



POLICY COMMITTEE
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President Linda M. Vaughn, Village of Machesney Park
District Engineer Roger E. Rocke, Illinois Department
of Transportation, District 2

Meeting Minutes RATS Technical Committee Meeting Date: July 18, 2002 Loves Park City Hall

Members Present:

Chad Atkinson, Machesney Park Planning;
Steve Ernst, Rockford Public Works;
Denny Hendricks, Rockford Mass Transit District;
Elizabeth Kinsinger, Rockford Community Development;
Sue McLaughlin, Winnebago County Planning;
David Noel, Loves Park Planning;
Steve Thompson, Loves Park Public Works;
Joe Vanderwerff, Winnebago County Highway;
Michael Zonzius, Greater Rockford Airport.

Others Present:

Fred Brereton, Mayor, City of Belvidere;
Craig Lawler, Belvidere Public Works;
Gary McIntyre, RATS staff;
Kurt Miller, Wisconsin DOT;
Mark Painter, Fehr-Graham & Assoc.;
Russ Petrotte, RATS staff;
Bob Soltau, IDOT Springfield;
Bob Spenle, SLATS.

1. CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES: At 10:30 A.M. with a quorum present, Steve Ernst called the meeting to order. The minutes of the May 23, 2002 and June 20, 2002 meetings were not available for review and approval. They will be distributed with the minutes of this meeting in the next mailout. A motion was made by Joe Vanderwerff to layover the minutes until the next meeting. The motion was seconded by David Noel 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, was presented, discussed and updated at the meeting. Michael Zonzius noted that funding has recently been announced for the improvement/completion of Belt Line Road in the vicinity of the Airport.

3. FY 2003 DRAFT TIP: Russ Petrotte said the June 20th draft of the proposed FY 2003 TIP was revised in accordance with suggestions made at the last meeting. The

changes were: (1) the Village of Roscoe and the Village of Timberlane were added to the list of entities covered by the TIP. This was because the new Census-defined Rockford urbanized area now includes these jurisdictions. Neither jurisdiction, however, had projects to add to the TIP. (2) An expanded discussion of Congestion Management was added to the text. (3) The revised Table 10 that was handed out separately on June 20th, including the requested paratransit vehicles for RMTD, was codified into the new draft. (4) Several spelling and grammar errors were corrected. Mr. Petrotte expressed thanks to the persons who took the time to carefully read the first draft and help him with proofing the document. The revised version, dated June 25, 2002, including all the above changes, was mailed to the full RATS mailing list in early July. He said he has received no further comments or requests for changes to this latest version. Mr. Petrotte then asked the Committee to make a motion recommending Policy Committee approval of the June 25, 2002 version of the FY 2003 TIP, contingent on there being no further significant comments or requests to change the document. If significant comments or requests come forth, those changes could be put directly before the Policy Committee and/or a special Technical Committee meeting could be scheduled. Joe Vanderwerff moved to recommend approval as suggested. The motion was seconded by David Noel and approved unanimously.

4. RATS URBAN AND METRO PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY DESIGNATIONS: Steve Ernst opened discussions on the need to redefine new Urban and Metro Planning areas for RATS. He reiterated discussions at previous meetings and explained that as a result of the new Census-defined "urbanized area" RATS will have to revise their Urban Area boundaries (often referred to as the Adjusted Urbanized Area) and revise the 25-year Metropolitan Area Boundary for RATS. He said the Adjusted Urbanized Area is the urbanized area expanded to encompass boundary irregularities and include developed areas that were not included because there are few or no persons living there (i.e., industrial and commercial areas). The Adjusted Urbanized Area is used

to classify roadways and determine what roads are eligible for “urban” versus “rural” funding sources. He said the Metro Planning Area is the area we expect to become urbanized in the next 25-30 years and is the area RATS will have planning jurisdiction over for the next decade or until we think it should be further revised. He explained that these change will also have an impact on who needs to be represented on the RATS Policy and Technical Committees. He said Policy Committee Chairman Darryl Lindberg has already received a request from the City of Belvidere for membership on both Committees and a request from Boone County for membership on the Policy Committee. Mr. Ernst said that staff had prepared an “issues” paper explaining these matters along with some of the various requirements, concerns and ramifications. The paper is still under internal review and should be ready for release with the next RATS mailout.

May Brereton spoke about Belvidere’s request. He said that the City of Belvidere is very interested in participating in RATS and that such participation would be mutually beneficial to all. He ask that the Technical Committee support Belvidere’s request. He said he understood that the Technical Committee may not be ready to recommend new members to the Policy Committee but he asked that a recommendation be made for Belvidere membership on the Technical Committee so that Belvidere could have a formal voice in future deliberations.

The Committee discussed Mayor Brereton’s request and related possible options. In response to what appeared to be a consensus of the Committee, Joe Vanderwerff moved that the Technical Committee recommend to the Policy Committee that the Belvidere Public Works Department be added to the Technical Committee. The motion was seconded by Chad Atkinson. There was discussion as to whether others such as Roscoe also be added but since they had not yet made a formal request they were not added to the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Discussion then turned to the question of whether or not RATS and SLATS should be combined into a single MPO. Bob Soltau stated that IDOT would not support such a joining until the issue of air quality was resolved regarding the Beloit ozone monitoring station. Preliminary data from that station has led the Wisconsin EPA to recommend that both Rock County and Winnebago County be declared air quality non-attainment areas. IDOT is requesting that the Illinois EPA oppose including Winnebago County because the monitoring stations in Winnebago County are not exceeding the standards. Wisconsin EPA contends that some of the air pollution is originating in Winnebago County. Mr. Ernst stated that he didn’t see the relationship between the air quality question and the RATS / SLATS combination – one is a planning issue the other is a technical air quality issue. It appeared the consensus of the Committee enough information was not available to make a recommendation at

this time and the matter should be reconsidered at future meetings.

5. ILLINOIS TOMORROW APPLICATIONS: Gary McIntyre said he received and forwarded three Illinois Tomorrow grant applications to IDOT. The first was from the Village of Machesney Park for funding to study and develop a detailed plan for the Illinois 173 Corridor between IL-251 and Belvidere Road. Development pressure is high in this corridor. With plans to construct an interchange with I-90/I-39, the pressure will soon increase. This is a also a sensitive corridor due to the presence of Rock Cut State Park.

The second request was for funding to study the possibility and feasibility of removing tolls from the stretch of I-90 between Wisconsin through the Belvidere toll plaza. This stretch of “tollway” is very problematic for the Rockford / Belvidere area. Oversized vehicles traveling between Wisconsin and I-39 south are surcharged into the Rockford area because they cannot pass through the toll facilities. Other traffic that should be on I-90 also uses local roads simply to avoid the tolls. The connection with I-39 south is under capacity and the toll station at that location further aggravates the situation. The fact that the only interstate serving the Rockford/Belvidere area is a tollway also has significant adverse economic impacts on the community.

The third request is for followup work on the Winnebago County Smart Growth Study. This would involve development of more detailed plans and proposals that would encourage more cost-effective and environmentally-friendly development throughout the region.

Mr. Soltau noted that this was the third round of Illinois Tomorrow applications. Two more rounds are remain in the program.

4.1 SPRINGFIELD/HARRISON PROJECT: Joe Vanderwerff reported the project to be proceeding as scheduled. There have been some problems installing the natural gas mains but these problems are being resolved.

4.2 WEST STATE STREET CORRIDOR STUDY: No report at this time. A detailed report may be made to the next Technical Committee meeting.

4.3 WINNEBAGO COUNTY SMART GROWTH STUDY: The three public meetings for the purpose of discussing Smart Growth issues have been completed. The consultant and steering committee are developing a report and list of topics to be further addressed.

4.4 ROCKFORD AREA RAILROAD CONSOLIDATION STUDY: No report.

4.5 ROSCOE/ROCKTON TRANSIT STUDY: No report.

4.6 WinGIS: Steve Ernst reported that a WinGIS Technical Committee meeting is scheduled this afternoon at 1:30. Work is on schedule.

4.7 RATS / SLATS MODELING STUDY: Gary McIntyre said there is a Steering Committee meeting scheduled immediately following this meeting.

4.8 RMTD ROUTE & SCHEDULE ANALYSIS: Denny Hendricks reported that the study will commence next week.

4.9 RMTD EAST SIDE TRANSFER CENTER STUDY: No report. This study is not likely to commence until this Fall after the Route and Schedule Analysis is completed.

5. COMMUNICATIONS: None

6. OTHER BUSINESS: David Noel reminded the Committee of their resolve that STP-Urban funds allocated to the area be spent in a timely fashion (i.e., not accumulating more than a 2-year balance). Mr. Ernst said the City is looking to accelerate the next phase of the Harrison Avenue project to use the funds.

Bob Soltau reminded the Committee of the Congestion Management System review scheduled for Thursday, August 15, 2002.

7. ADJOURNMENT: With no further business to conduct, David Noel moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Joe vanderwerff and approved unanimously at 11:44 AM.