
BATS MEETING MINUTES

Brunswick Area Transportation Study Policy Committee (PC) Meeting

Monday, August 8, 2022 – 1:30 p.m.

Via Teleconference

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (Walter Rafolski)
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Action Item
 - a. Minutes from PC meeting held on June 13, 2022
3. BATS FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - Information
4. BATS Administrative Updates
 - a. Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program
 - b. BATS FY 2023 UPWP Administrative Modification
 - c. GAMPO Special PL Funding Applications
 - d. 5303 Transit Planning Grant Application
 - e. Special PL Funding Project (Sea Island Road at Dunbar Creek Bridge Corridor Study)
5. 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
6. Adjourn

Brunswick Area Transportation Study
Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 8, 2022 – 1:30 p.m.

Hybrid Format (In Person/Via Teleconference)
Harold Pate Building, 1725 Reynolds Street, Second Floor
Brunswick, GA 31520

ATTENDEES

Committee Members

Walter Rafolski, Glynn County Board of Commissioners
Julie Martin, City of Brunswick Board of Commissioners
Pamela Thompson, Glynn County Community Development
Robert Burr, Glynn County Airport Commission
James Gilligan, BATS CAC Chair
C. Jones Hooks, Jekyll Island Authority
Thomas Caiafa, GDOT Office of Planning (Proxy for Radney Simpson)
Regina McDuffie, City Manager, City of Brunswick

Others

Rachel Hatcher, Transportation Planner, RS&H
Vishanya Forbes, Transportation Planner, RS&H
Garrow Alberson, City of Brunswick
Katie Proctor, GDOT District 5
Terra Winslett, Glynn County Airport Commission
Joseph Longo, FHWA
Jeremiah Bergquist, City of Brunswick
Melissa Phillips, Pond & Co.

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at approximately 1:30 p.m. by Commissioner Walter Rafolski, new chairman of the BATS Policy Committee. Commissioner Rafolski gave a brief welcome and introduction.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Action Item

a. Minutes from TCC meeting held on June 13, 2022

Mr. Rafolski spoke on this agenda item. He called for a motion to approve the minutes from the PC meeting held on June 13, 2022. Mr. Burr requested for a correction to change “Skylight” to “Skylane” in the Glynn County Airport Commission agency update. The changes were noted by staff for incorporation into the final publication. Mr. Hooks made a motion to approve the minutes with this change incorporated, Ms. Martin second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. BATS FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Information

Ms. Hatcher spoke on this agenda item. She explained that when the UPWP process is initiated each year, BATS staff presents achievements from the previous 12-month cycle as well as highlights from the approved work program for the current fiscal year. This exercise helps the BATS committees understand areas of emphasis and ladders for opportunity. She noted that discretionary grants are of particular interest to BATS because they provide supplemental funding to study intersections, corridors, or sub-areas that will support the next Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) or provide additional clarity from the previous MTP.

Ms. Hatcher reminded PC members that FY 2022 for BATS began on July 1, 2021, and ended on June 30, 2022, and that there is a federal and state requirement to have an annual work program approved which has gone through a specific process, including public comment. She stated that BATS staff finalized last year’s fourth quarter package for reimbursement that included an annual report of accomplishments. She added that oversight agencies completed their review and concurrence, and the document will be made available to committee members so they can review the detailed description of BATS activities.

Ms. Hatcher presented FY 2022 highlights, which included the successful development and administration of two special PL projects. She explained that these special PL projects are discretionary, and MPOs throughout the state of Georgia meet twice a year to select projects that will support their MTP and MPO planning process. BATS completed the MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor Study and BATS was awarded the Sea Island Road at Dunbar Creek Bridge Corridor Study. She emphasized that being selected for both projects was a great accomplishment for BATS in FY 2022.

Ms. Hatcher stated that BATS successfully carried out an updated Citizens Advisory Committee membership drive to fill vacancies for seats, and as a result there was a super-majority in several of the most recent CAC meetings. She explained the activities that BATS staff has done to maintain the federal continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) planning process required for all MPOs. There is an upcoming certification audit, so it is important that TIP amendments are reflected in the MTP and made available online. She stated that BATS staff continues to update the MPO website before and after each committee meeting to ensure all planning documents and meeting materials are posted online for oversight agencies and planning partners. She added that adopting annual performance targets is a federal requirement that BATS has implemented now for several years and will continue to adopt them on schedule and ensure those performance measures are represented in all planning documents and made available online.

Ms. Hatcher stated that the FY 2023 UPWP was adopted in April 2022 and on July 1, 2022, BATS began operating under this UPWP. She explained that areas of emphasis for this fiscal year include carrying out the 3C planning process and monitoring the release of the 2020 U.S. Census Data. BATS intends to focus specifically on the new urban area boundaries because this is subject to change. Once this data is released, BATS will work with oversight agencies to conduct a smoothing process to work out potential inconsistencies in the drawing of the initial boundary. BATS will then update all associated planning documents to incorporate boundary changes. She explained that BATS staff will be preparing for the tri-annual self-certification review, which involves a review of all activities and procedures. She added that BATS staff does not anticipate any problems with this process and will likely show that the MPO has been exceeding minimum requirements.

Ms. Hatcher explained that BATS will prioritize equity in the transportation planning process. Once BATS staff has a better understanding of where protected populations are located based on the new urban area boundaries, an equity assessment will be conducted to see where investments are being made in relation to protected populations and where disproportionate impacts may be.

Ms. Martin asked if BATS anticipates much change in protected populations and if there are other demographic characteristics included in this category.

Ms. Hatcher responded that some characteristics of protected populations are zero-car households and people who are over 65 with disabilities but still employed. She explained that aging populations and populations with limited English proficiency also have more vulnerability in terms of access to transportation, and she expects to see shifts in the share of aging populations within the BATS planning area.

Ms. Hatcher stated that an area of emphasis for the upcoming fiscal year will be the BATS 2050 MTP. She reminded the committee that the MTP must be updated every five years and it takes

approximately 12-18 months to complete. She added that BATS will need to seek supplemental funding for the MTP planning process and staff will be looking at preparing the scope of work for the discretionary GAMPO funding application.

Ms. Hatcher stated that BATS will continue to monitor and complete all special PL funding projects that have already been awarded in previous fiscal years. She added that BATS staff will work to ensure that the St. Simons Island project continues to move forward. She explained that BATS will coordinate efforts with oversight agencies on Complete Streets plans, policies, and procedures and will work to ensure that all requirements are being met. She stated that BATS will continue to implement the policy and project recommendations of the 2045 MTP and FY 2021-2024 TIP. BATS will also continue to maintain the administrative process to ensure that all documents are fully referenced and made available online for the public, oversight agencies, and planning partners.

Ms. Hatcher presented the FY 2024 UPWP Schedule of Activities and noted that BATS staff began development of the FY 2024 UPWP on the first day of FY 2023. She explained that BATS works within a state and federal planning framework, but BATS staff can emphasize specific areas and use resources to advance certain policies, procedures, and plans. If something does not fall within the framework, BATS can apply for discretionary funding. She stated that BATS staff ask all committee members to provide their feedback about projects or studies to include in the UPWP on the input form. The purpose of this form is to ensure that BATS meets committee members' expectations and advances transportation goals in the process. The input form is included in the meeting materials packet and is available for download on the MPO website.

4. BATS Administrative Updates

a. Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program

Ms. Hatcher explained that planning grants and capital construction grants were recently released as part of the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program. This discretionary grant program was established through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and is funded with \$1 billion over the next five years. The intention of this program is to help reconnect communities that were previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure and it focuses on removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity.

Ms. Thompson and Ms. Martin agreed that the Bay Street Pedestrian Project may be a potential application for this grant.

Ms. Thompson asked if the City of Brunswick would be the entity applying for this grant.

Ms. Hatcher responded that there is a recommendation from oversight agencies for a consortium of governments to submit a joint application, which demonstrates that there is a high level of community consensus.

Mr. Burr asked about the type of projects that are eligible for this grant.

Ms. Hatcher stated that eligible facilities include roads, streets, parkways, and other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity. She noted there was also mention of pedestrian bridges and the elimination of at-grade rail crossings during training meetings for the grant opportunity.

Ms. Martin suggested organizing an offline conversation about requirements and potential applications and Mr. O'Quinn stated that Glynn County will join the City of Brunswick's efforts on this grant.

Ms. Hatcher presented a table of the overall funding available through the RCP at the national level for the next five years and she stated that eligible applications include states, units of local government, federally recognized tribal governments, MPOs, and nonprofit organizations. Grants are due on October 13, 2022, and award winners will be announced in early 2023. She noted that additional information on this grant program is on the MPO website and if anyone would like additional information, they are encouraged to contact BATS staff.

b. BATS FY 2023 UPWP Administrative Modification

Ms. Hatcher explained that BATS staff performed an administrative modification to the FY 2023 UPWP to incorporate funding awarded for the Sea Island Road at Dunbar Creek special PL funding project. This modification is included in the summary budget table.

c. GAMPO Special PL Funding Application

Ms. Hatcher stated that the next round of GAMPO special PL funding applications is due in September 2022, but BATS collectively decided not to apply during this cycle and will instead consider applying in the following cycle due in March 2023. Funding can only be awarded for planning activities and may not be used for preliminary engineering or design, ROW purchase, utility relocation, or construction. There is an 80% Federal and 20% Local match with no maximum or minimum award size.

Ms. Hatcher reminded committee members that special PL funding projects must be reflected in the UPWP, go through two cycles of MPO meetings before the application cycle closes, and support the goals and objectives of the MTP. She explained that the typical timeline is approximately six months for BATS to prepare an application.

Ms. Martin stated that there will potentially be large projects along the corridor of Highway 17 and Glynn Avenue as well as dedicated area for boardwalks along the marsh frontage as part of the overlay district. She suggested that there should be additional conversations about considering this area for a special PL funding project.

d. 5303 Transit Planning Grant Application (FY 2024)

Ms. Hatcher reminded committee members that BATS annual formula funding includes PL funds for highway planning and 5303 funds for multi-modal and transit planning. She explained that 5303 funding is programmed for two fiscal years, whereas PL funding is programmed for only one fiscal year. BATS staff has initiated the process of preparing the FY 2024 5303 application and activities include program support and administration, general development and comprehensive planning, long-range transportation planning, short-range transportation planning, the transportation improvement program, and other activities such as standalone studies. The application opens in September 2022 and closes in November 2022. The notice of intent to award will be sent in March 2023 and funds will be awarded to recipients in July 2023.

Ms. Hatcher stated that the estimated FY 2024 5303 planning funds are approved for \$56,351.25.

Ms. Thompson explained that Glynn County budgets for a cash match but is often able to match it with in-kind time from staff.

Ms. McDuffie asked if the urban area boundary changes from the 2020 Census will impact transit.

Ms. Hatcher responded that population density is one of the main factors considered, so the urban area boundary change will certainly impact the amount of transit funding.

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

Ms. Hatcher stated that the RFP was released for the Sea Island Road at Dunbar Creek Bridge Corridor Study.

Ms. Thompson added that there were three submittals, and the evaluation team has been looking into the applications and intends to have this seen by the Finance Committee in August 2022 and presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval in September 2022.

Ms. Hatcher stated that an announcement will be made to the committee once a selection is made and BATS staff will provide regular updates.

5. Agency Updates

a. Glynn County Airport Commission

Mr. Burr stated that there is a maintenance project underway on the airfield at Brunswick Golden Isles Airport and the runway will need to be closed while work is being done, but work is being done at night after the last flight leaves. At the St. Simons Island Airport, the Skylane project involves taking an old runway and turning it into a new taxi lane. The environmental determination has moved from state to federal review and this project is paired with the safety improvement project at the airport. He explained that this project will require additional local and grant funding and he emphasized that it is a very important project for the Glynn County Airport Commission.

b. Glynn County School Board

Ms. Forbes stated that there is no representative from the Glynn County School Board present.

c. Glynn County

Ms. Thompson stated that Glynn County included their project updates in the committee meeting materials. Committee members may reach out to her with questions.

d. City of Brunswick

Mr. Alberson provided updates on City of Brunswick projects.

- Work is underway on the Habersham Road section of the Magnolia Park project and Habersham Road is currently closed between Peachtree Street and Tara Lane for construction. Once complete, the section from Tara Lane to Coast Street will be closed. The closure has been advertised as 60 days, but the city intends to complete the section in a shorter period.
- There is a drop-in public information session for the Boardwalk Trail project on August 11, 2022, from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. and the consultant team and city staff will be present.
- The resurfacing of Gloucester Street is scheduled to begin in early September. The contract states that work will start on September 1, 2022, but the team plans to begin on September 6, 2022, following the Labor Day holiday. Work will be done from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

e. GDOT District 5

Ms. Proctor provided status updates on preconstruction projects for GDOT District 5.

- SR 25 Spur East @ Mackay River bridge replacement continues toward PFPR. The PCRF is in review and the PFPR is anticipated in October 2022.
- The widening of SR 25 CR 415 from Harry Driggers to SR 99 (Phase II) is awaiting the STIP amendment to set the construction authorization and let date.

- The CR 583/ Sea Island Road @ Dunbar Creek on St. Simons Island bridge replacement continues in concept development and approval is anticipated in November 2022.
- SR 32 @ Little Buffalo Creek bridge replacement is on schedule for a concept team meeting in August 2022.
- The roundabout on SR 25 @ SR 99 is on schedule for let-to-construction in August 2022.
- Environmental review is ongoing for the SR 25 @ Darien River bridge replacement and the approved concept report is being revised. The pre-let schedule is under development.

Ms. Proctor provided status updates on active projects for GDOT District 5.

- Signs and flagging for construction will begin in the next few weeks for the resurfacing of Gloucester from SR 27 to SR 25. Modifications for striping may begin as early as August 29, 2022, and paving is anticipated to begin on September 6, 2022.
- All other projects are moving forward as presented at the meeting on June 13, 2022.

f. Jekyll Island Authority

Mr. Hooks explained that the Jekyll Island Authority is working with GDOT's aviation division to plan a new terminal at the airport on Jekyll Island that will be ADA compliant. He stated that the RFP will likely be released in October 2022.

g. Transit Agencies

Ms. Hatcher explained that BATS staff has been working with the BATS Citizens Advisory Committee to support the city's efforts on transit and to create a platform for additional discussion on implementation strategies. The CAC requests that the PC provides a letter of support for a transit system in the planning area, and the committee asks for the letter to be included the agenda for approval in the next PC meeting on October 3, 2022.

Mr. Gilligan explained that the CAC is interested in advancing smart transportation in the community and supporting growth and development of the transit network. He stated that many members of the CAC joined the committee due to their observations of the lack of public transportation across the city and county. He explained that the CAC has been working with the City of Brunswick to examine their proposed public transit system and there have been several presentations over the past few years on this topic. In July 2022, there was a detailed presentation on the proposed initial public transit system. After this meeting, the CAC decided that it is imperative to advance discussions about the development of a more extensive transit system, especially due to the high price of gas, lack of jobs, challenges businesses have faced getting employees to work. He suggested that the leaders of City of Brunswick and Glynn County work together on this initial system and then eventually expand it into a larger system that reaches the remaining parts of the county. He stated that the CAC has been working with BATS

staff to craft a letter of support and the CAC asks the PC to bring it to their next meeting for approval.

Ms. McDuffie stated that City of Brunswick is very supportive of transportation planning and has been diligently working to provide a range of transportation options. She stated that the city feels that smart transportation is very important, and citizens and businesses will all benefit if both the city and Glynn County collaborate on this effort.

Mr. Rafolski made a motion for the Policy Committee to add an agenda action item to review and consider a letter of support for transit and a partnership between the City and County at their next PC meeting on October 3, 2022. The motion passed unanimously.

h. Other Items

No updates on other items were presented or discussed at this meeting.

i. Public Comment

No public comments were provided at this meeting.

6. Adjourn

Mr. Rafolski reminded everyone of the upcoming meeting scheduled on October 3, 2022, and called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Caiafa made a motion and Ms. Martin seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 pm.

BATS PC Chair

Date