

## 2.0 Project Description and Purpose

The City of Winston-Salem is experiencing a resurgence of interest and investment, particularly in and around the central business district, with a variety of efforts to revitalize and redevelop the downtown core and surrounding communities. The goal of these efforts is to stimulate and intensify development through the strategic integration of land use and transportation and transit facilities.

The City of Winston-Salem Department of Transportation retained RS&H, Inc. to conduct a more detailed study of the portion of the US 52 corridor that is located in the downtown Winston-Salem area. The *Phase 2 - US 52 Land Use & Multi-modal Transportation Circulation Plan* focuses on the approximate two-mile segment of the US 52 corridor located between Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and Vargrave Street and includes the center city and the surrounding communities.

Because of the importance of US 52 to the Winston-Salem area, the proposed reconstruction of the highway must be integrated with the multiple development proposals in and around the downtown core of Winston-Salem and the corresponding transportation network of the area. This Phase 2 planning effort evaluates the future transportation infrastructure needs within the study area based on an analysis of the existing transportation system and the projected travel demand resulting from the population and employment growth associated with the major developments planned for the area. The Phase 2 Plan also recommends strategies for improved traffic operations and circulation patterns for the study area that are coordinated with the anticipated capacity needs generated by the overall growth forecasted for the City.

### 2.1 Phase 2 Study Area

The Phase 2 study area as shown in Figure 2-1 is generally bounded by Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to the north and east, Stadium Drive and Diggs Boulevard to the south, and Cherry/Marshall Streets to the west.



US 52 passes through downtown Winston-Salem and provides accessibility to the central business district and to the regional highway system, including Business I-40 (US 421), which runs east to west through the study area. The US 52 highway is important to downtown businesses and travelers, providing north-south accessibility between I-77 to the north, and I-85 and I-40 to the south.

Within the portion of the study area north of Business I-40, downtown Winston-Salem is the center for employment. Located west of US 52, the downtown includes municipal offices, major banks, and the headquarters for a tobacco manufacturer. Downtown Winston-Salem has a grid system with north-south and east-west running roads and many one-way streets. East Winston, on the eastern side of US 52, is more residential with a grid street system that is bounded by US 52, Business I-40, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

Within the portion of the study area south of Business I-40, the transportation system provides targeted connections between more expansive land uses. Here, the Old Salem Historic District is one of the earliest Moravian communities in North Carolina and has become an attractive tourist destination. The Salem

Academy & College, a liberal arts college, is situated east of the Old Salem Historic District. To the east of US 52, Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) plays an important role in the community and is one of the 16 constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina.

The Center City area is the downtown Winston-Salem Commercial District. It is intended to be the focus of development in the County and the area where the most intense urban development has taken and will take place. The Center City is a major employment center with significant corporate and government employers. It is intended to be a hub for government services, banking, medical research and other services. In the future, the Center City is also a focal point for the arts, cultural activities and the hotel, convention and tourism business. It has a rich mix of office, service, entertainment, retail and residential uses. The health and vitality of the Center City contributes in a major way to the City's regional and national image.

### 2.2 Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the Phase 2 project is to provide the downtown core of Winston-Salem and its environs with a multi-modal transportation plan that will serve the long-range needs of the area travelers and is well coordinated with the major development plans that are proposed for the City.

The overall goals of the Phase 2 Plan are summarized below:

- coordinated planning of the major transportation initiatives such as the proposed reconstruction of the US 52 and Business I-40 highway corridors including modification of the interchanges in the downtown area; the potential transit facilities services including commuter rail and a streetcar system currently being evaluated that would serve the regional and local transportation needs of the City;
- develop a unified theme for future improvements along the US 52 corridor that will create an identifiable image for the City;
- revitalize and transform the US 52 study corridor through the strategic integration of landscape architecture and streetscape planning for the highway corridor and major cross-streets within the study area;

- offer innovative techniques for urban beautification design guidelines that would be coordinated among the planned re-developments such as the Piedmont Triad Research Park (PTRP), the downtown master planning efforts, the expansion of the WSSU and the redevelopment of the Happy Hill Gardens and Southeast Gateway communities.



As a continuation of the earlier plan efforts for the US 52 corridor, one of the major components of the Phase 2 project is the creation of a urban design plan that provides for the continuity of physical improvements for the defined study segment of the US 52 corridor and several major cross-streets. These segments, while distinctive in their needs and uses, require unifying design elements to carry a common theme throughout the US 52 corridor and the Phase 2 study area. Urban design principles offer the tools needed to shape US 52 into a gateway corridor to the Winston-Salem community. In this way, US 52 can be better integrated with the center city and provide a sense of the local identity for travelers entering the city.

The transportation element of the Phase 2 plan begins with an assessment of the existing and future traffic capacity conditions within the study area based on current and forecasted land use and proposed developments. This analysis is the basis for the recommendations for roadway design and circulation improvements for both the US 52 corridor and the surrounding street network.

The Phase 2 Plan, as summarized in this document, is the next logical step towards achieving the vision of planned quality growth along the US 52 corridor and surrounding study area which includes the City's downtown core, and portions of the East Winston, Southeast and South Central areas of the City.

Figure 2-1. Phase 2 Study Area

