



City of Yakima

# **News Release**

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**Subject: Downtown Plaza Public Meeting**

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## **Finished Downtown Central Plaza Design to be Unveiled to Community**

After having gathered ideas and input at multiple public meetings, through a community-wide survey, and during several City Council sessions, the top notch design team that has been working on concepts for a potential Downtown Yakima Central Plaza will reveal its finished, final design on **Monday, October 6<sup>th</sup>** at the Seasons Performance Hall.

The design team, led by Seattle-based landscape architecture firm Gustafson Guthrie Nichol, will share the completed plaza plan during a **public meeting** that will begin at **6:30 pm** on **October 6<sup>th</sup>** at the Seasons. Doors will be opened for the event at 6:00 pm.

In early September, the City Council chose a parking lot between 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street north of Chestnut Avenue as the preferred site for a potential plaza. Renowned landscape architect Kathryn Gustafson, who is originally from Yakima, spearheaded the design team, which also created a plaza plan for the parking lot south of S Sgt Pendleton Way and east of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Over the past month Gustafson and her team have refined the preferred design, which incorporates water features, green space, flexible-use spaces, a large shade structure, and other elements that the community had identified as important in a plaza concept.

Some people had voiced concern over the potential loss of parking if a plaza were built. However, by adjusting parking spaces near the potential plaza site, there would be essentially no net loss of parking in the immediate area. The Council recently approved converting parallel parking spaces to angled parking spaces around the proposed plaza site to increase the availability of parking spaces that will result in available parking spaces adjacent to or within one block of the proposed plaza site being reduced from the current 417 to 416. Traffic lanes on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, and Chestnut Avenue will be narrowed as a result of the parking space changes, but research indicates that traffic on those streets is light enough to accommodate lane narrowing.

The cost of the proposed plaza is estimated to be in the range of \$9.7 million to \$11.1 million.

"We are confident that a public-private partnership can be formed to help finance the project," said Yakima Economic Development Manager Sean Hawkins. "These are exciting times for the future of Downtown Yakima," added Hawkins.

The design team will also present the finished plaza plan to the City Council during the Council's business meeting on Tuesday, October 7<sup>th</sup> at City Hall. The meeting will be aired live on Y-PAC, Charter Cable channel 194, and replays of that meeting, along with Monday's public presentation at the Seasons, will be shown on Y-PAC and available on the City of Yakima's website - [www.yakimawa.gov](http://www.yakimawa.gov)

Additional information on the downtown plaza is also available by clicking on a "Points of Interest" feature on the City of Yakima website front page.