

## **CHAPTER 12 CONCLUSION**

### **12.1 FUTURE EFFORTS**

With the conclusion of this Planning effort, the responsibility for seeing this Master Plan implemented will fall to the various Town boards, staff, and other public and private organizations that are given ownership for each of the specific objectives and actions. The CPDC, as part of its charter, will solicit status and feedback for each of the actions and provide this information, along with any recommendations for changes or additional objectives to begin work on, to the Board of Selectman (twice a year). In addition, for the true value of this Master Plan to be realized, the entire Town must embrace this plan and begin to utilize it as part of their vocabulary and guidance for any substantial efforts or important decisions. The State has also made the existence of a Master Plan a critical aspect of a Communities responsibility, and many state grants require that the Master Plan include information that supports the Town's application for such funds to support defined Master Plan efforts.

### **12.2 DECISION PROCESS**

This Master Plan provides a collection of intentions about the future of Reading. It is important to note that the needs and aspirations of the residents affect the plan's implementation in three tiers:

- through Town Boards, Commissions and Committees (B/C/Cs)
- through Town Administration
- through Town Meeting

While proud about its strong planning legacy and its volunteerism, Reading is a community whose administration has been affected by fiscal constraints, thus resulting in operational challenges of running the Town government in a modern and forward looking model. It is because of these reasons that in order to translate the collective intentions of the plan to policy, the three tiers mentioned above need to function in a complementary way. This is accomplished by asking the questions, providing the answers and aligning the actions with this plan's vision and goals.

At the same time, while state and federal legislation is going through a revision process, the Town should evaluate its priorities as a locality as well as a constituent of those regions. The

recent publicized smart growth principles, legislative reform efforts and interdepartmental cooperation initiatives provide opportunities for Reading not only to define its own future, but also affect regional development. One such example is the planned Massachusetts Land Use Reform Act (MLURA) in as far as it encourages communities to adopt or update their local master plans and enables them to develop effective land use regulations that are consistent with those plans. Other examples at a federal level are the new accessibility guidelines, transportation bills, environmental protection funding and national security initiatives, all of which should be investigated for their impact to this plan. It is the act of monitoring Town issues with regards to state and federal legislation and funding changes that will add another layer of credibility to the implementation decisions.

### **12.3 NEXT MASTER PLAN ISSUANCE**

The last Master Planning effort was concluded in 1991, just about 14 years ago. Although there is no specific guidance, plans that are not updated after 10 years begin to show their age, and given the rapidly changing environment, do not reflect current issues facing the community. Although the Community Development (CD) plan completed in 2003 satisfied some of the Master Plan objectives, this recent effort clearly addressed all of the required aspects from both the State and Communities point of view. Our hope is that through a more rigorous process of tracking progress against objectives and actions, Reading will recognize the need for updates to this Master Plan sooner, and continued involvement by members of the community, the various boards, staff, business and other organizations, will provide further encouragement to not allow such a long lapse between plan updates to occur. With plans for a formal review process by the CPDC in place, this could be another mechanism for requiring plan addendums to be created to address critical needs or significant community changes without having to recreate an entire document.