



**Rockford Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

POLICY COMMITTEE

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of Transportation, District 2

Meeting Minutes – RATS Technical Committee

Meeting Date: April 20, 2000 – Loves Park City Hall

Members Present: Joe Vanderwerff, Winnebago County Highway Dept.; Steve Thompson, City of Loves Park; Mary Allen Verdun, IDOT District 2; Jim Ryan, Rockford Public Works Department; David Noel, Winnebago County Planning; Lisa Brown, Rockford Mass Transit District; Michael Zonsius, Greater Rockford Airport Authority; Chad Atkinson, Machesney Park Planning.

Others Present: Carlos Molina, Winnebago County Highway Dept.; Bob Soltau, Illinois Department of Transportation (Springfield); Kirk Fauver, Federal Highway Administration; Gary McIntyre, RATS staff; Russ Petrotte, RATS staff; Janet Anderson, State Line Area Transportation Study; Linda O'Reilly, Center for Sight and Hearing; Lew Moon, Cottonwood Airport.

1. CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES: At 10:05 A.M. and with a quorum present, Joe Vanderwerff explained that Steve Ernst had called him and asked him to chair the meeting in Mr. Ernst's absence. With the Committee in concurrence with Mr. Ernst's request, Mr. Vanderwerff called the meeting to order and directed attention to the minutes of the February 17, 2000, Technical Committee meeting. Mr. Vanderwerff moved to approve the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mary Allen Verdun and approved unanimously.

2. AGENCY REPORTS: Agencies present reported on the progress of their ongoing highway projects. An updated TIP Status Report listing highway improvement projects is attached to these minutes reflecting the updated information.

Bob Soltau discussed recent new Federal emphasis on Environmental Justice. He explained that Environmental Justice (EJ) is a term coined in a recent Presidential Executive Order aimed at assuring that no particular segment of society takes the brunt of the adverse impacts of publicly supported programs or projects. EJ is similar

to the goals of Title VI legislation which seeks to deter unfair practices or impacts on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex. EJ goes a step further and directs agencies involved in Federal programs to take measures to assess and assure all segments of society, rich or poor, old or young and regardless of geographic location are treated and impacted equally.

Mr. Soltau discussed some of the difficulties in assessing and defining such fairness and the fact that no detailed Federal guidance has been issued. In the absence of such guidance and in light of the fact that the requirements stem from an Executive Order rather than Congressional legislation, there has been a broad range of interpretations nationwide. He advised that the MPO keep abreast of the literature on this topic and attempt to address the issue in future official actions.

3. FY 2001 UWP: Russ Petrotte said a draft of the FY 2001 UWP was developed, submitted to IDOT for review and mailed to all on the RATS mailing list in early March. He said the draft proposes the typically-required work, such as the TIP development, and the continuation of activities started this year, such as Rockford's Pavement Management project. He said he expects that significant time will need to be devoted to follow-up work stemming from the update of the Long-Range Plan and the triennial Certification Review. Efforts will also continue toward the implementation of WinGIS.

He called attention to the funding tables and noted that the usual procedure was used for suballocating the available Federal funds: the needs of the Lead Agency – now, Rockford Public Works – were addressed first. The Lead Agency is responsible for completing most of the federally-required activities. The remaining funds were then divided among the Rockford CD Department, Winnebago County Highway, Winnebago County Planning, Loves Park Planning and Machesney Park Planning. County Highway was assigned a larger

amount because of their more extensive needs. He noted, however, that the program is designed to be

He said, to date, he has received no comments on the draft program, positive or negative, from any of the participants or from the general public. Bob Soltau asked if consideration had been given to assigning funds for WinGIS staffing. Mr. Petrotte said that could be a possibility but would mean that suballocations to the other participants would have to be reduced.

Mr. Petrotte suggested the Committee withhold action on the Work Program until the May meeting to allow time for further participation or public input.

4.1. FY 2000 TIP AMENDMENT: Gary McIntyre explained that the FY 2000 Transportation Improvement Program is in need of amendment to advance a bridge replacement project for the City of Rockford that is to be partially funded with federal Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program funds. Project 3-00-64, the Spring Creek Bridge east of Alpine Road will be replaced this year (FY 2000) at a total cost of \$319,000 with \$208,000 coming from HBRRP and \$111,000 from local sources. This amendment is detailed in the Addendum to Resolution 2000-6.

After a brief discussion, David Noel moved to recommend Policy Committee approval of Resolution 2000-6. The motion was seconded by Chad Atkinson and approved unanimously.

4.2. FY 2001 TIP: Gary McIntyre next reminded the Committee that the FY 2001 TIP needs to be prepared. He said IDOT has supplied him with their proposed projects for the next three years and he asked the other agencies to do the same. The target for FY 2001 TIP adoption will be the July meeting.

5. RMTD/LPTS SERVICE AGREEMENT: Mr. Petrotte distributed a letter addressed to RATS from the Rockford Mass Transit District, dated April 17, 2000, regarding RMTD and LPTS mass transportation services. Mr. Vanderwerff asked the Committee to take the time to read it in full. The text of this letter is as follows:

Dear RATS Technical Committee Chairman and Members:

As you are most likely aware the Loves Park City Council voted unanimously to discontinue public transportation services provided by the Loves Park Transit System to the City of Loves Park. They voted to cease operations and dissolve the Loves Park Transit System. Loves Park has also expressed interest in retaining some of their assets to be used by their Public Works Department. The Rockford Mass Transit District is not opposed to Loves Park retaining assets as long as proper steps are followed with the State of Illinois and the Federal Transit Administration in retention of said assets.

Lisa Brown highlighted parts of the letter and stressed that the decision to dismantle LPTS and the decision to consider RMTD transit service in the Loves Park area were independent decisions. RMTD is not taking over

flexible – if special needs develop as the year progresses, the funding suballocations can be adjusted.

During the Loves Park City Council meeting, it was also unanimously approved to allow RMTD to adopt the Loves Park city limits into the RMTD operating area. The Board of Trustees of the Rockford Mass Transit District also voted unanimously to adopt the Loves Park city limits into the RMTD service area. This would leave RMTD as the sole transit provider for the metropolitan area. I would like to make it clear, however, that by the adoption of Loves Park into the RMTD service area, there is no guarantee of public transportation services in the area unless agreed upon by way of a subsidy agreement. This adoption as authorized under Act 3610 The Local Mass Transit District Act, Section 3610/3.01 Annexation, simply gives RMTD authority to traverse in and through the Loves Park city limits and provide services as approved by the RMTD Board of Trustees.

Section 3610/3.01 reads as follows: *"Any municipality or county may be annexed to a District, other than a Metro East Transit District, formed pursuant to Section 3 when the District has no tax levy in effect and has no bonded indebtedness if a petition for annexation is adopted by an ordinance or resolution approved by a majority vote of the corporate authorities of such municipality or the county board of such county and such ordinance or resolution is approved by a 2/3 vote of the members of the board of trustees of the District..."* The City Council of Loves Park and the RMTD Board of Trustees approved said resolution.

I would also like to make it clear that the Rockford Mass Transit District is not taking over or combining the RMTD/LPTS operations into RMTD. The City of Loves Park has made the decision to cease operations without any contingencies of continued transportation services from the Rockford Mass Transit District. It is now the desire of the Rockford Mass Transit District to negotiate a subsidy agreement with the City of Loves Park to provide fixed route and paratransit services to the City of Loves Park. However, the two actions are independent of each other. The City of Loves Park has already made the decision to cease operations no later than August 1, 2000. As of this date there is no subsidy agreement in place and no additional service to Loves Park scheduled. Both RMTD and the City of Loves Park are devoted to reaching a subsidy agreement so that service will continue without disruption. And, based on preliminary discussions, it does not appear that there will be any problems. However, unforeseeable delays could always hamper our best efforts.

It is also the desire of the Rockford Mass Transit District and the City of Loves Park for the Rockford Area Transportation Study (RATS) to develop a Mass Transportation Subcommittee to oversee the operation of any negotiated public transportation services to all areas subsidizing RMTD for services. Loves Park also wishes to retain the seat on the RATS Technical Committee which is currently held by Loves Park Transit System. The Rockford Mass Transit District does not oppose this request from Loves Park, however, RMTD does understand that the approval would be the decision of RATS.

A number of issues remain unclear as of this date, however, the cities of Rockford, Loves Park and Machesney Park all agree that one regional transportation provider will improve the overall efficiencies and eliminate duplication of expenses. It is felt that with proper planning, the transportation system in the metropolitan area can be improved and seamless. RMTD welcomes the opportunity and looks forward to maximizing the efficiencies of a regional transit system.

The Rockford Mass Transit District now requests that RATS approve the above desires and terminate any past agreements as developed by RATS between the Rockford Mass Transit District and the Loves Park Transit System, which allocates any of the transit appropriations, no later than the date in which the Loves Park transit System ceases to operate. Transit funding for the metropolitan area should be used at the sole discretion of the Rockford Mass Transit District and as approved by the Rockford Area Transportation Study.

I will not be able to attend the RATS Technical Committee meeting on Thursday because I will be in Springfield. I will have Lisa Brown who is the District's Marketing and Public Relations Specialist attend the meeting. She will be able to answer many questions and relay to me any outstanding issues presented by the Committee. If you any questions prior to the meeting, please give Lisa a call at 961-2226.

Sincerely, Richard W. McVinnie , Executive Director

LPTS and the decision to dismantle LPTS will be carried out whether RMTD agrees to provide service or not. However, it is the goal of both RMTD and Loves Park to negotiate a mutually acceptable service agreement and

that there be no disruption of transit service in the Loves Park area.

Joe Vanderwerff noted two requests in the memorandum: First, that RATS develop a Mass Transportation Subcommittee to “oversee the operation of any negotiated public transportation services for all areas subsidizing RMTD for services.” Second, that Loves Park be allowed to retain both of its seats on the Technical Committee.

Mr. Petrotte said that a standing subcommittee has long existed that aided the transit operators in making regionally-significant transit decisions – the Transit TIP Subcommittee. That subcommittee was composed of representatives from Loves Park, Machesney Park, Winnebago County and Rockford Planning agencies plus the transit operators themselves. The TIP Subcommittee has not met in recent years because of relationship between RMTD and LPTS has been more harmonious than it was in the past.

After a discussion, a motion was made by David Noel to reactivate the TIP Subcommittee, change its name to the Mass Transportation Subcommittee and redefine its role to one of assisting RMTD and other public transit providers (such as the Boone County Council of Ageing, BCCA) in making regionally-significant transit decisions (TIP and otherwise) in the area. Also, the Subcommittee would be available, if requested, to assist LPTS and/or RMTD in making the transition described above. The composition of the Subcommittee would again include the planners from Rockford, Loves Park, Machesney Park and Winnebago County Planning, RATS staff, RMTD staff, BCCA staff and the IDOT Bureau of Urban Program Planning. The motion was seconded by Michael Zonsius. Joe Vanderwerff asked if the Technical Committee had the authority to establish such a Subcommittee on its own or if Policy Committee authorization. Mr. Petrotte said the RATS Cooperative Agreement empowers the Technical Committee to establish such a committee on its own or if it needed Policy Committee authorization. Mr. Petrotte said the Cooperative Agreement empowers the Technical Committee to establish subcommittees at its own discretion but the Policy Committee should be informed. The motion was approved unanimously.

The question of what official actions need to be taken by RATS to permit the dissolution of LPTS was discussed. Mr. Petrotte said he didn't think there was any immediate action required of RATS. The FY 2001 TIP and the Long-Range Plan Update will be written to reflect the changes and that should be sufficient to address future grant requests by RMTD.

7.2. WinGIS: Russ Petrotte reported that all jurisdictions have adopted a resolution of intent to adopt the WinGIS Cooperative Agreement. Policy Committee voting and funding schedules/mechanisms are issues that still need some work. The contract for the Pilot Study was awarded

Mr. Petrotte asked to be notified of pending future discussions with IDOT Division of Public Transportation and with the Federal Transit Administration regarding disposition and reassignment of assets. Lisa Brown said that RMTD does not have a use for the LPTS transit facility but will be requesting transfer of much of the rolling stock and other equipment.

With regard to the Loves Park request to retain the LPTS seat on the Technical Committee, Mr. Vanderwerff said this may be more of a policy issue than a technical issue and suggested the matter be tabled for now. The Committee concurred.

6. RAT/SLAT STUDY: Gary McIntyre distributed copies of a draft of the “Memorandum of Agreement Between the Rockford Area Transportation Study and the State Line Area Transportation Study.” This agreement formalizes the spirit and extent of cooperation between RATS and SLATS in the conduct of the currently ongoing RAT/SLAT Traffic Simulation Modeling Study. Originally, the RAT/SLAT Study Steering Committee had intended that this agreement be put in place before the Study actually commenced. However, in the midst of contract negotiations and the commencement of the study itself, the agreement was briefly forgotten. Mr. McIntyre has resurrected it and is asking that RATS and SLATS adopt it for the purpose of establishing a sound basis for continued cooperation and/or conflict resolution as the study continues.

Mr. McIntyre asked that the Committee review the Agreement and consider it for adoption at their next meeting.

Mr. McIntyre said the Study itself is progressing as expected. Traffic analysis zones have been plotted for the entire study area and employment information is being geographically located within this zone structure. It has not yet been determined who will be responsible for the task of suballocating employment (existing and forecasted) into the zones in Boone County.

7.1. SPRINGFIELD / HARRISON EXTENSION PROJECT: Joe Vanderwerff stated that property acquisitions for the project are still underway. In response to recent concerns a second archeological study will be conducted on one large property. He said the first phase of construction still has an achievable target letting of June of this year.

to MRT, Inc., a local firm and work is now commencing. The RFP for Ground Control is under review and is expected to be completed next week.

8. COMMUNICATIONS: None.

9. OTHER BUSINESS: Gary McIntyre called the Committee attention to the STP-U candidate project recently submitted by the Winnebago County Highway Department. The County and Love Park propose intersection geometrics improvements and related improvements to mitigate congestion at the Alpine/Forest Hill/Alpine Road intersection. The STP-U Subcommittee will be convened in the near future to review this proposal.

Jim Ryan expressed concerns about the truck routings that are impacting the local road system in the area. Oversized vehicles traveling to or from Wisconsin on I-39 and I-90 are forced onto local roads because of the inadequate size of Illinois State Toll Highway Authority toll booths. He asked when the Truck Route subcommittee was going to complete their work and recommendations in this regard. Bob Soltau suggested that, when the recommendations are complete, we schedule a meeting with the Toll Highway Commission, perhaps asking them to come out to Rockford for a RATS meeting, where we could discuss the problem with them.

Bob Soltau and Russ Petrotte briefly discussed The Long-Range Plan update that is underway and due by July 27th. Comments on the current plan and proposed changes to it are welcome.

Mr. Petrotte reminded that Committee members who receive RATS funding that their 3rd Quarter reports are due.

10. ADJOURNMENT: With no further business to conduct, Mary Allen Verdun moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Steve Thompson and approved unanimously at 11:25 AM.