Memo

To: Acme Township Board of Trustees
From: Sharon E. Vreeland, Township Manager
Date: 11/17/10
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 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 from either the township or the road agencies.

An additional applicant/agency/staff meeting was held on Friday, November 5 in Mt. Pleasant. Discussion focused on three main questions relative to completion of the traffic impact study:

1. The main project entrance from M-72 as depicted on the Conceptual Plan does not meet MDOT spacing requirements from the M-72/Lautner key intersection. To provide for optimal 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 MDOTs spacing requirements, and noted that today's signal timing technology makes it possible to obtain reasonable traffic slow signal function. The township's traffic consultant, Stephen Dearing, observed that since the VGT property is somewhat of a "blank slate" in that it does not have existing development that could reasonably require the township and road agencies to make signal spacing accommodations, there is no reason why we should not request and obtain optimal conditions. MDOT representatives at the meeting appeared to support this position. The one factor commonly recognized as potentially having an existing development impact is whether or not the Grand Traverse Resort may still, in the future, seek to relocate their main entranceway to M-72 opposite the proposed VGT development. Tribal planning staff and two members of the Tribal Council have been approached to see if we can better understand any future plans that the Tribe may have in this regard and how they may affect final spacing of the VGT's proposed main M-72 entrance..

2. The applicant wished 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. They were advised that the configurations shown on the existing conceptual site plan were the result of lengthy discussions between MDOT, the township and the applicant dating back to 2002. We also discussed the long-standing goal of the township, supported by various planning documents, of having a boulevard along M-72 rather than 5 or more lanes of unbroken pavement. MDOT and Mr. Dearing generally advised the applicant to provide traffic modeling for both the current and desired access designs so that MDOT and the township can

adequately review the potential impacts. I further indicated a belief that any proposal that would move the township further from its goal of having green medians on M-72 may not be well received, so if left-in movements are proposed it would be a good idea to consider designs that would provide at least narrow medians if and as permitted by MDOT with short left-turn queueing areas rather than unbroken center turn lanes along vast stretches. This approach would have potential to move both the township and the applicant towards their individual long-term objectives.

3. There was some additional discussion about appropriate seasonal adjustments for high-summer (particularly July and August when Flintfields is hosting equine events) traffic volumes based on the May 2010 traffic counts taken by URS. It appeared that consensus was reached by all parties that using a factor of 1.3 would be appropriate to evaluate traffic condition at a seasonal summer peak including horse sports events.

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.