



CENTER CITY  
DISTRICT



# CENTER CITY Digest

## The State of Center City

Last month, we released the 2024 edition of our annual *State of Center City* report, which for decades has tracked the many ways that downtown Philadelphia's social and economic systems have evolved.

After a disruptive four years, it may be counterintuitive to frame our new report as anything other than a recovery scorecard. However, I'm inspired by the work of marine biologist and environmental activist Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, who asks, "What If We Get It Right?"

I wonder if it's time to stop talking about "recovery" and instead work to conjure the downtown that we want and that our city needs. We can continue to will our cities to resume the patterns of the last decade, or we can learn from unanticipated strengths and exposed vulnerabilities, and build a downtown that is more competitive, connected, livable, equitable, joyful, resilient and inclusive.

While we have 84% of the pedestrian volume of 2019, we have a growing residential population—a great many more residents than before the pandemic. Philadelphia has one of the largest downtown residential populations in the country, in part, because we have converted over 40 office buildings to residential over the last 25 years.

It's not apparent how many more office buildings are suitable for future conversion. Philadelphia will need solutions beyond residential conversions to repurpose obsolete office inventory. To support the continued absorption of our expanding downtown housing supply,

are there opportunities for CCD to promote living in Center City Philadelphia in higher cost markets where there is an established pattern migration to Philadelphia?

We have confirmed the correlation between shorter commutes and the likelihood of returning to the office, which means that Center City's residential core reinforces the office and employment core, with the benefit of the connective tissue of the fourth most walkable city in the U.S. Current and prospective office tenants can follow the leadership of Comcast, Independence Blue Cross, Chubb and the Parker administration and leverage a proximate talent pool for in-office collaboration, community and conviviality.

We are closely monitoring trends in the office market with the understanding of the role of downtown office values on the city's fiscal health and CCD's assessment revenue. 70% of non-resident workers are back in their offices in Center City on a given day and that number continues to inch upwards. CCD is working to restart an office retention initiative while creating fun experiences for office workers through mainstay programs—such as Center City District Sips—along with new programs such as Center City Sunrise. In the future, our team will seek to better understand other barriers to RTO ("return to office"), including childcare and commuting patterns.

The allure of what *Atlantic* writer Roge Karma calls "the [downtown] experience of being in proximity to a diverse array of people to meet,

**9.6 million**

Visitors to Dilworth Park in 2023

**343**

Programs at Dilworth Park and Sister Cities Park

**17.6%**

Drop in serious crime compared to 2019

places to go, and things to do” persists. Arts and culture organizations that have leaned into engaging new audiences or embraced tradition have found success; the Philadelphia Ballet sold more *Nutcracker* tickets over the winter than any time ever before. Center City has more outdoor seating than 2019, despite limited deployment of streeteries. Weekend pedestrian volumes have completely recovered to 2019 levels and continue to rise. You’ve heard about “revenge travel,” but what about revenge brunch?

Creative disruption in the retail industry nationwide is reflected in Center City’s storefronts; while some legacy brands have downsized their brick-and-mortar locations across their portfolios, we’ve seen spaces backfilled by digitally native brands catering to students and young professionals as well as new entertainment concepts. Still, storefront occupancy is nearly 85%, approaching the 89% occupancy of 2019 and dramatically rebounding from a low of 55% occupancy during the summer of 2020.

Perhaps most importantly, serious crime is down from 2019. However, negative perceptions of downtown safety persist. We are very aware that panhandlers, roaring ATVs and untended dumpsters understandably make residents, workers and visitors feel unsafe. There is significant work to do on perception but also quality of life challenges, including the interconnected citywide fentanyl and homelessness crises. We have heard loud and clear that safety, improving both reality and perception, is a top priority among our stakeholders.

Today, with nearly 280,000 jobs (43% of all jobs citywide and 62% of which do not require a college degree) and over 200,000 residents, Center City is on solid footing and optimism endures. It’s impossible not to be inspired by the vigor of Mayor Cherelle Parker and her goal of making Philadelphia the “cleanest and greenest” city in America. *Lonely Planet* has named Philadelphia one of the 10 best cities to visit in 2024, calling us “the perfect blend of old school and modern metropolis, a city marked by rich history but with an ever-evolving cultural core.”

When we welcome even more visitors to celebrate America’s 250th birthday, the MLB All-Star Game and World Cup soccer, we will have much to offer them, from new vendors at Reading Terminal Market to our growing list of James Beard honorees.

It is critical that Center City play an outsize role in creating opportunity for all Philadelphians and in tackling climate change through sustainable land use patterns. The CCD team is poised to foster partnerships between businesses, residents, nonprofit organizations and our public sector leaders to tackle vulnerabilities and identify opportunities.

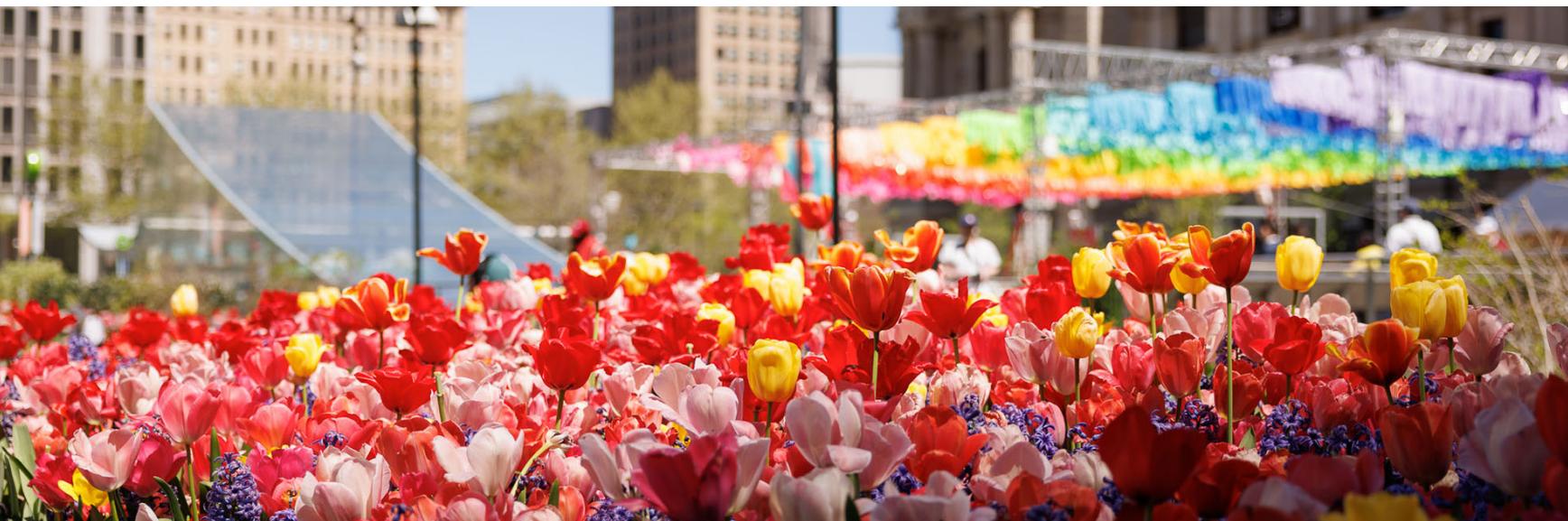
In other words, let’s get it right.

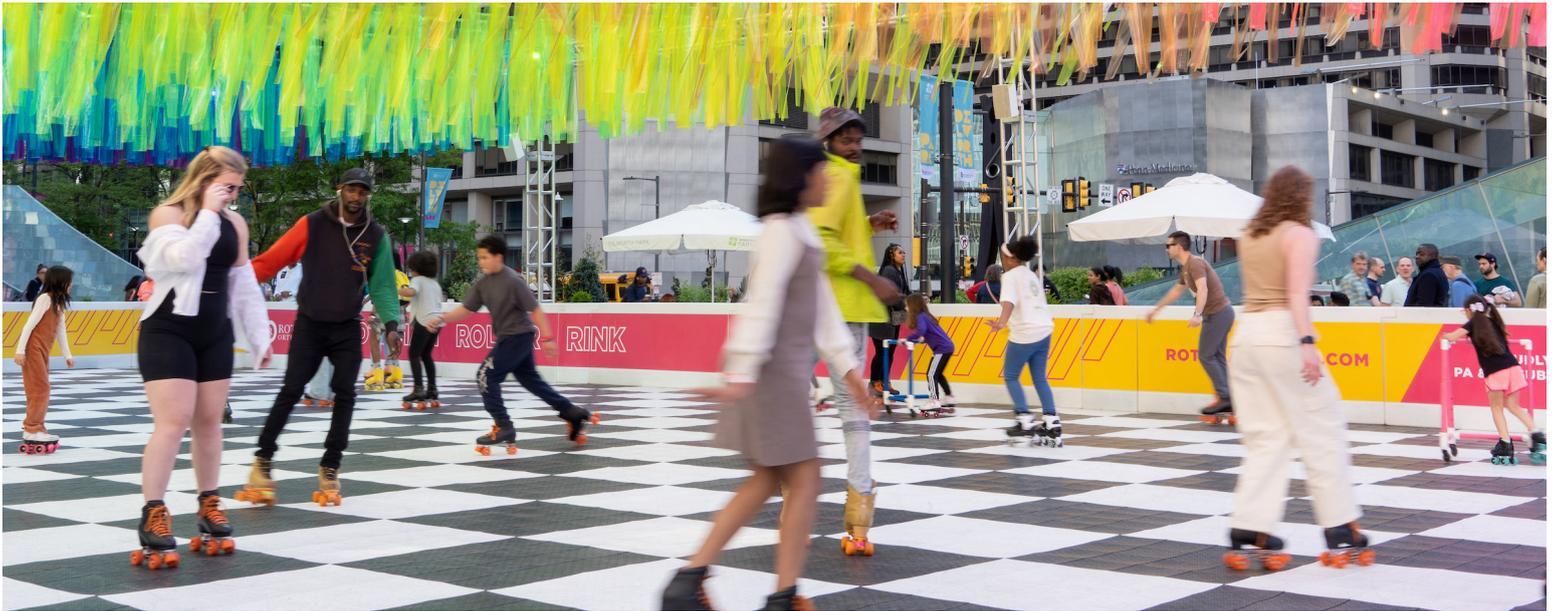
Finally, I encourage you to explore the *State of Center City 2024* report, located on our website at [centercityphila.org/socc](http://centercityphila.org/socc). It was created to be a tool that is informative and enjoyable—and reflective of CCD’s organizational obsession with analytical rigor and optimism rooted in data. This report is the culmination of months of work from CCD’s incredibly talented research, design and communications teams. I’m especially grateful for Lauren Smith’s capable project management, Clint Randall’s thoughtful and innovative leadership of our research, Dave Orantes’s fresh approach to art direction, and Aimée Liriano’s joyful illustrations. Please let us know how you find it useful.

All the best,

*Prema Gupta*

**Prema Katari Gupta**  
President & CEO  
Center City District





# Summertime Fun at CCD Parks

There's so much to do at Center City District parks all summer long! For more details, visit [ccdparkevents.org](http://ccdparkevents.org).

## DILWORTH PARK

**Rothman Orthopaedics Roller Rink**  
Daily through June 30

**Matinee Skate**  
Mondays & Tuesdays through June 25  
11 am – 5 pm

**Center City Fit**  
*presented by Rothman Orthopaedics*  
Tuesdays through October 1  
6 – 7 pm

**Live @ Lunch**  
Wednesdays & Thursdays through July 25  
12 – 1 pm  
(No program June 19)

**CCD Sips at Dilworth Park**  
*presented by Hornitos® Tequila*  
Wednesdays through August 28  
5 – 7 pm  
(No program June 19)

**Arts on Center Stage**  
Thursdays through August 29  
6 – 7 pm  
(No program July 4)

**Philadelphia Marketplace**  
Fridays & Saturdays through June 29  
12 – 6 pm

**Rhythm & Roll at the Rothman Orthopaedics Roller Rink**  
Thursdays through June 27  
7 – 9 pm

## SISTER CITIES PARK

**Parkway Pals: Story Art with the Free Library of Philadelphia**  
Tuesdays through August 13  
10:30 am

**Parkway Pals: Art Garden with the Fabric Workshop and Museum**  
Tuesdays through August 13  
11:30 am

**Parkway Pals: Investigation Station with the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel U.**  
Wednesdays through August 14  
10:30 am  
(No program June 19)

**Parkway Pals: Creative Movement with the Philadelphia Ballet**  
Thursdays through August 15  
10:30 am  
(No program July 4)

**Parkway Pals: The Wondering Studio with Design Philadelphia**  
Thursday, July 18 & Thursday, July 25  
11:30 am

## CRET PARK

**Jazz on the Parkway**  
Sundays through July 28  
4 – 6 pm

**CCD Sips at Cret Park**  
Wednesdays through August 28  
5 – 7 pm

## JOHN F. COLLINS PARK

**Wine Garden with Chaddsford Winery**  
Every third Thursday through August 15  
5 – 9 pm

*Host your next event at a Center City District park!*

*For information, email [rentals@centercityphila.org](mailto:rentals@centercityphila.org)*





# CCD Employee Appreciation Breakfast

Center City District’s annual employee appreciation breakfast was held on April 10 at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown for Community Service Representatives (CSRs), maintenance staff, office staff, bicycle safety patrol and Philadelphia police officers assigned to the CCD substation.

CCD President and CEO Prema Katari Gupta thanked the group for their commitment to keeping Center City sidewalks, parks and public spaces active and attractive, and congratulated the two dozen employees who reached milestone work anniversaries spanning from five to 30 years. Read more about them on our blog: [centercityphila.org/anniversaries](http://centercityphila.org/anniversaries).

Police Commissioner Kevin Bethel also spoke to the CCD team about their crucial role in creating a clean, safe and attractive Center City for residents, workers and visitors.

## 2024 Years of Service Awards

### Office Staff:

25 years:  
Mayra Diaz  
Philis Williams

10 years:  
Larry Hames  
Rob Nicol

5 years:  
Jhona Ireland  
Andrew Jacobs  
Lauren Smith  
Giavana Suraci  
Emrah Ulcay

### CSRs:

25 years:  
Dionne Johnson

10 years:  
Chanyse Robinson

### Maintenance:

30 years:  
Kenneth Adams  
Michael Brown  
Sean Clay  
Rance Legg

25 years:  
Wade Jackson

20 years:  
Joseph Clayberger

10 years:  
Thomas Middleton

5 years:  
Augustine Bowman  
Ahmed Brown  
John Harrison  
Stokosky Morel  
Earl Richards  
Colen Swaringer

Marc Tart  
Thomas Woods

### PPD:

20 years:  
Officer Nong T. Lo  
Officer James Owens

5 years:  
Officer Jacqueline Killen  
Sgt. Harold Toomer  
Officer Jason Wentzell

**Join our team!**

**Visit [centercityphila.org/jobs](http://centercityphila.org/jobs)  
for information on job openings.**



# Support the Center City District Foundation

Since 1991, Center City District has worked tirelessly to make downtown Philadelphia a place that is attractive, active, well-maintained and welcoming. In 2016, we launched the Center City District Foundation (CCDF) as the charity of choice for engaged citizens who care deeply about the vitality and competitiveness of Center City.

CCDF provides a means to support initiatives that improve the quality of life and build upon the unique strengths of Center City. Among the most visible of those initiatives are the Plant Center City program that brings thousands of tulips, greenery and trees to Center City parks and sidewalks and the Ambassadors of Hope partnership with Project Home that since 2018 has compassionately connected about 1,000 people experiencing homelessness and addiction in Center City with services and shelter.

These two important supplementary programs, in two very different ways, enhance the quality of life in Center City. We need your help to keep these successful programs going. Please use the enclosed envelope or visit [supportccdf.org](http://supportccdf.org) to make an impact today.

Making your donation a recurring monthly gift will help us plan for next year too!



**Support the Center City District Foundation by donating online at [supportccdf.org](http://supportccdf.org) or by using the enclosed envelope.**



# Spring Cleaning, Safekeeping, Warm Welcomes, Joyful Spaces

It's almost summer in Center City, and our dedicated on-street teams have been working harder than ever to maintain a public environment that's colorful, comfortable, clean and fun for everyone. Whether you're meeting friends for dinner, heading to the office, catching a show or doing some window shopping, there's so much happening downtown. See you here!



# Read All About It on CCD's Blog



Check out [centercityphila.org/blog](http://centercityphila.org/blog)

You'll find employee profiles, the latest information on new retailers and restaurants, tips on upcoming events in Center City, and much more – including a Q&A with local artist Miriam Singer, who created a series of stunning panels (see photo at left) that are currently gracing the windows of what will be CCD's new office at Broad and Chestnut later this year.

# Meet CCD's New Team Members



## Economic Development VP Clint Randall

In his role as Vice President of Economic Development, Clint Randall brings public and private sector expertise in research and data analysis to CCD, specializing in real estate markets and urban economic development.

Clint, who was born and raised in Center City, manages and mentors the CCD team responsible for research and reports, business attraction and retention strategies, and internal analytics, as well as assisting with content creation and delivery for the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation.



## Outreach Specialists Terrell, Sam and Taylor

As a part of CCD's community service staff, our new Outreach Specialists Terrell, Sam and Taylor are responsible for engaging with unsheltered people on the street, assessing their needs, identifying appropriate supports, and developing trusting relationships to guide them to the best support services available for their needs. These skilled outreach workers will coordinate their efforts with businesses, city agencies and other service providers.

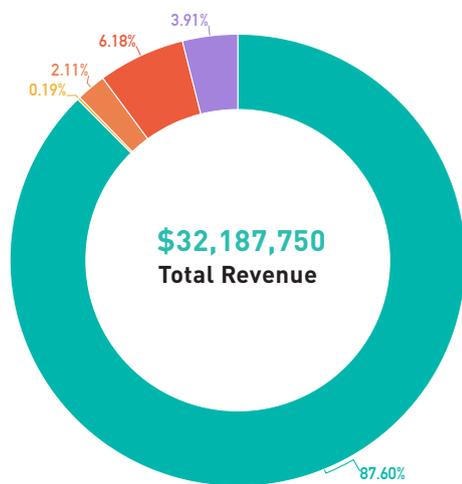
Through CCD's partnership with Project Home, the Outreach Specialists will work with people experiencing homelessness to address their basic needs and connect them with resources related to food, clothing, showers, laundry, transportation and identification.

# CCD 2024 Budget Details

## 2024 Property Statistics

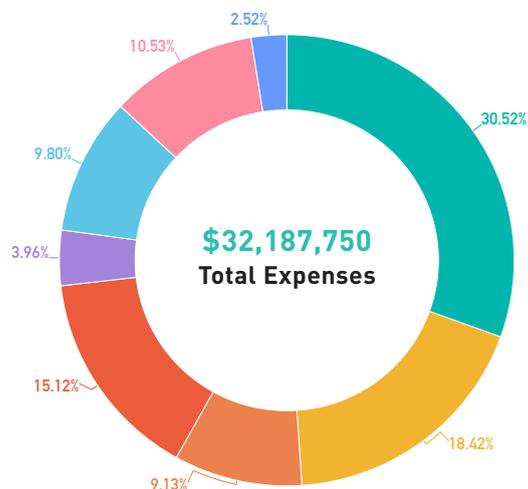
- The top 15 commercial properties pay 22% of total program costs, with an average charge of \$457,858
- The top 200 commercial properties pay 79% of total program costs, with an average charge of \$124,337
- The typical Market Street West office building pays \$279,098
- The average hotel pays \$92,241
- The average commercial office property pays \$45,491
- The average commercial property pays \$19,305
- The average retail property pays \$3,201
- The average residential property charge is \$372
- The average for all property types is \$5,447

Where the Money Comes From



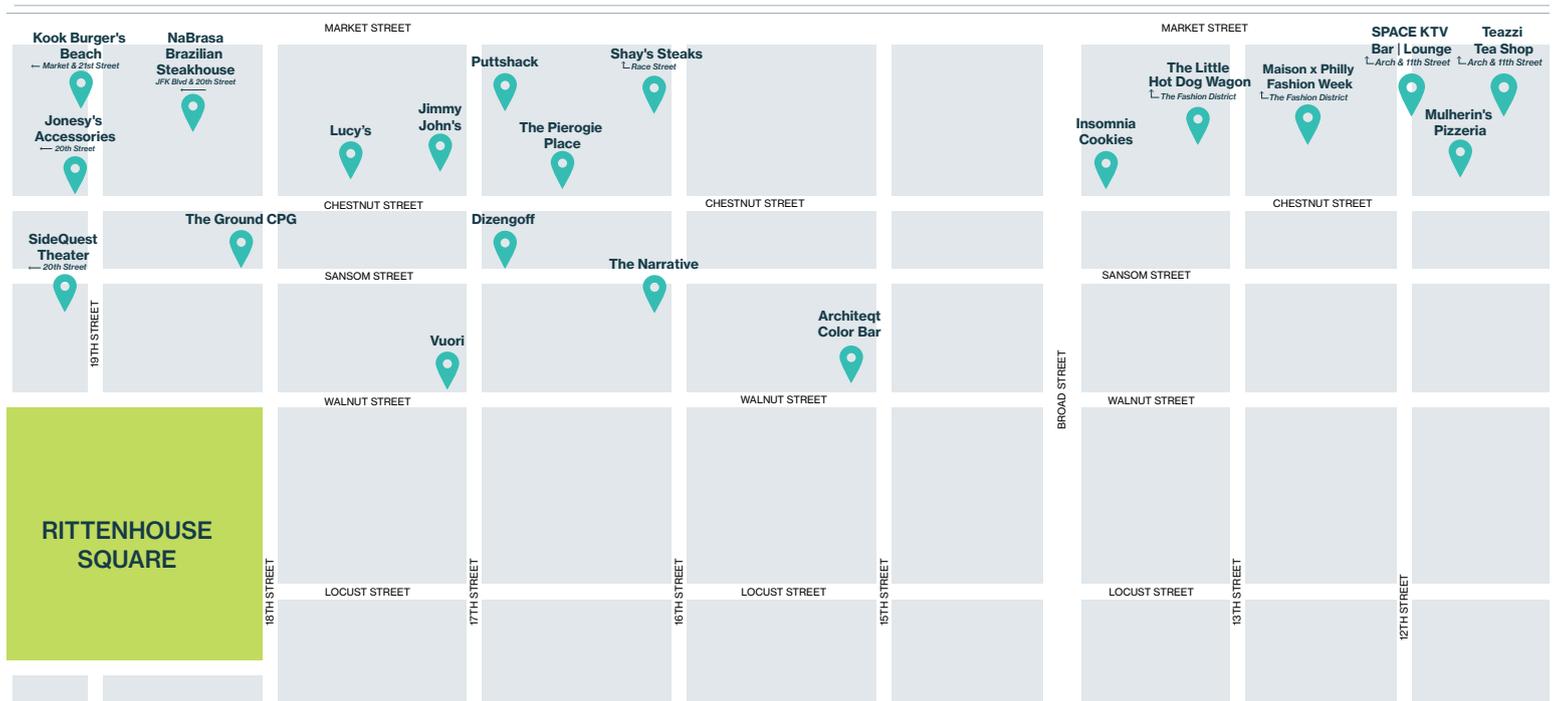
- Assessment Revenue
- Exempt Property Contributions
- Fees for Service
- Parks & Plazas
- Interest, Grants & Other Revenue

Where the Money Goes



- Cleaning & Maintenance Operations
- Safety & Crime Prevention Services
- Streetscapes
- Parks
- Debt Service
- Marketing, Communications & Public Relations
- Administrative
- Development, Planning & Research

# New Openings In Center City



**Architeqt Color Bar**  
1501 Walnut Street, 5th floor

**Dizengoff**  
1625 Sansom Street

**The Ground CPG**  
120 South 18th Street

**Insomnia Cookies**  
1 South Broad Street

**Jimmy John's**  
44 South 17th Street

**Jonesy's Accessories**  
1931 Chestnut Street

**Kook Burger's Beach**  
2102 Market Street

**The Little Hot Dog Wagon**  
The Concourse at  
The Fashion District

**Lucy's**  
1720 Chestnut Street

**Maison x Philly Fashion Week**  
The Fashion District

**Mulherin's Pizzeria**  
1175 Ludlow Street

**NaBrasa Brazilian Steakhouse**  
1901 John F. Kennedy Boulevard

**The Narrative**  
124 South 16th Street

**The Pierogie Place**  
Food Court at The Shops  
at Liberty Place

**Puttshack**  
The Shops at Liberty Place

**Shay's Steaks**  
200 North 16th Street

**SideQuest Theater**  
2030 Sansom Street

**Space KTV / Bar / Lounge**  
1025 Arch Street

**Teazzi Tea Shop**  
1026 Arch Street

**Vuori**  
1705 Walnut Street



Did we miss any new openings, or are you opening soon within Center City District boundaries? Let us know by emailing [shop@centercityphila.org](mailto:shop@centercityphila.org) with more information.

# Business Leaders Discuss the State of Center City

At the May meeting of the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC), Center City District President and CEO Prema Katari Gupta, VP of Economic Development Clint Randall, and Economic Development Managers Jimmy Salfiti and Lauren Smith presented the *State of Center City Philadelphia 2024* report, focusing on downtown vitality and investment drivers. Afterward, industry leaders across sectors discussed ideas for sustaining Center City’s strength and reinforcing and accelerating positive trends.

Among the key takeaways from *State of Center City 2024*:

- 43% of all Philadelphia’s jobs are located in Center City
- 62% of Center City’s 280,000 jobs do not require a college degree
- 24,800 jobs were added in 2023 citywide, taking unemployment to a 30-year low
- 18% decrease in crime within CCD boundaries since 2019
- 45% of employees who work in the West Market office district lived within 5 miles of work in 2023, compared to only 1/3 of workers in 2019
- Center City is one of the fastest growing areas in the city with its population growing by 26% in the past 20 years, and an increase of 11,000 residents since 2020.



To read or download the *State of Center City* report, visit [centercityphila.org/socc](http://centercityphila.org/socc)



## Become a CPDC Member Today

Business leaders who are members of the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC) have access to year-round programs and events from panel discussions to behind-the-scenes hard hat tours of some of Center City’s most exciting projects.

CPDC membership pays for research and member engagement, and enables CPDC to continue to provide reliable marketplace information and enhance the competitiveness of Center City.

To learn more about CPDC and how to join, visit [joinecpdc.org](http://joinecpdc.org) or contact CCD Economic Development Manager Lauren Smith at [lsmith@centercityphila.org](mailto:lsmith@centercityphila.org)

# CENTER CITY Digest



SUMMER 2024

Center City Digest is a publication of the Center City District (CCD), a private-sector-sponsored municipal authority committed to providing supplemental services that make Philadelphia's downtown clean, safe and attractive; and of Central Philadelphia Development Corporation (CPDC), with more than 60 years of private-sector commitment to the revitalization of downtown Philadelphia.

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