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Planning for Decline in Canadian Cities:
Lessons from Youngstown, Ohio and Leinefelde, Germany

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Abstract

While urban shrinkage has garnered significant international attention, especially in the US Rust Belt and the former East Germany, it has received little attention in Canada by both planners and scholars. This report provides a Canadian context for the debate on planning for shrinking cities by discussing the global and Canadian processes of shrinkage, determining the main factors behind such trends and providing an overview of how different municipalities around the world have responded to this phenomenon.

It is now more important than ever for Canadian planners to understand how to plan for a city that is no longer growing and is, in fact, getting smaller. This report looks to US and German models of decline management to see what lessons Canadian planners can learn from foreign experiences. Youngstown, Ohio and Leinefelde, Germany are good examples of how to plan for shrinkage and offer valuable lessons for Canadian planners. In both cases, officials recognized their cities were growing smaller, interpreted this trend as an opportunity, not a burden, and took action to create relevant plans that would help improve the quality of life for their reduced city population.

Alors que le rétrécissement urbain bénéficie d'une attention internationale significative, particulièrement dans la région "Rust Belt" des USA et dans l'ex-Allemagne de l'Est, elle a reçu peu d'attention au Canada de la part des urbanistes et des chercheurs. Ce rapport fournit un contexte canadien au débat sur le planification de les villes en croissance négative en parlant des processus globaux et canadiens du rétrécissement urbain, en identifiant les facteurs principaux derrière cette tendance et en fournissant une vue d'ensemble de la façon dont différentes municipalités autour du monde ont répondu à ce phénomène.

Il est maintenant plus important que jamais que les urbanistes canadiens comprennent comment planifier une ville qui ne se développe plus et qui, en fait, devient plus petite. Ce rapport passe en revue des modèles de gestion de déclin urbain aux États-Unis et en Allemagne pour voir quelles leçons les urbanistes canadiens peuvent tirer d'expériences étrangères. Youngstown, en Ohio, et Leinefelde, en Allemagne, sont de bons exemples de planification du rétrécissement urbain et offrent des leçons utiles aux urbanistes canadiens. Dans les deux cas, les autorités ont accepté la perte de population et d'activité, ont interprété cette tendance comme une occasion, pas un fardeau, et ont pris les dispositions nécessaires pour créer des plans appropriés qui aideraient à améliorer la qualité de vie d'une population plus réduite.

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1.0   Introduction

1.1 The Issue

It is estimated that at the turn of the 21st century, one in every four large cities in the world was shrinking (Rieniets, 2005). Many 'classic' factors played a role in this demographic reality, including war, famines, shifting trading patterns and natural disasters, all of which have been devastating or harming cities for centuries. Yet just as relevant in today's western world are newer transformative processes that have only started to occur within the last half century or so, including deindustrialization, suburbanization and ageing of the population. Cities such as Detroit, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Cleveland are large US Rust Belt cities often associated with decline. European examples include Manchester and Liverpool in England, Dresden and Leipzig in Germany, and numerous eastern European cities that were once under the umbrella of the Soviet Union. Add to this a host of Japanese cities struggling with rapidly ageing populations and the list of shrinking cities becomes quite substantial.

For the most part, Canadian cities have not experienced the same decline as their counterparts in other western nations, especially those found in the US Rust Belt and the former East Germany. Take Ontario as an example. Its manufacturing sector has managed to avoid the collapse that impacted numerous communities in America's northeast decades ago and its cities, for the most part, have grown larger while those in the Rust Belt have grown smaller. However, Ontario's natural resources sector has been hit especially hard in the last few years and recent job reports are hinting that gloomier days are here for Ontario's manufacturers (Van Alphen, 2008). Statistics released in early December 2008 stated that Ontario shed some

42,000 manufacturing jobs in the month of November alone, and lost a total of 66,000 jobs across all sectors of activity (Beltrame, 2008). With announcements of plant closures continuing unabated, international demand for Ontario's natural resources dipping, and economic reports stating the province will continue to see a permanent exodus of manufacturing jobs (Acharya & Yew, 2008; CBC News, 2005; Greenwood, 2008; Powell, 2009; Van Alphen, 2008), the worst may be yet to come.

From a planning perspective, it is important to know what tools can be used to help communities impacted by job and population losses, whether because of short-term economic cycles, or because of long-term structural changes. After decades of unprecedented economic expansion in many parts of the country, planning systems throughout the nation, like that of many other western jurisdictions, are largely centred on the concept of growth, resulting in a low capacity among planners for decline management planning. In the summer 2007 edition of *Plan Canada*[1], Senior Editor Mark Seasons declared that planning implications of population and economic decline had become the "policy elephant in the living room" that no one was talking about (2007, p. 6). But Canada is not alone in this regard.

In spite of the fact that a quarter of the world's large cities are shrinking, information on planning for decline is surprisingly hard to come by. Planning discourse on the subject is still in its academic infancy, although it has garnered more attention in Europe than in North America in recent years. Begun in 2002, the *Shrinking Cities Project* was the first comprehensive study of global shrinking cities. The project, funded by Germany's Federal Cultural Foundation, was an

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[1] The Summer 2007 edition was titled "Planning for Uneven Growth/L'urbanisme dans un context de croissance inégale," and has been the only volume of the magazine dedicated solely to planning for decline in the Canadian context.

attempt to expand the German debate on shrinking cities through international research and reviews of best practices for decline management around the world. The goal was to find effective ways to deal with the dramatic population losses in the former East Germany (Shrinking Cities Project, 2008). The *Shrinking Cities Project*, which now consists of a two-volume publication and multiple international exhibitions and conferences, remains the most comprehensive resource on the topic. However, planners played a minor role in this project dominated by architects, artists and activists (Hollander, Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009).

More recently, the Shrinking Cities International Research Network (SCiRN), a worldwide research consortium of scholars and experts pursuing research on shrinking cities, has helped to expand the small body of planning literature on the topic. Founded in 2004 in Berkeley, California, the consortium's mission is to "advance international understanding and promote scholarship about population decrease in urban regions and urban decline, causes, manifestations, spatial variations, and effectiveness of policies and planning interventions to stave off decline" (Shrinking Cities International Research Network, 2009).

For the most part, Canada and its planners have played a marginal role in the shrinking cities debate. While some scholars have focused on declining peripheral regions and resource-based towns in this country, *urban* shrinkage in Canada has received little attention from scholars, who have instead focused on Europe, the United States and Japan. This study hopes to bridge that gap by including Canada in the international discourse on shrinking cities.

The demographic and economic realities facing many Canadian communities may require planning policies that do not fit neatly into growth planning. The ultimate question at hand is

not one of doom-and-gloom scenarios, but one of policy relevance. Businesses do not hire more employees in order to downsize, nor do most empty-nesters choose to move into a larger house once the kids have moved out and personal savings are running low. In a similar vein, in order for planning policies to be relevant, they must adequately respond to the realities of economic and demographic changes that are taking place. That means planners at all levels need to be knowledgeable in how to plan for shrinking cities, just like they have been expected to be knowledgeable in planning for growing cities during years of prosperity. The more Canada is included in international comparative research, the easier it will be to build planning capacity for decline management at home and assess the effectiveness of policy responses to shrinkage.

1.2 Methodology

So what are the advantages and disadvantages of planning for shrinkage and what lessons can Canadian planners learn from international examples of decline management? In order to answer these questions a two-pronged strategy will be used, including an extensive literature review and an in-depth analysis of two case studies. The literature review will allow for a better understanding of the main topics and themes that have dominated the shrinkage discourse, and provide a general overview of the main strategies planners around the world have been implementing to deal with shrinkage. The case studies will provide an opportunity to place some of the strategies discussed in the literature review into a local context to see what factors helped planners achieve success, what worked and didn't work, and what practices, if any, can be transferred to the Canadian context to better prepare planners here to deal with urban decline.

The literature review, comprised of four main themes, is the first section of this report and consists primarily of secondary sources written by academics and journalists. The section begins with a discussion of the patterns and processes of shrinking cities around the world before continuing with a discussion on the impacts shrinkage has had on cities. Focus is placed on the European and American contexts, before it shifts to shrinking cities in Canada. This is followed by an analysis of the debate on the 'growth imperative,' which has emerged as one of the dominant topics in the academic debate on shrinkage. Finally, this section concludes with an overview of municipal planning techniques used to manage the effects of such decline. Here it is important to note that the focus of this study is local or municipal-level policies and plans, although the local implications of state- and national-level policies and plans will be discussed in some detail where appropriate.

The second section includes two case studies. Both case studies involved an in-depth analysis of secondary sources from academics and journalists and, more importantly, a review of primary planning documents produced by each of the two municipalities, including land-use plans and master plans. By using the case study approach, planning for decline can be placed in a real-life, political context to see what approaches worked and did not work. The goal is not to derive a detailed list of policies that Canadian planners should implement, but rather to come up with a general set of practical lessons that will be useful for Canadian planners to know, including what to expect when planning for decline and what factors can help or hinder success.

The first case study focuses on the American city of Youngstown, Ohio and the second on the German city of Leinfelde, Thuringia. These two cities have been chosen as case studies for a

number of reasons. First and foremost is the fact that they are two of the most frequently cited examples of cities that are planning for decline, which provides an adequate body of literature from which to draw analysis and conclusions. Second, but related to the first point, is that these two cities are considered 'pioneers' of decline management in their respective countries, which means policies have been in place long enough to analyze how effective they have been. Third, both Youngstown and Leinefelde are rare examples of cities whose *master plans* are defined by shrinkage. Many cities, knowingly or not, are practicing a multitude of decline management strategies, albeit on a somewhat piecemeal basis. These two examples, however, have moved beyond fragmented policies and have allowed shrinkage to play a lead role in their planning processes. Fourth, the size of the two sample cities (Youngstown has approximately 80,000 and Leinefelde has approximately 15,000) is similar to the size of many Canadian communities facing stagnating or declining populations, which tend to have populations of 100,000 or less. Finally, the location of both of these cities in federal states allows for a comparison of the impacts of national and state-level policies on local planning. By analyzing cities in similar political jurisdictions, in which municipalities are given responsibility for local planning through state-level legislation and depend on programs and funding from the state and federal governments, it is possible to determine what 'best practices' could be transferred to the Canadian context. Each case study concludes with an analysis of the lessons that could help planners in Canada come up with effective planning responses to mitigate the impacts of urban shrinkage, or at least better prepare them to do so.

Before proceeding, it is important to establish a consistent definition of *shrinkage* for this paper. In her review of academic literature on the subject, Pallagst concludes that "there is no

clear definition of shrinking cities, but rather a range of various interpretations of the phenomenon," including shrinkage as a natural growth-opposing process, as decline with negative implications, and as a cyclical process embedded in a larger context of growing and shrinking (2008, p. 7).

While there is no doubt that population change has been the dominant indicator used to define shrinkage (Bradbury, Downs, & Small, 1982; Downs, 1994; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Muller, 1975), Benke (2004) notes that shrinkage cannot be understood as a purely demographic process, but rather as a multifaceted process of change that contains economic, social and cultural elements.

In this spirit, the aforementioned SCiRN consortium defines a shrinking city as "a densely populated urban area with a minimum population of 10,000 residents that has faced population losses in large parts for more than two years and is undergoing economic transformations with some symptoms of a structural crisis" (Quoted in Pallagst, 2008, p. 7). While this definition lacks quantitative precision beyond the mention of a minimum threshold of 10,000 residents, it is nonetheless the most consistent working definition within the literature on the topic. The terms "economic transformations" and "structural crisis" are vague enough to allow for a variety of understandings depending on where such transformations are occurring. Its focus on "densely populated urban areas" allows for a distinction between the shrinkage occurring in urban areas and that occurring in rural and smaller peripheral communities, which has a separate body of literature and which will be discussed in further detail later in this paper. The definition also specifically includes "population losses," which

distinguishes the process of urban shrinkage from the processes of slow growth or stagnation, two terms which Leo & Wilson (2000) and Leo & Anderson (2006) lament are often conflated with decline, even though they are separate processes that require unique policy responses.

It is also important to note that the expressions *shrinkage* and *decline* will be used interchangeably in this paper, unless explicitly stated otherwise. *Decline* is also a common expression in research related to inner-city decay and neighbourhood decline. While some argue that the two expressions should not be conflated in order to spare *shrinkage* from the negative connotations associated with *decline* (Hollander, Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009), for the purposes of this paper, *decline* is to be understood in the same light as *shrinkage*, as defined above, and not as a synonym for *urban decay*.

Finally, much of the research consulted for this study was written in German. For the purpose of reader comprehension, all German quotes have been translated into English by the author of this report.

2.0 The Shrinkage Discourse

2.1 Processes of Shrinkage

Shrinking cities are by no means a recent phenomenon. For centuries, well before the onset of globalization, cities around the globe expanded to accommodate growing populations only to have their populations peak and begin a process of either rapid or slow decline. Some of today's cities that enjoy a high standard of living, including Boston, Glasgow and Vienna, are in fact smaller cities now than what they were at the time of reaching their population peak, an indication that decline does not inevitably lead to the final demise of a city.

As Benke (2004) points out, the predominant historical causes of shrinkage have been wars, famines, fires, shifting economies and trading patterns, as well as poor sanitation. Most of these processes contributed to the loss of a large segment of a city's population and/or left its physical and economic structures in shambles. Think of the devastation brought to Rome by the collapse of the Roman Empire or to London by its Great Plague and Great Fire in the 1660s. Venice began its decline in the 15th Century as trading routes to the New World opened up, undermining its strategic position as an international trading centre. More recently, large segments of Berlin and other German cities were devastated during World War II.

While traditional factors of shrinkage, such as conflict and natural disasters, continue to play a role in reducing some of the world's modern cities (Baghdad and New Orleans are two examples that come to mind), the causes of modern shrinkage are much more complex (Rieniets, 2005). Unlike 'classic' factors, with the exception of economic shifts, the leading causes of urban shrinkage in the last half of the twentieth century are longer processes, rather

than a dramatic single event, and have not necessarily occurred through external and violent events, but during times of peace and prosperity (Rieniets, 2005).

2.1.1 Modern Global Shrinkage

Many argue that shrinkage in its modern-day form has been, for the most part, a problem for the world's leading industrialized nations, including Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan and the United States (Oswalt & Rieniets, 2007; Pallagst, 2008; Prigge, 2005; Rieniets, 2005; Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999). Economic transformations, political restructuring, suburbanization, out-migration and ageing of the population stand out as the main causes.

The process of urban decline in Europe began with the continent's leading industrial cities. London, Manchester, Paris and Leipzig, all poster cities of the industrial revolution, began to see their overall populations decline even before the industrial revolution came to a close (Rieniets, 2005). Eastern Germany became the epicentre of European shrinkage when the Iron Curtain divided the continent in two along the River Elbe. In the 40-year period between 1949 and 1989, the country lost upwards of two million residents (Benke, 2004), which left many of its cities a fraction of the size.

Shrinkage started somewhat later in the United States than in Europe. With a manufacturing economy emerging relatively unscathed from the Second World War, the United States' industrial heartland thrived. But as Europe and Japan rebuilt themselves, the once dominant manufacturing cities located in the country's north-eastern states suddenly faced increasing international competition. This, coupled with the collapse of the steel industry, the expansion of car, truck and air travel, the evolution of modern telecommunications and the rise of the

American Dream in the form of suburban expansion, left many American central cities with a significantly smaller population than they once had (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999). By 1960, 38 of America's large cities, including Chicago, Detroit and Philadelphia, were shrinking (Rieniets, 2005). The largest beneficiary of central city decline was the suburb. This resulted in a growth pattern that saw metropolitan regions grow overall, but mostly at the expense of industrial central cities.

Shrinkage reached its peak during the 1970s and 1980s. During this time, the number of shrinking cities around the world grew by more than 100 percent, while the number of growing cities increased by less than two-thirds of that rate (Rieniets, 2005).

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the situation for shrinking cities seemed to have stabilized somewhat. However, the euphoria that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the collapse of the Soviet Union two years later, was quickly replaced by despair as uncompetitive state-run factories lurched into a post-socialist economy. Massive job losses and a new freedom of movement for citizens of the former socialist regimes resulted in large-scale migrations to the larger population centres and capitals in the east and, more noticeably, in the west, which drained the populations of many mid-sized eastern and central European cities (Hollander, Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009).

While many of Europe's shrinking cities are concentrated in the countries of the former Soviet states, they can be found in most areas of the continent. Pallagst (2008) points not only to the post-socialist countries of Latvia, Romania, and the eastern part of Germany as prime locations for shrinking cities, but also to Scandinavia, Italy and Spain. Add to this the rapid ageing of

populations throughout Europe, and shrinkage has fast become more of a rule than an exception there. Between 1996 and 2001, more than half (57%) of 220 large- and medium-sized cities in the European Union (EU) lost population, including twenty-two in Germany, nineteen in Italy, eleven in the UK and five in Spain (Wiechmann, 2008). The situation in the United States today is much the same.

Although cities such as Buffalo, St. Louis and Cleveland are still reeling from decades of steady population decline, shrinkage in the United States is no longer just a "Rust Belt saga" in which dramatic population displacement was brought on by the collapse of the steel industry and exodus of blue collar jobs (Schilling, 2008, p. 33). The aforementioned hollowing out of the inner city as a result of population and job losses to the suburbs is not the only pattern of shrinkage taking place in the United States (Hollander, Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009). The dot.com bust of the 1990s carried shrinkage across the United States to the west coast, hitting California's Silicon Valley especially hard (Pallagst, 2008). In recent years, thanks to the foreclosure crisis, shrinkage has taken on another form. It is no longer just an urban phenomenon, but is now also an issue facing many suburban communities dealing with population decline, ageing and abandoned housing, underused commercial sites, and deteriorating infrastructure (Dubner, 2008; Gecan, 2008; Schilling, 2008).

2.1.2 Shrinking Cities in Canada

According to the 2006 Canadian Census, 36 Canadian cities with populations of at least 10,000 had shrunk since 2001 (Simmons & Bourne, 2007). This simple statistic seems to indicate that Canada is also grappling with the same phenomenon of decline as the United States and Europe. But patterns of shrinkage in this country are much different than those found south of

the border and on the other side of the Atlantic. For the most part, shrinkage in Canada has typically occurred in smaller cities than in the United States, and the rate of decline has been much slower (Simmons & Bourne, 2007). Table 1 below offers a cursory comparison of shrinking cities in Canada and the United States over the course of the last 15-20 years.

Table 1: Population Decline in Shrinking Cities in Canada and the United States

City	Population			% Change
	ca Today	ca 2000	ca 1990	
Youngstown, OH	72,925	82,026	95,787	-23.9
Prince Rupert, BC	12,815	14,643	16,620	-22.9
Buffalo, NY	276,059	292,648	328,123	-15.9
Baltimore, MD	637,455	651,154	736,014	-13.4
Detroit, MI	912,062	951,270	1,027,974	-11.3
Huntington, WV	49,185	51,475	54,844	-10.3
Saint John, NB	68,043	69,661	74,969	-9.2
Sudbury, ON	n/a*	85,354	92,884	-8.1
Thunder Bay, ON	109,140	109,016	113,946	-4.2
Saint John's, NL	100,646	99,182	104,659	-3.8
*2006 Census data is only available for the amalgamated Greater Sudbury, which had a population of 157,857 and a growth rate of 1.5%.				

Source: Statistics Canada, 1991, 2001, 2006 Census;
US Census Bureau, 1990, 2000 Census & Annual Estimates of Residential Populations (2008)

Research on shrinkage in Canada has, for the most part, followed a pattern similar to that found in Australia (Forth, 2000; Hugo, 2000; Polèse & Shearmur, 2006), dominated by a discussion of *core-periphery* relationships.

Rather than focusing on shrinking cities, researchers have focused on demographic patterns in Canada's peripheral regions (Polèse & Shearmur, 2006; Popper & Popper, 1987; Slack, Bourne, & Gertler, 2003), where the processes of sustained population decline first emerged. Regions such as Northern Ontario and the more isolated regions of Atlantic Canada, Quebec,

Saskatchewan and northern British Columbia have been the epicentres of Canadian decline (Simmons & Bourne, 2007).

In a study of five peripheral regions in Eastern Canada, Polèse and Shearmur (2006) argue that many peripheral communities are entering a period of sustained employment and population decline. They point to the fact that the spatial distribution of employment opportunities favours major urban areas, such as the Greater Toronto Area. Since populations tend to follow employment opportunities, peripheral communities will continue to lose people and jobs to major centres, and there is little that public policy can do to alter this reality. This increased degree of uneven growth will, according to Bourne and Simmons, form the 'new fault lines' of Canadian society (2003). This was the rationale used by Popper & Popper (1987) when, in their landmark article *The Great Plains: From Dust to Dust*, they argued that the vast Great Plains region, including its northern limits that stretch into the Canadian Prairies, were poorly suited for agriculture and that the region was bound to a dismal future of continued impoverishment and depopulation. Their solution was "to restore large parts of the Plains to their pre-white condition, to make them again the commons the settlers found in the nineteenth century" (1987, n.p.).

However, to say that Canada's smaller, peripheral communities are shrinking and its cities are growing is an oversimplification of the complex processes of decline occurring in Canada. Many of the country's *urban* areas are shrinking as well. Polèse and Shearmur (2006) point out that a majority of Canada's urban areas with populations less than 250,000 actually shrank between the 1996 and 2001 censuses.

The *urban* element of Canadian shrinkage tends to get lost in the discourse about peripheral decline, with its focus on smaller and more rural settlements. Cities such as Thunder Bay and Sudbury, both urban centres of more than 100,000 people, have not received as much academic attention as shrinking regions such as Saguenay, Quebec and Northern Ontario, even though their populations have also been declining. Thunder Bay, as an example, had a six percent decline in overall employment during the 1990s and experienced a net loss of 4,500 people between 1996 and 2001 (Randall & Lorch, 2007). Other Canadian urban centres that have grappled with decline include Saint John, New Brunswick, Saint John's, Newfoundland and Prince Rupert, British Columbia (see Table 1 below).

Some argue that Canada may be on the cusp of a new phase of economic and population change in which more and more communities, both small and large, will begin to experience continuous decline (Shearmur & Polèse, 2007; Simmons & Bourne, 2007). It is beyond the scope of this paper to predict how, when, where and to what extent processes of shrinkage could occur in Canada in the future. Such predictions will be left to the economists and demographers. But existing research shows that shrinkage is *already* occurring in many urban parts of the country and the recent economic reports mentioned earlier show that there is potential for an intensification of the shrinkage process in the future. The transition to a knowledge-based economy and the weakened state of the country's natural resource and manufacturing sectors could result in further employment losses for many communities. Ageing of the population and a lack of employment opportunities could result in dwindling populations as well. While major centres such as Toronto might be better positioned to stave off processes of decline thanks to their diversified economies and their ability to attract newcomers, Thunder

Bay and Sudbury, two of Ontario's shrinking urban centres, could very well be joined by the likes of Sarnia, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, and Windsor, all of which rely more heavily upon the manufacturing sector.

2.2 Impacts of Shrinkage

Many urban centres, especially those in the United States, struggle to deal with the impacts of population and economic losses. The most notable by-product of these losses is an abundance of abandoned and vacant properties, including contaminated brownfields belonging to former industrial and commercial businesses, and abandoned and foreclosed residential and commercial properties.

In many cases, these idle properties no longer contribute to municipal coffers and reduce the city's property tax base. Infrastructure becomes underutilized when streets and sewers that once serviced robust residential neighbourhoods now serve half-vacant communities. Remaining residents have to pay more per capita for municipal services, which encourages a further exodus of residents to "cheaper" surrounding communities (Rybczynski, 1995). The combination of dwindling tax bases and increased social service needs stretches many municipal budgets to the brink (Glaeser & Gyourko, 2005).

In addition to contributing less to municipal coffers, vacant properties can also act as a major drain on a city's budget because of the costs associated with nuisance reports, inspections, property maintenance and even demolition. In pointing to Buffalo, New York as an example, Schilling (2008) estimates that each vacant property costs the Queen City anywhere between $12,000 to $20,000 over a five-year period – an annual cost of up to $4,000. The cost of such

properties becomes daunting if, according to Schilling (2006a), there are in fact at least 12,700 vacant properties in the city.

Vacant and abandoned properties also have psychological impacts on remaining residents, which can further contribute to decline. Gaps in the urban fabric appear, the vitality of neighbourhoods and commercial areas diminish and people start to believe that these areas are no longer desirable places to live or invest. This makes it harder to attract new investors and residents (Rybczynski & Linneman, How To Save Our Shrinking Cities, 1999), putting even more financial pressure on the public purse to revitalize decaying neighbourhoods. Vacant and abandoned properties also influence crime rates and become prime locations for an assortment of illegal activities (Accordino & Johnson, 2000; Popper & Popper, 2002; Rybczynski, 1995).

Unfortunately, because of the negative associations with the concept of shrinkage, many municipal policy makers and politicians have been reluctant to implement policies that are relevant to shrinkage, and have focused instead on growth-oriented policies.

2.3 Breaking the Growth Imperative

Urban policy has been dominated by the desire to attract and retain both jobs and people (Leo & Wilson, 2000; Logan & Molotch, 2007; Lorimer, 1972; Swanstrom, 1985). In recent years, however, our policy obsession with growth has come under increased scrutiny from a planning perspective.

According to social philosopher Walter Oswalt, growth is central to the western understanding of capitalism. Society's obsession with growth, which he terms the *growth imperative*, is a fundamental element of most political decision-making processes in today's capitalist system.

This obsession, as another author puts it, is centred on the belief that "the current economic system can only exist as long as it expands . . . If this growth does not occur, the whole system collapses" (Steglich, 2005, p. 686). Peterson (1981) also argues that growth dominates local political decision-making as part of a pre-ordained need to grow.

Philipp Oswalt, the lead author and curator of the aforementioned *Shrinking Cities* project and the current director of the Bauhaus Dessau Foundation, argues that city planning has almost exclusively dealt with the processes of growth, while ignoring the realities of shrinkage (2005, Introduction). Leo & Wilson argue that our attitudes toward urban growth "are unreasonable, obsessive, and often promote unwise political choices" that lead to damaging results for cities that are not experiencing rapid growth (2000, p. 198).

In an attempt to counter our cultural bias that growth is good and decline is bad, academics have started to question this growth-decline dichotomy. While a dwindling tax base, under-used infrastructure, reductions in home values and, ultimately, the loss of a city's self-worth brought on by shrinkage can be damaging, it is important to remember that growth, and especially rapid growth, can also impact a city negatively and that shrinkage can represent opportunity. The loss of agricultural land, overstretched social services, and costly expansion of infrastructure that never keeps up with population growth are three things Leo & Anderson (2006) point to as negative sides of growth. Canadian municipalities have been complaining for years now that they do not have the financial wherewithal to provide the necessary services to their rapidly-expanding population bases (Mirza, 2007). On the other side of the border, the organization called CEOs for Cities points out that population growth does not necessarily

equate growth in wealth. While Bakersfield, California grew by 35 percent during the course of the last decade, its per capita income dropped seven percent. Las Vegas, the nation's number one city for population growth, ranked a mere 38th in income growth over the last decade (Weissbourd & Berry, 2003).

Schwartz takes a cautious, yet optimistic, approach when analyzing the situation of Cleveland, Ohio, by arguing that the city's expanding inventory of vacant land and buildings "pose a daunting challenge, but also an unprecedented opportunity . . . in which we can transform Cleveland into a more dynamic, ecologically sound, and liveable place" (2008, p.73). Understanding shrinkage as an opportunity, and not just as a negative trend, is the first step to creating relevant policy responses. The vacant and abandoned lots created by shrinkage can be an opportunity to provide new amenities and green space for local residents. Shrinkage can also improve the affordability of housing and may in some cases allow planning departments to catch their breath and refocus after years of scrambling to keep pace with rapid expansion. Vellucci argues that while it is "part of the American culture to think that growth is good and decline is bad, . . . [we as planners are] not managing growth. We're managing change" (2007). Oswalt believes that shrinkage should not just be understood as a negative trend. Eventually, he argues it "will lead – as growth did – to fundamental transformations that will bring about new guiding principles, models of action, and practices, ultimately resulting in a new orientation for society" (2005, p. 12-13).

To get rid of the growth-decline dichotomy that casts shrinkage in a negative light is the first step to creating relevant planning policies that will effectively address urban decline.

2.4   Planning Policy Responses to Shrinkage

Whether referred to as *creative shrinkage*, *smart decline* or *right-sizing*, planning policy responses to shrinkage have not been analyzed to any great extent in academic discourse. It seems that the media, more so than academia, has taken an interest in how cities are planning for shrinkage. Youngstown, Ohio was the first American jurisdiction to explicitly plan for a smaller population. Its *Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan*, to be explored in more detail in the next section, received widespread media coverage in the United States (Christie, 2008; El Nasser, 2006; Swope, 2006; Vellucci, 2007) and under the coinage "creative shrinkage," was named one of the top 74 most creative ideas in America in *The New York Times* 6th Annual Year in Ideas issue (Lanks, 2006). In contrast, academic scrutiny of Youngstown's plan is minimal.

As previously mentioned, what is missing in the academic discourse on planning responses to shrinkage is an evaluation and comparative analysis of the effectiveness of policies which different jurisdictions have implemented. Similar to the literature on vacant and abandoned buildings, existing research "is strong on recommendations but weak on evaluation, especially from programs currently operating," (Dewar, 2006, p. 167-8) in part because many of the implemented policies and programs are so new.

Popper (2002) believes that planning for shrinkage, or what he terms *smart decline*, starts with thinking about who and what remains, which may lead to a reorganization or elimination of certain municipal services, or promoting certain landmarks and land uses more for their historical value, rather than as sources of potential future growth. Schetke and Haase argue that planning for shrinkage requires a combination of extreme measures, such as restructuring,

deconstruction and demolition, as well as a variety of "more sensitive measures, such as the innovative reuse of abandoned land and brownfield re-development." (2008, p. 485)

Others believe that the role of traditional planning is limited in the face of shrinkage. Oswalt argues that the lack of market-driven development in shrinking cities will force planning departments to reorient themselves more around "weak planning" because "often cultural development, forms of communication, and the rise of social networks and processes shape urban development more than construction itself does" (2005, p. 16). While all of these authors present theories and models of planning for shrinkage, none of them offers detailed assessments of policies that have been implemented in different jurisdictions.

With that in mind, it is easy to understand why it is difficult to identify the best practices of planning policies for shrinkage. Dewar states that what is "now considered 'best' may eventually turn out to be not even 'good' when evaluations measure results" (2006, p. 168). It is with this note of caution in mind that this report looks at the policies and programs that have most often been referred to in the limited body of literature that exists on planning for shrinkage.

There are many types of policies that can be implemented to respond to the needs of a shrinking city. Economic development policies, in which local economies are reconfigured in order to capitalize on remaining local potentials, are perhaps some of the most important. Of specific interest here could be the policies associated with transition planning in smaller, single-industry and resource communities. Many small towns across the country have been devastated by the closure of local companies or the collapse of local industries, including

forestry, mining and fisheries. Examples of such communities can be found across the country, from Tumbler Ridge, BC to Eliot Lake, ON to Canso, NS. While much academic attention has been devoted to policies that can save these towns, the vast majority of scholars have focussed on economic development policies rather than on land-use planning policies (Barnes & Haytor, 1994; Conway, Corcoran & Tillson, 1996; Halseth, Sullivan & Ryser, 2002; Luther & Wall, 2000; Nozick, Vodden & Markey, 2000). This, combined with the fact that the majority of these communities do not fall within the definition of "shrinking city" as posited earlier in this paper, place these communities beyond the scope of this report. This is not to say that an analysis of these communities and the policies implmented to help their economic transitions would not produce findings that are relevant to the shrinking cities debate.

Immigration policies also play a crucial role in the fate of shrinking cities, as is evidenced in Japan where restrictive immigration policies have resulted in a population that is ageing at a faster rate than in Europe and North America. Fiscal and taxation policy are also important since tax rates may influence where businesses and residents choose to locate. All of these policy areas require adequate attention in the shrinking cities debate. However, for the purposes of this section, focus will be limited to planning policy responses. This is not to suggest that a single city planning department has the tools to address the problem of shrinking cities independently. Rather, this narrow perspective allows us to focus on a single question: what strategies have planners employed to effectively respond to shrinkage?

Unlike growth planning, which attempts to shape how market-driven development impacts the physical form of the city, planning for shrinkage must figure out how to deal with an abundance

of vacant and abandoned properties in the absence of strong development pressures. Not surprisingly, demolition is one of the most common planning responses to shrinkage, but it has also proven to be one of the most controversial. In a chapter devoted entirely to demolition, the *Shrinking Cities Project* states the following:

> Demolition is a means of adjusting shrinking cities to a drop in local demand. Tearing down the old to make way for the new has always been part of the history of urban development. Demolition today has gained a hitherto unkown quality: it is an end in itself. It hence becomes an issue in itself. (Oswalt, 2005, p. 51)

Public reaction to demolition often depends on the scale of the program. Typically there is a strong local desire from residents to have one or two abandoned houses on their street torn down in order to avoid property devaluation and an influx of "undesirables," such as squatters and drug dealers. But that same desire becomes fleeting when a city faced with large amounts of abandoned buildings is forced to implement some type of widespread demolition program.

The City of Buffalo, New York spent more than $30 million on demolitions in the ten-year period between 1995 and 2005 (Schilling, 2006b). In August 2007, Buffalo's Mayor Byron Brown upped the ante and announced the beginning of a new *5 in 5 Demolition Plan*. The goal of the plan was to demolish 5,000 abandoned and dilapidated structures in the city within five years. The $100 million program, with financing to be split among the federal, state and city governments, was to be "an accelerated, comprehensive, citywide attack on the dangers and blight of vacant structures" (Cutler, 2007). Yet the program suffered a major setback when the 2007 New York State budget only allocated half of the $10 million requested by the city to fund the demolition process (Precious, 2006). The plan was also strongly criticized for not being linked to Buffalo's comprehensive *Vacant Property Asset Management Strategy* (Schilling &

Logan, 2008). In order for demolition programs to be met with a positive response from communities, the community must play a central role in developing the acquisition and demolition plans (Dewar, 2006). This is one of the reasons that Baltimore's *Abandoned House Demolition Initiative* has been regarded as a success. Unlike in Buffalo, community groups had input into prioritizing vacant buildings for demolition (Accordino & Johnson, 2000). This allowed for a higher level of predictability in the demolition process which prevented residents from going on the offensive against the bulldozer. However, decline management must do more than simply demolish abandoned buildings.

Both Hollander, et al. (2009) and Schwarz (2008) argue that two dominant planning models have emerged for shrinking cities attempting to manage their decline. One is referred to as the *consolidation* (or urban island) model and the other is referred to as the *dispersion* (or de-densification) model. But Doehler-Behzadi (2006) points to a third model overlooked by the others: the *compact city* model. This paper combines these three approaches and argues that there are in fact two dominant models for shrinking cities. On the one hand is the *reconfiguration model*, in which a city attempts to reduce the size of its geographic territory by concentrating development in certain areas and vacating other areas altogether. This model includes both the urban island *and* compact city concepts. On the other hand is the *dispersion model*, in which a city attempts to spread itself thinner over its existing territory without necessarily reducing the size of its footprint. City's following this model focus on reducing the abundance of vacant and abandoned properties by de-densifying the city as a whole.

2.4.1 The Reconfiguration Model

The reconfiguration model takes a traditional planning approach to land-use changes. It is based on earlier planning concepts and is typically implemented through a coordinated top-down effort that attempts to alter a city's footprint within a predetermined pattern. It is premised on the understanding that development should be concentrated in selected areas, while other areas should be completely vacated.

The *compact city* concept is an attempt to return to "the morphological building block of the 'European city' model," (Hesse, 2005, p. 180) which stands in stark contrast to the postwar reality of suburbanization and sprawl. Cities that attempt to implement this model, such as Leinefelde, Germany, do so by strengthening the city's core area through the diversification of its functions beyond tertiary uses, concentrating investment dollars in the centre and directing demolition towards outlying areas (Hesse, 2005). In essence, cities that follow this pattern attempt to shrink at the edges.

Leinefelde's master plan, to be discussed in further detail in the following section, has received numerous awards in recognition of its master plan, in which the dismantling and reorganization of most of *Südstadt*, a district on the outskirts of the small city comprised mainly of socialist-era highrises (World Habitat Award, 2008), was envisioned. The city's master plan dictates that "infrastructure as well as modernization, reconstruction, and partial demolition were to be concentrated on the town core, while the complete demolition of apartment blocks was primarily left to outlying areas" (Steglich, 2005, p. 71). While the transformation of Leinefelde is not yet complete, early successes have emerged in the form of a decreased outmigration of

local residents to the west (Steglich, 2005), which has slowed to an annual net loss of 150 inhabitants. Also, vacancy rates which once stood at 30 percent in *Südstadt* district highrises, registered at approximately 10 percent in 2007, with a rate of 3.5 percent for refurbished units (World Habitat Award, 2008).

The *urban islands* concept is also premised on the idea of concentrating development in some parts and demolishing abandoned structures in others, but this concept finds its origins in Oswlad Mathias Ungers' Urban Archipelago proposal for West Berlin in 1977. Described by Cepl as "one of the most important planning concepts of the twentieth century for the ideal city," Ungers' concept was developed as part of the discussion leading up to the International Building Exhibition in Berlin in the early-1980s (2005, p. 187). Ungers envisioned a series of dense nodes of development, each with a unique morphology and function, within the existing footprint of West Berlin. Areas of the city that "deserve to be preserved" were to be identified and strengthened, while remaining areas "ought to be allowed to be gradually retransformed into natural zones and pastures, without any rebuilding" (2005, p. 193).

This concept was brought back to life by Witold Rybczynksi in the mid-nineties when he argued that the "first need of a city whose population has declined radically is to consildate those neighborhoods that are viable" (1995, p. 46). He believed that residents in neighbourhoods deemed unviable should be offered housing alternatives elsewhere, remaining and vacant buildings should be demolished and the depopulated neighbourhoods should be zoned for zero occupancy and have their municipal services cut off. Although he promoted such moves, Rybczynski admitted they were wrought with potentially insurmountable obstacles.

Regardless of whether a city attempts to follow the *compact city* or *urban island* model, the inherent flaw in both these approaches is that they have often proven difficult to implement because they require invasive top-down planning policies that will ultimately uproot residents and require some politicians to agree to watch their own constituencies cease to exist.

For instance, in 1990 Detroit's City Planning Commission produced a report that outlined a process of depopulating certain neighbourhoods. The *Detroit Vacant Land Survey* identified neighbourhoods with the highest rates of vacant and abandoned properties to be shut down. *The Economist* summarized the findings of the report as follows:

> The city's ombudsman . . . is essentially suggesting that the most blighted bits of the city should be closed down. Residents would be relocated from dying areas to those that still had life in them. The empty houses would be demolished and empty areas fenced off; they would either be landscaped, or allowed to return to 'nature'. (In Waldheim & Santos-Munné, 2006, p. 82)

While the report has been praised for creating a plan that acknowledges the need to shrink (Byles, 2006; Waldheim & Santos-Munné, 2006), those who have praised the survey overlook the fact that it failed to receive the necessary political support it needed to become something more than the paper it was written on. The survey was never implemented due to objections from local residents in the targetted neighbourhoods, which were comprised of predominantly low-income and visible minority populations (Hollander, et al, 2009).

A similar fate befell planners in the German city of Chemnitz-Brühl. In 2005, the city's planners were forced to abandon their plans to demolish the residential area known as Hutholz-Süd, a socialist GDR-era high-rise development, after they were met with fierce opposition from residents (Grünzig, 2006). The initial intention of the planners was to concentrate remaining

residents in and around Brühl, the city's historic centre, at the expense of outlying areas such as Hutholz-Süd. But residents of the high-rise complexes, many of whom were seniors, were adamant that they be allowed to remain in their towers rather than relocate to the city's centre. In the end, Hutholz-Süd was spared and demolition plans were instead targeted at large swaths of Brühl, the historic centre planners had hoped to strengthen (Grünzig, 2006).

But other cities have had more success with implementation. Leinefelde, Germany, mentioned above, was able to reconfigure its settlement patterns based on the *compact city* model with minimal complications because much of the abandoned and vacant land was city-owned property, which allowed for a greater amount of control over land-use changes than most cities are capable of.

In a recent article in *Metropolis* magazine, Sonja Beek, Project Coordinator for Dessau's International Building Exhibition Urban Redevelopment Plan 2010, stated that the German city was reconfiguring itself to have no single core, but rather a series of dense urban nodes surrounded by uncultivated green spaces (Zacks, 2008). Recognizing the potential obstacles to converting certain areas of the city into landscaped zones, Dessau has committed itself to achieving its goal through minimal intervention and extensive citizen participation. Instead of actively dismantling certain areas, as was proposed for Detroit and for Chemnitz-Brühl, Dessau is consolidating the remaining core areas while allowing "sponsors," typically citizens, to purchase and take over swaths of green land gradually for cultivation (Zacks, 2008). While implementation of the plan is not yet complete, the city's incremental approach to the urban islands model has not been met with the same opposition as was the case in other cities.

Reconfiguring a city's territory would also create an excellent opportunity to return portions of land back to their natural state. Shrinking cities could prove to be excellent testing grounds for the *ecocity* model put forward by Richard Register (2002). Register himself argues that "Rust Belt cities need to reinvigorate their inner neighbourhoods, and many of them already have derelict open space that could be the beginning of great new walkable centers and restored agriculture and nature corridors as well" (2002, p. 209). It is not hard to imagine how Register's ecocity model, which includes restoration as its first step, could help transform shrinking cities into nodes of activity adjacent to reestablished "ribbons of blues and greens" (p. 32). Whether the remaining habitable portions of a shrinking city could achieve the high densities envisioned by Register is another question. But there is no doubt that an adapted version of the ecocity model could be used as a template for reconfiguring shrinking cities.

However, the reconfiguration of a city's territory, regardless of which of the above patterns is followed, can be a controversial process. In order to avoid the controversy that is often associated with reconfiguring a city's territory, many municipalities have instead implemented targetted neighbourhood investment strategies. Instead of actively turning off municipal services and vacating certain areas of a city, this approach maintains basic services in all areas of the city, but concentrates financial investments towards the most viable neighbourhoods to help ensure their continued resiliance in the face of the city's overall decline. Two often-cited examples of this approach are the Phildelphia Green program and Richmond, Virginia's Neighborhoods in Bloom program, both which target greening strategies and improvement initiatives to certain neighbourhoods in their respective cities.

Listed by the National Vacant Properties Campaign (NVPC) as one of the top "model programs" in the United States for vacant land management, Philadelphia Green works closely with neighbourhood residents, community organizations and city agencies to link greening initiatives to street improvements, new housing, and new development projects (National Vacant Properties Campaign, n.d.). The Pennsylvania's Horticultural Society (PHS) has operated the Phildelphia Green program as a community-building tool since 1974 to mitigate the negative impacts of the city's some 31,000 vacant properties (Schilling & Logan, 2008). With the intention of transforming the city's vacant land into a community asset, the PHS treats abandoned properties in two ways. Through the *Vacant Land Stabilization Program*, members and volunteers of Philadelphia Green clean a property, lay topsoil, plant seeds and trees, and surround the property with a new fence. The second approach is called *Community LandCare*, which involves the routine maintenance of a property, including cleaning and/or mowing, but no planting and fencing (Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, n.d.). Funded through a $16 million grant from Mayor John Street's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI), a five-year plan that targeted city funding to six neighbourhoods in need, the Philadelphia Green program has resulted in improvements, including cleaning and greening, to more than 7,000 lots in certain Philadelphia neighbourhoods between 2003 and 2007 (Schilling & Logan, 2008).

In spite of its success, the PHS recognizes three key challenges facing the Phildelphia Green program: long-term maintenance of greened lots, a continuous and dedicated funding stream, and investments from the private sector (City of Philadelphia, n.d.). That being said, a report by Professor Susan Wachter at the University of Pennsylvania measured the impact that greening strategies were having on Philadelphia property values. She found that property values were

twenty per cent lower than average when they were adjacent to blighted vacant lots, but seventeen per cent above average when adjacent to cleaned and greened lots, and nine per cent above average when within 50 feet of a new tree (Wachter & Gillen, 2006).

Richmond, Virginia's *Neighborhoods in Bloom* program was initiated in 1999 with the intention of attracting private investment to targetted areas of the city. The program directed approximately 80 per cent of Richmond's federal housing money to seven city neighbourhoods plagued by high rates of crime, disinvestment and property abandonment. Grants and loans from the United State's largest community development support organization, Richmond Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), were also brought in line to match the initiative's priorities (Richmond LISC, 2004).

A recent report outlining the results of the neighbourhood investment program indicates that housing prices in the seven targetted areas rose 9.9 per cent faster than the citywide average on an annual basis. Other positive outcomes included a nineteen per cent decrease in reported crime activity, compared to a six per cent city-wide drop, and the development or sale of approximately 400 new or renovated housing units (Richmond LISC, 2004).

According to Galster, Tatian, & Accordino, one of the impetuses for the program came from the city's planning staff, who had argued that "the longstanding practice of sprinkling development funds across all low-income neighborhoods had not allowed the city to accomplish its mission in any of them" (2006, p. 458).

In spite of the successes of both the Phildelphia Green and Richmond's Neighborhoods in Bloom initiatives, existing research does not give much insight into the fate of the city overall.

While research shows an improvement in circumstances for the few neighbourhoods that were targetted for strategic investments, there is little evidence of how ailing neighbourhoods that did not qualify for special funding fared. This paints an incomplete picture of this planning strategy for addressing shrinkage (Richmond LISC, 2004; Green Leigh, 2004).

2.4.2 The Dispersion Model

De-densification has emerged as the second dominant model of planning for shrinkage. Unlike the reconfiguration model, through which development is concentrated in some areas while other areas are vacated altogether, the dispersion model is implemented in order to reduce the density of a city without necessarily shrinking the size of its territory. Two main planning initiatives of this model are encouraging property owners to purchase adjacent properties that have been abandoned and developing new communities at lower densities than what previously existed.

One of the more successful approaches to de-densification in the United States has been the creation of land banks. Land banks have become one of the primary vehicles for transfering property titles to adjacent property owners – an important element for de-densifying a city. Instead of a property sitting abandoned, neighbours can add adjacent properties to their own land in order to , among other things, expand their yard or construct some type of addition to their house. One of the most frequently cited example for best practices in land banking is Cleveland's Land Reutilization Program.

Cleveland was one of the first cities in the United States to respond to the challenges of abandoned and vacant properties produced by its loss of population. As early as the 1970s, the

city's planning department had started to look at ways to deal with the growing number of abandoned properties in the city. Ohio state legislation passed in 1976, and later strengthened in 1988, led to the creation of Cleveland's land reutilization program (Dewar, 2009). Cleveland's land bank is unique in that one of its express goals is to "return all non-productive lands to a tax-producing status" (Dewar, 2006). While this may seem contradcitory to the tenets of planning for shrinkage, it is not. The city's land bank operates under the understanding that there are distortions in the local economy and that market forces are not strong enough to redevelop most of the surplus parcels of land in the city. That is why it often partners with, and in fact relies upon, community development corporations (CDCs) to purchase many of the acquired properties managed by the land bank, often for as little as $100 (The Great Lakes Environmental Finance Center, 2005). Working closely with CDCs and allowing them to purchase properties clear of title at such a low cost affords them the opportunity to redevelop properties, often as affordable housing, that otherwise would be too expensive to construct. This has enabled 45 per cent of disposed land bank properties in Cleveland to be redeveloped as housing and 22 per cent to be added as yards to neighbourhing properties (Dewar, 2006). These practices introduce rural elements and gaps, such as expansive lawns, into the city's fabric.

Another strategy for de-densification is the construction of new developments at a lower density than what was there before. In a sense, this approach allows densities often associated with suburban living to emerge within the city limits. Examples of such development can be found in the inner-city neighbourhoods of Detroit, Philadelphia and West Baltimore.

2.4.3 Vacant Land Management Strategies

Beyond the two dominant comprehensive planning models outlined above, there are a host of planning initiatives that do not necessarily operate within a framework for shrinking cities, but nonetheless provide interesting examples for dealing with the by-products of shrinkage. Since the largest result of shrinkage is an excess of property supply in relation to property demand, some of the planning policy responses found in the academic discourse on managing vacant and abandoned properties may be relevant to shrinking cities. Temporary-use initiatives, such as markets, cultural venues, temporary pools and beaches are some examples. This is also the case for much of the literature on urban greening initiatives such as Pittsburgh's Growth Through Energy and Community Health (GTECH) which saw local graduates of Carnegie Mellon University work with local authorities to transform blighted industrial and residential properties into agricultural fields for bio-fuel crops (Toland, 2007; Schilling & Logan, 2008). Popper points out that "planners working on urban agriculture, urban forestry, and community garden programs are already using smart decline tactics" (2002, p. 23).

And although it may seem contradictory, some smart growth policies may also be relevant to shrinking cities. In fact, Hollander, Pallagst, Schwarz and Popper (2009) argue that researchers have not paid enough attention to how growth-oriented policies can be applied to shrinking cities. For example, growth planning policies being implemented in the Greater Golden Horseshoe as part of the *Places to Grow Plan* have similar objectives as the decline management policies introduced in shrinking cities: making better use of land and existing infrastructure (Ontario, 2006). By concentrating development within existing built-up areas, smart growth policies in the Greater Golden Horseshoe could very well make it easier for

communities to reconfigure their territory if, or when, shrinkage occurs. But further research is required about the practical application of growth-oriented policies to shrinking cities.

This section has highlighted the abundance of methods planners have been using to address issues related to shrinkage, including demolition, master planning and vacant land management strategies. Demolition is an obvious response to shrinkage, but it can be met with widespread community opposition if not carried out in a predictable and coordinated manner. Master plans lend predictability to the shrinkage process, but have only been implemented by a handful of cities that recognize they are shrinking and accept their fate as smaller communities. For the majority of cities, however, vacant land management strategies present piecemeal solutions, albeit sometimes effective ones, to deal with the largest by-product of the shrinkage process.

3.0   Models of Shrinkage

This section provides an in-depth analysis and cross-national comparison of two cities that have accepted their fates as smaller cities and have incorporated decline management policies as a central element of their respective master plans. As explained earlier in the Methodology section, both Youngstown and Leinefelde have been chosen as case studies for their comparable sizes and political structures and for the availability of academic research and media attention. Each case study will begin with an overview of the processes of shrinkage that have impacted the city and continue with a detailed examination of the master plan. The case studies will conclude with a discussion of what, if anything, Canadian planners can learn from each of these two cities.

Figure 1: Youngstown Steel Mills and Leinefelde *Plattenbauten*

3.1   Youngstown, Ohio (USA)

The City of Youngstown, Ohio and its youthful mayor, Jay Williams, have received international attention since the adoption of the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan for its goal of right-sizing the former heart of America's steel industry (Schilling and Logan, 2008; El Nasser, 2006; Lanks, 2006; Swope, 2006). Youngstown is a city "that grew from a grid of riverfront farms to a coal-mining and steel-producing behemoth before becoming a weathered icon of post-industrial America – all in the span of 180 years" (Vellucci, 2007). At its peak in the late 1950s, Youngstown was the third largest steel-producing city in the United States and, with a population of more than 170,000, the 57th most populous city in the country (Swope, 2006). But the thriving industrial centre could not withstand the negative impacts of suburban flight, the collapse of the steel industry and years of political corruption (Faga, 2006).

On September 19, 1977, a date that is referred to as "Black Monday," the largest employer in the city at the time, the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company, announced it was closing its doors. This marked the beginning of an exodus of more than 40,000 manufacturing jobs from the city and a population free-fall that would last for decades (Swope, 2006). It is estimated that Youngstown has experienced an average decline in population of sixteen per cent every ten years for the last four decades – a loss of more than half its peak population (City of Youngstown, 2005). The rapid population loss triggered a dramatic increase in vacant and abandoned properties, as well as in crime rates (Swope, 2006).

No one in Youngstown was prepared for the sudden collapse of the steel industry and resulting population losses, especially not the city's politicians and planners. Even though the city's

population was halved, it continued to operate under a comprehensive plan adopted in 1951 and revised in 1974, both versions of which envisioned a strong steel economy and expanding population base (Finnerty, 2003). As pointed out in the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan:

> When steel's reign came to a screeching halt and the smoke literally cleared, Youngstown was left with no vision and no plan to deal with the aftermath . . . By the late 1970s the plan was without foundation and virtually obsolete. Youngstown lacked direction through its decline, and without vision languished for the next twenty five years. (City of Youngstown, 2005, p. 14)

It was not until the 1990s that city officials began to realize that if Youngstown was going to emerge from its downturn it would have to plan to do so.

Figure 2: Scenes of Shrinkage in Youngstown

The planning process for the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan was initiated at the local level, not by state legislation or national policy. In fact, while the state of Ohio requires universities to regularly update their master plans, it does not require the same of its municipalities (Finnerty, 2003). Youngstown had been operating for some 20 years without a relevant plan because there is no state legislation in place to compel it to update its municipal plan. Only once political will for change emerged at the local level was any action taken.

Councilmen who had been attending meetings in other cities realized that many centres experiencing economic recovery had in fact done so through planning, and not through piecemeal decision-making. They became convinced that a new plan in Youngstown would have to deal with the current reality on the ground and not some pie-in-the-sky vision of a return to

the city's former glory days. This realization eventually translated into widespread political will when, in 2001, the Mayor and Council unanimously allocated $300,000 to kick start the planning process for a new city plan (Finnerty, 2003).

A stroke of good timing also meant that the city was about to update its comprehensive plan at the same time Youngstown State University (YSU) was about to modernize its own master plan. YSU's previous plan, completed in 1994, was the first step in the university's attempt to transition from a commuter-focused campus into a more residential campus, complete with new dorms and facilities (Finnerty, 2003). Located right next to the city's downtown core, YSU not only occupied a large swath of central real estate, but had also become the city's largest employer. The City, led by Mayor George McKelvey and City Council, and YSU, with President David Sweet at the helm, "decided that participation in each other's planning process[es] was essential to the success of both" (Faga, 2006, p. 55).

The following table highlights the key milestones in the Youngstown 2010 planning process, starting with the aforementioned budget commitment by Youngstown's Mayor and Council:

Table 2: Key Milestones, *Youngstown 2010*

Year	Milestone
2001	Mayor and Council allocate funding to begin the planning process
Late-2001	Youngstown issues RFP for Phase I Visioning Process. Awards contract to Toronto-based Urban Strategies
2002	Urban Strategies conducts visioning process and creates 4 vision statements
December 2002	Public Meeting to review vision statements
February 2003	Council adopts vision by resolution
March 2004	Launch of citywide branding campaign
Summer – Fall 2004	A series of neighbourhood forums are held to work out details of the plan
January 2005	Formal public presentation of Youngstown 2010 Plan
July 2005	City Council adopts Youngstown 2010 Plan

Sources: Finnerty, 2003; City of Youngstown, 2005; Faga, 2006; Smith, 2007; Schilling & Logan, 2008

Following the 2001 budget allocation, the City sent out a Request for Proposals to find a consulting firm to develop a community vision for the plan. YSU simultaneously sent out RFPs for its own visioning process, but delayed choosing a planning consultant so it could actively participate in the City's process (Finnerty, 2003).

In late 2001 the city awarded the contract for the first phase of the project to Toronto-based consulting firm Urban Strategies, Inc. In the following year, the Urban Strategies team conducted a comprehensive background and issues analysis of Youngstown led by staff from the City and YSU. This was followed by a series of six workshops that brought together some 250 leaders from the private, public and community sectors (Schilling & Logan, 2008). After witnessing years of political corruption and repeated failures of earlier city ventures, many community leaders were initially sceptical of getting involved in the process. But the prodding of city staff, and the participation of the university in the planning process, convinced them to get involved (Smith, 2007). The outcome of these workshops was a set of four principles which formed the draft vision statement that was to be taken to the public for consultation: accepting Youngstown as a smaller community, redefining the role Youngstown plays in the regional economy, improving and enhancing the city's image and quality of life, and a call to action (Finnerty, 2003).

An aggressive marketing and outreach campaign was launched to ensure residents were aware of the process. The campaign proved successful when in December 2002, more than 1,400 people turned out to participate in the first town hall meeting at Stambaugh Auditorium to review the visioning statement (Smith, 2007). The hours-long meeting gave residents the

opportunity to air their opinions of the vision statements and ask questions of City staff and the consulting team. Interestingly enough, none of the articles consulted for this report mention residents taking issue with the first of the four pillars, that of accepting Youngstown as a smaller community.

Shortly thereafter, Council responded to the call to action by unanimously adopting the vision on February 19, 2003 (Schilling & Logan, 2008). What followed was a city-wide engagement process to get as many citizens as possible involved in creating the details of the plan by having them give their input on how to improve their neighbourhoods (Smith, 2007). A series of 11 neighbourhood meetings took place throughout the summer and fall of 2004. The purpose of these meetings "was to reinforce the Vision principles, emphasize the importance of planning, present background data for the neighbourhoods and find out from the residents and business owners how they see their neighbourhoods developing in the future" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p. 21).

The massive PR campaign that was launched in March 2004 paid dividends as more than 800 citizens participated in the 11 neighbourhood meetings – and this was during the summer months, typically considered to be a poor time of year for public engagement. The campaign used a variety of media including billboards, brochures, public service announcements, T-shirts, websites and window stickers. With the assistance of a local media professional, provocative slogans were employed to spur residents into action: "If we don't care...who will?" (Smith, 2007) and "Our kids go away and never come back!" (Swope, 2006) were just two of the slogans used to encourage public participation in the planning process. For the final

presentation of the Youngstown 2010 Plan, another 1,300 people packed the Stambaugh Auditorium, almost matching the unprecedented turnout of the visioning process that took place in the same venue two and a half years earlier (Faga, 2006).

In many ways, the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan is a traditional master plan. It contains all the elements of a standard master plan: a brief history of the city (Chapter 1), an overview of the planning process (Chapter 2), an extensive assessment of the city's current land uses and citywide conditions (Chapters 3 and 4), a list of the positive assets the city can build upon (Chapter 5), new land use regulations to help the city achieve its full potential (Chapter 6 and 7), and an implementation strategy and conclusion (Chapter 8). However, as Vellucci points out, while the plan "exhibits many of the basics of a modern-day master plan . . . it also recommends cutting the oversized infrastructure planners say makes Youngstown look like a 'size-40 man wearing a size-60 suit'" (2007).

The land use designations laid out in the 1951 and 1974 plans led to infrastructure provisions based on excessively optimistic population projections that never materialized. Roads were paved and sewers were laid for a city that was supposed to be dominated by low-density residential uses across its entire territory. Commercial uses were supposed to be concentrated in and around the downtown core and along key corridors to take advantage of commuters travelling into and out of the city each day. The Mahoning River valley was supposed to continue to be the main spine of the city's industrial economy and higher-density residential and institutional uses were supposed to surround the downtown core. In reality, however, these permitted land uses became irrelevant once the steel industry collapsed. Instead, an

overabundance of commercial and institutional uses were scattered incoherently across the city; many residential neighbourhoods, especially in the east, remained greenfields, albeit with a full supply of municipal infrastructure including roads, sewers and lamp posts.

The Youngstown 2010 plan contains a new vision for a city with a population stabilized at approximately 80,000 residents, less than half of its mid-century peak of 170,000. While the Plan does not neatly fit into any one of the categories of municipal planning strategies mentioned in the previous section, generally speaking, it employs a combination of strategies from the reconfiguration model (altering a city's infrastructure footprint) and the dispersion model (de-densification), as well as a host of vacant land management strategies.

Figure 3: Future Land Use Map, *Youngstown 2010*
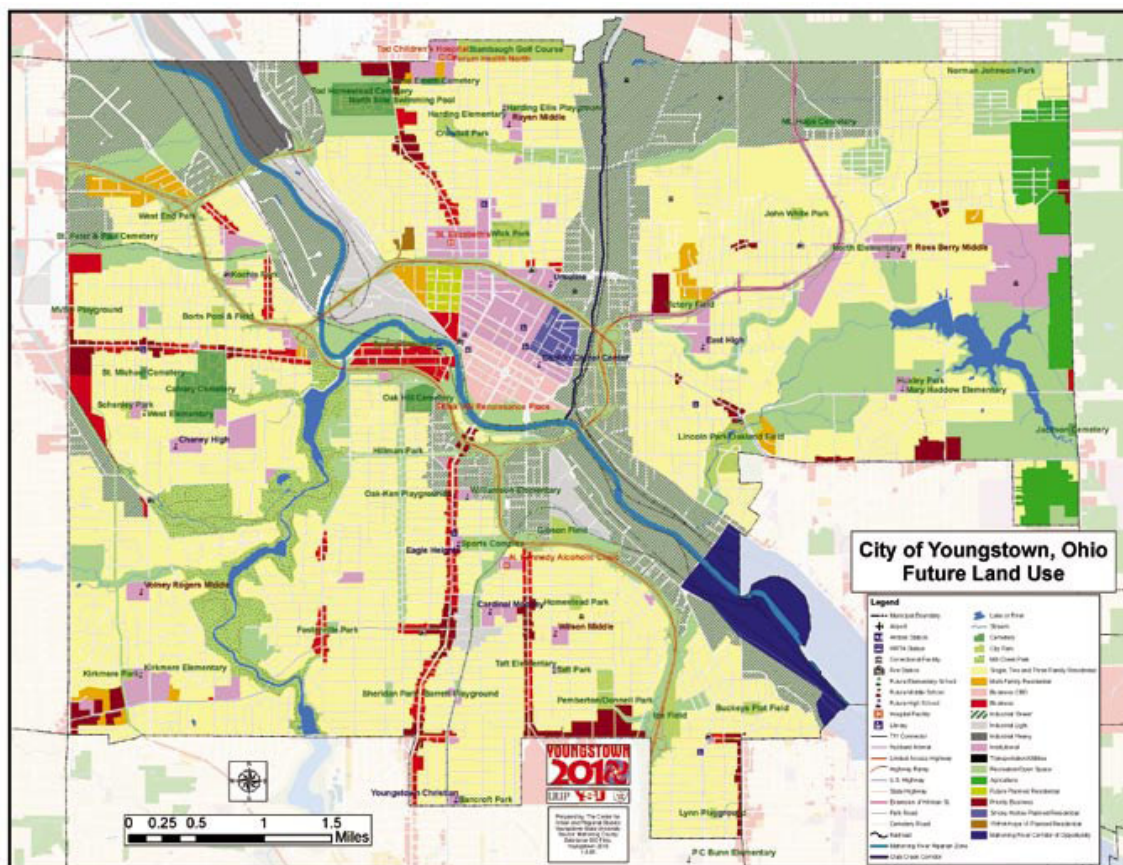
Source: Youngstown 201 Citywide Plan, 2005, p.46

New land use designations (see Figure 3) play a major role in bringing order to the abundance of non-conforming uses in the city and in allowing the city to reduce its overall size. Through the extensive Youngstown 2010 public consultation process, it was determined that the plan should include the preservation of existing open spaces. Neighbourhoods such as Sharon Line in the east, which was surveyed and outfitted with municipal infrastructure for residential development that never materialized, had its land use designation converted from low-density residential to recreational/open space. This conversion allows for the official decommissioning of municipal infrastructure to the area. In many ways, this was the "low hanging fruit" of the plan since the neighbourhood was already in a predominantly rural state.

The land use plan includes a 30 per cent reduction in residential land uses across the city and a 23 per cent drop in commercial land. It also reduces land areas for heavy industrial uses by 71 per cent and areas for light industrial uses by 84 per cent, although most of these lands are absorbed into the new land use designation *Industrial Green*. This designation, which is largely concentrated in the former steel industry corridor along the Mahoning Valley, is inspired by successful brownfield reclamation industrial parks in the city, including Performance Place, Salt Springs and Ohio Works. The sites are to be "occupied by environmentally friendly industries where green space is viewed as an asset, instead of the mills and slag dumps that previously occupied these sites" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p. 49). Interestingly enough, when accounting for all industrial uses, including heavy, light and green, the plan actually *increases* the total amount of land coverage for industrial uses by 29 per cent. The table below highlights the key changes to land use designations in the 2010 plan.

Table 3: Land Use Designation Changes, *Youngstown 2010*

Existing Land Use	# Acres	Future Land Use	# Acres	% Change
Industrial	3,900	Industrial	5,040	+29%
Heavy	*1,700*	*Heavy*	*490*	*-71%*
Light	*2,200*	*Light*	*350*	*-84%*
		Green	*4,200*	*+100%*
Commercial	1,260	Commercial	965	-23%
		Incl. CBD special designation	*N/A*	
Residential	12,000	Residential	8,400	-30%
Institutional	460	Institutional	925	+101%
		Recreational/Open Space	N/A	
		Agricultural	N/A	
	17,620		15,330*	
* Approx. 2,000 acres less that are included in recreational/open space + agricultural.				

Source: Author's own calculations based on figures in Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan

While land use designations will go some way towards right-sizing the city, they are not sufficient tools in and of themselves to create an attractive city of approximately 80,000 that offers a high quality of life to its residents. With the plan serving as a framework that guides future decision-making processes, it is the subsequent policy decisions that will help reshape Youngstown as a smaller city.

Two key policy directions have emerged from the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan. One is strategically directing investments towards neighbourhoods that are deemed to be "salvageable" rather than evenly distributing funding across the city. Youngstown Mayor Jay Williams clarifies the difficulties of such a strategy: "What it means is in many instances you have to start saying no . . . That's not easy as a public official, when it comes to people with all sorts of ideas that are well intended but not necessarily realistic" (Swope, 2006). As the Detroit example mentioned earlier highlights, determining where the winning and losing neighbourhoods will be can be a major obstacle to implementation. The failed *Detroit Vacant Land Survey* identified neighbourhoods based purely on statistics, including vacancy rates and

population levels, and also proposed to aggressively "shut down" neighbourhoods. Residents were not involved in the decision-making process and little thought was given to how shutting down neighbourhoods consisting of predominantly low-income minorities would we perceived by the public (Byles, 2006).

Like the *Detroit Vacant Land Survey*, Youngstown planners use statistical data to help determine which neighbourhoods should be saved and which should not. The Plan overlays census block population figures with data concerning building conditions and tax delinquencies. Neighbourhoods exhibiting high structure index problems[2] and low population densities were believed to be "beyond any hope of short-term solutions," while neighbourhoods with high structure index problems, but still home to a sizeable population, were considered to be neighbourhoods "in transition" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p. 35). The difference between the Detroit survey and the Youngstown plan is not the use of statistics, but rather how these statistics were gathered.

Determining which neighbourhoods would be saved, and which would not, was a key element of the planning process in Youngstown, something that was lacking in the Detroit example. Much of the data mentioned above was collected by residents themselves. During the summer of 2004, the city mobilized an army of volunteers to perform detailed assessments of the city's neighbourhoods and record information related to the condition of municipal infrastructure and private lots. This type of engagement allowed the residents to take ownership of the data and influence the decision-making process. Furthermore, the high profile nature of the

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[2] The Plan defines high structure index problems as "a function of tax delinquency and disrepair" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p. 35).

Youngstown 2010 Plan and the high rates of public involvement throughout the planning process reduced the chances that the public would react negatively to the plan and go on the offensive (as was the case with the surprise findings of the vacant land survey in Detroit).

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there is no proposal in the Youngstown 2010 Plan to actively close down the neighbourhoods identified as beyond salvation. The intention was not to slate these neighbourhoods for immediate closure, but rather to redirect city investments so that eventually, over a period of time, the neighbourhoods would empty out and, once completely abandoned, be decommissioned and returned to nature. As the current mayor, Jay Williams, points out, "We haven't gone in and aggressively shut down streets . . . but, over time, that's part of the plan" (Fairbanks, 2008). It is this incremental approach to shrinkage that has won Youngstown accolades.

One of the major issues facing Youngstown was that non-profit organizations were taking advantage of the affordability of land in the city and, using low-income housing tax credits from the federal government, as well as state and local subsidies, were building new homes throughout the city (Swope, 2006; Lindsay, n.d.), regardless of the condition of the neighbourhood. The location of these projects was determined by the availability of land, not by neighbourhood status. The Mayor points out the lack of logic in this approach:

> We didn't have a plan and [the low-income housing developments] popped up in areas that just didn't make sense . . . A brand-new house constructed between two houses that needed to be demolished – we're not doing anybody a favour. It's not that we don't need decent quality housing for low-income individuals, but where we house them in the city has to be well thought out.   (Swope, 2006)

Williams put a moratorium on developments using low-income housing tax credits until plans were in place to determine exactly where in the city such construction should occur. This will most likely happen once neighbourhood plans are in place throughout the city which will determine what each is expected to be in 2010, 2020, 2030, and beyond (Fairbanks, 2008; Schilling and Logan, 2008). In a similar vein, money distributed by the Community Development Agency to help low-income residents complete improvements to their homes is now distributed based on location, and not on a first-come, first-serve basis as was typically the case (Lindsay, n.d.; Swope, 2006; Miller, 2008). Another targeted neighbourhood strategy includes incentives of up to $50,000 for residents in "lost" neighbourhoods to move into more stable neighbourhoods (Lindsay, n.d.; Swope, 2006; Christie, 2008).

The second major policy direction to implement the Youngsotwn 2010 Plan is a variety of vacant land management initiatives, including demolition and land acquisition strategies. Chapter 4 of the Youngstown 2010 Plan points to census data from 2000 which shows Youngstown had more than 3,325 excess housing units, well above the 'normal' 15 per cent vacancy rate. Others have argued that there are approximately 14,000 vacant lots in the city with more than 1,000 derelict buildings sitting on them (Swope, 2006). The real and potential impacts of such vacant and abandoned properties have been discussed earlier in this paper.

With a quadrupled budget for demolition, Youngstown has torn down approximately 1,000 units between 2005 and 2008 (Swope, 2006; Schilling and Logan, 2008). In 2006 alone, the city spent $1.2 million to tear down more than 400 structures (Vellucci, 2007). Once the properties have been cleared of buildings (and back taxes waived through the Country Treasurer's office)

the properties can be put back into productive use by churches, businesses or adjacent property owners, who often use the property to expand their own yards or parking lots (Swope, 2006; Lindsay, n.d.)

Four years after its official adoption, the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan remains one of the few examples of a comprehensive master plan in a mid-size American city that is defined by principles of smart decline. Youngstown has emerged as the national laboratory for planned shrinkage in a country long-obsessed with growth.

One of Youngstown's biggest challenges at this point is keeping residents engaged as the 2010 Citywide Plan is translated into 120 neighbourhood plans that include action steps for implementation. This extensive process is being completed with only one full-time planner on staff and is resulting in a slow pace of change (Schilling and Logan, 2008).

This slow transition from plan to implementation is also perhaps one of the reasons why few other American cities have followed the Youngstown example of adopting a plan defined by smart decline strategies. While elements of the plan are no doubt being analyzed and "borrowed," many cities could be waiting for further evidence that the comprehensive planning approach to shrinkage actually produces the anticipated results before embarking on their own plans.

3.2 Leinefelde, Thuringia (GER)

For many years, Leinefelde was a typical, small German village that was quaint in its character and unassuming in its ambition. Like all places in Germany, however, Leinefelde was not immune to the political misfortune that befell the country, from the devastation of World War II to its subsequent post-war separation into eastern and western states. The village, located in the Federal State of Thuringia, was absorbed into the communist German Democratic Republic and consequently was separated from its traditional market bases that were located nearby in the Federal States of Bavaria and Hesse, both of which became part of West Germany (World Habitat Award, 2008).

By the late 1950s, the economy of Leinefelde and the surrounding region, known as the Eichsfeld region, was flagging. As a countermeasure to this, the East German government implemented the Eischfeld Plan in 1959, which attempted to transform the region into a model centre of industrialization. A new textile factory was constructed in the village and a brand new housing quarter was constructed to house the some 13,000 new residents that would be employed in the factory (Steglich, 2005). The new town quarter, known as Leinefelde-*Südstadt* (Leinefelde City South), was comprised of some 5,600 residential units in four- to six-story prefabricated blocks known as *Plattenbauten* (Steglich, 2005). Over the course of the next few decades, the village of 2,500 expanded into an industrial centre of more than 16,000 inhabitants. Although the mid-century expansion of Leinefelde under the Eichsfeld Plan was sudden and dramatic, it paled in comparison to the post-reunification collapse of the village's economy.

Like the post-war separation of the country, the 1989 reunification of Germany destroyed the economic base of Leinefelde:

> After the reunification of the Federal Republic, the Eichsfeld Region lost
> nearly three quarters of all its jobs, the government-owned textile industry
> was shut down and Leinefelde, the one-time flagship of modernization,
> fell into a deep crisis. Many looked for new beginnings elsewhere. (Kil, 2007, p.26)

Without the textile industry to support it, Leinefelde quickly sank. The unemployment rate hit 25 per cent (Steglich, 2005), and was surprassed only by housing vacancy rates which, a decade after reunification, were estimated to be as high as 50 per cent in the southern end of *Südstadt* and averaged 17.7 per cent throughout the town (Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau- und Wohnungswesen (BMVBW), 2003). The exodus of residents in search of employment in more prosperous areas of the country, including the newly-opened west, coupled with the general ageing of the population that was plaguing all areas of the former eastern German states (World Habitat Award, 2008), caused Leinefelde's population to drop by one-third, from its peak of 16,000 in 1980 to around 10,000 in the early 21st century (Steglich, 2005).

The decreasing population, and subsequent increase in vacancy rates, led to a rise in vandalism and youth violence. The slab towers of *Südstadt*, once the symbol of East Germany's economic strength, were rapidly being abandoned by their tenants and the quarter was transforming into a ghetto (Kil, 2007). The sheer size of *Südstadt* meant that any plans to save Leinefelde would have to focus on this area.

As the name suggests, *Südstadt* was located to the south of the historic village of Leinefelde. At the time of reunification it was home to approximately 85 per cent of Leinefelde's total

population (BMVBW, 2003). The low-quality, communist-era slab structures that comprised the bulk of the housing stock were also the hardest hit by the out-migration of the town's residents. This meant that the two housing companies, the WVL (*Wohnungs- und Verwaltungs-GmbH Leinefelde*) and the LWG (*Leinefelder Wohnungsbaugenossenschaft*) who owned the majority of properties in *Südstadt*, were also unable to compete in the competitive housing market that was emerging in the former eastern republic (World Habitat Award, 2008). It was estimated that the WVL and LWG alone owned approximately two-thirds of all the housing units in Leinefelde, and an even higher percentage of units in the *Südstadt*. A 2000 report by the Federal Ministry of Transportation, Construction and Housing (BMVBW) gives a snapshot of the housing situation in Leinefelde a decade after reunification.

Table 4: Housing Vacancy Rates in Leinefelde, 2000

	Citywide	*Südstadt*	South *Südstadt*
Population (2000)	15,011	7,255	650
% change (1990-2000)	-7.9%	-42.0%	-50.0%
Housing units built prior to 1948	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Housing units built prior to 1990	65.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Housing units built after 1990	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vacancy Rate (2001)	17.7%	27.0%	50.7%
Vacancy in housing built prior to 1948	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vacancy in housing built prior to 1990	95.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Vacancy in housing built after 1990	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau- und Wohnungswesen, 2003, p. 48

The above table shows how disproportionally affected the *Südstadt* was by the processes of population decline that hit Leinefelde after reunification. While the city as a whole witnessed a population decline of 7.9 per cent between 1990 and 2000, *Südstadt*'s population dropped by 42 per cent. The southern end of *Südstadt*, the furthest point from the historic village centre,

saw its population halve and its vacancy rate spike to more than 50 per cent. The vast majority of vacant units were located in the post-war prefabricated towers that had become synonymous with socialist-era living. By contrast, the historic buildings located in the old village centre enjoyed a very low vacancy rate of five per cent. These demographic and spatial trends would have a major influence on how Leinefelde managed its decline.

The reunification of the two German states triggered a series of political changes at the local level as well. One year after reuinification, in the first free vote of the post-war era in the town, the first democratically-elected Council came into power in Leinefelde (World Habitat Award, 2008). The new Council and administration almost immediately went to work on a new plan for the town.

As the above numbers show, the situation in Leinefelde was urgent. Its crumbling economy and location close to the western German states of Bavaria and Hesse meant it was easy for residents to leave. Furthermore, the dominant building type of the city, the prefabricated towers of *Südstadt*, was not appealing enough to maintain its residents. To add insult to injury, a 1994 market analysis of the housing situation was released and estimated that a mere 50 per cent of the housing stock in *Südstadt* would be in rentable condition by the year 2020 (BMVBW, 2003; Steglich, 2005).

Two years after its election, the Mayor and Council "realized that [they] had to develop a strategy to prevent the town's social, economic and political breakdown" (World Habitat Award, 2008, p. 3). The municipality's first step involved enrolling in a subsidy program run by the new Federal Government of Germany and the State of Thuringia. The program, called the

"Urban Redevelopment of Large Newly-built Areas" (*Städtebaulichen Weiterentwicklung großer Newbaugebiete*), was made available to most centres in the former east German state that were plagued with an overabundance of communist-era residential quarters (World Habitat Award, 2008). According to Mayor Reinhardt, "through measures that would improve the quality of housing, the municipality's structural deficit would be eliminated, which was considered to be one of the leading causes of out-migration" (Reinhardt, 2003, p. 136). In order to access the funds available in the federal/state subsidy program, the city was required to create a citywide master plan.

In 1993, Leinefelde commissioned GRAS, a Darmstadt-based architecture and urban planning firm, to develop a framework for the old town core and the *Südstadt* that would focus on better integrating the two areas of the city and reduce Leinefelde's bloated housing stock (Steglich, 2005). Leinefelde's first master plan was developed between 1993 and 1994 and approved by Council in 1995. The plan was to serve as a framework to coordinate investments and renewal efforts throughout the town and was designed to be a flexible document that would retain its relevance in the face of unexpected developments (Leinefelde, 2005; World Habitat Award, 2008). The flexibility came from a general strategy which simply stated that the central area should be stabilized and the outer edges of the *Südstadt* should be open for change (Gruppe Architektur & Stadtplanung (GRAS), 1999).

Table 5: Plans and Updates in Leinefelde

Year	Plan/Revision
1995	Leinefelde-Südstadt Master Plan
1999	First Update to Master Plan
2002	City Development Concept 2002
2005	Second Update to Master Plan
2005	First Update to City Development Concept

Source: Leinefelde, 2005, p. 3

The original 1995 plan was updated in 1999, the first in a series of revisions that responded to political and structural changes in the town. In response to Leinefelde's amalgamation with the villages of Beuren, Birkungen and Breitenholz in 2001, a city development concept (*Stadtentwicklungskonzept*) was created that incorporated the master plan into a document with a larger geographic scope. When, in 2003, the municipality of Leinefelde again decided it wanted to improve its population base and administrative efficiency in the area, it amalgamated with the adjoining town of Worbis to create a new municipality, Leinefelde-Worbis (World Habitat Award, 2008). As a result of this political decision, the city development concept was once again updated in 2005. Finally, the Leinefelde-*Südstadt* master plan was revised for a second time in 2005, in order to respond to the changing circumstances that came with amalgmation, the opening of a highway on-ramp in the vicinity of the town and the construction of a Kaufland supermarket in the old village centre (Leinefelde, 2005).

For the purpose of this report, attention will be focused on the original master plan and its updates, rather than on the city development concepts that include the surrounding villages. Since the villages that amalgamated with Leinefelde were deemed to be in stable condition and were not experiencing the same rate of decline as Leinefelde and its *Südstadt*, there is no need to include them in the discussion on planning for decline.

The Leinefelde-*Südstadt* Master Plan has become a widely-recognized and frequently cited document for the management of the processes of shrinkage. Its long list of recognitions and awards include, most notably, the 2007 World Habitat Award and the 2004 European Urban and Regional Planning Award.
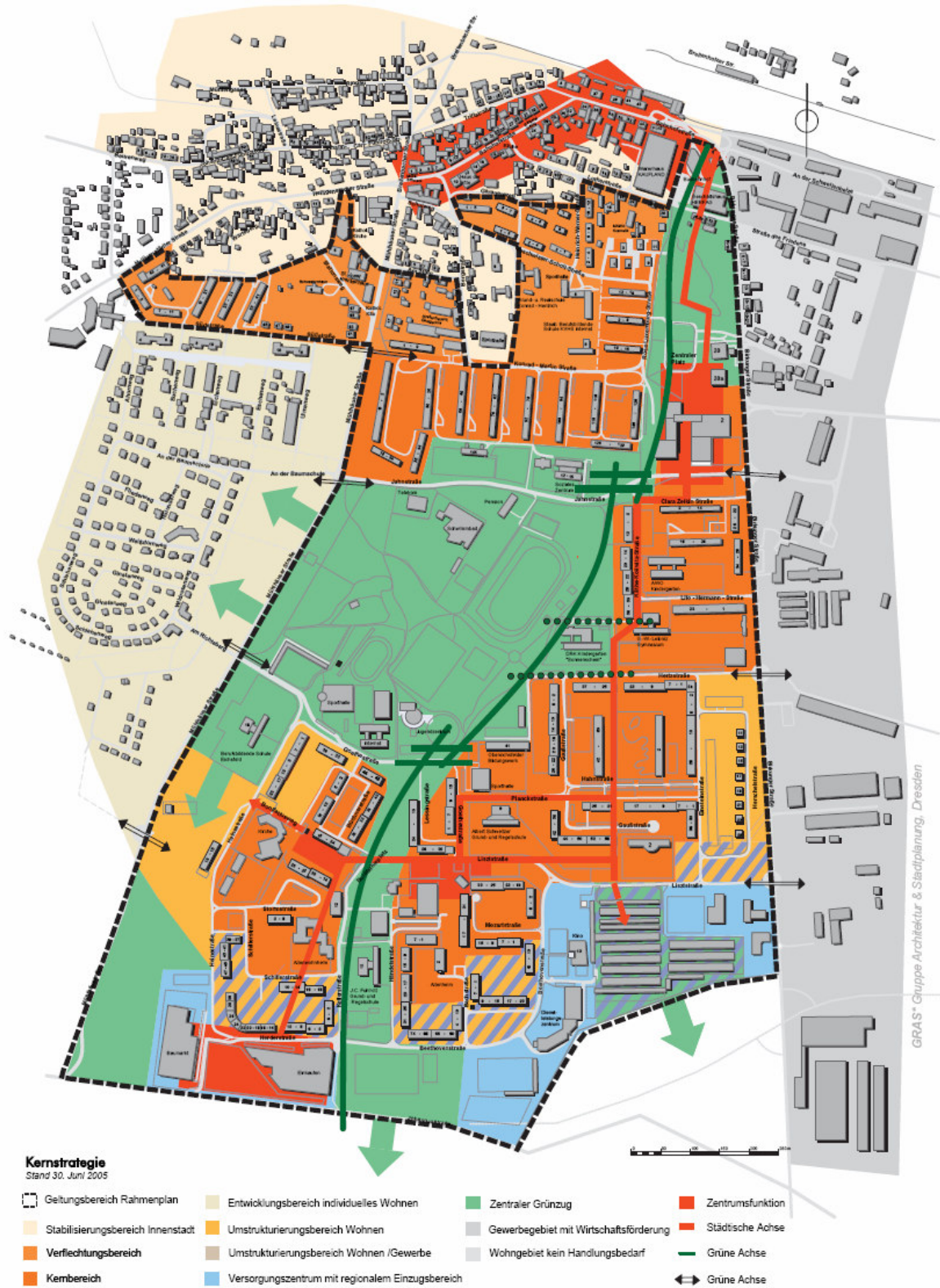
The goal of the Leinefelde plan was to avoid the negative cycle that many shrinking cities find themselves in, where dismantling and demolition is in a permanent race against growing vacancy rates (Steglich, 2005). Through a core strategy (*Kernstrategie*) that would strengthen the town's centre and focus demolition and de-densification efforts on the outskirts, Herman Sträb, head of the consulting firm GRAS, proposed two axes: a central urban axis (*Städtische Achse*) that would connect the old and new portions of the town and a green axis (*Grüne Achse*) that would bring open space to the densely-populated *Südstadt* and would provide visual sight lines to the open landscape beyond the town's borders.

The central area would be stabilized by concentrating infrastructure improvements and redevelopment along the urban axis and the green axis, which would both wind their way from the central core, through *Südstadt*, to the agricultural edges of the town. The urban axis would create a spatial and functional connection between the *Südstadt* and the old town centre (Leinefelde, 2005). Together the urban axis and green axis would serve as the cultural and social spine of the town, linking most of its disparate parts together, and would be where infrastructure improvements and redevelopment efforts would be concentrated. This also meant that the residential towers of *Südstadt* which did not flank either of the two axes would sooner or later be disposed of (Kil, 2007).

The plan divides the *Südstadt* into five zones in addition to the land slated to become part of the expansive green axis (see Figure 4). An integration zone (*Verflechtungsbereich*) encompasses the northern portion of *Südstadt* closest to the town centre. Renewal efforts in this zone would attempt to better integrate *Südstadt* with the town centre. A core zone (*Kernbereich*) encompasses the areas flanking the proposed green axis and urban axis. This zone would benefit from the bulk of renewal efforts and infrastructure investments. Two restructuring zones (*Umstrukturierungsbereiche*), one for residential uses and one for mixed residential/business uses, were concentrated in the southern portion of the *Südstadt*. These zones comprise the area of the southern *Südstadt* that was plagued by high vacancy rates, of up to 50 per cent. These two zones would be the prime targets for demolition and de-densification efforts. Finally, at the southern tip of *Südstadt* is a zone for services with a regional focus (*Versorgungszentrum*).

To the immediate south of the town core, and to the west of the *Südstadt*, was a development zone exclusively reserved for the construction of new single-family dwellings – a building type severely lacking in Leinefelde.

Figure 4: Core Strategy Map, Leinefelde-*Südstadt* Master Plan

Kernstrategie
Stand 30. Juni 2005

- ☐ Geltungsbereich Rahmenplan
- Stabilisierungsbereich Innenstadt
- Verflechtungsbereich
- Kernbereich
- Entwicklungsbereich individuelles Wohnen
- Umstrukturierungsbereich Wohnen
- Umstrukturierungsbereich Wohnen /Gewerbe
- Versorgungszentrum mit regionalem Einzugsbereich
- Zentraler Grünzug
- Gewerbegebiet mit Wirtschaftsförderung
- Wohngebiet kein Handlungsbedarf
- Zentrumsfunktion
- Städtische Achse
- Grüne Achse
- ⟷ Grüne Achse

GRAS* Gruppe Architektur & Stadtplanung, Dresden

Source: 3. Fortschreibung Rahmenplan Südstadt, 2005, p.23

The Leinefelde-*Südstadt* Master Plan includes two main strategies: reducing the overall number of residential units in the town through complete and partial demolition and improving the quality of remaining units. This was largely accomplished by focusing demolition efforts on the town's southern ring and using architectural competitions and pilot projects to boost living conditions in the old *Plattenbauten*.

By concentrating demolition efforts at the town's edges, and focusing on strengthening the town's core, Leinefelde created a pattern of demolition closely aligned with the "compact city" model of shrinkage described earlier in this report. In many ways, this model was a natural example for the municipality to follow given the geographic patterns of out-migration which impacted the town's south end much more heavily than the central core.

As mentioned earlier, one key advantage which enabled Leinefelde to implement its compact city vision was that approximately two-thirds of all the residential units in *Südstadt* were owned by two public housing companies, the WVL and LVG. The high vacancy rates plaguing the two companies quickly brought them to the brink of failure, which made them eager to enter into some type of agreement with the city that would help salvage their operations. From the beginning, the two housing companies worked closely with the municipality to develop the Leinefelde-*Südstadt* Master Plan, even helping to shoulder some of the costs of implementing the demolition program. The housing companies and the municipalities established a financial pool, to which the State and Federal governments also contributed, in order to make the cost of

total demolition, and the more expensive partial demolitions, more affordable (Leinefelde, 2005; Steglich, 2005). [3]

The master plan created a framework that guided demolition activities and created a sense of predictability in the process. Those buildings that were not located in the town's centre or along the proposed urban axis or green axis, were the first to be targeted for complete demolition. Again, because the municipality was able to exercise a great level of control over the process, residents located in the southern *Südstadt* were able to be relocated to other units within the *Südstadt* that had already been renovated and were closer to the town's centre (Leinefelde, 2005). Unlike in the Chemnitz-Brühl example discussed earlier, where residents of the socialist era high-rises in that city protested their proposed relocation to the centre of town, residents in the southern ring of *Südstadt* had no such concerns. This was partially because the recently-renovated units they were to move into offered them a higher quality of living and partially because they were located in the same area of town – *Südstadt* – just a bit closer to the centre. It is estimated that by 2005 more than 1,100 residential units had been demolished, 679 belonging to WVL and 438 belonging to LWG (Leinefelde, 2005).

Figure 5: Implementing Decline Management in Leinefelde

In addition to the complete demolition of buildings, partial demolition, which involved removing the top few storeys of buildings, was a key element of the plan. Most of the buildings targeted for partial demolition were located adjacent to the proposed urban axis and green axis. Other partially demolished buildings were located closer to the town centre. The purpose of reducing the number of vacant residential units in *Südstadt* was twofold: improve living conditions for remaining residents of *Südstadt* and strengthen the rental market for the area closer to the town's centre (Leinefelde, 2005).

A variety of modernization efforts were simultaneously undertaken to improve the living conditions of remaining households in order to stem the out-migration of residents. Modernization techniques included selling property owned by the two housing companies to private owners who could afford to invest in and improve the properties, constructing new single-family dwellings in a central area of town and, most notably, renovating existing structures in *Südstadt* (see Figure 5).

Unlike the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan, the Leinefelde-*Südstadt* Master Plan uses architecture and design as a central element of its plan. One of Leinefelde's first decisions in its shrinking process, after enrolling in the state-level subsidy program that required the development of a master plan, was to redesign the public space in front of St. Bonifatius' Catholic Church in order to exhibit the true potential of a revitalized *Südstadt* to the public (Gruppe Architektur & Stadtplanung (GRAS), 1999). The successful redesign of this space kick-started a series of international architectural competitions that would serve as showcases for

Leinefelde's transformation and exhibit the high-quality architecture that would be produced as a result of the plan.

Table 6: Architectural Competitions in Leinefelde

Year	Architectural Competition
1996	Modernizing *Plattenbauen* residences
1997	Renovation/Expansion of Obereichsfeld Hall
1999	New Residential Construction in Stadtteich
2000	Leinefelde Office Building
2003	Leinefelde Green Axis
2005	Europan

Source: Leinefelde, 2005

The first major architectural competition was launched by the municipality and the two housing companies in 1996 for two projects that would showcase the transformative process in *Südstadt* to create as much housing diversity as possible (Steglich, 2005). Two winners emerged from this bidding process.

The first winner was the Munich-based firm Meier-Scupin und Petzet which was commissioned to renovate the 'Physiker' quarter of *Südstadt*. Their project focused on the individualization of housing that would break the monotony of the standard residential unit found in the area. They created a series of unique layouts, including units that could be accessed through individual entrances on the ground floors and others that could be accessed through internal and external hallways (Steglich, 2005; Reinhardt, 2003; Kil, 2007). The second winner, the Frankfurt-based firm of Forster & Schnorr, used the relationship between residence and open space as their main theme. To this end they used the recycled parts of the demolished *Plattenbauten* to create townhouses and summer homes. They also created gardens and yards for first-floor

apartment units and built balconies on upper-story units where none existed before (Steglich, 2005; Reinhardt, 2003; Kil, 2007).

The 1996 architectural competition was considered a major success by Leinefelde's mayor: "The overwhelming acceptance of the high-quality, renovated units and new layouts proved that the architectural competition concept should be further developed . . . and that the development potential of the slab buildings would not be exhausted for a long time to come" (Reinhardt, 2003, p. 138).

According to the updated master plan, the transformation of *Südstadt* through renovations and partial demolitions was dramatic. Approximately 2,000 units were completely renovated in the five-year period following the plan's initial adoption, and another 3,000 were partially improved, including the installation of new heating systems, windows and baths (GRAS, 1999). The majority of renovated units were located in the aforementioned integration zone (*Verflechtungsbereich*) of *Südstadt*, especially those closest to the town core in line with the core strategy of the master plan.

The combination of demolition and modernization measures put forward in the Leinefelde-*Südstadt* Master Plan has considerably changed the property structure in the municipality. According to the 2005 updated plan, the number of privately-owned units in the town has risen from 35 per cent in 2001 to 42 per cent in 2004, either through the transfer of renovated units in *Südstadt* to private owners or through the construction of new single-family dwellings in the development zone (*Entwicklungsbereich*) close to the town's core (Leinefelde, 2005). Accordingly, while the two housing companies still own a disproportionately large share of the

housing market, their collective shares have dropped from 65 per cent in 2001 to 58 per cent in 2004 (Leinefelde, 2005). But perhaps more importantly is the fact that, according to WVL, the vacancy rates for modernized units in *Südstadt* reached three per cent, an indicator that these newly-refurbished units are proving to be desirable places to live (Steglich, 2005).

Almost fifteen years after its initial adoption, the Leinefelde-*Südstadt* Master Plan has been a success for the municipality. Like the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan, one of the key goals of Leinefelde's plan was to recognize the fact that the municipality was shrinking and implement a policy response that would address this reality in hopes of ultimately stabilizing the town's population base. Leinefelde Council believed that offering attractive and valuable residential alternatives to its residents would help stem out-migration (BMVBW, 2003). Indeed, the flow of residents away from town has almost come to a complete stop (Reinhardt, 2005) and, according to an analysis of the situation contained in the 2005 updated plan:

> a crucial factor for the slowing migratory out-flow lies with an improved economic situation. But the measures to improve the residential and infrastructure offerings, as well as the construction of new residential units, have also had a hand in stabilizing the population. (Leinefelde, 2005, p.4)

With a property structure that placed a disproportional amount of power with the municipality, Leinefelde was strategically positioned to plan for its future as a smaller town. Not only did the renovated buildings offer higher-quality living alternatives, which in turn created a higher satisfaction among residents, they also served as exhibits that offered residents first-hand glimpses of what a smaller Leinefelde would look like. This, perhaps, is a technique Youngstown should consider as it moves forward with implementing its plan. As previously mentioned, one of that city's biggest concerns is maintaining the interest of its citizens as the planning process

slowly shifts to implementation. A few architectural competitions could help keep the citizenry of Youngstown engaged in the shrinking process by creating an exhibition piece, whether it be a residential building, a public space, an office or institutional building, that would have a positive impact on the city's built form and psyche. Architectural competitions could help Youngstown prove that smaller can indeed be better.

4.0   Lessons + Conclusion

Little has changed in the two years since *Plan Canada* Senior Editor Mark Seasons declared planning for decline the policy elephant in the living room. In spite of recent economic turmoil, planning for decline is still not being discussed to any great extent in this country. While there is a significant list of Canadian shrinking cities, a list that will most likely get longer in the near future, there are no Canadian models for decline management in an urban context. It seems that most Canadian politicians and planners still believe shrinkage should be avoided at all costs, rather than embraced. With no domestic examples to choose from, Canadian planners need to look abroad for examples to learn how to plan for urban decline.

Both Youngsotwn and Leinefelde have emerged as international models for decline management and offer three important lessons for Canadian planners. The two cities not only recognized that they were growing smaller, something many shrinking cities refuse to do, but they also believed the shrinking process was an opportunity to improve the quality of life for their residents. By placing shrinkage in a positive light, planners and politicians were able to

take action and create relevant master plans that focused on shrinkage rather than create master plans that were based on the elusive process of growth.

Acknowledge the Issue

Recognizing that shrinkage exists is the first step towards the development of relevant planning policy responses. Unlike Youngstown's local government, which took decades to effectively respond to its collapsing economy and shrinking population, Leinefelde's mayor and council quickly adopted a plan that acknowledged the issue and attempted to control its shrinkage. Although Leinefelde's collapse occurred approximately two decades after Youngstown's, the German municipality reacted much more swiftly than its American counterpart. Leinefelde implemented a master plan based on the principles of decline management approximately five years after steady population losses began. Today, the plan has been in effect for fifteen years and the town's population has stabilized. In contrast, Youngstown ignored its own demographic reality for decades. With an outdated plan in place that focused on a thriving steel industry, the city languished and was unable to stabilize its population losses. Had it acknowledged the issue sooner, Youngstown could be in a very different position today. This contrast should serve as a lesson to Canadian municipalities: if and when steady population and job losses occur, municipal leaders should recognize the issue and address the situation head on, rather than continuing to chase the elusive process of growth.

Unfortunately, Canadian cities have been slow off the mark and few want to recognize that they are in fact shrinking. But there are signs of hope. In a recent Request for Proposals issued by the City of Saint John, New Brunswick for consulting services to develop a new municipal

plan, city planners acknowledged that the previous municipal plan, passed in 1973, was "predicated on economic assumptions that did not materialize" (City of Saint John, 2009, p. 3). The RFP goes on to state that these economic shortcomings coupled with smaller households and suburbanization has "resulted in a decline in the City's population from nearly 90,000 people to its present level [of 68,000]" (ibid). Saint John's acknowledgement of its decline is an important first step for the city. As the municipal planning process unfolds, Saint John may very well be a city to watch to see if it is ready to emerge as a model for Canadian shrinkage. At this point, however, Saint John does not seem ready to *implement* any type of decline management strategy. Instead, it hopes one of the winning consultant's first steps will be the creation of a Growth Management Strategy Framework to respond to immediate development pressures while the Municipal Plan is being created. It may very well be up to the winning consultant team to demonstrate to the city how it could benefit from planning for decline.

Understand Decline as an Opportunity

Breaking the growth-decline dichotomy that forces shrinkage into a negative light is the only way politicians and residents will buy into a planning process defined by decline management. Youngstown believed that planning for shrinkage was an opportunity to engage an apathetic public and sceptical stakeholders, as well as relieve itself of an overabundance of costly infrastructure.

While political will was a defining factor in the creation of the Youngstown 2010 Plan, the involvement of Youngstown State University (YSU) from early on, and the inclusion of a wide variety of stakeholders in the visioning process, protected the plan from being interpreted by

the public as someone's political pet project. The engagement of the public throughout the entire planning process ensured that the final Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan would be viewed as a legitimate planning tool by the community. That public leaders in Youngstown embraced public participation and dialogue as a primary goal of the plan, and not as a peripheral one, helped ensure community ownership of the plan (Faga, 2006). As Hunter Morrison, former Director of YSU's Center for Urban and Regional Studies, argues:

> The difference is that here, there's an acknowledgement by the community at large, from the mayor on down to Joe Q. Taxpayer, that smaller is indeed better . . . It's not just the mayor declaring it's going to happen . . . No, this is what we've all agreed to. We've agreed we're going to be smaller. We've agreed we're going to adjust to the new economy. We've agreed we're going to have a better quality of life.   (In Fairbanks, 2008)

Proof of the community's acceptance of this plan occurred when 74 per cent of Youngstown voters supported a charter amendment requiring a review of the plan every ten years to coincide with the release of new census data (City of Youngstown, 2005). This will ensure that the plan remains relevant into the foreseeable future and will continue to serve as an effective tool to strategically position Youngstown for the future.

Leinefelde, on the other hand, saw the shrinkage process as an opportunity to access state and federal funding, as well as a prime opportunity to rid itself of excess infrastructure and improve the quality of life of its residents. Leinefelde left no stone unturned in its quest to become smaller:

> There is hardly anything that Leinefelde would not have taken advantage of: the EXPO world exhibition, the Stadtumbau Ost (Urban Restructuring in Eastern Germany) program, the Soziale Stadt (Socially Integrative City) program, architectural bids, student projects, model recycling experiments, combinations of various aid

schemes, networking, and the establishment of a local administration for Südstadt in order to involve the residents by way of workshops, working groups, a neighbourhood newspaper, senior citizen care, and other activities. (Steglich, 2005, p. 75)

Of key importance to Leinefelde was its use of international architectural competitions to improve the quality of housing for its residents. The innovative, high-quality housing units that resulted from these competitions demonstrated to politicians, planners and residents alike, that planning for decline posed a host of opportunities to create a better city.

Had Youngstown and Leinefelde not changed their views on shrinkage, both cities would most likely still have irrelevant master plans in place that would not help them manage decline effectively. Canadian politicians and planners should take note. Planning for decline, like planning for growth, is about quality, not quantity.

Take Action

One of the biggest factors for Leinefelde's decision to adopt a master plan that focused on strategic shrinkage was the desperation of the municipality's situation. With the collapse of its largest employer, its location close to the newly-accessible west German states of Hesse and Bavaria, its lack of employment alternatives and lack of attractive housing, Leinefelde had to act quickly and dramatically in order to have any hope of saving itself. Canadian cities do not have the 'benefit' of such dramatic urgency to spur them into action.

Planning for decline is not an easy political sell, especially in a country where state and federal grants and funding are often based on population. In Canada, as in the United States, funding is often doled out on a per capita basis and could, potentially, serve as a disincentive for Canadian cities to embrace decline management principles. In a recent staff-prepared discussion paper

released by the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM), staff argued that the municipality, which has declined by more than seventeen per cent since its population peak in 1961, now forms a smaller share of Nova Scotia's population and "with a declining share of population comes declining political representation and declining shares of funding through all manner of federal and provincial programs" (CBRM, 2009, p. 17). The fear of losing access to state and federal funding opportunities has prevented CBRM from implementing any type of plan that focuses on shrinkage.

State- and federal-level policy influenced the decision-making processes of both Youngstown and Leinefelde. Ohio had no state legislation in place to compel Youngstown to update its plan. The city could have chosen to flounder for another 20 years without a plan, since state legislation does not require one, but *local* politicians realized that their city would be best served by a plan that recognized the reality of Youngstown's situation and so they did something about it. Furthermore, while Ohio doled out funding largely on a per capita-basis, Thuringia's government used competitive-based subsidies as a carrot to spur its municipalities into action. Perhaps if more provincial and federal subsidy dollars were available to Canadian municipalities through competitive bidding processes linked to creating plans that are relevant to the demographic realities of a city, then more cities would be willing to plan to grow smaller.

In Youngstown, however, there seemed to be political recognition that attempts to secure a larger piece of the pie were doing more harm than good. Unanimous support from the mayor and council who ensured the necessary budget allocations were made in order for the plan to proceed was vital for the plan's survival. Furthermore, the plan was not shelved following the

municipal election in 2005, but continued to be championed by a newly-elected mayor; this is strong evidence that the plan was firmly grounded in the political establishment of the city. As Swope (2006) points out, the political "establishment" had become dominated by "a new generation of civic leaders" who were not directly connected to the steel mill glory days of the city. This allowed for a fresh approach to be taken, rather than one "haunted by ghosts of the mills" (ibid), which enabled this new group of political champions to identify the problems, develop potential solutions and allocate the necessary funds and resources to achieve transformative change (Faga, 2006).

As Canada's work force, including its planners and politicians, continue to age and retire, perhaps a new generation of planners and politicians will look beyond the growth imperative and see that planning for decline can help create a better, albeit smaller, city in which to live and enjoy a high quality of life.

With one in four large cities around the world experiencing population decline, the policy debate surrounding shrinkage is surprisingly small. Nonetheless, this report has outlined the global and Canadian processes of shrinkage, described the factors behind such trends as well as their impacts, and provided an overview of how different municipalities around the world have responded to this phenomenon. Once predominantly caused by famines, wars and disease, shrinkage is now a complex process caused by suburbanization, shifting economic and political structures and ageing of the population. It is no longer a process confined to specific geographical locations, such as the US Rust Belt and the former Soviet States, but is now a process that has impacted every corner of the world to some degree.

The Canadian debate on shrinkage has, for the most part, ignored cities in favour of peripheral regions. This has created an unbalanced focus that overlooks the urban element of Canadian shrinkage in spite of the fact that a substantial list of Canadian shrinking cities already exists. Knowing and understanding what other cities have done in the face of shrinkage will better position Canadian politicians and planners to do the same, if and when they are impacted by similar demographic trends.

For many cities, demolition has been the initial reaction to shrinkage, tearing down the overabundance of vacant and abandoned structures in order to stave off property devaluations, rising crime rates and an influx of 'undesirables'. Even more cities have implemented a wide range of vacant land management strategies, including temporary-use initiatives and greening strategies. The shortcoming of these approaches is that most still operate within a city-wide growth framework, so while they may be effective strategies for individual properties, they do not address the overarching problem of shrinkage that is affecting the city as a whole. Only a handful of cities have taken the next step and included decline management as a central pillar to their master plans, either following the reconfiguration model, concentrating development in some areas and vacating others, or the dispersion model, reducing the city's density without reducing its territory. Youngstown, Ohio and Leinefelde, Thuringia are two cities that have embraced shrinkage.

Both Youngstown and Leinefelde serve as strong international examples of how to plan for decline and both cities offer valuable lessons for Canadian shrinking cities, including the need to

acknowledge that shrinkage is occurring, the importance of understanding shrinkage as an opportunity and the benefits of taking action to plan for decline.

If Canada's recent economic woes prove to be more structural than cyclical, a host of municipalities in the country could be confronted with more permanent processes of population and job losses. If this occurs, local governments need to be able to look beyond planning policies that address growth management and may need to embrace principles of smart decline in order to right-size their cities and effectively stabilize their populations.

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