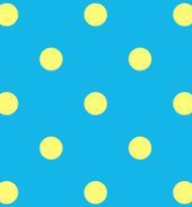
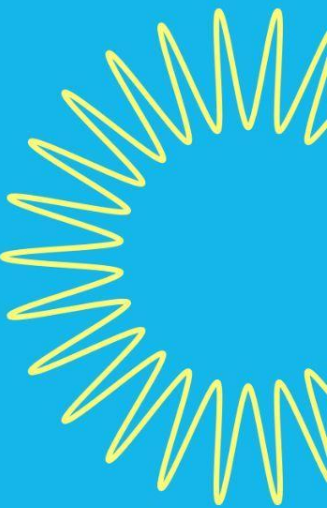




Downtown Allies: How Business Districts Are Helping Move People Inside



Built Together for Now: Effective
Cross-Sector Collaboration

Built For Zero.



**COMMUNITY
SOLUTIONS**

You probably know your local business district

But how connected are you, really?



Business districts are stepping up, from outreach and employment programs to leading direct-to-housing efforts, while balancing what their members, employers, and residents expect in return.

Today: assess how well your community works with business leaders, then leave with a plan to bring at least one new ally into the work when you get home.



Desired outcomes

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Get a primer on the resources, strategies, and partners being leveraged to lead initiatives on homelessness and public space management
- Learn why and how a growing number of business associations are becoming local quarterbacks for direct-to-housing initiatives
- Walk in the shoes of multiple constituencies: the City, the County, property owners, residents, large employers, and major institutions like universities and hospitals
- Get equipped with practical tips on engaging business partners, building trust, and going from collaboration to coordination around a shared aim



House People Every Day



Agenda

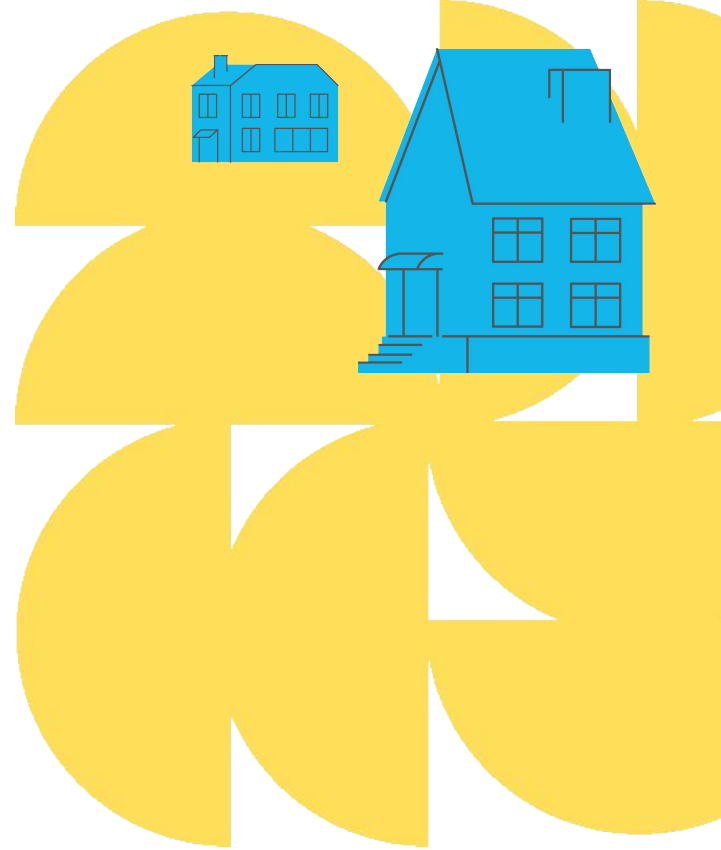
Introductions 5 min

Background and examples 30 min

Moderated discussion 20 min

Audience questions 20 min

Takeaways and next steps 5 min



What brought you here?

Raise your hand if you want to...



- Explore opportunities for partnerships with business leaders – where to start
- Build more effective relationships with Business Improvement Districts on outreach and space management
- Understand the nuts and bolts of funding, operations and membership
- Hear lessons and practices that could improve existing collaborations



Panelists



Marcus Mister

VP, Operations, Downtown
Atlanta, Inc.



Justine Murray

VP of Government Affairs,
Downtown San Diego
Partnership



Chris Johnston

Community Engagement
Specialist, Downtown Seattle
Alliance



Panelist spotlights

BACKGROUND AND EXAMPLES · 10-15 MINUTES EACH





Round robin: 10 minutes each

1

Your context

Your organization, and why homelessness affects your area

2

Your response

How your organization's response has evolved over time

3

Your role now

Why you are now a key 'doer' in the work

Built For Zero.





Marcus Mister

Downtown Atlanta, Inc

VP, Operations, Downtown Atlanta, Inc

Built For Zero.



**COMMUNITY
SOLUTIONS**

The background image is a photograph of a city street scene, likely in Atlanta, showing homeless encampments. There are several large, makeshift tents or shelters made of tarps and cardboard boxes. Bare trees are visible in the background, and a multi-story building is partially visible on the right. The image has a blue tint and a diagonal split effect, with the right side being a solid dark blue.

**DOWN
TOWN
ATL**

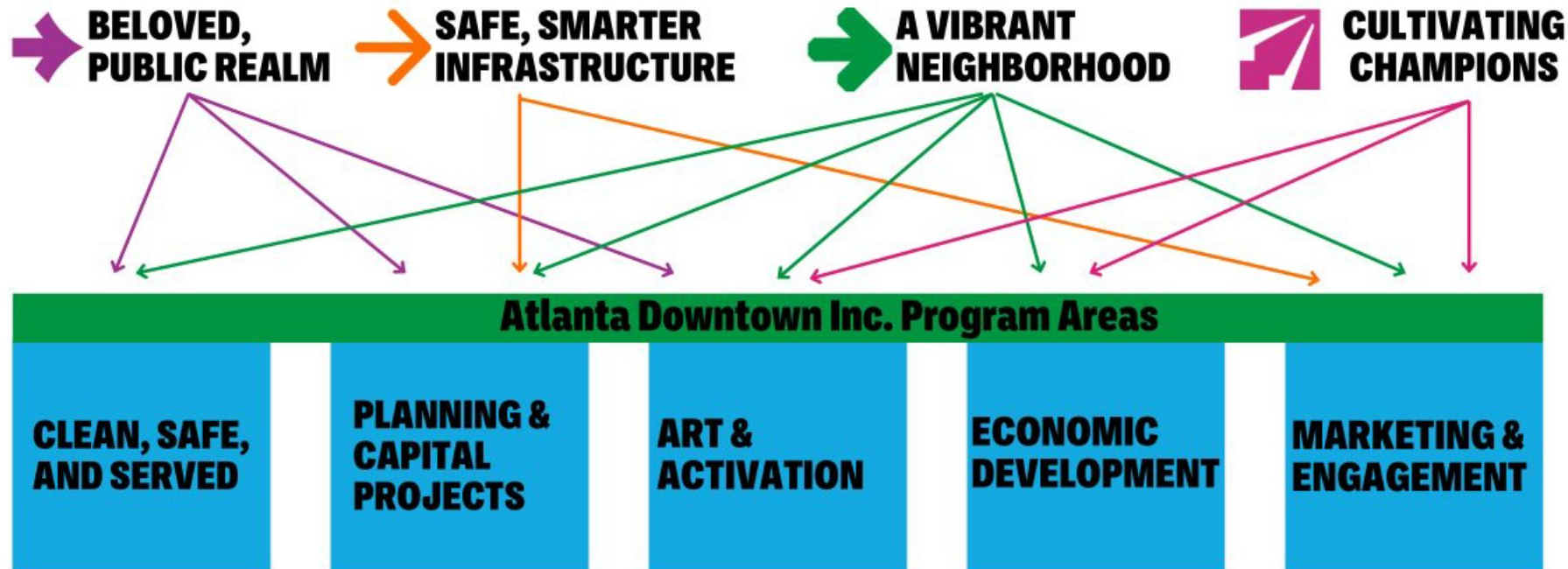
Downtown Allies: How Business Districts Are Helping Move People Inside

Considerations for Downtown Atlanta

October 2026

Four Pillar Strategy

Shaping Downtown Atlanta into a thriving and welcoming heart of the region, blending civic leadership, economic vitality, and community vibrancy.



Clean, Safe and Served Operations

220 Downtown Blocks. 365 Days a Year. 18 Hours a Day.

We know Downtown Atlanta better than anyone else. We're here every day, on the ground, keeping downtown clean, safe, welcoming, and vibrant.

A SAFE & HOSPITABLE DOWNTOWN

Public Safety Ambassadors help create a safe, welcoming, and connected Downtown every day through a visible presence, proactive engagement, and strong partnerships with public safety agencies. We serve as the eyes and ears of Downtown and are stationed at strategic locations and patrolling on foot, by bicycle, and in vehicles to assist the public, respond to concerns, and support a safe environment for residents, workers, and visitors.

A CLEAN & VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

Keeping Downtown Atlanta clean, well-maintained, and welcoming every day.

Clean Team Ambassadors provide daily, proactive cleaning, maintenance, and beautification services across Downtown, helping create a more attractive and inviting environment for residents, workers, businesses, and visitors.

COMPASSIONATE SUPPORT FOR A STRONGER DOWNTOWN

Homeless Outreach Ambassadors helps connect individuals experiencing homelessness with pathways to stability, support, and opportunity. Using a trauma-informed approach, our outreach team builds relationships, provides compassionate support, and connects individuals with essential services and resources. We also assist Downtown stakeholders by responding to non-emergency quality-of-life concerns and providing tools and resources to help address challenges.



Clean, Safe and Served Field Operations



Supporting Our Unhoused Neighbors



Downtown Atlanta's Homeless Outreach Ambassador Program

CORE SERVICES

- Street outreach and engagement
- Basic needs assistance and resource connections
- Connections to interim and permanent housing opportunities
- Pathway Home Reunification Support – Helping individuals reconnect with supportive networks and return to stable living environments
- Advocacy and collaboration with service providers and community partners
- Support for Downtown stakeholders with resources to address quality-of-life concerns
- Encampment outreach and resolution support
- Community convening

THE IMPACT

Compassionate outreach and coordinated support that helps individuals move toward stability while strengthening the Downtown Atlanta community for everyone.

A Thriving Downtown Requires a Comprehensive Approach to Homelessness

Downtown's long-term vitality depends on our ability to balance compassion for people experiencing homelessness with the expectations of the broader community.

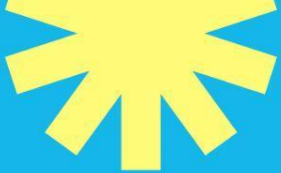
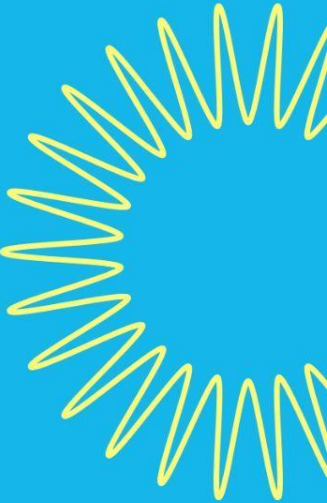
- **Honor Our Responsibility:** Downtown is Atlanta's oldest neighborhood and home to the city's highest concentration of legacy homeless service organizations. Our priority is to strengthen coordination, improve existing services, and ensure resources produce meaningful outcomes.
- **Strengthen Public Confidence:** Downtown is relatively safe by crime statistics, yet concerns about safety among visitors, conventioners, and office workers remain a barrier to its success.
- **Improve Quality of Place:** Unsheltered homelessness can contribute to sanitation challenges and diminish the appearance and usability of public spaces. We can address these challenges with compassion while maintaining spaces that reflect community pride. Downtown deserves nice things, and everyone deserves to enjoy them.
- **Protect Economic Vitality:** A strong downtown must attract and retain businesses, workers, residents, and visitors amid office market challenges and growing competition from other urban neighborhoods.
- **Ensure Public Spaces Serve Everyone:** Connect people experiencing homelessness to housing and supportive services while ensuring public spaces remain accessible and welcoming to the entire community.

Downtown cannot reach its full potential without addressing homelessness. Compassion and accountability are not competing priorities. Both are essential to a thriving downtown.

If Downtown Is to Rise, We Must Address Homelessness Through Strategic, Coordinated Solutions

- **Expand Safe, Stable Housing:** Increase access to permanent supportive housing and other housing options.
- **Assess the Shelter Ecosystem:** Identify service gaps, provider capacity, barriers, and opportunities to improve coordination.
- **Reduce Barriers to Shelter:** Address policies and practical obstacles that prevent shelter access.
- **Expand Diversion Alternatives:** Connect individuals to appropriate services and alternatives to enforcement when appropriate.
- **Provide Community Storage:** Expand secure storage for personal belongings.
- **Strengthen the Social Services Workforce:** Improve staffing, training, compensation, and retention.
- **Expand Mental Health Services:** Improve access to behavioral health care, crisis response, and coordinated support.
- **Increase Public Restroom Access:** Provide clean, safe, and well-maintained public restrooms.
- **Stop Public Feedings on Downtown Streets:** Redirect meal distributions to established providers offering meals in appropriate settings and connections to supportive services.
- **Enforce Quality-of-Life Ordinances:** Consistently enforce applicable laws governing aggressive panhandling and park use.





Justine Murray

Downtown San Diego Partnership

VP of Government Affairs



Built For Zero.



**COMMUNITY
SOLUTIONS**



DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO PARTNERSHIP



OUR WHY

MISSION:

Advance the economic prosperity and cultural vitality of Downtown San Diego

VISION:

A vibrant, thriving, and dynamic Downtown that inspires innovation, creativity and a sense of belonging



WHO WE ARE

BY THE NUMBERS:

- We represent over 300 members from Downtown and across our region
- We operate the City's only PBID, our Clean & Safe Program, which manages and is responsible for 285 blocks Downtown
- We employ over 150 San Diegans and operate an annual budget of about \$25M

OUR PROGRAMS & FUNCTIONS INCLUDE:

- Advocacy, Membership, Clean & Safe, Philanthropy, USS Services, PAC, City Center BID, Lifestyle and Marketing, and more





DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO MARKET

Downtown's Economic Impact

- **0.7%** of San Diego's land area
- **22%** of citywide spending
- **47%** of hotel revenue
- **9.8%** of city jobs

Growing Downtown

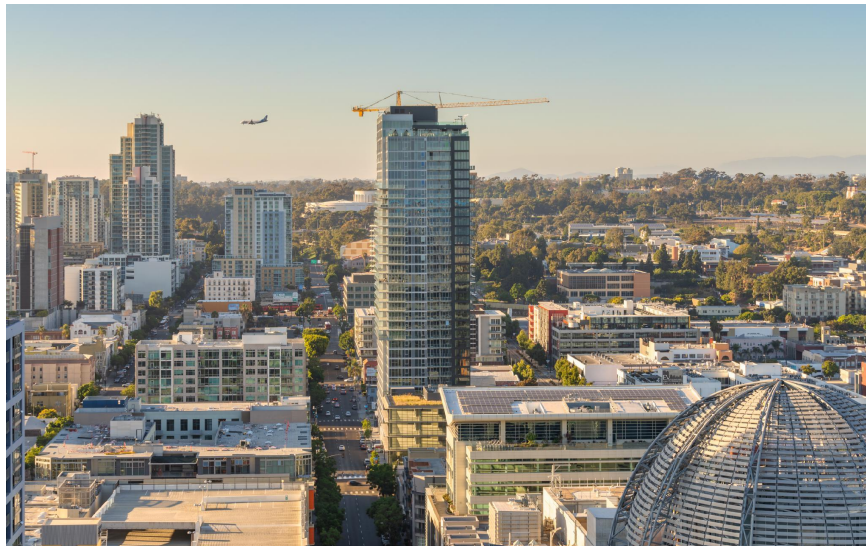
 **54K Residents** (+49% since 2020)

 **76K Workers**

 **12.1M Visitors Annually**

 **76M Annual Visits**

 **14.6K Hotel Rooms**



CLEAN & SAFE RENEWAL





DSDP UNHOUSED IMPACT TODAY

FY 25/26 Unhoused Care Team Impacts:

Outreach

- Daily Outreach Served **1,686**
- Positive exits to housing **611**
- Shelter Placements **333**

HUB

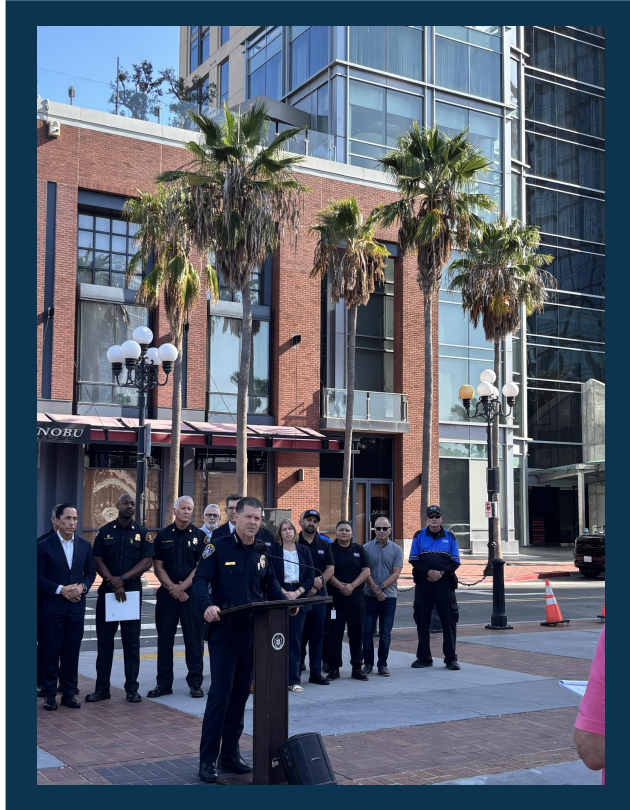
- 211 referrals through HUB **3,160**
- Assisted **3,568** individuals through our walk-in
- Housed **53** clients with Diversions assistance

Safe Sleeping

- **574** individuals served
- **540** households served
- **62** positive exits to permanent situations



PUBLIC SAFETY

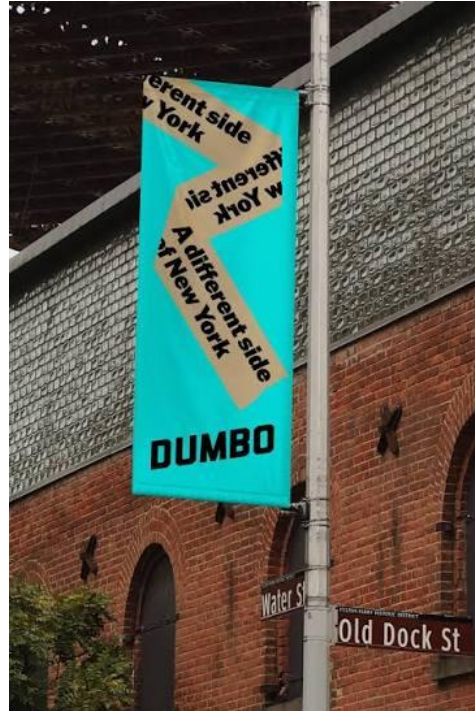




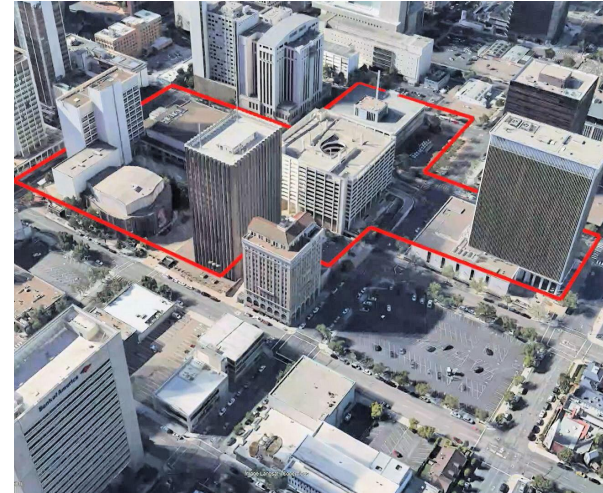
AMERICA'S OUTDOOR DOWNTOWN



D N C O



PUBLIC SPACE PROJECTS



CIVIC CENTER REVITALIZATION

creating a new cultural hub

Bird's eye view of the new public space for the Civic Center conceptual vision developed by U2 Advisors. The site will become a new center for education and culture in the heart of downtown. With exceptional transit connectivity and a reimagined public realm, San Diegoans will enjoy an abundance of cultural, learning, and experiential opportunities.

Rendering by Design Overlaid



civic center reimagined

View of the reimagined Civic Center conceptual vision developed by U2 Advisors looking north along the 2nd Avenue corridor from C Street illustrating a dynamic and active public space framed by cultural and educational uses. This new street will share with activity both day and night with residential, retail, hospitality, an arts + educational hub, and a world-class public space to draw a diverse population from across the region into downtown.

Rendering by Design Overlaid



1

meanwhile phase

Meanwhile, a near term activation of the plaza with food venues, outdoor seating, and art installations will make the Civic Center a more attractive place to be for City employees returning to work.



2

near term phase

Independent of the core four block site, both 101 Ash and the COB site can be redeveloped. Concurrently, the education/cultural center concept can be structured.



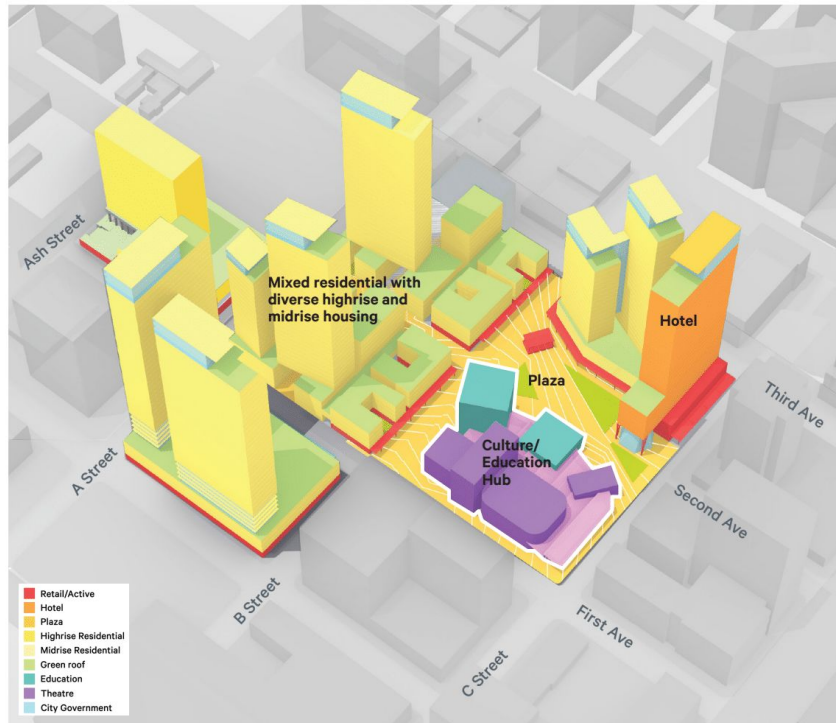
3

cultural hub phase

Golden Hall is demolished to build the new education/cultural center can be built while the existing Civic Theatre and possibly CAB remain in operation.

4

At full build out, the new Civic Center will be home to a new hub for learning and cultural life, a world-class public space, significant amenities, and a diverse offering of housing including 3,000 units of purposeful housing.



DOWNTOWN ARTS + DESIGN DISTRICT



A CONNECTED CREATIVE DISTRICT FOR DOWNTOWN

The vision connects Downtown's strongest arts, culture, design and civic assets into one recognizable district — building from the Civic Center through B Street and C Street.

Civic + performing arts core Civic Theatre, Balboa Theatre, Spreckels, Horton Plaza and the Civic Center.

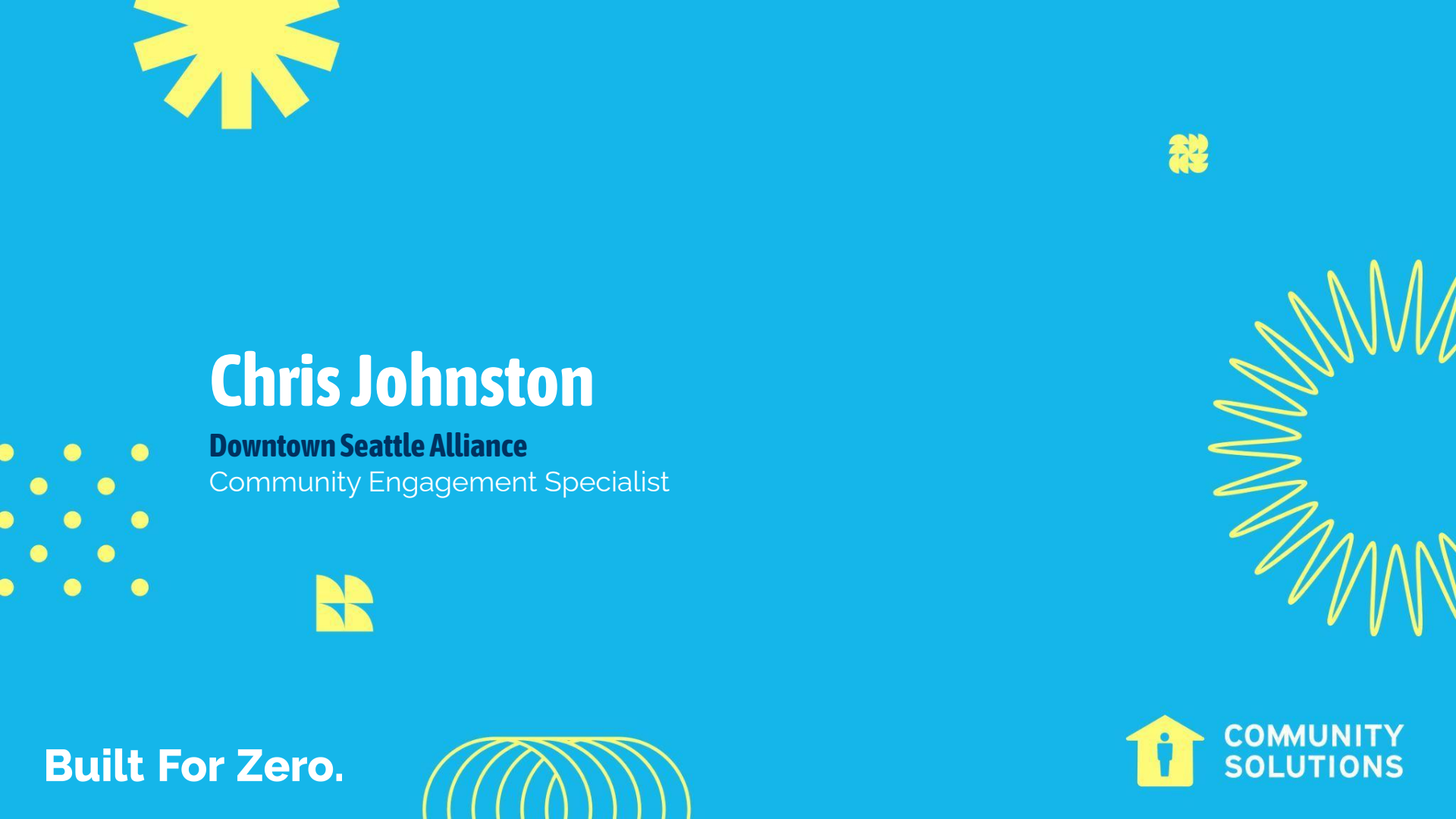
B Street design corridor Connect the Civic Center east to Symphony Towers, the NewSchool of Architecture & Design and City College.

C Street creative corridor Create space for artists, makers, creative businesses, studios, galleries and an accelerator ecosystem.

The goal: turn existing anchors and underused spaces into a visible, active creative economy network.

An aerial night photograph of downtown San Diego. On the left, a tall skyscraper with the 'OMNI' logo is visible. In the center, the San Diego Convention Center's distinctive blue, tent-like roof is prominent. The city lights and the San Diego Bay are visible in the background under a dark, cloudy sky.

DOWNTOWN
SAN DIEGO
PARTNERSHIP



Chris Johnston

Downtown Seattle Alliance

Community Engagement Specialist

Built For Zero.



**COMMUNITY
SOLUTIONS**



Downtown
Seattle
Association

Metropolitan Improvement District (MID)

- Founded by Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) in 1999
- Business-improvement area covering 300 square blocks in downtown Seattle
- 7 days a week
- 362 days a year

MID is made up of three departments:

1. Clean Team (CLN)
2. Community Safety & Hospitality (CSH)
3. Public Realm Operations (PRO)



Clean Team

It is our mission to provide a clean and safe environment for residents and visitors.

The Clean Team provides the following services:

- Daily trash and litter collection
- Alley cleaning
- Biowaste removal
- Syringe collection
- Graffiti removal
- Sidewalk pressure washing



Community Safety & Hospitality

CSH Ambassadors assist visitors, residents, workers, and those in need.

The CSH team provides the following services:

- Concierge services
- Transit information
- SafeWalk service
- Welfare checks
- Conditions of Entry and Sit/Lie ordinances
- Referrals to human services



Community Safety & Hospitality

In addition to our core CSH services, we also aid the downtown community through:

- Providing Narcan to our team on a volunteer basis, to assist in reversing overdoses from fentanyl. (157 reversals in 2024. 104 and counting in 2025.)
- We partner with SPD West Precinct to offer de-escalation and personal safety classes. - As well as act as liaison to get businesses signed up for SPD's Conditions of Entry program.
- Collaborate & meet with various community groups such as the Pioneer Square Alliance, Circle The Square, Lumen Field hosted Community Forum, HEAT, the Downtown Security Forum, Third Avenue Project, and various



Public Realm Operations

The Public Realm Operations (PRO) Team manages and activates seven parks ensuring these public spaces are clean and welcoming.

PRO Ambassadors oversee a range of daily activations:

- Art installations
- Food trucks
- Buskers and street performances
- DSS Summer concert series
- Annual Holiday Tree Lighting
- Seattle sports watch parties



Moderated discussion



Discussion themes

Stepping up

- What changed in your downtown?
- How did you make the case to your board and members?

Coordinating

- From collaboration to coordination
- What does being the local “quarterback” mean?
- Aligning many partners and timelines

Showing results

- Visible results vs. longer-term approaches
- Using data to report progress

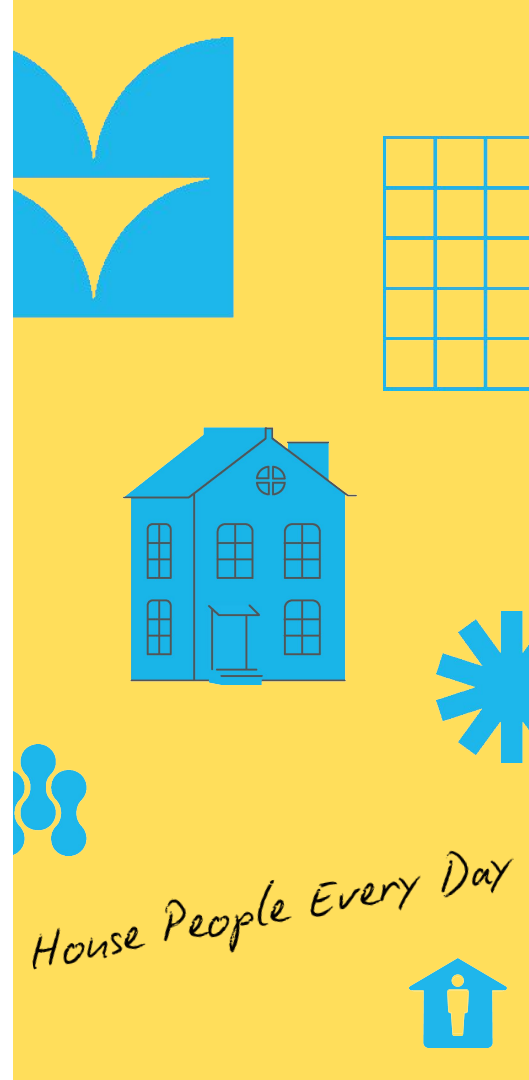
Audience questions

What does this look like in your community?

What is working well that you'd like to share?

What is an unanswered question you have?

What challenges are you facing in establishing effective coordination?



Takeaways

Bring one new ally home



What is the single most practical first step to bring a new business ally into this work?

What is one mistake to avoid when building trust with business partners?

Your next step: identify a new ally you will reach out to or take a step to deepen a relationship when you get home.

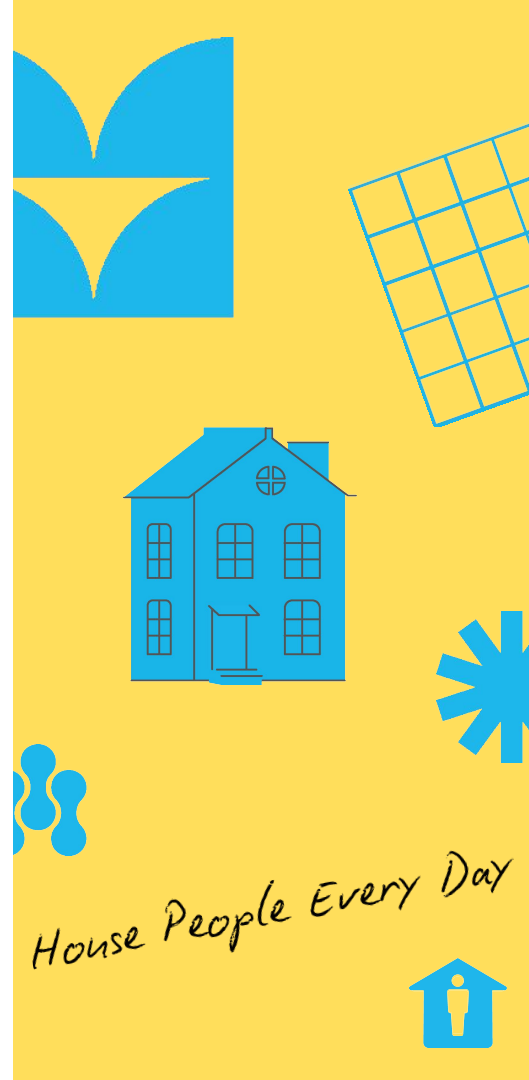


Session Feedback

Please scan the QR code to complete the feedback survey.



<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/9042138/2026-BFZ-Learning-Session-Workshop-Session-Feedback>



Thank you!

