

# Center City Reports: Outdoor Cafes

A publication of the  
Central Philadelphia  
Development Corporation  
and the Center City District  
660 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
215.440.5500

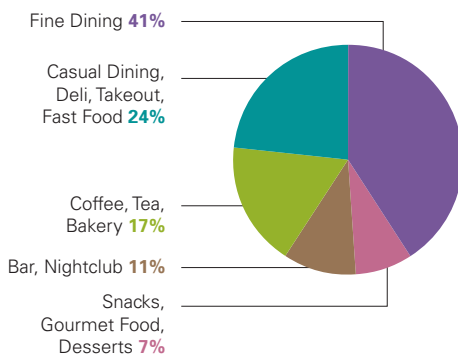
The Center City District's 11th annual survey of outdoor cafes, conducted in July 2011, recorded **235** separate locations between Pine and Vine Streets, from the Delaware River to 22nd Street. This represents a 10% increase from July 2010, and 241% more cafes than were counted in the summer of 2001.

In 1995, when then-Mayor Rendell issued an executive order and legalized outdoor cafes in Center City, there were no open-air cafes on downtown sidewalks. By 2001, when the CCD first began surveying, there were 69 outdoor cafes in Center City and Old City. This year, 2011, the CCD counted **273** outdoor cafes, including 38 outdoor cafes from Pine to South Streets between the Delaware River and 24th Street, which represents an increase of 3% over 2010 in this area.



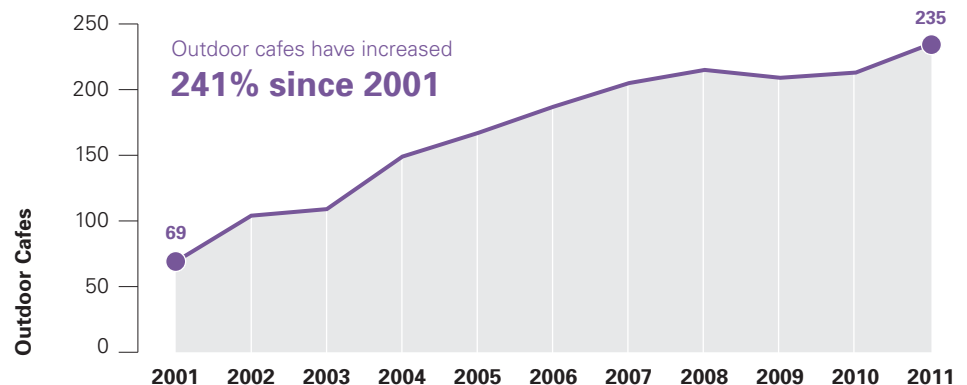
J.B. Abbott

## Establishments with Outdoor Seating by Category



Source: CCD, Sidewalk Cafe Survey, 2011

## Growth of Outdoor Cafes: 235 Cafes in Downtown Retail Core



Source: CCD, Sidewalk Cafe Survey, 2011

# Outdoor Cafes



J.B. Abbott

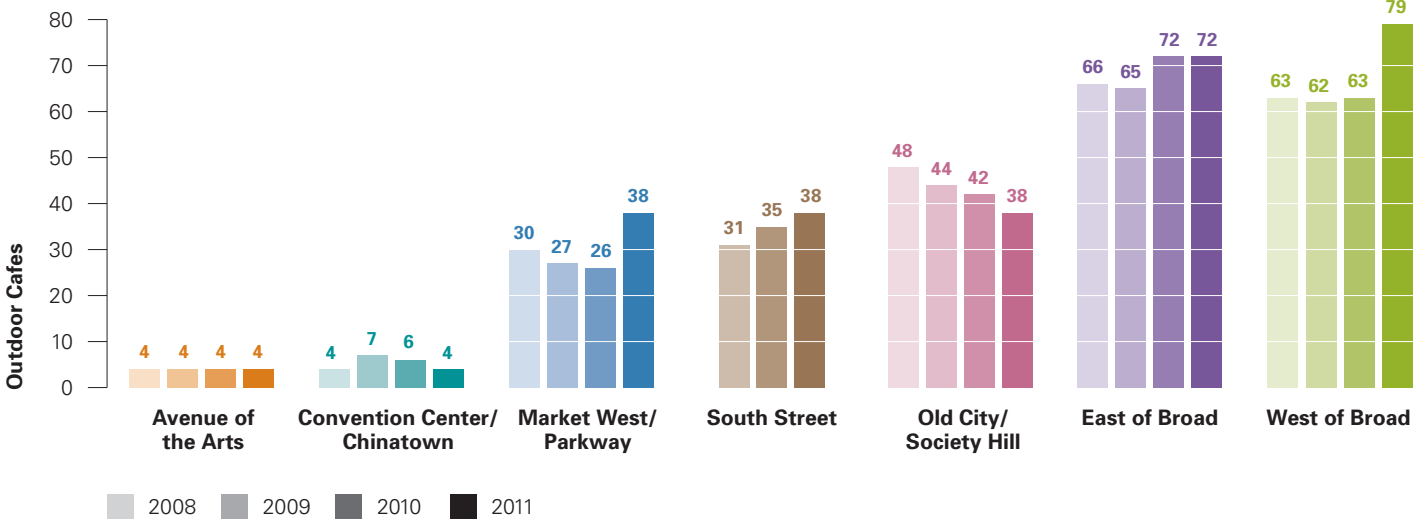
Outdoor cafes expand the seating area of restaurants and coffee shops, animate the sidewalks and attract impulse customers. By placing more eyes and ears on the street, sidewalk cafes increase the natural surveillance and safety of Center City. They provide a place for conducting business, socializing, or simply people-watching. They multiply the number of chance encounters, enhancing both the sociability of Center City and its competitiveness for the many forms of business that thrive on face-to-face contact.

This year the area West of Broad had the most outdoor cafes, at 79, and showed the largest increase of any neighborhood with the addition of 16 cafes. Market Street from Sixth to City Hall, with high concentrations of tourists and visitors but heavily trafficked with buses, continues to lack both the retailers and the type of quality public environment conducive to outdoor dining.

Between Vine and South Streets, Center City's 273 cafes provide seating for 4,432 individuals. The number of seats per establishment is greatest in the West Market office district where cafes accommodate throngs of lunchtime office workers. The majority of newcomers to the cafe scene are local establishments with 12 or fewer chairs, though if space allows, these may grow in time.

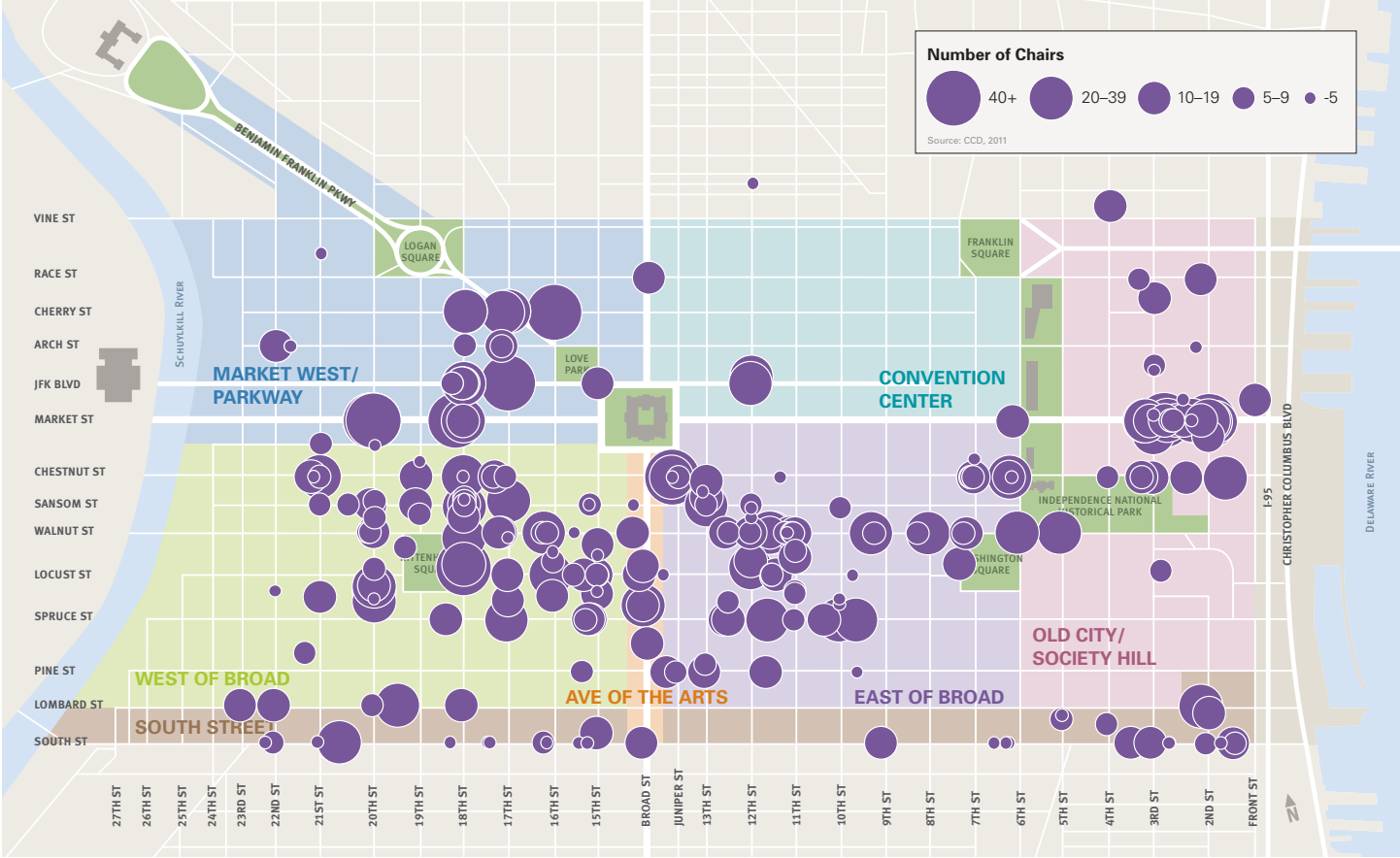
Many factors account for the growth of outdoor cafes: downtown's population has increased by 10.2% in the last decade with young professionals and empty-nesters the fastest growing segments. The steady growth of the arts, entertainment and the hospitality industry has attracted more people with leisure time and disposable income. The proliferation of hand-held technology has also meant that people can work or communicate from almost any location. Finally, the presence of people attracts other people — the ultimate sign of downtown's vitality.

## Change in Cafes by District: 273 Cafes in Expanded Area of Center City



Source: CCD, Sidewalk Cafe Survey, 2011

## Sidewalk Cafes by Location and Number of Chairs

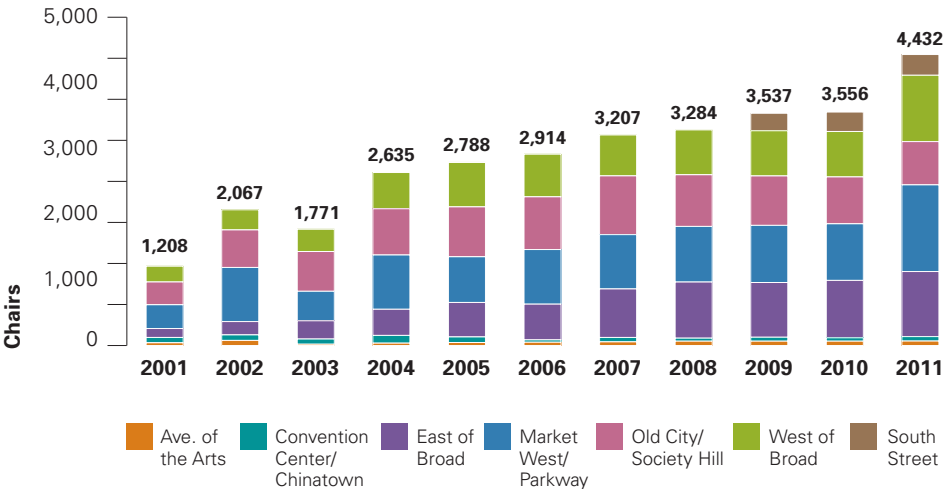


**Number of Chairs**

- 40+
- 20-39
- 10-19
- 5-9
- 5

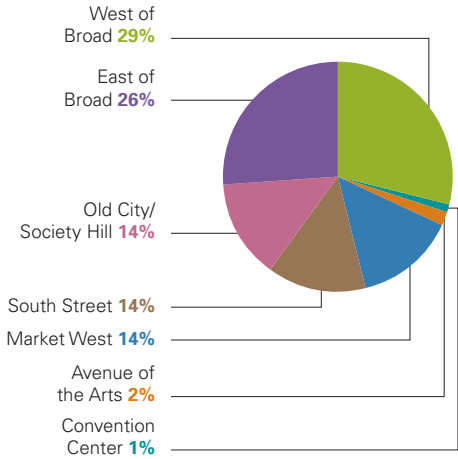
Source: CCD, 2011

## Growth of Outdoor Cafe Seating by District



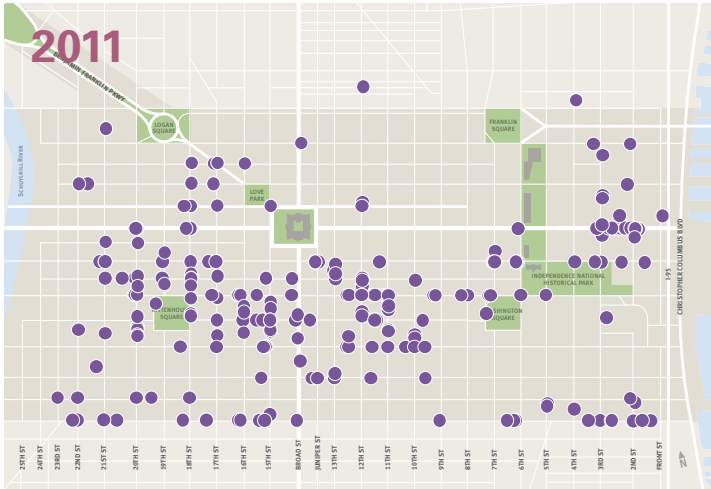
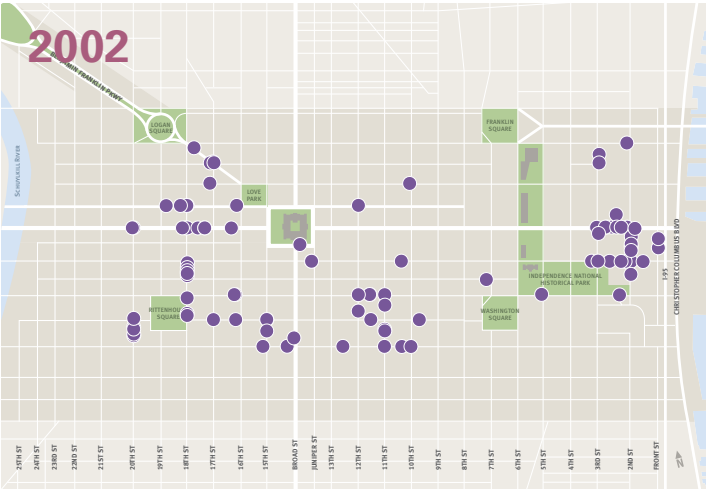
Source: CCD, Sidewalk Cafe Survey, 2011

## Establishments with Outdoor Seating by District



Source: CCD, Sidewalk Cafe Survey, 2011

## Sidewalk Cafes, 2002–2011



### Methodology

Surveys were conducted on randomly selected afternoons and evenings in July 2011 on the sidewalks of Center City between Vine and South Streets, and between Front and 24th Streets. When a restaurant, bar, cafe or food store had outdoor seating, the surveyor recorded the number of chairs. To be counted, the outdoor seating had to be in an area visible from the sidewalk (for example, a courtyard behind a wall in a private garden would not be counted), on ground level and accompanied by a table.