



Town of Reading
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867

January 9, 2025

Conservation Administrator
Conservation Commission
16 Lowell St
Reading, MA 01867

Dear Chuck Tirone and Conservation Commission,

I am respectfully requesting a working session on January 22nd with the Conservation Commission and our consultants to review the current design plan for the Reading Center for Active Living and the pickleball courts at Symonds Way. Below are brief overviews of the project.

Site Description

The site is located off Symonds Way, south of the Burbank Ice Arena. The total parcel is 15.2 acres of land with much of the site containing a Bordering Vegetated Wetland (BVW). The Bordering Vegetated Wetland on the site continues to the south onto abutting land owned by the Town of Reading's Conservation Commission, and in the easterly direction onto abutting private land. The wetland delineation area was flagged by Weston and Sampson on March 23, 2022 and field located on March 31, 2022. According to MassMapper, there are no Priority and Estimated Habitat or Certified or Potential Vernal Pools on the property. Based on information obtained from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Map, the property does not lie within a Zone A Special Flood Hazard Area. The work proposed for this project is located more than 35 feet away from the BVW south of the site. Most of the BVW will be retained in a natural condition except for the addition of an ADA boardwalk proposed as mitigation and add alternate for this project.

Reading Center of Active Living Overview:

The feasibility study for the Reading Center for Active Living (RECAL) kicked off in January of 2024 with our consultant, BH+A and has been a defined community need since 2015. The project was then accepted by our Permanent Building Committee. The Town of Reading secured the Owner's Project Manager in November, Turner, Townsend & Heery as was required to move into the schematic design phase. In addition, the Select Board voted to select this site in December upon the recommendation of the Permanent Building Committee.

The hope is that the project will be presented at the Spring Town Meeting to raise and appropriate funds. Pending approval at the Town Meeting and the Town-wide ballot question vote, we would then come to the Conservation Commission with a full permit request.

Pickleball Overview:

The pickleball courts are a proposed separate project from the RECAL center but are also on the same timeline. Pickleball has been a defined need in our community for the past several years. The Select Board voted on the outlined parcel of land for pickleball courts at Symonds Way this past November then ARPA funds were voted to be reallocated by the Select Board for the design. A contract was secured for the design at the end of December and again, the hope is that this project will be presented at the Town Meeting for approval.

I have attached the following documents in relation to the RECAL and pickleball projects to give insight in the project as well as all site specific information that will be relevant to the conversation.

- Power point slides the most recent Public forum given by TTH & BH+A December 2024
- Power point slides from the most recent design/layout of the Pickleball Courts
- Current Geotechnical Report from Wilcox & Barton
- Current Contamination Report from Wilcox & Barton
- Prior Survey of the Land by Weston & Sampson

In addition, please see the below link to the RECAL website which provides much of information on the project that has been worked on diligently by several committees, boards and staff for many years.

We have had meetings with the Conservation Administrator and expert, Chuck Tirone, along the way but would very much appreciate this meeting with the commission to gain additional comments, questions and concerns as we are about a month into the schematic design phase.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Genevieve Wood, Community Services Director

[Welcome to the Online Home of the reading center for active living \(recal\) | Reading, MA](#)