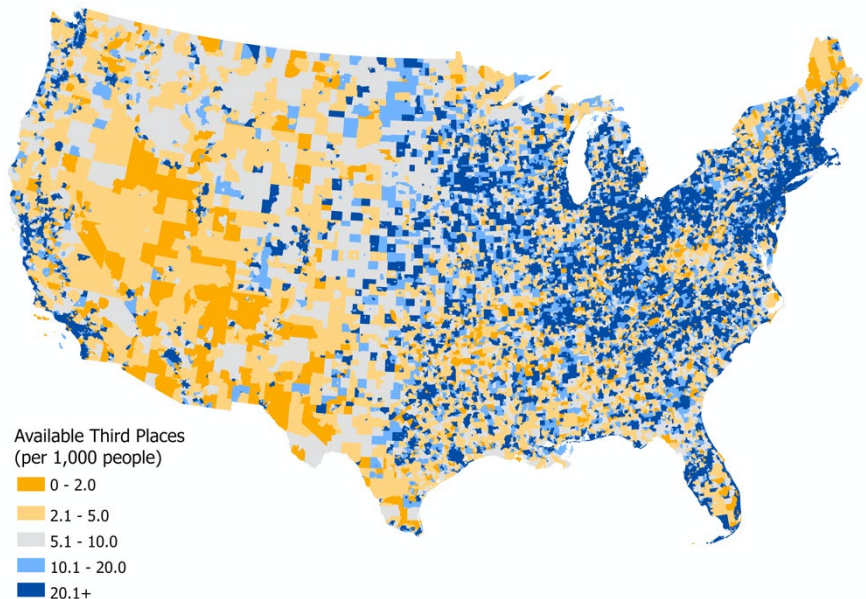


## DATA SLICE #52 - May 3, 2022

### Social Infrastructure (“Third Places”) is Not Distributed Equally Across the U.S.

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Third places are the physical spaces in a community where people can gather to connect and share resources, support, and information. They are a form of social infrastructure that include low cost or free places like libraries, commercial places like coffee shops, and social organizations like civic clubs and churches. Third places can help support health because they promote social interaction, community trust, and resource and information sharing. In a recent [peer reviewed publication](#), we used data from the National Neighborhood Data Archive and the American Community Survey to show that third places are not evenly distributed across the U.S. (see Figure 1). We found that there is less availability of third places per capita in neighborhoods (Census tracts) with larger shares of non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics and larger shares of residents in poverty. We also found that third places are in shorter supply in rural neighborhoods than in urban neighborhoods, except for the most remote rural tracts. Remote rural Census tracts had a comparatively large supply of third places, presumably because there is a minimum level of services required to sustain any neighborhood. As one way to improve health outcomes, community leaders should invest in the types of social infrastructure that support social connection and resource and information sharing.



**Figure 1. Third Places per 1,000 Residents by Census Tract**

Data Source: National Neighborhood Data Archive (2017); Notes: Third places per capita were determined using a 5-mile radius for urban tracts and 10-mile radius for rural tracts. Third places include free and publicly available places, low-cost commercial places, creative, athletic, and entertainment places, social services, and personal services.

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