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Three Million Reasons to Celebrate! Downtown Foot Traffic Reaches Three Million Visits per Month in a First Since 2020

Downtown Portland Foot Traffic Grows Fifth Year in a Row, New Data Shows

Portland, OR — 2026 has seen the busiest summer for pedestrian traffic in downtown Portland since 2019. Mirroring 2025, gains in 2026 have been driven by increased visitor activity, particularly on weekends, and strong turnout for events and festivals.

These sustained upward trends are evidence of over five years of intentional and consistent collaboration between the public, private, and non-profit sectors to invest in downtown activations and improve downtown cleanliness and safety.

According to the latest [Summer Downtown Foot Traffic Report](#) from **Downtown Portland Clean & Safe**, which analyzed foot traffic data from January through August:

- Downtown has seen **five consecutive years** of growth in January through August pedestrian activity.
- Pedestrian visits **surpassed three million in July and August** — the first months to reach this level since 2020.
- More than **22.2 million pedestrian visits** were recorded through August — **3.6% higher** than the same period in 2025.
- Foot traffic in **August 2026 reached 81% of August 2019 levels**, the strongest monthly recovery rate since 2020.
- **Every month through August**, visitor foot traffic totals surpassed 2025 levels.
- **Saturdays in 2026 are at a 92% recovery rate** from 2019 and **Sundays at a 91% recovery rate**, with several weekend dates exceeding 2019 levels.

Challenges Remain: Worker Activity Continues to Dip

Pedestrian activity has **recovered 77% from 2019**. The clearest barrier to full recovery is lagging worker traffic — 2026 levels through August are **nearly 50% lower than the same period in 2019**.

Despite lifting of pandemic era restrictions, downtown workforce activity has remained static in recent years because of structural policy barriers and the effects of pandemic-era changes like the transition to hybrid and remote work. Impacts are particularly felt by businesses that have historically depended on a large, predictable weekday workforce.

Full downtown recovery will require policy solutions that accelerate the positive momentum started by public-private partnerships, like the recommendations presented by the Central City Task Force and the Governor's Prosperity Council.

"Portland's improved pedestrian traffic is an important indicator of renewed downtown vitality, and this kind of progress wouldn't be possible without downtown community leaders, residents, and small businesses working together for Portland's economic renaissance. Thank you for all your great work," **Governor Tina Kotek said**. "The state and my office will continue to be a strong partner with you to encourage business investment and ensure downtown thrives as a premier destination for residents and visitors alike. Let's keep going."

Mayor Keith Wilson stated, "There remains work to be done, but this sustained positive momentum shows that we've made major progress together. I encourage Portlanders and visitors to spend a weekend downtown, there's often no shortage of fun experiences that can only be found in Portland. Thank you to the neighbors, business owners, and community leaders who put their hearts into downtown's recovery — the pulse of the central city is beating stronger every day."

Investments in Downtown Events and Festivals are Driving Results

The report shows that a packed calendar of cultural events and weekend activities have sparked sustained waves of downtown foot traffic. Surges coincided with signature downtown events. Strategic investment in downtown activation has been championed by business, nonprofit, and government leaders, including Senator Kate Lieber and Representative Daniel Nguyen who led support of recent funding for downtown waterfront festivals.

Senator Kate Lieber said, "In 2025, I worked to secure funding to help Waterfront Park's festival and event organizers keep Portland's downtown vibrant, creative, and

economically active. This report shows that investment is paying off. Downtown foot traffic is growing in large part by events that make this city special. When the public and private sector come together around shared priorities, we can get big things done — and quickly. I'm grateful to Downtown Portland Clean and Safe and the Portland Metro Chamber for tracking this progress, and to Portlanders for continuing to choose downtown."

Representative Daniel Nguyen commented, "Investments in downtown festivals and events are paying off! Positive energy and crowds are back on the city's streets. When people come downtown, they support local shops and restaurants, make our streets safer and more vibrant, and show that Portland's best days are ahead of us. We must double down to keep momentum strong."

Megan Conway, President and CEO of Travel Portland, said, "Large events and attractions continue to draw both residents and visitors alike to our city. Tourism's recovery goes hand in hand with increases in foot traffic throughout Portland and we know the impressive slate of events this summer were crucial to this growth. It is important we continue supporting events that drive the tourism economy and increase the quality of life for our local community."

Looking Forward

The data increasingly suggests that downtown Portland's future can be built by diversifying the downtown experience to become a more complete neighborhood and a more compelling destination — a place to live, dine, and gather, as well as work. Partners should address a remaining major barrier to full recovery — lagging downtown worker traffic.

Andrew Hoan, President and CEO of the Portland Metro Chamber, stated, "The numbers tell an important story — public-private partnerships and investments in downtown events and festivals have made a difference. We commend our public leaders and agencies who have invested in the livability and vibrancy of the downtown core, including Governor Kotek, Senator Lieber, Representative Daniel Nguyen, Mayor Wilson, and Travel Portland."

Hoan added, "While this progress should be celebrated, full recovery has been limited by lagging worker activity. To restore the central city's vibrancy, we need the same intentional willingness from government, business, and nonprofit partners to address the root issues of drops in workforce activity, including stagnated business development in the city core evidenced by prevalent office vacancies."

The full report is available at [2026 Summer Downtown Foot Traffic Report](#).

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About Downtown Portland Clean & Safe: The Downtown Portland Clean & Safe District was established in 1988 to support additional cleaning and security in a 273 block-area of Portland's Central City. In addition to these important services, the district supports market research, retail recruitment and retention for Downtown Portland. The district is managed by the Portland Business Alliance under the direction of the district's board of directors. Learn more at DowntownPortland.org.