

7. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

By implementing the recommended program of projects, the City of Sandy Springs can provide a transportation network capable of meeting future mobility needs and encouraging travel by alternate modes of transportation. The Transportation Master Plan sets forth a strategy to help the City move towards implementation of the recommended projects. To provide an understanding of the level of funding necessary to implement each phase of the program of projects, planning level cost estimates were developed. Implementation responsibilities are also discussed in this chapter, as some projects will be implemented by agencies other than the City.

Estimated Costs

Roadway costs were developed using ARC’s 2006 Transportation Project Costing Tool. For projects currently included in ARC’s RTP, those cost estimates were assumed and carried over to the Transportation Master Plan. Cost estimates for additional projects were developed using the costing tool and then inflated based on the time period recommended for implementation.

Cost estimates for projects included in the short-term plan were developed for the five-year Capital Improvement Plan. These costs were inflated by an annual rate of 5 percent, which was increased to 20 percent every third year. To account for inflation for the mid and long term projects, costs were escalated to the each implementation period’s midpoint year (2018 for mid-range projects and 2028 for long-range projects)–on the assumption that roughly one-half of the projects would be implemented before the midpoint year and the other half after. The same 5 percent average annual rate of increase was assumed for all mid and long range projects. This 5 percent increase is the assumed difference between project implementation cost (construction and right-of-way) and growth in current revenue sources. The 20 percent adjustment was not continued throughout the study period.

Total costs for the study period (2008-2030) are approximately \$630 million. The distribution of these costs over the implementation time periods is shown in Figure 7.1. Although the distributions seem to be weighted towards the mid-range time period, the per year costs are similar. This is due to the fact that this time period is longer than the others and that most of the transportation needs could be met prior to the long range time period. The cost per year for each implementation period (short, mid and long) is \$30 million, \$29 million and \$30 million, respectively. Projects proposed for the short and mid range time periods are expected to meet the needs through the end of study period, thus reducing the need for additional improvements during the long range implementation period. Since only a few projects are recommended for the last implementation period, the average annual cost is similar to those of the preceding time periods, despite the impacts of inflation.

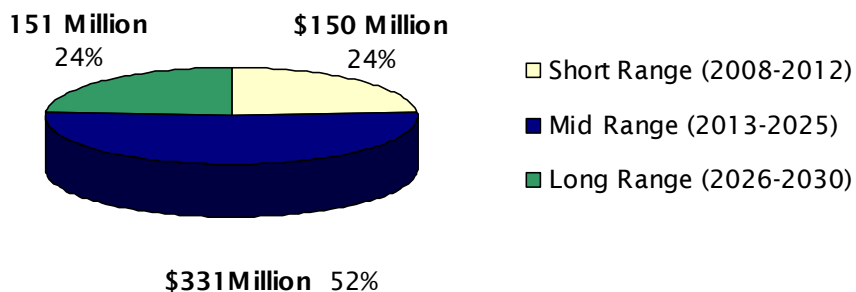


Figure 7.1 Project Cost by Implementation Time Period

Implementation Responsibility

While most of the recommended projects will be implemented by the City, some of the larger-scale projects will fall under the jurisdiction of GDOT. For these projects, the City will be responsible for coordinating with GDOT and, in some cases, participating in project funding. For the purpose of projecting costs for recommended projects list, the local share on GDOT-sponsored projects was assumed to be 20 percent, except when otherwise noted. All City-sponsored projects were assumed to be fully funded by the City. Table B1, located in Appendix B, shows the agency responsible for implementing each project as well as the City's share of the project cost.

Potential Funding Strategies

Identifying and effectively utilizing available transportation funding is a crucial element in planning for and successfully implementing a transportation plan. A variety of funding sources are available; however, each has restrictions and implications. This is especially relevant since transportation funding from city sources is limited.

Generally, funding is provided at the federal, state, and local levels. From these, the primary source for relatively more costly roadway, transit, bicycle and pedestrian projects is federal funding authorized by SAFETEA-LU. State funds are also an important component of transportation funding, particularly for capital projects. Lastly, a local match is usually required for transportation projects that are not on major state or federal routes. Sandy Springs has received funds from many different sources and will continue to pursue all available funding opportunities. Appendix C provides detailed descriptions of the variety of funding sources offered by state and federal agencies.

Potential Federal Funding Sources

As the region's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), ARC is responsible for developing the long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which list federal funding towards transportation projects. All federal funding categories require that the project sponsor contribute a portion of the project's cost, called a "match." The percent contribution required varies by federal funding category, as noted in the descriptions included in Appendix C. Matching funds for projects on the state system can be provided by GDOT.

Regional Coordination for Federal Funding

As the region's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), ARC is responsible for developing the long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and short-range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which list federal funding towards transportation projects. All federal funding categories require that the project sponsor contribute a portion of the project's cost, called a "match." The percent contribution required varies by federal funding category, as noted in the descriptions that follow. Matching funds for projects on the state system can be provided by GDOT. In order for new projects to be eligible for federal funding, they must be included in the long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). As an additional requirement, all capacity adding projects occurring on the regionally significant roadway network must be included in the RTP and modeled in ARC's Travel Demand Model Runs indicating conformity to air quality standards. Appendix B provides a listing of Federal, State, and Regional funding sources that may be applicable in Sandy Springs.

Local Funding Options

In addition to federal funding, requiring coordination with GDOT and ARC, local funding sources exist which allow the City of Sandy Springs to accomplish projects which are not eligible for Federal or State funding or which must be accomplished before Federal or State funding is available. Locally collected revenue sources used to fund transportation projects include:

General Fund – This fund is based on the City’s general tax revenue and is divided among all City services.

Impact Fees – A one-time fee charged in association with a new development designed to cover part of the cost of providing public facilities to support the development. The impact fee amount charged to a particular development must be directly tied to the amount of new infrastructure the development will require. An impact fee program has been developed as a part of the Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan and is based on costs needed to accomplish the improvements included in the five year Community Improvement Element.

The transportation impact fees are documented in Comprehensive Plan Community Agenda, Chapter 7: Capital Improvements for Impact Fees. The fees are based on a total program cost of \$141,582,122, resulting in an impact fee eligible cost of \$56,799,307. This cost, divided by the estimate 156,900 additional daily trips due to new development results in a fee per daily trip of \$362. The City Council approved transportation impact fee will collect 38 percent of the maximum impact fee (\$137.56/trip).

The fee is applied via a fee schedule which uses the number of daily trips for each land use type is based on information from Trip Generation, 7th Edition, by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). This document is the industry standard and authoritative source for trip generation information by land use. If an existing active land use is being removed to construct the new development, the fee amount that would be associated with the existing land use is subtracted from the fee amount for the new development. Thus, the fee represents the net increase in trips generated by the new development. If a developer has a large mixed-use development, they may wish to provide a traffic study supporting a reduced level of daily trip generation based on the combination of uses. Such a study would need to be consistent with mixed use trip capture rates and methods indicated in Trip Generation and approved by City Staff. Transportation Impact fees cover system improvement needs. Developers would still be responsible for project related impacts, such as the need for turn lanes and traffic signals at site access points or other needs as defined by the City.

Community Improvement District – A strategy for funding infrastructure projects in a limited area at the discretion of existing property interests. CIDs are essentially self-taxing areas, where property owners organize to raise funds to improve property values in the area. CIDs may organize to market an area, work to increase safety in that area, and collect and use funds for all types of transportation projects. CIDs are an innovative source of funding for transportation projects, but the scope of their activities is limited by property owner interests and a defined geographic area. The Perimeter CID is active in funding transportation and other improvements within its boundary. As the Town Center area develops, implementing a CID in this area may be an effective means to providing funding for infrastructure improvements.

Tax Allocation Districts – A strategy for funding infrastructure projects in a limited area targeted for accelerated growth. Infrastructure projects are financed from the growth of property taxes based on new development and increased property values. Establishing a TAD and creating a plan for the district can spark redevelopment in the TAD area, which in turn serves to finance TAD bond funds. Funds can be spent on a number of projects in the TAD area, including transportation projects. Therefore, TAD planning promotes redevelopment while also helping to create a dedicated source of infrastructure funding for that area. New pedestrian and bicycle facilities and streetscapes are typical TAD projects, though TAD funds are often used for non-transportation infrastructure as well. TADs are an appropriate tool for financing some types of transportation projects, especially in connection with the denser redevelopment of a particular area such as an activity center. As the Town Center area or other overlay districts along Roswell Road plan redevelopment, implementation of one or more TADs could provide funding for needed improvements.

Special Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) – A one-cent sales tax approved by voters, the money can be used for infrastructure development and maintenance but not operating costs. SPLOST referendums must have an associated time table. Fulton County is currently operating at the maximum level of local sales tax permitted. However, if future plans for regional transit funding replace the sales tax for MARTA service, this may provide the option for use of this funding source for transportation needs.