

**AMES AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (AAMPO)  
TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: AMENDMENT TO THE AMES AREA MPO 2015 – 2019 FINAL PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**BACKGROUND:**

The Federal government requires a locally-coordinated planning process for transportation issues between human/health service agencies and transportation providers. States and metropolitan planning organizations in turn, have been charged to carry out this process and as a result are required to develop a Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP). This plan provides needs-based justification for identifying passenger transportation priorities and/or strategies. The PTP is coordinated with both the Story County Human Service Council and the Transportation Collaboration groups. The PTP must be updated, at a minimum, every five years. The Ames Area MPO last amended its PTP in January 2018 and is required to submit the next full PTP to the Iowa DOT in May 2019. During the interim, there must be documentation of at least two coordination meetings to be submitted to the IDOT annually by July 31st of which the Ames Area MPO exceeds this requirement.

Projects funded with Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (FTA 5310) formula funding must specifically be identified within the PTP. Currently, the PTP identifies four projects for utilization of the 5310 funding: 1) CyRide's ADA Dial-A-Ride service, 2) Bus Stop Improvements, 3) Replacement/ Expansion of Light Duty Buses/Vehicles, and 4) Replacement/Expansion of Van Vehicles. Any suggested changes to 5310 funded projects within the PTP require an amendment to the plan.

**PTP AMENDMENT:**

CyRide is seeking to allocate this remaining uncommitted funding from Dial-A-Ride services to purchase annunciators for the CyRide fixed-route fleet. CyRide has \$435,452 of existing 5310 funding available which can be programmed over the next several years for this project to benefit the elderly and disabled Ames' community.

**Automated Vehicle Annunciators – AVA (Section 5310):**

To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), CyRide's drivers manually announce major transfer locations along transit routes as well as any bus stops the public request to be announced. In 2017, CyRide began working with Iowa State University's Alliance for Disability Awareness group which has communicated their desire for drivers to announce all bus stops throughout the

Ames' community without customers needing to verbally make a request to the driver. Such a system would be above and beyond what is required for ADA.

Adding automated vehicle annunciators (AVA) synced with LED signage will help keep all passengers, disability or not, better informed of where the bus is located along the route. This AVA will also make riding the bus more convenient and provide independence to hearing or visually disabled passengers. Automated announcements will make the messages more uniformly stated across the transit system by having the stops broadcasted in a similar method and at a consistent volume to be heard over loud noises inside and outside the buses. An AVA system will also allow CyRide's drivers to focus on operating the vehicle safety instead of talking into the intercom system every few blocks.

Approximate cost for **entire AVA project**: \$1,000,000 total; \$800,000 federal

**Funding for FY 2019**: \$544,315 total; \$435,452 federal, \$108,863 local

CyRide's transit board made a commitment within their capital plan to purchase an AVA system over a four to five year period beginning in FY2019. CyRide would fund the local portion of this project. The Transit Board has identified the **local match of \$108,863 in the FY 2019 Capital Improvement Plan**. Future 5310 funds will be identified for completion of the AVA implementation.

This project was reviewed with the Story County Human Service Council at their February 22, 2018 meeting and was recommended to the Ames Area MPO to be amended into the PTP. The Ames Area MPO Transportation Policy Committee is required to approve the PTP along with the recommended program for submittal to the Iowa Department of Transportation and Federal Transit Administration.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Review the amendment to the Ames Area MPO 2015 – 2019 Final Passenger Transportation Plan and set May 22, 2018 as the date for the public hearing.
2. Review and modify the amendment to the Ames Area MPO 2015 – 2019 Final Passenger Transportation Plan and set May 22, 2018 as the date for the public hearing.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION:**

The amendment to the Ames Area MPO 2015 – 2019 Final Passenger Transportation Plan has been developed in coordination as prescribed by the Passenger Transportation Plan. Therefore, it is recommended by the Administrator that the Transportation Policy Committee adopt Alternative No. 1, as noted above.

## IV – PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

The following are passenger transportation priorities and strategies for the next five years, as recommended by the Story County Human Service Council. Please note, that any Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and individuals with Disabilities projects (Section 5310 funding) must be specifically included in the PTP. All other strategies/projects funded by other means are encouraged to include in the PTP but are not required. This process ensures a cooperative effort between human service agencies and transportation providers to focus on transportation services to achieve the best possible transportation service for the community focusing on the elderly and disabled populations.

The PTP committee, made up of transportation providers and human/health service agencies, provided consensus to forward the following priorities and strategies forward and recommends this plan to the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization for formal approval. The AAMPO must review and approve the projects and overall PTP plan as amended for submittal to the Iowa Department of Transportation.

1. **Dial-A-Ride Service (Section 5310):** This need was identified as a base need for the community for those individuals that cannot ride the fixed-route system but can rather ride CyRide's Dial-A-Ride door-to-door service operated under subcontract currently to Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA). CyRide is mandated by the federal government as part of the American's With Disabilities Act (ADA), to provide this complementary fixed-route service for person's with a disability. This demand response service operates the same hours and days as the CyRide's fixed-route transit system. More demand will be warranted from the community in future years. Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and individuals with Disabilities funding (Section 5310 funds) can be utilized by transit agencies to subcontract out their ADA service however; they cannot provide the service themselves and receive the funding. Therefore, it is more economical to subcontract and coordinate with another provider. **Approximate annual funding = (\$237,500 total; \$190,000 federal)**

**Customer Service Portal (Section 5310):** In October 2017, HIRTA announced their plan to implement a customer service portal where customers will be able to book their own trips online, change their account status (address, phone number, etc.), check on their trip status, pay for trips online, etc. HIRTA is implementing this for their passengers throughout their service area including Story County and the Ames area. The Section 5310 funding supports projects that improve mobility for seniors and individuals with riding in Ames and the portal will be an outstanding technological improvement, benefiting ADA Paratransit (Dial-A-Ride) customers. This sort of technology has been specifically requested by an ISU's Alliance for Disabilities Awareness group which has met with CyRide over the past year to improve their rider experience on CyRide's Dial-A-Ride service. The one-time total capital cost of the customer service portal is \$179,560. HIRTA and CyRide have agreed that the Ames' 5310 funding should support approximately \$15,711 (\$12,569 federal) of the portal relative to the percentage of Dial-A-Ride passengers to HIRTA's overall customers throughout the region. HIRTA will accommodate the remainder of this purchase with other identified funding through their own budget. This capital cost portion for Dial-A-Ride will be amended as a miscellaneous expense into CyRide's contract with HIRTA to operate its Dial-

A-Ride service. Existing 5310 funding is currently available within the existing annual Dial-A-Ride Service budget above, due to unspent funding within previous years, to support this one-time project that will be drawn over a six-month period under the service agreement contract therefore no additional funding is 5310 is needed other than to identify it specifically within this plan. (Approximate one-time funding = \$179,560 total; \$12,569 federal)

	Dial-A-Ride (HIRTA)			
	Provides door-to-door ADA service within the Ames city limits.			
Annual Numbers	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013
# Revenue Hours	2,551	2,503	2,665	3,204
# Revenue Miles	30,498	31,122	34,108	35,445
# Days Provided/Yr.	362	362	359	359
# Riders (unlinked)	9,745	= 9,101	10,853	9,468
# Elderly Rides				
# Disabled Rides	9,745	9,101	10,853	9,468
Operating Costs	\$136,856	\$142,717	\$162,094	\$144,023

- 2. Transit Amenities/Bus Stop Improvements (Section 5310):** Improving the accessibility of CyRide’s bus stops as well as CyRide’s image is of importance to CyRide and their Board of Trustees. Shelters have be prioritized within a bus stop plan for the community to be funded from this identified funding in the next few years as long as funding is available to improve accessibility. These improvements also include lighting within the bus stop improvement as only a few bus stops currently have lighting within the shelter. Many passengers result to lighting up the schedule display within the shelter in the evening hours with their cell phone or a street light. Future shelters would incorporate lighting.

In addition, real-time schedule information has been a request within the Ames community for many years. This technology was implemented in February 2013 with LED digital signage at certain major transfer points on Iowa State University campus. Additional LED signage for real-time bus information can be incorporated into CyRide’s system making it easier for seniors and the disabled know when their Next bus will be arriving. CyRide intends to place these signs at major transfer locations. **Approximate annual funding = (\$200,000 total; \$160,000 federal)**

- 3. Small Light-Duty Bus Replacement/Expansion (Section 5310):** CyRide’s complementary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) service called Dial-A-Ride, is a door-to-door service serving individuals with a disability within the City of Ames. Passengers eligible for Paratransit service as defined by the (ADA) can ride this service. This service requires small light-duty accessible vehicles to operate door-to-door within the City of Ames. The useful life of these vehicles is four years as recommended by the Federal Transit Administration. CyRide currently leases one light-duty bus to its ADA contractor to help operate this service. The remaining vehicles are provided by the contractor directly as they also operate the regional public transit service for Story County. CyRide needs to systematically replace this vehicle leased to its contractor at a minimum of four years and maximum of every eight

years.

Additionally, this funding may be utilized to purchase expansion vehicles as needed for its ADA service as ridership for Dial-A-Ride increases. Specifically, CyRide cannot deny Dial-A-Ride passengers a ride due to vehicle capacity issues. CyRide must ensure a ride to its passengers within a two hour window (one hour before/after requested pickup/drop off) of the passengers' request. As of FY2013, Dial-A-Ride ridership has remained fairly stable. However, this may change as more and more disabled individuals turn to DialA-Ride for that "guaranteed ride" within the two-hour window. Section 5310 funds can be utilized by transit agencies to purchase replacement and/or expansion buses to operate its ADA service. Expansion vehicles may be necessary within this next five-year period as demand increases and CyRide would need to respond and provide additional vehicles if required.

CyRide estimates up to two light-duty buses being purchased for either replacement/expansion within the PTP between FY2015 – FY2019 with the cost identified below. Approximate funding per bus = (\$90,000 total; \$76,500 federal) **OR Approximate maximum funding = (\$180,000 total; \$153,000)**

- 4. Van Replacement/Expansion (Section 5310):** In January 2015, a Demand Response Service Action Plan (<http://www.cityofames.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=20699>) and Communication Plan were finalized under the guidance of a task force to develop process improvements for the door-to-door public transit service to the general public within Story County/Ames. While, the plan identifies 23 specific actions to improve demand response county-wide public transit service, many of these improvements can also benefit CyRide's Dial-A-Ride service provided to ADA-eligible disabled individuals as both transit services are operated by the same transit provider.

Specifically under Action Item #23 in Appendix H, the Demand Response Service Action Plan identified dedicating one "unscheduled" vehicle each day to address unforeseen operational issues to ensure smooth operation of service. The need was to keep demand response public transit service on time alleviating concerns from passengers. Again, this service improvement need was seen as something to improve not only HIRTA's service but CyRide's Dial-A-Ride service as well. Therefore a possible funding source for the purchase of the vehicle is 5310 (elderly and disabled funding) impacting the demand response services within the Ames community. The vehicle would be operated to keep the service within the City of Ames on schedule as much as possible and/or assist where needed. Although the action plan identifies a bus to operate this service improvement, recent discussions have identified the unscheduled vehicle as an accessible van. The useful life of this vehicle is four years as recommended by the Federal Transit Administration and therefore, would need replaced within the life of this PTP.

CyRide estimates up to two accessible vans being purchased between FY2015 – FY2019 for either replacement/expansion within this PTP with the estimated costs identified below. CyRide and/or HIRTA would be required to fund the 25% local portion of the vehicle. **Approximate funding per van = (\$57,500 total; \$42,925 federal) OR Approximate maximum funding = (\$115,000 total; \$85,850)**

5. **Automated Vehicle Annunciators - AVA (Section 5310):** To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), CyRide's drivers manually announce major transfer locations along transit routes as well as any bus stops the public request to be announced. In 2017, CyRide began working with Iowa State University's Alliance for Disability Awareness group which has communicated their desire for drivers to announce all bus stops throughout the Ames' community without customers needing to verbally make a request to the driver. Such a system would be over and beyond what is required for ADA.

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CyRide has existing 5310 funding available which can be programmed over the next several years for this project to benefit the elderly and disabled Ames' community. As a result, CyRide's transit board made a commitment within their capital plan to purchase an AVA system over a four to five year period beginning in FY2019. CyRide would fund the local portion of this project.

**Approximate funding for entire AVA project= (\$1,000,000 total; \$800,000 federal)**

**Approximate annual funding maximum = (\$300,000 total; \$240,000 federal)**