

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

October 26, 2016

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on October 26, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. in CyRide's Conference room. President Haila called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. with Trustees Gartin, Madden, Schainker, Haila and Valentino present. Absent: Trustee Staudt.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Madden made a motion to approve the August 24, August 31, and September 29, 2016 minutes as presented. Trustee Gartin seconded the motion. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comments were received.

IOWA CLEAN AIR ATTAINMENT GRANT APPLICATION APPROVAL: Director Kyras shared with transit board members that the IDOT was accepting Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP) applications, which can fund up to 80% of a new transit service for up to three years that reduces congestion or improves air quality. She indicated that these applications are due December 1, 2016. CyRide has three projects that would qualify for funding and that staff recommends including in an application for the next year - Green/Brown Weekday, Blue Sunday and Plum route. The application request would be for \$332,213, divided over multiple CyRide budget years, for the three projects and would allow for a budget savings to the Student Government Trust Fund, if funded.

Trustee Gartin asked if there was a reason not to approve the application as he could not envision any challenges with the request. Director Kyras indicated that the only challenge she could identify would be the staff time that it would take to put the application together, if the board desired staff to be working on other priorities. Trustee Gartin made a motion to approve submission of two ICAAP grant applications for operating expenses totaling \$332,213. Trustee Valentino seconded the motion. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

NEW FEDERAL TRANSIT ASSET MANAGEMENT (TAM) REGULATIONS: Director Kyras shared that new Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations were released in July 2016 requiring new reporting of federal asset condition. She indicated that the purpose of the regulation was to maintain a good state of good repair for the nation's public transportation assets. Action dates for which transit systems must comply are January 1, 2017, January 1, 2018, and October 1, 2018. She then briefly detailed the requirements, FTA definitions, and timelines. She also referred board members to the FTA attachment, included in the board material, summarizing the requirements.

She then indicated that CyRide staff will focus on the work that is required by January 1, 2017. She indicated that Rich Leners, CyRide's Assistant Director – Fleet & Facilities,

would be taking the lead on this project and working with staff to develop the performance goals required by January 1, 2017.

Trustee Madden mentioned that ISU personnel would be willing to speak with CyRide staff and could provide details on how ISU manages their assets.

A discussion regarding whether it was more advantageous for CyRide to set goals it believed it could achieve with all assets or to provide more-stringent goals that it would strive to achieve as it could impact CyRide's success in receiving federal grants. Trustee Schainker recommended establishing goals for "what we can live with financially."

Director Kyras indicated that a special transit board meeting in late December would be needed once the performance measures and goals were developed, as they would need to be approved before submittal to FTA in January.

2017-2018 SERVICE PROPOSALS: Director Kyras shared with board members the process staff uses to develop possible service modifications for the next budget year by identifying challenges within the current service and documenting customer requests. Before presenting staff's service analysis, Director Kyras began by providing board members with background information, as included in the board's meeting materials, on ridership (historical), fleet size, and ISU enrollment predictions.

Trustee Staudt arrived at 8:28 a.m.

Director Kyras then shared three trends with board members - higher evening ridership due to more evening classes, current ridership statistics and that ISU enrollment was in a stable, as opposed to a high growth period.

President Haila asked what the impact of having one more weekday would have on CyRide's ridership and how a month could have one more weekday. Director Kyras indicated that one more weekday would increase ridership by approximately 35,000 rides in one month and this occur due to how many weekdays are in a month, which can change from year to year. Ms. Gregory added that calendar days vary in a seven-year cycle.

Trustee Schainker shared his thoughts that he expected ISU classes and the number of faculty to increase in order to maintain the student-teacher ratio. Trustee Madden indicated that Iowa State is working to maximize utilization of rooms; however, this has increased the number of classes offered in the evening as the university has grown. He also shared that the university has discussed the possibility of staggering class times throughout the day to try to lessen CyRide's peak busing impact, but that there was little interest in modifying current practice in this area.

Trustee Schainker shared that the summer to school year ridership variation also challenges CyRide.

Trustee Schainker asked for clarification regarding the potential service changes presented at the meeting versus the timing of recommendations from the System Redesign. Director Kyras indicated that the possible service changes presented by staff at the current meeting could be considered for Fall 2017 implementation. Possible System Redesign changes would be identified after the 2017-2018 budget would be completed; therefore, they could be considered for Fall 2018 implementation.

Trustee Gartin asked if staff would be proposing any service reductions. Director Kyras indicated that most routes were highly productive and would not, therefore, be candidates for service reductions, but that CyRide was able to add/reduce services on a daily basis through its “extra” buses on its routes – matching buses with demand. There was a general discussion regarding lower efficiency routes, such as the Pink and Yellow routes indicating that these served community needs. Trustee Schainker provided his thoughts that the transit board and CyRide has an obligation to continue to support routes that serve the larger community so that people who do not have a car can go where they need to in Ames.

Trustee Schainker asked if staff was aware of the types of recommendations the consultant might be bringing to the Transit Board. Director Kyras indicating that the consulting firm was still in the information gathering phase, but had indicated that in lower productivity areas coordinating with Uber might be an option to maintain service to the community at a lower cost.

Director Kyras then explained each of the six potential changes staff had prepared for transit board consideration. The first option is to add up to five additional hours of service per day to address overcrowding issues that cannot be anticipated at a cost of \$69,230. This project would fit into the Transit Board’s service priority #1. These priorities were established in 2015 to guide service level decisions.

The second proposal was designed to address the trend of more students needing service to travel to/from evening classes and would add more service to the Red, Blue and Orange routes at a cost of \$71,276. This would also be a priority #1 service change.

The third proposal would also address the trend of more night classes by added two additional trips on the Brown Route service each weeknight at a cost of \$7,761. This would be a priority #2 service change.

The fourth proposal is to add weekend service to two routes (either Gray or Plum and Brown Route) to address customer requests for longer service hours at a cost of \$110,648. This would also be a priority #2 service change.

The fifth proposal is to divide ridership on one of CyRide's heaviest-used routes, the Red Route, into two routes, creating a new State Street Express at an estimated cost of \$122,000. This would be a priority #2/3 service change as it impacts an existing route, as well as creates a new route. The new State Street Express could also serve the new high-density residential development along Mortenson. The Purple Route would be shortened under this proposal as well.

President Haila asked for clarification on the purpose of the Purple route as it duplicated a significant portion of the Red Route. Director Kyras indicated its main purpose was to help provide capacity on the Red route and then provide service east of South Dakota to a small segment of non-student riders. Barb Neal, CyRide's Assistant Director – Operations, shared further historical information regarding the route indicating that its service had been reduced in the past due from an all-day route to a morning-afternoon route only due to budget reductions.

Trustee Madden inquired about whether the route serving the new north Walmart would need to operate differently and whether staff anticipated problems with shopping carts. Barb Neal indicating that she did not believe our service would need to operate differently and that she had discussed the need for a cart containment system, like the Southside Walmart had installed, and was told that Walmart was not considering this for their north location.

Director Kyras indicated that the last service proposal concerns access to the Research Park. She indicated that the proposal was to add a shuttle, connecting to the Brown route at the Core building, that could distribute individuals throughout the park at a cost of \$121,394 per year. This would be a priority #3 service change.

Director Kyras requested input on the desire to include any or all of the proposals in budget options or a spreadsheet listing the total cost, as well as the cost and percentage increase for each local funding partner.

Trustee Gartin expressed his thoughts about the need for service between Ames and Nevada. Director Kyras provided information regarding current service meeting this need, indicating that HIRTA operates in both Story County and Ames and could provide this trip for \$2 per ride by calling and reserving this trip 24 hours in advance. Trustee Gartin inquired about how well publicized this information was within the community. Shari Atwood, CyRide's Transit Planner, explained where the information could be obtained. Trustee Gartin requested that staff work with other human service agency groups in further educating the community, as well as at the Court House.

President Haila also reminded board members that the private business contract with Copper Beach was in its last year and that CyRide may not have this revenue in the future for Gray Route service, which would create a budget deficit or service would need to be reduced on this service starting next year. Director Kyras indicated that

preliminary discussions with Copper Beach have begun and that they are interested in entertaining the idea of future revenue for the route. President Haila shared his further concern that three-year contracts were challenging as there was an expectation for service to continue, with potentially no revenue from outside sources after the contract expires.

President Haila indicated that the new proposed service changes could add significant expense to the budget and he is concerned about whether it is sustainable into the future. He indicated that the System Redesign established a maximum 5% funding increase from each local funding partner and he was not sure we could add new services and stay within these financial constraints.

Trustee Schainker shared his thoughts that CyRide not consider adding service changes in the next budget year. President Haila indicated he believes there is uncertainty to federal and state funding levels remaining at current levels and a concern that existing services might not be sustainable into the future.

Ms. Gregory asked board members what their vision for Ames was as it continued to grow and what expectations should riders have to get from their home to Campus in the future.

Trustee Staudt shared his opinion that he was in favor of adding the following services for consideration in the 2017-2018 budget: five hours of service each day for overcrowding, additional night service on the Brown route and the State Street Express. There was a general consensus to further refine and cost the three options for budget consideration.

Trustee Madden said another budget approach is to cap the total budget at a specified amount and adjust services and funding partner shares to meet the capped budget.

Trustee Schainker shared his thoughts on a sustainable funding model, indicating that the transit board should establish long term assumptions that everyone can agree upon and then utilize these to guide service decisions. Further, he indicated that a long-term financial analysis needed to be completed and that he was not comfortable in committing to the service proposals without a longer term look at their impact.

Trustee Madden shared his thoughts regarding the annual CyRide increase percentages, indicating that the Board of Regents were utilizing a rate near inflation, which is about 3.5%. He also indicated that students would need to identify their priorities on fee increases, noting numerous projects that could increase fees. He also indicated that traditionally students had rated CyRide services as a high priority, but acknowledged that the competition for fee dollars was increasing. Trustee Staudt shared his thoughts that he did not believe that students were in favor of diminishing the quality of CyRide service.

A general discussion on new development locations ensued. Ms. Gregory suggested opening a dialog with developers regarding transit services to establish realistic expectations for service. Trustee Madden said Iowa State University enrollment levels would not be where they currently are at if the development today did not exist. Further, he shared that if enrollment trends start to reverse, the impact on the City/CyRide could become complex.

Trustee Valentino agreed with Trustee Staudt's priorities. There was a general consensus to further refine and cost the three options for budget consideration at the November board meeting.

Trustee Staudt further explain his desire to consider the State Street Express route indicating that he believe the Red Route was too busy and that this proposal would "take the burden off of" this route and provide a better quality of service from west Ames.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- **Ridership Update** – The Transit Director updated board members on ridership to-date, indicating that ridership is approximately 2.5% lower than for this same time period one year ago, mainly due to favorable weather conditions.
- **System Redesign Public Input Update** – The Transit Director reminded board members that the System Redesign public meetings are scheduled for November 8, 2016 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Memorial Union and November 9, 2016 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., Ames Public Library, Danfoss Room.
- **Federal Triennial Review** – Director Kyras shared with board members that CyRide had unexpectedly received notice of its Triennial review and requirement for major compilation of data/reports no later than December 16, 2016. The on-site review will be scheduled for mid-2017. She indicated that with this additional requirement, staff would be extremely busy through the end of the year with several major additional projects than is typical for this time of year. She urged board members to be patient as staff worked through meeting all the requirements, deadlines and priorities.

Trustee Madden shared his thought that the Ames Chamber of Commerce would be taking a trip to another university community and inquired about whether CyRide could suggest a location where a transit peer analysis could be part of this trip – indicating possibly Purdue, Grand Rapids, Madison, or Lafayette, IL.

Trustee Schainker asked board members if they were comfortable with the direction staff was taking in seeking legal direction on the Affordable Care Act, referencing the use of existing outside legal sources, as opposed the board-directed ACA transit expertise. There was a general consensus that efforts to secure legal counsel with transit expertise would be difficult and that they were comfortable with the current legal guidance.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Trustee Gartin made a motion to adjourn at 9:38 a.m. and seconded by Trustee Staudt. Motion carried.

FALL SEMESTER MEETING TIMES AND PLACE:

- November 1, 2016, 8:00 AM
- November 30, 2016, 8:00AM

John Haila, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary