

Route 140 Task Force
Thursday October 16, 2008 – 7:00 p.m.
Princeton Town Hall Annex
Meeting Minutes

TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

Glenn Lyons, Princeton Highway Department; Alex Fiandaca, Princeton; Ken Whitney, Princeton; Robert Protano, Sterling; Robert Temple, Sterling Highway Department; Will Ahearn, Westminster Highway Department; Peter Remelius, Westminster; John Powers, Sterling; Mary-Ellen Blount; CMRPC; Brad Harris, MRPC; Dennis Rindone, Princeton Town Administrator; Arthur Frost, MassHighway District 3

GUESTS:

Mickey Splaine, Princeton; George Snow, MRPC; Brian Doherty, MRPC; John Michalei, Holden; Sandy Owens, Westminster; David Watson, Princeton; Jon Fielding, Princeton; Jennifer Fielding, Princeton; Richard Traina, Sterling; George Pape

Welcome and Guest Comments:

D. Rindone called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes:

D. Rindone asked for a motion to approve the minutes of September 4, 2008. The minutes were accepted and passed unanimously with the addition of George Pape to the guest list.

Organizing the Taskforce:

D. Rindone stated that he would chair the meeting this evening, and a chair person would be appointed at the January 2009 meeting. D. Rindone then opened the floor for guest comments on the work that could potentially be done to Route 140, and welcomed anyone who was interested to voice their ideas.

A question was asked from the guests present on who started the Task Force. There is a rumor that it was started by the Crowley's to improve access to the Wachusett Mountain.

D. Rindone responded that local concerns among the towns led to discussions among the officials. P. Remelius also indicated that funds were placed on the State Transportation Bond Bill by our local representatives to address the problem.

D. Rindone mentioned that he sent out sample Corridor Studies to the communities in order to get an idea of what a corridor study entails.

At September's meeting, each community was asked to pick several portions of Route 140 where they felt like there were safety concerns. The Princeton members stated that the hot spots in their town are: bridge conditions on the Sterling/Princeton line, due to structural soundness and weight rating, also some sidewalk restoration along the roadway, and perhaps adding a weight limit or truck exclusion to the road.

The Sterling members stated that the hot spots in their town on Route 140 are mostly intersections that meet on an angle of 45 degrees or less, which lends itself to dangerous road conditions. Clemens Avenue and Crowley Road are missing intersection sight distance. There are also some busy intersections that could perhaps use signalization in order to improve the safety of the intersection.

The Westminster Task Force members indicated that the results of their site visits concluded that the hot spots in their portion begin with the intersection of Route 2A, Route 140 and Narrows Road. Other areas where the line of sight needs to be improved, as well as clearing out trees in order to get the sunlight to help with melting in the winter.

D. Rindone asked if Route 140 is state owned, or if it is owned by the towns.

G. Lyons replied that Route 140 is owned and maintained by the towns.

A Westminster task force member asked how the Bond money would be distributed throughout the towns.

D. Rindone stated that the bond bill will most likely pay for the design, however the towns and task force will have to come up with a formula to distribute the money.

A question was asked about the start and end parts of the study and the project. Discussion followed on logical points of terminus.

D. Rindone asked for a motion to decide where the project will begin, and end.

K. Whitney member moved to start the project at the Route 2A/Route 140 intersection in Westminster through to the Route 190 interchange in Sterling.

The motion was seconded by R. Protano and passed unanimously.

D. Rindone asked the towns to finish their lists by December 15th in order to put together an informational packet for distribution. He also mentioned that the next meeting, to be held on January 8th, 2009 will be in Sterling.

Crash Data/Traffic Count Discussion

B. Harris stated that the MRPC had been in contact with the police departments in the three towns, in order to collect crash data and compile information. MRPC is currently in the process of analyzing the data and is looking at the different types of crashes that have

occurred as well as things like road conditions, time of year, time of day, etc. He also gave a summary of the regional crash data provided to MRPC by MassHighway.

B. Harris discussed the traffic counts that the MRPC and CMRPC have done on Route 140 in the past. Overall, there has been a 2.8% growth rate over time in the amount of cars and people traveling over Route 140.

A task force member asked if they take into account the traffic brought over Route 140 by the skiers and hikers heading to Wachusett Mountain.

B. Harris replied that traffic counts were not taken in the winter so there is no data available to conduct a comparison on the increase in travelers. Mr. Harris also mentioned that manual peak hour counts can be done to assess the ski season traffic.

M. Blount discussed all the extensive aspects of what a corridor study entails versus a corridor profile. Corridor profile is more of a detailed traffic study, as opposed to a specific study during which all contributing factors are taken into account.

D. Rindone asked A. Frost what he felt was necessary for the work to be done on Route 140.

A. Frost replied that a corridor profile should be sufficient. However, if the task force wants to go deeper for information, then a corridor study would be more appropriate.

D. Rindone stated that he would feel more comfortable with the completion of a corridor study, completed by an outside consultant, as opposed to a profile. Mr. Rindone stated that a corridor study worked out very well for the Route 2 Task Force.

R. Protano asked if it was entirely out of the question to put in a bike lane on Route 140 in order to widen the road.

D. Rindone stated that would be question to answer after a corridor study is done, to assess the number of cyclists on the road and the need for a bike lane.

A question was asked if there would be any way to put a truck exclusion on Route 140 to keep it from being used as a through road.

A. Frost stated that there would need to be another comparable route for the trucks to take, if there isn't one, a truck exclusion cannot be done.

Adjournment

D. Rindone adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.