



City of Yakima

# **News Release**

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**Subject: Economic Development Strategic Plan Meeting**

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## **Community Invited to Learn More About Economic Development Strategy**

Yakima community members will have a chance to learn more about an economic development strategic plan that is being developed during an open public meeting that will be held at the Yakima Convention Center on Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

Earlier this year, the Yakima City Council approved a contract with TadZo, a Yakima-based economic development and site selection firm, to create a strategic plan that can be followed by not just the City of Yakima, but by various other area organizations involved in economic development.

During the October 7<sup>th</sup> open public meeting, TadZo Principal Allison Larsen will outline the work on the plan that has taken place so far and how the community will be involved throughout the process.

"Allison will be talking about the work she's done so far to evaluate the Yakima area's economic development assets," said City of Yakima Economic Development Manager Sean Hawkins. "She'll be going over what we do have in place that can be marketed to potential businesses and some of what we need to do to be more attractive to potential businesses. Allison will also present an 'economic snapshot' that will illustrate how Yakima stacks up competitively to other similarly-situated communities," said Hawkins.

The concept of an economic development strategic plan was first discussed by the Yakima City Council's Economic Development Committee (Mayor Kathy Coffey, Councilmember Avina Gutiérrez, and Councilmember Holly Cousens) earlier this year. The City Council approved a contract with TadZo in mid-July.

Larsen has already met with employers, workforce training organizations like Perry Technical Institute and Yakima Valley College, and City staff to assess the capabilities that are available locally to attract new investment. Larsen has also toured development sites in the Yakima area. She will share what she has learned during the October 7<sup>th</sup> open public meeting.

"Allison will also be talking about the importance of community involvement in creating the strategic plan," said Hawkins. "This needs to be a plan that is developed by the community and has the support of the community in order for it to be successful."

Later this fall Larsen will facilitate several meetings with local "stakeholders" who will represent a cross section of the community to gather ideas for growing the economy.

The economic development strategic plan is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

Larsen will be available to meet with media following the open public meeting.

