



Jones Lang LaSalle Americas, Inc.
Grand Central Terminal
25 Vanderbilt Avenue, Hall 3A New York New
York 10017 tel +1 212 340 2345

Jones Lang LaSalle

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Request for Proposal (RFP): Grand Central Terminal Official Tours

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INTRODUCTION

Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL/JLL Americas) is the retail property manager for Grand Central Terminal (GCT) on behalf of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and Metro-North Railroad (Metro-North).

JLL's responsibilities include property management, public relations, and events to ensure GCT remains a popular destination for New Yorkers, commuters, and tourists alike.

JLL and the MTA are offering a license agreement to qualified firms to conduct and operate all official GCT tour operations.

About Grand Central Terminal

GCT was fully restored to its 1913 splendor in 1998, becoming an early pioneer of incorporating significant retail and dining offers within a major transit hub. Today GCT is home to over sixty world-class retailers including Apple, Warby Parker, Banana Republic and Tumi.

GCT's tenant roster includes multiple dining options which are anchored by New York City icon, The Oyster Bar. The lower level Dining Concourse features fast-casual choices include Shake Shack, Magnolia Bakery, and Zaro's Family Bakery.

For over twenty years, the Grand Central Market has become a mainstay for locals, commuters, and tourists alike, offering fresh produce, seafood, baked goods, prepared meals, flowers, and much more. The 13 outlets represent the best of New York City family food businesses including Eli Zabar, Murray's Cheese, Li-Lac Chocolates, Pescatore Seafood Co., and Dishes.

Covid-19 has, for the present, impacted both Metro-North ridership, tourism, and overall foot traffic in GCT. This has affected our retail and food tenants, and as of this writing, 43 of 97 tenants have returned and more are expected as restrictions continue to ease. Covid-related vacancies are currently being marketed to restore full occupancy. In normal times, GCT welcomes hundreds of thousands of daily visitors from around the world. It is one of the world's largest and busiest train terminals, one of New York City's most-visited tourist destinations, and an instantly recognizable landmark, held dear in the hearts of many New Yorkers.

GRANT OF LICENSE

The Licensee selected as part of this RFP will conduct all official Grand Central tour operations, to feature two types of Official tours and a potential third option –

Required:

- Self-guided Audio Tours
- Guided Tours – Tour Guide Led (This may be a sub-contractor that the Licensee chooses to hire)

Optional:

- Guided GCT Food Tour – Tour Guide Led (This is not required in your proposal, but we would like to see it if possible)

The Licensee, as sole proprietor or as a joint venture with another operation, shall organize, operate and maintain a self-guided audio walking tour and provide the entire infrastructure for a guided tour program. This will include administrative and support staff, equipment (including all the necessary software and hardware), and marketing and pricing programs, which collectively are required to run the program.

Please note other *unofficial* tours pass through GCT given it is a public space, these include the Grand Central Partnership free [tours](#) on Fridays. These tours are not officially sanctioned by Metro-North.

Licensee Responsibilities:

Official Self-guided Audio Tours

- Research and write 45 – 60-minute audio tour script. Themes should include, but not be limited to: GCT history, architecture, preservation, transportation, and retail/dining.
- The audio tour should be available in a minimum of nine (9) languages: English, Spanish, French, German, Brazilian Portuguese, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, and Korean.
- Post-production editing and polishing
- Research, procure, own and manage the audio tour technology for customer hire.
- Direct listeners to approximately 10-12 points in GCT and offer historical facts, points on architecture, unusual characteristics, etc., including an attached map of all locations. Tour should allow for interruption of the program, out of sequence programming, and the possible addition of special remarks regarding specific aspects of the Terminal and special or promotional events. All proposed stops are subject to Metro-North's prior approval.
- Design and print tour maps and collateral to promote and support the audio tour experience.
- Provide mobile device technology (e.g. an app) to enable the audio tour to be purchased and downloaded to personal portable devices.
- Minimum daily on-site audio tour hours: 9am-6pm, seven (7) days per week.

- All tours must conclude at the New York Transit Museum Gallery Annex & Gift Shop, or another location determined by the MTA.
- The Licensee will distribute GCT retail collateral including but not limited to, special offer books, terminal maps, and event promotional materials, with the objective of enticing customers to continue to shop and dine after the tour.
- The Licensee shall procure and provide all necessary equipment for the duration of the license term and shall specify the equipment to be used, such as type, quantity, etc.
- The Licensee must provide substitute equipment whenever it becomes unavailable due to loss, damage, etc.
- The Licensee shall be fully responsible for the safe and efficient maintenance of all equipment. Equipment shall remain in excellent operating condition. Maintenance will include, but not be limited to, cleaning/disinfecting, all labor, major/minor repairs, etc. Specify the frequency of maintenance and how the equipment will be maintained and cleaned (in-house or outside handling), as well as security arrangements for the return of the equipment.
- Uniformed personnel. Metro-North reserves final approval of the uniform apparel and wearing guidelines.
- Any sponsorship / partnership arrangements secured by the licensee will be subject to approval.
- Metro-North, The MTA, JLL, etc shall be indemnified and held harmless for said operation or any related incident or injury. In the event Metro-North requires relocation of all or part of program installation, it must be done at Licensee's sole expense. Licensee shall provide evidence of adequate insurances required by Metro-North.
- Metro-North reserves the right to suspend audio tour operations when necessary in case of emergency. The Licensee will be subject to the Rules and Regulations Governing the Conduct and Safety of the Public in the Use of Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company Terminals, Stations and Trains.

Official Guided Tours –Tour Guide Led

- Research and write script for guided tour. Themes should include, but not be limited to: GCT history, architecture, preservation, transportation, and retail/dining. Script must be approved by Metro-North and MTA.
- Research, procure, and provide guided audio technology for customer hire to enable them to hear the tour guide over the ambient sounds of a busy transit hub.
- Design and print tour maps and collateral to promote and support the guided tour experience.
- Hire, train, and manage all tour guides, including their schedules
- Tour guides must be carefully vetted and trained; a New York City Department of Consumer Affairs license is preferred but not mandatory
- Provide uniformed personnel to reflect the historic environment

- Minimum one (1) guided tour per day, at a minimum of seven (7) tours per week.
- All tours must conclude at the New York Transit Museum Gallery Annex & Gift Shop, or another location determined by GCT.
- The Licensee operator will distribute GCT retail collateral including but not limited to, special offer books, terminal maps, and event promotional materials, with the objective of enticing customers to continue to shop and dine after the tour.
- If the guided tours are to be sub-contracted with another operator, provide all pertinent details including but not limited to:
 - Operator's name
 - 3 references

Official Grand Central Terminal Food Tour – Tour Guide Led

Currently, GCT does not provide a guided food tour; however, we invite proposals for the introduction of such a tour to encourage dining within GCT. The inclusion of a food tour within your proposal is optional, not required.

When fully occupied, GCT features exceptional dining and food retail, many of which are local businesses, all under one roof. From the colorful, diverse, and fresh ingredients available at Grand Central Market to the iconic Oyster Bar and The Campbell Bar, to the wide variety of fast-causal choices in the Dining Concourse, GCT is a foodie destination for all tastes and price points.

Given GCT's dining choices have been typically far more diverse than people realize, we seek to introduce a food tour to both help promote and publicize the choices available-- and to attract new visitors. As the MTA re-leases some of its dining locations, it seeks the following:

- Develop a guided food tour, to sell both as a standalone tour and as an upsell from the official guided tour and self-guided tours.
- Food tours should include but not be limited to must-see GCT historic/architectural features and stops at dining choices and the Grand Central Market to taste, sample, and purchase food and drink products.
- The Licensee will negotiate taste pricing and tour schedules directly with Grand Central Market, restaurant, and Dining Concourse tenants (tenant introductions will be made by JLL).
- The Licensee will distribute GCT retail collateral including but not limited to special offer books, terminal maps, and event promotional materials, with the objective of enticing customers to continue to shop and dine after the tour.
- A minimum of three (3) tours per week with a suggested maximum tour size of eight (8) people in order to not restrict regular customer traffic in tight locations like GC Market

LICENSE TERM

- This will be a five (5) year license with one three (3) year extension option.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

1. Terms to be Placed in the License

a. In addition to other terms in the License, the following will be codified in the License.

- Final tour script content and timing for both audio and guided tours
- Final tour locations (public areas only)
- Final tour collaterals and maps
- Maximum tour group size (25) for guided tour groups
- Ticket prices for self-guided audio tours, guided tours led by tour guide, food tours led by tour guide. Ticket pricing options should include discounted pricing for seniors, veterans, students, children (age to be defined), and MTA/Metro-North riders

2. Materials to be Provide to the Licensee

JLL and the MTA will provide the following for use in printed collateral material and digital assets.

- GCT images
- GCT logos and wordmarks
- GCT map artwork

3. Current Tour Operations

Since GCT's Centennial in 2013, [Grand Central tours](#) have been operated by two agencies.

- [Orpheo](#) manages the audio tour and the Main Concourse tours window, including ticketing and audio equipment for the guided tours (this license is the subject of this RFP).
- In conjunction with Orpheo, [Municipal Art Society](#) provides the docents and coordination for the daily 75-minute, 12:30pm guided tour. The tours are very well reviewed on [Tripadvisor](#).

Current pricing for the above-mentioned tours:

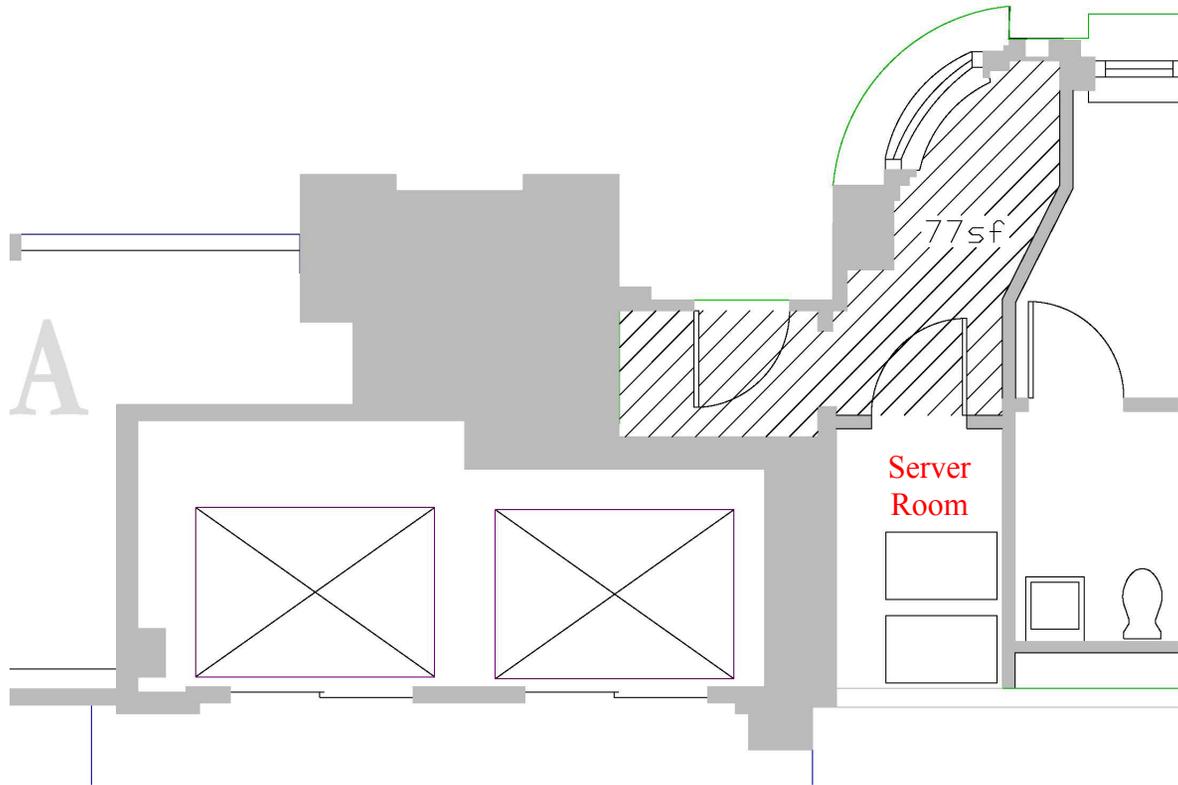
- **Orpheo Audio tour:** \$12: adults \$11: students, \$10: children and seniors.
- **Municipal Art Society Guided tour:** \$30 per adult, \$20: seniors, students, children under 10, members of the military, Metro-North riders bearing same-day ticket stubs, and Municipal Art Society Members

4. Physical Space Available for Tour Operations

The western-most ticket window across from Track 30 in GCT's Main Concourse is designated for tour operations. The space is 77 square feet, the layout is indicated by the drawing below.

All alterations to the space must be approved in advance by JLL and MTA/Metro-North

Note: Metro-North will need periodic access to the server room behind the space.



A walkthrough of the space can be arranged by contacting ryan.kelleher@am.jll.com.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION & DEADLINE

The following information must be included in your proposal:

- Company background, explaining relevant experience with tour operations*
- Business plan for Grand Central tour operations including ticket pricing
- Proposed annual compensation to MTA/Metro-North over the term of the License
- Timeline for planning and implementation
- Customer service plan – description of technologies for customer access, back office support and operation system.
- Previous client list and 3 references*
- Information about other tours you currently operate*
- Marketing plan for GCT tours
- Sample marketing materials from your other tours
- Proposed training/vetting plan for tour guides
- Proposed layout for space shown above
- Any improvements contemplated to the physical space identified in Section 4
 - Specify cost of an improvement
 - Specify physical and technological enhancements
 - Identify signage

*Information also required for any sub-contractors or joint ventures

Three (3) copies of your proposal should be submitted in one (1) **sealed** package on or before June 1, 2021 at 5PM, to

Dorit Phinizy
JLL
25 Vanderbilt Avenue, Hall 2A
New York, NY 10017

The package should be clearly marked “GCT Tours RFP”.

Questions or requests for clarifications of this RFP should be submitted in writing only, to Dorit Phinizy, JLL – Dorit.Phinizy@am.jll.com

Please note that in order to maintain a fair and transparent RFP process all written questions and answers will be anonymously shared with all other interested parties.

Proposal Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by the MTA and JLL shortly after the submission deadline. Shortlisted bidders will be invited for a more detailed discussion about their proposals and an opportunity to ask additional questions. The successful proposer will be selected by the end of the second quarter of 2021. A license agreement will be issued thereafter and the selected proposers implementation plan will be part of the license.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this RFP and without any liability to any prospective Licensee, MTA reserves the unilateral right to postpone submission deadlines, reject any and all proposals, negotiate with one or more prospective Licensee, seek additional input, including best and final offers, from one or more prospective Licensees (but not necessarily all prospective Licensees), waive any requirement of this RFP, and modify or withdraw this RFP in respect of any or all spaces specified herein.

Selection Criteria

1. The anticipated direct economic benefit of a proposal to the MTA.
2. The overall experience of the established tour company, including the guided tour operator.
3. The quality of proposal and the program offered.