

A hand holding a globe with a sunburst and various geometric shapes. The background features a hand holding a globe with a sunburst and various geometric shapes. The globe is blue and white, with a yellow sunburst in the center. A hand is holding the globe from the right side. There are several geometric shapes: a dark green gear-like shape in the top left, a red jagged shape in the top left, a gold jagged shape in the bottom right, and a pink jagged shape in the bottom left. A central banner with a red grid pattern contains the title text.

# “STAY AWHILE”: HOW THIRD SPACES TRANSFORM PLACES

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CRANBROOK TOURISM AGM  
BECKY PELKONEN, MSC  
15 APRIL 2025



I would like to acknowledge the Ktunaxa People, whose unceded ancestral lands all College of the Rockies campuses reside on. I deeply value the opportunity to learn, share and grow within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Further, I acknowledge, support and will continue to work towards my own responsibility and collective accountability regarding the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.



# THIS EVENING:



- Third spaces 101
- Who I am
- The trends
- The issue
- Some inspiration
- Call to action



# THIRD SPACES



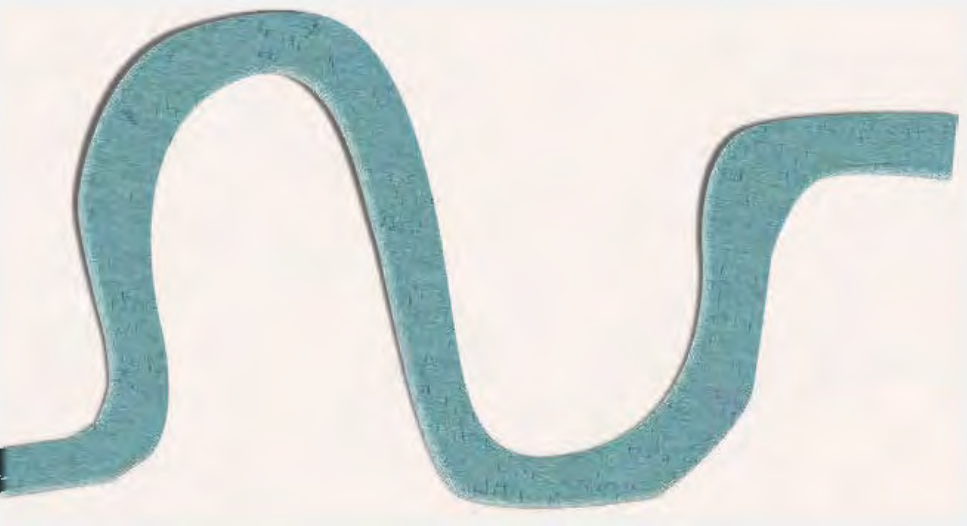
“Informal gathering places that are neither home (first space) nor work (second space) AND play a crucial role in community life.

Roy Oldenberg, Sociologist

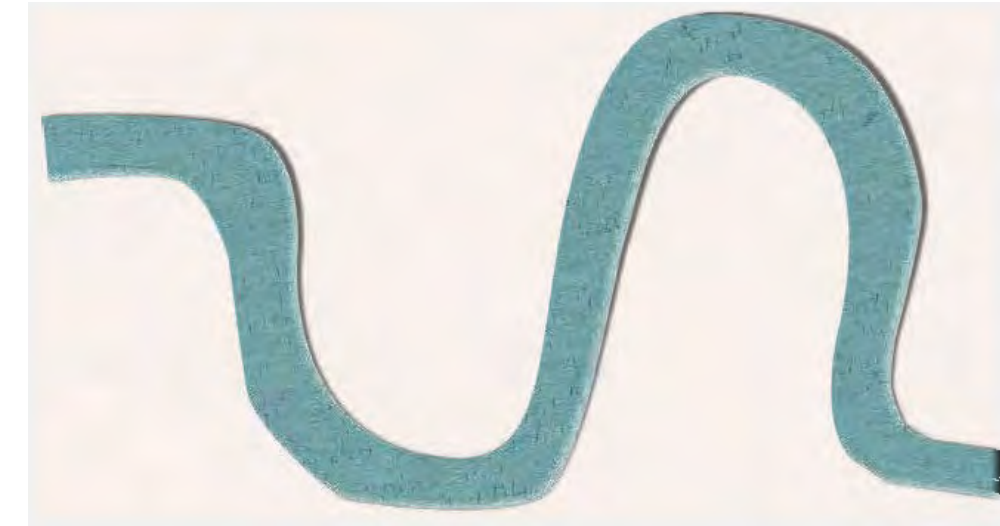
# ABOUT ME...

Why do I care about third spaces?





# **RESPONSIBLE TOURISM**



“Making better places for people to live in and better places for people to visit.”

-International Centre for Responsible Tourism













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LIVING

**In America's Cities, Saunas Are Becoming the Hottest Social Spot**

**VOGUE**

**Why saunas are the hottest place to hang out right now**

**The New York Times**

**Can a Finnish Sauna Improve Society?**

Contemporary sweat baths reflect the country's architectural past — and propose a future in which simple, sustainable buildings can still be sublime.



**Forget The Pub, Saunas Are The New Place To Socialise**

BY ARIELLE DOMB



# “BIG PICTURE” TRENDS

- Sustainable & Regenerative Tourism  
(shoulder-seasons!)
- Promotion of lesser-known destinations
- Indigenous Tourism
- Wellness & Nature-based Experiences
- Domestic Travel and the “Staycation”
- Rise of “Coolcations”

- Destination BC



# WHAT TOURISTS ARE DEMANDING “ON THE GROUND”

- Eco-friendly and community-focused
- Wellness and nature-based - mental and physical wellness
- Personalized and immersive itineraries
- “Detour destinations” - Preference for smaller, authentic locales
- “Set-jetting”
- Multigenerational
- Integration of technology



# TOURISM DEVELOPMENT & THE ~~TRIPLE~~ QUADRUPLE BOTTOM LINE



PEOPLE



PLANET



PROFIT



CULTURE





# THE ISSUE

Third spaces—informal gathering places like cafes, community bath-houses and pools, makerspaces, markets, and art hubs—are vital catalysts for sustainable tourism in small towns. These are the spaces where locals and visitors naturally connect, culture is made visible, and regenerative economies can take root.

They are, however, **ON THE DECLINE.**



# The New York Times

**THIRD SPACES ARE NOT DECLINING, BUT OUR ACCESS TO THEM IS**

Designing alienation in our urban planning.

Mashiyat Ahmed | September 23, 2024



Do you have a 'third place?' Here's why finding one is key for your well-being

LIFE / EVEN BETTER

## If you want to belong, find a third place

Your neighborhood watering hole is more important than you think.

2 MAY 2024 | IN HEADLINES, MEDIA, SOCIETY | 6 MINUTES

## Why We Must Rage Against the Death of Third Places



'Third places': The ways losing our local haunts hurts us

## A new paradigm of hospitality: from vacation spots to third community places

16 August 2024





# THE BIG IDEA

Third spaces are not just “cultural luxuries” –they’re strategic tourism infrastructure. Research shows that these everyday gathering places spark local economic activity, attract entrepreneurial energy, and foster the kind of authentic, place-based experiences today’s travelers crave.



In communities where third spaces thrive, visitors stay longer, spend more locally, and return more often—not because of attractions, but because of connection.

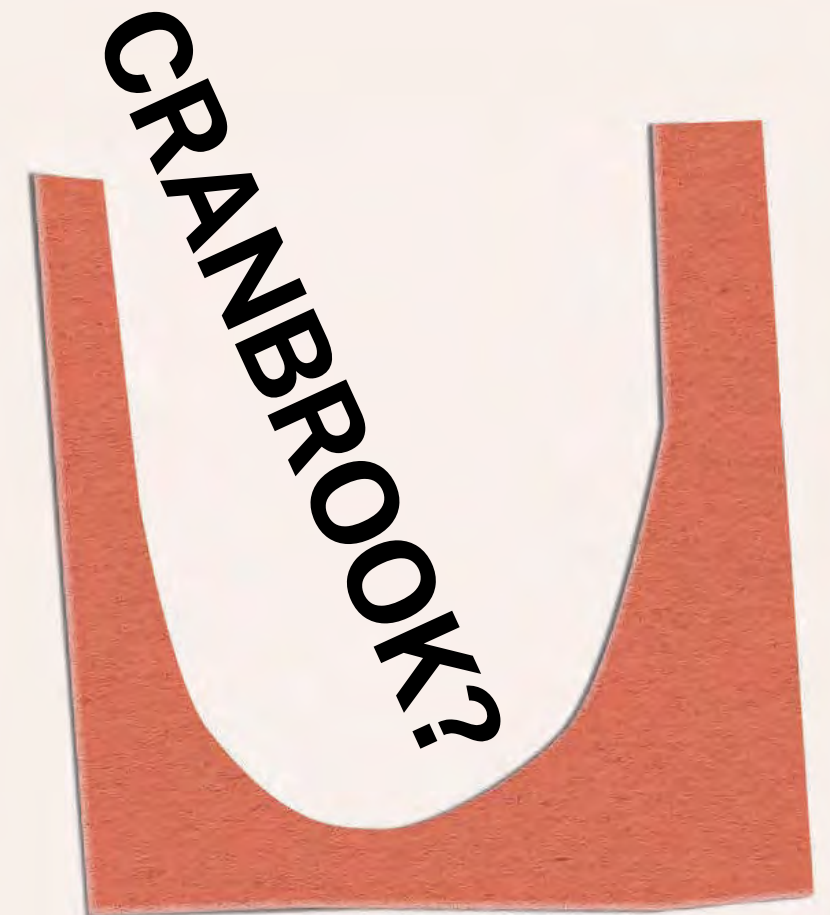
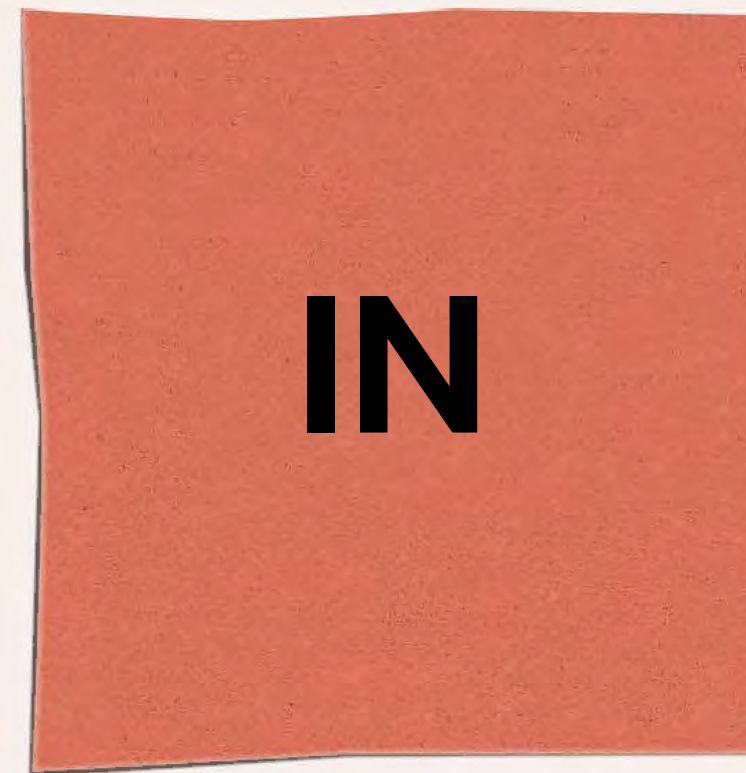


# CHARACTERISTICS OF THIRD SPACES

- **It's neutral ground.** You don't need an invitation, and anyone can enter. (It's accessible too! Think opening hours and for all generations.)
- **It's unstructured.** You can come and go as you please.
- **It's not expensive.**
- **It's a place to talk.** Conversation is the main activity, though playing games like chess and mahjong is also common.
- **It's near your home or work place.** Ideally, you can walk to your third place.
- **It has regulars.** But strangers aren't out of place. Chatter, joking and [banter] are an integral part of a third place.

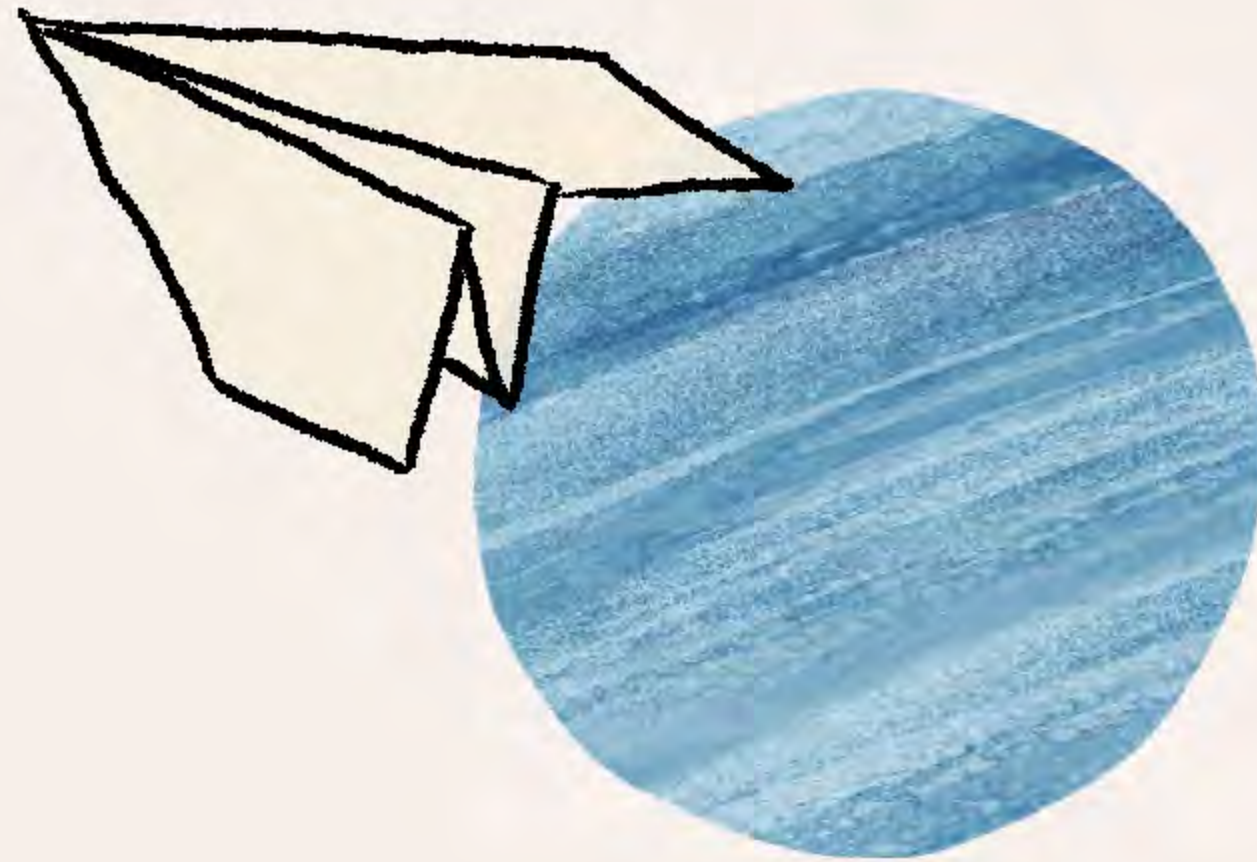


BASED ON THESE CHARACTERISTICS, WHICH SPACES WOULD YOU CURRENTLY QUALIFY AS



**WHAT COULD  
BECOME A MORE  
ROBUST THIRD  
SPACE?**

# INSPIRATION AROUND THE WORLD



# ICELAND - "FOOD HALL" EDITION

All Under One Roof: Food Halls Are Reykjavík's New Dining Obsession



FOOD HALLS, REYKJAVIK

THE GREENHOUSE HOTEL, HVERAGERÐI



# OSLO, NORWAY - “FJORD SAUNAS”

SALT SAUNA & CULTURE HOUSE, OSLO



# LOCAL-ISH EXAMPLE: VICTORIA & VANCOUVER, BC



AERTH SAUNA, VICTORIA



HAVN SAUNAS, VICTORIA

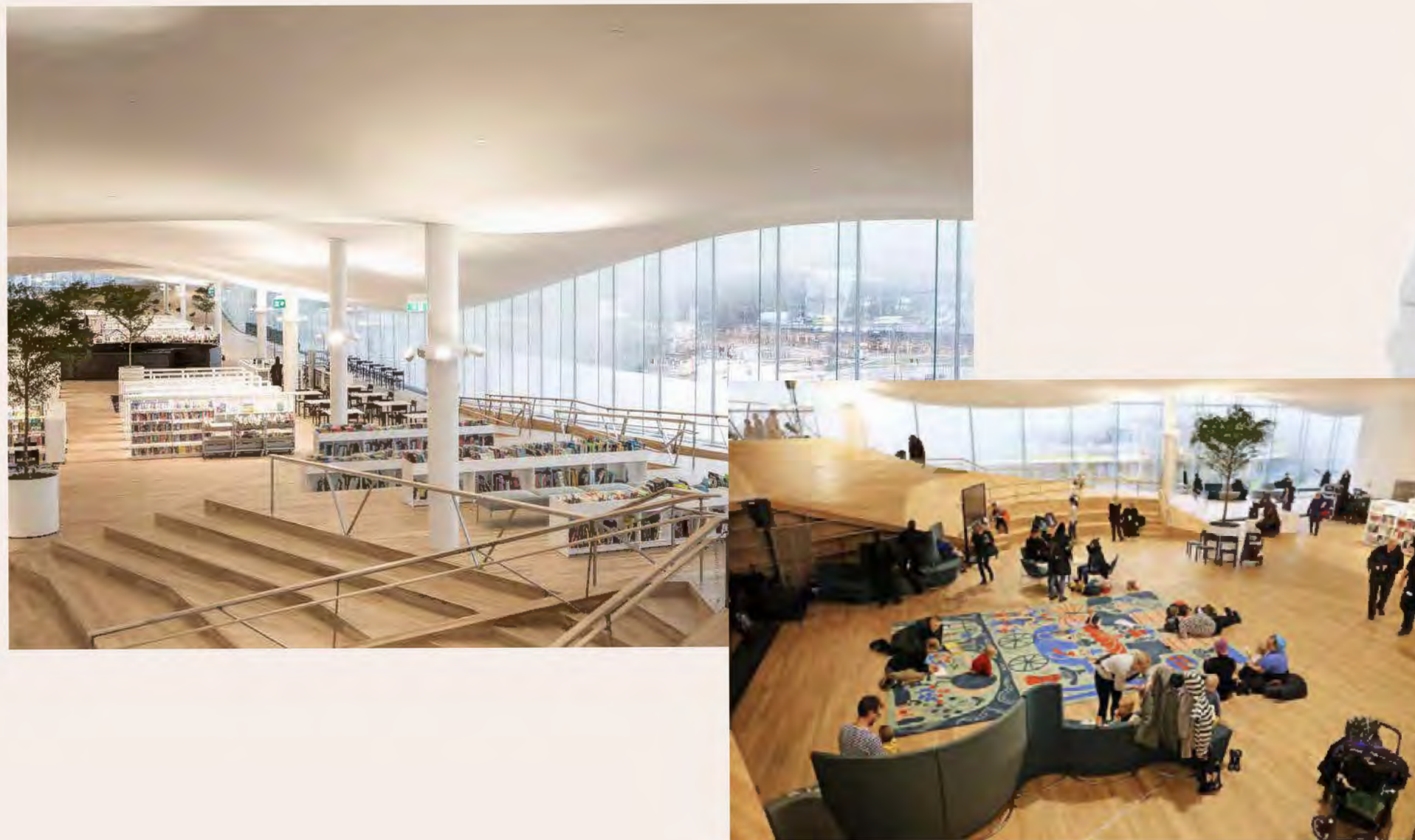


THE GOOD SAUNA, VANCOUVER



# FINLAND'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES

OODI, HELSINKI CENTRAL LIBRARY



# LOCAL EXAMPLE - RADIUM PUBLIC LIBRARY



# ENGLAND'S PUBS ARE ADAPTING



- Healthy pairings - meal options, non-alcoholic, pairing with yoga, arts, sauna
- Family-friendly
- Growing trend in rural areas - community-owned pubs
- Reinventing as community hubs - pairing with arts, choir practice, language revitalization centers

# MARAE IN AOTEAROA

TE WHAREWAKA O PŌNEKE (WELLINGTON)



TE NOHO KOTAHITANGA MARAE (AUCKLAND'S UNITEC INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY)



PAPATUĀNUKU KOKIRI MARAE (AUCKLAND)





# CALL TO ACTION

- **If you're a tourism leader**, map your community's existing third spaces and invest in programming that supports both locals and visitors. Integrate third spaces into destination development planning.
- **If you're in local government**, make third spaces part of your infrastructure strategy — support community-run initiatives, food trucks, public saunas and year-round gathering spaces, revitalization and rezoning, gardens, and gathering places.
- **If you're an entrepreneur or tourism business**, consider partnering with or creating a third space experience — anything that is co-created and reflects your community's identity.
- **When you're a visitor** — choose experiences where you can linger, learn, and contribute. Visit a local market. Attend a storytelling night. Tip the street performer. Ask someone where they like to go.

# TO CONCLUDE:

- **Third spaces anchor visitor experience:** They transform a town from a stopover into a stay-a-while place. A visitor may stop on their way through to Alaska, but they stay for the quiz night in the old firehall.
- **They incubate small-scale tourism enterprises:** Think pop-up markets, guide services, craft collectives, farm-to-cup tea tastings.
- **They are magnets for creative tourism:** Travelers are increasingly seeking out co-created, participatory experiences — and third spaces are where these happen naturally.
- **They boost the visitor economy through indirect spending:** Cafés, bookstores, local crafts, and food producers all benefit from the foot traffic and spillover of vibrant community spaces.
- **They are cost-effective, regenerative assets:** Unlike large-scale attractions that require heavy capital investment, third spaces often emerge from underused spaces and community input — delivering high returns with low impact.



**THANK YOU!**