

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING
TRAFFIC & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

JUNE 11, 2025

The Borough of West Reading Traffic & Infrastructure Committee met on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Chairman Christopher Lincoln; Council Member Patrick Kaag; Chief of Police Richard Tornielli; Mayor Samantha Kaag; Public Works Director Kerry Grassley; Borough Manager Randall Miller (via telephone); and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira.

Visitors:

Vladimir

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lincoln at 6:00 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the Traffic and Infrastructure Committee minutes of May 14, 2025. **Moved** by Chief Tornielli and seconded by Mr. Grassley. **Motion carried 6-0.**

New Business

Sidewalk Café Safety – Chief Tornielli shared concerns expressed by a business owner along South Fifth Avenue that requested a safety barrier between the sidewalk café seating area and vehicular traffic. It was noted that the sidewalk café seating areas along Penn Avenue at least have the barrier of a parked vehicle. Options such as setbacks and bollards were discussed. Regulations established for sidewalk café seating areas by the Department of Human Services (DHS), following the pandemic, will be reviewed by Chief Tornielli. Mr. Lincoln indicated that PennDOT would not allow obstacles to be placed within the right-of-way and would review their regulations. Written comments from the Code Department Manager indicated that current regulations do not provide him with the ability to require temporary barriers, and focus' primarily on protecting pedestrians from the sidewalk café area. Updates to this chapter may be warranted to take effect in permits issued next year. There was no desire to prohibit sidewalk cafes, only to maintain safety for pedestrians and diners alike.

Mr. Vladimir joined the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

Agenda Amendment – Motion to amend the agenda to include a discussion on a Multi-Modal grant application. **Moved** by Mayor Kaag and seconded by Chief Tornielli. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Safety upgrades to a pedestrian crossing at the Fifth Avenue and Pine Street intersection were discussed. A grant application to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) requests funding of the installation of a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB), streetlight, and three ADA ramps with a total estimated project cost of \$188,639. The Borough Engineer requested consideration to approve a grant match of 30% totaling \$56,591. Though DCED does not require municipalities to provide match funding, a match was recommended to be more competitive. It was noted that the hospital would be approached to contribute to this project that would benefit hospital staff, any contribution would help to offset the matching funds. Should this project be successful, a grant application could be submitted next year for the Third and Penn Avenue intersection.

Motion to recommend Borough Council approve 30% grant matching funds totaling \$56,591 to install a RRFB at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and Pine Street. **Moved** by Mr. Kaag and seconded by Mr. Grassley. **Motion carried 6-0.**

Council Member Denise Drobnick shared requests via email from residents that were not able to attend this meeting to address concerns. Mayor Kaag spoke of diverted traffic issues along the 300 block of Reading Avenue during the Armed Forces Day Parade and a suggestion to prohibit parking on one side to expedite the flow of traffic. This will be reviewed by the Police Department. The second item of note was from a resident in the 300 Block of South Third Avenue where street sweeping and permit parking restrictions create limited parking for these residents. It was noted that the Parking Enforcement Officer follows the street sweeper during the 0800 to noon timeframe and that permit parking is not enforced at that time.

Old Business

Wayne Avenue and Lakeview Drive Intersection – Mr. Grassley reported that the Zelkova trees in this vicinity will be trimmed in a few weeks. Chief Tornielli shared that two crashes were reported during 2024 in this intersection caused by vehicles entering from the Wyomissing side of the intersection. Line-of-sight issues are primarily from the Wyomissing side that is caused by hedges, trees, and parked vehicles. Information will be shared with the Borough of Wyomissing for their feedback. Removal of the parking space was recommended; a draft language amendment will be provided next month.

Towing Contract – Chief Tornielli reported that progress is being made in gathering contract information, there will be more to come soon.

Penn Avenue Paid Parking – The aspect of creating paid parking along Penn Avenue was shared with Borough Council last month that resulted in a recommendation to pursue agreements with various privately owned parking lots around the borough to offer a monthly employee or tenant parking program until a parking study can be budgeted and performed. Mr. Kaag shared a request from a long-time borough business that asked us to wait roughly a year until implementing a paid parking program noting that business is finally returning to normal following the pandemic and UGI Utilities, Inc. construction along the avenue. Mayor Kaag felt that paid parking along the avenue would be less alluring to visitors. A survey of all businesses will be conducted by Chief Tornielli to make an educated decision on how best to move forward. Mr. Grassley will communicate with various privately owned parking lots to determine their interest in renting parking spaces.

Mr. Miller signed out from the meeting at 6:39 p.m.

Borough Council recommended a temporary paid parking program be implemented on the 433 Penn Avenue lot to avoid issues with a monthly paid parking program and civic space use(s). Improvements to this lot such as lighting improvements, parking stall striping, and the creation of a separate zone through the ParkMobile App were reviewed. Mr. Lincoln recommended adding a one-way sign to exit onto Court Street towards Tulpehocken Avenue. Progress will be reviewed next month to possibly recommend that Borough Council open the lot for public use.

Handicapped Parking Spaces in the Business District – Mr. Lincoln noted that adoption of a handicapped parking space within the 700 block of Penn Avenue will come before Borough Council next week. The policy on business requested handicapped parking spaces allows the designation of one space per block in the Business District. Following adoption of a space within the 700 block, and the creation of two handicapped spaces within the 433 Penn Avenue parking lot, there will be a minimum of one space per block along Penn Avenue. Chief Tornielli will include a survey question to business owners as to the need for additional handicapped parking space designations within the business district.

Public Comment

Mayor Kaag shared a comment from a resident on Obold Street who received a parking ticket for parking in front of his garage. It was recommended to revise the ordinance to include the name Raisin Alley for enforcement purposes in the future.

Mr. Vladimir stated that he enjoyed listening to the discussions tonight and reported that the shopping center lot is not heavily used on weekdays. He shared his experience as a previous business owner in the city of Philadelphia where paid parking chased customers away that resulted in the closing of businesses.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 p.m. by Chief Torielli and seconded by Mr. Kaag.

Motion carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira
Borough Secretary