
BATS MEETING MINUTES

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

Thursday May 6, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

Via Teleconference
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AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (James Gilligan)
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Action Item
 - a. Minutes from CAC meeting held on March 8, 2021.
 - b. Minutes from special called CAC meeting held on April 7, 2021.
3. Special PL Funding Project (Bay Street Corridor Improvements) - Action Item
4. BATS Administrative Updates
 - a. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
 - b. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Membership Drive - 2021
 - c. BATS FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
 - d. BATS FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
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

Next Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting: Monday, July 12, 2021

Brunswick Area Transportation Study
Special Called Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday May 6, 2021 - 4:00 p.m.

Via Teleconference

ATTENDEES

Committee Members

Jim Gilligan

Ed Farley

Ed Ellis

Melinda Ennis-Roughton

Ben Slade

Others

Vishanya Forbes, Transportation Planner, RS&H

Rachel Hatcher, Senior Planner, RS&H

Justin Dammons, Transportation Planner, RS&H

Jonathan Guy, Kimley Horn

Chris Marsengill, Kimley Horn

Erin Granados, Forward Brunswick

1. Welcome and Introductions.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 4:00 p.m. by Mr. Jim Gilligan, Chairman of the BATS Citizens Advisory Committee. Mr. Gilligan introduced himself and gave a brief welcome.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Action Item

a. Minutes from CAC meeting held on March 8, 2021

b. Minutes from Special Called CAC meeting held on April 7, 2021

Mr. Gilligan called for a motion to approve the minutes from the CAC meetings held on March 8, 2021, and April 7, 2021. Mr. Farley made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Gilligan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Special PL Funding Project (Bay Street Corridor Improvements) – Action Item

Mrs. Hatcher briefly explained the purpose of this agenda item, and what efforts the study has made over the past year.

Mr. Guy presented this agenda item. He reminded the committee of the overview of the Bay St. Corridor Study and emphasized the priorities of the study. The priorities of the corridor study are:

- 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

Mr. Guy reviewed efforts taken since the last discussion, including an observation and needs determination, scenario generation & refinement, and a scenario(s) evaluation. He highlighted important statistics from the corridor, including corridor length, the number of traffic signals, major intersections, and other figures. He stated the project goals and the supportive objectives. He then stated the design considerations were formulated after stakeholder outreach and feedback:

- Beautification
- Multimodal Intersection Design
- Freight Vehicle Design Accommodation
- Enhanced Pedestrian Accommodations
- Traffic Operations
- Parking
- Safety Enhancement
- Driver Expectation
- Contextually Appropriate
- Impacts to Natural Features
- Supportive of Economic Development
- Railroad Impacts

Mr. Guy explained the recommendations for each of the intersections and segments of the study corridor:

- Exit 36 at I-95: Consolidate driveways in the functional area of influence and add pavement markings with freeway labels to the roadway.
- US 341 at Blythe Island Highway: Minimize or remove driveways in the intersection influence area, with further consideration consisting of short term and long-term recommendations.
- Newcastle at Fourth St: Include updated crosswalks and a pedestrian hybrid beacon if warranted and is also recommended for further consideration.
- Newcastle Street at Bay St: Include roundabout to improve safety at intersection, with potential for right turn lane from Bay St. to Newcastle St. to be determined in design development. Also recommended for further consideration.
- US 17 at 4th Avenue: Include roundabout to enhance operational improvements and is recommended for further consideration.

The design considerations were used to determine if they satisfy the objective criteria. He explained the three components of the corridor study; corridor characteristics, transportation strategies, and implementation plan. Major stakeholders included a wide range of individuals, agencies and organizations from across the BATS MPO region. Some of those stakeholders comprised property owners, business owners, Glynn County Commissioners, City of Brunswick Council, GDOT, BATS, GPA, Downtown Development Authority, and residents and visitors. He stated that feedback received from stakeholders fit into three categories: function & safety, aesthetics & amenities, and business & economics.

Mr. Guy stated that freight and rail were important in the corridor, highlighting the rail terminals in the region, including Mayor's Point Terminal and East River Terminal and Lanier Docks. Safety was also mentioned as an important part of the study, with a total of 721 crashes in the corridor and 401 crashes at the Blythe Island intersection. He explained corridor capacities and levels of services, and how they influence the suggested recommendations.

Study observations and findings include:

- Four unique areas along the corridor
- Bay Street Corridor is a primary freight corridor
- Areas that experience peak hour congestion
- Speeding is a concern
- Overall crashes are low (except New Jesup & Blythe Island)
- The corridor has additional capacity
- There are enhancements that should be considered

Mr. Guy explained the project goals and their related objectives. He stated transportation strategies and discussed design considerations that were used to evaluate the objective criteria.

Recommendations at different intersections in the study corridor include:

- Exit 36 at I-95: Consolidating driveways in the functional area of influence and adding pavement markings with freeway labels to the roadway.

- US 341 at Blythe Island Highway: Minimizing or removing driveways in the intersection influence area, with further consideration consisting of short term and long-term recommendations.

Mr. Gilligan asked about the turn lanes at this intersection regarding the train crossing and drivers trying to get around an active train.

Mr. Guy stated it can be improved and incorporated into the final recommendations.

Mr. Gilligan asked if the right turn lane precludes a future transit bus stop, and how would a bus stop at this location.

Mr. Guy responded that it would have to be looked at during the design phase of the project.

- Newcastle Street at Bay St: Include roundabout to improve safety at intersection, with potential for right turn lane from Bay St. to Newcastle St. to be determined in design development. Also recommended for further consideration. Scenario 2 recommended an additional driveway/roadway on the west end of the roundabout. This scenario is not recommended for further consideration.
- Newcastle at Fourth St at Selden Park: Scenario 3 Include updated crosswalks and a pedestrian hybrid beacon if warranted and is also recommended for further consideration.

Mr. Farley pointed out the safety issues crossing the street at this intersection.

Mr. Guy stated that there were some incidents at this intersection.

Mr. Farley responded that increasing the safety at this intersection will possibly increase usage of the park.

Mr. Guy stated that having a pedestrian hybrid beacon will stop through traffic and help pedestrians cross the street into the park.

Mr. Gilligan stated that this was a 45mph speed zone and wanted to know if there was a recommendation to lower the speed limit.

Mr. Guy replied it was something that could be looked at, and speed limits are highly controlled and regulated. Design considerations to assist drivers in slowing down such as rumble strips, advance warning lights could be considered.

Mr. Farley stated that these solutions should be evaluated and looked at.

Mr. Gilligan added that this area is known for having drivers passing slow drivers and having a pedestrian crossing in a speed zone is a safety issue.

Mr. Guy stated that even though the PHB is not a traffic signal, it does force drivers to stop at the crossing to allow pedestrians to cross the road.

Mr. Gilligan asked if this scenario include flashing markers in the pavement.

Mr. Guy stated that it would be more of a traditional crossing signal with a red light to indicate stopped traffic and a pedestrian crossing.

Mr. Guy explained the scenario recommendations for the Bay St. enhancements. He stated that the pedestrian bridge over Bay St. was not recommended for further consideration. A two-lane Bay St. was also examined at and was not recommended for further consideration. Enhancements from Scenario 3 for this segment of the study corridor include:

- Repurpose existing shoulder for landscaping and plantings
- Evaluate feasibility of widening sidewalk to 10+ feet to accommodate bikes
- Enhance the current railroad crossing for pedestrians
- Enhance crosswalks crossing streets to high visibility crosswalks
- Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon if warranted
- Repurpose Gloucester St. to a single inbound and single outbound lane to provide additional parking and enhanced pedestrian crossings

Scenario 4 for this segment included an improved crosswalk at Gloucester St. He reminded the committee that improvements are not contingent on any changes on Gloucester St, and this scenario is recommended for further consideration.

Mr. Slade asked if there was a bike lane for this segment.

Mr. Guy stated that there is nothing specific for bicycles at this segment of the corridor. He pointed out how in Scenario 3 there was space to create a shared-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Mr. Gilligan stated that one of the Intracoastal River Cruises pulls into the dock at the Port of Brunswick at the end of Gloucester St, and that it wasn't an inviting entry into the city. He asked if there were additional design elements to enhance the welcoming aspect of that dock into the City of Brunswick.

Mr. Guy responded that these elements are secondary to what the study recommended, but that scenarios 3 and 4 begin to create that gateway linking the city to the waterfront at this location.

Discussion continued over bicyclists and design elements to entice bicyclists into coming downtown.

Mrs. Hatcher reminded the committee of the BATS MPO receiving funding for the MLK – Altama Bike Route Study and how that would benefit bicyclists along that corridor.

- US 17 at 4th Avenue: Include roundabout to enhance operational improvements and is recommended for further consideration.

Mr. Gilligan asked if putting a roundabout in a high-speed location goes against GDOT standards.

Mr. Guy responded that the volumes in the area does not go against GDOT standards, and the consultant team met with GDOT regarding this recommendation and there were no issues with the recommendation.

Mr. Gilligan stated that he does not understand how this would be accepted, putting a roundabout in a high-speed location.

Mr. Guy replied that if this is something the committee does not want to move forward, it can be documented that it was evaluated and received feedback regarding that recommendation.

Mrs. Hatcher stated that the city of Brunswick has looked at roundabouts further up this corridor on US 17 and has been looked at as an alternative to intersection improvements.

Ms. Ennis-Roughton asked about the cost of a roundabout.

Mrs. Hatcher stated that it could be costly to implement, but cost would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Guy stated that implementing a roundabout could be cost-effective, but it is a long-term recommendation.

He stated next steps for the study, including presenting the draft report in May, with a final presentation in June for BATS adoption.

Mr. Gilligan made a motion to recommend that the BATS Policy Committee endorse the final draft of the Bay Street Corridor Improvements Study as presented. Mr. Farley seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

4. BATS Administrative Updates

a. Transportation Alternative Program (TAP)

Ms. Forbes presented the administrative updates. She stated that GDOT recently issued a Call for Projects under the TAP program, with applications due July 31, 2021. She reviewed the funding requirements for this call for projects, as well as the types of eligible projects and ineligible projects. She added that the MPO was not an authorized applicant for this call for Projects.

b. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Membership Drive – 2021

Ms. Forbes reminded the committee of the CAC membership drive timeline. She stated that BATS staff received a total of 10 eligible applications with only one reapplication from existing committee members. She added that BATS staff can resend the application to existing committee members who may have missed the previous deadline.

c. BATS FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The BATS Policy Committee took action at their April 2021 meeting to approve the final draft of the FY 2022 UPWP. She added that BATS staff packaged the UPWP with the signed resolution and

transmitted to FHWA for final approval. FHWA reviewed and issued an approval letter on April 16, 2021 with the final UPWP available on the MPO website for reference.

d. BATS FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Forbes stated that the BATS Policy Committee took action at their meeting held on April 12, 2021 to approve the final draft of the FY 2021-2024 TIP. BATS staff packed the signed resolution with the TIP and transmitted to GDOT/FHWA and posted the document to the MPO website for reference.

5. Agency Updates

Ms. Forbes stated that project updates were available from GDOT District 5 and Glynn County on the project sheet and if committee members have any questions, they can be forwarded to the respective agencies. There were no additional agency updates presented due to the CAC meeting occurring prior to the TCC meeting. She added that GDOT District 5 office stated that they were going to take a look at Exit 38 and start with signal assessments to see if they can make any adjustments. If no issue is detected, they will move forward with some operational adjustments.

Mr. Ellis asked about Gloucester St.

Ms. Forbes stated that there were no additional updates since the April 2021 Policy Committee meeting and after the TCC and PC meeting in May 2021, updates on that project can be sent to CAC members.

Mr. Gilligan asked if at the July 2021 CAC meeting, a transit update can be provided.

Ms. Forbes stated that BATS staff will get an update for the next CAC meeting, and that staff did reach out to John Hunter but he was unavailable to present at this CAC meeting.

Mrs. Hatcher stated Mr. Hunter is presenting at the upcoming TCC and PC meetings and will provided detailed transit updates and will be available to present at the next CAC meeting.

6. Public Comment

Ms. Granados asked if it was possible to watch the recording of the CAC meeting.

Mrs. Hatcher stated that the recordings are not released but are only kept for record keeping purposes. Documented minutes are published after the meeting has occurred.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Gilligan thanked everyone for their participation and reminded the committee of the next CAC meeting on July 12, 2021. Mr. Farley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ellis seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:30 PM.

BATS CAC Chairman

Date