



City of Winston-Salem City Council
Council Agenda Item Summary

Title	Resolution Approving Changes to the Winston-Salem Transit Authority Route Network as Identified in the Winston-Salem Transit Authority Route Study
City Council Committee	Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date	March 9, 2026
Staff Lead (Presenter)	Kelly Garvin, Assistant Director of Transportation
Department Head	Jeff Fansler, Director of Transportation
City Manager/ACM	Aaron King, ACM

Agenda Item Summary

Recommended Council Action	Resolution Approval
Suggested Action/ Motion Options	Motion to Approve Resolution for Additional Changes to the Winston-Salem Transit Authority Route Network as Identified in the Winston-Salem Transit Authority Route Study
Strategic Focus Area	Economic Prosperity
Strategic Plan Objective	EP2: Improving Economic Mobility and Reducing Poverty
Anticipated Fiscal Impact	Fiscal Impact Anticipated: See Analysis in Summary

Summary of Information

The Winston-Salem Department of Transportation (WSDOT) recommends advancing a major strategic shift in FY27 to align the Winston-Salem Transit Authority (WSTA) network more fully with the adopted WSTA Vision Network. This shift is designed to strengthen connections to key employment centers, modernize service delivery, and significantly improve overall system performance. The recommendation reflects several years of technical analysis, public engagement, and policy development focused on building a more reliable, equitable, and economically impactful transit system.

In 2020, HDR was selected to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of WSTA’s fixed-route network. In partnership with City staff, HDR analyzed route performance, identified critical service gaps, and developed a set of Service and Amenity Standards—approved by City Council in 2023—to guide long-term system improvements. Using these standards, HDR proposed a suite of service changes aimed at improving reliability, increasing frequency, and expanding equitable access to jobs and essential services.

In spring 2025, WSDOT implemented an initial round of service adjustments.



Vision: To be a premier city in the region providing world-class amenities while retaining a sense of charm and hospitality
Mission: To provide impactful services that enhance the quality of life for current and future generations
Values: Teamwork * Responsibility * Respect * Integrity * Customer Service

These changes served as a proof of concept, demonstrating that the Vision Network framework can deliver measurable improvements when resources are strategically reallocated. Early results show that higher-frequency corridors and simplified routing patterns are resonating with riders, improving travel times, and boosting system performance. Building on this success, the WSDOT recommends a bold, data-driven reallocation of service hours in FY27. This includes eliminating lower-performing routes and reinvesting those hours into higher-demand corridors that better reflect current travel patterns and employment needs. Additional enhancements include the introduction of two new crosstown routes, branded as WSTA-X, and a microtransit zone to improve coverage and flexibility. Collectively, these changes are designed to create a more efficient, job-focused network that reduces travel times and expands access to opportunity.

Proposed FY27 Service Changes

Frequency Improvements:

- Increase bus frequency from 60 minutes to 30/20 minutes on Routes 81, 86, 89, 92, 93, 96, 103, 105

Route Changes:

- Modify Routes 87, 93, and 104 to improve travel speed
- Eliminate Routes 82, 88, 97, 101, 102, 108, 109

New Service:

- WSTA-X, North, your premiere job line connecting Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center through the Hanes Mill area.
- WSTA-X, South, your premiere job line connecting Salem Gardens to Hanes Mall.
- One Microtransit zone replacing route 97

Public input is currently underway and includes the following outreach effort:

- Three in-person meetings: February 24, 2026, March 4, 2026, and March 5, 2026
- One all day pop-up meeting at the Clack Campbell Transportation Center: February 25, 2026
- One Virtual meeting: February 23, 2026
- A comprehensive survey opened on February 16, 2026 through March 24, 2026

A summary of the initial feedback and comments is detailed in attachment A. A public hearing is scheduled during the regular meeting of the Winston-Salem City Council on March 23, 2026 at 6:00pm.

Proposed implementation plan

Staff recommends approval of these initial service changes as an essential step toward realizing the broader vision for the WSTA network and service delivery.

Analysis of Fiscal Impact

The proposed routing changes will have an increase to the WSTA operating budget for FY 2026-27 and subsequent years; however, those increases will be mostly offset by additional federal funding (FTA 5307 adjustments). Local revenue sources (i.e., the property tax rate) will not need to be readjusted, and future year property tax support is in-line with current multi-year projections, which do not currently recommend a future rate increase.

As part of the larger WSTA vision, the WSDOT intends to apply for federal funding for an increased micro-transit pilot program. It is expected that program would provide funding for up to three years, at which point, if successful, the Mayor and City Council would need to identify additional local funding to ensure long-term sustainability of the program. Estimated costs for the program could be approximately \$800,000 per year, which would represent a tax rate increase of 0.2 cents per one hundred dollars of assessed value.

Attachments

Resolution

Summary of public comments and feedback
WSTA 2026 Service Change Presentation

Committee Action	COW 3/9/2026
For:	Against:
Remarks: Approved Unanimously	