

Subject Line: New Efforts for an Equitable Recovery and to Bring Workers, Small Businesses, and Visitors Back Downtown

Dear City colleagues,

Seattle was the first city in the country to feel the effects of COVID-19, and at the time, we had no national leadership or playbook to combat this virus and keep our communities safe. Still, we worked quickly to protect the health and safety of our communities, and to-date, Seattle has the lowest COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths of any major American city, and we were the first major city in the country to vaccinate 70 percent of its eligible residents.

These incredible successes are because of every single member of our 12,000-strong workforce. We worked quickly to launch new relief programs, nation-leading COVID-19 testing sites, and equitable vaccination hubs. And so many of you continued to come to work in-person throughout the pandemic to deliver the key services that our residents and businesses rely on. I am so grateful for our workforce's response to the pandemic, in particular our focus on the most vulnerable.

After a grueling 16 months of the pandemic, our work ahead is to ensure we have an equitable recovery. Yesterday, I signed into a law our jointly proposed Seattle Rescue Plan, which will surge \$128 million to neighborhoods and families across Seattle. This plan lays the foundation for our recovery to build back more just and equitable.

COVID-19 had a devastating impact on our residents, small businesses, and neighborhoods, with an acute impact on our downtown core. According to our partners the Downtown Seattle Association, more than 450 businesses have permanently closed downtown since the pandemic began. Those represent livelihoods lost, families disrupted, and elements of our Seattle fabric completely changed.

That's why we're launching new efforts across the City to support existing and bring new workers, small businesses, and visitors back downtown. Using Seattle Rescue Plan investments, we're investing \$9 million in four key strategies identified by the City and our downtown partners:

- Increasing events and programming at our parks and venues
- Reopening small businesses and cultural organizations
- Supporting a summer and fall return for workers who are currently remote
- Increasing graffiti and trash cleanup and beautification efforts

We can't bring back our downtown and neighborhoods alone. I'm calling on Seattleites to bring their civic and city pride to our recovery efforts. Our downtown small businesses, cultural institutions, and workers need our support – they can't reopen or recover without us. Downtown is Seattle's economic engine and heartbeat, and it's up to us to help it come back better than ever for all those who live, work, or visit.

I'll soon announce new programs that I hope will make many of you want to enjoy downtown – not just to work, but to experience our beautiful Seattle summers on the waterfront, get dinner at a downtown restaurant, and explore Pioneer Square's art galleries.

And in the coming weeks, I'll share new information on how widespread vaccinations will impact our internal City COVID-19 protocols. In the meantime, please visit our [COVID-19 resource page](#) to stay

informed of City COVID-19 protocols and policies including face covering and social distancing requirements.

Thanks as always for your work to help Seattle come back better than ever.

Sincerely,

Jenny