



# Craft Brewing and Place Development

Neil Reid, Department of Geography and Planning, University of Toledo, Toledo, OH 43606

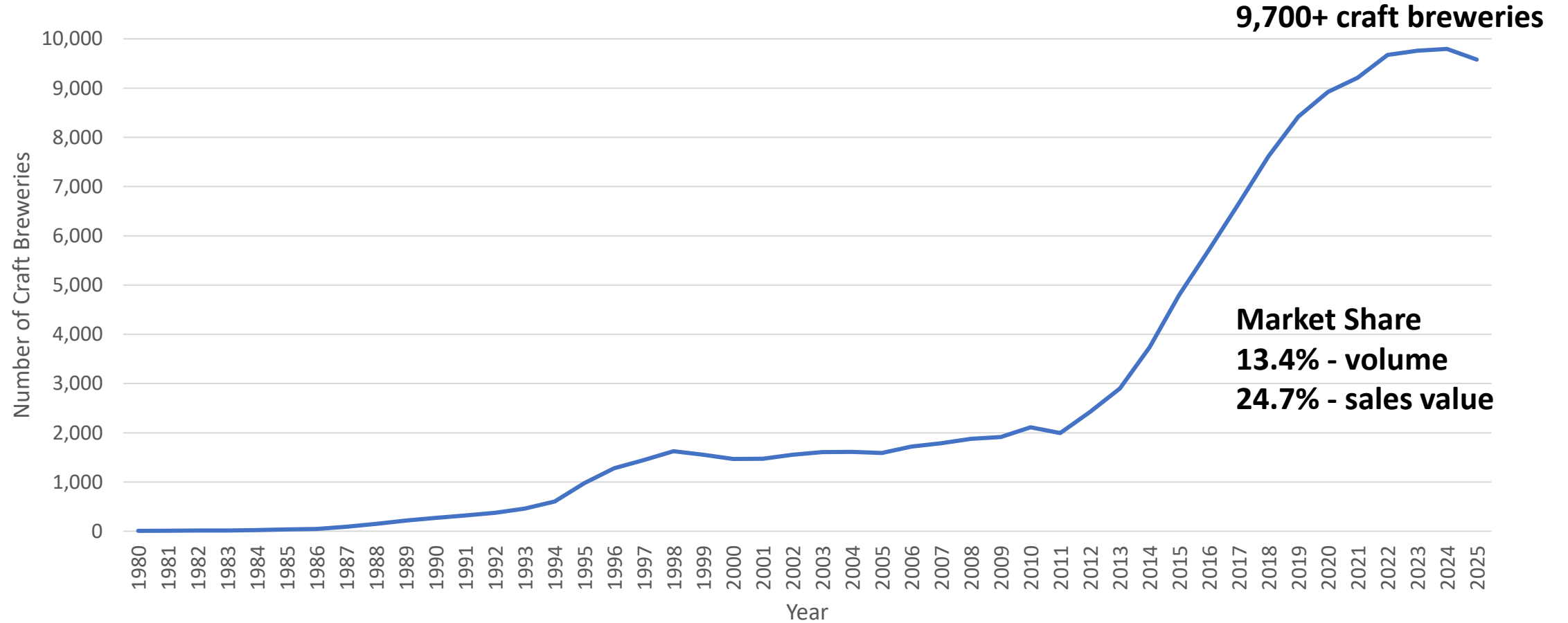
Presentation to Faculty of Mid-Sweden University and Community Stakeholders, Östersund, Sweden

June 16, 2026

# Synopsis and Framing Ideas

- Synopsis
  - Craft brewing demonstrates how small, locally rooted enterprises can drive place development by **reusing space, nurturing social life, and reinforcing cultural identity** - offering development pathways grounded in place rather than scale or growth
- The craft brewing revolution: from mass production to place-based production
- Conceptual foundations: space, place, and place-making
- Craft breweries as place-makers:
  - Physical place-making (adaptive reuse)
  - Social place-making (third places)
  - Symbolic and cultural place-making (neolocalism)

# Growth of American Craft Breweries 1980-2025



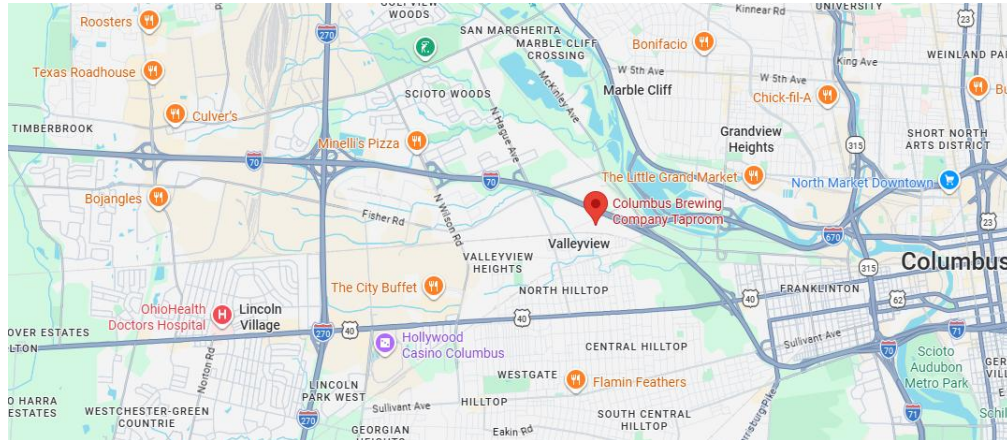
# The Craft Brewing Revolution: From Mass Production to Place-based Production





Produced in breweries that are 27 km apart in Columbus, Ohio





1 Brewery in 1 City  
~32,000 barrels of beer  
annually (~32,500 hectoliters)



12 Breweries in 12 Cities  
~ 95 million barrels of beer annually  
(~110 million hectoliters)

# Conceptual Foundations: Space, Place, and Place-making



# Space and Place

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- **Built / Functional Spaces**
  - Spaces designed for use, but not necessarily meaningful to people:
- **Neutral with respect to meaning**
  - A parking lot
  - A stretch of highway
  - An abandoned warehouse



# Space and Place

- Emerges when space becomes experienced, practiced, named, and valued by people
  - Social meanings and shared understandings
  - Memory, identity, and attachment
  - Norms governing behavior (“what happens here”)
    - The town square where protests occur
    - A bar
    - known as the place “where everyone meets”
    - “Home,” regardless of its physical form

Quenched &  
Tempered Brewing,  
Toledo, OH (April  
2026)



# From Space to Place

- “Space is more abstract than place. What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.” (Yi-Fu Tuan, 1979)
- Place = Space + meaning



# Place-making

- Place-making is the process through which **physical spaces are transformed into meaningful places** by shaping the built environment, social practices, and cultural narratives in ways that reflect local identity, support social interaction, and enhance quality of life



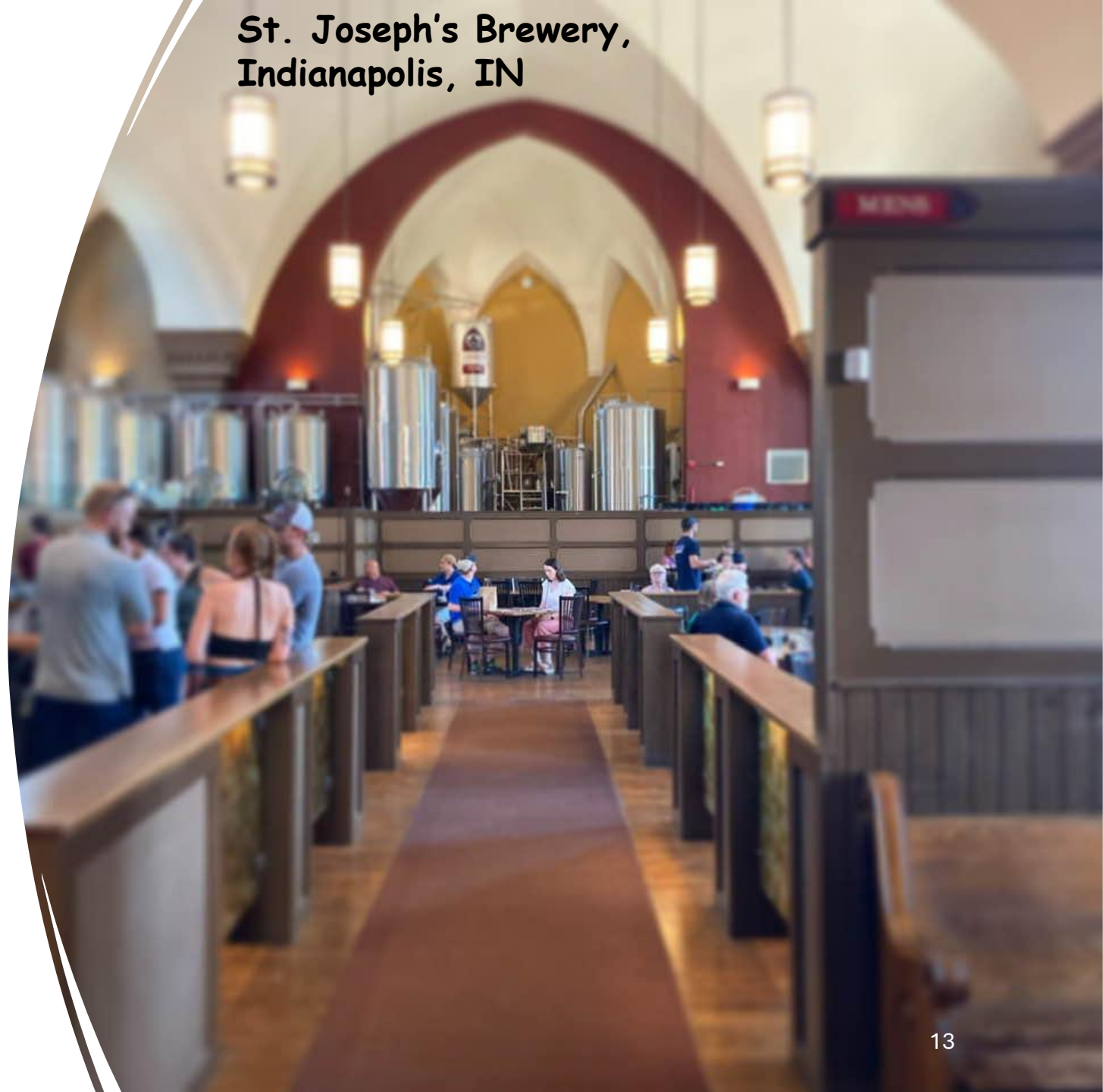
# Craft Breweries as Place-Makers



# Craft Breweries as Place-makers

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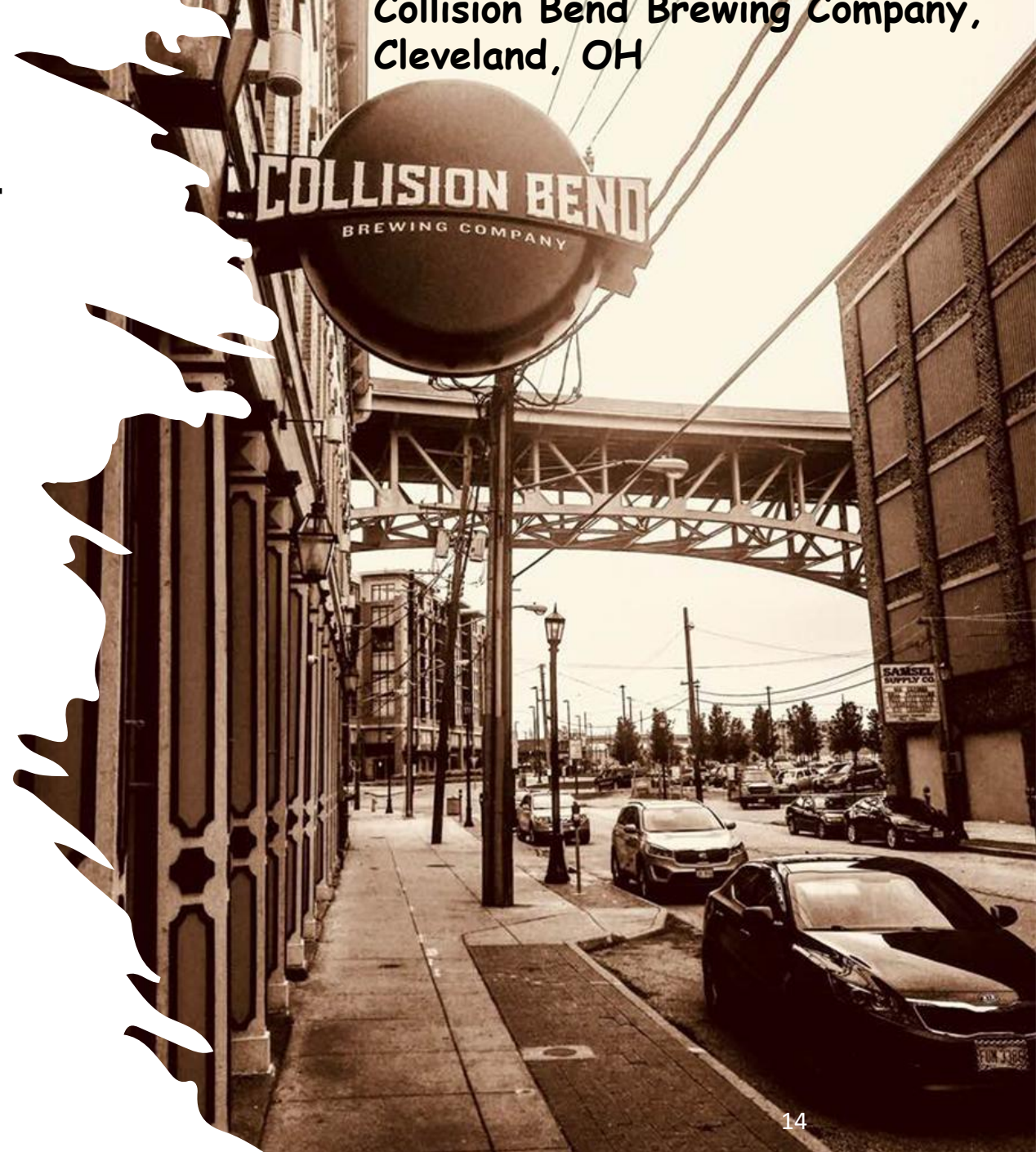
- Physical place-making
- Social place-making
- Symbolic and cultural place-making



# Craft Breweries – Locational Preferences

- Seek out inexpensive real estate
- “Economically peripheral locations” (Weilar 2000)
- Abandoned buildings in old (distressed) industrial neighborhoods or struggling downtowns

Collision Bend Brewing Company,  
Cleveland, OH



# Physical Place-making: Adaptive Reuse

- Adaptive reuse is the process of giving obsolete, underused, or abandoned buildings a new life by adapting them to contemporary needs instead of demolishing and rebuilding them
  - Key elements of adaptive reuse
    - Existing structure is preserved (wholly or in large part)
    - Original function changes (e.g., factory → apartments)
    - Physical modifications are selective, not wholesale
    - Cultural, economic, or environmental value is retained

# Physical Place-making: Adaptive Reuse

- Why adaptive reuse matters
  - **Economic:** Lower construction costs and faster redevelopment than new builds
  - **Environmental:** Reduces demolition waste and preserves embodied carbon
  - **Cultural:** Preserves local identity and sense of place
  - **Community Vitality:** Can create new social, commercial, or civic spaces -especially important in peripheral or post-industrial regions

# Physical Place-making: Adaptive Reuse

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- Examples
  - Warehouses converted into loft housing
  - Churches repurposed as community centers or performance venues
  - Schools redeveloped into housing or offices
  - Factories redeveloped in breweries

Nya Carnegiebryggeriet,  
Stockholm (2016)  
Former lightbulb factory



# Physical Place-making: Adaptive Reuse

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- Adaptive reuse transforms **space** into **place** by aligning existing built form with evolving social and economic needs



Brew Church Brewing,  
New Buffalo, MI (2019)

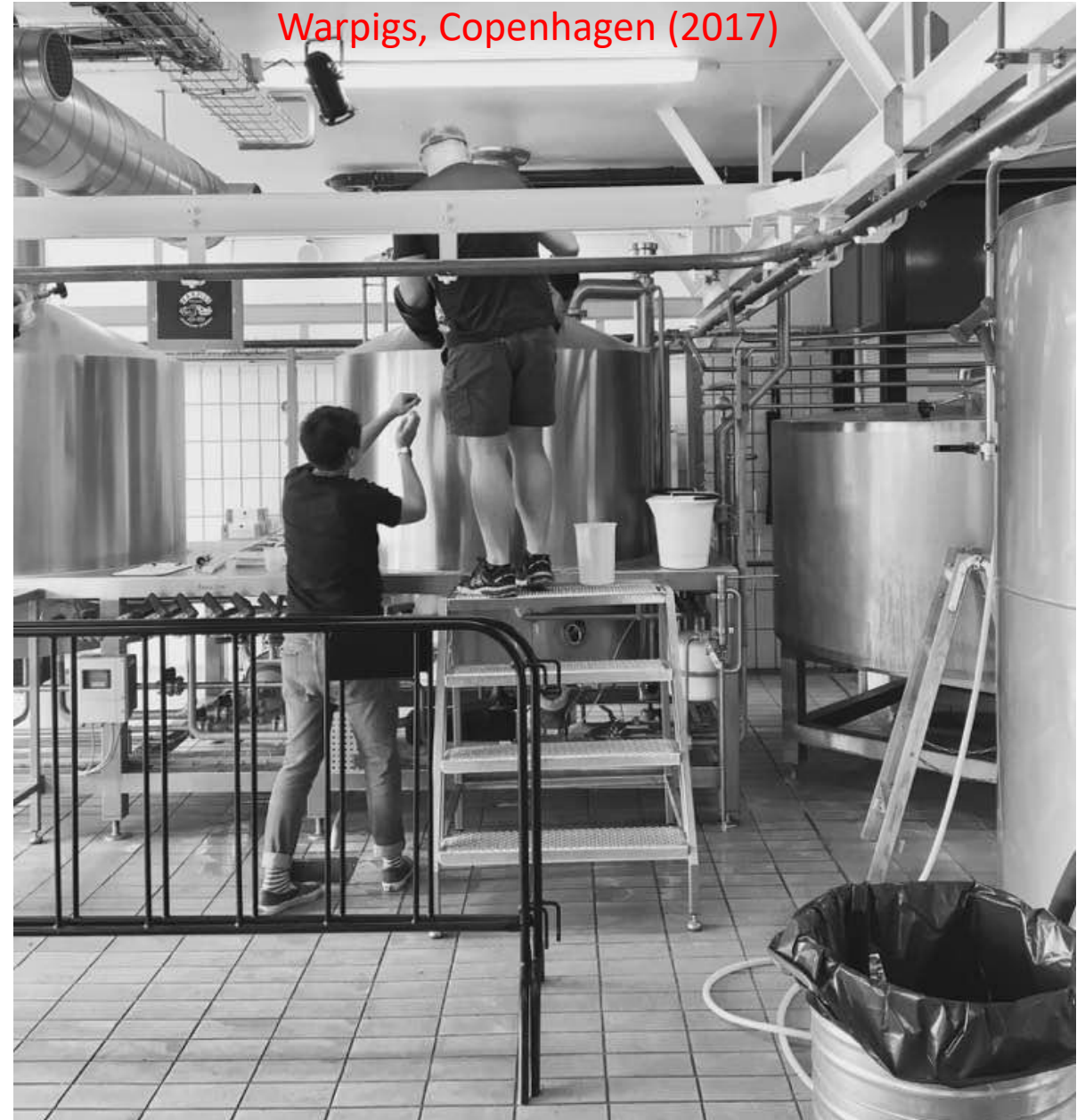
Lebanon Brewing Co., Lebanon, OH  
(decommissioned fire station)



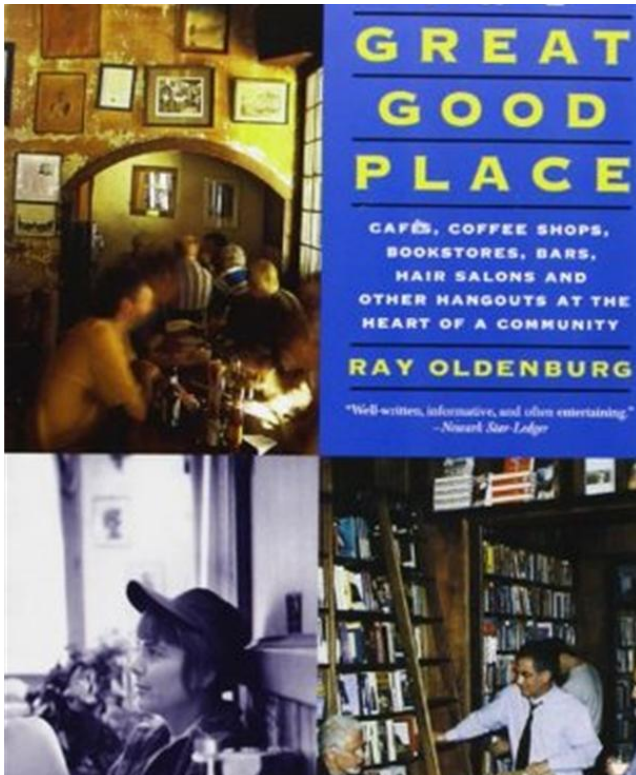
# Unique Beer in **Unique Spaces**

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- “Craft beer is as much about getting creative with the space the brewery is located in as it is about creating **unique beer recipes**” (Colliers International, 2015: 5)
- “The craft beer consumer is looking for a **unique atmosphere, taste, and overall experience** and it is up to the breweries to meet those expectations. The physical space and its associated atmosphere play an important role in achieving the ‘**experience**’ consumers have come to expect” (CBRE, 2016: 4)



# Social Place-making: Third Places



- Ray Oldenburg, an urban sociologist at the University of West Florida
- Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community
- Third Places are “nothing more than informal public gathering places” (Oldenburg 1989)

# Social Place-making: Third Places

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- “Exchange ideas, have a good time, and build relationships” (Butler and Diaz 2016)
- “The Living Room of society” (Hickey 2012)
- “Centers of Community” (Jeffres et al. 2009)
- “the loci of routine activities and sociocultural transactions” (Knox 2005, 8)

Border X Brewing,  
San Diego, CA (2023)



# Third Place Characteristics

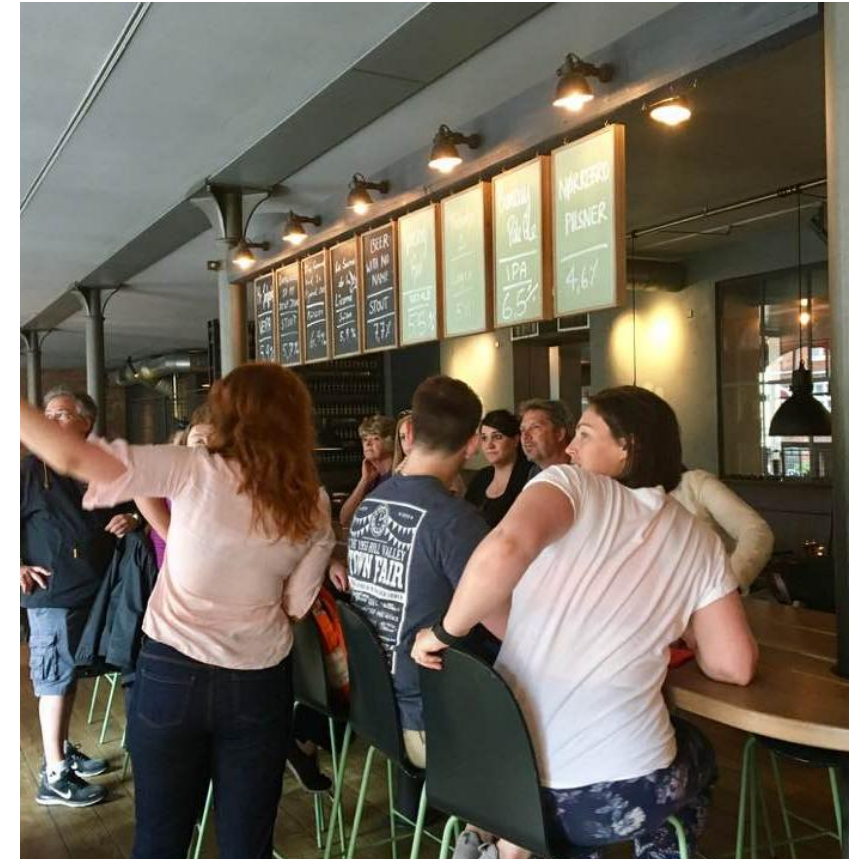
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<b>Neutral ground</b>	People can come and go freely, without obligation
<b>Inclusive and welcoming</b>	Open to all, regardless of social or economic status
<b>Conversation-centered</b>	Lively, engaging dialogue is the primary activity - what Oldenburg (1989, 28) called the sine qua non of Third Places
<b>Accessible</b>	Located near residential areas and open during convenient hours
<b>Regulars</b>	Frequent patrons help shape the character of the space and welcome newcomers
<b>Unpretentious</b>	Simple, modest physical environments
<b>Playful atmosphere</b>	Humor and light-heartedness are valued; serious discussions are rare
<b>Sense of ownership</b>	Regulars feel at home and often develop a personal attachment to the space

# Benefits of Third Places

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- Combat loneliness (Jing et al 2024)
- Reduce social marginalization among young people (Littman 2021)
- Build a sense of community and contribute to sense of place (Dolley and Bosman 2019)
- Improve quality of life (Jeffres et al.2009)
- Facilitate entrepreneurship and innovation (Roche 2020, Choi et al.2024, Credit et al. 2024) etc.



**Nørrebro Bryghus,  
Copenhagen (June 2017)**

# Planning Third Places

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- “While third places often seem to depend on a mysterious chemistry, planners can help foster the conditions in which they might emerge” (Oldenburg 1996/97, 10)
- “it is important that building third places into the built environment is a key priority” (RSPH 2018, 41)



Pivovar Hostinec,  
Košice, Slovakia  
(June 2025)

Woodburn Brewery,  
Cincinnati, OH  
(December 2017)

# Building A Third Place

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- “Do third places inherently possess physical characteristics that support human use and social interaction?” (Mehta and Bosson 2010)
- “Third places should . . . facilitate casual encounters as well as settings for sustained conversations.” (Knox 2005, 8)

# Coffeeshouses

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- Broadway and Engelhardt (2021)
  - Four coffeeshouses in an upper income neighborhood of Minneapolis, MN
  - Conversations were a minority activity in three of the four coffeeshouses
  - Only one met Oldenburg's standard of being a place of "lively, scintillating, colorful and engaging conversation"



# Coffeehouse Clientele

## Third Place Coffeehouse

- Appealed to a wide range of patrons
  - Parents with infants, students studying, young couples, empty nesters, grandparents with their children and grandchildren
- Most of its patrons go there with another person for a drink and a conversation

## Non-Third Place Coffeehouses

- Appeal is to people in their 20s and 30s who view them as workplaces, the “pseudo-libraries, taken over by the laptop generation”



# Coffeehouse Interior Design

Seating arrangements that encouraged conversation

Minimal number of electrical outlets

Décor that created an “at home” feel

**Table 3.** Coffeehouse Furniture Selection and Arrangement.

Coffeehouse	Upholstered chair/couch (%)	Bar stools (%)	Two chairs and a table (%)	Four chairs and a table (%)	Five or more chairs and a table (%)
Mountain	0	10	36	10	44
Hexagon	19	4	23	31	23
City	7	26	46	0	21
Azalea	9	0	45	30	16

Note. Figures refer to percentage of seating in each category.  
Source. Data collected by authors December 8-9, 2017.

**Table 4.** Office Amenities.

Coffeehouse	Free Wi-Fi	Printer	No. of outlets
Mountain	Yes	No	7
Hexagon	Yes	Yes	10
City	Yes	No	12
Azalea	Yes	No	25

Source. Data collected by authors, December 8-9, 2017.

**Table 5.** Coffeehouse Décor and Ambience.

Coffeehouse	Fireplace	Plant(s)	Pictures on wall	Coffee tables	Newspaper	Total no. of amenities
Mountain	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	4
Hexagon	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	2
City	No	Yes	No	No	No	1
Azalea	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	2

Source. Data collected by authors, December 8-9, 2017.

# Enhancing Social Interaction

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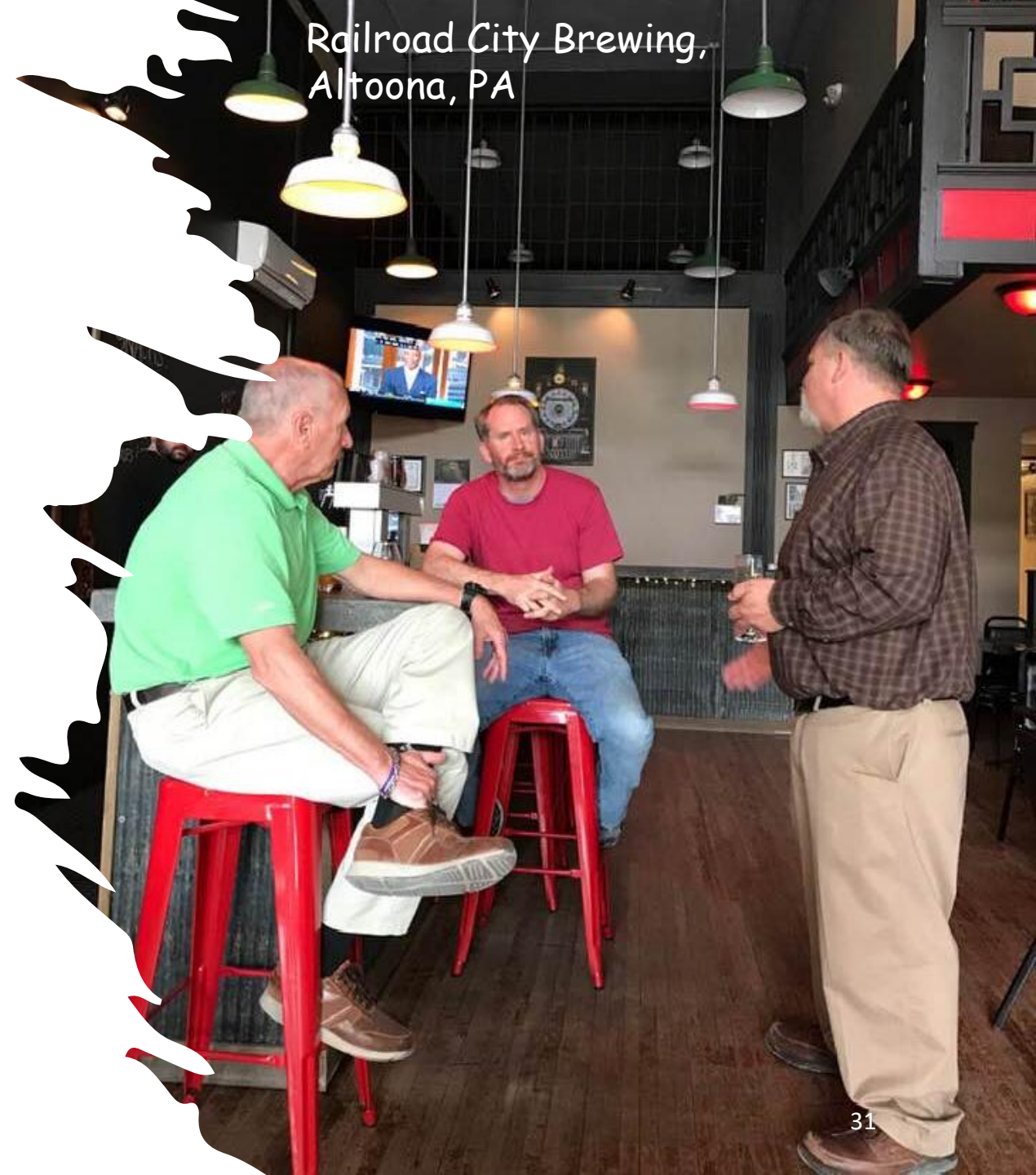
- *“Our tasting room doesn’t have TV’s . . . Instead of screens flashing advertisements and running results of the latest game, you’ll see the room filled with friends and families and you’ll hear the rumble of conversation accented with laughter. The tasting room is where our community comes together. It is where friendships are made, rekindled, or strengthened. Our beer is the closest we can get to packaging that feeling of belonging and community.”*

(Renegade Brewing Company, Denver, CO)



# Craft Breweries – A New Type of Third Place?

- Craft breweries are "gathering places that are in many ways replacing things like libraries and recreation centers within a neighborhood" (George Homewood, Norfolk, Virginia's director of planning and community development)
- Morrison (2017) describes craft breweries as "the evening analog to the third place of the morning, the coffeehouse."



# Craft Breweries as Third Places?

- Many craft breweries across the United States have strategically positioned themselves as community Third Places
- Craft breweries deploy several strategies to create tasting rooms conducive to social interaction
- While traditional bars are predominantly adult-only venues, many craft breweries seek out and attract a more diverse clientele



Birdsong Brewing,  
Charlotte, NC



Goldwater Brewing,  
Scottsdale, AZ (2022)<sup>32</sup>

# Experiential Drinking – An Emerging Trend

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- “not just going to drink” but “going to do something . . . and drink” (Watson 2020)
- “drinkers are now more drawn to experience-based locations for their alcohol consumption than typical bars” (Karg 2019)
- Craft breweries are proving very adept at providing “new and creative experiences for craft drinkers to engage with their favorite brews” (Karg 2019)

# HEAVY Beer Co. Toledo , OH



# Metazoa Brewing Co, Indianapolis, IN



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...in the Upper Room



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Month @10:30am



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Tempered  
Every 1st Thursday of  
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FEB 6TH  
MARCH 6TH  
APRIL 3RD  
MAY 1ST  
JUNE 5TH  
JULY 3RD  
AUGUST 7TH  
SEPT 4TH  
OCT 3RD  
NOV 6TH

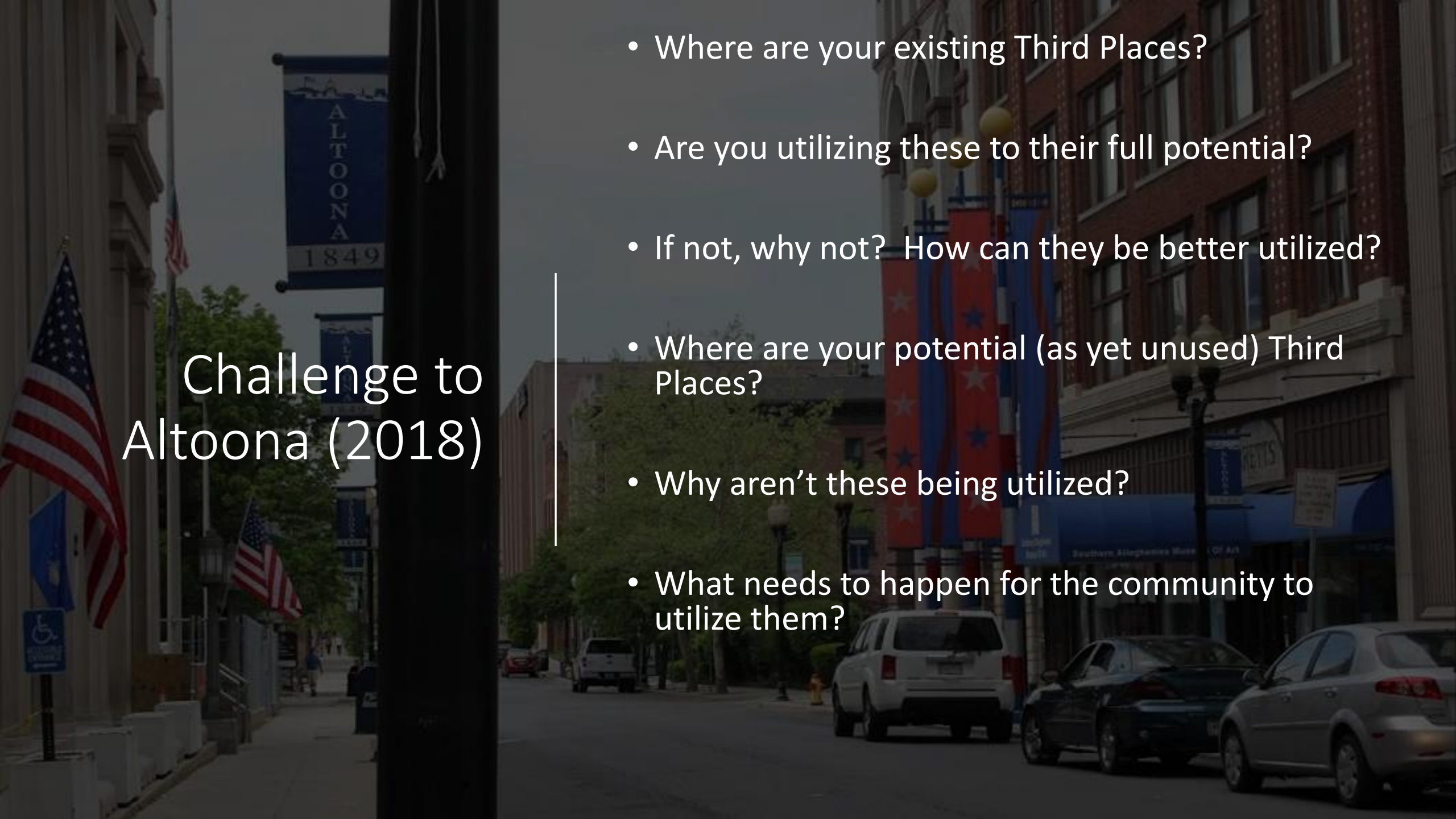
## Promotion of leisure-time physical activity by craft breweries in Knoxville, Tennessee

Kelley Strohacker, Eugene C. Fitzhugh, Angela Wozencroft, Paula-Marie M. Ferrara & Cory T. Beaumont



## “Ten Bucks for yoga and a beer in a cool vibey spot”: exploring motivations for LTPA at craft breweries

Alana N. Seaman, Lindsey Schroeder, Laura Morris, Kayla Hines & Michele Abee



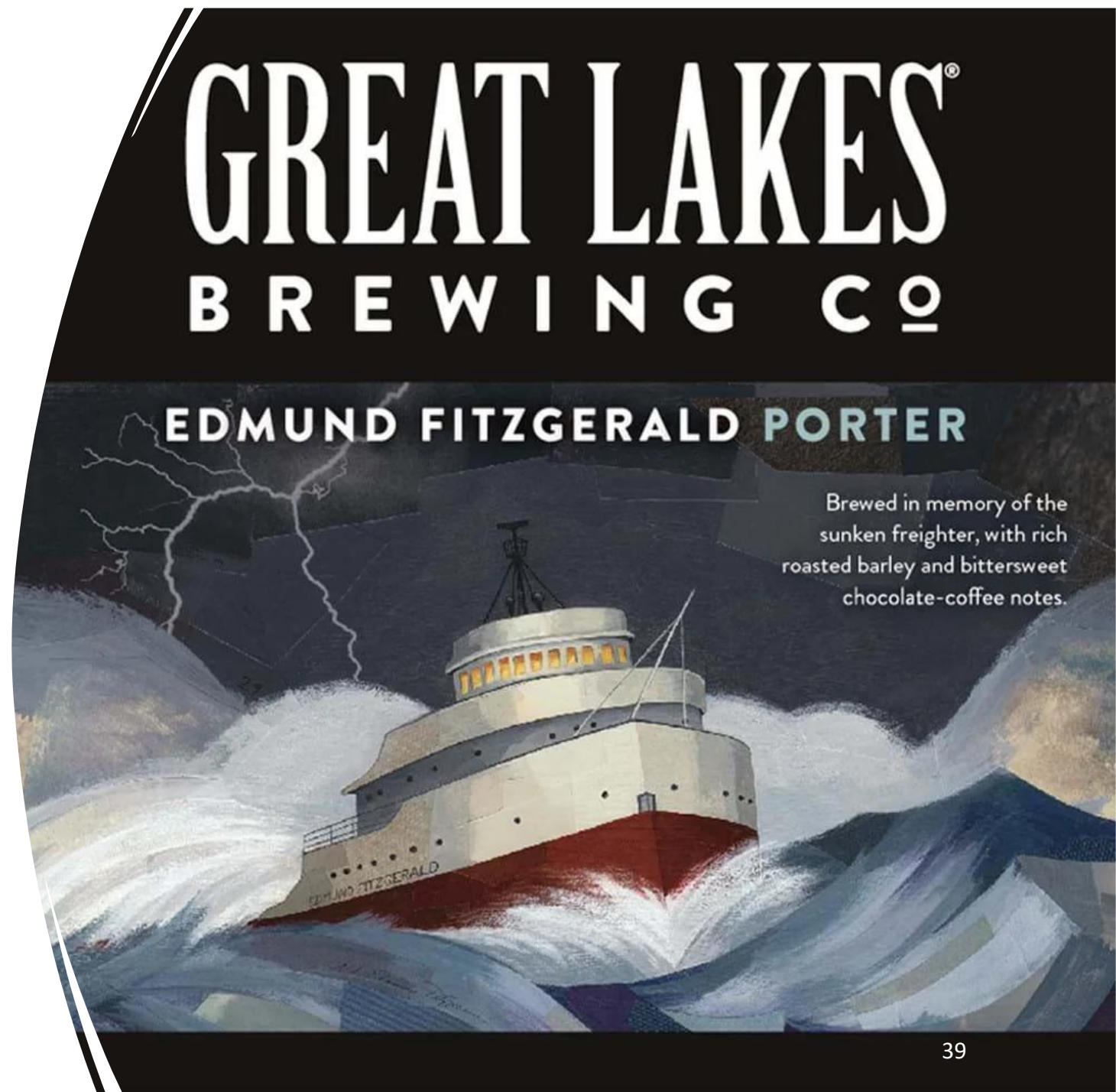
## Challenge to Altoona (2018)

- Where are your existing Third Places?
- Are you utilizing these to their full potential?
- If not, why not? How can they be better utilized?
- Where are your potential (as yet unused) Third Places?
- Why aren't these being utilized?
- What needs to happen for the community to utilize them?

# Symbolic and Cultural Place-making

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- Breweries and beer as narratives of place
  - Naming practices
    - Brewery names
    - Beer names



# Symbolic and Cultural Place-making

- The craft brewing movement is part of the larger “**neo-localism**” movement within the United States
  - Neolocalism - the active and conscious effort by individuals, groups, or businesses to foster a sense of place and local identity in response to globalization and cultural homogenization (Schnell 2003)



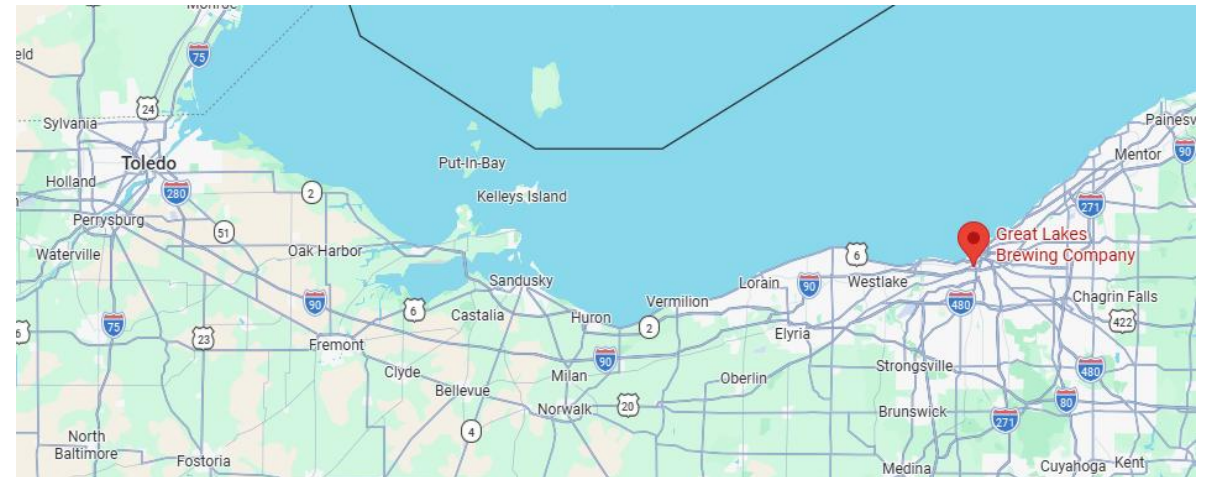
# Symbolic and Cultural Place-making

- Craft breweries act as symbolic vehicles for local identity
  - Beer names, labels, taproom décor, and origin stories intentionally reference:
    - Local history
    - Landscapes
    - Industrial heritage
    - Local disasters, folklore, or personalities
  - This branding is not incidental - it is a conscious act of place-making



# Great Lakes Brewing Company

Established in 1988 in Cleveland, Ohio



# The Great Lakes

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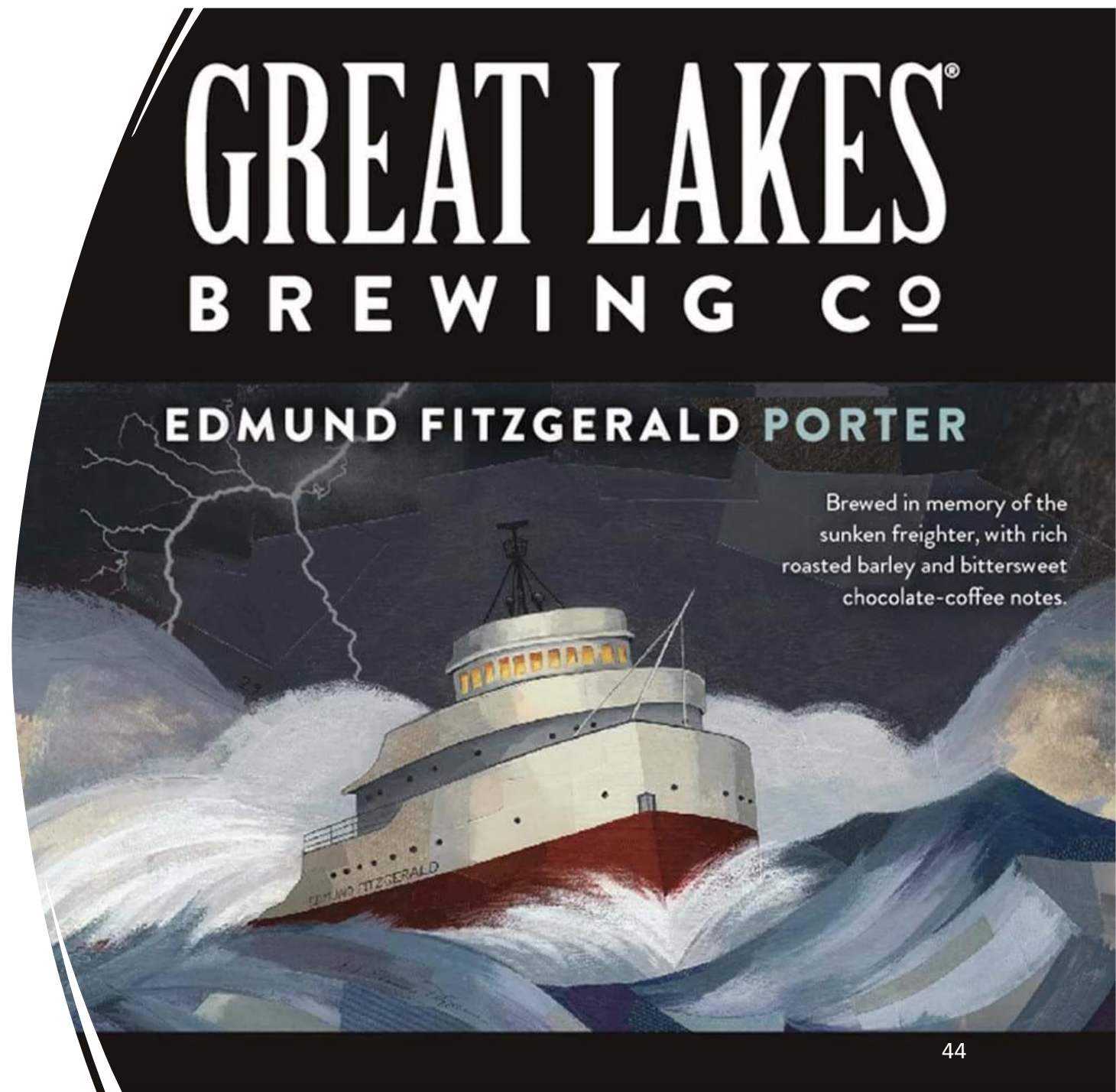
- Huron
  - Ontario
  - Michigan
  - Erie
  - Superior
- 
- By surface area, the Great Lakes are the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth
    - Contains 21% of the world's fresh water



# Symbolic and Cultural Place-making

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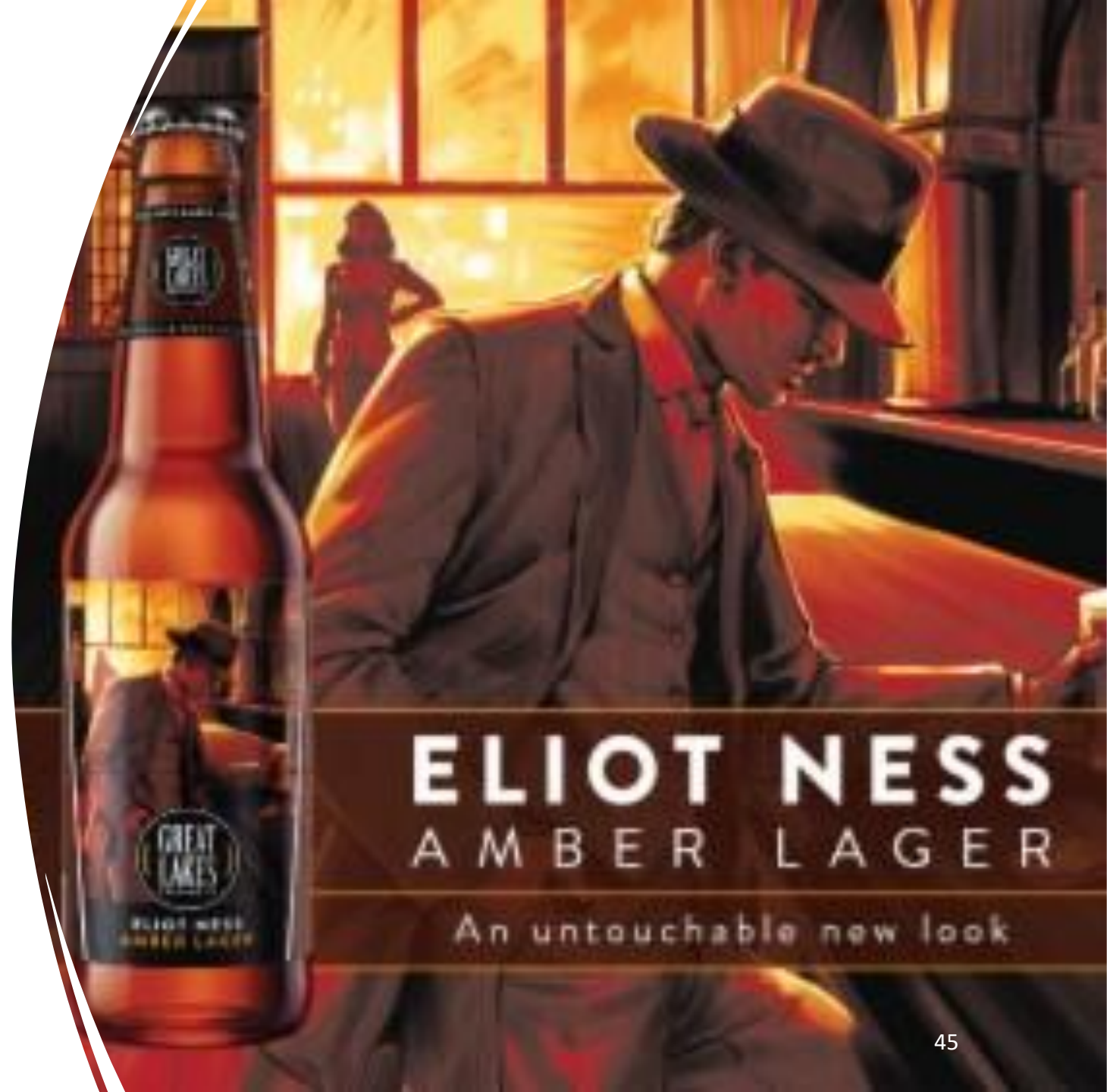
- Brewed in memory of the Edmund Fitzgerald a Great Lakes Freighter that sank on Lake Superior during a storm on November 10, 1975, with the loss of the entire crew of 29 men



# Symbolic and Cultural Place-making

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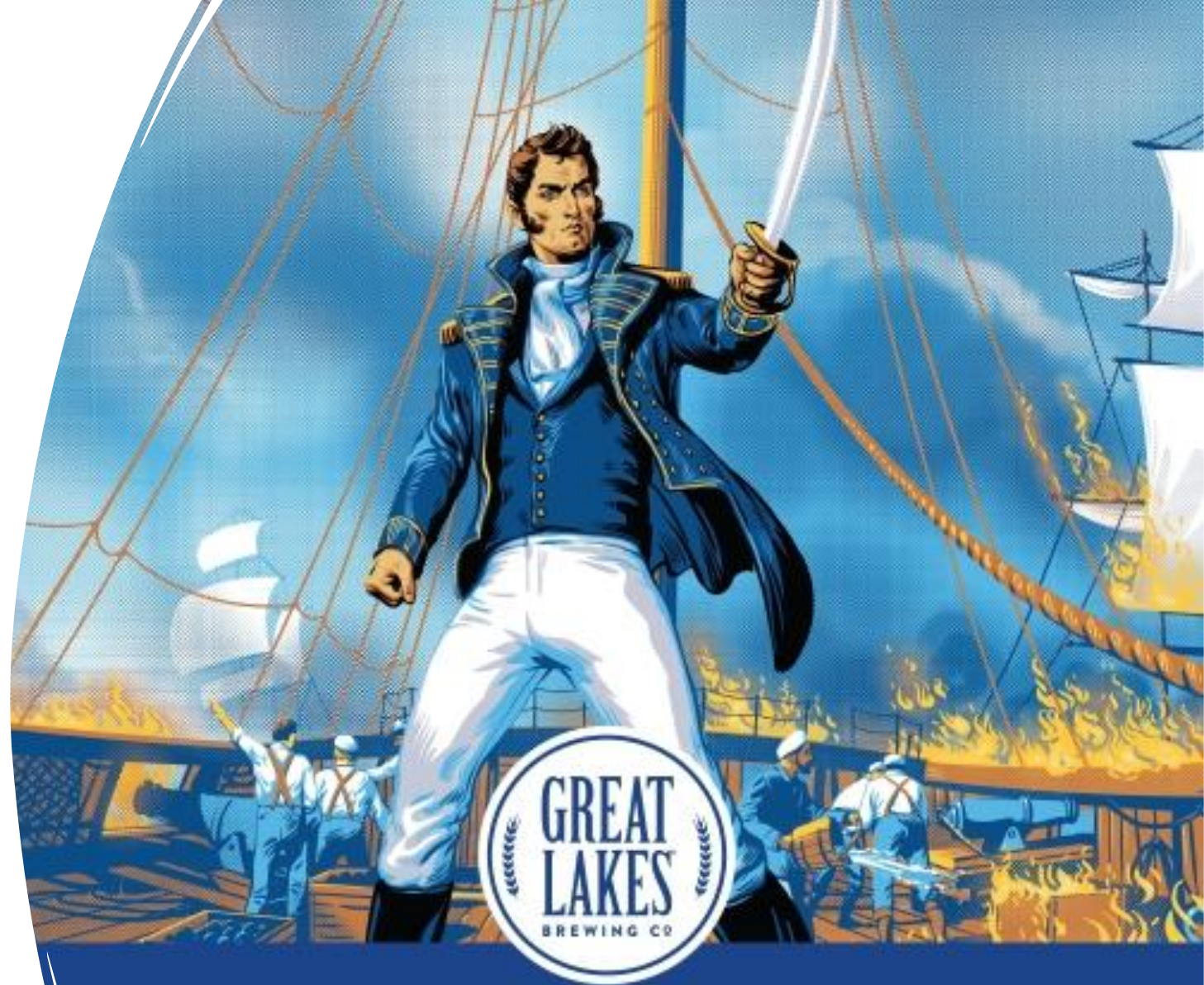
- Eliot Ness Amber Lager
  - Brewed in memory of Eliot Ness, a federal Prohibition Agent known for his efforts to bring down Al Capone while enforcing Prohibition in Chicago
  - Ness served as Cleveland's Safety Director between 1935 and 1942



# Symbolic and Cultural Place-making

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- Commodore Perry IPA
  - Brewed in memory of Oliver Hazard Perry a Naval Commander who led American forces to victory over the British in the Battle of Lake Erie in 1813



**COMMODORE PERRY IPA**

# Symbolic and Cultural Place-making

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- Lake Erie Monster Double IPA
  - Brewed in recognition of the Lake Erie Monster, a 9-12-meter-long serpent first sighted in Lake Erie in 1817



# Summary



# Craft Brewing and Place Development: Key Takeaways

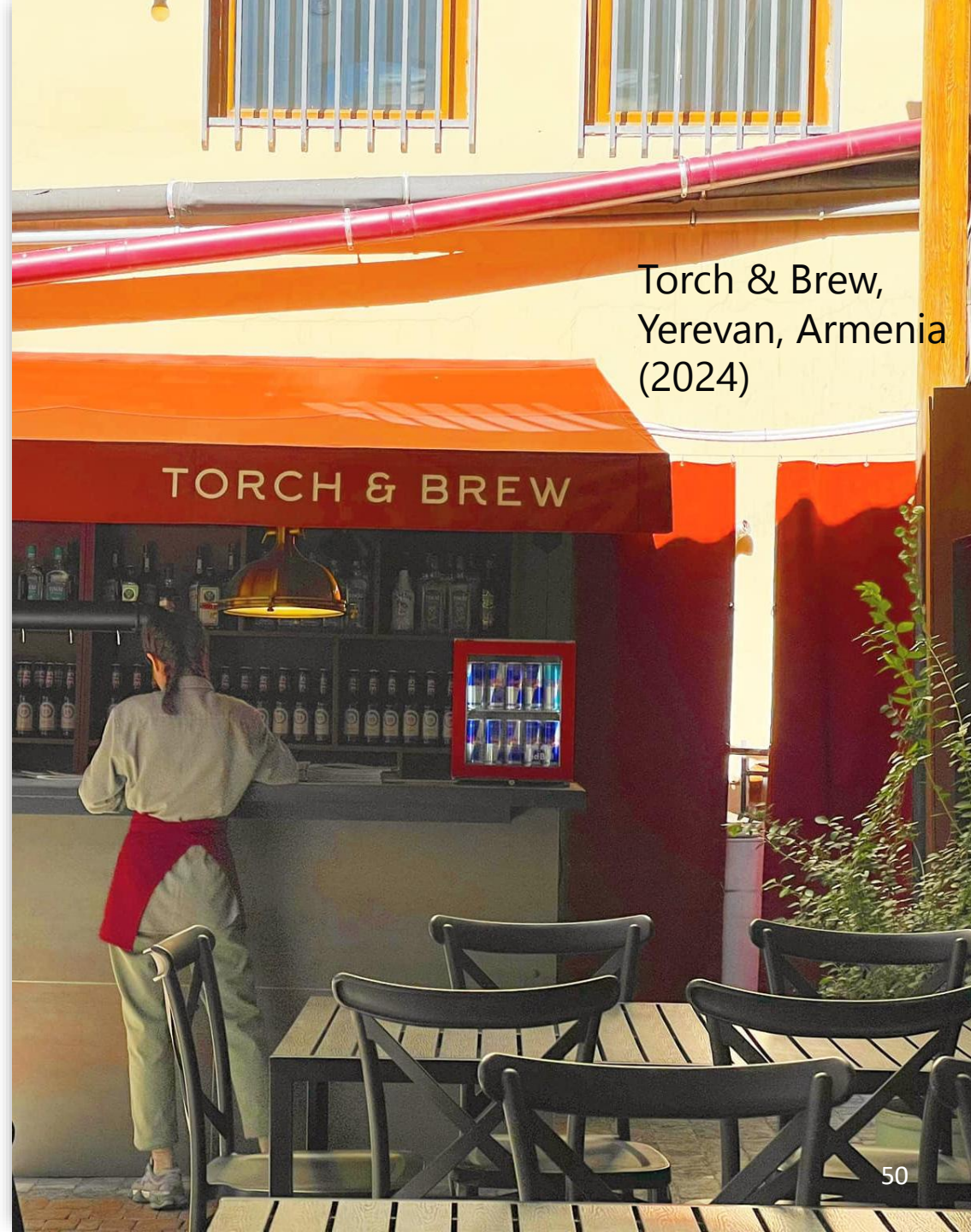
- The craft brewing revolution reflects a broader shift from mass, placeless production toward small-scale, locally embedded, and place-based economies
- Craft breweries act as place-makers, contributing through:
  - Physical place-making (adaptive reuse of industrial and underused buildings)
  - Social place-making (functioning as “third places” that foster interaction, inclusion, and community)
  - Symbolic and cultural place-making (neolocal branding, local narratives, and identity construction)

Grapevine Brewing,  
Grapevine, TX (2018)

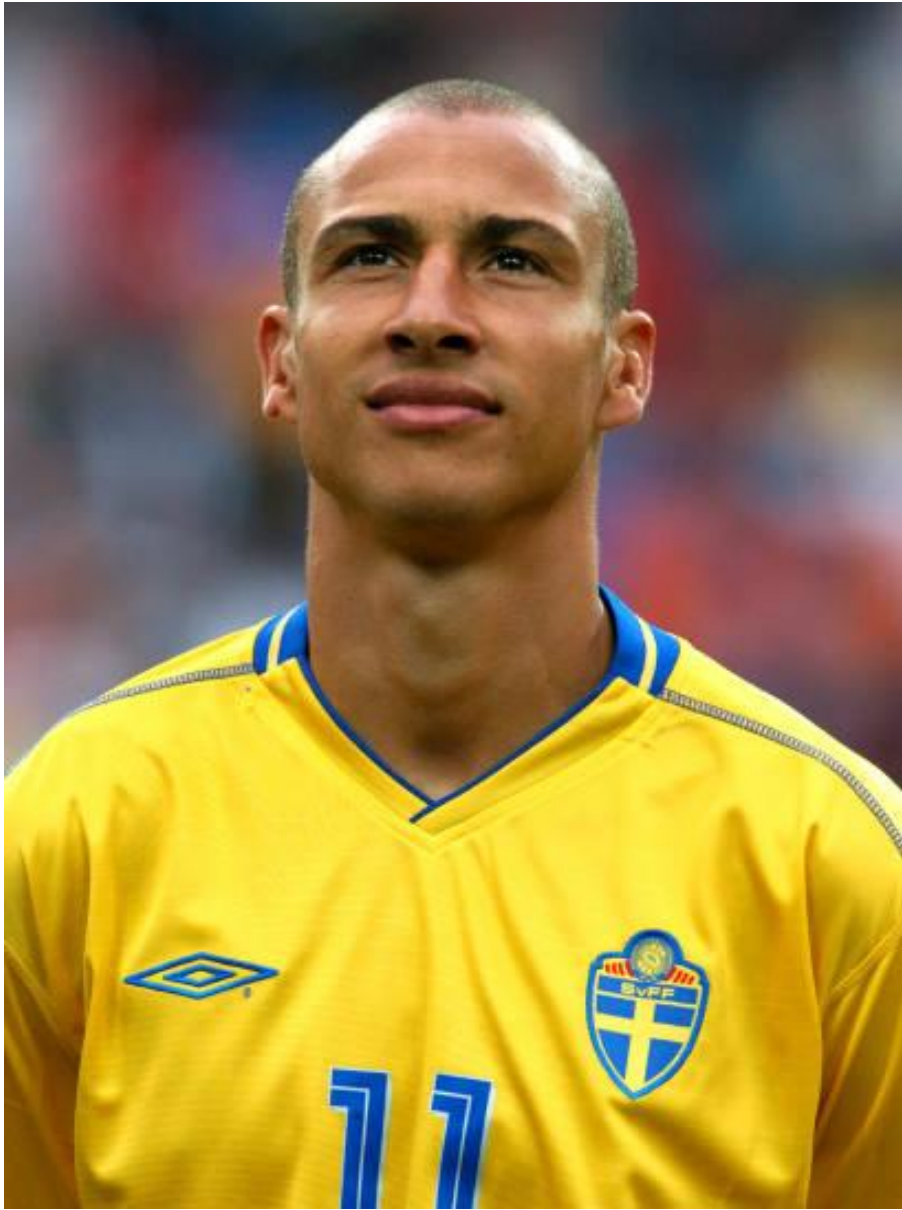


# Craft Brewing and Place Development: Key Takeaways

- By transforming space into place, craft breweries help strengthen local identity, social cohesion, and experiential consumption
- These dynamics position craft breweries as important actors in local and regional development, especially in post-industrial, peripheral, and marginalized places
- Craft brewing illustrates how development can be grounded in meaning, experience, and community rather than growth alone



Torch & Brew,  
Yerevan, Armenia  
(2024)



# Thank You

5

Fizzy  
Yellow  
Beer is 4  
wussies!

I am a  
Craft Beer  
Drinker!

Support  
Your  
Local  
Brewery!

No  
Crap  
on  
Tap!

Independent  
Collaborative  
Innovative

Join  
the  
Revolution!

[neil.reid@utoledo.edu](mailto:neil.reid@utoledo.edu)  
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