



Rockford Metropolitan Agency For Planning

ROCKFORD METROPOLITAN AGENCY FOR PLANNING
POLICY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Hanson, City of Rockford; Chairman Scott Christiansen, Winnebago County; Dan Jacobson, Loves Park; Jay Howell, Illinois Department of Transportation-District 2; Bob Walberg, Boone County Board Chairman.

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Mayor Brereton, City of Belvidere, Mayor Tom Strickland, Village of Machesney Park.

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve Ernst, RMAP Executive Director, Jon Paul Dipla, Mary Swanson, Michael Maddox and Michael Hren, RMAP staff; Wayne Vik, Winnebago Highway; Dave Taylor, NICTI Chairman; Curtis Jones, IDOT; Thomas Bona, Rockford Register Star; Jon Hollander, City of Rockford; John Donovan, FHWA, Illinois Division; Mrs. Slabaugh, citizen.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND REPRESENTATION:** Meeting was called to order by Chairman Christiansen with a quorum present at 1:25 p.m.
- 2. COMMUNICATIONS:** Mr. Ernst had several items of communication: 1.) A copy of a letter from statewide elected officials supporting the Amtrak route through Belvidere; 2.) Last week the Governor announced the availability of \$20 million in left over stimulus dollars for Transportation Enhancement Grants. The Governor is still considering the standard round of projects which we have submitted several applications. It is not known if there is a match requirement for this enhancement money. 3.) The Transportation Bill is due to expire the end of September. Several million dollars have been rescinded out of SAFTEA-LU. With less funding available, the Harrison project could be delayed. Mr. Donovan reported that the House has passed a Bill for a 3-month extension regarding SAFTEA-LU funds. This Bill should go before the Senate very soon, but will still have rescissions. 4.) Mr. Ernst mentioned the service to our MPO by John Donovan who will be going to the Chicago area. He will still be working with our MPO for a while during the interim. Mr. Ernst thanked John for all the work he has done with RMAP and especially the work he did during our certification process. 5.) The IDOT Fall Conference will be held at the Allerton Hotel in Chicago, October 14-16, 2009. 6.) The League of Bicyclists will be hosting a road design seminar at the RMAP offices on January 12, 2010. Formal announcements will be coming.

Chairman Christiansen also congratulated John Donovan on his move to the Chicago region office.

- 3. APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 27TH, 2009 RMAP POLICY MEETING MINUTES:** Motion to approve minutes by, Bonne County seconded by City of Loves Park. Motion carried unanimously.
- 4. TIGER GRANT APPLICATION:** A press conference was held on September 17, announcing the submission of a \$71.4 million dollar TIGER grant application. This funding comes from the Recovery Act and is totally discretionary money. The review team will consist of members from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Authority. The proposed application is split between passenger rail (proposed \$20 million) and freight rail (proposed \$50 million). Components of the application include construction of rail stations, crossings and grade upgrades. A

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Mayor Frederic C. Brereton,
City of Belvidere, Chairman

Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey,
City of Rockford, Vice-Chairman

Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg,
City of Loves Park

Mayor Tom Strickland,
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large component would be the industrial track upgrade at the Airport, providing a multi-purpose yard for freight cars. These improvements would continue the economic development within the Rockford Global TradePark and could provide up to 3,500 new jobs if industry should choose to locate there. The Morgan Street Bridge could be a catalyst for this project, as the initial rail consolidation component. During construction of the Morgan Street Bridge, the Illinois Railway would have to be rerouted to another Rock River bridge. Mr. Hollander has talked with the Canadian National Railroad and is in the process of trying to get a meeting scheduled with them. He has requested through the ICC financial participation for some of the bridge elements. He has not received a firm commitment from the ICC but they have not completely denied the request. Mr. Ernst mentioned that the Canadian Pacific has looked at Rockford for their long term plans for freight movement in the Midwest. To continue having the railroads work together for our region, it is important that members of the Policy Committee contact the US Delegation showing our support for our TIGER application.

- 5. **RMAP FY 2010-FY 2013 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP):** This document is a compilation of the member agency's capital projects and plans. There have been several amendments due to the stimulus money and stimulus driven projects. Chairman Christiansen entertained a motion to approve: Motion by City of Loves Park, seconded by City of Rockford. Chairman Christiansen then announced that we would proceed with discussion.

Mr. Diipala reported that the document is more user friendly and has more graphics included in it. He also mentioned that Winnebago County and the City of Rockford are currently in the process of completing their CIP's which will be included once they are done.

The call for vote on the aforementioned motion: Vote was in favor to approve. Motion carried unanimously.

6. PROGRESS REPORTS:

- 6.1 **Northwest Tollway (I-90) Improvements:** No update is available but the Tollway is planning a ribbon cutting towards the end of the year. The Tollway has met with residents of the Roscoe area regarding noise abatement but there is no status update on the noise issue at this time.

- 6.2 **NICTI Alternative Analysis:** Discussion involved the proposed route through Genoa. Mr. Taylor reported for the absent Mayor Brereton. The Mayor spoke with Mr. Weber and discovered the Genoa route was chosen by the Governor. He plans to meet with the Governor and there will be a meeting with the NICTI Committee on this issue also. There was a recommendation regarding using the old Blackhawk route. Mr. Ernst cited that working with the NICTI committee, our area has completed the necessary environmental portion for the route to come through Belvidere. The Genoa route has not completed this necessary environmental work. He also mentioned that Chicago has submitted a stimulus application for their "CREATE" project. Chairman Christiansen mentioned the upcoming Olympic decision and how it may affect where the rail will go. Mr. Taylor handed out copies of a letter from George Weber to Bonnie Hanson regarding ways to achieve getting the rail through Genoa.

- 6.3 **RMTD East Side Transfer Center:** No report.

- 6.4 **Regional Fiber Optic and Broadband:** No report, but should have an update for the next meeting.

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- 6.5 **RMAP Regional Freight Study:** Mr. Ernst reported that many components from the Freight Study were part of the TIGER application.
- 6.6 **RMAP Mobility Subcommittee:** The next meeting will be October 13th at 10:00 a.m. at the YWCA.
- 6.7 **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS):** No update.
- 6.8 **RMAP Website:** The website, rmapil.org, is fully functional. Stimulus information has been included, as well as graphical dashboards showing updates for projects.
- 7. **OTHER BUSINESS:** Mr. Ernst mentioned that there will be a meeting on Monday regarding the “Comprehensive Regional Planning Fund” that was not included in the State’s budget and the need to get these funds back into the budget. He is hoping these funds will be put back into the budget during the next session.
- 8. **ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn by City of Loves Park, seconded by City of Rockford, meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.