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## **BATS MEETING MINUTES**

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

Monday, July 11, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.

**Hybrid Format (In-person/Via Teleconference)**

#### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (James Gilligan)
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Action Item
  - a. Minutes from CAC meeting held on May 9, 2022.
  - b. Minutes from special called CAC meeting held on June 9, 2022.
3. Election of Committee Officers - Action Item
4. BATS FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Information
5. Transit System Update – City of Brunswick – Information
6. Proposed Letter of Support for Transit System Endorsement – Information
7. BATS Administrative Updates
  - a. Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program
  - b. GAMPO Special PL Funding Applications
  - c. 5303 Transit Planning Grant Application
  - d. Special PL Funding Project (Sea Island Road at Dunbar Creek Bridge Corridor Study)
  - e. CAC Membership Drive - 2022
8. Agency Updates
  - a. Glynn County Airport Commission
  - b. Glynn County School Board
  - c. Glynn County
  - d. City of Brunswick
  - e. GDOT District 5
  - f. Jekyll Island Authority
  - g. Transit Agencies
  - h. Other Items
  - i. Public Comment
9. Adjourn

**Brunswick Area Transportation Study**  
**Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

Monday, July 11, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.  
Via Teleconference

**ATTENDEES**

Committee Members

Darren West  
James Gilligan  
Melinda Ennis-Roughton  
Myrna Scott-Amos  
Neil Ligon  
Roxane George

Others

Chris Cary, Glynn County  
John Hunter, City of Brunswick  
Justin Dammons, Transportation Planner, RS&H  
Rachel Hatcher, Senior Planner, RS&H

## **1. Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 4:00 pm by Mr. James Gilligan, Chair of the BATS Citizens Advisory Committee.

## **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Action Item**

### **a. Minutes from CAC meeting held on May 9, 2022**

### **b. Minutes from Special Called CAC meeting held on June 9, 2022**

Mr. Gilligan called for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 9, 2022 meeting and special called meeting held on June 9, 2022. Ms. George made a motion and Mr. Sabbe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **3. Election of Committee Officers – Action Item**

Ms. Hatcher presented this agenda item. She gave a brief refresher on committee bylaws regarding the chairman and vice-chairman positions on the CAC. She stated that there is a vacancy for the Vice-Chairman position and added that the floor is open for nominations.

Mr. Gilligan asked if there was a vote on the chairman and vice-chairman position. Ms. Hatcher responded that the committee was only taking action on filling the vacant Vice-Chairman position.

Mr. Gilligan asked for any nominations for the vice-chairman position of the CAC. Mr. Sabbe nominated himself for the vice-chairman position.

Mr. Gilligan took a vote on the nomination for vice-chairman. The committee voted unanimously to approve Mr. Sabbe as the Vice-Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee.

## **4. BATS FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Information**

Ms. Hatcher presented this agenda item. She recapped the previous updates and accomplishments from the 2022 fiscal year UPWP. Some highlights include the completion of the MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor, successful GAMPO application for the Sea Island Road at Dunbar Creek Bridge Corridor Study, and the revamp of the CAC membership drive. She added that the BATS CAC is very informed and participates in the transportation planning process and is a model for other MPOs throughout the state, according to GDOT and FHWA.

Ms. Hatcher explained the planning priorities for the 2023 fiscal year UPWP, including monitoring the release of the 2020 U.S. Census count, the MPO self-certification review, and prioritizing equity in the transportation planning process. Additional priorities include preparation for the upcoming BATS 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan update, and monitoring and completing all special PL funding projects awarded in the previous fiscal year.

She stated that the development of the draft FY 2024 UPWP begins in July and highlighted important tasks on the schedule of activities. She added that BATS follows the federal 3C process, which is continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive. She reminded committee members to provide feedback about planning priorities for FY 2024, and that BATS staff will circulate a form for committee members to provide input to be incorporated into the draft FY 2024 UPWP.

Mr. Gilligan asked for committee members to keep in mind different aspects of the region regarding the possible integration of St. Simons Island into the Brunswick urbanized area when providing input for the upcoming FY 2024 UPWP. He asked for clarification regarding the feedback forms and when they will need to be submitted.

Ms. Hatcher explained the structure of the feedback form, and what feedback BATS staff is looking for when committee members complete the form. She added that the form will be sent out after the meeting and should be submitted prior to the next committee meeting.

## **5. Transit System Update – Information**

Mr. Hunter presented this agenda item. He provided a summary of what actions have been taken regarding the development of a transit system in Brunswick. He reviewed the recommended transit proposal, which includes:

- On-call Microtransit for the City of Brunswick and adjacent county neighborhoods
- St. Simons Flex Route
- Expanded county-wide demand response service
- Local share (LOST negotiations with Glynn County, St. Simons employers)
- Operations partnership (Coastal Regional Commission, City of Brunswick)

Mr. Hunter added that the proposal is for \$1.5 million-dollar annual operating budget. He explained how Microtransit and the St. Simons Flex Route would operate, and what would happen if the urbanized area boundary were to expand, and the difference between 5311 (rural) and 5307 (urban) transit services. He stated that the estimated annual budget went from \$2 million to \$2.3 million in total operating costs. Funding sources and the capital budget were reviewed as well.

Mr. Hunter stated that receiving a letter of support from the Citizens Advisory Committee would be helpful during the development of the transit system in Brunswick. He added that the decision for the proposed transit system to have its local match solely funded by the City of Brunswick and not Glynn County should be revisited, due to the changing demographics and employment opportunities of the region.

Mr. Gilligan fielded questions from the chat, provided by virtual participants. These included:

- Why did the City decide to charge fares? Mr. Hunter responded that it was not set in stone at this point, but it was a part of the modeling and there are opportunities out there to offset that with other funding sources.
- Are the vehicles going to be fully accessible to people with disabilities? Mr. Hunter responded yes.
- Do we take action today to propose a motion to send a request to the Policy Committee? Ms. Hatcher responded that it is recommended to draft a template letter and acknowledging that it is a draft letter, and that it needs to go through the TCC before it gets sent to the Policy Committee. Ms. George recommended that a small group of CAC members draft the letter with the help of BATS staff to send to the TCC and PC.
- What will the bus stop signage look like? Mr. Hunter stated that they do not know exactly yet, and there is money set aside for branding and public input.
- When do they envision vehicles being put into service? Mr. Hunter responded that the lead times on a lot of transit equipment is long, and that the Microtransit vans may be operational in a short period of time. He added that supply shortages also complicate the timeline for implementation of service.

Mr. Sabbe asked if the vehicles were going to have bike racks on them. Mr. Hunter stated that the buses for the St. Simons route will have bike racks, but the vans for Microtransit can as well, but it is under consideration.

## **6. Proposed Letter of Support for Transit System Endorsement – Information**

Mr. Sabbe asked who receives the signed letter of support from the CAC. Mr. Gilligan explained that it was an agenda item from the previous CAC meeting where the City of Brunswick requested for the BATS CAC to consider sending a letter of support to the County seeking LOST funding to advance the transit plan implementation. Ms. Hatcher explained the process of the proposed letter of support.

The committee members engaged in further discussion regarding the process and structure of the BATS committees.

Mr. Gilligan stated that committee members that represent different organizations should draft their own letters of support as well. Ms. Hatcher explained what the CAC can support and what the capabilities of the MPO are.

Mr. Gilligan asked for a motion to endorse the recommendations and to propose a draft letter to the Policy Committee. A motion was made by Mr. Ligon. Ms. Ennis-Roughton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **7. BATS Administrative Updates**

### **a. Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program**

Ms. Hatcher provided the committee with administrative updates. She explained the new Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program for planning grants and capital construction grants. It is a program through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, that is funded with \$1 billion over the next five years. She added that it is the first-ever program to help reconnect communities that were previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure. She detailed the eligible facilities that would be supported by this pilot program, and eligible planning activities. She added that the grant program application is due October 13, 2022, and grant applications must be submitted through the Federal grants website, grants.gov. She mentioned improving the connection between downtown Brunswick and the waterfront would be applicable for this grant program.

There were no questions or comments on this agenda item.

**b. GAMPO Special PL Funding Application**

Ms. Hatcher provided an update the GAMPO Special PL Funding Application. She stated that the next rounds of funding applications are due in September 2022 and March 2023. She explained the funding capabilities and its limitations, and that proposed projects must have a 20% local match, with no minimum or maximum award size. Applications must go through two rounds of MPO meetings before being presented at the next GAMPO meeting. She added that BATS has missed that timeline for the September 2022 meeting but would be eligible and ready for the March 2023 meeting if the process was started now.

Ms. Hatcher stated that the projects must also be reflected in the BATS UPWP, and that proposed projects must support the BATS MTP. She reviewed the timeline for developing and proposing a GAMPO Special PL funding application with the committee.

Mr. Gilligan asked if looking at the US 17 corridor regarding the recent Georgia Ports announcement would qualify as a potential project.

Ms. Hatcher stated that it may, but that BATS does not have a Freight Plan which would be eligible for a GAMPO Special Funding application, which is something that oversight agencies are recommending MPOs create and that BATS' peer MPOs already have.

Mr. Gilligan asked how potential freight studies would get pulled into a grant application. Ms. Hatcher explained the process for developing a Freight Study and how specific areas of interest would be integrated into an overall plan.

**c. 5303 Transit Planning Grant Application (FY 2024)**

Ms. Hatcher gave a brief refresher on the 5303 transit planning grant application process. She stated that BATS receives annual formula funding that comes from both PL and 5303 funds, and the 5303 funding is programmed for two fiscal years. BATS staff will develop a FY 2024 5303 application once the period opens. She explained the types of projects and studies that could be developed with 5303 funds. She mentioned the timeline for a typical application and highlighted the FY 2024 estimated budget table.

Mr. Gilligan asked if these funds could be used for an additional transit system planning study.

Ms. Hatcher responded that it could be, if the MPO were to communicate with the City of Brunswick and find an available local sponsor to meet the local match.

A question in the chat asked, “can any of these studies be used for equity priority and insufficient workforce in the region.”

Ms. Hatcher responded that equity is a part of any study completed with these funds. She added that it is a fundamental building block and goal and objective of FHWA and FTA, and focus on how is equity being prioritized in the development of the proposed study/project.

**d. Special PL Funding Project (Sea Island Road at Dunbar Creek Bridge Corridor Study)**

Ms. Hatcher stated that the RFP has been released for this project. She added that once a selection has been made and the project is underway BATS staff will update the committee. She reminded the committee that there is an active design project for the bridge replacement at Dunbar Creek, but feedback from multiple representatives from different agencies concluded that there needed to be additional feedback regarding the long-term condition of the roadway before beginning work on the bridge replacement.

**e. CAC Membership Drive – 2022**

Ms. Hatcher reminded the committee that the CAC membership drive is ongoing, and there are a total number of nine vacant seats on the committee. Applications are available on the MPOs website for download.

**8. Agency Updates**

**a. Glynn County Airport Commission**

There are no updates presented at the TCC meeting held earlier.

**b. Glynn County School Board**

There were no school board updates presented at the TCC meeting.

**c. Glynn County**

The Glynn County project sheet was provided to committee members, and there were no highlights provided to the committee.

**d. City of Brunswick**

There were several updates to the City of Brunswick projects.

- The Magnolia Park project is ongoing, and the paving is anticipated to be completed this week. The Habersham section is remaining.
- There is another resurfacing project that is expected to kick off later this month.
- There is a public information open house for the Boardwalk on US 17 project overlooking the Causeway on August 11 from 5-11 at Howard Coffin Park.

**e. GDOT District 5**

The GDOT District 5 office is waiting STIP amendments to be processed to change the funding on several projects.

**f. Jekyll Island Authority**

Jekyll Island Authority is still working on the design for the bike path on the causeway, and they may be able to start construction in 2025.

**g. Transit Agencies**

There were no updates from the Coastal Regional Commission provided to the TCC earlier in the day, and Mr. Hunter explained that they are currently waiting on LOST negotiations.

**h. Other Items**

There were no other items presented at this meeting.

**i. Public Comment**

No public comments were provided at this meeting.

**9. Adjourn**

Mr. Gilligan called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ligon made a motion and Ms. Ennis-Roughton seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Gilligan reminded the committee of the upcoming meeting scheduled on Monday, September 12, 2022, and thanked everyone for their participation. The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 p.m.



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BATS CAC Chair

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Date