

**Third Places:** Originally defined by urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg, these spots are public places for people to gather and connect that are outside of the home and work. Public third places are intended to be accessible and informal. In practice, popular third places for gatherings also includes coffees shops and other commercial spaces.

## Background

- Third places in cities allows residents to connect and facilitate the transfer of knowledge and ideas.
- However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced third places and our interactions with them to change. Even in a post-pandemic age, these changes prevail.
- Keystone third places, like Starbucks, have been altering their operations and focusing on pick-up-only, delivery-only, and drive-through-only locations (Meyersohn, 2024).
- Though drive-through options are on the rise, research shows when a Starbucks café is introduced into a neighborhood that did not previously have one, entrepreneurship increases between two and twelve percent (Guzman et al., 2024), showcasing the economic benefits these places can bring to neighborhoods.

## Research Questions

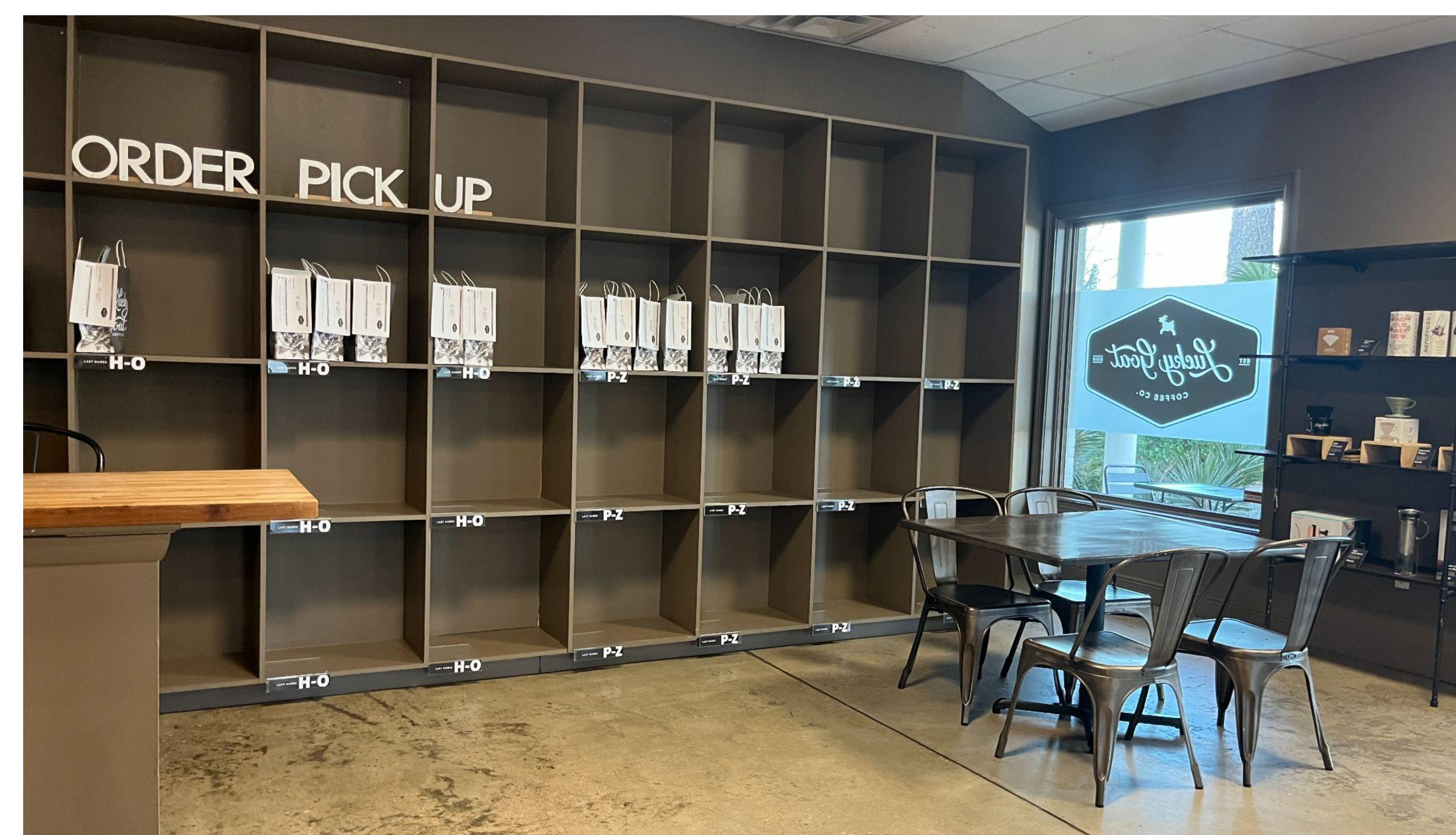
- 1) What relationship, if any, exists between third places and entrepreneurship?
- 2) What are the current and future trends for third places in cities?



**Figure 1.** Red Owl Coffee Company in Tallahassee, FL.



**Figure 2.** Starbucks café located on the first floor of the Strozier Library in Tallahassee, FL.



**Figure 3.** The interior of Lucky Goat Coffee Company in Tallahassee, FL.



**Figure 3.** Park space and seating in Tallahassee's Railroad Square Arts District.

## Methodology: Literature Review

The purpose of this research is to conduct a literature review of existing third place literature to identify some of the most popular or relevant forms of third places and the functions in recent years.

- Using Google Scholar, a combination of the following terms were entered: “third places”; “library”; “café”; “third place”; “entrepreneurship”; “types”; “third place” and “form” and “function.”
- 19 papers from 2009-2024 were collected and grouped to be analyzed by theme.

## Preliminary Results

- Multiple papers found a relationship between cafés and entrepreneurship, noting that in areas with cafés, it is more likely for startups to be nearby (Guzman et al., 2024; Credit et al., 2024; Fang et al., 2024; Fang & Slaper, 2022).
- The most common types of third places found in the literature are cafés/coffee shops, libraries, and virtual/digital spaces and the common themes were economic development, knowledge exchange, socializing, and community development.

## Policy Implications & Future Research

## References



- Policymakers should consider upzoning and reforming the current one-use zoning policies, giving cities the freedom to create a more engaging environment.
  - Existing zoning policies impact what kind of places can be built and where, acting as a barrier to more mixed-use development that organically foster third places.
- There are entrepreneurship opportunities in partnerships between cafes and local establishments like bookstores, libraries, or parks.
  - Despite the decline in visits over the years, many libraries are re-inventing themselves to foster community. When a coffee shop was launched outside the university library gate, patronage increased by almost 10% within the library (Manley & Garczynski, 2018).
- Future research should feature the best practices cases in regulatory reform and innovative design strategies that encourage the creation of thriving third places.