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NEWS, 9A

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NFL DRAFT



Outside Origin Story on Smithfield Street in downtown Pittsburgh on April 21. The coffee shop opened last year under the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership's rent abatement program.

A local nonprofit leads 'Vibrancy Initiative'

Erin Yudt
PITTSBURGH MEDIA PARTNERSHIP NEWSROOM

In January, downtown Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle had nearly 50 empty storefronts. Now, most are either filled with businesses or art installations.

Local nonprofit Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership is leading what it calls a "Vibrancy Initiative," aimed at contributing to the ongoing revitalization of the neighborhood. The group is always working to fill vacant retail spaces, but the NFL Draft brought more urgency to those efforts, said Cate Irvin, senior director of economic development.

The group revived a "pop-up" program earlier this year, allowing businesses to access retail space – pending an agreement from the property owner – for six to 12 months. Eighteen new businesses have opened within the past two weeks, including The Silly Goose Unapologetic Gifts & Novelties on Wood Street, whose owner came to the area because of the partnership's initiatives leading into the NFL Draft.

"While the [Vibrancy Initiative]

name is new, it really does lean into some very familiar work that you've seen here in downtown Pittsburgh," Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership CEO Jeremy Waldrup said. "It takes all the strategies that have guided our organization's economic development and public realm programs over the last few years and puts them under one roof, continuing to drive ongoing and future investments here in downtown revitalization."

Other areas of the Vibrancy Initiative include pedestrian infrastructure improvements, enhanced public spaces, and art installations, ranging from interior spaces for visitors to exterior, walk-by attractions.

One of these art displays was created by Kristina Fisher and Neal Lucas Hitch on the corner of Seventh and Liberty avenues. The installation, called "For Seasons," is an interactive display composed of 3-D printed lamps and thermodynamic window decals.

"I think the thing that's really

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One of 35 unique art installations the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership has partnered with Shiftworks Community + Public Arts, an organization dedicated to bringing together public art and civic design. The effort to install art and businesses in empty retail spaces was expedited ahead of the NFL Draft.

PHOTOS BY ERIN YUDT/PITTSBURGH MEDIA PARTNERSHIP NEWSROOM

NFL DRAFT

Vehicle traffic to be restricted in downtown

Beth Ann Miller
Beaver County Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Extensive road closures are in place around Point State Park and Acrisure Stadium through April 25 as the 2026 NFL Draft brings football fans into the city of Pittsburgh.

During NFL Draft events, the city's Downtown and North Shore areas will convert to a walkable "Draft Campus," with motorized traffic limited to Pittsburgh Regional Transit vehicles, the city's light rail system (the "T") and other official providers.

Therefore, many streets into and around the "Draft Campus" are closed to vehicle traffic. Traffic patterns will be adjusted to allow Pirates fans to access PNC Park for baseball games held during the road closures, according to NFLDraftPittsburgh.com.

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