

# Big plans for Conover Station

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With renovations to the 92-year-old former Warlong Glove Manufacturing Co. building scheduled to be complete in July, Conover is on track to create a destination mixed-use facility called Conover Station.

Already, city officials are recruiting office-space users to the former textile mill complex, which is being remade with a \$2.1 million federal grant. Next up is an effort to bring passenger rail and a regional busline service to the 27-acre former Broyhill land near downtown.

Greenway Public Transportation will move to the 25,000-square-foot Warlong building from offices west of Conover. The bus system, formerly called the Western Piedmont Transit Authority, operates routes in Hickory, Newton, Conover and Taylorsville.

“We feel very fortunate to have all these partners to come to the table early,” says Donald Duncan, Conover city manager.

The depot section of the building would serve as a train stop on the planned Western North Carolina Passenger Rail Corridor. It would connect Salisbury with Asheville, with a stop in Statesville.

Officials of the rail division of the N.C. Department of Transportation are pitching for federal funding for



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the 135-mile rail link. Conover Station will likely reserve about 3,200 square feet for the depot.

Duncan hints that Conover is working to add a manufacturing advice center to the project. Last month, Conover Mayor Lee Moritz Jr. issued a statement about cultivating a new form of small manufacturing in and around the city. “The catalyst for the new manufacturing economy is the Manufacturing Solutions Center,” Moritz said. That center, managed by Dan St. Louis, works with small production companies to plan, make

and market their products.

The Manufacturing Solutions Center is now based at Catawba Valley Community College.

More than five years after Conover bought the former Broyhill site, the first occupant will likely be the Conover branch of the Catawba County Library System. The branch, now housed in the basement of the Conover City Hall, would take about 3,600 square feet in the Warlong building adjacent to downtown Conover, on Third Street NW near U.S. Highway 70.