



Frequently Asked Questions

Boundary Street Corridor Improvement Plan

*City of Beaufort in partnership with Beaufort County,
S.C. DOT and the Federal Highway Administration*

General Questions

- 1. What is the Boundary Street Redevelopment Corridor project, and why is it needed?**
- 2. Where will the work take place?**
- 3. When will work start, and how long will it take?**
- 4. What kind of traffic problems and delays should we expect?**
- 5. Will Boundary Street be two lanes? How will the design of Boundary Street be changed?**
- 6. What will be the speed limits of Boundary Street?**
- 7. Isn't the landscaped median a waste of space that could be used for more lanes of traffic?**
- 8. Why are improvements needed on Polk Street?**
- 9. How will the new Boundary Street design affect truck and emergency vehicles?**
- 10. Are there any economic benefits expected from this project, especially to the businesses along Boundary Street?**
- 11. Where's the money coming from for this project?**
- 12. Are there any environmental impacts to the construction or overall design?**

Design Questions

13. What are the plans for traffic signals and new intersections?
14. Are roundabouts, also called traffic circles, still part of the plan?
15. Will all the overhead utility lines be put underground as part of this project?

The Bid Process

16. Will Disadvantaged Business Enterprises be included in the construction work?

General

1. What is the Boundary Street Redevelopment Corridor project, and why is it needed?

Building a better Beaufort is the goal of a \$30 million investment in Boundary Street to create a safer and more scenic entry to the city, provide better commercial and retail locations, and improve traffic conditions.

A financial impact analysis indicates the local economy will see \$5 in benefits for every \$1 invested in the Boundary Street Redevelopment District.

The project includes:

- Realigning the intersection of SC 170 and Boundary Street to make it safer and to help traffic flow more smoothly
- Retrofitting, re-investing and redeveloping neglected areas of the corridor
- Creating commercial/retail nodes
- Providing alternate ways for people to reach commercial/retail including bike and walking paths, improving efficiency
- And expanding the Spanish Moss Trail in partnership with Beaufort County.

The work is part of a larger effort to reconfigure Beaufort from near the Marine Corps Air Station to annexed areas of Lady's Island, creating a unified and connected neighborhood designed for people, not just cars.

2. What areas of Boundary Street will be affected?

The streetscape project will go from Neil Road to Greenlawn Drive. The utility work will extend to Ribaut Road. There will be no work done east of Ribaut Road.

The streetscape for the area between Greenlawn Drive and Ribaut Road will be done in the future when the City can secure funding.

3. When will work start, and how long will it take?

Construction started in early January 2016. The entire project, approximately 1.5 miles including side road improvements, is expected to be substantially complete in 2018.

4. What kind of traffic problems and delays should we expect?

Project management will work to keep traffic disruptions to a minimum throughout this project, but some delays are inevitable. For daily updates, visit www.boundarystreetupdate.com. Local media will be asked to share regular updates and announcements about lane closures or traffic pattern changes.

It is anticipated that a significant portion of the necessary work will occur at night to minimize traffic disruptions. The current lane-closure rules are:

- Lanes can be closed only at night, between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. Monday through Friday
- On Sundays, lanes can be closed between 1 p.m. and 6 a.m. Monday
- Saturdays, S.C. Department of Transportation rules allow lane closures any time
- During daytime work, lanes may be shifted but four lanes of traffic will be open.
- Other lane closures and detours will be submitted to the SCDOT on an as-needed basis and are anticipated only in extreme conditions or unforeseen circumstances.

To minimize impact on businesses along the construction path, it will be a priority for contractors to maintain access to driveways and store entrances throughout the project. Please pay extra attention when driving through the construction zone.

5. Will Boundary Street be reduced to two lanes? How will the design of Boundary Street be changed?

Currently, US 21/Boundary Street consists of two 12-foot travel lanes in each direction separated by a single 15-foot two-way left turn lane. The roadway serves approximately 40,000 vehicles per day.

The updated and improved US 21/Boundary Street will still feature two travel lanes in each direction separated by a raised and landscaped median. The road will have a sidewalk on the north shoulder and 10-foot multi-use path on the south shoulder. Left-turn lanes and left-turn signals will be provided at signalized intersections to provide for safe left-turn access.

Bottom line: There will still be a total of four traffic lanes on Boundary Street, two in each direction. In an emergency, three or even all four of the lanes can be reconfigured to help people evacuate the area.

6. What will be the speed limit on Boundary Street?

During construction, the speed limit will be reduced to 35 mph for the safety of workers. Speeding fines may be increased in the work zone and enforcement is needed to ensure the safety of work crews. Once construction is over, the speed limit will return to 40 mph.

7. Isn't the landscaped median a waste of space that could be used for more lanes of traffic?

Numerous studies have shown roadways with divided medians to be significantly safer than roadways with center turn lanes. Publications such as the Highway Safety Manual (American

Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials) and the Access Management Manual (Transportation Research Board) cover these safety benefits in depth.

The median breaks are located to utilize the existing and proposed street network and parallel streets to form a complete network of interconnected blocks and streets. This plan is designed to improve traffic flow from Boundary Street to the various street alternatives.

Improving safety is a key point for this project. Adding the landscaped medians will make Boundary Street safer for drivers and pedestrians. A side benefit is it creates a more visually pleasing entrance to the 300-plus year old City of Beaufort and its National Historic Landmark District.

Landscaping will be designed to minimize maintenance costs.

8. Why are improvements needed on Polk Street?

A key vision for the Boundary Street Corridor is a network of walkable routes to be built north of Boundary Street. Along wider sections of Polk, there will be parallel parking on both sides of the street, narrowing to parking on only one side (the northern side) as the road moves closer to Ribaut Road. Sidewalks will be built.

The project includes sidewalks, a grassy strip of landscaping and parallel parking.

9. How will the new Boundary Street design affect trucks and emergency vehicles?

In February 2012, a video classification of traffic was conducted and found that 98 percent of vehicles traveling the Boundary Street Corridor were passenger vehicles, 1.5 percent were single unit trucks, and less than one percent were combination tractor-trailers. The improvements for Boundary Street and SC 170 are designed to accommodate single unit trucks and intermediate tractor trailers.

Periodic breaks in landscaping will allow for median crossings by emergency vehicles. Also, emergency responders will develop response plans that take into account the geometry of the improved road. The Beaufort Fire Department and Police headquarters are located near the intersection of Ribaut Road and Boundary Street, putting them extremely close to the affected portions of Boundary Street.

Traffic signals will include an emergency vehicle pre-emption system to improve response times, reduce potential for crashes and minimize obstructions to emergency vehicles along the corridor. This system coordinates green lights for responding emergency vehicles. Opposing and conflicting traffic lanes are given red lights.

In addition to these design features, the parallel road and system of gridded streets will be useful for emergency vehicle access. Also, the raised median doesn't preclude the use of all four lanes for outbound traffic in times of evacuation.

10. What are the economic benefits expected from this project, especially to the businesses along Boundary Street?

The anticipated economic benefits to business owners along the improved section of Boundary Street include:

- Safer access to their businesses, making their location more appealing to drivers
- Smoother traffic flow at key intersections
- A more attractive and landscaped roadway which improves the likelihood of shoppers choosing to visit the Boundary Street shops and restaurants
- Removal of overhead utility lines will make it safer for drivers to enter and exit businesses and will make the area much more visually attractive
- Analysts expect a \$5 benefit for every \$1 invested in the Boundary Street Redevelopment District.

11. Where's the money coming from for this project?

The total estimated cost to develop and build this important safety project is about \$32 million. The Boundary Street Redevelopment Corridor project budget is funded through three sources:

- Federal Highway Administration TIGER grant of \$12.635 million
- The Beaufort County one cent sales tax of \$11.346 million
- And the City of Beaufort's TIF II estimated contribution of about \$8.223 million.

The Boundary Street Redevelopment Corridor plans caught eyes at the federal level in 2011 as Beaufort earned the 16th largest DOT grant that year and the largest in South Carolina history. Of the 848 applications for the TIGER III grant in 2011, only 48 were awarded funding -- about 6 percent of the total applications received. The TIGER grant is DOT-talk for *Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery*.

12. Are there any environmental impacts to the construction or overall design?

As a part of the National Environmental Policy Act, studies were conducted to assess for the possible effects of this project on the social, cultural and natural environments. The project may require minimal amounts of bank stabilization along Boundary Street and will include construction of an elevated boardwalk along the marsh line of Battery Creek. The project won't result in permanent loss of aquatic function within the marsh or result in any adverse impacts to the natural environment. All necessary environmental certifications and permits will be obtained prior to construction of the project.

Specific Design Questions

13. What are the plans for traffic signals and new intersections?

Click [here](#) to view of diagram of the planned traffic signals and intersections. A few high points include:

- Traffic signals include a **relocated** signal at the new intersection of SC 170, a **new** signal at Polk Street, an **existing** signal at Hogarth Street, a **new** traffic signal at Enmark and Carolina Cove, and the **existing** signal entering the K-Mart Shopping Center

- There will be a designated U-turn lane at Hogarth Street to enable westbound/outgoing traffic to turn around to easily reach businesses such as Sea Eagle Market and others
- Traffic signals will include left-turn lanes where necessary and left-turn signals to improve safe access and to minimize the potential for crashes
- Traffic signals will be upgraded to include decorative mast arms. Additional upgrades include Traffic Adaptive technologies to improve coordination and traffic flow, emergency vehicle pre-emption, traffic cameras and traffic data management system

14. Are roundabouts, also called traffic circles, still part of the plan?

No. The Traffic Study that was conducted as part of the 2009 Boundary Street Improvements Feasibility Study indicated that a roundabout at the SC 170 and US 21/Boundary Street intersection wouldn't function adequately due to the high traffic volumes. The intersection will remain under signal control.

A roundabout originally planned for the intersection of Ribaut Road and Boundary also has been postponed.

15. Will all the overhead utility lines be put underground as part of this project?

Yes, for the affected section of Boundary Street, overhead utility lines will be moved below ground. To improve safety and the appearance of this main entry to historic Beaufort, utility companies agreed in Summer 2014 to move their various lines and cables from overhead poles into an underground "duct bank." This applies to the area between Neil Road and the City Hall/Beaufort County Government Complex at Ribaut Road. The poles will be removed as well.

The end result will be a safer road for drivers, a more attractive entrance to the City of Beaufort, and a lower chance of utility lines being knocked down by storms.

Specific Questions about the Bid Process

16. Will Disadvantaged Business Enterprises be included in the construction work?

A minimum of 13 percent of all sub-contracting work will be required to go to S.C. Department of Transportation-approved DBEs.

June 2016