

RATS

**Rockford Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization**

POLICY COMMITTEE
Mayor Douglas P. Scott, City of Rockford
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District Engineer Gregory Mounts, Illinois Department
of Transportation, District 2

Meeting Minutes RATS Technical Committee Loves Park City Hall – November 21, 2002

Members Present:

Chad Atkinson, Village of Machesney Park;
Steve Ernst, Rockford Public Works;
Richard Gualandi, IDOT District 2;
Denny Hendricks, Rockford Mass Transit;
Elizabeth Kinsinger, Rockford Community Development;
Craig Lawler, Belvidere Public Works;
Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway;
Robert Martin, Loves Park Public Works;
Sue McLaughlin, Winnebago County Planning;
Carlos Molina, Winnebago County Highway;
David Noel, Loves Park Planning;
David Nord, Village of Cherry Valley.

Others Present:

John Donovan, FHWA Springfield;
Paula Hughes, RMTD;
Tim Lett, McDonald Transit
Gary McIntyre, RATS staff;
Rick McVinnie, RMTD;
Shane Mitchell, RMTD;
Russ Petrotte, RATS staff;
Jim Ryan, Rockford Public Works;
Bob Soltau, IDOT Springfield
Bob Spenle, SLATS;
Pat Wilkins, ATU Local 1333.

1. CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

At 10:08 am, with a quorum present, Steve Ernst called the meeting to order. Mr. Ernst called the Committee's attention to the minutes from the September 26 and October 17, 2002, meetings. Carlos Molina reported that the Harrison Avenue / Springfield Road connection is open and 99% complete. In response to questions, Steve Ernst noted that the Charles Street improvement is functioning well, even better than expected. Bob Martin reported that the Riverside Bridge has been reopened (all four lanes) for the winter season. The second half of the work on the bridge will commence in March. David Noel reported that Loves Park and Machesney Park have been

David Noel moved to approve both sets of minutes without changes or corrections. Elizabeth Kinsinger seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

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.

Chad Atkinson and Bob Soltau reported that two, possibly three, new Illinois Tomorrow grants have been awarded in the Rockford area: one awarded to Machesney Park in the amount of \$50,000 for a corridor study along IL-173, primarily between IL-251 and I-90; another to Winnebago County in the amount of \$100,000 for the continuation of the "Smart Growth" study that was started last year; and a third, although we are not entirely sure of the funding source, to Machesney Park in the amount of \$50,000 for a planning study of the Roosevelt Road corridor between IL-251 and Alpine Road. These awards may need to be amended into the TIP and/or UWP. Mr. Soltau also reported that there are still two more rounds of the Illinois Tomorrow program to go.

meeting with IDOT on the I-90/IL-173 Interchange. The proposed design consists of a half diamond on the east and partial cloverleaf on the west. A public information meeting will be scheduled soon, perhaps in December. Bob Spenle reported on various projects in the SLATS area.

3. VILLAGE OF WINNEBAGO REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP: Proposed Resolution 2002-12 was presented to the

Committee for consideration. The resolution will admit the Village of Winnebago to the Technical Committee as a voting member. A motion was made by David Noel to recommend Policy Committee approval of the Resolution. The motion was seconded by Sue McLaughlin and approved unanimously by the Committee.

4. RATS ADJUSTED URBANIZED AREA AND METRO PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES:

Russ Petrotte presented proposed Resolution 2002-13. This resolution with its attached map shows the proposed Adjusted Urbanized Area as was derived in the working session the Committee had on this topic during their last meeting. He noted that the boundary between RATS and SLATS proposed here has already been approved by SLATS.

A motion was made by Sue McLaughlin to recommend approval of Resolution 2002-13. The motion was seconded by Bob Martin and approved unanimously.

5. RATS METRO PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY DESIGNATION:

Russ Petrotte presented draft maps showing a proposed Metro boundary based on the population and employment forecasts that have recently been developed in conjunction with the Rock/Winnebago/Boone Traffic Simulation Model Study. He said staff is relatively confident of the employment forecasts but the population forecasts still need work. By recently adjusting the base year data to the 2000 Census levels we inadvertently created some situations where the 10 and 25 year forecasts show less dwelling units than currently exist. More recently, we corrected this in the Beloit area, but the problem is even more pronounced in the Boone County area where Vanderwalle actually forecasted some substantial DU losses in some zones. We are currently adjusting the Vanderwalle forecasts so that there are no losses forecasted. Another adjustment we are considering is to the TAZ geography to make the TAZs better correspond to the boundaries of the planned development areas in Boone County.

6.2 WEST STATE STREET CORRIDOR STUDY: No report.

Currently, we have several TAZs that have large areas planned for rural/ag use and large areas planned for intense population or commercial growth within the same TAZ.

Mr. Petrotte asked the Committee members to consider the following questions over the next month. How far east to take the Metro Boundary in Boone County? Should we go as far east as Capron and Garden Prairie? How far west should we extend in Winnebago County? Should we include Pecatonica and Durand?. Mr. Soltau noted that the goal, when defining the Metro Area, is to include the area that is likely to be urbanized in 20-25 years and this matter will have to be reconsidered again in 10 years. That in mind, he recommended being conservative and not taking large rural areas just to include a small city or village.

In discussing development to the south of the Rockford area, members of the Committee questioned the impact of the intermodal hub being constructed in the Rochelle area. It was suggested that we ask a representative of the City of Rochelle or somebody with knowledge of the freight plans there, to come to a RATS meeting for a briefing.

6.1 SPRINGFIELD/HARRISON PROJECT: Steve Ernst congratulated the County on the completion of the project. Carlos Molina reiterated that the project is complete with the exception of some of the landscaping and intersection work and other minor aspects. He thanked everyone for their assistance on the project. Mr. Petrotte requested that the County give consideration to naming the roadway after the late Ousley Walker. Mr. Walker was a long standing and enthusiastic supporter of both the project and the revitalization of the west side of Rockford. The Committee discussed some of the minor details of the projects that need to be completed.

6.3 WINNEBAGO COUNTY SMART GROWTH STUDY:

Sue McLaughlin reported that a draft of the final report on Phase 1 will be distributed soon. The

new Illinois Tomorrow award for Phase II was again noted.

6.4 ROCKFORD AREA RAILROAD CONSOLIDATION STUDY: No report.

6.5 ROSCOE/ROCKTON TRANSIT STUDY: No report.

6.6 WinGIS: Steve Ernst noted that a WinGIS Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for later today.

6.7 RATS / SLATS MODELING STUDY: Gary McIntyre reiterated that staff is reworking some of the forecast data and a draft report on the First Phase is underway.

6.8 RMTD ROUTE & SCHEDULE ANALYSIS: Rick McVinnie introduced Tim Lett of McDonald Transit, the consultant employed by RMTD to conduct the Route and Schedule Analysis. Mr. Lett gave a detailed presentation on the progress of the study to date. He said that RMTD is looking for ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their service. One of the big challenges they face is that the great majority of growth in the Rockford area has been to the east while the majority of transit riders remain in the west. RMTD would also like to attract new riders, especially non-transit dependant persons who currently travel by auto. As part of the study RMTD will consider the need for an east-side transfer center but that will be more the subject of a later follow-up study. RMTD is also looking at opportunities and needs to expand service northward to the I-173 area and toward Roscoe, and also, eastward toward Boone County and Belvidere. There was a brief discussion of the possible use of traffic signal preemptions for buses and its pros and cons. Mr. Petrotte asked that consultant to also focus on the needs of transit dependant persons, persons with low-income who are disenfranchised from the automobile, and the needs of racial and ethnic minorities, many of whom are more dependant on transit in our community. These groups comprise the largest part of the "traditionally-underserved" that Federal planning guidance directs all MPOs to consider in the Metropolitan Planning Process

The consultant will be continuing work on this study through December and January. Public input is welcome. In fact, one such meeting is scheduled this afternoon in the Rockford City Hall for the expressed purpose of soliciting public comment.

6.9 RMTD EAST SIDE TRANSFER CENTER STUDY: No report.

7. COMMUNICATIONS: Mr. Ernst and Mr. Soltau reported that Roger Rocke is retiring and Greg Mounts will be the new District Engineer for IDOT District 2.

8. OTHER BUSINESS: Mr. Petrotte noted that he has begun work updating the RATS Public Involvement Process Report. He is hoping to have a draft of the report available for inspection/comment in January. As part of this, he is sending a mailing list update and public participation survey to all persons on the current mailing list. He distributed copies of a draft of the survey and asked all present to review it and get back to him with suggestions. He will be doing the mailing late next week.

Mr. Soltau noted that the Long-Range Plan is due to be updated in 2005. That effort should be a large part of the FY 2004 (next year's) work program. Steve Ernst noted the Illinois Transit meeting scheduled for next Monday.

9. ADJOURNMENT: With no further business to conduct, David Noel moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Rich Lundin and approved unanimously at 12:05 pm.