



# Issues Brief

*City of Yakima e-Newsletter*

## ▼ New Year Will Bring a New Yakima Transit Route 1

In late November, the Yakima City Council took action to reduce future Yakima Transit operating costs by an estimated \$300,000 a year by eliminating the current Route 8 and modifying Route 1 while still preserving bus service to most of the West Valley area.

The new Yakima Transit Route 1 will begin operating on Monday, December 30<sup>th</sup> and, simultaneously, what is now Yakima Transit Route 8 will be discontinued. The new Route 1, is commonly referred to as the Summitview/Lincoln route, will still provide service all the way west to 96<sup>th</sup> Avenue just as it does now. However, the new Route 1, which will be longer than it is today, will also absorb some stops that are now part of Route 8.



***A new Yakima Transit Route 1 will begin on December 30<sup>th</sup> and the existing Route 8 will be discontinued.***

When the changes go into effect on December 30<sup>th</sup>, Route 1 riders will be able to stop or board buses at the West Valley Walmart Supercenter at 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Nob Hill Boulevard as well as the Meadowbrook Shopping Center at 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Nob Hill. As it does today, the new Route 1 will continue to make stops at the Orchards Shopping Center at 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Tieton Drive, the West Valley Library on 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue just east of the Orchards Shopping Center, the Harman Senior Center on 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of Summitview Avenue, and the Chalet Place Mall at 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Summitview.

Travel times to destinations along the new Route 1 are likely to increase from what they are today because the revised route will be longer than it is now. The elimination of the current Route 8 will also result in the discontinuation of existing Yakima Transit service along Lincoln Avenue and Englewood Avenue west of 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

“It will undoubtedly take a little time for riders to adjust to the changes that will take effect on December 30<sup>th</sup>,” said Yakima Transit Manager Ken Mehin. “But we are making every effort to get the word out in order to make the transition to the new Route 1 as smooth as possible. We have designed the new Route 1 so that the West Valley area continues to be provided with excellent bus service while still meeting the Council’s goal of reducing overall operating costs,” said Mehin. “We’re confident that the changes that are coming will be good for our riders as well as for Yakima Transit.”

Earlier this year the City Council also raised fares, cut evening bus route hours, and eliminated holiday service in order to lower Yakima Transit’s future operating costs. The savings that are projected to occur from having taking those steps will be combined with other resources to help replace some of Yakima Transit’s aging fleet. Fully one-third of the 27 buses currently operated by Yakima Transit have reached or exceeded their expected lifespan of 14 years and will need to be replaced in the near future. It costs about \$400,000 for a new, full-size transit bus.

For more information about Yakima Transit routes and services, click on the following link - <http://www.yakimatransit.org/>

## **Help Keep Yakima Safe When Winter Weather Hits**

Now that the Yakima Valley has had its first real taste of icy winter weather, it's a good time to remember that it takes everyone pitching in to keep our area as safe as possible when snow or freezing rain make roads and sidewalks slick.



***Home owners and business owners need to keep sidewalks near their property clear of snow and ice.***

City crews, along with private contractors hired by the City, follow a formal snow removal plan that's focused on keeping streets clear, especially near schools, hospitals, major intersections, and on hills.

But under a City ordinance passed several years ago, home owners and business owners are responsible for making sure sidewalks near their property are free of snow and ice. Shoveling snow before ice has a chance to form makes the job a lot easier. But if ice does build up on a sidewalk, you shouldn't use rock salt to get rid of it.

"The chemicals in rock salt (sodium chloride) tend to make concrete chip and crack," said Yakima Streets and Traffic Operations Manager Joe Rosenlund. "Calcium or magnesium chloride-based 'hot melts' are a much better option. Hot melts work like rock salt, but are effective over a wider range of temperatures and won't damage sidewalks," said Rosenlund.

Another common problem arises this time of year when some people shovel or blow snow from their sidewalks onto City streets. Doing so is not only unsafe, it's illegal.

"Moving snow from sidewalks out into streets creates a serious hazard for drivers," said Rosenlund. "It's not just a bad idea, it's against the law. Instead of putting snow in the street and hoping a plow will come by, it's a lot better to pile snow from sidewalks in your yard or somewhere else," said Rosenlund. "Anywhere's better than piling it in the road."



***Private contractors, along with City of Yakima crews, help keep streets clear during heavy snow falls.***

Help is available for senior citizens, disabled people, or others who need assistance to remove snow from sidewalks near their property by calling the City's Office of Neighborhood Development Services at 575-6101.

**Help Wanted**

### Be Part of the Solution!

*Help reduce panhandling. Instead of giving money directly to panhandlers, donate to local agencies and organizations that provide services to people who are low-income or homeless.*

**Yakima is our community – Be Part of the Solution!**

## Take Steps To Prevent Winter Home Fires

Every winter, the number of home fires increases compared to the rest of the year not only in the Yakima area but across the rest of the United States as well. The Yakima Fire Department, the U.S. Fire Administration (“USFA”), and the National Fire Protection Agency (“NFPA”) reach out to homeowners to share a few simple tips that can significantly reduce the number of home fires during the coldest part of the year.

“Winter fires are mostly preventable,” said Yakima Fire Department Captain Tom Schneider. “A simple common sense approach can go a long way to helping avoid tragedies so that everyone can have a safe winter season.”

Each year, the NFPA and the USFA jointly sponsor the *Put a Freeze on Winter Fires* campaign to help raise public awareness about how to avoid home fires this time of year.

Here are a few simple tips that you can follow in order to help prevent winter home fires:

- **Choose holiday decorations that are flame retardant or flame resistant**
- **Use indoor Christmas lights inside and outdoor Christmas lights outside**
- **Space heaters need space – Keep anything flammable at least 3 feet away from space heaters**
- **Make sure your live Christmas tree always has enough water**
- **Stay in the kitchen when you’re cooking or turn off the stove if you have to leave**
- **Check electrical cords to make sure they are not cracked or damaged – If the cords are cracked or damaged, Throw Them Away!**
- **Don’t ever use your stove or oven to heat your house**
- **Keep lit candles away from decorations or other thing that can burn – Blow out lit candles when you leave the room**



*Holiday decorations should be a source of joy, not an ignition source for fires.*



*Winter home fires, many of which could be prevented, result in more than 900 deaths each year and cause almost \$2 billion in damage.*

According to NFPA statistics, space heaters account for about one-third of all winter home fires and about 80% of deaths caused by winter home fires. The NFPA says that cooking is the leading cause of residential building fires during the coldest part of the year, accounting for 36% of winter fires.

USFA data shows that each winter an estimated 108,400 residential building fires occur in the U.S., resulting in 945 deaths, 3,825 injuries, and approximately \$1.7 billion in property loss.

To learn more about how to prevent winter fires in your home, visit the USFA website at [www.usfa.fema.gov/winter](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/winter) and the NFPA website at [www.nfpa.org/winter](http://www.nfpa.org/winter).