



Memo

To: Acme Township Board of Trustees
From: Sharon E. Vreeland, Township Manager
Date: 11/01/10
Re: VGT-Phase I SUP #2009-1P Status Update

As mentioned in last month's update, on September 16 there was a meeting to discuss technical aspects of the Village at Grand Traverse (VGT) Traffic Impact Study (TIS). Attendees represented the township, Road Commission, MDOT, BATA and applicant. Everyone I have spoken to since the meeting felt it was productive. However; the applicant has had some additional theoretical and procedural questions. Many of these questions have centered on the possibility and likelihood of receiving variances from site access design standards and requirements. In September I was told to expect the preliminary revised application materials, including updated traffic study, in mid-October.

The updated materials have yet to be received. An additional applicant/agency/staff meeting has been scheduled for Friday, November 5. At this time the applicant's questions relative to completion of the traffic impact study seem to be focused on two key concepts:

1. The main project entrance from M-72 as depicted on the Conceptual Plan does not meet MDOT spacing requirements from other key intersections. To provide for good traffic flow and signal timing/function MDOT requires half-mile spacing between signalized intersections. It is expected that signalization will be requested for this new intersection unless a more innovative approach is used. The applicant has indicated a strong desire to maintain their site plan as conceptualized rather than relocating the main M-72 entrance as required to meet MDOT's spacing requirements. MDOT and the township have indicated that compliance with the standards is necessary. A more innovative non-signalized approach, such as a roundabout, might accommodate the conceptual intersection spacing and/or may be required to resolve outstanding questions.
2. The applicant seems to wish to explore the possibility of converting some of the project access points on M-72 that are designated as right-in/right-out only to full-access in (right or left turn)/right-out. I have advised to review the meeting minutes and other feedback from the processes that resulted in the current conceptual plan, as I believe they will find that they originally proposed full access intersection points but that the road agencies and township did not find this acceptable and required them to reduce the access points to their current configurations at a minimum. I think of what they are proposing as a "3/4 access" intersection.
3. Our meeting on November 5 has been arranged because the parties are finding it ineffective to deal with piecemeal questions. Generally, we have advised the applicants that the standards exist to maximize traffic safety and efficiency and we cannot truly evaluate their requests for deviations from the expressed standards unless and until they provide design and traffic modeling data for both the standard and their desired configurations that would demonstrate that their preferred

configuration would provide traffic safety and efficiency that at least equals and preferably better the standard solution.

I have also recently advised the applicant that their application processing costs have risen to the level of the most recently revised cost projections. I have asked them if they would like some new projections of additional costs, at the same time indicating that I could use some input on a reasonable basis for such projections. They have not yet responded.

A **potential conceivable and not guaranteed** processing timeline is as follows:

- **December 1:** township receives revised application materials and distributes to MDOT, County Road Commission, legal staff and Beckett & Raeder
- **December 1 – February 1, 2011:** Consultant & Agency reviews MDOT needs at least 1 month for internal review both in Traverse City and by their Lansing signalization unit. Review by other units or committees may be indicated depending on whether there are any innovative proposals arising from the traffic study. We are hearing that state review and processing times on other projects around the state are running longer. As this step now falls in the end-of-year holiday season I'm projecting 2 months needed.
- **February 1 – 11, 2011:** Township staff reviews and assesses consultant and agency submissions and submits compiled response to applicant.
- **February 14-28, 2011:** Applicant reviews township response internally and (optional) in joint meeting with all parties, optionally adjusts and resubmits application materials.
- **March 1-25, 2011:** Planning Commission receives final materials to provide adequate review/preparation time.
- **March 28 potentially also April 25, 2011:** earliest potential preliminary hearing date(s).
- **April 25, potentially also May 23, 2011:** earliest potential public hearing and post public hearing dates.
- **June 7, 2011:** earliest potential Board consideration date.
- I feel I can't say it enough: this is a **tentative best case scenario timeline only**. It should not be regarded in any way as firm at this time. I am keeping consultants and road agencies updated frequently so that workflows can be planned for optimal efficiency.