

# 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  
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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*

## **RATS MOBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**PERSONS PRESENT:** Dia Cirillo, Center for Tax Budget and Accountability; John Strandin; Boone and Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board; Darcy Bucholz; Boone and Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board; Melinda Trier, Northwestern Illinois Area Agency on Aging; Richard Hunt, RAMP; John Slattengren, Boone County Council on Aging; Steve Haight, Careers, etc.; Rick McVinnie, RMTD; Lisa Brown, RMTD; Dennis Hendricks, RMTD; Ron Schoepfer, RMTD; Gary McIntyre, RATS; Jon Paul Dipla, RATS, Becky Tobin, Boone County; Lori J. Mitchell, Village of Machesney Park.

### **1. Call to Order**

The 10/09/07 meeting of the Mobility Subcommittee was called to order by Mr. Dipla at 10:05am.

### **2. Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Dipla asked the Subcommittee for approval of the October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Mobility Subcommittee agenda. Ms. Cirillo stated that there should be the addition of the coverage of the Northeastern HSTP reflected in the agenda. Members present approved agenda.

### **3. Approval of Minutes of the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007 RATS Mobility Subcommittee Meeting**

The minutes of the Mobility Subcommittee meeting for September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2007 were approved with the addition of the corrections that Ms. Cirillo had made. Mr. Haight moved to approve the minutes with the necessary corrections added. Ms. Cirillo seconded.

### **4. Mobility Subcommittee Structure**

Mr. Dipla began discussion of the structure of the Mobility Subcommittee and stated that according to the RATS Cooperative Agreement that traditional organizations are represented by one member from that respective organization. Possible voting structure was discussed. Mr. McVinnie stated that one vote per agency was acceptable and made sense. Mr. Strandin then opened discussion as to potential voting structure and the question of whether or not agencies that vote on another level (i.e. RATS Technical Committee) would be able to have a vote on the Mobility Subcommittee. Mr. Haight inquired as to the existing structure of voting members in RATS. Mr. McVinnie responded by stating that at the RATS Technical Committee level, organizations have one vote per agency. Mr. McVinnie stated that the RATS Technical and Policy Committees differ in the respect that RATS Policy consists of mayors, etc. Mr. McIntyre stated that members on the RATS Policy Committee get one vote and that for financial matters that there had to be a majority vote.

Ms. Bucholz inquired as to if members who serve on the RATS Technical Committee serve on the Policy Committee. Mr. McIntyre stated that Technical members do not serve on the Policy Committee. Mr. McIntyre described the structuring of the RATS Policy Committee. Mr. McIntyre then explained that any member of the RATS Technical Committee is also a member of the RATS Mobility Subcommittee. Mr. McIntyre stated that recommendations are made from the Mobility Subcommittee and that those recommendations would be presented to RATS Technical Committee. Mr. Strandin then stated that any member of the Technical Committee would be a voting member of the Subcommittee. Mr. McIntyre agreed.

Ms. Bucholz then inquired as to how quorum issues were to be handled. Mr. McIntyre stated that a listing of organizations involved existed. Mr. Diipla clarified that this listing was found in the Getting to Work in Greater Rockford study and that it was also placed in RATS Resolution 2007-8.

Ms. Cirillo stated that the RATS Technical Committee had sixteen members on it and that the Mobility Subcommittee had the potential to exceed that amount. Ms. Cirillo then asked Mr. McIntyre if there would be a "middle ground" to such circumstances to reach quorum and voting.

Mr. McIntyre encouraged the Mobility Subcommittee to get secured and ongoing representation from the organizations present. He stated that the Subcommittee had more of an advisory role. However, if a voting structure were to be created that those who vote on the Technical Committee would not be eligible for voting on the Mobility Subcommittee.

Ms. Cirillo said that they could be ex officio non-voting members and serve an advisory role. Mr. McIntyre stated that discussion should be encouraged at the Mobility Subcommittee level.

Ms. Cirillo then reiterated that those members on the RATS Technical committee would be ex officio non-voting members of Mobility Subcommittee and asked for a motion to be carried pertaining to that. Mr. Haight tuned the statement into a form of a motion.

Ms. Brown then stated that those present, which included Rockford Mass Transit District, the City of Rockford and the Village of Machesney Park would not be voting members. Ms. Cirillo confirmed this statement. Ms. Brown then entertained the notion of discussing this topic further so as to not exclude communities (i.e. Boone County, Machesney Park, etc) voting abilities. Ms. Mitchell commented that she felt that it would be important for municipalities to have a voice at the Mobility Subcommittee level. Mr. Haight agreed with this statement.

Hr. Haight then reiterated that it must be made clear to organizations that would be a voting member that they must attend meetings due to quorum issues. Ms. Brown stated that once the grant money were to end that the communities would have to carry on the projects, so that would give them incentive to come to the table. Mr. Haight then withdrew his previous motion.

Mr. McIntyre stated that in the RATS Cooperative Agreement that Subcommittees might have a limitation to a quorum given the fact that organizations come and go from the meetings and that having a quorum restriction could potentially limit the effectiveness of conducting business. Therefore, it might be beneficial to conduct the Subcommittee on a consensus basis. Mr. Strandin then asked how RATS defines a quorum.

Mr. McIntyre responded that for RATS Technical Committee that there were sixteen members and that nine were needed for a quorum. More than fifty percent is needed to establish a quorum and that percentage also applies to the RATS Policy Committee. Ms. Mitchell stated that members had to be identified on the Subcommittee level to establish quorum.

Mr. McIntyre stated organizations may not have been able to attend this meeting may attend subsequent meetings and that they would have to be allowed to participate. Mr. McVinnie then stated that some organizations show up occasionally and that those organizations would be able to attend the meetings for certain issues and voice their opinion, but that they may not necessarily be a voting member. If an agency wanted to be a voting member then they would have to commit the subcommittee. Mr. McVinnie stated that the subcommittee had to eventually get to that point.

Ms. Bucholz then stated that the meetings are open meetings under the open meetings act. As a result, membership would have to be established at some point. Mr. Strandin followed by stating that a commitment among organizations who wanted to become a voting member had to be made.

Mr. McIntyre stated that the goal of the committee was to assist in the development of the HSTP and that once the document was released for public comment other organizations may come forward and provide comment. Ms. Mitchell then stated that if an organization wanted representation then someone from that organization should be attending Mobility Subcommittee meetings.

Ms. Cirillo stated that an invitation should be sent out to agencies and municipalities to establish who will be participating and who will not be. Mr. McIntyre agreed that this attempt should be made to reach out to organizations.

Mr. Diipla then stated that the agendas have been mailed to all the members of the RATS Technical committee. Mr. Diipla then stated that he would make the necessary adjustments to the invitation letter pertaining to commitment and quorum issues. He then asked the subcommittee as to an appropriate due date to respond to the invitation letter would be. Mr. Haight stated that two weeks provided sufficient time to respond to such an invitation. It was then stated by Mr. Schoepfer that an agreement should be stated at some point that if a voting agency is absent for two or three consecutive meeting then they would loose their voting ability. However, a replacement representative could represent an organization if the appointed member was not able to attend.

Ms. Cirillo then added that since there was a limited timeframe to complete the HSTP that an interested organization must attend all the Mobility Subcommittee meeting up to the completion of the plan. Mr. McVinnie asked when the HSTP is due by. Mr. Diipla stated that there was not a specific date yet, but that the MPO was looking to have the plan completed in January of 2008. Mr. Diipla said that the HSTP is an ongoing document and that it would be revised over time.

Ms. Bucholz then reiterated that Mobility Subcommittee is asking organizations to commit to the Subcommittee and to appoint members to serve on the Subcommittee. Mr. Strandin then asked if the option would be afforded to keep organizations that did not want to be a voting member on the mailing lists. Ms. Cirillo stated that the option would be afforded and members present agreed this upon.

Mr. McVinnie then asked if a section should be included on future agendas that would allow time for public comment. Mr. Diipla stated that that public comment is welcome and that all of the agendas have the phrase "Opportunities for public comment will be afforded on all agenda items". Mr. McVinnie stated that it could be a possibility of making this a line item on future agendas.

Mr. McIntyre stated that all RATS Technical and Policy meeting agendas afford the same opportunity. Mr. McIntyre stated that if a member of the public had a question regarding a topic that they could speak at the time of the discussion and that this is how RATS has approached participation in the past.

Mr. Diipla then asked the Mobility Subcommittee if there were other changes or additions that needed to be made to the invitation letter.

## **5. Identifying Potential Members**

Ms. Cirillo asked if the invitation letter had already been sent out. Mr. Diipla responded by stating that the letter had not gone out yet and that the Subcommittee had to approve the letter before distribution. Ms. Bucholz commented that the addition of a response deadline as well as an information regarding the HSTP would be helpful. Mr. Diipla stated that the invitation letter would be mailed out to organizations in the area.

Mr. Diipla then briefly revisited agenda item #4 regarding the selection of a chairman and asked if it should be postponed until after the invitation responses are returned. Members present agreed that it should be postponed until then.

Mr. McVinnie then asked if a form should accompany the invitation letter to make a response easier. Mr. Diipla stated that he would develop a form to accompany the invitation letter

Ms. Bonner then suggested having questions on the form that would ask the organization what services they provided. This would be filled out even if they did not wish to participate in the Mobility Subcommittee. Mr. McVinnie agreed that this would be a good idea. Ms. Bonner then followed up by stating that the organization could list any issues they had, etc. even though they may not wish to participate in the Subcommittee.

Ms. Bucholz commented that this would assist in the Mobility Subcommittee's effort to find out exactly what organizations are in the area and to include them in the process.

Mr. Diipla then asked for a motion to approve the draft letter with the aforementioned revision. Mr. McVinnie made a motion to approve the draft letter. Mr. Haight seconded the motion.

## **6. Identifying Transportation Issues/Concerns**

Mr. Diipla stated that once the responses to the invitation letter were received that those responses would assist in identifying more agencies to include in the Mobility Subcommittee. Mr. Diipla stated that transportation issues from the Getting to Work in Greater Rockford study would be addressed by the committee, as stated at the last meeting. Mr. Diipla then opened the floor for discussions of other transportation related issues.

Ms. Mitchell stated that one issue was the "person in the workplace" in relation to transit drop off points. She stated that drop off points were not necessarily close to where individuals worked and that some had distances to travel in order to reach work. Ms. Brown asked where these areas are. Ms. Mitchell stated that it affected workers off the IL 173 Corridor. Mr. McVinnie then asked if service were to be provided on Burden would some of the issues be resolved. Ms. Mitchell said that it might help. Mr. McVinnie stated that RMTD had been in discussions with Machesney Park and that the Village would be ready to support such an initiative.

Mr. Diipla then asked Ms. Cirillo if discuss the Northeastern (NE) Illinois HSTP.

Ms. Cirillo stated that the Northeastern Region (Illinois) was the first region to complete the HSTP in the State and that the document was listed on the RTA website. Ms. Cirillo commented that the NE Region HSTP did not designate or identify certain project but developed strategies or policies to address transportation needs. Ms. Cirillo noted that the GTW study listed specific projects to address needs, but that those projects were under broader categories of transit needs. Ms. Cirillo then discussed some of the strategies that were identified in the GTW summary.

Ms. Cirillo then briefly reviewed the HSTP. She stated that the HSTP was a federal obligation from SAFETEA-LU. The purpose of the HSTP is to assist in the designation of JARC and New Freedom funds. It was stated that the MPO is assisting in the allocation of these funds. Ms. Cirillo stated the New Freedom funds are to be used to improve the mobility of individuals with disabilities above and beyond what is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Ms. Cirillo added that the ADA system complements fixed route service by providing paratransit options.

Ms. Cirillo stated that Rockford would receive approximately \$112,000 in JARC and \$70,000 in New Freedom per year (estimated). She stated that there are match requirements for these funding sources. The match would be 50/50 for operational costs and 80/20 for capital improvements. Ms. Cirillo stated that the HSTP that was being developed by the MPO and would only cover the Urbanized areas of the City of Rockford and the City of Belvidere. The rural HSTP will be developed by another agency. Ms. Cirillo stated that at some point the topic of connecting the HSTP's would be addressed.

Ms. Cirillo reiterated that the purpose of the plan was to insure that the use of JARC and New Freedom funds came from a process that had community input and that the transit concerns of individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals and elderly individuals were addressed. The second purpose of the plan was to increase coordination of transit providers in the area to improve service.

Ms. Cirillo stated that the NE region had a project advisory committee and that she served on it. She offered to provide assistance if there were any questions while developing the RATS HSTP. Ms. Cirillo stated that

the NE Region HSTP was implemented was from January 2007 to July 2007. 10% of funding was used for the planning process. She stated that 10% of the funding available could go towards planning if it was necessary for the RATS HSTP. The NE inventoried services through surveys and worked with those individuals to further identify other providers. The surveys also identified the transit needs. Needs were also assessed through focus groups and open houses. Mr. Haight inquired as to the public response to the open houses. Ms. Cirillo stated that the turn out was around 30-50 persons per open house.

Ms. Bonner asked if the surveys were sent out to transit providers and riders in the NE region. Ms. Cirillo responded by stating that surveys were sent to community based organizations, government organizations, transit providers, etc. She stated that the focus groups consisted of transit riders as well as transit providers and that the open houses were welcome to anyone. Ms. Cirillo then briefly reiterated the steps that were taken to develop the Northeastern Illinois HSTP.

Ms. Cirillo stated that it would be helpful for the Mobility Subcommittee to review the NE criteria to see how to structure the RATS HSTP Criteria. It was stated that a consultant led the process in the NE HSTP process. She stated that the NE Draft HSTP was out for public review from July to early October 2007 and that they would be releasing a Request for Proposal for JARC and New Freedom.

Ms. Cirillo then asked the members present if there were any questions. Mr. Strandin asked for a definition of the metro area. Mr. Diipla stated that maps of the RATS metro region were distributed previously to the committee. Mr. Diipla then briefly went over the urban area that RATS covered.

Mr. McIntyre explained that there were two boundaries in the map. One boundary was the urbanized area and the second was the Metropolitan Planning Area. Mr. Diipla reiterated this fact. Mr. Diipla also reiterated that the Mobility Subcommittee meeting agendas have been sent out to the RATS Technical Committee as well.

Mr. Diipla then discussed the meeting schedule. The Mobility Subcommittee agreed that the meeting dates and time were still acceptable. Ms. Bucholz voiced the concern that a month would go by until the next meeting and that it might slow down progress on the HSTP. It was suggested that a follow up meeting be held once the responses came in from the surveys. Mr. McVinnie asked on how the RATS HSTP would be structured. Mr. Diipla responded stating that it would include a description of the area, an inventory of available service providers and what target groups they provide service to, a listing of transit issues and concerns and a section for strategies and projects that could be implemented to address those issues. Mr. McVinnie stated that some of the data might already exist in previous RATS documents. Mr. McVinnie then commented that the Subcommittee would focus on developing the projects as well as the criteria for the HSTP.

Ms. Cirillo inquired as to how the provider inventory was being addressed. Mr. Diipla stated that he began with a listing of organizations that RATS has had contact with in the past and that the list would be expanded upon. Ms. Cirillo said that the work that was done in the GTW study provided a good basis and that provided the short time frame for the development of the HSTP, it would be beneficial to focus on the inventory.

Ms. Cirillo commented that another potential aspect of the plan would be to look at demographics and develop projections of future populations. Mr. McIntyre stated that some of the material that will be used towards the HSTP is included in the RATS Title VI document. He stated that the data used for the document was based off of the year 2000 U.S. Census. Ms. Cirillo stated that the American Community Survey data might be useful. Mr. McIntyre stated that the ACS data might not be compatible with the area that is being examined.

Mr. Strandin inquired if the transportation inventory only included public transit providers or if it would also encompass private providers, etc. Mr. Diipla stated that private providers would also be included. Mr. McIntyre mentioned that assisted living facilities would also be contacted. Mr. Strandin asked if taxi providers would also be included and it was stated that they would be. Mr. McIntyre mentioned that assisted living facilities might only provide service to those who live at that particular facility. Ms. Trier then stated that her organization had a listing of assisted living facilities and that she would share that information.

Mr. Diipla stated that an update meeting should be held two weeks after the invitation letter is mailed. Ms. Bucholz agreed that a follow up meeting would be beneficial to determine if there would be more organizations interested in being involved. Mr. Diipla said that he would send the invitation letter out by Friday 10/12/07. Mr. McVinnie stated to inform agencies through the invitation letter that the next meeting would be mandatory to attend if they wished to participate. Ms. Cirillo then stated that adding the next meeting date in the letter would be helpful.

Mr. McIntyre commented that having a meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 would give agencies enough time to respond to the invitation letter and survey and would also help to identify which agencies would like to be involved. Ms. Bucholz then asked the committee if 10am on 10/30/2007 would work as a meeting time. Members present agreed to this.

Mr. McVinnie asked if the YWCA would be the regular meeting place for the Mobility Subcommittee. Mr. Strandin replied that the YWCA will host the meetings on the second Tuesday of each month and that he had to check with the YWCA regarding the special meeting.

## **7. Organization Updates**

None

## **8. Communications**

Ms. Brown and the Mobility Subcommittee thanked Ms. Cirillo on all of her efforts and assistance in the process, as this was Ms. Cirillo's last meeting. Ms. Cirillo thanked the Mobility Subcommittee and commented that it was a pleasure to work with them.

## **9. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was entertained by Mr. Diipla. The motion was moved by Mr. Haight and seconded by Ms. Brown.