

**Route 140 Task Force**  
Thursday November 19, 2009 – 7:00 p.m.  
**Westminster Town Hall**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**TASK FORCE MEMBERS:**

John Fairbanks, Westminster; Alex Fiandaca, Princeton; Will Ahearn, Westminster; Glenn Lyons, Princeton; Joe O'Brien, Princeton; John LeBeaux, Princeton; Larry Greene, Princeton; Arthur Frost, MassDOT; Robert Protano, Sterling; Robert Temple, Sterling; Rich Rydant, CMRPC; Brad Harris, MRPC

**GUESTS:**

Phil Mighdoll, Princeton; Sheila Dubman, Princeton

**PLANNING AGENCY STAFF:**

George Snow, MRPC; Brian Doherty, MRPC; Stephanie Brow, MRPC

**Welcome and Guest Comments:**

J. Fairbanks called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

*J. O'Brien made a motion to approve the minutes of September 24, 2009 as written. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

**“Walkable Communities” Field Workshop**

R. Rydant indicated that the CMRPC put together a handout pertaining to the Walkable Communities workshop and the research that was done in Princeton.

J. O'Brien indicated that there was a walk-around done through East Princeton with the help of the local police department and planning commission, to identify problem areas along the roadway such as the lack of crosswalks and sidewalks in certain areas.

A. Fiandaca stated that there was a good turnout at the Walkable Communities workshop and that there was an enthusiastic turnout from the local residents.

R. Rydant indicated that Princeton is an easier town to do a walk-through due to its setup. The Westminster and Sterling segments of Route 140 are unlike the village, however if there are walking opportunities in the area, the same ideas could be applied elsewhere along Route 140.

J. Fairbanks mentioned that it would be applicable for the downtown area of Westminster.

## **Planning Agency Updates**

### **- MRPC – Sterling & Westminster**

B. Harris stated that the MRPC's focus has been indicating local intersection improvements as necessary; MRPC has been working on sight distance at various intersections along the roadway.

G. Snow presented the sight distance analysis table for intersections on Route 140 through Sterling and Westminster. Sight distance can be impacted by vegetation on the side of the road as well as other contributing factors. Intersections lacking substantial sight distance can contribute to crashes because drivers do not have enough time to stop or slow their vehicles down before encountering other vehicles entering the intersection. Lack of sight distance causes issues with safety.

B. Doherty stated that the MRPC has been working to collect data at each intersection concerning the level of service of each location. Level of service is a quality measure that describes the operational conditions at each intersection, based on delay that each vehicle experiences at each intersection waiting for traffic gaps, etc. Each intersection is graded on an "A" through "F" scale. "A" being the highest level of service with little or no delay at a stop controlled intersection and "F" being the lowest with little opportunity to enter the intersection in an acceptable period of time. Mr. Doherty then presented the traffic volumes for the roadways in Sterling and Westminster, in order to acquire the level of service rating for each intersection.

J. O'Brien asked how the MRPC is accounting for the influx of traffic during the winter months to the mountain and the ski area.

B. Doherty replied that the MRPC would have to do a turning movement count in the winter in order to get accurate numbers.

A. Frost stated that getting turning movement counts in winter is problematic.

B. Harris indicated that the MRPC is aware of the increase in traffic situations in the winter along Route 140. Mr. Harris also mentioned that staff could contact Wachusett Mountain to see what their count of customers per day is in order to get an estimate of the vehicle traffic.

### **- CMRPC**

R. Rydant indicated that CMRPC has continued their work on the project, presenting the peak hour counts for Route 140 in Princeton as well running level of service analysis for the intersections on the roadway. Levels of service at these intersections range from level "B" to "C". Mr. Rydant noted that the CMRPC is going to use data to compile a growth percentage rate for the area, in order to attempt to project future conditions on the roadway, through the year 2020. With improvements at various locations, there currently is no foreseeable need for signalized control at any of the intersections studied.

Mr. Rydant indicated that on the Princeton portion of the roadway there are not substantial issues with sight distance at the intersections. However, CMRPC recommends necessary cut back of vegetation within the right of way, so that it doesn't impede road signs or visibility.

Planning commission staff recently took an inventory of the major culverts along Route 140 in Princeton; staff noted the type, size, observed condition and location of each culvert. There are hundreds of feet of culverts along Route 140 in Princeton alone. CMRPC staff will be looking at potential drainage issues along the culverts.

Task Force members discussed realigning the Route 31 approach to Route 140, in order to improve the line of sight of the intersection.

### **Overview of Potential Improvement Options**

R. Rydant indicated that if the towns want to carry a project forward, they would need to hire a designer in order to do environmental work and obtain the necessary right of way. The process of getting projects funded requires placement on the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Rydant then presented the range of funding categories that are available for projects placed on the TIP.

B. Harris indicated that the MRPC is going to be inventorying the culverts in Sterling and Westminster before the next meeting and will bring the data they collect. Also staff has looked at the current conditions and approaches at the Route 140/Route 62 intersection and is currently considering the need for signalization at that intersection, as well as the options of a roundabout versus a traffic signal.

Discussion followed between the MRPC and Westminster representatives regarding the Westminster South Street Project and its location on the TIP.

### **Next Steps**

J. LeBeaux, the Princeton Town Administrator, offered to take control of the distribution of the minutes and agendas for all the upcoming Route 140 Task Force Meetings.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Route 140 Task Force will be held on Thursday January 21, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. at the Princeton Town Hall Annex.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business for discussion, J. Fairbanks adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.