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## PROJECT SUMMARY AND MEETING OUTLINE

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Project: Boardman Lake Avenue  
Meeting Date: 1-20-04  
Document prepared by Dan Wagner, P.E.

Project No.: 031128  
Title: Public Input Meeting #4

### PRELIMINARY

- I. Current Project Team Members
  - A. Joe Elliott, P.E., Gourdie-Fraser. Joe is a Principal / Project Manager at Gourdie-Fraser and has over 30 years of experience managing, designing, and providing construction engineering for similar projects.
  - B. Dan Wagner, P.E., Gourdie-Fraser. Dan is a Project Manager at Gourdie-Fraser and has over 10 years of experience with similar projects.
  - C. Tim Lodge, P.E., Traverse City Engineer. Tim, the newly appointed City Engineer has over 20 years of consulting experience with a strong concentration of transportation engineering skills.
  - D. Russ Soyring, A.I.C.P., Traverse City Planner. Russ has served for years as the City Planner and has worked with the residents, City Commission's and regional planners to evaluate and conceptualize the development of the Boardman Lake Avenue corridor.

The following paragraphs are intended to accomplish several things. Firstly to summarize the results revealed through the many, many hours of hard work performed over the years by citizens, regional planners, City Staff, and consultants in conceiving the creation of the Boardman Lake Avenue. There is a voluminous amount of information that has been evaluated and presented over the years. It is hoped that at least the key issues raised during the various studies are expressed in this summary. Secondly, the following paragraphs are intended to provide the reader a summary of the considerations that have revealed themselves and guided our most current design plans for the construction of the Boardman Lake Avenue. Lastly, it is hoped that the reader can gain an understanding of the remaining issues that need to be addressed and resolved. It is hoped that the members of the community will assist our design team in overcoming these issues to allow this project to become a reality.

## II. Brief History of Project

### A. Crosstown Arterial Study

Some 30 years ago regional traffic planners began evaluating and planning a route for the construction of an east west arterial road. The goal was to address the regions growing number of vehicles traveling on a street system that in large part dates back to the turn of the last century. The new road system needed to be designed around the many unique environmental features in our region such as the Grand Traverse Bays to the north of the City, Boardman Lake which the City surrounds, and the numerous watersheds south of the City that are tributaries to these bodies of water.

The arterial would allow for the collection of traffic on the west side of the Traverse City region and allow it to travel to the approximate eastern limits of the urban concentration that exists beyond the City limits. In 1980 a study titled the "Crosstown Arterial Study" was published that summarized the evaluation. One segment of the east west arterial was planned through the City adjacent to an existing railroad (dating back to the late 1800's) that closely parallels the west shore of Boardman Lake.

Several parcels of land along the planned arterial were acquired for use in constructing the feature. Popular support for the project waned and ultimately, the arterial plan was abandon. The parcels of land that were acquired by the City along the route for the arterial that were determined to offer the City little benefit in retaining were sold off.

The City planners felt that the stretch of road that had been planned for the regional arterial in the existing rail right of way should continue to be considered for a local City project. The planners felt it was an appropriate location for the construction of an independent road that would benefit the residents and businesses of the City. The monies that were generated through the sale of the parcels acquired for the arterial road were set aside and ear marked for use in the development of a road in the rail corridor.

### B. 1994 Gourdie-Fraser Study

In 1994 a study was completed for the City of Traverse City in cooperation with the Traverse City Area Transportation and Land Use Study (TC TALUS) to more closely examine the route identified during the evaluation for the arterial road. The stated need for the study was to identify a means by which "to relieve traffic congestion along the Cass and Union Street corridors" and "to return these roads to typical neighborhood roadways". The study also was to address the "increasing need to provide good north/south access to the downtown area".

This study offered many benefits but chiefly identified the route and cross section for the construction of a road that was labeled as the Boardman Lake Avenue. Several considerations were evaluated in the study in determining these factors.

The study attributed the traffic congestion and awkward access to the downtown area to historic traffic congestion problems on Cass and Union Streets. The study also suggested worsening conditions were anticipated due to continued growth in the surrounding communities and the potential development of a proposed bypass to the south. The bypass is what has evolved into the Hartman-Hammond Connector currently being considered by the Grand Traverse County Road Commission.

Traffic data collected by City Engineering and TC TALUS was evaluated. TC TALUS utilized traffic modeling software to project the impact that the road would have on traffic patterns. Traffic growth patterns were also evaluated to determine what type of road would be required to satisfy the immediate level of service and also to evaluate what level of service could be expected to maintain anticipated future growth. The study anticipated that the Boardman Lake Avenue would see 12,000-16,000 vehicle trips per day initially.

The 1994 study confirmed that it appeared feasible that the road could be constructed in the existing railroad corridor that runs along the west shore of Boardman Lake. The study suggested that the existing railroad tracks be relocated to allow for the construction of the parallel road section. It was conceived that the road be constructed from the City limits on Cass Street and extend to the north and intersect with 8th Street just west of the Lake Street and 8th Street intersection. The existing Cass Road north of the new road to be created would terminate at a cul-de-sac to maintain access to the commercial properties along this stretch of Cass road. The project suggested several alternatives for improving the current configuration of the 8th, Cass, Lake, and 7th Streets to further improve the potential benefits offered by the Boardman Lake Avenue.

The rail corridor through this area has a right of way with variable widths. Generally, the corridor south of 15th Street is limited to a 100' wide right of way. The right of way in this corridor to the north of 15th Street is generally 200' in width. The larger right of way was necessary as there are several stacking and maneuvering rails in this stretch. Near the north limit of the rail corridor the rail divides into two rails. The main rail continues around the north side of Boardman Lake. The other used to travel through the City but when the study was completed it terminated at 8th Street. There is also a railroad "wye" near 14th Street. The wye is used to change the direction a train moves down the track.

Substantial landscaping along the route was suggested to help buffer the noise that would result from the traffic on the new road. A 10' bike path was also proposed to be constructed to allow for recreation and non motorized transportation.

A two lane boulevard style or separated road section (one lane in each direction) with curb and gutter was suggested to be constructed initially. The study felt the suggested cross section would be capable of accommodating 16,000 vehicles per day at a suggested speed limit of 35 miles per hour.

Limited access to the Boardman Lake Avenue was recommended to occur at Cass Street near the City limits, 17th Street, 14th Street, 8th Street and as previously mentioned, some improvement to the Lake Street area. 17th Street and 14th Street would be improved from Cass road to allow for the connection to the new road.

The study recognized that in the section of the rail corridor south of 14th Street to the City limits that there was limited room to construct the new road. The existing railroad tracks which were still active were very near the shoreline of Boardman Lake. To complicate this matter there was a sudden and steep change in elevation at this same location. This section of the project would require extensive modifications that may require a bridge over a portion of the lake on the installation of a significant earth retaining structure.

The study acknowledged that the feasibility and cost for the project could be substantially reduced if the rail tracks could simply be abandoned to make room for the road. The study commented that there was a movement in the community to examine the possibility of abandoning a rail line that exists on the opposite side, or the east side of Boardman Lake. It was reported that the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) who owns the right of way where the rail exists was interested in gaining community census prior to making any decision regarding the removal of either of the trails.

The estimated cost to construct the two lane section including the rail relocation was \$3,000,000 not including any costs associated with right of way or property acquisitions. The cost also does not include any environmental testing or remediation of contaminated sites that may impact the project. The study suggested that the two lane road section be designed to allow for it to be expanded to a four lane boulevard section (two lanes in each direction) if additional carrying capacity was needed in the future.

Once the road character was identified various available funding sources were evaluated to suggest possible methods for funding the project. Various bonding programs along with state and federal funding sources were identified that could provide financial benefit if the project was pursued.

Finally, the study provided a preliminary evaluation of the environmental conditions along the anticipated route of the Boardman Lake Avenue. Since the development of the railway some 100 years prior to the 1994 study, the properties adjacent to the rail had been highly industrialized. Several properties with reported environmental concerns were identified. More than two dozen sites, 28 including the rail corridor itself, within one mile of the route were identified as reporting environmental concerns. The study identified that a specific environmental investigation would need to be conducted if the construction of the Boardman Lake Avenue was to take place.

The City supported the recommendations of the study and incorporated the development of the Boardman Lake Avenue Road corridor into the City Plan, the City's master planning document.

C. 1998 Gourdie-Fraser Study Update

The City planners continued to show an interest in developing the Boardman Lake Avenue and in 1998 Gourdie-Fraser prepared an "Engineering Study Update" for the City. The update was intended to evaluate several new considerations that would have an impact on the project such as the River's Edge development. In addition, the study was to more closely evaluate particular items of interest that would influence the project such as funding options that could help to construct the road corridor.

The traffic evaluation performed for the 1994 study was reexamined. New traffic count data was compared to the preexisting data. The data analysis revealed that while on some streets in the area traffic increased, on others it decreased. There was enough information to suggest an overall growth in the total number of vehicle trips in the area. As a result it was suggested that if constructed, Boardman Lake Avenue would expect to see an additional 2,000 trips per day than what was anticipated in the earlier 1994 study.

The River's Edge development no longer afforded the options of making substantial improvements to Lake Street north of 8th Street. As a result of this the project limits were confined to the areas south of 8th Street and extending to the south City Limits on Cass Road. The remaining limited intersections and various improvements to the connecting streets suggested in the 1994 study were affirmed in 1998.

Consistent with the original study, an expandable two lane boulevard style road section (one lane in each direction) was suggested to be constructed. The recommended speed limit for the road was 35 miles per hour. A revised construction estimate was provided with an estimated project cost of \$3,150,000 not including any costs associated with right of way or property acquisitions or . The cost also does not include any environmental testing or remediation of contaminated sites that may impact the project. This cost reflects a 1.65% increase per year since the cost estimate was prepared in 1994. Similar to the 1994 study, various potential funding sources were evaluated and a detailed summary of the available funding sources was provided.

In addition to the suggested type of road construction, several alternate road construction cross sections were evaluated. Cost estimates were also provided for the various cross sections.

As in the 1994 study the cost implications of reconstructing the railroad were noted, especially in the area north of 14th Street south of the City limits. Total abandonment of the railroad would result in a substantial cost saving to the project.

It was suggested that to avoid the significant costs for relocating the rail between 14th Street and the City limits that the project be developed in two phases. Phase I would run from 8th Street north to 14th Street. Phase II would be constructed from 14th Street and terminate near the south City Limits at Cass Road. The thought was that the construction of the first phase of the project would provide positive benefits by relieving traffic flows on Cass Road and Union Street north of 14th Street while delaying the cost for relocating the rail and bridging or shoring the west bank of Boardman Lake.

It appears that it was hoped that the rail through this corridor would be abandon by the MDOT and be sold or revert to the City. It made sense as rail service in our region was in decline and the aging rail system required increasingly more dollars to maintain.

#### D. 2000 Gourdie-Fraser Study Update

In 2000 the City commissioned Gourdie-Fraser to evaluate the feasibility of constructing the Boardman Lake Avenue in a manner that would not require the relocation of the railroad tracks. The primary focus of the update was on the costs associated with constructing the Boardman Lake Avenue in this configuration.

The recommended road cross section to be constructed, and proposed intersection locations remained as previously suggested in the earlier studies. City Staff requested that the speed limit be reduced to 25 miles per hour. As in the earlier studies, the 2000 update also recognized the benefit to the project if developed in two phases.

Some other considerations were also suggested. A traffic diverter was suggested to be installed on Cass Road north of 14th Street at the Griffin Street intersection. This was proposed to discourage the continued use of Cass Road to travel north and encourage motorists to utilize the Boardman Lake Avenue. It was promoted that traffic going to and from Cone Drive Gear could also use Griffin Street as a means by which to gain access to the Cone Drive site.

In researching the feasibility of constructing the Boardman Lake Avenue without relocating the rail tracks several considerations were revealed. By leaving the tracks in place, several rail crossings would be required. The MDOT has several safety standards and policies concerning rail crossings that would pose a challenge for the project. For instance, the MDOT had adopted a "no net gain" policy regarding railroad crossings. So in essence, if a new crossing were created, one would have to be removed. If the rail were not relocated, the new road would result in four new railroad crossings. It was suggested that a crossing in the Phase II section of the project be eliminated and that the City look to abandon three other crossings within the City.

Another rail crossing issue that was presented is the angle at which the rails can be safely crossed. The MDOT requires nearly perpendicular crossings. This is due to safety considerations for motorcyclists, for example. If a motorcycle were to cross a skewed rail, the wheels could be redirected by the rail and violently throw the rider. By not relocating the rail, two of the proposed Boardman Lake Avenue intersections would result in skewed rail crossings.

Yet a third rail crossing concern was simply the cost to build such a feature. The cost to construct a new crossing with electronic signalization and crossing gates was reported to be approximately \$200,000 each. Recalling that four grade crossings would be required if the new road were developed, this made the crossing issue a very costly concern.

Aside from the rail issues, the study commented on the impact the road and rail issues would have on the development of what is now known as the Lake Ridge Condominium project. The study identified that the construction of the road by not relocating the rails would also require the City to acquire a 0.82 acre parcel east of 15th and 16th Streets as there was simply not enough space along this parcel for the road and the rail.

Although the two lane boulevard section was still favored, four other cross sections were evaluated. One was an undivided two lane road. The remaining three sections were four lane roads (moving traffic in two lanes in each direction) with various configurations. Cost estimates to construct the alternate sections on a per lineal foot basis were prepared.

A detailed cost estimate was prepared to construct the preferred, two lane boulevard section. The cost for the entire route was estimated to be approximately \$5,400,000. This cost did not include any costs associated with right of way or property acquisitions. The construction cost (not including any design or oversight elements) for Phase I was estimated to be \$1,943,600. The substantial increase in cost was attributed to the alterations and safety equipment that would be required to accommodate the numerous rail crossings, if the road were to be constructed around the existing rail.

E. 2000 Gourdie-Fraser Pedestrian Study

In 2000 the City retained Gourdie-Fraser to evaluate the feasibility of constructing a pedestrian path. The pedestrian study was not directly connected to the Boardman Lake Avenue project. However, the study did evaluate the feasibility and costs associated with constructing a walkway in the area where the Boardman Lake Avenue would be constructed and is worth mention.

With the opening of the new library building there was interest in establishing a pedestrian route from the Old Towne neighborhood to the library. A route was suggested to stem from the eastern limits of 10th Street and travel easterly, across the same railroad tracks that the Boardman Lake Avenue would parallel. The path would cross the other railroad track the follows the north shore of Boardman Lake and continue over a pedestrian bridge that would need to be constructed over the Boardman River. From there the path would follow the north shoreline of Boardman Lake and pass by the wastewater treatment plant. The path would end at Hull Park.

This study required the use of various materials such as elevated wood boardwalk to cross various existing topographic features. The construction cost of that project was estimated to be \$468,500. This cost did not include land acquisition, or design services.

F. 2001 MEGA Fund

In 2001, and in an effort to secure financial support for the project, the Grand Traverse County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (GTCBRA) on behalf of the City filed a work plan to conduct Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and Michigan Economic Growth Authority (MEGA) eligible activities. Michigan Act 381, or Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act is a program that the State instituted in 1996.

This program is quite complex and if the reader desires to learn more about this program, there is a great deal of information available from the MDEQ through their internet website or through their publications office. Speaking in very general terms the program was designed to encourage the remediation and reused of contaminated or otherwise undesirable properties. The State funds the remediation of the contaminated property. The now uncontaminated property can be developed. Once developed the taxable value of that property increases. The difference between the two tax amounts is then made available to the Authority to use in that district to fund other improvements that provide a benefit to the property that was remediated and developed. The time period for which the money can be used is limited to 30 years.

In this particular instance the Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act, was applied for and approved to be used in the development of the Lake Ridge Condominiums. The tax increment financing or TIF capture was proposed to provide a source of income to pay for the design and construction of the Boardman Lake Avenue project. MEGA approved more approximately \$3,600,000 for this purpose. The City would still need to fund the project, likely through a bond sale but would then be able to use the TIF capture to pay off the bonds. The Grand Traverse Brownfield Redevelopment Authority projects this amount could be retired in the year 2019.

G. 2001 Andrews University Study

In 2001 the City Planning Department commissioned a study that was executed as an academic exercise by students attending The Andrews University Division of Architecture Urban Design. The student project examined and prepared a master plan for the Old Towne neighborhood and the northwest corner of Boardman Lake. This area included the rail corridor for which the Boardman Lake Avenue had been identified.

As stated in the study "The focus of The Andrews University Plan is explicitly physical and formal; and looks primarily at opportunities for new public parks and squares, street improvements (including neighborhood traffic calming), infill development, and (not least) the dispersal and redirection of traffic by means of new boulevards and roundabouts that both move traffic and support the pedestrian friendly environment of traditional urban neighborhoods." The students identified what they called "Ten Principles of Good Urban Neighborhood Design" and used them as a benchmark for evaluating the neighborhood and for making the master plan suggestions.

The Andrews study covered a great deal of information. The students examined existing land uses and existing ordinances. They presented a draft recommendation for the establishment and administration of a "Traditional Neighborhood District Ordinance". This ordinance would govern future land uses in the TND, if established by the City.

The study identified undeveloped parcels and developed parcels that were unoccupied or had declined and suggested uses for them. The areas suggested for development and redevelopment were concentrated primarily on the 14th Street and Boardman Lake Avenue Corridors.

In addition to the development considerations the study made suggestions for several small town squares (small parks) and recreational amenities throughout the neighborhood. For instance, the study suggested the City acquire a parcel located beyond the eastern limit of 10th Street and a parcel to the east of 12th Street to allow for the construction of these features. The main recreational opportunity that was identified was the property along the west shore of Boardman Lake. Features such as a boardwalk that could include fishing or observations piers and finger piers for boats were envisioned.

Traffic calming measures were also suggested to help with the traffic congestion in the neighborhood. Intersection markers located in the middle of numerous intersections, on street parking, and stop signs to be placed on Union Street and Cass Road were suggested. 14th Street was suggested to be converted into a boulevard cross section with a narrow tree lawn in the center and sidewalks along each side.

Since the study was commissioned, the City has implemented certain traffic calming measures in the Old Towne Neighborhood to try and stem the flow of traffic along Cass and Union Streets. For instance, several four way stop signs were installed to slow traffic speeds and deter traffic from entering the neighborhood.

The various types of streets and alleys throughout the neighborhood were evaluated and suggestions for redevelopment of them were made. The development of the Boardman Lake Avenue was also examined and suggestions for the development of this road system were made.

In large part the route remained the same as in the previous studies and a phased approach was suggested. Specific construction limits were not addressed as part of the phasing plan and it appears that the suggestion is that the entire route be constructed at one time. However, it was suggested that as part of their Phase I plan, a roundabout would be constructed at the 8th Street and Boardman Lake Avenue intersection. A second roundabout would be constructed at 14th Street and Boardman Lake Avenue.

The Andrews Study recommended a cross section that consisted of three separate road surfaces separated by curb and gutter and tree lawns. The westerly section would be a one way street that would allow traffic to move from 8th Street to the south to 14th Street. In addition a parking lane would be constructed to the west of the driving lane. A sidewalk was recommended to be constructed to the west of the vehicle parking lane and separated with another tree lawn. To the east of the one way driving and parking surface, a tree lawn was proposed to separate two single lane one way driving surfaces. Which themselves were suggested to be separated with a boulevard, similar to the previous studies. It was suggested that each of the one way driving lanes incorporate a bike lane as well.

Access to the Boardman Lake Avenue would be provided at 8th Street, two intersections north and south of 10th Street, two intersections north and south of 12th Street, at 14th Street, at 16th Street and on Cass Road at the south City limit. The existing railroad was suggested to be relocated to the east of the Boardman Lake Avenue along its entire route and the railroad wye removed.

The second phase of the construction suggested that a bridge be constructed over the Boardman River to allow for the Boardman Lake Avenue to connect to Boardman Avenue near the government center. The stretch of the Boardman Lake Avenue that would be constructed in Phase I roughly from 10th Street north to 8th Street would be removed and redeveloped as housing. This interesting idea would require that the existing Riverine Apartment Complex located on the Boardman River be acquired by the City and completely demolished to make room for the construction of the bridge.

No cost estimates to construct any of the suggested features were provided as part of the macroscopic study.

### III. 2003-2004 Gourdie-Fraser 30% Project Design

#### A. Project Goals (Formal and Informal)

In 2003 the City retained Gourdie-Fraser to complete a 30%, or preliminary design for the much discussed Boardman Lake Avenue. Simply designing the road through this section of town in itself is a relatively easy task. However, designing a road that is practical, complimentary to the environment and fiscally responsible makes this assignment much more challenging. We have approached this project with several goals in mind that are listed below.

1. Reduce the amount of traffic moving through the Old Towne and Central Neighborhoods.
2. Provide a direct route to the Government Center and Downtown Commercial Area.

3. Provide access to City residents for open space recreational opportunities along the west shore of Boardman Lake.
4. Improve the environmental conditions throughout the proposed Boardman Lake Avenue.
5. Encourage development and redevelopment of property near the west shore of Boardman Lake.
6. Shape the project based on input from the community and the obvious stakeholders.
7. Determine if it is realistic that the project will ever be realized.

B. Community Goals (From City Plan)

The City Plan, or master plan identifies several points of interest that we feel apply to this particular project. We have tried to conceive a design that compliments these various points. They are listed below.

1. Maintain a small-town atmosphere.
2. Protect and enhance the rich, natural environment.
3. Promote a healthy mix of uses while providing for the preservation of property values and the opportunity for economic expansion.
4. Preserve the community's historic resources.
5. Plan parks and open space areas and recreational opportunities within neighborhoods.
6. Keep the public bayfront primarily as an open-space resource.
7. Boardman Lake and Boardman River south of Eighth Street will serve primarily as a recreational and residential resource.
8. Boardman River north of Eighth Street will serve primarily as a commercial, recreational and residential resource.
9. Preserve existing neighborhoods, which may have residential, business and industrial uses. Encourage active neighborhood and business associations and assist in developing neighborhood plans.
10. Maintain and encourage a diversity of housing.
11. Promote the development of community centers and neighborhood centers.
12. Keep downtown a regional destination.

13. Promote a sustainable economy.
14. Support industrial growth in appropriate areas throughout the City.
15. Provide for planned growth and changes.
16. Create a balanced and diversified transportation network.
17. Rigorously enforce the zoning and sign ordinances.
18. Continue cooperative governmental action to deal effectively with local and regional issues.

C. Discussions with Stakeholders

Since initiating work on the 30% design we have met, and continue to communicate with several organizations, boards and individuals that we feel can provide benefit to the design of this project. The following is a list of those identified stakeholders.

1. Traverse City Staff-Engineer and Planner
2. Traverse City Planning Commission
3. Traverse City Board of Commissioners
4. Traverse City Downtown Development Authority
5. Grand Traverse County Road Commission
6. Grand Traverse County Soil Conservation District
7. Watershed Center, Grand Traverse Bay
8. Traverse Area Rails to Trails
9. TC TALUS
10. Michigan Department of Transportation
11. Cone Drive Gear
12. Citizen Input

## D. Overview of Public Input Meetings

### 1. Public Input Meeting #1

The first public input meeting was held on June 10, 2003. The meeting was held at the offices of Gourdie-Fraser. In large part the meeting was primarily a kick off and orientation meeting. A summary of the previous works completed relative to the project was presented. The specific tasks involving our contact to complete the 30% design were also presented. The manner in which we planned to execute these tasks was discussed. At the conclusion of the presentation a question and answer session followed.

Several handouts were offered to those that attended that were prepared by Gourdie-Fraser. Several exhibit displays were also in place for reference. The handouts and exhibits were focused on the likely route, and cross section anticipated for Boardman Lake Avenue. This information was determined in large part during earlier studies.

### 2. Public Input Meeting #2

On August 18, 2003 we conducted the second public input meeting. Several exhibit displays were in place for reference that were prepared by Gourdie-Fraser. The exhibits included a topographic survey of the route, an aerial image that highlighted the route and several likely connectors, the TART master plan along the route, and the City Plan along the route. Other historic information was on hand and was discussed during the meeting, and some historic exhibits were examined by meeting attendants after the formal meeting concluded.

An overview of the information discussed at Public Input Meeting #1 was provided. The activities completed to date and the activities to be completed later in the project life cycle were discussed. Following the presentation a question and answer period was conducted. The date, format and material to be presented at the next public input meeting was announced. We discussed the various drawings and sketches that would be presented to illustrate the various options available for the route and at critical intersections. We explained we would be demonstrating some typical cross sections and suggest a phasing plan if one appears prudent.

### 3. Meeting with the Old Towne Neighborhood

City Staff along with one team member from Gourdie-Fraser attended a neighborhood meeting in the summer of 2003 to provide a brief overview of the project.

### 4. Public Input Meeting #3

On September 18, 2003 a third public input meeting was conducted. It was held on the grounds of the Lake Ridge Condominium complex adjacent to the route identified for the Boardman Lake Avenue. Hot dogs and refreshments were provided to the meeting attendants.

Numerous suggestions for the alignment, critical intersections and a phasing plan for the project were presented and discussed. The pros and cons of the various alternatives were discussed in detail. Following the presentation, a question and answer period was conducted.

5. Joint City Council, City Planning Commission, and Downtown Development Authority Meeting  
On October 22, 2003 Gourdie-Fraser was asked to provide an update at a joint planning meeting that had been scheduled to consider several issues. By this point in the project a solid suggestion was made regarding the alignment, character for the Boardman Lake Avenue. A detailed cost estimate was prepared and presented for the first phase suggested for the project.
6. Meeting with Central Neighborhood  
City Staff attended a neighborhood meeting in the fall of 2003 to provide a brief overview of the project.
7. Public Input Meeting #4  
The next meeting has been scheduled for January 20, 2004 at 7 P.M. It will be held on the second floor of the Government Center at 400 Boardman. We plan to provide a detailed update on the current design. We hope to gain additional input on some of the design items such as traffic calming measures that have yet to be defined. The design team will hope to to answer any questions or accept any input regarding the project.

E. Miscellaneous Citizen Comments- Generalized from various conversations and meetings with individuals.

1. Traffic concerns.
2. Access concerns.
3. Beautification and development of corridor concerns.
4. Provide limited access.
5. Maintain reduced speeds.
6. Promote pedestrian accessibility.
7. Work cooperatively with the TART master trail plan.
8. Discourage further worsening cut through traffic in Central and Old Towne neighborhoods.
9. Provide access to City owned properties for recreational opportunities.
10. Provide access to privately owned properties for commerce opportunities.
11. Improve aesthetics of railroad corridor.

12. Be sensitive to environmental impacts (primarily light, noise, and surface water quality).
13. Maintain a limited construction budget.
14. Consider City Plan.
15. Consider Andrews University recommendations.
16. Avoid creating another Union or Cass road corridor.
17. Keep the project moving forward.

F. Summary of work completed on the following items:

1. Boundary and Right-of-Way Survey

a. Field work

The field survey work required to complete the boundary and right of way survey for the 30% design is complete. The raw data has been processed and incorporated into the plan.

b. Historic record information

Historic record research such plats, site condominium plans, etc. required to complete the 30% design have been obtained and incorporated in the plan.

c. Tax maps

The tax records for the parcels adjacent and surrounding the proposed Boardman Lake Avenue have been obtained and incorporated into the plan.

d. Railroad Maps

The original rail surveys that defined the rail right of way were obtained and the information incorporated in the plan.

e. Aerial Photometric Data

An aerial photo for this section of the City was provided by the City and has been incorporated into the plan.

2. Topographic Survey

a. Field work

The field survey work required to complete the 30% design is complete.

b. Processing of raw data

The raw data has been processed and the topographic features from the anticipated 8th Street intersection to the project limits at the south City limit has been incorporated into the plan.

- c. Private utility information  
Private utility information such as gas, electric, phone and cable TV has been requested from the various area utility providers. Most of the utility providers have provided the requested information and it has been incorporated into the plan.
  - d. Public utility information  
City storm sewer, water and sanitary sewer records were examined. Where these utilities were believed to conflict with or support this project, they have been incorporated into the plan.
  - e. Resulting base maps  
Base maps in digital format have been completed that illustrate all of the information discussed above.
3. Mapping Update
- a. Midtown Centre  
The most recent plan for the Midtown Centre that is currently being constructed north of 8th Street and south of the Boardman River was obtained and added to the plan.
  - b. 8th Street Streetscape  
The most recent plan for the 8th Street Streetscape project that the DDA is currently developing to provide on street parking for the Midtown Centre was obtained and added to the plan.
  - c. Riverine Apartments  
The most recent plan for the Riverine Apartments located south of 8th Street was obtained and added to the plan.
  - d. Old Town Condominiums  
The most recent plan for the Old Town Condominiums located east of Lake Street and west of the proposed Boardman Lake Avenue was obtained and added to the plan.
  - e. Oryana  
The most recent plan for the Oryana facility located off of Lake Street was obtained and added to the plan.
  - f. Lake Ridge Condominiums  
The most recent plan for the Lake Ridge Condominium complex located west of the proposed Boardman Lake Avenue was obtained and added to the plan.
4. Plan and Profile Layout
- In our evaluation of the project we have recommended that the City develop the Boardman Lake Avenue in three separate sections, or phases. We have prepared plans that illustrate and describe these sections.

- a. The Northwest section  
We recommend that the first section, or northwest section be constructed from 14th Street north to 8th Street. A typical "tee" type intersection would be constructed at 14th Street. A two lane, two way undivided road would be constructed with curbs and gutters west of the existing railroad tracks. The road would terminate at a three lane intersection at 8th Street that would be controlled with a new traffic signal. Lake Street would be blocked just south of its intersection with 8th Street.

Connections to the Boardman Lake Avenue are suggested to occur at three places. We suggest that limited access be provided to the Cone Drive Gear facility located north of 14th Street. We feel that providing a direct connection to this facility will reduce the number of passenger and heavy delivery vehicle traffic through the Old Towne neighborhood. Workers and deliveries can be encouraged to use this access. Since this connection would not be placed in an existing right of way and is not a City owned parcel, it would need to be acquired. Since it would only provide access to Cone Drive, we have assumed that there would be no need to acquire any additional right of way and would be located on private property.

The second access point conceived is through a narrow parcel that is currently used to gain access to a rail engine repair facility located north and east of the Cone Drive facility. This would provide residents in this part of the neighborhood to access the Boardman Lake Avenue. Since this connection would not be placed in an existing right of way and is not a City owned parcel, it would need to be acquired.

The third and last access point recommended is at the Oryana facility at the end of 10th Street. Since this connection would not be placed in an existing right of way and is not a City owned parcel, it would need to be acquired. We have been advised by City Planning that the owners of this property have expressed their willingness to cooperate with access through this parcel. This access point would serve primarily to provide access to Oryana and the other commercial properties located along Lake Street that would no longer gain access off of 8th Street.

A five foot paved sidewalk would be constructed to the west of the road. A portion of the sidewalk would require that the City obtain easements from certain property owners.

Three pedestrian crossings are anticipated to be developed as depicted in the TART master trail plan for the Boardman Lake trail. One would be located near 14th Street, the other near 12th Street and the last near 10th Street. We are proposing that the crossings be simple pedestrian cross walks but have not conceived signalization or over/underpass structures at this time. We have anticipated that certain traffic calming measures such as chokers, texturing, or raised walks can be incorporated at these areas to promote safe vehicle/pedestrian interaction.

Substantial landscaping and irrigation is proposed along the route to provide buffering and greenery to this corridor that is currently lacking any appreciable landscaping. Street lighting would be limited to street and pedestrian crossings.

No mainline rail relocation would be necessary and no new rail crossings would be created. Avoidance of these costly items were chief considerations in evaluating this layout.

The existing railroad wye that allows railcars to change direction located north of 14th Street would be relocated onto a parcel in the Aeropark Industrial Subdivision. The wye relocation was conceived several years ago and the City has already completed a preliminary design for the relocation of the wye and the property needed for the right of way has already been acquired.

The City will be required to acquire the existing right of way needed to support the road construction at market value. The MDOT will not simply transfer the property as may have been the policy in the past. More discussion concerning the rail property acquisition is provided in following sections.

We have estimated the cost for the initial construction for the features discussed above to be approximately \$1,250,000. This cost does not include any moneys for investigating or remediating properties in this corridor that are known to have environmental concerns. Until the necessary research and sampling is conducted, it would be mere speculation to try and estimate these costs.

b. The Northeast section

We are recommending that if the City feels that the traffic counts justify expansion that the next section of the road be constructed parallel to the first which we have titled the northeast section.

The northeast section would call for the creation of a second, two lane road with curbs and gutters. The second paved surface would be separated from the first by a tree lawn area and the two roads would form a boulevard section. The existing two lane two way section would be transformed to a two lane one way section that would allow vehicles to travel north to south. The new two lane section would be used to provide one way travel from the south to the north.

The only other appreciable change to the first road section to be constructed would be the reconstruction of the 14th Street and Boardman Lake Avenue to form a roundabout. The roundabout could not be constructed in the first section without causing substantial and costly disruption to the existing rail system. The roundabout as designed would come within just a few feet of the existing buildings. The safety and practicality of this arrangement is questionable and it is conceivable that in final design it may be revealed that one or both of these buildings would be to be acquired by the City.

We are proposing that the numerous rails that exist through this corridor be reduced to a single main line rail. The existing engine repair house would be demolished. Additional MDOT owned rail right of way would need to be acquired at this time by the City.

We have configured the alignment to not result in any new rail crossings. However, the existing rail crossing at 14th Street to access the Lake Ridge Condominium project would need to be reconstructed. The level of signalization and gates (if required) is unknown at this time.

c. The South section

As was proposed in earlier studies we are recommending the costly section of road that would need to be constructed south of 14th Street to the City limits remain as the last component of the project to be realized.

We recommend that the road in this section be of a similar character as Cass Road south of the City limits, a two lane, two way road section. One access point has been conceived at 16th Street where the existing road right of way abuts the existing MDOT rail right of way. The City would not need to acquire additional properties for this connection.

Similar to the earlier studies we are recommending that Cass Road terminate with a cul-de-sac prior to the intersection with the Boardman Lake Avenue. The commercial and industrial properties would gain access off of Cass road, prior to the cul-de-sac. We did evaluate reconfiguring this intersection into a typical "tee" intersection. However, the grade changes at this location would make this an impractical intersection.

No sidewalks have been proposed for this section of the road system. However, the TART master trail plan demonstrates a section of the TART trail that is planned to be constructed parallel to the west shore of Boardman Lake through this section of road.

The roundabout at the 14th Street intersection would provide numerous benefits. It would announce the entrance into the urbanized portion of the City and slow traffic down. It would retain the view shed to Boardman Lake down 14th Street. In addition the constant yet controlled flow of traffic that the roundabout can maintain would encourage its use. Drivers would not see a traffic light ahead, or see vehicles backed up and react by turning onto one of the south to north roads that cross through the Old Towne neighborhood.

5. Traffic Routing and Calming

The 2000 census data confirmed the increase in growth anticipated in the surrounding areas in the 1994 Gourdie-Fraser study. Grand Traverse County saw a 20% increase in population while the population in the City of Traverse City remained relatively static with a 4% decrease in population reported. The Road Commission continues to pursue the development of the Hartman-Hammond Connector.

Several traffic calming and routing suggestions have been discussed and considered. It has been suggested that traffic diverters be installed at Cass Road and Union Street on the north side of 14th Street at those intersections. The thought is that it would encourage vehicles traveling east on 14th Street to utilize the Boardman Lake Avenue.

It has been suggested that some of the recommendations presented in the Andrews study, such as simply removing certain intersections in Old Towne, be exercised.

Other traffic calming measures that have been suggested include placing a "Right Turn Only" sign on westbound Lake Street at the intersection of Cass Road. Another suggestion is to place "No Left Turn" markers on westbound 8th Street at the intersections of Cass Road and Union Street. Other suggestions have included making Cass Road a one way street and making Union Street a one way street in the opposite direction.

We hope to gain more input and formulate more decisions regarding this topic at and following the upcoming public input meeting.

6. Future Land Use Map

We have added zoning information from the City Plan to one of our graphics to evaluate how the new road corridor would interact with the community.

7. Right-of Way Acquisition Map

Once the final location of the route has been identified we will prepare an illustration to define the right of ways (and other properties if applicable) that would need to be acquired by the City for the project. This Item will be addressed later in the project.

8. Environmental Studies

We have included an allowance to update the inventor of sites known to pose environmental concerns to this project. Since the exact location and phasing of the route has not been acknowledged, we have suggested to address this item later in the project once we have a closer definition of routing of the road.

9. Pedestrian Access

In large part the pedestrian access planning has been guided by the TART master trial plan. We have included in our design the construction of a five foot paved walk in the initial phase of the project.

Individuals have expressed concern about the pedestrian/vehicle conflicts and interaction. We have suggested that features such as pedestrian under or overpasses are costly items yet something that could always be added into the project if the City feels these features are justified.

Roundabouts are typically though to be difficult for pedestrians to use. The roundabout at the 14th Street intersection will pose challenges for pedestrians. We feel that the two lane section proposed south of this intersection would be a preferred location for a east to west pedestrian crossing.

10. MDOT Issues

As previously discussed the existing railroad wye that allows railcars to change direction located north of 14th Street would be relocated onto a parcel in the Aeropark Industrial Subdivision.

We have communicated with the MDOT regarding the City's interest in developing this roadway. Throughout the various studies the City and her consultants have had similar communications. It had been the stated position of the MDOT that they would work with the City in accomplishing the goals of the project.

In 1998 The State of Michigan has passed legislation to divest itself of four separate rail systems by sale to private entities. The sale must occur in a certain order and there are strict guidelines that will ensure the rail remains, at least for the next decade. The first of the four rails slated for divestiture was sold but the second rail had not. The program states that the sales must occur in a specific order. We have had conversations with MDOT representatives that were not certain what impact this would have on their divestiture program.

The MDOT has reported that it will take a legislative change to allow the City to purchase any of the needed right of way to construct the Boardman Lake Avenue. However, the reason the State has initiated the divestiture program is to reduce the costs required to own and operate the rail systems. It would appear the State would be inherently motivated to pursue the legislative change to allow the sale to occur. The State is required by statute to sell property only at fair market value.

The rail that would need to be relocated for the construction of the project is currently under lease to the Tuscola and Saginaw Bay Railway Company, Inc. Since this section has been slated for divestiture, the MDOT has only been entering into annual extensions of the lease agreement that typically spans a several year period. It is not known what, if any, influence the private rail company will have on this project. We have provided plans to that firm but thus far have shown no interest in discussing the project.

11. Public Meetings

The next public input meeting has been scheduled for January 20, 2004. The future meeting dates or schedule has not yet been determined.

12. Permitting

At the conclusion of the project we will identify the permits that would be required from the various permitting agencies that have jurisdiction over this work. This Item would be addressed later in the project.

13. Traffic Counts – Existing/Future

a. Analyzing Data

We have been provided up to date traffic counts from City Staff. We have evaluated the traffic numbers. Similar to what was discovered in the 1998 study, traffic throughout the neighborhood appears to have slightly increased. However, traffic on some streets has lessened, while on others it has increased.

We plan to work with City Staff and TC TALUS to attempt to replicate the traffic modeling that was performed for the 1994 study. At present, the TC TALUS modeling software is being calibrated by the MDOT and is not available for use. Once available, we hope to utilize this tool to evaluate the amount of traffic that could be anticipated on the Boardman Lake Avenue, and the impact it will have on the other major streets in the Old Towne area.

14. Cost Estimate for Northwest section

A detailed estimate of costs was prepared for the construction of the initial recommended road construction, or that section referred to as the northwest section. We have estimated the cost for the initial construction for this feature to be approximately \$1,250,000. This cost does not include any moneys for investigating or remediating properties in this corridor that are known to have environmental concerns.

We have estimated the costs to acquire the needed right of way and have assumed that those portions of the right of way that following construction will not be needed (such as the rail wye that is to be relocated) can be resold at the same rate at which they were acquired.

Once the final design and alignment is determined, we will prepare a detailed cost estimate for the entire chosen route.

15. Financial

A summary of the possible funding apparatuses has been prepared and submitted to the City. With the exception of the brownfield redevelopment fund discussed in the previous section, no noteworthy sources of funding is known to exist that would assist financially with the construction of this project. Also as previously noted, the City does have monies earmarked for this project from the previous sale of properties that were at one time acquired for the east west arterial project.

- G. Solicit input from the meeting attendants regarding conceptual alignment, cross sections and intersections.
- H. Solicit input from the meeting attendants regarding items they wish to discuss at future Public Input Meetings.
- I. Question and Answer
- J. Summarize Meeting and Conclude