



CENTER CITY REPORTS

# OUTDOOR SEATING 2019

SEPTEMBER 2019

CENTER CITY DISTRICT,  
CENTRAL PHILADELPHIA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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Outdoor seating has been a long-term indicator of Center City's vibrancy since sidewalk cafés were first authorized in 1995 by then-Mayor Edward G. Rendell. Seating outside of restaurants first appeared around Rittenhouse Square and steadily expanded to cafés and restaurants across Center City and ultimately to commercial corridors throughout Philadelphia.

For restaurants, cafés and retail establishments, outdoor seating is good for business, expanding capacity and serving as open invitation for pedestrians to see what an establishment offers. For patrons, outdoor seating provides the opportunity to enjoy temperate outdoor weather, to see and be seen along the sidewalk, to meet, eat, drink or work. While seating on the most narrow sidewalks can occasionally pose some inconvenience for pedestrians, the advantage of more "eyes on the street" has made for safer sidewalks in the city.

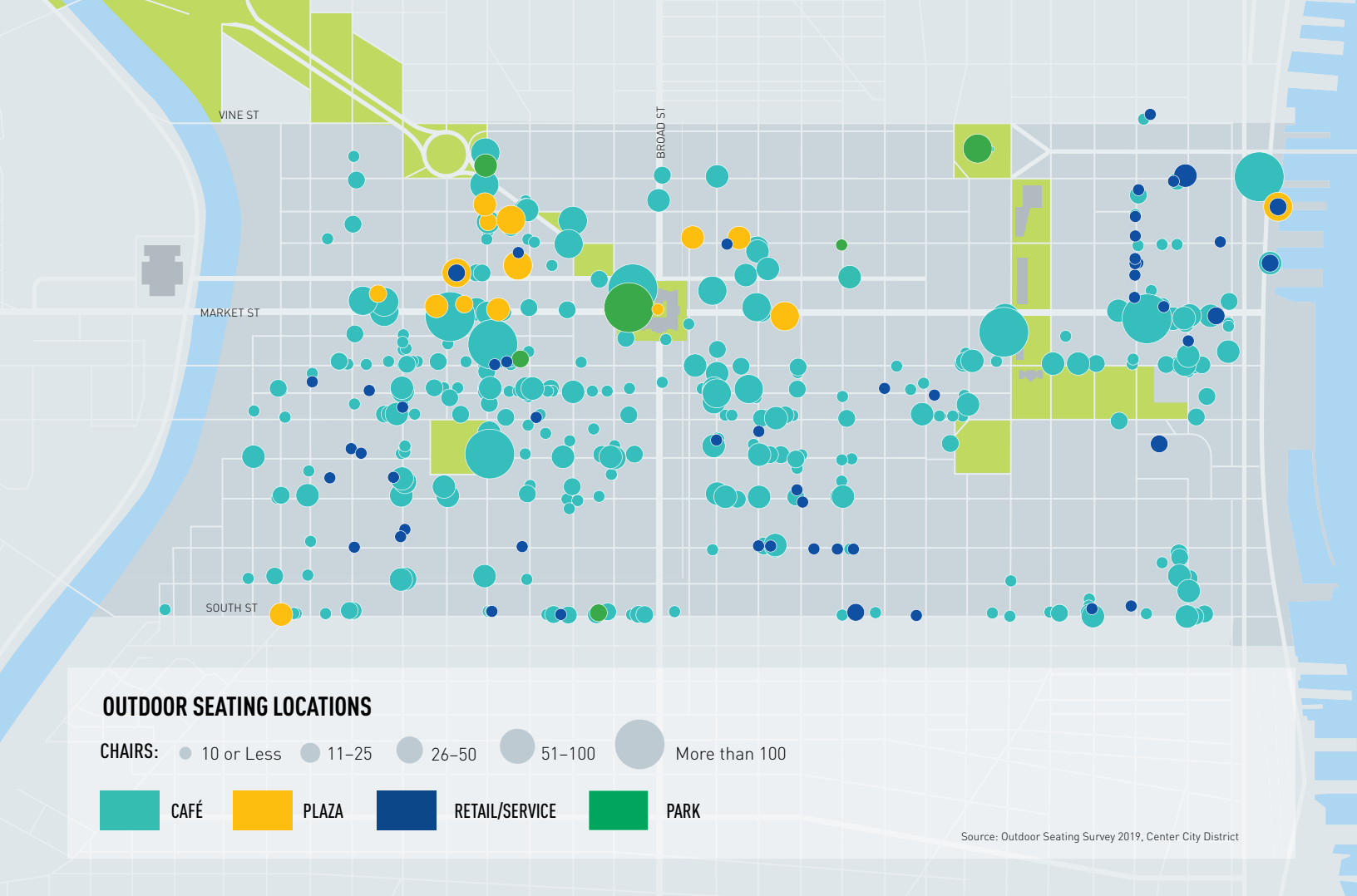
Since CCD began tracking outdoor seating in 2001, there has been steady growth in outdoor seating downtown. The first CCD survey of outdoor seating counted only cafés, but as years passed, more types of businesses began to deploy seating. In 2013, CCD began to count non-food retailers. In 2015, the "other" category was expanded, adding outdoor seating unassociated with a specific business.

## OUTDOOR SEATING IS A PRIME INDICATOR OF THE VITALITY OF SIDEWALKS AND PUBLIC PLACES

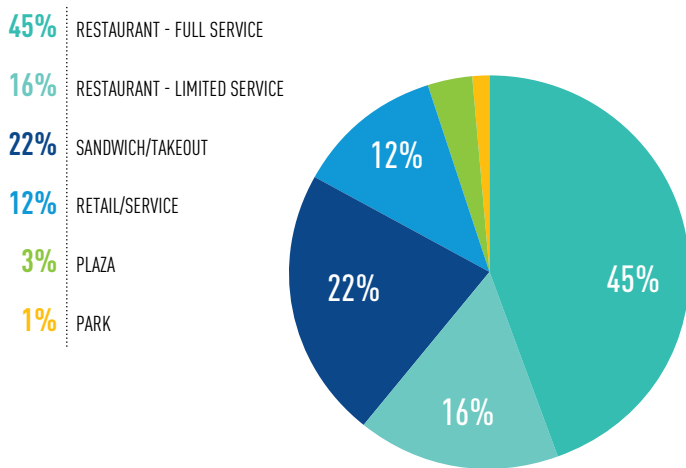
This includes parks, office buildings, and multi-tenant retail developments. The CCD's survey of outdoor seating now includes all outdoor cafés, non-food retailers, service establishments, and parks and plazas between Vine and South streets, river to river. Three of the Center City District's parks – Dilworth Park, Cret Park, and Sister Cities Park – have both café and park seating, while John F. Collins Park only includes park seating.

In 2018, there were 440 locations with a total of 6,631 seats. In the 2019 survey, the number of locations decreased to 436 but the number of seats increased 5% to 6,969.<sup>1</sup> One hundred and thirty of these seats are at non-food retail establishments, with apparel, home and garden, and beauty establishments making up the largest share.

<sup>1</sup>: Fires at two establishments, one on South Street and one on Chestnut Street account for two of these locations.



## OUTDOOR SEATING LOCATIONS BY TYPE



Source: Outdoor Seating Survey 2019, Center City District

Outdoor plazas associated with commercial developments contribute 677 seats to the total count. The Comcast Center provides 98 seats to the public and their employees. The mid-block walkways and courtyard adjacent to the restaurants of Market East have added more than 100 new seats. The Fashion District added 40 seats with the opening of City Winery and new establishments are likely to add more seats.

Pop-up gardens have also become a regular occurrence in the summer months. Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) was the first to open a pop-up beer garden in 2013, transforming an unused lot into a seasonal community gathering space with food and drinks. By summer 2019, the number of pop-up gardens rose to 13. Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, Fairmount Park Conservancy and FCM Hospitality partnered to create Parks on Tap, a beer garden that travels each week to a different park in Philadelphia. These pop-ups are placed in a range of locations, from an empty lot in Old City, to a parking lot on the Parkway.

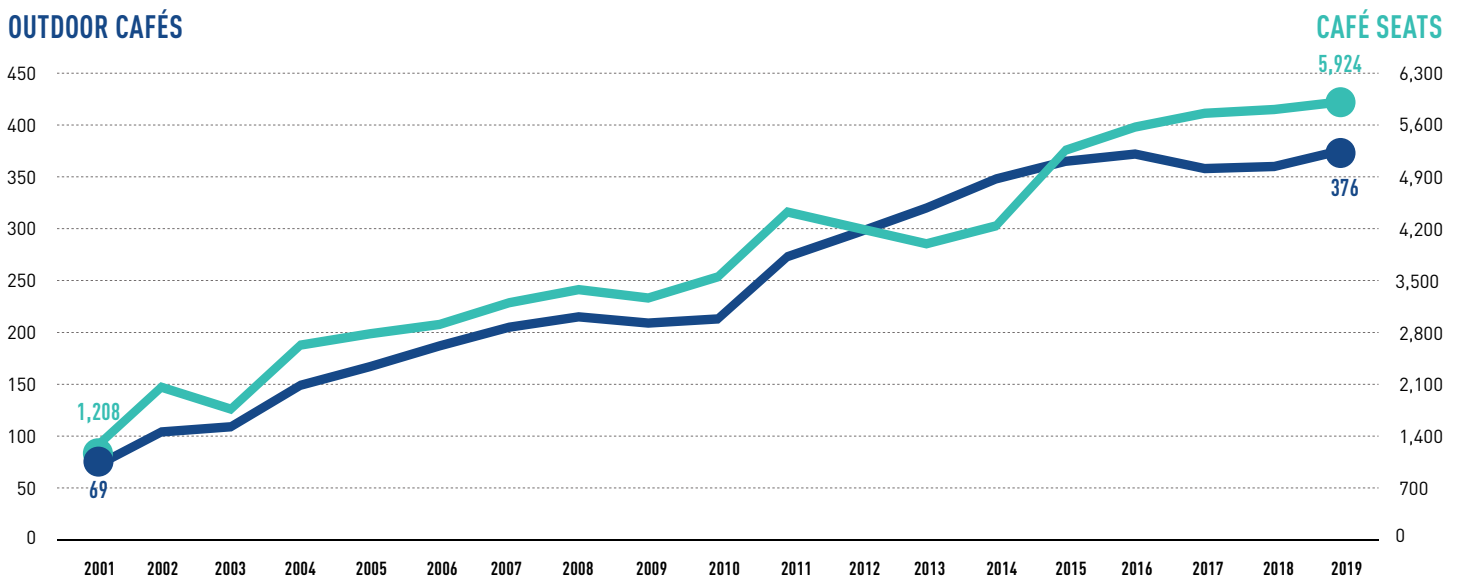


James B. Abbott

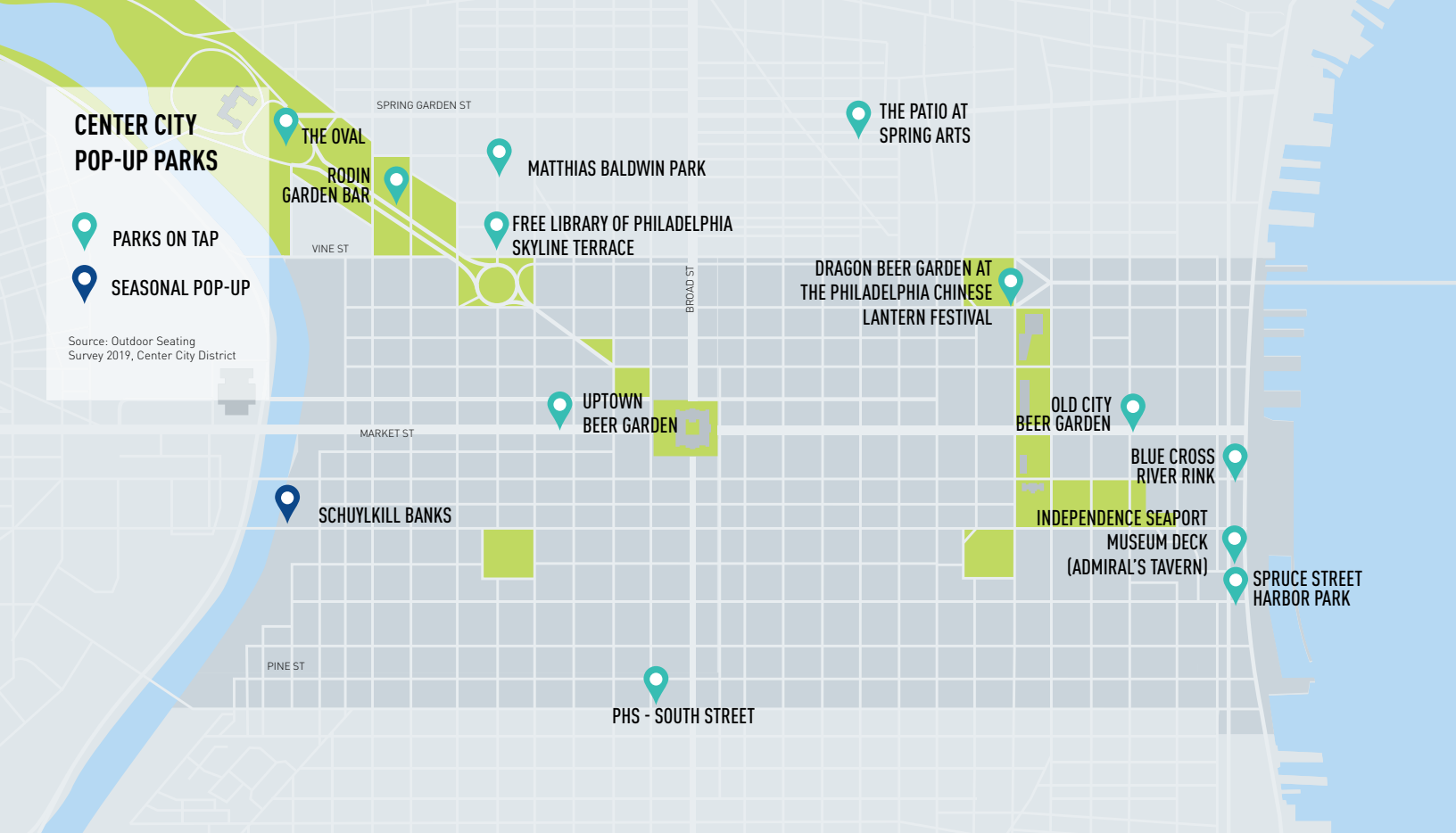
Restaurants can significantly increase the number of customers they can serve by deploying outdoor seating.

## OUTDOOR CAFÉS AT PREMISES SERVING FOOD AND DRINK

### OUTDOOR CAFÉS



Outdoor Seating Survey 2019, Center City District



## SEASONAL POP-UP PARKS HAVE PROVEN AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO ANIMATE OTHERWISE EMPTY SPACES

