MEMORANDUM

May 1st, 2024

To: Planning Board
From: Planning Staff

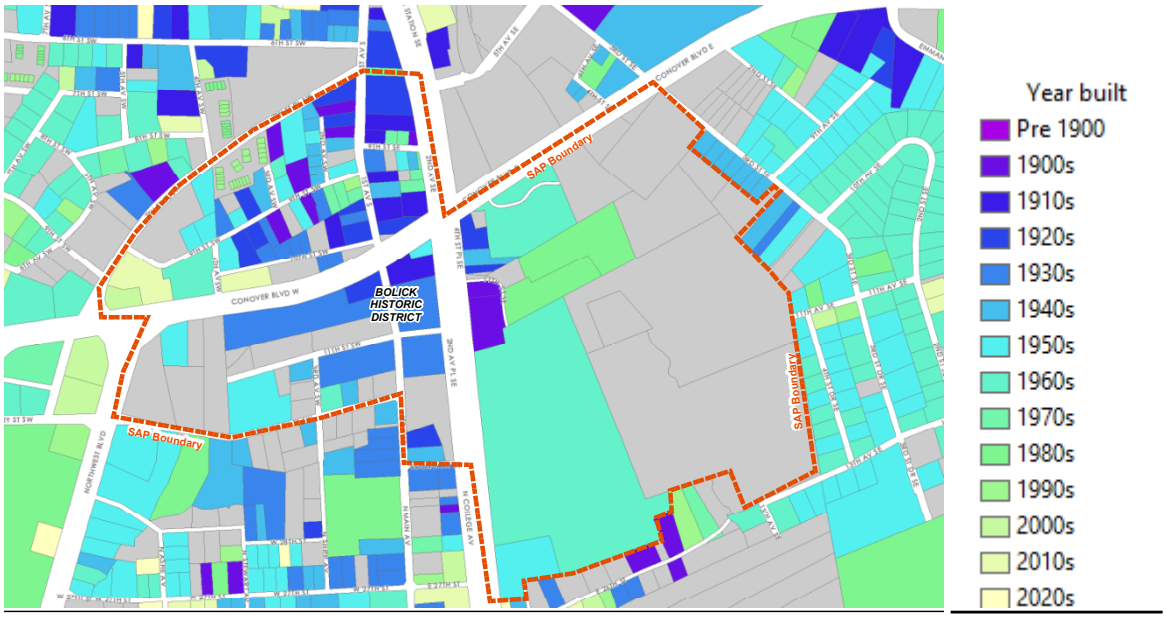
RE: Southern Conover Small Area Plan (SAP)

Background:

The Bolick Historic District was nominated to be added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1990, based in large part to the industrial contribution of the Bolick & Sons Company buggy works, begun in 1883. The structures in the district are comprised of the remaining industrial buildings and several domestic buildings.

In 2019, staff was tasked with finding a way to help preserve the historic nature of this part of Conover. Conover does not have a Historic Preservation Committee, but the City consulted with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) to help formulate a "SAP" that would help guide new development and redevelopment in this area to help preserve the elements that make it historic.

With the help of the WPCOG, staff expanded the plan area to adjacent areas outside of the immediate historic district. These areas include other industrial areas owned and developed by the Bolick family in the twentieth century for furniture manufacturing, like the Southern Furniture property. The area was expanded to include the primarily residential area north of Conover Blvd. W, along 1st Ave. S. This residential area has a cluster of some of Conover's older houses, primarily simple dwellings, but having many significant architectural features of their time.



Some transition from residential to commercial or office use has already occurred in this area and is likely to continue. The viability of the old Yount Cotton Mill to continue as an industrial use seems limited, and this plan points to that property as an opportunity convert the property to a more "productive" use while preserving the

historic building. Other suggestions for currently undeveloped areas could potentially add more access to the Southeast neighborhood as well as create more routes to Conover City Park.

This plan focuses primarily on finding ways to increase attractive housing options in this area while maintaining the historic nature of the district. It also focuses on redevelopment and new development opportunities that could create more commercial choices and community areas.

Staff Recommendation:

This SAP will help act as a guide for future development and redevelopment in this area. City staff and the WPCOG both recognize an intense need for more housing in the region in general and Conover in particular. This area of the city, situated in between downtown and a busy shopping area along Conover Blvd W could be ripe for new development, both residential and commercial. For this reason, the SAP was created to help guide future development.

The SAP, using the WPCOG's recommendations to help accommodate new varieties of housing, particularly in a more urban environment, provides guidelines for housing design that will help maintain the character of the existing development. Staff expects that many of these suggested changes will be adopted more widely with the updated Unified Development Ordinance over the next twelve to eighteen months.

In addition to the plan itself, the Conceptual Land Development Plan map incorporated in the 2003 (2022 Update) Land Development Plan (LDP) will be updated as well. This plan does not change the current zoning of any parcels, but the changes in the LDP map will put any future requests more in line with the adopted SAP. This document and its guiding principles should be considered while making decisions on development proposals within the SAP area.

Staff recommends that the Southern Conover Small Area Plan be adopted and the Conceptual Land Development Plan map be amended as proposed.