



City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania Planning Commission Annual Report for 2021

To: City of Reading Mayor Eddie Moran
City of Reading Council Members

From: City of Reading Planning Commission
Jamal Abodalo, Director of Community Development Services
Jerome Skrincosky, AICP, Planning and Zoning Consultant

Subject: Planning Commission Annual Report for 2021

Date: April 26, 2022

Pursuant to the provision specified by Section 207 of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, the City of Reading Planning Commission (Planning Commission) has prepared an Annual Report in order to summarize its activities during the 2021 calendar year. This Annual Report has been reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission on March 22, 2022.

Section A: Planning Commission Members (2021 and 2022)

Wayne Bealer, Chairman; Term Expires April 1, 2026
Will Cinfici, Vice Chairman; Term Expires April 1, 2024
Lee Olsen, AIA; Term Expires April 1, 2026
Bob Conklin, AIA; Term Expires April 1, 2025
Nelson DeLeon; Term Expires April 1, 2025
Peter Rye; Term Expires April 1, 2026
Donna Reed; City Council Liaison

Section B: Approved Subdivision and Land Development Plan Applications (2021)

The following plans have been approved by the Planning Commission in 2021:

B.1 Hope Rescue Mission Subdivision and Land Development Plan

The development is located on a 4.88 acre tract of land located at 645 North 6th Street (TPID 14530759846130). The Applicant proposed to subdivide the property into two (2) lots. Lot 1 will be 2.44 acres and include a 17,664 square foot building designated as the Men's Residence and Office. Lot 2 will be 2.44 acres and include a 24,986 square foot building designated as the Women and Children Shelter. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on February 23, 2021 via Resolution 03-2021.

B.2 Reading Skate Park Land Development Plan

This development is located on a 1.842 acre parcel of land that is located at 601 Canal Street (TPID 02530643866370). The Applicant proposes to construct a public skatepark on 26,500 square feet within two (2) phases. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on February 23, 2021 via Resolution 04-2021.

B.3 Reading Soda Works Land Development Plan

This development is located on a 18,471 square foot parcel of land located along the east side of Gregg Avenue, north side of Angelica Street and west side on Brookline Street (TPID 18530656439920). The Applicant proposes to construct a warehouse facility that will include a 5,470 square foot building, off-street parking and loading spaces and other related site improvements. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on February 23, 2021 via Resolution 05-2021.

B.4 Asian Spa Annexation and Land Development Plan

This annexation plan involves two (2) existing properties located at 912 Lancaster Avenue (TPID 18530664422624) and 914 Lancaster Avenue (TPID 18530664422603). The cumulative total area of the lots is 7,695 square feet. The existing use is a commercial personal service/retail establishment use (Asian Spa Massage Therapy) that occupies 1,415 square feet of gross floor area. The proposed use is a residential apartment unit that will occupy 448 square feet on the second floor. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on March 23, 2021 via Resolution 05-2021.

B.5 Reading Housing Authority Land Development Plan

The development is located at 400 Hancock Boulevard (TPID 18530655343945). The proposed site improvements for this project include: a proposed building addition on the north side of the existing administration building that includes 1,590 square feet of gross floor area; a proposed parking area that will include 44 off-street parking spaces; and realignment or closure of a portion of Liggett Avenue. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on March 23, 2021 via Resolutions 07-2021 and 08-2021.

B.6 Hummingbird Hill Annexation Plan

The plan involves the conveyance of land between Hummingbird Hill Condominiums located at 1375 Pershing Boulevard (TPID 18530653036962) and Wyomissing Park Apartments located at 1401 Pershing Boulevard (TPID 18530653033998). Tract A is a 1.106 acre parcel of land to be conveyed to Hummingbird Hill Condominiums. Tract B is a 0.015 acre parcel of land to be conveyed to Hummingbird Hill Condominiums. Tract C is a 0.124 acre parcel of land to be conveyed to Wyomissing Park Apartments. The plan was approved on April 27, 2021 via Resolution 11-2021.

B.7 Jan and Wil Properties Land Development Plan

The development is located on a 34,720 square feet located at 810 Windsor Street (TPID 12530760944840). The plan involves combining eight (8) residential apartment units that shall be converted and contained on three (3) floors plus one (1) commercial use to be contained on the first floor or street level. The proposed uses are permitted as per the provisions relating to Adaptive Reuse. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on May 25, 2021 via Resolution 12-2021.

B.8 Buttonwood Gateway Miltimore Revitalization Plan

This redevelopment and revitalization includes multiple properties located along Miltimore Street and West Buttonwood Street as part of Buttonwood Gateway Project. Habitat for Humanity of Berks County (Applicant) intends to reconfigure and redevelop the 29 parcels of land with 11 residential dwelling units, which includes: 1 one-family detached dwelling unit; 10 one-family semi-detached dwelling units; and 6 parcels designated for off-street parking for this development. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on May 25, 2021 via Resolution 13-2021.

B.9 The Nature Place Phase 2 Land Development Plan

Berks Nature intends to develop and improve a portion of Angelica Park, which is located at 575 Saint Bernadine Street (TPID 18530620812266). The property is currently utilized as a municipal, educational and conservation use. Berks Nature is proposing to expand the existing building footprint and floor area (12,733 square feet) by adding a second floor (13,841 square feet of floor area). The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on May 25, 2021 via Resolution 14-2021.

B.10 Albright Rockland Warehouse Land Development Plan

Albright College intends to convert a portion of an existing warehouse building, which is located at 1015 Rockland Street (TPID 17531817018390) to a college or university use (classrooms and storage) as part of the SRI Program. The 1.27 acre site contains an existing warehouse building (22,796 square feet) that will be partially converted. The plan was approved on May 25, 2021 via Resolution 15-2021.

B.11 ISLA Annexation and Land Development Plan

This plan involved the consolidation of four (4) parcels of land located at 660 Schuylkill Avenue, which were combined in order to comply with the decision rendered by the Zoning Hearing Board as part of Appeal 2018-31. The consolidated parcels of land (12,581 square feet) will include: a restaurant with 3 residential apartments on the second floor; a commercial use (barber shop) with two (2) attached one-family residential dwellings. As part of this project, the Zoning Map was revised so the property is included within the C-N Zoning District. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on July 27, 2021 via Resolution 17-2021.

B.12 Remcon Plastics Land Development Plan

This development is located on a 3.91 acre parcel of land located at 208 Chestnut Street (TPID 05530626684841). The Applicant proposes to construct a 4,800 square foot building addition and other related site improvements on this property. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on July 27, 2021 via Resolution 18-2021.

B.13 Marion Street Station Land Development Plan

The project involves a 12,012 square foot property as a new fire and rescue station, which will be located at 1201 North 9th Street (TPID 17531737061808). The property is currently utilized as a municipal park. The development includes: a new fire and rescue station within a 3-story building (7,563 gross square feet at the base and 14,330 cumulative gross square feet); 10 on-street accessible parking spaces; and other site improvements that will be contained on the property. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on August 24, 2021 via Resolution 21-2021.

B.14 Reading Truck Group Annexation Plan

The project involves two (2) parcels of land located at the transition between Hancock Boulevard and East Wyomissing Boulevard. Parcel A is a 21.06 net acre tract of land owned by Poindexter Properties. Parcel B is a 28.39 net acre tract of land owned by TMAP Realty. The Annexation Parcel is a 0.052 net acre tract of land currently owned by TMAP Realty, which shall be conveyed to Poindexter Properties. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on September 28, 2021.

B.15 Schaeffer Subdivision Plan

The development contains two (2) existing undeveloped parcels of land containing a cumulative gross area of 6,600 square feet, located at 114 and 118 Belvedere Avenue (TPID's 18530659831879 and 18530689832900). The properties will be subdivided and developed with three (3) attached residential dwellings. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on October 26, 2021.

B.16 RACC Annexation Plan

RACC proposes to acquire a 0.56 acre parcel of land via vacation and/or annexation. This property is located along the south side of Penn Street (SR 3422) and along the west side of South 2nd Street (SR 2008). This property is currently owned by the PennDOT in conjunction with the City of Reading. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on November 23, 2021.

B.17 Refuge Home Annexation and Land Development Plan

This project is located on two (2) parcels of land containing a 4,356 total square feet, which contains a one-family semi-detached dwelling located at 730 and 732 McKnight Street (TPID 15530757542346). The parcels shall be joined in common deed as a result of this plan. The residential building shall be converted into a one-family detached dwelling to be occupied as a group care facility for sex trafficking survivors, as approved under Conditional Use Application 2021-01. The plan was approved by the Planning Commission on December 21, 2021.

B.18 Reading Station Building II Land Development Plan

Reading Station Building II is located at 650 Spring Street (TPID 14530752950662), which is a 0.92 acre property. The developer intends to redevelop Building II and lease portions of the building to GoPuff Grocery Delivery Service (wholesale/distribution use) and 3 Rivers (restaurant). The revised plan of record or change of use was approved by the Planning Commission on December 21, 2021.

Section C: Pending Subdivision and Land Development Plan Applications (2021)

The following plans have been submitted to the Planning Commission in 2021 and are considered "pending" or have not been approved during the 2021 calendar year:

C.1 Albright Exeter Hall Annexation and Land Development Plan (Final Plan)

This development is located on 3.98 acres of land at 1700 and 1716 North 12th Street (TPIDs 17531722194644 and 17531722195818) to be joined as a common deed. Albright College intends to develop this site with a 5-story residential dormitory building 136,165 total square feet to be occupied by 350 students attending Albright College. The development will include 180 off-street parking spaces and site improvements.

C.2 Alvernia Berkshire Building Revised Plan of Record (Final Plan)

The plan involves the Berkshire Building located on a 21,022 square foot property at 101 North 5th Street and 501 Washington Street (TPID 07530783800808). The Applicant proposes to revitalize and redevelop the building through adaptive reuse techniques, which shall include: a commercial/retail use; 79 residential apartments to house 145 foreign exchange students; and other supporting accommodations.

C.3 Alvernia Crime Scene Lab Minor Land Development Plan (Final Plan)

Alvernia University intends to redevelop an existing one-family detached unit located at 323 St. Bernadine Street (Tax Parcel 18530619625456) with a Crime Scene Lab. The Applicant shall be required to submit a plan that complies with the provisions with a Revised Plan of Record or a Change of Use.

C.4 Castlewood HOA Dedication Plan (Sketch Plan/Inquiry)

The Homeowners Association has initiated a proposal to dedicate existing roads and stormwater management facilities within the street right-of-way. Further discussion on the requirements for submitting a Revised Plan of Record shall be required.

C.5 Dream Ventures Revised Plan of Record (Final Plan)

Dream Ventures is seeking to redevelop a property located at 100 South 4th Street (TPID 05530626792516) through adaptive reuse and revitalization techniques in order to convert an existing 4-story building from an abandoned industrial use (manufacturing and warehouse) to 20 residential apartment units.

C.6 Elm Street Daycare Annexation and Land Development Plan (Final Plan)

G&A Investment Corp proposed to redevelop an existing building as a daycare facility at 1010 Elm Street by combining 6 parcels of contiguous land (16,812 +/- square feet) in order to accommodate the considering site accessibility and parking requirements.

C.7 Fairview Christian School Annexation and Land Development Plan (Sketch Plan)

Fairview Christian School proposes to combine 5 contiguous parcels and to consider site improvements at 410 South 14th Street, which includes: the demolition of an existing garage; the removal of an existing wall; modifications to the off-street parking and loading areas; the relocation of a shed; pedestrian accessibility enhancements; and other site improvements that may be necessary for this project.

C.8 Heights Real Estate Revised Plan of Record (Sketch Plan)

Developers have inquired upon adaptive reuse and redevelopment opportunities that could be considered within the 10-story building located on a 23,600 square foot property at 601 Penn Street (TPID 07530783805320), which is part of the Commercial Core (C-C) Zoning District and the Callowhill Historic District.

C.9 Inglesias Pentecostal Annexation and Land Development Plan (Preliminary Plan)

The Applicant intends to develop two (2) parcels of land. Lot 1 is a 14,373 square foot property located at 1124 Schuylkill Avenue (TPID 19530739267209) that contains an existing building that will be utilized t as a place of worship. Lot 2 is a 9,350 square foot property located at 1119 Luzerne Street (TPID 19530747266127) that will be converted and utilized as a “worship facility” to support the place of worship. Zoning relief was granted to the Applicant by the Zoning Hearing Board.

C.10 Iron Gate Land Development Plan (Preliminary Plan)

This development is located on a 10,400 square foot parcel of land located at 228 Moss Street (TPID 09531769012629). The Applicant proposes to redevelop the site and abandoned building with a 3-story self-storage facility with a cumulative total of 19,305 square feet or 6,435 square feet per floor, which will include 228 self-storage units; 4 off-street parking spaces with access along Moss Street; and 7 garage bays with access to Justice Avenue. The main entrance will be located along Moss Street.

C.11 Medical Arts Annexation and Land Development Plan (Preliminary Plan)

This development is located on two (2) parcels of land containing 20,029 square feet, which are located at 226 and 230 North 5th Street (TPID's 075307757166970001 and 07530775716791). The Applicant proposes to combine the two (2) parcels of land into a single parcel of land through an Annexation Plan. The Applicant also proposes to convert the existing building located at 230 North 5th Street from a commercial and office use to a mixed-use development concept via adaptive reuse that shall include commercial or retail uses (4,409 square feet) within the basement level and 1st floor and 31 residential apartment units on the 2nd floor through 11th floor of the building. The Applicant also proposes to construct a commercial building at 226 North Fifth Street in order to accommodate 3 retail uses (3,873 square feet) on floors 1 and 2 and 4 residential apartment units on the 3rd floor, which will be added onto the south side of the existing Medical Arts Building located at 230 North 5th Street. A revision to the Zoning Map will also be required to consider the annexation part of this project.

C.12 MJ Reider Annexation and Land Development Plan (Final Plan)

This development is located on two (2) parcels of land, which includes 103 Angelica Street (TPID 18530665536402) and 107 Angelica Street (TPID 18530665536349). These properties shall be joined in common deed. The existing buildings are occupied by MJ Reider Associates (Tenant) as a laboratory and office use. The 2-story building addition (465 square feet of gross floor area) will be utilized and occupied by the Tenant. The area utilized for off-street parking and loading will be expanded in order to alleviate the parking requirements that are required for the Tenant.

C.13 O'Neill Storage Land Development Plan (Preliminary Plan)

The development is located on a 15,424 square foot property at 1403 Chester Street (TPID 19530737063667). The Applicant proposes to expand the storage facility by adding 34 self-storage units and other related improvements. The Applicant was granted relief by the Zoning Hearing Board via ZHB Appeal 2020-16.

C.14 Overlord Real Estate Land Development Plan (Final Plan)

The proposed development site is located on 8,630 square foot lot at 916 North 9th Street (TPID 13530752959345), which contains an existing 3-story building that was previously occupied by a commercial use (Outlet Mart) and is now vacant. The Applicant shall apply adaptive reuse provisions as part of a conversion to residential use (9 apartments) that will include: 5 apartment units on Floors 1 and 2; 4 apartment units on Floor 3; a common area (1,050 square feet on Floor 1; and a basement level that will provide 14 off-street parking spaces. The Applicant has been granted zoning relief by the Zoning Hearing Board.

C.15 Prince and Princesses Daycare Annexation/Land Development Plan (Final Plan)

This development includes two (2) parcels of land located at 936 and 938 Penn Street (TPID 03331777003073 and 03531777003093), which contain 12,214 square feet of cumulative land area. The Applicant proposes to combine the two (2) parcels of land into a single parcel of land through an Annexation Plan. The Applicant proposes to further develop and utilize the existing commercial building as a day care center, as permitted by the Zoning Hearing Board via Appeal 2020-03.

C.16 Reading Station Building D Subdivision and Land Development Plan (Final Plan)

Reading Station Building D is located at 600 Spring Street (TPID 14530752858138), which is currently part of a 20.53 acre property. The Applicant proposes to subdivide a 2.243 acre portion of the parent tract to encompass Building D, which will be occupied by Cube Smart (self-storage facility). Zoning relief will be required in order to permit the subdivision as a result of lot coverage and dimensional requirements.

C.17 Scheibner Annexation Plan (Final Plan)

This development includes three (3) parcels of land (663, 665 and 669 South 17th Street) to be joined in common deed, which is now identified as 665 South 17th Street. The consolidated parcel of land (8,797 square feet) was previously occupied as a one-family attached dwelling (2 units) or semi-detached dwelling. The Applicant proposes to convert the existing dwellings into a one-family detached dwelling (1 unit)

C.18 Scott Street Subdivision Plan (Final Plan)

The development contains two (2) separate parcels of land. The property identified as 1341 Scott Street (TPID 1853066110528) is an undeveloped tract of land containing 9,000 square feet. The property located at 1325 Scott Street (TPID 1853066110528) is an undeveloped parcel of land containing 12,000 square feet. The Applicant proposed to develop each property with a one-family semi-detached dwelling (2 units) for a cumulative total of 4 residential units within the development.

C.19 Storage First Land Development Plan (Sketch Plan)

The development site is located on a 2.40 acre tract of land at 755 Hiesters Lane (TPID 17530820913132-001). The existing building on the property is 35,924 square feet of gross floor area that was occupied as a business office, retail center and warehouse facility. The Applicant proposes to convert the existing building and use on the property to a self-storage facility. The Applicant has withdrawn this application.

C.20 Super Natural Produce III Annexation and Land Development Plan (Final Plan)

This development is located on four (4) contiguous parcels of land with a cumulative total area of 48,400 square feet, which is located at the southeast corner of North 4th Street and Elm Street. Site accessibility is also permitted via Madison Avenue. The Applicant proposes to redevelop the project site with a combination of uses that shall include: a grocery store; retail center; warehouse; restaurant; office complex; 9 residential apartment units; an off-street parking garage; and other uses. Zoning relief has been granted to permit certain aspects this development.

Section D: Conditional Use Applications (2021)

The Planning Commission considered the following Conditional Use Applications:

- D.1 Conditional Use Application 2021-01: 234 and 238 North 6th Street
- D.2 Conditional Use Application 2021-02: 700 Franklin Street
- D.3 Conditional Use Application 2021-03: 238 North 6th Street
- D.4 Conditional Use Application 2021-04: 730-732 McKnight Street

Section E: Municipal Plans, Reports and Ordinances (2021)

The Planning Commission considered the following plans, reports and ordinances:

- E.1 Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 600)
- E.2 Amendments to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (Chapter 515)
- E.3 Zoning Map Revisions for: Albright Exeter Hall Annexation and Land Development Plan (M-C to R-3); Medical Arts Annexation and Land Development Plan (C-R to C-C); and ISLA Management Annexation and Land Development Plan (R-3 to C-N)
- E.4 Liggett Avenue Relocation and Vacation (Reading Housing Authority)
- E.5 Penn Street Right-of-Way Vacation (RACC Annexation)

Section F: Planning Commission Resolutions and Meeting Minutes (2021)

- F.1 The Planning Commission approved eighteen (18) plans via municipal resolution during the 2021 calendar year. Copies of all resolutions adopted by the Planning Commission are maintained by the Department of Community Development Services.
- F.2 The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing, issuing and maintaining meeting minutes for all public meetings held by the Planning Commission. A copy of the meeting minutes for the 2021 calendar year is maintained by the Department of Community Development Services.
- F.3 The Planning Commission posts and advertises all public meeting and agendas in accordance with the provisions specified by the PA Municipalities Planning Code.

Section G: Planning Commission Projects and Activities (2021)

- G.1 Blighted Remediation Committee: The Planning Commission recommended six (6) properties to be included for reuse, including: 1225 8th Street; 1245 8th Street; 245 S. 5th Street; 549 S. 6th Street; 638 Schuylkill Avenue; and 640 Schuylkill Avenue.
- G.2 Redistricting Committee for the 2020 Census: The Planning Commission participated with the redistricting efforts associated with geographic and demographic criteria.
- G.3 City Greenhouse: Representatives from the Planning Commission participated with the plans for the City Greenhouse.