



Administrative Report Mayor Eddie Moran

TO: City Council
FROM: William M. Heim, Managing Director
PREPARED BY: Maritza Loaiza, Special Assistant
MEETING DATE: December 19, 2022
AGENDA MEMO DATE: December 14, 2022

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

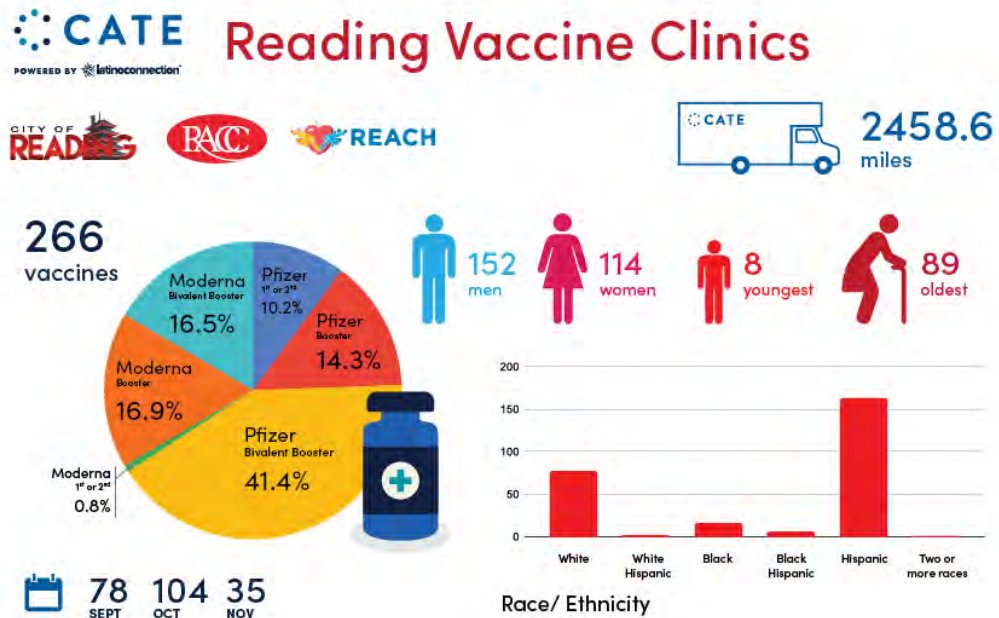
- The Community Development Department began preparing a HOME ARP application for a homeless shelter that a non-profit organization would manage. A potential property has been identified and approved by HUD. Once details are finalized, the process would require a resolution from City Council for final approval.
- Community Development presented on progress improvements made in the City real estate market for the Reading Berks Real Estate Association. The presentation touched on topics such as availing a Land Bank in the upcoming year, expanding the ReTAP program, potential interest in the 5th & Penn properties, and challenges in securing permits and home inspections.
- Community Development is meeting weekly with the Lincoln Institute on the Legacy Cities Initiative program, focusing on job creation, blight elimination, and local business opportunities in South Reading.

The Administration has assembled a city team to address economic development inequities in this area. The core team will include several civic associations such as South of Penn, Berks Tech Centro, Mt. Zion Church of God, Salvation Army, and Olivet Boys and Girls Club. The discussions thus far have focused on land policy for improving land equity, focusing on South Reading.

FINANCE:

- The Finance Department's Information Technology provided the following updates:
 - Staff is currently working with County of Berks representatives to resolve problems accessing the Cody System.
 - Firewall upgrades were completed.
- The Finance Department's Citizen's Service Center has the following updates:
 - Business Privilege License letters are being prepared for mailing during the first week of January 2023.
 - The City's Annual Children's Holiday Party was held on Wednesday, December 14th, at 9:30am. This year, over 50 children from 10th & Green Elementary School were selected to visit City Hall and receive a visit from Santa and gifts donated by City of Reading employees. Thank you to all who participated and contributed to the event's success.
- The Finance Department's Accounting Division provided the following updates:
 - Preparations for the year-end closing are underway.
 - Audit responses were prepared and submitted to Megan Thompson, as requested.
- The Finance Department's Purchasing Division provided the following updates related to projects:
 - Baer Park Playground Improvements – Bids are due on December 14th.
 - 233 North 3rd Street Residential Building Stabilization - Rebid – Bids are due on December 12th.
 - Sidewalk Replacement and Public Sidewalk Replacement Program – The project is being held for re-advertisement at the beginning of 2023 after review by the City's consulting engineer.
 - Grant Writing Services – The selection committee is currently reviewing the pricing proposals. Interviews will then be scheduled with the top three scoring candidates.
 - Upcoming Projects:
 - Reading Skate Park Construction
 - Reading Iron Playground
 - Abandoned Properties Registry
- The City Controller continues work on various items, such as:
 - Review of Pension Board Account needs
 - Act 44 needs
 - OPEB valuation follow-up needs

- The Finance Department provided the following updates on the AHL Grant activities:
 - In-person Project Partner meeting was held in City Hall on December 1st to discuss planning for the upcoming year, including a grant extension request.
 - Submission of the milestone document is expected to occur by the end of the month.
 - All scheduled Community-Accessible Testing & Education (CATE) vaccine clinics have been completed. The infographic provides an overview of activity:



- A Penn State College of Medicine biostatistician completed the required data analysis.
- A Reading Area Community College student has been on-boarded to conduct data analysis for the Hands Across Reading initiative.
- Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLQ) survey is ongoing. 400+ paper responses have been collected. The goal is set at 1,000.
- The Community Engagement Coordinator continues to do outreach with community organizations, scheduling approximately three per month in addition to Latino Connection coordinated events.
- Website development is progressing, with the go-live to occur by the end of the year.
- Signed MOUS have been received for assessment and execution by:
 - Berks Counseling Center
 - FaithCare
 - Berks Community Health Center
- AHL outreach is expected to begin at the City's Winter Wonderland events at the Santander Arena beginning December 17th.

FIRE:

- The Reading Fire Department participated in the City's Annual Holiday Parade. Santa rode in the bucket of the department's new tower ladder truck.
- RFD assisted the City's Public Works Department with repairs to the star mounted on the Fire Tower on Skyline Drive.
- The 9th & Marion Fire Station Progress has slowed down due to issues that need to be fixed by the general contractor. The City and Project Manager for this project are working together to address the problems. This has pushed the expected completion date until the spring of 2023.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- The Human Resource Department would like to welcome the following new employees to the City of Reading organization:
 - Yocasta De Pena, part-time custodian, December 12th.
 - Maureen Burns, PT HR Administrative Assistant, December 14th.

LIBRARY:

- The Reading Public Library received a \$7,000 Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) donation from Tompkins Community Bank, which will help support our children's programs Food for Thought and Art Blast.
- RPL's construction of a new Jerome Marcus Meeting room at the Northeast branch has begun with an estimated completion date of February 2023.
- RPL is seeking a full-time Systems Administrator/Assistant Director position that will replace a current employee when they retire on Dec 31, 2022. Anyone interested can visit the Library's website at:

<https://www.readingpl.org/about-2/volunteer-job-opportunities/>

PUBLIC WORKS:

- Public Works staff has also completed:
 - 45 sites, primarily illegal dumping sites, were cleaned up, resulting in 333 bags of trash and litter, 17 bulk items, 47 tires, and 61 televisions.
 - 11 dead animals were picked up
- Public Works Clean City Coordinator reports:
 - 1 cleanup event at Reed and Elm Streets with volunteers from Climate Corps was held, which resulted in the collection of 8 bags of trash and litter.
 - Numerous Adopt-A-Block cleanup events were held, which resulted in 28 bags of trash and litter and 16 yard waste bags.

- Met with Berks Area Mountain Biking Association (BAMBA) to discuss future clean-up collaboration opportunities
- Public Works Solid Waste Division Manager and Supervisor Ron Epps met with Republic Services management team on December 6th to do a year-end review and plan for 2023.
- Public Works Sustainability Manager Bethany Ayers-Fisher attended/participated in the following outreach opportunities:
 - MS4 Steering Committee meeting
 - Environmental Advisory Committee meeting
 - NEVI Stakeholder meeting
 - City's Tree Lighting event
- Public Works Sustainability Manager Bethany Ayers-Fisher served as a guest lecturer for the following:
 - Alvernia University's BIO 340 Course – Climate Action Plans
 - Reading Area Community College's Environmental Club – Community Event Planning
 - Reading Science Center – Sisters in Stem & Plastics event