

Chapter 5
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES
AND ACTION PROGRAM

Introduction

A Master Plan that is not implemented is one lacking community support or understanding. The Master Plan document is a framework and guide for future community based activities. Taken collectively, these public and private sector activities can improve the quality of life for every resident of Reading and the greater area.

For the City of Reading, the implementation activities are unique and intended to address observed present needs and problems. Resources available to Reading are limited, both in financial terms and in terms of people available and willing to bring about implementation activities. As such, among the many activities presented in this Chapter, priorities must be established among them to make best use of available resources.

An "Action Program" is included in the last part of this Chapter. The Action Program sets forth specific priorities for implementation activities within the period 2000-2006. Implementation activities are of three general types. These include (1) ordinance/planning activities, (2) special purpose programs and (3) capital investments/improvements. The Action Program has been prepared via close collaboration among the Planning Commission, City Council and the TIFA. Thus, capital investments for the 2000-2006 period will be closely coordinated among the key decision-makers.

Municipal Infrastructure

The physical conditions and level of service for municipal infrastructure is a critical concern. Sanitary sewer collection, wastewater treatment, a safe and ample source of drinking water, water for distribution to domestic users and for fire protection, the number and spacing of fire hydrants, water storage and adequate storm water management facilities are key elements of community infrastructure. In addition, streets, curb/gutter and sidewalks are often lumped into the general definition of infrastructure. However, in this Chapter, above ground vehicle and pedestrian facilities will be addressed separately.

Sanitary Sewer Collection System. The network of sanitary sewers is generally in good to very good condition. Much work has been done to replace old, leaking lines and prevention of storm water inflow to the sanitary sewer system. The newer portions of the system are well documented and mapped. Collection system capacity is quite good, however, expending sanitary sewer lines to service new areas has not been evaluated. Based on future land uses recommended for large areas of vacant land within the City, an engineering feasibility study should be undertaken in the near future which would: (1) determine size and location of sanitary sewer interceptor lines into new service areas, (2) capacity of existing lines to accept new sewage flows and any upgrades needed, and (3) cost estimates for new interceptor sewer lines or existing sewer line capacity upgrades.

Sanitary Sewer Treatment. Beyond the City limits to the southeast, the Reading operates two sewage treatment lagoons. These lagoons are in good condition. Recently,

biological treatment has been added to the lagoons to reduce accumulation of solids and sludge within each lagoon. The lagoons are near capacity. New development adding significantly to present wastewater flows will require an expansion of the lagoon system. At a minimum, a third lagoon would be needed. Current wastewater flows versus design capacity of the two existing lagoons should be determined to verify the question as to capacity to treat added flow. If it is verified that current flows are in fact at or near capacity, then preliminary, design and cost estimate of the additional lagoon should be undertaken in the near future. This will put the City in a position to respond promptly to additional demand for wastewater treatment.

Water Supply-Groundwater. The City has invested in new water wells due south of the along M-49. A new water main was installed to connect the well field to the City's water distribution system. The water wells have combined capacity more than ample to serve future growth within the City Limits. A well head protection plan was prepared and adopted when the new well field was developed. The new well field should meet demands into the foreseeable future with only normal maintenance.

Water Distribution-Domestic Consumption. Municipal water mains range in size from 2" to 12" diameter. Single family residential areas should be service by a minimum 6" diameter water main. Undersized water mains should be scheduled for replacement during the next 1-15 years. Typically, when a street is rebuilt or given heavy maintenance, the water main needing upgrading should be replaced in advance of the street project. An inventory of undersized water mains should be prepared and an annual program of gradual replacement commenced.

Water Distribution-Fire Protection. In general, when evaluating the level of service of municipal fire protection, the availability of water to fight fires is a major element. The amount of water available at a given location is dependent upon the size of water mains, number and spacing of fire hydrants and the amount of water available from elevated or ground storage. The type of construction and size of buildings and the use to which buildings are put directly affect the amount of water required to effectively address a fire. A fire flow requirements study should be implemented for existing areas of the City as well as areas planned for development. Thus, in addition to replacing old, undersized watermains, portions of the City not currently provided with adequate fire flows should be identified and a series of watermain improvements scheduled.

For areas of new development, the fire flow study should identify the locations for extension of the water main system to best serve these areas. Moreover, this study should identify any deficiencies regarding the existing 100,000-gallon elevated water storage facility (water tower) and the existing 200,000-gallon ground storage facility beneath the DPW building. The water tower has lead-based paint which must be removed in the near fliture at an estimated cost of \$25,000. Thus, the water system study should include an evaluation of saving the present tower versus constructing a new water storage facility.

Storm Drainage System. Of all infrastructure elements, the City's storm sewer system is the most seriously deficient. If present, the storm drains are most often former sanitary sewer lines. Most of these lines are undersized to serve as storm drains and flooding results. Before any relacement program is begun, an engineering study should be conducted to assess runoff rates in the developed areas of the City. Following this assessment, preliminary engineering plans which

identify the most cost-effective means of providing adequate storm water management to each area of the City should be prepared. This should be a high priority undertaking for the City.

Currently, the City is completing project engineering for a 42" diameter storm sewer running from Walnut Street to southeast of the railroad line. This storm drain and companion storm water detention basin will provide an outlet for storm water from a large area of the City.

Public Streets (Pavement and Curb/Gutter).

A community strategic planning session held during April of 1999 revealed a general lack of curb and gutters as the number one citizen concern. A general visual inspection of the local street system revealed often-narrow pavement width, poor surface conditions, few curbs and random parking along the pavement edges. The City has Major and Local Street Funds, based largely upon provisions of State law relating to street funding programs. The Local Street Fund is not self-supporting and is annually subsidized by the Major Street Fund and the General Fund.

To determine existing needs, a thorough condition assessment should be conducted for all streets within the City, including streets under jurisdiction of other public agencies such as the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). This engineering study would include surface conditions, road base, drainage, curb and gutter, and driveway approaches. The study would identify street segments, which are most deficient, moderately deficient, and those in good condition. The study would conclude with a recommended program of improvements giving highest priority to the most deficient street segments. Street improvements would be timed to assure that necessary drainage and other underground infrastructure were completed before or concurrent with the street improvement.

Pedestrian Facilities (Sidewalks, Pathways).

Contemporary lifestyles include citizens of all ages participating in outdoor walking, jogging, hiking or cycling to maintain good health. Others engage in in-line skating and skateboarding. These and similar activities require public non-motorized ways improved with level surfaces. Typically, these pedestrian ways may exist within public street right of way or within spaces dedicated for pedestrian use. Sidewalk and pathways are typical pedestrian facilities planned and developed in the modern community.

Reading has sidewalks in many portions of the City. A general visual inspection of existing sidewalks revealed many segments are in poor condition. A complete survey of present sidewalk conditions should be undertaken and priorities for replacement established. All streets serving homes within the City should have sidewalks. Areas lacking sidewalks should be given a high priority.

The Future Land Use Plan proposes a multiple use trail looping the City. This trail will serve existing neighborhoods and areas to be developed in the future. As laid out, the trail will connect neighborhoods with activity centers throughout the City, such as Downtown, school and parks sites. Segments of the proposed trail in areas of planned sidewalk improvements should be built in place of sidewalks. The typical design cross section for the multi-use trail should be a

minimum of eight feet, be well drained and have bituminous or concrete surface. Any location on the trail having a vehicle crossing should have concrete surface and signs located for both vehicle operators and trails users.

Fire Protection Facilities.

In addition to the requirement of an ample water supply discussed above, fire protection service must include a building to house vehicles, fire fighting apparatus and adequate staffing. The existing fire station on Michigan Street in the Downtown is adequate to meet present day needs. When additional apparatus is acquired, the existing building will not be capable of housing all the apparatus. Every municipal fire department must provide firefighters with personal turn out gear and small equipment to assure fire fighter safety. The present department operation lacks funding to maintain equipment for personnel meeting standards set forth by State and Federal occupation safety and health regulations and the National Fire Protection Code.

Looking to long term needs of the Reading Area, a fire service study should be undertaken which considers (1) the viability of the present administrative and funding mechanism, (2) fire apparatus age and conditions, (3) future apparatus requirements, and (4) future building needs and facility location alternatives.

Police Department.

The City of Reading operates it's own police department; funded from the General fund. Offices for the Department are being relocated from the Department of Public Works to the space adjacent to the present City offices. For the time being, these offices will be adequate for the Department. Rolling stock of the Department is in good condition. A new vehicle-leasing program will allow the Department to replace vehicles every three years.

Department of Public Works.

The Department operates in two buildings on the north side of Lincoln Street, just west of Main Street and adjacent to the existing water tower. A small office space is shared with the Police Department in the building without restroom facilities. The Department operates and maintains the water system and the sanitary sewer collection and treatment as well as providing street maintenance and snow removal. The current office should be closed down and the building solely used to house water system controls. Administrative offices for the DPW should be located at City Hall..

The Department operates large trucks and capital equipment. In general, the rolling stock is in good condition. A new snowplow equipped heavy-duty dump truck has recently been purchased. The City maintains a revolving equipment fund for purchase of large vehicles and equipment.

Municipal Building.

City government offices are located in a storefront building within Downtown. This building was recently renovated to the benefit of Downtown appearance. The facility should be adequate for the near future. Municipal employees having direct contact with the public should be housed at one location to provide the best level of service.

As the Downtown improves and business infill of storefronts occurs, City Hall space on Main Street should be relinquished to private sector business. City Hall should be maintained within the Downtown area, but not in a storefront. The public library building, the Watson House or a new building represents potential options for a relocated City Hall. As space becomes limited, there is little opportunity for expansion of the present building. The future of City Hall and location options should be an integral element of a Development Plan for the Downtown.

Public Library.

The public library building is quite new and located at the west edge of the Main and Michigan Streets intersection. The library building is undersized for future needs of the community. The facility lacks new technology, space for research, education and meetings and space for additional stacks. As with City Hall, the library building could have several future uses other than library. These include a new location for City offices or a private sector business. The library board should conduct a long-term space needs assessment to determine how long the existing building will be useful. The future library facility should be considered as an integral element of the Downtown Development Plan.

Downtown Reinvestment Strategies.

Downtown Reading contains a number of buildings having architectural and historic significant. At the same time, many of the buildings are in various degrees of disrepair. Downtown Reading has limited occupancy of storefronts. Some businesses occupying storefronts are open infrequently. Public spaces within the Downtown as also in disrepair, including sidewalks, alleyways and the like. A paved parking area on the west of Main Street is quite new. However, the parking area lacks any attractive design enhancements such as period lighting, landscaping pedestrian facilities or theme signage. Buildings in the downtown need to be remodeled with convenient rear entrances whenever they are adjacent to public parking. Downtown Reading must be revitalized to preserve the community identity and the historic "sense of place".

A successful revitalization strategy for the Downtown must contain several elements. A physical development plan for both public and private space in the Downtown is needed. This Plan would include a general layout for Downtown and the immediate environs, existing and proposed building footprints, planned building use(s), a detailed physical design for the public spaces, streetscapes and private outdoor spaces, signage theme and specifications for both public and private applications, historic preservation analysis of buildings with significant architecture and/or history, a marketing strategy, financing incentives for private building renovation and restorations, and finally identification of an oversight organization with responsibility for

carrying out the Plan details. This planning effort should begin in the year 2000 and continue uninterrupted to completion.

The Tax Increment Financing Authority (TIFA) presently operating in the City, should become an essential player in local share financing of the physical improvements needed within Downtown Reading. The TIFA captures tax increment revenue from real properties in the Downtown and environs. An attractive and healthy Downtown is one of the most important features business owners and manufacturers look for when making investment decisions. Thus, given the legislative intent for TIFAs and the fact that a portion of its revenue accrues from the Downtown, the Reading TIFA Board should make significant financial contributions to the effort to revitalize Downtown.

Parks and Recreation Facilities.

The City and the Reading Public School District have collaborated on an update of the existing Community Recreation Plan. Existing facilities throughout the City exhibit conditions of decline. Before committing to additional facilities or lands, existing facilities need improved regular maintenance. If existing active park facilities are serving the population of the area included in the school district, then the school district and other local governments beyond the City Limits should assist the City in funding. Current maintenance expense and the local share of new land acquisition or capital improvements within the parks system ought to be shared among the several local governments. In lieu thereof, non-resident user fees should be established for non-resident individuals or groups.

Land acquisition for an additional parkland serving the City's south side should be a priority as well as acquisition of land to extend Magic Square to the west. This area of land acquisition should be large enough to accommodate a future school/park complex.

Detailed facility deficiencies by type of recreation activity are included in the updated Community Recreation Plan.

Housing Strategies.

The City has recently received a housing rehabilitation grant from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). Targeted for owner-occupied housing units, the program funds may be offered as low interest loans or outright grants, depending upon the owner's income level.

Reading has a shortage of new, owner occupied housing. To foster new, affordable housing for young families, empty nesters and independent seniors, the City should consider forming development partnerships. The partnership could include City sponsored financing through special assessment districts and/or direct contributions for site improvements, thus significantly lowering the cost of financing of land development. The cost savings would be passed on to the consumer in the form of lower housing purchase price. As stated Chapter 4, the City could adjust zoning and site development standards to permit cluster, zero lot line and neo-traditional designs for the housing site, thus further lowering the cost of site development. Development

partnerships would also be appropriate for attached single family homes and multiple family dwellings under condominium ownership.

Another important aspect of improving housing opportunity is the improvement of rental housing units. The most significant step in this regard would be the adoption of a rental housing code and periodic inspection of rental units. Very often rental housing units, especially converted single family homes, become seriously deficient as to exterior appearance, interior condition and tenant safety. Implementation of a rental housing code should be a high priority for the City. Rehabilitation of rental housing units could be an addition to the owner-occupied rehabilitation program just starting. To foster use of upper story floor space in the Downtown for residential occupancy, rehabilitation and financing incentives should be offered to owners of existing buildings.

Medical Health Services.

Access to medical services is a critical issue for the residents of Reading. There are no medical doctors or other health professional in active practices within the City. Negotiations are on going with a doctor to open an office within Downtown, at least on a part-time basis. A key element of the Downtown Plan should be a new medical facility combining medical office practice, minor trauma, dental, out-patient services such as x-ray and lab testing, a pharmacy and nursing/therapy outreach services for seniors. A combination services facility should be located in the Downtown. The City should begin discussions with one or more hospitals serving citizens of Reading about a joint venture to create such a facility. The City could purchase land to accommodate such a facility and the hospital could create an investment partnerships or limited liability company to create significant tax advantages for the medical practitioner

Municipal Ordinances.

The City should create or update several ordinances to improve regulatory and management capabilities. This Master Plan will require several ordinances for effective implementation. These include (1) Zoning Ordinance Update, (2) Housing Maintenance Code, (3) Land Division Ordinance, (4) Condominium Ordinance, (5) Updated Blight and Junk Ordinance and (6) Civil Infractions Ordinance. In addition, a staff position responsible for several aspects of ordinance enforcement and management of community development should be considered. Such a position could have several and varied responsibilities. For example, this position could administer the housing rehabilitation program, rental housing inspection, zoning administration, staff support for the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, undertake ordinance enforcement, work with business interests seeking to invest in Downtown, and similar activities relating to community development and management of physical changes in the City.

Zoning Ordinance. The zoning ordinance should receive a complete make over and update. Changes in statutes, case law, and ever changing development practices and terminology require periodic update of any zoning ordinance. In Reading, the present zoning ordinance must reflect tenants of the Master Plan such as new residential districts, flexible design of development, classification of non-conforming uses, improvements to site development standards, for both permitted and special land uses, and numerous other necessary regulatory changes. The Zoning

Ordinance revision/update should be a first priority following adoption of the Master Plan.

Housing Maintenance Code. Important as a means to assure that existing housing stock does not further deteriorate. A number of neighborhoods in the City include residential buildings in need of major maintenance to their exteriors. The Housing Code should include all residential buildings and should further require periodic inspection of rental dwelling units to assure they remain in sound condition. The housing code should be given a high priority for enactment.

Land Division Ordinance. A land division act was enacted by the legislature during 1997. This act empowers municipalities to create rules and procedures by which land can be subdivided. The City has no land division ordinance as of this writing. The ordinance would regulate general land divisions as well as land divisions resulting from creation of formal subdivisions or site condominium subdivisions. Common standards would be set and procedures for review established. This new ordinance should be given priority within one to two years of adoption of this Plan.

Condominium Ordinance. The Condominium Act creates virtually no standards by which developments involving condominium form of ownership are created. Thus, it falls squarely in municipalities to enact custom rules for the condominium form of development. It will be possible for Reading to enact these rules as a part of the Zoning Ordinance revisions.

Blight and Junk Ordinance. This ordinance update would be focused on definition of blight and junk to satisfy legal requirements and to expedite enforcement of violations. The ordinance would include control of junk vehicles, vehicle parts and the open, visible accumulation of refuse and scrap materials. This ordinance should be enacted within one to two years of adoption of this Master Plan.

Municipal Design Standards.

Reading currently has no regular and consistent design and construction standards in place for municipal infrastructure and public facilities. Each public or privately sponsored project uses standards of the engineer or designer. As such, there exists no consistency among projects. The City of Reading should prepare and adopt a municipal handbook of design standards. This handbook would address all aspects of public facilities in the City and any construction changes or additions to them. The design and construction standards would cover the water system, sanitary sewer system, public streets (major, local, private drives serving multiple housing, commercial and industrial buildings), pedestrian facilities, street and site lighting, public signage (other than uniform traffic code signs), and other public infrastructure operated by the City. Thus, any engineer or other design professional working for the City of private sector developer would use a common set of design and construction standards, regardless of the project. The design and construction standards should be prepared and adopted by the City Council within one to two years of adoption of this Plan.

CITY OF READING

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ADMINISTRATION AND PROJECTS 2000-2006

Item

Original Source/ Responsibility ID Administration

1. Certified Industrial Park Designation
2. Special Assessment Procedures Established
3. Conduit Loan Arrangement
4. Code Enforcement Updates
Zoning Ordinance/Civil Infraction
Rental Housing Licensing Ordinance
Junkl/Blight/Community Standards Ordinance
Land Division Ordinance
Municipal Standards Ordinance
5. Sidewalk Survey/Excluded Site Triage Prioritization

TIFA Administrator
City Manager
TIFA Administrator

Gen.Fund/Plan Comm

City General Fund/
Plan. Cornm.
City Mgr. & D.P.W.

Physical Proiects to 6 Years

1. Downtown Parking Lot Drainage/Seal Coating
2. Walnut/Chestnut Srm Dr'n Proj. to North of Cheny
3. Barber Shop Insulation
4. Water/Wastewater/Storm System Study
5. Sidewalk Replacem't @ 8,000 Mn'l Appropriation
6. Water Tower
7. Park & Recreation Update
8. Enterprise Drive Street Lighting
9. Housing
10. Downtown Design Plan
11. Downtown Physical Improvments
12. Business Financing Program
13. Undefined Infrastructure Improvements.
14. Truck Route/New Road'way in South Part of City
15. Municipal & Dist. Library Location & Space Study
16. Pedestrian/Bike Trail Study & Implementation.

TIFA
City: Rev. Equip. Major,
Local, General; TIFA;
School
City General
TIFA, City: SOM, Water,
Gen.
City General,
Major,,Local/
Stakeholders
TI FA, City Water/*
City: Park & Recreation/
General
TIFN*
TIFAr
TIFAr
TIFNCity Majorr
TIFAr
City: Major, Local,
SOM, Gen.
TIFAr
TIFNCity General/
District. Library

City: Park Rec.IGeneral/

	/TIFN*
Total Physical Projects (est)	\$1,637,000
Total Administrative (est)	19,500
Total Expenditure for Administrative and Physical Projects (est)	\$1,656,500

PROJECTED AVAILABLE FUNDS FIRST SIX YEARS

TIFA	858,980
City - General	120,000
City - Water	350,000
City - Major	25,000
City - Local	5,000
City - Revolv. Equip.	75,000
Stakeholder	24,000
School District	<u>25,000</u>
Total Proj. Funds	1,482,980 (1)

(1) Outside source funding will make up difference between revenue and expenditure forecasts.