

Blue Star Highway Work In Douglas Expected To Be Completed By Memorial Day

May 4th, 2018 | By Efrain Sandoval

Thanks to a \$300,000 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) improvement grant, the City of Douglas has begun its construction on a Blue Star Highway project that will create a 10-foot, non-motorized pedestrian path that will be separated from vehicular traffic by a landscaped median that will include bushes and trees.

So far, the progress of the project has gone without a hitch, though city officials do want locals and visitors alike to be mindful of the construction and be more careful driving through that area. Construction is expected to be completed by Memorial Day.

“This is a city beautification project along the Blue Star corridor that aligns itself very well with the goals of the Friends of the Blue Star Highway (a proposed 20-mile paved, non-motorized bike path connecting Saugatuck and South Haven).

It is not necessarily one and the same, but a different project,” Douglas Zoning Administrator and Economic Development Director Lisa Imus told The Local Observer Tuesday afternoon.

The design calls for the reduction of Blue Star Highway from three lanes to two lanes, spanning from Center Street to Main Street. On the west side - the side fronting the harbor - will be the lane converted to the landscaped median.

Existing traffic patterns will remain the same, except there will not be a left turn allowed from Chestnut onto Blue Star Highway. Turning lanes will remain at Center Street, Union Street, Main Street and Washington Street, say city officials.

Access to all businesses and roads will not be blocked during construction, say city officials.

“The initial project planning survey, completed in 2011, indicated that over 70% of Douglas residents wanted safe places to walk and bike through the community, especially near the water and downtown.

Survey respondents also ranked highly the need to preserve views of the water from public streets, improve the landscaping along Blue Star Highway and have safe places to cross Blue Star Highway on foot,” indicates a recent Douglas press release.

“With the vehicle portion of Blue Star Highway being reduced to three lanes, it is anticipated that drivers will reduce their speed and take more notice of their surroundings.

This, coupled with the addition of bike and pedestrian access, will make traveling on Blue Star Highway a much more enjoyable and safer route, city leaders say in their support of the work.