

# THE TOWNSHIP OF ROBBINSVILLE

MERCER COUNTY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1 Washington Boulevard, 2nd Floor, Suite 6

Robbinsville, New Jersey 08691

Telephone (609)918-0002 Fax (609)918-1442

**Mayor**

David Fried

**Township Administrator**

Mary K. Caffrey

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## TOWNSHIP OF ROBBINSVILLE

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND QUALIFICATIONS ECONOMIC DEVELOPING BRANDING & MARKETING PROGRAM

SPRING 2008

#### I. BACKGROUND

In November 2007, voters overwhelmingly approved changing the name of the former Washington Township, Mercer County, to the Township of Robbinsville. An important aspect of this change is to allow the Township to distinguish itself not only from the other “Washingtons” in New Jersey, but also from other economic centers in the Greater Mercer County area. Robbinsville’s increasingly strong demographics have propelled economic growth in nearby Hamilton Township and East Windsor, and Township leaders feel strongly that it is long past time for residents to see the benefit of their purchasing power locally, rather than having to drive long distances for goods and services.

In the past three years, since a charter change brought in a new form of government, the Township has revisited its Master Plan, its Planning Board processes, and has pushed to resolve issues constraining the final stages of Town Center along Route 33. In the past six months, the Township has worked to adopt a new zoning ordinance for Route 130 consistent with the Master Plan update and the Mercer Regional Chamber’s Route 130 “Vision Team” project. With a new name and new planning tools in place, Robbinsville is poised for economic growth; it needs a cohesive marketing plan to draw together its various elements and harness the strengths of individual businesses.

The Robbinsville Economic Development Advisory Committee has invested considerable time in identifying those stakeholders who should take part in the development of a marketing campaign. Fruits of EDAC’s efforts will be available to the vendor throughout this process.

A marketing plan would seek to achieve several goals:

- Increase the number of businesses in Robbinsville
- Improve the vitality of existing businesses
- Raise the identity of Robbinsville as a good place to work, shop, dine and visit
- Offer smaller businesses opportunities for joint marketing initiatives

A successful RFP should address all four goals.

## II. Scope of Services Required

Robbinsville Township, led by its Economic Development Advisory Committee, is seeking proposals and a statement of qualifications from interested vendors to provide the development of a “brand” and marketing plan with an economic growth focus, either directly or on a subcontracted basis on or about May 15, 2008.

The term of the contract may be for one (1) or two (2) years, depending on the needs and abilities of the parties. The initial development of a Robbinsville brand is the most significant part of this project, and is the central focus of the EDAC. The future scope of the contract will depend, in part, on the Township’s ability to identify recurring revenue sources to support economic development efforts; any concepts the vendor suggests to support ongoing marketing efforts through public-private partnerships should be explored in a proposal.

Deliverable elements will be:

- **Robbinsville Logo:** Should be suitable not only for economic development but also for general township use on letterhead, the existing Web site, and possible use/adaptation on uniform patches for police/fire/public works. **Concept to be unveiled at Community Day, June 14, 2008**, although all use guides/separations are not expected on that date.
- **Marketing Plan:** Will include elements to be performed by the vendor over the next six to 12 months, as well as those by administrative staff, the EDAC, elected officials, the staff Economic Development Coordinator, the Robbinsville Chapter of the Mercer Chamber, etc.
- **Sample brochures/marketing materials/displays.** Robbinsville anticipates working with the vendor to develop a printing budget and schedule that will allow local businesses to help underwrite printing costs in exchange for featuring their logo/advertisement on the brochure. Marketing plan should reflect this concept.

Interested vendors will be required to provide these services. Optional services that the Township wishes to explore, and can be addressed in the proposal, are: gateway signage/branding, special events, and planning, coordination and execution of a public-private marketing partnership with local businesses.

It is the intent of the Township to continue a marketing campaign, if a long-term funding source can be identified.

### **III. Assignment and Budget**

The selected vendor will be awarded a contract for the balance of 2008 not to exceed \$25,000 for at least all three deliverable elements listed above. Ability to deliver elements beyond those listed will be considered by the committee in evaluating proposals. Vendors should envision a marketing plan that leverages public and private entities via matching funds, fund-raising or in-kind services. Further, vendors will be asked, when possible, to utilize local resources in order to maintain a presence in Robbinsville.

### **IV. Process**

All interested parties are requested to provide a detailed written proposal indicating how the deliverable items would be provided and the associated costs. Please include a comprehensive description where dollars will be invested. Any media recommendations should include an explanation of how they fit into an overall plan.

All proposals should express how they would provide the deliverables as outlined, and how those deliverables would fit into a longer-term strategy, should funds for an ongoing campaign be identified.

Members of the EDAC, along with the Township Administrator and the Economic Development Coordinator, will evaluate proposals according to competitive criteria, with cost, vendor experience, quality, creativity, references, and ability to set Robbinsville apart considered. All proposals must include the qualifications of the primary point of contact who would handle the account. Information from prior campaigns is encouraged.

Please submit one original and six copies of your proposal and the attached questionnaire, either in person or postmarked to Mary Caffrey, Township Administrator, Township of Robbinsville, 1 Washington Blvd., Suite 6, Robbinsville, N.J. 08691, no later than 5 p.m. (EST) Wednesday, April 30, 2008. Proposals will be evaluated by the Economic Development Advisory Committee during its meeting in the first week of May.

All proposals must include forms showing the vendor's ability to comply with state and local "pay-to-play" laws. Forms are available from the Robbinsville Municipal Clerk. Proposals that do not include these forms will be automatically disqualified.

Any questions about the requirements can be directed to Ms. Caffrey at (609) 918-0002, x. 102, or by email at [maryc@robbinsville-twp.org](mailto:maryc@robbinsville-twp.org).

## **V. Conditions Governing Proposals**

Robbinsville Township is not responsible for any proposals that are lost, wrongly addressed, misdirected or otherwise undeliverable. Only those firms that address all four goals and plans for meeting all three deliverables will be considered. No incomplete proposals will be considered.

All applicants should complete the attached questionnaire and submit with their proposals.

The Township reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, to waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received (after notification and concurrence with the affected vendor), and to negotiate with any and all vendors submitting proposals meeting the requirements.

Robbinsville is not responsible for any costs incurred in preparing submissions of responses to this RFP.

By submitting a proposal, a vendor agrees that it will not make any claims for or have any right to damages because of any misrepresentation or lack of information.

All materials, proposals and contents submitted during the review process will become the property of the Township of Robbinsville except in cases mutually agreed upon by the parties.