
BATS MEETING MINUTES

**Brunswick Area Transportation Study
Special Called Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) Meeting**

Friday, June 10, 2022 – 9:30 a.m.

Via Teleconference

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks (Pamela Thompson)
2. Special PL Funding Project (MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor Study) – Action Item
3. BATS Administrative Updates
 - a. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program
 - b. Return to In-Person MPO Meetings
4. Adjourn

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ATTENDEES

Committee Members

Pamela Thompson, Glynn County Community Development
Garrow Alberson, City of Brunswick
Paul Andrews, Glynn County Engineering
Thomas Caiafa, GDOT Office of Planning
John Hunter, City of Brunswick
Maurice Postal, Glynn County Community Development
Katie Proctor, GDOT District 5
Bob Nyers, Glynn County GIS
Jason Hartman, Glynn County Field Engineering
Robert Caudill, GDOT

Others

Vishanya Forbes, Transportation Planner, RS&H
David Schmidt, Pond & Company

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:30 a.m. by Ms. Pamela Thompson, Chair of the BATS Technical Coordinating Committee.

2. Special PL Funding Project (MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor Study) – Action Item

Ms. Forbes reminded the TCC that the purpose of this special called meeting is to facilitate the GAMPO special PL funded project the MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor Study. She explained that Mr. Alberson is the project manager on this study, and he has invited the consultant team from Pond & Company to present their final draft report to the TCC for recommendation and action to the BATS Policy Committee.

Mr. Schmidt welcomed everyone and shared with the committee that he is glad to have the opportunity to present this study to the TCC. He stated that the report is approximately 99% complete and is close to being finalized. He met with the CAC prior and received approval and other suggestions that the consultant team plans to incorporate in the final report.

Mr. Schmidt stated that the consultant team was asked to study a 6-mile corridor of MLK Jr. Boulevard and Altama Avenue. The team has done several studies to back up their data and they aim to propose the best alternatives so BATS can make an informed decision. He explained that this is a high-level project, and the team has not yet been tasked with diving into a detailed design.

Mr. Schmidt explained that the consultant team has looked into this corridor as a way to provide better north-south connectivity in the study area. The project aims to identify the possibility of a separated bike lane that will improve safety and promote connectivity to neighborhoods, schools, and businesses. He presented the table of contents for the report and explained that he will discuss in more detail how the consultant team has approached planning for this corridor.

Mr. Schmidt stated that the goal of a separated bike lane is to provide separation from the street so people on the corridor feel safe and comfortable and have a direct point of travel from point A to point B. He mentioned that the MLK-Altama corridor lends itself to one method of separation specifically, but he will present other alternatives that the consultant team considered. He explained that there are many design considerations, but the team has taken a holistic approach by considering how pedestrians and bicyclists use this corridor for several different purposes. He stated that the report presents the corridor from north to south. The northernmost portion of the trail ends at the intersection of Altama Avenue and Chapel Crossing Road near the Murphy's Kia of Brunswick and the southernmost portion ends at the intersection of MLK Jr. Boulevard and Prince Street.

Mr. Schmidt discussed the planning aspects of the project and explained that the consultant team first conducted a desktop environmental analysis and studied existing conditions, land use, historically or culturally significant buildings, endangered species, and wetland impacts. This analysis used a 100-foot buffer along both sides of the entire corridor. He stated that the team did not find any adverse effects through their analysis and their findings are compiled in a separate report.

Mr. Schmidt mentioned that a particular area of consideration is where there are off-street parking spaces in the right-of-way along MLK Jr. Boulevard that are currently being utilized by adjacent residents. He explained that the trail could run through the median in this location, as the consultant team does not recommend taking away parking from these residents. He also mentioned that the team collected traffic counts for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians in the study area. With this data, the team found that peak hours saw under 150 bicyclists. He explained that a wider trail is ideal because it is more comfortable, and it accommodates the different types of traffic on the trail. Other than a few sections that have right-of-way concerns, he recommends a 10-foot-wide path.

Mr. Schmidt presented Option #1 for the corridor, which proposes a trail along the west side of Altama Avenue. The consultant team proposed this option because the right-of-way is larger on the west side of Altama Avenue and there are several schools, including Altama Elementary School and Brunswick High School, on this side of the road. This option proposes a 10-foot trail that would be built into the existing shoulder with options for separation such as planters or a concrete curb. Mr. Schmidt stated that the report includes sections that show potential designs for sidewalk and bike lane separation. He explained that the team tried to utilize existing infrastructure, but they also considered how to adjust the network to make the separated bike lane safer. Potential additions and modifications, based on insights from transportation engineers, include signals, mid-block crossings, signage, stop-bars, and rapid-flashing beacons. He highlighted new signals near Altama Elementary and Brunswick High School. Mr. Schmidt mentioned that there are some instances along the corridor where there is little opportunity for separation due to turning lanes, but he explained that he does not think these instances are a hindrance to the overall project. Mr. Schmidt explained that there is more room in the right-of-way near the Coastal College of Georgia and Option #1 promotes the idea of moving the trail across to the eastern side of Altama Avenue in this area. He also explained that there is enough space in this area for a curving trail.

Mr. Schmidt stated that the consultant team has received several questions about shade along the corridor. He explained that there is enough existing tree coverage to provide opportunities for shaded benches or places to stop and relax. He mentioned that there is a train crossing near 1st Street and Parkwood Drive, and therefore this is an area to be careful of. He explained that the trail would cross the road and move into the median around where Altama Avenue turns into

MLK Jr. Boulevard. This portion of the trail would resemble a linear park. He explained that he has heard that the local utility company is planning to remove trees in the median due to future conflicts with the overhead utility line. He stated that as the design progresses, the team encourages plants and understory trees to provide additional shade, if allowed. This section of trail includes several diagonal crossing points. He explained that the trail would ideally tie into the existing trail that extends beyond the study area south of Prince Street. He reiterated that there will likely need to be several signal upgrades and modifications throughout the corridor to promote optimal safety conditions.

Mr. Schmidt presented Option #2 for the corridor, which proposes a trail along both the west and east side of the road. He noted that the current shoulder near Altama Elementary School is being used as a carpool pickup area, which could present some issues if the shoulder becomes part of the trail corridor. He stated that there is currently sidewalk along Altama Avenue near Glynn Isle and Altama Village Shopping Center, which warrants further design considerations because it is a particularly busy area. He explained that this option proposes a continuation of the trail on both sides of the road until the road turns into MLK Jr. Boulevard. At this point, both Option #1 and Option #2 propose the same idea of a trail within the median.

Mr. Schmidt showed renderings of separated bike lanes and discussed the differences between them. The first two renderings show sidewalk level trails, but they differ because one has a concrete curb and the other also has a planted buffer. Both options would involve filling the shoulder to bring it up to sidewalk level height. The next two renderings show street level trails, which involve road diet conditions where the two existing 12-foot lanes are reduced to two 10-foot lanes. One rendering shows a concrete curb buffer and the other shows a planted buffer. He stated that there are areas near the Coastal College of Georgia where there is space for both a sidewalk and separated bike lane. He explained that the consultant team finds the most favorable condition to be a street level separate bike lane with striping and bollards. He stated that this would involve a lane reduction to two 10-foot lanes, and it would be the least expensive option. He explained that the raised bike lane option is the least favorable condition because it removes the feeling of safety. He stated that this trail type would ideally be 10-feet, but it could be a minimum of 8-feet to provide space for a planted buffer.

Mr. Schmidt discussed intersections and highlighted the G Street and MLK Jr. Boulevard intersection. He explained that there is a lot of traffic in this area and that the trail could include a diagonal lane crossing here. He stated that there are some existing crossing signals, but more safety signage and signal retiming would be necessary, as it is most important to promote the bicycle first and then allow vehicles to pass.

Mr. Schmidt explained that the consultant team has looked into pricing and has found that it will cost approximately \$1.5 million per mile for this trail corridor to be constructed and implemented. He explained that the pricing estimate will be refined in further stages of the study.

Mr. Andrews asked if the plan for Option #1 is to remove the existing sidewalk where the trail is built on the opposite side of the road. Mr. Schmidt explained that the plan is to maintain the existing sidewalk on the opposite side of the proposed trail so the amenities that are in already in place can remain. He stated that the ideal trail condition includes a sidewalk, planted median, cycle track, and another planted median. He explained that conditions vary throughout the study area and there are some areas where the sidewalk will become a multi-use trail where pedestrians and bicyclists both use the same trail.

Mr. Schmidt stated that the report does not yet include recommendations for public transportation stops along the corridor. The consultant team is still in the process of identifying the best locations for these stops, but he confirmed that there will be stops near schools.

Mr. Andrews asked if the consultant team has been in touch with anyone at the Coastal College of Georgia regarding the section of trail in front of their property. Mr. Schmidt said that there have been several meetings that included individuals from the college, but they have not yet offered many comments or concerns. He explained that the consultant team wants to meet with the college to discuss their existing plans for the trail in order to better combine all efforts.

Mr. Schmidt explained that the consultant team's next steps are to implement recommendations from the CAC about bus stops and to finalize cost estimates. He stated that they have historical data that will help them to make accurate cost estimates.

Mr. Andrews stated that he has only seen a trail in the median in urban areas and asked if there is concern about people entering the trail from the street instead of using the provided crosswalks. Mr. Schmidt explained that the team has observed people already using this area as a linear park. He stated that there may be opportunities for more mid-block crossings in addition to the current crossings at intersections.

Mr. Schmidt thanked everyone for their time and stated that the consultant team will be meeting with the Policy Committee on Monday, June 13, 2022 and will provide the final report to BATS soon after.

Ms. Forbes suggested a motion for the TCC to recommend that the Policy Committee endorse the final draft of the MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor Study with final changes incorporated.

Ms. Thompson called for a motion to take this action. Mr. Caudill made a motion and Mr. Alberson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. BATS Administrative Updates

a. Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program

Ms. Forbes provided an updated on the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program. She reminded TCC members that BATS Staff discussed this program at the last TCC meeting in May. She explained that following this meeting, additional information about the application process was provided by FWHA/GDOT. The application opened on May 16, 2022 and is scheduled to close on September 15, 2022. The grant minimum award amount is \$200,000 which would require a 20% match which is approximately \$40,000. She continued her update stating that in order to apply for the implementation funding, a Safety Action Plan must be in place. She stated that because BATS does not have an existing Safety Action Plan, the options would be to submit a GAMPO grant application and use that funding to complete a Safety Action Plan or submit an application for the SS4A Action Plan funding. She added that funding for an Action Plan does not have to be from the SS4A Grant Program. She presented the timeline for this application and stated that there is enough time to go through the two necessary cycles of review by the MPO committees before September application deadlines.

Ms. Thompson explained that based on coordination with Glynn County grant administrator there is not sufficient time to gather the prerequisites for this application. BATS will consider applications in future funding cycles.

b. Return to In-Person MPO Meetings

Ms. Forbes reminded TCC members that the regularly scheduled MPO meetings will change to a hybrid format in July 2022. Local participants may attend in person at the Pate Building and participants who wish to attend virtually will also have that option.

4. Adjourn

Ms. Thompson asked if anyone had questions or comments and she thanked everyone for their willingness to take time out of their day to keep the MLK-Altama Bicycle Corridor Study moving forward. She reminded everyone of the upcoming meeting scheduled on Monday, July 11, 2022. The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:30 a.m.

BATS TCC Chair

Date