

STATE OF DOWNTOWN



Public Safety Challenges
& Proposed Actions
Fall 2023

Presented by



DOWNTOWN
BELLINGHAM
PARTNERSHIP



ABOUT US

The Downtown Bellingham Partnership is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to furthering the vibrancy and growth of our downtown.

- 20+ Year History
- Four Main Pillars of Service
 - Placemaking
 - Events & Promotions
 - Small Business Support
 - Landscaping & Cleaning

City of Bellingham funding (\$350K) in 2023 supported landscaping, cleaning, and a portion of our operating expenses.

DBP
DOWNTOWN
BELLINGHAM
PARTNERSHIP

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT



CITY BLOCK PROGRAM

5 districts led by business owners and DBP staff

Share and support resources, advocacy work, solutions to hyper-geographic issues

Meet with mayor 2x/year



SAFETY AMBASSADORS*

*\$580K in ARPA funds committed to 2022-2023 Pilot

Funded by City of Bellingham, co-managed by COB & DBP



GRAFFITI ABATEMENT*

*\$50K+ COB funds in 2022-2023

- 4K Removals
- \$400K+ Property Damage
- 4 Key Arrests in 2023

IMPLEMENTED SINCE 2022

DOWNTOWN MATTERS



INDEPENDENT OWNERSHIP

Downtown Businesses Are:

- Locally owned
- WWU Alums
- Families Supporting Generations

They are NOT corporate/chain establishments



COMMUNITY LIVING ROOM

Post pandemic, people are seeking connection more than ever AND there are new things to discover:

- Stateries
- Dozens of new businesses
- New murals and art



ECONOMIC ENGINE

Tax revenue collected supports:

- Essential services
- Programs that support vulnerable populations

Tourism destination for county

TO THE COMMUNITY

DATA & FEEDBACK PRIORITIZES OUR WORK

Collection Mechanisms & Key Findings Since Q1 2023

CITY BLOCK PROGRAM



Monthly Meetings



Open drug use, distribution, assault, robbery, weapon use

DBP downsized seasonal events footprints as result

BUSINESS SURVEY



March 2023



Safety #1 concern
15% reported moving out or closing in '23



Public Drug Use Ordinance

Mayor's Solutions Workgroup

PUBLIC SIGN-ON LETTER



May/June 2023



Chamber of Commerce Joins

- 1,300+ Signers
- 700+ Stories



Police Overtime
Foot Patrols

Alleyway Cleaning

COMMUNITY TESTIMONIALS

Day Care Owner & Operator

I own a childcare center in downtown Bellingham and have a solo practice as a Licensed Mental Health Professional. Both businesses have been dramatically affected. In the daycare center parents of children in my daycare center have been accosted when dropping off or picking up their children and parents have withdrawn their children due to security concerns ... We have had to obscure all windows to prevent ogling the children, installed additional outdoor lighting so staff felt safer accessing our dumpsters during dark months, and installed a security system at considerable expense.

James Place Child Development Center

COMMUNITY TESTIMONIALS

Major Downtown Employer

I'm the CEO of Faithlife... and employ around 200 employees in/around Bellingham....Our offices were repeatedly burglarized in 2021/2022, employees have been verbally accosted and/or assaulted near campus, and the collective damage to the downtown experience has forced many restaurants and other small businesses to shutter.

Collectively this makes downtown unappealing for my team, and makes it impossible for me to encourage, much less require, employees to return to the office.

If the city can find a path to make things safer and more manageable, I would welcome bringing my employees back to downtown in a more consistent manner.

Vik Rajagopal, CEO Faithlife

COMMUNITY TESTIMONIALS

Student & Resident

My children are 9 and 12. When they were younger we would spend hours downtown exploring the library, shops, and restaurants. Mallards being one of our favorite treats to walk to downtown. Flash forward to today and my kids actually have full blown anxiety about going downtown after witnessing dozens of unpredictable behaviors, dangerous altercations...and individuals actively using drugs on sidewalks.

Not even a trip to Mallards will bribe them to go downtown. Because of this, we avoid downtown completely, and yet there are still so many amazing businesses I want to support and have my kids experience! Neko cat cafe, Mindport, Are You My Human?, the Pickford, Hendersons, etc just to name a few.

Please, the community deserves a better downtown experience, with safety being a bare minimum requirement!


Jennifer J.

NEED FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

We support the efforts initiated by Mayor's Solutions Workgroup, sentiment of All Hands Whatcom, and community engagement philosophy. However,

URGENCY

is essential and we advocate for the immediate implementation of short-term solutions in parallel with longer-term plans.



Our Downtown cannot afford to wait for more intervention

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

Declaration, Capital Investment, & Measurement

PUBLICLY PRIORITIZE



Urgently



Mayor's Solutions Workgroup initiatives with short-term (30-90 days) impact



Announce public facing plan, with actions, metrics, and timelines

FUND



Urgently



Continued police foot patrols



Increase security patrol investment



DBP CPTED alleyway projects



Specialized drug units at BPD

REPORT & MEASURE



Now - 2024 Min



Public plan needs community-facing launch AND consistent updates on metrics:

- Overdoses
- Commercial Vacancies
- Responder Call Volume

EXAMPLES OF OTHER COMMUNITY PLANS

Seven Bold Goals for Downtown Seattle

In order to create a new future Downtown, we know we need to act boldly. Seven bold goals guide how we are looking to transform Downtown Seattle over the next three years.

01. Make Downtown safe and welcoming

INITIATIVE EXAMPLES:

- Increase service provider outreach along Third Avenue to provide a 24-hour presence
- Launch a contingency management drug abatement program
- Offer graffiti removal services on private property with owner permission

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

03. Create a unique Downtown retail experience

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

05. Celebrate Downtown Seattle's arts, culture, sports, and entertainment

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

07. Create a healthy, resilient, and green Downtown

MORE

[Denver, CO](#)

[Atlanta, GA](#)

[Frederick, MD](#)

[Saint Paul, MN](#)

[Asheville, NC](#)

[Cleveland, OH](#)

Downtown Activation Plan Dashboard

Welcome to the City of Seattle's Downtown Activation Plan Dashboard! Here you will find the latest data on the City's work to create a Downtown that is safe, welcoming, and a unique social gathering space.

Click on a link below to navigate to a specific topic. [Learn about the methodology here >](#)

Residents

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

Workers

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

Tourism

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

Retail

Create a unique Downtown retail experience.

Culture

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

Green

Create a healthy, resilient, and green Downtown.

Total Foot Traffic by Quarter

Quarter	Residential Foot Traffic	Worker Foot Traffic	Visitor Foot Traffic	Total Foot Traffic
2019 Q1	10M	10M	10M	30M
2019 Q2	12M	10M	10M	32M
2019 Q3	12M	10M	10M	32M
2019 Q4	10M	10M	10M	30M
2020 Q1	10M	10M	10M	30M
2020 Q2	2M	2M	2M	6M
2020 Q3	5M	5M	5M	15M
2020 Q4	5M	5M	5M	15M
2021 Q1	5M	5M	5M	15M
2021 Q2	5M	5M	5M	15M
2021 Q3	5M	5M	5M	15M
2021 Q4	5M	5M	5M	15M
2022 Q1	5M	5M	5M	15M
2022 Q2	5M	5M	5M	15M
2022 Q3	5M	5M	5M	15M
2022 Q4	5M	5M	5M	15M
2023 Q1	5M	5M	5M	15M

Source: Placerad

Public Safety

An additional goal of the Downtown Activation Plan is to make Downtown safe and welcoming.

To learn more about Seattle's work to ensure public safety, explore the Seattle Police Department dashboard here: <https://www.seattle.gov/police/information-and-data/data/crime-dashboard>.

Equity

Equity is a crucial component of the Downtown Activation Plan.

Learn more about the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI): <https://www.seattle.gov/rsji>.

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Public Safety & Economic Vitality
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