RATS

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

POLICY COMMITTEE

Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey, 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 Catherine H. Ward, Boone County
Deputy Director George F. Ryan, Illinois Department of Transportation, Region 2

RATS POLICY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
May 24, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Linda Vaughn, Village of Machesney Park; Frederic Brereton, City of Belvidere; Lawrence Morrissey, City of Rockford; Darryl Lindberg, City of Loves Park; Catherine Ward, Boone County; Steve Chapman, Winnebago County.

OTHERS PRESENT: Gary McIntyre, RATS staff; Steve Ernst, RATS Study Director; Tonia Vrolyk, City of Rockford, Public Works; Joe Vanderwerff, Sr., Winnebago County Highway Department; Bob Soltau, Stateline Area Transportation Study (SLATS); David Taylor, NICTI and Boone County Board, Les Nunes, IDOT Division of Urban Program Planning.

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND REPRESENTATION

Ms. Vaughn called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 29, 2007 RATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

At the request of staff this item was laid over to the June RATS Policy Committee meeting.

4. RATS FY 2008 UNIFIED WORK PROGRAM (UWP) - RATS RESOLUTION 2007- 2

Mr. Ernst and Mr. McIntyre explained the details of the FY 2008 Unified Work Program. RATS received an increase of roughly $14,000 in planning funds for the new fiscal year that will start on July 1, 2007. Additionally RATS has secured an additional $80,000, to be spread out over FY 2008 and 2009, to perform a regional freight study and model conversion project. The additional funds will come from a discretionary funding source, Special Planning and Research (SPR), and will provide $40,000 each fiscal year.

The March 29th draft UWP has been out for public comment since it was approved by the Policy Committee. Mr. McIntyre explained that all of the public comment was positive and only required some minor changes to the draft UWP, which is detailed on Page 39.

Mr. McIntyre also brought attention to Chart 7 on Page 23 that shows the funding matrix for the next fiscal year. All of the RATS member agencies that receive planning funds can find the amounts in this table. Mr. Ernst explained that upon Policy Committee approval today of the final version of this document he would take the contracts to the Rockford City Council for final approval.

Mr. Lindberg made a motion to approve RATS Resolution 2007 – 2. The motion incorporates all changes to the March 29th draft as well as authorizes the RATS Policy Committee Chairman to sign the MPO Self-Certification Page which is shown on Page 44. Mr. Brereton seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously (6-0).

5. RATS FY 2007 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) - RATS RESOLUTION 2007- 4

Mr. Ernst explained that RATS Resolution 2007 – 4 amends the transit portion of the current TIP so that RMTD can apply for the grant dollars for the NICTI project. These dollars come from Federal earmarks secured by Congressman Manzullo and Senator Durbin as part of the approval of the Federal Transportation Bill, SAFETEA-LU. The 20% match will come from the State budget of the IDOT Division of Public and Intermodal Transit, which has yet to be approved in Springfield. This action allows RMTD to initiate the grant request paperwork as early in the process as possible.

Mr. Lindberg made a motion to approve RATS Resolution 2007 – 4. It was seconded by Ms. Ward and passed unanimously (6-0).

6. RATS BICYCLE / PEDESTRIAN STUDY

Mr. McIntyre explained that two public informational open houses have been scheduled to solicit public comment on the RATS Bicycle / Pedestrian Study. The dates, times and locations are:

Thursday, May 31, 2007, 11 AM – 2 PM, Rockford City Hall, Formal presentation 12:15 PM
Thursday, May 31, 2007, 4 PM – 7 PM, Machesney Park Village Hall, Formal presentation 5:45 PM

Public comments will be accepted until June 21, 2007. Mr. McIntyre made copies of the 170+ page draft document available on CD. The final version of the plan document will include a section discussing public comments as well as a section that will discuss the new RMTD buses that include bike racks.

7. RATS FY 2007 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) - RATS RESOLUTION 2007- 5

Mr. McIntyre explained that the Winnebago County Highway Department wishes to move an existing project from the 2nd Year Element of the TIP to the Annual Element (1st Year). The project is the resurfacing of Baxter Road – Beltline Road from Falcon Road to Lindenwood Road. The funding source for the project would also change from County funds to Federal rural funds (STP-R). The Technical Committee did not take specific action on the request because the exact details were not known at the time, but did authorize staff to bring it directly to Policy Committee because it was only a slight change to an existing project.

Mr. Morrissey made a motion to approve RATS Resolution 2007 – 5. It was seconded by Mr. Chapman and passed unanimously (6-0).

8. PROGRESS REPORTS

8.1 Northwest Tollway I-90 Improvements: Report at Technical Committee from Bunny Anderson detailing all of the tollway projects. Schedule of meetings related to the tollway:

Thursday, May 24, 2007, 6 PM, North Suburban Library, public hearing on Riverside Blvd improvements and the toll increases to support the improvements.

Friday, May 25, 2007, 7:30 AM, South Beloit Ramada Inn, panel discussion sponsored by South Beloit Chamber of Commerce. Panel members from IDOT, WisDOT, Tollway and SLATS to discuss transportation projects in the region and their importance to economic development.

8.2 Winnebago County Smart Growth: Both reports for the Village of Rockton and the Village of Winnebago are complete. This item can be removed from future agendas.

8.3 NICTI Alternatives Analysis: Executive Committee meeting on May 23, 2007 addressed issues of immediate concern. First topic was the NICTI budget, and the need to secure the State match. Mr. Taylor encouraged the elected officials to contact the State officials and encourage them to pass a State budget. Second was the need to invite the counties, cities and villages along the four remaining NICTI routes to a meeting to explain the FTA process for station area planning, and the implications on local land use planning. Meeting tentatively set for June 19, 2007, 6 PM at Northern Illinois University.

8.4 RMTD East Side Transfer center – No report.

8.5 IL 173 Corridor Planning Study – No report.

8.6 RATS and Regional Planning: RATS subcommittee will meet on Wednesday May 30, 2007 at 1:30 in Loves Park City Hall to discuss the future of the MPO as a regional planning agency. Additionally, HB 1134, which is proposed to provide State dollars for regional planning, has been amended. The original bill proposed a takedown from IDOT's highway program at ½ of 1%. The funding was proposed to be split at 60%/30%/10% for CMAP/Downstate MPOs/Rural areas. The original bill would have generated roughly $411,000 for the Rockford MPO in FY 2008. The amended bill now proposes a flat $5 million dollar annual allocation from general revenue to a planning fund that would be split 70%/25%/5%. The downstate MPO share of this $5 million allocation would provide roughly $190,000 to the Rockford MPO. Staff will keep the Policy Committee informed of the status of this bill as it moves through the General Assembly.

8.7 RATS TIP for FY 2008: The FHWA – Illinois Division staff has requested that RATS submit the forthcoming TIP earlier than normal, moving up the process from August to June. This action was requested so the TIP could be reviewed and approved using pre-SAFTEA-LU guidelines, which would be advantageous to any projects wishing to use federal funds. This will necessitate a RATS Policy Committee meeting in June. Staff anticipates that the new TIP will need amendments shortly after approval due to anticipated award announcements for IDOT's safety program (HSIP) and the Safe Routes to School program.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Next RATS Policy Committee meeting will be on June 28, 2007 at Machesney Park Village Hall. The election of officers will be on that agenda.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business Ms. Vaughn entertained a motion to adjourn. It was moved by Mr. Lindberg and seconded by Mr. Brereton and unanimously approved.