



**Rockford Area Transportation Study  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

## **Meeting Minutes – RATS Technical Committee**

**Meeting Date: January, 18 2001 – Winnebago County Highway Department**

**POLICY COMMITTEE**  
Mayor Charles E. Box, City of Rockford  
Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park  
Board Chairman Kristine Cohn, Winnebago County  
President Stephen Kuhn, Village of Machesney Park  
District Engineer Roger E. Rocke, Illinois Department  
of Transportation, District 2

**Members Present:** Bob Martin, Loves Park Transit/Public Works; Steve Thompson, Loves Park Planning; Mary Allen Verdun, IDOT District 2; Steve Ernst, Rockford Public Works Department; Michael Zonsius, Greater Rockford Airport; Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway; David Noel, Winnebago County Planning; and arriving approximately an hour after the start of the meeting, Joe Vanderwerff, Winnebago County Highway Department; Denny Hendricks, Rockford Mass Transit District; Chad Atkinson, Village of Machesney Park.

**Others Present:** Boyd Lawrence, State Line Area Transportation Study; Jim Ryan, Rockford Public Works; Bob Soltau, Illinois Department of Transportation (Springfield); Gary McIntyre, RATS staff; Russ Petrotte, RATS staff; Carlos Molina, Winnebago County Highway Department; Lew Moon, Cottonwood Airport; Bill Hoyt, William Charles, Ltd.

**1. CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** At 10:05 A.M. and with a quorum present, Steve Ernst called the meeting to order. Rich Lundin moved to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2000 RATS Technical Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by David Noel and approved unanimously without further discussion.

**2. AGENCY REPORTS:** Agencies present reported on the progress of their ongoing highway projects. An updated TIP Status Report listing highway improvement projects was presented, discussed and updated at the meeting. An updated report will be mailed, with these minutes, to all on the RATS mailing list.

Bob Soltau reported that the funding marks have been issued for IDOT for transportation planning purposes in FY 2002 (July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2002). He said the Rockford Metro Area has been allocated \$282,442 in PL funds and \$84,007 in Section 5303 (formerly Section 8) funds. In addition, Mr. Soltau said IDOT is looking favorably at an additional award of funds to assist in the WinGIS effort. He suggested the area consider applying for the accumulated unexpended

balance of PL funds (approximately \$175,000) – these funds would have to be expended in the FY 2002 time frame. He said the Department might also consider an additional award of \$75,000 in SPR funds, if applied for with sufficient justification. This latter amount could be used over a longer time period. In response to a question, he said the application for these additional funds should be part of the proposed FY 2002 UWP.

Mr. Soltau also noted that an Illinois Tomorrow grant was awarded to Winnebago County in the amount of \$64,000. These funds will be matched at the 10% level by the State (\$8,000) and at the 10% level by the County (\$8,000) for a grand total for the effort of \$80,000. The funds will be used for the proposed “Winnebago County Smart Growth Initiative.” The purpose of this project is to create a better understanding of cost-effective planning incorporating infrastructure, transportation and land use. It includes the education of elected officials and the public at large. The two goals of the project are (1) to prepare a document that summarizes cost-effective planning options which can be used as a reference by future elected and appointed officials and the public at large; and (2) to build a consensus toward which projects can be identified for future funding requests. The ultimate goal is for the county to be part of area planning in the long term, and to ensure that smart growth is the guiding principle in that process.

Mr. Soltau stated that there are training sessions related to the use of the Illinois Tomorrow (SPR) funds and that he would like the RATS MPO staff to attend one of these training sessions, along with appropriate representatives from the County. Two of the sessions are in Chicago (1/31/01, 1 PM – 3 PM and 2/1/01, 10 AM – Noon); one session is in Peoria (2/7/01, 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM); and one session is in Collinsville (2/8/01, 10AM – Noon). Mr. Vanderwerff, Mr. McIntyre and Mr. Petrotte said they would try to coordinate their schedules but would attend at least one of the sessions.

**3. RATS FY 2001 TIP AMENDMENTS:** Russ Petrotte called the Committee's attention to the draft of Resolution 2001 that was included in the last mailing. This proposed resolution and the attached addendum change the project implementation priorities for the capital transit improvement projects proposed by RMTD in FY 2001– 2003. He said he was uncertain if a TIP amendment was absolutely necessary because no new projects are being added, no projects are being deleted and the total funding for the projects is not changing. However, eight projects that were originally going to be funded with Federal and State capital funds in FY 2001 are now going to be funded with RMTD operating funds. Another 15 projects that were going to be funded with Federal and State capital funds in FY 2001 have been moved to 2002.

And, one project was moved from 2001 to 2003. Addendum A lists and describes each of the projects. Mr. Petrotte said the reason for the change was insufficient State funding in FY 2001. He said the changes have been recommended by RMTD and staff concurs.

**Joe Vanderwerff moved to recommend Policy Committee approval of Resolution 2001-1. The motion was seconded by David Noel. Hearing no objections, the motion was approved unanimously.**

Gary McIntyre called attention to the draft of Resolution 2001-2, also included in the last mailing. He said the proposed resolution and addendum adds the latest award of STP-Enhancement funds to the FY 2001 TIP. The STP-E award is for \$1,742,000 and will fund the Southeast Connection of the Perryville Path (i.e., along Perryville Road from Argus Drive to the Cherry Valley Path at Vandiver Road.) The project will involve the construction of a bikeway and pedestrian overpass and includes lighting, utility adjustments and both preliminary and construction engineering. Local match will be provided in the amount of \$436,000. Mr. McIntyre said this is likely to be the last award of enhancement funds we will receive until a new Federal transportation act is developed. IDOT's Enhancement funds from TEA-21 are nearly exhausted.

**David Noel moved to recommend Policy Committee approval of Resolution 2001-2. The motion was seconded by Mary Allen Verdun. Hearing no objections, the motion was approved unanimously.**

**4. PERRYVILLE ROAD EXTENSION:** Joe Vanderwerff gave a lengthy presentation on the proposed extension of Perryville Road. The County plans to extend Perryville Road from its current terminus at IL-173 (northwest corner of Rock Cut State Park) all the way to the IL-WI State Line. Vanderwerff stated that IDOT's and the County's analysis has determined that long-term development and traffic projections show a need for considerable increased traffic-carrying capacity in the corridor between IL-251 and I-90. Accommodating this traffic on IL-251 and or I-90 would require increasing the costs of construction, ROW and professional services were estimated for five alignment scenarios. The range in

number of lanes on both of these facilities to a minimum of six lanes each, and perhaps more in some stretches. Such modifications along IL-251 would be extremely difficult and expensive considering existing development already along much of that roadway. Intersection improvement needs would also be extensive and costly if IL-251 were significantly widened. I-90 presents a number of problems as well. I-90 is a high speed interstate that is already near capacity in this stretch. Even if widened, the prospect of mixing local short-trip traffic with the high speed regional and interstate traffic poses undesirable conflicts. The fact that I-90 is a toll facility with very limited access and few interchanges is also a potential conflict with local traffic movements. Therefore, the County is committed to the Perryville extension as the most cost-effective and efficient means to deal with the increasing demand.

From IL-173, the proposed Perryville alignment will veer northeasterly and will merge with the Mitchell Road corridor south of the Kieselburg Forest Preserve. Following the Mitchell Road corridor, the new road will proceed northward across McDonald and Belvidere Roads in an alignment that is largely accepted and uncomplicated. Similarly, the proposed alignment of the far north leg, north of Prairie Hill Road to the State Line, is uncomplicated and will largely coincide with existing Willow Brook Road. However, in between the Stone Bridge Nature Trail and Prairie Hill Road, a number of obstacles or concerns have been observed as the engineers have sought to fix an alignment. Most notable among these are the Kinnikinnick Valley Wetlands, in the vicinity of Burr Oak Road; Roscoe Middle School, at Elevator Road; nearby development and access points along Elevator Road in the vicinity of Stone Bridge Trail; and the Tollway Interchange at Rockton Road. The desire to avoid these obstacles or potential conflict zones has led the County to develop 5-6 alternative alignments. For the past month, the County has been conducting and/or attending meetings to publicly air the pros and cons of these alternatives.

Generally speaking, the alignments on new corridors, rather than existing roadbeds, have better access control potential because they do not have to accommodate existing access points. Some of the alignments have smaller right-of-way needs and/or require the taking of fewer homes. Some have been proposed because they have lesser impacts on flood plains and existing storm water drainage and detention situations. The more direct and shorter alignments are generally less costly but have other land use conflicts. Some of the alignments come close to Stone Bridge Trail – this is considered undesirable. One alignment comes uncomfortably close to Roscoe Middle School; and one comes into potential conflict with traffic movements on and off the Rockton/I-90 Interchange.

total cost is between 31.5 and 34 million dollars with ROW costs ranging between 2.3 and 4.3 million dollars. The

County believes strongly in the need for the facility and is setting an aggressive time schedule for construction. An "Open House Public Meeting" on the preliminary design of a selected alignment is being planned for sometime during this April 2001. The goal for completion of the Preliminary Engineering and ROW acquisition is early 2003. By the end of the construction season of 2004, the County hopes to have the segment between Elevator Road and the State Line completed. The goal for the segment between IL-173 and Belvidere Road is 2006; and the final segment, Belvidere to Elevator Roads is sought to be completed by mid-2007. Adherence to this schedule will depend largely on the County's ability to amass funding for the project. In that regard, the County is pursuing the project with adherence to all Federal standards so as not to preclude any future opportunities for Federal participation.

Jim Ryan stated concerns that the City would not want to see planned road improvements that deal with capacity issues in the more urbanized areas around Rockford and Loves Park be deferred or ignored because of the large capital expenditures proposed for the Perryville extension. Mr. Vanderwerff stated that the County is committed to funding capacity expansion projects in the Rockford area consistent with its 5-Year Plan. He noted the Perryville / Newburg Project as an example.

Bob Martin raised a concern that the Perryville extension could lead to a diversion of truck traffic onto Perryville rather than I-90. Mr. Vanderwerff stated that the County would continue to enforce its no-truck policy on the Perryville expansion. He noted that both the County and the area municipalities have had to deal with overweight / oversized vehicles due to the inability of I-90 to handle these vehicles because of toll booth limitations.

**5. RATS TRUCK ROUTE MAPS:** Steve Ernst directed the Committee's attention to the proposed RATS truck route maps. He explained that these maps display the preferred routing for truck traffic throughout the RATS Metro area. One map shows the existing routes; the other closes obvious gaps in the existing system and shows a future more complete system. He asked that the Committee members (1) review the maps for any errors or inconsistencies, and (2) make suggestions regarding what other kinds of information might be included on the version to be published so as to make the maps useful to the general and trucking public. Boyd Lawrence suggested that the major commercial and industrial areas be included on the maps so the maps would be more helpful to truckers who are unfamiliar with the Metro area. Joe Vanderwerff said he would like to have his staff review the maps and compare them with County ordinances and the County's posted roads. He asked Mr. Ernst provide him with copies of some of the City's ordinances that designate truck routes. Mr. Ernst urged the Committee members to conduct their review as quickly as possible.

**6. FY 2002 UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT:** Russ Petrotte asked the Committee members to give serious thought to next years planning needs and priorities. He said a draft of the Year 2002 UWP must be submitted to IDOT by the end of March. He said he would develop a draft based largely on the continuation of priorities established over the last couple of years unless he receives other advice and input from the Committee. He said RATS staff will continue to accomplish the main planning process tasks of TIP development and Long-Range Plan maintenance. Staff will continue efforts with the Boone-Winnebago County-Beloit modeling study. Staff will continue to participate in WinGIS development. City of Rockford Public Works staff will continue assembling data in their Pavement Management Program as well as other data collection efforts related to traffic management. He noted that the 2002 Work Program will include the proposed additional \$250,000 for WinGIS assistance, as mentioned by Mr. Soltau earlier. It will also include the Illinois Tomorrow grant work proposed by Winnebago County. He reiterated the need for the Committee members to consider their planning priorities and to contact him with their input as soon as possible.

**7.1 PROGRESS REPORT ON SPRINGFIELD / HARRISON:** Joe Vanderwerff reported that the construction work on the south section is progressing as expected and should be completed by next summer as scheduled. North of Cunningham, a property settlement agreement still needs to be reached on three properties and there are few more to close on. A May or June bid letting is anticipated. IDOT is still reviewing the plans.

**7.2 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE BOONE/WINNEBAGO/BELOIT MODELING STUDY:** Gary McIntyre said the consultant has completed a first draft of the network configuration and is in the process of refining the network parameters. Population and employment data has been developed for the Winnebago and Beloit parts. Work is progressing on the Boone County part. An extension of the IDOT grant contract is in progress.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS:** Gary McIntyre distributed preliminary statewide information received from the US Census Bureau. He also distributed an announcement from a citizen group called the **Campaign to Build Illinois Transit** announcing "The Rockford Area Community Transit Summit." The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 20, 2001 at 10:00 A.M. in the Rockford Public Library Auditorium (215 N. Wyman Street, Rockford). Public officials and interested citizens are invited.

**9. OTHER BUSINESS:** Steve Ernst reported that the field work for the WinGIS Ground Control Densification Project has been completed and the paper work has been submitted to the NGS for bluebooking. The contract for countywide digital aerial photography was awarded to Surdex, a St.Louis firm, at a contract price of slightly over \$1 million. They will do the photography next spring and develop the data,

including a street centerline file, over the next two years. A pilot project will precede the development of the data countywide.

**10. ADJOURNMENT:** With no further business to conduct, Joe Vanderwerff moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Rich Lundin and approved unanimously at 11:55 A.M..