

Iowa City Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility

Proposed recipient:

Iowa City Transit/City of Iowa City

Recipient address:

410 E Washington Street, Iowa City, IA 52240

Requested amount:

\$750,000

Explanation of request:

Community Project Funding is requested for completing the design phase for the new Iowa City Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility (“Transit Facility”). 1.5 million individuals depend on Iowa City Transit to get to work, school, shopping and medical appointments every year. The existing facility is failing in condition with significant ground subsidence, air quality, and safety issues. The facility is also over capacity and unable to support future growth and service improvements. The age and condition of the facility precludes the City from completing a full transition to no or low emission technologies.

The Iowa Department of Transportation’s 2018 Transit Facility Condition Report indicates that the existing transit facility is in poor to marginal condition, has reached the end of its useful life, and is not considered to be in a State of Good Repair. The City has spent \$1.4 million on safety projects related to soil settlement, methane abatement, and age and condition repairs and maintenance. An additional \$1.9 million in maintenance would be necessary over the next five years. This is critical funding that could be used to expand service and reach the City’s sustainable transportation goals. Additionally, bus storage is over capacity and some buses must be stored in the wash bays overnight.

The City’s adopted Climate Action Plan calls for a shift of 55% of vehicle trips to sustainable transportation options such as public transit by 2050, in order to meet emission reduction goals. In response, in 2019 the City launched a comprehensive transit study including an electric bus transition plan. In June 2020, the City received a \$3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to replace four diesel buses with battery electric buses and the City contributed \$1.6 million in local matching funds. This small-scale transition is the first step; however, continued conversion is not currently possible due the existing facility’s age, condition, and inability to expand on the existing site due to soil subsidence and methane issues.

Iowa City Transit (ICT) is located in Iowa City, Iowa, the 5th largest city in the state and the "Home of the Hawkeyes" and the University of Iowa. Major local industries are education, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing, including bio-medical and consumer goods. It is anticipated that by 2045, the City’s population will have grown by 90% since the existing transit facility was built. In Fiscal Year 2019, Iowa City Transit provided 1.5 million rides and had the 17th highest ridership per capita in the nation. Iowa City has an explicit goal of doubling ridership in the next ten years based on a clear understanding that supporting and expanding transit service is critical to a more sustainable and equitable future for all.