

RESTAURANT and DINING:

A Request for Proposals in

BATTLE CREEK



Issued: **21 December 2018**

Closed: **22 March 2019**



Existing restaurants in/near downtown, see page 9

Battle Creek Unlimited
4950 W Dickman Road
Battle Creek, MI 49037



Introduction

Battle Creek Unlimited (BCU) – the economic development organization for the City of Battle Creek (City) – is searching for a reputable, experienced restaurateur who seeks a new location in the heart of the Upper Midwest. Located in Southwest Michigan, Battle Creek offers the best of both worlds: the resources and infrastructure of a larger city, paired with the culture and feel of something more intimate.

To expedite the restaurateur's expansion plans, BCU is offering up to two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) in financial assistance – which is flexible in use. In addition to capital injection, BCU will work with the award winner to secure a location, help facilitate administrative hurdles, market to the region and ultimately realize success in Battle Creek.

Market

Our metropolitan statistical area (MSA) is a prime location for a proprietor who wants to establish themselves or expand their footprint. Competition is low. The demand is high. Our economy was founded on food. We are home to numerous food and beverage companies, including the Kellogg Company Headquarters, Post Consumer Brands, Prairie Farms, Atlas Sales, Territorial Brewing Company, SnackWerks and FritoLay.

New Holland Brewing Company will soon join the ranks, after being awarded a brewery incentive RFP by BCU in early 2018. With a multimillion-dollar investment, New Holland will open its doors on West Michigan Avenue, near the epicenter of downtown. It plans to be operational by summer 2019 and will be complemented by a smaller brewer in the fall.

Other projects are also coming online. In late November, the Michigan Economic Development Corp. awarded \$10 million in gap financing assistance to the Heritage Tower restoration project. Heritage Tower – a 19-story, Art Deco downtown centerpiece built in the 1930s – will feature 85 market-rate residential units, with space on the bottom two floors for retail and dining.

Battle Creek's homegrown developers are also buying in. In October, the Lucky Rooster Kitchen & Cocktails, which features homemade plates and beverages from scratch, was opened by a local entrepreneur. Separately, Restore (269), a local developer, is on schedule with its Record Box project downtown, at 15 Carlyle Street, overlooking the river. The Record Box, slated for a fall 2019 opening, will feature event space on the top floor, office space on the middle floor and a brewery on the ground floor.

We are home to industry leaders, international corporations and institutions of higher education. Battle Creek – with a MSA population north of 136,000 – is conveniently located between Chicago and Detroit on Interstate 94. We are close to pleasant beaches along Lake Michigan, Big Ten and MAC universities, ethnic and community festivals, concerts, the region's best hiking, running and biking trails and other outdoor activities.

Battle Creek hosts all five branches of the U.S. military on two separate bases and a VA medical center. Annually, over 175,000 servicemembers spend time here. The neighboring industrial park, managed by BCU, showcases 13,600 employees and nearly 90 companies – a third of which are international. Between servicemembers and thousands more business professionals from one of 25 international firms, or Kellogg, a Fortune 300 company, our transient population is high. With just under \$25 million in dining consumer expenditure potential annually, there is a large leakage of disposable income waiting to be captured in Battle Creek.

Battle Creek's downtown has new vibrancy. Your restaurant can be a cornerstone to complement the City's resurgence. Multiple downtown properties are a stone's throw from a Fortune 300 world headquarters. A DoubleTree by Hilton is on target for completion in 2019. Additionally, two new microbreweries and brewpubs – one of which is a household name in New Holland – will open their doors downtown.

Our area's residents are the right mix of executives and mid- and high-skilled blue-collar workers, along with highly trained professionals. Battle Creek is hungry for more dining options.

Minimum Requirements

- BCU seeks proposals for a development project consisting of a new restaurant and dining option to locate in or near downtown Battle Creek and compliment what already exists.
- The proposed establishment shall, at a minimum, provide full lunch and dinner services.
- Applicants must have successful experience planning, establishing, opening and operating restaurants previously; *this RFP is not intended for first-time operators.*
- Applicants who represent a restaurant group, or other holding company, shall indicate where this project falls in their portfolio – and how it stacks against other projects.
- Proposals emphasizing farm-fresh ingredients, locally sourced produce and other health-conscious and sustainability considerations will be given preference.
- Preference will also be given to family-friendly restaurant proposals showcasing innovative or newer culinary trends (i.e., farm-to-table, food waste reduction, fine-casual, tapas or hyper-local sourcing, as just a few examples).
- Proposals must be unique and deviate from options already available in Battle Creek – whether in ambiance, menu structure, business model, overall dining experience or otherwise.
- Submissions should illustrate how the proposed restaurant can complement existing downtown eateries and other businesses.
- Proposals must delineate how the cash award from BCU will be utilized – and indicate how the developer plans to secure additional capital needed to complete the project.
- Applicants are not required to be Michigan based.

Other Considerations

- BCU is prepared to offer up to \$200,000 in flexible assistance.
- Proposals should indicate whether the developer/restaurateur wishes to own or lease property upon project completion. BCU can help facilitate property selection based on a proposal's specific needs – whether downtown or elsewhere in Battle Creek.
- Profiles of select properties are included in this RFP's appendix. The developer is not limited to the featured properties.
- Proposals need to consider that some properties may sit within a historic district. If necessary, proposed renovation and/or demolition plans must gain approval of the Historic District Commission before proceeding.
- BCU does not make any representation, guaranty or warranty concerning any site conditions of properties – including the possible presence of environmentally hazardous materials.
- Land not covered by structures or parking is encouraged to be landscaped, with pedestrian walkways as needed. Potential for terraces, courtyards, atriums and other visually appealing aspects should be considered.
- Any appraisal, survey, legal, market, architectural, engineering or other costs shall be incurred by the developer.
- Plans and specifications for renovation, demolition, alteration and new construction must be submitted to and approved by BCU prior to submission to the City.
- If the awarded developer lands on a BCU-owned property, it will be required to submit a good-faith deposit, \$5,000, to be returned in full upon successful fulfillment of the agreed proposal.
- Stronger consideration may be given to proposals which factor in a family-oriented ambiance, or other dining spaces separate from the bar area that may be more suitable for similar gatherings.

Proposal Content

- Present a detailed statement identifying and explaining the project's objectives, goals and desired results. Should elements of the proposal deviate from the stated requirements, clearly identify those deviations and illustrate how they make economic sense. Applicants are encouraged to be creative.
- Include a table showing sources of project capital, including owner equity, bank financing and other related commitments – and how those funds will be used, including hard development costs, support costs, reserves, et cetera.
- Provide relevant organizational principles and references. Additional references may be requested.
- Illustrate tentative project milestones via Gantt chart or other similar means. Include cost commitments and anticipated completion dates.
- Describe economic impact of the proposal. Include anticipated number of jobs and respective wages.
- Proposals must include a business plan demonstrating the fiscal ability to complete the project and begin operations. Give a broad cost narrative. The narrative may factor in the financial award from BCU. Additional financial information may be requested.
- Business plans and financial information submitted will only be reviewed by the selection committee and remain confidential.

Submission

- Proposals must be received by COB on Friday, March 22, 2019.
- Soft copies may be sent to Adam Reid, at reid@bcunlimited.org.
- Hard copies (although not mandatory) may be sent to:

Battle Creek Unlimited
4950 W Dickman Road
Battle Creek, MI 49037
- Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

Acceptance, Supplements and Rejection

Proposals shall demonstrate the organization's capacity to satisfy the requirements and objectives herein. While they do not need to be elaborate or costly, proposals should be represented in a professional manner. Proposals may include any background information or other supporting material considered relevant by the proposer. BCU will not be limited solely to the information providing in the proposal and may utilize other resources useful in evaluating the capabilities of the proposer. Proposals must be signed by an official who is authorized to execute binding contractual commitments on behalf of the organization.

Proposals, or unsolicited amendments to proposals, received after the closing time and date will not be accepted for review. Failure to submit the proposals in the fashion described before may result in the proposal's automatic rejection. Proposals must be submitted, in complete, and with any appendices issued in response to further inquiries, as a written response.

Should it become necessary to revise any component of this RFP, provide further information necessary to adequately interpret provisions and requirements of this RFP, or respond to written inquiries concerning this RFP, and addendum to the RFP will be issued via the same means as the original. Acknowledgement of all addenda issued by BCU shall be included in each proposal.

BCU, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to cancel this RFP –in whole or part – or reject all submitted proposals when determined to be advantageous to, or in the best interest of, the City, surrounding community or BCU.

Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed and rated in accordance with weighted criteria and evaluation. The adopted method ensures reviewers will maintain consistency throughout the selection process. When assessing each proposal, there are four priority grading criteria the selection committee will weigh heaviest:

1. Financial capacity of the developer(s) to fulfill the proposal's scope
2. Experience of the business owner with respect to operating, owning and establishing one or more restaurants previously
3. Degree to which the proposed project contributes to the vibrancy downtown, or elsewhere in Battle Creek
4. Proposal's uniqueness and ability to garner public interest and support

Evaluation of submitted proposals will also include, but is not limited to, the following criteria:

- Proposal's alignment with downtown's continued redevelopment
- Redevelopment is encouraged, but not mandatory; developers may consider property rehabilitation before new construction
- Past relevant experience and qualifications of the developer
- Project and financial references
- Perceived value of the proposal's benefits
- Schedule of completion
- Financing of the proposal
- Preference will be given to those who utilize Battle Creek-area contractors and business service providers throughout the project scope

BCU appreciates and welcomes dialogue with prospective developers, early and often, throughout the evaluation and selection process. To this end, interested parties are welcome to: submit draft proposals in advance of submission deadline; exhibit project ideas and visions to the selection committee in a presentation format; arrange private tours of select properties as necessary and desired; seek continued feedback regarding proposed scope so the developer can adjust accordingly before submission deadline. Interested parties should contact Adam Reid at reid@bcunlimited.org.

Award Procedures

To be eligible for the award, the proposal must – in addition to meeting the above criteria – gain approval of the selection committee. The selection committee features a variety of officials from the community, including the City, BCU and its Board of Directors (Board), and others committed to Battle Creek’s continued redevelopment. Official notices of the award decision will be sent to each respondent upon approval from the Board.

Rights Reserved

BCU reserves the right in its sole discretion to recommend the award winner – related to this RFP – based upon the written proposal received by BCU without prior discussion or negotiation with respect to those proposals. Any award by BCU will be subject to final approval by the Board.

As part of the evaluation process, BCU reserves the right to review and approve conceptual drawings, plans and specifications for redevelopment with respect to its conformance with the goals and requirements of this RFP.

BCU reserves the right to accept or reject proposals, at its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities, and to conduct discussion with all responsible proposers, in any manner necessary, to serve the interest of the City, surrounding community and BCU.

BCU reserves the right to request additional information from any or all prospective developers, if necessary, to clarify that which is contained in the proposals. Additionally, where applicable, BCU reserves the right to withhold the property deed throughout the development process until project completion, at which point it will transfer the deed to the developer, unless deemed otherwise.

Featured Properties

Pages 10-12 are select properties; *these are not exhaustive, nor mandatory options.*

For Existing Downtown-Area Battle Creek Restauranters

This RFP – beyond giving consumers more options – is designed to enhance the climate for restaurants already established in Battle Creek, particularly in the downtown area.

Downtown development is anticipated to accelerate in the coming years. BCU values current businesses as much as new; any award resulting from this RFP is intended to complement existing eateries. However, in garnering new investment from outside Battle Creek, BCU also wishes to recognize and support existing local businesses where appropriate.

Separate from this RFP, existing Battle Creek restaurants in the downtown area are encouraged to submit their own proposals explaining business expansion or improvement plans. Proposals may include renderings, financials, potential new employment numbers or other supporting materials. Submissions should demonstrate the need and financial wherewithal to supplement any potential award dollars. Proposals may also touch on previous expansion or improvement efforts in Battle Creek, which were unrealized, and how the restaurant sees itself fitting into the community's evolving business climate and continued growth.

BCU does not commit to a specific award figure (in addition to the award advertised in this RFP), as proposals from local restaurants will be assessed on individual needs and requests. Existing restaurants' proposals are due by the COB March 22 deadline; anything submitted afterward will not be accepted.

119/121 W Michigan Ave

- 18,400 SF
- Four floors, including basement
- Built 1923



25 W Michigan Ave

- 12,845 SF (total, approx.)
- Built 1933



Retail/commercial floorplan for 25 W Michigan Ave (Heritage Tower ground floor)

