

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

October 25, 2017

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on October 25, 2017 at 8:00 A.M. in the CyRide Conference room. President Haila called the meeting to order at 8:06 A.M. with Trustees Valentino, Gregory, Haila and Schainker present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Gregory made a motion to approve the September 20, 2017 and October 2, 2017 minutes as presented. Trustee Valentino seconded the motion. (Ayes: Four. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Trustees Bibiloni and Nelson arrived at 8:11 A.M.

#24 SILVER ROUTE PERFORMANCE: Director Kyras provided historical and current performance data for CyRide's Silver Route and asked the transit board for direction on whether to include this service with the System Redesign services the next year.

She indicated that the Silver Route operates on request from 6:00pm to 10:00pm connecting students returning to Campus Sunday evenings (who park east of Jack Trice Stadium) with their residence hall. She indicated that this route is one of CyRide's lowest performing routes and is substantially below the minimum off-peak performance standard set by the transit board of 7 passengers per hour. This service has operated over the years as budgets would allow. She stated that ridership had declined each year, only 29 rides had been provided year-to-date and that the service costs \$7,000 annually to operate.

President Haila asked the two student representatives their opinion on discontinuing this service. Both indicated they were not aware of any students that used this service, and while hesitant to reduce student services, believed that its low ridership would not significantly impact students and that these resources could be better utilized on other services.

Trustee Gregory made a motion to approve Alternative #1 to eliminate the #24 Silver Route effective with the 2018-2019 budget (Fall 2018). Trustee Valentino seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

FACILITY DISCUSSION: Director Kyras began by providing a brief history of its two facilities located at 601 N. University Blvd. (called CyRide 1) and its second site on E. Edison St. (called CyRide 2). She shared information regarding each facility expansion and when each was constructed due to CyRide's rapid ridership growth. She then briefly explained the history of its last two facility studies in 2009 and 2011, which both assumed a smaller fleet size in 20 years than CyRide operated today.

She indicated that 25 percent of CyRide's fleet is currently parked outside and that this exposure to the elements becomes an operating cost to CyRide, especially during cold winter months. She then explained the operating and maintenance problems that its current facilities create. She indicated that the purpose of the current discussion with board members was to gain direction on where expansion should be located to meet CyRide's space needs today and into the future.

She shared details about the current CyRide 1 site, stating that it was originally built for a 25 fleet vehicles and with five additions and 95 vehicles operating from this site, that this level of utilization has created extreme congestion and has created an increasing number of accidents on the property. She then shared how CyRide utilized the CyRide 2 site as a bus storage site for 4 - 25 vehicles that it shares the site with the Ames Police Department and that CyRide has spent \$50,000 to improve the site for its use.

Director Kyras summarized the 2009 and 2011 studies indicating that the 2009 study began as a space needs study but ended with a site analysis for a satellite facility, and that the 2011 study became a master plan study for expansion at the CyRide 1 site. She provided specific details about the space needs analysis completed at that time, indicating that the study found a need for 4-12 acres and that five sites were identified as potential satellite locations, but each was met with challenges. She provided details on the types of facility concepts that were analyzed to maximize space on the CyRide 1 site, indicating multiple levels and off-site functions were examined. She shared the final, adopted plan, which included three phases, with the first phase further subdivided into Phase 1 and 1A and that 1A became the 2014 addition to the building.

President Haila requested clarification regarding the approved solution for employee parking in the final 2011 Facility Master Plan. Director Kyras indicated that the approved plan included parking on the north side of University Blvd., across from its CyRide 1 facility, as opposed to a parking ramp on its current site.

Trustee Gregory asked for further explanation on the timing of the phases compared to the decision to secure its CyRide 2 site. Director Kyras indicated that CyRide constructed Phase 1A, that it was filled when the new expansion opened and that CyRide still had vehicles parked outside. Later that year, it was determined that the number of vehicles CyRide would own within the next year would exceed the seventeen available spaces outside the CyRide 1 facility; therefore, the Transit Board decided to secure and improve the City of Ames-owned CyRide 2 site, as a temporary location until a permanent expansion solution was found.

President Haila inquired further about the employee parking lot north of University Blvd. and the overall project budget. Brent Schipper with ASK Studio responded by indicating that the Phase 1 and 1A cost estimates were approximately \$12 million and that CyRide had secured \$5 million. He further stated that this was the reason for the smaller 1A project to expand with existing funding, which prioritized bus parking over

employee parking at the time. Shari Atwood, CyRide's Transit Planner, added clarification on the funding sources for the 1A project, which included other smaller building projects as well.

Trustee Schainker and President Haila discussed the need for more inside bus parking as a priority due to the number of years CyRide operates its vehicles. Director Kyras and Rich Leners, CyRide's Fleet & Facilities Director, shared the lower costs and advantages of indoor bus storage.

Director Kyras then discussed the two planning assumptions used to analyze CyRide's space needs today and for the future - planning horizon and fleet size. She indicated that past studies utilized a 20-year planning horizon and that staff had continued with this planning timeframe for this study as well, planning for space requirements that would meet CyRide's needs through 2038.

She then explained the historical trends and future predictions that will impact CyRide's fleet size. She began by historically comparing CyRide ridership with ISU enrollment changes and CyRide's fleet size. She stated that enrollment, as well as development patterns with densification around Campustown and extreme weather conditions all played a factor in CyRide's ridership and fleet needs. Over the past 12 years, CyRide has increased its fleet by 34 vehicles due to these factors; however, CyRide's facility has not been able to keep pace with this growth.

She then briefly discussed current predications for these three trends (enrollment, development and weather). She indicated that ISU's 10-year enrollment project is for stable to slightly increasing enrollment, development near Campus is anticipated to grow more slowly due to the availability of land becoming more scarce and weather will remain variable. As a result, staff's predictions for the next 20 years are that: CyRide will provide between 6.5 and 7.5 million rides annually, which equates to a fleet need of 93-107 vehicles. However, she recommended planning for fleet needs of 125 vehicles, but only constructing facilities as CyRide has a need and funding for.

Trustee Gregory shared her thoughts that CyRide's near-term focus should be on encouraging non-student ridership, which has declined from past ridership levels.

Trustee Valentino inquired about CyRide's space requirements for a training course that met the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Enforcement's future Commercial Driver's License requirements. Director Kyras provided information regarding their upcoming 2020 requirements for a driving "range". She indicated that there were three criteria that a range must meet: unobstructed course, no interference on course and unobstructed site views. She indicated that CyRide's current site at the ISU Center parking lot would not meet 2 of the 3 criteria. She then shared the size of a course at another transit system, which required 2 acres.

Trustee Schainker asked how often CyRide would need this course. Barb Neal, CyRide's Asst. Director of Operations, indicated that some weeks CyRide trained at this site every day, other weeks could be once or twice. He then asked if there was another entity that CyRide could partner with to share the cost of this site. Director Kyras indicated that there could be a number of potential partners and that there would need to be future discussions with these entities to determine if there was interest in a shared facility.

Trustee Gregory asked if this space needs analysis assumed that all buses would be diesel or if alternative-fueled vehicles would change this analysis. Director Kyras indicated that the analysis included space needs for diesel buses only at this time.

Director Kyras then explained the methodology used to determine space requirements for its existing fleet of 95 buses, as well as the future planning fleet of 125 vehicles - industry facility consultant's software program. She briefly explained the results of the space planning program for CyRide's existing fleet, indicating that the program indicated a need for a location with 10 acres, as opposed to its current 4.5 acres. She indicated that the space requirements for a bus fleet and support system for 125 buses required 14.5 acres plus the 2 acres needed for the training course, for a total of 16.5 acres needed to meet CyRide's operations/fleet for the next 20-year period.

Trustee Gregory asked how an additional 30 buses would require so much more land than CyRide currently operated on. Director Kyras stated that the program was based on industry standards and that CyRide was not operating under these standards. She provided the example of the industry standard space need for the area between buses being three feet and CyRide housing its fleet at less than a foot apart. She indicated while this was possible, it was not desirable based on safety concerns.

Director Kyras summarized the space needs analysis by indicating that CyRide's current site was undersized for its current and potential future fleet on a single level. She then indicated that Brent Schipper with ASK Studio had developed a multi-level conceptual design to determine how much additional space was able to be accommodated under this design concept. She indicated that this design accommodated: 95 of the 125 large buses and eight mini buses with indoor storage, a three-story parking garage for employee parking needs, 40% of the maintenance shop need, one of two fuel lanes needed, a larger training room and additional office space.

Mr. Schipper explained his thoughts that trying to fit the needs for 14.5 acres on 4.5 acres was impossible, but that more of the needs could be met with a multi-level structure. President Haila asked if the second fuel lane could be added or the fuel lanes moved to accommodate two lanes. Mr. Schipper indicated that a second one could not be accommodated at the current location and that moving the current lane would be very expensive. He indicated his focus for this analysis was to leave current functions where they were to the greatest extent possible. He further detailed the multi-story concept. He indicated that the employee parking solution for a parking ramp was very

expensive – estimated at approximately \$13 million dollars, without other modifications to the building being considered. He indicated that this was a major hurdle for the concept, along with the lack of maintenance space and a second fuel lane.

Director Kyras said shared her thoughts on the challenges with the current site: airflow around the cooling towers with the ramped structure, visitors will park in the ramp and enter CyRide on the second floor requiring relocation of the lobby, increase use/traffic on University Blvd. to circulate the buses, cost of the parking ramp, phasing of the construction would be more difficult and costly, CyRide would need to relocate during construction and there could be repayment to the FTA on existing concrete that would be removed.

Director Kyras then explained the board's alternatives for the facility expansion and asked for board direction.

Trustee Gregory shared her thoughts that she did not feel comfortable in making a decision at this time and would need additional information. Further, she indicated that there were a lot of "unknowns" at this time that would need to be worked through, such as what do we think the opportunity to increase non-student ridership would be; do we have Ames' population correct; do we have the system redesign correct, etc. She stated that understanding the operational costs of the various site choices, as well as the cost if CyRide no longer operated from the CyRide 1 site were questions she still had.

President Haila shared that expanding to the soccer fields south of CyRide 1 was not an option.

Trustee Valentino stated that he understood staff's recommendation for a second site and could see the long term benefits.

Trustee Gregory said she believes that CyRide will need a facility that will move it from a diesel supported to an electric bus facility, with dual capability for an extended period of time during the switchover.

Board members continued a general discussion of the information needs required to make a decision on the best location for the facility expansion. Discussions regarding the need to identify a specific, second site first, before making a decision on expansion at the current site versus a second site and the costs of each, were discussed. Director Kyras indicated that a full site analysis would need to be completed under this scenario and indicated that this was a labor-intensive study she had hoped would be completed only if board members agreed the best solution would be to not expand at the CyRide 1 site. She indicated that costs of a second site were specific to the location, stating that sites closer to CyRide 1 would be less costly to operate from.

Trustee Gregory asked about the timeframe staff was working toward, as the city was about to start on a two-year master plan for growth, which could impact CyRide's facility decisions. Director Kyras indicated that it was difficult to operate from the CyRide 1 site, that staff had had previous conversations with the board regarding this issue and, also, that grant application opportunities occurred once a year during the summer to assist in funding an expansion project. Further, she indicated that staff believes that at 95 buses, CyRide is at a tipping point that requires movement forward on expansion shortly.

President Haila agreed that he would need additional information to make a decision on the best expansion location stating it would be helpful to have information about repayment of the FTA share. Director Kyras indicated that CyRide would need a specific proposal for FTA to provide information regarding repayment and that a site and conceptual drawing indicating approximate square footage was needed first before those discussions could occur.

Trustee Gregory stated that she would like to see four options developed to the level that discussion with the FTA could occur – existing site with off-site parking, existing site with nearby second site (bus parking only), existing site with a farther away second site and an option to relocate the entire facility. Additionally, she stated that answers were needed regarding the impact of existing site options on the cooling towers and off-site employee parking shuttles.

Director Kyras shared her thoughts about the basic question that needed to be answered, which was whether board members were comfortable with expanding on a site where only the existing number of vehicles could be accommodated in the future. Trustee Gregory stated that for her, the answer to that question is a matter of money, as solutions can be found that cost more, but would be a better decision in the long run. Further, she shared her concerns with ultimately abandoning the CyRide 1 site with the thought that ISU would need to purchase the facility since it sits on ISU land. Specific sites were then discussed for potential second facility sites – Mortenson and State, Research Park, etc.

Trustee Schainker inquired about the possibility of employees walking from a parking lot at Brookside Park and whether this would allow for more bus-related activities at the CyRide 1 site. Director Kyras indicated that an employee shuttle would be needed that would operate from 5:30 am to 3 am on Friday and Saturday nights and would be an on-going operating cost. Mr. Schipper shared that removing the parking ramp would not allow for more bus parking. He indicated the next solution would be to stack bus storage, requiring a bus lift between levels.

Trustee Gregory asked what the facility impact would be if all its buses were electric. Director Kyras indicated that this had not been studied, but that most likely it would require additional space for one charging station per bus to be accommodated.

Trustee Valentino shared his concern that continued expansion at the CyRide 1 site was the "go to" site, but he was concerned if CyRide grew larger than anticipated, it could not support the operations at some point. Further, he acknowledged that more information would assist in making an informed decision.

President Haila shared his belief that the CyRide 1 site was too small for continued growth, but also was concerned about where funding could be secured to build at another site and potentially repay FTA at the current site.

Trustee Schainker also acknowledge that the CyRide 1 site had insufficient space for current and planned operations and asked if an inexpensive "bubble" type building could accommodate bus storage. Director Kyras indicated that once a decision to operate from a second site was made, staff and the board could determine the type of facility that could be built.

Brent Schipper shared his thought about a permanent second site, indicating that it would need to be at least 5 acres.

Trustee Schainker indicated that finding a satisfactory second site is the difficult part because Ames is running out of land within its city limits and that a 15 acre site is becoming scarce.

President Haila summarized board members thoughts, indicating that the board needed to provide staff with guidance on next steps. Director Kyras indicated that her understanding of the discussion was that the board desired to approve Alternative #3 to delay action and further that staff was to identify options and then complete an analysis, using criteria such as FTA repayment, operational cost, construction cost, etc. for each option and present this data to the board at a future meeting. Trustee Gregory agreed in approving Alternative #3, delaying action and further analyzing the four options discussed previously.

Trustee Bibiloni and Valentino encouraged staff to look at a scaled back version of the space needs at the existing site.

Transit board members shared additional information they would need to make a decision such as: city population, non-student ridership, potential number of CyRide buses in sections of Ames; operational costs of one site versus two sites; parking across University Blvd.; possible repayment to Federal Transit Administration; and fleet vehicle mix.

President Haila asked for further information on how a facility expansion could be funded and how CyRide could repay any federal share of CyRide 1. Director Kyras said that there are two grant opportunities: TIGER – minimum federal funding requirement

of \$10 million with a minimum \$12 million project and Bus and Bus Facility Program funding that fund smaller projects where CyRide could build a larger facility over time. Trustee Gregory asked if there were grants for electric buses. Director Kyras indicated that the federal No/Low Alternative Fueled Program funds electric buses at 85% and infrastructure/equipment needs to accommodate this technology at 90%.

Transit board members appreciated the facility information to-date, but agreed they needed additional data before they could move forward with the future facility expansion.

Trustee Gregory made a motion to approve Alternative #3 to delay action and request staff to provide information on four options: existing site with off-site parking, existing site with nearby second facility with bus parking only, existing site with a farther away second site and relocating CyRide to a different site. Trustee Bibiloni seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

SYSTEM REDESIGN BUS STOP CHANGES: Director Kyras shared information regarding staff's final analysis of the impact that the System Redesign will have on CyRide's 451 bus stops. She indicated that 17 new bus stops will need to be added with pads being poured, some with shelters, and that 89 bus stops will need to be removed or modified. The estimated cost to make these changes is \$44,340. She indicated that CyRide programmed \$50,000 in its capital budget for this work, with 80% of the cost paid for with federal formula dollars. She indicated that there is a lot of work to be completed over the summer and fall and that staff had developed a plan to place temporary signage at the stops in March 2018 with a service change date and alternate location to board the bus posted at the stops to be removed.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Update From the HIRTA Meeting -

- HIRTA has a new service "HIRTA Now" that began on September 6th. Cost is \$5 per ride with no requirements for advance reservations, compared to \$2 required by ADA with advance reservations. This service is above and beyond what ADA requires and Dial-A-Ride customers will pay \$5 as well.
- Out-Of-Town Service was restored with service from Ames to Des Moines and Ames to Iowa City.
- HIRTA is working on two new software products. Both are for online reservations, with one for agencies and one for customers. The agency product is currently being tested and HIRTA anticipates testing the customer product at the end of the year; however, is seeking funding to implement this product. CyRide has agreed to use its federal ADA funding to assist with this purchase as Dial-A-Ride customers will benefit from this product as well. The CyRide's share of the cost is \$15,711.25 and will be added to HIRTA invoices over six months.

- An additional position has been added to their office staff, which will help clarify staff roles and will assist in problem solving.

President Haila asked if customers would have difficulties using the online reservation technology and Director Kyras said that she believes a significant number of Dial-A-Ride customers would use it.

- Director Kyras explained the issues that ISU's Alliance for Disabilities Awareness group had regarding Dial-A-Ride service and stated that they had been addressed/solutions identified with HIRTA - difficulty identifying ISU buildings and online reservations.
- Director Kyras indicated that discussions with HIRTA regarding Dial-A-Ride's ridership levels last year found that there was an unusual reduction in the number of customers signed up for the program and also HIRTA indicated that some heavy users were riding less. She indicated that they brainstormed about how to target market these services to individuals who would be eligible for the service. President Haila shared his concern with the reduction of Dial-A-Ride customers and asked how many new applications CyRide had received. Director Kyras did not have that information available at the meeting.

North Grand Mall

- Director Kyras told the transit board that she and Asst. Director of Operations, Barb Neal, met with one of the owners of North Grand Mall and the Mall Manager, and that they had a productive conversation regarding where CyRide could stop at the mall. She briefly explained the three locations that would be analyzed with assistance from ASK Studio and that the goal was to move locations at the same time as the System Redesign change in August 2018.

November Board Meeting

- Director Kyras shared with board members her thoughts on two major topics for discussion at the November 22nd meeting – non-student ridership and fare change proposal.

Electric Bus Technology

- Director Kyras shared that CyRide's Assistant Directors had attended the APTA EXPO and researched electric bus technology's progress. She indicated that their consensus was that the technology had progressed to the point where it could be considered a viable alternative-fueled option for CyRide's fleet. She also indicated that an ISU student was working on an honors project on this subject and would like to present his findings to board members. Further, she indicated that the leading electric bus manufacturer would have their electric bus at CyRide's facility the next day from 10:00 am until noon and that board members were invited.

President Haila and Trustees Bibiloni, Valentino, Gregory, and Nelson would like to have a meeting with the ISU graduate student.

Based on the conversation and interest in this technology, Director Kyras will continue developing information about an electric bus application at CyRide and a possible demonstration project, and bring more information to the board later this year.

Set Meeting Times and Place:

- November 22, 2017 – 7:30 A.M.
- December 7, 2017 – 8:00 A.M.

ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 10:04 A.M.

John Haila, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary