



## 2008 Downtown Residents Survey

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **Objective**

Evaluate attitudes and perceptions of Downtown Seattle residents on issues involving neighborhood cleanliness and safety.

#### **Methodology**

This study consists of one-on-one phone interviews, employing a custom-designed survey. An independent research provider, EMC Research, conducted the interviews from August 3 – 26, 2008. This is the third wave of the study comparing residents' perceptions of cleanliness and safety. This study examines residents' levels of concern for ten related issues and their perceptions of how well "Downtown Seattle" is addressing these issues.

#### **Target Sample**

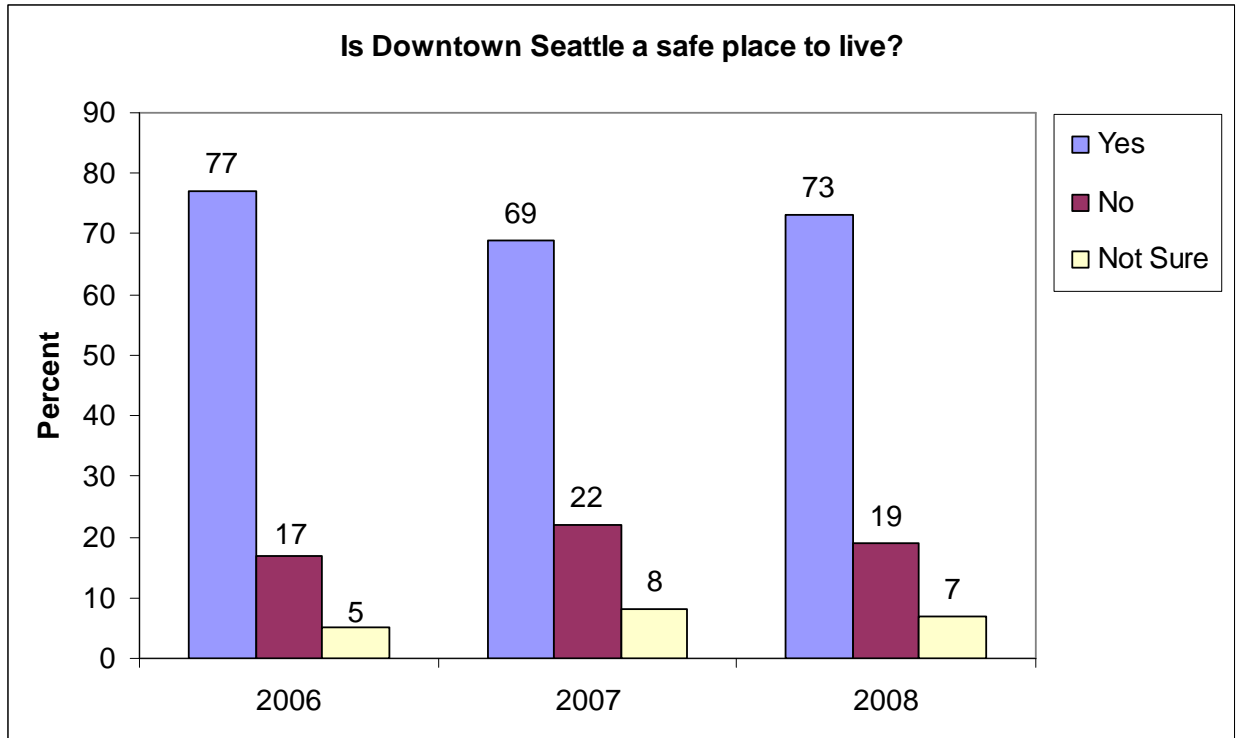
600 interviews were conducted among a representative sample of Downtown Seattle residents. They were looked at in the aggregate and also segmented into four designated neighborhood groupings:

- Belltown (largest percent of residents and survey respondents)
- Pioneer Square/International District
- Central Business District/Waterfront/West Edge ("CBD")
- South Lake Union/Denny Triangle

### **Findings**

#### Safety

- Approximately three-fourths (73%) of respondents believe downtown is a safe place to live. This is up slightly from 69% in 2007, which was the lowest number for the three years of the study. In 2006, 77% said downtown is a safe place to live. The graph on the next page shows residents' responses to the question "Is Downtown Seattle a safe place to live?" for all three years.
  - Residents in the CBD (80%) and South Lake Union/Denny Triangle (78%) neighborhoods are the most likely to say that Downtown Seattle is a safe place to live.



**Figure 1. Is Downtown Seattle a safe place to live? (All Respondents)**

- While overall perceptions of safety have remained stable, when asked if downtown is a safer place to live than it was a year ago, nearly half of residents (44% in 2008 and 47% in 2007) respond that it is not a safer place to live than it was one year ago.
  - Of those who said downtown is safe, only about a third (31%) say that it is safer than one year ago.

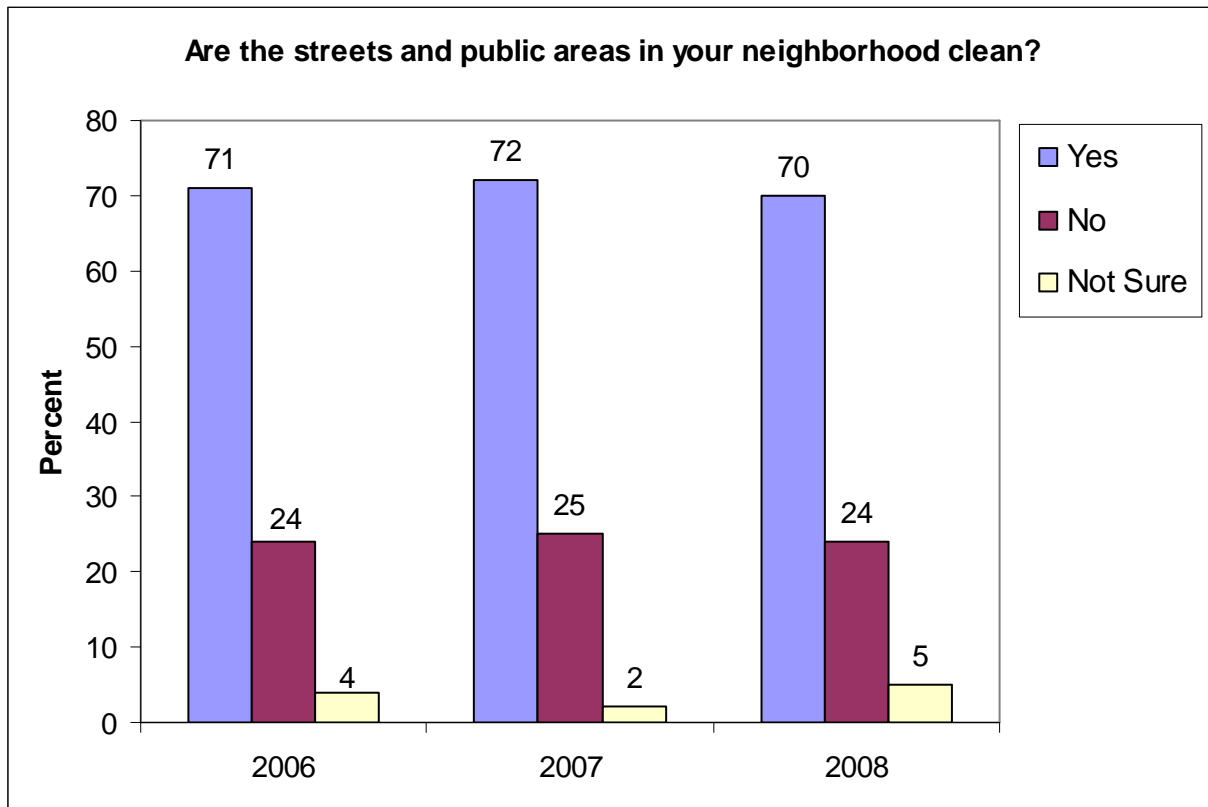
### Safety – Day vs. Night

- Almost all residents continue to feel safe walking downtown during the day (95% in 2008; 93% in 2007). Perceptions of nighttime safety have also remained stable (50% felt safe walking at night in 2008 versus 46% in 2007). However, perception of nighttime safety decreased over the three years of the study from a high of 60% in 2006.
- When asked whether it is safer to walk during the day or at night, two-thirds (67%) say it is safer to walk during the day while about a third (29%) say there is no difference.
  - Residents in the CBD (36%) and South Lake Union/Denny Triangle (41%) neighborhoods are the most likely to say there is no difference between day and night safety.

- Males and females are equally likely to say that their areas are safe (in 2007, males were more likely than females to make this comment).

## Cleanliness

- The same level agrees that neighborhood streets and public areas are clean in 2008 (70%) as in 2007 (72%) (Figure 2). There was no significant change in any neighborhood over the past three years but residents in the CBD were the most positive.



**Figure 2. Are the streets and public areas in your neighborhood clean? (All Respondents)**

- Similar to the pattern with safety, when asked about cleanliness versus one year ago, nearly half of residents (46% in 2008 vs. 48% in 2007) said that their streets and public areas are not cleaner than one year ago.
  - Over the three years, the trend is an overall increase in those who thought neighborhoods were not cleaner than the year before.
  - In 2007, the CBD saw an increase in those who thought their areas were not cleaner than one year ago, but they see some improvement in 2008. There was not a lot of change in perception versus the previous year for the other neighborhood groups.

- Of those who say streets are clean, only a quarter (26%) say they are cleaner than a year ago.

### Issues: Level of Concern

In addition to questions about overall cleanliness and safety, respondents were asked about their current level of concern on ten specific issues and how well these issues are being addressed in their neighborhood. The issues we asked about were (in descending order of respondents' overall levels of concern): keeping downtown parks safe (83%), buying and selling of drugs (76%), dangerous behavior due to alcohol consumption (70%), aggressive panhandlers (69%), public urination (68%), public drunkenness (66%), panhandling (63%), loitering by adults (61%), excessive nighttime noise (57%) and loitering by youth (54%).

- When looking solely at "extreme concern", buying and selling of drugs (52%) and keeping parks safe (48%) are the top two issues of concern to residents. This is the case in all neighborhood groups.
  - When "somewhat concerned" is added to this, excessive nighttime noise becomes a top two issue for those in the Pioneer Square/ International District neighborhood groups - 68% express that they are either "extremely" or "somewhat" concerned about excessive nighttime noise in this group.
- When looking at total respondents, there is a slight decrease in the level of concern between 2007 and 2008 for most of the issues.
- There are some differences by neighborhood. The most notable changes on level of concern are improvements for nearly every issue in the CBD.
- Pioneer Square / International District residents also expressed significantly lower levels of concern on some issues, most significantly panhandling and the buying and selling of drugs.
- There is less change in the Belltown and South Lake Union / Denny Triangle neighborhoods from 2007 to 2008.

### Issues: How Well Addressed

- While buying and selling of drugs tends to be a top issue of concern, it consistently ranks as one of the least well addressed of these issues in each neighborhood and is considered the least well addressed overall (10% say it is being addressed "extremely well" and 33% "somewhat well").
- Residents perceive keeping downtown parks safe, a top issue of concern, to be the most well addressed of the issues covered in this survey (18% "extremely well" and 50% "somewhat well").
- Overall, there is little change from 2007 to 2008, but there are some changes in individual neighborhoods.

- Changes in Belltown include a decrease in perceptions of how well panhandling is being handled and an increase in how well the issue of keeping parks safe is being handled.
- Four areas where South Lake Union / Denny Triangle residents see improvement are public drunkenness, dangerous behavior due to excessive alcohol, panhandling and loitering by youth.
- The CBD area sees improvements in nearly every issue.
- The Pioneer Square / International District group sees little change from 2007 to 2008, but does see an improvement in perceptions of how well panhandling is being addressed (52% in 2008 vs. 39% in 2007 for the total of "extremely" and "somewhat" well addressed).

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