

To:

BATS Policy Committee

CC:

William Fallon, County Manager, Glynn County

Regina M. McDuffie, City Manager, City of Brunswick

Dear BATS Policy Committee

In 2019, the Brunswick Area Transportation Study (BATS) assisted the City of Brunswick with the development of the *BATS 5303 Planning Technical Memo* which is an updated analysis of all existing transit plans conducted by Glynn County and the City of Brunswick to ensure the previous findings were still valid and that fixed route service was still justified for the planning area.

In recent years, the City of Brunswick has taken the initiative to lead the public transit planning and implementation process. Utilizing USDOT Federal Transit Administration Section 5307 funds, along with local matching funds, the City has developed a *Transit Service Plan* that reconfirms the need for a public transit system and details/guides how best to take the next steps in establishing a public transit system that connects the City of Brunswick with selected urbanized areas of Glynn County and St. Simons Island. The public transit system start-up now being proposed is a system using a mix of on-demand micro transit service and adds a new flex bus route operating between Brunswick and St. Simons Island to address the mobility needs of both residents and the workforce in our community.

The BATS Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), who represent a cross section of both Brunswick and Glynn County residents, are advocating for improvements in our multimodal transportation network. The BATS CAC have been an active part of the transit planning process with the City and strongly supports the conclusions and recommendations of the BATS 5303 Planning Technical Memo and the Transit Service Plan. We are now strongly encouraging the MPO to demonstrate support to the City of Brunswick and Glynn County leadership by facilitating discussions regarding partnership opportunities and submitting a letter of support for the joint development and operation of transit service within the MPO planning region. The BATS CAC firmly believes public transit service plays a vital role in supporting both the City's and County's collective vision for sustainable growth and economic prosperity. A jointly sponsored and locally operated public transit system is critical to enhancing our citizen's ability to access goods, medical services and educational opportunities along with attracting and retaining a viable workforce to support our local employers' job needs. As we look to the future, locally operated public transit will also be a key component in supporting major local and regional developments such as the Buc-ee's Super Rest Stop recently announced for northern Glynn County and the mega Hyundai Motor Company manufacturing plant west of Savannah, as well as other economic development projects announced and planned for Brunswick and Glynn County. Without workers and public transit to meet their mobility needs, these initiatives may elect to move to other parts of Georgia, or to nearby states such as Florida or South Carolina where workers can avail themselves of a viable community based public transit service to access

these new jobs. Public transit can support a growing workforce and attract new business development for the region.

We encourage City and County leaders to form a new partnership along with the region's business community to advance and advocate for this new mobility initiative now as time is of the essence. With recent announcements from both the US Federal government and the State of Georgia regarding new funding opportunities for new startup transit systems, we, the City and the County need to put ourselves at the forefront to show we are ready to move public transit forward and tap in to these new funding streams to get our transit system up and running.

Finally, the BATS CAC also believes there is more study and planning work yet to be done to advance beyond the initial recommended public transit system. We encourage the City of Brunswick and Glynn County planning staff, along with support of the BATS organization, to advance plans for a third study phase that will look deeper into the public transit needs and how best to serve all residents and businesses in the remaining portions of Glynn County, including St. Simons Islands, Sea Island, Jekyll Island and for the in-land portions of Glynn County not included in the recent study effort. We also believe there is a need to coordinate and partner with our neighboring counties of Brantley, Camden, McIntosh and Wayne to identify how an inter-regional public transit network of services can greatly benefit our entire region of southeast Georgia.

Thank you for your leadership and support in advancing public transit for our community and we look forward to working with you and continuing our advocacy efforts from the ground level to move this critical project to fruition.

Sincerely,

Member of the BATS CAC

(list of BATS CAC members)