



City of Reading - 113 S. Main St. - Reading, MI 49274 - (517) 283-2604

August 30, 2000

**TO THE READING CITY COUNCIL AND  
CITIZENS OF THE CITY OF READING**

**DEAR COUNCIL MEMBERS AND CITIZENS:**

The City Planning Commission is pleased to present this first ever Master Plan for our community. This Plan will guide public and private decision-making for the next ten-years or more. It is the most important consideration and guide for future zoning changes, development decisions and public capital investments.

Landowners, home purchasers and others investing in our community can take assurances from this Plan that, not only will neighborhoods be stable and free from intrusive nuisances, but that future land use is well defined and will be followed.

Any one wishing to learn more about the Commission, the Plan and the future of Reading need only contact any other Commission member or me. We will be delighted to assist anyone.

The Commission on July 10, 2000 adopted this Plan, by unanimous vote. The Commission will implement the Plan and advise Council on any matters relating to the Plan. Moreover, the Commission is now embarking on a serious effort to update zoning and related ordinances to reflect current law and modern land development practices.

On behalf of the members of the Planning Commission, we thank the Council for its strong support. Citizens of Reading can take comfort in knowing the Council and the Commission are working in concert to make Reading an even better community in which to live, work and play.

Very Truly yours,

**Bill Heinowski  
Chairman**

**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MEMBERS**

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**David Forrester**

**Christine Gollnick**

**Bill Heinowski - Chairman**

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**William Goodman**

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**Mike Redenius**

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**CITY MANAGER**

**Don Beavers**

**PLANNING CONSULTANT**

**Geoff Moffat**

**Chapter 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**

## **The Master Plan - Purposes**

A Master Plan is a long range view or strategy used to guide development and physical changes within a community. In general, the purposes of the Master Plan are to:

Describe and document existing conditions and trends as a basis for decision-making during formulation of plan elements;

State the community's goals for the future;

Establish policies to guide development decisions as regards future land use, land use relationships and zoning status;

Provide a foundation for public capital improvement priorities; and

Offer residents and property owners guidance regarding future land uses within their neighborhoods.

*A Master Plan establishes the basis for determining what types of land use and development densities are appropriate in various areas of the community. The Plan guides decisions regarding where development should occur and where resources should be directed to revitalize already developed areas. The Master Plan also helps to determine what streets, water and sewer lines and other public facilities are needed to support the proposed pattern of land use within the community.*

## **Legal Basis for the Master Plan**

For the City of Reading, the legal basis for preparing and adopting this Master Plan is found within the Municipal Planning Act of Michigan (Public Act 285 of 1931, as amended). The Act expressly authorizes cities, villages and townships to engage in planning to guide future change as well as zoning to manage day to day occurrences. Once a Planning Commission is appointed, it shall engage in efforts to formulate a Master Plan which is...

*"made with the purpose of guiding and accomplishing coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the municipality and its environs which will, in accordance with present and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, order, welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development; including among other things adequate provisions for traffic, the promotion of good civic design and arrangement, and the adequate provision of public utilities and other public requirements." (MCL 125.37)*

The Planning Act also states what must be included in the Master Plan. The Act says the Plan shall include...

**"maps, plats, charts and descriptive matter (depicting) the Commission's recommendations for the development of the territory" ( within the City and nearby environs) and the**

recommendations made are to be based on **"careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of present conditions and future growth of the municipality"** (MCL 125.36).

## **The Planning Process and Participants**

The Reading City Planning Commission and its members have made diligent effort to adhere to the terms of the Planning Act. During the last quarter of 1999 and the first six months of the year 2000, the Commission considered extensive information regarding the existing community and analyzed in detail options for future growth and change. The Planning Commission met in public session each month during this period to review and discuss the desired elements in the Plan, which depict the future City of Reading. A duly noticed public hearing was scheduled on Saturday June 17, 2000. This public hearing was convened at the Basswood Center. The hearing was held in cooperation with the Reading Tax Increment Financing Authority (TIFA), which also held a public hearing a proposed amendment to its Tax increment Financing and Development Plan.

The Master Plan for the City of Reading is a public record documenting community consensus regarding the desired future for the City. This Plan will be used by the Planning Commission and City Council, City Administrators and other City agencies to guide day to day decisions regarding land use, zoning, land divisions, public infrastructure, economic development, community facilities, recreation facilities and other aspects of community development and redevelopment.

The Master Plan is also a vehicle by which to communicate the City's development policies to Reading Township, Reading Public Schools, Hillsdale County and other nearby jurisdictions.

Residents, property owners, business owners, developers and others in the private sector can use this Plan for direction and guidance as to use or reuse of land, buildings and structures as well as to understand what land uses are likely to occur on nearby vacant lands. In today's environment, people contemplating purchase of a home or new company considering an investment in land and facilities want assurances regarding future development or uses on adjacent property. This adopted Plan provides these interests with the necessary information and assurance of future land use compatibility. This public document should be readily available at all time for review by interested citizens and other parties.