



City of Yakima

# News Release

**Subject: Downtown Yakima Central Plaza Questionnaire**

**Contact: Economic Development Manager Sean Hawkins – 575-6274**

**Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler – 901-1142**

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## **Community Input from Questionnaire Will Help Guide Downtown Plaza Design**

Input received from a questionnaire filled out by community members will play a key role in deciding what the design concepts for a proposed Downtown Yakima Central Plaza will look like. The City of Yakima is encouraging as many people as possible to fill out the questionnaire so the plaza design team has a broad range of feedback to work with and to ensure that the input gathered represents a true cross section of the community.

The two-page questionnaire can be filled out electronically on the City's website. The link to the Spanish version of the questionnaire is <http://www.yakimawa.gov/services/downtown/plaza-central-cuestionario/>. The English version of the questionnaire can be accessed on the City's website at <http://www.yakimawa.gov/services/downtown/central-plaza-questionnaire/>. The questionnaire can be filled out anytime over the next three weeks. It will close on Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>.

The first page of the questionnaire asks people to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 a variety of elements that might be incorporated into a Downtown Central Yakima Plaza including movable chairs and benches, a weekly farmers market, an open lawn area, a water play feature, free Wi-Fi, special lighting, food concessions, etc. A 1 rating would indicate "I don't want this," a 5 rating would indicate "I would love this!" The second page is designed to gather input about why people visit Downtown Yakima, how far they might be willing to walk in different weather, how safe they feel downtown, and other similar information that will be taken into consideration by the design team as it puts together concepts for a plaza.

What the design team learns from the responses to the questionnaire will have a big impact on making sure that the concepts that are developed are reflective of what our community wants and needs in a plaza, said City of Yakima Economic Development Director Sean Hawkins. The design process will rely heavily on community input. So, it's very important that people take advantage of the opportunities to participate in creating the plaza concepts, said Hawkins. Filling out the questionnaire on the City's website is an easy way to do that.

The Downtown Yakima Central Plaza design team is headed by Gustafson Guthrie Nichol (GGN), a Seattle-based landscape architecture firm. Kathryn Gustafson is a founding principle of GGN and is originally from Yakima. The team also includes Graham Baba Architects (GBA), an architecture firm from Seattle. Brett Baba, a founding principle of GBA, is also a Yakima native. Magnusson Klemencic Associates, a civil and structural engineering firm headquartered in Seattle, is also part of the plaza design team.

GGN and GBA representatives were in Yakima in mid April to take a look at the two potential sites for a Downtown Yakima Central Plaza. One of the sites is a parking lot adjacent to the Millennium Plaza on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The second site is a parking lot southeast of the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and S Sgt Pendleton Way.

The plaza design team is scheduled to visit Yakima again in May to share some of the feedback that will have been gathered from the questionnaire. Preliminary plans for a plaza could be done by late summer with final designs ready for review in early fall of this year.