Update to March 4, 2010 FTA Finding
Federal Transit Administration
Documented Categorical Exclusion
In Accordance with 23 CFR Section 771.117(d)(8)
For
Ames, Iowa Intermodal Transit Facility
FTA - ARRA TIGER Grant Number IA-78-0001

This is an update to the FTA March 4, 2010 finding and is based on a review of pending grant IA-78-0001 and the following documentation, all located in the FTA Region VII office project files and all incorporated by reference:

Ames Intermodal Transportation Feasibility Study Presentations, July – August 2009
Documentation for Draft Categorical Exclusion - Ames Intermodal Facility, September 2009
Ames Intermodal Facility TIGER Proposal, September 2009
FTA Letter to SHPO Requesting Concurrence of Determination of Effect September 2009
SHPO Request for 30- Day Comment Receipt September 2009 (No Comment Received in 30 Days)
CyRide TIGER Project dCE Addendum#1, November 2009
Supplemental Documentation October – November 2009
Traffic Engineer Concurrence to URS Traffic Memo, November 2009
Supplemental Documentation #2, November 2009
Request for Qualifications – Campustown Business District Redevelopment Project, October 2009
Campustown Study, October 2008

Purpose and Need – With American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program funding; the City of Ames (City), the Ames Transit Agency (CyRide), and Iowa State University (ISU) propose to construct an intermodal shared use transportation facility in Ames, Iowa. Findings of the "Ames Intermodal Transportation Facility Study" completed in September 2009 by CyRide and supplemental documentation identified the need for an intermodal facility that would link public and private transportation modes (public transit, intercity bus carriers, regional airport shuttle services, carpools/vanpools, taxis, bicycle commuters, and pedestrians) for Ames and central Iowa.

In contrast to the 1% Iowa average, approximately 10% of Ames residents rely on public transit for their commute. Another 10.5% walk, 2.3% bike and 6.6% carpool/vanpool. A transportation problem identified in Ames is the lack of seamless connections between these modes. Approximately five years ago, the Ames community identified specific components of this transportation problem which include disjointed access to private intercity carrier services, no bicycle/pedestrian trail access into ISU's central campus from high-density residential areas, no lockers for bicycle commuters, and no formalized carpool/vanpool program. To address this problem, the proposed Ames Intermodal Facility would be the centralized connection point between the previously mentioned modes of transportation.

The conditions of buildings and public infrastructure in the "Campustown" area, located one-two city blocks east of the proposed intermodal project site have been in decline for the past 40 years. "Campustown" has many vacant commercial properties and remaining property owners have asked ISU and the City for assistance. Sponsors of the proposed intermodal facility anticipate that the project itself will assist in the economic revitalization of Campustown by adding the transit facility and its new uses described later in this document under the "Project Description" section and by providing

intermodal connections between Campustown and the ISU campus, which will make the immediate project area and "Campustown" area more accessible. As of the date of this updated finding, the City of Ames and Iowa State University are in the process of selecting a master developer for one block bounded by Lincolnway on the north, Welch Avenue on the east, Chamberlain Street on the south, and Hayward Avenue on the west. This block subject to potential redevelopment is located to the northeast directly across Hayward Avenue from the proposed intermodal facility project awarded US DOT TIGER funding.

Project Description – The preferred site located at the intersection of Hayward Avenue/Chamberlain Street (see map in the project files) within the "Campustown Redevelopment District" was selected on its intermodal connection and economic revitalization potential. The site, equaling approximately 5.0 acres, was selected through an extensive multiple site feasibility assessment involving ISU, City of Ames, CyRide, private carriers serving Ames, and the local community through public meetings. Currently, the project site is a 240 space surface parking lot assigned to ISU students residing in nearby dormitories. The proposed project will expand the site's transportation value by providing multiple transportation uses and will also provide parking, retail, and safety and security services. The streets that will provide access to the proposed facility include Lincoln Way, Hayward Avenue and Sheldon Avenue. These streets, operating at a level-of-service of C and D, will have minor improvements associated with the project that will result in a projected no change in level-of-service.

CyRide has been awarded $8,463,000 of ARRA TIGER program funding towards the construction of the intermodal facility estimated to cost a total of $43,366,650. The following is a listing of all proposed uses:

* Four bus bays for two public operators in the region - CyRide and Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Authority
* Two bus bays and 1,700 square foot passenger waiting area for private operators – Jefferson Lines and Burlington Trailways; one bus bay, office space and 30 parking spaces for Des Moines airport shuttle
* Two taxi stands for the two local private companies providing 24-hour per day service
* 70 parking spaces for commuter vanpools, for intercity carriers and airport shuttle
* 680 parking spaces access to ISU and the Campustown Business District
* 30,000 square feet of office space for the ISU Department of Public Safety.
* 5,000 square feet of retail space
* Bike path connect to existing trails in Ames, 60 bike lockers, and men/women locker rooms with showers
* Public restroom space for Campustown redevelopment and for users of the intermodal facility
* Enhancements to the limited amount of existing green space in the area
* Replace two traffic signals (Hayward and Sheldon at Lincoln Way), add one signal at Hayward and Chamberlain; turning lanes on Lincolnway at Sheldon as well as on Sheldon and Hayward
* AVL on public transit buses and "Next Bus" technology in the Intermodal Facility and at bus stops along Routes served by the facility

Secondary Development

The City of Ames and Iowa State University issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in October 2009 for a master developer to develop in Step One; pre-project site plans, market and economic feasibility studies, marketing materials, funding strategy, land acquisition strategy, and environmental/historic site assessments for one block bounded by Lincolnway on the north, Welch Avenue on the east, Chamberlain Street on the south, and Hayward Avenue on the west. If after reviewing information generated in Step One, the Master Developer and Ames City Council agree that the proposed project is feasible and agree to moved ahead, it is anticipated that the City Council will enter into a second agreement with the Master Developer for the acquiring property, creating conceptual and final site plans, developing a project pro-forma, identifying and establishing strategic partnerships possibly including existing landowners and other developers, securing private sector equity and

financing, and partnering with the City of Ames and Iowa State University to facilitate all project components., including the use of public incentives.

This block subject to potential redevelopment is located to the northeast directly across Hayward Avenue from the proposed intermodal facility project awarded US DOT TIGER funding. The City of Ames and Iowa State University are in the process of selecting a master developer as of the date of this finding.

The Campustown Study included three alternatives for development of this block which will be secondary development for the intermodal facility. These alternatives are to be evaluated by the Master Developer in its determination of a redevelopment plan for previously described block. Alternative One includes the development of 94,300 square feet of new uses including retail use (25,550 sq. ft.) and office use (68,750 sq.ft.), major pedestrian access at the intersection of Lincolnway and Welch Avenue, rehabilitation of some existing structures, and 369 off street parking spaces. Alternative Two includes 122,200 square feet of redevelopment at a central building site with possibility of such structure being three stories in height, pedestrian access at Lincoln Way and Welch Avenue, and 473 off-street parking spaces. Alternative Three includes redevelopment of 120,200 square feet with a water feature in the center, rehabilitation of some historic buildings, and 132 off-street parking spaces.

Cumulative Impact

As stated in the RFQ, the City of Ames and Iowa State University have committed to appropriate and full environmental analysis including historic site analysis, as part of the Step One and any subsequent redevelopment agreements between the Master Developer and the City of Ames and Iowa State University. Step One and subsequent agreements are discussed in the preceding Secondary Development narrative. The TIGER application factored cumulative developments for the application's proposed traffic circulation improvements. FTA's has also analyzed additional cumulative environmental impacts including flooding and endangered species. FTA's analysis concludes that the cumulative impact of the secondary development will not result in a significant effect upon the human and natural environment.

Mitigation Actions

Energy analysis of new improvements is required under FTA regulations, "Requirements for Energy Assessments," 49 CFR Part 622, Subpart C. Incorporate all practicable improvement in project design.

Appropriate screening of the proposed facility from adjacent current and planned residential use is required. It is encouraged that a minimal amount of trees be removed in the construction of any bike path connecting to the project area's bike path.

The area disturbed by the project exceeds one acre; therefore, a storm water discharge permit (a construction National Pollutant Discharge Elimination (NPDES) permit) is required for this project.

If square footage of the project site is used as local match, an appraisal of the leasehold estate must be sent to FTA for FTA's review/approval and replatting of the project site would be required.

Building construction shall be out of the 100 year floodplain. The need for an Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Floodplain Construction Permit and any additional City of Ames permits shall be determined in the final engineering stage of the project's development. At this time, all proposed structures are to span the floodway. If a DNR permit is required, the appropriate procedures will be followed and the permit obtained prior to initiation of bridge construction work.

Updated FTA Findings

FTA has determined, in accordance with 23 CFR 771.117 (20)(d)(8), the Ames, Iowa transit facility project, meets the criteria for a Documented Categorical Exclusion (DCE) in accordance with 23 CFR part 771.117. The DCE and supporting documentation are hereby incorporated by reference to pending grant IA-78-0001. The DCE provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that additional environmental analysis is not required. In addition, in accordance to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, FTA has applied the criteria of effect, 800.5(a), and has determined that this project will have no adverse effect. FTA has also determined that no parkland and wildlife refuges are either acquired or affected by the project. Pursuant to 49 CFR 771.135, further Section 4 (f) analysis is not necessary. These findings update the FTA findings of March 4, 2010.

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3/29/2010
Date

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3/29/2010
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