

**2007 Master Plan Update
City of Lapeer, Michigan**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Submittal Deadline: **January 29, 2007, 5:00 p.m.**

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Lapeer is seeking creative and innovative proposals from qualified planning firms for the purpose of creating a comprehensive update of its 1986 Master Plan. The Master Plan will serve as the primary document to guide the community to its desired future pattern of growth and development.

There have been numerous revisions to specific areas of the current Master Plan since its adoption in 1986, but the changes have not been incorporated into the overall plan to provide a usable, comprehensive document. This, coupled with recent growth trends and impending future growth, necessitates a complete review of the City as a whole, with additional focus on certain special geographic areas of the city. The new Master Plan should also include recommendations and implementation strategies to provide useful guidance and direction for Lapeer's impending growth.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

The City is specifically seeking a Planning consulting firm or team with experience in preparing and updating City Master Plans for municipalities of similar size, characteristics and challenges. The following informational items shall be included in the submittal package:

- 1. Contact information.** Name(s), address and phone number of the principal-in-charge of this project for the consulting firm.
- 2. List of relevant experience.** Experience with communities of a size similar to or larger than Lapeer and with similar growth patterns and challenges within Michigan and the surrounding Great Lakes region will be of particular interest. Please include a brief summary of the project scope, length of process, and final cost for the relevant projects.
- 3. Key personnel.** Identify specifically those personnel most likely to work on the City project, including project managers for each team member. Significant changes in personnel at the proposal or contract stage may lead to disqualification.
- 4. Workload and availability.** Indicate the present and planned workload of the firm and the key personnel and their relative availability for this project.
- 5. References.** Names, addresses, phone and FAX numbers, for at least five references, including at least two references familiar with the work of each member of the team.
- 6. Sample.** A sample of a Master Plan created for and adopted by another municipality.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Four (4) copies of the proposal package must be mailed or delivered to the City of Lapeer by **5:00 p.m.** on **January 29, 2007** to the following address:

Linda Jackman, AICP
Director of Planning, City of Lapeer
576 Liberty Park
Lapeer, MI 48446

From the materials submitted in response to this RFP, the City will select a small number of firms/teams to interview. Based on the interviews and the proposals, the City will award a contract for the conduct of the work. The City anticipates interviews will take place in early February and that the contract will be awarded within two (2) weeks after the interviews, with work under the contract to begin as soon thereafter as practicable. ***The city reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.***

The City Planning and Development Department will be responsible for the management of the Master Plan project. Questions shall be sent via email to the Planning Director at: Ljackman@ci.lapeer.mi.us

SELECTION CRITERIA

Consulting firms or teams that submit proposals will be selected for further consideration on the basis of the following criteria:

- ♦ **Availability.** Only firms or teams in which key personnel are likely to be available to begin this project in early March 2007 will be seriously considered.
- ♦ **Experience.** Experience factors will weigh heavily in the selection, with the greatest weight given to experience in communities that are similar to Lapeer in one or more ways.
- ♦ **Quality of work.** The apparent quality of the work of the firm, based both on its submittal package and on information received from listed references and other previous clients, will also be an important factor in the selection process.
- ♦ **Project Needs.** The compatibility of the firm or team with the needs of the project will also be a consideration in the selection.

SCOPE OF WORK

The updating of the Master Plan will be an extensive process involving numerous meetings with City staff, the Planning Commission, City Commission, the business community and the general public.

The project shall include a "visioning process" in which the City will look ahead for new opportunities and revisit the past looking at areas that need improvement, with input from the stakeholder groups listed above. The visioning process shall result in the formulation of a Vision Statement, which is to include a set of guiding principals and priorities to implement that vision.

The final product will be a comprehensive plan that translates the vision statement into physical terms. Based on a study of demographics, economic activity, land use trends, transportation, infrastructure, housing, recreation needs, and natural, historic, and cultural resources, and any other pertinent information, the Master Plan shall show existing conditions and the proposed location, extent and intensity of future land use. The various sections of the existing Master Plan shall be updated or re-written, with new sections, chapters, or appendices added as needed, and integrated into a cohesive and easy-to-use planning document.

The Master Plan shall be designed to act as a catalyst for action in the form of public policy and private development/redevelopment strategy, by identifying implementation tools and strategies

that effectively guide actions in support of the City's vision and goals. It shall provide the City with guidance on how to handle issues such as but not limited to: infrastructure improvements, retail growth, balanced housing choices, economic development, historic and natural features preservation, parks and open space, and citizen's overall quality of life; as well as the challenges faced in the specifically identified geographic areas of the City.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The consultant will be expected to engage in the following activities and provide the following work in the update and development of the Master Plan:

- ♦ Coordination with the City of Lapeer Planning Commission and the Planning and Community Development Department staff
- ♦ Facilitate public forums with citizens and other stakeholder groups
- ♦ Specify and gather necessary information from city staff, as available
- ♦ Review and analyze existing 1986 Master Plan, and all subsequent Planning Studies and Master Plan amendments
- ♦ Conduct an analysis of existing conditions and growth projections
- ♦ Study appropriate Federal, State and Local Laws
- ♦ Address special conditions that pertain to specific geographical areas of the City as well as to the City as a whole
- ♦ Utilize information gathered and compile it into a usable document, which will include production and transmittal of the following deliverables: one (1) electronic format copy of the Master Plan and twelve (12) hard copies
- ♦ Make presentations and recommendations for the City Planning Commission's approval of draft and final document

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION

The following information is intended to give the applicant a general idea of the City of Lapeer's unique characteristics, in order to submit a proposal that reflects experience in preparing Master Plans for cities of similar size and character.

Location

The City of Lapeer has a population of just under 10,000 (9,072 per 2000 census) within six square miles, and is the county seat for Lapeer County, population 90,000. Lapeer is located about 20 miles east of Flint and 16 miles north of Oxford, (at the northern edge of the Metropolitan Detroit area.) State highway M-24 runs north from the metro Detroit area through the middle of the City, creating a busy commercial corridor. Interstate I-69 runs east and west just south of the current City limits, but the area will soon become part of the City due to a pending 700+/- acre annexation agreement with Lapeer Township.

Demographics

The **2000 U.S Census** provides the following demographic information:

Median Age: 33.2; **Avg. HH size:** 2.29 persons; **Race:** 89.9% White, 6.0% African American, 3.3% Hispanic, .6% Asian, and .5% American Indian; **Housing:** 52.3% owner-occupied, 47.7% renter-occupied, 5.4% vacant; **Unemployment Rate:** 3.3%; **Average Commute Time:** 26.8 minutes; **Educational attainment:** 8.8% bachelor's degree or higher; **Median HH income:** \$35,525; **Median HH value:** \$107,900

Growth Trends

Over the past 15 years, Lapeer has experienced an average annual residential growth of approximately 16%, keeping pace with the growth rate of the surrounding townships. A comparable amount of retail, office and industrial space have been added during that time span as well. Residential growth has recently slowed, but commercial development seems to be continuing as per past trends.

A pending 700+/- acre annexation agreement with Lapeer Township, set to be finalized in late 2006/early 2007, is expected to have a major impact on the City's utility needs, traffic, existing commercial areas, and housing demand.

Natural Features

The Flint River, Farmers Creek and Hunters Creek flow through the City adding variety and challenge to the topography. Adjacent to these waterways are numerous floodplain and wetland areas unsuitable for development. Over the years a number of City parks have been created in these areas, making the best use of the land and providing recreational amenities to the public. Protection of wetland and floodplain areas throughout the City through adherence to MDEQ floodplain and wetland regulations is a continual focus and challenge.

Additionally, some undeveloped areas of the city contain natural wooded areas which should be preserved to the greatest extent possible. Rolling hills are found throughout the city, both in developed and undeveloped areas.

City Government

Lapeer was incorporated as a City in 1869 and operates with a Mayor-Commission form of government that employs a City Manager. The City Manager is responsible for managing the daily operations of the City and coordinating efforts to meet the goals and objectives established by the City Commission. City services include water, wastewater, storm sewer, police, and fire protection.

The City Commission obtains recommendations in the governing of the City from 13 Boards and Commissions. In accordance with State statute the membership of the Planning Commission, whose charge includes review and approval of the City's Master Plan, consists of three ex officio members (the mayor, one city commissioner, and the city manager) and six city residents appointed by the mayor.

Key events or development issues include:

- ♦ Pending **annexation** of 700+/- acres at the I-69/M-24 freeway interchange, expected to be finalized late 2006/early 2007: The property is being annexed in order to utilize city water and sanitary sewer for new commercial, industrial and residential development.
- ♦ Increase in variety of new single-family **housing** options in recent years: This has helped to create better housing stock diversity and balance, which was formerly deemed to be heavy in the multi-family category. (*There is currently a comprehensive Housing Study underway, under the direction of the Housing Department, to assess the City's current and future housing needs.*)
- ♦ Interest in developing additional **industrial** space: Two potential sites have been identified for possible expansion of existing industrial areas.
- ♦ Development of **Oakdale property**: The City of Lapeer owns approximately 600 acres of open space, formerly the State of Michigan Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities. The property contains a substantial amount of wetlands, woodlots and floodplain, and has been identified as ideal for recreation, educational and cultural development.

- ♦ **Downtown:** The DDA and DBA follow the Main Street principles for Lapeer's downtown, and may be interested in establishing a Principal Shopping District. Downtown Lapeer's transition to a specialty retail, dining and entertainment district is well underway, but additional challenges are expected when the land around the M-24/I-69 interchange is annexed into the city and developed.
- ♦ **Traffic congestion:** Commercial development in the area of Main Street (M-24) and DeMille Rd. has turned this into the most congested intersection in the City. Potential alternate traffic routes need to be identified and established. Recent meetings with MDOT have opened a dialogue on the possibility of partnering on an access management plan for the M-24 corridor. A city-wide traffic management plan should also be considered.
- ♦ **Aesthetics/Blight:** Continued focus on turning blighted areas around is needed, as well as development of a higher aesthetic standard for both existing properties and new developments throughout the City.

Community Amenities, Organizations and Employers

Parks and Recreation:

- ♦ Park System – Lapeer has a 181-acre City-owned and operated park system which include soccer fields, ball diamonds, horseshoe courts, tennis courts, pavilions, numerous play structures and a 2.2-mile linear park pathway.
- ♦ The Community Center offers a wide-range of activities for youth, adults and seniors, and is an excellent resource for wellness activities. Amenities include: a swimming pool, weight room, fitness track, racquetball and walleyball courts, sand volleyball courts, basketball court and a new spray park set to open in 2007.

Transportation:

- ♦ 38.9 miles of major, collector, and local streets
- ♦ Greater Lapeer Transportation Authority – regional bus service
- ♦ Amtrak – active, unmanned station along the Blue Water rail line

Schools: Educational choices in the City of Lapeer include:

- ♦ Lapeer Community Schools – seven elementary, one junior high, two high schools, one alternative high school and one charter elementary school
- ♦ Bishop Kelly – preschool through Grade 8
- ♦ St. Paul Lutheran – preschool through Grade 8
- ♦ Mott Community College Lapeer Campus - facility also provides classroom space for University of Michigan-Flint and Baker College
- ♦ Davenport University

Major employers:

- ♦ Industrial and manufacturing facilities concentrated in 2 planned industrial parks, a planned industrial area, and an area along East Genesee Street that has been gradually transitioning to general commercial uses
- ♦ Health care industry, including Lapeer Regional Medical Center hospital, with adjacent cancer care center to be built in 2007, Genesys Health Systems office, numerous other medical clinics and offices, a nursing home, and an assisted living center
- ♦ Schools – Lapeer Community Schools, Mott Community College, Davenport University, private and charter schools
- ♦ Retail - Major retailers include K-Mart, Wal-Mart, Meijer, Home Depot, Kohl's, Kroger, Office Depot, Tractor Supply Company. Also, building supply centers: Lapeer Lumber and Truss Co., United Building Center, and Church's Builder Wholesale.
- ♦ Local and County government offices, County courts, and regional Post Office
- ♦ State and County prisons
- ♦ Banks (including regional offices) and other professional offices – law, real estate, insurance, etc.

Business Organizations: Downtown Development Authority, Downtown Business Association, Lapeer Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce

Arts and Cultural Organizations: PIX Arts Council and Theatre, Lapeer Community Theatre, Lapeer Center for the Arts/Gallery 194, Lapeer Art Association, Lapeer Civic Orchestra, Lapeer County Historical Society and Museum

Resources

In addition to the 1986 Master Plan and its subsequent updates, the following policy documents and studies may be relevant to the Master Plan and will be available for the consultant to use for additional information:

- ♦ Housing Assessment – currently underway
- ♦ Parks & Recreation Master Plan – to be updated in 2007
- ♦ Downtown Development Plan – updated in 2004
- ♦ Community Cultural Plan – 1997
- ♦ Numerous traffic studies, both city-initiated and developer-provided
- ♦ Various utility studies and analyses

SPECIFIC FOCUS AREAS

In addition to and in conjunction with the typical organization of a Master Plan into general topical sections, Master Plan shall provide specific guidance on how to develop/redevelop the following geographical areas to best utilize their unique characteristics and overcome specific challenges.

(The consultant chosen for the project may, at their option, suggest a creative or non-traditional format for the Master Plan in order to provide the background information, recommendations and implementation strategies specific to the City of Lapeer's needs in the most cohesive and understandable manner.)

Downtown District

The core of Lapeer's historic downtown district is located along Nepessing Street, just east of M-24. Prominent features of the downtown include the historic Lapeer County courthouse built in 1846, Farmer's market pavilion, restored art-deco PIX Theatre, recently established Gallery 194/Lapeer Center for the Arts, numerous restaurants with outdoor cafes, and an emerging loft apartment housing component. The Flint River flows through the area, around which numerous City parks have been created within walking distance of downtown. The DDA district extends beyond the Nepessing Street retail area and includes a portion of West Genesee Street to the south and the adjacent residential neighborhood.

Lapeer's downtown faces the same challenges as traditional downtowns throughout Michigan – competition from larger retail development away from the historic commercial core of the City is forcing a transition to specialty retail, service, dining and entertainment. The City's Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Business Association strive to guide this transition. A streetscape and gateway project for the downtown was completed in 2003. Lapeer's downtown will face even greater challenges when the annexation of land around the M-24/I-69 interchange into the city is completed and the anticipated commercial development of that area occurs. Potential redevelopment of the White Junior High site just west of the existing DDA limits (west of M-24) provides an opportunity for expansion of the downtown area.

Older and Historic Residential Neighborhoods

Lapeer is home to a variety of historic homes that have been restored and maintained to display their original elegance. Adjacent to Lapeer's Central Business District on Nepessing Street is the Piety Hill Historic District, which encompasses 29 properties that are largely nineteenth-century dwellings (one-sixth of the buildings are churches.) Surrounding this area and in other neighborhoods throughout the City, a variety of home styles and ages can be found.

A challenge has been to maintain the integrity of the traditional single-family neighborhoods. Many of the larger historic homes had been divided into multi-unit rental properties in the past, and some have fallen into disrepair. Two of the city's primary goals over the past 15 years have been to encourage conversion of these structures back to single-family use, and to aggressively enforce anti-bligh regulations. Much progress has been made but the efforts continue.

The City's Housing Department works with the non-profit group Lapeer Neighborhoods Inc. to purchase and renovate homes, or demolish blighted properties and build new market-rate housing. The Housing Department is currently in the process of creating a city-wide housing assessment that will identify any needs in our current housing stock and provide guidance on how to address those needs.

Former Oakdale Center

The City owns the 600-acre former State of Michigan Oakdale Center for Developmental Disabilities. The property contains a substantial amount of flood plain, wetlands and woodlots which the City intends to preserve to the greatest extent possible. Mott Community College and The Chatfield School (K-6 charter school) are located on the Oakdale grounds, as well as the 35-acre Prairies and Ponds Nature Preserve which was established in 2005. The area has been identified as a prime location for educational, cultural and recreational development, to best utilize and enhance the abundant natural resources of the area for the benefit of the community.

A land use study of the Oakdale area was done in 1996, which identified several cluster housing developments on the property. The City's housing needs have changed since then, in part due to several new residential developments on annexed land, and a greater variety of housing options now being built throughout the City. The commercial development area identified at the east end of the 1996 plan has now been built out, and a transition plan is needed to address how the commercial and residential areas will be buffered from and integrated with one another.

M-24/I-69 Annexation Area

A mutual agreement has been created between the City of Lapeer and Lapeer Township to transfer 700+/- acres of vacant land around the M-24/I-69 interchange to the City in order to facilitate new commercial, residential and industrial development. City water main and sanitary sewer will be extended into the area to service the development; various options and strategies for achieving this are currently being studied by the City's Engineer.

This area will extend the City's boundaries southward and become the new "gateway" into the City of Lapeer. Achieving a high aesthetic standard will be a focus. The annexation agreement contains provisions for review and approval of development plans in this area by both the City and Township planners. The design standards, expectations, and review procedures of the two communities will need to be coordinated.

M-24 Corridor – South City Limit to Genesee

The high traffic counts on M-24 have made this the most densely developed commercial area of the City. Numerous driveways onto M-24 for the relatively small lots, many of which contain

drive-thru restaurants, create challenging traffic conditions. The corridor has been said to lack "identity". For many motorists traveling along M-24 through Lapeer, this corridor creates their impression of the City as this is all they ever see of Lapeer.

M-24 Corridor - Genesee to North City Limit

Continuing north from the most congested commercial area of the City, M-24 cuts through a half-mile long historic residential area that contains a mix of owner-occupied and rental housing. Just north of the residential area are a number of medical offices, along with the Lapeer Regional Medical Center hospital. Numerous rezoning requests over the years has spurred discussion, both pro and con, of this corridor transitioning to some sort of mixed-use residential/office/light personal service district.

West Genesee Street – M-24 to Saginaw

This section of East Genesee Street is included in the City's DDA district, but does not share any visual characteristics of, or connection to, Nepessing Street which is generally considered Lapeer's "downtown." The corridor contains some blighted properties and other sites ideal for redevelopment, which could also provide opportunities for better integrating the area into the downtown core through careful design.

East Genesee Street - Saginaw to east City Limit

This section of East Genesee Street had been historically used for industrial uses due to the proximity of a railroad line along the south edge of the corridor. However, recent years have seen a gradual transition to commercial and office uses. The parcels along the south side of the road (adjacent to the railroad tracks) do not have the lot depth to support most of today's typical industrial enterprises. A number of established automotive repair and service businesses continue to operate along this corridor, with varying degrees of complicity with the City's desired aesthetic standards.

Davison Road – Millville to Lake Nepessing Road

Development opportunities exist in this corridor that could build upon the recreational (golf course, ice arena, bowling alley) and residential uses (attached and detached condos, senior apartments and assisted living facility) already in place. A portion of the golf course has been approved for a conditional rezoning to multi-family, with the approval to expire in December 2007 if conditions have not been met. Portions along the north side of Davison are in Elba Township; a pending annexation request seeks to bring 60 acres adjacent to the golf course into the City for potential condominium development, and also provide for the extension of Lake Nepessing Road north to connect with future phases of the Rolling Hills Subdivision.

SUMMARY

The City of Lapeer is requesting proposals for a complete Master Plan update from qualified planning firms experienced in creating Master Plans for municipalities of similar size, characteristics and challenges. The submittal process outlined above shall be followed, with a submittal deadline of **5:00 p.m. January 29, 2007**. The Master Plan process shall include community visioning and any other information-gathering activities needed to create a comprehensive plan that translates the vision for the City into physical terms. In addition to the basic topical components of a Master Plan, the final product shall include added focus on certain special geographic areas of the city.