

**Seattle Film Commission**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, September 25, 2023, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM**



**Seattle Film Commissioners:** Beth Barrett, Laura Jean Cronin, Lowell Deo, Champ Ensminger, Tom Florino, Mark Freid, Michael Huang, Kat Ogden, Melissa Purcell, Anthony Tackett

**Staffed By Office of Economic Development:** Chris Swenson, Hamdi Hassan

*Note: As always, these are "raw minutes notes" based on the discussion of the 09/25/2023 meeting and do not include every word spoken - not a literal transcript - merely a summary of ideas.*

**Meeting Called to Order at 9:30am by Chair Kat Ogden**

**General Order of Business**

1. Call to order
2. Roll Call
  - a. Quorum confirmed
3. Land Acknowledgement
4. Public Comment
  - a. None
5. General Order of Business
  - a. Administration
  - b. Review and approval 9/25/23 meeting minutes – Unanimous vote to approve
6. Review of past commitments and events
  - i. Seattle Film Commission mixer at The Summit – Friday, September 8, 2023
    1. Significant turnout, good conversations, seven Commissioners attended.
  - ii. Northwest Film Forum Local Sightings Opening Night Mixer – Friday, September 15, 2023
    1. Significant attendance, good conversations, one Commissioner attended
  - iii. SIFF Marquee Gala – Thursday, September 21, 2023
    1. Significant attendance, good conversations, eight Commissioners attended
  - b. Preview of upcoming commitments and events
    - i. Seattle Film Commission + Music Commission meet and greet – October 11 or 18, 2023
      1. The consensus favored the week of the 18th, and it was selected as the preferred date
    - ii. Seattle Film + Music Commission annual meeting – Wednesday, November 15, 2023
      1. The annual meeting will be hosted both in person and virtually
      2. Specific content and agenda items for the meeting will be determined at a later time
      3. The focus of the meeting will be on aligning the Commission's missions and sharing priorities
    - iii. 2023 City of Seattle Creative Economy Career Day – February 2024
      1. Focus will be on ages 17-24

2. Targeted date is February 9, 2024

iv. Committee and workgroup updates

1. Economic and Workforce Development (Tom Florino)
  - a. Tabled
2. Policy (Mark Fried)
  - a. Priority: Production IDs, which will help with safety and identification, and facilitating public interaction with the production process to enhance transparency
  - b. Priority: Ensuring consistency between local cities and communities concerning filming practices; for example, filming process in Seattle differs from filming in Tacoma
  - c. Priority: Would like to begin discussions with local tribal leaders regarding film production and workforce
3. Marketing, Branding and Initiatives (Beth Barrett)
  - a. Priority: Branding
  - b. Priority: Workplan creation
  - c. Priority: Production identification
  - d. Will present at October meeting
4. Working Group: SIFF Cinerama public benefits with Seattle Arts Commission (Kat Ogden)
  - a. Beth Barrett and Tom Florino recused themselves
  - b. The working group has not met yet, but Chairs of Seattle Art Commission and Seattle Film Commission have met with Tom Mara, SIFF Director, emphasizing the recommendation of prioritizing equity and inclusion at SIFF
  - c. Recommendations will be delivered to OED for Executive (Mayor) negotiation with SIFF

7. Presentation

- a. City of Seattle Downtown Action Plan (Alicia Teel, OED)
  - i. Alicia presented the downtown action plan
  - ii. Asked Seattle Film Commission for recommendations on ways to increase film production in downtown
  - iii. Presentation deck attached to meeting minutes (*pages 4-21*)
- b. Washington Filmworks programs and engagement with City of Seattle (Amy Lillard)
  - i. Amy presented Washington Filmworks scope and priorities
    1. Production Incentive Program (two funding programs)
      - a. Asked Seattle Film Commission to assist with helping businesses and crew list themselves in the Production Directory
    2. Film Commission/Office
    3. Workforce Development Office
    4. Lens of diversity, equity, and inclusivity
      - a. Asked Seattle Film Commission for recommendations to the Washington Filmworks Workforce Equity Committee
      - b. Asked OED for equity information from Seattle Office of Equity
    5. Enhanced incentive

- a. Additional incentive dollars for stories of underserved communities
  - b. Additional incentive dollars for filming in rural counties
    - i. Seattle is in an urban county
    - ii. Productions can work up to 50% in Seattle and still receive the rural incentive
- 6. Small Budget incentive
  - a. Asked Seattle Film Commission to help promote the program
- 7. Workforce Development Office “FWD”
  - a. Community and government effort to educate, train, prepare people to meet Washington’s film industry needs
  - b. Asks Seattle Film Commission and OED to identify City funding to help with the program, and City programs to partner with; references the OED funding of Northwest Folklife’s intern program
- 8. Marketing
  - a. Asked Seattle Film Commission and OED for clarity on Seattle marketing priorities
  - b. Needs collateral from Seattle Film Commission and OED for their sales trips
  - c. Asked OED to restart its monthly newsletter and industry mixer events; very big gap currently without them
  - d. Advises Seattle Film Commission and OED to get acquainted with adjacent rural counties for collaboration on rural incentivized productions
  - e. Advises Seattle Film Commission to advise City on how to help Seattle-based commercial production companies to land work here
  - ii. Presentation deck attached to meeting minutes (*pages 22-33, use this hyperlink to [Washington Filmworks Trailer](#)*)
- 8. Office of Economic Development
  - a. City production office space @ KCTS building (OED)
    - i. Discussions beginning on possibility to repurpose the building managed by the City of Seattle into a production space
    - ii. Community outreach will begin soon
- 9. Upcoming
  - a. Request to invite King County Creative to present on Harbor Island Studios and support for film industry
- 10. Adjourn
  - a. Motion to adjourn – Unanimous vote to approve

**Downtown**

**is**



**you**



## Table of Contents

- > Downtown Activation Plan
- > Progress to date
- > What's Next
- > Get Involved!

**Launched in June 2023,  
Mayor Harrell's Downtown  
Activation Plan is organized  
around seven bold goals  
that are already in action!**



**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**

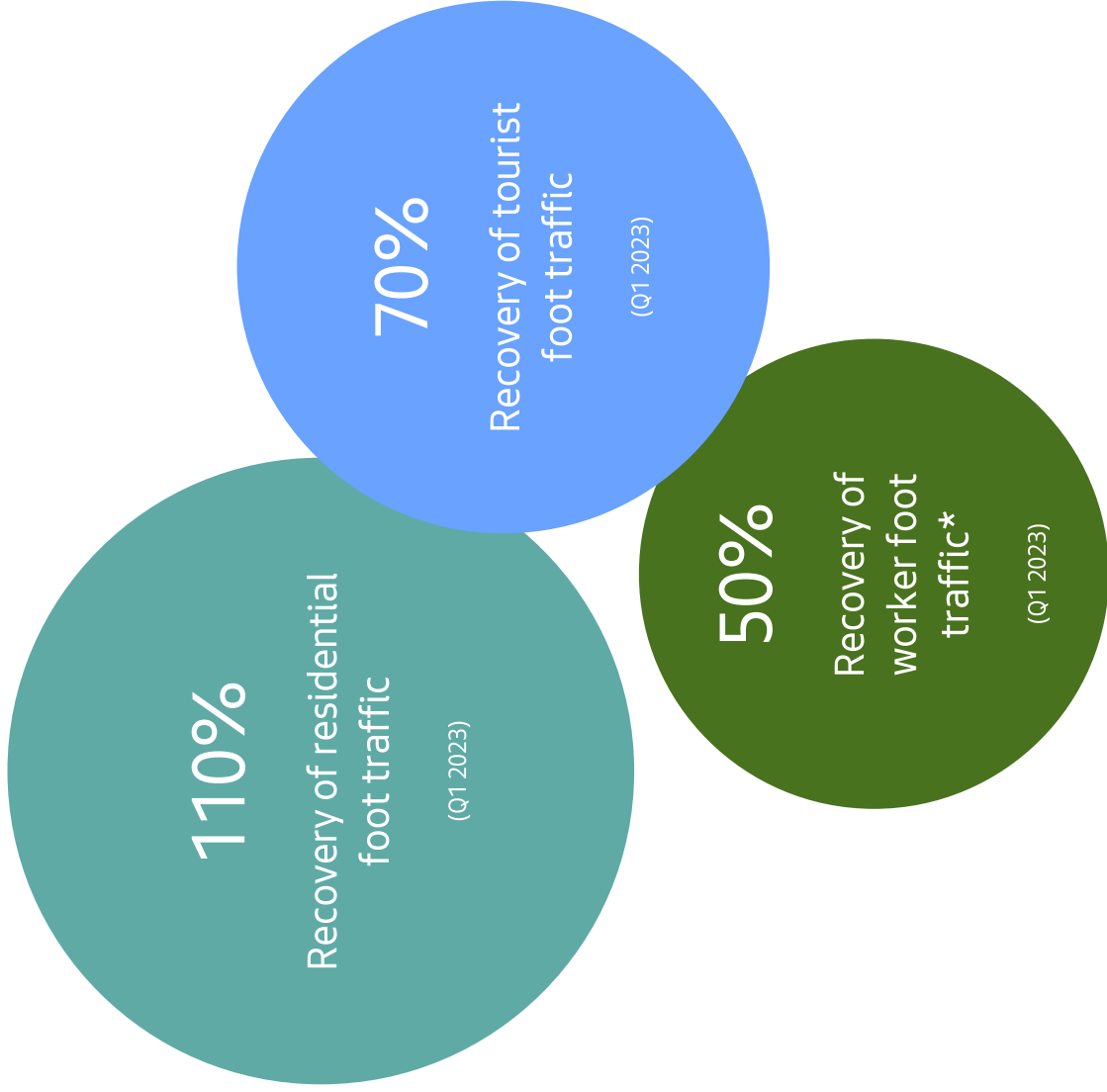
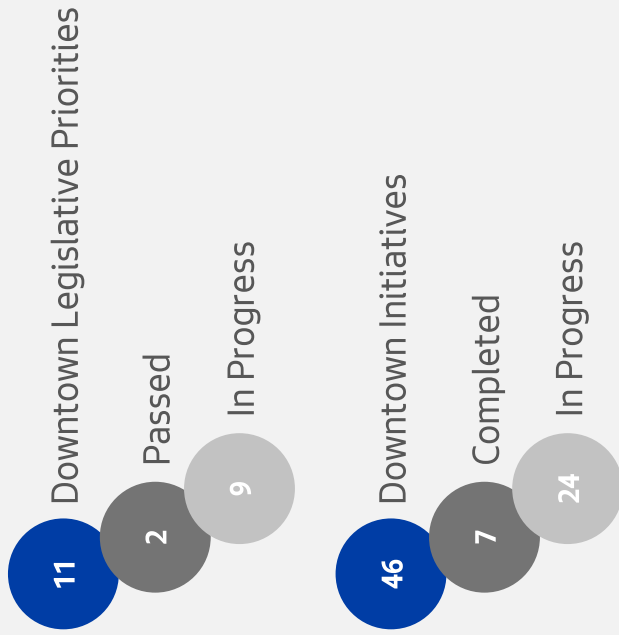


**Make Downtown a top destination for Seattleites  
and visitors year-round**



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

# Over 19 million residents, tourists, and workers have come Downtown in Summer 2023



\* Does not include South Lake Union





Safety

# Progress on safety positively impacted foot traffic Downtown throughout the summer

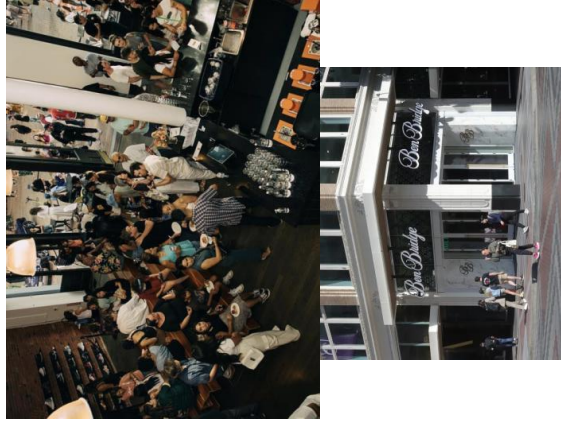
Expanded cleaning and public art in advance of the MLB All-Star Game created a record turnout



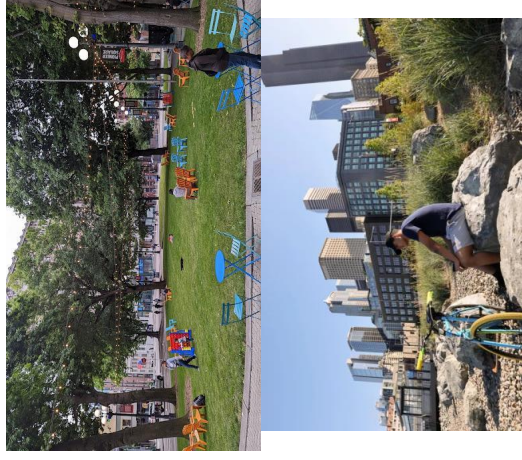
Summer 2023 saw events through Downtown Seattle that welcomed families, tourists, and residents



Businesses renewed investments in Downtown



Public safety helped open new and existing green spaces Downtown and at the Waterfront



# Early Initiative Progress



## Residential

- Pike Place hosted a satellite farmers market at City Hall during the summer
- Continued progress on the Downtown Subarea Plan
- Preparation of legislation around SEPA requirements and upzoning parts of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave



## Retail

- Launched The Liberty Project supporting underserved, particularly Black-owned businesses
- Investing in Seattle Restored to fill vacant storefronts with artists and small businesses and scales its impact across Downtown



## Workers

- Hosted more networking events that celebrate and welcome workers back Downtown, like the Black Tech Night



## Culture

- Grants awarded to create 32 new murals across Downtown, including every Downtown neighborhood
- Return of Bumbershoot to Seattle Center and the 2023 Waterfront Block Party
- Cultural Events hosted across Downtown in summer 2023



## Tourism

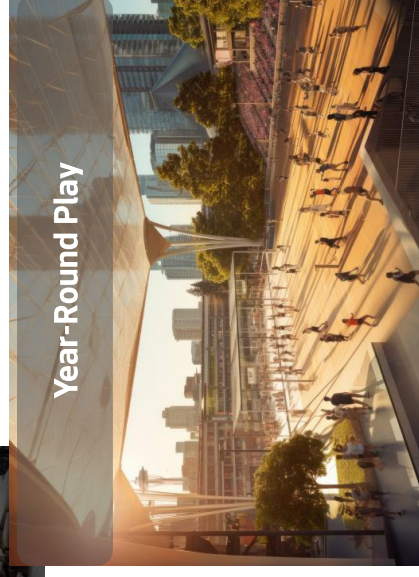
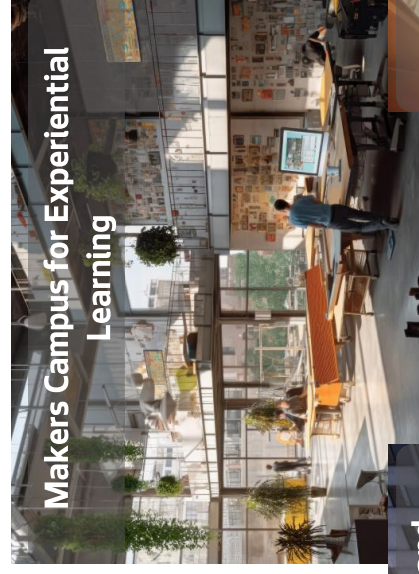
- Record breaking attendance at the MLB All-Star, 2-nights of Taylor Swift, and many other events
- Downtown hotels shattered their single-day revenue record, operating at 96.7% occupancy in mid-June



## Green

- Reopening of City Hall Park to events all summer long
- Pilot a green and healthy street by closing a half-block of Pike Street between First and Second Avenues for pedestrians only
- Opening of Habitat Beach at the Waterfront

# The City is looking to make progress on the Space Needle Thinking that was introduced in the Downtown Activation Plan



# Continued community engagement will help the City to continue to refine Downtown priorities

The success of the Downtown Activation Plan relies on ensuring the City's priorities reflect those of the Seattle community.

- Continuous feedback through public engagements and the feedback form on our website create a direct link from community stakeholder to the City
- We continue to build awareness and excitement around the Downtown Activation to maintain momentum going into the Fall and Winter when foot traffic typically decreases

## Focus Audience Segments

- Families (including engagement with young people)
- Downtown Residents
- Downtown Workers
- First floor retailers small business owners

## Downtown Activation Plan Feedback Form



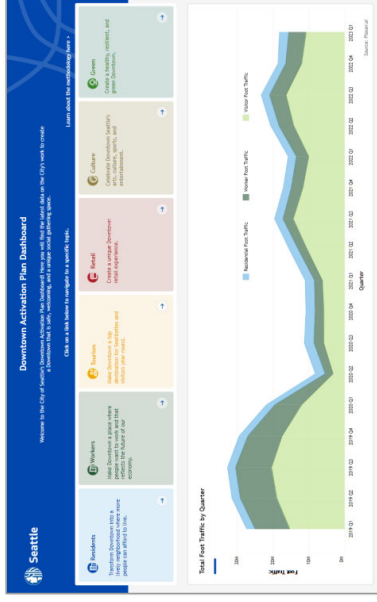


# To continue to demonstrate progress and accountability, the City is tracking Downtown recovery and sharing updates through multiple publicly available sources

[Downtown is You Website](#)



[Downtown Recovery Dashboard](#)



Good News Downtown Weekly  
Newsletter



# How can the Film Commission help?

## Two Ideas:

- Creative uses for underused space (e.g. commercial real estate)
- Opportunities and barriers to more activation downtown for film

**Keep up the momentum Downtown! We know foot traffic falls during the fall and winter.**

**Help us keep Downtown activated by attending, hosting, and promoting events year-round!**

## Stay updated on Downtown!

Visit and leave feedback on our website!



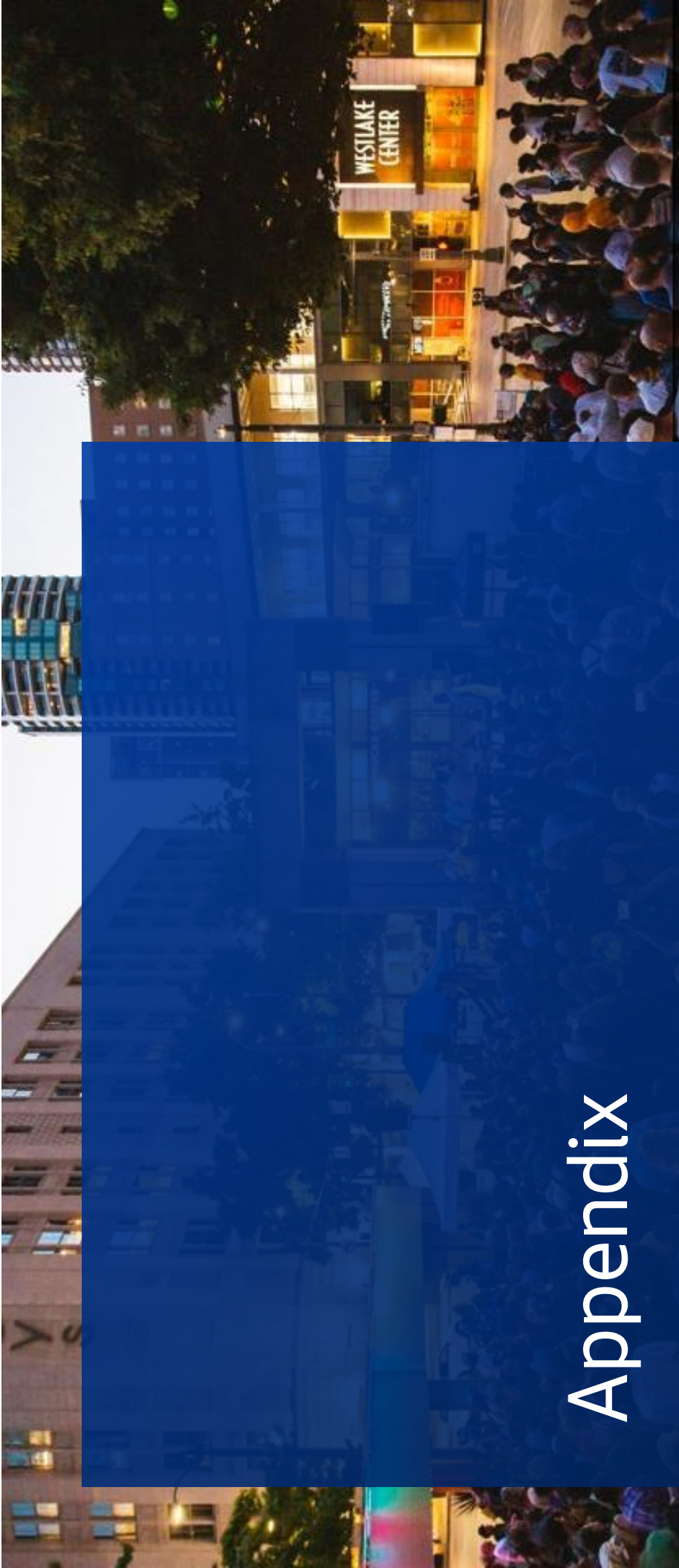
Sign up for our weekly newsletter on Downtown!



# Appendix



City of Seattle



### Downtown Activation Plan Legislative Agenda

	Status	Notes
1. Update zoning policies to allow for taller residential buildings along 3rd Ave from Union Street north to Stewart Street and east on Pike Street and Union Street toward 4th Avenue. This will allow for high-rise residential development with incentives for providing childcare and education facilities	In Progress	
2. Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) and the Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections (SDCI) are in the process of identifying potential changes to waive or modify development standards to facilitate office-to-residential conversions	In Progress	
3. Waive State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements for all residential projects. Following up on recent State legislation, SEPA review will no longer be required on any projects in the City of Seattle that include a residential component. This should significantly speed up permitting for Downtown projects	In Progress	CB 120587 passed in June (exempts up to 200 residential units and 300K SF non-residential)
4. Temporarily waive fees for Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Street Use fees for temporary and year-long food trucks and carts and small-to-medium scale street and sidewalk events and activities open to the public	In Progress	
5. Increase the flexibility for hotels in a two-block area in the Belltown neighborhood by applying residential housing standards to hotels	In Progress	
6. Pass supplemental budget legislation to expand Metropolitan Improvement District cleaning, safety, and hospitality services this summer and fall when major national and international events are being hosted Downtown	Completed	
7. Expand the range of street-level uses to include office, conference room, lab space, and residential building amenities	In Progress	
8. Expand allowed uses for street-level spaces and retail and recreation uses on all floors	In Progress	
9. Increase Floor Area Ratio levels in Belltown to increase hotel development, creating permanent jobs and providing more places for tourists and visitors to stay	In Progress	
10. Waive building code retrofit requirements to install temporary uses or return to former use	In Progress	
11. Extend retail, restaurant, and entertainment Floor Area Ratio exemption to all levels in a structure	In Progress	

	Status	Notes
<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	In Progress	
2. Seattle Police Department will continue special operations to reduce gun violence throughout the city	In Progress	
3. Increase service provider outreach in the Third Avenue, as well as creating a One Seattle station physical location	Not Started	
4. Launch a contingency management drug abatement program	In Progress	
5. Establish an opioid overdose recovery center	Not Started	
6. Establish one Crisis Care Center for adults—and potentially one for youth—as part of a regional network of five total centers	Not Started	
7. Improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, including Pike Pine Streetscape improvements.	In Progress	
8. Continue to support the 10-year renewal and expansion of the Downtown Seattle Association’s Metropolitan Improvement District for ongoing service	Completed	
9. Deliver a one-time grant to Downtown Seattle Association to boost cleaning, safety, and hospitality services	Completed	
10. Improve street and sidewalk lighting across Downtown	In Progress	SCL work in CID to follow-through on lighting assessment
11. Offer graffiti removal services on private property with owner permission.	In Progress	Pilot with Uplift NW in CID
12. Work with WSDOT to remove graffiti from Downtown exit signs and along I-5 and I-90	In Progress	

	Status	Notes
<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	<b>In Progress</b>	
2. Waive State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requirements for all residential projects	<b>In Progress</b>	
3. Pass legislation and make regulatory changes to make it easier to convert underutilized office space to housing	<b>In Progress</b>	
4. Bring satellite farmers markets into Downtown neighborhoods	<b>Completed</b>	
5. Attract additional and affordable grocery stores Downtown	<b>Not Started</b>	
6. Activate neighborhood alleyways to create more pedestrian-friendly experiences	<b>Not Started</b>	
7. Support the strategic vision defined by King County Executive Dow Constantine to redesign the County's Downtown campus	<b>In Progress</b>	
8. Complete the Downtown Subarea Plan as part of the major Comprehensive Plan update	<b>In Progress</b>	
<b>Goal 3: Create a unique Downtown retail experience</b>		
1. Launch The Liberty Project supporting underserved, particularly Black-owned businesses	<b>Completed</b>	
2. Grow Seattle Restored to fill vacant storefronts with artists and small businesses	<b>In Progress</b>	
3. Create a new Small Business Navigation Team to help small businesses successfully navigate City processes and connect them to resources.	<b>Not Started</b>	

	Status	Notes
<b>Downtown Activation Plan Initiatives</b>		
<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	<b>Not Started</b>	
2. Create networking events that celebrate and welcome workers back Downtown, like the successful Black Tech Night	<b>In Progress</b>	
3. Incentivize the development of childcare and education services by allowing greater building heights when these facilities are included in new buildings	<b>Not Started</b>	
4. Develop a "life at night" agenda to activate Downtown businesses in the late-night hours	<b>Not Started</b>	
<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	<b>Not Started</b>	
2. Hire a creative economy manager	<b>Completed</b>	
3. Provide capital funding for accessibility and other capital improvements to Benaroya Hall, a City-owned arts facility.	<b>Not Started</b>	
4. Explore ways to bring Bumbershoot events Downtown	<b>In Progress</b>	
5. Create more murals and other art installations throughout Downtown	<b>In Progress</b>	
6. Support community-driven activations and cultural celebrations Downtown	<b>In Progress</b>	



	Status	Notes
<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	In Progress	
2. Partner with Seattle Public Schools to build a new Memorial Stadium	In Progress	
3. Open a Tribal Interpretive Center at Waterfront Park	In Progress	
4. Connect Downtown neighborhoods with Waterfront Park	In Progress	
5. Modify the Seattle Tourism Improvement Area to expand advertising for leisure and Convention Center marketing	Not Started	
<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	Completed	
2. Reopen City Hall Park	Completed	
3. Finish improvements to Downtown parks	In Progress	
4. Complete the full construction of the Seattle Waterfront by 2025, including free, family-friendly programming	In Progress	
5. Explore the future use of Pier 48 as new open green space	Not Started	
6. Continue to explore the lidding of I-5 to create park spaces and pedestrian connections from Capitol Hill to Downtown	Not Started	
7. Pilot low-pollution neighborhoods Downtown by establishing low-emission delivery opportunities	In Progress	
8. Implement the Building Emissions Performance Standards Policy (BEPS)	Completed	



City of Seattle

# How can you help?

- xx
- Xx

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## Stay updated on Downtown!

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**Seattle  
Film  
Commission**

**09  
25  
23**

Washington  
Filmworks





# INCENTIVE IMPACT

131

PROJECTS

\$418M

ECONOMIC IMPACT

25,900

JOB





# WA STATE FILM OFFICE

[Production Directory](#)

[Location Database](#)

[Permit Information](#)

[Film Liaison Network](#)

[List Your Project](#)

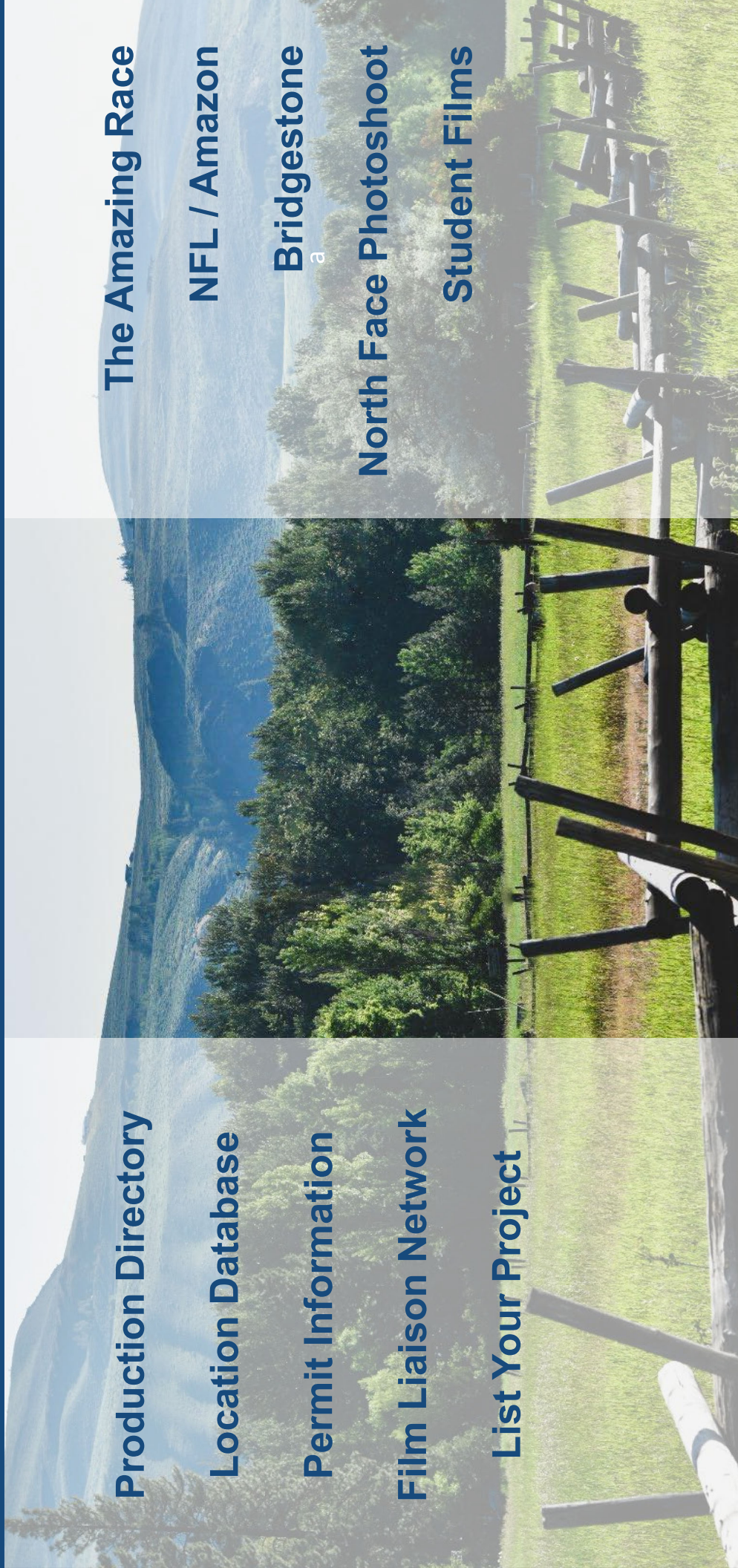
[The Amazing Race](#)

[NFL / Amazon](#)

[Bridgestone](#)

[North Face Photoshoot](#)

[Student Films](#)





# ENHANCED INCENTIVES

Additional Dollars

Telling the Story of an  
Underrepresented  
Community

Filming in Rural Washington

Goal: 20% of Annual Funding





# SMALL BUDGET PRODUCTION

## BASICS

Creatively Driven by WA Residents

Narrative Content

\$20K - \$1M

First Money In

## SEATTLE STATS

78 Applications

37% from Seattle

1 Feature - 1 Episodic - 4 Shorts

1 Completed Filming

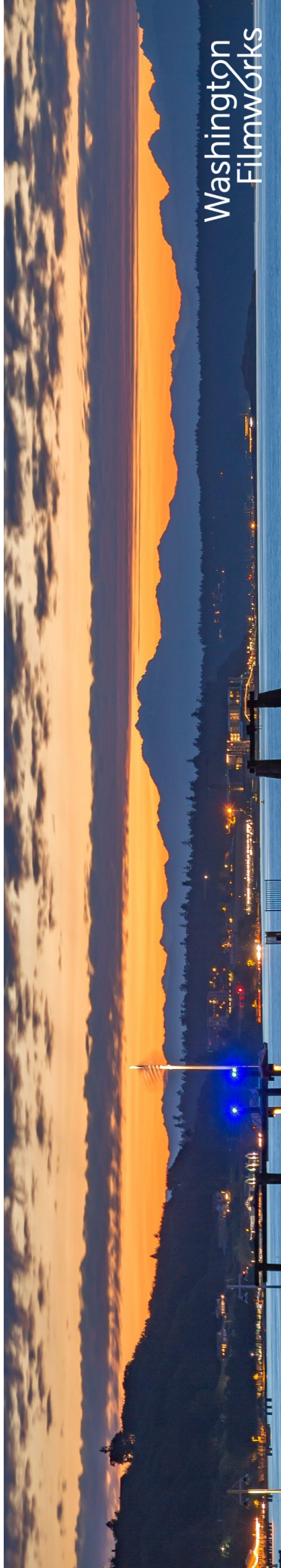


# DEFINING UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES

The term "historically underrepresented communities" refers to groups of persons who have been relegated to an unimportant or powerless position such that they are prevented from participating fully in decisions affecting their lives. People may experience further marginalization because of their intersecting identities

They are often communities or populations that face systemic economic, political, social, and cultural barriers, many of them embedded in local laws and norms. The term encompasses communities with a shared experience of marginalization stemming from circumstances beyond their control.

Historically underrepresented communities often include Black, Latino, Indigenous and American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color, members of religious minorities, refugees, migrants, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQIA2S+) persons, rural communities, formerly incarcerated persons, persons experiencing homelessness, and persons with disabilities.



## Washington Filmworks

A community-informed approach to create statewide plans, programs and resources to build the depth and breadth of the

Washington Film industry workforce, while supporting and amplifying efforts to ensure that workforce is diverse and inclusive, and that pathways are equitable and accessible.





# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce development may vary by sector and place, and encompasses initiatives that educate, train, and prepare people to meet current and future industry needs. Individuals, educational systems, employers, Unions, community-based organizations, and governmental agencies are all important collaborators in workforce development.







# ABOVE THE LINE EDUCATION FORUM + MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

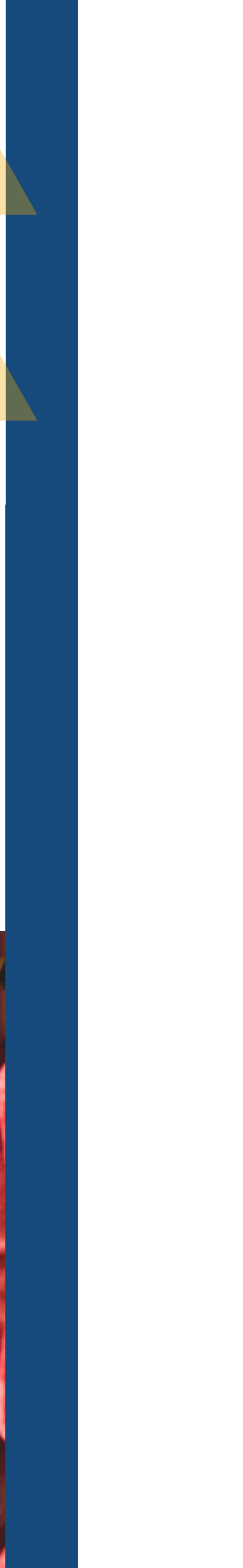
- Eligibility
- Program overview
- Supports
- Success





# APPLICATIONS INSIGHTS

- Location
- Lived experience
- Experience
- Types of projects
- What we are hearing





Washington  
Filmworks



Below the Line  
Media Mentorship Program

PA Training  
Access to Paid Positions on Set



# MARKETING

## LOCAL OUTREACH

Instagram up 713% / FB up 105%

## HIDDEN GEMS

Film Friendly Rural Locations

## NY / LA

Projects that Reflect Our Values



[www.WashingtonFilmworks.org](http://www.WashingtonFilmworks.org)