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press release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DOWNTOWN VAN BUREN AWARDED GRANT TO SUPPORT MAJOR BELLEVILLE ROAD UPDATES

April 23, 2013 – Belleville Road from Tyler to South I-94 Service Drive to receive traffic and pedestrian safety improvements

The Van Buren Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has been awarded \$774,620 through Wayne County for a major streetscape improvement project along its downtown on Belleville Road from Tyler Road south to the I-94 Service Drive.

Each year, the State of Michigan distributes highway funding (ACT 51 funds) to counties, cities and villages that have roadway ownership and maintenance responsibilities. This year, the State allocated \$6.3 million to Wayne County to fund one-time only projects. Funded projects require a focus upon safety improvements.

SAFETY CONCERNS ALONG BELLEVILLE ROAD

According to SEMCOG data, the section of Belleville Road from I-94 to Tyler is rated 13th highest for crashes in Wayne County, with an average of 56 collisions per year.

Fortunately, many of these crashes are avoidable through the use of modern signal equipment and coordination of the traffic signals in the corridor, so DDA members welcomed the opportunity to apply for this grant that would not only improve safety throughout Belleville Road, but also match the road's attractive streetscape and promote business development throughout downtown Van Buren.

At its April 2 meeting, the DDA board overwhelmingly approved the effort to apply for grant funding. Members were pleased to learn that VBT DDA was one of only 11 projects of 38 to be approved for funding.

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PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

The new signalized intersections will mirror the aesthetics of the equipment being constructed and installed as part of the Ecorse and Belleville Roads intersection reconstruction project.

INCLUDED IN THE PROJECT:

- All traffic signals replaced from Tyler Road south to the South I-94 Service Drive will include mast arms and illuminated street name signs.
- Six existing traffic signals will be replaced with modern equipment.
- A new traffic signal will be added between Meijer and Wal-Mart as part of the Township's access management plan for Belleville Road.
- The project will also address deteriorated pavement areas, broken curbs, emergency prep timing, and noncompliant pedestrian ramps.

The DDA Board is eager to address the safety issues on Belleville Road and the potential for attracting a thriving business community to downtown Van Buren on Belleville Road, connecting it to the City of Belleville's downtown proper.

DDA Executive Director Ireland shared, "This expansive project is able to be performed because of the conscientious and fiscally responsible DDA board, which was able to financially match and even enhance the project without seeking loans or bonds to fund the endeavor. The Belleville Road renovation project will bring safety to its pedestrians and travelers and promote an attractive thriving business community in downtown Van Buren Township."

Board members are looking forward to another successful project jointly funded with Wayne County. The project is anticipated to begin in July 2013.

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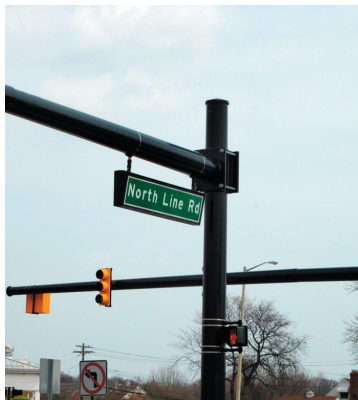


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Mast arms similar in look to these will be used throughout the corridor to improve safety, traffic flow and aesthetics. (PHOTO: DDA_MAST_ARMS).



Decorative illuminated street name signs such as this one will be used throughout the corridor to increase visibility and help direct motorists and shoppers to their destinations.

(PHOTO: DDA_STREET_NAME_SIGN).



Pedestrian countdown signals in conjunction with improved pedestrian ramp facilities will increase safety for pedestrians and improve overall walkability of the corridor.

(PHOTOS: DDA PEDESTRIAN COUNTDOWN SIGNAL 1;
DDA PEDESTRIAN COUNTDOWN SIGNAL 2)

