



Issues Brief

City of Yakima e-Newsletter

Yakima Homeless Encampment to Close in Mid-November

The City of Yakima has begun preparing for the closure of a homeless encampment located near the 3rd Street and Walnut Street intersection by mid-November.

At its October 18th business meeting, the Yakima City Council adopted a resolution revoking permission to use the City-owned parking lot southeast of the 3rd Street and Walnut intersection as a temporary encampment, effective at 11:59 pm on Friday, November 18th.

The encampment was established in July following the closure of an unauthorized encampment that had developed along Chestnut Street between 6th Street and 7th Street earlier in the year.

In early September, the City provided notice to people living at the 3rd Street and Walnut encampment that it would be closed by the middle of November. The November 18th closure will take place a few days after the expected opening of several winter weather shelters, which are typically hosted by local churches. Recently, the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments, which administers the local use of state and federal funds dedicated to address homelessness, issued a request for proposals from entities interested in operating the winter weather shelter program and has already received responses. A contract to operate the program is expected to be awarded soon.

Efforts to develop sustainable strategies to address homelessness in Yakima are continuing. The City is working together with local area homeless service providers and the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments to create a coordinated approach to addressing homelessness now and in the future.

The City also reminds community members interested in making donations of food, clothing, water, etc. to assist homeless that it is best to do so at appropriate sites rather than at the 3rd Street and Walnut encampment itself. To ensure that donations are properly sorted and distributed, they should only be dropped off at The Depot (602 E. Yakima Avenue), the Salvation Army (9 S. 6th Avenue), the Union Gospel Mission (1300 N. 1st Street), or Rod's House (200 S. Naches) so they can be sorted and properly distributed.



The City of Yakima is taking steps to close a temporary homeless encampment located in a City-owned parking lot near the intersection of 3rd Street and Walnut Street. The encampment, which opened in early July of this year, is scheduled to close on November 18th.

Ordinance Regulating Marijuana Sales in Yakima is Amended

At its October 4th business meeting, the Yakima City Council voted to amend an ordinance that regulates retail marijuana businesses in the City to include another category of child care facilities near which such businesses are not allowed to operate and add an additional zoning area in which marijuana retail shops are allowed to operate.

The Council added Family Home Child Care facilities to the list of locations that retail marijuana shops cannot locate within 1000 feet of. Family Home Child Care facilities typically operate out of houses and accommodate up to a dozen kids. The Council also included the Small Convenience Center zone among the areas in the city where retail marijuana shops can locate in.



Sweet Relief Cannabis Company is one of three marijuana retail shops currently licensed to operate in Yakima city limits. An application for a fourth shop is currently being reviewed.

Earlier this year, the current City Council began a process to lift a ban on retail marijuana sales within city limits that was established in January of 2014 by the Council in place at that time, which included four members no longer serving on the Council. In May, the current Council directed the City of Yakima Planning Commission to make recommendations regarding how retail marijuana sales in Yakima could be regulated.

In early July, the Council voted to accept the recommendations of the Planning Commission, which included a requirement that retail marijuana stores not be allowed to locate within 1000 feet of elementary or secondary schools, recreation centers and facilities, childcare centers, parks, public transit centers, libraries, or game arcades open to minors. By its vote, the Council also accepted the Planning Commission's recommendation that retail marijuana stores only

be allowed within the Local Business District, Large Convenience Center, Central Business District, General Commercial, and Regional Business District zones.

About a month after the Council adopted the ordinance regulating retail marijuana sales within city limits, Councilmember Holly Cousens (District 7) suggested more information be gathered regarding whether the 1000-foot buffer should apply to Family Home Child Care facilities, which were not included in the originally-adopted ordinance, and whether the Small Convenience Center zone should be added to the list of zoning districts in which retail marijuana stores could be located. The Council agreed and scheduled public hearings for September 20th to take testimony from community members about the two issues.

Among the "findings of fact" the Council made as a result of the public hearings included that, "Children should be protected as they are traveling to and from day care, whether it be child care centers or family home (or in-home) child care centers." The "findings of fact" also included that, "There is a need for additional possible locations for safe access to retail marijuana, both medical and recreational."

Based on those and other "findings of fact", the Council amended the original ordinance regulating retail marijuana sales within city limits at its October 4th business meeting.

Under rules established by the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board, only five retail marijuana shops are allowed to operate within Yakima city limits. So far, three retail marijuana business owners have received the necessary City permission to operate. Recently, the City received an application for a fourth retail marijuana business within city limits and is in the process of reviewing it.

Council to Review Proposed 2017 Budget at November Meetings

The Yakima City Council will conduct a series of study sessions throughout the month of November to review the proposed 2017 City of Yakima budget. The Council will also conduct two public hearings related to the proposed 2017 City budget in November and another in December.

All of the study sessions, as well as the public hearings, will take place in the Council Chambers at Yakima City Hall (129 N. 2nd Street) and will be aired live and replayed on Y-PAC, Charter Cable channel 194.

At this point, the proposed 2017 City of Yakima budget totals about \$235 million, but is subject to change by the City Council during the budget review and adoption process. Of that total, the proposed 2017 general fund budget currently stands at just over \$76 million. The general fund portion of the budget includes programs and services that are primarily paid for by taxes, such as police, fire, parks, and streets. The remainder of the budget includes programs and services primarily paid for by rates and fees such, as drinking water, sewer, irrigation, and refuse.

The first study session that will be held to review the proposed 2017 City of Yakima budget will take place on **Tuesday, November 1st** from **9:00 am to noon** and will include presentations by Yakima Municipal Court, the City Administration Department (City Manager/City Council office, City Clerks and Records office, Community Relations office, Information Technology Division, Yakima Airport), the City Legal Department, the City Finance Department (Purchasing Division, Utility Services Division), and the City Human Resources Department.

On **Thursday, November 3rd**, presentations will be made during a study session from **9:00 am to noon** about the City Community Development Department (Planning Division, Code Administration Division, Office of Neighborhood Development Services), the City Economic Development office, and the administration and City Hall maintenance functions of the City Public Works Department as well as the Streets & Traffic Division, Parks & Recreation Division, and Tahoma Cemetery, all of which are also under the Public Works Department umbrella.

The third budget study session will take place on **Tuesday, November 8th** from **9:00 am to noon** and will feature presentations about additional Public Works Department operations including the Water/Irrigation Division, the Refuse Division, the Wastewater Division (including stormwater), the Equipment Rental Division, and Yakima Transit.

On **Thursday, November 10th** from **9:00 am to noon**, the Council will hear study session presentations from the Yakima Fire Department (including public safety communications), the Yakima Police Department (including law & justice capital), and the City Engineering Division.

During the City Council regular business meeting on **Tuesday, November 15th**, the first of two public hearings on the proposed 2017 City of Yakima Budget take place. At that same meeting, the Council will also conduct a public hearing regarding the property tax amount intended to be collected next year. The public hearings will begin at or near **6:30 pm**.

During a **9:00 am to noon** study session on **Tuesday, November 29th**, the Council will deliberate and make decisions regarding the proposed 2017 budget, including any strategic initiatives brought forward by City staff.

The second and final public hearing on the proposed 2017 budget will take place during the Council's **Tuesday, December 6th** regular business meeting. The hearing will begin at or near **6:30 pm**.

Final adoption of the 2017 City of Yakima budget is scheduled to take place during the City Council's **Tuesday, December 13th** regular business meeting, which will start at **2:00 pm**. State law requires the City Council to adopt a balanced (within available resources) budget before December 31st of the year prior to the adopted budget taking effect.