



NEWS RELEASE

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Downtown Beaufort parking spaces painted for new payment system

Paving the way for a new kiosk-based parking system in downtown Beaufort, Bay Street parking spaces are numbered for easy identification.

When the new payment kiosks open in June, patrons will park, make note of their parking space number, then enter that number into any of the electronic payment panels located downtown. Payment can be made with cash, debit or credit cards. Should more parking time be needed while the customer shops or dines, it can be added remotely via cell phone.

The 12-inch parking space numbers are in easy to read black on a standard Sherwin-Williams Traffic Marking white paint rectangle. The white background makes for easier viewing, especially at dusk and evening, said Scott Dadson, Beaufort City manager.

Smaller numbers posed a safety hazard because parking customers might have to bend over or lean down in the roadway to identify their parking space, Dadson noted. There are 476 parking spaces in the core downtown district; 132 of them will continue to use the coin-operated meters.

“Lanier's opinion is for the numbering to be large enough and bold enough so that all parking patrons, regardless of their age, are able to easily recognize their individual parking space without confusion,” said Rick Graham, chief operations officer for Lanier Parking, the private firm that manages and enforces parking in Beaufort.

Lanier manages over 400 parking facilities worldwide. Graham said he believes the larger the painted number, the greater chance the patron remembers their specific spot.

“In all current, and future, ‘park by space’ lots company-wide, we will always recommend large numbering for visibility to aid the customer. Painting numbers on the curbs leads to excessive confusion by the patron, which results in an increase of citations due to a lack of recognition of the numbering,” he said.

“Lastly, and most importantly,” he said, “the large numbering minimizes the risk of endangering the patrons who are exiting their vehicle. Essentially, the quicker they read and identify their space, the quicker they are out of harm’s way with traffic.”

Once the new parking payment kiosks are in place and tested, most of the existing coin-operated parking meters in downtown Beaufort will be removed to reduce streetscape clutter.

“There were a number of alternatives considered, but this method of identifying parking spaces provides the most appropriate and safest solution,” Dadson said. “We have worked closely with Main Street Beaufort to find ways to help the downtown merchants, including their work on this parking plan. Having adequate parking spaces for our shops and restaurants is a big part of their success.”

Parking revenues, including fines, are split with 85 percent funding the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission and 15 percent funding Main Street Beaufort, USA, a downtown revitalization group that includes merchants. None of the parking revenue goes into the City general fund.

The comprehensive parking plan aims to maintain a steady turnover of spaces on Bay Street that encourages consumers to patronize shops and restaurants while providing affordable and safe off-street parking alternatives to those who work in the area.

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