

**Request for Proposals
For the Operation of the
City Owned Facility at
2 Johnson Street, Levee Park**

For the term of May 1, 2026 - March 31, 2028

City of Winona, Winona, Minnesota



**Prepared by:
Patrick Menton
Director of Parks & Facilities**

Release date: Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Submission Deadline: 12:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Introduction

The City of Winona (“City”) is seeking proposals from qualified individuals or firms to operate a business within a City owned facility on public parkland. The building, commonly known as the “Boathouse”, is available year-round and offers a unique opportunity to serve residents and visitors of Winona, Levee Park, and the surrounding downtown area. The above-referenced Boathouse building that is the subject of this proposal is referred to hereinafter as the “facility”, “building”, or “Premises”. Potential uses may include food and beverage service, retail, arts and cultural experiences, event hosting, or other creative ventures that contribute to the vibrancy of downtown Winona.

Invitation

The City of Winona seeks qualified individuals or firms that meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrated Experience: Have proven experience in the proposed industry, whether in food and beverage service, retail, event hosting, arts, or other relevant fields.
- Financial Capacity: Possess the financial stability and resources necessary to establish and sustain operations at this location.
- Regulatory Compliance (if applicable): Food and beverage businesses must be in good standing with local health and food safety regulations. Other businesses must comply with applicable local, state, and federal regulations. Proposers shall be in compliance with all applicable City, county and state taxes, including but not limited City property taxes, charges, fees, and special assessments.
- Business Proposal: Provide a detailed representation of the proposed business, including an overview of services, price estimates (if applicable), and how the business will contribute to the vibrancy of Winona.

Objectives

The operator will activate the onsite facility by providing goods, services, or experiences that enhance the space and serve the community. This may include retail, food and beverage service, event hosting, or other creative business ventures. Additionally, the operator may have opportunities to support events in the adjacent park space, such as providing services or amenities for gatherings on the outdoor Levee Park Patio.

Facility and Location Information

The City owned facility designated for this operation is located within Levee Park, in Winona, Minnesota, just feet from the Mississippi River at 2 Johnson Street. This prime riverside location offers unique accessibility by car, bike, and boat, making it a standout destination. The 2,125 square foot, single level facility is situated in a high-traffic area with ample parking and is adjacent to the 60 Main Development, which is a 75-room hotel and 24-room long-term rental unit currently under construction. In the past couple of years, over 220 new apartment units have been created in the area, with another 200 projected.

Levee Park and Patio, with the space to entertain 2,000 people, is a vibrant hub for a variety of events, including the Midwest Music Festival, weekly outdoor Farmer’s Market, Craft Beer Tour, Big Muddy Brew n’ Que, and many special events and private rentals. The park is a popular destination for residents and visitors alike, serving as a mooring site for cruise ships, paddle boats, and recreational

boaters. The location offers stunning views and opportunities for outdoor activities, with immediate access to the Flyway Trail, a scenic multi-use path that follows the Mississippi River, offering opportunities for biking, walking, and wildlife viewing along one of North America's major migratory bird routes.

Nearby attractions include the Minnesota Masterpiece Hall, the Masonic Theater which is now home to the Great River Arts Festival, and the Minnesota Marine Art Museum. Some of Winona's largest business are within walking distance including the Fastenal Corporate Offices, Winona State University, Winona County, and Bay State Milling, to name a few.

With its central location and proximity to both residential and commercial areas, the facility is ideally positioned to support a wide range of business ventures, including food and beverage service, retail, arts and culture spaces, event venues, and more. Levee Park's accessibility, high foot traffic, and close-knit community make it a prime location for businesses looking to thrive and engage with both locals and visitors in the heart of downtown Winona.

Scope of Tenant/Operator Services

The selected tenant/operator will be responsible for establishing and managing a high-quality business within the City owned facility. The scope of services includes, but is not limited to:

- Business Development: Designing and implementing a distinct concept, whether it be food and beverage service, retail, event space, an art gallery, or another creative business.
- Operations Management: Overseeing daily operations, including facility maintenance, staffing, and customer service.
- Regulatory Compliance: Adhering to all applicable health, safety, and business regulations relevant to the specific type of operation as well as applicable law and ordinances.
- Marketing and Promotion: Developing and executing strategies to attract customers and enhance visibility.
- Facility Maintenance: Maintaining a clean, welcoming, and well-organized business and premises.
- Customer Experience: Ensuring a high level of service and engagement to create a positive visitor experience.
- Financial Management: Managing budgets, reporting financials, and ensuring long-term operational sustainability.

Facility Staffing and Hours of Operation

The selected tenant/operator will be expected to maintain regular business hours that align with the needs of the community, compatible with Levee Park, and the nature of their proposed business operation. At a minimum, the facility should be open to the public during peak times, including evenings and weekends, to serve visitors to the park and surrounding downtown area.

Specific operating hours may vary based on the type of business but should generally include:

- Weekday Operations: Open at least during key daytime and/or evening hours.
- Weekend Operations: Open during peak visitor hours, including afternoons and evenings.

- Event Support: The operator may have opportunities to extend hours for special events or park activities, particularly on the Levee Park Patio or other adjacent spaces.

Proposers should include their proposed hours of operation in their submission, ensuring they align with community demand and contribute to the activation of the building.

Proposal Requirements

Proposals should include the following information:

- Business Profile: A brief overview of the business, including its history and any relevant experience.
- Concept: A description of the business concept and its proposed theme or focus, including how it will complement the surrounding area and engage the community.
- Service or Product Offerings: A draft of the services, products, or experiences that will be offered, including pricing structures if applicable.
- Staffing Plan: A plan outlining staffing needs and key personnel.
- Financial Projections: A summary of financial goals, including a proposed budget, expected revenue streams, and a compensation plan for the City. For example, the tenant/operator might reimburse the City 5% of gross monthly sales up to \$10,000, and 2.5% on sales above that amount. The City is open to alternative payment/rent proposals. A sample lease agreement is available on request from the City Clerk. The City reserves the right to negotiate and amend the sample lease agreement based on the circumstances and selected proposal in the City's sole judgment and discretion.
- Relevant Experience and References: Examples of prior experience in similar industries, including references from previous partners or clients.
- Capital Improvements: A plan for any potential capital improvements, including contributions towards facility upgrades, renovations, or enhancements that will benefit the space and its long-term sustainability.

Operator/Tenant Responsibilities

- The building is being presented as an empty shell that includes HVAC, two small stainless steel handwashing sinks, two restrooms accessible from the exterior, and indoor/outdoor patio space. The facility will be delivered empty and does not include any kitchen equipment or cooking facilities. There are no interior appliances or furnishings, and decorative elements are minimal. The City, at its discretion, will handle all external repairs, maintenance, and replacements, including the walls, roof, foundation, and sidewalks. The City will also remove snow from the sidewalks around the building and the adjacent parking lot.
- The tenant/operator is responsible for operating and maintaining the interior of the Premises and any improvements at their own expense. This includes sanitation, pest control, garbage disposal, kitchen equipment, seating, and all repairs unless otherwise noted.
- Obtain and pay for all required licenses and permits, including but not limited to those from the Minnesota Department of Health and Winona County, as applicable.
- Keep restrooms open to the public during business hours and share cleaning duties as determined.

- Pay all property taxes, assessments, and other governmental charges on the Premises during the lease term.
- Cover all utility costs, including but not limited to electricity, gas, water, sewer, internet, and related connection fees.
- Maintain personal property insurance for 100% replacement value against fire and other standard perils.
- Maintain commercial general liability insurance at limits required by Minnesota Statutes, Section 466.04.
- Comply at all times with all requirements in the City's required lease agreement as well as applicable law and ordinances.

City Responsibilities:

- The City is responsible for all exterior repairs, maintenance, and replacements at the City's sole judgment and discretion, including the building's walls, roof, foundation, sidewalks, and landscaping.
- Maintain and repair the restrooms on the Premises; cleaning duties shared with Operator.
- Provide snow removal for sidewalks and parking lot.
- Permit the Operator to use a fenced-off area in the adjacent parking lot for waste container placement.
- Makes no promises or warranties regarding the condition or suitability of the Premises beyond what is stated in the lease agreement.

Evaluation Criteria

The City, through City staff, designated boards and commissions, and the City Council, will evaluate timely submitted and complete proposals based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Evaluation Focus
1. Proposed Concept	20 points	Creativity, relevance, and community impact.
2. Operating Hours and Days	10 points	Accessibility during peak community and park need, including evenings and weekends.
3. References	15 points	Proven track record in similar operations, strength of references.
4. Financial Viability	15 points	Financial stability and viability, with a solid budget and realistic projections.
5. Payment Proposal	10 points	A proposal for rent payment and to reimburse the City for use of the space through a gross sales-based payment structure.

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Evaluation Focus
6. Community Engagement & Event Collaboration	10 points	Ability to partner with the City to provide services during community activities and special events.
7. Quality & Variety of Services or Products	10 points	Product or service quality, variety, and pricing with attention to diverse customer needs.
8. Capital Improvements Proposal (if applicable)	5 points	Commitment to enhancing or investing in the facility for long-term benefit.
9. Vision for the Future	5 points	Long-term business vision, including growth and sustainability over 5, 10, and more years.

Submission Details

Submit three (3) printed copies and one electronic copy (USB Drive) of the proposal by the below stated deadline. Proposals received after the deadline will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the proposer to ensure timely delivery of the proposal to the City. The City of Winona does not typically acknowledge receipt of proposals unless specifically requested. All costs of any kind or nature whatsoever incurred by a proposer in this process are the proposer's responsibility exclusively and none of the same shall be compensated or reimbursed by the City.

Questions

Pre-proposal questions or inquiries must be submitted by email to cityclerk@winonamn.gov. Questions will be answered and posted on the city's website by 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 21, 2025.

Award of Contract

The City reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or to accept the proposal deemed most advantageous to and in the best interest of the City.

Timeline

- Release of RFP: Tuesday, April 22, 2025
- Optional Facility Viewing: Tuesday, September 23, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.
- Deadline for Pre-Proposal Questions: Tuesday, October 7, 2025, by 12:00 p.m.
- Deadline for Questions Response: Tuesday, October 21, 2025, by 12:00 p.m.
- Proposal Submission Deadline: Tuesday, November 4, 2025, by 12:00 p.m.
- Award Notification: Tuesday, November 18, 2025
- New Lease Commencement Date: Friday, May 1, 2026

NOTICE TO ALL PROPOSERS

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the City reserves the following rights:

1. *To reject any and all proposals, to waive irregularities and informalities, to request additional information from all proposers/respondents, and to negotiate terms and conditions with proposers/responders in the City's sole judgment and discretion;*
2. *To select the proposal that furthers the best interests of the City in the City's sole judgment and discretion;*
3. *To negotiate the final terms and conditions of the contract/lease agreement for the Premises between the City and the selected proposer in the City's sole judgment and discretion;*
4. *For the City Council to select a proposal, or alternately to not select any proposals, in its sole judgment and discretion;*
5. *Should the City and a selected proposer be unable to mutually agree upon the entire contract, to discontinue negotiations, select another proposer or reject all the proposals;*
6. *Upon completion of negotiations agreeable to the City and the proposer selected, to require that the City's contract/lease agreement be fully executed; and*
7. *To require that the form of the contract/lease agreement with the City shall be the City's contract/lease agreement form as the same may be amended by the City based on the circumstances and selected proposal in the City's sole judgment and discretion; a copy of the template contract/lease agreement may be requested from the City Clerk. By submitting a proposal, all proposers hereby agree to the terms and conditions contained in the City's template contract/lease agreement.*

Contact Information

For general questions, please contact the City Clerk's Office, City of Winona, 207 Lafayette Street, Winona, MN 55987 at 507-457-8200.



Note: This map is created from data contained in Winona County GIS and is for reference purposes only. While significant effort has been invested to depict boundary extents as accurately as possible per existing records, this map should not be considered a replacement for professional land survey.

Date created: 12/26/2024
Last Data Uploaded: 12/26/2024 7:01:28 AM

Developed by SCHNEIDER GEOSPATIAL



Companion FAQ – Operation of City Facility at 2 Johnson Street, Levee Park

1. What is the submission deadline?

All proposals must be received by 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 4, 2025. Late submissions will not be accepted.

2. Where should proposals be sent?

Submit three (3) printed copies and one (1) electronic copy (USB Drive) to:
City Clerk's Office, City of Winona, 207 Lafayette Street, Winona, MN 55987

3. Can multiple businesses apply together (i.e., joint proposals)?

Yes, joint ventures or collaborative business models are welcome. Clearly outline the roles, responsibilities, and financial relationships between the parties.

4. Is a site visit required or available?

A site visit is not required but is highly encouraged. A viewing of the facility will be conducted on Tuesday, September 23rd, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. for any interested parties. Individuals do not need to register for the viewing.

5. Can we propose an alternative payment structure to the example provided?

Yes. While the sample payment plan suggests a percentage of gross sales (e.g., 5.0% up to \$10,000/month, 2.5% thereafter), alternative proposals are welcome and will be evaluated for fairness and feasibility.

6. Who is responsible for utilities and maintenance?

The operator (Lessee) is responsible for all interior maintenance, utilities, and cleaning. The City (Lessor) will manage exterior maintenance, major repairs (roof, walls, etc.), snow removal, and partial restroom maintenance.

7. What licenses or permits are required?

Depending on the proposed business, applicants may need licenses/permits from the Minnesota Department of Health, Winona County, or the State of Minnesota. It is the applicant's responsibility to secure and pay for all necessary permits prior to operation.

8. Can alcohol be served on the premises?

This depends on the tenant's/operator's ability to secure the appropriate liquor licenses and local ordinances. Contact the City Clerk's Office at 507-457-8200 for more information on alcohol service rules in City parks.

9. What are “capital improvements” in this context?

Capital improvements refer to upgrades or renovations that enhance the facility's long-term use, such as building expansion/renovations, interior/exterior remodeling, or permanent infrastructure additions.

10. Who selects the winning proposal?

Proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee, with final approval by the Winona City Council.

11. What items are provided with in the building?

The building is provided as a basic shell, including HVAC, two small stainless steel handwashing sinks,

and two restrooms with exterior access. It will be delivered empty, with no cooking equipment and minimal to no interior decor. Please note that all appliances and décor currently belong to the existing operator and will not be included.

12. What will be the duration of a new lease?

The length of the new lease will be May 1, 2026 - March 31, 2028. However, lease terms may be subject to negotiation during the negotiation phase of the award process.