

# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This paper provides a strategy for implementing the actions contained in the *Downtown Master Plan*. 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.

## **Use of the Downtown Master Plan**

The Downtown Master Plan should serve as a policy document to guide physical design and physical improvements within the downtown overlay. In that light, it should be adopted as a part of the City's Century Plan.

### ***Administration of the Plan***

A variety of city departments and commissions should consult the plan when preparing work programs in the downtown, as well as when reviewing proposals by others. This includes Development Services, Economic Development, Planning Commission, Historic and Architectural Review Commission and Georgetown Utility Systems, as well as the City Manager's office.

### ***Implementation Coordination***

While many individual staff and commission members will have opportunities to implement individual elements of the plan, it is important that one office be responsible for monitoring overall implementation and for coordinating various work efforts. The City Manager's office should have this responsibility, with an understanding that many of the plan elements may be guided by other designated persons or entities.

### ***Development Facilitation***

In the future, there may be the need for a person who will assist others in developing projects that fit with the concepts of the plan. A development facilitator, or ombudsman, should be designated for this role. They would work with property owners to help guide appropriate projects through the review and permitting processes of the city. This may be a city staff person, perhaps in the office of economic development, or it could be a position housed in a downtown organization. A professional to assist with retail recruitment is also essential.

## **A Strategy for Implementation**

A key concept is that the community 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 Appendix, 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 conditions, 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 paper. These can be applied when such changing conditions merit.

## Funding Sources

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, a series of funding mechanisms must be employed. These sources should be used:

### ***Capital Improvement Projects Fund***

Each year, the City may allocate a portion of its General Fund toward implementation of public-sector improvements. Work in the right of way, especially streetscape improvement, is a good example.

It is best suited for projects that can be completed within a single year or that can be phased without a multi-year commitment. For example, a limited portion of sidewalks may be constructed each year, or a fixed number of street furnishings may be acquired annually. These funds are well-suited for improvements that benefit the community at large.

This tool is especially useful for projects that must move quickly. It does require establishing some projects within the annual CIP plan. Wayfinding systems and gateway improvements are appropriate types of projects. 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.

### **Recommended application of CIP funds:**

- Streetscape improvements
- Wayfinding
- Gateways
- Parks

### ***Tax Increment Financing***

Tax increment financing allows special authorities to redirect new property and/or sales tax revenues generated by improvements within a designated area to be used for public improvements. The tax base is frozen in an initial year and any increase in taxes over the base amount flows to the authority for its use. Generally this annual tax increment is leveraged and used as a payment stream for revenue bonds; however, the funds can be spent on an annual basis as well. This is often used to fund streetscape enhancements that are in conjunction with a private development. TIF is particularly useful where a major improvement will increase value or generate substantial sales tax. Development of the Draeger property, for example, could be a TIF-enhanced project.

### ***Special Improvement District***

A Special Improvement District may be used for some 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 in order to fund improvements. Bonds may be issued based on the assessment's income stream, which allows a large project to be constructed in one stage; therefore, this tool is often an attractive way to fund major improvements. Such districts are often used to construct sidewalks and related streetscape improvements in a downtown area. The advantage is that this can accelerate construction of improvements that would otherwise have to wait for a CIP allocation. It also engages those who will benefit most directly in funding the improvements.

A special improvement district can be established only when there is agreement of the majority of the property owners that will be assessed. To do so, property owners must recognize benefits to their properties and businesses in order to support construction of the proposed improvements;

the property owners therefore perceive that there is the promise of a reasonable benefit from their investment. (Note that local governments can also participate in special improvement districts as property owners.) This tool also can be used to fund maintenance of improvements.

**Recommended application of SID funds:**

- Parking facilities
- Streetscape improvements
- Wayfinding

**General Obligation Bonds**

General obligation bonds commit a portion of the City's annual income stream to designated projects. These are supported by ad valorem taxes. A city election is held to approve General obligation bonds for projects, and thus spreads the costs over the entire tax base. Bonds are then issued for the work, based on the projected revenues.

The issuance of bonds is approved by City-wide election and is 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. For example, funding for a library, a civic center, or support for a conference center could be provided from general obligation bonds.

**Recommended application of General Obligation Bonds:**

- Library
- Parking facilities
- Conference center
- Civic center
- Parks

**Revenue Bonds**

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

**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.

**Recommended application of Grants:**

- Incubator space for start-up businesses
- Parking facilities
- Special housing types (e.g. affordable, seniors)

**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 Criteria**

Recommendations for phasing of improvements are made in a later section of this appendix. However, they 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.

### ***Financing Criteria***

- 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 Criteria***

- 7. The project is located in a focus area** of the Downtown Plan. The high priority areas are:
  - Downtown Core
  - Government Center
  - Draeger Property Redevelopment Site
- 8. The project will have high public visibility.** (For example, a project visible along Austin Avenue or other major public right-of-way).

### ***Ownership and Project Control Criteria***

- 9. The project is under the appropriate ownership or control.**
- 10. The project ownership or control can be acquired** with reasonable effort.

### ***Public Benefits Criteria***

- 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 Criteria***

- 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***

These are the highest priority. They should be implemented as soon as possible. Many of these are items that must be set in place before other later projects can be accomplished. For example, adopting the Downtown Master Plan as official policy is an early step that should be taken. (Generally scheduled for years 1-2 of implementation.)

### ***Priority B***

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. (Generally scheduled for years 2-4 of implementation.)

### ***Priority C***

These are projects that require more ground work, fund-raising and coordination with other groups. (Generally scheduled for years 3-5 of implementation.)

### ***Priority D***

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. (Generally scheduled for years 5-10 of implementation.)

### ***Priority E***

These are long-range projects, final phases of staged improvements, and more complex undertakings. Some are feasible only when market conditions are in place to support them. (Generally scheduled for years 10-15 of implementation.)

**PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION & STREETScape DESIGN**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	CURRENT STATUS	PRIORITY	YEAR	LEAD	SUPPORT	EST. COST	FUNDING	NOTES
1 Extend sidewalks throughout downtown • Includes on-street parking	approximately 8 block faces a year.	B and ongoing	2004 +	City		\$\$	CIP first, then Improvement District w/ TIF Supplement with special program-related grants.	
2 Construct trail connections • At Austin & the river • Install wayfinding • Construct ped bridge		B and ongoing	2004 +	City		\$\$	CIP first, then Improvement District w/ TIF Supplement with special program-related grants.	
3 Improve bike routes • Define routes • Install signs • Install racks		B and ongoing	2004 +	City		\$\$	CIP first, then Improvement District w/ TIF Supplement with special program-related grants.	
4 Intersection improvements • Decorative paving • Signs		B and ongoing	2004 +	City		\$\$	CIP first, then Improvement District w/ TIF Supplement with special program-related grants.	
5 Install streetscape elements • Street lights • Planted areas, furniture		B and ongoing	2004 +	City		\$\$	CIP first, then Improvement District w/ TIF Supplement with special program-related grants.	

Note: Dollar signs (\$) reflect estimated relative costs.

\$ = \$0 - \$100K  
 \$\$ = \$100K - \$500K  
 \$\$\$ = \$500K - \$1M  
 \$\$\$\$ = \$1M +

**AUTO CIRCULATION & PARKING**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	CURRENT STATUS	PRIORITY	YEAR	LEAD	SUPPORT	EST. COST	FUNDING	NOTES
1 Develop parking management plan • Parking needs study • Inventory of existing parking & use		A A	2004 2004	City City		\$ \$	City City	
2 Develop detailed street designs • Austin Avenue • Main Street • 8th Street Festival Street		A B B	2004 2005 2005	City City City	TXDOT	\$ \$ \$	City City City	
3 Construct street improvements • Austin Avenue • Main Street • 8th Street Festival Street • Remaining Streets		B C C D	2005 2007 2006 2007			\$\$\$ \$\$\$ \$\$\$ \$\$\$	TIF/federal grants TIF/federal grants TIF/federal grants TIF/federal grants	
4 Develop parking at County Site • Phase 1 Surface Lot • Parking structure in MU Dev't		A C	2004 2008			\$\$\$ \$\$\$\$	CIP/ Improvement district Economic Dev't Grants; TIF	
5 Develop parking at Civic Center Site • Structure		C	2006			\$\$\$\$	Economic Dev't Grants; TIF	

**WAYFINDING & PUBLIC SIGNS**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	CURRENT STATUS	PRIORITY	YEAR	LEAD	SUPPORT	EST. COST	FUNDING	NOTES
1 Develop final wayfinding package • Graphic design • Location plan								
2 Install wayfinding signs								

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**PARKS & OPEN SPACE**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	CURRENT STATUS	PRIORITY	YEAR	LEAD	SUPPORT	EST. COST	FUNDING	NOTES
1 Construct Civic Center Festival Street	Coordinate with individual site improvements.			City Parks Dept		\$\$\$	Improvement district/parks bond	
2 Construct Civic Center Park	Coordinate with individual site improvements.			City Parks Dept		\$\$\$	Improvement district/parks bond	
3 Construct Old Jail Park	Coordinate with individual site improvements.			City Parks Dept		\$\$\$	Improvement district/parks bond	
4 Construct County Site Park	Coordinate with individual site improvements.			City Parks Dept		\$\$\$	Improvement district/TIF	
5 Construct park in Draeger Property	* Is contingent upon a master plan for development of the site that includes a park.					\$\$\$	Improvement district/TIF	
6 Public art program	Coordinate with individual site improvements.			Downtown Org		\$		
• Develop public art plan.						\$		
• Install public art.						\$		

**OPPORTUNITY SITES**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	CURRENT STATUS	PRIORITY	YEAR	LEAD	SUPPORT	EST. COST	FUNDING	NOTES
1 Draeger Property								
• Initial mixed use components				Econ Dev't Dept	Private de'r	\$\$\$\$	TIF/Private	
• Hotel				Econ Dev't Dept		\$\$\$\$	TIF/Private	
• Conference Center				Econ Dev't Dept		\$\$\$\$	TIF/Private	
2 Civic Center								
• Business incubator w/ pkg				City			Bond Issue	
• Library				City			Bond Issue	
• City Hall, Part A				City			Bond Issue	
• City Hall, Part B				City			Bond Issue	
3 County Property								
• Surface lot	See parking division above.	C	2008				TIF/Private	
• Mixed Use w/Pkg								

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