



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Plaza Design Team Visit

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Downtown Plaza Process Begins With Design Team Visit

The process to develop concepts for a potential Downtown Yakima Central Plaza will formally get its start on Thursday, April 17th when members of the plaza design team visit Yakima to meet with a local group formed to implement the Downtown Yakima Master Plan, discuss the process with a City Council committee, tour potential plaza locations, and get input from the community during a public meeting that evening.

Last month the City Council approved a contract with Gustafson Guthrie Nichol (GGN), a Seattle-based landscape architecture firm, to lead the plaza design process and to come up with potential plans for two sites . a parking lot adjacent to the Millennium Plaza on 3rd Street and a parking lot southeast of the intersection of 2nd Street and S Sgt Pendleton Way. GGN will also work Graham Baba Architects (GBA), an architectural firm from Seattle, as part of the design team.

On April 17th, the team will be in Yakima to look over the two potential sites for the plaza and will meet for lunch at the Yakima Convention Center with the City's Downtown Master Plan Implementation Committee, a group of about 35 Yakima business owners, property owners, and interested community members. At 2:00 pm that day, the design team will brief the City Council's Built Environment Committee at City Hall about how the process may unfold.

Then, at **6:30 pm** at the **Seasons Performance Hall** (101 N. Naches Avenue), GGN and GBA representatives will lead a discussion designed to gather feedback from the public about the idea of a plaza and discover what elements community members may want to see in a plaza. The meeting at the Seasons is open to everyone.

We're very excited about the team visiting Yakima and getting the plaza design process underway, said City Manager Tony O'Rourke. The public meeting at the Seasons is just the first of many opportunities the community will have to give input about revitalization strategies for Downtown Yakima. We're especially enthusiastic that the design team includes two natives of Yakima who are heavily invested in the rebirth of our downtown because they want to give something back to their hometown, said O'Rourke.

Kathryn Gustafson, who grew up in Yakima and has several family members who still call the Valley home, is a founding principal of GGN and has earned international acclaim for her ground-breaking, contemporary landscape designs over a career that has spanned more than three decades. Brett Baba, a founding principal of GBA, is also originally from Yakima and has earned a reputation as the design master over his 30-year career as a leading architect throughout the Northwest.

Plaza design concepts for the two potential sites are expected to be completed later this year. Ultimately, the City Council will be asked to choose one of the two sites to develop.

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