



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Photo: New pedestrian safety measures at popular downtown Beaufort crossing at Carteret and Port Republic streets

City taking new steps to make downtown Beaufort more walkable

Making downtown Beaufort a better and safer place for people to walk took a positive step forward this week with installation of improved crosswalks at the key intersection of Carteret Street and Port Republic Street downtown.

The crossing is used daily by hundreds of people moving between shops and restaurants, and also is a primary crossing for residents of The Point neighborhood as they head to jobs, to shops and restaurants, and to the Henry C. Chambers Waterfront Park.

While simple, the pedestrian crossing signs in the middle of Carteret Street reinforce to drivers the message of the painted crosswalk lines: "Be careful – people may be crossing the street."

Crosswalks to the east and west of Port Republic, at Bay Street and at Craven Street, both have traffic lights with pedestrian "walk/don't walk" signals. The Craven Street signal includes a countdown timer to inform pedestrians how much time remains to safely cross -- an upgrade that will be featured at Bay and Carteret when the new traffic signal mast is completed.

The pedestrian crossing signs now seen at Carteret and Port Republic have been used with success along the commercialized three blocks of Bay Street.

“As we continue to work to make Beaufort a better, more walkable small town, we are looking at ways to help the pedestrians without tying up vehicle traffic on Carteret Street,” Beaufort Mayor Billy Keyserling said.

“The City Council and Beaufort Redevelopment Commission, working with the public, are trying to recruit new businesses and residents to the City, and making our crosswalk areas safer remains a priority – this truly is a town best enjoyed on foot,” Keyserling said.

During recent small group meetings looking at ways to make Beaufort a better place as it celebrates its 300th birthday and prepares for its fourth century, a number of residents spoke of the need for improved crosswalks, said Jon Verity, chairman of the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission.

“Some of the things we heard are going to take years to put in place, and probably a sizable investment. Upgrading the crosswalk at Carteret and Port Republic, which is between two very popular restaurants, was an easy and inexpensive fix,” Verity said.

The City recently started a two-year process to jump-start Beaufort’s future through solid and creative planning, redevelopment and infill, all based on the Beaufort Vision Comprehensive Plan of 2009 and new public input. The goal: Create new opportunities to transfer good planning into good redevelopment and investment in Beaufort.

“We’ll continue to work with the City and the (traffic) engineers to see what else we can do to make Beaufort a better town for people to walk to work and to play,” Verity said.

As part of the improved pavement markings on Carteret Street, the S.C. Department of Transportation re-painted the crosswalks last year.

At Bay and Carteret, the traffic signals soon will hang from a new mast rather than strung across on wires. Recent bad weather delayed the work, but crews now are expected to have the intersection’s traffic signals redone by the end of the month, Beaufort City Manager Scott Dadson said.

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