

## II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The proposed Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Extension is identified on the **Winston-Salem Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan**<sup>2</sup> (shown on Figure 2). The proposed extension is designated to be a major east-west thoroughfare which will improve traffic flow and connectivity in the project vicinity. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Extension is also expected to alleviate through traffic that is currently accessing the Historic West End District to get to the downtown area, making the West End District safer and more pedestrian friendly.

A **Constructability Assessment** was prepared by Wilbur Smith Associates in 2002. The findings of this assessment revealed that no project stopping issues were identified and recommended that the City of Winston-Salem move forward with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Extension project.

## III. PURPOSE AND NEED

Based on discussions with City Staff, the vision of improved east-west interconnectivity for this area, and the understanding of the City's development goals, there are several factors to be considered in realizing the purpose and need of the proposed Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Extension.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Extension is currently included on the **Winston-Salem Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan**<sup>2</sup>. Currently, the routing of traffic from Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to the Reynolda Road / Northwest Boulevard area is not a direct connection. Traffic must travel approximately 1550 feet north on N. Cherry Street before continuing west on W. Northwest Boulevard, which then intersects with Thurmond Street / N. Broad Street and then continues on to the west towards the intersection of Reynolda Road. The proposed thoroughfare will allow for a direct connection from Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to Reynolda Road.

The project team determined that the Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Extension is needed to:

- Provide an alternative access to the Winston-Salem Central Business District (CBD) from the northwest.
- Promote connectivity and accessibility; particularly for fire, police, and other emergency services.
- Complete an important piece of an arterial loop around the downtown area.
- Provide opportunities for economic development and re-development along the corridor.



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FEASIBILITY STUDY  
MLK JR. DRIVE EXTENSION  
WINSTON SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

CITY OF WINSTON-SALEM  
THOROUGHFARE PLAN

FIGURE: 2

SCALE: NONE