

RFP for eats on plazas

Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership eyes food options

BY LISA FICKENSCHER

THE PEDESTRIAN PLAZAS sprouting in the city may soon compete with neighborhood restaurants for consumers' dining dollars.

Last week, the Flatiron/23rd Street Partnership put out a request for proposals for two food or beverage kiosks to be installed in the public plazas adjacent to and across from the landmark Flatiron Building.

Tim Tompkins, president of the Times Square Alliance, says he plans to follow suit and issue an RFP later this summer that may include food options. Last month, the Alliance collected proposals from businesses responding to its requests for "expression of interest"—a call for businesses to submit a variety of ideas for setting up shop in its pedestrian plazas.

Culinary ideas only for 23rd Street

THE 23RD STREET business-improvement district is just looking for culinary ideas.

"We think there will be a lot of interest from within the neighborhood," says the partnership's executive director, Jennifer Brown, "though it's not exclusive to [businesses] in the neighborhood."

One restaurant that has been very successful in public parks is celebrity chef Tom Colicchio's 'wichcraft sandwich shop.

"I'm obviously interested in the RFP," says 'wichcraft partner Jeffrey Zurofsky, who installed kiosks five years ago in Bryant Park and more recently in Herald Square and Greeley Square parks. Revenues at the four Bryant Park 'wichcraft kiosks have grown 25% over each of the past two years, says Mr. Zurofsky.

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25%

'WICHCRAFT kiosks' year-over-year sales growth in Bryant Park

The 23rd St. Partnership is looking for a tenant for four years—the length of its commitment from the city for the pedestrian plazas. But it will not be able to offer electricity or running water at the location.

"We are not looking to build a Shake Shack," says Ms. Brown. Of course, restaurateur Danny Meyer's popular burger stand is just a stone's throw away in Madison Square Park.

The RFPs are due in mid-July, and Ms. Brown hopes an operator can move in by the fall. The Flatiron public plazas opened in August 2008, and the city has not declared them permanent fixtures like the Times Square and Herald Square plazas. ■