

City of Bridgeton, New Jersey



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

FOR

**DOWNTOWN CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**City of Bridgeton
Office of Development & Planning
181 East Commerce Street
Bridgeton NJ, 08302
(856) 451-3407
John L. Barry III, Director**

Public Notice

City of Bridgeton

INVITATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Request for Proposals

The City of Bridgeton hereby solicits proposals to hire a consultant team to conduct the necessary studies and analysis and prepare a Redevelopment Plan for the Downtown Central Business District (CBD).

To secure a complete copy of the Request for Proposal (RFP) package, please call the City of Bridgeton, Office of Development & Planning (856) 451-3407, or obtain a copy of the RFP package at 50 E. Broad St, Bridgeton NJ 08302, Monday-Friday 8:30AM-4:30PM, or visit the www.cityofbridgeton.com . All completed proposals should be mailed to Mr. John L. Barry III, Director of Development & Planning, 181 East Commerce Street, Bridgeton, NJ 08302

Persons with disabilities may request a reasonable accommodation by contacting the Office of Development & Planning at (856) 451-3407. Please make all requests as early as possible so as to allow time to arrange the accommodation.

The City of Bridgeton must receive proposals no later than 4:00PM EST on Friday, December 5, 2008. Faxed or electronically sent proposals will not be accepted. Failure of the proposer to submit a complete proposal may result in the rejection of the proposal. All proposals should be identified as **“Proposal-City of Bridgeton Central Business District Redevelopment Plan.”**

The City of Bridgeton is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Request for Proposals Downtown Redevelopment Plan

The City of Bridgeton is seeking a highly qualified consultant team to conduct the necessary studies/analysis and prepare a Redevelopment Plan for the Downtown Central Business District (CBD). The CBD Redevelopment Plan provides the foundation for revitalization of the downtown as it relates to eliminating deleterious conditions to commercial and retail development.

BACKGROUND

The Downtown Central Business District is comprised of a series of blocks, bordered by the Cohansey River to the west, Blocks 81, 83 and 87 off of Washington St to the north, E. Broad St to the south and Bank St to the east.

On August 7, 2000, the City Council of the City of Bridgeton adopted Resolution No.39-00 declaring the area delineated above as an area in need of redevelopment pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5., and further directs that a redevelopment plan for the Central Business District be put forth for consideration and adoption.

Since this declaration was first made, fires and other changes to the downtown have taken place, altering the landscape and changing the business climate. These occurrences necessarily changed what was possible at the time, as well as the thinking and planning of those charged with the task of creating a Redevelopment Plan.

With this in mind, and realizing that revitalization, rehabilitation, expansion, providing for infill construction and in some cases reclaiming the affected portions of the downtown CBD, could stimulate private investment, create jobs and rejuvenate the downtown, the City of Bridgeton determined that it is necessary to prepare a Central Business District Redevelopment Plan and maximize our potential.

The support and impetus for this redevelopment initiative is grounded in the belief that the Downtown Central Business District, in the heart of the Urban Enterprise Zone, is vital to health and growth of the entire community.

The Central Business District (CBD) has been the subject of several planning studies. The CBD was a vibrant center for the city in the first half of the twentieth century. Many business owners or managers lived above their stores, which created a constant presence. Bridgeton was a market center for western Cumberland County as well as a small processing center for agricultural products. With the decline of manufacturing and the diversion of retail to highway corridors and shopping malls in the second half of the twentieth century, the CBD has experienced decline. Bridgeton City has made an effort to beautify the downtown since the 1980's, with the installation of brick sidewalks, benches, lampposts, and a riverfront promenade.

The Main Street program works to revitalize the downtown through a four point approach: design, promotion, economic restructuring, and organization. The downtown is part of the Urban Enterprise Zone, which allows it to charge half of the current rate of sales tax for the state in order to encourage business.

Recreation programs provide events that attract visitors and residents to the downtown, including festivals and concerts. The Bridgeton Farmer's Market open on Fridays from June to September, also attracts consumers to the downtown. Obstacles to the successful revitalization of the CBD include the local unemployment rate, store vacancies, destruction of buildings by fire and neglect, outdated features, and high insurance rates. The competition from nearby shopping centers and malls along with the lack of variety of stores also negatively affect the success of the downtown.

The Central Business District was first targeted for rehabilitation in the Riverfront Urban Design Plan. The plan proposed historic renovations to downtown businesses, including both the front and rear facades. Renovating the rear facades and the creation of rear entrances into the Riverfront parking lot connects the businesses with the riverfront promenade while creating a more attractive setting for the riverfront area. The creation of a boat launch site and new restaurant on the river would help to increase recreational opportunities and tourism in the CBD. The riverfront promenade would help to connect the City Park and Zoo to the CBD. The plaza at Commerce Street and the Cohansey River includes a fountain and seating areas. The plan suggested the use of second and third floors for residential use to provide a captive market for the downtown shops and services. All of these improvements to the riverfront complement the Central Business District. The designation from the State of New Jersey of Bridgeton as a Regional Center is an asset to the efforts to revitalize the CBD.

The CBD is the focal point for City revitalization efforts. The City's Department of Community Development and Planning wishes to create an entertainment district drawing its market from neighboring municipalities as well as the tourists and travelers to the southern New Jersey Coast and attractions in Millville and Vineland. This strategy is intended to capitalize upon the ethnic diversity of Bridgeton, the support of the Rutgers Food Innovation Center, and its location along well traveled routes. The strategy will differentiate the City from other locations in the region. Development of hotels will complement this strategy and give the City an additional advantage in securing the tourist market. The successful development of the proposed culinary school will buttress the restaurant/entertainment strategy and build upon the presence of the Rutgers facility.

THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION: SCOPE OF WORK

The following listing of objectives will highlight the primary tasks anticipated for this project. The actual order of the tasks may vary for the selected consultant(s). Some tasks may be completed concurrently.

TASK 1: VISIONING AND OVERALL STRATEGY

The selected consultant(s) will familiarize themselves with the issues faced by CBD merchants and the shopping public. The consultant(s) shall formulate project goals, objectives, strategies, and an overarching vision that helps guide the successful completion and implementation of the project. This task can be addressed by the collection of existing information, community surveys, public meetings and other related methods. The consultant(s) shall provide recommendations and strategies, via a completed Redevelopment Plan, for the CBD with a detailed timeline.

TASK 2: LAND USE, BUILDING, AND VACANT LOT USE

The consultant(s) shall inventory, analyze, and compare existing general planning efforts, existing land use, and use of commercial buildings in the CBD to determine potential opportunities and constraints for future redevelopment and preservation in the CBD.

Vacant land strategies need to have an actionable and achievable plan for infill construction and development. This element shall address commercial and any residential land uses within the CBD. In addressing the highest and best use of the CBD a strategy shall be created that establishes a sense of place and what type of businesses are needed to create a retail destination. This strategy shall build upon existing synergies with existing businesses in the area.

TASK 3: HISTORIC PRESERVATION

All of the existing buildings in the CBD are located in the Historic District. A reuse and preservation strategy needs to be developed to ensure that the historic buildings remain commercially viable and historically preserved, as well as lowering the vacancy rate. The Consultant(s) shall analyze historic preservation and offer new visions, goals, and objectives that shall help enhance the CBD aspect of the Historic District. Cultural tourism shall be considered as it relates to enhancing commercial aspects of the CBD.

TASK 4: INFRASTRUCTURE

Consultant(s) shall do an assessment of existing infrastructure and a detailed assessment of what, if any, additional infrastructure is needed to achieve the vision of the Downtown CBD Redevelopment Plan.

TASK 5: STREETSCAPE

Consultant(s) shall consider existing streetscapes and make recommendations for additional streetscape elements congruent with the historic vernacular of the buildings and the commercial nature of the CBD

TASK 6: PARKING

The consultant(s) shall inventory and analyze the existing parking in the CBD as it relates to traffic and the overall vitality to businesses. Additionally, a long range parking strategy shall be developed to ensure that parking does not become an impediment to business growth within the CBD or otherwise use space that is better suited for commercial development within the CBD.

TASK 7: ECONOMIC BASE INDICATORS AND ANALYSIS

The consultant(s) shall survey the current economic conditions of the CBD. This shall include but is not limited to: demographics, socio-economic status, income, number of vacant buildings, a listing of existing businesses, commercial property owners. Secondary

sources can and should be consulted to obtain this data. Where information is deemed unreliable or outdated, it could be necessary for original research to be conducted.

TASK 8: INCENTIVES

The consultant(s) shall evaluate the current structure of incentives that are in place and make recommendations generated to enhance the project area. These recommendations should be generated by best practices of municipalities both regionally and nationally.

TASK 9: IMPLEMENTATION

The consultant(s) shall recommend a process to be used to evaluate the successful implementation of the plan. This element shall also contain a description of how recommendations will be financed and the process to be used. An estimated budget shall accompany each part of the plan, including all hard and soft costs. This element shall also assess public and private investment, grant opportunities, and other funding sources. This element shall also provide a realistic timeline for all aspects of implementation.

RELATED TASKS

Other aspects to be addressed by the Consultant(s) include any residential element as it affects commercial activity in the CBD, specifically a Downtown/Upstairs living component.

PROJECT BUDGET:

The maximum budget available to complete the necessary study/analysis and the resulting CBD Redevelopment Plan is \$50,000. This budget amount shall include all indirect or soft project costs. Because the source of project funding is the Urban Enterprise Zone Authority, consultant(s) must submit Business Certification Registrations which will be forwarded to the Urban Enterprise Zone Authority along with a fully executed contract/agreement.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE:

1. October 1, 2008 Issue RFP
2. November 1, 2008 questions on RFP in writing and notice of intent to submit
Proposals due
3. December 1, 2008 Responses due to City from interested consultant(s)
4. December 20, 2008 Consultant(s) selected
5. January 15 fully executed contract/agreement to be signed.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. Firms responding to this RFP must provide detailed information that demonstrates their organizational ability to undertake the project described herein.
2. Each proposal should include examples of similar projects completed by the Consultant(s)

3. The proposal must address such details as what services will be offered, program and pricing information.
4. During the evaluation of the proposals, the City reserves the right to request additional information from proposers.

CONDITIONS:

- Notwithstanding any other provision of this RFP, proposers are hereby advised that this RFP is a solicitation of proposals only and is not to be construed as an offer to enter into any contract or agreement. Thus, the City reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all proposals for any reason.
- The City shall have the unconditional and unqualified right to withdraw, cancel, or amend this RFP at any time. Proposers shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and furnishing of responses to this RFP. The City, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to determine whether any proposer meets the minimum qualification standards, to determine if a proposal is responsive, and select a proposal which best serves its objectives.
- All proposals shall be firm for 275 days following the date the date of submission of proposal.
- A proposal which contains conditions or limitations set up by the proposer may be deemed irregular and subsequently rejected by the City.
- False, incomplete, or unresponsive statements in the proposal response may be cause for its rejection. The evaluation and determination of the fulfillment of the RFP requirements will be the City's responsibility and its judgment shall be final.