



Rockford Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization

POLICY COMMITTEE

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of Transportation, District 2

Meeting Minutes – RATS Technical Committee

Meeting Dates:

June 22, 2000 – Loves Park City Hall

June 29, 2000 – Rockford City Hall

Members Present: Jim Ryan, Rockford Public Works Department; Dan Jacobson, City of Loves Park; Mary Allen Verdun, IDOT District 2; David Noel, Winnebago County Planning; Denny Hendricks, Rockford Mass Transit District; David Nord, Village of Cherry Valley; Chad Atkinson, Village of Machesney Park; Todd Cagnoni, Belvidere/Boone Regional Planning Commission; Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway Department; Carlos Molina, Winnebago County Highway Department; Michael Zonzius, Greater Rockford Airport Authority; Wayne Dust, Rockford Community Development Department.

Others Present: Bob Soltau, Illinois Department of Transportation (Springfield); Gary McIntyre, RATS staff; Russ Petrotte, RATS staff; Vance Hultgren, Illinois State Toll Highway Authority; Janet Anderson, State Line Area Transportation Study.

1. CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES: In the absence of Steve Ernst, Dan Jacobson was appointed to chair the meeting by consensus of the members present. Mr. Jacobson directed the Committee's attention to the minutes of the May 18, 2000 meeting. Mary Allen Verdun said the first full-sized paragraph on page 2 would better reflect her statements regarding the planning and engineering work on the State-owned sections of Kishwaukee Street if the last sentence was changed to read: "She said the District office is not opposed to further study of the corridor but would not like to see their implementation schedules or work they have already accomplished delayed." Bob Soltau said his statement on this topic should also be corrected to read: "Bob Soltau said it

would be appropriate to delay consideration of the proposals until they are more fully coordinated with IDOT District 2."

Jim Ryan made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 18th meeting as corrected. The motion was seconded by Ms Verdun and approved unanimously.

2. AGENCY REPORTS: Agencies present reported on the status of projects that are currently in the implementation year of the FY 2000 TIP. The changes will be added to the monthly TIP progress report sheets.

Bob Soltau distributed instruction / information brochures on Governor Ryan's Illinois Tomorrow Program. He said the program has five goals: reducing traffic congestion, preserving open space, encouraging redevelopment, enhancing the quality of life, and encouraging local government partnerships. Examples of eligible projects might be the evaluation and modification of comprehensive plans, encouragement of innovative housing developments, preserving open space, developing walkable community plans, multi-community corridor plans, intergovernmental agreements and several others as noted in the brochures. No application deadline has been set yet but the middle or end of August might be a target. Only general purpose units of government can apply for the grants. The MPO can do the work under contract if desired. The work must be "planning" as opposed to "implementation." The funding is 80% from Special Planning and Research funds, 10% from State funds and a 10% local match. RATS and SLATS are being asked to distribute the brochures and application forms. There will be \$1 million per year allocated for downstate areas in this program and there will be

three years to the program. Applications must be funneled through the MPO but the MPO will not review

3. FY 2001 UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM (UWP): The Committee resumed discussion that was initiated at the last meeting regarding the possible use / application of funds for additional planning work. The MPO's immediately available planning funds have been earmarked for the traditional / regular planning work as documented in the proposed FY2001 UWP and as recommended for approval, last month, by the Technical Committee. Additional work identified by the Committee for which additional funding is being sought includes the following.

1. Dick Lundin explained that Boone County will be faced with previously unforeseen expenses related to land use and employment forecasting in conjunction with the RATS / SLATS modeling and transportation study. He asked if there could be additional funding, (approximately \$7,500) made available for this work.
2. Jim Ryan reiterated the proposed scope of the downtown entry study which will be a comprehensive land use and transportation study of the West State Street corridor between Meridian Road and downtown Rockford. (A request for funding for a similar study on Kishwaukee Street is being dropped at this time).
3. Several other members of the Committee spoke in favor of requesting / allocating additional funding to various aspects of WinGIS implementation.

The sources of funding available to accomplish the above work include the following:

1. An unexpended balance of PL funds available to the Rockford MPO in the amount of approximately \$175,000. These are parts of previous year's allocations to RATS that were not fully expended in the years they were allocated. The unexpended amounts became available to the MPO again, after the given fiscal year's work programs had been audited. This \$175,000 amount accumulated over the past several years. All or a part of this pool, at the discretion of the State, can be allocated to any eligible planning project. However, allocations from this source must be spent within a given fiscal year, i.e., between July 1 through June 30 of the next year. A 20% local match is required.

or rank the proposals.

2. Federal Special Planning and Research Funds (SPR). IDOT has access to a large pool of these funds and can suballocate them to worthwhile projects throughout the State. The RATS MPO must compete for these funds with all other areas and entities within the State. There are, potentially, hundreds of thousands of dollars available from this source depending on the merits of the projects proposed and the competitive demand or need of others seeking the funds. Once allocated to a project, the funds have a longer life-span than PL funds and can be expended over 2-3 years if necessary. A 20% local match is required.
3. Illinois Tomorrow funds. As described above, this is a special program established through Governor Ryan's office. They are SPR funds with an additional 10% added from the State coffers. They require a 10% local match, are awarded competitively, and can be expended over several years once awarded.

The merits of the three proposed projects were not in dispute. Basically all members of the Technical Committee and other meeting participants agreed that all three proposed projects were highly worthwhile and should be funded. Contention centered around:

1. Which projects should be funded first?
2. Whether all projects should be applied for simultaneously, or staggered, and whether the latter approach would increase our chances of getting all the projects funded?
3. How much funding should be applied for, especially with regard to GIS – to a lesser degree with the downtown entry study where it was decided \$150,000 should be sufficient to do the job?
4. Where the unexpended PL funds should be applied – because these funds need to be expended by a fixed deadline (June 30th), they should be applied to a project that can definitely use them within that time frame?

5. How the funds should be applied for and exactly when the UWP should be amended to include the new projects? Mr. Soltau suggested that the FY 2001 UWP, approved last month by RATS, should Jim Ryan and Wayne Dust spoke strongly in favor of the West State Street Downtown Entry Study and asked that the Committee request an allocation of \$150,000 in PL funds for this work. Mr. Ryan said the work could be accomplished before June 30, 2001. He said the study needs to commence as soon as possible so that it can take advantage of planning impetus in the area and it can have timely input into IDOT's plans to improve West State Street itself. He also noted the need to develop sufficient background information and plans to enable Rockford to make timely application for Illinois First funding for implementation work in this corridor. Mr. Ryan emphasized the special need of concentrating on this corridor: that the area is in need of revitalization efforts and that the corridor is a major entrance to the entire urban area and therefore impacts all the communities in the Rockford area, not just the City of Rockford. In response to a question, he said the City is not sure if it will apply for Illinois Tomorrow funds.

Dan Jacobson, David Noel, David Atkinson spoke strongly in favor of applying the more certain funding and/or as much funding as possible to WinGIS. Eight units of local government are committed to implementing WinGIS and because all of their budgets are tight, outside sources for WinGIS are desired. With all the activities that WinGIS must accomplish, they felt certain that if the County took an aggressive approach, the available funding could easily be applied to WinGIS before June 30, 2001. Mr. Noel said his only question was how much should we apply for because we could use all we can get.

Jim Ryan made a motion that we recommend approval of the Downtown Entry Study utilizing the existing fund balances as well as coming up with recommendations to the Policy Committee on different activities that we can apply for with SPR dollars for WinGIS. The motion was seconded by Michael Zonzius.

Mr. Soltau said he had suggested last meeting that the corridor studies be held back because more coordination appeared to be needed with the district office; at this time he suggested that it might be prudent to hold back on WinGIS because more coordination is needed with the IDOT central office.

be allowed to go through the full approval process by the State before we request an amendment to it.

Carlos Molina suggested that it might be better to hold back a decision on this matter so that more discussion can take place between the Technical Committee members and the Policy Committee. He asked if this matter could be laid over and reconsidered at a later time before next week's Policy Committee meeting.

Dan Jacobson asked for comment on Mr. Molina's suggestion. Mr. Noel spoke in favor of waiting and gathering additional information.

By consensus of the Committee, it was decided that this matter would be temporarily tabled so that additional research could be done. After the other agenda items for this meeting are discussed, this meeting will be recessed and scheduled to reconvene at 10:00 AM for resumption of discussion on this matter.

4. FY 2001 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP):

Discussion resumed on the proposed FY 2001 TIP for RATS. Russ Petrotte said the draft TIP had been mailed to all on the mailing list for public review. He called attention to Table 6 of the Transit Element, the list of capital projects. He noted that the Loves Park Transit System (LPTS) had held back in acquiring a large number of approved capital items in recent years. This was fortuitous considering their recent decision to dissolve LPTS in favor of contracting for transit service. This means that the funds for these capital projects can be de-obligated and re-obligated to projects or funding needs of the Rockford Mass Transit District. He also briefly discussed the operating and capital project proposals of RMTD for FY 2001 and the forecasted vehicle replacement needs of RMTD for the next several years.

Mr. McIntyre noted two minor corrections to proposed IDOT highway improvements and the addition of the Boone County projects. He discussed the area's STU balance which now stands at \$7,323,433. These funds are programmed for the Springfield / Harrison Avenue Connection Project and, following that, the Harrison Avenue Improvement Project (IL-2 to Mulford Road). He noted the Projects in Table 16 (the 1st year or 2001 list) and Table 20 (the list of uncompleted approved pro-

jects from previous years that will remain as TIP-authorized projects in FY 2001). He stated that information is still needed from Belvidere, Machesney

Park, Cherry Valley and Loves Park and asked that these agencies respond as soon as possible so that the TIP can be completed in timely fashion.

5. RATS TRUCK ROUTE MAP:

Mr. McIntyre reported on the progress of the development of the area's comprehensive truck route map. He noted there are still concerns regarding overweight and oversized vehicles. He said the subcommittee is working to develop two maps: one of existing designated truck routes and one that will propose a more complete system that will close obvious gaps or discontinuities. The proposed map will be presented to the public for review and may also be included as "proposed" in the Long-Range Plan update.

6. RATS AGREEMENT ON MASS TRANSIT PLANNING:

Mr. Petrotte reiterated that this is a Federal planning requirement that was emphasized at our last two Certification Reviews. He said we have defacto cooperation between RATS and the public transit agencies but the Feds want to see a more formal assurance. The current draft has been revised to remove LPTS because they are being dismantled. He said Boone County and the Boone County Council on Ageing still have some minor wording concerns with the current draft. After discussion, it was suggested that staff draft an alternative version that included only RATS and RMTD. This alternative could be approved immediately and would allow more time for resolution of the Boone County issues. Mr. Petrotte said he would do that, if it appeared the Boone County issues could not be resolved soon. A motion was made by David Noel to recommend approval of either the joint RMTD/BCCA/RATS agreement or the alternate RMTD/RATS agreement. The motion was seconded by Michael Zonzius and approved unanimously.

7.1 SPRINGFIELD / HARRISON EXTENSION

PROJECT: Carlos Molina said bids were opened on this project and the low bid was from Rockford Blacktop at \$6,171,410 (\$200,000 below the engineer's preliminary estimate). Because of concerns by some parties that a part of the project's lands has archeological value, further approval from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation is needed before the contract can be awarded.

A decision by the Advisory Council is expected in early July. If approved, construction can start a few weeks after that.

7.2 WinGIS: Mr. Petrotte reported that WinGIS is still on schedule regarding the ground control densification project and the WinGIS data evaluation Pilot Project is also on schedule.

8. COMMUNICATIONS: Mr. McIntyre said an announcement is expected on "enhancement funding and projects" later this Summer. He also said the RAT/SLATS Transportation Study is proceeding, but is somewhat behind schedule because of staffing changes within the consultant's organization.

9. OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Petrotte explained that there had been a misunderstanding regarding the flexibility of the deadline for the Long-Range Plan Update. Consequently, he is endeavoring to develop a draft of the update before the end of the month. This will be distributed to all on the mailing list for public review and comment. He asked all present to make a diligent effort to review the draft and pass on their suggestions for changes as soon as possible. He explained that we do not have the opportunity to make significant changes to the LRP at this time because the Year 2000 Census data is not yet available and the modeling results of the RAT/SLAT Transportation Study are still several months away. That in mind, we should be able to meet the July 27th deadline.

10. ADJOURNMENT: At 12:15 PM, with no further business to conduct, the meeting was recessed and scheduled to reconvene at 10:00 AM in the Rockford CD Department's Conference Room "B" on June 29, 2000. The Committee unanimously concurred with this continuance.

JUNE 29, 2000 CONTINUANCE OF THE JUNE 22, 2000 RATS TECHNICAL COM- MITTEE MEETING

Members Present: Dan Jacobson, City of Loves Park; Chad Atkinson, Village of Machesney Park; Carlos Molina, Winnebago County Highway Department; Michael Zonzius, Greater Rockford Airport Authority; Wayne Dust, Rockford Community Development Department; Steve Ernst, Rockford Public Works Department; David Noel, Winnebago County Planning; Rick McVinnie, Rockford Mass Transit District.

Others Present: Jim Ryan, Rockford Public Works Department; Bob Soltau, Illinois Department of Transportation (Springfield); Gary McIntyre, RATS staff; Russ Petrotte, RATS staff.

At 10:10 AM, with a quorum present, Steve Ernst reconvened the RATS Technical Committee meeting that had been continued from June 22, 2000.

Mr. Ernst asked the Committee to resume their consideration of the additional planning work items proposed over the last month. He said discussions over the last week with several of the Technical and Policy Committee members and other RATS participants had led to the following proposal:

1. That the City of Rockford be authorized to request \$150,000 in PL funds for use in conducting the Downtown Entranceway Corridor Study of the West State Street Corridor between downtown Rockford and Meridian Road.
2. That WinGIS, through RATS, be authorized to request \$25,000 in PL funds and be authorized, through RATS, to request a \$250,000 SPR grant. These funds would be used to assist WinGIS in a variety of tasks including new digital aerial photography, cadastral mapping and database development or consolidation and other GIS development needs as determined appropriate by WinGIS.

After a brief discussion, Dan Jacobson moved to recommend approval of the above proposal by the RATS Policy Committee. The motion was seconded by Rick McVinnie and approved unanimously.

Mr. Petrotte asked the Committee to briefly resume discussion, initiated under Other Business, of the **RATS Long-Range Plan Update**. He directed the Committee's attention to the June 26th Draft of the LRP. He noted the following corrections:

1. An incorrect, early, working version of Table 20 had been inadvertently included in the June 26th LRP draft. The corrected version of Table 20 was handed out. The corrected version separates "Enhancement Projects" as a category of its own, adjusts some of the totals in the other categories (because some enhancements were previously included in those categories and some unit costs

used in calculations were updated) and raises the total 25-year costs from \$1,047 million to \$1,078 million. Textual discussion of Table 20 in the June 26th LRP draft cited the enhancement projects and totals correctly, so no changes were needed to the LRP text itself.

2. The projected cost of Project 15 in Table 21 was inadvertently rounded to \$14 million. It should be \$13.8 million. This correction recalculates the total for Capacity Expansion Roadway projects from \$371.8 million to \$371.6 million.

Michael Zonzius asked that the two sentences on Page 35 of the draft be removed. These two sentences refer to previous considerations, by the Greater Rockford Airport Authority, of high-speed rail between GRAA and O'Hare Airport in Chicago. Currently the GRAA considers this proposal so implausible that they would prefer to have references to it removed from the Plan. By consensus, the Committee concurred and instructed Mr. Petrotte to remove the wording from the final draft.

Rick McVinnie noted the recent initiative by the IDOT Division of Public Transportation to establish centers throughout the State for the performance of special non-routine maintenance and repair of State funded public transit vehicles – especially for those transit providers who are not large enough to employ their own maintenance staff. RMTD is being asked to serve in this capacity for a large part of northern Illinois (outside of Chicago). He suggested that reference and endorsement of this concept be included in the Plan. By consensus the Committee concurred.

Mr. Petrotte said, the above corrections/suggestions will be mailed to the full mailing list on Friday, July 7, 2000 along with any other errors that may be uncovered.

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned by consensus of the Committee.