

**Downtown**

**is**



**you**



# Letter from Mayor Harrell

**Downtown is the heart of Seattle and is powered by people - workers, neighbors, families, and visitors alike. Our Downtown Activation Plan is designed to bring Downtown into a new age. Downtown must be safe, welcoming, and a neighborhood for all.**

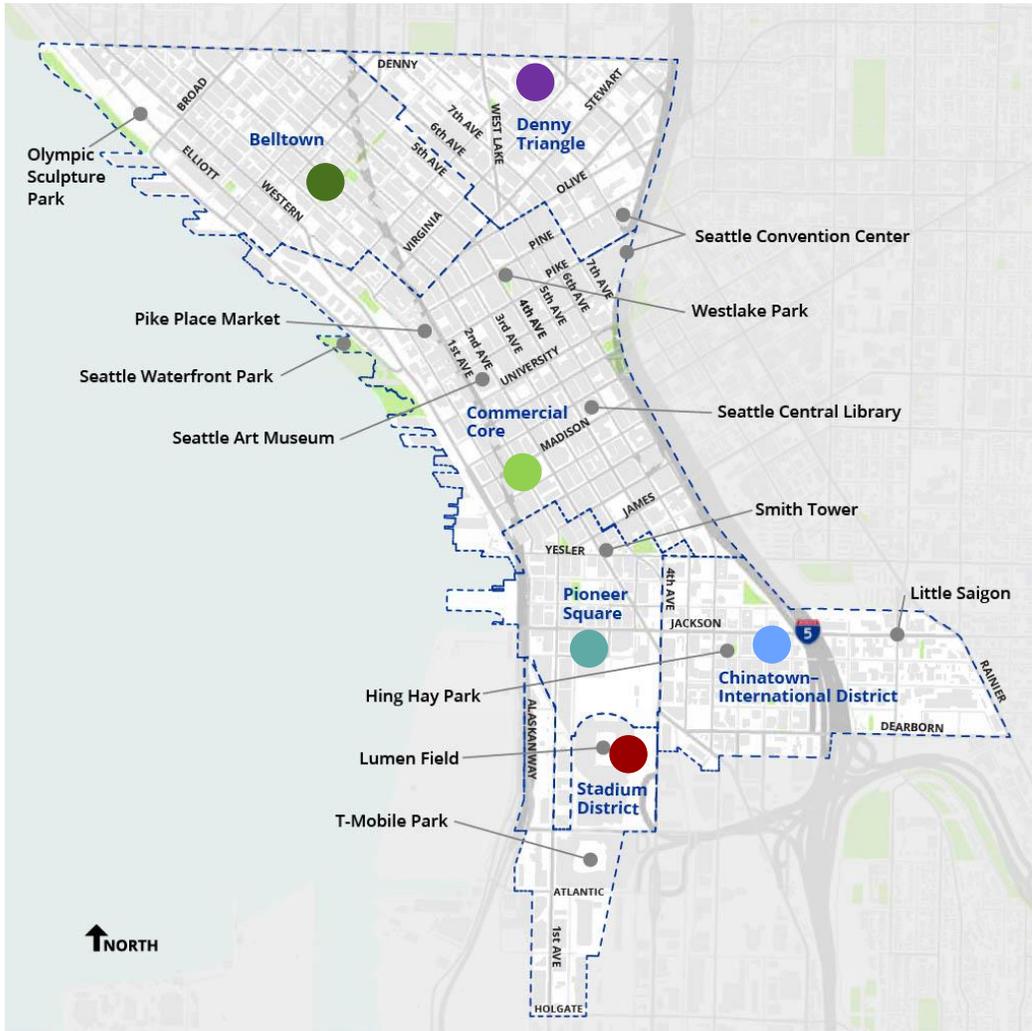
This is an exciting time, where we all get to dream, partner, and create the future of our city's core together. Earlier this year, in my State of City address, I called for us to embrace bold, creative thinking to design the Downtown of tomorrow. This is not about restoring the Downtown of the past, but rather reimagining what is possible as our city evolves.

Our goal is a robust Downtown neighborhood with more housing and amenities - ensuring Downtown is more than just a great place to go for work, but also a place where residents can afford to live, learn, shop, play, and so much more. Like downtowns across the United States, ours faces complex challenges including the remote work revolution, an ever-evolving retail landscape, affordable housing pressures, crises of homelessness and addiction, safety, and environmental priorities. The problems are real, but they are not insurmountable, and together, we can work to make positive change for our city.

Collaborating across levels of government and with private, nonprofit, and philanthropic partners, we are building a new Downtown that embodies our One Seattle values and vision. Our possibilities are endless, and together we will make them happen.

*Bruce Harrell*

# Downtown is a rich collection of neighborhoods



Downtown Activation Plan Zone

Source: Seattle's Office of Planning & Community Development

- **Belltown** is home to nightlife, local restaurants, and entertainment venues boasting bookings over decades ranging from Nirvana to Lizzo. Located next to the Waterfront, Belltown includes the Olympic Sculpture Park and is home to a large selection of human services that support people living in this neighborhood.
- As the anchor of Seattle's Asian community for more than 100 years, the **Chinatown-International District (CID)** thrives as both a residential and business space. A resilient community, rich in history and culture, committed to self-determination despite the continuing impacts of development, public policies, and other structural inequities.
- The **Commercial Core** is the central neighborhood of the Downtown urban center, where much of the city's economic and civic activities take place. It includes the historic Pike Place Market, the oldest continuously operating farmers market in the country, the central waterfront, and attractions like the Seattle Art Museum, Benaroya Hall, the Seattle Central Library, and Westlake Center.
- **Denny Triangle** stretches from the edge of the Downtown core to the grounds of Seattle Center, next to the Pacific Science Center and Space Needle. This area is home to many new high-rise residential buildings, hotels, and corporate offices that cater to people living, working, and visiting the rapidly growing area.
- **Pioneer Square**, known as Seattle's "first neighborhood" is a draw for many with its historic architecture, King Street Station and events like the First Thursday Art Walk. Filled with art studios, galleries, bars, cafes, restaurants, and Occidental Park.
- The **Stadium District** supports major sports, entertainment, retail gatherings, and events while maintaining the surrounding bustling industrial and maritime functions that are critical to our local and regional economy.

# Why Downtown Seattle Matters

## And this is just the beginning

**Seattle is worth fighting for - a healthy, thriving Downtown is critical to the identity and future of our city and region.** People across the city and the region want Downtown to succeed, have a lot of pride in Downtown, and understand it is crucial for our economic recovery.

Downtown has not always been a welcoming place for all people. **Today, we aim to reimagine what our shared future will look like and how Downtown is You.**

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**We're not waiting to improve Downtown** - in addition to announced actions, we will continue to work directly with Seattle communities to engage neighbors, refine our efforts, and advance new ideas and goals based on real input.

Use [www.downtownisyou.com](http://www.downtownisyou.com) to send us your feedback and sign up for our newsletter so you can stay updated on our progress.

# The Downtown Activation Plan will:

Bring people back to Downtown Seattle now...

...while designing a future of Downtown Seattle  
that works for you - **working people, families with  
children, and small business owners, and everyone  
who calls our city home.**

# We have the unique opportunity to reimagine Downtown Seattle and who Downtown is for.

Embracing this opportunity, Seattle is working toward a different future for the heart of our city...

A place that fosters a sense of **belonging, safety, and support**

**Environmentally friendly, green, and beautiful**

Accessible to **families with young children**

**Affordable** for those on a budget

A place where **small businesses can be successful and thrive**

Vibrant, active, and **full of life**

# Values and design principles that guided the development of Seattle's Downtown Activation Plan

## People First

The plan uses **language that is relevant to real people** and does not center the language of government or business. How we speak about the current state of Downtown and the future vision should be **aligned with what real Seattleites want** and center their needs.

## Ambitious Vision that Takes a Stand

Our vision for Downtown Seattle forms an opinion of who/what Downtown is for and takes a **visionary approach** consistent with the changing trends in Downtowns nationally.

## Race, Economic, and Social Justice

A plan that lives up to Seattle's **race and social justice values** by centering underrepresented voices and Black, Indigenous, and other Seattleites of color in the design of the future of Downtown.

## Resilience and Climate Justice

The plan will focus on actions that improve Downtown air quality, address the impact climate change is having on Downtown, and plan for a **more resilient, fossil fuel free city**.

## Humanity and Safety

While acknowledging the challenges facing too many Downtown, we want to **center people's humanity and ability to thrive**. The plan will reflect the need for Downtown to be a safe place for all people.

## Balanced Timeline

**Balance long-term transformation with quick win now**, prioritizing those now to three year impacts intended to stabilize Downtown and build momentum for sustainable change.

## Accountability

The plan needs to include **measurable outcomes, clear timelines, and accountability** to demonstrate an authentic commitment to achieving these goals.

## Collaboration

Understanding that the future of Downtown requires **all sectors to be committed** and brought into the process, engaging and involving government, nonprofits, the private sector, and community is critical.

# We listened to Seattleites to help build an equitable and inspiring vision for Downtown, then built out a plan to bring that future to life

We set out to reimagine a new future for Downtown ...



Goal of recovering foot traffic Downtown



Opportunity to create a Downtown that is:

- Family Friendly
- Affordable on any budget
- A hub for small businesses

... listening to Seattleites to help formulate a plan...

761

Seattleites polled on factors impacting their perceptions of Downtown

142

Downtown stakeholders and residents surveyed on what they want to see Downtown

116

Residents engaged in neighborhood listening sessions

60+

Leaders of City departments and external organizations interviewed

.... and built out a roadmap to make this vision a reality



**Detailed roadmap to Downtown revitalization**

# Seattle's Downtown Activation Plan is organized around seven bold goals to implement now while also laying the foundation for a new future for Downtown Seattle.

This plan recognizes that success depends on **first addressing public safety.**



Make Downtown **safe** and welcoming



Transform Downtown into a lively **neighborhood** where more people can afford to live



Create a unique Downtown **retail** experience



Make Downtown a place where people want to **work** and that reflects the future of our economy



Celebrate Downtown Seattle's **arts, culture, sports, and entertainment**



Make Downtown **a top destination** for Seattleites and visitors year-round



Create a healthy, resilient, and **green** Downtown

# Seattle's Downtown Activation Plan includes a continuum of action to balance quick, near-term progress with long-term systemic changes



## Near-term Goals and Strategies

- The City is already taking **quick action Downtown** to address urgent challenges, including the Executive Order on fentanyl, the reopening of City Park Hall, and expansion of the services provided by the Metropolitan Improvement District
- The City has developed a **tactical plan for the next three years** to make progress on the seven bold goals. This includes already funded initiatives, as well as some aspirational planning

## Visionary Ideas for the Future

- This plan also includes visionary ideas that signal a **transformational future** for Downtown Seattle but will take more time in order to strategize, secure investment, and build



# Downtown Action Plan Initiative Executive Summary

Downtown Activation Plan Initiatives	Safety	Residential	Retail	Workers	Arts, Culture, Sports, & Entertainment	Tourism	Green
<b>Goal 1: Make Downtown safe and welcoming</b>							
1. Seattle Police Department will continue to arrest individuals who are distributing and selling illegal drugs	●	●	●	●	●	●	
2. Seattle Police Department will continue special operations to reduce gun violence throughout the city	●	●	●	●	●	●	
3. Increase service provider outreach in the Third Avenue, as well as creating a One Seattle station physical location	●	●	●	●	●	●	
4. Launch a contingency management drug abatement program	●	●	●	●	●	●	
5. Establish an opioid overdose recovery center	●	●	●	●	●	●	
6. Establish one Crisis Care Center for adults—and potentially one for youth—as part of a regional network of five total centers	●	●	●	●	●	●	
7. Improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, including Pike Pine Streetscape improvements.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
8. Continue to support the 10-year renewal and expansion of the Downtown Seattle Association’s Metropolitan Improvement District for ongoing service	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
9. Deliver a one-time grant to Downtown Seattle Association to boost cleaning, safety, and hospitality services	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
10. Improve street and sidewalk lighting across Downtown	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
11. Offer graffiti removal services on private property with owner permission.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
12. Work with WSDOT to remove graffiti from Downtown exit signs and along I-5 and I-90	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Downtown Activation Plan Initiatives	Safety	Residential	Retail	Workers	Arts, Culture, Sports, & Entertainment	Tourism	Green
<b>Goal 2: Transform Downtown into a lively neighborhood where more people can afford to live</b>							
1. Upzone Third Avenue from Union to Virginia Street to allow for more affordable residential housing		○	○				
2. Waive State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements for all residential projects		○					
3. Pass legislation and make regulatory changes to make it easier to convert underutilized office space to housing		○		○			
4. Bring satellite farmers markets into Downtown neighborhoods		○	○	○	○	○	○
5. Attract additional and affordable grocery stores Downtown		○	○	○		○	
6. Activate neighborhood alleyways to create more pedestrian-friendly experiences	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. Support the strategic vision defined by King County Executive Dow Constantine to redesign the County's Downtown campus		○	○	○	○	○	○
8. Complete the Downtown Subarea Plan as part of the major Comprehensive Plan update		○	○	○	○		○
<b>Goal 3: Create a unique Downtown retail experience</b>							
1. Launch The Liberty Project supporting underserved, particularly Black-owned businesses		○	○	○	○	○	
2. Grow Seattle Restored to fill vacant storefronts with artists and small businesses	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Create a new Small Business Navigation Team to help small businesses successfully navigate City processes and connect them to resources.			○	○	○		

Downtown Activation Plan Initiatives	Safety	Residential	Retail	Workers	Arts, Culture, Sports, & Entertainment	Tourism	Green
<b>Goal 4: Make Downtown a place where people want to work and reflects the future of our economy</b>							
1. Convene public and private sector leaders to share strategies and drive effective return-to-office and hybrid work policies	●		●	●	●		
2. Create networking events that celebrate and welcome workers back Downtown, like the successful Black Tech Night			●	●	●	●	
3. Incentivize the development of childcare and education services by allowing greater building heights when these facilities are included in new buildings		●		●			●
4. Develop a "life at night" agenda to activate Downtown businesses in the late-night hours		●	●	●	●	●	
<b>Goal 5: Celebrate Downtown Seattle's arts, culture, sports, and entertainment</b>							
1. Hire a director of Citywide Special Events to implement the integrated and proactive strategy		●	●	●	●	●	●
2. Hire a creative economy manager		●	●	●	●	●	●
3. Provide capital funding for accessibility and other capital improvements to Benaroya Hall, a City-owned arts facility.		●			●		
4. Explore ways to bring Bumbershoot events Downtown		●			●	●	
5. Create more murals and other art installations throughout Downtown	●	●		●	●	●	●
6. Support community-driven activations and cultural celebrations Downtown	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Downtown Activation Plan Initiatives	Safety	Residential	Retail	Workers	Arts, Culture, Sports, & Entertainment	Tourism	Green
<b>Goal 6: Make Downtown a top destination for Seattleites and visitors year-round</b>							
1. Install a network of digital navigation kiosks Downtown	●	●	●	●	●	●	
2. Partner with Seattle Public Schools to build a new Memorial Stadium		●		●	●	●	●
3. Open a Tribal Interpretive Center at Waterfront Park		●		●	●	●	●
4. Connect Downtown neighborhoods with Waterfront Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5. Modify the Seattle Tourism Improvement Area to expand advertising for leisure and Convention Center marketing			●	●	●	●	
<b>Goal 7: Create a healthy, resilient, and green Downtown</b>							
1. Pilot a green and healthy street by closing Pike Street between First and Second Avenues for pedestrians only	●	●	●		●	●	●
2. Reopen City Hall Park	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3. Finish improvements to Downtown parks	●	●		●	●	●	●
4. Complete the full construction of the Seattle Waterfront by 2025, including free, family-friendly programming		●	●	●	●	●	●
5. Explore the future use of Pier 48 as new open green space		●				●	●
6. Continue to explore the lidding of I-5 to create park spaces and pedestrian connections from Capitol Hill to Downtown	●	●				●	●
7. Pilot low-pollution neighborhoods Downtown by establishing low-emission delivery opportunities		●	●				●
8. Implement the Building Emissions Performance Standards Policy (BEPS)	●	●					●