
8-IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This chapter provides a strategy for implementing the actions contained in the *Downtown Master Plan Update*. Successful implementation requires a coordinated effort between public and private entities. Economic development and revitalization of the downtown will require vision, investment and commitment from a broad base within the city – private citizens, public officials and many City departments.

A STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A key concept is that the City should use a bilateral approach for implementing the recommendations contained in the Plan: It should be both **proactive and responsive**. The community should follow the priorities presented later in this chapter, which provides some scheduling for implementing specific plan recommendations and at the same time, they should be poised to modify strategies to respond to projects that may be proposed by private developers. Also, the City should coordinate its planned actions with the work of other city departments and be ready to refine its schedule to be responsive to the activities of others.

For example, if Public Works plans to construct new curbs and repair sidewalks along a section of a street, then the intersection improvements recommended in this plan should occur at the same time.

In essence, implementation should proceed in the order recommended in the plan and yet the schedule should remain flexible to accommodate changing condi-

tions, especially where opportunities to share construction costs and administration arise. In order to help the community execute refinements in the implementation schedule in an orderly manner, a series of prioritization criteria is presented later in this chapter. These can be applied when such changing conditions merit.

However, there are clear catalyst projects that should be pursued with great focus. They are:

- A new **Municipal Center**
- A well-designed **public parking lot** across from the Library at 8th and MLK
- Improved **gateways**
- **Streetscape enhancements** within the historic district, along Austin Avenue, and along 8th Street connecting to the Library and proposed Municipal Center.

The urban design improvements recommended in this plan are ambitious, and a concerted effort on the part of downtown organizations, the City of Georgetown, its residents and business and property owners, and Williamson County is needed to realize their completion. To do so, multiple funding mechanisms must be employed.

EXISTING FUNDING SOURCES

The following is a list of existing funding sources that could be explored for various types of development both in the public and private realms.

FOR PUBLIC INVESTMENT

MEASURE 4B

Measure 4B (Type B) is an extension of Type A sales tax increment. For Georgetown, it includes 1/2 cent sales tax increment and generates approximately **\$4.5 Million** per year. Type B funds in Georgetown are mainly used for **transportation and community development**. In recent years, Type B monies have been used as the main road fund. Other possible projects could include **parks, a parking structure and signage** (10% may be used for marketing.)

DOWNTOWN TAX INCREMENT REDEVELOPMENT ZONE (TIRZ)

The Downtown Overlay District is part of a TIRZ district that generates approximately **\$130,000** per year. The district was established in 2004 in order to “facilitate a program of public improvements to allow and encourage the development and redevelopment of downtown Georgetown into a mixed use, pedestrian oriented environment consistent with the goals of the City’s Downtown Master Plan.” TIRZ funding is particularly useful where a major improvement will increase value or generate substantial sales tax. For example, El Monumento was able to use TIRZ funds for street lights and sidewalk improvements. The program is designed to fund sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian

crossing systems, storm and sanitary systems, landscaping, streetscaping, public art and furniture, plazas, parks, parking, public transportation, signage, and other public benefit projects. Since its inception, combined property values in the district have nearly doubled.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FUND

Each year, the City may allocate a portion of its General Fund toward implementation of improvements within public rights-of-way. Generally, **\$200,000 to \$600,000** per year is allocated to this fund. These funds are well-suited for improvements that benefit the community at-large.

Projects that can be completed within a single year or that can be phased without a multi-year commitment are best. For example, a limited portion of sidewalks may be constructed each year, or a fixed number of street furnishings may be acquired annually. It does require **strategic planning** to allocate projects within the annual CIP plan.

Recommended application of CIP funds include **streetscape improvements, wayfinding, gateways and parks**. In addition, these funds could be used as a contribution to larger projects, such as the construction of parking facilities, when joint ventured with private development or a not-for-profit organization.

FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Main Street Program has initiated a program to help with facade upgrades and signage within the downtown. Each year, City Council designates \$15,000 to the fund and the rest is generated through various fundraising efforts. In the past few years, the program has provided **\$30,000 to \$45,000** per year for these improvements. The funds are allocated through a grant application process and must be matched by the property owner. A maximum of \$10,000 is available for **facade improvements** and \$500 is available for **signage**.

PARKS BOND

A bond measure was passed in 2008 which is dedicated to parks. This fund includes anticipation of a **festival area/amphitheater**. This was originally thought to be placed in San Gabriel Park, however recent thinking suggests that downtown is a better location for such a facility in order to expand festival and event opportunities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

The CDBG program is a federal program of the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) department. It provides communities with resources to address a range of unique community development needs. The CDBG program provides **annual grants** to Williamson County and the County allocates the funds to municipalities.

In Georgetown, CDBG funds have mainly been used for **sidewalk improvements**, not actual housing. Funds are re-prioritized every year, however, and any non-profit can apply for them.

FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENT

MEASURE 4A

Measure 4A (Type A) is a state-wide sales tax measure to promote economic development. For Georgetown, this measure includes a sales tax increment of 1/4 cent and generates approximately **\$450,000** per year. Type A funds may be used for manufacturing and industrial facilities, research and development, job training facilities and corporate headquarters facilities. It is tied to private development and could help fund **land, buildings, equipment, facilities, expenditures, infrastructure and other improvements** that are for the creation and retention of jobs.

Example projects in Georgetown that have utilized Type A funds include:

- Lone Star Circle of Care - offices categorized as Headquarters.
- Grape Creek Winery - on-site manufacturing
- Gumbos - grease trap considered "infrastructure"

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

The following is a list of potential funding sources that should be explored to help fund new development, both public and private, in Georgetown.

FOR PUBLIC INVESTMENT

SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A Special Improvement District should be considered for key public works projects. In a special improvement district, a group of properties is defined that will be assessed a designated amount for a specific time period. An agreement from the majority of assessed property owners is necessary for the creation of a SID. Therefore, property owners must recognize the direct benefits the improvements (and their investment) will have on their properties. This will take leadership from both the public and private sectors in order to educate other assessors of the benefits. (Note that local governments can also participate in special improvement districts as property owners.)

Bonds may be issued based on the assessment's income stream, which allows a large project to be constructed in one stage. The advantage is that this can accelerate construction of improvements that would otherwise have to wait for a CIP allocation. Such districts are often used to construct sidewalks and related streetscape improvements in a downtown area.

Recommended application of SID funds include streetscape improvements, parking facilities and wayfinding and signage. Recommended target areas include Austin and University Avenues. Note that this tool also can be used to fund maintenance of improvements.

BONDS

General Obligation Bond

General obligation bonds (GO bonds) commit a portion of the City's annual income stream to designated projects. City Council authorizes GO bonds and the cost is spread over the entire tax base (supported by property taxes.) Therefore, they do not require tax hikes which tends to make them less controversial. Bonds are then issued for the work, based on the projected revenues.

GO bonds are best suited for projects that provide general public benefit. This approach spreads the costs of improvements over a wider population and can speed up implementation schedules. Recommended application of General Obligation Bonds include the proposed Municipal Center with new City Hall, parks/plazas and parking facilities.

A transportation bond is being considered for November 2014. The City should consider packaging a GO bond for transportation needs as well as a Municipal Center.

Revenue Bonds

A separate bonding source is a Revenue Bond, which does not require public vote, and in which sales tax revenues are pledged for a specific project. It could be used for some of the same projects as GO bonds.

Certificate of Participation Bonds

A Participation Certificate (PC) bond allows investors to purchase shares of lease revenues of a particular program. They are often used to construct a facility that is leased to the municipality - such as a Municipal Center.

GRANTS

In some cases, foundations and public agencies may provide funding to assist with projects. Federal and state agency funding, for example, may be available for economic development projects, as well as development of certain types of housing products. Other, smaller grants may help with installation of public art and construction of small parks. The City should continually research and apply for grants that could fit the needs of downtown as outlined in this plan. Some recommended application of grants include: incubator space for start-up/high-tech businesses, parking facilities, environmental clean-up (EPA Brown Field), and special housing types (e.g. affordable and senior housing.)

FOR PRIVATE INVESTMENT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

A CDFI is a mission-driven financial institution backed by a diverse group of investors, mainly including individuals, banks, non-depository financial institutions (e.g. finance and insurance companies, mutual funds, etc.) and corporations. CDFI's are appealing because of their financial as well as social returns. They provide loans and financial services to communities/individuals that are otherwise difficult for traditional financial institutions to serve.

There are more than 900 certified CDFI's in the Department of Treasury's CDFI Fund in all 50 states (54 exist in Texas.) They are all united in their primary mission of community development.

CDFI's could be explored to help fund private investment such as affordable/mixed income housing, new businesses, or community facilities such as health centers, daycares and education facilities.

TAX CREDITS

Tax credits are abatements of funds for a specific period of time that would otherwise be paid by a taxpayer to a governmental entity. They are mainly granted to encourage private investment and could help offset costs for a developer. Federal 381 tax credits could be explored, which include sales or property tax reimbursements and are negotiated on a case-by-case basis. State rehab tax credits could be explored for historic structures. Finally, New Market tax credits could be explored to encourage mixed income housing in the downtown.

PRIVATE FUNDS

Finally, some improvements are best suited for funding directly by private sources. Landscaping of private parking lots and construction of new commercial and residential buildings are examples. In some cases, private sources also may purchase individual street furnishings and install them on or near private properties.

PRIORITIZATION

Recommendations for phasing of improvements are made later in this chapter. However, projects should be considered to be dynamic and should be changed in response to plans and projects by other agencies and individuals that may present opportunities to combine efforts and maximize benefits.

In general, the community should set a high priority on an improvement when it can help support private development that is consistent with the vision and economic development goals of the Downtown.

However, there will still be times when decision-makers need to reassess the priority of a recommended action or one of the tasks necessary to implement it. When this occurs, the community should use the following criteria. Projects that meet several of the criteria should be given the highest priority for near-term implementation.

PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

FINANCING

1. The project will generate funds to cover portions of development costs. (For example, resulting uses will generate rental income or sales tax revenues.)

2. The project will leverage investment from other sources. (For example, property owners will finance a portion of sidewalk construction costs through an assessment program.)

3. Grant funds are available to cover portions of development costs.

4. The project fits within a larger capital improvement project, such that cost savings will be realized. (For example, sidewalks could be constructed when a street is to be repaved.)

5. Funding for maintenance of the improvement is provided. (This is an important consideration for streetscape, gateways and parks improvements.)

6. The project yields significant results for the level of investment.

LOCATION

7. The project is located in a focus area of the Downtown Plan. The high priority areas are:

- Downtown Core
- Municipal Center
- Austin Avenue

8. The project will have high public visibility. (For example, a project visible along Austin Avenue or other major public right-of-way).

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OWNERSHIP AND PROJECT CONTROL

9. The project is under the appropriate ownership or control.

10. The project ownership or control can be acquired with reasonable effort.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

11. The project will provide a direct benefit to local residents. (For example, a new park or public building.)

12. The project will serve multiple users or interest groups. (For example, an outdoor plaza that may be used by local residents as well as visitors and that may be used for festivals.)

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PROJECTS

13. The project will connect to existing public improvements. (For example, extension of an existing sidewalk into adjoining blocks.)

14. The project will enhance existing improvements and will not cause other desired improvements to become obsolete.

15. The project provides opportunities to connect with other future public improvements. (For example, a gateway that can later serve as a trail head for a river connection)

16. The project will function well upon its completion and later phases of construction are not required for this phase to perform adequately.

COMPLIANCE WITH COMMUNITY PLANS AND ADMINISTRATION

17. The project will help to accomplish broader goals of the community.

18. The project fits within work plans of downtown organizations and city staff.

19. Adequate administrative oversight is available for the project.

PRIORITIZATION CATEGORIES

Based on consideration of the criteria described above, priorities for implementation are arranged in the following five categories:

PRIORITY A

1-2 Years Post-Plan Adoption - these are the highest priority and should be implemented as soon as possible. Many of these must be set in place before other projects can be accomplished.

PRIORITY B

2-4 Years Post-Plan Adoption - these are also of high priority, but usually require more ground work to accomplish. In some cases, a different Priority A category must be in place first.

PRIORITY C

3-5 Years Post-Plan Adoption - these are projects that require more ground work, fund-raising and coordination with other groups.

PRIORITY D

5-10 Years Post-Plan Adoption - these are more complex projects, and those that require that a strong market be established first. They also include later phases of special projects of systems improvements that may have been initiated in early stages.

PRIORITY E

10+ Years Post-Plan Adoption - these are long-range projects, final phases of staged improvements, and more complex undertakings.

IMPLEMENTATION CATEGORIES

Refer to following pages for recommended prioritization and funding strategies, lead and support roles and estimated costs for the five implementation categories:

1 - NEW DEVELOPMENT IN OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Strategies for encouraging/implementing new development in the 3 opportunity areas:

- Austin Avenue North
- Municipal Center
- Southeast Quadrant

2 - PEDESTRIAN/BIKE CIRCULATION & STREETScape DESIGN

Strategies for extending sidewalks, improving intersections, implementing bike routes, encouraging river trail connections and initiating streetscape improvements.

3 - AUTO CIRCULATION & PARKING

Strategies for parking management and construction of facilities as well as improved street design and implementation.

4 - GATEWAYS, WAYFINDING & PUBLIC SIGNS

Strategies for improving gateways and re-implementing a comprehensive wayfinding and signage plan.

5 - PARKS, OPEN SPACE & PUBLIC ART

Strategies for implementing new parks and open space for residents and visitors to enjoy, as well as public art to enhance the experience of downtown.

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1 - NEW DEVELOPMENT IN OPPORTUNITY AREAS					
Recommended Actions	Priority	Lead	Support	Funding	Notes
1.1 Austin Avenue North	A/B	Private developer	Economic Development	TIRZ, Private	
Commercial and mixed use development along Austin Avenue	B	Private developer	Economic Development	TIRZ, Private	
New development (residential/hotel/mixed use) fronting river	B	City/Private developer	Economic Development	Tax credits, Bonds, Grants, Private	Currently owned by County
Redevelopment of historic jail + addition	B/C	Private developer	Economic Development	CBDG, Tax credits, Private	
Medium density residential devel. along neighborhood edges					
1.2 Municipal Center	A	City		Grant, Bond, Tax credits, City real estate	see also Municipal Center Feasibility Report
Renovation of existing structures	B	City		Grant, Bond, City real estate	see also Municipal Center Feasibility Report
New City Hall					
1.3 Southeast Quadrant	A/B	Private developer	Economic Development	TIRZ, Private, SID	
Commercial and mixed use development along Austin Avenue	B	Private developer	Economic Development	TIRZ, Private	
Commercial and mixed use development along Main Street	B	Private developer	Economic Development	TIRZ, Private, SID	development at Gateways encouraged ASAP
Commercial and mixed use development along University Ave.					
2 - PEDESTRIAN/BIKE CIRCULATION & STREETScape DESIGN					
Recommended Actions	Priority	Lead	Support	Funding	Notes
2.1 District					
Extend sidewalks throughout Downtown Overlay					
1st priority upgrades (refer to Map #10)	A	City		CIP, SID	coincides with on-street parking/street reconfigurations
2nd priority upgrades (refer to Map #10)	B	City		CIP, SID	coincides with on-street parking/street reconfigurations
3rd priority upgrades (refer to Map #10)	C	City		CIP, SID	coincides with on-street parking/street reconfigurations
2.2 Intersection improvements					
Austin Ave. pedestrian controls (RRFB)	A	City		4B, CIP	
coordinate with sidewalk and street improvements	ongoing	City		4B, CIP	coincides with on-street parking/street reconfigurations
2.3 Improve bike routes (sharrows/signage)					
Main Street and 7th Street (to University)	A	City		4B, CIP	
Rock Street and 2nd Street (with connx.'s to river trails)	B	City		4B, CIP	
6th and 3rd Streets (w/ connx.'s to river trails) and 10th to Ash St.	C	City		4B, CIP	
Install bike racks throughout downtown	ongoing	City		CIP, TIRZ, SID	
2.4 Improve river trail connections to/from Downtown					
South San Gabriel River bridge (cantilevered sidewalks and stairs/amp to trail)	A	City		4B, CIP, TIRZ	
Install wayfinding signs	B	City		4B, CIP	
Construct pedestrian bridge to west (Water's Edge Apartments)	D	City	Prop. Owners across river	CIP	
2.5 Install streetscape elements					
Streetscape kit of parts (benches, trash receptacles) - Historic District	A	City		CIP, TIRZ, SID	
Streetscape kit of parts (benches, trash receptacles) - Downtown District	B	City		CIP, TIRZ, SID	
Lighting (coordinate with sidewalk improvements)	ongoing	City		CIP, TIRZ, SID	

3 - AUTO CIRCULATION & PARKING		Priority	Lead	Support	Funding	Notes
Recommended Actions						
3.1 Develop parking management plan						
	Inventory existing parking resources	A	City		City	
	Establish existing and future parking needs/management options	A	City		City	
3.2 Develop detailed street designs						
	Austin Avenue	A	City		City	
	8th Street Festival Street	A	City		City	
	Main Street (north of square)	A	City		City	
	7th/8th Streets (from Church to Rock)	B	City		City	
	Rock Street	C	City		City	
	Other Neighborhood Streets	C	City		City	
3.3 Construct street improvements						
	Austin Avenue	A/B	City		4B, CIP, Grants	
	8th Street Festival Street	A/B	City		4B, CIP, Bond, Grants	
	Main Street (north of square)	B	City		4B, CIP, Grants	
	7th/8th Streets (from Church to Rock)	C	City		4B, CIP, Grants	
	Rock Street	C	City		4B, CIP, Grants	
	Other Neighborhood Streets	C/D	City		4B, CIP, Grants	
3.4 Construct parking lots/structures						
	8th & MLK surface lot	A	City		4B, CIP	
	Municipal Center parking structure	B/C	City	County	Bond, CIP, Private	
	9th & Main parking structure	C	City	Private	CIP, Private	
4 - GATEWAYS, WAYFINDING & PUBLIC SIGNS						
Recommended Actions						
4.1 Improve gateways						
	South San Gabriel River bridge and Austin Avenue	A	City	adjacent property owners	CIP, SID, Grants	
	Austin Avenue and University Avenue	A	City	adjacent property owners	CIP, SID, Grants	
4.2 Re-implement Wayfinding and Signage Plan						
	Minor re-design (improved identity)	A	City		City	
	Update location plan	A	City		City	
4.3 Install updated signage and wayfinding						
	Install signage	ongoing	City		City, CIP	
5 - PARKS, OPEN SPACE & PUBLIC ART						
Recommended Actions						
5.1 Implement new parks and open space						
	Terrace and/or park on the river	ADO	Private developer/parks	City	TIRZ, Private, Parks bond, CIP	
	Neighborhood park (North Austin Opportunity Area)	ADO	Parks dept.	City	TIRZ, Parks bond, CIP	
	Old Jail park	ADO	Private developer/parks	City	TIRZ, Private	
	Municipal Center parks and plazas	A	Parks dept.	City	Bond	
	Proposed pocket park and plaza (at bank on Austin Ave.)	B/C	Parks dept.	City/Private	TIRZ, SID, Parks bond	
	Pocket park/plaza at University/Austin gateway	A	Parks dept.	City	CIP, SID	
5.2 Public Art						
	Public art (coordinate with sidewalk/park improvements)	ongoing	City		TIRZ, SID, Arts Program, Private	

ADO = as devel. occurs