



### **Construction Begins on Blue Star Hwy Roundabout April 10th**

On Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, the Allegan County Road Commission will begin construction on a new roundabout at the intersection of Blue Star Highway and Old Allegan Road. The intersection will be closed during the construction period with plans to reopen to local traffic on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Covering a span of 0.33 miles, the single-lane roundabout is designed to optimize traffic movement efficiently and improve safety at the intersection. The approximately \$1.5 million project is funded through an MDOT safety grant, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant and local match funds from the Allegan County Road Commission and Saugatuck Township.

During construction, a detour for Blue Star Highway will be established via Route I-196.

Designed by LRE Engineers, the roundabout includes four road islands, two of which are extended, and a 45 ft diameter center circle. With 23 ft of the center circle consisting of a mountable apron, the roundabout is designed to accommodate the types and volume of vehicles that currently frequent the road, including large trucks and emergency vehicles.

A traffic study completed in 2021 indicated a need for the inclusion of additional safety measures at this intersection given high seasonal traffic and the potential for increased pedestrian activity given plans to construct a non-motorized path along Blue Star Hwy.

A roundabout was specifically recommended, as roundabouts are recognized as a Proven Safety Countermeasure by the Federal Highway Administration for reducing speeds and conflicts, minimizing severe crashes and offering more crossing points for non-motorized traffic.

In addition to the roundabout construction, the project includes the installation of an approximately 500 ft section of non-motorized trail on the west side of Blue Star Highway, as well as a pedestrian crossing south of the intersection. A concrete landing pad will be installed on the east side of Blue Star Highway in preparation for a future path connecting pedestrians to the Township's River Bluff Park.

Concurrently, Saugatuck Township has partnered with Viridis Design Group of Grand Rapids on a landscape design for the site. "Our goal was to integrate sustainable solutions into traditional infrastructure practices, seamlessly blending pedestrian and vehicular safety and circulation with the local ecology and artistic community" said Viridis landscape designer, Lindsey Gadbois. Design features include low-maintenance, drought resistant plantings such as dune grass, with hardscaping in the center of the road island.

"The location of the roundabout, with its proximity to Downtown Saugatuck and a growing Blue Star business corridor, presents an opportunity to create a welcoming



gateway into the Saugatuck Township community,” said Daniel DeFranco, Saugatuck Township Manager. This is the first time that the Allegan County Road Commission has partnered with a municipality on a landscape design for a road improvement project.

For inquiries or further information, interested parties are encouraged to reach out to the Allegan County Road Commission or Saugatuck Township.