

# chapter one introduction

## 1.1 Scope and Purpose

In August of 2004, the City of Winston-Salem contracted with Greenways Incorporated (GWI) to create a Bicycle Master Plan for the Winston-Salem Urban Area. The project area includes all of the incorporated municipalities in Forsyth County as well as the City of King in Stokes County, the Town of Bermuda Run in Davie County, and some portions of northern Davidson County.

The planning process took nine months to complete and included regular input from a number of local advisory committees and technical committees related to transportation planning in general and bicycle planning specifically. The City of Winston-Salem worked closely with the GWI consulting team to ensure significant levels of public input including two public open house opportunities and an area-wide survey of the bicycle interests and uses of area residents.

This document presents the findings of these surveys and public input sessions along with an examination of the existing bicycling conditions in the Winston-Salem Area. Also included is a set of phased recommendations for updating the current system to meet the future needs of the area's cycling public. The recommendations include actual physical changes as well as policy changes and program possibilities.

## 1.2 Benefits of Bicycling

For many years, small and large communities across America and throughout the world have been implementing strategies for serving the bicycle needs of their communities. They do this because of their obligations to promote safe travel and recreational opportunities for their residents and because of growing awareness of the many benefits of a bicycling. These



*Photo by Christine Rucker Photography.*



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benefits can include increased health and fitness, additional recreation and transportation options, lower levels of traffic congestion on area roadways, improved air quality from lower rates of vehicle emissions, and increased sense of community among residents that experience their community at bicycle-scale.

### ***1.2.1 Increased Health and Fitness***

Obesity from poor eating habits and lack of exercise has become a critical issue in America today. Our unhealthy lifestyles lead to increased rates of many diseases. The increased rates of disease reduce overall quality of life for individuals and lead to increased medical costs for families, companies, and local governments. Increasing our activity levels is a crucial part of any strategy directed at improving overall community health, and bicycling is an excellent way to increase regular activity levels.

### ***1.2.2 Environmental Improvements***

When people choose to get out of their cars and onto their bicycles, they make a positive environmental impact. They reduce their use of gasoline which then reduces the volume of pollutants in the air. Other impacts can be a reduction in overall neighborhood noise levels and improvements in local water quality as fewer automobile-related discharges wind up in the local rivers, streams, and lakes.

### ***1.2.3 Transportation Benefits***

In 2001, The National Household Travel Survey found that roughly 40% of all trips taken by car are less than 2 miles. By taking these short trips on a bicycle, rather than in a car, citizens can have a substantial impact on local traffic and congestion. Additionally, many people do not have access to a vehicle or are not able to drive. An improved bicycle network provides greater and safer mobility for these residents.

### ***1.2.4 Quality of Life***

Many factors go into determining the quality of life for the citizens of a community: the local education system, prevalence of quality employment opportunities, and affordability of housing are all items that are commonly cited. Increasingly though, citizens claim

that access to alternative means of transportation and access to quality recreational opportunities such as parks, trails, greenways, and bicycle routes, are important factors for them in determining their overall pleasure within their community. Communities that are attractive for residents can also attract new businesses and industries, and in turn, additional residents.

### ***1.2.5 Summary and Additional Resources***

Many private and public organizations have completed studies and surveys that show the many benefits of bicycling. The ideas presented above are only a small sample of the information that is available. If you would like to learn more about the benefits of bicycling, the internet can be a great source of information. Two good starting points are:

[http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/slp/bike\\_bib.htm](http://www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/slp/bike_bib.htm)

This site is maintained by the State and Local Policy Program of the Hubert Humphry Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. Their website lists dozens of studies related to economic, social, and natural resource impacts associated with cycling.

<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/pp/benefits/>

This website is provided by the Pedestrian and Bicycling Information Center based in Chapel Hill, NC

## **1.3 Prior Efforts**

This Bicycle Master Plan is part of the City of Winston-Salem's ongoing effort to provide safe and enjoyable bicycling opportunities to the residents of the metropolitan area. Earlier plan and map efforts have had a significant impact on the region's physical bicycling infrastructure and the plans and documents that guide the community's growth. Before implementing a new bicycle plan, it is important to understand the history of bicycle planning in the area.

The State of North Carolina's Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has provided funding assistance to create this plan, as well as the previous plans and physical bicycle facilities. The Bicycle and Bikeway Act of 1974 directs the NCDOT to assist local govern-



ments with the development of bicycle programs, construct a statewide bikeway system, develop policies and standards for facilities, and develop safety training programs. In 1992, Winston-Salem and Forsyth County worked with the NCDOT Bicycle Program to create the community’s first public Bike Map. In addition to the map, bike route signs were posted on roadways to mark these routes. The new bicycle network described in this document recommends changes and additions to the 1992 bike routes.

In more recent years, the City and the residents of the community have created other important documents to assist and plan for the community’s cyclists. In 2000, the book *Great Bike Rides In and Around Winston-Salem* was published. It describes commonly used routes for cyclists who are interested in cycling outside the routes shown on the 1992 Bike Map.

In January 2003, the community completed a Greenway Plan that illustrates a number of critical routes that could accommodate shared use between cyclists, pedestrians, and other users. Additionally, the City/County Comprehensive Plan, or Legacy Development Guide, has specific sections that directly relate to planning for bicycle users, including the chapters on parks, open space, greenways, and transportation alternatives.

Local communities have also played an important role in planning bicycle improvements. The TAC (Transportation Advisory Committee) and the BAC (Bicycle Advisory Committee) worked together in the early part of the decade to create a set of priority bicycle and pedestrian project requests that were included in the 2003 Transportation Needs Report.

Finally, the 2025 Multi-Modal Long Range Transportation Plan includes a Bicycle Plan that is the result of input from the community and from transportation planners in the area.

Combined, these documents, plans, maps, and facilities represent a continued interest in the community in supporting bicycle transportation and a commitment

to integrating bicycle needs into the physical development of the community’s transportation infrastructure.

## 1.4 Vision and Goals

The goal of improving bicycling in the Winston-Salem area has been established in many of the regions official planning documents. Listed below are a sample of statements found in those documents.

- *To promote safe and effective bicycling in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County for all types of cyclists and to promote the safe interaction of motorists and cyclists. (Winston-Salem DOT, Transportation Element, Bicycle Facilities Plan)*
- *Decrease reliance on the automobile and reduce traffic congestion by investing in attractive modes of transportation such as bus, light rail, bicycle, and improved pedestrian facilities. (Summary of the Legacy Comprehensive Plan, Legacy Principles)*
- *Develop a system of parks and natural areas connected by a greenway and open space network. (Summary of the Legacy Comprehensive Plan, Legacy Principles)*
- *Create a bikeway/sidewalk/greenway network that is an integral part of the transportation system and provides an alternative means of transportation as well as recreation opportunities. (Legacy Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Alternatives Section)*
- *Clearly marked and separated bike lanes on streets, bike trails, convenient bike parking, showers at destinations, and transit equipped to carry bikes are the kinds of enhancements that would provide an improved bicycling environment. (Legacy Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Alternatives Section)*
- *To facilitate the use of all modes of transportation, streets and highways must be designed to accommodate the various users by providing facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users. (Legacy Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Alternatives Section)*



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- *Increase public awareness of the legal rights and responsibilities of bicyclists and motorists; Create and expand on and off-road cycling opportunities; Improve the health of the residents of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. (Goals of the Bicycle Advisory Committee)*

- *Our mission is to move people and goods safely and efficiently on the surface transportation system in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County. We aspire to plan, design, construct and operate our system so that congestion, delay and traffic accidents are minimized while transportation choices are maximized. (Goals/Mission of City DOT)*

Taken together, and combined with the goals articulated by the participants at the fall 2004 public workshop, a vision of what the community wants to achieve becomes apparent:

### ***Vision Statement of the Winston-Salem Urban Area Bicycle Plan***

*In an integrated and thoughtful manner, create a safe and effective system of bicycle facilities that links together existing resources and destinations, supports alternatives to automobile travel, increases recreation opportunities, and provides improved options for advancing the community's mobility, health, and quality of life.*

Many types of cyclists can be seen in Winston-Salem. This planning effort is designed to improve the opportunities for each of them.



20th Street



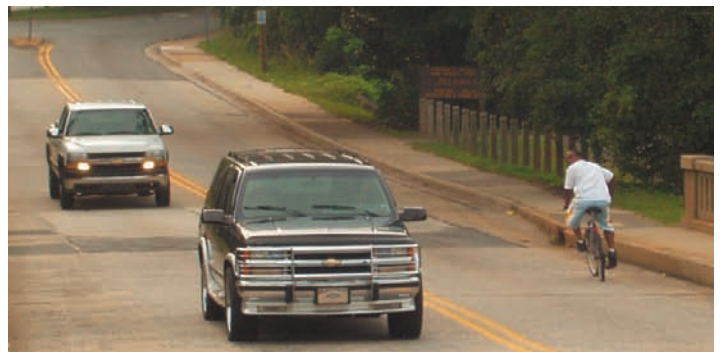
Shallowford Road



Liberty Street



Old Greensboro Road



WSTA Transit Center

