



**IOWA CITY TRANSIT MAINTENANCE FACILITY  
LOCATION AND FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Prepared for Iowa City Transit

Prepared By

The Metropolitan Planning Organization of Johnson County

**January 2014**

## I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to examine the feasibility of a new transit facility including an analysis of locations within Iowa City. Iowa City Transit had been at their current site, located at 1200 South Riverside Drive, since 1984. Over the years, two issues have developed at this site; 1) the current facility does not allow for future expansion or growth due to the soil conditions surrounding the facility, and 2) the facility was built on an old dumpsite that has led to air quality issues due to methane gas produced by the dumpsite.

This study will include a review of the history of the current transit facility site, an evaluation of the existing transit operations and facility, a review of facility needs, an evaluation of proposed sites for a new facility, a site layout, and cost estimates.

## II. HISTORY OF CURRENT TRANSIT FACILITY

### Feasibility Study for Current Transit Facility-1982

The City of Iowa City has operated Iowa City Transit since the early 1970s. During this time, Iowa City Transit has grown from a handful of buses to a 27 bus operation. The community of Iowa City has grown by 45% since the early 1970s when Iowa City first implemented transit service.

In 1982, Iowa City Transit hired R. Neumann Associates and Architects to conduct a feasibility study for a new transit facility. The space requirements at the time included:

Administration/Operation Areas:	4,794 sq. ft.
Maintenance Area:	13,390 sq. ft.
Vehicle Servicing Area:	3,166 sq. ft.
<u>Bus Storage (25-28 buses):</u>	<u>15,450 sq. ft.</u>
Total	36,800 sq. ft.

The site that was chosen was previously used as a landfill/dump area. The fill consisted of miscellaneous materials mixed with silt and inorganic materials. Below the landfill material was a layer of clay silt and then a coarse sand. Methane gas problems were expected due to the organic decomposition. Design procedures were followed for gas and odor control in the facility. The total project cost estimate in 1983 was \$2,974,400. Iowa City Transit received 80% (\$2,379,520) in federal funding and matched 20% (\$594,880) of the project with local funds. This new facility would replace the old transit building built in 1963 and would provide three times the space.

### **Current Transit Facility Site Selection Process-1982**

The current Iowa City Transit facility located at 1200 South Riverside Drive in Iowa City began with a Transit Facility Site Selection Study in May of 1982. The facility was planned to store 35 buses, perform all types of maintenance, fueling and cleaning, and support areas for drivers, mechanics, and administrative personnel. The site needed to be near downtown to reduce deadhead miles and consist of at least two acres. The site selection committee began with 17 sites which were eventually narrowed to six sites that warranted further consideration. These six sites were narrowed to three sites which were subjected to a more detailed site analysis consisting of 10 criteria. Based on the scoring of the criteria, the most favorable site for the new transit facility was the City Services Building site located at the intersection of Hwy. 1 and 6 and Hwy. 218. The transit facility has been located here for the past 28 years.

### **Categorical Exclusion-1982**

Also in 1982, Iowa City Transit prepared a Categorical Exclusion for the then proposed site at 1200 South Riverside Drive. The study concluded that the site did not require an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment in order to be approved for federal funding. Archaeological and historical/architectural assessments were not required.

### **Current Transit Facility Remedial Work-1997**

By 1997, the Iowa City Transit facility had undergone a constant sequence of repairs to floor drains and subsurface utilities resulting from settlement of fills beneath the surface. Void spaces were encountered below the concrete floors during repair activities and the probing of subfloor ventilator piping installed to minimize landfill gas buildup were obstructed, broken, and on occasion filled with gravel. Unidentified odors prompted closure of electrical systems and entry into the maintenance pit in the northern portion of the facility. The reports of odors prompted Iowa City Transit to complete an industrial hygiene study of indoor air quality. The study identified acceptable indoor air quality but expressed concern for future degradation of indoor air quality driven by geochemical processes in the subsurface.

Due to the above concerns, Iowa City Transit hired Terracon Environmental, Inc. to perform a Remedial Methane Assessment. Terracon completed research, field and engineering services to evaluate seasonal gas generation in the subsurface below the transit facility.

## **III. EXISTING TRANSIT OPERATIONS AND FACILITY**

### **MPO/Cooperative efforts**

Iowa City Transit, Coralville Transit, and the University of Iowa Cambus have been working together through the Metropolitan Planning Organization of Johnson County (MPOJC) for planning purposes since 1981. Cooperation and coordination over the past 31 years has been

beneficial to all three transit services, as well as the local paratransit provider Johnson County SEATS. Combining the three transit systems has been discussed by the MPOJC Urbanized Area Policy Board and the Iowa City City Council many times over the years, only to conclude that the three systems do not need to become one agency to work efficiently. In 2011, the three transit agencies combined to provide 6,673,622 rides, which is the highest ridership rate in the state of Iowa for a metro area.

Each year, MPOJC works with Iowa City Transit in preparing a Transit Capital Equipment Replacement Plan. The plan allows the transit system to track when capital equipment needs to be replaced and assures that the capital items are eligible for federal funding. The plan lists the current facility site life as 40 years, leaving 12 years left before replacement and \$713,856 in federal interest still remaining. However, due to the air quality issues and the unstable ground beneath the facility, Iowa City Transit plans on making a request to FTA that the remaining interest in the current facility be waived with new funding being invested in a new facility.

### **Current Operation and Service Area**

Iowa City Transit provides service on 17 regular routes from 6:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m. All routes operate daily with 30-minute service during peak periods. The Seventh Avenue (during a.m. and p.m. peak periods), Melrose Express, Westside Hospital, Eastside Express, and Westport routes operate hourly all day long. Midday service is hourly except on the Towncrest and Oakcrest where service is 30 minutes all day during the University academic year. The Eastside Loop and Westside Loop operate when Iowa City schools are in session. Hourly evening service is provided to the same general service area using combined routes, from 6:30 p.m.-11:00 p.m. Saturday service operates hourly all day with service ending at 7:00 p.m. There is no fixed route service on Sundays. Iowa City Transit also extends service to Chatham Oaks Care Facility located on the west side of Iowa City.

During peak periods, Iowa City Transit operates 20 buses. Eight buses operate weekdays off-peak and all day Saturday. During evening hours five buses are in service. The Downtown Iowa City Transit Interchange is the hub of Iowa City Transit's operations. All regular routes arrive and depart at the interchange except for the Eastside Loop, allowing for coordinated transfers between buses. There is one free-fare route, the Downtown Transit Shuttle.

The existing fare structure is a 75¢ base fare, \$25 unlimited ride 31-day pass, and \$6.50 for a ten-ride ticket strip. There is a 50¢ youth fare for K-12 aged children. Children under five may ride free accompanied by an adult. There is also a K-12 31-day pass available for \$20 and a student semester pass for \$80 for persons attending the University of Iowa or Kirkwood Community College. There is a monthly pass for University of Iowa faculty/staff for \$23 per month. Elderly persons may ride during off peak hours and all day Saturday for 35¢. Eligible

persons with disabilities and low income elderly persons may ride free during off peak hours. A qualifying purchase from any merchant participating in the Bus and Shop Program entitles the purchaser to one free ride any time of day. Free transfers are available and may be used on Coralville Transit.

All Iowa City Transit fixed route buses are lift-equipped. Demand responsive paratransit service is provided during fixed-route service hours and on Sundays (8 a.m.-2 p.m.), operated by Johnson County SEATS.

A map showing transit service, including Iowa City Transit Service, can be found on [the following page](#).

### **Fleet Information**

Iowa City Transit currently operates thirty three (33) fixed route buses. Johnson County SEATS operates Iowa City Transit's ten (10) paratransit buses. The specific fleet information is as follows:

- One 1989 40' Orion Bus (#632)
- Three 1992 40' Gillig Buses (#638-#640 and #654 and #655)
- Three 1995 40' Gillig Buses (#641-#643)
- Ten 1997 40' Gillig Buses (#644-#653)
- One 1998 40' Startrans bus (#662)
- One 2000 40' Gillig Bus (#637)
- Six 2007 40' Gillig Buses (#656-#661)
- Six 2010 40' Gillig Buses (#667-#672)
- Ten Light-duty paratransit buses

### **Ridership and Revenue Vehicle Miles**

Over the past five years, fixed route ridership for Iowa City Transit continues to fluctuate as does the revenue miles. The ridership and revenue miles figures are consistently within 5% of the previous year. Riders per revenue vehicle mile continues to be very consistent over the past five years. In 2009, Iowa City Transit was just under the 2 million riders threshold. Iowa City Transit believes that the ridership trend will continue to grow and anticipates reaching the 2 million riders mark within the next five years.



Prepared by K. Ackerson  
Date Prepared 3/14/12  
Data sources FEMA, USDA, IDNR



Miles

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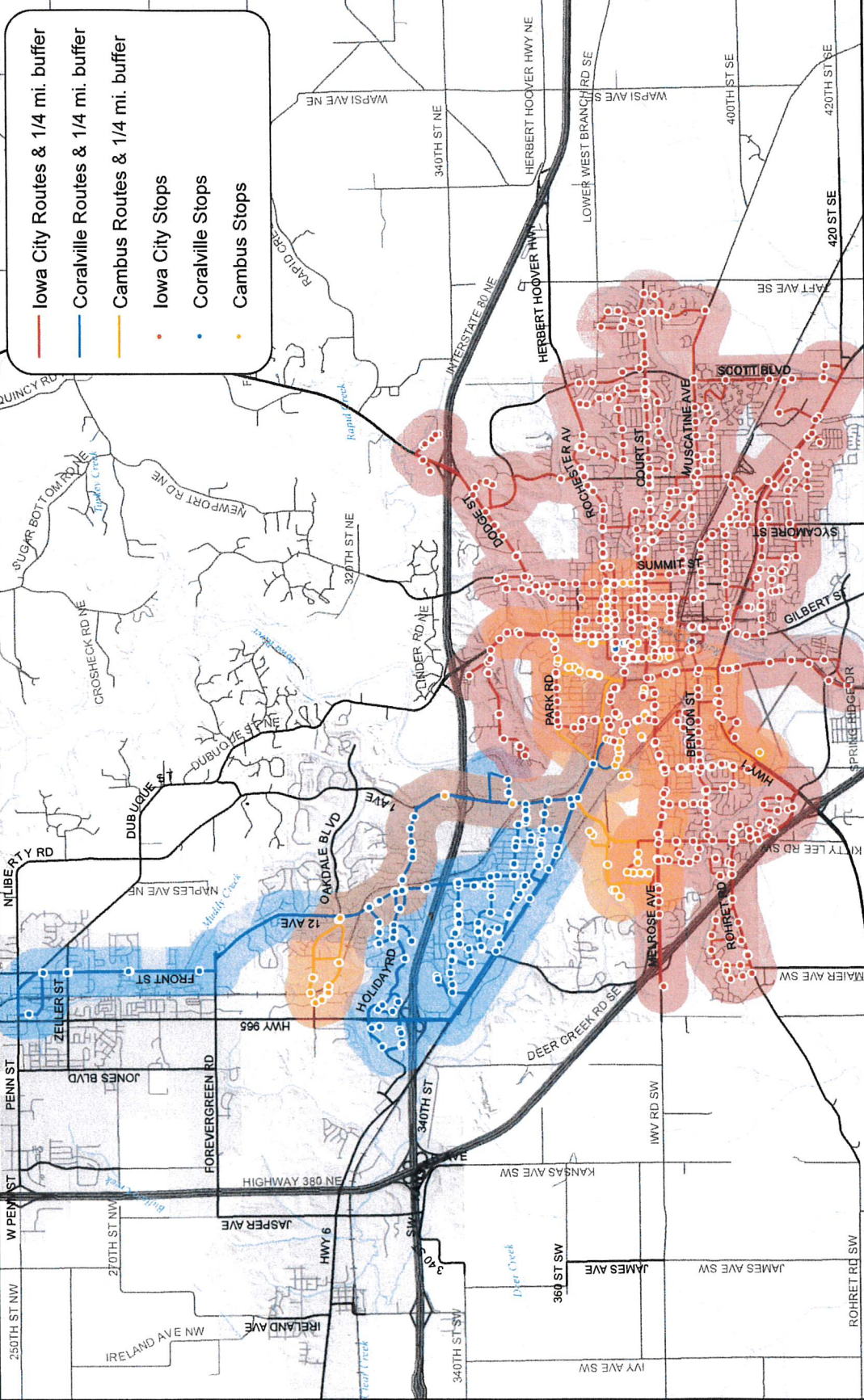
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Iowa City Urbanized Area

### Transit Routes & Stops

Iowa City, Coralville, Cambus Transit



YAR	RIDERSHIP	REVENUE MILES	RIDERS PER REVENUE VEHICLE MILE
YEAR	RIDERSHIP	REVENUE MILES	RIDERS PER REVENUE VEHICLE MILE
2011	1,879,331	679,596	2.7
2010	1,885,828	686,087	2.7
2009	1,986,738	719,403	2.7
2008	1,867,370	692,490	2.7
2007	1,676,353	672,247	2.5

**Current Transit Facilities**

The current Iowa City Transit facility was built in 1984 for \$2.9 million (including federal funding). Since that time the fleet has grown considerably and the increase in service and fleet size has created the need for additional maintenance space and vehicle storage space. However, more importantly is the issue of the methane gas being released into the facility.

The current Iowa City Transit facility sits on an old dump site along the Iowa River. (Photos)

The current facility has 13,300 square feet of bus storage/maintenance space and 4,794 square feet of administration space. Iowa City Transit's fleet consists of 27 40' heavy-duty buses; all are currently stored inside the facility including use of the maintenance bays. Any additional buses would need to be stored outside.

There is no room for growth of the bus fleet in the current facility and expansion is not a good option due to the poor soil stability.

#### IV. FACILITY NEEDS

A facility needs evaluation was completed by the City including a preliminary space evaluation for transit office space, driver area, vehicle storage, and equipment. The evaluation determined a 40 bus facility is needed to allow for growth of the transit system. A facility of 36,000 square feet is desired.

(need additional information)

#### V. FACILITY LOCATION

The City of Iowa City recently identified five potential locations (photos) for a new transit facility. Twelve criteria were used to evaluate each site. The criteria were evaluated on a high (1, 5, or 10 points), medium (1, 3, or 5 points) and low (1, 2, or 3 points) priority system and included:

- Access to parking for 40 vehicles (high priority)
- Property size of at least one square block (high priority)
- No conflict with residential uses (high priority)
- Not in floodplain (high priority)
- Access to arterial street (high priority)
- Utilities available/within city limits (high priority)
- Property owned by City (medium priority)
- Close proximity to downtown (low priority)
- Proximity to other City functions (low priority)
- Large enough for commuter lot (low priority)
- Ability to “secure” site (low priority)
- Vacant property (yes/no)

Twenty potential sites were evaluated and scored. The twenty potential sites and their scores are listed below:

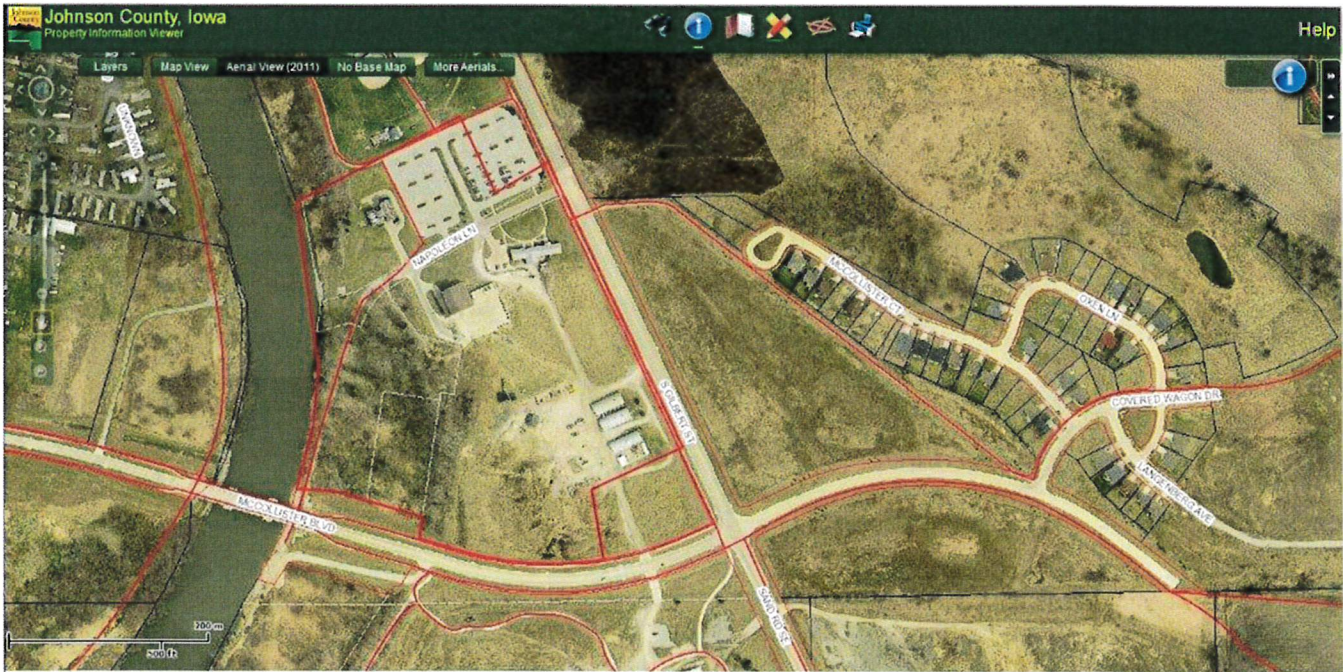
<u>SITE</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>LANDOWNER</u>
<b>South Public Works Site</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>City of Iowa City</b>
<b>Southgate and Waterfront</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>Michael and Janet Dahlen Revocable Living Trust Paul Kennedy South Gilbert Development Southgate BP Properties Development Southgate Development Co Inc Braverman Development Inc</b>
<b>Old Menards (currently University Arts Studios)</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>KDDSM LC DVHSM LC GASM LC</b>



		Et al.
<b>Airport, South of South Runway</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>City of Iowa City</b>
<b>Industrial Park Properties</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>OralB Buncher Family Foundation</b>
North of Soccer Park	65	Pleasant Valley LP
State Lot Behind the Jail	64	State of Iowa: For the Use of the University
South of Hawkeye Commuter Lot	63	University of Iowa
Federal Lot	62	United States of America
Naples/Highway 1/Escort Ln	62	Cook Appraisal LLC
MidAmerican Offices	62	Midamerican Energy Co
Airport, Near National Guard	61	City of Iowa City
Behind OralB	61	Oral-B Laboratories
Ernest St and Old Highway 218	54	Faley Properties LLC
Parkview Church Site	53	Parkview Evangelical Free Church
South of Old Depot	53	Dorothe Connell City of Iowa City State of Iowa: For the Use of the University Marvin Robertson Family Trust
Roosevelt Elementary	50	Iowa City Community School District
Scott Blvd, next to Recycling	48	City of Iowa City Systems Unlimited Inc Mid-America Building LLC MidAmerican Energy Co James Farr
Broadway/Highway 6	47	Nordstrom Oil Company Hawkeye Community Action Program
North Dodge and Prairie du Chien	43	Sims and Beltz Enterprises Gerald Stamp
Properties south of New Menards	Only on the map	James Davis Richard Albert, Life Est Connie Pearson, REM James Pearson, REM Larry Pearson, REM Garagemahaul Self-Storage LLC David Jensen Dean Rohret Marlene Boerjan Daniel Berg Real Money II LLC

		Randy Miller James Halvorsen Freeman Maas LC Donald Goedken Axial Industries Ltd Burdette Maas Go Low LLC
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After considering the twelve criteria and further discussion of the top five sites, Iowa City's current public works yard on South Riverside Drive was chosen as the preferred transit facility location.



South Public Works Site



Southgate and Waterfront



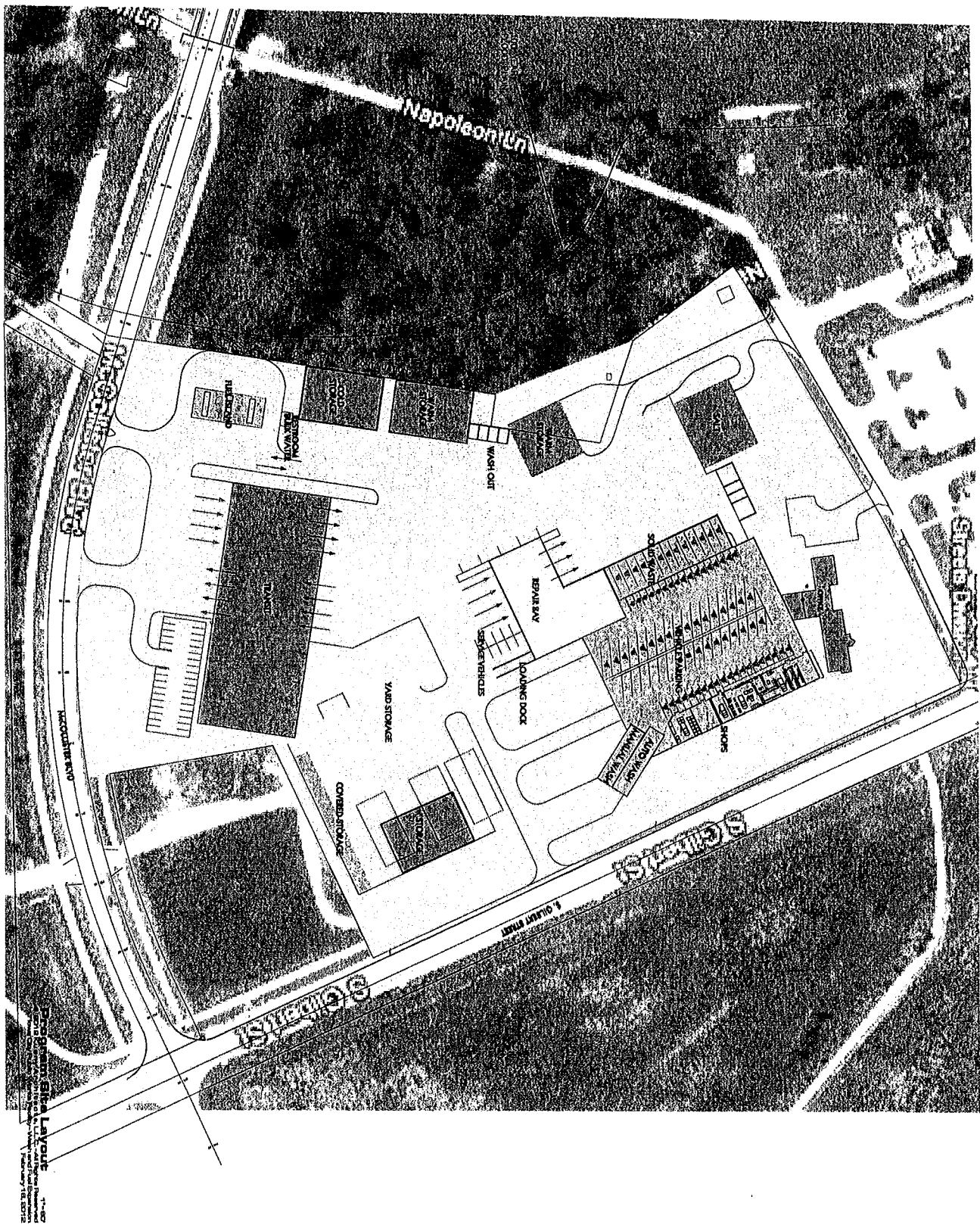
Old Menards



Airport South of Runway



Industrial Park Properties



**1.3**  
 2024/04/18  
 Final Layout  
 1"=400'  
 08/21/2024  
 1:30 PM  
 10/21/2024  
 10:30 AM  
 11/21/2024  
 11:30 AM

**1.3**

## **Preliminary Cost Estimate**

The preliminary cost estimate for the new facility is estimated at \$18 to \$20 million. A more detailed cost estimate will be completed during the summer of 2012.

The new building will be constructed with the possibility of future expansion.

Funding for the new facility will come from the City of Iowa City, FTA funds, and other grant or earmark sources.

(need additional information)

## **Implementation**

(need additional information)

## **Schedule/Time Line**

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Acquisition   | Complete    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Design and Bidding | Spring 2013 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction       | Summer 2013 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Projected Closeout | 18 months   |

(need additional information)

## **VI. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

The environmental analysis has already been completed at the public works site. Iowa City Transit will work with FTA on both the environmental analysis and, if need be, a categorical exclusion (23 CFR Part 771.117).

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