

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL AND AMES
TRANSIT BOARD AND SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL**

AMES, IOWA

OCTOBER 20, 2015

JOINT MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL AND AMES TRANSIT BOARD

The Ames City Council and Ames Transit Board met in joint session at 6:02 p.m. on the 20th day of October 2015, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue, pursuant to law with Mayor Ann Campbell presiding and the following Council members present: Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Peter Orazem, Matthew Goodman, and Chris Nelson. *Ex officio* Member Sam Schulte was also in attendance.

Also present were Transit Board members Sheri Kyras, Warren Madden, Steve Schainker, Tim Gartin, Matthew Teubert, and John Haila.

Transit Board Member Hamad Abbas joined the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

Transit Board Member Kyras briefly explained the CyRide general information, which included facts on ridership, funding, and expenses. Most of the funding received is provided by students and the majority of the costs go towards operating. She mentioned the current challenges of CyRide include the increasing ridership, driver shortage, and lack of facility space for housing buses. With the growth of population and development, system redesign has also become a challenge. Route design and types of buses to be used are two topics included in the system redesign.

Council Member Orazem asked if there could be another way to manage the demand, suggesting providing information to assist in spreading out the demand for transportation when certain buses are full or empty. Kyras stated that people tend to move to an earlier bus if they expect their usual bus to be full, but it is still difficult to leave riders at a bus stop.

Development such as Copper Beech and The Grove were mentioned as having a large impact on Transit because of the increase in residents and having little or no service on that route. The new development along S. 4th Street was considered to have a smaller impact since it is part of a current route. With the addition of extra buses on certain routes, riders' needs would be met. Adding one bus to a route would cost approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000 per year. In areas with no service or minimal service it would be more costly. Council Member Betcher suggested the use of different types of buses, such as articulated buses, on routes with more riders. It was said that articulated buses do cost more, but grants could assist.

Transit Board Member Haila stated that by having more buses means more drivers would be needed, and a shortage of drivers is already a challenge facing CyRide. Educating and working with the community will help accomplish the vision and assist in challenges as well as make sure funding will go as far as possible.

Council Member Nelson asked what amount students pay each year for Transit. The answer given was that it was roughly \$66.00 with that amount increasing in the next year. Kyras explained that when student enrollment is higher, the funds for Transit are put into a trust fund

then into operating costs. It has also been shown that students are willing to pick up more funds in order to accommodate their route. From historical patterns, students have always had a large impact on the percentage of dollars contributed towards Transit. However, with the growth in development, the appropriateness of that percentage is in question.

Council Member Goodman reiterated that citizens who ride the bus have to pay a fee of \$1.25 while students end up paying a discounted rate of roughly \$0.70. He believes that a ride should cost the same for everyone and making this happen should be a goal to accomplish. Kyras stated that students do not have a choice when it comes to paying for CyRide whether they ride or not.

Council Member Orazem suggested permitting users a certain number of rides each year and providing a magnetic card to track their usage. This could change the behavior of riders and ensure that rides are not being wasted. Goodman said rides should be meaningful and useful, and a decrease does not have to occur as long as the rides are needed.

Council Member Orazem stated that CyRide is not obligated to provide service to everything that is being built around Ames, and that it should provide service into the center of the City as a primary mission. An aggregator was mentioned as another possibility that could benefit a lot of residents and developers who are on the outskirts of town.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

The Special Meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor Ann Campbell at 7:37 p.m. on the 20th day of October 2015, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue. Present from the Ames City Council were Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Peter Orazem, Matthew Goodman, and Chris Nelson. *Ex officio* Member Sam Schulte was also present.

Representing the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) were the City's Public Works Director John Joiner and Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer.

Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer introduced the agenda and gave a brief description of the foundation for Complete Streets. Complete Streets was defined as streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. They may include sidewalks, bike lanes, special bus lanes, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, roundabouts and more. By adopting a Complete Street policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users.

Pregitzer discussed the development of the Complete Streets Policy and gave a short overview of the Policy elements. The more elements included in a policy, the more detailed it becomes, and by not having one element included could mean that another element is not necessarily needed.

OTHER COMPLETE STREET POLICIES AND APPROACHES: The approach of every Complete Street Policy varies with the extent and degree of policy specificity and the

prescriptive nature of design and implementation requirements. Plans may range from being philosophical in nature to detailing exactly what treatment is expected in each type of scenario as well as which modes receive priority.

Staff has researched several Complete Street Policies around the Midwest and nation. Examples of how they may range in detail from low, medium, and high were presented. Cedar Falls, Iowa was shown to be Low Detail (very simple and including the “why and who”). Fayetteville, Arkansas, was Medium Detail (adding the “what and where”, specific goals, and how to evaluate the streets). Champaign, Illinois, was High Detail (adding “when, how, and how much,” listing priorities, and the evaluation of an ideal setting). The higher the detail that is expected in a policy, the longer it will take for the consultant to complete the development of the policy, the greater the cost will be for the consultant, the more the cost will be to the developers and the City for infrastructure improvements, and the less flexibility will be available to deal with individual situations.

Council Member Corrieri asked if it is recommended to start with a low detail plan and then gradually having it become high detail. Pregitzer stated that they will start off with low detail and work through to see what works and what does not, then move up to a policy with medium detail and so forth. He said cities with success have used this approach and it seems to work very well.

PUBLIC FORUM: Trevin Ward, 2610 Northridge Parkway, #201; Ames, representing the Ames Bicycle Coalition, believes that the Complete Streets Policy in Ames needs to be robust and give plenty of guidance. He pointed out that Ames suffers in intersections and transit zones with bike lanes disappearing in certain areas and buses being intimidating for many cyclists and pedestrians. Ward described how the League of American Bicyclists has five categories that are consistently needed in order to create a great area for cyclists, those being engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation and planning. Ward feels that more events are needed around town to promote all modes of transportation and educate on how to interact with those modes. Ward suggested creating a city commission that would evaluate transportation and development projects, handle exceptions that need to be made, and evaluate the access for all users starting with the most vulnerable—those with limited mobility or disabled, then pedestrians, bikes and vehicles.

John Shierholz, 4788 Copperstone Drive, Ames, Co-chair of Healthiest Ames, simply asked that the Traffic Division listen to all feedback when developing the Plan.

Tim Lane, a consultant for Healthiest Ames, expressed his concern about the late development of the Complete Street Policy for this area. He presented a photo of the Ohio University Upward Bound program from 1967 and then a photo of the same program 40 years later. Lane pointed out that in the program 40 years later, most participants did not appear to be of healthy weight and that activity steps had been engineered out of their daily routine. Lane stated that obesity is a great concern and the cost of healthcare is a burden. Lane believes the City should make the process of adopting Complete Streets inviting and mentioned that there are many things that can be done in order to make all modes of transportation friendly. Lane recommended that Ames become a model with Complete Streets and stated that, although a project might cost a lot, it will save a lot in healthcare costs.

Steven Libbey, 708 Brookridge Avenue, Ames, of the Ames Bicycle Coalition, wanted to reiterate that Complete Streets is not only for cyclists and pedestrians; it is about creating access for everyone and improving safety in the transportation system. Libbey suggested that even though the Policy might not be officially complete, the City should still consider the impacts that roads and other developments will have on Complete Street issues.

Chad Hunter and Carl Rogers of the Iowa State University Community Design Lab presented a draft plan and summary of the inventory and assessment of existing conditions regarding Complete Streets. It was pointed out that most rights-of-way are too wide and are not safe to cross, but the new plan would be to take advantage of the current width, without increasing, and make it multi-modal use. According to Hunter and Rogers, the focus is primarily on vehicles and should be more on multi-modal. Their assessments show concerns, but also positives, and they are excited to partner with the City to shape guidelines and the Complete Streets Policy.

Sarah Cady, 2812 Arbor Street, Ames, spoke about the importance of educating the population, especially new residents, on Complete Streets. An example of education that was recommended would be learning the proper way to ride on the road and how drivers should interact with existing and new infrastructure. Cady mentioned that Healthiest Ames and the Ames Bicycle Coalition have been a huge help, but they are relatively small groups. The City putting forth education is needed. Cady suggested that a public service announcement similar to that of Smart Energy be created for Complete Streets and a cycling instructor program could benefit the community by offering safety courses. She wants it to be known that Complete Streets and the Long Range Transportation Plan were created not only for cyclists, but to help drivers as well.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION: Council Member Gartin asked if the ISU Design Lab representatives have been interfacing with staff in the development process. Pregitzer stated that through Healthiest Ames, Complete Streets, and the MPO, they have provided a lot of feedback on the Long Range Transportation Plan. Gartin also agreed education is critical as well as improving outreach. He believes it is an action that could be accomplished now.

Internal and external advisory committees were discussed as possible next steps in the development process. The Internal Committee would be an inter-departmental team involving those with expertise or who will be impacted by the policy. The External Committee would consist of staff liaisons along with interested parties and those that may be affected by the Policy including representatives of commuter bicyclists, recreational bicyclists, Healthiest Ames, developers, engineers, ISU, Ames Community School District, and neighborhood advocates.

Other steps mentioned were to engage assistance of a transportation planning consultant to assist in the development of a Complete Streets Policy and have City Council review the recommendations that are developed through the work of the consultant. The final decisions regarding the Complete Streets Policy will be made by City Council.

Council Member Goodman suggested having a mobility impaired advocate as part of the External Committee to add an essential perspective. Council Member Betcher also suggested having a representative of those who are economically challenged.

Council Member Nelson asked if it was possible to get a statement of support to ensure that near-term opportunities would not be missed. Pregitzer stated that staff is working on putting together a timeline for when a draft policy is to be presented to City Council; ideally they would like to get groups together, with Council support, to start discussions by the end of the year.

Council Member Orazem asked to what extent is the process prioritized and was particularly interested in setting priorities on finishing current trails before starting new trails. Instead of trying to determine who is responsible for the costs on finishing a project or adding an extension on a trail - whether it is the IDOT, ISU, or City - he believes all should work on coming up with a compromise in order to complete projects. Pregitzer commented that evaluation tools and performance measures are weighted to match up with the priorities and that is why it is very important to have a policy that is clear on the values and goals to be accomplished.

Moved by Goodman, seconded by Corrieri to establish an Internal and External Advisory Committee for input on plan development. Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Moved by Goodman, seconded by Nelson to reach out to ISU and the Ames Community School District to communicate Council's interest to other governmental entities that the Complete Streets Policy is a plan that the City endorses and looks to when making decisions. Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: Moved by Betcher, seconded by Goodman, for the discussion to be added to the next agenda about her serving on the Main Street Cultural District Board Selection Committee and have Council Member Gartin possibly become a member as well. Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Council Member Betcher requested that an email from Christine DeCoudreaux, Public Information Officer of YSS, about Council participation in the MLK Day Planning Committee to AHRC.

Moved by Corrieri, seconded by Orazem to refer to staff the letter from the Ames Economic Development Commission pertaining to airport improvements. Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Moved by Orazem, seconded by Goodman to refer to staff the letter from Emanon pertaining to the possibility of installing a stop sign near Roosevelt School. Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Orazem to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Heidi Petersen, Recording Secretary