



DONNA REED
CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

CITY OF READING, PENNSYLVANIA

CITY COUNCIL OFFICE
ROOM 2-24
815 WASHINGTON STREET
READING, PA 19601-3690
(610) 655-6205

Statement from Council President Donna Reed:

I am always encouraged to see meetings like this come to fruition and I thank Representative Guzman for his organizing this with the inclusion of PennDOT, the South Central Transit Authority, and the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority. I'm also grateful that our state Transportation Secretary Michael Carroll is to be in attendance.

As a long-time councilor and member of the Reading Area Transportation Study group, I know well the challenges of improving our transportation infrastructure. The collaboration of federal, state, and local funding mechanisms is crucial to driving this forward. And chief among improved transport avenues is the re-establishment of passenger rail between Reading and Philadelphia.

I remember being at the Franklin Street Station when that last passenger train pulled away in the summer of 1981 and the spectators, for the most part, shaking their heads in disappointment and disbelief.

Just last month, I had the opportunity to spend time in Reading, UK. Councilor Chris Miller and I witnessed an incredible rail transport system and an expansive new station. From Reading, one could board a train and be in Paddington Station, Central London, in about 22 minutes – the same distance as our Reading is from Philadelphia. And the huge station boasts trains that travel from Reading to Wales to Scotland directly or with easy connections. There is also an incredibly massive and efficient bus system within the greater Reading/Berkshire region as well as buses that run directly and frequently from Heathrow Airport to Reading center city.

All around the rail station area there is vibrant economic development – from the new Oracle retail complex on the Kennett River to mid-rise apartment complexes in the same vicinity that are fully leased before construction is completed.

Like Reading, UK, we have an historic downtown, our Schuylkill River and its frontage, a railroad history, and space for both new construction and renovated structures for market-rate and affordable housing near the existing station.

I very much support the return of passenger rail and hope my Council colleagues share that support.

I'm sorry to miss this morning's meeting. I'm watching an 18-month-old District 1 resident – my granddaughter-- who, I'm sure, would love to contribute some unique sound bites to this gathering. I will take the liberty of voicing her support for a time a few years down the road when she and her Gremom Reed can board the train for a girls' day out in Philly.

Thanks for allowing me to enter this statement into this important meeting.

