Outlook

Comment to the Comp Plan

From David Morales <dtown2703@gmail.com>
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To Ask Planning <Ask.Planning@yakimawa.gov>; All City Council <ccouncil2@YAKIMAWA.GOV>; City Council <City.Council@YAKIMAWA.GOV>; council2@yakima.gov <council2@yakima.gov>

Dear Planning Commission,

As a resident of Yakima, I appreciate the substantial work reflected in the Comprehensive Plan update.

After reviewing the Housing, Transportation, Technical Analysis, and Vulnerability Assessment materials, I am encouraged that the City has identified significant disparities affecting East Yakima and many Latino neighborhoods, including lower homeownership rates, higher environmental-health burdens, greater heat exposure, and elevated displacement risk.

However, identifying disparities is only the first step. The larger question is whether the Comprehensive Plan affirmatively furthers fair housing and expands opportunity. This was the goal of the original committee that I served on ten years ago.

The Technical Analysis documents significant differences in homeownership, income, environmental conditions, and neighborhood outcomes across Yakima. It also identifies displacement risk in downtown and East Yakima.

I encourage the City to strengthen the Comprehensive Plan in three ways:

1. Prioritize investments in sidewalks, shade trees, crossings, parks, and neighborhood infrastructure in areas identified as having the greatest heat, environmental, and health burdens.
2. Ensure that housing choice, middle housing, ADUs, and affordable housing opportunities are available throughout the city, including in higher-opportunity neighborhoods, rather than concentrating affordability in areas that already face disproportionate burdens.
3. Strengthen anti-displacement strategies in neighborhoods identified as having moderate and high displacement risk.

The most resilient investments are often the smallest ones: safe sidewalks, connected neighborhoods, street trees, housing flexibility, and incremental infill. These investments improve public health, expand opportunity, and build long-term community wealth while helping the City manage future infrastructure costs.

The plan contains valuable analysis. I encourage the City to ensure that implementation priorities are aligned with the disparities that the analysis itself identifies. Doing so would strengthen both the City's resilience goals and its commitment to fair housing and equitable opportunity.

DOC. INDEX #
D-27

Best,

David Morales

DOC. INDEX #
D-27