

AMES, IOWA

April 15, 2014

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on April 15, 2014 at 3:30 p.m. in the CyRide Conference room. President Rediske called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. with Trustees Haila, Goodman, Murrell, Madden, and Schainker present. Absent: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Goodman made a motion to approve the March 26, 2014 transit board minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Trustee Haila. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

FACILITY PLANNING HISTORY: Director Kyras presented information to the transit board on how the CyRide facility has grown since its construction in 1983 as a storage facility for 16 vehicles. She shared that CyRide currently operates 83 buses providing 6.5 million rides from this facility. The number of buses will increase to 88 by the fall of 2014 with the purchase of five used buses that will be needed for adequate capacity as a result of expected higher enrollment at Iowa State University. With the completion of the current phase of the facility, the facility is full with three buses being parked outside. The graphic contained in the board's material illustrated the facility's six expansion phases from 1983 to 2014.

Transit board members inquired as to the significance of or goal to have all buses in a storage facility. Director Kyras explained that there were two areas of concern in not having buses under storage in a northern climate. First was the impact on its customers. She explained that it takes time for a large vehicle to warm up in the winter/cool down in the summer for customers. Rich Leners, Asst. Director of Fleet and Facilities, added that it takes approximately 30 minutes, to warm up the interior of the bus. He also explained the second concern that is a maintenance challenge. He indicated that there is more wear and tear on the vehicle when they are housed outside in cold climates and that this creates service or reliability issues when buses fails on route or are not able to be started for service. It was also discussed that at 10 degrees, buses must idle all night in order for the diesel fuel to not gel.

Trustee Haila asked how CyRide currently maneuvers buses within the facility, indicating that it appeared to be tight in his tour of the facility. Director Kyras confirmed his thoughts stating that the turning radius with an L-shaped building creates challenging environments. She further shared since July 1, 2013, CyRide has experienced 90 accidents compared to 49 accidents for this same time period a year ago and that staff was beginning a study to determine if there were opportunities to improve. She indicated that the current configuration itself creates accidents as it is difficult for drivers to back the buses up or maneuver them because of the close proximity to walls and other buses. Trustee Haila commented on the facility challenge in having the maintenance shop surrounded by bus storage. Rich Leners responded that operationally this translates into more repair hours as buses are not able to be maintained when they need to be repaired. He shared that traditionally there are two

maintenance shop shifts that extend into the evening hours and that CyRide is unable to have a second shift as the shop areas become land-locked with buses in the late afternoon.

Trustee Haila asked for clarification as to whether HIRTA own their buses or if it was the responsibility of CyRide to store and service these vehicles. Director Kyras confirmed buses are owned and serviced by HIRTA, except for one bus that CyRide leases to HIRTA for the Dial-A-Ride service. She indicated that their office and bus storage in Ames is located along east Lincolnway.

Director Kyras began discussing the various facility master plans that had been developed over the years. The first plan was developed in 2002 and identified three expansion phases to house a maximum fleet of 77 vehicles: bus storage/washer, office expansion and relocation of the maintenance shop. The first two phases had been completed by 2006. She also shared that in the plan it had stated that if the fleet grew to more than 77 vehicles, a second site should be secured to house the larger fleet.

She continued by discussing the next steps taken by the board and staff. By 2007 before beginning the maintenance expansion phase, the fleet had grown to 64 vehicles and the Transit Board discussed the feasibility of continuing expansion at the current site. Discussions centered on being land-locked and the finite amount of land available for transit at the current site. Based on these discussions, the Transit Board approved hiring a consultant or firm with expertise in transit facility design. Parson's Brinkerhoff was chosen to perform this space needs study to analyze CyRide's facility infrastructure needs for the next 20 years. The study took a conservative approach to CyRide's growth based on ISU enrollment projections at that time, which indicated steady to slightly declining enrollment. The results of the study found that the existing facility was undersized, space for critical transit functions were missing and that 308,801 additional square feet of building space was required to house a maximum of 84 vehicles and 188 employees. It indicated that a site, or combination of sites, with 11.29 total acres, compared to the existing site with 4.39 available acres, was needed. The Transit Board then directed staff to work with the consultant and local representatives to identify potential satellite facility locations.

A local study team comprised of CyRide, ISU and City staff narrowed, using eleven site criteria, possible sites to ten locations. From these locations, two sites were chosen for further consideration, but later it was determined that these sites were located in the planned Research Park expansion. Through further discussions with the Transit Board, three additional sites were identified - Central Iowa Transit facility, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing site/facilities on State Street, and the ISU soccer field located south of the CyRide facility. Staff further examined each site and, as a result, the preferred site was identified as the soccer field adjacent to CyRide. After consideration of this site, the Transit Board directed staff to work with the consultant to fit all functions within the current site due to the lower operating costs of one location.

Parsons Brinkerhoff was directed to develop a plan for the existing site based on current and predicted growth levels and needs – the result was the adoption of site plan option D1a. At that time, the Transit Board approved moving forward to select an architect to implement that option and contracted with URS Corporation. After taking the plan from concept to final drawing, the Transit Board approved proceeding with Phase 1A of the final plan.

FACILITY PLANNING NEXT STEPS: Director Kyras shared with the transit board that the current master plan was designed to house 90 buses and 138 parking spaces between the existing site and a location to the northwest of the current site. She also explained that the next phase of the facility plan to be built was the remaining portion of Phase 1 – additional bus storage.

Trustee Haila asked what the total dollar loss was due to accidents within the garage. Director Kyras explained she did not have the exact number at hand, but that the total loss last year from accidents was approximately \$15,000 and this year it will be over \$30,000 and most were attributed to the facility configuration. Trustee Haila asked if the other facility configuration options had been developed. Director Kyras explained that several other options were included as attachments to the history information provided. She indicated that numerous facility parking configurations were examined including a multi-tiered parking ramp adjacent to the facility and parking for employee vehicles on the roof of the facility.

Director Kyras next provided a brief update on the current construction project, including the improvements that were included in the project and the anticipated completion date. She indicated that the result of the project is that thirteen more buses are able to be housed indoors, employee parking spaces increased from 77 to 100 and a new articulated bus repair bay has been added.

Director Kyras then described the remaining challenges with the current facility as a result of CyRide’s unpredicted growth. The existing facility plan maximized the existing facility/site at 90 buses by the year 2028. As of fall 2014, CyRide will have 88 vehicles and should have 95 vehicles according to the Federal Transit Administration using spare bus ratio calculations to ensure smooth operations. Further she indicated that staff believes that with current ISU enrollment projections, that CyRide should be planning for 100 – 110 vehicles within the next ten years.

Director Kyras explained the current facility dollars that are available for facility expansion - \$537,500 in “left-over” funds from the current project, \$200,000 in local dollars as approved in the 2014-2015 capital plan and a possible \$800,000 in Public Transit infrastructure Grant (PTIG). Together these total approximately \$1.5 million.

Trustees asked if there were other grant funds available. Director Kyras responded that most facility programs had been discontinued; however, TIGER funds remained available

for larger facility projects, but at lower federal matching dollars. Discussion turned to possible state sources and the PTIG program. Director Kyras explained that the maximum PTIG award available to a single system was 40% of the total dollars appropriated to the program from the Iowa State Legislature. She indicated that the maximum may be only \$600,000 this year, but that the legislature had not finalized this program funding to-date.

Director Kyras then explained the four options that staff had identified as next steps in addressing CyRide's facility needs. Option one is continuing with the current Master Plan and hire an architect to design as much as possible with the \$1.5 million available. Concerns raised with this option included, constructing over underground oil tanks, and reduction of employee parking spaces.

Option 2 is to revisit the current master plan and determine how to fit 100-110 vehicles on the current site. The next steps under this option are to develop a scope of work and estimate of the design costs for further consideration by the Transit Board. Director Kyras shared that the concern with this option would be in increased site congestion.

Option 3 was to work with an architectural firm, ISU and City of Ames to identify a satellite location. A scalable design would be developed to fit within the \$1.5 million budget, but allow for additional growth at the site when more funding became available. The next steps under this option are to develop a scope of work and estimate of the design costs for further consideration by the Transit Board.

Option 4 is to decide to not continue building and plan to park buses outside as a permanent solution. Concerns regarding this option included operations, financial, and environmental implications with buses parked outside in the cold weather.

An extensive conversation proceeded regarding the four options above. Numerous questions were raised throughout the discussion as follows:

- **What are the implications of relocating CyRide's operations to another site?** – A professional market analysis would need to be completed and the Federal Transit Administration would be entitled to 80% of the facility's value. FTA's share could possibly be transferred to the new building. More conversations with FTA about this would need to be held to gain a thorough understanding of this relationship.
- **What other funding options are there?** – Earmarks are currently not available, but may be in the future, PTIG and TIGER grants. Also State Reinvest in Iowa Infrastructure (RIIF) dollars maybe used as one-time capital improvements, but requires legislative action. State dollars can match federal dollars.
- **Is there a low-cost structure that can be constructed?** – Trustee Haila provided information regarding metal building options that range from a bare-bones type

structure of \$80,000 to \$90,000. Other options of more aesthetically attractive metal buildings were discussed.

- **Could CyRide lease a building?** – CyRide could lease a building, but this would be an annual operating expense as opposed to a one-time capital expenditure.
- **Does it cost more to operate a second facility?** – Director Kyras indicated that it does, but that the cost depends on how far apart the two facilities are located and where they are located in proximity to bus routes. She indicated that this had been looked at previously and staff could update this information for the board.

Trustee Madden shared that there was a possibility that some of CyRide’s needs could be met at the Wiley Blackwell facility that ISU now owns. He recognized the concern of putting additional dollars into the current site when it was already tight; however, he shared concerns about the large capital investment this would take in the future.

Trustee Goodman discussed using this site for the building and moving employee parking to another location such as east of the facility. Director Kyras indicated that the current master plan addressed this, but was uncertain if the ground could built-up to accommodate parking as it currently was used for water drainage. She indicated that an architect would be needed to answer this question. Other areas east of the facility were discussed as possible employee parking locations. She also shared that the typical building design for a bus facility is rectangular and CyRide’s L-shaped facility creates challenges for constructing more bus storage at the current site.

Trustee Schainker asked if a bubble-type structure could be built to keep buses out of the snow and ice. Trustee Madden shared his concern with the aesthetics of this type of structure. It was also shared that the life-time cost of a structure of this nature would need to be examined as it was not built to last 50 years as is CyRide’s current facility.

Trustee Goodman shared his concern that there currently were multiple needs within CyRide; operations, buses and facilities and that the transit system was not going to be able to address all of them. Director Kyras acknowledged his concern, but also stated that there needs to be a balance between these competing challenges. She shared how staff was finding ways to reduce bus capital needs through the purchase of used buses.

Discussion led to how many more buses CyRide can support and maintain as well as the system size. Trustee Madden shared his concern with the number of buses on campus and the congestion this creates. Trustee Goodman shared that the ISU student need was well quantified, but that he was less clear about the community-wide needs.

Trustee Goodman mentioned there are many things to consider when making the decision on which option to choose. He shared his thoughts about other ways to address the bus storage issue – rotating buses inside and outside of the facility, looking at other technology such as a bus blanket or canopy that can be placed over the buses.

Trustee Goodman made a motion to approve option #4 to continue to park buses outside at least for the next several years. The motion died for a lack of a second.

Board members were hesitant to move forward as each of the options created funding, land or operational challenges. Trustee Haila asked if there was a way to project out, with current ISU enrollment numbers, how much CyRide would grow and the number of buses needed. Director Kyras indicated that for every additional student an average of 170 rides is generated so that ridership could be predicted, but which routes and times of days they would be using was difficult.

Trustee Haila inquired about why leasing of the CIT building was a challenge. Barbara Neal responded saying that there are maintenance functions associated with getting buses operating each morning and that this requires duplicate maintenance staff and equipment each day at two sites. Employees also need to be transported between the two sites to check-in and address work issues.

Trustee Haila asked whether Iowa State's conversion to natural gas would free-up the coal storage area to the west of CyRide or if the soccer field to the south was still a possibility. Trustee Madden shared that the university will continue to use the coal plant and would still need the coal storage area. He also indicated that he is not opposed to having more conversation about the soccer fields. He stated that they are now property of the Recreational Department and that more conversation about relocating functions at this site would need to be explored.

Trustee Goodman made a motion to move forward with storage as it is a bit closer to staff's recommendation, no work on this site and look at another site, but unsure how to move forward on this. Fit within look at something to get it undercover as keeping them outside. How to move forward,

Trustee Haila believes it is the staff's recommendation to have the building adjacent to the site and as a transit board, and as a transit board, do not have the expertise on the cost of a general storage building and the aesthetics, what levels of finishes there are, a what each cost, and what the transit board could live with. Trustee Haila recently bid a building such as this and could provide some information on cost.

Board members discussed possible second site locations adjacent to the current facility (east, west and south) or further away. The benefits of being close to CyRide's existing building were discussed as well as the cost savings of a lower-cost building style at a site further away. Also, Director Kyras shared with the Trustees that ISU owned a parcel of land, approximately 10 acres, near the high school that might be a candidate for a second site.

Director Kyras shared with the board the urgency to identify a course of action as there are three buses parked outside currently and another five will be added in August.

Further she shared the timeframe that it takes to design, gain approval and then construct a building - two to three years at a minimum – and in the meantime CyRide will continue to add parked buses outside and, as ISU enrollment grows, the fleet will continue to grow.

Trustee Schainker asked staff if a location next to the current facility was the best option. Director Kyras indicated that if sufficient land could be secured, it was the best option.

Trustee Goodman shared that he was comfortable in parking buses outside for the next several years, relaying his concern with other financial challenges of the organization.

The transit board was interested in pursuing the opportunity of adjacent land to CyRide's current site. They were in favor of looking at a plan of adding employee parking across the street or the soccer field, or possibly revisiting the cooling towers area, as it is beneficial to have adjacent parking.

Trustee Goodman asked if it was reasonable, and to keep discussions moving forward, for Trustee Madden to start the conversation with Iowa State University's senior administration on the use of adjacent land for CyRide purposes, to have an answer by the middle of summer and then proceed with asking the students for their support in the fall. Trustee Madden indicated that the process would be difficult to resolve over the summer as the GSB Student Body's leadership was new in their positions and that they do not meet over the summer.

Trustee Goodman made a motion to move forward with this discussion to ask Trustee Madden to have a conversation with Iowa State University and ask what, if any land adjacent to the south, west, and east of the CyRide building, would be available. Motion seconded by Trustee Schainker. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Trustee Haila mentioned he attended the HIRTA public meeting last week and thought it went well. He was impressed to see many of the CyRide staff present and felt they did a good job, as well as HIRTA staff.

Next transit board meeting is Wednesday, April 23 at 3:15 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Dan Rediske, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary