

RATS

**Rockford Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

POLICY COMMITTEE

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of Transportation, District 2*

Meeting Minutes – RATS Technical Committee

**Meeting Date: March 22, 2001
Loves Park City Hall**

Members Present: Bob Martin, Loves Park Transit/Public Works; Steve Thompson, Loves Park Planning; Mary Allen Verdun, IDOT District 2; Steve Ernst, Rockford Public Works Department; David Noel, Winnebago County Planning; Joe Vanderwerff, Winnebago County Highway Department; Denny Hendricks, Rockford Mass Transit District; Chad Hunter, Village of Machesney Park.

Others Present: Anna Gray, Boone County Council on Ageing; Carlos Molina, Winnebago County Highway Department; Boyd Lawrence, State Line Area Transportation Study; Bob Soltau, Illinois Department of Transportation (Springfield); Gary McIntyre, RATS staff; Russ Petrotte, RATS staff.

1. CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES: At 10:02 A.M. and with a quorum present, Steve Ernst called the meeting to order. Joe Vanderwerff moved to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2001 Technical Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Bob Martin. Mary Allen Verdun noted that she had not received the minutes. Steve Ernst said the minutes had been E-mailed. The motion to approve the minutes was approved by majority vote.

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. An updated report will be mailed, with these minutes, to all on the RATS mailing list.

Bob Soltau said the State is looking favorably on the RATS request for additional funding for WinGIS. He said he and Mr. Petrotte would be working on a formal request and pre-award letter.

Anna Gray reported that the Boone County Council on Ageing is developing its budget and grant requests for next year.

3. RATS UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM FOR FY 2002: Russ Petrotte distributed copies of the March 15th draft of the proposed FY 2002 Unified Work Program (UWP). This draft incorporates suggested changes to the previous draft. The most significant change is with respect to the WinGIS work. This draft earmarks requested IDOT funding for the first \$312,500 (\$250,000 Federal, \$62,500 local) of the Compilation Phase of the WinGIS countywide orthophotography project. He thanked the Committee members for reviewing the previous draft and forwarding spelling and grammatical changes to him.

Joe Vanderwerff moved to recommend that the Policy Committee approve submitting the March 15th draft to IDOT as the draft FY 2002 UWP. The motion was seconded by Mary Allen Verdun and approved unanimously.

4. RATS FY 2001 UWP AMENDMENT: Russ Petrotte stated that the proposed Resolution 2001-5 (not 2001-4, as stated in the Agenda) amends the FY 2001 UWP to include the proposed use of Illinois Tomorrow funds for the Smart Growth Initiative Study proposed by Winnebago County. Joe Vanderwerff moved to recommend Policy Committee approval of Resolution 2001-5. The motion was seconded by Mary Allen Verdun and approved unanimously without further discussion.

5. ROCKFORD MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT PARATRANSIT PLAN UPDATE: Russ Petrotte said the RMTD Paratransit Plan Update that was distributed at the last Technical Committee meeting a month ago was reformatted and mailed to all persons on the RATS mailing list, including the press and media. He said no comments have been received. He said the

Plan Update documents that RMTD is in full compliance with the requirements of the American's With Disabilities Act. All buses are equipped to assist persons with disabilities and paratransit service is provided throughout the entire services area, including the contractual service areas in Loves Park and Machesney Park.

Denny Hendricks moved to recommend Policy Committee approval of Resolution 2001-4 (not 2001-5 as noted in the Agenda). This resolution endorses the Paratransit Plan Update. The motion was seconded by Joe Vanderwerff and approved unanimously.

6. LPTS DESIGNATED RECIPIENT STATUS: Mr. Petrotte explained that since 1980, the Love Park Transit System had been named a "Designated Recipient" thereby qualifying it to receive Federal transit subsidies. With its cessation last July, this special designation is no longer needed. Proposed Resolution 2001-6 removes the designated recipient status. The resolution also commends LPTS for its exemplary delivery of public transit services over the last 20 years.

Bob Martin moved to recommend Policy Committee approval of Resolution 2001-6. The motion was seconded by Mary Allen Verdun and approved unanimously.

7. DESIGNATION OF RMTD AS THE COORDINATED SERVICE PROVIDER: Mr. Petrotte explained that IDOT's Division of Public Transportation (DPT) encourages the designation, in each urban area, of a public transit agency to act as the coordinator of transit services, especially paratransit services and related requests for funding assistance from IDOT/DPT. When LPTS was operating, this responsibility had been assigned jointly to RMTD and LPTS. In light of the cessation of LPTS, proposed Resolution 2001-7 rescinds the joint designation and names RMTD as the sole Coordinated Service Provider.

David Noel moved to recommend Policy Committee approval of Resolution 2001-7. The motion was seconded by Bob Martin and approved unanimously. (Note: Following the meeting Anna Gray spoke with Mr. Petrotte about the possible effects of the wording of 2001-7 on the BCCA's normal grant application process. Mr. Petrotte said it was not his intent, when he drafted the Resolution, was not to impair BCCA in any way. BCCA's long-standing paratransit services in Boone County are well coordinated with the services in the Rockford area and it was not his intent to impose further review procedures on their efforts. He indicated he would explore some alternative wordings that would make this clear, before the Resolution was presented to the Policy Committee for adoption.)

8. THE CAMPAIGN TO BUILD ILLINOIS TRANSIT: Gary McIntyre called attention the Campaign to Build Illinois Transit that is being promoted by several chapters of the Amalgamated Transit Union as well as several other special interest groups including Citizen Action/Illinois, Metro Seniors in Action, Citizens Taking Action, and the United Transportation Union. These groups have enlisted the aid of several members of the Illinois General Assembly in sponsoring House Bill 670 and Senate Bill 225. These bills would provide an additional \$4.4 billion dollars to maintain existing and fund new and expanded transit services throughout the State. The effort has received the endorsement of over 200 organizations, transit districts and municipalities in recent months.

Some Committee members expressed concern about where the funding would come from and whether the funding, if approved, would detract from other needs in the State, especially highway improvement needs. Bob Soltau said he was not sure of IDOT's position on the proposal and asked that action be delayed until the following month.

Russ Petrotte noted that several transit projects, originally programmed in the FY 2001 TIP, had to be deferred to FY 2002 and latter years because the State of Illinois did not have sufficient funding authorized to fund the local match requirements.

After further discussion, the Committee unanimously agreed to lay this matter over to the next meeting.

9. RATS TIP FOR 2002: Gary McIntyre reminded all members and participants to begin developing and prioritizing their projects for the FY 2002 Transportation Improvement Program. The goal is to have a draft available sometime in April or early May with final adoption in June or July.

10.1 PROGRESS REPORT ON SPRINGFIELD / HARRISON: Joe Vanderwerff reported that the project is on schedule. Construction is on schedule in the first phase and land acquisition and demolition is nearly completed for the second phase.

10.2 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE BOONE/WINNEBAGO/BELOIT MODELING STUDY: Gary McIntyre reported that the modeling study is proceeding smoothly. Staff and the Steering Committee are now concentrating on the land use forecasts.

11. COMMUNICATIONS: Gary McIntyre distributed a table that tracked gasoline prices in comparison to average income over the last several decades. The data shows that even though gas prices have risen steadily over the decades and dramatically in recent years, the cost of gas is a smaller proportion of the average person's income than it was decades ago.

Steve Ernst said the City of Rockford once again has a referendum on the April 3rd General Election ballot. The City is asking for authorization to sell \$7 million in bonds. The monies will be spent to improve or upgrade various roads within the City.

Bob Martin said the City of Loves Park is still contemplating the addition of Bell School Road as a designated truck route between Riverside Boulevard and Harlem Road.

12. OTHER BUSINESS: None.

13. ADJOURNMENT: With no further business to conduct, Joe Vanderwerff moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mary Allen Verdun and approved unanimously at 11:11 A.M..