

Staff Report

REQUESTS FROM ACVB REGARDING RAGBRAI

March 27, 2018

BACKGROUND:

Ames will be an overnight stop for RAGBRAI XLVI from Tuesday, July 24th, through Wednesday, July 25th. Approximately 10,000 registered bicycle riders, 4,000 support personnel, and several thousand additional non-registered bicyclists are expected to arrive beginning the morning of July 24th from Jefferson, and leave the morning of July 25th for Newton. Ames was last an overnight stop for RAGBRAI in 2008. The Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) is leading the local RAGBRAI organizing committee in preparing for RAGBRAI's arrival in Ames.

ROUTE AND POINTS OF INTEREST:

The proposed route will enter Ames from the southwest, following South Dakota Avenue to Mortensen Road, taking Mortensen Road to Beach Avenue, Beach Avenue to S. 4th Street, and reaching the official welcome area along South 4th Street between Beach Avenue and University Boulevard (adjacent Jack Trice Stadium).

The following day, riders will leave from the intersection of University Boulevard and S. 16th Street, following S. 16th Street to Bell Avenue, taking Bell Avenue to E. Lincoln Way, and following E. Lincoln Way eastbound out of the City.

The community is expected to provide camping areas for approximately 13,000 total riders and support people. The camping areas are proposed to be located in the tailgating lots adjacent Jack Trice Stadium, in Brookside Park, and in portions of Stuart Smith Park. Camping areas will have various services including showers, toilets, food vending, medical support, and bicycle repair facilities.

Entertainment will be concentrated in the downtown area and be organized primarily by the Main Street Cultural District (MSCD). MSCD intends to host musical acts, food vending, and a beer garden.

TEMPORARY ORDINANCE REQUESTS:

RAGBRAI brings an opportunity to showcase the Ames community. It also requires the host community to provide significant temporary services to manage the large influx of people. RAGBRAI recommends overnight towns adopt a temporary local ordinance to manage these activities. Through conversations with City staff, ACVB has identified

several components of *Municipal Code* that it requests be temporarily modified to facilitate RAGBRAI:

1. Suspension of Section 19.11 (Park Hours) to Provide Camping – The Municipal Code prohibits the use of City Parks between the hours of 10:30 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. If the Council was to allow camping in portions of Brookside Park and Stuart Smith Park, this provision of *Municipal Code* would need to be temporarily suspended with respect to those two parks from Monday, July 23rd through Wednesday, July 25th. Although the registered riders will not enter the community until July 24th (Tuesday), registered support teams often send advance teams who camp the day prior to the arrival of riders to prepare their designated spots.
2. Suspension of Section 19.12 (Bike Riding Prohibited in Certain Parks) – The *Municipal Code* prohibits riding bicycles on the hard-surfaced pathways in Brookside Park. The portion of this ordinance with respect to Brookside Park would need to be temporarily suspended for the duration of RAGBRAI. Staff should note that this ordinance may merit being reviewed and permanently modified, as it was implemented long before the existing, wider shared-use path was paved in the park. However, a temporary suspension of this ordinance would allow a longer-term review to take place as staff time is available.
3. Suspension of Section 19.9 (Unlawful to Operate a Motor Vehicle in City Parks) – During RAGBRAI, most support motor vehicles will be kept on pavement or in ISU tailgating lots. However, several charter companies provide support to large groups of RAGBRAI riders. These companies need to be able to move large amounts of equipment and supplies from their parking areas into the camp sites using small utility vehicles. Additionally, it is anticipated that officials from RAGBRAI, ACVB, and the City may need to move people and equipment through the parks. Therefore, it is requested that this blanket prohibition on operating motor vehicles in the parks be amended to temporarily allow the Parks and Recreation Director to designate certain people to be able to drive such a vehicle in the parks.
4. Suspension of Division III, Chapter 22 (Vending) – It is anticipated that a variety of vendors will be recruited by the local RAGBRAI organizing committee to serve the campgrounds and entertainment areas. The existing provisions of *Municipal Code* provide for vending to occur on City streets, but do not lend themselves well to a short term event that is as spread out across the community the way RAGBRAI is. Additionally, the local RAGBRAI organizing committee anticipates incurring significant costs to provide services for the riders (utilities, advertising, toilets, entertainment, etc.) These costs must be recouped by the local organizing committee.

To facilitate this, RAGBRAI organizers recommend that overnight communities establish a special structure and fees for vendors. City staff has reviewed how

RAGBRAI's model temporary ordinance would apply to specifically to Ames. Staff has identified below how those concepts could apply in Ames:

- a. For those who wish to vend during RAGBRAI, suspend the City's typical vending regulations and allow the local RAGBRAI organizing committee to issue permits, adopt fees, establish policies, and regulate locations and hours of sales. It is anticipated that fees to obtain a RAGBRAI Vending Permit would be several hundred dollars (compared to the City's Vending License fee of \$50). The fee for non-profit vendors (churches, civic organizations, etc.) would be less than the fee for for-profit vendors.

It should be noted that this would also supersede Parks and Recreation policies related to Vending in the parks. Vending that occurs in parks is not subject to the City's regulations related to vending on City's streets. Vendors in parks are subject to policies the Parks and Recreation Commission has adopted. Of note, vendors in parks are normally required to pay the City 10% of their revenues in exchange for the right to vend. This provision and any other park-specific vending policies would be superseded by the proposed temporary ordinance.

- b. Allow the existing licensed vendors that have established vending spaces to retain those spots without requiring a RAGBRAI vending permit. There are two caveats to this: First, existing Vending licenses are site-specific, so if an existing vendor in the City wishes to move locations to take advantage of the RAGBRAI crowds, that vendor would need to follow the special RAGBRAI vending permit process.

Second, the City's existing Vending ordinance states that vendors who are in locations where a special event is occurring may be prevented from using that space to facilitate the event. It should be noted that some RAGBRAI entertainment is proposed to be downtown, where existing Vending licensees have regular vending locations. These vendors may be required to move to accommodate the event, although the local RAGBRAI Committee may choose to contract with those vendors to be in the entertainment areas, subject to paying the RAGBRAI vendor fee.

- c. Require the local RAGBRAI organizing committee to use fees collected to finance only the expenses of hosting RAGBRAI. Additionally require that regulation of permits be done in a manner free from illegal discrimination. Require City Manager's Office review and approval for policies and fees, and review of any action to revoke, deny, or suspend a RAGBRAI Vending Permit.

5. Limitation on Temporary Outdoor Service Privileges – The model ordinance provided by RAGBRAI recommends that only the main alcoholic beverage garden organized by the local RAGBRAI organizing committee be permitted, and that local authorities do not approve other temporary outdoor service privilege requests during RAGBRAI.

The rationale provided by RAGBRAI for this restriction is two-fold: 1) A single large temporary beverage garden is less challenging to monitor and control than temporary beverage gardens spread throughout the community, and 2) RAGBRAI indicates that local establishments can expect increased business during RAGBRAI even without their own outdoor beverage gardens. Since the local organizing committee is incurring significant expenses to support the RAGBRAI event, it should be allowed to recoup its costs by directing RAGBRAI participants to the main beverage garden.

STREET CLOSURES AND UTILITIES:

City staff has identified the need to close certain streets along the RAGBRAI route. These closures are anticipated to be as follows:

On Tuesday, July 24, from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.:

- Mortensen Road from South Dakota Avenue to Beach Avenue
- Beach Avenue from Mortensen Road to S. 4th Street
- S. 4th Street between Beach Avenue and University Boulevard (closed until 9:00 p.m.)

On Wednesday, July 25, from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.:

- One lane of University Boulevard from 6th Street to S. 16th Street
- S. 16th and S.E. 16th Streets from University Boulevard to Bell Avenue
- Bell Avenue from S.E. 16th Street to E. Lincoln Way
- E. Lincoln Way from Bell Avenue to the east corporate limit of Ames.

The selected route minimizes the number of major intersections that would need to be controlled and the number of homes and businesses that will be affected by the closures. Staff will work with ACVB to notify affected residents and businesses, and identify methods to allow access in a safe and controlled manner while cyclists are on the road. Staff anticipates that on the outbound portion of the ride, local traffic will be granted access at the controlled intersections alongside the riders.

Additionally, because the main camping area is in Brookside Park, the portion of 6th Street from University Boulevard to North Hazel Avenue will need to be closed from 6:00 a.m. July 24 through noon July 25. This will allow controlled access for support vehicles and the large equipment trucks that will enter this area, and reduce the potential for vehicle collisions with the large number of pedestrians crossing this street. CyRide will

be allowed to operate through this corridor to provide service between the east and west sides of the City.

Parking areas within Brookside Park and Stuart Smith Park will be closed from 5:00 p.m. Monday, July 23, through noon Wednesday, July 25, to clear parked vehicles and facilitate the unloading of camping supplies.

The campers, their support teams, and vendors who will provide food, showers, and toilets, will need temporary access to water and sewer services. Staff anticipates that this may involve a dozen temporary water and sewer connections. Typically, temporary water connections would be established using hydrant meters. City staff will prepare to reserve a number of these meters for this event.

When RAGBRAI visited Ames in 2008, the City provided two hydrant meters to provide water for shower stations. ACVB budgeted \$1,500 for water and sewer services that year. However, water and sewer accessed on ISU property in 2008 would not have been accounted for in this amount. Because water and sewer rates have increased, and because camping will take place in City parks (thereby increasing water consumption to be counted), staff estimates the costs associated with providing water and sewer service to be between \$2,000 and \$3,500 this year, depending on the number of connections.

City staff will work with the RAGBRAI committee to identify locations where water and sewer service is needed by vendors and service providers. City staff will arrange to install hydrant meters and backflow preventers as appropriate for those locations. Charges for the usage will be billed to the local RAGBRAI Committee. Water and sewer access on the Iowa State campus will be managed by the University.

NEXT STEPS:

The issues outlined above are those that City staff and the ACVB have identified so far in the RAGBRAI planning process. Many RAGBRAI details are still being coordinated, including the location and timing of the entertainment activities, which are planned for the Downtown area. Additional street closures, beer permits, and other approvals are anticipated to be brought to the City Council as they become clearer.

At this time, staff is requesting direction regarding what elements of the temporary ordinance requests, if any, the City Council is interested in taking up. As described above in this report, these elements are:

1. Suspension of park hours to provide camping in designated parks
2. Bike riding on the path in Brookside Park
3. Limited use of motor vehicles in the parks
4. Regulation of Vending related to RAGBRAI
5. Limitation on the number of outdoor beverage service gardens

On March 22, the Parks and Recreation Commission discussed issues 1-4 above. The Commission indicated its support for items 1-3 and the suspension of parks policies related to vending.

After Council direction is received regarding these elements, staff would draft an ordinance and return it to the City Council at the next opportunity for first reading. Staff should note that the sooner the City Council can provide direction regarding this ordinance, the sooner a system can be implemented to handle requests to provide vending and camping services in an orderly manner.

The City Council is also being asked for its direction regarding the proposed route and closure areas. If the Council believes these concepts are acceptable, it should direct staff to place these items on a future agenda for consideration.

