

5.0 HOUSING.

5.1 Introduction

The future demand for housing is a crucial element of this plan. There is need to accommodate current and future population demands in a variety of housing types and affordability levels. This Housing Element contains the goals, policies, and implementation actions that will help Yakima achieve high quality, affordable, and equitable housing for today's generations forward.

Yakima acknowledges that the marketplace will generally provide adequate housing to meet demand for those in the upper economic brackets, but that some combination of appropriately zoned land, regulatory incentives, housing funding and rehabilitation programs, and innovative planning techniques will be necessary to meet the needs of middle and lower income residents. Understanding this challenge, and the current housing trends, helps the City plan for the future.

Housing Goal- Growth Management Act

Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock. (RCW 36.70A.020 (4))

5.2 Conditions and Trends

Most of Yakima's Housing Stock is Single Family Homes

Around 60 percent of structures in 2014 were single family detached units, with another 4 percent of single-family attached units. Only 7.4 percent of structures had 20 or more units— (ACS, 2014). Yakima's housing structures are predominantly two and three bedroom units, with a combined 68.4 percent of units falling into these categories.

Total units in Yakima grew by around 23.1 percent between 2000, when there was an estimated 28,743 units, and 2014, when there was an estimated 35,583 units (ACS, 2014). In 2014, an estimated 54 percent of units were owner-occupied, with 46 percent renter occupied units.

Most of Yakima's Housing Stock is Old

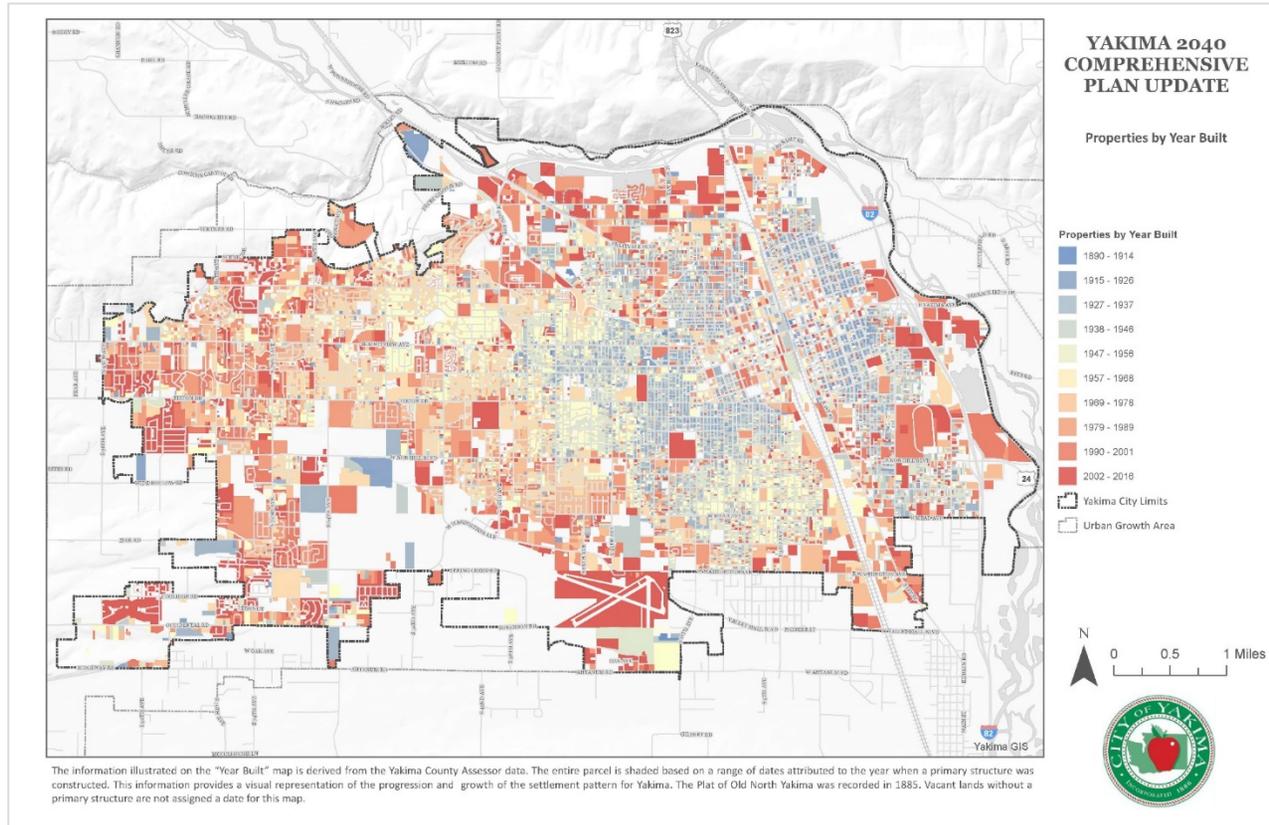
In 2014, only 10 percent of residential structures had been built since 2000, and 50.1 percent of units were built 40 or more years ago. Since housing units generally have a functional life of around 40 years, those units older than 40 years require additional investments. Preserving existing housing is important to maintain affordability.

The age of housing structures is indicative of structure quality, supported by national research that shows a negative correlation between the age of a unit and its condition.

A map of structure age (both residential and commercial) is shown in Exhibit 5-1; the vast majority of structures in the city are residential with older stock focused in eastern Yakima.



Exhibit 5-1. Year Structure Built Map



Source: City of Yakima GIS 2016

A Community for the Young and Old Population

The City's population is getting older on average, with more retirees than any other community in the County. Yet, the City is also seeing an increasing number of children, particularly in east Yakima. Both seniors and children grew by 5 percent between 2000 and 2010 citywide. The City needs to address housing

and services for older generations such as aging in place, health, and mobility. The City also needs to address needs of younger residents such as education and recreation.

The median age in Yakima in 2015 was 33.2, which has increased slightly over the previous 15 years. An estimated 30.6 percent of the population in 2014 was under 20 years of age, and an estimated 13.8 percent was 65 and older.

Low Vacancy Rates

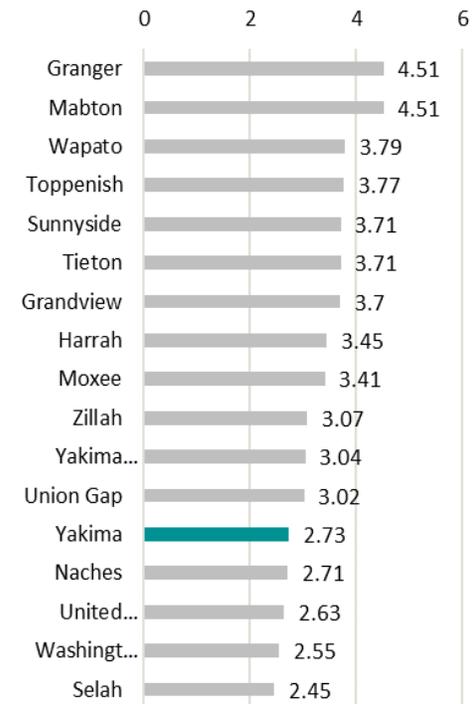
Vacancy rates, as an indicator of housing markets, can provide information about how supply and demand are interacting and how the market and prices may react. In 2014, vacancy in Yakima was around 4.9 percent for renters and 2.0 percent for owners. More recent 2016 data showed a tightening of vacancy rates, particularly for renters, of 2.0 percent. Several unit types (1 and 2 bedroom) show a vacancy rate of 1 percent. (Runstad Center for Real Estate Studies / University of Washington, spring 2016)

Low Average Household Size

Within Yakima city limits, average household sizes in 2014 were an estimated 2.73 persons per household, and average family sizes were an estimated 3.41 person per family (ACS, 2014). Yakima has among the lowest average household sizes in the county.

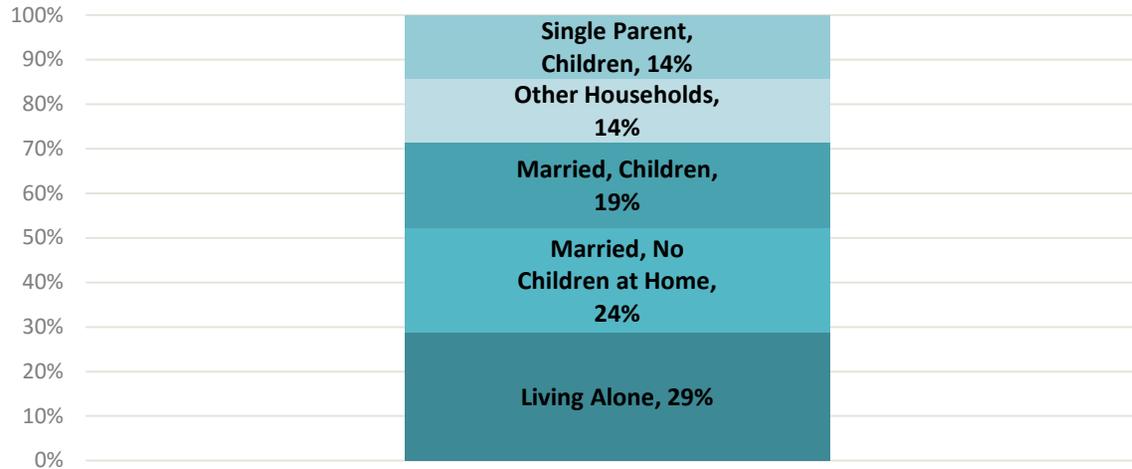
A Majority of Yakima Households Have No Children

As of 2014, the City of Yakima contains approximately 33,074 households. About 29 percent of households consist of single persons, and another 24 percent of householders are married with no children at home; this means over half of the City's households have single or coupled adults and no children. About 19 percent of households consist of married persons with children, and another 14 percent are households with single men or single women with children at home. Last, 14 percent of households are classified as other households (e.g. non-married households without children). Future housing opportunities would need to address both small units for those living alone as well as larger houses for families with children.



Average Household Size in Yakima County and Communities (2014)

Exhibit 5-2. City of Yakima Household Characteristics: 2014

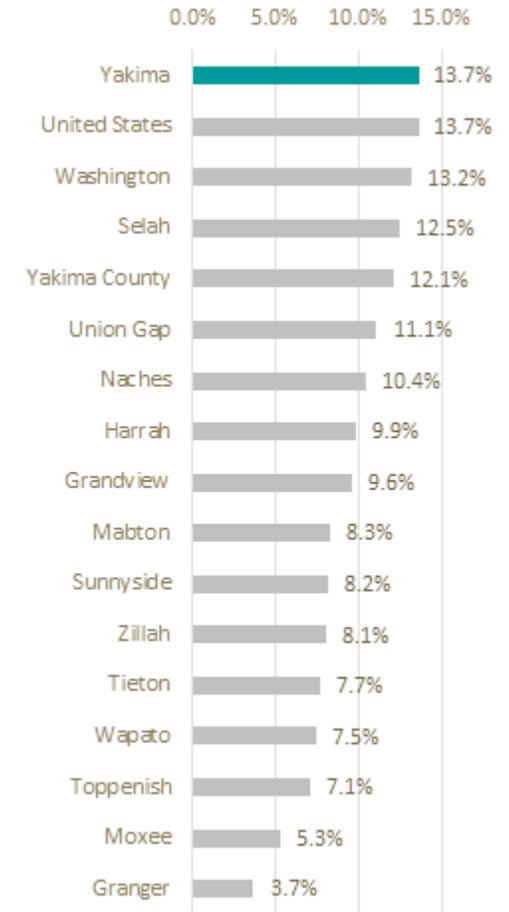


Source: (ACS, 2014); BERK Consulting 2016

Demand for Special Needs Housing and Programs

Several populations may have special housing needs or supportive services, including the homeless, residents with disabilities, single parents, seasonal and year-round farmworkers, and [the](#) elderly.

- According to the Homeless Network of Yakima County, in 2015 homelessness had decreased by over 44 percent since 2006. Homelessness still affects families with children, couples, and single persons. In 2016, the City received funding to relocate those living in a pop-up encampment in East Yakima.
- As of 2014, the City of Yakima has the most persons with a disability in the county, and the second highest share of the population at 15.3 percent, behind Union Gap.
- Single parent households, particularly female headed households, are more likely to have lower incomes and potentially have cost burdens. As of 2014, over 10 percent of city households are female headed and another almost 4 percent are male-headed with children.



Persons Aged 65 and Older as a Percent of Total Population (ACS, 2014)

- As described above, the elderly make up almost 14 percent of the city’s population in 2014. The elderly often have disabilities – about 46 percent – requiring universal housing designs that meet ambulatory needs. Continuum of care housing and services allowing aging in place are other considerations over the planning period.
- The City of Yakima is located at the heart of Yakima County, which employs many farmworkers at the farms, orchards, and livestock operations throughout the County. Many of these workers struggle to find stable housing.

The City of Yakima and other non-profit agencies offer a number of services [that](#) addressing maintaining and attaining housing to meet the needs of low income households, disabled persons, and senior citizens in the community.

Housing Value Is Increasing in Yakima, but is Still Relatively Affordable

Appreciation rates have been above average for the last 10 years, at an annual average of 2.5 percent. Home sales prices have jumped by \$20,000 in the last year. The median priced home is attainable to half of the City’s residents. However, in 2014, nearly half of Yakima’s homeowners were cost burdened and nearly one third of renters are cost burdened.

Rental Costs

The Runstad Center for Real Estate Research has noted that “Over the past year [\[2015\]](#) Yakima County has recorded the greatest decrease in vacancy rate with a considerable drop of 5.8 percent (from 7.8% to 1.7%).” If supply does not keep up with demand, it is likely that rental rates will increase.

In the City there is a gap of over 3,300 units affordable to those earning lower incomes. Many households have to pay more than they can afford for the units that are available.

Homeowner Costs

As of 2015, the County’s housing supply showed it was relatively affordable for a metropolitan area and that there was a large share of homes for sale below the median home price. Recent price increases were leading the state in 2015.



As of ~~2012~~[2014](#), 32% of city renters are cost burdened and 49% of owners are cost burdened.

Ensuring there are opportunities to develop a variety of housing types and densities affordable to different income levels can help to address current and future households and their cost burden.

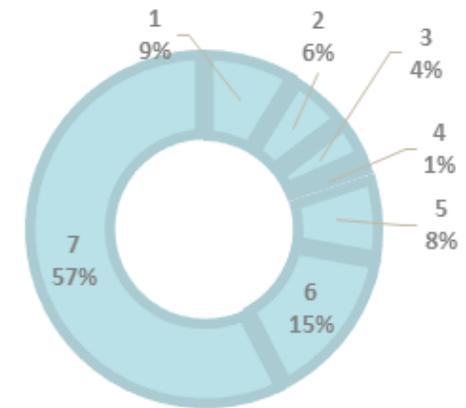
In 2016, around 56% of households can afford a median home price, with homeownership less attainable for the remaining 46% of the population. To purchase a single family home at the current median selling price a household would need to earn \$38,477 annually or \$3,206 monthly. There are an estimated 18,402 households in Yakima with incomes greater than \$35,000, or 56% of the population that can afford the median home price in Yakima.

5.3 Challenges and Opportunities

Yakima currently provides a relatively affordable housing stock, the majority of which are single family homes. The City has additional capacity for housing with a large share of land that is developable, particularly to the west, and a good portion of the City that provides an opportunity for infill development and redevelopment.

Low vacancy rates in Yakima are leading to a pressure on housing supply as the population grows and the housing stock ages. New housing will be needed to replace units that have reached the end of their useful life and to house new residents. In addition, a diversity of housing types will be needed in order to provide units that fit the needs of large and small households, special needs populations, those aging in place, and a diversifying population.

Yakima has a vision of being a place that provides affordable and quality housing equally to all residents across the city. The City has sufficient capacity to meet future housing growth targets for 2040. Yakima’s strategy is to focus on infill housing downtown and in mixed use centers, with compatible transitions to ground-related townhomes and single family dwellings. The capacity in Downtown Yakima and mixed use nodes will create an increased supply of smaller units in multifamily or mixed use residential structures while the undeveloped land capacity to the west will result in added single family units.



2016 Capacity for New Homes by Council District on undeveloped land

5.4 Goals and Policies^[C1]

GOAL 5.1. ENCOURAGE DIVERSE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING CHOICES. (Retained)

Policies

- 5.1.1. Monitor market rate and affordable housing needs. Review and adjust land capacity for housing development and redevelopment based on housing needs. (Broadened and combined existing policies 5.1.1 and 5.1.2)
- 5.1.2. Promote the preservation, improvement, and development of single family homes in Yakima. (Audit Recommendation)
- 5.1.3. Encourage mixed use infill development, particularly Downtown and in commercial nodes. (Support Land Use Element update concepts)
- 5.1.4. Facilitate small lot sizes, condominiums, clustering and other options that increase the supply of affordable homeownership options and the diversity of housing that meet the needs of aging, young professional, and small and large households. (Similar to existing Policy 5.3.2)
- 5.1.5. Allow accessory dwelling units in single family zones to increase the supply of affordable housing units and to help existing homeowners remain in their homes. (Similar to existing Policy 5.3.3; Audit Recommendation)
- 5.1.6. Allow manufactured homes on individual lots in residential zones in accordance with the provisions of state and federal law. Apply development and design standards equally to manufactured housing and other residences. (Audit Recommendation)
- 5.1.7. Promote the improvement of existing mobile home parks to meet health and safety standards and quality of life needs of residents. (Existing Conditions Report Need)
- 5.1.8. Encourage and incentivize affordable housing development. (Similar to existing policy 5.1.3; audit recommendation on affordable housing incentive)
- 5.1.9. Support proposals for affordable assisted and market rate housing based on the following criteria:
 - Dispersion of affordable housing throughout the City

- Convenient access to transit
- A range of unit types
- Ownership housing when possible
- Long-term affordability

(Audit Recommendation)

5.1.10. Remove barriers to development of affordable and market rate housing.

- Maintain a zoning system that allows a wide range of housing types and densities.
- Use creative SEPA tools such as exemption thresholds, infill and mixed use exemptions, or planned actions to encourage housing and streamline permitting.
- Ensure that City fees and permitting time are set at reasonable levels so they do not adversely affect the cost of housing. (Similar in concept to existing policy 5.1.7 and policy 5.3.1)

5.1.11. Encourage a range of affordable homeownership options and provide access to education for first time buyers. (Similar to existing policies 5.2.1, 5.2.2, and 5.2.3)

5.1.12. Participate in efforts to secure land available for affordable housing. (Similar to existing Policy 5.1.2)

5.1.13 Allow for well-designed farmworker housing recognizing the City of Yakima’s role as the primary city in the agricultural Yakima valley with the greatest range of housing opportunities, urban infrastructure, and public services. (Farmworker housing strategy; Existing Conditions Report)

GOAL 5.2. PRESERVE AND IMPROVE EXISTING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS. (Existing Goal 5.5)

Policies

5.2.1. Invest in and improve quality of life in existing neighborhoods. (Similar to existing Policy 5.5.1)

5.2.2. Support programs that improve and preserve Yakima’s existing housing stock. (Similar to existing Policy 5.1.8)

- 5.2.3. Seek alternatives, when feasible, to demolition and removal of units from housing stock. (Existing Policy 5.5.2)
- 5.2.4. Encourage maintenance and preservation of existing housing. Maintain the City's Housing Repair Assistance Program for low- and moderate-income homeowners. (Similar to existing Policies 5.1.8 and 5.2.4)

GOAL 5.3. ENSURE AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.
(Existing Goal 5.6)

Policies

- 5.3.1. Prioritize the provision of fair share housing opportunities to all economic segments of the population and those with special needs. (Similar to existing Policy 5.1.5)
- 5.3.2. Support development of new units and the operation of existing units for housing persons with special needs such as the disabled and elderly. Promote universal design principles in new and rehabilitated housing to ensure housing is designed for all persons and abilities. (Similar to existing Policy 5.6.1; Audit Recommendation)
- 5.3.3. Support programs that offer assistance to homeless individuals and families. (Similar to existing Policy 5.6.2)
- 5.3.4. Support programs and housing options that allow the senior population to age in place as their housing needs change. (Audit recommendation)

GOAL 5.4. ENCOURAGE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTAINENCE OF HIGH QUALITY HOUSING. (New Goal, Audit Recommendation)

- 5.4.1. Promote sustainable development practices in housing development. (Audit Recommendation)
- 5.4.2. Use transitional densities, design and landscape standards to ensure housing is compatible with existing character and planned goals. (Audit Recommendation)
- 5.4.3. Encourage development of well-designed new housing in coordination with population growth, employment growth, and transportation goals. (Audit Recommendation)

- 5.4.4. Coordinate future housing development with capital planning and investment. (Audit Recommendation)
- 5.4.5 Implement utility standards that encourage infill development. (Support Land Use Element update concepts)
- 5.4.56 Ensure multimodal public and private transportation options are available for new and redeveloped housing. (Audit Recommendation)
- 5.4.67 Promote complete streets and trails to interconnect Yakima’s neighborhoods and promote walkability.
- 5.4.68 Promote safe, energy efficient, and healthy housing attainable to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Explore measures to improve indoor air quality and foster construction methods that reduce dust, mold, and air toxics concentrations in the homes. (Audit Recommendation)

Goal 5.5 Foster a caring community that nurtures and supports individuals, children, and their families. (Optional topic; human services and housing are linked; suggest addressing given equity study)

- 5.5.1 Make human services more inclusive and accessible to the Yakima community.
- 5.5.2 Identify opportunities and develop strategies that are proactive and preventative in their approach to human services needs.
- 5.5.3 Allocate City general funds and seek federal and state funds to offer human services that the City can best provide ~~to and~~ address a spectrum of community needs.
- 5.5.4 Consider human services objectives in developing City regulations and codes. For example, enforcing code abatement may mean making people homeless. Ensuring there are community resources to assist these residents, before they are abated, is critical.
- 5.5.5 Cooperate with school districts and non-profit human service providers to identify needs and effective delivery of services to individuals, children, and families.

5.5.6 Educate the community about and promote affordable and special needs housing and human services facilities and programs. Conduct early and ongoing public outreach and communication during program or project review and apply appropriate conditions of approval that address community concerns such as traffic congestion, public service provision, or environmental quality.

5.5 Implementation

Yakima’s Housing Element is implemented through the actions and investments made by the City with the support of its residents and stakeholders. Some of these actions include regulatory changes, partnerships, coordination, administrative acts, policy changes, human service programs, and capital investments. The following implementation items aid in this process.

Exhibit 5-3. Housing Implementation

Implementation Item	Action Type	Desired Result
City of Yakima Consolidated Plan, 2015 – 2019	Strategic plan, updated periodically, that provides an assessment of current and projected housing needs, housing market trends, inventory conditions, barriers to providing affordable housing, a list of current providers, and a five-year strategy for providing affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on housing inventory and needs • Inventory of affordable housing providers • Increase in affordable housing
A Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness: A Five Year Update, 2012 ^[CJ2]	Report on local efforts and strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on homelessness • Decrease homelessness
Annual Action Plan for CDBG and HOME Investment Partnership Funds, 2016	Plan for use of federal funds, updated annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in affordable housing needs and community development needs

Implementation Item	Action Type	Desired Result
Yakima County Farmworker Housing Action Plan, 2011 – 2016	Strategic plan for approaching issues related to farmworker housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing needs data for seasonal and year-round farmworkers • Increased housing stability for farmworkers
Zoning Code	Regulatory law on housing development, amended as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure code aligns with goals and needs in the community • Remove barriers to affordable housing
Senior/Disabled Persons Home Repair Program	City housing program administered through the Office of Neighborhood Development to those who qualify (income and asset restrictions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased investment in neighborhoods • Aesthetic improvements
Exterior Paint Program	City housing program administered through the Office of Neighborhood Development to those who qualify (age and disability restrictions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased investment in neighborhoods • Aesthetic improvements
Homeownership Through New Construction	City housing program administered through the Office of Neighborhood Development to those who qualify (income restrictions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased homeownership
Tenant/Landlord Counseling	Office of Neighborhood Development Services program to assist either tenants or landlords with disputes and advice on reaching agreements or seeking legal support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved tenant/landlord relationships • Education on legal support for those in need

Implementation Item	Action Type	Desired Result
Lot Acquisition Program	A City program within the Yakima Target Area that provides funds to purchase lots for residential development projects. Lots must be residentially zoned, have vacant or substandard buildings, and be developed within 12 months of purchase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New housing stock ● Neighborhood revitalization ● New infill development