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A dozen new shops are coming to downtown Norfolk. Here's what they'll sell.

By Eric Hartley
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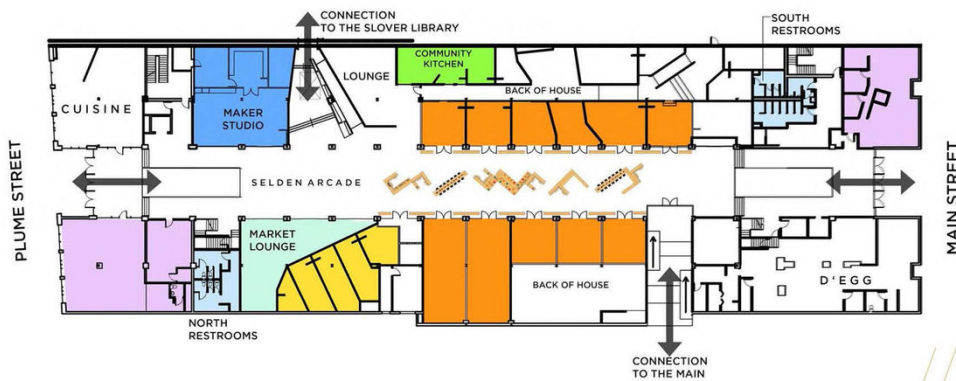


Courtesy of the city of Norfolk

A new market opening Oct. 4 in downtown Norfolk's Selden Arcade, which neighbors the Slover Library and The Main, will include a dozen shops and a high-tech "maker studio."

KEY

- SLOVER LIBRARY MAKER STUDIO
- SPACE TO BE UTILIZED AS-IS, WITH LIMITED MODIFICATIONS
- ENCLOSED MARKET SHOPS
- ANCHOR TENANT SPACES, BEYOND THE SCOPE OF PHASE 1
- EXISTING WALLS TO BE REMOVED TO MAKE SPACE FOR MARKET LOUNGE



Courtesy of the city of Norfolk

The new Selden Market in downtown Norfolk, which opens Oct. 4, will include a dozen shops and a high-tech "maker studio" run by the Slover Library.



Sargeant Memorial Collection
The Selden Arcade as it looked in 1931, the year it opened.

NORFOLK

A dozen new shops selling doughnuts, soap, jewelry, tea, coffee, leather goods and more will open next month inside Norfolk's historic Selden Arcade.

The new "Selden Market," which aims to help startup retailers get off the ground, will be operated by the Downtown Norfolk Council. It opens Oct. 4.

The council announced the opening date and the names of the tenants on Wednesday morning.

The hope is for shops that succeed at Selden Market to find permanent spaces elsewhere in Norfolk. As spots in the market come open again, the council will take applications from prospective new tenants.

The city-owned Selden Arcade sits between two of downtown's newest anchors: the Slover Library, which opened in 2015; and The Main, the hotel and conference center that opened this year.

There were never any games in this "arcade" – the word is used in its historic sense, meaning an arched, covered passageway.

The Selden was an arts center until a 2015 explosion caused heavy damage. In April, the city and the Downtown Council [announced a plan](#) for a new market inside the repaired building.

Besides the shops, it will have a high-tech “maker studio” run by the Slover Library that includes “a sound recording studio, 3-D printers, a laser cutter and sewing machines,” according to an announcement.

New covered connectors allowing people to wander between Selden Market, the library and The Main should be finished by the end of September, city spokeswoman Lori Crouch said.

The council is leasing the space from the city for \$26,955 a year through September 2019, and it can renew the lease for up to two years. The city has not decided what will happen to the building after that.

The goal of the market is to mix “incubator” spaces for new businesses with “mentor” spaces for more experienced shops. In addition to the dozen storefronts, there will be pop-up booths that people can rent by the week or month to test new concepts.

[Monthly rents](#) are \$225 to \$325 for incubator spaces or \$550 to \$900 for mentor spaces. Pop-up spaces will go for \$100 a week or \$300 a month.

The council, a nonprofit organization that advocates for downtown improvements, gets more than \$1.8 million a year in city funding through a surcharge on downtown real estate taxes

Selden Market is part of the council’s “Vibrant Spaces” program, which offers startup money, discounted rent and other help to new businesses. Vibrant Spaces helped Muddy Paws, Lamia’s Crepes and Prince Ink open, and it has since given grants to other businesses.

The council [took applications for Selden Market spaces](#) over the summer and notified the winners last month.

The arcade’s site between Plume and Main streets has a long and dramatic history. In 1930, [a fire destroyed the Academy of Music building](#) there. The next year, [Selden Arcade opened](#) with tenants including a barber shop, a furniture store and a shoe shop.

Over the years, it was home to offices or shops. After the owner threatened to tear it down, the city bought it in 2003 and it served as a cultural arts center for a decade.

In April 2015, [a contractor's accidental strike of a power line](#) caused a massive explosion that sent shattered glass flying through the arcade. No one was hurt, but several interior walls collapsed, and an exterior wall cracked and shifted. A later review by an engineering firm turned up unrelated structural problems. The repairs cost the city about \$800,000, though insurance reimbursed all but about \$69,000, a city spokeswoman said.

The d'Art Center, which had its home in Selden Arcade, has [since moved to the NEON arts district](#).

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