

# Central Square Business Improvement District Welcomes 12 New Businesses in Cambridge, MA's Downtown

*Five New Eateries Among the Openings*

CAMBRIDGE, MA, UNITED STATES, January 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- (Cambridge, MA January 16, 2025) Central Square is in the midst of a sustained effort to shine a spotlight on the



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*Michael Monestime,  
President, Central Square BID.*

richness of Cambridge's Downtown. Between the end of 2024 and mid- 2025, a dozen new retail operations will open their doors, including five new restaurants, an art gallery, and a gaming arcade, highlighting the vibrant nightlife in the Square. These new enterprises bring the first-floor vacancy rate in the [Central Square Business Improvement District \(CSBID\)](#) to less than 2%, according to the CSBID district assessment.

"Central Square continues to thrive as a vibrant commercial district that attracts small, independent retailers looking to establish themselves in a dynamic and supportive community. With a remarkably low vacancy

rate, the area exemplifies the success of fostering local entrepreneurship and creating a space where businesses and residents alike can flourish," said Michael Monestime, President, Central Square BID.

The newly opened enterprises include a re-birth for the iconic Boomerangs thrift store, which was run by Fenway Health for many years and raised funds for HIV/AIDS causes. It reopened early in December at 563 Massachusetts Ave. as Boomerangs by More Than Words. providing customers with the same sense of community that existed for years at Boomerangs. This store is now operated by the non-profit More Than Words (MTW) which supports young people ages 16-24 who are in foster-care, homeless, out-of-school, or in the court system. The store will be staffed by alumni of MTW's programs.

The Smoot Standard at 313 Massachusetts Ave., is a neighborhood café, restaurant, and bar that opened in December, and serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner Wednesday- Sunday. By day, The Smoot Standard serves freshly brewed coffee, pastries, and a variety of breakfast and lunch

options in a casual, walk-up setting. By night, the space will transform into a vibrant dinner destination with seasonal dishes, craft cocktails, wine, and beer.

DXArcade @ Central Square (580 Massachusetts Ave) is the new location for premier arcade/gaming in Cambridge. "We were able to launch our brand in Harvard Square as a pop-up over the summer," said owner Sean Hope. "The overwhelming positive response from our customers and the request for more games made it clear we needed to expand to a larger location. We recently opened the Central location, and the community response has been great. This location enables us to expand our game offerings and beverage options with a full liquor license, develop local partnerships, and to create a community-driven entertainment venue for all ages, including evening themed meetups and cocktails. I'm really excited for our Grand Opening on February 8th and thrilled that we're part of the new renaissance of Central."

Dray at 5 Columbia St #10, is a non-alcoholic bottle shop, online marketplace, and community for everyone passionate about alternatives to alcohol, which opened just in time for dry-January. Owner Pat Dooling said "A year after our successful opening of Dray in Boston's South End, we were drawn to Central Square, given many of its terrific similarities with the South End neighborhood: inclusivity, forward-thinking and curious customers, and a fantastic bar/restaurant presence. We found the perfect spot for our second location."

James Beard nominee Conor Dennehy and Danielle Ayer, of Talulla in Cambridge, and Marcos Sanchez, formerly of Tasting Counter, Gray's Hall and Tres Gatos, have come together to create Fallow Kin at 853 Main St. The restaurant will provide thoughtful and delicious chef driven, farm to table food, driven by a commitment to working with local farmers who practice sustainable agriculture.

Avery Appleton and Gary Strack, who created the Central Square staple Brick & Mortar are opening Acqua & Bocca in the same space (567 Mass. Ave), this month. The intimate Italian bar will pay homage to apericena culture, something Strack describes as "A looser, less expensive way to dine that still has style and is chef-focused, with lower-ABV drinks, organic and biodynamic wines."

Green Soul is a new cannabis dispensary at 759 Mass. Ave. set to open in early February. "At Green Soul we go beyond the cultivation and consumption of cannabis to craft an experience, build a legacy, and forever change the game," said CEO Tabasuri Moses. "Opening a dispensary in Central Square is a full-circle moment for me. Growing up in the Port, I've seen the changes, the gentrification, and the displacement of the Black community. As the neighborhood evolves, I knew I had to be part of its future."

Longtime business owner Mohammed Seffo, known for his popular establishments Moody's Falafel Palace and Aleppo Palace, is bringing a new addition to the vibrant Central Square community. His latest venture, Chateau Blanc Cafe, will serve as a welcoming spot for coffee and ice cream lovers, while continuing to embrace a Middle Eastern vibe. Set in the iconic White Castle building, the shop will maintain its predecessor's beloved late-night hours, staying open

daily until 3 a.m. during the summer season. With this new project, Seffo further cements his legacy as a cornerstone of Central Square's thriving business scene.

Central On Air, a new community-based online radio station located at 425 Mass Ave in the heart of Cambridge's Cultural District, is an exciting initiative led by the Central Square BID. This unique platform will feature live video streams on its soon-to-launch website, along with show archives and live DJ sets available on its YouTube channel. Visitors can also catch DJs in action through the station's storefront window, bringing the energy of Central Square directly to the community.

Stretch Med, is excited to announce the grand opening of its new location at 425 Massachusetts Avenue in Central Square, Cambridge, on January 20th. This innovative studio offers personalized, one-on-one assisted stretching sessions designed to alleviate chronic muscle and joint pain, enhance flexibility, and improve overall mobility. Each 50-minute session includes an intake consultation with a certified stretch therapist, a dynamic warm-up, and a customized stretching routine tailored to meet individual needs. StretchMed's services aim to help clients move pain-free and live well, offering a unique approach to mobility and wellness in the heart of Cambridge.

A new Dim Sum and cocktail bar restaurant, Darling is set to open at 464 Massachusetts Avenue in April in the location of long-time Central Square fixture Mary Chung. Owner Brian Callahan says "The Square just has a vibe that really resonated with us. We love the energy; it's one of the few neighborhoods that feels like it managed to grow while maintaining its existing character and charm." Darling will serve a menu of dim sum inspired small plates alongside a cocktail menu that will rotate daily and reflect local and seasonally driven ingredients.

Opening in May at 541 Massachusetts Avenue is The Collective, an art gallery/community space led by Curator and Producer Liza Quiñonez of the award winning BIPOC artist-owned agency Street Theory. "We are incredibly excited to bring the Street Theory Collective to Central Square," said Quiñonez. "Our new 6000 sf creative and cultural hub is a dynamic space where artists and communities collaborate to explore and experiment with artistic expressions that create meaningful transformation toward collective well-being. The Collective aims to be a place where our collective community thrives, and creativity finds its home."

Michael Monestime concluded, "This burst of activity in Central Square reflects not just growth but intentional growth. The mix of businesses opening here represents the Square's commitment to diversity, creativity, and entrepreneurship. Central Square's role as a cultural hub and commercial district continues to evolve, offering something for everyone and further establishing the Square as the heartbeat of Cambridge."

Established in 2019, The Central Square Business Improvement District's (BID) work revolves first and foremost around placekeeping. To maintain and uplift what makes Central special, the BID leverages longstanding, intergenerational relationships to create spaces and opportunities for local residents, artists, and entrepreneurs to benefit from the richness of Central Square's

Cultural District. In addition to the programming and pop-ups, the BID manages a team of cleaning and hospitality ambassadors. As stewards for the neighborhood, they are a welcoming presence in the Square, working to connect at-risk neighbors with social services, provide assistance to shop owners, residents, and visitors, and maintain our shared public spaces.

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