AIR TRANSPORTATION

The majority of air traffic in The Winston-Salem Urban Area departs or originates at the Smith Reynolds Airport. This airport, operated by the Airport Commission of Forsyth County, serves the local citizenry as a general aviation airport. The airport is located about three miles northeast of downtown Winston-Salem with reasonably good access to US 52. Prior to the opening of Piedmont Triad International Airport in neighboring Guilford County, Smith Reynolds Airport served as the regional passenger air carrier for northwestern North Carolina with more than 33,400 daily passengers in 1983. After 1984, daily passenger volumes decreased to less than 3,000 due to the increased service at Piedmont Triad International Airport. Today, there are no commuter flights originating from Smith Reynolds Airport.

Historical photo of Smith Reynolds Airport

Liberty Street provides the local street access to the airport. Regional access is provided from US 52 at two interchanges, Liberty Street and Akron Drive. The Winston-Salem Transit Authority provides public transportation services to the airport vicinity via Route 9. The closest bus stop is located at Liberty Street and Akron Drive, which is a short walk to the passenger terminal building. Because there is no commuter service located at the airport, employees are the primary users of bus service.

Planned improvements for the airport include the rehabilitation of the main runway, additional corporate hangers, and automobile parking, taxiway relocations, and the construction of new Passenger and Air Carrier Terminals. The capacities of the existing roadway facilities accessing the airport are considered to be adequate to serve the projected traffic volumes through 2030. Good access to US 52 is considered to be critical to the future success of Smith Reynolds Airport. In the future Smith Reynolds Airport would like to see the return of commuter flights in order to better serve the people of the Winston-Salem Urban Area.

There are also multiple studies and projects that are currently being conducted on US 52. These studies and projects are being conducted in order to try and improve safety and alleviate congestion, both of which are current problems on US 52. Recommendations from the studies and construction improvements will improve accessibility to the airport.

Liberty Street is a Revitalization Corridor Project that provides for road widening, landscaping, and sidewalks from Seventh Street north to the Smith Reynolds Airport. Currently the project has been completed to Eighteenth; the remaining portion is on hold until the US 52 studies and projects are further along. The role of air freight at Smith Reynolds Airport and industrial development nearby is discussed in the Freight Planning section of this document.

VEHICLE FOR HIRE

Vehicle for hire (taxi cab and limousine) service is an integral part of urban transportation in Winston-Salem. The City of Winston-Salem regulates the industry with regard to safety, service levels, fares, and the number of cabs authorized.

The City of Winston-Salem grants franchise agreements to companies that agree to operate according to the rules and regulations published in the City Code. The City also conducts periodic assessments of the number of vehicles for hire and the service levels they provide in an effort to determine the optimum number of vehicles for the marketplace.

There are currently 32 authorized companies operating in Winston-Salem; 22 limousine companies, 9 taxi cab companies, and one horse carriage company. At the present time there are 275 cabs authorized to operate in the City of Winston-Salem. On a given day about 60% of these cabs are in service. Winston-Salem currently has .92 cabs per 1000 population which is average for cities in North Carolina.

Because the City views vehicle for hire service as an important urban transportation need it will continue to monitor and regulate various aspects of the industry to assure this element meets the transportation needs of its constituents.

INTERCITY BUS TRANSPORTATION

One bus carrier, Greyhound Lines, Inc. currently serves the Winston-Salem Urban Area. The schedule contains 17 daily arrivals and departures with service to the northeast, midwest, south and southeast. Services to and from Winston-Salem includes; New York, Detroit, Cleveland, Atlanta, Jacksonville, Knoxville, Raleigh, and Charlotte.

Greyhound Lines, Inc. not only carries passengers, but also packages. Greyhound Package Xpress (GPX) piggybacks on the intercity bus services to deliver packages throughout the US. GPX works with independent couriers to get packages from bus terminals to recipients' doors. Customers include companies from industries such as food, environmental and medical, printing, and technology.

Currently, Greyhound Lines, Inc. operates out of the multi-modal Transportation Center in downtown Winston-Salem. Winston-Salem's Clark Campbell Multimodal Transportation Center is located at the corner of Fifth, Trade, and Liberty streets. While its exterior compliments the Millennium Center building nearby, the Transportation Center's contemporary design features attractive and inviting open space for pedestrians and bus passengers. Sixteen covered bus parking bays adjacent to a glassed interior waiting area provide passengers the comfort of waiting indoors or outdoors and the convenience of boarding buses in a sheltered space.

STREETCAR

As part of the City of Winston-Salem Strategic Plan, the Winston-Salem Department of Transportation has reviewed the viability of light rail service for the city. As the review explored different light rail options, the Urban Streetcar has emerged as promising technology. Streetcar supports other parts of the Strategic Plan especially with regard to the development of downtown. Streetcars cost about half as much per mile as a traditional light rail system, they have been a catalyst for new development, they can be funded by public/private partnerships, they have been credited for creating more livable urban areas and integrate well with PART's plans for commuter rail in the area.

In March of 2003, HDR/Streetcar partnership conducted a week long workshop to evaluate the potential for using streetcars in Winston-Salem. The workshop was also geared to evaluating the feasibility of such a system. Their conclusions follow:

- Streetcars fit the scale of Winston-Salem streetscape.
- Streetcars can replace shuttle services currently in use.
- Streetcars can link major activity centers.
- Streetcars can stimulate infill and revitalization at a pedestrian and urban scale.
- There are no overriding physical features that would preclude the design, construction and operation of streetcars along selected route in Winston-Salem.

The HDR/Streetcar partnership study suggested several possible streetcar routes including:

- The study suggested starting with an initial route to serve downtown on 4th & 5th streets linking the Government/Employment Center/ Research Park on the east with the Wake Forest University Medical Center/Baptist Hospital on the west.
- A 2.5 mile connection from downtown to Old Salem, Salem College and the School of the Arts.
- A route that runs east from the Research Park to East Winston and Winston-Salem State Univ.
- A route that runs from 5th Street north to the Coliseum area and Wake Forest University.

Presently, the City is examining possible funding sources included in a detailed Streetcar Feasibility Study. The City of Winston-Salem contracted with HDR Engineering, Inc. of the Carolinas for a Streetcar Feasibility Study. The feasibility study was completed in October 2006. (See the Appendix for a slide show of the Streetcar proposal for Winston-Salem.)