



CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

FROM: The Office of the City Manager **DATE:** January 27, 2025

SUBJECT: Consider Resolution 2025-007, authorizing support for a grant application to the Texas Department of Transportation's 2025 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Call for Projects for a Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan non-infrastructure planning document and acceptance of allocated funds if awarded in an amount of up to \$500,000 with the City's local match being up to \$100,000.

PRESENTER: Clayton Comstock, Managing Director of Development Services

SUMMARY:

Staff is seeking City Council's approval of a resolution supporting an application to the 2025 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Call for Projects for a Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Funding

Federal funding for the 2025 Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA) program was announced October 2024 and is a continued implementation program of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Transportation Alternatives funding is intended to support non-automobile related infrastructure projects more related to bicycle, pedestrian, and transit alternatives. The statewide Call for Projects includes opportunities for funding assistance for non-infrastructure planning projects. In a similar call for projects in 2023, staff received positive feedback after the exploratory first step application for a city-wide *Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan* described in more detail below. The "step 1" application deadline for this call is February 21, 2025. If the application meets the Step 1 criteria and is selected for additional review, the Step 2 application process would be open from April 16, 2025 to June 20, 2025. This timing allows staff and City Council to review the grant opportunity further through the FY26 budget planning process.

Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan

Sidewalk connectivity, accessibility, and overall pedestrian mobility have been emerging issues in North Richland Hills as the community nears build out. Many residents desire a direct, safe, and complete off-street path to get to destinations such as schools, parks, trails, commercial centers, and transit. This citizen feedback was evident in the Vision2030 Strategic Plan process and in subsequent citizen surveys in 2019, 2021, and



2023. With the input of the community, the Vision2030 Transportation Plan included an implementation strategy to adopt a Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan.

While the 2021 and 2023 Citizen Survey's open-ended "One Thing" responses were categorized into very broad topics, "sidewalks" was one of the most frequently mentioned word and topic once those responses were evaluated more closely.

The purpose of a *Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan* is to provide a comprehensive strategy for trail and sidewalk project identification and prioritization. Annual Sidewalk Program CIP funding and construction grant applications could then be targeted to implement the plan. A general outline of a *Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan* for North Richland Hills would likely include:

1. General local policies and strategies for pedestrian mobility and safety
2. Sidewalk Plan
 - a. Identifying the existing sidewalk inventory
 - b. Primary destination designations (i.e. retail/service nodes, parks/trails, schools, transit, etc.)
 - c. Identifying gaps in the sidewalk network
 - d. Prioritization of sidewalk projects based on scoring criteria for destinations, project complexity, estimated cost, number of benefited residents, etc.
 - e. Project funding estimates to create the information necessary to apply for future construction grants
3. Safe Routes to Schools Small Area Plans for each school campus within the community
4. Safe Routes to Transit Small Area Plans for Smithfield & Iron Horse TEXRail station areas
5. An ADA Transition Plan to address accessibility of the city's sidewalk network

Planning and engineering staff have estimated the cost of a plan of this scope around \$500,000. The Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside funding program is an 80/20 match, where the City would be responsible for 20% of the cost of the project, or \$100,000. If the grant is awarded, this project will begin no earlier than next fiscal year. As such, matching funds are not included in the current year's adopted budget. If this application is approved, staff will recommend appropriate funding sources for the match requirement in the FY 2026 proposed budget. Awards are anticipated to be announced in October 2025.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve Resolution 2025-007.