

RATS

Rockford Area Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Organization

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

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RATS MOBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES March 11th, 2008

Attending: Steve Haight, Careers Etc.; Ron Schoepfer, RMTD; Lisa Brown, RMTD; Jon Paul Diipla, RATS; Denny Hendricks, RMTD; Rick McVinnie, RMTD; Paula Hughes, RMTD; Lori Mitchell, Village of Machesney Park; Brian Ward, RVC Refugee Program; Melinda Trier, NICA; Rich Hunt, RAMP; John Strandin, The Workforce Connection; John Slattengren, BCCA; Curtis Jones, IDOT; Janyce Fadden, RAEDC.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The 3/11/2008 RATS 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 3/11/2008 RATS Mobility Subcommittee meeting agenda was unanimously approved.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE 2/12/08 RATS MOBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS:

The 2/12/08 RATS Mobility Subcommittee meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

5. DISCUSSION:

The RMTD bus tour was discussed and would take place during National Transportation Week (week of May 12, 2008). Ms. Brown prepared and presented tentative routes for the tour. One potential tour would be to take a job-search excursion. A bus would be taken to the work force connection to experience what it is like to be in the situation of using public transportation in order to find a job. Another option would be to take the city loop route to experience what it is like to transfer outside of the downtown transfer center. A third option would be to take an "everyday trip", i.e. take transportation to a medical center, for shopping, etc. These were just some ideas and the tour route was open to discussion and suggestions. It was also noted that the time frame for the trip would be from 10am-12pm. The tour would be scheduled for May 13th, (which is the scheduled Mobility Subcommittee meeting date for that month). Mr. McVinnie mentioned that the purpose of the tour was not just to ride the bus but to actually experience what those who rely on public transportation have to face on a daily basis (i.e. Headway times, undeserved destinations, etc.) It was stated that the Mobility Subcommittee helps to determine where the gaps are and how to prioritize service improvements. It was also noted that after the first year of funding that projects had to be self-sustaining.

The idea of having individuals members ride the bus on their own schedule was discussed. Mr. Haight mentioned that the group tour idea would be the better idea so as to get other individuals involved (i.e. staff from respective organizations, etc.). Discussion of including elected officials also was included. Ms. Trier mentioned the idea of RMTD working with a senior living center to involve seniors in the bus tour. At the same time, this would also help to promote the free rides for seniors program by having senior become familiar with how fixed route transit operates.

It was agreed through consensus that a decision (finalized route, itinerary, etc.) regarding the tour needs to be made at the April meeting and that the bus tour should be done through a group outing. It was agreed that the tour in total should not last more than a couple of hours and elected officials should be invited to participate. It was also agreed that the group should discuss the experiences on the tour after the tour is finished.

Discussion of a destination for the bus tour took place. There was mention of the State Street route (employers, etc.) The group would start at RMTD and then take the bus to Cherry Vale Mall and back. The total time for the trip would be two hours, not including the time it would take for individuals to meet up at RMTD prior to the start of the tour. It was also mentioned that the IL-173 corridor was a possible option. Right now, the route ends at Target in Machesney Park. This route would show where persons have to get off now as opposed to where the route would go after the 173 service were to be started (service is to be tentatively started this summer). A second bus would pick up the group and then show them where the new route would cover. It was noted that this route is also an area that was identified by the group and HSTP for service expansion.

Discussion of employment areas that have a great demand for service but are undeserved, as well as RMTD ridership, took place. The East State Street route was agreed upon as the route to take for the bus tour. It was also agreed upon that riding the route for a half-hour would be sufficient time to understand the process. Ms. Fadden mentioned the notion of having a business talk to the Mobility Subcommittee regarding their employees and public transportation, as well as it's impact on getting workers to their jobs, etc. This outing would also be an educational experience for the Subcommittee as well as for those elected officials that may attend. Ms. Brown stated that an itinerary would be provided next month with more detail regarding the tour.

The Subcommittee then explored the topic of free rides for seniors. Ms. Brown mentioned that the program had been publicized by various means (radio, t.v., sending out fliers, etc.). RMTD will continue to provide ID's to seniors who request them. Free rides for seniors will begin March 17, 2008.

6. COMMUNICATIONS:

The floor was opened to members of the Mobility Subcommittee to present any project ideas for the FY 09 JARC/New Freedom funds. Mr. Haight mentioned that East State Street would continue to be a need. It was also stated that IL-173 project will be started sometime in the summer of 2008. Ms. Fadden mentioned the idea of an impact study for the City of Rockford for the number of individuals who use transit to go to Cherry Vale Mall for employment. There was also discussion of the growth of inbound call centers in the area. Ms. Fadden also gave a brief update on the NICTI study. Ms. Brown made an announcement for the annual RMTD fundraiser and that the proceeds would go toward helping RMTD. Mr. Dipla mentioned that RATS will be holding an informational open house sometime in April or May and that once the date was set, individuals on the RATS mailing list would be notified.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10am.