

Walhalla receives \$500K for greenway project

BY NORM CANNADA
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WALHALLA — Walhalla city officials announced on Wednesday a \$500,000 federal grant to begin the first phase of an estimated \$5.7 million, multi-year greenway project to connect downtown Walhalla to the Palmetto Trail.

The grant was awarded to Walhalla by the Appalachian Regional Commission to begin Phase 1. City administrator Brent Taylor announced plans for the project a year ago during a Walhalla Partners for Progress meeting. Once completed, the overall project will be a 3.25-mile loop of pedestrian and bicycle paths constructed mostly on North and South Broad streets.

When the plan was announced last year, Taylor said the greenway

The trail is expected to include public art and interactive features while expanding the city's beautification program.

project will be divided into seven phases and will take "several years" to complete, adding the city was seeking grants and private donations to pay for it.

The initial grant provides for construction of a 4,240-linear-square-foot bike and pedestrian path beginning on Coffee Road and ending near the Walhalla Depot, according to a

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PROJECT: Work on Phase 1 expected to begin in 2021

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news release.

"We needed that to get something started," Taylor said of the grant. "Without that, we couldn't start it at all. This, we believe, will be the catalyst for other fundraising efforts as well to go to it."

The trail is expected to include public art and interactive features, while expanding the city's beautification program by adding an "arboretum-like component," according to the news release.

"This is important because we will now have the component necessary to make Walhalla the terminus in the Upstate for the Palmetto Trail," Taylor said. "This, along with Stumphouse Mountain Bike Park, is going to make us a trail town destination. The beauty of this greenway is a person will not

have to be a mountain biker to enjoy it. The features along the greenway will allow the visitor or the year-round resident to enjoy spending the day in Walhalla."

Walhalla City Councilwoman Sarai Melendez, who chairs the council's recreation committee, said she was "excited" to hear the grant was awarded and credited the work of those on council before she took office in January in getting the grant.

"The hard work was being done already, and I am just very happy to hear that the city of Walhalla is one of the recipients for this," she said, adding she hopes the city will receive other grants for recreation projects in the future.

Taylor said he expects work on Phase 1 to begin in 2021.