

2023 DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH SATISFACTION SURVEY



ABOUT THE SURVEY

The 2023 Downtown Pittsburgh Satisfaction Survey was created to gauge the public's experience and perceptions of Downtown Pittsburgh and the work of the PDP. Collected data was analyzed and compared to 2022 data to inform results.

2023 data was extrapolated from over 1,520 responses (a 50% increase in survey responses from the 2022).

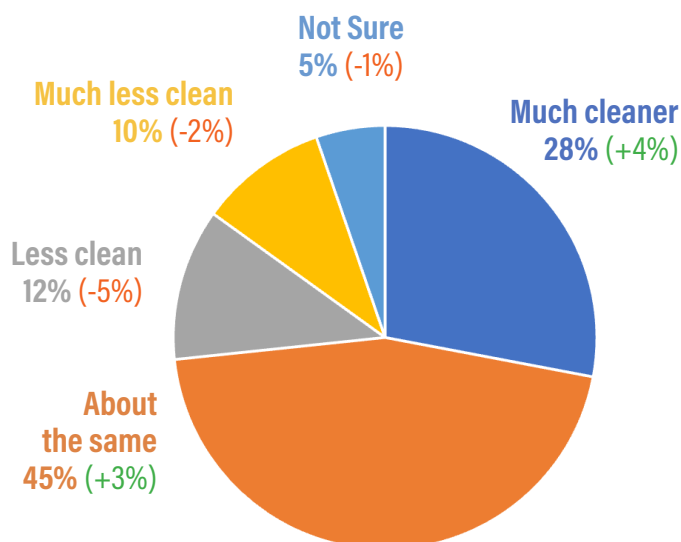
ON-STREET EFFORTS AND IMPACTS

Staff Visibility

On-street staff visibility has improved overall since the previous year. Over 62% of respondents reported seeing PDP On-Street Service Staff (Clean Team members, Golden Triangle Ambassadors), City of Pittsburgh Police or bike safety patrol, or City of Pittsburgh Public Works staff 'every time' or 'most of the time' they are Downtown during the day (a 5% increase from 2022), and 33% during the evening hours (an 8% increase from 2022).

Street Cleanliness

73% rated cleanliness in the Golden Triangle as 'much cleaner' or 'about the same' as other districts in Pittsburgh. The percentage of those who rated the Golden Triangle as 'much cleaner' grew by 4%, and the percentage who answered 'less clean' or 'much less clean' decreased by 7% from 2022.



Downtown Challenges

When asked to choose the three biggest problems (besides litter) that most detracted from the appearance of sidewalks in Downtown, respondents selected 'Personal Items left by People Sleeping on Sidewalks' (69%) 'Bags or Boxes of Trash' (37%) and 'Overflowing Trash Cans' (35%) as the top concerns, consistent with 2022 findings.

Ongoing PDP Efforts

Respondents were asked to rate the impact of five PDP focus areas for Downtown improvement. 83% ranked 'Sidewalk Cleaning and Pressure Washing' and 'Events and Programming in Parks and Public Spaces' as having a 'significant' or 'modest' impact on improving conditions, while 'Graffiti Removal' and Golden Triangle Ambassador Interactions/Assistance' received over 65% positive impact ratings.

88% of respondents favorably ranked PDP's streetscape efforts (outdoor dining platforms, planters, and public artwork), underscoring the value of public/private partnerships in realizing these vibrant changes to Downtown streetscapes.

'Homeless Outreach' was perceived to have the lowest impact. 42% listed these efforts as having 'minimal to no impact,' indicating a need to enhance the visibility and value of these important services.

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SAFETY DOWNTOWN

Safety and the perception of safety are hard to gauge, and our responses echoed this with **48% of respondents answering that they 'feel safe most of the time' Downtown**, a 10% increase from 2022. Conversely, 28% answered that they 'often feel unsafe,' a 6% increase from 2022.

When asked to identify the top three situations/ conditions that make them feel most unsafe in Downtown, 76% of respondents selected 'Panhandlers, Mentally Ill, or Addicted Individuals who Confront Pedestrians,' followed by 'Drug Dealing and Other Illegal Activities' (50%) and 'People Sleeping on the Sidewalk and in Doorways' (50%). Although the choices were modified slightly in the 2023 survey, these results are consistent with 2022 findings.

PROGRESS & IMPROVEMENTS

When asked to rank Downtown's recovery from the pandemic on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being 'Great Progress' and 1 being 'No Progress,' most respondents were right in the middle, with '3' being selected by 40%.

41% of respondents believe that Downtown is headed in the 'Right Direction,' (compared to 43% in 2022) while those that believe Downtown to be headed in the

'Wrong Direction' (28%) decreased by 5% from 2022.. 31% were 'Neutral' on the question, 7% increase from the previous year. Comparatively, 42% believe that the Pittsburgh Region as a whole is headed in the 'Right Direction,' with 44% 'Neutral,' and 14% 'Wrong Direction.'

Respondents were asked to select three changes to the public environment that would most improve Downtown. 50% chose 'Improving Conditions at the T-Stations and Bus Stops' and 'Repair Deteriorated Sidewalks,' respectively, followed by 'Fill Potholes and Resurface Streets' (38%), 'Improve the Appearance of Dumpsters' (33%) and 'Empty the Trash Cans More Frequently' (33%).

When choosing two improvements that would 'enhance the competitiveness of Downtown as a place to work or start/ expand a business, the majority selected 'Reduce the Number of People Living and/or Panhandling on Sidewalks' (72%) and 'Improve Public Safety' (52%).

While the question parameters differed slightly, these are consistent with the top concerns in 2022.

CONCLUSION

Findings from the 2023 Downtown Pittsburgh Satisfaction Survey showed a general modest improvement in overall sentiment towards Downtown, as well as reflected ongoing public concerns with issues related to homelessness and public safety.

The visibility of PDP and/or City services staff during the day has increased, and cleanliness ratings have improved. Although visibility during the evening hours is also improving, challenges persist, and the impacts of homelessness continue affect respondents' attitudes towards Downtown's appearance.

Much of PDP's work, such as cleaning and pressure washing, events and programming, as well as streetscape efforts, are widely recognized for their positive impact. However, responses indicate that PDP's homeless outreach services needs more public recognition to increase awareness and understanding of these efforts and highlight the impact of this work.

Respondents expressed a mixed perception of safety, with an increase in those feeling 'safe most of the time' but also a rise in those feeling 'often unsafe.' Specific concerns were primarily individuals confronting pedestrians, apparent drug-related or other illegal activities, and the presence of unhoused individuals.

Downtown's recovery from the pandemic is viewed neutrally by most, and the direction of Downtown in general is also assessed with a balance of opinions. The top areas of concern for Downtown can be generally categorized as cleanliness, safety, and infrastructure. Specifically, respondents feel that reducing the number of people living or panhandling on sidewalks, improving public safety by reducing illegal activities, addressing deteriorated sidewalks and potholes, and improving conditions at transit stops are key priorities for Downtown's continued progress.

