

RATS

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

POLICY COMMITTEE

*Mayor Douglas P. Scott, City of Rockford
Mayor Darryl F. Lindberg, City of Loves Park
Board Chairman Scott H. Christiansen, Winnebago County
President Linda M. Vaughn, Village of Machesney Park
Mayor Frederic C. Brereton, City of Belvidere
Board Chairman Susan L. Anderson, Boone County
Deputy Director Gregory L. Mounts, Illinois Department of
Transportation, Region 2*

RATS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES November 17, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chad Atkinson, Village of Machesney Park Planning; Joe Vanderwerff Sr.; Steve Ernst, City of Rockford Public Works Department; David Nord, Village of Cherry Valley; Craig Lawler, City of Belvidere Public Works Department; Mark Painter, Village of Winnebago; Jim Johnson, RMTD; Rich Lundin, Boone County Highway Department; Adam Tegen, Belvidere – Boone County Planning Department; Sue Mroz, Winnebago County Planning and Development; Dan Jacobson, City of Loves Park Public Works; Nathan Bruck, City of Loves Park Community Development; David Noel, Village of Roscoe Economic Development.

MEMBERS MISSING: Greater Rockford Airport Authority, IDOT-District 2, City of Rockford Community Development.

OTHERS PRESENT: Sharon Durbin, IDOT Springfield; Angelo Caruana, Local Resident; Arianne Clarke, City of Rockford; Sherri Van der Wege, Baxter & Woodman; Bunny Anderson, Illinois Tollway Authority; Wayne Vlk, Winnebago County Highway Department; Gary McIntyre and Hayes Morrison, City of Rockford and RATS staff.

Meeting was called to order by Mr. Steve Ernst of City of Rockford Public Works Department at 10:22am with a quorum present.

1. Approval of Minutes of March 17, April 21, May 19 & August 18, 2005 RATS Technical Committee Meetings:

There were no minutes to approve, however Mr. Gary McIntyre mentioned there was a misprint on the November 17, 2005 agenda for item #1. This item should read, APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 17, APRIL 21, MAY 19 & SEPTEMBER 22, 2005 RATS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS. (The August 18, 2005 minutes should be replaced with September 22, 2005).

2. Agency Reports:

Winnebago County Highway Department – Perryville/Baxter road project will open next week. Perryville/Mill Road construction is temporarily suspended. Riverside/Mulford construction is working on the right turn lane westbound to northbound. Perryville/Crimson ridge temporary signals will be letting November 21st with a completion date of December 2005.

City of Rockford – No update.

City of Loves Park Public Works – Pearl St. Bridge project is 100% complete.

Village of Machesney Park – Working on Roosevelt Road preliminary engineering survey.

Rockford Mass Transit District – Funding finalized for the paratransit facility. Bid letting will be early 2006.

City of Loves Park Community Development – No update.

Village of Cherry Valley – No update.

Winnebago County Planning and Economic Development – Working on long range planning grants to hire a planner and consultant to prepare an updated land use plan for Winnebago County. The County has currently identified nine firms in the area that could do this work. Joe Vanderwerff Sr. and Judy Barnard are completing the grant application for Illinois Tomorrow funds.

Belvidere – Boone County Regional Planning – The I-90 corridor draft plans will be presented to the Belvidere City Council Monday, November 21st. On December 20th at 6pm the final plans will be presented at an open house with the consultant available to answer questions. Boone County Board and Belvidere City Council will view the final plans on December 20th at 6pm.

Boone County Highway – Genoa Road is 85% complete. The remaining item is installation of traffic signals at the Tollway and Wal-Mart, which are delayed.

City of Belvidere Public Works – There are four pending projects related to the Chrysler Plant expansion that are still in the works and partially federally funded. The 6th St/ 7th Avenue project is 95% complete with the second part to be completed in spring 2006. EDP funding around the Chrysler plant is \$1.8 million. The consultant-led engineering proposal has been sent to the State for review of the two phases. Temporary signals on South Appleton will be installed over the next few weeks. Retooling is complete and production will begin mid-December.

Mr. Steve Ernst requested a tour for the MPO members of the transportation improvements made around the Chrysler plant. Mr. Craig Lawler thought it possible to bring a representative from Chrysler to a technical committee meeting to give a presentation or possibly have the policy meeting at Chrysler. Mr. Gary McIntyre stated he would try to work on setting up the next policy committee meeting in December in Belvidere to tour the Chrysler plant road improvements and meet with representatives of Chrysler.

Village of Roscoe – No update.

Village of Winnebago – Elias Street improvement project is 98% complete with only punch items remaining.

Illinois State Toll Highway Authority – I-294 Open Road Tollway at the urban park plaza opened Sunday, November 13th and reception was better than expected. The preliminary staging for the South Beloit plaza will begin November 21st and will continue through June 2006. Construction on the new bridge begins in two weeks and will be complete August 2006. I-355 construction is underway. DesPlaines River Road Bridge construction begins next year and will remain open through fall 2007. I-294 Southbound should be completed in December or spring 2006. Construction will then shift to complete the remaining lanes. I-90 conversion of the Elgin toll plaza to Open Road Tollway and widening of I-90 is in the engineering stage. Ms. Bunny Anderson reported 73% of toll transactions are now I-PASS. She thanked Winnebago County Highway Department for their assistance. Mr. Joe Vanderwerff Sr. added the Riverside Bridge construction was hired by Winnebago County. The existing diamond interchange and remaining bridge widening should begin in December.

IDOT Division of Urban Program Planning – Two free training classes will be offered. The first is Freight training, which discusses how freight traffic impacts communities and includes PDH's. This two-day class will be held December 7 and 8 in Rock Island. The second is a community impact class held in Springfield. For more information contact Sharon Durbin.

3. RATS FY2007 Unified Work Program (UWP):

Mr. Gary McIntyre stated IDOT would begin sending proposed marks for planning funding after January 2006. If there is an obligated balance IDOT will need to be informed when and how it will be used. Illinois Tomorrow grant applications are due in the RATS office by December 9, 2005. RATS must have them in Springfield by

December 16, 2005. Mr. Ernst mentioned the City of Rockford is requesting \$50,000 for an ITS deployment plan for fiber optics.

Mr. McIntyre also handed out a spreadsheet detailing the preliminary UWP budget for the FY-2007 fiscal year. He pointed out two projects that are being carried over, City of Rockford Land Use & Zoning and RATS – MPO Bike/Pedestrian Study. Both of these projects are multiple year projects. There was not enough money in the VISION SUITE software program budget, so some funding was moved from the Bike/Pedestrian study, which lead to the split between the two years not being 50/50. Mr. McIntyre also stated the 2007 planning funds would remain the same as 2006 under the scenario in his spreadsheet. Mr. Ernst interjected, stating there will be a 33% to 40% increase in funding which will need to be decided upon. Mr. Ernst suggested that this additional funding could be used to add another planner to the RATS staff.

Ms. Sharon Durbin mentioned IDOT is becoming serious about safety issues, and believed any MPO's addressing safety issues will receive additional funding, between \$725,000 to \$6 million.

Mr. McIntyre requested project or funding ideas to be submitted in time for the January meeting.

Mr. Joe Vanderwerff Sr. suggested a four-year project to hire a planner and a consultant for planning for all of Winnebago County, including changes to building and zoning codes. He believed the position should be filled under Winnebago County Planning and Development and would mirror other agencies' community plans to help create a coordinated plan for the county. PL funds could be used for labor for the next 6 months, totally \$25,000, but the four-year project would cost approximately \$100,000. Mr. Vanderwerff Sr. also stated Winnebago County requested funding from Illinois Tomorrow for this study, but if denied he intends to ask RATS for funding. He mentioned the study would be short-term and would work with all the different areas, agriculture, industrial, etc. to create a coordinated community plan that is continuously reviewed. Ms. Sue Mroz pointed out I-39 as an example – this area is prime for industrial growth and any residential housing would be a detriment to future growth. Mr. Vanderwerff Sr. concluded by stating this plan is a major goal of Winnebago County Chairman Scott Christiansen.

Mr. Steve Ernst informed the committee of the need to update the 2020 plan. He suggested hiring a consultant to speed up the process. Currently, there are four in-house staff working on the plan. Ms. Sue Mroz indicated this is also a prime goal of Chairman Christiansen.

4. Expansion of the RATS Technical Committee:

Mr. Steve Ernst explained the last Policy Committee meeting wanted to bring in someone focused on economic development, freight movement, and sanitary service for advice. RATS staff has drawn up a starting list of agencies that might possibly be invited to attend RATS meetings, probably as a non-voting member to discuss long-range planning issues. Mr. Ernst continued, stating these agencies would not be required at every meeting, but their expertise in their field could aid the technical and policy committees with planning. Actual names need to be drawn up before voting in January. Discussion ensued regarding some of the agencies and how the committees would function with additional members. Some of the agencies are as follows:

- Rockford School District 205
- All MPO Bound School Districts
- Both Local Universities (Rock Valley, Rockford)
- The Three Area Hospitals
- City of Rockford Chamber of Commerce
- Rockford Area Economic Development Council
- Park Communities Camber of Commerce
- Belvidere Chamber of Commerce
- Growth Dimensions
- Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Rockford Park District
- Winnebago Forest Preserve District
- Boone County Conservation District

Belvidere Township Park District
Winnebago Park District
Rock River Water Reclamation District
North Park Water
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Illinois Department of Employee Securities

5. IL 173 CORRIDOR PLAN

Mr. Gary McIntyre spoke of a resolution passed by the Technical committee in July 2005 regarding IL-173 and west of the Tollway for an IDOT improvement plan. In September, Mr. McIntyre received correspondence from IDOT regarding some changes to the plan not part of the original resolution. These changes include access between IL-251 and Forest Hills and a right-in/right-out at the north side between Alpine and Continental driveway. The committee had no objections to the changes, but believed this was something IDOT needed to discuss with the community rather than the MPO. Mr. Steve Ernst asked if Mr. McIntyre would find out exactly what IDOT was asking the MPO to do, endorse the changes or amend the resolution. If a resolution is required, it will be voted on in January.

6. RATS staff presentation on the history of the STP-urban funding in the Midwest

Mr. Steve Ernst presented information on Illinois transportation funding. His presentation suggested that a 1992 resolution which superceded Federal transportation funding regulations was having a direct negative effect on RATS funding. Mr. Ernst believes it imperative that IDOT show an exact accounting of their funding, detailing the percentage breakdown of how much money will be used to fund the MPO's. He wondered whether RATS should inform IDOT we no longer wish to honor the 1992 resolution. Mr. Ernst indicated he would be compiling his information in a written paper and would present it in full once completed. There were no objections to Ms. Sharon Durbin's request to invite Randy Blankenhorn and Chuck Schmitt from IDOT to a technical committee meeting to give a clearer picture regarding this issue.

7. PROGRESS REPORTS

7.1 Winnebago County Smart Growth Study

Project is ongoing.

7.2 Springfield Corridor Planning Study

No report.

7.3 NICRI Commuter Rail Alternative Analysis

NICRI members presented the results of the feasibility study to the FTA and requested \$2.4million to continue with an alternatives analysis. The City of Rockford is completing the alternative analysis project information form.

7.4 RMTD East Side Transfer Center

Site one was ruled out due to the inability to reach an agreement with the landowners. The City of Rockford Zoning division is investigating site two.

7.5 IL 173 Corridor Planning Study (by Machesney Park)

Working on a draft to present to the technical committee.

7.6 RATS 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

The draft print turned out well and compact discs will be available at the next meeting. Mr. Gary McIntyre is working on the public comment section now.

8. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Gary McIntyre mentioned approval by IDOT of the functional classification maps.

McHenry County placed an RFQ for a countywide model study. Mr. Gary McIntyre indicated RATS would need to coordinate model data with McHenry County.

Mr. Gary McIntyre handed out a letter he received from the Illinois League of Bicyclists. The League is requesting the opportunity to complete a map of bicycle path routes. Mr. McIntyre believed this fit in with the RATS Bike/Pedestrian route plan.

Mr. McIntyre passed around an instructional sheet for locating the RATS website and strongly suggested looking there for information before contacting RATS staff.

At 12:10 P.M., with no further business to conduct, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.