

AMES, IOWA

July 30, 2015

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on July 30, 2015 at 8:00 a.m. in the CyRide Conference room. President Haila called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. with Trustees Haila, Gartin, Abbas, Madden, and Teubert being present. Absent: Trustee Schainker.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Abbas made a motion to approve the June 23, 2015 minutes and seconded by Trustee Madden. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried to approve the minutes.

ORANGE ROUTE STUDY PRESENTATION: Director Kyras explained the background of why the Orange Route was being evaluated, mentioning that historically the route has continued to grow by 2-7% each year, with approximately 14,000 rides per day, making it the busiest route in the State of Iowa. She then explained that the FTA approved funding for an Alternatives Analysis study to improve the route. The project was awarded to URS through a bid process in 2012. Director Kyras introduced Bill Troe of SRF formerly of URS, who is staying on this project through its completion, and guest Mark Bechtel, of the Federal Transit Administration Region VII Office. She added the goal is to examine how CyRide can efficiently provide future needs in light of the route's high ridership and continued demand. Director Kyras then asked Mr. Troe to recap the work completed to-date and to provide information on the remaining route alternatives.

Mr. Troe started his presentation by reviewing the purpose of the Orange Route Study, stating that four steps were taken in the Alternatives Analysis study process: purpose and need, range of alternatives, evaluation of the identified alternatives, and selection of a preferred alternative. Mr. Troe stated that the purpose and need were defined by the amount of wait time for passengers, overcrowded buses, pedestrian safety with increased vehicle activity, greenhouse gas emissions and that the current method to increase route capacity adds buses, creating inefficiency and safety concerns.

Mr. Troe said that a broad range of alternatives were evaluated, including adding more 40' buses, using all articulated buses, split or modified routes, Bus Rapid Transit, and light rail transit. Mr. Troe stated that simply adding more 40' buses did not solve the capacity issues, as they only hold 65 people and often times leave the ISC parking lot full, while the articulated buses hold 105 people. Director Kyras added that the project was based on a 10-year study period, with the intent of providing 1,800 rides per hour and that our current operations provide 1,500 rides per hour. Mr. Troe said that the two remaining alternatives that were identified as possibilities by the committee include the use of all articulated buses and the implementation of BRT (Bus Rapid Transit). Mr. Troe further explained why the alternatives of a split route and light rail, were eliminated as viable options, stating that the operating costs of a split route and the implementation costs of light rail were too substantial and that the addition of more traditional 40' buses to the route would increase the negative effects of the route's current situation.

Trustee Gartin asked what the role of the Transit Board would be in the decision to implement one of these concepts. Director Kyras said that the intent was to have the Transit Board review information developed by the study, decide on the best alternative and then consider implementation of this alternative through the budget process. President Haila asked if Iowa State officials had been informed about the options and if they supported the remaining options. Director Kyras shared that Iowa State University, CyRide, City of Ames and student representatives were part of a study committee that reviewed these options. She also stated the meetings had been held with ISU Administrative staff on the range of options to determine if any alternatives were not feasible from their perspective.

Trustee Gartin asked why so many people use the Orange Route. Director Kyras answered that there are three basic traffic generators on this route: people that park and ride for free from the commuter lot, large residence halls are on the west side of campus that contain a high number of students and people that use the route to circulate throughout campus. Trustee Madden added that there are a lot of people coming from outside of Ames that drive and ride into campus, as well as people within the city who do not want to pay for parking on campus. Trustee Gartin asked how much ridership is attributable to commuters. Mr. Troe stated that this had been identified in the study through a rider survey and it was found that 40% of the demand comes from the commuter lot, 40% from the MWL/Richardson Court area and 20% from circulation within campus. Mr. Troe added that 25% of the commuter demand is coming from outside Ames, predominantly from the Des Moines area.

Trustee Gartin questioned whether or not other parking options on campus had been evaluated before the light rail option was considered. Mr. Troe stated that the light rail option has been dismissed for consideration. Trustee Gartin asked if other parking places had been considered aside from the current commuter lot for parking. Director Kyras said that transit is most efficient from one route as opposed to service from multiple lots because operating costs double. She indicated the current Orange Route is highly efficient as it operates on a three mile loop that carries 14,000 people per day. She also indicated that parking decisions were made by Iowa State University representatives.

Mr. Troe continued reviewing his presentation, stating that the remaining alternatives under consideration were: splitting the current Orange Route into two routes, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and using all articulated buses to service the route. Mr. Troe further elaborated on all of these options, sharing a map of the split route option. He explained the two routes, indicating the first route would be an express route into campus, with less stops, maintaining connectivity to the Veterinary Medicine area and the second route would be referred to as the Maple-Willow-Larch (MWL) Circulator. He explained that this route would loop around campus starting at MWL, staying north of Lincoln Way, as MWL is one of the most active locations on the route. Mr. Troe stated that this option would be less efficient because it would utilize more vehicles and drivers and also add more trips into campus – particularly along the currently congested Osborn Drive.

Mr. Troe shared information about the option of using all articulated buses. Currently, the Orange Route uses 12 buses, 10- 40' buses and two articulated buses needed in service. This number would be reduced to eight articulated buses needed under this option. Trustee Haila asked what the current hours of operation are for the Orange Route. Tom Davenport, CyRide's Transit Coordinator, stated that the first bus starts at 6:30am and that at around 7:30am there are 10 buses servicing the route; increasing to 12 buses between 8:30am and 1pm; afternoons require 10 buses. Mr. Davenport added that there is one bus between 6pm and 10pm due to the lower demand.

Mr. Troe reviewed the option of Bus Rapid Transit. Mr. Troe shared that the BRT concept would start at the ISC Parking Lot, stopping on the hill on Beach Rd., at MWL, at Lied Recreation and at three stops along Osborn and then turn around at Osborn Dr. and Bissell Rd. He explained that this shortens the travel time by having fewer stops, speeding up entry and exit by having lower boarding, and enhanced stations. In addition, technology such as the NextBus digital signs, shelters and signal priority at intersections will further reduce travel time. He further elaborated on the signal priority technology and contrasted it with a queue jumper lane to pass through the Beach and University Blvd. intersection, indicating that the priority technology was preferable for this application than the queue jumper.

Mr. Troe shared that there is an FTA program called "New Starts", which could fund much of the BRT capital start-up costs. Director Kyras introduced Mark Bechtel of the FTA's Region VII office. Mr. Bechtel shared some information on the implementation process for the BRT option. Mr. Bechtel stated that normally the process to implement a BRT option takes about two years. He stated that the following activities must be completed prior to submitting a grant request under this program: NEPA (National Environmental Protection Agency) documentation, must be included in the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan, Local and State Funding must be secured and engineering/design plans must be completed.

Mr. Bechtel further elaborated on the process, stating that Maurice Foushee with the FTA's Washington DC office would be a great resource for project development advice. Mr. Bechtel suggested that Director Kyras, Mr. Foushee and he hold a conference call prior to Mr. Forshee's visit to Iowa later this year. He explained that Kansas City has two BRT routes in place and is looking to implement a third, so they could also be a valuable resource in project development for CyRide's possible project. Mr. Bechtel stated that things such as economic development, ridership and age of the fleet would be evaluated during the determination.

Trustee Madden asked what the level of competitiveness was for this grant program. Mr. Bechtel replied that CyRide would be competing nationally. Trustee Teubert asked if Ames would be given preference due to its high ridership over other agencies that already have a BRT route. Mr. Bechtel said he would have to ask this question to those reviewing the grants and that Eugene, OR (University of Oregon) would be a good comparison of a college community with BRT service. Mr. Bechtel left the meeting at 8:40am.

Mr. Troe returned to his presentation on the Orange Route Study, stating that in the BRT alternative, the traffic would follow a bi-directional path, requiring a turnaround or roundabout at Bissell and Osborn. He elaborated that this would eliminate the current three-way stop, benefiting all users of the intersection, but would have some land use implications. He explained that the BRT alternative could include rehabilitation of a portion of the ISC Parking Lot where commuters are parking. Specifically, he indicated that the funding program could provide rehabilitation to around 900 parking spaces in the C5 and C6 parking lots, with the funding share at 80% federal and 20% local.

Mr. Troe reviewed the range of alternatives, which has been narrowed down to two alternatives - using all articulated buses and the BRT concept. Mr. Troe explained that under the New Starts Program, BRT is an eligible option for funding and, that even though there are several items to account for, he does feel it could be done in a shorter implementation timeline, closer to the six month goal used by Kansas City.

Trustee Gartin asked what the costs are for each remaining alternative. Bill referred to a handout that listed the estimated capital costs for each option, stating that the all articulated bus option would be an estimated at \$3 million and BRT would be \$8.57 million; however the difference between the local share needed for each option was not significantly higher for the BRT option. Director Kyras clarified that eight articulated buses would be needed for service and two additional buses needed for spares buses. She elaborated that currently CyRide has two articulated buses, four are on order, leaving four additional articulated buses needing to be purchased under either of the remaining options. Trustee Madden asked if each articulated buses already on order was \$750,000. Director Kyras stated that this was an estimate of the future cost of these buses, after completing all the requirements of a New Starts grant.

President Haila questioned whether or not boarding time was considered in maintaining the all articulated buses option. Mr. Troe stated that it was a consideration and that boarding through both doors would be anticipated using automatic passenger counters (APC) to collect ridership data. Director Kyras added that CyRide has tried using APC's on its current articulated buses, but has been unsuccessful to-date in getting the technology to accurately count all passengers through the extra wide doors of the articulated buses. CyRide staff will continue to work on this technology. Trustee Teubert suggested looking into the idea of having ISU students scan a card when they enter. Director Kyras said that staff is currently working with NextBus to try to resolve the current APC issues as this technology is already on the buses.

Trustee Madden asked if the platform bus stop option would be used in the all articulated concept. Mr. Troe explained that near level boarding usually involves at least one step. President Haila asked if the current buses comply. Director Kyras replied that CyRide's current low floor buses do comply.

Mr. Troe explained that the stops would have shelters and NextBus signs according to their activity/demand at locations under the BRT concept, but not under the all articulated concept. President Haila asked why shelters are required. Mr. Troe replied that it is an integral part of

the BRT defined service according to FTA officials. Trustee Madden added that the recent rain issues could make shelters very useful for people waiting for the bus.

Trustee Gartin asked what the initial capital investment was for the project and what the operating costs would be going forward. Mr. Troe replied that the current operating costs are at estimated \$1.6 million in year 2024 and that converting to the all articulated bus or BRT options would cost about \$1.1 million, resulting in approximately \$500,000 in savings per year. President Haila asked where the savings came from. Mr. Troe replied that both concepts have fewer buses operating (eight versus 12), resulting in lower costs.

Trustee Teubert asked if using Pammel Dr. had been considered, rather than Osborn Dr. Mr. Troe replied that significant changes to the Osborn Drive corridor are being implemented for this fall to reduce conflicts along this corridor and that placing students further away from the core of campus would result in students walking further. Trustee Madden shared that a group on campus has been working to identify ways to address the congestion on Osborn Dr. and that there is a pilot plan that will be implemented this fall that will modify stops, not allow parking and reduce traffic on Osborn Dr. by limiting gate access. Trustee Madden stated that these Orange Route alternative concepts fit the idea of less traffic on Osborn Dr.

Mr. Troe continued his presentation, stating that costs for the BRT street improvements would be around \$500,000 for the turnaround, \$60,000 for a transit signal priority system and approximately \$4.5 million for the rehabilitation of 900 parking spaces. Mr. Troe explained that using the 80/20 funding structure, the local cost for the all articulated bus option would be \$1.5 million and \$1.7 million for the BRT option.

Mr. Troe said that the grant for the BRT option is very competitive; showing a list of other places that have received grant approval for their BRT project. He pointed out that in comparison, CyRide's request of approximately \$6 million is far less than other communities (\$24-160 million) who were awarded the funding at the 80% level as opposed to a lower federal participation percentage. Mr. Troe said that the Orange Route Study Committee is leaning toward the BRT option as the locally preferred option, but Board input is needed regarding the possibilities of the local funding required for this option. Director Kyras stated that there are some things that are not included in the BRT option price, including design costs and a contingency budget. Trustee Madden shared that he believes that this is a good return on investment. Trustee Teubert added that there are benefits of this project that could positively impact other routes.

Director Kyras said a major concern of hers regarding the BRT alternative is whether or not ISU is comfortable with the turnaround that is necessary for the concept to function. Trustee Teubert asked what the roundabout looks like. Tom Davenport referred to the City of Gilbert's roundabout as a comparison. Director Kyras also stated that the BRT alternative could be impacted if a decision were made to have individuals parking at the commuter lot were required to pay a parking fee; thereby significantly reducing ridership on this route. She indicated that if the parking infrastructure improvements (900 spaces) were no longer needed

to support the Orange Route, that FTA could request repayment of their share of the improvement. Trustee Madden asked if payment for parking in the commuter lot would result in a lower grant application ranking with the FTA. Mr. Troe replied that parking fees would lower the demand for the route, which the grant application would be based upon, so could be looked at negatively by the FTA.

President Haila asked if moving service from Osborn Dr. to Pammel Dr. was still under possible consideration. Director Kyras indicated that there was some discussion by ISU representatives participating in the Osborn Dr. Study to consider this as a long-term solution. She indicated that this would be a major change for CyRide for its route structure and financially, and said that a future Transit Board discussion on hiring a consultant to complete a redesign of CyRide current route structure could incorporate this option. Further, she indicated that the system is currently design to comfortably carry 4 million passengers; however, as CyRide approaches 7 million rides, it may be time to relook at this structure and make sure it works for the future. She indicated that she will include this discussion as a future Transit Board agenda item.

President Haila asked if the BRT alternative would have to be maintained for a required amount of time to satisfy FTA requirements. Director Kyras stated that use of the infrastructure would be required within CyRide's system, but the Orange route could be moved around or adjusted.

Trustee Madden mentioned that ISU enrollment is expected to be up an additional 1,500 students for this fall, so continual growth will be something to consider. Director Kyras explained that she wanted to bring the board up-to-date on the information regarding the Orange Route Study by presenting the two remaining alternatives and that she will bring Trustee Schainker up-to-date by the next meeting.

President Haila asked what the local funding model would be for the alternatives. Director Kyras stated that it could follow the standard 65% student, 24% city and 11% ISU model if board members were comfortable with this approach, but there are some groups benefiting directly from the improvements, such as ISU Athletics, that could contribute to the local share as well. She indicated that the sources and funding splits would need to be negotiated. Trustee Madden added that since this is a community system, the growth and benefits would be felt by a lot people.

Trustee Gartin asked if benchmarking had been done and what would happen if we did nothing. Mr. Troe said that this has been reviewed through the study. Director Kyras stated that she would provide a "cheat sheet" at the next discussion of this topic that contains the information for the two remaining options and a "do nothing" option for comparison.

Trustee Gartin asked if looking at additional parking structures on campus had been explored, including adding more levels to existing parking ramps. Trustee Gartin said that he has concern for the long-term funding of this project. He added that the payback seems almost unbelievable for the BRT option. Trustee Gartin also stated that self-sufficiency is "key" and that less funding by the FTA in the future is inevitable.

President Haila asked Tom Davenport, CyRide's Transit Coordinator, for his input on the BRT concept. Mr. Davenport said that he is not sure of the \$500,000 savings stating that further refinement of this level of this savings should be studied. He also indicated that the "wait time" at a bus stop would increase from 2 – 5 minutes and that he believes this could have a negative impact on ridership.

Director Kyras added that two articulated buses in use now create a "bottle neck" for the other shorter buses being used on the route because the longer buses take longer for loading and that she believes this situation could be remedied by either the all articulated bus option or the BRT option. It would also help in having fewer buses on campus and would benefit service at the Veterinary Medical facility. Trustee Teubert said that he didn't believe students would view a five-minute service on the Orange Route as a negative aspect of service. Trustee Madden said that he doesn't believe walking more is a goal or desire on campus.

Based upon the discussion at the meeting, Director Kyras will provide more detailed information regarding these options at a future board meeting.

SCHOOL YEAR 2015-2016 OPERATIONS CONTRACT: Director Kyras shared that Central Iowa Transit (CIT) provided service last spring under a contract for service on CyRide's Cardinal Route. She indicated that the service had operated successfully and, based on previous board discussion and interest to further continue this project, that discussion had progressed regarding a larger project this fall for CIT to operate more service on this route. As a result, a new project was placed out for bid for two buses providing service from 7:30-11:30am on the Cardinal Route with only one bid received from CIT Transportation. She explained that their cost was \$711.13 per day, which is comparative to CyRide's hourly service charge of \$86 per hour. She also shared that CyRide's direct operating costs totaled \$439.90 to operate this same service. Tom Davenport stated that this amount did not include overhead or capital costs in that figure. The total amount of the contract is estimated to be \$114,000 for the school year. Director Kyras stated that staff recommended Alternative #1, to approve a contract with CIT Charters at \$711.13 per day for service as directed by CyRide for the 2015-2016 School Year as this will reduce the number of drivers and buses needed to operate daily service and is at a comparable fully-allocated cost.

Trustee Haila asked if the amount of the excess expense was budgeted. Director Kyras said it was not in the budget approved by the Transit Board in January 2015, but that fuel cost savings can offset this expense, as CyRide is currently experiencing a significant budget savings due to the lower price of fuel than budgeted. She also shared that CyRide is struggling to find drivers, stating that the goal was for 35 new drivers to be hired/trained during the summer and that CyRide has hired only 23 to-date. She indicated the new CDL requirements enacted in July are hindering the hiring process. Trustee Gartin asked what CyRide is paying drivers. Barb Neal, Operations Supervisor stated that for the first 120 hours CyRide pays a training wage of \$8.00 per hour, those working less than 20 hours per week start at \$11.96 per hour and those over 20 hours are paid \$14.05 per hour as a starting wage. Director Kyras stated that she doesn't necessarily believe that the hiring challenge is related to the wage rates, but rather due to the

fact that unemployment is low in the Ames area. Director Kyras said that staff was in the process of reassessing the training wage and would provide the board with more information on this issue at a future meeting.

Trustee Haila shared his concern about the higher cost of contracting this service as opposed to CyRide's direct cost.

Trustee Madden said that he sees this as a practical near-term solution and made the motion to approve Alternative #1, seconded by Trustee Abbas. President Haila said he would like to reevaluate this in the future. (Ayes: 5, Nays: 0). Motion carried to approve Alternative #1.

AMES AREA MPO LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION TRANSIT PROJECTS: Director Kyras stated that the Ames Area MPO is in the process of completing a 25 year Long Range Transportation Plan that is required by the federal government. That the list of transit projects included in the board packet were potential projects that had been identified through reviewing previous discussions at the Board level and staff's understanding of current development patterns. She is seeking input from board members as to the transit board's comfort level in including these projects in the plan.

Trustee Teubert asked about the Story County Supervisor's thoughts about regional commuter services, such as the Nevada service he recommended in the future. Director Kyras replied that it was included in the plan under regional services. Trustee Madden asked if CyRide could be a regional transit system. Director Kyras answered that CyRide could potentially contract with outlying communities or that it could go to a regional structure, such as Des Moines has done by creating a Transit District. Trustee Madden asked if it would make a difference in the qualifications for funding. Tom Davenport, Transit Coordinator stated that under Section 5307, the population density funding formula would be negatively affected if CyRide increased its service area to include lower populated areas of Story County. He also added that when CyRide added the Pink Route, the transit system lost approximately \$25,000 per year due to this area's lower population density.

Trustee Haila asked if this is more of a "wish list". Director Kyras confirmed that it was and that if CyRide was not ask for funding of any of these projects stating that they were "illustrative" and if deemed desirable would need to be brought forward through the budget process and included in other planning documents. Shari Atwood, Transit Planner, commented that CyRide would specifically have to add the BRT project to the document if this was approved. Trustee Haila asked when this plan is approved. Director Kyras replied that it was scheduled for September for approval by the Ames City Council.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Due to increased usage of e-cigarettes and other vaping devices, a change in CyRide's Rider Policy was being contemplated by staff to add smoking of e-cigarettes or vaping as not permissible on the bus. She also indicated that several other changes were being made to strengthen the written policy to match current practices on drugs and alcohol

usage on the bus. This change will be effective at the beginning of the School Year. Trustee Madden shared that there was language in a policy that ISU has drafted that addresses the use of e-cigarettes and vaping devices. Trustee Gartin said he was supportive of whatever ISU was doing in regards to this policy. Trustee Teubert confirmed that vaping and e-cigarette devices are included in the policy at ISU.

Trustee Haila asked if the rider policy addressed firearms and if they were allowed. Barb Neal said that they were not allowed and that she thought that this may have been previously addressed due to an incident with BB guns and would confirm that it is already addressed. A further discussion on weapons ensued and the consensus was to leave the policy as is unless there are issues that arise as a result of behaviors around this issue.

- Staff, along with ISU Facilities Planning & Management, has identified a possible short-term parking solution for the increased number of buses that will be in use beginning next school year (fall 2016) - south parking lot at 925 Airport Rd, the former Van Wall Equipment location. Possible long-term solutions identified for sight expansion include: Breckenridge Parcel on State Street that ISU is in the process of obtaining, ISU's Curtis Farm on State Street (south of Hwy 30), S. Riverside Dr. by the airport owned by the City of Ames and the State Nursery, which is owned by the State of Iowa and is just south of the Ames Fire Department House #3.

Director Kyras stated that these were the options that had been identified thus far. Trustee Haila stated he would like to see the costs associated with each of these options. Trustee Madden stated that the State Nursery was under discussion and that the Breckenridge property should be removed from the list due to neighborhood issues.

- Director Kyras shared that overall ridership for last year was 6,711,635, increased from the previous year by 92,453.
- Director Kyras stated that Copper Beech had not complied with the contract that they had signed by delivering a check by July 1, 2015 for the 2nd year of a three year contract for additional service in the area of their development and is currently in default of their contract. She added that the service for the Plum Route to S. 16th Street has been reduced to reflect the lack of payment and is not listed in the printed route schedule. Trustee Gartin asked if there have been any communication attempts made to reach out to someone at the Copper Beech organization. Director Kyras stated that she has reached out to the local managers of the Grove, who state that they are now responsible for Copper Beech, but they are unwilling to pay for the service. She added that communications was sent on August 1, 2015 via the City Attorney's Office to the person listed in the contract and that they have until August 20, 2015 to produce a check for the amount listed in the contract.

Trustee Haila asked if the service had already been amended. Director Kyras confirmed that it is already been reduced from the 20 minute service to 40 minute service and that staff has prepared for the reduction in service. Trustee Madden asked if there is documentation of a land contract sale. Director Kyras replied that the City Attorney's office has not found such a document, but in researching other Copper Beech developments, it appears that ownership is often transferred between properties owned by the same individuals.

SET MEETING TIME AND PLACE:

- August 20, 2015 – 8 A.M. (Thursday)
- September 24, 2015 – 4 P.M. (Thursday)
- October 29, 2015 – 4 P.M. (Thursday) changed to 4:00pm
- December 3, 2015 – 8 A.M. (Thursday)

Trustee Madden stated that he may need the meeting on August 20th changed to 4 PM, rather than 8 AM. President Haila confirmed that 4 PM on the 20th works for his schedule. Trustee Gartin stated that he would not be in attendance at the September 24th meeting.

President Haila made a motion to adjourn the Ames Transit Board of Trustees meeting at 9:59 a.m. Trustee Gartin seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None.) Motion carried.