

Westminster gets grant for downtown

BY ANDREA KELLEY
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WESTMINSTER — The city of Westminster can check another item off the list in its quest to revitalize downtown, thanks to a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission.

The city was awarded a \$32,000 grant recently to develop a master plan

for the downtown area — which includes Main Street, the hill next to the depot and the former school across from the M.D. Cleveland Civic Center.

The grant required a 100 percent match, so the city has \$64,000 at its disposal for the project.

City administrator Kevin Bronson said the city will hire a planning con-

sultant with the funds to get the public's input and craft design options.



Bronson

“The consultant would come in and ask people to come by and say, ‘What would you do here? What do you think would be a good idea?’ and then listen to

the various ideas,” he said. “Then synthesize that into either some type of design or idea, and then give that back to us as part of the master plan.”

Bronson used the area next to the depot as an example.

“I’ve heard from quite a few folks throughout my tenure here that they

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revitalization plan

‘The hope ... is that you improve your downtown streetscape, and you attract more commercialized activity in your downtown buildings because it looks more desirable.’

Kevin Bronson
Westminster city administrator

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would like to see that dressed up some way or another,” he said. “Is it just landscaping it? Is it closing off the vehicular access that goes under the train trestle and doing something else right there? ... What else could it be from what it currently is?”

“There’s always the option to just say, ‘Well, we think the best thing is to leave it like it is,’” he added. “I would hope, at a minimum, we would have a way to landscape

ings because it looks more desirable,” he said. “In a lot of ways, the master plan lays the groundwork for a lot of things that can come next, if we’re using the state and the federal agencies for funding.”

Many of the grants require a match from the city, but the plan is to pay for

say three times, I thought, ‘OK, I need to get a master plan.’”

The plan can be incorporated into grant applications, which will prove there’s “support from the elected body and the citizens,” he said.

Bronson didn’t have a timeline for when the master plan would be completed.

‘It’s a planning study — it’s not a construction job — so my hope is that there shouldn’t be a materials shortage