

A message to our ratepayers

January 2025

The metrics we use to track downtown’s revitalization continue to improve, thanks in part to the support of property owners within the 300-square-block Metropolitan Improvement District. Your investment in cleaning and hospitality services, security patrols, park and public space activations, and research and marketing continues to have a profound impact.

Visitors are returning to the center city at levels approaching pre-pandemic, with tens of millions of unique visitors to downtown in 2024. Thousands of people came downtown during the holidays to experience free, family-friendly events supported by ratepayers, including the annual Tree Lighting Celebration in the heart of the retail core. The average daily worker foot traffic continues to climb, hitting totals not seen since 2020. Visitors and workers join the record 108,000-plus residents who now live downtown.

As we move into 2025 we look forward to continuing our partnership with Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell and his administration to address the illegal activity that disrupts downtown’s full revitalization. Last September, we partnered with the city to launch the Downtown Activation Team. The DAT brings together nearly 15 city departments to work alongside MID-funded downtown ambassadors and service organizations to address the

issues that have long plagued the core of downtown. DAT provides additional cleaning services, more police support, public-space improvements and services for those in need. The DAT has proven highly effective in its first few months and will continue with funding from the city’s 2025 budget.

As downtown property owners, your voice is essential. Thanks to those of you who took the time to respond to our satisfaction survey last spring. Respondents noted sidewalk cleaning, enhanced park activation and concierge services among the highest-rated MID-funded services. While overall results were positive, data also indicated areas for improvement or those in need of more investment and attention. You can read more about the survey results on the back page of this letter. The next survey will be in the field this month.

As the chair of your Ratepayer Advisory Board, I thank you for your ongoing support of and investment in a thriving center city.



Sabrina Villaneuva
Senior Director, Property Management
Clise Properties

Your Assessment at Work

December 2023–November 2024



1,204,790

Gallons of trash removed



48,830

Graffiti tags removed



64,838

Incidents of human/animal waste removed



4,937

Syringes collected



50,272

People given directions



18,311

Hours of park programming and activations

MID Ratepayer Satisfaction Survey Recap

In spring 2024, the Downtown Seattle Association, as manager of the Metropolitan Improvement District, issued a satisfaction survey to MID ratepayers and downtown stakeholders. The survey was distributed via email, mail, online and in person by downtown ambassadors. In all, 642 responses came in from residents, commercial property owners, businesses and workers.

Stakeholders were also asked to rate their satisfaction with current MID-funded services. The highest-rated were sidewalk cleaning, enhanced park activation and concierge services (i.e., providing directions). Respondents highlighted as top concerns: personal belongings and drug paraphernalia left on streets, as well as unpleasant smells and graffiti on buildings.

While overall results were positive, data also indicated areas for improvement and areas where ratepayers would like to focus more investment and attention. Following are some changes MID staff have undertaken this year.

Improving Business Retention & Economic Research

Respondents gave this service lower satisfaction marks but expressed the highest level of interest in expanding the service. DSA/MID publishes monthly revitalization dashboard reports tracking the health of downtown Seattle. However, recognizing MID ratepayers may not be receiving these, there has been an effort to broaden the distribution. Additionally, MID-funded staff are working on a dashboard to show the status of street-level businesses throughout the MID. The MID is also engaging with the city of Seattle's Office of Economic Development on developing a retail strategy for the Pike-Pine corridor, which should be available in spring 2025.



Tackling Chronic Challenges in Partnership with the City

In September 2024, the city of Seattle partnered with the DSA/MID to pilot a program designed to address chronic challenges along Third Avenue and the Pike-Pine corridor. This ongoing coordination of services and communication between DSA/MID and Seattle city officials is showing strong results, including a reduction in observed drug activity, violent crime, graffiti and unpleasant smells.

Investing in Downtown Parks

In 2023, the Seattle City Council renewed and expanded the DSA/MID parks management agreement to include four downtown parks: Occidental Square, Westlake Park, Pioneer Park and Bell Street Park. With MID funding, all four parks were activated for the holidays.

The winter ratepayer satisfaction survey is currently in the field and open through Jan. 31. You can access the survey at downtownseattle.org/mid.



Celebrating the Holidays Downtown

With support from MID ratepayers and sponsors, downtown Seattle was aglow during the holidays. Thousands of people came downtown for the annual Tree Lighting Celebration in Westlake Park in the heart of the retail core. The evening included music, the illumination of the iconic Holiday Star and a spectacular fireworks show. The fun continued through December with dozens of free, family-friendly activities across downtown, including Santa pictures, a holiday bazaar, holiday crafts, a pop-up ice skating rink and more.