



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Plaza Design Team Concepts

Contact: City Manager Tony O'Rourke – 575-6040

Communications & Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler – 901-1142

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Design Team to Unveil Concepts for Potential Downtown Plaza

After having worked for several months to incorporate input received through an online questionnaire into several concepts for a potential Downtown Yakima Plaza, the design team chosen earlier this year by the Yakima City Council will reveal its ideas during an evening community meeting on **Tuesday, August 12th**.

During the meeting, the team, which is led by the Seattle-based landscape architecture firm Gustafson Guthrie Nichol (GGN+), will show its designs to potentially transform portions of one of two parking lots into a community gathering place, performance venue, and multi-use space. The community meeting will take place at **6:30 pm** at the **Seasons Performance Hall** (101 N. Naches Avenue). The doors will open at 6:00 pm and attendees are encouraged to show up a little early so the community meeting can start on time.

The design team will also be presenting its concepts to the City Council during a study session earlier in the day on August 12th. The study session, which will begin at 9:00 am in the Council Chambers at Yakima City Hall, will also include the findings of a downtown parking study conducted by Carl Walker, Inc., a structural engineering and parking consulting firm headquartered in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The study session will be aired live on Y-PAC, Charter Cable channel 194.

The two sites that have been studied by GGN and the rest of the design team as possible locations for a central plaza include portions of the parking lot adjacent to the Millennium Plaza on 3rd Street and portions of the parking lot southeast of the intersection of 2nd Street and S Sgt Pendleton Way. Ultimately, the City Council will be asked to choose one of the two sites to possibly develop.

The design team is headed up by Kathryn Gustafson, who grew up in Yakima and has several family members who still call the Valley home. Gustafson is a founding principal of GGN. The team also includes Graham Baba Architects (GBA+), a Seattle architecture firm. Brett Baba, a founding principal of GBA, is also originally from Yakima and has played a key role in the creation of design concepts for the potential Yakima plaza. Magnusson Klemencic Associates, a civil and structural engineering firm headquartered in Seattle, is also part of the plaza design team.

An online questionnaire was filled out by more than 1400 Yakima community members during late April and early May of this year. The questionnaire was designed to gather input about preferred elements of a plaza, why people most often visit downtown, how far away from a plaza people may be willing to park in order to go to events there, etc. The team used information provided through the questionnaire, performed extensive historical research, and took into account existing structures in Downtown Yakima when developing its design concepts for a potential central plaza.