
BATS MEETING MINUTES

**Brunswick Area Transportation Study
Special Called Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting**

Thursday, June 9, 2022 – 4:30 p.m.

Via Teleconference

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (James Gilligan)
2. Special PL Funding Project (MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor Study) – Action Item
3. BATS Administrative Updates
 - a. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program
 - b. Return to In-Person MPO Meetings
4. Adjourn

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ATTENDEES

Committee Members

James Gilligan
Jamaal Brown
Chris Cary
Melinda Ennis-Roughton
Ed Farley
Margie Harris
Dylan Lukitsch
Lance Sabbe

Others

Vishanya Forbes, Transportation Planner, RS&H
David Schmidt, Pond & Company
Matt Wilder, Pond & Company
Vinny Rendina, Pond & Company

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at approximately 4:30 p.m. by Mr. James Gilligan, Chair of the BATS Citizens Advisory Committee. He reminded the CAC that the focus of this special called meeting is to hear about the MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor Study. He explained that the consultant team will present their findings and then provide an opportunity for the CAC to ask questions.

2. Special PL Funding Project (MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor Study) – Action Item

Mr. Schmidt introduced himself and thanked everyone for inviting the consultant team to present their study. For this study, the consultant team studied the corridor along MLK Jr. Boulevard and Altama Avenue and came up with recommendations for a separated bike lane to encourage greater pedestrian and bicycle access. He noted that this is a master plan study, so it is conceptual and does not include detailed designs. He stated that the team has been working on this study for over four months and has collected a lot of great data for their report.

Mr. Schmidt explained that the consultant team has a typical design approach that they follow, but most importantly they aim to invite a safe and successful bicycle corridor into this area to serve the public, businesses, and schools. He mentioned that there are several trail projects near the study area, including a trail from Maine to Florida, and there may be opportunities to integrate the MLK-Altama corridor into these other trail systems.

Mr. Schmidt stated that the consultant team will provide the committee with printouts of their study, and he provided an overview of the study's table of contents. The planning portion involved an environmental study using GIS to analyze opportunities and strengths along the corridor. This analysis is compiled in a separate 98-page report. The study also includes general design considerations, intersection improvements, and an opinion of probable cost. He explained that this is a master plan level study, so additional design work may lead to a more accurate cost estimate.

Mr. Schmidt stated that the goal of a separated bike lane is to provide separation from the street so people on the corridor feel safe and comfortable and can travel directly from point A to point B using their bicycles. He explained that separated bike lanes promote connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, and schools. He highlighted that the northern boundary of the study area is the intersection of Chapel Crossing Road and Altama Avenue, and the southern boundary is the intersection of Prince Street and MLK Jr. Boulevard.

Mr. Schmidt explained that the recommendations the consultant team proposes are based upon the environmental and historical/cultural report they put together. This analysis used a 200-foot buffer around the entirety of the corridor and included a study of land use, water resources, and historical and cultural areas. He stated that there are four streams in the study area, but there are no wetlands or open waters. He mentioned that there are many historical areas that must be

considered with this proposal. He explained that the team did not find any adverse effects through this analysis and believes that this trail would offer many benefits.

Mr. Schmidt provided an overview of general design considerations for the corridor. He explained that the consultant team proposes a 10-foot, two-way bike path so it is comfortable and keeps traffic flowing. They did not do a full-scale traffic study, but they collected traffic counts and determined that peak hours will see approximately 150 pedestrians and bicyclists.

Mr. Schmidt discussed Option #1 for the corridor and stated that the report presents the options from north to south, with north on the left of the page so the graphics fit appropriately. This option proposes a trail along the west side of Altama Avenue. He explained that an area of concern with this option is near the northernmost part of the trail where there is limited space in the right-of-way. The consultant team sought to be cognizant of limiting the amount of right-of-way take so property would not have to be purchased to accommodate this trail. There are a few minor sections that must go outside the right-of-way, but he explained that the majority of the trail will not require this. One location that may require going outside the right-of-way is near the Altama Connector intersection due to a turn lane. The trail can be 8-feet wide instead of 10-feet wide in certain areas, but he explained that 8-feet is a minimum width, and the ideal trail is 10-feet wide.

Mr. Schmidt explained that the corridor includes a wide shoulder on the west side of Altama Avenue, which allows space for a separated bike lane. He highlighted that graphics in the report show where there will need to be signal modifications or additions. He explained that the shoulder in front of Altama Elementary School is often used for staging and this area therefore may require further consideration. He stated that an additional signal near the school will be required to make this area safe for children crossing the street. He explained that there is not a lot of room for trees in this area, but there are sections of the trail that have existing trees and will provide more shade.

Ms. Ennis-Roughton asked if the school that Mr. Schmidt referenced is Altama Elementary School and if there are other schools in the corridor. Mr. Schmidt replied that he was referencing Altama Elementary School and explained that the Coastal College of Georgia and Brunswick High School are also in the corridor. Students from all of these schools would likely be heavy users of this trail. He stated that Option #2 would have trails on both sides to serve each school.

Mr. Schmidt stated that the area near Altama Village Shopping Center is a higher traffic area that has existing crossings and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Because people are already using this area, it can continue to be utilized for the proposed trail and can be made safer with a separated bike lane. He explained that the consultant team observed many students running across the street near Brunswick High School, which can be dangerous and therefore presents an opportunity to add mid-block crossings in this area. Mid-block crossings could include a raised

table with rapid-flashing beacons to calm traffic and allow people to cross safely. He explained that there is a wide section of right-of-way in front of the Coastal College of Georgia that creates an opportunity for curves in the trail or plantings to provide additional separation from the street. He added that there are existing trees near 4th Street that will provide shade for the trail. One area of concern is the railroad crossing which will require additional signage and signals to promote safety.

Ms. Harris asked about the specific location of the railroad crossing. Mr. Schmidt explained that this is located south of the intersection of Parkwood Drive/1st Street and Altama Avenue. Mr. Sabbe added that the railroad crossing is across from The Brunswick News office.

Mr. Schmidt explained that the trail would cross and move into the median near the bend from Altama Avenue to MLK Jr. Boulevard. He stated that the median is a great amenity because it functions like a linear park and the consultant team has observed people already utilizing this area for recreation. He explained that the right-of-way is narrow in this area and many residential properties utilize it for parking. As a result, the team does not want to propose the trail in the right-of-way in this portion of the corridor. The trail would utilize diagonal crossings with flashing beacons at intersections. He mentioned that the trail can curve through the median, but specific designs are forthcoming and will be based on the survey and overhead utility locations. He explained that the trail would ideally tie into the recently completed trail that extends beyond the study area south of Prince Street. He stated that the report includes a key with examples of bike-oriented signal modifications for crossings, which could include stopbars, flashing lights on the street, or signage.

Mr. Schmidt presented Option #2 for the corridor, which proposes the addition of a trail along both the west and east side of Altama Avenue. He stated that there would be a mid-block crossing in front of Altama Elementary School, where this consultant team observed many children crossing the street where there is currently no crossing. He highlighted the area farther south near Glynn Isle and Altama Village Shopping Center which has many vehicle turning movements. These conditions can make pedestrians and bicyclists feel more exposed and therefore some of these spaces may require a right-of-way take to provide enough space for a buffer. He explained that Option #2 utilizes the same concept as Option #1 once Altama Avenue turns into MLK Jr. Boulevard, where the trail moves into the median.

Ms. Harris asked Mr. Schmidt about the status of the study and when it would be finalized. Mr. Schmidt explained that the consultant team has done a preliminary master plan study using data to analyze whether a separated bicycle lane would be possible along this corridor. The next step would require a survey and would involve more detailed design recommendations. He emphasized that this is a work in progress and explained that it is conceptual and intended to incorporate feedback from the public and BATS.

Ms. Harris asked about the starting and ending point for the corridor. Mr. Schmidt explained that the corridor begins at Chapel Crossing Road near the Kia of Brunswick and travels south to Prince Street near the water tower. Ms. Harris asked if Mr. Schmidt saw this trail extending beyond the study area limits and Mr. Schmidt responded that the consultant team would love to see similar improvements throughout the city, but they have only been hired to study this specific corridor. Ms. Forbes added that this project was part of a GAMPO application, which provides funding only for planning, whereas design and implementation were not part of this process.

Mr. Schmidt showed renderings of separated bike lanes and discussed the differences between them. The first two renderings show sidewalk level trails, which utilizes a curb or planted buffers to separate the bike lane from vehicle lanes. Near the Coastal College of Georgia, there is enough space for both a bike lane and sidewalk for pedestrians. Throughout the rest of the corridor, the trail will be utilized by both pedestrians and bicyclists due to width limitations with the right-of-way. Mr. Schmidt explained that green paint is commonly used in bike lanes, and it helps to signify that the trail is meant for bicycle-only travel. He explained that the consultant team finds the most favorable condition to be a street level separated bike lane with striping and bollards. He stated that this would involve a simple vehicle lane reduction to two 10-foot lanes, and it would be the least expensive option because it would not require changing the existing curb. He explained that the raised bike lane option is the least favorable condition because it removes the feeling of safety for users. He stated that this trail type would ideally be 10-feet, but it could be a minimum of 8-feet to provide space for a planted buffer.

Mr. Schmidt discussed intersections and highlighted the G Street and MLK Jr. Boulevard intersection because there is a lot of traffic in this area. He explained that the trail could include a diagonal lane crossing with flashing bike signals at this intersection to promote bicyclists and pedestrians first and vehicles second. He stated that the report includes more information on options for signals.

Ms. Ennis-Roughton asked about the location of the G Street intersection and mentioned that there is some concern with schoolchildren crossing the street. She asked if there would be a way for these children to cross the street safely. Mr. Schmidt explained that the proposed crossing would be a safe option for children because signals would flash to warn drivers.

Ms. Harris explained that there must be efforts to educate the public about the proposed trail. She stated that many people park near the intersection of G Street and MLK Jr. Boulevard and explained that they will need to promote education to reduce potential conflicts in this area. Mr. Schmidt agreed and stated that the consultant team is a proponent of public involvement.

Mr. Schmidt explained that the consultant team is still looking into pricing but has found that it will cost approximately \$1.5 million per mile for this trail corridor to be constructed and implemented.

Mr. Schmidt opened the discussion up for further questions. Mr. Gilligan thanked Mr. Schmidt and the consultant team for putting this study together and for giving the CAC an opportunity to provide comments. He asked if Mr. Schmidt's team has looked at the implications of the proposed Brunswick transit system and the integration of public transit stops. He explained that it would be helpful to understand more about how bus stops and the trail may integrate, and he called out the section of the corridor between the Coastal College of Georgia and the Scranton Connector as an area where this integration will be important. He explained that it would be very helpful to include this consideration in the final report. Mr. Schmidt agreed that opportunities for bus stops will still need to be included in the plan. He explained that the report draft presented today primarily focuses on interest and appropriateness for the separated bike lane in this corridor. Mr. Gilligan stated that renderings of transit stop and trail integration near the Coastal College of Georgia, Glynn Isle at Golden Isle Parkway, and Altama Elementary School would be beneficial to include in the report because seeing these renderings would help the broader discussion when these different plans come to fruition. Mr. Schmidt agreed and stated that this could be included in the final study.

Mr. Sabbe asked if Mr. Schmidt expects traffic flow to be different as the school system transitions from the old Altama Elementary School to the new location. Mr. Schmidt stated that his main concern is the use of the shoulder for staging. He explained that he is unsure if this is being promoted by the school or if people are choosing to park there on their own. He stated that retraining could take place to encourage people to park only in the existing facilities on the school property.

Mr. Sabbe stated that he had a discussion with Georgia Power and explained that they are planning to remove most of the trees in the median at the south end of MLK Jr. Boulevard. Mr. Schmidt asked if this is because trees are getting too tall and interfering with the lines and Mr. Sabbe confirmed that this is the issue. Mr. Schmidt mentioned the possibility of planting shorter trees that would not interfere with overhead utilities.

Mr. Cary explained that many parents of Altama Elementary School students park in the shoulder because they arrive early. He explained that it may be 1:30 p.m., an hour before school ends, and twenty cars are already in line for pickup. Mr. Schmidt asked why staging does not occur on the school property and Mr. Cary explained that they stage in the school parking lot first and then the overflow traffic wraps out onto the shoulder of Altama Avenue. Mr. Gilligan stated that there is a traffic control officer at the old Altama Elementary School location, so this will need to be an additional consideration for bicyclists on the trail.

Ms. Harris asked if there was something the CAC would need to vote on. Ms. Forbes presented the suggested motion and Mr. Gilligan called for a motion for the CAC to recommend that the BATS PC endorse the final draft of the MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor Study after incorporating any

final changes. Mr. Farley made a motion and Ms. Harris seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Schmidt thanked the CAC for their input and told them that the consultant team is open to any further questions or feedback.

3. BATS Administrative Updates

a. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program

Ms. Forbes provided an update on the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program. She reminded TCC members that BATS Staff discussed this grant program at the last CAC meeting in May. She explained that Glynn County is interested in submitting an application so they can draw down funding for the implementation grant. However, she explained that eligibility for the implementation grant hinges on having an Action Plan in place. She stated that because BATS does not have a Safety Action Plan, they will need to adopt one before they can apply for the implementation grant. This application can be a joint effort between the city, county, and MPO. BATS Staff found out since the last CAC meeting that the minimum grant award amount is \$200,000 which would require a 20%, or \$40,000, local match. Ms. Forbes stated that there are two options for next steps: BATS can put an application together for the Action Plan grant but will need to put forward \$40,000 for the match or BATS can put a GAMPO application together which would be less than \$200,000 but would reduce the local match. She added that both applications would need to go through two rounds of MPO meetings before the September 2022 deadlines. She presented a suggested timeline for the SS4A Action Plan grant application and asked the CAC if this would be something that they recommend moving forward to the TCC and PC. Mr. Gilligan stated that the CAC recommends moving this forward to an official vote at the next meeting in July.

b. Return to In-Person MPO Meetings

Ms. Forbes reminded CAC members that the regularly scheduled MPO meetings will change to a hybrid format in July 2022. Local participants may attend in person at the Pate Building and participants who wish to attend virtually will also have that option.

4. Adjourn

Ms. Forbes reminded the CAC of the upcoming meeting scheduled on Monday, July 11, 2022. Mr. Gilligan explained that this is Mr. Farley's last official meeting with the CAC and thanked him for his time on the committee and for his support over the last few years. Mr. Farley thanked the consultant team and the CAC for their terrific work and stated that it has been a pleasure and honor to be associated with this group. Mr. Gilligan called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Ennis-Roughton made a motion and Mr. Sabbe seconded. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 p.m.

BATS CAC Chair

Date