

# RATS

**Rockford Area Transportation Study  
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

## **POLICY COMMITTEE**

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Board Chairman Scott Christiansen, Winnebago County*

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

### **Members Present:**

Mary Abernathy, Village of Roscoe;  
Steve Ernst, Rockford Public Works;  
Rick Guilandi, IDOT District 2;  
Denny Hendricks, Rockford Mass Transit District;  
Craig Lawler, Belvidere Public Works Dept.;  
Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway;  
Robert Martin, Loves Park Public Works;  
Dan Jacobson, City of Loves Park;  
Mark Painter, Village of Winnebago;  
Joe Vanderwerff, Winnebago County Highway Dept.

### **Others Present:**

Angelo Caruana, Citizen, Realtor;  
Jason Dupruis, SLATS;  
Gary McIntyre, RATS staff;  
Russ Petrotte, RATS staff;  
Sharon Durbin, IDOT, Springfield;  
Carl Mikyska, IDOT, Springfield.

### **Members Absent:**

Greater Rockford Airport Authority;  
Rockford CD Department;  
Village of Cherry Valley;  
Village of Machesney Park.

**1. CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** At 10:10 am, Steve Ernst called the meeting to order and asked all to introduce themselves for the sake of those persons present new to the RATS planning process.

He then called the Committee's attention to the minutes of the previous meetings of November 20, 2003; January 22, 2004; February 19, 2004; March 18, 2004; and May 20, 2004. He asked the Committee if they had any corrections or changes to these minutes. Hearing none, he requested a motion for their approval. The motion was made by Rich Lundin and seconded by Craig Lawler. With not further discussion, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Because Mr. Hendricks indicated that he might have to leave the meeting early, Mr. Ernst adjusted the agenda to allow the presentation of an "Other Business" item on the agenda: **A request to amend the FY 2004 TIP by RMTD.**

Russ Petrotte distributed copies of proposed RATS Resolution 2004-6. He explained that during RMTD's recent Federal Certification Review, it was determined that certain previously included insurance costs were ineligible for reimbursement under the FTA 5307 Program as "Preventive Maintenance" expenses. Therefore, the a previously approved TIP Project (Project 04-1, Preventive Maintenance) needs to be reduced. However, this reduction creates a potential budget imbalance of \$200,000 for RMTD for FY 2004 and no State or local funding sources are available to correct the above potential imbalance.

However, it was also determined that FTA 5307 funds can be used to cover part of the operations expenses for RMTD's Federally-mandated "Complimentary ADA" services – (i.e., the mandatory demand-response services within 3/4th of a mile RMTD's fixed bus routes). This required complimentary service costs RMTD over \$1.3 million annually and has been a part of RMTD's budget for several years. In the past, RMTD has applied for and used FTA 5307 funds for parts of the capital aspects of this service (the paratransit vehicles) but has never applied for and used 5307 funds for related operations aspects.

Therefore, to correct the non-allowable "Preventive Maintenance" usage but avoid a budget imbalance, RMTD is requesting that TABLE 6 of the FY 2004 TIP be amended as follows:

### **REDUCE Project 04-1 "Preventive Maintenance"**

from

\$1,695,901 Total; \$339,180 Local; \$1,356,721 Federal;  
to  
\$1,445,901 Total; \$289,180 Local; \$1,156,721 Federal.

### **ADD Project 04-1a "Complimentary ADA"**

with costs of

\$ 250,000 Total; \$50,000 Local; \$200,000 Federal

A motion was made by Dan Jacobson to recommend Policy Committee approval of proposed resolution 2004-6. The motion was seconded by Denny Hendricks and approved unanimously.

**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, Jason Dupruis noted that the next State Line Area Transportation Study meeting will be held on Monday, August 2, 2004 at 1:00 pm in the Rotary River Center. Mr. Dupruis also stated that SLATS has hired a new Director, Bob Soltau, formerly with IDOT.

Joe Vanderwerff joined the meeting at this time.

### **3. RATS TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

**FOR FY 2005:** Russ Petrotte explained that we are later than usual this year in developing a draft of the TIP because several agencies have not been able to develop their project lists. However, over the last few weeks, staff has endeavored to develop a rough working draft. Copies were distributed at the meeting (draft dated July 22, 2004).

He asked the Committee members to assist staff in reviewing the text of the proposal which has not yet been proofread.

He noted that the most significant change in this TIP compared to previous years is the method of service delivery in parts of Boone County. Specifically, those areas of Boone County declared by the Census Bureau to be urbanized are no longer eligible for FTA 5311 funds which are reserved for “rural” areas. To compensate for this change in FY 2005, the urbanized parts of Boone County have been annexed into the Rockford Mass Transit District and the costs for services to be provided in those areas incorporated into RMTD’s budget. These actions make those costs eligible for reimbursement (at 55%) under the State of Illinois Downstate Operating Assistance Program.

To actually provide the service, RMTD will subcontract with the Boone County Council on Ageing. This eliminates the need for RMTD to add vehicles and drivers, allows BCCA to continue providing the service as done in the past, and avoids the need to layoff BCCA drivers. This is a temporary, one-year arrangement that buys time for more intensive study of the various alternatives of providing public transit in the urbanized parts of Boone County. Such study is already underway – funded by an IDOT grant. This approach is summarized on page 14 of the draft TIP.

M. Petrotte next called attention to Table 5 of the draft (page 22). He asked that RMTD pay careful attention to the operating cost estimates in this table and provide him with more accurate figures.

Turning to page 6 of the 7 pages in Table 6, Mr. Petrotte pointed out that most of the FTA 5307-funded projects that were previously approved for last year have been deferred to FY 2005. This is because there are no State or local funds available to match (20% required) the Federal funds. Consequently, seven projects from FY 2004 have now been moved to FY 2005. Unfortunately, it is also uncertain that local funds will be available for these projects in FY 2005. We are

listing them to reconfirm that they are needed projects and to draw attention to the need to find local matching funds from the State. Complimentary ADA funding is added to Table 6 for the years FY 2004 through 2007.

Mr. Petrotte said Table 9 lists other special transit needs. He noted that new and replacement vehicles are listed here for the BCCA, the Barbara Olson Center of Hope, and Lifescape. The latter entities provide special services to persons with disabilities and to elderly persons. In that past, their transportation needs have been difficult and costly for RMTD to meet. Therefore, Lifescape and the Center have been authorized to apply for vehicles under the FTA 5310 Program. Because their labor costs (drivers) are lower, it is more efficient to provide them vehicles than to blend their service needs in with RMTD’s complimentary ADA service. He asked that RMTD review this table.

Gary McIntyre reviewed the Highway Element of the draft TIP. He called attention to the Harrison Avenue projects listed at the end of Table 13. Even though this project has been constructed and is in use, all costs have not yet been fully processed and the project is not “administratively” closed out.

In Table 14, Mr McIntyre noted the \$491,729 adjustment to the area’s FAU/STP fund allocations. This is the estimated amount of STP funds that were allocated to Boone County under the “Rural-STP” program. They remain available.

Table 15 shows the currently “committed” STP projects for the area. In addition to the Harrison Avenue projects previously mentioned (Winnebago County’s Harrison / Springfield Connection) there are three addition Harrison Avenue projects authorized (engineering, ROW and reconstruction phases authorized for the City of Rockford) and the 6<sup>th</sup> Street Project authorized for the City of Belvidere.

Mr. McIntyre noted that Table 20 lists only IDOT projects, exactly as submitted to him to date. The projects in this table need to be refined in two ways: the funding sources must be identified and the projects listed for FY 2006 through FY 2011 must be further broken down to specifically show which projects are programmed for FY 2006 and FY 2007. He asked that IDOT attend to this.

In Table 21, Mr. McIntyre asked that Belvidere verify the cost estimates quoted for their 6<sup>th</sup> Street Project. The IDOT projects listed in this table will be replaced with the refinements IDOT provides for Table 20. And similarly, in Tables 22 and 23, the IDOT projects in those tables will be replaced with the refined information from Table 20.

Throughout Tables 21 through 23, the Winnebago Highway Department projects are likely to be modified considerably to reflect a new project list and schedule that is now being reviewed by the County Board. Joe Vanderwerff will make a more detailed presentation on this new list at the end of this meeting.

Mr. McIntyre also asked the members to give attention to Tables 24 and 25. Table 24 lists the projects that have been initiated and/or completed in FY 2004. This table provides the public with a comprehensive accounting of our recent efforts. Table 25 list projects that have been approved in previous TIPs, have not yet gone to bid letting, and more important, are still being actively pursued and remain authorized projects.

Mr. Ernst asked the Committee to work diligently in making necessary refinements to this draft TIP and asked their permission to release the document as a working draft. The Committee concurred.

**4. ROSCOE - ROCKTON PUBLIC TRANSIT STUDY:** Staff distributed copies of the Final Report on the Roscoe-Rockton Transit Feasibility Study. Mr. Ernst commented that he thought the Study did a thorough job of exploring the variety of options for public transit service in the northeast Winnebago County area but stopped short of making specific recommendations on implementing public transit services and of forecasting public transit ridership. If public transit services are to be implemented in the area, the report recommended a cautious phase-in of demonstration projects to test the market response. This could involve short term contracts with exiting public or private transportation providers. Also worth exploring is the promotion of ridesharing or van pooling programs.

The discussion turned to requests that Mary Abernathy has been receiving for special services for persons with disabilities in the Roscoe area and some of the factors that complicate obtaining funding assistance for public transit in Roscoe. The discussions touched on the following topics.

One source of funding, the FTA 5307 Program, is potentially available but is complicated by the fact that the area is dissected by two Census-defined urbanized areas: the Beloit Urbanized Area and the Rockford Urbanized Area. Further, because of their differing sizes, these urbanized areas are treated differently when it comes to funding eligibility and funding use. Because the Beloit UA is less than 200,000 in population, the 5307 funds can be use for both operating expenses (i.e., wages) and capital purchases (i.e., vehicles). In the Rockford UA, which is over 200,000 in population, these funds can only be used for capital purchases, preventive maintenance expenses, and complimentary ADA services.

Further confusing the matter is the fact that two States are involved with one of the urbanized areas. The Beloit Urbanized Area receives a Federal formula allocation of 5307 funds for its Wisconsin side and another allocation for its Illinois side. On the Wisconsin side, the Beloit Transit System uses this allocation to help support its transit services. On the Illinois side, this allocation is unused because there is no currently active public transit provider.

And finally adding to the confusion is the fact that a large part of northeastern Winnebago County was shifted from the Beloit UA to the Rockford UA by the Year 2000 Census. Prior to the Year 2000 Census, part or all of these funds could have been

used by the Village of Roscoe because at that time Roscoe was in the Beloit UA. As a result of the Year 2000 Census, however, Roscoe was moved into the Rockford Urbanized Area. Now, whatever portion of these funds might have been attributable to the population of Roscoe, are now merged with the portions attributable to the other populations in the Rockford UA and any potential suballocation is much more complicated.

Another funding source that could assist in providing transit service is the Roscoe area was briefly mentioned. The State of Illinois Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP funds) could be tapped to provide 55% of the operating costs – similar to what is being done this year for the urbanized parts of Boone County. Tapping into these funds, however, requires being recognized by the Illinois General Assembly as a chartered Downstate Transit Operator. Roscoe has two options here: form its own transit district or, as Boone County has done, become part of the Rockford Mass Transit District.

The need to make a better determination of the need for transit services was also mentioned. Steve Ernst mentioned that RATS might be able to assist the Village in developing a survey of the Village residents and asked Ms Abernathy if a listing of Village residents is readily available.

Denny Hendricks stated that he had heard a meeting was being arranged between some Village officials and Lisa Brown of RMTD. He said he would make inquiries and keep the Committee informed. He also said he was meeting with Dave Spacek of the IDOT Division of Public Transportation latter today. He said he would appraise Mr. Spacek of the situation and ask if he could be available to meet with stakeholders on the matter.

## **5. PROGRESS REPORTS**

**5.1 Winnebago County Smart Growth (Phase 2)** – Mr. Vanderwerff said two consultants have been selected for the two parts of the study and the contract have been sent to IDOT for reviews. He noted a need for additional funds for this Study.

**5.2 WinGIS** – Steve Ernst said a WinGIS Technical Committee meeting is scheduled this afternoon in Room 501 of the Winnebago County Administration Building.

**5.3 Commuter Rail Study** – Several members of the Committee had attended a progress / work session on the Study, yesterday in Belvidere. The Study is nearing 50% completion. The existing rail situation has been inventoried and rough cost estimates have been prepared for the physical upgrades necessary to accommodate commuter trains. Several alternatives for station locations have been identified and rough cost estimates developed. The consultant has met with and established a good relationship with the two private rail companies involved. The consultant was to meet with Rockford Airport officials latter in the day, yesterday. Another progress / work session is scheduled in August and at that time the consultant may have some preliminary ridership estimates.

Progress reports on the Study will be posted on Rockford's Website.

**5.4 Springfield Corridor Planning Study** – Joe Vanderwerff reported that this study is approximately 50% completed.

**5.5 Boone/Winnebago/Rock Counties Transportation Modeling Study** – Gary McIntrye said the RATS/SLATS Traffic Simulation modeling study is complete. Copies of the final report are available at the RATS offices. The model is completely functional and is being used to evaluate scenarios. The land use forecasts will soon have to be updated to accommodate the Long-Range Plan update time frame extension.

**5.6 RMTD East Side Transfer Study** – No report.

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

**6. COMMUNICATIONS:** Steve Ernst cited the following items:

The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations is soliciting nominations for their annual planning awards.

The Southern California Association of Governments has published a report on integrating smart growth into land use plans. Information in this report will be useful in our Long-Range Plan update.

On July 29, 2004 there will be an open house meeting between 1:00 and 6:00 pm on the West State Street Corridor Study. This will be held at the Crusader Clinic on West State Street.

Six responses to our request for proposals on our Long-Range Plan were received. Staff is in the process of evaluating the proposals. Interested Committee members are invited to participate. We will short list to 2-3 firms and schedule interviews within the next week or two. Again, interested persons are welcome to participate.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS:** Joe Vanderwerff gave a detailed presentation on the Winnebago County's "Multi-Year Highway Capital Improvement Program. This program is scheduled for adoption at tonight's County Board Meeting. A copy of the proposal is attached to these minutes.

**9. ADJOURNMENT:** With no further business to conduct, Joe Vanderwerff moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Dan Jacobson and approved unanimously at approximately 12:10 pm.