



City of Yakima  
Comprehensive Plan Update Program

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040 HORIZON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GUIDE



**Public Participation Opportunities Related to the Update of Yakima's  
Comprehensive Plan and Associated Development Regulations**

Adopted: Spring 2015

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## Comprehensive Plan 2040 Horizon—Public Participation Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is a requirement of the Growth Management Act (GMA), and is a document that looks toward a 20-year horizon for the City of Yakima. Its core purpose is to help define—through goals, objectives and policies—how Yakima should accommodate forecasted household and job growth, provide open space and recreational opportunities, and best manage traffic and other vital services. It has been 10 years since the City has updated its Vision and Comprehensive Plan maps and elements, therefore, it's time to update its Comprehensive Plan to bring into focus the vision for Yakima for the next 20 years. The Periodic Update process requires the City to engage citizens in a conversation about the City's future. Neighbors, business owners, community groups and students are needed to participate in important conversations about land use, transportation, parks, open space, and other vital services.

In addition to updating the core element chapters of the Comprehensive Plan, including, but not limited to, Land Use, Utilities, Housing, Capital Facilities, and Natural Environment. Also, the City is developing long-range plans for transportation, a new bike plan, and a downtown master plan. Portions of these plans will be integrated into the Comprehensive Plan, where appropriate.

Public involvement is vital to these initiatives. We hope that you will join the conversation by sharing your voice, attending meetings, and learning more through educational opportunities.

### Project Timeline

(Administrative work, Scope of Work etc.)	Fall 2014-Winter 2014
Project Framing and Visioning	Winter 2015-Summer 2015
Element Review and Revision	Winter 2016-Fall 2016
Environmental Review	Spring 2016-Spring 2017
Final Approval	Spring 2017

Public participation is a key component of this two year planning effort. This Public Participation Plan has been created for two purposes. First, to identify potential stakeholders and invite them to participate in the planning process. Second, to guide public participation efforts throughout the process to ensure early and continuous involvement throughout the decision-making process. Efforts to ensure public participation will continue to evolve throughout the life of the Update process.

The primary contact person for the City of Yakima's Comprehensive Plan 2040 Update is:

Valerie Smith, AICP  
Planning Division  
129 N 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Yakima, WA 98901  
(509) 575-6042  
[valerie.smith@yakimawa.gov](mailto:valerie.smith@yakimawa.gov)

The City of Yakima Planning Commission (YPC) will take the lead as the advisory body for this project. YPC meetings are regularly scheduled and open to the public with opportunities for the public to speak at each meeting on both agenda items and non-agenda items. Staff will ensure that City Council receives regular briefings on the work of the YPC through the Council's Built Environment Committee.

### **Public Participation Plan**

State law requires the City to invite citizens and stakeholders to participate in the Comprehensive Plan update process. Public Participation is also very important to the City of Yakima as an effective tool to balance competing interests and needs that are inherent in the land use decision making processes. It is important that information be made available so any interested person can understand the materials and participate. The City will encourage participation in several ways.

#### *Stakeholders*

A variety of groups, agencies, and individuals may have interest in the update of Yakima's Comp Plan. These stakeholders can be categorized as follows:

- Other Governmental Agencies
  - Adjacent jurisdictions: Union Gap, Selah, Ellensburg, Yakima County....
  - State Agencies: Washington State Dept. of Commerce, Washington State Dept. of Ecology, Washington State Dept. of Transportation, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.
  - Regional organizations: COG, MPO
  - Tribal government: Yakama Nation
- Quasi-governmental Groups
  - School Districts: Yakima, West Valley
  - Yakima Housing Authority
- Residents and Property Owners
  - Neighborhood Associations
- Business Groups and Associations
  - Business organizations: Yakima Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Yakima's Historic Preservation Commission, Downtown Association of Yakima, among others.
  - Trade organizations: Home Builders Association, Association of Realtors. Etc.
- Environmental Organizations and Conservation Groups
  - Local groups
  - Regional Groups
  - Local Chapters of National groups

Outreach to the general public will include posters in public places such as libraries, community facilities, and businesses. City of Yakima residents may be sent a notice in their utility billing statements, and project information may be circulated in the Yakima Herald Republic, City newsletters, City's Public Access Channel (YPAC), and on the City's website, among other communication tools.

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update process, the City will maintain several channels for communication and public participation. One of the primary tools the City will use, is a City webpage dedicated to the project. This website will include notices for upcoming public meetings, documents available for review, and other information related to the project. Visitors to the website can also sign up to be on the interested parties list. Ideally, the website would include interactive features that would allow an on-going exchange of information and ideas related to the project. A dedicated email address "Ask Planning" [ask.planning@yakimawa.gov](mailto:ask.planning@yakimawa.gov), is also available for questions and comments on this project.

Stakeholders who express interest in participating will continue to receive notices and informational mailings from the City. Joining the interested parties list, by providing contact information to receive updates about the project by email or post, will be the best way for an individual to consistently receive notices and messages about the process.

A series of public workshops and public hearings will be held throughout the project. Prior to public workshops or public hearings, notices will be posted in general community locations and distributed through various City channels identified herein and per YMC Title 16 notice requirements. These methods are intended to inform the general public, or those who have not provided individual contact information, of key opportunities for participation in the Comprehensive Plan update.

#### *Document Review*

Update of the Comprehensive Plan will result in several work products that require review. Some of these products include: draft policy changes, draft code changes, issue papers, staff reports, and environmental review documents. It is expected that the City will consult with stakeholders in the development of documents and other work products for this update.

Once drafted, all documents will be available for official review by the public. Comment periods will be clearly specified and advertised through the means identified in this public participation plan. The City will maintain a database of all comments received throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update process, which will be available for public review upon request.

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process offers additional opportunities to seek public input. The City anticipates integrating SEPA review into the proposal through the Growth Management Act/SEPA integration process. Prior to Planning Commission making a final recommendation on the updated Comprehensive Plan and any related changes to the Yakima Municipal Code, the City will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, which provides the opportunity for additional specific input on environmental impacts of the proposal.

### *Community Open Houses*

The City of Yakima Planning Division will hold community visioning open houses in June thru October 2015. These open houses will be scheduled at times that are more likely to be accessible to the majority of citizens and stakeholders (i.e. weekday evenings). The open houses will feature a presentation covering four basic subject areas:

1. GMA requirements for review and update of comprehensive plans and development regulations.
2. City of Yakima growth trends, forecasts, and accommodations.
3. Preliminary GMA compliance evaluation results.
4. Visioning for the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The community open houses will also feature information stations covering various comp plan elements and planning areas (e.g. land use, transportation, etc...). These stations will be staffed to answer questions and gather public input.

### *Comprehensive Plan Basics*

The Comprehensive Plan is a document adopted by the Yakima City Council. It describes how Yakima will continue to provide necessary facilities and services to accommodate job and population growth. Most importantly, it is a statement of the kind of community Yakima wants to become, envisioned by those who live, work, recreate, and visit here. The Comprehensive Plan includes a Vision Statement—a verbal snapshot of our desired character over the next 20-years—and general Framework Goals to implement that Vision.

#### *Why is the Comprehensive Plan important to me?*

The Comprehensive Plan is used as a guide to decide where housing and business growth should occur, what transportation system(s) we will have to support growth, what types of businesses and jobs we want to encourage, what types of housing we should have in the community, how we can protect our environmentally sensitive areas and what values we want reflected in the character of our community. The Plan is the basis for zoning, which in turn guides development permits in the City. Therefore, it is important to be involved in the formation of the Plan to influence decisions on future development activity.

The Plan also establishes our desired public facilities and services for roads, parks, sewer, water, fire and police protection and funding of those facilities and services through the six-year capital improvement program. It provides policies to support economic development that encourages what business and thus jobs and services locate here.

*Who decides what the Plan says?*

The City engages the community to develop a shared vision for Yakima based on common values, desires and goals. The Planning Commission prepares a draft Plan based on the community's vision, state and regional requirements, and planning principles, such as Smart Growth Principles. Public meetings and hearings are held to get public comments on the draft Plan. The Planning Commission makes a recommendation to the City Council and the Council approves the final Plan.

*Written Comments*

Written comments are welcome throughout the GMA Evaluation and Update process. Opportunities for formal public comment at key points of the planning process will be provided at public hearings before the City of Yakima Planning Commission and the City Council. The project timeline below shows when public hearings are anticipated to be held. Additional information on planning public hearings can be found in the location newspaper, the City website, etc., and as described in this Public Participation Plan. To ensure consideration, written comments must be received by the City of Yakima prior to the close of the public hearing.

All written comments submitted by mail or fax should be sent to:

City of Yakima Community Development Department  
129 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Yakima, WA 98901  
Fax: (509) 575-6105

[ask.planning@yakimawa.gov](mailto:ask.planning@yakimawa.gov), please reference the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update in your email.

*Joint Planning Commission and Elected Officials Review Meeting*

A work session will be held jointly between the City of Yakima Planning Commission (YPC), City Council, and Director of Community Development to review preliminary evaluation findings. The joint meeting will be scheduled following the conclusion of the regional community open houses described above.

*Final GMA Compliance Evaluation*

The YPC will work together with the Department of Community Development, and interested parties, to review the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations for GMA compliance. The evaluation process will identify needed update areas to comply with the GMA, and may identify other recommended "areas of update" to address local or regional needs. During this phase specific proposed amendments to the comprehensive land use and zoning map will be considered and the results of the evaluation will be compiled in a Draft GMA Compliance Report.

The YPC will conduct at least one public hearing to gather and consider public input on the Update, any proposed amendment applications, and any other proposed specific amendments. The YPC will forward their recommendations and findings to the City Council for further action.

The Yakima City Council will hold at least one public hearing on the results of the Update review and analysis. The public hearing(s) will also address any proposed revisions to the comprehensive plan or development regulations, including any proposed amendment applications.

The City of Yakima will publish a notice of the adopted GMA Compliance document, and any adoption of updates to the City’s comprehensive plan or development regulations. The date the notice is published will initiate a 60-day appeal period pursuant to RCW 36.70A.290(2) on the scope of the City’s GMA compliance review and analysis, and adoption of any specific amendments.

*GMA Compliance Review Meetings*

Eight (8) regular-scheduled meetings of the City of Yakima Planning Commission are planned from January 2017 thru April 2017 to evaluate the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations for compliance with the GMA. Regular-meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at City Hall, 129 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, in the City Hall Council Chambers, starting at 3:30p.m. All meetings are open to the public, formal opportunities for citizen review and comment on the results of the Planning Commission’s GMA compliance evaluation will be provided at the scheduled public hearings (see below) tentatively planned for Winter/Spring, 2017. There may be opportunity to hold special meetings with the Planning Commission that are more likely to be accessible to the majority of citizens and stakeholders (i.e. weekday evenings).

Tentative Schedule for community visioning, open houses and plan review:



All outreach efforts will be documented by the City and available for public review upon request.

## **Growth Management Act (GMA) and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Integration**

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update, the City will be reviewing the project under SEPA review. All public meetings, workshops and outreach opportunities, as well as, any documents produced for this project will be opportunities for public comment on the environmental aspects of this project. The integration of SEPA and GMA will result in improved planning and project decisions from an environmental prospective. Just as GMA goals cannot be addressed without consideration of environmental factors, the goals of SEPA are benefited by the examination of the "big picture" and identification of mitigation to address cumulative impacts of development that occurs during GMA planning. All comments and public input received during the Public Participation portion of the Update program will be included in the Integrated SEPA/GMA document pursuant to WAC 197-11.

## **Conclusion**

The update of Yakima's Comprehensive Plan is a collaborative effort in which the City will engage the public, businesses, governmental agencies, and other interested groups. The City website, public postings, community events, public meetings, and workshops will be used to reach out to interested parties and get them involved in the process.

The City of Yakima will utilize a variety of methods to inform the public about upcoming public meetings, availability of relevant planning documents and reports and important milestones related to the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update process, including, but not limited to:

1. **Internet:** the City of Yakima will establish a website for the project where interested community members may go to for status updates, reports, meeting notices and agendas, and other project information. The website will also include links to the City of Yakima comprehensive plan and development regulations. Follow the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update at <http://www.yakimawa.gov/services/planning/comprehensive-plan-update/>
2. **Mailing List:** the City of Yakima will maintain a list of interested parties to receive notices of scheduled public meetings. Notice will be provided either by mail or email. Individuals and organizations interested in being on the mailing list should contact City of Yakima Planning Division, at (509) 575-6183 or [ask.planning@yakimawa.gov](mailto:ask.planning@yakimawa.gov).
3. **News Releases:** the City of Yakima will issues news releases announcing public meetings, hearings, and comment periods to local media, including, but not limited to: the City's own Y-PAC channel, the Yakima Herald Republic, KIMA, KNDO, local radio, etc.

4. **Hearings-Decisions:** Public notice of all public hearings and any decisions regarding the review and update of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations will be published under “Legals” in the Yakima Herald Republic classified section. Public notification of all hearings will be provided at least 10 days before the date of the hearing. The notices shall include the date, time, location, and purpose of the hearing. The City of Yakima may pay for other public notices in addition to this legal notification.

Public notification on the adoption of this Plan, or other specific development regulations will follow the provisions of Yakima Municipal Code (YMC) and RCW 36.70A.

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