

2021 Public Safety Survey: Executive Summary and Slide Notes

In April 2021, Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) published its annual public safety survey in order to track the perception of health and safety in Downtown. The survey was open from the beginning of April through the end of May, collecting a total of 1,223 cleaned responses. The results of the survey are compared to the previous three years the survey was collected. Due to the rapidly changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic in April of 2020, DLBA chose not to issue a public safety survey. As a perception survey, the results of the public safety survey may not necessarily reflect real-time data or crime statistics.

Overall, the sentiment in the survey results reflects the tumultuous previous year and the effects downtowns across the country are experiencing. A marked decrease in daily activity around Downtown Long Beach due to remote work and public health restrictions exacerbated existing challenges such as illegal dumping, property crime, homelessness and untreated mental illness. DLBA's increased messaging heightened awareness of services offered; however, reduced social and economic activity in Downtown created a more negative perception of health and safety.

Below are guiding notes accompanying the slide deck of the 2021 Public Safety Survey results.

Slide 1:

- Title Slide

Slide 2:

- The timing and social circumstances of the COVID pandemic led DLBA to cancel the 19/20 survey. The initial 19/20 response rate was abnormally low and the perception of safety and health would be outlier data.
- The 20/21 survey was open from mid-April to the end of May, and we received almost 4 times the number of results. After cleaning data, response amount is more congruous with past years. City shared link on their twitter

Slide 3:

- The largest number of responses came from downtown residents or regular Visitors, followed by a downtown workers and live/workers. There was still underreporting from workers, business owners, and tourists. Distribution of the survey went beyond DTLB, hence large numbers of area visitors

Slide 4:

- The breakdown of downtown user type is roughly the same over the past three iterations of the survey.

Slide 5:

- There is underreporting from Pine/Promenade residents and the West Gateway area, and overreporting from Waterfront and slightly from EV. Overreporting from the Waterfront is to be expected from older, retired, and more civically involved residents. The target distribution is based off of census tract data.

Slide 6:

- Margin of error is calculated based upon number of results we received the total downtown population and the confidence interval in the reliability of the results.
- Margin of error has been the same the past three years of the survey.

Slide 7:

- This question was only added starting in 2018/19, but interesting to see how frequent visits to DTLB have declined compared to previous survey. This is possibly due to COVID-related restrictions.

Slide 8:

- The perception of cleanliness has stayed roughly the same over the past three years with most people saying that downtown is “fairly clean”.

Slide 9:

- Selected cross tab: perception of cleanliness broken by DTLB neighborhoods
- The highlighted cells represent which neighborhood has the highest proportion of responses in each cleanliness category. West Gateway was largest share of “cleanest downtown” responses, North Pine for “fairly clean”, and East Village for both “slightly unclean” and “dirtiest downtown” categories.

Slide 10:

- Recommendation rating score has decreased from past three years

Slide 11:

- Perceived comfort at 7am – 2pm, working hours
- The share of “completely comfortable” as well as overall comfortability has decreased
- people who reported “somewhat uncomfortable” has doubled during this time of day.

Slide 12:

- 2pm to 8
- People who reported feeling “somewhat uncomfortable” has doubled since 18/19

Slide 13:

- 8pm to 12am, Dinner/Nightlife hours
- Comfortability has decreased, “N/A” has increased (possibly because less people visiting at this timeframe), and share of overall those feeling uncomfortable has increased.

Slide 14:

- 12 to 7am
- Levels of discomfort are back to 17/18 levels, and “N/A” responses increased as well.

Slide 15:

- Large decrease in perception that the following aspects of Downtown have improved over past 3 years. This doesn't necessarily mean things have gotten correspondingly worse, but just not improved since 17/18. "Momentum" has decreased.

Slide 16:

- Can't really compare to past years because the question changed from better/worse presence to increase/decrease presence. previous option was open to too much subjective interpretation.
- For most part people said security presence stayed the same, with about 20% saying there was increase in all categories
- Police had largest perceived decrease in presence

Slide 17:

- Sentiment questions on homelessness
- Numbers roughly same as 18/19, with 30-40% agreeing on knowledge of DLBA/city efforts

Slide 18:

- Small fluctuations from one year to next, but agreement numbers are in high 70s low 80s
- These sentiment questions are biased

Slide 19:

- Same as slide 18, but numbers hover around 50%

Slide 20:

- Crosstab of sentiment knowledge on DLBA homelessness efforts by user type
- Highlighted cells represent the largest response group from each row of Downtown user type.
- While Residents and Workers have largest share agreement for homeless services, majority of answers from other user groups are in disagreement for knowledge of homeless services.
- most users aren't really aware of what DLBA does for those experiencing homelessness, although it has increased over past three years

Slide 21:

- awareness of all DLBA services has increased about 15-20% on avg over past 3 years
- increased outreach and messaging over last year
- grants, homeless services, public realm are biggest increases

Slide 22:

- rating of specific clean safe services decreased slightly, but on trend
- responsiveness increased most, but still around 40% good
- litter and graffiti removal had biggest decrease, but still 2/3s say its good

Slide 23:

- Parking and Surface lot safety has increased in priority, almost tied with loitering in public space in last years. Issue may have been elevated due to decrease in street activity over past year, more underused spaces and generally less eyes on the street. Similar for street lighting issue.

Slide 24:

- 2 out of 5 comments about homelessness, 1 out of 5 about health and safety (animal waste, litter, property crime, etc.)

Slide 25&26:

- Summarized themes of comments
- Selected comments