



2025-700 Rio Grande Building Restaurant – Restaurant Rental Space Request for Proposals

Introduction

The City of Aspen is requesting proposals from qualified vendors for 1687 square feet of net leasable commercial restaurant space located at the street level of the Rio Grande Building at 455 Rio Grande Place in Aspen, CO. The City Council of the City of Aspen has directed that the Rio Grande Building have a restaurant operation that provides year-round services, in an affordable family friendly setting, to the Aspen community. All proposals must include or physically acknowledge these elements in their proposal(s) to be eligible for further consideration. Proposers may submit proposals with no more than two (2) suggested restaurant configurations for consideration and lease contract award.

Background

The restaurant space in the Rio Grande Building has previously been a fixture of the Aspen local's food scene for many years, serving the community with a fast, reliable and affordable fare. The City of Aspen would like to continue this tradition with a new tenant. The adjacent parks provide a unique opportunity to serve the locals of Aspen in a way that could add tremendous value to the community.

The space has been cleaned and prepared for a new tenant and currently includes various pieces of restaurant equipment which can be included in the lease agreement with the new tenant (equipment outlined in **Exhibit B**). The location has City Hall and the Rio Grande parking garage immediately adjacent, providing plenty of potential customer traffic and parking. The outside patio area provides an appealing outdoor dining space. With the Hotel Jerome just blocks away and a downtown location, delivery options are encouraged.

Scope of Proposal

Part One: Function

The Aspen City Council has directed that the Rio Grande Building maintain a restaurant operation that provides year-round services and provides daily service to the public. Late-night bar service is possible but is not required. The restaurant space is located across the street from Rio Grande Park, Theater Aspen, the skate park, and the John Denver Sanctuary, and is located

adjacent to City Hall. The food and beverage entity will serve as an asset to the community members who use these public spaces and the Aspen community at large.

Key points in the City of Aspen's selection of the food and beverage entity occupying the space within the Rio Grande building include:

- The character of the business should be in keeping with the historic use of the space as a restaurant that serves locals who recreate and work nearby, as well as visitors to the area, and support a theme or presence that complements the programs and activities that occur at the nearby public spaces.
- The restaurant should be non-gourmet and family friendly, focusing on affordability and ease of access for all members of the community.

Part Two: Size, Footprint, Equipment, Fixtures and Finishes

1) Size and Footprint

The current restaurant footprint includes 1687 square feet of net leasable indoor space. Outdoor dining is permissible and encouraged on the adjoining 850 square foot patio. Additionally, there is a 200 square foot trash enclosure located at the Southeast corner of the patio. See **Exhibit A** for drawings.

2) Fixtures, Finishes and Equipment: Aspen City Owned and Provided

- Turnkey, four-walled space or equivalent for the food and beverage entities operational purposes with an ADA compliant entry, dining patio, and trash enclosure.
- HVAC, Electrical & Plumbing as laid out in **Exhibit A**
- Fire suppression system & alarms
- *Optional* Kitchen Equipment
 - Please see **Exhibit B** for a comprehensive list of the equipment currently provided in the space. Equipment may also be viewed and evaluated during the walk-through.
 - As part of your proposal, please elaborate on what equipment, if any, you would like to remain in the space. Lease terms shall be negotiated and adjusted accordingly.

Modifications to the current fixtures, finishes and equipment shall be modest and must be approved by the City. All modifications will be at the expense of the food and beverage entity and should be considered relative to the expediency of commencing initial operations.

A walk-through will be facilitated for all applicants. During this walk-through, applicants will be able to evaluate the equipment and determine which pieces they would like to remain in the space for their proposed business operations.

The food and beverage entity should assume responsibility for providing all remaining fixtures and furnishing necessary for operations, including but not limited to lighting, décor, seating, coolers, POS, bar and kitchen equipment.

Part Three: Timeline and Occupation

The City will work with the selected tenant to open and begin serving the community as soon as possible. Please consider your needs for securing any food service, staffing, and additional equipment acquisition. Consider if you can do a limited menu as you ramp up to full operation. Applicants with a shorter timeline to reach full operation will be viewed favorably; however, it will not be the only consideration for selection.

Selection of the tenant is scheduled to occur in January of 2026. The RFP process will occur on an abbreviated timeline. The most suitable applicants will be presented to the City Council. Final approval of the selection of tenant will be made by City Council. An anticipated timeline is:

December 3, 2025	RFP release
December 8, 2025 @ 9am	First on site walk through – 2-hour time slot
December 10, 2025 @ 1pm	Second on site walk through – 2-hour time slot
December 21, 2025	Deadline for questions
December 30, 2025	Proposals due
January 5-9, 2026	Finalize lease negotiations & reference checks
January 13, 2026	Applicants presented to City Council for consideration
TBD	Selection of preferred vendor and approval at public meeting

****The City reserves the right to modify the schedule as deemed necessary. ****

Part Four: Terms of Lease

The City of Aspen will deliver to the tenant a turnkey commercial restaurant space as outlined in part two. The tenant will be responsible, unless otherwise negotiated during the selection process, for all additional kitchen equipment, furniture, thematic finishes, and other custom work associated with establishing a restaurant space.

The City is proposing a favorable lease that is below market to promote and support an operator that can deliver year-round, affordable and family-friendly food service for the Community. The selected proposer will be offered a five-year initial lease with one (1) 5-year renewal period for a maximum of a 10-year lease arrangement. Lease terms shall be for a fixed amount each month, to be determined, plus percentage of gross sales or some combination of these terms. All proposers must pay a pro-rated cost of the building's electric, water, gas, and sewer. All other utilities (waste removal, cable, IT, etc.) are the responsibility of the tenant. The lease will require that all grease traps be cleaned out, at the business' sole expense, at least four times per year. Onsite parking is not included in the terms of the lease.

The lease period is anticipated to be set for a 5-year period with one (1) 5-year extension option.

The City has drafted a boilerplate lease with anticipated terms (**Exhibit C**) which includes an initial-term per-square-foot rate. Rates shall include an annual adjustment to reflect, at minimum, fluctuations in the consumer price index. The price index shall be the Consumer Price Index – All Urban Consumers (CPI U-) U-S. City Average – All Items, or a successor or substitute index published or authorized by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Also included is a method of profit sharing after the first full year in operation after the restaurant has exceeded the break-even point.

Part Five: Quality Standards, Noise Levels, and Miscellaneous

The tenant will be expected to maintain their space in keeping with the high standard for quality and customer service that the City of Aspen expects. This shall apply to both the exterior and interior of the space, including outdoor seating/service areas.

The space will be required to meet the City of Aspen noise ordinance which specifies that noise at any property line or lease boundary shall not exceed 65 decibels during the day (7:00 AM-9:00 PM) or 60 decibels at night (9:00 PM - 7:00 AM). Sound level measurements shall be made with a sound level meter using the "A" weighting scale and using the "slow" response.

Submission Requirements

Proposers shall clearly follow and label each section of their proposals as follows:

Section 1: Company Introduction

Basic introduction of organization, including:

- Company background and ownership (include all partners)

Section 2: Qualifications

Experience with operation of food and beverage business, description of equivalent operation(s), professional associations, citations and awards (if appropriate), and any other information that speaks to an extended history of successfully operating a food and beverage business in Aspen or equivalent resort destination.

Proposers must disclose all history of legal disputes and their ultimate resolution, whether litigated or not; and whether the proposer has ever filed for bankruptcy protection (including process and final resolution). Proposers should include letter(s) from their bank(s) describing the relationship with that bank, account balances, loan balances, etc.

Proposers should also include a copy of their credit report and a business plan. Proposers also should provide letters from banks indicating pre-approval for any necessary loans and/or provide evidence of sufficient capital to execute the business plan. Finally, if the proposed ownership

entity is an LLC or similar entity, the proposer should provide all the above for all LLC members.

Please be clear and provide any information you can share regarding existing or anticipated financial resources.

Section 3: Concept & Operations

Description of concept for proposed food and beverage business to operate in the Rio Grande restaurant rental space. Provide a concise response to how your concept reflects an affordable, family-friendly option for Aspen. Description must include the following but is not limited to:

- Anticipated personnel needs
- A concept menu (must include pricing). This doesn't have to be exact but reasonably close to intent
- Overall theme, design and décor, special design features
- Proposed daily / weekly hours of operation. Please touch upon your ability to remain open during the offseason and any anticipated annual closure periods.
- Proposed kitchen equipment (delineate what existing equipment you would like to remain and what new equipment you will bring in)
- Target market, planned integration and compatibility with the surrounding attractions (park, theater, offices, etc.)

Section 4: Lease Rate/Term

Proposers shall review the proposed lease term and renewal options in **Exhibit C**. Should any amendments be desired please outline which terms and your proposed amendment.

Section 5: References

Provide at least (3) recent business references, including affiliation, business name (if applicable), contact name, phone number, and email address.

Evaluation Committee

The final selection decision shall be made by the Aspen City Council.

Questions and Communication

Questions regarding the RFP or procurement process must be submitted via email to the following email address: procurement@aspen.gov. Answers will be posted online for all Offerors to review and consider at the following link: <https://www.aspen.gov/1763/Rio-Grande-Building-Restaurant>. It is the Vendor's responsibility to check the website for Q&As, addendums, and other important information.

Proposal Submission

Proposals may be submitted electronically via email to procurement@aspen.gov . Proposals must be compiled into a single Word or .PDF document named “2025-700 by XYZ Company”. Failure to do so may result in disqualification. Please call 720-589-4943 with questions about your submission.

Physical submissions must be saved on a thumb drive or CD and placed in a sealed envelope that is clearly marked on the outside “Proposal for 2025-700 by XYZ Company” and delivered via carrier or in person to the City of Aspen Purchasing office, 427 Rio Grande Place, Aspen, Colorado 81611. Submissions are due Tuesday December 30th .

The City cannot accept faxed proposals.

Legal

Pursuant to the Colorado Open Records Act, C.R.S. Section 24-72-200.1 (CORA), any and all of the documents that are submitted to the City of Aspen may be deemed public records subject to examination and inspection by third parties. The City of Aspen reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to release for inspection or copying any document, plan, specification, proposal, or other writing submitted pursuant to this request.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all Proposals or accept what is, in its judgment, the proposal which is in the City's best interest. The City further reserves the right, in the best interests of the City, to accept a late submittal or to waive any technical defects or irregularities in all proposals submitted.

Pictures of Space:













