

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 Susan L. Anderson, Boone County
Deputy Director Gregory L. Mounts, Illinois Department of
Transportation, Region 2*

RATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES August 24, 2006

MEMBERS PRESENT: James R. Ryan, City of Rockford; Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park; Scott H. Christiansen, Winnebago County; Linda M. Vaughn, Village of Machesney Park; Frederic C. Brereton, City of Belvidere; Susan L. Anderson, Boone County; Carl Mikyska, Illinois Department of Transportation.

OTHERS PRESENT: Gary McIntyre, RATS staff; Hayes Morrison, RATS staff; Steve Ernst, RATS Study Director; Tonia Vrolyk, City of Rockford, Public Works; Dave Taylor, Boone County Board; Steve Chapman, Winnebago County; John Donovan, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); Paula Hughes, Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD); Bob Soltau, Stateline Area Transportation Study (SLATS); Joe Vanderwerff Sr., Winnebago County Highway Department.

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND REPRESENTATION

Meeting was called to order at 1:28 PM.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

Steve Ernst mentioned that IDOT is compiling a truck route map and needs updates from all agencies by the end of August. Copies of this request were distributed at the July RATS Technical Committee Meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MAY 25, 2006 RATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

The minutes were not available at this time. Item will lay over until next meeting.

4. RATS FY-2007 to FY-2010 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP): RATS RESOLUTION 2006-9

The RATS Technical Committee unanimously endorsed RATS Resolution 2006-9 at the August Technical Committee meeting. The resolution adopts the 2007 Transportation Improvement Program. Motion to approve by Mr. Ryan, seconded by Mayor Vaughn. There was no further discussion and the resolution was unanimously approved.

5. ELECTION OF RATS POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN for FY-2007

Mayor Lindberg expressed his desire to relinquish the RATS Policy Chairman position. Mayor nominated Chairman Christensen as RATS Policy Chairman, and Mayor Vaughn as Vice Chairman. Chairman Christiansen declined the nomination. Chairman Christiansen nominated Mayor Vaughn for Chairman and Mayor Brereton as Vice Chairman. Chairman Anderson seconded the motion. There were no other

nominations made. On a unanimous vote Mayor Vaughn was elected Chairman and Mayor Brereton was elected Vice Chairman for the 2007 fiscal year.

6. EXPANSION OF RATS POLICY COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mayor Brereton requested a discussion on the possible expansion of the MPO's planning roles and responsibilities. As a result of new planning initiatives that are occurring in Northeastern Illinois (the recent merging of CATS and NIPC planning organizations, now called CMAP) and some new programs and guidelines from the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) legislation, the issue was very timely.

Bill Luman, who was involved in the Bi-State Planning Commission, gave a presentation on this topic to the RATS Policy Committee on Wednesday, October 8, 2003. Subsequent to that presentation Mayor Brereton submitted documentation that incorporated a regional approach to a new organization that included Boone, Winnebago, Stephenson and Rock Counties. Copies of those documents were handed out by Mayor Brereton.

Recently the topic has resurfaced as a result of the "Moving Beyond Congestion" initiative by the RTA in northeast Illinois and the talks about Amtrak service. During the subsequent discussion it was decided to hold a RATS Policy Committee retreat in the fall to discuss this topic. RATS staff will follow up and schedule the retreat.

7. PROGRESS REPORTS ON:

7.1 – Northwest Tollway (I-90) Improvements - Mr. Ernst indicated that the Cherry Valley Interchange project is scheduled for construction Spring 2008, and completion in Fall 2009. As the final alignment has been agreed upon now, they are expecting a detour in both the Spring and Summer 2009. Additionally, the Tollway is nearing completion of the Open Road Tolling at the South Beloit Toll Plaza. The Tollway has asked staff to coordinate a mailing list of elected officials and important business and community leaders for a grand opening celebration, tentatively scheduled for September.

7.2 – Winnebago County Smart Growth Study - Mr. Vanderwerff indicated that the second phase of the smart growth study is with two communities, Winnebago and Rockton, to help them plan for, and possibly implement, the principals of balanced growth.

7.3 – Springfield Corridor Planning Study – Mr. Vanderwerff reported that the Study has been completed by the consultant, Lannert Group. Therefore, this agenda item can be removed from the agenda.

7.4 – NICTI Alternative Analysis – Mr. Taylor. Reported that there will be a NICTI committee meeting on Wednesday, August 30, 2006, from 10:00 a.m. to noon at RMTD. Everyone on RATS Policy Committee is welcome to attend. There will also be a press conference following at 12:30 p.m.

7.5 – RMTD East Side Transfer Center – Ms. Hughes reported that the site has been selected and RMTD is in negotiations to purchase the land near East State Street and Lyford Road.

7.6 – IL 173 Corridor Planning Study (by Machesney Park) - Steve Ernst reported that the study is progressing and they expect to have a final report soon.

7.7 – RATS Bicycle / Pedestrian Study – Mr. McIntyre reported that the consultant, TY Lin, would be performing interviews of the RATS Policy members within the coming week if they had not already been done. Also, there will be a bicycle ride, lunch, and workshop on Saturday, September 16, 2006 starting at 9 AM at Loves Park City Hall.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Ernst mentioned the RTA and Work, Welfare and Families will be holding a one day summit on regional transit issues at the NIU Naperville Campus. Staff will attend. Also the IDOT Fall Planning Conference will be held October 19-20 in Fairview Heights, IL. The dinner speaker will be Mayor Connie Moran of Ocean Springs, Mississippi talking about the hurricane Katrina recovery efforts. Staff can provide conference brochures upon request.

Mr. Ryan reported that the City of Rockford has hired the NIU Broadband Devolvement Group to outline a broadband deployment strategy for Rockford. Copies of the study will be available upon completion.

Mayor Lindberg reported that the local Ironman Triathlon will be held at Rock Cut State Park, bring thousands of visitors to the region.

Mr. Ernst reported that the next meeting of the Blackhawk Area Rail Coalition will be September 19th, at 6:30 pm. More details are available at the BARC website, www.returnthetrain.com.

Mr. Soltau reported that the Phase 2 feasibility study for a commuter rail extension from Harvard to Beloit on the Union Pacific line is progressing. Contract negotiations with Earthtech should be completed within the next couple of weeks.

9. ADJOURNMENT

It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:23 p.m.