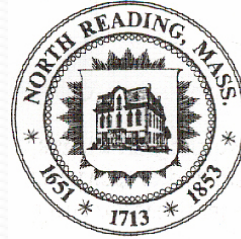


# Town of North Reading Strategic Plan 2020 & Beyond



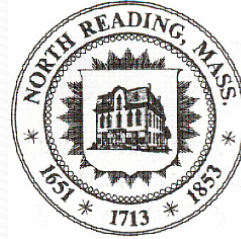
Approved by the Board of Selectmen on November 19, 2018

# Mission Statement



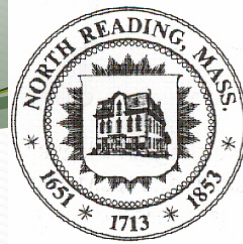
The Board of Selectmen, as ethical stewards of the public trust, shall set policy that is consistent with the Town Charter, respectful of the needs of the Community, *the* laws of the Commonwealth and within the financial means of the Community. It shall seek all opportunities that will advance the overall well-being of the Community and its citizens by providing the best quality of life, education, public safety and public health. It shall provide the necessary leadership through consensus building and communication for the benefit of its constituencies and employees by proving to them their vested interest in the Town.

# Vision Statement



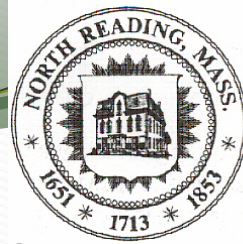
North Reading while maintaining its suburban small town character, will implement a strategic plan that improves the quality of life for all its residents through controlled community development, supportive infrastructure and the implementation of a budgetary plan with, cost savings, increased efficiencies, and new revenues which support services on an annual basis town wide.

# Progress Assessment



- New High and Middle School (11-12)
- Renovated Senior Center (Complete -12)
- Obtained Additional Funding for New School Project (13)
- Technology Investments
  - Fully Funded the Completion of MUNIS (13)
  - Acquired a Town-Wide Alert System
    - Code Red
  - Town Hall Security Systems
  - Town Hall Server Upgrades
- Revenue Generating Services
  - ALS Services at 90% Staffing Level (13)
- Wastewater Achievements
  - Completed a Study that Proves the Investment in Wastewater in Key Commercial Areas will generate additional Tax Revenues
- New Collective Bargaining Strategy
  - Successfully Negotiated 7 Labor Agreements that Resulted in Long-Term Savings
  - Labor & Mgmt Cooperation On Health Ins.
- Energy Efficiencies Established
  - New/Retro-fitted Lighting
  - Installed Efficient Motors in Various Equipment
- Employee Recognition
  - Annual Lunch
- Completed a Facilities Study on Town Buildings (14)
  - Fire Station/DPW Facility/Town Hall Facility/Senior Center
- Acquiring Healthcare Consultant Achieves Modest and Controllable Premium Increases (13)
- Delinquent Taxes & Collections
- Successfully Executed a Succession Plan
- Identified New Water Resource/Options (11-15)
  - In Process Dialogue with MWRA, Reading and Andover
- Established an Economic Development Committee Jointly with CPC
- Committed to MWRA as our New Water Resource (16)

# Progress Assessment

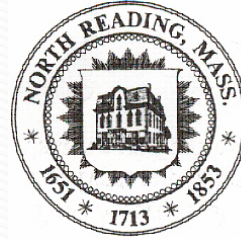


- Secured Funding for MWRA Project and Submitted Environmental Impact Permits
- Storm Water
  - Secured Funding for Mapping and Completed Mapping (16)
- Identified and funded a Profile for Funding OPEB
- Establish stand-alone Human Resources office w/Director
- Completed and Submitted a DEIR for Water and Wastewater
- Funded Implementation RMLD Phase-1 Installing LED Street Lights throughout the Town Streets and Town Owned Properties
- Acquired Mill Street Property for Future Pump Station
- Received the Funding on Two (2) Community Compact Projects
  - Regional Transportation
  - Concord Street Sewerage Study
- Acquired Two (2) Parcels on Lowell Road from DCAMM (former JT Berry)
  - Purchase and sales agreement signed with Pulte Homes in March, 2017
- Established partially self-funded health insurance model for FY 2018
- Secure Funding and Implementation for MWRA Water Resource Project (18-19)

# Objectives

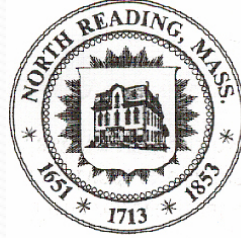
- ❖ ~~Secure Funding for Evaluation of Andover Potable Water Solution~~
- ❖ Storm Water (11 – on going)
  - Identify Cost & Revenue Sources to Fund this Program
- ❖ Revenue Plan that Supports Services Without an Override
  - Funding Capital Plan
  - Economic Development
  - Integrate Wastewater in Key Commercial areas to Increase Values
  - Fund OPEB as per Current Policy
- ❖ Refine Collective Bargaining Strategy (19-21)
- Maintain Management/Labor Relations (13-on)
- Wastewater Plan Implementation (11-25)
  - Develop a Finance Plan (19)
  - Complete FEIR (19)
- Technology Solutions, Expansion & Implementation (11-ongoing)
  - Permitting and Record Retention and Access(19-21)
  - Enhance Security, Implement Best Practices(17-19)
  - Employee Time Tracking Solutions (19-20)
- Shared Municipal/School Services (12-ongoing)
  - Human Resources, Purchasing Agent, Facility Maintenance and Technology
  - Develop Plan to Tie-In Municipal Bldg into School Waste Water Facility (Library, Peabody Court, Public Safety, etc)
- Maintain and Increase Sidewalks (ongoing)
- Develop **Capital** Plan for Use of Berry Sale Proceeds (19-ongoing)
- Determine Vision for Town's Future Identity
- Identify Opportunities to Team with Surrounding Towns on Sharing Resources (13- on-going)
  - ~~Animal Control, Veteran Services, (18-19)~~
- Greater Energy Conservation (13 – On going)
  - Wind, Solar, Vehicles (on-going)
  - Work with RMLD to Install LED Street Lights (17-19)
  - ESCO (19-20)
- Improve Town Buildings
  - Develop Short/Long Term Plan for Town Buildings (17-21)
    - Town Hall and Fire Station (18-19)
  - Update Second Floor of Third Meeting House (TBD)
  - Senior Center/Community Center (TBD)
- Affordable Housing (Plan Development Ongoing)
- Senior Housing/Assistance Living
  - Need to Identify Town Owned Parcel(s) (18-19)
  - Identify Funding Sources as Seed \$\$\$ or
  - Seek out a ~~Non-Profit~~ Organization to develop senior living
- Transportation Enhancements (18-21)
- Leverage the Use of Available Town-owned Land (13 – Ongoing)
- Identify options to gain access to Riverwood Property
- Explore the Viability of Rail Trail (19-20)
- **Explore Options for Early Voting in Town Elections (20)**
- **Pursue Public Relations / Communications Personnel**
- **Pursue Grant Writing Personnel**
- **Evaluate Alternative Delivery of Municipal Services**

# Community Core Values



- Quality Public Education
  - Public Safety
  - Promotion of Local Commerce
  - Preservation and Improvement of Environment
  - Reputation of Openness and Trust
  - Open Space and Recreation
- Preservation of Town Character
  - Involvement in Community
  - Diversity of Ideas and Respect for Others
  - Health & Welfare for All
  - Sense of Community Compassion

# SWOTT Exercise

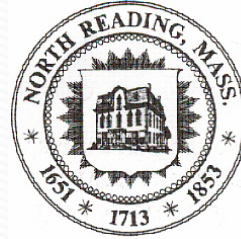


- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats
- Trends



# Strengths

- Location (proximity to major highways)
- Excellent School System
- Open Space
- Effective First Responders
- Effective Legislative Delegation
- Productive Town Department Operations
- Productive Operations by Town Employees
- Favorable Bond Rating
- Open Town Meeting (*Trending toward a weakness due to lack of Participation*)
- Community Involvement/Volunteerism/Activism/Generosity
- Continued Stability of Workforce/Ability to Attract Candidates
- Proactive Financial Planning Team
- Active Community Impact Team and Outreach
- Active Economic Development Committee
- Excellent Youth Opportunities
- **Long-term stable quality water supply**



# Weaknesses

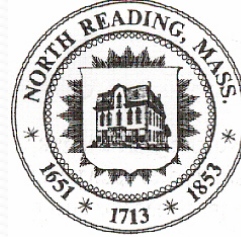
## Weaknesses tied to an Objective

- Small Commercial Tax Base
- Lack of Sewers
- Lack of Public Transportation (trending favorably)
- Deteriorating Public Facilities and Infrastructure
- Increased Costs due to Deferred Maintenance
- Unfunded Federal/State mandates
- Structural Revenue Shortage
- High Cost of Employee Benefits
  - Health Insurances Premium, End of Career Benefits, Pension Costs
- ~~Lack of Adequate Water Supply~~
- Inconsistent aesthetics of commercial real estate on Rte. 28.
- Website Not Updated by Boards & Committees
- Lack of Affordable/Senior/**Assisted** Housing
- **Lack of Sidewalks and Sidewalk Conditions**
- **Fragmented Social Media Presence**

## Weaknesses without a dedicated Objective

- ~~Civil Service in Public Safety Promotions~~
- Lack of Contested Races for Public Office
- Low voter turnout, and percent of eligible voting residents to meetings, and town meeting.
- Lack of Employee Recognition
- ~~Negative Atmosphere in Resolving Difference~~
- Underutilized Public Access Channel
- Negative Public Perception of Customer Service at Town Hall

# Opportunities

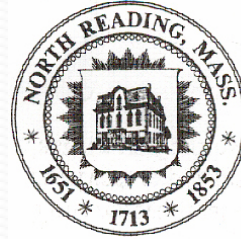


- Wastewater Initiatives
- Berry Center Commercial Development
- Planning for **Capital Expenditure of** Berry Sale Proceeds
- Increase Commercial Tax Base
- ~~Energy Committee Initiatives~~
- Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Improve Employee Relations
- Improve Communications with Residents and Industry
- Combine Local Public Safety Dispatch
- Consolidations (General Gov. – Schools)
- ~~MWRA Long-Term Water Connection~~
- Tie-in Town Buildings & Peabody Court Wastewater into School Wastewater Plant
- Favorable Legislation
- Employee Incentive Program
- Wastewater Revenues by Commercial Development
- Expand Services and Facilities for Seniors
- Increase Collaboration Between Towns
  - Regionalization
  - Joint Purchasing
- Improve Customer Satisfaction and Public Perception
- Employee Development
- ~~MVRTA Transportation Opportunities~~
- Use of Town-Owned Land
- Develop a new Identity for a NR Downtown
- **Seek Opportunities in State Bond Bills**
- **Expanded Grant Writing**
- **Evaluate Regional Water Resource Needs**

# Threats

- Affordable Healthcare Act
- Reduction in State Aid
- Unfavorable Litigation
- Rising Energy Costs
- DEP/EPA Enforcement Orders
- Increased State & Federal Regulations
- Increase in Construction Costs
- Possible New Vocational School Project, Town would Pay a %
- Severe Winters/Storms/**Climate Change**
- Loss of Cell Tower Revenues
- ~~Northeast Direct Gas Pipeline~~
- ~~Adverse Economic Climate~~
- Inability/Unwillingness to Serve on Boards/Committees
- ~~Lack of Support of Local Initiatives~~
- Increased Drug-related and Domestic Crime
- Labor Costs
- Housing Affordability for Seniors
- Special Education Costs
- Infrastructure Failure (**bridges**)
- Reduction of Federal Aid
- Cost of Operating and Maintaining New High/Middle School
- ~~Maintaining New School Project Building Schedule/Cost~~
- Changes in Cable Technology over to Fiber Optics – Causes Decrease Rev.
- Opioids Addiction
- Security: facilities / cyber / staff

# Trends



- Increased Cost of Goods and Services
- Eroding National Public Trust & Lack of Understanding
- Continuing Over-Regulation and Unfunded Mandates
- Uncertain Energy Costs
- Increased Healthcare Premiums
- Willingness to Foster Inter-municipal Collaboration
- Trending toward more Positive in Flexibility by State Agencies
- Increase in Lawsuits Against Town
- Multiple Initiatives Underway Simultaneously
- **Increasing Labor Costs**
- **Limited Availability of Qualified Personnel for Open Positions**