

## AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

February 17, 2016

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on February 17, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. in the CyRide Conference room. President Haila called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. with Trustees Madden, Schainker, Haila and Teubert present. Absent: Trustees Gartin and Abbas.

**APPROVAL OF JANUARY 13, 2016 MINUTES:** President Haila requested the time line in the attached chart be amended to show the \$200,000 - \$300,000 funding requirement for Project Development starting December 2016. Trustee Madden made a motion to approve the January 13, 2016 minutes as amended by President Haila. Trustee Teubert seconded the motion. (Ayes: Four. Nays: None.) Motion carried unanimously.

Trustee Gartin arrived at 8:05 am.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

**PURCHASE HIRTA BUS:** Director Kyras told the Transit Board that since 2008, CyRide had leased a bus to HIRTA to provide ADA-required Dial-A-Ride service. She indicated that the bus currently used in service is bus #7640, which is ten years old and well past its useful life of four years. Director Kyras proposed to replace this bus using 85% federal dollars (5310 funds for disabled persons). CyRide staff proposed using the Iowa DOT's statewide bus procurement to replace this bus, awarding the bid to Hoglund Bus and Truck in Marshalltown, Iowa at a cost of \$81,000. Director Kyras informed the Transit Board that there are adequate federal funds, of almost \$600,000, in CyRide's federal section 5310 account to purchase the vehicle for HIRTA. This program is also used to fund CyRide's annual Dial-A-Ride budget. She indicated that the vehicle was included in the CIP budget, requiring a 15% local match of \$12,173. Director Kyras further explained that HIRTA asked to purchase the current bus and continue to operate it within Story County, under a federal transfer of ownership allowed by the federal government. She indicated that if CyRide were going to sell the vehicle that the bus would be advertised at an online auction, and that similar vehicles sold by CyRide in this manner had generated approximately \$3,000 in revenue. She then indicated that HIRTA would purchase this vehicle from CyRide for this amount and the title will be transferred to HIRTA.

Director Kyras asked for approval to purchase the bus from Hoglund Bus and Truck at the price of \$81,153.

Trustee Madden inquired about how many miles had been placed on the bus to be replaced. CyRide's Asst. Director Fleet and Facility, Rich Leners estimated approximately a quarter of a million miles.

President Haila asked for information about the process required to dispose of federally-funded buses. Director Kyras explained that if a vehicle is sold for less than \$5,000, the transit system may keep all of the proceeds. If the vehicle proceeds are at or exceed \$5,000, the transit system must return 80% of the proceeds to the federal government. She indicated that the federal government requires vehicles to be transferred to another system, if both systems agree upon a local share amount. The purchasing transit system would then be responsible for dispose of the asset, per federal regulations, when they no longer can/want to operate the vehicle.

A discussion of the 5310 federal funding balance ensued. Director Kyras indicated that of the almost \$600,000 balance, approximately \$203,000 had been committed to the operating budget to operate the Dial-A-Ride program for next year and \$40,000 to bus stop improvements. The remainder was currently uncommitted. Director Kyras shared that the Iowa DOT would prefer to have these funds drawn down for disabled transit service purposes.

Trustee Gartin asked why the DOT had an interest in the fund balance. Director Kyras shared that the DOT administers the federal Section 5310 funds in Iowa and is responsible to the federal government for their use. Trustee Gartin asked if the DOT had guidelines that they felt CyRide should keep for reserves. Director Kyras shared with Trustee Gartin that there are no guidelines, but also shared that most transit systems in Iowa depleted their balance every year, which is why the DOT had indicated a desire to develop a plan to utilize these funds. Trustee Gartin expressed his concern that the DOT might be overly concerned with CyRide's management of the funds, stating that the Transit Board was doing its due diligence in utilizing these funds for the benefit of the community over the long-term. Director Kyras shared that the replacement of a vehicle well past its useful life was a good use of the funds and would lower the funding balance at the same time.

President Haila clarified that the Section 5310 program is an ongoing federal program and a positive way to fund required federal programs such as CyRide's Dial-A-Ride program. Trustee Madden indicated that the Iowa DOT was simply asking for information on CyRide's plans for the funding and recommending that it begin drawing this funding level down.

Trustee Gartin suggested this money could be used for unexpected expenses. Director Kyras indicated that the only eligible uses in CyRide's system for the funds were: vehicle purchases, shelters and Dial-A-Ride operating expenses. Trustee Madden clarified that this federal funding program is used to pay for 80% of CyRide's Dial-A-Ride service, which HIRTA provides. Further, he indicated that if CyRide operated this service directly, these funds could not be used to pay for this service and would require 100% local dollars as the funds are for "contracted" Dial-A-Ride services only. President Haila further clarified this funding distinction.

President Haila inquired as to what the fund balance would be at the end of the fiscal year and Director Kyras estimated \$200,000.

Director Kyras clarified the action needed at the meeting was for the bus purchase only. She indicated that the current bus transfer to HIRTA was a standard operating procedure per federal regulations, but desired to share this with the Transit Board as it was a less typical way for CyRide to dispose of vehicles.

Trustee Schainker and Director Kyras clarified the bus transfer, indicating that the bus either had to be sold per a competitive disposal process or transferred to another public transit system, but could not be sold directly to an individual.

Trustee Gartin made a motion to approve the purchase of one minibus under the Iowa DOT procurement to Hogle Bus and Truck for a purchase price of \$81,153. Trustee Madden seconded the motion. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried unanimously.

**SYSTEM REDESIGN SCOPE OF WORK:** Director Kyras explained that this agenda item was a follow-up to last month's meeting on the scope of work for the System Redesign Study. She indicated that the revised scope of work was attached and captured the changes provided by board members at the previous month's meeting as well as ISU staff. Specific changes included:

- Task 2, added neighborhood associations to list of stakeholder meetings.
- Task 5, added non-rider survey to public input and will require the consultant determine how to gain this input.
- Task 8, two changes were added: clarification that option #2 should address routes currently travelling "through" campus, and added potential revenues/sources of revenue as well as expenses to the financial analysis.

Trustee Abbas arrived at 8:19 am.

Trustee Schainker questioned whether the revised scope of work, Task 8 language, clearly addressed the need for a thorough financial analysis, which would include how to address funding gaps, create new revenues if needed, etc. Director Kyras guided board members to page 6 of the revised scope of work, stating the verbiage indicated a need to analyze revenues, expenses and ways to pay for service under the service options.

Trustee Schainker questioned the membership and purpose of the Technical Committee asking whether it was strictly comprised of technical representatives (Technical Committee) or if it would also include interested parties (Steering Committee), as the current language indicates a mix of the two. He recommended splitting the two apart and having two committees to advise the Transit Board, each having a different

perspective on CyRide service. Director Kyras shared her initial thought on the original Technical Committee members, but indicated that staff could provide a list for Transit Board consideration, prior to the project's implementation. Individuals initially considered included: Cathy Brown, ISU University planner; Mark Miller, ISU Parking; Damion Pregitzer, City of Ames Traffic Engineer, as well as student representation. Director Kyras indicated she would adjust the language to include the two advisory committees.

Trustee Schainker also asked who would make the final decision on the study's recommendations. Director Kyras indicated the Transit Board would be the final decision maker. Mr. Schainker also asked if the consultant would be making a recommendation, suggesting that all other groups provide input into the consultant's recommendation to the Transit Board. Director Kyras indicated that the consultant could make the final recommendation, based on input from the technical committee, the steering committee, CyRide staff and comments from public meetings.

Trustee Madden shared a different process that he believed would be beneficial. He suggested receiving the two committees and the consultant's recommendation separately and then have the Transit Board consider all three opinions in their final decision. A discussion of the two methodologies ensued. Based on the discussion, Director Kyras indicated that she would change the scope of work language to state that there will be a recommendation from the consultant on the three options and that the Transit Board will have the ability to make the final decision.

Trustee Schainker said the inclusion of "students" is a generic term and suggested that non-students or maybe non-riders, who have interest in the system, be included on the Steering Committee. Trustee Gartin encouraged staff to consider additional individuals on the Technical Committee, indicating that other transportation expertise in the community could provide a benefit to the study.

President Haila concluded that the Steering and Technical committee membership could be discussed and defined at a later time. Trustee Teubert added that the students have individuals that are already to participate in this study.

A discussion followed regarding the funding sources for the study, particularly discussing the timing of the Ames Area MPO consideration of a \$100,000 contribution to the study. Director Kyras indicated that, through discussions with the MPO Director, she believed that the AAMPO funding could be approved by May; prior to the scheduled July 1<sup>st</sup> start date for the study. President Haila raised a concern about distributing the Request for Proposal prior to having funding solidified. Director Kyras indicated that she could include language regarding the funding in the RFP so that consultants were aware of the timing gap.

Trustee Gartin made a motion to move Alternative #2 and approve the Scope of Work, including Transit Board modifications, in a Request for Proposal to conduct a System Redesign Study, including proposed language changes recommended by Trustee Schainker that a separate committee shall be formed (Steering committee) and that the consultant will provide three options and a final recommendation to the Transit Board, based on public, technical and steering committee input. Trustee Madden seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried unanimously.

**FACILITY SPACE UPDATE:** Director Kyras gave the Transit Board an update on the short-term and long-term planning for facility space and indicated that staff will follow-up at the March Transit Board meeting with more detailed information. She indicated that with the arrival of the articulated buses this May, that CyRide will have four to six more vehicles than the interior and exterior bus parking can accommodate at its current site. The articulated buses will take up the space of eight standard buses.

Director Kyras began by providing information regarding the short-term possibilities, indicating that she had met with Cathy Brown from Iowa State University to determine if there were possible sites owned by the university for either short or long-term solutions. MS. Brown indicated that the university currently owned the former Van Wall building on Airport Rd. and that CyRide could improve a portion of the back of the property to store up to six vehicles. She indicated that Iowa State had an open contract for asphalt and, based on the size of the area, the cost to improve this area for buses was estimated to be \$45,000; however, usage of the space would be at no cost to CyRide. Trustee Madden said that the Van Wall location is a short-term solution only.

Another short-term option being considered is the property owned by the City, adjacent to the City's Fleet Services warehouse on Edison St. She indicated that the best piece of this ground was currently being used by the City of Ames Police Department, but that there was adequate room for both purposes. CyRide could improve this land with gravel and accommodate 15-25 buses. Trustee Gartin shared that he liked the City site as an option as he believed that the buses were a good fit for the area. Trustee Teubert agreed and indicated that he liked the ability to house more buses at this location as opposed to the Van Wall site that could accommodate only six buses. He further stated that it would be better use of CyRide's funds in the long run.

Trustee Madden asked about CyRide's additional expense at the two locations. Director Kyras indicated that the distance from CyRide's current facility to either location is about the same; however, she indicated operating costs would be higher from the City site because CyRide operates more services to the south and west side of Ames and the buses would be housed in east Ames.

Trustee Madden asked if CyRide had explored the K-Mart site, which has a large paved lot and wondered if the current owners would be willing to lease the parking lot to park

buses as a short-term location and suggested CyRide contact a realtor to see what other properties might be available. Trustee Teubert was not in favor of the K-Mart parking lot, indicating that this site is highly visible and would not provide the aesthetic the community would desire for this area. Director Kyras said she has a meeting set up with a realtor to begin this process and will follow-up with the Transit Board with more information in March.

Director Kyras then explained a third short-term option, which was the Ames School District's current leased bus facility. She indicated that the school district's project was not moving forward as quickly as anticipated and that they had extended their lease for this site so that it could not be considered as a short-term CyRide possibility at this time.

Trustee Madden offered other possible site suggestions, such as space at the airport or parking behind the Bourne building, as Sauer Dansfoss uses this facility as a warehouse.

Director Kyras said no decisions needed to be made at the February meeting as staff will work toward a short-term solution within the next month or two.

Director Kyras then began explaining the possible long-term sites. Trustee Schainker requested that sites near the Airport not be considered as a permanent solution as the Research Park is continuing to grow and the land along Riverside Drive continues to develop.

Director Kyras then provided background information regarding the long-term bus storage need. She indicated CyRide currently houses 93 vehicles and with the articulated bus arrival, the fleet will increase to 97 vehicles. She indicated that 80 vehicles could be housed indoors in the current facility. She also indicated that at the June 2015 Transit Board meeting, staff had recommended planning a space to accommodate a fleet of 125 vehicles in the long-term, requiring a second space for 45 vehicles. She indicated that staff has begun discussion on the long-term solution by determining how CyRide could function with two facilities and determining what functions would need to be performed at each site, indicating that the maintenance function at each site was a critical component of the discussions. She indicated that these discussions were not completed yet, but that several potential sites had been identified for consideration once the space needs portion of this project was completed. She indicated that Brent Schipper with ASK Studio would develop a building concept for 45 vehicles and then each site could be compared to the required space for the building concept.

Director Kyras explained that one site being considered is Iowa State University's Curtiss farm, south of Hwy 30 on State Street. This site could better serve the south and west side of Ames where a majority of CyRide service operates from.

Trustee Madden mentioned another site, the fire school located on Haber Road, as a possible location, indicating that at one point the school had considered relocating, but that the Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau would like the school to remain in Ames for its economic benefits to the community. This site would be close to CyRide's current facility, but Director Kyras said CyRide would not be able to bring all the buses through the Haber tunnel due to its height restrictions. Trustee Madden pointed out that this site is also in the flood plain.

Another possible site discussed was Brookside Park as the Ames School District will be relocating their baseball field. Transit board members discussed that this site was also in the flood plain, but geographically close to CyRide.

President Haila inquired about the parking lot north of Frederiksen Court, as it would also be in close proximity to CyRide's current site. Trustee Madden said it is currently used for student parking for residents that live in Frederiksen Court, due to the complexes building expansion a few years ago.

Director Kyras said CyRide staff has not considered East Ames sites as long-term solutions as a majority of CyRide services are provided in the west and south portion of Ames with the Orange and Red Routes.

Trustee Madden mentioned another possibility of the dealership that moved out of the property on West Lincolway, former Reuters Car Dealership. Director Kyras indicated they would look into this site and bring back feasible options at a future board meeting for the Transit Board to consider.

Referring to facility discussions several years ago, Trustee Schainker shared that he still believes that there is a solution at the current site. He indicated that building bus storage on the current parking lot, with employee parking on the roof, could provide a solution at the current site. Director Kyras indicated that functionally parking buses in the employee parking lot space would be difficult with the circulation space required. Further, she stated that if the current building was not constructed, that a better layout, that could accommodate more buses, could have been designed.

President Haila summarized the long-term discussion by suggesting that staff: take into consideration the operational cost of each potential site, include facility impacts in the System Redesign Study and remove all potential sites around the airport from consideration.

Trustee Gartin shared that the community needed good access to transportation and Trustee Madden shared that he liked the idea of looking west of Ames for a larger parcel, 20 to 25 acres, to build on as need and funding allowed, and to not piecemeal a facility together.

**CALENDAR YEAR 2016 PROPOSED BUS STOP IMPROVEMENTS:** Director Kyras explained the bus stop improvement plan update was requested by board members at the December meeting and postponed at the January meeting due to time constraints. She shared that CyRide's bus stop improvements were based on a 2008 study that rated the condition of each of its 400+ bus stops and then prioritized recommended improvements. She indicated that since then, staff had been systematically working through this list to improve customer experience.

Barb Neal, CyRide's Operation's Supervisor, shared with transit board members that this is a plan, and that the timing of specific improvements could fluctuate depending on a variety of factors. Trustee Teubert shared that several students have requested specific improvements, such as heated bus shelters. He indicated that an increasing number of Student Government Senators were interested in improving the shelter program for students. Trustee Gartin indicated that a better use of CyRide's limited bus stop improvement dollars might be for technology requests, such as phone charging stations, as Iowa winters usually last only about three months, leaving the benefit of shelters less justifiable.

Barb Neal indicated that CyRide's \$50,000 annual budget must accommodate both campus and off-campus locations, for both student and non-student needs. Director Kyras added that approximately \$50,000 per year in construction projects was about the maximum that staff could accomplish during the summer months.

President Haila shared his perspective that CyRide staff had two big projects to currently work on (Orange Route BRT and System Redesign projects) and suggested waiting to address another major project.

Barb Neal told the Transit Board that CyRide works with both ISU and the City on shelter construction projects and provided an update on two larger projects - a new Bessey Hall bus stop, which would not be needed until 2017; Friley Hall bus stop, which would include a new style bus shelter. Trustee Teubert stated that the Student Government has donated money for bus shelters. Barb Neal indicated that CyRide staff would work with students on how they wanted to utilize these funds.

The Transit Board then discussed the cost range for bus stop improvements. Trustee Gartin asked what drives the cost of bus stop improvements, as concrete is relatively inexpensive. Director Kyras explained that a simple improvement can cost \$1,000 to a major improvement with a new style shelter, amenities, electricity, etc. costing up to \$35,000. Barb Neal further explained that it is expensive to lay/build a bus stop on campus as ISU has moved to colored concrete, and that if NextBus signage and electrical is needed, the average cost is about \$30,000. A question was asked about where CyRide purchased its new style bus shelter from. Rich Leners, CyRide's Fleet and Facilities



Director, stated that they are manufactured by Columbia shelters and that CyRide's design is a custom design, resulting from a CyRide/ISU group effort to develop a more attractive structure. He further indicated that this shelter costs approximately \$20,000. Trustee Gartin asked President Haila if, in his professional opinion, he concurred with the costs of bus stop construction. President Haila indicated that he believed it was reasonable as this type of construction is considered a small project and, as such, tended to be higher priced.

Trustee Gartin asked about crime at bus stop locations and Rich Leners said there is very little crime at shelters and that most of the cost comes from broken glass panels in the fall and spring, with very little or no assault at these stops.

Trustee Madden asked about the South Duff and Walmart bus stop and referenced previous discussions about getting buses closer to the retail facilities east of South Duff. He suggested this be examined in the System Redesign Study.

#### **TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- 1) Director Kyras reported that the two grant applications for the Iowa DOT's Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP) were approved in January. The table provided in the packet of information showed a total savings of \$384,120 to the operating budget as a result of this grant approval. CyRide also has savings from last year's ICAAP grant award and plans to address how to apply these savings within CyRide's budget with the Transit Board at the March meeting.
- 2) Director Kyras indicated that she had received notification from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that the FTA's visit to view CyRide's potential BRT project will need to be rescheduled from its original March date, until late summer or early fall. Director Kyras told the Transit Board that at the February board meeting, board members agreed to submit a letter of request in April 2016, after the originally planned FTA visit. Director Kyras recommended still submitting letter in April, but accompany it with a high-quality video showing the Orange Route and explaining the project. President Haila expressed his concern with committing to the project without knowing the specifics of what would be required, and expressed his reservations in submitting the letter to determine FTA's interest in the project. Trustees Teubert, Abbas and Madden were supportive of submitting the letter.

Trustee Schainker raised a concern about the timing of this submittal prior to the System Redesign results. Director Kyras indicated that the next steps in the BRT project would not need to be taken until the end of 2016, if the FTA was interested. The System Redesign project will be half way completed at that time and CyRide's staff/board should have a feel for the direction of this study at that time.

After a lengthy discussion, board members agreed to submit the letter in April, confirming that this did not constitute a commitment and that the board still reserves the right to delay or terminate a grant request for the BRT project.

- 3) As a result of previous facility discussions on indoor versus outdoor parking costs, Director Kyras explained that CyRide staff had monitored the additional cost of parking twelve buses outside during the month of January 2016, which totaled more than \$13,000.

Trustee Schainker asked if the technology existed that could turn a bus engine heater on and off throughout the night on buses stored outside in cold weather. Trustee Schainker asked Rich Leners to look into the possibility of this. Mr. Leners shared that the technology for buses is different – different fuel type, age of vehicles, etc. He indicated that he had looked into this and that an engine heater that cycles off and on costs approximately \$7,500 per bus; however, this would not solve CyRide’s cold weather issues as a fuel tank heater would also be needed and that the bus’s battery fails in the cold weather. He indicated that he had recently researched the possibility of addressing the fuel tank/battery issues and did not find technology to-date that would resolve these issues.

- (4) Director Kyras shared that CyRide staff was working with the City Finance Department on a closing balance analysis and that staff will provide information for the board on this item at the March meeting.

Transit board members inquired how other transit systems address a reserve account. Director Kyras briefly shared the results of a previous, reserve account, transit survey, indicating that there is no standard methodology - some require three months of operating funds, some a certain dollar amount, and others a percentage of operating expenses. She indicated that the decision on methodology/reserve amount was determined by the risk level policymakers were comfortable with.

Trustee Madden informed the Transit Board that Iowa State’s administration had approved the policy for CyRide drivers to receive priority registration for class scheduling and urged Director Kyras to follow-up with Laura Doering of Iowa State to determine the logistics of this program.

Trustee Madden suggested another date for the March meeting as some of the Transit Board members may need to attend a community event on the scheduled date. CyRide staff will look for an alternate date.

Trustee Gartin suggested that staff include, in the board packet each month, the number of drivers needed so that the board could determine if the agency was making progress on its

driver staffing levels. Director Kyras suggested reporting the number of open hours instead of the number of drivers needed to gauge any improvement in this area.

Trustee Gartin asked staff to share any driver's concerns following the December accident. Director Kyras indicated that there were initially three drivers who had indicated they were struggling with driving a bus as a result of the accident, but that all had returned to work at that time. She also indicated that retired workers were questioning whether the job was worth the risk and that there may be future driver staffing ramifications.

Trustee Gartin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:02am. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried unanimously.