

D. Paul Sommerville

April 9, 2016

Boundary Street Corridor Groundbreaking

Good morning! My name is Paul Sommerville and I'm the chairman of the Beaufort County Council. I represent District 2, which includes Beaufort, the Air Station area, Lady's Island and Fripp.

Thank you for joining us today for the ceremonial groundbreaking for this important project. The County and the City have been working on reaching this milestone for a decade - lots of planning, review, reviews of planning and grant applications came before today. Now we are underway. Within a few hundred feet of us, workers are building a new and safer intersection at Boundary Street and Robert Smalls Parkway.

Work has begun to move the overhead utility cables into an underground duct bank. That's going to make the road look a lot nicer without overhead lines and the poles. It's also going to improve the stability of our utility infrastructure - because in heavy storms, the lines won't be knocked down.

This is a prime example of our one percent referendum at work. When voters approved the limited one-cent sales tax to upgrade our infrastructure, this is the kind of project the County Council and City Council had in mind. Earning a federal TIGER grant for more than \$12 million helped make this project a reality.

As anyone who has driven to and through Bluffton knows, we've been doing a lot of road improvements in Beaufort County. The Boundary Street Corridor Improvement Project is an essential reinvestment in infrastructure. I know it may look like a mess now with all the safety barrels up, but I am confident we all will be proud of this project when it's done.

Our goal is to make this section of Boundary Street **safer** and to help traffic flow more smoothly. We'll do that through improved intersections with "smart" technology. This will take real time data about traffic flow and translate it into more efficient traffic signals. When you add in the landscaped median, this is going to make Boundary Street a safer and more appealing place for people to shop.

Without the center "suicide lane," we expect this road will be safer and a lot less stressful to navigate.

I want to emphasize a couple of points:

#1, Boundary Street is going to **remain** four lanes when this project is done. There will be two lanes going in each direction - just like there have been.

#2, there **isn't** a traffic circle at Ribaut Road - we took that out of the project several years ago. That intersection at the County Government complex and City Hall will stay a traditional T-intersection with a traffic signal

#3, most of the work on this project will be done without any lane closures. There will be traffic lane shifts, but the entire project crew is very aware of how important this section of road is for traffic flow.

I know from first-hand experience that vehicles get backed up along this stretch of Boundary Street, and it may seem worse since the lanes shifted and we limited the left turns. But even before this work, we had traffic slowdowns during our Lowcountry rush hour. By comparison, on Lady's Island at the Publix intersection, traffic backs up every work day and there isn't any roadwork going on there.

I encourage everyone to be patient and to be extra careful when driving through this work zone. Pay attention. We have a lot of work ahead, but it's going to bring a fantastic result.

Thank you.