

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

May 24, 2017

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on May 24, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. in the CyRide Conference room. President Haila called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m. with Trustees Nelson, Madden, Schainker, Haila, and Valentino present. Absent: Trustee Bibiloni. Iowa State University's Senior Vice President Kate Gregory was also present.

Public in Attendance: Trent Taglauer, ISU student and drives Cardinal route for CIT.

Approval of April 13 and April 25, 2017 Minutes: Trustee Madden motioned to adopt the April 13 and April 25, 2017 transit board minutes as presented. Trustee Schainker seconded the motion. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Public Comments: No public comments.

Federal Triennial Review Results: Director Kyras briefly described the process required for a federal Triennial Review, indicating that it began with submission of documentation in seventeen different areas, with questions over the past four month, ending with a two-day on-site review. As a result of this investigation, CyRide received findings in two areas – planning and drug and alcohol program. In the planning area, she explained that an agreement between the Ames Area MPO and CyRide would be needed to document planning responsibilities between the two organizations. She indicated that past federal reviews had indicated that this document was not needed, as staff to both the MPO and CyRide were employed by the City of Ames; however, she indicated that this opinion had changed and would now be required to complete this document.

The second finding was in the Drug and Alcohol program area. Director Kyras explained the staffing changes in this area of responsibility, as well as the stringent requirements to monitor sub-contractors. She indicated that discussions during the review centered on the need for CyRide's subcontractors to modify their policies to reflect the Federal Transit Administration's drug and alcohol policy requirements, as well as the Federal Highway Administration's requirements, which governed other business for the companies. However, she indicated that the finding was written more broadly to develop an oversight plan for its subcontractors. Barb Neal will provide this information to our contractors and work on making these changes and developing a plan.

Director Kyras further indicated that the reviewers had indicated that CyRide was well operated and that fewer than four findings represented a good outcome.

President Haila asked for further clarification on the discussion and finding in the drug and alcohol area. Director Kyras shared that at the end of the Triennial Review meetings, staff met with the reviewer for an exit conference and that the discussion centered on the policy changes needed. However, since that meeting, a draft Triennial

Review report had been received, which requires a plan to be developed that indicates how CyRide will oversee its subcontractors in this area.

Director Kyras also indicated that Assistant Director Barb Neal has been working to change subcontractor procedures to meet the requirements, but minimize the oversight required. She also indicated that CyRide would develop a plan that met the requirements, but believes that meeting the “best practices” recommended by the reviewer was not financially feasible for CyRide.

Quarterly Operations Report (January – March 2017): Director Kyras shared the third quarter, January through March 2017, performance statistics. She indicated that ridership was higher during the quarter; however, was lower year-to-date. She then explained additional measures that staff would be monitoring in the next few quarters.

- **Dial-A-Ride** - Ridership continues to be lower, which impacts the passengers per hour and cost measures as well. Director Kyras shared that staff had a meeting with HIRTA in February and they indicated that ridership was lower due to a temporary, administrative change made where other programs paid for Dial-A-Ride customers trips for a period of time. She indicated all rides requested were provided, but a different funding source paid for their trips. They indicated that this change has been corrected and ridership should return to previous levels.

President Haila asked how this would affect federal funding and Director Kyras said that the smaller number of rides should have no impact on state or federal funding.

- **Moonlight Express** – Director Kyras indicated that the number of rides during the quarter was higher, but lower year-to-date.
- **Drivers/Month/# of Interior Buses Cleaned** – Director Kyras indicated that both measures were lower for the quarter but higher for the year.
- **Farebox Revenue** – Director Kyras indicated that farebox revenue was higher for the second consecutive quarter, which is a reversal of previous quarters.

President Haila mentioned the positive miles per gallon trend achieved and asked staff if new measures had been implemented to achieve this 25% increase. Rich Leners, CyRide’s Assistant Director of Fleet and Facilities, indicated that there are numerous variables that can affect this measure from which buses are placed on different routes to weather conditions. He indicated that the numbers would need to be “pulled apart” before he could provide further insight.

Trustee Madden noted that diesel fuel had increased 44% for the quarter, as compared to the same quarter one year ago. He asked staff if prices had increased that significantly in one year and what was the 2017-2018 CyRide budget price per gallon. Director Kyras indicated that fuel prices had been trending higher, citing that fuel prices at the beginning of the fiscal year was approximately \$1.48 per gallon and the average price for the year was currently approximately \$1.68 per gallon. She indicated that the

2017-2018 budgeted price per gallon was \$2.75.

Transit Director's Report: Director Kyras indicated that there were four items of interest to the Board. First was the election of officers that will be postponed until the June 2017 Transit Board meeting to allow all members to be present for the election. Second, the Director briefly highlighted summer staff activities in the operations, administration and maintenance divisions to get ready for fall service and efficiently maintain and operate service. Third, she discussed the current and proposed student fee rates and percentage increases to maintain current service levels. Fourth, she informed board members that the City Council had approved \$225,000 in federal funding to assist in funding a bus in the 2020-2021 budget.

President Haila asked Director Kyras to update the Transit Board on conversations with Copper Beech. Director Kyras said she received an email from Copper Beech asking CyRide to provide a proposal as their company wanted to compare CyRide's cost with private operator bids they received. She indicated that she had informed the Copper Beech representative that the Transit Board had fully funded the existing level of service for next year, replacing their current contract funding. She indicated that the representative was not sure at that time if a private shuttle system would be operated next year. Director Kyras indicated that she believes that private shuttles were being used in the Ames area as a marketing tool to set apartments apart from others as the student apartment market softens.

Iowa State University's Senior Vice President Kate Gregory asked Director Kyras to reach out to Copper Beech regarding whether they would be operating the private shuttle next year, as the university will need to finalize plans for drop-off locations near campus if they do operate this service. Trustee Valentino shared that he had heard from students who were confused about bus service to/from this location, so he supported this conversation.

President Haila's shared his concern that the private shuttle will not be fully utilized and asked what kind of capacity the Plum route has. Director Kyras indicated that some trips currently have extra buses to provide the needed capacity and that staff will monitor ridership next year.

Trustee Madden asked ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory if there had been any conversations to consider S. 16th as an institutional road and widen it where it narrows from Grand to University Blvd. as it will become a bottle-neck as more apartment units are added along this corridor. ISU Senior Vice President Gregory indicated that it was an institutional road, but that the traffic was generated by city and university travel and, therefore, more discussion would need to take place regarding any changes.

System Redesign Plan – Service Refinement: Director Kyras recapped the board's action on April 13, 2017 regarding approval of the System Redesign Plan. She then explained that the final step in the planning process was to refine the service changes and ensure that

all changes would operate smoothly. She indicated that preliminary schedules had been developed over the past month and these schedules were used to test the service to make sure that it would operate as conceptually planned. She indicated that the consultant had also developed recommendations on when each of the route changes should be implemented. She also stated that the consultant had prepared a list of additional service changes that could further enhance CyRide's system, if additional funding could be secured in the future.

Mr. Wittmann with Nelson Nygaard then began his presentation with a brief overview of the System Redesign planning process for new board members present, including the market research, public/stakeholder outreach and surveys conducted to generate information that led to the improvements contained in the plan.

President Haila asked if staff had developed a thorough approach to communicate the service changes to the community. Director Kyras said that once the plan was finalized, staff would begin developing an implementation plan, and that educating the public was a key component of this plan.

Mr. Wittmann then explained the operational challenges that were reviewed, such as platooning of buses where multiple buses operate one trip in the schedule and on-time performance issues with routes and times of the day.

Mr. Wittmann then explained that the conceptual plan approved by the transit board was then developed into specific, preliminary schedules based on the approved routes and frequencies of the buses for each day of the week, when school was in session. He indicated the purpose of this exercise was to determine volumes on specific streets, examine the wait times to transfer to a different route, and identify trips where additional buses would be needed for the demand at that time. He then explained the analysis completed regarding Union Drive bus volumes. He referred board members to a chart that identified bus volumes on Union Drive between 8 and 9 am (peak demand). This analysis indicated that no more than three buses in each direction would be scheduled to operate on this street at this highest demand time, which represents a worst-case scenario.

Trustee Madden asked Iowa State University's Senior Vice President Kate Gregory if private vehicles would also be allowed on Union Dr. Senior Vice President Kate Gregory said the university has contemplated procedures where individuals could drive through, but cannot stop.

Director Kyras indicated that staff had further analyzed the information on the chart to examine how many buses would be stopped on Union Drive in a two-minute period, which represents the typical amount of time at a stop to board and de-board customers. She indicated that there was only once instance when a fourth bus would be needed at a stop under this scenario.

Mr. Wittmann then stated that three buses are easily accommodated on the roadway and up to five buses could be accommodated in the westbound direction. He indicated that the new roadway/sidewalk design for Union Drive would accommodate the number of waiting passengers.

Trustee Madden shared his concern that with buses lined up at/near the stops that this will block pedestrians, crosswalks, and access to parking lots #4 and #5. ISU Vice President Gregory said this could happen, but sidewalk improvements will channel pedestrians to new crosswalks, which will minimize this occurring.

President Haila asked if staff was comfortable with the volume of buses on Union Dr. Director Kyras said that they were, that the peak period analysis represented the worst case, in theory, and reminded the board that buses could be behind schedule due to operational issues on a given day, which could modify this schedule slightly. She also indicated that she believed that the benefits of providing more service in West Ames versus more service operating around campus would better serve the community in the long run.

Trustee Valentino shared Iowa State University's Transportation Advisory Council discussion on this topic. He indicated that the conversation had included skateboard, pedestrian and vehicle movements on Union Drive and indicated that the group determined that they would have the next year to work through these issues.

ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory said improvements along Union Drive should be completed by 2018, which correlates with the system redesign being implemented. She indicated that the improvements would include larger bus stops.

Director Kyras briefly mentioned some of the implementation activities, such as completion of a Title VI discrimination document and construction of a turnaround at the Towers. She also indicated that almost every route would have changes and that the consultant and staff had had discussion regarding how to successfully schedule these improvements. Mr. Wittmann then explained the two-phase approach recommended, with a smaller set of improvements in May 2018 and the remainder in August 2018. He indicated that the initial changes were ones that could be independent of the ones scheduled for August and would be cost neutral. Director Kyras indicated that staff was in the process of determining if the August changes were possible at one time and there was a possibility that these changes would need to be divided into two time periods. Mr. Wittmann then listed the potential changes included in each phase.

ISU Senior Vice President Gregory and Trustee Schainker questioned how the timing of the turnaround construction as well as, the Union Drive and Bissell Road construction would impact the system redesign implementation. Director Kyras indicated the preliminary schedule for the turnaround was as follows:

- Summer – decision on funding plan
- Fall – Design turnaround

- Winter –Bid the construction
- Spring/Summer – construct turnaround

She also shared the discussion with Iowa State University staff on the schedule for constructing Union Drive and Bissell Road, which she had been told would be completed before school started in August 2018. ISU Senior Vice President Gregory indicated that the Department of Residence would benefit from the turnaround and could be a potential partner in funding its construction.

Director Kyras shared with the Transit Board that CyRide staff will be very busy this next year operating service and planning for the system redesign changes. She indicated that even with the two-phase approach to service changes, the work will need to be completed for the spring 2018 bid process; however, she indicated that implementing the changes in two phases would allow staff to address any operational issues more quickly.

President Haila offered a suggestion to begin the fall service schedule a week earlier when fewer students were in Ames to allow time to work through any issues. Director Kyras indicated that all options would be discussed during the development of the implementation plan. Director Kyras said CyRide typically had asked for an additional five hours of service per day to address unanticipated operational issues and that one thought would be to increase this for one year when the plan was implemented to give staff the resources needed to successfully make the changes.

Mr. Wittmann shared a list of the activities that represented the next steps toward implementation, such as bus stop modifications, Title VI planning, budget that reflects the service changes, marketing, property-owner discussions and final schedule development.

Director Kyras indicated that the System Redesign Plan was fiscally-constrained, which typically has represented a 3% increase per year in local funding; therefore, the board could consider adding a priority service need from the list of potential service to next years' service. Trustee Schainker also indicated that the Affordable Care Act had not generated significant additional expenses as was anticipated, so that this might lower the typical 3% baseline budget.

Iowa State University Senior Vice President Gregory suggested reaching out to realtors and developers to inform them of the System Redesign Plan, so that they could better plan new developments around this new route structure.

Trustee Schainker encouraged CyRide staff to be proactive in regards to marketing the changes, specifically mentioning renaming the Innovative Transit Service zone and informing current Yellow route service customers of the changes.

President Haila asked what the impact would be if Target would not allow CyRide to operate on the west side of its building. Director Kyras said that if Target would not allow the buses, then CyRide would operate the Blue route as it is today. She indicated that moving CyRide's bus stop at North Grand Mall created a bigger issue and that staff was in the process of determining this impact. Trustee Schainker asked which mall representatives CyRide staff had been working with. Director Kyras indicated the mall manager and one of the owners. She indicated that the mall's preferred location was on the west side of the mall and would create the need for more buses on three routes, having a substantial cost impact. Director Kyras indicated that staff will present a report on this issue at the June board meeting. Trustee Haila indicated that board members could help support staff in these discussions and Trustee Madden advised getting the Chamber of Commerce support as well.

Mr. Wittmann then briefly summarized the list of additional services that could be added to the approved plan to enhance service in Ames. He indicated these services were divided into two categories: highest priority and long term service recommendations. Highest priority improvements included longer service hours and more frequent service on routes contained in the plan, route modifications to meet more service demands. Other longer term modifications included route and frequency changes, as well as modifications to the current fare structure (i.e. rolling the fare back to \$1).

Director Kyras said that this is the last analysis to be completed by the consultant and that a final report would be provided at the end of June, with CyRide staff then beginning the implementation stage of the project.

Trustee Schainker shared his thoughts on the list of service improvements, indicating that he would like to see a circulator route between Campustown, downtown and the mall to help alleviate parking issues for events in town. Mr. Wittmann said this was not included on the list based on current ridership and information received on desired services. A discussion of this route proposal versus existing services was held. Trustee Schainker recommended adding this route as an option in the final list of service improvements. There was concurrence by other board members.

Iowa State University Senior Vice President Gregory asked if the board had established guiding principles for transit services, such as balancing service needs with financial constraints and expectations for growth. Trustee Schainker shared his thoughts that it was the community's role to determine if they desired to fund differing levels of transit service. He also indicated that the Land Use Policy Plan, to be updated in the next several years, provided a framework and impact on where transit services would be needed. Director Kyras indicated that the board could direct staff to develop high-level transit corridors for submission to the city for discussion with this planning process to help guide and coordinate transit services with land use policy.

President Haila shared his thoughts that this was a comprehensive plan and a great opportunity to have input on where/how the city would grow and to coordinate transit services with this growth.

The transit board asked Mr. Wittmann what the final deliverable report would entail. Mr. Wittmann said the report ties together the various elements: market assessment, strengths and weaknesses, public outreach, preliminary and final recommendations, and list of long range recommendations with cost estimates. The final report will be placed on CyRide's website after staff has had an opportunity to review the report and make any corrections.

Trustee Madden thanked Mr. Wittmann for leading the transit board and CyRide staff through this process and said this is one of the better plans he has seen from a consultant.

Set Meeting Times and Place:

- June 28, 2017, 10:00 AM
- August 24, 2017, 8:00 AM

Adjourn: Board of Trustees was in agreement to adjourn at 10:18 am. Motion carried.

John Haila, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary