



Rockford Area Transportation Study  
Metropolitan Planning Organization

## POLICY COMMITTEE

Mayor Douglas P. Scott, City of Rockford  
Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park  
Mayor Frederic C. Brereton, City of Belvidere  
District Engineer Gregory Mounts, IDOT, District 2  
Board Chairman Susan L. Anderson, Boone County  
President Linda M. Vaughn, Village of Machesney Park  
Board Chairman Scott Christiansen, Winnebago County

## Meeting Minutes RATS Technical Committee Loves Park City Hall – January 22, 2004

### Members Present:

Steve Ernst, Rockford Public Works;  
Rick Gualandi, IDOT-Dixon;  
Paula Hughes, Rockford Mass Transit District;  
Troy Krup, Belvidere/Boone Planning Dept.;  
Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway;  
Carlos Molina, Winnebago County Highway;  
David Noel, Loves Park Planning;  
Mark Painter, Village of Winnebago.

### Others Present:

Jason Dupruis, City of Beloit;  
Russ Petrotte, RATS staff;  
Bob Soltau, IDOT - Springfield;  
Diana Tweed, WisDOT-Madison;  
Representative from the media.

### Members Absent:

Belvidere Public Works Department;  
Greater Rockford Airport Authority;  
Loves Park Public Works;  
Machesney Park Planning;  
Rockford Community Development Department;  
Village of Cherry Valley;  
Village of Roscoe;  
Winnebago County Planning & Economic Development.

**1. CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** At 10:15 am, Steve Ernst called the meeting to order. Mr. Ernst explained that the gathering was one person short of a quorum and therefore the group could not make recommendations on behalf of the Technical Committee. However, he suggested proceeding with the meeting for the information of those in attendance.

Bob Soltau said that John Schwalbach, the IDOT Bureau Chief in charge of railroads, is willing to come to the next Technical Committee to give a report on the Chicago Region and Environmental Efficiency (CREATE) project. This project has been endorsed by a variety of Chicagoland civic, planning, and citizen groups. The project's goals are to: create/improve five

He asked those in attendance if they had any comments of the minutes of the November 20, 2003 meeting (included in the mailout). No comments were made. The minutes of the September 18, 2003 meeting are not yet available. Both minutes will be brought before the Technical Committee for action when there is better attendance.

**2. AGENCY REPORTS:** Several of the members present gave reports on the status of the improvement projects under their respective jurisdictions. The TIP Status Report will be updated to reflect these comments and redistributed with the next mailout. In addition, the following information is noteworthy.

Carlos Molina the County has recently awarded a contract to Hansen Engineering for the design of three bridges under County jurisdiction. He also said that the County anticipates a June bid letting on the Meridian Road resurfacing project (the stretch between IL-2 and Cunningham Road).

Paula Hughes discussed recent progress on the proposed route and schedule changes by the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD). She said they have recently finalized the proposed changes. She said most of the concepts proposed by the consultant were retained but the precise bus routing and scheduling had to be revised considerably. RMTD intends to implement the new route structure on March 1 and will spend all of February holding training sessions and meetings to educate the transit patrons on the intricacies of the new system. She distributed a meeting/training schedule (see the chart on the following page) and stated that additional training sessions can be arranged for any group of persons wanting to learn more about the system. Requests for training should be directed to Lisa Brown at 961-222 or [LBrown@RMTD.org](mailto:LBrown@RMTD.org).

rail corridors including one primarily for passenger trains; grade separate 25 crossings to eliminate commuter delays; build six flyovers to separate freight- and commuter-rail traffic; and remove a downtown rail corridor to foster commercial development. This is a multibillion dollar project that will not only benefit Chicago but all the surrounding communities,

including Rockford. That meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday March 18<sup>th</sup>. At that time, Mr. Schwalbach may also be able to give us an update on the Rochelle rail hub operation.

Mr. Soltau informed the Committee that the year's IDOT Fall Planning Conference has been scheduled for September 30<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>. It will be held at the Eagle Ridge Resort in the Galena area.

Mr. Soltau reminded the Committee that the last round of Illinois Tomorrow Program applications will be due soon. He encouraged participation in the Program.

Jason Duprius informed the Committee that he is now the acting Director of the State Line Area Transportation Study (SLATS). Bob Spenle has officially retired. All correspondence can be directed to Mr. Duprius at the same address and phone number that was used for Bob Spenle. Mr. Duprius also stated that the next SLATS meeting will be held on Monday February 2, 2004 at 1:00 pm in the Rotary River Center in Beloit.

**4. RATS WEB SITE:** Steve Ernst and Russ Petrotte led the Committee in a discussion of the proposed RATS WEB site. The site is currently set up as a sub-section of the City of Rockford WEB site. Staff developed it in-house during the month of December. Several days ago, the City enabled it with a portal in a secluded untitled location so that it could be viewed by RATS members and participants but would not be easily accessible to the general public.

The site is set up on a humorous note with a cartoon character, "Rocky the Rat" who encourages site visitors to browse the site, learn more about transportation planning and RATS, and consider various aspects related to traffic safety and traffic congestion mitigation. Staff admits that it may be somewhat unconventional compared to many government WEB sites but this was intentional to stimulate interest and awareness. Mr. Petrotte said he hoped that no one would take offense to the "Rocky the RAT" character but would regard him like the "Smokey the Bear" campaign that was used for years to make people aware of the forest fire dangers.

Most of the Committee members present said they had viewed the site but that their respective Policy Committee members had not. Mr. Ernst asked the Committee members to further review and evaluate the site and consult the Policy Committee members regarding its possible acceptance.

**5. UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM FOR FY 2005:** Steve Ernst reminded the members present that the time is upon us to develop the FY 2005 UWP. We need to get a draft developed in time for the March Technical and Policy Committee meetings. The usual deadline for approval of the final is the May meetings.

Bob Soltau said that IDOT is not certain at this time exactly how much funding will be available but suggested that the same marks that were issued for the FY 2004 Program be used to develop the draft of the FY 2005 Program.

Mr. Soltau also noted that the Long-Range Transportation Plan needs to be updated by July or August of 2005. Therefore that work will have to be an important component of the FY 2005 Program. He asked if there had been any further discussion or a decision made as to whether the Plan was going to be prepared in-house, as it was done in the past, or farmed to a consultant. Mr. Ernst said staff has had some discussion but no decision has been made.

Mr. Petrotte asked that the members present give this matter some thought and be prepared to come to the next meeting with ideas, suggestions or requests.

**6. RATS FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF HIGHWAYS/STREETS:** Steve Ernst explained that Gary McIntry has been on sick leave for the last week as has not been able

to complete the review. This will be place on next month's agenda.

**7. PROGRESS REPORTS**

**7.1 Winnebago County Smart Growth (Phase 2) –** No report.

<b>RMTD Route Change Training &amp; Implementation Schedule</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>
2/9/04	New Map & Schedule Books delivered to RMTD		
2/10/04	6:30 pm	Training	Growth Enterprises
2/11/04	9:00 am	Training	Growth Enterprises
2/12/04	6:00 am - 8:15 am	Meeting	Downtown Transfer Center
	1:45 pm - 3:45 pm		
	5:15 pm - 7:15 pm		
2/14/04	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Meeting	Midvale
2/18/04	11:30 am -	Meeting	Shelter Care Ministries
2/19/04	6:00 am - 8:15 am	Meeting	Downtown Transfer Center
	1:45 pm - 3:45 pm		
	5:15 pm - 7:15 pm		
2/23/04	1:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Meeting	Public Library Auditorium, downtown Rockford
2/24/04	9:00 am- Noon	Meeting	Public Library Auditorium, downtown Rockford
3/1/04	New Service Begins - Implement new Routes & Schedules at the start of the service day		

**7.2 Roscoe-Rockton Public Transit Study** – Russ Petrotte said he has received a copy of the first draft of the study, as prepared by the consultant but has not had time to review it.

Jason Duprius said he would contact the consultant to see if it would be possible for a presentation on the study to be made at RATS or SLATS or both.

**7.3 WinGIS** – Steve Ernst stated that a WinGIS meeting was scheduled for this afternoon.

**7.4 Winnebago/Boone Co. Transportation Planning Study**  
No report.

**7.5 RMTD Route and Schedule Study** – This was reported on previously in the meeting.

**7.6 RMTD East Side Transfer Center** – Paula Hughes said his study is on hold until the new route and schedule structure is implemented.

**7.7 Commuter Rail Study** – Russ Petrotte said seven firms responded to our Request for Proposals (RFP). On Tuesday of this week, the Northern Illinois Commuter Rail Initiative Executive Committee, of which RATS is part, met and evaluated the proposals. He said all of the proposals were good but two appear outstanding and those firms have been requested to make formal presentations before the Executive Committee. The two firms selected are TranSystems Corporation and Parsons Brinckerhoff. The presentation meetings are scheduled for February 4, 2002. They will start at 1:30 pm and will be held in the Board Room of the Boone County Court House. He said that anyone interested is welcome to attend.

**7.8 Springfield Corridor Planning Study** – Carlos Molina said the Lannert Group was selected to do this study at a negotiated cost of \$60,000. The study will take approximately a year and one organizational meeting was recently held.

**7.9 IL-173 Corridor Planning Study** – No report.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS:** Steve Ernst informed the members present that IDOT will commence comprehensive traffic counts this Summer. These are done every five years. In the past, these have been done by local staff. This year IDOT has hired a consultant. Staff will, however, assist IDOT in determining locations for the counts.

**9. OTHER BUSINESS:** None.

**3. RATS TRANSIT TIP AMENDMENT** – This item had been moved to the last item on the agenda in hopes that an additional Technical Committee member would arrive, thereby achieving a quorum and making it possible to make an official

Committee recommendation on the item. However, the assembled group remained one short of the eight needed. Mr. Petrotte suggested that staff proceed to present the item to those present and that the item be subsequently presented to the Policy Committee at next week's meeting. The Policy Committee could then decide to either act on the item under the recommendation of the less-than-quorum Technical group, or refer it back to the Technical Committee. The Chairman and members present concurred.

Mr. Petrotte explained that the primary reason for the amendment was twofold. First to clarify that the 18 buses that RMTD is seeking to acquire, as listed in Table 8 of the adopted TIP, are to be acquired with FTA 5309 funds. The way the table was originally constructed it could appear that these buses were to be acquired with FTA 5314 funds. In fact, only the Commuter Rail Feasibility Study will use 5314 funds.

Second, not all 18 of the buses will be replacement buses. Three of the 18 will be expansion buses necessary to more efficiently accommodate the recent service expansions including the evening service, the nighttime service and the Sunday service.

Staff also decided to correct some other inaccuracies in the document. Specifically, as follows:

1. RMTD expenses for Preventive Maintenance turned out to be higher than originally estimated for FY 2002, FY 2003 and will also be higher than forecasted for FY 2004. Those numbers are updated in Table 6, the table detailing 5307-funded projects. In total, for all three years combined, the Preventive Maintenance expenses are approximately \$250,000 higher.

2. The construction of the East-side Transfer Center is moved to FY 2006 and may be later than that, depending on future study.

3. Project 02-2\* as listed on Table 6 in FY 2004 (Computer for the Training Room) was erroneously listed as a Boone County Council on Aging project. It is an RMTD project.

Following a short discussion, the members present concurred that these changes should be referred to the Policy Committee. There was no objection to the changes by the seven members present.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:** With no further business to conduct, Mr. Ernst thanked the members present for their participation and adjourned the meeting.