

**What helps or hinders the adoption of “good planning” principles in shrinking cities?  
A comparison of recent planning exercises in Sudbury, Ontario and Youngstown, Ohio**

by

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Laura Katherine Schatz

## ABSTRACT

In both academia and the popular media, much attention has been paid to the increasing number of people living in cities while a relatively understudied but related phenomenon is silently gaining strength: that of “shrinking cities.” In the context of massive economic restructuring, increasing globalization, and unprecedented social and demographic change, a growing number of cities in industrialized countries such as Germany, the United States, and Canada are experiencing a population decline. The usual approach of planners in these cities is either to do nothing or to focus on “growing” their cities to previous population levels. To date, however, both approaches have been largely unsuccessful in addressing the many and varied challenges that arise from population decline.

This leads to the overarching question I ask in this thesis: What are other possible approaches to planning besides a population and economic growth orientation that might be successfully implemented in shrinking cities? A small but growing number of shrinking cities researchers are encouraging planners in shrinking cities neither to focus on planning for growth nor to ignore decline but to focus on planning to meet the needs of the population that remains. While it can be argued that improving the quality of life of existing residents should be the goal of planners in all cities – growing or declining – what is “new” and “different” about planners focusing on quality of life in the context of shrinkage is the fundamental belief by shrinking cities researchers that cities which are declining in population *can* offer a high quality of life. These researchers argue, in a heretofore fragmented way, that this can be accomplished if planners adopt the following general principles for “good planning” in shrinking cities: leaving behind the assumption of future growth; using processes that are strategic, with an emphasis on citizen participation; adopting a balanced approach in addressing the needs of the community; and changing the role they play in the community. Unfortunately, the literature is not clear what factors might facilitate or impede the adoption of each principles.

In order to address this gap in the literature, I use these general principles as a point of departure for assessing and comparing the recent planning exercises in two shrinking cities: Youngstown, Ohio (which, in its recently-adopted Youngstown 2010 Plan, has begun to tackle the issues of population decline in a way that is ostensibly resembles the principles of good planning in shrinking cities) and Sudbury, Ontario (which has opted for the traditional “growth is the only option” approach in its recently-adopted Official Plan). Based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, I find that, taken as a whole, the principles of “good planning” for shrinking cities are in practice difficult to achieve, even where a city has actively begun to move away from the traditional focus on attracting new population growth. Whether or not planners in shrinking cities will decide to adopt these principles is influenced by a number of factors, including the presence or absence of young, innovative leadership, levels of devolution and autonomy, current fiscal structures, local economic structure, and political dynamics.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introduction

In both academia and the popular media, much attention has been paid to the trend towards global urbanization (that is, the increasing number of people living in cities) and the resulting problems associated with the growth of “megacities.” While it is true that a limited number of large cities are growing larger, a relatively understudied but related phenomenon is silently gaining strength: that of “shrinking cities.” In the context of an increasingly dominant system of capitalism (the very hallmark of which is uneven development) massive economic restructuring away from an industrial-based economy, increasing globalization, and unprecedented social and demographic change, many cities in industrialized countries such as Germany, the United States, and Canada are experiencing a decline of both population and economic activity. In many regions, shrinking cities have become the rule and throughout the world their numbers are increasing. Worldwide since 1990, the proportion of cities over 100,000 people with a declining population has almost doubled from 1 in 6 to more than 1 in 4 (Rieniets, 2005a). The negative impacts arising from the recent economic downturn felt by many cities (particularly older industrial cities) in the developed world means that this number may be even higher today. For instance, a recent article in the *Toronto Star* explains that “Oshawa [Ontario] residents hit hard by GM cutbacks are turning to food banks in droves” and many are considering leaving the city altogether in search of jobs elsewhere (Kennedy & Balkissoon, 2009). Another recent article discusses the potential negative effects of the impending closing of Pittsburgh Glass Works in Hawksebury, near the Ontario-Quebec border (Van Alphen, 2009). Traditional “sunbelt” areas are not immune and are also seeing the effects of the economic downturn:

Central Florida lost 9,700 people in the last year, largely as a result of people leaving in search of jobs. As Kunerth & Shrieves (2009) observe, “for a region that has grown like a bodybuilder on steroids, it's something of a shock.” What these stories reveal is just how vulnerable cities everywhere are to outside pressures and events.

This vulnerability may lead some to argue that, in the context of declining populations as a result of forces beyond their control, planners are powerless to effect positive change. Others may argue that planners in shrinking cities need to focus on “selling” their city in order to achieve past population levels. Both approaches are premised on the notions that growth is the only positive development in the life of a city and that municipal officials are powerless in the face of global pressures. There are indeed examples of cities dealing with population decline using both of these approaches (Pallagst, 2005; Allweil, 2007), particularly the second as will be seen in Chapter 3. However, a review of case studies of shrinking cities leads to the conclusion that neither of these are desirable options. Doing nothing is not the answer: shrinking cities face numerous challenges, such as infrastructure overcapacity and high vacancy rates, that are unlikely to be addressed (and are likely to worsen) if left alone. Neither is blindly pursuing growth that is unlikely to occur at all costs a practical solution in the context of shrinking municipal revenues or any solution to issues such as growing social polarization.

This leads to the overarching question I ask in this thesis: **What are other possible approaches to planning besides a population and economic growth orientation that might be successfully implemented in shrinking cities?** Indeed, while the shrinking cities research remains largely focused on the causes and effects of population decline, a small but growing number of shrinking cities researchers have begun to speculate (in a heretofore fragmented way) about the ways in which planners might have a positive impact in the context of population

decline. The overall approach advocated by these researchers (and others in the urban regeneration and strategic planning fields who are examining effective planning approaches in the context of population decline) prompts planners in shrinking cities neither to focus on planning for growth nor to ignore decline but *to focus on planning to meet the needs of the population that remains*. When one examines both extreme views of planning in the context of population decline mentioned above, it is clear that one important consideration is lost: the quality of life of remaining residents (for few shrinking cities end up emptying completely). The approach put forth in the shrinking cities literature puts this consideration (and the role of planners in achieving it) at the forefront. Of course, it can be argued that improving the quality of life of existing residents should be the goal of planners in all cities – growing or declining – and that shrinking cities researchers are not adding anything new in this regard. However, as will be discussed below, the prevailing notion in planning research, education, and practice is that the only successful cities are those that are growing. Cities experiencing population decline are commonly viewed as “failures.” Thus, what is “new” and “different” about planners focusing on quality of life in the context of shrinkage is the fundamental belief that cities which are declining in population *can* still be successful; that is, they *can* offer a high quality of life.

Certainly, shrinking cities researchers recognize that there are many outside pressures facing cities that local planners will not be able to change; however, in leaving behind the endless quest for achieving population growth and focusing on improving the quality of life of remaining residents by minimizing the challenges of and capitalizing upon the opportunities present by population decline, shrinking cities researchers maintain that planners in shrinking cities can make a positive difference that is at once proactive, effective, and realistic. Indeed, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, even in the face of global pressures beyond their control,

municipal officials (particularly in North America) in both growing and shrinking cities continue to have responsibility for a wide range of areas that affect residents' quality of life; the key, again, to planning in the context of population decline is minimizing the challenges and capitalizing upon the opportunities (a notion which, to date, was not presented in the literature as possible in the context of population decline).

Of course, this is not to say that the task of improving quality of life in the context of population decline is an easy one and, as will be discussed below, shrinking cities researchers recognize that it will be a difficult task. The challenges arising from urban shrinkage are many, including vacant properties (many of which are contaminated brownfield sites), infrastructure overcapacity, shrinking municipal revenues, chronic unemployment, and high crime rates. Furthermore, the quest to develop effective planning strategies in shrinking cities is complicated by the fact that the challenges and opportunities vary with the form of shrinkage: for instance, a shrinking city within a shrinking region (such as Youngstown, Ohio and Sudbury, Ontario) will face a set of challenges that may differ in certain respects from that faced by a shrinking city within a growing region (such as Detroit). Exacerbating the difficulty of the task of planning in shrinking cities is the fact that the experience of urban planners has traditionally been focused on managing growth and its corresponding issues such as the increased demand for infrastructure, not dealing proactively with population decline. Shrinking cities researchers have only recently begun to consider how traditional planning models, theories, and tools need to be revised in the context of population decline. However, according to shrinking cities researchers, planners in shrinking cities can take heart that not all impacts are negative: population decline also leads to less congestion and presents opportunities for incorporating more greenspace into the urban environment. First, however, planners must learn to recognize these opportunities.

So, what do shrinking cities researchers say this “needs of remaining residents” approach entails? Indeed, central in the shrinking cities literature is the notion that planners can improve the quality of life for remaining residents in shrinking cities as long as *the way that planning currently happens* in these cities (that is, doing nothing or “going for growth”) changes. Unfortunately, the bulk of this growing body of literature remains focused on addressing the physical effects of shrinkage in order to improve quality of life, and has not yet addressed in a comprehensive manner how the other aspects of urban life – economic, social, and environmental – should be addressed in an atmosphere of shrinking municipal revenues and growing resident disenchantment. Fortunately, the bodies of literature on strategic planning and urban regeneration in the context of decline are both instructional in this regard. In reviewing this diverse collection of literature, I have gathered and assembled the following general principles for “good planning” in shrinking cities:

- Planners must **leave behind the assumption of future growth**;
- Planners must use processes that are **strategic, with an emphasis on citizen participation**;
- Planners must **adopt a balanced approach** in addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community; and
- Planners must **change the role they play** in the community.

According to the literature, in adopting these general principles of good planning, planners<sup>1</sup> can make a positive difference in the quality of life offered by shrinking cities, rather than just doing nothing or blindly adopting the “growth is the only option” approach. Of course, similar to the overall goal of “quality of life” being relevant also to growing cities, many of these specific

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<sup>1</sup> I adopt the broad definition of urban planners used by Luithlen (1998), who defines urban planners as “all those who are professionally involved as representatives of the public sector in making decisions relating to land use, environmental conditions, and development” (p.69). Accordingly, Luithlen’s definition includes “not only professional planners but also highway engineers, economists, sociologists, and, more recently, ecologists. These may be working at local or central/regional government levels” (p.69).

principles of good planning can equally apply to growing cities. What is different in the recent shrinking cities literature, however, is the fact that they are being put forth by these researchers as being as both *possible* and *necessary* in the context of sustained population decline.

It is important to note that the efficacy of these principles in improving the quality of life of remaining residents has yet to be tested and doing so is not the focus of this thesis. However, it can certainly be inferred at this point – given the inefficacy of other approaches and the inherent logic of developing a more “internal” focus to planning in shrinking cities – that this approach is more likely to improve the quality of life of those currently living in shrinking cities. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the principles of good planning in shrinking cities are being realized in practice and what opportunities and obstacles exist to planning using these concepts. In fact, little is known in the existing research about either. In order to accomplish this purpose, I am using these general principles of good planning in shrinking cities as a point of departure for assessing and comparing the two recent planning exercises in two shrinking cities: Youngstown, Ohio (which has begun to tackle the issues of population decline in a way that is ostensibly “different” than traditional approaches and which, in part at least, seems to be based on the principles of good planning in shrinking cities) and Sudbury, Ontario (which has opted for the traditional “growth is the only option” approach). Both cities are facing long-term population decline in the context of overall regional population decline. In the remaining sections of this introductory chapter, I orient the reader to the issue of shrinking cities in terms of its growing prominence and persistence. I then discuss the lack of attention paid to it in both the professional and academic realms of urban planning, which has resulted in a pressing need for research in this area. I end with an outline of the chapters that follow, including a description of the cases upon which this comparative study is based.

## 2.0 Shrinking Cities: A persisting phenomenon

Historically there are many examples of cities shrinking in population. As Oswalt and Rieniets (2006c) state, “[s]hrinking cities have always been a feature of settlement history, a fact that sank into oblivion during the period of expansion precipitated by industrialization” (p.26). The sheer numbers and persistence of the shrinking cities phenomenon is what makes urban population decline today different from shrinkage in pre-industrial times (Rieniets, 2005b). This sentiment is reflected in Polèse and Shearmur’s (2006) argument that, while regional decline is not new, “...we suggest that the scope and duration of decline will, in coming decades, occur on a scale unknown in the past” (p.24). The modern causes of urban shrinkage will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. For instance, economic restructuring from an industrial-based towards a “knowledge-based” economy has contributed to the shrinkage of older industrial cities of developed nations (Rieniets, 2005a and b; Rieniets, 2006; Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006c and e; Birg, 2005; Irurah, Park, & Yeang, 2005; Friedrichs, 1993; Polèse & Shearmur, 2006; Müller, 2006; Genske & Ruff, 2006; Schilling & Logan, 2008). On an even more fundamental level, however, the theory of “uneven development” advanced by Neil Smith in the mid-1980s indicates that capitalism, by its very nature, leads to “uneven development” resulting in the gap in distribution of growth between growing and declining regions becoming even more advanced in the future.

As explained by Smith (2008):

The point is that uneven development is the hallmark of the geography of capitalism. It is not just that capitalism fails to develop evenly, that due to accidental and random factors the geographical development of capitalism represents some stochastic deviation from a generally even process. The uneven development of capitalism is structural rather than statistical. The resulting geographical patterns are thoroughly determinate (as opposed to “determinist”) and are thus unique to capitalism. (p.4)

The competitive nature of capitalism necessarily results in areas of growth and decline in the perennial search for new sources of profit. This contributes to the conclusion in the literature

that more cities are expected to become “shrinking cities” in the coming decades (Rieniets, 2005b; Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006b and c; Irurah, Park, & Yeang, 2005; Polèse & Shearmur, 2006; Andersen, 2005; Koziol, 2004; Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Müller, 2004; Müller & Siedentop, 2004; Grossman, 2004; Martinez-Fernandez & Wu, 2007; Mace et al., 2007). Even in growing regions, particularly in the United States, central cities continue to empty out as people move to the suburbs creating a “hole in the doughnut” effect (Wiechmann, 2006; Pallagst, 2005; Fishman, 2005). As will be discussed further in Chapter 2, although shrinkage occurs on a regional level in the United States, since the 1950s, more and more cities are becoming shrinking cities as a result of a process of “regional restructuring” in which people and jobs shift from the core of the region to the periphery (Fishman, 2005). In these cases, shrinkage is embedded in an overall context of growth.

Whatever the reason (and more reasons will be discussed in Chapter 2), Rieniets (2005b) warns that “...cities are shrinking in unprecedented numbers: more than one out of every four large cities in the world lost population during the 1990s, and general population prognoses suggest that the number of shrinking cities will increase...” (p.4). Specifically in the United States: “During the run-up of urbanization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, urban population loss was rare and episodic. After 1930, and with the exception of the 1940s, it became the norm as population losses were significant and prolonged” (Beauregard, 2003, p.672). Decline has been particularly pronounced in the struggling industrial “Rust Belt” region of the United States (Pallagst, 2005; Cleveland Shrinking Cities Institute, 2007; Rieniets, 2005b; Beauregard, 2003) and, as just mentioned, in central cities even where the entire region is growing (Fishman, 2005). According to Rybczynski and Linneman (1999), between 1950 and 1990, 26 of the 77 largest American cities (500,000+) shrank by an average of 24 percent (this includes shrinking cities within both

growing and declining regions). Of large cities that lost population (many of which did so in the context of regional growth), losses in some have been dramatic (for example, Detroit has lost about half a million people since 1970 while Philadelphia has lost more than 350,000).

Furthermore, “this decline is neither merely recent nor episodic” (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999, p.33). American cities that have been declining in population have been doing so at a steady rate and the decline continues today (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Pallagst, 2005).

According to Popper and Popper (2002):

Our history and planning have given us a sense that the U.S. population is on a permanent roll, that is will inevitably continue to increase everywhere. This belief has in it a strong element of myth. In fact, the U.S. has experienced population spurts at various times and in various places, but that increase is by no means universal. It has occurred in some parts of the country but not others. Thus, the American infatuation with growth has always meant overlooking an important chunk of reality. (p.1)

In Canada, growth is similarly unevenly distributed; the vast majority of the population resides in a relatively small number of large metropolitan areas (Seasons, 2007). According to Simmons and Bourne (2007), two-thirds of all growth in Canada during the last census period occurred in the six largest places (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa-Gatineau, Calgary, and Edmonton) with population over 1 million. On the flipside, many Canadian cities (especially resource- and industrial-based cities outside of commuting range of large cities) are experiencing prolonged periods of population decline (Seasons, 2007; Simmons & Bourne, 2007; Shearmur & Polèse, 2007; Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Hall & Hall, 2006; Leadbeater, 2007). In fact, 37 of 144 Canadian cities lost population between 2001 and 2006 (Simmons & Bourne, 2007).

Unlike in the United States where a large number of central cities are shrinking within growing regions, shrinking cities in Canada tend to be located in what Leadbeater (2007) calls the “hinterland” of the country: the periphery of larger metropolitan areas and otherwise isolated regions in Atlantic region, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and northern British Columbia. Of course,

population decline is not a new phenomenon in Canada, where many cities are familiar with “boom and bust;” however,

... a half century of continued demographic expansion, coupled with frequent interventions by government – for example, in terms of regional development and social welfare policies – have given us false feelings of security. Recently, it has become apparent that population decline of (and within) cities has become a widespread phenomenon. The security blanket provided by continued population growth has been removed. (Simmons & Bourne, 2007, p.13)

The trend towards population decline in Canada’s hinterland is expected to continue in the future (Simmons & Bourne, 2007; Polèse & Shearmur, 2006; Leadbeater, 2007; Hall & Hall, 2006):

“...given the aging demographic structure, [the number of shrinking cities in Canada] is ...likely to increase in the next decade with the decline becoming much more widespread and more visible” (Simmons & Bourne, 2007, p.19).

Similar to the situation in Canada’s hinterland, many peripheral regions in other industrialized countries are in a state of accelerated decline and hence the number of shrinking communities within them is increasing. For instance, the decline of peripheral resource- and industrial-based communities is happening in countries such as Sweden, Finland, Norway, France, and Australia (Polèse & Shearmur, 2003 and 2006; Cunningham-Sabot & Fol, 2006; Ward, 1999; Kitchen, 2003; Couch et al., 2005; Martinez-Fernandez & Wu, 2006 and 2007; Munck, 2005; Jauhiainen, 2004). According to Shearmur and Polèse (2007), “...the most remote (often resource-dependent) regions in the western world are facing population decline” (p.33). In Finland, for instance, where during the 1990s some cities grew with the location of high technology industries within their boundaries, “...peripheral rural areas, towns in the countryside and small industrial towns could not take advantage of the technological turn and they continued to lose population” (Jauhiainen, 2004, p.31). Moreover, the phenomenon of urban shrinkage is becoming increasingly prominent worldwide (Andersen, 2005; Kabisch, Haase, & Haase, 2006;

Irurah, Park, & Yeang, 2005), influencing such countries as Japan and South Africa (Andersen, 2005).

As will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, population decline affects cities, and thus urban planning, on a fundamental level. As Sander (2006) explains, the growing number of shrinking cities means that “[t]he built city as presently structured has come under increasing pressure for change. It has become more evident than in the past that many aspects of urban development and planning are now experiencing far-reaching change” (p.1). The question becomes: given the increased prominence and likely persistence of the trend of shrinking cities, how are urban planners and planning academics currently addressing the issues associated with population decline?

### **3.0 Shrinking Cities: A growing but relatively unaddressed planning challenge**

Unfortunately, despite the recent emergence of a discussion taking place largely in Europe on shrinking cities, the issue of planning for population decline has yet to gain significant traction in both planning practice and planning research, particularly in North America. The attention of academic planning research is largely focused on how growing cities can manage increases in population; when it is undertaken, most academic research on cities that are losing population tends to focus on what these cities can do to reverse the decline and to start growing again. Similarly, the focus of urban planners – especially in North America – largely remains how to attract and manage future growth, even where future population growth is unlikely or even impossible (Cleveland Shrinking Cities Institute, 2007). Why does the growth paradigm (that is, the paradigm that growth is necessary, desirable, and achievable) persist in both realms? The answer, it appears, lies in the “taboo” of actively planning for, or indeed even admitting the likelihood, of future population decline.

### 3.1 A shift in perception: Today, growth is the only option

Historically, as Rieniets (2005b) explains, growth was not always seen as the only positive development in the life of a city. In fact, there was a time when urban scholars and local officials saw shrinkage as a desirable antidote to the negative effects of growth. In the context of rapid industrialization in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, many cities in Europe and North America multiplied their population, leading to acute housing shortages, infrastructure problems, and poor social and hygienic conditions. In many of these cities, on-going in-migration was soon accompanied by partial out-migration. Some critics of the industrial metropolis saw decentralization and even shrinkage as desirable alternatives. For instance, Ebenezer Howard's *Garden City* (1898) presented as desirable the movement of people out of crowded cities to the country. According to Rieniets (2005b), Howard's ideas particularly caught on in Russia, where the Garden City was declared urban planning doctrine in the early 1920s. Planners in America also caught on to the idea of low density and decentralization. Frank Lloyd Wright's 1932 work *The Disappearing City* promoted extremely low densities to reverse the failures of urban centralization. As Rieniets (2005b) states,

[w]hat all these visions—and many others—have in common is that ideas of shrinkage were perceived as desirable, controllable, and progressive developments as opposed to the undesired, uncontrolled, and failed urbanization of the early industrial metropolises. (p.3)

Rieniets (2005b) goes on to explain that what is different today is not just the sheer numbers and persistence of shrinking cities, but the way they are perceived:

Because we customarily associate urban growth and urban livelihood with economic prosperity, shrinking cities are perceived as a symptom of crisis, an undesirable side effect of failed economic and political policy. And it is widely hoped and believed that the economy, politics, and—last but not least—urban planning can find appropriate solutions. (Rieniets, 2005b, p.5)

Because of this shift in perception, planning proactively for likely future population decline is politically difficult. Put simply, shrinking is a political taboo amongst politicians because of the negative connotations associated with urban decline (Allweil, 2007; Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006). Of course, a certain degree of reluctance in facing the prospects of long-term population decline is understandable given that most effects of shrinkage are not positive, as will be seen in Chapter 2. However, problems arise when politicians automatically associate shrinkage with failure and thus do not address the issue realistically and candidly, instead promising that the next project or program will restore the city to its peak population (Allweil, 2007). Indeed, mayors who are candid about a city's demographic prospects may not get re-elected (Allweil, 2007). As Beauregard (2003) explains, “[i]n a political economy where growth, particularly for civic leaders, has always been ideal, population loss – whether absolute or relative – is a stigma...” (p.673). Even in Germany, where the academic debate on shrinking cities has been growing since the turn of the century, “...demographic decline has been only sporadically discussed in the local political arena, and when the issue is broached, it is only to debate about reversing the process, i.e., achieving growth” (Müller & Siedentop, 2004, p.7). According to Hollbach-Grömig and Trapp (2006), “[d]emographic change and the discussion on how to deal with it is not only a complex issue but also a politically and emotionally highly charged subject” (p.17).

The tendency for politicians to engage in “growth talk” is especially pronounced in North America (Leo & Brown, 2000; Leo & Anderson, 2006). Leo and Anderson (2006) explain that

[g]rowth is to North American civic leaders what publicity is to Hollywood stars; there is no such thing as bad growth and no such thing as too much of it. If we take local media seriously, we may come away with the impression that growth is the elixir that cures all ills, from potholes to poverty, and that any city that is not growing rapidly is being ‘left behind’ and is ‘off the map.’ The city is seen, first and foremost, as a ‘growth machine’ ... and is valued only if it conforms to that image. (p.169)

This fixation with growth has deep roots in United States and Canada where “the settlement of the west and the industrial revolution were marked by boosterism, as expanding cities competed for investment” (Leo & Anderson, 2006, p.169). This sentiment has carried through to the present day, with the effect that “cities that are growing rapidly, or have grown to a great size, are the ‘successful,’ desirable, and admired ones, while residents of Nowheresville struggle with a diminished sense of self-worth” (Leo & Anderson, 2006, p.169). According to Leo and Anderson (2006), this diminished sense of self-worth felt prompts civic leaders of shrinking cities to pursue pro-growth policies that are often damaging to the health of slow- or no-growth cities. Again, this tendency is particularly pronounced in North America, which may explain why the emerging debate on alternatives to the growth paradigm for planning in shrinking cities is largely (but not exclusively) European.

### **3.2 A lack of tools for planners to effectively deal with shrinkage**

One of the main contributors to the persistence of the growth paradigm is the fact that disciplines of urban planning and urban design emerged in response to rapid urban growth in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries for the purpose of controlling and redistributing urban growth. As such, while there are tools, models, and legal mechanisms to deal with growth, there are none to deal with shrinkage (Rieniets, 2005b; Cleveland Shrinking Cities Institute, 2007; Kabisch, Haase, & Haase, 2006; Andersen, 2005; Schilling & Logan, 2008). For example, infrastructure policy and planning has traditionally been geared towards planning for new growth and increasing capacity (Moss, 2008). Nuissl and Rink (2005) explain that strategies to curb sprawl (which still happens in shrinking cities) are largely focused on the problem in the context of population growth. Rieniets (2005b) explains that

...architects and planners are being faced with an entirely new task for which nothing in their previous experience has prepared them. Instead of designing new buildings, old buildings have to be deconstructed, dismantled or altered; instead of designing new infrastructures, old infrastructures have to be reduced, reorganized, and adapted to less intense use; instead of designing buildings for old programs, new programs have to be invented for existing buildings, and so on. (p.6)

Most of the suggestions for decreasing urban densities mentioned in the previous section never went beyond the realm of visions. As such, planning for growth has become somewhat of a familiar “routine.” As Jessen (2006) notes, in the context of being focused for so long on controlling growth, “...something in the way of a placid routine developed in urban planning on the basis of saturated experience” (p.8).

Indeed, Rieniets (2005b) argues that urban planning as a profession has developed a “...quasi causal relationship with urban growth. Its methods, visions, and values, only become justified through the assumption of continuous growth...shrinking cities have been ignored, forgotten or considered taboo” (p.1). To Squires (2003), “[t]he emphasis on growth is not a response to any compelling social science evidence [of the benefits of growth]. Rather, it reflects the values and interests of those in power who make policy decisions and who benefit from this approach to urban development” (p.28). According to these arguments, this “quasi-causal” relationship with growth and the desire of those in power to achieve growth for their own gain (that is, an increase in the market value of the land and resources they control which can only happen in the context of growth) has lead urban policymakers to focus on reversing population decline, rather than finding ways to deal with it in a way that that improves the quality of life of remaining residents, regardless of growth or decline. In explaining the failed revitalization attempts in Baltimore and Detroit, Andersen (2005) finds problematic the one-sided focus on achieving population growth: “...in the past hundred years growth has been the goal and the ideal that planners, politicians and architects have been working to achieve and

control. But with these failed revitalization strategies it seems that decline is here to stay and that growth is not attainable for all cities” (p.4).

### **3.3 A focus in planning research on growth**

It seems likely that part of the reason for urban planning’s focus on growth is the fact that planning research – when it deals with issues of population decline, which is relatively less often than when it deals with issues associated with urban population growth (Ward, 1999; Seasons, 2007; Rieniets, 2005b) – similarly concentrates on how shrinking cities can achieve growth. As a result, planners in shrinking cities are left with little guidance on how to deal with the effects of population decline other than trying to reverse it. In Canada, according to Hall and Hall (2008), current academic research in this area, while acknowledging the issue, does not address how urban areas should plan if they leave behind the assumption of future growth. In general, in the Canadian urban planning literature

...while there is an appreciation of the unevenness in growth rates across the Canadian urban system, all too few articles were focused on decline and no-growth as continuing trends that require further research and planning attention. In their strategy recommendations, articles were keen to discuss methods to attract growth, as well as the challenges associated with growth, and growth management strategies. Issues of direct pertinence to declining and no-growth areas are obscured. When policy-makers and planners seeking solutions for urban areas facing these conditions turn to the literature they may be told why they are in decline, but the guidance they are presented with constitutes, for the most part, denial. Growth is overwhelmingly presented as expected and normal. (Hall & Hall, 2008, pp.21-22)

Evidently, the “dogma of growth” so prevalent in urban planning practice also dominates to a large extent planning education and research despite the likely persistence of the trend of population decline in many communities (Allweil, 2007; Leadbeater, 2007; Bontje, 2004). Leo and Anderson (2006) agree that the tendency in the local media and policy literature to engage in “growth talk” extends to mainstream academic literature in which there is a “subtler and unintended but nevertheless pervasive tendency to emphasize the benefits of growth and

underplay the costs, combined with insufficient analysis of the consequences and policy implications of different rates of growth” (p.171). Studies of growth tend to cast growth in a positive light. The opposite is true of studies of decline, most of which simply track the cycles of demographic change and make broadly generalizations about the policy implications that lack nuance or detail, for instance referring to growing cities as “winners” and shrinking cities as “losers.” According to Leo and Anderson (2006),

...the existing literature has tended to view urban population growth in terms of stereotypes and does not encompass the kind of research necessary to develop a nuanced understanding of the policy implications of different rates of growth. We argue that such research is needed to fill an important lacuna in urban studies and to support intelligent policy-making. (p.173)

In short, there exists in the bulk of the existing literature dealing with population decline a general notion that the absence of population growth represents a failure, with the implication that the only strategies discussed as “effective” are those that seek to increase population. In the context of the likely increase in the number of cities which will experience long-term population decline, this assumption needs to be challenged. Fortunately, a body of literature has begun to emerge which calls for a shift away from the growth paradigm in the context of long-term population decline. Most importantly, it introduces the notion that cities can be successful and liveable in the absence of population growth.

### **3.4 The emerging shrinking cities literature and the need for more research**

As a reaction to the lack of attention paid to this issue in both the academic and professional realms, a debate has recently begun on how to plan for and design shrinking cities. This debate originated in Europe, prompted primarily by the dramatic population decline in Eastern Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall (Kabisch, Haase, & Haase, 2006; Allweil, 2007; Rieniets, 2005b; Moss, 2008). Since the turn of the century, there have been a number of

events in Europe dealing with the issue of shrinking cities and policies have been developed on both the local and national level (such as *Stadtumbau Ost*) which are focused on deconstruction and conversion measures (Wiechmann, 2007a and b). The German government-funded Shrinking Cities Project has produced case studies on shrinking cities in Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Russia, and the United States. A lively academic debate is taking place on the causes and effects of shrinkage, and the planning strategies to cope with it, contributed to by such European researchers as Wiechmann (2003; 2007a and b), Moss (2008), Müller & Siedentop (2004), and Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp (2006).

While the swift shrinkage of New Orleans brought on by Hurricane Katrina (and more recently the economic downturn) has brought the issue of shrinkage more to the forefront in North America, the debate has yet to gain the same momentum here as it has in Europe (Allweil, 2007; Pallagst, 2005). Pallagst (2005) notes that particularly in the United States, there is less active discussion about shrinking cities, largely because a strong stigma remains attached to admitting and planning for population decline. While in North America the latest trend in urban and regional planning sphere is “smart growth,” several concepts of which could relate to shrinkage (such as the importance of containing sprawl), “...it has to be noted that – in order to achieve political acceptance – the center of the concept is growth, however in a tamed variation. An active discussion of urban, regional, or metropolitan shrinkage, as it is provided recently by European planners, is missing” (Pallagst, 2005, p.4). Of course, this is not to say that the issue of shrinking cities is completely ignored in the North American academic literature. The Berkeley-based Shrinking Cities International Research Network is examining shrinking cities in a global perspective, with comparative case studies from Mexico, Brazil, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Canada, South Korea, and Australia. Research such as that put forth by Popper and

Popper (2002), Dewar (2006), and Schilling and Logan (2008) addresses planning issues associated with shrinking cities. Also in the United States, the Cleveland Shrinking Cities Institute – a practice-based initiative – focuses on finding effective urban planning and urban design methods for the shrinking older industrial cities of Northeast Ohio. While no such group has been formed yet in Canada, researchers such as Bourne and Simmons (2003), Polèse and Shearmur (2003; 2006), and Leadbeater (2007) are examining the causes of regional decline in the Canadian context. The majority of a recent issue of *Plan Canada* was devoted to the issue of planning for population decline. In addition, Leo and Anderson (2006) and Leo and Brown (2000) have studied urban development policies in slow growth regions in Canada, the conclusions about which they argue might be equally applied to those regions experiencing population decline.

The momentum of the growing debate surrounding the shrinking cities phenomenon needs to be sustained and built upon, especially in North America where the recent economic downturn has brought issues of urban decline into the forefront. Shrinking cities are not going to disappear and thus an open dialogue – within both the professional and academic realms – is needed on the spatial effects of population decline and their consequences for all levels of government (Müller & Siedentop, 2004). Particularly with respect to academic research, there is a need for international comparative studies because, even though the context varies, shrinking cities all over the world face many of the same issues (Pallagst, 2005; Leo & Brown, 2000; Kabisch, Haase, & Haase, 2006). To date, according to Pallagst (2005), the issue of shrinking cities has been “widely underrepresented in international comparative research” (p.1). Regardless of methods used, however, officials at all levels of government, as well as planning researchers, need to start addressing this issue in a way that leaves behind assumptions of the

likelihood of, and necessity of, growth. As Seasons (2007) succinctly puts it: “let’s talk about place decline and better still, act with a basis of sound planning” (p.6).

#### **4.0 Summary of the chapters that follow**

This thesis research is an attempt to push the shrinking cities debate further in the direction of understanding how planners in shrinking cities might move towards adopting strategies that are geared towards their particular demographic context. In the chapters that follow, in addition to reviewing the shrinking cities literature, which provides general principles for “good planning” in shrinking cities, I assess and compare two case studies of recent planning initiatives in the context long-term population decline. More specifically, in Chapter 2, I provide a definition of shrinking cities, discuss the usual causes of urban decline and where it is most prevalent, and identify the common effects of urban shrinkage. I continue my literature review in Chapter 3, in which I discuss in more detail the four principles of “good planning” in shrinking cities and present my research questions. In Chapter 4, I describe my methodology for conducting this research, including my choice of research strategy, research design, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. In Chapter 5, I introduce the Youngstown case study: including the physical, economic, environmental, and social context of the planning process and a general overview of the main components of the Youngstown 2010 Vision and Citywide Plan. I then introduce the Sudbury case study in Chapter 6, also with an overview of the physical, economic, environmental, and social context of the planning process and the main components of the Official Plan. In Chapter 7, I use the general principles of good planning in shrinking cities gathered from the literature as a point of departure for comparing the plans. The result of this comparison is an assessment of how each planning exercise “measures up” against the principles of good planning and what factors have either facilitated or impeded the adoption

of each principle. In the final chapter, I surmise how these case studies can provide lessons for planners in shrinking cities facing similar demographic decline and how the issues uncovered in this research can be used to further advance the growing body of theory concerning planning in shrinking cities.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SHRINKING CITIES LITERATURE I: COMMON CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF URBAN POPULATION DECLINE

#### 1.0 Introduction

The next two chapters present a review of the developing body of literature on shrinking cities, which is quite diverse and sometimes contradictory. Oswalt (2005) cautions that even the term “shrinking cities” is problematic because it fails to reflect the complexity of this phenomenon: “...behind the term are hidden various causes, processes, and effects that the words themselves do not reveal” (p.12). In reviewing the shrinking cities literature, I attempt to delve beneath the apparent simplicity of the term in order to address a number of questions. This chapter provides answers to some basic “shrinking cities” questions. First, how are shrinking cities defined? Second, what are the usual causes of urban population decline (influencing the pattern of urban population decline) and where is it most prevalent? Finally, what are the most common effects of urban shrinkage? In the next chapter, I incorporate discussions from the literature on planning practices in shrinking cities into a framework for *how* planning should take place so that it is most effective in dealing with the unique issues shrinking cities face; in particular, I focus on the proper goal of planning in shrinking cities, the best method for accomplishing this goal, and the proper role of planners in shrinking cities.

#### 2.0 How are “shrinking cities” defined?

Likely because this is a relatively recent area of research, there is no widely accepted definition of the term “shrinking cities.” In fact, many researchers (particularly Canadian

researchers) do not use the term at all. Where it is used, some researchers define shrinking cities purely in terms of population decline while others define it in terms of both population and economic decline. For instance, Grossman (2004) refers to “declining cities,” which she seems to define as cities that “have lost population” (p.1). In the Canadian literature, for example, Bourne and Simmons (2003) and Simmons and Bourne (2007) discuss the challenges faced by “growing” versus “declining” regions, distinguishing between the two on the basis of gains versus losses (or stagnation) in population numbers. Hall and Hall (2008) use a similar distinction in comparing the attention in academia paid to “growing” versus “declining” urban areas, as do Leo and Anderson (2006) in their comparison of policies in a slow-growth and a rapidly-growing city, Leo and Brown (2000) in their discussion of urban development policy in slow growth regions, and Simmons (2003) in his examination of the characteristics of “declining cities.” Polèse and Shearmur (2003) examine the causes and consequences of “population decline” in peripheral regions. More recently, Shearmur and Polèse (2007) discuss declining or stagnating peripheral areas, terms which they use to refer to those peripheral areas facing population decline caused by declining employment. However, in an earlier article, they use the term “regional decline” to refer to a “decline in absolute population and employment numbers” (Polèse & Shearmur, 2006, p.34). In a similar way, Seasons (2007) refers to “place decline,” which he seems to define as “population and economic decline” (p.6). Thus, most of the Canadian literature on this topic does not use the term “shrinking cities” using instead the language of “growth” and “decline.” The bulk of this literature distinguishes between the two primarily on the basis of population numbers, with economic decline presented as a cause and a consequence. However, Polèse and Shearmur (2006) and Seasons (2007) add a decline in employment numbers to their definition of “place” or “regional decline,” meaning that, in the

context of their discussions, a “declining city” is one that is experiencing a loss of both population and economic activity.

The term “shrinking cities” tends to be used more often in the international literature, in particular the German literature on “*schrumpfenden städte*” (“shrinking cities”). However, most of these researchers use the term without providing any formal definition, leaving it to the reader to infer from the discussion to what exactly the author is referring. For instance, Franz (2004) seems to define “shrinking cities” as cities facing demographic decline. In fact, he deliberately divorces population shrinkage from economic decline in order to examine “whether or not a declining population means lagging economic growth” (p.1). He finds that the mere fact that a city is “shrinking” (in population) does not necessarily mean that city is declining economically. Hollbach-Grömig and Trapp (2006) appear to define “shrinking communities” as those that are experiencing “declining populations,” the result of which is “economic problems” (p.3). In the following statement, Irurah, Park, and Yeang (2005) also seem to be equating urban shrinkage with population decline: “Everybody is talking about global urbanization... Yet there is also an opposite trend at work: that of the *shrinking city*. City planners must be prepared to deal with a dynamic process that includes simultaneous growth and *decline of population*” (p.156, emphasis added). Other authors similarly infer that a shrinking city is one that is losing population for a variety of reasons (including economic reasons) and with a variety of consequences (including economic decline) (Mäding, 2004; Müller, 2004; Müller & Siedentop, 2004; Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006b; Rieniets, 2006; Ward, 1999; Cleveland Shrinking Cities Institute, 2007; Hollander & Popper, 2007; Popper & Popper, 2002; Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999).

Fortunately, some researchers provide a formal definition of the term “shrinking cities,” although definitions vary in content and helpfulness. Oswalt (2005) explains, somewhat

vaguely, that the term “shrinkage” refers to “an essential change: the epoch of growth has come to an end... [T]he process of urbanization has reached its zenith and is declining” (p.12). On a more specific note, Andersen (2005) explains that the definition of “shrinking cities” depends on the perspective one takes when examining the phenomenon:

Among other things, the phenomena of Shrinking Cities can be seen from a political-economical, a sociological and an urban planning perspective. The political-economical perspective sees Shrinking Cities as being cities which suffer from an economic decline, while the sociological and urban planning perspectives see shrinking cities as cities with a decline in population. (p.2)

Andersen herself, although focusing largely on urban planning issues, adopts the perspective that a shrinking city is one that faces both population and economic decline:

This is seen as the most suitable because a city can be suffering from a decline in population, but still have a growing economy and, on the other hand, a city can suffer from a declining economy and still have a rising population. It is the opinion that a Shrinking City both has an economic problem and a declining population and that it is impossible to devote focus on one of these subjects when dealing with a Shrinking City. (p.2)

Wiechmann (2006) adopts the Berkeley-based Shrinking Cities International Research

Network’s definition of “shrinking cities,” which also incorporates the economic element.

According to him, a shrinking city is:

- a *densely populated urban area* with a minimum population of 10,000 residents
- that has faced a *population loss* in *large parts* of it
- for *more than two years* and
- is undergoing *economic transformations* with some symptoms of a *structural crisis*. (emphasis in original)

In contrast, Oswalt and Rieniets (2006b), in echoing Oswalt’s (2005) caution about the problematic nature of the term “shrinking cities,” state that “the term ‘shrinking city’ first and foremost describes a symptom: population loss. A wide variety of processes and causes can be hidden behind this symptom...” (p.6). Rieniets (2005b) similarly defines shrinking cities according to the symptom of population loss, but he adds to that loss must be “significant” (p.1).

While Rieniets (2005b) does not elaborate on what he means by “significant,” others are quite specific about the amount of population loss needed to qualify as a “shrinking city.” For instance, Delkin (2007), in his study of “happiness” in shrinking cities, defines shrinking cities as cities which have experienced a population decline of more than three percent between 1990 and 2005. Similar to Wiechmann (2006), Leadbeater (2007) further adds the element of time to the definition. He states that the process of shrinkage in a given urban area or region refers to “*long-term* population decrease, whether it is a persisting decline or a reduction to a lower, more or less stable scale;” this shrinkage is typically accompanied by economic decline (p.1, emphasis added).

Apparently, then, there appears to be no commonly accepted definition, either explicit or implicit, of the term “shrinking cities.” Indeed, the term is sometimes not used at all in favour of the language of “decline.” In this thesis, I have adopted the term “shrinking cities” instead of “regional *decline*” or “place *decline*” because it seems to me to be more value-neutral. As will be discussed below, not all of the effects of shrinkage are negative, in the same way that not all of the effects of growth are positive. As was noted in Chapter 1, using the growth/decline dichotomy (and using the terms “winners” and “losers”) assumes the superiority of growth which precludes a more nuanced discussion of the policy implications of population loss or stagnation (Leo & Anderson, 2006).

In terms of which definition of “shrinking cities” I adopt in this thesis, the dominant trend in the literature points me towards identifying the defining characteristic of “shrinking cities” to be population loss as opposed to both population loss and economic decline. I find this approach is more helpful for two major reasons: first, as discussed above and as will be elaborated upon below, a city that experiences population shrinkage may not experience economic decline.

However, a city that loses population but does not experience economic decline will still have to deal with the physical effects of people leaving, such as underutilized infrastructure. To me, such a city is a “shrinking city.” To exclude such cities from the definition would result in shrinking cities researchers missing some important urban planning implications of population loss. Second, on a related note, I find it more useful to deal with the economic causes and implications of population shrinkage separately from the mere fact of population loss because the strength and nature of the influence of the “economic element” is likely to vary from situation to situation. In addition to defining shrinking cities according to population loss, I believe, as Wiechmann (2006) and Leadbeater (2007) do, that to qualify as a “shrinking city,” a city must be losing population in the long-term (that is, at least for more than two years). Temporary population loss is unlikely to result in the types of problems and opportunities that arise from more sustained population decline. I do not find it useful to quantify how much population loss would result in a “shrinking city.” A shrinking city is a city that is experiencing any long-term population loss. The question of “how much” a city is shrinking is simply one of degree. A city that has experienced dramatic shrinkage will experience more significant effects than one that has experienced only minor shrinkage. For all of these reasons, I find Leadbeater’s (2007) definition of a shrinkage – which is, again, “long-term population decrease, whether it is a persisting decline or a reduction to a lower, more or less stable scale” (p.1) – most useful and I thus adopt it in this thesis.

### **3.0 Why and where do cities shrink?**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, urban shrinkage is not a new phenomenon (Rieniets, 2005b; Rieniets, 2006; Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006c; Lang et al., 2004; Wiechmann, 2008a) As Rieniets (2006) states, “throughout most of history, phases of shrinkage were as much a part of the

development of cities as phases of growth” (p.30). It is only with the onset of industrialization in Europe that cities experienced phases of long and intense growth: “new means of transportation, communication, and conservation, fed by the rapidly growing availability of fossil fuels, enabled the growth of cities far beyond their old boundaries. This historic turning point fundamentally changed the quantity and quality of urbanization...” (Rieniets, 2005b, p.2). From the onset of industrialization to World War One, many cities in Europe and North America multiplied their population as rural populations left the countryside in hopes of finding better living and working conditions in cities. Prior to industrialization and the accompanying long and intense phase of urban growth, shrinkage was more commonplace. Many cities experienced stages of population decline because of, for instance, war, crises, fires, epidemics, and natural disasters (Beauregard, 2003; Krüger, 2006; Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006a; Rieniets, 2006; Shaw, 2006; Schott, 2005). Following the demise of the Roman Empire, Rome, for instance, faced a lengthy period of decline. Because of an earthquake in 1509 which killed 5000 people, Istanbul (which had previously gone through periods of decline as a result of wars) shrank considerably in the space of a few hours. An epidemic of the plague in Nuremburg in the 1630s claimed the lives of 20,000 people, decreasing its population by nearly two-thirds. Indeed, some cities have disappeared completely, such as Troy, Carthage, and Pompeii (Rieniets, 2005b).

While shrinkage itself is not new, in postindustrial times the major causes of shrinkage have changed. Epidemics, for instance, do not tend to have the impact on population numbers they once did because “in most developing countries the growth rates are too dynamic. In the wealthy lands of the ‘North,’ the sanitary infrastructure and healthcare systems are so well developed that there have not been demographically significant epidemics in decades” (Krüger, 2006, p.58). Population loss because of disasters is also less likely today than it once was,

mainly because “response mechanisms are more elaborate and institutionalized, as are support systems that enable people to remain in place during a disaster’s aftermath” (Beauregard, 2003, p.686).

Of course, some of these “historical” threats, such as natural disasters and war,<sup>2</sup> have continued to play a role in the shrinkage of postindustrial cities (Beauregard, 2003; Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006a; Rieniets, 2005a; Schott, 2006). For instance, many cities in Europe and Asia, such as Warsaw, Dresden, and Hiroshima, shrank dramatically during the Second World War (Rieniets, 2005b). In 1997, a volcanic eruption in Plymouth, Montserrat, emptied the city of all of its inhabitants (Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006a). Even more recently, Hurricane Katrina brought “quick and intense shrinkage” to New Orleans (Allweil, 2007, p.91; Schott, 2006). However, in recent years, it has become much more common for shrinkage to occur like a “slow-motion Katrina” (Allweil, 2007, p.91) because of a set of different factors, acting either on their own or, more commonly, in combination. For reasons that will become clear, while cities throughout the world are shrinking,<sup>3</sup> these “new” causes of shrinkage tend to disproportionately affect cities in the developed world, particularly older industrial or resource-based cities (Rieniets, 2005a and b; Rieniets, 2006; Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006c; Birg, 2005; Irurah, Park, & Yeang, 2005; Friedrichs, 1993; Polèse & Shearmur, 2006; Müller, 2004; Genske & Ruff, 2006). As Rieniets (2006) states, shrinking cities have become “a phenomenon of wealthy and developed industrial nations” (p.30).

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<sup>2</sup> Rieniets (2005a) and Shaw (2006) note that because of technological advances and the greater destructive power of weapons, war now actually poses a greater risk to urban populations than it did in pre-industrial times. Rieniets (2005a) notes that this is also true of ecological disasters, with high-profile examples being Bhopal (1984) and Chernobyl (1984).

<sup>3</sup> According to Rieniets (2006), while urban shrinkage tends to disproportionately affect older industrialized cities, shrinkage still occurs in cities in the developing world. Natural disasters, wars, and violent conflicts have caused destruction in and streams of refugees from cities in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa. On the whole, however, these are “isolated cases” that have occurred in the larger context of high urban growth rates in the developing world (Rieniets, 2006, p.30).

### 3.1 Demographic change and immigration patterns

According to the literature, demographic change and migratory movements are a major cause of postindustrial urban shrinkage (Koziol, 2004; Lang et al., 2004). Put simply, cities are shrinking in countries where population growth is slowing. Simmons (2003) explains that there are three components of population growth: natural increase (births minus deaths);<sup>4</sup> net migration (in-movers minus out-movers) and net immigration from abroad. In countries and regions where the birthrate is falling and there is not enough immigration/migration from abroad of other parts of the country to compensate for the falling birthrate and/or the number of (typically young) people moving away (Kabisch, Haase, & Haase, 2006; Rieniets, 2005b), the number of shrinking cities is on the rise.

Where is this trend most prevalent? According to Eisinger (2006), “developing countries currently account for ninety-five percent of world population growth...” (p.28). In the past fifty years, Birg (2005) explains, birthrates have decreased at a greater rate in developed countries (50%) versus developing countries (44%). In addition, the average age of population in developing countries is much younger than in developed countries. Birg (2005) refers to this phenomenon as “demographic aging.” According to him, “comparative international studies show that the greater the decline in the birthrate and the more intensive the aging of society, the greater the country’s level of economic development (‘demographic-economic paradox’)” (p.112). Birg (2005) finds that demographic aging is very pronounced in countries such as Japan. Indeed, Japan – because of low birth rates and high life expectancy – is the fastest-aging and fastest shrinking society in the world (Oswalt, 2005). In addition to Japan, low fertility rates are also found in countries such as Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic, Finland, Spain, and

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<sup>4</sup> Palmer (2003) clarifies that population requires at least 2.1 children per family to grow from Natural Increase. According to Beaujot & Kerr (2004), 2 births are needed to replace parents and 0.1 is needed to compensate for small number of deaths that occur before next generation reaches reproductive ages.

Russia (Allweil, 2007; Andersen, 2005; Hall & Hall, 2008; Beyer, 2005; Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006; Kabisch, Haase, & Haase, 2006; Müller, 2004; Genske & Ruff, 2006). In these countries, the only hope for growth comes from immigration or internal redistribution of residents (Rieniets, 2005); however, in many countries the levels of immigration are such that it will only slow the trend, not reverse it (Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006).

Particularly in Europe, according to Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp (2006), all countries are experiencing demographic change. In general, fertility rates in European countries are not sufficient to keep population numbers stable. In addition, life expectancy continues to rise, as does international migration. As a result, Europeans are becoming “older, fewer and more heterogenous” (Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006, p.2). Hollbach-Grömig and Trapp (2006) expect that international migration will give slight growth to the European Union population until around 2025, when the population will decrease significantly. According to them, “immigration cannot stop population decline but only diminish it” (p.14). This projected long-term decrease in population is especially evident in Germany, where birthrates have been falling for over a century (Müller, 2004).<sup>5</sup> Since 1972, the annual number of deaths in Germany has exceeded the number of births (Birg, 2005). By 2050, the German population is expected to fall from over 82 million to under 70 million. This will be accompanied by a dramatic change in the demographic structure: the portion of working-age people (defined as people between the ages of 20 and 65) will be 55 percent of the population as opposed to 62 percent today (Müller, 2004). While immigration to Germany has, so far, compensated for falling birthrates (and has even led

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<sup>5</sup> According to Birg (2005), fertility rate in eastern parts of Germany even lower than in western parts (1.1-1.2 in East versus 1.3-1.4 in West).

to a slight increase in population), at current immigration levels, population will still start to fall as birthrates continue to drop (Birg, 2005).

In Canada, fertility rates are also declining (Beaujot & Kerr, 2004; Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Simmons & Bourne, 2007; Palmer, 2003), a situation that is “truly unique in the history of Canada” (Palmer, 20003, p.3). In the long-term, fertility rates have declined from seven births per woman in 1851 to 1.5 in 2000, well below the rate of 2.1 used to mark replacement fertility (Beaujot & Kerr, 2004). According to Beaujot and Kerr (2004), with fertility constant at 1.5, births will continue to outnumber deaths until 2025. In addition to (and related to) declining fertility rates, the population of Canada is also aging (Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Simmons & Bourne, 2007). Taken together, these two factors mean that communities can grow only by attracting residents from elsewhere (Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Simmons & Bourne, 2007). Indeed, as Simmons and Bourne (2007) explain, “...immigrants account for a larger and larger proportion of the growth in national population (two-thirds of growth in the last Census period)” (p.18). The problem is that most immigrants settle in larger, growing metropolitan areas and do not tend to disperse over time (Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Hall & Hall, 2008; Simmons, 2003; Bourne & Simmons, 2007; Palmer, 2003). Thus, large cities in Canada such as Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and Calgary are growing larger and more heterogeneous while the rest are stagnating or declining in population, remaining homogenous with a rapidly aging population (Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Simmons, 2003).

More specifically, according to Polèse and Shearmur (2006), urban shrinkage in Canada is occurring primarily in the country’s periphery, which they define as an area located more than one hour’s travel time from a major urban centre of 500,000 or more (Polèse & Shearmur, 2006, p.25). Polèse and Shearmur (2003) explain that birth rates are declining in peripheral areas and

while outmigration used to be compensated for by high natural growth, the declining birth rate means that the population in peripheral areas, who are generally not able to attract a large number of immigrants, is declining. In other words, in peripheral areas, net outmigration automatically means population decline (Polèse & Shearmur, 2006). Atlantic Canada has particularly been affected by declining birth rates and uneven immigration settlement patterns (Palmer, 2003). The provinces of Atlantic Canada, with the exception of PEI, have fertility rates well below the national average. Despite its potential to, immigration is not offsetting declining fertility rates and cities and towns in the Atlantic region continue to lose their (predominantly young) residents.

It is important to note that, in comparison to Canada and most European countries, shrinkage in United States is embedded in population growth at the national level (Pallagst, 2005). However, while the birth rate in the U.S. is higher<sup>6</sup> and immigration plays less of a role in population growth, uneven immigration and migration patterns certainly have a role to play in the continuing pattern of urban shrinkage since people still tend to move to larger, thriving urban centres. In other words, even though fertility rates remain relatively higher in the United States than in other developed countries, it is unlikely that shrinking cities will reverse the downward trend in population since areas of demographic and economic decline will likely continue to lose population to larger, economically-thriving urban centres.

### **3.2 Globalization, technological change, and macro-level economic restructuring**

In addition to long-term demographic change and immigration patterns, the literature identifies “globalization” (Cunningham-Sabot & Fol, 2006; Martinez-Fernandez & Wu, 2006; Grossman, 2004; Pallagst, 2005) and the accompanying “economic restructuring” (Cleveland

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<sup>6</sup> The birth rate in the United States is almost 2.0 (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Shrinking Cities Institute, 2007; Lang et al, 2004) as a major cause of urban shrinkage.

“Globalization” is a complicated, multi-faceted process that is characterized by many factors, including:

- increasing mobility of labour (Andersen, 2005) and capital resulting in the internationalization of the production process (Castells, 2000; Cusack, 1998);
- the growth of transnational corporations (Castells, 2000; Cusack, 1998; Dicken, 2003); and
- increasing international trade and investment (Castells, 2000; Rondinelli, 2001) and the emergence of a global market for goods and services, though some barriers still exist (Bradford, 2003; Castells, 2000; Costa et al., 1998).

All of these factors have been facilitated by the proliferation in recent years of new information and communications technologies (ICTs) (Benner, 2002; Breathnach, 2000; Castells, 2000; Cusack, 1998; Dicken, 2003; Salomon, I. & Tsairi, B., 1994; Salomon, 1996). ICTs have drastically reduced the cost of transporting information across geographic space (Audretsch & Feldmann, 2000). They have also opened and expanded markets, increased mobility, led to the creation of new varieties of products, and changed the relative costs of production and distribution (Behrman & Rondinelli, 1992). With ICTs as a facilitator, the process of globalization is leading to the creation of a global economy which Castells (2000) defines as “an economy whose core components have the institutional, organizational, and technological capacity to work as a unit in real time, or in a chosen time, on a planetary scale” (p.102).

With globalization and the proliferation of ICTs has come structural economic change – which Seasons (2004) defines as a “significant and long-term shift in the comparative influence exerted by a sector (or sectors) in an economy” (p.11) – from a natural resource or manufacturing-based economy to service or knowledge-based economy. In the past,

metropolitan economies were based on manufacturing and the exchange of physical goods (Rondinelli, 2001). Today, metropolitan economies are increasingly based on ICT-intensive economic activities where information is the raw material and ICTs are used in the production process (Caves & Walshok, 1999; Gibbs & Tanner, 1997; Hall, 1997; Rondinelli, 2001; Van den Berg & Van Winden, 2002; Beyers, 2000). In particular, rapid advances in ICTs have fuelled the expansion of knowledge industries; that is, industries “that depend for their competitive advantage primarily on the exchange, development, and use of information” (Rondinelli, 2001, p.8). ICTs play an important role in knowledge industries as they facilitate the transmission, processing, and stocking of information (Polèse & Shearmur, 2002). Related to the shift to a knowledge-based economy, metropolitan economies are increasingly based on services (Hall, 1997; Hodos, 2002; Buchanan & Koch-Schulte, 2000; Stanback, 2002). ICTs have been associated with the growth in the service sector, “as an increasing share of economic activity is associated with information processing” (Giuliano, 1998, p.1078).

How have these developments contributed to the phenomenon of shrinking cities? First, while a small number of “global cities” are playing a strategic role in the new economy (Sassen, 2002; Andersen, 2005), economic restructuring from a manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge-based economy (which emphasizes producer services, finance, insurance and real estate and the high tech industry) has resulted in many cities in industrial nations losing their relative economic position and role in the wider market (Friedrichs, 1993; Andersen, 2005; Hall & Hall, 2008; Pallagst, 2005). The ensuing loss of industry and jobs (Allweil, 2007; Friedrichs, 1993; Pallagst, 2005) has led to significant out-migration (Rieniets, 2005a and b; Rieniets, 2006; Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006c and e; Birg, 2005; Irurah, Park, & Yeang, 2005; Friedrichs, 1993;

Polèse & Shearmur, 2006; Müller, 2004) as people leave to find job opportunities in growing, economically-thriving cities (Fassman, 2006a).<sup>7</sup> As Pallagst (2005) states,

urban decline and the loss of employment opportunities are closely linked in a downward spiral, leading to an outmigration of population. This process of decline is often due to the post-industrial transformation of cities and to the shift from manufacturing activities to services, a process that has left industrial and working-class cities with very few resources in terms of employment and fiscal base... (p.1)

Examples of cities undergoing industrial transformation are predominantly found in old industrial areas of Japan, the United States, Britain, and Continental Europe (Wiechmann, 2006; Popper & Popper, 2002; Rybcybski & Linneman, 1999; Prigge, 2005; Munck, 2005; Rieniets, 2005b). According to Rieniets (2005b):

following the industrial boom that occurred during the war and in the postwar period, former industrial cities in the Rust Belt, central England, the Ruhr and Saar regions, and the Po Valley fell into crisis. The closure, modernization or relocation of production locations led to the widespread loss of jobs, which had a predictable impact on population growth in the cities affected. (p.4)

Marseilles, for instance, lost 10 percent of its 800,000 residents in the 1980s because of the loss of heavy industry (Munck, 2005). Britain, which was first to “peak” in the industrial era, has been particularly hard-hit by the transformation to a knowledge-based economy (Munck, 2005). Between 1955 and 1983, manufacturing employment in Britain fell from 48% to 34%, more than any other industrialized country. The loss of manufacturing jobs in, for example, Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow resulted in massive out-migrations of these cities’ populations (Munck, 2005; Ward, 1999).

In the United States, industrial cities in the so-called Rustbelt region have fared particularly poorly in the transition from an industrial-based to a knowledge-based economy

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<sup>7</sup> Indeed, growth and decline are closely connected: the growth of some cities “very much rests on the shrinkage of other places” (Andersen, 2005, p.5).

(Beauregard, 2003). The inability for cities in this region to adapt to this transition has greatly contributed to the phenomenon of urban shrinkage:

Cities that did not make the transition from a manufacturing base to advanced services in the early postwar era – cities such as Akron, Detroit, and St. Louis – have continued to lose population just as earlier commercial cities that did not develop or were bypassed by manufacturing. The contemporary equivalent is the failure to build telecommunications infrastructure, international airports, and high-speed highways and thereby situate the city in the global economy. Cities have to be competitive to retain and attract investors and households... (Beauregard, 2003, p.686)

One of the most extreme cases of urban shrinkage in the United States is Detroit, which has lost nearly 1,000,000 inhabitants in the past 50 years because of a combination of industrial restructuring, suburbanization, anti-urban federal policies, and racism (Armborst, D'Oca, & Theodore, 2007; Fishman, 2005).

In addition to, and related to, industrial transformation, globalization, in particular the increased mobility of capital, has contributed to urban shrinkage because of the growth of outsourcing (Martinez-Fernandez & Wu, 2006; Müller, 2004; Andersen, 2005). According to Müller (2004), today companies are no longer just outsourcing labour-intensive stages of production to countries with lower unit labour costs. Now, entire branches of production and technology-intensive industries are withdrawing from older industrialized nations. As well, higher order functions, such as financial services and entire research and development departments are being relocated. In general, globalization and outsourcing have led to new patterns of unemployment with countries such as Brazil and India profiting and becoming more integrated into the world economy. In the meantime, unemployment, while still lower than what it is in developing countries, is rising in developed countries. As Fassman (2006b) states, “the economic causes for large-scale unemployment in Western industrialized nations are always related to high labor costs and rigid employment regulations. Manual labor in the production

sector is reduced by rationalization and automation, and services are simplified or outsourced” (p.74). Taken together, both deindustrialization and outsourcing has hit older, industrialized cities, particularly those relying on one industry (Friedrichs, 1993), in the West particularly hard. While some cities have become players in the new global arena (for example, becoming home to corporate headquarters, insurance companies, etc...), many older industrialized cities are experiencing shrinkage (Fassman, 2006b). Fassman (2006b) explains that

[i]n the monoindustrial cities of Western and Eastern Europe, unemployment has settled in and has long since changed from cyclical to structural unemployment. Whereas monoindustrial cities were once the engines of national economies, today they are locations in crisis suffering a loss of purchasing power, emigration, and aging populations. Efforts to move modern service companies into old factory halls have been only partially successful. Shopping malls, office parks, and entertainment centers do not need coal, iron, or even cheap transportation routes, rather they require access to highways, a nearby airport, lots of parking space, and the look of urbanity. A changing economic dynamic – job growth in one place and job loss in another – is associated with a return of internal migration. Whereas in the nineteenth century, workers moved in great numbers to the emergent industrial centers, these days migrants are going to the large service-industry metropolises of the world: New York, London, and Paris, but also Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Munich. (p.74)

In Canada, these trends “tend to favour large metropolitan regions, in particular Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver...” (Hall & Hall, 2008, pp.5-6). Indeed, according to 2006 census, growth continues to concentrate in Canada’s six largest metropolitan areas (with a population over 1,000,000) while other areas are declining or stagnating (Shearmur & Polèse, 2007). A similar trend is occurring in remote regions countries such as Australia, the Scandinavian countries, and Scotland. The literature cites a variety of reasons for this growth disparity in Canada, most of which are related to globalization and structural economic shifts. For instance, Bourne and Simmons (2003) and Hall and Hall (2008) explain that because of the decline of the resource and manufacturing sectors, the growth of the service sector, and the fact that knowledge-based jobs tend to concentrate in large metropolitan areas, Canadian cities in

resource and manufacturing-based regions have experienced significant job losses. According to Leadbeater (2007), both small and large resource-based towns and cities are shrinking because of changing conditions at both the macro and community level that have “shifted fundamentally the development prospects for hinterland and labour” (p.11). This new “crisis of hinterland development,” which began to take shape in the early to mid-1970s, has a number of key features. First, an increase in productivity in resource industries has resulted in absolute decline in employment, even when production was maintained or even increased. Second, there have been massive increases in the concentration of capital, both domestically and internationally, resulting in poorer employment conditions for workers at the hands of transnational corporations who could, when challenged, “more easily threaten to go elsewhere” (Leadbeater, 2007, p.10). Third, there has been a major shift in state policy towards cutbacks in employment and social programs. Fourth, production and consumption are facing more environmental limits. Finally, extensive resource development has faced increased political resistance from Aboriginal peoples over questions of sovereignty and land claims. Thus, the growth of resource communities in Canada through expanded resource extraction has been limited by availability of resources or access to resources. Where expanded resource extraction is possible, its employment impacts have been limited because of increased productivity.

Polèse and Shearmur (2003) and Shearmur and Polèse (2007) offer reasons for shrinkage in Canada’s periphery that are similar to Leadbeater’s (2007), but they place more of an emphasis on the location (or lack thereof, in the case of the periphery) of knowledge-based industries. According to them, the trend towards peripheral population decline is based on “fundamental and structural changes that are occurring in Canada’s periphery, its metropolitan areas and, more generally, in similar economies in the developed world” (Polèse & Shearmur,

2003, p.47). Put simply, these changes mean that employment is declining in the periphery and people are leaving to find economic well-being elsewhere (Shearmur & Polèse, 2007).

More specifically, in addition to declining birth rates and uneven patterns of immigration, they highlight several factors leading to regional decline in the periphery. First, most peripheral regions were settled to gain access to natural resources and they grew as demand for resources grew. Importantly, Shearmur and Polèse (2007) point out that situation of growth in the periphery was maintained “somewhat artificially perhaps” by the cold war:

...on the one hand, the reconstruction of Europe, coupled with phenomenal material growth throughout the western world, ensured growing demand for Canada’s natural resources. On the other hand, alternative sources of supply, in the Soviet Union and its dependencies, were not easily available to fuel this growth. Political instability in many Latin American countries also limited supply.(Shearmur & Polèse, 2007, p.34)

In recent years, global growth rates have slowed significantly. Although demand for resources is still growing, it is at a slower rate than in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. In addition, the fall of Iron Curtain and relative calm in Latin America has meant that many new sources of supply are now available. Thus, changes in demand and increased competition have led to employment decline in most of Canada’s resource industries. Second, in many regions, resources are being depleted (for example, seas are being over-fished, regions are being over-logged, etc...), also leading to employment decline. Third, productivity is increasing in resource extraction industries at a rate that is outstripping increases in demand. According to Shearmur and Polèse (2007),

by definition, increasing productivity faster than demand leads to job losses: thus, even in regions that depend upon resources that are not exhausted and for which demand is rising, job losses are still likely. Needless to say, in those industries where natural limits have been reached (forestry and fishing, for example) the job situation is even worse since jobs lost due to productivity increases combine with those lost due to decreased production. (pp.34-35)

Fourth, the internet and the knowledge economy have not provided the hoped-for development opportunities for peripheral areas (Polèse & Shearmur, 2003). Of course, there are examples of

individual entrepreneurs who have been able to seize opportunities; however, the fact remains that the internet, while good at transmitting codified knowledge, is not good at transmitting tacit knowledge and thus face-to-face-meetings are still important. Peripheral regions are therefore at a disadvantage for attracting industries that rely on the use of tacit knowledge. Fifth, with the shift from resource-based sectors to service sectors, higher-order service industries (such as management consulting and computer services) are driving growth in the knowledge economy. Large metropolitan areas, not peripheral areas, provide what these industries require, such as market access. Finally, although globalization has resulted in different parts of the production process being located in different areas, peripheral areas are still at a disadvantage because most economic activity, including manufacturing, continues to locate in central places. This final point is echoed by Bourne and Simmons (2003): “the information economy and the diffusion of new telecommunications technologies may have reduced the friction of distance but, paradoxically they have also increased the importance of place and location – of locality” (p.33). In the end, Shearmur and Polèse (2007) argue that “any one of these global trends would have had an effect on remote regions.” Taken together, these trends are “having a major impact, similar, we believe, to the impact that the industrial revolution had on Britain’s and Europe’s rural areas (from which crafts industries rapidly disappeared, followed by a sharp decline in farm labour as agriculture became mechanized)” (p.34).

### **3.3 Suburbanization**

Numerous researchers cite suburbanization, or the flight of people to the suburbs, as a major cause of urban shrinkage (Andersen, 2005; Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006; Wiechmann, 2006; Pallagst, 2005; Cleveland Shrinking Cities Institute, 2007; Müller, 2005; Prigge, 2005; Fishman, 2005). Suburbanization, defined generally as “the sprawl of urban settlements beyond

the bounds of a core city and into its hinterland” (Hesse, 2006, p.96), is a central characteristic of 20<sup>th</sup> century urban development in almost all industrialized countries. According to Rieniets (2005a), people migrate out of city centres mainly because of the promise of a better quality of life: “The need for more room, greater demands on residential areas, and increased mobility within developed countries have resulted in disproportionate growth of suburbs in metropolitan areas and a simultaneous stagnation or shrinkage of central urban zones” (p.31).

Suburbanization is often facilitated by planning and policy (for instance, through the development of new highways leading out of the downtown core and the existence of lower taxes in suburban communities). In general, suburbanization results in what is called the “hole in the doughnut” effect (Wiechmann, 2006; Pallagst, 2005) or the hollowing out of the core city.

While a common occurrence in most industrialized countries, the extent of suburbanization varies from country to country. While not as much of a cause of shrinkage in Europe (Pallagst, 2005; Rieniets, 2005b) and Japan (Rieniets, 2005a), suburbanization is a major cause of shrinkage in the United States (Beauregard, 2003; Hesse, 2006; Rieniets, 2006 and 2005a; Fishman, 2005) and Great Britain (Hesse, 2006). As Hesse (2006) explains, “by the end of the twentieth century, the great majority of both the British and American populations lived in suburbia as opposed to less than half the German population” (p.96). In the United States, suburbanization began in 1950s. Suburbanization happened later in other Western industrial nations and Japan, but on a much smaller scale (Rieniets, 2005a). During the 1950s, the number of shrinking cities in US increased from 3 to 38. By the 1970s, number of people living in suburbs in US doubled to 74 million. For the first time, this exceeded the urban population (Rieniets, 2005a). Beauregard (2003) deems this the “white flight,” in which white people fled the city after the influx of African Americans from the South:

Racial fears and suburbanization have been two of the most important factors in post-war central city population loss. The two became linked, with blacks blocked from moving to the suburbs by racial discrimination and confined to central cities in disproportionate numbers, often isolated in ghettos. Their presence further contributed to white flight. The formation of suburban municipalities also blocked population growth in the cities. The suburbs resisted annexation and consolidation thus making it difficult for cities to increase in population by adding land area. (Beauregard, 2003, p.685)

It is important to note that suburbanization and the shrinkage of core cities, especially in the US, often occurs within the context of region-wide population growth (Fishman, 2005; Pallagst, 2005), although even shrinking cities within shrinking regions continue to spread out:<sup>8</sup> “despite their diminished utilization, shrinking cities continue to sprawl beyond their borders and thereby undergo a twofold thinning out: less activity is spread out over a greater space” (Oswalt, 2005, p.12). In the United States, however, shrinkage is often “embedded in a larger process of growth” (Oswalt, 2005). For example, while Detroit has declined from over 2 million at its peak in early 1950s to 950,000 today, the Detroit region is almost 5 million and has grown steadily in population and wealth in the same time period (Fishman, 2005). Thus, although shrinkage also occurs on a regional level, many examples of shrinkage in US are

...due not to region-wide shrinkage, according to which the central city, its suburbs, and surrounding agricultural hinterland shrink overall as key industries such as mining or textiles decline with little new employment to replace them. Instead, shrinking cities are at the core of regions where population and employment continue to grow region-wide but their location shifts from the center to the periphery – leaving extensive abandonment and poverty at the core. This transformation is in fact a radical “regional restructuring.” (Fishman, 2005, p.67)

According to Fishman (2005), making this distinction is important because this type of shrinkage calls for different policy responses than other forms of shrinkage. With core-city shrinkage embedded in region-wide population growth, there is hope in the rediscovery of traditional urbanism based on density and pedestrian street life. In fact, in the US, while suburbanization

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<sup>8</sup> Although, in countries such as Germany, even suburbs are starting to shrink (Hesse, 2006; Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006; Müller & Siedentop, 2004).

remains a powerful force, “reurbanism” is “... bringing new life to many shrinking cities. An understanding of this dynamic is crucial to any constructive response to the shrinking city” (Fishman, 2005, p.67). This “reurbanism” is not likely to play a large role in shrinking cities where the whole region is shrinking, for example in the northern Great Plains and many parts of the Rust Belt of the eastern and Midwestern US.

### **3.4 Political upheaval**

Urban shrinkage has long been an issue for cities facing political upheaval (Pallagst, 2005; Riess-Schmidt, 2006; Rieniets, 2005b). Recently, the euphoria of reunification in Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Union has given way to the bleak reality of urban shrinkage in Eastern Germany (Reiss-Schmidt, 2006; Schmidt, 2005; Beyer, 2005), other former Eastern European planned economies (Rieniets, 2005b; Prigge, 2005; Beyer, 2005), and the former Soviet Union (Beyer, 2005). As Beyer (2005) states, “...in the space of just a few years whole industries have ground to a halt or experienced fundamental structural change...” (p.74). Rieniets (2005b) further clarifies that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the “planned economy”

...triggered a new, incomparably more dramatic development: from one day to the next, numerous cities fell into a state of political, economic, and demographic instability. Waves of emigration, rapidly falling birth rates, and a decreasing life expectancy triggered a demographic landslide. More than 200 large cities (approximately one out of every two) experienced population losses; 93 of them in Russia alone. There, as in Bulgaria, eastern Germany, Hungary, and Ukraine, the population of large cities declined, and the majority of large cities shrank. Cities also became victims of the ethnic and nationalist conflicts that broke out after the fall of the socialist regimes. (p.4)

Thus, economic reorganization and collapse of an entire political system (together with its distinctive worldview and social structures) have led to significant shrinkage in the postsocialist societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Particularly with respect to deindustrialization, the collapse of state planning has meant that industrial regions – formerly

highly specialized as part of the “planned economy” – have been forced to create for themselves a new economic basis. This has proved difficult for many industrial regions and those regions have lost jobs and, as a result, population (Beyer, 2005). In Eastern Germany, for instance, the outmigration of young, well-trained labour, has led the population of cities to become mixed, older, and poorer (Reiss-Schmidt, 2006). Armenia has lost about a quarter of its population (around 1,000,000 people) since the fall of the Soviet Union (Beyer, 2005).

### **3.5 Environmental pollution**

According to Lauinger (2006) and Pallagst (2005), environmental pollution, particularly a problem in older industrialized cities, has contributed to urban shrinkage. Environmental pollution was particularly high in industrialized countries in the “boom” phases prior to the First and Second World Wars (Lauinger, 2006). At that time, immense damage was done to the soil and water in older industrialized cities. When deindustrialization began in the 1970s, air and water pollution in these cities diminished drastically, but the problem of soil contamination persisted and this contamination has presented a significant barrier to attracting new development to these cities:

...the damaging aftereffects have proved in retrospect to be an unwelcome legacy for urban development. The unknown risks and high costs of contaminant removal pose a huge obstacle to converting countless disused sites in inner cities, so that such sites often go unused for decades, with severe consequences for the municipal structure, urban planning, and the image of the city. In many monostructural industrial cities, extensive disused areas can even be found in the former city center. In Germany alone there are currently forty billion square meters of sites awaiting conversion. (Lauinger, 2006, p.56)

Thus, because of the legacy of industrialization, many older industrial cities find themselves unable to convert significant portions of land to productive use, which exacerbates shrinkage.

### **3.6 Summary**

The literature reveals that shrinkage is often a combination of two or more of these causes (Dabinett, 2005; Hall & Hall, 2008; Martinez-Fernandez & Wu, 2007). Dabinett (2005) warns against oversimplifying the causes of shrinkage, stating that shrinkage may be a result of many events and processes. For instance, with respect to shrinkage in Canada, Hall and Hall (2008) note that the disparities between growth and decline are “a result of economic restructuring, changing trade patterns, the concentration of immigrants in large metropolitan areas, and lower birth rates...” (p.6). Moreover, causes and effects are often linked in a downward spiral. An example is a city that loses population because of loss of industrial or resource-based jobs, where the effects of shrinkage makes the city less attractive to new investors, leading to further decline (Beauregard, 2003). Thus, the process of shrinkage is complex and multidimensional and as the causes of shrinkage are varied and complex, so too are the effects, making this a particularly challenging issue facing the planners within these cities.

#### **4.0 What are the most common effects of shrinkage?**

As noted above, shrinkage can affect regions, cities, or parts of cities (Pallagst, 2005). In the case of suburbanization in the United States, shrinkage can also be embedded in overall process of growth. Of course, population decline is more extreme in some cases than in others (Leo & Brown, 2000). As Leo and Brown (2000) state, “...in large metropolitan areas, modest population decline might well continue for some time without significantly affecting the character of the city or its degree of prosperity...” (p.196). Population decline also occurs at different rates. In Canada, for instance, cities tend to decline quite slowly<sup>9</sup> (Simmons & Bourne,

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<sup>9</sup> According to Simmons & Bourne (2007), this slow rate of decline can be attributed to the fact that “there are powerful forces resisting the loss of population in small communities. These include a variety of public assistance programs that encourage people to stay put, ranging from government transfers to municipalities, to the variety of social insurance available to individuals and families, as well as the weight of the financial and human capital already invested in a home, business or community that people are reluctant to write off. Moving out is usually difficult, sometimes traumatic, and likely expensive” (p.18)

2007). Thus, the effects of population decline vary case by case according to the circumstances surrounding it (Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006; Leo & Brown, 2000). In addition, many of the effects of population shrinkage are still unknown (Strohmeier & Bader, 2004). Keeping this in mind, the literature identifies several common consequences, negative and positive, of being a shrinking city.

#### **4.1 Economy**

According to the literature, economic decline is both a cause and consequence of population decline. A common characteristic of many shrinking cities is chronically high rates of unemployment (Andersen, 2005; Delken, 2007; Fassman, 2006b; Friedrichs, 1993; Ward, 1999; Rybcznski & Linneman, 1999; Seasons, 2004; Foster, 2007; Jauhiainen, 2004; Bourne & Simmons, 2003). Foster (2007) describes the economic situation in Cape Breton, which has consistently lost population for 40 years:

... [The] employment rate in March, 2007 was 44.9%. Based upon the size of our working age population, the region would have to create an additional 14,000 jobs to achieve the average rate of employment in Nova Scotia and an incredible 24,000 jobs to achieve the average rate of employment in the Halifax Regional Municipality. This provides some sense of the economic disparity that exists in our small province. (p.22)

As Fassman (2006) explains, gainful employment has many positive effects: it “structures the lives of individuals, secures their income, and defines their position in society... Employment is the anchor of every individual in the course of his or her life and in the structure of society” (p.74). Being a shrinking city has serious and adverse long-term consequences for both the quantity and quality of employment in the city, including loss of highly-paid unionized jobs and the shift towards lower-paid, non-union jobs (Leadbeater, 2007). High unemployment rates are often accompanied by high poverty rates (Rybcznski & Linneman, 1999) and a rise in the number of people on social assistance (Friedrichs, 1993).

Importantly, while the decline of the dominant industry or industries may be the precipitating cause of shrinkage and hence unemployment, the population loss itself may lead to further economic problems, accelerating population decline. Shrinking cities often see reduced development activity (Seasons, 2004) and lack of investment (Simmons & Bourne, 2007) because of a lack of confidence in the area (Ward, 1999). According to Beauregard (2003), absolute population loss results in a stigma for all cities that experience it:

Absolute population loss is an unwanted event in the life of a city. Even when it involves only a few households, it is a sign of declining attractiveness to investors and residents and of possible long-term stagnation. When the numbers are large, the loss is traumatic. A steep drop-off reveals serious flaws in the processes of investment and migration that sustain a city and make it prosperous. In a political economy where growth, particularly for civic leaders, has always been ideal, population loss – whether absolute or relative – is a stigma... (p.673)

Friedrichs (1993) explains that this is especially true of urban economies dependent on one industry. In these dominant industry towns, decline of dominant industry will extend to other firms and result in a negative image for the city, which will deter new companies from locating there. Compounding this problem is the fact that shrinking cities have fewer funds to use to attract new industry (Friedrichs, 1993) at the very time where more funds are needed in the cut-throat competition for people and jobs (Mäding, 2004). However, this disadvantage does not equally affect all sectors of the urban economy. While shrinking cities may have trouble attracting new economy jobs in knowledge-based industries such as finance and business services, they seem to be able to retain and attract government jobs. Indeed, according to Simmons (2003), in Canada, cities experiencing population decline attract almost 20 percent more government jobs: “Public agencies are much slower to respond to growth signals than the private sector, and they may also be unwilling to reduce employment in declining cities. In fact, they may even try to reallocate public facilities to slow-growth areas” (Simmons, 2003, p.4).

As well, new businesses may be deterred from locating in shrinking cities because of the shrinking labour market (Jessen, 2006) that is also aging. Younger and better educated people tend to leave shrinking cities (Friedrichs, 1993; Rieniets, 2005b; Simmons & Bourne, 2007), leaving behind a population that is generally older (Simmons, 2003; Simmons & Bourne, 2007) and less educated. According to Friedrichs (1993), demographic aging results in the shrinking city losing creative potential that lowers chances for adapting to the new economy:

Zero growth or even decline will result in a structure of the labour market characterised by a mismatch between the skills of the displaced workers and the skills required for the given employment opportunities. Hence, only a small percentage of those laid-off from the decline of manufacturing companies will qualify for the new jobs—for example, in banking, insurance or electronics—nor will most of them be willing to take an underqualified and low-paid job in the services, such as restaurants. This employment qualification mismatch has been documented for many cities in West Germany and the US. (Friedrichs, 1993, p.911)

Hollbach-Grömig and Trapp (2006) agree that, in shrinking cities, skilled labour becomes scarce so the city becomes less attractive for new businesses, which may in turn accelerate population decline. In Germany, for example,

2015 will mark a turning point: the skilled labour will decrease significantly because of the declining population. Even an increase in the employment rate for women and older people, a migration rate of about 200,000 persons per year, and shorter periods of education would be unable to stop this development. (Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006, p.13)

Indeed, certain characteristics of dominant industry shrinking cities may further deter new economic activity, accelerating population decline. For instance, new industry may be prevented from locating in these cities because of the high wages paid by the dominant industry (Friedrichs, 1993). This is called “intrusive rentier syndrome” by Polèse and Shearmur (2006): high wage rates drive up local wage levels and they become an expectation, which makes it difficult for start-up businesses. As well, Friedrichs (1993) explains that, in dominant-industry towns, as the dominant industry declines, the elite does not want to lose influence and tries to

maintain it, which reduces the city's capability to accept new industries and reallocate resources. As Friedrichs (1993) states, "[t]he conservative strategy of the local elite, in turn, has two negative effects on the city's economy: the period of decline is prolonged, but decline not prevented and the city government's interest in attracting new industries is delayed and funds necessary for this purpose are not available" (p.912). This has happened in cities in Ruhr Valley. In addition to industry elites, trade unions fight the decline of the industry. Friedrichs (1993) gives the example of Detroit where, in 1981, the "Rational Reindustrialization" strategy, which proposed a shift away from the auto-related industry, failed because of opposition from industry leaders, unions, and city officials.

Declining populations also means economic problems for the private sector, especially the retail sector (Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006; Lötscher et al., 2004) and the service sector, most notably real estate agencies (Simmons, 2003). Quite simply, fewer residents consume fewer goods and services. Moreover, population loss leads to more than just decline in market size. It also leads to disinvestment and discourages new investment and enterprises: "As the population declines and the overall consumption of many services is reduced, existing stores are going to find themselves fighting for a shrinking market with few opportunities for rapid growth" (Simmons, 2003, p.6). Businesses also find their investments diminishing in real value terms (Bourne & Simmons, 2003).

It is important to note at this time that the literature indicates that a declining population does not always mean lagging economic growth in all shrinking cities (Franz, 2004). In his study of the major cities of Eastern Germany, Franz (2004) finds "no concurrent demographic and economic decline" (p.1). Despite having shrinking populations, many Eastern German cities recorded above average economic growth rates between 1994 and 1996. In these cities, Franz

(2004) finds, instead, a pattern of economic growth without employment effects (which has term “jobless growth”). For this reason, Franz (2004) cautions against the acceptance in all situations of the notion that a downward spiral occurs in shrinking cities, consisting of a “shrinking population, growing housing vacancies, urban decay, declining economic basis, diminishing attractiveness, growing outmigration. Negative scenarios of this type can become self-reinforcing and self-fulfilling prophecies” (p.2). Franz (2004) admits that “there is no disputing that sections of the housing industry and municipal undertakings responsible for infrastructure in cities with vacant housing are suffering losses”(p.2). However, he argues that it is not yet confirmed that the regional economy as a whole is being negatively influenced by population loss. Some studies in Germany have found that population shrinkages does not always lead to a deterioration in income position, leading to the conclusion that the relationship between demographics and economics is more complex. Certainly, the correlation in Eastern Germany may be looser for a number of reasons, including the fact that in Eastern Germany, many firms are closing the productivity gap, which leads to economic growth but not necessarily higher employment rates. However, this looser correlation between demographics and economics may have more widespread application, for instance in areas where suburbanization is the major cause of shrinkage; that is, where the core loses population but the regional population remains stable or is growing. In that case, Franz (2004) explains, the economic effects of shrinkage may be minimal. This highlights the need to examine the issue on the level of the entire region:

It might ... be the case that population losses in a city have a statistical impact but no economic effect. This is true of migration from cities to suburbs which involves a change in residential location but usually neither a change in job nor in consumer behaviour. Investigation within narrow administrative boundaries is inadequate in this regard. It needs to include the complete urban region... This holds not only for residential suburbanization but also for the suburbanization of industry and services. (p.7)

Thus, different patterns of decline may have different effects on the economy. In general, it appears that “a fall in population caused primarily by suburbanization appears to be less damaging to [economic] growth than a decline due mainly to the outmigration of younger carriers of high-quality human capital.” (Franz, 2004, p.7). In addition, it is important to remember at this time that economic woes are not solely the domain of shrinking cities. Indeed, there are also many problems associated with economic growth, as pointed out by Shearmur (2006):

...in fact: economic growth – particularly when driven by elites... – puts pressure on poorer people. The increased congestion and pollution that accompany fast growth often have, as first victims, the residents of poorer neighbourhoods. Poor neighbourhoods that are attractive are rapidly gentrified. Rising real estate prices put property ownership out of reach of many people. (p.38)

## **4.2 Infrastructure and services**

In shrinking cities, “...urban citizens are leaving empty cities behind them, and all that expensive urban infrastructure is going to waste” (Ward, 1999, p.248). Population decline often leaves shrinking cities with unused or underutilized infrastructure (Allweil, 2007; Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006; Kabisch, Haase, & Haase, 2006; Ritter, 2006; Sander, 2006; Seasons, 2004; Moss, 2008). This creates fiscal problems for shrinking cities (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Rieniets, 2005b; Friedrichs, 1993) which are facing a reduction in the tax base without a concomitant reduction in the amount of network-related infrastructures (such as water, sewer, and public transport) and social public infrastructures (such as schools, libraries, and swimming pools) which must be maintained at the same fixed costs (or even rising costs). Certainly, as Leo and Brown (2000) assert, population decline “entails fiscal strain only if it brings with it both decline in revenues and the inability to reduce expenditures correspondingly” (p.195). However, the bulk of the literature indicates that most shrinking cities are unable to reduce their

expenditures on infrastructure and services at a rate equal to population decrease. As Hollbach-Grömig and Trapp (2006) explain,

...the financial burden per capita is actually rising [in shrinking cities] because municipalities find it difficult to reduce their services (especially as regards technical infrastructure facilities) at the same rate as that of population change, decline or ageing... On the other hand, elderly care facilities will have greater demand for their services and will need to expand. These changing demands require high levels of investment to convert and modernize infrastructure and facilities for the elderly. (p.3)

Similarly, Müller and Siedentop (2004), state that:

...one thing is clear: the settlement structure of the future will entail greater resources and be more expensive. The demolition and downsizing of redundant buildings and infrastructure cannot be achieved at a level proportionate to the fall in population... Maintaining and operating the building and infrastructure stock will have to be paid for by fewer and fewer residents. The 'shrinking city' will doubtless be an expensive one. (p.7)

Thus, with respect to maintaining infrastructure and services, population decline has resulted in many shrinking cities' budgets being "pushed to the limit" (Rieniets, 2005b, p.7). In fact, many shrinking cities are experiencing losses (Franz, 2004). In Germany, for instance:

Over the past decade, hardly any German city has been able to balance its budget. Investment, personnel, and volunteer activities have been dramatically reduced in recent years. Although privatization and asset sales, not to mention increased borrowing have provided room for manoeuvre in the short term, the long-term economic capabilities of cities have been destroyed. (Reiss-Schmidt, 2006, p.3)

As mentioned above, shrinking cities may face not just fixed infrastructure costs, but rising infrastructure costs. Most of shrinking cities are older industrial cities and while there may be diminished expenditure on expanding infrastructure networks (Mäding, 2004), it is becoming more expensive to maintain the old infrastructure which is often in need of repair and replacement (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Seasons, 2004; Rieniets, 2005b; Mäding, 2004). In addition, the population in shrinking cities is usually aging, so while fewer teachers and day care workers are needed and school rolls are falling (Ward, 1999; Simmons, 2003; Müller,

2004), more health care workers are required (Simmons, 2003) as the health care sector and other services for the elderly become more important (Simmons & Bourne, 2007; Mäding, 2004). Furthermore, as Mäding (2004) asserts, the growing number of people living in single person households requires more per capita spending on services. In the end, the higher costs of operating and maintaining infrastructure in shrinking cities become, the harder it becomes to pass these costs on to the citizens who remain. According to Müller (2004), “since durable utility systems are difficult to adapt to demographic developments, higher per capita spending is incurred, which is more and more difficult to pass on to the dwindling number of users” (p.1). As taxes are increased to compensate, this may accelerate population decline as mobile residents (particularly in growing regions) move out to the suburbs or (particularly in declining regions) out of the region altogether.

Particularly with respect to hard infrastructure, Moss (2008) explains that in shrinking cities in Germany,

...levels of consumption of water, in particular, are stagnating or falling, sometimes quite dramatically. Utility managers accustomed to expanding their physical networks to meet an ever-growing demand for water are in some areas having to confront an unfamiliar and unwelcome phenomenon: over-capacity in parts—or even across all — of their infrastructure network. In serious cases the drop in consumption is so great that it is causing major problems for the technical functioning and economic feasibility of infrastructure systems. (p.437)

Koziol (2004) similarly explains that falling residential, commercial, and industrial demand for network-related infrastructure leads to lower network utilization levels which in turn “have a fundamental impact on the efficiency of operation” of infrastructure (p.3). The effects of population shrinkage differ for each type of utility service (e.g. water, sewer, telecommunications, power supply), some of which are interdependent (e.g. water and sewer). For the drinking water network, decline in consumption can lead to bacterial aftergrowth because

of longer water retention times. Declining water consumption can lead to reduction in sewage volumes, which can lead to sediment deposit, making it necessary to flush sewers frequently. With respect to heating, there can be condensation if the critical demand level is not reached. Reduction in supply leads to higher operating costs: “When the lines are too large, the system tends to become less efficient and more difficult to control” (Koziol, 2004, p.7).

With respect to transportation, both Koziol (2004) and Hollbach-Grömig and Trapp (2006) agree that population decline affects public and private transport (that is, traffic volume, trip purpose, modal choice, and spatial distribution of traffic volume). According to Koziol, there can be both positive and negative effects. On the private transportation side, fewer people means less traffic and fewer parking problems. With respect to public transportation, however, municipalities have to pay more for upkeep of the road system and public transit systems “have to accept much lower utilization rates and cost-effectiveness when vacancy rates in the service area are high” (p.4).

Koziol (2004) points out that, unfortunately, the anticipated positive ecological impacts of reduced consumption are minimal. He states that “although falling consumption can generally be expected to ease burdens on the environment, i.e., to have a positive impact on resource consumption, in practice it can have negative ecological repercussions, e.g. by hampering the operation of network-related systems” (Koziol, 2004, p.8). For example, corrosion of sewer shafts can contaminate groundwater and anaerobic transformation in pipe lines can lead to odour. Furthermore, the need for frequent pipe cleaning may thwart efforts to save water. Thus, while there may be some positive effects with respect to reduced use of infrastructure in shrinking cities, especially in the area of transportation, the impacts on cost, efficiency, and the environment are generally negative.

### 4.3 Land use

According to the literature, population decline affects a city's land use patterns, leading to long-term changes in urban structures (Koziol, 2004). As Kabisch, Haase, and Haase (2006) state, "...shrinkage, population losses and vacancies unhinge the balance of existing urban structures, and produce new patterns of cityscapes" (p.6). Physically, a shrinking city loses density and ends up with an overly large footprint (Allweil, 2007; Andersen, 2005; Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999), with large empty open areas available. The city of Leipzig in Germany was the first to coin the term "the perforated city" (Jessen, 2006). This term is also used by Müller and Siedentop (2004) and Sander (2006) to describe the structure of shrinking cities which, as Andersen (2005) explains, is not traditional: "the city we previously thought of as a high density becomes a more open structure" (p.3). Buildings are being torn down, in effect leading to "unbuilding" of the city (Andersen, 2005, p.5). Andersen (2005) speaks of an "indescribable urbanism" in which cities like Detroit are becoming the suburb of their own suburbs. In effect, the city is not a centre and periphery but a poly-nuclear structure, with enclaves connected through different networks.

According to Hollander and Popper (2007), within the shrinking city there are a number of physical effects of population decline, including "derelict structures, vacant lots, underutilized properties, and changes to inferior land uses" (p.39). Indeed, shrinking cities are often home to a large number of vacant properties, both residential and commercial (Allweil, 2007; Andersen, 2005; Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Kabisch, Haase, & Haase, 2006; Krumholz, 2007; Dewar, 2006; Schilling & Logan, 2008). For example, the number of vacant properties in cities such as Baltimore, St. Louis, and Washington can number in the tens of thousands (Krumholz, 2007). As Allweil (2007) states, "...vacant plots, empty apartments, and gray and brown areas amount

in some cases to 70 percent of the municipal area. The spread can be like an epidemic, causing a sharp drop in property values and a sense of helplessness among the remaining population” (p.91). Schilling and Logan (2008) emphasize the market effects of vacant properties which deter further investment: “...An oversupply of urban vacant land depresses land prices, property values, and tax revenues.... Conventional market-based redevelopment policies to induce reinvestment are insufficient to reverse this imbalance and the cyclical nature of decay and disinvestment...” (p.452).

In general, Andersen (2005) explains that “in some areas it is like living in a ghost town and it seems as an evil circle which is difficult to break” (p.2). According to Rybczynski and Linneman (1999), this reduction in population density is problematic because it usually happens in an irregular manner, resulting in “irregular gaps in the urban density pattern” (p.36). For example, with respect to commercial and retail land uses, while growing cities have more planned modern malls and industrial parks, shrinking cities have more “unplanned” clusters of retail in pedestrian and arterial strips, and dispersed stores (Simmons, 2003). These gaps mean that the city is no longer continuous, with populated areas separated by unplanned and vacant areas, which is a problem because older cities are designed to operate most efficiently with mostly continuous densities of people:

As depopulation occurs, not only does the provision of normal municipal services become more expensive (unplanned vacant space is expensive to secure and maintain) but there may no longer be a sufficient population base to support neighborhood social and retail activities in many areas. This results in services being further reduced, inducing those who can to move away. (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999, p.37)

This “thinning out” in turn creates lack of dynamism and reduced sense of safety, signalling the overall deterioration of the quality of life in shrinking cities (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Rieniets, 2005b). According to Rybczynski and Linneman (1999), the overall effects of the large

number of vacant properties in shrinking cities can be likened to the effects of a large number of vacant stores in a mall:

A city that has lost much of its population has - to borrow a real-estate phrase - a high vacancy rate. When a shopping mall has a high vacancy rate, the owner suffers not only because of the lost revenue on the empty space but also because the overall vitality and attractiveness of the center's shopping experience is diminished. This, in turn, makes other tenants more likely to vacate, depressing rents on leased space. So, too, for a city with a high vacancy rate: It suffers not only a loss to its tax base but, unless it is successfully repositioned, it becomes a less attractive place to live and work. (p.35)

Again, population decline does not necessarily lead to shrinkage of the physical space of the city (Rieniets, 2005b). In fact, the city may continue to spread out through suburbanization of both residents and businesses. As discussed above, many shrinking cities are embedded in regions of growth where shrinking inner cities are surrounded by growing, sprawling peripheries. This sprawl is “accompanied by the inverse densification of an urban settlement, a process that becomes more extreme when the total population of an urban region is no longer growing, but stagnating or even shrinking” (Hesse, 2006, p.96). Indeed, according to Couch et al. (2005) and Nuissl and Rink (2005), even in shrinking urban regions, some shrinking cities are still sprawling. This makes servicing such a city particularly problematic and it becomes more expensive to do so as the population thins out over a greater area (Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006). In the end, underutilized infrastructure drives cost of living in the suburbs up (Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006; Müller & Siedentop, 2004). Müller and Siedentop (2004) argue that, given that people are more mobile in shrinking cities where housing prices lower and there is more to choose from,<sup>10</sup> the rise of the cost of living in the suburbs may motivate people to move back to more densely populated areas of the city such as the downtown. However, Couch et al.

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<sup>10</sup> Although this may be limited by Allweil (2007) and Simmons & Bourne's (2007) observation that people leave shrinking cities largely by choice, so society that remains is generally less mobile (Allweil, 2007; Simmons & Bourne, 2007).

(2005) do not find that happening in their case study of two examples of sprawl in the context of decline –Liverpool and Leipzig –which leads them to conclude that downtowns are declining faster in these “expanding shrinking cities” than in growing cities. They argue that one specific characteristic of sprawl in declining regions is that it is a zero-sum game “in which new areas are developed at the expense of existing urban quarters” (Couch et al., 2005, p.118). Both Liverpool and Leipzig have lost significant population, but they continue to sprawl beyond their borders. Interestingly, in both cities, it is not housing sector, but the commercial and industrial sectors that are sprawling. The main reason for this is that local authorities are competing fiercely for investors and are in a weak bargaining position when it “comes to making decisions over these new developments” (Couch et al., 2005, p.129), particularly where they will locate. They explain that

in both cities, Liverpool and Leipzig, decline and the pressure to create additional jobs has led the planning system to offer weak resistance (and in some cases active support) to the sprawling of employment zones such as research and development facilities, but also big industrial fabrication plants, beyond the existing urban boundary. (Couch et al., 2005, p.131)

Because of this sprawl, in both cities, downtown decline is aggravated because overall population is declining. In the end, Couch et al. (2005) conclude that the effect of decline and sprawl is the emergence of a new, more complex pattern of urban structure, one that increasingly involves downtown decline. Yamashita (2004) finds a similar pattern of downtown decline in the case of Saga, Japan, where, despite a shrinking population, businesses such as big box stores continue to locate in the suburbs.

It is important to note that, in terms of land use, there are opportunities in shrinking cities. As Sander (2006) states, “the perforated city harbours risks like dilapidation, stagnation, and

loss; but it also offers opportunities and positive stimuli for development like adjustment to modern living requirements, ‘retreat’ from the urban fringe, more open spaces in the city” (p.3).

Müller and Siedentop (2004) agree that population decline can have positive effects on land use within a shrinking city:

It should not be forgotten that population decline can be an opportunity. It can open the way to renewal and modernization (e.g., in competition, in urban development revitalization), it can offer opportunities for quality improvement (e.g., in the residential environment, for open space quality and local recreation, as well as for the near-natural landscapes) and provide an incentive to mobilize the endogenous resources or regions (e.g., new economic sectors and initiatives). (p.10)

Sander (2006) argues that population shrinkage opens up new opportunities for land uses because of the decline of manufacturing:

The decline of the manufacturing sector and the simultaneous growth in tertiarization release major land resources in cities and create new possibilities for economic activities in existing areas – either through demolition and new construction or through the conversion of existing buildings in attractive inner-city locations. (p.5)

Members of the Cleveland Shrinking Cities Institute (2007) also assert that shrinking cities present opportunities to reclaim vacant land. Thus, although population decline poses many challenges to land use in shrinking cities, it also presents opportunities, especially the opportunity to create quality open spaces within the city.

#### **4.4 Housing**

One type of land use is “particularly affected” by population shrinkage (Sander, 2006, p.3) and thus warrants special attention: housing (Martinez-Fernandez & Wu, 2006). In shrinking cities, there tends to be a large number of vacant houses and apartments (Allweil, 2007; Kabisch, Haase, & Haase, 2006; Koziol, 2004; Rieniets, 2005b; Sander, 2006; Mace et al., 2007). In recent years, German shrinking cities, for instance, have become home to an unprecedented number of vacant houses and apartments (Rieniets, 2005b). As well, in Detroit, there is an

“unfathomably large amount of vacant land” (Amborst, D’Oca, & Theodore, 2007, p.9). Since it started to decline 50 years ago, 40,000 lots have reverted to City ownership and one-third of all properties in Detroit are tax delinquent. Because Detroit’s building block is 30 foot by 100 foot single family lots, most of the lots that have reverted are single-family lots next to occupied homes, so they are not very appealing for developers and thus have low market value (Amborst, D’Oca, & Theodore, 2007).

In general, the large number of vacant properties negatively affects the houses that remain occupied in two major ways. First, the drop in demand for housing in shrinking cities (Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006; Jessen, 2006; Müller, 2004; Sander, 2006; Krumholz, 2007) has meant that investments in housing diminish in real value terms (Bourne & Simmons, 2003) and property prices fall (Jessen 2006; Ward, 1999). In fact, in some areas, there is virtually no demand for housing (Ward, 1999), which, in shrinking cities, tends to be older (Simmons, 2003). Second, although Delken (2007) has found that overall satisfaction with life appears to not be lower in German shrinking cities than in growing cities and that satisfaction with several aspects of urban life actually appears to be higher in shrinking cities, many researchers have concluded that the large number of vacant properties negatively affects the general quality of life in the neighbourhoods in which the vacancies are located. As Hollander and Popper (2007) state, “because a house is not an island, the conditions of nearby housing stock, roads, and utilities can affect its future tremendously” (p.39). According to Ryczynski and Linneman (1999) vacant buildings lower quality of urban life. Many vacant buildings are burned and collapse; some vacant lots become dumps. This decay in turn causes further disintegration. Hollbach-Grömig and Trapp (2006) agree with this conclusion and also comment on the effects that an aging population has on the housing market in shrinking cities:

shrinking means empty buildings and shops, falling property prices and frequent vandalism in derelict areas. Ageing challenges municipalities as well as private investors and housing companies to offer housing options and neighbourhoods adapted to the requirements of an ageing society; e.g., lifts instead of stairways, neighbourhoods with services the day-to-day needs (health care, shopping facilities) of elderly and disabled people. (p.12)

Thus, at the same time that existing housing is being negatively affected by population decline, housing and neighbourhoods also need to be upgraded to meet the needs of an ageing society.

#### **4.5 Other effects**

In addition to leading to issues with the economy, infrastructure and services, land use, and housing, several researchers argue that population decline leads to other problems in shrinking cities, particularly social issues such as drug problems (Andersen, 2005), poorer schools (Andersen, 2005), lack of social control (Ward, 1999), anti-social behaviour (Ward, 1999) and fear of crime<sup>11</sup> (Ward, 1999). Strohmeier and Bader (2004) speak of deteriorating social conditions in traditional working class neighbourhoods because of lack of jobs in heavy industry and the security associated with them. Lötscher et al. (2004) argue that the gap between rich and poor is increasing in shrinking cities. Krumholz (2007) similarly argues that areas where the central city is declining and suburbs are growing in United States have high regional socioeconomic inequality:

Regional socioeconomic inequality is high in the U.S. compared with other industrial democracies. Differences are nearly always presented in terms of central city/suburban disparities, with striking rates of poverty, unemployment and inequality of opportunity in central cities. This pattern differs from trends in many Canadian and European cities where urban gentrification is common and lower-income families are losing access to central city neighbourhoods. (p.31)

In particular, declining central cities and inner suburbs tend to be home disproportionately to low income African American populations (Krumholz, 2007), which has roots in the “white flight”

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<sup>11</sup> Although, as Rybcznski & Linneman (1999) explain, crime rates are similar (and high) for both large shrinking and large growing cities. Crime rates are only slightly higher in large shrinking cities.

mentioned above which originally led to population and jobs dispersing out of central cities. According to Krumholz (2007), in these central cities, infrastructure is obsolete and in many areas zoning laws and building standards limit housing for low income minorities. Rieniets (2005b) and Allweil (2007) argue that, in addition to the social aspects of shrinkage, population decline can also cause “cultural” shrinkage as many important aspects of local society begin to disappear.

## **5.0 Summary**

The effects of population decline are diverse and varied, and they are often dictated by the causes of the population decline which are, as seen above, also diverse and varied. This complex environment presents a significant challenge to planners in shrinking cities. While many of the effects are clearly undesirable – such as water and sewer system overcapacity and an abundance of vacant houses – the literature indicates that the effects of population decline are not always negative. For example, as Rybcznski and Linneman (1999) state:

Is population loss always a bad thing for a city? We think not. Cities with more than a million inhabitants were rare before the twentieth century. There is no reason to assume that a smaller city is worse than a large one. In fact, an argument can be made that when a city is smaller it is also more human in scale, more livable, less anonymous, with a more manageable and responsive government. (pp. 34-35)

Houston et al. (2008) point out that a city with a declining population may have some positive effects such as reducing demands on public services. However, the bulk of the literature seems to subscribe to the notion that population decline is generally not a positive occurrence in the life of a city. Indeed, Houston et al. (2008) go on to agree with the literature cited above that shrinkage is not likely to benefit a city’s economy and indeed the loss of population “...in some circumstances may be economically damaging” (p.134). Thus, most researchers seem to be in agreement with Seasons (2007) assertion that, if left unaddressed in a proper manner, “decline

can create destabilizing economic, fiscal, social and environmental impacts that can compromise a community's quality of life and viability" (p.6). Importantly, however, all is not lost in cities experiencing population decline: while acknowledging the negative impacts, most shrinking cities researchers also argue that, with skillful planning aimed at minimizing the challenges, the positive effects of shrinkage can be capitalized upon and the negative consequences can be turned into opportunities. It is to the literature on effective planning practices in shrinking cities that I now turn.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE SHRINKING CITIES LITERATURE II: EFFECTIVE PLANNING PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF POPULATION DECLINE

#### 1.0 Introduction

As might be expected, the diverse causes and effects of shrinkage outlined in Chapter 2 have enormous implications for urban planning which, in this thesis, I broadly interpret to include land-use, economic, social, and environmental planning. Irurah, Park & Yeang (2005) caution that "... in the future shrinking cities might cause more urban problems than expanding ones" (p.158). Andersen (2005) similarly argues that since shrinkage is increasingly becoming a worldwide phenomenon, urban planners in a growing number of cities will need to be prepared to deal proactively with the effects of urban population decline: "The shrinking cities phenomenon has to be incorporated into the general assumptions about the contemporary city and maybe the understanding of the city needs to be updated in some areas..." (p.1). Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the "hallmark" of the geography of capitalism is "uneven development;" that is, a system of growing and declining cities and regions. The implication of this seems to be that if capitalism is here to stay, so is the phenomenon of urban shrinkage.

Fortunately, there is general agreement amongst shrinking cities researcher that rather than ignoring the issue or blindly pursuing growth that is unlikely to happen, urban planners *can* play a constructive role in improving the quality of life of residents in cities experiencing long-term shrinkage. In short, in the context of global forces beyond their control, *planners can effect positive change in shrinking cities with skilful planning aimed at minimizes the challenges and*

*capitalizing upon the opportunities presented by population decline.* Researchers such as Rybczynski and Linneman (1999) see shrinkage as an opportunity for cities to “...reinvent themselves, becoming better cities...” (p.38). Pallagst (2005) explains that in planning for population decline, local governments play a “crucial” role. As Rieniets (2005b) acknowledges, planners cannot reverse shrinkage, but they can shape the effects to the best ends possible:

[u]rban planning has never generated urban growth, but rather enables and controls it by means of planning. Likewise, urban planning can hardly stimulate the opposite process—shrinkage—nor can it reverse it. However, it can guide the process to the best urban solutions possible. (p.6)

Indeed, some researchers view the importance of skilful urban planning in the context of population decline as even greater than the importance of planning in the context of growth. According to Müller and Siedentop (2004), “...downsizing and redevelopment have to rely on coordinated planning in much greater measure than growth and expansion.” (p.8) Shrinking cities researchers also agree that these efforts will be more effective if local officials in cities that are likely to experience long-term population decline are proactive and do not wait until the decline has progressed to an advanced stage.

Unfortunately, as noted in Chapter 1, despite the growing need to find urban planning and policy solutions which address the issues associated with population decline, this issue remains for planners and planning academics alike, as Seasons (2007) describes it, the “policy elephant in the living room” (p.6). According to him, shrinking cities face enormous challenges that

...require responses based on sound decisions. However, we know much less about planning for and managing place decline than we know about growth management. It is time to develop appropriate responses to the place decline reality. (Seasons, 2007, p.6)

The policy elephant that is shrinking cities remains largely unacknowledged in practice: Ritter (2006) found that while 70 percent of mayors in German cities view the implications of demographic change as very serious, less than one third have answers ready. According to

Simmons and Bourne (2007), “[a]t present, most communities at risk of decline are in a state of denial” (p.21). As Rieniets (2005b) explains, this lack of forethought is problematic:

...architects und urban planners are usually confronted with urban shrinkage at a time when the process of decline has already reached an advanced stage: empty apartments, debilitated infrastructures, and public budgets pushed to the limit. Architects and urban planners then find themselves in a position where they can only react to the given circumstances rather than draw up plans for future developments. Therefore, in the same way traditional urban planning usually operates on the assumption of urban growth, cities that are expected to lose population in the long run need to be planned in advance. Only if foresighted plans are implemented can shrinking cities be designed in the most effective and sustainable way. (pp.6-7)

Even in the emerging shrinking cities literature, the discussion of how best to plan in shrinking cities remains fragmented and is usually presented as an afterthought to a discussion on the causes and effects of population decline in specific cases. In addition, when the issue of planning in the context of population decline is discussed, it is largely focused on planning for the physical effects of urban shrinkage (for instance, vacant buildings). Shrinking cities researchers are only beginning to address the issue of how planners can be most effective in shrinking cities. In this chapter, I have assembled the fragmented discussions about planning in the context of population decline from shrinking cities researchers (supplemented by other bodies of literature that deal with aspects of planning in the context of decline, including urban regeneration and strategic planning) into four general principles for good planning practice in the context of population decline, namely:

- Planners must **leave behind the assumption of future growth**;
- Planners must use processes that are more **strategic, with an emphasis on citizen participation**;
- Planners must **adopt a balanced approach** in addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community; and
- Planners must **change the role they play** in the community.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, these four principles incorporate established aspects of good planning in all cities – growing and shrinking. For instance, while good planning in shrinking cities requires that planners take on different roles (for example, manager of the decline process) than those undertaken in the context of growth, existing planning processes increasingly used in the context of growth (namely strategic planning) remain useful and in fact take on heightened importance in the context of population decline. However, what is different about these principles in the context of population decline is the fact that shrinking cities researchers see the use of them as necessary for improving the quality of life in shrinking cities *despite* the lack of population growth. The bulk of the literature discussing planning in the context of population decline has heretofore presented population decline as a “failure” and prescribed growth as “the cure.” In the shrinking cities literature, the “cure” is presented as the ability to minimize the challenges of population decline and capitalize on the opportunities through the use of “good planning” principles. Only this will improve quality of life, *not* growth. At the conclusion of this chapter, I present my research questions.

## **2.0 First Principle: Planners must leave behind the assumption of future growth**

The clearest recommendation from shrinking cities researchers is that urban planners in shrinking cities need to leave behind the assumption of the likelihood (and, indeed, necessity) of future population growth (Couch et al., 2005; Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Grossman, 2004; Hollander & Popper 2007; Kitchen, 2003; Cleveland Shrinking Cities Institute, 2007; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Hollbach-Grömig & Trapp, 2006; Müller & Siedentop, 2004; Müller, 2004; Andersen, 2005; Polèse & Shearmur, 2003 and 2006; Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Simmons & Bourne, 2007; Martinez-Fernandez & Wu, 2007). In shrinking cities, planners need to let go of the ultimate goal of attracting future growth and instead must tailor their policies to realistic

demographic prospects. As Andersen (2005) states, "...urban planners and designers have been so used to growth and how to handle growth when they are planning that the goal for the city, automatically, becomes growth and development" (p.3). However, focusing on attracting future growth when it is unlikely is not only inefficient, but may prove detrimental to urban development in the long run. Indeed, strategies to attract future growth may divert much-needed resources in shrinking cities away from more pressing issues and may end up wasting scarce resources (Shearmur, 2006; Allweil, 2007; Mäding, 2004; Wiechmann, 2007a and b).

For instance, Mäding (2004) explains that every shrinking city seems to have a local economic development policy to increase the attractiveness of the city to industry and they also seem to all pursue policies to maximize the attractiveness of the city to potential in-migrants. However, in Mäding's opinion, this type of "cut-throat," expenditure-side competition for residents is dangerous because "...for a given total population, each individual can win only to the cost of others" (p.14). Wiechmann (2003) argues in the European context that focusing on attracting growth "...is risky, because on a European scale population decrease in many (if not most) cities is inevitable in the coming decades. Undoubtedly there is a danger that growth targeted strategies expend substantial resources for investors that will never come" (p.19).

Leo and Brown (2000) similarly caution that

[a]t a minimum, our analysis suggests strongly that the desire to be in the 'major leagues' or at least to act as if a city is in that league, puts serious obstacles in the way of rational policy-making. Few communities will drastically alter their growth rate; no matter how much money they spend on infrastructure or economic development. Policies pitched to a city's actual circumstances will serve it better." (p.210)

Furthermore, Shearmur and Polèse (2007) explain that the continued focus on achieving unattainable growth may have a negative effect on the morale of local officials:

Policies aimed at growth – particularly if it is employment growth that is being sought – are very likely to fail. Repeated failures discredit development policies and lead to

burnout amongst development officers and planners. Instead, policies should be geared towards qualitative changes and managing the decline. (p.36)

Polèse and Shearmur (2006) emphasize that the core premise that a region can “grow” again if it correctly organizes itself is ill-suited to the needs of shrinking communities.

Growth policies pursued where growth is unlikely to happen are particularly detrimental to the physical structure of shrinking cities. Several shrinking cities researchers point out that, given the physical effects of population decline including oversized infrastructure (which becomes more expensive to maintain and operate for fewer people) and a “perforation” of the urban structure (which tends to lead particularly to downtown decline), instead of continuing to allow a city to sprawl outwards thereby exacerbating those issues, urban planners in shrinking cities need to shift their mindset towards consolidation and downsizing (Couch et al., 2005; Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999). As Couch et al. (2005) explain in the context of a discussion of sprawling, shrinking cities in Europe:

Given that little demographic growth is to be expected in Europe in the foreseeable future, declining cities like Liverpool and Leipzig should not anticipate a return to their former importance and place in the urban hierarchy. The past has shown that efforts to attract (and subsidize) industrial investors and to develop big infrastructural facilities with public money, which have taken place in both cities, could not stop – let alone reverse – the decline. Besides, since most of these investments have been located on the urban periphery they often have changed the functional structure of the urban space to the further detriment of the inner city. Hence, urban policy making and planning will have to concentrate on the organization of shrinking and redevelopment. (pp.133-134)

Hollbach-Grömig and Trapp (2006) similarly explain that

Demographic changes generate differing spatial planning requirements in prosperous or stable regions and in shrinking regions. Spatial planning in prosperous regions and cities, like the metropolitan areas of Helsinki, Frankfurt, Munich, Comunidad Valenciana or Madrid, may still function under the traditional premise of ‘growth allocation.’ ... In shrinking regions and cities, by contrast, urban density ... needs to be sustained or reconfigured. Usually, shrinking implies a decrease in population density. A consequence of this development is the underutilization of infrastructure. Spatial planning has to employ tools to keep ... infrastructure functioning and (more or less)

cost-efficient and to develop measures to increase the attractiveness of a city and region. (pp.11-12)

Thus, especially in the realm of spatial planning, the idea of growth as the ultimate “goal” of planning needs to be left behind. So, the question becomes: if population growth should not be the goal in shrinking cities, what should be?

Shrinking cities researchers argue that instead of focusing on attracting new residents, urban planners need to direct their attention inward, to maintaining and indeed improving the quality of life of those who remain (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Popper & Popper, 2002; Grossman, 2004; Allweil, 2007; Müller & Siedentop, 2004; Polèse & Shearmur, 2003; Andersen, 2005). According to Grossman (2004), the success of a city should be measured not by its population or economic growth, but by the quality of life it provides:

The growth paradigm as a cultural pattern has translated into routines of perception and action. Such a routine of action is the town planning which sees itself as designing by means of steering growth. Another routine of perception is the measuring of successes in the competition of cities by spectacular construction projects, economic benchmarks and not least by great events. According to a change of paradigm in the direction of sustainability these categories could be replaced by categories of quality of life. (p.22)

While focusing on quality of life is not (or, at least, should not be) a goal which applies to only shrinking cities, the fact that a city that is declining in population can still offer a high quality of life (and that, in fact, there are opportunities that come from a smaller population) may be a new concept for many planners. Importantly, Rybczynski and Linneman (1999) remind us that historically, many European cities have gone through periods of decline and yet they still provide residents with a high quality of life. For instance, Vienna is now about 20 percent smaller than its zenith before World War One. To them, cities like Vienna provide a “critical lesson” that “...a smaller city can be made a good place to live. Using these cities as role models, the

question for shrinking cities is not, ‘How can we grow big again?’ but rather, ‘How can we prosper and have a wonderful, smaller city?’” (pp.39-40)

In focusing on building on existing assets and improving the quality of life of those who remain (that is, in focusing their attention and efforts *inward*, rather than *outward*), shrinking cities researchers argue that urban planners in shrinking cities will begin to see the opportunities associated with population decline. Kabisch, Haase, and Haase (2006) explain that

[u]rban policy makers are challenged [in shrinking cities] – the paradigm of growth has to be replaced also in practice-related thinking and in developing new strategic goals for urban futures, treating shrinkage not only as a menace but also as a chance for reshaping urban spaces. (p.1)

In short, urban planners in shrinking cities, in leaving behind the quest for growth, will see that smaller is (or at least can be) better. Rybczynski and Linneman (1999) and Popper and Popper (2002) recognize the difficulty planners will face in changing their mindset to “smaller can be better” given that planning has always had a bias towards growth. Despite the challenges, Popper and Popper (2002) propose that planners adopt an approach they call “smart decline,” which involves “...leaving behind the assumptions of growth and finding alternatives to it. In particular, smart decline requires thinking about who and what remains. It may entail reorganizing or eliminating some services and providing different ones...” (pp.2-3). Again, they acknowledge that

[d]ecline planning strategies are often controversial and difficult. But they have the virtue of acknowledging the reality, persistence, and effects of population decline. Such a recognition is a necessary first step that allows planners to think creatively and practically about smart decline, just as they do about smart growth. (Popper & Popper, 2002, p.4)

Hollander and Popper (2007), in outlining their Reverse Land Use Allocation Model for predicting where future decline will happen in shrinking cities, emphasize that planners (with the

help of local residents) will find opportunity in adopting a mindset that is not based solely on attracting future growth:

What are other possible successor land uses to the housing units which will be left behind, besides abandoned buildings and vacant lots? What else can become of the homes left behind? What can the existing vacant lots become? If we can expect residents to abandon housing units in the blocks from Seventh to Tenth Street along Vine Avenue, what would early neighbourhood intervention accomplish? Can we convert those entire blocks into community gardens, into an urban forestry project, into a baseball field, into a human-made lake? The options are as unlimited as the imaginations of local residents – and planners can help realize them. (p.40)

Andersen (2005) similarly argues that, in focusing inward on the quality of life of remaining residents, planners will find new value in abandoned spaces and will learn to work creatively with the open structures of a shrinking city. Schilling and Logan's (2008) proposed model for "right-sizing" America's shrinking cities is based largely on downsizing shrinking cities in a way that recognizes the potential of abandoned properties: "With an abundance of vacant properties, these shrinking cities provide fertile ground for neighborhood-scale and citywide greening strategies that can revitalize urban environments, empower community residents, and stabilize dysfunctional markets" (p.451).

Thus, shrinking cities researchers suggest that, in terms of planning goals in shrinking cities, the ultimate focus should not be on planning for future growth, but instead planning to improve the quality of life for the residents that remain. In other words, the focus of planners needs to shift from the external to the internal. Again, while the goal of planning for quality of life is a laudable goal in both growing and shrinking cities, recognizing that there are opportunities that come with population decline will require that planners adopt a new way of thinking in shrinking cities. Especially in the realm of physical planning, leaving behind the mindset of growth may lead to planners addressing the negative effects of population decline in creative ways that ultimately result in a "smaller being better" way of thinking. Of course,

shrinking cities researchers also acknowledge that this will be a difficult transition for planners, requiring them to make many difficult choices. However, this change in mindset is seen as an important first step towards effective planning in shrinking cities.

### **3.0 Second principle: Planners must use processes that are strategic, with an emphasis on citizen participation**

So how is planning for improving the quality of life of remaining residents in shrinking cities to be achieved? The answer lies in a planning process which is increasingly being used by cities in all demographic circumstances – growing or shrinking: strategic planning, which places an emphasis on citizen participation. Müller (2004) explains that, in shrinking cities, “[p]lanning is to be understood as strategic and as the management of shrinkage processes” (p.3). Reiss-Schmidt (2006) agrees that population decline requires a new response from planners, one of strategic, proactive “urban development management” (p.2). Kühn (2007) explains that elements of strategic planning play a key role in the transformation and regeneration of urban areas. As discussed in the following section, the theory of urban regeneration is based on the premise that balanced, qualitative development in shrinking cities is best achieved using strategic planning processes (Kühn, 2007). More specifically, Roberts (2000) and Carter (2000) both emphasize that declining cities seeking to regenerate need to do so using strategies which are based on a comprehensive and integrated vision, one that balances the physical, economic, environmental, and social needs of a community. Again, shrinking cities usually have shrinking resources (Hutter & Neumann, 2008); discrete strategies based on a longer-term comprehensive and integrated vision allows these communities to invest their limited resources where they are likely to have the most effect:

Conventional, all-encompassing master plans are often impossible to fund and usually divorced from the need for solutions to pressing urban problems. As municipalities struggle to become more effective and efficient in their functioning in the light of

increasingly scarce resources, strategic planning with its selective, action-oriented, partnership approach can help to identify priorities and to mobilise resources to address these priorities. (Narang & Reutersward, 2006, p.8)

### **3.1 What is strategic planning?**

A large body of literature exists on strategic planning in various disciplines, including planning and business studies, a detailed review of which is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is worthwhile illuminating from this literature exactly what is meant by “strategic planning.” In fact, there is no uniform conception of strategic spatial planning (Kühn, 2006), but for the most part the definitions given in the literature are similar to Roberts’ (2000) description of strategic planning in the context of urban regeneration (see above). Albrechts (2006), for instance, defines strategic spatial planning as “...a transformative and integrative, (preferably) public-sector-led...socio-spatial...process through which a vision, coherent actions, and means for implementation are produced that shape and frame what a place is and what it might become” (p.1152). To Hutter and Wiechmann (2005), strategic spatial planning is “...“...a social process for coordinating actors and institutions in fragmented, uncertain environments in order to empower and motivate key stakeholders and to provide a decision framework for the management of spatial change” (p.2). In general, Albrechts (2006) explains that strategic planning is different from comprehensive planning primarily in its selectivity; that is, strategic planning focuses on certain projects which are chosen based on an overall vision. In contrast, comprehensive planning involves “...the integration of nearly everything” into technical or legal regulations (p.1149). Kühn (2006) explains that strategic planning “...attempts to find a third way between the large master plan and small steps” (p.331). To Wiechmann (2003), strategic planning is different from comprehensive planning in that it places emphasis not only on a formal output, but on a decision framework. It is a social process where a range of actors get

together to design a plan-making process and develop strategies. In other words, what is important in strategic planning is the process, while comprehensive planning is about product. To him, "...[m]ore important than the plan itself is what involved actors learn when they engage in a strategic planning process..." (Wiechmann, 2008b, p.6). Plans may be forgotten; what is important is what is learned in the process of forming them.

### **3.2 What characteristics of strategic planning are particularly relevant for shrinking cities?**

Strategic planning is increasingly being incorporated into the planning processes in growing cities; however, according to the shrinking cities literature, there are several characteristics of strategic planning which, according to the literature, make it *particularly* useful for planning in shrinking cities. First, strategic planning is based largely on the need for long-term thinking through the creation of **long-range visions** (Albrechts, 2006; Kühn, 2006; Sartorio, 2005). The creation of a vision upon which subsequent policies and projects are based is the first key step in strategic spatial planning process. In short, the vision provides the framework for action. According to Kühn (2006), the vision plays "...an important role in creating consensus and guiding activities for a shared future when integrating various actors and departments..." (p.330). Kühn (2006) further points out that it is vitally important that there is a connection between projects and visions in strategic planning. Unfortunately, there is often a gap between the two. Kühn (2006) illustrates this in his study of two East German shrinking cities: Cottbus, which has failed to translate vision into action and Gorlitz, which has undertaken projects in the absence of a vision anchored in local consensus. According to him, both are unlikely to succeed in the long term because of the lack of a link between vision and action.

Importantly, the literature emphasizes that the vision should balance the social, physical, economic, and environmental needs of present and future generations (Narang & Reutersward, 2006; Roberts, 2000; Carter, 2000). This is in contrast to comprehensive planning, which Albrechts (2006) argues is usually based on a particular, more short-term time-frame. This emphasis on long-term thinking and visioning how a city *could* be or *should* be is particularly useful in shrinking cities where residents and local officials alike may be used to focusing on the negatives associated with shrinkage, rather than the opportunities. Strategic planning may inspire residents and planners to innovate (Sartorio, 2005); for instance, they may think more creatively what the vacant lots in their neighbourhood could become and, on a broader scale, how “smaller can be better.” Successful planning in shrinking cities requires vision and inspires creativity; thus, strategic planning’s use of visioning as a first step towards creating effective and innovative strategies is particularly useful in shrinking cities.

This leads to the second characteristic of strategic planning that is particularly important for shrinking cities: that of **inclusiveness** (Albrechts, 2006; Narang & Reutersward, 2006; Sartorio, 2005). Strategic planning dictates that all relevant actors must be included in a meaningful way. Albrechts (2006) explains that this is different from participation in traditional master planning:

In most traditional spatial planning the focus is clearly on producing a plan, and public involvement is mainly end-of-the-line. In strategic spatial planning the plan is just one vehicle amongst others with the purpose of producing change. As spatial planning has almost no potential for concretizing strategies, strategic spatial planning involves relevant actors needed for their substantive contribution, their procedural competences, and the role they might play in acceptance, in getting basic support, and in providing legitimacy. (p.1163)

The inclusive nature of strategic planning is important for shrinking cities (Allweil, 2007; Reiss-Schmidt, 2006; Sander, 2006; Hutter & Neumann, 2008; Kühn, 2006 and 2007), which may lack

the resources to develop and implement strategies on their own and which have to rely on a wide range of actors to both lend their expertise, ideas, and efforts in developing and implementing strategies. As Sander (2006) explains, there is a need to intensify participatory requirements and civic engagement in shrinking cities, “which generates identification and thus quality” (p.12). Given the general sense of apathy towards top-down planning approaches in many shrinking cities, including all parties in meaningful and creative ways in developing and implementing strategies to improve their city may generate a feeling of excitement about a city’s future which is beneficial in and of itself. It cannot be emphasized enough that in order for strategic planning processes in shrinking cities to be truly inclusive, participation must be meaningful and open, “...fostering a fair balance between the interests of various social and age groups, and between women and men.” (Reiss-Schmidt, 2006, p.6). Plans may be labelled as “strategic,” but if they do not involve meaningful participation, they are not true strategic plans. As Wiechmann (2003) explains, this seems to be the case of the planning document adopted in 2000 in Newcastle which was called a strategic plan, but whose contents were “...elaborated inside the city administration by working groups and were provided top down” (p.8). Thus, true strategic plans need to be inclusive. It is worthwhile to note at this stage, however, Hutter and Schanze’s (2008) caution that not all aspects of strategic planning may lend themselves to broad-based consensus-building. Thus, planners need to decide which aspects of strategic planning call for broad stakeholder involvement and which call for the inclusion of external experts in a more technical discussion.

Next, the **selective** nature of strategic planning is important for shrinking cities.

According to Albrechts (2006), while comprehensive planning attempts to develop policies on nearly everything, strategic planning is

...oriented to issues that really matter. Indeed, budgetary constraints and a lack of institutional capacity make it impossible to do everything that needs to be done.

'Strategic' implies that some decisions and actions are considered more important than others and that much of the process lies in making the tough decisions about what is most important for the purpose of producing fair, structural responses to problems, challenges, aims, and aspirations. (p.1155)

As noted above, financial and human resources are often scarce in shrinking cities. As such, it is virtually impossible for these cities to address all of their issues at the same time. Through strategic planning, shrinking cities can prioritize projects based on which are most pressingly needed to accomplish the long-term vision for the city. Planners can also focus their energy and resources on issues they can actually do something about (Hutter, Schanze, & Wirth, 2008). In fact, as Kühn (2006) explains, "...[s]trategic projects are called 'key projects' when their effects are intended to radiate outward. In the case of regeneration of shrinking cities, these effects are often expected to spread geographically (metastasizing) or accelerate in time (catalyzing)" (p.330).

In addition, the process of strategic planning is **context-specific** (Albrechts, 2006; Hutter, Schanze, & Wirth, 2008; Sartorio, 2005), which is helpful in shrinking cities for two main reasons. First, as mentioned in Chapter 2, cities shrink in different ways and for different reasons, so the fact that strategic planning principles are flexible enough to take these different circumstances into account is useful. Secondly, on a more fundamental level, the fact that strategic planning processes must be tailored to the specific circumstances and needs of the community in itself reinforces for shrinking cities the fact that context is important in planning processes. That is, in choosing the most appropriate way to carry out strategic planning in their communities, planners in shrinking cities will need to take into account, among other things, the city's specific realities, including the likelihood of long-term population decline. In addition to being context-specific in terms of process, strategic planning emphasizes the need for a realistic examination of context in the development of long-term visions and strategies (Hutter &

Schanze, 2008; Hutter, Schanze, & Wirth, 2008). As Albrechts (2006) states, a sense of realism must permeate the strategic planning process: "...the vision must be placed within a specific context (economic, social, cultural, political, or power), a specific place, a specific time, and a specific scale in relation to specific issues that are of interest and within a particular combination of actors" (p.1160). In short, visions must be rooted in an understanding of the basic processes, including demographic and economic trends, which shape places. This is particularly important for shrinking cities because, as Kitchen (2003) explains, successful planning in shrinking cities needs to involve strategic thinking about the potential of the existing asset base: "...we need to think hard about how best to support the kinds of economic activities that have at least a realistic chance of growing in our cities in the future..." (p.131). As noted above, the first step towards realism and acknowledgement of context in shrinking cities may involve a shift away from the assumption of future growth towards an acceptance that demographic and economic forces are likely to dictate further population decline. Strategic planning encourages shrinking cities to take this first step.

Next, strategic planning is designed to be **flexible** both in terms of process and product. In terms of process, again, there are many ways to go about strategic planning; the best way is one which is geared towards the specific characteristics of a city and the circumstances it is facing. In fact, Hutter, Schanze, & Wirth (2008) argue that strategic planning may stifle creativity if it becomes too formulaic. This flexibility is beneficial for shrinking cities (Allweil, 2007; Kühn, 2006), each of which faces a variety of issues associated with population decline based on specific circumstances and each of which, in the absence of established planning principles dealing with population decline, needs to encourage creativity. In terms of product, strategic planning is meant to be flexible. Speaking in the context of Dresden's planning

strategy, which focused on growth when the city was shrinking and on shrinking when the city grew unexpectedly, Wiechmann (2007a) argues that, in fact, "...strategic flexibility [is] more important than the strategy itself" (p.1). While comprehensive plans may "lock-in" a city's policies for a specific time period, strategic planning recognizes that, as context changes, so do visions and priorities (Albrechts, 2006). If something is not working, strategic planning dictates that it be changed. As Albrechts (2006) states, "[t]raditional spatial plans are judged in terms of conformance, strategic spatial plans in terms of performance..." (p.1165). In fact, shrinking cities researchers argue that strategies developed in the context of population decline need to be flexible (Wiechmann, 2008a; Allweil, 2007; Reiss-Schmidt, 2006; Sander, 2006). Reiss-Schmidt (2006) argues that the goal of planning in shrinking cities is "... not to produce a quickly obsolete master plan with concrete individual measures but to formulate development strategies permitting flexible responses to unpredictable changes..." (p.6). In general, "...[s]trategic thinking and flexible action are becoming more important than concern with operative details..." (Reiss-Schmidt, 2006, p.13). In fact, Hutter and Wiechmann (2005) argue that in the context of shrinking cities, planners should pay attention not only to developing strategies but also to detecting existing patterns in the city's day-to-day activities that work and that can be exploited and built upon on a wider scale. According to them, "[p]lanners do not have to be strategy *makers*. They can be *finders*...[I]ntentions are only the beginning of the strategy making journey..." (Hutter & Wiechmann, 2005, p.7, emphasis in original). Wiechmann (2008b) argues that planners need to find a balance between deliberate strategy-making and the more incremental learning-based strategy-finding.

Finally, strategic planning is **integrative on the scale of the region**, with agencies and communities acting in cooperation rather than competition (Albrechts, 2006; Sartorio, 2005). As

Sartorio (2005) explains, unlike comprehensive planning, strategic planning can go beyond territories that are legally defined and shift boundaries from administrative ones to more operational ones. This focus on cooperation within the broader region is useful for shrinking cities (Reiss-Schmidt, 2006; Pallagst, 2005; Müller, 2004; Jessen, 2006; Müller and Siedentop, 2004; Sander, 2006), particularly in the United States, where planning is done in a fragmented way (if it is done at all). According to Pallagst (2005), who advocates for an approach called “progressive regionalism,” the lack of a regional response is problematic, especially where shrinkage occurs on a regional level. Müller (2004) argues that shrinking cities in all countries need “...integrated regional strategies for adjusting to demographic change, drawn up in intermunicipal cooperation and placing decline or growth trends in a regional context” (p.3). Intermunicipal cooperation allows communities within a region to avoid wasting efforts: “.....only on the regional scale can duplicate investment be prevented in competing for population and jobs... This could lower the risk of desperate action by local authorities in the form of dubious beacon projects...” (Jessen, 2006, p.11). Müller and Siedentop (2004) similarly see the growing importance of the region as a level for action in shrinking cities. To them, it is becoming more and more important to treat functionally interrelated areas as a unit for planning purposes, primarily for the sake of efficiency:

If redevelopment and downsizing are on the municipal agenda, adjustment concepts need to be discussed and implemented in regional cooperation. In contrast to traditional policy approaches, the region is becoming more important, less as a level for the order-oriented control of development than as a spatial platform for the efficiency-oriented adjustment of settlement structures. If a number of municipalities face the same problems of having to close schools or scale-down technical infrastructure, these problems should not be tackled at the level of the single municipality: regional solutions should be sought to ‘save’ facilities and maintain public services in the long terms and in keeping with community needs. The same holds for housing construction and many other sectors. (pp.9-10)

Müller and Siedentop (2004) further state that the opportunities arising from population decline “...can be exploited only if municipalities collaborate with their regions...” (p.10).

Thus, these characteristics of strategic planning are presented by shrinking cities researchers as being particularly useful exercise in shrinking cities. Not only is strategic planning more likely than traditional comprehensive planning to produce strategies that are more flexible, efficient, and effective, simply engaging in the process of discussing an overall vision of how to turn the negatives of shrinking into opportunities to maximize the quality of life of the residents who remain is likely to be immensely valuable. The participatory nature of strategic planning is especially helpful in shrinking cities where residents tend to become disenchanted as a result of past failed attempts to reach former population levels. The selective nature of strategic planning is particularly useful in cities which are experiencing declining municipal revenues.

#### **4.0 Third principle: Planners must adopt a balanced approach in addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community**

In order to ensure that the quality of life of the citizens that remain in shrinking cities is indeed improved, many shrinking cities researchers argue that planners in shrinking cities, like those in growing cities, need to deal with the effects of population decline in a balanced manner. For instance, policies to improve the economic conditions in shrinking cities should not be pursued at the expense of physical, social, and environmental conditions. Unfortunately, the literature indicates that, to date, this has not been the case and usually it is the social and environmental realm that are “sacrificed” in search for economic growth at all costs (a consequence of seeing growth as the only positive development in the life of a city). Beyond providing the general suggestion that planning be “balanced,” however, the shrinking cities literature is lacking in guidance as to for ways as to how this balance can be accomplished.

Urban regeneration literature – which posits that it is only through a comprehensive and balanced approach that urban policies in declining cities can improve the quality of life of remaining citizens in an effective and sustainable way – provides assistance in this regard. This body of literature also confirms that this balanced approach has, to date, not been the norm.

#### **4.1 The typical one-sided approach to urban shrinkage**

As Barbanente and Monno (2004) explain, the literature “...shows few examples of successful stories of long term efforts to regenerate widely deindustrialised regions...” (p.36). Strategies to deal with shrinkage have tended to focus on reversing demographic and economic decline and returning to previous population levels by attracting foreign investment (Polèse & Shearmur, 2006). Cities adopt an “entrepreneurial” role and attempt to “sell” their locations with business friendly policies. Typical amongst these “market-based” strategies are place promotion, image boosterism, and flagship projects (Punch, 2004). Underpinning these economic development strategies is a fundamental belief that urban decline cannot be “fixed” by government, but by the private sector (Beswick & Tsenkova, 2002) and that economic growth is achievable and is the cure for ills of urban decline. In fact, as Lovering (2007) explains, “...there is no consistent evidence that increasing the openness of the local economy, encouraging inward investment and flows of trade and tourism, has had a positive effect on growth, much less on employment rates and per capita incomes...” (p.357). Dabinett (2004) points out that in the UK, despite consistent economic growth since 1997, the division between the richest and poorest in society has increased. In the realm of spatial planning in shrinking cities, with such exceptions as Leipzig (Jessen, 2006; Bontje, 2004) and Youngstown (discussed below), the “property-led” approach to regeneration is common (Beswick & Tsenkova, 2002) and like the market-based approach in economic development, it reflects the emphasis on achievable growth as the ultimate

goal. For example, shrinking cities designate new land for development, develop industrial parks, and plan new housing projects in the hopes of attracting industry and people (Müller & Siedentop, 2004). Even in the rare cases where the emphasis has shifted away from growth in the physical sphere (for instance, Leipzig and Youngstown have developed strategies in the physical sphere based on downsizing the built environment), in the economic sphere policies tend to resemble more traditional entrepreneurial strategies (Bontje, 2004).

Unfortunately, where these market-led economic and property-led spatial policies are successful in contributing to economic growth, social conditions remain unchanged or even worsen (Andersen, 2005; Lovering, 2007; Lang, 2005; Punch, 2004; Gosling, 2008; Pattison, 2004). As Pattison (2004) explains, "...policies based on an economic rationale guided by aesthetic judgements remain insufficient to match the real complexities of both community regeneration and areas suffering decline" (p.329). The major problem is that these one-sided policies fail to address the gap between privileged and middle class and the working class and marginalized in shrinking cities, instead reinforcing and exacerbating this disparity. Sheffield, UK, a former steel town which saw many job losses beginning in the late 1970s, has been successful in attracting new businesses, leading to both a quantitative and qualitative change in the economic base. However, according to Dabinett (2004), continued presence of deprived communities suggests that these post-industrial activities have not benefited the wider "urban well-being" and have not resulted in social justice for disadvantaged groups: "...inequitable impacts are occurring alongside the more obvious quantitative changes in the employment base of the city" (p.21). For instance, ethnic minorities in Sheffield continue to experience higher levels of unemployment and while educational attainment has generally improved in Sheffield, it still lags behind the south east of England and is deeply divided within the city. Dublin, Ireland,

whose traditional industrial base declined in the post-war period, has experienced recent economic growth as a result of various policies which encouraged foreign direct investment and private property redevelopment (Punch, 2004). However, the newly redeveloped “Port and Docks” global finance capital facility has contributed to the gentrification of the inner city, raising concerns about social integration and displacement of poorer residents (Punch, 2004). As well, because of the city’s emerging role as a site of back-office functions for multinationals, the occupational structure of the city has become increasingly polarized, with growth in high-grade professional services (e.g. legal services, engineering, architecture,...) or low-paid vulnerable services (e.g. for hotels, restaurants, etc...). According to Punch (2004), Dublin’s working class is not benefiting from new economic growth or policies. Instead, they have been left without opportunities for manual work and they are unable to compete for skilled-manual or white-collar positions created. Punch (2004) argues that

...the contradiction between the opportunities and benefits accruing to the privileged and middle classes and those accruing to working-class and marginalized people remains a key issue and a central feature of Irish society, which has perhaps been reinforced, if anything, by the economic boom. (p.11)

In short, in these cases, economic priorities have taken precedence over social concerns.

Another type of common economic growth policy which has failed to address social concerns is creative class attraction strategies, made popular by Richard Florida. Florida’s basic argument is that cities can be economically revitalized by making themselves attractive to the creative class (Florida, 2002). Once this is done by, among other things, encouraging cultural activities and “tolerance,” jobs will follow. However, studies have shown that the creative class follows jobs and not vice versa; that is, educated people tend to move to growing, thriving areas (Houston et al., 2008). According to Shearmur (2006), policies promoting the interests of the creative class fail to deal with the concerns of the rest of the population and in fact end up

reinforcing the already privileged position of the elite “knowledge aristocracy:” “In fact, the type of municipal and regional policy inspired by Florida’s ideas is squarely aimed at attracting and retaining elites, often at the expense of other pressing, concrete but less visible municipal and regional responsibilities...” (p.38). The attraction of the creative class in fact does not ameliorate the social and economic issues facing many residents in shrinking cities and may indeed exacerbate them by, for instance, increasing inequality and class disparities (Squires, 2003).

In addition to negatively affecting (or, at best, failing to take into account) social concerns, the focus on attracting economic growth (whether through making the city attractive to foreign investment or to members of the creative class) has caused problems for the physical development of shrinking cities. Again, focusing on creative-class attraction (a typical strategy amongst shrinking cities) may cause the city to ignore other, more pressing municipal responsibilities (Shearmur, 2006), such as crumbling infrastructure in poorer neighbourhoods. In addition, as alluded to earlier, the desire to attract any kind of economic activity may lead shrinking cities to be more permissive in allowing sprawl. According to Couch et al. (2005), in shrinking cities

...it tends to be more difficult to restrict peripheral employment growth, because the political pressure to allow almost every investor what they demand is particularly strong when economic growth is lacking. In a situation of decline the economic development aims invariably take precedence over the aims of sustainable development and the planning system is obliged at least a passive role and often an active role in stimulating employment sprawl. (p.132)

Couch et al. (2005) give as examples Liverpool and Leipzig, where little demographic growth is expected, but city officials have used public infrastructure money to develop large facilities on the urban periphery in an effort to attract industrial investors. In both cases, this has negatively affected the functional structure of the city and has been particularly detrimental to the inner city.

Similarly, Foster (2007) explains that in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality in Nova Scotia, despite population decline, retail activity continues to gravitate towards the outskirts of town:

Decline does not exempt this region from changes in retailing that affect us all. Box stores and strip malls have moved the focus of retailing to the periphery near major arteries, leaving the downtowns of former towns as neighbourhood commercial centres. Increasingly, those without a car become disenfranchised from society. (Foster, 2007, p.24)

Dublin's inner city has experienced similar disinvestment as both people and businesses suburbanize (Punch, 2004). In addition, allowing developments on the outskirts of shrinking cities has proved environmentally detrimental as these developments tend to locate on greenfield sites (which require no refurbishment or decontamination), leaving brownfields vacant. For instance, in Eastern Germany after reunification, local authorities welcomed all types of private investment no matter where they chose to locate and where they chose to locate was often ecologically sensitive areas, despite the large number of brownfields waiting for reuse (Nuisl & Rink, 2005). In this case, the lack of planning on the part of local authorities was not the only contributor to sprawl:

In eastern Germany, the most effective incentives to sprawl...came from the programmes and fiscal instruments implemented by the federal government in order to stimulate the influx of capital. By awarding high subsidies without distinguishing between different locations, these programmes and instruments attracted several enterprises and companies to suburbia where building development was easiest. (Nuisl and Rink, 2005, p.126)

Strategies in the Ruhr District of Germany, where the closing of steel mills has resulted in vast areas of industrial wasteland, are attempting to halt this trend and reduce unemployment by encouraging, through funding schemes, the location of clean, innovative industries on industrial brownfields (Genske & Ruff, 2006). Nuisl and Rink (2005) caution that it remains to be seen whether efforts to contain further sprawl in Germany will be as effective as efforts that fostered it.

Thus, these types of typical strategies for dealing with the issues arising from shrinkage have proved problematic, particularly because of their one-sided emphasis on attracting economic growth at all costs. Simply put, "...when planning cities in decline like Baltimore and Detroit it is important to incorporate all aspects of shrinkage and therefore, both look at the demographic and the economic side, but also to include the physical, social and human aspects of the problem." (Andersen, 2005, p.2). According to shrinking cities researchers, comprehensively coordinated and integrated strategies are needed in order to achieve sustainable urban development under conditions of shrinkage (Koziol, 2004; Reiss-Schmidt, 2006; Müller & Siedentop, 2004; Bontje, 2004; Schilling & Logan, 2008). The concept of "urban regeneration" may provide a framework for developing these comprehensive and balanced strategies.

#### **4.2 Urban regeneration: A more comprehensive and balanced approach**

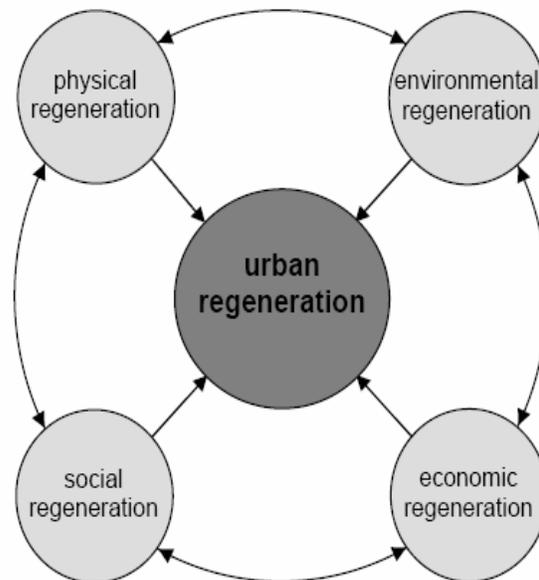
The term "urban regeneration" has been used to refer to many things, basically anything that is "new" (Lovering, 2007). Most are not "urban regeneration" projects according to the definition of term provided in the urban regeneration theoretical literature. In short, there is often a divergence between what Lovering (2007) terms "actually existing urban regeneration" and urban regeneration in theory. The notion of urban regeneration emerged in the United Kingdom in the 1990s in response to the deficiencies inherent in economic and planning policies geared only towards the physical and economic renewal (Tsenkova, 2002; Lang, 2005). As Beswick and Tsenkova (2002) state, "[p]roperty-led regeneration, and the government's focus on urban economic policies of the past, received a lot of criticism, claiming that it failed to recognise critical social and community issues and problems" (p.15). The focus thus shifted towards a more comprehensive approach – captured in urban regeneration theory – which would

address, in addition to physical and economic issues, social and environmental concerns in a balanced and strategic way.

The most quoted definition of “urban regeneration theory,” and the definition adopted in this paper, is that of Roberts (2000). To him, urban regeneration is a

comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area. (p.17)

The following chart from Lang (2005) illustrates the concept of urban regeneration.



*Figure 1: The concept of urban regeneration<sup>12</sup>*

Roberts (2000) emphasizes that it is critically important for cities to create a comprehensive and integrated framework with a clearly articulated vision upon which discrete urban regeneration strategies would be based. This use of strategic planning principles is particularly important to urban regeneration theory since, as mentioned above, shrinking cities often have shrinking resources and thus they must choose carefully policies in which to invest their limited resources (Hutter & Neumann, 2008). Having an overarching framework for choosing strategies allows

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<sup>12</sup> Source: Lang, 2005

cities to undertake projects that are seemingly discrete, but which are based on a longer-term vision for the city – a vision which recognizes the interdependence of the economic, social, physical, and environmental spheres. Carter (2000) explains that

[s]trategic vision is concerned with creating the framework in which longer-term goals, aims and objectives of individuals, organisations and areas can be realized...The creation of a strategic vision can ensure that resources, for example land, capital and labour, are used in such a way as to achieve the best overall effect. (p.42)

Roberts (2000) further clarifies that this framework, in order to be a basis for successful regeneration policies, should be developed by consensus through the fullest possible public participation. Care must be taken to avoid the situation in regeneration attempts in communities in northern England where, "...although representatives from local communities are often present at regeneration meetings, they do not have the power, knowledge and/or skills to make any real decisions..." (Gosling, 2008, p.619). In short, participation must be meaningful (Gosling, 2008; Roberts, 2000; Friesecke, 2007).

Of course, each city is unique and what works in one may not work in another. Lovering (2007, p.344) cautions against relying on "cookbooks" – that is the "fairly standard set of policy goals and outcomes" – in attempting to bring about urban regeneration. However, one principle is applicable in all shrinking cities: to be successful, urban regeneration policies must be created within a comprehensive strategic framework that simultaneously seeks to balance improvements each area (physical, economic, social, and environmental) (Roberts, 2000; Lang, 2005; Deakin and Allwinkle, 2007; Carter, 2000; Tsenkova, 2002; Grossman, 2004; Andersen, 2005; Squires, 2003); in other words, objectives in one area of urban life should not compromise developments in the other.<sup>13</sup> Again, it is important to remember that, in the context of shrinking cities,

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<sup>13</sup> This is similar to the notion of sustainability, where the economic, ecological, and social sphere are treated as equal and one is not to be developed at the expense of the other. The core idea is that each area is interdependent. In fact, Grossman (2004) and Genske and Ruff (2006) specifically state that the concept of sustainability should be

“resolving” problems and “improving” conditions does not mean “growing” to previous population levels where growth is unrealistic (Andersen, 2005; Allweil, 2007; Hollbach-Grömig and Trapp, 2006; Leo and Anderson, 2006; Müller and Siedentop, 2004; Polèse and Shearmur, 2006; Popper and Popper, 2002; Rybczynski and Linneman, 1999). As Lang (2005) states, “urban regeneration is about implementing policies in existing urban areas rather than developing new urbanisation” (p.8). Put another way, urban regeneration in shrinking cities is about qualitative, not quantitative development. According to Squires (2003), “[b]alanced development may be far more difficult to achieve than growth, but it would also constitute a more humane achievement” (Squires, 2003, p.30).

## **5.0 Fourth principle: Planners must change the role they play in the community**

The bulk of the emerging literature on planning in shrinking cities involves case study research. In the course of discussing measures taken to address population decline in particular cases, researchers often comment (either explicitly or implicitly) on the role played by planners. For instance, Krumholz (2007) explains that “...the role of planning varies between Las Vegas with its 85 percent growth and St. Louis with its 13 percent decline” (p.30). Taken together, the various discussions of what planners have done well and where improvement is needed in these cases provides a general prescription for the role planners *should* play in shrinking cities. The overall consensus seems to be that in some respects planners need to play a *qualitatively different role* in shrinking cities than in growing cities (for instance, managing the decline process versus steering growth); in other respects, the role of the planner is the same in any demographic context – growth or shrinkage – but the *importance of that role is heightened* in the context of

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used as an alternative to the growth paradigm in shrinking cities. Urban regeneration theory adds the physical element, which is so often a major concern in shrinking cities.

population decline (for example, facilitating residents to undertake projects on their own becomes more important when a municipality is under fiscal strain). The following section describes these aspects of the role of planners in shrinking cities in more detail.

## **5.1 New roles for planners in shrinking cities**

### ***(a) Planner as manager of urban shrinkage***

According to Martinez-Fernandez and Wu (2007), government and planning officials play a crucial role in shrinking cities, one that is different from the role played in the context of growth. As has already been discussed, the traditional role of planners has been to steer growth in the most desirable direction. However, the bulk of the shrinking cities literature suggests that, instead of focusing on attracting and steering new growth, planners in shrinking cities need to become “managers” of the population decline process (Müller, 2004; Kitchen, 2003; Seasons, 2004; Schilling and Logan, 2008; Rybczynski and Linneman, 1999; Rieniets, 2005b; Hollbach-Grömig and Trapp, 2006; Irurah, Park & Yeang, 2005; Müller and Siedentop, 2004; Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Shearmur & Polèse, 2007; Koziol, 2004; Simmons & Bourne, 2007). In this respect, Kitchen (2003) explains that planners in shrinking cities with little hope of growing again need to manage the process of getting smaller “...with minimum damage both to its quality of place and to the lifestyle opportunities it offers to its present and future citizens” (p.124). Seasons (2004) argues that planners in shrinking cities need to assist in the “difficult transition to a no- or slow-growth economy” (p.11). As mentioned above, Rieniets (2005b) explains that “[u]rban planning has never generated urban growth, but rather enables and controls it by means of planning. Likewise, urban planning can hardly stimulate the opposite process—shrinkage—nor can it reverse it. However, it can guide the process to the best urban solutions possible” (p.6).

According to Müller and Siedentop (2004), instead of focusing on ways to distribute quantitative increases in population, planners in shrinking cities need to concentrate their efforts on improving the quality of the environment for residents who remain in the most cost-effective way possible. Bourne and Simmons (2003) similarly argue that planners in shrinking cities need to downsize communities in an equitable and efficient manner, re-thinking conventional planning approaches. In managing the decline process, the literature suggests that planners may adopt a variety of methods that are fundamentally different from those used to plan for growth. For instance, Schilling and Logan (2008) argue that planners need to actively “right size” communities using a model they provide, which involves “... (a) instituting a green infrastructure program and plan; (b) creating a land bank to manage the right-sizing effort; and (c) building community consensus through collaborative neighborhood planning” (p.452). The Cleveland Shrinking Cities Institute (2007) suggests that managing the shrinkage process could involve, for example, removal of redundant streets and downsizing of infrastructure, which could in turn open up opportunities to restore native landscapes, improve air and water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat. Irurah, Park and Yeang (2005) provide some possible tools to be used in shrinking cities, including introducing food production into cities (farming in the city), urban forestation (turning streets into forests), introducing green roofs, and creating “green corridors” that link green areas of the city and provide habitats and routes for animals. Koziol (2004) discusses ways planners can adapt a shrinking city’s hard infrastructure to a declining population, including prioritizing extensive downsizing over dispersed downsizing and carrying out downsizing, if possible, from the ends of networks rather than at points in-between.

Importantly, as discussed above, the shrinking cities literature emphasizes that effectively managing the shrinkage process involves planners shifting their mindset from seeing growth as

the only positive direction for a city to take. In other words, planners in shrinking cities need to be able to see that smaller can be better. As Rybczynski and Linneman (1999) state,

[a] fundamental change in mind set is required once we accept that smaller can be better. A city that has irretrievably lost large amounts of its population needs to examine ways to redesign itself to become more compact, perhaps even smaller in area. This will not be easy. City planners have traditionally favored growth and expansion. It is now time for planners to look for ways to shrink our cities. Just as physicians should allow gracious and healthy decline as people age, so too must our planners manage older cities. However, just as aging is not merely adolescence in reverse, urban planning for shrinkage is fundamentally different than planning for growth. (p.40)

In accepting that with population decline comes benefits, planners will be able to effectively manage population decline in a way that enhances the quality of life of the residents who remain.

However, although a shift away from overly optimistic growth scenarios is needed (especially in the context of infrastructure planning – see Koziol, 2004), it is also important that planners not become overly pessimistic about demographic trends, instead adopting a more realistic and flexible stance. For instance, in discussing Leipzig's efforts address population decline – which have been based, since reunification, on overly optimistic growth scenarios (resulting in policies promoting the construction of suburban homes which were never occupied) and then too-pessimistic decline scenarios (in the context of an unexpected stabilization of the population), Bontje (2004) argues that

[u]nder these conditions, Leipzig is probably best off with a realistic development policy aiming at modest economic growth, creating enough employment opportunities to stabilize the urban population and prevent a new exodus to the West. The city government has to find its way between unnecessary pessimism and unreasonable optimism. (pp.18-19)

As mentioned earlier, Wiechmann (2008a) discusses the similar case of Dresden, where planners were overly optimistic when the city was losing population, and overly pessimistic when it unexpectedly gained population. He explains that since planning in shrinking cities happens in a very uncertain demographic context, planners need to be flexible and adaptable. While relying

on overly optimistic growth scenarios (and the accompanying one-sided policies that concentrate on attracting external investment) can be “risky,” so too can relying on scenarios that are overly pessimistic. Realism and flexibility are thus an integral part of the planner’s role in managing the shrinking process.

***(b) Planner as innovator/pioneer***

While planners have throughout the years acted as innovators in developing new policies for dealing with urban growth, not often has there been an issue which required planners to come up with solutions to a pressing urban issue literally from scratch. In the context of shrinking cities, the shrinking cities literature suggests that planners need to take on the role of innovator and pioneer in a manner that involves a complete overhaul of existing principles (Rieniets, 2005b; Bontje, 2004; Nuissl & Rink, 2005; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Tietjen, 2007; Sander, 2006; Reiss-Schmidt, 2006; Jessen, 2006). Certainly, the need for this new role is due in large measure to the lack of models and tools currently available to deal with the issue. As Nuissl and Rink (2005) explain, “[o]nly innovative strategies and instruments will provide a chance to pursue this task since it faces various difficulties... One such difficulty arises from the very fact that the instruments and means at hand for urban policy and planning are designed to organise growth, not decline (which is reflected by the discussion on strategies to curb sprawl being largely focused on the problem of growth...)” (p.132). Schilling and Logan (2008) similarly explain that “[u]rban policymakers and practitioners are challenged by shrinkage because they lack models of how existing and foreseeable future population levels influence urban systems... Planners must develop new policies and strategies to address the challenges shrinkage presents...” (p.453). However, the need for planners to be innovators and pioneers in this field

also arises from the lack of attention paid to this issue in planning education and research. As Rieniets (2005b) explains,

...in many regions we cannot count on continuous and ubiquitous growth, and the old principles of urban planning have to be modified, complemented or invented from scratch. However, if urban planners want to successfully implement new strategies, they have to be able to rely on a supportive environment with regard to institutional patterns, legal frameworks, and, first and foremost, the willingness of all of the stakeholders involved. In this respect, urban planners are not just being asked to revise their fields of activities, but to address the changes required to be made in the fields of research and education alike. (pp.7-8)

Thus, population decline is placing considerable pressure on planners in shrinking cities to invent a completely new way of planning, in the course of which they are being asked to address deficiencies in planning education and research. In addition, Tietjen (2007) suggests that planners need to invent new urban identities, which can aid in "...socially, economically and environmentally cohesive territorial development" (p.5) and which can provide something people can rally around.

In developing innovative strategies, Sander (2006) explains that planners in shrinking cities need to look at the experiences of other cities. He identifies Leipzig as a pioneer for innovative concepts for bringing the landscape back to the city. While examples of planners already taking on this role in North America are few and far between, Jessen (2006) explains that planners in East Germany have been discussing how to deal with shrinking cities for about eight years now and while a coherent set of mechanisms for dealing with population decline has not yet been developed: "It is still a lively search involving a lot of people" (p.8). He outlines different contexts in which new procedures, new approaches, new concepts from urban planning in shrinking cities are being sought: (1) internal innovative impetus (practitioners in local authorities facing specific problems); (2) top-down innovative impetus (higher-level government

programs); and (3) lateral innovative impetus (such as the German Shrinking Cities Project).

According to him:

Over the past five years, local planning authorities, especially in East German cities, have been laboratories where, accompanied by an abundance of welcome and unwelcome advice, new planning strategies and concepts have been developed for a task without precedent – at least in Germany. Instead of controlling and organizing growth processes in space, planning has had to cope with shrinking cities. Prototypes are being developed, new categories for describing, analyzing, and planning are being tested; new concepts and actor constellations, cooperation with neighbouring disciplines are being experimented with. Seldom has so much innovative effort been invested by the planning profession in so brief a period. But it remains to be seen how shrinking cities will develop and what role urban planning can play at all. The ‘built city under pressure for change’ has put the discipline of urban planning under pressure to innovate. (p.1)

Importantly, Jessen (2006) explains that there are two sides to innovation: (1) successful implementation of new ideas that (2) leads to changes in broad, established practices by gaining practical recognition. One can only speak of innovation if novel developments have impact beyond the specific city by becoming a model for others, “thus gaining recognition and becoming embodied in legal instruments, subsidy guidelines, and other norms and standards” (p.2). There are, however, limits on how much of each side of innovation urban planning can accomplish. First, there are also limits with respect to how much an urban planner can accomplish in terms of successfully implementing new ideas in his or her particular city because “...urban planning is always integrated into a political process. Within his own area of action, the municipal urban planner is only one of many agents; he accordingly has only limited control over boundary conditions and over the possibility of implementing new concepts” (p.2). Thus, “[u]rban planning must be understood as a process liable to political and social revisions and not as the straightforward expansion and renewal of a canon of goals and procedures” (p.3). Secondly, with respect to the diffusion of novel ideas “...urban planning is always place-related, and innovations that take effect do so initially at the local level alone, and generally only if the

circumstances are right: a specific constellation, a propitious moment; and they apply only in a particular case” (p.2). Hence, there are limits to how much knowledge can be transferred from one case to another. Ultimately, though, a “collective renewal” can happen “...through an abundance of single decisions. The mechanisms of this renewal change with shifts in the prevailing perception of problems among planners and with the tasks they address” (p.5). It is the role of the planner in shrinking cities to contribute to this collective renewal.

## **5.2 Existing roles taking on increasing importance**

### ***(a) Planner as facilitator/source of citizen empowerment***

In general, the field of urban planning has been moving towards more and more citizen participation in the planning process, especially in developing strategic visions and plans (see, for instance, Healey, 2006; Albrechts, 2006; Kühn, 2006; and Sartorio, 2005). In the context of population decline, however, the importance of public involvement in both the development and implementation of planning policies is elevated, primarily because shrinking cities also have shrinking funds and there generally is a lack of funds for creating innovative policies and later implementing them. To counter this, the shrinking cities literature suggests that importance of planners acting as a facilitator for citizen action and a source of citizen empowerment is particularly heightened. As Rieniets (2005b) explains, in the context of population decline,

...architects and urban planners are not in a position to deal with shrinking cities on a large scale. Rather they have to act as mediators, pioneers or instructors, demonstrating alternative urban practices, instructing and inspiring inhabitants to cope with the burden of their urban environments and to create their own solutions. (p.6)

Punch (2004), after discussing urban regeneration attempts in Dublin which have generally been unsuccessful, comments that planners need to empower local citizens in order to deal successfully with the issues faced. Yamashita (2004) explains that one reason why revitalization

attempts in shrinking city of Saga, Japan were unsuccessful was because of a lack of citizen empowerment. According to him, planners in shrinking cities need to empower citizens to come up with innovative ideas and proposals on their own:

It is vitally important that innovative ideas and proposals from citizens be incorporated in revitalization programs. Empowered to participate in urban revitalization, citizens will not only spur innovation in municipal planning and regulatory systems, but more generally will contribute to restoring the creative energy that will ensure our common future. (p.473)

Similarly, Schilling and Logan (2008) discuss the need to empower community residents throughout the process of developing planning strategies in shrinking cities. For instance, according to them, regreening strategies present an opportunity to empower residents to address social conditions in their neighbourhoods.

### ***(b) Planner as consensus-builder***

On a related note, the shrinking cities literature calls for planners in shrinking cities to increasingly take on the role of consensus-builders. Again, this role is also being seen as more important in urban planning in general, but it has heightened importance in shrinking cities, where widespread apathy and disenchantment (arising mostly from failed past promises of top-down measures that will “save” the city) will hamper any attempts to deal with population decline in any meaningful way. In short, the shrinking cities literature suggests that policies to deal with the effects of population decline will not be successful if they do not reflect the general consensus of residents, in particular about how population decline has affected them and how the negative effects can be addressed and the positive effects enhanced. For instance, in addition to being unsuccessful because of a lack of citizen empowerment, Yamashita (2004) explains that revitalization attempts in Saga, Japan were unsuccessful also because of “...a lack of public participation. Almost no meaningful pursuit of consensus between the municipal government and citizens was conducted. The revitalization process did not reflect the ideas or views of citizens”

(p.472). In a similar way but different context, Pattison (2004) argues that the “D”-village policy of County Durham, UK (where certain mining villages were slated for demolition based on the notion that the residents of these villages would be better off where there were more economic opportunities) failed because planners did not work with local residents in achieving a consensus about how population decline in this area should be dealt with. In this case, planners acted as if they knew what was best for local residents and went on the assumption that if only people could see the effects of their policies, they would be happy. Unfortunately, policy-makers failed to consider how their policies impacted local residents on a social level:

...[t]heir lack of social insight led to a failure to explore the existing networked social structures in the villages. In the early days, public opposition seems to have come as something of a shock to many policy makers. It is almost as though they felt that their sincerity was under question. When this happened their only counter argument relied on wider arguments. Residents might be discontented in the short term but when they saw their new homes and employment opportunities they would see the wisdom of the policy. This argument did not stand the test of time. (Pattison, 2004, p.327)

Because planners did not speak to residents, the intrinsic value of the villages was not taken into account: “[h]owever evangelistic the planners and policy makers were in their desire to build a better future, theirs was a top-down imposition on a system that had survived for generations on a strong and federated sense of mutuality” (Pattison, 2004, p.328). In failing to consult with village residents, the policies were unsuccessful at addressing population decline in any meaningful or lasting way, illustrating the need for planners to incorporate the community consensus into their policies.

This need for consensus-building is also reflected in Schilling and Logan (2008) right-sizing model, part of which involves building a community consensus through collaborative neighbourhood planning. According to them, planners need to reach a consensus when making difficult decisions in shrinking cities: “Identifying a comprehensive plan for greening that takes

into account neighborhood and city interests will require planners to develop flexible policies respectful of, and in collaboration with, a diverse group of stakeholders” (Schilling & Logan, 2008, p.460). It should be noted at this point that the planner’s role as consensus-builder might conflict with their role as innovator because a broad-based consensus may reflect the lowest common denominator. Indeed, it may be more difficult for planners to achieve a public consensus about new and innovative ideas. How planners will successfully incorporate these two roles in shrinking cities, however, has not yet been addressed in the shrinking cities literature.

***(c) Planner as a source of knowledge***

Planners have always been a source of knowledge for many people, including citizens, developers, and people looking to relocate to a particular city. However, in the context of shrinkage, this role is becoming even more important especially where it relates to the successful redevelopment of vacant property. Dewar (2006) explains that especially with respect to vacant land, planners need to be a source of complete and accurate information to facilitate urban redevelopment in shrinking cities. They need to reduce uncertainty for prospective buyers of property, reduce costs, and speed up the redevelopment process. In order to do this, planners need to keep complete and accurate information. To illustrate this, Dewar (2006) uses cases of Detroit, where a clear inventory of vacant property is non-existent and policies with respect to vacant land are unclear and ever-changing, and Cleveland, where complete records are kept and policies are more streamlined. Not surprisingly, more vacant land has been put to productive use in Cleveland than Detroit, largely because developers find the task more daunting where records and policies are disorganized and amorphous. Schilling and Logan (2008) agree that planners need to conduct a vacant land inventory and environmental assessment. They need to stay aware

of properties as they become vacant and national data sources for vacant properties should be augmented by local efforts. In addition, they argue that planners in shrinking cities need to become a source of knowledge for each other by establishing a network of shrinking cities to share model practices and work collaboratively to solve problems.

***(d) Planner as ghostwriter/advocate***

Finally, some shrinking cities researchers have suggested that the role of planner as advocate for the disadvantaged should be enhanced. In the process of describing what they call the “New Suburbanism” in Detroit, Armbrorst, D’Oca, and Theodore (2007) argue that planners should become “ghostwriters” in shrinking cities: that is, they argue that part of the role of planners in shrinking cities is to discover and advocate for things people are already doing. According to them, the “New Suburbanism” – which they define as “the process through which entrepreneurial homeowners take, borrow, or buy adjacent vacant lots” (Armbrorst, D’Oca, & Theodore, 2007, p.1) – is happening throughout Detroit: “All over Detroit, homeowners—many of who have stuck it out through race riots, deindustrialization, and the resulting depopulation and disinvestment—are starting to spread out, expanding their property by gradually accumulating lots that others abandoned” (Armbrorst, D’Oca, & Theodore, 2007, p.1). These expanded lots are the “DNA” of the New Suburbanism. While the results are not always spectacular (for instance, some people use the adjacent properties to house satellite dishes or trampolines), this is an important phenomenon that is

...perhaps best understood as unplanned, unacknowledged, and yet entirely plausible response to Detroit’s depopulation and disinvestment... [T]he New Suburbanism is unknowingly authored by thousands of entrepreneurial, self-interested individuals... (Armbrorst, D’Oca, & Theodore, 2007, p.1)

The problem in Detroit is that, as mentioned above, it is very difficult for people to acquire clear title to vacant land. Importantly, there is no land bank, which would make this “blotting” (the term they use to describe the new, expanded lots) easier.

In this context, Armbrorst, D’Oca, and Theodore (2007) argue for a new type of planning: “namely, a planning that attempts to identify, document, and finally advocate for potentially progressive practices that, like the New Suburbanism, already exist, but are underappreciated and have little legitimacy” (p.14). They explain that this sort of planning originates from ideas of Hernando DeSoto, in particular the idea that the best thing governments in developing countries can do is “formalize the informal, so that the poor can leverage their informal holdings (i.e., in informal, squatted land, in informal goods, and in informal jobs) for financial gain” (Armbrorst, D’Oca, & Theodore, 2007, p.14). On a more general level, the most important of DeSoto’s ideas is that of “listening to the excluded,” (Armbrorst, D’Oca, & Theodore, 2007, p.14) where officials listen to what is going on in the streets so that policies and laws do not lag behind how people actually live and work. In short, it is important for planners to make it “easier for (mostly poor) individuals to do *what they are already doing*.” (Armbrorst, D’Oca, & Theodore, 2007, p.15, emphasis in original). This is particularly relevant in shrinking cities where, in many cases, residents have been left to cope with the effects of population decline on their own, often in innovative ways. Following DeSoto’s, and to a lesser extent, Davidoff’s ideas, advocacy planners need to spend time “defining, describing, and telling seductive stories about the client” (Armbrorst, D’Oca, & Theodore, 2007, p.15). In that sense, the planner becomes a “ghostwriter,” who identifies and documents “...progressive practices that already exist, but that are underappreciated and have little legitimacy. We’re suggesting is that there is an entire phase of planning that should happen before we start talking about policies...” (Armbrorst, D’Oca, &

Theodore, 2007, p.16). This phase involves telling the story of those who are experts in dealing with population decline: the residents who have remained.

In a similar vein, Krumholz (2007) argues that planners in shrinking cities in the United States are more and more becoming advocates for the disadvantaged. For example, planners in Cleveland have lobbied for better state laws on tax delinquent land; in doing so, they were trying to address issues of regional socioeconomic inequality. In addition, planners in some shrinking cities are working on “reverse commute” programs to help connect poor central city neighbourhoods with suburbs where new jobs are emerging, for example by reconfiguring bus routes. Some planners in the United States also work for with Community Development Corporations (CDCs) doing such tasks as “designing and administering local land banks, working to equalize regional responsibilities among cities and their suburbs, and helping to raise local family incomes” (p.30). In these CDCs, planners becoming advocates for poor and working class residents. This signals a shift in the role of planners in the United States, particularly prevalent in shrinking cities, away from land use planning, urban design, and growth regulation towards more diverse tasks, including advocacy.

## 6.0 Summary

Thus, the research on shrinking cities provides the framework of “good planning principles” for planners in cities experiencing population decline. The following chart summarizes the key components of this framework.

General principle	Key points	Key bodies of literature
Planners must <b>leave behind the assumption of future growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Urban planners need to be realistic about future population growth.</li> <li>▪ Strategies to attract future growth may divert much-needed resources in shrinking</li> </ul>	Shrinking cities

	<p>cities away from more pressing issues, may end up wasting scarce resources, and may prove detrimental to urban development in the long run.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Instead of focusing on attracting new residents, planners need to direct their attention inward, to maintaining and indeed improving the quality of life of those who remain. Planners must begin to realize the opportunities that come with population decline.</li> </ul>	
<p>Planners must use processes that are <b>strategic, with an emphasis on citizen participation;</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planners in shrinking cities must incorporate key elements of strategic planning into their planning processes, including: the creation of a comprehensive vision; extensive and meaningful citizen participation; selectivity; attention to context; flexibility; and integration on a regional scale.</li> <li>▪ Ultimately, what is important in strategic planning is the process.</li> </ul>	<p>Shrinking cities, Strategic planning in declining cities, Urban regeneration</p>
<p>Planners must <b>adopt a balanced approach</b> in addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning policies must not prioritize, for instance, economic over physical, social, and environmental concerns.</li> <li>▪ It is critically important for cities experiencing population decline to create a balanced framework with a clearly articulated vision upon which discrete strategies would be based.</li> <li>▪ Having an overarching strategic framework allows cities to undertake projects</li> </ul>	<p>Shrinking cities, Urban regeneration in declining cities</p>

	<p>that are seemingly discrete, but which are based actually on a longer-term vision for the city – a vision that recognizes the interdependence of the economic, social, physical, and environmental spheres.</p>	
<p>Planners must <b>change the role they play</b> in the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In order to be effective, the role of planners must change in the context of population decline.</li> <li>▪ In some respects planners need to play a <i>qualitatively different role</i> in shrinking cities than in growing cities (for instance, planners should actively manage the effects of population decline rather than plan for growth that is unlikely to happen).</li> <li>▪ In other respects, the role of the planner is the same in any demographic context – growth or shrinkage – but the <i>importance of that role must be emphasized</i> in the context of population decline (for example, facilitating residents to undertake projects on their own becomes more important when a municipality is under fiscal strain).</li> </ul>	<p>Shrinking cities</p>

Table 1: General principles of good planning in shrinking cities

**7.0 Research Questions**

Evidently, shrinking cities researchers are beginning to address the lacuna in the literature, mentioned in Chapter 1, which exists regarding the subject of planning in the context of population decline. In this thesis, I seek to further narrow the gap between the wealth of knowledge about planning for growth and relative lack of knowledge about planning for decline.

I also seek to move the trajectory of the shrinking cities literature beyond a discussion of the physical effects of decline and appropriate related strategies (where most of the focus remains concentrated) towards a broader examination of how planners may go about having a positive impact in all urban spheres: physical, economic, social, and environmental (all of which, as mentioned above and in Chapter 2, are inter-related).

In this regard, researchers have only begun to speculate about what planning approaches will work best in shrinking cities and why: in this literature review I have attempted to assemble these fragmented discussions (both explicit and implicit) into four principles of good planning in shrinking cities. In doing so, what I have found is missing is a discussion of what these principles might look like in action and how these principles might be incorporated into shrinking city planning. For instance, shrinking cities researchers will use case studies to illustrate the causes and effects of population decline in shrinking cities, will argue that a shift away from the growth-oriented paradigm is needed and will admit this will likely be difficult, but this is as far as they go. What is not clear from their discussions is how this shift may work in practice and what factors may facilitate or impede such a shift. The same is true for adopting a strategic approach, incorporating a balanced focus, and shifting the role of planners in cities with declining populations. Shrinking cities researchers tell us that it is possible for planners to improve quality of life in the absence of population growth by adopting these principles, but *how are the principles of good planning in shrinking cities being realized in practice and what are the opportunities and obstacles to planning using these principles??* It seems necessary to ask and answer this research question in order to steer the discussion on planning in shrinking cities in a more nuanced direction.

More specifically, in this thesis I am asking the following sub-questions:

- What approach have Youngstown, Ohio and Sudbury, Ontario taken in their recently-adopted Official/Comprehensive Plans?
- Does this approach incorporate each principle of good planning in shrinking cities?
- If yes, what opportunities led to the break from tradition? If no, what obstacles prevented a break from tradition?

Ostensibly, Youngstown Ohio has taken a “new” approach to planning for population decline which incorporates some of the principles of good planning in its recently-adopted comprehensive plan while Sudbury has opted for a more traditional “going for growth” approach. By investigating the nature of two ostensibly polar planning approaches and exploring what factors influenced each city to either step towards the principles of good planning in shrinking cities and to hold fast to more traditional approaches, I intend to advance the debate beyond “what do we need to do and why” to “*how* can it be done?” These polar cases can provide new insights into what factors might encourage or impede the adoption of good planning practice in shrinking cities.

At this point, it is important to note some of the limitations of the approach I have taken in this thesis. First of all, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, I am not assessing the efficacy of the principles of good planning in shrinking cities. Based on what I have read in the literature and on the logic that the opposite approaches have not worked, I am inferring that these principles would provide a sounder basis for effectively improving the quality of life for residents who remain in shrinking cities. This, however, remains an untested inference and, I believe, a fruitful area for future research (provided a case study where all of the principles have been wholeheartedly adopted can be found). Secondly, I have limited myself to examining the approaches taken in two comprehensive/official plans. Of course, not all aspects of plans get

implemented and thus some policies included in both Sudbury's and Youngstown's plans may never see the light of day. As well, not all projects or strategies undertaken by municipalities are based on the plans [nor should they be: see Wiechmann, 2008(b) and Hutter and Wiechmann, 2005], so the decision-making processes (particularly with respect to day-to-day decisions) in these instances are not addressed in this thesis. It would also be fruitful in future research to examine in practice Hutter and Wiechmann's (2005) theory that in the context of shrinking cities, planners should pay attention not only to developing strategies but also to detecting existing patterns in the city's day-to-day activities that work and that can be exploited and built upon on a wider scale. For this thesis, I remain focused on the approach taken in each official/comprehensive plan as practically it affords me an opportunity to examine the overall approach taken in each city's recently-adopted plans which, based on discussions with municipal officials in both cities, were both intended to be a "guiding document" (where not legally, then morally) for each city. With these research questions and research limitations in mind, I now turn to my methodology.

## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

### 1.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present and justify my choice of research strategy, research design, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. Recognizing that my methodological choices have consequences which may strengthen my conclusions and or serve to limit them, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of how I attempted to capitalize on the strengths of my approach and minimize the limitations in the context of the five tests of good quality research: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity.

### 2.0 Research Strategy

#### 2.1 Why a case study?

In choosing a research strategy from a myriad of options, including surveys, experiments, histories, and archival analysis, I considered three factors as suggested by Yin (2008), each of which pointed to the conclusion that a case study would allow me to most effectively accomplish my research goals. First, I considered the **nature of my research questions**. According to Yin (2008), Kyburz-Graber (2004) and Meyer (2001), case studies are useful in addressing questions of *what happened*, *how*, and *why*, rather than *who* or *how many*. While parts of my research questions deal with identifying *who* or *how many*, these questions are only a precursor to asking a *how*, *why*, or *what happened* question (for example, I seek to identify the major players in the planning process in order to discuss how they were involved). Hence, the *what happened*, *how*, and *why* nature of my research questions pointed me in the direction of using a case study approach.

However, according to Yin (2008), I needed to consider two more factors in order to determine the appropriateness of using case study as a research strategy since *how* or *why* questions can also be answered using histories and experiments. Thus, the second factor I considered was the **extent of control** I would have over behavioural events. While experiments rely on control over behavioural events, case studies are appropriate where there is little or no control (Yin, 2008). Obviously, in this study, I would have no control over the planning process in each city. An experiment would therefore not be appropriate. In also ruling out using a history as a strategy, the last factor I considered was the **degree of focus on contemporary versus historical events**. As Yin (2008) explains, a conventional historical study is preferred when the focus of a study is the “dead” past – that is, when there is no one alive to talk about the event, even retrospectively. In such situations, the investigator relies heavily on documents and artefacts as sources of evidence. In contrast, a case study, while similar in technique to an historical study, employs two important sources of data not available to historians: interviews and direct observations. In my study, I am certainly able to talk to those involved in the planning process in both cities and to observe the effects of population decline and the strategies to address it. It is thus much more appropriate for me to use case study as a strategy, not a historical study.

Therefore, given the nature of my research questions, the extent of control I would have over behavioural events, and the degree of focus on contemporary versus historical events, I chose to use a case study as my research strategy. This is indeed the situation identified by Yin (2008) where a case study strategy has distinct advantages. That is, “a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control” (Yin, 2008, p.13).

My decision to use a case study strategy based on Yin's three factors was reinforced by Hakim's (2000) comment that case studies are often used for cross-national comparative studies and Meyer's (2001) assertion that "case studies are tailor-made for exploring new processes or behaviors or ones that are little understood..." (p.330; see also Eisenhardt, 1989, p.532). Certainly, my research involves a cross-national comparison, which is important to identify legal and political contextual factors which contribute to the choice of planning approach, and also is being undertaken in an area about which little is understood, that is, planning for shrinking cities. Indeed, as was seen in Chapters 2 and 3, in the literature that does exist on this topic, case studies tend to be the preferred strategy. For instance, in their examination of urban development policies in a slowly-growing city (Winnipeg) versus a rapidly-growing city (Vancouver), Leo and Anderson (2006) explain that "because the study of policy implications of different urban growth rates is a largely unexplored field (but see Leo & Brown, 2000), our purpose in doing a pair of case studies is to undertake a contextually rich exploration of a largely unexplored terrain..." (p.173-174). As well, Martinez-Fernandez and Wu (2006), in researching cases of shrinking cities in Australia, comment that "case studies provide an in-depth understanding of the cycles of growth and shrinkage, policy and community responses and [their] effectiveness." Additionally, the German Federal Cultural Foundation's Shrinking Cities Project explores the causes, effects and cultural perspectives of shrinking cities on an international level by looking at these issues in four different case studies: Detroit, Halle/Leipzig, Ivanovo, and Manchester/Liverpool. Similarly, the Berkeley-based Shrinking Cities International Research Network is using case studies as its primary strategy in researching various aspects of shrinkage throughout the globe. Thus, my decision to use a case study research strategy was reached by

considering Yin's factors and was reinforced by examining the strategies typically used in this area of research.

## **2.2 What is a case study?**

### ***(a) Definition***

Despite its wide use in many different disciplines (Meyer, 2001), the literature on the case study as a research strategy is sparse (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Meyer, 20001; Palys & Atchison, 2008; Tellis, 1997b), especially as compared to other strategies such as experiments or surveys. In terms of a definition, a few authors have provided their own definition of case study. Eisenhardt (1989) explains that case study is a “research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings” (p.534). Kyburz-Graber (2004), defines a case study as one that analyzes “an existing, real-life situation in all its complexity, exploring it as close to the people concerned as possible, describing the situation in as much detail as possible, and finally explaining the findings in a clear and comprehensible way” (p.54). Most authors, however, defer to Yin's definition of case study and I will do so here as well. Yin, in the later (2008) edition of his “bible” on case study research, expands on his earlier definition and provides a two-part “technical” definition. The first part deals with the scope of a case study:

1. A case study is an empirical inquiry that
  - investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
  - the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (Yin, 2008, p.18)

In other words, unlike experiments, case studies deliberately deal with contextual conditions because the researcher feels they are relevant to the phenomenon being studied. Meyer (2001)

echoes the importance of context in case study research. To her, the ability of case study to examine contemporary phenomena in real life contexts is one of its main strengths. Indeed, in the present study, the context is very important: I am comparing the factors internal to the city (past strategies, political, economic, and demographic characteristics) and external to the city (state/provincial and federal policy and legislation) that led to the development of the each planning strategy in order to determine which were pertinent to one city's motivation and ability to innovate in the face of population decline.

The second part of Yin's definition deals with technical characteristics, including data collection and data analysis strategies:

## 2. The case study inquiry

- copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (Yin, 2008, p.18)

I will deal with the technical points of data collection and analysis in more detail below as I discuss my research design. What is particularly important here, and what this part of Yin's definition nicely illustrates, is that **case study is a research strategy in its own right** (see also Eisenhardt, 1989; Kyburz-Graber, 2004; Meyer, 2001; Robson, 2002; Tellis, 1997a and b). As Robson (2002) puts it "*case study is not a flawed experimental design; it is a fundamentally different research strategy with its own designs*" (p.180, emphasis in original). Case study as a research strategy is an "all-encompassing method...covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis" (Yin, 2008, p.18). Until recently, many methodological texts did not consider case study a strategy in its own right (Yin, 2008; Robson,

2002). It was to be undertaken only in preparation for or in concert with more “hard-nosed” experimental or survey research (Robson, 2002). According to Yin, many social scientists believed – and still believe - that case studies are only appropriate in the exploratory phase of research. Importantly, however, it is increasingly recognized that there is no “hierarchy” of strategies. Each research strategy has distinct advantages in particular situations and each can be used for the three purposes of research: exploration, explanation, and description (Yin, 2008; Tellis, 1997b). Most significantly, each, including case study, has its own distinct logic of design, data collection techniques, and data analysis methods.

### ***(b) Traditional criticisms of case studies***

Even if some critics now accept the inherent value of case study as a research strategy, there is still a prevailing view that case study is a somewhat less desirable form of strategy compared to experiments or surveys. Yin (2008) outlines three common concerns. What Yin (2008) labels as the “perhaps the greatest concern” is the **lack of rigour** in case study research (p.10). As he states,

too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy, has not followed systematic procedures, or has allowed equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings or conclusions. Such lack of rigour is less likely to be present when using the other methods – possibly because of the existence of numerous methodological texts providing investigators with specific procedures to be followed. In contrast, only a small (though increasing) number of texts besides the present one cover the case study method in similar fashion. (p.14)

Meyer (2001) and Hakim (2000) see this lack of guidance from texts as to specific design decisions as both a blessing and a curse. According to them, it can be a good thing because it results in a great deal of flexibility, in particular allowing the “tailoring [of] the design and data collection procedures to the research questions” (Meyer, 2001, p. 329). On the other hand, they both acknowledge that, as mentioned above by Yin, this flexibility has led to sloppiness, with

researchers failing to systematically address design, data collection, and data analysis decisions. Hakim (2000) comments that “precisely because they are flexible, they are open to sloppy use...” (p.70). Meyer (2001) mentions that the methodology sections of published case studies are far too limited and fail to give the reader a detailed “map” as to the decisions taken in the process of planning and conducting the research. As Meyer (2001) states, “this approach has resulted in many poor case studies, leaving it open to criticism, especially from the quantitative field of research” (pp.329-330).

In order to address this criticism, Yin (2008), Meyer (2001), Robson (2002) and Hakim (2000) all suggest that special effort needs to be made when conducting a case study to documenting the decisions made and procedures followed from the design stage through to the reporting stage. As Meyer (2001) states,

I believe that there is a need for articles that provide a comprehensive overview of the case study process from the researcher’s perspective, emphasizing methodological considerations. This implies addressing the whole range of choices concerning specific design requirements, data collection procedures, data analysis, and validity and reliability. (p.330)

As such, I have attempted in this chapter to heed this suggestion and systematically document my decisions at all of the stages mentioned by Meyer (2001).

A second common criticism of case study as a research strategy is that it is **not possible to generalize the findings** from a specific case to a general population. The problem with this criticism is that it assumes that the goal of case study research is statistical generalization from a representative sample to a population. In actual fact, the cases chosen to study are not chosen because they are representative of a broader population (Yin, 2008; Eisenhardt, 1989; Meyer, 2001). As Eisenhardt (1989) states, “cases are chosen for theoretical, not statistical reasons...The cases may be chosen to replicate previous cases or extend emergent theory, or they

may provide examples of polar types” (p.537). The goal of case study research is to use each case to generalize to theoretical propositions, not populations or universes (Yin, 2008; Eisenhardt, 1989; Meyer, 2001). Yin (2008) calls this “analytical generalization.” In this case, by identifying factors that led to the adoption of different approaches in Youngstown and in Sudbury, I will be extending the broader theoretical issue of how “good planning” principles might be adopted in shrinking cities. This “replication logic” is similar to the logic of performing multiple experiments in order to test and strengthen or disprove a theory (Yin, 2008). In both instances, I am seeking to help build a theory of how planning happens in shrinking cities. My goal is thus analytical, not statistical, generalization.

Finally, Yin (2008) identifies as a common criticism of case studies the assertion that they **take too long** and that they “**result in massive, unreadable documents**” (p.15). While Yin admits that this may have been the situation for previous case studies, he outlines methods of writing up case studies that, if utilized, would aid the researcher in producing readable documents rather than lengthy narratives. Meyer (2001) also provides suggestions for effective and efficient case-study write-ups. I outline some of these strategies and discuss the method I chose below. In terms of case studies taking too long, in my opinion, having research questions that are answerable in the time allotted to complete the case study (whether that time limit is self-imposed or determined by a “higher power”, for example, by a funding agency or by university regulations) goes a long way to allaying those concerns about the possibility of falling into a long, drawn-out case study process. When defining my research questions and sub-questions, I tried to identify questions that I could reasonably answer in the time I was provided to complete my thesis. I also believe that having a well-defined research design helped me to keep on track, as well as on schedule. It is to this design that I now turn.

### **3.0 Research Design and Process**

Prior to discussing how my research was designed and carried out, it is important to note that designing and conducting a case study is a highly iterative process. Palys and Atchison (2008) define an “iterative process” as follows:

an iterative process is one that is cyclical but not merely repetitive. Instead, the term also connotes increasing sophistication or change, as in a feedback loop, where each successive pass is different from the one preceding. In that sense, to describe a process as iterative is to suggest more the form of a spiral than that of a circle, with each cycle taking us a little further in some identifiable direction. (p.308)

At each step in the research process, the researcher may return to an earlier step. For instance, a researcher may visit and revisit the research site, performing interviews and re-interviews so that each repetition takes the researcher “closer to an increasingly well-defined goal” (Palys & Atchison, 2008, p.308). The research question may also shift in the process of conducting the case study, sending the researcher back into the field to collect additional data (Eisenhardt, 1989). As well, certain steps – most commonly the data collection and data analysis steps (Eisenhardt, 1989) – may overlap. In addition to being an iterative process, and although case studies are widely used in many disciplines, it is also important to once again note the existence of only a few models for designing case studies – the “how-to” literature is sparse and the information presented in the methodology section of published case study research is, most of the time, inadequate. It is thus particularly important, as mentioned above, to be explicit about the choices made and the reasons for those choices. With this context in mind, I now turn to my design decisions, following a combination of the steps as laid out by Meyer (2001), Yin (2008) and Eisenhardt (1989).

#### **3.1 Selecting the cases**

### ***(a) Unit of analysis***

The first decision that I made was a fundamental one. What exactly is “the case” or unit of analysis? A case can be many things: a situation, an individual, a group, an organization, a project, a decision, an implementation process, etc... (Robson, 2002; Yin, 2008) According to Yin (2008), “as a general guide, your tentative definition of the unit of analysis (and therefore of the case) is related to the way you have defined your initial research questions” (p.30). As well, Yin (2008) suggests that, when choosing a case, the researcher should keep the available research literature in mind. Presumably, a researcher will want to compare their findings with others; for this reason, the unit of analysis or case should be similar to those in previous studies. “In this manner,” Yin (2008) states, “the previous literature also can become a guide for defining the case and unit of analysis” (p.33). In my study, the objective of my study is to examine in detail how a city arrives at a policy approach to deal with population decline and what factors shaped the decision to adopt this approach. These objectives and the resulting research questions point towards using cities as case studies. In addition, as was seen in Chapter 1, much of the research on shrinking cities involves case studies of cities. As such, I chose to conduct my study using cities as cases.

Importantly, though, while I chose cities to comprise my cases, I also chose to examine sub-units of analysis within these cities. According to Yin (2008), case studies may be either *holistic* or *embedded*. A *holistic* case study examines the entire nature of the case study, while an *embedded* case study gives attention to subunits. Yin (2008) provides this example of an embedded case study: “even though a case study might be about a single organization, such as a hospital, the analysis might include outcomes about the clinical services and staff employed by the hospital (and possibly even some quantitative analyses based on the employee records of the

staff” (p.50). Yin (2008) explains that both types of case studies are more or less advantageous in different situations. For example, a holistic case study is appropriate when there are no logical sub-units to study. An embedded design is thus appropriate when there are identifiable sub-units and it can “serve as an important device for focusing a case study inquiry” (Yin, 2008, p.52). In my study, in addition to examining each city’s approach to population decline, I chose to examine more closely and form conclusions about the role of planners in shrinking cities. Thus, I chose an embedded case study design, making sure to keep in mind Yin’s (2008) caution that if such a design is chosen, the researcher has to ensure that the analysis does not end up focusing solely on the subunits without returning to the larger unit of analysis.

### ***(b) Number of cases***

Case studies can include single or multiple cases. For many research issues, it possible and, in fact, appropriate to conduct a case study using a single case. Yin (2008) provides examples of such issues. For instance, a single case study design might be appropriate for testing theory in an extreme or unique case, such as a case study of an individual with a rare disease, where the goal is to gain information from each new person who contracts the disease. As well, a single case design might be appropriate in a longitudinal study, where the case is studied at two or more points in time. In most instances, however, it is desirable to include more than one case. Keeping in mind the replication logic discussed above, conducting multiple cases is like conducting multiple experiments. As more cases are added and the findings are replicated, the findings are more compelling and more robust (Yin, 2008). As Hakim (2000) states:

...confidence in the generalisability of the results of a case study design increases with the number of cases covered, with the greatest proportional gains being achieved when the number of cases is increased from one to two, three, or more. When the number of cases remains small, there is an advantage in selecting them so as to cover the known range and variation, perhaps starting with both extremes. (p.62)

Thus, when a pattern is replicated in more than one case, the researcher can be more confident about the robustness of the theory (Tellis, 1997b). As such, as Yin (2008) encourages, "...having at least two cases should be your goal" (p.62). According to Hakim, this is particularly true in the study of communities: "while most studies focus on a single location, the strongest designs involve the comparative study of two or more communities" (p.63).

For these reasons, I chose to conduct my study using more than one case. In deciding to examine two cases and not more (which would have added further confidence to the findings), I heeded Meyer's (2001) and Hakim's (2000) caution that while multiple cases are desirable, the researcher needs to balance the benefits of including more and more cases with the desire for depth and with practical considerations, such as cost and time constraints. In Meyer's (2001) case study of organizational integration in mergers and acquisitions in Norway, she chose to focus on two cases because that allowed for "comparison and contrast between cases as well as a deeper and richer look at each case" (p.333). In my study, given the time allotted and the resources available, I decided that I could conduct two case studies at an appropriate level of detail, indeed, a greater level of detail than had I chosen to include more cases.

### ***(c) Which cases?***

After deciding on a number of cases, I then chose the actual sites. The selection of cases is an important issue in conducting a case study. As mentioned above, cases are chosen for theoretical, not statistical reasons. That is, cases are selected because they replicate or disprove emergent theoretical propositions, not because they are representative of a population or universe. In particular, according to Yin (2008), "each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results (a *literal replication*) or (b) predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a *theoretical replication*)" (p.54). Eisenhardt (1989) suggests that if only a

limited number of cases are being studied, the researcher should choose cases that are extreme situations and polar types “in which the process of interest is ‘transparently observable’” (p.537). In my particular area of research, case studies of polar examples are often used. For example, Leo and Anderson (2006) contrast urban development policies in a rapidly growing city (Vancouver) and a slowly growing city (Winnipeg). Pallagst (2005) examines responses to population decline in Youngstown, Pittsburgh, and San Jose, each of which is pursuing very different strategies. Grossman (2004) similarly contrasts planning approaches to decline in Pittsburgh (which continues to pursue growth strategies) and Chemnitz (which is systematically “reducing” the city).

As such, I chose to focus on two polar examples: Youngstown, which has ostensibly begun to move away from traditional “growth-oriented” approaches, and Sudbury, which continues to pursue growth-oriented strategies despite predictions of continued long-term population decline. I chose the Sudbury case study first, as I had done previous research on the economic, labour force, and land use impacts of the call centre industry in Sudbury and thus was familiar with Sudbury officials’ “growth is the only option” approach to planning the city’s future. In addition, as a result of my work on Sudbury’s call centre industry, I had established a network of government, business, and labour contacts I was able to re-contact for this research. Sudbury is also my hometown and I was thus familiar with the demographic decline faced by the city as well as its various attempts to address it. Of course, this raises the issue of the possibility of bias on my part, which I deal with below in section 3.4. After choosing the Sudbury case study, I then focused on choosing another city whose approach to planning was a polar opposite to Sudbury’s. I knew from media reports and recent academic research (for instance, that of Pallagst, 2005) that the recently-adopted Youngstown 2010 Plan was being touted as something

“new” and “different” in the world of planning shrinking cities in that it deviated away from the traditional growth paradigm. Further investigation revealed that Youngstown is one of the only (if not the only) shrinking city in North America to have so publicly, in an Official Plan, adopted a “smart decline” approach. Thus, the approach taken in the Youngstown 2010 Plan was a logical choice for a case study that was in polar opposition to Sudbury’s more traditional “going for growth” approach. Further cementing my choice of case studies was the fact that both cases are in two different countries, which would allow me to examine whether the policy context at the regional, state/provincial, and national levels within which each city exists played a role in the adoption of each strategy. Furthermore, each city has codified its approach in recently-adopted official plans. In practical terms, this made each city’s strategy, in Eisenhardt’s words, “transparently observable” and it also made it easier for me to get in touch with the people involved (most are still working in the same positions they did when the plan was formed) to talk to them about a process that is still relatively fresh in their minds.

It is important at this point to note that with my choice of case studies come limitations. For instance, Sudbury and Youngstown have each experienced very different levels of decline. Sudbury’s long-term population decline has been much slower and much less drastic. As such, it does not face the same pressing physical issues such as how to deal with the large amount of vacant property. However, this difference does highlight, as will be seen in Chapter 7, the fact that the level of physical decline influences a city’s decision to adopt or not adopt a “smart decline” approach. As well, Sudbury is a mining town and mining remains a productive industry. Youngstown was a steel town and the steel industry has virtually abandoned the city. Thus, there may be issues of comparability in this sense. However, I would argue that both are (or were) single industry towns (regardless of industry) and once again, the fact that the single

industry remains viable in Sudbury (of course with the characteristic upswings and downturns) highlights the dependence of Sudbury planners on that industry to determine the city's future, not on their Official Plan policies, and the freedom of Youngstown planners to "chart their own course." All in all, I believe that the limitations on comparability of my case study choices are outweighed by the insights that their comparison provides and indeed, some of these limitations have actually be the source of some of my conclusions.

***(d) Design framework***

For all of these reasons, then, I chose to an embedded, multiple-case design to carry out my research. In other words, I chose to compare two cases (the polar examples of Youngstown and Sudbury) in context using more than one unit of analysis. This type of design is illustrated in contrast with others types of case study designs by Yin (2008).

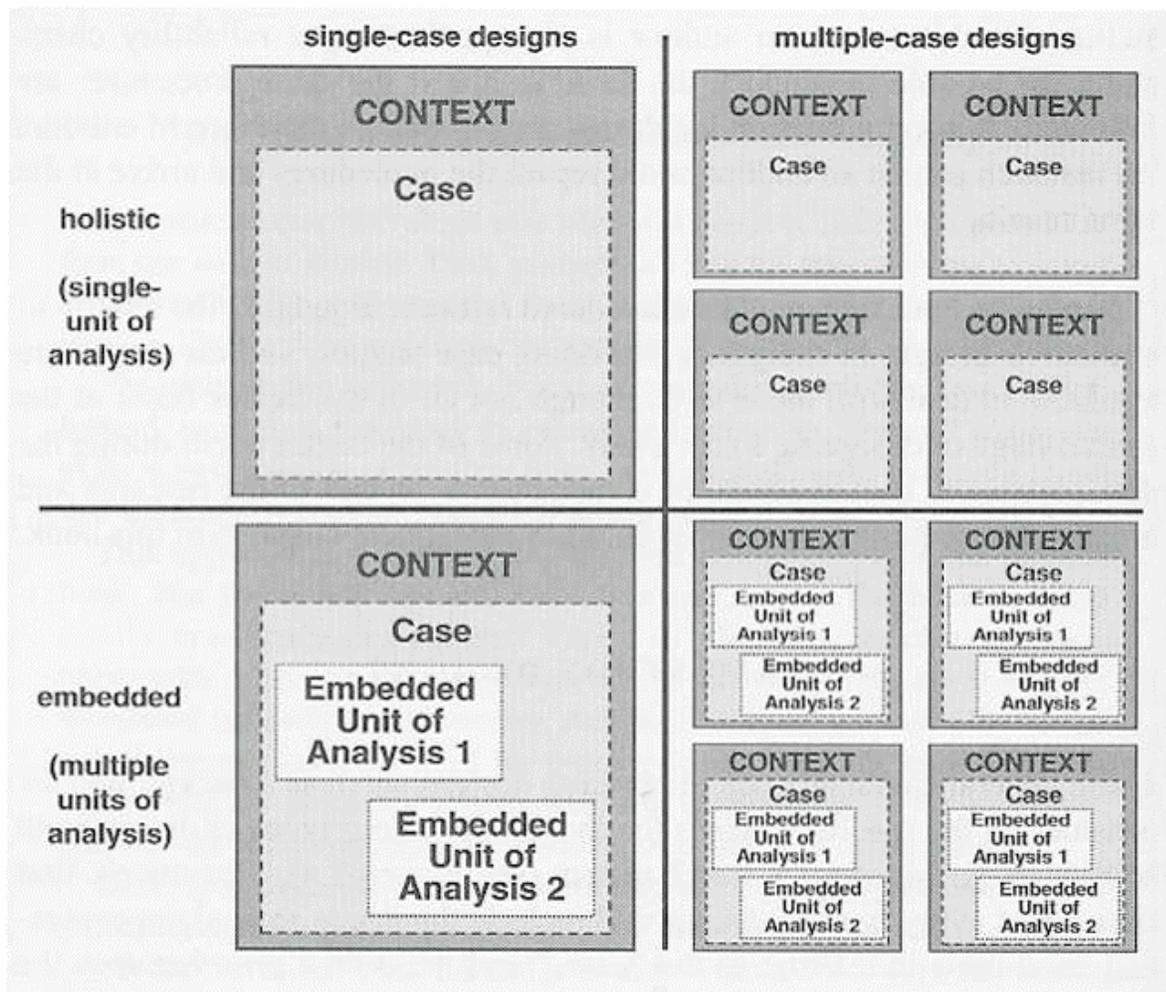


Figure 2: Basic Types of Designs for Case Studies<sup>14</sup>

### 3.2 Collecting the Data

#### *(a) Approach to data collection*

In order to answer my research questions using the embedded, multiple case study design, I needed to decide what types of evidence I would seek. In other words, would my conclusions be based only on words (i.e. qualitative evidence) or numbers (i.e. quantitative evidence) or both? Although case studies are often equated with purely qualitative research, it is possible, and indeed desirable, to include both sources of evidence in a case study (Yin, 2008;

<sup>14</sup> Source: Yin (2008), p.46.

Kyburz-Graber, 2004; Robson, 2002; Eisenhardt, 1989; Hakim, 2000; White, 2004) “instead of privileging one over the other” (White, 2004, p.247). This approach is found in most place-based studies of urban economic and demographic decline. For example, Polese & Shearmur (2006) use both quantitative and qualitative evidence in their examination of 5 peripheral declining regions in Eastern Canada. As Eisenhardt (1989) explains, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data

can be highly synergistic. Quantitative evidence can indicate relationships which may not be salient to the researcher. It also can keep researchers from being carried away by vivid, but false, impressions in the qualitative data, and it can bolster findings when it corroborates those findings from qualitative evidence. The qualitative data are useful for understanding the rationale or theory underlying relationships revealed in the quantitative data or may suggest directly theory which can then be strengthened by quantitative support...”

Thus, in this study, I adopted a quantitative-qualitative approach in which I used quantitative data to uncover broad economic, land use, and demographic trends and qualitative data to provide a contextualized narrative of economic and demographic decline in each city and the strategies used to address it.

### ***(b) Data sources and data collection procedures***

There are many possible sources of evidence in case studies. Six of the most important are identified by Yin (2008): documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artefacts. While a case study could rely solely on one source of evidence, this is not recommended (Yin 2008; Meyer, 2001; Eisenhardt, 1989; Hakim, 2000; Kyburz-Graber, 2004; Tellis, 1997a; Tellis, 1997b). Indeed, one of the major strengths of the case study as a research strategy is its ability to incorporate multiple sources of evidence. Doing so allows the researcher to achieve triangulation, which “provides stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses” (Meyer, 2001, p.336). Yin (2008) explains the concept of

triangulation as the “development of converging lines of inquiry,” which is desirable because “...any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information...” (p.116). Thus, following Yin’s (2008) suggestion that a good case study will “want to use as many sources as possible,” (p.101) – subject, of course, to constraints in time, monetary resources, and access (Meyer, 2001; Yin, 2008) – my sources of evidence include documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, and another source not mentioned by Yin: multimedia materials such as videos and websites.

#### (i) Documents

Documents were a large source of information in this case study. I used a variety of documents, including official plans, written reports, minutes of meetings, government documents, newspaper articles, and community newsletter articles. I selected documents based on their relevance to my research questions. Most of the documents were accessed over the internet; however, I also spent time at the local libraries in Youngstown and Sudbury. In addition, I was given documents during my interviews. These documents were useful for a number of reasons. First, they provided me with an overview of the general situation in each city as regards to population decline and strategies pursued. Second, reading the documents helped me to identify questions to be asked during interviews. Third, the documents provided basic facts about people and events (e.g. titles of interviewees, timelines, etc...), allowing me to focus interviews more on the interviewees’ views and opinions. Fourth, the documents provided corroboration for other sources of evidence (e.g. the correct spelling of names and titles). In using documents, I of course had to keep in mind that documents are not always accurate and

they could be biased. For that reason, I paid special attention to who wrote the document and for what purpose, rather than accepting the documents as providing the unmitigated truth.

## (ii) Archival records

In terms of archival records, I used as evidence in this study primarily maps and census records. The majority of quantitative evidence came from archival records, particularly census records and government data. Thus, archival records were particularly useful in identifying broad economic, land use, and demographic trends. They were also useful for the same reasons that the documents were useful: providing a basis for interview questions and providing corroboration of other sources of evidence. Again, as with documents, I was careful to keep in mind who produced the data and for what reason when judging its usefulness and accuracy. As Yin (2008) states, "...archival records can be highly quantitative, but numbers alone should not automatically be considered a sign of accuracy" (p.106).

## (iii) Interviews

Interviews were an essential source of information in this case study. Conducting interviews was at once the most rewarding and the most challenging aspect of conducting this case study. I conducted 28 interviews during my three visits to Youngstown and my several (at least four) visits to Sudbury, 5 telephone interviews, and 1 e-mail interview.

### *1. Interview subjects*

As Yin (2008) states, "key informants are often critical to the success of a case study. Such persons provide the case study investigator with insights into a matter and also can initiate access to corroboratory or contrary sources of evidence" (p.107). For each case study I selected key informants based on a review of documents and web sites, contacting them initially either by

phone or email. I also identified key informants using the “snowball technique;” that is, at the end of each interview, I asked the informant if they could suggest any further informants who might be knowledgeable about the issues in my case study. As I wanted to do as many interviews as possible on my field trips, I also asked informants when I was arranging on-site interviews if they could suggest people I should talk to while I was in town. When informants started suggesting the same group of people I had already spoken to, I felt confident that I had spoken to a sufficient range of key informants. I spoke to as wide a range of informants as possible, purposely seeking informants with diverse or contrary views in order to obtain a balanced perspective. A list of interview subjects is appended to this chapter.

## *2. Ethics: Informed consent*

In terms of practicalities, prior to conducting the interviews, I received Ethics clearance from the University of Waterloo’s Office of Human Research according to the Guidelines for Research with Human Participants. In the process of completing the ethics application, I dealt with the issue of informed consent, developing a consent form with dealt with such issues as consent to use the informant’s name in my thesis and consent to tape record. With respect to the issue of consent to be named, prior to conducting the interview, I gave the interviewees the choice to either be named in the thesis and have their quotes attributed to them or to remain anonymous and have their quotes remain unattributed. In explaining these options to the interviewees, I encouraged them to make whatever decision would allow them to speak most freely. That is, I would rather obtain “the real story” and have it remain anonymous than obtain only limited information that I could attribute to a certain source. Some informants chose to be named in the thesis and others did not. Furthermore, some decided that parts of what they said could be attributed, while other parts could not. For this reason, out of an abundance of caution,

I decided to keep all of the interviews anonymous. With respect to tape-recording, all interviewees agreed to be tape recorded. As Hancock and Algozzine (2006) state, “the best way to record interview data is to audiotape the interaction” (p.40). I found tape-recording very helpful in that it ensured an accurate rendition of the interviews. I was only unable to record one interview, not for lack of consent, but because of problems with the tape recorder. For that interview, I had someone accompany me to take notes.

### *3. Location of Interviews*

Most of the interviews were conducted in person at the interviewee’s place of work. One interview was conducted in Youngstown’s public library. Where an in-person interview was not possible (for example, if an informant was not available when I was at the case study site or it was impossible for me to travel to their place of work, such as for my interview with a planner in New York City), I conducted interviews over the phone, which I also tape-recorded. Wherever possible, though, I tried to talk to the interviewees in person as it was easier to establish a rapport in person rather than over the phone. That being said, phone interviews were a useful back-up.

### *4. Interview structure*

As is most common in case studies (Yin, 2008), the interviews I conducted were semi-structured and open-ended in nature. I developed a list of questions for each interviewee which were aimed at addressing my research questions and which were derived from information I gathered from documents and other interviews. I asked for both facts of the matter and opinions. I asked these pre-determined questions at the interviews, but I also asked follow-up questions based on the interviewee’s responses. In fact, I found that the most fruitful discussions were the unplanned discussions. For this reason, I tried to keep the pre-determined questions to a minimum. Some interviewees (particularly those in political office) asked for the list of pre-

determined questions beforehand, which I provided to them, along with the warning that I would also be asking follow-up, unplanned questions.

### *5. Follow-up interviews*

At the end of the interview, I asked each informant if I could contact them for a follow-up interview if need be. After transcribing interviews, reviewing more documents, and speaking to more people, I found that it was necessary to re-interview people in order to obtain clarification or additional information. In fact, I conducted several follow-up interviews. I found these interviews very helpful because, having already dealt with introductory issues in the first interview it was much easier to focus the interview on what I really needed to know.

#### *(iv) Direct observation*

Several visits to the case study sites provided me the opportunity for direct observation. These observations were largely informal and involved driving around each city, taking field notes about my observations (which are basically a stream of consciousness commentary of what I was observing), and taking pictures. In Youngstown, a zoning officer gave me a two hour long guided tour of neighbourhoods in varied states, from stable to declining. I found the tour very informative as it, borrowing from Yin's (2008) comments about the benefits of direct observation, "add[ed] new dimensions for understanding" the context of the development of the "positive decline" strategy and the effects of the strategy itself (p.110). I could not appreciate the effects of population decline in Youngstown until I visited the city and saw it for myself.

#### *(v) Multimedia materials*

My final source of evidence in this study was websites and videos. Of course, all the caveats about documents and archival records apply equally to documents found on websites.

As mentioned above, several documents, particularly newspaper and other popular media articles, were obtained by searching websites. I also looked at city websites, community group websites, and the websites of various levels of government. The City of Youngstown developed a website devoted to progress on the Youngstown 2010 plan and I found this site particularly helpful as it contained links to videotapes of town hall meetings, presentations, and design charrettes dealing with the Youngstown 2010 plan. It was very beneficial to me to be able to observe, for instance, the town hall meeting when the 2010 plan was unveiled and the urban design charrette where students from Kent State University worked with residents of a Youngstown neighbourhood in developing a vision of how the neighbourhood should look in the future. I believe that these videos nicely augmented my other sources of evidence.

### ***(c) Challenges in the data collection process***

I found some aspects of the data collection process particularly challenging. First, the issue of scheduling interviews was often difficult as I only had a limited amount of time I could spend at the case study sites. As such, arranging times for interviews involved a lot of “juggling” and when a potential interviewee was not available during my visit, I had to do the interview by phone. Second, with respect to those interviewees who chose to let me use their name in the thesis, I felt at times as if I was not getting the “whole picture” when I asked for the interviewee’s opinions on certain matters. A few interviewees seemed to be choosing their words carefully for fear of saying something they would later regret. Finally, there were times in Youngstown when I felt unsafe driving through neighbourhoods and taking pictures. Youngstown does, in fact, have a high crime rate. One of the interviewees told us we were lucky to not encounter one of the “crackheads” downtown who routinely ask people to give them five dollars to watch their car while it is parked. Another interviewee pointed out to me

neighbourhoods that she would never go to, day or night, for fear of being mugged. As such, I made sure to always “bring a buddy” (my husband), but this, of course, meant that I also had to schedule trips around his schedule. The feeling of lack of safety also resulted in my doing some observations from the car, which meant that I could not get as close to what I was observing as I would have liked. Despite these challenges, however, I found that the process of data collection, particularly the interviews and field visits, resulted in a rich collection of data, from which I could draw conclusions with confidence.

#### **4.0 Analyzing the Data**

In conducting a case study, it is important to have a general analytic strategy, explained by Yin (2008) as “defining priorities for what to analyze and why” (p.126). As with the preceding steps in conducting a case study, the literature on case studies provides little guidance in this area, a fact that is confirmed by Yin (2008): “analyzing case study evidence is especially difficult because the strategies and techniques have not been well defined” (p.126). In order to address this deficiency, Yin (2008) outlines three general strategies: relying on theoretical propositions, thinking about rival explanations, using both qualitative and quantitative data, and developing a case description. According to Yin (2008), the last strategy is less preferable and should be used only when theoretical propositions and rival explanations are difficult to identify. As this was not the situation in my case, I chose the first strategy: relying on theoretical propositions, while also attempting, wherever possible, to identify rival explanations. Using this strategy meant that my theoretical propositions, and the research questions based on them, guided my case study analysis, focusing attention on certain data and allowing me to ignore other data. Throughout the process, I attempted to address rival explanations.

#### **4.1 Preparing the data for analysis**

In preparing the data for analysis, I maintained a case study database, as per Yin's (2008) suggestion, which included case study notes, case study documents, tabular materials, and interview transcripts. Most of the case study notes (transcribed from hand-written field notes) and all of the tabular materials and interview transcripts (as well as the original digital voice files) were kept in a "dissertation" file on my computer. I transcribed all of the interviews myself which, although time consuming, as Meyer (2001) states, gave me a "good grasp of the data" (p.338). Paper copies of case study documents and hand-written case study notes were filed according to subject in a filing cabinet in my home office. In order to manage the large volume of case study documents, I created, again as per Yin's (2008) suggestion, an annotated bibliography which facilitated storage and retrieval.

#### **4.2 Steps in the data analysis process**

Taken together, the suggestions put forth by Meyer (2001), Eisenhardt (1989) and Yin (2008) provided me with the steps for analyzing my data using my general analytic strategy in order to reach my conclusions.

##### ***(a) Coding***

The first step in my data analysis process was the coding of data into themes. I derived the themes from my research questions and sub-questions. Themes also arose in the coding process itself. The broad themes largely revolved around the four principles of "good planning" in shrinking cities and sub-themes arose from those. For instance, I searched transcripts for passages dealing with the "role of the planner" in developing each plan and I also looked for evidence of specific roles, such as manager of the decline process, facilitator, or innovator.

### ***(b) Writing up and analyzing each case***

The next step in my data analysis process involved writing up each case separately using the aforementioned themes. This step was necessary in order to deal with the large volume of data (Eisenhardt, 1989). It also enabled me to become “intimately familiar with each case as a stand-alone entity” (Eisenhardt, 1989; see also Meyer, 2001). This familiarity is important because, as Eisenhardt (1989) states, it “allows the unique patterns of each case to emerge before investigators push to generalize patterns across cases... [This familiarity], in turn, accelerates cross-case comparison” (p.540). During this step, case study documents were used primarily to establish the facts and interviews were used primarily to give input into perceptions and reactions (although some documents also provided perceptions and some interviews also provided facts). The themes I used helped to focus the case and helped me to develop a framework that could be used later as a basis for comparing the two cases.

### ***(c) Comparing the cases***

After I became familiar with each case as an individual, I then compared the two cases according to my previously determined themes as well as themes that emerged during the within-case analysis. Within these themes, I looked for similarities and differences. This method of carrying out a cross-case comparison is one of three<sup>15</sup> suggested by Eisenhardt (1989) who emphasizes the importance of the use of systematic cross-case comparison techniques:

overall, the idea behind these cross-case searching tactics is to force investigators to go beyond initial impressions, especially through the use of structured and diverse lenses on the data. These tactics improve the likelihood of accurate and reliable theory, that is, a theory with a close fit with the data. Also, cross-case searching tactics enhance the probability that the investigators will capture the novel findings which may exist in the data. (p.541)

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<sup>15</sup> The other two methods suggested by Eisenhardt (1989) involve first, comparing pairs of cases (when a large number of cases is involved) and second, dividing data by data source and looking for patterns.

Since, in the next stage, I employed Yin's (2008) "pattern matching" technique – which he describes as "one of the most desirable techniques" for case study analysis (p.136) – at this point my goal was to identify similarities and differences in the patterns of each case, in preparation for enfolding the theory into the analysis.

#### ***(d) Comparing the findings with theory***

In this final step of the data analysis process, I compared the similarities and differences in the patterns I identified with the relevant theory identified in my literature review. The logic of this pattern-matching technique is to compare "an empirically based pattern with a predicted one" (Yin, 2008, p.136). As Meyer (2001) states, "this comparison of emergent concepts, theory, or hypothesis with the extant literature involves asking what it is similar to, what it contradicts, and why..." (pp.342-343). In this process, I identified which similarities and differences in the patterns of each case could be explained by theory and, importantly, which patterns could not. The latter was especially important because, as Palys and Atchison (2008) caution, "...the researcher is compelled not only to try to create an account that 'explains' the data, but also to try to consider all the various reasons why that account might *not* be true" (p.316, emphasis in original).

### **5.0 Quality of Research**

A case study, like any other type of research, must meet certain "tests" in order to be considered "good quality" or rigorous research. In the context of case studies, Yin (2008) discusses four tests commonly used for all types of research: construct validity, internal validity, generalizability, and reliability. Meyer (2001) adds a fifth test: objectivity. I employed measures suggested by Yin (2008), Meyer (2001), and others at all stages of my case research in order to meet the requirements of each test.

## 5.1 Construct validity

The issue of construct validity is “especially challenging in case study research” (Yin, 2008, p.41). Threats to construct validity occur when the researcher “fails to develop a sufficiently operational set of measures [and uses] ‘subjective’ judgments...to collect the data” (p.41). In other words, a study lacks construct validity when the research findings fail to accurately reflect the phenomenon being studied. In order to avoid this pitfall and to meet the test of construct validity, Yin (2008) provides two steps:

1. Select the specific types of changes that are to be studied (and relate them to the original objectives of the study) and
2. Demonstrate that the selected measures of these changes do indeed reflect the specific types of change that have been studied. (p.42)

In order to fulfill these two steps, Yin (2008) and Meyer (2001) recommend employing several tactics, each of which is relevant at various stages in the research process: triangulation, establishing a chain of evidence, considering the comments of key informants, and using feedback loops. First, as discussed above, triangulation, most relevant in the data collection phase, involves using multiple sources of evidence to establish a converging line of inquiry. Second, establishing a chain of evidence, also relevant in the data collection phase, involves including sufficient citation in the report to the relevant portions of the case study database which, “upon inspection, should reveal the actual evidence and also indicate the circumstances under which the evidence was collected – for example, the time and place of an interview” (Yin, 2008, p.123). Third, considering the comments of key informants involves distributing a draft case study report to key informants for their review. Fourth, using feedback loops involves returning to interviewees for further clarification if their comments reveal contradictions in the data.

In this study, I attempted to incorporate all of these tools in order to meet the test of construct validity. First, in choosing to examine the planning strategies in two shrinking cities, I relied on multiple sources of evidence, including the background literature, documents, interviews, direct observation, and archival records. In evaluating how each planning strategy meets the criteria of “good planning” in shrinking cities, I again relied on multiple sources of evidence (being careful to maintain a chain of evidence). Where necessary, I re-interviewed selected informants when I needed clarification; that is, where their comments revealed inconsistencies in the data. Where the comments simply revealed a difference of opinion, I took those comments into account but did not necessarily make changes to the draft. Using each of these tools increased my confidence that I was indeed studying what I set out to study.

## **5.2 Internal validity**

The second test of research quality is internal validity. According to Patton (1986), “internal validity, in its narrowest sense refers to certainty about cause and effect. Did X cause Y? In a broader sense, it refers to the ‘trustworthiness of an inference’ . . . , in a sense that one is reasonably confident about an interpretation” (p.234). In order to avoid making any unjustified inferences, I employed two of the tools suggested by Yin (2008) to increase my confidence that my inferences were indeed correct: pattern matching and addressing rival explanations. I also kept in mind Meyer’s (2001) caution that “the main problem with internal validity as a criterion in qualitative research is that it is often not open to scrutiny” (p.346). As such, I was careful to document my processes of data collection and analysis, chains of evidence, and my interpretive contributions.

## **5.3 Generalizability**

The third test deals with the generalizability (sometimes referred to as “external validity”) of the study. Are the study’s findings “generalizable beyond the immediate case study?” (Yin, 2008, p.43) This is the point on which case studies are often criticized: “critics typically state that single cases offer a poor basis for generalizing” (Yin, 2008, p.43). However, as was emphasized earlier in this chapter, this criticism mistakenly assumes that the goal of case study research is to generalize from a representative sample to population. In case studies, the goal is not statistical generalization but analytical generalization, or generalization of “a particular set of results to some broader theory” (Yin, 2008, p.43). If multiple cases (versus a single case) are used because they will produce similar results (*literal replication*) or different results for a predictable reason (*theoretical replication*), this provides stronger support for the theory. As Yin (2008) explains, “this replication logic is the same that underlies the use of experiments...” (p.44). Thus, in this study, I opted to examine two polar cases, expecting to achieve theoretical replication. For reasons mentioned above, including cost and time constraints, I was unable to include more cases, even though this would have even further strengthened my analytical generalizations. In providing rich description of the context of each case, I provided a basis upon which other cities could determine if the theory would apply in their case.

## **5.4 Reliability**

While each type of validity concerns the meaning and meaningfulness of the data, the fourth test of research quality focuses on the consistency of the results (Patton, 1986). In essence, reliability concerns whether or not the same study, carried out by different researchers, would result in the same findings. As Yin (2008) describes:

the objective is to be sure that if a later investigator followed the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator and conducted the same case study all over again, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions. (Note that the emphasis is on doing the *same* case over again, not on “replicating” the results off one

case by doing another case study.) The goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in a study. (p.45, emphasis in original)

Patton (1986) confirms that reliability “concerns the problem of error in data collection” (p.228).

In order to achieve reliability, Yin (2008) and Meyer (2001) emphasize that it is essential to document procedures followed in case studies. As mentioned above, most case study reports are deficient in this respect and this lack of documentation – and hence, lack of reliability – has been a major criticisms of case studies. In this chapter, I have attempted to provide detailed documentation of my case study procedures. In other chapters, I have attempted to provide a detailed description of how I reached my findings. I have, as suggested by Yin (2008), attempted to “make as many steps as operational as possible and to conduct [this case study] as if someone were always looking over [my] shoulder” (p.45).

## **5.5 Objectivity**

The last test plays a role in all of the others just discussed, but its importance has led me, following Meyer’s (2001) example, to deal with it separately. According to Meyer (2001), the basic issue here is “relative neutrality and reasonable freedom from unacknowledged research biases” (p.344). In conducting any kind of research, the researcher is in danger of losing objectivity by becoming too involved with the people or organizations and becoming an “advocate” versus an “observer.” Of course, some level of closeness with the research subjects is helpful in order to establish trust which may help in gaining access to information and other key informants. Indeed, in this study, I feel that I was able to establish a relationship with the key informants which led them to trust me enough to provide me with information they may not otherwise have divulged and to provide me with the contact information for other key informants. I believe that the fact that my hometown is Sudbury helped me to gain access to many key informants in Sudbury as I was not seen as an “outsider.” I also believe that the fact

that my hometown is a city which has lost population also helped me to gain access to key informants in Youngstown as many Youngstown informants seemed interested in learning about the planning strategies of a Canadian city in a similar situation and they also seemed to believe that I would be more understanding of the issues faced by Youngstown.

That being said, since my hometown is Sudbury, I needed to be careful that my findings with respect to Sudbury were “not simply a product of [my] prejudices and prior experience” (Meyer, 2001, p.344). I have not lived in Sudbury since 1994, so I believe that my absence allowed me to gain some “outsider” perspective on recent planning initiatives. Following Meyer’s (2001) suggestions to counteract biases in case studies, I made an effort to state any potential presuppositions and to set aside these presuppositions. I also made a point to actively seek out evidence that conflicted with previous evidence and to consider rival conclusions. I feel confident that I made every effort to acknowledge, document, and counteract any possible biases.

## **6.0 Summary**

I chose to answer my research questions using case study as my research strategy. I designed an embedded, multi-case design and collected a mix of quantitative and qualitative data using documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, and multimedia materials. Data was analyzed using several steps, including coding, writing up and analyzing each case, comparing the cases with each other, and comparing the cases with the theory. The primary tool used in this process was pattern matching. Throughout the case study process, I took measures which would enhance the validity and reliability of the research so that the product would be a good-quality, rigorous case study.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **THE YOUNGSTOWN 2010 PLAN: CONTEXT and OVERVIEW**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

At the turn of the millennium, the City of Youngstown embarked on a visioning and comprehensive planning exercise, the results of which have garnered national and international attention. Once the poster child for the effects of rust belt decline, the City of Youngstown is now drawing attention from similarly struggling cities searching for new ways to address their persisting physical, economic, social, and environmental issues. What has drawn the most attention has been the City's willingness to admit that it has a smaller population and its land-use policies which call for reducing its physical structures and infrastructure accordingly. While the admission that the city is not the size it used to be may not seem revolutionary to some, as was argued in previous chapters, this is hardly the norm in the field of urban planning, the theories, models, and tools of which tend to be focused on growth. From its inception, the discipline of urban planning has dealt almost exclusively with how to manage growth and its corresponding issues such as the increased demand for infrastructure, not decline, which brings with it an entirely different set of issues including vacant buildings and surplus infrastructure.

In effectively "right-sizing" the city to match its currently population levels, the City of Youngstown seems to be charting new territory in its 2010 Plan. As will be seen in Chapter 7, on closer inspection, the argument that the city is somehow "shaking the growth paradigm" seems to apply only to the Plan's land-use policies; even then, the hope for eventual growth remains in the background. In fact, Youngstown 2010's economic and environmental strategies

– seeking economic revitalization through attracting new industries (including high tech industries) and foreign investment and adding more greenspace – are more commonplace, as is the fact that comprehensive social policies are not included as part of an overall integrated plan. This will be examined more closely in Chapter 7. In this chapter, I discuss the context of the 2010 process (including the physical, economic, social, and environmental challenges the city faced as it began the process of creating the 2010 Plan), identify the factors that “sparked” the planning process, and describe the main components of the Vision and Plan.

## **2.0 Youngstown, Ohio**

### **2.1 Geography**

The City of Youngstown is located in the Mahoning Valley of north eastern Ohio, 10 miles west of the Pennsylvania state line. It is situated midway between Cleveland (located 65 miles northwest) and Pittsburgh (located 61 miles southeast) and also, on a broader scale, midway between New York City and Chicago.



Figure 3: Youngstown, Ohio<sup>16</sup>

On a regional level, the City of Youngstown is part of the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman Metropolitan Statistical Area<sup>17</sup>, which encompasses Mahoning and Trumbull Counties in Ohio and Mercer County in Pennsylvania. More locally, the City of Youngstown is the county seat of Mahoning County and is bordered by the Mahoning townships of Boardman, Austintown, Campbell, Coitsville, and Struthers. The City also extends slightly into Trumbull County to the north, and is bordered by such Trumbull townships as Girard, Liberty, and Hubbard.

<sup>16</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau Reference Maps, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> A Metropolitan Statistical Area is a geographical entity defined by the U.S. government for statistical purposes. An MSA contains a core urban area of 50,000 or more population, together with surrounding areas that have a high degree of economic and social integration with the core. The definitions of MSAs change periodically and were last changed in 2000 (U.S. Census, 2008).

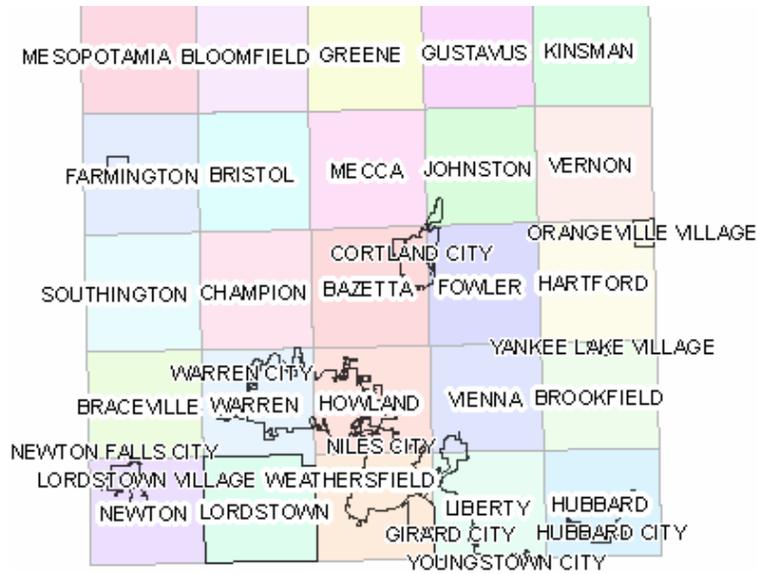


Figure 4: Trumbull County<sup>18</sup>

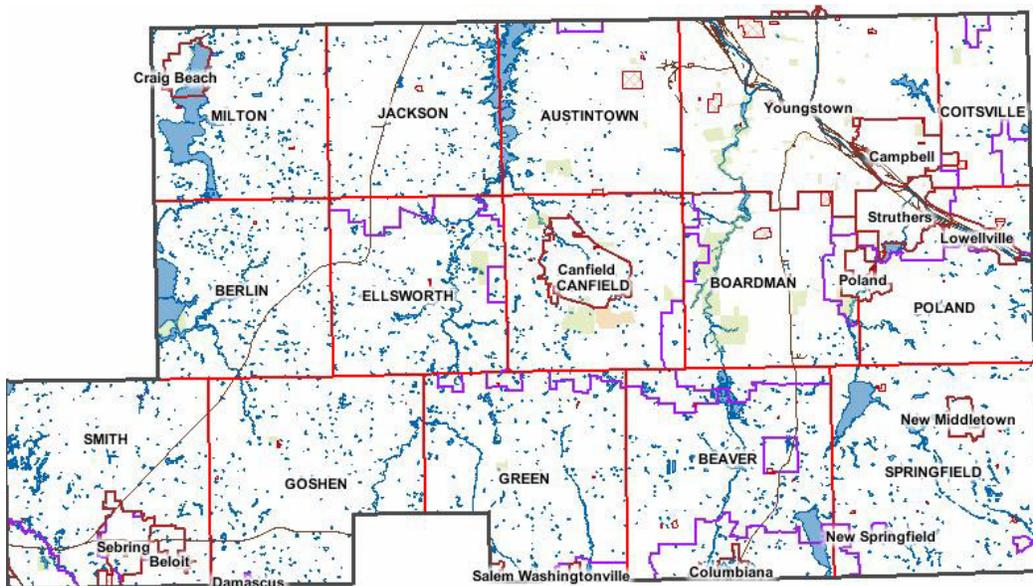


Figure 5: Mahoning County<sup>19</sup>

The City of Youngstown itself has a total area of 34.2 square miles (88.7 km<sup>2</sup>) and is made of up several distinct neighbourhood and clusters.

<sup>18</sup> Source: [www.co.trumbull.oh.us](http://www.co.trumbull.oh.us)

<sup>19</sup> Source: [www.mahoningcountyoh.gov](http://www.mahoningcountyoh.gov)

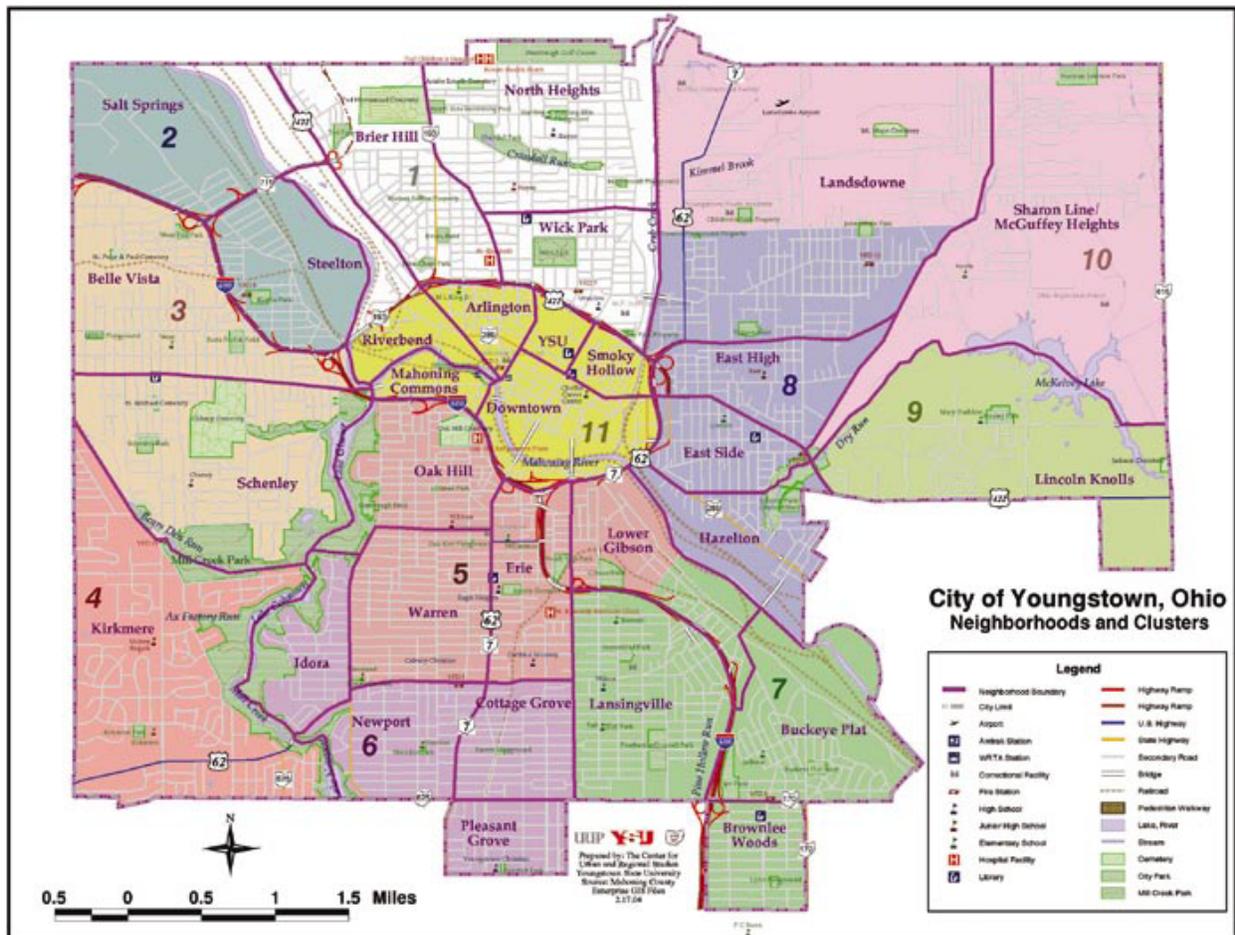


Figure 6: City of Youngstown Neighbourhoods<sup>20</sup>

## 2.2 Brief History

Youngstown is a former steel town whose downward spiral was triggered by the steel industry downturn of the 1960s and 1970s. According to Linkon & Russo (2002), “Youngstown offers a classic case of the rise of industrial America, the importance of economic and social struggle, and the human costs of economic restructuring” (p.8). Indeed, Youngstown was once a part of “...the industrial heartland of North America that stretched from western Pennsylvania to Wisconsin, and from the Ohio River to the Canadian Shield...[and which] produced most of the consumer goods bought by North Americans” (High, 2003, p.5). Because of deindustrialization,

<sup>20</sup> Source: [www.youngstown2010.com/plan/final\\_plan/Ytown2010\\_chapter2.pdf](http://www.youngstown2010.com/plan/final_plan/Ytown2010_chapter2.pdf)

this “heartland” region – once home to thriving auto, rubber, steel, and agricultural machinery industries – is now referred to as the Rust Belt (High, 2003; Safford, 2004).



Figure 7: The United States Rust Belt<sup>21</sup>

Like other older industrial cities in the Rust Belt such as Cleveland and Detroit, and indeed like single-industry towns in general, Youngstown’s fortunes have grown and declined with the fortunes of the major industry upon which it was built – in Youngstown’s case: the steel industry (Safford, 2004; Buss & Redburn, 1983; Faga, 2006). The first steel mill appeared in the Mahoning Valley in the late-1800s; at the time, Youngstown was a village of 3000. By 1900, the population had grown to 45,000 and by the 1960s, it reached its peak population of 166,000. Up to this point, as described by Buss & Redburn (1983):

Youngstown grew quickly and with minimum attention to amenities not associated with steel. Its reliance on steel has been both its strength and a source of vulnerability. During strikes, economic downturns, and especially during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the city’s people suffered. Nevertheless, the productivity of the mills, the

<sup>21</sup> Source: www.coalcampusa.com

struggles of the union, and the prosperity generated by the success and growth of this industry and the nation's entire economy, gave thousands a living and, in time, made Youngstown's steelworkers one of the most productive, best-paid, and seemingly secure industrial labor forces in the world. (p.2)

Beginning on September 19, 1977 (referred to as "Black Monday") with the announcement of the impending closure of Youngstown Sheet and Tube's Campbell works and the layoff of 5000 workers, the City of Youngstown lost about 50,000 manufacturing jobs in a relatively short period of time as Youngstown's steel industry all but disappeared (Linkon & Russo, 2002; Buss & Redburn, 1983; Fuechtmann, 1989; Faga, 2006; Mock, 2008). The reasons for the steel industry decline were many, including sagging profitability, increased labour productivity, increased foreign competition, and slackening domestic and international demand (Buss & Redburn, 1983). The loss of these jobs, together with suburban flight which began in the 1950s, "...all but devastated the city..." (Faga, 2006, p.54) and began Youngstown's population decline to about half its original size: from 166,000 in 1960 to around 74,000 today. According to Wilson (2007), Youngstown, in its era of prosperity, could never have predicted how hard it would fall. In short, Youngstown has become "...a poster child of post-industrial decline." (Safford, 2004, p.3). Youngstown informant Y1 – an employee with the City of Youngstown's Finance Department – describes the decline as follows:

...you went from a community you felt had prosperity and a future to a community that had a 20% unemployment rate and there's lines for people to get jobs at McDonald's. I mean, it was just a collapse of almost the American Dream, you know? You look at it and you say there's a future and there's a way to make things work ... I think we had 20 miles of mills around the river here and all of a sudden it's all gone in a period of about 3 or 4 years and it's pretty amazing to look at that and say what type of upheaval is going to take place because of this? It's a huge economic event and so in terms of living it, you say to yourself, ok, do you want to stay and fight this battle? Do you want to go to some area of the country that's more prosperous, you know, and a lot of people said I'm getting out. Probably 80% of my graduating class took off, you know, the ones that were getting degrees and had a skill that was wanted in other places in another community, where the ones that stayed behind just wanted to fight the fight. So, I kind of viewed myself as wanting to fight that fight.

### 3.0 Context of the Youngstown 2010 Planning Process

At the turn of the millennium, the City of Youngstown embarked on the process of creating a new citywide plan in an effort to revitalize the struggling city. Prior to this, the City was operating according to a comprehensive plan that was written in the early 1950s and updated only once in 1974. Unlike the Ontario Government's mandatory planning requirements under the *Planning Act* (which will be discussed in the next chapter), the State of Ohio, like many other states, does not require cities to update, or even have, a comprehensive plan (Finnerty, 2003). As Light (2003) states, "...American land-use planning is weak and usually optional..." (p.25). Youngstown informant Y9 – a professor at Youngstown State University – describes Ohio as "...a very low impact state. This is not Florida. This is not Maryland. Some of the states mandate comprehensive planning. This state is *very* hands off about planning..." Similarly, according to Youngstown informant Y7 (a Youngstown State University professor):

Planning is not a priority in Ohio on any level whatsoever. Transportation is required by the feds so we have our local MPO and they are regional, but that's only there because in order to get federal highway funds, you have to have transportation planning and the state participates in that because they want federal highway funds. But, as far as urban or regional planning, no, it's not required in Ohio...Ohio is a free-for-all state!

In this regard, Youngstown informant Y14 – a high-ranking city official – explains that

...certainly there are state regulations, requirements with respect to certain things, but nothing that would be as specific and definitive as related to planning, especially because we are a Charter city, so as a Charter city, we have the ability to exercise certain municipal powers that can't be in conflict with state authority but it can go beyond certain state authority. So, I actually think that might have been helpful had there been something [similar to mandatory planning requirements in the Ontario *Planning Act*] here.

Typical of land-use regulation in other American cities where comprehensive planning is not mandated, Youngstown relied predominantly on *zoning*, rather than *planning* (Cullingworth & Caves, 2003; Wright & Gitelman, 2000) to regulate land use. Thus, the city thus lacked a

comprehensive vision that was based on up-to-date conditions. When Youngstown's original plan was drafted, planners in the then-thriving city expected the population to reach between 200,000 and 250,000 (City of Youngstown, 2005). Large amounts of land were set aside for residential, commercial, and industrial expansion. After the collapse of the steel industry, the lack of appropriate vision and guidance resulted in failed "knee jerk reactions to events outside of the City's control" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.17). Indeed, at the time the City undertook its 2010 planning process it faced a number of demographic, physical, economic, social, and environmental challenges which were certainly not anticipated in 1951 and many of which persist today.

### **3.1 Population**

#### ***(a) City of Youngstown***

The population of the City of Youngstown has declined steadily from its peak of 166,631 in 1960 to 73,818 in 2007 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008; City of Youngstown, 2005). In other words, the City has lost well over half of its population since the 1960s. On average, according to the City of Youngstown (2005), the city has lost 16% of its population every ten years for the past 40 years. It has been predicted that the city's population will fall to 54,000 by 2030 (City of Youngstown, 2005). Despite the assertion in the Youngstown 2010 Plan that the population decline trend "will slow and the population will stabilize" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.30), the City has already lost 10% of its population in the first seven years of this decade.

	<b>CITY OF YOUNGSTOWN POPULATION</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE CHANGE</b>
<b>1990</b>	95,732	
<b>2000</b>	82,026	-14.31%
<b>2007</b>	73,818	-10.00%

Table 2: Population change in the City of Youngstown, 1990-2007<sup>22</sup>

**(b) Surrounding Suburbs**

Is Youngstown alone in its population decline? In other words, is Youngstown’s population shrinking while the suburbs continue to grow? Rather than being a “hole in the doughnut” (as is, for instance, Detroit), U.S. Census data reveals a trend in population decline on the level of the Metropolitan Statistical Area, county, and surrounding suburban townships. In other words, Youngstown, like Sudbury (as will be seen in the next chapter) is a shrinking city within a shrinking region.

	<b>Youngstown- Warren-Boardman MSA</b>	<b>Mahoning County Ohio</b>	<b>Trumbull County Ohio</b>	<b>Mercer County Pennsylvania</b>
<b>1990</b>		264,806	227,813	121,003
<b>2000</b>	602,166	257,555	225,116	120,293
<b>2007</b>	570,704	240,420	213,457	116,809
<b>Percentage change 1990-2000</b>	N/A	-2.74%	-1.18%	-0.59%
<b>Percentage change 2000-2007</b>	-5.22%	-6.62%	-5.18%	-2.98%

Table 3: Population change on MSA and County Level, 1990-2007<sup>23</sup>

More specifically with respect to the suburbs surrounding the City of Youngstown,<sup>24</sup> between 1990 and 2000, all lost population except Hubbard City, Austintown Township, Poland

<sup>22</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008. As the MSA definitions changed in 2000 (with Boardman being added to the Youngstown-Warren MSA), data is only included on the MSA level from 2000 and 2007.

<sup>24</sup> List of suburbs provided in a personal communication with Anthony Kobak, Youngstown’s chief planner, January 27, 2009. According to him, the most “important” suburbs in terms of size and proximity are Boardman, Liberty, and Austintown.

Township, and Boardman Township, each of which grew only slightly. During that time, Canfield Township also gained 35.19 percent. Since 2000, all areas surrounding the city have declined (with the exception of Coitsville Township, which gained 20 people between 2000 and 2007). However, the pace of decline is generally much greater in the City of Youngstown than in its surrounding suburbs.

	Youngstown City	Austintown Township	Boardman Township	Campbell City	Coitsville Township	Liberty Township	Struthers City
<b>1990</b>	95,732	36,740	41,796	10,038	1,841	24,453	12,284
<b>2000</b>	82,026	38,001	42,518	9,460	1,608	23,522	11,756
<b>2007</b>	73,818	35,479	39,616	8,537	1,628	22,098	10,859
<b>Percentage change 1990-2000</b>	-14.31%	+3.43%	+1.72%	-5.76%	-12.66%	-3.81%	-3.48%
<b>Percentage change 2000-2007</b>	-10.00%	-6.63%	-6.82%	-9.76%	+1.24%	-6.05%	-7.63%

Table 4: Population change in Youngstown's abutting suburbs, 1990-2007<sup>25</sup>

	Youngstown City	Canfield Township	Lowellville Village	Girard City	Hubbard City	Hubbard Township	Poland Township
<b>1990</b>	95,732	10,831	1,349	11,304	8,248	14,863	13,993
<b>2000</b>	82,026	14,642	1,281	10,902	8,284	14,304	14,711
<b>2007</b>	73,818	13,880	1,153	10,182	7,776	13,521	13,860
<b>Percentage change 1990-2000</b>	-14.31%	+35.19%	-5.04%	-3.56%	+0.44%	-3.73%	+5.56%
<b>Percentage change 2000-2007</b>	-10.00%	-5.20%	-9.99%	-6.60%	-6.13%	-5.47%	-5.78%

Table 5: Population change in suburbs not abutting Youngstown, 1990-2007<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, this trend of population decline in the region is anticipated to continue in the future.

As Youngstown informant Y13, a university-based urban design consultant/academic who has worked in Youngstown, explains:

<sup>25</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008. According to Census Geographical Change notes, the boundaries of these areas have remained stable throughout the reporting period.

<sup>26</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008. According to Census Geographical Change notes, the boundaries of these areas have remained stable throughout the reporting period.

...if you look at the census projections for Trumbull county where Youngstown is located, they're estimating that by 2030, another 50,000 people will have departed from the county and they're assuming, and I think we're all assuming, that the biggest part of that hit is going to be in the City of Youngstown, rather than in suburban Boardman or one of the other suburbs, although the county as a whole is anticipated to decline.

In a way, then, Youngstown is a "hole" in a "doughnut" that is itself declining.

### **3.2 Physical Challenges**

Physically, although Youngstown has many assets, including a compact downtown with many historical buildings and an urban park larger than Central Park (Finnerty, 2003; Lanks, 2006a), the effects of Youngstown's population decline are striking. After losing more than half of its population, the city was left with an oversized footprint – the footprint of a much more densely populated city (Lanks, 2006a; City of Youngstown, 2005). The basic problem is that Youngstown has the same geography and the same cost structure, but fewer people. As a result, the city has an abundance of excess infrastructure that must be maintained by a shrinking number of tax payers (Swope, 2006b). Mayor Jay Williams has likened Youngstown to a "size-40 man wearing a size-60 suit" (Swope, 2006c, p.2). In the 1950s, when Youngstown's previous comprehensive plan was written, planners had no reason to believe the city would not continue to thrive (City of Youngstown, 2005). Thus, new retail centres were constructed in the city and new neighbourhoods were laid out on the fringes in anticipation of future population growth (Aeppel, 2007). On Youngstown's east side, for instance, in an area known as "Sharon's Line," the City laid out infrastructure believing that this area would soak up Youngstown's anticipated future growth. This did not happen and the area is now an "odd country enclave tucked inside a fast-declining city" (Swope, 2006c, p.2).



*Photograph 1: Sharon Line Neighbourhood (photograph by Laura Schatz)*

In addition to excess physical infrastructure, lack of demand for residential housing and retail in Youngstown (Lanks, 2006a) has resulted in widespread vacancy and abandonment. While the population has dropped, the housing stock has not. One of the very visible manifestations of population shrinkage has been vacant and abandoned lots, businesses, and industries (Logan, 2007; Swope, 2006b; City of Youngstown, 2005). As Youngstown informant Y1 (an employee with the City of Youngstown’s Finance Department) succinctly states, “Housing is a function of wealth creation. If there’s no wealth creation going on in your community, there’s no need for housing.” In 2000, Youngstown had 3,325 excess housing units assuming 2.4 persons per household, well above the “generous 15% ‘normal’ vacancy rate” (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.31). This pattern of abandonment has negatively affected the city’s financial situation: “I think our assessed valuation numbers are probably maybe 700 million

dollars versus back in the 80s it was probably 5 or 600 million dollars, so there's almost not growth. Actually, in real dollars, you've lost over that period of time" (Y1). Youngstown informant Y9, a professor at Youngstown State University, further explains that

Well, you've wind up in shrinking cities having as Mayor Williams says a size 38 guy in a size 46 coat. You've got – most cities at least in this country get their – a major portion of their revenue from rates – from property taxes. So if you take out – if you have half a mile of street which had housing on both sides of 60 foot lots – you had all those people paying rates to pay for the maintenance, the water, sewer, light, street, sidewalk and all of that – you start taking those taxpayers out, the you're still servicing the same linear dimension of pavement and utilities with fewer people to pay. Also if you have a lower income accompanying a lower density you wind up getting hit on the income tax side by not having the funds to maintain the same plan. It's like a single guy occupying a house that used to have a family of 3 kids – you rattle around a lot.

Currently, there are around 1000 abandoned homes and several hundred old stores, schools and other structures (Aepfel, 2007). Between 1980 and 2000, Mahoning County gained housing units, more than offsetting loss in the City. At the same time, the region as a whole lost population, so there was no new population to support the housing boom. This meant that "...every new construction yielded a dwelling somewhere else in the region that was no longer economically viable. The majority of nonviable dwellings were in Youngstown." (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.31) As the vast majority of new construction was taking place in the suburbs, the city's housing stock is disproportionately old compared to the county. As Youngstown informant Y7, a Youngstown State University professor, explains:

...the city was left with tons of excess housing which naturally fell into decay. It was left with an infrastructure for business, empty buildings, which there was no retail function for because the retail had all suburbanized before the collapse. It was logical then, because, there was nowhere to grow in the city... it spread out. It made sense then. It makes no sense now, but it made sense then. So, all of that had been suburbanized and when the collapse came, the city was stuck with what was in the city limits. All of that was old, all of that was the stuff that was going to get abandoned.

Most of Youngstown's housing stock was built before 1950. In fact, the city's older core neighbourhoods, such as Brier Hill and Oak Hill, have especially felt the effects of neglect and

abandonment. Youngstown informant Y9 explains that “well, people leave and there’s no market to replace them so the house winds up being empty and I guess vandalized and I guess trashed and I guess demolished. It’s a nasty and often prolonged cycle.” He further explains that these neighbourhoods have also become functionally obsolete:

Many of the older neighbourhoods in the older cities were developed around trolley car networks that were pulled up 50 years ago. And they are based on a retailing model which included an ice box, a trolley car, and a stay-at-home mom... Momma would shop, take her hand cart down to the corner to buy food for the night and bring it home... You didn’t shop for the week and fill a big refrigerator. Patterns have changed and they’ve changed broadly so that people shop for the week, they have large quantities of food, they’ve got a lot of choices... So they’ll go from all over to the big supermarkets, leaving behind this obsolete retail – these storefronts with rented apartments over them. In a robust market, those sites get redeveloped. In a weak market, those sites sit there and they just rot and because they’re concentrated along old trolley car strips. Because they were large land users in the neighbourhood... you notice them. They’ve become very visible. That’s a combination of the decline of the population often followed by a decline in the household income combined with functional obsolescence...

The result is that these neighbourhoods have essentially been “gutted” and are “beyond any hope of short-term solutions...” (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.35).



*Photograph 2: Abandoned homes in Idora Park neighbourhood (Photograph by Laura Schatz)*

More specifically, the Youngstown’s downtown and the nearby Youngstown State University have suffered the effects of a declining and dispersing population. While downtown and the campus of Youngstown State University are oriented back-to-back, for years “mutual apathy” resulted in no attempts to link the two (Finnerty, 2003, p.2). As Finnerty (2003) explains, “This relationship was marginally tolerable during the good times, but when the economy collapsed, the city suffered, and as part of the city, the university suffered, too” (p.2). However, even before the 2010 process, Youngstown’s downtown was beginning to recover with a number of renovations, construction, and expansions. The recovery has been based, in large part, on the fact that downtown has a number of assets (City of Youngstown, 2005; Lanks, 2006a). It is compact and has many historic buildings – a remnant of its earlier, more prosperous days: “The compactness and density of the infrastructure and a built environment that cannot be

duplicated are assets that are incalculable.” (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.43). Youngstown informant Y7, a Youngstown State University professor, describes Youngstown’s downtown as unique because “...it was built when things were good and it was ...it’s too big and too valuable to put on the demolition list. Plus, a lot of those are on historic inventory. And so that unique part of the built downtown remained. That’s a positive in the midst of the negative.” He further explains about the downtown’s built environment that

...a lot of steel companies started here. A lot of companies that built steel mills were headquartered here. I don’t know if they told you the history of the buildings but those were practice skyscrapers for Chicago and New York. [Chicago architect Daniel] Burnham built buildings downtown Youngstown before he went and built in Chicago. Yes. They practiced here and then built bigger ones elsewhere because the money was here to do that. It’s unique.

The downtown is also home to cultural amenities not typical of a city of 82,000 people.

According to Youngstown informant Y2 (the head of a Youngstown business association):

We have a phenomenal symphony in Youngstown. Youngstown used to have a lot of wealth from the steel industries, so there’s some very wealthy foundations still here. We should not have a symphony like we have. 102 musicians are under contract for it. They have a Classical series. They have a Pop series. They have a Broadway series: that’s right across the street [from the business association’s downtown location].

However, problems in the downtown remain, including conflict over the proposed tearing down of some historic buildings. As Mock (2008) explains, “another problem with shrinking is that fewer competing investors increases the chance for one or a small few to buy up more than a fair share of property – as in the case with downtown Youngstown, where Louis A. Frangos, the single largest property owner, occasionally poses a problem for those trying to preserve the city.” (p.44). The City has also run into conflict with preservationists, who have opposed certain proposals for tearing down some historic buildings (see Swope, 2006a and b).

### **3.3 Economic Challenges**

Youngstown has faced, and continues to face, a number of economic challenges. Rather than being based in heavy industry, Youngstown's economy is now based on government, public schools, Youngstown State University, and two hospitals (Associated Press, 2007). According to the 2002 Economic Census (which provides information for each North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) sector), the largest number of employees work in the health care and social assistance sector.

<b>NAICS Sector</b>	<b>Number of Employees, 2002</b>	<b>Annual Payroll, 2002 (\$1000)</b>
<b>Manufacturing</b>	3,061	113,513
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	2,244	73,573
<b>Retail Trade</b>	2,413	41,599
<b>Information</b>	895	36,525
<b>Real Estate &amp; Rental &amp; Leasing</b>	370	8,290
<b>Professional, Scientific, &amp; Technical Services</b>	1,846	64,099
<b>Administrative &amp; support &amp; waste management &amp; remediation service</b>	851	17,424
<b>Educational Services</b>	29	476
<b>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</b>	9,516	325,266
<b>Arts, entertainment, &amp; recreation</b>	354	2,162
<b>Accommodation &amp; food services</b>	1,679	14,935
<b>Other services (except public administration)</b>	1,202	24,905

*Table 6: Number of employees and annual payroll by NAICS industry, Youngstown, 2002<sup>27</sup>*

Evidently, there is still some traditional manufacturing in Youngstown. As Youngstown informant Y7, a Youngstown State University professor, explains, “there is one mini-mill that used to part of YT Sheet and Tube Briar Hill works. It is a remnant. But the blast furnaces are gone and a lot of the finishing mills are gone. They make pipe for the drilling industry and that’s still there and it’s profitable. It’s no longer locally owned, but that’s the last in Youngstown steel.” Youngstown informant Y9, a professor at Youngstown State University, notes that

<sup>27</sup> Source: U.S. Economic Census, 2002.

Youngstown's remaining steel industry has been successful in part because of actions taken by the city:

Youngstown has been remarkably successful in a national level at taking down the old steel mills, deciding which steel mill sites actually have contemporary viability and which don't – taking the ones that do and providing the road connections to the freeway network so that in fact you can operate a contemporary business in the city on an industrial park that used to be a steel mill.

Despite the continued presence of some steel in Youngstown, there is a lack of industries having the same effect that the old steel mills did (Safford, 2004). After the collapse of steel, the city tried to find other big employers to replace it (for example, two prisons), but these types of jobs have not replaced unionized steel jobs (Aepfel, 2007). Service industries concentrated in Youngstown are at the lower end of the skill range and hence also at the lower end of the pay range. One such industry, the call centre industry, has made “significant inroads in Youngstown in recent years” (Safford, 2004, p.16). According to Youngstown informant Y2, the head of a Youngstown business association, there are well over 10,000 call centre jobs in the greater Youngstown area. However, he argues that while these may not be well-paying jobs in some areas of the country, in Youngstown call centre jobs provide a “decent” standard of living:

...it's not a good thing... but the YT's housing market is the second most affordable housing market in the country. You know why it's the second more affordable, but whereas a call centre job doesn't buy you a great standard of living, even in YT, it's actually a decent standard of living whereas that call centre wouldn't do the same thing for you out in California, or Florida...

According to Safford (2004), Youngstown has not successfully diversified into the FIRE service sector (that is, high-end finance, insurance, and real estate services): “Youngstown...has suffered from an inability to develop a coherent approach to attracting inward investment, a lack of entrepreneurship and the inability of major local employers to transform in ways that benefit the community” (Safford, 2004, p.28). In addition to Youngstown's inability to attract a significant

number of high-paying, highly-skilled jobs, the shrinking customer base has been very problematic for the city's retail sector. As mentioned above, several hundred retail establishments remain vacant in the city. Many of the retail establishments that remain are struggling. For example, the city's paper – the *Vindicator* – has been negatively affected by declining circulation, subscription, advertising, and revenue base (Mock, 2008). Declining demand for the paper prompted workers to strike in 2004 over wages.

With respect to rates of unemployment, the annual average unemployment rate for the City of Youngstown since 2000 has fluctuated between 14% (in mid 2002) and 8% percent (in 2008). When the city embarked on its planning process at the turn of the millennium, the average unemployment rate was 8.9%, compared to 5.0% for the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman Metropolitan Statistical Area and 4.0% for the State of Ohio. The current (2009) unemployment rate is estimated to be 10%, which is still well above the rate for the State of Ohio (7.6%) and the rate for Mahoning County (8.4%), and slightly above the rate for Trumbull County (9.8%)<sup>28</sup> (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2009).

In general, Youngstown informant Y1 – an employee with the City of Youngstown's Finance Department – attributes Youngstown's economic challenges to a lack of investment in Youngstown:

...the main factor I think why Youngstown – symptom of lost population is due to lost investment. This investment takes place, people then have jobs. One thing – investment happens... investment creates a job. You don't have investment, you don't have jobs. So when huge disinvestment takes place – and I actually lived through it between 1979 – I actually graduated from undergraduate school in 1979 and from 79 till 81, we lost – Youngstown Warren Metropolitan Area lost 29,000 manufacturing, one billion dollars in payroll. And those are in 1979 dollars, so the impact today would probably be three or four times that amount in terms of adjusting for inflation.

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<sup>28</sup> Note: at the time of writing, there were no current statistics on the unemployment rate in the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman Metropolitan Statistical Area.

According to him, the fact that Youngstown was not sufficiently diversified meant that “unforeseen economic events” had a “huge impact on the city.” Further exacerbating the city’s economic challenges is the fact that as people have moved to the suburbs, so have the jobs:

Fifty years ago Youngstown basically was the economy. 90% of the jobs that probably existed, existed in Youngstown. You lived wherever, but you worked in Youngstown. Now, Youngstown is still a very large part of the economy, but it’s a smaller part of a much larger regional economy. The outlying suburbs certainly have some economic muscle that they didn’t have before (Youngstown informant Y14).

### **3.4 Social Challenges**

When Youngstown embarked on the 2010 planning process, the city faced a number of social issues. Key among these challenges is a history of racial conflict. Racial conflict was particularly prevalent during the time that the steel industry was thriving and African-American steelworkers were brought in when white labour unions went on strike (Mock, 2008). This exacerbated any discrimination already being felt by African Americans. For instance, “[n]otoriously racist banks refused African Americans home loans, which left neighborhoods segregated all the way through the 20th century” (Mock, 2008, p.43). When Youngstown “hollowed out” because of the decline of the steel industry, exacerbated by “white flight” to the suburbs which began in the 1950s, Youngstown’s poor and minority residents, many of them African Americans, were left behind (Aeppel, 2007). In the 1980s, whites made up 2/3 of the city. Today, they make up less than half. According to the City of Youngstown (2005), the city is now “racially balanced” (p.30); however, these words belie the racial hostility and conflict that has remained entrenched throughout Youngstown’s history (Mock, 2008). Related to this, the City of Youngstown faces high levels of poverty and low median income levels. In 1999, 24.8% of Youngstown residents were living in poverty, compared to 12.5% in Mahoning County, and 10.6% at the State level. The median household income in Youngstown was \$24,201, versus

\$35,248 for Mahoning County and \$40,956 for the State of Ohio. Unfortunately, little has changed in recent years. According to Bishaw and Semega (2008), the poverty rate in Youngstown in 2007 was 32.6%, which was one of the 10 highest percentages for places in the United States with a population between 65,000 and 249,999. Comparatively, the poverty rate for Mahoning County in 2007 was 16.6%, while the State percentage was 13.1%. With respect to median household income, in 2007, Youngstown's median income was \$24,941 (the lowest income of "places" of 65,000 to 249,999 people in the United States), compared to \$37,358 for Mahoning County and \$46,597 for Ohio.

The effects of population decline, and thus a shrinking tax base, have also been felt by the school system (Gwin, 2007). In fact, the State of Ohio has placed Youngstown's school district in a state of fiscal emergency. Because of a shrinking pupil population, the Youngstown board of education has suffered from large deficits. In 2007, for instance, the Youngstown board of education had \$15 million budget deficit (Gwin, 2007). The City, under the direction of a state-appointed fiscal oversight commission, is currently making staff cuts and trying to reduce spending. The rapid growth of charter schools is also a major drain on district resources. The City of Youngstown is losing thousands of pupils and about \$26 million per year to charter schools (Gwin, 2007). The shrinking student population recently led the oversight commission to recommend to Youngstown that it levy new taxes (Gwin, 2007).

There are also social issues related to the state of housing. The number of vacant properties has had a number of negative effects, in that these properties have become "...convenient places for criminal activities and eventually deteriorat[ing] to the point where demolition is the only option. The impact on neighborhoods where concentrations of abandoned houses exist is catastrophic, leading to further disinvestment and abandonment" (City of

Youngstown, 20005, p.31). Crime is particularly a problem in Youngstown neighbourhoods. As Youngstown informant Y1 explains: “There’s a whole bunch of things out there – domestic violence, drug abuse, murder rates, all that type of stuff...it kind of reflects the loss of hope amongst the population.” Another Youngstown native (and Community Development Corporation employee) – informant Y10 – explains that “I think crime [has been] the biggest issue because I have relatives and I have friends and have people that visit me in New England that really wanted to stay in the city but because of crime, they had to leave.” He further explains that declining house values as been an issue: “...these people’s life savings and investment was in their house and it was worth nothing after 20 years. It just declined.” In fact, housing values in City lag behind suburbs and county as a whole; in 2000, Youngstown’s median housing value approximately half Mahoning County’s:

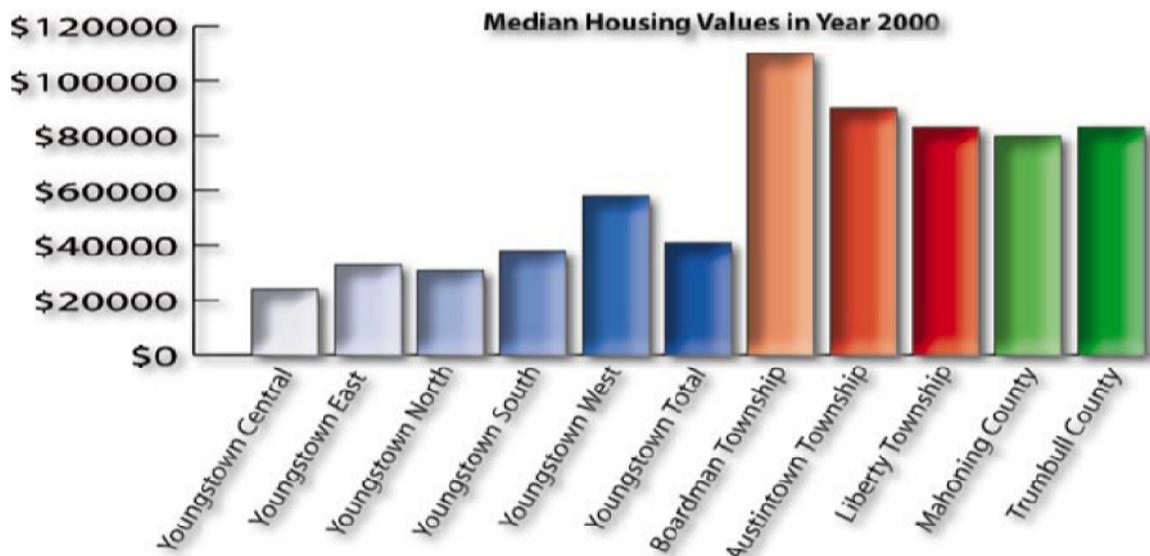


Figure 8: Median Housing Values, Youngstown and surrounding area, 2000<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Source: City of Youngstown, 2005.

As Youngstown informant Y12 – an employee with the City of Youngstown’s planning department and Youngstown native – explains:

When the people left, the houses remained, so that’s where the problem really arises is the abandonment of the homes and once you have one house that’s abandoned... Well, right now we’re dealing with foreclosures... then everyone else’s property values goes down because no one is taking care of that particular home and it spreads like cancer.

Youngstown informant Y13 illustrates the situation of declining house values in Wick

Neighbourhood in this way:

[This is] Youngstown’s oldest, most significant neighbourhood. It has these wonderful mansions around a very classic urban square with a performing arts centre at one end and I mean, at this point, you could buy a house around that square for 8 or 10,000 dollars. It’s amazing! I mean, you can’t re-hab them, really, because you would have to put 80,000 into just stabilizing the house and you’ve got a house at the end that might be worth 20,000 dollars.

Furthermore, the age of city’s housing stock presents health issues as many houses are in need of remediation for lead paint and asbestos; some of the oldest houses have lead plumbing. In addition to negative health impacts, the presence of lead and asbestos limits resale potential and makes it more expensive to demolish or rehab (City of Youngstown, 2005). Also limiting resale potential is the fact that there is little to no demand for the particular type of housing the City of Youngstown offers:

...a lot of problems cities have too is they built row housing... we built housing that the steel industry... the steel industry needed to grow and it was somewhere a Microsoft or Intel story today literally a hundred years ago, but they came in, needed to grow, and they needed a population base to do it. So they built from their perspective what was the most efficient, reasonable housing that they could build. So it was row housing with one car garage and not the amenities that a lot of spoiled Americans are wanting today in terms of... you know, if you take these houses to China, they’re mansions. At our community, they don’t have the value that they had at one time (Youngstown informant Y1).

### **3.5 Environmental Challenges**

The City of Youngstown is bounded on four sides by tributaries: the Mahoning River, Mill Creek, and Crab Creek. Originally, these watercourses were the site of industrial growth,

with the exception of parkland along Mill Creek called Mill Creek Park. Mill Creek Park – the “crown jewel in the Mahoning Valley” (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.41) – is a city park larger than Central Park. It was created in 1891 in order to protect the creek from overdevelopment (City of Youngstown, 2005; Lanks, 2006a). However, industry thrived along the rest of the watercourses, leaving a legacy of environmental problems. As Youngstown informant Y7 explains: “...at one time I think there were 27 blast furnaces along the Mahoning River in various places and it’s all heavy iron and when you mix the nickel and the magnesium and all the other stuff in there, through the process, it goes down into the river and sinks and makes this sediment and it does not flow to the Gulf of Mexico.”

Today, Youngstown is left with the task of cleaning and restoring its watercourses as well as cleaning and reusing a number of industrial brownfield sites. According to Finnerty (2003), there have been a number of successful brownfields developments along the Mahoning River. The City of Youngstown (2005) claims that “Youngstown has become a leader in the creative reuse of old industrial brownfield sites. This had yielded state of the art industrial parks that fit comfortably in the new industrial green classification” (p.45). Despite these successes, however, the City still faces a number of challenges in accomplishing its goal of “cleaning and greening.” According to Youngstown informant Y7:

The river is the reason why the city grew in the first place. Most people in Youngstown, you can’t see the river because Riparian forests are the main reason. Earlier you couldn’t see them because of the mills. After the mills closed, the trees grew. So, a lot of people still don’t know the river’s there. And what the 2010 plan does is it opens the river; it makes the river a designated greenspace and it plans to take advantage of it for recreational activities. State won’t let you swim in it for years to come, but bike trails and hike trails are all there. We still have heavy metals and sediments and that kind of stuff.

### **3.6 Other challenges**

In addition to the economic collapse and suburban flight, over the years local corruption in the courts and county government contributed to the dismal situation which existed in Youngstown prior to the 2010 planning process (Faga, 2006). In addition, infighting amongst civic leaders (Safford, 2004) affected the city's ability to respond in a unified way with a coherent approach. All of these factors contributed to a general sense of apathy, arising from residents' disenchantment and a desire to return to Youngstown's former glory. In fact, a 1999 study of community life in Youngstown described residents as "...frustrated and tired, the city as 'stuck' and a 'place in waiting'" (Smith, 2007, p.1). As Youngstown informant Y9 explains:

[significant population loss] clearly has an impact on the retail and may have an impact on your schools and other institutions but it changes the way things work to something that generally people who remember the way things were find worse. And what you hear in those communities is "we used to be." "We used to be." "The neighbourhood used to be." "This was wonderful once upon a time. It's falling apart." You hear lay observations about palpable decline.

Youngstown informant Y14 similarly explains that "in 1977 when steel mills collapsed, the city spent 20 or 25 years just looking in a rear view mirror, just lamenting, anguishing over the one industry that defined it." Citizens were particularly cynical about past failed attempts to revitalize the city. As Faga (2006) explains, prior to the Youngstown 2010 planning process, "[d]emoralized residents and a cynical press had already undercut several renewal attempts."

(p.55) As Youngstown informant Y14, a high-ranking city official, states:

The city's population had declined but the thinking was such that we were still thinking or operating as if we still 150,000 people... Now that we're at 82,000, your expectations have to change. That would breed frustration or resentment and cynicism in many regards so the fact that it had happened and we weren't acknowledging it was not healthy... Over the past several decades, lots of promises have been made, lots of ideas have been made ... "this will save Youngstown, do this..." a new factory here, a promise from a national politician and I think the community had just grown weary of these empty promises that were these unattainable goals... people were cynical...

A Youngstown native (and current employee with a Community Development Organization in Youngstown) describes the overall sentiment amongst the citizens and government as follow:

... when I returned to this city after being away many many years, I was dumbfounded, floored, wanted to weep on the total disinvestment and it showed that it wasn't just that the steel mills closed because I lived in cities where mills closed and lost population. In fact, Cleveland lost 87,000 jobs in 1978 – in the late 70s, early 80s. But what I saw was a total institutional and civic disengagement from the city... (Youngstown informant Y10)

#### **4.0 The Youngstown 2010 Plan**

In this context, at the turn of the millennium, the Youngstown 2010 planning process began. The Youngstown 2010 Plan has been described being “unusual” (Aeppel, 2007), “controversial” (Aeppel, 2007), “ambitious” (Swope, 2006c), an “exception” (Nassar, 2006), “enormously brave” (Popper, as quoted in Lanks, 2006b), “... a monumental step in the face of the US growth paradigm” (Logan, 2007), “...one of the most aggressive proposals to deal with rustbelt decline” (NPR, 2007), “haltingly honest” (Swope, 2006c), a “big psychological shift” (AP, 2007), “...on the cutting edge of planning” (Russell, 2008), and a “...radical experiment” (Russell, 2008). More specifically, the planning approach taken in the Youngstown 2010 plan has received various labels in the popular media, including “controlled shrinkage” (Aeppel, 2007, NPR, 2007), “managing change” (Morrison, as quoted in Aeppel, 2007) “smart decline” (Nassar, 2006, Logan, 2007; Swope, 2006c; Boardman, 2008; Russell, 2008), “smart shrinkage” (Nassar, 2006), “creative shrinkage” (Lanks, 2006a, 2006b), “unbuilding the city” (Mock, 2008); “owning its population deficit” (Mock, 2008); “right-sizing” (Williams, as quoted in Mock, 2008), “planned shrinkage” (Schwarz, 2006), and “managed shrinkage” (Russell, 2008).

Whatever the label and/or adjective used to describe Youngstown 2010, there is general agreement in the popular media that it is somehow, in the world of urban planning at least, a break from tradition. The aspect of the plan receiving the most attention is the plan's land use

policies, which are based on the notion that Youngstown cannot count on future population growth and thus the city needs to focus on contracting the built environment to meet current, smaller, population levels. According to Aeppel (2007), this approach to land use planning would be considered blasphemy in most cities, where officials are taught to promote growth and development and fight against population decline: “Accepting that a city is going to shrink goes against conventional wisdom that a bigger city means more jobs, more taxpayers, more revenue, better education, and better services, in essence, a higher standard of living” ( p.2).<sup>30</sup> Similarly, as Mock (2008) states:

Most cities in this predicament hunker down, then spend big on casinos, sports stadiums, convention centers, hotels and nightclubs to attract new resident. The success rate for this model is unpromising, however, especially for smaller cities that will never compete with large metropolises. Youngstown’s plan is to embrace stunted growth. The ‘shrinking city model,’ as it’s called, reasons that a city suffering post-industrial blues and losing residents by the thousands won’t suddenly charm people back by way of huge commercial bells and blockbuster whistles. Instead, the shrunk city demolished blocks, converting its abandoned buildings and houses into open space for neighborhood enterprises and to nurture greenery.” (Mock, 2008, p.41)

In essence, the City is trying to find uses for unused property other than habitation (Mock, 2008) and although Youngstown’s approach may seem like an obvious strategy, in the urban realm, where growth is equated with success and decline with failure, it certainly is not: “...cities’ futures are typically shaped by politicians who can’t think past their next campaign; to them, growth – *New houses! New arenas! New shopping* – wins elections” (Tone, 2007, p.1, emphasis in original). Most cities in this predicament “stubbornly refuse” to admit that they are not likely to start growing significantly again and instead they focus on “...reversing population losses in an attempt to regain bygone glory” (Swope, 2006c, p.2; see also Associated Press, 2007). By taking a different approach, “Youngstown may emerge as something of a national laboratory for

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<sup>30</sup> Whether the city is, in fact, accepting that it will continue to shrink as this author suggests is an issue which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

ideas on how to cope with urban contraction. It's not that the town's civic leaders want to be in that position – they simply see little choice” (Swope, 2006c, p.2).

In fact, in going against the norm in its land use policies, Youngstown is one of the first cities in the United States to adopt a “smart decline” perspective (Boardman, 2008). It is important to note, however, that while other cities such as Pittsburgh, Detroit, Cleveland, and Flint are not as publicly willing as Youngstown to accept contraction, they are all finding ways to adapt to their smaller selves (Russell, 2008). These cities tend to address the by-products of shrinking, such as rotting infrastructure and budget shortages. Russell (2008) calls these strategies “less daring” than Youngstown's, but cautions that they still bear watching. For example, in Flint, the Genesee County Land Bank has won acclaim for its efforts to deal effectively with the city's large inventory of vacant property. The land bank holds title to large chunk of property in Flint and maintains the property, holding to the philosophy that all the properties do not have to be developed in order for them to be a productive part of the landscape. It is also important to note that Youngstown did not accept shrinkage at first – it took decades. Now, however, “...perhaps because it has fallen so loud and so hard, Youngstown is now at the vanguard of American city planning...” (Russell, 2008) and other cities in similar situations – such as Wheeling, West Virginia and Dayton, Ohio – are starting to take notice, sending officials to Youngstown to see what this new approach is all about (Lanks, 2006a; NPR, 2007; Boardman, 2008). As Tone (2007) states, “the buzz has left others wishing aloud that Cleveland would follow the lead of, yes, *Youngstown*” (p.1, emphasis in original).

#### **4.1 Factors that sparked the Youngstown 2010 planning process**

Before discussing the Youngstown 2010 Plan, it is necessary to examine the factors that led the city to undertaking the process in the first place. The first factor that facilitated taking a

new approach in Youngstown began in the 1990s when **law enforcement cracked down on organized crime and political corruption**. Particularly significant was the indictment, conviction, and imprisonment in federal prison of Congressman James A. Traficant Jr. Other prominent figures faced criminal charges, including former Mahoning County Sheriff Phil Chance, former county Prosecutor James Philomena, and several local judges (Niquette & Sheban, 2008; Finnerty, 2003). Although corruption scandals continue to plague the city – in 2008 Attorney General Mark Dann from Liberty Township was involved in a sexual harassment and mismanagement scandal – the city has made enormous steps in cleaning up its image (Niquette & Sheban, 2008). The jailing of Traficant, in particular, was viewed by many residents and officials “...as a turning point for the community. It offered an opportunity to focus on new beginnings” (Finnerty, 2003, p.1). As Youngstown informant Y9, a Youngstown State University professor, explains, Congressman Traficant “...was sort of the last of the machine politicians...there was a long, long history of a few key actors in the business community and the unions and the political world calling the shots. So you had a power vacuum that emerged when he was sort of the last of the bosses.” In this way, these events helped to clear the way for the Youngstown 2010 planning process.

A second factor that sparked the Youngstown 2010 process was **recognition by leading city officials in the late 1990s/early 2000s that the old plan needed to be updated** and that decline needed to be dealt with proactively, rather than passively waiting for growth to happen (Finnerty, 2003). Again, until this point, Youngstown was operating on a comprehensive plan that was adopted in 1951 and updated only once in 1974. This plan envisioned a large amount of growth and expansion. According to the City of Youngstown (2005), “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” (p.14). At the turn of the millenium, there was a realization on the part of city officials that the city did not have an adequate and effective roadmap. City officials “began to notice that cities benefiting by economic recovery had actually planned for it. Councilmen came back from Chattanooga convinced that Youngstown would stop its decline only if it dealt with its current reality and developed a plan to cope with it” (Finnerty, 2003, p.3). According to Youngstown informant Y8 (a city planner), City Council realized from this trip that “...the success of those cities was not by chance...” In short, the city realized it needed a new vision based on the city’s current reality, rather than on past trends that were expected, but never realized (Mock, 2008). Youngstown informant Y9, a professor at Youngstown State University, describes it as “... a little bit like an alcoholic bottoming out. We’ve tried everything else; let’s try this.”

A third major factor which contributed to the momentum leading up to the Youngstown 2010 process was the **formation of a partnership between the City and Youngstown State University**. As Youngstown informant Y7, a Youngstown State University professor, explains, “the city and the university did it together and that was kind of serendipity.” Traditionally, both entities were very inward-looking and had not coordinated efforts. By the late 1990s, both had independently decided to modernize their comprehensive plans. YSU, being required by state law to update their comprehensive plan at regular intervals, began to look for ways to clean up the areas surrounding the campus in its new comprehensive plan (Faga, 2006). Youngstown City Council, under the leadership of then-Mayor George McKelvey, while not required by law to update the plan, also decided to do a new comprehensive plan. Each side came to realize that participating in the other’s process would be a key factor in the success of both (Faga, 2006; Finnerty, 2003; Swope, 2006c). As Finnerty (2003) states, both the city and the university

“realized the status quo was only going to lead to further decline, and that the future of both institutions was in doubt. The demise of one would lead eventually to the demise of the other” (p.1). Particularly instrumental was David Sweet, who had a background in planning and who became president of YSU in 2000 and “set in motion plans to connect the university’s future with the city’s future. The university realized it was hard to sell on-campus residency if nearby neighborhoods were in a state of disrepair.” (Finnerty, 2003, p.2). Sweet was especially interested in halting the decline of enrollment numbers by improving the curb appeal, in particular through addressing “...trashed lots and boarded-up windows on nearby street” (Faga, 2006, p.55). Instrumental on the City’s side was then-Director of Community Development, Jay Williams, who realized the benefits of collaboration and sought out the expertise of YSU (Mock, 2008). Youngstown 2010 thus became a partnership between the City’s planning department and YSU (Lanks, 2006b). According to Smith (2007), partnering with YSU proved to be a pivotal marketing decision: “The well-regarded institution provided staff expertise and resources, as well as something less tangible” (p.1). In effect, this “unusual town-gown partnership” (Swope, 2006c) lent credibility to the plan that it otherwise would not have had if it was just done by the City. As well the city, with a small planning staff, would receive some much needed “...expertise that were available in the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies....” (Youngstown informant Y7).

Finally, in addition to the partnering of the City and YSU, the Youngstown 2010 planning process was sparked by the **fortuitous coming together of certain actors with particular attributes, skills, and expectations**. Importantly, the turn of the millennium saw younger leadership installed as the “old guard” (that is, older politicians and business leaders in place when steel collapsed) retired, moved on, or died (Swope, 2006c). The younger leadership

was comprised of: Jay Williams, who was elected as Mayor in 2003 at the age of 34 (the youngest mayor ever elected in Youngstown); Anthony Kobak, who was 29 when he took over as Chief Planner; and Bill D'Avignon, who became Planning Director in his mid-30s (Tone, 2007). These younger officials were better able to leave behind old paradigms in search of a new approach. As Youngstown informant Y14 (a high-ranking city official) explains

I was born in 1971 and certainly the steel mills were still going. Youngstown still had a significant population, so it hadn't crashed yet. But the Youngstown I remember even growing up is pretty much Youngstown we have now. I don't remember downtown when there were 170,000 people where 50,000 people would come and you did all your shopping downtown. The malls were built and the suburbs were growing by the time I was growing up, so I think it was generational. My parents did not work in the steel mills. My grandparents did, but my immediate family members had already understood that there was going to be change in their jobs and in their careers. So I think generational influences certainly played a lot in it. And what you also saw, you saw some people from my generation finally breaking through on the political spectrum. Congressman Tim Ryan who is just – I'm 35, he's just a year younger than I am – was elected to Congress. You started seeing some of those people take very influential positions so it allowed some of that old guard thinking and there's still good value in having both old and young, but I think that helped too.

Youngstown informant Y7 agrees that there was a generational shift, accompanied by a physical removal of the remnants of steel's presence in Youngstown, which precipitated interest in new vision for Youngstown:

We had 27 mile of mills from Newton to Newcastle Pennsylvania, and all of them are gone, so for a long time the buildings were still there and I think a big change in the attitude here came when the buildings finally disappeared [in the 1990s]. Most of the buildings are gone... that as long as those buildings were standing there, the people who had worked in the mills all thought, well there's still a chance. When the buildings came down, 2 things happened. First, the older people knew that the mills weren't coming back and you said something about YT's decline being quick as opposed to Sudbury's slower... but it took a whole generation in YT for the realization to set in. We have a generation now that never saw the mills and so their attitudes' completely different. That's a positive that grew out of the negative.

In addition to younger leadership, other actors became involved in the process who were able to lend their particular expertise. These actors include: Tom Finnerty, associate director of YSU's

Center for Urban and Regional Studies and a native of Youngstown; the Toronto planning firm of Urban Strategies, which was able to provide an “outsiders” point of view; Hunter Morrison, Planning Director in Cleveland for 20 years who became Director of YSU’s Centre for Urban and Regional Studies when his wife was elected mayor of Cleveland and who was one of the prime architects of the 2000 Cleveland Civic Visioning Process; and David Sweet, who became YSU’s new president in 2000 and who had worked with Hunter Morrison in Cleveland (Finnerty, 2003). Perhaps most importantly, not only did the coming together of these actors help to spark the Youngstown 2010 planning process, it was the fact that they all came together with the expectation of breaking from the past and *doing something different*.

#### **4.2 Overview of the main components of Youngstown 2010**

There are two main components of Youngstown 2010: the Vision and the Citywide Plan. The Vision was crafted after extensive public consultation (described in detail in Chapter 7) in 2002 and the Plan was written based on the Vision and further public consultation and involvement (again, described in Chapter 7). According to the City of Youngstown (2005):

A **vision** is an agreed-upon set of goals and principles about the kind of place that Youngstown should be in the future and the changes that need to be made to get there. A **comprehensive plan** is a detailed framework that puts the visions into action. It sets out the specific policies that will guide the City in making both big and small decisions to achieve the goals of the vision. (p.135, emphasis in original)

The Youngstown 2010 Vision is made up of four principles, which are:

- [1] **Accepting that we are a smaller city:** Youngstown should strive to be a model of a sustainable mid-sized city;
- [2] **Defining Youngstown’s role in the new regional economy:** Youngstown must align itself with the realities of the new regional economy;
- [3] **Improving Youngstown’s image and enhancing quality of life:** Making Youngstown a healthier and better place to live and work; and
- [4] **A call to action:** An achievable and practical action-oriented plan to make things happen. (p.135, emphasis in original)

As alluded to above, the principle that has received the most attention in both the public and academic realm is the first: that is, **accepting that Youngstown is a smaller city**. The principle acknowledges that Youngstown is much smaller than it used to be and that it is unlikely to grow significantly in the future. For that reason, the City is facing difficult decisions in operating a town whose infrastructure is meant for a much larger population. Essentially, the City "...cannot sustain all of the services land that it currently has" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.136) and it needs to save money by rationalizing and consolidating its infrastructure, defining which parts of the city are sustainable and which are not supportable, and directing new development to areas already supported by infrastructure. On the positive side, the amount of vacant land under the City's control means that the City can be "generous" with urban land and can explore "...new options for the city's neighbourhoods and open space systems" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.137). This part of the Vision also emphasizes that the City needs to take a regional approach to its development, seeing itself as part of the Mahoning Valley Region.

In addition to accepting that Youngstown is a smaller city, the second principle of the Vision – **defining Youngstown's role in the new regional economy** – calls for an acceptance that steel is gone and that the City's economy is now dominated by health care, education, government, and light industry. As such, the City needs to adopt policies in its Comprehensive Plan that foster and encourage these industries. In particular, it calls for recognition that Youngstown State University will play a "key role" in the City's revitalization, as will the public sector (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.138). In addition, the City must do whatever it can to help nurture small businesses, for instance, by supporting and expanding the Youngstown Business Incubator. Similarly, the next principle – **improving Youngstown's image and enhancing quality of life** – deals with improving and building upon what already exists in Youngstown,

including an authentic urban environment (offering features suburbs cannot), a compact downtown, and an extensive system of parks and waterways. According to this principle, building on these assets (and addressing issues such as urban decay, neighbourhood safety, and racial division) will both improve the quality of life for residents that remain and will improve Youngstown's image to outsiders. Finally, in order to translate these principles into a concrete plan, the last principle of the Vision is **a call to action**, which specifies that the City must develop a plan that is "...specific, organized, and action-oriented in order to get results. The Plan will only help the community if it is implemented" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.142). This principle recognizes the need of a well-articulated plan in obtaining public funds, for which there is "...fierce competition" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.412).

As mentioned above, the Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan was written based on this Vision and unveiled in January 2005. It was created through a collaborative process between the City and Youngstown State University and involved the efforts of nearly 200 volunteers, neighbourhood organizations, and businesses. The 2010 Plan purports to fill in the details of the four Vision principles, which are included as an appendix to the plan itself. Broadly, the plan:

- describes the *citywide conditions* in terms of population, race, age, housing, and vacant and abandoned properties as they existed at the time of writing;
- identifies *assets to build on*, such as regional connectivity, water courses, green networks, and a compact core;
- identifies the plan's *themes*, which are creating green networks, competitive industrial districts, viable neighbourhoods, and a vibrant core;
- illuminates current conditions and identifies assets in *four planning districts* (North, South, East, and West); and
- sets out the next steps in terms of *implementation*.

More specifically, after first describing the demographic, social, physical, economic, and environmental conditions (as outlined earlier in this chapter), the second part of the plan stresses that the City of Youngstown has many assets upon which it should capitalize and which it should seek to improve. For instance, Youngstown is physically in an advantageous position in terms of international, national, and regional connectivity, with two major international airports (Cleveland Hopkins International and Pittsburgh International) within 75 miles and two regional airports (the Akron-Canton Regional Airport and the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport) in the close vicinity of the city. Highway connections are also an asset, with two major east/west interstates (the I-80 and I-76) passing through the region. Other assets to be improved and built upon include Youngstown's system of watercourses and the city's compact and dense core, which offers a built environment "that cannot be duplicated" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.43).



*Photograph 3: Downtown Youngstown (Photograph by Laura Schatz)*

After identifying Youngstown’s existing assets, the plan discusses the four themes upon which it is based. These themes were identified as important to residents during neighbourhood cluster planning meetings and adopted as the guiding forces behind future land use. First, the “green network” theme is part of a broader desire to “clean and green” the City of Youngstown.

Existing green space is to be linked in a network and expanded to include more green space. Secondly, and also part of the desire to clean and green the City, the City will find creative uses for old industrial brownfield sites – effectively turning “grey to green.” Thirdly, the City will work to stabilize viable neighbourhoods, using this as a starting point to reclaim adjacent, less-successful neighbourhoods. Finally, recognizing the asset the City has in its compact core, significant effort will be focused into returning vibrancy into Youngstown’s downtown.

Using these themes as points of departure, the bulk of the Youngstown 2010 Plan deals with describing current conditions and identifying the assets of 11 neighbourhood clusters in the North, East, South, West and Central planning districts. For instance, with respect to neighbourhoods in the North Side, each has been impacted by deindustrialization and suburban flight differently. The North Side has experienced an average population decline of 16% every ten years for the past 40 years, leaving a large number of vacant and abandoned properties. While all North Side neighbourhoods are home to blight, it is most concentrated in Briar Hill, Wick Park, and North Heights neighbourhoods. Some of the assets to build on in this district that the City identifies include two major medical facilities and a large amount of dedicated recreation/open space. Several parkland gifts made to the city by early industrialists have ensured that there are several recreational opportunities for north side residents, including Wick Park and the Henry Stambaugh Golf Course. According to the Plan, these and other assets are to be expanded with an increase in the overall greenspace and institutional space. In comparison, the neighbourhoods of the West Side Planning District – some of which are the most recently developed neighbourhoods in Youngstown – have weathered the process of deindustrialization much better, averaging only a 7.75% population decline every ten years for the past 40 years. These predominantly white neighbourhoods are home to significantly less blight than the North,

South, and East Districts. Some of the assets to build on in this district include four planned school projects and a large endowment of usable green spaces. Similar analyses and recommendations are made for the other three planning districts, including the downtown, where it is envisioned a large amount of investment in redevelopment projects – including establishing recreation and open space areas and building a high density mixed use development in largely-abandoned Smoky Hollow – will take place.

Importantly, since completing the general “inventory” of the five planning districts, the city has further divided the districts into 127 neighbourhoods (Aepfel, 2007), labelling each as stable, transitional, redevelopment, semi-rural, and industrial (City of Youngstown Neighbourhood Categories). The city is now working on customized plans for these neighbourhoods, with the goal of crafting plans for about 30 neighbourhoods per year with the help of residents. In general it is envisioned that certain neighbourhoods will not be revived and services will eventually be cut off in abandoned areas (City of Youngstown, 2005; Lanks, 2006a; Aepfel, 2007; Russell, 2008). This corresponds with the part of the city’s Vision which calls for a downsizing of the massive amount of excess infrastructure. Along these lines, another major component of the plan is the removal of blight in the form of, first, removing the biggest eyesores, including 1000 abandoned homes and several hundred old stores, schools, and other structures (Aepfel, 2007; Lanks, 2006a; City of Youngstown, 2005). In fact, one of Mayor William’s first official duties was to apply surplus money to demolition. In 2007, the Mayor increased annual demolition budget from \$320,000 to \$1.5 million (Aepfel, 2007). The goal of removing blight works in concert with the desire to create more green space: empty parcels are to be converted into parks for community gardens or sold to remaining residents, allowing them to expand their yards or even rebuild their homes spread out over more than one lot (Aepfel, 2007).

According to Youngstown informant Y14: “We’ve put forward a very aggressive and cogent plan to start eliminating some of the excess units that have become blighted. We’ve done that for years, but we have the ability now through the plan and through some additional resources to become much more aggressive and we spent a million dollars just in the 2 past years tearing down structures.”

The final important component of the plan is a chapter on implementation, which lays out the “next steps” citywide and for each planning district. Each “next step” involves a project that would have “an immediate impact on the City” and that could “reasonably be expected to be underway or completed by 2010” (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.127). Each project is designed for one of three purposes: to make the city “cleaner,” “greener,” or “better planned and organized.” For instance, citywide, next steps include targeting highly visible demolitions (cleaner), converting surplus school building sites to green space (cleaner), creating and maintaining city parks (greener), seeking Clean Ohio funding for brownfields remediation (greener) and encouraging organizations to develop neighbourhood plans (better planned and organized). In each district, a “next step” for making the city “cleaner” involves targeting demolition in stable neighbourhoods, planned areas, or areas adjacent to catalyst projects/neighbourhood assets. Examples of “green” projects include establishing new parks in strategic neighbourhood locations and next steps for making neighbourhoods “better planned and organized” include revitalizing priority business centres in strategic neighbourhood locations. Most importantly, these steps are designed to keep various groups – government business, institutions, and the community – working together to implement the Plan. As the Plan states: “The City cannot afford single handedly to do all that this plan calls for on its own. This will take a collaborative effort between the City, citizens, private sector developers and businesses,

Youngstown State University, Youngstown Board of Education, community development corporations, other government agencies, religious entities, etc.” (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.127)

## **5.0 Summary**

In 2008, Forbes Magazine named Youngstown among the top 10 fastest dying cities in the U.S., referencing Census Bureau data, including population change, unemployment rate, and annual gross domestic product (Schoenstein, 2008). Mayor Jay Williams has strongly discredited this characterization because the authors of this article had not visited Youngstown and thus had not witnessed firsthand the Youngstown 2010 effort to turn the city’s problems around. Clearly, when it embarked on the Youngstown 2010 planning process, the city faced enormous physical, economic, social, environmental, and other challenges. The Youngstown 2010 Vision and Citywide Plan was created in an attempt to deal with these issues. Does the Youngstown 2010 Plan embrace any of the principles of “good planning” in shrinking cities as laid out in Chapter 3? If so, what factors led to the adoption of the principles? If not, what mitigated against the adoption of the principles? This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. For now, I turn to a discussion of Sudbury’s recently-adopted Official Plan.

## **CHAPTER 6:**

### **SUDBURY'S OFFICIAL PLAN: CONTEXT and OVERVIEW**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

Greater Sudbury, a mid-sized Canadian city in northern Ontario, a four- to five-hour drive from Toronto (Canada's largest municipality), is a resource-based community that in recent decades has suffered from a trend of significant unemployment and out-migration in the face of loss of its mining jobs. Although the city's population has recently stabilized somewhat due to a "booming" mining sector, the general long-term trend of Sudbury's population has been downward. At its peak in 1971, the population of the communities that make up with City of Greater Sudbury was 170,000. Lay-offs at the city's two large mining companies sparked a long-term downward trend in population and today the population is 157,857. Unlike the steel industry in Youngstown, mining in Sudbury remains a very productive industry. However, advances in technology and the resulting increases in productivity have meant that fewer people are needed to work in the mines. Within this context of a general downward trend in mining employment, Sudbury's economy has prospered or floundered according to the fortunes of the two dominant mining companies. In short, Sudbury is a "boom and bust" community.

In June 2006, Sudbury's City Council approved a new Official Plan called "People Engaged, Places Defined, Progress Driven." The Official Plan is part of the city's regeneration strategy, which includes an economic development plan, environmental reclamation plan, and a human services strategy, each prepared by different city departments and each of which is incorporated, or at least referred to, in the Official Plan. Overall, in contrast to Youngstown's strategy of admitting it is a smaller city that needs to "right-size" to its current population, the

policies contained in Sudbury’s new Official Plan are based on the assumption of that the population of Sudbury will continue to grow in the future. The following chapter examines Sudbury strategy more closely, including the context within which Sudbury planners developed their regeneration strategy, the factors that sparked the recent planning exercise, and the main elements of the regeneration strategy, including the land-use planning, economic development, social, and environmental policies.

## **2.0 The City of Greater Sudbury, Ontario**

### **2.1 Geography**

The City of Greater Sudbury is located in what Statistics Canada defines as the Northeast Economic Region of Northern Ontario.<sup>31</sup> In total, Northern Ontario occupies more than 800,000 square kilometres; this is almost 90% of the province’s land base. More than half of the Northern Ontario’s residents live in the region’s five largest cities: Sudbury, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, and Timmins. Only Sudbury and Thunder Bay have populations over 100,000, while seven Northern Ontario communities have populations between 10,000 and 100,000. Most of the communities in Northern Ontario have less than 10,000 residents. The rest (35%) live in rural communities, many of which are remote and are only accessible by boat or air. Northern Ontario is home to 106 of Ontario’s 134 First Nations<sup>32</sup> communities; in total, 40% of Ontario’s Aboriginal population lives in Northern Ontario. As well, 26% of the province’s

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<sup>31</sup> Statistics Canada combines census districts into “economic regions” for the purposes of analyzing regional economic activity. Northern Ontario is divided into two such regions: the Northwest Economic region and the Northeast Economic Region. The City of Greater Sudbury is located in the Northeast, along with the Districts of Nipissing, Parry Sound, Manitoulin, Sudbury, Timiskaming, Cochrane, and Algoma.

<sup>32</sup> A note about terminology: According to the Federal Government’s Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, there are several terms used to refer to North America’s original inhabitants. The term “Aboriginal” refers to all descendants of the original inhabitants of North America, including Indian, Inuit, and Métis. The term “First Nation” is a terms which came into use in the 1970s to replace the word “Indian,” which some people found offensive. There is no legal definition for the term “First Nation,” but it is generally used to refer to Indian people (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 2009). Thus, a First Nation community is an Indian community.

Francophone population lives in Northern Ontario. The region also encompasses most of Ontario’s woodlands and some of the richest mineral deposits in the world (Ontario, 2008).

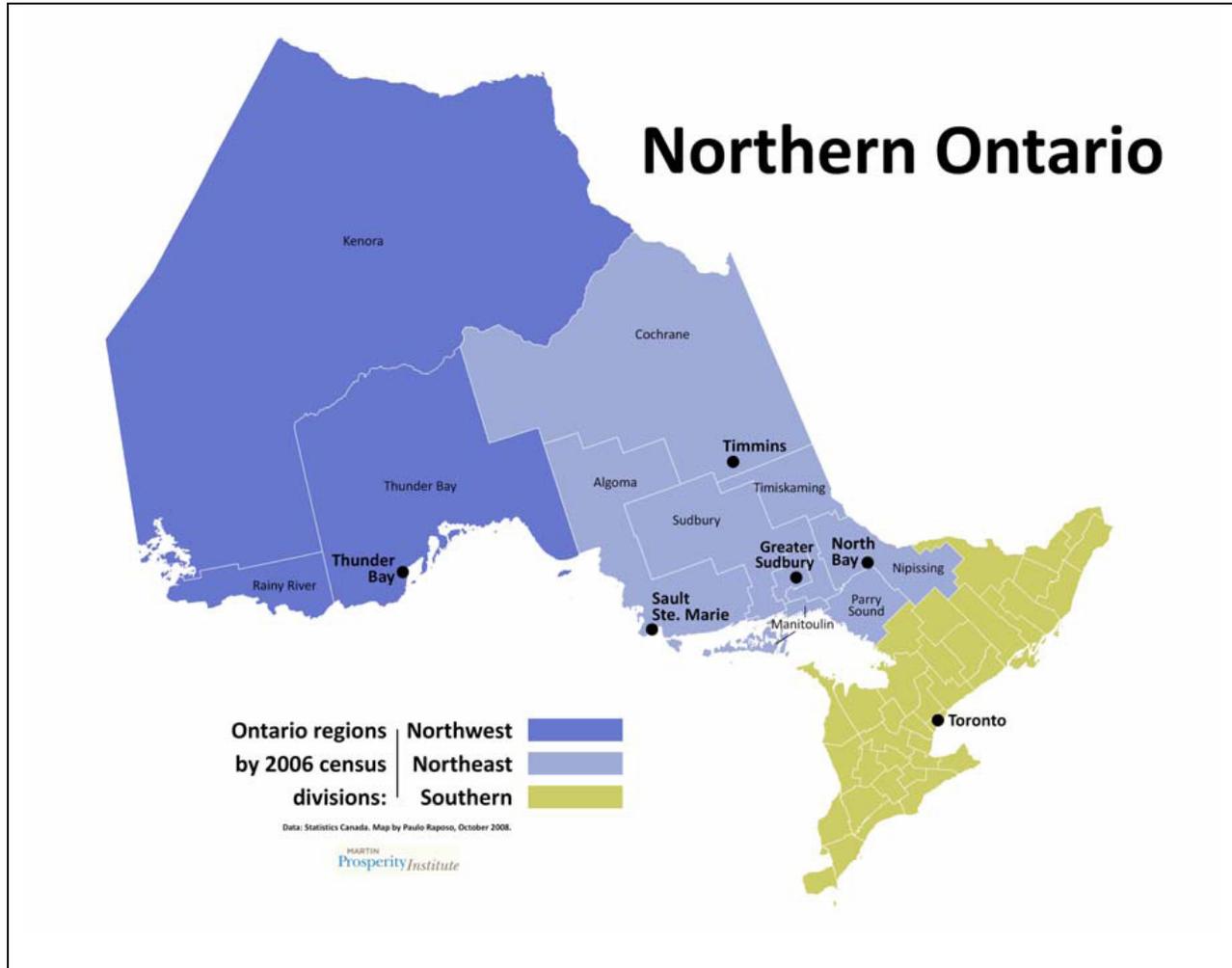


Figure 9: Northern Ontario<sup>33</sup>

The City of Greater Sudbury was formed in 2001 through what Leadbeater (2008b) calls a “forced amalgamation” (p.18) of the former Regional Municipality of Sudbury (an upper tier municipality comprised of the former lower-tier municipalities of Sudbury, Capreol, Nickel Centre, Onaping Falls, Rayside-Balfour, Valley East, and Walden) and several unincorporated townships (Fraleck, Parkin, Aylmer, Mackelcan, Rathbun, Scadding, Dryden, Cleland and Dill).

<sup>33</sup> Source: Hall & Donald (2009).

The City of Greater Sudbury is thus made up of Sudbury proper and several surrounding communities, including Azilda, Blezzard Valley, Boninville, Capreol, Chelmsford, Coniston, Copper Cliff, Dowling, Falconbridge, Froid Mines, Garson, Hanmer, Levack, Lively, Onaping, Val Caron, and Val Thérèse. Each of the various communities which make up Greater Sudbury developed around local mine sites, railways, and agricultural infrastructures and, as Leadbeater (2008a) explains, these communities have their own “...particular cultural histories different from Sudbury proper” (p.9). In addition to these communities, there are two First Nations communities within the City’s boundaries which are politically independent of the City: Whitefish Lake First Nation and Wanapitei First Nation. Of course, as Leadbeater (2008a) notes: “...the whole area was Aboriginal territory prior to colonization” (p.9).

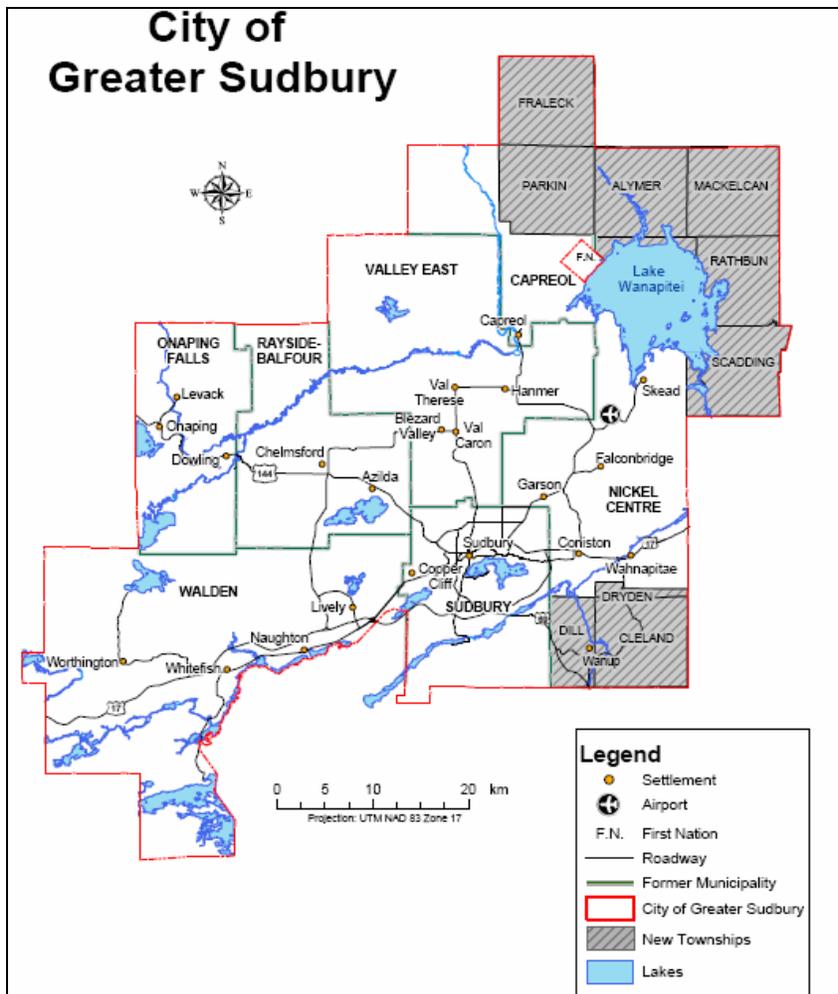


Figure 10: Communities comprising the City of Greater Sudbury<sup>34</sup>

The total area of the City of Greater Sudbury is 3,627 square kilometres, within which 330 lakes are located. It is the largest municipality in Ontario in terms of total area, the second largest in Canada and the fourth largest in North America.

## 2.2 Brief History

Sudbury’s beginnings can be traced back to 1883, with the westward expansion of the Canadian Pacific rail line. The discovery of vast copper and nickel reserves propelled the tiny railroad junction into the ranks of Canada’s major cities, growing through cycles of boom and

<sup>34</sup> Source: City of Greater Sudbury (2009b).

bust. Sudbury's fortunes have largely depended on the fortunes of two large nickel-mining corporations: Inco Ltd (formed in 1886 as the Canadian Copper Company) and Falconbridge Ltd. (established in 1928). The city reached its zenith in 1970, when nickel reached peak prices and employment at Inco and Falconbridge reached 30,000. Residents of the Sudbury Region, then numbering approximately 170,000, were among the richest in Canada (Thoms & Pearsall, 1994). As Leadbeater (2008b) explains:

Between the early 1900s and the 1960s, Sudbury mine workers of these two companies produced well over half the capitalist world's nickel. Based on their Sudbury-generated wealth, Inco and Falconbridge expanded across the globe to become major transnational corporations. (p.7)

However, changes in the international nickel market brought on by globalization and technological advances in the mining industry ended Sudbury's boom. Inco, which at one time controlled 90 percent of the world nickel market, lost its monopoly because of international competition. Advances in mining technology also meant that fewer workers were needed. The effect on Sudbury's economy was dramatic. By 1983 workers in mining numbered less than 14,000—barely 10% of Sudbury's workforce (Richardson, 1991). The loss of mining jobs had a significant effect on Sudbury's population numbers. By 1981, Sudbury had lost 4.5 % of its 170,000 residents (Buse, 1993) and population has continued to decline since, with a slight recovery in the last census period (see below). The decline in mining has been offset somewhat by expansion of Sudbury's role as a regional centre for government, commercial, educational, and health services. A new middle class has emerged, made up of teachers, government employees, and small business owners, replacing blue collar workers as the largest workforce sector. Despite this, the city's economy – once characterized by high income and high employment – has become dominated by high unemployment, low income levels (Robinson, 2002; Leadbeater, 2008b), increased economic dependency, deteriorating living standards and

social programs, and growing social polarization (Leadbeater, 2008b). While rising nickel prices in the past few years reversed this trend somewhat, it is a reprieve that is not expected to last: “The current boom in metal process and production cannot hide the deeper economic and social cleavages forming under the pressures of globalization” (Leadbeater, 2008b, pp.7-8).

### **3.0 Context of the Sudbury’s Planning Process**

When Sudbury’s planners undertook the process of updating the City’s official plan in the early years of the new millennium, they faced a number of significant challenges – many of which continue today. These challenges include a long-term trend of population decline, fluctuating economic conditions dictated by the boom and bust mining sector, a rapidly ageing and increasingly homogeneous population, and a legacy of environmental damage. In the following section, I look more closely at the context of Sudbury’s planning process.

#### **3.1 Population**

Because of changes in boundaries and census divisions and subdivisions, it is difficult to track the overall pattern of Sudbury’s population. Nonetheless, the trend that emerges from a review of the available data on several geographical levels is that of overall population decline, with a slight increase in the last census period. The following section examines the demographic data for the City of Greater Sudbury, discussing first population trends on a regional level.

##### ***(a) Regional population change***

While Ontario’s population has increased, in recent years the population of **Northern Ontario** has decreased steadily. In particular, between 2002 and 2007, the population declined 1.88% from 816,417 to 801,065. During the same period, the population of Ontario increased 5.8% from 12,102,045 to 12,803,861. So in addition to decreasing on an absolute level,

Northern Ontario’s population is decreasing as a percentage of Ontario’s population. It is projected that the population of Northern Ontario will decline by 4.5% by 2031 if current migration and demographic trends remain unchanged (Ontario, 2008). Within Northern Ontario, the **Northeast Economic Region** (in which the City of Greater Sudbury is located, see above), while declining in population, has fared marginally better than the Northwest Economic Region. Between 2002 and 2007, the Northeast Economic Region lost 1.23% of its population, while the population of the Northwest Economic Region declined by 3.39%.

	2002 population	2003 population	2004 population	2005 population	2006 population	2007 population	% change 2002-2007
Northeast Economic Region	571,208	569,203	568,003	567,295	566,221	564,175	-1.23%
Northwest Economic Region	245,209	244,900	243,942	242,346	239,999	236,890	-3.39%

Table 7: Population change in Northeast Economic Region, Ontario, 2001-2007<sup>35</sup>

Within the Northeast Economic Region, there is a trend of long-term population decline, followed by a slight recovery, on the level of the former **Sudbury Territorial District**. Prior to 1973, the area that approximately corresponds to today’s City of Greater Sudbury was included in a region with outlying communities such as Espanola and Massey. This region was referred to as the Sudbury Territorial District. After 1973, this District was separated into the Regional Municipality of Sudbury (which became the City of Greater Sudbury in 2001, see above) and the “Sudbury District” (see map above). Adding together population figures from the post-1973 Sudbury District and the City of Greater Sudbury, it is evident that population in the area of this former Sudbury Territorial District has declined steadily from its peak in 1971 (198,079), with a

<sup>35</sup> Source: Statistics Canada (2008). Annual population estimates by economic region, provinces and territories, Canada — Population at July 1.

slight recovery in the last census period. In fact, the population of the current Sudbury District declined faster in the last census period than the one previous. For this reason, on this level, the recent gains in the population of the City of Greater Sudbury are offset to a certain extent by population loss in outlying communities. It is also possible that the source of at least some of the recent in-migration to the City of Greater Sudbury was outlying communities.

Geographic Area	1996 Population	2001 Population	2006 Population	% change 1996-2001	% change 2001-2006	% change 1996-2006
Post-1973 Sudbury District	23,831	22,894	21,392	-3.93%	-6.56%	-10.23%
City of Greater Sudbury	165,336	155,219	157,857	-6.12%	+1.7%	-4.52%
Former area of Sudbury Territorial District	189,167	178,113	179,249	-5.84%	+0.64%	-5.24%

Table 8: Population change in former Sudbury Territorial District, 1996-2001<sup>36</sup>

### **(b) Local population change**

On a local level, the **City of Greater Sudbury** which, as discussed above, was formed in 2001 by amalgamating the former Regional Municipality of Sudbury (an upper tier municipality comprised of the former lower-tier municipalities of Sudbury, Capreol, Nickel Centre, Onaping Falls, Rayside-Balfour, Valley East, and Walden) and several unincorporated townships (Fraleck, Parkin, Aylmer, Mackelcan, Rathbun, Scadding, Dryden, Cleland and Dill), saw its population increase slightly in the last census period in the face of a long-term trend of population loss.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Source: Leadbeater (2008a) and Statistics Canada 1996, 2001, and 2006 Census of Canada

<sup>37</sup> The same trend is true of the **Greater Sudbury Census Metropolitan Area**, which is comprised of the City of Greater Sudbury, as well as Whitefish Lake First Nation and Wanapitei First Nation. Prior to 2001, the Greater Sudbury CMA did not include the former Town of Capreol, the unincorporated townships, or the Wanapitei First Nation; thus, I have not included numbers for the CMA.

	<b>1996 population</b>	<b>2001 population</b>	<b>2006 population</b>	<b>% change 1996-2001</b>	<b>% change 2001-2006</b>	<b>% change 1996-2006</b>
<b>City of Greater Sudbury</b>	165,336	155,219	157,857	-6.11%	+1.70%	-4.52%

Table 9: Population change in City of Greater Sudbury, 1996-2006<sup>38</sup>

Interestingly, most of the increase in the City of Greater Sudbury's population in the last census period can be attributed to an increase in the Aboriginal population of the City. In general, the Aboriginal population is growing at a faster rate than the population of Ontario. In particular, Sudbury's Aboriginal population grew 36.61% between 2001 and 2006, while the non-Aboriginal population declined by 0.05%. As Northern Ontario is home to 106 of the province's 134 First Nations, it seems plausible that a significant portion of Sudbury's in-migration came from other communities in Northern Ontario.

<b>City of Greater Sudbury</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>% change 2001-2006</b>
<b>Aboriginal population</b>	7,020	9,590	+36.61%
<b>Non-Aboriginal population</b>	146,485	146,405	-0.05%

Table 10: Aboriginal population change in City of Greater Sudbury, 2001-2006<sup>39</sup>

Finally, the general trend of long-term population decline with slight recovery is evident for most of the communities that make up the City of Greater Sudbury, including the **City of Sudbury** proper, the **surrounding communities**, and the **new unincorporated townships**.

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>1996 Population</b>	<b>2001 population</b>	<b>2006 population</b>	<b>% change 1996-2001</b>	<b>% change 2001-2006</b>	<b>% change 1996-2006</b>
<b>Capreol</b>	3,817	3,486	3,492	-8.7%	0.2%	-8.5%
<b>Nickel Centre</b>	13,017	12,672	12,629	-2.7%	-0.3%	-3.0%

<sup>38</sup> Source: Leadbeater (2008a) and Statistics Canada 1996, 2001, and 2006 Census of Canada

<sup>39</sup> Source: Statistics Canada 2001 and 2006 Census of Canada

<b>Onaping Falls</b>	5,277	4,887	4,742	-7.4%	-3.0%	-10.1%
<b>Rayside-Balfour</b>	16,050	15,046	14,359	-6.3%	-4.6%	-10.5%
<b>Sudbury</b>	92,059	85,354	88,855	-7.3%	4.1%	-3.5%
<b>Valley East</b>	23,537	22,374	22,664	-4.9%	1.3%	-3.7%
<b>Walden</b>	10,292	10,101	10,159	-1.9%	0.6%	-1.3%
<b>Former region</b>	<b>164,049</b>	<b>153,920</b>	<b>156,889</b>	<b>-6.2%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>-6.2%</b>
<b>New townships</b>	1,287	1,299	958	0.9%	-26.3%	-25.6%
<b>City of Greater Sudbury</b>	<b>165,336</b>	<b>155,219</b>	<b>157,875</b>	<b>-6.1%</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>-4.5%</b>

*Table 11: Population change in Sudbury proper and surrounding areas, 1996-2006<sup>40</sup>*

Thus, it is evident that Sudbury is a city experiencing long-term population decline, with a slight recent recovery due in large part to an increase in its Aboriginal population, within a region that is also declining in population. Predictions have been made that Sudbury's population will continue to decline because of a declining birth rate and ageing population, unless more immigrants settle there (Wilkinson, 2005). According to Matthews (2006), Sudbury's population could decrease to as low as 64 000 (40% of its current population) in 2051 if current birth rates and its current share of immigrants are maintained (Matthews, 2006). Within the City itself, several of the communities surrounding Sudbury proper have seen large declines in recent decades while others have seen a recent small increase. All in all, the demographic circumstances of the city, while not as dramatic as those faced by the City of Youngstown, present significant challenges for Sudbury's planners.

### **3.2 Physical Challenges**

The City of Greater Sudbury is different from most cities, and certainly different from Youngstown, in its physical structure. As discussed earlier, Greater Sudbury occupies a large total area: 3,627 square kilometres. According to Sudbury informant S1 (a city planner):

One of the challenges we face is our dispersed development in the city - the fact that we started with 10 or more urban areas – one central city but with 10 or more smaller urban areas and then there's areas that are non-urban but still clusters of rural population. And

<sup>40</sup> Source: City of Sudbury, 2009a and Statistics Canada 1996, 2001, and 2006 Census of Canada

when you consider that it's a pretty basic planning principle that you try to foster development and try to achieve economies of scale and lessen your impact or footprint on the environment, [our dispersed structure] is just something we'll have to continue to deal with as we move forward.

Furthermore, each of the City's distinct communities has its own history and culture and each of which is facing different demographic circumstances. Another city official (a planner) – Sudbury informant S12 – explains that

...there are 7,8,9,10 distinct cultures in this community: there's the French community, there's geographic separation of communities, there's former communities that were owned by [mining companies]:Falconbridge-kind of towns, former Inco-towns. [These communities] grew up slightly different from a cultural standpoint based on their relationships with the companies. So, the communities are not homogeneous. This is not one big city... it's a city with many parts. You have many different cultural, political ambitions and expectations that are at play, so part of the challenge is to understand that.

Compounding this geographic and cultural diversity is demographic differences: certain parts of the City are losing population at a fast pace, while others remain stagnant and still others have gained population in recent years. On top of the large number of diverse communities, the City of Greater Sudbury's land area contains over 330 lakes over 10 hectares and, as Sudbury informant S12 explains, "...an untold number of water bodies in addition to that that are smaller, which means there is a heck of a lot of environmental issues in this community." All of these characteristics present a challenge for Sudbury's planners, who are faced with the task of developing land-use policies in a very dispersed and diverse environment.

In addition to, and related to, the challenge of planning for such a large and diverse area, Sudbury has faced issues of downtown decline, particularly since the mid-1900s. Sudbury's downtown occupies approximately 42 city blocks within the city's 3627 square kilometres. Despite the fact that Sudbury was originally established as a temporary railroad junction without thought to the location's suitability as a central business district either in terms of access or attractiveness (Saarinen, 1990; Stelter, 1971; Sudbury Planning Board, 1963), by 1951

downtown Sudbury became the prominent place of business (Ferrigan, 1996). However, after World War Two, discontinuous urban sprawl led many businesses to relocate near newer residential development and the city began orienting itself around the automobile (Saarinen, 1971). With the opening of a suburban shopping mall in 1957, residents began to patronize suburban shopping locations over the downtown core and the core's retail function began declining.<sup>41</sup> In 1966, a report by Sudbury's Planning Director called for revitalization of the downtown, ushering in an era of urban renewal (Sudbury Planning Board, 1966).

These revitalization efforts, including the building of the City Centre Shopping Mall in 1971, succeeded in aiding the downtown to regain a share of the local retail market. However, by the 1990s, the downtown core faced competition by new suburban malls as well as emerging power centres<sup>42</sup> (Downtown Village Development Corporation, 2006) which the city had actively encouraged to locate in the periphery, despite the opposition of downtown merchants.<sup>43</sup> At one low point, the majority of retail space in the City Centre Mall was vacant. By 1990, the New Sudbury suburban area was home to 36.8% of commercial/service establishments while 13.5% were located in the downtown (in 1951, the downtown had accounted for 62.6% of this activity) (Ferrigan, 1996). The office sector also decentralized due to competition from office parks in the New Sudbury area, but to a lesser degree. In this sector, the downtown's share dropped from 96.8% in 1950 to 49.1% in 1990 (Ferrigan, 1996). In all, the decline of Sudbury's downtown represents a significant challenge for Sudbury's planners.

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<sup>41</sup> This mass exodus of people and business out of the downtown core after WWII has been a common pattern in mid-size cities across Canada (Bunting, Filion, & Priston, 2002; Filion et al., 2000; 2004; Seasons, 2003).

<sup>42</sup> A "power centre" is defined as a shopping area "having three or more big box retailers with shared parking lot and typically ancillary smaller commercial areas" (Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity [CSCA], 2006b). Big box retailers are usually "three times or more times larger than other comparable stores" (CSCA, 2006a).

<sup>43</sup> According to O'Brien (2004), this seemingly counter-productive strategy is common: "...planning and economic development sometimes work in a schizophrenic manner" (p.27). A city may be working to revitalize the central area on one hand, while developing power centres on the fringes. In O'Brien's opinion, "this is an interesting observation, because it points out the tension between shoring up the local ark and being carried along in the globalization flood" (p.27).



*Photograph 4: Space for lease in downtown Sudbury (Photograph by Laura Schatz)*

Finally, in terms of physical challenges, Sudbury is home to a large amount of crumbling physical infrastructure, a fact which Leadbeater (2008b) finds particularly troubling:

Given that Sudbury is such a world-level centre of mining atop such enormous mineral wealth, one might think it would exude substantial prosperity, with well-provided cultural, educational, health and social-welfare institutions, and a well-maintained and attractive physical infrastructure. But this is far from the Sudbury most people know. Despite doing a major share of the Canadian economy's heavy lifting for well over a century, the Sudbury area as a community has relatively little to show for it. (p.7)

Sudbury's roads have been in a particular state of disrepair for many years (see, for instance, Myers, 2007; Bradley, 2009b). The major difficulty in fixing the problem, according to Mayor Rodriguez, is the fact that there are 3600 kilometres of lanes and roads running through Sudbury and not enough money in the budget to fix them (Myers, 2007). According to a high-ranking

city official, Sudbury informant S11: “The cost of providing that service in the wintertime and in the summertime to those road infrastructures... We have a 10-year deficit of approximately 540 million dollars, so over half a billion dollars in a 10 year deficit.” The irony that this lack of funds to fix the roads continues to exist even in the context of record profits in recent years for both mining companies (who damage Sudbury’s roads by driving massive trucks over them) has been pointed out by several observers (Leadbeater, 2008b; Atkins, 2008; Greater Sudbury, 2006a). In 2006, a report called “Claiming our Stake; Building a Sustainable Community” was released by a task force formed by then-Mayor Courtemanche, who formed the task force in response to the take-over by foreign owners of Inco and Falconbridge. The report points out that, even though the municipality is solely responsible for maintaining its physical infrastructure, it continues to receive a shrinking amount of mining tax revenue and property tax revenue from local mining companies:

...almost 50% of [mining] tax revenues go to the federal level, 35% go to the provincial government while only 16% stays in the local resource municipalities. As their contribution to municipal revenues has fallen over time, the mining companies increased their use of public transportation infrastructure and reduced their investment in private transportation infrastructure. Twenty-years ago, most ore was transported throughout the Sudbury Basin by railroads that were maintained by the mining companies. Today ore is predominantly transported by truck, causing rapid and costly deterioration of the road infrastructure that was not designed for heavy industrial use. (Greater Sudbury, 2006a, p.22)

On top of dwindling contributions by higher levels of government, Sudbury informant S11 (a high-ranking city official) explains that the property taxation system for mining companies has meant declining revenues for many years:

The only source of taxation for a community is property taxes and in our case in Sudbury the predominant corporations in this community have been the mining companies and their properties. Now, for whatever reason, mining companies come under what’s called the *Mining Act of Ontario*. Even the way we tax them is outlined in the *Mining Act*. So, for example, a citizen’s home is not depreciated when it comes to assessing them for property taxes for the city. But the mining properties depreciate. So, for example, we

don't collect any tax on the Superstack here in Sudbury anymore. It's depreciated beyond assessed value, so we don't collect anything on the Superstack for example... It's still producing wealth for the company, but it's depreciated. Then you've got the reality of the companies looking for efficiency, so if their equipment is getting deeper and deeper in the mine, as is the case today, then you don't need to bring the equipment up to the surface to be serviced. The idea is to take the garage down to where the equipment is. So then you don't need that building up on the surface so you knock it down and we can't follow the assessment underground according to the Mining Act of Ontario. So we've lost that assessment. In fact, 15 years ago, the taxes we collected from the mining companies based on their assessment was 26% of our base budget. Now it's down to 6%.



*Photograph 5: A wealth-creating asset with no assessed property value: The Superstack (Photograph by Laura Schatz)*

As such, the maintenance of physical infrastructure with increased use and decreased revenue from mining companies represents a significant challenge for local officials in Sudbury.

### 3.3 Economic Challenges

Sudbury has faced, and continues to face, significant economic challenges. As noted above, a large number of mining jobs have been lost in recent decades due to increasing globalization of the mining industry combined with technological change resulting in large productivity increases per worker. Today, the two large mines in Sudbury employ less than 6000 workers, down from approximately 30,000 in the 1970s. Decreasing employment in primary mining is a trend that is expected to continue (Leadbeater, 2008b) and thus the City is faced with the challenge of diversifying into other industries. Indeed, in recent years Sudbury has become entrenched as a regional centre for government, commercial, educational, and health services (Sudbury, 2004). As Sudbury informant S8 (an employee with the City’s business development organization) puts it: “We are very fortunate for a Northern Ontario city. We are fairly centrally located. We’re three times the size of any other northern city. We are a referral centre. We are an education centre.” 80% of Sudbury’s labour force are now employed in service activities, while 20% are employed in goods-producing activities (City of Greater Sudbury, 2009a). Much of the service employment has been in the public sector. More specifically in terms of labour force by industry, in 2006 out of a labour force of 81,590:

<b>Industry by North American Industry Classification</b>	<b>Labour Force</b>	<b>% of Sudbury’s total labour force</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	285	0.3%
Mining and oil and gas extraction <sup>44</sup>	5,715	7.0%
Utilities	505	0.6%
Construction	5,145	5.8%

<sup>44</sup> Note: The North American Industry Classification of “Mining and oil and gas extraction” includes primary extraction of naturally occurring minerals and activities which support extraction, including exploration activities (Industry Canada, 2008). Thus, it does not include other activities related to mining, including manufacturing industries such as smelting and refining and the mining supply and services industry; unfortunately, there is no separate category for these activities and they are thus included in other categories.

Manufacturing	4,775	5.9%
Wholesale trade	3,015	3.7%
Retail trade	10,270	12.6%
Transportation and warehousing	3,645	4.5%
Information and cultural industries	1,225	1.5%
Finance and insurance	2,195	2.7%
Real estate and rental and leasing	1,135	1.4%
Professional, scientific and technical services	3,530	4.3%
Management of companies and enterprises	15	0.0%
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	3,800	4.7%
Educational services	7,045	8.6%
Health care and social assistance	9,920	12.2%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,550	1.9%
Accommodation and food services	5,610	6.9%
Other services (except public administration)	4,225	5.2%
Public administration	6,180	7.6%

*Table 12: Labour force by industry in Sudbury, 2006<sup>45</sup>*

However, recent economic diversification has not erased Sudbury's dependence on the mining industry, which remains significant (Leadbeater, 2008b). In 2006, 50.85% of all employment income earned in Sudbury was earned in the mining industry; in particular, 37.23% was earned in primary mining (Statistics Canada, 2006). Indeed on a regional level, it is recognized that Northern Ontario's economy as a whole continues to be largely resource-based (Ontario, 2008). In particular, levels of employment in Sudbury continue to depend in large degree on fluctuations in the international nickel market, a fact which has been felt in recent months with the sharp decrease in nickel prices. In the last year, Sudbury's unemployment rate has climbed from 5.6% (in June 2008) to 8.9% (in June 2009) (Robinson, 2009). In February 2009, one of the large mines laid off 700 workers and closed three mines. The other mine has been shut down since May, 2009. In May 2009 alone, 2,400 jobs were lost in Sudbury (Robinson, 2009). In comparison, June 2009, the unemployment rate for Canada was 8.6% while Ontario's was 9.6% (primarily due to large losses in manufacturing in Southern Ontario).

<sup>45</sup> Source: City of Greater Sudbury (2009a).

Indeed, Sudbury has tended, since mining employment began to decline in the 1970s, to have unemployment rates higher than the national and provincial averages (Leadbeater, 2008b), with the gap being narrowed or widened according to mineral price fluctuations (Statistics Canada, 2006). In 2001, for instance, when nickel markets were particularly depressed, Sudbury's unemployment rate was 9.1%, compared to a rate of 6.1% for Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2001). In 2006, when nickel markets were starting to improve, Sudbury's unemployment rate declined to 7.8%, compared to a rate of 6.4% for Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2006).

In addition to affecting Sudbury's levels of employment, on a more general level the continued reliance of Sudbury's economy on mining means that the city remains dependent on the corporate decisions of two large mining companies, whose ownership has become increasingly distant from the region in recent years. In 2006, Inco was taken over by Companhia do Vale Rio Doce (CVRD), a Brazilian transnational, and Falconbridge was taken over by Xstrata Plc, a Swiss mining transnational. The companies are now known in Sudbury as Vale Inco and Xstrata Nickel. There are suspicions that the restructuring of ownership of the companies is not over: "rumours and proposals continue to appear about further rounds of corporate takeover and consolidation" (Leadbeater, 2008b, p.7). Recent layoffs and shutdowns have raised concerns from unions and local residents that the further removed ownership is from the Sudbury region, the less concerned companies will be with the well-being of the local community.<sup>46</sup> Of course, neither Inco nor Falconbridge were headquartered in Sudbury (both were headquartered in Toronto; the centre of Inco's world marketing was located in suburban New Jersey), but the current transnationals that own both companies are even farther removed

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<sup>46</sup> See, for instance, "Mine Mill local fights 700 layoffs in Sudbury." (2009). Retrieved July 13, 2009 from [http://www.peoplesvoice.ca/articleprint33/07\)\\_MINE\\_MILL\\_LOCAL\\_FIGHTS\\_700\\_LAYOFFS\\_IN\\_SUDBURY.html](http://www.peoplesvoice.ca/articleprint33/07)_MINE_MILL_LOCAL_FIGHTS_700_LAYOFFS_IN_SUDBURY.html)

from the region. Sudbury informant S8, an employee with the City's business development organization, however, points out that foreign ownership may in fact be beneficial:

Well, there was a bit of an attitude when it all happened that how could we let these foreign-owned companies take over. That passed. Those companies have shown that they're very socially conscious. They've been very supportive of the community in a number of ways, everything from a social cause to an economic development cause. They volunteer. They're *in* the community. So, I think, sure. If push came to shove and things were really bad, it's a lot easier for an international company to say 'we're out' than it is for a locally-owned company but... To me and to others, we're starting to see that this could be a good thing versus a bad thing. These are huge international companies that bring huge international connections. Those connections in the past we didn't have to that extent.

Increased international connections and local volunteering aside, foreign ownership creates a challenging environment for local planners who are trying to influence the development in a city whose fortunes are largely determined in Brazil and Switzerland.

As noted, diversification into the service sector – particularly the public sector – has somewhat reduced Sudbury's dependence on mining in recent decades. This leads Leadbeater (2008b) to conclude that Sudbury has become a "two-industry town," "maintained by the public sector as well as by mining" (p.23). However, employment in the public sector in Sudbury has been declining in recent years. For instance, in 2005 alone, employment in public sector occupations declined by about 3000. After analyzing public sector employment for 2005 and years previous, Lange (2005) notes that "...the public sector has been cutting back noticeably on employment in the Sudbury region... In short, the employment data suggests that all three levels of government and, probably mainly the senior levels, have been abandoning the Sudbury region" (p.1).

As well, the private sector service jobs that have been created have not replaced the high-paying unionized mining jobs that have been lost. The highest-paying jobs in Sudbury continue to be those in the primary mining industry: in 2005, the median earnings for full-year, full-time

earners in primary mining was \$89,070 (up from \$67,322 in 2000); for the service sector, median earnings were \$23,821 (down from \$24,660 in 2000) (Statistics Canada, 2006).<sup>47</sup> Sudbury informant S4, the head of a community organization and member of City Council, explains that

We're in an interesting time in Sudbury... Nickel prices have been very high and we have a good number of people employed with the mining industry who are making these bonus cheques. They're making salaries equivalent to very high level CEOs so it's nothing for a miner to have a \$160,000 T4 for this city, right? So, that's good for the economy because they don't stash that money away. They spend it. They buy boats and RVs and their camp and do construction, which means that everybody else makes money in the community, right? So, we've got a very strong economy and lots of money being spent on the one hand and that's a good thing. On the other hand, the disparity between the haves and have-nots is probably wider because for people that work in the service industry, in minimum wage jobs, people that don't work at all that are living in poverty, they get lost in that economy... You look around, there's cars every place, there's people shopping every place, it's like man, we're doing well. Except for that 10 percent of the population that's not doing so well. And it's been hard to draw attention to that. It's easier to draw attention when it's 30 percent. When it's 10 percent, when it's actually something that we could do something with, it's hard to get attention because they don't see it... not as evident...

Many of the private sector service jobs created in recent years have been low-paying, high-stress, insecure call centre jobs. In the late 1990s, Sudbury began investing in costly ICT infrastructure to become an attractive destination for outsourced technology services. The city focused on attracting the call centre industry because it promised the “quickest job-creation potential” (Gordon, 2003). By 2000, the city had laid some 2500 kilometres of fibre optics and 150 kilometres of broadband cable readily accessible by business enterprises (HRSDC, 2004). Sudbury's strategy has been successful in attracting approximately 10 call centres, two of which are government call centres in the health care sector (Greater Sudbury Development Corporation, 2009). Many are foreign owned, particularly by US-based firms with one or more Canadian locations. Despite assertions by the City that the sector is “growing” (Greater Sudbury Development Corporation, 2009), call centres remain notoriously footloose and a number have

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<sup>47</sup> Earnings are in 2005 constant dollars.

closed their doors or downsized significantly since locating in Sudbury.<sup>48</sup> Recently a private sector call centre (headquartered in Nashville) employing 350 people announced it would be closing because of “changing business needs” (Bradley, 2009a). Thus, in addition to not replacing the high-paying unionized mining jobs, diversification into the private sector services (particularly lower-end, back-office services such as call centres) continues to reinforce Sudbury’s dependence on forces beyond its control as decisions which significantly affect Sudbury’s economy are made in locations far removed from the community. Again, this lack of control and stability poses significant challenges for Sudbury’s planners.

### **3.4 Social Challenges**

Sudbury’s planners have faced and continue to face challenges with respect to planning for a population that is losing young people, is ageing, and lacks diversity. In terms of age structure, traditionally there has been a large out-migration of those in Sudbury’s younger age groups, which has been stemmed slightly in recent years: between 1996 and 2001, the population in the 25 to 34 age group declined by 25% (Social Planning Council of Sudbury, 2005). Between 2001 and 2006, the number in this age group remained largely unchanged (Statistics Canada, 2006). Sudbury has also been plagued by a significant trend of youth (18-24) out-migration (Social Planning Council of Sudbury, 2005). This trend has also been stemmed slightly in recent years, although not for children aged 14 and under: in 2006 Sudbury had fewer residents of this age group than in 2001 (Sudbury Community Foundation, 2008). It seems likely that the 35% growth in Sudbury’s Aboriginal population (in which 4 of 10 are under the age of 25, compared to 3 of 10 for Sudbury’s non-Aboriginal population) (Statistics Canada, 2006) in the last census period has contributed to the slight increase in the population of younger age

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<sup>48</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of the impacts of Sudbury’s call centres, see Schatz & Johnson, (2007).

groups. Rather than signalling a trend reversal, researchers such as Leadbeater (2008a) expect that in the long term Sudbury will continue to witness a drain of its young people. This seems likely given that youth unemployment rates in the city remain high: in 2006, 17.6% of youth aged 15-24 were unemployed, which is much greater than the provincial rate of 14.5% and the national rate of 12.8% (Sudbury Community Foundation, 2008).

Related to the long-term trend of losing young people, Sudbury is an aging population: in 2001, 13.9 % of the population were seniors aged 65 and over, compared to 12.9% for all of Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2001). In 2006, the median age increased in Sudbury from the last census by 2.1 years to 41.0 years, which is higher than the national level (39.5 years) and the provincial level (39.0 years) (Sudbury Community Foundation, 2008). It is projected that in 2011 the percentage of seniors will reach 16.3 % and by 2021, will rise to 21.3 % (City of Greater Sudbury, 2009a). As noted above, predictions have been made that Sudbury's population will continue to decline because of a declining birth rate and ageing population, unless more immigrants settle there (Wilkinson, 2005). However, to date Sudbury has not succeeded as an immigration reception area: in 2001, 7.1 % of Sudbury's population were immigrants. In 2006, this percentage dropped to 6.68%. Both are well below the Ontario's rate of foreign-born population, which was 26.8% in 2001 and 28.3% in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2001; 2006; Sudbury Community Foundation, 2008). Particularly troubling is the fact that the unemployment rate for recent immigrants (that is, those who have immigrated in the last 5 years) in Sudbury in 2006 was 30.1%, up from 8.7% in 2001 (Sudbury Community Foundation, 2008). Sudbury also continues to lack diversity in terms of attracting visible minority residents: although Sudbury's visible minority population increased 4.6% between 2001 and 2006, only

2.1% of the population are visible minorities, compared to the provincial rate of 22.8% (Sudbury Community Foundation, 2008).

Finally, Sudbury also faces challenges in the social realm related to housing, education, and health. In terms of housing, the recent boom in nickel prices has meant that more people are seeking housing in Sudbury. Between 1998 and 2007, housing starts increased 256%, compared to a national increase of 66% and a provincial increase of 27% (Sudbury Community Foundation, 2008). The number of new houses may be part of the reason the total amount of acres farmed in the city decreased 4.2% between 2001 and 2006 (Sudbury Community Foundation, 2008). As well, the vacancy rate for two-bedroom apartments has dropped dramatically in recent years and access to affordable housing has become a serious issue (Social Housing Services Corporation, 2009). Sudbury informant S4, the head of a community organization, explains that in Sudbury, finding housing "...for anybody is a challenge. Finding housing for low income people is an even greater challenge. You know, the food banks will tell you that food bank use is still high...". As well, booming nickel prices have not lowered Sudbury's high-school drop-out rate, which remains high. According to Sudbury informant S4:

Our high school drop-out rate is still I think far too high for what it should be. It's difficult to get good and accurate numbers because you get national numbers and you get provincial numbers. It's very hard to get local numbers, but [there are] estimates that about 25% of our high school kids are not finishing high school anymore. And what does that mean in today's economy. Again 30 years ago those guys, because it was just guys at that time, could leave high school and go to Inco to get a job and they're retiring now with great pensions from INCO [and they] didn't have Grade 12. This next generation is not going to be in that boat. You have to have a college degree to get hired at Inco now. So, what's the economy for that group? How do we re-engage them after we've lost them in high school?

With respect to health issues in Sudbury, the 2006 census found that life expectancy in Sudbury is 77.3 years, 2.2 years lower than the national life expectancy and 2.4 years lower than the provincial life expectancy. As Nagarajan (2008) explains, "[t]he health status of the people

of Sudbury and Northern Ontario is relatively poor” (p.125). For example, research by Nagarajan (2008) has found that mortality rates for almost all major illnesses are higher than the rest of the province as are rates of occurrence of chronic diseases. According to him, the poorer health conditions in Sudbury can be explained by a number of factors, one of which is poor lifestyle choices. For instance, smoking rates are increasing in Sudbury: in 2007, 27.4% of the population over the age of 12 identifying themselves as current smokers, which is 3.4% higher than in 2005 and 5.5% and 6.8% higher respectively than the national and provincial rates. Obesity rates have also increased in recent years and are higher than both the national and provincial averages (Sudbury Community Foundation, 2008). Another factor is the relative lack of access to physicians, nurses, and health-care facilities. However, another significant factor has contributed to poorer health conditions: the pollution of the physical environment. It is to Sudbury’s environmental challenges that I now turn.

### **3.5 Environmental Challenges**

In terms of the natural environment, Sudbury has an abundance of assets. The City of Greater Sudbury contains 330 lakes within its municipal boundaries. At 13,257 hectares in area, Lake Wanapitei is the largest city-contained lake in the world. However, as the region also contains one of the world’s largest nickel reserves and is the largest hardrock mining centre in North America, Sudbury’s natural environment has suffered enormous degradation from mining and smelting activities. Indeed, according to City publications, “[t]here is no community in Canada that has endured as much environmental damage over the past century of mining than Sudbury” (Greater Sudbury, 2006, p.22). As Edinger (2008) states, “Sudbury is a textbook case in industrial degradation of the environment... The story of acid rain, deforestation, soil erosion,

and the Sudbury ‘moonscape’ of the 1940s to 1970s has become part of Canadian legend...”  
(p.106).

Environmental damage from mining and smelting began in Sudbury shortly after the discovery of copper ore in the 1880s (Edinger, 2008). The damage has taken a number of forms since then. For instance, deforestation occurred prior to the 1920s when trees were used to fuel the large roasting beds. Most of the trees (and animals) that remained were killed by the heavy metals that were released into the ground under and beside the roasting beds. In some areas of Sudbury, toxic levels of nickel, copper and other heavy metals remain. In addition, sulphur dioxide and particulate-metal clouds released from smelters have killed vegetation and made re-greening difficult given the soil’s high acidic content. While the building of the Superstack in 1972 reduced local emissions by 90%, the sulphur acidified more than 7000 lakes in a 17,000 square kilometre radius and “[s]ome lakes in Killarney and the Sudbury region will probably never recover” (Edinger, 2008, p.107). In addition, the building of the Superstack meant that the effects of mining pollution were sent further afield. While much has been made – rightly – of the city’s re-greening efforts (since the late 1970s, over 11 million trees have been planted and the city has received international awards for its environmental initiatives), Sudbury’s environment continues to feel the damaging effects of mining. For instance, there is still a large area left to be re-greened. As Sudbury informant S7 (an Earthcare Sudbury employee) explains:

A lot of the emphasis at first was on [re-greening] roadside corridors, so a lot of those areas are done and it gives the illusion that everything is green when it’s only on the roadway... including some residents of Sudbury. So the illusion is that oh, aren’t you guys done with re-greening yet? In fact, that’s not the case. There’s thousands of hectares left to be done.



*Photograph 6: Re-greened slag heaps as seen from the highway... (Photograph by Laura Schatz)*



*Photograph 7: ...and as seen from the side (Photograph by Laura Schatz)*

Importantly, Sudbury informant S7, an employee with Earthcare Sudbury, disagrees with the assertion that the two mining companies continue to disregard the health of Sudbury's environment. For instance, Edinger (2008) argues that “[b]oth Inco and Falconbridge continue to be convicted of a wide range of environmental violations...” (p.109). According to S7,

I think the mining companies work very hard at bringing their operation to a more environmentally conscious way... it's constant work on their part to make sure that not only they act in regulatory boundaries but also in some instances moving beyond those into areas that aren't regulated but they still want to do the right thing.

Regardless of where the fault lies, a key question is how this environmental damage has affected the health of Sudbury residents. Despite the knowledge that the physical environment likely has significant impacts of health, there are few publicly available studies on the health impacts of Sudbury's environment (Nagarajan, 2008). As Edinger (2008) explains:

The health implications of sulphur dioxide gas releases and other environmental violations require more study. The fact that Inco compensates employees and residents of Copper Cliff and the West End of Sudbury for damage to the paint on their cars caused by smelter fallout, but not for damage to their lungs, illustrates the low attention given to health impacts of smelter operations. (p.109)

In 2001, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, which has been sampling soil and vegetation in Sudbury since 1971, found elevated levels of heavy metals such as nickel, copper, and arsenic in Sudbury's soil (Ontario Ministry of the Environment, 2003). In response to this report, the Sudbury Area Risk Assessment Group (SARA Group) – made up of corporate (including Inco and Falconbridge), community, and other partners – did a “Soil Study” which found “no unacceptable health risks” from the metals in the environment (SARA Group, 2008, p.3). The study, however, has received criticism, particularly for its choice of cut-off point for deciding how much risk is “acceptable.” For instance, with respect to lead levels, the SARA group chose to use a cut-off of 400 parts per million rather than the provincial guideline of 100 parts per million (Nagarajan, 2008). Indeed, a review of this study by the Toronto-based non-profit

organization Environmental Defence – conducted at the request of the two local unions – concluded that “[t]he risk assessment cannot demonstrate that no harm is occurring; it can only estimate the level of risk. The assessors have inappropriately decided what that acceptable level of risk should be. This is a decision the community should make” (Environmental Defence, 2008, p.1). The SARA Group soil study has also been criticized for potential conflict of interest given that the two mining companies were included as members of the Technical Committee, which made the major decisions about the study, including decisions regarding cut-off points.<sup>49</sup> Unions, on the other hand, were invited only to “attend and observe” Technical Committee meetings (SARA Group, 2008, p.6). Thus, questions remain about the continued impact of Sudbury’s environment on the health of residents.

### **3.6 Other challenges**

According to Leadbeater (2008b), despite the fact that the mining companies continue to do damage to the local community (including to the environment, the health of local residents, and infrastructure) without paying their fair share of “resource rents” (that is, part of corporate profit over and above the average rate of profit for the industry) back to the community, local officials are afraid to criticize the companies and indeed have become “subservient” to them (p.11). According to him, the reaction to any criticism of the mining corporations is that “...if Sudbury or any community wants jobs, then this is what one must expect and accept, however reluctantly. This is the classic ‘TINA’ notion – ‘There Is No Alternative.’” (p.19). To Leadbeater, the TINA “flim-flam” poses an obstacle to developing policy which would see the local community receive its fair share of benefits of mining its rich nickel deposits. Of course, others, including the task force mentioned earlier put together by former Mayor Courtemanche in

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<sup>49</sup> See, for instance, [http://www.sudburysoilsstudy.com/EN/media/support/articles/CBCRadio\\_091703\\_2.pdf](http://www.sudburysoilsstudy.com/EN/media/support/articles/CBCRadio_091703_2.pdf); see also Mulligan (2003).

the wake of the foreign takeovers of Inco and Falconbridge, have argued that Sudbury does not receive its fair share of money from mining companies. However, their major argument is not that there should be more local control over local resources or that mining companies should pay compensation for social or environmental damage. Instead, they argue that the city should receive a larger *portion of existing* government revenues. That is, mining companies should not be paying more taxes; Sudbury should receive a greater share of what they are already paying. This is the view which is being argued by the current Mayor. Regardless of which view one adopts, there is a general sense of lack of control in Sudbury which poses a challenge for effective policy development.

Sudbury's large and growing Aboriginal community faces significant challenges which also warrant special mention. As stated by the Ontario government in its discussion paper on a growth plan for the North, in Northern Ontario "...Aboriginal communities are increasingly looking for partnerships to create new employment and economic opportunities. Engaging and working with Aboriginal peoples is key to the future prosperity of the region" (Ontario, 2008, p.1). Despite their key role in the future prosperity of Northern Ontario, Aboriginal people continue to experience rates of unemployment higher than the non-Aboriginal population. Particularly in Sudbury, the unemployment rate of Aboriginal people in 2006 was 11.9% versus 7.6% in non-Aboriginal population. 31.9% of First Nation youth were unemployed in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2009). The median income for Aboriginal people was lower than that for non-Aboriginal; indeed, both have increased in recent years, but the gap between the two also widened from a 31.1% difference in 2000 to a 40.9% difference in 2005 (Sudbury Community Foundation, 2008). In 2005, the median income for Aboriginal women in Sudbury was particularly low: \$15,891, compared to \$20,176 for non-Aboriginal women or \$29,377 for

Aboriginal men. As well, in 2005, over one in four (27%) Aboriginal people were living below the low-income cut-off, compared to 12% of non-Aboriginal people. As well, 34% of Aboriginal children (14 years and under) were living under the low-income cut-off compared to 15% of non-Aboriginal children (Statistics Canada, 2009).

#### **4.0 Sudbury's Official Plan**

In the context of these significant challenges, Sudbury planners updated the city's Official Plan in the early years of the new millennium. The Plan, entitled "*People engaged, places defined, progress driven*" was prepared by the Southern Ontario planning firm Meridian Planning Consultants and was adopted by City Council on June 14, 2006. As a whole, the Plan sets out the city's land-use planning policies, in addition to incorporating (or at least referring to) strategy developed separately in the areas of economic development (*Coming of age in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: An economic development strategic plan for Greater Sudbury 2015*), social policy (the *City of Greater Sudbury Human Services Strategy 2015*), and environmental policy (*EarthCare Sudbury Local Action Plan*). According to local officials and as stated in the Plan itself, the strategies and policies contained in the Official Plan represent the main instruments which are guiding the future development of the city in the physical, economic, social, and environmental realms: "...the Official Plan functions as much more than a land use planning document" (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.3). In the following section, I examine more closely policy in each of these areas. First, however, it is important to discuss why the city embarked on this planning exercise.

#### 4.1 Factors that sparked Sudbury's Official Planning process

Sudbury undertook the task of updating its existing Official Plan largely for two reasons: provincial legislative requirements for review and a desire for up-to-date, uniform standards for the entire area of the recently amalgamated City of Greater Sudbury. In terms of **legislative requirements**, Sudbury was required to review its existing Official Plan – a document required for each Ontario municipality under the provincial *Planning Act*<sup>50</sup> which sets out general planning goals and policies for the area under the municipality's jurisdiction – under the provisions of the *Planning Act* in order to determine whether revisions were required. One of the key requirements of the *Planning Act* is the one set out in section 26 which states that a municipality's Official Plan must be reviewed at least once every five years to ensure that it remains relevant to the municipality's circumstance and that it incorporates any changes to provincial legislation, policies, and guidelines. Zoning by-laws – the major instrument through which official plan policies are put into effect – must then be revised no later than three years after an official plan has been revised.

This requirement is but one illustration of the level of influence or indeed control that the Ontario government exerts over municipalities in terms of local planning. Basically, through the *Planning Act*, the Province of Ontario lays the ground rules for how municipalities may go about controlling land use within their boundaries. In addition to detailing procedural requirements, the Province of Ontario through section 2 of the *Planning Act* dictates that municipalities must “have regard to” matters of provincial interest into their Official Plans, such as the protection of farmland, the protection and management of natural resources, and accessibility for persons with disabilities. Because of sections 3(5) and (6) of the *Planning Act*, municipalities must also

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<sup>50</sup> R.S.O. 1990, Chapter P.13.

ensure that their decisions and actions are consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement<sup>51</sup> (a document adopted by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 2005 which gives overall policy directions in areas such as the provision of affordable housing and the protection of employment lands) and conform to plans such as the recently-adopted Greenbelt Plan<sup>52</sup> and the Growth Plan<sup>53</sup> for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (both of which apply to the area surrounding the Greater Toronto Area in Southern Ontario). Thus, in contrast to the State of Ohio's lack of involvement in local land-use planning, the Province of Ontario plays a strong role in local development by dictating to municipalities both procedural and substantive requirements through the *Planning Act*.<sup>54</sup> The procedural requirement that municipalities review their existing official plans at least once every five years played a role in sparking the recent planning exercise in Sudbury.

As a result of this review – according to local officials and as stated in the Official Plan itself – it was determined that for practical reasons Sudbury needed to overhaul its current planning policies to **create uniform, updated standards** across the entire City of Greater Sudbury. As discussed earlier, the City of Greater Sudbury was formed in 2001 by an amalgamation of 13 former municipalities in the Regional Municipality of Sudbury. This meant that there were 13 separate planning documents covering the area which constituted the former Regional Municipality. This represented a significant challenge for planners, who determined

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<sup>51</sup> Available at <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Asset1421.aspx>

<sup>52</sup> Available at <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page189.aspx#greenbelt>

<sup>53</sup> Available at <http://www.placestogrow.ca/images/pdfs/FPLAN-ENG-WEB-ALL.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> While the courts have been giving an increasing amount of deference to municipalities decisions in terms of land-use planning [as long as proper procedures are followed: see the Ontario Court of Appeal's decision in *Croplife Canada v. City of Toronto* (2005), 37 O.R. 355, (C.A.)], recent amendments to the Planning Act have actually strengthened the Province's role in controlling land use in the province. For instance, one of the changes made in 2006 by Bill 51 (the *Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act, 2006*) to sections 3(5) and (6) of the *Planning Act* means that municipal decisions and documents must now **be consistent with** and **conform to** the provincial policy statement and provincial plans. Both of these standards are higher than those that existed previously meaning that provincial interests dealt with in the statement and plans now play an even larger role in controlling local development than they did previously.

that it was necessary to rationalize the 13 separate documents into one plan covering the entire city. According to the City's website:

In developing one Plan for the new City, the goal was to reduce the number of land use designations while also accommodating the broad range of uses and activities found throughout Greater Sudbury, with an end product that is easier to interpret and more efficient in application. (City of Greater Sudbury, 2009b)

Although there was a Regional Plan that applied to the entire city (under which the constituent plans for each of the 13 former municipalities were created) and which had been amended periodically since its creation in 1976, the five-year review requirement had not been adhered to and thus the plan had not been overhauled significantly since its creation. Thus, the creation of a new Official Plan presented an opportunity to create an updated and uniform vision for the entire city. As Sudbury informant S1, a city planner, states: "...we saw there was value in having a single plan. It was sort of like ... one new plan for one new city. So it was seen as from some standpoint as something that people could rally around as something we could share as a community, a first big project." Sudbury informant S12, another city planner, similarly states: "We needed to have a new plan for a new city."

#### **4.2 Overview of the main components of Sudbury's Official Plan**

Sudbury's new Official Plan is divided into the following major sections: managing growth and change; protecting the natural environment; investing in infrastructure; developing quality of place; healthy people, healthy places (which includes economic development and housing issues); and site specific policies. Before policies are outlines in these sections, however, the Plan includes a discussion of the overall vision, guiding principles, and context. The vision is made up of six statements, including:

- **Greater Sudbury is a modern, vibrant and diverse community**, offering the amenities and services of a large urban centre as well as immediate access to the natural environment...;

- **Greater Sudbury is a “City of Lakes,”** with 330 lakes within its municipal boundaries...;
- **Greater Sudbury is a green community** and a world leader in environmental protection, rehabilitation and innovation...;
- **Greater Sudbury is a healthy and sustainable community** which recognizes that the quality of life of our citizens is directly related to environmental, economic and social determinants...;
- **Greater Sudbury is open to business** and strives to provide an economic environment to retain and grow commercial and industrial enterprises and to attract new investment and human capital...; and
- **Greater Sudbury’s *Downtown* will be developed and sustained as the vibrant hub of a dynamic city...** (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, pp.4-5, emphasis in original)

Thus, the vision – which was developed by “...drawing on past community initiatives and public consultation” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.3) – seems to be made up of various statements recognizing the City’s *current* assets which are to be promoted and built upon. This is in contrast to the vision statement put forth in the Youngstown 2010 Plan, which is based more on a vision of how Youngstown *should be* in the future.

Using this “collective vision” as a basis, the Plan then outlines four key principles which will “...guide future change, growth and development in the City” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.5). The first principle deals with the **importance of a balanced approach** to local development; indeed, according to the Plan, it is “...a Council priority for Greater Sudbury to be a Healthy Community offering a high quality of life to its residents” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.5). Sudbury has adopted the healthy community model, recognizing that “...the quality of life of citizens is a product of economic, social and natural environments...” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.5). According to the Plan, health determinants include level of citizen engagement, opportunities for employment, access to health care and fitness facilities, and

educational opportunities. The second principle states that **economic development is essential** to Sudbury's future as a healthy community. This principle recognizes that one of the important purposes of the Official Plan is to "...provide a policy framework which supports economic development initiatives and facilitates the implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Plan" (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.6). In order to attract economic development, the Plan emphasizes the importance of improving quality of place in order to attract and retain "talented" individuals. The third principle emphasizes the **importance of protecting the natural environment** through the principles of "sustainable development," which involve ensuring that natural resources are used in the most efficient and environmentally sensitive way possible. The last principle is a general one **involving the importance of building on existing assets** such as the large number of lakes in the City and the growing mining supply and services cluster. According to the Plan, "Greater Sudbury must build upon its strengths and recognize where opportunities exist to improve our community" (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.8).

Importantly, the next section of the Plan details the context of the planning process, including the demographic context. It is clear in this section that local officials expect the demand for housing to increase in Sudbury in the future; this increased demand is expected to come from new residents or existing residents or both:

Projecting population change beyond the immediate future is particularly difficult in Northeastern Ontario. Greater Sudbury has made economic development a priority and a strategic plan has charted the way for numerous initiatives. There is optimism that these efforts will yield the necessary employment to fuel population growth. Whatever the future growth scenario, decreasing household sizes, changing demographics, and shifts in housing preferences will continue to create demand for new housing with or without population growth over the plan period. (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.9)

As such, many of the "key observations" about the Plan's context revolve around the capacity of the city – for instance, its physical infrastructure and employment opportunities – to

accommodate the population growth which is expected to happen. While there is acknowledgement that the population of Greater Sudbury is ageing (“like Canada as a whole,” the Plan is quick to point out), there is no mention of the possibility of future population decline. Again, as with the vision, the context factors seem to simply state that the City has many assets, including 330 lakes, which should be capitalized upon to improve quality of life for existing residents and to attract new residents.

Next, the Plan outlines its **land-use** objectives and policies. In general, the Plan’s land-use policies are based on the fundamental recognition that creating policies for a city that is so large in total area (3,627 square kilometres) and that is home to several distinct communities is a challenge. The Plan defines Greater Sudbury’s “urban structure” as containing three types of settlements: Communities, Non-Urban Settlements, and Rural and Waterfront Areas.

Communities are “seen as the primary focus of residential development and will absorb most of our projected growth. Communities also encompass the majority of our designated Employment Areas” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.19). There is no intention to expand infrastructure services such as sewer and water to Non-Urban Settlements, which are primarily residential in nature, or Rural and Waterfront Areas, in which seasonal waterfront uses on non-urban lakes dominate. Thus, the land-use planning policies contained in Sudbury’s Official Plan are based on the general premise that population growth is to happen within areas that are already serviced by municipal infrastructure. Again, there is no mention of what land-use policies would be used should Sudbury’s population decline.

In directing where future growth is to occur, the Plan’s land-use policies deal with the particular challenges facing physical infrastructure, in particular the “...necessarily complex network of infrastructure that needs to be maintained, upgraded, and in some situations,

expanded” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.113). The set of policies dealing with physical infrastructure detail how and under what conditions infrastructure is to be improved and/or extended to accommodate current and future developments. The guiding principle is that the Plan seeks to ensure that “...water supply and sewer capacity are adequate to service development without major line or plant expansion” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.137). Finally, in terms of land-use policies the Plan details a number of measures to be taken to protect heritage resources and to improve urban design, particularly in downtown Sudbury, something which the Plan acknowledges is key to developing “quality of place.” With respect to the latter, the Plan explains that

...[i]n order to attract economic development opportunities and the skilled labour required to achieve strategic planning goals, the City must foster environments that emphasize human scale, accessibility, safety, attractiveness, innovation, and integration with both the existing built form and the natural environment. (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.153)

Thus, the main thrust of the land-use planning policies of Sudbury’s new Official Plan appear to be the steering of future growth to already-serviced “communities” and the improvement of infrastructure and “quality of place” (particularly in the Downtown) in order to attract economic development and new residents.

With respect to the **economic** and **social** policies contained in the Official Plan, while economic and social issues are mentioned throughout the Plan, they are more specifically discussed in the section of the Plan called Healthy People, Healthy Places. This section deals with the City’s “Healthy Community” approach to local development. According to the Plan:

The Healthy Community approach is rooted in the belief that social, environmental and economic factors are important determinants of our health. The City of Greater Sudbury has supported the Healthy Community approach to community development for a number of years. (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.169)

The Plan goes on to emphasize the importance of a “diverse and vital economy” to healthy communities. The policies put forth to achieve this – developed in the 2003 *Coming of Age* economic development strategy – are summarized in the Official Plan in order to provide “...policy direction for Council” in the achieving the broader community vision discussed above (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.169). In particular, the Plan quotes the *Coming of Age* economic development strategy’s five “engines for growth” which need to be developed:

- The best mining and supply services in the world
- A city of the creative, curious and adventuresome
- One of Ontario’s top four destinations
- A leader in health innovation and biotechnology
- A model for eco-industry and renewable energy (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.179; Greater Sudbury Development Corporation, 2003, pp.3-4)

The first of these “engines” – the mining supply and services sector – is the cornerstone of the city’s *Coming of Age* strategy. While both the Plan and the *Coming of Age* strategy recognize the importance of diversification, the strategy in particular also emphasizes the necessity of building on the city’s strength – mining – in order to strengthen the city’s economy as a whole.

Indeed, according to the strategy:

Sudbury’s rich mining history will be a springboard for gaining world class recognition for mining supply and services. The past is rooted almost exclusively underground in extracting ore by a few large industries. The future will take advantage of more diversified business opportunities using technologically complex processes. (Greater Sudbury Development Corporation, 2003, p.3)

As Sudbury informant S8, an employee with the City’s business development organization, puts it:

The mining industry will continue to be key to the City’s future. The bottom line is: you can diversify all you want and we continue to and that was part of the reason why the strategic plan was developed. But one of the engines is to be a world leader in mining supply and services. The bottom line is we are rich with the resources, so let’s not try to hide or walk away from... It would be like if you’re an incredible piano player, but you refuse to play the piano and you’ve decided you would prefer the tuba. You could still

learn to play the tuba, but if you're good at piano, you might as well be the best piano player you can be...

In order to nurture these engines of growth, including the mining supply and services sector, the Official Plan specifies that the four key “igniters” outlined in the strategy are essential and are to be facilitated by the land-use policies of the plan. These “igniters” include “...creating a culture of continuous learning, maintaining technology-readiness, investing in infrastructure, and developing quality of place” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.179; Greater Sudbury Development Corporation, 2003, pp.16-18). Of these igniters, of particular importance is investment in technology infrastructure. Since 1999, Sudbury has been investing in costly ICT infrastructure in a bid to attract technology-based companies. The city is now home to some 2500 kilometres of fibre optic cable and 150 kilometres of broadband cable (HRSDC, 2004). Both the Official Plan and the Coming of Age Strategy emphasize the importance of expanding and promoting Sudbury’s “technology readiness” in order to promote economic growth. All in all, the city’s economic development strategy, which has been incorporated into the Official Plan, calls for finding ways to ensure that both the economy and the population continue to grow. This is summed up in the overall “vision” of the Coming of Age document; that is, that “[t]he City of Greater Sudbury is a growing, world-class community bringing talent, technology and a great northern lifestyle together” (Greater Sudbury Development Corporation, 2003, p.18).

In addition to outlining the City’s economic development strategy for Council’s direction, the Plan mentions that the social policies developed in the *Human Services Strategy* should also provide policy direction for Council in its efforts to achieve the overall community vision discussed above. The *Human Services Strategy* was published in June 2005 by the Social Planning Council of Sudbury, an arms-length organization that was commissioned by the City in 2003 to develop a human services strategy as part of the Official Plan. Basically, the Strategy

provides direction in five “strategic areas” of municipal-level policy which are essential to achieving “...the quality of life to which Greater Sudburians aspire” (Social Planning Council of Sudbury, 2005, p.4). The first two strategic areas identified by the Social Planning Council involve increasing the role that citizens play in developing municipal policy. The Strategy directs the City to be more proactive in encouraging (and indeed establishing implementing standard procedures with regard to) citizen participation which is inclusive of residents of all levels of socio-economic status, race, gender, ethnicity, age, geographic location, ability, language, and sexual orientation. Next, Council is directed by the Strategy to establish a body within the municipality that is “...responsible for long-term human services planning and policy development...” (Social Planning Council, 2005, p.5). The next strategic area involves creating a vibrant community through strategies to “...promote social inclusion and diversity, population growth and poverty [which] are interconnected” (Social Planning Council, 2005, p.5). This is related to the next strategic direction which is to ensure that policies to achieve population growth include strategies relevant to Sudbury’s minority populations. Finally, the Social Planning Council calls on the City to take measures to reduce poverty and improve access to education, training, employment, and basic needs (including housing). In all, according to the Social Planning Council, strategies developed in these five strategic areas will improve the overall quality of life of Sudbury’s current and future population. Interestingly, the Strategy seems to imply that achieving population growth is necessary to improve the quality of life of Sudburians.

Unlike the economic development strategies, the *Human Services Strategy* is not summarized in any great detail in the City’s Official Plan. While the importance of considering the social welfare of local residents is mentioned throughout the Plan (particularly when

discussing the Healthy Community Model), the only place where social issues are discussed in any detail is in the “housing” section of the “Healthy people, healthy places” part of the Plan. According to this section, the main goal of the Plan’s housing policies is to provide “adequate and affordable housing for all residents [which is] a fundamental component of Greater Sudbury’s Healthy Community approach to growth and development” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.186). The Plan seeks to accomplish this goal by ensuring that zoning by-laws permit a wide variety of housing types, including low-income housing. For instance, it is a policy of the Plan to “prohibit conversion of rental units to condominium form of tenure when the apartment vacancy rate falls below three (3) percent...” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.187). On a more general level, in addition to outlining its land-use planning policies related to housing, the Plan directs Council to “...encourage housing providers to pursue housing opportunities that support the Economic Development strategic plan and its mission of creating an environment for citizens to prosper and experience a satisfying quality of life” (p.188). This is the extent of discussion in the plan on any purely “social” issue.

Finally, the Official Plan outlines policy in the area of the **natural environment**. Like the economic development and social strategies, these policies are to work in concert with a separately-developed document: the *EarthCare Local Action Plan*. As noted above, the City of Greater Sudbury has faced and continues to face a number of environmental challenges because of the presence of the mining industry. Throughout the years, and especially since the late 1970s, a number of reclamation efforts (many of them successful and the focus of national and international attention) have been made in order to “re-green” Sudbury. The *EarthCare Local Action Plan* was developed in 2003 by EarthCare Sudbury, which is a coalition of the City and local community groups (including Vale Inco and Xstrata Nickel) housed in the City’s

Department of Environmental Initiatives. The three main goals of the *EarthCare Plan* are as follows:

The first of these is to enhance the environmental health of Greater Sudbury – to improve the quality of our air, land, water and living systems – and in so doing, improve the social and economic well-being of future generations. The second goal is to encourage each of us to take environmental responsibility by carrying out local actions that contribute to community sustainability and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. The third goal is to share the knowledge and experience gained here with Sudbury’s citizens and other communities. (City of Greater Sudbury, 2003, p.1)

Interestingly, the word “mining” is mentioned only a handful of times throughout the entire document. While the past damage inflicted by the mining industry (as part of the Industrial, Commercial, and Institutional Sector) is acknowledged, when the role of the sector in improving Sudbury’s environment is addressed, the focus is on ensuring industrial, commercial, and industrial buildings to become more energy efficient. Furthermore, the onus is put on the businesses to take action on a voluntary basis: “The well-informed business will be aware of global best practices and can consider whether to adopt them within its own operations” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2003, p.50). Much more emphasis is placed in the *EarthCare Plan* on what local residents can do to decrease their negative impacts on the environment, such as composting and eliminating the use of non-essential pesticides.

The Official Plan policies on protecting the natural environment – which are intended to support the objectives set out in the *EarthCare Sudbury Local Action Plan* – are also relatively silent on the responsibility of the mining companies in cleaning up past damage and minimizing future damage. Indeed, other than in a small section entitled “Mine hazards and abandoned pits and quarries,” the mining industry is barely mentioned. In general, the stated goal of the Official Plan’s policies on the natural environment is to protect Sudbury’s natural assets (which are a “defining feature of the City’s image and appeal”) for future generations (City of Greater

Sudbury, 2008, p.73). In order to protect the City's natural assets, Official Plan policies are outlined in the areas of water, natural features, and human safety. For instance, policies are laid out with respect to protecting drinking water sources from potential contamination and depletion. One such policy is that "Council will work cooperatively with other agencies to protect and, where necessary, improve or restore the quality of drinking water resources" (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.77). Another policy calls for the creation of Subwatershed Plans in order to ensure that proper stormwater management practices are undertaken. Still another directs municipal staff to "...determine the potential for significant habitat of endangered species and threatened species at the application stage of any new development or redevelopment proposals" (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.93). Again, however, the role of local policy with respect to mining pollution (the main source of Sudbury's environmental damage) is not dealt with in any comprehensive way.

## **5.0 Summary**

Thus, in the context of numerous physical, economic, social, and environmental challenges, Sudbury's strategy – contained in its Official Plan and/or supplemented by the *Coming of Age* economic development plan, the *Human Services Strategy*, and the *EarthCare Sudbury Local Action Plan* – seems to be largely focused on improving economic development and on attracting population to the city, while at the same time claiming to take a "balanced" approach to improving residents' quality of life. In general, the Plan seems to be based on the assumption that the City of Greater Sudbury will grow in the future. Does this Plan reflect any of the principles of good planning in shrinking cities as laid out in Chapter 3? If so, what factors led to adoption of the principles? If not, what factors impeded the adoption? The next chapter

examines this issue more closely with respect to both Sudbury's Official Plan and Youngstown's 2010 Plan.

## CHAPTER 7: AN EXAMPLE OF “GOOD PLANNING” IN SHRINKING CITIES?

### YOUNGSTOWN’S and SUDBURY’S PLANS IN COMPARISON

#### 1.0 Introduction

As seen in Chapter 2 and 3, the literature (including in particular the shrinking cities, strategic planning, and urban regeneration literature) reveals that “good planning” in shrinking cities must incorporate all of the following principles in order to have a positive impact, even in the context of population decline, on the quality of life offered to remaining residents:

- Planners must **leave behind the assumption of future growth**;
- Planners must use processes that are **strategic, with an emphasis on citizen participation**;
- Planners must **adopt a balanced approach** to addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community; and
- Planners must **change the role they play** in the community.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I introduced the context of the recent planning exercises in Youngstown, Ohio and Sudbury, Ontario and outlined the key details of each city’s plan. In this chapter, I use the general principles of good planning in shrinking cities gathered from the literature as a point of departure for comparing the plans. The result of this comparison is an assessment of how each planning exercise “measures up” against the principles of good planning and what factors facilitated or impeded the adoption or non-adoption of each principle. In the next and final chapter, I surmise how these case studies can provide lessons for planners in shrinking cities facing similar demographic decline and how the issues uncovered in this research can be used to further advance the growing body of theory concerning planning in shrinking cities.

## 2.0 A note about the influence of local officials and local plans over development trajectories

### 2.1 The influence of local officials

Before examining what local officials in each city seek to accomplish with their plans and how these plans were developed, it is necessary to ask: how much influence do local officials and the plans they craft have over determining a city's future development? In other words, does local policy matter? As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, in the context of globalization and particularly the increased mobility of capital and people, cities are becoming increasingly vulnerable to global forces beyond their control. This does not mean, however, that they are losing significance. Bradford (2002) argues that "cities are *the* places where today's major economic, social, and environmental challenges most visibly intersect" (p.iv, emphasis in original). According to Hebdon & Jalette (2008), municipalities provide services that are

...essential to the vitality of our communities and the quality of life of their citizens. The security, health, and enrichment of our daily lives depend on the effective delivery of such services as: parks and recreation; museums, art galleries, and libraries; police, fire, and ambulance; health and human; and water and waste. (p.144)

In fact, especially in Canada, in recent years the federal and provincial governments have both increased municipal responsibilities. As Bradford (2002) explains:

In the past decade, both federal and provincial governments have passed responsibility to municipal authorities for significant aspects of urban infrastructure, ranging from transportation and communications to social services and cultural programs. (p.iii)

In planning for and delivering a growing number of services, local actors play a very real and very direct role in determining the quality of life of the citizens that live within the boundaries over which those actors preside: "*quality local places* ... generat[e] prosperity and well-being for citizens and nations" (p.v, emphasis in original). As Slack (2009) states, local actors are "critical in shaping the physical, social, and economic character" of metropolitan areas (p.1). In a very

tangible way, then, local actors in both growing and declining cities have an important role to play in determining the quality of life of local residents.

However, despite the influence municipalities have over the daily lives of their citizens, it must be recognized that municipalities do not operate within a “vacuum.” That is, in addition to being influenced by outside forces such as globalization, the role of local government in influencing future development within their boundaries in both countries is filtered through historical constitutional relationships which serve to limit the scope of their authority and which place financial constraints on exercising the authority they possess. That being said, in a number of ways, municipalities in the United States tend to enjoy more autonomy in developing local policy and in collecting revenue than in Canada. For instance, as a general rule, in both Canada and the United States, municipalities are only allowed to exercise the powers granted to them by provincial and state governments respectively. In Canada, the *Constitution Act, 1867* grants authority over municipalities to the provincial government. In the United States, the *Tenth Amendment* of the *United States Constitution* makes local government a matter of the state. That means, generally, municipal officials in both countries may only develop policies within their boundaries to the extent to which that responsibility has been expressly delegated by a higher level of government. However, many municipalities in the United States, including those in Ohio, have been granted “home rule,” which means that they “...may adopt laws for purposes of local self-government that are not specifically forbidden by or in conflict with general law” (Brubaker, 1998). Thus, while still being a creature of state government, home rule municipalities in states such as Ohio have more autonomy in policy-making. Youngstown is such a municipality. There is no equivalent status in Canada, where municipalities remain more constrained by provincial authority.

In terms of funding, Canadian municipalities are more limited in terms of revenue sources. In recent years in Ontario, for instance, while federal and provincial governments have downloaded more responsibilities onto municipalities, they have done so “...without providing the resources...[M]unicipalities are left to foot the bill” (Slack & Bird, 2008, p.73). Indeed, municipalities in Canada have only “...very limited fiscal autonomy,” depending largely on property taxes, user fees, and conditional provincial transfers, which have decreased in recent years (Slack & Bird, 2008, p.73).<sup>55</sup> As Maxwell (2002) explains, even though there is “...growing recognition of the national and local importance of urban spaces as the site of innovation, economic development and social and political interaction,” there is also “...growing concern that existing policy, planning, and financial arrangements cannot address current challenges to urban success or the tasks devolved to cities by senior governments” (p.i). This is likely exacerbated in shrinking cities which most often have shrinking municipal coffers. In comparison, while cities in the United States generally have comparable responsibilities in terms of the services they provide (with the exception of some American cities, particularly larger cities, having the added responsibility of hospitals, corrections, and airports), they are able to draw on other sources of income, such as income, sales (such as alcohol and tobacco taxes), and other local taxes (Slack, 2003; 2006). Larger American cities also receive more federal grants than do Canadian municipalities, to which federal grants are negligible (Slack, 2003). In terms of expenditures and revenues, Slack (2003) concludes that, in general, American cities have more local autonomy in terms of how local officials decide how to spend the money and from what sources that money is raised. Of particular note is Slack’s (2003) finding that:

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<sup>55</sup> It should be noted that, according to the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, the City of Toronto now has the authority (which it exercises) to collect a Land Transfer Tax. This tax is applied to purchases on all properties within the city and is in addition to the province’s Land Transfer Tax.

Greater access to other revenue sources (such as income and sales taxes) allows U.S. cities to have revenues that increase with the growth in the economy. The downside of reliance on these taxes, however, is that revenues can fall significantly when there is a downturn in the economy. (p.34)

Thus, municipalities in both the United States and Canada are limited to a certain extent in terms of their “room to manoeuvre” with respect to local policy-making and revenue-raising. Canadian cities are particularly constrained in terms of raising revenue. In spite of these limitations, in an era of increased down-loading, the role of Canadian and American municipal officials in affecting the quality of life of citizens within their jurisdiction is increasing. Indeed, even in areas outside of direct municipal responsibility, that influence may still be felt as many areas of municipal responsibility indirectly affect others; for instance, a land-use planning by-law (or ordinance, in the United States) passed by a municipal council may have profound economic, social, or environmental ramifications. In other words, in the context of increasing responsibility (if not increasing resources), local officials do indeed possess significant power to influence their development trajectories. In short, local policy matters. This is particularly important in the context of population decline, where, as mentioned in Chapter 3, there is a heightened need for coordinated planning. It is worthwhile at this point repeating Pallagst’s (2005) assertion that, in the shrinking cities, local governments play a “crucial” role.

## **2.2 The influence of the Youngstown 2010 Plan and Sudbury’s Official Plan**

Given the importance of local policy, what influence do Youngstown’s and Sudbury’s comprehensive or official plans have over their future development trajectories? In other words, why study these plans? On a general level, both the Youngstown 2010 Plan and Sudbury’s Official Plan (as supplemented by its economic, social, and environmental strategic plans) are intended to be a framework upon which future policy and planning decisions made by local officials in each city are based. Thus, it is important to analyze in what direction each seeks to

move the city. Of course, particularly in the case of Sudbury's Official Plan, not all policies contained within each document carry the same amount of weight in terms of their direct effect on decision-making. City Council in Sudbury, by virtue of the *Planning Act*, is legally bound by the policies contained in its Official Plan. However, in some matters the Plan provides specific direction to Council while in others the policies are mere suggestions. For instance, policies pertaining to land-use (for example, directing where intensification is to occur or protecting employment lands) are quite specific in directing Council, who must adhere to these policies in its decisions. When Council fails to act in accordance with the Official Plan in a land-use planning matter, in most circumstances its action will be subject to appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board (an administrative tribunal in Ontario which deals with local land-use planning matters) or to judicial review by the courts.

However, in terms of those economic, social, and environmental matters contained in the Plan not strictly related to issues of land-use, Official Plan policies merely encourage Council to make decisions which will assist in accomplishing the goals set out in the economic, social, and environmental strategic plans. For instance, a strategy outlined in the *Coming of Age* economic plan is to encourage the growth of small businesses in the city. One of the Official Plan's policies on this point is to direct Council to "...encourag[e] more experienced business persons [both working and retired] to volunteer their time to serve as mentors for new small businesses..." (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.184). In other words, the economic, social, and environmental strategic plans which are summarized or referred to in the Official Plan have been translated into policies that provide guidance to Council in terms of suggestions for future action. Thus, in Sudbury, it is in the area of land-use planning that the Official Plan has the most direct influence. However, because they are contained or at least referred to in the Official Plan –

which has been adopted by Council – the economic, social, and environmental strategies carry more influence than had they remained as purely separate documents.

In Youngstown, the force of the 2010 Plan, including the land-use policies contained therein, is that it provides guidance for Council. It is important to note at this point that the “2010” label refers only to census markers – it is not a projected goal. Officials are not sure how long the process will take and 2010 will be used as an opportunity to reflect on what has worked and what has not. According to the Plan itself, Youngstown 2010 is a “citywide plan” that is “...a guide for the community and future city administrations to follow and implement.

Although change is inevitable, this document is intended to provide a solid foundation for a cleaner, green, and more efficient city” (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.7). Later, the Plan states that “[i]ndividual projects and decisions must conform to the new Youngstown 2010 Citywide Plan” (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.127). But will the Plan have any legal effect? According to Chapter 713 of the *Revised Code of Ohio*, any zoning ordinances adopted by Council must be done in accordance with “any plan.” The legal impact of the Plan thus depends on how broadly “any plan” is interpreted and given Ohio’s “hands-off” approach to planning discussed in Chapter 5, it seems unlikely that it intended for cities to adopt a citywide plan prior to creating or amending zoning ordinances. That being said, the Plan has been adopted by council and both the Plan itself and local officials indicate that the City of Youngstown’s zoning ordinances are to be updated in accordance with the 2010 Plan’s new policy direction, so at least in the area of land-use, the Plan policies will have direct influence. Like Sudbury, the economic, social, and environmental matters dealt with in the Youngstown 2010 Plan are meant to provide Council with a general guidance when making decisions in those particular areas.

On a more general level, in both cities most participants identified each recently-developed Plan (including the supplemental strategic plans in Sudbury) as the key documents providing the framework for city policy. In other words, they represent the direction in which local officials (and, to a greater or lesser extent, local residents) wish to steer the future development of each city and reveal underlying assumptions of how the city will develop in the future and what issues are more important than others. The remaining sections of this chapter assess whether these plans and the processes used to create them adopt the general principles of good planning in shrinking cities and what factors encouraged or militated against their adoption.

### **3.0 First Principle: Planners must leave behind the assumption of future growth**

As noted in Chapter 3, as a first step in effective planning in shrinking cities, planners must abandon the assumption that future population growth is both a likelihood and a necessity. According to shrinking cities researchers, focusing on planning for and attracting future growth when it is unlikely is not only inefficient, but may prove detrimental to urban development in the long run (for instance by continuing to allow the city to sprawl, resulting in further “perforation” of the urban structure and by leading to burn-out amongst local officials). Strategies to attract new growth may divert much-needed resources in shrinking cities away from more pressing issues, wasting scarce resources. It is worthwhile mentioning again Polèse and Shearmur’s (2006) caution that the core premise that a region can “grow” again if it correctly organizes itself is ill-suited to the needs of shrinking communities. Instead, planners in shrinking cities must be realistic about demographics and must develop policies which focus on managing future population decline where that is the most likely demographic scenario. Above all, shrinking cities researchers assert that planners in shrinking cities must focus on improving the quality of life of residents who remain by realizing that with population decline comes a number of

opportunities to make a smaller, more liveable city. Importantly, these researchers also admit that the transition away from planning for growth will not be easy for any city, particularly in the North American context. Do the Youngstown 2010 Plan and the Sudbury Official Plan each incorporate this principle for good planning in the context of population decline?

### **3.1 Youngstown 2010**

Indeed, if one is to believe recent media reports, the Youngstown 2010 Plan is a break from the emphasis on growth so prevalent in urban planning. For instance, Aeppel (2007) explains that

...rather than struggle to retain its former glory or population, [Youngstown] has adopted an economic-development plan that boils down to controlled shrinkage. By accepting the inevitable, the city says it can reduce its housing stock, infrastructure and services accordingly. (p.1)

Adjectives used by the media to describe the Plan were listed in Chapter 5. Terms like “monumental” and “cutting edge” have been used to explain the importance of the apparent shift to decline-oriented planning in the Youngstown 2010 Plan into context. For example, El Nassar (2006) refers to the Plan as an “exception.” Logan (2007) describes it as “... a monumental step in the fact of the US growth paradigm.” Russell (2008) refers to the Plan as a “...radical experiment.” Similar descriptions of the importance of the Plan are also beginning to appear in the academic literature: Pallagst (2005) explains that Youngstown’s Plan is “almost revolutionary given US planning traditions. For the first time a shift in paradigm is about to occur leading from growth to ‘shrinking smart’” (p.8). Media reports have been particularly quick to question the “sanity” behind Youngstown’s apparent acceptance of future population decline. For example, after Mock (2008) describes Youngstown’s plan to downsize its infrastructure, he asks:

But how exactly does a city sustain itself while shrinking? By 2030, a population of 73,000 will become 54,000, which will eventually become 20,000 – and then what? Size may not matter, but density does, especially to solidify a tax base that can support schools and media. Is Youngstown sealing its fate by shrinking out of existence? (pp.41-42)

But has there really been a shift away from the growth paradigm in the City of Youngstown?

In fact, when one delves beneath the media hype by closely inspecting the contents of the Youngstown 2010 Plan and by speaking with local officials, it is clear that the Plan does not represent a “clean break” from growth-oriented planning. Rather than accepting projections that the population will continue to decline, the Plan is prefaced with the following statement:

Linear population projections produced by the Ohio Department of Development and analyzed by Youngstown’s metropolitan planning organization... indicate that by 2030, Youngstown’s population will fall to 54,000. Linear projections may be accurate if there is no change in the status quo. Youngstown 2010 is a chance to change the status quo and *alter the slope* of the projected line. (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.7; emphasis added)

It is not explicitly stated whether the policies contained in the Plan seek to make the slope of the projected line less steep, flat, or tilted in the direction of population growth. However, document and interview transcript analysis reveal that the Youngstown 2010 Plan is based not on the assumption that Youngstown will continue to shrink, but on the acceptance that it has already shrunk and on the belief that offering an improved quality of life will stem the population outflow and even attract a modest number of residents in the future (although not to previous levels). In other words, the Plan characterizes Youngstown not as a *shrinking city*, but as a *shrunk city* that has stabilized and that will attract future growth if certain measures are put into place. In that way, although there is focus inward on the quality of life of local residents, one “eye” remains focused outward on maximizing the attractiveness of the city to potential in-migrants, something which shrinking cities researchers caution against. This dual sentiment is revealed in several of the Plan’s statements. For instance:

- The Plan’s Vision emphasizes the importance of accepting that Youngstown is a smaller city that must recreate itself “...as a sustainable mid-sized city” (p.18).
- After describing the city’s decline, the Plan explains that “Youngstown 2010 is a planning process to pick up the pieces and organize them to set the stage for sustainable regeneration in the new economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (p.15).
- The Plan’s policies are geared towards improving “...the attractiveness of Youngstown as a place to live and do business” (p.19). Through this Plan, the City of Youngstown “...is positioned to become a competitive city once again” (p.19).
- Policies set forth to increase recreation and open space are justified in part as providing a way to improve the quality of life of existing residents but also as a means of attracting new economy jobs and workers: “Adequate recreational opportunities have become a major factor for business location, especially with high tech firms. [Establishing these] will make Youngstown more attractive to such businesses” (p.47).
- Capitalizing on opportunities to “green” the city is seen as a way to attract “...business and industry in the new millennium” (p.49).
- While the amount of land set aside for residential use is decreased by 30%, this is a rather “...conservative reduction... Leaving excess land in residential use allows the City to retain the ability to absorb new residential development should the need arise” (p.50).
- The Plan classifies current nodes of commercial establishments on major corridors as “priority business clusters” which “...will serve as growth poles and as demand develops, growth will spread outward along the corridor” (p.52).

Importantly, nowhere is it stated that Youngstown officials, through the policies contained in the 2010 Plan, are managing future population decline.

Essentially, then, Youngstown 2010 is based on the notion that the city's physical structure needs to be "shrunk" to meet current population levels, not on the acceptance of the continued loss of population. Realizing this distinction is important: accepting *shrinking* represents a complete paradigm shift away from traditional growth-oriented planning; in accepting *shrinkage*, remnants of the growth paradigm remain as one of the reasons for downsizing infrastructure is to once again make the city an attractive destination for new residents. Failing to make the distinction may have led to misconceptions that Youngstown officials have accepted being a *shrinking* city. This means, then, that there has not been a wholesale shift away from the growth paradigm in Youngstown and in fact its approach may not be as groundbreaking and as unique as has been portrayed.

That being said, it is important to note that the characterization of the Youngstown 2010 Plan as somehow "different" is not completely off the mark: so publicly admitting that the city's population has shrunk and that infrastructure needs to be downsized is a monumental step in North American planning culture where, as was stated in Chapter 1, "[g]rowth is to ... civic leaders what publicity is to Hollywood stars; there is no such thing as bad growth and no such thing as too much of it" (Leo & Anderson, 2006, p.169). There was the sense amongst local officials, community leaders, and residents that something "different" needed to be done. As mentioned in Chapter 5, a number of factors contributed to the adoption of a new approach, including: the removal of the "old guard," including key actors in the business community (including the steel industry) and local politicians who had, up until this point, according to one informant been "calling the shots;" the recognition that the city had "bottomed out" and needed a new approach; and the fortuitous coming together of young leaders who were open to doing

something different and experts with experience planning in shrinking cities. As well, local residents were receptive to an approach which was not based on false promises of future growth:

Over the past several decades, lots of promises have been made, lots of ideas have been made ... “this will save Youngstown, do this...” a new factory here, a promise from a national politician and I think the community had just grown weary of these empty promises that were these unattainable goals... People were looking to embrace something real. (Youngstown informant Y14)

All of these factors resulted in a highly publicized and broadly-based break from tradition in Youngstown, a first in North American planning culture. While other cities may be pursuing strategies to downsize their physical structure privately, few, if any, have brought the discussion into the public realm in such an honest way, especially in the form of a widely publicized citywide plan. According to Shames (2006), Youngstown 2010 is likely the first plan in the United States to include a section on addressing vacant and abandoned property. The Plan’s honesty about the need to adapt to being a smaller city that will not reach previous population levels – as well as its focus on finding opportunities associated with being a smaller city and the open discussion amongst local officials regarding ways that “smaller can be better” – is in North American planning culture monumental (Pallagst, 2005).

As well, although some shrinking cities may be pursuing strategies to downsize their physical structure behind the scenes, as the shrinking cities literature points out, growth-oriented planning in the context of population decline remains the norm. Thus, even policies aimed at downsizing to current population levels is a break from planning tradition and represents a step towards true decline-oriented planning as defined in the shrinking cities literature. Nonetheless, given the likelihood that Youngstown’s current population decline will continue, one must question whether this “first step” goes far enough and whether denial of realistic demographic prospects remains.

### 3.2 Sudbury's Official Plan

In contrast the Youngstown 2010 Plan, a search of newspaper article databases such as Factivia reveals that the creation and adoption of Sudbury's new Official Plan received relatively little (that is, hardly any) media attention. Attention paid tended to be comprised of reports on narrow legal issues pertaining to the Plan's land-use policies. The comparative lack of media attention is likely a result of a number of factors which distinguish this case from the Youngstown case. For instance, as will be discussed below, Sudbury officials did not use the media to the extent it was used in Youngstown to inform the public and solicit their involvement. As well, unlike the Youngstown 2010 Plan, interviews and document review in the Sudbury case did not reveal a sense that the city was embarking on the process of creating a new Official Plan in order to address any pressing physical (as was the case Youngstown's pressing, and visible, physical decay), economic, environmental, or social issues. As noted in Chapter 6, when asked why the City created a new Official Plan, informants cited practical reasons: that is, the fact that city officials wanted to consolidate the plans of the former municipalities of the region into one comprehensive document and the city was required by the *Planning Act* to review its existing plan at least once every 5 years. For instance, as Sudbury informant S1 explains, the main reason for creating the new Official Plan was:

...the fact that the city was reconstituted in 2001 as the City of Greater Sudbury, so we used to have former Regional government, so our local government was restructured. We amalgamated a number of municipalities together into 1 single city and we saw that there's a value in having a single plan. It was sort of like a mantra: one plan for one city.

While some informants suggested that the city wanted to create a new vision for the newly amalgamated city, the primary motivation was practical, which likely contributed to the relative lack of media attention. In comparison to Youngstown, while experiencing its share of issues, especially economic and social concerns, Sudbury was not seeking, through its Official Plan, to

pick itself up from “rock bottom.” Youngstown had lost the industry upon which it relied and in the context of extensive physical decline, was in search of a new identity. Mining continues to be a productive industry in Sudbury and thus even when the industry is in a downturn, there is an expectation that it will improve. According to Sudbury informant S8:

When [mining] is strong, that is felt across every sector in this community... It is very important and it needs to be and there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. As long as we're able to make sure that... we are *very* much a cyclical economy and we have to ensure that what we're doing in all the other areas when it does dip we're able to weather that storm... There will always be a downturn.

In fact, a content search of Sudbury's two largest papers – the *Sudbury Star* and the *Northern Life* – for the terms “mining” versus “Official Plan” reveals that much more focus is paid in local Sudbury newspapers to the fortunes of the mining industry than issues related to Official Plans. This may reflect (and indeed, reinforce) the possibility that local residents see their futures as being determined by the fortunes of the mining company rather than the actions of planners, hence less interest in the planning process. In comparison, in Youngstown, the steel industry had long since moved on from the city and according to informants, the removal of the “old guard” played a role in adopting a new approach. As will be discussed in the next chapter, how the presence of a dominant industry in resource or industrial towns influences over perceptions of the efficacy of planning is an important area of future research.

Finally, the lack of media attention also likely stems from the fact that, unlike in the case of the Youngstown 2010 Plan, Sudbury officials did not appear to be doing anything “different” in crafting its new Official Plan. Like many other shrinking cities, Sudbury's Official Plan is based on the assumption that Sudbury, if various strategies are put into place, will attract population. While the Plan briefly acknowledges the possibility that population might decline, the prevailing sentiment seems to be that population decline would not be a positive occurrence:

Projecting population change beyond the immediate future is particularly difficult in Northeastern Ontario. Greater Sudbury has made economic development a priority and a strategic plan has charted the way for numerous initiatives. There is optimism that these efforts will yield the necessary employment to fuel population growth. Whatever the future growth scenario, decreasing household sizes, changing demographics, and shifts in housing preferences will continue to create demand for new housing with or without population growth over the plan period. (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.9)

In fact, in a draft Discussion Paper on Sudbury's "Growth and Settlement/Development Options" (part of the City of Greater Sudbury's Infrastructure Background Study completed in preparation for the creation of the Official Plan), city officials considered whether Sudbury's infrastructure within existing boundaries was "...capable of accommodating...anticipated growth" over the next twenty years (Meridian Planning Consultants, 2005, p.1). As such, the document was meant to provide "...the technical basis for assigning expected growth to specific geographical areas so that engineering and transportation modeling exercises can be undertaken" (Meridian Planning Consultants, 2005, p.1).

In determining what this "anticipated growth" would be, four future population scenarios were considered: the first based on "out-migration exceeding natural increase and in-migration" (resulting in large population decline to 135,407 by 2021), the second based on "out-migration and in-migration have no net effect, leaving natural increase to affect population levels" (resulting in slight population decline to 150,012 by 2021, but an increase in the number of households due to decreasing average household sizes), the third based on "in-migration exceeding out-migration" (resulting in moderate population increase to 169,579 by 2021), and the fourth based on "high in-migration exceeding out-migration" (resulting in large population increase to 175,000 by 2011) (Meridian Planning Consultants, 2005, p.3). The first three scenarios were based on population projections while the last was based on a "...stated desire to achieve 175,000 population in 2014" (Meridian Planning Consultants, 2005, p.9). In the ensuing

discussion of how much land should be set aside for residential purposes, while there is a technical discussion on how growth should be distributed, there is no discussion on how decline would be dealt with, should it happen. In fact, it is stated that for the decline scenario, "...no technical analysis is needed" (Meridian Planning Consultants, 2005, p.6). A similar lack of policy solutions for dealing with the effects of population decline, should it occur, is absent from the Housing Background Study, which examined issues related to the projected supply of and demand for housing in Sudbury (Greater Sudbury, 2005).

Furthermore, while the decline scenario is mentioned, the tone of the document is one of dealing with development in a growing city. Terms such as "anticipated growth" and "future growth" are scattered throughout the document. What will happen to the city's physical structure should the population decline is not considered in any meaningful way. In fact, in interviews for this research, when informants were asked if strategies for population decline were considered during the planning process, one informant (a city planner) said "no, we didn't get there. We didn't say that. We picked [the growth scenario]" (Sudbury informant S12). Another said: "...rightly or wrongly we're still focused on growth and I don't know that we're very much focused on the decline part of it. I think partly because it's very hard for people to admit that eventuality" (Sudbury informant S3). This lack of paradigm shift from growth-oriented to decline-oriented planning may prove problematic in the future. In fact, during the planning process, planners received feedback from higher-level officials, who expressed concern that the Plan's higher growth estimates were "not based on standard growth projections methodology" (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, letter, March 21, 2006). These officials were concerned that despite the fact that population in Sudbury is likely to decrease in the next 20 years, the Plan sets aside a disproportionate amount of land for urban uses. They stressed the

importance that the city has a “practical handle” on expected population changes in order to “appropriately plan for anticipated change.” This echoes from Hall’s (2007) research which examined whether planners in Sudbury were being realistic in their assessment of the city’s demographic future. She found that the majority of planners are indeed unwilling to consider that Sudbury is currently in a state of population decline or no-growth. In fact, at times in her research, when she suggested the contrary, some informants refused to speak with her while others appeared openly irritated by her suggestion. According to “some” of her key informants, Sudbury should not be planning for future decline or no-growth (Hall, 2007, p.83).

For those reasons, Sudbury’s Official Plan is based largely on managing and directing projected future population growth, instead of developing strategies to deal with possible future population decline. This persistence of the growth paradigm plays out in many of the specifics of the Official Plan. For instance:

- The first major section of the Plan is entitled “Managing Growth and Change.”
- One “pillar” of the Plan’s Vision, which is largely a list of the city’s already-existing assets, is that Greater Sudbury is “**open to business** and strives to provide an economic environment to retain and grow commercial and industrial enterprises and to attract new investment and human capital” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.4, emphasis in original).
- Plan policies are geared towards improving quality of place, both to improve quality of life for existing residents and to attract and retain talent. According to the Plan, improving quality of place is crucial to growing the city’s economy.

- The Plan states that existing infrastructure (such as water, wastewater, and transportation) can support new growth, but does not mention what will happen if the population declines.
- In discussing where growth is likely to happen within the city, the Plan states that the **“community of Sudbury...will continue to be a major focus of growth and change.** The former City of Sudbury currently provides three quarters of the jobs for residents of the City. This concentration will grow as the service, educational and health sectors of the local economy expand in the future” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.10, emphasis in original).
- Policies with respect to how the city’s urban structure is to develop mention that growth and development is to happen in areas already serviced by municipal infrastructure. In other words, the city will focus on in-fill development by steering new growth to already serviced locations.
- In discussing the need to invest in infrastructure, the Plan states that Sudbury’s “...vast geographic area, combined with new obligations imposed under amalgamation and other provincial directives, have resulted in a necessarily complex network of infrastructure that needs to be maintained, upgraded, and in some situations, **expanded**” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.113, emphasis added).
- In general, the words “growth and development” are scattered throughout the Plan. For instance, in discussing issues related to housing, the Plan states that “[a]dequate and affordable housing for all residents is a fundamental component of Greater Sudbury’s Healthy Community approach to growth and development” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.186).

The focus on planning for growth is similarly reflected in the economic, social, and environmental plans that are summarized or referred to in the Official Plan. For example:

- The *Coming of Age* economic development strategic plan mentions that Sudbury is like many cities in that it "...aspires to growth and sustainability" (Greater Sudbury Development Corporation, 2003, p.7). The plan explicitly adopts Richard Florida's "creative class" thesis in stating that, following his thesis, it is essential that Sudbury offer an "enviable quality of life" in order to attract "talented individuals" (p.3). In developing the strategic plan, the authors learned from the experiences of other cities that local officials in Sudbury need to "...alter policies that impede growth and to promote the virtues of living, visiting and doing business" in the city (p.10). While the plan discusses the trend of out-migration, it sees a trend reversal as both possible and essential for the city's "sustainable prosperity" (p.13). The ultimate result of these strategies is that Sudbury is a "growing, world-class community bringing talent, technology and a great northern lifestyle together" (p.18).
- The *Human Services Strategy*, which is focused on social issues, indicates that "...attracting immigration and improving the quality of life for current citizens plays an important role in improving the local economy" (Social Planning Council of Sudbury, 2005, pp.5-6). Overall, the Human Services Strategy seems to be based on the assumption that "achieving population growth" is essential to having a "vibrant community" (p.22). As such, the strategy is geared towards how social issues should be included in the city's growth strategy, instead of how social issues can be addressed if the population declines. For instance, the strategy recommends ensuring that historically disadvantaged groups – such as Aboriginals, visible minorities, and gay, bisexual,

lesbian, and transgender communities – are included in the city’s “overall population growth strategy” (p.6).

- While the *Earthcare Sudbury Local Action Plan*, which deals with the city’s non land-use related environmental issues, does not provide much discussion on the city’s demographic prospects, it does echo the economic development strategy’s focus on improving quality of place as a means of attracting “talented” individuals. According to Earthcare, these people will be attracted by a “clean and healthy environment, diverse and accessible recreational opportunities, and abundant lifestyle amenities” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2003, p.45).

Thus, all of the policies and strategies in key documents guiding Sudbury’s future development are fixed strongly within the growth paradigm. While there is talk of ensuring that existing infrastructure is used efficiently, this is done in the context of deciding where it is desirable to steer future growth. Improving quality of life, while discussed to a certain extent in terms of improving the experiences of existing residents, is generally seen as a way to attract new residents in the “new economy.”

Interestingly, if one examines the Official Plans of the former Regional Municipality of Sudbury and the plans of its constituent municipalities, one sees that not all of those plans were based on the assumption of future growth. Indeed, this “consolidation in the face of growth” approach was apparent in the previous Official Plan for the Regional Municipality of Sudbury – originally passed by Council in 1978 and last updated in July 2004 – which designated one community in each of the component municipalities as “growth centres” (Regional Municipality of Sudbury, 1978, p.1). These centres were to attract a majority of the expected population growth while “remaining settlements” would “be allowed to infill” but would “rely largely on the

growth centres for most of their goods and services” (Regional Municipality of Sudbury, 1978, p.1). The Regional Official Plan predicted that the population of Sudbury would increase to 228,000 by 1996 and 350,000 by 2025, an increase of 1.5% per year. This is despite the fact that, at the time the Regional Official Plan was written (in the mid-1970s), population had already declined in Sudbury from 168,371 in 1971 to 166,121 in 1975. Creating the conditions that would result in this large population increase was listed as one of the “goals” of the plan. Despite many changes to the regional plan in subsequent years, this goal was not formally amended (Regional Municipality of Sudbury, 1978, Appendix C).

However, the Secondary Plan for the City of Sudbury (the largest constituent municipality in terms of population), adopted by Council in 1987 and remaining in effect until 2004, reveals that although this “growth goal” of the Regional Official Plan was never amended, by the mid-1980s, planners and the local officials (in the context of further population decline) were shifting away from basing policies on lofty population predictions and were concentrating on (at least in the area of land-use) planning in a “no growth or decline” scenario. This is revealed in the introduction to the Sudbury’s Secondary Plan – entitled “Land Use Policies for Qualitative Development” – which states:

*In a city experiencing conventional growth, land use planning has meant essentially two things, allocation of land for different uses and regulations to guide the use of such lands. In a city experiencing no growth or decline in quantitative terms, land use planning has to have a different focus. Although past commitments of land have to be acknowledged and various past regulations retained to guide development efforts, different policies and programs are also increasingly necessary in order to facilitate community conservation, infilling and redevelopment efforts. In a no growth situation qualitative development to improve the structure of the built form becomes a compelling imperative. (Greater Sudbury Planning Services Division, 1987, p.2-1, emphasis added)*

One of the “guiding principles” of the Secondary Plan is as follows:

In the absence of quantitative growth, the existing built form configuration is likely to remain virtually unchanged in the next twenty years; however, continuous qualitative

development will alter the internal structure of the built form and is likely to enhance the quality of the habitat... (Greater Sudbury Planning Services Division, 1987, p.2-1).

Specifically with respect to infrastructure, the Secondary Plan acknowledges the danger of allowing the city to spread out in the context of no-growth or decline:

Declining resources available to the municipality necessitate infill development of serviced land, contiguous development as opposed to leap frogging, and the minimization of total infrastructure expenditures... (Greater Sudbury Planning Services Division, 1987, p.2-2)

Furthermore, the Secondary Plan emphasizes that "...it is the intent of Regional Council to preserve stable areas..." (Greater Sudbury Planning Services Division, 1987, p.2-4). Thus, although planning for future population growth (in the context of actual population decline) was the overall thrust of planning in the mid-1970s, the Sudbury Secondary Plan reveals that during the 1980s, planners and local politicians were actively planning for a no-growth or decline scenario. While there is no mention of downsizing the existing built form in the Secondary Plan (even though there is an admission that the built environment is "out of proportion to the population size of the City"), the focus on controlling sprawl in the context of decline or no-growth (by, for instance, encouraging the reuse of "surplus" buildings) and a shift in emphasis from quantitative to qualitative development reveals that the growth paradigm was loosening its hold on Sudbury planners and local politicians (at least in the realm of land-use planning) long before relaxing its grip on local officials in Youngstown (Greater Sudbury Planning Services Division, 1987, p.2-2 and 8-8). However, in consolidating all of the existing secondary plans into the current Official Plan and adopting a more "competitive" approach, this slight shift away from growth-oriented planning in the Sudbury Secondary Plan has been lost and once again planning for attracting and managing future growth has become the focus.

#### **4.0 Second principle: Planners must use processes that are strategic, with an emphasis on citizen participation**

As stated in Chapter 3, one of the principles of “good planning” in shrinking cities set out in the shrinking cities, strategic planning, and urban regeneration literatures is that planning must incorporate key elements of strategic planning. First, planning that improves quality of life (that is, qualitative development) in declining cities is best done by pursuing strategies based on a comprehensive, integrated, long-range vision which emphasizes how a city *could* or *should* be. Secondly, the process of planning in shrinking cities must be inclusive in that any vision or plan must be developed through extensive and meaningful citizen participation. Thirdly, plans must be selective; that is, they must be focused on pressing issues so that local officials can use scarce resources where they will have the most effect. Fourthly, plans must be context-specific and, in particular, must be based on a realistic assessment of demographic trends. Fifthly, planning in shrinking cities should be flexible in order to avoid “lock-in” to strategies that may not be working. Finally, planning in shrinking cities must be integrative on a regional scale so that communities within a region cooperate, rather than waste scarce resources. Ultimately, however, according to the literature, what matters most in shrinking cities is the process of planning, not the outcome: the creation of a decision framework, put together by a wide range of actors (including actors from the entire region, not just the city), matters more than the document. Can the key elements of strategic planning important for shrinking cities be found in Youngstown and Sudbury?

#### **4.1 Youngstown 2010**

The Youngstown 2010 Plan, although it is called a “comprehensive plan” reads much more like a strategic plan. It contains a long-range Vision, upon which the “framework” for future planning (the Plan itself) is based. This framework is designed to be flexible:

Obviously, the city changes, the state, the nation, the world changes, the economics, the environment changes, so we'll want to make sure that the Youngstown 2010 Plan always remains relevant to the current state of affairs and also it's always pointing us towards the future. (Youngstown informant Y14)

The creation of the Vision included an extensive examination of the context in which the city was mapping its future, including a more or less honest discussion of the likelihood of future growth (although the hope for future growth, at least amongst local officials, remains, as discussed above). However, as will be discussed in more detail below, the Vision, although to a lesser degree than the Plan, is slightly unbalanced as it does spend a great deal of time on physical regenerations issues, likely due to the fact that the wide extent of physical decay in Youngstown has made it a priority issue for both local officials and the general population. For that reason, the comprehensiveness of the Vision can be questioned. However, regardless of the content of the Vision and Plan, what is important in Youngstown, and instructional for other shrinking cities, is the inclusive nature of the planning process used to create the Vision and Plan. As stated by Weichmann (2008b), plans may be forgotten, but what is learned during the process is what is important.

In the process of creating the Youngstown 2010 Plan, the City of Youngstown sought extensive, meaningful public participation. According to Youngstown informant Y13 (a university-based urban design consultant/academic):

I think that's YT's major strength is the level of civic engagement that they've been able to achieve as a result of having this open dialogue. This is who we are and this is what we're turning into and people have *embraced* it. Anthony Kobak [Youngstown's Chief Planner at the time the Plan was made] tells me that when he goes down to a community meeting and talks about development, people raise their hand and go excuse me, but I thought this process was about shrinking! The fact that they've been forthright about what's happening and what the potential of the city could be, people have embraced it in a way that if they stood up and had this rhetoric about growth, people would have been inherently sceptical of it, with good reason. So YT, their major strength is that they've been able to engage the population at that level with the honest dialogue.

Finnerty (2003) describes the 2010 planning process as a “unique collaborative planning process...” (p.4). According to Faga (2006), the Youngstown 2010 process is a “fascinating” and “promising” one (p.67). Skolnick (2008) asserts that the Youngstown 2010 process was particularly effective in engaging stakeholders. In total, more than 5000 residents participated in the process in one way or another; indeed, the amount of public interest and participation was unexpected and caught many off guard (Smith, 2007). As recognition for its efforts to encourage public participation, in 2007, the City was the recipient of the American Planning Association’s National Planning Excellence Award for Public Outreach. As Faga (2006) explains, “going into the process, City/YSU planners were mindful that strong public support would be needed to overcome any political roadblocks and to propel the plan into action” (Faga, 2006, p.65). Given the high level of public apathy planners faced when embarking on the Youngstown 2010 planning process, it is indeed significant that, in the end, “when the Youngstown public was faced with the choice to hang on to old ideas or move forward, they put aside their misgivings and joined the discussion” (Faga, 2006, p.67).

So, how did this “discussion” happen? As a result of the convergence of factors discussed in Chapter 5 that sparked interest in developing a new vision and plan for Youngstown, in 2001 then-Mayor George McKelvey and city council allocated \$300,000 in Community Development Block Grants for the planning process (Finnerty, 2003; Boardman, 2008).<sup>56</sup> That year, the City sent out a Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Phase 1 of comprehensive plan: the vision. At the same time, YSU was conducting its own visioning process and had also sent out RFPs for its plan update. As Finnerty (2003) explains, “as a first step in building collaboration, YSU’s Center for Urban and Regional Studies had a staff member

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<sup>56</sup> According to Boardman (2008), \$20,000 in Community Development Block Grants is allocated annually to helping the city advance the plan.

on both search committees” (p.2). When the city chose Urban Strategies, Inc., of Toronto, to facilitate the visioning process in late 2001, YSU “...delayed choosing a planning consultant so the university could fully participate in the city’s visioning process” (Finnerty, 2003, p.2). Soon after being chosen, the Urban Strategies team – consisting of partners George Dark and Frank Lewinberg, project manager and associate Pino Di Mascio, planner Oliver Jerschow, and urban designer Eric Turcotte – performed a reconnaissance of the city (using the expertise of the City and YSU) and then began the visioning process.

What was particularly unique about the Youngstown 2010 process was that, instead of beginning the visioning process with large public meetings where everyone would have their say (the traditional approach), Urban Strategies proposed a different approach to counteract the widespread cynicism that had already led to the failure of more than one renewal attempt. Urban Strategies proposed engaging local leaders in focus groups to develop an outline of a common vision before taking this vision to the public to for input. As Youngstown informant Y5 (an “outside” planner who was involved in facilitating the visioning process) explains:

What we said in the beginning was, “if this going to be successful, you have to take it seriously.” And that is a big part of it which is, we’re not just going to go out and have public meetings and advertise public meetings. You’ll get input that way, but it’s not how you make sure people take it seriously. It’s not how we get you to take it seriously.

In order to get people to take the process seriously, Urban Strategies proposed having the Mayor (in order to lend legitimacy to the process) invite community leaders to participate in focus groups and one-on-one interviews:

[We explained to Youngstown officials that] if you really want to start to tackle the issue, we’re going to sit down with you and with whoever else you think you need to bring to the table and start to list who the community leaders are. What we mean when we say “community leaders” are people who are active in all different kinds of discourses and different parts of civic engagement. Once you get them, they first of all can probably generally represent the various interests, the various issues that are going on in the city and two will then go back and talk to other people because they’re engaged in that. So, it

kind of works both ways – you get with a smaller group of people, a larger representation of ideas *and* you inevitably are talking to more people because you’re relying on them. (Youngstown informant Y5)

Urban Strategies needed to convince the City (who wanted to be all-inclusive right from the beginning) that this was the right approach:

...launching a grassroots public process by starting a conversation with selected members of the community seemed counterintuitive; and, indeed, the proposal met with initial resistance from Youngstown officials, who raised questions about possible elitism. But eventually, the city came around to the Urban Strategies approach (Faga, 2006, p.57).

As a first step in forming the focus groups, the YSU/City planning team identified Youngstown’s “influentials:” that is, people who “...knew what needed to happen and held some say among their peers” (Faga, 2006, p.58). These approximately 250 influentials included representatives from government, Neighbourhood Watch programs, social agencies, banks, and industries. The planning team made sure to include supporters and critics. With these leaders, Urban Strategies conducted 40-50 interview sessions (one-on-one or in small focus groups); particularly with respect to the focus groups:

[There were] about 15 to 20 people at each [focus group meeting] and what we told them at each of the session, you have to mix everyone. So, nobody gets to choose what session – well, they get to choose in terms of timeline, but they’re not topic-specific. We don’t want all the university people in one. We don’t want all the church people... because all you’re going to have is people talking about the same issues... In Youngstown, it really was kind of the first time people had been engaged at this level and had quite a bit to say so we got into quite interesting discussions. At the end of the session, we got a lot of good feedback. (Youngstown informant Y5)

Urban Strategies distilled the results of the interviews and focus groups into key issues and then held six stakeholder workshops where a SWOT analysis was done:

The discussions managed to evoke and clarify the diverse perspectives of these individuals on the issues and challenges facing Youngstown. The process also deepened their involvement and their stake in the success of Youngstown 2010. This influential group of citizens became the vision’s creators and champions. (Faga, 2006, p.59)

According to Finnerty (2003), “the level of concern, hope, and intensity expressed at the focus groups was palpable” (p.3). Between June 2002 and December 2002, Urban Strategies distilled the ideas into four vision principles which they then brought back to community leaders comments and criticism. They then crafted final document to present to public. In all, Urban Strategies progressively brought in more and more people to talk to each other about the issues in an “ever-widening circle of participation” (Faga, 2006, p.59).

Thus, before the wider public was consulted, the vision was crafted with the input of community leaders. The visioning process culminated with public meeting in December 2002 in 2500-seat Stambaugh Auditorium. The planning team did not anticipate high attendance because “public meetings concerning planning in Youngstown have never been well attended” (Finnerty, 2003, p.3). In fact, a local reporter predicted only about 200 people would show up. However, between 1200 and 1400 people (including a large number of suburbanites) came to the meeting, which came as a “...pleasant shock to city and planning professionals alike” (Faga, 2006, pp.61-62; Finnerty, 2003). As Youngstown informant Y5 states:

I saw the auditorium ahead of time and said, well, this is going to feel pretty empty when we're in here. They had a newspaper ad. They had the local radio station talk about it too, so that got people out. But not only was it the *number* of people, but how *positive*... by the end of it, it really felt like there was a “this is great.” And while it didn't feel like they were saying your vision is 100 percent right on, it's like, yeah, you're right. We have to start thinking positively and saying what it is we're going to do in the future or what we're going to be as a city – person, after person, after person...

During the meeting, the public made oral and written comments about the vision and 100 people volunteered to participate in the planning process. In general, the response from the public was positive and there seemed to be wide agreement on the principles:

I hate to make it sound so wonderful and euphoric and just a great process here with little opposition but there really wasn't much negativity. I mean at that time, all of our comments, nearly all... I mean I can count on one hand... about someone saying oh, Youngstown should have done this 20 years ago and it's too late now, but truly I mean, 4

or 5 people making some comments at the meeting, but it was all supportive.  
(Youngstown informant Y8)

Key to the success of the visioning process (and the later planning process) was the involvement of the media. Especially important was the fact that the City/YSU planning team involved the local media in the process "...as *participants* rather than observers and critics on the sidelines. Media owners and editors were invited to take their places in the leadership groups, in recognition of their vital business and institutional interests in the future of the region. As a result, the process garnered well-informed and supportive coverage" (Faga, 2006, p.61, emphasis in original). Essentially, the media stopped being reporters and started being participants and they saw the process in a new and positive way. *The Vindicator* ran a four-part series laying out the principles of the vision and leading up to the public meeting, the paper ran editorials and other stories emphasizing the importance of public participation: "Hundreds of Youngstown's residents responded to the publicity by emailing and phoning their comments and checking the Youngstown 2010 website for details" (Faga, 2006, p.61). As Youngstown informant Y14, a high-ranking city official, states: "...the media really got on board, which I think helped."

Youngstown informant Y8, a city planner, explains that

Our approach ... what made it successful (not so much for decline but it has to do with maybe apathy and obviously if you're talking about decline, there's usually some apathy thrown in there) ...is the marketing effort. We engaged our public broadcasting station to run, to rebroadcast meetings. We'd highly publicize them through our marketing channels – full page ad in our newspaper or our network with our existing neighbourhood groups, things like that. We marketed truly like a company markets its own products. [We also had a] really unique partnership with PBS and even the public radio station would rebroadcast stuff. I think [marketing is essential] if you're going to talk about decline or just planning in general, but even decline because people's attitudes can be really down.

After the vision was created, Urban Strategies recommended that the City demonstrate its commitment to the process; to that end, City Council adopted the vision principles by unanimous

resolution on February 19, 2003. At the same time, it enacted other recommendations of Urban Strategies which would facilitate the creation of the more technical comprehensive plan. For instance, it formed a technical committee consisting of city planning and YSU staff to oversee the creation of a steering committee to be comprised of citizens who had volunteered during the visioning process. In addition, working groups were also created for each of the 4 platforms. Volunteers mobilized to assess neighbourhood conditions (that is, conditions of buildings, sidewalks, lots, etc...). In 2004, 11 neighbourhood clusters targeted for citizen input into the comprehensive plan and more than 800 residents participated in this process. In time, however, momentum started to slightly fade (Faga, 2006). To counteract this, one of the volunteer committees, under the leadership of Richard Hahn, a local marketing and media professional, undertook a branding campaign in March 2004 designed to keep the momentum going. The campaign included billboards, a newly designed website, and televisions public service announcements, featuring members of the public. In addition, since 2003, WNEO, the public television station for Northeast Ohio rebroadcast the vision presentation and began broadcasting quarterly updates on the successes of the planning process. For instance, the first update consisted of panel discussion between David Sweet, Hunter Morrison, then-Mayor George McKelvey, Bill D'Avignon, and Anthony Kobak (Finnerty, 2003). In all, the branding campaign and media coverage was designed to keep people thinking about where the plan would take them in the future and to get people invigorated and excited about the process. All of these efforts culminated in more than 1300 residents attending a public meeting in January 2005, where the comprehensive plan was formally presented.

Thus Youngstown, in order to create its 2010 Plan, embarked on a major strategic planning process, which emphasized public participation and partnership with community

organizations, in particular YSU. According to Faga (2006), “in an effort to ward off naysaying and inspire new interest and faith in the future of the city, the ‘Youngstown 2010’ initiative turned public engagement into the project’s primary focus” (pp.53-54). The process was meant to be as inclusive as possible; from the beginning of the process, the “public” defined as “anyone who might care, should care, or could be convinced to care about Youngstown” (Faga, 2006, p.57). In addition to encouraging residents to participate, the City reached out across county lines to include anyone dealing with the City in its efforts. Importantly, given the history of hostility between the city’s white and African American residents, African Americans were and continue to be given equal access to the planning process. The City has made the effort to bring together people for a common cause, focusing on neighbourhood issues, and not black/white issues. To this end, in addition to the media coverage mentioned above, the city produced television shows and had town hall meetings on race issues during the planning process (Mock, 2008). As a result, the public participated in the planning process at an unusually high rate for a comprehensive planning process.

Thus public participation in the planning process has played a large role in igniting a new sense of hope in the community. However, some issues remain unaddressed. For instance, the Youngstown 2010 Plan lacks a regional focus, resulting in the Plan not being as integrative as it could have been. According to Youngstown informant Y14, a high-ranking city official:

...there still hasn’t been enough [regional collaboration] here in the [Mahoning] Valley – certainly not enough between the city and its surrounding areas. Over the past couple of years, the surrounding suburbs have more and more recognized the fact that there’s got to be some collaboration. Now, they’re still resisting the collaboration with the City unfortunately, but they’re starting to collaborate more amongst themselves and eventually that collaboration is going to have to happen with the city in all the areas.

While the Plan pays lip service to developing a regional approach, it is largely focused on addressing Youngstown’s planning issues. As well, while people from the suburbs participated

in the process by attending public meetings (although not to the same extent as Youngstown residents), the suburbs have generally not been cooperative in Youngstown's efforts to regenerate itself. In order to develop more of a regional approach to Youngstown's regeneration, in recent years, Youngstown officials (led by Mayor Williams) have put forth a proposal to join the suburbs in a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD), which is used in the State of Ohio when one or more municipalities agree to work together to develop township land for commercial or industrial purposes. A JEDD benefits a municipality because it can get a portion of taxes levied in the JEDD without having to annex it. Surrounding townships benefit by receiving municipal services such as water. JEDDs are established under State legislation (Chapter 715, Ohio Revised Code). Essentially, Youngstown's JEDD proposal would mean that workers who work at every business in the JEDD that receives Youngstown's water would pay a 2 percent city income tax (PMF Group, 2008). As explained by Youngstown informant Y14:

So the city of Youngstown has an income tax. So, if you work in Youngstown or if you live in Youngstown, you pay an income tax. Well, there are surrounding communities that are suburbs, that are not cities, that don't have income taxes... [L]et's say you live in a suburb and you work in a suburb, you potentially don't have any income tax. What we're saying is that ... the income taxes applicable to Youngstown ... need to expand that to incorporate more people. Well the people out here are going to say, you've lost your mind! I'm not paying that! I don't live in Youngstown. I don't work in Youngstown. Why should I pay it? Well, we're saying however, you still benefit from Youngstown's existence. Now, some of them don't think they do. Some of them say, you can close the lights, shut down Youngstown, we'll be fine. That's not the case. What we're saying is that because you benefit from Youngstown's existence primarily because your water and your water service comes from Youngstown.

This proposal has met with opposition from the suburbs, with one Austintown trustee calling Youngstown's actions an "attack" (Skolnick, 2008). However, according to Youngstown informants, the JEDD is necessary:

It'll be litigated and challenged, but to me it's one of those things that you've got to do because just thinking that we're going to be able to maintain [water service] with that whole core of fewer people paying a higher rate would be insanity... [I]t's not popular,

but we think at the end of the day ...it means that it's a more equitable distribution of the resources... People don't want to realize, but they benefit in so many ways of having Youngstown. (Youngstown informant Y14)

In addition to opposition from the suburbs towards adopting a more regional approach, the relationship between the City of Youngstown and the County has been strained:

...the relationship with the county is a work in progress. There is a strange relationship at times, and depending on the subject matter, still a strained relationship between the city and the county on certain issues - on roles and responsibilities in terms of certain financial matters. (Youngstown informant Y14)

In particular, the county government has taken action in recent years that has been to the detriment of physical regeneration efforts in Youngstown. Particularly problematic was the selling of tax liens by the county to a third party. This has hindered the City's ability to acquire the properties and add them to their land bank (because they now have to rely on a third party to foreclose on the property). As Youngstown informant Y12, an employee with the City's planning department, explains:

It's *one big mess*. The first time, [the County sold the tax liens because they] wanted to clean their books. There was over 32 million dollars worth of delinquent property taxes. [*sarcastically*] There was no need to aggressively go after property taxes in the City of Youngstown because all of the property in the City of Youngstown is garbage, so why waste our time? So, they decided they wanted to clear their books, so we'll sell these delinquent taxes to this company. But they've been doing it since 2004 and every year since then. After the first time, our books are clean. Now, we can start fresh and we could actually do our job and collect taxes. No. They sell tax liens. And this is for someone who has missed one-quarter or one half of paying their taxes. Their lien is sold... This company is out of Florida. So, this money is taken out of the city and given all the way to Florida. And they're never going to put any money back into the city so this money is taken out of the city. Period. It's a compounded problem on top of problems that we already have.

According to Youngstown informant Y13, what the County has done is "...they [have given] up control in exchange for short term economic benefit and I think that that actually undermined [the City of Youngstown's] ability to really plan for decline."

In addition, there is concern that the projects based on the Plan may not be as selective as they should be. While the Plan is meant to be a framework for selecting key projects in order to advance the city's vision, Youngstown planners have divided the city into approximately 130 separate neighbourhoods, each of which will require a neighbourhood plan. To date, only a few of these neighbourhood plans have actually been created and there are concerns that the slow pace of implementation will lead to further disenchantment:

The plan is almost too ambitious. Some of the ideas should have been reserved for a "Youngstown 2020" plan. You cannot fix everything at once. While it is great to see where you are going and what you would like to become, there is danger in that the public may be disappointed when the city cannot immediately deliver on ideas that can only be reasonably implemented over a span of twenty or thirty years, not five... There are way too many neighbourhoods in the plan. It is not necessary to break the city into 120+ neighbourhoods for planning purposes. There is no way that any good planner can come up with 120 unique neighbourhood plans within the same city. It would be a lot more efficient to have a couple dozen planning zones, or even overlay districts, instead of the 20+ neighbourhood plans. (Youngstown informant Y16, former City of Youngstown employee)

Youngstown informant Y13, a university-based urban design consultant/academic, echoes these implementation concerns:

The implementation of that plan...is still to be determined. I think that despite all of the attention that Youngstown has received for its planning process, which I think is good, the outcomes of that process have really not happened yet. So, in Youngstown, they've started on this planning process that's very very micro. I mean, it's tiny... it's dividing the neighbourhood into these tiny sort of sub-groups and embarking on a planning process. The problem is there's like a hundred and some of them and I think at this point they've delved into three and they were hoping to have those three done by the end of the year, but I don't know that that's gonna happen. And there's also the whole question of if you do these very detailed plans at that level, will the city be able to leverage their resource to implement the ideas the residents put forward. Especially, if they can do it for the first 3, are they going to be able to sustain it when they get to 138 or whatever the number is. So, I mean, I look at Youngstown and I think that from a perspective of planning and policy-making, the plan is very strong. From a question of implementation, I think that it's pretty much almost non-existent.

On balance, however, although creating a regional approach to planning in Youngstown has not yet successful, either in the Youngstown 2010 Plan or in subsequent attempts and in spite of

criticisms that planners may be taking on “too much” in terms of projects to implement the Plan, the Youngstown 2010 planning process still stands out as an example of a successful planning process in its ability to include a large number of citizens and to generate excitement about creating a new future amongst a disenchanted population.

#### **4.2 Sudbury’s Official Plan**

In comparison, Sudbury’s Official Plan is a comprehensive plan which adopts strategic planning terminology but does not utilize to any significant degree the key strategic planning principles mentioned above. Most notably, Sudbury’s Official Plan does not contain a comprehensive vision that was developed through extensive public participation. The Official Plan does have some degree of flexibility in that it can be amended at the request of City Council or any Sudbury resident; however, the process for amending the Plan – as set out in the *Ontario Planning Act* – can be long and expensive (especially if appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board are involved). In addition, Sudbury’s Official Plan is not a framework for selecting key projects based on a comprehensive, long-range vision. In fairness, in creating a “comprehensive plan,” Sudbury’s planners were merely meeting the requirements set out for them by the Ontario government in the *Planning Act*. However, in choosing to incorporate elements of strategic planning, but not fulfilling the “spirit” of those elements, the benefits which could have been gained will likely not be realized. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter 3 and as reiterated above, creating a long-term, comprehensive vision through meaningful public participation is a key component of strategic planning. Again, strategic planning is as much, if not more, about the process of participation and the creation of a decision-making framework as the product. The parties who participated in creating the vision upon which the Youngstown 2010 Plan is based benefited from the process itself. One of the greatest benefits was that people, through

meaningful participation, became excited once again about Youngstown's future. In contrast, while Sudbury's Official Plan begins with a discussion of the "vision" upon which the Plan is ostensibly based, the public was not directly involved in its creation, meaning that the process was less inclusive than Youngstown's. Essentially, planners wrote the vision based on various sources and took it to the public in their various consultations, rather than the other way around:

What we did is, by that time we had the benefit of the public input at the background stage, but we also looked at things like Earthcare, economic development plan, and we sort of ... we wanted to... it doesn't make sense to do a new Official Plan ignoring other plans that went before you. So, we took information – some of the key points from the background studies but we also looked at these other plans in what they've received. So, we put together a vision which we thought recognized all of those things. We tried to go to as many sources as we could. We really drew on a lot of sources. (Sudbury informant S1)

While the vision was discussed in the planners' presentations of the first and second draft of the Official Plan at the various public meetings and open houses held between September 2003 and March 2006 (unfortunately, informants did not know how many people in total participated – Sudbury informant S1 estimated two to three hundred people participated in total), Sudbury residents were less interested in the overall vision of the Plan and more interested in how the Plan affected them personally. As Sudbury informant S12, a city planner who participated in many of the open houses, explains: "...no one ever asked me about the vision." The lack of public interest in the vision could have been a result of a number of factors, including the fact that the vision was not discussed in meetings *prior to* the writing of the Plan itself (as was done in Youngstown) and the fact that Sudbury officials were not trying to re-invent the city through the Official Plan (as were Youngstown officials), thus making the "rallying" behind a new vision less necessary. Indeed, at least one high level official (Sudbury informant S11), when interviewed for this research, was unaware of the vision contained in the Official Plan. When asked if the Vision was located somewhere on the website, he replied: "Oh, there's a vision. It's

all up here, of course, [points to his head], but we haven't put it down on paper. I suppose we should be doing that and we should be putting on our website." Also, Sudbury informant S1, a city planner, speculates that because a comprehensive plan is so all-encompassing, people may be less interested in the vision: "I think Official Plans – a lot of people take them for granted. Because they're so all-encompassing, unless someone's got a particular interest in a particular issue, I don't think... it's always a challenge." In the end, while there was an opportunity to generate public excitement about the planning process and sense of involvement through the creation of a truly comprehensive, long-term vision based on residents' meaningful input, Sudbury's "vision" was written by local officials and seems to be, for the most part, a listing of selling features geared towards attracting outsiders (for instance, the statement that Sudbury is a "city of lakes") as opposed to a vision that reflects the views and concerns of local residents.

Also in contrast with the Youngstown 2010 Plan, Sudbury's Official Plan was not as context-specific with respect to future population levels. As is generally the case with all Ontario municipalities, in crafting its Official Plan, the City undertook a number of "background studies," including the following:

- Agricultural Study
- Healthy Community Study
- Housing Study
- Infrastructure Study
- Natural Heritage Study
- Parks & Leisure Study & Master Plan
- Stormwater Study
- Transportation Study
- Waterfront and Rural Study & Background Policy Paper
- Downtown Vision
- Human Services Strategy

These studies informed the policies of the Official Plan, providing evidence of effort on the part of local officials to develop a context-specific approach. For example, in the Agricultural Study, land was categorized according to the Province's Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) process, classifying agricultural land in terms of, for instance, soil classifications, quantity of arable land, and drainage (Greater Sudbury, 2004). A Housing Study examined existing housing stock in terms of future supply and demand. However, with respect to the fundamental issue of likely future population levels, the accuracy of the assessment of the demographic context may be questioned. As discussed above, planners did not craft the Official Plan with population decline in mind. Of the four future population scenarios put forth (outmigration, natural increase, in-migration, and high in-migration), planners chose the in-migration scenario, which forecasts a moderate population increase to 169,579 by 2021. Indeed, the "motto" of the planning process in Sudbury, set out on the front page of each background study and contained in each public notice, was: "Developing a single, up-to-date Official Plan that fosters sustainable growth, economic development and a high quality of life to attract people and investment." From that statement, it appears that considering future population decline was not a priority. To be fair, population decline scenarios were briefly considered in the Housing and Infrastructure Studies, but policies to deal with the consequences of policy decline were not seriously considered (Greater Sudbury, 2004; 2005). Indeed, population decline scenarios were not even considered in the Transportation Study, which dealt with forecasting future supply and demand for roads networks in Sudbury. Instead, the "high in-migration" scenario (which forecasts an increase to 175,000) was used. As stated in the study:

The rationale for modeling the high in-migration scenario was that it would have the greatest impact on the transportation system. This population level had been reached previously and it was proposed that this population could be reached again. (Earth Tech, 2005, p.52)

According to Sudbury informant S1, a city planner who participated in the background studies:

...the emphasis was on trying to get a handle on future costs as a result of growth and so in terms of the out-migration, that wasn't much of a concern from the standpoint that it could be using existing infrastructure and we'd still have all these various settlement areas that would have to be sustained.

It seems to be assumed that the effects of a reduced population do not warrant attention. For these reasons, at least in terms of demographics, Sudbury's Official Plan does not seem to have been based on a realistic assessment of context.

Finally, while the Plan takes a regional approach in terms of dealing with issues in the large land area that is the City of Greater Sudbury, it is unclear how some of the policies contained in the Plan might affect communities beyond the city's boundaries. For instance, in the Coming of Age economic development strategic plan which has been incorporated into the Official Plan, drafters identify the Mining Supply and Services (MS&S) Sector (which supplies the mining community with machinery and specialized services) as one of the five "economic engines" for which strategic actions and initiatives are targeted. Indeed, the MS&S sector in Sudbury has been growing in importance in recent years: the trend towards declining employment in mining and smelting has been offset partially by growth in MS&S sector (Robinson, 2004). Anchored by Sudbury's two large mines – Vale Inco and Xstrata Falconbridge – in 2008 it was estimated that the sector employed about 14,000 people in Sudbury (Bradley, 2008), more than are employed the primary mining, smelting and refining sector (Sudol, 2008). According to Sudbury informant S2, whose organization promotes the Mining Supply and Services Sector internationally, "Our website gets 100,000 hits a month; in 2004, there were over 7 million hits. We have 30-40 countries visiting on a daily basis." Sudol (2008) states that this sector is "rapidly growing" (however, this growth likely has been

negatively affected by the seven-month strike at Vale Inco which continues as of early February, 2009).

Given the importance to Sudbury's economy of the MS&S Sector, it would seem logical that Sudbury's economic strategic plan would call for strategies and initiatives to help promote Sudbury as the international centre for mining supply and services (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.179). As Sudbury informant S9, an employee with the City's business development organization, explains:

We have worked here in the Mining Supply and Service Sector to attract different companies to come here. This is the centre because you have the end users here. So this is the place to be. The location here works for supplying the hard rock mining industry across Northern Ontario and into Northern Quebec. We have a number of national firms here, like Atlas Copco. Their main headquarters are based here for sales and service for mining and construction equipment. There's a number like that that supply the whole Canadian market here and we've been able to attract them to make the move because of... to be close to their customers, Vale INCO and Xstrata.

However, several mining supply and services firms also exist in other northeastern Ontario communities such as North Bay, located about an hour east of Sudbury. According to the City of North Bay's Office of Economic Development:

The Mining Supply Industry is one of the most prominent sectors in the North Bay region. There are approximately 65 local area businesses providing mining exploration and development services, including engineering, fabrication, machinery and equipment manufacturing for the mining industry. North Bay is proud to have over a half dozen multinational Canadian headquarters here. In the North Bay area, 2,100 direct and indirect jobs are attributed to mining supply firms, which is nine times greater than the provincial average. This sector brings in excess of \$19 million dollars in wages in the local economy each year and accounts for more than 1,300 full time positions. (City of North Bay, 2007, p.1)

The City of North Bay also has adopted a strategy to entice MS&S firms to locate in the city.

Timmins, located approximately 3 hours north of Sudbury, is also home to a cluster of MS&S firms. It is thus unclear how Sudbury's strategy, articulated in the Official Plan, of trying to

become the premier Mining Supply and Services Centre in the world will impact smaller MS&S

clusters such as those that exist in North Bay and Timmins. Thus, in the end, while Sudbury's Official Plan uses strategic planning "speak," several key aspects of strategic planning – including developing a comprehensive vision created from extensive participation, taking an inclusive regional approach, and creating a flexible framework upon which discrete projects can be based – are not present to a significant degree. Perhaps most importantly, Sudbury planners did not see it as their role to get the public interested in planning in general or in the vision for the city in particular. In the end, people paid more attention to how the particular policies affected their particular piece of land than to how the vision will affect the city's overall development.

### **5.0 Third principle: Planners must adopt a balanced approach in addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community**

As discussed in Chapter 3, the shrinking cities literature suggests that planning in cities that are losing population needs to be pursued in a balanced manner; that is, planning policies must not prioritize, for instance, economic over physical, social, and environmental concerns. Urban regeneration literature provides more details as to how this might be accomplished. According to this literature, above all, it is critically important for cities experiencing decline to create a balanced framework with a clearly articulated vision upon which discrete urban regeneration policies would be based. Having an overarching strategic framework allows cities to undertake projects that are seemingly discrete, but which are based actually on a longer-term vision for the city – a vision that recognizes the interdependence of the economic, social, physical, and environmental spheres. Do the Youngstown and Sudbury plans provide such a framework? In other words, do the plans provide a balanced, holistic approach to each city's future development or do they prioritize certain concerns above others, as is common in many shrinking cities?

## 5.1 Youngstown 2010

As discussed in Chapter 5, the Youngstown 2010 Plan is based on a **Vision** which contains four “pillars:”

- Accepting that Youngstown is a smaller city;
- Defining Youngstown’s role in the new regional economy;
- Improving Youngstown’s image and enhancing quality of life; and
- A call to action.

In addition, the Plan itself is based organized around the following **themes**, emphasizing the importance of creating:

- A green network
- Competitive industrial districts
- Viable neighbourhoods; and
- A vibrant core.

Again, the Vision (agreed-upon principles and goals as to what kind of place Youngstown should be in the future) is contained as an appendix to the comprehensive Plan (a detailed framework designed to “guide the City in making both big and small decisions to achieve the goals of the vision”) (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.135).

While it is asserted in the Youngstown 2010 Plan that the city is setting the stage for “sustainable regeneration in the new economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.15), a detailed review of both the Plan and the Vision upon which it is based reveals that it places a strong emphasis on physical regeneration and, by implication, re-greening, with a moderate discussion of strategies to incorporate into the “new economy,” and only a brief mention of social issues and issues related to protecting the environment for its own sake. With

respect to **physical** regeneration, both the Vision and the Plan are largely based on the need for city officials and residents to recognize that the city can no longer sustain its over-sized infrastructure and that there are too many abandoned properties and underutilized sites. Thus, a major focus of the Youngstown 2010 is essentially the “unbuilding” of the city to meet current population levels and the consolidation of urban infrastructure. In fact, while the Vision deals with economic, social, and environmental issues to varying degrees, the Plan itself deals almost exclusively with issues of physical regeneration. The “meat” of the Plan is the detailed analysis of the physical conditions of each of the planning districts. For instance, with respect to the east side planning district, after discussing briefly the history of each neighbourhood within that district and the population, race, and age composition the district, the Plan lays out maps of vacant property in the district and explains:

Vacant land on the East Side... is widespread, although much has never been developed. The spread of vacant parcels inside populated areas is the greatest concern. The East Side presents a mixture of serious problems and great opportunities. (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.88)

The Plan goes on to inventory the physical assets of the East Side District, including a new high school, two fire stations, and parks, and to lay out the new land use plan for the district. In particular, with respect to the East Side:

There is an abundance of green space available on the East Side...The new plan defers to green... It is the part of the City with agricultural land use, has extensive recreation/open space land use and takes advantage of the new industrial green classification. (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.91)

The Plan then discusses in more detail where uses in each classification – recreation/open space, residential, institutional, commercial, and industrial – will be located. Particularly in the East Side District, the focus of the new land use plan is decreasing the amount of land set aside for residential and commercial uses and changing heavy industrial classifications to “green

industrial” classifications. This is consistent with the overall goal of “shrinking” the physical structure of the city to meet current population levels. This format is repeated for each of the five districts. Although a “vibrant core” is listed as one of the Plan’s themes, interestingly the Central Planning District, in which the downtown is located, does not receive much of an extended consideration compared to the rest of the neighbourhoods. Much of the focus in the discussion in this district involves capitalizing on the existing assets of the downtown, including its adjacent location to Youngstown State University and its large number of key government facilities, including two federal court offices and many of the State’s regional offices.

Indeed, this focus on the physical aspects of regeneration has permeated the actual projects undertaken by the city since the Plan was adopted. In the past 4 years, the City has already spent millions of dollars tearing down structures and reducing the city’s physical structure. Examination of the Plan, newspaper coverage of the Plan, and interview transcripts reveals that physical regeneration is indeed the major focus of Youngstown 2010. As Youngstown informant Y14 explains, “we’ve put forward a very aggressive and cogent plan to start eliminating some of the excess units that have become blighted.” According to a recent article in *The Economist*, Mayor Williams plans to “...use federal stimulus funds to demolish areas with high vacancy rates and turn them into green space for parks or even farms” (2009, p.37). Youngstown informant Y14 explains that

In 06 and 07, we spent 3 million dollars aggregately [on demolition] between those two years. We had a slowdown in 08 because of the economic crisis. We were battling a deficit, but we will be back up to speed next year. The federal government provided some neighbourhood stabilization money, so we’ll be doing upwards of 1.5-2 million dollars of demolition in 09... I mean, there was this blip in the radar screen in 08 because of the economics, but we’ll be right back at it in 09.

As well, city officials have stated that it is pointless to revive certain neighbourhoods (Aepfel, 2007). The city is thus offering tax incentives for people to move out of abandoned areas. Some

are being offered relocation money as opposed to money to rehabilitate their existing home (Nassar, 2006). In addition, the city and county are turning over abandoned lots to neighbours and placing a moratorium on the (often haphazard) construction of new dwellings and encouraging rehabilitation of existing homes (Lanks, 2006a). Moreover, according to Swope (2006c), until recently, funding from the city's program for helping low income residents fix up their homes was based on first-come, first-served basis, regardless of the condition of the neighborhood. Now, the Community Development Agency skips homes in far-gone areas, giving money instead to people in these areas to relocate because it does not make sense to invest in homes on streets where more than half of the homes have to be demolished. A moratorium has also been placed on the construction of homes financed with low-income housing tax credits as city officials do not want, for instance, a new home to be built between two homes that have to be demolished (Swope, 2006c; Tone, 2007; Russell, 2008).

While protecting the **environment** for its own sake is not a large focus of the Youngstown 2010 Vision or Plan, the emphasis on physical regeneration in both means that the city's desire to "re-green" figures prominently in both as well, particularly in the Vision. Here, it is recognized that "shrinking" the city's physical footprint naturally opens up more opportunities to create green space. One of the "pillars" of the city's Vision is to "be generous with our urban land" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.137), meaning that physically downsizing the city's physical infrastructure and housing will open up vacant land for purposes other than development, such as neighbourhood parks or community gardens:

[Shrinking] may actually open up some possibilities because often the areas that are in decline – neighbourhoods that are in decline – are the ones in the contemporary market are the weakest. So you may find that old industrial properties that when you look at it with a fresh eye are great park sites because in 1890 it made sense to put a steel mill on it and run railroad tracks to it. It makes no sense to try to run a road to it. It's too small. It's irregularly shaped. It's hard to... Fine, make a park out of it. Make a bike way out

of it. Make a linear greenway out of it. Do something else with it. You're free to do that. The land values have dropped sufficiently. The competition for land use is pretty minimal. (Youngstown informant Y9]

Capitalizing on opportunities for re-greening also figure prominently in the 2010 Plan. In fact, as noted above and in Chapter 5, one of the Plan's themes is the creation of a "green network" that involves "linking the existing green spaces in the city via water courses and trails..." (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.45). In the "implementation" section of the Plan, for each planning district, "next steps" are set out in order to meet the goal of re-greening the city. For instance, the next steps for the South Side district in this respect include expanding several existing parks, establishing new parks in "strategic neighborhood locations," creating a "green boulevard" on two streets, and creating "green enhancements" along a rail line (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.130). The next steps for the East Side district in this respect involve creating and maintaining "high quality parks" and seeking Clean Ohio<sup>57</sup> funding for "open space land acquisitions" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.132). Indeed, in the September 2008 Grey to Green Festival at Wick Park, efforts were made to encourage residents to, among other things, plant lots or vegetable gardens on vacant lots (Barron, 2008).

In addition to contributing to physical regeneration, the Plan's re-greening policies are also geared towards improving social and economic conditions in the city. For example, part of the City's Vision is that "[p]arks, open spaces, and a clean natural environment are important elements in public health, active lifestyles, quality of life and even economic development" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.140). Particularly with respect to economic development goals, it is stated in the Plan that having recreational opportunities in open space has "...become a major factor for business location, especially with high tech firms" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.47).

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<sup>57</sup> The Clean Ohio fund is administered by the State of Ohio and seeks to restore, protect, and connect "Ohio's important natural and urban places by preserving green space and farmland, improving outdoor recreation, and by cleaning up brownfields to encourage redevelopment and revitalize communities." See [www.cleanohio.gov](http://www.cleanohio.gov)

Existing open space is to be protected by two new land classifications: recreational/open space and agricultural. Also, removing the “residue” of heavy industry works will allow the city to convert industrial brownfields to “green industrial” sites and to attract “green industries.” One of the only mentions of protecting the environment for at least partly its own sake is found in the Vision, where the importance of “restoring the Mahoning River” is discussed. According to the Vision, the

Mahoning River has been abused in the past, but it should be a resource in the revitalization of Youngstown. A vision for the future of the river must be implemented which includes environmental clean up, public access and recreational opportunities to serve the region (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.140).

Thus, within the City’s framework for planning for the future of Youngstown, considerable attention is paid to re-greening policies which appear to be designed to enhance the physical, economic, and, to a lesser extent, social conditions of the City. Unfortunately, the attention paid to protecting the environment for its own sake appear to be lacking and one may question whether the Plan will provide sufficient guidance for policy-makers seeking to develop environmentally-sensitive policies.

In addition to being heavily focused on physical regeneration (and, by implication, re-greening the city), the Vision contained within the Youngstown 2010 Plan pays a good deal of attention to addressing the City’s **economic** woes through creating jobs in and attracting jobs to the city. On the surface, it may appear that “unbuilding” the city does not “fit” with attempting to attract economic growth. In fact, interviews reveal that the city is hoping that the cost-savings from reducing infrastructure will mean that more money can be used for economic development initiatives:

...obviously we’re looking to *always* attract new investment to this city. So, while it sounds when you say “shrinking city,” that also might include economic development, our economic development efforts actually have been *enhanced* by the fact that if there’s

less infrastructure we have to maintain, those funds can be used to more aggressively fund economic development initiatives. If we get the city employment structure balanced, then that means those dollars that heretofore would have been going to salaries and benefits and other things can now be driven towards economic development initiatives. So, don't let anybody confuse the notion of a shrinking city. Our economic development efforts are *more robust now* probably than they've *ever* been! (Youngstown informant Y14).

In the area of economic development, the Vision provides a framework for policies that appears to be inward-focused; that is, it is focused on capitalizing on the city's existing economic strengths. Inward-focused goals include supporting the university and health care sector and nurturing innovative start-up high tech businesses in the downtown core. For instance, part of the Vision is that Youngstown becomes an even more important centre for health care, education, government, and light industry. In particular, part of the Vision calls for Youngstown to be "open for business" in order to retain small businesses:

Small businesses account for most of the jobs created in today's economy. The City of Youngstown should do everything possible to help these businesses. The Youngstown Business Incubator helps new technology firms and it is expanding – it's an example of a step in the right direction. (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.139)

The Plan itself, while not dealing directly with economic issues to any great extent, deals with them by implication: that is, physical regeneration is seen as a way of accomplishing the economic goals set forth in the Vision. For instance, as mentioned above, part of the reason for re-greening the city and developing more outdoor recreational opportunities is to make the city more attractive for businesses – particularly high-tech, "new economy" businesses – whose workers value "quality of life" factors.

In practice, some of the Vision's economic development goals can be seen to be at work.

As explained by Boardman (2008):

Youngstown uses enterprise zones, tax and fee abatements, city façade renovation loans and other programs to help attract and retain businesses in the city. In 2007, \$5.3 million

was spent on business development, nearly twice the amount spent in 2006...New businesses have moved in...

In particular, the Youngstown Business Incubator has become an integral part of the City's downtown and has helped revitalize the area in which it is located. According to Mock (2008), the Youngstown Business Incubator, assisted by federal grants, is successfully nurturing start-up knowledge- and technology-based businesses and is contributing to downtown revitalization. One company that started here, Turning Technologies, was voted top software company in 2007 by Inc. Magazine. Skolnick (2008) argues that the Youngstown Business Incubator has turned the city into "hot spot" for business-to-business software development. Youngstown informant Y2 explains that

...[the Youngstown Business Incubator has] been *amazingly* successful at [nurturing business-to-business software companies] in Youngstown Ohio. In 5 years we've been able to create over 200 jobs. And that's accelerating faster than even *we* imagined. There's just nothing like us in the region, or even really in the country.

In fact, Youngstown recently lobbied for the state to establish one of twelve "hubs of innovation and opportunity" in Youngstown (Runyan, 2008). According to Youngstown informant Y14, "...the Youngstown Business Incubator is a good example of Youngstown's economy being redefined where you get some high tech companies in here."

Youngstown Business Incubator aside, interviews reveal that, in practice, key officials within the city are concentrating economic development funds on projects that are much more outward-focused than the approach called for in the 2010 Plan. That is, their efforts are concentrated on attracting foreign investment to the city (in particular, companies that will provide a large number of jobs), especially to newly constructed state-of-the-art industrial parks on converted brownfield sites. This is one area where there appears to be a disconnect between the Plan in principle and in practice. One city official – Youngstown informant Y1 (an employee

with the City's Finance Department) – was particularly adamant that the way to address Youngstown's economic issues was to attract large firms that would create a large number of jobs. To him, while the Youngstown Business Incubator is a good idea, it is not the answer:

[The Youngstown Business Incubator] is nice, but we'll do one or two deals that'll equal what they're doing on an annual basis in a month from the city's perspective... Now, I applaud their efforts. I want them to do well. I want them to continue to succeed. I want them to be downtown, but at the same time, I think as an overall redevelopment strategy for the area that we have to cookie cutter this stuff. We have to do a lot and we need to do it fast. That's what our focus is.

This had been frustrating for a proponent of the 2010 Plan, who expressed the hope that this official would eventually “buy-in” to the critical importance of smaller-scale initiatives like the Youngstown Business Incubator:

... [Youngstown informant Y1] is a bright guy. He's sort of critical of the incubator because this is a guy who's put together deals, taking old steel mill sites and done wonderful things. The incubator is sort of a different animal. A lot of money has been thrown in that thing, but right now, on the front page, one of the companies is the seventh fastest growing company in the country or small and medium sized companies headquartered two minutes from here. And that company's acquiring and going global. So it's different than what [Youngstown informant Y1] has been fighting for for 20 years and he's done a great job... I'm trying to say, hey, [Youngstown informant Y1], do what you do, and let them do what they do. At the end of the day, these companies have the ability to sort of eradicate that whole issue of outsourcing. They can maybe reverse part of that trend and at least find their niche.

In spite of the efforts of others to persuade him, according to Youngstown informant Y1, focusing on attracting investment from industries that would provide large numbers of jobs (instead of focusing on nurturing small start-ups) is critically important to the city. Indeed, having more jobs in Youngstown is actually *more* beneficial to the city fiscally than having residents:

People who work in Youngstown pay an income tax. They don't have to live in Youngstown. If they're working in the community, they're paying. In effect, 80% of our revenue comes from people who work in this environment but live outside of the environment, live outside the city borders. So we're able to tax a large group of people who aren't necessarily living in the community. Somebody's living here, we have to

provide all those services of a resident. A lot of time, those resident services are much more costly than that person's giving you back in tax dollars... [T]he true trick is that taking those additional resource dollars and using them on the job creation side and if people want to live somewhere else, we're OK with it... You've got more revenue and less services. It's a wonderful equation! (Youngstown informant Y1)

Unfortunately, what the focus on unbuilding the city for *people* while increasing the city's attractiveness for *industry* may mean for the physical structure of the city remains a question.

The state-of-the-art industrial parks being promoted as attractive locations to foreign investment are located in the outskirts of the city, meaning that this may work against both the Vision's and Plan's stated goal of consolidating the city's infrastructure for efficiency's sake. This would also steer development away from the downtown, which would, again, seem to work against the Plan's theme of creating a vibrant core. In addition, encouraging people to work in the city, but not live in the city, promotes the further dispersal of residences to suburban areas outside of the city, again, negatively affecting the goal of consolidation. It also would negatively affect local businesses, which depend on local residents for their survival. For instance, as noted by Mock (2008), a shrinking customer base has already been problematic for many industries, including the local newspaper: "City hall may not have been concerned with drawing people from other cities for growth, but the *Vindicator* was" (p.44). Attracting industry, but losing people to the suburbs, will likely exacerbate the dismal situation of many local businesses. Again, this appears to be an area where the goals of the Plan and the goals of local officials are working at cross-purposes.

In addition, what "unbuilding" the city for people while seeking to attract industry may mean to **social** issues such as neighborhood vitality also remains a question. The view that it is more attractive fiscally for the city to be home to jobs, but not people, works against the vision of improving the quality of life of Youngstown residents. According to the Vision, social issues

such as education, neighbourhood safety, and racial divisions need to be addressed. In fact, in the visioning process, a number of radio broadcasts were aired which addressed racial divisions in the community and encouraged participation in the planning process by all races. The city also produced television shows and held town hall meetings on the issue of racial divisions (Mock, 2008). As Youngstown informant Y9, a Youngstown State University professor explains:

[Mayor Williams] understood the power and importance of it as a civic dialogue, as a lancing of boils that had festered for too long, as an exercise in recent hope, as something that had to be practical. And he spent a lot of time going out into the community and listening so when he came back, said back up guys... in the barber shops and beauty parlours, nobody feels like their part of this and we've got to figure this one out. That's when we went on public television and had 3 hours of... 2 hours of which were live... of face-to-face discussion, black, white, across the community, about the issue of race. So, we're not going to have anybody buy into this thing if we don't confront the way which we deal with each other... It loosened up the joints a lot. It got people to believe that maybe they were being listened to...

Mayor Williams also hoped that the planning process would bring people of all races together for a common cause – neighbourhood issues – not black/white issues. Indeed, African Americans continue to be given equal access in the Youngstown 2010 process (Mock, 2008).

Specifically, according to the Vision:

Members of our community have said that there are divisions – especially racism – which are holding Youngstown back. The Comprehensive Plan will not be able to resolve these divisions, but we must begin to take steps to improve the situation. (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.141)

Despite this statement, however, social issues are not dealt with to any great extent in the Youngstown 2010 Plan. Issues such as education, crime, and racial divisions) are addressed in the Plan generally only where they relate to the city's physical condition (that is, improving the physical environment to make the streets safer and rehabilitating the older housing stock which are health risks because of lead paint and asbestos). For instance, according to Mock (2008), to

tackle crime, Williams increased demolition budget since abandoned buildings are haven from criminals. However, social problems such as Youngstown's high poverty rates – as was mentioned in Chapter 5, according to Bishaw and Semega (2008), the poverty rate in Youngstown in 2007 was 32.6%, one of the 10 highest percentages for places in the United States with a population between 65,000 and 249,999 – and low household incomes – again as mentioned in Chapter 5, in 2007 Youngstown's median income was \$24,941, the lowest income of “places” of 65,000 to 249,999 people in the United States (Bishaw and Semega, 2008) – are not addressed in the Plan.

Of course, that is not to say that the city is not attempting to address these issues in other venues (for example, through their Community Development Agency), although, according to Skolnick (2009), Mayor Williams admits that the city lacks an organization which does true community development. However, social issues (or at the very least an explicit consideration of the social *impacts* of the Plan) are not expressly included as part of the city's framework for future development and it is unclear how the City's strategies to improve the physical, economic, and environmental conditions will alleviate these issues. In fact, the city's strategy of encouraging residents to move to more stable neighborhoods, while logical from an infrastructure efficiency standpoint, is meeting some resistance from citizens who feel strong ties to their neighborhoods, abandoned or otherwise (Christie, 2008). According to Boardman (2008), some residents have turned down \$50,000 cash to move to busier parts of the city. As well, although the city is not forcing anyone to move, it is acknowledged that the “hollowing out” of unstable neighbourhoods will hit poor and minority residents hardest (Aeppel, 2007). According to Mock (2008), “[i]t's acknowledged across the board that when cities shrink, the neighborhoods that end up most expendable are typically low-income and often predominantly

African- or Latino-American communities” (p.44). Boardman (2008) also explains that historic preservationists expressing concern about the tearing down of historic buildings and the impact on the city’s sense of history. This lack of focus on social issues contributes to the overall unbalanced approach of the Youngstown 2010 Plan. Physical regeneration, and by implication, environmental regeneration, is clearly the priority, in part in order to achieve economic development goals. Social issues, while mentioned in the Vision, seem to have fallen by the wayside, both in the Plan and in the thinking of at least one highly-placed official. Issues of environmental preservation for its own sake also remain relatively unaddressed.

## **5.2 Sudbury’s Official Plan**

In comparison, at first glance, Sudbury’s Official Plan, as supplemented by the economic, humans services, and environmental strategic plans, seems at first glance to represent a much more balanced approach towards planning the future development of the city. Especially within the context of the trend in Ontario towards greater municipal responsibility (although without corresponding resources), planners in Sudbury appear to have produced a document which acknowledges the linkages between the physical, economic, environmental, and social spheres of urban life. For instance, the stated purpose of the Official Plan is to “...establish goals, objectives, and policies to manage and direct physical change and its effects on the social, economic and natural environment for the twenty-year planning period” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.3). Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 6, the introductory comments of the Plan explicitly state that it is meant to be much more than a land-use planning document, encompassing objectives related to social, economic, and environmental matters as well.

Furthermore, the theme of “balance” is repeated in the “vision statements” and elsewhere throughout the Plan. For instance, one of the vision statements is that Sudbury is a healthy and

sustainable community, providing a quality of life that is “...directly related to environmental, economic and social determinants” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.4). One of the “principles” of the Plan that is advanced to “guide future change, growth and development in the City” is that it is a priority of Sudbury’s City Council to adopt the “healthy community” approach to planning in the Official Plan, the human services strategy, and other city initiatives. As a matter of fact, two informants who have both worked for the City for a number of years explained that Sudbury was one of the first cities in Ontario to adopt the healthy community model, long before it was considered “en vogue” to do so. According to Sudbury informant S5, a city planner, “...back in 1986 when we hosted a national conference here, [adopting the Healthy Community Model] was one of the key points of that national conference. And then we joined Healthy Communities movement and carried those ideas into the plan.” Indeed, as he explains, the former Region of Sudbury was “the first region in Ontario who really included social policy in our plan.” Sudbury informant S1, a city planner, explains that “historically, Sudbury has pushed the envelope that tries to deal with more than just land use issues... the Sudbury Regional Plan dealt with what we call the Healthy Communities stuff – like the social aspects... It was ahead of its time in that way.” In 2004, Sudbury City Council (under former Mayor David Courtemanche) recognized the importance of developing a Healthy Community Strategy, which was done by an “Expert Panel” formed with various “opinion leaders” from the community (Greater Sudbury, 2006b, p.3). The strategy outlines four “strategic priorities” for the City, including: active living/healthy lifestyle; natural environment; civic engagement/social capital, and economic growth. In order to achieve these priorities, the City was to establish a Healthy Community Cabinet made up of “key community stakeholders” (Greater Sudbury, 2006b, p.3). Unfortunately, while a Healthy Community Cabinet Advisory Committee has been formed, it has not been very active and the

initiative has “fallen by the wayside” under the leadership of the current Mayor John Rodriguez. As Sudbury informant S4, the head of a community organization and member of City Council, states:

[The Healthy Community Strategy] was the previous Mayor’s baby and it was a priority. David Courtemanche and I were big proponents of it. The new Mayor got elected and it wasn’t part of his agenda. Now, he’s been supportive and great, but he’s not leading the charge. So, it’s very difficult to get the same level of engagement with the community on this because you don’t have the mayor up front carrying the torch as David was carrying it. And that will happen with new mayors and new people all the time. So, you do end up with good plans and good documents that can fall by the wayside.

In fact, none of the informants identified the Healthy Community Strategy as one of the key documents guiding city policy.

In the Official Plan, however, the notion of the “healthy community” is repeated throughout: determinants of a “healthy community” are listed to include community engagement, employment opportunities, accessible health care, protected natural areas, social supports, a safe city, and educational opportunities. An entire section of the Plan – Part VI, entitled “Healthy People, Healthy Places” – is devoted to describing the health community model. According to Part VI:

The Healthy Community approach is rooted in the belief that social, environmental and economic factors are important determinants of our health. The City of Greater Sudbury has supported the Healthy Community approach to community development for a number of years. (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.169)

The Plan goes on to note that a “diverse and vital” economy is an essential part of a Healthy Community and the *Coming of Age* strategic economic development plan is aimed at producing such an economy:

Greater Sudbury has adopted an economic development strategic plan that identifies several key engines of growth. In addition to mining and supply services, other targeted sectors include tourism, arts & culture, health care services and research, and the development of an environmental services sector that will build upon the City’s well established land reclamation and lake water quality programs. This Plan adopts a broad

and flexible approach to land use policies in order to facilitate economic activity in existing industrial sectors as well as all emerging areas of growth. (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.169)

It is then explained that “many” of the social issues outlined in the Human Services Strategy 2015 are relevant to the Healthy Community model. Some of the policies advanced in support of achieving a healthy community according to the indicators mentioned above do deal with social issues, including the policy to “provide through partnerships with the non-profit sector, the social support network to address the basic necessities of life including food and shelter...” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.176). A chapter of this part of the Plan entitled “Housing” deals with a range of issues related to housing, including strategies to “encourage a greater mix of housing and tenure” and strategies to increase the availability of affordable housing (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.189). In addition, the Plan advances policies to deal with homelessness, including the policy to “support the provisions of shelters and other temporary housing facilities...” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.190). The bulk of the rest of Part VI of the Plan is devoted to a discussion of the economic development strategic plan and how the land use plan will facilitate and expedite development projects by, for example, making the development approval process more user-friendly.

Despite explicitly advocated a balanced approach, closer inspection of the Plan and examination of interview transcripts and recent projects decisions, reveals that Sudbury has, similar to the cities discussed in Chapter 3, placed economic goals above aspirations of achieving a “healthy community.” While the Plan itself contains many detailed policies with respect to land-use planning (which are required by Ontario’s *Planning Act*), the overall tone of the Plan is one of a marketing document intended to “sell” the city’s assets to prospective businesses who may be considering Sudbury as a place to locate. In that way, the Plan – with the exception of

the detailed land-use policies – is focused “outward” towards attracting economic growth and population as opposed to being an inward-focused, balanced, and honest assessment of the city’s current conditions and the ways to improve quality of life for the *citizens that already live there*. Those areas where, for instance, social issues are discussed are minimal compared to the discussion devoted to economic development. This may be a result of the lack of a department within the city that deals with social planning. As it currently stands, social planning is done by an arms-length organization – the Social Planning Council of Sudbury, who has stated in their Human Services Strategy that “...there needs to be intentional planning through a Human Services Strategy that is integrated with economic and environmental planning” (Social Planning Council of Sudbury, 2005, p.12) which could be achieved by creating, within the city, a “human services and policy development body [to] support the activities of coordination, intersectoral action, service integration, and accountability” (Social Planning Council of Sudbury, 2005, p.22). In fact, a 2008 poverty reduction study put forth by the Social Planning Council of Sudbury, that suggestion was repeated as a way of ensuring that social issues do not get sidelined within city policy:

Giving this poverty reduction strategy the same priority and attention as economic and environmental strategies will allow for a sustained focus on employment and training, affordable housing, food security and transportation. By creating a human services planning and policy development body the CGS [City of Greater Sudbury] Council will be investing in the type of social infrastructure that will allow this strategy and any other social strategy, committees, solution teams, roundtables and /or advisory panels to be part of a process that could inform the direction of social development in the CGS. (Social Planning Council of Sudbury, 2008, p.2).

To date, no such body has been created.

Instead, the focus on planning for population growth means that, like the cases of unbalanced regeneration attempts mentioned in Chapter 3, this means that **economic** priorities have taken precedence over physical, social, and environmental priorities. Again, Sudbury’s

Official Plan reads much more like a document intended to sell the city to businesses (and hence, future residents) as opposed to one intended to improve the quality of life of current residents. The vision statements pay lip service to environmental and social concerns, but the only words highlighted in the vision is that Sudbury is “**open to business**” (City of Greater Sudbury, 2008, p.4, emphasis in original). While the Human Services Strategy and the Earthcare Sudbury Plan are referred to in the Plan, the only supplemental strategy that is discussed at any length is the Coming of Age Economic development strategy. Furthermore, when environmental or social issues are discussed, they tend to be addressed in the context of how either existing assets could be capitalized upon in order to attract foreign investment, or how conditions can be improved in order to attract foreign investment (although there are exceptions, as seen, for instance, in the housing policies mentioned above). For example, it is stated in the Plan that the Plan “provides land use policies which protect our natural resources to support long-term economic growth, including mining, aggregate and agricultural lands” (p.7). While, of course, there is nothing wrong with considering economic issues in an official plan, the problem with Sudbury’s Official Plan is that the attention paid to attracting new economic growth is not balanced with careful consideration of how that strategy may affect the physical, environmental, and social aspects of the city.

Indeed, the focus on attracting foreign investment (and retaining foreign investment already located in Sudbury) at the expense of a consideration of social, environmental, and physical issues has also resulted in the city pursuing projects that may have detrimental effects on those areas. For example, the Plan’s policy to “expedite the development process” seems to have resulted in a lack of consideration towards where new businesses are allowed to locate in the city. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the proliferation of big box stores in recent years has had a

negative impact on downtown development and seems to work counter to the Official Plan's stated objective of revitalizing the downtown.



*Photograph 8: Vacancy in downtown Sudbury (photograph by Laura Schatz)*



*Photograph 9: Big box stores in the suburbs (photograph by Laura Schatz)*

In fact, a new Wal Mart Superstore is currently being constructed on the outskirts of the city's south end, which will likely draw even more customers away from any downtown retail.



*Photograph 10: Walmart being constructed on the edge of the city (photograph by Laura Schatz)*

Although the city has considered the effects of these peripheral big box stores on the downtown, they have determined that the benefits outweigh the negative impacts:

...we aggressively went after big box stores, for example. There were opponents to that. There were people that – downtown merchants, for example, that were opposed to it -- people that just didn't want to see us become a big box city, who wanted the mom and pop stores, the small businesses, that kind of thing. (Sudbury informant S13, a former high-ranking city official)

As well, given that Sudbury's population is likely to decline in the long-term, what this continued location of retail on the outskirts of the city will mean for the city's ability to maintain such a dispersed infrastructure system in the future remains unaddressed in the Plan. Indeed, the Mayor's concern about the lack of funds to fix the city's large network of crumbling infrastructure (discussed in Chapter 6) is unlikely to be ameliorated if retail in the city continues to spread out. Concerns have also been raised that, in the short term, the development in the South End will negatively affect Sudbury's quality of life:

Walmart's coming in and you can barely turn left on Thursday at six o'clock without sitting through 4 lights. I can't wait to see what's going to happen out there when all of that opens up... That entire corridor is going to be a mess. Walmart, Smart Centres, another Home Depot... There are hotels going up in the South End. You've got to move people! So, if we keep selling our great quality of life saying that you can avoid city traffic, we may be losing that. (Sudbury informant S8)

As well, the Plan's promotion of a continued (and even increased) dependence on the mining industry, including the mining supply and services sector, will likely result in continued environmental damage and harm to the health of local residents. Unfortunately, the Official Plan and even the *Earthcare Sudbury* plan, remain relatively silent about the continued negative impacts of the two dominant mining companies on the health of the environment and local residents. In fact, in conducting interviews with local officials for this study, none of them were willing to be critical of the mining company's environmental impacts. As Sudbury informant S7, an Earthcare Sudbury employee, was quoted in Chapter 5:

I think the mining companies work very hard at bringing their operation to a more environmentally conscious way... it's constant work on their part to make sure that not only they act in regulatory boundaries but also in some instances moving beyond those into areas that aren't regulated but they still want to do the right thing.

When asked what major environmental challenges the city is currently facing, one local official did not mention the mining companies:

I think the City is very conscious of its environment because it has to be. I think that the re-greening efforts... because of Earthcare, you have Earth Day at the market. That was a wild success. People are trying to teach their children to be environmentally conscious. I think Sudbury should be proud of their efforts in that area. (Sudbury informant S8)

This unwillingness to be critical of the mining companies, who historically have inflicted (and continue to inflict) environmental damage, only reinforces the conclusion that economic development, in both the Plan and in practice, remains the priority.

In addition, it is not clear how the city's policy of selling the city in order to attract any and all types of businesses addresses any of the social issues currently faced by the city,

including increasing gap between rich and poor. As discussed in Chapter 6, in recent years, the city has put considerable efforts into attracting call centres to the city. Indeed, call centres have had some positive impacts on the community: for instance, the call centres which have located downtown have contributed to the adaptive reuse of buildings and their workers have contributed to the sustainability of businesses located in the downtown (Schatz & Johnson, 2009). In addition, the industry contributes substantial money to the economy by providing entry-level and second-income jobs. It provided an impetus to develop telecommunications infrastructure so that high tech firms could come to Sudbury. However, most of the call centres provide low-paying, high-stress, insecure jobs that have not replaced the highly-paid union jobs that have been lost. Furthermore, the high tech firms that were supposed to follow the call centres to Sudbury have not yet materialised in the numbers expected. And call centres can come and go fairly easily, as is evident from the number of firms that have already departed (Schatz & Johnson, 2007). Here again, economic priorities seem to have take precedence over social issues, such as the need to provide well-paying, quality work opportunities for Sudbury residents.

The lack of balance in the city's Official Plan and policies resulted in Sudbury, in a recent study by the Pembina Institute,<sup>58</sup> ranking last out of 27 Ontario municipalities on the Institute's "sustainability" index (Pembina Institute, 2007). This index ranked the municipalities according to 33 indicators in three broad categories: smart growth, liveability, and economic vitality. According to the Institute:

Although various definitions of urban sustainability have been put forward, they all pivot on the idea of achieving growth and development in a way that balances environmental, social and economic concerns. Development is sustainable when it conserves resources, avoids damaging ecological processes, and contributes to social equity, quality of life and a vital, diverse economy. (Pembina Institute, 2007, p.5)

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<sup>58</sup> The Pembina Institute is a Canadian not-for-profit think tank, established by a citizen group in 1985, whose mission is to "...to advance sustainable energy solutions through innovative research, education, consulting and advocacy" ([www.pembina.org](http://www.pembina.org)).

Unfortunately, the findings of this study suggest that development has not been sustainable in Sudbury, despite the assertion in Sudbury's Official Plan that it is a "healthy and sustainable" community. This is not surprising, given the unbalanced approach taken in both the Plan and in recent policy decisions.

## **6.0 Fourth Principle: Planners must change the role they play in the community**

As outlined in Chapter 3, according to shrinking cities researchers, in order to be effective, the role of planners must change in the context of population decline. The basic conclusion is that in some respects planners need to play a *qualitatively different role* in shrinking cities than in growing cities (for instance, planners should actively manage the effects of population decline rather than plan for growth that is unlikely to happen); in other respects, the role of the planner is the same in any demographic context – growth or shrinkage – but the *importance of that role must be emphasized* in the context of population decline (for example, facilitating residents to undertake projects on their own becomes more important when a municipality is under fiscal strain). In this section, I examine whether, as compared to growth-oriented Sudbury, in developing their "right-sizing" land-use policies, planners in Youngstown have begun to take on new roles. I find, that despite planners in Youngstown not completely abandoning the growth paradigm, in the area of land-use planning they have taken a significant step towards changing the role they play in the community. Indeed, in developing the Youngstown 2010 Plan's and Sudbury Official Plan's land-use policies, the role of planners in Youngstown and Sudbury differed in several ways, providing support to the notion that when the "hold" of the growth paradigm is relaxed, the role of planners changes. In short, Youngstown planners – at least those engaging in land-use planning – have begun to take on some of those

key roles outlined in the literature as being necessary in practicing “good planning” in shrinking cities, while the role of Sudbury planners remains more traditional. The following section compares these roles.

## **6.1 New roles for planners?**

### ***(a) Planner as manager of urban shrinkage?***

Instead of taking the traditional role of planning to direct where future development and growth will occur, planners in Youngstown have essentially become managers of the physical effects of population decline. Through the Plan, they are directing where and how the physical structures of the city will be downsized. Rather than increasing the amount of residential space, the Plan calls for a 30% decrease in residential land (City of Youngstown, 2005). The Plan also calls for the demolition of vacant and derelict buildings. As mentioned above, millions of dollars have been spent in recent years on demolition. As Youngstown informant Y14 explains:

There’s still very difficult questions that have to be answered about parts of the city that are just very marginally inhabited, sparsely inhabited. What do we do? We’re not going to force people to relocate or move but ... we want to make sure that we don’t encourage investment in areas of the city that won’t be sustainable. And if we find an area of the city that becomes almost non-inhabited, can we somehow structure it so we aren’t allocating resources there when there’s really no citizens there that would need those resources and redirect some of those things.

Currently, Youngstown planners are working with local residents to develop neighbourhood plans based on the “smart shrinkage” principles contained in the Youngstown 2010 Plan (see discussion below regarding Idora Park Neighbourhood Plan).

In comparison, planners in Sudbury have not taken on the role as “managers” of the decline process, which is not surprising given the growth-oriented nature of the policies contained in Sudbury’s Official Plan. Sudbury planners have very much retained the traditional planning role of directing where future growth will be located in the community. As discussed

above, population decline was not seriously considered as a possible scenario in the city's demographic future and there was no discussion of how the physical effects of population decline might be handled should population decline occur. Planners instead based the Official Plan's policies on an assumption of future population increases. As also mentioned above, when asked if strategies for population decline were considered during the planning process, informants indicated that they chose to base the Plan on the growth scenario, prompting higher-level officials to express concern that the Plan's higher growth estimates were "not based on standard growth projections methodology" and that too much land was being set aside for urban land uses (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, letter, March 21, 2006). The lack of willingness to seriously consider future population decline as a possibility and how this decline might be managed means that Sudbury planners will be unprepared for future population decline and the new "managing of decline" role this will likely necessitate.

***(b) Planner as innovator/pioneer?***

From the beginning of the Youngstown 2010 process, planners believed that traditional planning processes and policies would not work given the demographic context and widespread disillusionment and apathy amongst the population. There was a sense that something "different" was needed and that residents would not be receptive to hearing more false promises. Although the planners emphasized in interviews that the idea of admitting Youngstown is a smaller city essentially came from the people, they took those ideas and translated them into decline-oriented land-use policies – policies which are innovative in the North American context and essentially without precedent. As Youngstown informant Y13, a university-based urban designer who has consulted in Youngstown explains, "to Youngstown's credit, they did take a risk in adopting this plan and they don't know how it's going to come out..." Importantly, other

cities in similar demographic situations are beginning to take notice. Since the Youngstown 2010 Plan was published, other cities have shown interest in the innovative aspects of the 2010 Plan, meaning that Youngstown planner's innovative approach to planning may soon diffuse to other shrinking cities, further strengthening the assertion that Youngstown planners have been "innovators:"

...other cities are finally starting to accept the notion that cities do shrink and embracing that, acknowledging that is something productive. And I think that's been evidenced by the amount of attention that's been shown from both nationally and internationally to the Youngstown 2010 Plan. I mean, I've been across the country and I've been in Europe talking about this Plan. (Youngstown informant Y14)

Youngstown informant Y8, a city planner, explains that the City has hosted delegates from such cities as Flint Michigan, Dayton Ohio, and Fort Wayne Indiana. At the time of the interview, a delegation of professors from six shrinking cities in Japan was planning to visit Youngstown to learn about the Youngstown 2010 approach. Youngstown has also fielded inquiries from shrinking cities in Europe. As Youngstown informant Y14 explains:

Not necessarily all of [the cities inquiring] are ready to acknowledge and hit on the shrinking city concept and that's ok, but they're certainly asking questions on what we're doing, how we're going about doing it and this is still a very much process that is evolving, that's in the making. We're not telling them we have necessarily figured out all the answers. But, cities certainly have been inquiring significantly about how we went about it and what we're doing and what the plans are.

In addition to the Youngstown planners being innovators in developing the land-use planning policies contained in the 2010 Plan, Urban Strategies' planners were also innovative in coming up with the process of developing the Vision. As noted above, in order to combat the general feeling of apathy towards any planning process amongst Youngstown residents, the firm first conducted focus groups with community leaders and then went to the larger public, rather than simply conducting large scale public meetings. Also in terms of process, Youngstown planners

engaged in an innovative marketing process, which served to ignite interest in the general population. Explains Youngstown informant Y8, a city planner:

Our approach ... what made it successful, again not so much for decline but it has to do with maybe apathy and obviously if you're talking about decline, there's usually some apathy thrown in there, is what that public participation that public outreach is the marketing effort. We engaged our public broadcasting station to run, to rebroadcast meetings. We'd highly publicize them through our marketing channels – full page ad in our newspaper or our network with our existing neighbourhood groups, things like that. We marketed truly like a company markets its own products. But then also the really unique partnership with PBS and even the public radio station would rebroadcast stuff so I think that all goes hand in hand with if you're going to talk about decline or just planning in general, but even decline because people's attitudes can be really down.

The result of the efforts of planners to reach out to the public using focus groups of community leaders prior to large-scale public meetings and to use the local media to help “brand” the Youngstown 2010 planning efforts resulted in the large amount of participation, outlined above, in the planning process. Recognition in the form of the American Planning Association's 2007 National Planning Excellence Award for Public Outreach and mention in academic works such as Barbara Faga's 2006 book *Designing Public Consensus* has meant that Youngstown's planning process is starting to be held out as a model for engaging the local community.

Certainly, in adopting a traditional growth-oriented planning approach, Sudbury's land use planners have not taken on the role, as Youngstown planners did, of innovators either in policy or process. It must be mentioned that there are likely several factors contributing to the lack of shift in this respect, including less pressing physical decline and the recent slight gain in population. Also, unlike in Ohio where municipalities have a large degree of control over municipal planning, in Ontario, legislative constraints are placed on the content of planning policies by the Ontario government through the *Ontario Planning Act* and other provincial documents such as the *Places to Grow Act* (which contains provincial policies on how growth should occur in each Ontario municipality) and the Provincial Policy Statement (which contains

provincial policies relating to planning, such as the protection of prime agricultural land and the encouragement of residential intensification). Planners in Ontario may thus be less likely to “chart their own path” than to ensure they follow the path laid out for them by the Province – a path which, incidentally, does not lead in the direction of effective planning for long-term population decline. Finally, as discussed above, interviews with Sudbury officials reveal a general unwillingness amongst policy-makers (although this is by no means universal) to consider the possibility of future population decline; this may have served to limit the perceived options available to planners when crafting the Official Plan policies. All of these factors have likely contributed to Sudbury’s planners taking a more traditional path rather than taking on the role of innovators.

## **6.2 Existing roles taking on increased importance?**

### ***(a) Planner as facilitator?***

As stated in the Youngstown 2010 Plan, with only two planners and a limited amount of funds, the city does not have the resources to implement the Plan on its own:

The City cannot afford single handedly to do all that this plan calls for on its own. This will take collaborative effort between the City, citizens, private sector developers and businesses, Youngstown State University, Youngstown Board of Education, community development corporations, other government agencies, religious entities, etc. (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.127)

The Plan goes on to outline which types of projects could be undertaken by city officials and residents city-wide and in each planning district which would “have an immediate impact on the City...” (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.127). For example, to make the North Side “better planned and organized,” residents are encouraged to form an organization to develop various neighbourhood plans (City of Youngstown, 2005, p.129). Planners in Youngstown have, in large measure, become facilitators of local resident action, mainly out of necessity:

Our planning department is woefully understaffed as we go out and do the neighbourhood-level planning. Our economic development department is understaffed. Now, the people who we have there are phenomenal and proficient at what they do. In fact, as far as I'm concerned, they're all geniuses, but the resources just aren't there and that's where the collaboration becomes much more important. But, yeah, the community has a lot of involvement and there's reliance on the community. (Youngstown informant Y14)

Planners are essentially depending on local residents, the private sector, and other groups to implement the Plan because they cannot do it on their own. In fact, as a result of the process of public participation and education described above, residents have been inspired to take action on their own. For example, as Youngstown informant Y13 explains:

...the other sort of strength of Youngstown is not only that people have bought into it but people of the city are beginning to implement it. I was talking to somebody a couple of weeks ago who said, you know, the city has been a little bit slow to actually do anything on the ground. But one of the churches has begun acquiring vacant properties, and there are lots of them in the area around it, and they've planted corn and they had this big event this summer where you could come out and eat corn. I know it might sound silly, but I really think that corn-eating may save Youngstown in the end. There's a day-care centre in Youngstown that's adopting a similar strategy.

Furthermore, as Youngstown informant Y13 states, this has resulted in a level of uncertainty as to what the final results of the Plan will "look" like:

...the city just doesn't just have the resources in terms of planning staff or in dollars to be able to implement any sort of large scale vision so this sort of piecemeal vision that takes place one parcel at a time may kind of end that way. It's kind of a question mark as to what the end is. But to me, the most interesting questions are the ones you don't have the answers to! What Youngstown turns into... and the planning process may be about enabling rather than about actually doing and if the city is able to do that... if the city is able to relax some of its ordinances enough to enable individual actions to take hold then I think something really good can happen. It's all kind of unknown at this point.

Indeed, a number of citizen groups have been formed to undertake projects designed to implement principles of the Youngstown 2010 Plan. For instance, in the South Side District, 15 citizen groups are listed on the Youngstown 2010 website as being involved in some respect in implementing the Youngstown 2010 Plan. One group in particular – the Idora Neighbourhood

Association (INA) – has set up a website (<http://idoraneighborhoodassociation.weebly.com>) wherein the stated mission of the INA is “...to revitalize the neighborhood and carry out the strategies laid forth in the neighborhood plan. The INA has developed as a grassroots organization with leadership from within the neighborhood.” Together with residents of the Idora Neighbourhood and GIS experts from Youngstown State University, Karen Perkins (a zoning officer with the City of Youngstown) and Ian Beniston (of Ohio State University) co-managed the project of creating a neighbourhood plan for the Idora Neighbourhood. In March, 2008, the Plan was recognized through a City Council resolution as accurately reflecting the Youngstown 2010 Plan and as being the “guiding document for the future development of the neighborhood” (City of Youngstown Planning Department and The Ohio State University, 2008, p.3). Among other purposes, the Plan is aimed at dealing with the 30.5 percent of land parcels within the neighbourhood that remain vacant. Plans are put forth to convert vacant land into community gardens, parks, or sideyards. Residents are encouraged to “embrace their vacant spaces” as an opportunity to create these types of greenspace (City of Youngstown Planning Department and The Ohio State University, 2008, p.44). The Plan sets forth a number of other strategies, many of which (like finding creative ways to use vacant lands and creating neighborhood watch associations) are to be undertaken by the residents and other members of the Idora Neighborhood. City of Youngstown planners are largely facilitators in the implementation of the Plan:

It was very successful. What it did was it got the residents of that neighbourhood involved in the Plan. We held meetings for them to come and give their input, things that they wanted to change and things they wanted done in their neighbourhood because they lived there so they're affected by everything that goes on in that neighbourhood. And it was a *huge* success because they're now taking over their own neighbourhood. They don't wait for the city to come in and suggest that you need to do this or that. They may call the city and say “we need this done and that done.” So, it was a huge success ... (Youngstown informant Y12)

According to a recent article in Youngstown's online version its newspaper, *The Vindicator*, the Plan is beginning to have effect:

Little by little, the redevelopment is starting to work. Residents have joined to form the Idora Neighborhood Association, which has grown to more than 240 members. The INA works with the city and MVOC [Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative], and decaying houses are coming down. Residents are maintaining vacant properties and refurbishing rusted posts and fire hydrants. They are establishing youth groups. The Idora Wildcats 4-H youth program participated for the first time this year at the Canfield Fair and received an award for its display. Block parties are bringing neighbors closer. (Keling & Denen, 2009)

The revitalization of Wick Park (a central park in the Wick Neighbourhood) is another example of planners in Youngstown facilitating residents and other organizations to take on implementation of the principles of the Youngstown 2010 Plan. The Wick Park Revitalization Project ([www.wickparkproject.info/](http://www.wickparkproject.info/)) has been undertaken by a group of community organizations, led by two such organizations: Defend Youngstown and Youngstown CityScape. The group has enlisted the services of urban designer Terry Schwarz, from The Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio, an outreach department of Kent State University that assists communities by providing technical assistance and urban design services for local design initiatives.



*Photograph 11: Wick Park public meeting (photograph by Laura Schatz)*

While Youngstown planner Anthony Kobak attended the community meetings as a participant, this project was undertaken by the residents themselves, with planners playing only a facilitative role. Youngstown informant Y8, a city planner, explains that while he was asked to be on the steering committee for this project “...with being so busy, I just said no, you guys look like you’re going in the right direction. I offered comments and I just kind of watch how things are going and offer advice that way.” These and other projects are being undertaken by local residents and organizations under the Youngstown 2010 banner, with the city planners acting as facilitators. It should be mentioned, however, that Youngstown planners see themselves as facilitating local residents’ actions, they are not always comfortable with completely removing themselves from the process:

I always get nervous if [residents] want to do it themselves. Like one neighbourhood in particular, there’s a guy who said yeah, OK, we’re supposed to do a neighbourhood plan, OK, I’ll do it. And I’m just like... you don’t just kind of *do* it. I mean, what’s your

background? If you're going to do it, are you going to get money and then pay a consulting firm to assist with this? I talked to him and I extended our help, but I haven't heard much from him. I think he's actually not going forward with it. (Youngstown informant Y8)

The role of “planner as facilitator” does not exist to any significant extent in Sudbury in the area of land-use planning. Planners did not indicate that any part of their role was to facilitate citizens to undertake implementing the Official Plan on their own. There was more of a sense that the Official Plan represented the “rules of the game,” which the residents are expected to follow. The only area in which Sudbury planners were seemingly taking on the role of facilitator to any extent was in the area in economic development, primarily due to the fact that the city has little control over economic development and therefore economic development planners **must** rely on the community, particularly the private sector, to implement their overall vision. When asked what parts of the economic strategic plan have been implemented, according to Sudbury informant S8, an employee with the City's business development organization:

The limits the province places on local action are constraining... Implementation would be a stretch-word [in terms of the economic development strategy]... For instance, we said we wanted to build a city for the creative, curious, and adventuresome and since then the community has kind of come together and formed groups, for example, the community group that's advancing the School of Architecture... So, we don't implement. The community goes after projects that advance the economic strategic plan. Sometimes we facilitate. Sometimes we don't. Sometimes it's not required.

There was no sense that economic development planners in Sudbury were acting in any way different than economic development planners in other Ontario cities, who face the same limits over measures they can take directly to influence local economic development.

### ***(b) Planner as consensus-builder?***

In developing the Youngstown 2010 Plan, Youngstown undertook a massive effort to include the public in the planning process, soliciting their views and including a consensus of these views in the final planning document. As discussed in more detail above, initial workshops

involved over 200 community leaders, including representatives from neighbourhood groups, local government, business, and trade unions. The city also conducted smaller individual meetings with churches, neighbourhood groups, and business people. As Youngstown informant Y8, a city planner, explains: "...we wanted to engage the community. We wanted to educate people about the importance of planning." As noted, planners made extensive use of the media (television, print, and radio) to link the public to the visioning process and "...the media really got on board..." (Youngstown informant Y14). In creating a brand that residents identified with, planners generated excitement within the local community so that they could get as many people involved as possible in order to reach a consensus as to how the city should plan for the future. Again, when the Vision was unveiled at a public meeting in 2002, 1400 people attended. After the Vision was adopted by City Council, the city undertook a series of neighbourhood meetings in order to obtain input on how to develop the comprehensive plan. Over 800 people participated in these meetings and 1300 people attending the unveiling of the comprehensive plan in 2005. As a result of the City's efforts at public inclusion, over 5000 people directly participated in the developing the Vision and the comprehensive plan. Thus, planners made a concerted effort to gain meaningful grassroots participation and to build a consensus among residents. As one Youngstown resident who participated in the process succinctly explains, "the city did a real good job of getting the public involved!" (Youngstown informant Y3).

In comparison, planners in Sudbury did consult, but on a much lesser scale than the consultation that was undertaken in Youngstown. When drafting a new Official Plan, or revising an existing plan, planners in Ontario are required by the *Planning Act* to hold one public meeting. According to informants, Sudbury's planning department went over and above the requirements contained in the *Planning Act*, conducting a number (about 16) of "open houses" in

communities throughout the city. During these open houses, planners did a presentation about the Plan, followed by questions and answers. Some of the open houses were well attended while others were not. One informant explained that attendance varied according to the location, the subject of the open houses, and the weather (many were conducted during the winter). As mentioned above, informants could not provide an exact number of how many people participating in the planning process: “how many people did we touch? I don’t know” (Sudbury informant S12). Sudbury informant S1 estimates that around 200 to 300 people participated in open houses. However, it is clear that the same effort was not put in to advertising the open houses or to getting the public interested in the planning process as was done in Youngstown. According to one city planner (Sudbury informant S12), although planners tried at the public meetings to educate the public, most attendees attended out of “self-interest;” that is, out of concern as to how the policies affected their specific parcel of land. The public generally did not raise concerns about the broad principles underlying the Plan or the content of the policies themselves. As mentioned above, as Sudbury informant S12 puts it, “...no one ever asked me about the vision.” In the end, planners in Sudbury, with the help of external planning consultants, were much more like “experts” who developed the Plan, including the Vision upon which the Plan was based, with later feedback from residents. This is very different than in Youngstown, where planners saw themselves as facilitating a consensus amongst the population on the basic principles, upon which the Youngstown 2010 Plan.

***(c) Planner as ghostwriter/advocate?***

Although Youngstown planners spent considerable effort finding out the views of the public and encouraging them to take action on their own, I found no direct evidence of planners acting as a ghostwriter or advocate. However, it is worthwhile mentioning at this point that

perhaps this role will begin to become more important in Youngstown as citizens undertake more and more projects on their own and planners begin to see positive outcomes from these projects. Not surprisingly, I found no evidence of planners in Sudbury acting as ghostwriters or advocates.

Thus, in several ways, the role of the planner in Youngstown indeed reflects the suggestions in the literature of how planning in shrinking cities should take place in order to be effective. Again, it could be said that some of these – for instance, planner as consensus-builder and planner as facilitator – should be present in the planning process of any city, growing or declining, but what was important in Youngstown was the degree to which these were *necessary* in order to develop land-use policies aimed at managing the city’s physical decline. As the city undertakes the massive task of implementing the Plan (and overseeing the creation of 130 neighbourhood plans), it is likely that the role of the planner in Youngstown will need to evolve further towards facilitating residents’ actions and the role of advocating for actions already being undertaken may soon appear. As mentioned above, Youngstown informant Y13 believes that, in the end “...the planning process may become about enabling rather than about actually doing...” In comparison, several of the key roles suggested in the literature for good planning in shrinking cities found in Youngstown are not present in Sudbury, suggesting that the role of planners in cities that have begun to shift away from the growth paradigm is indeed different.

## 7.0 Summary

The literature suggests that planning needs to change in many respects in shrinking cities; to that end, “good planning” in shrinking cities must incorporate all of the following principles:

- Planners must **leave behind the assumption of future growth**;
- Planners must use processes that are **strategic, with an emphasis on citizen participation**;

- Planners must **adopt a balanced approach** to addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community; and
- Planners must **change the role they play** in the community.

Rather than focusing on achieving and distributing future growth (which is unlikely to happen to any significant degree), planners need to focus on improving the quality of life of the people who remain, developing policies, through extensive citizen participation, that are balanced and strategic. In doing so, planners must be willing to take on new roles in the community, particularly the role of manager of the decline process. Youngstown, Ohio and Sudbury, Ontario are illuminating case studies of how planning differs (in some respects) in shrinking cities that have begun to adopt some of these principles versus those that have not.

With respect to the first principle of “good planning” in shrinking cities, the shift away from growth-oriented planning has begun in Youngstown. A major focus of the Youngstown 2010 Plan is the downsizing of infrastructure in order to make the city “fit” its current population levels. A number of factors contributed to Youngstown taking the first steps towards breaking away from the growth paradigm, including: a new generation of political leaders and policy-makers; extensive public participation by residents who were tired of unfulfilled promises of growth; a plan so old that it was generally seen as time for a whole new approach; the involvement of key people, such as Hunter Morrison and other members of Youngstown State University, who had experience working in shrinking cities; and a pressing need to deal with the ever-worsening negative effects of extensive physical decline. All of these factors contributed to Youngstown admitting it is a “shrunk,” but not “shrinking” city. This is an important distinction: there has not been a complete shift away from the focus on growth in Youngstown. Ultimately, there is hope amongst local officials that the city will start growing again; indeed, the focus of the Plan thus seems to be to “shrink” the city and make it more attractive so that it will

grow again (although not to former population levels) in the future. Even this small step away from the emphasis on growth, however, is a monumental one in North American planning culture.

In contrast, Sudbury's Official Plan remains heavily influenced by the growth-oriented approach, despite the likely long-term decline in population. Overall, planners and policy-makers appear to be unwilling to first, be candid about the prospects for future population growth and second, have possible policy responses "at the ready" for managing the likely population decline. Sudbury's Official Plan seems to be a reflection of the "competition between cities" mentality and the "growth is the only option" approach. Interestingly, this was not always the case, as can be seen in the more pragmatic approach taken to population decline in Sudbury's previous plan. This provides hope that Sudbury planners may, in the future, be once again willing to shift away from the planning for growth mentality. In the meantime, the growth paradigm dominates in Sudbury. Interviews indicate that this dominance is influenced by a number of factors, including: the recent slight gain in population; the fact that, unlike in Youngstown where steel is no longer the dominant industry, mining still dominates Sudbury's economy and thus downturns (which may lead to an outmigration of population) are expected to be only temporary; and the fact that the city had not hit "rock bottom" and was not in search of an entirely new approach to planning. In fact, the motivation for revising the Official Plan was primarily practical: that is, the desire to have uniform Official Plan policies for the newly amalgamated City of Greater Sudbury. All of these factors contributed to a lack of paradigm shift away from growth-oriented planning in Sudbury.

With respect to planning processes, the Youngstown 2010 Plan was indeed crafted using many of the principles of strategic planning seen by shrinking cities researchers as so vital to

good planning in cities experiencing population loss. Most importantly, the Vision and the Plan which was based upon the Vision involved extensive citizen participation. The planning process was inclusive: extensive efforts were made to get the public involved, including strategic use of the media and use of “outsider” firm that employed innovative methods of encouraging public involvement that had not previously been tried. Also importantly, the process involved an honest self-reflection on the city’s demographic context. Residents were ready to talk about what could realistically be done given current circumstances and trends and planners were ready to listen and to translate their suggestions into the Youngstown 2010 Plan. However, contrary to strategic planning principles, the Vision is not as comprehensive as it could have been, being largely dominated by physical regeneration issues. As well, the Plan may not be as flexible as it could have been, being that it will be updated only once every 10 years. Finally, the Plan does not integrate parties on a regional level and is very Youngstown-focused.

In comparison, while Sudbury’s Official Plan contains much strategic planning “speak” – for instance, speaking of a “vision” and “strategy” – the Plan itself is a comprehensive plan as required by the *Ontario Planning Act* (a requirement over which, of course, planners in Sudbury had no control). The strategies are also not context-specific, as required by strategic planning principles; they are based on selling the city, not on a realistic assessment of demographic, economic, physical, social and environmental circumstances. Planners did not consider the potential ramifications of future population decline, nor did they pay attention to the impact of the dominant mining companies (other than their positive impacts) on the city. In terms of process, planners did go over and above the requirements of the *Planning Act* to solicit public involvement. However, the public was not involved in writing the “vision” and in the many Official Plan open houses conducted in Sudbury, the vision was not of particular interest to those

who attended (most of whom attended out of self-interest; that is, to determine how policies would affect their particular parcel of land). Interviews failed to reveal the same desire on the part of Sudbury planners to get the public excited about the process that was evident with Youngstown planners. Perhaps this could be attributed to the fact that Sudbury planners were not attempting to do anything “new” with their Official Plan. In particular, they were not trying to create an entirely new vision for the city.

In terms of whether each planning exercise created a balanced approach, interviews and document review indicate that both Youngstown’s and Sudbury’s plans do not meet the “balanced” requirement for good planning in shrinking cities. With respect to the Youngstown 2010 Plan, there is an emphasis on physical regeneration (likely because of the visibility of physical decline and the belief that “fixing” physical issues will alleviate other concerns). A lack of attention is paid to both environmental (where it is not related to physical, economic, or social goals) and social issues (at least, the social impacts of the Plan). There is also a lack of a coherent approach to economic regeneration, which not all local officials “buying in” to the approach as outlined in the Youngstown 2010 Plan.

Sudbury’s Official Plan is similarly unbalanced, but it is unbalanced in favour of economic concerns. The wholesale adoption of the notion that the city needs to “sell” itself to outsiders in order to grow (because growth is the only option), has resulted in a Plan that is skewed towards economic concerns and toward making the city attractive to outsiders. The focus on economic concerns has led to a lack of willingness to critically examine the two dominant mining companies’ continued environmental and health impacts and to question why the mining companies, with all their wealth, do not make a greater financial contribution to the quality of life of the local community. The lack of integrated human services planning and

policy development body with the municipal structure means that the Official Plan's Human Services Strategy remains more of an "arm's length" document than one that is truly integrated into all other aspects of planning.

Finally, there are indications that the role of the planner is starting to shift in Youngstown, where planners have taken steps away from (without leaving it behind completely) the growth paradigm. This shift has not happened in Sudbury, where the growth paradigm remains firmly entrenched. Youngstown planners, at least in the area of land use planning, are beginning to act as "managers of the decline process," determining how the physical structure of the city can be "downsized" to fit current population levels. Sudbury planners continue to direct future growth. Youngstown planners (and planners from the Toronto consulting firm, Urban Strategies) have acted as innovators both in process (using innovative techniques to get people involved) and in policy (developing methods to downsize certain neighbourhoods). Youngstown planners, in comparison with Sudbury planners, also played much more of the role of "facilitator" both in finding a consensus upon which the Plan could be built and in facilitating residents in their implementation of the 2010 Plan. On the other hand, planners in Sudbury have acted very much as experts, writing the vision upon which the Plan is based themselves and taking the finished product to the public for comment. There is no sense in Sudbury (whose planning department is much larger than that of Youngstown's) that planners are relying on the public to implement the Official Plan.

Thus, this evaluation of whether Youngstown and Sudbury have incorporated the principles of "good planning" for shrinking cities has produced mixed results. What is clear is that Youngstown (which has admitted *shrinkage*, although has not resigned itself to *shrinking*) has begun to base its planning on more of these principles than growth-oriented Sudbury. In the

final chapter, I comment on the lessons they case studies may provide for planners and policy-makers, for planning academics, and for residents of shrinking cities.

## **CHAPTER 8:**

# **IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, and DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

### **1.0 Introduction**

In the context of a growing number of shrinking cities, the lack of attention paid to finding effective planning approaches in the context of population decline will have serious repercussions for those cities disadvantaged by processes of economic restructuring and demographic change. There is general agreement in the shrinking cities literature that it is not simply the case that growth-oriented planning strategies can be super-imposed onto shrinking cities. Planners in shrinking cities need strategies geared towards the many unique challenges that arise when population declines. Continuing to focus the academic telescope on growing cities does a significant disservice to the increasing number of planners who are finding themselves faced with the reality of population loss and its accompanying challenges and opportunities. Luckily, there is a small but growing body of shrinking cities literature that is beginning to address how municipal officials in shrinking cities can tackle those challenges and capitalize upon the opportunities. My intention is that my research will contribute to this growing body of literature. In the remainder of this chapter, I revisit my central research question, relate my findings to the literature, and discuss implications for planning practitioners, planning educators, and planning researchers.

### **2.0 Research question revisited**

As stated in Chapter 1, the vulnerability of cities to outside economic and demographic forces has led to two opposing, but related views: the first is that there is nothing planners can do in this context and the second is that planners should focus on “growing” their cities to previous population levels. Both approaches assume that growth is the only positive development in the life of a city and that municipal officials are powerless to “shape” global forces to suit the needs of the residents who remain in these shrinking cities. There are indeed examples of cities pursuing both approaches, particularly, as was seen in Chapter 3, the “going for growth” approach. Unfortunately, the former leaves pressing problems (such as infrastructure overcapacity) unaddressed while the latter wastes ever dwindling municipal resources.

As was also seen in Chapter 3, shrinking cities researchers have pointed out that there is a different way of planning in shrinking cities, one that is based on the premise that planners can indeed effect positive change in the cities in which they plan. Together with echoes found in the urban regeneration and strategic planning literature, this approach prompts planners in shrinking cities neither to focus on planning for growth nor to ignore decline but *to focus on planning to meet the needs of the population that remains*. In focusing on the needs of remaining residents, planners can shape the effects of global forces beyond their control in a proactive, effective, and realistic way. Importantly, in order to do so, planners need to change the way they plan in shrinking cities by following certain principles of “good planning” in shrinking cities, including:

- Planners must **leave behind the assumption of future growth**;
- Planners must use processes that are **strategic, with an emphasis on citizen participation**;
- Planners must **adopt a balanced approach** in addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community; and
- Planners must **change the role they play** in the community.

In exploring the recent, ostensibly polar, planning approaches taken by two shrinking cities – Youngstown and Sudbury – I have attempted to address my over-arching research question; that is: shrinking cities researchers tell us that the adoption of certain principles of “good planning” is necessary in shrinking cities, but what do the principles of good planning in shrinking cities look like in practice and what might make their adoption more or less likely? More specifically, in this thesis I am asked the following sub-questions:

- What approach have Youngstown, Ohio and Sudbury, Ontario taken in their recently-adopted Official/Comprehensive Plans?
- Does this approach incorporate each principle of good planning in shrinking cities?
- If yes, what motivated the break from tradition? If no, what mitigated against a break from tradition?

The point of comparing these two approaches was to uncover whether each principle of good planning in shrinking cities has been incorporated and to illuminate what factors either facilitated or impeded adoption of each principle. To date, this aspect of planning in shrinking cities has not been addressed in the literature. It is to my key findings that I now turn.

### **3.0 Key findings**

In Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation, I outlined the shrinking cities literature (augmented by the urban regeneration and strategic planning literature) as it relates to the causes and effects of population decline and the four principles of “good planning” in shrinking cities. While the goal of this thesis was not to provide a detailed account of the reasons for population decline in Youngstown and Sudbury nor was the goal to provide a complete picture of the effects of population decline, both case studies tend to confirm the assertion in the literature that the causes of population decline are many, varied, and inter-related. In both Sudbury and

Youngstown, the trend towards long-term population decline (with a recent, but likely temporary slight increase in Sudbury's population) has been the result of a number of demographic and economic factors. Furthermore, the effects of shrinkage are equally varied, lending support to the conclusion in the literature that not all cities shrink in the same way.

Because of the diverse causes and effects of shrinkage, it would be a mistake to conclude that there are substantive policies that will work in all shrinking cities, including Youngstown and Sudbury. In other words, as per the shrinking cities literature, given the complexity of urban shrinkage, there likely are no "one-size-fits-all" policies that can be translated to any demographic, economic, and political context. However, there are certain principles of good planning *process* in shrinking cities which, according to the literature, can provide planners in shrinking cities with an opportunity to make a positive difference in these communities. As I noted in Chapter 3, I am inferring from the literature and from logic that these principles of good planning will be more effective than previous approaches in shrinking cities. Again, this is an untested assumption. As was seen in Chapters 5 and 7, Youngstown has begun to adopt some of these principles while, as outlined in Chapters 6 and 7, Sudbury, Ontario has not. These case studies provide a picture as to what factors make it easier or harder for shrinking cities to adopt these principles. My key conclusions as to how these case studies "flesh out" these principles of good planning presented in the literature are the following:

### **3.1 Planners must leave behind the assumption of future growth**

- Through the Youngstown 2010 Plan, Youngstown officials have begun to move away from planning for growth as a dominant approach. In comparison, Sudbury's recently adopted Official Plan is *more* focused on planning for growth than its previous Official Plan.

- In the case of Youngstown, the 2010 Plan calls for accepting Youngstown is a smaller city. Media hype aside, the Plan does not represent a complete break from the growth paradigm. Municipal officials, including planners, continue to hope that the city will grow sometime in the future. For now, municipal officials are concentrating on “shrinking” the city’s infrastructure to meet current population levels. The belief is that this will improve the quality of life for existing residents and also make the city more attractive to potential residents.
- However, so publicly accepting that a city’s infrastructure needs to be reduced in order to meet current population levels is one step away from the growth planning paradigm – a step that is unprecedented in the North American context. A number of factors contributed to this, including: the removal of the “old guard,” including key actors in the business community (including the steel industry) and local politicians; the recognition that the city had “bottomed out” and needed a new approach; the fortuitous coming together of young leaders who were open to doing something different and experts with experience planning in shrinking cities; and the receptivity of local residents to an approach which was not based on false promises of future growth.
- In the case of Sudbury, the recently-adopted Official Plan is based on the assumption that the city will continue to grow in the future. The Plan discusses how this future population growth will be accommodated within the City’s existing infrastructure. While population decline scenarios are briefly mentioned in the background studies for the Plan, they were quickly dismissed and thus the possibility of future population loss was not considered at a policy level. In all, the Official Plan is very outward-focused and in many respects reads as a marketing tool designed to “sell” the city to outsiders.

- Interestingly, the former City of Sudbury’s Secondary Plan (which has been replaced by the new Official Plan), was focused on a “no growth or decline” scenario, suggesting that in recent years the City of Greater Sudbury has shifted *more* towards planning for growth rather than away from it.
- A number of factors have contributed to the renewed focus on planning for future population growth in the City of Greater Sudbury. These factors include: less pressing physical decline in Sudbury than that which existed in Youngstown when the 2010 Plan was created; less of a sense of urgency that the Sudbury had hit “rock bottom” and needed to do something different than what other cities were doing (Sudbury’s new Official Plan was created largely for practical reasons, making it a much less “emotional” process than the one undertaken in Youngstown); a general sense amongst policy-makers that the city’s future is determined by the fortunes of the dominant mining companies, rather than the actions of planners; and a focus on “competing” with other cities for population and economic growth (a notion with which admitting population decline seems fundamentally incompatible).
- In general, the case studies lend support to the literature in stating that even though planners in shrinking cities need to leave behind any assumption of future growth, it will be very difficult for any city, particularly in North America, to shift the focus completely away from population growth. Even in Youngstown, the factors that created an atmosphere conducive to a shift away from the growth paradigm were only enough to prompt a small step and not a clean break. In fact, the general sense from document review, direct observation, and interviews is that Youngstown chose this new approach not because it was the desirable thing to do, but because it had no choice. In that way, leaving behind the assumption of future

growth (even if only to a certain extent), was still done with a sigh of resignation and a lingering hope that the situation would someday change.

### **3.2 Planners must use processes that are strategic, with an emphasis on citizen participation**

- Youngstown incorporated more of the elements of strategic planning put forth in the literature as necessary for good planning in shrinking cities. This is despite the fact that Sudbury's Official Plan incorporates more strategic planning "speak" than the Youngstown 2010 Plan.
- Particularly important in the case of Youngstown was the fact that the process of creating the Vision upon which the Youngstown 2010 Plan was based generated considerable excitement about the planning process. The same level of involvement and excitement was not present in Sudbury, where planners did consult the public, but not to the same extent. In fact, planners in Sudbury wrote the Vision themselves and presented it to the public in a number of open houses. At these open houses, no one commented on the Vision. One key step that Youngstown planners took which Sudbury planners did not is educating the public about the importance of planning and creating an overall vision of how the city *could* and *should* be.
- The case of Youngstown confirms the importance placed in the literature on getting the public involved in the planning process. Indeed, the process of coming together and creating a Vision for the city and a Plan based on that Vision was ultimately more important than the Plan itself. This case shows that, even in the context of widespread decline and public apathy, the remaining residents in shrinking cities can be brought together for a common purpose if the right techniques (in the case of Youngstown, public education, consultation first with local leaders, and strategic use of the media were particularly important) are used.

- In comparison, the case of Sudbury shows that without the same effort to get the public involved in creating a vision of how the city *could* or *should* be in the future, the public will be more interested in how the plan affects them on an individual level. The case also shows that having an outward focus in terms of “selling” the city to outsiders shifts the focus away from bringing current residents together to discuss how *they* see the city moving forward in the future in terms of improvements to their quality of life.
- These two cases also show the following key points: it may be easier for cities to adopt strategic planning principles where they have the legislative freedom to determine the form and content of their plans; and developing a regional focus is challenging, especially where different parts of the region are facing different demographic and economic conditions.

### **3.3 Planners must adopt a balanced approach in addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community**

- Like other cities examined in the literature, both Youngstown and Sudbury have struggled in achieving balanced approach in addressing the physical, economic, environmental, and social needs of the community.
- With respect to Youngstown, likely because of the pressing issues arising from the extensive physical decline, there is an emphasis on physical regeneration in the Youngstown 2010 Plan. A lack of attention is paid to both environmental (where it is not related to physical, economic, or social goals) and social issues (at least, the social impacts of the Plan). There is also a lack of a coherent approach to economic regeneration, which not all local officials “buying in” to the approach as outlined in the Youngstown 2010 Plan.
- In the case of Sudbury, the Official Plan is similarly unbalanced, but it is unbalanced in favour of economic concerns. Through the Plan, municipal officials have adopted the approach that the city needs to “sell” itself to outsiders in order to grow (because growth is

the only option). This has resulted in a Plan that is skewed towards economic concerns and toward making the city attractive to outsiders. The focus on economic concerns has led to a lack of willingness to critically examine the two dominant mining companies' continued environmental and health impacts. The lack of integrated human services planning and policy development body with the municipal structure means that the Official Plan's Human Services Strategy remains more of an "arm's length" document than one that is truly integrated into all other aspects of planning.

- Both cases illustrate the fact that while it may be a principle of good planning in shrinking cities to adopt a balanced approach, this is in practice very difficult to achieve. In both cases, the plans emphasize what each city perceives is the most pressing concern: in Youngstown that is physical issues; in Sudbury, that is economic issues. Also in both cases, social issues and environmental protection for its own sake appear to be included as more of an afterthought than an integral part of each city's plans.

### **3.4 Planners must change the role they play in the community**

- Planners in Youngstown, who have taken a step away from growth-oriented planning, have begun to change the role they play in planning for the city. In contrast, planners in growth-oriented Sudbury continue to play the more traditional role of "experts."
- With respect to Youngstown, planners, at least in the area of land use planning, are beginning to act as "managers of the decline process," determining how the physical structure of the city can be "downsized" to fit current population levels. Youngstown planners (and planners from the Toronto consulting firm, Urban Strategies) have also begun to act as innovators both in process (using innovative techniques to get people involved) and in policy (developing methods to downsize certain neighbourhoods). Finally, Youngstown planners

are very much taking on the role of facilitators in the implementation of the Youngstown 2010 Plan. This role has been made easier by the fact that planners took the time to develop a consensus amongst residents which was translated into a plan about which residents were excited.

- In the case of Sudbury, where the growth paradigm is firmly entrenched, planners continue to occupy the role of managing and directing future growth. As a result of the lack of willingness to consider future population decline as a possibility, planners have not acted as innovators in developing new strategies to deal with population decline. They also have not acted as facilitators for resident implementation of the plan (which may be a result of the both the lack of necessity – Sudbury’s planning department is much larger than Youngstown’s – and the lack of desire – discussions with Sudbury planners did not reveal the intent to have the residents implement the plan on their own – to do so).
- The Youngstown case illustrates the fact that, once planners begin to shift away from growth-oriented planning, they may begin to take on new roles in the community. Again, in the case of Youngstown, this appears to have been the result of necessity: the city had hit “rock bottom” and the two planners employed at the time had little choice but to change the role they played in the community. Interviews revealed no indication that Sudbury planners felt the need to change the role they were playing in the community.

### **3.5 General Comments**

- Taken as a whole, I have found through my case studies that the principles of “good planning” as outlined in the literature are difficult to achieve, even where a city has actively begun to manage population decline.

- However, a number of inter-related factors facilitate the adoption of these principles, most importantly: more pressing physical decline resulting from a large percentage of population loss; the complete loss of a dominant industry and the election/hiring of “new blood” in the municipality; the willingness on the part of planners and municipal officials to consider the possibility of future population decline; and the involvement of the public in creating a new vision for the community resulting in the public being willing to take on a large amount of responsibility in implementing the plan.
- A number of inter-related factors also may impede the adoption of these principles of good planning, most importantly: a smaller percentage of population loss intermixed with periods of slow-growth or stagnation (meaning the physical effects of population decline are not as visible); a dominant industry that remains productive, with predictable cycles of growth and decline (meaning the hope for new growth is always on the horizon); the adoption of an outward-focused “competitive” approach resulting in a lack of willingness to consider the possibility of future population decline; a broader legislative framework which does not provide guidance for cities facing long-term population decline; and a broader legislative framework which sets strict procedural and content-based rules for planning not based on the principles of good planning in shrinking cities.

#### **4.0 Implications for planning practitioners and policy-makers**

What are the key points that planners in shrinking cities can take from this research? First and foremost, it is clear from document analysis, interviews, and direct observation that *planners in shrinking cities such as Youngstown and Sudbury are in desperate need of guidance when it comes to effective planning approaches*. As mentioned several times throughout this thesis, planners know how to plan for growth; unfortunately, they do not have the same kind of

theories, models, and tools at their disposal when dealing with population decline. When asked if having some kind of guiding principles at the state/provincial level would have helped in choosing a particular approach, nearly all of the planners indicated that that would have helped. Thus, there is a need for a dialogue not only at the local level about planning for population decline, but also at the broader state/provincial and even federal level. Particularly in Ontario where planning is so heavily influenced by the provincial government, having no guidance in the *Planning Act* for communities facing population decline is a serious oversight. This is especially true given the number of communities, particularly in Northern Ontario, that are likely to face long-term population decline in the future. Focusing planning in Ontario only on planning for population growth (including by developing a “Growth Plan” for Northern Ontario) is a mistake on the part of the Ontario government that borders on negligence. Policies are sorely needed at this level in order to give guidance to planners in shrinking communities.

Secondly, both the Youngstown and Sudbury case study makes clear the fact that *making the initial shift away from the growth paradigm is not easy and planners who choose to take on this task will likely face a number of obstacles*. This seems to be particularly the case where the dominant industry that is the lifeblood of the community remains as such, as it does in Sudbury. My sense in speaking to municipal officials in Sudbury, including planners, was that no one wanted to talk about population decline for fear of scaring potential economic activity (particularly activity related to the mining industry) away from the area. However, the case of Youngstown provides hope to planners in shrinking communities that embarking on a planning process in the spirit of starting an honest dialogue about a city’s demographic prospects is possible, particularly where a city has hit “rock bottom.” Planners, with their responsibility for determining how a city will develop in the future, are in the best position to spark the debate;

indeed, given the political stigma associated with even mentioning population decline, they may be the only ones willing and able to take on this task. And even though the case studies show that it is easier to start the dialogue about planning in the context of long-term population decline when a city has hit “rock bottom,” it is necessary for planners to start the dialogue early so that a city may be prepared to deal with the effects of population decline when they happen. Perhaps shifting the focus away from planning for growth towards “planning for quality of life” will be less politically contentious.

Thirdly, it is *important that planners keep in mind the need to achieve a balanced approach to addressing a shrinking city’s physical, economic, social, and environmental challenges*. Evidently, focusing mostly on growth makes balance harder to achieve, but so does focusing mostly on addressing physical effects of population decline. In both, social issues and environmental protection tend to get lost. Planners need to work together with social, economic, and environmental officials in order to avoid developing strategies which may improve conditions in one area, but which may leave issues in another area unaddressed or, even more problematic, worsened. Related to this, planners in shrinking cities need to find a balance between public participation and employing experts to ensure that key issues which may not be at the forefront of the public’s concern are not ignored. In Youngstown, there was much emphasis put on public participation and achieving a public consensus with respect to the Vision. While this was indeed an important process, it may have resulted in the Vision being focused on issues which were most pressing for the public – visible physical decline. In Sudbury, there was less public participation, meaning that the Official Plan seems to be focused on what was important to local officials, which was attracting people and industry. Planners need to find a balance between employing experts and involving the public in developing planning strategies.

Fourthly, the case of *Youngstown* provides important lessons for planners in shrinking cities who are seeking to get a heretofore apathetic public involved in the planning process. Education about the importance of planning prior to embarking on a public participation exercise is especially important. An honest examination of the demographic prospects is also important. Planners in Youngstown emphasized to me how important it was during the process that the public did not feel as if planners and other municipal officials were creating false hope and making empty promises about the next project that would “save” Youngstown. As well, where possible, partnering with a local university may help lend legitimacy and expertise to the process. Informants in Youngstown believed that both were the case in that planning process. Finally, generating a public consensus has led to public buy-in in Youngstown which in turn has made it easier for planners to take on the role of facilitator. This is an important lesson for planning departments in shrinking cities who have seen the number of planners dwindle with the decrease in population. Any plan will need local buy-in if it is to be successful, especially in the context of declining revenues for implementation.

Ultimately, the major implication of this research for planners is the reassurance that, based on the assumption that the principles of “good planning” are more likely to have a positive impact in shrinking cities than previous approaches, *planners can have a positive impact in the face of forces largely beyond their control, if they are willing to take the first step away from focusing on planning for population growth.* If nothing else, starting an honest dialogue in the context of widespread, meaningful public participation can generate excitement about a city’s future, even in the context of widespread apathy. Not all effects of population decline are negative, and planners, if they can see the opportunities, can find ways to capitalize on them.

Indeed, dealing with the effects of urban shrinkage is a complex process in which urban planners can play a key role in effectively managing change.

## **5.0 Implications for planning educators**

Simply put, there is a need for more education about planning in the context of population decline. Indeed, one way to deal with the “taboo” of planning for population decline would be to start the dialogue when planners are first being educated. With the growing number of shrinking cities, there is a greater and greater chance that planners will find themselves working in a city where the population is declining. If all planners learn about is how to plan for growth, this will leave a large number of planners unprepared for the situation that awaits them. It will be up to planning educators to encourage the creation of classes and studios that are geared towards planning for population decline. It would be particularly useful for students to gain practical experience in community outreach initiatives in shrinking cities. Again, if planning students see the issue of planning for population decline as part of the standard curriculum in planning education, they will be less likely to view the issue as “taboo” when they are faced with it in the real world.

## **6.0 Implications for planning researchers: Directions for future research**

Finally, what does this research mean for planning academics? What are some directions for future research? As this is a relatively new and growing research area, there are a number of issues which demand further research. Given the growing number of shrinking cities (as mentioned in Chapter 1, even now in traditional growth areas such as the sunbelt in the United States), it is particularly important to continue the dialogue about planning for population decline. Creating more connection between the European research on this issue (which is far more advanced) and the North American research would be a good first step in this regard.

Unfortunately, at the moment, there appears to be a “silo mentality” in the shrinking cities literature in which research in different geographic areas remains disconnected. There is thus a need for more international comparative case studies.

More specifically, my research raises the following questions:

- To what outcomes do the principles of good planning in shrinking cities lead when they are put into practice?
- What does “accepting decline” really mean? What does a complete shift away from the growth paradigm look like?
- In a capitalist system, where areas of growth and decline are produced in the ever-present search for new sources of profit, is it realistic to believe that any city will fully accept further population decline? What role does the broader capitalist system play in the ability of municipal officials to fully accept population decline? Is it even possible, in this system, to “decline gracefully?”
- What does accepting decline mean for the social, economic, and environmental “realms?”  
The current research on shrinking cities tends to focus on planning for the physical aspects of population decline. However, the physical, economic, social, and environmental realms are inter-related and we need to know what “smart decline” means for a shrinking city’s economy, social well-being, and environment.
- Why do social concerns tend to be left by the wayside in planning in cities experiencing population and economic decline? What can be done to make sure they are an integral part of the planning process?
- How does the current focus on “competition” for people and economic activity (promoted by such authors as Richard Florida) affect the way the shrinking cities plan? My research seems

to suggest that the competition mentality is making shrinking cities more outward-focused and plans become more of a marketing tool than a way to improve the quality of life of residents who remain.

- What is the role of planning in cities whose fortunes are so dependent on one industry? Interviews with planners and municipal officials in Sudbury revealed the sense that local actors are “planning around” the industry’s fortunes rather than focusing on creating their own fortunes. In other words, how does “institutional lock-in” (Boschma & Lambooy, 1999; Hassink, 2005; Hassink & Shin, 2005; Hudson, 2005) affect planning in such cities? Furthermore, are residents in such a city less interested in participating in planning processes?
- How can power relations between the dominant industry in single-industry communities and municipal officials be modified so that more of the power shifts towards municipal officials? It seems grossly unfair that a city can be established to support an industry, but that industry is not held accountable for contributing to the quality of the city (beyond philanthropic donations). When the industry leaves or downsizes, it leaves municipal officials in the position of floundering to attract new industries. Are there examples of single-industry communities in which more responsibility for a community’s well-being has been demanded? Are there examples of “best practices” in this regard?
- How can we ensure that shrinking cities take a regional approach to planning, particularly where different parts of the region are experiencing different demographic and economic conditions? Again, are there examples of “best practices” in this regards?
- How does the way municipalities are given power and funded affect their ability to effectively plan for population decline? According to researchers such as Enid Slack,

municipalities have too little power in Canada and too few resources. Furthermore, if funding arrangements reward having more people there, then how can we expect local officials to plan for a declining population?

- Is there a danger that policy-makers will use the notion of “smart decline” as an excuse to favour growing areas over shrinking ones in terms of funding (“well, it’s going to decline anyway...”)?

Certainly, there are many fundamental questions that need to be addressed before we can discuss what specific planning strategies should be undertaken in shrinking cities. In general, when it comes to planning in shrinking cities, before we get to the “what,” we need to deal with the “how.” The intent of this research (and the questions it raises) was to take a step in that direction.

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## APPENDIX: LIST OF INFORMANTS

### 1.0 YOUNGSTOWN

Identifier	Position/Place of Employment (with level of detail so as to not violate confidentiality)	Date of Interview	Type of Interview
Y1	Employee, City of Youngstown, Finance Department	Nov 29/07	In person
Y2	Head, Youngstown Business Association	Nov 29/07	In person
Y3	Resident, Planning process participant	Nov 30/07	In person
Y4	Planner, City of Youngstown	July 26/07	In person
Y5	Independent Planning Consultant	June 20/07	In person
Y6	Planner (New York City)	Dec 17/07	Telephone
Y7	Professor, Youngstown State University	July 27/07	In person
Y8	Planner, City of Youngstown	July 26/07	In person
Y8(2)	Planner, City of Youngstown	Nov 30/07	In person
Y8(3)	Planner, City of Youngstown	Nov 14/08	In person
Y9	Professor, Youngstown State University	July 26/07	In person
Y9(2)	Professor, Youngstown State University	Nov 29/07	In person
Y10	Employee at a Youngstown Community Development Corporation	Dec 19/07	Telephone
Y11	Academic, University	Dec 12/07	Telephone

	of California, Berkeley		
Y12	Employee, City of Youngstown, Planning Department	Nov 30/07	In person
Y12(2)	Employee, City of Youngstown, Planning Department	Nov 13/08	In person
Y13	Urban Design Consultant/Academic, Kent State University (Urban Design Outreach)	Dec 19/07	Telephone
Y14	High-level city official, City of Youngstown	July 13/07	In person
Y14(2)	High-level city official, City of Youngstown	Nov 26/08	Telephone
Y15	Employee, City of Youngstown, Economic Development	Nov 14/08	In person
Y16	Former employee, City of Youngstown	Sept 28/08	Email

## 2.0 SUDBURY

Identifier	Position	Date of Interview	Type of Interview
S1	Planner, City of Greater Sudbury	June 10/08	In person
S2	Head of Business Organization	June 10/08	In person
S3	Planner, City of Greater Sudbury	June 10/08	In person
S4	Head of Community Organization and City Council Member	Oct 1/08	In person
S5	Planner, City of Greater Sudbury	Oct 1/08	In person
S6	Academic, Laurentian University	Sept 30/08	In person

S7	Employee, City of Greater Sudbury, Earthcare Sudbury	Sept 29/08	In person
S8	Employee, City of Greater Sudbury, Business Development	June 10/08	In person
S9	Employee, City of Greater Sudbury, Business Development	September 30/08	In person
S10	Social planner, Community Organization	Oct 1/08	In person
S11	High-level city official, City of Greater Sudbury	Sept 29/08	In person
S12	Planner, City of Greater Sudbury	June 10/08	In person
S13	Former high-level city official, City of Greater Sudbury	July 14/05	In person