

# Chapter 8

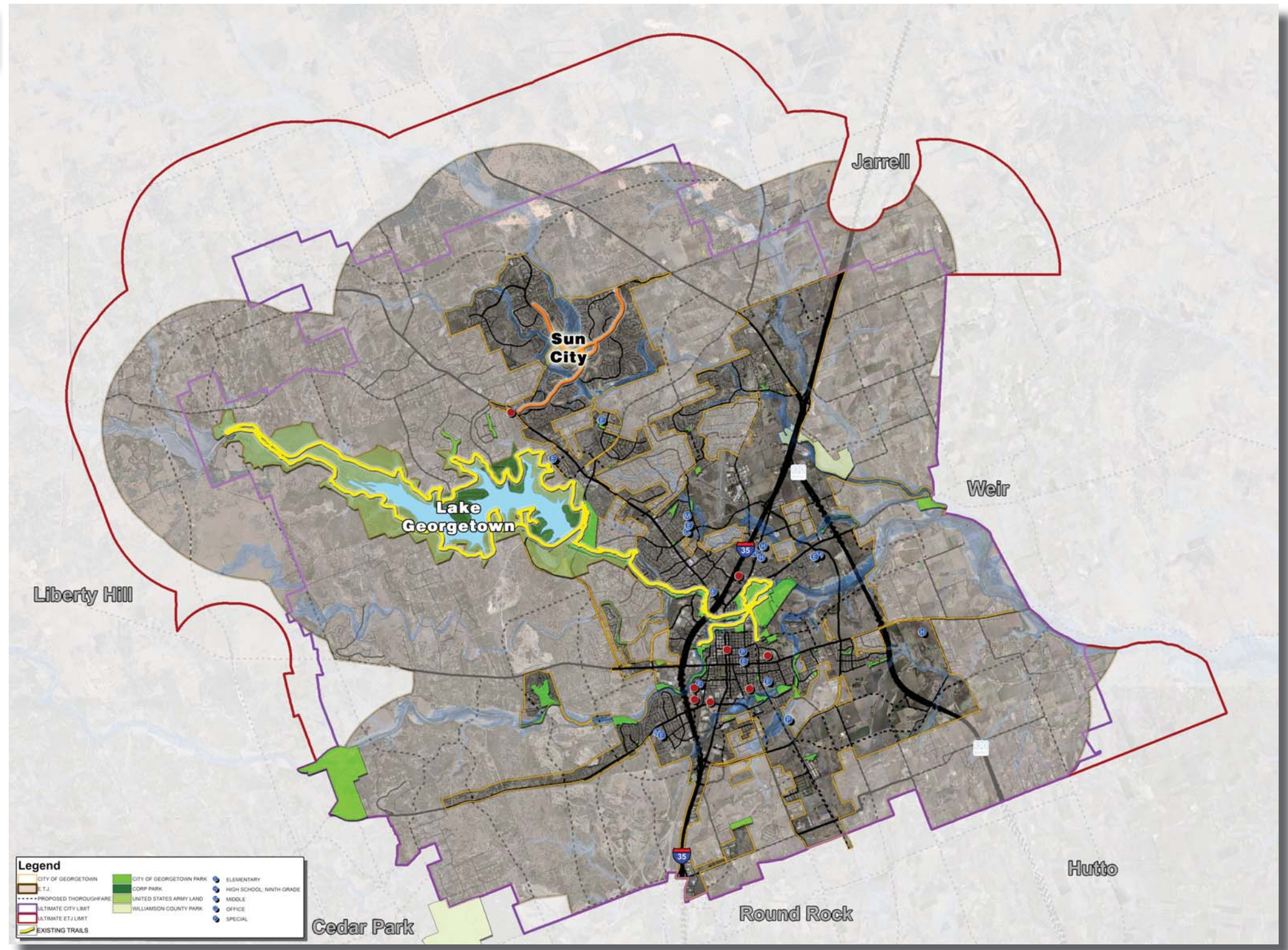
## Trail Master Plan Recommendations

*“A walkway system can be a showcase of how existing features in a landscape — an abandoned railroad right-of-way, utility corridors, city sidewalks, a canal towpath, a city dock — can be thoughtfully adapted to form a unified and useful outdoor space. It creates a public environment where people want to gather, explore, and learn. That promotes conservation at its most basic level — knowing our World.”*

CRAIG EVANS, President WalkWays Center in Washington DC, 1989

**Existing Trails in Georgetown**

There are already existing trails in Georgetown that loop through San Gabriel Park following the north fork of the San Gabriel River and continue looping around Lake Georgetown. There is a trail along a portion of the South San Gabriel River and also many of the existing parks have looped walking trails in them. The goal of this plan is to connect the existing trails with other recreation, residential, and public facilities throughout the community. The purpose is to create a well connected trail system that reaches all residents and destinations in Georgetown.



### Typical Trail Users

A variety of activities can take place on trails. Trails should accommodate those that want to enjoy being outdoors, those wanting a great view, those that want to run or ride a bicycle, or those that simply want to be with others. Trail users vary from the very young to older residents of the City. Trails can even accommodate horseback riding or residents who want to travel via canoe. Georgetown's trail system should have something for everyone, including the following typical types of trail users.

Walkers seeking exercise and recreation - typically relaxed walking along a pleasant corridor; may include senior citizens, parents with children, or someone walking their dog. These users may occupy a significant portion of the trail due to walking side by side.



Joggers and runners - typically exercise at a higher speed than other trail users. They often prefer softer trail surfaces such as decomposed granite or asphalt.



In-line skaters - use trails for fun and fitness. Due to the swinging motion of their arms to increase momentum, skaters occupy a large cross section of the trail.



Recreational and inexperienced cyclists - typically are interested in exercise and activity, as well as scenic appeal. Ease of access to the trail system is important. They prefer more interesting trail alignments rather than trails that favor higher speeds. This group may also include children and youth going to school.



Equestrian riders - these users require a completely separate trail from the other users to ensure the safety of the riders, other users, and horses.



Mountain bikers - travel on more natural trail surfaces, and prefer trails with challenging terrain.



Higher speed cyclists and commuters - these riders favor roadways over off-street trails. For off-street trails, alignments with shallower curves are favored by these users. Because of their higher speeds, increased trail widths are recommended to reduce conflicts with other trail users.



*"Greenways are about connections: connections between people and the land; between public parks, natural areas, historic sites, and other open spaces; between conservation and economic development; and between environmental protection and our quality of life."*  
Chuck Flink and Robert Seams, *Greenways*, 1993



**Categories of Trails for Georgetown**

Trails in Georgetown will encompass several key types of facilities, each with its own size and character requirements. Where feasible, trails should follow the standards established by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Recommended trail types are discussed in greater detail below.

- **Regional or Arterial Trails** - Community wide trails should be a high priority, since they provide the connectivity between many different parts of the city. Community wide trails are intended to provide access from one part of the city to another. In essence, these trails become the “spine” system for the city, providing an easy route to travel longer distances. These trails are typically at least 10 feet in width, but in some cases may be up to 12 feet in width where a significant volume of users is anticipated. These trails should be constructed using concrete or asphalt. A suggested option is to provide a soft surface running trail along one side of the concrete trail. Access points to the trail should be located every 1/4 to 1/2 mile with a minimum of 1/2 mile walk or bicycle ride to the access point. Other facilities offered at or along a regional trail include: parking, locator maps, water fountains, shade shelters, bicycle racks, and interpretive / historic signage.



- **Neighborhood Trails** - Neighborhood trails provide access from each neighborhood to the larger arterial trails. Neighborhood trails are typically only 6 feet to 10 feet in width, and are constructed with concrete for long range durability but can be constructed with asphalt or crushed granite. Tighter curves are allowed to introduce interest into the trail segments. As in the case of arterial trails, some neighborhood trails can have a crushed granite component for runners directly adjacent to the concrete trail; if no danger of excessive flooding occurs, neighborhood trails may also be built out of decomposed granite. Access points to the trail are from neighborhoods, streets, parks or schools.



- **Natural Corridor Trails** - natural trail types typically are a compacted earth surface. Nature trails should be at least 6 feet to 10 feet in width, but in some cases may be 12 feet to 15 feet in width to allow for greater visibility within the understory. Normal obstructions such as roots, rocks and understory vegetation should be cleared from the walking pathway. An additional 2 feet to 4 feet shoulder zone is needed on either side of the trail. Bridges and drainage crossings should be constructed using wood and timber materials, and should be rustic in appearance.



- **Greenway Corridor Natural Trails** - potential natural corridors exist along many of the creeks, river and drainage corridors in the city. In some cases these corridors may incorporate walking trails, but with only minimal improvements to address street crossings. Use trail surfaces that create an atmosphere that is compatible with the natural beauty of the corridor and that results in a very pleasant trail environment.



- **Parkway Trails and Sidewalks** - often times the best trail corridors are adjacent to major collector or boulevard streets. Unlike sidewalks, these trails are wider, and a minimum width of 6 feet to 8 feet is preferred. A surface of concrete is preferred for durability however crushed granite can also be used. They include amenities such as decorative light fixtures, landscaping and ground cover, and varying surface treatments at intersections and crosswalks. The overall parkway zone should be at least 15 feet to 20 feet, to allow for at least 6 feet of clearance between the street curb and the walkway and another 4 feet +/- between the walkway and the adjacent property line. In many cases additional width may be required to accommodate drainage or other utilities. The picture to the left shows a parkway trail along a roadway. Parkway trails typically include landscaping that beautifies the road corridor such as a row of large, mature trees in this case. Access to the trail should be adjacent to major arterials and collector streets as well as parks.



## Other Specialized Types of Trails

- Water Trails** - water trails could be developed along the edges of Lake Georgetown and in sections of the two forks of the San Gabriel River. Canoes or kayaks could be used for these water trails, and marker poles with information could be added to create interest. Boat launches will be necessary for those water trails.
- Equestrian Trails** - Lake Georgetown offers great opportunities for lengthy trails for horseback riding and there are planned equestrian trails to be developed at Garey Park. Places to ride horses offer an opportunity for a unique recreational venue in Georgetown. Equestrian trails require additional height clearance and a separate initial quarter mile trail for horse droppings. Parking for trailers is required, and a closed in permanent stabling operation greatly increases the use of these trails.
- On Street or Striped Bike Lanes** - Off street trails that are intended to accommodate bicycles are referred to as shared use paths. Most trails should be designed to readily accommodate bicycles. On-street bicycle facilities are equally important. Routes should be added to the already existing facilities in Georgetown. Specific facilities for cyclists include striped bicycle lanes that are a minimum 4 feet (5 feet is preferred for inexperienced rider comfort) in width from the street edge of the gutter pan, or in some cases the use of the “sharrow” which indicates a shared use lane (SLM). The sharrow is in the final stages of approval for inclusion in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), but municipalities may apply for permission to use this new symbol prior to its formal adoption.
- Sidewalks** - Sidewalks are an important component of an overall plan to improve walk ability. Sidewalks that are a minimum of 6 feet wide are recommended along collectors and arterial roads. Sidewalks invite walking, and wider sidewalks tell pedestrians that they can walk side by side and that the walkway can accommodate significant volumes of walkers. Similarly, streets with no sidewalks convey the message very clearly “don’t walk here.” Sidewalks also provide safe routes for children to travel to school.



*“Imagine walking out your front door, getting on a bicycle, a horse, or simply donning your backpack and within minutes of your home, setting off along a continuous network of recreation corridors that could lead across the country.”*

President’s Commission on Americans Outdoors, 1987



**Trail Amenities**

- **Water Fountains and Bicycle Parking** - Water fountains provide drinking water for people (and pets in some cases) and bicycle racks allow trail users to safely park their bikes if they wish to stop along the way, particularly at parks and other desirable destinations.
- **Interpretive Installations** - Interpretive installations and signs can enhance the trail experience by providing information about the history of Georgetown. Installations can also discuss local ecology, environmental concerns, and other educational information.
- **Art Installations** - Local artists can be commissioned to provide art for the trail system, making it uniquely distinct. Many trail art installations are functional as well as aesthetic, as they may provide places to sit and play on.
- **Restrooms** - where appropriate at major trailheads or as previously existing in city parks along the trail route.
- **Pedestrian-Scale Lighting and Furniture** - Pedestrian-scale lighting improves safety and enables the trail to be used year-round. It also enhances the aesthetic beauty of the trail. Lighting fixtures should be consistent with other light fixtures in the city, possibly emulating a historic theme. Providing benches at key rest areas and viewpoints encourages people of all ages to use the trail by ensuring that they have a place to rest along the way. Benches can be simple (e.g. wood slats) or more ornate (e.g. stone, wrought iron, concrete).
- **Maps and Directional Signage** - A comprehensive signing system makes a trail system stand out. Information kiosks with maps at trailheads and other pedestrian generators can provide enough information for someone to use the trail system with little introduction - perfect for areas with high out-of-area visitation rates as well as the local citizens. The directional signage should impart a unique theme so trail users know which trail they are following and where it goes. The theme can be conveyed in a variety of ways: engraved stone, medallions, bollards, and mile markers. A central information installation at trailheads and major crossroads also helps users find their way and acknowledge the rules of the trail. They are also useful for interpretive education about plant and animal life, ecosystems, and local history.
- **Information Kiosks** - Trailhead stations should provide trail users with information and the rules and regulations of the trail. Involving school children, university students and civic organizations in the research, design and construction of these kiosks would be an excellent community activity.



Drinking Fountains



Bike Racks



Interpretive Installations



Maps and Signage



Art Installations



Lighting and Furniture



Information Kiosks

**Opportunities for Trails in Georgetown**

Georgetown has many corridors that lend themselves to creating a citywide system of trails. There is the San Gabriel River system, the creeks that feed into the river, and Lake Georgetown that continue throughout the city. Enhancing trail opportunities throughout the city will not only preserve open space, it will provide an alternate mode of transportation for the residents.

Opportunities to create trails and linear parks in Georgetown have been repeatedly noted in public input efforts throughout this planning process. Citizen support and desire to continue building these facilities is very high, and points to the need to make trail building a very high priority over the next five to ten years.

*“Passion and vision will build future trails, preserve green space, and create other community connections and enhancements in our area.”*

Christian White, *A History of Portland Trails*, 2001



## Proposed Trails for Georgetown

This section presents a citywide network of trails, representing the most important trails to be built. Using prioritization criteria tailored specifically to Georgetown, those key trails are then divided into segments and prioritized. Cost projections were prepared for each of the recommended segments, allowing for the preparation of an “Action Plan” for trail implementation. These corridors were selected to meet the goals established by the planning effort, and to reflect citizen comments and desires received during the extensive public input process. Those goals included:

**Connectivity** – trails considered in this plan should have a purpose. They are not simply scenic walks through a park, but are intended to link destinations that would be most frequently used by residents of Georgetown. Those include schools, recreation facilities and parks, nearby retail area, civic uses, downtown, and finally major places of employment.

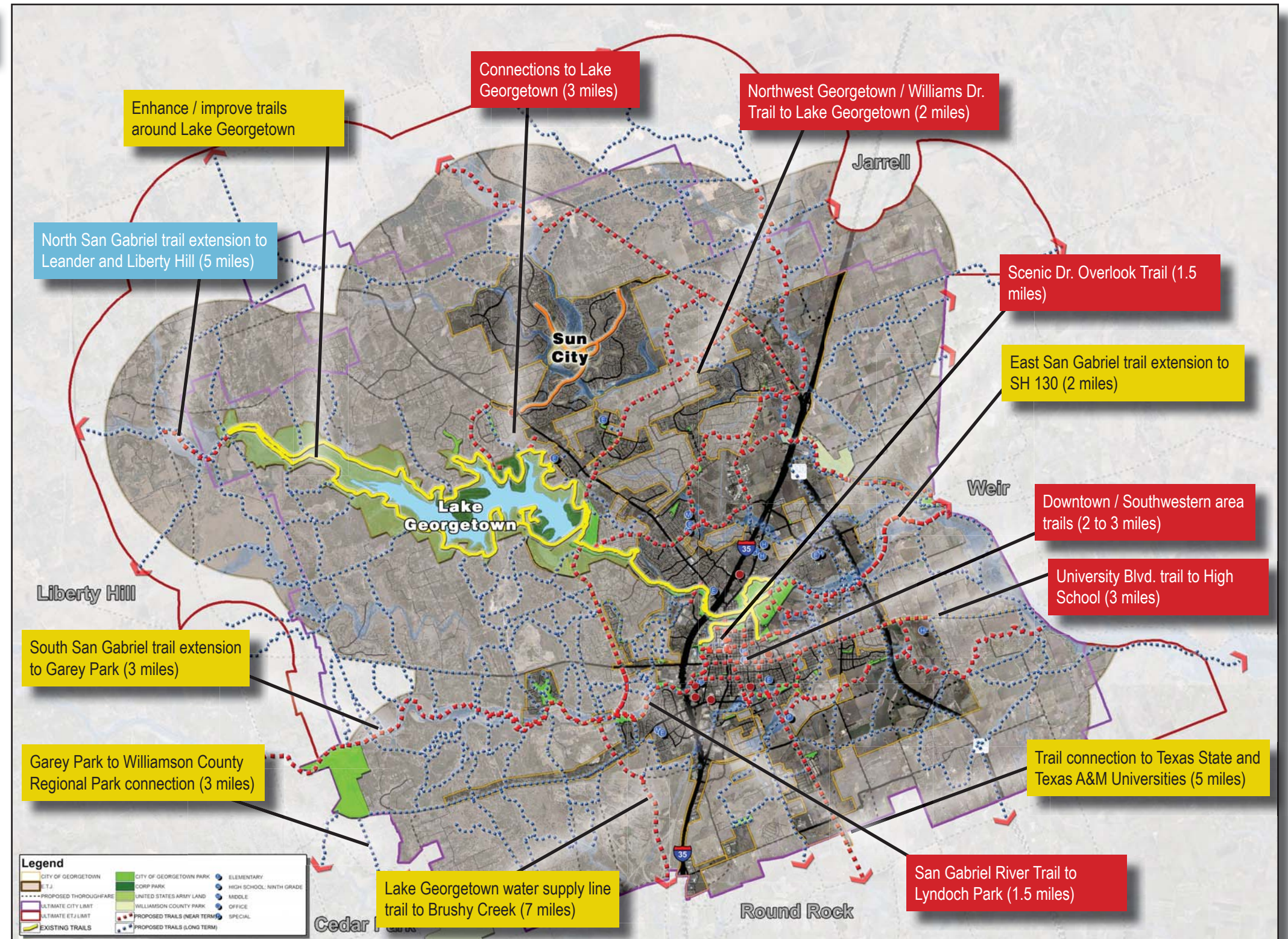
**Planning for an entire system** – these trails are intended to be key pieces that someday link all of Georgetown together.

**Create meaningful segments** – significant sections should be built, so that they can immediately become highly used and effective pieces of the overall system. Segments need to be built in a way that sequences connections. Individual random pieces should not be left unconnected for very long.

**Create partnerships** – many segments can be built by new developments. Even if planning for those developments is in an advanced stage, modifications should be considered to implement key components of this plan, so as to create an overall better final plan for the city. Homeowner Associations and other entities can also play a major role in implementing some segments.

**Initial prioritization on trails in the incorporated city limits** – the immediate focus will be on trail segments within the city limits of Georgetown. Trails in the extra territorial jurisdiction can be implemented in the future or independently by developers or homeowners.

The major system of trails in the city is shown on this page. More detail of proposed trail corridors is given in the Trails, Greenways & Open Space Master Plan.



# Georgetown Parks and Recreation Master Plan

## Draft Action Plan 2008-2018

### Trails and Linear Park Recommendations

Priority	Action ID	Action	City Sector	Estimated Cost Range		Type of Dev.	Potential Funding Mechanisms and Sources	Potential Time Frame
				Low Range	High Range			
<b>Potential Priorities</b>								
High	1	South San Gabriel River Trail from Blue Hole Park to Lyndoch Park (1.6 miles)	Southwest	\$800,000	\$900,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2008-2010
High	2	Bootys Crossing Park to San Gabriel River Trail Extension	Southwest	\$1,700,000	\$3,700,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, foundation assistance, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, Garey	2008-2010
High	3	University Blvd. Trail to new Eastview High School (4.2 miles)	East	\$1,900,000	\$3,900,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2009-2012
High	4	Northwest Georgetown / Williams Dr. Trail to Lake Georgetown (1.6 miles)	West	\$1,100,000	\$1,600,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2009-2013
High	5	McMaster Athletic Complex Trail extension to San Gabriel River Trails	Southeast	\$1,300,000	\$2,300,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2010-2013
Medium	6	Scenic Dr. Overlook trail (1.5 miles)	Southeast	\$900,000	\$1,400,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2011-2014
Medium	7	Williams Dr. to River Park and Trail along Rivery Blvd.	Southwest	\$340,000	\$390,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2013-2016
Medium	8	Enhance / improve trails around Lake Georgetown	Citywide	\$350,000	\$2,200,000	Renovation and enhancement of existing trails.	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2012-2015
Medium	9	East San Gabriel River Trail extension to SH 130 (2.7 miles)	East	\$1,500,000	\$2,500,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2012-2015
Medium	10	South San Gabriel River Trail extension to Garey Park (8.7 miles)	Southwest	\$5,800,000	\$7,800,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2013-2015
Medium	11	Trail Connection to Texas State and Texas A&M Universities (3.7 miles)	Citywide / Southeast	\$3,700,000	\$4,000,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2014-2018
Medium	12	IH-35 Connector along Brushy Creek to Pecan Branch Park (3.7 miles)	Citywide / west	\$1,500,000	\$2,800,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	2015-2018
Low	13	North San Gabriel River Trail extension to Liberty Hill and Leander (5 miles)	Northwest	\$1,200,000	\$1,700,000	New Development, may require some easements	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	Beyond 2018
Low	14	Georgetown Tennis Center Trails	Northwest	\$1,200,000	\$1,700,000	Renovation and enhancement of existing trails.	Bonds, private donations, in-kind services, TPWD grant funding, certificates of obligation, general fund, sale of naming rights	Beyond 2018
<b>Estimated Total</b>				<b>\$22,090,000</b>	<b>\$35,190,000</b>			
<b>Total Potential Expenditure Range For 2008 to 2018 Planning Timeframe and Beyond - (note that grants and donations may fund portions of the amount shown)</b>				<b>\$22,090,000</b>	<b>\$35,190,000</b>			

1. Note: Costs shown are order of magnitude estimates prior to any concept or design, and will vary as site selection and more detailed design occurs. List is for guidance in planning, and not all items may be implemented. Grants and donations may reduce the cost of each item.  
 2. Land costs, if shown, are general estimates intended to establish allowances and will vary. Land costs are estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$75,000 per acre.  
 3. Cost include an annual 5% escalation factor. All costs shown are rounded to nearest \$50,000. Costs should be updated frequently as additional cost information becomes available.

