

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

RATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES March 29, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Vaughn, Village of Machesney Park; Frederic Brereton, City of Belvidere; Lawrence Morrissey, City of Rockford; Darryl Lindberg, City of Loves Park; Catherine Ward, Boone County; Scott Christiansen, Winnebago County.

OTHERS PRESENT: Gary McIntyre, RATS staff; Steve Ernst, RATS Study Director; Tonia Vrolyk, City of Rockford, Public Works; Joe Vanderwerff, Sr., Winnebago County Highway Department; Bob Soltau, Staline Area Transportation Study (SLATS); David Taylor, NICTI and Boone County Board, Les Nunes, IDOT Division of Urban Program Planning, Jim Considine, TY Lin International.

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND REPRESENTATION

Ms. Vaughn called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. McIntyre handed out a copy of a letter from RATS staff to the FTA requesting concurrence with the RATS staff assessment that the 2004 version of the Environmental Justice and Title VI document is valid for 2007. This document provides analyses of the transit service providers and their ability to serve low income and minority populations. The staff assessment pointed to the fact that the information from the 2000 Census has not changed, the route structure of RMTD has not changed, and the boundary of the MPO has not changed since the last document was produced. Therefore the 2004 document was still valid. A motion was made by Mr. Lindberg to concur with the assessment of RATS staff and authorize staff to forward the letter to the FTA. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ward and passed unanimously (6-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 1, 2007 RATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

A motion was made by Mr. Morrissey to approve the minutes of March 1, 2007. The motion was seconded by Mr. Christiansen and passed unanimously (6-0).

4. RATS BICYCLE / PEDESTRIAN STUDY

Mr. Considine presented the highlights of the draft RATS Bicycle / Pedestrian Study. There was extensive public involvement in the development of the RATS Bicycle / Pedestrian Study. After the document is completed it will be available for public comment prior to final approval by the Policy Committee. Mr. Considine explained how the approved RATS Greenway Plan and the RATS 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan are coordinated. Mr. Considine also highlighted the various corridors in the Plan, how roadway improvements could play a part in the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian routes, and planning level cost estimates for the various corridors. Mr. Ernst mentioned that

the new Safe Routes To School program might also assist in funding for some of the missing connections. No action was required at this time.

5. RATS FY 2008 UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM

Mr. McIntyre explained that the UWP document is required to be submitted to IDOT every year, and then IDOT forwards the document to FHWA and FTA. This document provides detail on all planning activities for the MPO and the member agencies. Mr. McIntyre provided a brief overview of the major planning initiatives for the upcoming fiscal year. The new planning guidelines from SAFETEA-LU are discussed on page 5. On pages 9 and 10, Part 6 is the detailed information on revenue that will be provided to the planning process of the MPO. Approximately \$508,000 federal dollars will be available from traditional sources, FHWA PL and FTA 5303, that will have to be matched 80%-20% by the MPO, bringing the total to roughly \$609,000. Additionally the MPO has requested \$80,000 from Special Planning and Research (SPR). This discretionary funding source will be targeted to a planning study of freight movement in the RATS area and will provide for a conversion of the transportation model. The UWP document also shows carryover planning studies from Illinois Tomorrow and SPR, and programs the earmark funding for the NICTI Alternatives Analysis. Chart 7 on page 23 provides the funding allocation for the MPO and the member agencies of RATS. Page 40 describes the public comment process and schedule, and staff will be adding all comments and staff responses to this section in the final version of the UWP. Staff expects a final vote at the May 2007 meeting.

Mr. Christiansen made a motion to transmit the draft FY 2008 Unified Work Program to IDOT for their review. It was seconded by Mr. Morrissey and passed unanimously (6-0).

6. PROGRESS REPORTS

6.1 Northwest Tollway I-90 Improvements: Mr. Ernst described the 3-year project to widen I-90 to six lanes from Newburg Road to Rockton Road. In the first year (2007) the construction will rehabilitate the shoulders on the northbound side. In the second year (2008) all traffic will drive on the existing northbound side, two lanes in each direction. This will be accomplished by using the shoulders. The southbound side will be reconstructed to the new cross section. In the third year (2009) the traffic will be moved over to the new pavement on the southbound side, again providing two lanes in each direction. The northbound side will then be reconstructed to the new six-lane cross section.

6.2 Winnebago County Smart Growth: Mr. Vanderwerff reported that the smart growth report for the Village of Rockton is complete and the report for the Village of Winnebago is nearing completion, possibly by the end of the following week.

6.3 NICTI Alternatives Analysis: Mr. Ernst mentioned that the NICTI project has met a major milestone, and a one page summary of the process was provided to the Policy Committee. The NICTI Executive Committee also has transmitted final versions of documents to the FTA. Copies of these documents were provided to any members of the Policy Committee that did not already have them. Mr. Christiansen discussed the initiative of Winnebago County to get the Illinois General Assembly to establish a rail authority for the Chicago/Rockford International Airport. Mr. Morrissey mentioned that Senator Durbin and Congressman Manzullo will host an Amtrak meeting at Rockford College on Saturday morning, March 31st from 10-11:30 AM.

6.4 RMTD East Side Transfer Center – RMTD is still working on getting a Zoning Map Amendment and Special Use Permit for the facility on Lyford Road. The Rockford City Council laid this item over at their March 26th meeting, but action is expected soon.

6.5 IL 173 Corridor Planning Study – No report.

6.6 RATS and Regional Planning: A RATS Technical Committee working group is currently being formed to look into the issues surrounding an expanded MPO. Recommendations will be forthcoming at future Policy Committee meetings.

Mr. Christiansen discussed his communications with area elected officials about what might make sense for RATS in the future. Mr. Morrissey expressed his interest in a tour of some City owned facilities that might serve as a new home for the MPO, the staff, and possibly other related agencies, where plans of all members can be showcased.

Mr. Ernst spoke to HB 1134 and the new Amendment #1 that has been introduced. He will continue to monitor the progress of this bill and report to the Policy Committee.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. McIntyre briefed the Policy Committee on the release of new demographic information from the Census Bureau. Mr. McIntyre passed out summary information for the 102 counties in Illinois. Boone County is the 3rd fastest growing county in Illinois and Winnebago County is the 13th fastest growing county in Illinois. Boone County is also the 87th fastest growing county in the nation. Population changes based on Year 2000 Census to July 1, 2006 percentage growth.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business Ms. Vaughn entertained a motion to adjourn. It was moved by Mr. Morrissey and seconded by Mr. Lindberg and unanimously approved.