

RMAP

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

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RMAP MOBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES July 8th, 2008

Attending: Steve Haight, Careers Etc.; Melinda Trier, Northwestern Illinois Agency on Aging; Steve Ernst, RMAP; Jon Paul Diipla, RMAP; Denny Hendricks, RMTD; Rick McVinnie, RMTD; Lisa Brown, RMTD; Richard Hunt, RAMP; Carol Green, Lifescape Community Services; Dyanna M. Chandler, Council of Neighborhood Organizations; Robert Soltau, SLATS; Ralph Hoekstra, Blackhawk Bike and Ski Club; Janyce Fadden, RAEDC; Marshal Starks, The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Northern Illinois; Maria Hawley, The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Northern Illinois

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The 7/8/2008 RMAP Mobility Subcommittee meeting was called to order by Mr. Haight at 10:05am.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were given by those present.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The 7/8/2008 RMAP Mobility Subcommittee meeting agenda was unanimously approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE 6/10/08 RMAP MOBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS:

The 6/10/08 RMAP Mobility Subcommittee meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

5. RMAP PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP) AND LRTP AMENDMENTS:

Mr. Diipla stated that the final drafts of these documents would be presented to the Technical and Policy Committees this month for recommendation and approval. The RMAP Technical Committee would be held on July 17, 2008 and the RMAP Policy Committee would be held on July 24, 2008. The Management and Operations document will be developed next. Thus far, three of the four documents needed for Full Certification have been produced. Once full certification is awarded, projects in the TIP may move forward. It was stated that there were public comments regarding the PPP. The Public Comment section of the plan is being developed as well as the addition of a section elaborating on the changes in the MPO and its expanded role in regional planning. These are the two sections being added to the RMAP PPP.

Mr. Ernst then briefly discussed changes within the MPO. He gave an overview of the Chicago MPO. The goal is to have a much stronger presence in the community and to have the community come together and provide the MPO their ideas. A Center for Planning and Design will be created to assist in the MPO efforts. RCPD may provide work through contractual agreements with RMAP. RMAP is also working with a communications agency to develop a "brand" and communications plan.

6. INVITATION OF ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MOBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE:

Mr. Haight announced the Mobility Subcommittee to the Homelessness Task Force meeting last month and invited organizations present at that meeting to attend the Mobility Subcommittee meetings. Unfortunately, none of the invited organizations came to this month's meeting.

Mr. Diipla stated that an invitation letter has been developed. He also stated that at the last Mobility Subcommittee meeting he asked members to review the service provider list in the back of the HSTP document to determine what other organizations in the area should be contacted to participate. Copies of this listing were also handed out at the meeting.

Ms. Trier stated that a personalized letter may be an effective method of inviting organizations into the Subcommittee. Mr. Haight added that in the letter, the name change from RATS to RMAP should be mentioned so as to avoid confusion on the recipient's behalf. Mr. Haight stated that he would continue to speak with service/ transportation providers in the area to get them involved in the RMAP Mobility Subcommittee.

Mr. Diipla stated that if any members of the subcommittee had contact information for potential organizations to please pass it on to him so that he may contact them regarding the Mobility Subcommittee. Mr. McVinnie mentioned that a new provider in the area, ASAP, has contacted RMTD and would like to work with the transit district. Mr. McVinnie stated that he would pass on the contact information for ASAP to the MPO.

It was noted that CAREAVAN was no longer in business. ASAP has helped to fill the gap in service that resulted from the closing of CAREAVAN. It was noted that the organization originated in the south LaSalle area. Ms. Trier asked for contact information for the organization. It was noted that ASAP is at the same location as CAREAVAN was in Loves Park. ASAP has helped to alleviate some of the paratransit demand that was placed on RMTD when CAREAVAN closed.

Mr. Diipla encouraged the Mobility Subcommittee to review the organization list and to forward any information regarding any other organization that should be contacted to him.

7. DISCUSSION

Mr. Haight stated that this portion of the agenda is open for organizations to discuss any transportation issues or questions that they might have. Ms. Fadden briefly spoke about the Freedom Field project. Ms. Fadden mentioned that there had been an inquiry from an organization called Clean Energy. Clean Energy runs fuel stations using natural gas. Ms. Fadden stated that a meeting would be held next week regarding this project. Mr. McVinnie added that RMTD will be involved in the process and that a FTA grant cycle ends July 22, 2008. Mr. McVinnie stated that Springfield Mass Transit uses CNG for their vehicles. RMTD staff will visit Springfield to examine the technology. It was then inquired whether or not the City of Rockford is looking into CNG. It was believed that the City was not at this current time but may in the future. At this point, there is an effort to determine if organizations in the area would be interested in utilizing this fuel source. Mr. McVinnie stated that the grant has to go through the transit district.

Free rides for seniors was then discussed. Mr. McVinnie stated that a similar bill is waiting to be signed by the Governor for persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities (under the circuit breaker program) would be able to ride fixed route buses for free once the bill was signed. The Department of Aging will be the agency certifying this process. People would receive a letter of eligibility for the program. This might be needed to issue an ID.

Mr. Haight asked if senior ridership has continued to increase or if it has leveled off. Mr. Hendricks stated that it is leveling off somewhat but overall has still increased gradually. Also, there have not been many complaints submitted to RMTD regarding the program. Ms. Trier inquired as to whether there has been any crowding on buses. Mr. Hendricks stated that the E. State Street bus has crowding due to its high ridership use. Mr. Hendricks also brought up the point that if the new bill allowing persons with disabilities to ride for free is passed that there might be issues due to there only being 2 spots on each fixed route buses where wheelchairs can be secured. Ms. Green asked if there has been an increase in ridership due to high fuel costs. Mr. Hendricks stated that there has been a 8-9% increase in ridership this year. It was also noted that the bicycle racks on RMTD buses have been well received and used.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Diipla thanked organizations who provided copies of RMAP brochures to their patrons. This has helped to add new members to the MPO mailing list.

Mr. Haight mentioned that he had a conversation with Representative Dave Severson a few weeks ago and briefly discussed the conversation.

Mr. McVinnie stated that one point of concern for RMTD is the trend of new businesses moving to Rockford that realize they require mass transit but do not move near a mass transit route. Mr. McVinnie stated that it is not easy to change a route. Mr. McVinnie asked if there was anything that the RAEDC could do to help with this situation. The topic was opened for discussion. It is more of an operational issue than people might acknowledge.

9. PROGRESS REPORTS

Ms. Brown mentioned that there were two individuals at the meeting who were not present during introductions. Ms. Maria Hawley and Mr. Marshall Starks from the Northern Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce introduced themselves. The Mobility Subcommittee welcomed the representatives.

Mr. Diipla gave an update on the Federal Certification status. This topic was mostly covered under agenda item #5. The PPP and the LRTP amendments will be going to Policy Committee this month for approval.

Mr. McVinnie asked if RMAP had heard anything from the Federal Review Team with regard to the MPO's certification. Mr. Ernst stated that the MPO has been in contact with John Donovan from FHWA and it has been indicated that the MPO is on track with receiving full certification pending completion of required documents.

Mr. Diipla stated that the 5310 applications have been reviewed by the MPO and that IDOT-DPIT has received the applications. The IDOT-DPIT application review process should begin sometime in August.

Mr. Diipla also stated that the HSTP process should start up again in the next month or so. The Mobility Subcommittee will assist in reviewing the current needs and gaps listed in the HSTP and will also help to determine if new needs have surfaced. Mr. Ernst stated the Winnebago County might be interested transit service.

Mr. Diipla stated that the TIP will be the next document produced by the MPO. It is anticipated that the FY 2009 TIP will be adopted by September of 2008.

Mr. Diipla stated that the funding agreement between RMAP, RMTD, BCCA, City of Belvidere and Boone County ends June 30, 2009. Mr. Slattengren mentioned this topic at the June Mobility Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Diipla asked RMTD if there had been any developments regarding this matter. Mr. McVinnie replied that there was a meeting scheduled prior to the Mobility Subcommittee meeting with Boone County but it was rescheduled for July 22, 2008.

Mr. Ernst added that he attended a meeting with transportation officials regarding the 2016 Olympics. Brief discussion followed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.