

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

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## **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

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PLANNING  
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WORKS  
LOVES PARK TRANSIT / ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION*

## **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**April 4, 1995**

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 4, 1995, TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE CHERRY VALLEY VILLAGE HALL.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Russ Petrotte, Rockford Community Development Dept.; Dan Jacobson, Loves Park Planning; Hong Liu, Rockford Public Works Dept.; Dennis Hendricks, Rockford Mass Transit District; Ron Heinen, Winnebago County Public Works Dept.; Mary Allen Verdun, IDOT-Dixon; David Noel, Winnebago County Planning; David Nord, Village of Cherry Valley; Nick Licary, Winnebago County Paratransit System; Non-voting members present: Richard Lundin, Boone County Highway Dept.; David Sliktas, Belvidere/Boone Regional Planning Commission.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Daniel Salameda, Loves Park Transit; Lori Tharp, Machesney Park Planning Dept.; Greater Rockford Airport Authority.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Gary McIntyre, RATS Staff; Steve Baker, IDOT-Springfield; Mike Bacidore, Belvidere Daily Republican; Bill Smith, IDOT-Springfield; Gene Washburn, IDOT-Dixon; Anna Gray, Boone County Council on Aging; Charles Martin, IDOT-Springfield; Craig Lawler, Belvidere Public Works Dept.; Rory Peterson, Mayor, City of Belvidere; Jane Anne Anderson,

Boone County Board; Don Kiefer, Vice Chairman, Boone County Board.

Russ Petrotte called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. He explained that this special Technical Committee meeting was called for the single purpose of presenting information and discussing some of the issues involved in the request for membership on RATS by Boone County, the Belvidere/Boone Regional Planning Commission and, possibly, the City of Belvidere. He said numerous question had developed as this matter was discussed at previous RATS meetings. Mr. Lundin had requested this special meeting so that interested Boone County and Belvidere officials could be present to hear the discussion.

Mr. Petrotte and Mr. McIntyre presented numerous items of pertinent background material. Most of these items are attached to these minutes or are available upon request. These included:

1. A map of RATS Metro Area also showing the Urban Area. The urbanized area is defined by the Census Bureau and is based on population density and other factors. These population figures are the basis for many federal allocations of funding. The Urban Area is nearly the same as the urbanized area with the irregular boundaries

**LOCAL LEAD AGENCY FOR RATS / CITY OF ROCKFORD, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, PLANNING DIVISION**

**425 EAST STATE STREET, ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS 61104 / 815-987-5628 / FAX 815-967-6933**

rounded off. The Metro Area is the area expected to be urbanized in the next 20 years.

2. A sheet summarizing the urbanized area and Metro area populations (attached).

5. Copies of the Cooperative Agreement that established RATS as the area's Metropolitan Planning Organization. This agreement has been adopted by Rockford, Loves Park, Machesney Park, Winnebago County and the Illinois Department of Transportation (on behalf of the Governor). (available on request).

6. An excerpt/synopsis from the federal Metropolitan Planning Rules pertaining to designations and redesignations of MPOs (attached).

Mr. Petrotte and Mr. McIntyre reviewed the current membership of the RATS Policy and Technical Committees. They noted that members can be added to the Technical Committee by action of the Policy Committee without changing the Cooperative Agreement. Changing the Cooperative Agreement requires approval of the respective legislative bodies. Adding membership to the Policy Committee requires changing the Cooperative Agreement. Therefore adding Policy Committee membership is a more complicated process.

Further complicating the process are the federal Metropolitan Planning Rules pertaining to MPO redesignations. If an MPO is officially "redesignated," the Policy body must be expanded to include agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation (freight rail, trucking, and others). A question not yet answered is whether a change to the RATS Cooperative Agreement, by virtue of the fact that it involves the Governor, constitutes a redesignation. If it does, RATS cannot simply add Boone County and/or Belvidere to the Policy Committee. RATS must also add representatives of the major modes.

3. Computer-generated maps illustrating the population densities by Census block of the Metro area (attached).

4. Computer-generated data sheets summarizing demographic data for the Metro Area (attached)

The function of RATS and the primary documents produced by RATS each year to qualify the area for federal transportation subsidies were discussed. These include the annual Unified Planning Work Program, the annual Transportation Improvement Program and the Long-Range Transportation Plan (every 5-years).

The federal transportation subsidies provided to the area were outlined. RATS has direct control over some of these and all have to be included in the annual RATS Transportation Improvement Program. RATS has direct control over annual allocations of roughly \$1.1 million in STP-Urban funds and \$2-3 million in transit subsidies. These funds are allocated based on urbanized area population. Belvidere also receives roughly \$90,000 in STP-Urban funds. Boone County receives periodic awards of Section 18 funds for paratransit vehicles. According to IDOT, RATS has the discretion to decide if the Belvidere and Boone County funding will be blended with the urbanized area allocations or kept separate (if and when Boone and Belvidere become full members of the Policy Committee).

Anna Gray asked how paratransit services would be coordinated and Section 18 funds allocated in the future. Mr. Petrotte said he assumed that since Winnebago County does not have a Section 18 Program, Boone County would decide on this matter on its own. However, as the Urban Area expands toward Belvidere and the service areas of the Rockford Mass Transit District and the Loves Park Transit System expand eastward, more coordination between those agencies and Boone County would be needed. Steve Baker suggested we consult with the IDOT Division of Public Transportation.

Mr. Petrotte noted some of the concerns of Rockford as we consider expanding RATS.

Steve Baker suggested that a subcommittee be formed to continue investigating RATS membership expansion. Mr. Petrotte suggested that an appropriate subcommittee might consist of persons from both counties and all the municipal jurisdictions involved. By consensus it was decided that this suggestion would be presented at the next regular Technical Committee meeting for further action.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

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