

PITTSBURGH  
DOWNTOWN  
PARTNERSHIP

# STATE OF DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH

Q2 | DOWNTOWN RETAIL

May 12, 2026



# RETAIL FOCUS

- National retail trends
- Downtown foot traffic
- The Vibrancy Initiative
- Downtown's retail evolution and turnaround
- New storefront activations and retailers
- Power of partnerships
- Next Steps
- Q & A

# NATIONAL RETAIL TRENDS

## Retail held strong in 2025

**76%**

of total retail sales remained store-based in 2025

*Colliers, 2025*

**+3.7%**

actual retail sales growth in 2025  
(forecast was 1.5%)

*Colliers, 2025*

**+1.9%**

retail rent growth in 2025  
(record \$25.69/SF)

*Colliers, Q4 2025*

**4.3%**

retail vacancy rate held steady through Q4 2025

*Colliers, Q4 2025*

### DEMAND IS SHIFTING TO EXPERIENCE

**57%** of consumers say they would rather pay for a great experience than buy something new

**82%** of retailers grew experiential marketing spend in 2025

*Zappi, 2025*

# NATIONAL RETAIL TRENDS

## What's Winning, What's Struggling, and a Path Forward

### ✓ PERFORMING WELL

F&B

#### Food & Beverage

Coffee, QSR, fast casual & experiential dining — #1 urban leasing category at 37.7% of leases

FIT

#### Wellness & Services

Boutique fitness, yoga, beauty, personal care — serving residential population

ESS

#### Necessity-Based Retail

Pharmacy, grocery (small format), convenience — daily driver for residents

EXP

#### Experience & Destination

Immersive concepts, local brands, specialty retail with reasons to visit

### ✗ UNDER PRESSURE

APR

#### Traditional Apparel

Mid-tier struggling without strong residential or tourism base

HME

#### Home Goods & Furniture

Sales -5.6% YoY (Feb 2026); requires destination trips not supported by current foot traffic

DPT

#### Department Stores

Bifurcation persists — luxury holds, mid-tier under sustained pressure (Placer.ai)

RX

#### Big-Box Pharmacy

Legacy oversized formats continuing to shrink or close

Sources: Cushman & Wakefield Manhattan Retail MarketBeat Q2 2025; U.S. Census / Home News Now (Feb 2026); Placer.ai 2025 Department Store Recap

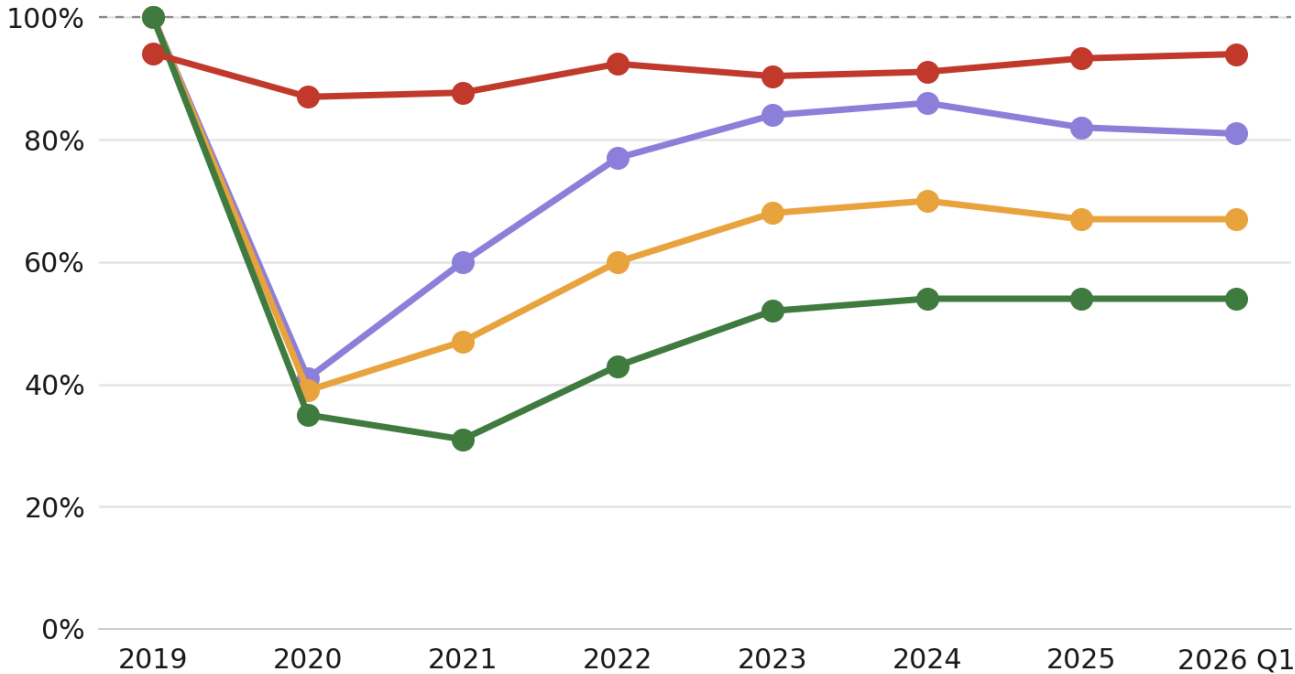
### COMPARABLE BENCHMARK — PHILADELPHIA CENTER CITY

Retail storefront occupancy hit **84.2% in March 2026** — highest in two years, up from 82.6% six months prior. Market Street saw the largest jump: **68.2% → 71.6%**. Recovery is possible. *Source: Center City District, March 2026*

## KEY TAKEAWAY #1:

**National retail is strong,  
but the rules have changed.**

# DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH ACTIVITY



- Visitors leading recovery**  
 Visitors recovered to 81% of 2019, far ahead of in-office. Peaked at 86% in 2024.
- Office presence, not jobs**  
 Daily in-office holding at 54-55% of 2019 for three years — a structural WFH shift, not a smaller workforce.
- Driven by experience**  
 Activity is increasingly driven by visitors, events, and downtown experience — filling the WFH gap.
- Residential demand stayed strong**  
 Golden Triangle apartment occupancy never dropped below 87% and is back to 94% in Q1 2026.



PITTSBURGH DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

# Vibrancy *INITIATIVE*

*Four Pillars of Downtown Revitalization*



Retail  
Attraction



Storefront Art



Pedestrian  
Improvements



Public Realm

# STATE OF DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH | Q2

## 2026 NFL DRAFT EXPERIENCE



SI NBA PLAYOFFS NFL SOCCER MLB NCAAF NCAAB GOLF FANTASY WNBA

### The City of Pittsburgh Was the True Star of the NFL Draft

Steel City provided a memorable draft experience full of picturesque views and big crowds eager to take in one of the most unique experiences in sports.

[Gilberto Manzano](#) | Apr 26, 2026

**Sports  
Illustrated**



### The reviews are in: Pittsburgh and its residents are a top pick for NFL Draft's out-of-town visitors

'It is amazing how many people have smiled and said welcome to Pittsburgh,' one Cincinnati Bengals fan said.



LINDSAY SHACHNOW ✓  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
lshachnow@post-gazette.com

APR 23, 2026 9:05 PM

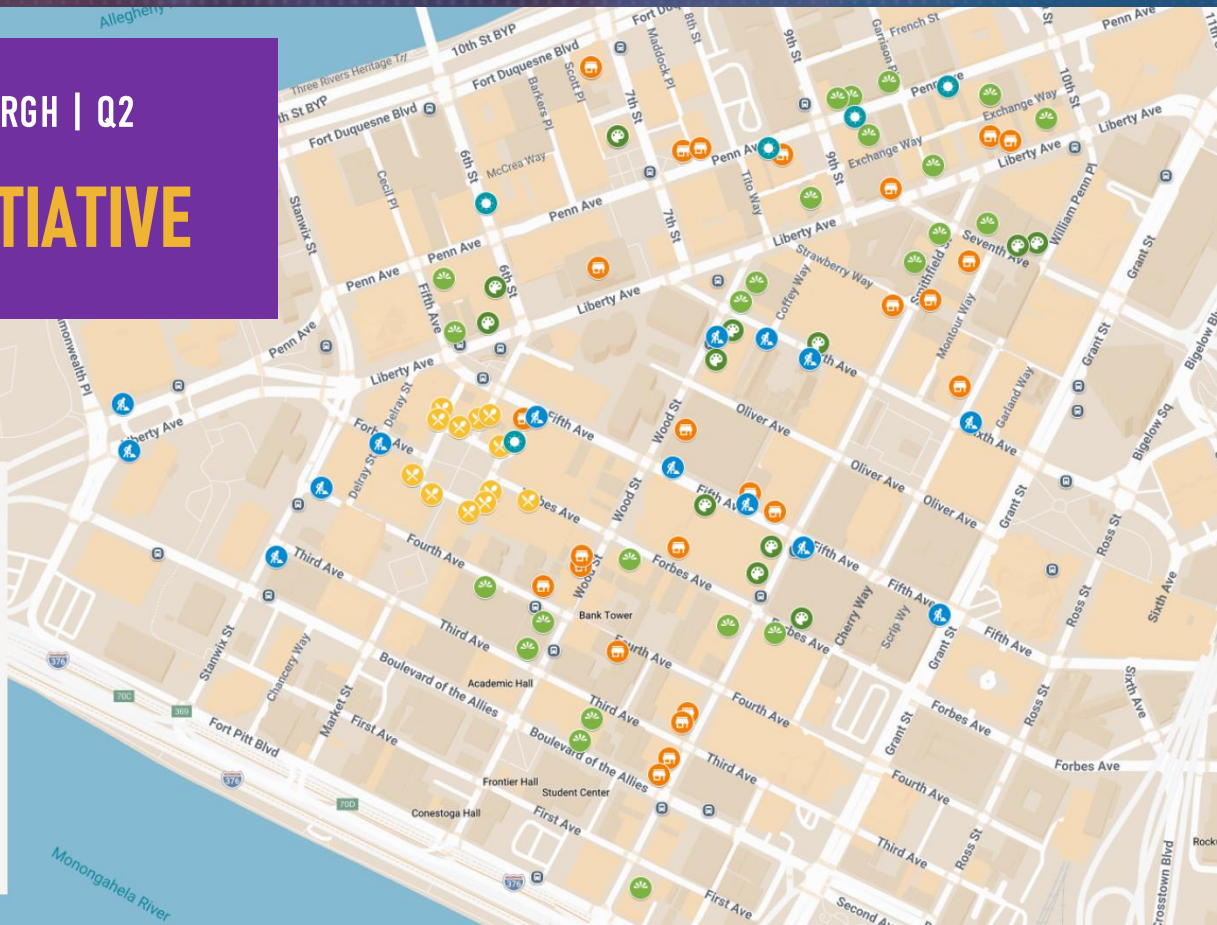


## STATE OF DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH | Q2

# THE VIBRANCY INITIATIVE

### MAP KEY

-  Retail
-  Window Displays
-  Artistic Vinyl + Murals
-  Sidewalk Repairs
-  Outdoor Dining Enhancements
-  Lighting Installations



# STATE OF DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH | Q2

## DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH RETAIL



### At-a-Glance — Vacancy Snapshot

#### DOWNTOWN RETAIL VACANCY RATE

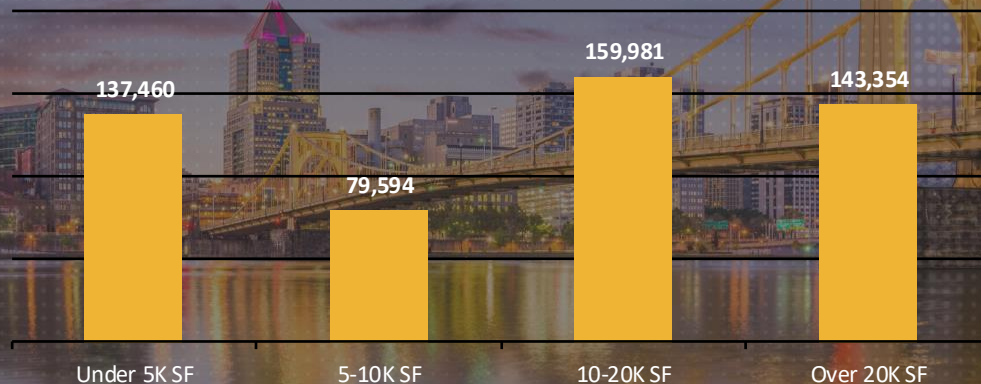
# 18.6%

*SF-weighted, excludes redevelopment projects; signed leases pending storefront activation counted as occupied.*

**1.45M SF** total retail universe (excl. redev)

**271K SF** vacant · 67 tracked storefronts

#### Vacant Retail SF by Size Segment



#### KEY INSIGHT

Just 13 vacant spaces (each  $\geq 10K$  SF) account for 58% of all vacant retail SF — vacancy is concentrated in larger box properties.

# STATE OF DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH | Q2

## DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH RETAIL

### At-a-Glance — Occupancy Snapshot

#### VACANCY REDUCTION FROM Q1 2026 to Q2 2026

# 2.6%

*SF-weighted; excludes redevelopment projects; signed leases pending storefront activation counted as occupied*

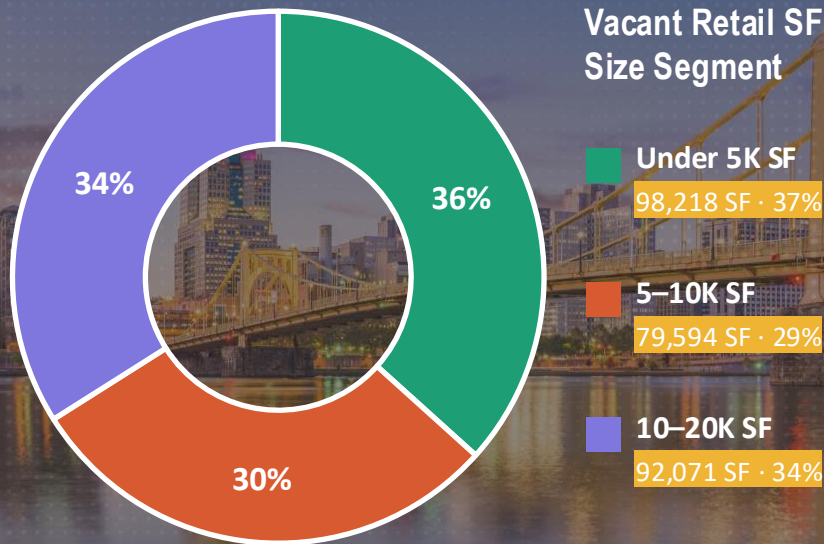
**1.45M SF** retail universe (excl. redev.)

**270K SF** vacant · 67 tracked storefronts

#### Q1 → Q2 PROGRESS

SF vacant **308K → 270K**

Storefronts **80 → 67**



#### KEY INSIGHT

With redevelopment properties excluded, no single vacant space exceeds 20,000 SF. The remaining vacancy is largely in small and mid sized storefronts where our incentive programs have been effective, particularly pop ups and DRAP.

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## DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH RETAIL



### At-a-Glance — Storefront Activation & Leasing Pipeline

#### ACTIVATION COVERAGE

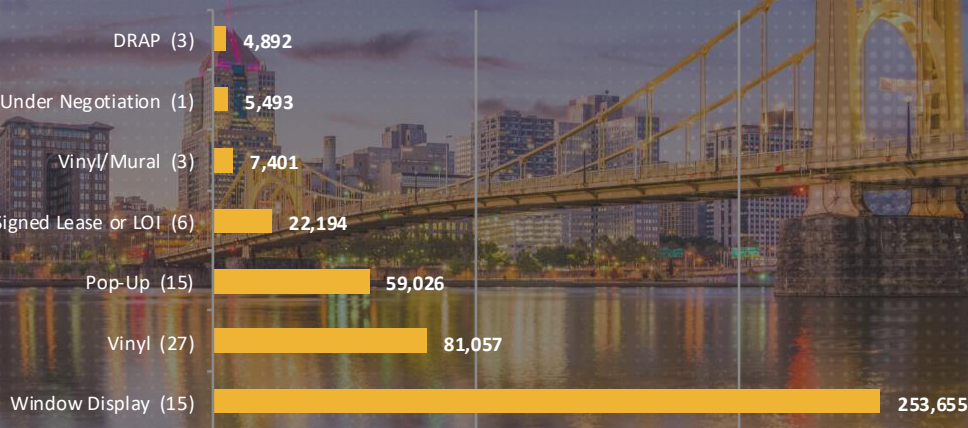
# 83%

*of vacant retail SF is programmed*

**74 of 89** storefronts activated

**433,718 SF** actively programmed

#### Vacant SF by Activation Type (# spaces)



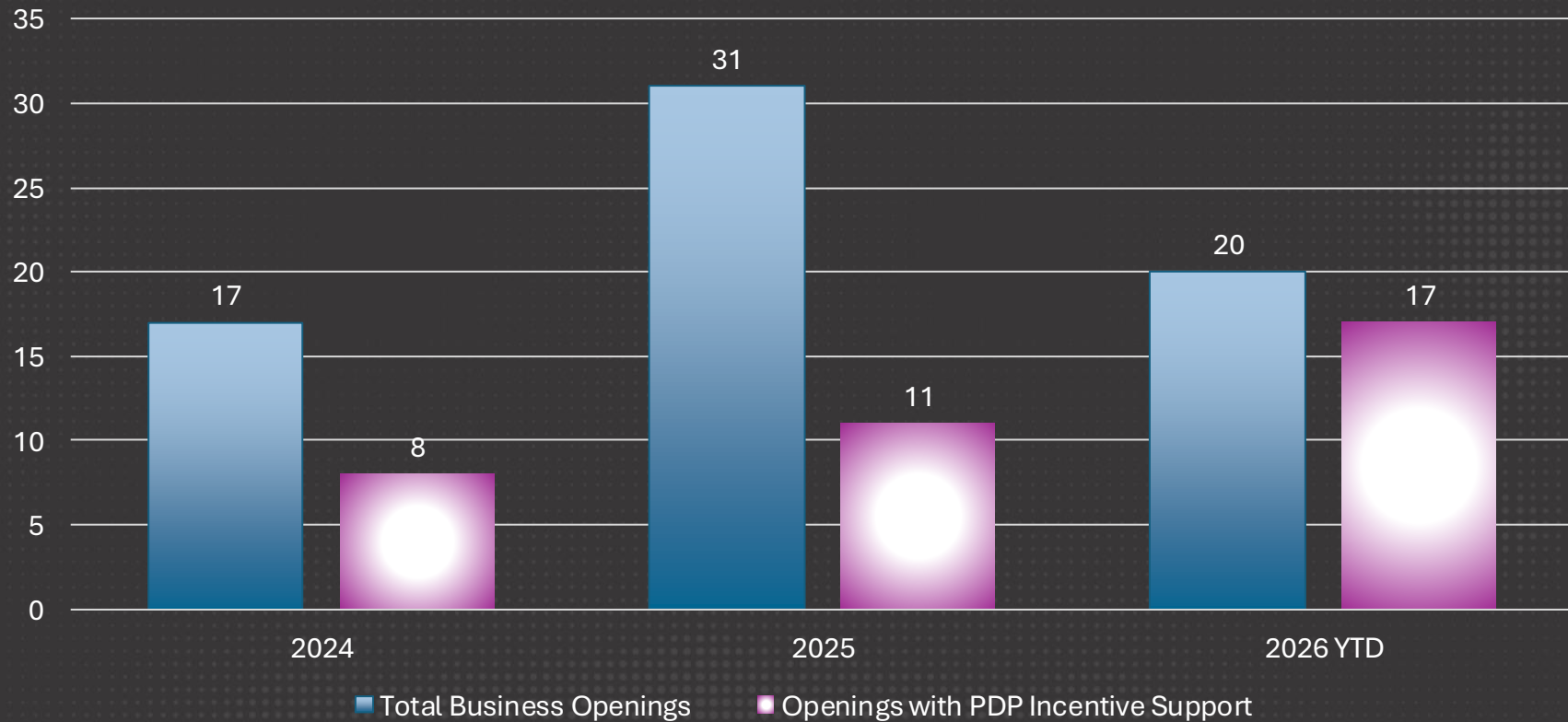
#### LEASING PIPELINE — VACANT SPACES BEING FILLED

7 spaces (24,858 SF) are in the leasing pipeline, supported in part by the Downtown Rent Abatement Program: 6 with signed leases or LOIs and 1 in activation negotiation.

## KEY TAKEAWAY #2:

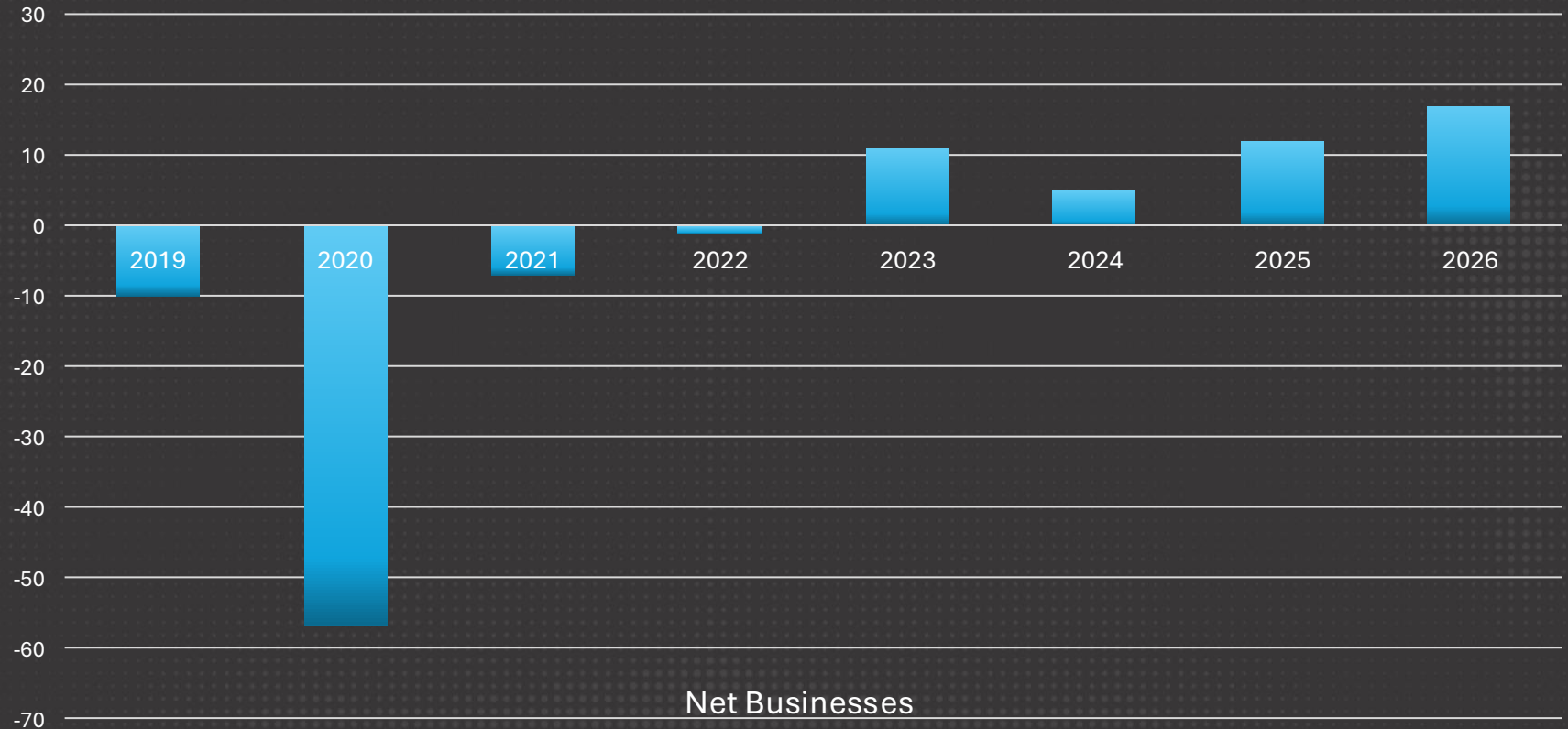
**Today, (almost) every storefront window facing a Downtown sidewalk is presenting a commercial purpose or artistic display.**

## 2024-2026 (YTD) BUSINESS GROWTH & IMPACT



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# DOWNTOWN NET BUSINESSES (2019-MAY 2026)



## KEY TAKEAWAY #3:

**Activation, investment, and incentives have flipped Downtown from chronic business loss to four straight years of net growth.**

# DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH RENT ABATEMENT



**Fahri's Custom  
Clothiers**  
606 Liberty Ave



**Mild 2 Spicy**  
951 Liberty Ave



**Rebel Hound**  
915 Liberty Ave.

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**VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT ART**



Alyson Lush  
Crested Guinea Fowl, 2024  
Pea Hen, 2024  
Turkey Vulture, 2024  
*908 Penn Ave.*

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**VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT ART**



Emily Armstrong  
Freedom, 2025  
Fluid (30), 2025  
Fluid (31), 2025  
608 Wood St.

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**VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT ART**



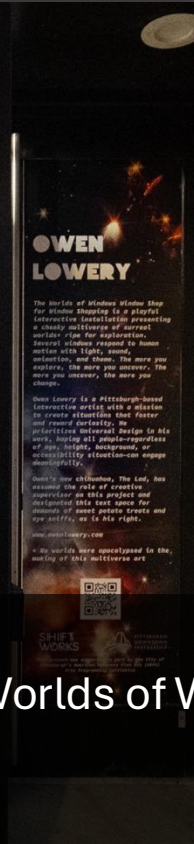
Ian Brill  
Broadcast  
344 Fifth Ave.

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**VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT ART**



Joshua Challen Ice  
Aurora V2  
441 Smithfield St.

# STATE OF DOWNTOWN PITTSBURGH | Q2 VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT ART



Owen Lowry  
The Worlds of Windows Window Shop for  
Window Shopping  
130 7<sup>th</sup> St

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## VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT ART



### FOR SEASONS

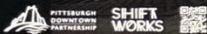
an installation by  
**i / thee**

For Seasons is an interactive installation composed of 3D-printed lamps and patterned window decals made from thermochromic vinyl that shifts color in response to temperature changes induced by environmental conditions, human touch, and pulsing light. Combining heat and cold-activated materials, the work graduates between blue and purple across the seasons: in deep winter it appears fully purple; on a hot summer day, fully blue; and on temperate days, it settles into a responsive blue-purple rhythm that reacts to touch, like drawing on a fogged window.

The installation visualizes the slow rhythms of the natural environment in contrast to the bustle of downtown Pittsburgh—not as a digital simulation, but as a physically responsive surface attuned to its surroundings. As the work shifts over time, it encourages repeated viewings, changing with the hour, season, and proximity of the body making each visit unique. For Seasons invites visitors to engage, touch, and participate in its continual formation—a dedication to the changing seasons.

Credits  
Kristen Miller and Neal Lucas Hinch  
© \_\_\_\_\_ | i/thee design

This project was supported in part by the City of Pittsburgh's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Arts Programming Initiative.



i/thee  
For Seasons  
6<sup>th</sup> St and Liberty Ave. Garage

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**VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT ART**



SETH CLARK

SHAPING HOME  
2026

Through an ongoing process with the meaning of home, Clark introduces these sculptures as an imaginative story about encouraging viewers to rethink how we relate to our neighbors and those communities.

SHIFT  
WORKS

Seth Clark

Shaping Home

Heinz 57 Building, 339 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.

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## VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT ART



The Pittsburgh Film Office  
Pittsburgh in Film

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**VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT RETAIL**



Deryck Tines Consignment  
625 Smithfield Street

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# VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT RETAIL



The Studio by PGH Candle  
413 Wood St

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**VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT RETAIL**



**Black Brewhouse**  
339 Forbes Ave.

# VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT RETAIL

THE  
SILLY  
GOOSE



UNAPOLOGETIC  
GIFTS &  
NOVELTIES

ALL LANGUAGES

417

NO  
LOITERING  
SOLICITING

The Silly Goose Unapologetic Gifts & Novelties

417 Wood St

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# VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT RETAIL



This new  
Downtown  
Studio

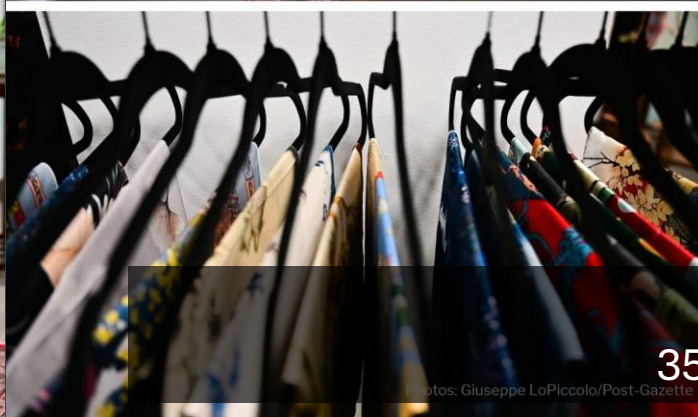
*is blooming  
beautifully*



Confleurtti  
208 Fifth Ave.

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## VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT RETAIL



Eastern Passage  
355 Fifth Ave., Suite 110

Photo: Giuseppe LoPiccolo/Post-Gazette

Photos: Giuseppe LoPiccolo/Post-Gazette

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# VIBRANCY INITIATIVE – STOREFRONT RETAIL



Pittsburgh Brewing Co.  
611 William Penn Place

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# MOONSHOT MUSEUM LUNAR SIMULATION LAB



## LUNAR SIMULATION LAB

DOWNTOWN POP-UP LOCATION  
810 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15222



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**BIRGO CAPITAL**



## KEY TAKEAWAY #4:

**When partners align, Downtown moves  
at the speed of opportunity.**

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# NEXT STEPS

## SUSTAINED MOMENTUM

Grow activation coverage from 83%  
to 90% by end of 2026.

## SUPPORT THESE BUSINESSES

Reduce storefront turnover by helping current businesses succeed and convert from pop-ups to long-term tenants.

Vibrancy Business Directory:  
[www.downtownpittsburgh.com/vibrancy/](http://www.downtownpittsburgh.com/vibrancy/)

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**THANK YOU**  
Questions?

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