Implementation Strategies

The pedestrian network within the city limits of Georgetown, presents a long-term asset management challenge in part because of its long useful life cycle, steady growth and cost of repair. It is appropriate that the asset management and financing strategies for the network account for capital improvement projects, ongoing operations and maintenance costs and accommodation of future network needs. The following chapter provides an overview of existing funding sources, a summary of approximate cost determination, recommendations for future funding (including capital reserves) and a discussion of potential funding sources. Lastly, this chapter provides an outline of the annual review process necessary to ensure the Master Plan is responsive to community needs and changing priorities.

EXISTING FUNDING SOURCES

At the time of Master Plan adoption, the Streets Department within Transportation Services was responsible for the maintenance and operations of the City's pedestrian network. The Streets Department relies on two main sources of revenue to complete its maintenance and operations requirements.

❶ The first and largest revenue source is the City's General Fund. Annual funding for sidewalk construction and maintenance is approximately $75,000. The amount of funding allocated since 2001 does not appear to have a direct correlation to overall need but has been sustained based on practice. Current funding does not adequately support the maintenance of existing infrastructure.

❷ The Unified Development Code (UDC) generally requires sidewalks on both sides of all streets having a right-of-way width equal to or greater than 50 feet. However, the UDC does provide for deferment of construction. To qualify for the deferment of residential sidewalks, developers must pay 20% of the total cost of the uninstalled sidewalk improvements to the City for allocation to a residential sidewalk fund. These funds are held for five years to complete sidewalk construction in the specific subdivision. Any remaining funds will roll over into a general sidewalk fund. Although this mechanism is available for construction and maintenance by the Streets Department, there are currently no monies within the fund to do so.

Annual funding levels do not adequately support maintenance of existing infrastructure nor do they mirror the growth in the pedestrian network brought about by new roadway construction and development as required by Federal and State law. The project team recommends that City Council, related boards and commissions evaluate legal requirements and appropriate maintenance and operation standards which, when fully funded, support community expectations and legal requirements.

SUMMARY OF APPROXIMATE COSTS

Preliminary cost estimates for sidewalk projects identified in the Master Plan were developed using staff input, Texas Department of Transportation 12 month floating average bid prices and City of Georgetown sidewalk project bid prices awarded in 2014. Cost estimates for projects identified in the Master Plan are based on City of Georgetown Construction Standard Details, as discussed in the City Manuals and Standards and Review Chapter. Sidewalks that deviate from the adopted standard increase the City's liability. Costs associated with those deviations should be recovered by the City at time of construction. Design deviations and cost recovery are regulated through the City's UDC and are outside the scope authority of this Master Plan. This Plan does however provide recommendations for revisions to the UDC to reduce the City's cost and maintenance liabilities.

Projects recommended in this Master Plan include all elements of cost associated with projects completed by external contractors including materials, contingency, design and construction administration. Should

internal staff not be able to complete those scheduled projects, the City will have sufficient funds to hire external contractors to complete the work. A breakdown of potential sidewalk construction costs, in present dollars, follows:

Table 10. Preliminary Plan Costs

Description	Estimated Fee
Priority 1 Projects	$10,180,000
Priority 2 Projects	$7,570,000
Priority 3 Projects	$7,770,000
Remaining Citywide Projects	$243,640,000

RECOMMENDED FUNDING

Capital Improvements

The City of Georgetown has completed sidewalk projects, which given their size, complexity and cost were considered capital improvements, programmed through the Plan CIP process. However, this Master Plan represents a paradigm shift in the City's administration of the pedestrian network, and is designed, in accordance with the Master Plan vision statement, "…to improve pedestrian mobility". The Priority 1, 2 and 3 projects identified in this Master Plan include the construction of new pedestrian facilities as well as repair of existing facilities. Funding for these projects will come from either the annual budgeting process, special revenue accounts or from outside sources such as grants. Priority 1 Projects identified in the Master Plan are anticipated to be completed in a 10-year timeframe with potential funding from a $10 million bond program, pending approval by City Council and authorization from City residents in a potential May 2015 referendum. If the referendum is not successful, the project team recommends budget administrators appropriate funds for Priority 1 projects across the same 10-year cycle as the Master Plan through two CIP process timeframes. At current staffing levels, the Streets Department can administer approximately $1 million of pedestrian capital improvement projects a year.

Table 11. Sidewalk Project Administration

	Timeframe	Funding Level
Bond/CIP	2015-2025	$1,000,000/year

The programming of these prioritized projects is in addition to the annual maintenance of pedestrian facilities within the City.

2015-2025 Maintenance Costs

The planning cycle for operations and maintenance will follow the same 10-year cycle proposed for prioritized projects. The project team recommends a 10-year maintenance forecast based on ability to internally administer and complete projects with existing staff.

In determining life cycle costs, the project team reviewed industry literature and adopted best management practice life cycles for sidewalks. According to that literature, a new sidewalk has an expected useful life of up to 50 years; sidewalks in fair condition have an expected useful life of 10 years. If the recommendation to inventory the City's pedestrian facilities every 10 years is adopted, the project team does not recommend including facilities previously categorized as good or excellent, as these facilities are assumed to maintain their usable status until the next inventory cycle in 2025.

Through this Sidewalk Plan's efforts, the project team determined that $5,540,000 is required to repair all currently failing and limited-failure pedestrian facilities citywide (excluding the Downtown Overlay District, whose repairs have been accounted for through the CIP process). The funding of Priority 1 projects through the CIP process will include roughly $560,000 towards these repairs, leaving approximately $4,980,000 required for maintenance of existing infrastructure. At current staffing levels, the Streets Department can administer approximately five projects a year with an individual project cost of $100,000; resulting in the maintenance of approximately 1,500 linear feet of sidewalk, 40 curb ramps, 60 detectable warning surface repairs and crosswalk striping as needed. If the recommended maintenance funding is approved, the City will be able to repair all failing and limited-failure pedestrian infrastructure within the 10-year planning horizon. Maintenance funding and efforts should be focused on these project types:

- Failing sidewalk facilities not included in Priority 1 projects
- Limited-failure sidewalk facilities not included in Priority 1 projects
- Failing curb ramps not included in Priority 1 projects
- Functional ramp repairs requiring ADA compliant detectable warning surfaces.

Table 12. Sidewalk Maintenance Administration

	Timeframe	Funding Level
Maintenance	2015-2025	$500,000/year

Retirement and Replacement Programming

Accounting for the future costs of sidewalk replacement is an important aspect given the anticipated growth in the network over time as well as the constant increase in project costs. This report recognizes the importance of planning for future infrastructure maintenance costs resulting from recommendations here within as well as the maintenance costs of future development-driven facilities.

Since the last Master Plan was completed, the sidewalk network has grown from 104 miles in 2001 to 144 miles in 2014; an average of 2.5% annually. For the purposes of estimating the sidewalk repair needs at the end of the useful life of sidewalks, the project team projected the total size of the network through the year 2065.

Table 13. Forecasted Sidewalk Network

Year	Network Length
2001	104 mi.
2014	144 mi.
2025	190 mi.
2035	240 mi.
2065	500 mi.

Accounting for the future costs of sidewalk replacement is an important aspect given the anticipated growth in the network over time as well as the constant increase in project costs. The age and condition of pedestrian facilities varies throughout the network; however, the City can forecast future rehabilitation needs for the years between 2015 and 2025 using a 50-year lifecycle. Based on the historic growth of

Detectable warning surfaces indicate the boundary between a pedestrian and vehicular routes for pedestrians who are blind or have low vision.

the sidewalk network, the project team estimates that approximately 40 miles of sidewalk existed in 1965. Assuming 1/50th of the 1965 network will deteriorate annually through 2025, it is anticipated that an additional 1.25 miles of sidewalk and 20 curb ramps will deteriorate from passable to failing conditions annually. Using these assumptions, approximately $800,000 is required per year for program retirement and replacement of the pedestrian infrastructure between 2015 and 2025. The City has three options to consider for employment of a retirement and replacement program:

❶ Replace those failing segments annually,

❷ Save money annually for replacement of those segments in 2025, or

❸ Plan for replacement in 2025 using CIP-type financing (bond or general fund).

The project team recommends expending replacement and retirement funds for those expected failures in 2025 after the update of the 2015 Plan when the City will be able to better determine actual failure rates and costs using bond financing. This will allow the City to focus its efforts and resources on a retirement and replacement program and minimize maintenance efforts beginning in 2025 with the adoption of an updated Master Plan. Table 14 depicts the costs of a coupled approach of maintenance and retirement and replacement program for failing facilities over the next 10 years.

Table 14. Retirement and Replacement Programming

	Timeframe	Funding Level
Program Replacement	2015-2025	$800,000/year
Maintenance Costs	2015-2025	$500,000/year
Total Operation and Maintenance		$1,300,000/year

Approximately $1,300,000 is required per year for maintenance and program retirement and replacement of pedestrian infrastructure deteriorating to failing conditions between 2015 and 2025. As with all other projected costs in this report, the City should review the required cost yearly in order to ensure inflation, cost of construction and overall network estimates made in 2014 reflect current conditions.

Potential Funding Sources

Outside of the City's general fund, there are four areas, which could be harnessed to support the maintenance and operations of the City's pedestrian network.

❶ Special revenue districts are appropriate sources of funding because excess revenues generated by that district above and beyond an established assessed value bring about additional reinvestment in that district through infrastructure improvements. Infrastructure within the Downtown, Rivery and Williams Drive Gateway Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) are designed to serve pedestrian needs. Maintenance

expenses within those districts should be supported by a dedicated source of funding directly related to the value it creates.

❷ City staff, led primarily by the Housing Coordinator, has experienced success in securing Federal and State funding through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Since 2008, the City has been awarded approximately $1.1 million for the construction of sidewalk projects that serve low to moderate income areas. This funding is important to the overall management of the City's pedestrian network not only because it enhances mobility along heavily trafficked corridors, but it also induces economic activity and creates ancillary tax revenue opportunities.

❸ Like TIRZs, the City administratively supports Public Improvement Districts (PIDs), which through additional tax increments, manage infrastructure enhanced beyond minimal City requirements. Although the City cannot directly harness the additional taxes raised by PIDs, it could partner with PIDs to improve and maintain the pedestrian network.

❹ Subsequent to the adoption of this Master Plan, the City may complete a bond referendum in May 2015 focused on transportation improvements. Should the City Council elect to hold the referendum, the referendum could provide several funding mechanisms for the pedestrian network. All new roadway projects, by design of the UDC, will provide sidewalks on both sides of the road. This will grow the pedestrian network and further the City's stated goal of multi-modal transit. This increase in the pedestrian network will require increased maintenance capacity. Secondly, if held and approved by the voters, the transportation bond referendum should consider allocating a dedicated portion of the overall bond to reducing accessibility barriers, which in the normal course of budgeting, would be impracticable given the amount needed.

ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS

An annual review process is paramount to the execution of the Master Plan. City staff and management have made a concerted effort to include pedestrian infrastructure within the same asset management schema as other capital items in the City's inventory. The pedestrian network serves the community in the public right-of-way which conveys liability and requires public expenditure.

The project team recommends that the Master Plan be reviewed annually in coordination with CIP efforts. Every effort should be made to synchronize roadway and pedestrian improvements to minimize impact to public and staff. Initial project prioritization and recommended scheduling are included in this Master Plan; however, additional project selection criteria will be included that allows staff to respond to public partners and elected official requests in a transparent and predictable manner. The annual review should include three components:

❶ An audit of projects completed in the prior year in terms of costs, scheduling and scope.

❷ Analysis of current needs compared to the prioritized project list.

❸ Funding request through the CIP process, informed by expected revenues, community partnerships and grants.