

RATS **ROCKFORD AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY** **METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

POLICY COMMITTEE

CHARLES E. BOX, MAYOR, ROCKFORD
JOSEPH F. SINKIAWIC, MAYOR, LOVES PARK
STEPHEN KUHN, PRESIDENT, MACHESNEY PARK
WILLIAM D. OST, DISTRICT ENGINEER, IDOT DISTRICT 2
EUGENE R. QUINN, CHAIRMAN, WINNEBAGO COUNTY BOARD

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

LOVES PARK TRANSIT / BELVIDERE-BOONE COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING
BOONE COUNTY HIGHWAY / ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
ROCKFORD MASS TRANSIT / WINNEBAGO COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS
WINNEBAGO COUNTY PARATRANSIT / CHERRY VALLEY PLANNING
ROCKFORD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT / LOVES PARK PLANNING
GREATER ROCKFORD AIRPORT / MACHESNEY PARK PLANNING
ROCKFORD PUBLIC WORKS / WINNEBAGO COUNTY PLANNING

POLICY COMMITTEE **MEETING MINUTES** **January 25, 1996**

The following are the minutes of the January 25, 1996, RATS Policy Committee meeting held in the Machesney Park Village Hall.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Joseph F. Sinkiawic, Mayor of Loves Park;
Sam Schmitz, City Administrator representing the Mayor of Rockford;
Eugene R. Quinn, Chairman of the Winnebago County Board;
Stephen Kuhn, President of the Village of Machesney Park; and
Larry Reed, representing the District Engineer of IDOT District 2.

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mary Allen Verdun, IDOT;
Ron Heinen, Winnebago County;
Dan Jacobson, Loves Park Planning;
John Paul Kohler, FHWA;
Gary McIntyre, RATS Staff;
Russ Petrotte, RATS Staff;
Dan Salameda, Loves Park Transit; and
Bill Smith, IDOT.

1. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m. by Chairman Sinkiawic. All voting members were present except Sam Schmitz who arrived at 2:15 p.m. and Gene Quinn who arrived at 2:18 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of the November 16, 1995, meeting were presented for discussion. Larry Reed moved to approve the

minutes. The motion was seconded by Stephen Kuhn, and approved unanimously without further discussion.

3. FY96 TRANSIT TIP AMENDMENT: Russ Petrotte called the committee's attention to materials mailed out in December -- over 30 days prior to discussing this proposed amendment. He explained that the federal funding apportionments in October were different from the projections made earlier in the TIP. These differences precipitated changes in the project priorities by the transit operators. He reviewed the proposed changes as follows:

a. Federal operating subsidies were \$33,645 less than forecasted. Local subsidies will make up for these cuts this year, but transit service reductions are likely next year.

b. Section 9 capital funds were \$209,597 and Section 3 capital funds were \$528,000 more than forecasted. This will allow both operators to accelerate capital equipment replacements as follows:

c. RMTD will replace three full-sized buses in FY96 instead of two.

d.LPTS is allocated \$310,000 instead of \$225,000 for their bus storage expansion needs.

f.RMTD is allocated additional funds: \$130,000 for additional computer hardware and software and funds sufficient for six additional paratransit vans at \$55,000 each; a spare engine/transmission (\$40,000), and a replacement floor scrubber/sweeper (\$20,000).

The Technical Committee unanimously recommended approval of these changes. The changes were announced to the public in accordance with established public notification procedure and no comments were received from the public. Staff recommends approval of these changes via RATS Resolution 96-1.

Stephen Kuhn moved to approve Resolution 96-1. The motion was seconded by Sam Schmitz. With no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) by role call vote.

4. RMTD/LPTS PARATRANSIT PLAN UPDATES:

Russ Petrotte called attention to the Paratransit Plan Update of RMTD that was included in the mail out. He distributed copies of the LPTS Paratransit Plan Update. LPTS is in full compliance with all of the ADA requirements. They are providing fully-accessible service on all fixed routes and are also providing supplementary paratransit service in full accordance with the ADA. RMTD is not yet in full compliance, but is on schedule according to previously approved paratransit plans. The only aspect they do not yet fully comply with is the aspect of providing paratransit service to areas outside the City of Rockford's corporate limits but within 3/4-mile of a fixed bus route. RMTD is, however, on

e.LPTS is allocated additional funds: \$20,000 for a bus washer, \$55,000 for a paratransit van, and \$20,000 for a paratransit bus lift.

schedule for providing this service. Three quadrants of the service area are now served. In FY97, the fourth quadrant will be added and RMTD will reach full compliance with the ADA.

Stephen Kuhn moved that Russ Petrotte be authorized to sign the paratransit plan approval forms certifying that the RATS MPO has reviewed and concurs with both the RMTD and LPTS Paratransit Plan Updates. The motion was seconded by Gene Quinn. With no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously by role call vote (5-0).

5. REPORTS ON CURRENT PROJECTS

HARRISON AVENUE EXTENSION: Ron Heinen said he has met with an appraiser regarding several of the properties needed for the project.

He is going to make a special request to IDOT and FHWA that he be allowed to proceed with selective purchases of property prior to complete project design approval. These are hardship situations where property owners have immediate needs to dispose of their properties and there is near absolute certainty that the properties will be needed for the project.

Gene Quinn emphasized the need to acquire some properties now. The owners have a need to sell their properties now and the impending nature of this project prevents them from selling the properties.

No one wants to buy a house that is likely to be condemned for a public improvement in the very near future. He cited one property where the bachelor owner recently died and the survivors now need to dispose of the property.

Larry Reed noted that hardship cases are sometimes approved, but we need to be very certain that we have enough of the design completed and are close enough to the project approval stage that we can be reasonably assured that the properties will be needed for the project and the project is likely to be approved. We don't want to get into a situation where we have acquired properties and the design or project approval status changes in a way that negates the need for those properties.

Gene Quinn asked what is the next step. Ron Heinen said the normal sequence would be: (1) complete and get approval of environmental assessment, (2) get the final design approved, (3) prepare and get approval for an acquisition/relocation plan, and (4) begin acquisition. He said he Mayor Sinkiawic asked Mr. Heinen about the situation on East Riverside, particularly with property owned by Luke Meyer. He asked Mr. Heinen to contact Mr. Meyer again on this matter.

WALLENBERG/WOODRUFF EXPRESSWAY STUDY: Gary McIntyre said the City of Rockford and their consultant are still working on this study and there is nothing specific to report at this time.

7. COMMUNICATIONS: Mr. McIntyre distributed copies of the final certification report on the activities of RATS as prepared by the FTA/FHWA following their review last May. He said there are no surprises in the report. It formally reiterates what they said in May. We are certified without conditions. However, they made several suggestions, some of which we have already implemented and some we are still working on.

First, they suggested that we explore options of giving Boone

is not trying to get approval to begin selective/hardship acquisition prior to completion of steps 1-3. He is simultaneously preceding in the normal sequence.

The environmental assessment is in draft stage. Comments are coming in and the assessment should be completed in two months. He has also sought design approval on the intersections.

Joseph Sinkiawic asked if the appraisals and relocation plan had been completed yet. Mr. Heinen said no but he is still asking for approval to proceed on selected properties.

Gene Quinn stressed that he is frustrated because the process is taking such a long time and asked that all entities involved endeavor to expedite the matter.

County better representation on the MPO. We have responded by adding the Boone County Highway Department and the Belvidere/Boone Regional Planning Commission as voting members of the Technical Committee.

Second, they suggested updating our Cooperative Agreement under which RATS is formed to reflect language in the ISTEPA. We are working on this at present.

Third, they encouraged that we continue our public involvement efforts. We will be updating our Public Involvement Process (PIP) report later this year.

Fourth, they suggested we encourage the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority to be more actively involved in RATS. Mr. McIntyre said he recently sent a letter to Tollway officials passing on this suggestion.

Larry Reed commented that the Tollway Authority has only one facility through the area, and

other than interchanges linking that facility to the transportation system in this area there is little need, or interest in their involvement.

John Paul Kohler stated that type of involvement is all the Feds are suggesting. But to facilitate planning, it was suggested that we ask them to attend more meetings and play a more active role, primarily at the Technical Committee level.

Gene Quinn noted the Airport Authority's high speed rail proposal. One option was to go down the center of the Tollway. He asked if that is being pursued.

Mr. McIntyre said that option was evaluated by a consultant and discarded in favor of another more cost-effective alignment that followed existing rail bed. Mr. Quinn commented on the coordinated airport plan for Lake, DuPage and Cook Counties. He said it seems Rockford is not part of this plan and there are a lot of other things like this that we should be involved in, but for reasons unexplainable to him, we always seem to be out of the loop in the planning and decision-making. He said we need to get Rockford more involved in these broad regional planning issues at the policy level.

Mr. McIntyre said there have been some past discussions of combining RATS with SLATS to facilitate a broader view of the region.

Larry Reed spoke in favor of regional planning. We should work closer with Boone County in this Mr. Petrotte cited the recently adopted RATS Transportation Plan and said that this is a step in the right direction as it attempts to promote a multimodal coordinated transportation system. But for better or worse, the highway mode and the automobile dominate the transportation system

region. He currently sees CATS moving their sphere of influence westward. There is a need for connections with SLATS, RATS and CATS. Mayor Sinkiawic agreed that the areas need to be tied together, but there is also concern about not sacrificing local principles. He cited some of Loves Park's recent difficulties with Boone County and the differing development standards or strategies from one community to the next. Mr. Petrotte objected to the formation of another layer of government. He suggested that the State of Illinois, in particular the Department of Transportation and IDOT District 2, take a more active role in coordinating development and growth in the region. He noted that RATS has been expanding its sphere of planning into Boone County.

Mr. Quinn noted the development trends in the suburban counties west of Chicago and cited some of the undesirable aspects of this development, especially the traffic situations that have evolved in some of those areas. He expressed hope that better planning might prevent some of those problems in our region.

Stephen Kuhn said a real challenge to this area is to avoid some of the same frustrations being experienced in developing areas in the Chicago region. We need to expand our definitions of transportation. We need to get away from "us and them" planning philosophies and move more toward approaches where "we" do things together.

in our area. He said it is nearly impossible to develop a cost-effective mass transit system in areas with low land-use density such as ours. He said we have already entrenched ourselves too much in the automobile and we have to face the problems that come with it. He would welcome

suggestions that could turn this situation around. Mayor Sinkiawic cited the financial limitations we must work within.

There was further discussion of the Certification report findings and the progress RATS has been making in implementing the suggestions from the FTA and FHWA.

Mr. Petrotte said there was one FTA/FHWA suggestion that continues to pose debate. As part of our financial planning, we have been asked to estimate and program the "operating and maintenance costs" of our transportation systems. The debate comes about in defining and tabulating these costs. Anything from a roadway resurfacing cost to the salaries of traffic policemen could be included in a broad definition of this topic. Mr. Kohler said his office has asked for further guidance from Washington on the topic.

Mayor Sinkiawic suggested that staff continue to keep the Policy Committee informed on the progress toward implementing the suggestions in the Certification Review.

8. OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Petrotte distributed copies of the January 15, 1996, printing of the official RATS Long-Range Transportation Plan. He said all of the approved changes and refinements have been incorporated into this version, including references to the Perryville Road Corridor and Riverside Road Corridor refinements adopted to date.

Gary McIntyre informed the Committee that two minor changes are needed to the highway portion of the TIP. The first is a bridge reconstruction/replacement project on the bridge over Keith Creek at 15th Street. The second is an intersection improvement project at Auburn and Central Avenue.

Mr. McIntyre said these projects have recently received awards of federal funds and he was just informed of these awards last week. At the suggestion of IDOT, he polled the Technical Committee members and was able to contact 10 of them and receive their concurrence that the projects should be approved. Mr. McIntyre distributed copies of proposed Resolution 96-2 and reviewed the details of these projects as stated in that resolution.

Larry Reed moved to approve Resolution 96-2. The motion was seconded by Gene Quinn. Without further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote (5-0).

9. ADJOURNMENT: With no further business to conduct, Mr. Schmitz moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Stephen Kuhn and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:05 p.m.