

**City of Reading
Planning Commission
October 10, 2022
Regular Meeting
7:00 P.M.**

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Approval of Meeting Minutes- July 11, 2022**
- IV. Agenda/Additions/Deletions**
- V. Public Comments and Communication Items (Agenda Items)**
- VI. New Business**
 - A. 2023 Commission Goals - **Action**
 - B. 2022 Commission Report - **Discussion**
- VII. Old Business**
 - A. Other
- VIII. Zoning Administrator Report**
 - A. Permits Issued: Fence (2)
- IX. Public Comment (PC related)**
- X. Comments from Commissioners**
- XI. Adjournment**

Proposed Minutes

READING PLANNING COMMISSION

CITY OF READING

July 11, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at Reading City Hall by chairperson, Betty Blount. The meeting was also available via zoom. Members in attendance were Betty Blount, Warren Bartels, Chad Penney, and Chuck Hartshorn. Absent: none. Guests present were Kendra Stump, who is to be appointed to the Commission by the City Council, Kym Blythe and Alan Beeker, the new Zoning Administrator. Chad made a motion, seconded by Chuck, to approve the May 10th minutes. Motion carried 4-0. The agenda was accepted as presented.

Betty closed the regular meeting at 7:02 and opened a Public Hearing to review the 2023-2028 CIP plan. Items in the different years were reviewed and compared with last year's document. While many of the items remained the same, it was noted that many of the street improvement projects have been able to be moved ahead some. This is nice positive aspect for the city. Kym shared information as the proposed document was reviewed. With no further discussion, Chad made a motion, seconded by Chuck, to close the Public Hearing at 7:22. Motion carried 4-0. Betty reopened the regular meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: Kendra shared that she had reviewed Bronson, MI and Ashley, MI Parks and Recreational Master Plans. Both are smaller communities, with Ashley being very similar to Reading. There were recommendations for activity sites in each one. Discussion also centered on not just listing park improvements, but that some plans bring up entertainment improvement areas and related activities that would bring people into the community. Brainstorming ideas for a document included 1) recreational possibilities, 2) food related activities or events, 3) physical activity possibilities including paths, trails, sidewalks, skateboard or skating areas, and more and improved ball fields, 4) an indoor shooting range, with Razorback's site and business a possible developer, 5) improvement and maintenance of our present tennis court in town, 6) add, improve, and maintain any areas that we actually have now and then move on to new and more expanded projects, 7) add to the pavilion project, and 8) get further public input as with a survey. It was also suggested that sending a survey home with school children in the fall might be a way to reach many families.

NEW BUSINESS: Warren made a motion, seconded by Chuck, to approve and recommend to City Council the CIP Capital Improvement Plan proposed for 2023-2028. Motion carried 4-0.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for August 8th, 2022.

FUTURE BUSINESS: It was noted that we will need to keep in mind further work on a Housing Code for the Master Plan with possible development locations and R-3 Higher Density Recommendations.

With no further business or comments, Chad made a motion, seconded by Chuck, to adjourn at 8:05. Motion carried 4-0.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following sections are organized by the guiding principles of the Land Use Framework: Preserve, Redevelop, Transform, and Contain. Each principle will follow the format below.

Metrics for Success

These should be easy to track and calculate figures to measure progress over time. If more detailed research has produced a specific target to reach, that should be used, but in its absence, the desired direction for each metric indicates if progress has been made. These metrics are designed to create a data-driven approach to planning and allow for more frequent evaluation of a city's actions in advancing towards the guiding principle.

Future Land Use and Zoning Plan

This section features each guiding principle's connection to the FLUM, both spatially (map) and textually (table with recommended changes). The tables "Future Land Use and Zoning" for each guiding principle also features the Zoning Plan, a short description of proposed dimensional, structural, or land use changes that must be made to the current Zoning Ordinance in order to comply with the vision set out in the Master Plan and FLUM.

Seven Tools

There are seven common tools at a city staff's disposal for implementation. The action plan is based on which tool is most appropriate to use, and lists the responsible party and the desired timeframe for completing this action.

Plans

- » Reference to an existing plan that provides guidelines and/or strategies
- » Creation, amendment, or adoption of new plans or studies

Code

- » Creation of or update to a new police power ordinance or zoning regulation

Operations

- » Continue, expand, or modify an existing program, practice, or policy

Financing

- » Identification of grants, loans, foundations, donations, revolving funds, and CIP

Knowledge

- » Develop public awareness campaigns, communication
- » Increase professional expertise and capacity of staff

Partnerships

- » Identify potential collaborators and develop a working relationship to achieve common goals

Citizens

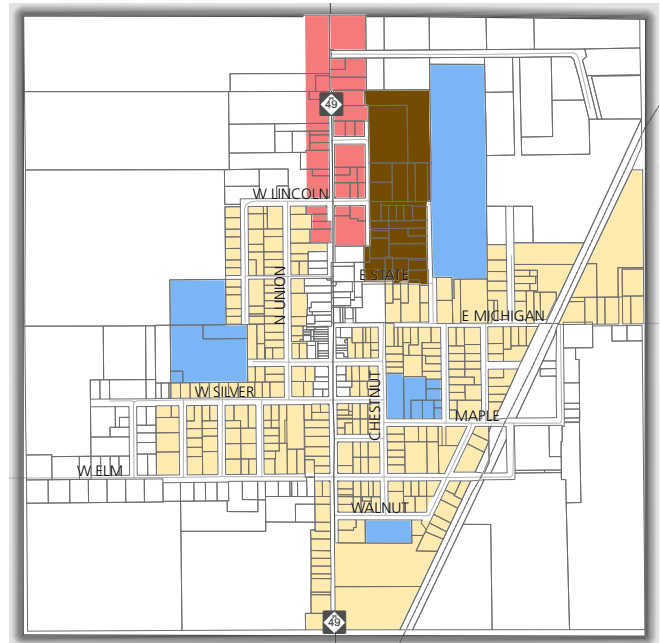
- » Identify ways that citizens can help to achieve the city's goals

Preserve: Neighborhoods & Corridors

Preservation, in this context, is not a “no change needed here” policy. The city’s existing neighborhoods fall into this category because their primary purpose should be maintained as residential areas, but necessary enhancements to their basic structural elements - housing structures, pathways (roads and sidewalks), and parks - were demonstrated as areas for improvement in the master planning process. To preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods, all three elements must be tended to simultaneously to reach its greatest maximum potential.

Future Land Use & Zoning Plan

The proposed changes to land use categories help to achieve the preservation and enhancement of existing neighborhoods by providing greater housing options for residents through varying life stages, income levels, and disability status. The intended benefits of greater housing diversity are to fill in vacant parcels in the neighborhood with more manageably sized units to reduce instances of blight; smaller yards and units could help to alleviate some of the financial burden of homeownership so that residents have discretionary funds to spend on upkeep. Slight increases to density will generate greater tax revenue to the city for funding public infrastructure to service these neighborhoods such as parkland acquisition and maintenance, tree canopy coverage, complete sidewalk networks, and improved road conditions.



Basic Strategies

Equitable code enforcement for blighted structures, targeted funding for home repairs, and upgrades to public infrastructure should be designated for these areas.

Zoning Plan

Loosen restrictive dimensional standards and expand housing options in R-1, R-2, and R-3.

Recommended Density

Low density	Up to 5 du/acre
High density	Up to 15 du/acre; expand maximum coverage threshold to achieve this

Recommended Structure Form

Low density	Large and small lot single-family
High density	Up to three story townhomes, quadplex, bungalow courts, condo/apartment buildings

Du=dwelling unit

Metrics for Success (2019 baseline)



Blight complaints (117)



Average residential parcel value (\$50,922)

Parkland acreage
(14 acres)

Feet of sidewalk replaced 2015-2020
(4,130 that was either 4' or 5' wide)

TOOLS	ACTIONS	PARTY & TIME FRAME
Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to identify specific recreational needs and potential sites for parkland acquisition » Once completed, apply for MDNR grants to complete project based on findings from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan 	<p>PC, 2022</p> <p>Parks and Rec Dept, 2022</p>
Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Increase housing variety in the Zoning Ordinance by loosening restrictive dimensional standards and expanding types of housing units permitted » Update the ordinance to prohibit absentee landlords » Create design standards for higher-density housing 	<p>PC, 2022</p> <p>City Manager, 2021</p> <p>PC, 2022</p>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Equitably enforce the International Property Maintenance Code » Follow the Sidewalk Prioritization map to fill in gaps in the nonmotorized network » Use the “Residential Vacant” map to determine suitability of sites for infill housing » Develop a system for residents to submit instances of home flooding and track data to target interventions at higher risk areas » Continue to require that all new construction is hooked up to municipal water and sewer » Develop a Historic Commission to identify historic properties in the city and strategize how to preserve them » Expand water and sewer capacity according to the CIP 	<p>Code enforcer, Ongoing</p> <p>DPW, 2025</p> <p>Zoning Admin., Ongoing</p> <p>DPW, 2021</p> <p>DPW, Ongoing</p> <p>City Council, 2021</p> <p>DPW, 2025</p>
Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Apply for USDA Housing Preservation grants to fund repairs and rehabilitation for low to very low-income homeowners » Develop a revolving fund to loan to qualified homeowners in need of home repair » Investigate a special assessment district in neighborhoods that wish to see greater tree canopy coverage, sidewalk and road improvements, curb and gutter, and recreational opportunity 	<p>TIFA, 2021</p> <p>TIFA, 2022</p> <p>City Manager, 2022</p>
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Educate private property owners on how they can retain stormwater onsite to reduce instances of flooding » Market available vacant residential sites to reputable developers 	<p>DPW, 2021</p> <p>City Manager & Assessor, Ongoing</p>
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Apply for the MSHDA MOD program to pilot modular housing units » Collaborate with the school district to apply for a Safe Routes to School grants » Partner with the Michigan State Land Bank to fill vacant residential lots with modular housing uses 	<p>City Manager, 2021</p> <p>City Manager, 2022</p> <p>Assessor, 2023</p>



Citizen Opportunities

Volunteer hours for park maintenance and for assisting homeowners with home repairs

Redevelop

The downtown is the only area of the city that falls into this category. While the downtown has good bones, it is in need of a revamp. As discussed in the Economic Development section, the downtown building stock is losing touch with its architectural heritage and also suffers from commercial vacancy and underutilized buildings.

Recommended Density

Compact, new construction does not exceed 3 times the width of originally platted downtown parcels without special consideration.

Recommended Structure Form

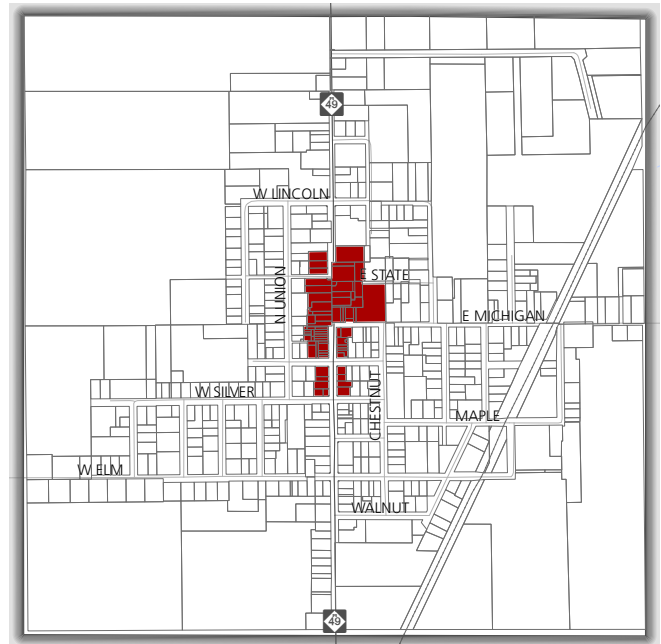
2-3 story historically appropriate building façade with rear parking

Basic Strategies

The strategies for this area include façade improvements and building rehabilitation, nonmotorized enhancements, and business recruitment.

Zoning Plan

Update and strengthen the historic design standards to include regulations on building materials and historically accurate architectural features; minimize the presence of parking with screening requirements and maximums.



Metrics for Success (2019 baseline)



Commercial vacancy (45%)



- Facade grants disseminated (\$15,000)
- Downtown businesses with a website (2)
- New business starts (4)
- Resident perception that downtown has improved (40%)
- Second-story residential (11 units)
- Average downtown commercial values (\$65,560)

TOOLS	ACTIONS	PARTY & TIME FRAME
Plans	» Update the TIFA Plan	TIFA, 2021
Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Update and strengthen the standards in the historic district overlay » Provide a designated space and regulations for food truck rallies » Continue to permit parking only in the rear of a building » Continue to enforce code against aggressive solicitation in the downtown rights-of-way » Require that parking lots that abut a public right-of-way are screened » Consider updating the parking formulas for land uses and instituting parking maximums 	PC, 2022 PC, 2022 PC, ongoing Code enforcer, ongoing PC, ongoing PC, 2022
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Apply for Michigan Main Street, if denied, hire a TIFA Director to increase professional capacity » Update the façade improvement grant program » Create a database of all commercial properties and market property information packages that detail the sites basic characteristics and selling points to investing in Reading » Conduct an inventory of all second-story units in the downtown and determine how they can be repurposed » Improve stormwater management through the installation of GSI » Convert enclosed vacant parcels in the downtown core into programmed public space 	TIFA, 2021 TIFA, 2021 TIFA, 2022 TIFA, 2022 TIFA, DPW, 2024 TIFA, ongoing
Financing	» Apply for MEDC grants to prepare sites for redevelopment	TIFA, ongoing
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Train business owners on how to establish and maintain a web presence » Expand promotional channels for marketing local businesses 	TIFA, 2022 TIFA, 2022
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Actively seek out and direct potential entrepreneurs to the Hillsdale Economic Development Partnership to develop business plans » Continue to partner with MEDC to secure funding and/or support on redevelopment properties » Collaborate with MDOT to make M-49 pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly through visibility improvements and streetscaping efforts to the right of way (tree canopy, bulb outs) » Work with the city's youth to gain their insight on how to make the downtown more user-friendly for teenagers 	TIFA, ongoing TIFA, ongoing TIFA, ongoing TIFA, 2022



Citizen Opportunities

Shop locally and attend downtown events

Transition

The housing analysis revealed an insufficient supply of different housing types. While there is infill potential for residential development, the larger swath of agricultural land on the western portion of the city presents greater opportunity for neighborhood development. This is the city’s opportunity to plan growth using best practices for neighborhood design and layout. Before development pressure becomes urgent, the city should plan for a continuation of the original grid pattern, as opposed to curvilinear subdivisions with cul-de-sacs, with smaller lots and varied housing styles, along with the associated upgrades that the community expressed in the survey: tree line streets, curb and gutter, sidewalks, and recreation access.

While there may be some objection to loss of farmland in a rural community, when cities incorporate, they are responsible for being a population center, a hub of goods and services to serve the needs of the region. Farmland preservation is noble and necessary task but in this instance is more suitable for surrounding rural townships.

Recommended Density

8 du/acre

Recommended Structure Form

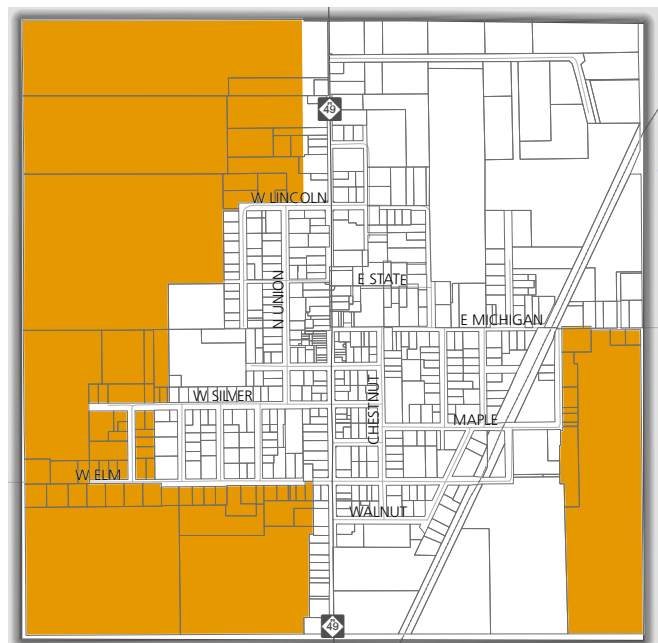
Range of small lot single-family, duplex, triplex, townhome, bungalow courts

Basic Strategies

Create a subarea plan that details how to phase in medium-density neighborhoods

Zoning Plan

Rezone agriculture to medium density residential.



Metrics for Success



Sales price of new construction is attainable for a range of current residents (60% AMI)



% of pre-sold units (50%)

Adequate tree canopy coverage (1 tree/parcel)

Completed sidewalk network that is ADA-compliant (no gaps)

Majority of residents are within walking distance to a park/open space (60% of households live within .25 miles of a park)

TOOLS	ACTIONS	PARTY & TIME FRAME
Plans	» Adopt a specific neighborhood subarea plan that includes rendering of proposed development	PC, 2023
Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Update the Zoning Ordinance to create standards for neighborhood development including design regulations for multi-family homes » Require that neighborhoods are connected (no cul-de-sacs), unless necessary to protect natural features or public safety » Adopt a PILOT ordinance 	PC, 2022 PC, 2022 City Manager, 2022
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conduct a fiscal impact analysis* prior to approving neighborhood development » Extend water, sewer, and stormwater to new residential development and charge based on the findings from the fiscal impact analysis* 	DPW, 2022 DPW, during site plan review process
Knowledge	» Inform the public through several community meetings about the transition process	DPW & PC, during site plan review process
<p><i>* Fiscal impact analysis is a tool that compares, for a given project or policy change, changes in governmental costs against changes in governmental revenues.</i></p>		



Citizen Opportunities

Provide constructive feedback on the neighborhood transition

Contain

The city's industrial areas are essential employment centers and a part of the region's economic history. Yet industrial uses have the highest probability for conflict. The intensity of the activity and space needed to buffer the effects from residential and commercial areas warrants a plan for physical containment within its designated boundaries and strategic growth within. For the industrial park in the norther part of the city, containment is of utmost importance as it shares a border with the elementary school. The other industrial area in the southeast corner of the city is physically bounded by railroad tracks on its western border. Between this site and the city's eastern border there is room that could be better occupied by other land uses; therefore, this industrial area should be contained to its current boundaries.

Recommended Density

Consider greater flexibility in minimum lot widths and maximum coverage requirements

Recommended Structure Form

Modern and attractive building materials, treated as a campus with uniform design, not to exceed downtown heights, properly buffered from rights-of-way

Basic Strategies

Do not expand industrial zoning, recruit businesses with a competitive advantage

Zoning Plan

Update stormwater and landscaping standards.



Metrics for Success (2019 baseline)



No soil contamination
(unknown)

Available land industrial park
(20 acres)



New hires are Reading area residents
(unknown), total employees (32)

Number of new business starts (0)

TOOLS	ACTIONS	PARTY & TIME FRAME
Plans	» Refer to Region 2 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies to align business recruitment efforts for the industrial park with industries that have a competitive advantage	TIFA, ongoing
	» Develop a site master plan that includes preferred circulation, landscaping, building design and orientation, and infrastructure	TIFA, 2022
Code	» Require onsite stormwater retention and improve landscaping standards as a means of screening from other uses	PC & TIFA, 2022
Operations	» Require that new businesses conduct a soil sample to test if contaminants have leaked	TIFA, 2023
	» Incentivize new industrial operations to hire local residents	TIFA, 2022
Knowledge	» Develop marketing material for promoting available spaces in the industrial park	TIFA, 2022
Partnerships	» Partner with the school district to train students for jobs in Reading and Hillsdale County	TIFA, 2023