

RATS

**Rockford Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization**
City of Rockford, Public Works Department
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104

POLICY COMMITTEE

*Mayor Douglas P. Scott, 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 Susan L. Anderson, Boone County
Deputy Director Gregory L. Mounts, Illinois Department of
Transportation, Region 2*

RATS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES February 17, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT: Paula Hughes, RMTD; Rick Mohaupt, Winnebago County Highway Department; Steve Thompson, City of Loves Park Public Works Department; Kris Tobin, IDOT-District 2; Adam Tegen, Belvidere – Boone County Planning Department; Katie Coble, City of Rockford Community Development Department; Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway Department; Craig Lawler, City of Belvidere Public Works Department; Chad Atkinson, Village of Machesney Park; David Noel, Village of Roscoe; Judy Barnard, Winnebago County Planning and Economic Development Department; Mark Painter, Village of Winnebago; Nathan Bruck, City of Loves Park Community Development; and Steve Ernst, City of Rockford Public Works Department.

MEMBERS MISSING: Village of Cherry Valley and Greater Rockford Airport Authority.

OTHERS PRESENT: Dennis Hendricks, RMTD; Bunny Anderson, Illinois State Toll Highway Authority; Ken Terrinoni, Boone County; Dan Jacobson, City of Loves Park; Charlie Smith, Hanson Engineering; Shawn Goetz, Hanson Engineering; Dina Richter, Citizen; Pat Nelson, League of Women Voters; Tommy Unzicker, Citizen; John Donovan, FHWA-IL Division; Bob Soltau, SLATS; Sharon Durbin, IDOT-Springfield; Dan Ericson, Ericson Construction; and Gary McIntyre, City of Rockford and RATS staff.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 14 2004, RATS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

With a quorum present, Chairman Steve Ernst called the meeting to order at 10:07 A.M.

David Noel made a motion to approve the RATS Technical Committee meeting minutes of November 14, 2004. The motion was seconded by Rich Lundin and approved unanimously without any changes or corrections.

2. AGENCY REPORTS

All agencies present gave a report on their projects that are currently underway.

RMTD announce plans for a new 30-day pass, which will essentially replace its current monthly pass. This new 30-day pass will be good from the date of the month that the pass is issued until that date the following month. Also, RMTD is in the early evaluation stages of reviewing its fare policy. If their fares are adjusted, a Public Informational Open House will be held at the proper time.

The City of Rockford new web site, www.ci.rockford.il.us (also www.cityofrockford.net), is working. The City's new 2020 Land Use Plan is available on this web site. Also, RATS has a home page available through the City's web site. Most (if not all) RATS documents, meeting agendas and future meeting schedules will be posted on the City's web site.

The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority said the Board adopted its new Long Range Plan last fall. There are several projects in the Rockford area (on the N.W. Tollway, I-90/39) that will be upgraded as a result of this plan.

The Village of Roscoe announced that the IEPA has established a new Facilities Planning Area for northeast Winnebago County. Also, the U.S. Census Bureau will be doing a special census this year for the Village. IDOT-Division of Urban Program Planning announced that its 2006 Fall Planning Conference will be held on October 13th and 14th in Chicago. IDOT is looking for agenda suggestions.

The next SLATS meeting is scheduled for March 14th.

3. RATS 2035 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRP) UPDATE

Steve Ernst said this update is currently underway. Russ Petrotte has completed some of the mapping. He said the study is about 40% completed and still within the projected budget. Mr. Ernst distributed a budget update status report prepared by T Y Lin.

Gary McIntyre said that because of other RATS issues and work tasks, the 2035 land use projections are behind schedule. Therefore, the modeling work is not progressing as originally scheduled. Also, the economic and freight sections of this plan update are lagging behind.

Mr. McIntyre did distribute a draft section of the report on the Bicycle / Pedestrian Component prepared by TY Lin. He also handed-out a list of "Recommendations for RATS Long Range Transportation Plan" from Ed Barsotti, from the League of Illinois Bicyclists. He said that a citizens committee has met twice on this element of the RATS 2035 LRP. He said the primary issue that arose from these meetings is the lack of a connected bike/ped system in the RATS urban area. Even though there are several path facilities in the area, most of them are not connected. To address this issue, most of the projects the citizen's committee selected were directed toward this issue of connecting the existing paths together, by either a system of on-street facilities or by construction of more paths.

Mr. Ernst suggested that members of this Committee should forward this issue regarding the Bike/Ped element to their Policy Committee members for their information. Future recommendations could require changes to the RATS LRP.

Mr. Ernst also stated that an on-line survey of transportation needs and attitudes might be still done. Since the City's new web site is now active, this might be a way of getting input from the citizens.

4. RATS FY-2006 UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM (UWP)

Mr. Ernst said at the March 17, 2005, RATS Technical meeting, a draft of the FY-2006 will be distributed. Since pass through FHWA-PL funds were kept this year for the RATS LRP update, those funds should be dispersed again to those agencies that received those funds in FY-2004. Some of the special planning projects that might be funded are:

- a. follow-up work on Winnebago County's Springfield Avenue corridor study,
- b. technical assistance to review the possible transit service to the Roscoe-Rockton-South Beloit area,
- c. reviewing and updating the City of Rockford Land Use and Subdivision ordinances,
- d. upgrade of T-MODEL 2 computer transportation software to new software,
- e. and other possible new planning initiatives.

Mr. McIntyre said that RATS does not anticipate using any of the outstanding planning funds that might have been accumulated over the past several years.

Mr. Ernst said Russ's position is now being advertising for filling.

5. STATEWIDE I.T.S. ARCHITECTURE

Mr. Ernst said this project is progressing and the Statewide committees will be meeting on this issue in March 2005. The Regional ITS Architecture will be discussed and voted on at the next RATS Technical Committee. The deadline for this plan to be submitted to FHWA is April 8th.

Mr. Ernst also said that a new fiber-optic corridor is being explored using the I-39 right-of-way between Rochelle and Rockford. This fiber optic connection could complete the last leg of the "technology triangle", which includes I-90, I-88 and I-39.

6. PROGRESS REPORTS ON:

6.1 Winnebago County Smart Growth Study

Judy Barnard said a series of meetings has been scheduled for March 10th, 11th and 16th by the consultants for this study. The information that will be presented at each of these meetings will be similar, but some detail information will be discussed, depending on the topic for that particular meeting.

For another part of this study, two selected areas in the County will be reviewed by using conservation design land use standards and principles. After this review, material will be prepared showing how these two different areas could be developed by applying these different land use principles.

6.2 Commuter Rail Feasibility Study

Mr. Ernst said that City staff, on behalf of NICRI, has prepared the necessary paper work to apply for the next stage for this study, which is the preparation of the Alternatives Analysis. This is an analysis that will lead into an Environmental Impact Statement.

6.3 Springfield Corridor Planning Study

Judy Barnard said the 1st draft of this study has been submitted by the consultant to the County for their initial review.

6.4 RMTD East Side Transfer Center

RMTD project manager will be coming to the next meeting to discuss this issue.

6.5 IL 173 Corridor Planning Study

Chad Atkinson reported that this study is making progress.

6.6 Boone and Winnebago County Regional Greenway Plan

Mr. McIntyre said that RATS is participating in the preparation of this plan again. The original Greenway Plan was prepared seven years ago. This plan is being prepared in ARC-View software, with approximately 60 to 70 informational layers being generated. Some of the major changes being made by this update is the displaying of the adjacent counties and their Greenway connections to the Boone and Winnebago County. Another change that is being made is a cleaner distinction between urban and rural areas. Mr. McIntyre explained the differences between the RATS Bike/Ped element of the LRP and the pathway information that will be included in the Greenway Plan. Essentially, only off-street (Class 1) bike/ped facilities will be shown on the Greenway Plan. The RATS Bike/Ped element of the LRP might display some on-street facilities.

7. COMMUNICATIONS

Ken Terrinoni said the agreement between Boone County, the City of Belvidere, RMTD and RATS pertaining to the RATS urban area needs to be reviewed and updated. Boone County is the recipient of FTA 5311 funds, which funds part of the operations of the transit system provided by the Boone County Council of Aging. This agreement is only a one-year agreement. As a result of comments received from FTA and IDOT, an additional four-year extension to this agreement needs to be prepared.

Dina Richter, a RMTD bus rider, expressed her concern regarding the RMTD's transfer policy and some of the abuses that are occurring as a result of the implementation of the new routes. Paula Hughes said that RMTD is studying this issue, as indicated in her report under item number 2. Dennis Hendricks and Ms. Hughes both said that the RMTD Board has been informed of this issue. Following a brief discussion, it was reinstated that before any fare changes are implemented, a public hearing will be held.

Mr. Ernst said that IDOT's new Travel Statistics are available on their web site, www.dot.state.il.us

Mr. Ernst said that several FHWA and FTA documents have also been received on transit, H.O.V. lanes and freight management.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. McIntyre said that there will be an FY-2005 TIP amendment at their next meeting. Also, Ms. Hughes discussed the issue of scheduling and canceling RATS Tech and Policy Committee meetings. Following a brief discussion, it was suggested that the RATS web site, through the City of Rockford web site, should be used as a means of communicating meeting schedules. Also, RATS staff will strive to have better communications with RMTD on this issue.

Mr. Ernst said that he is still waiting for additional information from IDOT regarding a statewide initiative to spend down all of the locally-derived Federal programs including STP, HBRRP and HES. IDOT first presented this issue to the MPOs Study Directors in December 2004. At that meeting the discussion centered on spending down the balances during fiscal years 2006 to 2008. The use of these funds would depend on the status of projects and the readiness of projects. IDOT also presented this information to the County Engineers and IDOT Local Roads staff.

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:53 A.M., with no further business to conduct, Mr. Lundin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mohaupt and was approved unanimously.