

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

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

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## **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

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ROCKFORD MASS TRANSIT / WINNEBAGO COUNTY PUBLIC  
WORKS  
LOVES PARK TRANSIT / ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION*

## **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**February 23, 1995**

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 23, 1995, TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE LOVES PARK CITY HALL.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Wayne Dust, Rockford Community Development Dept.; Dan Jacobson, Loves Park Planning; Steve Ernst, Rockford Public Works Dept.; Dennis Hendricks, Rockford Mass Transit District; Lori Tharp, Machesney Park Planning Dept. (left at 11:40 a.m.); Ron Heinen, Winnebago County Public Works Dept.; Daniel Salameda, Loves Park Transit; Mary Allen Verdun, IDOT-Dixon; David Noel, Winnebago County Planning (arrived at 10:10 a.m.). Non-voting members present: Richard Lundin, Boone County Highway Dept.; David Sliktas, Belvidere/Boone Regional Planning Commission.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Greater Rockford Airport Authority; Winnebago County Paratransit System, Village of Cherry Valley.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steve Baker, IDOT-Springfield; Russ Petrotte, RATS; Bill Rogers and Bob Kleckner, Rogers-Kleckner, Ltd.; Mike Bacidore, Belvidere Daily Republic; Hong Liu, Rockford Public Works Dept.; Lewis Moon, Cottonwood Airport; Mike Weber, Rock River

Water Reclamation District; Bev Moore, Rails and Trails; Bob Moore, Bob's Bike Shop; A. Marie Holms, City of Loves Park; and the following members of the Blackhawk Bicycle Club: Louise Castelli, Virgil Castelli, Eugene Bishop, Phyllis Bishop and Bill Pilot.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** At 10:04 a.m., Wayne Dust called the meeting to order. Daniel Salameda moved to approve the minutes of the January 19, 1995, meeting of the RATS Technical Committee. The motion was seconded by Mary Allen Verdun and approved unanimously (8-0).

**2. AGENCY REPORTS:** Members present reported on the status of the major projects within their jurisdictions. This information is contained in the attached TIP Progress Report sheets. Dennis Hendricks reported that RMTD is anticipating the delivery of 13 new buses sometime in April.

**3. LRP - SPRING CREEK ROAD EXTENSION:** The Committee briefly discussed the proposed Spring Creek Road extension (eastward to Bell School Road) and the issues discussed on this subject at the last Policy Committee meeting. The Committee reiterated its support of this extension and proposed RATS Resolution 94-16

which amends the Long-Range Plan (LRP) to add this extension.

**4. RATS RESOLUTION 95-3:** Gary McIntyre gave a brief explanation of RATS Resolution 95-3. This proposed resolution amends the FY95 TIP to change the funding source for the removal and replacement of the bridge deck on the 11th Street bridge over Keith Creek. Previously, the project was slated to be funded with local and MFT funds only. If this amendment is approved, \$320,000 of federal BRRP funds will be used. The total cost of the project will remain the same (\$440,000). David Noel moved to recommend Policy Committee approval of the motion. The motion was seconded by Steve Ernst and approved unanimously (9-0).

**5. RATS REGIONAL BIKEWAY PLAN:** Gary McIntyre led a discussion on recent developments related to the RATS Bikeway Plan in the State Street corridor between Bell School Road and Lyford Road. The discussion was precipitated by a recent ROW transfer/sale to a local developer that raised concern that sufficient ROW would remain for the proposed bikeway. After taking a closer look at the situation, Mr. McIntyre said the ROW transfer would not prohibit the bikeway from being located on the south side of State Street. Sufficient ROW would still be available. He clarified that the Plan, as originally presented and adopted, showed the preferred location on the south side but the north side could also be acceptable.

**6. PARATRANSIT COORDINATOR:** Russ Petrotte distributed a letter from Rick McVinnie requesting that the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) and/or the Loves Park Transit System (LPTS) be declared the "Paratransit Coordinator(s)" for the Rockford Urban Area. He also distributed copies of an excerpt from IDOT's Section 16 application packet that explains the role and responsibilities of the Paratransit Coordinator. Mr. Petrotte said this request is the result of three factors: (1) the increased role of RMTD and LPTS in providing paratransit service

as now required by the ADA, (2) a change in the law related to Section 16 funds that now allows public transit operators such as RMTD and LPTS to apply for Section 16 funds, and (3) the recent financial problems of the Winnebago County Paratransit System. He said the role and title of "Paratransit Coordinator" was just recently defined by IDOT in response to changes in the law that were part of the ISTEA. RATS has not designated an official Paratransit Coordinator. The defacto coordinator is WCPS because of RATS plans pertaining to paratransit adopted back in the late 1970s and RATS procedures since then. Now, with the changes in law and responsibilities, he recommended that RATS concur with Mr. McVinnie's request.

Mr. Salameda spoke in favor of the request and emphasized the paratransit responsibilities and obligations the fixed-route providers now have. He asked that RMTD and LPTS be declared joint Paratransit Coordinators for the Urban Area. Mr. Salameda moved that the Technical Committee make this recommendation and that staff be directed to prepare a resolution to this effect for Policy Committee action. The motion was seconded by Mary Allen Verdun. After a brief discussion, it was approved unanimously (9-0).

**7. LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN:** Mr. McIntyre distributed copies of the revised functionally classified existing and planned roadway networks. He explained the major changes in these maps are in the Boone County area. RATS staff met with Boone County officials to determine these proposed changes. He said staff is now working on the financial plan aspects. The costs of the changes and improvements shown on the long-range maps are being computed. In accordance with federal guidelines, we will compare these costs with projections we are making of our financial resources. Mr. Petrotte distributed several tables that list the projects and financial resources programmed

over the last seven years. This information has been used to make rough projections of the financial resources we will have available over the next 20 years. He said staff will compare the financial projections with the proposed projects and make a list of projects that are financially feasible in the next 20 years. Other projects may

**8. THE UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM FOR FY96:**

Mr. Petrotte said a draft of the FY96 UWP is due on March 15th. He asked Technical Committee members to put some thought into what should be included. He said he would either call a special meeting or call and talk with members individually about this. IDOT has allocated the same FHWA PL (\$206,410) and Section 8 (\$67,000) planning amounts to RATS as allocated last year. He said the areas of work emphasis he foresees are: (1) continued refinements to the Long-Range Plan, (2) incorporating the finding of the Woodruff/Wallenberg Study into the LRP, (3) continued land-use and development planning in the various jurisdictions, and (4) continued study of the paratransit issues facing the community. He suggested suballocations of funds among the various RATS participants similar to those last year. Staff will ask Policy Committee approval to submit a draft program to IDOT by the March 15th deadline. Further deliberations on the program will be possible through April and May.

**9. RATS TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM:**

Mr. Petrotte and Mr. McIntyre reminded the members the FY96 TIP development is now underway. They asked the members to begin assembling their project proposals and submit this information to staff. We would like to have a draft TIP available in April or May and an adopted TIP by June or, at latest, July.

**10. WOODRUFF/WALLENBERG**

**EXPRESSWAY:** Steve Ernst reported that a presentation on the Woodruff/Wallenberg Study is scheduled for the March 30th Policy Committee meeting. There are some meeting conflicts on

continue to be proposed but on a "beyond 20 years" basis. Mr. Petrotte said staff is aiming to have this information available for public comment by the end of March. We are still hoping to present a final LRP for adoption at the April meetings.

this date and staff is considering rescheduling. He said he would distribute drafts of the study as soon as possible.

**11. HARRISON AVENUE EXTENSION:**

Mr. McIntyre reported that the request for STP-Urban funds for ROW acquisition is still on the table. There was a lengthy discussion on various aspects of this request. Mr. Heinen reiterated the County's concerns over the extraordinary ROW expenses of this project. Mr. Petrotte said he had heard rumors that the City of Rockford and Winnebago County were willing to compromise on this request. If the County was willing to accept less than the full 80 percent share with federal funds, the City would support the request.

Mr. Dust and other members of the Committee said that determining a precise share proportion was more of a policy matter than a technical one.

After further discussion, Ron Heinen moved that the Technical Committee recommend an exception be made to the RATS policy of not spending STP-Urban funds on ROW needs, but that the exact share of these costs be left to the Policy Committee. This exception is based on the high ROW costs associated with this project and the inability (i.e., current funding constraints) of the County to expedite the ROW acquisition and construction in the desired time frame without financial assistance. He asked that staff be authorized to prepare a proposed Policy Committee resolution to this effect. The motion was seconded by David Noel. After further brief discussion, it was approved unanimously (9-0).

**12. REQUEST FOR BOONE/BELVIDERE VOTING MEMBERSHIP:**

The February 10, 1995, letter addressed to RATS Chairman

Sinkiwic from Boone County Board Chairman Donald Meier, was distributed by Gary McIntyre. The letter requests that Boone County be added as a voting member to the RATS Policy Committee, and that the Boone County Engineer and the Belvidere/Boone County Director of Planning be added as voting members to the Technical Committee. Dave Sliktas noted that RATS will be receiving a similar letter from the City of Belvidere.

Mr. Petrotte distributed the ISTE A guidelines pertaining to MPO structure and designation. He said RATS identified the metropolitan planning area which is an ISTE A requirement. In the planning regulation, 75% of the existing population in the metropolitan area must concur with any changes in the MPO. This is one way to ensure the central city maintains its involvement with the MPO.

Steve Ernst said RATS and the MPO planning Gary McIntyre said the ISTE A planning guidelines state that, if the existing urban area views that growth is going to continue within an area outside of the existing urban area, and if that area will impact the existing urban area, then that area should be considered in the development of the transportation plans for the 20-year planning horizon.

Mr. McIntyre said the action that was taken at the Policy Committee regarding the metropolitan planning area was primarily for forecasting purposes. He said another issue is the federal funding aspects of increasing the RATS voting structure into Boone County and Belvidere and what impact this would have on federal transportation funds that currently come to those agencies. Mr. Lundin said the City of Belvidere is very concerned about losing STP funds they presently receive from IDOT. Steve Baker said he would look into this issue. Wayne Dust said the issue of how and by whom the federal transportation funds are spent in the area is one of the primary issues the Policy Committee needs

process is an urban planning process. At the policy level, it appears Boone County desires to remain essentially rural. He said the legislation from the elected officials in Belvidere and Boone County are not in line with urban concerns.

David Sliktas noted the two local governments have said the plans in Boone County and Belvidere may not match what Rockford views as urban development standards. He said they are willing to talk about those plans and development concerns and want to participate in RATS. Rich Lundin asked about the Boone County development standards and what influence RATS would have over those standards. Wayne Dust said RATS' primary responsibility is to distribute the federal transportation funds that come to the Rockford Urban Area. Rich Lundin asked, for example, about any plans for bicycle facilities and roadways that RATS might adopt for Boone County. He and the Boone County Board feel they should be involved in that planning process. to know before making a decision.

Regarding Policy Committee membership, Mr. McIntyre said the criteria of the existing Cooperative Agreement has a numerical threshold for membership. He is not sure if Boone County and/or the City of Belvidere qualify.

Mr. Dust said the RATS Cooperative Agreements were adopted at a time when there was only an urban area, not an urban area and a metropolitan area. Mr. Dust said this should be laid over so that the Committee can obtain more information.

Russ Petrotte said this issue should be divided into two separate issues: (1) Technical Committee membership, and (2) Policy Committee membership. He said it took Machesney Park five years to get on the Policy Committee after they were put on the Technical Committee. A major concern is retaining a proper balance of power with regard to the central city, Rockford. Planning commissions are notorious

for planning in the suburban areas and ignoring the older parts of the central city. By separating the issues, the debate on the Technical Committee will probably occur a little bit faster than the discussion for Policy Committee membership.

Mr. Lundin said the feeling of Boone County is to discuss the two issues separately. Boone County officials believe it is time to start discussions on this issue and a decision should not be rushed. He said the financial questions that have been raised today should be addressed before any action is taken on their request.

Mr. Petrotte said he believes the density patterns that are currently being developed in western Boone County are too low and that land is being lost at too high a rate.

Mr. Sliktas said Boone County feels these issues should have been discussed in meetings between the two areas instead of using the media to quarrel with each other over the past four or five years. He felt the City of Rockford has been planning to come into the Boone County area and Boone County officials believe it would have been Ron Heinen said RATS is driven by ISTEIA regulations to include this area in the planning process. To include those areas in the planning process, but not to be included in the voting process directly, is legislation without representation. Mr. Noel concurred, but stressed the need for more information before proceeding. Mr. Heinen say he would like to delay the question on Policy Committee membership until more information is known about funding, eligibility, expenditure of funds, and the affect of funds on those agencies requesting membership. Mr. Heinen said he would like to separate the two issues: (1) Technical Committee membership, and (2) Policy Committee membership.

Mr. Noel said he wanted to separate the issues and withdrew his motion. Ms. Verdun withdrew

better to have face-to-face discussions.

Mr. Sliktas asked if RATS has the authority to impose land use controls over other areas? Mr. Petrotte said no, and Mr. Sliktas said this has been the tone of the discussions so far at this meeting. David Noel said the population density is the primary factor in determining whether or not an area is going to be urban.

Mr. Dust again suggested this item be laid over. Mr. Noel made a motion to lay this item over until further information is obtained. Mary Allen Verdun seconded the motion. Mr. Petrotte said RATS is developing its Long-Range Plan (LRP) which includes portions of Boone County and all of the City of Belvidere. He expressed his opinion that RATS should have representation from these two areas if they are to be included in the LRP. If they are not, then RATS should reconsider the metropolitan planning area and not include those areas in Boone County and the City of Belvidere.

her second. Mr. Noel then made a motion to separate the issues of (1) Technical Committee membership, and (2) Policy Committee membership requested by Boone County. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Mr. Heinen made a motion to have representatives from the Boone County Highway Department and the Boone County - Belvidere Planning Commission be included on the RATS Technical Committee as voting members. Mr. Salameda seconded the motion.

Mr. Dust said one of the functions of this Committee is to recommend project selections for the TIP and priorities for the use of the STP-Urban funds for the Rockford Urban Area. If these two agencies are not eligible for the use of these two funds, he believes there is a conflict

having these two agencies involve themselves on these matters where they are not being affected by these decisions. He said he would be voting no on this motion. Mr. Baker reiterated that he would investigate the funding issues.

Dan Jacobson moved to amend the motion to lay this item over until more information can be obtained. Steve Ernst then seconded the motion made by Mr. Jacobson. Mr. Jacobson said he believed the Technical Committee should wait to take a vote on this issue until all the facts are presented. Mr. Lundin concurred with this request to delay action at this time until all information can be presented.

Mr. Heinen withdrew his motion. Mr. Salameda did not withdraw his second. He said there is enough information to support the request and the vote should be taken. Mr. Dust said the original motion was still on the floor. By voice vote, the motion to add members to the Technical Committee failed by a 2-6 vote (Mr. Heinen and Mr. Salameda voted in favor). Mr. Jacobson stated that further information is still needed and asked that this be reported on again at the next meeting.

**13: ADJOURNMENT:** With no further business to conduct, Steve Ernst moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Dan Jacobson, and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.

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