



**Rockford Area Transportation Study  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**POLICY COMMITTEE**  
Mayor Douglas P. Scott, City of Rockford  
Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park  
Board Chairman Kristine Cohn, Winnebago County  
President Linda M. Vaughn, Village of Machesney Park  
District Engineer Gregory Mounts, Illinois Department  
of Transportation, District 2

## **Meeting Minutes RATS Technical Committee Loves Park City Hall – July 17, 2003**

### **Members Present:**

Steve Ernst; Rockford Public Works;  
Denny Hendricks, Rockford Mass Transit District;  
Elizabeth Kinsinger, Rockford Community Dev. Dept.  
Craig Lawler, Belvidere Public Works Dept.;  
Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway;  
Carlos Molina, Winnebago County Highway;  
David Noel, Loves Park Planning;  
Mark Painter, Village of Winnebago;  
Bob Soltau, representing IDOT District 2;  
Michael Zonsius, Greater Rockford Airport Authority.

### **Members Absent:**

Chad Atkinson, Machesney Park;  
Belvidere-Boone Regional Planning Commission;  
Chris Hodges, Village of Roscoe;  
Bob Martin, Loves Park Public Works;  
David Nord, Village of Cherry Valley;  
Winnebago County Planning & Economic Development.

### **Others Present:**

Susan Anderson Boone County Board Chairman;  
Jason Dupruis, City of Beloit;  
Nancy Edwardsen, Citizen;  
Gary McIntyre, RATS staff;  
Russ Petrotte, RATS staff;  
Bob Spenle; SLATS;  
Ken Terrinoni, Boone County Administrator.

**1. CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** At 10:11 am, with a quorum present, Steve Ernst called the meeting to order. Approval of minutes was laid over until next meeting.

**2. AGENCY REPORTS:** The members present discussed the status and progress of the projects under the responsibility of their respective jurisdictions.

Bob Soltau reported that the application package the next round of Illinois Tomorrow grants is available. The deadline to submit is August 29, 2003.

Carlos Molina reported that the Spring Creek Road project started about a week ago. This project runs from Bell School

to Perryville. It will take roughly three months and will be closed to traffic much of the time. He also reported that the Sandy Hollow/ Mulford Road project will be awarded soon. Patching work has commenced on Forest Hills Road north of Riverside Boulevard and that segment will be turned over to Loves Park when completed. Finally, the Meridian Road resurfacing project (from I-75 to 1.5 miles south) is nearly completed.

Steve Ernst asked everyone to speak loudly enough for everyone to hear. He said a complaint was made at a recent Policy Committee meeting. In the future, we will be using the public address systems whenever they are available – especially in Rockford, Loves Park, and Machesney Park.

Mr Ernst reported that the Alpine Road resurfacing project (between Spring Creek and Highcrest Roads) will soon commence. Also a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the extension of Development Drive is being scheduled around August 28<sup>th</sup> to correspond with the initiation of the new Airport passenger service. Development Drive will be renamed to Airport Drive.

Denny Hendricks reported that a pre-bid conference was held last week for the RMTD administrative office expansion project.

David Noel reported that the Riverside Bridge project is completed and open to traffic.

Nancy Edwardsen asked how the storm debris cleanup was progressing. Steve Ernst said Rockford is currently running 40 crews with 6-day work weeks and 12-hour work days. This will continue for roughly 3-4 weeks. They are generally following the snow plowing pattern in the affected areas. Look for further news at the Mayor's weekly press conferences.

Rich Lundin reported that Caledonia Road is now open.

Craig Lawler reported that Julien Street in Belvidere is roughly 60% completed.

Bob Spenle and Gary McIntyre reported that the Governor of the State of Wisconsin has sent his recommendation to the EPA regarding which counties should be declared non-attainment for air quality. The letter recommends Rock County remain an attainment area. Copies were distributed. Bob Soltau said the State of Illinois Governor will most likely make a similar determination regarding Winnebago and Boone Counties. Mr McIntyre said we have had no ozone-level violations, to date, this year.

**3. RATS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT:** Steve Ernst said the latest draft of the document was completed late yesterday. It was E-mailed to Committee members (version dated July 16, 2003). Additional copies were distributed.

Mr. Ernst highlighted the changes to the document. Most important, the City of Belvidere and Boone County have been added (as voting members).

David Noel said the name “Loves Park Planning Department” should be changed to “Loves Park Community Development Department.”

Rich Lundin asked why the Ogle County Highway Department is the only non-voting member cited in the Agreement but several other non-voting agencies are typically listed on RATS Technical Committee agendas. Recognizing this inconsistency, this Committee, by consensus, recommended that Ogle County be removed from the list in the Agreement – they will continue to be listed under Agency Reports on the agendas.

Steve Ernst said Article 6 has a clarification that the annual election of the Policy Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman will take place at the June meeting or the “nearest meeting thereafter” if no meeting is held in June. Mr. Ernst noted that this situation has occurred this year. Article 6, point 10 pertains to Environmental Justice (EJ), Title VI (non-discrimination with regard to race or ethnicity) and related matters. This wording has been added in response to comments made during our last Federal Certification Review. Mr. Ernst said Article 9 has been modified in response to recent comments from Loves Park and Rockford officials. It is now recommended that passage of matters involving Federal funding should require a “2/3rds majority vote.” Carlos Molina said the Chairman of the Winnebago County Board agrees with this. Mr. Ernst clarified that this is 2/3rds of the total number of Policy Committee members not merely 2/3rds of the quorum. Ken Terrinoni said that Boone County officials also agree with the 2/3rds condition.

Mr. Ernst said Article 10 has been changed substantially. In the existing Agreement, adding a new member to the Policy Committee requires that the Agreement be sent back to the legislative bodies of all members for re-ratification. In this proposed Agreement, a new member can be added without legislative ratification by the existing members if the new member meets all of the listed criteria. Of course, the legislative body of the new member would have to ratify the document. However, if all the criteria are not met, a new

member could still be added if all the legislative bodies of all the members, existing and new, ratify a new agreement.

Carlos Molina asked about the criteria that specifies an entity must provide (fund) significant public transit service. He noted that Winnebago County does not provide such service.

Russ Petrotte said Winnebago County has such substantial roadway responsibilities that it would be inconceivable not to have them as a member. Boone County contributes substantially to the paratransit service in both Boone County and Belvidere. It is not known if Ogle County, a potential future member, contributes to the paratransit service that is provided down there. If they are added to the Rockford urbanized area as part of the next Census and they contribute to transit service, they could be admitted to the Policy Committee by the unanimous consent of the exiting Policy Committee members. If they do not contribute to transit, they could still be admitted via a completely new Cooperative Agreement, newly ratified by all the members. It is important to note that the term “substantial contribution” to public transit is deliberately vague in order to give the Policy Committee some judgement leeway regarding that criteria.

Mark Painter noted that the Village of Winnebago is in the same situation. It does not provide transit service. Mr. Petrotte said that it would not necessarily be difficult for Winnebago to overcome this obstacle, especially if the Policy Committee is liberal in how it interprets the words “significant” and “substantial.” Mr. Petrotte said, in his opinion, it is not unreasonable to require an entity to make some effort toward public transit if they want to be full member (Policy Committee member) of RATS. Transit is the primary means by which we provide some measure of equity to the “traditionally underserved” cited in the Federal guidelines.

Ken Terrinoni asked about the 7,500 population criteria with respect to Boone County and the different numbers he had heard regarding the Boone County population. Mr. Petrotte and Mr. McIntyre explained there are several ways of looking at the parts of Boone County with respect to RATS. First, Boone County would primarily represent those parts of the County that are not represented by Belvidere and Loves Park. Second, the actual numbers vary depending on what geographic area is used: (1) the part of Boone County that is contained within the Census-defined Urbanized Area; (2) the part of Boone County that is within the slightly larger, RATS-defined Adjusted Urbanized Area; and (3) the even larger part that is within the RATS-defined, federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Boone County exceeds the 7,500 population criteria in all three of those areas, but the area that the criteria is concerned with is the smaller, Census-defined Urbanized area. The following table illustrates the exact numbers.

Population in Boone Co		
Area in Boone County	Census UA	RA

		UA	Area
Belvidere	20,080	20,820	20,820
Loves Park	0	54	54
Remaining pt. in	9,006	12,662	14,759

Boone Co.	
Totals	29,086

Steve Ernst said that Article 11, bullet point four, sub part “b” should also include counties. Bob Soltau asked how townships would be treated if they requested Technical Committee membership. Russ Petrotte said they could be added only if the Policy Committee was in unanimous agreement.

Steve Ernst said the Article 15 clarifies that this proposed Agreement, when ratified, will supercede the existing Agreement. He said Article 16 is new. It defines and references the process we have been using to define and evaluate STP-Urban candidate projects and it reaffirms the currently selected projects.

Bob Soltau and Carlos Molina questioned whether the design engineering would have to be completed before a project would be considered. Steve Ernst said that the wording is meant to state that there must be a local commitment to do the engineering but not that it must be actually completed. After discussion, it was agreed that paragraph “a” of Article 16 should be changed to read: “The project shall have the local commitment in place, including commitment for completion of the design engineering and commitment for the local share of the right-of-way and construction costs.”

Bob Soltau questioned whether paragraph “c” puts too much emphasis on the “traditionally underserved.” Gary McIntyre stressed that this set of criteria is only the general framework for STP project selection. There are two existing RATS resolutions that more precisely define the criteria and selection process. Steve Ernst said those resolutions are not being superceded by the wording in this Agreement. In this case, the wording is meant to supplement and bolster the existing criteria, not supplant it. Steve Ernst suggested that a way to clarify that there are other considerations would be to modify the last sentence of the opening paragraph of Article 16 to read: “The evaluation process shall include, but not be limited to, the following” (added wording underlined). Bob Soltau suggested that the first sentence be modified to read: “The parties herein agree that the Policy Committee shall establish and maintain a project selection process, in accordance with Federal guidelines and criteria of the Policy Committee, that establishes priority for the use of STP-Urban funds” (added wording underlined). The Committee concurred with these suggestions.

Carlos Molina suggested that paragraph “d” be modified to read: “Consideration should be given to

long-term equity in the geographic distribution of projects relative to population density and federally-eligible road miles” (underlined wording added). Steve Ernst suggested that paragraph “b” covers the road responsibility aspect. Bob Soltau suggested that paragraph “d” should refer to total population as well as population density. By consensus the Committee decided to reword “d” to read: “Consideration should be given to long-term equity in the geographic distribution of projects relative to population and population density” (underlined words added).

Craig Lawler asked if the City of Belvidere would be limited to spending its accumulated funds strictly to the West 6<sup>th</sup> Street project. Steve Ernst said they would but that does not mean that if they have funds left over from their accumulated balance they could not ask RATS to approve those funds for another qualified project. Also, they could use those funds on work that is closely related to and bid as part of the West 6<sup>th</sup> Street improvement (work on connected parts of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, for instance).

Steve Ernst said Article 17 is also new to the Agreement. It gives us the authority to make non-substantive wording updates to the document.

Bob Soltau said that Timothy Martin, the IDOT Secretary of Transportation, would be the person signing the Agreement on behalf of the State. The Committee concurred with that change.

A motion was made by Craig Lawler to forward the proposed Agreement, along with the changes agreed upon here today, to the Policy Committee, with a recommendation that they approve the document and transmit it to their respective legislative bodies for ratification. The motion was seconded by Elizabeth Kinsinger and approved unanimously.

**4. RATS FY 2004 TIP:** Russ Petrotte distributed copies of the draft FY 2004 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and discussed the highlights of the document. He said two maps have been added (pages 3 and 4) to illustrate the Metropolitan Planning Area (RATS and SLATS), the Urbanized Area, the Adjusted Urbanized Area and the various jurisdictions included in RATS. In Tables 5 and 6 of the Transit Element, he pointed out the RMTD operating budget and emphasized that the Federal 5307 funding for “preventive maintenance” is considerably higher than typically proposed by RMTD. This is to compensate for losses in other

revenue, mainly the City of Rockford. RMTD is hopeful that the City will see fit to increase funding in future years so that RMTD can go back to accumulating 5307 funds for future bus replacements. He said the capital projects proposed by RMTD are listed in Tables 6 (page 24-5) and Table 7. Most of these project were in last year's TIP but had to be deferred because State matching funds were not available. Table 26 shows special projects that are funded with FTA 5309, 5314, 5310 and 5311 funds. Important projects listed here include RMTD's East Side Transfer Center Feasibility Study; the Rockford-Belvidere Transit Feasibility Study; Gary McIntyre discussed the Highway Element. He noted that Tables 13, 14, and 15 have been updated. They reflect the history and status of the balances and assignments of Federal Aid Urban and STP-Urban funds allocated to the Rockford area. For the final document, an additional table or small section will be added to illustrate the Belvidere STP-Urban project.

Tables 16 through 19 summarize the projects and expenditures of all highway-related projects in the area. Tables 20 through 22 give a project-by-project list of the highway-related projects for FY04, FY05, and FY06. Table 23 lists the projects from 2003 that have been completed or have been initiated and are in progress. Table 24 lists projects that have been previously approved in an older TIP, have not yet been initiated, but remain authorized.

Bob Soltau recommended underlining the wording on page 31 that states: "The Policy Committee's STP Project selection criteria allows for STP-Urban funds to be used for public transit purposes but no such transit projects have yet been proposed or are proposed in this TIP." He also recommended adding a sentence stating that Federal transit funds/grants can be used for highway projects but no such projects are proposed.

Steve Ernst said this document will be presented to the Policy Committee next week. A month will be afforded for public review. If there are no major changes the document will be presented to the Policy Committee for adoption at their August meeting.

David Noel moved that this document be forwarded to the Policy Committee as the official draft Transportation Improvement Program for FY 2004. The motion was seconded by Rich Lundin and approved unanimously.

## PROGRESS REPORTS ON OTHER MAJOR PROJECTS

**5.1 Winnebago County Smart Growth (Phase 2) – No Report.**

**5.2 Rockford Rail Consolidation Study –** Steve Ernst reported that the consultants have drafted their report and sent it to the respective railroads for their comments. After

replacement paratransit buses for the Boone County Council on Aging, Lifescape, the Barbara Olson Center of Hope, RMTD; and operating assistance for the Boone County Council on Aging. Also included in this TIP are Tables that list the RMTD vehicle inventories and replacement needs, long-range capital needs and funding forecasts, and miscellaneous capital needs. Many of the miscellaneous capital needs fall into the category called "illustrative projects," i.e., projects that are desirable but possibly beyond funding capabilities given current constraints.

they respond, modifications may be made and the report will be released.

**5.3 Roscoe-Rockton Public Transit Study – No report.**

**5.4 WinGIS –** Steve Ernst reported that the WinGIS Technical Committee will meet this afternoon at the North Park Public Water District at 1:30 pm.

**5.5 Winnebago/Boone Co. Transportation Planning Study –** Gary McIntyre reported that model runs will start at the end of this month.

**5.6 RMTD Route and Schedule Study –** Denny Hendricks reported that RMTD will be starting the public hearing phase next week. Meetings will be held at several locations announced in newspapers and through the media.

**5.7 RMTD East Side Transfer Center – No Report.**

**6. COMMUNICATIONS:** Steve Ernst said he received a letter from the League of Illinois Bicyclists and the Morrissey Law offices regarding the functionality of bike paths for work commuting purposes. Copies are available. Staff is preparing a response.

Bob Soltau said the State will not be awarding additional Special Planning and Research funds this year.

**7. OTHER BUSINESS:** Michael Zonsius announced that he has accepted new employment with another airport. The Greater Rockford Airport Authority will be sending a new representative to RATS. On behalf of the Committee, Steve Ernst congratulated Mr. Zonsius, thanked him for his input and efforts over the last several years, and wished him the very best of luck.

**8. ADJOURNMENT:** With no further business to conduct, Elizabeth Kinsinger moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Carlos Molina and approved unanimously at 12:00 Noon.