

DOT study anticipates bottlenecks

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Long-range plans sees need for improvements near I-43, Veterans Park

A public input session hosted by Wisconsin Department of Transportation officials last week quantified what anyone driving through Saukville knows all too well — stretches of Highway 33 are under increasing traffic pressure.

The volume of traffic on the road between Saukville and Port Washington will be addressed when the DOT starts its road widening project later this year.

However, the focus of the input session was the 18-mile stretch of Highway 33 from I-43 to Highway U in the Town of Addison in Washington County.

A series of 16 large panels identifying road deficiencies and traffic trends ringed the perimeter of the Saukville Elementary School gym.

The exhibits were used to begin planning long-term improvements to the highway.

A draft study, prepared by the engineering firm Short Elliot Hendrickson red-flagged two stretches of road in the village that are likely to experience significant congestion by 2020.

The greatest of attention, according to SEH, should be given to the stretch west of the I-43 overpass and the area along the north side of Veterans Park.

The study shows daily traffic counts west of the I-43 interchange are likely to reach 26,700 in 2020 and 32,300 by 2040.

Traffic volume in the area of the park is expected to grow to 22,600 vehicles a day by 2020 and be as high as 27,600 vehicles a day by 2040.

Senior Project Manager Steve Plachinski of SEH characterized both counts as “a significant amount of traffic.”

The study and input session were intended to identify sections of road that need to be looked at closer, but no specific improvements were identified.

The study does recommend adding two lanes between Progress Drive and Ulao Street by eliminating on-street parking, installing traffic signals at Main Street and prohibiting westbound turns from Highway O, as well as taking steps to better handle traffic from Foster Street to I-43.

“We are looking long term, 20 to 30 years out. The goal is to manage Highway 33 and all the roads that connect to it,” Plachinski said. “If you think of the highway as a pipe and vehicles as water, the idea is to address cracks or obstructions in the pipe that prevent maximum flow.”