



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Police Bike Patrols

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Summer Bike Patrols Returning to Downtown Yakima

After a successful test run last fall that was positively received by both business owners and community members, Yakima Police Department ("YPD") Bike Patrol officers return to the streets of Downtown Yakima on Monday, June 17th. The bike patrols will continue for about the next three months.

Two YPD Bike Patrol officers at a time will cruise the downtown area seven days a week from late morning until mid evening. A total of four officers, all who volunteered for the duty, have been assigned to the YPD Bike Patrol Unit.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the YPD operated a bike patrol unit which specifically focused on the downtown area. The unit was particularly effective in stemming criminal activity related to drugs that was going on in Downtown Yakima and with issues that resulted from people who were "Cruising the Ave" in cars.

However, changing law enforcement priorities and tight budgets led to the original incarnation of the YPD Bike Patrol Unit eventually being dismantled.

But results from the 2012 Yakima Citizen Survey paved the way for the return of police bike patrols downtown. Many people who responded to the survey said they didn't feel as safe as they would like to in Downtown Yakima, particularly after dark. Yakima City Council members had also expressed concern that a perception of the downtown area not being safe was hurting business development as well as attendance at nighttime special events in the commercial core of the city.

So, in September of last year, the YPD revived its Bike Patrol Unit for a few "First Friday" evenings. Based on encouraging feedback from the community, it was decided to bring back bike patrols full time this year from early summer to early fall.

"Simply having bicycle officers patrolling the downtown area establishes a more visible police presence, and that in itself is intended to create a greater sense of safety," said YPD Captain Jeff Schneider. "Police bike patrols have proven to be effective crime deterrents in many other cities. Bike patrols worked here in Yakima before and we're confident they'll be successful again," said Schneider.

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