



News Release

For immediate release

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Comprehensive Beaufort parking plan proposed

In a sweeping plan to improve parking opportunities to boost the downtown Beaufort economy, a comprehensive parking program is underway that includes new meters, new meter enforcement, private lots and expanded police patrols of late-night parking areas.

Parking revenues, including fines, are split with 85 percent funding the Beaufort Redevelopment Commission and 15 percent funding Main Street Beaufort, USA. None of the parking revenue goes into the City general fund, according to City Manager Scott Dadson.

“What we’ve done is work very comprehensively with our planners and the public-private partnerships to piece together what used to be a broken-up puzzle called downtown parking,” Dadson said. “This is the whole picture and will benefit the downtown merchants, the Main Street program and the Redevelopment Commission, whose job it is to encourage economic development.”

The Redevelopment Commission’s parking recommendations require review and approval by the Beaufort City Council – possibly later this month. Lanier Parking Solutions, a private company, manages and enforces the City’s parking program. There are 476 parking spaces in the core downtown district.

Highlights of the parking proposal include:

- Install new parking pay stations that accept credit and debit cards

- Maintain 132 coin-operated meters
- Change the hours of parking enforcement to 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., supporting both day and nighttime businesses, vs the current 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. enforcement. Sunday parking still would be free
- Hourly parking rates for meters would increase from 50 cents per hour to \$1
- Fines for parking tickets would rise from \$3 to \$15
- Expanded opportunities for monthly parking rates at City and private lots downtown
- Expanded nighttime police patrols in the downtown business district when restaurant workers leave their jobs and walk to their parked cars

The 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.

The plan also provides for residential parking plans for people living in the New Commons and Historic Point neighborhoods should they see a need for help, Dadson said.

“We continue to work closely with Main Street Beaufort to find ways to help the downtown merchants,” Dadson said. “Having adequate parking spaces for our retailers and restaurants is essential to their success, and that’s the goal of this plan. If we reach the point where homeowners in our downtown need help with parking access, we stand ready to assist.”

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