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## **BATS MEETING MINUTES**

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### **Brunswick Area Transportation Study Special Called Policy Committee (PC) Meeting**

Monday May 10, 2021 – 1:30 p.m.

Via Teleconference

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#### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (Cornell Harvey)
2. Special PL Funding Project (Bay Street Corridor Improvements) - Action Item
3. BATS Administrative Updates
  - a. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
  - b. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Membership Drive - 2021
4. Adjourn

***Next Policy Committee Meeting: Monday, June 14, 2021.***

**Brunswick Area Transportation Study**  
**Policy Committee Meeting Minutes**

Monday May 10, 2021 - 1:30 p.m.  
Via Teleconference

**ATTENDEES**

Committee Members

Mayor Cornell Harvey, BATS PC Chairman  
Pamela Thompson Glynn County Community Development  
Jones Hooks, Jekyll Island Authority  
Regina McDuffie, City Manager, City of Brunswick  
Julie Martin, City of Brunswick  
Robert Burr, Glynn County Airport Commission  
Jim Gilligan, BATS CAC Chairman  
Garrow Alberson, City of Brunswick  
Cassius Edwards, GDOT  
Ansley Grantham, GDOT Intermodal  
Melissa Phillips, Glynn County  
Radney Simpson, GDOT  
Walter Rafolski, Glynn County Board of Commissioners  
Ned Green, GDOT Planning

Others

Rachel Hatcher, Senior Planner, RS&H  
Vishanya Forbes, Transportation Planner, RS&H  
Ann-Marie Day, FHWA  
John Hunter, Planning & Zoning, City of Brunswick  
Tom Caiafa, GDOT Planning  
Jonathan Guy, Kimley Horn  
Chris Marsengill, Kimley Horn  
Erin Granados, Forward Brunswick

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 1:35 pm by Mayor Cornell Harvey, Chairman of the BATS Policy Committee. Mr. Harvey gave a brief welcome and explained the purpose of the meeting. He then turned the meeting over to BATS staff to carry out the roll call and proceed with the next agenda item.

## **2. Special PL Funding Project (Bay Street Corridor Improvements) - Action Item**

Mrs. Hatcher briefly spoke on this agenda item. She provided the committee with a refresher on this agenda item stating that there were previous meetings conducted by the consultant team regarding the Bay St. Corridor Improvements project. She then turned the meeting over to Mr. Guy to continue with updates on this agenda item.

Mr. Guy continued updates on this agenda item. He highlighted the four priorities of the study, which included:

- Develop a coordinated plan for the entire corridor
- Identify mobility issues along the corridor
- Develop solutions for identified area(s) along the study corridor that enhance mobility for all modes
- Develop an action plan that shows how public and private entities can work together to realize results

He shared with the committee efforts taken since the last discussion, including observations and needs determination, scenario generation & refinement, and scenario(s) evaluation. He briefly reviewed the project goals and objectives and explained each accordingly. He went on to highlight design considerations, including beautification, multimodal intersection design, freight vehicle design accommodation, enhance pedestrian accommodations, traffic operations, parking, safety enhancement, driver expectation, contextually appropriate, impacts to natural features, supportive of economic development, and railroad impacts. He added that the design considerations were used to create a design matrix that evaluates them to the objective criteria.

Mr. Guy continued his update describing each intersection and area where improvements were recommended in the study. He stated that operational improvements were explored for the intersection of Exist 36 at I-95. He shared the recommendations made for the corridor, which include consolidating driveways in the functional area of influence with pavement markings to the freeway, as well as that this intersection is being recommended for further consideration.

The next intersection examined was at US 341 at Blythe Island Highway. He reminded the committee that over 55% of the overall crashes that occur in the study corridor happened at this intersection. Operational improvements were reviewed for this intersection, which include minimizing or removing driveways in the intersection influence area. He added that this intersection is also being recommended for further consideration. He shared with the committee that in the previous CAC meeting held committee members asked for additional information regarding the intersection, and how would transit service affect this intersection. He went on to discuss how the recommendations

were made to improve safety in this intersection, considering the high number of pedestrians that walk along this portion of the corridor. He highlighted the design considerations and other factors to consider, as well as the recommendation for this intersection, which is to prioritize intersection improvements for future funding opportunities.

Ms. Martin asked about using service roads to the rear of the properties and if there was a way to better utilizing those service roads.

Mr. Guy replied stating that “service roads can be great, but they can also be highly expensive as well.” He stated that an important action that can be taken is promoting interconnectivity between land uses. He briefly highlighted areas along the corridor, that could be connected to neighboring parcels through simplifying driveways to access to parcels.

Mr. Guy continued his update with findings on the Newcastle Street at Bay Street intersection. He stated that they explored alternatives to improve operations and safety at this intersection. He stated that two scenarios were conceived for this intersection. The first scenario is to create a roundabout which would slow traffic coming into the downtown area from Newcastle St. The second scenario is to also create a roundabout that includes an additional leg between Newcastle & Bay St. on the west side of the intersection. He stated that there is a fatal flaw with the at-grade crossing at the railroad, and this scenario is not recommended for further consideration. He compared the two scenarios and stated that the first scenario is recommended to move forward for further consideration.

Mr. Harvey asked if the consultant team has met with the Georgia Port Authority. He explained that there are a lot of trucks that move through this intersection and would have to use that roundabout and he was unsure if they could easily access it.

Mr. Guy replied stating that roundabout would not pose an issue for the trucks and used the Port of Savannah’s roundabouts as an example. He highlighted the smoothness and design details of the roundabout that would help truck traffic moving through this intersection.

He then explained the findings and recommendations for the Newcastle St. at Fourth St. and Selden Park intersection. He stated that the consultant team explored means to improve pedestrian connectivity with Selden Park and the east side neighborhoods. He added that GDOT was already looking at options at this location. Four scenarios were developed, with scenario three being recommended for further consideration. The four scenarios had a pedestrian crossing placed at different points in the intersection, with the third scenario having a pedestrian crossing placed in the center of the intersection. He added that if warranted, a pedestrian hybrid beacon (PHB) can be added as well, which is proven to slow and stop traffic for pedestrian safety.

He then briefly highlighted other factors to be considered and design considerations with the proposed scenario three. He stated that recommendations and comments provided from the CAC included providing additional signage associated with the recommended changes.

Mr. Harvey asked if a traffic light was considered instead of a PHB.

Mr. Guy replied stating that it was, but that the traffic volume recorded is not enough to warrant a traffic signal at this intersection. He added that it did not meet the criteria to justify adding a traffic signal.

Mr. Harvey asked what the criteria were for adding a traffic signal at this location.

Mr. Guy answered explaining that the volume at the main corridor and the side streets were examined as well. Other warrants include railroad safety from crash standpoint and looking at the interconnected network. He reiterated that the volume isn't enough to warrant putting a traffic signal in.

Mr. Harvey asked if it was recommended for a crosswalk to get people across the highway.

Mr. Guy replied stating that it was. he further explained that this would accommodate pedestrians who are trying to cross SR 27. He stated that with prioritizing pedestrians, it is the safest way for pedestrians to cross without a traffic signal and that all traffic stops at this intersection with the pedestrian hybrid beacon.

Mr. Rafolski asked if the center turn lanes were being removed, based off the scenario drawings presented.

Mr. Guy responded that they were being removed, and there is no widening being done.

Mr. Rafolski stated that the speed of cars at this intersection is above the posted limit. He added that he is not sure that taking out the center lanes is going to slow traffic down.

Mr. Guy replied stating that with new intersections there needs to be a level of enforcement to change vehicular behavior.

Mr. Rafolski asked if GDOT will allow the speed limit to be lowered at this intersection.

Mr. Guy responded that it is something that can be reviewed in the design phase associated with this project. He added that speed is a concern looking at this intersection.

Mr. Guy continued update on this agenda item presenting the recommendations for Bay Street. He stated that the consultant team was charged to explore the means to improve pedestrian connectivity with Mary Ross Park and downtown and way to enhance the visual appeal of the Bay Street corridor. He then highlighted four scenarios and how scenario 1-2 were not recommended for further consideration. He explained scenario three, and how it includes plantings and enhancements for pedestrian railroad crossings. This scenario repurposes Gloucester St. to a single inbound and single outbound lane to provide additional parking with enhanced pedestrian crossings. Scenario 4 includes additional parking and enhancing the pedestrian experience and landscaping from waterfront to Bay Street, as well as enhancing the current railroad crossing for pedestrians. This scenario also includes a pedestrian hybrid beacon if warranted, and evaluation of the feasibility of removing the left-turn lane during the design phase. He then highlighted the design considerations and other factors to be considered at this intersection.

Ms. Martin asked about the roadway on Gloucester St. referenced in the photo presented.

Mr. Guy replied by highlighting the area of Gloucester Street explaining the design decisions made to improve the pedestrian access on Gloucester.

Ms. Martin asked if a conversation was had with the Georgia Port Authority regarding their continued use of that as ingress/egress for large trucks.

Mr. Marsengill stated that several conversations were held, and that the GPA did not indicate any changes to their operations. He added that they stated their facility on Gloucester was not utilized to its highest rate but did not indicate any changes to their access points or operations.

Ms. Martin stated that she liked scenario three with widened sidewalks to 10' that enables the use as a bike trail and with added greenage. She added that it softens the roadway and could potentially bring the speed of the traffic down, with drivers more mindful of pedestrian activities.

Mr. Guy stated that there are some design considerations that are important with enumerating it as a trail. He added that the sidewalks would have to be widened, with sufficient right of way, and working with GDOT to utilize the shoulder in a different manner.

Mr. Harvey stated that the City of Brunswick has partnered with GDOT to enhance Gloucester St. He asked if the consultant team is privy to the study regarding Gloucester St.

Mr. Guy replied stating that conversations were held with GDOT District 5, but he has not seen any of the final plans.

Mr. Harvey added that there are some things that GDOT is planning on doing to enhance that corridor, and he was concerned about the connectivity between the two study projects and corridors.

Mr. Guy replied stating that extra effort will be made to show the connectivity between the two projects in the final document and to avoid do anything that would contradict the work with either project.

Mr. Guy continued his update highlighting the final intersection examined as a part of the study, the US 17 at 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. He stated that the consultant team explored operational improvements at this intersection. He explained the long-term recommendation made, which includes adding a true roundabout to this intersection. He added that this will help with the increasing traffic volumes in this section of the corridor. He highlighted other factors to consider and design considerations.

He explained next steps, which include incorporating feedback from the BATS committees, with a draft document that will be presented in May, with a final presentation in June for BATS adoption.

Mrs. Hatcher explained that this item was an action item, with the TCC and CAC unanimously recommending approval of the Bay St. Corridor Improvement recommendations as presented. She stated that comments provided by the TCC and CAC were incorporated into the presentation.

Mr. Harvey called for a motion. Ms. Martin made a motion to recommend that the BATS Policy Committee approve the recommendations for the Bay St. Corridor Study as presented for incorporation into the draft report. Mr. Hooks seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **3. BATS Administrative Updates**

#### **a. Transportation Alternative Program (TAP)**

Mrs. Hatcher provided the committee with the administrative updates. She stated that GDOT issued a call for projects under the TAP program, with applications due on July 31, 2021. She explained the funding requirements for the call, which include a population requirement, a minimum funding amount requested among others. She reminded the committee of eligible projects for this TAP program, including Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities, Streetscape Improvements, and Safe Routes to School Programs. She briefly stated the ineligible uses for the TAP funds and are the authorized applicants for this program. She reminded the committee that the BATS MPO is not an authorized applicant, but the MPO is providing information to the respective agencies and local government officials. She stated that the TAP program does require a minimum local match of 20%, and projects are more competitive with a higher local match.

#### **b. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Membership Drive - 2021**

Mrs. Hatcher presented this agenda item. She reminded the committee that the CAC membership drive is ongoing and highlighted the timeline for this process. She stated that in June 2021, there will be a slate of CAC members for the Policy Committee to consider for appointment. In July 2021, the appointed CAC members will be provided training and orientation to prepare them for the next cycle of CAC meetings. She stated that Policy Committee members will receive at the next PC meeting information on the prospective CAC members for review.

There were no questions or comments.

### **4. Public Comment**

There were no public comments received at this meeting.

### **5. Adjourn**

Mr. Harvey reminded everyone of the next regularly Policy Committee on June 14, 2021. He thanked everyone for their participation and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:35 pm.

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BATS PC Chairman

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Date