
BATS MEETING MINUTES

Brunswick Area Transportation Study Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

Friday June 11, 2021 - 4:00 p.m.

Via Teleconference

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AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (James Gilligan)
2. Special PL Funding Project (Bay Street Corridor Improvements) - Action Item
3. BATS Administrative Updates
 - a. GAMPO Special PL Funding Application – Fall 2021
4. Adjourn

Next Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting: Monday, July 12, 2021.

Brunswick Area Transportation Study
Special Called Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday June 11, 2021 - 9:00 a.m.

Via Teleconference

ATTENDEES

Committee Members

Melissa Ennis-Roughton

Ed Ellis

Ben Slade

Ed Farley

James Gilligan

Wally Orrel

Others

Jonathan Guy, Kimley Horn

Erin Granados (Forward Brunswick)

Dr. Lesley Leonard (College of Coastal GA)

Maurice Postal (Proxy for Pamela Thompson)

Vishanya Forbes, Transportation Planner, RS&H

Rachel Hatcher, Senior Planner, RS&H

Justin Dammons, Transportation Planner, RS&H

1. Welcome and Introductions.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. by Mr. James Gilligan, Chairman of the BATS Citizens Advisory Committee. Mr. Gilligan gave a brief welcome and did a roll call.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Action Item

- a. Minutes from CAC meeting held on January 11, 2021.

Ms. Forbes addressed this agenda item. She stated that meeting minutes from the January 11, 2021 CAC meeting was sent to committee members prior to the meeting for review.

She then asked if committee members had questions/comments of the January meeting minutes.

There were no questions or comments on the meeting minutes.

Mr. Gilligan called for a motion to approve the minutes from the CAC meetings held on January 11, 2021. Mr. Farley made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ennis-Roughton. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Final Draft BATS FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Action Item

Ms. Forbes spoke on this agenda item. She gave a brief refresher explaining that the current FY 2018-2021 TIP expires on June 30, 2021. She reminded the committee of the FY 2021-2024 TIP schedule and tasks and shared with the committee that the public comment period for the draft TIP closed on January 13, 2021. She added that comments were received from oversight agencies and have been incorporated them into the final draft. She also stated that no comments were received from the public and briefly highlighted the updated tables provided by GDOT that were incorporated into the final document.

Ms. Forbes outlined the next steps prior to adoption of the FY 2021-2024 the TIP in April 2021 and added that a the TCC unanimously recommended the document for approval during their meeting held earlier that day.

She then opened the floor for questions/comments.

Mr. Gilligan added that while reviewing the transit chapter of the draft document he noticed that some of the upcoming tasks listed for the City of Brunswick has already been completed.

Ms. Forbes replied stating that would review and update accordingly prior to presentation to the Policy Committee for adoption.

There were no additional questions/comments on this agenda item.

Mr. Gilligan then called for a motion to recommend approval of the final draft FY 2021-2024 TIP document to the Policy Committee. A motion was made by Mr. Ellis to recommend to the BATS Policy

Committee adoption of the BATS FY 2021 -2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This motion was seconded by Mr. Orrel. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Final Draft BATS FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Action Item

Ms. Forbes spoke on this agenda item. She highlighted the FY 2022 Schedule of Activities and outlined the previous efforts in the UPWP development process. She stated that the public comment period for the draft FY 2022 UPWP ended on January 13, 2021 during which staff only received comments from oversight agencies. She also added that all comments have been incorporated into the final draft.

Ms. Forbes outlined the next steps in the UPWP process including the BATS Policy Committee adopting the final draft in April 2021, and FHWA approving the adopted FY 2022 UPWP and issuing a certification letter.

She shared with the committee that the TCC unanimously recommended to the BATS PC adoption of the draft UPWP during their meeting held earlier that day. She then opened the floor for questions and comments.

There were no questions/comments on this agenda item.

Mr. Gilligan then called for a motion to recommend approval of the FY 2022 UPWP. A motion was made by Mr. Farley to recommend to the BATS Policy Committee adoption of the FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program. The motion was seconded Mr. Slade. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Public Participation Plan Update – Action Item

Ms. Forbes spoke on this agenda item. She stated that there was a chapter added on page 25 of the BATS Public Participation Plan to address public participation during emergencies, and guidance for returning to in-person meetings following emergencies. She then shared highlight from the added chapter with the committee and opened the floor for questions/comments.

There were no questions or comments on this agenda item.

She then told the committee that the TCC unanimously recommended to the BATS Policy Committee approval to release the Public Participation Plan Amendment for a 45-day public comment period.

Mr. Gilligan then called for a motion. Mr. Slade made a motion to recommend to the BATS Policy Committee approval to release the Public Participation Plan Amendment for a 45-day public comment period. This motion was seconded by Mr. Farley. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Bylaws Update – Action Item

Ms. Forbes presented on this agenda item. She reminded the committee that the CAC bylaws were updated to provide interim guidance for meetings, voting and participation during emergencies.

These guidelines help ensure that BATS carries out its responsibilities of the transportation planning process and maintain certification when in-person meetings are not possible.

She then opened the floor for questions and comments. There were no questions or comments on this agenda item.

Mr. Gilligan then called for a motion to recommend to the BATS Policy Committee adoption of the BATS Citizens Advisory Committee amended bylaws and that the PC Chairperson signs the amendment. A motion was made by Mrs. Ennis-Roughton. The motion was seconded by Mr. Slade. The motion passed unanimously.

7. BATS Administrative Updates

a. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Membership Drive – 2021 Update

Ms. Forbes provided the committee with the administrative updates. She reminded the committee of the ongoing CAC membership drive, and that all active members should resubmit a new application for those who wish to reapply this week. She highlighted the CAC membership drive timeline, which she stated should end at the beginning of FY 2022 with new CAC members appointed. She stated that four applications had been received thus far and are currently being reviewed.

b. Metropolitan/Micropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Standard

Ms. Forbes spoke on this agenda item. She stated that on January 19, 2021 the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) posted in the federal register a notice and request for comment on recommendations from the MSA Standards Review Committee. She added that these recommendations included changing the minimum urban area population to qualify as a metropolitan statistical area from 50,000 to 100,000.

She stated that this would directly affect the BATS MPO, and that BATS would be declassified as an MPO if this recommendation is approved. She added that BATS would lose all local MPO funding, and the state would dictate what transportation projects happen at the local level. She shared that along with BATS, the City of Brunswick, the Jekyll Island Authority, and other peer MPOs in Georgia are writing letters and providing comments to the OMB opposing this recommendation.

Mrs. Hatcher added that MPOs across the country have been providing comments to the OMB as well. She relayed a vignette about a few Texas MPOs that would lose funding as they are smaller MPOs near a larger MPO, which would gain federal planning dollars. She stated that in Georgia, six out of the 16 MPOs would be under the threshold and those planning funds would go back to the larger MPOs.

Ms. Ennis-Roughton stated that she would write a letter as well.

Mr. Gilligan asked if it was recommended to write senators and house representatives regarding this change.

Mrs. Hatcher responded that it was recommended to write those letters to those members in Congress as well as to the MSA Standards Review Committee.

8. Agency Updates

Ms. Forbes provided the committee with a brief overview of the agency updates provided during the TCC meeting.

a. Glynn County Airport Commission

She stated that the parking lot project is ongoing and anticipated completion by the end of March, and they will be conducting their tri-annual emergency exercise this month as well.

b. Update on School Board Projects

She told the committee that during the TCC Mr. Simmons shared that the new elementary school on Altama is making progress, and operations have not been severely impacted by the closure of the railroad crossings. She added that there were some issues reaching students who reside at the farthest ends of the County, and those issues have been handled on an individual basis as quickly as they can.

c. Glynn County

Ms. Forbes stated that there is a project sheet available for committee members to review. There were no conversations surrounding county projects at the TCC meeting, and if there were any questions or comments, she would relay those to Mr. Austin and provide the committee with his feedback.

d. Update on City Projects

She stated that the Magnolia Park Project is moving along well, and the city of Brunswick received statements of qualifications for the board walk trail from the Overlook to the St. Simons Causeway. A small landscaping improvements project at the intersection of Highway 17 and Fourth Ave. is anticipated for completion in a couple of weeks. The base bid portion of the CBDB sidewalk and are looking at adding on one more phase to that program to include the construction of sidewalks in low-income areas around the City. There were no updates provided on the Bay St. Corridor Improvement project.

Mrs. Hatcher stated that immediately following the TCC, the consultant on the Bay St. Corridor project emailed BATS staff soliciting feedback and input about stakeholder engagement and public engagement. She added that staff will submit the CAC as an option for engagement and will ask them to provide information regarding the project to the CAC.

Mr. Farley asked for more information regarding the St. Simons Causeway project receiving statements of qualifications. He also asked if this was the tourist causeway.

Mrs. Hatcher responded that the city submitted a request for qualifications to design the St. Simons Causeway project, and this was not the tourist causeway, but along SR 17 from the Overlook to the Causeway. The city is evaluating proposals that were submitted by various engineering and consulting firms to design that causeway so they can move forward for bid and construction.

Mr. Gilligan stated that there were several accidents along Highway 17, and is the city doing anything about that as of late.

Mrs. Hatcher stated that there has not been a lot of focused discussion lately but during the development of the long-range plan it was identified as an area with higher than state average of crashes occurring at that location. She added that there were suggestions to do a supplemental safety audit as part of the preliminary recommendations, and there has been continued dialogue regarding that.

e. Update on GDOT Projects

Ms. Forbes stated that the GDOT project sheet is available for review, and if there are any comments or feedback on any of the projects, committee members can send them to BATS staff and those will be sent over to the new GDOT District Five representative, Katie Proctor for questions and answers.

f. Jekyll Island Authority

Ms. Forbes shared that there are SPLOST funding projects that they anticipate the completion by the end of the week, including the Boat Ramp Rd and the parking lot projects. The airport has reopened and that they are still awaiting the arrival of their new lighting system that will be all LED lighting.

g. Transit Agencies

Mrs. Hatcher stated that there was a representative present from the Coastal Regional Commission who is currently undertaking a regional transit development plan. This was a major recommendation made in the statewide transit plan. The CRC was tasked with completing that document. She added that the new representative is not a voting member but attends the TCC meetings. BATS staff had a meeting earlier in the week with the CRC representative and provided them with the latest information on the fixed route urban transit service in the Brunswick area. She stated that staff will try to get more information to get the CAC involved in this process.

Mr. Gilligan stated that it would be beneficial for a future meeting to include updates from the City of Brunswick as well as from the Coastal Regional Commission.

Mrs. Hatcher stated that BATS staff will try to make that a part of the schedule.

Mr. Gilligan asked if this regional transit development plan includes neighboring states South Carolina and the northern part of Florida.

Mrs. Hatcher responded that the plans don't from what she has seen, but there was some discussion in the statewide plan about the theme of regionalism and how to involve FTA funding between states. She stated that BATS staff will post the statewide transit plan to the MPO website for reference.

h. Other Items

Mr. Gilligan stated that if there were items of interest to the CAC, they could work on inviting a group or speaker to speak before the committee. He added that this would help the CAC make more informed decision. He mentioned the transit side as something he would be interested in hearing from, as well as the railroads and the ports being other potential topics that could be brought before the committee.

Ms. Ennis-Roughton stated that she would like to have a better understanding of the status of the public transportation bus route, because it would service the low-income community in Brunswick. She added that her organization's clients think the CAC meets primarily to discuss public transit, and that is what they would like to hear about.

Mr. Gilligan stated that they could have that presented before the committee at the May 2021 CAC meeting.

Mrs. Hatcher stated that BATS will be submitting an application for special PL funding on behalf of the City of Brunswick, which would be studying the MLK/Altama corridor as a key bicycle corridor analysis. The consultant hired for this project would take the next step and look at the corridor and cross sections and the available right away to identify what the scenario of a bike trail along that corridor could look like. She stated that it is being submitted for consideration to the GAMPO Committee at their meeting on the last Monday in March. If approved, it would take around two months to get through contracting and then about an additional month and a half to get through the RFP process, with an anticipated let date in June 2021.

Mr. Gilligan asked if the next meeting will be in virtual or in-person.

Mrs. Hatcher stated that BATS staff will keep committee members posted if they are expected to meet in person, with at least a 10-day notice.

i. Public Comment

There were no public comments presented at this meeting.

2. Adjourn

Mr. Gilligan called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Farley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Ennis-Roughton seconded that motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Gilligan thanked everyone for their participation and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:30 PM.

BATS CAC Chairman

Date