



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

*Joan Davenport, AICP, Director*

*129 North Second Street, 2nd Floor Yakima, Washington 98901*

*Phone (509) 575-6183 • Fax (509) 575-6105*

*[www.yakimawa.gov/services/community-development](http://www.yakimawa.gov/services/community-development)*

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: November 15, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

Thru: Robert Harrison, City Manager

From: Joan Davenport, Community Development Director

Sara Watkins, City Attorney

Tom Sellsted, Supervising Senior Analyst

Randy Bonds, Senior Full Stack Developer

Rosylen Oglesby, Assistant City Manager

Randy Beehler, Communication and Public Affairs Manager

Subject: Summary of 2017 Equity Study

At the July retreat, City Council requested an update regarding the 2017 Equity Study at a future City Council meeting. This briefing provides City Council a foundation for the discussion.

Background Information

On December 12, 2017, the Yakima City Council accepted the final report from the Washington State University (WSU) Metropolitan Center for Applied Research and Extension entitled the "City of Yakima Equity Study Analysis." This report was produced in response to City Council's direction for a study to do the following: (1) review historical data regarding public investments in parks, street lights, code enforcement, transit, and public safety; (2) use 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue as the boundary between East and West, contrast the two portions of the City; (3) create a profile of the city population using population and other characteristics derived from the US Census data.

To support the work of the WSU Metro Center, City staff provided extensive data and created GIS mapping catalogs about the items requested for analysis and many other city characteristics. The data, maps, and the WSU Metro Center report are published on the City of Yakima website (<https://www.yakimawa.gov/council/equity-study/>).

The study cost \$25,000, took about nine months to complete, and was funded by the ACLU lawsuit that resulted in the formation of the court order City Council districts. The City received \$100,000 to be used to fund projects that encouraged equity. The remaining funds were used to support the school mentorship intern program.



### Recommendations of the 2017 Equity Study

The Final Report from the WSU Metro Center concluded:

1. The City has done a professional job collecting and handling data. This data can be used as an “initial conditions statement” and a base to build data-driven decisions. Data presented in the study identifies significant differences in the population and land characteristics east and west of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The study notes that this is primarily attributed to annexation and growth patterns in the City over time. There is no evidence of intentional bias found in the data regarding investments
2. The City should assess what additional data it needs to collect based on the questions it wants to address in the future. Using the history, growth, and size of park parcels, east and west of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, as context, the Equity Study stated that the city could strategically address existing disparity without needing an expensive historical analysis.
3. The final report of the Equity Study notes that many cities have developed an “Equity Lens” process to evaluate the impact of a program or policy on diverse groups. However, critical to developing any Equity Lens decision process, the City needs to set some goals. An example was creating a ranked list of investment opportunities for philanthropy, which could be distributed to community partners to encourage funding of amenities within facilities in diverse communities.
4. The study concludes that authentic community and stakeholder engagement is a cornerstone of equitable decision-making. Additional resources for fostering community engagement were provided in the report.

### Conclusions

1. The 2017 Equity Study Analysis is a standalone document, analyzing data from the specific evaluation period. The study urged the City of Yakima to utilize the data and the process of examining additional data and findings to assist in data-driven decision-making and encourage investment in areas of diverse populations.
2. The Community Integration Committee was established in 2017 to advise City Council on various items related to community engagement and diversity.
3. One example of utilizing this data is the commitment to construct an east-side swimming pool.
4. The 2022 revision of City Council Districts utilized updated population characteristics from the US Census Bureau and created a third “Minority Majority” City Council District. The 2022 Redistricting process used the socioeconomic population characteristics along 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to define the revised boundaries.
5. If the City Council wishes to direct future projects to implement the Equity Report, they may wish to hold a Study Session in order to set goals, define terms and establish expectations.