

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
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Board Chairman Catherine H. Ward, Boone County
Deputy Director George F. Ryan, Illinois Department
of Transportation, Region 2*

RATS MOBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES October 30th, 2007

PERSONS PRESENT: Fred Brereton, City of Belvidere; Nathan Bruck, City of Loves Park; Darcy Bucholz, Boone/Winnebago Workforce Investment Board; John Strandin, Boone/Winnebago Workforce Investment Board; Paul Huhges, RMTD; Lisa Brown, RMTD; Cyndi McGovern, City of Rockford Human Services; Bob Soltau, SLATS; Diana Nevitt, IDOT; Becky Tobin, Boone County Govt.; Monica Plymale, River Bluff Nursing Home; Lori Geier, Rockford Supportive Living; Richard Hunt, RAMP; Patricia Jones, Lifescape; Dorla Bonner, Rockford Housing Authority; Mary Pulliam, LOVE, Inc.; Mike Williams, Rock River Training Corp.; Bill Grahn, Milestone, Inc.; Lenny Mabry, Milestone, Inc.; Cathy Johnson, Shelter Care Ministries; Ron Schoepfer, RMTD; Gary McIntyre, RATS; Jon Paul Diipla, RATS

1. CALL TO ORDER

The October 30th, 2007 RATS Mobility Subcommittee was called to order by Mr. Diipla at 10:15am. Introductions were then given by all persons present.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda was unanimously approved

3. MOBILITY SUBCOMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Mr. Diipla briefly went over the invitation letter as well as the survey that was sent out. He also explained that the handout distributed was that of agencies that responded to the letter. He stated that the survey deadline was October 26, 2007 and that approximately 102 surveys that were sent out. He explained that the purpose of the survey was an attempt to get involvement from more organizations in the planning process. He explained that a follow up letter would be sent out to those who have not responded and a deadline would be set before the next meeting

Mr. Diipla then discussed the voting structure of the Subcommittee. Since the committee is new he proposed the idea of a consensus based voting. He then described what the human service transportation plan was to new members at the meeting. He stated that as a result of SAFETEA-LU that any projects applying for FTA 5310, 5316 or 5317 funds had to be derived from a Human Services Transportation Plan. The plan analyzes those gaps in services and develops strategies to remedy any gaps/redundant service or deficiencies. He briefly mentioned the types of organizations that would be involved. He also mentioned that RATS needs to have the plan done by January of 2008.

Ms. Brown then stated that the funding sources pools of money are noncompetitive for our urbanized area an that cooperation need to be shown to use the funding

Mr. Diipla then briefly went over the GTW executive summary that identified transit needs and gaps for the new members present.

Mr. Diipla went back to discussion of the structure of the subcommittee. It was stated that since more members were coming in and that the subcommittee was still new, that the committee would operate on a consensus based structure. Right now to get the HSTP done, this would be the best way to approach the committee. He stated that once the HSTP was finished that the Mobility Subcommittee would look into the voting structure again (possibly in February) since by that time it could be gauged as to who is involved in the plan/process.

Ms. Brown then asked if the voting would be per individual or per organization. Mr. Diipla responded that it would be per organization.

Mr. Soltau then reiterated that decisions would be based on consensus. Mr. Diipla then stated that since the plan has to be completed by January 2008, that this would be the best way to approach the subcommittee structure.

Mr. Strandin then asked if there were any issues with establishing quorum given the fact the Mobility Subcommittee was governed by the open meetings act.

Mr. McIntyre responded by stating that the subcommittee makes recommendations and that they would not take final action. He explained that since the meetings were open to the public and that the meetings were announced that there shouldn't be conflict with the open meetings act.

Mayor Brereton then asked if the recommendations by this committee were to the RATS Policy committee and Mr. Diipla explained that the recommendations would go to the RATS Technical Committee and then to the Policy committee.

Mr. Diipla said that he could mail out the resolution that created the Mobility Subcommittee to the members present. He explained that the first duty of the Mobility Subcommittee was to help in the development of the HSTP but that the subcommittee was not limited to that. It would be involved in other plans and processes and is a standing committee.

Mr. Diipla then moved to the agenda item of the selection of a chairman. He stated that the chairman's duties would be to help facilitate the meetings, make sure they follow Roberts Rules of orders, review the meeting minutes and agendas prior to the meetings. Mr. Diipla then asked the subcommittee for nominations.

Mr. McIntyre explained that Mr. Diipla was the recording secretary for the meetings.

Mr. Soltau then made a recommendation for the Mayor of Belvidere (Mayor Brereton) to be the chairman. However, Mayor Brereton stated that he might have schedule conflicts that may interfere with being the chairman. He also stated that he was a member of the RATS Policy Committee as well.

Mr. Soltau then recommended Ms. Brown for the position of chairman. However, since she represents Rockford Mass Transit District, she stated that there might be an issue of having a member of the mass transit district chair the committee which would recommend how to use transit funding.

Mr. Diipla then recommended that Steve Haight be the chairman. Ms. Brown then stated that Ms. Bucholz chaired these types of meetings before. Mr. Diipla then stated that Mr. Haight contacted him and told him that he would not be present at this meeting. He also listed that Lori J. Mitchell, John Slattengren and Melinda Trier were not able to make it to this meeting but that all would be participating in the Subcommittee.

Ms. Brown then moved for Steve Haight from Careers Etc. to chair the committee. Mr. Soltau then mentioned that there should also be a nomination for a vice-chairman in case the elected chairman wouldn't be able to make it to the meetings. Mr. Diipla then asked if there were any nominations for vice chairman. Ms. Brown mentioned that Melinda Trier as well as Diane Barthelman had been involved previously. Ms. Brown then reiterated the fact that the floor was open and that anyone could be nominated for the position. Ms. Bucholz then approached Mr. Hunt with the position of vice chairman. Mr. Hunt declined taking the nomination.

Mr. Diipla asked if there were any other nominations for chairman. He then carried the motion of making Steve Haight from Careers Etc. the Chairman of the Mobility Subcommittee. By consensus vote, Mr. Haight

was elected as the Chairman. Mr. Diipla then made a motion to table the selection of a vice-chairman until the November 13, 2007 Mobility Subcommittee meeting. The motion was agreed upon by consensus vote.

4. OVERVIEW OF IDOT HSTP MEETING (10/18/07-10/19/07)

Mr. Diipla then briefly went over the HSTP training session that was held in Springfield on October 18th and 19th. He explained that the Mobility Subcommittee was on the right track to creating an HSTP because the various organizations that were involved have contact with transit dependent populations on a daily basis. He then mentioned that he would like to present a draft of the HSTP at the November 13, 2007 Mobility Subcommittee meeting. He then reiterated that since the plan needs to be completed by January 2008, the needs that were listed in the GTW summary would be the ones that the Mobility Subcommittee would focus on. He said that other issues that were brought up would also be included. He also stated that the plan would be updated and that new concerns would be addressed in the plan as time goes by.

5 & 6. WORKING WITH IDENTIFIED TRANSPORTATION ISSUES & COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Diipla then asked RMTD to discuss possible projects/plans to address the concerns in GTW report.

Ms Brown presented the proposed RMTD funds for two projects. For JARC funding, she explained that service to Cherry Valley was the number 1 need by customers for numerous years, was stated in the GTW summit, and was listed as a need in the GTW report. She stated that RMTD has not been able to provide service on the Mall property. Ms. Brown also stated that ridership numbers are still being maintained on the Magic Water Routes, even though the park is closed. RMTD recommended that the JARC funding be used to continue this service.

Ms. Brown then explained that with the remaining JARC funds, service could be provided to the IL 173 Corridor in Machesney Park through route extension in day and night service. It was stated that Machesney Park officials would assist with the services after the seed money ends. Ms. Brown stated that these are proposed projects for the funding and that there were other projects that could be considered.

It was noted that New Freedom projects have not been discussed much. This money funds projects that go above ADA standards. Ms. Brown mentioned that RMTD provides ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act 1990) compliant paratransit service in Rockford, and that RMTD provides this service for the whole city of Rockford, which goes above ADA requirements. She also noted that there are individuals with disabilities who may not qualify for paratransit service however at the same time they may not be able to reach the fixed route service. Therefore, RMTD would propose to use New Freedom money to purchase two new Paratransit vehicles in the first year and in the second year of funding provide a paratransit shuttle service for those individuals with disabilities who are not ADA qualified. This would provide service from their home to the fixed route bus stop. The project would also benefit the community by adding the two new paratransit vehicles for service.

Mr. McIntyre then asked if the proposed IL 173 Machesney Park route had an established route determined. Ms. Brown then responded that the tentative route would run from IL-173 to Burden Road and back. Ms. Hughes stated that the night service would run for an hour traveling near the already established fixed route service.

Mr. Soltau then inquired as to how much funding was available in these categories (5316, 5317). Ms. Hughes stated that for New Freedom there were three years of funding available. Funds that are available are (2006) \$69,323; (2007) \$72,716 and 2008 \$76,000 (estimated). For JARC funding, it was stated that the 2006 amount was used to provide service to Magic Waters. For the 2007 funding, there is \$117,444 and estimated 2008 amount is \$123,000. Ms. Hughes stated that the 2008 Federal Register for funding apportionments has not been released yet. It was then asked if the projects described by RMTD would use all of the funding for service. Ms. Hughes stated that it would. Ms. Hughes stated the 2006 apportionment for New Freedom would be in jeopardy if it were not put into a grant as of June 2008 because the funding would lapse at the end of Fiscal Year 2008. The projects would use all three years of New Freedom and all of the 2007 and some of the 2008 for the JARC projects.

Ms. Bucholz then asked if RMTD had the required match for those programs. Ms. Hughes stated that if RMTD were to purchase the two paratransit vehicles that the match would come from Toll Revenue Credits and for the operating side of both the JARC and New Freedom projects, RMTD's Down State Operating

Assistance Program (DOAP) funds would be utilized as the match. Ms. Hughes stated that there were sufficient funds for this.

Mr. Diipla then thanked Ms. Brown and Ms. Hughes for the information provided. Seeing that there were new organizations present at this Mobility Subcommittee meeting, Mr. Diipla opened the floor for any organization to state any transportation concerns that they had for discussion.

Upon receiving no comment, Mr. Diipla inquired as to if there should be a motion for adjournment. Ms. Brown then asked those present if everyone understood what the processes and purpose were for this planning document.

Mr. Soltau asked if the service agencies present felt that the potential projects that RMTD described would be beneficial to any of the clients that they serve. Mr. Grahn then stated that the proposed new paratransit service would benefit individuals that Milestone, Inc. serve because the organization has had some issues with getting individuals to bus stops due to staff availability, etc. Mr. Grahn also stated that there was demand for clients to go to Cherry Valley as well as Cherry Vale Mall. He stated that if RMTD were able to provide service to that location that clients of Milestone who wished to go there would be able to. He stated that Milestone attempted to provide that service but that they were unable to because of funding issues. Mr. Grahn stated that the two new projects would be helpful.

Ms. Brown stated that the projects would need to be revised and that during the process RMTD would consult with such agencies as Milestone as well as assisted living centers to make sure that as many people as possible were served by the service.

Mr. Strandin then inquired as to the process of how the projects that RMTD discussed would be addressed. Mr. Diipla stated that any project that were to use JARC or New Freedom had to be included in the HSTP. Ms. Hughes stated when she talked about the lapsing funds, that June is not that far away because the plan needs to be approved as well as having the funds placed into a grant. Ms. Brown asked Ms. Hughes to reiterate the funding that was available for New Freedom. Ms. Hughes stated the Fiscal Years 2006, 2007 and 2008(money still needs to be apportioned) would be available. It was then stated that the first two years of funding would be used for purchase the two paratransit vehicles and that the third year funds would be used for providing the service.

Ms. Hughes stated that as of right now, funding through 2008 is being discussed and that the 2009 Fiscal Year is approaching. She mentioned that the Mobility Subcommittee would have to begin considering possible usage for the 2009 funding and that this would occur after the first HSTP is complete. Ms. Brown stated that a plan needed to be put in place so that existing funds do not lapse, but also stated that the continuing work of the Mobility Subcommittee would be to address other transportation issues and needs that would arise as well as address other issues and concerns listed in the GTW executive summary. Ms. Brown then reiterated that work of the Mobility Subcommittee is ongoing to identify transit needs.

Mr. Strandin then asked if service to Boone County was still being considered and Ms. Brown replied that it was still being considered. Ms. Brown then stated that the projects discussed were RMTD's thoughts. She also stated that RMTD would like to provide service to the City of Belvidere but that funding limited the service as of right now. Ms. Brown stated that service to Cherry Valley had a large demand.

Ms. Hughes stated that there would be more ideas as a result of the Alternative Analysis being completed as of next year. It was also stated that RMTD would be working with Boone County regarding service. Ms. Hughes stated that the GTW executive summary prioritized needed services. Ms. Brown reiterated that service to Boone County was the second item on the list under service to Cherry Valley. Ms. Hughes then reiterated that RMTD is not making the decision of what should be done, rather it is a group decision. Ms. Hughes stated the RMTD was only putting out a suggestion to the Mobility Subcommittee as like any other organization present would be able to. She also stated the RMTD did not have any more weight than any other organization involved in the Subcommittee. It was also stated that the JARC projects would be derived from the needs list contained in the GTW executive summary and that the New Freedom projects were not discussed previously. Ms. Hughes then reiterated that RMTD would not be making the decision.

Mayor Brereton then asked what the cost of service to Boone County would be. Ms. Hughes stated that she was updating the numbers since the original cost was calculated some time ago. Ms. Brown followed by saying that the service to Boone County was slightly over the apportionment. Ms. Hughes stated that when

it was calculated previously, that the cost came to \$274,000, half of which would be from JARC (approximately \$135,000). She also stated that it might be possible to provide service, but that she would have to recalculate the numbers first.

Mayor Brereton asked if local match would be necessary. Ms. Brown agreed that would be assist in providing service. Ms. Brown stated that after the seed money was used, then the 50% match (for operating costs) would have to be met.

Ms. Bucholz then addressed the issue of the RMTD/Boone County agreement that needed to be reviewed in 2009. Ms. Hughes stated that currently the agreement was a sole source procurement to provide demand/response service in the Belvidere area. The agreement expires in June 2009. It was stated that after that point in time, Boone County had various options to pursue. It was also stated that a possibility would be to potentially combine a JARC project with other service. Ms. Hughes stated that service to Boone County was a viable project and that it might be able to fit under the budget. Mayor Brereton then asked Ms. Hughes if detailed information could be provided and Ms. Hughes stated that it could be done.

Mr. Soltau then reiterated the as of right now with the money that is available, even with some funding from the City of Belvidere that service would not be possible. Ms. Brown stated that service would be either /or with the funds that area available. Ms. Hughes then asked the Subcommittee if anyone else had ideas on any of the other projects listed in the GTW summary so that she would be able to put numbers together. There were no comments. Ms. Brown briefly mentioned that the original service that was intended to the City of Belvidere would be to the Chrysler plant.

Ms. Bucholz stated that at the time that the Getting to Work in Greater Rockford (GTW) organization was developing, Chrysler was "gearing" up and getting to jobs was a significant issue. CherryVale Mall was another need due to the mall providing jobs as well as extending service along E. State Street in Rockford. Service on E. State Street was lower on the GTW Priority list because of the costs that would have been necessary to provide extended service. Ms. Bucholz also stated that IL-173 service in Machesney Park was also a need stated by the GTW. She also stated that the report was started 3 years ago and that funding has been searched for projects.

Mr. McIntyre stated that before projects go forward, needs have to be listed in the Human Services Transportation Plan and that this is the reason that the process is being undertaken to receive funds. Mr. McIntyre stated that new ideas for service could develop, and that if this occurred after the plan was completed, there would have to be an amendment. He also stated that the plan needed to be complete by January 2008. The second deadline would be for grants in June of 2008. He also explained that the process being taken was the process developed by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Ms. Hughes stated that once the selected projects were placed in the HSTP, they would then be listed in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. McIntyre confirmed this. Mr. McIntyre also stated that the Mobility Subcommittee purpose is to have members of the community come together to discuss transportation issues and incorporate those needs/ideas into the plan.

Ms. Hughes stated that the group has talked about the JARC programs in the past and that it might take a few meetings to get a better understanding of the New Freedom program. She reiterated that a New Freedom project would go beyond the ADA requirements and that it would help individuals with disabilities. She also stated that a New Freedom project had to be a new service. For example, an existing service could not be stopped and then started again to receive funds.

Mr. Diipla added that once the HSTP is completed that it had to be amended to the RATS Year 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan. Mr. Diipla then asked if anyone else had anything else to add. Mr. Hunt stated that the Belvidere service should be addressed. Ms. Brown mentioned that there was a previous study that listed the expenses for the service. Ms. Hughes stated that there was some preliminary analyses done. Ms. Brown then asked if there have been any voiced needs for transportation. Mayor Brereton stated that there were.

Mr. Mabry stated that extended service to Loves Park on Sundays would be beneficial. He stated that some of the JARC and New Freedom funding could possibly be allocated to such an extension. Ms. Hughes then stated that Loves Park service extended to 10pm and that paratransit service to Loves Park runs later than the fixed route service.

Ms. Brown asked if the Chrysler facility in Boone County is the focal point at which service should be directed to or if there were other locations as well. Mayor Brereton responded that making a connection with the Boone County Council on Aging would help with the community. Other employers in the vicinity of the Chrysler facility were mentioned such as the Wal-mart and Green Giant facility. Mr. McIntyre stated that some of the employers might work on a 24hr basis.

Mr. Hunt asked if there was a service route developed. Ms. Brown stated that a study had been done a few years ago that had a tentative route selection and that the numbers mentioned before came from that study.

Mr. Soltau asked if that at the next meeting numbers for service to Belvidere would be looked at. Ms. Hughes said that it could be addressed. Mr. Diipla then asked if anyone else had a topic to address.

Mr. Strandin inquired as to whether the Commuter Rail Study had any significance in this process. Mayor Brereton stated that the Alternative Analysis is the next step to try to receive funding for the project. He mentioned that there were two rail lines and two bus rapid transit routes that are being examined. He said that the Alternative Analysis would hopefully be complete in January 2008. He stated that the analysis would determine the preferred route. It was stated that the process was a competitive selection process. He also stated that at the last NICTI meeting the notion of sharing a line with Amtrak was discussed.

Mr. Diipla stated that it might be useful to mention the NICTI study in the HSTP as well as the Stateline Mass Transit District (SMTD). Mr. Diipla stated that the HSTP is addressing the identified transportation needs and that the process is ongoing. He also stated that if anyone else had any other ideas or concerns to please let him know.

Ms. Brown asked for the service providers present to think about or state the needs of the clients, if any, that they provide so as to determine how the Mobility Subcommittee could address them.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Diipla stated that the next meeting would be held on November 13th, 2007 at the YWCA in Rockford. He thanked those who could make the meeting given the fact that it was a special meeting of the Mobility Subcommittee. He stated that he would have a draft of the HSTP at the meeting in November. He asked if there were any other topics to discuss. None were mentioned. Mr. Diipla entertained a motion for adjournment. It was moved by Ms. Brown and seconded by Mayor Brereton.