

City of Yakima

Issues Brief

Latest Estimate Puts Yakima Population Just Under 92,000

The most recent estimate from the Washington State Office of Financial Management ("OFM") puts the current population of Yakima at 91,930. That represents an increase of 300 people (.33%) from the 2011 OFM estimate of 91,630 and an increase of 734 residents (.80%) above the 2010 U.S. Census count.

In between each U.S. Census count, which only occurs every 10 years, the OFM produces population estimates annually. The estimates are critical because the allocation of state and federal financial support for local governments is based in large part on the OFM numbers. Population estimates from the OFM also affect business recruitment and economic development because the numbers are used to establish potential market size.

Based on the 2012 OFM estimate, Yakima retained its 2011 ranking as the 9th largest city (by population) in Washington State.

Although all of the top 10 most populated cities in Washington State experienced some growth over the past year, their order in rank did not change from 2011. Seattle (616,500) remains the largest city in the state by population followed by Spokane (210,000), Tacoma (199,600), Vancouver (163,200), Bellevue (124,600), Kent (119,100), Everett (103,300), Renton (93,910), Yakima, and Spokane Valley (90,550).

According to the 2012 OFM estimates, Yakima County also increased its population slightly since last year from 244,700 to 246,000 (.53%).

Yakima remains the largest city or town in the county by far. Sunnyside (16,130) is next on the list followed by Grandview (11,000), Toppenish (8,950), Selah (7,290), Union Gap (6,105), Wapato (5,030), Moxee (3,505), Granger (3,285), Zillah (3,035), Mabton (2,290), Tieton (1,195), Naches (805), and Harrah (650).

Interestingly, 3 of the 5 counties in the state that experienced the highest growth rates in the last year are located in Eastern Washington. Whitman County grew by 2.57%, Franklin County by grew by 2.48%, and Benton County grew by 1.18%. Skamania County (1.12% growth) and Thurston County (1.06% growth) rounded out the top 5.

For more information about this article, contact Community Relations Manager Randy Beehler by phone (901-1142) or by e-mail (rbeehler@ci.yakima.wa.us).

➤ **Metro Parks District Will Be Discussed at July 24th Study Session**

As part of its ongoing effort to explore all available options for providing services to the community, the Yakima City Council will revisit the potential of establishing a metropolitan parks district during a study session on Tuesday, July 24th. The study session will begin at 10:00 am and take place in the Council Chambers at Yakima City Hall.

The Council has discussed the pros and cons of establishing a metropolitan parks district several times in recent years. The Yakima Parks Commission, which is made up of community members appointed by the City Council, heard a presentation about the potential of a metropolitan parks district as recently as last month.

Under Washington State law, a metropolitan parks district can be formed by individual cities or counties, or a combination of them, to provide independent oversight and management of a parks system, public spaces, recreational facilities, etc.

Metropolitan parks districts are similar to other "junior taxing districts" such as sewer districts, irrigation districts, fire districts, or library districts which are formed to provide specific services or perform specific functions. Such districts are responsible for generating revenue (generally through taxes) as well as operations, maintenance, expansion, etc.



Spray toys at Miller Park provide welcome relief on a hot summer day.

A metropolitan parks district actually existed in Yakima from the early 1940s until it was dissolved in 1969 due to financial challenges. When that happened, the Yakima parks system, which had been run by the City before the district was formed, again became the responsibility of the City.

Currently there are about a dozen metropolitan parks districts throughout Washington State including in King County, Tacoma, the North Bend area, Kitsap County, and Pullman.

The Council's July 24th study session concerning the potential for establishing a metropolitan parks district will be aired live and replayed on Y-PAC, Charter Cable channel 22. Replays of the study session will also be able to be viewed on the City's website – www.yakimawa.gov.

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National Night Out Set For August 7th

Throughout the Yakima Valley and across the nation, communities will be throwing a “going away party for crime” during the annual National Night Out on Tuesday, August 7th. In addition to numerous neighborhood block parties, several organizations and businesses will be sponsoring National Night Out events.

National Night Out was started in 1984 and is the brainchild of Matt Peskin, who was the executive director of the National Association of Town Watch (“NATW”) at the time. The NATW is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the development and growth of crime and drug prevention programs nationwide. NATW’s membership now includes now more than 6,500 crime, drug, and violence prevention organizations.

In the early 1980s, the NATW estimated that in a typical community, only 5% to 7% of residents were actively engaged in crime prevention. Peskin was convinced that more people would become involved in fighting crime if given the opportunity. He believed that in order to heighten awareness and strengthen participation in local anti-crime efforts, a high-profile, high-impact type of event was needed on a national scale. Peskin’s idea grew to become National Night Out.

In its first year, about 400 communities participated in National Night Out activities. The 29th annual version of the event this year is expected to include more than 15,000 cities and towns and an estimated 37 million people.

While the traditional ‘lights on’ and front porch vigils remain a part of National Night Out, the variety of events that take place in communities has expanded considerably over the years to include block parties, cookouts, parades, visits from police, festivals, neighborhood walks, safety fairs, contests, rallies and meetings.

“National Night Out is a wonderful opportunity for communities nationwide to promote police-community partnerships, crime prevention, and neighborhood camaraderie,” said Peskin. “While the one night is certainly not an answer to crime, drugs, and violence, National Night Out does represent the kind of spirit, energy and determination that is helping to make many neighborhoods safer places throughout the year. It’s a night to celebrate safety and crime prevention successes and to expand and strengthen programs for the next 364 days,” said Peskin.

To learn more about National Night Out activities in the Yakima Valley, contact any of these local law enforcement agencies:

Grandview Police Dept. – 882-2000
Mabton Police Dept. – 894-5178
Selah Police Dept. – 698-7346
Tieton Police Dept. – 673-0200
Union Gap Police Dept. – 248-0430
Yakama Tribal Police – 865-2933
Yakima County Sheriff – 574-2500

Granger Police Dept. – 854-2656
Moxee Police Dept. – 575-8850
Sunnyside Police Dept. – 836-6200
Toppenish Police Dept. – 865-4355
Wapato Police Dept. – 877-3161
Yakima Police Dept. – 575-6197
Zillah Police Dept. – 829-6100