

# Administrative Report

## Mayor Eddie Moran

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Frank Denbowski, Interim Managing Director  
**PREPARED BY:** Maritza Loaiza, Special Assistant  
**MEETING DATE:** March 28, 2022  
**AGENDA MEMO DATE:** March 23, 2022

---

### **MAYOR:**

- Mayor Moran on behalf of the City of Reading is requesting the release of the National Opioid Settlement. The Nationwide Opioid Settlement agreement resolves litigation against pharmaceutical distributors McKesson, Cardinal Health, & AmerisourceBergen and manufacturer Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Pennsylvania has elected to participate in these settlements and as a result, Pennsylvania Counties and Municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more are eligible to participate in the settlements. The total allotment of funds received is dependent on the level of participation.

Settlements require 85% of funds to be allocated to programs that will help address the ongoing opioid crisis through treatment, education, and prevention efforts. PA has already passed agreements that dictate how funds will be distributed between state and local governments, ensuring funds will effectively reach communities in the coming months.

The settlement is the first of its kind to administer resources directly to the state and local levels, specifically for relief programs to help rebuild the devastation caused by the opioid epidemic. The settlement will distribute funds based on population adjusted for the proportionate share of the opioid epidemic impact. The share of the impact is calculated using detailed, and objective national data, including the amount of opioids shipped to the state, the number of opioid-related deaths that occurred in the state and the number of people who suffer opioid use disorder in the state.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- The Community Development Department staff prepared the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for the period of January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, as required by HUD and was advertised in the Reading Eagle on March 18<sup>th</sup>. The CAPER is designed to provide information on how the City used its federal, state, and local funds for housing and community development program year.
- The CD Department staff completed a Notice of Intent for the Lead Hazard Remediation program as required by HUD. The scope of work was developed for competitive bidding. Once the Lead Hazard Remediation staffing is assembled, the bids will be advertised.
- The Planning Commission approved the following projects during their regular business meeting:
  - Albright College's Exeter Student Dormitory project. Construction is set to begin in April, with an anticipated completion date of May 2023.
  - Berkshire Building project. Selective restructuring/demolition has begun. This project will create 79 apartments for 150 international students.
  - Medical Arts Building. Received conditional preliminary plan approval.
- The Community Development Department received authorization (Resolution 57-2022) to issue Habitat for Humanity the use of HUD funding for site improvements (sidewalk and curb) in front of eight residential units. Construction is anticipated to begin in early summer 2022 with completion in late 2023.
- The Community Development Department will submit a request to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by the end of March for the release of \$3,750,000 in Federal Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction grant funds, \$400,000 in Healthy Homes Supplemental grant funds, and \$450,000 in match funds.

The Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant Program will address lead and other hazards in housing units located in the City of Reading. This grant will help in remediating lead and other hazards in homes owned or occupied by low-income families with children under six years of age, and/or homes with pregnant women.

The City proposes the remediation of 150 (estimated) housing units within the City. The average cost per unit will be approximately \$15,000 for lead remediation. Expected work includes, but is not limited to abatement, interim controls or healthy homes activities.

- The Community Development’s Property Maintenance Division provided the following Quality of Life Report for February 2022. Violations are broken down by City Council District:

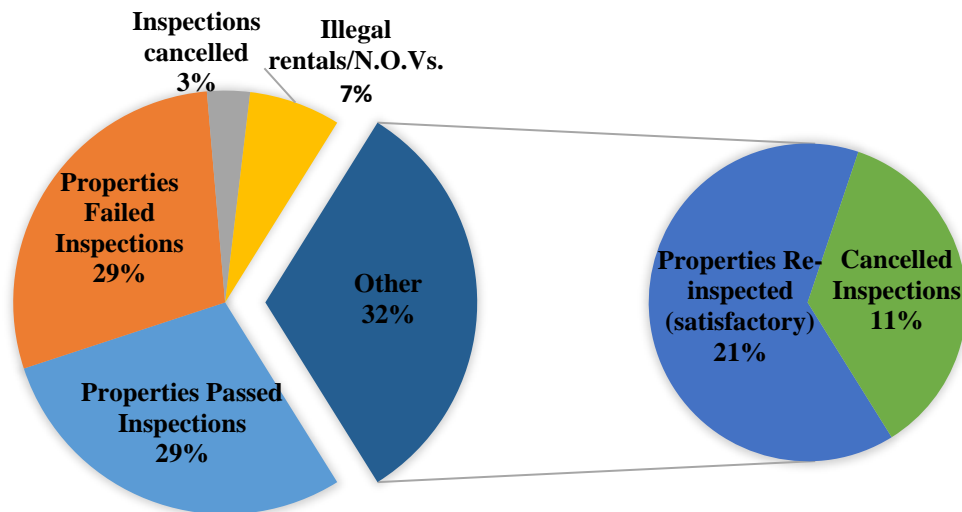
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<b>Total</b>
QOL 001 Accumulation of Garbage	5	5	10	10	6	20	56
QOL 002 Animal maintenance and waste	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
QOL 003 Improper disposal of Garbage	1	7	1	0	0	4	13
QOL 004 Highweeds and grass	2	2	0	1	3	0	8
QOL 006 Motor vehicles	0	2	2	5	0	1	10
QOL 009 Outside placement of indoor furniture of appliances	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
QOL 013 Storage containers out of place	1	0	0	0	0	0	28
QOL14 Storing or discarding appliances	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Total QOLs</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>118</u>

- The Community Development’s Property Maintenance Division provided the following Inspection Summary for February 2022:

**February Summary**

Properties Passed Inspections	194
Properties Failed Inspections	193
Inspections cancelled	22
Illegal rentals/N.O.Vs.	47
Properties Re-inspected (satisfactory)	139
Cancelled Inspections	78

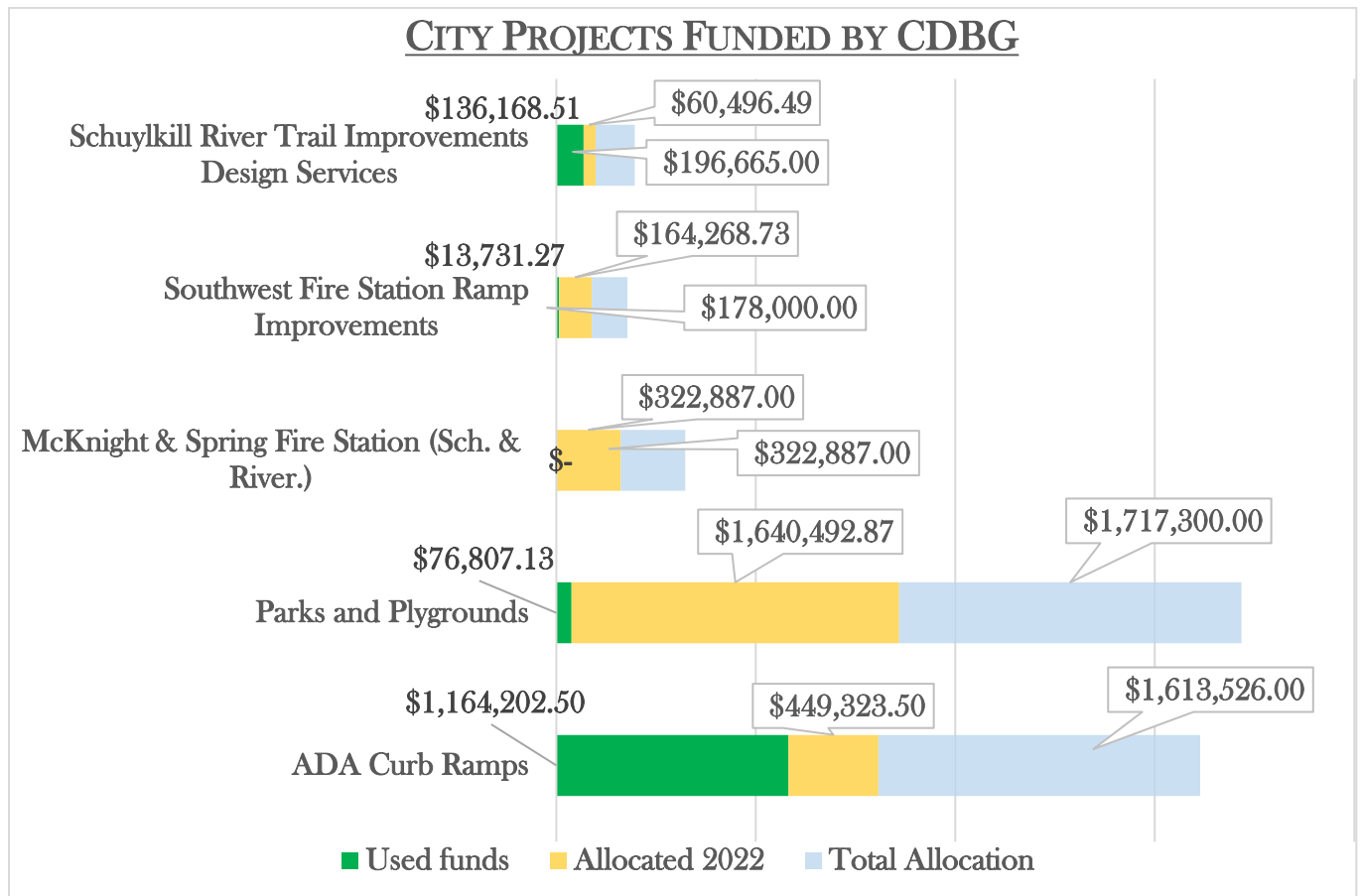
**Properties Inspection – Two Week Summary (ending March 18, 2022)**



- The Community Development's Zoning Division provided the following report on Planning and Zoning activities:

	10-Mar	18-Mar	Total
New permit applications rec'd City	5	13	18
Pending intake	2	4	6
Permit reviews completed	11	11	22
Application returned incomplete	1	0	1
Applications on hold/awaiting applicant	47	47	94
Applications pending/in review	53	64	117
Applications over 31 days	24	23	47
New Zoning Complaints/Enforcements			0
Open from 2021			0
New Inquiries/research new received	18	21	39
2022 Open inquiries	59	52	111
2021 Open inquiries	232	280	512
Site visits	10	0	10
Phone Calls	51	54	105
Walk-ins	86	97	183
Zoning Hearings (ZHB) March 9			

- The Community Development provided the following report on City projects funded CDBG:



**DOWNTOWN:**

- The Downtown Coordinator worked with Public Works and other volunteers to plant yellow and blue flowers along Penn Street in support of Ukraine.
- On March 14<sup>th</sup>, the Downtown Coordinator presented an overview of the downtown plan of action to Alvernia’s Cultural Coalition.
- The Downtown Coordinator gave a tour of the downtown to the Leadership Berks group.
- The Downtown Coordinator is working with Police Traffic on concerns regarding ingress and egress from those attending events in the City.
- The Downtown Coordinator met with Berks Arts and the GRCA to discuss the potential for public art installments to occur.
- Presented at the Innovation Subcommittee Board Meeting to outline the Alvernia fellowship program which will support the City’s Block Steward program which is in the final planning stages.

**FINANCE:**

- The Finance Department’s staff continues to work on EnerGov and prepare for the future launch of the program.
- The CSC’s continues to work with the Property Maintenance Division and the County Assessment to update ownership files in Hansen after problems were experienced with the January 2022 file.
- The CSC’s mailed housing bills the week of March 14<sup>th</sup>. As a result of the mailing, the CSC has seen an increase in phone calls related to housing.
- The Finance Department’s CSC provided the following data related to phone calls recieved:

<b>REQUEST TYPE</b>	<b>REQUESTS</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Sewer backup	111	23.62%
Property Maintenance Unpaid Fees Request	77	16.38%
Needs Recycling Bin	36	7.66%
Recycling Electronics	34	7.23%
Yardwaste	24	5.11%
Pothole or sunken utility cut	21	4.47%
Trash Pick up	18	3.83%
Property Inspections Scheduling	16	3.4%
Trash Enforcement	14	2.98%
Building and Trades Permits	13	2.77%
Meet with the Mayor	8	1.7%
Property Maintenance Issues	7	1.49%
Graffiti vandalism removal	7	1.49%
Zoning Inquiry	6	1.28%

Tire Removal/Pick Up	6	1.28%
Housing Permits	5	1.06%
Unpermitted construction activity	4	0.85%
Trash Education	4	0.85%
Trash Cans Outside Too Long	4	0.85%
Property Maintenance Fees	4	0.85%
Handicap parking	4	0.85%
Structure	3	0.64%
Sewer Grates Catch Basins	3	0.64%
Illegal Dumping	3	0.64%
Tree Trimming Private Property	2	0.43%
Street Sweeping	2	0.43%
Street Sign Request	2	0.43%
Recycling Pickup	2	0.43%
Quality of Life Violations	2	0.43%
Property Inspections	2	0.43%
Parks general	2	0.43%
Housing Inspection	2	0.43%
Historic preservation assistance	2	0.43%
Collections - Codes	2	0.43%
Clean City Projects	2	0.43%
Certificate of Transfer	2	0.43%
Zoning Violation	1	0.21%
Tree Trimming Public	1	0.21%
Tree Questions Permits	1	0.21%
Trash City of Reading Owned Property	1	0.21%
Street sign damaged or vandalized	1	0.21%
Street Repair or Paving	1	0.21%
Street light out or malfunctioning	1	0.21%
Street Inquiries	1	0.21%
Sewers Storm Renewal/Repair	1	0.21%
Roofs/Drainage	1	0.21%
Non Emergency Police	1	0.21%
Meet with the Managing Director	1	0.21%
Building & Trades Inspection Plumbing	1	0.21%
Abandoned Property	1	0.21%

- The Finance Department’s Purchasing Division provided the following update on current and upcoming projects:
  - **Road Program.** Submissions are due by April 5<sup>th</sup>. The project consists of but not limited to the removal and replacement of roadway pavement and related items such as subbase repairs, base repairs, leveling, ADA curb ramp

improvement and associated with signal improvements, pavement markings, loop detection systems.

- **Reading Police Department Training and Special Operations Facility Engineering Project RFP.** Submissions from qualified individuals or firms are due by March 30<sup>th</sup>. The RFP is for design engineering service for the new Reading Police Department Training and Special Operations Facility.
  - **City Park Improvement Project.** Submissions are due March 28<sup>th</sup>. The project consists of removal of trees laying on the ground, unhealthy standing trees, pruning large trees, understory clearing and grubbing; provision of earthwork, porous asphalt paving walkways, segmental block piers, landscaping; installation of owner furnished modular play and swing structures, benches and safety surface mulch; and all incidental work.
- City Controller Michael Oppenheimer is working diligently on the 2021 audit.

### **FIRE:**

- The Fire Department Suppression Units completed annual air consumption training drills in February.
- The 9<sup>th</sup> and Marion Fire Station project site work is progressing. Footers are now completed, and block work for the walls continues. Below is a current photo of progress at the worksite:



### **HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION:**

- Starting on January 1<sup>st</sup>, and as of March 18<sup>th</sup>, HRC has:
  - 108 total rent and utility assistance applications were received (An increase of 14 applications since last reported).
    - 93 applications for rental assistance

- 96 applicants were facing eviction
- 8 applicants were not actively facing eviction
- 1 applicant resided outside of the City but within the County.
- 3 application for utility assistance

### **HUMAN RESOURCES:**

- The Human Resource Department would like to welcome the following new employees to the City of Reading organization:
  - Christopher Geltz began on March 1<sup>st</sup> as the City’s Chief Building Official
  - Travis Kauffman began on March 8<sup>th</sup> as an EO II for Sanitary Sewers.
  - Margielene Soriano will begin on March 23<sup>rd</sup> as a part-time Accounting Clerk
  - Ryan Bradley will begin on April 1<sup>st</sup> as the Clean City Community Coordinator

### **LIBRARY:**

- The Reading Public Library received positive media coverage on a strategic planning process written by the former Executive Director Ms. Bronwen Gamble and published on the Library Journal online. For those interested, you can access the article at:
  - <https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/Change-the-scene-backtalk>
- On March 8<sup>th</sup> and March 10<sup>th</sup>, the RPL Main Library hosted the PA Department of Health as they setup a table to distribute free COVID home test kits to the community.
- The RPL would like to thank the City and County DA’s Office for funding 52 cameras at all four library branch locations. At this time, 51 of the 52 cameras have been installed and the last one is expected to be installed shortly.

### **POLICE:**

- The Reading Police Department held its PT test on March 12<sup>th</sup> at Alvernia University. Out of 36 participants, 29 passed and will move onto the interview phase of the hiring process.
- Chief Tornielli met with the Chief County Probation Officer to collaborate on improving information sharing and response to violence.
- Chief Tornielli joined Mayor Moran in two meetings related to crime. One was organized by State Representative Guzman to discuss with business owners there concerns related to crime. The second meeting was hosted by Mayor Moran with various community organizations related to youth violence and available programming.
- Chief Tornielli met with the CEO of Haven Behavioral Hospital to discuss how officers could better facilitate the handoff of individuals with mental health issues to mental health professionals.



- The RPD's Lt. Lance Lillis continues to participate in a variety of outreach efforts. He participated in the COVID Resource event at 11<sup>th</sup> and Pike playground.

Upcoming events include a Coffee with a Cop event for children on the Autism spectrum scheduled for April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Police Department tours are also being planned for elementary school students.

In addition, Lt. Lillis will be participating in the Adopt-A-Block event and continue recruiting efforts at scheduled various events.

- The Reading Police Youth Academy continues to meet. In the next few weeks, cadets will be trained/certified in CPR.

### **PUBLIC WORKS:**

- Public Works Director Kyle Zeiber is happy to share the WasteWater Treatment Plant is currently meeting all NPDES discharge and Air Quality permit requirements. In addition, all WWTP laboratory staff completed their PA DEP required annual ethics training.
- Public Works staff has completed 33 clean-up projects that resulted in 156 bags and 160 bulk items picked up.
- Public Works has recently delivered 150 recycling bins that residents have requested.
- Public Works continues to work on event planning for the Great American Cleanup scheduled on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.