
BATS MEETING MINUTES

Brunswick Area Transportation Study Policy Committee (PC) Meeting

Monday August 9, 2021 – 1:30 p.m.

Via Teleconference
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AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (Walter Rafolski)
2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Action Item
 - a. Minutes from PC meeting held on June 14, 2021.
3. BATS FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Information
4. GAMPO Special PL Funding Application – Information
5. BATS Administrative Updates
 - a. 5303 Transit Planning Grant Application
 - b. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Membership Drive – 2021
 - c. Future MPO Meeting Format
 - d. Annual Title VI Questionnaire
6. 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
7. Adjourn

Next Policy Committee Meeting: Monday, October 18, 2021.

Brunswick Area Transportation Study
Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday August 9, 2021 - 1:30 p.m.

Via Teleconference

ATTENDEES

Committee Members

Walter Rafolski, BATS PC Vice-Chairman (Glynn County Board of Commissioners)

Pamela Thompson Glynn County Community Development

Jones Hooks, Jekyll Island Authority

Julie Martin, City of Brunswick

Robert Burr, Glynn County Airport Commission

Jim Gilligan, BATS CAC Chairman

Cassius Edwards, GDOT

Radney Simpson, GDOT

Ned Green, GDOT Planning

Tom Caiafa, GDOT Planning

John Hunter, Planning & Zoning, City of Brunswick

Others

Rachel Hatcher, Senior Planner, RS&H

Vishanya Forbes, Transportation Planner, RS&H

Ian Newman, Transportation Planner, RS&H

Ann-Marie Day, FHWA

Katie Proctor, GDOT District 5

Troy Pittman, GDOT

Garrow Alberson, City of Brunswick

Maurice Postal, Glynn County Community Development

Melissa Phillips

David Thompson, GDOT

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 1:30 P.M. by Mr. Walter Rafolski, Vice-Chairman of the BATS Policy Committee. Mr. Rafolski gave a brief welcome and addressed the first agenda action item, approval of the meeting minutes from the Policy Committee meeting held on June 14, 2021.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Action Item

a. Minutes from PC meeting held on June 14, 2021

Mr. Rafolski called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mr. Hooks, with a second made by Mr. Simpson. The motion was passed unanimously.

3. BATS FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Information

Ms. Forbes presented this agenda item. Ms. Forbes mentioned there were a few updates pertaining to BATS UPWP documents. She stated that the BATS FY 2021 UPWP expired on June 30, 2021, and that BATS is now operating under their FY 2022 UPWP. She also highlighted accomplishments from the previous fiscal year, including the development and administration of several special PL funding projects, including the BATS 2045 MTP with St. Simons Island Sector Study, the Bay Street Corridor Improvement that concluded work in June 2021, as well as the MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor project which was recently awarded funding during the GAMPO meeting held in March 2021.

Ms. Forbes reminded the committee that BATS also carried out an updated to their FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) during FY 2021. She reviewed additional highlights from FY 2021 including the committee bylaws and public participation plan being updated to accommodate for guidance for operating during emergencies when in person meetings are prohibited and virtual meetings are needed to conduct business. BATS also hosted an additional CAC membership drive for 2021 to fill the empty seats on the CAC and replace inactive committee members. Ms. Forbes mentioned that BATS carried out a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuous planning process, the 3-C planning process, with the development of the annual work program and exceeded the minimum federal and state certification requirements for the MPO planning process. She stated that BATS also releases their UPWP 30 days in advance of publication for a public comment period which is not a federal requirement.

Ms. Forbes discussed the FY 2022 UPWP updates. She mentioned that the fiscal year started on July 1, 2021 and that this PC meeting was the first committee meeting of the new fiscal year. She stated that the focus for this new fiscal year will be to review the new 2020 US Census count result once the data becomes available, and to then identify the required updates to the MPO documents. BATS staff will support the implementation of the recommendations highlighted in BATS's 2045 MTP that was recently adopted, as well as to maintain all requirements for the BATS MPO and continue to adhere to the Performance Based planning requirements set forth by the FHWA.

Ms. Forbes highlighted FY 2023 UPWP updates that show what BATS staff will be doing monthly until the adoption date next calendar year. She stated that BATS is in the July-October timespan and is currently 'Developing a Draft UPWP with BATS Input for Planning Activities.' Ms. Forbes reminded the PC committee members that a document/feedback log was circulated in July 2021 so members of the CAC and TCC can provide their input on what to focus on in the next fiscal year. She mentioned that this form will be circulated after this meeting to the PC. She asked if there were any questions on this agenda item before continuing. There were no additional questions.

4. GAMPO Special PL Funding Application – Information

Ms. Forbes reminded those on the call that the next rounds of GAMPO Special PL funding applications are due in September 2021 and again in the Spring, which is in March 2022. This funding cannot be used for PE, ROW, or construction but just at a planning level for these projects. Once received the funding is an 80/20 split with the federal government providing 80% of the funds but there will need to be a local sponsor for the 20%.

Ms. Forbes stated that a study has been proposed by the Glynn County for Sea Island at Dunbar Creek and that BATS staff has been in coordination with Ms. Thompson and are working on putting out an application together for the spring GAMPO meeting in March 2022. She mentioned that the package/project will need to go through two rounds of MPO meetings so the Spring submittal would be a better timeline. She reminded those on the call that project must be reflected in the BATS UPWP and therefore an amendment will need to take place so this project's details can be incorporated; reiterating that two cycles of MPO meetings prior to submittal to GAMPO and that proposed projects must support the BATS 2045 MTP.

Ms. Forbes showed a map highlighting Sea Island Road at Dunbar Creek Bridge from BATS's TIP. She mentioned that this study is to look at the roadway to see if data supports a possible widening on the Dunbar Creek Bridge. She asked for any questions and there were none. She shared the timeline of the GAMPO application process highlighting the two cycles of MPO meetings per FHWA/GDOTs requirement.

She added that the next steps will be to put a scope and fee together and create an RFP package so the BATS PC can review it prior to submitting that application in the Spring to GAMPO. Ms. Forbes asked if there were any questions or comments. Mr. Burr asked if the widening was for future lane expansion. Ms. Forbes responded that it is for that reason, and during the development of the BATS 2045 MTP there were volume to capacity projections for level of service D or F and this is a proactive planning item. She asked for any additional comments. There were no additional questions or comments.

5. BATS Administrative Updates

a. 5303 Transit Planning Grant Application

Ms. Forbes reminded the committee that this had been incorporated into FY 2022 UPWP and has already been approved by the MPO. BATS staff will be preparing this application for submittal in September once the application becomes available, and she showed the line items of the 4303 and read through them. She gave an overview of the timeline. The application period opens in September, closes in November, and by March 2022 BATS will know if they were awarded, and by the start of the next fiscal year on July 1, 2022 those funds will become available to BATS.

Ms. Forbes showed the table that was incorporated into the current UPWP and mentioned that BATS anticipates they will receive approximately \$56,000 for BATS FY 2023 5303 Transit Planning Grant. Ms. Forbes asked if there were any questions or comments pertaining to this. There were no additional questions or comments.

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

Ms. Forbes stated that the BATS CAC Membership Drive had its new member orientation on July 1, 2021 following the BATS PC Committee's approval of the list of applications during the PC June meeting. She added that it was a great turnout at the orientation. The CAC members were excited

and eager to be a part of the committee. The first CAC meeting after the new member orientation was on July 12. Those members unable to attend emailed Ms. Forbes prior to the meeting. She mentioned that there are still 12 active members and 6 remaining seats that BATS is hoping to be filled by the end of the year. The application process was extended per the PC's approval and she reminded those on the call if they know anyone interested in serving to please send them to the MPO website so they can download the application and email it back to them.

She asked the Chairman of the CAC, Mr. Gilligan, if he had anything he would like to add. Mr. Gilligan introduced himself and updated the committee on the discussion topics of the CAC's previous meeting. He emphasized the benefit of having a broad base of groups represented. Mr. Gilligan mentioned that there are CAC members from the social services, business development, and even some specialty working with those with disabilities. Mr. Gilligan added that one of the main things being discussed has been keeping a close eye on the city's efforts to develop an initial transit system within the City of Brunswick. He continued that over time they've asked the city to provide the CAC updates. Mr. Hunter provided updates at the last CAC meeting, including a brief update on the status of the transit planning update and possibilities of future rollout using a few different models. There was great interest because many of the new members were interested in how to find out where they were in providing input into the planning process.

Mr. Gilligan mentioned that of most interest to the new members were the details of the routes being developed, especially as it relates to the planned route stops. CAC members recognize the need for more service into the County itself. They felt the jobs were more in St. Simons and Jekyll Island and that the transit system would not provide services to those locations initially. Committee members wanted to study the materials Mr. Hunter presented, and in the September meeting, they stated they would like to discuss more ways to begin an advocacy process to look beyond the next phase of the initial starter system. They also want to engage the business community. The committee unanimously felt the hospitality and service industries namely the Sea Island Company and major hoteliers on St. Simons Island and Jekyll Island. He mentioned that over the next few months, the CAC members want to engage the county leadership as well as neighboring counties to their plans. Ms. Forbes asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Hooks asked if they had a listing of the new group of members of the CAC. Ms. Forbes said she can get that to everyone following this meeting. Commissioner Martin asked that at the City's workshop/work session just before the commission meeting two weeks prior, they had a presentation on the transit system, and she wanted to know if any of the advisory board members were able to listen in on this. Ms. Forbes asked Mr. Gilligan if he knew of any members that were able to attend and he was not aware of it and did not receive details on this meeting. He replied that this is an example of why CAC members are more interested in being a part of these input processes.

Commissioner Martin asked if Ms. Forbes can reach out to Mr. Hunter for PowerPoint slides that could be forwarded to the CAC members. Mr. Hunter agreed.

Commissioner Martin requested that Mr. Hunter invite BATS BOC and CAC members to be included on presentations concerning the transit system in the City of Brunswick. Mr. Hunter agreed and stated that the slides presented to the City Commission meeting was a precursor to what was presented to the CAC, and that their plan is to utilize the CAC as a main contact point of the process of developing the next steps.

Mr. Burr asked Mr. Gilligan on the CAC's expressed interest in the hospitality industry and asked if there were members on the CAC that represents them and if not, we have 6 seats yet to be filled. Mr. Gilligan responded that they do not, and most newer members are City of Brunswick based. He stated that this became a talking point, since if they can bring a member of the public who is a representative of the hospitality industry that would be terrific since many committee members felt that is where the jobs are at. There was also discussion about commercial businesses along highways that are closing due to a lack of employees – many of whom would not be able to make it to these businesses due to lack of transit. CAC members are trying to understand if transportation is part of the problem.

Mr. Burr asked that the limit of this type of service, in this phase, would be within the City of Brunswick's limits. Ms. Forbes stated that it was. Chairperson Rafolski mentioned he had heard that the city was considering creating a loop to St. Simons and was wondering if this was correct. Mr. Hunter answered that in the initial study, work that was done a few years ago led them to the planning process, and there were initially three routes suggested one of which would be from the Wynn Dixie on Glynn Avenue out to St. Simons. Looking at the three routes was their starting point,

and in looking at the finances to do it, they realized they needed additional options. Two more limited routes within the city were then thought of as an alternative.

Ms. Hatcher mentioned that in addition to the costs of the financial partnership to expand the routes that far, the 2010 Census designated that St. Simons Island was outside of the urbanized area making it ineligible for the urban 5307 transit operating funds which are critical funding to purchase and procure capital for the system as well as operating funds. Therefore, any routes operating outside the designated urbanized area per US Census cannot receive reimbursement for those expenses. Ms. Hatcher added that it would have to be 100% locally funded or receive funding from rural services that is currently designated for the Coastal Region Commission. If the 2020 US Census shows that St Simons is included in the urbanized area, then the city must find local partners to help with the match of the 20% for operational and capital burdens. Ms. Forbes asked if there were any additional comments or questions.

There were no additional comments or questions.

5. BATS Administrative Updates

a. Future MPO Meeting Format

Ms. Forbes mentioned that peer MPOs have been coordinating regarding the Georgia Open Meetings act and that BATS staff will be updating the PC as BATS gets more information and that this will be further discussed at the upcoming GAMPO meeting in the Fall.

b. Annual Title VI Questionnaire

Ms. Forbes reminded the committee that every year BATS must complete the Title VI Questionnaire in which the MPO demonstrates how they are making efforts to ensure that disadvantaged members of the community and those with limited English proficiency have access to documents published by the MPO. She mentioned that BATS staff are working on getting this resubmitted to GDOT by the 20th of August and once completed an update will be given to the Policy Committee.

6. Agency Updates

c. Glynn County Airport Commission

Mr. Burr gave the update for the Glynn County Airport Commission. Mr. Burr mentioned that for the Brunswick Golden Isles Airport, there are two project updates. The extension of the parking lot has

been completed and traffic numbers are exceeding 2019 numbers which are signs for hope for normal airline service numbers. They are currently constructing calibration pads and that's currently underway which will help tenants at Brunswick airport. For the St. Simons Airport, Mr. Burr stated that they completed multiple design studies that were submitted to the agencies, and they've received good feedback and are hopefully going to move into runway safety enhancement projects. Mr. Rafolski asked if this was EMAS and Mr. Burr confirmed. Mr. Burr added that it is multi-phase with the first phase being environmental and that hopefully they will get it kicked off right away.

d. Glynn County School Board

Ms. Forbes stated that there was no representative of the School Board on the call and that they did not receive a written update beforehand. Ms. Forbes mentioned that from the last TCC meeting they mentioned they were working on getting the students moved into the new school for this upcoming school year and hoped it was a smooth transition for them.

e. Glynn County

Ms. Forbes mentioned that we did not get anyone from Glynn County to join the meeting but that BATS received the standard project sheet which is available for download on the website and that she could send out via email after the meeting. She added that she and/or Ms. Thompson could also send to Glynn County questions, including any questions as well as questions pertaining to the county updates. Commissioner Rafolski asked if Ms. Thompson was not attending the meeting and Ms. Forbes responded that Mr. Postal is on the line and is serving as proxy for Ms. Thompsom. Mr. Postal stated he has not been given any updates to give to the committee.

f. City of Brunswick

Mr. Alberson gave the update for the City of Brunswick. Mr. Alberson said that they are continuing work on the Magnolia Park project and looking at a completion of phase 1 in the fall and phase 2 will be out for construction bids due in mid-September. He said they are working with the consultant to get the design contract in place for the boardwalk trail from Overlook to the Causeway. Mr. Alberson mentioned that the City is also working with Pam and her staff to get the RFP out for the Altama MLK bicycle corridor study.

g. GDOT District 5

Ms. Proctor gave the update for GDOT District 5. Ms. Proctor reviewed GDOT's preconstruction list with their first project being the bridge replacement at Mackay River (SR 25 Spur East at Mackay River) with the next milestone being the PFPR. The first phase of the SR25 FM CR 372/Yahct RD to CR

415/Harry Driggers project has an anticipated August Let. She mentioned that Phase 2 of that project will let to shelf in December. Ms. Proctor continued and added that they have two bridge replacements, one at Dunbar Creek on St. Simons Island (CR583/Sea Island Rd) and the other one at Little Buffalo Creek (SR 32) both of which are still in concept development. The roundabout at SR25 at SR99 will have its next milestone be its FFPR. The seventh project is in McIntosh County, SR 25 at Darien River in Darien and has its next milestone as environmental approval.

Ms. Proctor continued with active construction projects, saying that GDOT has four projects with the first three, resurfacing on SR 25 Conn(Gloucester) from SR 27 to SR 25, Resurfacing on SR 25 from N of SR 303 extending S of Sidney Lanier Bridge, Resurfacing on SR 32 from Brantley Co line extending W of SR 27, have not begun work but are anticipated to be completed in the Fall of this year. The last active project is marking upgrades SR 405/I-95 from N of Dover Bluff Overpass extending S of US25/US341/SR27 started in April and is 75% complete and anticipated to be completed in the Fall also.

h. Jekyll Island Authority

Mr. Hooks gave the update for the Jekyll Island Authority. He mentioned that they have decided to move forward with the unfinished bike path on the causeway to complete it to the welcome center. They will also do the same at the South Loop Trail on Jekyll Island and are hoping that will leverage the project on the causeway mentioned at the previous meeting. He added that they will continue working with GDOT and FHWA to get the bike path completed to US 17 and then tie into the City of Brunswick and St. Simons.

i. Transit Agencies

Mr. Hunter mentioned that the City of Brunswick is beginning their outreach phase to a greater degree, and in addition to returning to the CAC in September, he mentioned that the PC would be a good group to present details to. Chairman Rafolski agreed. Mr. Hunter said he would get it set up.

j. Other Items

Chairman Rafolski then asked if those on the call had any other items to discuss at the meeting. There were no other items to discuss.

k. Public Comment

Ms. Forbes stated there was one person from the public on the call. Mr. Thompson from GDOT Intermodal spoke and mentioned that there was no comment from GDOT Intermodal present.

7. **Adjourn**

Chairman Rafolski informed those on the call that the next meeting will be on October 18, 2021. Ms. Forbes reminded those on the call that the PC voted to move this meeting one week in advance as to not interfere with Columbus Day. Chairman Rafolski called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hooks made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Martin. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Rafolski thanked all who attended the meeting.

BATS PC Chairman

Date