



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: Cedars House at Wissahickon Valley Park

OVERVIEW

Fairmount Park Conservancy ("Conservancy") is seeking expressions of interest from qualified food service operators to lease and operate the Cedars House located within the historic Wissahickon Valley Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This opportunity offers the selected operator a chance to establish a distinctive destination within one of Philadelphia's most treasured natural settings.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Cedars House, the former office of Andorra Nursery, is situated at 200 W Northwestern Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19119. It sits within Wissahickon Valley Park, a 1,800-acre wooded gorge encompassing the Wissahickon Creek. The space includes:

- Approximately 1,900 square feet of interior space across two floors
- Shady patio and lawn available for outdoor seating
- Access to utilities including City of Philadelphia water and wastewater service
- Fully renovated and restored in 2010 for eat-in and take-out cafe
- Adjacent to popular park trails, including the Forbidden Drive

OPPORTUNITY

The Conservancy envisions the Cedars House as a welcoming establishment serving park visitors, local residents, and tourists. The selected operator will have the opportunity to:

- Develop a concept that complements the setting and respects the diverse needs of park users
- Create a sustainable business model that provides quality offerings at reasonably accessible price points
- Partner in community events and programming in collaboration with the Conservancy, City of Philadelphia and community-serving organizations

QUALIFICATIONS

Interested parties should demonstrate:

1. Proven experience operating successful food service establishments
2. Financial capacity to invest in and maintain the space
3. A vision that respects and enhances the natural environment of Wissahickon Valley Park
4. Commitment to sustainable business practices
5. Understanding of seasonal fluctuations in park visitation
6. Ability to navigate permit and licensing requirements for food service operation in Philadelphia
7. Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in business operations

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please include the following in your expression of interest:

1. **Company Profile:** Please provide a general statement describing the organizational structure of your business. Include the following:
 - a. Company Name
 - b. Contact info for owner(s) and/or designated representative authorized to respond to questions and negotiate on the company's behalf.
 - c. A description of your company's form of business organization, e.g., for-profit or non-profit corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship.
 - d. Identify the individuals or other entities that will have any ownership or equity interest in the leasing, renovation or operation of the Property. Identify the nature and extent of such interests.
 - e. Describe the experience of the technical and/or managerial staff which your company will use to carry out the work in connection with the Property.
 - f. If applicable, please provide the names of any architects or designers you plan to retain for this project.

2. **Management team:** Please provide a background on the team who will oversee and execute business operations.
 - a. Information about previous training, employment, and any prior or current business ventures in which you are involved.
 - b. Indicate company's experience obtaining the necessary permits, approvals, and variances to operate the proposed business, including but not limited to those that govern zoning and use.

3. **Concept Proposal:**

- a. Vision – Provide a narrative of your vision, including a sample menu, brand statement and pricing strategy
- b. Property Use – Specify the proposed uses for the property, the areas of the property you plan to use, and parking requirements.
- c. Lease Term– Specify the length of the lease term desired (i.e.; 3 years, 5 years, 10 years).
- d. Proposed rent and/or revenue share
- e. Business Plan or Operating Pro Forma - provide a conceptual demonstration of operating sustainability. How will this concept meet operating expenses be sustained through park seasonality
- f. Renovations/Improvements – Please describe any renovations you are interested in completing at the property. Detailed plans and specifications are not required at this time. All improvements are subject to the approval of the Conservancy. *Please note: physical renovations are not a requirement for a successful concept*

2. **Financial Information:** Please provide information regarding financial responsibility and indicate the financial resources available to fulfill all obligations related to the start-up and operation of the proposed business use. Including:

- a. Company financial statements for all entities included as financial resources for the proposed business. Statements should be prepared within the last 12 months in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards (GAAS).
- b. Personal financial statements of owner(s) (guidelines same as above).
- c. If applicable, include a statement of any financial relationships between the company/owner and any other party who may participate in the business operation.
- d. Credit report(s) for owner(s).

3. **Operational Plan:**

- a. Staffing and Management
- b. Proposed hours of operation and seasonality
- c. Facility maintenance and safety protocols
- d. Vendor logistics considering park access constraints
- e. Customer service approach to creating a welcoming experience for all
- f. Marketing strategy for low visibility site

4. **Community Engagement:**

- a. Ideas for engaging with local community and park users
- b. Plans to connect with diverse neighborhood groups and organizations
- c. Approach to receiving and implementing community feedback

5. **Sustainability Plan:** Strategies for environmentally responsible operations

SELECTION PROCESS

The Conservancy's staff, Property Committee and Board of Directors, will evaluate submissions based on:

- Alignment with the Conservancy's mission and values
- Alignment of operator's concept to the unique park setting
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed concept
- Operator's experience and capacity
- Commitment to community engagement and environmental stewardship
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in business operations
- Proposed financial terms

TIMELINE

- RFEI Release Date: March 10, 2025
- Mandatory Site Visit: April 7, 2025, 9am or 6pm ET
- Questions Due: April 8, 2025 5pm ET
- Responses to Questions Posted: April 10, 2025 5pm
- Submissions Due: April 14, 2025
- Interviews with Selected Respondents: April 28 - May 2
- Operator Selection: May 16, 2025
- Target Opening Date: June 30, 2025

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit all materials electronically to [VIA THIS LINK](#) by April 18, 2025 at 5 PM ET

Questions regarding this RFEI should be directed to aschapker@myphillypark.org. All questions will be compiled and shared with parties who attended the mandatory site visit.

ABOUT FAIRMOUNT PARK CONSERVANCY

Fairmount Park Conservancy exists to champion Philadelphia's parks. We lead capital projects and historic preservation efforts, foster neighborhood park stewardship, attract and leverage investments, and develop innovative programs throughout the 10,200 acres that include Fairmount Park and more than 100 neighborhood parks around the city.

This RFEI does not constitute a commitment to lease or contract with any respondent. The Conservancy reserves the right to reject any or all submissions, to modify the RFEI process, and to discontinue the process at any time.