

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

September 29, 2016

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on September 29, 2016 at 7:30 a.m. in CyRide's Conference room. President Haila called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m. with Trustees Madden, Gartin, Staudt, Haila and Valentino present at the meeting. Absent: Trustee Schainker.

Reporter Richard Martinez with the Iowa State Daily was in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comments.

FEDERAL TITLE VI PROGRAM UPDATE: Director Kyras provided background information regarding CyRide's Title VI Program, indicating that it was initially developed three years ago to comply with new Federal Transit Administration regulations. She indicated that the regulations required service standards and a written plan. She further indicated that these elements must be updated every three years and that Shari Atwood, CyRide's Transit Planner, had reviewed and modified both elements. Director Kyras explained that one major item that had changed in the plan is the Limited English Proficient outreach requirements as a result of new census data for Ames. As of this year, Ames' Mandarin Chinese population, speaking English than very well, exceeded 1,000 individuals, which requires CyRide to provide all "vital documents" in this language.

Shari Atwood explained that currently there are approximately 1,400 individuals who reside in Ames that speak English less than very well. Trustee Madden asked how this number was calculated and shared that, for individuals to be admitted to Iowa State University (ISU), they have to nominally be able to speak English. Shari Atwood stated that this number is based on census surveys conducted by the federal government and it is based on self-reporting this information.

Director Kyras shared that CyRide had been chosen for a federal Title VI audit several years ago and that through discussions with reviewers, they had indicated that it did not matter if they could speak English well enough to meet ISU standards, but that their bases was strictly the self-reported information from the census.

Director Kyras continued to explain the differences in the written plan and standards from the original plan to the revised plan under consideration. She pointed out the ten items that CyRide is required to have included in the document and generically what is contained in each section.

Trustee Gartin shared a concern regarding the new Limited English Proficiency requirement and the burden it placed on CyRide. He indicated that it was an unfunded mandate that could have significant financial ramifications, with little beneficial impact.

Director Kyras acknowledged his concern, but indicated that CyRide did not have a choice to not comply with the regulation since it receives federal dollars. Ms. Atwood then shared with the board the different activities CyRide currently undertakes to provide access to individuals speaking Mandarin Chinese – website’s Google Translate, picture graphics for lost and found, “I speak cards” for CyRide drivers to identify a customer’s language and can then request assistance in that language and language interpreter telephone services. Director Kyras then explained the changes that CyRide would need to accomplish in the next 120 days - Title VI notices on the bus will need to be translated into Mandarin Chinese (currently these documents are on the website and can be translated through Google translate), advertise the free Language Assistance availability, and translate several policies, procedures and applications into Mandarin Chinese. Director Kyras estimated the cost for these changes to be approximately \$2,000. She also indicated that additional measures, such as interior bus signage including Mandarin Chinese, could be evaluated to determine if they would provide meaningful access for customers and that staff would evaluate each and report the results to the board prior to taking these steps.

Trustee Gartin expressed his continued concern with the new requirement, but indicated that because of the lower cost he could support staff’s recommendations. Shari Atwood provided additional information indicating that the FTA could claim that CyRide was not making meaningful access for individuals if the transit system chose not take these additional measures. She shared an example that if a customer wished to fill out a Dial-A-Ride application, and the only way they could do this was in English, then FTA would find that CyRide was not providing meaningful access.

Trustee Madden shared his thoughts that if 1,000 individuals meet the threshold that he was surprised that Ames’ Hispanic population did not meet this threshold as well. Director Kyras indicated that the census did not indicate that more than 1,000 individuals, self-reporting as Hispanic, spoke English less than very well.

Trustee Gartin requested further clarification of the numbers contained in the written plan, indicating that he thought staff would be recommending that CyRide place its vital documents in Hispanic, as opposed to Mandarin Chinese.

ISU’s Senior Vice President Kate Gregory shared her thoughts that regardless of the individual minority populations, if the census indicates these populations have exceeded federal program thresholds, CyRide must provide meaningful transportation.

Shari Atwood further shared that regardless of this new threshold for Mandarin Chinese, CyRide has to provide meaningful access in any language requested, through the language telephone line.

ISU’s Senior Vice President Kate Gregory shared her thoughts about conversations she has had with foreign-born ISU students about not feeling welcomed in the community

and at ISU. She shared her perspective that she would like to make it easier for all individuals to use CyRide service.

Trustee Gartin reiterated his concern about the new requirements and whether they provided meaningful access and wondered why CyRide was not considering these same efforts for Ames' Hispanic population. Director Kyras indicated that Spanish-speaking populations were more prevalent across the nation and that many of the bus signs are currently translated into Spanish by the bus manufacturer.

Trustee Madden inquired about whether there were requirements to identify the medical facility areas of Ames. Barb Neal, CyRide's Assistant Director – Operations indicated that drivers currently announce this area on the buses.

President Haila said CyRide's Title VI Plan received recognition as a best practice and that his desire was to allow staff to continue to be a best practice. He also shared this concern that meeting this requirement could lead to more languages needing to be reflected in CyRide materials. Trustee Madden shared his thoughts that individuals are able to translate to almost any language using the internet.

Trustee Staudt indicated that he believed that the requirement was not a large burden on CyRide and could be addressed by staff's recommendation. Trustee Gartin disagreed, indicating that it needed to be thought through critically.

Trustee Staudt made a motion to approve CyRide's Title VI Plan and policy for submission to the Federal Transit Administration by October 1, 2016. Trustee Gartin seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5, Nays: None) Motion carried.

OPERATIONS DIVISION REORGANIZATION PLAN: Director Kyras shared with board members that with Karen Jamison's retirement, Director Kyras had been analyzing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Operations Department as its responsibilities had grown and changed over the years. She provided board members with a copy of the current organizational chart and then explained the first of three phases of the reorganization she proposed for this division of CyRide. She explained the first phase consisted of consolidating overall responsibilities for the Operation's Division into the Assistant Director – Operations position. This change results in the elimination of the Operations Supervisor position, providing a 2016-2017 budget saving of \$85,000 and reserving the full-time equivalent (FTE) from the eliminated position for the third phase of the reorganization. She indicated the second phase was to provide clerical support for this new consolidated position by modifying the Principal Clerk, serving as CyRide's Receptionist, and providing a new clerical position for the Operation's Division. She indicated that the impact of this change would create a \$17,000 additional cost to the 2016-2017 budget. She then explained the third phase of adding mid-level management support to work with the drivers and analyze CyRide's operations.

President Haila shared his thoughts that he approved Phase 1, concurring with the direction CyRide is going with the reorganization of this division.

Director Kyras introduced Barb Neal as the new Asst. Director of Operations. Director Kyras provided additional details on the third phase, indicating that Barb and the Director would further define the mid-level manager's roles and responsibilities and would incorporate this information into the 2016-2017 CyRide budget process. The position would then be recruited during the spring for a start date of July 1, 2017. President Haila asked about the budget impact. Director Kyras indicated that it depended on where several positions placed within the City's Pay Plan and would not be able to answer the question about its final impact until this review was completed by the City's Human Resources Department.

Trustee Madden raised the question regarding CyRide's position titles, wondering if it would be an appropriate time to determine if these should also be modified, specifically referencing the position of "secretary." Director Kyras indicating that there might some flexibility to modify transit-only titles, but positions such as clerks and secretaries were titles used throughout the City of Ames organization.

Trustee Gartin asked if Trustee Schainker had looked at the reorganization since he was not able to be at the board meeting. Director Kyras said that she had met with Trustee Schainker prior to the meeting and that he was in agreement with the recommended second and third phases, but wanted to have staff bring the board up-to-date on the specific titles and impact on the budget at a future meeting, before it was finalized. Trustee Gartin agreed with this approach.

Trustee Gartin questioned whether there was value in looking at other transit system's organization and leadership structures and whether the recommended plan was consistent with industry practices. Director Kyras indicated that CyRide's previous structure was atypical, but that the recommended structure was more in-line with how other system's operate.

Barb Neal, CyRide's Assistant Director – Operations, indicated that over the next several months the final Operation's Division structure would be developed and could include a review of how other systems were structured.

President Haila acknowledged the budget savings created from the first phase of the reorganization and the savings that was currently being created through lower fuel prices; however, inquired about whether the overall impact might be higher or lower in the end. Director Kyras shared her belief that the total change could result in a slightly higher total payroll, possibly in the \$20,000 range.

Trustee Gartin made a motion to concur with Phase I and II of CyRide's Operational Division reorganization, with additional information to the board regarding the second

phase and providing additional information on Phase III with the proposed 2017-2018 Budget. Motion seconded by Kate Gregory. (Ayes: Five, Nays: None.) Motion carried.

SYSTEM REDESIGN SCOPE AND ACTIVITY UPDATE: Director Kyras provided background information regarding the System Redesign project discussed at the August 31, 2016 board meeting. She indicated that in this discussion two policies were discussed that impacted operations - Fare Free Analysis and impact of Orange route on other routes. She indicated that these two topics were not included in the study's scope of work, but had requested that the consultant provide information about adding these to the scope of work.

Director Kyras said Nelson Nygaard provided staff with two proposals, one for each policy issue. She indicated that the Fare Free analysis would increase the study's budget by \$29,846 and included a review of the cost and benefits of the student's fare free program as well as the cost/benefit of extending this fare free concept city-wide. She indicated that the second analysis would determine the impact to other routes if the Orange Route did not exist. The cost of this study was just under \$15,000. Director Kyras indicated that the fuel savings year-to-date would cover the cost of these two analyses.

Trustee Gartin asked staff whether Trustee Schainker had had an opportunity to review the two proposals. Director Kyras shared that she had spoken with Trustee Schainker before the meeting and that she believed he had had the opportunity to briefly review the material. Further, she indicated that he had shared with her that he was supportive of adding these two analyses to the scope of work for the System Redesign Study. ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory shared that she believed that Trustee Schainker had wanted a broader study than what was being proposed, so the addition of these two analyses would benefit the expectations of the larger transit board.

President Haila shared his thoughts about the current student fare free program. He indicated that with the current program it provides unlimited rides, which impacts ridership. This impact provides challenges operationally as well as for the facility as the organization continues to grow. President Haila indicated that extending this program to the entire community would magnify these challenges.

Director Kyras reminded board members that if changes were recommended to the student fare free program, a new student referendum would need to be approved as the transit board could not decide this issue, but could provide a study of the benefits/costs.

President Haila provided his thoughts about the sustainability of CyRide's current system into the future pointing out the operational and facility needs today. Further, he inquired about the timing of these two analyses, asking if it was possible to complete them at the same time as the original scope of work proposals are provided to the

transit board and public for consideration. Director Kyras indicated that she had not discussed the timing of these analyses with the consultant, but indicated she would determine if they could be done in conjunction with the original scope of work.

A question was raised about whether the scope of work in the Fare Free analysis reflected Trustee Schainker's questions on this topic. Trustee Madden referred to Task 1.5 of the Fare Free proposal, the last paragraph summarizes the cost-benefit of the current system and indicated he believed it addressed Trustee Schainker questions.

President Haila shared his thoughts that if Trustee Schainker believed the two analyses were beneficial and if Trustee Madden felt it was worth the additional investment, that he would recommend proceeding to add these to the System Redesign scope of work.

ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory shared her thoughts that finding the right balance of transit services for the future was complex and that if the transit board is contemplating moving away from fare free for the students, that an analysis could be beneficial. She also shared her desire to have it accomplished along with the original scope of work or whether one analysis should be done prior to the other.

Trustee Staudt shared that he thought that the fare free analysis proposal included both the current student program, as well as the impact of a community-wide program. President Haila agreed; however, said the transit board needed to clarify if both was included in the analysis.

ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory shared her concern for a community-wide fare free program, indicating that it would be difficult to sustain as ridership increases. Director Kyras shared that ridership increases would minimally impact service levels as the new ridership would be generated by non-students, to locations throughout the community, and that CyRide has unused bus capacity to address this increase. Further, she indicated that current financial resources would not change dramatically in the future, which would be reflected in the study.

Director Kyras was directed to clarify the fare free analysis scope of work to make sure it included both student and community-wide fare free analysis, as well as determining the timing of these two new analyses to hopefully coincide with the original scope of work. Additionally, she was directed to make sure the Fare Free analysis scope of work met Trustee Schainker's needs. Trustee Madden shared that he did not want to lose another month and recommended giving staff approval to move forward if the board's direction could be accomplished.

Trustee Gartin suggested proceeding with approval of Alternative #1, subject to the direction of board members. Trustee Gartin then made a motion to approve the Nelson/Nygaard contract for the System Redesign by \$44,706 to include both the fare

free and Commuter Lot/Orange Route analysis. Motion seconded by Kate Gregory. (Ayes: 5, Nays: 0.) Motion carried.

BROWN ROUTE REPORT: At the August 24, 2016 Transit Board Meeting, individuals from a business at the Research Park spoke to the Transit Board and staff requesting that service to the North Loop Drive on the Brown Route be restored. As a result, board members directed staff to prepare a report on the history and options for this portion of the route. Director Kyras explained the history of the change, ridership counts that had been taken in making a decision on the change and solutions that had been analyzed. The following briefly recaps the presentation:

- Change was made as a result of the new Core building being open, which split the market in this area into two locations.
- Two week ridership counts were taken in January 2016 which resulted in a maximum of 14 and average of less than one person per trip.
- Discussions with and consensus of Research Park representatives.
- Solutions discussed:
 - Alternating the route between the two areas
 - Shuttle route from the Core building
 - Serving only the Hub
- Consensus of Research Park and board members was to serve only the hub area.

In the petition received at the August 24th transit board meeting, representatives of InTrans requested staff to look at serving both locations, indicating it only took an additional 3-4 minutes. Director Kyras shared the scheduling analysis completed by CyRide's Scheduling/Budget Analyst, which indicated that the current route required an additional 7-8 minutes and that it only has 3 minutes at the end of the route before it must begin the next trip. She also indicated that as many as 18 individuals were using the new route based on recent counts taken. She indicated that staff's recommendation remained the same, but that this was one area the System Redesign Study would be analyzing and there could possibly be changes recommended as a result of this study.

Trustee Madden shared his thoughts that CyRide should continue the route to the Core building as sidewalks were currently being planned to make walking to other buildings more convenient. Additionally, he indicated that future developments, such as the medical building, rec center, restaurant, and possibly a child care facility will be constructed, making the current alignment more advantageous and revisiting it as the development grows.

Director Kyras shared that the walking distance from the nearest bus top to building #4 where InTrans is located is $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile, which is the transit industry standard for the acceptable walking distance to a bus stop.

ISU Senior Vice President Gregory shared her interest for student input regarding bus service and is interested in gaining this input in the System Redesign Study. She asked for an update regarding progress in setting these meetings. Director Kyras indicated that staff was in the process of getting the pop-up, formal meetings and on-line surveys scheduled and would share the plans as they were developed. ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory inquired about the online survey. Director Kyras told the transit board that the survey Ms. Gregory was referring to would be a community-wide survey to gain input on what was important in a transit system for Ames.

Trustee Madden suggested a mass email through the university to students, faculty and staff. Trustee Staudt shared his thoughts on this idea to have a good subject line for the student's mass email.

President Haila suggested outreach to: Ames Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Cultural District, and looking into the possibility of including it in the City's utility billing.

Ms. Gregory shared her desire to get non-riders to complete the survey, as well as current riders.

Trustee Gartin returned the conversation to the Research Park issue sharing his thoughts that there is not a parking problem at the Research Park, which is different than on campus where there is a parking challenge, which requires more CyRide service. He indicated that there may be a parking challenge in the future when the student population increases at the Research Park.

ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory shared her desire for the consultant to gain input from individuals at the Research Park to gauge the need for service.

Director Kyras said that it is a dynamic problem as the Research Park continues to grow, as a majority of this growth is to the south, closer to the Core building.

President Haila shared his recommendation to not change the current route as the walk is manageable, but then monitor comments provided through the System Redesign study for possible changes in the future.

Trustee Gartin indicated that the Research Park and transit issues are dynamic and suggested looking at other research parks serving students and full time staffs around the nation to see how transit is serving other populations. ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory said there are a handful of these research parks and will provide a list to Director Kyras.

Director Kyras was directed to reach out and respond to the students present at the August 24th meeting.

Kate Gregory left the meeting at 8:43 am.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- **State Grant Application:** Director Kyras shared that the State's urban bus grant did not get approved by the FTA, but that the rural bus grant did. As a result, CyRide will not need to commit match dollars from CyRide's closing balance for the purchase of new buses; therefore, upon completion of the audit, staff will prepare options on the dollar amount above the approved 10% closing balance.
- **Driver Hiring Update:** Director Kyras updated board members on the number of open bus driving hours, indicating a continued decrease in this number and a positive trend. Further, she indicated that 92.4% of the runs were filled and that this is considered full employment. Trustee Gartin thanked Director Kyras for sharing this information and she thanked the board for helping to provide resources to address this crisis. She then shared the results of offering bonuses and incentives to drivers.
- **Personnel Changes:** Karen Jamison will retire on September 30, 2016 after 40 years. A reception will be held for her on Friday, September 30th with an informal presentation at 2:45pm.
- **Facility Access Control and Security System:** Director Kyras indicated that the access control/security system project was considered a public improvement project and, as such, would follow the City of Ames procurement process. The City Council will be reviewing the plans and specifications in October and once bids are received, the Council and Transit Board will be provided with the results for consideration.

Trustee Gartin acknowledged that the 40th Anniversary proclamation at the City Council meeting was well received. He encouraged all transit board members to ride CyRide and spoke highly of his experience taking CyRide to the Ames Racquet and Fitness Center and of the driver.

FALL SEMESTER MEETING TIMES AND PLACE:

- October 26, 2016, 8:00 AM
- November 30, 2016, 8:00 AM

Meeting Adjourned: Trustee Gartin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 am.
Motion carried.

John Haila, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary