



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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**MEMORANDUM**

May 4, 2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
Robert Harrison, City Manager

FROM: Joan Davenport, AICP, Community Development Director  
Joseph Calhoun, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Background Information on City Council Review of Housing Action Plan Draft

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At the April 20, 2021 meeting, the City Council scheduled a discussion “to direct staff to write amendments to the draft Housing Action Plan which will actualize our affordable housing policy goals”. This memo is offered to the City Council as a summary of the status of the Housing Action Plan (HAP). Staff is prepared and available to assist the City Council in conveying direction to accomplish City policy and goals.

The Housing Action Plan (HAP) Over-view

The Yakima City Council adopted Resolution R-2019-118 on December 3, 2019 to accept a grant of \$100,000 from the Washington State Department of Commerce for the purpose of preparing a Housing Action Plan, as outlined in HB 1923. The legislation included in HB 1923 was a flagship effort by Washington State Department of Commerce to promote a robust effort at the local level to foster and encourage affordable housing in our communities, as well as implement regulatory reform to promote housing construction. Yakima is one of the 66 communities to receive a grant under this program. The City contracted with BERK Associates to coordinate and draft the HAP, as BERK was also the firm which prepared the Comprehensive Plan Housing element.

In 2019, the City of Yakima was very involved in measures to encourage affordable housing. The Council study session on March 12, 2019 resulted in direction of staff to begin working on 24 different strategies to encourage housing. The Planning Commission held 12 study sessions to review zoning, subdivision and SEPA amendments, which the Council adopted. Additionally, the City Council adopted HB 1406 which authorized an optional sales tax provision for Affordable Housing purposes.

The priorities stated by the City at the time of entering the HB 1923 grant project included:

1. Infill Development;
2. Promote Home Ownership for low to Moderate Income families;
3. Affordable Senior Housing;
4. Encouraging Permanent Supportive or Transitional Housing.

## Status of the HAP

Completed and adopted HAP's are required to be submitted to Department of Commerce by June 15, 2021. Largely due to the pandemic, virtually all communities have struggled to complete their HAP by the deadline and Commerce is now granting extensions. The City of Yakima has submitted a request to extend the deadline. Community engagement was significantly re-strategized in March of 2020, when public meetings were restricted.

The HAP is considered a Supplement to the Comprehensive Plan. As such, the Yakima Planning Commission (YPC) is responsible for the public process which includes the review of the draft document, conduct a public hearing, incorporate public and agency comments, and then forward an amended draft HAP to the City Council for their review and adoption.

Below is a list of notices for the public hearing and SEPA review process, which is underway.

April 8, 2021 Notice of YPC Public Hearing and Environmental Review (SEPA) issued  
April 28, 2021 YPC public hearing  
April 28, 2021 Public and Agency Comments due  
May 12, 2021 YPC finals draft of HAP for Council  
May 25, 2021 City Council Study Session to review HAP, as recommended by YPC  
June 1, 2021 Yakima City Council Public Hearing on HAP

We have a study session set for May 25<sup>th</sup> when the Council will have the opportunity to review a more complete draft HAP. The City Council may receive public comments on June 1, 2021 and then discuss, deliberate and direct edits to the draft HAP. The City Council may choose to schedule a follow up session to consider amendments to the draft HAP, if necessary. Once the HAP is adopted by the Council, after any changes are made, the final document is required to be forwarded to the Department of Commerce, in order to close out the grant and receive the final reimbursement.