

Route 140 Safety Improvement Task Force

Thursday, May 27, 2010 - 7:00 PM
Westminster Town Hall

MEETING MINUTES

TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

Brad Harris, MRPC; Rich Rydant, CMRPC; Dick Sheppard, Sterling; Robert Temple, Sterling; John Powers, Sterling; John Fairbanks, Westminster; Will Ahearn, Westminster; Alex Fiandaca, Princeton; Joe O'Brien, Princeton; Ken Whitney, Princeton; Glenn Lyons, Princeton

GUESTS:

Mickey Splaine, Princeton; Rob Protano, Sterling; George Snow, MRPC; Brian Doherty, MRPC; Jon Ding, CMRPC

Welcome-Town of Westminster:

John Fairbanks, Westminster Board of Selectmen, welcomed the Route 140 Safety Improvement Task Force and guests to the Westminster Town Hall and called the May meeting to order shortly after 7:00 PM.

Review and Approval of the Minutes:

J. Fairbanks asked for a motion to approve the minutes of March 18, 2010 meeting held in Sterling. The minutes were accepted as corrected and passed unanimously.

Around the Room Introductions:

The Route 140 Task Force members and guests introduced themselves around the table.

Planning Agencies Updates:

R. Rydant provided one copy of the draft Technical Appendix being compiled to accompany the Route 140 study document. At this time, the draft Tech Appendix includes the meeting agendas, summaries and sign-in sheets from each of the Safety Improvement Task Force meetings, from August 2008 to

the present time. *(Other supporting materials will be added to Tech Appendix as the Corridor Profile report document is finalized.)*

R. Rydant distributed handout materials that summarized the work completed by CMRPC for the town of Princeton since the last meeting of the Task Force. After mentioning two (2) articles from the local press about the March meeting of the Safety Improvement Task Force included in the packet, Mr. Rydant went on to explain the summarized transportation Management System-derived and integrated Corridor Profile findings for Route 140 in Princeton. In the handout, separate summaries were prepared for the study intersections and the roadway segments.

R. Rydant explained the Level-of-Service (LOS) analysis results, which provide a report card-type grade indicative of intersection and roadway segment operational conditions. He also reviewed the vehicle crash analysis findings, existing public transit for the elderly and disabled, the percentage of heavy vehicles for freight planning as well as the findings of the broad brush Environmental Profiles prepared for the Route 140 corridor.

R. Rydant continued explaining the roadway segments findings, discussing the results of the pavement condition analysis and well as the Princeton Route 140 culvert and bridge inventory conducted by the CMRPC staff.

R. Rydant went on to present the "Suggested Improvement Options" summaries for intersections and roadway segments in town of Princeton. Improvement options include removing overgrown vegetations at several locations, maintaining "Stop" signs and pavement markings, intersection realignment at the northern Route 140/Route 31 study location and perhaps the installation of a modern roundabout at the southern Route 140/Route 31 study location in the East Princeton Village.

Joe O'Brien asked what would be considered an adequate pavement width for Route 140, where the community seeks to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. M. Splaine answered that, according to MassDOT design criteria, roadway widths of 30 to 32 feet are considered adequate for highways that have the characteristics of Route 140. *(It was indicated that CMRPC plans to measure Route 140 pavement widths through Princeton at tenth-mile intervals. Emphasis will be placed on the East Princeton Village, where roadway widths will be measured every 100 feet.)*

Reviewing some suggested improvement options that had been discussed earlier in the study process, Rydant also presented graphics showing an example of potential signage indicating entry into the historic East Princeton

Village area as well as active speed monitoring devices, currently used at the Thomas Prince School, that have the potential for installation in the Village.

B. Harris stated that following the March meeting of the Safety Improvement Task Force, MRPC staff completed further work on a detailed safety analysis of Route 140 as well as a series of suggested recommendations for improvements. Mr. Harris provided detailed handout materials to the group that summarized the work completed by the Montachusett planning staff.

G. Snow, MRPC staff, then reviewed the Route 140 crash analyses conducted in the town of Westminster. Covering a three (3) year analysis period, Mr. Snow reviewed the various maps and summary tables included in the handout.

G. Snow then continued with an inventory of existing traffic control signs in Westminster and Sterling, particularly the placement and condition of yellow diamond warning signs. New signs made with modern reflective materials are necessary to enable clear night time viewing. Further, Mr. Snow pointed out the poor condition of pavement markings, traffic control signs and guardrails at several Route 140 locations in Westminster. It was suggested that reflectors be installed on Route 140 guardrails to increase visibility under dark conditions.

R. Rydant asked about MassDOT policy regarding the installation of the reflectors. M. Splaine indicated that Route 68 had met the standards for the installation of centerline reflectors. The cost is around \$20 per reflector; he was unsure about the installation cost. The pavement is ground down where the reflector is installed so that snow removal operations will not dislodge them from the pavement surface.

G. Snow, following the materials in the meeting handouts, reviewed suggested improvement alternatives for Route 140 in both Sterling and Westminster. Potential improvements include flattening some sections of Route 140 where sight distance is an identified issue as well as removing roadside vegetation within the right of way that restricts vision along some curved sections of the roadway. The handout included five (5) example Route 140 locations along with photos and measurements obtained in the field by MRPC staff.

R. Rydant stated that before installing a "Blind Driveway" sign, other solutions such as selectively cutting back vegetation should be considered. Further, other engineered solutions to significant obstructions need to first be explored, such as removing ledge or relocating stone walls and other moveable obstructions. Ornamental vegetation close to the road needs to

be trimmed low. Rydant stated that installing such a sign should be a last resort. *(An alternative sign that has been used in the planning region stated "Limited Sight Distance".)*

Next Steps:

J. Fairbanks, providing a summary of the group's discussions, indicated the following suggested next steps for the communities and planning agencies:

June & July: Each Route 140 host community will identify any remaining suggested improvement options for consideration and inclusion in the report document. Improvement options should also be prioritized for each community.

August: Next meeting of the Safety Improvement Task Force. Work to finalize improvement options and resolve any remaining issues. Begin to prepare for public meetings in respective communities.

September: Each community will hold a final local presentation; the planning agencies will be able to finalize the report document. *(An Executive Summary will also be prepared.)*

Next Meeting:

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for the evening of August 19, 2010 at 7:00 PM at the Princeton Town Hall Annex. *(Later, this meeting was cancelled and rescheduled for the evening of September 16, 2010 in the Annex.)*

Adjournment:

J. Fairbanks then motioned to adjourn the meeting. After a unanimous vote to adjourn, the meeting ended at 8:40 PM.