

# RATS

**Rockford Area Transportation Study  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**POLICY COMMITTEE**  
*Mayor Charles E. Box, City of Rockford  
Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park  
Board Chairman Kristine Cohn, Winnebago County  
President Stephen Kuhn, Village of Machesney Park  
District Engineer Roger Rocke, Illinois Department of  
Transportation, District 2*

## **MEETING MINUTES – RATS POLICY COMMITTEE January 25, 2001, at Winnebago County Administration Building**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Darryl Lindberg, City of Loves Park; Kristine Cohn, Winnebago County; Steve Kuhn, Village of Machesney Park; Charles E. Box, City of Rockford; and John Wegmeyer, Illinois Department of Transportation.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Bob Soltau, IDOT-OPP; Steve Thompson, City of Loves Park; Bob Martin, City of Loves Park; Steve Ernst, City of Rockford; Joe Vanderwerff, Winnebago County Highway Department; William E. Hoyt, citizen; Russ Petrotte, RATS staff and City of Rockford; and Gary McIntyre, RATS staff and City of Rockford.

**1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND REPRESENTATION.** With a quorum present, RATS Chairman Lindberg called the meeting to order at 1:38 PM.

**1. COMMUNICATIONS.** Steve Ernst said that a letter has been received from IDOT informing RATS of its planning funds for FY-2002. In the January 11 letter from IDOT, RATS will receive \$282,442 in FHWA-PL funds and \$84,007 in FTA-5303 funds. Mr. Ernst said that RATS staff will be preparing the FY-2002 Unified Work Program in the next few months and requested input from the Policy Committee members for planning projects in the next fiscal year.

Bob Soltau said IDOT is looking favorably at an additional award of funds to assist in the WinGIS effort. He suggested the area consider applying for the accumulated unexpended balance of PL funds (approximately \$175,000) – these funds would have to be expended in the FY 2002 time frame. He said the Department might also consider an additional award of \$75,000 in SPR funds, if applied for with sufficient justification. This latter amount could be used over a longer time period.

Mr. Soltau also said that Winnebago County was recently awarded an Illinois Tomorrow grant for \$80,000 [\$64,000 - IL Tomorrow; \$8,000 - IDOT; and \$8,000 - Winnebago

County]. These funds will be used for the proposed “Winnebago County Smart Growth Initiative.” The purpose of this project is to create a better understanding of cost-effective planning incorporating infrastructure, transportation and land use. It includes the education of elected officials and the public at large. The two goals of the project are (1) to prepare a document that summarizes cost-effective planning options which can be used as a reference by future elected and appointed officials and the public at large; and (2) to build a consensus toward which projects can be identified for future funding requests. The ultimate goal is for the county to be part of area planning in the long term, and to ensure that smart growth is the guiding principle in that process.

Ms. Cohn expressed the County’s appreciation to Mr. Soltau for his assist in obtaining this grant. Chairman Lindberg offered his gratitude also to Mr. Soltau.

Chairman Lindberg said he received a letter and the final report on the RATS Transportation Planning Process Certification Review. He said the report findings are that “the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) jointly certify the transportation planning process for the Rockford metropolitan planning area.” He thanked the staff for a good report and a job well done.

### **1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 30, 2000, RATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING.**

Ms. Cohn moved to approve the meeting minutes of November 30, 2000, RATS Policy Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Steve Kuhn and approved unanimously without correction or discussion.

### **2. ROCKFORD AREA TRANSPORTATION STUDY (RATS) TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) for FY-2001 AMENDMENTS.**

Russ Petrotte called the Committee’s attention to the draft of RATS Resolution 2001-1 that was included in the last

January 25, 2001, RATS Policy Committee Minutes, continued. . .

mailing. This proposed resolution and the attached addendum change the project implementation priorities for the capital transit improvement projects proposed by RMTD in FY 2001– 2003. He said he was uncertain if a TIP amendment was absolutely necessary because no new projects are being added, no projects are being deleted and the total funding for the projects are not changing. However, eight projects that were originally going to be funded with Federal and State capital funds in FY 2001 are now going to be funded with RMTD operating funds. Another 15 projects that were going to be funded with Federal and State capital funds in FY 2001 have been moved to FY 2002 and one project was moved from FY 2001 to FY 2003. Addendum A lists and describes each of the above-mentioned projects. Mr. Petrotte said the reason for the change was insufficient State funding in FY 2001. He said the changes have been recommended by RMTD and the RATS Technical Committee. Following a brief discussion, Mr. Kuhn made a motion to adopt RATS Resolution 2001-1, which amends the FY-2001 RATS TIP. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cohn and approved unanimously.

Gary McIntyre said RATS Resolution 2001-2 has been prepared to amend the FY-2001 RATS TIP for the latest award of STP-Enhancement funds for the area. The STP-E award is for \$1,742,000 and will fund the Southeast Connection of the Perryville Path (i.e., along Perryville Road from Argus Drive to the Cherry Valley Path at Vandiver Road). This project was submitted by the Winnebago County Highway Department and the Village of Cherry Valley. The project will involve the construction of a bikeway and pedestrian overpass and includes lighting, utility adjustments and both preliminary and construction engineering. Local match will be provided in the amount of \$436,000. Mr. McIntyre said this is likely to be the last award of enhancement funds we will receive until a new Federal transportation act is developed. IDOT's Enhancement funds from TEA-21 are nearly exhausted. He said this Resolution has been recommended by the RATS Technical Committee. Following a brief discussion, Ms. Cohn made a motion to adopt RATS Resolution 2001-2, which amends the FY-2001 RATS TIP. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kuhn and approved unanimously.

**3.PERRYVILLE ROAD EXTENSION.** Joe Vanderwerff gave a lengthy presentation on the proposed extension of Perryville Road. The County plans to extend Perryville Road from its current terminus at IL-173 (northwest corner of Rock Cut State Park) all the way to the IL-WI State Line. Vanderwerff stated that IDOT's and the County's analysis has determined that long-term development and traffic projections show a need for considerable increased traffic-carrying capacity in the corridor between IL-251 and I-90. Accommodating this traffic on IL-251 and/or I-90 would require increasing the number of lanes on both of these facilities to a minimum of six lanes each, and perhaps

more in some stretches. Such modifications along IL-251 would be extremely difficult and expensive considering existing development already along much of that roadway. Intersection improvement needs would also be extensive and costly if IL-251 were significantly widened. I-90 presents a number of problems as well. I-90 is a high speed interstate that is already near capacity in this stretch. Even if widened, the prospect of mixing local short-trip traffic with the high speed regional and interstate traffic poses undesirable conflicts. The fact that I-90 is a toll facility with very limited access and few interchanges is also a potential conflict with local traffic movements. Therefore, the County is committed to the Perryville extension as the most cost-effective and efficient means to deal with the increasing demand.

From IL-173, the proposed Perryville alignment will veer northeasterly and will merge with the Mitchell Road corridor south of the Kieselburg Forest Preserve. Following the Mitchell Road corridor, the new road will proceed northward across McDonald and Belvidere Roads in an alignment that is largely accepted and uncomplicated. Similarly, the proposed alignment of the far north leg, north of Prairie Hill Road to the State Line, is uncomplicated and will largely coincide with existing Willow Brook Road. However, in between the Stone Bridge Nature Trail and Prairie Hill Road, a number of obstacles or concerns have been observed as the engineers have sought to fix an alignment. Most notable among these are the Kinnikinnick Valley Wetlands, in the vicinity of Burr Oak Road; Roscoe Middle School, at Elevator Road; nearby development and access points along Elevator Road in the vicinity of Stone Bridge Trail; and the Tollway Interchange at Rockton Road. The desire to avoid these obstacles or potential conflict zones has led the County to develop 5-6 alternative alignments. For the past month, the County has been conducting and/or attending meetings to publicly air the pros and cons of these alternatives.

Generally speaking, the alignments on new corridors, rather than existing roadbeds, have better access control potential because they do not have to accommodate existing access points. Some of the alignments have smaller right-of-way needs and/or require the taking of fewer homes. Some have been proposed because they have lesser impacts on flood plains and existing storm water drainage and detention situations. The more direct and shorter alignments are generally less costly but have other land use conflicts. Some of the alignments come close to Stone Bridge Trail – this is considered undesirable. One alignment comes uncomfortably close to Roscoe Middle School; and one comes into potential conflict with traffic movements on and off the Rockton/I-90 Interchange.

The costs of construction, ROW and professional services were estimated for five alignment scenarios. The range in

January 25, 2001, RATS Policy Committee Minutes, continued. . .

total cost is between 31.5 and 34 million dollars with ROW costs ranging between 2.3 and 4.3 million dollars. The County believes strongly in the need for the facility and is setting an aggressive time schedule for construction. An "Open House Public Meeting" on the preliminary design of a selected alignment is being planned for sometime during this April 2001. The goal for completion of the Preliminary Engineering and ROW acquisition is early 2003. By the end of the construction season of 2004, the County hopes to have the segment between Elevator Road and the State Line completed. The goal for the segment between IL-173 and Belvidere Road is 2006; and the final segment, Belvidere to Elevator Roads is sought to be completed by mid-2007. Adherence to this schedule will depend largely on the County's ability to amass funding for the project. In that regard, the County is pursuing the project with adherence to all Federal standards so as not to preclude any future opportunities for Federal funding participation.

Mr. Soltau said that the existing Federal transportation legislation terminates in September 2003. Accordingly, the timing of this project is very good if this project would receive any special highway funds.

Ms. Cohn explained that the five alternatives gives the community an opportunity to view different alignments for the Perryville - Willow Brook Road corridor. It is hoped that an alignment will be selected by the County's Public Works Committee by the end of February. At that time, the issue would be referred to the full County Board for their discussion.

#### **4.1 PROGRESS REPORTS ON SPRINGFIELD AVENUE/ HARRISON AVENUE EXTENSION PROJECT.**

Joe Vanderwerff said this project is currently underway. For the north section of this project (Cunningham Road to West State Street) only three more properties need to be acquired, and two families need to be relocated. Hopefully, these right-of-way acquisitions and relocations can be completed in time for a June construction letting for the north section. For the south section (Montague Road to Cunningham Road), construction is 30% completed. The contractor is still working on the railroad bridge over the CN railroad and on the pipe culverts for Kent Creek. By next summer all the grading will be completed for paving for an opening by late summer or early fall 2001.

#### **6.2 BOONE COUNTY - WINNEBAGO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING STUDY.**

Mr. McIntyre said the consultant has prepared a new schedule to show that this study can be completed by March 2002. He further said information is still being gather and submitted to the consultant for the initial calibration. After the calibration is completed, the consultant and the area's land use and transportation planners and Steering Committee members need to prepare and complete land use forecasts and projections for the study area.

**5. OTHER BUSINESS.** Mr. McIntyre distributed preliminary statewide population information received from the US Census Bureau. He also distributed an announcement from a citizen group called the **Campaign to Build Illinois Transit** announcing "The Rockford Area Community Transit Summit." The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 20, 2001 at 10:00 A.M. in the Rockford Public Library Auditorium (215 N. Wyman Street, Rockford). Public officials and interested citizens are invited to attend.

1. **ADJOURNMENT.** With no further business, Mr. Kuhn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cohn and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM.