

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA



RECREATION DIVISION
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Request for Information
COMMUNITY CENTER CAFÉ OPERATIONS

Proposals Due:
Friday, March 20, 2026, before 5:00 PM
670 Shell Boulevard, Foster City

Contact for this RFI

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City of Foster City

Request for Interest (RFI) – Community Center Café Operations

The City of Foster City invites statements of interest and qualifications from experienced food service operators to manage and operate the café at the new Foster City Community Center (Community Center), anticipated to open in Fall 2026.

The City's intent is to identify a qualified private-sector food and beverage operator that can provide high-quality food and beverage service that complements Community Center programming, supports daily users and special events, enhances the visitor experience, and operates fully within the Community Center's adopted operating model and policies. The café will primarily serve walk-up customers during regular Community Center hours and may also have opportunities to support City-approved programs, meetings, rentals, and special events, subject to City policies and scheduling; such opportunities are non-exclusive and not guaranteed. The operator will have access to the café space before and after public hours for preparation, setup, and cleaning.

This RFI is intended to solicit interest and qualifications from potential operators to inform the City's selection process for café operations.

1. Purpose and Goals

The City seeks a café operator that will:

- Provide high-quality, accessible, full-service food and beverage offerings for Community Center patrons, Leo J. Ryan Park users, the broader Foster City community, visitors, on-site staff, and event attendees.
- Operate during regular Community Center hours on weekdays and weekends, with service structured to support both daily walk-up customers and peak usage periods.
- Operate efficiently within a public, multi-use facility, balancing walk-up service with opportunities to support City-approved programs, meetings, rentals, and special events; such event opportunities are non-exclusive and not guaranteed.
- Enhance the Community Center as a social and civic gathering place through welcoming design, service quality, and menu offerings.
- Coordinate with City scheduling, security, and event operations.
- Deliver a financially sustainable café operation with transparent reporting and strong customer service standards.

2. Facility Overview

The café is located in the new Foster City Community Center at 650 Shell Blvd, scheduled to open in Fall 2026. The indoor café space is approximately 690 square feet, with a back-of-house area of 128 square feet. The café is designed primarily for grab-and-go service, with limited indoor seating.

The space will be outfitted by the City with general kitchen equipment, including an ice machine, prep counters, refrigerator, freezer, sinks, and a refrigerated display case. Operators may also bring or add equipment to customize the space for their operations.

Additional seating is available outdoors overlooking the scenic Foster City Lagoon, as well as in the nearby Community Center lobby. The café is adjacent to the Senior Lounge and Early Operations space, providing convenient access for different patron groups.

Conveniently located in the heart of Leo J. Ryan Park—considered to be Foster City’s Community Hub, the new Community Center is home to classes, programs, and events—the café benefits from a high-traffic, vibrant environment. The café has separate access, secured with a key card system, and the facility is equipped with surveillance cameras. Weekday operating hours must align with the Community Center’s standard hours of 8:00 AM–8:00 PM. Standard weekend hours are Saturday 8:00 AM–5:00 PM, with the potential for the café to operate independently outside of these standard building hours, subject to City approval.

This café will serve as a welcoming spot for Community Center patrons, park visitors, and the wider Foster City community, providing a casual gathering place and complementing the Center’s programs and services.

3. Scope of Services

The selected café operator will be responsible for providing high-quality, accessible food and beverage service that meets the daily needs of Community Center users, serves the broader Foster City community and visitors, and may have opportunities to support City-approved programs and special events. The operator will manage all aspects of café operations while coordinating with City staff to ensure smooth integration with Community Center programs and events. The operator will have access to the café space before and after public hours, as approved by the City, for preparation, setup, and cleaning.

A. Food and Beverage Service

- Provide daily café service aligned with Community Center hours.
- Offer coffee, beverages, and light food options appropriate for a community recreation setting.
- Provide menu options suitable for diverse ages and dietary preferences.
- Offer grab-and-go items for program participants, families, and visitors.
- Provide optional event-support menu items for City-approved meetings, rentals, and special events, as opportunities arise. Providing this service is not required.

B. Event and Program Coordination

- The café may have opportunities to provide food and beverage service for City-approved programs, meetings, rentals, and special events.
- These opportunities supplement walk-up café service and are non-exclusive, subject to City policies, scheduling, and operational considerations.
- Selection as the café operator does not guarantee preferred or exclusive catering rights, and other approved caterers may be permitted.

- The café operator is not granted exclusive rights to provide food and beverage service in or around the Community Center or adjacent areas (e.g., Leo Ryan Park). The City may allow other approved food vendors during special events, rentals, or other activities, which are separate from the café's operations.

C. Customer Service and Communications

- Deliver consistent, high-quality customer service.
- Maintain clearly posted operating hours and signage coordinated with the Community Center.
- Collect and respond to customer feedback.

Ensure all communications and signage comply with City branding guidelines.

D. Operations and Staffing

- Maintain staffing levels appropriate to daily and event-driven demand, including access to the café before and after public hours for preparation, setup, and cleaning.
- Utilize approved access to the café space before and after public hours for preparation, setup, and cleaning.
- There may be opportunities for the café operator to utilize designated Community Center kitchen space for food preparation during approved days and times, subject to availability and City approval. Additional kitchen use outside designated hours may be available for rent.
- Train staff in food safety, customer service, and emergency procedures.
- Coordination with City staff regarding opening, closing, and special events
- Implement cash handling, point-of-sale, and inventory controls.

E. Health, Safety, and Regulatory Compliance

- Comply with all applicable County and State health and safety requirements.
- Obtain, maintain, and comply with all required permits, licenses, approvals, and certifications necessary to operate food and beverage service.
- Maintain and file all required and updated health forms with the appropriate authorities.
- Maintain food safety plans, staff certifications, and prepare for inspections.
- Follow all applicable grease management, waste disposal, and recycling practices.
- Report incidents in accordance with City procedures.
- Ensure compliance with all health requirements related to any approved use of Community Center kitchen facilities.
- If alcohol service is proposed and approved, obtain and maintain all required alcohol-related licenses and permits, comply with all applicable laws and regulations, and carry insurance coverage meeting City requirements.

F. Data Collection and Reporting

- Track sales, transaction volume, and peak-period activity.
- Monitor customer satisfaction through feedback, surveys, or other methods.

- Submit monthly reports using City-provided templates.
- Provide an annual performance summary including key metrics and improvement plans.

4. Minimum Requirements

Respondents should demonstrate sufficient experience, capacity, and qualifications to successfully operate a small café in a public community center. Meeting all criteria is preferred, but the City will consider overall qualifications and relevant experience.

- Minimum of three years operating a café, concession, or comparable food service operation.
- Experience operating in public facilities, community centers, or event-driven environments (preferred).
- Compliance history free of unresolved health or safety violations.
- Capacity to staff and manage operations during busy periods and variable demand.
- Ability to meet insurance and indemnification requirements.
- Demonstrated ability to market and promote a food and beverage operation, particularly in a community-focused, public, or event-driven setting.
- Evidence of financial and operational viability, which may include a brief business concept, summary of operating approach, or examples of sustained success at comparable locations.

5. Operating Model

The City is open to a range of operating models, including concession agreements, lease arrangements, or hybrid approaches, and encourages respondents to propose a structure that is operationally practical, financially sustainable, and aligns with Community Center policies. While models are flexible, proposals should include a minimum base rent component to ensure predictable financial contribution to the City.

Examples of possible models include, but are not limited to:

- Concession agreement with a percentage of gross revenue to the City.
- Lease or license agreement with base rent and revenue participation.
- Hybrid model combining base rent with gross revenue share above a threshold.

The operator must ensure that the proposed model is operationally practical, transparent, and consistent with public facility expectations. The proposed model should also include clear financial reporting and recordkeeping procedures to allow the City to monitor revenue, rent, and any shared earnings, ensuring transparency and accountability.

6. Pricing and Access

The City seeks an operating model that balances financial sustainability with operational practicality and alignment with Community Center policies. The operator must ensure that the proposed model is operationally practical, transparent, and consistent with public facility expectations. The proposed model

should also include clear financial reporting and recordkeeping procedures to allow the City to monitor revenue, rent, and any shared earnings, ensuring transparency and accountability.

- The café operator must obtain City approval for menu pricing and any annual adjustments.
- Pricing should be accessible to Community Center users, visitors, and the broader Foster City community, while supporting sustainable café operations.
- The City may consider proposed senior, resident, or value-oriented pricing as a positive factor during evaluation and contract negotiations, recognizing the Community Center’s role as a public-serving facility.
- Operators may offer optional resident-friendly, senior, or value-oriented promotions or discounts, subject to City approval.
- Any discounts, promotions, or special pricing must be coordinated with the City.
- While the café may have opportunities to provide food and beverage service for City-approved programs, rentals, and special events, such participation is optional and non-exclusive; other approved caterers may also be permitted.
- The café operator is not granted exclusive rights to provide food and beverage service in or around the Community Center or adjacent areas (e.g., Leo Ryan Park). The City may allow other approved food vendors during special events, rentals, or other activities, which are separate from the café’s operations.

7. Performance Standards and Indicators

The selected café operator is expected to maintain high standards for daily operations, customer service, and financial and regulatory compliance. The following key performance areas provide context for the City’s expectations under a future agreement:

- **Operations:** Hours open as scheduled; responsiveness during peak periods; effective management of optional event-support opportunities.
- **Financial:** Maintain accurate and timely reporting aligned with City templates; monitor sales performance relative to reasonable projections.
- **Customer Experience:** Strive for high customer satisfaction, measured through City-approved feedback methods.
- **Health and Safety:** Comply with all applicable County and State requirements; promptly address any issues or corrective actions.
- **Coordination:** Work collaboratively with City staff to support daily operations, programs, and special events.

Note: These standards are intended to guide the City’s expectations and potential agreement performance. Respondents are not expected to meet these metrics at the RFI stage; they provide context for the City’s priorities and desired outcomes.

8. Risk and Responsibility Matrix

The following table outlines the general allocation of responsibilities between the City and the café operator. It identifies which party is responsible for key building systems, operations, and compliance areas, and clarifies expectations for day-to-day management.

Area	City	Operator	Notes/Recommendations
Base building (roof/MEP)	✓		Standard building maintenance covered by City
Utilities baseline & metering	City baseline	Operator pays excess	Operator responsible for usage above baseline
Kitchen equipment (base fit-out)	City provides basic furnishings	✓ Maintenance and supplementation	Operator may add equipment or smallwares as needed
Janitorial inside café/outdoor seating	✓ Evening service	✓ General daily cleaning (sweeping, wiping surfaces, tidying)	Operator maintains cleanliness of the café and adjacent outdoor tables during café hours; City staff handle evening janitorial service for all city-owned spaces, including kitchen
Smallwares, consumables		✓	Operator provides all necessary items for café operations
Health permits & inspections		✓	Operator responsible for obtaining, maintaining, and complying with all required permits, licenses, approvals, and inspections
Marketing & menu communications	✓ guidelines	✓ implementation	Operator manages menu and communications while adhering to City branding and policies
Insurance & indemnification	Sets minimums	✓ Carries	Operator must maintain required insurance coverage

9. Term and Compensation

The initial agreement term is anticipated to be three (3) to five (5) years, with the option for renewal based on satisfactory performance and mutual agreement.

Compensation to the City may include base rent, a management fee, a percentage of gross revenue, or a hybrid model, with any caps or adjustments tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or other mutually agreed-upon indices. A minimum base rent component is expected to ensure predictable financial contribution to the City.

The selected operator may be required to provide a financial guarantee (such as a security deposit or letter of credit) equal to two (2) to three (3) months of estimated operating costs.

10. Submission Requirements

Respondents should provide the following information to demonstrate their experience, qualifications, and approach to operating the café:

- **Cover letter and organizational overview** – Years in operation, mission, leadership structure, and relevant café or food service experience.
- **Café concept and operating approach** – Proposed menu framework, service style, hours of operation, and approach to serving a diverse, multi-generational community.
- **Staffing plan** – Staffing levels, roles, training, and strategies for peak periods and special events.
- **Health and safety plan** – Food safety practices, certifications, emergency procedures, and compliance with County and State regulations.
- **Facility use and operations plan** – Use of kitchen and café spaces, equipment care, waste/recycling practices, and maintaining a clean, safe environment.
- **Basic financial overview** – Basic revenue and expense assumptions, pricing approach, and any proposed compensation model. Multi-year projections are not required but financial feasibility should be clear.
- **References** – one (1) to two (2) examples of comparable café, concession, or food service operations previously operated.
- **Exceptions or alternative approaches (if any)** – Any exceptions to the RFI requirements or alternative approaches, with rationale.

11. Addenda and Acknowledgment

The City may issue written addenda during the RFI process to clarify information, respond to questions, or provide updates to the scope or requirements. All addenda will be posted on the City’s website and/or distributed to registered respondents to ensure that all potential operators have access to the same information. Respondents are responsible for reviewing all addenda prior to submitting their materials and must include acknowledgment of each addendum in their response. Submissions that do not acknowledge all addenda may be considered incomplete.

12. Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be reviewed based on the overall café concept, operational readiness, financial feasibility, customer experience, and ability to maintain the café space safely and effectively.

Area	Weight	Description
Relevant Experience & References	25%	Experience operating cafés or similar food service in public facilities, community centers, or event-driven environments. Examples of past operations and references.
Café Concept & Customer Experience	25%	Quality, variety, and accessibility of menu offerings; suitability for community center patrons, visitors, and the broader community; approach to walk-up customers and optional event support (non-exclusive opportunities).
Staffing & Operations	20%	Proposed staffing plan, including roles, qualifications, training, and strategies for managing daily operations and

		peak periods; coordination with City schedules and events.
Financial Feasibility	20%	Clear, realistic assumptions for revenues and expenses; sustainable business model; proposed compensation approach and optional revenue share.
Health, Safety & Facility Care	10%	Approach to food safety, health compliance, reporting, and maintaining café space and equipment in a clean and safe condition.

12. Anticipated Schedule

The City anticipates issuing the RFI on **Wednesday, February 19, 2026**, with an optional pre-submittal meeting or site walk. Questions must be submitted by **March 2, 2026**, any addenda will be issued by **March 4, 2026**, and proposals are due by **March 20, 2026 by 5:00pm**.

Submission Format: Responses should be limited to 20 pages (excluding exhibits) and use standard, legible fonts and margins. Submissions should be provided as a PDF, and any financial or pro forma documents should also be submitted in an editable format (e.g., Excel) to allow the City to review calculations and assumptions efficiently.

Proposals can be emailed to: toren@fostercity.org or mailed to: Tiffany Oren, Recreation Manager, 670 Shell Blvd, Foster Ciy, CA 94404. If submitting by mail, please include a minimum of 3 copies.

13. Required Insurance

Respondents must provide proof of the following insurance coverages: Commercial General Liability, Professional Liability (Errors & Omissions), Abuse and Molestation Coverage, Workers’ Compensation, Auto Liability, Additional Insured Endorsements, and Waivers of Subrogation.

Coverage shall be *at least as broad as*:

1. **Commercial General Liability (CGL):** Insurance Services Office Form CG 00 01 covering CGL on an “occurrence” basis, including property damage, bodily injury and personal & advertising injury with limits no less than **\$1,000,000** per occurrence. If a general aggregate limit applies, either the general aggregate limit shall apply separately to this project/location (ISO CG 25 03 or 25 04) or the general aggregate limit shall be twice the required occurrence limit.
2. **Automobile Liability:** Insurance Services Office Form Number CA 0001 covering Code 1 (any auto), or if Instructor has no owned autos, Code 8 (hired) and 9 (non-owned), with limits no less than **\$1,000,000 per accident for** bodily injury and property damage. (**Note**– required only if auto is used in performance of work).

1. **Workers' Compensation** insurance as required by the State of California, with Statutory Limits, and Employer's Liability Insurance with limit of no less than **\$1,000,000** per accident for bodily injury or disease. (**Note** – required only if Vendors has employees).
2. **Sexual Abuse or Molestation (SAM) Liability:** If the work will include contact with minors, and the CGL policy referenced above is not endorsed to include affirmative coverage for sexual abuse or molestation, Contractor shall obtain and maintain a policy covering Sexual Abuse and Molestation with a limit no less than **\$1,000,000** per occurrence or claim.
3. The Insurance Company agrees to waive all rights of subrogation against the City of Foster City, its elected or appointed officers, officials, agents, volunteers, and employees for losses paid under the terms of any policy which arise from work performed by the Instructor for the Entity. This provision also applies to the Instructor's Workers' Compensation policy.

Certificate Holder must read: City of Foster City, Estero Municipal Improvement District, 650 Shell Blvd., Foster City, CA 94404.

Description box must read: The City of Foster City/EMID, its elected and appointed officials, employees, volunteers, and agents as Additional Insured on the General Liability policy on a primary and non-contributory basis. All Certificate Holder privileges apply only if required by written agreement between the Certificate Holder and the insured and are subject to policy terms and conditions.

14. Exhibits

The City will provide the following reference materials to support proposal development:

- Floor Plan and Room Layout
- Site Map
- Community Center Exterior Renderings

15. Interview Topics (if shortlisted)

If a respondent is shortlisted following the RFI review, the City may invite them to a brief interview to discuss topics such as:

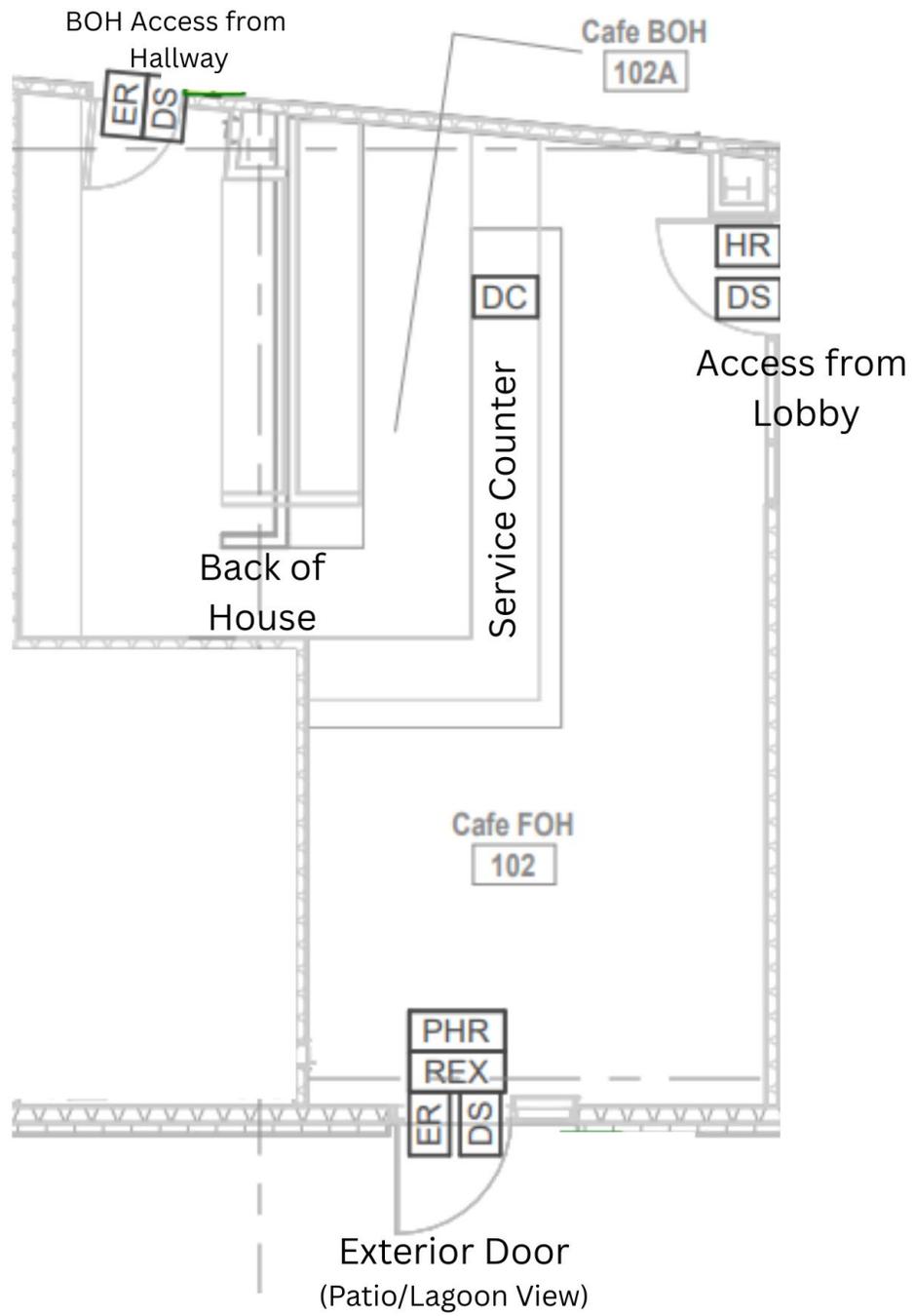
- Café concept refinement and menu strategy
- Staffing approach and management of peak-demand periods
- Coordination of service for City-approved events, rentals, and any limitations
- Financial assumptions, operating model, and risk allocation
- Requested City support, infrastructure needs, or access to facilities

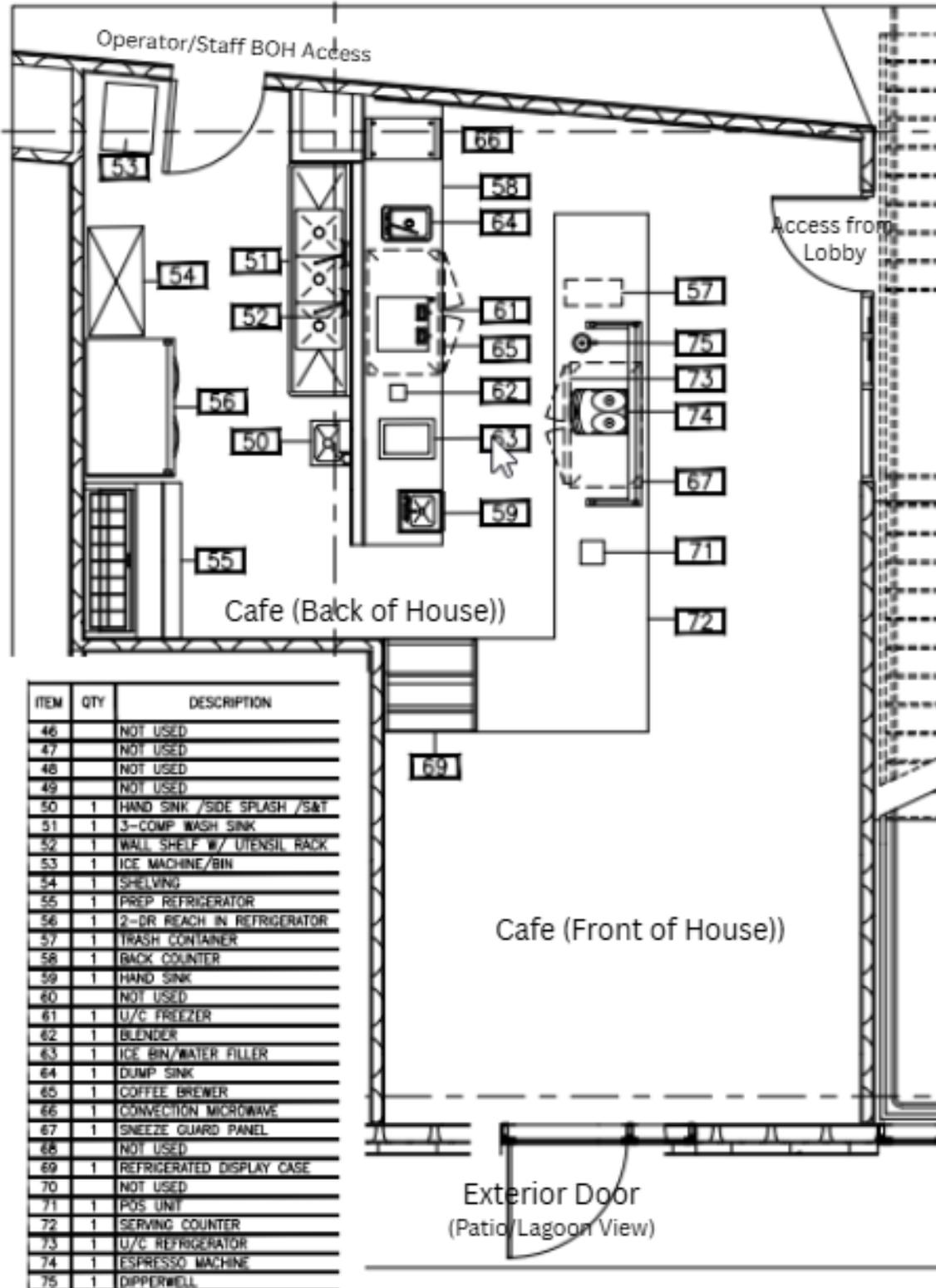
Interviews are informational and will not constitute a commitment to award a contract.

Short RFI Notice Text

Foster City invites experienced food service operators to express interest in operating the café at the new Foster City Community Center. The City is seeking high-quality, community-oriented food service that enhances daily use and special events while operating sustainably within a public facility. Respondents should provide their qualifications and a proposed operating approach consistent with this RFI. Depending on the responses received, the City may issue a future Request for Proposals (RFP).

EXHIBIT A
COMMUNITY CENTER CAFÉ OPERATIONS FLOOR PLAN AND LAYOUT





ITEM	QTY	DESCRIPTION
46		NOT USED
47		NOT USED
48		NOT USED
49		NOT USED
50	1	HAND SINK /SIDE SPLASH /S&T
51	1	3-COMP WASH SINK
52	1	WALL SHELF W/ UTENSIL RACK
53	1	ICE MACHINE/BIN
54	1	SHELVING
55	1	PREP REFRIGERATOR
56	1	2-DR REACH IN REFRIGERATOR
57	1	TRASH CONTAINER
58	1	BACK COUNTER
59	1	HAND SINK
60		NOT USED
61	1	U/C FREEZER
62	1	BLENDER
63	1	ICE BIN/WATER FILLER
64	1	DUMP SINK
65	1	COFFEE BREWER
66	1	CONVECTION MICROWAVE
67	1	SNEEZE GUARD PANEL
68		NOT USED
69	1	REFRIGERATED DISPLAY CASE
70		NOT USED
71	1	POS UNIT
72	1	SERVING COUNTER
73	1	U/C REFRIGERATOR
74	1	ESPRESSO MACHINE
75	1	DIPPERWELL

EXHIBIT B
FOSTER CITY COMMUNITY CENTER SITE PLAN

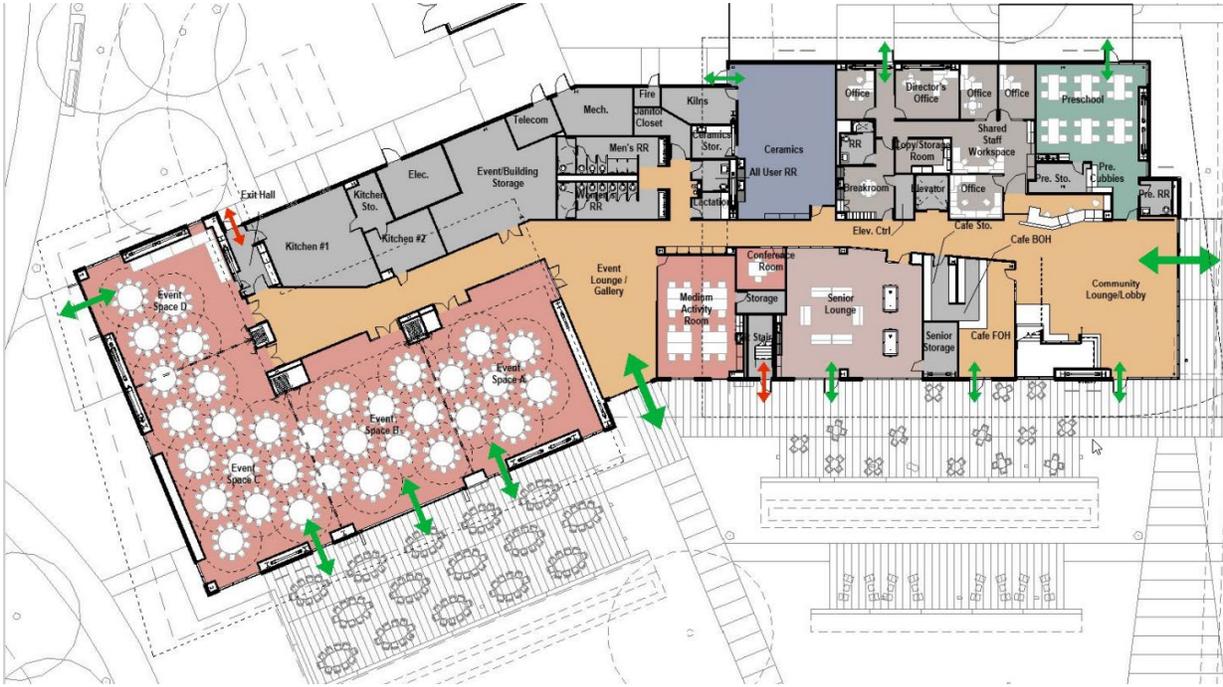
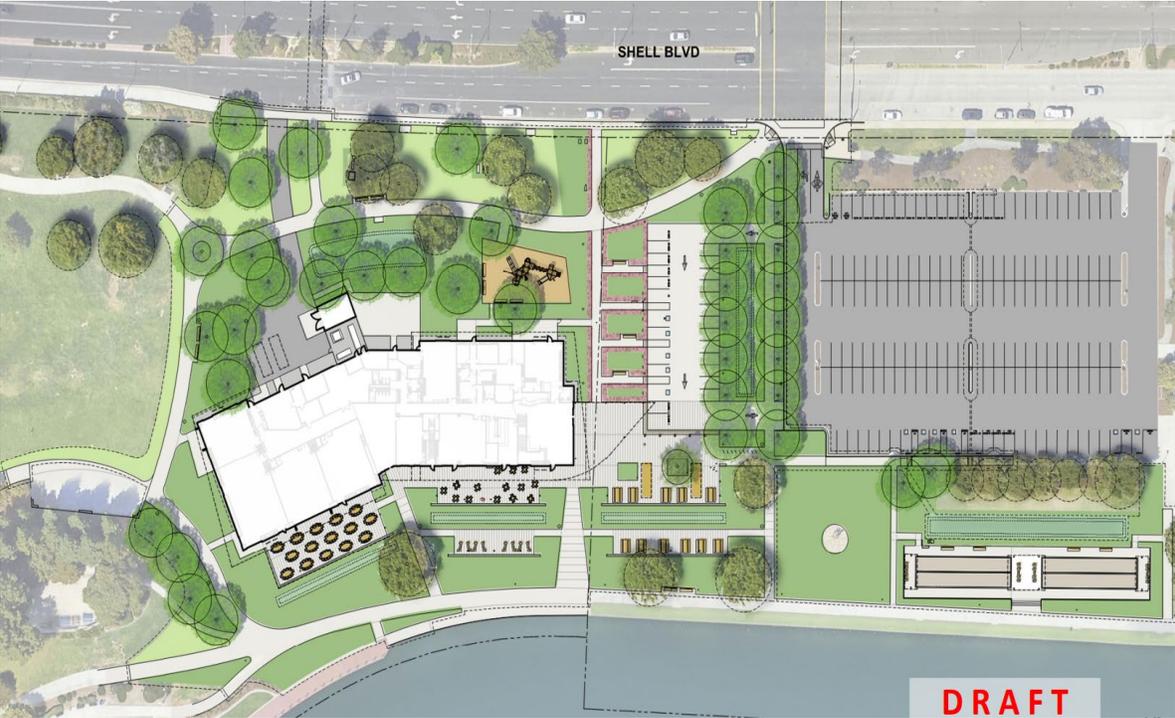


EXHIBIT C
FOSTER CITY COMMUNITY CENTER EXTERIOR RENDERINGS

