



February 23, 2022

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on February 23, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. in the CyRide Conference room. Vice President Ludwig called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. with Trustees Beatty-Hansen, Cain, Clayburn, and Schainker present..

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 26, 2022, AND FEBRUARY 4, 2022, MINUTES: Trustee Beatty-Hansen made a motion to adopt January 26, 2022, and February 4, 2022, transit board minutes as presented, and Trustee Clayburn seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

NEW BOARD MEMBER: Director Neal welcomed Kit Clayburn as our new student board member. Kit is a sophomore at ISU majoring in Animal Ecology and Biology and is an off-campus senator.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING REQUEST FY 2026: Director Neal requested approval to submit a Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) application to the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO). The AAMPO receives approximately \$1.8 million each year for transportation capital projects funded at 80% through the federal STBG grant program. If approved, the grant application for FY 2026, due March 31, 2022, would request \$225,000 to upgrade a 40' bus to a battery electric bus.

The Transit Director recommended approval of Alternative #1, to approve submitting a grant request for \$225,000 in federal STBG funds from the AAMPO. If awarded, these federal funds would help with planned bus purchases and move CyRide toward a more efficient, sustainable fleet.

Trustee Beatty-Hansen made a motion to approve Alternative #1, approving a grant request of \$225,000 in bus capital funds from the AAMPO for STBG federal funds in FY 2026. Trustee Clayburn seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSIT FOR A HEALTHY PLANET STATEMENT AND GOALS: Director Neal requested approval of the healthy planet statement and goals. The board previously committed to developing a climate action or sustainability plan at the September 15, 2021, board meeting as part of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Healthy Planet Challenge; plans are due to the FTA by April 15, 2022.

Director Neal reviewed the policy statement and goals developed by staff to align with the FTA's goals and match the funding levels outlined in the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). The plan utilizes information from The Zero Emissions Roadmap study done in 2019 by the Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) that determined the current facility and route structure could support 17 battery

electric buses by 2050. She explained that the board could expand the commitments outlined in the plan, but a larger capital investment by the board would be required.

Director Neal provided an overview of the goals. The first goal is considered short-term, with a 3-5 year timeline. It focuses on replacing 7% of the fleet with battery electric buses, the use of biodiesel, installing solar-powered bus shelters where appropriate, using energy-efficient support vehicles, and maximum usage of cooling towers to heat and cool the facility. The second goal is considered long-term and includes replacing 18% of the fleet with battery electric buses by 2050. Other considerations were outlined in the third goal, including the exploration of alternative bus technology and fuels, facility improvements to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG), promotion of transit ridership in the community, installation of charging stations in the parking lot, and the programming of other sustainable projects as funding becomes available.

The Transit Director recommended approval of Alternative #1 or #2, stating that Alternative #1 would be ideal as it keeps spending within the framework of the board and City council approve CIP and aligns with the Zero Emissions Roadmap developed by CTE. Either choice formally demonstrates CyRide's commitment to sustainability to the FTA.

Trustee Beatty-Hansen asked if it was possible to know how far off this plan is from achieving similar goals to the city's Climate Action Plan, which set a target of 83% GHG reduction by 2030. Trustee Beatty-Hansen further inquired what additional expenses there would be to achieve the city's goal. Director Neal said that the 83% reduction of GHG is a very ambitious goal based on today's circumstances. She explained that the statement and goals being presented are a starting point that could be revised to have more ambitious goals in the future. Staff has been working with the city's consultant but believes that it may be beneficial for the board to hire their own consultant that would use transit data and tools evaluated by the American Public Transit Association (APTA) to have an accurate understanding of the impacts relevant to transit.

Trustee Beatty-Hansen said that no suggestions had been made to the City of Ames at this time. She added that the goal to increase ridership would help reduce carbon production and that the Ames City Council has set aside extra funding for climate action related projects. Trustee Schainker confirmed that \$1.2 million had been budgeted for climate action projects.

Transit Planner Shari Atwood pointed out that 83% of the bus fleet is 74 buses. If all 74 buses are replaced in the next seven years, only between 7-21 buses might be federally funded, leaving the rest to be funded locally at approximately \$900,000 each. Director Neal added that a new facility would be needed to accommodate the changing fleet, requiring approximately 20 acres of land and \$40 million. Trustee Schainker said that he would like to revisit the plan after the City's Climate Action Plan suggestions were made.

Trustee Cain made a motion to approve Alternative # 1, approving CyRide's climate action statement and the three sets of goals for submission to FTA, with the understanding the plan would be reviewed in upcoming years. Trustee Clayburn seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

MONTHLY REPORT:

New Articulated Bus: A 60' articulated Nova bus was delivered earlier this month, replacing a 40' bus, increasing the articulated bus fleet to seven. The goal is to have 10 articulated buses on the Orange route since they have 50% more capacity than a 40' bus and require no additional operating costs.

Dial-A-Ride Survey and Contract: CyRide's Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service is contracted with Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Authority (HIRTA). Each year a customer satisfaction survey is conducted to evaluate the service. Staff is contacting DAR customers via phone to increase the number of responses. Once the results are tabulated, we will share this information with HIRTA and the transit board at a future meeting. Additionally, HIRTA will be contacted to confirm their interest in providing DAR services next year.

Valentine's Day: Special Valentine's Day messages were displayed on the bus destination signs and generated positive comments from the community.

Solar Panel on CyRide Roof: In response to an inquiry made by the City Council, staff has done a high-level review of the potential addition of solar panels on the roof of the CyRide building. Currently, the on-call Architecture and Engineering firm is being consulted to evaluate the solar panels' impact on energy consumption. Another factor that will need to be accounted for is the positive environmental value of the facility's existing white, reflective roof, which offsets GHG. The review process could take several months due to the A&E firm's workload, but the information will be shared with the board as it becomes available.

Fuel Contract: Fuel is currently purchased on a contract with Renewable Energy Group (REG) on an over or under cost of the market rate through June 30, 2022. Staff will be working with the Purchasing Department to release a new request for proposal (RFP) and exploring if our contract could be combined with other City of Ames departments to reduce costs. Results of the RFP will be presented to the board at a future meeting.

Trustee Ludwig inquired if there were concerns about the \$2.75 per gallon that was approved in the budget and if any amendments to the budget were needed. Director Neal said that when \$2.75 per gallon was put into the budget, fuel was averaging \$2.50 per gallon. The past five loads of fuel averaged \$2.77 per gallon, and the market rate today at the Department of Transportation is \$2.84 per gallon. It was noted there have been some savings from not running as many extra buses. We will continue to monitor the fuel market and keep the board updated.

Infotainment Monitors: New buses are being equipped with infotainment monitors that display upcoming stops, transfer points for the route, and provides advertising revenues. In the past, the advertising contractor purchased tv screen type monitors for advertising in the six articulated buses, but these monitors are no longer functioning properly. Staff will be working with the Purchasing Department to issue an (RFP) to replace these units and will present the RFP results to the board.

Transit Advertising Contract: CyRide currently contracts with Houck Transit Advertising to sell the advertising space on the interior and exterior of the buses. Since the contract expires on July 30, 2022, staff will be working with the Purchasing Department to issue an RFP. Once completed, the results of the RFP will be presented to the board.

Ames Intermodal Facility Leases: Currently, Ames Police Department, Executive Express, and Jefferson Lines have leases at the Ames Intermodal Facility. Each year the lease rate for Executive

Express and Jefferson Lines is negotiated with a proposed increase based on the Producer Price Index (PPI), which would be an increase of 0.8%. Due to the continued economic issues and the low PPI increase, no increase is being proposed. The Ames Police Department is interested in renewing their no-cost lease for an additional five years. Later this spring, all leases will be formally presented to the board for consideration.

Second Quarterly Report: A detailed system report for the second quarter of FY 2022 was summarized. Ridership is trending up. Trustee Cain asked if data from FY 2019 and FY 2020 could be included in future comparisons.

Spring meeting dates:

- March 23, 2022, 4:00 p.m.
- April 27, 2022, 4:00 p.m.
- May 25, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

Adjourn: Trustee Clayburn made a motion to approve adjourning at 4:32 p.m. Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

Liz Jeffrey, President

Cheryl Spencer, Recording Secretary