



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
129 North Second Street
City Hall, Yakima, Washington 98901
Phone (509) 575-6050 • Fax (509) 576-6335

Kathy Coffey, Mayor
Carmen Méndez, Assistant Mayor
Maureen Adkison
Holly Cousens
Avina Gutiérrez
Dulce Gutiérrez
Bill Lover

October 10, 2016

Rogelio Montes
1518 S 9th Avenue
Yakima, WA 98902

Felicity Farias
712 S 7th St
Yakima, WA 98901

Subject: Status of Petition Relating to Expediting Equity Study

Dear Mr. Montes, Ms. Farias and et.al.,

On behalf of the Yakima City Council, I would like to thank you for the petition that was presented to the Council on September 20, 2016. The petition highlighted some key areas for community development and with this response, we will share with you some of the efforts already in place.

As you are aware, the petition, consisting of a stated 800 names, was submitted along with the following written statements.

1. Yakima Organizing Committee submitted the statement demanding that the City of Yakima prepare a "Comprehensive Plan for how it will address inequity among Yakima Neighborhoods by October 10, 2016"
2. Citizens for Safe, Clean and Healthy Neighborhoods asking for a Comprehensive Plan to address an Eastside Pool, park improvements, new sidewalks and repaired sidewalk on the east side of town, new street lighting and Code Enforcement.
3. Rich Stolz, Executive Director of OneAmerica letter to Council dated May 6, 2016 detailing a requested assessment of Yakima's neighborhoods. The letter specifically requested the following items:
 - a. Outsource the study to an external partner
 - b. Establish an oversight committee
 - c. Use metrics that illustrate the need
 - d. Make a clear commitment to act
 - e. Adopt a long-term approach
 - f. The letter provided a list of minimum criteria for the assessment

Status of City Response

The petition restates the information presented in May, 2016 to the City, with an additional declaration that a "Comprehensive Plan" be developed to address several capital improvements by October 10, 2016. The City Council directed staff to begin the Equity Study on May 3, 2016, with a 6-month time frame (November 2016). The approach used by the City

to date has followed much of the suggestions outlined in the OneAmerica letter attached to the petition.

- The Council Neighborhood and Community Building Committee (NCBC) was assigned the responsibility of guiding the Equity Project. Monthly reports have been presented to the NCBC. Staff immediately began the process of gathering data and preparing information that could be sorted into Council Districts for geographic comparison.
- A city web site has been created to publish the data for the study. Many of the data related to items detailed in the letter has been compiled and published.
www.yakimawa.gov/council/equity-study
- The council is in the process of establishing two citizen committees that will assist in the evaluation of questions related to equity.
- The council is in the process of establishing goals and outcomes for the Exploratory Committees and the Equity Study to ensure the objectives of the study are met.
- Council has requested additional data and characteristics be added to the data collection for fact-finding. We have reported information by Council Districts and used data that is measurable and can be updated for benchmarks.
- The City brought an expert on Race and Social Justice (Benita Horn) to facilitate a study session on August 23, 2016 with the City Council in order to introduce the experiences of other communities. Ms. Horn recommended the council work hard to develop an "Inclusive" approach that treats all residents in an equal manner which will facilitate a "win-win" rather than "win-lose" approach to problem solving and capital spending.
- One of the recommendations made by Ms. Horn was for education of City staff and elected officials on cultural competency. This training is in development and will be implemented soon.
- Staff has made preliminary contact with the Washington State University Social and Economic Sciences Research Center regarding future work as an independent examiner of information, once the data research is complete. The City is responsible for providing the data. WSU (or other institute) can examine and report on the information. Coordination with such an institute requires advance work in order to schedule the project.
- The City of Yakima is preparing the update of the Comprehensive Plan for the entire City, as required by the Growth Management Act. This Plan, due for adoption by June 2017, is currently in review by the City Planning Commission. The Draft Plan uses the seven new Council Districts as statistical areas and reports extensive information by Council Districts. The Capital Facilities portion of the Plan will also report information by Council Districts. The Plan is required to include a 6-year Capital Improvement Plan and a more generalized 20 year Plan for Capital spending.

- The City of Yakima has spent significant resources in street improvements in the last few years. Since 2013 \$11.17 Million was spent on street resurfacing east of 16th Avenue with approximately \$3.7 Million spent east of 1st Street. Since 2013, the City of Yakima spent \$8.0 Million in resurfacing of streets between 16th Avenue and 96th Avenue.
- Regarding future street improvement projects the Transportation Improvement Program for the next 6-years includes 34 projects east of 16th Avenue (valued at \$75 Million) and 30 projects west of 16th Avenue (valued at \$35 Million).

In summary, the City of Yakima is earnestly working toward the goal of providing an equitable distribution of services and improvements in all neighborhoods. There are many opportunities to participate in the process and we welcome comments and concerns from the community to build a community we can all feel safe in, raise our families and prosper.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy Coffey', written in a cursive style.

Kathy Coffey
Mayor of Yakima