



**Rockford Area Transportation  
Study**

**Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**Meeting Minutes -- RATS Technical Committee**

**Meeting Date: June 19, 1997-- Loves Park City Hall**

**Members Present:** David Dratnol, Winnebago County Highway; Russ Petrotte, RATS; Dan Jacobson, Loves Park Planning; Mike Stone, Loves Park Transit System; Chad Atkinson, Village of Machesney Park; David Noel, Winnebago County Planning; Dennis Hendricks, Rockford Mass Transit District; Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway Department; Mary Allen Verdun, IDOT/Dixon (arrived toward the end of the meeting).

**Others Present:** Bill Smith, IDOT/ Springfield; Polly Berg, Winnebago County Board

**1. CALL TO ORDER and APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** With a quorum present, Russ Petrotte, on behalf of Wayne Dust who could not attend, called the meeting to order. Because the minutes of the previous two meetings were not completed and mailed, this item was laid over until the next meeting.

**2. AGENCY REPORTS:** Dan Jacobson reported that Loves Park's Bell School Road project is being refined. Bi-directional turn lanes are being extended farther north and accell/decell lanes are being added at key locations. The bridges and approaches for the Loves Park Flood Control project are 100 percent complete. They are now involved in property acquisition for the final stage.

Chad Atkinson said the Willow Creek Bike Path is proceeding as planned. Dennis Hendricks said the Rockford Mass Transit District is considering a complete reevaluation of their current route and schedule structure. There will be extensive public involvement and Rick McVinnie will be providing the Committee with details at a later date. Mike Stone said the Loves Park Paratransit System is working well and ridership is picking up. Mr. Petrotte asked

**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 William D. Ost, Illinois Department of  
Transportation, District 2*

if the fixed route service contract between RMTD and Machesney Park had been renegotiated or if Machesney Park is reconsidering a new contract with LPTS. Mr. Hendricks said there have been no negotiations as of yet. Mr. Petrotte offered the services of RATS if needed in this regard.

**3. FY98 TIP:** Russ Petrotte reported that work is moving forward on both the highway and transit elements of the FY98 TIP but it is somewhat behind schedule. He has met with RMTD and LPTS and they are in agreement regarding the suballocation of federal transit subsidies. It is uncertain whether there will be federal operating subsidies. However, both operators are working on alternatives that will avoid major services cuts even in worse-case federal funding scenarios. Mr. Hendricks noted that federal capital funding may now be used for some aspects of transit that were previously funded as "operating" expenses. This may help relieve some of the impact of the proposed cuts.

**4. FY97 TIP AMENDMENT:** Russ Petrotte and Bill Smith explained that this amendment to the FY97 TIP (Resolution 97-3) was needed to address a safety problem at IL-173 and Belvidere Road. This resolution was previously hand circulated and signed by all the Policy Committee members before this meeting. This was necessary to take advantage of a recent release of Federal Hazard Elimination and Safety funds and allow a timely bid letting on this much needed project. The issue is on the agenda today to provide for public comment and the opportunity to publicly support (or question) the Policy Committee's action. The amendment funds the installation of flashing beacons at the intersection.

Rich Lundin moved to recommend Policy Committee reaffirmation of Resolution 97-3. The motion was seconded by Chad Atkinson. With no  
**5. RATS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS:** Russ Petrotte presented the draft update of the RATS Public Involvement Process. The report is required by federal law and must be updated a minimum of every three years. This draft was prepared by staff, mailed out to everyone on the RATS mailing list and presented to the Technical Committee at their last meeting. A 45 day public review period is required and notice has already been published in the Rockford Register Star. No action is requested today but will be requested at the July or August meetings. Mr. Petrotte discussed the highlights of the report and its recommendations.

The report notes that the Technical Committee was expanded by adding the Boone County Highway Department, the Belvidere/Boone Regional Planning Commission and the Village of Cherry Valley as voting members and the Ogle County Highway Department as a non-voting member. The Technical Committee makes use of subcommittees to provide further public involvement. Recent subcommittee opportunities include the Regional GIS Subcommittee and a Subcommittee for Truck and Hazardous Cargo Routes. The Rockford Mass Transit District will also be forming citizen committees in the near future to help them evaluate their transit services.

In the section on Policy Committee representation, Mr. Petrotte said he attempted to summarize and document the apparent sentiments of past and current Policy members not to expand the Committee at this time. He said there are many factors to be weighed, not the least of which is maintaining an equitable balance of power within the Committee as well as the federally mandated emphasis to respect the needs of the central city (Rockford). He discussed the lengthy process that occurred when Machesney Park was added. He said Boone County has made a request to be added but Belvidere has not. If Belvidere becomes a member, the State has stated that the Belvidere STP allocation must be merged with the RATS STP allocation. He cited the portion of the report that listed factors in favor of and against adding Boone and Belvidere to the Committee. Another section states that current Policy Committee sentiment is not in favor of expanding membership at this time but would reevaluate the situation after the Year 2000 Census or if there were changes in federal  
**5. FY97 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM AMENDMENT:** Mr. Petrotte presented

further discussion or public comments offered, the resolution was approved unanimously.

guidance. He also cited a statement indicating membership requests might be looked upon more favorable if they were made in conjunction with other provisions that did not diminish the authority of the central city or otherwise significantly alter the current balance of power. He asked the Committee to review this section with their respective Policy Committee members and make sure it accurately reflects their position.

Mr. Petrotte mentioned RATS mailing procedures. RATS maintains an extensive mailing list that include the press, media and public libraries. This list is updated often and attempts are made to expand it periodically. This year a mailing was sent to all newly elected or appointed public officials and the township road commissioners have been added to the list.

David Noel suggested that we add the Road Commissioner(s) for the Township(s) in Ogle County in the vicinity of the Greater Rockford Airport. The Committee concurred. Mr. Noel also noted that the Village of Davis Junction has recently annexed land northward to the Ogle/Winnebago County Line. That puts them within a half mile of Edson Road which is the south boundary of the RATS Metro Area.

Mr. Petrotte said the report also contains schedules for the development of the UWP and TIP (annually), the Long-Range Plan (updated every 5 years), as well as this report and the federal triennial reviews (done every three years). There are also tables giving appropriate contact persons at the local, State and Federal levels.

David Dratnol said the correct spelling of the name of Owen Township Road Commissioner is Wiltfang not Wiltsang.

Mr. Petrotte went over the details of the PIP Development schedule on page 11. The schedule leads to the adoption of the PIP at the upcoming August 28th meeting.

Mr. Petrotte asked if there had been any further thought about have a local planning seminar on an annual basis as opportunity for further public involvement.

proposed Resolution 97-1 and its Addendum. He said this version reflects the comments offered by

the Technical Committee and Rick Strader of the Park District at the May 22nd Technical Committee meeting. He reviewed the recommendations (page 2 of the Addendum) for items to be added to the RATS Transportation Plan or otherwise acted on by RATS. In summary: (1) Add the Grand Illinois Trail and the Ice Age Connector as "arterials" on the RATS Regional Bikeway and Pedestrian Facility Map. (2) Declare the Perryville Path as an "arterial" link. (3) Further develop an "Arterial Pathway System" with the above as hubs. (4) Assign high priority to the implementation of the "Arterial Pathways System." (5) Endorse and ask local governments to adopt a resolution of bicycle/pedestrian facility support similar to the model resolution developed by Regional Planning Subcommittee. (6) Ask local governments to appoint Pedestrian/Bicycle Facility Coordinators. (7) Activate and sponsor a Pedestrian/Bicycling Advisory Committee. (8) Work with the above committee to comprehensively review and refine the RATS Pedestrian/Bicycle Component of the LRP. Mr. Petrotte said Resolution 97-1 was recommended for approval (unanimously) by the Technical Committee at their last meeting.

Bill Smith commented that it would be wise to make progress toward the establishment of the Advisory Committee before the Certification Review meetings this Fall.

David Noel moved that Resolution 97-1 be recommended for approval by the RATS Policy Committee. The motion was seconded by Dan Jacobson and approved unanimously without further comment or discussion.

**7. PROGRESS REPORTS ON CURRENT PROJECTS:** David Dratnol reported that the consultant, Barton Ashman, has submitted an existing conditions data report and is awaiting modeling information from RATS. Copies of the data report were offered to all present.

Russ Petrotte reported that a new version of the Boone County East State Street Study has been disseminated by the consultants for the Belvidere/Boone Regional Planning Commission. He said the RATS Policy Committee had been critical of previous versions of the study, particularly with reference to the lack of commercial areas near the Winnebago County line but also with the overall low densities/intensities proposed throughout the planning area. Questions were raised regarding the ability of these low densities to support the costs of sewerage the area. Some Policy Committee members are also concerned that

the constrained commercial may not be the "highest and best" use of the lands adjacent to Route 20. Mr. Petrotte said the latest version of the plan maps shows new small pockets of commercial on the far west end of the study area.

Dan Jacobson reported that the Loves Park Planning Commission is meeting this evening to do a final review of the draft Loves Park Comprehensive Plan. Following this, there will be a further public input process including public hearings. In response to questions, he said the RATS Transportation Plan and the Greenways Plan is the basis for the transportation element of the Loves Park Plan.

Mr. Dratnol reported that the County Highway Department plans to begin purchasing ROW for the Springfield/Harrison project in early 1998 and begin construction in early 1999.

Russ Petrotte reported that a GIS Subcommittee meeting has not been held recently but staff has been working on the following elements. (1) A letter was drafted and mailed to all taxing bodies in Winnebago County. The letter discussed GIS and the regional GIS concept and invited participation in the project. The only new responses were from Winnebago Schools and the North Suburban Library District. (2) A cooperative agreement has been drafted and reviewed by the City Legal staff. (3) An RFQ for consultant services has been drafted and is under review by the City's Purchasing Agent. Bill Smith suggested that the Township Tax Assessors be contacted regarding participation in the GIS.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS:** Russ Petrotte reported that a letter has been received from Dave Spacek (IDOT/ Chicago) indicating that the titles of all paratransit vehicles that were previously assigned to WCPS are now being transferred to RMTD and LPTS.

**9. OTHER BUSINESS:** Bill Smith reiterated that the RATS Certification Review has been rescheduled to September 24-25, 1997.

At this time Mary Allen Verdun arrived at the meeting. She had been delayed by an incident with lost children in the Machesney Park area. She reported the progress on IDOT projects in the area. (Project 93-15 is five percent constructed, 95-10 is 95 percent constructed, 93-20 is 76 percent constructed and 196-3A is 10 percent constructed.)

Dan Jacobson noted that the educational facility housed within the Loves Park City Hall is being relocated to another part of the building. Planning, Zoning and Building will be relocated into the area vacated by the educational facility. This will take place sometime in the Fall and RATS will be meeting in the new area when work is completed

Rich Lundin said he recently received a copy of an updated report from IDOT regarding Bikeways on Local Roads and Streets. He asked if RATS had received a copy and said he would obtain extra copies if anyone wanted them.

**11. ADJOURNMENT:** At 11:30 PM a motion was made by Dan Jacobson to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mike Stone and approved unanimously.