

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

October 12, 2007

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met October 12, 2007, 4:00 p.m. at City Hall Conference Room 233. President Goodman called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. Trustees in attendance: Ayers, Hynak and Schainker. Arriving later: Trustee Anders. Absent: Trustee Madden. Public in Attendance: Brenda Witherspoon, and several students from the Ames High School Government class.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Hynak made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 24, 2007 and September 7, 2007 Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees meeting. Trustee Ayers seconded. (Motion carried unanimously).

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Brenda Witherspoon, Ames resident, asked the transit board to consider additional service to the Green route on Sunday mornings. Ms Witherspoon asked if the Green route could begin service earlier on Sunday morning so it could meet up with the Red and Blue routes. Ms. Witherspoon suggested the transit board contact the faith communities located along the Green route and possibly survey passengers on the Green route to see if additional Sunday morning service would be beneficial.

Following some discussion, Trustee Schainker commented that the board has provided service similar to Ms. Witherspoon's request as an experiment and commented that additional research and surveys might not be needed. Trustee Schainker asked CyRide staff to calculate the cost of earlier Green route service on Sunday morning and bring the cost estimate to the transit board to consider during the route planning meetings in November or December.

MILLION MILE AWARD – JOHN SORBO: President Goodman presented the Million Mile Award to John Sorbo who has driven 25,000 hours without a preventable accident and has been an employee of CyRide for 14 years. Safety is very important to the CyRide organization and is one the four principles for CyRide drivers.

FY09 ROUTE PLANNING: Director Kyras told the transit board that route planning is part of the fall budget process. To determine where service modifications should be made, CyRide staff reviews requests received from the public, current service statistics, and community growth. Through this process, eight routes have been identified as candidates for modified service. The more promising route planning options, as discussed by the board at this meeting, will be refined by CyRide staff and brought to the board for consideration at upcoming transit board meetings.

CyRide staff also requested the transit board forward any requests they received for additional service to CyRide staff for route planning. The routes CyRide staff has compiled are:

1. Blue South has shown a 10.2% ridership increase. Option A for Blue South could add additional service Friday evening by increasing frequency from 40 minutes to 20 minutes and extending the route to restaurants, movie theaters, and commercial businesses along the South Duff corridor from 7:15pm to 9:46pm.

Option B adds additional service on Saturday's increasing frequency from 40 minutes to 20 minutes from 5:15pm to 9:46pm.

Option C for Blue South adds additional service on Sunday's to operate every 30 minutes from noon to approximately 10:00pm.

2. The Yellow route targets the residential neighborhood in the Southdale area and with the addition of Wal-Mart and the significant business community along S. Duff Avenue, customer demand is anticipated to increase. Additionally, CyRide has received many requests for service to the Movies 12 theaters on weekends located near S. Duff. Service could operate on Sunday's, every 40 minutes from 10:45am to 6:00pm.
3. Brown route has received requests from residents for additional evening hours for transportation to attend activities within the community. Option A could add 3 hours of weekday evening service during the school year with a frequency of 40 minutes from approximately 6:00pm to 9:00pm.

Option B could add 3 hours during summer week nights providing 40-minute frequency from approximately 6:00pm to 9:00pm.

4. A few years ago, the Silver route was eliminated due to budget constraints. This service provided transportation for students returning from the weekend and parking at the "S" lot at the Iowa State Center. Comments have been received that the lack of current service in this area in the evening poses a safety risk for students walking after dark. This service option could provide transportation on Sunday evenings from approximately 6:00 to 10:00pm with a frequency of 30 minutes from the parking lot to residence halls on campus
5. Last spring, CyRide was contacted by the management company representing the apartments along Billy Sunday Road asking for public transportation for their residents. Additionally, CyRide receives transportation requests from groups arriving at the Ames Airport needing transportation to campus. This route option could provide transportation hourly for these two areas on weekdays from 7:30am to 5:30pm. The cost estimate for this service is \$65,824.

The transit board discussed this option and expressed concern about Billy Sunday Road not being an arterial road and not meeting bus standards. Transit board members also felt people who arrive at the Ames Airport and are requesting service from the Ames Airport to campus could find alternative transportation. The board concluded that the expense of this route is probably not feasible.

6. In researching why residents do not use transit, it was found that one major reason why Northridge/Northridge Heights residents do not use transit is due to convenient, nearby service on Stange Road. One option that has been successful around the nation for residents in areas like this that are more suburban is zone or on call service. This could help diversify CyRide's ridership among more of the community.

Zone or On Call service is a door-to-door service within a zone where residents would call to schedule a trip and be delivered to a designated bus stop on an existing route. Residents could pre-schedule a trip every day or ride whenever they needed transportation. A per trip surcharge could be charged to help defray the cost of this service. A small bus would be used on this service to comply with the arterial street weights and fit more easily in a residential neighborhood.

The board expressed an interest in this service, but it was felt that more information and time to design a service of this nature would be needed. Discussion revolved around re-examining this option next year based on additional work by staff over the next year.

7. CyRide currently offers airport shuttle service for Thanksgiving, semester break, and spring break. The Airport Shuttle Service enhancement option would be to add three trips per day for three days before school starts in August and at the end of school year to the Des Moines Airport from Ames. This option was created because CyRide received several requests for airport service prior to the beginning of the ISU school year and after school ended last May. The lack of airport service before and after school starts poses particular problems for international students.

Transit board members suggested contacting student organizations and the student and scholar's office to have them market this service.

8. Food service is not provided at the Wallace/Wilson residence halls so the Department of Residence has contracted, for the last two years, with CyRide for a minimal service to transport residents to food service on campus. One option would be to absorb this service within CyRide's budget as the service is anticipated to be needed in the future.

Option A would provide service every 20 minutes during the weekday from noon to 3:15pm and from 6:00 – 8:15pm.

Option B would provide service every 20 minutes each Saturday from 11:00am to 2:15pm and from 6:00 – 8:15pm.

Option C would provide service every 20 minutes each Sunday from 11:00am to 2:15pm and from 6:00 to 8:00pm.

Trustee Anders commented that visibility of the bus on this route is the key to ridership. Further, he indicated that a great marketing tool for the service would be to change the route to consider parking at a different location or travel on the street to the East of the Towers for more visibility. CyRide staff indicated this would pose a safety issue because there is not enough room for the bus to make the corner at that intersection. Trustee Anders asked CyRide staff to refine this option.

Trustee Hynak commented that he would not be comfortable in considering more service along Duff Avenue unless controlled crosswalks and crosswalk corridors were addressed for pedestrian safety. Following a lengthy discussion, the transit board deemed the pedestrian safety issue on Duff Avenue as an

Ames City Council topic and letters of concern should be sent to the Ames City Council for their consideration.

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN: At the August transit board meeting, the board discussed updating the Facilities Master Plan. Director Kyras developed a scope of work, which included looking at three possibilities for future bus storage. They are expansion of the existing facility, satellite bus storage and a new bus facility. Director Kyras contacted three firms for their input on the scope of the work, estimated budget and amount of time to conclude this study. Funding to pay for this study could be provided from the operating or capital budget; a one-time contribution of \$80,000 from the three funding parties; in purchasing two not three buses in FY07-08; or by reducing the capital closing balance by \$60,000 and request \$20,000 in AAMPO planning dollars. This project is eligible for AAMPO funding and a portion of the study could be funded if approved by the committee.

Trustee Anders made a motion to approve Alternative #1 for funding of a Facilities Master Plan Update with one of the options stated. Motion seconded by Trustee Ayers.

Following further discussion, Trustee Schainker indicated that he felt that proceeding with the full study, in looking at the three options, was premature considering the current construction of the facility. Director Kyras explained that the current facility hampered continued growth of the system particularly as it related to articulated buses recommended in the Transit Feasibility Study as the current bus storage portion of the building would not accommodate these vehicles. The transit board suggested moving forward with only one of the options in looking at the possibility of expansion within the current site. Additionally, they indicated that other options could be looked at if this was not feasible. The motion on the floor was postponed until more information can be gathered and brought back to the transit board for further discussion at future meetings.

President Goodman excused himself from the board meeting at 5:20pm and Vice President Hynak continued the meeting.

PEER REIVEW RESULTS: Director Kyras highlighted the results of the peer review CyRide had been asked to participate in earlier in the year. The peer review focused on system performance, transit management and policies. The other transit agencies included were Transfort – Fort Collins, Iowa City Transit, CATA (State College, PA), CityBus and CUMTD (Champaign-Urbana). The results of the Peer Review indicate CyRide is a very efficient system in comparison to the peer systems even with one of the smallest populations and student enrollment of the systems examined; CyRide has the highest number of part-time employees; one of the oldest fleets, one of the largest ridership increases because of the fare free system implemented in 2002 and 2003; CyRide is the only system without a marketing budget; CyRide offers more fare selections; and more routes operate through campus.

CYRIDE 75 MILLIONTH RIDER: Director Kyras informed the transit board that CyRide would reach another milestone by achieving its 75 Millionth rider. A low-cost celebration was planned for this event with press releases, destination signs illuminating this milestone, a small gift bag for 13 riders (one for each route) and a grand prize award for one rider.

Trustee Anders made a motion to approve a budget of \$350 and activities for recognition of CyRide's 75 millionth rider. Seconded by Trustee Ayers. (Motion carried unanimously.)

QUARTERLY OPERATIONS REPORT: Tom Davenport, Transit Coordinator, went over the Quarterly Operations report with board members before the meeting was called to order.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Director Kyras reported construction on the building is on schedule. One problem that has developed in the last month relates to the channel glass that was to be used in the building. If this material was used, it would require a \$16,000 change order, plus a delay of 4 months due to unforeseen manufacturing issues. CyRide staff proceeded with choosing an alternative product to avoid the cost, delay and other problems associated with the channel glass. A change order should be written up in the next month reflecting this change and several smaller ones.

Other highlights pointed out by Director Kyras included: an accounting of the revenues generated in excess of expenses from the State Fair shuttle, an update on the Iowa City buses, an explanation of the positive driver situation that has been experienced this fall due to the training staff's efforts in recruiting and staffing; and a discussion regarding the public input process for the Transit Feasibility Study.

SET TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: Next transit board meeting is scheduled for November 5 at 4:15 p.m. in City Hall Conference Room 135.

ADJOURN: Trustee Ayers made a motion to adjourn at 5:35 p.m. Seconded by Trustee Anders. (Motion carried unanimously.)