



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Plaza Design Team Visit

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Plaza Design Team Pays a Second Visit to Yakima

The design team responsible for developing concepts for a potential Downtown Yakima Central Plaza will pay its second visit to our area on **Tuesday, May 13th** to provide updates on its progress to a committee working on revitalizing the city's core and to the public during a community meeting that evening.

The design team, led by the Seattle-based landscape architecture firm Gustafson Guthrie Nichol (GGN+), will meet with the Downtown Yakima Master Plan Implementation Committee earlier in the day and then at **6:30 pm**, the team will lead a **community meeting** at the **Seasons Performance Hall** (101 N. Naches Avenue).

During its visit, the team will share some of the preliminary results of an online questionnaire that has been filled out by more than 1400 people since it was posted about three weeks ago. The questionnaire, which closes at 5:00 pm on Friday, May 9th, was designed to gather input from the community 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 will also talk about how certain design elements might work with the two potential plaza sites in Downtown Yakima that are being studied, how historical research done by the team will play into the design concepts, and how existing structures in Downtown Yakima could be incorporated into the final design concepts.

The two sites that are being studied as locations for a potential central plaza are the 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. 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 possibly develop.

The design team is being 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 will play a key role in the creation of design concepts for the Yakima plaza. Magnusson Klemencic Associates, a civil and structural engineering firm headquartered in Seattle, is also part of the plaza design team.