



Walnut Hills
Redevelopment
Foundation

656 E McMillan St
Cincinnati, OH 45206

Office: (513) 593-9473

March 6, 2019

Request for Proposal – Small Grocery Store Operator

1. The Opportunity

a. Introduction

The Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)(3). We're a comprehensive community development corporation focused on creating a vibrant and thriving Walnut Hills Business District. Some of our recent accomplishments include Trevarren Flats, Walnut Hills Neighborhood Reinvestment Plan, and implementation of Form-Based Code.

The half-mile radius surrounding the Peeble's Corner Business District is in the midst of a major renaissance. It's been the site of \$60 million of development over the past couple of years. But in the midst of all this positive momentum, there's something missing – a conveniently- located grocery store.

Our primary purpose for opening the grocery store is to serve the people in our neighborhood who are the most vulnerable – the elderly, those living in poverty, and residents with disabilities. To be sustainable though, we'll also need customers from the surrounding, more affluent, neighborhoods to become loyal shoppers. So this is the challenge...to operate a store that accounts for a broad range of price sensitivities and meets the grocery needs of a culturally diverse population.

The social aspect of the store is also important. It will need to be a friendly place where everyone feels welcome. A successful operator and their staff will be on a first name basis with regular customers and be willing to fulfill their special food requests.

b. Description

The Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation is looking for a grocery store operator to address the food desert situation here in our neighborhood. The ideal candidate has a passion for food justice and experience starting up as well as managing a neighborhood grocery or retail establishment. We're seeking someone who would embrace



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opening a friendly grocery in a resurgent and diverse neighborhood that also happens to be a food desert. This person could be an experienced grocery operator or someone who wants to open a deli and could also run the grocery side of it. Or, perhaps, a group of interested individuals that pool their talents and interests to run the day-to-day operation.

We recognize that the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation is not a grocery store operator, and more generally is not a retail operator, and that's why we're putting out this Request for Proposals. We've outlined our ideal operator responsibilities, goals, and features below but we want to hear from you. Think creatively about how you envision operations running, the relationship between the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation and the Operator, and do not feel entirely confined by our descriptions. At its core, we're looking to create a small grocery store (between 750 – 4,000sf) which is welcoming to and serves all members of our diverse neighborhood population, while focusing on providing fresh foods.

The ideal grocery operator would be responsible for:

- Weighing in on the store location
- Collaborating on store design and product offering mix
- Selecting equipment and store fixtures
- Developing a healthy, food supply chain for a mix of products: shelf stable items, meat, fish, produce, deli, beverage
- Making all orders to stock grocery and store operation supplies
- Managing inventory, product storage, and rotation activities to minimize food waste
- Working with the neighborhood to hire qualified residents
- Developing and executing a sales and merchandising strategy
- Offering guidance and training to the grocery staff
- Incorporating food access volunteers into workforce
- Maintaining the store in a safe, clean, and appealing way for both customers and employees
- Providing positive shopping experiences and ensuring customer satisfaction
- Operating in an environmentally sustainable manner
- Ensuring that the store's look and feel is welcoming to all
- Utilizing technology to accept SNAP cards and Produce Perks incentive program
- Setting up product displays and other merchandising material



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- Documenting and reporting basket size, customer volume, SNAP usage, and profitability
- Handling the day-to-day financial duties – payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable
- Engaging with adjacent store owners to build a safe, walkable retail environment

2. Purpose of the Grocery

The primary purpose behind opening this grocery store is to improve access to fresh, affordable, healthy food for our most vulnerable residents.

a. The Store Offering

1. More produce-based with healthier, less processed options (i.e. low sugar, salt, and fat).
2. Local food from orchards, community gardens & livestock farms
3. Local food products on shelves and in deli from minority-focused entrepreneurial incubators
4. Value-added meals made from donated food
5. Fewer brand choices to allow for more items (1,000–2,000 SKUs)
6. A site for grocery ordering and customer pick-up as well as being the drop-off spot and departure zone for deliveries via bikes and vans
7. A space to do food demos, smoothie samples, and educational events
8. Convenient hours to serve everyone – some mornings, some evenings, and weekends.

b. Our Partnership

1. The WHRF will amplify store's Marketing & Promotion efforts via our website and social media and those of our partners.
2. The WHRF will act as the neighborhood liaison in getting the physical space ready for occupancy.
3. The WHRF will promote and manage media relations with TV, radio, print, and web outlets.
4. The WHRF will visually document the process.
5. The WHRF will provide counsel as needed.



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c. Business Structure

The WHRF has limited grant funding for the project which could be contributed towards tenant improvement buildout, providing a move in ready space, rent offset, or other startup/operational needs.

We're open to exploring different models of how the business will be structured, profit and loss allocation, and division of responsibilities for buildout of the space and operations.

d. Your Proposal

Please answer the following questions:

1. Why do you want to operate a small grocery in Walnut Hills?
2. Small Grocery Concept (Please clearly explain which elements of our operating responsibilities and store offerings you plan to include, and differences from our proposal)
3. Operator experience and credentials
4. Business Structure Concept and expected WHRF responsibilities
5. Projected operating numbers
6. Projected Sources and Uses

In summary, we're looking to open a grocery in late summer of 2019 to bring affordable groceries back to Walnut Hills. And we're seeking the best possible person or group to operate it.

If you're a passionate food person who's interested in making a positive impact in a rapidly-growing business district, this could be a great opportunity for you. Please send your proposal to Gary Dangel at the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation gary@walnuthillsrfd.org

Deadline for applications is 11:59p on Sunday, March 31, 2019.