
DOT approves Route 140 improvements

By TIM CAMERATO | Jun 16, 2015

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BELMONT — Safety improvements at the intersection of Route 140 and Jamestown Road will be made, now that a Public Hearing Commission gave the state Department of Transportation the go-ahead on Monday.

The three-member commission's decision to move forward with the project was unanimous, according to Project Manager Victoria Chase.

Construction at the intersection will use money from the federal Highway Safety Improvement Program to install new warning signs, clear trees and resurface Route 140 about 900 feet east and west of the intersection.

A previous price tag of about \$1.6 million was quoted to the Belmont Board of Selectmen last August, but Chase said officials haven't calculated a new estimate for the project.

A possible construction project at the intersection has been discussed between town and state officials for years, with public hearings on proposed plans in 2011 and 2013. The state wasn't convinced that there was enough community support to continue at those times, and the project sat in limbo until they met with town officials last July.

According to notes taken at that meeting, Police Chief Mark Lewandoski said he still sees near accidents on that section of road. He suggested that the clearing of "escape routes" and tough road conditions have caused people to slow down though, reducing the number of accidents in recent years.

Last August, the Board of Selectmen voted to back safety improvements and send a letter of support to the state, although some expressed concern with the cost and worried that improved roads could lead to more speeding.

Chase said the state will soon move forward to acquire easements for clearing trees. A plan for construction will then be developed before the project goes out to bid.

She said construction is scheduled for late 2016 but if all goes well, work might be able to begin earlier.

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