



October 18, 2018

## ADMINISTRATION

**Update on Ongoing Projects:** There are three larger projects that staff is working on: facility expansion, developing services for Fall 2019 and electric bus study. The work completed/to be completed and timelines of each are discussed below.

**Facility Expansion** - This is a project staff is working toward completing with the Transit Board in the spring 2019, so that staff can potentially prepare grant applications for summer grant opportunities. Over the past several months, the board has eliminated the current site and any sites close to CyRide's facility for expansion of the facility. They have directed staff to conduct a site analysis of potential 8+ acre vacant sites within the city limits and, at the last meeting, expanded this to sites to the west in Boone County. It is anticipated that the list of potential sites can be narrowed, based on criteria that would make a site less desirable, to a maximum of 10 sites that can then be more thoroughly analyzed. This analysis would include a preliminary building plan on the sites, construction estimates and CyRide operating estimates from the site. This list would then be further narrowed to a "preferred site" and a "backup site." The federal government would then need to review these sites, and from this review, be able to move forward with the site in a grant application. In any scenario that has been looked at, CyRide would be operating from two sites for a long time, with the hope that sufficient funding could be secured over time to eventually consolidate its functions into the new site only.

**Service Update** – A group of operations/administrative staff have been gathering customer and driver comments on the new CyRide 2.0 services, and based on these comments, have been developing possible service improvements to recommend to the Transit Board for funding beginning next fall. This group has identified possible changes on five routes that could improve the service (we'll call it CyRide 2.1). The list of possible changes is below.

- **#3 Blue** – Either add another bus to the route or modify the route so that the bus can be on time
- **#14 Peach** – Improve service frequency to every 30 minutes either all day or at least during peak ridership times (7 – 10 am and 3 – 6 pm)
- **#25 Gold** – Three options were identified:
  - Service during breaks/summer (SUV to campus only) – 50 mins.
  - Reduce service to every 12 minutes (to help pay for more changes and match the ridership)
  - Operate service until 12:30 am on weekdays
- **#11 Cherry** – Extend service to 10 pm, operating every 40 mins.
- **#12 Lilac** – Operate service in the midday, every 20 mins.

These changes total an addition to the budget of approximately \$800,000, so it will not be possible for the Board to fund all of these changes, but the plan is to set a maximum dollar amount they will be able to increase the budget and then staff will need to prioritize the improvements and the board approve this recommendation after the first of the year (January-February 2019).

**Electric Bus Study** - Staff had a number of delays in hiring a consultant to assist in determining if electric buses are feasible to operate on CyRide's route structure and in identifying changes to, and cost of, modifying CyRide's facility to accommodate these buses. CyRide has recently awarded a contract to the Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE) to complete this study. It is anticipated that they will begin their work and be able to complete their analysis by the end of this year. If the study finds the bus technology feasible for CyRide, the board will need to then decide if they would like to lease an electric bus for a number of months to try on the routes, submit a summer grant application to purchase these buses or decide to not move forward in this direction at this time. (Sheri K.)

**Bus and Bus Facilities Grant:** This summer, the Iowa DOT applied for funding to replace buses on behalf of CyRide and all other urban transit systems in Iowa and then second application for the rural and small urban transit systems. On September 25, the U.S. Transportation Secretary announced the award of \$366.2 million in grants to improve safety and reliability of America's bus systems. Overall, a total of 107 projects in 50 states and territories will receive funding.

Unfortunately, CyRide was not successful in attaining an award this go around. Iowa's "rural" transit agencies and small urban transit system under 50,000 in population were awarded \$7.0 million dollars which the Iowa DOT will distribute to the oldest and buses in the worst condition throughout those transit systems. The City of Dubuque also applied directly to purchase accessible buses and received an award for \$1,939,672. A full list of the selected projects and descriptions are available online at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/fiscal-year-2018-bus-and-bus-facilities-projects> (Shari A.)

**Ridership Update:** The first quarter of ridership has been entered and corrected. Ridership entry and corrections are much quicker this year due to some internal changes on how we process the information. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this process and to all that enter tally sheet information. Tallies are being entered more quickly and most importantly accurately, which is important to the success in this new process.

Ridership is down 3% for the first quarter of FY2018-19 which equates to 41,668 fewer rides. Divide that number by the number of weekdays for the first quarter and it is roughly 650 fewer rides per day. That doesn't sound like much but it is almost 11 less buses at capacity per day. There was the same number of weekdays for the first quarter this year compared to last year. The importance of the comparing days between the years can help explain why ridership is up or down. This is not the case for the first quarter this year as days are the same. Lower ridership can be attributed to several different factors such as: weather, schedule changes, route changes, ridership patterns, lower ISU student enrollment, traffic, trip length, walking more and riding the bus less, housing closer to campus, and fewer transfers to cross campus.

Comparing ridership is a little more challenging this year compared to years past. On a positive note several routes are showing ridership growth this quarter. The #23 Orange increased 8.3% (28,611 rides), #5 Yellow increased 39.2% (1,656 rides), #7 Purple increased 66.6% (4,983 rides), #21 Cardinal increased 11.0% (8,188 rides) and #9 Plum increased 34.9% (9,546 rides). Most of these routes added more trips to the schedule which helps contribute to the increased ridership. West Ames ridership (Red, Cherry, Lilac and Purple) combined is down 13% (48,684) fewer rides which is a large impact to the system. Residents living in these areas are either choosing to drive to the park and ride and ride #23 Orange or just may have moved closer to campus. Another set of routes that can be grouped together

because of all of the structural changes are Blue, Peach, Gold and Brown. These four routes in the first eight class days started out strong and positive but over the course of the semester that trend has shifted. These routes combined are down 2.7% from last year which is 11,726 fewer rides. On a brighter note EASE seems to be gaining in popularity. Although the daily ridership isn't high, passengers seem to enjoy the new service.

Considering all of the changes from last year to this year, ridership plateauing or decreasing a little is not entirely a bad thing. The ridership decrease could have been more drastic considering CyRide changed all the schedules and routes, ISU has significant lower enrollment, and student housing has shifted closer to campus. Drivers have expressed both pros and cons about CyRide 2.0 service to me over the first few months of school. If you have challenges and issues with your runs and trips, please communicate what's not working to me so we can hopefully improve those situations for next year. If you have time point, shift alignment, schedule suggestions, etc. that you would like to see changed, please fill out a paper suggestion form or come talk to me in person. Thank you for all of your input and lets work together to make CyRide 2.0 more successful! (Rob J.)

## OPERATIONS

**Fall Back:** Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. Do not forget to set your clock (or watch) back one hour. Enjoy that extra hour of sleep!

**Parking Buses Outside during Cold Weather:** When parking buses outside the garage in cold weather, the following procedures must be done:

- Leave the transmission in neutral
- Set the parking brake (do not use the rear door interlock as a parking brake)
- Close all windows and roof vents
- Turn off all interior lights and fans
- Turn off the 4-way flashers
- Close the front door by reaching through the driver's window
- Close the driver's window

When parking a big bus outside and the outside temperature is 20 degrees or below, do not turn off the bus engine. When parking a minibus outside and the outside temperature is 0 degrees or below, do not turn off the bus engine. The high idle and front heat or defrost should be left on all buses. This procedure will prevent the front windows from frosting over and diesel fuel from gelling and clogging both fuel lines and filters.

**Holiday Time Off:** With the approaching holidays we will be working with many requests for time off. Please be sure to check carefully if your requests have been covered **before you leave**. Talk to dispatchers if you have any questions about a shift being covered. Simply submitting a request does not mean it is automatically covered.

Sign-up sheets will be posted for the holiday break schedule. If you are interested in working extra hours, you can sign up on those sheets and you will be assigned some extra hours according to your seniority.

Also, be sure that you know your schedule for the holidays. A memo will be posted explaining the holiday schedule. If you have any questions about when you work, talk to Jen or Mike.

**Winter Driving Tips:** We've all heard the saying "there are two seasons in Iowa – road construction and winter." Most years it seems that way. Iowa's snow season typically runs from November through early March.

The following tips will help in reducing the chances of becoming involved in a weather-related accident.

- \* Report for work rested and alert.
- \* Do a thorough pre-trip inspection. Make sure you have de-icing fluid, an ice scraper, and window cleaner.
- \* Slow down. The posted speed limit may **not** be a safe speed to travel at during inclement weather. Remember safety before schedule.
- \* Give yourself more stopping distance, about 15-20 feet before where you would usually stop. Bridges and shady spots can be icy when other areas are not. Avoid sudden stops and quick direction changes.
- \* Turn off the transmission retarder if the bus is equipped with one.

Snow and ice create hazards for our passengers as well. The following tips can help reduce the chances of our passengers having an accident.

- \* Turn your four ways on early so the passenger knows you see them at the stop.
- \* Approach the stop cautiously and allow extra clearance on the right side, if necessary.
- \* Choose the boarding and deboarding area carefully. If there is snow at the bus stop, select another area such as a sidewalk or driveway. If the sidewalk is icy or snow covered, give the passengers warning of the condition before they exit. If there is not a clear location keep a clearance of three to five feet from the snow bank so that passengers can use the street for boarding and deboarding. Do not move the bus until all people are safely away from the bus. Check your mirrors carefully to make sure the area is clear.
- \* If your bus steps are snow or ice covered, scrape/brush the snow/ice off these steps.
- \* Monitor the interior temperature of the bus for the comfort of the passengers. (Rob and Jenny)

**NextBus:** We're continuing to monitor driver reports of NextBus login issues, particularly in the early morning or when buses are starting up from the garage. If you have problems getting logged in, please fill out a maintenance card and include where you were when you tried to log in, and the message that was shown to you on the NextBus screen (if any).

**Bus Stop Announcement Technology:** We're working on an exciting new project to bring automatic bus stop "annunciators" to CyRide. These systems are able to make transfer announcements automatically, without the need for any driver action. The initial pilot program is planned for just a few buses, but we're hopeful that our experience with this system will let us move toward a fleet-wide installation going into the future. Watch for a memo in the upcoming weeks for more details.

## HIRING AND TRAINING

**Mind the Line:** Please pay particular attention to the yellow line painted within the garage. They serve a useful purpose. These lines help drivers move safely within the parking lanes and into and out of the garage. When parking your bus in the garage, keep the left side of your bus positioned parallel along the line. The left rear and front tires of your bus should be positioned next to or within two inches of the yellow line. Parking along the guide line ensures your bus is properly positioned and safely away from other buses and fixed objects like walls, water lines, air hoses, etc. Parking askew of the guide line (see photo) makes it more difficult for other drivers to park and sets your bus up for a preventable



accident. Do not be sloppy when parking. Take the time to properly align your bus up when parking. Keep your bus straight and mind the line! (Tom, George & Jason)

**The Art of Moving Back:** With our increase in ridership and as the weather gets cooler and cooler, it is imperative to ask our passengers to move back on the bus so more people can board. Making a request to your passenger is an **ART**.

Attention Getter

Request Politely

Thank your passengers for their cooperation

Here are some sample announcements:

- "May I have your attention; I have just a few more people to board if you would please move back in the aisle a few steps. Thank you."
- "Good Morning, we have a lot of passengers traveling with us this morning if everyone would move back a step or two we will have room for everyone. Thank you."

Morning Orange route drivers should make this announcement **after** they leave the parking lot, so there is room for passengers boarding at Maple Hall. (Tom, George & Jason)

## **FLEET AND FACILITIES**

**Bus Stop Signs, Benches, and Shelters:** When you see missing or damaged bus stop signs, rubbish strewn, or damaged bus shelters and/or benches, please record this information on a maintenance card. The maintenance card should be given to the dispatcher at the end of your shift. If damage creates a hazard to passengers, such as broken glass in the bus shelter, notify the dispatcher immediately. Your timely reporting assists us in keeping CyRide safe, clean, and professional looking. (Rich L.)

## **BREAK ROOM COMMITTEE CORNER**

### **Walking Taco Event:**

The Breakroom Committee had a great response to the Walking Taco event this fall and we look forward to hosting another great event next year. Thank you to all for helping make this a success!

**Holiday Party:** The CyRide Breakroom Committee has not met yet this fall, but will in the upcoming weeks to complete details for the CyRide 2018 Holiday Party. We are "always open" to suggestions and comments and ask that you contact one of the committee members by leaving your suggestion in a breakroom committee member's mailbox, or with Joanne.

Holiday party notices will be posted shortly before the date and will ask for your participation to make the holiday party a successful event by asking employees bring a food item to share with your co-workers. This holiday party is an annual event for co-workers, friends, family and CyRide retirees allowing you time to share your favorite recipe or recipes of the season.

The CyRide Breakroom Committee typically hosts quarterly events throughout the year for our employees. If you have ideas that you would like to see implemented, please talk to someone on the Break Room Committee.

### **CyRide Breakroom Committee**

Yvette Gahring, Karen Goodman, Dave Happe, Rich Lane, Emily Nguyen Donna Olson, Sara Scheiding, Trevin Ward, and Joanne Van Dyke