



# NEWS RELEASE

**For immediate release**

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## **Boundary Street construction to be re-bid by County, new start expected in winter**

Longer than expected negotiations with area utility companies to move their lines underground along Boundary Street contributed to Beaufort County's preference to re-bid contracts for the multimillion dollar Boundary Street Corridor construction.

The project will be re-advertised in October and contracts are scheduled to be awarded in December, with major work getting underway early in 2015.

A benefit of the construction delay is it allows time for engineers to review plans for the underground duct bank, where utility lines will be placed after they are removed from the SCE&G power poles, said Beaufort City Manager Scott Dadson.

"The county engineers and the City of Beaufort agree that hiring engineers to conduct a 'constructability review' of the duct bank part of this project is a good idea," Dadson said. "It is essential that we relocate the overhead utility lines underground, but it has to be done right the first time."

That report should be complete by early August.

Beaufort County's transportation department originally advertised the construction project for bids in January. Because of the exhaustive negotiations area utility companies, the original bids solicited in January aren't valid and the County decided to seek new bids.

In addition to the constructability review, county staff is meeting with the utility companies every week to carefully review the utility duct bank plans and to identify areas of concern from their perspective. With the evaluation completed and the utility company concerns identified, the construction documents will be amended to incorporate the necessary changes prior to the October re-bidding.

Until the contracts are awarded and details worked out with the contractors, timelines and schedules for construction must be considered very tentative, Dadson said. “When we are dealing with a project this size, with its daily impact on thousands of drivers and its long-term impact on the city and all of northern Beaufort County, we are going to take the extra time to plan it as carefully as possible.”

The Boundary Street redevelopment project budget is funded through three sources; a Federal Highway Administration grant of \$12.635 million; the Beaufort County one cent sales tax of \$7.819 million; and the City of Beaufort’s TIF II estimated contribution of about \$6.443 million.

The utility coordination has been one of the more challenging aspects of the project, noted Rob McFee, director of engineering and infrastructure for Beaufort County. A central component of the Boundary Street project in the federal grant application was moving underground the overhead utilities.

After a year of discussion and negotiations, this summer SCE&G, Hargray and CenturyLink reached agreements with the City to relocate their overhead lines along Boundary Street.

“Getting those agreements in place took longer than we expected, but moving the overhead utility lines to underground conduit will make Boundary Street safer and will certainly make it a more attractive gateway to Beaufort and the National Historic Landmark District,” Dadson said.

**Tentative schedule, subject to changes:**

Complete right-of-way acquisition	October 1, 2014
Re-advertise for construction bids	October 1, 2014
Award of construction contract	December 1, 2014
Construction start	December 15, 2014
Demolition	December 2014 through February 2015
Grading	March 2015 through August 2015
Utilities	December 2014 through April 2015
Drainage	July 2015 through April 2016
Paving	March 2015 through September 2015
Signals	July 2016 through September 2016
Signs/Markings	September 2016 through October 2016
Landscaping	October 2016 through November 2016
Substantial construction completion (est.)	November 2016

**END**