



# Issues Brief

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## Yakima City Council Holding Neighborhood Forums

*Forums focusing on long-term strategy for public safety*

The Yakima City Council organized two neighborhood forums in October and one in November.

The goal was to provide an opportunity for community members to share concerns about public safety issues and input about potential solutions.

"The City Council is making an extra effort to give neighbors an opportunity to share their concerns with one another," said Councilmember Dulce Gutiérrez.

The most recent forum was Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, at the Beauchamp Community Center.

Prior to that, forums were held October 25<sup>th</sup> at Garfield Elementary School gymnasium and October 14<sup>th</sup> at St. Michael's Episcopal Mission, 5 South Naches Ave.

"These forums give neighbors an opportunity to band together to make it clear they won't tolerate violence and crime in their neighborhoods," said Councilmember Gutiérrez, who hosted the forums. "That's why these forums are being held."

The forums have been presented primarily in either



***The Yakima City Council organized two Neighborhood Forums last month and more are planned in the future.***



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- Councilmember Dulce Gutiérrez

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Spanish or English. Translation services are provided.

The City Council announced plans earlier this year for several neighborhood forums to be held throughout Yakima. The Council is seeking feedback from community

members as part of an effort to developing a long-term strategy addressing public safety issues.

For more information about future neighborhood forums, contact Councilmember Gutiérrez at 823-7021.

# **Councilmember Avina Gutiérrez Reflects on Term in Office**

*\* Editor's Note: This is the next in a series of articles written by Yakima City Council members that are being published each month in the City of Yakima Issues Brief e-Newsletter.*

I consider myself truly fortunate to have been raised by parents who not only taught me the value of education and instilled in me a deep appreciation for social justice, but even more importantly impressed on me the obligation that I have to put my skills, abilities, experience and passion to work for the greater good.

My parents are my community service role models. Both of them have devoted their lives and careers to helping others. My father has done so as an elected official, a lawyer, an educator and, most importantly, a civil rights leader. My mother has served the underserved as a social worker, a community activist, and as the founder of a Yakima non-profit organization that inspires and accelerates the growth of minority-owned businesses.

Building on the community service legacy of my parents is my passion. I was humbled to be the one of the first Latinas elected to the Yakima City Council and took great pride in being selected by my Council seatmates in January 2016 to serve as Yakima's first Latina mayor. I recognize and appreciate the awesome opportunity that I have had during my tenure on the Council to help proactively redefine the leadership of the Yakima community.

I am privileged to have played a part in bringing about necessary change to the City of Yakima. Over the last two years, the Yakima City Council has faced many tough issues and has had to address a variety of difficult



***District #2 Councilmember Avina Gutiérrez's two-year term will end Dec. 31, 2017***

questions concerning the evolution of our community. In some areas, we've forged new paths forward. For that I am grateful. In other areas, we've merely treaded water. But the difficult and demanding conversation about the changes going on around us has begun, and it will continue. That, in itself, is progress.

My time on the Council has been intensely challenging, deeply rewarding, and, at times, highly frustrating. I admire anyone who takes on the demanding task of serving in elected office. Assuming such a high profile leadership role and the scrutiny that comes with it requires unwavering commitment and a thick skin.

I applaud all of the candidates who stepped forward this election cycle and am confident those who were elected, along with the rest of the Council, will keep Yakima moving in a positive direction.

I sincerely thank the voters of District #2 for entrusting me with the responsibility of representing them and the entire City the last two years. I am proud of what the Council achieved during that time. There is, however, more work to be done.

I encourage the City Council to continue to keep as its top priority the safety and security of our community. Restoring and preserving a sense of calm and wellbeing is paramount to the prolonged prosperity of Yakima and must remain a key area of focus for policy makers.

While I will no longer be serving as a Council member, my dedication to this community remains steadfast.

I look forward to continuing to be actively involved in fostering inclusiveness, ensuring equity, and creating opportunities for everyone who calls Yakima home.

# Pond Improvements Underway for Randall Park

*Pond improvement one of several projects for park*

Improvements are underway for the pond at the City of Yakima's Randall Park.

The City recently began efforts to drain the one-acre pond so years of sediment could be removed.

After that, the bottom of the pond will be deepened and its slopes improved to enhance stormwater run-off, Parks and Recreation Manager Ken Wilkinson said.

The City's Stormwater Division is taking on the project

The Division's work will help provide a match for a grant from the state's Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) that is assisting with funding the pond improvements.

The 12-foot-deep pond dates back to 1974 and Wilkinson believes this is the first time it has been drained and sediment removed.

"The pond was getting shallow. We needed to do something or in a few years we wouldn't have a pond," Wilkinson said.



***Improvements now underway at the Randall Park pond will ensure the pond's longevity for duck and human visitors for years to come.***

The project means visitors to Randall Park will find the pond drained and emptied throughout the fall and winter months.

"It will ensure the longevity of the pond and the ducks will be back to enjoy it for many years to come," Wilkinson said.

The pond project is just part of a 3-year plan to address several significant issues at Randall Park.

It's all funded through a \$500,000 RCO grant and over \$600,000 in local donations and matching funds.

Other projects at Randall Park receiving funding include construction of a new restroom, rebuilding worn-out pathways, installation of a bridge, new playground equipment, and basketball courts.

Plans also call for installation of two new picnic shelters, fixing parking lots and other improvements at the park, such as new signage and fencing.

Click <https://yakimaparks.com/> for information about programs and updates in the City of Yakima's Parks and Recreation Division.



The City of Yakima Issues Brief e-Newsletter is a monthly publication of the City of Yakima Community Relations Office. Questions or suggestions? Contact Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler at 509-575-6045 or [randy.beehler@yakimawa.gov](mailto:randy.beehler@yakimawa.gov).

Visit <https://www.yakimawa.gov> for more information about the City of Yakima.