



**Rockford Area Transportation
Study**

Metropolitan Planning Organization

Meeting Minutes -- RATS Policy Committee

Meeting Date: June 26, 1997-- Loves Park City Hall

Members Present: Sam Schmitz representing Mayor Charles E. Box, City of Rockford; Board Chairman Kristine Cohn, Winnebago County; President Stephen Kuhn, Village of Machesney Park; Larry Reed representing District Engineer William Ost, Illinois Department of Transportation, District 2; Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park..

Others Present: David Dratnol, Winnebago County Highway; Gary McIntyre, RATS; Russ Petrotte, RATS; Bill Smith, IDOT/ Springfield; Jon-Paul Kohler, FHWA/ Springfield; Dan Jacobson, Loves Park Planning; Mike Stone, Loves Park Transit System; Rick Strader, Rockford Park District; Jim Canham, Illinois State Toll Highway Authority.

1. CALL TO ORDER: With a full quorum, Chairman Stephen Kuhn called the meeting to order at approximately 1:45 PM.

3. COMMUNICATIONS: Chairman Kuhn cites the letter from Bill Ost appointing Larry Reed to represent IDOT at today's meeting.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Kristine Cohn moved to approved the minutes of the March 13, 1997 and May 15, 1997 Policy Committee meetings. The motion was seconded by Sam Schmitz and approved unanimously with no corrections to the minutes.

4. RATS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS: Russ Petrotte presented the draft update of the RATS Public Involvement Process. The report is required by federal law and must be updated a minimum of every three years. This draft was prepared by staff, mailed out to everyone on the RATS mailing list and presented to the Technical Committee at their last meeting. A 45

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 William D. Ost, Illinois Department of
Transportation, District 2*

day public review period is required and notice has already been published in the Register Star. No action is requested today but can be taken at the July or August meetings. Mr. Petrotte discussed the highlights of the report and its recommendations.

The report notes that the Technical Committee was expanded by adding the Boone County Highway Department, the Belvidere/Boone Regional Planning Commission and the Village of Cherry Valley as voting members and the Ogle County Highway Department as a non-voting member. The Technical Committee makes use of subcommittees to provide further public involvement. Recent subcommittee opportunities include the Regional GIS Subcommittee and a Subcommittee for Truck and Hazardous Cargo Routes.

The Rockford Mass Transit District will also be forming citizen committees in the near future to help them evaluate their transit services.

In the section on Policy Committee representation, Mr. Petrotte said he attempted to summarize and document the apparent wishes of the current Policy members not to expand the Committee at this time. He said there are many factors to be weighed, not the least of which is maintaining an equitable balance of power within the Committee as well as the federally mandated respect for the needs of the central city (Rockford). He discussed the lengthy process that occurred when Machesney Park was added. He said Boone County has made a request to be added but Belvidere has not. If Belvidere becomes a member, the State has stated that the Belvidere STP allocation must be merged with the RATS STP allocation. He cited the portion of the report that listed factors in favor of and against adding Boone and Belvidere to the Committee. He cited the section that states current Policy Committee sentiment is not in favor of expanding membership at this time but would

reevaluate the situation after the Year 2000 Census or if there were changes in federal guidance. He also cited a statement indicating membership requests might be looked upon more favorable if they were made in conjunction with other provisions that did not diminish the authority of the central city or otherwise. Mr. Petrotte cited the mailing procedures. RATS maintains an extensive mailing list that include the press, media and public libraries. This list is updated often and periodically attempts are made to expand it. This year a mailing was sent to all newly elected or appointed public officials and the township road commissioners have been added to the list. The Technical Committee recently recommended that we add the Townships in Ogle County in the vicinity of the Greater Rockford Airport.

Mr. Petrotte said the report also contains schedules for the development of the UWP and TIP (annually), the Long-Range Plan (updated every 5 years) and this report and the federal triennial reviews (done every three years). There are also tables giving appropriate contact persons at the local, State and Federal levels.

5. FY97 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENT: Chairman Kuhn explained that this amendment to the FY97 TIP (Resolution 97-3) was needed to address a safety problem at IL-173 and Belvidere Road. In this instance, the amendment process was unusual because the resolution had been hand circulated for signature before this meeting. This was necessary to take advantage of a recent timely release of Federal Hazard Elimination and Safety funds. The issue is on the agenda today to provide for public comment and to provide the Policy Committee members with the opportunity to publicly reaffirm their action. The amendment itself funds the installation of flashing beacons at the intersection.

Darryl Lindberg moved to approve Resolution 97-3. The motion was seconded by Sam Schmitz. With no further discussion or public comments offered, the resolution was approved unanimously.

6. FY98 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: Gary McIntyre said that nearly all RATS participants, including the CD Department, are behind schedule in the development of the FY98 TIP. He asked that agencies submit their project lists as soon as possible. Staff will endeavor to produce a draft TIP for next month's mailing.

7. PROGRESS REPORTS ON CURRENT PROJECTS: David Dratnol reported that the consultant, Barton Ashman, has submitted an existing conditions data report and is awaiting modeling information from RATS. Larry Reed commented that

significantly alter the current balance of power. He asked the Committee to review and discuss this section at their convenience and comment as they see fit.

the problem appears to be quite complicated and he hoped that the consultant has been informed that a range of alternative solutions needs to be presented because funding constraints may eliminate many of the more complete solutions. Kristine Cohn also emphasized her concern over the seriousness of the situation. She asked about possible funding. Mr. McIntyre said this area could be a candidate for the use of STP funds after the completion of the Springfield/Harrison project. Mr. Dratnol said the consultant will be asked to provide a phasing plan for proposed solutions. Russ Petrotte said they will also be asked to present a range of solutions with rough cost estimates -- then it will be up to the various jurisdictions involved to determine what level of solution they want to develop further. He noted that the most complete solutions are not likely to be affordable because of the highly developed nature of the area. Mr. Dratnol said the consultant is hoping to have a draft of the study available by the end of July. It was suggested that the consultant be asked to present the results of the study to the Policy Committee or to a joint meeting of the Technical and Policy Committees.

Mr. Dratnol reported that the County Highway Department plans to begin purchasing ROW for the project in early 1998 and begin construction in early 1999. The complete details of the project schedule are to be presented to the County Board this evening. Kristine Cohn said a copy of the schedule will be provided to the Policy Committee.

Russ Petrotte said he had received a new draft of the Boone County East State Street study. He said small pockets of more intense commercial have been designated near the Boone/Winnebago County line in response to comments from the Policy Committee at the last meeting. He suggested that the City of Rockford Planning Division study the plan carefully. If the current proposal is not satisfactory, they should draft a formal statement to the Boone/Belvidere Regional Planning Commission stating objections and proposing alternatives. Gary McIntyre said he had heard some property owners in the corridor were not happy that the plan might constrain the future use of their properties from what they considered to be the highest and best use.

Russ Petrotte reported that a GIS Subcommittee meeting has not been held since the last Policy Committee meeting but staff has been working on the

following elements. (1) A letter was drafted and mailed to all taxing bodies in Winnebago County. The letter discussed GIS and the regional GIS concept and invited participation in the project. The only new responses were from Winnebago Schools and the North Suburban Library District. (2) A cooperative agreement has been drafted and reviewed by the City Legal staff. (3) An RFQ for consultant services has

8. RATS LRP AMENDMENT (BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN ELEMENT): Mr. Petrotte discussed the proposed amendment which is drafted as an addendum to Resolution 97-1. He said the work stems from efforts of the Regional Planning Subcommittee of the Interorganizational Council and the Perryville Path Committee. These loosely formed committees of staff and citizens are seeking to help RATS emphasize the need to respect pedestrian and bicyclist needs and to improve the user-friendliness of roadways. After examining the work of these committees, the RATS staff and Technical Committee prepared a list of eight recommendations to be added to the RATS Transportation Plan or otherwise acted on by RATS. In summary: (1) Add the Grand Illinois Trail and the Ice Age Connector as "arterials" on the RATS Regional Bikeway and Pedestrian Facility Map. (2) Declare the Perryville Path as an "arterial" link. (3) Further develop an "Arterial Pathway System" with the above as hubs. (4) Assign high priority to the implementation of the "Arterial Pathways System." (5) Endorse and ask local governments to adopt a resolution of bicycle/pedestrian facility support similar to the model resolution developed by Regional Planning Subcommittee. (6) Ask local governments to appoint Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Coordinators. (7) Activate and sponsor a Pedestrian/Bicycling Advisory Committee. (8) Work with the above committee to comprehensively review and refine the RATS Pedestrian/Bicycle Component of the LRP. Mr. Petrotte said Resolution 97-1 was recommended for approval (unanimously) by the Technical Committee at their last meeting.

In discussion, Sam Schmitz asked that the minutes reflect thanks to the Perryville Path Committee and the Interorganizational Council for their collaborative efforts with RATS in refining the Bicycle and Pedestrian Component of the RATS Long-Range Plan. This serves as another example of citizen and public official involvement in the development of the area's official transportation plans which are under the jurisdiction of RATS. Policy Committee members ask that the minutes note that the model resolution need not be adopted verbatim. The important thing is to recognize and show support for pedestrian and non-motorized transportation needs in all official actions.

been drafted and is under review by the City's Purchasing Agent. A GIS Subcommittee meeting will be scheduled in July. Mr. Petrotte cautioned the Policy Committee members that it will take quite some time to develop a fully operational regional GIS and that they should not abandon their current mapping methods at this time.

A motion to approved Resolution 97-1 was made by Darryl Lindberg. The motion was seconded by Kristine Cohn. Without further discussion the motion was approved unanimously.

9. LRP - NORTHWEST BYPASS: Chairman Kuhn asked that the Technical Committee be directed to investigate the need and feasibility of planning a northwest bypass that would complete an outer ring connecting with US 20, currently undeveloped areas northwest of Rockford, parts of Machesney Park and major roadways along the stretch all the way to the Tollway. Chairman Kuhn emphasized that, although this roadway is not immediately needed it would be needed in the future to open these areas for development and to accommodate a growing travel demand. Sam Schmitz said he was unsure where the major funding would come from for such a road. He noted the impetus of development to the east along the Tollway and asked if we might not be better off to concentrate our limited funds in that areas. Mr. Petrotte asked if Chairman Kuhn might be looking farther into the future, to a time when most of the vacant land within close proximity of the Tollway, even in Boone County had been developed. If our current rate of development continues, that time might only be 20-30 years away. From that standpoint, it might not be a bad idea to look at future roadway needs in the northwest quadrant so that we could reserve appropriate ROW as future subdivision plats are proposed.

A motion was made by Kristine Cohn to refer the matter to the Technical Committee. The motion was seconded by Darryl Lindberg and approved unanimously. The comment was made that this might also be a matter for a joint discussion of the Technical and Policy Committees.

10. OTHER BUSINESS: Kristine Cohn stated that she has asked the Highway Department to look at re-engineering parts of the Perryville Path. They have agreed and hope to have the work complete by the end of June 1998.

Darryl Lindberg stated that the Loves Park Comprehensive Plan update is nearing completion and noted that he was pleased with the public involvement in the effort and the overall results thus far.

Gary McIntyre reiterated that the federal Certification Review of the RATS planning process has been rescheduled to September 24-25, 1997.

Jim Canham for the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority stated that the Authority is evaluating the feasibility of a large number of new interchange facilities. One of these is the IL-173 request. He said a large part of the Tollway's budget over the next couple of years will be devoted to automating toll collection.

11. ADJOURNMENT: At 2:56 PM a motion was made by Darryl Lindberg to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Kristine Cohn and approved unanimously.