

NEWS RELEASE

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Issued as a Service for the Village of Onekama and Onekama Township

SHORELINE COMMUNITIES REQUEST PROPOSALS TO LAUNCH FIRSTJOINT PLANNING EFFORT

For Immediate Release

Manistee and Onekama, Michigan – Two local governments that share one of Michigan’s crown jewels, a high-quality inland lake connected to Lake Michigan, announced today a joint effort aimed at protecting and sustaining their quality of life and economic well-being.

The Village of Onekama and Onekama Township in Manistee County, with Portage Lake and its watershed as their centerpiece, have developed and issued a Request for Proposals for qualified organizations to facilitate and complete a community-driven process to develop a Joint Master Plan encompassing their communities.

A master plan is a "blueprint," that guides development of a community and how it will manage its resources. It also serves to establish priorities for public or private funding. The plan provides the framework under which a community can preserve its natural features, build strong neighborhoods, increase commerce, plan for public services, and guide new development including informing local land use regulations and zoning ordinance. Most plans also identify needed capital improvement projects.

The development of the collaborative master plan will be supported in part by a grant of \$12,500 from the Manistee County Community Foundation, made possible by a grant to the Community Foundation from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

“In Michigan and the nation, the quality of life and sustainability of our communities relies upon thoughtful, community-driven land use planning that unites families, businesses, organizations and governments around shared visions for the future,” said Gail Imig, Program Director for the Battle Creek-based Kellogg Foundation. “We salute the leaders in Onekama Township and the Village of Onekama who are plowing new ground for a partnership that will be of immeasurable benefit for this resource-rich coastal community.”

The Manistee-based Alliance for Economic Success will partner with the Manistee County Community Foundation to help the Village and Township manage and administer the Request for Proposal process.

In issuing the RFP, the Village and Township recognized that:

“Land use planning and master plans require technical expertise to develop and implement and the cost and availability of that expertise can often only be managed through a collaborative effort that shares resources. There is growing recognition that challenges involving land use planning and master plans do not stop at the border of political jurisdictions. Good governance suggests that collaboration to address issues, needs and opportunities that cross those boundaries should be done through joint, collaborative efforts.”

Proposals must be received by the Alliance for Economic Success on or before 5 p.m. on Friday, March 21, 2008. Proposals will be expected to address several requirements contained in the RFP, including:

- How existing information, including the Township Master Plan, Village ordinance and the new Portage Lake Watershed Forever plan will be used as baselines for the project.
- How “best practices” will be used and considered in designing the project.
- How community engagement and participation will be fully achieved in the process, including year-round and seasonal residents, businesses, nonprofit organizations, governments, agricultural interests and others.
- How “best-in-class” technical assistance will be provided throughout the development of the Master Plan.
- Facilitating a community-driven process to develop a shared community vision.
- Completing the Joint Master Plan, including clear strategies for funding and roles, responsibilities, action steps and a projected implementation schedule. It is expected that the Master Plan will include goals and action plans involving:
 - Land use and land development, including consideration of Smart Growth principles
 - Economic development
 - Recreation and open space preservation
 - Universal access
 - Managing competing and conflicting uses
 - Community sustainability and competitiveness
 - Quality of life
 - Human and financial resources needed to implement the plan

The RFP recommends that two teams be created to ensure community participation and technical expertise are provided:

- 1) A **Community Leadership Team**, consisting of township and village officials as well as year-round and seasonal residents and representation from other organizations, businesses and interests to help guide and implement the process and encourage outreach and participation.
- 2) A **Technical Assistance Team**, consisting of technical advisors, who will advise on best practices and creative solutions throughout the process.

Proposals will be first evaluated by a Community Subcommittee that will recommend a set of finalists who will be interviewed by the Village and Township officials at a public meeting to make a final selection. The RFP calls for the project to be completed during 2008.

A copy of the RFP is attached to this news release. The RFP is also available on-line by going to: www.allianceforeconomicsuccess.com