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## Revitalization Through Food: Bringing Back Smalltown, USA

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**Revitalization Through Food: Bringing Back Smalltown, USA**

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**Abstract**

What makes a small town in the middle of nowhere USA unique, and what does food have to do with it? The following paper will discuss the impact of food on the revitalization process of small towns in the United States. This paper will attempt to answer questions concerning the revitalization process, how to measure the success of revitalization, and how food turns a town into a destination. Sidney Alive, a non-profit downtown revitalization group located in Sidney, Ohio, will be presented as a case study to discuss what could be a real-life success story. This case study will evaluate the work being done, the goals of the organization, and give a first-hand look at a revitalization project in progress: as well as how to best measure that progress. Additionally, research of downtown revitalization trends and many aspects of food tourism that create a unique process in small towns throughout the United States will be evaluated through an interdisciplinary lens. The many trends in downtown revitalization and food related destinations, such as the uniqueness that is needed for success or the historical significance of food, are discussed in relation to one another. Overall, the following paper will work to create a better understanding of the relationship between food as a destination and downtown revitalization in small towns throughout the United States, following different trends, discussing real-life work, and evaluation through an interdisciplinary lens.

Keywords: downtown revitalization, smalltown, food, tourism

**Introduction**

“When you’re alone and life is making you lonely, you can always go downtown” (Clark & Lin, n.d, *Downtown*). Not only have these words resonated throughout nearly every home since 1964 but, this idea of having a downtown that makes you happy, has become the

foundation of small towns around the world. With this, the revitalization process focuses on the needs and wants for a downtown area by a community... and that is where food comes in. This study will provide an understanding of the importance of food to the revitalization process as it works to answer some of the following research questions: How do you measure the relative success of the revitalization process? What is the impact of the Farmers Market (and other food-based events) on the revitalization process? Is there a significant connection between traditional / historical food-places to the revitalization process? How does the “foodscape” of a destination relate to the revitalization process?

Through the analysis of these questions, this study emphasizes how the downtown revitalization process uses food as a tool to create a destination for the community and for tourists. There are many trends in downtown revitalization and food related destinations, such as the uniqueness that is needed for success or the historical significance of food in relation to one another (Yuen, 2021, p. 202). Through these trends and comprehensive analysis, there are clear links between the success of a downtown revitalization program and a presence of food that is working towards destination creation. Overall, the following paper will work to create a better understanding of the vital relationship between food as a destination and downtown revitalization in small towns throughout the United States, following different trends, discussing real-life work in a case study of Sidney, Ohio, and evaluation through an interdisciplinary lens.

### *Downtown Revitalization*

To begin, it is first important to define downtown revitalization and how it will be used in the context of this paper. It is also important to note that this study will be focusing on the revitalization of downtowns in small towns, most focused in the Midwest United States. Though this topic could be evaluated on a much larger, international scale, this study is centered on the

findings from a case study conducted in Sidney, Ohio. For the purposes of this study, downtown revitalization can be defined most broadly as “considerable reinvestment occurring in city centers” (Greenberg, 2006, p. 4). This definition can be further elaborated into the many ways in which reinvestment into city centers is actually put into use to create revitalization. It can also be used to break down the process in the overall efforts to appease the “renewed desire for city life” that is at the center of each city’s unique revitalization goals (Greenberg, 2006, p. 4). All of this surrounds the foundation that “small town regeneration challenges are considered to be long-term, complex/ multi-dimensional, involving many actors and having locally specific challenges” that must be met in order for revitalization to succeed (Powe, Pringle, and Hart, 2015, p. 177). Downtown revitalization project is the focus of this study and will be discussed in greater detail within its relationship to food in the creation of a destination, and its real-life application in Sidney, Ohio.

### *Food as a Destination*

Food is at the center of all our lives, so it makes sense that it would be at the center of our communities. With the above definition and understanding of downtown revitalization in mind, it is important to introduce the role of food in this context. For the purposes of this analysis, the impact of food, food related products / events, nutritional trends, and restaurants will be evaluated based on the idea that these roles turn a town into a destination. This understanding of food in the creation of a destination can, in some capacity, relate to food tourism. At its core, food tourism most commonly refers to “‘experiencing food at a destination’ (Green & Dougherty, 2008; Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010)” (Hiamey, Amenumey, and Mensah, 2021, p. 193). The following evaluation of the relationship between downtown revitalization and food as a destination will not use this definition of food tourism exclusively. It may be referenced

throughout the paper, but overall, the focus of this paper will be on the impact food has on the revitalization process and how it can be used to turn a town into a destination for its community members in addition to tourists.

## **Analysis**

### *Literature Review*

To review the literature studied throughout the research process, a trend will be considered a finding that is mutually agreed upon in three or more pieces of work. Therefore, trends will guide the overall findings of this analysis. First, establishing the trend that there is a connection between food and downtown revitalization is imperative. This connection is evident in all of the literature analyzed and discussed in a variety of capacities. Discussing “the role that food tourism has been assuming over the last few decades as a catalyst of local development” puts into perspective their co-dependent relationship (Figueiredo, Forte, & Eusébio, 2021, p. 637). This connection is expanded by Tellstrom, Gustafsson, and Mossberg in an expression that “economic and political use of traditional food culture is identified at an early point by ethnologists such as Kostlin (1975) and Salomonsson (1984), as part of a process where it is revitalized to create feelings of regional identity” (Tellstrom, Gustafsson, & Mossberg, 2006, p. 130). This statement not only shows the many times food and revitalization have been connected over a thirty-one-year period, but the true association between food and the revitalization process. To emphasize this connection once more, much research shows it is “evident that rural traditional foodstuffs, from agricultural practices to culinary ones, are strongly connected to rural tourism activities and experiences and hold a key position as pull factors to a particular rural destination” (Figueiredo, Forte, & Eusébio, 2021, p. 625). This affirmation goes further than

drawing a connection between food and revitalization, as it discusses “foodstuffs” that improve tourism and create a destination. This mention of the individual factors that directly lead to improved tourism, destination creation, and revitalization lead directly into the next trend of discussion.

The second trend to be discussed is the vital role that uniqueness plays in the success of any revitalization process whether discussing food or community infrastructure. What makes any old town a destination? According to Greenberg, “every city has assets and the ability to achieve excellence in its own way” (Greenberg, 2006, p. 6). This sets the foundation for the idea that all small towns have something that makes them unique. It is expanded further where “findings suggest that local communities may provide an important source of creative / innovative ideas leading to the necessary local distinctiveness in offer. Regeneration support must encourage such local initiative” (Powe, Pringle, and Hart, 2015, p. 197). Combined, these two statements build the foundation for the conviction that uniqueness is essential for revitalization, every town can embrace its uniqueness, and those working in revitalization must embrace what makes them unique to progress. To once again solidify this understanding and expand on this idea of progress, “it is important to retain some of the characteristics that make an area distinctive and enhance its local character, while maintaining and enhancing some of its existing social fabric throughout this process of change” (Weingaertner & Barber, 2010, p. 1669). With this, it is to be known that the revitalization process is dependent on a town’s unique qualities in order to succeed and foster growth.

As mentioned in the above understanding of unique qualities being vital to the success of the revitalization process, the role of food can be found. The use of the terms “traditional food” or “local food” throughout the review of literature will be the next trend to be discussed. With



this, there needs to be a clear understanding of what is meant by “traditional or local food” and how it relates to the revitalization process. To be concise in the creation of a definition: “local food demonstrates the uniqueness of each person’s community and the place’s geographical landscape” (Yuen, 2021, p. 244). This can be simplified down to local / traditional food being constructed by the community and geographical landscape from which it is produced. For the purposes of this study, the two terms will be used interchangeably. Therefore, local / traditional food can be any food that is generated by the community and unique to the area. This can then be expanded with the idea that “heritage is a product of modern conditions with attribution and influence of the past, including authenticity, image, and longevity” (Xie, 2021, p. 197). This adds to the definition of local / traditional food that needs to be community generated, unique to the destination, and now must have influences from the past and include authenticity. Combined, these two ideas complete what will be used throughout this study as the definition for the terms “traditional” and “local” foods.

To move further, there will be a shift in direction to the connection between this definition and the revitalization process. First, it is found that “local food and tourism share an important relationship reflected in the increasing number of people who travel in search of unique culinary experiences (Ab & Chi, 2010)” (Hiamey, Amenumey, & Mensah, 2021, p. 192). This very clearly states the connection between unique, local food and the increase in tourism that comes with the creation of a destination through the revitalization process. Again, to expand: “food should be understood as a distinguishing feature of rural tourism destinations, at the same time as displaying specific heritage and traditions as and contributing to the development of rural territories” (Figueiredo, Forte, & Eusébio, 2021, p. 623). To accept this trend, it can be

simplified down to the findings that food creates a link between heritage, uniqueness, tradition, and progression to turn a town into a destination.

With all these trends now in mind, it seems imperative to address why food is so important to people. Above, was discussed, and will continue to be discussed, why food is so important to the revitalization process and the creation of a destination. However, this trend will focus on the importance of food to people themselves that allow towns / destinations to capitalize so heavily on the use of food as an attraction. Therefore, this trend will hit on the consumers perspective of food and their nutritional understanding of their preferences. The first of these findings claims that “consumers’ attitude and opinion about the nutritional characteristics, safety, trademark, or price of the product... affect acceptance” by tourists and those within the community (Hiamey, Amenumey, & Mensah, 2021, p. 194). This gives a very basic description of some of the ways in which people perceive the food they want to consume. Leaning further into the concern for food culture characteristics, many have begun to view their “diets as a first line of defense in the prevention of various chronic diseases of aging, including cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis, arthritis and age-related macular degeneration.” (Hasler, 2000, p. 499-500). This emphasizes not only the specific concerns people have when it comes to their diets and the nutritional characteristics of their food, but the amount of thought that goes into food choice within each individual. This can then be applied to the findings that “health and food safety (Halkier, 2004) can be linked to an increased interest in food’s origin. This interest is conflated with nostalgic ideas that food of the past was ‘good and proper’ (Gilg and Battershill, 1998), or a desire to consume patriotically for ethnocentric reasons (Shimp and Sharma, 1987)” (Tellstrom, Gustafsson, & Mossberg, 2006, p. 131). This finding is crucial to the understanding of this analysis as it connects the importance of food culture or nutritional characteristics by

consumers to the “traditional food” that has been discussed in previous trends, and how they work together to turn towns into destinations through the revitalization process.

This connection can then be used to foster a transition into the last trend under discussion: the food related efforts used in the revitalization process such as farmers markets and local events. This can be expanded and further defined as “experiences with food (to) include the study of specific – and custom-designed – events to promote memorable food experiences... They also include farmers’ markets, community-based initiatives, and connections with other mediums such as cinema” (Figueiredo, Forte, & Eusébio, 2021, p. 634). This finding creates a base of understanding for the type of food related events that are found commonly throughout small towns that are working through the revitalization process. Further, food is used as an aide to destination creation as people enjoy trips to “areas abundant in gastronomic resources to build leisure experiences, including visits to food producers, markets, carnivals, projects, culinary workshops, meal tastings” and much more (Yuen, 2021, p. 243) . Again, food related events are used to bring people into an area and augment the revitalization process.

Combining these two findings, it is clear to see the connection between food related events and the revitalization process, in addition to the compilation of some of the most common events throughout communities. The success of these initial events then lead to the hiring of “a full-time program director who is responsible for coordinating... hosting and promoting downtown events (e.g., festivals and farmers’ markets)” (Van Leuven, 2021, p. 194). This final finding from the literature review not only emphasizes the extensive project that is downtown revitalization, and the large part that food / food related events play in the process, but also connects to the case study of Sidney Alive and an interview with its executive director.

*Methodology and Disciplinary Approaches*

The above literature review and the following case study work together in this analysis to evaluate the relationship between downtown revitalization of small towns and food as a means of destination creation. This will take shape using a qualitative approach to research with the inclusion of a case study following the revitalization work of a small Ohio town. Using a literature review of academic research papers accessed through the Bowling Green State University and the Google Scholar research databases, part of this analysis was completed. Additionally, the case study portion of the following analysis will also take a qualitative form but will be from a primary source. This research was conducted through an interview with Amy Breinich, the Executive Director of Sidney Alive, a non-profit downtown revitalization group located in Sidney, Ohio. Amy was chosen for this interview as she started Sidney Alive from the ground up, has been the acting executive director at the organization for six years, and has the most knowledge of the revitalization process happening in Sidney, Ohio. Combined, this research approach will allow for a better understanding of the relationship / impact of food as a destination and downtown revitalization.

Using the above methodology, this analysis will work through a multidisciplinary approach. There are three major disciplines in which the following research will target: nutrition, tourism, and urban renewal. First, a nutritional lens is used to evaluate the trends found in restaurants opening throughout the revitalization process, such as the types of foods they serve and the foods that aid the process. Second, tourism is used as an interdisciplinary lens to evaluate the creation of a destination through food and the revitalization process. Lastly, urban renewal is a disciplinary approach that will allow an evaluation of the downtown revitalization process in small towns in reference to the transformation that is seen through the building of community

infrastructure. These three disciplines will guide the following research and focus its findings. Though these are the most essential disciplines this paper will include, there are many more that are used in the completion of this analysis. These disciplines include hospitality, food science, marketing, economics, geography and planning. These disciplines will guide this analysis to highlight its purpose, which is to express the impacts and relationship between downtown revitalization and food as a destination in small towns.

### *Foodscape of Sidney, OH*

Before diving into the case study of Sidney Alive, it is important to establish the “foodscape” of Sidney, Ohio. This is essential because the term foodscape defines “the institutional arrangements, cultural spaces, and discourses that mediate... relationships with... food” within a destination or community (Mackendrick, 2014, p. 16). Expressing the foodscape of Sidney will lend reference to the types of food that are served at restaurants and events discussed throughout the case study in order to gain perspective of the community as a whole. With this, downtown Sidney is home to two classic American diners (The Spot and The Alcove), one pizza restaurant (Amelio’s Italian Pizza Restaurant), two upscale sit-down restaurants (Tavolo- Modern Italian and The Bridge), two sports bars (KB’s Tap House and Murphy’s Craftbar & Kitchen), one coffee shop (Greenhaus Coffee), and one juice bar (Spot On Nutrition). Of these restaurants mentioned, The Spot is arguably the most significant food-based business in downtown Sidney. They are popular for their classic American diner food such as hamburgers, chicken tenders, tenderloin, and most importantly... pies! More specifically, the old fashioned creme and strawberry pies; for these, the website even claims that “you can taste the difference” (*History*, n.d., <http://thespottoeat.com/history/>). This is emphasized by the various number of presidents that have stopped by The Spot for a bite to eat; not to mention the frequent visits by

actor Rob Lowe whose grandparents used to own the historic restaurant (“*History*”, n.d., <http://thespottoeat.com/history/>). To finish this understanding of Sidney’s foodscape, it is important to mention the farmer’s market that attracts many visitors to the downtown area. The farmer’s market highlights and sells local produce, mostly garden vegetables and some baked goods such as breads, doughnuts, cinnamon rolls, and assorted pastries. These items are all locally produced and sold by community members. Combining all of these significant elements of the downtown Sidney foodscape allows for a better understanding of the community in which this analysis will examine the relationship between food and the revitalization process.

#### *Case Study: Sidney Alive*

Sidney is a very small town located in SouthWest Ohio, commonly mistaken for the very large city in Australia. However, this only happens when spoken; when written or visited the two destinations do not quite look the same, yet they are both a destination in their own right! Sidney, Ohio, just as Sydney, Australia, has its own distinguishing factors that make it unique, intriguing, and well... a destination! One of these factors is the non-profit downtown revitalization organization, Sidney Alive. According to their mission statement, “it is the mission of Sidney Alive to strengthen the core of our downtown culture by fostering economic development, historic preservation and community events that engage the public through the entrepreneurial spirit of our residents and businesses” (Sidney Alive, n.d., <https://sidneyalive.wpcomstaging.com>). With this, the small team at Sidney Alive, led by executive director Amy Breinich, works to revitalize the downtown area in Sidney. For the purposes of this study, an interview with Amy has been conducted to work as a case study to analyze the work of Sidney Alive, their progress, and provide a first-hand look at the revitalization process. This interview is included

below only as questions and answers, where the analysis of the interview and its connections to the original literature review will be included in the results section of the study.

The first question asked: What is the mission of Sidney Alive? To this, Amy responded with her own understanding, and not the one previously quoted from the organization's mission statement. With this, she said their mission is "To connect the people who live here, who work here, with the community... to create a place where people feel like they belong". She then went on to say that "the downtown is the living room of the community" as she attempted to emphasize the goal of creating a place where people feel welcome to spend time.

The second question asked: How do you believe Sidney Alive is turning Sidney into a "Food Tourism Destination"? She then responded in agreement with the idea that Sidney is turning into a food destination based on the work of Sidney Alive. She does this by saying they are "marketing it as a place to be and to eat". She then expands into a goal where Sidney can be referred to as "a destination to find something for everybody".

The third question asked: What do you believe has been the role of the Farmer's Market in the Revitalization of Sidney? She then responded, saying that "It was the first large-scale event that drew people in... (it made) restaurants re-think regionally grown food. The Spot now buys their rhubarb from the Farmers Market!". "The Spot" mentioned here is a classic American diner that is one of Sidney's biggest attractions. It has stood in the same spot since 1907, was formerly owned by Robert Hepler, Rob Lowe's grandfather (and is often frequented by the famous actor) and has been visited by various United States Presidents ("*History*", n.d., <http://thespottoeat.com/history/>). Amy then continues to discuss the role of the farmers market in its ability to show off the "things that are locally grown and crafted by people they (community members) may know". She goes on to say that the farmers market "draws people downtown and

they have to get out of their cars and walk around; it makes real connections with the people and businesses in the downtown area”.

The fourth question asked: In my research, I have found that “taste and traditional food with historical connections” are key components to successful food tourism (Figueiredo, Forte, & Eusébio, 2021, p. 634). How do you believe this relates to Sidney Alive? Amy then explained that “It creates an immersive experience: the traditional food brings connections to the community. It connects stories...The Spot is a destination unto itself having been open and running for 115 years. It creates connections to Rob Lowe, Amelio’s uses the Gelardi family’s original recipes, and Tavolo’s also uses traditional family recipes”. The two restaurants, Amelio’s and Tavolo that she mentions, have both opened in the downtown area within the last five years. She then went on to mention that there are “hops grown on a local farm that is then turned into beer sold downtown... (this is) creating connections between real people and people they know”.

The fifth question asked: What event do you believe has the biggest effect on the success of your mission at Sidney Alive? For this question, she quickly responded with “the Farmer’s Market”. This was elaborated by the idea that food-based events “create an experience, more than just food”. This then led into a discussion about some of the other successful food-based events that Sidney Alive has produced like “The Music and Arts Festival which included a DORA (designated outdoor refreshment area) and food trucks. The open-air dinner with a locally sourced farm to table dinner, catered by the Spot and held in community park, and decor by a local company. The Murder Mystery Party had food matching the theme, and our annual Chocolate Walk”.



The sixth question asked: What makes Sidney unique? She took a pause before answering this question as she expressed it was something hard to articulate. She then said “The People. It is different because of who we are.” She then went on to explain that “We are just a little bit different than everyone else with our drive, our entrepreneurship, and our work ethic”.

The seventh question asked: What are the biggest challenges facing Sidney Alive? The almost immediate response to this question was “funding”. She then goes on to explain that “being a non-profit that is not human services, Arts, or Religious based it is hard to gain funding”. Further, she explains how she is able to combat funding issues and bring attention to the community by “making an impact and changing the perspectives and outlook of people who have always lived in Sidney and having the ability to view things with an outsider standpoint. We take for granted the area, not realizing that Sidney has things to be excited about that are also historically significant”.

The eighth question asked: If you could describe the “foodscape” of downtown Sidney in just a few words, how would you describe it? Her response to this question should be familiar following the literature analysis with her answer being: “local”. She then goes on to say that it “caters to our demographic...Something for Everyone”.

The ninth question asked: Do you feel that Sidney Alive focuses more on the residents of Sidney or the visitors? To this, she responded with “Both... because our industries are growing so much, visitors are becoming residents”. This was then elaborated into the idea that “factory employees are more likely to switch to a job in Troy if they are living in Troy instead of Sidney because when they visited it did not appeal to them”. Troy is a town frequently compared to Sidney as it is only 20 miles south of Sidney. With this, she then touches on the focus Sidney

Alive gives to residents by “keeping current members of the community happy and excited to be living in (the) community”.

The tenth question asked: Has a lack of local participation been a challenge for Sidney Alive? Is it still? How have you overcome it? She gave a very thorough response to this answer saying that it was “in the beginning, but we had to cater to what ‘needed’ to be done...A “cookie-cutter” solution does not work”. She then expressed how this changed over time, saying that “as soon as people started to talk, participation started to increase”. She even went as far as to explain some of the key components that helped bring about success as she expressed how “support makes it easier, especially from the manufacturing companies in town. When they realize that their employees will be more reliable, willing, and happy to work when they live in a community that they are happy with, they are very willing to lend support”.

The eleventh question asked: How do you measure the relative success of Sidney Alive? She replied, saying that “After 5 years, you can check and compare attendance and ‘talk’... if these two things are not improving, move on”. She then proceeded to advise on some things she has learned to help with success and how it can be measured: “focus almost entirely on marketing the first few years. There may be low attendance, but you want to get people talking...be consistent without it tearing you down”.

The twelfth, and final, question asked: In one word, what emotional relationship do you want people to have with Sidney? To this, Amy gave a very immediate response as if it were an easy question. She said, “Pride”. She then expands on this, saying “if you don’t take pride in where you live, why are you here, or what are you doing to change it?”. This was a perfect way to sum up this interview as it expresses the passion Amy, and the Sidney Alive team, has for the community in which they work and the overall project that is the revitalization process!

## Results

After analysis, there are many conclusions found to create a better understanding of the connection between downtown revitalization and food as a means of destination creation. The results of this study will focus on the connections that can be drawn between the trends found through the literature review and the findings from the Sidney Alive case study. With this, the first finding to connect the two forms of analysis, and therefore discussed as a result, is that there is an evident connection between downtown revitalization and food. This idea was found to be a trend in the literature review and then confirmed later by Amy when discussing questions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8. Through the responses of these questions, she discusses Sidney Alive turning Sidney into a food destination, food related events like the Farmers Market, and the effects of traditional food / historical significances on downtown revitalization. Combining these responses with the trend found in the literature review, there is a connection between food and the downtown revitalization process.

Further, a second result from this study is the found importance of uniqueness to a successful revitalization process. This is seen through a trend in the above literature review that highlights the idea that “every city has assets and the ability to achieve excellence in its own way” (Greenberg, 2006, p. 6). Amy then confirms this claim in questions six and eight of her interview. In her response, she elaborates on the people of Sidney and why they make the small town unique. Even further, she goes on to discuss that through this unique aspect, Sidney Alive is able to thrive and be successful in its revitalization goals. Therefore, the trend found in the literature review is justified by the findings of the case study and is now considered a found result of this analysis.

Touching back on the first result discussed in this section, the apparent connection between food and downtown revitalization, it is found that there is a more specific connection between traditional foods and the revitalization process. This is presented in the literature review after defining what is “traditional / local” foods for the purposes of this study. There was then a trend found in the literature review that connects traditional / local foods to the revitalization process. Again, this is confirmed through the Sidney, Ohio case study in the response to question four above. The discussion of connections to traditional foods and historical significances playing a large role in creating experiences for people who live in and visit the community, solidifies the truth behind this trend, creating the third result from this study.

The fourth result to be discussed from this study is that food related events aid the downtown revitalization process. This is found as a trend in the literature review as a discussion of the “events to promote memorable food experiences... (that) include farmers’ markets, community-based initiatives” and other food related events (Figueiredo, Forte, & Eusébio, 2021, p. 634). This trend of impact is confirmed by Amy, as she discussed the role of the Farmer’s Market to the revitalization process as well as community building. She not only touches on the Farmers Market, but other food related events as well. She does this through questions three and five of the case study interview, justifying the result that food related events have an impact on the downtown revitalization process.

#### *Implications for Further Study*

For further study of this topic, there are many ways in which the discussed understandings can be expanded. With this, much of the literature reviewed included topics based in different countries from around the world. Therefore, the connections between food as a means of destination creation and the downtown revitalization process could easily be expanded

into an international study. Future studies could also expand this topic to analyze the impacts that different types of food make on the revitalization process. This study discusses the impact of traditional / local foods on revitalization, but future studies could take multiple food types and compare their impact on the process. With this, a last implication for further study would be to use a similar methodological approach to this study and apply it to a large city. The revitalization process and its connection to food could then be compared between large cities and small towns.

### *Conclusion*

After analysis, discussion, and review, it is clear to say that there is a connection between food and the downtown revitalization of small towns in the United States. This study addresses the questions concerning the revitalization process, how to measure the success of revitalization, and how food turns a town into a destination. Trends found from a review of literature on the topic and the Sidney, Ohio case study are connected to create solid results for a better understanding of these questions. The impacts and connections are clear and justified throughout this analysis, with the results presented above. Therefore, the downtown revitalization process of small towns in the United States inherently relies on food for success, and Sidney, Ohio is just one success story of this conclusion.

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