

## Eight N. Main store fronts will receive façade forgivable loans



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By Jennifer Emert - email

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) - The push to make Main Street in Columbia more attractive to new business continues. By next week, work on at least one of 22 businesses getting a make over will start. It's all part of façade forgivable loans granted to eight store fronts.

Appliance Sales & Services in the 2600 block of Main Street has seen business and the street change in the 30 years they've been there. The push for improvements is finally changing the areas for the better.

"You see a lot of people walking now, stuff like that," said store owner Merwin Woodie. "They're walking their dogs, they're walking up and down the street."

The front of this store will also see a change once the final façade plan get approval from the city.

"We're doing awnings, changing the windows a little bit and then signage too," said Merwin.

However, business owners say Main Street needs more foot traffic.

"It would be nice to have some more restaurants out this way some things like that," said Bobby Woodie.

They say it's taking longer for improvement to take affect because for so long Main Street was simply overlooked, allowing many businesses to simply give up and move out, leaving dozens of vacancies.

"They've concentrated on Gervais Street down in the Vista area and just let this place go seems to me like," said Bobby. "They haven't concentrated on North Main like they should."

They're happy the focus has finally come their way, hopefully not too late.

"Hopefully it will work, I guess it's a gamble like anything else," said Bobby.

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