



# Downtown

is



you

Progress from July to December 2024  
Downtown Activation Plan



# Table of Contents

- 6-months of Downtown Progress
- Downtown Progress
- Appendix





# Downtown includes a rich collection of neighborhoods



- **Belltown** is a dense, urban neighborhood that is home to nightlife, local restaurants, and entertainment venues.
- 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.
- The **Commercial Core** is the central neighborhood of the Downtown urban center, where much of the city's economic and civic activities take place.
- **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.
- **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.
- The **Stadium District** supports major sports, entertainment, retail gatherings, and events while maintaining the surrounding bustling industrial and maritime functions.

# 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**

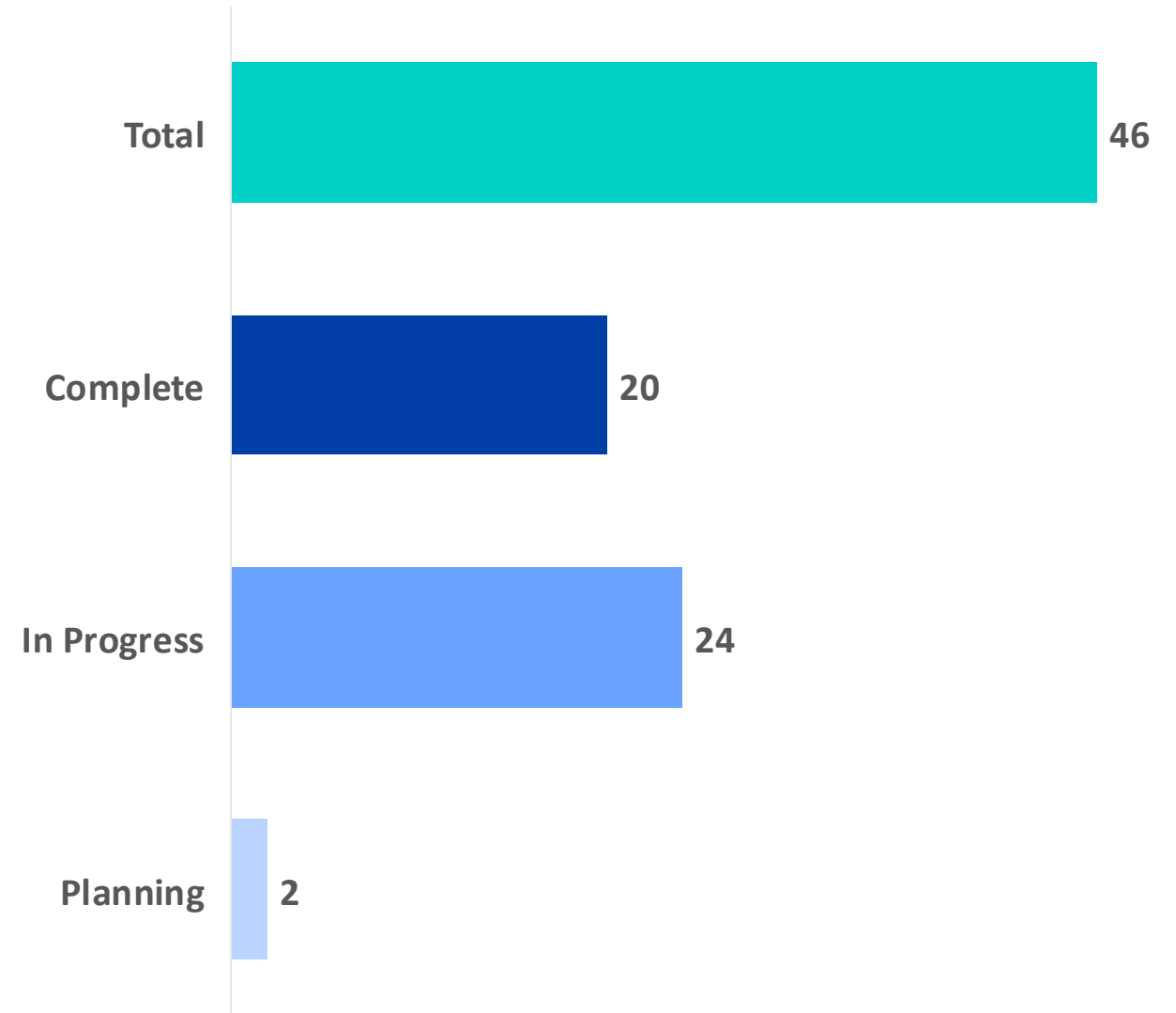


Make Downtown **a top destination** for Seattleites and visitors year-round



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

# Of the 46 initiatives introduced in the Downtown Activation Plan...





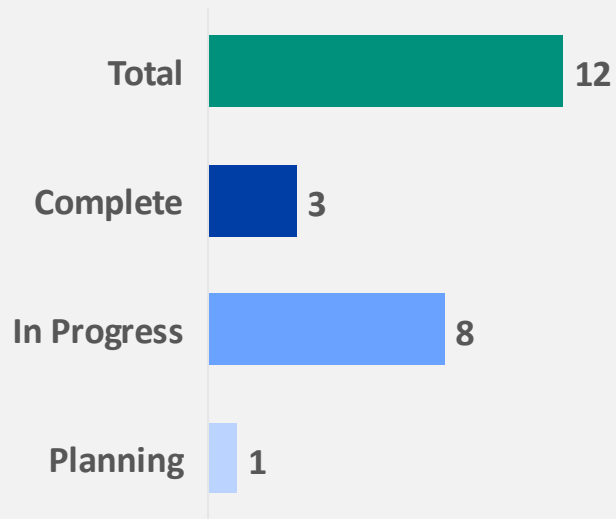


# Downtown Progress Highlights

July to December 2024



## Make Downtown safe and welcoming



*\*Note some of the safety initiatives are ongoing so they are labelled In Progress rather than Complete*

The City of Seattle became the first in the nation to have firefighters/EMTs administering buprenorphine medication in the field.

Mayor Harrell directed \$2.85M to increase dedicated detox and inpatient treatment bed capacity for those with substance use disorder. Funding will support additional bed capacity at Valley Cities Recovery Place Seattle in Beacon Hill through a pilot program.



Photo by Downtown Seattle Association

“Working alongside our partners, this comprehensive strategy – laid out in our 2023 Executive Order – is helping make a difference; preliminary data shows 150 fewer fatal overdoses in 2024 compared to this time last year.”

Mayor Harrell

Spark Blocks lit up Third Avenue with help from SDOT, DSA, and property owners. New lights and murals along Third Avenue have created a festive feel and increased safety and vibrancy in this critical Downtown corridor.

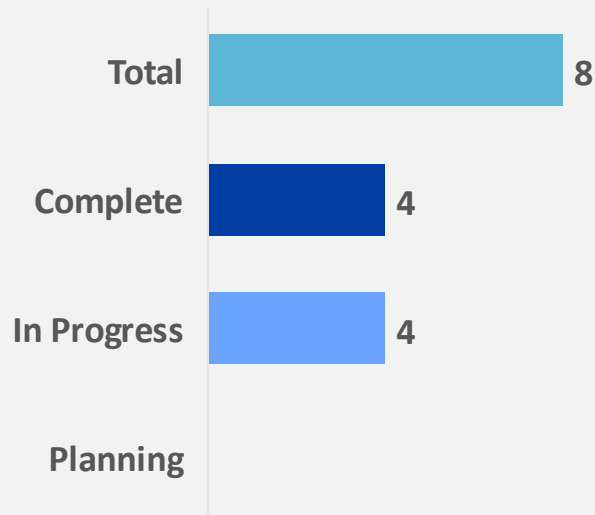
An Executive Order created the Downtown Activation Team. Initial DAT operations have shown positive early results in the Pike/Pine DAT area compared to last year.

- 27% decrease in violent crime
- 14% decrease in emergency service calls
- 30% decrease in emergency medical responses





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



### Mayor Bruce Harrell signed legislation waiving design review for new development projects

Downtown. This action “establishes more efficient, flexible design review process that will reduce the amount of time and cost of development... This will add more housing and employment opportunities in Downtown neighborhoods, strengthening the heart of our city and supporting its continued economic growth now and into the future.”



Photo by Office of the Mayor

Seattle voters approved the transportation levy to maintain and modernize the city streets with paving, bridge repairs, sidewalk construction, and connections to light rail. Some examples include:

- Creation of People Streets on Occidental Promenade and
- Chinatown-International District Alley Activation
- Third Avenue Activation

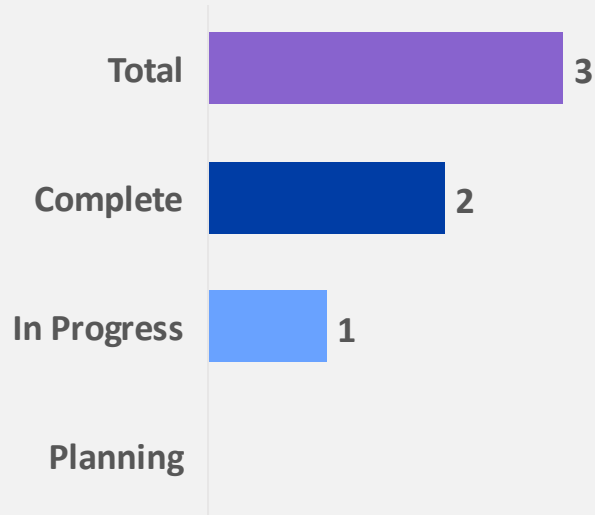
### Seattle City Council unanimously passed legislation to support the conversion of existing commercial buildings to resident uses

The legislation established clear guidelines for determining what qualifies as a residential conversion and provides broad exemptions from design development standards any time an existing structure is converted to housing from another use, or residential uses are added within an existing building.





## Create a unique Downtown retail experience



### New Businesses continue to open Downtown

- [Diamond Bay Seattle](#) (CID),
- [Long Brothers Fine & Rare Books](#) (Pioneer Square)
- [Karoo Café](#) (Commercial Core)
- [Lenox](#) (Belltown)
- [ShoMon Kappo Shushi](#) (Denny Triangle)

### [Friends of Waterfront Park piloted pop-ups shops along the Waterfront.](#)

This summer eight local artists sold their goods in tiny, metal boxes right on Waterfront Walkway.

[The Pacific Place shopping center was sold to new owners.](#) News of the sale has brought optimism to the more than two dozen storefronts that are open and ready for business in Downtown's core.



Photo by Meg van Huygen



Photo by Casey Martin (KUOW)

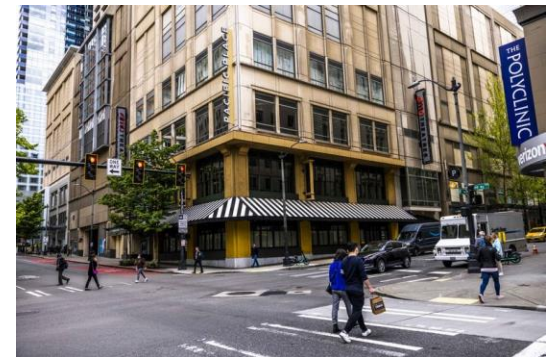
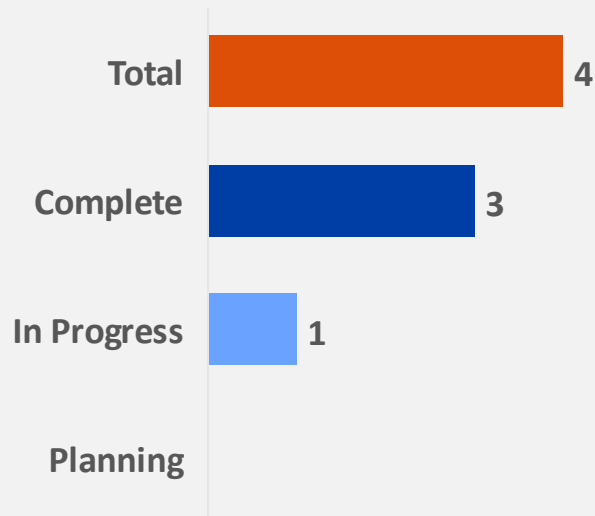


Photo by Daniel Kim (Seattle Times)



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



After years of fundraising, the Pike Place Market Child Care and Preschool indoor/outdoor play space is open! Established in the 1980s, the school aims to provide accessible care and education regardless of income.

Photo by Dezeen.com



Under new ownership, Smith Tower attracts nearly a dozen new tenants, including Café Vida and Alexander Hutton, who signed a seven-year release.

**Employers continue to bring workers back to office.**

- King County and Sound Transit join Mayor Harrell in announcing return to office policy changes.
- Amazon will require employees to work from the office five days a week starting in 2025.

The Hope Corps Downtown Seattle Mural Project showcased the talents of local artists and provided work and funding to over 30 artists.

Applications for Seattle Restored at Base Camp Studios 2 opened. Through this program, artists will have access to affordable studio space at the historic Bergman Luggage Building on the corner of Third Avenue and Stewart Street in Downtown Seattle.

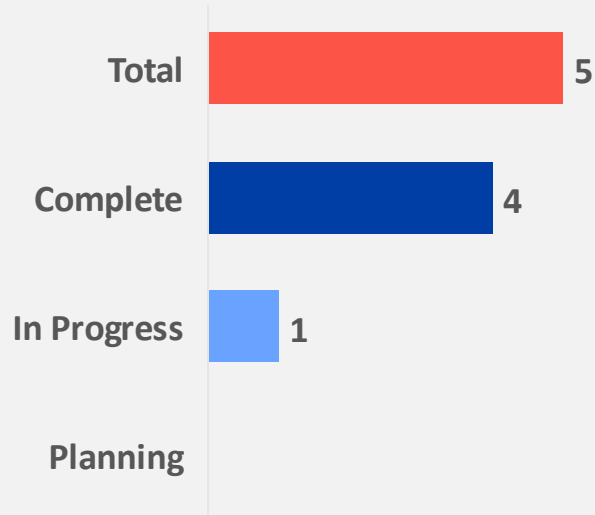


Photo by Jordan Nicholson





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



Mayor Harrell signed music venue zone permit legislation for live music venues to support easier parking and loading access for performers. The legislation authorizes SDOT to administer a Music Venue Zone Permit program and establish Music Venue Zones at qualifying music venues.



Photo by Office of the Mayor

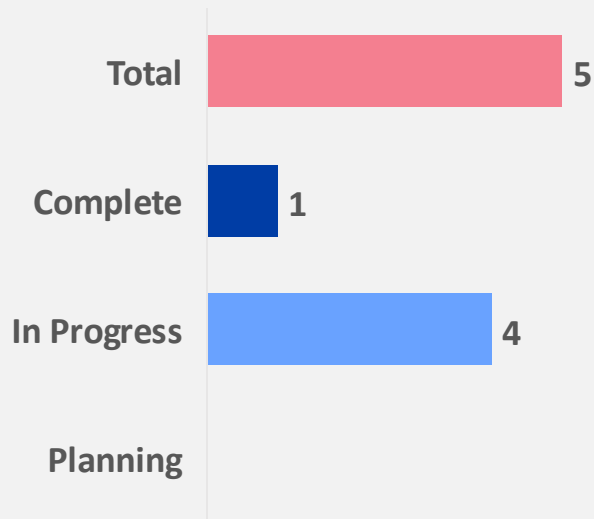
More than 22,500 music lovers showed up and rocked out to 35 concerts over 11 weeks during the 45th annual Downtown Summer Sounds outdoor concert series. Westlake Park saw the largest attendance for the DRAMA concert, which drew more than 4,000 people, followed by Occidental Square, which drew nearly 3,000 people for eight combined concerts, and Bell Street Park, where 1,000 people gathered to hear native Seattleite Ryan Caraveo.

King Street Station hosted a celebration of the Winter Solstice with the Longest Night. This communally-minded, season-inspired Solstice party brought light to the liminal space of the year's darkest day

Seattle Aquarium's Ocean Pavilion opened in August featuring three art installations created by Lummi artist Dan Friday – reflecting the artists' native ancestors, culture and place.



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



**Seattle's newest iconic landmark is open – Overlook Walk!** Connecting the Waterfront and Downtown with breathtaking views and enhanced public space, Overlook Walk is located where the Alaskan Way Viaduct once stood, creating the first ever pedestrian connection between Downtown and the Waterfront. So far, the overlook walk has sent [foot traffic numbers soaring](#).



*Photo by Waterfront Seattle*



*Photo by Seattle Times*

**Enchant Christmas returned to T-Mobile Park after a four-year hiatus**—bringing the world’s largest Christmas light maze and Santa’s landing Downtown. As visitors travel through Downtown they will experience [holiday lights in Westlake Park](#) and end up at [Seattle Center’s Winterfest and Christmas Market](#).

**More than 50 new murals have been or will be installed in Seattle’s Downtown.**

The mural project harnessed the resources of DSA, Belltown United, SCIDpda, SODO BIA, Visit Seattle and the Wing Luke Museum to connect artists with property owners.

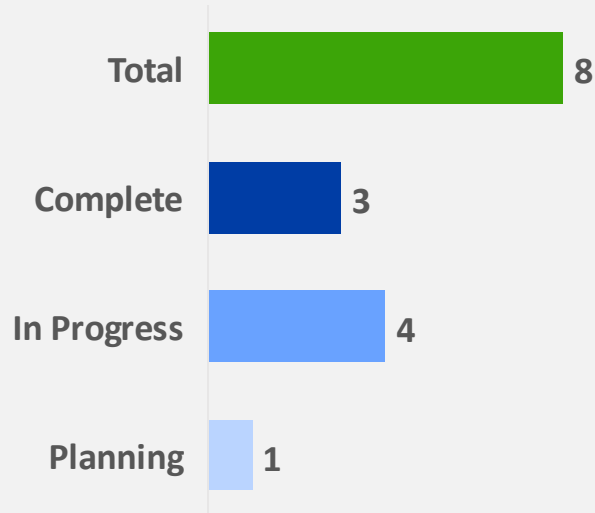


*Photos by Downtown Seattle Association*





## Create a healthy, resilient, and green Downtown



[Mayor Harrell advanced legislation to establish a shore power agreement with the Port of Seattle for Pier 66.](#) With the passage of this legislation, Seattle would become one of the first cruise ports in the nation to offer shore power at every berth, significantly reducing port-related air emissions in the Northwest.

[City of Seattle was awarded \\$17.2 million to implement Building Emissions Performance Standard,](#) which will support multifamily and commercial buildings reduce climate pollution.

[Pioneer Square East-West Pedestrian Improvements finished](#) and create more accessible and enjoyable travel between the Waterfront Park and Pioneer Square.

The opening of the Lynnwood Light Rail extension saw more people visiting Downtown by rail since pre-pandemic.



Photo by Office of the Mayor

[Construction on the Alaskan Way Safety Project has begun](#) to create a safer and more accessible route along Seattle's Waterfront, including protected bike lanes, upgraded traffic signals, and more.

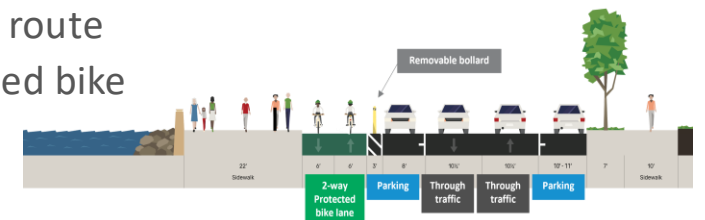


Photo by Seattle Department of Transportation



All photos by Jonathan Boone (Boone Media)

# Progress is underway...turning visionary ideas into reality

## Heart of the City

- In Q4 2024, a Westlake Steering Committee (City, DSA, Seattle Park Foundation) came together to align on the near-term actions around Westlake leading up to the World Cup in 2026 and create a plan for building a long-term vision
- In 2025, the City and partners will come together to create a Civic Committee to reimagine Westlake as an active, illuminated, and iconic Downtown District
- By the middle of the 2025, the City will look to share a catalytic District vision for what Westlake can become

## Makers Campus

- Seattle Colleges has assigned a project lead, who led the development of the Health Education Center in Pacific Tower
- They prepared a letter of intent specifying their goals for the Downtown Campus including desired square footage and financing options
- Seattle Colleges attended the Real Estate Roundtable and is meeting with prospective partners for a Downtown campus including Hudson Properties, OED, Urban Visions (in progress), and Seattle Chamber (in progress)

## BIPOC Mercado

- The pop-up markets hosted by Friends of Waterfront and supported by OED showcased a pilot of a Mercado concept
- Friends is looking to host vendors again in summer 2025





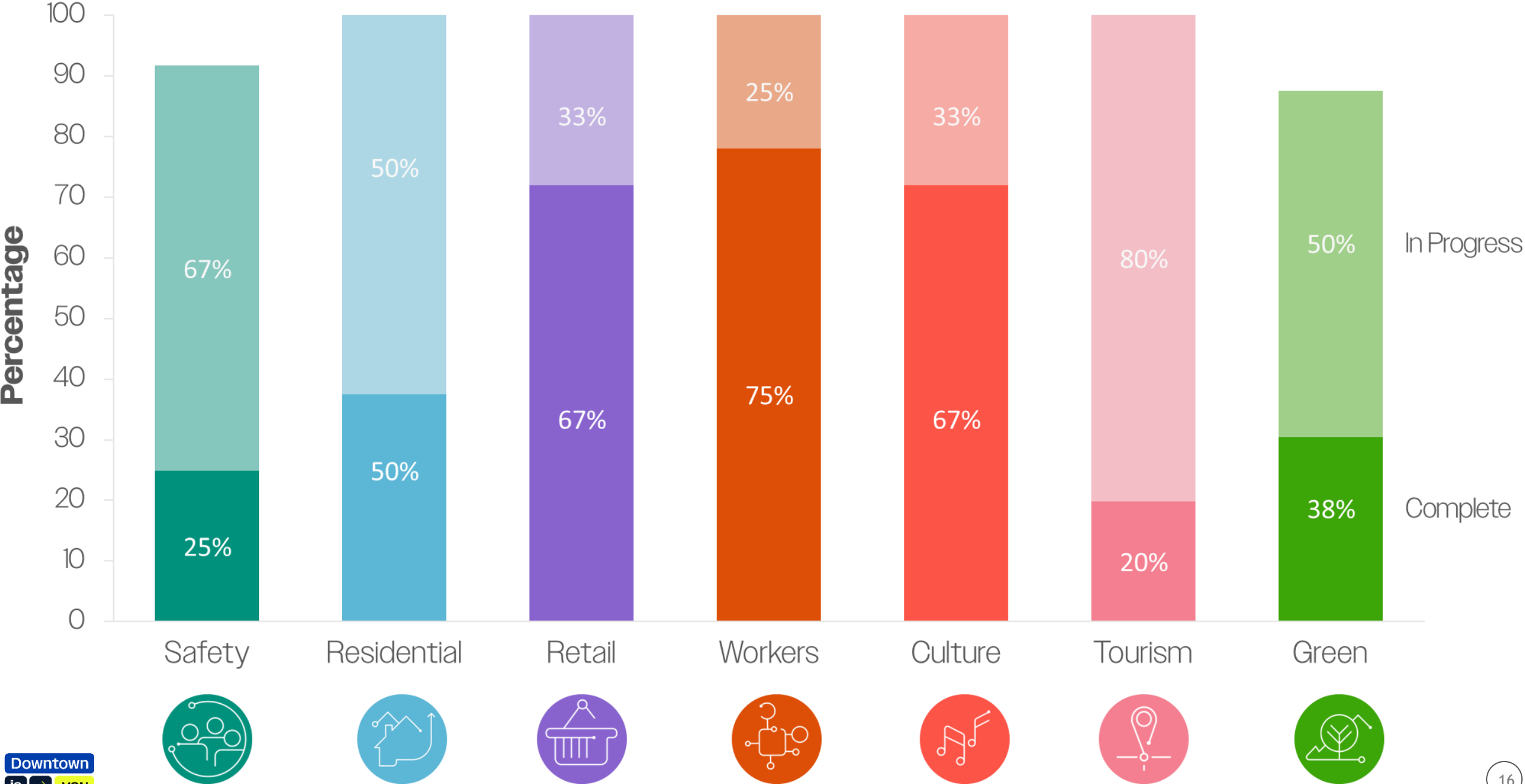
# Appendix



Detailed Initiative Tracker



Initiatives that are complete or in progress



	Planning	In Progress	Complete
<b>Downtown Activation Plan Initiatives</b>			
<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		x – ongoing	
2. Seattle Police Department will continue special operations to reduce gun violence throughout the city		x – ongoing	
3. Increase service provider outreach in Third Avenue, as well as create a One Seattle station physical location			X
4. Launch a contingency management drug abatement program		x	
5. Establish an opioid overdose recovery center		x	
6. Establish one Crisis Care Center for adults – and potentially one for youth – as part of a regional network of five total centers	x		
7. Improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, including Pike Pine Streetscape improvements		x – new progress!	
8. Continue to support the 10-year renewal and expansion of the Downtown Seattle Association’s Metropolitan Improvement District for ongoing service			x
9. Deliver a one-time grant to Downtown Seattle Association to boost cleaning, safety, and hospitality services			x
10. Improve street and sidewalk lighting across Downtown		x – ongoing	
11. Offer graffiti removal services on private property with owner permission.		x – ongoing	
12. Work with WSDOT to remove graffiti from Downtown exit signs and along I-5 and I-90		x	



	Planning	In Progress	Complete
<b>Downtown Activation Plan Initiatives</b>			
<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			x
2. Waive State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements for all residential projects			x
3. Pass legislation and make regulatory changes to make it easier to convert underutilized office space to housing			x – new progress!
4. Bring satellite farmers markets into Downtown neighborhoods			x
5. Attract additional and affordable grocery stores Downtown		x	
6. Activate neighborhood alleyways to create more pedestrian-friendly experiences		x	
7. Support the strategic vision defined by King County Executive Dow Constantine to redesign the County’s Downtown campus		x	
8. Complete the Downtown Subarea Plan as part of the major Comprehensive Plan update		x	
<b>Goal 3: Create a unique Downtown retail experience</b>			
1. Launch The Liberty Project supporting underserved, particularly Black-owned businesses			x – ongoing
2. Grow Seattle Restored to fill vacant storefronts with artists and small businesses			x – ongoing
3. Create a new Small Business Navigation Team to help small businesses successfully navigate City processes and connect them to resources.		x	

	Planning	In Progress	Complete
<b>Downtown Activation Plan Initiatives</b>			
<b>Goal 4: Make Downtown a place where people want to work and that 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			x – ongoing
2. Create networking events that celebrate and welcome workers back Downtown, like the successful Black Tech Night			x – ongoing
3. Incentivize the development of childcare and education services by allowing greater building heights when these facilities are included in new buildings		x	
4. Develop a “life at night agenda” to activate Downtown businesses in the late-night hours			x – new progress!
<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		x	
2. Hire a creative economy manager			x
3. Provide capital funding for accessibility and other capital improvements to Benaroya Hall, a City-owned arts facility.		x	
4. Explore ways to bring Bumbershoot events Downtown			x
5. Create more murals and other art installations throughout Downtown			x – new progress!
6. Support community-driven activations and cultural celebrations Downtown			x – ongoing

	Planning	In Progress	Complete
<b>Downtown Activation Plan Initiatives</b>			
<b>Goal 6: Make Downtown a top destination for Seattleites and visitors year-round</b>			
1. Install a network of digital navigation kiosks Downtown		x	
2. Partner with Seattle Public Schools to build a new Memorial Stadium		x – new progress!	
3. Open a Tribal Interpretive Center at Waterfront Park		x	
4. Connect Downtown neighborhoods with Waterfront Park		x – new progress!	
5. Modify the Seattle Tourism Improvement Area to expand advertising for leisure and Convention Center marketing			x
<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			x
2. Reopen City Hall Park			x
3. Finish improvements to Downtown parks		x – new progress!	
4. Complete the full construction of the Seattle Waterfront by 2025, including free, family-friendly programming		x – new progress!	
5. Explore the future use of Pier 48 as new open green space	x		
6. Continue to explore the lidding of I-5 to create park spaces and pedestrian connections from Capitol Hill to Downtown		x	
7. Pilot low-pollution neighborhoods Downtown by establishing low-emission delivery opportunities		x	
8. Implement the Building Emissions Performance Standard Policy (BEPS)			x