



Reading, PA



Readung, Pennsylvania, is located along both sides of the Schuylkill River in the southeastern area of the state and is the county seat of Berks County. Native American settlements were located on land now occupied by Reading prior to European settlement of the area in the 1730s. In 1743, William Penn's sons Richard and Thomas proposed a plan for the Towne of Reading. They named the town after Reading in Berkshire, England, the ancestral "shire" of the Penn family. Officially laid out in 1748, Reading's original plan featured 520 lots and 204 outlots in a grid pattern as well as 2 principal streets.

Several museums are located in Reading. Displays of art, science, and civilization can be found at the Reading Public Museum, which also features a planetarium and a 25-acre arboretum. An original Conestoga Wagon and the 1902 Duryea, a car that was built in Reading, are displayed at the Berks History Center Museum, which also presents exhibits of toys, crafts, and fine arts from among the collection's 32,000 artifacts. The Central Pennsylvania African American Museum maintains a collection of objects, artifacts, art, papers, books, and photographs that document and describe the history and culture of African Americans in the new World, with an emphasis on Reading, Berks County, and surrounding counties. The Mid-Atlantic Air Museum displays vintage aircraft, including military planes, with attention to the Mid-Atlantic region's unique contribution to flight. The Reading Area Firefighters Museum is committed to the preservation of the 1876 Liberty Fire Co. No 5 building and firefighting memorabilia, antique furnishings, and the John Wanamaker-designed "best room."

With 87 steps to the top, The Pagoda is an historical landmark located atop Mt. Penn that was completed in 1908. Standing 7 stories tall, The Pagoda contains a bell that was cast in Japan in 1739.

The Daniel Boone Homestead, the birthplace of American frontiersman Daniel Boone, is a museum and historic house in nearby Birdsboro. Exhibits at the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum in Hamburg include Reading Company documents, blueprints, rolling stock, equipment, and locomotives.

Reading offers many opportunities to enjoy performing arts. The Santander Arena and Performing Arts Center host sporting events, concerts, and other forms of entertainment. Reading Theater Project, Genesis Theatre, Reading Civic Theatre, and Reading Community Players perform new shows, classics, children's theater, and musical theater. Reading Symphony Orchestra, Reading Philharmonic Orchestra, and Reading Pops Orchestra perform at various venues in Reading and the surrounding communities.

Located on the campus of Reading Area Community College, Miller Center for the Arts hosts art shows, dance performances, Second Sunday recitals, community events, college events, and Berks Opera Company performances. The Center for the Arts at Albright College is another venue for creative performances.

The Berks Jazz Fest, held annually in April, offers 10 days of musical events that span the entire spectrum of jazz, blues, and R&B.

Neighborhoods

Residential options in Reading's downtown include row houses and apartment buildings, many of which are designated for the elderly and disabled.

Reading has several historic districts. Almost entirely residential in character, the Centre Park Historic District is comprised of 2.5- to 3-story structures situated on tree-lined streets. Built between 1895 and 1915, housing in the District includes large mansions, semi-detached homes, and row homes in architectural styles that include Queen Anne, Late Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Georgian Revival, Victorian Romanesque, and Late Federal. Spanning the 1880 to 1925 period, the Queen Anne Historic District is an intact concentration of semi-detached and row houses and a small number of single houses. Approximately half of the buildings were constructed in the Queen Anne style and were built as row houses, with the remainder built as twin homes. The Reading German style, which comprises 41% of the district, dates from the 1880s to the 1910s. Typically built as a two-family or row house, these brick houses are 2.5 stories tall and feature a gable or mansard roof.

Approximately 60% of the homes in Hampden Heights, a neighborhood located near Albright College, are detached, single-family, brick homes from the 1940s, and about 30% are semi-detached, red-brick twins from the 1920s.

Castlewood is a small residential development of large detached, single-family homes in the city's southeast corner. The homes were built primarily in two phases, in 1992 and in 2003, and are set on heavily wooded large lots with narrow, winding streets.

Parks and Recreation

Reading has 28 parks with amenities that include 2 recreation centers; an outdoor pool; tennis, volleyball, and basketball courts; soccer, baseball, and softball fields; and playgrounds.

With more than 48 acres, City Park is the largest municipal park. City Park features the Volunteer Firemen's Memorial Bandshell that is home to a summer concert series, basketball courts, a playground, and walking paths.

Two county parks are also located around Reading. At 643 acres, Antietam Lake Park offers hundreds of acres of meandering streams, mature forest, and wetland areas. Angora Fruit Farm is located in the center of Antietam Lake Park and contains spring-fed ponds, access to Antietam Creek, naturalized meadows, and demonstration gardens. With 15 acres, Stonecliffe Recreation Area provides opportunities for family-oriented recreation and athletics. Facilities include an Action Park for inline skaters, skateboarders, BMX bikers, and scooters. Other amenities consist of 2 volleyball courts, a basketball court, shuffleboard courts, a combination football/soccer field, a playground, and a fitness station for both able-bodied and physically challenged persons. The park also had a fishing dock.

The Reading Fightin Phils are a professional minor league baseball team. Mt. Penn is the site of the Duryea Hillclimb (sports car race) and Duryea Downhill (mountain bike race).

Education

The Reading School District educates approximately 17,800 students in 13 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, an intermediate high school, and a senior high school. The district also shares a career and technology center with a neighboring district.

Higher education is available at Penn State Berks, a campus of Pennsylvania State University, which offers 20 bachelor's and 4 associate's degree programs, as well as the opportunity to complete the first 2 years of the 160 degree programs offered at the main campus. Albright College is a private liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Alvernia University is a private Franciscan Roman Catholic university with a liberal arts curriculum oriented towards traditional college-aged undergraduate students, adult learners, and graduate students.

Reading Area Community College offers associate's degree, certificate, and diploma programs; career-focused training; transitional coursework; skills training for business and industry; personal enrichment programs; and public service activities.

Health Care

Reading is served by the following health care facilities:

- Reading Hospital: 714 licensed beds
- Penn State Health St. Joseph's Medical Center: 204 licensed beds
- Healthsouth Reading Rehab Hospital: 60 licensed rehab beds
- Surgical Institute of Reading: 15 licensed beds

City Stats

2016

City Population	88,207
Metropolitan Statistical Area Population	414,812
Per Capita Personal Income, Reading, PA MSA	\$45,763