

# ***RMAP***

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## ***Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning***

**City of Rockford, Public Works Department  
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104**

[www.rockfordil.gov/government/works/index.cfm?section=planning&id=977](http://www.rockfordil.gov/government/works/index.cfm?section=planning&id=977)

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# Public Participation Plan

(July 17, 2008)

# ***Public Participation Plan***

(July 17, 2008)

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## **Metropolitan Planning Organization Planning Goals**

- 1.** Support the economic vitality of the Rockford Metropolitan Planning Area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency.
- 2.** Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
- 3.** Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- 4.** Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight
- 5.** Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life and promote consistency between State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- 6.** Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- 7.** Promote efficient system management and operation
- 8.** Efficiently preserve the existing transportation system

## **-SECTION 1-**

### **PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT:**

The purpose of this document is to set forth the policies, procedures, methods and details for involving the general public and area transportation stakeholders in the transportation planning and programming activities of the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (formerly the Rockford Area Transportation Study), the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Rockford Metropolitan Area.

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE ROCKFORD MPO PLANNING PROCESS:**

The Rockford Metropolitan Planning Organization (RATS/RMAP) is the federally-required planning organization, or MPO, for the Rockford Urbanized Area (UA) as defined by the US Bureau of the Census for the Year 2000. Federal law, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and its predecessors require that the Rockford MPO conduct a *continual transportation planning process* that *coordinates* transportation and related land use and infrastructure decisions of all the State and local governmental jurisdictions in the Rockford MPO Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The MPA includes all of the Census-defined urban area (UA) plus those additional areas in the vicinity that are forecasted by the MPO to become urbanized in the next 20-25 years.

The expressed purpose of the transportation planning process is to assure the cooperation of all State and local jurisdictions and other transportation stakeholders so that all governmentally-spirited transportation policies and decisions and publicly-funded transportation projects, improvements and systems are in concert with each other and with all other governmental activities in the MPA. No Federal funding can be applied to transportation improvement projects, transportation services, or transportation planning studies in the MPA unless the projects, services, or studies are part of one or more of the following three comprehensive, coordinated and cooperative documents that have been developed by Rockford MPO and approved by the Rockford MPO Policy Committee and, to varying degrees, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

1. ***The Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)***. The LRTP is a comprehensive proposal for the further development, improvement and maintenance of the area's major transportation systems. The LRTP has a 20-year (minimum) time horizon and addresses all forms of transportation: highway, transit, pedestrian, public and private. The LRTP is comprehensively updated every 4-5 years.
2. ***The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)***. The TIP lists the proposed public expenditures for transportation improvements scheduled over the next three years. The listing includes all major projects proposed by all jurisdictions in the area. The listing establishes priorities and is financially constrained (i.e., a project can only be included if there is a reasonable expectation of sufficient funding for its completion). The TIP is updated annually.
3. ***The Unified Planning Work Program (UWP)***. The UWP is prepared annually to direct the day-to-day work of the MPO staff and committees. It outlines the specific planning activities to be accomplished or attempted in the coming fiscal year and it assigns responsibilities to the various MPO participants. The bulk of this work is funded by grants from the Federal transportation agencies (FHWA and FTA).

### **THE PLANNING AREA:**

The full jurisdictional area of the Rockford MPO is the **Metropolitan Planning Area**. To understand what land and jurisdictions are included in the MPA, two additional designated areas must be explained: the "**Urbanized Area**" and the "**Adjusted Urbanized Area**".

The "Urbanized Area" is defined by the US Census Bureau in accordance with strict population density criteria. Generally speaking, urbanized areas must have a minimum of 50,000 persons living in contiguous dense settlement patterns. From the Census criteria used in 1990, the Rockford Urbanized Area was confined within Winnebago County and consisted primarily of the incorporated areas of Rockford, Loves Park, Machesney Park, Cherry Valley, and

immediately surrounding intensely developed lands. Roscoe, Rockton, South Beloit, Beloit (WI) and the developed lands surrounding those communities were designated in the Beloit Urbanized Area.

For the Year 2000 Census, however, the urbanized area criteria was altered to become even more strictly dependent on population density and proximity. In general, the core of an urbanized area must be comprised of Census block groups or blocks that have a population of at least 1,000 persons per square mile. Other blocks with a minimum of 500 persons per square mile can be added if they are within a precisely defined proximity to the core area. Significant in 2000, incorporated areas are not automatically included in the Year 2000 urbanized areas, as they were in the 1990. Now, to be included, each census block must meet the density and proximity criteria.

The most significant changes from the 1990 UA to the Year 2000 UA are:

- a. Large parts of Boone County and the City of Belvidere are now in the Rockford Urbanized Area. Also included is part of the Village of Timberlane.
- b. The Village of Winnebago is now included in the Rockford Urbanized Area.
- c. Most of the Village of Roscoe is now in the Rockford Urbanized Area. Roscoe was previously in the Beloit Urbanized Area.
- d. The population of the Rockford Urbanized Area has increased substantially (from 207,826 in 1990 to 270,414 in the Year 2000).

The real importance of the urbanized area designation is to serve as the basis for several Federal funding assistance formulas. Federal transportation funding assistance derived from these statistics for the Rockford area is substantial. In recent years, the Rockford area has annually received Federal transportation planning funds over \$600,000 per year, roadway construction funds approaching \$2.0 million per year, and public transit assistance funds close to \$1.5 million per year.

One of the functions of Rockford MPO is to determine when, and on what projects the above funds can be spent locally. In making this determination, Federal guidance requires that the Rockford MPO conduct the "3-C" planning process, mentioned above, and the guidance further requires that the MPO adjust the urbanized area for planning purposes and forecast a Metropolitan Planning Area.

For transportation planning purposes, the Adjusted Urbanized Area must include all of the urbanized area, but also includes other small areas as necessary to round-off the jagged or sometimes irregular boundaries of the urbanized area. The Adjusted Urbanized Area includes additional lands that are certain or highly likely to be developed within the next 5 years and other abutting or nearby already developed lands. The Adjusted Urbanized Area is used primarily to determine which roadways are eligible for Federal "urban" or "rural" funding assistance (but does not affect the total amount of Federal assistance available). The most recent Adjusted Urbanized Area for the Rockford MPO was derived through deliberations of the MPO staff and Technical Committee over the last several months of 2002 and adopted by the Policy Committee in December 2002.

The **Metropolitan Planning Area** is similarly determined by the Rockford MPO. The **Metropolitan Planning Area** is the area that is expected to be urbanized in the next 20-25 years. It can be as large as the entire metropolitan statistical area or consolidated metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Bureau of the Census.

Maps showing the Rockford Urbanized Area and Adjusted Urbanized Area are included at the end of this document.

**-SECTION 2-**

**THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ROCKFORD MPO:**

The authority establishing the Rockford MPO is derived from State of Illinois law pertaining to interagency agreements and Federal laws that provide transportation assistance to the State and local governments. By an interagency agreement known as the MPO Cooperative Agreement, the State of Illinois and the legislative bodies of Rockford, Loves Park, Machesney Park, Belvidere, Winnebago County and Boone County have established RMAP as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford area.

The governing body of the Rockford MPO is the **Policy Committee** and the current membership on this Committee is listed in **TABLE 1**. The Policy Committee is responsible for all official activities of the Rockford MPO as further specified in the Cooperative Agreement.

<b>TABLE 1 - Policy Committee</b>
Mayor, City of Rockford
Mayor, City of Belvidere
Mayor, City of Loves Park
President, Village of Machesney Park
Chairman, Boone County
Chairman, Winnebago County Board
Deputy Director, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT-Region 2)

As stated in the MPO Cooperative Agreement, an entity desiring membership to the Policy Committee should make a formal written request to the Policy Committee Chairman. The Policy Committee will review and evaluate all such requests and respond in a timely manner.

New members may be added to the Policy Committee (and thus included in the Cooperative Agreement) without re-ratification by the legislative bodies of the existing members if all of the following criteria and conditions are met:

1. The new entity is an incorporated village or city within the Rockford Urbanized Area or a County encompassing part of the Rockford Urbanized Area.
  - a) If the new entity is a County, it shall contain a population of at least 7,500 persons located within the Census defined Rockford Urbanized area, with said 7,500 persons not residing within a city or village having representation on the Policy Committee, according to the most recent U.S. Census of Population.
  - b) If the new entity is a city or village, it shall contain at least five percent (5%) of the population of the Census defined Rockford Urbanized Area, according to the most recent U.S. Census of Population.
2. The entity has responsibility (ownership or maintenance) for three (3) road miles or more with Federal route designation as indicated on the latest Federal Aid Five-Year Classification Map.
3. The entity has responsibility, including significant financial participation, for substantial public transit including fixed route, demand response or both.
4. The legislative body of the new entity adopts and ratifies the Cooperative Agreement (altered only to include the new entity in the list of Policy Committee members).
5. The existing Policy Committee members unanimously agree to admit the requesting member.

The Policy Committee obtains input and advice on transportation matters from a wide variety of public and private sources but primarily through the **Technical Committee**. The Technical Committee currently consists of one voting representative from each of the following entities in **TABLE 2**.

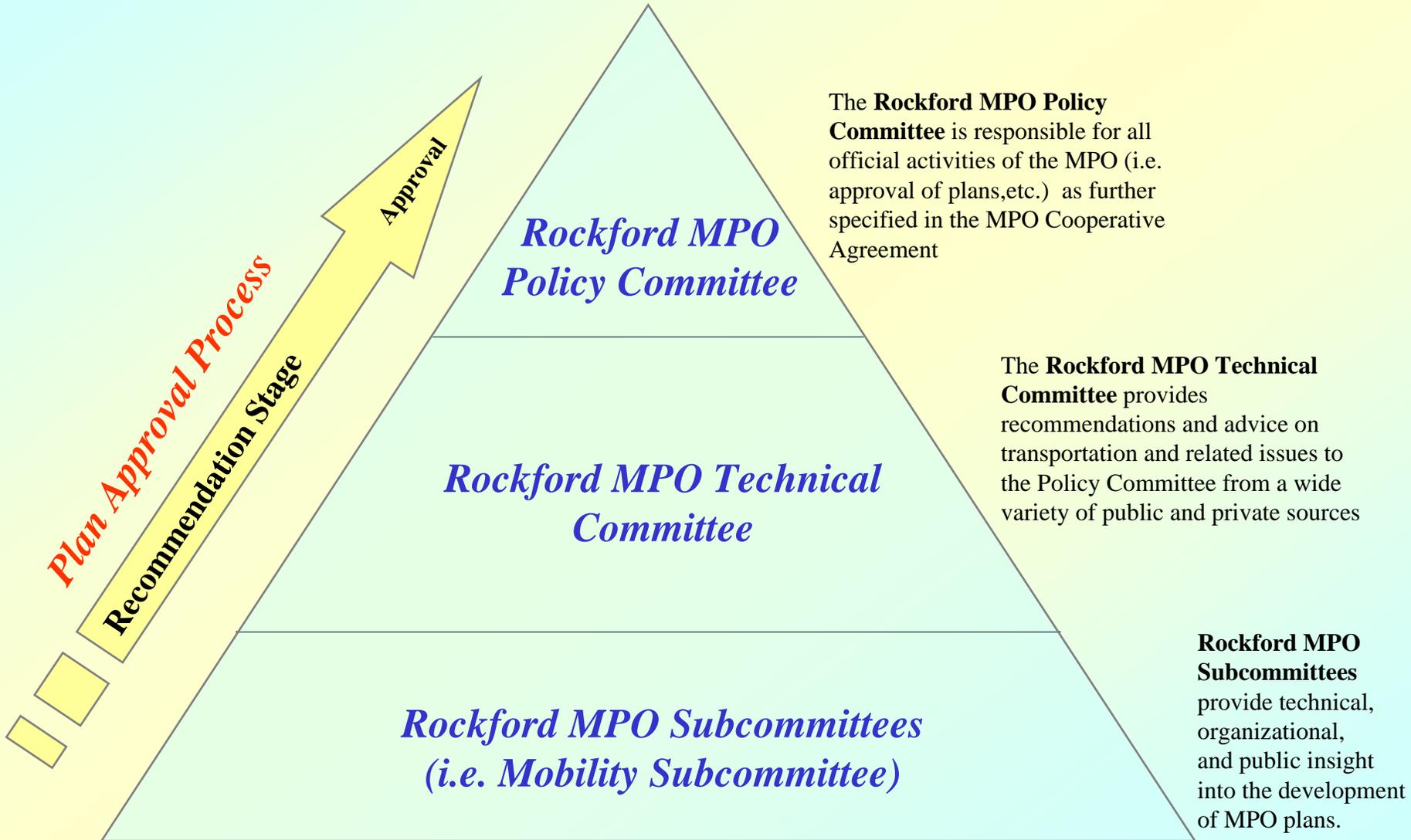
<b>TABLE 2 - Technical Committee</b>	
1	Belvidere/Boone County Planning Department
2	Belvidere Public Works Department
3	Boone County Highway Department
4	Village of Cherry Valley
5	Greater Rockford Airport Authority
6	Illinois Department of Transportation – District 2
7	Loves Park Public Works Department
8	Loves Park Community Development Department
9	Machesney Park Planning Department
10	Rockford Community Development Department
11	Rockford Mass Transit District
12	Rockford Public Works Department
13	Village of Roscoe
14	Winnebago County Planning & Economic Development Department
15	Winnebago County Highway Department
16	Village Winnebago

The Technical Committee has the authority to establish and appoint members to other temporary or special purpose committees as needed to carry out the duties of the Technical Committee. Membership on these committees may consist of individuals or come from organizations not otherwise represented on the Technical or Policy Committees.

In the past, the Technical Committee has appointed special subcommittees including the following:

1. **STP Subcommittee.** This subcommittee was originally created to focus on the selection and prioritization of candidate projects for the use of Federal Aid Urban funds, a special category of funding used primarily for regional highway projects. Under new federal law the Federal Aid Urban category has been replaced with the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and the funds can now be used for highway and transit purposes. Approximately \$1.5 - \$2.0 million dollars is allocated annually to the Rockford Urban Area. The STP Subcommittee continues to meet on an as-needed basis to provide advice on the use of these funds.
2. **Transit TIP Subcommittee.** Activated as needed, this subcommittee is comprised of area planners and transit staff and meets for the purpose of studying and making recommendations on complicated local transit programming issues. In the past, this subcommittee was also responsible for promoting greater private sector participation in the planning and delivery of transit services.
3. **Mobility Subcommittee.** To promote communication and coordination between public transit, human services providers and workforce development agencies the Rockford MPO has created the Mobility Subcommittee. The Mobility Subcommittee originated from the Getting to Work in Greater Rockford (GTW) organization, which was part of the larger statewide Work, Welfare and Families coalition. The Mobility Subcommittee consists of human services and transportation agencies, governmental entities, workforce development organizations, public and private transit providers, assisted living facilities and ambulance providers. The GTW organization began in 2005 and has met since to discuss transportation options for transit dependent populations and is continuing to do so

# ROCKFORD MPO ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE and PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS



as the new Mobility Subcommittee. The Mobility Subcommittee is a standing subcommittee and meets the second Tuesday of each month at 10:00am at the YWCA of Rockford, IL. Agendas are distributed through the Rockford MPO mailing list (as well as through e-mail) 1-2 weeks prior to a meeting. The Mobility Subcommittee was primarily responsible for the development of the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP).

The duties of the Mobility Subcommittee are to facilitate public involvement to identify transportation needs, identify and work with resource agencies to develop strategies that address the transportation needs of public transit dependent populations. The Mobility Subcommittee also advocates for enhancements, expansion and new services that improve the well being of public transportation dependent populations.

### **-SECTION 3-**

#### **PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE MPO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP):**

Developing the MPO Public Participation Plan involved several phases. To begin the process of creating this document, a public comment period was afforded so that the public could comment on the predecessor of this document, the RATS Public Involvement Plan. The intent of this public comment period was to solicit feedback regarding what citizens within the MPA felt was important to the process of creating such a plan as well as to determine if current methodologies taken regarding public participation were satisfactory. This commenting period began on April 9, 2008 and lasted until May 27, 2008. Notification of this comment period was given by placing a legal notice (on 4/9/2008) in the Rock River Times, a widely distributed and free regional newspaper, and by sending notices to all those listed on the MPO mailing list.

A second public comment period was afforded once a draft of the Public Participation Plan was complete. The comment period on the draft MPO Public Participation Plan began on May 19, 2008 and ended on July 2, 2008 allowing the federally required 45-day comment period for the draft. During this comment period a notice was placed in the Rock River Times, on May 14, 2008, and informational public open houses were held on May 20-22, 2008 regarding the PPP as well as other MPO documents. In conjunction with this review period, the *Mobility Subcommittee, Technical and Policy Committees* were provided the draft for review and comment. Subsequently, updates on the PPP were given at all MPO Committee meetings. The document was also made available to the public on the MPO webpage.

At the end of the comment period, responses and comments received by the public, committee members and other interested parties were examined. Questions and comments received from the comment periods and open houses have been addressed and responses are included in an Appendix to this document.

In association with the creation of this document, public outreach materials such as brochures and a graphic executive summary were developed and made available to members of the public at the various open houses and through partner organizations of the MPO. The purpose of these outreach materials were to explain the goals and objectives of the PPP as well as to gain the interest of citizens to participate in the MPO planning process. The outreach materials provided MPO staff stakeholder contact information and guidance on the stakeholder-preferred method of public outreach. Copies of these materials are included in an Appendix of this document.

### **-SECTION 4-**

#### **STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE ROCKFORD METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA:**

The Rockford MPO will continue to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for public participation regarding the transportation planning process through the following strategies:

##### **➤ *Engage the public in the transportation planning process***

- Provide information to citizens, affected public agencies, and other interested parties regarding transportation plans and programs early in the process to afford time for review materials and participate in the process.
- Maintain the Rockford MPO mailing list to ensure that all interested parties are notified of planning activities so that they may comment and participate in the planning process.
- Utilize various visualization techniques, which include but are not limited to maps, graphs and charts to assist the public in better understanding transportation plans and planning processes.
- Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of transportation related plans.

- **Keep the public informed of transportation related activities**
  - Provide access to transportation plans and related information to the public during normal business hours.
  - Make documents available related to the transportation planning process to interested parties through a comprehensive and continually updated contact list (i.e. the Rockford MPO mailing list).
  - Maintain the MPO website with transportation plans, contact information, upcoming events, committee meeting schedules, agendas, minutes, and related transportation planning materials.
- **Promote participation in the transportation planning process**
  - Continue the MPO policy of allowing any member of the public the opportunity to comment and ask questions at MPO meetings.
  - Facilitate public meetings/informational open houses, when appropriate, at convenient and accessible places and times.
  - Publish notices regarding transportation plans, open houses etc. to make the public aware of comment periods.
  - Promote the Rockford MPO webpage on MPO documents.
- **Develop methods to improve public participation**
  - Evaluate current public participation techniques used to encourage involvement and modify accordingly.
  - Continue to work with the Mobility Subcommittee to encourage public participation.
  - Expand upon current public participation and involvement methods with the development of the new RMAP<sup>1</sup> MPO structure.

**The Rockford MPO will also continue to apply the following planning principles:**

- ◆ Recognize the rights of citizens to participate in planning decisions.
- ◆ Strive to give citizens (including those who lack formal organization or influence) full, clear and accurate information on planning issues and the opportunity to have a meaningful role in the development of plans and programs.
- ◆ Strive to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons.
- ◆ Assist in the clarification of community goals, objectives and policies in plan-making.
- ◆ Ensure that reports, records and any other non-confidential information which is, or will be, available to decision makers is made available to the public in a convenient format and sufficiently in advance of any decision.
- ◆ Strive to protect the integrity of the natural environment and the heritage of the built environment.
- ◆ Pay special attention to the coordination of decisions and the long-range consequences of present actions.

The next section, "*FEDERAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS*," list the specific criteria that have been developed Federally through the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and details the methods in which RATS will address each of the categories.

## **-SECTION 5-**

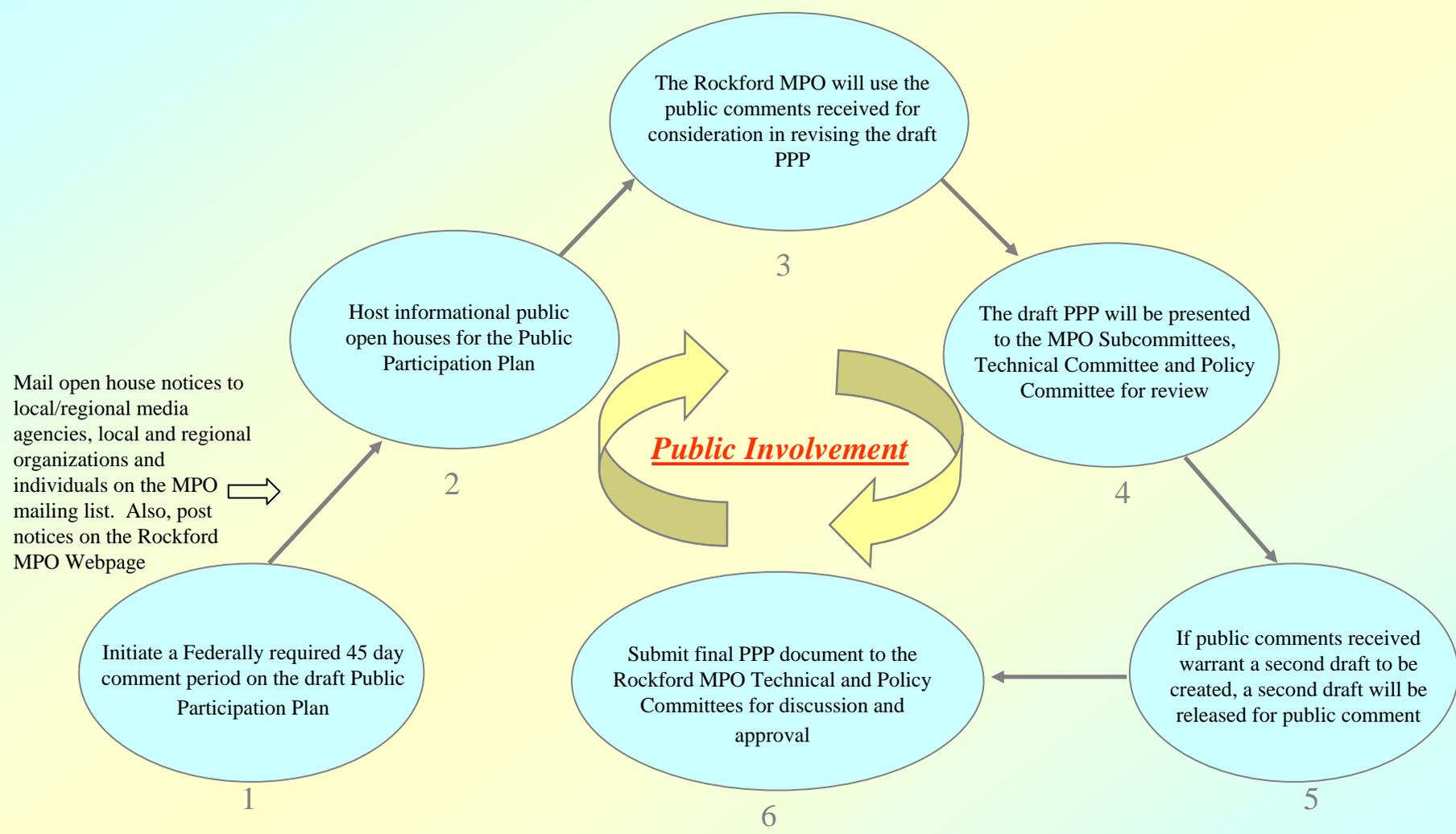
### **FEDERAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS:**

The guidelines for Metropolitan Planning as published in the February 14, 2007 Federal Register and stemming from the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) require an extensive public participation process in all future transportation planning.

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<sup>1</sup> RMAP: *Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning*. At the time of the creation of the draft PPP document, efforts were being finalized to develop a new MPO structure that will continue the planning work and documents of RATS as well as expand regional planning activities. A succeeding section of this document will elaborate on the reorganization and expansion of the MPO.

# STEPS TO CREATING THE ROCKFORD MPO PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)



The law states specific criteria that the metropolitan planning process shall follow, prefaced by the following statement from the February 14, 2007 Federal Register, ***“The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.”***

In the section below, the criteria are repeated (bold italics), each followed by a brief summary of the general policy, technique, or approach the MPO will use to abide by or accomplish the criteria.

- ***“A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable”***

To comply with this criteria, the Rockford MPO will develop/update its PPP whenever there are significant changes to: (1) the planning process, (2) the geographic coverage area of the planning process, and/or (3) the approach of the Rockford MPO in facilitating and encouraging public participation. Further, the Rockford MPO will develop/update the PPP in a timely fashion, distribute it to all persons on the MPO mailing list, including the press, the media and public libraries. The MPO will then publish a notice in an area newspaper of general circulation and will provide a minimum of a 45-day review and comment period. Subsequently, if significant comments are received, MPO staff will modify the PPP and redistribute it for further review and comment. This process will iterate until such time as the MPO Policy Committee is satisfied that all comments have been appropriately addressed. A final adopted PPP will be made available to the public in electronic and hard copy format.

- ***“Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes”***

The Rockford MPO addresses this requirement in several ways. Some efforts involve direct contact with stakeholders and general citizens while other approaches are indirect and/or opportunistic. The Rockford MPO will continue to employ all of the following under appropriate circumstances.

1. The primary approach of the Rockford MPO to comply with this criteria is the maintenance of an extensive mailing list and the use of direct mailings to all persons on this list. As a matter of practice, the Rockford MPO makes the above mailings in a timely fashion. Mailings are made at least 6-7 days prior to all Committee meetings and, typically 13-14 days prior to MPO Policy Committee meetings. Details of the mailing list development, expansion, maintenance and use are the subject of a full section of this report, immediately following this section.
2. The Rockford MPO periodically conducts comprehensive surveys of its mailing list members. Such surveys request verification of mailing information, desire to continue on the list, suggestions for improving public involvement, and suggestions for additions to the list.
3. With regard to special transportation studies, extra efforts are made to announce and invite participation. These efforts include expanded mailing lists, press releases, press conferences, and special open meetings on-site or near the subject area of the special study. Examples of studies where special efforts have been made include: the West State Street Corridor Study; the Riverside/Alpine/Forest Hills Congestion Management Study; the WinGIS Feasibility Study; the Winnebago/Boone/Rock County Traffic Simulation Modeling Study; the Winnebago County Smart Growth Study; the IL Route 173 Corridor Plan in Boone County; the Rockford Rail Consolidation Study and Winnebago County's Springfield Avenue Corridor Plan. Current plans underway that will have several opportunities for public participation include the Kishwaukee Street Corridor Study, the NICTI Alternative Analysis, the Regional Freight Study and the Boone County Northeast Urban Planning Area (NUPA) Study. In total, hundreds if not thousands of persons have been encouraged to participate in these studies.
4. Annually, the Rockford MPO publishes a public notice announcing the planning work to be conducted during the coming year. Specific mention is made to the UWP, the TIP and the LRTP and the public is invited to solicit additional information, attend MPO meetings, and comment on transportation issues. The MPO also

sends via e-mail all meeting notices and documents to media organizations announcing comment periods for draft plans and informational public open houses.

5. The Rockford MPO makes special efforts to participate in activities *initiated by other planning, visioning, or design efforts sponsored by other entities throughout the region*. In the past, the Rockford MPO has paid special attention to the Blueprint for Rockford visioning effort, the Mayor's Welfare to Work Task Force, the comprehensive land use plans of the member land regulatory and planning authorities, the Route and Schedule Studies of the Rockford Mass Transit District, the update of the City of Rockford's Zoning Ordinance, and the Kishwaukee Corridor Study. Over the years, the Rockford MPO has established and maintained working partnerships and contacts with regional organizations that provide various services. MPO staff have attended meetings, open houses and have made presentations to committees and boards of partner organizations. The Rockford MPO will continue to seek out and participate in efforts such as these when opportunities arise.
  6. The Rockford MPO makes a special effort to maximize the ability of the Policy and Technical Committees, as well as the Mobility Subcommittee, to facilitate public participation. All committee meetings are announced ahead of time; **first**, annually in the Fall, via a tentative list of the next year's meeting dates and times; and **second**, before each meeting, agendas and documents are disseminated to the entire mailing list. All meetings are open to the public with public comment solicited on all agenda topics. As a matter of practice, all agendas and notices are specifically annotated with the phrase, "**Opportunities for public comment will be afforded**". Following all MPO meetings minutes are prepared that document actions and significant discussions and these minutes are distributed to the full mailing list and posted on the MPO website. The Rockford MPO makes a conscious effort to provide a welcoming environment for public comment at all of its meetings.
  7. The Rockford MPO utilizes special sub-committees on an ad hoc basis. Examples of such committees in the past have been the Transit TIP Subcommittee, the Federal Aid Urban/Project Selection Committee, the Traffic Simulation Modeling Steering Committee, the GIS Feasibility Subcommittee, the Mobility Subcommittee (presently) and numerous others. Citizens who are interested in the specific topics of these committees are invited to attend as voting or non-voting members, depending on their willingness to diligently participate. The Rockford MPO will continue to utilize such subcommittees in the future when appropriate.
- **"Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web"**

It has been a long standing policy of the Rockford MPO to provide the public with the necessary information needed to understand the transportation planning process as well as the function of the MPO. MPO documents, such as technical information, plans, meeting agendas and meeting minutes are posted on the MPO website (currently <http://rockfordil.gov/government/works/index.cfm?section=planning&id=977>). The MPO staff also provide work products on CD or DVD upon request.

Additionally, the Rockford MPO makes their work available in printed format. While it is important to make information available in electronic format for quicker and more widespread distribution, it must also be recognized that not all individuals who may be interested in the planning process have *direct access* to a computer or the Internet in order to view MPO material. Therefore, to the extent possible, the Rockford MPO policy is to provide printed copies of all documents to stakeholders and interested parties. The LRTP, the TIP and the UWP are distributed to all on the mailing list. Executive summaries are provided for large printed documents that are difficult to distribute in mass. All large documents are available for public inspection at the public libraries and other accessible public locations.

- **"Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times"**

All Rockford MPO meetings are open to the public and public comment is welcome on all matters. Open discussion is permitted on any transportation-related matter at every Mobility Subcommittee, Technical and Policy Committee meeting.

All Rockford MPO meeting locations are selected with recognition of the need to accommodate persons with disabilities. Locations for Rockford MPO meetings are also selected with regard to individuals who rely on public transportation and are therefore held at venues that are along or near public transit routes. MPO meetings are held at convenient times with formal meetings generally in the afternoon and often in the evening

after 5:00 pm. In addition, Rockford MPO meetings are dispersed geographically to maximize the stakeholder coverage.

Rockford MPO documents are made available at public open houses. Comment sheets and informational brochures are also provided.

➤ ***“Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs”***

The Rockford MPO has provided visualizations (maps, charts, diagrams, etc.) in the past and will continue to do so with future documents. The MPO is currently in the process of furthering its use of visualization techniques to assist the public to better understand transportation plans and the transportation planning process. Examples include the development of video, models, diagrams and brochures that give insight to the various documents that the Rockford MPO produces. This information will be available to the public in both hardcopy and electronic format. Examples of visual outreach materials are attached in an Appendix of this document.

➤ ***“Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including but not limited to a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP”***

Even though the Rockford area is an attainment area for air quality, the MPO often uses the more lengthy review period common to non-attainment areas (30 days or more) for all major MPO documents (LRTPs, TIPs, UWPs). For example, the UWP is typically released in draft form in mid-March but not adopted until the end of May. Similarly, the TIP is usually released in draft form in late May or early June, but not adopted until late July or August. The LRTP, when updated, typically goes through several draft releases, with several weeks between releases, before adoption. Moreover, any element or project in the MPO documents can be reintroduced for further review before the Technical or Policy Committees, at any time, up until the project is actually under construction.

Amendments to Rockford MPO documents, plans and programs are treated on an individual basis but are generally less rigorous than the adoption of the full document, depending on the significance or potential impact of the amendment. More specific statements regarding timing and notice are in the LRTP, TIP, and UWP Timetable sections of this report and in the documents themselves.

As previously noted, all Rockford MPO meetings are announced well ahead of meeting dates through mailings of meeting agendas to all on the mailing list. In addition, a tentative meeting schedule for the next calendar year is prepared and distributed to those on the mailing list toward the end of each year. MPO meeting calendars are also placed on the MPO webpage.

Prior to the approval of any MPO plan, informational public open houses are held so that members of the public can comment on documents as well as converse with MPO staff. Notices for open house events are distributed to all individuals on the MPO mailing list and are publicized in the widely distributed Rock River Times newspaper as well as displayed on the MPO webpage.

➤ ***“Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP”***

The Rockford MPO responds to all public input and comments received during the planning and program development process. Specific sections are reserved in the TIP, LRTP and other MPO documents for public comments. MPO staff respond in writing to input received during the comment period. Any draft MPO document is not considered complete and are not adopted until all comments are responded to or changes made to the documents to accommodate the comments.

Verbal comments made at Rockford MPO meetings are generally responded to immediately or the topic is continued for later response. Minutes are prepared for all MPO Technical, Policy Committee and Mobility Subcommittee meetings and public comments and responses are recorded therein. Said minutes are then distributed to all so that further discourse may occur, as needed.

➤ ***“Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems, such as low income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services”***

The Rockford MPO's policy to consider the needs of those traditionally under served by existing transportation systems has many facets. The MPO periodically prepares and updates assessments on Environmental Justice and Title VI (Non-discrimination). These reports document the spatial distribution of the area's low-income and minority populations and compares the distribution of these populations to the distribution of publicly-funded transit services and other transportation improvements. The Rockford MPO will continue to prepare these assessments with the goal of determining whether transportation decisions adversely-impact or-neglect low-income and minority persons or groups. With the Year 2000 Census data, the MPO has conducted a comprehensive assessment of the geographical distribution of the area low income and minority persons with respect to transportation.

The Mobility Subcommittee plays a key role in seeking out and considering needs of the traditionally under-served. As previously stated, the Mobility Subcommittee played a major role in the development of the HSTP, which assessed the job-related needs of transit dependent individuals in the planning area. The Mobility Subcommittee meets monthly to discuss transportation, transit and workforce development issues in the region. These meetings provide a forum for area human service, workforce development, public and private transit providers, and citizens to meet, discuss and coordinate efforts to better serve and involve individuals in the metropolitan planning area. The Subcommittee will continue to identify individuals and organizations within the Metropolitan Planning Area to participate in this important component of the planning process.

To the extent financially feasible in a community that is predominantly automobile oriented, the Rockford MPO will continue to support the development and maintenance of efficient and comprehensive mass transit services as provided publicly and privately. The MPO will continue to provide technical services to the Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative (NICTI) which is looking at commuter rail service to the Chicago region as well as the proposed inter-city rail service by Amtrak.

To the extent financially feasible in a community that is predominantly automobile oriented, the Rockford MPO will continue to support the development and maintenance of efficient and comprehensive facilities for pedestrian and bicyclists. The MPO will assist its members and provide best practices during implementation of on-street bicycling facilities.

The Rockford MPO supports the development of facilities to provide equal or better service to persons with disabilities and the modification of existing transportation systems to remove barriers to persons with disabilities.

To the extent financially feasible, practical and not unduly disruptive to the general citizenry, the Rockford MPO supports efforts to improve transportation services to all persons who are disenfranchised from or disenfranchised with the predominantly automobile-oriented transportation system in the Rockford Area.

- ***“When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93), a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP”***

The Rockford MPO will continue to explicitly comply with this requirement, as evidenced in all MPO plans and TIPs since the guidelines for SAFETEA-LU were enacted into law.

- ***“Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts”***

The Rockford MPO will continue to explicitly comply with this requirement, as evidenced in all MPO plans and TIP's since the guidelines for SAFETEA-LU were enacted into law.

- ***“Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process”***

This document marks the *first* Public Participation Plan that the Rockford MPO has created since the implementation of SAFETEA-LU. Prior to this document, the MPO published a Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

three times since the requirement was first developed in the early 1990s. In preparation for the most recent update of the PIP, the MPO mailed a survey to all on the mailing list. The survey solicited comments and suggestions on the involvement process, and on the representative composition of the Rockford MPO Technical and Policy Committees. Based on the results, it was concluded that the great majority of respondents were satisfied with the way the Rockford MPO currently involves the public and transportation stakeholders and to the composition of the Technical and Policy Committees.

The MPO also periodically reviews the effectiveness of the procedures and policies that it utilizes for public participation through internal review. Public participation methods are discussed by staff frequently. In addition, suggestions for methods to involve the public and encourage participation are inquired upon from the various Rockford MPO Committees.

As stated in this document, public comment is always welcome regarding the effectiveness of the procedures undertaken to ensure public participation. The Rockford MPO will continue to monitor the effectiveness of procedures and will build upon and revise them as necessary.

- ***“These procedures will be reviewed by the FHWA and the FTA during certification reviews for TMAs, and as otherwise necessary for all MPOs to assure that full and open access is provided to MPO decision making processes.”***

Since the PIP was first developed in 1995, the FHWA and FTA have conducted five certification reviews of the MPO; the first in 1995, the second in 1997, the third in 2000, the fourth in 2003 and the last in September 2007. None of these reviews have cited the Rockford MPO Public Involvement Processes as being inadequate or inappropriate. In the 1995 review, the Rockford MPO was commended for its use of ad hoc committees and its participation in Rockford’s Blueprint visioning effort. In the 1997 review, it was suggested that Realtors, as appropriate, be added to the mailing list. An informational mailer was sent to hundreds of area realtors. Those who responded were added to the mailing list. In the 2007 review, it was noted that the PIP needed to be updated to reflect the requirements of SAFETEA-LU regarding public participation. This update was undertaken by Rockford MPO staff and is reflected in this document.

It should also be noted that the certification process is itself used as an opportunity for public participation. Announcement of the certification reviews were disseminated for all five reviews and the public was invited to attend, participate and comment. The Rockford MPO will continue this practice.

- ***“In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs shall be developed with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:***

***(1) Recipients of assistance under Title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53***

***(2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and***

***(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 204.***

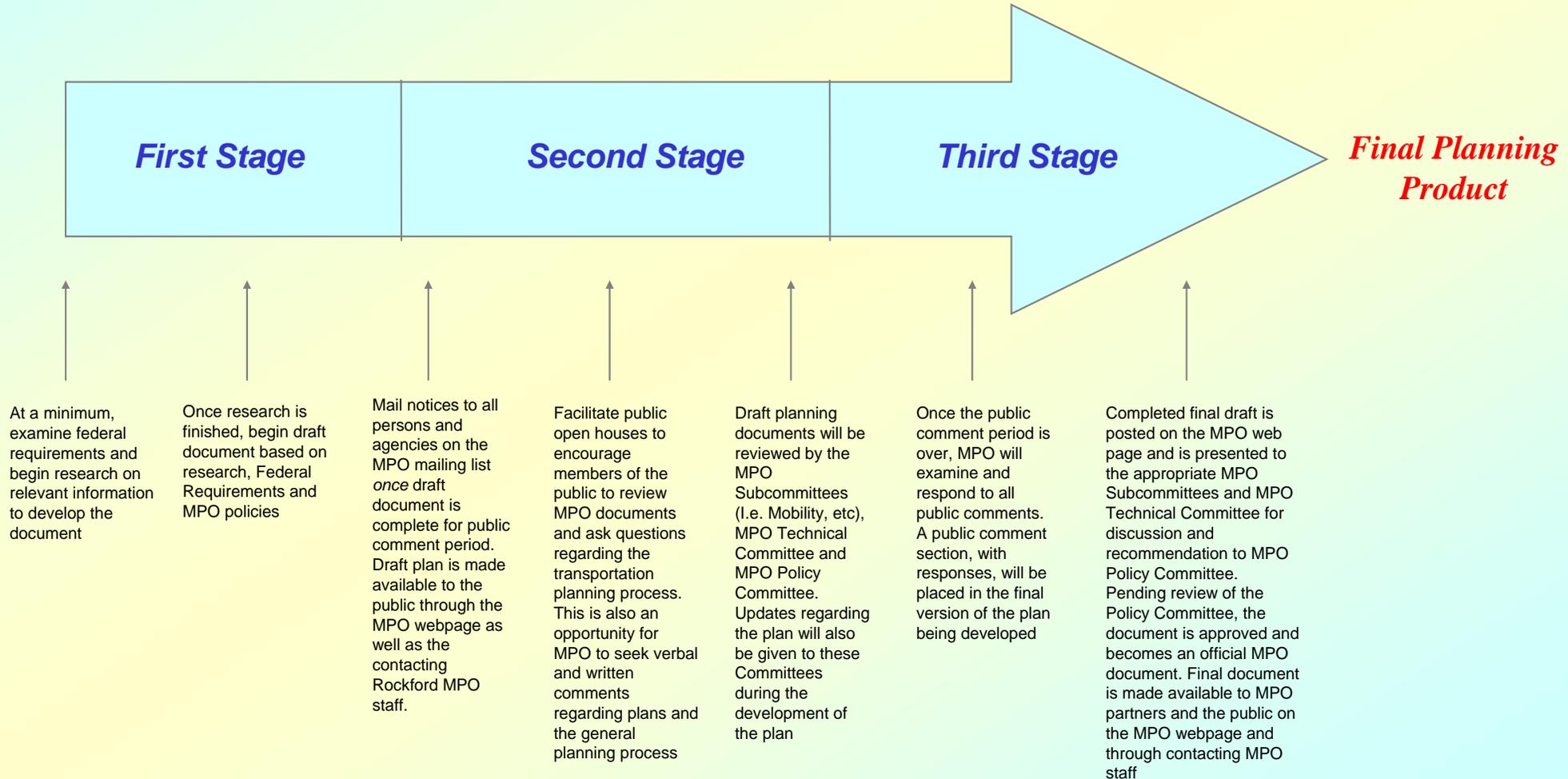
***(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.***

***(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.***

***(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b) (c) and (d) of this section***

The Rockford MPO and IDOT have agreed to and will endeavor to coordinate their public participation and involvement efforts as prescribed by this requirement.

# Current Process of Creating a Rockford MPO Document



## -SECTION 6-

### MAILING LIST GENERATION AND MAINTENANCE:

The primary mailing list of the Rockford MPO has evolved through years of effort and numerous attempts by the MPO to find persons interested in participating in the planning process. The press and media component has been in existence from the beginning and is easily maintained via current telephone directories. Added to this component and also easily maintained are the County, City and Village Clerks of the various general-purpose units of government in the area.

Another large component of the mailing list is the Policy and Technical Committee members themselves, along with numerous other members of their respective organizations. This largely governmental component has been a steady source of participants and interested parties. Over the years, the governmental component has been expanded to include other governmental agencies that are not directly involved in transit or road building but are concerned with transportation because of its effect on their plans and programs, its effect on the environment, and/or its effect on its clientele. As a result, agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, area sanitary sewer providers, area public water providers, and social service agencies have been added.

Because the Rockford Metropolitan Area is affected by situations outside the Metropolitan Area and vice-versa, governmental agencies and entities adjacent to or near the Rockford MPO's Metropolitan Planning Area have been added to the list. *Below is a history of the development and continued maintenance of the MPO mailing list:*

Attracting participants from the private sector has been difficult. In the late 1980s, a list of **private transportation providers** (bus companies, taxi companies, rail providers, etc.) was compiled. These entities were mailed an invitation to be placed on the mailing list. The response was small but some providers did respond and the Rockford MPO list includes all of the area private bus companies and rail providers.

Attracting participants from the trucking industry has proved even more difficult. An invitational mailing to the 50-60 odd trucking companies in the area yielded less than 5 to 10 respondents – and most of them subsequently declined additional mailings in later survey questionnaires.

A mailing list of **paratransit providers** was developed as part of the paratransit planning required through the Americans with Disabilities Act. This list included all social service agencies, public transportation providers, ambulance companies, taxis, limo companies, and churches in the area and was over 400 names in length. The list was used to conduct an extensive mail survey of paratransit services offered in the community. Subsequently, many of these entities were added to the mailing list and sent regular mailings. Over the years, a few of these have remained regular participants but several have declined to continue receiving Rockford MPO information. A mailing list of **disadvantaged business enterprises** (DBEs) is maintained by the City of Rockford and the area transit providers and highway implementing agencies.

During the last two decades, a number of changes were made to the Rockford MPO mailing list and notification process to encourage public involvement and participation in the Rockford MPO planning process.

1. Because a large part of Boone County was added to the Rockford MPO's Metropolitan Area as a result of the 1990 and 2000 Census, the press/media mailing list was expanded to include entities in Boone County and the City of Belvidere. More recent expansions of the Metropolitan Area as a result of the Year 2000 Census have prompted the further expansion of the mailing list to include the communities of Timberlane, Caledonia, Poplar Grove, Winnebago, Roscoe and possibly Capron and Garden Prairie.
2. The practice of sending copies of the meeting minutes and pertinent reports or report summaries to all press and media was initiated shortly after the first PIP report was adopted in 1994. This practice is being continued. Prior to that time they were sent only agendas. This information is also available on the Rockford MPO webpage as well as by e-mail.
3. Meeting agenda items have been expanded to provide a broader explanation of what is to be discussed at the meetings.
4. Meeting agendas are annotated to announce that meetings are open to the public and that opportunities for public comment will be afforded on all agenda items.

5. The general mailing list was expanded to include agencies previously omitted but which have impact on land development and planning. Examples include the Rock River Water Reclamation District, North Park Water District, the Rockford Park District, Growth Dimensions, Rockford Area Economic Development Council and WinGIS.
6. As mentioned, the private transportation provider mailing list was expanded to include all private trucking companies and railroads as shown in area telephone directories. These industries were mailed a notification describing the Rockford MPO planning process and inviting involvement. Response to this mailing was not great but those who did respond were added permanently to the mailing list.
7. Several citizens with transportation disabilities and several agencies providing paratransit services or other support services for persons with disabilities were added to the mailing list.
8. Social service agencies and groups representing minorities were added to the mailing lists in the interest of stimulating greater participation by persons traditionally under-served by existing transportation systems. Unfortunately, most of these entities have not responded and some have even asked to be eliminated from future mailings.
9. Area bicycle clubs, pedestrian/fitness clubs and area groups concerned with environmental protection were added in the interest of stimulating greater participation by persons supporting non-motorized travel. Addition of individuals to the mailing list were also produced from the efforts taken to create the adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
10. Area appointed and elected officials were notified of Rockford MPO planning activities on several occasions. As a result, several officials from many of the area special and general-purpose units of government requested Rockford MPO mailings and have been permanently added to the mailing lists.
11. New public officials are notified following all general elections.
12. Township Road Commissioners throughout Winnebago and Boone Counties have been added.
13. Working through the Rockford Association of Realtors, all area realtors were notified, invited to participate and provided with a map depicting the long-range transportation plan.
14. The process of developing the Human Services Transportation Plan (2007-2008) assisted in the further addition of area organizations to the Rockford MPO mailing list. As part of the effort to create the HSTP, invitation letters were sent out to over 100 area organizations which included workforce development agencies, governmental entities, public and private transit providers, assisted living facilities, school districts, taxi and ambulance services and human service agencies. In response to this invitation, organizations that wanted to be involved in the HSTP process, as well as in the broader transportation planning process, were added to the Rockford MPO mailing list. Those who did not initially respond to the invitation were sent a second invitation letter asking for their participation in the development of the plan as well as general participation in the transportation planning process that the Rockford MPO conducts. This outreach method added approximately 40 more area organizations to the list. To note, the Mobility Subcommittee has also been involved in identifying other area organizations to participate in the Rockford MPO transportation planning process. This process has also assisted in having citizens regularly attend Mobility Subcommittee meetings.
15. Citizens who have shown interest in the Rockford MPO transportation planning process have been added to the MPO mailing list. The MPO utilizes sign-in sheets at all meeting and open house events. Interested individuals are either asked by Rockford MPO staff if they would like to be added to the mailing list or let staff know that they would like to receive future mailings. As with all members on the mailing list, those citizens who have provided contact information are sent Rockford MPO related materials when mailings are distributed.
16. Brochures and graphic summaries have been distributed to MPO partner agencies so that Rockford MPO materials are available throughout the geographic planning area. These materials include Rockford MPO contact information as well as brochures that encourage individuals to join the Rockford MPO mailing list.

#### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT/PARTICIPATION SURVEY:**

In November 2002, MPO staff conducted a comprehensive mailing list update and survey to help assess the effectiveness of the MPO mailing and information dissemination procedures. The survey was mailed to all 165 persons on the mailing list at that time. Of the 165 surveys mailed out, 73 were returned, for a 44% return rate.

Given the time frame to complete the Public Participation Plan in 2008, a survey such as the one undertaken in 2002 for the Public Involvement Plan was not conducted. However, future updates of the Public Participation Plan have the potential for a survey similar to that used in the Public Involvement Plan.

It is important to note that the Rockford MPO administered surveys for such projects as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and the Human Services Transportation Plan. While surveys contained questions pertaining to the respective plan for which they were created, there was also a general comment section in which respondents could list any other MPO or transportation related questions or issues. It has been the consensus through comments received through surveys and committee meetings that Rockford MPO makes the necessary efforts to engage the public in its planning activities. The Rockford MPO will continue to take the necessary efforts (using existing methods as well as developing new ones) to engage the public to participate in the planning process.

**-SECTION 7-**

**UPDATING THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS:**

Following is the schedule for the development and adoption of this Public Participation Plan. This schedule will be extended to allow further public review if significant changes are made to the draft.

Subsequent updates will be repeated every 4-5 years or whenever a significant change to the process is contemplated, in accordance with a similar notification procedure and schedule.

<b>TABLE 3 – 2008 PPP Development Schedule</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
1	<b>April 2008</b>	Begin work on the Public Participation Plan.
2	<b>May-June 2008</b>	Develop draft report and begin 45-day public review period for the Draft PPP
3	<b>May 2008</b>	Distribute draft to all on the mailing list.
4	<b>May-June 2008</b>	Discuss draft and comments received at Technical Committee meeting, invite further public comment.
5	<b>May-June 2008</b>	Discuss draft and comments at Policy Committee meeting (if held), invite further public comment.
6	<b>June-July 2008</b>	Incorporate suggested changes, if any, and allow extended opportunity for public comment.
7	<b>July 2008</b>	If changes have been significant redistribute 2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft.
8	<b>July 2008</b>	Discuss 2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft (if applicable) at Technical Committee meeting, invite further public comment. If document has changed significantly or significant new comments received, extend public review period. If not, recommend for Policy Committee approval.
9	<b>July 2008</b>	Discuss 2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft (if applicable) at Policy Committee meeting, invite further public comment. If document has changed significantly or significant new comments received, extend public review period. If not, adopt document.
10	-	Repeat milestones 7 -9 until adopted.

**UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT:**

The Unified Work Program (UWP) is prepared annually. It describes, prioritizes and assigns responsibility and allocates funds for planning among Rockford MPO participants. The Rockford MPO fiscal year corresponds with the IDOT fiscal year and runs from July 1st through June 30th. Even though formal work on the UWP does not normally begin until the January or February months, staff begins consideration of items to be included in the next year's UWP as early as September or October. For this reason, persons seeking planning work on a special topic should approach the MPO as

early as possible. The following schedule of activities related to the development of the UWP is proposed as an annually recurring process. Various parts of this schedule may have to be compressed or expanded to accommodate unforeseen conditions but every effort will be made to allow reasonable amounts of time and opportunities for public input.

<b>TABLE 4 – Annual UWP Development Schedule</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>Oct-Dec</b>	Initial considerations for the next year's work program.
<b>Jan-Feb</b>	IDOT issues funding marks for coming years. Open discussion of UWP issues at regular meetings.
<b>Mar</b>	Open discussion of UWP issues at regular meetings.
<b>Mar</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Draft of UWP prepared by staff and distributed to all on the mailing list.
<b>Mid Mar</b>	Draft presented at Technical Committee meeting, public comment invited.
<b>End Mar</b>	Draft presented at Policy Committee meeting, public comment invited.
<b>End Mar</b>	Draft submitted to IDOT for review and comment.
<b>Apr</b>	Publish notice in newspaper announcing MPO planning activities, including UWP development. Rough time tables for public input and opportunities noted.
<b>Apr- Mid May</b>	Public comments accepted throughout this time. Local match (20%) assurance sought from lead agency (City of Rockford) and any other agencies involved.
<b>Mid May</b>	Final draft prepared, presented at Technical Committee meeting for public review and comment, Technical Committee makes recommendation to Policy Committee.
<b>End May</b>	Final Draft presented to Policy Committee for adoption. Additional public comment allowed.
Amendments to the UWP are possible at any time. The public review period for amendments need not be more than the approximate 2-week time period between when proposed amendments are prepared and mailed out to the time of the Policy Committee meeting. The review period may be shortened or extended by the Policy Committee depending on the significance of the amendment. Public comment will be accepted at any time.	

**TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT:**

**Early Involvement Encouraged** – The implementation of a transportation improvement, whether it be as simple as the purchase of a new transit bus or as complex as the construction of a new freeway, can be a lengthy process. A large complicated project can take several years from the time it is conceived to the time it is actually implemented. Federally funded projects or projects involving multiple jurisdictions may take even longer.

From the opposite viewpoint, projects that have been planned for a long time and have already been engineered or have right-of-way purchased or reserved are not easily stopped or changed. Agencies are reluctant to abandon or alter projects in which they have already made sizable investments in time and public funds.

**Therefore, whether a citizen is seeking to encourage or discourage a particular project, it is best that they become involved in the planning process as early as possible.**

**TIP Defined** – The Rockford MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is prepared annually to coordinate major improvements among the many jurisdictions in the Rockford Metropolitan Area and to encourage greater citizen knowledge and involvement in selecting and assigning priority to transportation improvements. The TIP is a detailed list of the transportation projects to be implemented in each of the next three years. The first year is the implementation year and the second and third years are referred to as the "out years". Ideally, a project will first be seen in the TIP in the third year and will, over the next two TIP updates, advance to the first or implementation year. Sometimes projects are advanced faster or may even enter the TIP for the first time in the implementation year. Conversely, some projects

may stay in the out years for several years before reaching the implementation year or may be dropped entirely, as community priorities change. Large complicated projects are often phased or spread over several years. For such projects, the initial project planning, conceptualization and feasibility analysis and alternatives analysis will take place well before the project reaches the TIP. The efforts are part of the Long-Range Planning process, part of which will show up, first, in the annual Unified Planning Work Programs (UWP). Projects and proposals that pass muster through these preliminary studies then, typically, proceed to the engineering stages where the project is actually designed and where the project will first show up in a TIP. If a project is especially large or complex, actual construction may be divided into several phases, spread over several years and hence various parts of a major project may appear in all years of the 3-year TIP, advancing through the TIP for several years in succession.

**Jurisdictional Timing Considerations** -- The TIP is generally prepared to coincide with IDOT's fiscal year which is the same as the Rockford MPO, from July 1st through June 30th. For example, the FY 2009 TIP will program projects to be implemented between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009. It will also list projects proposed for FY 2010 and FY2011 (7/1/2009 - 6/30/2011).

Rockford MPO staff work on the TIP begins approximately six months prior to the start of the fiscal year, in January and February of each year. However, input for the TIP from the various jurisdictions begins sooner in many cases and is complicated by the differing fiscal years of the various Federal, State and local jurisdictions. Citizens seeking to influence project selection are urged to begin making contact with the officials in the various jurisdictions no later than six months before the start of the jurisdiction's fiscal year. In addition, some jurisdictions, such as IDOT, internally prepare improvement programs covering longer time spans.

<b>TABLE 5 – Fiscal Year Start Dates</b>	
<b>DATES</b>	<b>JURISDICTION</b>
<b>Jan 1</b>	Rockford
<b>May 1</b>	Loves Park, Machesney Park, Belvidere, Cherry Valley, Poplar Grove
<b>April 1</b>	Village of Winnebago
<b>June 1</b>	Village of New Millford
<b>July 1</b>	IDOT, RATS, Rockford Mass Transit District, Roscoe
<b>Oct 1</b>	Winnebago County, Federal government
<b>Dec 1</b>	Boone County

Each of the above jurisdictions determines the extent and priorities of their proposed capital improvements through their own respective public participation and involvement process. The general-purpose units of government, such as Rockford, Loves Park and Machesney Park, have elaborate committee structures and routinely scheduled meetings for making these decisions. These meetings are announced to the press and media and are open to the public. The special districts such as Rockford Mass Transit District have less elaborate committee structures but programming issues are discussed at various announced meetings throughout the year. These meetings are also open to the public. Special formal public hearings are also conducted for major decisions or whenever State or federal funds are involved.

**Opportunities in the TIP Process** – The TIP process encourages public participation and involvement. Citizens can influence project selection and priority setting in two ways. By scrutinizing the "out year" projects, the public can determine if the projects they believe to be important are included. Although, by federal law, a project cannot be included in the TIP unless funding is likely to be available, citizens can question why some projects are included and others not. Second, citizens can influence the priority setting (i.e., which projects are advanced to the implementation year). Sometimes a project cannot be hastened because engineering, Right-of-Way (ROW) acquisition, funding or various components have not been accomplished. But many times, all of these aspects can be adjusted and the time for implementation can be lessened.

**Who to Contact** – Whenever citizens are concerned about the inclusion or priority of a project, they should first contact the specific jurisdiction responsible for the project. **TABLE 6** lists the various agencies involved in programming transportation improvements and contact persons for those agencies. If they are not satisfied with answers from the jurisdictional level, they can bring their concerns before the Rockford MPO Technical and Policy Committees. Of course,

if they are unsure what jurisdiction is responsible or if the project is of a multi-jurisdictional nature, the Rockford MPO would be the place to start.

**Timing and Scheduling** – **TABLE 7** outlines the typical schedule for the annual TIP development. Various parts of this schedule may have to be compressed or expanded to accommodate unforeseen conditions but every effort will be made to allow reasonable amounts of time and opportunities for public input.

**Making Changes** – As **TABLE 7** shows, the TIP development process takes place over several months and there are numerous opportunities for citizens to participate and to voice their concerns about project selection or priority.

Sometimes, however, proposals for **significant changes** to the draft TIP are made late in the TIP development process. In these instances, the Policy Committee will weigh a variety of factors in determining if an extended public review period is warranted. Such factors include: the nature or degree of the change, the cost of the change, the advice of the Technical Committee, the likelihood that the change will be opposed by citizens or other entities and the need for action on the TIP to meet time lines or deadlines on other projects in the TIP. Changes likely to be significant include the addition of a completely new project, the deletion of a project, major cost or funding changes or changes of priority that bump other projects from the implementation year or from the TIP entirely.

Further, any change in a project priority or project scope which meets the objection of a member of the Rockford MPO Policy Committee would be considered a significant change. In rare situations, it may be necessary to take action on the TIP because of deadlines on projects unrelated to a proposed change. In these instances, the Policy Committee may elect to adopt the TIP with the change included but provide for further post-adoption public review and comment.

**When significant changes are proposed, after a TIP has already been adopted, an additional public review period will be provided.** Significant changes to the TIP will require formal amendment by the Policy Committee. Normally, notification of the public via the Rockford MPO meeting agenda mail outs (these occur 1-2 weeks before meetings and are sent to all on the MPO mailing lists, including the media) will be considered sufficient notice. Objections from citizens or Policy Committee members may warrant more lengthy comment periods. Similar factors, as described above, will be weighed in defining a "significant change" and the need for formal amendment.

**However, it is recognized that special circumstances may arise necessitating a project be moved forward (project advancement) from the "out years" to the implementation year.** Project advancement (or deferral) is allowed without formal amendment to an adopted TIP under the judgement of the implementing agency or agencies. However, the implementing agency or the Rockford MPO staff are required to inform the Technical and Policy Committees of project advancement or deferral at the next regularly scheduled committee meetings. Also, if there is doubt about whether a proposed TIP change, project advancement or deferral should be considered significant, Rockford MPO staff or staff of the implementing agency will poll Policy Committee members for advice.

**TABLE 6 – Agency Contact Persons**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Title or Department</b>	<b>Phone #</b>	<b>Address</b>
<b>Incorporated Cities and Villages</b>				
<b>Belvidere, City</b>	Adam Tegan Craig Lawler	City/County Planner Director Director of Public Works	544-5271 544-9256	401 Whitney Blvd, Belvidere, IL 61008 210 Whitney Blvd., Belvidere, IL 61008
<b>Cherry Valley, Village</b>	David Nord Joe Cavenny	Village Administrator Public Works Director	332-3441 332-3441	806 E. State St., Cherry Valley, IL 61016 806 E. State St., Cherry Valley, IL 61016
<b>Loves Park, City</b>	Dan Jacobson Steve Thompson Nathan Bruck	Director of Community Development Community Development Department Community Development Planner Officer	654-5029 654-5029 654-5029	100 Heart Blvd., Loves Park, IL 61111 100 Heart Blvd., Loves Park, IL 61111 100 Heart Blvd., Loves Park, IL 61111
<b>Machesney Park, Village</b>	Chad Atkinson Chad Hunter Paul Sheppard	Director of Planning & Zoning Zoning Officer Public Works	877-5432 877-5432 877-5432	300 Machesney Rd., Machesney Park, IL 61111 300 Machesney Rd., Machesney Park, IL 61111 300 Machesney Rd., Machesney Park, IL 61115
<b>New Milliford, Village</b>	Bonnie Beard Dale Johnson Dennis McMullen	Village President Streets Village Engineer (Infratek Engineers, Inc)	874-7271 874-5359 395-3700	6771 11 <sup>th</sup> St, New Milliford, IL 61109 206 Manderia Dr, New Milliford, IL 61109 433 S. Phelps Av, Rockford, IL 61128
<b>Poplar Grove, Village</b>	Martha Suhr	Village Clerk	765-3201	200 Hill Street, Poplar Grove, IL 61065
<b>Rockford, City and RATS Staff</b>	Steve Ernst vacant Jonah Katz Gary McIntyre Jon Paul Diplia	RATS Study Director & City Traffic Eng. Assistant Traffic Engineer Planner 2 – Community Development Dept RATS Transportation Planner RATS Transportation Planner	987-5570 987-5570 967-6772 987-5638 987-5628	425 E. State St., Rockford, IL 61104 425 E. State St., Rockford, IL 61104
<b>Roscoe, Village</b>	David Krienke Bonnie Miles Sheryl Crowley	Village President Village Clerk Village Zoning Officer	623-2829 623-2829 623-2829	10631 Main St, Roscoe, IL 61073 10631 Main St, Roscoe, IL 61073 10631 Main St, Roscoe, IL 61073
<b>Timberlane, Village</b>	Steve Rapp	Village President	547-4275	PO Box 56, Caledonia, IL 61011
<b>Winnebago, Village</b>	Steve Butler Mark Painter	Village President Village Engineer (Fehr-Graham & Assoc.)	335-2020 394-4700	108 West Main Street, Winnebago, IL 61088 1920 Daimler Rd, Rockford, IL 61112
<b>County Governments</b>				
<b>County of Boone</b>	Richard Lundin Ken Terrinoni	County Engineer County Administrator	544-2066 547-4770	9759 IL Route 76, Belvidere, IL 61008-9599 601 N. Main / Suite 201, Belvidere, IL 61008
<b>County of Ogle</b>	Curtis D. Cook	County Engineer	732-2851	1989 Illinois Route 2 South, Oregon, IL 61061
<b>County of Winnebago</b>	Joe Vanderwerff Wayne Vik Sue Mroz	County Engineer Assistant County Engineer Director of Regional Planning & Economic Development Department	319-4000 319-4000 319-4366	424 N. Springfield Av., Rockford, IL 61101 424 N. Springfield Av., Rockford, IL 61101 404 Elm St., Rockford, IL 61101-1221
<b>Special Districts and Authorities</b>				
<b>Chicago / Rockford International Airport</b>	Franz L. Olson	Deputy Director of Operations & Facilities	969-4426	60 Airport Dr., Rockford, IL 61109
<b>Illinois Dept of Transportation, District 2</b>	George Ryan Dan Long	Deputy Director – Region 2, District 2 Project Studies Engineer	284-5301 284-5966	819 Depot Av., Dixon, IL 61021-3546 819 Depot Av., Dixon, IL 61021-3546

<b>Illinois Toll Highway Authority</b>	Bunny Anderson	Liaison for Engineering Projects	630-241-6800	2700 Ogdan Av., Downers Grove, IL 60515
<b>North Park Public Water Dist.</b>	John Donahue	General Manager	633-5461	1350 Turret Dr., Machesney Park, IL 61115
<b>Rockford Mass Transit District</b>	Rick McVinnie	Executive Director	961-2230	520 Mulberry St, Rockford, IL 61101-1016
	Dennis Hendricks	Operations Manager	961-2240	520 Mulberry St, Rockford, IL 61101-1016
	Paula Hughes	Grant Specialist	961-2227	520 Mulberry St, Rockford, IL 61101-1016
	Lisa Brown	Marketing & PR Specialist	961-2226	520 Mulberry St, Rockford, IL 61101-1016
	Terry Houghton	Paratransit Supervisor	961-2237	520 Mulberry St, Rockford, IL 61101-1016
<b>Rockford Park District</b>	Tim Bragg	Park Planner	987-8865	401 S. Main Street Rockford, IL Suite 102
<b>Rock River Water Reclamation District</b>	Dana Carroll	Engineering Manager	387-7660	PO Box 7480, Rockford, IL 61126-7480
<b>Township Governments</b>				
<b>Belvidere Twp. / Boone Co.</b>	Richard E. Lee	Road Commissioner	544-2029	8200 Fairgrounds Rd., Belvidere, IL 61008
<b>Bonus Twp. / Boone Co.</b>	Donald Gustafson	Road Commissioner	597-2888	9669 Lawrenceville Rd., Garden Prairie, IL 61038
<b>Boone Twp. / Boone Co.</b>	Tom Anderson	Road Commissioner	569-2040	15132 Russellville Rd., Capron, IL 61012
<b>Caledonia Twp. / Boone Co.</b>	Norm Pierce	Road Commissioner	765-0345	1250 Candlewick Dr, NW, Poplar Grove, IL 61065
<b>Cherry Valley Twp./Winn. Co.</b>	Pat O'Donnell	Road Commissioner	874-5785	4875 Blackhawk Rd., Rockford, IL 61109
<b>Flora Twp. / Boone Co.</b>	Michael A. Frank	Road Commissioner	332-4853	77 Poole Rd., Cherry Valley, IL 61016
<b>Harlem Twp. / Winn. Co.</b>	Bob Pilcher	Road Commissioner	633-2671	819 Melbourne Av., Loves Park, IL 61115
<b>Leroy Twp. / Boone Co.</b>	James Richardson	Road Commissioner	737-8226	7789 Coon Trail Rd., Capron, IL 61012
<b>Manchester Twp. / Boone Co.</b>	Joel Nussbaum	Road Commissioner	389-2139	2259 Manchester Road, South Beloit, IL 61080
<b>Owen Twp. / Winn. Co.</b>	Bob McWilliams	Road Commissioner	633-1642	1580 Katrina Way, Machesney Park, IL 61115
<b>Poplar Grove Twp. / Boone Co.</b>	Wayne Wares	Road Commissioner	765-3603	12922 Parkway Ct., Poplar Grove, IL 61065
<b>Rockford Twp. / Winn. Co.</b>	Pete McKay	Highway Commissioner	962-7313	404 N. Springfield Av., Rockford, IL 61101
<b>Rockton Twp. / Winn. Co.</b>	Matt Cuyler	Road Commissioner	624-7177	1301 N. Blackhawk, Rockton, IL 61109
<b>Roscoe Twp. / Winn. Co.</b>	Mat Servant	Road Commissioner	623-7323	5792 Elevator Rd., PO Box 49, Roscoe, IL 61073
<b>Spring Twp. / Boone Co.</b>	Dennis Dovenmuehle	Road Commissioner	544-0139	3673 Shattuck Rd., Garden Prairie, IL 61038
<b>Winnebago Twp. / Winn. Co.</b>	Tim Mitchell	Road Commissioner	703-8849	9367 Bridgeland Road, Winnebago, IL 61088

<b>TABLE 7 – Annual TIP Development Schedule</b>	
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>Jan-Feb</b>	<b>Deliberations on the next year's TIP begin.</b> The TIP is placed on the agendas of the Technical and Policy Committee meetings. Persons on the Rockford MPO mailing lists, including the private providers and paratransit providers, are mailed agendas and public comment is invited. In addition:
	a) Staff reviews progress reports on projects in the current TIP. Documents projects implemented and remaining to be implemented. Public comment is accepted on priorities of remaining projects and addition of new projects.
	b) Staff reviews and reports on federal funding recently spent, available or forecasted, and allocated to specific projects or unallocated. Special attention given to federal sources.
	(c) Rockford MPO accepts comments or proposals regarding the project selection criteria or priorities for the use of federal STP funds and the methodology for sub-allocating federal transit subsidies.
	(d) Rockford MPO accepts new proposals or requests for the use of special federal/State funds for paratransit.
	(e) Input from RMTD, Boone County Council on Aging and other paratransit providers considered.
	(f) Staff considers and presents pertinent material related to recent Transportation Plan changes or other special technical studies conducted the previous year.
	(g) Publish <b>public notice</b> in newspaper announcing Rockford MPO planning activities, including TIP development. Rough time tables for public input and opportunities noted.
<b>Mar - May</b>	<b>Staff prepares preliminary draft(s)</b> of the next year's TIP (July - June). Drafts based on information assembled above. Public comment again encouraged at the Technical/Policy Committee meetings. (May only be one preliminary draft prepared if significant comments are not made, significant changes not needed, and all participant report proposed projects in timely manner.)
<b>Apr- Jun</b>	<b>Staff prepares final proposed draft(s)</b> of the TIP for the May Technical and Policy Committee meetings. Draft includes summary of the public comments received. (May only be one final draft prepared if significant comments are not made or significant changes not needed.)
<b>Jun-Aug</b>	<b>Proposed TIP presented to the Technical and Policy Committee for adoption.</b> New public comments are addressed. If changes to the TIP are needed as a result of the comments, the changes are duly noted. The Policy Committee determines if changes are significant enough to delay adoption and extend the public comment period. If changes are significant, adoption is delayed a minimum of a week. If quick adoption is not needed to allow a project bid letting, adoption may be delayed until the following regular meeting in July.
	<b>Significant changes</b> (see text) to the TIP will require a formal amendment and the public will be afforded a review/comment period. Length of the review comment period will be based on the nature and significance of the change. Simply moving a project from the out years to the implementation year or minor changes to the project scope, costs, and funding sources are not normally considered significant changes that will necessitate a lengthy review period. Typically, non-significant changes can be made by placing the proposal on the Technical and Policy Committee agendas, distributing the agenda in the normal fashion, and allowing opportunity for comment on the change at the Technical and Policy Committee meetings.
<b>Throughout the remainder of the year</b>	<b>Progress on the implementation of the projects</b> in the TIP is reported at the RMAP Technical and Policy meetings and is documented as part of the meeting minutes.

**LONG-RANGE PLAN DEVELOPMENT and MAINTENANCE:**

The Rockford MPO Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is developed in the interest of promoting, developing and maintaining a safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system that will meet the needs of the area's citizens, businesses and industries over a much longer time span than planned in the TIP. By federal law, the LRTP considers a time span of 20-25 years and, like the TIP, can only include those projects or improvements for which there is sufficient funding based on reasonable forecasts. The Rockford MPO LRTP will annotate some projects that appear to be needed some time in the future but do not have a reasonably assured potential funding source. These projects are programmed beyond the 20-year time span.

The first comprehensive long-range transportation plan was developed by the Rockford MPO was adopted in the late 1960s. Although the plan was updated several times over the last four decades, the basic foundation of that plan remains valid and accepted today. The LRTP was last comprehensively updated and adopted in July of the Year 2005, and proscribes improvements through the Year 2035. Copies of the plan are available in the public libraries, at the MPO offices and at the offices of the Rockford MPO participants.

The LRTP can be amended or updated for reasonable cause at any time. Persons seeking to amend or refine the Plan can initiate the process by contacting Rockford MPO staff or any member of the Rockford MPO Technical or Policy Committees. By law, the Plan must be comprehensively updated, adopted and republished every five years at a minimum. In accordance, the LRTP is scheduled for its next comprehensive update in Year 2010 and will be a major component of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 Unified Planning Work Program (UWP) (from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009) and FY 2010 UWP (from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010). Assuming roughly 10-12 months to accomplish the process, **TABLE- 8** specifies a probable update/adoption schedule.

<b>TABLE 8 – Next LRTP UPDATE Schedule</b>	
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>Jan 09</b>	As part of the annual public notice of MPO planning activities, the Rockford MPO announces that the LRTP is scheduled for update in the following fiscal year, starting July 1, 2009. Public participation in the update is encouraged.
<b>Jan-Jun 09</b>	As part of the development of the FY 2009 UWP, all Rockford MPO participants and persons on the mailing list are notified that the LRTP will be updated in FY 2010.
<b>Apr 09</b>	Technical Committee forms a <b>LRTP Subcommittee</b> for the purpose of providing direction to staff and encouraging and hearing public input on the LRTP. <i>Note:</i> this would include all Subcommittees, such as the Mobility Subcommittee, and any other Subcommittees/Citizen Advisory Committees developed by the RMAP process.
<b>May – Jul 09</b>	LRTP Subcommittee determines if work is to be done in-house or with consultant assistance. If by consultant, RFQs/RFPs are issued, consultant selected, and scope and contract negotiated.
<b>Jul-Sep 09</b>	Staff and/or consultant: Assembles documents, reports, resolutions and other work pertinent to the update and prepares list/summary of these materials; copies are provided to the Subcommittee and made available to the public.
	Prepares a more detailed updated schedule, if needed, and a schedule of meetings and locations.
	Investigates/summarizes new State/Federal requirements and reports to Committees.
	Advises Policy Committee of above work and seeks input/direction.
<b>Oct 09</b>	Open meeting(s) / invite preliminary public comment on state of the transportation system
<b>Nov 09 - Feb 10</b>	Staff and/or consultant develops 1st draft of the LRTP update.
	Draft distributed to all on mailing list for February or March meetings.
<b>Jan 10</b>	Annual Public Notice in newspaper further announces Plan development. Other press releases developed as needed and deemed appropriate by the Study Director or the Rockford MPO Committees.

<b>Feb or Mar 10</b>	Open meeting(s) / invite comments on LRTP update draft.
<b>Mar or Apr</b>	Staff and/or consultant develops 2nd draft of LRTP update. Draft distributed to all on mailing list.
<b>Apr or May</b>	Further comment invited at regular meetings.
<b>May or Jun</b>	Final draft developed / distributed for June meetings.
<b>Jun 10</b>	Final draft adopted.
<b>After Jun 10</b>	Possible refinement of elements or portions of the Plan, as per comments, instructions from the Policy Committee, or recommendations within the Plan.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING:**

As a result of part of the on-going discussion in the MPO planning process, and the need to identify issues and relationships between transportation plans and programs that might impact the environment, it is the intent to have continuous conversations with organizations and individuals regarding environmental issues. To keep this dialogue active, one item for consideration would be to develop an advisory committee of environmental agencies and individuals to review and incorporate environmentally friendly (ecosystem or watershed basis) practices into state and local construction and maintenance operations to protect and enhance wildlife and wetland habitat. Agencies that could be involved in such an Advisory Committee include but are not limited to:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)/ Illinois EPA
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
- Illinois Department of Agriculture
- Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Boone County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Rockford Park District
- Winnebago County Forest Preserve District
- Boone County Conservation District
- Belvidere Park District
- Village of Winnebago Park District
- Natural Land Institute

With such an advisory committee, transportation plans and programs can be better assessed to minimize environmental impacts and promote environmental best practices while at the same time promote public participation in the transportation and environmental planning process.

**ADDITIONAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES:**

**Certification Reviews** – Federal guidelines require the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to jointly review the transportation planning process on a periodic basis (no less than every four years) to determine compliance with federal laws and guidelines. As a matter of practice, area officials, community leaders and the general public are afforded opportunities during these reviews to comment on the planning process directly to the federal partners.

The last Certification Review was initiated in September of 2007 and completed in March of 2008. During this period, officials from the FHWA and the FTA examined all aspects of the Rockford MPO planning process. Over a 2-day period in September 2007, FHWA and FTA officials met with Rockford MPO staff and participants and conducted an on-site review. Prior to this on-site meeting, comments were solicited from the general public through an announcement of the review via the MPO mailing list. Additionally, during the on-site review, a public open house was held and comments were provided by the public regarding transportation in the metropolitan planning area. The Rockford MPO planning process was conditionally certified, with full certification pending the completion of certain LRTP amendments as well as the completion of the Rockford MPO Public Participation Plan. A document detailing the findings, comments and recommendations of the FHWA and FTA is on file in the Rockford MPO offices and is available for public review at any time. That document was also distributed at Rockford MPO Technical and Policy Committee meetings.

The FHWA and FTA will conduct the next certification review of the Rockford MPO planning process sometime in mid to late 2011. Opportunities for public comment during the certification process will be afforded again at that time. Contact Rockford MPO staff for meeting times and locations. Written comments regarding the planning process can be submitted at any time. Comments may be addressed to the Rockford MPO staff or submitted directly to the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, or Illinois Department of Transportation staff (see **Table 9**, below, for contact specifics).

**TABLE 9 – Certification Review Contacts**

Agency	Contact	Address	City	Phone	E-Mail
FHWA	John Donovan	3250 Executive Pkwy.	Springfield IL 62703	217-492-4625	john.donovan@fhwa.dot.gov
FTA	Reginald Arkell	200 W. Adams, Suite 320	Chicago IL 60606	312-886-3704	reginald.arkell@dot.gov
IDOT	Curtis Jones	2300 S. Dirksen Pkwy	Springfield IL 62764	217-785-2995	curtis.jones@illinois.gov
	Steve Ernst	425 E. State St	Rockford IL 61104	815-967-6734	steve.ernst@rockfordil.gov
MPO Staff	Jon Paul Diipla	425 E. State St.	Rockford IL 61104	815-987-5628	jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov
	Gary McIntyre	425 E. State St.	Rockford IL 61104	815-987-5638	gary.mcintyre@rockfordil.gov

**-SECTION 8-**

**RESTRUCTURING OF THE METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION: THE ROCKFORD METROPOLITAN AGENCY FOR PLANNING (RMAP)**

In February of 2008, the Rockford MPO Policy Committee held a retreat to discuss organizational changes to the existing structure of the Rockford Area Transportation Study. This was the second time that the RATS Policy Committee met regarding the issue of expanding the MPO, with the first discussions being held in 2006. Changes to the organization would include changing the name of the MPO to the “Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning” a.k.a. “**RMAP**” as well as the following:

- Expand the mission of RATS into regional planning, moving beyond the minimum federal requirements for transportation planning.
- Create and fill an independent Executive Director positioned managed by the MPO Policy Committee and increase existing technical staff from 2 to 3 or 4.
- The City of Rockford would transition from the “Lead Agency” to a “Fiscal Agent”.
- Create a Citizen’s Advisory group at the Advisory level of the organization.
- Member organizations contribute on a pro-rata basis, based on urban area population, to the Federal match starting in FY09.
- Transition away from members receiving direct subsidies of Federal planning funds for projects; utilize discretionary grant opportunities to fill these agency needs; MPO member agencies would receive technical assistance on specific issues from the expanded MPO staff.
- Find an alternate location in the near future for the MPO staff, given limited office space in Rockford’s City Hall.
- Develop modifications needed in the 2003 RATS Cooperative Agreement to accommodate the above changes in mission, organization and funding mechanism.

As stated in the Northern Illinois University Regional Development Institute's report<sup>2</sup> and discussed in depth at the Rockford MPO Policy Committee retreat, the purpose behind the changes in the MPO structure stem from:

- Increased federal requirements for MPOs, especially TMAs, and new Federal emphasis on more active planning agencies with increased citizen involvement, visualizations and dissemination of information to the public at large.
- Increased complexity of population and employment growth generated from southern Wisconsin and the eastward expansion of the Chicago Metropolitan area.
- The new State of Illinois Regional Planning Fund, with an annual allocation of planning dollars directly to the MPOs for regional planning activities.
- The City of Rockford's desire to cease funding the total federal match required by SAFETEA-LU.

The new RMAP organization will be responsible for the same federally-required planning work and documents that are being currently produced by the Rockford Area Transportation Study, [the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the Unified Work Program (UWP), the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP), and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan]. The aforementioned changes could begin as early as *July 1, 2008* when the new fiscal year begins.

*Expanded services* to be provided by the RMAP organization include, but are not limited to, planning activities in transportation, land use, regional economic development, public participation, congestion management and operations, environmental coordination and green community initiatives. The goal of the newly structured MPO will be to meet the federal requirements that are stipulated for Metropolitan Planning Organizations as well as to move beyond the federal requirements to accommodate objectives of the RMAP Policy Committee.

Examples of planning activities in the aforementioned categories would be:

- Develop a capacity to perform objective analysis of development projects (i.e. fiscal impact analysis).
- Identify areas (parcels, tracts, platted land) of potential development and analyze opportunities for growth of regional scale and significance (i.e. industrial, commercial, public space).
- Analyze performance of transportation components, identify critical components of poor performance and recommend strategies that would provide greater consistency of traffic flow for passenger traffic, urban goods movement and public transit.
- Investigate best practices and recommend strategies to collect information from the general public on transportation, land use and other regional issues. Also conduct impact analyses of transportation investment on various communities in the region.
- Provide analytical techniques that produce an unbiased analysis of economic development proposals that MPO member agencies can use
- Investigate best practices and provide developers and member organizations with guidance to meet green community goals and objectives.

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<sup>2</sup> NIU facilitated the RATS Policy Committee retreat in February of 2008 and subsequently produced a follow-up document which summarized the discussions and decisions that took place at the meetings. The NIU summary report is available to the public. Please contact RATS/RMAP staff if you would like a copy of the report.

*Diagrams 4 and 5* outline the organizational changes that will take place as a result of the creation of the new RMAP organization.

In addition to the planning activities listed above from the NIU report, RMAP activities will also include transportation tasks that will continue network planning of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, review and integration of the various land use plans from the local jurisdictions into the regional transportation model (and other related planning efforts), begin the planning process to address issues of linkage between transportation plans/programs and the environment, and monitoring and updating the Title VI and Environmental Justice documents as needed.

Essentially, the goal of RMAP planning activities is to create a transportation planning process that is transparent so that the public can have a better understanding of and directly participate in the overall planning process, including the relationship between land use planning and transportation planning.

### **RMAP AND THE REGIONAL CENTER FOR PLANNING AND DESIGN: ENVISIONING REGIONAL EFFECTIVENESS:**

Currently, the Rockford MPO is in a transition period to become the **Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning**, (RMAP). With the establishment of the new organization, new staff will be added to the MPO which will increase its capacity to assume a regional leadership role in various planning projects and activities throughout the Metropolitan Planning Area.

Using the Chicago region as a model, it is envisioned that the MPO members will create the Regional Center for Planning and Design. This organization will have a symbiotic relationship to the MPO much the same as the Center for Neighborhood Technology in Chicago has to the Chicago MPO. The vision of the design center includes physical space, such as gallery space, available for public viewing of plans, interactive dialogue with MPO staff as well as urban design professionals, and meeting space that fosters meaningful discussion on important regional issues. The goal of this cooperative effort will be to develop and maintain an atmosphere in which the public can feel comfortable to engage in planning activities and provide input for projects that will affect the region and the MPO members. The Regional Center for Planning and Design will engage experts in various fields related to the MPO mission, investigate best practices in urban and regional planning, utilize state-of-the-art techniques to provide visual summaries of planning documents (such as web based video, models, etc), and provide accessible, comfortable and easy to find space for public use at all stages of the public participation process. The MPO budget contains contractual dollars which can be used to pay for the services of the Regional Center for Planning and Design where necessary.

The overriding goal of this cooperative effort will be to ensure that the citizens who live in the region and who are affected by planning decisions are able to fully understand planning objectives and strategies as well as to provide input to influence planning decisions. This cooperative effort will strive to increase the effectiveness of regional planning, invoke civic pride, reach consensus and promote the advancement of the region as a whole.

*Diagram 6* helps to elaborate on this cooperative effort.

### **RMAP AND PUBLIC OUTREACH:**

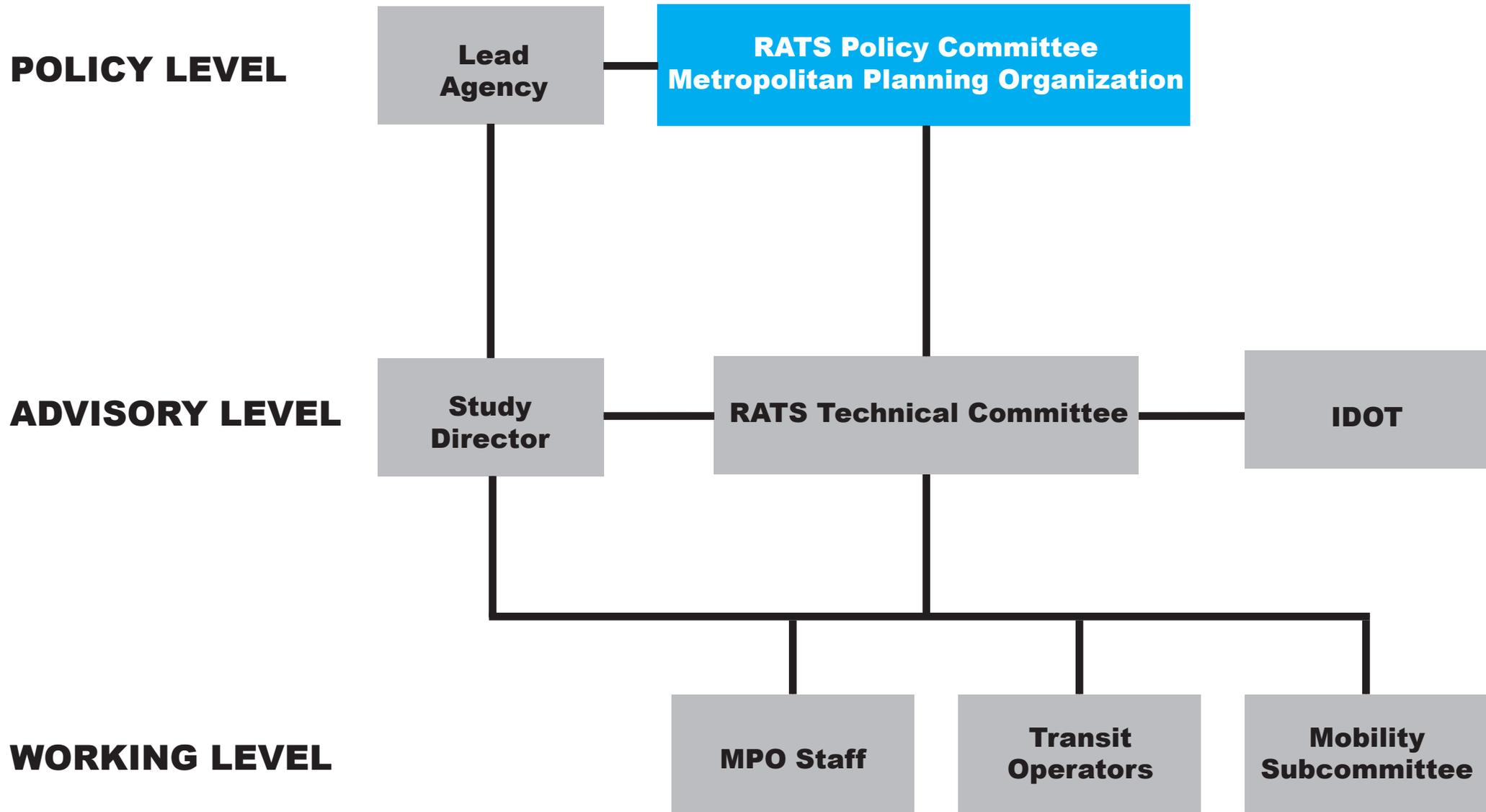
RMAP will continue to invite public comment with traditional methods that were employed by RATS as well as develop and implement new techniques. A summary of public outreach activities for RMAP are:

- Distribute RMAP information and materials (i.e. meeting agendas, meeting minutes, RMAP plans, etc.) through the RMAP mailing list. *Continue* to add individuals and organizations to the RMAP mailing list upon request.
- Publish notices for public open house events as well as public comment periods in regional newspapers.
- Regularly update the RMAP web site with information, documents, meeting calendars, etc.

- Create informational pamphlets and brochures that highlight the importance of traditional RMAP documents (i.e. LRTP, TIP, HSTP, PPP, etc.) in multiple languages and visual formats. These documents have traditionally been laced with jargon, been minimally understood by elected officials and the general public not familiar with the MPO, and have received cursory review by non-MPO participants.
- *Continue* attendance by MPO staff at member agency meetings where planning initiatives in the region are being discussed.
- *Continue* an MPO “open door” policy. Comments on all MPO documents are encouraged and welcomed at any time. Also, staff will be available to speak with any citizen who has a concern or is interested in any planning project or document. MPO staff may also be contacted via e-mail, telephone or can meet with citizens by setting up an appointment.
- Develop surveys, both traditional and web based, to gauge public opinion in a convenient and unbiased method.
- Develop a communication strategy including logo / identity, brand, and standard communication pieces such as letterhead, media advisory, press release, promotional materials and standard graphical design elements.
- Attend functions and meetings upon request, and deliver presentations and other information outside of the typical RMAP Policy, Technical or Subcommittee meetings.
- Revamp the MPO website to a user-friendly, dynamic and informative information tool. The revamped website shall be constructed with the user in mind, be easy for MPO staff to add, modify and delete content and be capable of file sharing of the large documents that the MPO creates. The site shall be capable of hosting web based surveys.
- Create an Executive Director blog on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Incorporate hyperlinks in the blog to important regional websites and internet based information locations, including print, radio and television outlets.
- Host media events and have regular press releases to keep regional planning in the mainstream consciousness of the stakeholders.

The above listed techniques are in *no way exhaustive* of the methods that RMAP will take to involve the public in the MPO planning process. Further techniques and methods will be developed as the organization matures and as soon as the Center for Planning and Design is created.

Diagram 4



**POLICY LEVEL**

**RMAP Policy Committee  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**ADVISORY LEVEL**

**Executive  
Director**

**RMAP Technical Committee**

**IDOT**

**WORKING LEVEL**

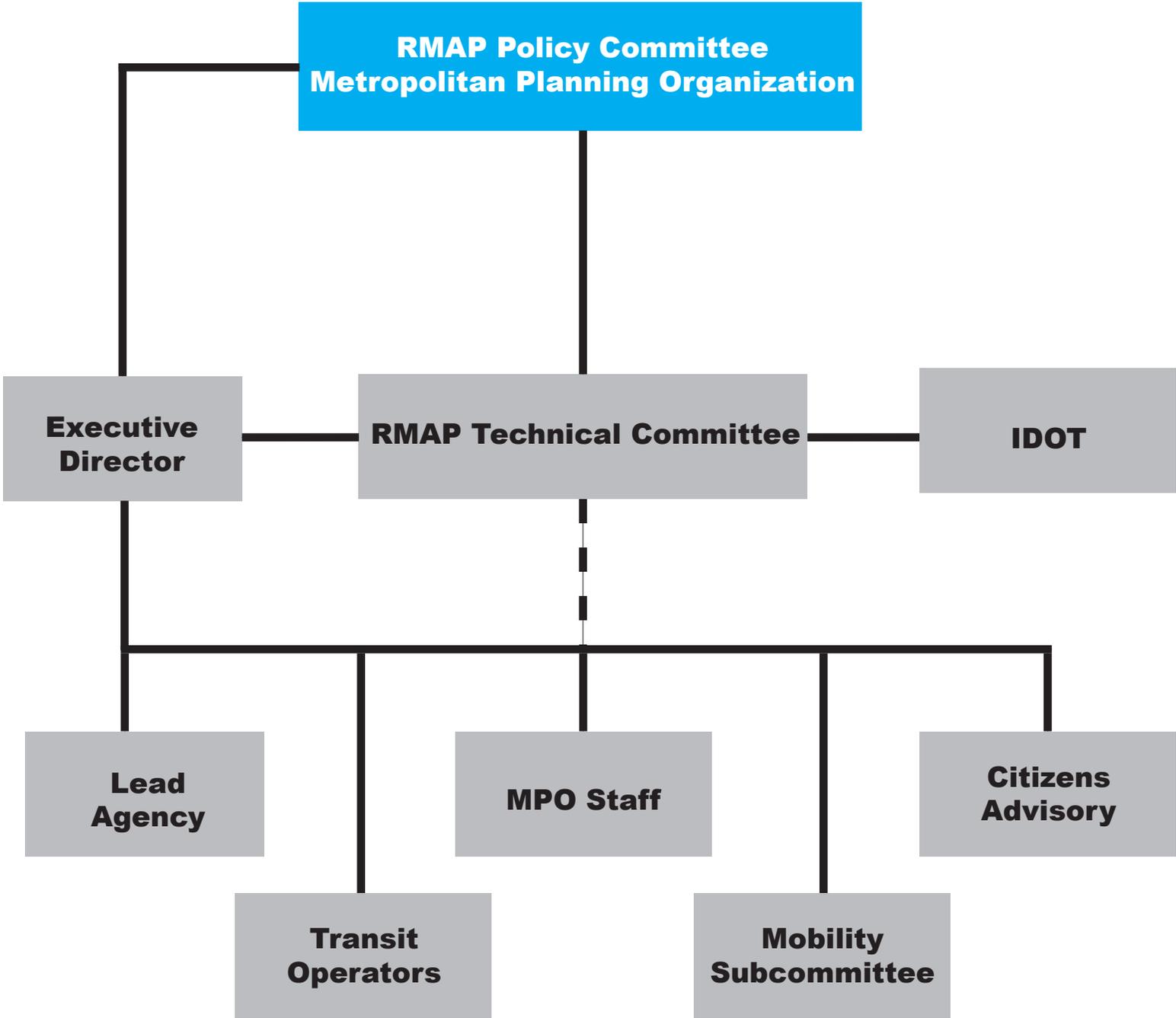
**Lead  
Agency**

**MPO Staff**

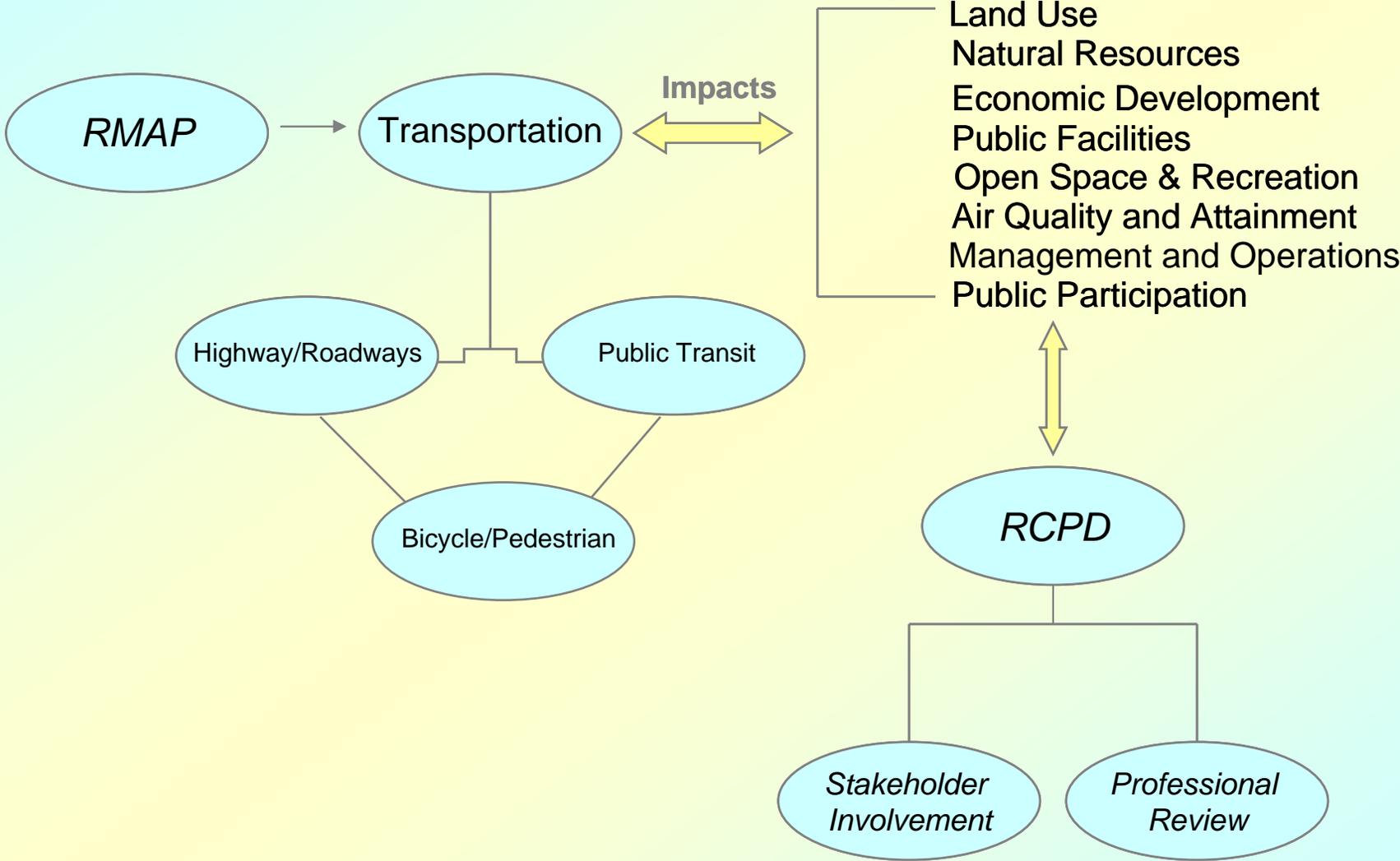
**Citizens  
Advisory**

**Transit  
Operators**

**Mobility  
Subcommittee**



# RMAP: Transportation Planning and Linkages to Regional Planning



The area highlighted on this Exhibit A (the area within the thick outline) is the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) for the Rockford Area Transportation Study, the Federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Rockford, IL area. For the next 5-10 years, RATS will focus its transportation planning activities in this area.

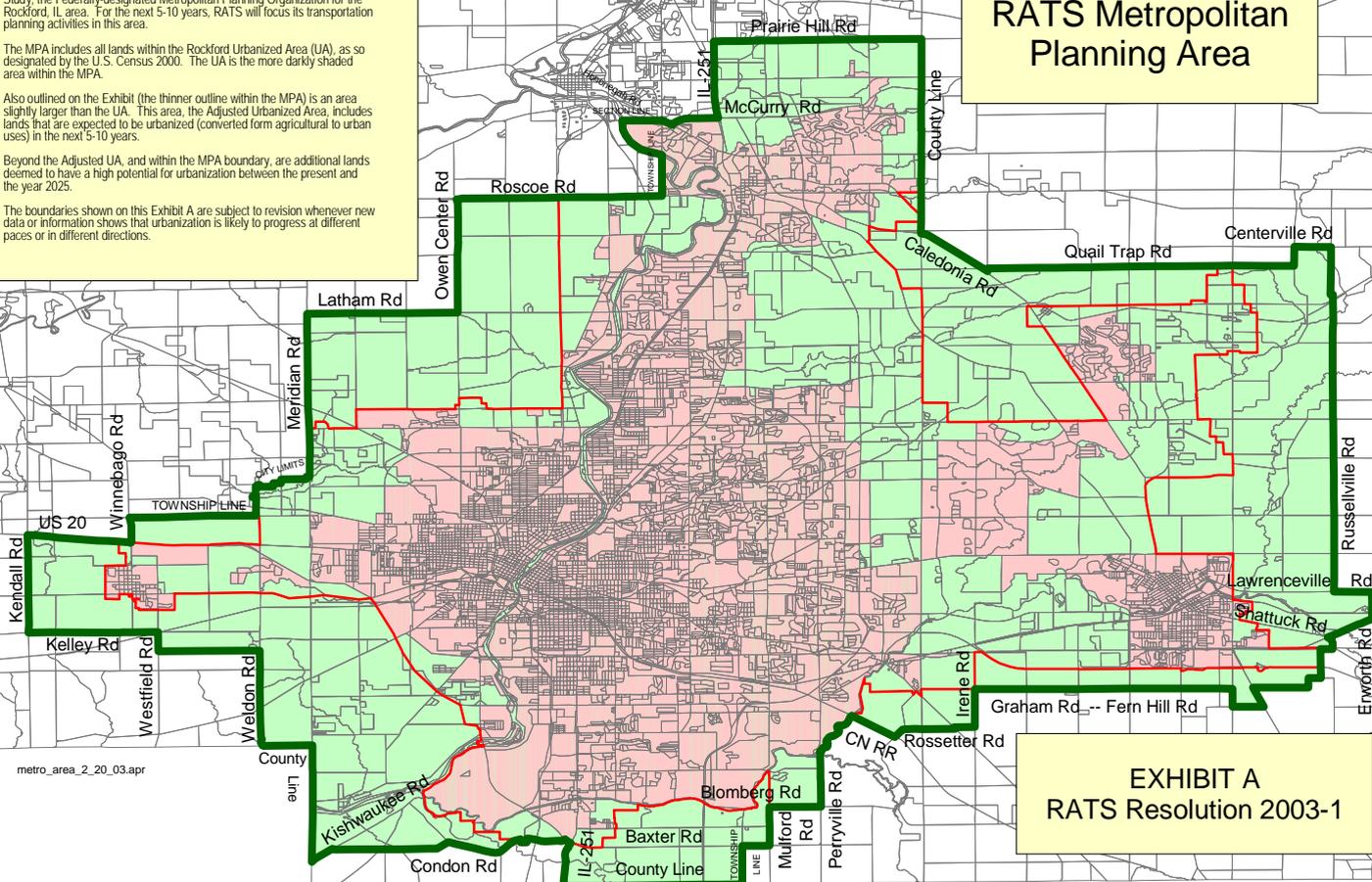
The MPA includes all lands within the Rockford Urbanized Area (UA), as so designated by the U.S. Census 2000. The UA is the more darkly shaded area within the MPA.

Also outlined on the Exhibit (the thinner outline within the MPA) is an area slightly larger than the UA. This area, the Adjusted Urbanized Area, includes lands that are expected to be urbanized (converted from agricultural to urban uses) in the next 5-10 years.

Beyond the Adjusted UA, and within the MPA boundary, are additional lands deemed to have a high potential for urbanization between the present and the year 2025.

The boundaries shown on this Exhibit A are subject to revision whenever new data or information shows that urbanization is likely to progress at different paces or in different directions.

# RATS Metropolitan Planning Area



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## EXHIBIT A RATS Resolution 2003-1

# **APPENDIX A**

## NOTICE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING for ROCKFORD URBAN AND METROPOLITAN AREA

Notice is hereby given that the Rockford Area Transportation Study (RATS), the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Rockford Urban and Metropolitan area, is seeking public comments on the transportation planning process and the development of the following documents. RATS coordinates publicly funded transportation planning and improvements among the various jurisdictions in Winnebago and Boone Counties. RATS documents are available for public review and can be amended at any time. Therefore, public comments and input are encouraged at any time

1. **RATS FY-2009 UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM (UWP):** This document specifies the transportation planning work proposed over the next year (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009). A draft of the FY-2009 UWP is now available and will be considered for adoption on May 29, 2008 at the RATS Policy Committee meeting at Winnebago County Administration Building, 404 Elm Street, Rockford, IL. Comments will be accepted at the Technical Committee meetings scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on April 17<sup>th</sup> and May 22<sup>nd</sup> in Loves Park City Hall and/or by contacting RATS staff (contact information listed below).

**RATS FY-2009 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP):** This document will identify and prioritize all major transportation and public transit improvements scheduled for implementation in the RATS Metropolitan Area in the next four years (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2012). The document is now under development and a draft will be available for comment by August 21, 2008. The target adoption is on or about September 25, 2008. Public comments will be accepted anytime, but should be submitted prior to September 18, 2008. To start the public review process, the public is encouraged to review the current adopted RATS TIP by accessing our web site at the following:

<http://www.rockfordil.gov/government/works/index.cfm?section=planning&id=1009>

**RATS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP):** This document needs to be updated to reflect the changes in current federal transportation law and regulations. Currently, RATS has a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) on its web site at: <http://www.rockfordil.gov/uploadedFiles/government/PublicWorks/Planning/RATS/Public%20Involvement%20Process%202003.pdf>. As a result of changes made in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), RATS will be updating our PIP to meet the new planning requirements under SAFETEA-LU. The first step in this process is for the general public to comment on our current public participation process. Accordingly, the general public is encouraged to submit comments during the next 45-days (until May 27, 2008) and/or attend one of the public information open houses, which are listed below. Over this time period, comments can be submitted to RATS at the address listed below or by email to RATS staff by using the form on the RATS web site at: <http://rockfordil.gov/government/works/form.cfm?section=planning&id=1410>.

**RATS 2035 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP).** The LRTP discusses plans and assigns priority for all major transportation systems improvements for the Metropolitan Area over the next 20 to 30 years. On July 28, 2005 the RATS Policy Committee adopted the LRTP. Since the past three years, several local communities have continued the overall land-use planning process. As a result of recent land use changes, the City of Rockford, Village of Machesney Park and the City of Belvidere have several changes to amend to the RATS Year 2035 LRTP. Accordingly, these additions/changes will be available on the RATS web site and at the public information open houses for public review and comments, which are listed below.

In addition to these changes, the RATS 2035 LRTP needs to be amended to correct three findings from our Federal Certification review, which was completed in March 2008. These amendments are as follows and will be available on the RATS website and at the open houses for review and comment:

Environmental Mitigation discussion,  
Operational and Management strategies discussion, and  
Financial Plan for revenues and expenditures for public transit services.

Depending on the public comments RATS receives at the public events listed below or received by May 27, 2008, the LRTP amendments will be presented and at the June 19, 2008 RATS Technical Committee meeting and at the June 26, 2008 RATS Policy Committee meeting. Formal adoption of these three amendments and the PPP is tentatively schedule for the July 24, 2008, 1:15 PM, RATS Policy Committee at Rockford City Hall, 425 East State Street, Rockford, IL.

The LRTP is available for public review and can be amended at any time. Therefore, public comments and input is encouraged at any time.

The next scheduled formal review and update is tentatively scheduled for 2010.

**RATS HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN (HSTP):** To begin the process for FY 2009 Section 5310 – Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities, 5316 – Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and Section 5317 – New Freedom projects to be amended to the RATS Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP), the first step in this process is an area-wide call for projects. This is also an opportunity for the public to comment on the existing plan and to comment on any transit needs that are currently unmet.

**IDOT's TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (ITEP):** IDOT recently announced that projects can be submitted for this federally funded grant program. At this open house, the projects that were submitted within the Rockford Metropolitan Area will be available for public review and comment.

**ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS FOR COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION:** This study will review the transportation corridors and current transportation methods, volumes, and routes for North Central Illinois residents that are traveling to and/or from destinations in Chicago's northwestern suburbs and the City of Chicago. The study will estimate how much need for transportation is remaining unmet by the current transportation alternatives. The goal of the study is to evaluate if indeed transportation needs are unmet, and if so, what alternative to existing transportation modes in the area will be most effective to improve mobility and support economic development, while still being cost effective. In late February 2008, RATS and the Northern Illinois Commuter Transportation Initiative (NICTI) held two public open houses to present the First Level Screening Results, the four selected alternatives that were selected by the NICTI Executive Committee and to seek public comments on the various improvement concepts, evaluation process and the draft purpose and need. The next major activity will be to develop detailed alignments and operation plans for the four selected alternatives and to test those results against the baseline / transportation system management scenario. Once this process is completed, the public will have an opportunity to comment of this phase of this analysis. For more information, the public is encouraged to access the project website at [www.nicti.net](http://www.nicti.net).

The format of these open houses is to allow an informal discussion between the public and RATS staff. The times are indicated below.

**DATES**

<b>May 20, 2008 – Tuesday</b> 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM Rockford Mass Transit District Conference Room 520 Mulberry Street Rockford, IL	<b>May 20, 2008 – Tuesday</b> 3:30 PM to 6:30 PM Porter Park – Log Cabin At the intersection of McDonald Road & Swanson Road Roscoe, IL	<b>May 21, 2008 –Wednesday</b> 3:30 PM to 7:00 PM Boone County Council on Aging Keen Age Center 2141 Henry Luckow Lane Belvidere, IL	<b>May 22, 2008 –Thursday</b> 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM Loves Park City Hall Conference Room 100 Heart Boulevard Loves Park, IL
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**PURPOSE:**

View Graphic Displays, Discuss Study Goals and Objectives, Ask Questions and Obtain Public Comments and Input

*For further information, contact*

Gary W. McIntyre, RATS Planner  
City of Rockford / RATS  
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104  
815/987-5638 (voice); 815/967-7058 (fax)  
email: [gary.mcintyre@rockfordil.gov](mailto:gary.mcintyre@rockfordil.gov)

Jon Paul Diipla, Transportation Planner  
City of Rockford / RATS  
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104  
815/987-5628 (voice); 815/987-7058 (fax)  
email: [jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov](mailto:jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov)

**Date of notice: April 9, 2008**

# RATS

**Rockford Area Transportation Study  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
City of Rockford, Public Works Department  
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104

## POLICY COMMITTEE

Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey, City of Rockford  
Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park  
Board Chairman Scott H. Christiansen, Winnebago County  
President Linda M. Vaughn, Village of Machesney Park  
Mayor Frederic C. Brereton, City of Belvidere  
Board Chairman Catherine H. Ward, Boone County  
Deputy Director George F. Ryan, Illinois Department  
of Transportation, Region 2

## NOTICE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING for ROCKFORD URBAN AND METROPOLITAN AREA

### PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR THE RATS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Notice is hereby given that the Rockford Area Transportation Study (RATS), the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Rockford Urban and Metropolitan area, is seeking public comments on the RATS Public Participation Plan. RATS coordinates publicly funded transportation planning and improvements among the various jurisdictions in Winnebago and Boone Counties.

#### RATS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP):

As a result of changes made in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), RATS has prepared a DRAFT of the RATS Public Participation Plan and the draft is available for review. This document outlines the methods and procedures that the Rockford Area Transportation Study will undertake to promote public participation in the transportation planning process. Accordingly, the general public is encouraged to submit comments during the next 45-days (beginning May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and ending July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008) and/or attend one of the public information open houses, which are listed below. Over this time period, comments can be submitted to RATS at the address listed below or by email to RATS staff by using the form on the RATS web site at: <http://rockfordil.gov/government/works/form.cfm?section=planning&id=1410>.

The **Draft** RATS Public Participation Plan can be viewed at <http://rockfordil.gov/government/works/index.cfm?section=planning&id=977> or you can receive a draft copy by contacting RATS Staff. Staff contact information is provided below.

Public comment will be afforded for the RATS Public Participation Plan **from May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 until July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008**. Comments can be submitted by (a) electronic format at the RATS website (b) mailing in your comments to RATS staff at the address provided below (c) faxing in your comments (d) or by attending one of the four public sessions on the PPP listed below.

The objective of these public informational open houses will be to seek comments on the above-mentioned planning document as well as other draft planning documents (listed below) and to allow informal discussions between RATS staff and the general public:

- **FY 2009 UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM**
- **YEAR 2035 LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP) AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**
- **RATS CORRINATED HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN**
- **THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT APPLICATION (SUBMITTED TO IDOT MAY 5, 2008)**

#### Dates and Locations

<u>May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008 - Tuesday</u>	<u>May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008 - Tuesday</u>	<u>May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008 - Wednesday</u>	<u>May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 - Thursday</u>
<b><u>11:00am-2:00pm</u></b>	<b><u>3:30pm-6:30pm</u></b>	<b><u>3:30pm-7:00pm</u></b>	<b><u>9:30am-12:30pm</u></b>
At Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD)	at Porter Park – Log Cabin	at the Boone County Council on Aging	at Loves Park City Hall
Conference Room, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor 520 Mulberry Rockford, IL 61101	At the intersection of McDonald Road and Swanson Road Roscoe, IL	2141 Henry Luckow Lane Belvidere, IL 61008	Conference Room 100 Heart Boulevard Loves Park, IL 61111

Public comments are welcomed on the above document and other RATS planning documents, at all RATS meetings or by contacting RATS through telephoning, e-mailing or writing. The RATS Technical Committee meetings at which comments by the public can be made regarding the PPP will be the May 22nd, 2008 and June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 meetings which will both be held at 10:00am at Loves Park City Hall (100 Heart Blvd. Loves Park, IL 61111). Comments can also be made at the RATS Mobility Subcommittee meeting, which will take place on June 10th, 2008 at 10:00am at the YWCA of Rockford (4990 E. State Street, Rockford, IL 61108). The RATS PPP amendments to the LRTP are to be tentatively adopted by the RATS Policy Committee at their meeting on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Jon Paul Diipla, Transportation Planner  
City of Rockford / RATS  
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104  
815/987-5628 (voice); 815/967-7058 (fax)  
email: [jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov](mailto:jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov)

Gary W. McIntyre, RATS Planner  
City of Rockford / RATS  
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104  
815/987-5638 (voice); 815/967-7058 (fax)  
email: [gary.mcintyre@rockfordil.gov](mailto:gary.mcintyre@rockfordil.gov)

**Date of Notice: May 14, 2008**

# RMAP

**Rockford Metropolitan Agency  
for Planning**  
City of Rockford, Public Works Department  
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104

## POLICY COMMITTEE

Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey, City of Rockford  
Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park  
Board Chairman Scott H. Christiansen, Winnebago County  
President Linda M. Vaughn, Village of Machesney Park  
Mayor Frederic C. Brereton, City of Belvidere  
Board Chairman Catherine H. Ward, Boone County  
Deputy Director George F. Ryan, Illinois Department  
of Transportation, Region 2

## PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

### ***RMAP PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN***

Public comments and input for the RMAP Public Participation Plan (PPP) and all other Rockford MPO planning documents is an on-going and continuous process. It is a policy of the Rockford MPO that the public is *always* welcome to submit comments to the transportation planning process at any time. All Rockford MPO Policy, Technical Committee and Subcommittee meetings are open to the public and comments are welcome during those meetings.

During the preparation of the RMAP PPP, regular updates regarding the process and progress of this plan were given at all MPO meetings. As the RMAP PPP was being developed, an important step was to identify the process to inform and involve the public.

Two public comment periods were held for the development of the RMAP Public Participation Plan. The *first* public comment period began on April 9, 2008 (and lasted until May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008) with a legal notice being published in the Rock River Times as well as notices being mailed out to all of the individuals listed on the Rockford MPO mailing list. This comment period was afforded so that members of the public could bring forward comments and or questions regarding RATS Public Involvement Plan. The purpose of this was to determine if the public approved of the involvement and participation techniques that the MPO *currently* utilized. Also, this time was afforded so that suggestions for improvements to the methods currently used could be offered to the MPO. Suggestions as to improvements of public participation techniques would be used to help draft the RMAP Public Participation Plan.

A second public comment period was held once a draft of the PPP was created. This public comment period lasted from May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 until July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008. A notice was again published in the Rock River Times and mailed out to all individuals on the Rockford MPO mailing list. The publication of this notice *began the federally required 45-day comment period for the RMAP Public Participation Plan*. The draft RMAP Public Participation Plan was made widely available to the general public by posting the document on the Rockford MPO webpage as well as making the draft available to the public through contacting Rockford MPO staff.

Additional opportunities for comment were afforded to members of the public through the Rockford MPO Mobility Subcommittee, Technical and Policy Committee meetings as well as the Rockford MPO hosting informational public open houses. Public Informational Open Houses were held at various locations within the Metropolitan Planning Area between May 20-22, 2008. A total of 16 persons attended these sessions.

At the conclusion of the time period, two comments were received. Listed below are the names of the individuals, organization and the subject of the comment.

<b>Name of Person</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Comment / Subject</b>
Leonard Mabry	5/20/2008	Citizen	Public Outreach
Lawrence J. Morrissey	5/26/2008	Mayor, City of Rockford	Public Outreach/Planning

Comments made during this period pertained to public outreach and MPO planning. In terms of public outreach, comments and recommendations as to how to keep the public aware of Rockford MPO activities were given. While the Rockford MPO annually posts meeting dates in regional newspapers, on the Rockford MPO webpage and distributes meeting agendas and meeting calendars through the MPO mailing list prior to meetings, it was suggested that the MPO consider publishing the meeting dates on a quarterly basis in regional newspapers and possibly consider television/radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for meeting dates or for open house/public comment periods. Also, it was commented that Rockford MPO informational brochures and flyers could be more widely distributed through placing them at partner organizations locations.

The Rockford MPO is currently examining the possibility of using these additional methods to inform the public. These methods could potentially be integrated into the current procedures to better make the public aware of the planning process as well as remind the public of planning events closer to the time of the occasion. In response to making informational brochures available to partner organizations, the Rockford MPO has begun the process to create brochures for their plans and distribute them to partner agencies upon request. The various MPO committees, partner organizations and mailing list members will be made aware of new Rockford MPO brochures as they become available. Brochures will also be posted on the Rockford MPO webpage.

The Rockford MPO will also be using various additional public outreach strategies as listed on pages 26-27 of the Public Participation Plan.

Other remarks received requested a more detailed discussion of the newly re-structured MPO/ RMAP organization. In response, **Section 8** was added to this document. That section of the plan details the factors behind the creation of the organization and lists duties and activities to be carried out by the MPO. It must be noted that as the new MPO organization matures, new methods and procedures of involving the public and carrying out the planning process will be developed. Therefore, the techniques that are listed in this document are *not* exhaustive and new methods regarding public participation in the planning process are always possible.

ROCKFORD AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

ATTENDANCE LIST

PURPOSE: Public Informational Open House - RATS Long-Range Transportation Plan Amendments

DATE / TIME: May 20, 2008 - Tuesday

LOCATION: Rockford Mass Transit District

Name:	Organization (if any)	Address:	Phone #	e-mail address:
1 Lawrence Mulberry				
2 DENNY HENDRICKS	RMTD			
3 RICK McVINIE	RMTA	520 MULBERRY	815 961-2220	R.McVinnie@RMTA.org
4 Paula Hughes	RMTD	"		
5 CURTIS JONES	IDOT	23005. Dickson Pkwy	217-795-2995	curtis.jones@illinois.gov
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ROCKFORD AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

ATTENDANCE LIST

PURPOSE: Public Informational Open House - RATS Long-Range Transportation Plan Amendments

DATE / TIME: May 20, 2008 - Tuesday

LOCATION: Village of Roscoe

Name:	Organization (if any)	Address:	Phone #	e-mail address:
1	Bob Soltan			
2	Chris Jones			
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ROCKFORD AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

ATTENDANCE LIST

PURPOSE: Public Informational Open House - RATS Long-Range Transportation Plan Amendments

DATE / TIME: May 21, 2008 - Wednesday

LOCATION: Boone County Council on Aging

Name:	Organization (if any)	Address:	Phone #	e-mail address:
1 Carol Ashley		5530 Olive Dr. Belvidere		
2 Deidra Johnson		2308 Main St, Caledonia		
3 Curtis Jones	IDOT	2300 S. Dirksen Pkwy		
4 FRANK P. HRANICKA		601 PEARL BEVIDERE		
5 John E Bowers		8834 Greenfield Dr		
6 Joanne Roddewig		11239 Meadowlark Lane Belvidere		
7 Cindy Swiatek		7689 BelMar DR. Belvidere		
8 Melanie Dembecky		1629 Candlewick Dr Poplar Grove		
9 MARGIE LOPEZ		1986 Davis Dr Belvidere		
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ROCKFORD AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY

ATTENDANCE LIST

MEETING: RATS Technical Committee and PIOH

DATE / TIME: May 22, 2008 @ 9:30 A.M.

LOCATION: Loves Park City Hall

Name:	Organization	Address:	Phone #	e-mail address:
1 Ralph Hoekstra	Blackhawk Bike	PO Box 355, Sullivan	815-222-2971	
2 Mark Crady	Pea	515 Mulford	815-962-2119	
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## **APPENDIX B**

# RATS

**Rockford Area Transportation Study  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
City of Rockford, Public Works Department  
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104

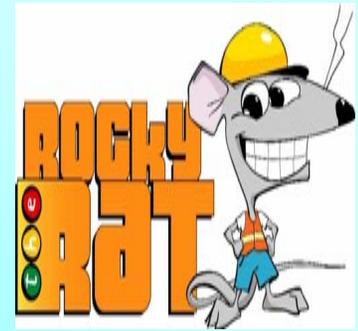
## POLICY COMMITTEE

Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey, City of Rockford  
Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park  
Board Chairman Scott H. Christiansen, Winnebago County  
President Linda M. Vaughn, Village of Machesney Park  
Mayor Frederic C. Brereton, City of Belvidere  
Board Chairman Catherine H. Ward, Boone County  
Deputy Director George F. Ryan, Illinois Department  
of Transportation, Region 2

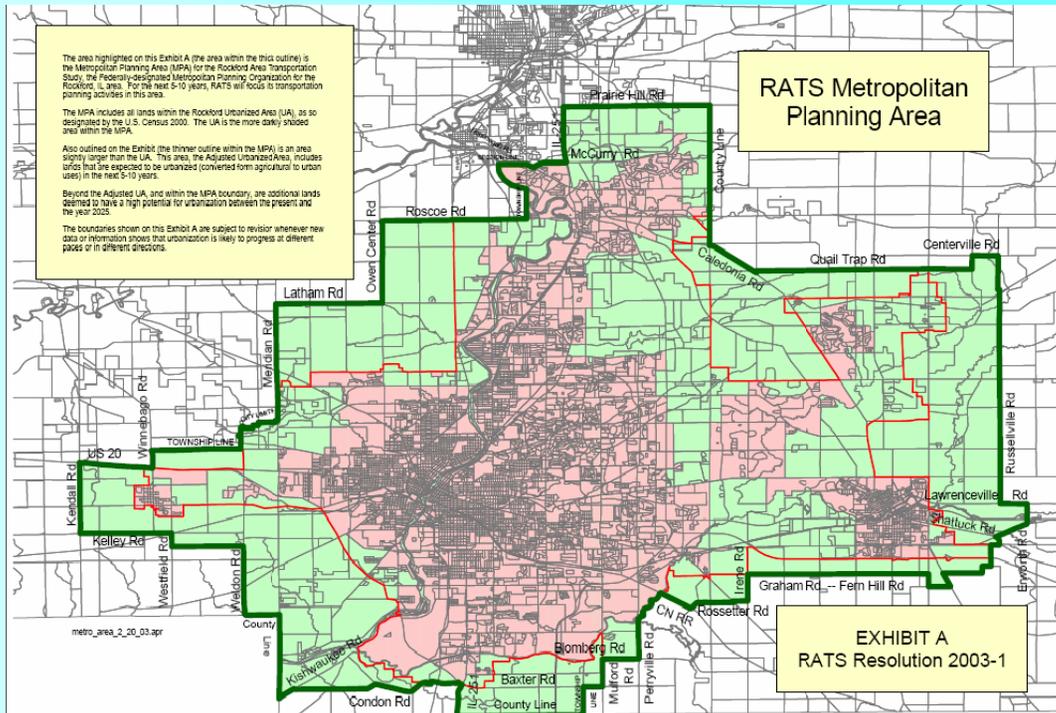
## ***Graphic Executive Summary***

# ***for the RATS Public Participation Plan***

# What is the Rockford Area Transportation Study (RATS)?



The Rockford Area Transportation Study is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Rockford Area. Federal law requires a Metropolitan Planning Organization for all urbanized areas in the United States above 50,000 in population. The work of RATS ensures that Federal transportation funds are available to the region for roadway capital projects, safety projects, mass transit capital and operating projects, bicycle and pedestrian facilities as well as regional projects.



## How was RATS formed?

RATS was formed by a cooperative agreement between the cities of Rockford, Loves Park, Machesney Park, Belvidere; the counties of Boone and Winnebago and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT)

## *What is the Public Participation Plan?*

The Public Participation Plan is a document that describes the methods that the Rockford Area Transportation Study takes to promote public participation and involvement in the transportation planning process



## *What information does the Public Participation Plan include?*

The Public Participation Plan includes such information as:

- Background information and organizational structure of RATS
- Actions that RATS will take to meet the Federal requirements for involving the public in the transportation planning process
- Information regarding the RATS mailing list
- Information regarding other RATS documents such as the Unified Work Program (UWP), the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)



## *How can I comment on the RATS Public Participation Plan?*

You can comment on the RATS Public Participation Plan through several ways:

- Attend information open houses hosted by RATS. Dates for public open houses are published in the Rock River Times or you can contact RATS staff. You can also find out more information on the RATS webpage at:

<http://rockfordil.gov/government/works/index.cfm?section=planning&id=977>

- Submit comments through filling out the comment form on the RATS webpage

<http://rockfordil.gov/government/works/index.cfm?section=planning&id=977>

- Write a letter and send it to RATS

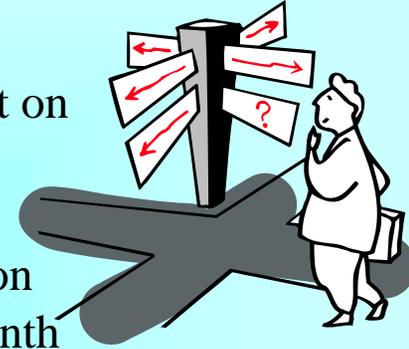
- Call and talk to RATS Staff



## *How can I become involved in the RATS planning process and other plans?*

You can become involved in the RATS planning process and provide input on other plans through the following:

- ***Ask*** to be added to the RATS mailing list. Agendas and other information regarding RATS work are sent out to members on the mailing list each month prior to Mobility Subcommittee, Technical and Policy Committee meetings.
- ***Attend*** RATS meetings
- ***Visit*** the RATS website to review plans and provide comment. Public comment on RATS documents is encouraged and always welcome
- ***Contact*** RATS staff for more information



### *Where is the RATS Office located?*

The RATS Office is located on the 6th floor of Rockford City Hall which is located at 425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104.

## ***Who should I contact if I have questions?***

You can contact the following if you have any questions.

### ***Steve Ernst, RATS Study Director***

City of Rockford/RATS

425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104

815/ 987-6734 (voice); 815/ 967-5078 (fax)

e-mail: [steve.ernst@rockfordil.gov](mailto:steve.ernst@rockfordil.gov)

### ***Gary W. McIntyre, RATS Planner***

City of Rockford/ RATS

425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104

815/978-5638 (voice); 815-967-5078 (fax)

e-mail: [gary.mcintyre@rockfordil.gov](mailto:gary.mcintyre@rockfordil.gov)

### ***Jon Paul Diipla, Transportation Planner***

City of Rockford/ RATS

425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104

815/ 987-5628 (voice); 815/ 967-5078 (fax)

e-mail: [jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov](mailto:jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov)

## CONSIDERATIONS AND PROCEDURES IN THE PLANNING PROCESS\*

Recognize the rights of citizens to participate in planning decisions

Strive to give citizens (including those who lack formal organization or influence) full, clear and accurate information on planning issues and the opportunity to have a meaningful role in the development of plans and programs

Strive to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons

Assist in the clarification of community goals, objectives and policies in plan-making

Ensure that reports, records and any other non-confidential information which is, or will be, available to decision makers is made available to the public in a convenient format and sufficiently in advance of any decision

Strive to protect the integrity of the natural environment and the heritage of the built environment

Pay special attention to the coordination of decisions and the long range consequences of present actions

\*Excerpts for Ethical Principles in Planning- American Planning Association.  
[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)

# RATS

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Jon Paul Diipla, Transportation Planner  
City of Rockford/ RATS  
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104  
815/ 987-5628 (voice); 815/ 967-5078 (fax)  
e-mail: [jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov](mailto:jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov)

Gary W. McIntyre, RATS Planner  
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425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104  
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# RATS

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**Rockford Area Transportation Study  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
City of Rockford, Public Works Department  
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

(PPP)

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP)

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) is a document that identifies the methods taken to engage the public in transportation planning decisions. The document also provides information regarding the transportation planning process, organizations involved in the transportation planning process and information regarding other RATS Planning documents.

The PPP is required by the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). As stipulated in SAFETEA-LU, a 45 day public comment period is afforded. The purpose of this comment period is to solicit feedback from the public as to how they perceive the transportation planning process as well as to solicit suggestions from the public as to how to better the process.

Public comments on all RATS documents (i.e. the PPP) are always welcome and are encouraged. In order to draft the PPP and have the plan approved, public comments will be accepted regarding the PPP from May 19, 2008 until July 2, 2008. Comments can be submitted to RATS through e-mail, telephone or sending written comments. RATS staff contact information is listed on the back of this brochure.

## HOW CAN THE PUBLIC PROVIDE INPUT FOR THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN?

The public can provide input for the Public Participation Plan by attending open houses regarding the plan, attending any of the RATS Policy Committee, Technical Committee or Mobility Subcommittee meetings. Members of the public may also provide input for the plan by contacting RATS staff (contact information is provided on the back of this brochure). Meeting dates for the various RATS committees can be found on the RATS webpage:

<http://www.rockfordil.gov/government/works/index.cfm?section=planning&id=977>

## WHAT IS THE RATS MOBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE?

The RATS Mobility Subcommittee was created to address various transportation issues in the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). The MPA includes the City of Rockford, the City of Loves Park, the Village of Machesney Park, the City of Belvidere, Village of Poplar Grove, Timberlane, Winnebago, Cherry Valley, New Milford and surrounding portions of Boone and Winnebago County.

Among its duties are to assist in the development of the RATS PPP, assist in exploring other possible mode choices and transportation services to adjacent areas to RATS and to act upon associated issues as identified by the RATS Policy and Technical Committees. Further information regarding the RATS Mobility Subcommittee can be obtained by contacting RATS Staff.



## THE RELATIONSHIP AND IMPORTANCE BETWEEN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND TRANSPORTATION

Transportation systems are used by the public on a daily basis

Accessible transportation is important to get people to and from work, activities, etc.

Transportation options are a vital component of citizens livelihoods

***Your opinions are valuable and essential in improving transportation for all citizens***



## HOW CAN YOU BECOME INVOLVED?

If you would like to be added to the RATS mailing list to receive meeting notices, etc. please fill out, detach and return this page with your contact information to:

The Rockford Area Transportation Study  
425 East State Street  
Rockford, IL 61104

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Your input is always welcome

Thank you for your interest.

# RMAP- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

## Informational Brochure

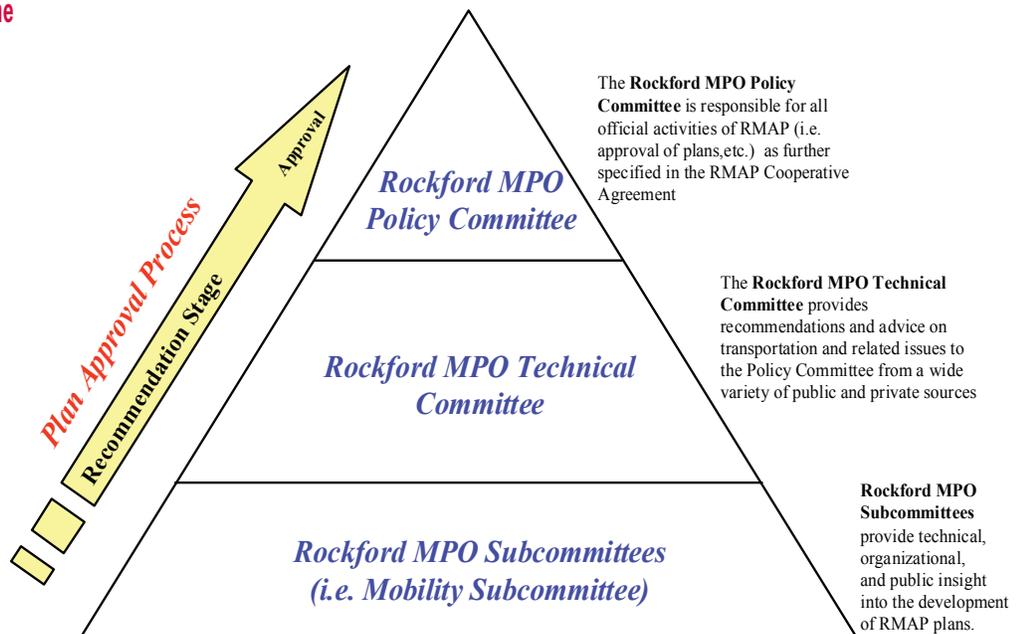
### What is the RMAP Public Participation Plan?

The Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP) Public Participation Plan is a document that explains the policies, procedures, methods and details for involving the public and area stakeholders in the early stages of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) transportation planning process.

### What is RMAP?

RMAP is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Rockford Area. The governing body of RMAP is the Policy Committee which is responsible for all official activities of the MPO such as the approval of transportation planning documents, etc. The Policy Committee obtains input and advice on transportation matters from the Technical Committee. The Technical Committee consists of various regional organizations such as municipal and county governments, IDOT, mass transit districts, economic development councils, etc. There are also subcommittees of the Technical Committee which serve different functions. Subcommittees that have been used in the past include, but are not limited to, the Transit TIP Subcommittee, the STP Subcommittee and the Mobility Subcommittee. Each respective Subcommittee has provided input to RMAP staff and the Technical Committee in the development of transportation planning documents created by the MPO.

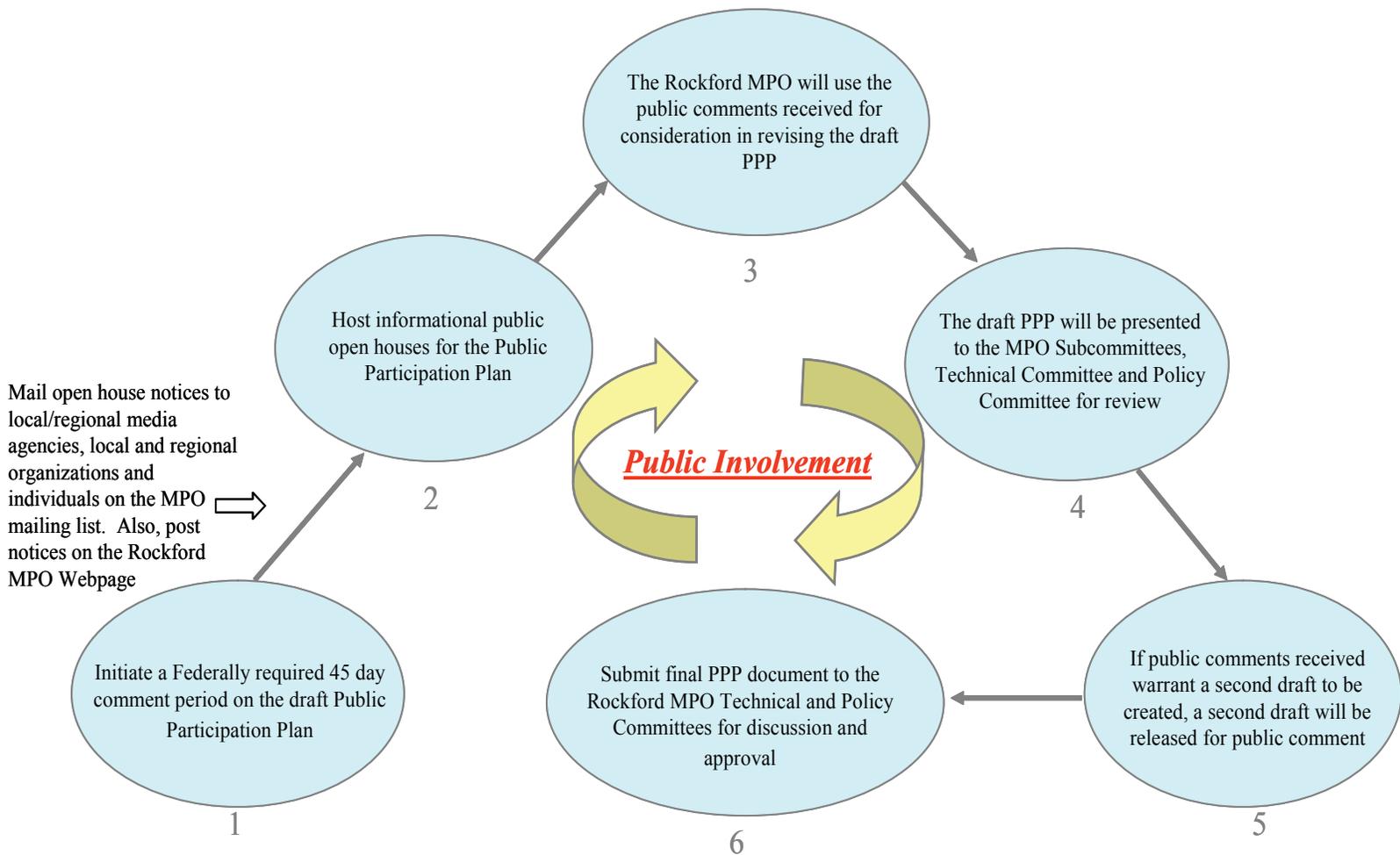
### ROCKFORD MPO ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE and PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS



# RMAP- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

## Informational Brochure

### How was the RMAP Public Participation Plan created?



The above diagram displays the process that was undertaken to develop the Public Participation Plan. Public comment is always welcome on the document as well as on other RMAP documents. If you would like to provide comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact RMAP staff. Contact information is provided at the end of this brochure.

# RMAP- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

Informational Brochure

## RMAP Strategies for Public Participation

### Engage the public in the transportation planning process

1. Provide information to citizens, affected public agencies, and other interested parties regarding transportation plans and programs early in the process to afford time for review material and participate in the process
2. Maintain the Rockford MPO mailing list to ensure that all interested parties are notified of planning activities so that they may comment and participate in the planning process
3. Utilize various visualization techniques, which include but are not limited to maps, graphs and charts to assist the public in better understanding transportation plans and planning processes
4. Provide reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of transportation related plans

### Keep the public informed of transportation related activities

1. Provide access to transportation plans and related information to the public during normal business hours
2. Make documents available related to the transportation planning process to interested parties through a comprehensive and continually updated contact list (i.e. the Rockford MPO Mailing List)
3. Maintain the Rockford MPO website with transportation plans, contact information, upcoming events, committee meeting schedules, agendas, minutes, and related transportation planning materials
4. Issuing PSA's

### Promote participation in the transportation planning process by making the MPO visible and accessible

1. Continue the Rockford MPO policy of affording all members of the public to comment at all MPO meetings
2. Facilitate public meetings/informational open houses, when appropriate, at convenient and accessible places and times.
3. Publish public notices regarding transportation plans, open houses etc. to make the public aware of comment periods.

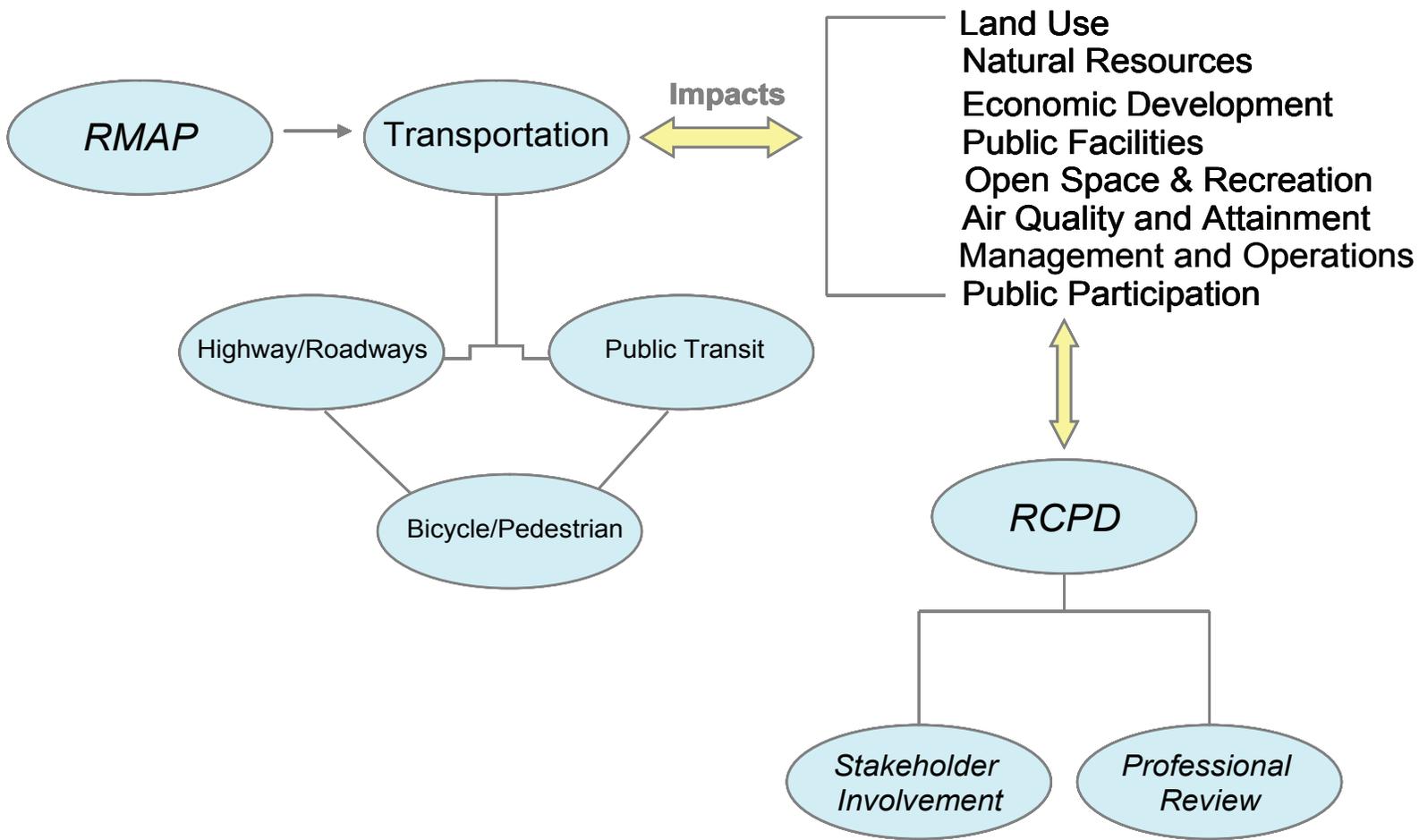
### Develop methods to improve public participation

1. Evaluate current public participation techniques used to encourage involvement and modify accordingly
2. Continue to work with the Mobility Subcommittee to encourage public participation
3. Expand upon current public participation and involvement methods with the development of the new RMAP MPO structure and promote the Rockford MPO webpage on MPO documents

# RMAP- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

## Informational Brochure

How will RMAP and the Regional Center for Planning and Design work together?



The above diagram displays the relationship that will be formed between the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning and the Regional Center for Planning and Design. While the relationship will be based upon the above qualities, new and different aspects will be incorporated into the model to develop and strengthen a dynamic in which RMAP and RCPD will work in collaboration to provide objective and effective planning recommendations and projects. With the combined efforts of the two organizations and constant stakeholder (i.e. the public, businesses, land owners, non-profit agencies, etc.) participation, efficient solutions can be created to promote the region as a whole.

# RMAP- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

## Informational Brochure

### How can we work together to make a difference?

*- How can we make a difference? How can the public and planning professionals, etc. understand where each other are coming from? -*

“We”, the public, community and citizens, can make a difference by communicating with each other and with planners/professionals within RMAP and the RCPD. By letting these professionals know what your questions, concerns, recommendations and suggestions are, plans that are developed will take your ideas into consideration. The only way that your ideas can be heard and acted upon is if you let them be known. Listed below are some ways in which the public can participate in the planning process.

1. Request to be added to the RMAP mailing list. If you would like to be added to the list, please contact RMAP staff and they will gladly add you to the listing.
2. Attend RMAP meetings. All RMAP meetings are open to the public and public attendance is encouraged. RMAP meeting dates, times and locations are listed on the RMAP webpage. Meeting agendas are also sent out prior to meetings to those on the mailing list.
3. Contact RMAP staff with any questions that you might have.
4. RMAP staff can be contacted through e-mail, fax, or by simply calling them. Also, you can submit questions and comments through the RMAP webpage.

<http://rockfordil.gov/government/works/index.cfm?section=planning&id=977>

5. Attend RMAP Public Open Houses. These events are held so that the public may come and view plans, speak with RMAP planners/staff and become more familiar with the MPO planning process. Prior to an RMAP Public Open House being held, notices are published in the Rock River Times and are sent out to all individuals on the RMAP mailing list.

# **RMAP- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

## **Informational Brochure**

### **RMAP Contact Information**

**Steve Ernst, RMAP Study Director**

**City of Rockford/RMAP**

**425 East State Street Rockford, IL 61104**

**815/ 987-6734 (voice); 815/ 967-5078 (fax)**

**e-mail: [steve.ernst@rockfordil.gov](mailto:steve.ernst@rockfordil.gov)**

**Gary W. McIntyre, RMAP Planner**

**City of Rockford/ RMAP**

**425 East State Street Rockford, IL 61104**

**815/978-5638 (voice); 815-967-5078 (fax)**

**e-mail: [gary.mcintyre@rockfordil.gov](mailto:gary.mcintyre@rockfordil.gov)**

**Jon Paul Diipla, Transportation Planner**

**City of Rockford/ RMAP**

**425 East State Street Rockford, IL 61104**

**815/ 987-5628 (voice); 815/ 967-5078 (fax)**

**e-mail: [jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov](mailto:jonpaul.diipla@rockfordil.gov)**