

Reading Downtown Revitalization Observations
Presented to the Reading Economic Development Committee

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Introduction & Purpose

Reading is blessed with an active and attractive downtown. Downtown Reading maintains a comparatively high level of retail occupancy and enjoys the anchoring presence of a highly successful community grocery store. Several Institutional and office users, including the town government, a major post office, and multiple financial institutions, as well as a busy commuter rail station provide daytime activity throughout the downtown. A handful of new restaurants and specialty stores have increased evening activity downtown as well.

Not willing to merely accept these assets, Reading continues to take proactive steps to enhance and improve its downtown. A major capital improvement project in partnership with the Massachusetts Highway Department will soon transform Main Street. New mixed-use zoning has been adopted to encourage additional development and increase activity. The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is assisting Reading with a market assessment report focused on Downtown. The Town Administration has been authorized to begin studying parking management options including consideration of the feasibility of constructing a new parking structure to serve Downtown.

The 2005 Master Plan for the Town of Reading listed "Improve Downtown" as the number one economic development goal. Consistent with the Master Plan, the newly appointed Economic Development Committee has identified the following as their top economic development objective:

Improve the quality of life for Reading residents by increasing the available retail, restaurants, and other amenities in town, particularly in the Downtown

Given the primacy of downtown revitalization for the Town of Reading and the Economic Development Committee, this document is intended to complement the broader Economic Development Strategy with more detailed discussion of opportunities and recommendations for Downtown Reading.

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Reading Master Plan

The 2005 Reading Master Plan listed the following observations, goals, and objectives for the revitalization of Downtown Reading.

Downtown Revitalization

Reading's Downtown enjoys a low vacancy rate, significant public and private investment and a fairly diverse mix of commercial uses. However, the lack of parking is the major impediment to retail or mixed-use development. Also, mixed-use is currently prohibited by zoning by-law in the commercial areas. Improving the Downtown can be achieved primarily through good urban design. This includes improved streetscape, enhanced and enforced parking, more pleasing building facades, easier and safer pedestrian street crossing, and attraction of first rate restaurants and vibrant niche retailers.

Goal 1 Improve Downtown

Objectives:

- A. To enhance the economic development of Downtown, the CPDC will develop the appropriate mixed-use zoning changes and present them to Town Meeting for approval.
- B. Complete the planned streetscape modifications developed over the last 8 years and which is currently on the MassHighway Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for fiscal year 2006 funding. This will provide additional parking, easier crossing of Main Street to improve access to the east side shops, provide improved traffic circulation for the Haven Street – Gould Street areas and generally beautify the Main Street area from the Common to Washington Street.
- C. Investigate multi-level structured parking facilities in the parking area behind CVS, perhaps in conjunction with medical, commercial and/or residential facilities. Other areas for potential open or structured parking should also be investigated for a multi-leveled structure, with some consideration for pedestrian, bicycle or alternative transportation.
- D. Encourage specific beautification projects such as façade improvement, window flower boxes, artwork on graffiti-prone walls and alleys, and shrubs and plantings for screening where needed. These to be accomplished by shop owners, landlords, church groups, service clubs, youth groups, and other volunteer organizations with assistance from the Town where appropriate.
- E. Apply for grants from all appropriate State and Federal programs to extend the streetscape program to the Haven Street/High Street/Depot areas.

Observations

On Friday, April 20, Town Manager Peter Hechenbleikner and members of the Economic Development Committee accompanied me on a tour of Downtown Reading. It was a warm and sunny afternoon after a colder and wetter than normal April and this was school vacation week, ideal circumstances for people of all ages to enjoy a pedestrian-friendly downtown setting. This provided an excellent opportunity to observe strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement toward the goal of achieving an active and vital downtown. The following observations stem from the tour.

Major Attractors

Downtown commercial districts, like malls and other retail areas, are only successful if there is sufficient market activity to ensure financial success for the retailers. There are essentially two types of retail businesses, destination retailers and convenience or impulse retailers. Destination retailers include the anchor departments stores in most malls, supermarkets that anchor most strip centers, and restaurants and stores that offer products or services of a quality or type that is unique in the area. While trade areas for destination retailers vary, their customers will generally make a planned trip to the patronize that particular business.

Impulse retailers, include convenience stores, gas stations, fast food restaurants, pharmacies, and many of the smaller stores in most malls and shopping centers. These businesses provide products and services that are or are perceived to be available at similar levels of quality from many locations within a trade area. These businesses generally cannot depend on customers making a special trip to patronize a particular establishment. Instead, they must rely on convenience to the customer who is drawn to their location for some other reason. Many, including gas stations and urban chain coffee houses, rely on being located proximate to high traffic locations (highways or urban downtown street corners, respectively). Others rely on being located near destination retailers, as is common in most malls and shopping plazas. Still others rely on being located near major attractors that are not necessarily retailers, including tourist-oriented businesses near visitor attractions, insurance agents near motor vehicle registration offices, and sports bars near arenas.

Most retailers that populate and form the street-level fabric of successful downtowns are not destination retailers. They are usually reliant on customers drawn by major attractors and destination retail anchors. As the downtowns become more and more successful, the pedestrian friendly environment itself becomes a major attractor as is seen in Portsmouth, NH and Newburyport, MA, for example.

Currently Downtown Reading is not an attractor unto itself as the above-named communities are. However, Reading is blessed with several attractors including destination retailers which form an excellent foundation for revitalization.

- The Atlantic Supermarket appears to draw the most customers to Downtown Reading as a destination retailer and it has the potential to perform the same function that supermarkets play as anchors in strip shopping centers, boosting the sales of adjacent businesses. To successfully leverage the market as an anchor however, other businesses

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need to be located where they are visible and conveniently accessed from the entrance to the market. Unfortunately, since most customers appear to access the market from the parking lot behind, and few other businesses are visible from this lot, a significant amount of the potential trade benefit for other businesses may not be effectively captured. Signage in the parking lot with logos and names of other Downtown businesses, and the distribution of promotional fliers in grocery bags (with permission from the market) may be some simple short-term steps to increase the Downtown's ability to leverage grocery shoppers.

- The MBTA rail station draws approximately eight hundred commuters daily to Downtown Reading by car and presumably on foot from nearby neighborhoods as well. Unfortunately, the train station is at the edge of Downtown, separated from the business areas and parking is spread out linearly along High Street. These factors mean that this potential population is not drawn toward businesses along Haven and Main Streets to the degree that might be desired. Textured crosswalks, bulb-outs, and other physical improvements to enhance pedestrian connection between the train station and the end of Haven Street may be beneficial.
- The Post Office appears to draw a significant number of people to Downtown. This building is well-positioned to convey its visitors to other sites due to its location in the center of the downtown business district. Unfortunately, surface parking lots and office uses occupy many of the parcels immediately surrounding the post office, limiting the potential for post office users to be drawn to other businesses in Downtown.
- There are a series of smaller businesses along the west side of Main Street from Haven Street to the Town Hall that have developed some capacity to act as destinations at varying times of day due to unique offerings. These include the Venetian Moon Restaurant, The Wine Shop, Christopher's Restaurant, Goodhearts and Sense of Wonder.

The Spine

Collectively, these major attractors form a linear path beginning at Town Hall extending south along Main Street to include the square formed by the intersection with Haven Street, then west down Haven Street and terminating at the Commuter Rail Station. This forms a core spine which can constitute a foundation for the revitalization of downtown. Efforts to enhance the pedestrian experience and promote commercial activity in Downtown Reading will be most successful if they build on this existing foundation.

A compelling pedestrian experience in a downtown setting is driven by two important factors: activity and visual interest. Humans are inherently social animals. We are drawn to other people and to places that have been activated by the presence of others. We are also drawn to places where there are things to look at. As a result, most people are drawn to a downtown street lined with active uses and interesting things to look at, particularly along the sidewalks from three feet to eight feet above the ground. Not surprisingly, the best way to achieve this is to line the sidewalks with active retail uses, characterized by well-designed storefront window displays and outdoor and window seating for restaurants and cafes (nothing is more interesting to look at than other people). By contrast, surface parking lots, building walls without windows, etc. will detract from the pedestrian experience.

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As a result, it is very important that Reading work to energize the spine with more activity and visual interest. Some specific action steps that should be considered include:

- Redevelop the parking lots that front on Haven Street (a short-term interim step would be to improve the visual variety and interest to the landscaping along the sidewalks at these lots). Prioritize these developments to increase the continuity of the spine.
- Increasing the proportion of ground floor uses along the spine that are active in nature
- Allow parking along both sides of all streets in this area so that pedestrians on the sidewalk are protected from the moving traffic on the street by the parked cars. For this reason, delivery and drop-off zones should be limited (or eliminated) from the spine.
- Narrow pedestrian crossings along the spine, particularly at the intersection of Gould and Haven Streets, and provide textured or colored crosswalks.
- Improve the comfort and safety for pedestrians crossing High Street from the train station to Haven Street
- Widen sidewalks where possible and allow for sidewalk seating for restaurants and cafes.
- Encourage new developments to include residential uses on upper floors to increase the nighttime activity in the area
- Manage parking so that employees, residents, and other non-customers must walk along the sidewalks to travel from the parking to their destinations
- During the review process encourage new developments to increase the proportion of fenestration (windows) on sidewalk-facing ground floors
- Work with banks and institutional users to redevelop underutilized ground floor space in their buildings as cafes and other functions that are more engaging to downtown pedestrians. Wainwright Bank's new branch being built in Dorchester may be a good model.

It would be desirable to apply these types of improvements to all areas of the Downtown. In some cases, this is possible. In others prioritization is important since revitalization typically proceeds incrementally. The revitalization process can be accelerated with proper management though.

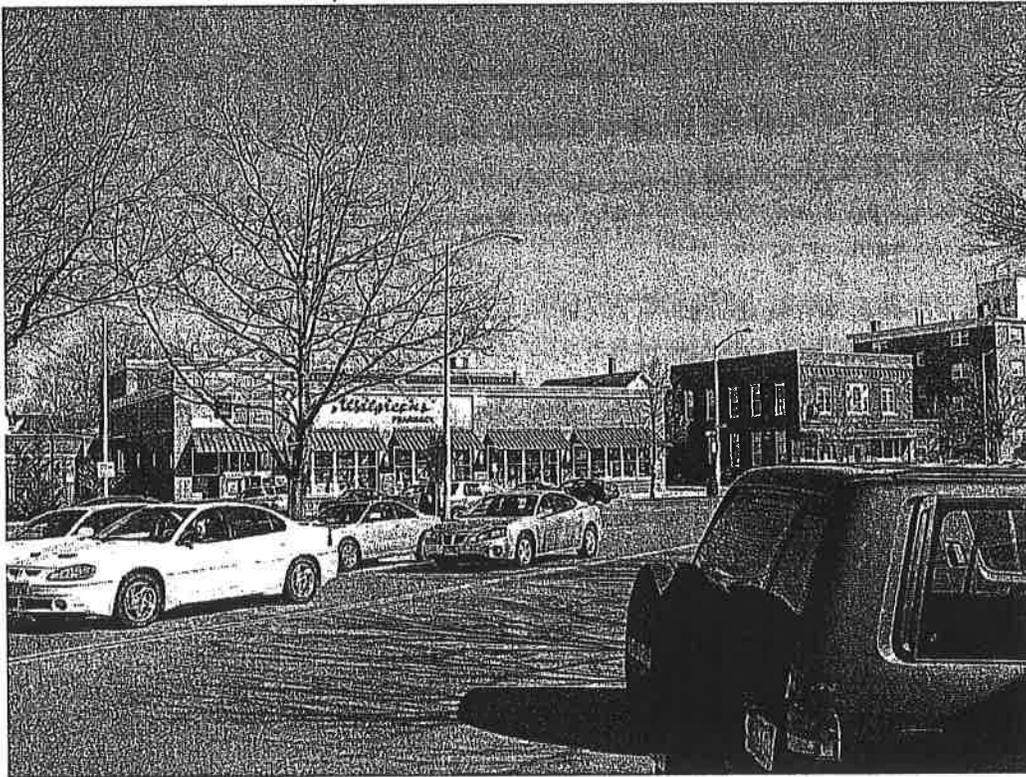
Studies by Boston-based Goody Clancy and others have observed that it takes 1000 households to support one block of urban main street business development. In more urban setting, these 1000 households come from dense housing in surrounding areas, typically within walking distance of the main street block. Several residential areas of Reading are very close and well-connected to Downtown by sidewalks. There area also existing residential properties in the downtown, including a multi-family apartment complex, and the new mixed-use zoning will wisely allow for new residential uses on upper floors of developments in the downtown.

Collectively, these sources may generate 1000 households, but are unlikely to generate more than 1000. Given that the Main Street/Haven Street spine represents at least three and possibly as many as five blocks, at least 3000 households may be needed to support it. Reading households have higher incomes and greater purchasing power than those in the urban areas Goody

Clancy studied and additional customers will drive to Downtown Reading from other areas.

Nevertheless, the available market currently will not support the commercialization of the entire Business B Zoning District in Downtown Reading right away. Instead, it can support either the infilling of a few core blocks completely or the spread of some additional commercial activity sparsely throughout the entire district. If the focus is placed on the spine outlined above first and that area is revitalized well, it will create the impression of a highly successful business district and provide a compelling experience for people who shop along these blocks. As these blocks succeed, their success will draw more people to the Downtown, expanding the market, and ultimately supporting the expansion of the vital commercial district well beyond what the local population could support as has been the case in Portsmouth, NH. If instead the existing market is dispersed throughout the district, the critical mass of activity that spurs future growth may never materialize.

Site-Specific Observations

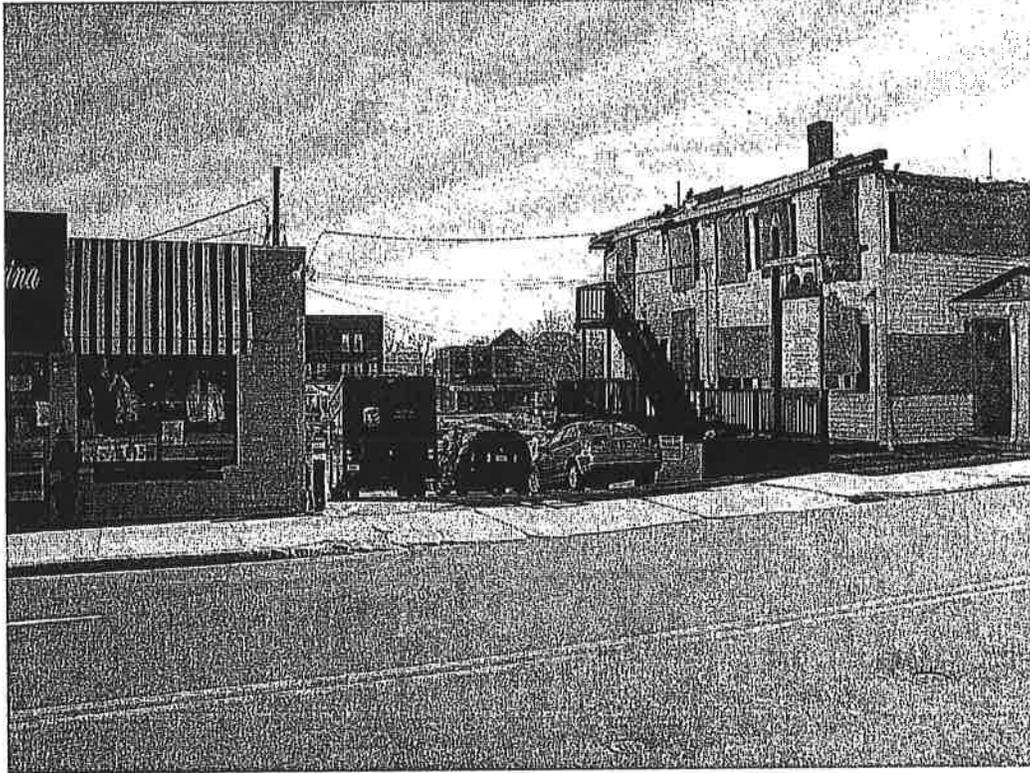


This new pharmacy is comparatively well-designed for a downtown setting. The building is built to the side walk, with an entrance and multiple display windows directly facing the sidewalk at elevations that work well for pedestrians. It could be improved if one could see into the store through more of the windows.

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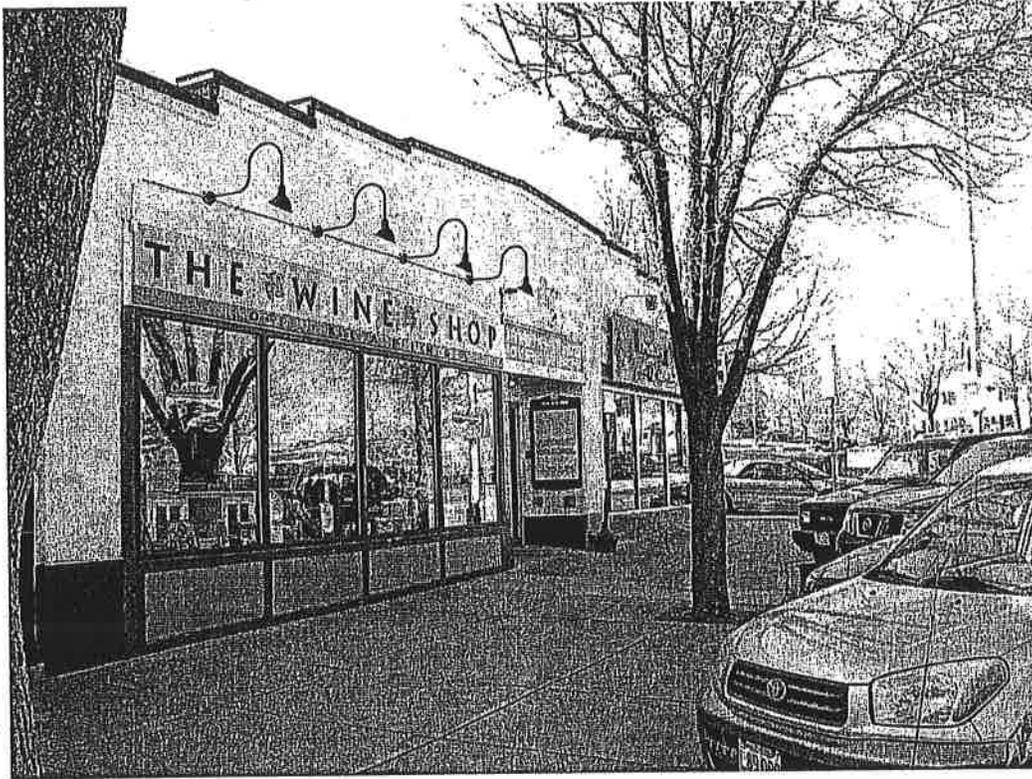


In contrast, this building is designed for a more suburban setting. The parking area separates pedestrians on the sidewalk from the entrances to the ground floor businesses limiting visibility, interest, safety, and access. The architecture of the building also highlights the second floor and the structural system rather than the storefronts which should be the focus in a downtown setting.

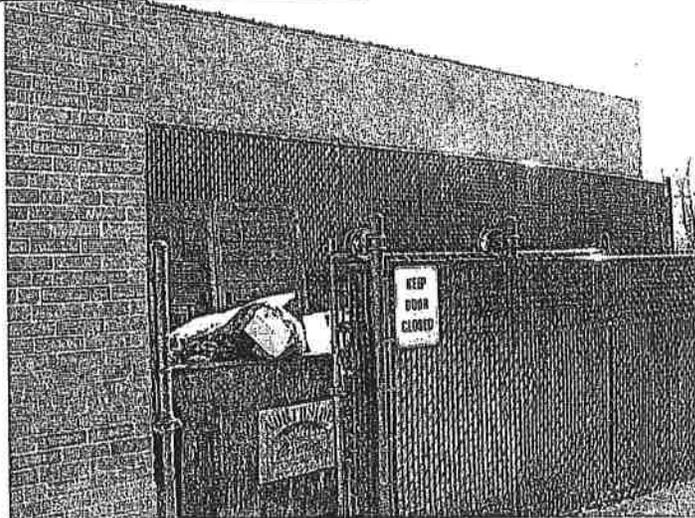
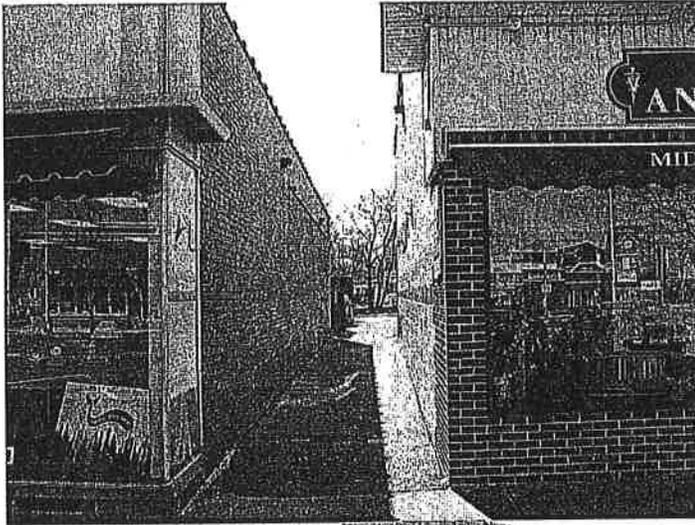


This alley is primary vehicular entrance to the central parking area. To encourage usage and awareness of the parking area, it should be well-marked, attractive, and visible from the main streets. A well-designed entrance structure that incorporates the universal "P" parking sign could address these issues for limited cost.

Plans have been filed to redevelop the fire-damaged building on the right.



The Wine Shop and Venetian Moon of several excellent examples of the types of businesses that can thrive in a contemporary downtown setting. Downtowns may not always be competitive with strip shopping centers and malls for automotive convenience or well-marked familiar chain stores. However, unique and locally-owned business which emphasize quality products and high levels of customer service will draw customers to a downtown. Restaurants, bars, and service businesses which provide experience to the customer can both benefit from and strengthen the ambiance of a pedestrian-oriented downtown setting.



This alley is the public pedestrian access between the public parking lot and Main Street. Such a connection should be welcoming and convey a sense of safety, comfort, and interest and be thought of as one would view a public sidewalk along Main Street. Trash facilities should obviously be relocated. Alternate paving materials and painting the adjacent building walls a consistent light color would be an improvement. Arches at both ends could help pedestrians recognize this as the connection to Main Street. More and more attractive lighting would substantially improve the sense of safety and overall appearance after dark.



As discussed elsewhere in this report, Downtown Reading enjoys ample public parking and it is generally located in appropriate places, including parallel and angle parking on the main shopping streets and rear lots, like this one. The design challenge with rear parking lots is to present an attractive visual setting for the customer, while simultaneously providing for the loading and refuse facilities that are needed to allow businesses to function. In this case, landscaping within the parking lot and along the edges of the lot, could provide an alternate focus to distract from blank rear walls and service facilities.



This building is an excellent historic example of a well-designed downtown building. Reading is fortunate that it anchors a very prominent corner. The scale and massing of this structure is ideal for downtown Reading. The storefronts are well-proportioned to support the pedestrian experience. Unfortunately, the bank dominates the majority of the storefronts, which limits the visual interest and variety for the pedestrian that might come from retail displays or café seating in a restaurant window.

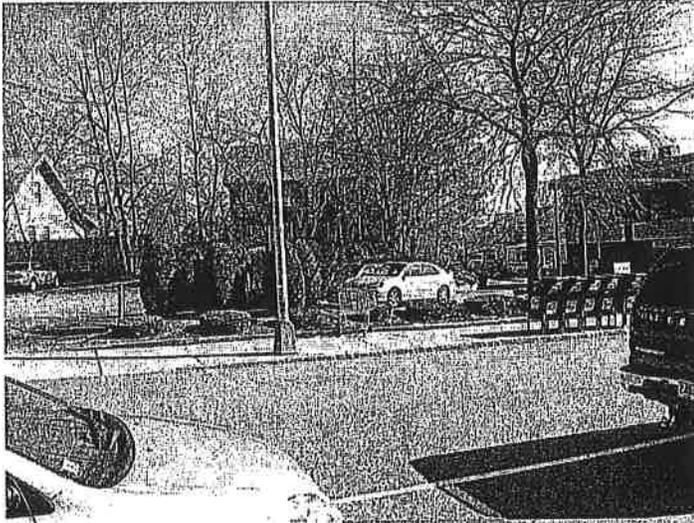
The crosswalks pose some challenges at this location and elsewhere in downtown Reading. Their length and lack of visual prominence suggests to both pedestrians and motorists that automobiles have the right-of-way, which is neither legally accurate nor desirable in a downtown setting. Narrowing the crossings with bulb-outs at street corners and use of alternate paving materials including pavers or colored cast-in-place concrete would be beneficial. These changes may be incorporated into the planned Main Street improvement project that MassHighway will be implementing.



These institutional uses benefit downtown Reading by providing employment and daytime activity which provides customers for downtown businesses. However, their location and designs create a significant gap in the "Spine" that otherwise forms the core pedestrian experience. The buildings do not enliven the street. Ground floor windows are too small and do not provide interesting displays to passers-by. Deep setbacks, compounded by the elevation change create a "hole" in the streetscape in the lower photo. It will be difficult to retrofit these sites in the short-term, but development regulations and review processes should be used to ensure that these situations are not duplicated with new developments.

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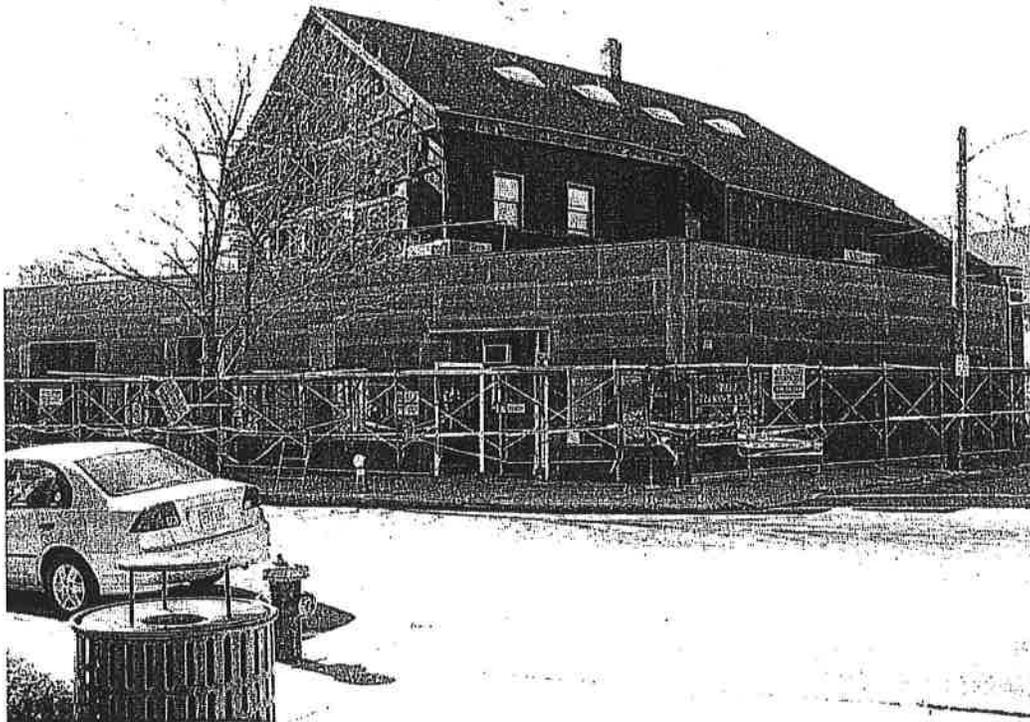
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One of the largest challenges to achieving a pedestrian-friendly and vibrant streetscape in downtown Reading are the surface parking lots that front directly on Haven Street. In the short-term property owners should be encouraged to significantly improve the variety and visual interest to the landscaping between the sidewalks and the lots. Over the longer-term, these sites provide potentially valuable locations for significant redevelopment which would increase the property value for the owner, tax revenues for the Town, and, most importantly, strengthen the vitality of the downtown.

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This site is impressive for two reasons. First, the significant investment the owner is making in expanding and improving their property suggests that a strong market exists for commercial development in downtown Reading. Second, what appears to be an addition to an existing building, is transforming this property from an auto-oriented site design (a large building with deep setbacks) to a pedestrian-friendly downtown infill site design by bringing retail storefronts to the back of the sidewalk.



This is another great example of a well-designed new building in downtown Reading. The scale and site design are well-suited to a town center. The use mix and locations of those uses within the building, as well as how they are expressed architecturally work very well. Parking is provided behind and under the building, effectively addressing a practical need without disrupting the streetscape. This project, which appears to be fully occupied, is further evidence that a market exists for good urban design in downtown Reading and suggests that the EDC's vision of a highly-desirable walkable downtown is achievable.

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Parking Management

The Master Plan and many other documents highlight a perceived shortage of parking as a detriment to downtown revitalization. As a result, there have been calls for studies of parking management downtown and exploration of the feasibility of constructing a new parking structure. Given the analysis of the market needed to support downtown above, and the stated desire for an improved downtown to become a quality of life amenity for all Reading residents, it is clear that parking will continue to be an important factor, as many downtown customers will need to drive to the downtown. However, it is also important to differentiate between issues that are perceived and those that are real and proscribe appropriate solutions accordingly.

Proposed Parking Structure

The concept of a proposed parking structure appears to stem from both a perceived lack of parking today and a fear that available parking will not be sufficient to support additional development activity particularly if residential uses are introduced. However, the construction of structured parking is very expensive, with per space costs ranging from \$15,000 for a bare bones structure to well over \$20,000 depending on the complexity of the design, site constraints, and the size of the facility (smaller facilities generally cost more on a per space basis). The only state or federal grant funds that are generally available to support the construction of parking structures are usually tied to serving transit rather than economic development.

Reading's proposed site is an existing surface parking lot located in the center of the block bound by Main Street, Haven Street, Sanborn Street, and Woburn Street. This parcel is approximately one half acre in size, which is probably too small to provide sufficient land for an external "speed ramp" and retain a sufficiently-sized parking floor plate. The site is also less than 120 feet wide, the optimum width for a parking structure with an integral ramp. This width allows for two standard bays of perpendicular parking with a two-way drive lane between them. One bay is ramped and the other is level to allow drivers to circulate. These site constraints mean that construction of a new multi-level garage would probably be fairly expensive relative to the number of spaces created, despite the fact that a mid-block site would require only minimal architectural cladding. The topography may allow for a single elevated parking deck, accessed from Woburn Street over a surface lot accessed from Haven Street, but that proposal may be constrained by its impacts on adjacent properties and the need to take or obtain easements to cross private property to access the structure.

If a new parking structure is going to be both challenging to design and expensive to construct, the importance of evaluating the underlying assumptions behind the proposal. If funds are available for a feasibility study, I would strongly recommend that this study include an assessment of the demand for the facility and explore parking management alternatives in addition to looking at the design and finance issues associated with the proposed facility.

Parking Demand and Supply

Since Downtown Reading is predominantly characterized by commercial uses and the residential uses in the district generally have off-street parking, demand for parking can reasonably be expected to peak during weekday afternoon business hours. During these periods, office and institutional buildings are

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occupied, retail stores and restaurants are open, and commuter rail users who left their vehicles in the morning have not yet returned from Boston.

The April Downtown tour discussed above occurred during this presumably peak parking demand period. However, photos taken during this tour show at least a dozen available spaces in the lot proposed for the garage, nearly as many available in the lot behind the Atlantic Market, and many on-street public spaces available along every street. In addition, several private parking lots serving non-residential uses were completely empty. The only location where demand appeared to meet or exceed available supply was at the train station.

The fact that the existing parking appears to adequately meet the existing demand does not specifically address the fear that additional development may upset this balance. A separate but related reason for considering structured parking is that if additional supply were introduced, it would be easier to convince private owners of property presently underutilized as surface parking to redevelop these sites.

Further and more detailed analysis as part of an alternatives analysis component to the parking structure feasibility study discussed above should address these questions more thoroughly. However, given the fact that much of the added development may be in the form of residential uses, whose peak parking demand complements the peak office and commuter demand that exists today, it is likely that the existing on and off-street public parking supply will be sufficient to support a substantial number of additional residential dwelling units even with no off-street parking requirements for those units.

A large proportion of the privately-owned surface parking spaces were also available during the site tour. As a result it is likely that incentive-based parking management strategies which incorporate shared use may allow for the redevelopment of many of these lots with no significant impact on the parking availability in Downtown Reading generally and for retail and restaurant customers specifically.

Various studies by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and others have demonstrated that in mixed-use areas that are not served by mass transit, the total actual parking demand, satisfied by both on-street and off-street parking, is generally between 1.5 and 2.5 spaces for every 1000 square feet of occupied development. At this standard, if Reading were to permit the development of new 3-story buildings, which maximized the lot coverage allowed by zoning on all of the undeveloped lots and surface parking lots along the spine outlined above, this would generate a new parking demand of 150 spaces in addition to the approximately 50 spaces in existing lots that would be displaced by new construction. The mid-day aerial photograph of Downtown Reading that is on Google Earth, shows at least 189 empty on- and off-street parking spaces within one half block of this same spine area. Nearly all of the real parking demand associated with the full build-out of the spine could potentially be accommodated without constructing a single new parking space. The addition of creative incentive-based parking management strategies could essentially guarantee that all of the parking demand could be accommodated.

Parking Management

The transportation engineering firm Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates has been a leader in researching and promulgating parking management strategies

that are based on viewing parking as an economic commodity rather than merely as public infrastructure. Considering parking a commodity resource allows for the introduction of incentive-based parking management systems which have proven to be particularly effective in addressing real and perceived parking shortages in many downtowns while also reducing traffic congestion and raising revenue for downtown maintenance and improvements.

The key to this process is to create a set of regulations and financial incentives and penalties which result in market-driven maintenance of a 10-15% vacancy rate in all public parking areas, particularly on-street, so customers recognize that there is always a space available. The revenue raised from the financial package can then be reinvested in improvements in the district that help with beautification and maintenance.

Some strategies that have been used successfully in communities like Pasadena, CA, Bellevue, WA, Cambridge, MA, Redwood City, CA, Boulder, CO, and Arlington, VA, as well as in major cities are listed below. Because they are generally based on creating market-driven economic management of parking, they all are most effective in areas where there are no or minimal parking requirements in zoning, as is the case in Downtown Reading.

- Commercial Parking Benefit Districts where parking-related revenue streams are spent solely on improvements within the commercial district served by the regulated parking. Revenue can come from meters that are priced to maintain the appropriate vacancy rate and clearly signed to let parkers know how the revenue will be spent. Such signage may allow community pride and recognition of the benefits to offset frustration with paying for parking.
- Require landlords to unbundle parking from commercial leases by charging extra rent for each parking space rather than including a fixed number of spaces in the base rent. This allows tenants to make a market-based decision about how much parking to rent and use and landlords to make a market-based decision about how much parking to build. San Francisco does this for residential rental property as well.
- Require parking cash-out programs, where employers must calculate the value of free parking that is provided to employees and make a payment to those employees who do not use the free parking because they walk, bicycle, take public transportation, or carpool to work.
- Instead of posting parking time limits for public parking, institute metered pricing with rates set at the market-determined level that ensures 10-15% vacancy. This system is often coupled with a validation process that allows free short-term parking for customers of businesses.
- Encourage sharing of privately-owned off-street parking among multiple complementary uses.
- Create a Residential Parking Benefit District in the neighborhoods adjacent to facilities that generate high parking demand. In Reading, the commuter rail station may be an example. Under such a system, people using the facility are charged for the right to park in the impacted neighborhood's streets at a rate that is set to allow for the appropriate level of vacancy. Revenue from the charges (through meters or permits as appropriate) is then reinvested in the benefit district to improve streets and sidewalks, plant trees, or do other public improvements that the residents desire.

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- End winter on-street parking bans that apply to downtown. Alternate approaches including snow emergency parking restrictions and odd/even parking could effectively allow for snow removal without eliminating on-street parking as a valuable source of parking supply, especially for mixed-use development.

These strategies may or may not be appropriate in Reading, but they and others like them should be explored as alternatives as part of any overall parking management strategy when reviewing the possibility of constructing a parking structure. Any proposed parking benefit district models would also need to be reviewed by Town Counsel to determine how they are allowed under Massachusetts General Law or if they would require a home rule petition.

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Business Improvement District

The policy statement by the Board of Selectmen that created the Economic Development Committee specifically proposes the exploration of a Business Improvement District (BID) for Downtown Reading. There are many benefits to the BID model and in many downtowns nationwide it has proven an effective means of promoting and improving commercial districts. BIDs are used to supplement general government services with additional programs that specifically benefit the BID area. Potential benefits include streetscape beautification programs, collective marketing, special event programming, refuse collection, maintenance programs, and economic development efforts. BID programming is financed through various means, the most common being an essentially a surcharge on property or business taxes, similar to the common area or condominium fees that are assessed in private shopping centers and malls to finance similar management, enhancement, and maintenance programs.

Massachusetts allows for the creation of BIDs under M.G.L. Chapter 40O. Unfortunately, this legislation has not been very effective due to the following clause in Section 4

Any property owner within the BID may, within thirty calendar days after such declaration of organization by the local municipal governing body, elect not to participate and not be subject to the BID fee.

This opt-out provision means that property owners may choose not to pay into the BID. Ostensibly the impact of this provision would be minimized by denying the BID benefits to those who choose not to participate, which may work for refuse collection programs or snow removal, but is hard to do when the BID wishes to fund physical improvements or area beautification. Once other property owners or businesses realize that one of their neighbors is not helping to pay for the hanging flower baskets that benefit everyone in the area, they too may choose not to participate, creating a cycle that undermines the funding structure for the BID. As a consequence, only three communities in Massachusetts have established BIDs with varying degrees of success.

Despite this flaw in the BID legislation, the concept is a very valuable one that could benefit Downtown Reading greatly. As a first step in evaluating a BID, the Economic Development Committee should meet with and survey potential participants to gauge both the level of interest in the program and the likelihood that some parties would opt out. If there is support but several key parties would probably not participate, Reading would have two options.

- A home rule petition could be filed allowing Reading to establish a BID without the opt-out provision. This may have an uphill battle because it is essentially imposing a local option tax, which could get caught up in the politics associated with other local option tax proposals currently being debated in the Legislature.
- Alternatively, different revenue sources could be identified to fund similar programs as those which would be paid for under a statutory BID and the BID could be adopted as an organizational and management vehicle without the special assessment. Options include the parking benefit district models discussed above and a 501(c)3 model supported by tax deductible donations.

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Reading Economic Development Committee Strategy

Introduction & Purpose

The Town of Reading, Massachusetts is a desirable suburban community, located at the junction of two of New England's busiest interstate highways. Reading and several of its neighboring towns have welcomed an increasingly affluent and well-educated residential population over the past several years. Recently, the town has been able to capitalize on the strength of this market and the convenience associated with its excellent highway access to attract several major retail developments to a redeveloped landfill site in the Walker's Brook Crossing area adjacent to Interstate 95/Route 128.

Reading is also blessed with an active and attractive downtown. Downtown Reading maintains a comparatively high level of retail occupancy and enjoys the anchoring presence of a highly successful community grocery store. Several institutional and office users, including the town government, a major post office, and multiple financial institutions, as well as a busy commuter rail station provide daytime activity throughout the downtown. A handful of new restaurants and specialty stores have increased evening activity downtown as well. A major capital improvement project in partnership with the Massachusetts Highway Department will soon transform Main Street.

Despite these assets, Reading faces some challenges to economic development. The vast majority of land in Reading is zoned to prohibit business and industrial uses and most of the available commercially zoned land in Reading has been developed. These conditions result in a tax base that is dependent on residential property for nearly 95% of total valuation.

Although unemployment rates are comparatively low, the limited local employment base is dominated by service and retail jobs, and only 30% of the jobs in Reading are held by Reading residents. Over 80% of Reading residents commute to other communities for employment.

Unlike many residential suburbs, Reading has embraced a proactive approach to economic development. A new Economic Development Committee has been appointed and the Town Administration is genuinely engaged. Significant opportunities exist to enhance the downtown through additional development, including new mixed-use projects, stakeholder organization, and improved parking management. In addition to the Downtown, several vacant or underutilized properties, most notably the Addison-Wesley site on South Street, provide opportunities for additional economic development.

This document is intended to help guide the work of the Economic Development Committee, as well as other key players, to help the Town of Reading protect their assets, and effectively capitalize on the available opportunities. It includes a discussion of economic development priorities for Reading as well as a prioritization of specific work plan activities with measures to evaluate success.

Economic Development Committee

The 2005 Reading Master Plan recommended the creation of an Economic Development Committee (EDC) and in March 2006, the Board of Selectmen adopted a policy establishing such a committee to advise town officials on economic development. The five-member EDC is appointed by the Board of Selectmen and includes representatives from various key stakeholder groups including the Chamber of Commerce, utility companies, downtown Reading, and the School Department. The EDC's advisory responsibilities are particularly focused on the following areas:

- Develop an Economic Development Strategy consistent with the Master Plan and goals and objectives established periodically by the Board of Selectmen;
- Within the Economic Development Strategy, work with staff to obtain additional State and Federal economic development grants;
- Explore the need for and the legality of forming a "property-based" or "business-based" Business Improvement District(s) funded by assessments on all businesses within the individual districts;
- To the extent feasible, encourage commercial development and office leases of downtown space consistent with the traditional atmosphere of a New England Village Center;
- Advise the Board of Selectmen, Community Planning and Development Commission, and any other Town agency or official as appropriate, on matters related to economic development in the community;
- In order to achieve the above, review options to funding economic development activities in cooperation with other civic organizations.

The EDC receives staff support from the Town Manager and the Town Planner in the Department of Community Services. However, staff resources are extremely limited and the recently-hired Town Planner is responsible for a broad range of activities, including providing staff support to multiple boards, committees, and commissions.

The EDC also does not have a local budget appropriation. Any consultant assistance or project funding must be supported either with grant sources or future Town Meeting appropriations. Both of these funding sources will require demonstration of measurable success. Finally, the EDC enabling policy requires renewal in 2012. As a result, the committee must be both self-reliant and capable of effectively and succinctly demonstrating their effectiveness in a comparatively short period of time.

The current membership of the EDC appears to include an excellent balance of skills and experiences needed to successfully introduce a new group into a well-established community. Key assets for this purpose include deep and broad connections with the political, business, and residential constituencies in Town, breadth of education and work experiences, strong communication and technical skills, along with a willingness and ability to devote significant time and energy to the mission of the committee.

Economic Development Priorities

Economic Development is a complex and broad concept with many potential definitions that encompasses several related but not always consistent priorities. The Reading Master Plan and the Economic Development Committee's mission reflect several of these priorities.

A key tension often emerges within economic development programs between objectives and actions designed to maximize economic return to the community (through net tax revenues and employment) and those designed to enhance the quality of life in the community. Often developments that yield significant tax revenue, particularly in the short-term have the potential to have detrimental impacts on quality of life factors if they are not managed carefully. These impacts can include "cannibalizing" customers and sales from existing businesses elsewhere in the community, increased traffic congestion and utility service impacts, unattractive architecture and site designs, environmental impacts, and potentially unsustainable economic outcomes over the long-term.

Based on a review of the Town of Reading's Master Plan and discussions with Town Manager Peter Hechenbleikner and members of the Economic Development Committee, Reading clearly recognizes this potential tension and has firmly placed maximizing the quality of the community in a sustainable manner ahead of merely achieving the maximum short-term economic return.

As a result, the following were established as the overall priority goals for the activities of the Economic Development Committee. The priorities are listed in order of importance to the committee and the community.

1. Improve the quality of life for Reading residents by increasing the available retail, restaurants, and other amenities in town, particularly in the Downtown
2. Ensure the stability and success of existing businesses in Reading that contribute to the quality of life in the Town
3. Expand the commercial property tax base

The following were identified as secondary goals for the activities of the EDC:

4. Create additional opportunities for Reading residents to work in town
5. Create additional employment opportunities in Reading

Current and Proposed Activities and Initiatives

The following is a listing of some of the initiatives and activities that the Economic Development Committee is currently considering and/or may be appropriate. This list was generated during meetings with members of the EDC and the Town Manager in February and April 2007.

Business Recruitment

- Web site upgrade
- Listing of available Real Estate
- Buxton study
- Marketing packet(s)
- Technical assistance to businesses
- DHCD-funded market study
- Survey businesses and developers

Downtown

- Business Improvement District
- Arts Organization – Arts Center
- Main Street streetscape improvement project
- Improve Main Street Alley Way
- Lynch downtown redevelopment
- Web site upgrade
- Grant-writing
- Buxton study
- DHCD-funded market study
- Technical assistance to businesses
- Downtown Parking (including proposed garage study)
- Downtown promotional events & activities
- Downtown Steering Committee
- Commuter rail depot area/connections
- Recently-adopted mixed-use and residential uses/zoning
- Banners, flower baskets, other streetscape enhancements
- Extend Main Street improvements to other areas
- Survey businesses and developers

Other Commercial Development Opportunities

- South Main Street redevelopment opportunities
- Jacob Way - Addison Wesley property
- Walkers Brook Area
- Web site upgrade
- Grant-writing
- Marketing packet(s)
- Buxton study
- Improve quality of retail
- Beautification of commercial developments
- Participate at CPDC hearings

Business Support and Stabilization

- Chamber of Commerce Meetings
- Web site upgrade
- Promote/organize South Main Street Business Association

Work Plan & Measures of Success

As the list above demonstrates, the Economic Development Committee has energetically embraced a broad and diverse set of potential activities. As a new entity in the community, it is easy to be drawn in many different directions but important to focus energy on a more limited scope with the following specific objectives:

- Introduce the EDC and it's mission;
- Establish the committee as a valuable resource;
- Demonstrate measurable success.

The following section is an outline of a work-plan that will help the EDC achieve these objectives. Most of these tasks relate to both Downtown and Economic Development initiatives throughout the community. Each item listed below includes a description of the activity, a listing of specific actions for the committee, possible measures of accomplishment in terms of activity (did it get done?), outputs (how much was done?), and outcomes (did it work?) and a schedule.

Website Enhancement

The internet has become the primary gateway for the dissemination of information regarding economic development. In many cases, a community's or business's web presence now provides the "first impression" to potential investors, customers, developers, and others. This is particularly true among the better-educated and more-affluent demographics that increasingly constitute Reading's population.

On the other hand, a poor website, one that is difficult to navigate or find, or one that does not provide a clear contact for additional information may also be the "last impression." As a result, it is essential that the website be attractive, welcoming, clear, and informative. It is also critical that the website clearly indicate a single point of contact for further inquiries. It is also important that the website present current information.

The existing web presence for Economic Development in Reading is limited. It includes a reasonably helpful outline of the permits required for business development. It is part of a page of Town Planning information which also provides some general demographics and descriptive information and a substantial amount of additional permitting and regulatory information as well as application forms that would be helpful for visitors interested in development projects. It appears to most effectively cater to citizens interested in learning about development processes and projects or participating in hearings.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to find and, because it is part of a fairly busy page it is a bit confusing to locate specific information. It also does not appear to have been designed with the two key economic development audiences in mind:

- Developers, entrepreneurs, and their representatives and agents
- Customers and visitors to Reading

The Town of Reading and the Economic Development Committee are currently working with Virtual Town Hall to develop a new website. This company has

designed many attractive and effective websites for similar communities in Massachusetts and elsewhere. The EDC should participate actively in this process to help ensure that economic development objectives are achieved by the new site.

The following are some of the content and experience criteria that should be addressed as part of the redesign with respect to economic development. A good model of an economic development website for a smaller community in the area is Nashua, NH's site.

- A. The page a visitor finds first when searching for the Town of Reading on Google or other search engines should be visually attractive, should provide a brief but compelling description of the Town's assets, and should provide a clear and direct link to an economic development specific page. The economic development page should also be accessible from a list of options that emerges when a visitor follows links of "information for businesses," "information for visitors," or "information for residents."
- B. The economic development homepage should have a brief "boosterish" description of why Reading is a great place that appeals to people interested in proposing a development, starting a business, looking for a commercial site, or just interested in shopping or visiting. This page can also include a one sentence mission statement for the committee, whose primary benefit is to let visitors know that Reading is interested in promoting and assisting with economic development. This homepage should also name a specific contact person for inquires and provide email, telephone, and other contact information for them (this contact should be repeated on all economic development pages). Finally, this page should link to the following (preferably on separate pages so the homepage is not too busy):
 - Community profile – This page will continue the theme of promoting the community's assets, but will also provide demographic and market information, and a listing (with links if available) of businesses in Reading. These links will be helpful for potential customers but also help those representing potential developers and entrepreneurs see that others have chosen to invest in Reading.
 - Resources for Businesses – This is the page for permitting guides, applications, and regulations, listings of available sites (or a person to contact about sites), and assistance that is available for businesses (including both technical assistance and funding).
 - News, Announcements, and Events – This page can include links to positive press on Reading, announcements of programs, events, promotions, and accomplishments by the EDC, the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown group(s), individual businesses, etc. Information on this page should make the visitor to the site more interested in learning more and following up with either a visit or at least a call or email to the contact person.
- C. All information on the website should be current. It is better to avoid information that will expire like upcoming date-specific events if it is not feasible to regularly update the site. Outdated information conveys the impression that no one is really paying attention to economic development.

- D. While the main "portal" pages should be Reading specific, there is no harm in linking to external sources of information (from state agencies, the Chamber of Commerce, etc.) provided that the links stay active and accurate and the information is relevant to Reading.

Specific Committee Activities:

1. Work with Virtual Town Hall and Town Officials to guide the creation of a site similar to what is described above.
2. Arrange for site content to be easily updated from any computer with internet access and designate and empower a committee member to maintain and enhance the site.
3. Document visitor activity on the existing site and track activity on the new site.
4. When communicating with economic development stakeholders, obtain feedback about the site, document use of the site, and seek content for the news , announcements , and events page.

Accomplishment Measures

1. Implement new site (activity)
2. Increase visitation to site relative to existing site (output)
3. Increase visitation to site over time after implementation (output)
4. Draw new businesses and developments to Reading, particularly Downtown (outcome if website was visited during decision-making process)
5. Draw new customers to businesses in Reading , particularly Downtown (outcome if website was visited during decision-making process)

[Discuss how to document and what goals to set]

Timeline

[Discuss what is reasonable and realistic based on existing contract, Town goals, and available time/resources]

Outreach Survey to Economic Development Stakeholders

As a comparatively new committee, there are two key reasons for doing outreach to key stakeholders. First, it is a way to introduce the committee to the community. Many will probably not be aware that the committee has been established and is a potential resource and partner for them. Second, it is a chance to develop databases of information about economic development in the community and learn what is important to various stakeholders to help guide future efforts and activities of the committee.

Key stakeholder groups for this exercise include:

- Business owners and managers
- Commercial property owners
- Developers
- Commercial real estate brokers

Customers and residents of Reading are also important stakeholders for economic development. However, it is more difficult for the committee to effectively survey this constituency due to its size and diversity. Additionally, a substantial amount of existing data is available from various sources that can

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contribute to descriptive conclusions about the habits, activities, and interests of these groups. The market study being conducted for Downtown Reading with the Department of Housing and Community Development, if similar to the one prepared for Hingham in June 2006 by OKM Associates, will help to do this. As a result, the committee should focus on the other stakeholder groups.

Based on February and April conversations with members of the EDC, it appears that there are several projects which interest the committee that will require survey-based data collection from some or all of the constituent groups noted above. It would be valuable to combine these efforts into a single survey project that reaches all of the groups listed and also serves to introduce the committee to these groups and lay the groundwork for organization that will be required to support the potential establishment of a Business Improvement District (BID) and for other future economic development events and initiatives.

For businesses, the survey should therefore include:

- Information about the nature and status of the business
- Plans for expansion, contraction, relocation, etc.
- Benefits of and concerns about doing business in the Town
- Identification of benefits which would generate support for a Business Improvement District (group health care, collective marketing, financing parking, refuse collection/recycling, downtown maintenance & beautification, special events promotion, etc.)
- Level of interest in assisting with larger economic development efforts
- Data collection associated with the DHCD-funded market analysis

For property owners and brokers, the survey might include:

- Generating a list of available commercial property for sale and for lease
- Information about the nature and status of properties
- Benefits of and concerns about doing business in the Town
- Identification of benefits which would generate support for a Business Improvement District (group health care, collective marketing, financing parking, refuse collection/recycling, downtown maintenance & beautification, special events promotion, etc.)
- Level of interest in assisting with larger economic development efforts

For developers, the survey might include:

- Generating a list of available commercial property for sale and for lease
- Information about the nature and status of properties
- Benefits of and concerns about doing business in the Town
- Level of interest in assisting with larger economic development efforts
- Willingness to contribute to public parking garage construction in lieu of constructing privately-owned parking downtown.

Lists of commercial property owners can be generated from Assessors' records. Lists of developers active in the community can be obtained from the Town Planner's office. Lists of businesses can be purchased from various information sources; Olympia, Inc. is one example. There are probably a comparatively small number of commercial brokers active in the community, who can be readily identified.

The market research consultants being hired for Downtown through DHCD will likely be able to provide additional advice on the design of a survey(s) for the intended purposes.

Specific Committee Activities:

1. Develop lists of parties to survey from the sources above.
2. Prepare survey instruments.
3. Conduct telephone or door-to-door surveys as appropriate.
4. Compile databases of results as well as contacts for future projects.

Accomplishment Measures

1. Conduct outreach surveys to the identified economic development constituencies (activity)
2. Number of parties surveyed (output)
3. Identification of issues and priorities (outcome)
4. Organization of supporters for BID (outcome)
5. Assemble contacts for future EDC initiatives (outcome)
6. Generate list of available properties for development and occupancy (outcome)

[Discuss how to document and what goals to set]

Timeline

[Discuss what is reasonable and realistic based on available time/resources]

Other Marketing/Events

TO BE DEVELOPED

*Breakfast event
Articles in papers
Elevator pitch
Build on December downtown event success*

Specific Committee Activities:

- 1.

Accomplishment Measures

1. (activity)
2. (output)
3. (outcome)

[Discuss how to document and what goals to set]

Timeline

[Discuss what is reasonable and realistic based on available time/resources]

Participation in Hearings

One of the charges established for the EDC in the original Board of Selectmen's vote, was to advise the Community Planning and Development Commission (CPDC). In keeping with this objective, committee members should request

regular reports from the Town Planner as to proposed commercial and industrial projects in Reading as well as residential projects proposed for commercially-zoned sites. Depending on the volume of activity, the committee should designate a member to review each filing and identify projects which the EDC may wish to express an advisory opinion.

The EDC will want to evaluate the proposals against the economic development objectives and priorities outlined in the Master Plan, in their enabling policy from the Board of Selectmen, and those identified by the committee members. After evaluation, the EDC may want to draft an opinion letter to the CPDC or other reviewing body expressing support for and/or concerns about the project relative to these objectives.

Possible review positions that could be valuable include:

- Advocating for projects which will enhance the quality of life for Reading residents, stimulate downtown revitalization, increase the commercial tax base, and/or create employment opportunities for Reading residents.
- Encourage conditions on proposals which will help them achieve these goals if approved.
- Counter NIMBY sentiments at public hearings where a proposed project may have economic development benefit for the larger community but is perceived by immediate neighbors as a threat.
- Advocate against projects which propose to utilize commercial or industrial property in a manner which does not further the economic development goals of the Town of Reading.

Similar procedures should also be developed to review and comment on proposed zoning amendments, licensing regulations, Board of Health regulations, and other by-laws which may impact economic development.

Specific Committee Activities:

1. Work with the Town Planner to establish a procedure whereby the EDC is informed of pending development proposals related to economic development.
2. Designate a member to review all such proposals and report back to the committee on those deemed significant.
3. Review significant project proposals and prepare opinion statements and testify at public hearings before the CPDC and other Boards and commissions as appropriate.

Accomplishment Measures

1. Advise the CPDC and other Boards and Commissions on proposed development projects (activity)
2. Number of projects reviewed (output)
3. Number of quality projects approved with the support of the EDC (outcome)
4. Number of projects improved as a result of comment from the EDC (outcome)
5. Number of projects denied due to adverse impacts on economic development based in part on EDC comment (outcome)

[Discuss how to document and what goals to set]

Timeline

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1-3 months - Establish a procedure for identifying and reviewing projects
Ongoing – Review and advise on projects as appropriate

Research & Self-Education

To be successful and to be respected as an advisory committee, EDC members should strive for ongoing continuing education on relevant economic development topics. This is especially true for a newly formed committee. Members should seek reference materials, training programs, and conferences on appropriate topics. Additionally, members should identify communities in the region which have successfully implemented initiatives similar to those under consideration by the Town of Reading, conduct site visits, and interview key officials in those communities. Regular communication with State officials from DHCD, and other agencies within the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development will also help committee members educate themselves about key policies and programs, and increase awareness of and the likelihood of success in applying for various grant and technical assistance programs. These contacts may also help create communication channels which can introduce potentially beneficial economic development opportunities and projects to the Town of Reading.

Topics for research and self-education may include:

- Business Improvement Districts
- Downtown Revitalization and Redevelopment Strategies
- Downtown parking strategies
- Commercial site design considerations
- Transit-oriented and mixed-use urban development
- Successful marketing and promotional events

Specific Committee Activities:

1. Open and maintain email and telephone communication with appropriate state officials.
2. Monitor websites, listservs, and other conduits of information about creative economic development initiatives and training opportunities.
3. Research and identify other communities that may be successful models

Accomplishment Measures

1. Research and self-education (activity)
2. Training participation by EDC members (output)
3. Contacts with officials from the state and other communities (output)
4. Greater credibility and success with all initiatives (outcome)
5. Greater access to funding and technical assistance (outcome)

[Discuss how to document and what goals to set]

Timeline

Ongoing.

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Here's what our existing businesses have to say about Reading.....

"The community of Reading is very welcoming and supportive of local businesses. Relocating our business to Reading continues to be a successful business decision."

Erin Calvo-Bacci
The Chocolate Truffle

"Reading is a wonderful place to do business because the Reading community is supportive and loyal."

Leslie Leahy, Owner
The Hitching Post

"Moving to Reading has had a very positive impact on our business. Even though we were only 2.5 miles away before, we have seen sales increase significantly here. The town has a demographic well-matched to a business with a good product to offer. People seem well-educated and environmentally conscious, making them more likely to shop locally. Also, the proximity to Route 128 makes it very convenient for my out-of-town customers."

Valerie Mata, Owner
The Natural Food Exchange

*"All roads lead to Reading!
Reading is a very family friendly town and is easily accessible from all major routes. Reading is so centrally located, Goodhearts customers come from many different surrounding areas."*

Debbie Rio, Owner
Goodhearts Children's Shop

Reading is Ready for Your Business



"Be ready when opportunity comes.....Luck is the time when preparation and opportunity meet."

Roy D. Chapin Jr.

Welcome!

The Town of Reading and the Board of Selectmen are proud to have embraced a proactive approach to economic development.

Our Master plan lists "Improve Downtown" as our number one economic developmental goal. We are taking this direction very seriously, and have followed through on this recommendation by:

Creating a new Economic Development Committee (EDC). This committee was appointed to attract new businesses and ensure the stability and success of existing businesses in Reading, and aid in the of the quality of life for residents by increasing the available retail, restaurant, and amenities in town.

Adding staff resources to support the Economic Development Committee.



Hiring staff to act as a "Permits and Licensing Coordinator" to make your application and approval experience in Reading an easier process.

All of these actions are directed at making Reading the prime location for your business.

We welcome the opportunity to talk to you about your business ideas and needs. Outlined in this brochure are easy steps to get started. Thank you for considering Reading and we look forward to talking with you soon!

Peter Hechenbleikner
Town Manager

Why Reading?

Location, Location, Location.

Desirable suburban community located at the junction of two of New England's busiest interstate highways.

Proximity to residential population in the primary trade area (3 miles) with incomes 32% higher than state-wide median.

High vehicle count providing access to a large number of potential customers (approximately 20,000 cars per day).

Commuter rail station in the heart of Downtown with Express service to Boston.

\$6,000,000.00 Grant to revitalize and enhance Downtown streetscape

Reading Municipal Light Department (RMLD) is owned by the Town of Reading, providing a public service to its residents and businesses, offering low rates, high reliability and superior customer service.

One of the lowest commercial tax rates of the surrounding communities.

EDC completed a market assessment addressing demographic and business opportunities within town. Full details available online at www.ci.reading.ma.us—Business tab.

Thriving Reading-North Reading Chamber of Commerce www.readingnreadingchamber.org

Success starts here.....

The Economic Development Committee has found that the businesses which have engaged with town staff early in their planning stages have had very positive and successful experiences.

One of the committees top priorities is to help new and existing businesses demystify the planning and permitting process.

We strive to make your experience a smooth one, and encourage you to:

- Meet with our Town Planner to discuss which town approvals you will need to start your business.
- Meet with our Permits Coordinator to ensure your permitting process is clear and concise.
- Meet with our Building and Health Inspectors will be available to explain all applications for construction, demolition, plumbing, gas, electrical, refrigeration, and signage.

If you have further questions, please contact the Economic Development Committee directly at EDC@ci.reading.us or visit our website at <http://www.ci.reading.ma.us/Pages/businesses>

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Economic Development Activity		
#	Street	Name
AVAILABLE		
360	Main Street	Former Insurance Company
Space up for lease with Century 21 Real Estate. Approximately 1,000 square feet of commercial space located in Business A zoning district.		
306	Main Street	former Getty Station
Former gas station, undeveloped lot. For sale sign on property noticed as of January 4, 2012. Contact is Steve DeSisto (978) 852-5559 with Coldwell Banker. 17,000 square feet for \$495K. Environmental monitoring on-going. New owner may build restaurant.		
41-49	High Street	Last Corner Rest. Bldg.
Building for sale. Mixed use commercial & office building.		
587	Main Street	Vacant Retail Space
Vacant retail space.		
545	Main Street	Former Metro Bath
Vacant retail space. Owner may be interested in having restaurant located there.		
236	Ash Street	Manufacturing/Office bldg.
Space for lease, 2,050 sq. ft. in the industrial zoning district but great for office use w/access to Walkers Brook Dr. Contact Scott Sartell at (781)-944-9152		
18-20	Woburn Street	18-20 Woburn St
Vacant site has been re-graded, loamed, and landscaped.		
50	Walkers Brook Drive	The Crossing at Walkers Brook
Property listed for sale. Currently under CBRE National Retail Investment Group. 76,000 square feet of leasable area.		
600	Main Street	MF Charles Building
Space in rear still available. Not under lease.		
IN PROGRESS:		
	General Way (128 1 Marketplace)	Vacant office space
Zoned industrial but suitable for office space in the Walker's Brook area. Received approval for modifications to site plan to be more suitable for retail tenants.		
258	Main Street	Former Valerie's Bridal
Zoned Bus-A which allows for commercial and also residential. Building is currently vacant. New owners proposing mixed use office/retail. DRT held, await Site Plan Review Submission.		
30	Haven Street	Pamplemousse
Applicant received Minor Site Plan Review approval for 26 haven Street. Pamplemousse is a specialty wine and food shop. Construction has started.		
622	Main Street	Bunratty Tavern
DRT held on 7/2/12. Public Hearing with CPDC on 9/10/12 and CPDC voted to approved proposal.		
85	Haven Street	Former Hot Spot Café
New beauty boutique to go into the space. They have filed for temp sign permit so anticipate opening soon.		
6XX	Haven Street	D'Amici's Bakery
Owner has indicated the D'Amici's Bakery as tenant. Expect to see Building Permit soon.		
612	Main Street	Orange Leaf
Letter of Intent signed by Orange Leaf for MF Charles space with property owner. Orange Leaf working with Health Department on plan approval. DRT on 8/7/2012.		
600-622	Main Street	MF Charles Building
Received Site Plan approval April 4, 2012. Applicant filed for Minor Modification and received CPDC approval on 1/24/13. Building Permit issued. Construction on-going. Tenants to seek building permits in new few weeks.		
285	Main Street	Perfecto's Café
Minor Modification to building facade design approved by CPDC 8/6/12. Applicant received Minor Modification approval from CPDC on January 14, 2013 for changes to parking lot layout. ANR Plan submitted to CPDC and approved on January 24, 2013. Applicant received Minor Modification approval with CPDC on April 8, 2013 for changes in second floor use. Contractor working on demo permit.		
INACTIVE:		
COMPLETED:		

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77	Haven Street	Leah's	New salon on Haven Street.
212-214	Main Street	JKs Market	New JK's Market and New Liquor Store now open.
95	Main Street	Multi-Tenant Building (Elyese Jewelers, etc.)	New interior and exterior improvements. Construction Complete.
54	Haven Street	Portland Pie	Now open.
275	Salem Street	Planet Fitness (former RMV Building)	Received Minor Site Plan Approval from CPDC on 11/26/2012. CPDC also issued Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed signage. Construction complete and opened.
80-100	Main Street	Calareso's Farm Stand	Construction complete. Minor Mod approved by CPDC on 9/26/11. Sign Permit approved and issued. New fence panel has been installed as of 11/27/2012 and CPDC approved Bond request on 11/26/2012.
591	Haven Street	Avana Sushi	Construction complete. Now open.
233	Haven Street	Kaleyedascoppe Salon	New salon on Haven Street. To be opened upon state health approvals. Awning sign approved by CPDC on 11/26/2012.
30	Haven Street	Zinga	Applicant has had preliminary meeting with Planning Department on 4/24/2012. Project is under Site Plan Review thresholds. DRT scheduled for 5/1/2012. Will require Plan Review from BOH and Building Permits. Oaktree was approved for Minor Modification for changes to first floor plan on 5/7/2012. Open for business.
244 R	Ash Street	Northeast Cutlery	Site plan review approved by CPDC on May 9th. Preconstruction meeting on 11/2/11. Will be seeking minor modification approval for changes to facade design. Minor Modification and sign permit approved by CPDC on 8/27/12.
82	Hopkins Street	Camp to Castle Consignment (Former Cala	Former Calaresos now occupied by Antique dealer/consignment shop. Now open.
670	Main Street	Glo Skin Salon	Salon has moved to former Kumon Space. Blade sign approved by CPDC 8/6/12
32	Lowell Street	Ballet School	Proposal for dance studio to be developed under Dover Amendment. CPDC Approved Site Plan 2/27/2012. ZBA approved variance based on plan that identified 4 parking spaces. Building permit issued 5/2/2012
303	Salem Street	Cumberland Farms Service Station	Interior and exterior renovations complete.
80-100	Main Street	Just Desserts	Plans to occupy new space at the new Calareso's location.
126	Main Street	Harrowes	Received Minor Modification to approved site plan for changes in building facade on 4/2/2012
250	Main Street	Beauty Loft (Viking Travel)	A beauty salon moving into the Viking Travel location on Main St. Approved by CPDC 8-22-11.
235	Haven Street	Former Aine's Boutique	Magic Cleaners from Main St address moved to this space. Defunct sign has been removed.
Bold print = New updates since last meeting.			

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Reading Economic Development Committee

Work Plan 9/4/13

EDC: Sheila Clarke, George Rio, Karl Weld, Meghan Young-Tafaya, (Members) Camille Anthony, Maria Higgins, Jack Russell (Associates)
 Town: Bob LeLacheur, Jean Delios, Jessie Wilson
 BOS Liaison: John Arena

	Key Initiatives	Updates and Action Items	Leads	Due
1	Building Façade and Signage Improvement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013 BFSI Open enrollment Underway - Through 10/2/13 2013 BFSI Intern Recruitment in progress; BFSI Committee established 	Sheila, Jessie	
2	DIET Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DIET Funding Business Plan - created w/ summer intern (Scott Onigman) 2013 goal of \$50,000 - Kickoff scheduled for December 2013 	All	
3	Best Retail Practice (Retail Visioning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2013 consulting w/ Christine Moynihan (5 businesses) Retail Visioning Intern (Ned Connors) working w/ 5 business on graphic design 	Maria, Meghan	7/1/2013
4	Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Media Plan created w/ summer intern (Scott Onigman) Created Social Media SOP - to be reviewed by EDC/Town Counsel 	Sheila, Jessie	
5	RCTV EDC Program	RCTV - "Reading Matters" - Engage ambassadors - Karl and Camile to create workplan	Karl, Camille, Jessie	
Other Ongoing Items				
A	DIET Financials / Reading Fall Street	Review monthly	Camille	Ongoing
B	Illustrated Business Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karl to draft illustrated business map of Reading 5/1/2013 Consider leveraging for brochures and "bollard" or in-town signs 	Karl	
C	Communication with Businesses / Outbound Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any new article or outbound marketing opportunities to note? Consider launching survey to gather feedback from businesses 	Maria	Ongoing
D	Downtown Idea Exchange	Monthly review of DOWNTOWN best practices		Ongoing
E	Liaisons to other Committees	Attend B/C/C meetings as applicable		Ongoing
F	Development Review Team	Review current DRTs	Jessie	Ongoing
G	Other Economic Development	MAPC updates from Jessie, etc.	Jessie	Ongoing
H	Streetscape	Monitor for upkeep, additions, yearly projects (flower baskets)		Ongoing
I	Vacant Space Research	Monthly review of Activity Work Plan		Ongoing
J	Sign Violations	Zoning Work Group starting September 2013 - EDC review/input throughout	Jean/Jessie	In Process
K	Wayfinding	Implement Wayfinding recommendations (2011 Peer Review) as necessary	All	Ongoing
L	New Ideas to Improve EDC Impact,	BOS working group meeting - September 2013	TBD	Ongoing

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DRAFT 2013 Subsequent Town Meeting

Tuesday November 12, 2013

WARRANT OUTLINE REVISED 09/05/2013

1

<u>Art.</u> <u>#</u>	<u>Article Description</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Mover/ Comment</u>	<u>Moderator Notes</u>
1	Reports	Board of Selectmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ RMLD – Coleen O’Brien ◆ Schools – Dr. John Doherty ◆ Library – David Hutchinson ◆ Motion to Table – John Arena 	
2	Instructions	Board of Selectmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Motion to Table – James Bonazoli 	
3	Amend the Capital Improvement Program FY 2014-FY 2023	Board of Selectmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Motion – Dan Ensminger ◆ Presentation – Bob LeLacheur ◆ FINCOM report - 	
4	Approve 12(2)(d) benefit for retirees	Retirement Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Motion - ◆ Presentation – Frank Driscoll ◆ FINCOM report - 	
5	Approve regional tax assessment program with Wakefield	Board of Selectmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Motion – Ben Tafoya ◆ Presentation - Board of Assessors/Victor Santaniello ◆ FINCOM report - 	
6	Deposit funds into Smart Growth Stabilization fund	Board of Selectmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Motion – Marsie West ◆ Presentation – Sharon Angstrom/Bob LeLacheur ◆ FINCOM report - 	
7	Approve Payment of Prior Year’s Bills	Board of Selectmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Motion Indefinitely Postpone – John Arena 	Postpone
8	Dispose of Surplus Tangible Properties	Board of Selectmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Motion – James Bonazoli ◆ Presentation – Bob LeLacheur ◆ FINCOM report - 	
9	Accept easements for West Street improvements	Board of Selectmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Motion – Dan Ensminger ◆ Presentation – George Zambouras ◆ FINCOM report - 	
10	Authorize debt for West Street project – local share and other related costs	Board of Selectmen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Motion – Ben Tafoya ◆ Presentation – George Zambouras/Bob LeLacheur ◆ FINCOM report - 	2/3 vote

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11	Approval of amendments to the Table of Organization per section 6-1(b) of the Reading Home Rule Charter	Board of Selectmen	◆ Motion – Marsie West ◆ Presentation – Bob LeLacheur	
12	Amend the FY 2014 Budget	FINCOM	◆ Motion – Barry Berman ◆ Presentation – Bob LeLacheur ◆ FINCOM report -	
13	Repeal section 6.2.2 m and 6.2.6.3.1 of Zoning Bylaw – off premises signs (Prohibiting Digital Billboards)	CPDC	◆ Motion – ◆ Presentation – Jean Delios	Instructional motion from ATM
14	Amend boundary of PUD-R-zoning district to include abutting 26,019 s.f. parcel of land at Johnson Woods	CPDC	◆ Motion – ◆ Presentation – Jean Delios	
15	Religious, Educational and Child Care – Reasonable Requirements per the Dover Amendment (MGL40A&3)	CPDC	◆ Motion – ◆ Presentation – Jean Delios	
16	Medical Marijuana Dispensaries Moratorium	CPDC	◆ Motion – ◆ Presentation – Jean Delios	

**Board of Selectmen Meeting
August 20, 2013**

For ease of archiving, the order that items appear in these minutes reflects the order in which the items appeared on the agenda for that meeting, and are not necessarily the order in which any item was taken up by the Board.

The meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, 16 Lowell Street, Reading, Massachusetts. Present were **Chairman James Bonazoli, Vice Chairman John Arena, Secretary Ben Tafoya, Selectmen Daniel Ensminger and Marsie West**, Town Manager Bob LeLacheur, Town Counsel Gary Brackett, Police Chief James Cormier, Police Armorer Justin Martel, Office Manager Paula Schena and the following list of interested parties: Thomas J. Ryan, William Brown, Everett and Ginny Blodgett, Patrick Cigante, Andrew Marino, Max Gabriello, Ann Ward, Donnan and Curtis Barnes, Stephen Crook.

Reports and Comments

Selectmen's Liaison Reports and Comments – Ben Tafoya noted that the September 8th Fall Street Faire might set a record for the number of vendors.

Daniel Ensminger noted that the Volunteer Appointment Subcommittee will be holding interviews on September 17, 2013.

James Bonazoli thanked DPW for their work on the roads this summer. The Economic Development Committee is taking applications for the façade program.

Public Comment – Thomas Ryan indicated he was upset because he left informational fliers on the Town Clerks counter and the Town Clerk would let him leave the flyers there. The Town Manager noted they were political in nature and if he wanted to leave them at Town Hall they could be left on the bulletin board inside the Town Hall front door foyer.

Marsie West suggested that Mr. Ryan hand them out at the Senior Center tomorrow night during the Financial Forum because those are the people who will care about the information.

Town Manager's Report – The Town Manager gave the following report:

Administrative matters (* indicates additional material in tonight's packet)

- ◆ *School Committee vacancy – A joint meeting of the Selectmen and the School Committee has been rescheduled at the request of the Schools to 7:45pm on Monday September 9th at the Superintendent's Conference room @RMHS. We received three applications for the open position on the School Committee, and one of the applicants was unable to attend the August 26th meeting. The appointment will fill out a term until the next local election, scheduled for April 2014.
- ◆ Reading Special Legislation – The bill has been filed to correct the defect in the annual Town Meeting as it pertains to the Library project debt: <https://malegislature.gov/Document/Bill/188/House/H3629.pdf>. Thanks to the Board of Selectmen for meeting at short notice on a Thursday night, to the Governor for filing the bill, and to our legislative delegation including Senator Katherine Clark, Representative Jim Dwyer and especially to Representative Brad Jones who took the lead on this project.

5a1

- ◆ *November Town Meeting – The Selectmen will preview the Warrant at their next meeting. Thus far there are 22 Articles which should be concluded in two nights. Included on tonight's packet is a recent history of Instructional Motions from past Town Meetings. We'll update this and circulate it as needed in the future.
- ◆ *Revenue opportunity – Verizon has shown some interest in placing a cell tower over at the Reading Ice Skating rink at Symonds Way. Town Counsel has reviewed the RIAA 10-year lease and suggests if that some changes need to be made to the lease, and notes that the lessee is not adversely affected in any way. Due to the expected value of the lease we will need to conduct an RFP. Carl McFadden, your RIAA liaison, is coming in on October 8th for an unrelated update of RIAA operations. If the Board wishes to consider this opportunity we can begin doing some preparation work internally.
- ◆ Amplified Sound Permit – issued by Recreation to the Barrow's PTO for a back-to-school picnic on September 9th from 5:30-7:30pm.
- ◆ *Upcoming BOS agendas – Please look through the schedule for the next few months. Among other topics are the following:
 - September 10th - Business Workshop that will include the Reading Housing Authority and the Economic Development Committee;
 - September 24th - joint meeting with the Reading & Wakefield Boards of Assessors;
 - October 8th - Traffic & Safety Workshop;
 - October 22nd – Recreation Master Plans overview;
 - November 5th – Enterprise Fund overview.

Community Services

- ◆ Comprehensive Update of the Zoning By-Law –
 - The Town Manager, Assistant Community Services Director/Town Planner, Staff Planner and DPW Business Manager met with four applicants for the Zoning project. A final selection for the consulting firm is expected by early September;
 - Tonight the Board will hold a Hearing to establish an ad hoc Zoning Advisory Committee;
 - On September 10th the Board will interview applicants from the public for the ZAC;
 - The ZAC will likely hold their kick-off meeting on September 30th. There will be a great deal of outreach to the community over the following year as the final product will reflect the long-term values of Reading.

*M.F. Charles – Construction is progressing very well. Due to the extensive amount of renovations needed in the early phases of demolition, including unanticipated conditions related to the age and condition of the building, there has been added time to the project. First floor retailers will be seeking building permits in mid-September. There is a motion in your packet - I would request the Board consider extending the liquor license application for Bunratty's Tavern from September 14th due to the extensive construction work needed. Community Services Director/Town Planner Jean Delios prepared a presentation that is available on the Town's website.

A motion by Tafoya seconded by Ensminger to extend the deadline for RKR Corp. d/b/a Bunratty Tavern at 622 Main Street to be fully operational to December 31, 2013 was approved by a vote of 5-0-0.

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- ◆ *Perfecto's – See enclosed material. Fines began last week at \$100/day and will escalate to \$300/day on September 3, 2013 under the Vacant Property Bylaw. No permits will be issued until the fines have been paid.
- ◆ *Post office - See attached article from EDC about “losing a downtown post office”. I have reached out to the PO with our federal contact but have nothing back yet.

Library

- ◆ Library Building Committee – RFP for temporary space has been issued. The Library expects to move in March 2014. Contract negotiations are underway with the designer/architect. STV is doing an excellent job as the Owner's Project Manager thus far.

Schools

- ◆ Woburn Street School – Below is a list of important dates:
 - August 21 – Financial Forum at the Pleasant Street Center to review the expected changes to the annual School operating budget over a multi-year period; an overview of project costs will also be reviewed.
 - September 11 – Financial Forum at the Pleasant Street Center to review the entire project;
 - September 16th (and 19th as needed) – Special Town Meeting at RMHS Endslo PAC

Public Safety

- ◆ *Franklin & Main Street- Jeff Gomes of MA DOT has finished his analysis and design and is putting together funding for short-term improvements. No real change since the BOS 7/30 meeting.
- ◆ *FEMA Public Assistance – The Town received over \$134,000 and RMLD received over \$21,000 for reimbursement of some costs associated with the blizzard last February 8th & 9th. Town funds will flow to free cash at the close of the current fiscal year.

Public Works

- ◆ West Street – the project has been approved! At November Town Meeting we will seek debt authorization for the local share of costs. Depending on what the State requires, these costs will be close to the \$600k we have budgeted.

Road Improvements

- ◆ All paving for our spring/summer round is complete (20 streets approx. \$1.6M)!! The contractor should finish the loam and seeding of roadway edges where required and a couple of remaining driveway aprons this week. Traffic markings will be installed on Oakland Road by mid-week.
- ◆ We will be opening bids for our second round of paving and crack sealing the second week of September. We had to delay until we knew how much money we would get from Chapter 90 – the latest figure is about \$600k, which is well below the Governor's initial \$900k figure, but in line with recent history. It is possible more Chapter 90 funding will be freed up during the fiscal year - we will wait to bid micro-seal work until winter/spring.

Discussion/Action Items

Hearing – Review and Adopt Traffic Rules and Regulations – The Secretary read the hearing notice. Police Chief James Cormier and Officer Justin Martel were present. The Town Manager noted that the

intent of the project was not to make changes, but to make it more user friendly. Inconsistencies were found and the changes will bring in line with votes already taken. Orienting the regulations by street is much easier

Marsie West noted that there are no stop signs on Rustic at Beaver or Scotland at Summer. Chief Cormier noted that it was in the current regulations but the signs were never put up.

Officer Martel noted that there are heavy vehicle exclusion signs that were never approved by the state so they have to be taken down. Marsie West noted that it makes sense to remove signs but it doesn't make sense to put up a stop sign that was never put up.

Officer Martel noted that Section 11.1 indicates that all old votes are carried forward into the new regulations. The Town Clerk will be the keeper of the record and will do the renumbering. Changes are listed in the Briefing Package that is attached to these minutes. Officer Martel noted that there are four additional amendments on page 47 of tonight's handout and are as follows:

- On page 15 under Article 5.4.1A, insert “for a period longer than one hundred twenty minutes after the word “Fridays.”
- On page 31 under Article 10.1B, replace the language “Articles 5.4.4E and 5.4.6” with “Article 5.4.6.”
- On page 33 under Article 11.4, replace the language “numbering and organization” with “numbering, organization, and typographical characteristics.”
- On page 114 under Appendix 5, strike the language “Old Sanborn Lane—15 MPH” because it was not approved by the state.

Marsie West suggested that Section 10.1A regarding \$20 fines for certain parking violations say that “all parking fines will be \$20 except as noted below in Sections 10.1B-E,” instead of listing each one. Officer Martel agreed and noted this will be included as the 5th amendment tonight.

Daniel Ensminger noted that the no parking at corner sign on Temple Street at Woburn is in the wrong location and James Bonazoli noted that it is not a good use of the Police or Engineering to be out measuring. Chief Cormier noted that the intent is to get the document approved and if the Board wants to add or eliminate then hold hearings and notify the neighborhoods.

Everett Blodgett noted that seven years ago Sally Hoyt went through a huge process of heavy vehicle exclusion on West Street and he asked if there are any others in town. Officer Martel noted there is a list in Appendix 4.

Donnan Barnes, 11 Bancroft Street, asked if Bancroft Street is still heavy vehicle exclusion because there is no sign. Chief Cormier indicated it is.

Ann Ward, a resident of Bancroft Avenue noted that the packet indicates it is being deleted. Officer Martel noted that is an inconsistency and he will add that from Lowell to Woburn on Bancroft Avenue from 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. but he wants to investigate this first to make sure the state approved it.

The Town Manager indicated Bancroft Avenue heavy vehicle exclusion will be added as the 6th amendment made tonight.

A motion by Tafoya seconded by West to close the hearing adopting the Traffic Rules and Regulations dated August 20, 2013 was approved by a vote of 5-0-0.

A motion by Tafoya seconded by West to approve the revised Town of Reading Traffic Rules and Regulations dated August 20, 2013 to include revisions as listed in the two page Briefing Package and the additional six amendments as indicated in these minutes, was approved by a vote of 5-0-0.

Close Special Town Meeting Warrant – The Town Manager noted that Article 5 is related to retirees' benefits. Article 6 is for a debt exclusion for the Woburn Street School which is the topic of the Financial Forum tomorrow evening and it will be decided then whether to move forward with the project. Town Counsel Gary Brackett noted that the Board can close the Warrant tonight and can make a motion tomorrow night to cancel the Special Town Meeting, if need be, as long as the Warrant has not been posted.

A motion by Tafoya seconded by West to close the Warrant consisting of six Articles for the Special Town Meeting to take place on September 16, 2013 at the Reading Memorial High School Performing Arts Center, 62 Oakland Road at 7:30 p.m. was approved by a vote of 5-0-0.

Hearing – Adopt Policy Establishing Ad Hoc Zoning Advisory Committee – The Secretary read the hearing notice. **There being people present for other agenda items and no one present for this hearing, a motion by Ensminger seconded by West to continue the hearing to a time set by the Chairman was approved by a vote of 5-0-0. Chairman James Bonazoli noted the hearing will be continued until 9:15 p.m. A motion by Ensminger seconded by West to reconvene the hearing on the Ad Hoc Zoning Advisory Committee at 9:15 p.m. was approved by a vote of 5-0-0.**

James Bonazoli noted that the previous discussion by CPDC was they wanted more members but the Selectmen did not want a quorum of CPDC on the committee.

Ben Tafoya noted that the goal is to put the Zoning Bylaws into a better format and to simplify. If the Board wants to make major changes then they need a different policy.

Marsie West noted it is not a straight recodification without addressing certain issues. There will be no change in land use but this will address issues that cause bottlenecks.

Ben Tafoya noted we are not changing the zoning map.

The Town Manager noted that the goal is to simplify and organize. There will be 20 – 30 public meetings so there is an opportunity to get feedback.

Ben Tafoya noted that the overlay districts have never been used so will they be changed during this process? The Town Manager indicated they will not.

John Arena indicated he would like to see exceptions.

A motion by Ensminger seconded by Tafoya to close the hearing on adopting the policy establishing an Ad Hoc Zoning Advisory Committee was approved by a vote of 5-0-0.

A motion by Tafoya seconded by West to approve the policy establishing an Ad Hoc Zoning Advisory Committee was approved by a vote of 5-0-0.

Set Liquor License Fees for CY14 – The consensus of the Board was not to change the liquor fees.

A motion by Ensminger seconded by Tafoya that the Board of Selectmen set the liquor license fees for CY14 as follows:

Liquor Fees	All Alcohol Restaurant	Wine/Malt Restaurant	Package Store	Clubs
CY2014	\$3700	\$2700	\$2500	\$1300

The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0-0.

Paint and Sip Beer and Wine License – James Bonazoli noted that there was discussion some time ago about a Paint and Sip business that offers beer and wine and that would require a liquor license. The problem is that the Board of Selectmen policy requires food be served.

Town Counsel Gary Brackett noted that he spoke with the City of Newton and they had reservations so the commission required food service be provided and contracted through a caterer. They also put time restrictions, restrictions on amount of drinks, price and liquor only available for people attending the session. Judy Barolak's proposal is to have no food. This would set a precedent and he recommends considering whether the Selectmen want to offer this type of license and do a survey. The Selectmen would also have to decide what type of regulations they would want and after doing the study adopt as a policy and issue on a license by license basis.

Police Chief James Cormier noted that it would be a cumbersome task to take on license by license. He noted that the Board previously set food requirements and he would strongly recommend the Board do research.

Marsie West noted she went to a paint and sip and there is no time to eat and drink. She suggests checking with Newton and see if they are actually eating.

John Arena noted that alcohol is secondary to the intent of the establishment and it would be worth doing the study.

The Town Manager noted that paint and sip is popular in other states but not so much in Massachusetts.

526

John Arena asked if it is possible to restrict just to paint and sip and Town Counsel indicated it could be challenged.

Judy Barolak noted that the paint and sip in Newton does not serve food. They have prepackaged snacks. There is no mention or offering of food and if you ask about food they suggest restaurants in the area. There are also some paint and sips in Boston. Others are bring your own booze and some are located within all alcohol restaurants and some are beer and wine with prepackaged snacks. Ms. Barolak noted that Newton has been doing this for three years and they created this license for this one premise.

James Bonazoli noted that he loves creativity but has issues with setting a precedent. He feels a study would be worthwhile. He suggested surveying both in Massachusetts and outside of Massachusetts.

Ms. Barolak asked if she served food if it had to be hot. Ben Tafoya noted that the Board has softened the policies over the years but it was always an amenity for restaurants. The intent is to have a full service restaurant and he has a problem trying to get around it. Ben Tafoya indicated he would like to see Newton's regulations.

John Arena indicated he would like to know what other towns have done for non-restaurant situations.

Marsie West asked about bring your own booze and Town Counsel indicated it is not allowed.

Aberjona River and Saugus River Drainage Study – Town Engineer George Zambouras noted that in 2010 a study was done of the Aberjona and Saugus Rivers. It evaluated the existing conditions; recommended improvements and developed an implementation schedule. The Minot Street area has been added due to flooding.

A report was made to the Board of Selectmen in July 2012. He has met with the consultant and they have a good accurate model. There will be a presentation to the Board in November and he needs to know if the Board wants to invite the Conservation Commission to the presentation. The consensus of the Board was to invite the Conservation Commission.

Daniel Ensminger asked about the Aberjona area and Mr. Zambouras noted it covers mostly the Bond Street area due to flooding and surcharging.

Saugus River issue is that the Track Road and Line Road bridge is unsafe for fire apparatus.

Discuss DPW and Cemetery Garage Sites – The Town Manager noted that several years ago the cemetery garage and cold storage came under the CIP Plan for \$500,000. Currently there is \$1.50 million for cemetery and \$1.50 million for the DPW Garage. The funding is through Facilities. The School Department cancelled \$100,000 for the cemetery project because there was no contract in place even though there had been three months of contract negotiations. The Department of Revenue has determined that the Town Accountant has the liberty to move forward funds if Town Meeting has approved them and the project is moving forward.

5a7

James Bonazoli noted that the Board of Selectmen did site visits of the cemeteries years ago. RFP's were sent out and we selected a firm.

Town Engineer George Zambouras noted that the existing cemetery garage is over 100 years old and has structural issues. The cemeteries, property at Pearl and Audubon and the compost site were looked at as possible sites for the cemetery garage. Two sites, Laurel Hill and Forest Glen, were chosen for further analysis and the Town issued an RFP. The consultant will do a space needs study and then the Board of Selectmen and Cemetery Board will make a decision then do a RFP for design.

DPW Garage – George Zambouras noted that the current use is 5.9 acres. The original John Street site was 15 acres and used sites at the landfill and the Nike site. The current site deficiencies to address include security, safety, parking expansion, and improve vehicle maintenance area and public access. The previous study said the minimum area needed was six acres.

George Zambouras noted there are currently two RFP's – one for the cemetery garage and one for the DPW garage that will analyze for planned improvements and up to three sites for all DPW functions including administration, Engineering and cemetery.

The Town Manager noted that staff has looked at the industrial zone at the Reading Municipal Light Department and he suggests talking with the RMLD.

Daniel Ensminger suggested expanding where the DPW garage is now but later realized that there is other properties in between that doesn't make expansion possible.

The Town Engineer reviewed maps of possible Town and State owned property sites as well as privately owned sites.

Marsie West asked how much of environmental issue is there for both the Town and State. George Zambouras noted the environmental issue is a defined limit of a 100 year flood.

Cemetery Director Bob Keating noted that it is more efficient to have cemetery maintenance at a cemetery. All of the cemeteries are located in the center of Town and east. He noted that 99% of all cemeteries operate that way.

Cemetery Board Trustee Bill Brown noted that he cemetery was an orphan until 1986 and he feels the garage should remain at the cemetery.

The consensus of the Board was to move ahead with Task 3.

Approval of Minutes

A motion by Ensminger seconded by West to approve the minutes of July 30, 2013 as amended was approved by a vote of 3-0-2 with Tafoya and Arena abstaining.

A motion by Ensminger seconded by West to approve the minutes of August 1, 2013 was approved by a vote of 3-0-2 with Tafoya and Arena abstaining.

A motion by Tafoya seconded by West to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 p.m. was approved by a vote of 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary

Police Dept. & PTTTF Traffic & Parking Regulation Project

—Board of Selectmen Briefing Package—

I. Relevant Statutes & Bylaws

A. Code of MA Regulations

1. 527 CMR 10.03.10: 10: State regulation promulgated by the Department of Fire Services' Board of Fire Prevention Regulations, which grants the local Fire Chief the authority to require 18' fire lanes when necessary and creates a burden on the property owner to maintain them in properly signed and marked condition.¹ Note, the localized details of how the Town manages the requirements of this regulation are included in Article 8.3 of the Town's General Bylaws.

B. MA General Laws²

1. MGL 40-22: Vehicles bearing disabled veteran plates, handicapped plates and handicapped placards are statutorily exempt from overtime parking penalties.
2. MGL 85-2: Grants municipalities the authority to post signage and enumerates specific caveats and requirements. For example, municipalities must obtain approval from MassDOT for Heavy Vehicle Exclusion. Another example, municipalities must conform to the MUTCD or MassDOT can remove signage without notice or, in the extreme, withhold Chapter 90 money until fixed.
3. MGL 89-9: Case law requires police to cite one-way violations under 85-2 and reference Article 8.1
4. MGL 90-1: Provides consistent definition and statutory reference for the term "trailer"
5. MGL 90-17: Establishes the "reasonable and proper" clause for speeding based on road conditions
6. MGL 90-18: Requires municipalities to obtain approval from MassDOT for speeds higher or lower than 30MPH for thickly settled areas (all of Reading) and establishes speed on RTE28 at 40MPH via the "any other way" clause

C. Town's General Bylaws

1. Article 8: Establishes various public order regulations, which include a broad range of topics such as: snow removal, silly string, road obstructions, parades, driveway permits, some concerning duplication on the topic of fire lanes, distributing leaflets, news racks, animal control, firearms, marijuana, constructions hours, etc.

II. Definitions & Terms Changes

A. Additions

1. Downtown Business District
2. Fire Lane, Holiday
3. Recreation Equipment

B. Deletions

1. Business District
2. Senior Van

¹ Regulation available online at: <http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/source/mass/cmr/cmrtxt/527CMR10.pdf>

² All MGL's discussed herein are available online at (search required): <http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/Search>

C. Modifications

1. Trailer

III. Regulatory & Policy Changes

A. Additions

1. Includes listings for 74 private and semi-private ways which are regulated
2. Recordkeeping duties are assigned to the Town Clerk, consistent with existing bylaw procedures
3. Non-substantive numbering and formatting changes are allowed
4. Clarifies penalty and fine amounts to readers *in the document* rather than on their *parking tickets*
5. Requires regulations to be posted online and printed (in amended form) annually by the Town Clerk
6. Provides reference to Article 8 of the General Bylaws regarding fire lanes

B. Deletions

1. Former reserved parking space for the senior van at the Atlantic is removed (Appendix A-1a).

C. Modifications

1. Combines separate school zone Do Not Enter regulations into one for consistent timing

IV. Changes to the Applicability of Regulations

A. Additions

Adds the following in Article 12 to reflect signage, which was vetted through PTTTF as appropriate and for which the PTTF believes was previously passed, but where there is no paperwork to support.

Current, these are signed accordingly and included in the re-adoption document:

1. STOP SIGN at Bear Hill/Summer
2. STOP SIGN at Bolton/Ash
3. NO PARKING for the first 50" from Main on northerly side of Forest Glen
4. RESIDENT PERMIT REQUIRED for the easterly side of Fulton
5. NO PARKING on the easterly side of High from Woburn to Mt. Vernon
6. DO NOT ENTER Hillside from Waverly
7. RESIDENT PERMIT REQUIRED on westerly side of Linden from Haven to #25
8. NO PARKING on westerly side of Linden from #25 to Woburn
9. Reference to 720 CMR 9.03(2) included for NO PARKING on Lowell except marked spaces
10. Reference to 720 CMR 9.03(2) included for NO PARKING on RTE28 whatsoever
11. STOP SIGN at Mill/Main
12. LEFT TURN ONLY from left hand lane on New Crossing onto Walkers Brook
13. STOP SIGN at Pond Meadow/New Crossing
14. STOP SIGN at Rustic/Beaver
15. Reference to 720 CMR 9.03(2) included for NO PARKING on Salem except marked spaces
16. STOP SIGN at Scotland/Summer
17. STOP SIGN at Van Norden/Forest
18. NO TURN ON RED from Willow onto Lowell
19. STOP SIGN at Winslow/West
20. NO LEFT TURN from General Way onto Walkers Brook Drive
21. Again, includes listings for 74 Private Ways categorized as "public access" and "no public access"
22. STOP SIGN at Zachary/Dividence

B. Deletions

1. HEAVY VEHICLE EXCLUSION on Bancroft
2. HEAVY VEHICLE EXCLUSION on Grove³
3. NO PARKING on southerly side of Hillside from Oakland to Waverly⁴
4. Duplicative occurrence of the NO LEFT TURN from Hopkins onto Main; one instance to remain
5. HEAVY VEHICLE EXCLUSION on Prescott
6. HEAVY VEHICLE EXCLUSION on Summer⁵
7. HEAVY VEHICLE EXCLUSION on Village⁶

C. Modifications:

IIV. Formatting Changes

A. Overview

1. The major formatting change is that the alphabetical street listing in the new document replaces the "section-and-appendix" reference system of the old document. The alphabetical street listing improves reader understanding, recordkeeping procedures, enforcement standards and signage requirements. In short, the new document is much easier to read and understand.

³ Currently there is signage in place, but there was never even a regulation passed. No record indicating how it was ever posted.

⁴ Prior Board had given the Town Manager discretion in creating parking regulations during the construction of the new RMHS building under former Article 5.16.

⁵ Due to the proximity to Joshua Eaton and Parker, the Town may wish to reapply for the exclusion in the future.

⁶ Due to the poor turning radii at Green and Pleasant, the Town may wish to reapply for the exclusion in the future.

Board of Selectmen Meeting
August 21, 2013
Financial Forum
Open Session

Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Sr. Center Great Room

Fincom Members Present

David Greenfield
Paula Perry
Paul McNeice
Mark Dockser
Jeanne Borawski
Hal Torman,
Jeffrey Perkins
Karen Herrick Arrived at 7:40 p.m.
Mark Dockser

Staff Members Present

Bob LeLacheur, Town Manager

Board of Selectmen

Dan Ensminger
Ben Tafoya
Marcie West
John Arena

School Committee

Hal Croft, School Committee
Chuck Robinson, School Committee
Chris Caruso, School Committee

John Doherty, Superintendent
Mary DeLai, Assistant Superintendent

Others

Police Chief Jim Cormier, Dianne Kennedy, Vicki Griffin, Mary Daly, John Daly, Angela Binda, Heidi Bonnbeau, Thomas J. Ryan, Kevin Carnes, Thomas Loughlin, Elizabeth Ward, Maria Caruso, Mary Connery, Erin Gaffen, Joshua Kempner, Lee Bianchetto, Rebecca Liberman.

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Berman called the Finance Committee to order at 7:34 p.m.
Chairperson Arena called the Selectmen to order at 7:34 p.m.
Mr. Berman welcomed guests and reviewed the agenda for the evening.

II. Recommended Procedure

A. Continued Business

Woburn Street Project

Mr. Greenfield stated that he was an abutter to the property and would not participate in any votes on the subject.

Mr. Berman turned the meeting over to the Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Doherty stated that he is recommending not to move forward with the Woburn Street Project.

Ms. Herrick arrived at 7:40 p.m.

Dr. Doherty stated that full day kindergarten for all is something that the district wants to pursue and it is in the best interest of students and student learning. He continued reviewing the timeline to date. He mentioned that the elementary space needs and full day kindergarten discussion began in January of 2011. An Elementary Space Study was approved at the fall 2011 Town Meeting which was completed and presented to the School Committee in June of 2012. In the interim the Reading School Committee voted to support the implementation of free full day kindergarten for all.

Based on information provided by the Locker report it was determined the best option would be to purchase a building and renovate the building to house the RISE Preschool and kindergarten classes. In April of 2013 the Town reached an agreement with the St. Agnes Church and signed a Letter of Intent to purchase the lower building. The School Department hired an Architect to begin a Feasibility Study. Over the course of the spring and summer the Superintendent met with the Architect, community members and Town Officials on the Woburn Street Project.

As a result of the meetings it has been determined that because of traffic, parking and other logistic matters as well as cost it has been determined that this may not be the best option to address the elementary space concerns.

Ms. DeLai reviewed the cost of fully funded full day kindergarten for all.

Dr. Doherty reviewed the cost estimate and because of changes that needed to be made to the inside with the addition of a third floor the cost came in higher than anticipated. The cost estimate does not include the proposed parker parking lot and the natural gas line installation.

Superintendent Doherty reviewed the other options to address the space issue. He pointed out that this is not an enrollment issue. Our enrollment is staying fairly level but because of the Special Education programs we have in the district our classroom space is at a premium. The Superintendent would like to establish a working group to investigate other options.

Dr. Doherty stated that he has had a conversation with St. Agnes regarding this decision.

Mr. Berman said that the School Department must be very disappointed. He also asked how the working group would be set up.

Dr. Doherty said it will consist of community members, town officials and educators.

Mr. Arena asked when the decision was made. Dr. Doherty said last week after the meeting with town officials and the Architect when the final costs were discussed. Mr. Arena asked further about the cost.

Ms. DeLai indicated that we are responsible to pay rent from July to October as part of the Letter of Intent. She also said that St. Agnes is renting space at the Parker Middle School for their Religious Education classes due to the renovation of their Parish Center therefore some costs are offset.

Mr. Berman asked what has been spent to date. Ms. DeLai indicated that approximately \$79,000 had been spent. Town Manager LeLacheur reminded the group that \$150,000 had been allocated.

Mr. Tafoya moved, seconded by Ms. West, to cancel the September 16th Special Town Meeting. The motion carried 4-0.

Ms. Borawski asked if the district was looking at construction as an option. The Superintendent said that we will explore all options. She then asked for clarification of the Superintendent's option. Dr. Doherty explained the process.

Mr. Caruso added that we have been using the Superintendent's Option to balance elementary class size for 4 years.

Mr. Arena asked if full day kindergarten is implemented would parents have a different option if they did not want to enroll their child in the full day program.

Dr. Doherty said that we would no longer have a half day program and parents would have to enroll children in private programs or have their child enter school in first grade.

Ms. Ann Coneeney, 13 Temple Street, thanked the Superintendent for all the work on this project and appreciates that the concerns of the citizens were heard and is doing what is in the best interest of the children.

Rebecca Liberman, 50 Pratt Street, asked if the elementary schools were full. The Superintendent responded the schools have no additional classroom space.

Mr. Arena moved, seconded by Mr. Tafoya, to adjourn. The motion carried 4-0.

The Board of Selectman adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary

Attachment: handout from Thomas J. Ryan

Estimated cost of free full-day kindergarten for the average-assessed Reading home of \$400,000.

Assuming: \$10,000,000 exclusion (to be bonded for ten years or more) for the purchase and renovation of the St. Agnes School building on Woburn Street; a proposed override of the tax levy of \$885,000.

Estimated cost per home is \$177 per year for the bonding.

Estimated cost per home for the override is \$144 per year. (The \$144 increases at a minimum of 2 ½ % every year, permanently.)

Cost of bond @ \$177 per year:

10 years	\$1770
12 years	\$2124
15 years	\$2655

Cost of override @ \$144 per year:

10 years	\$1604 (increases by 2 ½% annually)
12 years	\$1975
15 years	\$2051

Total combined cost of bonding and the override per year:

10 years	\$3374 Plus library @ \$104/year= <u>\$4414</u>
12 years	\$4099
15 years	\$4706

The library funding has been voted already.

Looking ahead, the town MUST replace aged water pipes at a cost of \$25,000,000 plus \$8,000,000 for Killam repairs.

Sidelight: average assessed value of a \$400,000 home in 10 years under prop 2 ½ will be \$7649, in 12 years, \$8060, and \$8654 in 15 years.

Estimates of costs are based on figures provided by the School Department in its recent presentation at Parker Middle School.

Thomas J. Ryan, 87 Dana Rd., Reading, MA 01867 781 944-2544 tobus111@verizon.net

564

4cBos

Schena, Paula

From: LeLacheur, Bob
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2013 10:50 PM
To: Schena, Paula
Subject: FW: Verizon Change in the FiOS Channel Lineup
Attachments: Customer Notice - NBA League Pass.pdf

For BOS packet

Robert W. LeLacheur, Jr. CFA

Town Manager

Town of Reading

16 Lowell Street

Reading, MA 01867

townmanager@ci.reading.ma.us

(P) 781-942-9043

(F) 781-942-9037

www.readingma.gov

Please fill out our brief customer service survey at:

<http://readingma-survey.virtuالتownhall.net/survey/sid/8cebfd833a88cd3d/>

Town Hall Hours:

Monday, Wednesday and Thursday: 7:30 a.m - 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday: 7:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Friday: CLOSED

From: Frere, Mary Louise [<mailto:mary.l.frere@verizon.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2013 3:22 PM

Subject: Verizon Change in the FiOS Channel Lineup

Dear Municipal Official,

This is to notify you that on or after October 11, 2013, channel 1489, will be removed from the NBA League Pass package. **Programming on channel 1489 will continue to be available on channel 1450.**

Customers will be notified by means of the attached bill message that will run in the September bill cycle.

Access to the FiOS® TV channel lineup is available 24/7 by visiting us online at verizon.com/fiostvchannels.

We realize that our customers have other alternatives for entertainment and our goal is to offer the best choice and value in the industry. Verizon appreciates the opportunity to conduct business in your community. Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact me.

Mary L. Frere

Sal

Senior Consultant – FiOS Video
Verizon Communications
125 High Street Oliver Tower
Boston, MA. 02110
617-743-4119



FiOS® TV Channel Changes

NBA League Pass Channel Change

On or after October 11, 2013, channel 1489 will be removed from the NBA League Pass package. Programming on channel 1489 will continue to be available on channel 1450.

4CB05

Schena, Paula

From: LeLacheur, Bob
Sent: Wednesday, September 04, 2013 6:50 PM
To: Schena, Paula
Subject: FW: Current Package Stores

For BOS packet

Robert W. LeLacheur, Jr. CFA

Town Manager

Town of Reading

16 Lowell Street

Reading, MA 01867

townmanager@ci.reading.ma.us

(P) 781-942-9043

(F) 781-942-9037

www.readingma.gov

Please fill out our brief customer service survey at:

<http://readingma-survey.virtualltownhall.net/survey/sid/8cebfd833a88cd3d/>

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Tuesday: 7:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Friday: CLOSED

From: Jill Fairweather [<mailto:jillchev@gmail.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, September 04, 2013 6:12 PM

To: Reading - Selectmen

Subject: Current Package Stores

Hi,

I talked to Paula and got the addresses for the 6 current package stores currently licensed, but two of them I could not find/confirm from looking online.

Could you please confirm the right info:

Haven St. – couldn't find any package store. What is the name and address of the Haven St. Package store?

212 Main St. - J&Rickey, couldn't find it, what is correct name and address? I could only see something called JK's market at that address but it doesn't seem to sell liquor?

The other ones I did confirm:

Wine Shop 676 Main

Busa 345 Main

Square Liquors 11-13 High St.

Wine Bunker 1 General Way

861

Thanks,
Jill

Please reply to confirm receipt.

Jill Fairweather
RE/MAX Realty Advisors
320 Washington St., Norwell, MA
www.JustThinkJill.com
<http://facebook.com/JustThinkJillForRealEstate>
781-771-9444
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