

RATS

Rockford Area Transportation Study
Metropolitan Planning Organization
City of Rockford, Public Works Department
425 East State Street, Rockford, IL 61104

POLICY COMMITTEE

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RATS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES November 18, 2004

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dennis Hendricks, RMTD; Joe Vanderwerff, Winnebago County Highway Department; Bob Martin, City of Loves Park – Public Works Department; Rick Gualandi, IDOT-District 2; Adam Tegen, Belvidere – Boone County Planning Department; Katie Coble, City of Rockford – Community Development Department; Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway Department; Craig Lawler, City of Belvidere – Public Works Department; and Steve Ernst, City of Rockford – Public Works Department.

OTHERS PRESENT: Tommy Unzicker, Citizen; Bob Soltau, SLATS; Angelo Caruana, Citizen; Sharon Durbin, IDOT-Springfield; Carl Mikyska, IDOT-Springfield; and Gary McIntyre, City of Rockford and RATS staff.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 19, 2004, RATS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

With a quorum present, Chairman Steve Ernst called the meeting to order at 10:04 A.M.

Joe Vanderwerff made a motion to approve the RATS Technical Committee meeting minutes of August 19, 2004. The motion was seconded by Rich Lundin and approved unanimously without any changes or corrections.

2. AGENCY REPORTS

All agencies present gave a report on their projects that are currently underway.

The City of Rockford will have a Public Informational Open House from 4 P.M. to 7 P.M. this afternoon (11/18/2004) at the Lutheran Church at the southwest corner of the intersection of Harrison Avenue and Mulford Road for the Harrison Avenue DRA project.

Dennis Hendricks of RMTD said that new software will be available to their paratransit users that will reduce the amount of time it takes to determining their ride times for this service when they call in.

The City of Rockford adopted its new land use plan, entitled the 2020 Plan. Its is available on the City's web site, www.ci.rockford.il.us

3. RATS 2035 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Ernst said TY Lin has been hired to do the RATS 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRP). TY Lin will divide this 2035 update into six components. Aviation, Rail, Highway, Freight Transportation, Public Transportation, and Bicycle/Pedestrian. Under those six sections, the plan will be subdivided into ten selected categories. They have reviewed the previous RATS LRP, restructured the goals of RATS to meet the current federal guidelines and regulations and have started to prepare written sections of the 2035 LRP. They are currently reviewing all the land use plans of all the jurisdictions within the RATS structure.

Gary McIntyre said that the land use subcommittee will be meeting to update the land use projections. The new target year will 2035 for employment and dwelling units. Mr. McIntyre also said a Bicycle/Pedestrian Citizens

Advisory Subcommittee has been formed and will be meeting for the first time on December 1st at Rockford City Hall. He said based on the newspaper articles on this issue, he has received about 30 e-mails and phone calls from citizens regarding their involvement with this subcommittee.

Mr. Ernst said the team at TY Lin has superior experience in all the modes of transportation and land use planning, and led the City of Rockford / RATS staff to select them.

Mr. Ernst said that the Federal Highway Administration has issued their Planning Emphasis Areas for FY-2005. These six areas are as follows:

- (1) Consideration of safety and security in the transportation planning process;
- (2) Linking the Planning and NEPA processes;
- (3) Consideration of management and operations within planning processes;
- (4) State Department of Transportation (DOT) consultation with non-metropolitan local officials;
- (5) Enhancing the technical capacity of planning processes; and
- (6) Coordination of Human Service Transportation.

These six PEA will be included and addressed in the RATS 2035 LRP.

4. STATEWIDE I.T.S. ARCHITECTURE

Mr. Ernst reported that this state-wide effort links information on the highway system to the highway users by means of electric-routing selected detail information to the user (such as the electric message display overhead signs, GPS of transit vehicles, and other computer / telecommunication technology. He distributed information of this item to the Committee members. Mr. Ernst also said that the State of Illinois has a web site for this topic, www.ilits.org.

He said that the State will be divided into districts, by IDOT's district offices, that this information will be available to all the jurisdictions and the general public. Fire, EMS, police and all other transportation information will be centered in these hubs.

He said that the Statewide I.T.S. must be adopted by April 15, 2005.

In the Southwest Wisconsin ITS architecture prepared by WisDOT the Illinois counties of Winnebago, Boone, Ogle and DeKalb counties were assembled together. Due to the proximity of the two MPOs in the area (RATS and SLATS) a combined ITS Regional Architecture will be submitted that removes Ogle and DeKalb counties. The DeKalb MPO will be covered by the overall statewide architecture document.

Mr. Ernst mentioned the City of Rockford involvement into "Rock-Net," which a area-wide network of high-speed cable fiber optic loop within the Rockford urban area.

5. PROGRESS REPORTS ON:

5.1 Winnebago County Smart Growth Study

Joe Vanderwerff said the first meeting of the Steering Committee for the second phase of this study will be meeting today (at Noon). The Committee selected Teska Association Inc. and the Metropolitan Planning Council.

5.2 WinGIS

No report.

5.3 Commuter Rail Feasibility Study

This study is still underway and almost completed. There is a press conference on Monday, November 22, 2004, to announce the final results and recommendations of this study.

5.4 Springfield Corridor Planning Study

Mr. Vanderwerff said that the consultant is working on the land use component of this study.

5.5 RMTD East Side Transfer Center

This study is on-hold until a request-for-proposals can be prepared and issued.

5.6 IL 173 Corridor Planning Study
No report.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. McIntyre said RATS received its FY-2005 to FY-2007 TIP approval letter from FHWA and FTA.

Mr. Ernst announced another FHWA publication on freight transportation.

Mr. McIntyre said an error was in the original meeting dates memo for 2005. He distributed an update list of meeting dates for 2005.

Mr. Ernst said there is a web-site, www.interstate-guide.com, which is promoting a Business Interstate 39 route in the Rockford area. This is not an official FHWA, IDOT, ASSHTO or TRB web site. It only is for information to the general public on interstates in the USA.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. McIntyre reported on an air quality workshop he recently attended. Essentially, as a result of the cool summer in 2004, the initial air quality measures put Winnebago County and Rock County below the Ozone ascendance level for violating this type of air pollutant.

Also, one of the topics that was discussed was the issued of idling reduction. As a result of emissions improving from automobiles as a result of new technology being used by the automobile manufactures, the increasing numbers of vehicles on highways and local streets, the increasing number of trucks moving throughout our Country and the increasing number of stops (while in transport and at truck stops), he stated that the area's Ozone air quality will be an issue that RATS and SLATS will continue to monitor. He stated that the current issue that is facing the country is the increasing number of trucks and those trucks that are idling, especial at truck stops while they are stopped there. He pointed out that two new truck stops will be opening at the interchange of I-90 and Rockton Road (in Roscoe) in the very near future. As a result of the nearby toll plaza on I-90 and other facilities and factories whose emissions affect air quality, the ozone issue will require frequent monitoring. He said that new technology is available at truck stops to reduce trucks idling. Basically, the State of California is leading the country in implementing new technology in this area. Following a brief discussion on other details of this issue, the Committee concluded that staff should continue to track these air quality issues.

8. ADJOURNMENT

At 11:30 A.M., with no further business to conduct, Bob Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vanderwerff and was approved unanimously.