



Minneapolis
Park & Recreation Board
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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
TRAILHEAD CAFE CONCESSION OPERATOR

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RELEASED ON:
DECEMBER 17, 2025

PROPOSALS DUE ON: FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2026

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and the Loppet Foundation are seeking a highly qualified operator for the Trailhead facility within Theodore Wirth Regional Park. The Loppet Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization with a mission to connect people to the outdoors through experiences that grow community. Founded in 2002, the Loppet Foundation bases its work out of the Trailhead at Theodore Wirth Park. The Trailhead is an area devoted to outdoor activities like cross country skiing, mountain biking, fat tire biking, road biking, trail running, golf, disc golf, snow tubing, snowboarding, Alpine skiing, run orienteering and hiking. The Trailhead area includes cross country ski trails, mountain bike trails, hiking trails, par-3 and disc golf courses, learning and staging areas for mountain biking and skiing and a full service facility that acts as the jumping off point for outdoor activities in the park. The building includes an approximately 3,500 sq. ft. gathering space with tables for seating, a bike and ski rental shop space, offices for the Loppet Foundation, public restrooms, and outdoor patio space with tables. The Trailhead has two parking lots: a smaller 25-car lot with a Metro Transit bus turnaround area, and a larger 95-car lot. In the winter (non-golf) months the larger Chalet parking lot is also available.

Theodore Wirth Regional Park attracts an estimated 100,000+ mountain biker visits, 50,000+ hiker visits and 100,000+ cross country skier visits, 30,000+ golf visits, and 5,000+ tubing and snowboard/alpine skier visits each year. The park also hosts events like the City of Lakes Loppet Festival, CITYTRAIL Loppet, and the Trail Loppet, and dozens of other events and private parties. The park hosts Park Board, Loppet Foundation and other-organization-run programs like Adventures programming aimed at involving North Minneapolis youth and families, Trail Kids, Loppet Nordic Racing, Run Clubs and Loppet Cycle Works training. Finally, the Trailhead plays host to high school ski and mountain bike teams, as well as middle school and other school programming. The Trailhead often has multiple scheduled activities beyond ordinary individual use. Estimates show 350,000 annual visitors at the Trailhead.

The Trailhead includes a 625 sq. ft. kitchen facility with service windows to the inside and the outside and an approximately 325 sq. ft. storage/staging area for the cafe space. The cafe space is expected to be open throughout the year and service all the various user groups as well as the general public.

The Loppet Foundation is seeking proposals for managing and operating the cafe concession in the Trailhead. Services sought in the concession include sales of things like coffee, beer and wine, and food. Proposals might also include catering for community events, corporate gatherings, birthday parties, celebrations of life, weddings, golf outings, trail events, and beyond.. The best proposals will include ideas for how to take the built-in crowds at The Trailhead and create a space that holds people for things like great food, beer and coffee, and helps create a year-round community around a love for outdoor activity and nature. The goal is to have a new operator in place in May of 2026.

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE

The key concepts we would like to see outlined in a proposal to operate the Trailhead Cafe concession are:

- 1.) Providing reliable service to the public with extensive hours and minimal closings
- 2.) Maximizing income to the Loppet Foundation
- 3.) A unique venue oriented to the neighborhood and visitor demographics
- 4.) An environmentally friendly business approach
- 5.) An expandable business approach to meet the needs of large crowds
- 6.) An operator with the resources to invest in equipment and facility improvements
- 7.) A venue that respects and appreciates the unique setting and backdrop of Theodore Wirth Regional Park
- 8.) An operator with integrity and commitment to the park system and park patrons
- 9.) An operator which will provide a service that is efficient, effective, excellent and equitable to park patrons.

PROPOSALS

The proposals should clearly outline the type of venue, income estimates, payment to the Loppet Foundation, investments in equipment and facilities, business plan, terms, operating season and hours and sample menu pricing. The operator must also include their experience in the restaurant or concession business. A template for the proposal format is included as Attachment A – please use this format in your submission. Please submit 5 printed copies of your proposal.

Proposals Due: Friday, January 16 2026, 5:00 pm CST

Submit to: Meghan Cosgrove
Loppet Foundation
1221 Theodore Wirth Pkwy Minneapolis MN 55422
cosgrove@loppet.org

EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSALS

A committee comprised of Loppet Foundation staff and board members and MPRB staff will evaluate all of the proposals and will provide their recommendation on a preferred operator to the Loppet Foundation Board of Directors. The recommendation by the committee is advisory. The Loppet Foundation Board of Directors will make the final selection and the agreement shall be between the selected operator and the Loppet Foundation. The agreement between the Loppet Foundation and the preferred bidder/operator will be contingent upon final approval by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board of Commissioners.

PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS

The committee may request a presentation by the proposal submitter to clarify the proposal. The Loppet Foundation or the MPRB may require Proposers to make a formal presentation of their respective proposals to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board of Commissioners. An agenda of specific interest points identified by the Board may be provided to respondents prior to the presentation date.

SCHEDULE

Listed below are the dates and times by which stated actions must be taken or completed. If the Loppet Foundation determines, in its sole discretion, that it is necessary to change any of these dates and times it will issue an Addendum to this RFP. All listed times are local Minneapolis, CST.

Date/Time	Action
Wednesday, December 17, 2025	Request for Proposal released
Monday, December 29, 2025 9-10:30am Wednesday, January 7, 2026 12-1:30pm	Walk through at the facility for interested parties
Friday, January 16, 2026 at 5pm	Proposal Due Date
Late January-early February 2026	Proposal Presentations to Selection Committee
February 2026	Loppet Foundation decision on recommended proposal
February 2026	Contract Negotiations
Wednesday, March 4, 2026	Recommendations Presented at MPRB Administration & Finance Committee
Wednesday, March 18, 2026	Final Board Action MPRB Full Board
April, 2026	Contract Executed
May 1, 2026	Facility Available for new tenant

LOPPET FOUNDATION RIGHTS

The Loppet Foundation may reject any or all responses to this request or accept a response in whole or in part. The Loppet Foundation also reserves the right to cancel the solicitation process without penalty, if circumstances prevent the process from being completed.

PROPOSER BACKGROUND CHECKS

The Loppet Foundation will require full criminal history background checks and credit history checks for all proposers.

PROPOSAL VALIDITY PERIOD

Any submitted proposal, shall in its entirety, remain a valid proposal for twelve (12) months after the proposal submission date.

DISPOSITION OF PROPOSALS

All proposals become the property of the Loppet Foundation and the Loppet Foundation shall have the right to use all ideas, and/or adaptations of those ideas, contained in any proposal received in response to this RFP. Any parts of the proposal or any other material(s) submitted to the Loppet Foundation with the proposal that are copyrighted or expressly marked as "confidential", "proprietary", or "trade secret", will be exempted from the "open records disclosure requirements". The Loppet Foundation's selection or rejection of a proposal will not affect this exemption.

INDEPENDENT PARTIES

Except as expressly provided otherwise in the contract resulting from this RFP, if any, the Loppet Foundation and the Proposer shall remain independent parties and neither shall be an officer, employee, agent, representative or co-partner of, or a joint venture with, the other.

PERFORMANCE INVESTIGATIONS

As part of its evaluation process, the Loppet Foundation may make investigations to determine the ability of the Proposer to perform under the response of this RFP. The Loppet Foundation reserves the right to REJECT any proposal if the Proposer fails to satisfy the Loppet Foundation that it is properly qualified to carry out the obligations under the response of this RFP.

INTEREST OF MEMBERS OF LOPPET FOUNDATION

The Proposer agrees that no member of the governing body, officer, employee or agent of the

Loppet Foundation shall have any interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, in the contract resulting from this RFP.

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT/ COVENANT AGAINST CONTINGENT FEES

Proposer hereby certifies that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, no individual employed by the Proposer or subcontracted by the Proposer has an immediate relationship to any employee of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board or the Loppet Foundation who was directly or indirectly involved in any way in the procurement of the contract, if any, resulting from this RFP or goods or services thereunder. Violation of this section by Proposer shall be grounds for cancellation of such contract. The Proposer also warrants that no person or selling agency has been employed, engaged or retained to solicit or secure any contract resulting from this RFP or any advantage hereunder upon an agreement or understanding for a commission, percentage, brokerage or contingent fee, or in exchange for any substantial consideration bargained for, excepting that which is provided to the Proposer's bona fide employees or to bona fide professional commercial or selling agencies or in the exercise of reasonable diligence should have been known by the Loppet Foundation to be maintained by the Proposer for the purpose of securing business for Proposer. In the event of the Proposer's breach or violation of this warranty, the Loppet Foundation shall, subject to Proposer's rights, have the right, at its option, to annul any contract resulting from this RFP without liability, to deduct from the charges otherwise payable by the Loppet Foundation under such contract the full amount of such commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, and to pursue any other remedy available to the Loppet Foundation under such contract, at law or in equity.

DATA PRACTICES

The Proposer agrees to comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and all other applicable state and federal laws relating to data privacy or confidentiality. The Proposer shall immediately report to the contract monitor any requests from third parties for information relating to this agreement. The Loppet Foundation agrees to promptly respond to inquiries from the Proposer concerning data requests. The Partner agrees to hold the Loppet Foundation, its officers, department heads and employees harmless from any claims resulting from the Proposer's unlawful disclosure or use of data protected under state and federal laws.

ATTACHMENT A - PROPOSAL FORMAT

Business Plan
Description of Venue, Menu, Season, Hours and Pricing
Description of investments to the facility, equipment investments
Proposal Terms (income to the Loppet Foundation, term of agreement, other)
Estimated Income – Years 1 to 5
Operator Experience
Sustainability Initiatives
References
Other information