

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

August 29, 2008

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on August 29, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. in CyRide's conference room. The meeting was called to order at 8:02 a.m. by Vice President Hayek. Trustees in attendance: Madden, Schainker, Popken and Munoz. Absent: Trustee Anders.

AWARD RECOGNITION: On behalf of CyRide, Vice President Hayek presented Ray Coffey with the Million Mile Award. Ray has driven for CyRide for 22 years and safely driven 25,000 hours, which is equivalent to 1 million miles without a preventable accident.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Madden made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 1, 2008 Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees meeting. Trustee Popken seconded. (Motion carried unanimously).

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comments.

FACILITIES STUDY PRESENTATION/FINDINGS: In 1984, CyRide moved to its present location on the outskirts of ISU campus with the expectation of growing to a 25-vehicle bus system. CyRide has nearly tripled that expectation since moving to this site 24 years ago, currently at 70 total vehicles with five expansions to the facility. In February 2008, CyRide's Board of Trustees approved entering into a contract with Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB America) to complete a Facilities Study on CyRide's current site of operations to determine its space needs for the next 20 years. This summer, a study team consisting of CyRide management and Iowa State University's Facilities Planning and Management met with PB America to discuss future physical space needs for administration, operations, maintenance, bus fueling/wash bay, bus parking and employee/visitor parking. The goal was to identify possible solutions for the current site while meeting these future space requirements.

Adam Manuel, Project Manager with PB America and Director Kyras, led the discussion with the study team and identified the following challenges/issues regarding the site and facility:

- Future Space Requirements – 11 acres needed (current site 4 acres). CyRide is currently land locked with no room for expansion.
- Bus Storage
 - Facility Ceiling Height – All future large buses will require a ceiling height higher than the existing facility.
 - Bus Expansion Expectations – 84-89 large buses; one bus/year over the next 20 years with the expectation of ridership growth to 5.7 million in that timeframe. CyRide is currently at capacity at 59 large buses.
 - Safety – Vehicles are currently parked too closely within the facility. Engine compartments cannot be accessed due to the proximity of the next bus and is a concern for the fire department in fighting a fire in the building. For reliability, buses start better in a climate controlled indoor environment.

- Future Use of Site/Building – Any future non-transit use of site/building was discussed as repayment would need to be made to the federal government for their share of the facility. ISU also expressed concerns about the size of the building becoming too large to reuse for a different function.
- Maintenance Shop – Future maintenance bays will be needed to meet the anticipated ridership/bus growth. Additionally, mechanics will need to be able to work on buses past 5:00 pm which can not currently be done due to the centralized configuration of the shop area which is landlocked after this time period. The maintenance department must end its day at 5:00 pm as circulation flow of the buses is not conducive to allow a second shift.
- Employee Parking – Additional on-site parking is needed for future employees to maintain reliable transit service.

Nine possible solutions were identified within the current site location with the focus of these efforts on CyRide's bus storage and maintenance needs. It was ascertained that not all of the needs could be met on the current site, but a best solution was identified. This best option met 80% of CyRide's needs but would be at capacity in ten years. The construction cost of this best option was estimated at \$25 million.

As a result, Director Kyras explained three options the study committee identified. CyRide staff is looking for direction from the transit board on which of the three options to begin pursuing from a design and financial standpoint.

Option A – Begin design of the study teams' preferred on-site option utilizing the existing \$1,527,000 in federal dollars and begin securing additional construction funding for this option. Estimated Cost - \$25,039,000.

Option B – Begin the process of securing federal/state funding for an off-site, satellite bus storage building for approximately 20 buses, a supervisor office, restrooms and common area for drivers to gather. This site could include an option for a new maintenance shop if the decision to not improve the existing site was made at a later date. It was also discussed that this option provided the board with the greatest flexibility to grow or retract as ridership changed. Estimated Cost - \$5,904,000 with possible additional growth in future phases.

Option C – Begin the planning process to relocate the entire CyRide facility to a new location while looking for rental storage space to meet immediate bus storage needs. Estimated Cost - \$40,478,000.

Discussion on the anticipated growth of CyRide occurred of whether ridership would reach 5.7 million passengers with stagnant ISU enrollment and slower residential growth predicted. The Board questioned whether an additional bus would be added each year as a result and challenged staff to look at whether the Ames community would garner that additional ridership. The board asked whether a relatively inexpensive temporary building could be constructed that would last 10 years. However, Adam Manuel explained that a less expensive building also did not last as long and that it was a better long term investment to build to a "modest" level which is similar to CyRide's existing facility. The board discussed whether an 11 acre site was feasible within the Ames community in a centralized area. It may be

more feasible to have a satellite location to house 20 buses only needing 2-3 acres. Additional discussion continued regarding the effect that ISU policy had on ridership through more/less parking ramps and subsidizing passes.

Following a lengthy discussion, the board members agreed more sensitive data was needed to move forward, but there is merit in exploring alternative site locations. Trustee Madden asked CyRide staff further explore the possibility of engaging in a study identifying possible off-site locations (ISU campus and City of Ames) as well as options for funding this endeavor and provide the Board with a scope of work at the next meeting.

FY2009 MARKETING PLAN: Director Kyras reminded the transit board that CyRide applied for Iowa's Clean Air Attainment Program funding in the fall of 2007 to support marketing activities in an effort to keep CyRide's ridership over 4.2 million rides. The application was approved for a two-year project of \$31,300 per year with implementation to begin July 2008. Documentation of the marketing plan vision was included in the board packet. CyRide will target three areas to include students, the business community and residents residing in apartment complexes.

A proposal was presented to the board that would market to ISU students through advertisements in the Daily, welcome back events with ISU and the City of Ames, summer mailings to students, and information mailings to students annually. Secondly, CyRide would work with the business community targeting 1-2 businesses per year on subsidizing bus passes for their employees. Marketing supplies would be developed and lunch and learn promotions would be completed for these business promotions. Lastly, CyRide would develop marketing materials emphasizing the environment and financial savings in riding transit while targeting residents at three apartment complexes each year to promote its services

Additionally, CyRide would implement Google Transit's trip planner on its website to allow residents to obtain schedule information. Director Kyras explained that a CyRide employee has developed much of the required information needed to proceed forward with Google Transit. Typically trip planners have an associated high cost due to software purchases but Google Transit provides this service at no cost to transit systems wanting to add this service to their website. The only stipulation is that CyRide maintain the data once the trip planner is operational.

CyRide staff requested input and direction on marketing activities for the next year from board members. The board concurred with staff direction on the marketing plan. CyRide staff will present the final marketing plan at the September 2008 meeting.

FINAL 2007-2008 BUDGET ANALYSIS: Director Kyras provided information on the budget analysis for fiscal year 2008. Operating expenses were 3.0% higher than the amended budget with fixed route expenses being 3.8% over budget and administrative support over by 0.5%. Dial-A-Ride expenses were down 2.3%. Operating revenues were slightly up by 1.8% due to increased shuttle, farebox and advertising revenues.

The closing balance decreased 8.1% from the amended budget showing a loss of \$76,785 bringing the balance below the board policy of 15% to 13.7%.

Director Kyras explained the bright spot in the closing balance for the year is the GSB Trust Fund. The current deficit in this fund balance was expected to improve by \$54,490 but it actually improved \$127,909 because of higher enrollment leaving the GSB Fund balance at -\$138,556 at the close of the fiscal year. At the current rate, this fund balance will be in the positive one year earlier than planned.

The capital closing balance was +\$721,193 higher due to timing and project delays under building, bus and planning study line items. This money will be spent down in the 2008-2009 year instead.

QUARTERLY OPERATIONS REPORT: Highlights from the Operations Report: ridership increased 7.7% for FY2008; for the first time ever, CyRide completed the year without any accident claims; safety improved; and the two main performance criteria used by CyRide, passenger/mile and passengers/revenue, improved indicating good efficiencies for our system.

Maintenance expenses increased by 19.8% due to fuel prices. Fixed-route ridership increased 7.5%, not including shuttles and the farebox revenue increased 11%.

Dial-A-Ride ridership decreased due to harsh winter weather; however, expenses were up due to fuel prices.

Ridership on Moonlight Express continues to increase, with the largest increase of +39.1% in the last quarter of the fiscal year.

TRIENNIAL REVIEW RESULTS: Director Kyras informed the Transit Board that a transit system can be deficient in over 300 areas of the federal transit program. CyRide staff prepared documentation and responded to approximately 230 questions in 23 broad categories in preparation for the on-site review. The results of the review found CyRide deficient in two of the 23 categories requiring corrective action, with two advisory comments. The areas of deficiencies were as follows:

Maintenance – CyRide was deficient in keeping facility maintenance records to ensure that 80% or more of the inspections were being performed. CyRide will begin completing a spreadsheet and submit this to the Federal Transit Administration’s Regional Office as required by November 26, 2008.

Drug-Free Workplace – CyRide was deficient in demonstrating an on-going awareness program of a drug-free workplace. CyRide will develop a flyer to place in all employees mailboxes four times per year on the first day of the quarter. This flyer will be provided to the Federal Transit Administration’s Regional office as evidence of CyRide’s on-going awareness program as required by September 29, 2008.

In addition, two advisory comments were made in the Safety and Security area. CyRide was advised to inform passengers of how to deal with unusual behavior or suspicious packages aboard the bus. Advertising signs will be developed and

placed in the interior of each bus alerting customers to these issues. The other comment involved having CyRide involved in a regional intelligence sharing task force. CyRide has asked guidance from FTA's regional office on this issue. These endeavors will be completed by October 1, 2008.

FY2009 PROJECT REQUEST/PRIORITIZATION: During the July 2008 transit board meeting, Director Kyras discussed a number of projects that staff could take on in the upcoming year. Staff asked board assistance in prioritizing these projects as all could not be accomplished in the next year. The projects fell into three broad categories: Service Projects, Facility Projects and Marketing. Major projects having associated grant funding or planning requirements that must be completed were highlighted for the board.

After much discussion, the board directed staff to continue analyzing and pursue a possible CyRide Vanpool Program for the Ames community, Bus Stop Plan Implementation, a Fare Free Project and Google Transit.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT AUGUST 2008:

Director Kyras highlighted her report for August.

- RAGBRAI ridership was 1,602.
- ISU Transportation Survey results indicate interest in free fares for faculty and staff, expanded vanpool service and coordination of carpool matching. Findings were discussed with ISU Parking Staff and additional ISU officials.
- Fleet Planning replacement plan is being examined and staff is concerned that the 2-3 new buses per year will not allow for the timely replacement of twelve used buses purchased for student fare free program from 2001. Staff is researching whether funding is available to purchase newer used buses as an alternative.
- Ames to Iowa City Regional Service needs an additional \$15,714 of the \$114,818 budget to fund the first year of service. Potential sources for this remaining funding could come from Story County, City of Ames, and Story County Community Foundation Grants. Heartland Senior Services (HSS) would operate the service and grants are being solicited by HIRTA and HSS. When all funding is obtained, the bus will be purchased by HSS with service anticipated to begin July 1, 2009.
- Bike Rack Kick-Off is scheduled for Monday, September 8, 2008 with several sources for educating the public. Bike Racks will be placed on additional routes upon the results of the Rack 'n Roll contest.

CYRIDE/AMES SCHOOL DISTRICT COORDINATION REQUEST: At the last City Council meeting a request was made of the CyRide Board to explore coordinating bus service with the Ames School District. CyRide's board instructed Director Kyras to look into whether the superintendent of the Ames School District was interested in this planning study effort. Upon discussion with the superintendent, there was some interest, but additional input was needed from school administrators. In addition, Director Kyras indicated that there is new federal regulations that may impact whether CyRide could perform service of this type for the City of Ames.

SET TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: Next transit board meeting will be held on September 29, at 8:00 a.m.

ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 10:10 a.m.