

April 6, 2021

Pacific Power
825 NE Multnomah Street
Portland, OR 97232

Pacific Power
500 N. Keys Road
Yakima, WA 98901

Re: Need for more predictable, shorter timelines for development projects

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Yakima is facing a housing crisis. Rental vacancy levels are less than 1% and developers are building units to get them on the market quickly. From single family homes to multi-family apartment complexes, all types, styles and sizes of housing is needed to address this crisis. The City Council has been engaging with the Central Washington Home Builders Association and local developers of housing to address the crisis and discuss affordable housing opportunities.

The main issue of concern involves the Pacific Power engineering and design team. They currently are unable to take projects and get developers an engineered design so that the developers can get to work on their projects. Developers have reported to the City that Pacific Power does not have enough engineers on staff to handle the amount of work being sent for design. Engineering plans that should take 90 days to get back to developers are taking almost 12 months. That significant delay is restricting housing units from going online in Yakima, where they are desperately needed. Further, since all other utilities follow after the Pacific Power designs are completed, the failure to provide designs back to developers in a timely manner by Pacific Power is causing substantial delays in construction.

Yakima has a high demand for housing units and developers are ready, willing, and able to construct these units in Yakima as quickly as possible. There are several developments in the construction stage, and additional projects being developed for housing units in Yakima. These housing units are desperately needed. Unfortunately, the delays caused by Pacific Power are hindering the development and on-site work from being completed.

What is needed from Pacific Power is predictable response times that will expedite housing unit development. Developers and contractors are depending on you to do your work so that projects can move forward. The City is depending on you to do your work so that housing units can go online and people can find the housing they want and need in Yakima.

We encourage your pro-active resolution to many of these issues. Our residents can no longer abide the delays.

Sincerely,

Patricia Byers
Mayor

cc. Senator Curtis King
Senator Jim Honeyford
Rep. Gina Mosbrucker
Rep. Chris Corry
Rep. Bruce Chandler
Rep. Jeremie Dufault
Robert Harrison, City Manager

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