



Planning Beyond Recovery

The Mayor's Vision and Strategic Plan for Reading



A Renewed Vision for the City

The City of Reading is recognized as a leading model of sustainable urban living and one of the most vibrant and innovative communities in Pennsylvania. It offers a shared prosperity among all who live, work, learn, and visit here through a thriving local economy, broad cultural diversity, and a healthy natural environment.

Planning Horizons

Short Term = Recovery Plan

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Mid-Term = Strategic Plan

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Long Term = Comprehensive Plan

Mayor's Five Goals for the City

- Safer and Cleaner Neighborhoods
- **Economic Development and Job Creation**
- **Sound Fiscal Management**
- Open and Transparent Government
- **High Quality of Life**



Setting Objectives and Priorities

- Each goal now has clear objectives
- All City initiatives must match to specific objectives
- All objectives are measured for results
- CitiStat performance management system tracks and progress
- Continuous improvement is made toward goals

Goal #1: Providing Safer and Cleaner Neighborhoods

- **Objective 1.1:** The number of crimes, fires, and other dangers are reduced citywide
- **Objective 1.2:** The built environment is designed to prevent accidents and injuries and discourage crime
- **Objective 1.3:** The streets, sidewalks, alleys, parks, and other public spaces are kept clean and in good repair

Goal #2: Driving Economic Development and Job Creation

- **Objective 2.1:** People have access to diverse, family-supporting employment opportunities
- **Objective 2.2:** Businesses are able to successfully open, operate, and expand in the City
- **Objective 2.3:** City Hall drives economic development through business-friendly services and policy initiatives

Small Business is the Solution

- Growth of small and mid-size companies essential
 - Are the engine of job creation
 - Fastest way to rebuild the tax base
- But small business faces an uphill struggle
 - Cannot get access to capital to finance growth
 - Cannot get access to land to expand
 - As a result, cannot add jobs to the workforce

Land and Capital are Essential

- Land value tax
 - Rewards capital investments with lower burden
 - Targets blight and speculation that stunt growth
- Land bank authority
 - Streamlines acquisition of vacant properties
 - Simplifies consolidation of land for development
- Community capital reinvestment
 - Maximize reinvestment of local money locally
 - Leverage public funds to stimulate local lending

Putting People to Work

- Our jobs agenda must include innovation
 - Green collar jobs in “waste to wealth” industries
 - Worker-owned cooperatives that stay rooted here
 - Walk-to-work opportunities for city residents
 - Entrepreneur-supporting incubators for startups
- The public sector must lead in this effort
 - Holding an internal economic development summit in May
 - Directing more public spending to local businesses, recirculating local money

Strengthening the Core

- A strong downtown is fundamental to grow
 - Submitted Main Street application for approval
 - Making parking as painless as possible
 - Researching Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone potential
- Ensuring City Hall stays “open for business”
 - Holding regular tours and meetings with city companies
 - Streamlining processes and physical layout of permit, license, and tax offices

Goal #3: Operating Through Sound Fiscal Management

- **Objective 3.1:** The budget format and content accurately reflect the goals and objectives of the City
- **Objective 3.2:** The City maximizes revenues, minimizes debts, and eliminates waste
- **Objective 3.3:** Financial reports are consistently released and reviewed

Major Progress Has Been Made

- Budget process continually being improved
 - Regular reports, fiscal oversight of spending levels
- Revenues and reductions regularly enhanced
 - Over \$1 million in amnesty and increased collections alone
 - Contingency fund and discretionary spending better controlled
- Even so, major “fiscal cliff” looms ahead

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back?

- Act 47 is not enough to address pensions
 - Cities cannot carry current MMO levels
 - Serious reform must come from Harrisburg
 - Scranton
- Act 73 is cutting our lifeline
 - Amendment to Authorities Act severs critical transfer payments to supplement revenue
 - Authorities and public assets are fundamental to Reading's survival

Cannot Just Cut Our Way Out

- 5% reductions in 2013 budget was a struggle
- Continuing to cut where possible
 - Constantly monitoring overtime costs
 - Increasing building and fleet performance to cut energy costs
- New revenues and tax base growth essential
 - Street light assessments
 - Emergency medical service fees
 - Improved pension investment performance

Goal #4: Ensuring Open and Transparent Government

- **Objective 4.1:** Democratic governance maximizes opportunities to be informed and involved
- **Objective 4.2:** Quality constituent services ensure input is expressed and issues are addressed
- **Objective 4.3:** People are treated fairly and equitably in all policies and processes
- **Objective 4.4:** Intergovernmental coordination and collaboration is established whenever possible

Goal #5: Thriving Through a Higher Quality of Life

- **Objective 5.1:** Neighborhood standards of living are raised through high quality public services, infrastructure, and amenities
- **Objective 5.2:** Every resident has access to open spaces and recreational opportunities
- **Objective 5.3:** Civic and cultural opportunities and events expand across the community

Getting to Great Neighborhoods

- Establishing a new standard of living
 - Quality of Life tickets changing behavior
- Grow from strength: Market Value Analysis
 - Investments being focused in targeted areas
- Neighborhood Improvement Districts
 - Building on the success of the DID across the city
 - Parking revenue can fund new improvements
- Elm street
 - Will serve as phase two of the Main Street initiative in a select residential area

Looking Forward to 2025

- Comprehensive Plan: June 2014
 - Must be innovative and inspiring
 - Must include economic development as keystone
 - Must include sustainable design and practices
 - Must be an action plan, not just an obligation
 - Must involve all stakeholders in community
- If successful, today's vision will become tomorrow's reality

Planning to Lead

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Theodore Roosevelt, "Citizenship In A Republic"

Questions and Answers

