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Planning Decisions for Vacant Lots in the Context of Shrinking Cities: A Survey and Comparison of Practices in the United States

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Planning Decision for Vacant Lots in the Context of Shrinking Cities: A Survey and Comparison of Practices in the United States

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Planning Decisions for Vacant Lots in the Context of Shrinking Cities: A Survey and Comparison of Practices in the United States.

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Planning theory and practice in the United States has been dominated by a paradigm of growth; however, since the 1980s, many cities have faced prolonged population decline, prompting questions about how shrinkage is engaged as planners attempt to provide for health, safety, and welfare. This investigation surveys and compares lines of thought being used to make decisions regarding these properties, with particular emphasis on planners located within cities having dissimilar experiences of "shrinking." Principally, it is focused on vacant and abandoned lots, which are the most immediately visible symptom of population decline and offer the greatest opportunity to reimagine urban form-and-function relationships. The investigation begins with a literature review of the causes and effects of shrinking as well as an investigation into historical research and contemporary thought on vacant land in the United States. Current reasoning supporting decisions about vacant and abandoned lots is identified through a national survey of planning professionals in fifteen cities with either stable-to-growing or shrinking populations. These are augmented by selected follow-up interviews. Both stratified sampling and matching were used to achieve a range of city characteristics and control for them across growth orientation. This approach is new in that while case studies of one or two shrinking cities have been undertaken, there has not been a national survey focused on shrinking cities and vacancy. The goal is to understand regional trends, tools, and obstacles to

progress. The results indicate a range in which methods and techniques predicated on the dominant and normative growth paradigm have been both adopted or adapted for use in shrinking cities. Results suggest that concepts regarding quality of life, intentions for the future, and community goals have been reprioritized and redefined in shrinking cities. Finally, results indicate ways in which ideas regarding the built environment and the dis|continuities of the urban fabric are being reconceptualized in the face of massive economic and demographic upheaval.

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CHAPTER 1

1.0   Challenges of Shrinking Cities and Research Questions

The population of the United States continues to grow through immigration and the high birthrates of some ethnic groups, but many of its older east-coast, midwest, and sunbelt cities are experiencing population decline. This process has been termed "shrinkage" and places where it is happening have been called "shrinking cities." While shrinkage is observable and affects the physical structure and social fabric of a city, its conceptualization within planning theory remains ambiguous in light of the dominant normative paradigm of growth—shrinkage's opposite. Given that planners have made, are making, and will continue to make decisions related to the health, safety, and welfare of communities within shrinking cities, this conceptual lack or gap prompts questions about the ways in which decisions for shrinking cities are grounded and justified. The purpose of this thesis is to identify current logics of planning decisions made in the context of shrinkage, discuss the relationships of these logics to the dominant growth paradigm, and demonstrate how these logics can provide a platform for advanced inquiry and improved practice.

Those who engage in the act of planning operate under the assumption that it is purposeful. Helling and Sawicki have gone so far as to say that planners have a "bias in favor of relevance," claiming that the discipline's collective "long-standing commitment to using and improving decision-making processes, based on both knowledge and on the values of those with a stake in the outcome" is what makes planning unique and differentiates it from other social sciences (1997, p. 228). By investigating the ways decisions are framed, deliberated, and decided, I contend that relationships between means and ends of planning can be understood. In part, this decision-making process includes the analysis of current conditions: the kinds of data that are collected and considered, the ways the data are assembled in mental and mathematical models of neighborhoods, communities, and cities, and the ways these

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models are assessed as indicative of successful places (or not successful places). This framing also includes the analysis of alternative courses of action: the kinds of change and ranges of change that are conceived (including both spatial and temporal dimensions), the anticipated impacts of the change, and the nature of the decision making process.

This research focuses upon post-industrial shrinking cities in the mid-western and northeastern U.S., cities that have seen fundamental, large-scale changes in their economic bases. These changes have triggered significant population declines and further, resultant, losses of economic capacity. In this thesis, I examine the ways shrinkage is understood and engaged by surveying and comparing how planners, both those working in or for these shrinking cities as well as those operating in stable or growing cities, frame their decisions with regard to the re-purposing and re-use of vacant and abandoned lands. As the most immediately visible symptom of population decline, they provide the greatest opportunity to reimagine urban form and function relationships.

While it can be assumed that much, if not all, of the formal professional education and training which planners working in shrinking cities have received has been based on the growth paradigm, the planners' current positions have required them to engage the challenges of shrinkage. Towards understanding the implications of shrinkage on practice, one general question that can be asked is if the context of shrinkage has influenced the means by which these planners define and attempt to meet the ends of health, safety, and welfare. That is, in what ways have they applied or adapted techniques developed for growing cities to shrinking cities? Or, in what ways have they created new techniques specifically for planning shrinking cities?

A second general question is, when making decisions about vacant or abandoned land, do these planners attempt to restore former conditions (populations, densities, levels of service, capacities of infrastructure) and thereby meet well-established benchmarks of success (tax revenue, population level, reputation); or

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instead, do they attempt to form a new image of the city and employ new measures of success? To rephrase, is shrinking seen as a "problem that needs to be solved or an opportunity to create a different development path for the future" (Martinez-Fernandez & Wu, 2007, p. 804)? This issue highlights the necessity of investigating the "economic and legal, as well as social, contexts of shrinking cities, in order to be able to alert fragile cities and be able to learn from the tactics employed by other cities" (Allweil, 2007, p. 93). On a very basic level, this question is used to investigate planners' and planning organization's fundamental orientations in these cities: do they consider their actions to be (generally) lessening some set of ills or (generally) increasing some set of goods.

This investigation is carried out through three separate inquiries. The first is a review of literatures on the conceptualization of shrinking cities and on the conceptualization of vacancy in the built environment. The second inquiry is a national survey of practitioners working in or for shrinking, as well as stable-to-growing, cities about city-scale planning efforts to address vacant and abandoned lots. The third is a series of semi-structured interviews with selected survey respondents to further discuss the decision-making process related to individual projects intended to re-purpose or re-use vacant or abandoned land.

This work provides a compilation of current planning perceptions and practices that can be identified as being particular to post-industrial shrinking cities in the U.S. More significantly, it provides a basis for identifying current assumptions with regards to the means and ends of planning in the context of shrinkage. Finally, it enables an initial assessment of needs for training and education in regards to shrinking cities, and contributes to the setting of directions for further investigations by the scholarly and professional communities.

1.1   Ubiquity of Shrinking Cities in the United States

The post-industrial experience of urban shrinkage in the United States can be traced to the 1970s and 1980s, when many mid-size and large cities were affected negatively by deindustrialization and related economic changes. Economies and industries were weakened by technological changes. Commensurately, jobs moved, both domestically and internationally, following economic markets, demographics, and tax-regimes. These changes led to further demographic shifts, decreases in commercial activity and tax bases, and a concomitant decrease in the ability to provide public services and maintain infrastructure.

An early use of the term "shrinking" in reference to post-population decline urban renovation was made by Roger Starr in 1976 as a proposal for New York City after the loss of manufacturing and related jobs. While Starr thought the city's population decline was inevitable and potentially long-lasting (he did not anticipate the tourism and wealth that would come to the city with its global rebranding), the city's steady growth after one decade of population loss removes it from the category of "shrinking city" (Starr, 1976).

Other urban theorists of the era were able to see beyond single city population growth and decline and extrapolate the effects of widespread industrial change around the United States. Glickman, in a 1979 conference paper on the topic of Urban Impact Analysis, wrote about demographic shifts over the prior twenty years that had led to urban decline and the need to "forecast where decline will occur and learn to *plan for decline* in cities and regions where population levels are falling" (1980, p. 27). One year later, a Brookings Institution study of these nascent shrinking cities looked into population loss, the related loss of city vitality, and city bankruptcies in the 1970s. It produced prescient findings, including such statements as "most cities would be better off trying to adapt themselves to a smaller size" and "population loss is not necessarily injurious to city residents, whose welfare is the ultimate test of any city's 'success'" (Bradbury, Downs, & Small, 1982, p. 216).

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The twin forces of globalization and immigration helped some larger cities, such as New York and Washington, D.C., rebound during the 1980s as financial, cultural/entertainment, and tourism sectors of the economy grew through foreign and domestic immigration (Beauregard, 2009). Kotkin demonstrates how immigration and the "demographic distinctiveness" to which it contributes have increased both the unique culture of large cities in the U.S. as well as their economic resiliency:

> Ethnic diversity, in this sense, is not a politically correct notion, but an economic asset of cities, a comparative advantage that is culturally-derived and less subject to undermining by traditional urban weaknesses such as high taxes, regulation, and political corruption (Kotkin, 1999, p. 25).

The rebounding of the nation's largest cities through the 1980s and 1990s seems to have wiped out any earlier advancements made in accepting alternative city trajectories, leaving planners to start over and again look forward to a "time [when] it may become possible to advocate publicly a rational response to" the realities of decline and shrinkage (Heilbrun, 1979, p. 426).

Other large cities, such as Detroit, Cleveland, and St. Louis, and a host of smaller cities like Youngstown, Flint, and Buffalo that were less attractive to immigrants and without diversified economies continued to be victims of the parasitic suburbanization that had been the prevailing growth dynamic since the 1940s. Prior to this era, population growth and urbanization had been distributive, as all cities grew and new ones could arise without draining vitality from existing cities. After the war, the suburbs and the Sunbelt gained population by parasitically "draining people and investments from the older, industrial cities" (Beauregard, 2006, p. 40).

By 1997, it was recognized that the trajectory of these U.S. cities was outside of the expected and not easily correctable. Rybczynski and Linneman took the stance that "mayors, planners, and city government officials must learn to accept the fact that the older, shrunken…cities will never grow back to their earlier size and prosperity.

The goal must be, instead, to make their cities more livable, more attractive, and, probably, even smaller" (1999, p. 38).

Five years later, an international shrinking cities movement in academia developed (Beauregard, 2009). It originated in Germany in 2002 with the Shrinking Cities Project, a series of exhibitions, installations, and publications profiling shrinking cities in England, Germany, Japan, and the United States. While this project was ostensibly about urban issues, it was "primarily the work of architects, artists and activists" (Hollander J. B., Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009, p. 3). In 2004, the Shrinking Cities International Scholars Group was formed at the University of California at Berkeley. Its members held a conference on the topic in 2007 and subsequently formed the Shrinking Cities International Research Network. In 2005, Kent State University and Cleveland State University collaborated to create the Shrinking Cities Institute, focusing on the issue in northeastern Ohio.

Table 1.1, "Shrinking Cities in the United States" is adapted from the Shrinking Cities Project's *Atlas of Shrinking Cities*, showing U.S. cities that have exhibited continuous population decline from the mid-19th century through 2000, as well as information from the same source about selected cities which have shown marked inner-city decline associated with suburban growth. The population figures have been updated with the results of the 2010 census. Almost half of the cities on this list are considered "'hard-core' in the world of urban decline" due to both the persistence of the population loss as well as the cumulative amount of overall decline; these cities have seen population decline for over sixty years (Beauregard, 2009, p. 526).

Table 1.1: Shrinking Cities in United States

Columns D-H from Register of Shrinking Cities from **Atlas of Shrinking Cities**, pages 152-156
Columns I and J from **Atlas of Shrinking Cities,** page 88. Source: Projektburo Oswalt, 2006

City	State	Decade Shrinking Began	Pop. in Thousands	Pop. in 2000	Pop. in 2010	% Change 2000 - 2010	% Change Peak to 2010	Shrinking Years	Average Pop. Loss per Year
Akron	OH	1960	290.350	217.070	199.11	-8.27%	-31.42%	50	1,825
Albany	NY	1950	135.000	95.660	97.856	2.30%	-27.51%	50	787
Baltimore	MD	1950	949.710	651.150	620.961	-4.64%	-34.62%	60	5,479
Birmingham	AL	1960	340.890	242.820	212.237	-12.59%	-37.74%	50	2,573
Buffalo	NY	1950	580.130	292.650	261.31	-10.71%	-54.96%	60	5,314
Camden	NJ	1950	124.555	79.904	77.344	-3.20%	-37.90%	60	787
Canton	OH	1950	116.912	80.806	73.007	-9.65%	-37.55%	60	732
Cincinnati	OH	1950	504.000	331.290	296.943	-10.37%	-41.08%	60	3,451
Cleveland	OH	1950	914.810	478.400	396.815	-17.05%	-56.62%	60	8,633
Dayton	OH	1960	262.330	166.180	141.527	-14.84%	-46.05%	50	2,416
Detroit	MI	1950	1849.570	951.270	713.777	-24.97%	-61.41%	60	18,930
Erie	PA	1960	138.440	103.720	101.786	-1.86%	-26.48%	50	733
Evansville	IN	1960	141.540	121.580	117.429	-3.41%	-17.03%	50	482
Flint	MI	1960	196.940	124.940	102.434	-18.01%	-47.99%	50	1,890
Gary	IN	1960	178.320	102.750	80.294	-21.85%	-54.97%	50	1,961
Hartford	CT	1950	177.397	121.578	124.775	2.63%	-29.66%	60	877
Jackson	MS	1980	202.895	184.286	173.514	-5.85%	-14.48%	30	979
Louisville	KY	1960	390.640	256.231	NA	NA	-34.41%	50	2,688
Milwaukee	WI	1960	741.320	596.970	594.833	-0.36%	-19.76%	50	2,930
New Orleans	LA	1960	627.530	484.670	343.829	-29.06%	-45.21%	50	5,674
Newark	NJ	1950	438.780	273.550	277.14	1.31%	-36.84%	50	3,305
Philadelphia	PA	1950	2071.610	1517.550	1526.006	0.56%	-26.34%	50	11,081
Pittsburgh	PA	1950	676.810	334.560	305.704	-8.63%	-54.83%	60	6,185
Rochester	NY	1950	332.490	219.770	210.565	-4.19%	-36.67%	60	2,032
Scranton	PA	1930	143.333	76.415	76.089	-0.43%	-46.91%	80	841
St. Louis	MO	1950	856.800	348.190	319.294	-8.30%	-62.73%	60	8,958
Syracuse	NY	1950	220.580	147.310	145.17	-1.45%	-34.19%	60	1,257
Toledo	OH	1970	383.820	313.620	287.208	-8.42%	-25.17%	40	2,415
Trenton	NJ	1950	128.009	85.403	84.913	-0.57%	-33.67%	60	718
Washington	DC	1950	802.180	572.060	601.723	5.19%	-24.99%	50	4,602
Youngstown	OH	1930	170.000	82.030	66.982	-18.34%	-60.60%	80	1,288
Ypsilanti	MI	1970	29.538	22.362	19.435	-13.09%	-34.20%	40	253

Note: Washington, DC, Philadelphia, Albany, Hartford, and Newark showed growth in the 2000 - 2010 decade
Note: Louisville city and Jefferson County, Kentucky, formed a consolidated government after Census 2000. The 2000 population for the incorporated place of Louisville city is before consolidation.
Source: (Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006), U.S. Census

While a few of the cities in Table 1.1 have shown increases in population since 2000 (Albany, New York; Hartford, Connecticut; Newark, New Jersey; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and most notably Washington, District of Columbia), most have

continued to decline. These 31 cities largely represent the industrial heartland of the U.S., although the presence of cities such as Birmingham, Jackson, Louisville, and New Orleans (pre-2005's Hurricane Katrina) on the list demonstrates that large-scale population loss is not region-specific. Other areas in the U.S. that are experiencing widespread population decline include the Mississippi Delta, central Appalachia, the northern Midwest, central Alaska, and the Great Plains (Popper F. , 2011). These areas are largely rural, economically dependent upon agriculture, mining, forestry, and other extractive industries. The population decline, or even disappearance, of the towns in these areas goes without notice for the most part due to their small sizes and remote locations.

In the wake of the national foreclosure crisis, the Sunbelt states of the U.S. have recently begun to experience shrinkage, particularly California, Florida, Arizona, and Nevada. The robust economies of the late 1990s, combined with cheap land prices, led to regional overbuilding and sprawl in the mid-2000s when housing price bubbles, subprime mortgage lending, and a building boom led to the real estate market collapse (Hollander J. , 2011). Hollander notes that what led to population decline in the Sunbelt is markedly different from what led to decades of decline in the Rustbelt (or in the rural regions referenced above). Resulting from a housing market inefficiency rather than structural shifts, the "Sunbelt's woes may simply be episodic and the sun-drenched growth machines of the past may begin quickly to rev up. But they also may continue to sputter and with future economic conditions uncertain, the past few years may presage a future of ongoing decline" (Hollander J. , 2011, p. 5).

1.2   Vacant and Abandoned Lots in Shrinking Cities

Mallach has posited that "land reconfiguration continues to represent arguably the only viable potential strategy for creating a brighter future" for shrinking cities, indicating the importance of both revitalizing and repurposing the vacant and abandoned lots that pervade these cities (Mallach A. , 2011; Mallach A. , 2012, p. 113).

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Land use planning has traditionally been one of the prime activities of urban planners and government officials. Given Swanstrom's claim that "the most important powers of city government are powers over land use, especially powers over zoning and public improvements," the decision to focus on vacant and abandoned lots to investigate decision making processes in shrinking cities appears to be well-founded (Swanstrom, 1998, p. 272). In these shrinking cities, it is often local or regional government that is responsible to identify options and act. However, it has yet to be determined which of the many options available to deal with them is best in any given situation, largely due to the limited state of research and practice attuned to the particular needs of shrinking cities.

In cities that are growing in the historically predominant manner, developers work in conjunction with city planners under existing zoning and design codes to create new buildings or larger developments that are determined to be appropriate for a city. In shrinking cities with very little private market for development, the assumption is that the only physical changes occurring in the city are those of increased vacancy and abandoned lots. These individual changes, however, can add up to a dramatic disturbance to the urban fabric of a city. Morrison and Dewar warn us that "cities experiencing extensive disinvestment without concerted efforts to influence the direction of change become new kinds of places in any case − but by accident or by surprise − and not in as positive a way as they could" (2012, p. 120). In these cities, the "mostly unintentional 'urban design' [is] as much subtractive as it [is] additive" (Ryan, 2012, p. 122).

Vacant and abandoned lots are seen as problems in many cities for two primary reasons. The first is fiscal. Vacant and abandoned lots reduce property tax receipts directly by not producing taxes and indirectly by decreasing the property values of adjoining and nearby properties (National Vacant Properties Campaign, 2005). The second reason is structural. Both individual and groups of vacant and abandoned lots negatively affect the existing fabric of a city. In many cases, the *perception* of vacancy

is more of a threat to a neighborhood than the actual gap in urban continuity. Corbin notes that "signs such as broken windows, weedy fields, or deteriorating fences are readily understood in contemporary culture as human failure made tangible in an anthropomorphized landscape" (Corbin, 2003, p. 15). The perception of vacancy and abandonment in conjunction with a real decrease in tax income can lead to less revenue supporting a more widely dispersed citizenry, safety and perception of safety issues arising from empty lots, loss of community arising from decreased population density, and vacancy spreading from one neighborhood to another throughout a city.

With these two types of negative impacts noted, vacant and abandoned lots can prove to be opportunities in certain cases. For example, a study in Flint, Michigan discovered that while vacant lots within 500 feet of a house have a negative effect on housing prices, vacant lots from 500 – 1500 feet of a house have a neutral or even slightly positive on housing prices. While this effect may be particular to this city or even this neighborhood, there is a possibility that vacant and abandoned lots, when sufficiently cared for or maintained by a city or neighbor, can be an asset to a neighborhood (Griswold & Norris, 2007, p. 31).

Vacant lots may also be seen as opportunities for fulfilling different roles at different times. Networks of connected vacant lots have been called "unprecedented opportunities to improve the city's green space network and natural systems" in Cleveland, potentially saving tens of thousands of dollars in infrastructure and healthcare-related costs, and increasing property values (Mallach A. , 2012, p. 111).

Finally, maintaining vacant and abandoned lots as un/under-developed can be seen as providing for future opportunities of economic development in areas of cities that have the potential for redevelopment. In certain cases, while redevelopment may not be fiscally possible for ten or twenty years into the future, "the opportunities are too valuable not to be preserved" (Mallach A. , 2012, p. 111).

1.3   Planning and Growth

Planning as a distinct discipline was created largely to "shap[e] and guid[e]… the physical growth and arrangement of towns in harmony with their social and economic needs" (Adams, 1935, p. 21), to manage both expected and unruly growth, and to control its impacts. These diverse motivations are reflected in most of the standard planning activities, including land-use planning, zoning, and environmental actions (Popper & Popper, 2002). Despite contemporary occurrences of shrinking coinciding temporally, if not geographically, with growth across many metropolitan areas of the U.S., "the current discourse in urban and regional planning in the United States still shows a high affinity toward growth" (Pallagst K. , 2008, p. 10).

The result of using tools and practices solely oriented to growth, in non-growing cities, has been an inability to produce desired changes, leading planners to search out and develop alternative approaches to planning and forms of planning tools. If this issue was temporary, or localized, federal or state governments could institute short-term, targeted economic aid policies to stricken cities and wait for them to revive, taking the responsibility of developing tools and policies to address this problem out of the hands of planners. However, the problems that have caused shrinkage within many of our older Midwestern cities, as well as those causing problems in areas far from the Great Lakes region, are not transient: "urban population loss should not be perceived as an anomaly in the context of ubiquitous growth (a concept that is still prevalent today)" (Rieniets, 2009, p. 233).

1.3.1   THE GROWTH MACHINE

The city arose in human history as both the means and ends of economic growth. Peterson's claim that "policies and programs can be said to be in the interest of cities whenever the policies maintain or enhance the economic position, social prestige, or political power of the city, taken as a whole" goes a long way towards explaining the intransigence of existing power groups within the city to accept

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decentralizing technological and social shifts of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (1998, p. 11).

While technological advances in the United States have resulted in the situation that jobs and employers are no longer as location-based as they once were, cities are still rooted to the ground upon which they were founded. The construction of infrastructure and the making of other improvements over tens—and in some cases hundreds—of years, as well as the interests of certain placed-based groups, continue to yoke cities to Molotch's infamous "growth machine" (Molotch, 1976, p. 310). Molotch explains the impetus behind the operation of any given locality as a growth machine as he describes:

> A city and, more generally, any locality, is conceived as the areal expression of the interests of some land-based elite. Such an elite is seen to profit through the increasing intensification of the land use of the area in which its members hold a common interest. An elite competes with other land-based elites in an effort to have growth-inducing resources invested within its own area as opposed to that of another. (1976, pp. 309-310)

This view of the city assumes an overarching consensus on the primacy of growth amongst local elite groups who benefit from the "machine's" ability to "increase aggregate rents and trap related wealth for those in the right position to benefit" (Logan & Molotch, 1987, p. 50). As public employees whose futures are "tied to growth of the metropolis as a whole," city planners are part of local governments who "have the most to gain or lose in land-use decisions" thus doubly enforcing the growth imperative as a limitation upon action (Molotch, 1976, p. 314). This understanding of the role of growth in local politics has translated into a focus on growth in planning practice and education.

Molotch identified this inability to think or operate outside a framework singularly focused on growth when he noted that "this growth imperative is the most important constraint upon available options for local initiatives in social and economic reform" (1976, p. 310). He went on to hypothesize that with the destruction of the

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growth machine in U.S. cities, "new options for taxation, creative land-use programs, and new forms of urban services may thus emerge as city government comes to resemble *an agency which asks what it can do for* its people rather than what it can do to attract more people" (Molotch, 1976, p. 328, emphasis added).

The growth imperative continues to influence local economic development in the U.S., as "urban boosterism and the desire to present cities in a positive light have become integral elements of… contemporary politics" (Jonas & Wilson, 1999, p. 4). It is only through the efforts of shrinking cities like Youngstown, who have begun to actively plan outside the constraints of the growth machine, accepting that growth as an intensification of uses may not be in its future, accepting its diminished size, and focusing on quality of life, that a model for disconnecting planning from the growth machine will be established (Finnerty, 2003).

1.3.2 GROWTH-FOCUSED PLANNING EDUCATION

Oswalt notes in his groundbreaking two-part book on the subject, *Shrinking Cities*, that the inability of "previous attempts to shape the process of shrinkage…have often failed because the conventional tools of city planning and development… are not able to tackle the problem" (2005, p. 15). This is largely because urban planning challenges associated with population decline and the related shrinking of cities appear to be vastly different from those associated with growth. Using a medical metaphor, Rybczynski and Linneman note that "just as aging is not merely adolescence in reverse, urban planning for shrinkage is fundamentally different than planning for growth" (1999, p. 40).

It has been claimed that "pragmatically, the traditional tools of planning – land use, zoning and urban design – are effective only in growth situations," which leads to governments in shrinking cities being confronted with questions and issues for which they are not prepared and practitioners with problems for which they have not been adequately educated (Conway, 1976, p. 16). Because "few publications and little professional training exist to guide… planners as they try to intervene in the process of

persistent decline," planners and other urban design professionals have been left to simply react when shrinkage occurs, not plan proactively for it (Morrison & Dewar, 2012, p. 121).

Planners' current abilities to address a "widespread First World occurrence for which planners have little background, experience or recourse" (Hollander J. B., Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009, p. 223) are limited. Morrison and Dewar warn that

> Because of the considerable shift in perspective, planners working in these settings need more resources and opportunities to learn how to manage a city's adjustment after decline. Without these, planners continue to work on development, or they struggle on their own to invent new ways of thinking, when, instead, they could learn from one another. The prospect of reinventing the practice of planning in America's legacy cities and historically industrial communities provides an important challenge for planning professionals and educators for the years to come (Morrison & Dewar, 2012, p. 141).

Karina Pallagst also demonstrates the need for changes to be made in the education of planners, noting that "it is still not clear whether, or in which way, planning paradigms, planning systems, planning strategies and planning cultures are being adapted when faced with the dynamics of urban shrinkage" (2010, p. i). Frank J. Popper and Deborah Epstein Popper, noted theorists and proponents of several adaptations for shrinking cities and regions such as the Buffalo Commons, have created an agenda for alternative tools and policies, clarifying that "explicitly, purposefully, planning for less – fewer people, fewer buildings, fewer land uses – demands its own distinct approach" (2002, p. 23).

In the realm of academia, several U.S. universities have taken up the challenge, recognizing that "shrinkage is as much in need of systematic planning as is growth" (Mallach A. , 2011, p. 1867) and are offering studios or courses that focus on "realities of population and economic decline" (Luescher & Shetty, 2013, p. 2; Morrison & Dewar, 2012). Departments throughout the U.S. Midwest and Northeast as varied as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Tufts University, Cleveland State University, the University of Toledo, and the University of Michigan have been

offering planning and/or design courses and studios centered around shrinking cities (Luescher & Shetty, 2013).

1.3.3 THE CHALLENGES OF PLANNING FOR SHRINKAGE

Planning for shrinking cities may not call for a wholesale dismissal of existing growing-cities oriented planning tools and policies. While planning for shrinking cities is significantly different from planning for growing cities, there is at least one important overlap between the two. Planners in both growing and shrinking cities are responsible for managing change, tasked with providing services for unknown future populations (Morrison & Dewar, 2012). These unknowns include: How many residents will be in a region, How many will be in a neighborhood, What are the demographics of these populations, What level of services are required or fiscally possible? This commonality establishes the possibility that planning for shrinking cities may require the modification of existing tools and policies.

Despite the recognition of the conceptual parallels and important differences between planning needs in these two types of cities, the tools and skills that have developed over years of research and practice continue to be solely oriented around making these decisions within the conventional growth paradigm. For example, the lack of an active private real estate market stymies most conventional urban development, as "not only does the planner of greenfield development confront a relatively clean slate, but growth, whether at the urban fringe or through redevelopment of an urban downtown, is driven by the headwinds of market demand and private sector investment," two driving forces missing from most shrinking cities (Mallach A. , 2011, p. 1870).

Gans' call in 1975 for "cutback planning" as an alternative to planning for growth is still, largely, looking for a practitioner who "will have to learn how to plan for reduced and declining capital and operating expenditures, and to figure out how to develop a viable and functioning city under conditions of decline" (1975, p. 307). Relevant to the research undertaken here, Gans identified that "the prime difficulty of

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cutback planning for the planner is to adapt to the new questions about the city that have to be answered, questions to which the growth-oriented answers of past planning practice will be irrelevant" (1975, p. 307).

1.4 Contributions to Planning Practice and Research

To understand the contribution which this research is poised to make, it is useful to place it within the context of a greater conversation happening in the academic planning literature. In a set of two 2009 articles in the journal *Progress in Planning*, emerging research agendas in urban design and planning were reviewed. The first, "Hot, congested, crowded and diverse" reviews the areas of building capacity for adaptation in the light of climate change, planning around multiple modes of non-motorized travel, and how to create socially inclusive and compact communities (Blanco, et al., 2009). In the second, the editors referred to the various sub-fields adjectively as "Shaken, shrinking, hot, impoverished and informal"; more descriptively, they included planning for disaster recovery, first-world urban shrinkage, climate change, and the rapid urbanization of informal and impoverished cities in the global south. The editors presented these eight areas as novel areas of research and important shifts in direction, calling on planning schools to "reflect critically on these changes and develop long-term research agendas that can better position our field in society and academia" (Blanco, et al., 2009, p. 196). While not written as a literal response to Blanco et al.'s call for the development of long-term research agendas in these areas, the contemporary development of this research project and publication of these essays illustrates the timeliness of the study.

Hollander et al. put forth two challenges to the academic urban planning community with regards to the emerging shrinking cities agenda. The first was in response to the growth paradigm which is still so prevalent in planning education and practice. They noted that "little is known about how existing planning tools used in growing communities can be adapted to be used in a shrinking environment". The

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second was about the actual practice of planning in these shrinking cities, suggesting that

> planning researchers should study how planners, policy makers, citizens, businesses, and others operate within a shrinking city, how they conceptualize population loss, how they manage the physical changes that result from shrinkage, and what can they do to better plan for shrinkage (Hollander J. B., Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009, p. 2).

Existing knowledge of the day-to-day operations of planners in shrinking cities is largely anecdotal, hypothesized in the popular press, or based on single-city case studies. Gallagher (2010) has published a book hypothesizing opportunities now available to the city of Detroit, while student researchers such as Alligood (2008), Bell (2011), Pyl (2009), Reese (2011), and Schatz (2010) have written doctoral and masters theses investigating single case studies or comparing two cities' approaches to shrinking. What sets the research in *this* thesis apart is that it studies planners and affiliated professionals in a number of shrinking cities in the Midwestern United States at the same time, investigating and comparing the decision-making frameworks they use.

As noted, the focus areas in which planners in shrinking cities in the United States work to make decisions regarding opportunities and challenges which result from shrinking are diverse, ranging from economic development and transportation planning to housing and diversity. To constrain the scope of this research, to draw upon my own background in the field of urban design, and to focus on one of the most readily visible symptoms of shrinking, I have chosen to focus on one particular facet of shrinking cities: the use and reuse of vacant and abandoned spaces. While there are a multitude of ways in which lots become vacated (buildings burning down or being demolished, post-industrial brownfield holding patterns) the research in this thesis is interested primarily in what happens after vacancy and abandonment occur; it focuses on the individual decision-making frameworks that planners use to respond to the issue of vacant and abandoned lots.

The research undertaken in this thesis is envisioned as contributing to the greater discussion of shrinking cities by focusing on one particular type: post-industrial cities with rich histories and socio-cultural assets in the U.S. Midwest, also known as "Legacy Cities." While other cities, such as Manchester and Liverpool in the United Kingdom have experienced similar histories of economic change and de-population, differences between the social and governmental milieu of the United States and United Kingdom set these cities apart. Similarly, cities in the United States that might have similarly structured single-industry economic histories like Birmingham, are inherently different from rust-belt cities purely as a result of their location outside of the Midwest, with all of the labor, economic, ethnic, and racial differences that that discrepancy entails. Finally, there have been a number of cities in the United States which have shrunken for other reasons, like New Orleans' post-Hurricane Katrina population loss, the movement of residents out of sunbelt states during the recent recession (see Hollander J., 2011 for more detail), and any number of mining, farming, and ranching communities which have seen population decline in the face of industry transformations and climate change. It would be impossible to draw conclusions about conditions in these varying types of "shrinking cities," so one single type has been chosen for study.

This study investigates the question: How do planners in shrinking cities in the United States frame their decision-making processes, particularly in regards to vacant and abandoned lots? In order to approach answers in a way that acknowledges both the policy and urban design issues associated with these indeterminate spaces, it is necessary to utilize a framework that speaks to both policy-makers and designers. When investigating a topic as conceptually hard-to-grasp as a mental framework used in decision-making, it becomes vital to be able to "ground" findings, organize answers in a predictable fashion, and disentangle results in a comprehensible, coherent manner. By utilizing a single conceptual and theoretical framework to organize, prioritize, and

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center the multiple types of primary and secondary research in this study, findings will be intercomparable across the internal models associated with the framework.

For this operational need, I have adopted Carl Steinitz' Framework for Theory (Steinitz, 1990; Steinitz, 1993; Steinitz, 2002; Steinitz, 2012). It has been used to organize and conceptualize many research and design practice problems in the fields of landscape architecture (Stiles, 1994; Gazvoda, 2002), ecological planning (Poiani, et al., 1998; MacEwan, 2008), scenario analysis and alternative futures (Musacchio & Coulson, 2001; Nassauer, Corry, & Cruse, 2002), brownfields redevelopment (Kirkwood, 2001); urban design (Steinitz, Figueroa, & Castorena, 2010) and interdisciplinary research (Musacchio, Ozdenerol, Bryant, & Evans, 2005; Lenz & Peters, 2006). The framework is being used in this urban planning research for its ability to systematically investigate and make transparent the multiple distinct steps taken in regular municipal decision-making processes.

1.5   Overview of Document

The following chapters build on this introduction to examine the conceptualization of shrinking cities and the role of vacant and abandoned lands in them. Chapter Two reviews the literature on shrinking cities concepts, effects, and causes. It begins by defining the term "shrinking cities," including how it has been used in the literature, how that definition has changed in the ten or so years that it has been in circulation, other terms used to describe similarly situated cities, and how it being defined/used in this document. It then goes on to review the most common causes and effects that are currently creating and being experienced in shrinking cities in the United States. These are differentiated into five types of economic causes, six types of demographic causes, and the contribution of anti-urban policies to the creation of these cities. This review then discusses hypothesized models explaining how economic and demographic decline intersect with and reinforce each other in urban arenas. The frst

literature review then concludes with a brief analysis of recent single and dual case studies of shrinking cities in the United States by academic researchers.

Chapter Three introduces the second literature review discussing vacancy in the U.S. built environment. It begins with a review of terminology, exploring what "vacant" means and how it has been defined, in the context of U.S. cities. It then goes on to review policy perspectives on vacancy, exploring the ways vacancy has been approached, investigated, and quantified by policymakers in recent years. Following is a review of the social and public health effects of vacant lots. Next is a discussion of urban form and design perspectives on vacancy, investigating how vacancy in the built environment affects physical concepts of space and community. The second literature review concludes with an overview of three distinct types of intervention tools and techniques that have been used to manage vacant lots in shrinking cities in the United States: government-led interventions, individual and group-led interventions, and changes to the urban fabric.

Chapter Four introduces Carl Steinitz' Framework for Theory, which is used throughout this study to aid in the systematic exploration of planning decisions made in the United States. It enables inter-comparability between the various research methods: literature review, survey, and interview. The framework's evolution, common applications in a multitude of disciplinary fields, and its particular use in urban planning applications are reviewed.

Chapter Five presents the first primary research of this investigation. It reviews the survey methods used, including the selection process used to select cities for participation as well as the survey procedure implemented. It presents the survey questions and results as organized within the Steinitz Framework, moving naturalistically through the decision-making process used in each of the participating cities. It concludes with a discussion of the survey findings, again organized using the Steinitz Framework, as they relate to the findings of the two literature reviews.

Chapter Six reviews the second primary research method used in this inquiry, that of Interviews. The chapter begins with the case selection methods used as well as a brief review of each city's recent demographic and economic status and recent planning-oriented revitalization initiatives. It then reviews the interview procedure used and the integration of the Steinitz Framework to the interview process. Concluding with a presentation of interview results, interview findings are compared to those of the survey for verification, support, and discovering divergences in the survey and interview findings.

In Chapter Seven results of these three research avenues, literature reviews, survey, and interviews, are compared, revealing commonalities and discrepancies amongst the decision-making frameworks used by planners in the United States. It concludes with lessons learned through this inquiry, possible limitations of the research undertaken, avenues for future research, and actionable items for implementation by shrinking cities in the United States, and the planning officials who work in them.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON SHRINKING CITIES

2.0   Shrinking Cities: Introduction

Shrinking cities is a relatively new topic within the field of urban planning (Blanco, et al., 2009). This chapter provides a review of its literature. It begins with an investigation into the definitions and terminology used in this field and a discussion of the topic as an independent sub-field within urban planning research and practice. It then investigates the causes that are commonly attributed to the creation of shrinking cities in the United States. Due to the cyclical nature of shrinking processes, common causes and effects are bundled together. Three causes are considered: Economic Factors, Demographic Factors, and Policy Factors. Included in this review are two models proposed by other researchers to describe the non-linear ways that industrial decline, population decline, and vacancy are related. The review concludes with an overview of recent academic studies of shrinking cities and a discussion of their findings.

2.1   Shrinking Cities: Initial Development of the Concept and Definitions

2.1.1   INITIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT

Shetty and Luescher provide a succinct history of the development of the "shrinking cities" concept, calling particular attention to Germany's Shrinking Cities Project (2002–2008) as the progenitor of the topic within international urban design and planning circles (2013). In the aftermath of German reunification, cities in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) lost population rapidly (some up to thirty percent within ten years) to places with better job prospects and living conditions in the former Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Responses to this population decline were limited to the housing market and included vast demolitions. Interested individuals and groups outside of the government recognized that social and economic repercussions to this rapid depopulation were not being discussed. Into this interdisciplinary search

for explanations and solutions stepped the German Federal Cultural Foundation. The resulting Shrinking Cities Project investigated urban shrinkage in England, Germany, Japan, Russia, and the United States. Participants included artists, architects, scientists, and local contributors, seeking to break up the "otherwise subject-specific discussion and addressing an interdisciplinary and international audience, perceiving shrinking cities not only as an economic, social, and planning challenge, but above all as a cultural change" (Rieniets, 2005). The project led to a series of exhibitions in these five nations and three foundational publications: *Shrinking Cities Vols. 1* and *2* and the *Atlas of Shrinking Cities* (Herbold, 2006). The most vital outcome was the identification of urban shrinkage due to population loss and economic decline as a distinct and unique process, which enabled the initiation of a dialogue centered around the issue (Luescher & Shetty, 2013).

2.1.2   EVOLVING DEFINITIONS AND CONNOTATIONS

Comprehension of the concept of shrinking cities is made difficult due to the vague nature of the term "shrinking." Here, the word is not being used to denote a city that is getting physically smaller, like a puddle of water drying in the sun. Instead, the term is being used to describe a city that is remaining the same size in terms of boundaries and built infrastructure, but which is decreasing significantly in terms of population and economic strength, correlated with areas of population decline and vacancy (Pallagst K. , 2008).

The dominant operative definition of the phenomenon of shrinking cities is that of the Shrinking Cities International Research Network (SCIRN) at the University of California at Berkeley. This type of city is characterized as "a densely populated urban area with a minimum population of 10,000 residents that has faced population losses in large parts for more than two years and is undergoing economic transformations with some symptoms of a structural crisis" (Wiechmann, 2006; Hollander J. B., Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009, p. 6). Population loss has been used as a measure of urban decline since at least the 1980s. Bradbury et al. suggest two reasons for its use as a

valid urban indicator. First, that the desirability of a city which is losing population can be called into doubt, as "why would more people be leaving a place than entering it if it weren't less healthy or attractive than other places?" (1982, p. 18). Secondly, that it can be considered as a simplified indicator of broader issues, representing more complicated issues in an easily measurable manner.

Notwithstanding Bradbury et al.'s argument for using population decline as a significant, independent, defining characteristic of shrinking cities, Martinez-Fernandez et al. suggested an augmentation of the SCIRN's definition that includes the specification of multiple characteristics, such as "population loss, economic downturn, employment decline and social problems" as constituent symptoms of the structural crisis affecting shrinking cities (2012, p. 214). These researchers push the ramifications of shrinking or urban shrinkage beyond population decline, emphasizing the multidimensionality of both the shrinking process and its effects, including "economic, demographic, geographic, social and physical dimensions that … continue to evolve as a result of new global and local realities." All of these are "generally understood to follow deindustrialization" (Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, Fol, & Cunningham-Sabot, 2012, p. 214).

Despite the operational adoption of terms such as "urban shrinkage" in Europe, and particularly in Germany, which has been at the forefront of shrinking cities research and activism, the term is still stigmatized or taboo in the United States (Leo & Anderson, 2006; Hollander J. B., Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009; Pallagst K. , 2010; Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). Acknowledging that a city is shrinking is seen in many places as acknowledging that a city has failed or is failing. This perception is perhaps due to the historical U.S. preoccupation with growth and competition between cities in attracting residents and businesses (Leo & Anderson, 2006; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, Fol, & Cunningham-Sabot, 2012; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

The occurrence of shrinking cities has put a spotlight onto the preoccupation with growth, and it has led to an exposure of the weakness of planning's fundamental

assumptions in this area. One basic problem is the fear that governments and leaders have of exposing their population losses, much less beginning to proactively tackle them; they simply "cannot think positively about a city that is not growing" (Gans, 1975, p. 307). In 2007, St. Louis' Planning Director claimed that "the dogma of growth is so inherent to cities, that no mayor will address shrinkage." Director Rollin Stanley went on to explain why, asserting that "It's stigmatic of failure. He will never get reelected" (Allweil, 2007, p. 92).

In the face of political unwillingness to use the term, as well as the ambiguous nature of urban/metropolitan relationships, another term has arisen to describe these cities, "Legacy Cities." This term was created during the 110th American Assembly in April, 2011, and specifically refers to "a group of American cities that have rich histories and assets, and yet have struggled to stay relevant in an ever-changing global economy" (The American Assembly of Columbia University, 2011, p. 0; Mallach A. , Personal Communication, 2013). This definition continues in the multidimensional vein of Martinez-Fernandez et al., to describe a complicated process and create a specific identify for shrinking cities. These "American legacy cities were once industrial powerhouses and hubs of business, retail, and services…" that since the middle of the last century "have seen sustained loss of jobs and population, and now face daunting economic, social, physical, and operational challenges." Nevertheless, they maintain important assets that can be "catalysts for regeneration, including vital downtown areas, stable and historic neighborhoods, multimodal transportation networks, vibrant universities and medical centers, and rich artistic and cultural resources" (Mallach & Brachman, Regenerating America's Legacy Cities, 2013, pp. 2-3).

While the terms "shrinking cities" and "Legacy Cities" are used interchangeably, the various ways in which they have been defined or referenced illustrates the evolving nature of the concept (Giloth & Meier, 2012). Initially seen as a term to describe cities that were losing population and undergoing fundamental

economic transformations, "shrinking cities" has been customized by researchers such as Martinez-Fernandez et al. to include additional dimensions and a recognition of the effects of both global and local economic realities upon a city. Pushing that recognition further, and moving away from the term "shrinking," Legacy Cities encompasses the multidimensional effects and causes of industrial change and brings in the local physical and social assets which will be the building blocks as well as catalysts of future urban transformation. In this thesis, the term "shrinking cities" will be used, in keeping with the dominant terminology in the field, but with an understanding of the complex causes and effects associated with urban decline, as well as the individual assets and challenges that cause each shrinking city to be unique.

2.2   Causes and Effects of Shrinkage

The histories of the cities in this study are representative of mid-sized to large, U.S. cities that industrialized before the end of the nineteenth century. From the nation's founding through the 1930s, these, and most U.S. cities, followed a trajectory of uninterrupted growth. However, a large number of medium to large cities began shrinking around the middle of the twentieth century as a perfect storm of events combined to alter them demographically, economically, and fiscally. Ryan presents a particularly succinct report of these events in *Decline after Design*, noting how the problems faced by these cities "after 1950 were both severe and chronic, and they plague policy makers to this day" (2012, p. 38). Vey notes that "globalization and rapid technological change have created a new economic paradigm in which the role of many central cities has become uncertain at best and at worst, downright precarious" (2007, p. 20).

2.3 Economic Factors

2.3.1 MACROECONOMIC FACTORS

The United States became a country of large cities very quickly. In 1900, only six of its cities had more than five hundred thousand inhabitants while by 1950, over seventeen cities were of this size or larger. These large cities were located within land and water-based transportation networks, had easy access to raw ingredients for manufacturing and processing purposes, and had a range of regional and national consumer markets (Vey J. S., 2007). The Great Depression was the first systemic cause of contraction as many cities lost residents due to failed businesses. As the depression receded, urban cores regained vitality, but never regained their prime status. Instead, outlying districts became business locations, serving growing suburban populations.

The economic demands of World War Two drew population back into cities with employment. After the war, an intact post-war economy reaped the benefits of Marshall Act spending in Western Europe (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999). As Europe and Asia recovered from the impacts of World War Two, the United States' declining relative position in manufacturing could no longer support the agglomeration economies needed for constant growth and many cities saw their populations level off. Decentralization of populations had caused the decline of many inner cities, which efforts of urban renewal, slum clearance, and blight removal attempted to cure (Fogelson, 2001).

Contemporary discussions of regaining population in shrinking cities continue to reverberate with lessons learned from the efforts at returning a tax base of middle-class homeowners, as well as multiple small- and mid-sized businesses, to central locations through the removal of lower-income residents.

2.3.2 TAXES, SERVICE PROVISION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Turok and Mykhnenko explain that population change has always been interrelated with economic conditions in a city as manifested through job availability.

Indeed, they note that population is "linked with economic change, both as a cause and an effect, especially over the long-term" (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2006, p. 5).There is also a net effect on the vitality of a local economy through the creation of densities and economies of scale to support specialization, service demand, and entrepreneurism (2006).

The economic issues associated with population decline confront already struggling local and state governments with additional difficulties. The most immediate is the decrease in property tax revenues. This loss of revenue is accompanied by sales and income tax declines as populations move their purchasing and work locations. Unless tax rates are increased, these income sources continue to fall. Unfortunately, the cost of providing services to a decreased number of residents will not fall proportionately, since urban growth and decline are not "perfectly symmetric processes" (Heilbrun, 1979, p. 419). Fixed costs (infrastructure and debt servicing), operating costs, and employment costs (often unionized) fluctuate very little despite decreased demand or usage.

Additionally, studies have found that "costly local services such as police and fire protection are concentrated among lower-income households." The cost of these services actually increases, per capita, in declining cities (Muller, 1977; Bradbury, Downs, & Small, 1982, p. 26). Other services, both public ones such as libraries, zoos, subways, and commuter buses and railways, as well as private ones like theaters, malls, and restaurants, require certain population and income levels to operate. They fail or require a subsidy to remain open as population declines.

The effects of shrinking upon infrastructure and service provision are multiple. Primarily, a decrease in property tax revenue leads to either a decrease in services or delaying maintenance projects and equipment replacement. In many older cities, infrastructure is often outdated and in need of repair before declining tax revenues are taken into account. Much of the national infrastructure, however, is not incrementally created or retrenched. Despite a decrease in population, the same amount of

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infrastructure must be maintained to serve a smaller number of inhabitants. The dilemma is noted by Rybczynski and Linneman in terms of a discontinuous urban fabric, where "at the very same time that [these] cities need to find more efficient servicing techniques to offset their declining tax bases, they are faced with an increasingly inefficient and expensive population pattern" (1999, p. 37).

2.3.3 TECHNOLOGY, MANUFACTURING, AND DISTRIBUTION

Technological and infrastructural advances combined to limit the locational advantages of large urban centers after World War Two. These included an increase in truck transport, the advent of commercial airline travel, and modern telecommunications. The cities at risk were largely those located in the Northeast and Midwest. Twenty-six large cities (ranked in the fifty largest cities by population) lost population during at least three of the four decades between 1950–1990. Only four of these were located outside of the Northeast or Midwest (Beauregard, 2001). With it no longer necessary to locate businesses in the center of cities, cheaper locations such as the suburbs, smaller cities, and states with lower costs of operation and living became more appealing for both businesses and residences. Advancements in technology related to automation also limited the number of workers needed in remaining industrial employment (Vey J. S., 2007).

From the 1960s through 1990s, the percentage of the labor force that was involved in manufacturing had a direct, and inverse, relationship with population growth in U.S. cities. Cities that were more involved in manufacturing grew more slowly than those that were less involved. Cities with more than 20 percent of their labor force in manufacturing grew by an average of 6.3 percent during the decade (5.5 percent when weighted by population). This is very low, in comparison to the mean growth rate for the period of 11.2 percent or the median growth rate of 8.7 percent. Cities with 10 to 20 percent of their labor force employed in manufacturing grew by an average of 12.3 percent (10.2 percent when weighted by population) while those with

less than 10 percent grew by 13.3 percent (11.9 percent when weighted by population) (Glaeser & Shapiro, 2001).

In fact, reliance on manufacturing as the core industry was the "defining characteristic of cities with persistent population losses" (Beauregard, 2006, p. 24). This relationship held true for all regions of the country and was influential beyond city boundaries as it limited suburban growth as well (Beauregard, 2003). This situation reflects a population shift away from manufacturing centers towards cities that have developed more-diversified economies. Glaeser et al. interpret this association to indicate that "cities followed the fortunes of the industries that they were exposed to initially" (1995, p. 131).

As manufacturing declines in importance, so do the host cities. Representative of a "vintage capital model," non-manufacturing industries did not move in to replace the declining manufacturing industries. Glaeser et al. suggest that this is due to a reluctance of cities that had invested in now obsolete manufacturing-based capital to replace it with newer types of capital. Pre-existing capital, aligned with the declining manufacturing industries, view expended, existing capital as a sunk cost and continue to crowd out newer capital (Friedrichs, 1993; Glaeser, Scheinkman, & Shleifer, 1995). Booth asserts that until these vested interests have decreased in influence, they will continue to "divert potential entrepreneurs and other resources from the new businesses formation process" (1986, p. 459).

2.3.4 INTRA- AND INTER-METROPOLITAN COMPETITION

As jobs moved out of our inner cities, mobile populations followed them. Those districts that lost population were then left with decreased funds with which to provide needed and desired services. Remaining mobile residents were faced with the choice of remaining in homes receiving relatively decreasing amenities or moving to locations that could provide a different "bundle" of residential goods and services. Often, suburban locations were more attractive. Higher-quality homes in inner-city locations opened up and remaining residents up-graded to these residences. Less desirable homes

were vacated, and often remained so. Many privately owned residences become rental units as their value declines in response to the decreasing value of the surrounding neighborhood. Modest demand and low rents provide owners with little incentive to maintain units and they fall into disrepair, vacancy, and default (Accordino & Johnson, 2000). This process is described in further detail below in section 2.4.4.

2.3.5 PERSISTENCE OF DECLINE

Economic research has established the "persistence" of growth rates, which suggests that "the best predictor of whether a city['s population] will grow over the next 20 years is whether or not it has grown over the past 20 years" (Glaeser, 1994, p. 19). Cities that were welcoming to immigrants and grew faster than the national average during the 1950s continued to grow in the 1960s (Glaeser, Scheinkman, & Shleifer, 1995). In fact, the cities that grew from 1950–1970 were also the ones that grew from 1970–1990 (Glaeser, 1994). Erickcek and McKinney found a similar relationship between change in income growth in the 1990–2000 decade and pre-existing structural economic factors, giving credence to the assertion that "an area's past and current industrial structure determines its economic futures" (2006, p. 248). The story of post-industrial shrinking, then, is often one of continuous decline. Rather than looking to identify new issues contributing to the process, the question is "why have these particular cities not (yet) rebounded from the prior years of decline" (Beauregard, 2009, p. 526).

2.4 Demographic Factors

2.4.1 CONTEXT

"The problem with the decline of U.S. cities is not a question of size but, rather, a question of who is leaving and who is staying" (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999, p. 35). The population remaining in inner-cities after decline has started is largely majority minority and poor. The demographics of the remaining population is directly related to the demographic characteristics of people who choose to locate in inner-city

neighborhoods before population decline begins. Poorer immigrants to cities often locate in the center where housing and transportation costs are lower (see below). These "entry-port" locations are often filled with familiar racial and ethnic communities for new immigrants and provide social stability for a family until they are financially able to move out into areas with better housing, schools, and employment opportunities (Bradbury, Downs, & Small, 1982, p. 166).

In 1990, a comparison of social characteristics was made between the 26 cities (over 100,000 population) that shrank between 1950 and 1990 and the 51 cities that had grown. On every type of social welfare indicator, including rates of poverty and unemployment rates, numbers of families on public assistance, infant mortality, and household income, the 26 shrunken cities had worse levels (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999).

2.4.2 SUBURBANIZATION

Although it is possible to date widespread population loss in some cities to the 1930s, the beginning of the shrinking process in the nation truly began in the 1950s with suburbanization (Beauregard, 2001, p. 137). The number of cities with shrinking core districts increased from three to eighty-three during that decade, including eleven of the twelve largest cities in the country (Rieniets, 2009). This ex-urban movement was not limited to large cities, as small to medium-sized cities experienced similar levels and cycles of population decline (Beauregard, 2001).

The effects of suburbanization upon urban residents in shrinking cities are almost universally negative. New housing built in cities is largely concentrated on suburban, green-field sites with lower land acquisition costs. These structures are built to contemporary standards and code requirements and their prices reflect updated material and finish costs, as well as the services associated with suburban locations. As such, their cost is too high for many urban residents, including most new immigrants, and migrants from rural locations. These new urbanites are often only able to afford older housing located in inner-ring suburbs and the urban core, housing that becomes

available as previous residents are able to upgrade and move into newer housing. The concentration of poorer residents in a limited number of areas "aggravates many social problems associated with extreme poverty" as the poor find themselves in an environment almost exclusively composed of similarly situated residents (Bradbury, Downs, & Small, 1982, p. 10).

In shrinking cities, this immigration and in-migration into central city neighborhoods can slow or stop altogether, creating what Bradbury et al. term "emptying out decline" (Bradbury, Downs, & Small, 1982, p. 11). While they note that it does not usually occur without a concomitant increase in suburban housing provision, it is possible to envision this process taking place as gross urban population declines and houses become empty, abandoned, and are then demolished.

Beauregard links racial fears and suburbanization as two intertwined factors leading to postwar central city population loss. Populations moved into suburbs for various reasons, including a search for better education opportunities for their children, larger/newer housing options, and a desire to avoid racial tensions in cities, amongst other causes. This movement was facilitated by massive spending on highway infrastructure as well as racially and ethnically biased federal home loan lending policies which left minorities stranded in deteriorating inner cities (Jackson K. T., 1980; Beauregard, 2003). It was also encouraged by the federal government's enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, the end of segregation in areas like public schooling (through busing) and public housing, further encouraging white flight from inner cities. (Barro, 1977; Vaughan & Vogel, 1979) Suburbanization pulled non-minorities into newly formed municipalities that competed among themselves to provide better services for fewer tax dollars. Their adjacent formation stopped cities from being able to annex their way to population growth.

2.4.3 RACE

Race has become a polarizing issue in shrinking cities, as cities that were once exemplars of the American "melting pot" became more homogenous. Between 1950

and 1990, Detroit lost 53 percent of its white residents. By 2002, it had become the most segregated large city in the United States, and retained that distinction through at least 2010 (Popper & Popper, 2002; Logan & Stults, The Persistence of Segregation in the Metropolis: New Findings from the 2010 Census, 2011). In a Brookings study of sixty-five older industrial cities, central core residents were subject to increased levels of poverty, as well as increased racial segregation. African-Americans in the Midwest and Northeast, in particular, are more physically isolated from employment than residents of other regions while central cities have some of the most underperforming schools in the nation. It is no surprise that years of racial segregation, poverty, crime, low tax returns, and high demand for services have "undermine[d] older industrial cities' economic prosperity and perpetuate the cycle of economic isolation" (Vey J. S., 2007, p. 26).

2.4.4 IMMIGRATION, EMIGRATION, AND MIGRATION

Vacancies in shrinking cities tend to concentrate in neighborhoods which are considered the lowest in status, where housing costs are the lowest, regardless of the condition of the housing stock (Downs, 1979). This is because these neighborhoods are those from which residents seek to upgrade their housing status. The neighborhoods are less desirable (for whatever reason, be it housing condition, school district, status) and those who can move, will, as part of the "filtering process" (Heilbrun, 1979, p. 418). Continuous inhabitation of these low-status neighborhoods depends on a relatively steady influx of low-income residents. As this flow is stemmed, vacancies become more common.

Myers notes that the "effect of immigration is to bring new residents to large cities, concentrating them in older gateway neighborhoods where they take root and invest their energies" (Myers, 1999, p. 3). In this manner, these relatively poorer immigrants would move into housing and neighborhoods being vacated through general processes of household upward movement, maintaining neighborhood population levels. Restrictive immigration laws put into practice in the 1920s reduced

one prime source of new residents in core urban neighborhoods, causing total population numbers began to decline. A sharp decline in immigration in the 1930s and continuing through World War Two reduced a formerly strong international flow of people into U.S. cities. This flow had previously been able to balance flows out of central cities (Beauregard, 2001). Formerly vital neighborhoods became vulnerable to the implementation of urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s, as the delayed effects of decreased emigration were felt after the upheavals of the Great Depression and World War Two (Myers, 1999).

In general, large urban centers in the Midwest and Northeast continued to lose population through the 1970s and 1980s. Many began to see growth again, or at least saw population decline decrease, during the 1990s. One reason for this increase in urban populations has been attributed to a resurgence in immigration (Simmons & Lang, 2001; Vey & Forman, 2002). Myers notes that the "inflows are highly concentrated in many of the nation's largest and most important cities: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Miami, San Francisco, Houston, and others" that also serve as port-of-entry cities (Myers, 1999).

2.4.5 LOCALIZATION OF POPULATION RECOVERY

In 2001, a Fannie Mae Foundation report suggested that "the wave of population decline associated with postwar urban-restructuring might have run its course" (Simmons & Lang, 2001, p. 5). One cause of this population rebound has been attributed to the general health of the economy in the 1990s, especially in cities which had been able to transition into segments of the economy located in so-called "outperforming sectors" such as advanced services (Simmons & Lang, 2001; Vey & Forman, 2002).

The metropolitan areas that grew in the 1980s were those that offered a set of recreation and work opportunities attractive to both international immigrants and skilled domestic migrants (Frey, 2005). They were also the cities with diversified economies that included a significant portion of service-based jobs (Frey, 1993).

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However, the 1990s continued to be a decade of population loss for many middle-sized cities without diversified economies or the status of population magnet. For older, industrial cities, the "1990s was another decade of serious population loss" (Vey & Forman, 2002, p. 1). In terms of Friedrichs' urban decline model (Figure 2.1), these cities were able to increase their industrial diversity, decreasing the dominance of any one industry as well as the city's susceptibility to an individual product cycle.

2.4.6 HUMAN CAPITAL

Human capital has usually been "measured by the median level of schooling in the community or the percent of the residents in the community over the age of 25 with college educations" (Glaeser & Shapiro, 2001, p. 9). Research has shown that in the United States, from 1900–1960 cities with higher human capital measurements grew faster than others, and that both population growth and income growth were positively associated with increasing levels of human capital for the period 1960–1990 as well (Glaeser, 1994; Simon & Nardinelli, 1996). This trend continued into the 1990s, as cities in the U.S. with high human capital measurements grew more than those without (Vey & Forman, 2002). The average growth rate varied from 7.5 percent to 16 percent when cities with low levels of human capital (less than 15 percent of the population having college degrees) were compared to those with high levels (more than 25 percent with degrees.) Other measures of human capital, including high median household income and decreasing poverty levels, were also positively associated with population growth in the 1990–2000 decade (Glaeser & Shapiro, 2001).

Many U.S. metropolitan areas face capacity issues related to human capital due to the urban location of low-income residents who do not have the education or skills needed to attain work that pays sufficient income to support their families (Gordon & Turok, 2005). In inner cities, human capital challenges are exacerbated by spatial mismatches between jobs and homes. These disconnections are among educational, economic, and workforce investments. There is fragmentation of investments across large city-regions and inadequate or insufficient targeting of private and public human

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capital investments (Giloth & Meier, 2012). These issues are exacerbated in shrinking cities. Specifically, shrinking cities have, overall:

- lost proportionately more employment than the nation as a whole

- higher unemployment and poverty rates

- lower employment participation

- a lower number of high school graduates

- a lower proportion of college graduates

- fewer immigrants

- more pronounced spatial mismatches

- a clear racial divide (Giloth & Meier, 2012).

In shrinking cities, the relationship between human capital and population decline becomes starkly illustrated when investigating the source of workers in these cities. While some shrinking cities still have a number of high-technology, high-education firms located in them, many of the high human capital employees commute from outside of the city. Mallach and Brachman note that in 2013, there were 216,000 jobs in the shrinking city of St. Louis, MO, but less than 55,000 of those jobs were held by city residents (2013). Inner city residents are being left behind in terms of their ability to gain steady, high-paying education that will enable them to contribute to their community, invest in their homes, and achieve financial stability.

While the causation behind this association is not yet definitely established, a number of suppositions exist. The first is associated with poverty levels. Research has suggested that high poverty levels in cities are permanent features of those cities and reflect the skill level of residents rather than any economic trends or the local labor market (Glaeser, 1994). The second set of suppositions are related to skill levels of workers themselves. These hypotheses about the relationship between human capital and shrinking cities affirm that skilled workers may have advantage in terms of innovation, leading to expanding labor markets, that the abilities of highly skilled workers may be transferred to neighbors or those they associate with, and that less-

skilled workers are seen by some as being associated with social problems which may deter others from living nearby (Glaeser & Shapiro, 2001).

2.4.7 SELF-REINFORCING CYCLES OF POPULATION DECLINE

Bradbury et al. note that there are certain forces, both intentional and unintentional, that lead to population decline and that help to perpetuate the decline. These include:

> the disproportionate withdrawal of high- and middle-income households from cities, rising local taxes and deteriorating public services there, city-suburban disparities in the percentage of older housing, losses of economies of agglomeration and scale as activities decrease, the tendency of physical deterioration to induce poorer maintenance by owners of surrounding properties, and the falling political power of cities within Congress and state legislatures (Bradbury, Downs, & Small, 1982, p. 12).

As the economic and social environment of a city declines, residents are provoked to leave, thus further decreasing the amount of assets available in a city and giving additional residents reason to follow.

While the vast majority of these causes are the unintentionally distributive forces given above, some causes of inner-city population decline are linked to intentional, and even societally desirable, distributive forces. These causes include: an increase in incomes, personal automobile ownership, a desire to live in low-density locations and for homeownership, and even the desire to protect residential investments through location in socio-economically (and perhaps racially) segregated locations (Bradbury, Downs, & Small, 1982). Middle- to upper-income residents are thus doubly encouraged to leave inner cities locations, pushed by the declining social services and available amenities and pulled by those made readily available in suburban locations.

2.5   Policy Factors

2.5.1   ANTI-URBAN FEDERAL POLICIES

By the early 1980s, the results of decades of anti-urban federal policies on the fabric of U.S. cities had become abundantly clear (Vaughan & Vogel, 1979; Glickman, 1981). Bourne suggested, whether intentional or not, "the summary effect of nonurban public sector policies has in part been to 'design' the decentralized urban fabric" (1980, p. 45). He explains this comment by parsing out the effects of powerful yet implicit federal policies on the built environment, suggesting that they favored:

- New construction over the rehabilitation and reuse of existing buildings

- Highway transportation over public transit

- The conversion of undeveloped land for urban uses over the reuse of developed urban land

- The construction of single-family, owner-occupied housing over multiple-family and rental housing

- Growing areas over depressed areas

- New locations (recently developed) over old locations (Bourne, 1980, p. 45).

Barro describes these policies as locational incentives which the federal government created "while attempting to accomplish a variety of social goals, ranging from improving transportation to redistributing income to the poor… that affected the attractiveness of cities relative to suburbs and regions relative to one another" (1977, p. 16).

The Interstate Highway system began with the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 for the purpose of national defense (Freilich, 1997). It had, however, unintended side effects beyond the preliminary choice of investing in highway expansion over public transportation. The investment in a national system and the advent of highway-enabled trucking worked to decentralize both population and economic development as formerly non-competitive areas which were far from population centers, became viable locations for residential and commercial investment (Barro, 1977). The same

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system aided the development of the suburbs by adding direct automobile routes between central cities. Finally, the highway system disrupted the urban fabric wherever it "touched down" in cities, uprooting neighborhoods and dissecting cities through the imposition of massive infrastructure (Glickman, 1980).

Through a number of federal policies subsidizing homeownership, including the tax structure, mortgage guarantees, and infrastructure grants, the United States government encouraged the growth of suburban locations to the detriment of inner cities (Vaughan & Vogel, 1979). Homeownership is encouraged by the mortgage and local property tax income tax deductions, making homeownership preferential to renting and encouraging the sprawl of greenfield home construction (Barro, 1977). This encouragement is supported by federal mortgage policies, including subsidized interest rates, direct loans from federal lenders, and guarantees and subsidies to non-federal lenders, most of which has been directed at the purchase of new homes (Vaughan & Vogel, 1979). Finally, the federal government has supported the decentralization of the U.S. population through grants for infrastructure for current and future suburban development, lowering the actual cost of suburban homeownership.

While Beauregard (2001) debunked the theory of federal government complicity in urban decline through post-World War Two federal policies, he was not able to refute the accusations of neglect and perversity in their policies. The first of these assertions, neglect, claims that by ignoring cities, the federal government has implicitly allowed "forces that eroded their economic resources and social attractiveness" to have free rein (Beauregard, 2001, p. 131). The second, perversely, asserts that the federal government actually harmed cities through polices meant to help, such as the above-noted emphasis on highway transportation.

2.6   Hypothesized Relationships between Economic and Demographic Decline

The issues facing undiversified postindustrial cities in the United States were known by the 1990s when Jurgen Friedrichs published his "Theory of Urban Decline."

It described the reciprocal relationship between economic decline and demographic decline. It is particularly "well-suited to account for the present problems of cities with dominant industries like Detroit, Pittsburgh or Houston in the U.S." (Friedrichs, 1993, p. 909). (See Figure 2.1) Bradbury et al. also found this relationship to be valid, noting that employment and population loss are very closely related, especially within metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) as "growth and decline depend importantly on the functioning of the area's economy – the interactions of residents and firms in labor and product markets" (1982, p. 108).

Friedrich's Model has been used extensively throughout the shrinking cities literature. Specific uses include: describing and modeling "the general process of transformation and sprawl in urban systems of Western countries" (Salone & Besana, 2013, p. 5); explaining "cycles of urban changes with regard to... the decline of central cities" (Wiechmann, 2008, p. 434; Hoekveld, 2012; Hoekveld, 2014); and illustrating issues facing single-industry regions such as their difficulty in attracting new emerging services companies (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011), their vulnerability to the processes of globalization (Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, Fol, & Cunningham-Sabot, 2012), and the resistance of industrial elites to change that would diminish the industrial image of a city (and therefore their perceived power positions within the city) (Liebmann & Kuder, 2012).

Friedrich's Model offers the premise that demographic and economic decline recursively cause and are caused by each other within a metropolitan context of little industrial diversity. The central concept of the theory is the lack of industrial diversity, as "the heterogeneity of industries and of the employment structure… is assumed to make a city vulnerable to either stability or decline" (Friedrichs, 1993, p. 913). This model is particularly relevant in the study of the set of cities being examined in this thesis. Its eschewing of urban decline as a linear process supports Martinez-Fernandez et al.'s establishment of the multidimensionality of the shrinking process (2012). The model does not, however, say how the "decline" of a city will affect anything other

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than its economic fortunes, except to note an earlier research finding that "population decline due to migration is the consequence of economic decline" (Friedrichs, 1993, p. 908).

Figure 2.1: Friedrichs' Urban Decline Model
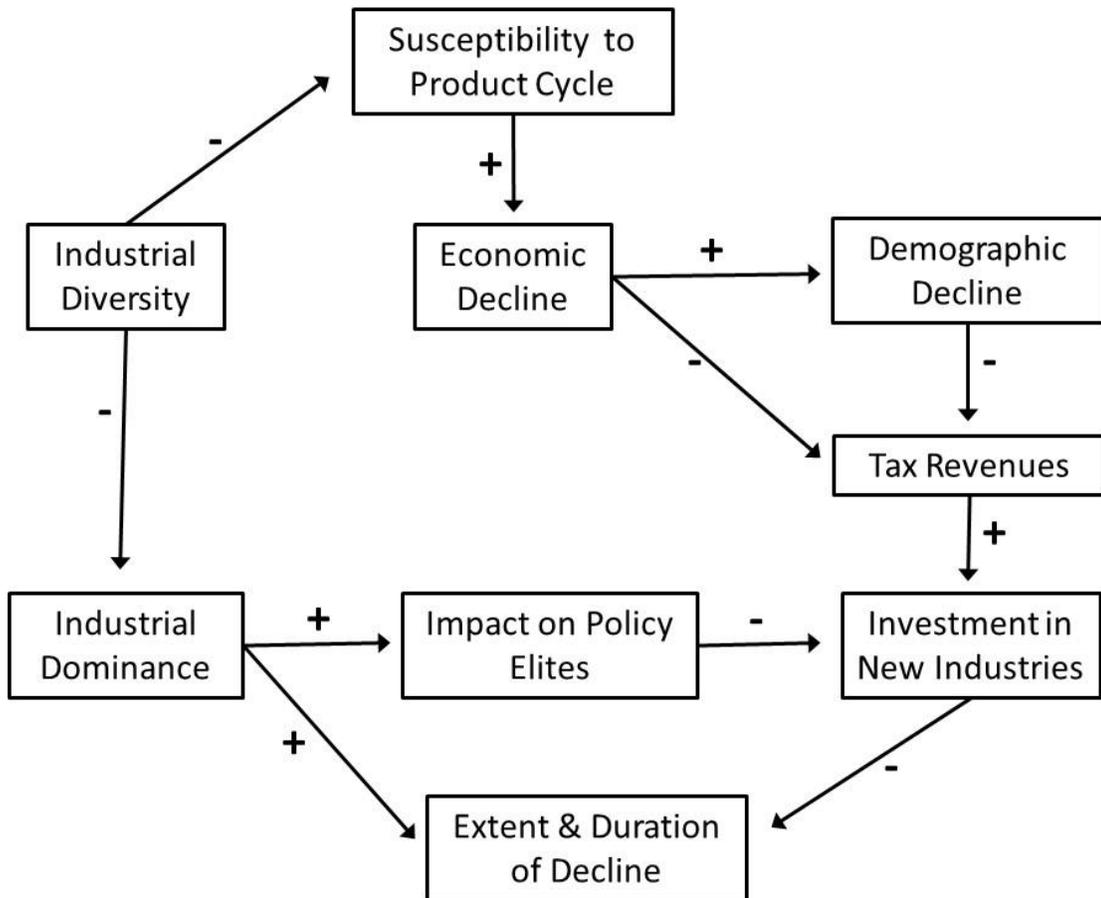
Source: Adapted from (Friedrichs, 1993)

A model that attempts to explain how decline affects the physical environment of shrinking cities is offered by Schwarz and Haase. (See Figure 2.2) It suggests how population decline may affect individual neighborhoods in shrinking cities and result in a proliferation of vacant housing and lots (2010). The model has appeared in both shrinking cities and landscape planning literatures. It has primarily been referenced for

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its cumulative process of population decline, neighborhood downgrading, and use/non-use of infrastructure (Hoekveld, 2012; Hoekveld, 2014). It has also been used to illustrate the relationship between an increase in vacant houses, underutilization of infrastructure, and challenges to the maintenance of services (Haase, Landscape Planning/Design of Shrinking Landscapes, 2013). A final use has been the illustration of the relationship between an increase in vacant houses, infrastructure underutilization, and additional relocation out of the area reinforcing population decline (Haase, Shrinking Cities, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, 2013).

Figure 2.2: Schwarz and Haase's Decline and Relocation Model
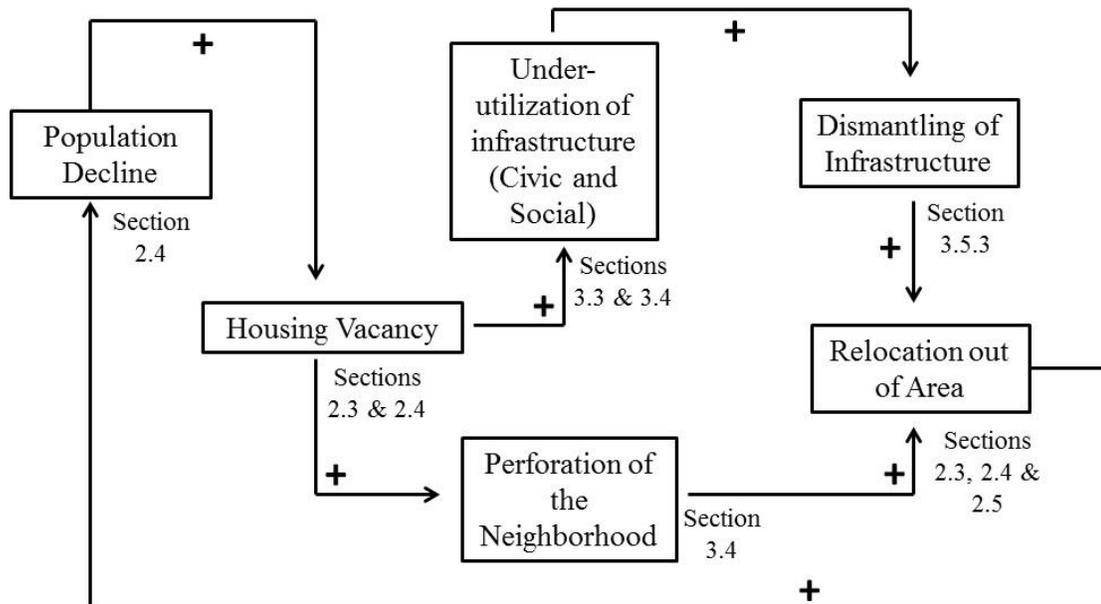
Source: Adapted from (Schwarz & Haase, 2010; Haase, 2013)

Models that attempt to address the built environment effects of shrinking are not common. Hoekveld notes in her article on the circular causality character of shrinkage that "the usual focus is on the cumulative relationship between economic and demographic development" (2012, p. 182). Schwarz and Haase's Model was developed to illustrate how the "pattern of vacant, demolished and new housing types poses

challenges for urban infrastructure provision" in a "possibly vicious cycle for a single area in a shrinking city," for the purpose of computer modeling said process (Schwarz & Haase, 2010, p. 2).

The research undertaken in this thesis does not investigate the relationship between infrastructure provision, population decline, and vacancy, as shown at the top of Figure 2.2. Instead, it examines the relationship between vacancy (of both land and buildings) and neighborhood perforation, both physical and social. To this end, sections of this thesis that particularly address individual portions of Schwarz and Haase's model are indicated in the above model representation.

2.7   Recent Single- and Dual-City Research into Shrinking Cities

As noted earlier, a number of books and theses have been written recently on the topic of shrinking cities. These have primarily used one city or compared two cities to examine current situations, explore the application of new tools and policies, or hypothesize about future conditions as shrinking processes evolve.

The single-city case studies include theses and a book that use the cities of Altoona PA, Youngstown OH, Indianapolis IN, and Detroit MI to explore Smart Growth and Right Sizing planning applications, consider the implications of a housing deconstruction policy, and hypothesize about the smaller Detroit of the future.

The first of these, Reese's 2011 master's thesis in Landscape Architecture at Pennsylvania State University *Altoona PA: Researching Smart Growth Principles in a Shrinking City* focused on the application of Smart Growth planning principles to a shrinking city to determine which of these principles are viable in this type of city and which are not. Reese concluded that while "Smart Growth planning does have a role in shrinking cities today… this role may be limited due to a lack of demographic diversity" (Reese, 2011, p. iii). His conclusions speak largely to the lack of industrial, economic, and resulting demographic diversity that have arisen in Altoona after the collapse of the local rail engine maintenance and construction industry (Reese, 2011).

Pyl's 2009 master's report in Planning at the University of Toronto *Right Sizing a Shrinking City: Land Use Strategies from Youngstown, OH* similarly investigated the use of one particular set of planning tools, those associated with Right Sizing, on an individual shrinking city. (See section 3.5.3.1 for further discussion of Right Sizing.) Pyl examined how existing land-use tools, those designed for growing cities, are being applied in a shrinking city like Youngstown, Ohio. While his research resulted in a "list of land use strategies that can be applied, to varying extents, to any city with an urban fabric too big for its population," he also discovered that "shrinking cities are not creating new tools; rather, they are simply using the same tools planners have always used, but in new ways" (Pyl, 2009, p. 2).

Bell's 2011 "One Nail at a Time: Building Deconstruction Law as a Tool to Demolish Abandoned Housing Problems," written for the *Indiana Law Review*, uses the city of Indianapolis to investigate the question "how can cities most efficiently remove existing levels of abandoned houses while deterring abandonment in the future? (Bell, 2011, pp. 550-551). Bell's answer, as developed in this article, is the creation of economic incentives for housing deconstruction, removing existing abandoned properties in a value-creating manner while also preventing future abandonment through incentivizing owners to deconstruct houses at the end of their usefulness (Bell, 2011).

In the final single-city case study, Gallagher, a journalist for the *Detroit Free Press*, wrote *Reimagining Detroit: Opportunities for Redefining an American City* as an exploration of the future of Detroit and similarly situated shrinking cities. Much of the book is predicated on the need for the city to accept that Detroit of the future will be a much smaller city than it had been. By accepting this reality, and embracing it, Gallagher suggests that

> As the nation struggles to cope with rising global temperatures and soaring fuel prices, Detroit may emerge as the city that figured it out first – how to use its open lands to foster a local food economy, how to create a network of greenways that permits its residents to park their vehicles, how to help

community-based entrepreneurs create a financial safety margin for a city once yoked to global economic swings. This future city may be home to no more than five hundred thousand residents, but it can function as a world-class city all the same… (Gallagher, 2010, pp. 150-151).

Two of the theses, a doctoral inquiry into "good planning" principles, and an examination of Creative Shrinkage, compare two cities; both chose Youngstown as the exemplar city against which to judge more typical planning processes. Schatz' 2010 doctoral thesis in Planning at the University of Waterloo *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* investigated factors helping or hindering the adoption of an established set of principles for "good planning" in shrinking cities. Comparing recent planning exercises in decline-accepting Youngstown with growth-focused Sudbury, Schatz found that 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 (Schatz L. K., 2010, p. iii).

Alligood's 2008 master's thesis in Community Planning at the University of Cincinnati *Creative Shrinkage: In Search of a Strategy to Manage Decline* compared Pittsburgh's more conventional approach to Youngstown's "Creative Shrinkage" response to urban decline. Her goal was to investigate "whether Creative Shrinkage is a primarily academic movement that describes a set of urban conditions, or a shrinkage strategy that can be utilized by aging post-industrial cities" (Alligood, 2008, p. 64). Alligood discovered that while the movement does indeed enjoy academic support, it also provides a multifaceted strategy to decrease costs, improve quality of life, provide information to citizens and potential investors about the city's future trajectory, and provide a range of housing environments (2008).

2.8 Discussion

Shrinking cities have only recently been identified in the United States as a cohesive set of cities with a similar set of characteristics. Research into these cities began overseas with attention first drawn to the effects of shrinkage in the context of German reunification after 1990. As depopulation became problematized, it became more easily identified globally, eventually coming to the notice of researchers in the United States. It has been extensively theorized and researched since then in the academy with the development of a research network and the creation of subsets of shrinking cities, such as the Legacy Cities studied in this thesis.

There is consensus around the types of causes and effects that can be attributed to population decline leading to shrinking. These include a number of economic, demographic, and policy-related factors that have contributed, exacerbated, and resulted from this wholesale urban transmogrification. There have been explanatory models put forward to explain these relationships and hypothesize about the impact of job and population loss upon the physical environment of a city.

Previous researchers have attempted to use selected shrinking cities as individual case studies for investigating the use of a single tool or policy. As cities losing population and jobs, these shrinking cities are operating in an unusual or unexpected manner. These earlier researchers have used these cities' unusual contexts as opportunities to test the value of similarly unusual planning tools like Smart Growth, Right Sizing, and Housing Deconstruction. As the most well-known example of a proactive shrinking city in the United States, researchers have chosen to compare the planning approaches of other shrinking cities to that of Youngstown. These previous studies have taken the approach of investigating the shrinking city itself. By focusing on one, or two, individual cities, these researchers have delved deep into how a tool or policy works in one city or compared it amongst two.

This thesis, in contrast, takes the environment of the shrinking city as a settled matter, an established type of city that now exists in the United States. The goal here is

not to tell the entire story of one city, but to draw lessons from planners working in a number of these cities and make statements about how these shrinking cities, in general, work. Shrinking cities are no longer a small subset of cities in the United States. Their residents account for a significant portion of the U.S. population. Legacy Cities constitute a significant portion of U.S. shrinking cities; they and their metropolitan regions provided homes to 45 million people in 2000, then fifteen percent of the national population (Mallach A. , 2012, p. vi).

Earlier studies tended to keep a professional distance from those at work in these cities. In this thesis, the story of planners working in shrinking cities is largely told in their own words through survey and interview methods. This research has looked directly to the planners who daily make decisions about planning for vacant and abandoned lots in shrinking cities in the United States. It has asked for their input on the causes and effects of population decline and vacancy. It has requested information about intervention methods being tried, those being used, and those discarded. The intention is to reveal the way that planners (and affiliated design professionals) are making daily decisions about vacant lots, to expose systemic constraints, political considerations, and operational limitations. By disclosing the way that these decisions are made in a systematic way, a more complete knowledge can be used to inform future decision-making, streamline processes, and reduce institutional blockages to making effective, economic, and equitable changes in these cities.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW ON VACANT LAND

3.0 Vacancy in the U.S. Built Environment: Introduction

This chapter reviews the multiple ways that "vacant" and "vacancy" are interpreted with reference to our built environment. Definitions, terminology, and varying concepts built into the word "vacant" are introduced as they relate to the built environment in the United States. It continues with an investigation into policy approaches towards vacancy, including historical research that provides an understanding of how vacant lots have been investigated and conceptualized over the past eighty years. After covering the current state of knowledge on the quantity of vacant land in U.S. cities as well as the costs of these properties to municipalities, it moves on to current policy issues related to vacant land. The chapter concludes with an overview of design approaches towards vacancy, exploring how vacant lands affect the coherence and integrity of our cities, as well as how designers and theorists have used design approaches to address vacancy in shrinking cities.

It is has been suggested that "many view the visual landscape of shrinking cities as their most striking and disturbing feature" (Ryan, 2013, p. 269). These vacant parcels that often dominate the appearance of shrinking cities can be defined and interpreted in several ways. They can be seen as detrimental to a community, gaps in the urban fabric, locations for crime and antisocial behavior, or also not contributing to the financial stability of a city through property taxes. They can be seen as opportunities for economic development, their value lying in the potential to add physical structures, tax revenues, or even new members to a community (Molotch, 1967; Molotch, 1976). These pieces of land can also be all these things at the same time, making them neither an unqualified "bad" nor "good" for a community. Bowman and Pagano illustrate this view of vacant land as they note that it is "both ubiquitous and diverse and both a problem and a resource for city governments" (2004, p. 1).

Research has been scarce and has often dealt with vacant lots in a purely objective, quantifiable manner. Beyond the physical attributes of vacant lots, however,

there are emotional aspects to the term "vacant." It usually has a negative connotation. As a recent American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA.org) article reminds us, "the sight of them [vacant lots] can evoke feelings of despair and avoidance. They are the markers of ruined hopes and economic failure" (Currey, 2010). The emotions that they provoke may have influenced the lack of research that has occurred on vacant lots in the United States in the past century.

From both policy and design standpoints, vacancy is a scale-relative term, in that the experience of one vacant lot on a block is a different situation than one vacant lot in a neighborhood. Similarly, three on a block is quite a different dilemma than three in a neighborhood (Ryan, 2013). The time scale of the vacancy can also influence how a vacant lot is experienced and approached. Temporarily vacant lots in growing areas of town are viewed very differently than permanently vacant lots in areas with very little growth. Issues of scale, passage of time, resulting problems and concerns are all relative in cases of abandonment, as are the tools and policies used to address them.

3.1 "Vacant" Terminology

The choice of terminology has a great deal of influence upon how vacant places are perceived and experienced. The American Planning Association (APA) defines vacant land broadly and neutrally, keeping out of the discussion of development or function, society or ecology, as either "land or buildings that are not actively used for any purpose" or "a lot or parcel of land on which no improvements have been constructed" (Davidson & Dolnick, 2004, p. 30). These definitions are so encompassing and vaguely worded as to be practically useless. This indeterminacy may be intentional, as cities normally construct their own definitions of vacant land, and the APA gains seemingly little by supporting a more strict definition of the term (Kremer, Hamstead, & McPhearson, 2013).

As the word has been interpreted in land development or real-estate terms, vacant lands are blank slates. In legal terminology, "vacant" is defined as "absolutely

free, unclaimed, and unoccupied" although "courts have sometimes distinguished vacant from unoccupied, holding that vacant means completely empty while unoccupied means not routinely characterized by the presence of human beings" (Garner, 2009).

The online *Oxford English Dictionary's* definition of the term is helpful in providing historical interpretations that have influenced the term's current usage. The *OED*'s second set of definitions of vacant as an adjective defines the term variously as

> a. Devoid of all material contents or accessories; containing, or occupied by, nothing; unfilled, empty, void.; b. Devoid of an occupant; not taken up by any one.; c. Of land, houses, etc.: Uninhabited, unoccupied, untenanted. Also, of a room: Not in use, disengaged.; d. Marked or characterized by the absence of life, activity, or sound.; and e. Of water: Free from ice; open (Oxford University Press, 2013).

The first four definitions, those germane to the vacancy of real-estate, have in common an orientation toward human usefulness, human life, and human occupation. Therefore, vacant lands, or vacant spaces, are considered as such if no person has taken them up or otherwise engaged their use. This human orientation can be found reflected in the types of land commonly considered untenanted, unused, or disengaged and thus vacant. These include: agricultural or uncultivated lands at the perimeter of cities, land that has been recently clear or razed of dwellings, derelict land including brownfields, lands with abandoned structures or buildings, and greenfields (Pagano & Bowman, 2000). Such a broad set of land types considered "vacant" makes it difficult to distinguish genuinely vacant land from land being used to provide ecosystem services or agriculture; the "highest and best use" judgment underlying these evaluations reflects the financial criteria used to determine what land is un- or under-utilized.

Northam's typology of five types of urban vacant land also closely reflects the development-orientation behind these vacancy determinations, with each cause for vacancy being termed in relation to the developability of the land. They are: remnant parcels, parcels with physical development restrictions, parcels reserved for corporate

expansion, parcels held for speculation purposes, and parcels reserved for institutional expansion (Northam, 1971). Vacant land, under this classification scheme, is either classified as land that is unsuitable for development or land that is being held for future development (Northam, 1971; Bowman & Pagano, 2000; Bowman & Pagano, 2004). This concept of vacancy also takes on an additional attribute of time. Some lots are only temporarily vacant while others are permanently vacant due to their inability to be profitably developed.

Taking the focus on the development aspects of lots one step further, Jones profiles Greenville, South Carolina's extension of the concept of "vacant" to include under-utilized land (Jones, 1992). This strongly pro-development interpretation of the concept is influenced by the city's tax structure and attitude towards management of vacant land. If a parcel has a zero-dollar value building on it (per tax assessor), if it has no structure on it, or if is a city-owned parcel that is un-built upon and developable (such as a municipal parking lot in a desirable location), then it is vacant (Bowman & Pagano, 2004). This definition of vacant is similarly economic in its orientation, but adds the qualifier of profitability to the concept, denoting buildings with no taxable value as equivalent to empty land.

Poracsky and Houck note that in Portland, Oregon, effort has been made to change the conversation around vacant lots, from a real-estate oriented discussion to an ecologically oriented one that seeks to explore what services these lots are already performing (Bowman & Pagano, 2004). As a result of conducting a systematic biological field inventory of the four-county Portland, Oregon – Vancouver, Washington metropolitan region, lots that would otherwise be traditionally defined as vacant or underdeveloped gain biological definitions related to the ecological services they are provide. Through the inclusion of this biological data, planners and decision makers are able to go beyond the usual limitations of narrowly defined economic and social parameters and include data "concerning the natural environment and people-nature interactions… providing an important tool for guiding difficult decisions

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regarding the balance between urban growth and the maintenance of quality of life" (Poracsky & Houck, 1994, p. 263). Kremer et al.'s 2013 social-ecological assessment of vacant lots in New York City supports Poracsky and Houck's identified need for the inclusion of additional data as attributes of vacant lots. Their visual survey of five percent of the vacant lots in each borough of the city resulted in finding that

> the City's method for identifying and classifying vacant lots, though meaningful for property tax purposes, is not necessarily useful for planning purposes. Many lots defined as vacant are sites for a multitude of social and ecological processes, and require a finer classification if they are to be fully considered in planning processes (Kremer, Hamstead, & McPhearson, 2013, p. 229).

It is likely that these lots will be recognized to support this wider set of processes as Geographic Information Systems-based (GIS) methods are developed to assemble and integrate data from multiple sources. Utilizing such technologies and accessing widely sourced information should be able to contribute to decision-making about these lots on a site-scale that more accurately describes the function and value of these "vacant" lots.

What is clear is that there is no one overarching or dominant definition or set of values associated with vacant land. Vacant, and vacancy, are loaded terms. Their use

> raises issues about landscape that affect perception, use, and design: how land is valued; function and productivity, morality and waste; surface versus spatial and material dimensions; visibility and scale; change and memory; and cycles of growth and withdrawal. Vacancy is complex, existing both as a cultural idea and in myriad physical versions (Corbin, 2003, p. 14).

How broadly or narrowly the term is used, how strictly or generously the definition is fashioned, is largely discretionary on the part of city officials. Despite common connotations of a lack of active use or human habitation, vacant is being interpreted in accordance with the values or desires of a local population, municipal agency, or development community. In this way, the inherent ambiguity of the term gives political actors the ability to define the term in a way that best reflects a given

community and aids in achieving a community's goal for the ultimate disposition of vacant lands. However, the variety of terminology and definitions used poses problems for assessing national data on vacancy issues and for developers or community advocacy groups who work across jurisdictions. Within cities, grouping multiple types of un- and under-utilized lands under the common term "vacant" erases any differentiation which might be useful for planning purposes, and negates the usefulness of uses which might be happening on site, but which are not easy to put into traditional land-use categories.

3.2 Policy Perspectives on Vacancy

In this section, a review of historical U.S. research on vacant lots is undertaken, investigating the changing ways vacant lots have been conceptualized through the lenses of land-use, land taxation, and vacant land policy research. It continues with an aggregation of current U.S. information regarding vacant lands, demonstrating that the historical focus on quantity of land, to the detriment of information on location or condition, continues. It continues with a discussion of the current extent of vacant and abandoned land in U.S. shrinking cities. It concludes with a review of the literature on two primary challenges associated with vacant land that have driven the development of vacant land policies: disorder caused by urban vacancy and blight and the harmful public health effects related to vacant lots.

3.2.1 HISTORICAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON VACANT LAND IN U.S. CITIES

There have been six national surveys quantifying vacant land in the past eighty years, the first in 1932, four taking place between 1952 and 1968, and the most recent in 2000. (See Table 3.1) A review of these studies illustrates the changing set of issues associated with land used in general, and vacant land in particular. They also demonstrate the overarching focus on quantity of vacant land, with little to no attention paid to the location, condition, or physical attributes of this land. Finally, they reveal the way that planning's preoccupation with, and faith in, the natural eventuality of

urban growth has enabled planners to actively neglect planning for vacant and abandoned lands.

3.2.1.1 Bartholomew and Marr - 1932

The first national study involving a systematic investigation into vacant land was Bartholomew and Marr's 1932 study of urban land uses in twenty-two typical U.S. cities and suburbs. Done under the aegis of Harvard University's School of City Planning, it was one of a series of investigations into zoning initiated in light of the landmark zoning case Euclid v. Ambler (Village of Euclid, Ohio v. Ambler Realty Co., 1926). While the case supported the legal use of zoning, it did not prescribe how zoning would occur. This study was intended to support the practice of scientific, non-political, zoning through the "determination of the requirements of the American city as to land areas used for various purposes, ratios of these areas to a given population unit, and analogous statistical information that will be an aid" in directing the practice of zoning (Bartholomew & Marr, 1932, p. 4; Hius, 1936).

The study's focus on all types of land-use was limited to determining the average amount of land being used in cities of different sizes for each types of use. The reasoning behind gathering these data was that if a city was going to engage in zoning, and zone an entire city preemptively, it would be useful to have information on a set of reference cities to use as guides. The authors calculated the ratios of type of land use to population for all surveyed cities and concluded that there "are definite limits to the amounts of land which will be used for various purposes" (Bartholomew & Marr, 1932, p. 151). Their intention was to apply these ratios to both future zoning plans and ordinances, as well as to the revision of existing ones. The authors hoped that their survey of land uses in the United States would provoke further study of how cities allocated land uses in practice.

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Table 3.1: Previous National Studies Quantifying Vacant Land in the United States

Number of Cities Sampled	City Population Range	Land Vacancy (%)	Source
12	>50,000	38.3%	Bartholomew and Marr (1932)
7	>100,000	34.2%	Bartholomew and Marr (1932)
2	>230,000	26.7%	Bartholomew and Marr (1932)
Field Surveys in 22 cities between 1928 - 1931; 16 included here were self-contained cities (not suburbs) above 50,000; population numbers estimated for year of survey and range from from 8,700 (Troy, OH) to 307,000 (Louisville, KY); 12 above 50,000 population. Some survey data overlaps with Bartholomew and Wood (1955); vacant land also included land unused for urban purposes such as farming or truck gardening.			
58	>50,000	24.3%	Wehrly and McKeever (1952)
40	>100,000	24.6%	Wehrly and McKeever (1952)
23	>230,000	26.8%	Wehrly and McKeever (1952)
11	>500,000	25.5%	Wehrly and McKeever (1952)
Survey sent by ULI to 178 cities having population greater than 50,000 in 1950 census; 51% response rate (91 cities); 58 cities included vacant land use data; population ranges from 59,654 (New Rochelle, NY) to 7,900,000 (New York, NY); self-reported land use percentages; vacant land also included non-developable land, institutional uses, or public uses as each city saw fit.			
25	>50,000	26.7%	Bartholomew and Wood (1955)
12	>100,000	23.4%	Bartholomew and Wood (1955)
5	>250,000	19.8%	Bartholomew and Wood (1955)
Data from land use field surveys in 97 cities and metropolitan areas conducted 1935 - 1952; 58 included here were self-contained cities (not suburbs or metropolitan areas) ranging in population from 1,740 (Naples, FL) to 821,960 (St. Louis, MO); 25 above 50,000 population; population numbers from most recent census or estimated for year of survey. Some survey data overlaps with Bartholomew and Marr (1932); vacant land included in-city water bodies in this study.			
47	>100,000	21.9%	Niedercorn and Hearle (1963)
41	>230,000	21.6%	Niedercorn and Hearle (1963)
20	>500,000	22.8%	Niedercorn and Hearle (1963)
Survey sent by RAND Corporation to city planners in 63 large cities in U.S. in Spring, 1962; 76% response rate (48 cities); self-reported land use percentages from surveys dated 1946 - 1962; population numbers from most recent census or estimated for year of survey and range from 115,000 (Portsmouth, VA) to 7,793,000 (New York, NY); 47 above 100,000 population at time land surveyed; vacant land here included both agricultural land and parking lots.			
85	>100,000	24.0%	National Commission on Urban Problems (1968)
36	>250,000	19.2%	National Commission on Urban Problems (1968)
16	>500,000	20.1%	National Commission on Urban Problems (1968)
Survey mailed in early 1968 to planning agencies in 130 cities above 100,000 in population according to 1960 census; 82% response rate (106 cities); 85 cities reported data on vacant land; self-reported land-use percentages ranging from 1957-1967; populations range from 101,000 (Torrance, CA) to 7,782,000 (New York, NY); vacant land defined in this study as any privately owned land that is undeveloped.			
70	>100,000	15.4%	Pagano and Bowman (2000)
21	>250,000	15.8%	Pagano and Bowman (2000)
9	>500,000	14.6%	Pagano and Bowman (2000)
Survey mailed in 1998 to city officials in cities with population more than 100,000 in 1995 census; 50.3% response rate (99 cities); 70 reported data on vacant land; populations range from 100,000 (Midland, TX) to 7,400,000 (New York, NY); self-reported land use percentages from 1997-1998 (although some earlier); vacant land defined here as not only publicly-owned and privately-owned unused or abandoned land or land that once had structures on it, but also the land that supports structures that have been abandoned, derelict, boarded up, partially destroyed, or razed.			

Table after (Kremer, Hamstead, & McPhearson, 2013)
Sources: (Bartholomew & Marr, 1932; Wehrly & McKeever, 1952; Bartholomew & Wood, Harvard City Planning Studies Vol. XV, 1955; Niedercorn & Hearle, 1963; Niedercorn & Hearle, 1964; The National Commission on Urban Problems, 1968; Northam, 1971; Pagano & Bowman, 2000)

In the process of conducting sixteen field surveys between 1928 and 1931 in independent cities (meaning that they were not suburbs of another city), Bartholomew and Marr found that in municipalities with populations above 50,000, an average of 38.3 percent of total city acreage was considered vacant (defined as unused for any urban purpose, which also included areas used for farming or truck gardening). In cities above 100,000, 34.2 percent of land was considered vacant or unused, and in cities with populations above 230,000, 26.7 percent was considered similarly (Bartholomew & Marr, 1932). In this survey, vacant land was discussed in two ways: either as an area which "will naturally be built upon when the population increases" or as areas unbuildable due to natural and artificial barriers that will be some of the last land to be developed, remaining "unused until these conditions are corrected by grading or the installation of satisfactory drainage systems" (Bartholomew & Marr, 1932, p. 123).

During the time period when this study was undertaken, U.S. cities were growing quickly and expanding their boundaries in anticipation of future growth. Illustrations in the report indicate that the majority of the land categorized as vacant or unused was located at the perimeter of the city, either in large tracts for future development or in pre-platted sub-divisions awaiting development. For cities in the early 1930s, vacant areas at the edges of the city represented opportunities: the growth of industry, residential areas, and the tax base. The small number of vacant spaces which were located closer to each city's Central Business District (CBD) were opportunities for redevelopment. It was a time of optimism, when the authors' greatest land-use worry was about defective zoning ordinances, which resulted in "the unfavorable effects on land values of [unbalanced] zoning" (Bartholomew & Marr, 1932, p. v). The assumptions were that growth would continue in its historical fashion, spreading out contiguously from the CBD, and that cities would prosper with some scientific application to the proper allocation of land uses.

3.2.1.2 Wehrly and McKeever (Urban Land Institute) - 1952

The second study was done in 1952. During the twenty years since the work of Bartholomew and Marr, residential suburbanization and the expansion of commercial and industrial uses beyond city's limits had begun to have detrimental effects on the viability of cities' economic bases. Undertaken by the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the study's focus was on whether cities were able to undertake, on a normal basis, the assignment of tax receipts and service costs to land-use types for the purpose of supporting fiscally responsible municipal land-use policies. By the mid-1950s, the discrepancy between the tax returns and cost of service outlays attributable to central city land uses had become a widely addressed problem, discussed in such mainstream magazines as *American City, Business Week*, and *Time* (Business Week, 1954; TIME Magazine, 1955; Jabine, 1956).

The ULI survey was sent to all 178 cities having over 50,000 residents in the 1950 United States census and had a 51 percent response rate. Among the 91 cities responding, 58 of them included amount of vacant land among self-reported land-use percentages. Vacant land was defined broadly and variously by each of the responding cities, and included non-developable land, institutional uses, or public uses as each city saw fit. Results showed that the percentage of vacant land in these cities had declined markedly in the twenty year interim. On average, 24.3 percent of a city's total acreage was considered vacant in cities with populations larger than 50,000, 26.8 percent of land in cities larger than 230,000, and 25.5 percent in cities over 500,000 (Wehrly & McKeever, 1952).

It is possible that the overall consistent amount of vacant land between cities of different sizes was the result of a few cities reporting a massive amount of vacant land within their city limits. Such a situation would inflate the average amount of vacant land in each size category. For instance, Des Moines, Iowa, population 177,000, reported 46 percent of the city's land as vacant; Portland, Maine, population 77,000, reported that their city consisted of 48 percent vacant area, while New Orleans,

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Louisiana, with a population of almost 570,000, reported that over 79 percent of the city's land was vacant.

It is also possible that these large percentages of vacant land resulted from the way in which vacant land was interpreted in individual cities. Davenport, Iowa, which reported 66.7 percent of the total city area as vacant "includes streets and other uses not comparable as vacant, unused land," while Rochester, Minnesota with 41 percent of the city reported as vacant "includes streets and other public uses" (Wehrly & McKeever, 1952, p. 18).

The authors noted the inability to draw direct conclusions from the amount of vacant land being reported by cities in the 1952 study, saying that

> comparison among cities, even of the same population range, is meaningless. Compilation of the figures varies widely… The figures on vacant land indicate only the extent of area within cities yet to be used for one purpose or another. For comparative purposes, they indicate only that one city is more nearly built up than another (Wehrly & McKeever, 1952, pp. 19-20).

They were able to claim, however, based on comparing data used in the 1932 Bartholomew and Marr study with comparable data in their study, that the mean average of vacant land, per city, had declined from 39.8 percent to 24.6 percent during those twenty years.

While it is not possible to see a pattern of larger amounts of vacant land in smaller cities, as was visible in the 1932 study, an overall trend of vacant land declining as cities became more developed, unless they were able to annex land outside the city limits, spurred cities to do just that. Many cities in the United States, outside of the Northeast where cities were more likely to be landlocked by other municipalities, engaged in annexation in the 1950s (Austin, 1999). It is possible that the large percentages of vacant land in cities of all range of population resulted from early annexation activities by these cities.

To these authors, the largest threat seen facing U.S. cities was fiscal. If vacant land inside a city was not reserved for commercial or industrial development, then these potential contributors to the tax base would continue to move outside of the city. Further, residential development, a net drain on the city's coffers, would move in instead. Vacant land was seen at this time as both an opportunity and a challenge, but fully embedded within the context of growth. It was assumed that growth would come to these cities; however, what had to be planned and managed was how land would develop. At risk was the subsequent impact of that choice upon the financial viability of each city.

The authors of the 1932 study had believed in the natural, organic development of a city and its ability to revitalize and renew deteriorated districts through systematic growth appears. By 1952, this belief seemed to have given way in the face of serious economic difficulties, as the authors referred to "the difference between municipal solvency and bankruptcy," cities "forced into a continuously shrinking tax base," suburban growth that "puts a strain upon fiscal resources of local government," and the need to consider with very proposed project "whether the revenue to be received from the real estate taxes on the improvements counterbalance the public outlays required" (Wehrly & McKeever, 1952, pp. 3-4). A considered approach to planning cities appeared to now be required, with information and accounts necessary for informed action.

Actively planning for the development of vacant lots had now arisen as an activity appropriate for government action. However, at this point, the recommendations of the authors appeared to have supported planning at city-scale, indicating broad land uses which were or were not appropriate for a city's vacant lands and then applying them as large overlaying districts. Vacant lots were not yet being treated as individual spaces with different inherent characteristics.

3.2.1.3 Bartholomew and Wood - 1955

Three years later, Bartholomew and Wood published another Harvard University sponsored study. It built upon the survey data and findings of the 1932 study and, again, intended to inform zoning practice. Recognizing that "so long as the city is dynamic, zoning must be studied and adjusted periodically if it is to function properly," the study was intended to examine the changes in U.S. land use patterns and challenges to zoning that had occurred in the period since 1932 (Bartholomew & Wood, 1955, p. vi). During this period of time, U.S. cities faced unexpected and unforeseen change, as urban growth was impeded by the Great Depression, directed by the needs of World War Two, and modified by the expansion of personal automobile use. The purpose of the study was to update the findings of the 1932 study with contemporary land-use ratios after the "intervention of the federal government in the field of local planning [and efforts] made to deal with the total urban problem" (Bartholomew & Wood, 1955, pp. 3-4). These efforts, including the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 that paved the way for urban renewal and suburbanization, respectively, had led to decentralization and suburbanization of land uses, prompting the new survey.

For the purposes of the 1955 study, vacant land was again defined as any land "not given over to any urban use even though it may be potentially available for development. Thus… agricultural land is considered vacant land" (Bartholomew & Wood, 1955, pp. 13-14). The findings of this survey were largely in line with those of the 1952 ULI study, as they showed that vacant land had decreased in these cities since 1932. Of the cities with populations over 50,000, an average of 26.7 percent of total city acreage was vacant (this study combining vacant land with area of in-city water bodies). In cities of over 100,000 population, 23.4 percent of land was considered vacant and in cities over 250,000, 19.8 percent was, on average, vacant. While these numbers differ from Wehrly and Mckeever's findings of just three years previous, the downward trend they show is similar.

The authors of the study did not specifically address vacant land or its position within city planning policies, despite the suburbanization which had become more widespread during the 1950s. As residences, commercial businesses, and industries moved outside of the city limits, vacant lands opened up in previously dense areas. Rather than addressing vacant land as result of suburbanization or possible tool for growth, they spoke about two other common urban ills, "depreciated land values and blight". The authors noted that both had come about, but put the blame for these occurrences squarely on "zoning plans based on unsound assumptions concerning the direction and extent of civic growth" (Bartholomew & Wood, 1955, p. 7). Vacant land was simply addressed as extra space in a city, undeveloped acreage that had resulted from "the average central city… [containing] more land than is necessary for urban development" (Bartholomew & Wood, 1955, p. 73).

3.2.1.4   Niedercorn and Hearle (RAND Corporation) - 1963

The threat of suburbanization to the continued vitality of the urban core of cities was first addressed in the RAND Corporation's 1963 study of the proportion of types of land in urban use. This work was intended to inform a subsequent effort at forecasting changing land-use patterns in metropolitan areas (Niedercorn & Hearle, 1963). While noting that between 1950 and 1960, twelve of the nation's thirteen largest cities had lost population, the study also found that vacant land in U.S. cities was decreasing rapidly (Niedercorn & Hearle, 1964). In cities of over 100,000 in population, the average percentage of land area that was vacant (defined in this study to also include both agricultural land and parking lots) had declined to 21.9 percent. In cities over 230,000, this figure was 21.6 percent and in cities of over 500,000, an average of 22.8 percent of the total land of the city was vacant.

The authors suggested that the only way to arrest the loss of population and employment in urban cores was to increase net land use densities. They appeared to make a connection between stabilizing (and perhaps increasing) some unstated level of central city population and employment densities with maintaining the "role of our

central cities" and "clarify the future prospects of the nation's urban areas" (Niedercorn & Hearle, 1963, p. 1). Assuming that the observed decline in residential and manufacturing densities would continue, the study's authors declared that "unless large amounts of vacant land exist inside the city limits, the average large city appears to have nearly reached its upper limits of population and employment in manufacturing and commerce" (Niedercorn & Hearle, 1963, p. v).

3.2.1.5   The National Commission on Urban Problems - 1968

Five years later, in 1968, the National Commission on Urban Problems sent a survey to the cities in the United States with populations above 100,000, again looking for information on current land-use patterns. Contending that most information about the form of large cities was available only in single-city sources, an assertion refuted by this review, and often gathered with non-standard measures, this survey was intended to support and enable comparison between cities, as well as being an aggregation of national data (The National Commission on Urban Problems, 1968). Results of this survey supported those of the RAND corporation study, displaying a continued national decline in vacant urban land. In this study, vacant land was defined as any privately owned land that is undeveloped. In cities above 100,000, an average of 24 percent of urban land was classified as vacant. For cities of over 250,000, the average amount of vacant land had declined to 19.2 percent and to 20.1 percent for cities of over 500,000 in population. One of the notable findings of this study was that while vacant land was still declining in these cities, "a considerable part of the area of many major cities is still undeveloped." On average about one-third of all privately held land was considered vacant at this time (The National Commission on Urban Problems, 1968, p. 19). The authors find that "many large cities have considerable amounts of undeveloped land—typically, for cities of 100,000-plus, much more than all the area being used for commercial and industrial purposes"—suggesting that the call for "more urban space and better controls over land use within and around cities"

are erroneous or premature (The National Commission on Urban Problems, 1968, p. 18).

Neither this study, the RAND study, nor the ULI study on property taxation indicate that the authors investigated the location of vacant land uses in the cities they studied. If the authors had done so, succeeding studies would have been in position to establish a trend in urban vacant land migrating from the edge of cities to the core as cities ran up against natural or political growth boundaries. The two Harvard sponsored studies did include image plates which showed "areas unused for any urban purpose in five typical cities" from each survey (Bartholomew & Marr, 1932, p. 123; Bartholomew & Wood, 1955). The five cities shown varied between the two studies, but it is possible to see the increase, on average, in vacant land uses in the twenty year period of time. The increase is particularly noticeable near to each city's (CBD) as these areas were entirely developed in the earlier images.

3.2.1.6 Pagano and Bowman - 2000

The final and most recent national study with import to the study of vacant land was Pagano and Bowman's 1997–1998 survey of U.S. cities with populations over 100,000. Worried that both a lack of information on the quantity of vacant land in U.S. cities and a preoccupation with the regulation and management of vacant land had led to "short-term fixes rather than long-term solutions," the authors sought to undertake the first national, systematic survey of vacant land since 1968. It was the first to focus exclusively on vacancy (Pagano & Bowman, 2000, p. 2). Regarding vacant land as possible opportunities for both growing and recovering areas and as potential social and economic assets, the authors sent surveys to city officials in 99 cities. They asked for estimates of the amount of usable vacant land within the city's borders. Each city's definition of "usable" would cause discrepancies in the final data. In cities above 100,000 in population, the average amount of usable vacant land was 15.4 percent. In cities above 250,000, the usable acreage was 15.8 percent, and 14.6 percent in cities above 500,000.

Pagano and Bowman's finding that the average amount of vacant land was around 15 percent for all city sizes continued the trend of vacant land decreasing in U.S. cities. Additionally, the differentiation between city size ranges appeared to have vanished. This result may have been due to cities deciding not to expand any farther, having annexed all possibly annexable land or having made the decision to not incorporate outlying communities.

The fact that widely varying sizes of cities were converging to similar amounts of vacant land could, however, hide the wide variation amongst individual cities. At the time, surveyed cities ranged from 0.6 percent and 0.7 percent vacant land in Alexandria, Virginia and Inglewood, California, respectively, to 42.6 percent and 45 percent in Phoenix, Arizona and Amarillo, Texas, respectively. While all considered "vacant land" and categorized similarly, the parcels in these two different sets of cities are going to be seen very differently by planners and city administrators, developers and neighbors. In cities with very little vacant land, any open parcels are going to be valuable properties, drawing the attention of municipal actors and private developers alike as they spur action. In cities with a large amount of vacant land, their occurrence is not unusual, therefore these parcels are seen as less valuable due to their proliferation and less worthy of municipal or private sector attention. Pagano and Bowman suggest that "city governments must understand the unique circumstances of their vacant land situation and craft policy solutions that fit them," rather than addressing vacant land as it has been historically, as seen in this set of studies, as one-size-fits-all, devoid of context or defining characteristics (2000, p. 8).

3.2.1.7 Discussion and Trends

There are some noticeable patterns in both the way that vacancy has been viewed. One caveat that must be mentioned before delving into observable trends is the widely differing definitions used by cities to categorize their vacant lands. These definitions influenced the way that cities conceptualized, obtained, and kept data, making meaningful inter-city comparisons and national trends hard to obtain. The

authors of the 1952 ULI study specifically comment upon the difficulty in using vacancy data to make comparisons among cities, noting that due to the various ways that these numbers are calculated, the one way they can be used to compare cities is in indicating "only that one city is more nearly built up than is another" (Wehrly & McKeever, 1952, p. 20).

First, over time, the discrepancy in percentage of city acreage occupied by vacant lands between small, mid-sized, and large cities has been eliminated. The 1932 and 1955 studies proportionately included more small (greater than 50,000 in population) cities. These two studies saw the greatest variation between the amount of vacant land in cities, based on size of the cities. (See Figure 3.1) The other four studies, which were based on larger data sets and included proportionately more mid-size (greater than 100,000) and large (greater than 250,000) cities, show greater convergence around an average amount of vacant land in cities at each time point, regardless of the size of the cities. This result may be related to the mature status most cities in the United States had reached. It became more difficult for them to annex additional territory due to the establishment of cities and towns with contiguous borders (Beauregard, Voices of Decline: The Postwar Fate of U.S. Cities, 2002; Edwards, 2008). Also, a number of states and cities had established greenbelts, urban growth boundaries, and urban service boundaries which restricted their expansion or direct it in pre-determined ways and areas (Bengston, Fletcher, & Nelson, 2004).

As noted above, cities in the United States have very different conceptions of how to define vacant land. While the authors of each of these studies were able to make general conclusions about vacant land, these measurements were based on different conceptions of what is usable, what is developable, and what is under-used as opposed to unused, among other differentiations. From the very beginning, the term "vacant" has been subject to interpretation and qualification based upon local values. In these six studies, vacant land was determined to include:

1. Land unused for urban purposes, such as farming or truck gardening; (1932)

2. Non-developable land, institutional uses, semi-public, or public uses; (1952)
3. Water bodies lying within the city limits; (1955)
4. Agricultural land and parking lots; (1963)
5. Any privately owned land that is undeveloped; (1968) and
6. Not only publicly owned and privately owned unused or abandoned land or land that once had structures on it, but also the land that supports structures that have been abandoned, derelict, boarded up, partially destroyed, or razed. (2000)

Figure 3.1: Average Percentage of Vacant Land Use in United States Cities: 1932–1998
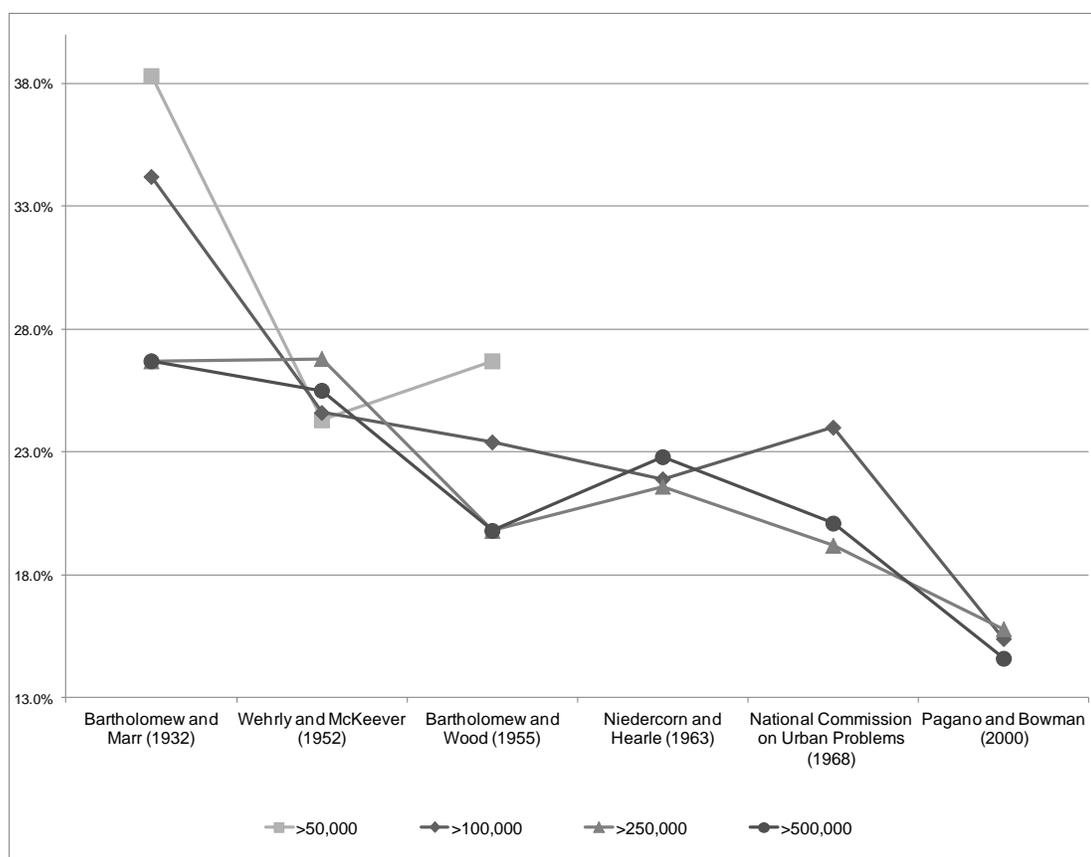
Source: (Bartholomew & Marr, 1932; Wehrly & McKeever, 1952; Bartholomew & Wood, 1955; Niedercorn & Hearle, 1963; The National Commission on Urban Problems, 1968; Pagano & Bowman, 2000)

At some point between 1963 and 1968, where vacant land was occurring in cities influenced the way that it was being defined. This becomes apparent when the definition of "vacant" is shown in a time-ordered manner. Prior to the 1968 study, vacant land was conceptually tied to the lightly developed agricultural or greenfield areas at the edges of cities which had never supported urban uses. By the time of the National Commission on Urban Problems study, vacant land came to be associated with the previously developed, possibly brownfield sites in the center of cities. The transition of the concept occurred in tandem with the 1963 fear of too little vacant land left for industrial and commercial development giving way to the 1968 assertion that there was ample vacant land left in cities for development; the discrepancy between the two sets of authors' findings can be explained by a shift from thinking purely in terms of greenfield development to a realization that other types of vacant lands were suitable for urban building and redevelopment.

These studies also give insight into the way that researchers over the past eighty years have conceptualized land-use and vacant land. Overall, the approach has been quantitative, using equations to calculate appropriate land-use percentages and taxing schemes and deriving land-use schemata for application to cities within specific population ranges. Issues of context, geographic location, demographics, and other qualifying concerns were not considered. As noted earlier, these studies did not gather qualitative data related to how planning, growth, or the decisions of where individual land uses will occur happens in these cities. The only exception were the spatial data included in the two Harvard-sponsored studies denoting the location of vacant land uses.

Planning for vacant land, treated as an afterthought in the first five of these studies, was of even less interest to the researchers than other types of land use. While other land uses such as residential or commercial were discussed in terms of adjacencies, employment, and economic data related to each land use, vacant land was

included in these studies as a sort of "remainder" category, as illustrated below in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Diagram Illustrating Urban Land Use Types from Bartholomew and Marr, 1932

FUNCTIONAL USES
OF URBAN LAND

PLATE NUMBER IV

TO ACCOMPANY
"URBAN LAND USES"

TOTAL MUNICIPAL AREA

DEVELOPED AREA   VACANT PROPERTY

AREA PRIVATELY DEVELOPED   AREA FOR PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC USE

SINGLE FAMILY · TWO FAMILY · MULTIPLE DWELLINGS · COMMERCIAL · LIGHT INDUSTRY · HEAVY INDUSTRY

STREETS · RAILROAD PROPERTY · PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS · INSTITUTIONS-CEMETERIES CHURCHES-CITY PROPERTY-ETC.

Source: (Bartholomew & Marr, 1932, p. 15)

69
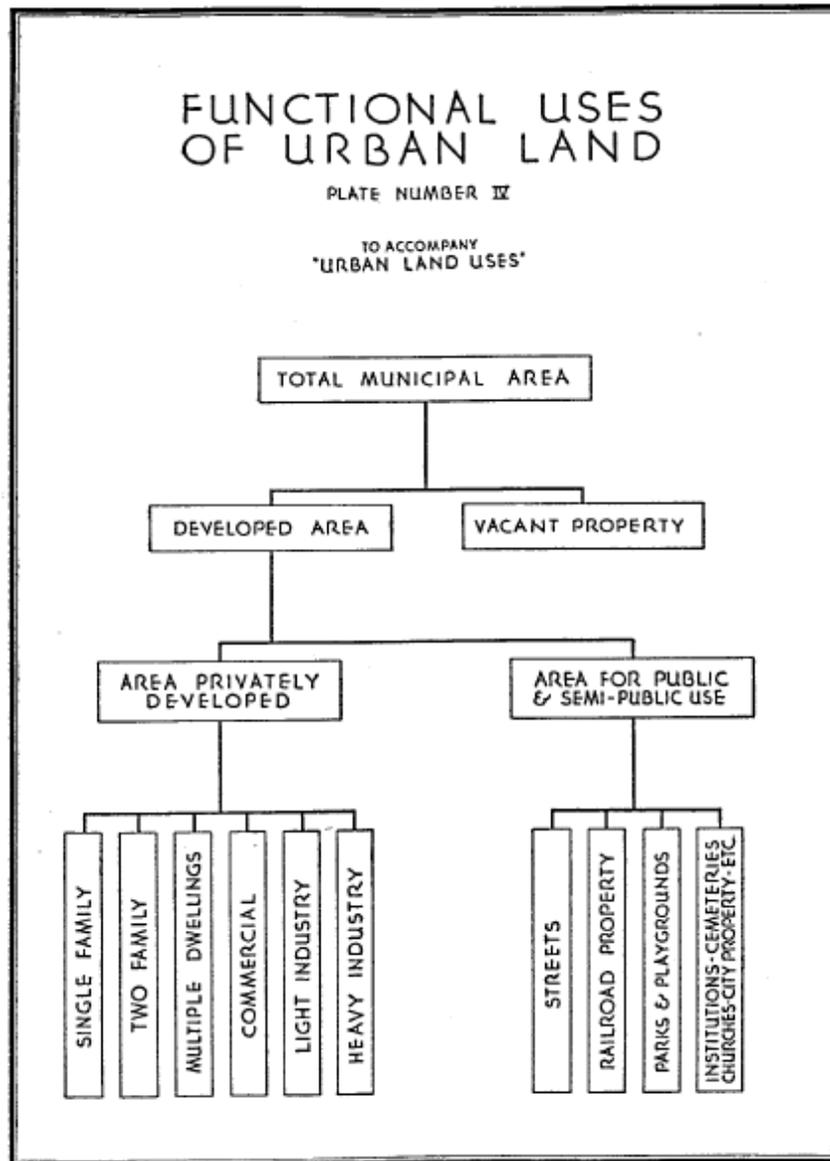
Always listed and addressed last, the 1955 study made the unimportance of vacant land especially clear through its inclusion after not only all other types of land use, but also after a "summary of uses" detailing the percentage of public, private, and infrastructural land-uses which a typical city required. The tacit assertion of this listing order being that vacant land is not required for the proper functioning of a city (Bartholomew & Wood, 1955).

Surveys sent out and conducted by the researchers behind these studies either did not ask about information on the location or condition of different types of land uses, were unable to be supplied with these data by city officials, or chose not to include it in their studies. In terms of developing and redeveloping, knowing where vacant lands are located, their condition, and potential developability are important distinctions for developers. In terms of cities understanding what role their vacant land may play in the future and what role the city must play in realizing that future for those lands, knowing more than just the number of these lots is paramount for making long-term plans.

Finally, vacant lots have been interpreted by the authors of these studies variously as opportunities, as challenges, as both challenges and opportunities, and have been discounted as unimportant parts of the urban environment. For the majority of these studies vacant lands were discussed in the abstract, as undifferentiated empty space that needed to be converted to something else before it actually became a part of the urban fabric.

Initially seen as pure opportunities for cities to grow and attract new residents and businesses, these spaces became seen as both challenges to a city's fiscal stability—if they could not be turned to the appropriate types of land use—and opportunities for fiscal stabilization—if they could. They were seen to be challenges to growth when data began to show vacant land declining. It was only in this most recent study that vacant lands were finally addressed as a distinct type of land use and not what was left over after all other types of productive land use were accounted. In the

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most recent study, the authors took the viewpoint that these parcels were opportunities for reuse in both growing and recovering urban areas. While this last study goes further in treating vacant land as a distinct land-use type, it persists in investigating vacant land at a macro-scale, as undifferentiated "vacant land," neglecting context, location, or any other defining characteristics.

3.2.2   CURRENT ANALYSIS OF VACANT LAND IN UNITED STATES CITIES

More recent surveys of vacant land have been single city-based, instituted as part of a vacant land management processes. Philadelphia is in the process of its Philadelphia2035 plan and has surveyed vacant lots as part of the process. In 2008, the city had over 30,000 vacant lots, up from 27,000 in 2001, totaling over 1,000 acres of land, which was just over one percent of the city's area (Leob, 2008; Mallach A. , 2011)[1]. A 2010 estimate showed that the number had increased to over 37,000 vacant (structureless) lots, although that number could have been closer to 55,000 considering estimates from previous studies (May 8 Consulting/ Econsult Corporation/ Penn Institute for Urban Research, 2010). In Detroit, determining an accurate count of vacant lots is an ongoing process, due to ongoing depopulation; however, a point estimate in 2012 counted over forty square miles of vacant land, approximating the area of one-third of the city (Burkholder, 2012). This is in addition to another 35,000 – 50,000 abandoned structures. Once demolished these will add to the city's acres of vacant land (Mallach A. , 2011). In 2009, Baltimore had approximately 11,200 vacant lots, which was five percent of the total number of parcels within the city (Baltimore Ecosystem Study - Parks & People Foundation, 2011). These estimates are associated with research or plans attempting to address urban vacancy; as more become published the true scale of the occurrence in U.S. cities may be made more evident.

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[1] These data come from the Philadelphia NIS neighborhoodBase website which define Vacant Land in two ways. First, from the Board of Revision of Taxes as number or percentage of tax assessed properties that are unimproved land. Secondly, from Licenses and Inspections as number or percentage of tax assessed properties that are identified as vacant lots in 2000 Licenses and Inspections Survey. http://cml.upenn.edu/nbase/nbDataDictionary.asp

A 2010 study of vacant land management in Philadelphia exposed the challenges associated with contemporary municipal management of these lots. The study found that Philadelphia's approach to vacant and abandoned lots is, like many cities, stymied and fragmented because ownership of parcels and services provided to them are spread out across multiple city agencies (Econsult Corporation; Penn Institute for Urban Research; May 8 Consulting, 2010). Due to the inability to comprehensively address the city's vacant and abandoned lots, the city's approximately 40,000 vacant parcels are currently costing the city millions of dollars in terms of decreased property values, maintenance expenses, and uncollected property taxes. In particular, the study found that property values were depressed by $3.6 billion dollars due to proximity to blight, that the city was spending over $20 million in maintenance costs on publicly and privately owned vacant lots each year, and that approximately 17,000 parcels owe a combined total of $70 million in property taxes, a number that is increasing by $2 million each year (Econsult Corporation; Penn Institute for Urban Research; May 8 Consulting, 2010, p. ii).

A similar 2008 study of eight cities in Ohio found comparable costs for vacant and abandoned properties, including those with structures. Using 2006 data, Cleveland was found to have 12,381 vacant buildings and lots, 5,367 of which had no structures. While this study did not take into account the cost of blight on surrounding housing values, it did consider the cost of demolitions and boarding of vacant homes. Demolition costs of $1.2 million, maintenance costs of $3.3 million, and tax losses of $30.7 million led to $35 million dollars in loss for the city in just that one year, all sourced to the creation and maintenance of vacant lots (Community Research Partners; ReBuild Ohio, 2008).

3.3   Effects of Vacant Lots

3.3.1   "BROKEN WINDOWS," DISORDER, AND COMMUNITY COHESION

One of the prime policy issues associated with vacant and abandoned lots is the effect on immediate surroundings. Just as vacant and abandoned lots can have devastating effects upon the value of neighboring properties, they can also have detrimental effects upon their surrounding community's cohesiveness and the appearance of safety or civility within a neighborhood. One explanation for the way in which derelict appearances can contribute to actual dereliction can be found in Zimbardo's 1968 study of anonymity and destruction that gave rise to the term "Broken Windows."

Zimbardo's study, part of a larger research agenda into deindividuation, looked into vandalism and the conditions associated with acts of vandalism by "abandoning" (under continuous observation) cars on streets near Stanford University and New York University's Bronx Campus. Both cars had license plates removed and hoods raised, acting as "releaser signals" to draw attention and indicate the "dead" status of the car (Zimbardo, 1969, p. 285). At this time, community life in the Bronx was characterized by "its anonymity, the frequency with which cars are abandoned and things are stolen or broken, the past experience of 'no one caring'." In contrast, Palo Alto (home to Stanford University), was, as it remains today, an upper-class community (Wilson & Kelling, 1982, p. 31). In less than three days, the automobile "abandoned" in the Bronx was a battered shell, destroyed in 23 separate incidents of destruction as passersby stripped and battered the car. Demonstrating both the ingenuity of children as well as their delight in danger, five eight-year-olds used the car as a private playground, crawling around in it before smashing the windows. Destruction occurred primarily during the daytime. Individuals occasionally stopped to chat while the vandals worked. The looting of the car occurred first, largely instigated by well-dressed adults "who would under other circumstances be mistaken for mature, responsible citizens demanding more law and order." After anything of worth had been stripped, teenagers

and youngsters stepped in with their acts of random destruction (Zimbardo, 1969, p. 290).

In direct contrast, the car "abandoned" in Palo Alto emerged after five days untouched, except where a passerby had lowered the hood when it began to rain. The car was then "abandoned" directly on the campus of Stanford University for another seven days, without incident. In fact, when the car was moved from the street to the Stanford campus, three residents called the police to say that the car was being stolen. Understanding that the "releaser signal" that worked in the Bronx (the hood up on an unaccompanied car) would not work similarly in the Stanford environment, Zimbardo and two graduate students provided a stronger releaser signal by taking a sledgehammer to the car. Observers gathered around the scene of destruction, cheering it on, joining in to flip the car on its top. Subsequently, the only spontaneous attack to happen occurred after midnight when three students began to beat on the car with pipes under the cover of darkness.

Lessons learned from this study have implications for planning policies centered on vacant and abandoned lots in shrinking cities. Zimbardo's findings indicate that the combination of anonymity (which was found then in the Bronx) and "minimal releaser cues" can give rise to acts of destructive vandalism. Beyond vandalism, however, it is not impossible to imagine that the combination of anonymity and releaser cues which are abundant in depopulated and deteriorating neighborhoods could combine to destroy the "fabric of social norms which must regulate all communal life" (Zimbardo, 1969, p. 292).

In developing the theory of "Broken Windows," Wilson and Kelling distill Zimbardo's findings down to their essence and then extrapolate the effect upon promoting criminal behavior. They assert that "untended property becomes fair game for people out for fun or plunder and even for people who ordinarily would not dream of doing such things and who probably consider themselves law-abiding" such that "'untended' behavior also leads to the breakdown of community controls" (1982, p.

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31). While Wilson and Kelling's focus is on describing the way that untended behavior will eventually lead to an increase in crime, what is important for this research are the intermediate steps: a breakdown in community controls (displayed through both social and physical disorder) leading to a perception of an increase in crime and a subsequent decrease in community cohesion.

In a discussion on the effects of incivility on social disorder and fear, Hunter describes the concept of civility, illustrating how untended property could upset a very delicate balance:

> The continuing movement between personal and collective rights and obligations, the delicate balance between private and public claims is seen to be routinely problematic. The forms and stages of this process are most clearly highlighted by their breach, when expectations are not met, claims and counterclaims come into conflict, and the public order must be renegotiated (1978, p. 4).

As unmaintained vacant and abandoned lots proliferate in a neighborhood, the stability of a neighborhood is threatened. Unless stabilizing forces act to restore balance (through the housing market and actions of interested individuals and groups), the neighborhood will begin to decline (Skogan, 1987). These lots come to represent tangible evidence of physical incivility/disorder taking place as the neighborhood's social order shifts away from the *status quo ante* and established injunctive (the common disapproval of certain types of behavior) and descriptive (perception of common behavior) norms to some new balance between private and public, rights and responsibilities (Keizer, Lindenberg, & Steg, 2008). This type of physical disorder, represented by untended yards, dumping, and deteriorating buildings, gives rise to either social incivility/disorder, represented by squatters and anti-social behavior or the appearance of social disorder. To a resident or visitor, these instances of incivility (where descriptive and injunctive norms conflict) indicate both that co-residents or landlords are no longer concerned with respecting the pre-existing social order as well as the inability of local agents of public order, such as the police, to intervene (Taylor, Shumaker, & Gottfredson, 1985).

Figure 3.3: Relationship between Physical/Social Disorder and Community Cohesion
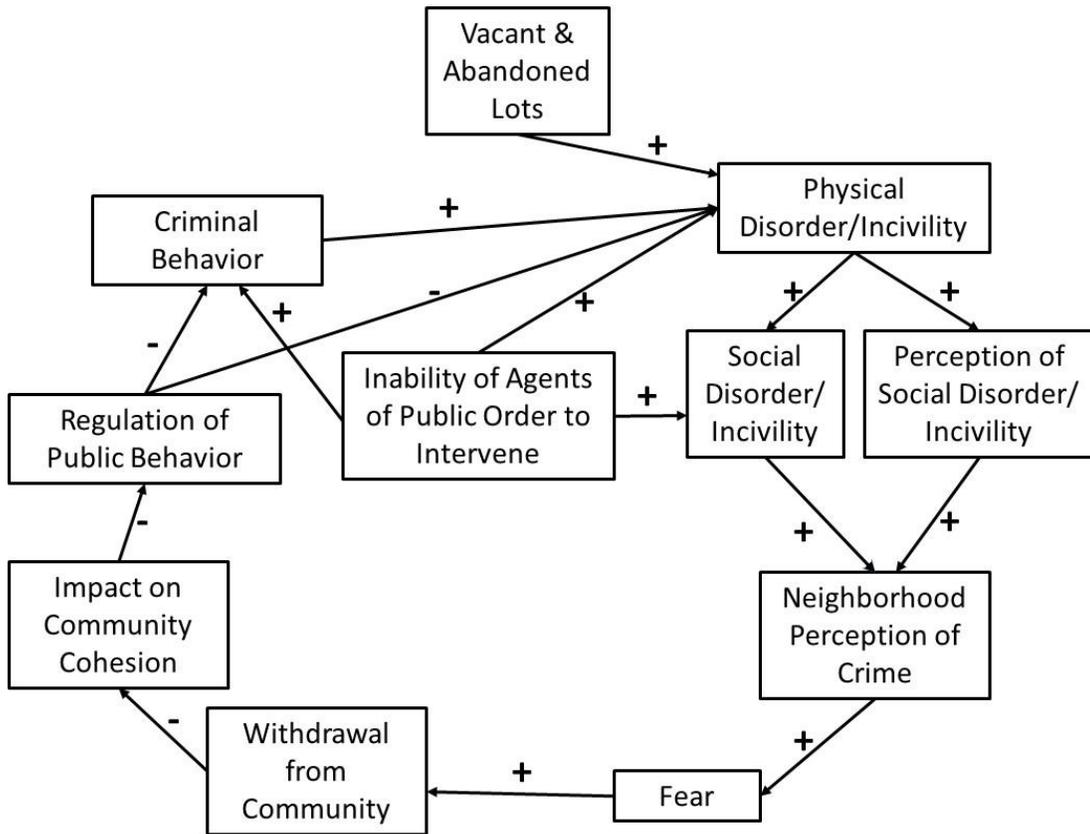
Source: Adapted from (Hunter, 1978; Skogan, 1987; Perkins & Taylor, 1996; Bratton & Kelling, 2006) and Modified by Author

Wilson and Kelling are very careful to note that "it is not inevitable that serious crime will flourish or violent attacks on strangers will occur" as a result of social and physical disorder, but that many neighborhood residents or visitors will *think* that it is increasing due to perceived cues (1982, p. 31). As a result, they will begin to withdraw both physically and psychologically from communal life, from fear of crime or the perception of crime, visiting neighbors and neighborhood institutions less often, and spending less time in the street or on the sidewalks. For most residents, "the neighborhood will cease to exist except for a few reliable friends whom they arrange to meet" (Wilson & Kelling, 1982, p. 31). As illustrated in Figure 3.3, as the

neighborhood community deteriorates, the informal social processes which had regulated public behavior decline and give leeway for a rise in crime and anti-social behavior (including blighting conditions such as vacant lots). There is, subsequently, less organizational and mobilizing capacity of the neighborhood residents to combat these conditions (Skogan, 1986).

3.3.2 PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF VACANT LOTS

Vacant and abandoned lots and homes can also have deleterious effects on the physical and mental health of neighboring residents. In a 2011 study of residents of two Philadelphia neighborhoods with significant numbers of vacant land parcels[2], qualitative interviews revealed the impact of vacant parcels on individual's well-being, physical health, and mental health (Garvin, Branas, Keddem, Sellman, & Cannuscio, 2012). The study of inner-city residents in a shrinking United States city found that distinct effects of vacant lots were seen in three separate domains of public health: community well-being, physical health, and mental health. They affected community well-being adversely by undermining residents' ongoing efforts to improve the external image of a community, contributing to a sense of futility in terms of personal/community agency over the immediate environment, increasing fractures and disagreements between neighbors over responsibilities, appearing to attract crime and criminal behavior, and decreasing the value of homes and preventing new economic investment.

The impacts of vacant lots on physical health are largely related to "the way in which they undermine" it through "unsanitary conditions and the potential for injury" related to the trash-dumping and arson that are endemic on these properties (Garvin,

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[2] The Garvin et al. study conflates vacant/abandoned lots with vacant/abandoned buildings, calling them both "vacant parcels." This is far from unusual. While the study undertaken in *this* research project specifically focuses on vacant lots without buildings, much previous research on the topic treats the two as equal situations for the purpose of study. See also (Accordino & Johnson, 2000) in which houses, apartments, commercial/industrial buildings, and lots are considered "vacant and abandoned property" per a United States Government Accountability Office definition of said property as "a building or lot that has been vacant for two years or more" (p. 301).

Branas, Keddem, Sellman, & Cannuscio, 2012, p. 7). Survey respondents worried that they were in danger of being physical harmed through proximity to illegal trash dumps, the wild animals that were drawn to these dumps, illicit activities (and their perpetrators) in abandoned homes, and fears of fires being started in these spaces.

Mental health issues associated with vacant and abandoned lots (and homes) were discovered to be largely the result of long-term negative emotions. These emotions are related to long-term living in proximity to illicit trash dumps, anxiety about children's interactions with dangerous neighborhood environmental conditions, stigma associated with living in a poorly perceived neighborhood, and defeat related to their lack of personal/community agency (Garvin, Branas, Keddem, Sellman, & Cannuscio, 2012). One interesting finding amongst these multiple harmful effects of vacancy was the degree to which study respondents were willing and interested in taking the initiative with appropriate support from the city to address vacancy and abandonment. Some respondents were already involved in caring for these vacant lots and "described satisfaction about using this work to exert a degree of social control over the neighborhood" (Garvin, Branas, Keddem, Sellman, & Cannuscio, 2012, p. 421). As noted above, increased social control from within the community is one step that can be taken to short-circuit the cycle of disorder, crime, and incivility.

The following image, Figure 3.4, adapted from Cohen et al., 2003, illustrates the relationships among physical structures, including vacant lots, social structures, and the health of neighborhood residents. Mediated through both situational opportunities and exposures as well as health behaviors, the impacts can be detrimental to the well-being of residents already compromised by living in depopulated inner-city locations. Wallace explains in a research paper on the public health effects of "planned shrinkage" in the Bronx in the 1970s that the effects of destruction of community upon a disadvantaged population that is eerily relevant for discussion of today's shrinking cities:

With destruction of housing and community there is concomitant intensification of a nexus of deviant behavior including (but not limited to) homicide, suicide and substance abuse… This nexus is embedded in conditions of preexisting poverty and overcrowding whose impacts have been exacerbated by the loss of community and of social networks associated with severe out-migration… (1990, p. 801).

Figure 3.4: Relationships between Physical/Social Structures and Public Health Outcomes
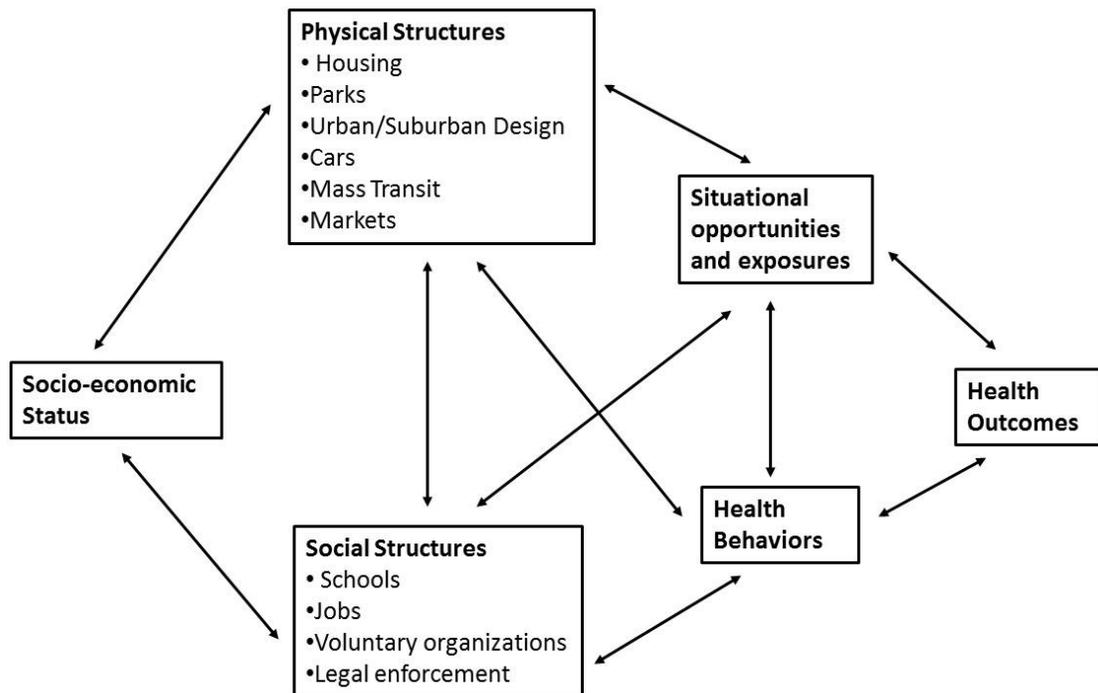
Source: Adapted from (Cohen, et al., 2003)

A 2007 study completed in Flint, Michigan examined the causal effects of residential/commercial deterioration upon depressive symptoms and stress. Undertaken in one of the U.S. cities most devastated by post-industrial population loss, it clearly demonstrated the effects of a blighted built environment upon the mental health of residents, as mediated by both individual perceptions (of crime) as well as social behaviors (including social contact and capital within the immediate neighborhood). Figure 3.5 illustrates these relationships. As their neighborhood in Flint deteriorated

physically, it also deteriorated socially. This situation led to a decrease in social capital, an increase in fear of crime, both leading to decreasing neighborhood satisfaction, and increasing self-diagnosed perceptions of depression and stress (Kruger, Reischl, & Gee, 2007).

Figure 3.5: Relationships between Neighborhood Deterioration and Mental Health Outcomes
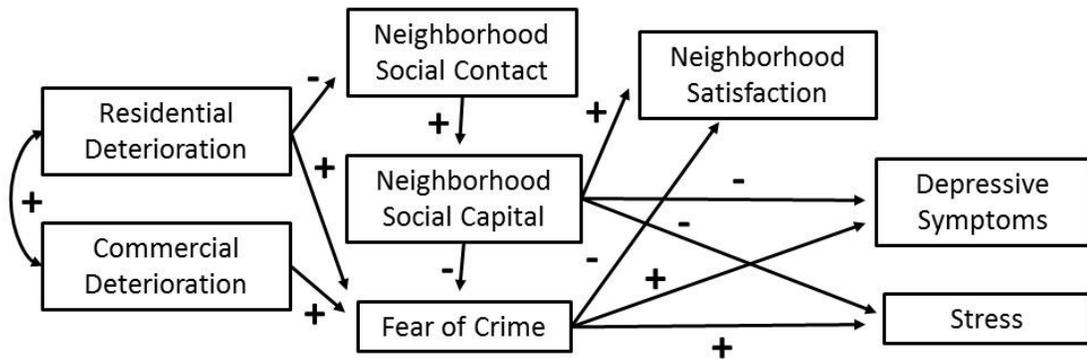
Source: Adapted from (Kruger, Reischl, & Gee, 2007)

Vacant lots and neighborhood deterioration have thus both been shown to lead to significant public health challenges for residents living in these blighted areas. While there is no direct causal relationship between vacant lots and neighborhood deterioration, it is mediated in both of these studies by a loss of community, social networks, neighborhood social contact, and neighborhood social capital. These findings suggest that the physical stabilization of neighborhoods may not only short-circuit the cycle of disorder, crime, and incivility discussed earlier, it may actually help to improve health outcomes for neighborhood residents.

3.4 Urban Form and Design Perspectives on Vacancy

Amongst the multiple definitions of "vacant' in the online *Oxford English Dictionary*, the second primary definition is "devoid of all material contents or accessories; containing, or occupied by, nothing; unfilled, empty, void" (Oxford

University Press, 2013). This definition has multiple connotations for designers, as it touches upon concepts of space, place, enclosure, center, and activity, amongst others.

While vacant has concise dictionary and legal definitions, vacancy in the urban realm is more similar to Justice Stewart's famous take on obscenity (to paraphrase): "you know it when you see it" (Jacobellis v. Ohio, 1964). It is only upon physically entering areas dominated by vacancy that one recognizes to what extent the spatial realm has been disturbed. As individual lots on a block become vacant and abandoned, a sense of emptiness is created. Although the physical structure of the block, as defined by the relationship between street walls, trees, street furnishing, sidewalks, and intersections can remain stable in the face of a few empty lots, the structure of the neighborhood begins to disintegrate as multiple adjacent lots open up. A large number of vacant agglomerations can challenge the persistence of a city's urban fabric. As elements of urban composition become isolated and lose any connection, "there is no longer a clear relation between one building and another, and between buildings and streets or open spaces… [it is] a freeing from all relationships between the elements which form the urban fabric" (Levy, 1999, p. 83).

3.4.1 URBAN FABRIC, STRUCTURE, AND BOUNDARIES

The layout of our oldest industrial cities and towns in the United States is unique, based on historical traditions of European colonization interacting with westward expansion, transportation access for commerce, and the gridded parcelization that facilitated early settlement (Jackson J. B., 1980). The distinct urban fabric that resulted from these various influences has two distinguishing features. The first is the continuous nature of the urban fabric due to cost premiums on transportation, information, and communication amongst workers and industries. The second is "the classic density gradient model of urban form," in which the densest part of a metropolitan area is at the core, diminishing outwards (Mallach A. , 2011, p. 1860). Due to its continuous nature and relatively uniform density gradient, any defect, discontinuity, or gap thus becomes magnified in terms of importance and significance.

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One of the fundamental connective tissues of the urban fabric in the United States is the street. Many Midwestern and Western cities were laid out with the speculative grid, easy to sell to prospective residents or investors and insensitive to natural topography. These streets came to identify neighborhood boundaries, make prominent civic connections, and create community identities. Functionally and aesthetically, they continue to provide historic roles, as noted by Jackson, dating to the earliest recognizable "street"

> Now they discovered a continuous space with a quality – and eventually with a name – of its own. What had been two rows of heterogeneous structures now became the walls of a spatial unit. From the beginning therefore the street served to catalyze the confusion of houses and spaces of the early medieval town, introducing concepts of architectural orientation and harmony, and even façade (Jackson J. B., 1980, p. 65).

The street, thus, became an identifiable constructive element of the urban fabric along with individual lots and structures. The street gives underlying structure to these other elements which create the edges defining the street. This symbiotic relationship becomes damaged with the removal of buildings and the irregular introduction of vacant lots. While the removal of one or two constituent buildings can be overlooked, many losses will create an insurmountable visual breach in the structure of the street.

In a populated neighborhood, with few vacancies, houses provide a clear defining line, demarcating the private spaces from the semi-public space of front yards and the public space of the sidewalk and street. Vacant or abandoned homes do not serve this function well, as they are often made semi-transparent through the removal of doors, windows, and general lack of upkeep. When these buildings are removed, the vacant lots become gaps in the demarcation line. "Without physically demarcating and articulating the public and private domain as two distinct yet related zones both are threatened," and the resulting ill-defined space is uncomfortable for both residents and visitors to these neighborhoods (Gusevich, 1986, p. 25). Christian Norberg-Schulz explains this need for an unambiguous environment, noting that "the distinctive quality

of any manmade place is enclosure and its character and spatial properties are determined by how it is enclosed" (Norberg-Schulz, 1975, p. 430).

The street gives structure to individuals' mental composition of their living environment. Trancik notes that

> People require a relatively stable system of places in which to develop themselves, their social lives, and their culture. These needs give manmade space an emotional content − a presence that is more than physical. The boundary, or definite edge, is important to this presence (Trancik, 1986, p. 113).

By acting as a boundary, streets can define neighborhoods, cities, and communities as individual and specific areas, defining both what they are as well as what they are not. These definitions free residents from constant negotiation and renegotiation of where they are and who they are, enabling them to develop their lives within a commonly understood set of characteristics. Due to the proliferation of vacant lots, streets, neighborhoods, and blocks deteriorate as coherent entities, threatening the unity of urban spaces. J.B. Jackson commented on the importance of boundaries in urban life to create commonalities, particularly important in the multi-cultural environments represented by some of our oldest industrial cities

> As the word itself suggests, a boundary is what binds us all together in a group, that which excludes the outsider or stranger. The boundary creates neighbors; it is the symbol of law and order and permanence. The network of boundaries, private as well as public, transforms an amorphous environment into a human landscape, and nothing more clearly shows some of the cherished values of a group than the manner in which they fix those boundaries, the manner in which they organize space (Jackson J. B., 1980, p. 115).

3.4.2 INDETERMINATE SPACES

The integrity of the urban fabric in shrinking cities has also been challenged by the way that depopulation has occurred. Historically, when populations shrank, remaining citizens would cluster in the core of the earlier, larger metropolis for protection, companionship, and commerce. Mallach describes how this process occurred in Rome after the collapse of the Roman Empire and resulted in a new type of interstitial space. The depopulated area between the shrunken core and the former

city walls, known as the *disabitato* (uninhabited place), occupied a green belt of formerly settled lands (Tice, 2005; Mallach A. , 2011; Waldheim, 2013). Current models of depopulation are extremely different, owing to modern patterns of property ownership and infrastructure provision as well as suburbanization and urban decline. Depopulation and vacancy are concentrated in urban centers and emerge sporadically throughout a city, disturbing the industrial city's density gradient and creating discontinuities in the urban fabric. Rather than being represented by a swathe of empty lands, as in the *disabitato*, vacant lands are now more individual and scattered, experienced as residual spaces (Mallach A. , 2011) or *terrain vagues* (Rubio, 1995).

These spaces, the *terrain vagues*, are a common occurrence in cities that have experienced modern patterns population decline and patchwork vacancy. Coined by Ignasi de Sola-Morales Rubio, the term has come to be commonly used to describe urban spaces of indeterminate history, use, and purpose. Rubio's definition of the term as "empty, abandoned space in which a series of occurrences have taken place" encompasses much of our urban sphere, in cities both shrinking and growing (Rubio, 1995, p. 119). It has been adopted by shrinking cities theorists (Oswalt P. , 2005; Blanco, et al., 2009; Savitch, 2011) and primarily used to describe

> Unincorporated margins, interior islands void of activity, oversights, these areas are simply *un-inhabited, un-safe, un-productive*. In short, they are foreign to the urban system, mentally exterior in the physical interior of the city, its negative image, as much a critique as a possible alternative (Rubio, 1995, p. 120) (emphasis in original).

In these spaces, the sense of abandonment, of otherness, the "strange configurations of building remnants and overgrown trees and plans" draw users in, offering "possibilities for risky or transgressive activities" which may be in keeping with the otherness of the site, but not necessarily for the surrounding community (Franck, 2014, p. 154).

Thus, in many ways, vacant lots are tearing at the urban fabric of some of the nation's oldest cities. Through interrupting the structure of streets to define and

establish boundaries, through intermittent inversions in the city's natural density gradient, and through the contribution of unintelligible *terrains vagues*, vacant lots challenge the vitality of our urban realm.

3.4.3   LOST SPACE, CRACKS, AND EDGES

In design discourse, there are multiple ways to denote vacant lots. These include open space, voids, and gaps. Ryan (2013) uses the terms "piecemeal" and "scattered" to describe the individual spots of vacancy which lead to a "patchwork" arrangement of housing in previously entire neighborhoods. On a city-wide scale, vacant lots are just one type of the "gaps [which] disrupt the overall continuity of the city form" (Trancik, 1986, p. 2). These types of spaces range from underused surface parking lots in the middle of cities and indeterminate spaces along highways and waterfronts to abandoned industrial complexes and the individual vacant lot. Simultaneously detrimental to their host city "antispaces, making no positive contribution… ill-defined, without measurable boundaries," they also exist as potentially contributing assets, as these so-called "lost spaces, underused and deteriorating, provide exceptional opportunities to reshape an urban center" (Trancik, 1986, p. 4).

Loukaitou-Sideris uses the term "cracks" to describe the varied types of social and physical discontinuities that permeate the urban environment. These are inaccessible urban plazas, uncomfortable building/sidewalk interactions, the suburban shopping strips that lack sidewalks, and infrastructural railroads and highways that cut through neighborhoods. They are, however, concentrated in our depopulating inner-city neighborhoods in the form of decaying playgrounds, desperate public housing developments, and abandoned and vacant lots (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1996).

These cracks, or gaps, are a serious challenge to the cohesion of surrounding residents and can serve to further isolate marginalized populations. In inner cities, we especially need to "promote landscapes of integration and communication" as these streets and neighborhoods are often populated by residents with low amounts of social capital or political power (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1996, p. 100). These cracks need to be

mended in order to create stronger, more resilient communities. If the gaps or voids become too large, mending them will take more social and economic inputs than are available in these struggling neighborhoods and cities.

3.4.4 SPACE AND ANTI-SPACE

Finally, the random dispersal of multiple vacant lots in a city threatens the experience of a "rich, complex and varied urbanism," which is inherent to cities composed with a sensibility to space (Peterson S. K., 1980, p. 110). The coherent composition of the city is put at risk when the space of one or two empty lots in a defined area increases to encompass multiple, continuous empty lots, becoming "anti-space." The concepts of space and anti-space are relatively congruent to the pre-Copernican definition of space as an area lying within some limits, or occupied by a body, and the post-Copernican definition of space as continuous and unlimited, undefined. The interpretation of anti-space as an "*a priori* continuum," as something that is everywhere and indefinite, denies the possibility of a space having specific meaning or the ability to be manipulated (Peterson S. K., 1980, p. 91).

The inherent differences between these two types of space, one concrete and definable, one infinite and intangible, also affects the development of place qualities, as

> The free, flowing aspect of *anti-space* obliterates the important distinctions necessary for the definition of place, which requires specificity and uniqueness. By making everywhere the same, *anti-space* destroys honorific distinctions between public and private realms (Peterson S. K., 1980, p. 99)(emphasis in original)

When a neighborhood, street, or block deteriorates physically through the introduction of anti-space "physical enclosure is threatened, if not completely lost, as in the typical suburban strip development. This loss of physical enclosure, of articulated space, (whether implicitly or explicitly) defined, is also a loss of civic values, of shared meaning" (Gusevich, 1986, p. 25). These locations have now transitioned into a type

of "placelessness," without an "identifiable 'sense of place' or character [to make] them individually distinctive" (Relph, 1976; Sime, 1986, p. 54).

3.5   Vacant Lot Intervention Techniques and Approaches

For over forty years, planners and urban theorists have been studying the problems of the older, once industrialized cities of the United States. By 1975, there was recognition that "the older cities of this country… are facing a host of new problems which cannot be addressed by traditional tools" (Krumholz, Cogger, & Linner, 1975, p. 298). Many of our larger cities have recovered, some spectacularly like New York City. Others have continued to decline and depopulate to the point where their future existence as cohesive settlements appears tenuous.

In response, the shrinking cities movement has brought a level of awareness to the failure of traditional tools and policies to arrest and reverse this decline. It has also sought to increase residents' quality of life. It could be said that the very open, unpopulated, devalued nature of the *terrains vague* which permeate these cities has enabled and initiated the exploration of new, innovative ideas for confronting the issues of the shrinking city. As expressed by Ryan "if the future of shrinking cities is to be in any way better than the present, urban design innovation will have to play a role" (2012, p. 203). Indeed, around the U.S., cities are using various methods to approach the issues of vacant and abandoned lots. While some of these methods are clearly associated with viewing vacant and abandoned lots as problems, others can be "answers" to vacant and abandoned lots as both problems and opportunities.

Most U.S. programs to address vacant and abandoned lands operate on the city government level. Typically, each program is focused on dealing with one aspect of the issue, whether it be from a safety perspective, an ecological perspective, or from the perspective of getting parcels back onto the tax rolls. This section reviews current tools being used, as well as commonly implemented approaches towards vacant and abandoned lots. The first set of initiatives are "top-down" approaches that have been

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led by municipal governments or local authorities. The second set are "bottom-up" approaches that have been initiated by individuals or local groups. The third set of initiatives are those that combine city policies and individual actions to effect change.

3.5.1 GOVERNMENT-LED INTERVENTIONS

Maintenance and disposal to private parties are the most frequent type of interventions that governments undertake. These types of interventions utilize pre-existing service delivery processes and can be bundled into existing maintenance and lot sales services without the creation of an entirely new service infrastructure. Green Infrastructure is a newer type of intervention and is being used in a few cities around the country. Its use in Buffalo is profiled below in section 3.5.1.2, while Philadelphia has recently received $1.6 billion in federal funding to implement a range of green infrastructure projects throughout the city (Bauers, 2014). Land Banking is profiled at length below in section 3.5.1.4., and is an increasingly popular and effective approach to address lot supply in a number of shrinking and stable cities in the United States.

3.5.1.1 Maintenance

The most basic type of intervention is ongoing maintenance of vacant lots. Maintenance concerns many issues, including illegal dumping on vacant lots, neighborhood stabilization, property-value stabilization, and legal/liability issues for cities (Hollander J. B., Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009). Vacant lots are often found interspersed among residences of responsible homeowners. Some are firmly committed to their properties while others may be considering abandoning their properties due to financial problems or neighborhood deterioration. By proactively showing care for these lots, cities demonstrate that they are invested in these neighborhoods and the future of the residents. They can also deter illegal activity by showing a city presence and prevent liability for injuries by clearing the sites of any potentially harmful material. A 2005 study in a Philadelphia neighborhood on house values, proximity to transit, vacant parcels, and urban greening efforts found that vacant land improvements,

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such as basic maintenance, had the potential to increase neighborhood house values by as much as thirty percent (Wachter, 2005).

3.5.1.2 Green Infrastructure

The Blueprint Buffalo plan has teamed the use of a land trust with the approach of green infrastructure. In order to combat the preponderance of vacant and abandoned lots, Buffalo is using green infrastructure, defined as "a strategically planned and locally managed network of protected green space with multiple purposes and benefits" to replace abandoned properties (Schilling, 2009). The city will acquire these lots through a land bank which will also have some of the properties of a land trust, in that it can manage and direct the usage of the lands in perpetuity. This process will give the city of Buffalo the ability to decide the pattern which the city will take after clearing vacant and abandoned properties, as well as directing the location of green infrastructure in the city.

3.5.1.3 Disposal to Private Parties

Rather than manage vacant and abandoned properties through governmental structures for what may be an indefinite period of time, cities such as New Orleans, Louisiana, and Meridian, Mississippi have been taking approaches aimed at getting these properties back into private hands. As shown, cities are working with a number of different partners to make properties productive again, from individual homeowners to commercial developers.

After 2005's Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans had an expanding number of vacant and abandoned lots. The New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA) was designated by the state to receive and distribute some five to seven thousand properties acquired by the state as either damaged by the hurricane or given up for tax nonpayment. Working through the "Lot Next Door" program, those who had homestead exemptions on their own property were given first right of refusal to acquire vacant abutting properties. Although it is legal to build a home on the acquired

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property, the procedure in place was to demolish any pre-existing structure on the lot causing de-densification of these neighborhoods (Ehrenfeucht & Nelson, 2011).

In Meridian, Mississippi, city staff administers the Mayor's Affordable Housing Program in low to moderate-income neighborhoods. It is used to acquire vacant and abandoned lots that have reverted to the office of the Mississippi Secretary of State due to non-payment of property taxes. The city acquires the properties, abates any back-taxes and bills for demolition, and obtains title. The city then makes these properties available to developers who commit to building single-family affordable housing units. The donation of property to developers comes with the stipulation that if the property comes to be used as anything other than a homeownership unit in the future, the deed will revert back to the city of Meridian (City Policy Associates, 2008, p. 19).

3.5.1.4   Land Banking

The concept of land banking dates to the 1960s, but the institutions as understood today have proliferated recently due to both the preponderance of shrinking cities as well as the sheer number of foreclosures resulting from the recent housing and mortgage crisis. (See Table 3.7) These institutions have been created by cities and counties to undertake land banking activities, defined as "the process or policy by which local governments acquire surplus properties and convert them to productive use or hold them for long-term strategic public purposes" (Alexander, 2011, p. 22). They were designed to address the physical, built-environment ramifications of deficiencies in the U.S. residential and commercial finance system.

Before their creation, as homes and lots became abandoned or vacant, they would sit empty, deteriorating for years while municipal authorities worked through lengthy foreclosure processes in order to gain title. Often, title could be only administratively acquired, not legally acquired through a judicial ruling. This situation left the title in question as far as development interests were concerned. When title was eventually acquired, these properties were often bought for low prices at municipal

auction by investors only interested in deriving rents from their use until the houses became too deteriorated for the rental market. They were then subsequently re-abandoned (Gillotti & Kildee, 2009). These blighted properties "infected" or spread their mis-use to neighboring houses, lowering real estate values on entire streets and blocks. The parcels imposed "costs on the adjoining properties, on the fabric of the neighborhood and on the vitality of the community" (Alexander, 2011, p. 10). The only way to stop the effect of these infectious properties was to demolish them, although the resulting vacant lots could continue to threaten the stability of surrounding neighborhoods unless a municipal authority stepped in to maintain them. Today, land banks pre-empt this cycle of destruction by purchasing properties, stabilizing inhabitable homes or demolishing deteriorated ones, and maintaining them for future redevelopment or municipal use.

While the use of land banks today is relatively constrained to the acquisition of vacant land and vacant buildings, it was initially envisioned as a tool to address a multitude of redevelopment purposes. Their first creation was spurred by suburban sprawl. In the 1960s, sprawl came to be seen by planners and sociologists as a haphazard process, reflecting the preference for low density, single family housing, and occurring on an ad hoc, unplanned basis. In this context, land banking was seen as a tool to be used by local authorities to assemble properties and direct the speed, direction, and rate of future exurban development. In order to facilitate large-scale planning and create balanced development, land banking permitted "the proper proportion of various land uses, transportation facilities, and open space for the creation of a liveable [*sic*] environment" (Bosselman, 1968, p. 7). During this period, the "range of social and cultural problems to be solved by the early visions of land banks was limited only by the creative imagination of the social and urban planners" (Alexander, 2005, p. 143).

A 1970 Urban Institute study on the essential elements of land banking anticipated difficulties in the proposed wide-ranging and aggressive use of the tool by

local municipalities. Its authors suggested that the problems could be avoided by working at a smaller scale (Kamm, 1970). The anticipated difficulties included contributing to price inflation, the limits of eminent domain, and the burden of debt service on large tracts of land. Kamm's suggested smaller uses for land banking were a diverse set, ranging from the acquisition of sites for the private development of low to moderate housing and acquiring land near infrastructure investments such as highway interchanges, to acquiring open space to channel or control urban growth and acquiring inner city parcels to undertake urban renewal without the limitations of operating solely in blighted or slum areas (Kamm, 1970, pp. 54-58). This study was remarkably prescient about the uses which the courts (both of law and public opinion) would eventually find valid for land banking and land trusts.

In 1967, John Sanger anticipated Kamm, identifying urban redevelopment in the inner city as a possible prime venue for the use of land banks (Sanger, 1967). By this time, urban renewal policy was being widely criticized from both the left and the right sides of the political spectrum, from citizen activists and civil rights leaders, for its destructive effects on established urban neighborhoods—particularly on minority ethnic and racial communities (Sutton, 2008). By constructing land banks which would only acquire un- or under-utilized properties for inclusion and redevelopment purposes, it would perhaps be possible to avoid the issues which had caused strong citizen reaction, including race riots, at urban renewal locations in cities throughout the U.S. (Mollenkopf, 1975). Land banks had thus proceeded, in a relatively short period of time, to be transformed from all-purpose development entities used to solve a range of social and built environment problems to organizations recognizable as modern land banks.

The Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (1957) and The Milwaukee Land Bank Program (1964-1971) were early instances of public entities formed for the purpose of acquiring and assembling land for a pre-determined redevelopment purpose (Alexander, 2005). As the focus of land banks honed in on

redevelopment of inner-city parcels, the first general purpose urban land bank was created in 1971: the St. Louis Land Reutilization Authority. This land bank, and the four other major banks that followed it, Cleveland, Ohio (1976), Louisville, Kentucky (1989), Atlanta, Georgia (1991) and Flint/Genesee County, Michigan (2002) were the precursors of the land banks operating in the United States today. All of the cities were faced with similar situations of increasing vacancy and abandonment manifested in publicly or privately owned tax-delinquent properties, as well as a desire to somehow convert these liabilities into longer-term assets for the city (Alexander, 2005).

Land banks have recently become more widely used to address real estate market inefficiencies, currently operating in 28 states. As of 2013, there were approximately 113 land banking entities operating in the United States, most developed in the past five years as a number of states have authorized their creation. (See Table 3.7 below) Excess numbers of vacant properties have occurred in recent years due to both the foreclosure crisis associated with the recent recession as well as population loss due to economic and demographic changes in certain parts of the United States. Market failure occurs when there is no private market for vacant or abandoned properties. In such situations, public interests must step in to manage these properties before deleterious effects such as blight and crime spread to surrounding properties and neighborhoods. Land banks have been brought in to organize this process, as "most local governments lack efficient and effective tools for preventing or reversing" the potentially devastating effects of abandonment and vacancy (Alexander 2008, 5).

Each land bank is structured by the state enabling law or city legislation that created it and proscribes its activity (Alexander, 2005). Contemporary land banks are funded through different sources, according to the state in which they are based. These sources include: the sales of land in the land bank, interest and penalties on taxes owed on land bank property, and fees paid by those contributing land to the land bank (Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy, 2008). Some land banks are used as pass-throughs. That is, they are used to clear titles and pass the properties on to other

bodies. Others hold onto land in anticipation of future needs. Still other land banks only hold land for short periods of time and try to remove them from city responsibility as soon as possible. Finally, another group of land banks operate more as independent entities, holding and selling, buying and trading, developing and financing properties as a functional arm of the city.

Land banks in the United States can be separated into those that came before the creation of the Genesee County Land Bank Authority (GCLBA) in 2002 and those that came after. The GCLBA and its founder, current U.S. Congressman for the 5th District of Michigan Dan Kildee, were instrumental in the State of Michigan passing key legislation that widely expanded the activities possible for land bank authorities. Called "the most progressive land banking legislation in the nation," Michigan's approach allows land bank authorities to assemble, sell, or redevelop tax-foreclosed properties on their own as well as allowing counties to use tax-increment financing for redevelopment purposes (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, Sage Computing, Inc., 2009, p. 10).

The 1999 and 2004 Michigan State laws that shaped and enabled the Genesee County Land Reutilization Council (2002 -2004) and Genesee County Land Bank Authority (2004 – present) created a body that demonstrated the possible control a city or county can take over its future. Prior to this fundamental change in approach, Michigan's foreclosure process had been a patchy, lengthy, and piecemeal process very similar to that in other states. Table 3.2 (below) shows how enabling law PA 123 of 1999 established land banks in Michigan as bodies that would completely alter the way foreclosed properties were handled in the state.

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Table 3.2: Land Bank Operation in Michigan Pre – 1999 Tax Law and After

	Former MI Foreclosure Law	New Foreclosure Law (PA 123 of 1999)
Time:	4 - 7 Year Process	1 - 2 Year Process
Title:	No Clear Title to Property	Clear Title gained through Judicial Proceeding
Ownership:	Hundreds of (often unknown or missing) Owners; Low-end Speculation at Property Auction	Property Titled to County; Tax-liens Eliminated
Foreclosure	Indiscrimate; Homeowners at Risk	Hardship Postponments; Work with Homeowners
	Contagious Blight	

Source: Adapted from (Genesee County LandBank, n.d.)

States that have developed land banks in the post-GCLBA era have largely emulated the powers and latitude for action given to the GCLBA, expanding the activities in which land banks in their states can engage. Examples of these are legislation that speeds up and clarifies the foreclosure process and streamlines the title acquisition process, possibly cutting the time from initial tax delinquency notice to sale of rehabilitated properties by years.

Land banking is coming to be seen as a vital instrument for use in revitalizing blighted areas and assembling properties for redevelopment. The entities are being used to manage vacancy and attempt to stem deteriorating property values. Land banks also give cities the ability to capture the location-specific values associated with land, use those values to proactively redevelop, reinvest, and generate additional value in cities that are short on economic wherewithal, and provide guidance over a city's future direction.

Table 3.3: Land Banks currently in Operation in the United States (as of 2013)

State	Name of Agency
Alaska	Anchorage / Heritage Land Bank
Alabama	Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
Arkansas	City of Little Rock Land Bank Commission
California	California State Lands Commission
Georgia	Athens-Clarke County Land Bank Authority; Atlanta Development Authority; Fulton County/City of Atlanta Land Bank Authority;Augusta, Georgia Land Bank Authority; Augusta - Richmond County Land Bank Authority; Columbus - Muscogee County Land Bank Authority; Dekalb Regional Land Bank Authority; Griffin-Spalding County Land Bank Authority; Lagrange - Troup County Land Bank Authority; Macon -Bibb County Land Bank Authority, Inc; Rome-Floyd Land Bank Authority; Chatham County/City of Savannah Land Bank Authority; Statesboro -Bullock County Land Bank Authority; Thomasville - Thomas County Land Bank Authority; Valdosta -Lowndes County Land Bank Authority
Illinois	Cook County Land Bank Authority
Indiana	Allen County Land Bank; Elkhart Land Bank; Indianapolis Land Bank; Muncie Land Bank
Kansas	Arkansas City Land Bank; Wyandotte County – Kansas City, KS Land Bank; Olathe Land Bank; Overland Park Land Bank
Kentucky	Louisville and Jefferson County Landbank Authority, Inc.
Louisiana	East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority; Lafayette Land Revitalization Authority
Massachusetts	MassDevelopment
Maryland	Baltimore Development Corporation
Maine	Portland, Maine Landbank
Michigan	Arenac County Land Bank; Bay County Land Bank; Benzie County Land Bank; Berrien County Land Bank; Calhoun County Land Bank; Cass County Land Bank; Charlevoix County Land Bank; Clare County Land Bank; Delta County Land Bank; Detroit Land Bank Authority; Emmet County Land Bank; Genesee County Land Bank; Gladwin County Land Bank; Gogebic County Land Bank; Grand Traverse County Land Bank; Houghton County Land Bank; Ingham County Land Bank; Ionia County Land Bank; Jackson County Land Bank; Kalamazoo County Land Bank; Kent County Land Bank; Lake County Land Bank; Lapeer County Land Bank; Leelanau County Land Bank; Lenawee County Land Bank; Marquette County Land Bank; Muskegon County Land Bank; Oceana County Land Bank; Ogemaw County Land Bank; Ottawa County Land Bank; Saginaw County Land Bank; Sanilac County Land Bank; St. Clair County Land Bank; Van Buren County Land Bank; Washtenaw County Land Bank; Wayne County Land Bank Corporation
Minneapolis	Twin Cities Community Land Bank; St. Paul Port Authority
Missouri	Land Trust of Jackson County; St. Louis Land Reutilization Authority
Mississippi	City of Jackson Land Bank
Montana	Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Trust Land Management Division
Nebraska	Land Reutilization Commission
New York	Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corp.; The Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation; Land Reutilization Corporation of the Capital Region; Chautauqua County Land Bank Corporation; Newburgh Community Land Bank; Broome County Land Bank Corporation; Rochester Land Bank Corporation; Suffolk County Land Bank Corporation
Ohio	Cincinnati Economic Development Department; Cleveland Land Bank Program; Columbus Landbank; Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation; Dayton REAP; Erie County Land Reutilization Corporation; Franklin County, Dept. of Development; Lima Land Acquisition & Neighborhood Development Bank; Lucas County Land Reutilization Corporation; Mahoning County Land Bank; Montgomery County Land Reutilization Corporation; City of Warren Land Bank Program; Youngstown City Land Bank
Oregon	City of Eugene; Portland Development Commission
Pennsylvania	City of Coatesville; Dauphin County Land Bank Authority; Erie County Industrial Development Association; Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp.; Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh
Rhode Island	Rhode Island Housing Land Bank
Tennessee	Shelby County Land Bank
Texas	City of Dallas Urban Land Bank Demonstration Program
Wisconsin	City of Milwaukee, Department of City Development Brownfields Redevelopment
West Virginia	Huntington Land Bank Fast Track Authority

Source: Author, (Alexander, 2005; Alexander, 2011; Alexander & Toering, 2013)

3.5.2 INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP-LED INTERVENTIONS

This section profiles vacant and abandoned lot interventions that are initiated by private individuals or groups and administered largely outside the realm of municipal government. They are often used in a more targeted fashion in cities, rather than as city-wide initiatives. Interventions like land trusts and ecological uses have been used in shrinking cities as methods of protecting or capitalizing upon existing natural resources. Interventions that align with temporary uses typology are not limited to parts of cities with specific natural characteristics, but may be targeted to other lot attributes, like location, site context, or amenability of owners. A final type of individual intervention is urban agriculture.

3.5.2.1 Land Trusts

Land trusts are similar to land banks in that they are used to manage vacant and abandoned lands. These private, non-profit citizen-led organizations are, however, focused on holding land of "significant ecological, open space, recreational and historical value" for conservation purposes (Wright, 1992, p. 83). They have been used in places like Buffalo to provide long-term leases to individual homeowners, protecting both the long-term property rights of the land trust as well as the affordability of the properties leased to individuals.

3.5.2.2 Ecological Uses

While actively creating green infrastructure or maintaining vacant and abandoned lands through land banks/trusts is one option for an ecological approach, a simpler approach may be to simply let these lots "return to nature" by permitting the growth of native species. Research has shown that benefits accrue to both the passive and active enjoyment of green spaces in urban areas. Westphal (2003) profiles a number of results attributable to individuals, organizations, and communities which might be achieved through greening vacant and abandoned lots. There are multiple ways that greening vacant lots can cause benefits to accrue to individuals and

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organizations (including productivity, reduced stress, increased school performance, and increased desirability of business districts). The finding most germane to this research is the reduction in crime attributable to communities that is associated with greening vacant lots (Westphal, 2003). Kuo and Sullivan found that more verdant neighborhoods reported fewer incidents of incivilities and reportable crimes (2001). Kuo et al. have also found that within public housing developments and neighborhoods, residents anticipated feeling safer if their neighborhood had well-maintained green spaces (Kuo, Bacaicoa, & Sullivan, 1998). Whether these lots are primarily grass or native species,

> The presence of trees and well-maintained grass sends a positive signal, indicating to residents and possible offenders that this is a "nice" place, a civilized, cared-for place with civilized standards of behavior (Kuo, Bacaicoa, & Sullivan, 1998, p. 55)

3.5.2.3 Temporary Uses

Municipal administrations driven by urban quality of life concerns such as public safety, sanitation, and cost effectiveness can see vacant lots in cities less as "green lungs" and more as threatening "rat havens," turning what may have been a "luxury to a liability" (Burkholder, 2012, p. 1158). In response, cities are becoming more proactive in policing and managing these vacant and abandoned lots, and some have started instituting temporary uses for the land. Seen as a holding strategy for the land, these uses include temporary art installations, community gardens, market spaces, and sporting and cultural event locations. Often, however, innovative temporary uses are difficult to establish due to local regulations and zoning while municipalities and private, non-profit agencies must jump hurdles in order to use these spaces (Hollander J. B., Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009).

One of the most widely-known instances of temporary uses in the United States is Tyree Guyton's Heidelberg Project, on the east side of Detroit. Beginning in 1986, Guyton's outdoor, public art installation on vacant lots and abandoned homes has

evolved from a target of demolitions and municipal scorn to a cultural landmark. (See Image 3.1) The project has been interpreted through multiple lenses as making widely varying statements about life in contemporary Detroit: architecturally, by John Beardsley as a form of "adaptive reuse"; socially and racially, by John Herron, as "visible tokens of a humiliated history"; and artistically, by Marion Jackson, as "dialogic art" premised on the idea of an exchange between the artist and audience (Herscher, 2013, pp. 73-74). Whatever the intentions, its city-ordered partial demolitions in 1991, 1998 and 1999[3] and recent fire (May 2013) at the oldest extant house installation are evidence of the perilous existence of art in an overwhelmed and underserviced city.

Image 3.1: The Heidelberg Project

Source: http://www.heidelberg.org/

3.5.2.4 Urban Agriculture and Forestry

Urban agriculture is a widely applied tool for vacant lots. In some cities, the lots are envisioned to be temporary gardens until a real estate market reappears. Others are envisioned as long-term ventures providing employment and stability to a

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[3] Demolitions of portions of the Heidelberg project took place at the bequest of Detroit Mayors Coleman Young (November 1991) and Dennis Archer (February 1999) and the Detroit City Council (September 1998). The portions demolished were located on city-owned land (Taylor B. L., 2013).

neighborhood (McClintock, 2010). More health-related research is needed as questions still arise about the use of formerly industrial land for growing table food and even the use of these centrally-located parcels for farming (Hollander J. B., Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009).

This lack of research has not stopped urban agriculture from being a popular action path suggested by both policy and design advocates. In the 2005 "URBAN VOIDS: Grounds for Change" competition in Philadelphia, the implementation of urban agriculture, green infrastructure, and topographic remodeling were among prominent design responses (Leob, 2008). In October of 2013, the Governor of Michigan approved the sale of over 140 acres of downtown Detroit land for the creation of Hantz Woodlands, a for-profit company that will produce hardwood trees on lots recently cleared of residences and trash. The venture is being billed as the world's largest urban farm, and could possibly grow by another 180 acres in two years (Burns, 2013; Goodyear, 2013).

3.5.3 CHANGES TO URBAN FABRIC

The third approach to vacant lot intervention is of a different nature from the first two. Government and individual or group-led interventions have been instigated on a regular basis over the past decade. Cities have developed tools and policies to support interventions that may differ a bit from what has historically been used by cities to act in the private property market, but have not been radical redefinitions of a city's planning approach.

This third intervention approach, active changes to the urban fabric, is such a redefinition. Right-sizing, achieved through relocation, demolition, targeting funds, and other similar initiatives are approaches that put the city at the center of property development decisions, replacing the private market. Density changes like those profiled here impact on neighborhoods or scattered nodes throughout a city.

3.5.3.1 Right-Sizing

The idea of right-sizing is to reduce the amount of blighted buildings in order to "enhance property values in healthier parts of the city [where] investments could be better applied," actively transforming unused buildings and structures into functioning, non-market oriented spaces on a temporary or long-term basis (Savitch, 2011, p. 802).

Right-sizing, as defined by Schilling and Logan, involves "stabilizing dysfunctional markets and distressed neighborhoods by more closely aligning a city's built environment with the needs of existing and foreseeable future populations by adjusting the amount of land available for development" (2008, p. 453). Actions for right-sizing include demolishing vacant and abandoned properties, de-annexation and decommissioning surplus public infrastructure while limiting municipal services, a moratorium on public and non-profit investments, transferring service responsibilities to private entities, and urban growth boundaries. The common first step with any of these strategies, however, is to stabilize neighborhoods by addressing blight and decay related to vacant properties, noting that "demolition of vacant and abandoned properties is a necessary component of right sizing" (Schilling & Logan, 2008, p. 454).

The concept of right-sizing found its first physical manifestation in the Youngstown 2010 plan. It includes in its vision the acceptance of Youngstown as a smaller city and calls for a 30 percent reduction in residential land use, the conversion of existing failing neighborhoods into other uses, and targeted residential demolitions and rehabilitations in "stable neighborhoods, planned areas or adjacent to catalyst projects/neighborhood assets" (City of Youngstown, 2005, p. 129). The city was hoping to "capitalize on its high vacancy rates and underused public spaces" by seeing this situation as an opportunity to remodel itself into an exceptional city of 88,000, one with the unique qualities of "a symphony orchestra, two respected art museums, a university, a generously laid-out downtown and an urban park larger than Central Park" (Lanks, 2006, p. 40).

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In order to implement this plan, the Mayor's office has integrated and adapted many of the principles put forth by Roger Starr in the 1970s in his planned shrinkage vision for New York City (discussed in section 3.5.3.2.1). These include: selected targeting of funds, enticing relocation out of deteriorated neighborhoods, stabilizing transitional neighborhoods, and having to "start saying no"—a difficult thing for a politician (Swope, 2006, p. 46). For the city's administration, the guiding principle is all about increasing and enhancing quality of life and becoming competitive with a new size class of cities.

3.5.3.2 Right-Sizing through Demolition

For some policy-makers vacant lots are the positive end-result of a popular municipal policy: demolition of blighted buildings. Vacant lots can be seen as less harmful than vacant and abandoned homes as they are less likely to provide refuge or shelter for nefarious operators who would prey on their surrounding communities. Vacant buildings are expensive to maintain and the majority of them have little prospect of re-inhabitation in many shrinking cities. A recent analysis in Philadelphia found that the city was spending $20 million annually to maintain these lots, which were dragging down property values by a total of $3.6 billion (Mallach A. , 2012). For these reasons, demolitions have become popular and are widely used in shrinking cities like Baltimore, Buffalo, Cincinnati, and Detroit.

In Detroit, rampant demolition is being called the city's "largest-scale urban design intervention of the postrenewal era, and by far its most radical one" (Ryan, 2012, p. 124). The city has proposed using $520.3 million between 2014 and 2019 to address blight. The majority of the money is being planned for increasing the number of demolitions the city undertakes on a weekly basis from 144 residential structures a week (as of early 2014) to 400–450 by early 2015. (Gallagher, Montemurri, & Reindl, 2014) A former city councilwoman was quoted as saying that the reduction of up to 80,000 blighted homes over five years could result in "the face of Detroit [being] fundamentally changed." This sentiment was echoed by a local teenager; however, he

seemed to worry about the results of this massive change, noting that "it's going to be like all of Detroit's gone" (Gallagher, Montemurri, & Reindl, 2014) Buffalo created a 5 in 5 Initiative in 2007 that planned to demolish 5,000 homes in 5 years. The city successfully brought down over 3,100 before it lost funding for the program.

The problem with programs focused on bringing down derelict buildings is that "they [are] driven by a simple imperative to demolish vacant buildings with little idea about what the vacant lots would be used for" (Ryan, 2012, p. 182). Instead of creating large tracts of vacant land which would be marketable to private developers or useful for public investment, the randomly located lots have no value beyond removing an immediate health and safety threat to neighbors. The wide-scale demolition of vacant properties in shrinking cities is, thus, a controversial policy in the absence of plans for the vacated lots or a clear and transparent policy about the policy's goals and process.

3.5.3.2.1 *Right-Sizing and Planned Shrinkage*

One criticism charged against using demolition to right-size current shrinking cities calls back to controversies surrounding the proposed historical use of demolition in the depopulated New York City of the 1970s. Although proponents associate the use of demolition with the goals behind "right-sizing" a shrinking city, critics think that it is more akin to this historical concept of "planned shrinkage." Planned shrinkage was the term coined by Roger Starr around 1976 in his position as Administrator of the New York City Housing and Development Administration. He proposed it as an answer to conditions such as those found in the South Bronx, where

> Large parts… are virtually dead – they have been so reduced in population that block after block of apartment houses stand open to wind and sky, their windows smashed, their roofs burned, the plumbing pilfered. Perhaps only three or four houses in a five-block area are inhabited, with another abandoned five blocks on the other side of them (Starr, Making New York Smaller, 1976, p. 33).

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Shrinkage was occurring throughout the city's boroughs, both in terms of overall population decline and the de-population of previously densely settled neighborhoods. The city had over 800,000 fewer residents in 1980 than in 1970 (Beauregard, 2006, p. 26; United States Census Bureau, 2013). *The New York Times* reported Starr as claiming that a "'shrinkage'…is already taking place. But it is 'not planned' and not coordinated, and 'a limit has been reached in the extent to which you can thin out services across the city'" as Starr advocated for regulating what was already occurring in the city (Fried, 1976, p. 35). While the city was clearly suffering as a result of free-market/technologically driven shrinkage, Starr seemed to believe that its financial hemorrhaging might be curtailed if shrinkage could be controlled and planned (Downs, 1979, p. 464).

The parallels between New York City in 1976 and Detroit, Flint, Youngstown, and Cleveland in 2013 are significant, especially in the wake of Detroit's July 2013 bankruptcy filing (Fletcher, 2013). Depopulation, vacancy, and abandonment abounded in New York City's boroughs as deindustrialization drove up the unemployment rate and the city faced economic challenges associated with a high level of service demand as well as bond and loan repayments. In the face of population decline, Starr anticipated further fiscal problems, including the bankruptcy so closely avoided in 1975, predicting that the city "cannot survive if the pattern of its costs remains the same for the smaller population as it was for the larger" (Starr, 1976, p. 33; Roberts S. , 2006).

Starr's planned shrinkage would entail three main actions: first, voluntary internal resettlement from depopulating areas to stable areas in order to regain density and efficiently provide services. Federal housing subsidies would be used to encourage reluctant people to relocate. Second, the city's Planning Department would be empowered to create schemes based on predicted future population levels that would make the most efficient use of resources to provide various levels of services. As populations decreased or increased, plans for neighborhoods would be based on

viability and long-term stability. Third, demolition and redevelopment: "stretches of empty blocks may then be knocked down, services can be stopped, subway stations closed, and the land left to lie fallow until a change in economic and demographic assumptions makes the land useful once again" (Starr, 1976, p. 33; Starr, 1977). Each of these actions is being utilized currently, in whole or in part, in shrinking cities in the United States like Baltimore, Buffalo, and Youngstown. The third, decommissioning parts of the city, is most infrequently used, most likely due to the political and economic challenges sure to face any city considering such drastic measures.

Planned shrinkage was initially considered a controversial concept, particularly among New York City municipal officials (Fried, 1976). It was, however, enough accepted by mainstream planners by 1979 for inclusion (albeit under the title "opportunity oriented strategy") as a proposed city-wide strategy for coping with smaller total housing demand in a *Journal of the American Planning Association* article by Anthony Downs (Downs, 1979, p. 469). This acceptance may be due in no small part to research findings such as the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) *National Abandonment Survey of 1978*, that studied structural abandonment across the United States. It found that "increasingly, there is a growing number of cities in which there are no short or intermediate-term reuse prospects for either land or structures," and that abandonment was acting as both a symptom and a disease in these cities. (Burchell & Listokin, 1981, p. 15). The application of planned shrinkage to these depopulated cities was expected to address the dangers posed by abandoned buildings while simultaneously giving the residents a chance to succeed in re-concentrated urban centers.

The policy of planned shrinkage was featured prominently in a report prepared for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1977 (Subcommittee on the City of the Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, 1977), appeared in numerous academic articles as the preferred "land management strategy for declining cities" (Heilbrun, 1979, p. 420), and was considered an ancillary tool for land banking

purposes (Patton S. H., 1981). It also became a core element of the theory of urban "triage" as applied in Durham, England; St. Louis, Missouri; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Kleniewski, 1986; Roberts S. , 1991).

3.5.3.2.2 *Criticisms of Planned Shrinkage and Demolition*

Careful reading of Starr's 1977 "Whither Cities?" illuminates the common thread that connects planned shrinkage through to later concepts such as creative shrinkage, smart shrinking, and right-sizing cities: "the fundamental realities of American economics must be kept in mind" (Starr, 1977, p. 20). In it, he clearly explained the reasoning behind withholding investment from depopulated neighborhoods that were receiving more in benefits than they were contributing and had no clear route to altering that equation. Beyond a certain point, "the federal government's only reasons for contributing to the operation of the projects are the humanitarian idea of helping people and the political importance of humanitarianism toward urban dwellers" (Starr, 1977, p. 17). In cities facing disaster-induced depopulation, such as New Orleans after Katrina, there are expectations that some number approximating the previous level of population and jobs will return, turning federal aid from a lifeline into a safety net (Zaninetti & Colten, 2012). This was not the case in New York of the early 1970s (from the contemporary viewpoint), nor is it the case in Detroit, Youngstown, or Flint of 2013.

Critics such as Roberta Brandes Gratz, are worried about contemporary applications of planned shrinkage. One of Brandes Gratz' contentions is that while vacant properties are the nexus of crime in any neighborhood, demolishing the properties will just move the crime on to other locations (Gratz, 2007). This assertion has been supported by research in Buffalo, which tracked arrests for assault, drugs, and prostitution during the city's "5 in 5 Demolition Plan" during which 5,000 structures were demolished in five years. Previously overlapping incidents of criminal behavior shifted spatially, contemporaneous with increased demolitions (Frazier, Bagchi-Sen, & Knight, 2013).

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Brandes Gratz' answer to this problem is "positive reoccupancy… the small-scale reclamation of vacant housing by grassroots groups, followed by new infill of vacant lots. Community populations where this takes place wind up stabilized and ready for new infusions of people" (Gratz, 2007, p. 19). To illustrate, Gratz profiles instances of this occurring in cities such as Salt Lake City and Houston, which have been able to renovate, repopulate, and bottom-up revitalize particularly hard-hit neighborhoods. This policy, however, is not directly relevant to conditions in still shrinking cities. Salt Lake City had a shrinking population in the 1960s and 1970s. In the decade to 2000, however, it grew at 13.6 percent and again at 2.6 percent in the decade to 2010. Houston has never experienced a single decade of shrinking population. In the decade to 2000, it grew at an astonishing 19.8 percent rate, and a 7.5 percent rate in the subsequent decade to 2010.

Another of Brandes Gratz' criticisms of planned shrinkage (Starr's 1970s version) lies in the top-down way in which it was implemented (Gratz, 2007). This accusation appears valid and her suggestions of self-generation, citizen involvement, and local grassroots efforts have widely been accepted as best practices in terms of creating long-lasting momentum and validity within a planning process (Harvey, 1992; Quick & Feldman, 2011).

Rybczynski and Linneman anticipate one of the most controversial elements of demolition in shrinking cities as they warn that "historic preservationists will undoubtedly object to wholesale demolition, since even decrepit areas contain buildings of architectural merit, and some of the worst areas are the locations of so-called industrial landmarks" (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999, p. 43). This concern has been played out in many cities across the country as historical buildings have been demolished in the name of progress. It has also recently been an unexpected outcome of the way that the federal HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funding was distributed, as Moloney documented in her report on preserving historical buildings in the shrinking cities of Lansing and Saginaw, Michigan (2012). Demolition

decisions using NSP funds were strongly influenced by the desire to remove blight on a piecemeal basis. As a result, "a significant number of buildings were lost because of a lack of awareness on the location of historic resources, the condition of many of the buildings, and the lack of inclusion of historic preservationists in the planning process" (Moloney, 2012, p. 13).

A final criticism of demolition, and one that is sustained by both its advocates and detractors, is the danger that demolition will be used by municipal officials as "planning by default" (Gratz, 2007, p. 19). Mallach, while a supporter of the judicious use of demolition to reshape cities and support struggling neighborhoods, reminds that "demolition should not be an end in itself, but should be a step in the process," and be used as a tool, rather than as a goal (Mallach A. , 2009; Mallach A. , 2012, p. 22). Demolition and vacancy are thus inextricably linked. The use of the former as a policy tool for addressing the physical environment caused by shrinking creates the latter. Indiscriminate use only seems to solve one problem while creating others including the relocation of illicit behavior, the destruction of our national architectural history, and the dismantling of neighborhood social fabric.

Demolishing buildings continues to be a controversial step, for its historical associations with urban renewal, planned shrinkage, and the dangers it could pose to historical buildings or districts. Despite these issues, it has come to be a useful and primary tool wielded by planners and government officials as a first step to clearing away extraneous problems in these cities before beginning to address the other problems caused by decades of population loss. What must be remembered is that while concentrating on the issues related to vacant lots in these cities, more are being created every day.

3.5.3.3   Density Changes

Another approach that cities have taken is to actively alter the urban fabric is through densification changes. While most research on these types of urban transformations have come about in the decade since the Shrinking Cities Project

traveled the world, the question of urban remodeling in the face of depopulation goes back at least to the late 1970s. In a 1977 U.S. Government document "How Cities Can Grow Old Gracefully," Wilbur Thompson contributed a chapter on Land Management Strategies for Central City Population. In it, he asks

> As depopulation leads to property abandonment, what land management strategies are open to us – how should we arrange the holes that open up in the inner city? We could just take depopulation and abandonment as it comes, economizing on the time and energy of the public managers. Or we could instead try to guide the dwindling population into a rough checkerboard pattern, seeking to cluster those persons who remain and alternate these clusters with other places that we help to empty out. Or we could try to reduce residential densities across the board by thinning out every third or fourth house, block after block (Thompson, 1977, pp. 68-69).

In this question about how to address vast abandonment and vacancy issues, Thompson anticipated the most common outcomes of population decline: the de facto de-densification that occurs in the wake of sporadic building demolition, and the more intentional creation of urban clusters.

3.5.3.3.1 De-Densifying: New Suburbanism
One pattern is a general de-densification of a city through a process of encouraging remaining property owners to take responsibility or ownership of surrounding/adjacent vacant and abandoned parcels. This method also encourages the inventive use of larger vacant parcels through flexible zoning codes and land-use policies. Examples of this type of land use are currently seen in U.S. cities such as Detroit, Youngstown, and Cleveland, where the easy purchase of low-valued property and relaxed attitudes towards zoning makes this the more easily accomplished of the two patterns. Due to real-estate prices being so low in the inner-city, low-density suburban style housing developments are being built (Hollander J. B., Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009). The authors of *However Unspectacular: The New Suburbanism* call this pattern the New Suburbanism, claiming that it is a "'bottom-up' suburbanization of the inner city" (Interboro; Center for Urban Pedagogy, 2006).

3.5.3.3.2 De-Densifying: Blotting

A different approach towards de-densification is blotting. This strategy was profiled in a piece produced by the architecture firm Interboro. Blotting is a modified version of New Suburbanism. Blot is a term connoting the expansion of single lots into potentially block-sized parcels through the acquisition of neighboring vacant and abandoned lots. In Detroit, as in Baltimore, Buffalo, Youngstown, and other shrinking cities, this is done in one of two ways: through the purchase of neighboring lots from the city or other parties or, when it is not possible to purchase the lots, by appropriating without purchase (Amborst, D'Oca, & Theodore, 2006). However, when owners illegally appropriate lots due to the difficulty of administratively acquiring clear title, they are reluctant to invest in infrastructure or improvements on said lots. This illicit use of neighboring vacant lots thus leaves potential tax revenues on the table for cities in desperate need of funds.

Hollander notes that in neighborhoods which have a low rate of home-ownership and/or a lack of strong community organizing, there is evidence of a similar reluctance or inability to take on care for vacated neighboring lots (Hollander J. B., 2010). Terry Schwarz, of the Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio, notes that while many cities will give or sell a single vacant and abandoned lot to a neighbor, that one lot is the limit. Schwarz suggests that engaging neighbors with multiple lots, bringing total parcel size up into the ¼ or even ½ acre range, might interest property buyers who never thought they could get such sizable parcels in the inner city and create a heretofore non-existing land product (Axel-Lute, 2007).

3.5.3.3.3 Clusters: Urban Islands

A third type of urban pattern which might result from the de-densification of cities is that of "urban islands." These are described as *cities within cities*, "areas of dense, urban development concentrated at key nodes within the existing urban footprint, determined to be the most viable remaining areas of depopulating cities" (Hollander J. B., Pallagst, Schwarz, & Popper, 2009, p. 23). This approach to urban

transformation remains theoretical, based on Unger's 1977 Urban Archipelago design idea for a then shrinking West Berlin (Cepl, 2006; Hertweck & Marot, 2013).

While the other de-densification alternatives take place as the result of the natural depopulation of a neighborhood, the creation of urban islands is more intentional. New Suburbanism and blotting require very little action from a city government, beyond the zoning and legal framework for purchasing or caring for nearby lots. In contrast, the creation of urban islands involves political, social, and economic factors that may be beyond the ability of shrinking cities to influence or control. To create urban islands, the area around these urban concentrations would be emptied of buildings and occupants and would, ideally, return to a naturalized condition. Schwarz expects that

> it would be very difficult to implement this vision because growth and decline in a city are inevitably intertwined. In practical terms, determining which parts of a city to re-urbanize and which parts to naturalize would be nearly impossible to achieve, given the underlying political, economic, and social factors that would have to be addressed (Schwarz T. , 2008).

3.6 Discussion

Vacant land in the United States has historically been defined in terms of its usefulness for human occupation or development. These definitions have been challenged recently by alternative conceptions which include ecosystem services, environmental assets and constraints, and animal habitat. These definitions are supported by the gathering of more holistic land-use data, which differentiates vacant land into multiple types of land use, rather than gathering it all under the umbrella of "vacant." There is, however, still no consensus about what the term "vacant" means for planning purposes. As a term that is largely up to the discretion of municipal administrators to define and modify as desired, establishing general planning principles for vacant land will be challenged by this lack of common ground.

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The discrepancy between definitions of vacancy is not a new development tied to recent ecological movements or economic development needs. Research quantifying vacant land in cities dates to the early 1930s. This research shows a continuing trend of variations in the definitions of vacancy used between cities that has made it difficult to determine national trends with any degree of specificity. This research also indicates that vacant land has often been seen as an after-thought in studies of land uses; these earlier studies made clear their pro-growth assumption that vacant land would eventually be filled with productive uses. These decades of growth assumption are yet another indication of the difficulties facing planners and cities who seek to plan in the environment created by shrinkage.

Planners working in shrinking cities have decades of institutional, if not personal, experience as shrinking cities planners to draw upon. As the amount of vacant land increases in shrinking cities, have the institutional knowledge and scope of the vacancy problem contributed to the creation of clear operational definitions of vacant land? If so, are these definitions comparable across cities in a manner that will facilitate not only multi-city research, but inter-city sharing of planning processes and tools? Has vacant land, as a land-use type, increased in importance for planners in these cities? Does the assumption that vacant land will be filled with some productive use still hold, or has vacant land become yet another type of land use that must be planned for, much like residential or commercial uses?

Research on another aspect of vacant lots has highlighted the potential for their existence in a neighborhood to drive disorder, lack of community cohesion, and support negative public health effects. The first relationship, between vacancy, disorder, the perception of disorder, and the resulting impact on community cohesion is one that will be investigated in this thesis as it relates to why and how planners approach the problem of vacant and abandoned lots. Is this relationship understood in shrinking cities? Are the trigger mechanisms clear? Similarly, research demonstrating the public health impacts of vacant lots leads to another set of relationships to investigate in this thesis.

Are planners cognizant of the role that vacant lots can play in these relationships and do they make changes associated with goals specifically related to interrupting these processes? Similarly, are planners evaluating processes or the impacts of proposed changes with disorder, perception of disorder, public health, and community cohesion used as measurements?

Many urban theorists have written on the relationships within the built environment between the street grid, buildings, and interstitial spaces. A question to investigate in this research is how this type of understanding of the integral nature of the urban environment is manifested in planning decisions. Are considerations of building, street, public space interactions taken into account? Is there a way that the sense of how vacant lots interrupt the urban fabric influences planning decisions for these lots? Are planners able to customize planning processes and goals for the various forms of urban structure which exist in a city—are they able to approach one vacant lot in a manner differently from that which they would use for a conglomeration of lots? Are the varying built environments of suburban sprawl, inner-ring suburbs, and the core city (for example) taken into account when planning for the future of these lots? How is data about these varying built environments factored into the decision making process, if it is, and how is the process of vacancy viewed differently as it occurs on these variously situated lands?

Finally, given the three distinct types or approaches to interventions on vacant lots reviewed above, how are planners making the decision about whether to initiate government action, leave interventions up to individuals or groups, or work for some combination? What are the key points in the decision-making process that lead to a decision in favor of one of the above approaches. Similarly, what are the factors that lead to the choice of a specific intervention, once an approach has been selected? Initial review suggests that the types of resources available to a city influences the approach chosen by planners in any given city, while familiarity or experience with specific interventions leads to their choice. Are these the deciding factors, or are there unseen

actors or factors influencing these decisions? This thesis looks to identify these significant points in the decision-making framework used by shrinking cities planners and reveal any previously undetected actors or factors.

CHAPTER 4: ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH

4.0 Introduction

My research question, *How do planners working in the context of shrinking cities frame decisions with regards to the re-use of vacant and abandoned lots?* is answered at two levels of inquiry. The first level is general planning practice, as the question is examined through a survey of professionals representing fifteen cities from the Northeast and Midwest United States. The second level is project implementation. It is examined through a collection of eight interviews with planners who participated in the survey about specific plans, projects, practices, tools, policies, and programs undertaken at the municipal level.

One advantage to conducting a study of this sort is that the utilization of multiple levels of inquiry supports the unique nature of the process in question. As the research question inquires how planners frame decisions, it is useful to have multiple sources, and types of sources, from which to draw answers. The implementation of an open-ended survey gives planners and affiliated personnel the opportunity to use either formal, municipal language to explain the process in use, or to use individual, informal terminology to describe personal actions. On a second level of inquiry, an in-person interview process gives respondents a chance to describe and illustrate their decision-making framework, supported by official and un-official planning documentations, in an interactive and responsive interviewing environment that brings in findings and insights gained from the other levels of inquiry to augment and "texturize" findings.

In both types of research I will be using Carl Steinitz' Framework for Theory (Steinitz, 1990; Steinitz, 1993; Steinitz, 2012) to organize research questions and frame findings in a manner which makes them mutually inter-comparable. In the following chapter, the development, primary uses, criticisms, and modification of this framework are reviewed in order to place the use of the framework within the context of current land-use research.

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4.1 Carl Steinitz' Framework for Theory and Planning

Within each level of inquiry, planning and planning-support activities are mapped and qualified with the aid of Carl Steinitz' "Framework for Theory Applicable to the Education of Landscape Architects (and other Environmental Design Professionals)" (Steinitz, 1990; Steinitz, 1993; Steinitz, 2002; Steinitz, 2012). Steinitz was educated as an architect and earned his doctorate in planning at MIT under Kevin Lynch. His academic career was spent at the Harvard Graduate School of Design where he taught in the core curriculum of the Master in Landscape Architecture program and different interdisciplinary advanced studios and seminars.

This inherently naturalistic framework was developed through Steinitz' years teaching landscape planning concepts and GIS techniques and has been frequently cited in papers related to planning and design pedagogy, among a range of subject fields (Stiles, 1994; Gazvoda, 2002; Marusic, 2002). Steinitz references Rapoport's distinction between theories, models, and frameworks as a way of explaining what his construction is, and what it is not. Rapoport claimed (as reported in Riley, 1990), that "a theory explains, a model predicts, and a framework organizes. A framework can be judged on its reasonableness and its utility, but claims no exclusivity vis-à-vis other frameworks" (Riley, 1990).

Steinitz asserts "there is an overwhelming (and perhaps necessary) structural similarity among the questions asked by and of landscape planners and other environmental design professionals" (Steinitz, 1993, p. 42). One of these similar questions sets is Lynch's description of how decision-making by "significant actor[s], public or private" occurs in large urban settlements (1981, p. 42). Lynch suggested that these decision efforts have

> typical features. The first question is: "What is the problem?" The consciousness of a problem is always an integrated perception, however vague, that is simultaneously an image of the situation and its constraints, of the goals to be achieved, of who the clients are, and what kinds of resources and solutions are possible. Problems do not exist without some inkling of all of these features,

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and the decision process is no more than a progressive clarification of this set, until a firm basis for action is found… (1981, p. 42)

Cognates of Steinitz' model steps are found in Lynch's description of the decision making process, as is the notion of methodologically identifying these steps in an iterative manner. Steinitz' further development of this "decision effort" involves progressing in a predetermined manner through these models.

Steinitz' segmentation of the process echoes that of Dyckman, who, in a discussion of planning and decision theory, suggested three distinguishable phases of decision. Dyckman saw decision-making in planning as requiring a synthesis of the rational planning *normative* model with objective, *behavioralist* methods "dealing with the action context and the location of the actor in the system of action" (1961, p. 335). These "synthetic" methods include three

distinguishable phases of decision: intelligence, design, and choice. In the words of Simon, these are 'processes for scanning the environment to see what matters require decision, processes for developing and examining possible courses of action, and processes for choosing among courses of action'. In any given action sequence, these phases may be intermingled" (Dyckman, 1961, p. 336; Simon H. A., 1955).

Steinitz' models of Representation and Process, Evaluation and Change, and Impact and Decision can be seen as loose representations of Dyckman's three "distinguishable phases".

The promotion of similar mental frameworks by planners as different as Lynch, working in human perception and urban design, and Dyckman, at the beginning of his career when he wrote on decision-making but later a specialist in international planning, suggests that there is widely-based support for the use of this framework to investigate the research question herein posed.

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4.1.1   EVOLUTION OF FRAMEWORK

Steinitz initially published the framework in a 1990 *Landscape Journal* article, proposing that "the framework can be the basis of a strategy of professional education" (p. 136). The framework, shown in Figure 4.1, consists of six distinct types of questions that are each answered by a model of understanding. Each question-answer pair is thus "considered a *level of inquiry* relating to a *theory-driven modeling type*" (Steinitz, 1990, p. 136) (emphasis in original).

Figure 4.1: Steinitz Framework
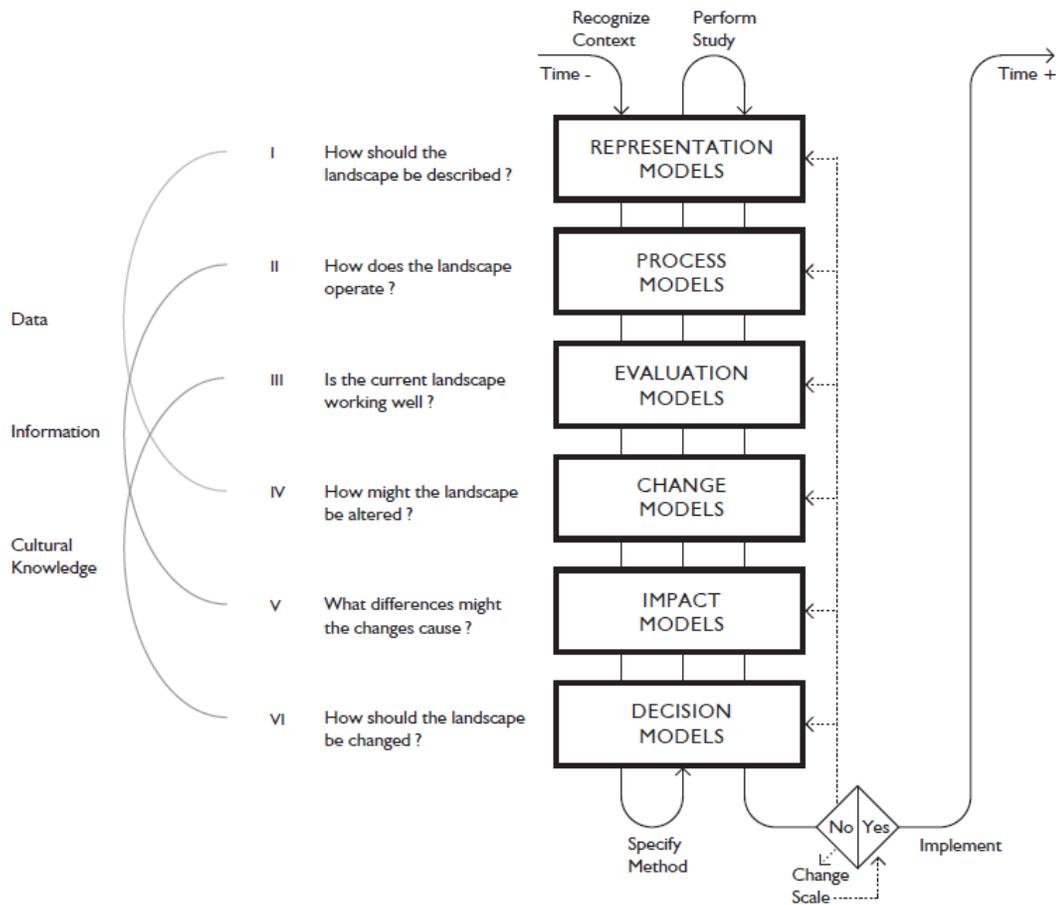
Source: (Steinitz, 1990; Steinitz, et al., 2003)

Each of the six models is related to the models directly adjacent to it, as shown in Figure 4.1. Steinitz illustrated these relationships by describing how one would move "in reverse order" through the framework, "with each level defining its necessary contributing products from the models next above in the framework" (2002, p. 234).

> VI. Decision – To be able to decide to propose to make a change (or not), one needs to know how to compare alternatives.

> V. Impact – To be able to compare alternatives, one needs to predict their impacts from having simulated changes.

> IV. Change – To be able to simulate change, one needs to specify (or design) the changes to be simulated.

> III. Evaluation – To be able to specify potential changes (if any), one needs to evaluate the current conditions.

> II. Process – To be able to evaluate the landscape, one needs to understand how it works.

> I. Representation – To understand how it works, one needs representational schema to describe it (Steinitz, 2002, p. 234).

Achieving operational alignment among the six models takes considerable effort and it is unlikely that the process of reconciling the models with each other can be done with a strictly linear approach. While acknowledging this challenge, Steinitz suggests that, in the abstract, the questions are asked and answered three times in a landscape design project. With reference to the diagram of the framework, in a first round, the models are defined from top (representation) to bottom (decision) toward the goal of scoping the task at hand and considering why a project might be undertaken. In a second round, the models are defined from bottom (decision) to top (representation) toward specifying the design of the process and considering how a project might be executed. In Steinitz's writings, the second round is given emphasized importance as it specifies the data, information, and knowledge that must be known or

acquired (Shearer, 2012). In a third round, the models are again defined from top to bottom as the plan is carried out.

When the framework is used for a design study, at the end of a forward pass through the steps, either a yes or no decision is made. If the decision is yes, then the next step is to move through a second and third pass to define method and perform the study/implement the process. If the decision is no, then there is a need to enter into a backward feedback loop, altering a previous level. Steinitz notes that "the first three – representation, process, and evaluation models – are rarely altered, presumably because a profession knows its substance" although the feedback could originate at any level (1990, p. 138). Feedbacks would occur until a yes decision has been made. He later altered this expectation, considering that a "contingent yes" decision could also result, which would "trigger a shift in the scale, size or time of the study… [and] again proceed through the six levels of the framework" until a unqualified yes decision can be made (Steinitz, 1993, p. 44). Steinitz also altered what counts as a yes, or implementable decision, in this 1993 version of the framework, suggesting that in some cases "a *do not build* conclusion can be regarded as a positive decision" (1993, p. 44) (emphasis in original).

In a 1996 alternative futures study of the Camp Pendleton region in California, the framework was again altered. The classification of three distinct levels of epistemology (data, information, and cultural knowledge) was integrated into the model (at left in Figure 4.1) (Steinitz, et al., 1996). This classification recognizes the different sources of knowledge upon which each model depends. Data-driven models are based in fact, with judgment restricted to the recognition of relevant and non-relevant facts. Information-driven models rely to a greater extent upon expert recognition of environmental and social processes that impact upon a given site or situation. Cultural Knowledge-driven models rely on the normative judgment of experts and local actors who are able to distinguish between working and nonworking process and desired and undesired outcomes.

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The framework as used at this time also saw the development of an altered Change Model with the recognition that "at least two important types of change should be considered: those brought about by current trends and those caused by the implementation of purposeful change via actions such as plans, investments, and regulations" (Steinitz, et al., 1996, p. 8)

Another alteration Steinitz made to the framework emerged in his 2012 *A Framework for Geodesign: Changing Geography by Design*. When using the framework for a geodesign project, Steinitz includes a region's stakeholders as the ultimate arbiters; they have the responsibility for making yes, no, or maybe (a term used in place of a contingent yet in this version of the framework) decisions. Any yes decision reached by a team of geodesigners results in the "study or proposed framework [being presented] to the stakeholders for their review towards implementation and action" (Steinitz, 2012, p. 32).

As shown, the framework can be used for a wide range of purposes, including design projects at a range of geographical and time scales, research projects in a number of fields, and as an organizing framework for presenting information in a systematic, methodological manner. In his original 1990 article, Steinitz demonstrated this flexibility and general applicability by using it to explore three dissimilar projects: a planning-scale study for an infrastructure project in a U.S. National Park, the history of the design of a large urban park, and a hypothetical small-scale international garden design (Steinitz, 1990). Since then, he has used it in further discussions of landscape architecture and planning practice and education (Steinitz, 1993; Steinitz, 1995), design and data visualization (Steinitz, 1992; Steinitz, 1995; Steinitz, 2010), and ecological principles (Steinitz, 2001; Steinitz, 2002). Steinitz has also used the framework in the process of a number of alternative futures studies (Steinitz, et al., 1996; Steinitz & McDowell, 2001; Steinitz, et al., 2003), an urban design study (Steinitz, Figueroa, & Castorena, 2010), and, most recently, in a foundational work in the emerging field of geodesign (Steinitz, 2012).

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4.1.2 OUTSIDE USE OF STEINITZ' FRAMEWORK

Since its first publication, over ninety journal articles, books, book chapters, and academic theses or dissertations have been written with reference to it. Most of these articles, studies, and research projects have evolved out of the work of academics associated with both Harvard University and Prof. Steinitz. These writings are primarily aligned along two areas of interest: design and planning studies and the environmental management disciplines. Within these two areas, the range of "keywords" used to describe the subject matter of articles that cite the framework range from agri-environmental services and biodiversity to experiential landscapes, decision making, and pedagogy. The diversity of subjects that make use of the framework for reference, organization, or theoretical support, is demonstrated in Table 4.1.

Of the 480-plus individual instances of keywords used to describe these 90-plus publications, it is possible to categorize them into eight larger subject categories, as shown in Figure 4.2. Breaking down the subject categories by frequency allows us to know which types of articles have most frequently referred to the Steinitz Framework. These are articles on environmental and natural resource planning topics, articles on ecology related subjects, and articles on technology, systems, and processes. Less frequent use of the Steinitz Framework has been found in articles on landscape studies, design education, practice and research, and those on the subject of scenario studies or alternative futures. The least frequent types of articles published that make reference to or use of the framework are those in the areas of planning education, practice, and research and spatial analysis.

Table 4.1: Subject Matter of Articles, Books, and Academic papers using or referencing the Steinitz Framework

Ecology Related Subjects	**Design Education, Practice, and Research**	**Planning Practice, Education, and Research**
Air Quality	Architecture	Brownfields
Biodiversity	Design Disciplines	Conflicting Uses
Climate Change	Design Education	Growth Management
Conservation Ecology	Design Process	Institutions
Ecological Knowledge	Design Related Research	Long Term Planning
Ecological Processes	Education	Open Space Planning
Ecological Restoration	Landscape Architecture	Planning
Ecology Disciplines	Pedagogy	Planning Practice
Ecosystem Management	Theory	Planning Process
Ecosystem Planning		Planning Strategies
Ecosystem Services	**Scenario Studies and Alternative Futures**	Professional Practice
Environmental Vulnerability	Scenario Analysis	Public Participation/ Participatory Methods
Habitat Mapping	Scenario Planning	Redevelopment and Reuse
Human Environment Interactions	Scenario Studies	
Landscape Ecology	Security	**Environmental/Natural Resource Planning Topics**
Resource Management		Agricultural Conservation
Restoration	**Spatial Analysis**	Agricultural Landscapes
Riparian Forest Reclamation	Spatial Models	Agri-Environmental Services
Riparian Management	Spatial Organization	Conservation Easements
Surface Hydrology		Conservation Planning
Urban Ecology	**Technology, Systems, and Processes**	Environmental Conservation
Watershed Analysis	Adaptive Management	Environmental Planning
	Collaborative Research	Greenways
Landscape Studies	Data Visualization	Land Management
Cultural Landscapes	Decision Making/ Decision Support	Land Use
Experiential Landscape	GeoDesign	Land Use Planning
Landscape Analysis	GIS	Natural Resources Management
Landscape Change	Information System Design	Regional Planning
Landscape Design	Interdisciplinary Studies/ Interdisciplinarity	Sustainability
Landscape Evaluation	Metrics/ Measurement Tools	
Landscape Modelling	Modelling	
Landscape Planning	Process Modeling	
Landscape Research	Representational Choices	
Landscape Values	Systems Assessment	
Landscape Visualisation	Technology	
Visual Preferences	Uncertainty	

Source: Author

Scenario studies and alternative futures have been one of the main, if not the primary use, of the framework by Steinitz, his colleagues at Harvard, and academics worldwide. Interestingly however, articles introducing the framework have more frequently referenced a number of subject areas, ranging from design education and landscape studies to natural resources and ecologically oriented topics (Ahern, 1994; Steinitz, et al., 1996; Mouat, Kiester, & Baker, 1998; Ahern, 1999; Hulse, Eilers, Freemark, Hummon, & White, 2000; Hulse & Gregory, 2001; Musacchio & Coulson,

2001) (Steinitz & McDowell, 2001; Kepner, Edmonds, & Watts, 2002; Steinitz, et al., 2003; Baker, et al., 2004; Hulse, Branscomb, & Payne, 2004; Kepner, Semmens, Bassett, Mouat, & Goodrich, 2004; Davis, Costello, & Stoms, 2006) (Mouat, Bassett, & Lancaster, 2006; Bryan, Crossman, & King, 2008; Hulse D. , Branscomb, Enright, & Bolte, 2009; Kahyaoglu-Koracin, Bassett, Mouat, & Gertler, 2009; Shearer, et al., 2009; Mahmoud, et al., 2009; Albert, 2010) (Bohnet, 2010; Ulrich, 2010; Albert, Zimmermann, Knieling, & Haaren, 2012; Morley, et al., 2012).

Figure 4.2: Subject Category Frequency

Source: Author

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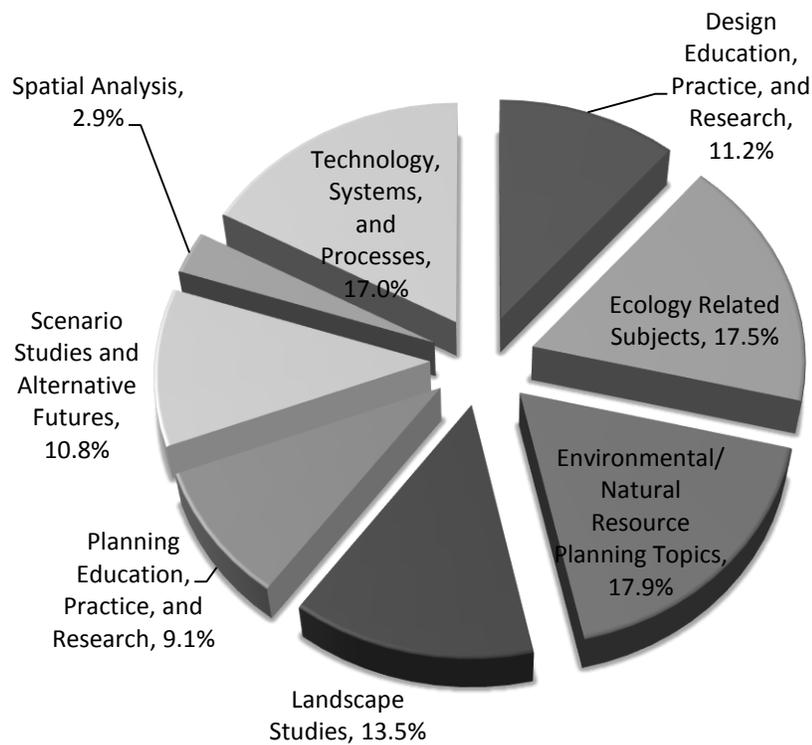
The most frequently cited keywords associated with the Steinitz Framework are those associated with environmental planning and ecological uses, as a number of articles cite the Steinitz Framework (Steinitz, 1990), McHarg's *Design with Nature* (McHarg, 1969), and, to a lesser degree, Steiner's Ecological Planning Model (Steiner, 1991) as the three foundational frameworks designed for systematic investigation into landscape change processes. According to articles in these environmental areas, the particular strength of the Steinitz Framework is its feedback loops and an iterative approach. It has been called one of the "fundamental ecologically-based planning theories and methodologies of the 20th century" (Leitao & Ahern, 2002, p. 69). Similarly, the large number of articles with technology, systems, and processes related keywords is also supported by the framework's ability to provide a methodological approach for gathering data, processing information, and implementing change with the input of actors from a host of disciplines.

4.1.3 USE OVER TIME

While the frequency of keyword use informs about the overall use of the Steinitz Framework during the 1992-2013 time period, looking at how frequently each type of subject has been written about across the entire period of time demonstrates the trends in fields using the framework during this time.

Figure 4.3: Subject Category Appearance 1992 – 2013: The Environmental
Disciplines
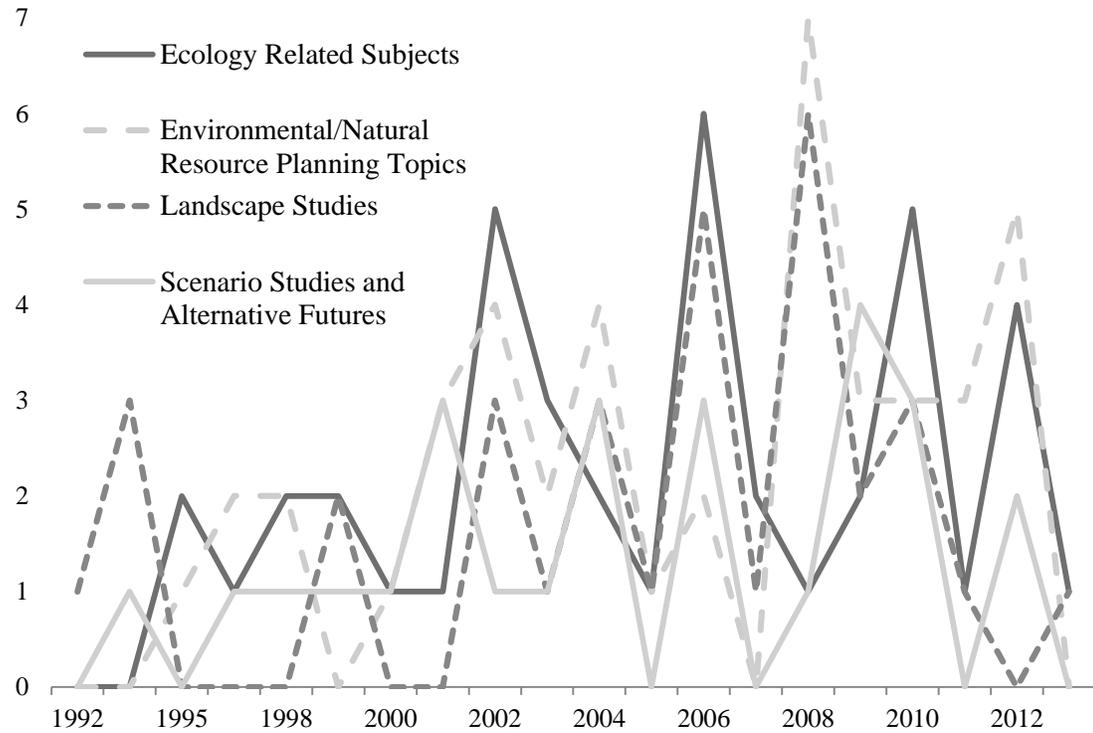
Source: Author

Figure 4.3 illustrates the number of articles with environmentally related
keywords that referenced or used the Steinitz Framework during the 1992-2013 time
period. While articles that were related to landscape studies, such as landscape
planning, analysis, and modeling, were the first to make significant use of the
framework, its strength in the environmental fields was quickly recognized and adopted
for use by academics in these fields. Figure 4.3 also shows the way in which
environmental and ecological factors were also paired with, or overlaid upon, other
subjects, such as landscape or scenario studies. This observation shows the spikes in
other environmentally-related subjects. This figure reflects the recognized strength of
the Steinitz Framework for environmental and ecological applications, such as

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environmentally related scenario studies or ecologically situated landscape studies, for example.

Figure 4.4: Subject Category Appearance 1992 – 2013: Design and Planning Studies
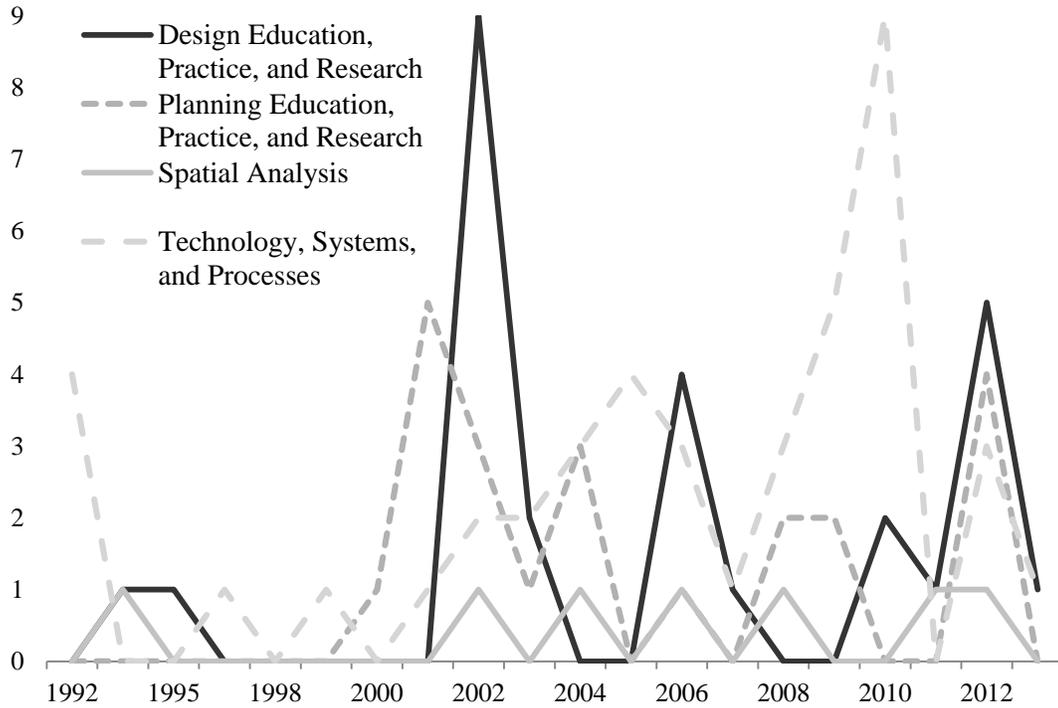
Source: Author

The figure illustrating trends over time in keyword-related subjects publishing in design and planning studies shows a different story from that of the environmental disciplines. Figure 4.4 can be seen as reflecting multiple notable publishing peaks as well as two smaller long-term trends. The subjects of design education, practice, and research and technology, systems, and processes both saw years in which a number of articles using the Steinitz Framework were written. 2002 saw a flood of publishing of articles on the design disciplines that used the Steinitz Framework, including Steinitz' own *On Teaching Ecological Principles to Planners*. Similarly, 2010 saw a number of articles on technology that referenced the Steinitz Framework, again including an

article by Steinitz *Landscape Architecture into the 21ˢᵗ Century – Methods for Digital Techniques.* It is possible that these spikes in keyword mentions could reflect a conference on a related topic or the publication of a subject-related book. Conversely, they could simply represent moments in disciplines when certain subjects become commonly spoken on and written about. The other two keyword-related subjects represented in this chart, planning education, practice, and research and spatial analysis are the two least often occurring of those that mentioned the Steinitz Framework. While planning studies did show small spikes in interest in 2001, 2012, and to a lesser degree in 2004, spatial analysis has shown steady, minimal mention of the framework in published writing.

4.1.4 FRAMEWORK APPLICATIONS

As noted, the Steinitz Framework has been referenced, mentioned, or used in ninety-plus articles, books, and academic papers since its initial publication in 1990. In two-thirds of these papers, the framework was either simply mentioned or referenced for its contribution to the paper's topic area. For the authors of these papers, it is clear that within their individual fields of expertise, the Steinitz Framework is considered a well-regarded source of theory and organization.

In the remaining papers, the framework is substantively used, sometimes in whole and sometimes in part as individual models. Covering the same fields mentioned above, the framework is mainly used in three different ways: to prepare and conduct a land-use change or planning project, to take-advantage of the framework's question-based process to organize an investigation into a landscape/land-use related subject, and for inclusion as one individual part of a larger framework. Within these uses, individual authors and groups of authors have taken advantage of the framework's customizability to create modifications within individual models, to use models independently of the entire framework as necessary, and to make modifications to the entire framework in conjunction with perceived weaknesses in the framework which have been exposed through years of use and experience. While the Steinitz Framework

seems to be a sufficiently general framework that is has been adopted for use by academics and practitioners in a host of disciplines, the recognition of its strength and widespread support has led to modifications, additions, and subtractions occurring within disciplines as it is customized for particular uses.

4.1.4.1 Application: Entire Framework

Since 1990, seventeen publications have used the Steinitz Framework for the purpose of applying the entire framework to a research question. Among the first of these were two studies in urban planning which applied the framework to the problem of brownfield redevelopment. While applications within urban planning are not very common, the framework's recognized ability as an "ABC model," incorporating abiotic, biotic, and cultural goals (Ahern, 2006), and strength in supporting decision-making influenced the choice of the framework for use by both authors (Kirkwood, 2001; Ekman, 2004). More detailed discussion of the framework's use in planning applications is given below.

Other articles, books, and papers which used the framework represented a wide range of subject matters, including: research into developing participatory geographic decision support (Nyerges & Jankowski, 2004), a study comparing the steps in a designer's modeling process to a scientist's (Ervin, 2006), inclusion in a study developing a social-ecological framework for sustainable landscape planning (Bohnet, 2010), use to systematically differentiate between the concepts of "D" design and "d" design (Goodchild, 2010), the development of a greenspace conservation planning framework (Kato, 2010), a study directly aimed at increasing social learning within the context of scenario-based landscape planning (Albert, Zimmermann, Knieling, & Haaren, 2012), and inclusion of the framework into a larger multi-scale planning process for riparian buffer planning in agricultural landscapes (Bentrup, Dosskey, Wells, & Schoeneberger, 2012).

Some of these authors included the framework within a larger, custom-designed process to take advantage of the framework's "specific but flexible guidance for

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analyzing resources and developing plans" (Bentrup, Dosskey, Wells, & Schoeneberger, 2012, p. 101), its ability to "introduce 'theory' (broadly defined) and to link theory more effectively with method in any project circumstance," (Kato, 2010, p. 130) the iterative nature of the process, which catches overlooked aspects (Nyerges & Jankowski, 2004), and the possibility of refining the incremental process at "multiple scales of analysis" (Davis, Costello, & Stoms, 2006, p. 23).

A number of authors also investigated the structure of the Steinitz Framework itself, while simultaneously applying it to their own research projects (Stiles, 1994; Johnson, et al., 2002; Kepner, Edmonds, & Watts, 2002; Nyerges & Jankowski, 2010; Stremke, VanKann, & Koh, 2012). For example, Stiles, an early adopter of the framework, looking into the relationship between landscape planning and landscape design, discerned that by applying the framework to the questions which landscape theory needs to be able to answer, the six individual models could be combined into three. These three are created by combining two individual models into larger categories: resource description (Representation and Process), the initiation of change (Evaluation and Change), and the evaluation of the changed landscape (Impact and Decision). Each combination leads to questions for theory that are directly related to three perceived definitions of the landscape professions:

- Which models for resource description? - Landscape Resources (both cultural and natural);
- Which Methods for Effecting Change? - Conservation and Enhancement; and
- Which Principles for the Evaluation of Resource/Change? - Benefits for Current and Future Generations (Stiles, 1994).

In this way, Stiles was able to use the framework to create overarching categories that could be used to "map" the questions of landscape theory onto the definitions of the landscape professions, suggesting the existence of a common theoretical base for landscape planning and landscape design. Thus the use of the framework has helped to identify theory needs, and the questions asked to develop theory, associated with multiple definitions of the landscape professions.

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Whether the framework was included in a larger process or used by itself, the authors of these seventeen publications utilized the entire process to organize knowledge across multiple fields, supporting Steinitz' original assertion that "despite individual differences and some collective-professional differences in emphasis, there is an overwhelming and necessary structural similarity among the questions asked by and of landscape architects and other environmental design professionals" (Steinitz, 1990, p. 136).

4.1.4.2 Application: Individual Models

Another eight publications used the Steinitz Framework for the value of both the framework's overall organizational and analytical method as well as the ability of one or more individual models to further investigate a research topic. One example represents a common focus of studies that spotlight the "Change" Model. Using a scenario-based approach to regional land-use planning, Kepner et al. utilized the overall framework to assess spatial and temporal land-use changes in a river basin spanning the U.S.–Mexico border. To use the framework for scenario analysis, the study's authors specifically focused in on the Representation, Change, and Decision Models, and modified, or perhaps clarified, the Change Model to differentiate change caused by current projected trends (termed "Projection models") from change caused by designed action (termed "Intervention models") (Kepner, Edmonds, & Watts, 2002). This differentiation was also made in a number of other papers (Stremke, Neven, & Boekel, 2011; Stremke, VanKann, & Koh, 2012) although its first appearance was in a 1996 report by Steinitz et al. on alternative futures for the Camp Pendleton, indicating that it was perhaps an oversight or assumed differentiation that had not been clearly indicated in the original 1990 article (Steinitz, et al., 1996).

There were also two studies that focused on individual models within the framework. For the authors of these two works, the Steinitz Framework was employed less as a systematic organization tool, and more for its ability to identify distinct, discrete stages or phases that are represented by theoretical model types and applicable

to research questions. One of these, a doctoral research proposal from The Netherlands into the application of "park cities" as viable type of city extension form, specifically focused on Representation and Process Models. The researcher used these models to "translate the desirability of existing park cities… into spatial and functional principles," establishing both what these cities are, and how they work for subsequent research purposes (Smit, 2002, p. 31).

4.1.5 CHANGES AND MODIFICATIONS TO FRAMEWORK

A number of the studies using the Steinitz Framework have made modifications to the process, either making modifications to individual models, adding or deleting models from the framework, or combining the framework with other landscape planning and analysis processes to create larger, meta-frameworks (Stiles, 1994; Kepner, Edmonds, & Watts, 2002; Bentrup, Schoeneberger, Dosskey, & Wells, 2003; Davis, Costello, & Stoms, 2006; Baker, et al., 2007; Jankowski & Nyerges, 2008; Kato & Ahern, 2008; Ulrich, 2010) (Albert, Zimmermann, Knieling, & Haaren, 2012). An example of modifications within models was implemented by the authors of a book describing how GIS can guide decision making about complex community and environmental questions. They modified the Representation Model, splitting it into two parts: problem description, including goals, objectives, and targets; and database development (Nyerges & Jankowski, 2010).

One of the most common modifications to the framework is the combination of Representation and Process Models into one combined model (Johnson, et al., 2002; Machado, Stoms, & Davis, 2003; Baker, et al., 2007). In a 2010 University of Oregon thesis written on restoring Oak habitats in Oregon's Willamette Valley, the author used a five-step modified Steinitz Framework to both develop the model process used to build and run restoration scenarios and to organize the Modeling Methods chapter of the document (Ulrich). Combining Representation and Process Model questions into "What is the Current Condition of the Landscape" question, the author truncated the framework with the recognition that it is often difficult to separate data and process in

natural systems (Ulrich, 2010). Similarly, in a study of the development of riparian buffer planning process, the authors eliminated the Process Model, asking process-level questions in the Representation (How should the riparian landscape be described) and Evaluation (Is the riparian landscape functioning well?) models in a shortened framework (Bentrup, Schoeneberger, Dosskey, & Wells, 2003).

Another modification made in the use of the framework occurred in a 2006 article on systematic planning for biodiversity conservation. This project was centered around changing the biodiversity conservation planning process from determining minimum acceptable requirements to setting goals, assessing future scenarios, and allocating funds to alter future scenarios to achieve maximum biodiversity, all while supporting collaborative processes and negotiation. The authors used individual models from the Steinitz Framework, but rearranged them to fit the exercise they were conducting in the creation of "algebraic functions to measure the conservation value of a planning site with respect to each of these five objectives" (Davis, Costello, & Stoms, 2006, p. 33):

- What resources do we seek to conserve in the planning region, and what are our goals for those resources?
- What is the current extent and condition of those resources?
- What are the key environmental and social drivers affecting resource extent and condition?
- How are resource extent and condition likely to change in the future?
- What conservation tactics are available for different places and conservation concerns? (Davis, Costello, & Stoms, 2006)

The authors modified the framework to be able to fit the problems of biodiversity conservation planning, but worked within the structure of the Steinitz Framework to create a model that is adaptable, building upon the strengths of "generality, explicitness, flexibility for exploring alternative goals and objectives, consideration of threats and costs as well as biodiversity values, and the use of a formal cost-effectiveness analysis for comparing alternative conservation actions" which are

possible through a systematic framework application (Davis, Costello, & Stoms, 2006, p. 23).

Another type of modification that has occurred is the addition of steps or phases to the framework. A 2012 article detailing an experiment to investigate the possibility of creating social learning outcomes through scenario-based landscape planning projects presents a Steinitz Framework with multiple steps added to the process in response to its focus on social learning facilitation (Albert, Zimmermann, Knieling, & Haaren). An introductory step of "Framing" was added to the beginning of the framework, which entailed asking the question "What are the focal issue, scope, and participants?" while a step of "Elaboration and Discussion" was added immediately before the Decision Model, asking "What do the findings mean for decision-making?" (Albert, Zimmermann, Knieling, & Haaren, 2012, p. 351). The authors found that adding steps directly targeted at social learning and "amending the objective of landscape planning to provide relevant information for decision support with the goal of effectively facilitating social learning processes thus presents an important opportunity for enhancing the knowledge to action transfer," which could be adopted into a multitude of fields through implementation of a modified Steinitz Framework (Albert, Zimmermann, Knieling, & Haaren, 2012, p. 359).

A similar modification is suggested in a 2003 Australian article reviewing innovative farmer-initiated agricultural systems (Perkins, Gleeson, & Keating, 2003). The authors indicate that a framework to guide future innovation would be useful, and suggest the use of the Steinitz Framework to do so. However, they note that in the case of farming systems, it is important to add an initial question of "What do we want from the landscape" to gauge values and community expectations and to provide a starting point for the framework. The authors suggest that beginning the design process with this simple question would enhance the framework's applicability as "the questions asked in the Steinitz Framework would then be answered in the context of community aims and expectations and the process used to achieve those aims," grounding the

application in the values of the location where it is to be applied (Perkins, Gleeson, & Keating, 2003, p. 36).

4.1.6 CRITICISMS OF FRAMEWORK

In the years since publication, a subset of the books, book chapters, and articles utilizing the Steinitz Framework have made modifications to the framework in response to perceived weaknesses (Johnson, et al., 2002; Machado, Stoms, & Davis, 2003; Ekman, 2004; Nyerges & Jankowski, 2004; Mouat, Bassett, & Lancaster, 2006; Nyerges & Jankowski, 2010; Stremke, VanKann, & Koh, 2012). A 2002 book chapter on facilitating collaboration between designers and ecologists uses a modified version of the framework to create a "synthetic conceptual framework that begins to encompass both disciplines" (Johnson, et al., 2002, p. 310). Johnson et al., interested in educating students of design and ecology, consider that "dialogue and collaboration between the two disciplines holds the potential for shared learning that could reshape how we design and manage landscapes" (2002, p. 305). To create this framework for dialogue, the authors suggest a question-based framework like Steinitz'. While acknowledging the framework's innate ability to shift emphasis from "the concepts themselves to how to harness them for problem-solving," the authors note that neither Steinitz' nor two other question-based frameworks, the Watershed Analysis Framework (Montgomery, Grant, & Sullivan, 1995) and Landscape Research Assessment (Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project Team, 1996), are "explicitly ecological or cultural" (Johnson, et al., 2002, p. 309). They correct this perceived weakness in all three models, the authors combine them into one master framework which is then targeted for application through the inclusion of "more specific concepts that may provide guidelines or protocols for design and planning" (Johnson, et al., 2002, p. 312) (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Johnson et al. Modified Steinitz Model

- **How Does the Landscape Work?**
  - Umbrella Concepts
  - Priorities in Time and Space

- **Is the Current Landscape Working Well?**
  - Landscape Health and Integrity
  - Landscape Metrics

- **How Might the Landscape Change or be Changed?**
  - Imagining and Proposing Change
  - Managing Change

- **What Impacts Might Result from Implementing a Design or Plan?**
  - Types and Propagation of Effects
  - Key Classes of Effects and System Responses
  - Sources of Uncertainty

- **How Should Decisions be Made?**
  - Forums and Frameworks
  - Adapting to Uncertainty

Adapted from: (Johnson, et al., 2002)

A similar addition is made to the framework in a 2012 article focused on the emerging methodological framework for long-term regional design. This article suggests that the Change Model needs to be portioned into three types of change: change due to current projected trends, change due to intention, and change in the possible far future due to external contexts. This is needed because the Steinitz Framework does not have a way to factor in possible far futures, or critical uncertainties, such as "whether globalization will continue and influence land-use patterns in the study region" (Stremke, VanKann, & Koh, 2012, p. 313). The authors insert these external context scenarios in a Change Model that is internally iterative

between projected change, possible far-futures, and designed change, indicating that multiple movements through Change may need to occur before an Impact can be determined (See Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: Stremke et al. Modified Steinitz Model
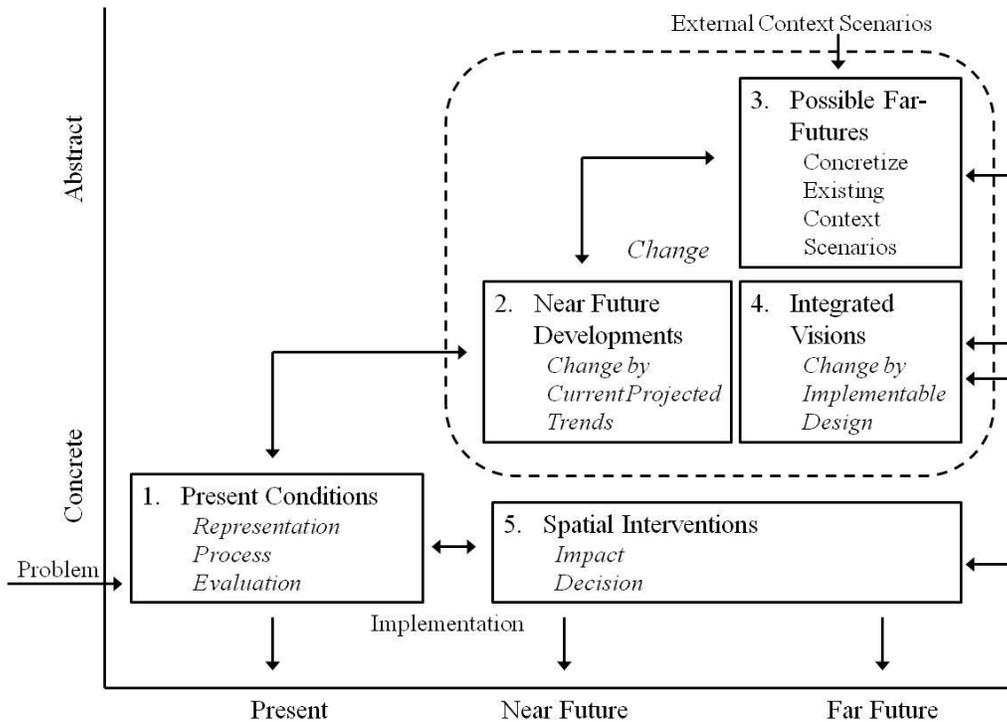
Adapted from: (Stremke, VanKann, & Koh, 2012)[4]

Both of the above-noted modifications to the Steinitz Framework come in the context of a specific type of planning research project or exploration.

4.1.7   USE IN URBAN PLANNING APPLICATIONS
To the author's knowledge, its published use in urban planning is limited to three projects. First, Kirkwood, a colleague of Steinitz at Harvard's Graduate School

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[4] Italicized words in model refer to Steinitz Model types with Change split into two types: change due to current trends and change due to implemented design.

of Design, uses the Steinitz Framework, through the fifth level, Impact Models, to organize and structure issues associated with the underdevelopment of brownfields sites for residential housing (See Figure 4.7). Kirkwood does not use Decision Models as it "is beyond the scope of this paper" (2001, p. 12)

Figure 4.7: Kirkwood's Brownfields Development Model compared to Steinitz Model

How should the state of brownfields development be described?	Representation Models Representational schemata to describe current state
How do brownfield developments operate?	Process Models How it works (the situation)
Are the current brownfield developments functioning well?	Evaluation Models How well the current situation is performing
How might brownfield development be altered?	Change Models What change to simulate
What predictable differences might the changes cause?	Impact Models Comparative impacts from simulations
How should brownfields development be changed?	Decision Models How to evaluate alternatives

Adapted from: (Kirkwood, 2001) (Steinitz, 1990)

In this instance, the value of the framework is that it gives structure to redevelopment questions, enables the associated issues to be understood in relationship to one another, and locates brownfields within the broader pattern of growth and economic competitiveness in the national debate. Kirkwood includes within each model a number of sub-questions associated with each particular model type. For instance, as a Change Model question, Kirkwood asks "How might brownfield development be altered?" and then asks further questions, including "What would occur if no changes were made? How would brownfields development evolve?" (2001, p. 16). The flexibility of the framework enables it to be customized for each application—here it serves as a general framework used to organize issues related to brownfields that were identified by national conference attendees. It could be further

modified to include questions particular to each site, or modified at a more basic level to include issues particular to a foreign location.

The second previous instance of use in an urban planning context comes from Ekman, who incorporated Steinitz' Framework as one piece of a greater redevelopment process framework that he proposed using to derive a project method for reclaiming postindustrial landscapes. (See Figure 4.8)

Figure 4.8: Ekman's Redevelopment Process Framework for Reclaiming Postindustrial Landscapes
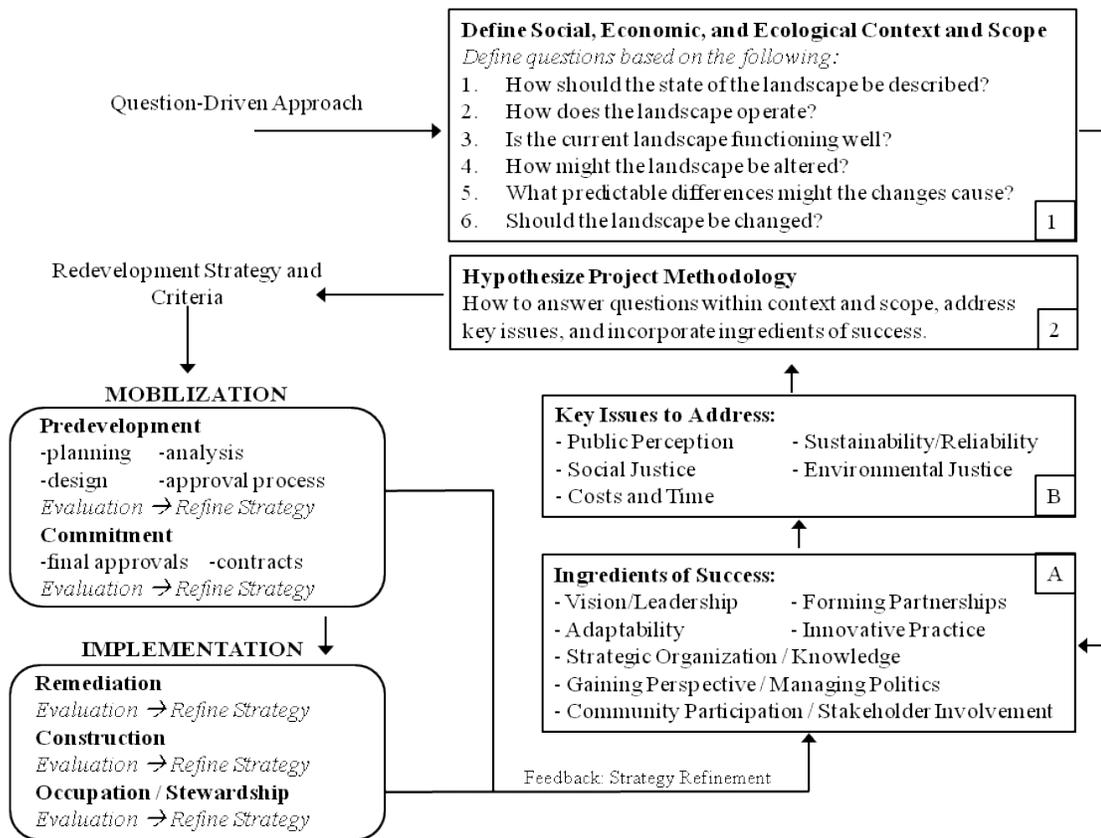
Adapted from: (Ekman, 2004)

Influenced by Kirkwood's use of the framework in the area of brownfields redevelopment, Ekman suggested the systematic use of the framework prior to initiating any postindustrial reclamation project. His adaptation of the framework would focus the questions on parameters of sustainability, investigating social, economic, and ecological parameters at each model level. Ekman's hope was to design a "question-driven approach [which] functions through inquiry in order to understand a situation and from there build up an appropriate project methodology, which accommodates the complex and often unique issues presented by the postindustrial landscape" (2004, p. 101).

The third instance is a 2005 alternative futures study by a university consortium of Harvard University and the Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana, Mexico. The two universities, in conjunction with local authorities and social groups, developed a sustainable development strategy for Tepotzotlan, a community located forty kilometers from downtown Mexico City and experiencing development pressures from suburbanization (Figueroa, Steinitz, & Castorena, 2005).

Many of these previous uses of the framework, including the Kirkwood and Ekman uses, have been centered about the framework's ability to support decision making, whether in practice or academic contexts. There are similarities between these two previous planning uses and the use of the Steinitz Framework in *this* research process. Kirkwood used the framework to investigate brownfields, which have substantial similarities to vacant and abandoned lots (and potentially overlap in industrial areas). Both types of land uses struggle with issues of public perception, monetary and time resources, social justice and environmental equity, and the sustainability and replicability of any instituted redevelopment process (Kirkwood, 2001).

Ekman similarly has focused on the restoration or remediation of post-industrial lands, inserting Kirkwood's brownfields-adapted Steinitz Framework into his model as an initial

brainstorming exercise under social, economic, and ecological parameters with respect to the site and site-context relationship [that] will potentially identify issues to further explore and anticipate before they appear unexpectedly as problems during the development process, as well as recognize larger efforts that the project can join with and thus gain momentum and support (Ekman, 2004, p. 103)

In this manner, both Kirkwood, in terms of topic, and Ekman, in terms of method, have applied the Steinitz Framework to a question similar to that being explored in *this* thesis.

While Steinitz' Model was initially formatted to address landscape planning problems, applying it to the various levels of inquiry associated with both planning and design has the potential of leading to increased efficiency of comprehension. This framework has been applied across the multiple research methods of this thesis for two reasons. The first is its comprehensive nature, which will aid in understanding the myriad actions taken in furtherance of each vacant/abandoned lot option. The second is the flexibility with which it can be applied, which will enable the comparison and contrast of findings across disparate research methods.

Generally, Steinitz's framework has been used prospectively and synthetically. Which is to say that it has been used to structure discussions and compose logically consistent options for action in support of planning decisions that are being made in the present time or that will have to be made in the near future. The prospective use of the framework appears to have as an ideal the rational approach to planning, as clarified by Banfield, wherein

- The decision-maker considers all of the alternative (courses of action) open to him…;

- He identifies and evaluates all of the consequences which would follow from the adoption of each alternative…; and

- He selects that alternative the probable consequences of which would be preferable in terms of his most valued ends (Banfield, 1955, p. 314). As reported in (Baum, 1996, p. 127)

Rational planning emerged in the 1960s as a "general societal management process" (Healey, McDougall, & Thomas, 1982). The search for increased rationality had been the driving force through three nineteenth century movements which shaped modern city planning: scientific efficiency, civic beauty, and social equity (Kreuckeberg, 1981; Boyer, 1983; Dalton, 1986). Rational Planning and its desire to professionalize planning through emulation of the scientific method was the logical extension of these movements.

Rational planning has been criticized (Paris, 1982) for its assumption that the means and ends of planning could be separated, as they are the products of two distinct types of rationality: formal (means) and substantive (ends) (Faludi, 1987). The distinction of two types of rationality has also been criticized by Marxists for the way that it "divorces rational planning from the normal political economy concerns of historically real and contextualized situations" (Allmendinger, 2002, p. 63). Other criticisms include the postmodern discussion of the "positivist epistemology which privileges scientific and technical knowledge over an array of equally important alternatives" (Sandercock, 1998) as well as the way that rational planning overlooks the relationship between planning, rationality, and power (Flyvbjerg, 1998; Yiftachel, 1998). Remnants of the rational approach to planning remain in planners' "attitude of technical competence and political neutrality" (Allmendinger, 2002, p. 56), and it remains robust within planning practice, particularly in federal government program reporting requirements (Cullingworth & Caves, 2014) and in Impact Analysis assessments (Allmendinger, 2002).

While there are similarities between the Steinitz Framework and the rational planning method in the way that both pull apart the decision-making process into its constituent parts, the way that it is being used in this research is clearly distinct from

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rational planning's comprehensive, "value-free, emotionally-neutral, [and] abstract" approach (Wilson B. R., 1970) In this dissertation, the framework is being used retrospectively and analytically. That is, it is being used to map ideas, analyses, and evaluations that contributed to decisions that have been made in different cities into a common format that allows for a comparison of reasons and rationales. Its use in this retrospective manner recognizes that despite the inputs of data, information, and cultural knowledge, each model is dependent upon the extensiveness of the model level preceding it for its completeness and quality.

4.2   Application

I investigate the primary research question, *How do planners working in the context of shrinking cities frame decisions with regards to the re-use of vacant and abandoned lots?* by progressing methodically through the six levels of inquiry.

Applying Steinitz' Framework to answer the research question, *How do planners working in the context of shrinking cities frame decisions with regards to the re-use of vacant and abandoned lots?* yields a number of sub-questions that allow for a more nuanced examination of the topic. For example, to illustrate how the model is used in this research, when investigating the following question:

- What are the goals of a given organization (e.g., municipal department, program, or commission; non-governmental organization; public-private partnership) in regards to vacant land?
    - How do these goals align with decisions, definitions, assessments, actions, assumptions, and data from prior model steps?

In an exploratory research project such as this, the framework would be used by starting from the bottom "step" in the above model and moving stepwise upwards through each model level, investigating:

- Relative to those goals, what specific decisions and related actions can be and are considered and taken by a given organization? Who, and how, actually implements decisions?

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- What might hamper certain actions regarding vacant and abandoned lots from being taken? What enables certain decisions to be made?

- Relative to the kinds of specific decisions and related actions that can be considered, how is a successful (or relatively more successful) option assessed? Of particular concern is if the assessment seeks to minimize some assumed "bad" condition or maximize some assumed "good" condition.
  - What are the implicit/explicit definitions of meaningful impact upon vacant and abandoned lots? What are the qualitative/quantitative determinations of when impact becomes meaningful? How is this determination related to prior model steps?

- Relative to the measures of assessment, how are potentially meaningful options for change (including both physical plans and policies) identified and developed?
  - What programs/actions are being taken to approach vacant and abandoned lots?

- Relative to the determination of how the current situation works, how is the current situation assessed? In what ways and at what points is intervention deemed to be beneficial or necessary?
  - What are the explicitly/implicitly determined points at which action must be taken to address a situation? What types of action are permitted?

- Relative to how well or how poorly the current situation is assessed, how does the current situation work? How does the data contribute to understanding the process of shrinkage?
  - How is the process/occurrence of vacant and abandoned lots tied to explicit/implicit understandings/assumptions about vacant and abandoned lots – where does the knowledge about what vacancy actual does and is as a process in a city originate?

- Relative to how the current situation works, what data are used to inform? Are there criteria for data accuracy or precision?
  - What are the implicit/explicit definitions of vacant and abandoned lots upon which policy makers depend?

In this research, the Steinitz Framework is applied to the formulation of survey questions associated with the above primary research question, including the above-noted sub-questions. It is then used to formulate and organize interview questions and subjects of planners and affiliated professional in selected shrinking cities throughout

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the industrial Midwestern United States. In this manner, findings from both types of primary research will be intercomparable within a structured framework.

As noted above, precedents for the use of the Steinitz Framework to investigate a research problem in the field of urban planning exist in the Kirkwood (2001) and Ekman (2004) publications. Another precedential use of the framework which proved influential on the choice of investigatory tool was a 2009 article on agricultural conservation easement exchanges in California. While not studying a problem within the urban context, this project used the Steinitz Framework to parse out easement exchange actions taken, understanding that the framework "allows one to distinguish the various stakeholders' interests and values, their understanding of the landscape and its processes, and their understanding and interpretation of political processes and legislative statues" (Stewart & Duane, 2009, p. 190). Use of the framework enabled the study's authors to identify faults in a statewide conservation program, lapses in the California Department of Conservation fulfilling its obligations, and the structuring of dubious narratives, all achievements that would have been overlooked without the structure of the Steinitz Framework.

The investigation of concepts such as perceptions, interpretations, mental frameworks, and decision-making requires the use of qualitative research methods. The primary research methods used here, survey and interview, are widely supported for empirical research in the social sciences (Greenacre & Pardo, 2006; Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

This thesis is investigated with both primary research methods such as survey and interview, as well as secondary methods, including the review of existing, proposed, discarded, and in-process planning documents, in conjunction with associated literatures. This has been done in an attempt to achieve triangulation around the question through multiple, complementary methods. This methodological approach is in line with Campbell's concept of triangulation (Campbell, 1996) and Denzin's further distinction of methodological triangulation, (Denzin, 1978) using multiple

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methods "because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality" (Patton M. Q., 2002, p. 556). In the case of this research, triangulation is being used for its ability to approximate completeness, rather than for confirmation. By assembling multiple viewpoints and looking from disparate angles, the hope is to find not just convergences that support theories but also divergences that might lead to alternative hypotheses to be tested with further research (Arksey & Knight, 1999).

4.3 Discussion

The Steinitz Framework for Theory and Planning has been widely used in a diverse number of academic fields in the past twenty years. The framework is valued for its question-based approach, ability to systematically organize complex questions, adaptability, flexibility, and multi-scale iterative nature. It has been used in whole and in-part by academics and practitioners who have embraced the framework to such a degree that they have felt comfortable enough to make modifications, corrections, and alterations to the basic structure of its process. Its use in the urban planning field has been limited in the past to two studies touching on environmental concepts, which has been a common thread throughout the history of the framework. This project takes the framework and places it in an urban, non-ecological context for the first time.

The use of a framework such as Steinitz' to organize this study opens up the possibility of not only utilizing it for its acknowledged strengths in organizing the research undertaken in this thesis, but also investigating the further use of it for planning research, education, and practice. Due to the diligence of previous researchers' investigations into the framework, there are a number of inquiry routes open for exploration. An initial route relates to the three levels of epistemology includes in the framework: data (representation and change), information (process and impact), and cultural knowledge (evaluation and decision). When applying the framework to the decision-making process used by planners in shrinking cities, is there a pattern in models associated with certain types of knowledge being the location of gaps in this

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process? Is there a pattern of planners focusing on one type of knowledge or expressing comfort with the type of knowledge needed in a given model of the framework? Does this given epistemological grouping appear valid through investigation into planners' decision making frameworks?

Another question that comes up in relation to previous work derives from the application of the Steinitz Framework to Geodesign projects. As noted, public participation has come to be seen as a vital ingredient of an inclusive planning process. Is there any indication from planners that decisions that are made regarding vacant and abandoned lots in shrinking cities are subject to, or presented for review to, citizens of these cities or residents of nearby lots? Does this later addition to the framework hold true for how these decisions are made? If there is no citizen review, what are the implications of the omission of this participation for both the planning process and the outcomes?

A basic question, related to earlier use of the Steinitz Framework, is the relationship of the framework to its individual, constituent model levels. For some earlier researchers, one or more of the models was of particular use in their research, while for others, the entire framework was the more appropriate tool. Is there a particular model used by shrinking cities planners when making these decisions that is key to the process? Or is the entire framework, with its structure and organization, a more appropriate analytical unit?

Previous researchers have made modifications or adaptations to the Framework for use in their own particular studies. Are any of these previous modifications useful for the research undertaken in this thesis? For example, Stiles modified the Steinitz Framework for his work in creating a common theoretical basis for landscape planning and landscape design. He grouped Representation and Process into Resource description, Evaluation and Change into the initiation of change, and Impact and Decision into the evaluation of the changed landscape. Are these groupings useful for investigating the decision-making processes used by shrinking cities planners?

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Similarly, are modifications to either the framework as a whole, or individual models needed to adapt the Steinitz Framework for use in urban planning research as undertaken in this thesis or envisioned in future research or practice? One common adaptation is the combination of Representation and Process Models into one combined Model level. Would this be a useful step for me to use in analyzing the data in this research? Would it be appropriate or useful in future urban planning research? What would be the possible benefits of doing this?

When using the Steinitz Framework to organize survey and interview results, is there an apparent need for the inclusion of an additional step or phase to adequately capture or represent the decision-making framework used by shrinking cities planners? Do these six steps fully encompass this process?

A final question related particularly to the research in this thesis is about the types of changes to vacant lots that are conceptualized by shrinking cities planners. Which do they emphasize—change due to current projected trends, change due to intention, or change in the possible far future due to external contexts? Are these three the only types of changes that could be envisioned?

This study could be envisioned as a baseline investigation of the applicability of the Steinitz Framework for general urban planning research, practice, or education. One of the most infrequent uses of the Steinitz framework, among the subject area articles that have referenced it, are those related to planning education, practice, and research. What is the potential use for this framework in any of those fields? Is it useful for planning education, planning practice, or planning research? Is it possible to envision it fulfilling a need in any of those areas? Finally, is there a fundamental element of urban planning decision-making that the Steinitz Framework is unable to capture? If so, what is this, and is there an existing model that could be used to augment the Steinitz Framework or somehow combined with it to make up for this perceived weakness?

CHAPTER 5: SURVEY

5.0 Introduction

In order to establish an understanding of the kinds of thinking done about vacant lots, this investigation begins with a multi-city, internet-based, survey. To research this topic, a survey was chosen for a number of reasons, including:

- "Shrinking cities" is an emerging topic within planning. Research that is done on the topic will be foundational and initiate the creation of a consensus about the topic.
- A national survey of this sort has never been done.
- Many cities around the country are dealing with shrinking issues, and a survey is the best way to gather insight from planning officials who face daily questions resulting from shrinking issues.
- By contacting and surveying a wide-range of planning officials from around the United States, it is possible to gather a number of different versions of the processes used to frame these decisions across cities in the United States.
- By surveying cities of many different sizes, histories/experiences with shrinking, and other such differentiating characteristics, the results will offer multiple paths of comparison.

This study employs a qualitative research approach to the question of vacant and abandoned lots in shrinking cities. This type of study, in conjunction with a mixed-methods analysis of survey results, was chosen for the ability of "critical, interpretive qualitative research [to] create… the power for positive, ethical communitarian change" (Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006, p. 779).

As qualitative research, this project alters the process undertaken in a typical social-science survey, which can be understood as a "systematic method for gathering information from (a sample of) entities for the purpose of constructing quantitative

descriptors of the attributes of the larger population of which the entities are members." Instead, the approach used here looks to determine the diversity and range of deviation of certain sample characteristics (Groves, et al., 2004, p. 4). Table 5.1 (below) illustrates the way in which this qualitative survey is differentiated from a statistical survey and demonstrates the methods that were used to conduct sampling, data collection, and analysis.

Table 5.1: Research Processes: Qualitative Survey v. Statistical Survey

Steps	Qualitative Survey	Statistical Survey
1. Defining knowledge aims		
Topic (material object)	any topic	any topic
Aspect (formal object)	diversity	frequency distribution
Empirical domain	any population (collection)	any population (collection)
Unit of data collection	members of population	members of population
Knowledge function	primarily description	primarily description
2. Sampling		
Method of selection	diversity; by purpose	probability; by chance
Criterion for size (N)	saturation, coverage of population diversity	precision of estimate (CI)
3. Data collection		
Measurement level	any	any
Method of collection	any	any
4. Analysis	*diversity analysis*	*distribution analysis*
1st-level analysis	coding data (downward and	counting frequencies,
Unidimensional description	upward) in objects, dimensions and categories	descriptive statistics, estimating parameters
2nd-level analysis	*case oriented:*	*unit oriented:*
Multidimensional description	combinatory synthesis of diversity: property-space analysis, typology construction	cluster analysis, homogeneity analysis
	concept oriented:	*variable oriented:* correlation, factor-analysis,
	holistic synthesis by core concept	index construction, scaling
3rd-level analysis	*deterministic explanation:*	*probabilistic explanation:*
Explanation	combinatory analysis, QCA, pattern analysis	discriminative analysis, regression, LISREL

Source: Adapted from (Jansen, 2010)

Purposive sampling was undertaken in order to investigate particular phenomena related to shrinking cities. It is expected that findings are generally representative of a larger population of planners; however, it should be emphasized that the results are representational, not statistical. A more accurate description of this survey process is one which "includes all studies of diversity in a population without restrictions as to the number of empirical cycles or the way of generating codes: data-driven, prior-research-driven or theory-driven" (Jansen, 2010, p. 3).

Basic quantitative analysis was employed in this study through the use of Qualitative Content Analysis (Lederman, 1991; Bradley, 1993; Morgan, 1993). This entailed codifying and categorizing qualitative open-ended textual data to "determine relevant themes, patterns of thought, major trends, … attitudinal and behavioral responses to issues or events, [and] reflect cultural patterns" that emerged through the survey and interview processes (Lederman, 1991, p. 169).

5.1   Survey Methods

The goal of the survey is to identify how planners working in the context of shrinking cities frame decisions with regards to the re-use of vacant and abandoned lots. In order to do this systematically and to compare the survey results with the results of the interviews, the Steinitz Framework was used to organize and prompt survey questions and topics. (See the Appendix for survey questions and topics.)

5.1.1   UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The city is used as the unit of analysis for sampling for a number of reasons. First, cities are the units for which professional planners in the United States have the responsibility of planning. Second, census data is widely and historically available for cities as units. Those in the rustbelt have reached their full size in the past few decades, enabling comparison across decades, while other census units like metropolitan statistical areas (MSA) continue to change. Third, cities tend to work autonomously in competing for new businesses and create their own largely independent approaches to

growth. Molotch noted in 1976 that the competition for economic growth among cities in the United States "continues to be the significant dynamic of contemporary local political economy and is critical to the allocation of public resources and the ordering of local issue agendas" (p. 312; Leitner, 1990; Sassen, 2006).

A number of shrinking cities in the U.S. are, in fact, the center of growing regions. The MSA of cities such as Akron (6.94%), Baltimore (13.78%), Canton (2.62%), and Detroit (1.12%) all saw growth during the 1991 - 2010 period, while the MSA of Flint and Cleveland saw only minimal population declines of 1.08% and 1.19%, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). These numbers are in stark contrast to the population decline for the central city of these MSAs, which range from declines of 4.6% to 25% in the 2001 – 2010 decade alone. The question could be asked: "Are these cities even shrinking?" with respect to their metropolitan areas. Perhaps the decline of the central city is part of a transition to multi-nodal cities or the result of the elimination of distribution centers in the information age. Have central cities outlived their usefulness? The answer depends upon the perspective of the researcher and is beyond the scope of this research.

For the purposes of this project, the final reason that cities have been chosen as the unit of analysis lies in their historic establishment as the emotional, civic, and cultural core of any given region. Despite these attributes, U.S. cities have been particularly affected by shrinkage. Pallagst established that

> Unlike in old industrial regions of Europe, shrinkage in the US is usually taking place in the urban core, while the suburban region continues to grow. In fact, early processes of shrinkage of the 1950s and 1960s were triggered by suburbanization. The sprawl pattern led to dramatic losses of population in the city centers. The problems of derelict sites, vacancies and abandoned urban quarters are well known. Social consequences include poverty, segregation, and homelessness, which are happening to a much more dramatic extent in the United States than in European cities. (2008, p. 11)

The tension between a declining core and growing suburban region is unique to the U.S. experience with shrinking, and only researchable with a focus on the city as the unit of analysis.

5.1.2 CASE STUDY SELECTION

Through preliminary demographic, historical, and geographically-based research into shrinking cities, I identified a set of seventeen Legacy Cities in the United States to be examined through the survey portion of this research (See Tables 5.2a and 5.2b.) Purposeful case selection was used to select eight of the seventeen surveyed cities for follow-up interviews. I have operationalized "shrinking" as net population loss within the statistically-defined area (as defined by census data) of a city. Beauregard (2001) and Bradbury, Downs, and Small (1982) support net population loss as a "good, simple measure of multidimensional decline" (Beauregard, 2001, p. 137).

In order to control for certain demographic factors which may influence results, I also identified a set of twenty-seven stable-to-growing U.S. cities with similar demographic, historical, industrial, and locational characteristics. (See Tables 5.3a, 5.3b, and 5.3c.) I had anticipated that through document research and by contacting the planning department in each city, I would be able to determine who within the planning department is primarily responsible for making decisions regarding the reuse of vacant and abandoned lots. As will be described, this assumption changed as I attempted to make contact with these cities.

Table 5.2a: Case Study Cities: Group of Contacted Shrinking Cities

City, State		Akron, OH	Baltimore, MD	Buffalo, NY	Camden, NJ	Canton, OH	Cincinnati, OH	Cleveland, OH	Dayton, OH
Region of Country	Midwest / Northeast	MW	NE	NE	NE	MW	MW	MW	MW
2010 Population	below 100k				77,344	73,007			
	100k -150k								141,527
	150k - 250k	199,110		261,310					
	250k - 500k						296,943	396,815	
	above 500k		620,961						
Years Shrinking	30-50	50							50
	60-80		60	60	60	60	60	60	
Population Percentage Decline Since Peak	20-30%								
	30-40%	-31.4%	-34.6%		-37.9%	-37.6%			
	40-50%						-41.1%		-46.1%
	50-60%			-55.0%				-56.6%	
	60-70%								
% Pop. Decline 2000 - 2010 Decade	Below 5%		-4.6%		-3.2%				
	5% - 10%	-8.3%				-9.7%			
	10% - 20%			-10.7%			-10.4%	-17.1%	-14.8%
	Above 20%								
2010 - 2011 Pop. Change	Decline	0.00%	-0.04%	-0.30%		-0.30%	-0.25%	-0.89%	-0.16%
	Growth				0.26%				
2011 - 2012 Pop. Change	Decline	-0.16%		-0.36%	-0.35%	-0.01%		-0.31%	-0.29%
	Growth		0.23%				0.21%		
2012 - 2013 Pop. Change	Decline	-0.26%	-0.05%	-0.17%	-0.59%	-0.49%		-0.30%	
	Growth						0.25%		0.07%

Source: U.S. Census

Note: Cities Participating in Survey Identified in Bold

Table 5.2b: Case Study Cities: Group of Contacted Shrinking Cities (continued)

City, State		Detroit, MI	Flint, MI	Gary, IN	**Pittsburgh, PA**	Rochester, NY	St. Louis, MO	Toledo, OH	**Youngstown, OH**	Ypsilanti, MI
Region of Country	Midwest / Northeast	MW	MW	MW	**MW**	NE	MW	MW	**MW**	MW
2010 Population	below 100k / 100k -150k / 150k - 250k / 250k - 500k / above 500k	713,777	102,434	80,294	**305,704**	210,565	319,294	287,208	**66,982**	19,435
Years Shrinking	30-50 / 60-80	60	50	50	**60**	60	60	40	**80**	40
Population Percentage Decline Since Peak	20-30% / 30-40% / 40-50% / 50-60% / 60-70%	-61.4%	-48.0%	-55.0%	**-54.8%**	-36.7%	-62.7%	-25.2%	**-60.6%**	-34.2%
% Pop. Decline 2000 - 2010 Decade	Below 5% / 5% - 10% / 10% - 20% / Above 20%	-25.0%	-18.0%	-21.9%	**-8.6%**	-4.2%	-8.3%	-8.4%	**-18.3%**	-13.1%
2010 - 2011 Pop. Change	Decline / Growth	-1.13%	-0.78%	-0.71%	**0.13%**	0.08%	-0.03%	-0.52%	**-1.61%**	0.67%
2011 - 2012 Pop. Change	Decline / Growth	-0.67%	-0.97%	-0.72%	**0.05%**	-0.03%	-0.01%	-0.78%	**-0.58%**	0.60%
2012 - 2013 Pop. Change	Decline / Growth	-1.41%	-0.65%	-0.80%	**-0.11%**	-0.07%	-0.22%	-0.35%	**-0.97%**	0.58%

Source: U.S. Census
Note: Cities Participating in Survey Identified in Bold

Shrinking or growing cities were defined by U.S. Census Bureau population. Doing so follows the example of numerous other studies of urban decline which have also used population as the indicator of change for a city (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2006; Beauregard, 2009; Pallagst & Aber, 2009) as well as other academic theses studying shrinking cities (Alligood, 2008; Pyl, 2009; Schatz L. K., 2010; Reese, 2011). Gross population numbers for fixed geographic units (assuming that city boundaries are relatively stable) are readily available and updated on yearly bases by the federal government.

I further followed the example of leading scholars in the field of historical population trends by additionally differentiating population along the lines of Prevalence, Severity, Persistence, and Geography (Beauregard, 2009). Four categories

were used to examine these characteristics: the number of decades experiencing population loss, overall population decline, population loss in the most recent decade, and the location of these cities. To these four categories, I added Size, representing cities along the entire population range of currently shrinking cities, and Immediacy, representing the range of population gain or loss in the most recent years (for which there are available Census estimates).

I used the cities shown in Tables 5.2a and 5.2b as my initial sample of shrinking cities. They represent various regions of the country, current size, years shrinking, percentage decline since peak population, and recent experience with shrinking. This sample was compiled by combining U.S. cities named in the *Atlas of Shrinking Cities* (Oswalt & Rieniets, 2006) with the U.S. Census' list of the ten U.S. cities shrinking the most (by percentage) in the 2001–2010 decade. This group of cities was chosen due to both its acceptance as a valid identified set in shrinking cities literature as well as its apparent completeness as the set of mid-size to large shrinking cities in the Midwestern U.S. To this grouping, I added other cities throughout the Midwest and Northeast that have economies largely built upon industry and manufacturing. As shown in Tables 5.2a and 5.2b, this sample accurately represents the target of surveying and interviewing officials from around the country in cities representative of multiple types of experiences with shrinking.

5.1.2.1   Control Group

In order to control for shrinking as a deciding factor influencing the approach of planners to vacant and abandoned lots, I selected twenty-seven cities (see Tables 5.3a, 5.3b, and 5.3c) that: are located in the same regions as the selected shrinking cities, have a similar range of population sizes, and had either limited or no recent history with shrinkage. These twenty-seven cities acted as a control group of unmeasured confounders. While the characteristics noted above, such as region of country and size are, no-doubt, influential upon the type of decision framework planners use in shrinking cities, matching is employed here in an effort to "balance

cases and controls with respect to unknown confounders" (Wacholder, Silverman, McLaughlin, & Mandel, 1992, p. 1042).

In the years between the 1990 and 2010 censuses, the population of the United States grew by 24.1 percent, from 248.7 to 308.7 million people. This growth is larger than the average growth of the control group, as the eight stable-to-growing cities participating in the survey averaged 9.65 percent growth over 1990–2010 period. This discrepancy may reflect the national population trend away from the colder industrial/postindustrial Northeast and Midwest and towards the warmer Southern and Western states. With the average growth noted, some of the chosen control cities have experienced dramatic population growth over the past twenty years, while others have remained relatively stable, often in regions that have seen other cities decimated by population loss. Each city has historically supported an industrial job-base. While some continue to do so, many have diversified their economies to their long-term financial benefit. Demographically, these cities are adequate corollaries for my case study shrinking cities.

Through surveying and interviewing planners in these cities as well as shrinking cities, I was able to control for the effects of shrinking when asking about decisions made towards the reuse of vacant and abandoned lots. Of the stable-to-growing cities participating in the survey, Newark, New York, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania all had population declines between the 1990 and 2000 censuses. Both Bethlehem's and Newark's were relatively minor while Philadelphia's was significant at 4.29 percent. Philadelphia is included as a growing city because this city of over 1.5 million managed a slight population increase in the 2010 census. Its growth continued through 2012 and it is the largest city to make such a turnaround in recent decades (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Of the stable-to-growing cities included in the final surveyed group, both Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and Joliet, Illinois

saw small population decreases in the most recent 2012 – 2013 American Community Survey estimates.[5]

Table 5.3a: Case Study Cities: Group of Contacted Stable-to-Growing Cities

City, State		Allentown, PA	Aurora, IL	Bethlehem, PA	Bridgeport, CT	Columbus, OH	Danbury, CT	Dearborn, MI	Elgin, IL	Elizabeth, NJ
Region of Country	Midwest	MW	MW			MW		MW	MW	
	Northeast			**NE**	NE		NE			NE
Size in 2010 (in thousands)	below 100k			**74,982**			80,893	98,153		
	100k -150k	118,032			144,229				108,188	124,969
	150k - 250k		199,672							
	250k - 500k									
	above 500k					787,033				
2010 - 2011 Growth	Below 1%	0.52%	-0.68%	**0.10%**	0.77%		0.92%	-0.63%	0.83%	0.61%
	Above 1%					1.11%				
2011 - 2012 Growth	Below 1%	0.09%	0.23%	**0.02%**	0.54%		0.71%	-0.61%	0.39%	0.58%
	Above 1%					1.37%				
2012 - 2013 Growth	Below 1%	-0.16%	0.13%	**-0.10%**	0.33%		1.22%	-0.80%	0.41%	0.63%
	Above 1%					1.54%				
2000 - 2010 Growth	Below 1%							0.39%		
	1% - 5%				3.57%					3.65%
	5% - 10%			**5.12%**			8.08%			
	10% - 20%	10.69%				10.62%			14.50%	
	Above 20%		38.40%							
1990 - 2000 Growth	Below 1%			**-0.14%**	-1.71%					
	1% - 5%	1.47%								
	5% - 10%							9.51%		9.61%
	10% - 20%					12.41%	14.12%			
	Above 20%		43.59%						22.69%	

Source: U.S. Census
Note: Cities Participating in Survey Identified in Bold

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[5] While a generally supported and statistically sound product of the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey data are based upon a small sample of the entire U.S. population and, as such, have a greater Margin of Error than decennial census products. This should be kept in mind when reviewing these numbers (United States Census Bureau, 2008).

Table 5.3b: Case Study Cities: Group of Contacted Stable-to-Growing Cities (continued)

	City, State	Fort Wayne, IN	Green Bay, WI	**Indianapolis, IN**	Jersey City, NJ	**Joliet, IL**	**Joplin, MO**	Kansas City, MO	**Lafayette, IN**	Midland, MI
Region of Country	Midwest	MW	MW	**MW**		**MW**	**MW**	MW	**MW**	MW
	Northeast				NE					
Size in 2010 (in thousands)	below 100k						50,150		**67,140**	41,863
	100k -150k		104,057			**147,433**				
	150k - 250k				247,597					
	250k - 500k	253,691						459,787		
	above 500k			**820,445**						
2010 - 2011 Growth	Below 1%	0.28%	0.35%	**0.70%**		**0.11%**	**0.47%**	0.29%		0.57%
	Above 1%				1.74%				**1.18%**	
2011 - 2012 Growth	Below 1%	0.07%	0.40%	**0.89%**		**0.18%**	**-1.72%**	0.50%	**0.04%**	0.02%
	Above 1%				1.36%					
2012 - 2013 Growth	Below 1%	0.71%	0.01%		0.79%	**-0.20%**	**0.94%**	0.58%	**0.92%**	0.12%
	Above 1%			**1.02%**						
2000 - 2010 Growth	Below 1%				-0.35%					0.43%
	1% - 5%		1.70%	**4.93%**				4.07%		
	5% - 10%									
	10% - 20%						**10.21%**		**19.05%**	
	Above 20%	23.31%				**38.80%**				
1990 - 2000 Growth	Below 1%									
	1% - 5%							1.53%		
	5% - 10%		6.06%	**6.91%**	5.04%					6.96%
	10% - 20%	18.87%					**11.09%**		**13.17%**	
	Above 20%					**35.20%**				

Source: U.S. Census

Note: Cities Participating in Survey Identified in Bold

Table 5.3c: Case Study Cities: Group of Contacted Stable-to-Growing Cities (continued)

City, State		Naperville, IL	Newark, NJ	Philadelphia, PA	Rockford, IL	Springfield, MO	Waterbury, CT	Waukegan, IL	Wyoming, MI	Yonkers, NY
Region of Country	Midwest / Northeast	MW	**NE**	**NE**	MW	**MW**	NE	MW	MW	NE
Size in 2010 (in thousands)	below 100k							89,078	72,125	
	100k -150k	141,853					110,366			
	150k - 250k				152,871	159,498				195,976
	250k - 500k		277,140							
	above 500k			1,526,006						
2010 - 2011 Growth	Below 1%	0.52%	**0.01%**	**0.65%**	-0.68%	**0.49%**	-0.30%	-0.25%	0.76%	0.66%
	Above 1%									
2011 - 2012 Growth	Below 1%	0.55%	**0.04%**	**0.66%**	-0.65%		-0.15%	-0.23%	0.96%	0.38%
	Above 1%					**1.17%**				
2012 - 2013 Growth	Below 1%	0.71%	**0.29%**	**0.29%**	-0.44%		-0.21%	0.13%		0.68%
	Above 1%					**1.16%**			1.00%	
2000 - 2010 Growth	Below 1%			**0.56%**						-0.06%
	1% - 5%		**1.31%**		1.84%		2.89%	1.34%	3.97%	
	5% - 10%					**5.22%**				
	10% - 20%	10.51%								
	Above 20%									
1990 - 2000 Growth	Below 1%		**-0.61%**	**-4.29%**			-1.55%			
	1% - 5%									4.26%
	5% - 10%				7.67%	**7.89%**			8.57%	
	10% - 20%									
	Above 20%	47.60%						26.67%		

Source: U.S. Census
Note: Cities Participating in Survey Identified in Bold

5.1.2.2 Location Selection

While shrinking cities exist in every part of the nation, I have constrained the study to "Legacy Cities" as defined by both Schilling and Mallach, and Mallach and Brachman (2012; 2013). These cities were previously considered industrial powerhouses and regional economic hubs. Concentrated primarily in the Midwest and secondarily in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, they have had a steady loss in both job numbers and population dating to the 1950s and 1960s. They include cities across a range of all population sizes and face severe economic, social, physical, and operational challenges. Nevertheless, each has assets that may be capitalized upon for urban

regeneration (Schilling & Mallach, 2012, p. 13; Mallach & Brachman, Regenerating America's Legacy Cities, 2013). (See Table 5.4)

Table 5.4: Legacy Cities

State	Cities
AL	Birmingham
CT	Hartford, New Haven
DC	Washington
DE	Wilmington
IN	Gary, Hammond
GA	Macon
MY	Louisville
LA	New Orleans
MA	Fall River, New Bedford
MD	Baltimore
MI	Detroit, Flint, Pontiac, Saginaw, Warren
MN	Minneapolis
MO	St. Louis
NJ	Camden, Newark, Trenton
NY	Albany, Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Rochester, Schenectady, Syracuse, Utica
OH	Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Springfield, Youngstown
PA	Erie, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Reading, Scranton
RI	Providence
VA	Norfolk, Richmond
WI	Milwaukee
WV	Charleston, Huntington

Source: (Mallach & Brachman, Regenerating America's Legacy Cities, 2013; The J. Max Bond Center at the Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture at the City College of New York, 2014)

These shrinking cities have similar patterns of vacancy and depopulation. Many of their downtowns and inner-ring suburbs have been largely depopulated of residents while sprawling development has occurred at the edges of these metropolitan areas. Their populations are becoming much less dense and more spread out as stable or

shrinking populations move further apart. In this manner, growth, at least outward growth, is becoming a threat to the cohesiveness and identity of these metropolitan hubs. Morrison and Dewar warn that "the challenge for planners working in the Legacy Cities of the Northeast and Great Lakes regions – and New Orleans – is to find ways to manage depopulation and disinvestment in a manner that will achieve goals other than the traditional ones of encouraging or controlling growth" (Morrison & Dewar, 2012, p. 122).

Table 5.5: Surveyed Cities: Region of Country for Participating Cities

City	State	Midwest	Northeast
Baltimore	**MD**		**NE**
Bethlehem	PA		NE
Buffalo	**NY**		**NE**
Cincinnati	**OH**	**MW**	
Cleveland	**OH**	**MW**	
Dayton	**OH**	**MW**	
Indianapolis	IN	MW	
Joliet	IL	MW	
Joplin	MO	MW	
Lafayette	IN	MW	
Newark	NJ		NE
Philadelphia	PA		NE
Pittsburgh	**PA**	**MW**	
Springfield	MO	MW	
Youngstown	**OH**	**MW**	

Note: Shrinking cities identified in bold[6]

These cities have a common history of industry and manufacturing which has been eroded by economic change. For some places, jobs have been replaced in government, education, and medical services. In other, related population loss has led to large inventories of vacant land and buildings in conjunction with an outsized

[6] This table and the following tables describing 2010 population size, years shrinking, population decline since peak, and recent decade population decline of Case and Control study cities includes only those cities that participated in the survey process. Response rate is described more explicitly in the subsequent section 5.3.3.

infrastructure, decaying historic buildings and neighborhoods, unemployment, and poverty. For these reasons, both the historical causes of shrinkage in these cities, as well as the current results of shrinking, the selected group of Legacy Cities is an appropriate sample of an overall coherent, identifiable population. (See Table 5.5)

Table 5.6: Surveyed Cities: Population in 2010 for Participating Cities

City	State	below 100k	100k - 150k	150k - 250k	250k - 500k	above 500k
Baltimore	**MD**					**620,961**
Bethlehem	PA	74,982				
Buffalo	**NY**			**261,310**		
Cincinnati	**OH**				**296,943**	
Cleveland	**OH**				**396,815**	
Dayton	**OH**		**141,527**			
Indianapolis	IN					820,445
Joliet	IL		147,433			
Joplin	MO	50,150				
Lafayette	IN	67,140				
Newark	NJ			277,140		
Philadelphia	PA					1,526,006
Pittsburgh	**PA**				**305,704**	
Springfield	MO			159,498		
Youngstown	**OH**	**66,982**				

Source: U.S. Census
Note: Shrinking cities identified in bold

5.1.2.3 Range of Current Population in Sample

The cities in this sample range in population size from around 67,000 to 714,000. Cities of such vastly different sizes can be expected to have very different resources at hand—from the number of planners in a city to the economic resources available to focus on vacant and abandoned lots. Importantly, it can be expected that cities of different sizes can support different planning processes. It is also possible that cities of different sizes might have vastly different responses to large-scale shrinkage. There are also questions about how quickly a city responds to the incidence of vacant and abandoned lots, as they may become more noticeable in smaller cities earlier, but perhaps larger cities have more municipal officials who may notice the trend. Thus, for

a number of reasons it is important to have a wide range of city sizes in the sample, as well as multiple cities representing each size category. (See Table 5.6)

5.1.2.4   Range of Years Shrinking

This study is restricted to cities that have experienced prolonged population loss, under the assumption that this extended experience would give cities time to come to terms with their population loss and adjust municipal policies to their new reality. The inclusion of cities with historical experience of shrinking that ranges from forty to eighty years is expected to result in an equally wide range of approaches to shrinking. These varying approaches may result from the differences in the length of time that cities have had in coming to terms with, and developing policies in the face of, shrinking pressures. (See Table 5.7)

Table 5.7: Case Study Cities: Years with Declining Population (From Population Peak to 2010)

City	State	30-50	60-80
Akron	OH	50	
Baltimore	**MD**		**60**
Buffalo	**NY**		**60**
Camden	NJ		60
Canton	OH		60
Cincinnati	**OH**		**60**
Cleveland	**OH**		**60**
Dayton	**OH**	**50**	
Detroit	MI		60
Flint	MI	50	
Gary	IN	50	
Pittsburgh	**PA**		**60**
Rochester	NY		60
St. Louis	MO		60
Toledo	OH	40	
Youngstown	**OH**		**80**
Ypsilanti	MI	40	

Source: U.S. Census
Note: Cities participating in survey identified in bold

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5.1.2.5 Range of Overall Population Decline since Peak Population

The sample group also includes cities that represent a wide range of percentage decline (in population) since peak population. This was done to explore different "approaches to shrinking" which may come about as the result of different amount of population lost since peak population. The inclusion of this range was expected to lend insight to questions like *Is there a tipping point at which cities have to start dealing with the population decline on a regular basis? Are there policies or tools which only come into play at a certain percentage of decline? Are there some which will only work up to a certain percentage of decline but which are in effective at higher levels of population loss?* (See Table 5.8)

Table 5.8: Case Study Cities: Percentage Population Decline (From Peak Population to 2010)

City	State	20-30%	30-40%	40-50%	50-60%	60-70%
Akron	OH		-31.42%			
Baltimore	**MD**		**-34.62%**			
Buffalo	**NY**				**-54.96%**	
Camden	NJ		-37.90%			
Canton	OH		-37.55%			
Cincinnati	**OH**			**-41.08%**		
Cleveland	**OH**				**-56.62%**	
Dayton	**OH**			**-46.05%**		
Detroit	MI					-61.41%
Flint	MI			-47.99%		
Gary	IN				-54.97%	
Pittsburgh	**PA**				**-54.83%**	
Rochester	NY		-36.67%			
St. Louis	MO					-62.73%
Toledo	OH	-25.17%				
Youngstown	**OH**					**-60.60%**
Ypsilanti	MI		-34.20%			

Source: U.S. Census
Note: Cities Participating in Survey Identified in Bold

5.1.2.6 Range of Shrinking in the 2001 – 2010 Decade

As noted above, some of the larger U.S. cities that have histories of thirty-plus years of shrinking have seen their population rebound in the most recent census. While

a few of those cities have been included in the stable-to-growing sample of control cities, the targeted shrinking cities in this sample are those which have not only declined in the 2001 – 2010 decade, but which have declined in excess of five percent during that period. By restricting the amount of population decline in the most recent census period to five percent and higher, the sample is restricted to those cities with ongoing problems requiring ongoing attention. (See Table 5.9)

Table 5.9: Case Study Cities: Population Decline in 2001 – 2010 Decade

City	State	5% - 10%	10% - 20%	Above 20%
Akron	OH	-8.28%		
Baltimore	**MD**	**-4.64%**		
Buffalo	**NY**		**-10.71%**	
Camden	NJ	-3.20%		
Canton	OH	-9.65%		
Cincinnati	**OH**		**-10.37%**	
Cleveland	**OH**		**-17.05%**	
Dayton	**OH**		**-14.84%**	
Detroit	MI			-24.97%
Flint	MI		-18.01%	
Gary	IN			-21.85%
Pittsburgh	**PA**	**-8.63%**		
Rochester	NY	-4.19%		
St. Louis	MO	-8.30%		
Toledo	OH	-8.42%		
Youngstown	**OH**		**-18.34%**	
Ypsilanti	MI		-13.09%	

Source: U.S. Census
Note: Cities Participating in Survey Identified in Bold

5.2 Survey Design

Surveys were designed and administered with SurveyGizmo, an internet-based application. I used the free version of the software, available for student use (http://www.surveygizmo.com/student-account/). This software was chosen for its flexibility in terms of question design, as well as for the numerous reporting features with which it comes standard. It proved easy to use for survey design and distribution

although some survey respondents reported problems with the software feature of saving and returning later to a partially completed survey.

Survey questions were designed using the Steinitz Framework, with individual questions associated with each level of inquiry. The text of the surveys as given to the participants are provided in the Appendix.

5.3   Survey Procedure

5.3.1   IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

In each city, whether shrinking or stable-to-growing, efforts were made to contact people who were primarily responsible for planning around vacant and abandoned lots. Identification of city employees responsible (or most responsible) for the classification, managing, and redeveloping of vacant and abandoned lots is difficult because these actions are often distributed across multiple municipal departments. Further, in some locations, responsibilities are shared between city and county personnel who have varying degrees of communication and coordinated effort.

In order to survey the most appropriate personnel within each city, the director of the planning or community development department in each city was contacted and asked to distribute a survey invitation to the person or persons he or she thought most appropriate:

> We are hoping that you will share this invitation with professional staff who help address issues that relate to vacant and abandoned lots in your city. Given the range of expertise and experience that might be drawn upon, we ask you to exercise your best judgment about which person or people might participate (Shearer, 2013).

While it can be recognized that having multiple respondents in each city is desirable in order to capture different—and perhaps competing—perceptions within a municipality and to enable richer comparisons across cities, the number of potential responses was entirely at the planning director's discretion.

5.3.2 SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION

The distribution of the survey was undertaken in accordance with the guidelines of the Institutional Research Board (IRB) of the University of Texas at Austin, protocol number 2012-09-0073. Initial contact was made by the primary dissertation advisor with an emailed letter soliciting participation. This communication included a PDF version of the email text and a PDF of the Letter of Consent required by the IRB. Designated respondents who did not reply to this email were contacted approximately one week later by the investigator with a second request for participation. The PDF documents sent by the primary advisor were attached for reference. Respondents who indicated their agreement with the required Letter of Consent were sent an internet link to the survey.

The schedule for completing the survey followed the recommendations given in Dillman's *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method - 2nd Edition* (2007). After seven days, respondents were sent a short follow-up email; after fifteen they were sent an email noting that the initial time-period had expired. Another reminder email was sent after twenty-two days asking them to contact the investigator with their current status in regards to the survey.

5.3.3 SURVEY DISTRIBUTION AND RESPONSE

The total response rate for the survey was 58 percent. This has been broken down into two groups, shrinking cities and stable-to-growing cities, in Table 5.10. The response rate has been calculated using the number of cities able to participate in the survey rather than the total number of cities contacted or the number responding to the initial request for participation.

Forty-four cities in the U.S. Midwest and Northeast were contacted for inclusion. Seventeen of these cities have been experiencing shrinking populations for forty years or more. Twenty-seven of them have growing or stable population numbers. Thirty-two cities responded to the invitation to participate. The remaining twelve cities did not respond despite numerous attempts to make contact. Of the thirty-two cities that

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responded, a further six were unable to participate due to a number of factors, the most common being staffing shortages. Five of these non-participating cities, Danbury, Connecticut; Elgin, Illinois; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Naperville, Illinois; and Wyoming, Michigan, are categorized as growing. It is not unusual to consider that growing cities may be short of staff needed to perform daily tasks. The remaining city unable to participate was Flint, Michigan, one of the national leaders in taking proactive steps to address shrinking. Responses from planners in Flint indicated that they are overwhelmed with requests for research assistance.

Table 5.10: Case Study Cities: Survey Response Rates

Total Response Rate:		
Number of Total Cities Contacted	44	34%
Number of Cities Responding	32	47%
Number of Cities Able to Participate	26	58%
Number of Cities Participating:	15	58%
Shrinking Cities Response Rate:		
Number of Total Cities Contacted	17	41%
Number of Cities Responding	14	50%
Number of Cities Able to Participate	13	54%
Number of Cities Participating:	7	54%
Growing Cities Response Rate:		
Number of Total Cities Contacted	27	30%
Number of Cities Responding	18	44%
Number of Cities Able to Participate	13	62%
Number of Cities Participating:	8	62%

Source: Author

It should be noted that two rounds of solicitations were sent. The first round of twenty-nine invitations yielded a response rate significantly below 50 percent. Dillman's "Tailored Design" method does not give guidance on increasing response rates for convenience samples such as this one, as it is primarily concerned with random sampling procedure. In the absence of this guidance, a second set of cities was selected

and contacted using the same procedure as the initial group. This second round of fifteen cities was contacted one month after the first group. While a higher response rate, representing a larger set of cities, was envisioned initially, the range of cities in the final survey response set represents a wide range of historical, regional, and demographic experiences with shrinking. (See Tables 5.11 and 5.12)

Table 5.11: Case Study Cities: Survey Group of Participating Shrinking Cities

City, State		Baltimore, MD	Buffalo, NY	Cincinnati, OH	Cleveland, OH	Dayton, OH	Pittsburgh, PA	Youngstown, OH
Region of Country	Midwest			MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
	Northeast	NE	NE					
2010 Population	below 100k							66,982
	100k -150k					141,527		
	150k - 250k		261,310					
	250k - 500k			296,943	396,815		305,704	
	above 500k	620,961						
Years Shrinking	30-50					50		
	60-80	60	60	60	60		60	80
Population Percentage Decline Since Peak	30-40%	-34.6%						
	40-50%			-41.1%		-46.1%		
	50-60%		-55.0%		-56.6%		-54.8%	
	60-70%							-60.6%
% Pop. Decline 2000 - 2010 Decade	Below 5%	-4.6%						
	5% - 10%						-8.6%	
	10% - 20%		-10.7%	-10.4%	-17.1%	-14.8%		-18.3%
	Above 20%							
2010 - 2011 Pop. Change	Decline	-0.04%	-0.30%	-0.25%	-0.89%	-0.16%		-1.61%
	Growth						0.13%	
2011 - 2012 Pop. Change	Decline		-0.36%		-0.31%	-0.29%		-0.58%
	Growth	0.23%		0.21%			0.05%	
2012 - 2013 Pop. Change	Decline	-0.05%	-0.17%		-0.30%		-0.11%	-0.97%
	Growth			0.25%		0.07%		
Number of Personnel Surveyed		2	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: (United States Census Bureau, 2013)

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Table 5.12: Case Study Cities: Survey Group of Participating Stable-to-Growing Cities

	City, State	Bethlehem, PA	Indianapolis, IN	Joliet, IL	Joplin, MO	Lafayette, IN	Newark, NJ	Philadelphia, PA	Springfield, MO
Region of Country	Midwest		MW	MW	MW	MW			MW
	Northeast	NE					NE	NE	
City Population in 2010	below 100k	74,982			50,150	67,140			
	100k -150k			147,433					
	150k - 250k								159,498
	250k - 500k						277,140		
	above 500k		820,445					1,526,006	
Population Growth in 2000 - 2010 Decade	Below 1%							0.56%	
	1% - 5%		4.93%				1.31%		
	5% - 10%	5.12%							5.22%
	10% - 20%				10.21%	19.05%			
	Above 20%			38.80%					
% Pop. Change in 1990 - 2000 Decade	Below 1%	-0.14%					-0.61%	-4.29%	
	1% - 5%								
	5% - 10%		6.91%						7.89%
	10% - 20%				11.09%	13.17%			
	Above 20%			35.20%					
2010 - 2011 Pop. Change	Below 1%	0.10%	0.70%	0.11%	0.47%		0.01%	0.65%	0.49%
	Above 1%					1.18%			
2011 - 2012 Pop. Change	Below 1%	0.02%	0.89%	0.18%	-1.72%	0.04%	0.04%	0.66%	
	Above 1%								1.17%
2012 - 2013 Pop. Change	Below 1%	-0.10%		-0.20%	0.94%	0.92%	0.29%	0.29%	
	Above 1%		1.02%						1.16%
Number of Personnel Surveyed		1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1

Source: (United States Census Bureau, 2013)

5.3.4 PRE-TESTING THE SURVEY

The survey was pre-tested in four cities in order to assess its effectiveness as a means to capture criteria for planning and design decisions. The cities selected for the pre-tests were Austin and Port Arthur, Texas and Battle Creek and Warren, Michigan. These sites were selected because they reflect a range of economic health and population change over the last ten to twenty years. Notably, while Texas is clearly outside of the geographic area of the U.S. Midwest, its strong economy and population growth provided contrast with Michigan. Within Texas, Austin is one of the state's fastest growing cities, while Port Arthur's population has decreased by 12 percent since

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1980. For the reason of comparison, it was judged that these cities in Texas would be valuable for assessing the robustness of the survey. The four sites were also geographically advantageous in that the investigator was located in or within driving distance of them during the pre-testing phase of this research.

A closer examination of the two states and the four cities provides context for the pre-test. During the 2001–2010 statistical decade, the U.S. population grew by 9.7 percent overall and showed an estimated 0.9 percent increase in the year to 2011. In that decade, Texas' population increased by 4.3 million people, a 20.6 percent population increase and continued with an estimated 1.9 percent increase in the year to 2011 (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Texas' unemployment rate roughly equaled the national rate in the 2001–2010 decade (5.52 percent v. 5.54 percent) and is currently besting the national average.

During the 2001–2010 decade, the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) grew by 37.3 percent; Austin's was the eighth fastest-growing MSA in the nation during this period (Mackun & Wilson, 2011). Austin's population increased by 67.4 percent from 1991–2010, and had an annual growth rate of 3.9 percent population growth in 2010-2011, the second largest rate of population growth in the nation (United States Census Bureau, 2012). By contrast, during the 2001–2010 time period, while Austin and many other cities in Texas were experiencing rapid growth, Port Arthur's population declined by 6.8 percent. Over the longer period of 1991–2010, its population has declined by 8.4 percent.

Michigan's demographics are very different from those of Texas. The state gained population in the 1991–2000 decade, although its 6.9 percent increase was only half of the nation's 13.2 percent population increase over the same period. In the 2001–2010 decade, the state actually lost population, decreasing by 0.6 percent in a period where the national population grew by 9.7 percent (Mackun & Wilson, 2011). Michigan had a further loss of 0.1 percent of its population in the year to 2011. This

population decline has been coupled with an unemployment rate markedly higher than the national rate in the 2001–2010 decade (7.2 percent v. 5.54 percent).

Warren is the third largest municipality (by population) in Michigan and is one of Detroit's many suburbs. The city has lost 25 percent of its population since 1970, although it seems to have leveled off after 2010 and had a minor gain of population in both 2012 and 2013 (United States Census Bureau, 2013). This population recovery is most likely correlated with the recovery of the United States automobile industry beginning in 2010. General Motors and Fiat-Chrysler are two of the three largest employers in the city (City of Warren, Michigan - City Controller, 2012). Battle Creek is currently the thirtieth largest municipality in the state and has had a relatively stable population since 1990.

Pre-testing of the survey in Austin and Port Arthur was done in December 2012. Pre-testing of the survey in Warren and Battle Creek occurred in January 2013. Each participant had been briefed over the phone in regards to the purpose of the research. The pre-tests were done in the respective offices of the participants and in the presence of the investigator. Each respondent took the computerized survey during this face-to-face meeting. After the preliminary questions regarding the means and ends of the survey were answered, participants proceeded with the survey itself. Each respondent was asked about his/her comprehension of each survey question before answering. This step was taken to ensure that the respondent's understanding of the questions matched the investigator's intentions. After each respondent completed the entire survey, he/she was asked additional questions to assess general reaction to the survey, question sensitivity, and the reliability of his/her answers (Hess & Singer, 1995). Each pre-test took approximately two hours. The survey questions were altered after each pre-test for clarification with regards to word choice, concept clarity, and question sequence. Each refined iteration of the survey instrument was then used in the subsequent pre-test, with alterations made after the pre-tests in Austin, Port Arthur, and Warren.

After the final pre-test there were no substantive requests by respondents for clarification. Based on this assessment, it was decided to distribute the survey to respondents in the selected study cities.

5.4   Survey Results

As noted, surveys were implemented using computerized Survey Gizmo software. The same software was used to organize survey responses. Survey responses from shrinking cities were grouped, as was data from stable-to-growing cities. After initial inter-group comparison was completed, data from all cities was combined in order to compare and contrast responses.

5.4.1   SURVEY ANALYSIS: QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The technique of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) was used to analyze the data. Content Analysis was initially developed in the 19th century as a method to analyze and report on the textual content of newspapers, advertisements, and political speeches (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Content Analysis has been used for decades in the United States, most frequently to quantitatively express qualitative data. The method has recently found resurgence as both a purely qualitative and as a hybrid qualitative/quantitative method, particularly in the health sciences (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). QCA has been described as both "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278) and "a technique which lies at the crossroads of qualitative and quantitative methods… a technique that allows a quantitative analysis of seemingly qualitative data" (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002, p. 224). QCA has been supported for use in open-ended survey questions for its ability to examine both manifest and latent meanings of words and concepts (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002), achieve valid data through non-leading open-ended questions (Hons & Kipping, 1996), exposing complex

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phenomena and respondents' mental constructs (Smith C. P., 2000), and identifying critical processes (Lederman, 1991).

QCA combines the strength of quantitative content analysis (counting the instances of codes or themes appearing in texts as a measure of importance) with the ability of qualitative research to investigate core motivations, maintain context, and interpret meaning. In short, it is said to give an "accurate and detailed description of a point of view, a social world" (Knafl & Howard, 1984, p. 18).

QCA is used to explore the range of a given characteristic in a population. It usually takes the form of purposive sampling to populate the sample in a diverse manner. Codes emerge from the data itself. That is, they are not externally created and applied to this project to test existing hypotheses or theories (Mayring, 2000). The issue of counting, or a quantitative presentation of qualitative data, is particularly important. In more traditional quantitative content analysis, the reduction of data to a count is the end of a research project: presenting counts and "tabulations of codes summarize what is known about the data, and the analytic effort typically stops with the presentation of these numerical results" (Morgan, 1993, p. 115). In QCA, these counts and tabulations present the opportunity for additional analysis, through interpreting the resulting patterns in a process described as "decontextualizing and recontextualizing" (Tesch, 1990; Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

5.4.1.1 Coding Method

Coding is used to draw out common themes from survey responses, to "systematically and rationally reduce the complex set of attributes that characterize a phenomenon to a simpler set of attributes which is more tractable" and also quantifiable (Poole & Folger, 1981, p. 482). There is a danger, however, in reducing data too far. Hong warns that "the quality of the data, which is the strength of open-ended questions, will suffer" if answers are overly reduced for purposes of analysis (1984, p. 98). There is also a danger to distorting the data gathered, as any coding schema must be comprehensive enough to adequately capture the phenomena being studied, while

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simultaneously being applied in a manner so as to not distort or confound any of the dimensions of the phenomena being studied (Lazarsfeld & Barton, 1969). Although there are multiple sources and guides on how to code qualitative survey data, the crucial determinant of how to code in each study must depend upon the ultimate knowledge goals of the research project. The "quality of the coding is not so much a technical methodological issue, but involves theoretical sensibility and creativity" (Jansen, 2010).

While it is possible to code on multiple levels of verbal data units, such as the paragraph, the sentence, the phrase, or even by the word, survey and interview responses in this study have been coded by individual themes (Weber, 1984). These individual themes could be expressed as distinct ideas or issues of relevance (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

To retain the context and description that was included in survey responses, codes were imposed lightly upon responses for purposes of analysis. When coding survey responses, in most cases, each distinct idea was represented by a word or term derived directly from a respondent's survey response, as a validity-check on the coding process. Each question was considered on its own, independent from others in terms of discovering and applying coding categories. Responses were coded for both manifest and latent content in order to create coding categories that were contextually and topically accurate (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Responses that were coded similarly or that showed a substantial degree of overlap in content and intent were then included in a single category for the purposes of quantitative analysis. See Figure 5.1 for a model illustrating the three main phases of the Qualitative Content Analysis Process.

As a single-author study, the author takes on the role of the expert for the purposes of coding. He or she makes explicit what is implicit or implied in surveys and interviews, explaining and connecting concepts, and translating context-specific terminology for readers outside of this particular context, using knowledge gained through a thorough investigation of the pertinent literature.

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Figure 5.1: Phases of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) Process
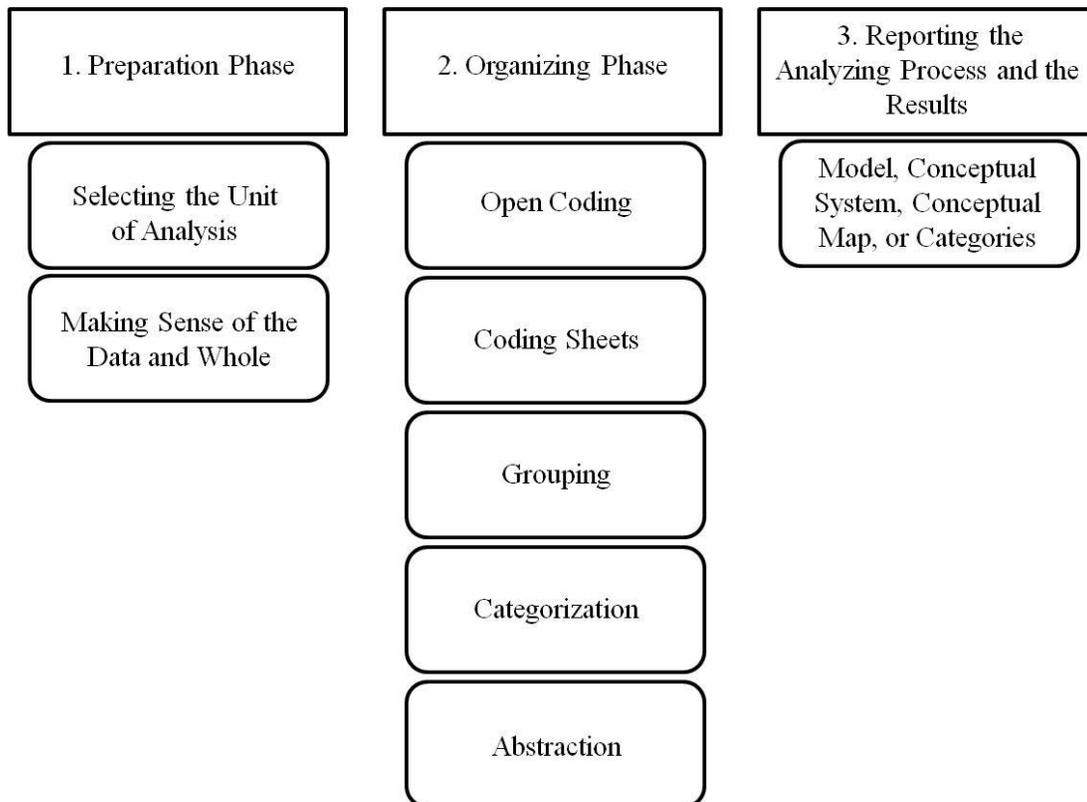
Source: Adapted from (Elo & Kyngas, 2008)

5.4.1.2   Data Quality

When used in non-positivist (naturalistic) paradigm-based research projects, there is discussion about the appropriateness of using positive (or post-positive) concepts of validity and reliability to judge the quality of QCA research methods.[7] In this research project, I worked within the framework of four types of qualitative criteria

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[7] Guba (1981) and Guba and Lincoln (1994) assert that concepts such as internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity, only hold meaning as criteria for judging goodness or quality of an inquiry when a research project is fully situated within a realist epistemology. Outside of positivism and post-positivism, these criteria are transformed into credibility (approximating internal validity), transferability (approximating external validity), dependability (approximating reliability), and confirmability (approximating objectivity). Others, such as (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002), have continued to advocate for the continuing use of the traditional criteria of reliability and validity to judge these qualitative inquiries. See (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004) and (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009) for further discussion.

for trustworthiness: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). (See Table 5.13 below)

Table 5.13: Positive/Rationalistic and Critical/Naturalistic Criteria for Trustworthiness

Aspect of Trustworthiness	Positivistic Term	Naturalistic Term
Truth Value	Internal Validity	Credibility
Applicability	External Validity/ Generalizability	Transferability
Consistency	Reliability	Dependability
Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability

Source: Adapted from (Guba E. S., 1981)

Just as steps are taken at multiple points before, during, and after a research project in order to obtain and retain measures of validity and reliability, similar steps were taken, during this project, towards ensuring a significant degree of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The measure of credibility, which is analogous to the positivistic term internal validity, is evaluated within the naturalistic paradigm as a researcher's ability to accurately reconstruct a particular social reality (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). In this study, I attempted to reach this goal through corroborating survey results with respondents during subsequent interviews, which will be presented in the next chapter (Bradley, 1993). By comparing findings in different stages of research, such as surveys and interviews, I attempt "triangulation," (Denzin, 1978; Campbell, 1996) using survey and interviews as multiple sources of information on the same phenomenon and obtaining documentation from multiple sources so as to diminish the possibility of research bias affecting results. I also worked to investigate and explain or eliminate possible internal conflicts or contradictions amongst findings.

The goal of transferability, which is centered around the extent to which the working hypotheses about a particular phenomenon or situation could apply to a different context, corresponds to the positivistic measure of external validity (generalizability). Two of the ways to achieve transferability are related to the findings and the coding process. First, are the study's findings reasonable, given general knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation, so that the use of the process/hypotheses could be defended in a similar future study? Secondly, is the coding scheme laid out with enough specification so that it could be used in a related future study? One way in which I attempted to answer both of these questions was by collecting "thick" descriptive data about the context of the phenomenon being studied. The use of multiple research methods and literatures was done with the expectation that by so thoroughly describing the decision-making framework and process of creating and handling vacant lots, this study would be a useful comparison and source for future studies of other phenomena with appropriate matching characteristics (Geertz, 1973).

The third goal of naturalistic research is to achieve dependability, which correlates with reliability in positivistic research. This is attempted through the creation of a transparent coding process. One threat to dependability is found in discrepancies between coders; in this case, there were no threats to inter-coder reliability because one person did all data coding. Another threat to dependability is the consistency of the coding/coder. In this case, survey coding was done by the primary researcher over the period of few days, with coding of shrinking cities data done first and then stable-to-growing cities done second. Coding choices that were made for the first set of data were then replicated for the second set, and when differences in terminology in the second set of data led to a "better" set of codes, they were then imposed on the first set of data in order that both should be inter-comparable.

Another threat to dependability depends upon the familiarity of a coder with the data to be coded. Coding is a skill that requires a coder to be fluent in the language being used, be familiar with the topic of conversation, and be able to differentiate

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between germane and non-germane topics within a written response. This familiarity must be so in-depth that they are able to interpret multiple, topic-specific uses of terms, understand both manifest and latent uses of individual terms, and make connections between semantically unconnected terms, to name just a few of the skills of an expert (Carley, 1988).

In the case of this project, the coder had been immersed in the terminology and literature of the project for an extended time period and was familiar with the context in which answers were being provided by survey respondents. Other efforts at dependability have been made in the effort to assist in additional analysis of data for replication or verification purposes, including the presentation of primary data and an explanation of coding processes (available by request from author) (Guba E. S., 1981).

The fourth goal, confirmability, is analogous to the positivistic measure of transferability, relating to the degree to which findings are supported elsewhere. In this study, confirmability was approached by comparing findings with those of other researchers, looking for similarities or obvious discrepancies. Guba notes that one of the largest differences between the positivistic and naturalistic sets of criteria for reliability and validity is found in confirmability, as "naturalists shift the burden of neutrality from the investigator to the data, requiring evidence not of the certifiability of the investigator or his or her methods but of the confirmability of the data produced" (Guba E. S., 1981, pp. 81-82).

5.4.2 RESULTS

Both the survey sent to planners in shrinking cities and the survey sent to planners in stable-to-growing cities began with a set of seven introductory questions. The purpose of these questions is to understand the work experience of the planners and affiliated professionals who are responding to the survey. These questions asked about the years of experience and location of past planning jobs that planners might have had in order to gain additional contextual knowledge about a planner's individual knowledge and experience with planning as a profession. The number of years of

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experience can be seen as an indicator of an assortment of dimensions, including both their relative position of seniority on the planning staff as well as their experience and familiarity with routine planning actions. From the standpoint of power dynamics, the number of years a planner has worked in a particular city could have multiple interpretations regarding their ability to proactively plan for the shrinking city. It is possible that the more time spent within a city's municipal government, the more entrenched a planner may become within the current regime's pro-growth agenda. Conversely, it may only be once a planner has reached a certain higher echelon within city government that he or she has gathered enough personal power to be able to advocate for policies that may be counter to traditional pro-growth conceptions.

A question about previous cities in which a planner or affiliated professional has worked was asked in order to determine what types of regional or demographic influences a planner has had. Previous work in other cities which have faced issues associated with large population losses or economic declines may give planners a set of tools and experiences to draw on that can be used in their present jobs. Similarly, those who have worked in cities which are experiencing a traditional growth-oriented trajectory may be biased towards using traditional economic development policies and against developing alternative planning methods. These questions (1-7) are:

1. Name:

2. Please provide the email address at which you would prefer to be contacted for the purposes of this study.

3. What is your current Job Title?

4. What are your General Job Responsibilities?

5. How many years have you been working in a Professional Planning position in this city? (This includes professional city planners as well as affiliated professionals.)

6. How many years job experience do you have, working in a professional planning capacity? (This includes professional city planners as well as affiliated professionals.)

7. In what other cities have you worked in a professional planning capacity? (This includes professional city planners as well as affiliated professionals.)

After the first two questions asking information regarding personal identification, question three asked survey respondents to list their current job titles.

Table 5.14: Current Job Titles of Survey Respondents

Current Job Titles of Survey Respondents
Acting Division Chief, Research & Strategic Planning
Administrator of Abandoned Buildings
Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning
Building Official
Commissioner
Community Planner
Director of Housing and Real Estate
Director of Neighborhood Services
Director, Community Development & Planning
Division Manager, Property Maintenance Code Enforcement
Economic Development Director
Planning and Development Manager
Principal Planner I
Senior Planner
Senior Planner
Senior Planner
Special Landscape Architect

Of the seventeen survey respondents, nine listed their job titles as having some form of the word "planning" included. The remaining eight had job titles as varied as "Building Official", "Commissioner", and "Special Landscape Architect". The

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distribution of responsibility for vacant and abandoned lots throughout local government in these cities illustrates both the wide-ranging nature of the problem as well as the difficulty in establishing a single set of best practices for addressing them.

Question four asked the survey respondents about their general job responsibilities. The seventeen respondents listed forty different types of actions that they undertook on a usual basis. These responsibilities have been coded into twelve categories. The most common job responsibilities of survey respondents are code enforcement, policy research and analysis, and neighborhood planning.

Figure 5.2: General Job Responsibilities of Survey Respondents
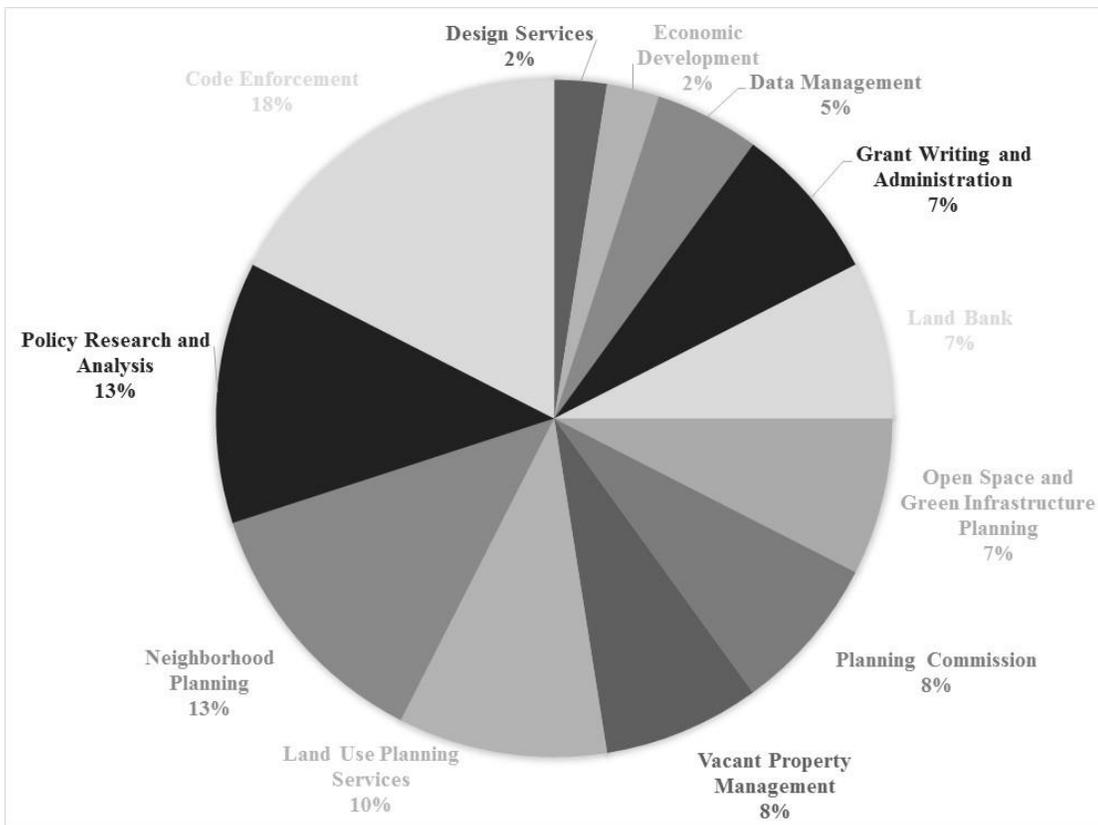
Question five asked survey respondents how long they had been working in a professional planning position in their current city. Responses ranged from 4 months up to 29 years, although the average was 11.6 years.

Question six, similarly, asked survey respondents about how many years they had, in total, working in a professional planning capacity. Responses to this question ranged from 4 to 30 years.

Question seven asked respondents to list other cities that they have worked in.

Table 5.15: Other Cities in which Survey Respondents have Worked

Akron, OH
Allentown, PA
Boston, MA
Buffalo, NY
Detroit, MI
Greenville, SC
Ithaca, NY
Kansas City, MO
Lafayette IN
Manchester, NH
Marshall Township, PA
Mercer County, PA
New York, NY*
Nixa, MO
Rochester, NY
San Jose, CA
Shawnee, KS
*two mentions of this city

5.4.2.1 City-Wide Planning Environment Questions

The next set of two questions (8-9) evaluated the general sense of importance that issues related to vacant and abandoned lots have within a city-wide planning

environment. These questions were intended to be used for two purposes. First, they relate to the importance of vacant and abandoned lots within all city planning activities as well as the professional job-related planning activities of each respondent. Second, assuming that the planners and associated personnel who have been asked by their department heads to respond to this survey are those most involved with vacant and abandoned lots, it is possible to learn from the correlation between responses to the two questions. The relationship between how vacant and abandoned lots are prioritized within city-wide planning policy and how they are prioritized within the job responsibilities of individual planners informs the way that they are conceptualized: as useful assets or overlooked liabilities.

8. Relative to all planning activities in your city, how important are activities related to vacant and abandoned lots? [please choose the most appropriate response]

Not at all Important; Rarely Considered; One issue against many for the city; Very important (among the 2 or 3 most important issues); The city's most important issue; Unsure

9. Relative to your job responsibilities, how important are activities related to vacant and abandoned lots? [please choose the most appropriate response]

Not at all important relative to MY job responsibilities; Rarely Considered while conducting MY job responsibilities; One Issue amongst many for ME to consider while going about MY job responsibilities; Very Important (among the 2 or 3 most important issues for ME when conducting MY job responsibilities); The most important issue for ME while conducting MY job responsibilities.

Question eight, which asks planners and affiliated professionals how important they feel that the issue of vacant and important lots is relative to all planning activities in a city, is indicative of the amount of attention being paid to these parcels. The range of issues on which planners and affiliated professionals must work is wide, from economic development and overseeing transportation needs, to environmental impact assessments and assuring access to affordable housing. However, in the surveyed shrinking cities, 75 percent of respondents thought that activities related to these lots

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are among the two or three most important planning activities undertaken in their city. This level of importance compares directly with planners in stable-to-growing cities, where 44 percent of respondents considered these lots to be amongst the two or three most important issues for their cities. (See Figures 5.3 and 5.4)

Figure 5.3: Shrinking Cities: City-Wide Planning Environment

Relative to all planning activities in your city, how important are activities related to vacant and abandoned lots?

One issue amongst many for the city
25%

Very important (among the 2 or 3 most important issues)
75%
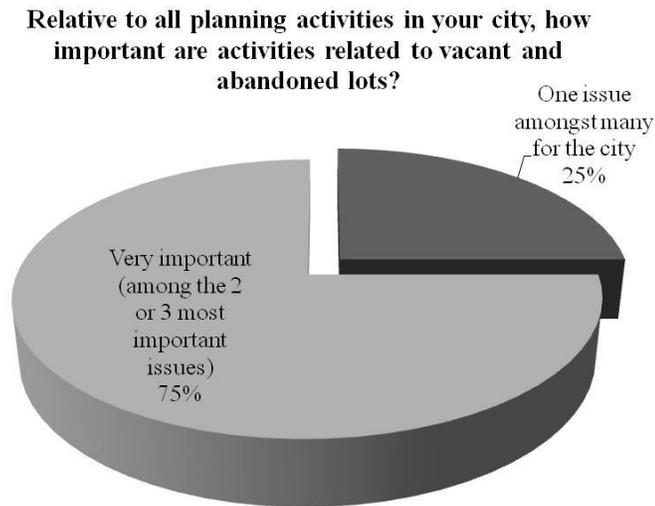
Figure 5.4: Stable-to-Growing Cities: City-Wide Planning Environment

Relative to all planning activities in your city, how important are activities related to vacant and abandoned lots?

One issue amongst many for the city
56%

Very important (among the 2 or 3 most important issues)
44%
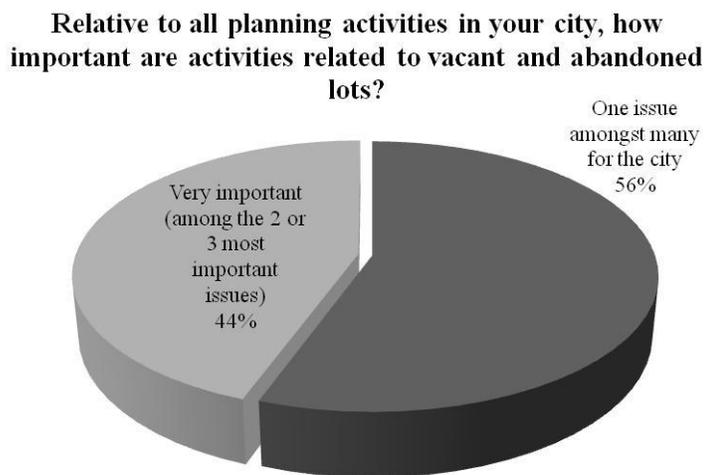
Figure 5.5: Priority Activities: City Importance relative to Job Responsibility

	The most important issue for ME while conducting MY job responsibilities	Very important (among the 2 or 3 most important issues for ME when conducting MY job responsibilities)	One issue amongst many for ME to consider while going about MY job responsibilities	Very important (among the 2 or 3 most important issues)	One issue amongst many for the city
Shrinking Cities	25.0%	25.0%	50.0%	75.0%	25.0%
Stable to Growing Cities		44.4%	55.6%	44.4%	55.6%

The responses to questions eight and nine also help us to verify the inclusion of these particular planners and affiliated professionals as the appropriate sources of information regarding vacant and abandoned lots in both types of shrinking cities. In stable-to-growing cities, survey respondents gave the same average response to the questions about the importance of planning for vacant and abandoned lots in their cities as well as the importance of planning for these lots in their jobs. From this response,

we can infer that the survey group is largely representative of planners working in stable-to-growing cities, no more or less involved with vacant and abandoned lots than any average group of similarly situated planners.

The more telling responses lie with the survey respondents in shrinking cities. (See Figure 5.5) When asked about all planning activities in their respective cities, 75 percent of respondents replied that activities related to vacant and abandoned lots were amongst the two or three most important issues in their city while 25 percent of respondents thought that they were just one issue amongst many for the city. However, in terms of their own workload, 25 percent of these shrinking cities planners considered issues related to vacant and abandoned lots to be one of the two or three most important issues for themselves, 25 percent thought they were the most important issue, while the remaining 50 percent thought that it was just one issue amongst many for themselves.

The discrepancy between the 50 percent of survey respondents who consider these lots to be just one of the issues included in their job responsibilities, as compared to the overall importance of these lots in their cities, is puzzling. Perhaps these respondents are not the most knowledgeable about their respective cities' action on vacant lots, or perhaps their job responsibilities are so wide or varying that these lots cannot be placed at the top of the job priority list. It is also possible that this discrepancy between work focus and importance for the city is an indication that planning departments are not giving the amount of attention to vacant and abandoned lots that the respondents think is appropriate, relative to their cumulative impact upon the city.

Looking at the responses to questions 1 – 9, it is not possible to determine that there are relationships between the length of time worked at a particular job (or in planning), the location of previous jobs, job title, job responsibilities, or the perceived importance of planning for vacant and abandoned lots across the entire group of surveyed respondents. Three relationships of interest, however, do emerge.

Among shrinking cities, two paired relationships appear which may help to illuminate the nature of planning for vacant lots in these cities. First, two of the

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respondents in shrinking cities noted that planning for vacant lots was the most important issue for them while conducting their job responsibilities, while also suggesting that in their respective cities, planning for these lots was very important. The similar ranking of the importance of these lots for planning at large, and for their jobs in particular, intimates that these respondents see themselves at the forefront of a very important issue in the city. Of importance for this research into planners and affiliated planning personal, neither of these two respondents are planners – one is a landscape architect while the other is the city's Neighborhood Development Commissioner. The importance of this topic for these affiliated professionals supports the suggestion that these lots have wide-ranging impacts in cities and are objects of study and action by multiple departments across a city.

The second relationship is between the number of years spent working in a city and the importance of vacant and abandoned lots as a topic. Two shrinking cities respondents have worked in their cities for 21 and 26 years, respectively. These respondents were the only ones to note the importance of these lots for both the city in general and their own job responsibilities in particular as simply "Important". Every other respondent from shrinking cities had ranked the topic as "Very Important" for the city as well as "Important" or higher for their own job responsibilities. This discrepancy suggests that increased job tenure could be correlated with a diminished conception of the importance of these lots for the city in general, regardless of their own job title (one is the city's Planning Director and the other is Division Manager of Code Enforcement).

The third relationship of import is related to the job titles of those survey respondents who ranked vacant and abandoned lots as very important for both the city and for their own job responsibilities. In shrinking cities, the only two respondents to rank these lots so highly (aside from the landscape architect and commissioner mentioned above) were planners – a Senior Planner and a Community Planner. In stable-to-growing cities, this dual ranking was the highest importance ranking given by

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respondents to the topic of vacant and abandoned lots. It was given by a city Housing and Real Estate Director and the Assistant Administrator of a city's Department of Metropolitan Development, respectively. This discrepancy between the job titles associated with ranking these lots highly in the two different types of cities suggests that vacant lots attract attention from very different types of city departments, depending on the growth environment of the city.

5.4.2.2 Steinitz Framework Questions

5.4.2.2.1 Representation Models

The survey continued by introducing questions associated with the six models specified in Steinitz' Framework. The first two questions associated with the framework were questions associated with Representation Models. These specify the basic elements of the environment in terms of content, boundaries, space, and time within planning (and perhaps other city) offices. These questions were focused to ask about the explicit and implicit definitions of vacant and abandoned lots upon which policy makers and planning administrators are basing their decisions and actions.

Questions twelve and thirteen were asked to identify relationships in the choices of data used, or not used, in the decisions made, as well as the source of the city's definition of "vacant" and "abandoned." Additionally, by establishing the method, whether it be experiential, legal, or political, of determining the condition of vacancy or abandoned, it is possible to begin to understand the institutional knowledge of, and experience with, the condition as well as the prescribed remedies.

These questions (12-13) included:

12. When considering issues related to vacant or abandoned lots, what are the most important sources of data you use? As best as possible, please list them in rank order (1 = the most important data source).

13. When considering issues related to vacant or abandoned lots, HOW does your city make determinations of when a structureless lot or property becomes "vacant" or "abandoned" (i.e. what is the "tipping point")? For example, is this

determination based in legal statute, is it based upon site visits to the property in question, etc.? WHERE are these determinations based? For example, are they explicitly laid out in state or city documents, or is this an implicit determination left to individuals within city government?

The most frequently cited source of data used by planners in both sets of cities is data retrieved from the city's GIS database. (See Figure 5.6) The reliance on GIS data is not surprising, considering its strength in teaming physical, location-based data (such as parcel information, infrastructure/utilities, and adjoining uses) with overlays of data such as zoning, redevelopment/investment zones, and transit lines. Respondents were not specific, however, in describing the source of this information or the types of data that were included in these databases. Questions that emerge from this omission is whether these planners were active in gathering this data or passive consumers of it, as well as how the types of data included in the system determined or prescribed the land use information derived from it. In what ways is decision-making in these cities pre-determined by the data included in the GIS databases, and who makes this choice?

Another computerized record source, that of the county auditor, is also frequently used. These data complement the physical and legal/administrative GIS data source with financial information regarding tax payments. County Auditor records, noting that a parcel has taxes owing, may be the first indicator that an owner is in financial difficulties or has abandoned the parcel. The third most commonly used source of information is Recorder's Office Records. If information about ownership is not available through a GIS database, the Recorder's Office will give planners information about who currently holds title to a lot and who is the person or entity responsible for upkeep and maintenance.

Figure 5.6: Sources of Data Used when Considering Issues related to Vacant and Abandoned Lots[8]
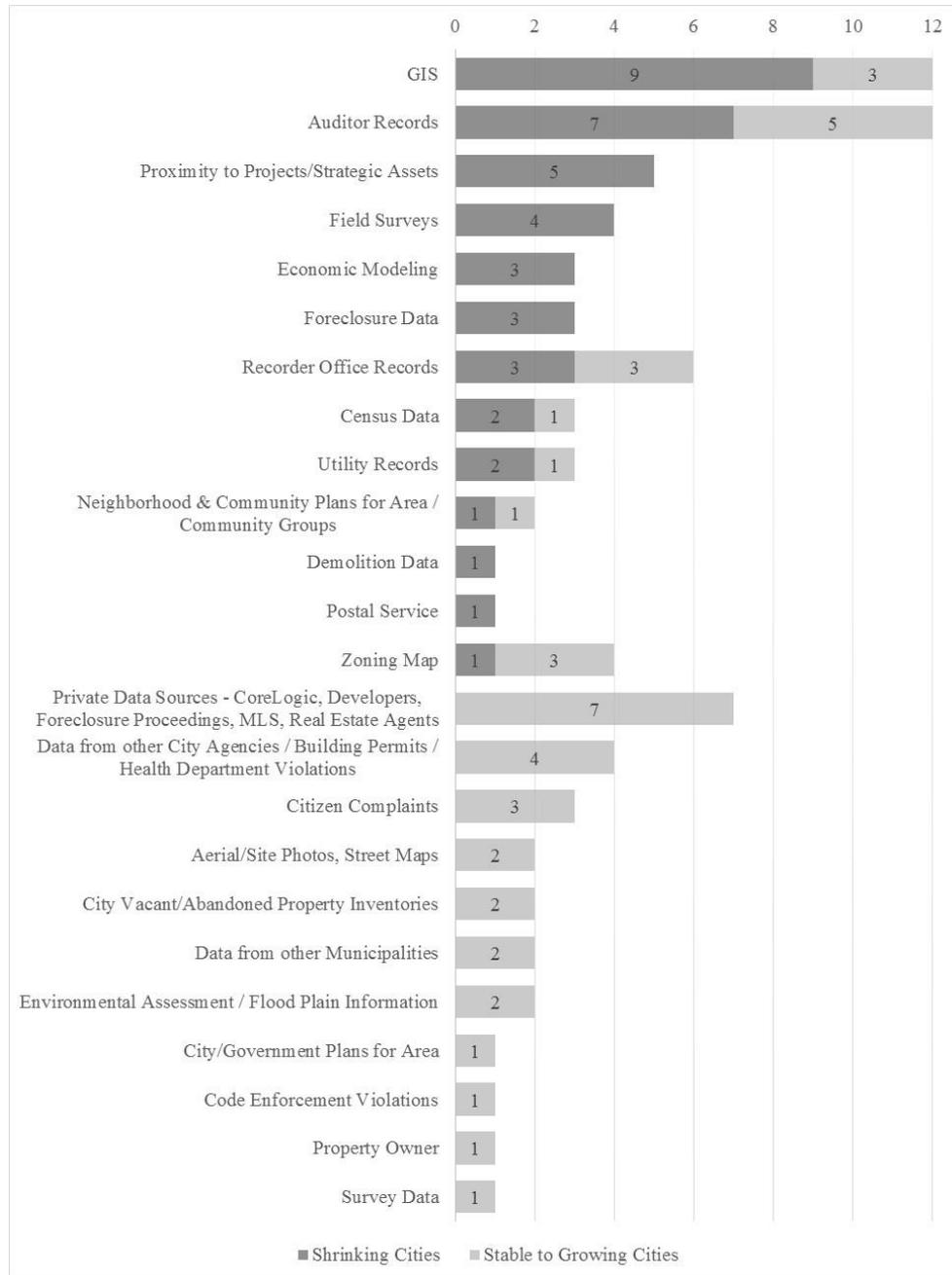
[8] For all bar charts, the number of responses are non-cumulative. In Figure 5.21, for example, the twelve responses next to the first answer, "GIS", indicates that 9 planners in shrinking cities gave this response while 3 planning in stable-to-growing cities gave this response.

The second question associated with Representation Models attempts to locate the nexus of the decision regarding vacancy or abandonment, situating it either in a legal determination or ruling or law, as the outcome of a standard political or legal process, or as a discretionary judgment taken by municipal officials. (See Figure 5.7)

For both types of cities, this determination is primarily located in one of three places: city code, state law, or in a discretionary judgment which has been either set down in city planning documents or left up to the discretion of certain city departments. For a smaller subset of cities, this determination results from a court case. In one city, "vacant or distressed" lands are defined in the city's Comprehensive Plan; it is up to individual departments to judge whether parcels fit these definitions through the use of City GIS data. In another city, indications of vacancy or abandonment occur in the wake of either court-ordered demolition or foreclosure proceedings. It is then up to the city's planners to acquire individual properties according to their location and fit with future plans.

In no city was there a proactive stance such as finding or identifying vacant properties through field surveys. This could indicate both a large number of such properties already identified, a shortage of staff to do such surveys, or an established system for bringing these properties to the attention of municipal actors.

Figure 5.7: How Determinations of Vacancy and Abandonment are made in Surveyed Cities
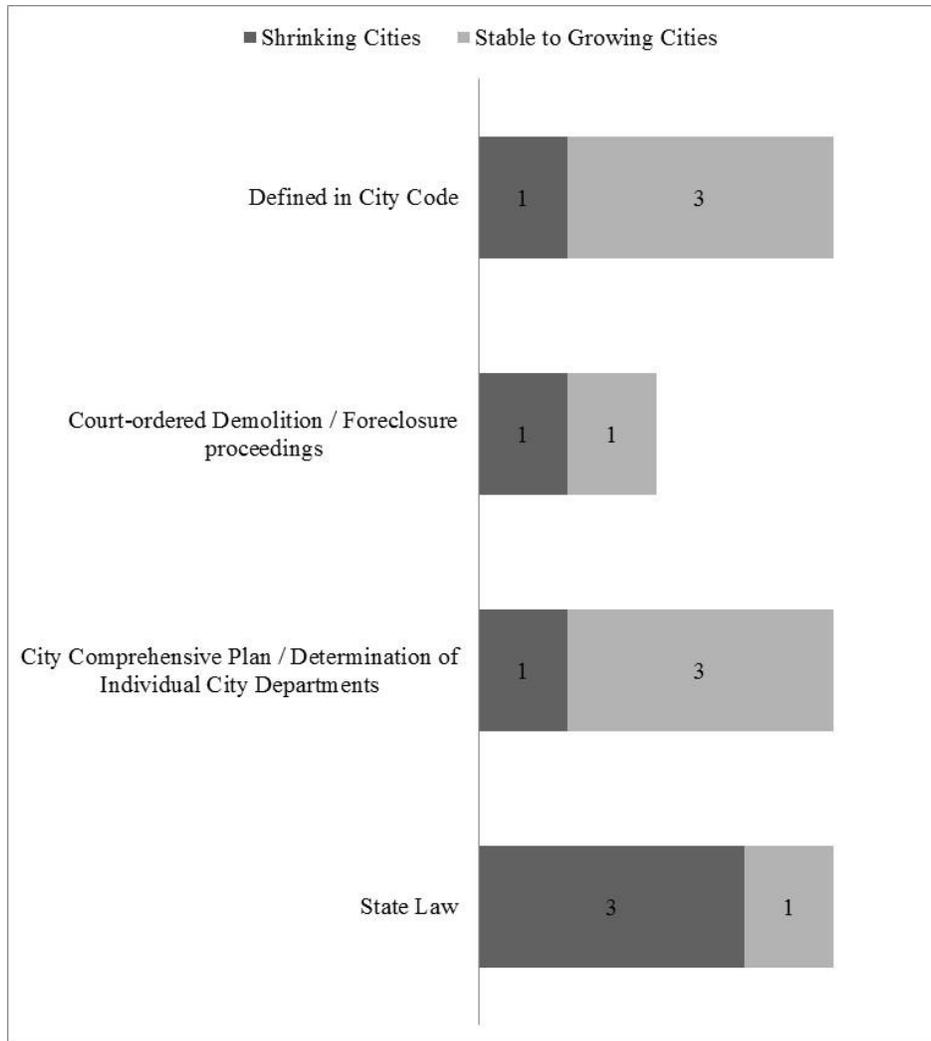
5.4.2.2.2 Process Models

The second set of Framework questions are those associated with Process Models. These describe the structural and functional relationships of the elements in the built environment. Process Models describe how the built environment works. By explicitly calling attention to cause and effect relationships, Process Models provide a mental map that locates potential opportunities to bring about purposeful change. For

this research, the Process Model of greatest concern is how vacant lots come into being and commensurately go out of existence. Through the disclosure of the multiple questions associated with taking action on vacant and abandoned lots, possible limiting or enabling forces may come into focus.

The survey questions (11,14) were:

11. The question, "What should be done with vacant or abandoned lots?" can be considered an umbrella question, because it includes many other questions that must be asked and answered. What related or sub-questions do you also consider when you think about, "What should be done with vacant or abandoned lots?"

14. What economic, environmental, technical, social, or political trends or processes contribute to the making of vacant or abandoned lots in your city? In your opinion, how, specifically, does each trend or process contribute to the making of these lots? (Please disregard, in answering this question, any and all vacant and abandoned properties whose title has been acquired by the city.) Please list both WHAT trends and processes as well as HOW they contribute in rank order (1 = most significant in creating these lots).

To begin to investigate the Process Models being used by planners and associated professionals in these cities, the first question asked was number eleven. As a process question, this question was asked to investigate the related processes that are understood to be related to vacant and abandoned lots and intertwined with the forces creating these lots. Responses from the planners in stable-to-growing, as well as shrinking, cities indicated that there were a few common questions asked in both types of cities, but that there were also a large number of questions particular to the different types of development conditions inherent to these city types. (See Figure 5.8)

The most commonly asked question in shrinking cities was about the availability of resources to act. These could be monetary resources, city staff ability, volunteers/community attention, or a number of other types of resources. This was also a leading question asked in the stable-to-growing cities, although the resources mentioned by these planners were exclusively of the monetary sort.

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Figure 5.8: Related or Sub-Questions Considered when Thinking about "What should be done with vacant or abandoned lots?"
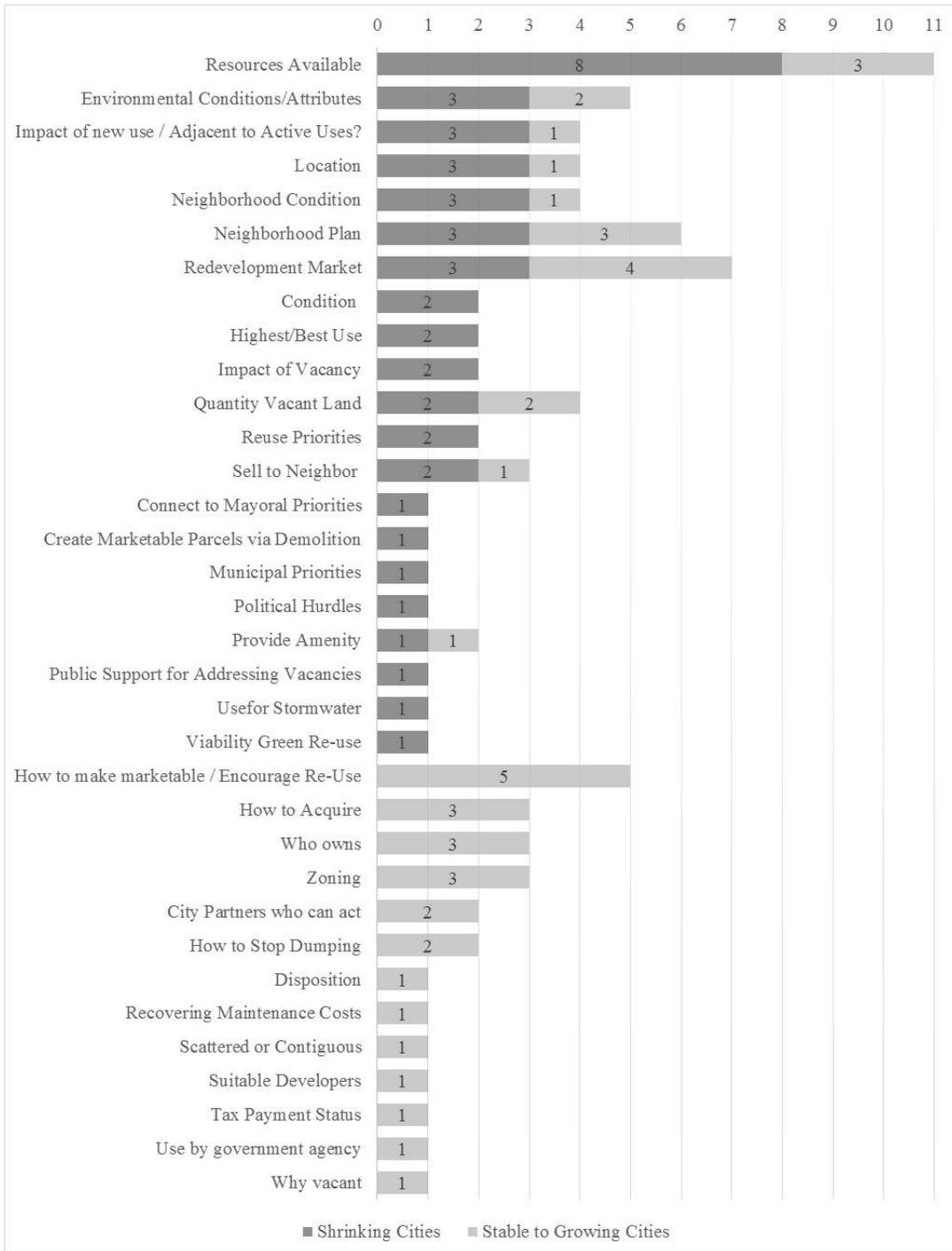
In stable-to-growing cities, the most commonly asked question about what should be done with vacant and abandoned lots centered around the redevelopment market that exists for the lots. The frequency and primacy of asking this question may reflect the assumption in stable-to-growing cities that vacant and abandoned lots have some inherent value. The city does not need to clean them, incentivize their purchase by developers, or begin to think about alternative uses.

The sub-questions that are particular to shrinking cities differ from those of stable-to-growing cities in two main ways. First, they include questions about how these lots are currently, and might be in the future, making an impact upon their surrounding neighborhood. Questions asked solely by officials in stable-to-growing cities do not explore how these lots may be affecting either neighbors or the surrounding neighborhood. Secondly, the questions particular to shrinking cities indicate that there is no assumption that a market exists for these properties, and instead reflect an exploration for non-market oriented possibilities. Sub-questions asked in stable-to-growing cities do not consider non-market uses other than use by a municipal agency or the provision of an amenity, both types of uses which are easily convertible into market uses should a redevelopment opportunity arise.

In both stable-to-growing and shrinking cities, the issue of addressing vacant and abandoned lots appears to be self-contained as it raises questions related only to effecting the changes that need to happen and considering immediate effects. While many actions that planners take have wide-reaching causes and effects, reverberating around a neighborhood and a city, responses to this question indicate that action on vacant and abandoned lots is approached as a largely localized issue, in terms of geographic and economic effects.

It is possible to code these sub-questions into six thematic categories: community/neighborhood considerations, economic considerations, the physical condition of lots, resources available to effect change, and political considerations emerge as overarching categories of associated questions. (See Figure 5.9)

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Figure 5.9: Prime Related or Sub-Question Themes
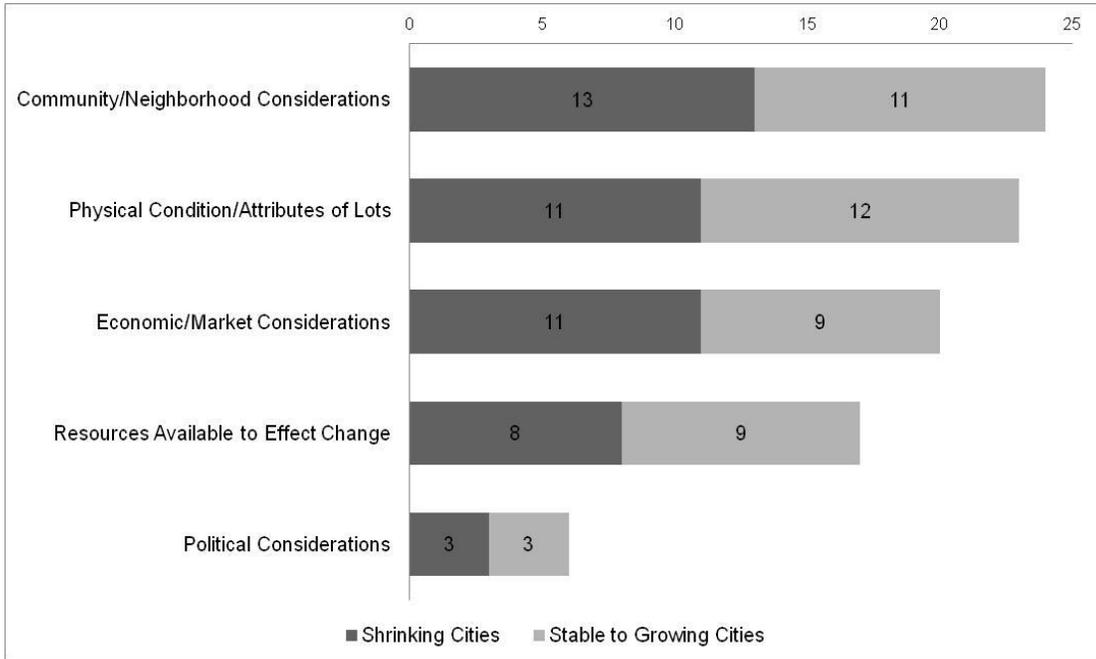
Through the use of coding, themes emerged which enable further analysis of the differences between Process Models used in shrinking cities as compared to stable-to-growing cities. The most commonly cited type of question in both sets of cities is those connected to community and neighborhood considerations. In shrinking cities, these questions include both the impact of the vacant lots as well as the impact of any proposed change to the lots, neighborhood concerns and plans, and the condition of the surrounding neighborhood. The implication here is that when action is being considered on these lots in shrinking cities, one of the first groups thought about is the immediate neighborhood and community. As cities that have lost a large proportion of their population, any attention given to the needs of remaining residents is understandable and good municipal policy.

In stable-to-growing cities, there are also questions asked about the neighborhood's plan or need for the lot and the condition of the surrounding neighborhood. Other types of questions related to community or neighborhood

considerations are more market-oriented, such as the current zoning of the parcel or the ability to sell to a neighbor.

The next two most commonly cited question themes in both types of cities are those associated with the physical condition of the lots themselves and economic/market considerations. These themes are related, inasmuch as flat, clean, maintained, regular (in terms of shape) lots are easiest to develop. They are also evidence of different avenues of thought regarding potential action. Questions associated with these two themes are very similar across all surveyed cities.

Economic considerations such as city reuse priorities, the ability to sell lots to neighbors, and the possibility of creating marketable parcels through demolition illustrate the varying fiscal positions in which cities with vacant and abandoned lots find themselves. For some cities, the ability to sell lots to neighbors and reduce the amount of maintenance and oversight expected of city employees is a driving factor. Other cities, with perhaps a more positive city financial position, are able to consider issues such as reuse priorities, and the strategic creation of marketable properties.

The physical conditions of the lots are related to the above two categories and return the focus to physical planning issues. Planners in both types of cities consider environmental issues related to slope, floodplain location, and drainage as well as the condition they are currently in, and the quantity of contiguous land. These issues are directly related to maintenance, marketability, and use for green amenities or parkland, indicating that planners are thinking of these lots in concrete, contextual terms, and not just as abstract, undefined empty spaces.

A related process question, number fourteen, asks survey respondents: "What economic, environmental, technical, social, or political trends or processes contribute to the making of vacant or abandoned lots in your city? In your opinion, how, specifically, does each trend or process contribute to the making of these lots?"

Table 5.16: Primary Trends and Processes Contributing to the Creation of Vacant and Abandoned Lots

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Decreased demand for housing*	Economic Decline
Sustained population loss*	Employment/Job Losses
Lack of funds to rehab aging buildings	Empty Buildings not properly stabilized
Missing Heirs	Flight to Suburbs
Overbuilding in Region	Land unsuitable for Building
Property abandonment	Location in Undesirable areas
	Natural Disaster led to Housing Loss
	Restrictive Zoning
*Two mentions of each trend/process	Weak Neighborhood Housing Markets

The top ranking trends and processes believed to help contribute to the creation of vacant and abandoned lots in these cities are varied, although there are two common contributing trends in both types of cities. (See Table 5.16) These are a lack of funds to rehab or maintain aging buildings and the location of buildings in undesirable areas.

In shrinking cities, sustained population loss and decreased demand for housing are believed to represent the most common trends. These two are related to larger, regional population and job movements away from cities of the Northeast and Midwest. The other noted primary processes could be commonly found in cities around the country. Many cities continue to sprawl outward from their cores and have experienced overbuilding in the region, while older, smaller, inner-city homes prove unpopular in many U.S. cities, leading to abandonment, prohibitively expensive rehabilitation, and an unwillingness to accept responsibility for these properties.

Figure 5.10: All Trends and Processes Contributing to the Creation of Vacant and Abandoned Lots
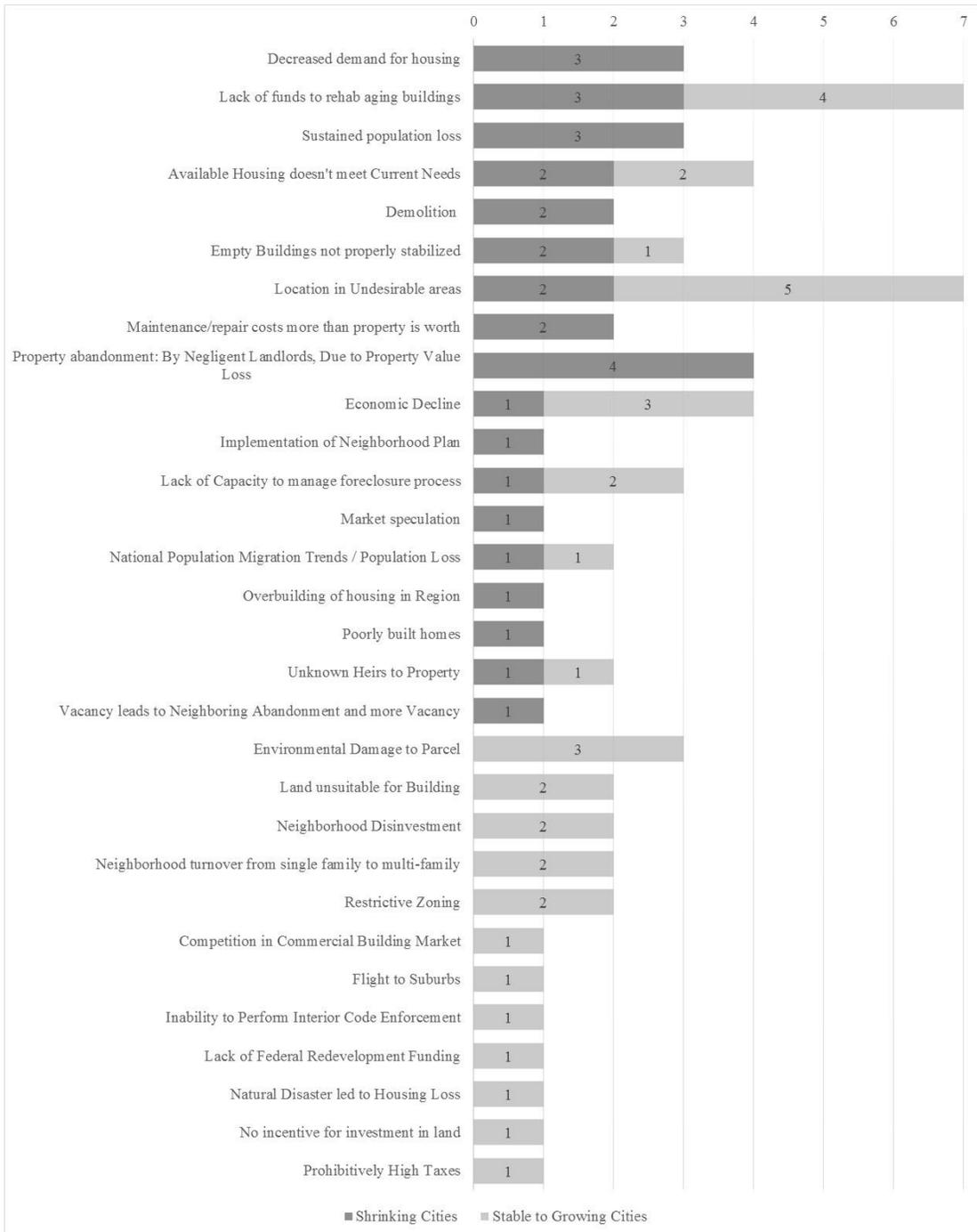
Among stable-to-growing city planners surveyed, each gave a different primary trend or process causing the creation of vacant and abandoned lots. One mentioned the national trend of people moving from inner cities or urban locations to the suburbs. Two cities mentioned trends that are particular to specific locations in their cities, including neglecting to properly stabilize empty buildings and the weakness of individual neighborhood housing markets. The majority of comments revolved around issues that their city or region is dealing with on a whole, ranging from unsuitable land for building and natural disasters to economic decline and job loss.

Expanding from the prime contributors to the creation of vacant and abandoned lots out to additional contributors, there are a number of processes that are thought to be involved. These are shown above, in Figure 5.10, and range from location of lots and market speculation to issues related to zoning, code enforcement, and natural disasters.

Coding the trends or processes into categories associated with their sources, it is apparent that the overwhelming majority are based in either local/regional trends or in characteristics which are particular to individual lots. (See Table 5.17) In shrinking cities, fully eighty-five percent (27 out of 32) of the noted trends or processes operate on the scale of either the city/region or an individual lot, similar to the eighty-nine percent (33 out of 37) of trends in stable-to-growing cities.

Table 5.17: All Trends and Processes Contributing to the Creation of Vacant and Abandoned Lots: Three Main Themes

Shrinking Cities		*Stable to Growing Cities*	
National Trends		**National Trends**	
2	Available Housing does not Meet Current Needs	2	Available Housing does not meet Current Needs
1	Market speculation	1	Flight to Suburbs
1	Vacancy Leads to Neighboring Abandonment and more Vacancy	1	Lack of Federal Redevelopment Funding
1	National Population Migration Trends	4	
5			
Local/ Regional Trends		**Local/ Regional Trends**	
3	Decreased Demand for Housing	5	Location in Undesirable areas
3	Sustained Population Loss	3	Economic Decline
2	Demolition	2	Lack of Capacity to manage foreclosure process
1	Abandonment Due to Property Value Loss	2	Land unsuitable for Building
1	Economic Decline	2	Restrictive Zoning
1	Implementation of Neighborhood Plan	1	Market
1	Lack of Capacity to Manage Foreclosure Process	1	Inability to perform interior code enforcement
1	Overbuilding of Housing in Region	1	Natural Disaster led to Housing Loss
1	Poorly Built Homes	1	Population Loss
14		1	Prohibitively High Taxes
		19	
Individual Property-related Factors		**Individual Property-related Factors**	
3	Lack of Funds to Rehab Aging Buildings	4	Lack of funds to rehab aging buildings
2	Empty Buildings not Properly Stabilized	3	Environmental Damage to Parcel
2	Location in Undesirable Areas	2	Neighborhood Disinvestment
2	Maintenance/repair Costs More than Property is Worth	2	Neighborhood turnover from single family to multi-family
2	Property Abandonment	1	Empty Buildings not properly stabilized
1	Abandonment by Negligent Landlords	1	Unknown Heirs to Property
1	Unknown Heirs to Property	1	No incentive for investment in land
13		14	

5.4.2.2.3 Evaluation Models

The third set of questions is associated with Evaluation Models. These qualify or quantify the current conditions of the environment and thresholds of success or failure. Evaluation is used to determine what are the explicitly and implicitly determined points at which action must be taken to address a situation, what are the criteria (or metrics) being used to make decisions to take action, and how these determinations are related to previous models. The intent was to determine if there had been development of a specific set of benchmarks that would indicate a sincere desire, and support on the part of administrations, to systematically assess current conditions and implement appropriate actions, based on a comprehensive review of multiple possible contributing factors.

Evaluation questions in this survey (15, 20, 22) are:

15. Given the trends and processes you identified in the previous question, what are the measures or benchmarks that you typically use to determine if/when/where/how to take action, when it becomes clear that some kind of action is required? Please list them in rank order (1 = most important measure). Please also note TO WHICH of the trends/processes identified in the previous question these measures/benchmarks are referring.

20. Given the range of actions that might be taken in regards to vacant and abandoned lots, are there specific site context/ circumstance/ conditions/ factors/ state of affairs/ situations/ considerations (in regards to each individual lot) that are factored into the decision making process? Please note WHAT these considerations are and HOW they are factored in.

22. When considering issues related to vacant or abandoned lots, how do you evaluate the impact of the proposed change or changes? Do you have qualitative or quantitative thresholds or benchmarks that indicate that a proposed change should be "successful enough" to proceed? Please list first HOW YOU EVALUATE impacts and then list these thresholds or benchmarks in typical order of importance (1 = most important).

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Table 5.18: All Primary Measures and Benchmarks Used to Make "Take Action" Determination

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Redevelopment Interest*	Code Violations^
Code Violation	Housing Deterioration due to Sinking
Condemned needing Demolition	Long-term Vacancy
Emergency	Public Safety Issues
Proximity to Assets	Sidelot Program Opporunities
Value/Function of Residence	Unpaid Taxes
*Two mentions of trend/process	^Four mentions of trend/process

Table 5.18 and Figure 5.11 show the responses to the first Evaluation Model question, number 15. The question asked respondents about measures or benchmarks that they use when it becomes clear that some sort of action must be taken on vacant and abandoned lot. In shrinking cities, the most common primary response to this question was that action was initiated on these vacant or abandoned lots when some sort of redevelopment interest arose. Given the financial difficulties in many of these cities, it is understandable that a city cannot take action on all vacant or abandoned lots and that action might be initiated only when a qualified developer indicates interest in taking responsibility for the property. Other measures or benchmarks noted, such as code violations, emergencies, or the need for demolition, speak to a city's liability issues as well as legal requirements for enforcing codes.

As might be expected, the two most commonly cited measures used by planners to decide when to take action on vacant and abandoned lots are those of complaints and code violations. (See Figure 5.11) Many of the other benchmarks appear to be less official policies that come into effect when a certain measure is reached. These are more on the order of personal benchmarks which motivate planners, neighbors, and city officials to take action. With a lack of official, regulatory benchmarks on the books, it is up to individuals to decide when to take action on these lots.

Figure 5.11: All Measures and Benchmarks Used to Make "Take Action"
Determination
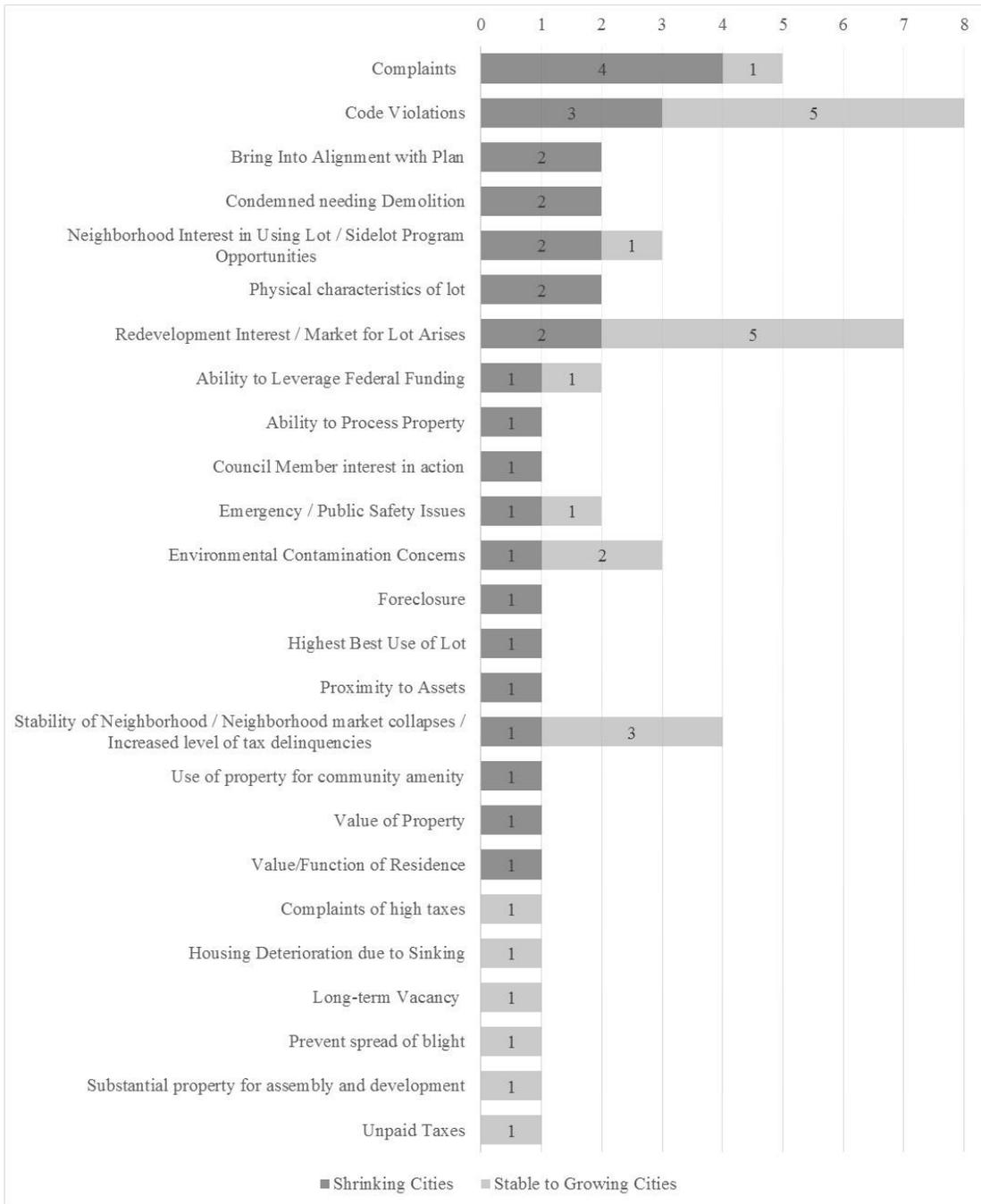
Table 5.19: All Measures and Benchmarks Used to Make "Take Action"
Determination: Time-Frame Categories

Shrinking Cities		Stable to Growing Cities	
Immediate Actions: Responding to Threats		**Immediate Actions: Responding to Threats**	
4	Complaints	5	Code Violations
3	Code Violations	1	Complaints
2	Condemned needing Demolition	1	Public Safety Issues
1	Emergency	7	
1	Stability of Neighborhood		
11			
Stemming Loss of Value/Threat to Neighboring Assets		**Stemming Loss of Value/Threat to Neighboring Assets**	
2	Neighborhood Interest in Using Lot	2	Environmental Contamination
1	Foreclosure	2	Neighborhood market collapses
1	Proximity to Assets	1	Complaints of high taxes
1	Use of property for community amenity	1	Housing Deterioration due to Sinking
1	Value of Property	1	Increased level of tax delinquencies
1	Value/Function of Residence	1	Prevent spread of blight
7		1	Unpaid Taxes
		9	
Considered Actions: Planning for Long-Term Opportunities		**Considered Actions: Planning for Long-Term Opportunities**	
2	Bring Into Alignment with Plan	5	Market for Lot arises
2	Physical characteristics of lot	1	Ability to Leverage Federal Funding
2	Redevelopment Interest	1	Long-term Vacancy
1	Ability to Leverage Federal Funding	1	Sidelot Program Opportunities
1	Ability to Process Property	1	Substantial property for assembly and development
1	Council Member interest in action	9	
1	Environmental Contamination Concerns		
1	Highest/Best Use of Lot		
11			

In stable-to-growing cities, code violations was by far the most commonly
noted benchmark used in making the determination to take action on vacant and
abandoned lots. Similarly, survey respondents also noted that public safety issues or

housing deterioration due to structural issues would initiate action, most likely in response to similar legal issues as those confronting shrinking city planners.

It is possible to code these measures, or benchmarks, into three categories of action, according to the impetus driving a planner to act. These are: immediate actions, taken in response to imminent threats resulting from vacant or abandoned lots; immediate to short-term actions taken to stem either loss of value or threats to neighboring assets resulting from vacant and abandoned lots; and more considered actions, taken as vacant and abandoned lots are found to pose an opportunity for a city. (See Table 5.19) By coding these types of measure or benchmarks into three themes according to the type of impetus driving action, different driving forces between shrinking and stable-to-growing cities become apparent.

The next Evaluation Model question, number twenty, asks: "given the range of actions that might be taken in regards to vacant and abandoned lots, are there specific site context/ circumstance/ conditions/ factors/ state of affairs/ situations/ considerations (in regards to each individual lot) that are factored into the decision making process?" (See Table 5.20)

Table 5.20: Site Considerations Factored into Decision Making Process

Shrinking Cities	*Stable to Growing Cities*
Location is Prime Factor: Highly Visible Areas become Priority Sites for Blight Management; Affects City Decision Whether to Acquire through Foreclosure	A property by property assessment - best neighborhood use, feasible options, resources available, partners to implement
Use factors such as: Adjacent Neighbors; Proximity to Employers, Assets, and Redevelopment Areas; and Location on Major (highly visible) Corridor	Concern by Residents, How marketable is property/site, level of hazard posed
Use factors such as: Ownership, size of lots, use, proximity to redevelopment, community desires to help make decisions.	Each Situation is different - location, size, marketability, tax delinquency, environmental condition, imminent hazard, specific request for future permanent or interim uses
Use factors such as: Slope of Site; Marketability of Site; Soil and Site Stability; Brownfield Contamination	Factors likely to increase city interest - highly visible interchange lots, location amongst developed lots, need for public garage to spur development
Working on Model to help make these Decisions	Feasibility of Parcel Redevelopment
Working with Local University to Develop Matrix for Land Re-use and Lot Stabilization Decisions	Platting, Availability of Utilities, Current Taxes, Foreclosure or Back Taxes status, Is it Maintained

The second Evaluation Model question, asking about special site considerations that are factored into the decision-making process similarly shows differences between the evaluative approaches of planners in these two types of cities. Responses indicate that planners in shrinking cities are actively working to either create models which will help them to systematically make decisions by taking into account all relevant factors, or they are making these decisions using a subset of factors which they have found to be most relevant for their city. Although a model would regularize the evaluations included in the type of decision-making that accompanies individual determinations and judgments, the continuously changing nature of a city would make it difficult to base all decisions on a purely objective model. Planners in stable-to-growing cities had similar responses, indicating that they were also looking at each property as a unique, individual set of characteristics, although none of the stable-to-growing cities indicated that they were developing a model for use in this process.

The final Evaluation Model question, number twenty-two, asks: "When considering issues related to vacant or abandoned lots, how do you evaluate the impact of the proposed change or changes? Do you have qualitative or quantitative thresholds or benchmarks that indicate that a proposed change should be 'successful enough' to proceed?" (See Tables 5.21 and 5.22) This two-part question asked first about how impacts are evaluated, and then to list the thresholds or benchmarks that are used.

Table 5.21: How to Evaluate Impacts of Proposed Changes

Shrinking Cities	*Stable to Growing Cities*
	Common sense measures, the city's growth compared to the US economy in general
Developing Measures to Evaluate Success	
How Will Quality of Life Improve?	Cost versus Benefits Ratio
How Will Surrounding Property Values Improve?	Currently too many variables in play
Neighborhood Sustainability	Don't evaluate; problem is minor and almost always taken care of
Place Deed Restriction on Parcel, Addressing Intended Re-Use and Timeline for Performance	Each circumstance is different, look at conditions that could lead to success
Successful if Someone else than City is Maintaining Lot	Increase in Jobs, Tourism Impact
Use both Qualitative and Quantitative Benchmarks	Increased Number of Properties returned to active use
What Will it Cost?	Land Bank will be guided by certain quantitative thresholds
Working on a Model to Evaluate	New Construction that benefits to tax base, the neighborhood, and brings redevelopment to community
	Unknown

Responses to this question represent a wide range of approaches to evaluating proposed changes to vacant and abandoned lots. These range from cities working on a specific model or developing measures to evaluate changes to those that have already developed measures, including the specific method of delineating performance of these lots through deed restrictions. Going further into detail about the types of benchmarks or thresholds currently being used, it becomes clear that there are two basic types: those that are more qualitative, with evaluation of the proposed changes designed to be an ongoing process, and those that are more quantitatively-oriented, with trackable measures that can be determined at any future point in time. (See Table 5.33)

Table 5.22: Types of Benchmarks/Measures Used

Shrinking Cities	*Stable to Growing Cities*
Ongoing, Qualitative/Experiential Types of Measures	*Ongoing, Qualitative/Experiential Types of Measures*
Appearance of Lot	Useful to Community as Resource that Strengthens Neighborhood
Degree of Neighborhood Involvement	Spur Investment
Effect on Existing Assets	
Housing Market Strengthened	
Is the Lot being put to some Productive Use?	
Non-Tangible Benefits Realized	
Positive Benefits for Adjoining Property Owners	
Quality of Life	
Using Lot to Solve Issues Market Cannot Address, such as providing Green Infrastructure or Food Production	
Value Received for Costs Expended	
What Happens if City Does Nothing?	
Trackable, Quantifiable Types of Measures	*Trackable, Quantifiable Types of Measures*
Are there Complaints?	Cost of Action
Land Returning to Taxable Status	Increased Collection of Taxes
Monitoring Progress on Parcels Sold for Development	Create Jobs
Number of Adopted Lots	Provide tangible benefit such as additional affordable housing
Number of Demolitions Decreasing	
Number of Foreclosures Decreasing	
Number of Lots Repurposed	
Number of Lots used for Urban Farms	
Number of Purchases in Neighborhood Increases	
Property Removed from City Maintenance	
Property Removed from City Ownership/Responsibility	
Rate of Abandonment Slowed	
Tracking Mowing and Trash Removal Requests	

5.4.2.2.4 Change Models

The next set of four survey questions is associated with Change Models. These questions ask about the actions that might alter the current representation of the environment.

These questions were largely about the actions that have been taken, as well as the limiting or enabling characteristics that emerged as relevant during the process of taking action on vacant and abandoned lots. Answers to these questions are of particular interest when viewed in relationship to earlier model levels and the ways that they have directed or blocked action options.

For this research, four questions (17-18, 25-26) were asked in the survey:

17. When considering taking action on vacant and abandoned lots in your city, which factors associated with the possibilities of change are completely within your ability to control and utilize? Which factors are beyond the control of your office? Which factors can you influence but not control?

18. Given the assessment that action should be taken, what types of policies, plans, or actions are most often considered in your city, with regard to vacant and abandoned land? Please list them in rank order (1 = most commonly considered).

25. Based upon your knowledge of the city please note the different actions which have been taken in regards to vacant and abandoned lots. Please list for each type of action which has been taken; A) HOW OFTEN have they been done; B) In WHAT WAYS have these actions been effective?

26. What are the conditions PARTICULAR TO YOUR CITY which have supported the implementation of plans and policies to address vacant and abandoned lots?

Responses to the first Change Model question, number seventeen, are shown below in Tables 5.23, 5.24, and 5.25. The intent of this question is to understand the extent of change-making powers that survey respondents have at hand.

Table 5.23: Factors Associated with Changing Vacant and Abandoned Lots that are Within the Ability of Survey Respondents to Control and Utilize

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Budget Allowance for Addressing Vacant Demolition Sites	Ability to prioritize these lots in budget
City-Owned Properties	Acquire Lots through Land Bank
Creation of Demolition Strategy	Administrative Organization to Identify and Manage Lots
Creation of Plan Denoting Areas to be Renaturalized	Apply Code Enforcement
Determining Priority of Parcels to Acquire	Apply Tax Liens to Titles
Efficiency of Transferring Parcels	Cleaning, greening, adop-a-lot, leasing, disposition, improvements to city owned lots
Guide to Re-Use of Vacant Property	Create Incentives for Lot Development
Land-Use Ordinances Controlling Uses of Property	Cutting and Cleaning Lot, Billing Owner for Service
	Doing outreach and meeting with potential users/owners
	Gain Control if Taxes or Liens for Weeds are not Paid
	Issue Citations for Unkempt Lots
	Planning/Making recommendations for Change on lots
	Using Legal Powers, such as Code Enforcement

Table 5.24: Factors Associated with Changing Vacant and Abandoned Lots that Survey Respondents have the Ability to Influence but not Control

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Creation of Stabilization Program	Acquiring First Lien rights in Court Suit
Decisions/Actions of County Landbank	Bringing interested parties, investors, taxing bodies together around issue
Delinquent Tax Replayment Plans	Can Influence City Council, State Legislature, Courts, Overall Real Estate Market to take action
Finding User and Uses Consistent with Neighborhood Plan	Can use Code Enforcement to Apply Pressue to Negligent Owners
Housing Court Rulings	Citations and Notices may Spur Action
Identifying Targeted Areas	Prioritization of Staff Resources
Land Reutilization Policy Decisions	Recommending disposition for a particular use or to a particular owner
Provision of Small Grants to Upgrade Vacant Lands	Utilization of State Law to Condemn through Eminent Domain
Redevelopment Decisions	

Table 5.25: Factors Associated with Changing Vacant and Abandoned Lots that are Beyond the Control of Survey Respondents' Offices (or Jobs)

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Availability of Resources for Interim Uses (Gardening) or Marketing for Sale	Ability to Purchase or Condemn to Acquire
Creating Demand for Vacant Property	Cannot force change until certain legal level of non-compliance is reached
Dumping on Lots	Disposition of Land
Heirs not Accepting Responsibility for Property	Environmental Factors
Legislation to Improve Outcomes on Vacant/Abandoned Lots	Larger Societal Trends, Larger Economic Trends
National and Regional Market Trends	Owner being receptive to change
Owners Abandoning Property	Ownership
Private Lot Upkeep	
Private Sales and Transfers	

The first Change Model question resulted in responses that were similar for planners in both shrinking and stable-to-growing cities. Planners in both types of cities have the ability to utilize a wide-range of existing tools and policies that are part of the traditional planning toolbox. These include zoning, budgeting, making plans, creating guides and priority lists, management, code enforcement, and utilizing existing programs and laws when needed.

Difficulties appear to emerge when planners wish to shape laws or create programs rather than simply implement them. It appears that most of the factors that planners can influence, but not control, are the result of their arena of action/interest being strictly defined and not being flexible or broad enough to give them the ability to tackle an expansive and unwieldy set of problems. These include decisions about redevelopment, land reutilization policy, and county land banking, as well as recommendations regarding disposition and identification of targeted areas for action. The role of advisor or influencer is useful for making changes on vacant and abandoned lots, but in a range of change-related areas it is clearly not seen as adequately effective. The set of factors that are beyond the control of planners also include larger, societal trends that affect the creation of vacant lots (and the resources necessary to care for them) and the actions of property owners and private individuals.

The next question associated with Change Models, question eighteen, asks: "given the assessment that action should be taken, what types of policies, plans, or actions are most often considered in your city, with regard to vacant and abandoned land?" (See Figure 5.37) In both shrinking and stable-to-growing cities, the most commonly considered actions are to sell the properties, either to identified developers or to the public at large through sheriff or foreclosures sales. This is a logical result of the general support for returning these parcels to the contributing side of city coffers. Maintenance and code enforcement are also commonly used, which is to be expected due to most cities' liability and legal requirements. Less often, the city will acquire

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properties on its own for development, either of public facilities or in conjunction with a community partner, or implement an interim holding strategy.

There was a degree of overlap between policies used in the two types of cities, with more actions used only in shrinking cities than those used only in stable-to-growing cities. It makes sense that shrinking cities would have considered, developed, or implemented more vacant and abandoned lot programs than stable-to-growing cities, as they would have more of the lots.

The responses solely attributable to planners in stable-to-growing cities, however, were less about actual lot interventions and more about the process of addressing these lots. Responses included legal action to control nuisances, market studies to encourage development, or processing properties through city's Hearing Authority. These responses indicate that while stable-to-growing cities planners have been using standard lot intervention techniques, they also believe that the city's administrative or legal processes for addressing these lots are capable of securing a good solution for problem properties.

Figure 5.12: Policies, Plans, and Actions that are Most Often Considered in regards to Vacant and Abandoned Lots
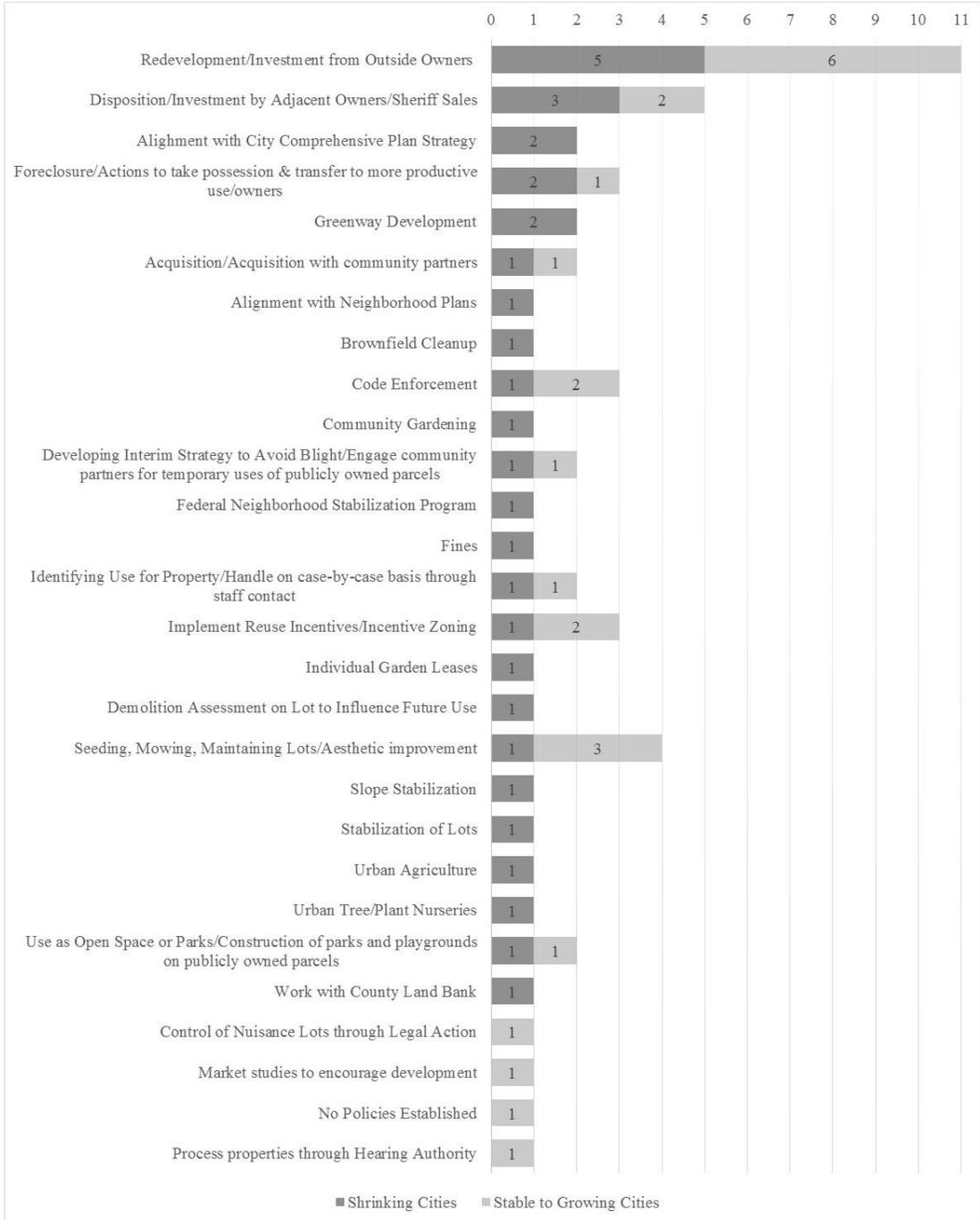
The next Change Model question, number twenty-five, asks survey respondents a similar question: "based upon your knowledge of the city please note the different actions which have been taken in regards to vacant and abandoned lots, how often have they been done, and in what ways have these actions been effective?" (See Table 5.26)

While the previous question asked respondents about what types of policies were most often considered, this one is investigates what actions had been most frequently taken. A large range of answers resulted that was easily coded into two categories: Processes/Procedures put into place and the Implementation of on-site reuses.

Table 5.26 Actions Being Undertaken on Vacant and Abandoned Lots

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Process/Procedure	Process/Procedure
Sale of Side Lots	City Purchase of Lots
Recently Developed Land Bank	Cleaning and Maintaining publicly owned properties
Adopt-a-lot Program	Code Enforcement
Assist Developers in Acquiring Vacant Lots	Contacting Owner
City acquisition	Incentives for development
Developing integrated land management software	Land Assembly for Single-Family Home Construction
Economic Development	Mowing and Cleaning Property, Billing Owner
Established set of partners to all work with same priorities	Working with adjacent property owners
Help Community Gardens gain access to Water Supplies	Working with other units of government or non-profits
Mini-Grants to Improve Vacant Lots	Working with Private Investors
On-site surveys of lots coming into Land Bank	Working with Taxing Bodies
Regular Code Enforcement	
Sale to Neighbors	
Streamlining properties through City Land Bank	
Targeted Demolition	
Volunteer Community Clean Ups	
Types of Re-uses	Types of Re-uses
Community Gardens	Developing Infrastructure onsite to spur nearby investment
Using lots for Stormwater Management	Private Development
Bioremediation of Contaminated lots	
Creating Official Open Space Areas	
Expanding Park Lands	
Rain Gardens	
Testing greening strategies	
Urban Agriculture	
Urban Plant Nurseries	

Responses indicate that shrinking cities have been much more active in implementing re-uses as well as processes and procedures for disposing or addressing the lots. It is not surprising that there have been more of both types of actions in shrinking cities. The lack of a functioning market for private land has given planners in these cities more experience with developing and implementing both policies and procedures as well as particular re-uses.

The final Change Model question is number twenty-six, which asks survey respondents "what are the conditions particular to your city which have supported the implementation of plans and policies to address vacant and abandoned lots?" (See Table 5.27)

Table 5.27: City-Specific Conditions that have Supported Action on Vacant and Abandoned Lots

Shrinking Cities	*Stable to Growing Cities*
City has Adopted Land Reutilization Program	Active city policies to reduce blight, selling lots to adjacent homeowners, comprehensive database of all vacant land.
Dire Economic, Housing, Depopulation, Abandonment Conditions have Facilitated Creation of City Demolition Plan	City's creation of Neighborhood Services division to proactively tackle blight-related issues
Large State Grant being used to Fund Workforce Training program Stabilizing Post-Demolition Sites	Implementation of Dangerous Buildings Ordinance caused many demolitions; these vacancies have been filled due to recent housing boom.
Market Conditions for Redevelopment Emerging in Some Neighborhoods	Local CDCs have received regional, state, and philanthropic funding to engage in neighborhood planning
Recognition of Region/City's Overbuilt Condition Supported Funding for Demolition of Nuisance Properties	Many New Vacant Lots
	Mayoral direction/leadership, public support for issue, leadership from municipal board, commissions, and NGOs in City
	Pro-Development Mayor and Council, staff updating of zoning ordinance and offering expedited construction review; good housing stock, good public schools, strong downtown
	Sheer magnitude of issue has kept it front-burner issue for decades in City.

A final Change Model question asked about the types of conditions in surveyed cities that have supported action on vacant and abandoned lots. In shrinking cities, as expected, a number of the responses cited a city's progressive approach to dealing with vacant and abandoned lots by noting the development of special programs or their

successful lobbying for state assistance funds. What is more unusual is that two survey respondents specifically noted that the difficult conditions in their cities, especially the housing situation, had resulted in the need for, and the creation of, demolition plans. Two of the stable-to-growing cities also cited the sheer volume of vacancies in their city as a condition supporting, or perhaps directing, the creation of policies to address the vacancies. For both types of cities, it appears that adverse conditions can also spur the city to being able to make change on these lots, not just beneficial circumstances.

5.4.2.2.5 Impact Models

The fifth set of framework questions are those associated with Impact Models. These specify what predictable differences might occur as a result of changes to these vacant and abandoned lots. Impact Model questions were used to describe the implicit and explicit definitions of meaningful impact that cities are using in regards to vacant and abandoned lots, including the determination of points at which impact becomes meaningful. An additional type of question was how these definitions or determinations were related to earlier models.

Responses to the Impact questions provide insight into the degree to which a city might conceive of the optimization of opportunities, the minimization of liabilities, satisficing in order to be seen achieving some positive change to vacant and abandoned lots.

The Impact Model questions (21, 23-24) were:

21. Please answer the more accurate of the two following questions for your planning experience with vacant and abandoned lots in your city: a. When determining options for change on these lots, is it most accurate to say that your decision-making process is largely done in the hope of curing or easing a "problem" in your city? How do you feel that your actions have been constrained in this manner? OR b. When determining options for change on these lots, is it most accurate to say that the options which you are able to consider in your decision-making process are ones that might take advantage of an undesirable situation and create an "opportunity" for your city? How do you feel that your actions have been enabled in this manner?

23. How are these qualitative or quantitative thresholds or benchmarks of success developed? Are there explicit or implicit definitions of meaningful impact which you are using?

24. When considering whether a proposed change is considered "successful" are your measurements largely based upon minimizing some externally determined "bad" condition, are they based upon maximizing some externally determined "good" condition, or a combination of the two? Please explain HOW your measurements represent a minimization/maximization or a mix.

Responses to the first Impact Model question, number twenty-one, are shown in Table 5.28.

Table 5.28: Planning for Vacant and Abandoned Lots: Curing/Easing Problems or Creating Opportunities

Shrinking Cities	*Stable to Growing Cities*
Both - In the short term, easing problems which will become opportunities in the long-term. Constrained by a lack of resources. Recent creation of Land Bank is expected to assist with creating more opportunities.	Both, because not all lots present real practical alternatives. In these cases, they can be turned into something the neighborhood wants, enjoys, and maintains.
Both - Working with vacant lots from perspective of multiple time-frames: immediate maintenance, temporary and transitional uses, long-term assembly and redevelopment opportunities.	Both, depending on the circumstances, efforts may be primarily about reducing blight and tax delinquency but also about improving quality of life and setting the stage for future development consistent with city plans
Both, but creating opportunities is becoming more frequent as the city has chosen to direct resources supporting various types of reuse.	Both - We realize that that there are problems but are realistic about there being no silver bullets to solve problems overnight. We also realize that there is a process for turning an undesirable liability into an opportunity
Both, but creating opportunities is becoming more important as the city looks to goal of sustainability.	Creating opportunities as city has employed Master Developer to help with acquisition and re-use of vacant properties
Both, but more often curing or easing problems.	Creating Opportunities as we meet with agencies to give recommendations on disposition process and on particular uses or users for parcels
Both. Constrained by excess supply of lots and low demand.	Creating opportunities because City Government realizes we only have so much land and the City is a reflection of who we are. The curing problems approach is too easy, so creating opportunities is the only way to go.
Creating Opportunity by Taking Advantage of an Undesirable Situation	Creating Opportunities is the goal of most of our vacant lot development
Curing the problem of unproductive land . Constrained by lack of demand.	Curing problems as we eliminate blight and hazards and hope to stem further deterioration, stabilizing neighborhoods Curing problems, due to lack of funding

An Impact Model question about whether decision-making is done to cure problems or take advantage of opportunities resulted in similar answers for shrinking and stable-to-growing cities. In shrinking cities, the majority of survey respondents claimed that their city makes decisions with a mix of these goals in mind. This standpoint reflects the situation wherein some serious side effects in these cities must be addressed, whether or not the city is able to capitalize upon opportunities. In the stable-to-growing cities, the responses were split more evenly between curing problems, creating opportunities, and a combination of the two, reflecting the divergence that exists between the stable-to-growing cities surveyed, despite their similarly "successful" status as stable or growing.

Question twenty-three asks Survey Respondents "how are these qualitative or quantitative thresholds or benchmarks of success developed? Are there explicit or implicit definitions of meaningful impact which you are using?," in reference to evaluating whether proposed changes are considered "successful enough" to proceed. (See Table 5.29)

In shrinking cities, some created, or are currently creating, methods of connecting plan outcomes with established neighborhood or community goals. Others have developed quantitative benchmarks, which are useful in monitoring progress towards unstated goals. Still other cities are just starting on this process, having realized the difficulty in measuring qualitative effects and making definitive connections between causes and effects.

The stable-to-growing cities show a much less defined process for evaluating proposed changes, which is in-line with the types of activities happening on vacant and abandoned lots in these cities. Most of the experience of these stable-to-growing cities is with maintaining lots, enforcing owners' responsibilities, and selling them for development, activities which do not lend themselves to the need for developing multifaceted evaluation processes.

Table 5.29: How Thresholds or Benchmarks of Success are Developed, Definitions of Meaningful Impact

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Cost Per Resident of Providing Open Space, Park, and Recreation Services	Don't quantify anticipated or actual benefits; measure sustainability and qualitative improvements
During Neighborhood Planning Process with Public Input	Implicit - looking for every opportunity to turn lots and neighborhoods around
If Someone Else is Maintaining the Lot, the City considers it a Successful Outcome	They are more implicit
Number of Parcels and Acreage of Vacant and Distressed Lots (Compared to Previous Year)	Thresholds are currently being developed for use by Land Bank
Number of Parcels and Acreage Recycled	
Percentage of City within Walkable Distance of Open Space	
Quality of Life Factors, Demographic Factors, Market Factors. Threshold depends on funding sources or objectives of particular plan.	
Realize the complicated nature of developing cause and effect relationship between value and vacant lot stabilization.	
Subjective valuations such as community morale and establishment of order can tend to reduce crime.	
TBD	
Value of Open Space System	
Working to connect benchmarks of success to City's Outcome Budgeting Process, CitiStat program, and to Goals mentioned in City's Sustainability Plan	

Survey responses to this question represent the different experiences cities are having with developing benchmarks. This question follows up on the Evaluation Model question "How do you evaluate the impact of the proposed change or changes?" Responses about developing benchmarks are similar to the responses to that question, as shown in Tables 5.21 and 5.22, in that the volume and variety of responses attributable to planners in shrinking cities indicate a more considered approach to the development of benchmarks than do those of planners in stable-to-growing cities.

The final question associated with Impact Models asks survey respondents: "when considering whether a proposed change is considered "successful" are your measurements largely based upon minimizing some externally determined "bad" condition, are they based upon maximizing some externally determined "good" condition, or a combination of the two? Please explain how your measurements represent a minimization/maximization or a mix." (See Table 5.30)

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Table 5.30: Measurement of Success

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Combination of Two	Combination of Two - At the citywide level, we track both good and bad conditions.
Combination of Two - Cost to Maintain, Complaints about Lots, How many Community Gardens Produce Food, How Many Lots Beautified	Combination of Two - eradicating determined "bad" condition and maximizing "good" condition
Combination of Two - Most Important is to Minimize "Bad" by Maintaining Appearances of Lots	Combination of Two - primarily it is addressing a "bad" condition and that is how we learned of issue, but then we try to maximize whatever good or community benefit that we can
Combination of Two - Slow Rate of Abandonment, Increase Number of Purchases, Less Foreclosures, Less Need for Demolitions.	Combination of Two - reducing blight with an active reuse of the lot, increasing tax collected
Maximizing a good condition - Protecting Sustainable Neighborhoods	Maximizing a good condition - benefitting from growth demands of already successful enterprises in City
TBD	Minimizing a bad condition

Again, responses were very similar across all cities surveyed, as the majority of respondents admitted that they were attempting to navigate between the two, measuring success both by minimizing what was not working in their city and limiting the harmful effects, as well as maximizing what they saw as working, contributing in a positive manner.

5.4.2.2.6 Decision Models

The final set of questions are related to Decision Models. Here the survey was used to ask about who makes decisions about which action to take and how they are implemented, what could be hampering certain actions from being taken, what enables certain decisions to be made, and as always, how these determinations are related to earlier models.

These questions (10, 16, 19, 27) were:

10. When considering issues related to vacant or abandoned lots, what are your primary motivations for taking action? Please list them in rank order (1 = most important)

16. Is your city legally required to take action regarding vacant and abandoned lots when some indicator or benchmark is reached, OR are decisions related to

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vacant and abandoned lots discretionary (subject to the political process)? Please indicate WHICH is more accurate and HOW this decision is made.

19. Given the assessment that action should be taken, are there policies, plans, or actions that a county, state, or federal government can implement, in regard to vacant and abandoned lots in your city, which can assist with your objectives? Please note WHAT these policies/plans/actions are, with WHICH level of government they are most often associated, and HOW they can assist with your objectives.

27. Are there plans and policies that cannot be implemented in your city due to legal restrictions or perceived political liability?

The responses to question 10 show that planners in the surveyed cities have a wide-range of motivations for taking action. Figure 5.13 shows a Tag Cloud that was created out of the primary motivations of shrinking city planners, which illustrates that the most commonly cited primary motivation is blight, followed by the general idea of reuse. Recognizing that it can be difficult to present findings from QCA, due to its production of results such as "expressions from subjects reflecting how they view the social world" (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 2), tag clouds such as Figures 5.13 and 5.14 are a useful method due to their ability to visually represent qualitative data in a manner that represents the relative importance of each datapoint.

Primary motivations for both types of cities were similar, but with a few distinct differences. Shrinking cities motivations range from encouraging reuse, protecting property values, and restoring confidence to deterring crime and dumping and healing blight. These primary motivations largely illustrate the visceral sense of damage, insult, and hurt that these lots can cause to a neighborhood, reflected in the choice of words like "blight," "dumping," and "crime."

Figure 5.13: Shrinking Cities: Primary Motivation for Taking Action on Vacant and Abandoned Lots

Figure 5.14: Stable-to-Growing Cities: Primary Motivation for Taking Action on Vacant and Abandoned Lots

In contrast, the primary motivations for taking action on vacant and abandoned lots, as mentioned by planners in stable-to-growing cities, are more centered around

improvement and renewal. Blight once again is the most commonly noted motivation, seconded by safety. Beyond these first two items, the primary motivations in these stable-to-growing cities is more positive than those in shrinking cities. They are largely about management and guiding or redirecting the use of these vacant lots towards something more constructive. The sense here is that there is an existing alternative use for the lots and it is up to planners or government officials to assist in getting these parcels back on track towards productive use.

If we look past primary motivations, and include all stated motivations (Figure 5.15) we begin to see a more comprehensive vision of how vacant and abandoned lots represent multiple types of challenges and opportunities for surveyed cities.

In shrinking cities, the challenges that these lots present to city budgets emerges as the most frequently cited motivation for taking action, followed closely by: eliminating blight, creating amenities, dereliction, dumping, and complaints about the lots, and redevelopment. In stable-to-growing cities, while blight was the most frequently cited primary motivation, it falls to fifth most commonly-cited motivation, with ensuring appropriate uses are occurring on lots, contributing to neighborhood revitalization, a return to tax rolls, and safety being more frequently noted motivations. There is, in fact, a great deal of overlap between motivations mentioned by planners in shrinking cities and those in stable-to-growing cities.

Figure 5.15: All Motivations for Taking Action on Vacant and Abandoned Lots
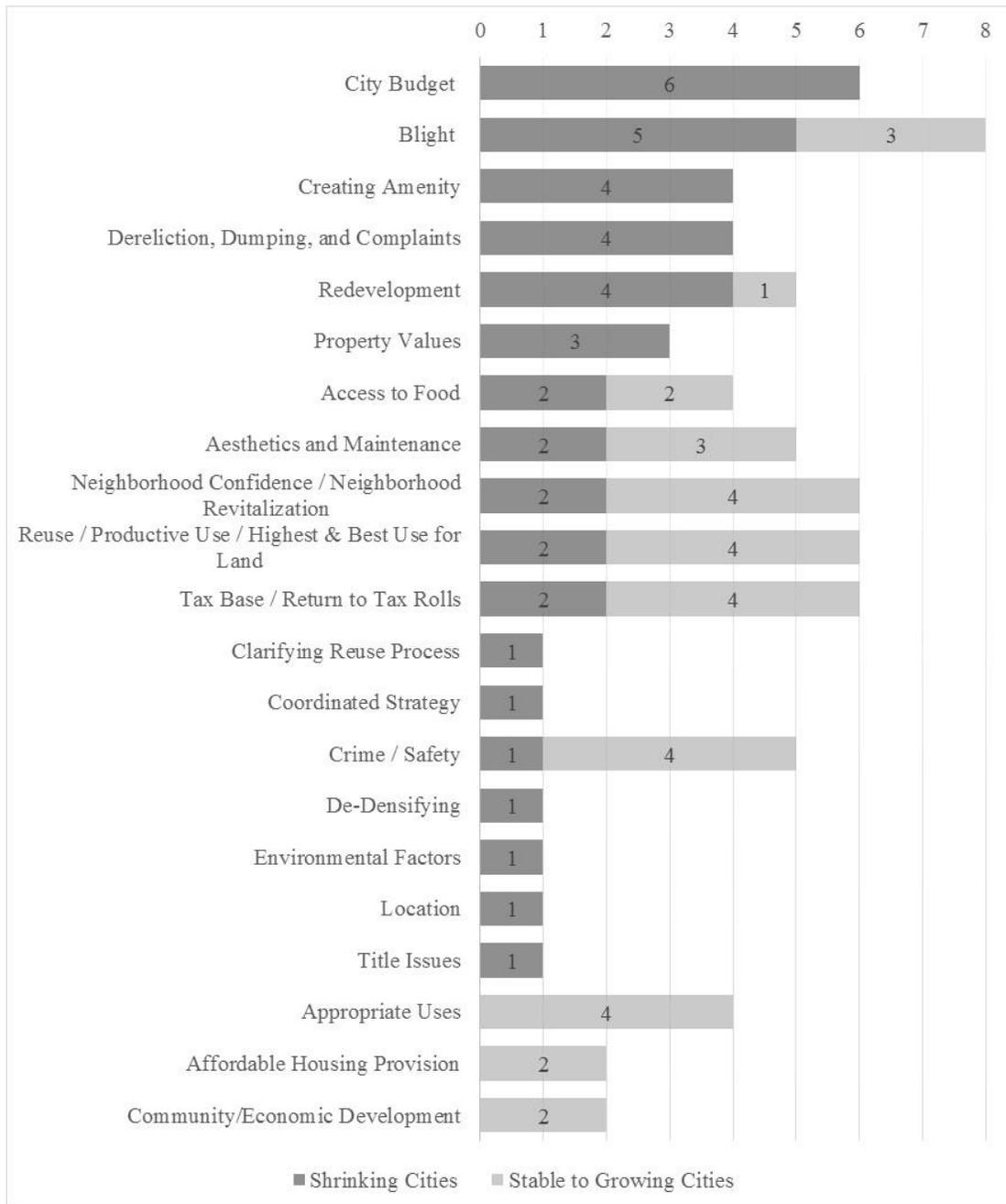
These motivations can be alternatively coded into two dichotomous categories: ones that see vacant and abandoned lots as opportunities for a city, and ones that see these lots as challenges to be overcome. (Table 5.31)

Table 5.31: Motivations related to viewing Vacant and Abandoned Lots as Challenges or Opportunities

Shrinking Cities		*Stable to Growing Cities*	
Vacant Lots as Challenges			
City Budget	6	Appropriate Uses	4
Blight	5	Safety	4
Property Values	3	Blight	3
Dereliction	2	Maintenance	3
Complaints	1		
Crime	1		
Dumping	1		
Environmental Factors	1		
Title Issues	1		
	21		14
Vacant Lots as Opportunities			
Creating Amenity	4	Neighborhood Revitalization	4
Redevelopment	4	Return to Tax Rolls	4
Access to Food	2	Community/Economic Development	3
Aesthetics	2	Productive Use	3
Neighborhood Confidence	2	Aesthetics	2
Reuse	2	Affordable Housing Provision	2
Tax Base	2	Highest/Best Use for Land	1
Clarifying Reuse Process	1	Property Values	1
Coordinated Strategy	1		
De-Densifying	1		
Location	1		
	22		20

By coding motivations into opportunities and challenges, it is possible to establish a basic perspective of each type of city's outlook regarding these lots. The forty-three motivations listed by planners in shrinking cities were relatively evenly split between the two views: 21 mentions of challenge-related motivations and 22 mentions of opportunity-related motivations. In the stable-to-growing cities, more of these motivations could be coded as "opportunities" than as "challenges." Anecdotally, this makes sense, as planners in cities which have more demand for land and prospects for economic development would view these lots as potentially contributing to the city.

In shrinking cities, at the top of the list of challenges is the category of threats to the city budget. The prominence of this item is interesting in that planners are not usually the officers in charge of formulating, balancing, or managing a city's budget. Yet their recognition of this item, so prominent on the overall list yet not mentioned as a primary motivation, suggests that the city's budget is a common secondary influence in planning departments in shrinking cities.

The remaining challenges in shrinking cities, with the exception of crime, title issues, or environmental factors, are all those related to the neglectful decay and deterioration of properties. Although challenges like blight, dereliction, and complaints seem to be directly related to physical deterioration, they are also all, in some way, related back to the city budget. As properties and property values decline, residents are motivated to move to other locations where investment in their homes may be safer. The city sees less property tax income from these properties, yet is expected to clean and maintain the very lots that threaten surrounding property values.

The most commonly noted opportunities that motivate action on vacant and abandoned lots in shrinking cities are those of redevelopment and creating amenities. Both of these options represent a desire to build on or develop on land; however, the target communities for these actions are very different. Developing, or redeveloping, land has a speculative connotation to it; the non-specificity in respondents' answers suggests that any development would be acceptable as it is expected, or hoped, to bring

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jobs and tax revenue with it. The beneficiaries of development are the local business community and local and state tax receipts. Creating amenities, on the other hand, while still non-specific, intimates a desire to provide additional services for existing community members, enhancing the quality of their lives, and perhaps attracting new residents. The beneficiaries here are primarily existing residents.

Question sixteen asks survey respondents: "is your city legally required to take action regarding vacant and abandoned lots when some indicator or benchmark is reached, or are decisions related to vacant and abandoned lots discretionary (subject to the political process)?" (See Table 5.32)

Table 5.32: Actions taken on Vacant and Abandoned Lots

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Discretionary, based on Need and Capacity of Staff	Discretionary based on citizen complaints leading to investigation of code violations
Discretionary, as City demolishes vacants due to immediate safety concerns or in strategic areas	Discretionary, based on health and safety complaints and if a property is located in a designated redevelopment area
Discretionary, as City may clean lots not Maintained by Owners and Bill the Owners	Discretionary, based on shared community values re: quality of life
Discretionary, based on Measures and Benchmarks used by City	Legally Required to address buildings deemed immediately dangerous and non-compliant with property codes
Discretionary, dependent upon action of City Officials or legislation enabling selling/lease of City-owned property.	Legally Required to take action on vacant and abandoned lots
Legally Required to Maintain City-owned Vacant Land. Maintenance of Privately-owned Vacant Land is Billed to Owners.	Legally Required when property is in violation of local ordinances
Legally Required to take action on Violations such as Blighted Structures and High Grass. Acquisition is Discretionary and based on Planning Policies and Neighborhood Plans	Legally Required, target problem properties through a Hearing Authority which takes action on unsafe buildings

The next Decision Model question, number nineteen, asks survey respondents: "given the assessment that action should be taken, are there policies, plans, or actions that a county, state, or federal government can implement, in regard to vacant and abandoned lots in your city, which can assist with your objectives?" (See Table 5.33)

Table 5.33: Assistance from Other Levels of Government to Assist with City Objectives

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Federal Funding such as CDBG or a Fourth round of NSP funding	All levels: monetary resources would be helpful
Federal or State funds for demolition would help.	Federal and State funding for New Construction
Federal and State Funding for Land Banks	Federal and State funding for ownership housing program
Federal, State, and County policies to stop facilitating regional sprawl	State action enabling rental inspection at the local level.
State laws which Enhance the Abilities of Land Banks	State developing expedited processes for authorizing use of eminent domain
States could enact Stronger Land Reutilization Laws or Land Bank Statutes	State enabling legislation to aid city agencies to be appropriately aggressive
State help in simplifying the title clearing process as well as enhancing the ability of land banks (or similar entities) to collect penalties and interest on abandoned and delinquent properties.	State establishment of higher tax rates to pressure property owners into productive uses
	State Housing and Redevelopment Agencies
	State increasing funding for tax credits for construction
	State policies aiding the creation of a more robust Land Bank
	State simplification of procedures for taking legal action, especially code violations
	County Bond funds for creation of road access to large parcels of vacant land
	County foreclosure for back taxes
	Not aware of any
	Unknown; haven't had need for higher level of government action

Among shrinking cities, a number of respondents mentioned the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), in particular the Neighborhood Stabilization Program Grants, the most recent of which was distributed through Neighborhood Stabilization Program 3, part of the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. For many of the cities involved in this survey, their State governments are in similarly difficult financial situations and are unable to assist communities, financially, limiting assistance to legal or procedural aid. A number of other respondents mention the desire for either legal or financial support for the development, enhancement, and ongoing maintenance of land banks.

Responses about assistance from other levels of government in stable-to-growing cities are less focused on federal funding. Their responses indicate that their

desired level of assistance from the national government is restricted to aid in construction of new housing or help with ownership programs. They are more desirous of assistance from their state governments, however, indicating need for aid with state laws, funding for agencies, and changes in tax rates and tax credits. They also indicated a need for some county support, reflecting the multiple jurisdictional levels on which vacancy operates.

The final Decision Model question asks survey respondents: "are there plans and policies that cannot be implemented in your city due to legal restrictions or perceived political liability?" (See Table 5.34)

Table 5.34: Political Liabilities and Legal Restrictions which Prevent Actions from Being Taken on Vacant and Abandoned Lots

Shrinking Cities	Stable to Growing Cities
Blocks of Virtually Structureless Land cannot be Abandoned by City due to Political Repercussions	City investigating ways to expedite gaining title to delinquent properties - need state law passed to enable In-Rem Foreclosure like that used in New York City
City Will Not Acquire Any Land with Structure due to Potential Liability	Owner's property rights make it difficult to act, even though they are often negligent and have walked away from property
Potential Political Issues with Development of Fully-Functional County Landbank	Political liabilities always a concern - Land Bank may help with transparency, equity concerns. State has recently passed laws enabling city to act more aggressively on vacant property issues
Unknown	Rental and Interior Inspection

Responses from shrinking city respondents include those from two respondents who claimed that were unsure or did not know and a respondent who was worried about the potential political liabilities of creating a fully-functioning, independent county land bank. They also included responses noting the reality that city abandonment of virtually, but not quite completely, deserted blocks would be political untenable as well as the city's inability to acquire land with any structures due to potential liability.

Planners in stable-to-growing cities also mentioned the issues that may come up in the development of a land bank, as well as the possibility of the land bank actually working to make the process of dealing with these properties more politically palatable.

Other answers revolved around state laws and the difficult tension between respecting private property rights and acting for the good of the greater community.

In cities that have stable-to-growing populations, the survey questions associated with the Steinitz Framework ended at this point. There were then four additional questions (28-31) asking about tools and policies currently being used in each city and a request for participation in the subsequent interview stage of this research project.

> *28. Have you developed tools or policies, addressing vacant and abandoned lots, in your planning practice which are particular to your city and its current context? If so, what are they?*

> *29. Can you list some of the projects your city has taken on in regards to vacant and abandoned lots? a) Which are the ones that you are most proud of? b) Which have been most successful? How do you operationalize "success"? c) Which ones have not worked? Do you know why?*

> *30. Is there anything that you would like to add about the way your city addresses vacant and abandoned lots?*

> *31. Would you be interested in participating in any follow-up interviews?*

These four Tool and Policy questions were asked of respondents in shrinking cities as well, and the responses from both groups are located in Section 5.4.2.4.

5.4.2.3   Growth Paradigm Questions

Two additional sets questions were asked specifically of planners and affiliated professionals in shrinking cities. The intent of these two questions sets was two-fold. First, it is possible to know, objectively, whether a city is losing population, gaining population, or is relatively stable. Despite the fact that a city can be easily categorized as one of these three, a city may resist the "accurate" representation of their population status and self-identify or wish to be identified alternatively. Exploring the associations of semantic choices may reveal a city's actions, or lack thereof, to deal with shrinking issues.   Second, cities may identify with options outside of the growing/ stable/

shrinking choice range, which may indicate larger issues or arenas in which a city has chosen to be active and create an identity for itself.

The first set (28-29) was designed to explore the implications of planning in a city operating outside of the growth paradigm, and with the self-identification of cities as shrinking, growing, or stable.

28. One aspect this study is investigating is the practical differences between planning in a city that has an increasing population, planning in a city which has a stable-to-declining population, and planning in a city which is shrinking. Do you feel that your city explicitly identifies with one of the above "types" of city? Please explain the reasoning behind your perception of how your city identifies itself.

29. Of the three options presented in the previous question, if your city does not identify with/as a shrinking city: Is there a reason for this alternative identification? Can you describe the sources or reasons behind this?

Responses to question 28 are shown below in Table 5.35.

Table 5.35: How these Cities Self-Identify

Has been Shrinking, is now Increasing
Shrinking: Due to Industrial Job Loss
Shrinking: Due to Steady Population Loss over Several Decades
Shrinking: Steady Population Loss marked by Severe Vacancy Issue
Stabilizing City (in terms of population): Mayor has Explicit Goal of Gaining 10,000 Households by 2020
Stable to Declining City
Stable to Declining Population that Varies Greatly by Neighborhood
Steadily Declining Population over Several Decades but Few Politicians will Embrace Concept of "rightsizing"

Survey responses are relatively evenly split between identifying as cities with shrinking populations and as cities with stable-to-declining populations. The three cities with the most optimistic outlooks are Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland.

The second question in this set asks respondents: "of the three options presented in the previous question, if your city does not identify with/as a shrinking city, is there a reason for this alternative identification?" (See Table 5.36)

Table 5.36: Reasons for Cities losing Population not Identifying with/as Shrinking

There is Reason to Believe City's Population will Stabilize Around Current Size.
Census Figures Show City's Population Might be Starting to Stabilize
City's Population Loss is Due to a Decrease in Household Size, Not a Decrease in Number of Households
No One Wants to Admit the City is Shrinking
Seeing residential, business/technology, and education sector growth. Existing city is built unsustainably - on slopes, in floodzones, in landslide zones and on undermined soils

When pressed further to discuss why their city does not identify as shrinking, if they had so indicated in the previous question, respondents found a number of alternative explanations to set their city apart from cities with declining populations. Respondents in the three cities noted above, plus Cincinnati, gave these five reasons for which their cities did not identify as shrinking.

The final set of questions (30-31, 34-35) was about working as a planner in a city that was no longer (or not currently) growing. They were designed to elicit responses which could explore the usefulness of traditional tools and policies as well as the ability to recognize the need, determine the form, and implement new types of shrinking-appropriate tools and policies. Finally, these questions were intended to draw out planners' informed responses to the effects, both positive and negative, of non-growth on a city and its residents.

30. When working as a planner in your city, do you feel that tools and theories which are associated with the traditional "growth paradigm" within planning,

tools which you may have learned in your planning education or used in other cities, are useful in your current work? Why or why not?

31. Are you able to adapt traditional "growth paradigm" tools and theories to a non-growing city? If so, how? If you don't feel the need to, why not?

34. Can you imagine that there might be benefits associated with a smaller population in your city, in particular? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

35. What are the main changes that you have seen in your city as population has declined? Are they economic, social, infrastructural, etc? Additionally, are these changes which you feel you have the tools to address?

Responses to the first question, number 30, are shown below in Table 5.37.

Table 5.37: Usefulness of Growth Paradigm-oriented Tools and Policies for Planning in Shrinking Cities

Best Practices can be Great Tools - However Each City is Unique and Sometimes New Ideas Need to be Explored
Not Much Help - Traditional Tools are Geared Towards Controlling Growth
Not really - Learning as we go along
Should offer Course in Planning School on Managing Population Loss and Planning to Shrink. Recently attended course on Form Based Zoning which was all Predicated on Growth - asked Question about Foundation solely based on Growth, and was told that City would Eventually Grow
Some Tools are Useful, such as Comprehensive Planning. Emerging Theories like Resilience, Environmental Urbanism, and Tactical Urbanism offer new ways to be Flexible
Yes - We Copy What Many other Cities are Doing, Using Input from Community and Partner Organizations to put a Local Spin on Those Models
Yes and No. Complicated Question Could Take Years to Answer

Responses to this question vary widely. Two responses indicated that they were not much help in planning in shrinking cities while a third suggested that there should be classes in planning schools specifically tailored for these conditions. Other responses indicated that some of the growth paradigm tools were useful and they were

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able to pick and choose those that were applicable from among the standard toolbox. No respondent said unequivocally that they were able to use growth paradigm tools, unmodified, for their jobs.

Question thirty-one asked survey respondents: "are you able to adapt traditional 'growth paradigm' tools and theories to a non-growing city? If so, how? If you don't feel the need to, why not?" (See Table 5.38)

Table 5.38: Ability to adapt Growth Paradigm-oriented Tools and Policies for Planning in Shrinking Cities

Existing tools are of little use. Controlling growth is planned and orderly while shrinking happens in a chaotic, fractured way. New tools are needed to address this discontinuity
If someone told me that they were planning for growth when there will be none I would suggest a new tool box - put away the welcome mat and roll up your sleeves to address long-term abandonment
Population Growth and Decline exist simultaneously, and in proximity to each other, in our city. In the more desirable neighborhoods we are planning for growth.
We adapt traditional planning tools to the context of a city with a weak market. In practice, this means that we are open to ideas making use of abundant water, land, and infrastructure
TBD
Unknown

Survey responses to this question largely support findings of the previous question. Some cities are actively working to adapt traditional tools to work in shrinking cities, while others do not seem to feel that they have the tools or policies to address the realities of planning in their cities. Additionally, there are respondents who seem to feel that they are simultaneously planning for growth and decline, demonstrating that a need may remain for growth-oriented policies and tools in shrinking cities.

The next question, number thirty-four, asks survey respondents: "can you imagine that there might be benefits associated with a smaller population in your city, in particular? If so, what are they? If not, why not?" (See Table 5.39)

Table 5.39: Benefits of a Smaller Population in City

Absolutely - larger lots, cleaner, greener, roomier
If shrinking were handled in a managed process, the city could be more green, less crowded, with lots of elbow room. If it is not handled well, it will be expensive and may not 'fit right'.
No
The city should stabilize its base so that it can plan for its ongoing needs in housing, employment, etc.
There is an opportunity to incorporate more green spaces, providing environmental, social, and economic benefits, into the city; also an opportunity to guide future development areas
There may be an opportunity to better connect with a smaller population and build consensus
We may be able to develop in a more sustainable manner by not developing areas unsuitable for development or natural areas that provide services to the city
Spending less resources on services might be beneficial; however, the structures that will be left behind will be problematic.

A number of responses to this question noted the benefits of having more green space in their city, both for the ability to de-densify residential development, as well as for the amenities and ecosystem services potentially delivered by these areas. They also noted that there was now an opportunity to remedy some past mistakes, such as the development of unsuitable areas and the possibility of guiding future development to the most appropriate areas.

A follow-up question, number thirty-five, then asked survey respondents: "what are the main changes that you have seen in your city as population has declined? Are they economic, social, infrastructural, etc? Additionally, are these changes which you feel you have the tools to address?" (See Table 5.40)

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Table 5.40: Results of Declining Population Seen in City

Disparity between income areas within city; large swathes of vacant properties; increasing amounts of trash; accompanying impacts on city services.
Excess residential structures, never enough resources to demolish them.
Increased emphasis on economic development to bring jobs to city; results of suburban growth and again infrastructure becoming apparent; city becoming more desirable due to investments in economic development projects; challenge of addressing declining neighborhoods with available tools becoming challenging.
Increased number of vacant and abandoned building units; neighborhoods ruined by blight; financial burden of addressing blight.
Increasing levels of poverty and social/demographic change due to "white flight"; a built environment serving only 3/5 of it's intended users; excess housing and commercial properties not being maintained.
Increasing Need to Address Stock of Vacant and Abandoned Structures. City can only address fraction of these existing structures without additional funding/sustained resources.
Stress on maintenance/management of infrastructure - same amount to care for with less human and financial resources. Partnerships, volunteers, non-profits stepping up to take care of properties, parks, and other lands.

There seem to be three main types of changes seen in these shrinking cities due to population decline: physical changes, social issues, and results of economic struggles. The literature review (see Chapter 2) anticipated many of these findings as they are now commonly seen amongst shrinking cities.

The built environment is recognized as being too large for the population remaining in it while individual homes and commercial buildings are deteriorating. There is an excess of vacant and abandoned structures in these cities and a decreasing amount of resources available to call upon for their maintenance or demolition.

Social issues such as increasing discrepancy between incomes, the removal of upper socio-economic groups from the city, and an increasing concentration of the poor are becoming visible problems.

Economic issues are revealed as investments in suburban growth and infrastructure become more noticeable in cities. The burden of an outsized

infrastructure, dwindling tax income, and dangerous structures in need of demolition all point to the visible effects of serious financial problems. Resources are again a real issue for these cities as every respondent identified resources as directly influencing the observable changes in their city due to population decline.

5.4.2.4 Tool and Policy Questions

The last set of questions asked of shrinking cities is about their development of tools or policies which are specific to planning in shrinking cities. The goal of including this question set was to accumulate a set of policies or tools which may prove useful to other cities facing similar problems. Question number thirty-two asked: "have you developed alternative tools in your planning practice which are particular to your city and its current context? If so, what are they?" (See Table 5.41)

A number of the tools or policies being used in these cities are quite commonly used, such as land banking, urban agriculture, sale of side lots to neighbors, and urban gardening. Others, like changes to the city's zoning code which take into account the current viability of specific neighborhoods, and accepting more naturalistic landscapes are unique adaptations to an unfamiliar context.

Table 5.41: Alternative Tools or Policies Used in Shrinking Cities, Developed in response to Current Context or to Particular Conditions in City

Assisting Property Owners to Acquire Nearby Vacant Lots
Bright Sites Program - Workforce training program using CDBG funds to beautify and stabilize residential demolition sites
Changes to Weed Control Ordinances to Facilitate Natural Landscaping
Demolition Plan to Address Abandoned, Deteriorating Structures
Developing New Zoning Code
Districts which Allow for Liberal Reuse of Vacant Land for Urban Agriculture
Funding Assistance for Neighborhoods to Make Use of Abandoned Lots
Integrating issues related to Environmental Planning, Sustainability, and Climate Change into Planning Methods and Decision-Making
City Land Bank
Limited Service Zoning Overlay for Areas where Significant Investment is Not Encouraged
Side Yard Purchase program
Urban Farming and Gardening
Working on Decision Making Tool, with Researchers from two universities, to Determine best Approach to Dealing with Urban Vacant Land

The last question, number thirty-three, asked survey respondents "can you list some of the projects your city has taken on in regards to vacant and abandoned lots? Which are the ones that you are most proud of? Which have been most successful? How do you operationalize 'success'? Which ones have not worked? Do you know why?" (See Table 5.42)

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Table 5.42: Ongoing projects Addressing Vacant and Abandoned Lots

Clean Ohio program - Brownfield Revitalization and Green Space Preservation, preserved over 200 acres of new open space
Development of Land Bank
Future Blooms Program - Resurfaces/paints front of vacant properties to appear occupied to thwart vandalization and crime
Grassroots Garden Lease Program - Non-profit agency that plans and creates community gardens, funded by grants and partnerships
Homegrown Baltimore - Urban Agriculture Program using vacant land near food deserts
Including vacant lots as actionable items in City's official Sustainability Plan
Power In Dirt Program - Facilitating Adoption and Community-oriented uses of Vacant Lots
Program to Develop Urban Wetland Mitigation Bank through Land Bank
Reimagine Cleveland - vacant land reuse initiative that complement's City's long-term development objectives
Targeted approach to neighborhood preservation with City - reuse of over 120 lots and restoration of health of housing market
Tree Baltimore - Umbrella Organization for City agencies and organizations working on increasing city's tree canopy
Urban Homesteading Program - selling vacant lots for $1.00 for either construction of owner-occupied home or maintenance by neighborhoing home-owner
Using City's Real Estate Acquisition Program to move vacant lands into hands of people who can make productive use of them
Vacant to Value Program - Cleaning and Redeveloping Properties, Demolishing and Maintaining Blighted Blocks
City assistance in development of reuses such as community gardens

These programs represent a range of investment requirements on the part of cities that might want to copy or adopt these types of policies. Some of them take little financial investment, such as rezoning, creating programs, or developing land banks. Others take financial investment, whether through government funding or grants, such as redeveloping residences or resurfacing vacant properties.

5.5 Discussion

5.5.1 WORK EXPERIENCE AND CITY-WIDE PLANNING EXPERIENCE

The first substantive survey question asked all respondents to identify their job title and general job responsibilities. Responses to this question reveal the diversity of titles and responsibilities of the city officials who are involved in planning for vacant and abandoned lots in the U.S. today. One of the most common issues regarding planning for these lots that emerged in the literature review, noted by Hollander et al (2009), Pallagst (2010), and Morrison & Dewar (2012), was the difficulty of training planners to work in this altered environment. From responses to this question, it appears that the difficulty of training officials to work in a non-growth oriented environment goes beyond the planning profession and touches on many facets of quotidian city administration.

If there is a "silver lining" in this need to introduce tools and methods for working in non-growth environment, it lies in the very diversity of responsibilities performed by those who also plan for these lots. Clearly, it is not possible to delineate shrinkage or population decline as a "planning" problem solely to be addressed in planning schools or considered in a city's planning department. It must become a topic of research and conversation in fields as disparate as landscape architecture and public policy, real estate and social work. This proposition is supported by the responses to questions eight and nine, as discussed above in Section 5.4.2.1. Responses to this question demonstrate the range of job titles ranking these lots as important. They also demonstrate that vacant lots are not only a topic of interest for those working in shrinking cities. There is a need for city employees of many different departments, working in stable-to-growing, as well as shrinking, cities to be able to effectively plan for vacant and abandoned lots.

5.5.2   REPRESENTATION MODEL

5.5.2.1   Information Sources

In shrinking cities, planners have a unique, commonly used source of information. It consists of a range of alternative sources that gives planners access to facts about proposed projects and strategic assets. The proximity of a vacant parcel to one of these sites is augmented with unofficial information about the type of program proposed for the site, if additional parcels are needed, or if lots will benefit from future development. Perhaps planners' ability to access these disparate sources of data is more frequently relied upon in these cities due to the limited market for redevelopment. When formal redevelopment plans are few and far between and a project could take a long time to come to fruition due to the challenge of securing financing, it is possible that personal access to data sources regarding proposed or planned projects might be superior to official sources of information regarding officially in-process projects.

Survey respondents in stable-to-growing cities indicated a closer relationship to developers, real estate agents, and private sources of information related to an active real estate market, than those in shrinking cities. This type of reciprocally beneficial relationship between the public and private sectors might only really be possible in cities that have thriving development markets.

In shrinking cities the predominant type of non-agency information on vacant lots results from community groups, such as Neighborhood CDCs and Associations. These groups continue to exist, and thrive, in cities without vibrant real estate markets; data that they might provide to planners about these lots would likely be centered around prospective community-oriented non-profit future uses. As result of these disparate sources of information, it is possible that the types of uses considered for these vacant lots could be predetermined or influenced according to the interest of the information sources.

5.5.2.2 Definitions and Determinations

Although information sources can be clearly delineated into those used by shrinking or stable to growing cities, determinations of vacancy and abandonment are harder to differentiate according to growth status of a city. While state law, city code, and city comprehensive plan or city departmental determinations were clearly more frequently cited as sources than court judgments or foreclosure proceedings, there were no outstanding differences attributable to either type of growth status.

For cities where there is state law that defines when a lot becomes officially vacant or abandoned, there is, inevitably, more standardization in the definition of vacancy across all of the state's municipalities. This is advantageous from the perspective of anticipating the point at which a property will become officially vacant or abandoned and having foreknowledge of the standard condition of these properties at such a point. On the other hand, it is possible for two jurisdictions within a state to have very different economic or social conditions. In this case, there would be a need for determinations that are more contextual, fitted to different environments. The benefits of being able to know at what point properties will be officially considered vacant and abandoned by monitoring the relevant measures referenced in such a law would be balanced by the inability to customize it for application to very different circumstances. Definition in a city code could be more flexible and contextual; the drawback here is that codes are easier to modify and this could possibly happen as political powers within a city shift on a fairly frequent basis.

The lack of widespread, common operational definitions of vacancy and abandonment is not a new problem, as discovered in the literature review of U.S. vacancy studies dating to 1932. While the lack of a common definition inhibits the comparison of the amount of vacant land in U.S. cities across time, the lack of any set definition in some surveyed cities also inhibits the creation of a regular management process.

5.5.3 PROCESS MODEL

5.5.3.1 Lack of Private Real Estate Market - 1

One of the Process model findings speaks to the need that planners and affiliated professionals in shrinking cities have to find alternative, non-growth sourced uses for vacant and abandoned lots. While planners in stable-to-growing cities ask process-related questions that reveal their assumption of a working, private real estate market, those from shrinking cities do not. Due to the lack of a functioning private real estate market, planners in shrinking cities are asking questions that reveal both how resource dependent their actions on these lots are, as well as their development of non-market based uses. As noted in the literature review, shrinking cities in the U.S. have developed a number of vacant lot intervention techniques and approaches in response to the proliferation of these spaces.

5.5.3.2 Source of Issues Leading to Shrinking

The other Process model question has findings that run counter to most of the shrinking cities literature. The literature largely speaks to national trends, as covered in Chapter 2, as being at the root of shrinking cities problems. However, in both shrinking and stable-to-growing cities, 85 to 89 percent of the identified trends or policies believed to be at the root of shrinking were identified as either city/region or lot-specific issues. Developing tools or policies to address these issues on individual region/city/parcel levels will be more difficult than crafting tools to address national-scale issues. Conversely, it may actually be easier to get these tools or policies effected at a local level where there may be more support for action.

One of the shrinking cities respondents and three of the stable-to-growing cities respondents made an implicit connection between economic decline and the creation of vacant lots. Assuming that the mediating variable between these two concepts is population decline, these responses seem to indicate the perception of a link between the Friedrichs model and the Schwarz and Haase model at the point of Demographic/Population decline. As practitioners who may not be familiar with

economic development theory, it is understandable that their references to concepts in the Friedrichs model were limited to economic decline. Their responses however, more fully supported Schwarz and Haase's theory of decline and relocation, noting the civic, social, spatial, and physical processes that contribute to, and cyclically result from, the creation of vacant lots.

5.5.4   EVALUATION MODEL

5.5.4.1   Benchmarks Used: Assets v. Opportunities

A topic mentioned repeatedly in the literature reviews of shrinking cities and of vacancy and abandonment was the dual nature of these spaces as both asset and liability. One of the Evaluation model questions addressed this issue through the types of evaluations being used in both shrinking and stable-to-growing cities to decide to take action. By coding responses into timeframes associated with these measurements, the difference between the approaches of these two cities became clearer.

Of the three types of measures or benchmarks leading to action, responding to immediate threats and taking action to realize long-term opportunities are the most frequently cited types for surveyed planners in shrinking cities. While it is not surprising that action on vacant and abandoned lots should be instigated by threats such as complaints and code violations, a similar number of actions result from a planner or affiliated professional recognizing opportunities for long-term benefit resulting from the parcels. This ability to balance short-term and long-term priorities suggests that planners in these shrinking cities may be working from a less hectic, more considered position than first assumed.

In stable-to-growing cities, while all three categories of benchmarks or measures were used at similar rates to determine action, those related to intermediate or long-term values were most dominant. It is possible that planners in these cities are motivated more frequently by intermediate benchmarks, taking actions to stem loss of value or deter threats to neighboring assets because these neighborhoods retain more

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value and contribute more to an overall successful economy than those in shrinking cities. It is also possible that these cities have a successful process in place for addressing code violations due to their consideration as a prime benchmark. With a working system for addressing these immediate problems, perhaps stable-to-growing cities are able to concentrate more on developing responses to other types of intermediate to long-term threats and opportunities.

5.5.4.2 Lack of Benchmarks in Stable-to-Growing Cities

Another Evaluation Model question shifts from benchmarks used to determine when to take action to benchmarks used to evaluate action after the fact. Results of this question show evidence that planners in shrinking cities have developed a more extensive set of thresholds or benchmarks to use in measuring the impacts of proposed changes to vacant or abandoned lots, listing twelve distinct qualitative types of measures and thirteen quantitative ones. Planners in stable-to-growing cities listed only two distinct qualitative measures and four quantitative ones.

The nature of the measures are different between the two types of cities as well. Those used in shrinking cities consider intermediate type benchmarks, such as number of demolitions or foreclosures decreasing, or use of these vacant lots to solve issues that the market cannot address, like green infrastructure. The benchmarks used in stable-to-growing cities are most focused around evaluating end products, like the creation of jobs, increased collection of taxes, or the spurring of investment. The discrepancy between the two suggests that shrinking cities planners have "lowered the bar" as far as creating benchmarks. This could possibly be due to shrinking cities planners' realization of their cities' straitened circumstances or result from an intention to create more achievable measures.

The few benchmarks mentioned by planners in stable-to-growing cities are rudimentary, with twice as many quantifiable benchmarks as qualitative ones. This lack of established benchmarks indicates that making evaluations after development is not a usual job requirement for planners in these cities. One survey response explains

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this lack of evaluation succinctly, noting they "don't evaluate; problem is minor and almost always taken care of," we can only assume, by the private market.

5.5.5 CHANGE MODEL

5.5.5.1 Opportunities to Assist Planners in Taking Action

The first Change model question asked respondents about factors associated with changing lots that are within, influenced by, or outside the control of respondents. The third set of responses, those that are beyond the control of survey respondent's offices or jobs, is a clear list of problem areas to which local and state officials in shrinking cities should pay close attention. While respondents in stable-to-growing cities also listed a number of factors beyond the control of their offices or jobs, the respondents in shrinking cities were very specific about their challenges. These problems, including lack of resources, dumping on properties, missing heirs, owner abandonment, legislation to improve outcomes, and private lot upkeep, are all actionable items at multiple levels. While outside the control of survey respondents, they are within the purview of many other city and state officials, again supporting the earlier finding that vacant lot issues are not specific to planners or planning-affiliated professionals.

5.5.5.2 Lack of Private Real Estate Market - 2

Change model findings also support those of the Process model, wherein planners working in shrinking cities have developed a number of vacant lot intervention tools and practices in the absence of an active real estate market. The Change model question asking about what types of actions are most often considered for these lots reveals the difference between planners working in shrinking as compared to stable-to-growing cities. Planners in these more conventionally operating cities are dependent upon the real estate market to address these spaces; the actions they most often consider are more process oriented, focused around getting non-compliant properties into compliance and thus marketable.

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With no assumption of a private market taking control, planners in shrinking cities have moved ahead, creating uses on these lots in the gap left by an inactive private market. Answers to the Change model question about the city-specific conditions that have supported the implementation of plans and policies regarding vacant and abandoned lots, suggest that forces outside of the private market are working in a similar way to encourage action. Respondents suggested that a recognition of adverse conditions like the overbuilt status of the Dayton region or the dire demographic and economic conditions of Buffalo have spurred action. Similarly, difficult conditions in Youngstown have stimulated the development of a municipal land reutilization program while those in Cincinnati drove the city to apply for a state grant that is being used to fund work-force training around the stabilization of sites, post-demolition.

5.5.6   IMPACT MODEL

5.5.6.1   Lack of Definitions

Responses to the Impact model questions indicate that while survey respondents have developed or are developing a rigorous set of benchmarks to evaluate the quality of proposed vacant lot interventions, the definitions of meaningful impact upon which these are based are not as well developed. Responses to Evaluation model question twenty-two suggests that planners in both types of cities, but particularly in shrinking cities, are using or creating both qualitative and quantitative benchmarks.

There seems to be a gap, however, in these cities in the reasoning that planners are using to create these benchmarks due to a lack of operational definitions of meaningful impact. The sole definition of meaningful impact given by a survey respondent suggested that a successful outcome depended only upon someone other than the city caring for the lots. Other responses regarding quality of life, demographics, market/economics, community morale, and establishment of order suggest attention is being paid to creating these definitions even if they are not yet finalized. Responses indicate that shrinking cities planners are working on creating

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these definitions as well as realizing "the complicated nature of developing cause and effect relationship between value and vacant lot stabilization."

5.5.7 DECISION MODEL

5.5.7.1 Lack of Private Real Estate Market - 3

Survey responses to the first Decision model question support findings from other Steinitz Framework levels, particularly the Evaluation and Change models. When noting the motivations that prompt them to take action on vacant and abandoned lots, one of the features distinguishing between shrinking and stable-to-growing responses was the existence of a private property market.

In stable-to-growing cities, the "challenge" motivations of safety, blight, and maintenance are similar to motivations found in shrinking cities planners. However, one of the most commonly cited motivations, that of "appropriate uses," is a problem not found in shrinking cities. In stable-to-growing cities, there are temporary or intermittent uses happening on vacant and abandoned lots, such as illegal parking, or issues with sites being zoned for uses no longer appropriate for their surroundings. The key issue for these sites is that something is actively happening on them, or there is someone who wants to actively do something on these sites. Planners are motivated to ensure that what happens is appropriate for the surrounding neighborhood and community. As a motivation for taking action, this still ranks as a challenge, but of a different nature than issues such as blight and safety.

Opportunities in stable-to-growing cities are also of a different nature from those in shrinking cities. Not only are there a larger number of opportunity motivations than challenges in these cities, but the majority of them reflect the operation of a successful private property market. This is indicated by planners' motivation to provide or contribute to affordable housing and being able to discriminate in ensuring the highest/best use for land, considerations that were not mentioned by shrinking cities planners.

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5.5.8 Growth Paradigm

5.5.8.1 Self-Identification

The last set of questions, asked solely to planners working in shrinking cities, gives insight into both how these cities see themselves, as well as how planning occurs outside of planning's usual "growth paradigm." The question asking about self-identification reveals a mixed set of self-assessments. As shown in Table 5.11, only three of the shrinking cities had nominal population increases in the 2011–2012 American Community Surveys, while only one of those, Cincinnati, and another, Dayton, showed increases in the 2012 – 2013 ACS.

One of the respondents in Baltimore indicated that they believed the city to be stabilizing in terms of population, particularly as a result of Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake's commitment to attract 10,000 new households to the city by 2023 (City of Baltimore, 2010). The other respondent in Baltimore also indicated a positive outlook for Baltimore's population, noting that the city's stable-to-declining population varies greatly by neighborhood. Of the shrinking cities included in this research, Baltimore appears to have the best reason for being optimistic about their population prospects, as they experienced a population decline of only 4.3% in the 2001 – 2010 decade. This decline could be interpreted as curtailing the city's sixty years of population loss, leading to a stabilized smaller Baltimore. This stability is shown in the city's minimal population declines in the 2010 – 2011 and 2012 – 2013 census estimates in conjunction with a population increase of 0.23% in the 2011 – 2012 census estimate.

The respondent in Pittsburgh similarly seemed optimistic about the trajectory of the city's population by noting that while it had been shrinking, it was now (as of early 2013) increasing. This assertion was less supported by U.S. Census figures, which show that Pittsburgh lost 8.6% of its population during the 2001 – 2010 decade. The city did show small population increases in both the 2010 – 2011 and 2011 – 2012 census estimates but again turned negative with a small population decrease in the 2012 – 2013 estimate. It is impossible to predict what the rest of the 2010 decade presents

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for Pittsburgh's population, but from the census estimates thus far, it appears that the respondent's optimism may be premature.

In the case of Cleveland, the other city with a planning official expressing an optimistic outlook about its population figures, it is more difficult to discern the motivating forces behind this viewpoint. Cleveland experienced a 17.1% population decline in the 2001 – 2010 decade and has experienced small population declines in each of the three yearly census estimates since then. There is little in the way of population numbers to suggest that the city is stable-to-declining, as noted by the respondent, rather than continuing its sixty-plus years of population decline. While the respondents in Baltimore and Pittsburgh may have recognized their slowing population decline rates and intermittent population upticks, the reason for the optimism in Cleveland must be based on something other than population numbers.

The respondent in Cincinnati was clear about the city's steadily declining status (as of early 2013) but was equally frank about the political ramifications of identifying as a shrinking city. While the city had experienced several decades of declining population there were few politicians who would embrace the concept of "rightsizing." Leading into the next question asked of respondents, about why these cities didn't identify as shrinking, the respondent from Cincinnati was very clear: no one wants to admit it.

This reluctance was a common theme underlying the reasons given by these cities for not identifying as shrinking. In Cleveland, the respondent notes that there is reason to believe that the city's population will stabilize around the current size, despite little indication of this from population numbers and estimates. In Pittsburgh, the respondent coupled the city's recent residential population growth with that of local business, technology, and education sectors to suggest that there were solid bases upon which to found this denial of the shrinking identity. Similarly, the respondents in Baltimore cited reasons beyond census figures for the city to be outside the label of shrinking. While noting the levelling-off of population decline in the census, they also

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commented on a shift in demographics of household make-up as the sources of population decline rather than just an absolute loss in population.

These responses indicate support for literature review findings that there is a reluctance among public officials to "admit" to shrinking, as one respondent noted. They also indicate an optimistic outlook on the part of planners, for whatever reason, who either truly believe that their cities are at an inflection point, or want to be perceived in that way.

5.5.8.2   Usefulness of Existing Growth-Oriented Tools and Techniques

Responses to a question about the usefulness of growth-oriented tools for planning in shrinking cities are largely grouped correlating to how these cities identify with the "shrinking" label. The last three responses in Table 5.52, indicating that yes, traditional growth-oriented tools are useful or at least somewhat useful are from the respondents in Baltimore and Pittsburgh. These respondents had also indicated (as discussed in the previous section) that their cities did not identify as shrinking cities, despite their continuing population loss.

The first three responses in the table, those that indicate a degree of frustration with existing growth-oriented tools, are from respondents in Dayton, Youngstown, and Buffalo, cities that are believed to firmly identify as shrinking. The fourth response, noting the frustration of being taught planning tools that are solely grounded in growth principles, was from the Cincinnati respondent, who indicated that the city's inability to identify as shrinkage was due to an unwillingness to accept that population decline had, and is continuing, to occur. Indications from this grouping of responses indicates that a city's outlook on its trajectory can influence the types of planning tools and techniques that planners use as well as the drive of planners to look for alternative approaches.

In conjunction with the following question, asking about the ability of planners to adapt traditional tools to the needs of shrinking cities, the overall results indicate that there is a real need to develop a new set of tools, or modify existing ones, for a situation

beyond the imagination of those who initially developed them. This need has been picked up on by individuals within academia, as discussed earlier, through the development of shrinking-cities oriented planning studios and classes in universities across the United States.

5.5.8.3 New Non-Growth Tools and Techniques

Similarly, when asked about the types of alternative tools that the city had developed particular to shrinking, the survey respondents largely mentioned tools and policies introduced in the literature review. A few of the tools are unique and indicate innovative thinking on the part of planners and government officials in these cities. Some of these are: the Bright Sites workforce training program which is beautifying and stabilizing residential sites, post-demolition; a limited zoning overlay to discourage significant investment in unsustainable areas of city; and the development of a decision-making tool with the assistance of university researchers. These unusual programs demonstrate both the desire and need of planners and affiliated professionals in shrinking cities to go beyond the standard redevelopment tools and policies and craft custom applications to address their city's particular problems.

5.5.8.4 Smaller Population Benefits

Another growth-paradigm related question asked survey respondents about their ability to imagine benefits that might be associated with a smaller population in their city. The intention was to find out about benefits that were already being seen in these cities or that might emerge as the population continues to decline or stabilizes. Again, responses varied as planners honed in on the effects of a smaller population on multiple aspects of urban life.

Respondents in Cincinnati and Dayton focused on the spatial repercussions of decreased population, hypothesizing about larger lots and a "greener"city, although the Cincinnati respondent did touch upon the chance of this process resulting in an ill "fit." Respondents in Baltimore and Pittsburgh picked up on the prospects for increasing

economic, environmental, and social benefits for citizens and directing future development to more sustainable areas of city. The Buffalo respondent was cautious about the idea of a smaller population, as it could help the city's budget but also prove problematic in the long-run with the additional oversupply of built infrastructure. The respondent in Youngstown focused on the process benefits of a smaller population as this could increase the connection between citizens and their government. Responses of "no" and a desire for the city to stabilize its population to facilitate a more steady planning process from respondents in Baltimore and Cleveland illustrate the ongoing influence of the growth paradigm within planning.

Responses to this question do not seem to align with either self-identification or with actual population growth of these cities. Instead, they show that while it is possible for planners to see that there could be positives emerging out of their shrunken status, these are still balanced and possibly offset by the negative effects.

5.5.8.5 Observed Changes in City

The next question, which asked about the observed changes in city due to population decline, correlates strongly with the findings of the literature review. Reponses indicate that population decline has led to: socio-economic disparities, blight and perceptions of blight, changing demands on infrastructure and services, increased demand for resources, demographic changes, and increased dependence upon non-governmental partnerships. These results strongly support the relationships hypothesized by Schwarz and Haase's Decline and Relocation Model (Fig. 2.2), particularly the impact of population decline upon infrastructure, as well as the hypothesized relationships between disorder and cohesion as shown in Fig. 3.4.

CHAPTER 6: INTERVIEWS

6.0   Introduction

Following the online survey process, in-person, on-site interviews were scheduled with survey respondents in eight cities. All seven shrinking cities were selected, as was Philadelphia, a stable-to-growing city that has a relatively recent experience with population decline.

These interviews provided an opportunity to investigate the credibility of survey responses by comparing them to interview responses on the same or similar questions. They were also an opportunity to increase the generalizabilty of findings, as each lengthy interview was an occasion to accumulate additional "thick" descriptive data through site visits, review planning documents and maps, and experience the planning environment in a city (Geertz, 1973).

The nuance and details gained through each interview helped to individualize and make distinct the processes occurring in each city visited. This individuation is expected to aid future researchers by drawing discrete lines between cities that might otherwise seem similar for comparative research purposes. The interview process aided a final check of data quality: evaluating internal data agreement (credibility) with external data agreement (confirmability). The expectation was that survey results would be supported by interview results and that both would then be held up by outside research and literature review.

6.1   Methods

6.1.1   CASE SELECTION

Following from the survey, the interviews were intended to gain depth of information about selected cases. Biemer and Lyberg note that this is considered mixed-mode data collection (2003). Through my interviews of selected survey respondents, I attempted to conduct small-scale case studies of their experiences

planning for vacant and abandoned lots. The aim was to gain "insight and understanding of a particular situation or phenomenon" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 550).

To select which survey respondents to interview, I used purposive sampling. This method is very similar to standard case-study selection procedure (Weiss, 1994). While there are numerous examples of case study selection processes (Lijphart, 1975; Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995; Baxter & Jack, 2008), Seawright and Gerring (2008) offer the most guidance for the type of study undertaken in this research. Because randomization is not possible with most small-N samples, purposive case selection was employed.

It is considered acceptable to combine case selection methods (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). Cases chosen for this study were chosen using two techniques: extreme cases and diverse cases. Extreme cases are those that are unusual in some way in relation to the average values or measures of cases being studied. They exhibit some sort of rareness or uniqueness of the variable being measured, here the planners' approach to vacant and abandoned lots. Seawright and Gerring note that "the extreme case approach to case study analysis is therefore a conscious attempt to *maximize* variance on the dimension of interest" (italics in original) (2008, p. 302). These cases are those most likely to be known by surveyed respondents due to media coverage and referenced by other respondents during the survey. Their unique and/or noteworthy approaches to vacant and abandoned lots would lead to them contributing distinctively in the interview process.

By purposefully choosing to interview planning professionals in certain "extreme" cities, such as Youngstown, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland, the intent was to be able to uncover and discuss "approaches to shrinking" in outstanding and influential circumstances. While these cities may not be statistically representative of shrinking cities, the responses and actions of officials in these cities may be informative of emerging trends in shrinking cities and of the variety of responses made to addressing vacant and abandoned lots.

Diverse cases are representative in the sense that the values of their independent variables represent the spectrum of values for the sample as a whole. Weiss calls this type of purposive sampling "sampling… to maximize range" (Weiss, 1994, p. 23). The cases are, however, non-representative in the sense that by including cases representing the full range of distribution for values, there may be some distortion in the distribution of cases relative to the range of actual conditions. This case selection technique, however, has the best claims of representativeness for any small-N case study (Weiss, 1994). In order to obtain both extreme and diverse cases, reference was made to the results of the literature reviews, preliminary background research on the cities, and the survey. Through this process of selecting for diversity of population, shrinking status, and percentage of population decline, Baltimore, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Dayton and Philadelphia were chosen. They joined the cities chosen as extreme cases, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Youngstown, for interviews.

6.1.2 INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

Interviews were conducted using a qualitative, semi-structured format. Qualitative interviewing was chosen for its ability to facilitate

> the possibility of enquiring openly about situational meanings or motives for action, or collecting everyday theories and self-interpretations in a differentiated and open way, and also because of the possibility of discursive understanding through interpretations. (Hopf, 2004, p. 203)

Semi-structured interviewing was chosen because of the way it modifies the stringent requirements of structured interviews. Structured interviewing requires the use of exactly the same wording and sequence to ensure that differences in response are due to variation in respondents, not in the manner of questioning (Gorden, 1975). This type of limitation, using the same wording and sequence in every interview, restricts the ability of an interviewer to react to responses and follow-up on emerging revelations. It confines the conversation to a pre-determined pathway that may

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overemphasize topics that become revealed as non-important and underemphasize, or miss entirely, significant subjects. By using a semi-structured process, interview questions in this research are based upon responses, and non-responses, to the survey questions, meaning that while each interview used the same base set of questions as a guide, they are also customized for each individual respondent (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

While starting from the same set of survey questions, each respondent appeared to be more comfortable with, or more interested in, different survey questions. For example, some respondents were more familiar with issues raised in Representation Model-related questions and spoke more on these topics, fully explaining what type of data the city was using to make decisions related to vacant and abandoned lots.

As preparations were made for the interviews, it became clear that there were sensitive topic areas about which respondents might be reluctant to speak. One of the goals identified from survey responses was to get answers to questions that had been skipped in the survey. Similarly, some responses indicated apparent confusion on the part of respondents. The interviews allowed for clarification. The interviews would also be used to gain verification from respondents that my interpretation of their answers was correct. A final goal was to have respondents give more detail, or "thick description" to certain of their responses which had hinted at unusual perspectives, unique programs, or unexpected revelations.

By asking respondents to give further explanation and detail to their initial survey responses, interview results continue to be associated with, and comparable to, those of the survey. Through the inclusion of planners from both growing and shrinking cities as interviewees, as well as survey respondents, my expectation was to be able to further investigations into planning outside the traditional growth paradigm, augmenting the research with narratives and qualitative information that compares the application of planning tools and theories between traditionally and non-traditionally operating cities.

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As described earlier, Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) was used to analyze data. Coding was similarly used to draw themes from the interview responses. However, coding proceeded in a different manner than it had during the survey analysis, because quantitative research was not used to analyze or represent these responses. Each interview was transcribed by the author, who had conducted the interviews. After transcription, the interviews were reviewed for contributions to one of four individual knowledge centers: data about the city-wide planning environment, information about the decision-making process used in the city, data on the relationship of the city's planning approach to the growth paradigm, and the types of tools and policies being used in the city to deal with vacant and abandoned lots. These four knowledge centers were selected due to their use in both the formation of the original survey questionnaire and analysis of the survey results. Within these four categories, interview results that related to information about the decision-making process used in the city were further separated into models associated with the Steinitz Framework.

6.1.2.1   Steinitz Framework: Unpacking Decision-making

Carl Steinitz' Framework was used during the interview process to mentally explicate the decision making process related to vacant and abandoned lots for the purpose of systematically investigating the process. The framework contributed to the interview process in three ways. First, it served as the basis to structure conversations. Second, its use enabled the revelation of unspoken assumptions, customary policies, and non-transparent processes. Third, it contributed structure to the organization of an otherwise unrelated set of responses related to the city-wide planning environment, decision-making, attitudes about growth regimes, and planning tools and policies.

6.2   Interview Results

In-person, on-site interviews were conducted in seven formerly industrial, Legacy Cities, as well as Philadelphia, in late July and early August, 2013.

Table 6.1: Location of Interview Respondents

City, State		Baltimore, MD	Buffalo, NY	Cincinnati, OH	Cleveland, OH	Dayton, OH	Pittsburgh, PA	Youngstown, OH
Region of Country	Midwest Northeast	NE	NE	MW	MW	MW	MW	MW
City Population in 2010	below 100k / 100k-150k / 150k-250k / 250k-500k / above 500k	620,961	261,310	296,943	396,815	141,527	305,704	66,982
Years Shrinking	20-50 / 60-80	60	60	60	60	50	60	80
Population Percentage Decline Since Peak	30-40% / 40-50% / 50-60% / 60-70%	-34.62%	-54.96%	-41.08%	-56.62%	-46.05%	-54.83%	-60.60%
% Pop. Decline 2000 2010 Decade	1%-5% / 5%-10% / 10%-20%	-4.64%	-10.71%	-10.37%	-17.05%	-14.84%	-8.63%	-18.34%
2010 - 2011 % Pop. Change	Decline / Growth	-0.12%	-0.36%	-0.31%	-1.04%	0.13%	0.12%	-1.79%
2011 - 2012 % Pop. Change	Decline / Growth	0.18%	-0.76%	0.18%	-0.45%	-0.25%	0.05%	-0.57%
Housing Vacancy Rate	2000	14.14%	15.70%	10.79%	11.68%	12.82%	12.01%	13.41%
	2010	15.77%	15.67%	17.18%	19.30%	21.14%	12.77%	18.97%
# of Housing Units	2000	300,477	145,574	166,012	215,856	77,321	163,366	37,159
	2010	296,685	133,444	161,095	207,536	74,065	156,165	33,123
2000 - 2010 % Decline in # of Housing Units		1.26%	8.33%	2.96%	3.85%	4.21%	4.41%	10.86%
Number of Personnel Interviewed		1	1	1	1	1	1	1

		Philadelphia, PA
Region of Country	Midwest Northeast	NE
City Population in 2010	below 100k / 100k-150k / 150k-250k / 250k-500k / above 500k	1,526,006
% Pop. Change in 1990 - 2000 Decade	Below 1% / 1%-5% / 5%-10% / 10%-20% / Above 20%	-4.29%
Population Growth in 2000 - 2010 Decade	Below 5% / 5%-10% / 10%-20% / Above 20%	0.56%
2010 - 2011 % Pop. Change	Below 1% / Above 1%	0.82%
2011 - 2012 % Pop. Change	Below 1% / Above 1%	0.59%
Housing Vacancy Rate	2000	10.86%
	2010	10.51%
# of Housing Units	2000	661,958
	2010	670,171
2000 - 2010 % Increase in # of Housing Units		1.24%
Number of Personnel Interviewed		3

Source: Author, (United States Census Bureau, 2013)

Five of the selected cities are firmly located within the category of shrinking cities, with fifty-plus years of population decline, double-digit population decline in the decade to 2010, and negative to negligible population growth in the most recent American Community Survey census yearly estimates. With the exception of Buffalo, these cities, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, and Youngstown, have also seen large jumps in their housing vacancy rates in the 2000–2010 decade, despite significant decreases in the number of housing units over this same time period.

Three of the cities selected for interviews represent nuanced experiences with shrinking. Interviews done in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia take into account

stabilizing levels of population decline or nominal growth and stable housing vacancy rates over the 2001–2010 decade.

Table 6.2: Job Titles of Interview Respondents

Job Title:
Commissioner
Community Planner
Director, Community Development & Planning
Division Manager, Property Maintenance Code Enforcement
Principal Planner I
Senior Planner *
Special Landscape Architect
*Three respondents held this title

Interview respondents in each city represent varying positions within a city's municipal structure. While the majority hold job titles that include some variation of the word "planner," others vary, representing the wide-range of job function titles in U.S. cities which hold responsibility for vacant and abandoned land planning functions. (See Table 6.2) These range from a landscape architect who works in the planning department and the head of the property maintenance and code enforcement division, to a city commissioner who oversees neighborhood development. Each of the respondents was identified through multiple contacts with their respective city administrations as a person who had working knowledge of the city's approach towards vacant and abandoned lots. The range of job titles demonstrates the variety of training, skills, and approaches, as well as the types of city departments, which are being harnessed to create approaches.

Before participation in the interview process, respondents were made aware of the precautions that have been taken to preserve the anonymity of both their cooperation with this research project as well as the information they have shared. The

letter sent to all participants before their participation in the survey portion of the research indicated that

> In reporting the survey results and any associated comments given by participants, names and organizations will not be specified, except in cases where a respondent has given explicit permission. Such reporting includes correspondence related to clarification of an answer, feedback reports, preliminary research write-ups, the submitted dissertation, and any subsequent publications. Instead, statements of fact, analysis, and opinion will be expressed in a generic manner (for example, "a city planner" or "a staff member of the zoning office"). It is possible that in some instances an individual may be recognizable by inference from specific details given in survey answers. In instances when specific data are attributable to one person, permission for attribution will be sought and obtained prior to the reporting of results. (Shearer, 2013)

All survey participants, a group that includes the interview participants, indicated their agreement with this process being undertaken to protect their anonymity[9]. Interview results have been reported in a manner specifically designed to preserve the anonymity of respondents so that respondents felt free to give candid assessments of their city's progress on tacking these problems without fear of professional or personal consequences.

During the interview process, a number of conversation topics were covered. As expected, individual respondents spoke at length about different topics, depending upon what issues were at the forefront of dealing with vacant and abandoned lots in their own cities or within their own individual job responsibilities.

In order to understand the logic of decisions about vacant and abandoned land, the contents of the interviews have been presented within the six models of the Steinitz Framework. Following Steinitz' reasoning, decisions are predicated on estimated impacts of change, impacts are predicated on kinds of change that might be taken,

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[9] One interview participant, in Philadelphia, was not a survey participant. He participated in a group interview with his two colleagues, who were survey participants, and has been given the same protection of anonymity as other contributors.

envisioned change is predicated on evaluations of current conditions, evaluations are predicated on an understanding of processes acting on the site, and processes are predicated on representations of site phenomena. As such, the presentation of results for each interview begins with a discussion about decisions and then proceeds step-by-step through the other five models to representation.

Responses have been presented in categories associated with the four individual knowledge centers: data about the city-wide planning environment, information about the decision-making process used in the city, data on the relationship of the city's planning approach to the growth paradigm, and the types of tools and policies being used in the city to deal with vacant and abandoned lots. Responses relative to the first three knowledge centers are presented in this section as they were revealed by planners in each individual city. Responses regarding tools and policies in use in these Legacy Cities have been assembled and are presented in the next section.

Each set of responses is preceded by a short discussion of the city's recent population demographics and a map illustrating the location of vacant lots within the city's limits. These maps were all located in city planning documents, except for those illustrating vacant lots in Baltimore and Cleveland. The Baltimore map was sourced from the 10 December, 2012 posting on the personal weblog of Robert E. Mealey "Obscure Analytics," based on data obtained from the City of Baltimore's data catalog at data.baltimorecity.gov/. The Cleveland map was sourced from the 21 December, 2011 posting on the personal weblog of Kurt Neiswender at archinect.com, based on data obtained from the City of Cleveland Planning Department and Office of Sustainability.

6.2.1 BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Baltimore, with a 2012 population of 621, 342, is the largest city in the state of Maryland and the second largest of the cities chosen for interviews (United States Census Bureau, 2013). The city has a long history of population decline, having lost

almost thirty-five percent of its peak 1950 population in the ensuing sixty years. The 2012 American Community Survey reported a nominal increase of 0.18 percent population in the city during the 2011–2012 year. This reversal has been happily received in Baltimore, especially by the mayor, who declared at her 2011 inauguration that her main goal was to increase the city's population by ten thousand families in ten years (Kilar, 2013; United States Census Bureau, 2013). In the 2001–2010 decade, the city reported the smallest decline in housing units of interviewed cities, along with a modest increase in the housing vacancy rate, which indicates that the city's housing market was already beginning to stabilize and attract residents during the past decade.

The population rebound in Baltimore has been pinpointed on the millennial generation, between the ages of 19 and 33. The movement of this age-group into the city has been strong enough during the past decade to overcome the movement of all other age groups out of the city. If trends continue as they have in the past, this group will also move out of the city in droves, leaving Baltimore in a cycle of massive population movements, low residential diversity, and instability (Comeback City, 2013).

Baltimore's location on the East Coast, within immediate proximity to Washington D.C. and easy commute distance to Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Wilmington is one of its prime assets. Maryland has been named by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as the number one state for innovation and entrepreneurship (Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore, 2014). In conjunction with these assets, the network of universities, hospitals, and skilled talent in the city should be sufficient ingredients to create a globally competitive city. However, studies have shown the city has not been able to leverage these assets into excelling relative to its peer post-industrial cities. It has shown an ongoing inability to translate its market advantages in scientific discovery and technological advancement, international exports, and green economy into market leadership (Vey J. S., 2012).

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Image 6.1: Map of Vacant Buildings and Lots in City of Baltimore - 2012

Vacant Lots
and Buildings

X Vacant Building   X Vacant Lot
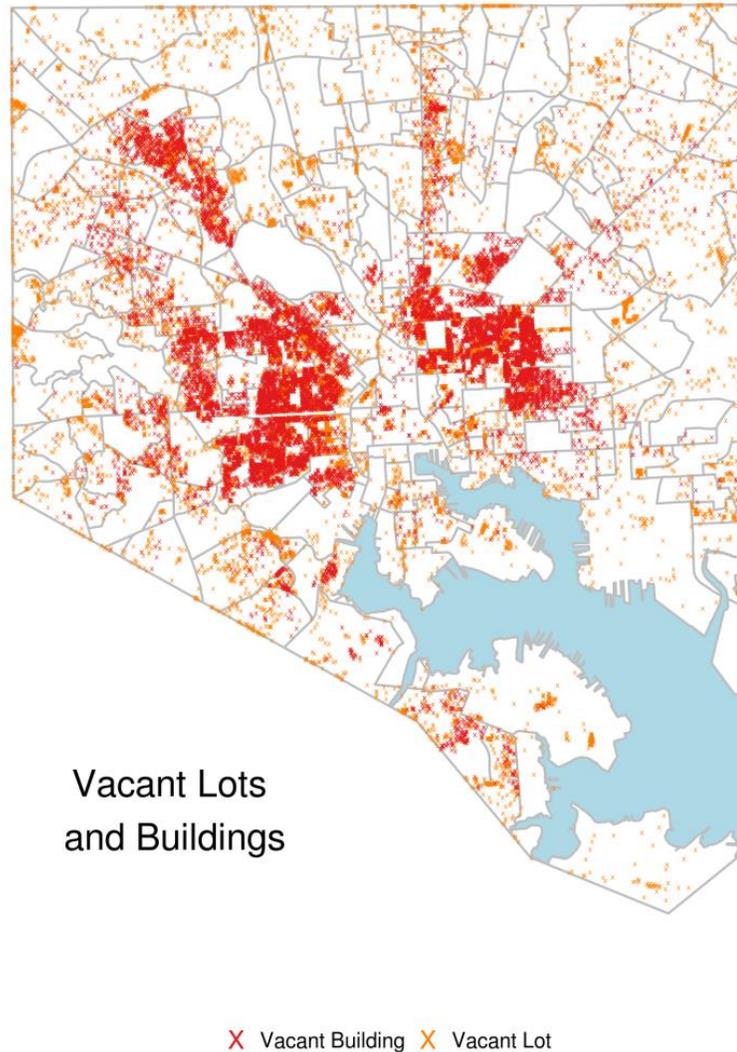
Source: (Mealey, 2012)

The city has been actively revitalizing its urban fabric, dating to the Charles
Center urban renewal project in the 1950s. Its most successful revitalization project has
been the de-industrialization and subsequent tourism-oriented development of the Inner
Harbor, ongoing since the early 1960s. The city has focused on assembling a
competitive set of tourist attractions in the vicinity of the Inner Harbor, including

professional baseball and football stadiums, museums, an aquarium, concert pavilion, and a casino opening in the fall of 2014. While public and private investments in these attractions have helped to bring money and visitors to areas of downtown Baltimore that would be uncompetitive otherwise, the resources have not spread far beyond the Inner Harbor. In between the stable, vibrant neighborhoods adjacent to the tourist-rich Inner Harbor and the universities and hospitals located miles from the downtown are vast acres of Baltimore that are largely forgotten (see Image 6.1, above).

6.2.1.1   Knowledge Center Responses

The respondent in Baltimore spoke about decision making in reference to five of the six models used in the Steinitz Framework: Decision, Change, Evaluation, Process, and Representation. Although he did not reference the importance of planning for vacant and abandoned lots within the city-wide planning environment, he did indicate in his survey responses that he considered these activities to be both very important for the city and the most important issue for himself while conducting his job responsibilities.

6.2.1.1.1   Decision

In a question about how his survey responses indicated that motivations for acting on vacant and abandoned lots was evenly split between challenges and opportunities, the respondent commented that

> It's almost simpler than that. There's just too much vacant land, vacant property. So because of that, there are properties that are opportunities and there are opportunities for us to grow Baltimore. Whether that's through new development, economic revitalization and new open spaces, urban agriculture, addressing our stormwater mitigation needs… but because of the number of vacant properties and the reality is that they're not going to all be redeveloped in some way, in the next few years to 10 years or so, there's still a lot of property that we have to take care of. And we have to deal with and I think those are the challenges and it's just because there's just too much [vacant land].

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The amount of vacant land in Baltimore leads directly to it being seen as both an opportunity and a challenge. Because of the large amounts of land, it is viewed as an opportunity for experimentation, diversifying uses within the city, addressing unmet needs. At the same time, the large amount of land is a challenge because it needs to be taken care of both before and while these potential opportunities are being realized.

6.2.1.1.2 Impact

The respondent did not speak to any topics related to the Impact Model.

6.2.1.1.3 Change

One condition that the respondent noted (mentioned below in Process Models) that has enabled Baltimore to implement plans for vacant lots is the amount of interagency cooperation that occurs within municipal government. When asked about whether this cooperation was part of the institutional culture, the respondent said that

> I don't know about institutional culture… But I think that it happens and then it's also a challenge. I think agencies are tasked to do certain things and they're doing a lot and do collaborate and work with other agencies takes time. So I think it's really a balance between the value of the collaboration/ working together and then the challenges of time and process involved in that.

Collaboration is part of what makes Baltimore able to get change accomplished on these lots, but it seems that the collaboration is perceived to come at the expense of time spent getting intradepartmental goals met, which could lead to the amount of collaboration being reduced.

Another Change Model comment heard in Baltimore was one that was heard widely through the interview process. The respondent mentioned that the lack of resources constrained the decision making process. In Baltimore, this was reflected in conversations regarding turning vacant lots into parks.

I think making the decision is the tough one because we have different… you have different agendas and different hopes and concerns like parks. The parks department has trouble with maintaining its parks, so the thought of 'let's create new parks' is like… they can't maintain what they have.

Because of the unwillingness or inability of the parks department to take on the responsibility of additional parks, the decision-making process is constrained from results that would include additional park land.

6.2.1.1.4 Evaluation

The respondent spoke to a number of issues related to Evaluation Models during the interview. He mentioned that the city had a market typology map created by The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) that was being used to help the city decide where to get involved with investment programs and policies. Using this TRF data, the city had identified

Broadly 4 types of communities. Distressed, middle-market, another one that I can't remember the name of, and stable. So you can imagine distressed is at the bottom and at the top, neighborhoods that have… tend to be the higher wealth neighborhoods. And then you've got the two in the middle that are closer to one or the other. The distressed neighborhoods are where you see a majority of these vacant lots. Those are the areas that don't have the market that we're looking at. These landholding and stabilization and innovative reuses for the land that aren't based on someone coming and buying the property and redeveloping, with the goal of being able to move distressed neighborhoods up to the next level and up to the next so that you're building that housing market. Begin to allow the market to work on its own.

By segmenting the city's housing market into these four typologies, the city is able to have a set of established measures indicating where it is effective for them to get involved, where public funds are needed, and where they would be most useful. By doing this segmentation, the city is able to "play a stronger role as you move from the

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top of the housing market down to the distressed in terms of what they might need to provide in terms of subsidies or other types of assistance."

He also spoke about potential conflicts seen in the city about how evaluations are made regarding proposed uses for vacant and abandoned lands. Within the city,

> Not everyone's agenda is the same. So vacant land might be seen by someone who is involved with development as new buildings, new houses. Someone who is involved with agriculture, that would be a great place to grow food because it's in a food desert, etc… How do you make those decisions, and a lot of these decisions are looking in a crystal ball. We're not going to see development in a lot of these neighborhoods for years. Deciding, making decisions that 'we got a lot of land, let's make this one permanent and use it for stormwater and move on" is not going to hamper redevelopment of this area. But sometimes it's hard to make that decision because it's like "what if a developer comes and wants to develop on this land' so that's one of the things we're collaboratively working on. We have to make these decisions about where it makes sense to do this.

Baltimore has, as noted above, developed a culture of interagency cooperation. Despite, or perhaps as a result of this, conflict has emerged as a distinct challenge to decision-making on vacant land in the city. This conflict has led to the city reaching out to a group of academics at the University of Massachusetts and Tufts University to develop a mathematically based modeling tool to help guide redevelopment. This tool is particularly envisioned by the city's planning staff as helping to decide between two conflicting potential uses for a single parcel of land.

> I think it was just something that seemed like a good opportunity to test out, to see 'is there a way that we can make decisions in a way that'… kind of move this a little bit beyond just simply a few people around a table doing that, using data, using adjacencies, using GIS and different criteria to begin indentifying... What we're interested in is identifying those places where we get conflict. Where are those places that might come up as a great stormwater management site that also comes up as a great redevelopment site. How do we address that? Right now we don't have a way of addressing that but we also haven't had a clear system of identifying these priority areas based on different criteria.
> The creation of this model is intended to help the city make these Evaluation

Model type decisions more transparently, efficiently, and equitably. The use of this

modeling tool should remove a degree of uncertainty from the entire decision-making process and clarify the transition from Process Models through Evaluation on to Change Models.

6.2.1.1.5 Process

The respondent spoke briefly on topics related to the Process Model, particularly the types of questions that the city regularly addressed with dealing with vacant and abandoned lots. He mentioned that a decision was made about ten years ago for the city to assemble city agencies and data sources and base decisions on the gathered data.

> I think maybe there is a certain institutional change that happened ten years ago about, around the city staff, and getting agencies together and starting to use data to make decisions, and I think beginning to, in making those decisions, realize that… looking at non-traditional partnerships within agencies was the way to address problems. So that looking at crime from just a 'we're going to go and police the area' to how does recreation fit into that, how does public health fit into that, begins to address issues in a multifaceted way rather than just this is a transportation issue, this is a policing issue, this is a planning issue…

By creating this multi-disciplinary approach to what might otherwise be seen as traditional planning problems, Baltimore has internalized the findings of studies like that represented in Figures 3.4–3.6 which demonstrate the interconnected nature of disorder, social and physical structure, health, and neighborhood destruction. Their multi-disciplinary approach has been assembled to target what has been diagnosed as a similarly multi-disciplinary set of problems.

6.2.1.1.6 Representation

In his survey responses, the respondent had not noted that GIS data were used in vacant lot decision making. When asked about it during the interview process, he clarified that GIS was, indeed, one of their most used sources of information.

GIS very much is one of our data sources. The meetings that I've been involved in, they're very GIS-based. And we're looking at a lot of different factors and then you know there are adjacencies and relationships and we've actually got them mapped and we then add on top of that both sort of human knowledge as well as… we got info from the police department about where some of their hot spots are so we can layer that on top of some of the clusters. and then as we went around, let's say 20 potential ones were identified initially, recognizing that we then had to go through and call them, sat around with the police department and they say 'yeah, take those down, we've got problems at that corner and with this house and that would be a great one' so it's a combination of GIS and then personal knowledge.

Their decision-making process appears to be based on information from a variety of sources, combining social, geographic and demographic inputs to create a multifaceted view of the city's vacant and abandoned lots.

Another Representation Model topic that came up in the interview was about how vacancy is defined in the city. Both vacant buildings and vacant lots are defined in Baltimore City Code. The respondent was asked about whether he thought that having a more flexible definition could be advantageous. He responded that

I think having a clear definition is beneficial around… very beneficial for communities so that… but I haven't really thought of that. I don't think about how to define something as vacant and abandoned, I just… having to help deal with it after it's been identified as such.

The respondent clearly does not interpret his job description as having to define vacancy or make determinations of vacancy on a daily basis. He does, however appear to interpret the established definition of the term as beneficial for the city.

6.2.1.1.7 Growth Paradigm

This respondent did not specifically address the topic of planning as a shrinking city, although he did note in his survey responses that the city identifies itself as a stabilizing city. This is in-line with the most recent Census and American Community

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Survey data. As one of the non-planners interviewed, the respondent was not entirely familiar with the concept of the "growth paradigm" as it exists in planning. He did, however, note that he saw potential advantages to a smaller population existing within the infrastructure of a city built for one million inhabitants. These include creating a green infrastructure network and using it to help structure future urban development, using vacant space to provide environmental, social, and economic benefits, and the potential of "right-sizing" the city.

6.2.2 BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Buffalo is the second largest city in New York State, with a 2012 population of 259,384 and the largest city in the area of upstate New York (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Situated on Lake Erie and adjacent to the Canadian border, Buffalo's history is tied to its location as a transportation hub. The city grew quickly after the 1825 completion of the Erie Canal connected Lake Erie with East Coast seaports. It declined in a similarly rapid fashion after the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959 rerouted Great Lakes shipping away from the city (Glaeser, 2007). The loss of locational economic advantages and de-industrialization combined to erase almost eighty percent of the city's manufacturing jobs between 1970 and 2009 (Silverman, Yin, & Patterson, 2012).

The city's 2010 population of 261,310 was fifty-five percent lower than its peak in 1950. The city saw an almost eleven percent decline in population in the 2001–2010 decade alone. Of the cities being interviewed in this research, Buffalo alone saw a nominal decline in the city's housing vacancy rate in the 2001–2010 decade. This change coincided with a strong decline of over eight percent in the number of housing units in the city. Eliminating Buffalo's vacant homes has been a particular project of the city's mayor through the 2007 "5-in-5" Demolition Plan, which targeted the demolition of 5,000 structures over five years (City of Buffalo, 2007).

Image 6.2: Map of Vacant Parcels in City of Buffalo - 2011

FIGURE 37   Vacant Land

Vacant land by parcel
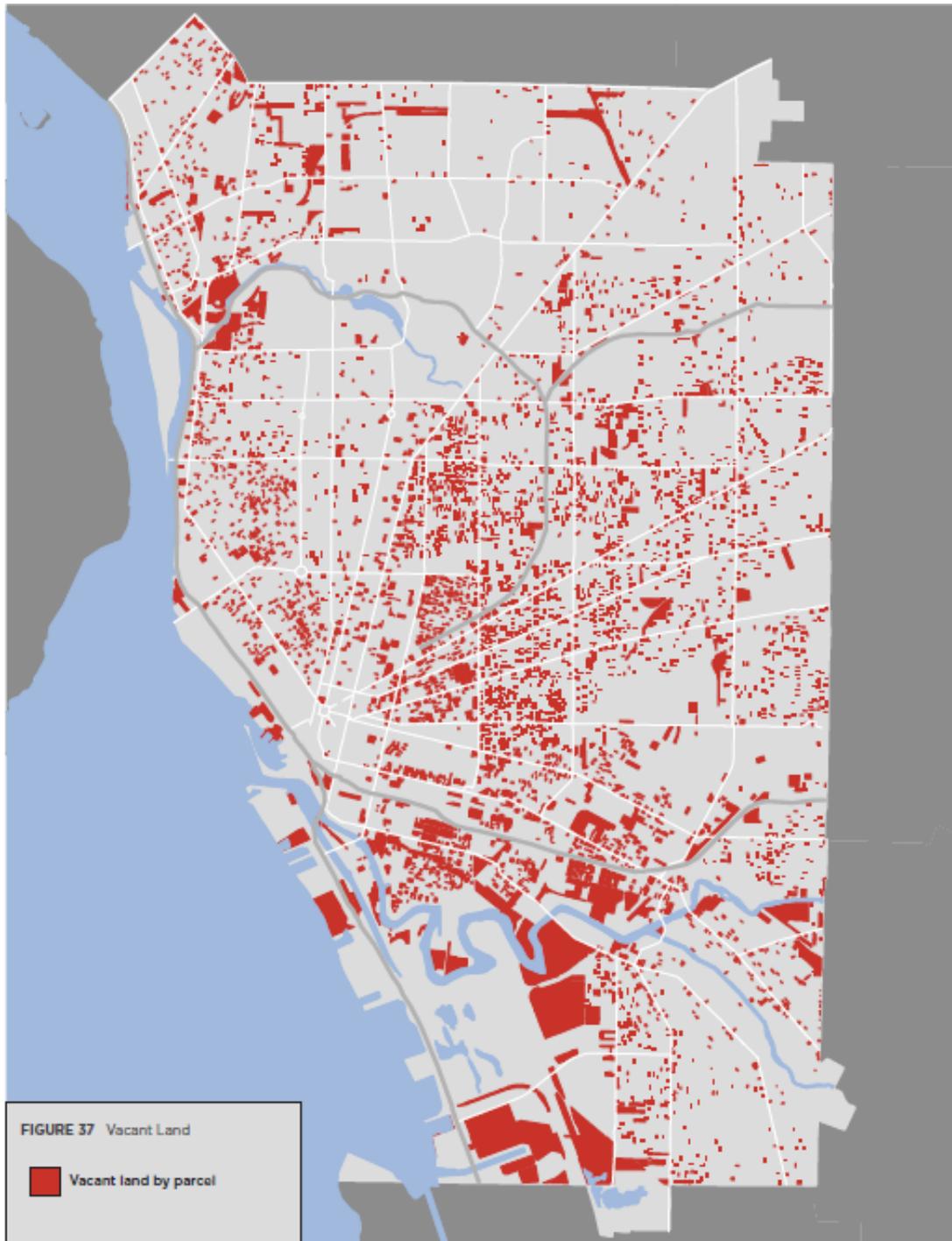
Source: (City of Buffalo, 2011, p. 33)

The city created a new comprehensive plan in 2006. It envisions Buffalo in 2030 as a strengthened, vibrant center of the Great Lakes, but is candid in its assessment of the city's current straits, recognizing that:

> The City of Buffalo is in financial crisis. Its leaders, working under the supervision of the Buffalo Fiscal Stability Authority, have many difficult matters to attend to right now. But it is also important to look to our future in a longer view. What Buffalo must do in the short term to survive and what it must do in the longer-term to prosper need to be closely related to one another. They must be part of the same plan (City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, 2006, p. 2).

Eight years later, the city is in the process of developing the "Green Code," a replacement of their sixty-plus year old development code. It will enable Buffalo to implement the goals of the new Comprehensive Plan. The Green Code specifically addresses the fundamental differences of planning for dense city neighborhoods versus planning for those that have experienced much demolition, establishing a separate set of standards that new construction in these less-dense neighborhoods must meet, as well as additional potential landuses (City of Buffalo, 2011). (See Image 6.2) Through Form Based Coding, Buffalo is hoping that the Green Code will "give Buffalo an advantage in attracting jobs, investment, and talent," encouraging compact development and green infrastructure, encouraging development by simplifying the process, and building upon the city's ample architectural and social assets (City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning, 2012, p. 2; City of Buffalo, ND; Sommer, 2014).

6.2.2.1 Knowledge Center Responses

The respondent in Buffalo spoke about decision making in reference to five of the models used in the Steinitz Framework: Decision, Change, Evaluation, Process, and Representation. The respondent also did not reference the importance of planning for vacant and abandoned lots within the city-wide planning environment during his interview. He did, however, indicate in his survey responses that he considered these

activities to be very important for both the city and relative to his own job responsibilities.

6.2.2.1.1 Decision

The respondent in Buffalo noted the sort of murky view that planners in the city have of vacant lots as motivation for taking action. Similar to the view of the respondent in Baltimore, the Buffalo respondent noted that while they primarily see vacant lots as opportunities, maintenance of the lots is always a concern.

> I would say the planners usually look at project areas and see opportunities with vacant land or even, as far as blight goes, once we demolish we'll see it as an opportunity. In some areas the market has just died down so much that we'll look at things like the mowing issues and the maintenance issues that we have with these swathes of vacant land and what we end up finding is that there will be several contiguous city owned lots, one in foreclosure, and then several contiguous… so looking at it as an issue for maintenance is one thing. But then an opportunity to sort of make our lives easier, on the flip side for maintenance. But then that would turn into an opportunity if a developer comes along and we own all of the parcels. It's very different with each neighborhood in the city.

Whether motivations are an opportunity or a challenge really is related to the location of these lots in Buffalo as each neighborhood has a different market for development.

Another Decision model topic that emerged out of the interview was related to the idea of decommissioning areas of the city and moving people out of largely depopulated neighborhoods. He noted that while:

> Everyone acknowledged that there really isn't market to build anything new in that neighborhood. But as far as decommissioning a street, that is mostly city-owned or approaching a property owner to move, I just don't think we're there yet. I think definitely through foreclosure every year we look in that smaller target area and we'll just acquire things that are in foreclosure, but there are homeowners - that one house on the block might be an elderly homeowner that has lived there all her life and she plans on passing that house down to her grandchildren or what have you, so I don't think we're in a position to have

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people move just yet. But we are definitely thinking about sustainability and long term effects of spreading ourselves so thin with such a declining population. It's a tough decision.

The topic of possibly relocating residents out of depopulated neighborhoods was brought up in a number of interviews. It was not a question specifically asked in the survey but has been prominent in the national discussion of shrinking cities since Detroit's Mayor spoke in favor of the idea in 2011 (PBS, 2011). Although the city is not yet be able to make the call to move people out of unsustainable neighborhoods, it appears that that is a topic for discussion in Buffalo. The Buffalo respondent's survey results were heavily focused on quality of life issues for remaining residents; three of the four responses given to the question "what should be done with vacant and abandoned lots" were neighborhood focused. It appears that this concern for neighborhood viability and quality of life has resulted in a willingness to have the politically unpopular conversation about relocating citizens out of depopulated areas

6.2.2.1.2 Impact

During the interview process, the respondent did not speak to topics associated with the Impact Model. He did mention in his survey responses, however, that Buffalo uses a mixed group of qualitative and quantitative benchmarks to measure success. These range from quality of life and rate of abandonment to numbers of purchases, foreclosures, and demolitions. Planners in the city follow the trends in each neighborhood, using these measures to determine if planning efforts have been successful, although there was no discussion of how this "success" was measured or determined.

6.2.2.1.3 Change

One response related to the Change Model that was heard in the majority of these interviews was the ability to take action in the face of dwindling resources. When

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the topic of what factors associated with change the city had no control over came up, the Buffalo respondent noted that

> I was just thinking our biggest challenge with adequately addressing vacant land issues is resources and I bet every city would say that that's dealing with these issues. We just can't keep up with, I mean, it's just, look at that map. You know, we spend an estimated $24 million per year maintaining vacant and abandoned properties. So, in a city that, you know, is… was once third poorest and our budgets don't go up every year, they're certainly going down, the issue's not going away. It's increasing and… Definitely, resources.

While resources is a common factor outside the control of these cities, one of Buffalo's less common attributes is its combined sewer system. Other cities in this survey and interview do have a combined system, but Buffalo's Sewer Authority (BSA) has been proactive about working with other city agencies on using vacant lots to address stormwater issues. The BSA has

> [R]eceived a significant amount of funding to do greening projects around the city. And I believe they were talking about identifying demolition properties that, once we demolish, they can go ahead and use that funding for… and they were looking at some of our land assemblage areas where we own a lot of the vacant land to do some things there [addressing stormwater issues]… they basically mapped out our vacant properties over their watershed areas and they were basing it on that.

The BSA is an asset to the city, in terms of bringing funding for projects that address vacant lots and folding in stormwater mitigation policies with vacant lot mitigation.

He did, however, mention resources, or the lack thereof, in his survey responses as something that constrains the city to curing problems rather than taking advantage of opportunities. He noted that limited resources have created a conundrum for the city: if they use their resources to acquire problem lots, these lots become a strain on depleted resources. However, if they do not acquire the lots, the lots can potentially cause even more problems.

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6.2.2.1.4 Evaluation

The respondent in Buffalo spoke to a number of topics associated with Evaluation Models. He discussed how the city made the determination of what neighborhoods to get involved in.

> The agency that I actually work for receives federal money directly to work in some of the worst neighborhoods. So we are not… when we do community planning, we are not planning in the neighborhoods that don't have these issues. We're planning for neighborhoods that are either at their tipping point or are so far gone that they require a different strategy.

Because of these federal requirements, there is more money to be spent in "worse" neighborhoods.

> As far as us targeting our limited resources, we're going to definitely focus on the neighborhoods at the tipping point with some market left. The neighborhoods that are eligible for CDBG dollars, they have some housing issues, they need that little bit of help. We're going to definitely target our resources in those neighborhoods. Definitely not saying that we're giving up on some neighborhoods, we're just not going to dump a ton of money to save something that's not there.

The city is both capitalizing upon the outside funding it can get from the federal government, as well as being rational about the expected return on its own investment by not attempting to rebuild, single-handedly, decimated areas using scarce public funds. Because of these benchmarks for use of money, there are different options available for action in different types of neighborhood.

> So it is sort of interesting because in one neighborhood you'll have maybe a dense block with one board-up and then you go to the other side of the city and you'll have a block with one house on it. But [you'll] be able to spend the money based on the needs of that community and then if the community is gone and there's that one house there, addressing those challenges… the strategy is very different.

Another Evaluation Model topic discussed was about determining when to sell vacant city-owned land and when to lease it. This emerged when talking about Buffalo's first urban farm.

> This is our most vacant area of the city. The city owned all the contiguous vacant lot. A family approached us, and they were interested in doing urban farming and we did have some reservations about the long-term upkeep and things like that, so we worked out a lease arrangement agreement with them. Rather than, and I don't know that they even approached us to purchase, I just knew they wanted to do urban agriculture…

Rather than make an evaluation immediately about whether a proposed project is going to be allowed to go on in the city indefinitely, Buffalo gives itself the ability to establish an ongoing evaluation process through the use of lease agreements.

The city also factors the number of lots already owned into the Evaluation Model point of their decision-making process. Buffalo is proactive about maintaining an urban density within the city limits, so it limits the amount of spreading out that can occur through the purchase of multiple vacant lots by adjacent homeowners.

> The one thing we don't really allow is homesteading[10] of multiple lots because we do want to keep an urban feel. We don't want to feel the character of the neighborhoods [change]. So areas of the west side, for example, where it's very dense and yeah, there needs to be that one demolition, let's say there are two demolitions in a row. Our preference is usually to have homeowners on either side take over the lots. If one of the homeowners isn't interested, the other can homestead the one adjacent and then purchase the other one. We usually don't… in the past they have allowed for multiple homesteading and it's usually in the more vacant area. But if we own two or three lots in a row, then usually we let them homestead one and hold on to the other.

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[10] Buffalo has developed an Urban Homestead policy that enables homeowners in CDBG-eligible neighborhoods to buy vacant lots next to their homes for one dollar. This is a State of New York program.

A more difficult evaluation decision for planners in Buffalo is when they have to make a judgment between the desires of residents to have more space for their families and the city's ability to control its structure for the long-term.

> Yeah, we talk about it all the time. We go back and forth because we'll own… Actually it just came up the other day. We owned maybe 7 lots in a row. There was this one house and he wanted to buy one of them. Actually, he wanted to homestead it and immediately I thought that's not the highest and best use to let go of one of these several contiguous [lots] for $1 but then I thought about it, like it's a sidelot for his children to play in, he just wants to fence it off and it's one less. We still own 6. I'm just thinking in five years, let's say he can't keep up the house and… I just think of all different scenarios and it's always challenging to think not only for now, getting it out of our inventory so we don't have to maintain it so it's back on tax rolls. But then down the road, you can never predict what's going to happen.

6.2.2.1.5 Process

When questioned in the survey about the measures or benchmarks that were used to determine when to take action on vacant lots, the respondent noted that Housing Court violation and demolition orders, along with foreclosure rulings were most typically used. During the interview, this topic came up again, and the survey respondent clarified his answer to note that there were also qualitative issues that the city used as measures, namely quality of life. "Yeah, everything we do revolves around quality of life issues for the residents. That's certainly something we're always taking into consideration." Planners in Buffalo are clearly operating on a model similar to that shown in Fig. 3.4 as they use the benchmark of maintaining quality of life to support their actions on vacant and abandoned lots.

It is unclear as to how much discretion planners in Buffalo have about when to take action on vacant lots outside of the Housing Court process, although their focus on quality of life issues does give them some leeway to act.

6.2.2.1.6 Representation

In contrast to some other cities, there appears to be no fixed definition of "vacant" in Buffalo from the perspective of the planning department. This determination comes largely in the form of a court judgment or foreclosure proceedings. Buffalo has had a housing court since 1978 "exclusively devoted to actions and proceedings involving the enforcement of all housing codes, pertaining to all real property situated within the city of Buffalo", created for the purpose of improving "the quality of housing in the City of Buffalo by enabling stricter, more effective enforcement of housing standards (New York State Senate and Assembly, 1978, pp. 917, 1931). Judges in this court have the ability to employ any practice sanctioned by local, state, or federal law to address housing deficiencies.

The respondent commented on how citizen action helps to initiate the process of establishing vacancy within this judicial system: "actually, yeah, I would say the neighbors are definitely instrumental with letting us know. We have a 311 system that they can call into. So that sort of prompts the whole housing court process". While the determination is judicial or legal, it can be initiated by citizen action to establish that vacancy exists and thus start the process of addressing it. The city's Housing Court uniquely integrates citizen participation and feedback into the judicial process (New York State Unified Court System, 2013).

6.2.2.1.7 Growth Paradigm

Regarding the growth paradigm, the respondent commented on how he felt his growth-oriented planning education had ill prepared him for the challenges of planning in a shrinking city. Responding to a question about how the city appears to be planning for multiple future timeframes simultaneously, he said

> They don't teach you real world challenges and how to… there really is no easy answer for any of these challenges we're facing. In each time we're faced with something unique. It isn't like boilerplate answers that will solve everything. But yeah, we do think about down the road if we do ever need to decommission

a street or have site control or things like that and we already have started to do land assemblage in areas, it's just tough. It's just tough to make some of these decisions

In the survey, the respondent had noted that Buffalo was very much a city of independent neighborhoods, where some are strong and growing and others are declining. Large amounts of economic development investments are being planned for the city, but at the same time, finding the tools to address the declining neighborhoods is becoming more challenging. These economic development funds and successful neighborhoods are not translating into spillover effects or useful tools that can be leveraged to help the declining areas of town.

6.2.3   CINCINNATI, OHIO

Cincinnati, located on the Ohio River in the Southwest corner of the state, is the third largest city in Ohio, with a 2012 population of 296,550 (United States Census Bureau, 2013). The city is spread out over almost eighty square miles. Its downtown is located directly adjacent to the river, reflecting the importance of manufacturing and trade in the city's early history. The city's population in 2010 was 296,943, with a MSA population of over 2.1 million. Cincinnati has lost population in each census decade since 1960, and has lost over forty percent of its peak 1950 population of 503,998.

Cincinnati has experienced population loss in a pattern similar to many other post-industrial Midwestern towns. While a number of residents have left the area to follow jobs or better weather, many city residents have moved to the suburbs looking for larger homes and lower taxes (Alltucker & Andrews, 2004). The city has made strides in the past fifteen years in terms of trying to attract residents and visitors back to the city, largely through two signature projects, The Banks and the Cincinnati Streetcar.

The Banks plan began in 1996 as the city decided to redesign the waterfront around two new stadiums for the Cincinnati Reds MLB baseball team and Bengals NFL

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football team. The public-private partnership project grew to encompass a 40-acre riverfront park, an 18-acre mixed-use district, the National Underground Railroad Museum and an existing arena venue (Urban Design Associates, 2000). As of 2013, Phase 1 of the Banks has been implemented, and the area shows promise for reinvigorating downtown Cincinnati.

Image 6.3: Map of Vacant Parcels in City of Cincinnati - 2012
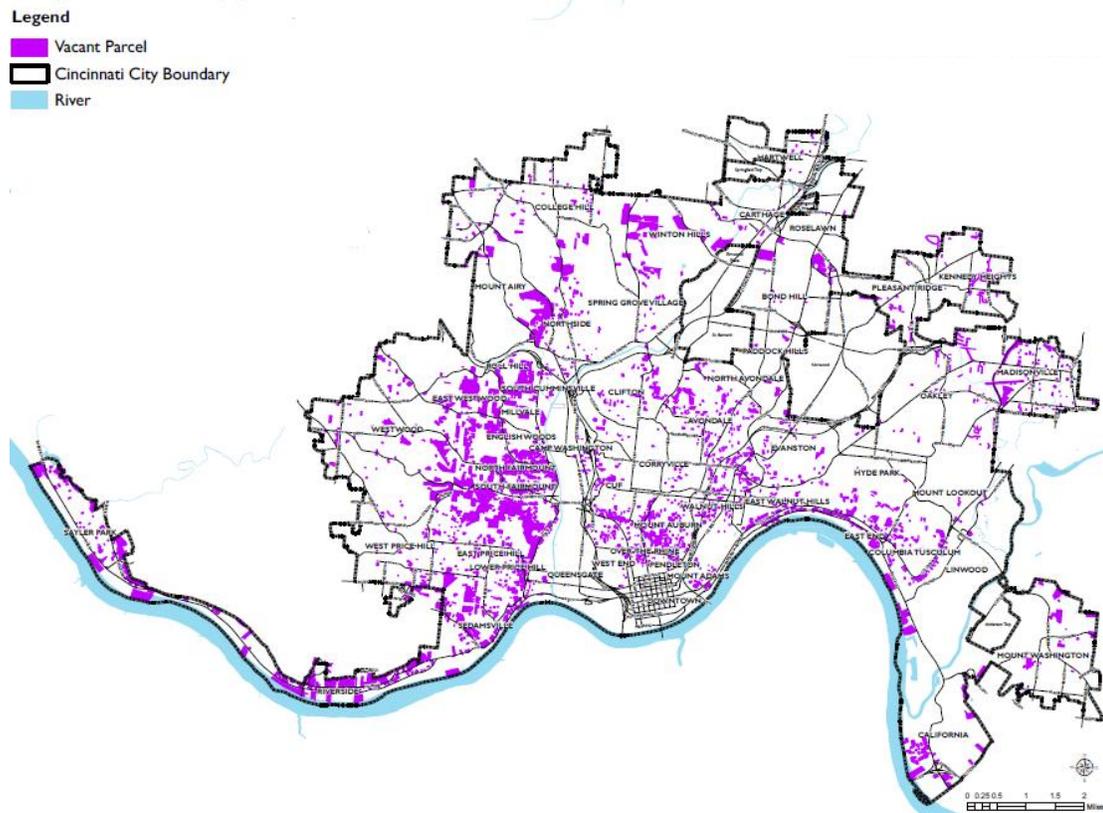
Source: (City of Cincinnati, 2012, p. 49)

The Cincinnati Streetcar was designed to encourage transit-oriented development and bring residents back to downtown, the Uptown area around the University of Cincinnati, and neighborhoods in between the two along a 3.6 mile loop. In the 1950s, the city's original streetcar system was removed. The city expressly

makes the connection between population decline, loss of economic vitality, and lagging competitively against other cities such as Chicago to this removal (City of Cincinnati, 2013). This streetcar proposal has not been welcomed universally. The current mayor ran on a platform of stopping the installation of the project and canceled it until an independent audit demonstrated that the cost of canceling the system would be similar to the cost of finishing it. This lead to the city council to vote to save the project after a private foundation stepped in to pay for the system's operating costs for ten years (Osborne, 2013).

While both these projects illustrate that there is municipal support for redeveloping the city, and the high residential occupancy rates at the Banks shows that there is a market for new highly-urban style development in the city, Cincinnati is, in general, still facing challenges in its urban renovation.

6.2.3.1 Knowledge Center Responses

The respondent in Cincinnati spoke about decision making in reference to five of the models used in the Steinitz Framework: Decision, Impact, Change, Evaluation, and Process. The respondent did not reference the importance of planning for vacant and abandoned lots within the city-wide planning environment during his interview. He did, however, indicate in his survey responses that he considered these activities to be important for both the city and relative to his own job responsibilities.

6.2.3.1.1 Decision

One Decision Model topic that emerged in Cincinnati is related to the city's political process. The respondent discussed how the prioritization of resource targeting can get tied up in local politics, making it difficult to differentiate between

> [U]rgent and important [and] urgent and not important. [We] get bogged down with the latter – example, city council wants answers about something because someone complained. On the other hand, planning for vacant land is getting more urgent all the time. And it's important.

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In Cincinnati, there has been a reluctance in city administration to admit that the city is shrinking. This refusal inhibits the ability of planners to actively plan in the face of shrinking and curtails the types of tools, policies, and plans that they can use.

> But whether it…when you don't admit it, you can't fix it very well, you can't plan for it. And look at the plan, it's calling for repopulation - the comprehensive plan.

Another Decision Model topic that is commonly discussed in these interviews is the idea of buying out the last remaining homeowners in a depopulated area and moving them to a more viable part of the city. There is no political will in Cincinnati, like other cities, to take this action. The respondent noted that "I think if they thought they would be able to convert it to commercial zoning and build a factory or some industry there, they might do it. Otherwise no, I haven't heard anyone talking about that."

6.2.3.1.2 Impact

On an individual lot basis, the city is still trying to develop ways to evaluate the impacts of proposed changes. The respondent notes that Cincinnati is

> Not very far into the process of trying to address these lots. In the past, it's been hit or miss, if one comes up they try and do something with it. Never been a strategy saying 'hey, let's take a look at our vacant land and try to do something.' Property values is one way to quantify what you've got, what it's worth, what it's worth today… how many gardens you've built, how many new homes you have leveraged or built. They can track all that and they will because they have to. Using federal money to do these lots and they want reports. They will keep track of what they do and then look back and see what has helped areas.

One advantage of using federal funds to make changes on vacant and abandoned lots is that there is a requirement for reporting. This requirement drives the

city to develop a process for making determinations about the impacts of proposed changes.

6.2.3.1.3 Change

One factor beyond the control of the respondent is Cincinnati's approach to private developers. He noted that the city government is

> [T]hinking about how we're going to lure the next developer in. How we're going to lure the housing people back. They want them back, and they're planning on them coming back. Whether they come back or not, I don't know. It's conceivable that they won't be back for a long, long time.

The city's growth-oriented planning process does not enable planners to develop tools and policies that would seem to be more appropriate to Cincinnati's current status as a shrinking or non-growing city. A similar problem noted by the respondent is the lack of information about the city's future population or needs for housing, infrastructure, and the like. The respondent illustrated this difficulty saying that

> What has always been missing from this equation to determine, plan, think about what to do with these lots is knowing what the prospects are for people returning to the cities and actually creating the demand for these vacant lots to do things on. It's not going up, it's going down and has been for a long time. … populations won't be returning for 30, 40, 50 years. So that's the kind of long range planning we're trying to be thinking about. But what are we doing now so that we don't screw things up if there is this return to urban… You can't plan for these lots until you have some idea what the prospects are. So right now the strategy is – let's keep them from hurting us at least. Try to.

There is a realization that decisions need to be based on actual projections, not desperate wishes. If those projections are unknown, making data-based decisions is difficult, if not impossible.

Another Change Model topic that came up in the interview was that of how the limited resources that the city has for maintenance is limiting what types of options can be implemented on vacant and abandoned lots. The respondent said that Cincinnati

> [H]as a couple hundred thousand [dollars] to mow vacant and abandoned lots throughout the entire city. So to minimize maintenance costs, they've designed a mixture of formal and natural landscaping – mulch/ground cover across front and a couple of feet back from street. Keep it from encroaching on sidewalk and to maintain line of sight. Row of shrubs/hedges, then some trees, then natural landscaping. City has weed ordinance and has recently changed it to accommodate natural landscaping.

The lack of funds has supported the development of a naturalized landscape design regime and a prescribed mix of formal and natural site applications. It has, however, also curtailed the options of other proposed uses or activities on these lots. The respondent noted that a lack of resources really restricted Cincinnati to acting solely in response to perceived challenges.

> If the city had more (money, time, etc.) to do something with the vacant lots, they would be seen as opportunities. [They're] challenges because there are so many of them and there are only so many things to do with them, with the market as it is. It depends on where the lots are – some areas have better markets, can do infill housing. Other areas, interim uses: gardens, green space. The challenge is looking at both long term and short term prospectus for the lot

This distinction suggests that without private money leading and making determinations about uses, the city has put off doing long-term planning or making long-term decisions in areas without functioning real estate markets, instead providing for interim uses.

6.2.3.1.4 Evaluation

Cincinnati has recently taken a step to alleviate some of the stress normally associated with Evaluation Model questions. The city has updated their comprehensive plan (winner of the 2014 APA Daniel Burnham Award for a Comprehensive Plan) and

mandated that everything the city does, whether it's an ordinance, development deal, or other municipal action,

> [H]as a stamp on it that it has been reviewed by the planning department and it will advance the comprehensive plan goals. And when they do budgeting, they want to know how it will advance the comprehensive plan. You can develop a plan, but if you want to implement it, you've got to make sure it happens… doesn't sit on a shelf somewhere collecting dust

By creating a new comprehensive plan and requiring all city activities to advance the goals and ideals of the plan, the city has effectively set up the benchmarks for judging when to act and what considerations to factor in.

6.2.3.1.5 Process

One Process Model topic that came up during the interview was related to how vacant lots were being created in the city. While the respondent did not speak on larger regional or economic issues, he did mention that there were discussions going on in the city about the effects of demolitions on their surrounding communities.

> Taking a step back, to the question of whether to even to demolish a building. Do you want to create another vacant lot? That is a subject of debate all the time, every day. For neighbors, communities, etc. The mayor went around and looked at buildings we were going to tear down. He created a list of ones to reconsider – they were ones that were already considered historic and wouldn't be knocked down.

Cincinnati's approach to the creation of vacant lots through demolition supports the hypothesized relationship shown in Fig. 3.5 of the physical structures of a community being directly related to the social structures. The questioning that is going on about creating more vacant lots in the city illustrates this belief in the impact that changes to the physical environment, in terms of more vacant lots, can have upon the health of the surrounding community.

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There appears to be a lack of communication amongst city departments about how decisions are being made regarding building demolition, to the point where the mayor got involved personally.

6.2.3.1.6 Representation

This respondent did not speak to any Representation Model topics during the interview. He did mention in the survey, however, a number of data sources that Cincinnati uses to make decisions related to vacant and abandoned lots. These include: Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System, Hamilton County Auditor records, Hamilton County Clerk of Courts records, Permits Plus land tracking module in City database, Hamilton County Records, and Neighborhood Associations and CDCs. This list indicates that Cincinnati is balancing factual, government-sources data with social data sourced in local groups.

6.2.3.1.7 Growth Paradigm

The topic of the growth paradigm and the city's identification as a shrinking city came up during the interview. The respondent noted that, in Cincinnati,

> You don't even dare say the word. The city manager, the politicians, they're all about growth. The reason is we've got to pay the bills. Increase the tax base to… If you get people in your city, more people to take care of it, more people to pay taxes, not as much vacant problematic land. I understand why they're doing it. It's got to stop somewhere. Detroit has bottomed out completely, filed bankruptcy. There's the reason they want to grow, they don't want to be the next bankrupt city.

Because of this inability to accept shrinkage, and the need to plan in light of what has already occurred, the city is still using growth-oriented planning tools and policies and working with a growth-oriented mindset that cannot address the current realities.

6.2.4 CLEVELAND, OHIO

Cleveland is located on the south shore of Lake Erie near the Pennsylvania border and is the second largest city in the state of Ohio, with a 2012 population of 390,928 (United States Census Bureau, 2013). The city's 2010 population of 396,815 represents a fifty-six percent decline from its peak population in 1950, and a seventeen percent decrease from the city's population just one decade earlier. Cleveland has shown declines in both the 2011 and 2012 American Community Survey. It has also had a near doubling of the housing vacancy rate between 2000 and 2010 despite a decrease of over eight thousand housing units in the same time period (United States Census Bureau, 2013).

Like other larger cities included in the interview process such as Baltimore, Philadelphia, and even Cincinnati, downtown Cleveland has seen a turnaround in the past decade or so due to massive, targeted, economic development. Prime examples are The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (1995), The Great Lakes Science Center (1996), and The Cleveland Browns' NFL Stadium (1999), which are all located on the waterfront between downtown Cleveland and Lake Erie. The Cleveland Indians' MLB Baseball Stadium (1994) and the Cleveland Cavaliers' NBA Basketball Arena (1994) are both located in the Gateway District. The difference between the downtown and the rest of the city is starkly illustrated by a 2005 Brookings Institution report showing that in the 1970–2000 time period, Downtown Cleveland's population had increased by 5.7 percent while the city's population, as a whole, had decreased by 35.8 percent (Birch, 2005). The majority of Downtown growth occurred in the 1991–2000 decade as population increased in this district by 32.3 percent during this period (Birch, 2005). In fact, in the twenty years from 1990, the Downtown's population has almost doubled (Brennan, 2013).

Image 6.4: Map of Vacant Parcels in City of Cleveland - 2011
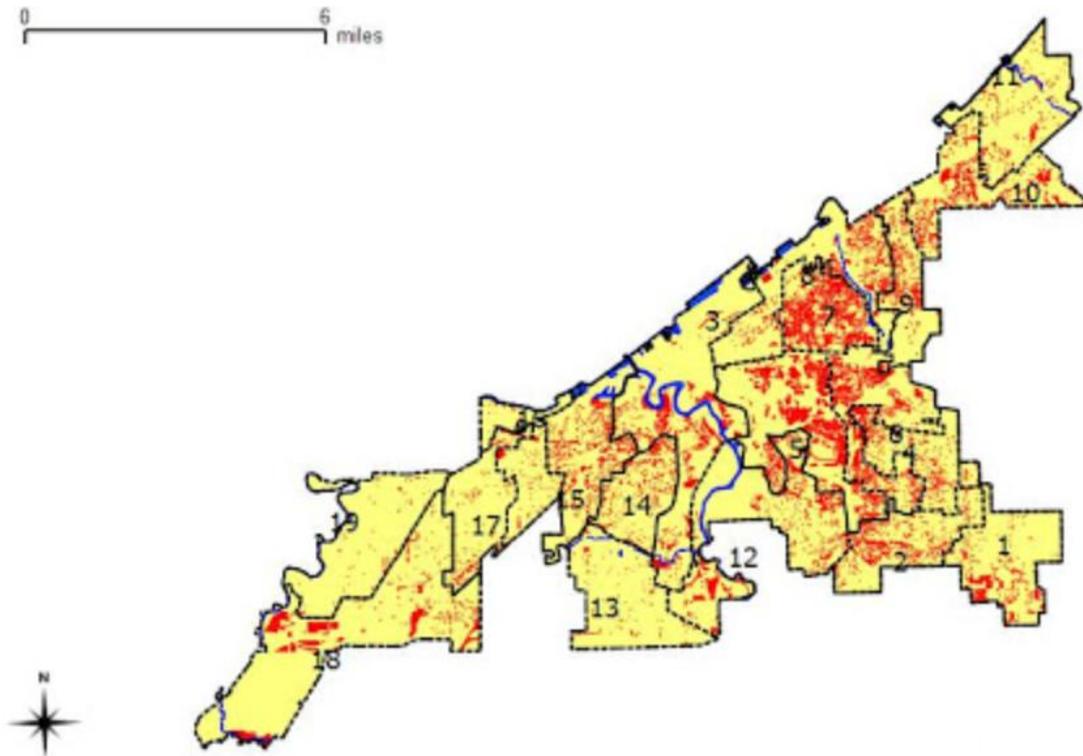
Source: (Neiswender, 2011)

Recognizing that the revitalization of Downtown Cleveland was not spreading quickly or smoothly to other areas of the city, Cleveland's most recent comprehensive plan *Connecting Cleveland 2020* specifically includes a chapter on increasing opportunity and equity throughout the city. In a collaboration between a former planning director and the current planning director, the city's newest comprehensive plan makes reference to Cleveland's days as the center of equity planning in the U.S. It restates the city's position from the 1975 *Cleveland Policy Planning Report:* "In the context of limited resources, the Cleveland City Planning Commission will give priority attention to the task of promoting a wider range of choices for those Cleveland residents who have few, if any, choices" and spells out specific ways that the plan is

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designed to give attention to "policies designed to empower those who have been passed over by the recent tide of revitalization" (Krumholz & Brown, 2007, p. 1).

6.2.4.1 Knowledge Center Responses

The respondent in Cleveland spoke about decision making in reference to four of the models used in the Steinitz Framework: Change, Evaluation, Process, and Representation. The respondent did not reference the importance of planning for vacant and abandoned lots within the city-wide planning environment during his interview. He did, however, indicate in his survey responses that he considered these activities to be very important for the city and the most important issue relative to his own job responsibilities.

6.2.4.1.1 Decision

During the interview, the respondent did not touch on any topics related to Decision Models. He listed in the survey, however, a number of motivations for action on vacant and abandoned lots, including: identifying a potential reuse; coordination with vacant land partners (City/County and CDCs); and addressing issues of ownership and/or clearing titles.

He also spoke on the topic of assistance that other levels of government could give in achieving the city's objectives. These include: sustained funding for vacant properties/vacant land from the county, state, and/or federal government, funding for demolitions and repurposing land, and funding through CDBG or the creation of an NSP4.

6.2.4.1.2 Impact

During the interview, the respondent also did not touch on any topics related to Impact Models. In the survey, however, he mentioned that while the city would probably lean more to the side of decision-making that takes advantages of

opportunities rather than decision-making that seeks to cure problems, he recognizes that vacant lots are both opportunities and problems.

6.2.4.1.3 Change

One Change Model topic that was raised during the interview was the city's inherent conservatism in terms of trying new projects and approaches. The respondent noted that while Cleveland's hesitancy was due to its high expectations for the results of its programs, it could also work against innovation in the city.

> When I've observed other programs and thought through how we would implement them, part of the hesitation stems from not just that we've always done something some way, but that we've also grown to have a standard that we expect for ourselves. So there's a concern around new programs and whether the risk of say 'what if the church group that wants to adopt these ten lots isn't able to do it,' that the risk of say examining that for a couple seasons versus the trade-off of not and saying 'well, we really need to keep our safeguards into working with organizations that have already demonstrated a track record of being able to produce that.' So that exchange of being perhaps able to learn from say a Baltimore or whomever and how they overcame that hesitation. Because of course, again, with 12,000 properties in our inventory and another 2,000 coming in next year and really for the foreseeable future, the city can't afford not to consistently be coming up with innovative near-term and long-term choices.

Shrinking cities, as this thesis has established, operate in a manner very different from cities growing in a more "normal" manner. Discovering the best way to plan for these cities is happening on an experimental basis, in universities, cities, and think-tanks around the world. For Cleveland to be able to succeed as a new type of city, shrunken but thriving, it will have to modify some of its existing processes accordingly.

One of the modifications that the city has made is in their work to connect opportunities for development with their existing vacant land inventory. In this way, other actors already in the area or existing opportunities can lead the way in suggesting what to do with the vacant and abandoned lots.

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We often also are trying to connect opportunities with our existing vacant land inventory and where we have rehabilitation going on. So it's a huge win if, for instance, the Cleveland Housing Network or Habitat for Humanity or a CDC rehabs a single family home and at the same time acquires the neighboring lot that was created from a demolition, consolidates that so that you have a rehabbed home and a sideyard to then market it. On the small scale, it's a more marketable product and becomes attractive.

6.2.4.1.4 Evaluation

The respondent noted how Cleveland makes the decision about which areas to get involved in. For the most part, the city links their action to model blocks (See Representation Models for a definition of model blocks).

Much of the work that we've done has been in these targeted areas, model blocks, and in NSP2 areas and there's a mix of both strong and weak market geographies in those cases. But in either case, the understood intent was let's identify zones, relatively small geographies where you can affect street-level change. So whether or not the market was strong didn't change the reality that what we wanted to see was re-securing the fabric of the neighborhood, either having new homes, rehabbed homes, or repurposed vacant land.

The city also uses proximity to strong markets as a way to decide what areas of town to get involved in, wanting to be able to capitalize upon already existing development.

It is a strong bit of logic that we would look to those parts of town that are contiguous to the strongest markets for investment to happen there… where we want to mobilize investment is in the streets immediately bordering the healthiest of the streets because they may not have reached the point where the private development community is attracted to them but they certainly are parts of town that are going to be viewed as desirable if they're strengthened, because you're near places where there's a good deal of neighborhood fabric and activity and opportunity for the free market to pick that up.

Similar to other cities, one evaluation that Cleveland makes is in regards to those who apply to buy or lease lots. The city has established a comprehensive process that includes a number of departments, local actors, and local government.

> From the lens of the city, we also want to be transparent and comprehensive and so there's a very digestive review that happens with that application and it's our department's responsibility to see that those touch points happen so that we get that recommendation to divest or not… It's really important that when I say that it's comprehensive, it's not just that we spend a lot of time moving it around on desks and the like. The city works diligently to seek input from the local council person, from the local CDC, and our city planning office. The city planning office probably does the most intensive review. For many applications, they'll go out and they'll meet with neighbors there on the street, so it takes a great deal of time in order to make that recommendation to proceed or not with disposition. And that's just a question of whether or not we're even proceeding with what it is the applicant wants to do. Separate from that it's a question of whether or not we're leasing or selling the land as well. You bring together all those points, and many times they don't all agree, by the way, to make a recommendation to then proceed.

Cleveland is also making cautious determinations in regard to what types of sales or lease agreements to enter into with people who wish to take on city-owned vacant land. The city has been using one-year licenses or three- to five-year leases over the past two to three years. These are relatively quick for the city to set up and have benefits for both individuals and community groups as well as for the city. For potential users, the one-year license "allows the applicant to get underway with their project and also gives us the opportunity to really observe whether or not they're acting as a good steward of the land." If Cleveland approves of the way the land is being used, a three- to five-year lease is usually offered, which means that the city retains control of the long-term use of the land while the land is tax exempt for the user, as city property. Because of the interim nature of this lease,

> [I]t really allows the city to examine if the market is recovering in the way that we would expect it to in that particular area, and we could examine whether an alternate development activity could be happening on that site. We haven't been

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doing it long enough to see whether or not that's actually the case and we could find, say five years down the road, that's still the most desirable use from the comfort level of the immediate neighbors and the benefit that it's offering to the neighborhood. As well as from where the market is in reality, in the 2015–2017 period that we would be talking about there, that it really is the ripest use, and maybe the better choice is to sell the land.

6.2.4.1.5 Process

Cleveland specifically looks to local individuals and actors like CDCs to take the lead on making suggestions about what should happen on vacant and abandoned lots.

> Gauging what investments to put where, in which geographies, that was all about saying "let's not determine for ourselves, necessarily that we think that this is a part of town that needs a heavy amount of demolition versus another activity" but rather let's actually have the foot-soldiers or whatever the metaphor is, that are out there in the CDCs make that recommendation and then build that into our plans. So anyway, it's a long way of saying that the M.O. for the city is always going to stem from what information that we're getting and what prerogative that we're getting from the local CDC and active neighborhood groups.

By tying their decision-making regarding these vacant and abandoned lots to pre-existing initiatives and outside actors, the city is acknowledging that it cannot be the sole initiator of action, nor the sole decision-maker about what use are most appropriate. The city is letting existing interests and existing activities guide them.

6.2.4.1.6 Representation

One important source of information for Cleveland is their "strategic geographies." These are operationalized in the form of "model blocks" in the city, "small four- to six- block areas surrounding the [large-scale] anchor project [to facilitate neighborhood recovery]" created by the city and local CDCs working together to target areas for strategic intervention (PolicyLink, ND). Using both basic

data sources and local information to generate the information of strategic geographies, model blocks are created by

> Identifying extremely concentrated geographies within a sub-neighborhood of a neighborhood where you want to be strategically directing resources, doing intensive land use review, identifying targets for rehab, targets for demolition, vacant lots that would be ripe for reuse or, for that matter, for new construction, and fashioning your efforts as a local, on the ground agent, as a CDC, around those geographies.

Cleveland is a large city, geographically, at over eighty-two square miles. The city has elected to concentrate their activities in these model blocks that are determined by working with local CDCs. Having established a pre-set group of areas in which it will be active, the city is able to assemble multiple types of information about these areas, that are then used to determine where and how to intervene on vacant and abandoned lots.

6.2.4.1.7 Growth Paradigm

The respondent's discussion regarding the growth paradigm seems to indicate that there is a level of acceptance in Cleveland that the city is shrinking.

> I wouldn't say that the general pulse is one where folks are remorseful about the past and constantly having a discussion of, well, we need to be more like your sunbelt city, we need to be more like even the mildly growing older city counterparts like Chicago, DC, New York and the like. I think that folks are generally sort of honest about where the city was years ago and where the city is presently.

6.2.5 DAYTON, OHIO

Dayton is the sixth largest city in Ohio, with a 2012 population of 141,359 (United States Census Bureau, 2013). It is located in the southwestern central part of the state, abutting the northern border of the Cincinnati metropolitan area. Its 2010 population, 141,527, represented a fifteen percent decline from its 2000 population. Its

peak population was 262,330 in 1960. Despite a four percent decline in housing units over the 2001–2010 decade, the city has the highest housing vacancy rate of the eight cities represented in the interview process, at over twenty-one percent vacancy.

While the city has experienced de-industrialization and suburbanization in patterns similar to many other Rust Belt cities, the location of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base on the northeastern edge of the city has given it distinct advantages. In 2009, the Governor of Ohio named the city as the state's first Aerospace Innovation Hub, a designation that will support the state's investment of time and money in developing private-public partnerships that "build the Dayton region's capabilities for aerospace technology and advanced manufacturing materials development" (Nolan, 2009). This designation has helped the city and region to diversify beyond traditional manufacturing into research and development, aerospace, and aviation.

Contemporary with this designation, the city responded to the recommendations of a 2008 Brooking Institution report on the State of Ohio. One of the findings that initiated action for leaders in Dayton was the determination that Ohio needed to rebuild its cities immediately for it to remain competitive in the modern economy (Vey, Friedhoff, & Lew, 2008). The City and the Downtown Dayton Partnership began developing the "Greater Downtown Dayton Plan." The plan is an economic development, vibrancy, and infrastructure/public spaces enhancement program leveraging the city's existing assets to draw businesses, residents, and visitors to downtown and increase the city's competitiveness within the region (Downtown Dayton Partnership). The plan has proven successful. As of September 2013, its completed projects have resulted from combined public and private sector investments of $376 million (Downtown Dayton Partnership, 2013). While not specifically addressing the city's high housing vacancy rate, the Plan does call for an increased diversity in housing price and housing size to provide competitive choices for residents in the downtown. It also addresses the needs of inner-ring neighborhoods to be

revitalized and made more sustainable through increased commercial services and the retention of social and cultural anchors.

Image 6.5: Map of Vacant Parcels in City of Dayton - 2014
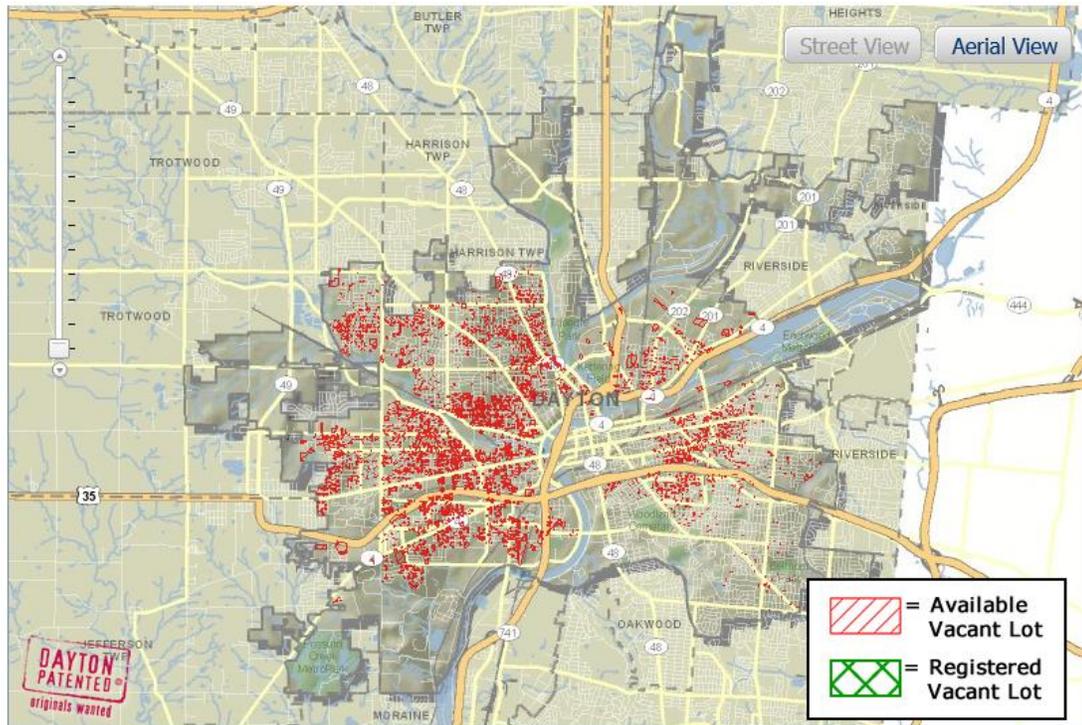
Source: (City of Dayton, n.d.)

6.2.5.1   Knowledge Center Responses

The respondent in Dayton spoke about decision making in reference to all six of the models used in the Steinitz Framework: Decision, Impact, Change, Evaluation, Process, and Representation. The respondent did not reference the importance of planning for vacant and abandoned lots within the city-wide planning environment during his interview. He did, however, indicate in his survey responses that he considered these activities to be very important for the city and an important issue relative to his own job responsibilities.

6.2.5.1.1 Decision

Dayton, as noted in other cities, faces the political unpopularity of decommissioning depopulated areas of the city. The respondent noted that while it was unlikely that the city would actively do so, the private property market was making depopulation occur anyways.

> Well, market forces are going a pretty good job of finishing off many adjacent blocks and the city's not going to be actively saying this part of the city is going away and we can't just stop providing services or shut down their streets or water systems... You can't just take infrastructure out. That's just my perspective on that idea that gets brought forward to us all the time. ...Well, I don't see us acquiring a lot of these residential properties. If there's an end use for them, we could consider a land banking situation. We're not going to remove infrastructure on them.

Different departments in Dayton's city government have different goals or missions regarding vacancy. When asked if he was able to get departments to work together on the issue, he said "Not really. Every different department has its own mission when it comes to vacant lots. If there was one central data location all the departments could utilize it would be good."

6.2.5.1.2 Impact

The respondent did not speak to any topics related to the Impact Model.

6.2.5.1.3 Change

One Change Model topic that came up in the interview was the city's ability to influence but not control what happens on vacant lots. The respondent noted that the city's approach was about "facilitating the transition of vacant lots to productive use, and we can help provide tools for that, but it's not necessarily the city's job to figure out what the next step is in terms of transitioning from a vacant lot."

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A Change Model topic that came up in the Dayton interview was frequently cited by interviewees across multiple cities. This is the topic of the decision-making process being constrained, particularly the ability to take actions that result in additional parkland. Dayton does not want any new parks developed, so this option has been taken off of the table for vacant land in the city.

> The first thing you'll hear is 'who the heck is going to maintain a new park?' We want to divest ourselves of parks, as a matter of fact. That doesn't do us a whole lot of good in terms of the vacant land situation. It's more conceptual. It's easy to look at a map of vacant properties and say, wow, there's almost three contiguous acres here, wouldn't that be a great park. The practicality of that, we haven't discovered yet.

Additionally, Dayton has two conditions particular to the city that have affected the implementation of plans and policies. One is the city's abundant water assets, which has the ability to support new plans and policies. The other is the overbuilt status of the region's residential housing, which is actively working against the city's implementation of redevelopment plans and policies.

Dayton's water assets give them the ability to attract water-intensive industries at a lower price than in other regions.

> We have the most productive aquifer in the country. It's buried, no surface sources or anything. So water is something that we certainly will not have a problem with. Of course we're a city built for 300,000 people with major industries dotted throughout the landscape and that's mostly gone now. A couple examples are Pepsi – has a plant here, use city of Dayton water. Cargill – they use our water for the same kind of thing really. Up there they process the corn syrup. The corn that comes in there, and then they do whatever, bottling. And we have a separated system, we're not combined sewer and stormwater. That's not an issue either. That's all good. It's interesting that other cities bring forth all these ideas and cool stuff related to green infrastructure. It's not coming forth as quickly here in Dayton because it's not really important. We don't have the drainage issues and combined sewer issues, water restrictions or any of that.

The other condition particular to Dayton is the degree to which the region is overbuilt. The respondent noted that

> Since the 1970s the region has lost 1 percent of population but grew in land area by more than 50 percent. From the 2000 census to 2010 census the MSA lost 6,700 people but we added 21,000 new housing units. It doesn't take a genius to realize that someone is going to feel the pain there. For a number of combining reasons, Dayton has been disproportionately impacted by the continued overbuilding.

6.2.5.1.4 Evaluation

Dayton faces the dilemma of where to use scarce city resources and federal NSP3 funds, just as other cities interviewed. For targeting demolitions, their reasoning is explained here:

> A lot of it was looking at which neighborhoods are the hardest hit, in combination with where would the most strategic demolition have the most impact? And that's the constant tension we have here. The conversation of 'do you go ahead and nearly wipe out blocks with demolition and expend an insane amount of resources, or do you try to concentrate on the more stable neighborhoods and strategically take out the nuisance properties?' There's not really a right or wrong answer to that. Who the heck knows what the right answer is? More than anything, it's probably the hardest hit neighborhoods. … Where demolition needs are the greatest. I see demolition as basically the front line, the first step of reimaging the city and transitioning to a city with a greener, roomier, cleaner, more comfortable city.

He went on to describe how the process of addressing vacant lots is initiated in Dayton, noting that "more than anything, we'll address vacant lots as somebody comes to us with an idea for the vacant lot. Which is where the neighbors and the nearby institutions come into play."

In terms of making evaluations about proposed uses for lots, Dayton appears to have set a low hurdle for getting approved. The respondent explained that

Well, you have to comply with our zoning code and not impose some terrible externalities on neighboring properties. But more than anything, yeah, we don't want to be in the property maintenance and land bank and ownership business as much as we can get out of it, we'd like to… It's resources… It's yeah, more than we can handle.

Compliance with the zoning code is an existing external benchmark that proposed uses must achieve; however, not imposing "some terrible externalities on neighboring properties" is much more subjective. Because of this desire to remove the city from responsibility for these vacant and abandoned lots, Dayton has made the choice to create a very loosely constrained evaluation process.

6.2.5.1.5 Process

The respondent did not speak to any topics related to the Process Model.

6.2.5.1.6 Representation

The only Representation Model topic which emerged during the interview was the fact that Dayton does not have a fixed definition of "vacant." For planners like the respondent, this situation means different departments operate under different definitions, hampering cooperation. The respondent admitted

I commonly get asked the question 'Hey, do you have a vacant lots layer? A database or shapefile.' And my first thing is always like, 'ok, well, what's a vacant lot or what's a vacant structure?' Because there are so many ways to define them and we don't have just one regular 'this is our vacant lots.' you know. But we have various ways to describe it, whether it's water shut-offs or what's the city maintaining or what's tax delinquent. So there's all these different measures of vacancy. I guess you can kind of put them together and come up with something that approximates our vacant lot inventory… Part of the issue with that is different departments in the organization have these different records of vacancy.

These different definitions of vacancy in Dayton translate into different types of records about vacancy being kept.

6.2.5.1.7 Growth Paradigm

The respondent in Dayton spoke at length about the growth paradigm and how it was being engaged with in the city. He first discussed the usage of the term shrinkage, saying "It's reality. I don't know anybody that could disagree with that or be offended by it. I'd prefer it to dying, I guess. Which is the term that people like to throw around here."

He discussed the process of trying to get citizens to come around and accept Dayton as a shrinking city.

> We're working through that, at least in terms of the way our everyday citizens react to the way we're trending right now. I mean, that's a hard message to get across. I think a lot of what occurs as neighbors and citizens compare the situation today with what it was 30 years ago when every house was occupied, Dayton was a boomtown and it was just growth, growth, growth. Well, that perspective isn't very useful because we're trying to convey what the city of the future is going to look like. But that doesn't mean a lot to people that have to live next to a nuisance property where vandals are breaking in and fires are starting and things like that.

The respondent also spoke to the amount that the city has been able to adapt growth-based planning tools for use in a shrinking city and what types of success Dayton was having with this.

> The primary tool planners still have is zoning. Well, zoning as you know is about, basically, growth control and development standards. That's very difficult in a city like Dayton. It's a whole different meaning and concept here, I think. So we use Planned developments to accommodate uses that maybe traditionally zoning would say 'no you can't do this here.' Or downtown we have something called a graphics overlay district which allows things like the large scale off premise advertising. Murals and things like that, which are actually advertising as well. So those are zoning tools, but they're not being used to restrict or control growth, they're actually being accommodating and almost induce it. So I think that's probably where I was going with that. And you know, in some ways [with] your zoning, you're also expressing your priorities, just like a budget would express your priorities. So downtown we decided parking regulations, we don't need them. We don't [stop] anything that

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could be a positive for somebody that's going to develop downtown. They'll say 'oh great, they don't have any parking requirements' so I think it plays into the idea that we're trying to encourage growth, not just, 'here's a book of regulations.' We have some elements of FBC [Form Based Coding] in our code now… basically three different categories for both commercial and residential development: mature development area, the eclectic development area, the suburban development area. So there are some elements of form based stuff, but it still has the Euclidean separation of uses for the most part. We've gotten little more flexible on what you can do in different zones and stuff. I'd like to be more flexible probably.

6.2.6 PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia, the largest city in Pennsylvania with a 2012 population of 1,547,607, is located in the southeast corner of the state, at the confluence of the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers (United States Census Bureau, 2013). The largest city included in these interviews, Philadelphia is also the only one to have regained population in the 2001–2010 decade, although the growth was a nominal 0.56 percent. It has shown similarly small population growth numbers in the three American Community Surveys ending in 2011, 2012, and 2013. The city's current size is still just over twenty-five percent down from its peak population of 2,071,610 in 1950. As of 2013, Philadelphia had approximately 3,500 acres of vacant land, costing the city $20 million to maintain annually (University of Pennsylvania School of Design, 2013, p. 15). (See Image 6.6)

Image 6.6: Map of Vacant Parcels in City of Philadelphia - 2010
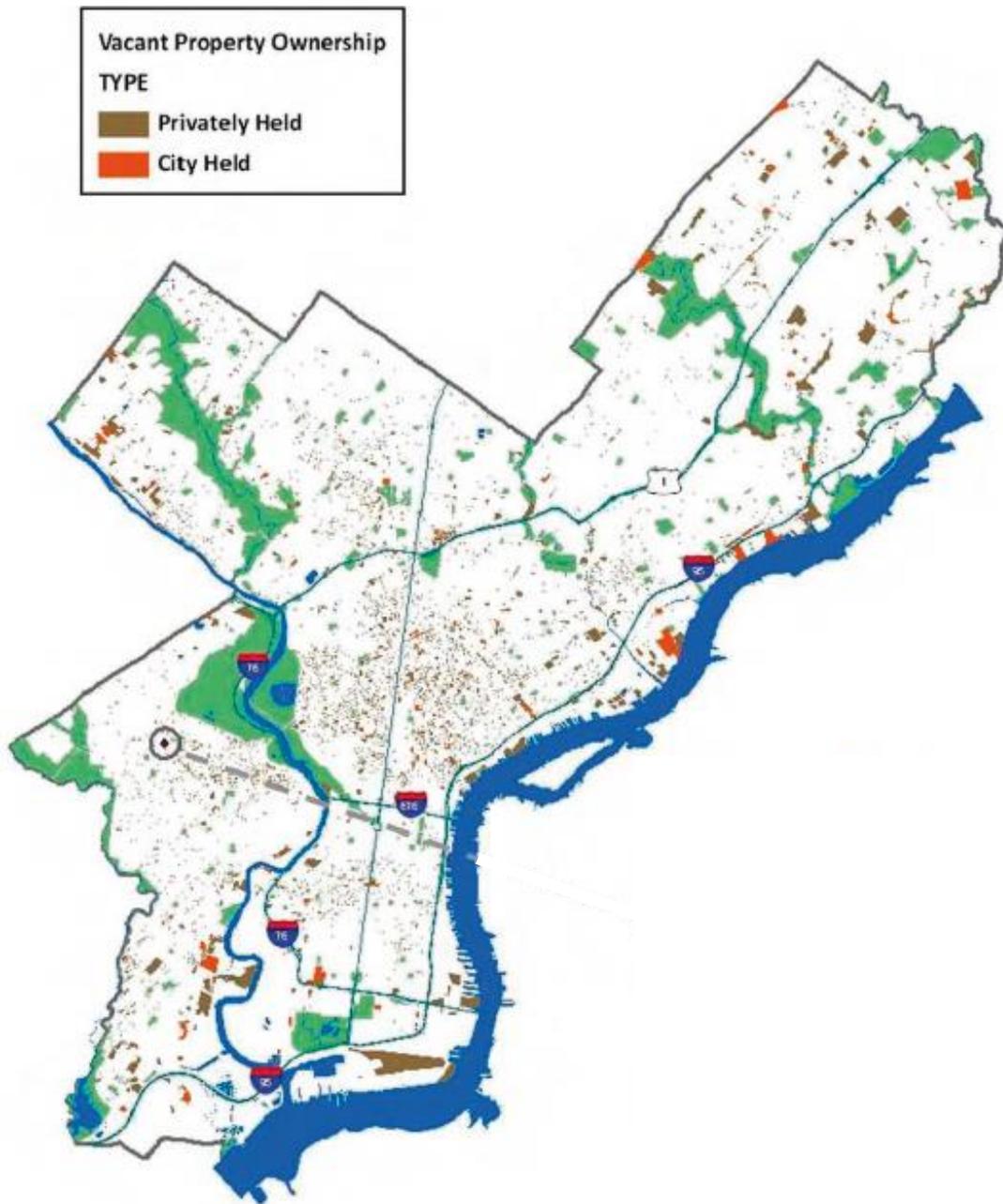
Source: (Econsult Corporation; Penn Institute for Urban Research; May 8 Consulting, 2010, p. 3)

One of the keys to Philadelphia's stabilization has been strong immigration, which began in the 1990s. While immigration peaked nationally in 2000, it continued to increase in the Philadelphia region after that date. Philadelphia's foreign-born population increased by forty-five percent during the 1990s and by twenty-nine percent in the six years to 2006, with just over half a million foreign-born residents by 2006 (Singer, Vitiello, Katz, & Park, 2008).

6.2.6.1 Knowledge Center Responses

The respondent in Philadelphia spoke about decision making in reference to five of the six Models used in the Steinitz Framework: Decision, Change, Evaluation, Process, and Representation.

6.2.6.1.1 City-wide Planning Environment

The respondent discussed the importance of planning for vacant and abandoned lots during his interview. The topic was broached in terms of which types of vacant lots are seen as more important to plan for within the city.

> We have a wide variety of vacant and abandoned lots, so we've got the small sort of retail vacant lots, here's a house, here's a vacant, here's a house, etc. And then we've got huge swathes of vacant former industrial sites and we've got a lot of both of those. So to the extent that I would say, overall, we've got large amounts of land that aren't paying taxes and are requiring public services that… there's a certain amount of effort that needs to go towards the bigger lots, where the payoff in terms of economics might be relatively large. And so there's been, from time to time, some large focused planning efforts on what to do with those areas, those larger industrial redevelopment areas. And then small, more focused efforts on places where there is concentrations of smaller, more formerly residential lots.

6.2.6.1.2 Decision

One Decision Model topic which emerged was the type of primary motivation that leads the city to action. The respondent noted that in Philadelphia, these vacant lots are primarily seen as challenges. He explained that this

Goes back to having so much vacant land to deal with. Not everyone is a near-term opportunity. The ongoing maintenance issues, deterioration, public safety nuisance issues, and you also have the fact that most of them are not generating taxes. In some cases, there are opportunities, particularly if there is someone who is willing to take stewardship, own it, manage it, or if it's close to something else we can assemble something and actually get some reinvestment. Either as a building or some sort of community amenity. But in a lot of places, the scale of the issue keeps the opportunity quotient pretty small.

Another Decision Model related topic that came up in the interviews was the ability of planners to have control over factors related to making changes. The topic of programs changing with each political administration emerged as one that the planners have no control over: "each administration has their trademark programs and [the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative[11]] was something associated with the previous administration." Another initiative of a former administration was coordination amongst city agencies. The respondent noted that it "was more of an initiative of the administration… I think that there was a target effort to make that happen. And it's not still fully been done…"

6.2.6.1.3 Impact

The respondent did not speak to any topics related to the Impact Model.

6.2.6.1.4 Change

One characteristic of Philadelphia that has helped to support action on vacant and abandoned lots is the city's combined sewer system. Because of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) requirements for the city to address its overflow problem,

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[11] The city's previous mayor developed the Neighborhood Transition Initiative in 2002, which allocated $295 million "to finance the acquisition of property, the demolition of derelict buildings, and the assembling of large tracts of land for housing redevelopment" (McGovern, 2006, p. 529). The majority of the money would be used to demolish 14,000 structures. $35 million would be used to "acquire properties, relocate residents, and prepare large parcels of land for developers to build a mix of market-rate and affordable housing" while additional funds would be used for housing rehabilitation, neighborhood preservation (McGovern, 2006, p. 530).

the city has worked out some innovative approaches, largely through the introduction of green infrastructure.

> But it's not all necessarily parks. The intent is where we can do parks, that's great. And where we can do green infrastructure on streets, that's great. And if we can integrate it into a schoolyard that's great as well.

Another characteristic that sets Philadelphia apart in being able to make changes on vacant and abandoned lots is the city's strong community of Community Development Corporations.

> Compared to a lot of cities, we have a robust CDC community…Particularly in the less marketable areas, I think that they are really the main drivers of a lot of development. Because the city just doesn't have the funding to do it. So a lot of initiatives are really spearheaded in those areas where there are some active CDCs working. [There's a] mix of the two now where they are targeting traditional neighborhood commercial corridors and try to get some economic development generated along that corridor. There's a mix of purely affordable housing development and an economic development component. There are a handful who are very good, very efficient at using public funds and then the rest of them are, some of them could be emerging, some could be declining…about a dozen really active ones. There's a Philadelphia association of CDCs that helps build capacity and to organize efforts, and they're large enough that they have paid staff… they have a website, they do a lot of research, they do policy papers themselves, they may have some research on vacant lots… The CDCs tend to be in the areas that have been CDBG eligible for years. The more affluent neighborhoods don't have CDCs. They may have some other organizations, a business association, community association. They all have zoning committees. But the CDCs do tend to align pretty much where you find eligibility for CDBG-backed activity.

However, In common with a number of other cities, the respondent in Philadelphia noted that the city was constrained from deciding to turn vacant and abandoned lots into parks by the city's parks and recreation department. The respondent explained that

Our parks and rec department really doesn't want any additional inventory unless there is a strong commitment that someone is going to be able to maintain it and that is certainly true even in those areas where we've identified we're deficient in open space. So to the extent that [unless] you can [attach a] maintenance and stewardship entity to the vacant piece, we're pretty loathe to say 'hey, it's going to be a park' because our parks folks will say 'no, it's not.'

6.2.6.1.5 Evaluation

As noted above, Philadelphia's approach to managing stormwater has been determined by the EPA to be failing. Their approach to meeting the EPA's requirements will impact upon vacant lots.

One of the big environmental initiatives that Philadelphia has underway is a stormwater management program. We've worked out a fairly innovative approach with the EPA and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to help us deal with our combined sewer overflow problem. And the deal is that rather than building lots of hard infrastructure, we are going the green infrastructure route.

Under a previous administration, Philadelphia formerly had a strategy in place where they would go into transitional areas to make investments. This "tipping point strategy" was part of the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, an initiative of a former city administration. The strategy

Was an initiative by the city that was looking at the strategic planning initiative and they were targeting different areas and the whole idea was to target areas where there was the most market potential. Looking where you could build upon existing assets, rather than going into more marginal areas. Strengthening the areas that were transitional to try to build… That was the major initiative of the previous administration. A lot of the bond money that was created to help that ($295 million)… drop in the bucket. The impact of that is still being felt but is much less than what we had hoped and it took a long time to get going and the actual cost of demolishing deteriorated vacant buildings and putting the sites back to some sort of … level turned out to be much more per building. …. As you go around the city right now, particularly in areas of concentration, lots that are no longer hosting concentrations of deteriorated vacant buildings. Now they are green lots with nice fences and trees. In many cases managed in

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partnership with some of the local CDCs. That's behind us. But there is a lasting legacy of that.

The respondent did not comment on whether this evaluative process had been replaced by another one.

6.2.6.1.6 Process

The only Process Model topic that the respondent brought up was related to nearby existing processes that planners take into account when thinking about what might happen on vacant lots. They

> Come at it from two angles – [is there an] environmental reason to think that it should stay green? This could include 'is it close to some other green space,' 'would it provide some effective buffer from something else,' 'is there a brownfield issue that is too expensive to feasibly remediate for whatever the likely market would be?' On the other end, 'is it something that actually has some near/medium term potential to either serve some other public need through a physical investment or meet some affordable housing need or perhaps for some private development?' Sometimes [we] see where things work out in the middle. In many cases, it's an opportunity. Who's bringing that particular opportunity to us or our partner agencies, assuming that we own it. If it's a privately owned thing, it's largely zoning.

Philadelphia is using the inherent natural and physical qualities of the sites themselves or existing needs of a local community to guide development options. Similar to the approach taken in Cleveland, the city is letting what it perceives as existing interests and existing activities guide them.

6.2.6.1.7 Representation

The city's primary source of data used to make decisions on vacant and abandoned lots is the city inventory.

> The city inventory has been work in progress for number of years… [It] is a collection of records from records department, water department, and USPS.

Three commonly used data points. Also use aerials. Have fairly recent aerial photography, about a year old… Records department updated every 2-3 months. Water department updated monthly. Look at bills, seeing if they are being paid, for both vacant land and vacant buildings… Tax delinquency and vacancy status for department of records.

The respondent's suggestion that there is no singular source or definition of vacancy in Philadelphia is supported by the survey, in which he said that "currently, determinations may involve [the] Law Department, Licenses and Inspections, and Revenue, among others." The planning department has also been actively working to ground-truth the data that they get from other sources to ensure that their work is based on the most up to date data.

As part of the district planning work, particularly because a lot of the district planning work is geared to inform recommendations about zoning, our staff has been going around, doing parcel by parcel land use inventories. Using data that's coming from these other sources to say 'here's what the map is based on our administrative records' and then we go out to try to confirm or deny what is actually on the ground as of the time that we're doing it. So it's a snapshot then that is pretty close, in time, to where we're then hopefully making zoning suggestions and recommendations.

Another data source that the city uses, similar to Baltimore, is TRF market analysis of the city's different market areas.

They actually have come up with an analysis that they actually use and sell. Something that they take a lot of city data and look at marketability, sales, prices, other market factors and come up with a map of the entire city… and divide [the city] up into different market clusters in terms of where the different areas align in terms of marketability, market desirability, on a regional scale. So areas would be highlighted if they were considered to be competitive within the region. It's a proprietary thing that they've done for us occasionally.

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6.2.6.1.8 Growth Paradigm

The growth paradigm was not a topic asked of the respondent in either the survey or the interview, as Philadelphia is classified in this research as a stable-to-growing city.

6.2.7 PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh is the second largest city in Pennsylvania, with a 2012 population of 306,211, and the heart of the largest metropolitan area in Western Pennsylvania, which extends into Ohio and West Virginia (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Famous as a center for steel production, the city is equally infamous for its swift decline in the 1970s and 1980s as technological changes in the steel industry spurred the closure of steel mills and the loss of tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs (Giarratani, Singh, & Briem, 2003). The city's 2010 population of just over 305,000 is fifty-five percent lower than its peak population of 676,810 in 1950. The city has shown nominal population increases in the 2011 and 2012 American Community Surveys and has maintained a relatively stable housing vacancy rate (United States Census Bureau, 2013).

Pittsburgh's recent successes are the legacy of almost thirty years of planning on the part of city, Allegheny county, and university leaders who responded to the economic troubles of the early 1980s by developing "Strategy 21," a regional economic development agenda. Focused on diversifying their formerly narrow economy, the plan had "four major goals: leveraging what remained of the region's metals industry and attracting more corporate headquarters; focusing on advanced technologies; enhancing the region's quality of life; and expanding opportunities for women, minorities and other underemployed groups" (Allegheny Conference on Community Development, 1985, p. 3; Foster, 2013).

Strategy 21's concrete goals have largely come to fruition. These include improving transportation links and facilities throughout the region, redeveloping the

waterfront, mitigating the environmental and physical scars created by the steelmaking process, and supporting university high-tech research (Smith A. , 2013).

Image 6.7: Map of Vacant Parcels in City of Pittsburgh, by Neighborhood - 2011
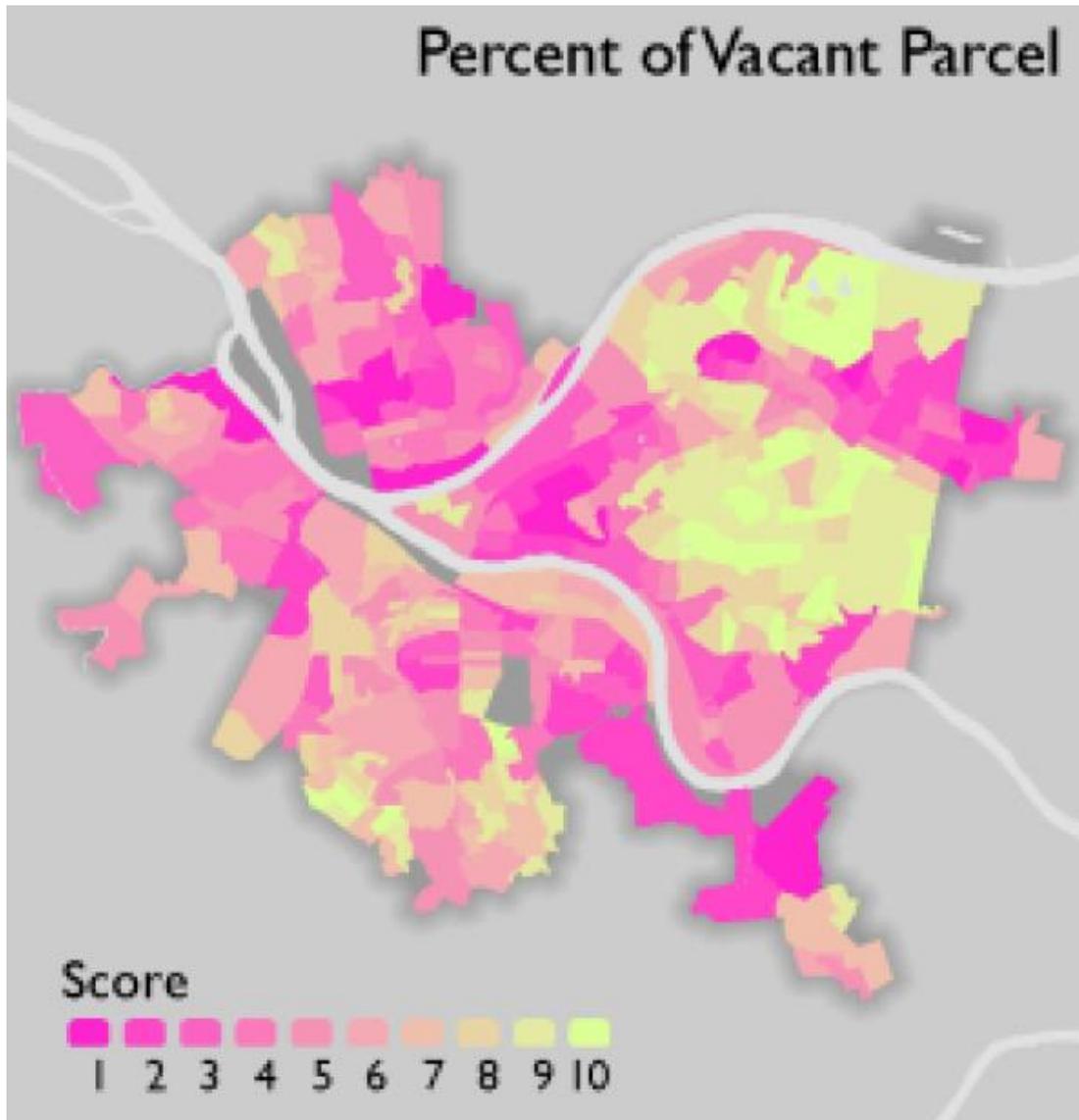
Higher Scores indicate more ideal conditions in the area: 1 is more vacancy, 10 is less vacancy.
Source: (City of Pittsburgh - Department of City Planning, 2011)

The city's ability to successfully reinvent itself has turned it into an exemplar for other cities attempting similar post-industrial transition, both in the United States and abroad. In 2011, a group of business and policy leaders from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland toured the city with Boston College's Irish Institute and Carnegie-Mellon University's Center for Economic Redevelopment to learn about regeneration in urban centers. The director of the Irish Institute explained that "Pittsburgh is the poster child for managing industrial transition… [because it] went through a major downsizing among its core industrial employers, but managed to reinvent itself and build a new economy" (Erdley, 2011). Both the city's diversified economy and its multi-year rankings as "Most Livable" city in the United States attest to the striking results due to the multifaceted approach initiated by city leaders of the past (Smith A. , 2013).

6.2.7.1   Knowledge Center Responses

The respondent in Pittsburgh spoke about decision making in reference to five of the Models used in the Steinitz Framework: Decision, Change, Evaluation, Process, and Representation.

6.2.7.1.1   City-wide Planning Environment

The respondent in Pittsburgh noted that the topic of vacant and abandoned lots is much talked about it in the city. When asked if the topic was specific to the area of planning around these lots, he responded that the topic is

> Definitely not a planning specific thing. Issues of vacancy and abandonment in the city of Pittsburgh are something that we see almost city wide. [The topic is discussed] from local Neighborhood Development Corporations to the non-profits to the City to when we go out and speak with residents.

6.2.7.1.2 Decision

A prime motivation that the respondent notes for taking action on vacant and abandoned lots has to do with the scale of the problem. Problems with both vacant homes and vacant lots motivate action.

> I think that the scale of that, as to what percentage is dealing with homes and what percentage is dealing with lots, fluctuates a little bit more by neighborhood. There's definitely concern over both. I think that, at least in my observations, Pittsburgh, more so than some of the other rust belt cities, has vacancy everywhere. We don't have as many large concentrations of vacancy where we have certain areas that are completely kind of vacant and abandoned. Not evenly [spread across city]. It's one of those things that you see it more everywhere here. You don't just see it on some of the dramatic scales that you see it in Detroit, for example, or Cleveland.

Another motivation for taking action is the fact that Pittsburgh has put off dealing with vacancy for so long that it has become a big problem for the city.

> We've had a lot of that has gotten deferred over time. The issue of vacancy has been put off as we've tried to deal with other things. The intent of the planning work that we had now, that dealt with that side, is to start to figure out what is the strategy to alleviate this as a problem. It's something that we hear constantly, that it is a problem. [We are] trying to determine the strategy for dealing with that problem.

6.2.7.1.3 Impact

The interview did not include any topics that coincided with Impact Models, while those asked of the respondent in the survey were not fully answered.

6.2.7.1.4 Change

One issue that is particular to hilly cities like Pittsburgh (and perhaps Cincinnati) is the way that topography can amplify or mask the number of vacant and abandoned lots in a city.

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The topography differences, I think, [is] where we're a lot more unique than other Midwestern cities that are facing the same challenge. For us I think the idea is that some of these areas are isolated and it's more of a fine-grained intervention than saying what do we do with this entire neighborhood. Or what do we do with these entire neighborhoods. Which I think for a positive side, allows us to move forward more quickly in many cases because we're not having conversations about some of the other issues with class or race or some of those things that may come in to taking your neighborhood. That is where some of the discussion starts to go. The negative/flip side to that same uniqueness is that there may not be the same sense of urgency because it's not… 'We're completely gone at this point. We're hanging on by a thread at this point in time.'

I think that even though we're trying to coordinate those efforts and determine a proactive strategy, people see Pittsburgh as growing and so there is still the… it was kind of deferred before and we want to make sure we're dealing with it rather than kicking the can down the road and hoping that it solves itself. I think at the same time we've got it on a small scale everywhere so I think that the smaller changes, 'yes, we want you to do those.' I think it's that transformative shift will be much harder to do here because it is more of a localized problem and less of the big thing that is going to ultimately sink us.

We have a very localized culture in Pittsburgh. In the county that Pittsburgh is in, 1.2 million and probably similar to the size of the city of Austin. But we have 130 different municipalities including the city of Pittsburgh. 90 neighborhoods in the city of Pittsburgh, all which have unique and individual identities from one another. And sub-neighborhoods beyond that. I think that the culture here is definitely very localized and the topography does play a role in that as to why that is.

The counter to that is that if [vacancy is] disastrous here you can be right across the valley, within close proximity and not have it effect you in the same way that in a gridded, flatter city, you could have a pocket of vacancy that will affect something four blocks away. Here that four blocks away you're crossing a railroad track and climbing a hill so there's not that connection from here to here.

6.2.7.1.5 Evaluation

The location of vacant and abandoned lots is one of the site considerations for assessing the need to make a change. In Pittsburgh, many of these are occurring in hilly topography, in areas where the city would prefer that there be no additional building.

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We have a lot of long, very steeply sloped streets that kind of wind through hillsides. As those homes don't exist there [due to demolition] and as we, especially those places where the market is weaker and there is not really a viability for those homes long term, we're dealing with having to have public works costs for landslides and things like that, we're basically just trying to keep those streets there. The real question is can we start thinking of a strategy that there are some of those places that we can just let them return to nature.

To inhibit this rebuilding, in a legal manner without incurring the specter of "takings," the city set up a process to evaluate any proposed building on these hilly vacant lots.

About ten years ago, we had a study, we did do a study of all of our hillsides… And so as part of that, we did introduce hillside development regulations that wasn't precluding people from being able to build; it was getting to a lot stricter geotechnical review… We weren't getting into takings type problems, because obviously we have that if we start precluding people from developing in these areas. It was making sure that stuff that does go on, could be building a house, it could just be building a shed or something like that on somebody's property, has to go through that review. Again, making sure that anything that is being done on those areas isn't complicating the problem further.

Pittsburgh has been proactive about evaluating proposed changes on vacant and abandoned lots. They have an approach that can be customized for any particular lot.

I think that we understand that there are different solutions for different locations. We started to address that in what we called the suitability analysis. We started to take physical, environmental, economic and social features of property to start to filter what types of uses are better than other in certain places. … It's [more about] finding the right fit for the right type of activity than it is necessarily saying 'ok, everything has to be tax generation. Everything has to be maintenance responsibility free.' I think that we want to move into an area where we have much less of the burden of these properties that we came into ownership of not by choice but more by neglect…. But I'd say more it's around finding the right fit because doing a side lot in some places may be, where there's not a social network there to sustain that property, is probably a good thing because then at least somebody's taking care of that property. But

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there are other places where there's the community development support or the neighborhood group support…

The city is also actively trying to create a more data-driven evaluation process that will help them to decide where to invest their scarce resources. They have realized that their current decision making process really enables people or constituencies who are more engaged, but does not differentiate between people that *want* action and places that *need* action. It is more of a political process, and while sometimes the outcomes of a politically oriented decision making process could align with a needs-oriented decision making process, sometimes they will not.

> The issue with the current system [is that] it allows people that are engaged to be able to potentially get things done. It's definitely a process to move through that, on one side. Those places that actually need the most help is the other side. Trying to move towards more of a data-driven approach helps us understand where, especially in everyone says it, but in an era of limited resources, we're a city that's under financial receivership from the state, it's not like we are flush with cash to put into these types of projects… if data can help us make the best decisions as to where these places have the greatest impact, where actions have the greatest impact, obviously we want to try to make that a part of what's going on.

One evaluation topic that came up was the need to admit that not every type of vacant land use was going to be economically rewarding. This approach gives Pittsburgh the

> Opportunity to direct the right types of non-development uses because we understand that every place isn't right for a market intervention and that there are a lot of places where, the way to get rid of vacant, to turn vacant lots into productive reuse, isn't necessarily tax-generating reuse. It's reuse that solves problems for communities, that stabilizes communities, that puts those communities in a place where people will want to invest in them in the future. As opposed to being something that's on the tax rolls tomorrow

6.2.7.1.6 Process

As noted earlier, the city's hilly topography was combining with other factors to create vacant and abandoned lots.

> And so what's happened is that those places and those houses with environmental issues of building on hillsides, with the construction quality of those homes compared to other areas of the city in general… that's where we started to see a lot of degradation and constant deterioration of housing. We've had, on a percentage basis, a greater percentage of those buildings that end up having to be demolished. It's dealing with vacancy but also dealing with a lot of environmental issues. With landslides, with stormwater. With a lot of other things we see by that type of building that was probably less sustainable.

The city has some areas of low cost work-force housing that was built during the nineteenth century. Much of this is located in these hilly areas. These homes are being demolished more than others, creating vacant lots throughout these areas. The lack of resources is inhibiting the city from being able to get properties back into productive use to then produce resources. The problem is the cost of all of the bureaucratic paperwork and regulations that have to occur before a property can be redeveloped. When the respondent in Pittsburgh was asked about what occurs after a house is demolished, the response was

> Well, the answer to that is nothing a lot of times. It gets the minimal maintenance from public works. If there's not anybody interested, again, there is a chance that we may not even take the property through the treasurer's sale to clear title. Or not even to clear title, just to get it within the city's rights to ownership… There's a cost to all of that stuff. There's a cost to take those things through treasurer's sale process, there's a cost to clear the title. There's just not the interest there to do that… There's just such a backlog of properties because it's gone on and nobody did anything for quite some time… It's becoming more proactive but still the scale of what we have out there compared to what it is that we're doing… we're only making a dent.

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6.2.7.1.7 Representation

The city uses a set of data that was developed in house to make decisions about where to act.

> As part of the data pieces that we have, we have something called PGH snap. It's a tool that was developed in-house. Basically, to deal with how we understand our neighborhoods, and how our neighborhoods relate to each other. And we have a market value analysis that looks at the entire city, but it only really looks at what the opportunities are to sell a property in a certain area… What we did was try to take some of those basic indicators of community health and try to create what we called a social stability index as part of that, in PGH snap. So it's looking at some of those core blight indicators that we have, but then also looking at things like education, looking at things like resident tenure and things like that to start to understand what social stability is. We're starting to use those indicators from PGH snap in, for example, starting to understand where we're thinking about having longer term strategies to starting to take properties to potentially close streets down, for example. So we're considering those things from a market perspective and a social stability perspective as well.

The city of Pittsburgh does not have one strict definition of vacancy that city departments operate using. During the recent comprehensive planning process, city departments have been attempting to standardize the definitions that departments used. When asked about this process, the respondent said that

> Everybody feels… people based on what their focuses are define vacancy in different ways… there's a definition that's there [in the comprehensive plan] but then it's how do we spread that beyond that more and into the work that we're doing everyday…I don't know if a law would help, honestly. I think it's more just, again, making sure that we're on the same page when we're talking about this issue. I think that as the conversations keep increasing we're moving further in that direction.

6.2.7.1.8 Growth Paradigm

A growth paradigm topic that emerged in the interview process revolved around Pittsburgh's development of a tool that will enable residents to get involved with vacant lots without having the city lead the process.

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What we're terming a 'vacant lot toolkit' that residents can go, completely independent of having to contact me or someone in city government, and can look at and say 'well, this is what I want to do. This is how I can do it. These are the places I can do it. Here's the non-profit technical assistance providers I can find. Here's what my city process is.' Again, trying to make it more something that people can get the guidance and help they need without necessarily having to… for us it's how can we facilitate making those good ideas happen because the government's not going to do it. We're not going to go out and build new community gardens and doing all these things. It's going to be based on community groups and residents showing the interest and the initiative to do these things so how can we make it so we're better facilitating making those things happen in the right way.

Another growth topic conversation emerged when talking about what the respondent had called the "Pittsburgh Model" in the survey. He clarified this, saying that

I think it's more what other shrinking cities are doing. I think the issue is more that we can't rely on setting the right development framework and saying development is going to take care of the problem. Especially … there are ways for us to deal with these properties and to deal with the issue of vacancy where the city government gets out of the way more. And where there are opportunities that a city government doesn't necessarily need to be the driver or the one being very heavy-handed in the situation to makes these kinds of things happen. It's trying to figure out how we can provide more of those opportunities for residents or interested property owners to be able to take on more of that where they want to.

This approach, which could be called the Pittsburgh Model, or the Legacy Cities model as it appears to be common to most of them, is largely framed around redefining the government's role in initiating or facilitating development. Pittsburgh has taken the approach of letting the private market decide what will happen on vacant and abandoned lots. The respondent went on to note that this approach includes figuring out

where government has to play a role and where the outcome is more 'how can we get things done more efficiently to get those properties out there.' And

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'where can we either back off or just kind of gently facilitate to make the right things happen.' I don't think it's walking away. I don't think it's letting anarchy reign in the streets with vacant property and vacant property reclamation. It's just trying to play the light guiding hand instead of the strong hand. It's how can we make that happen the best way. If liability is an issue, how can we deal with ownership? Is that a land bank kind of situation? If it's an issue of getting access to property, how can we structure that to make sure that we cover those basic concerns the city has, but not getting in, not defining things too far, dictating too far down the line... We want to try to facilitate good people wanting to do good things in the city and that's [where] we're trying to move things in the future. How can we better allow, better have people do those things?

6.2.8 YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

Youngstown, Ohio's ninth largest city with a 2012 population of 65,405, is located in the northeast corner of the state, midway between Pittsburgh and Cleveland (United States Census Bureau, 2013). The city holds a number of distinctions among the post-industrial cities included in this interview process. It is the smallest, with a 2010 population of 66,982, less than half the size of the next largest city, Dayton. Youngstown has also lost the highest percentage of population in the eighty years since its peak 1930 population of 170,000. It is currently less than 40 percent of that high. The city also saw the largest decade population decline between 2001 and 2010, losing over eighteen percent of its population. It was the only city in the country to lose over two percent of its population between 2010 and 2012 (Posey, 2013). During that same time, the city's housing vacancy rate increased by over five and one-half percent despite an almost eleven percent decline in the number of housing units in the city.

Youngstown's history is similar to Pittsburgh's in that the economy of both were centered around the steel manufacturing industry. Whereas Pittsburgh diversified early in the wake of the industry's restructuring, Youngstown's identification as "Steel Valley" caused the workers and residents to respond to plant closings very differently. In the wake of "Black Monday", the September 19, 1977 closing of the Campbell works steel mill, and the closing of four more major mills in the next eight years, the local

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community organized and lobbied for the reopening of Campbell under community ownership, eventually taking their cause to the head offices of U.S. Steel in both Pittsburgh and Youngstown (High, 2002). These efforts failed and led to a demoralized populace as a "new Youngstown story of falling population, rising crime and burgeoning welfare rolls was…taking hold" (High, 2002, p. 111).

Image 6.8: Map of Vacant Parcels in City of Youngstown – 2010
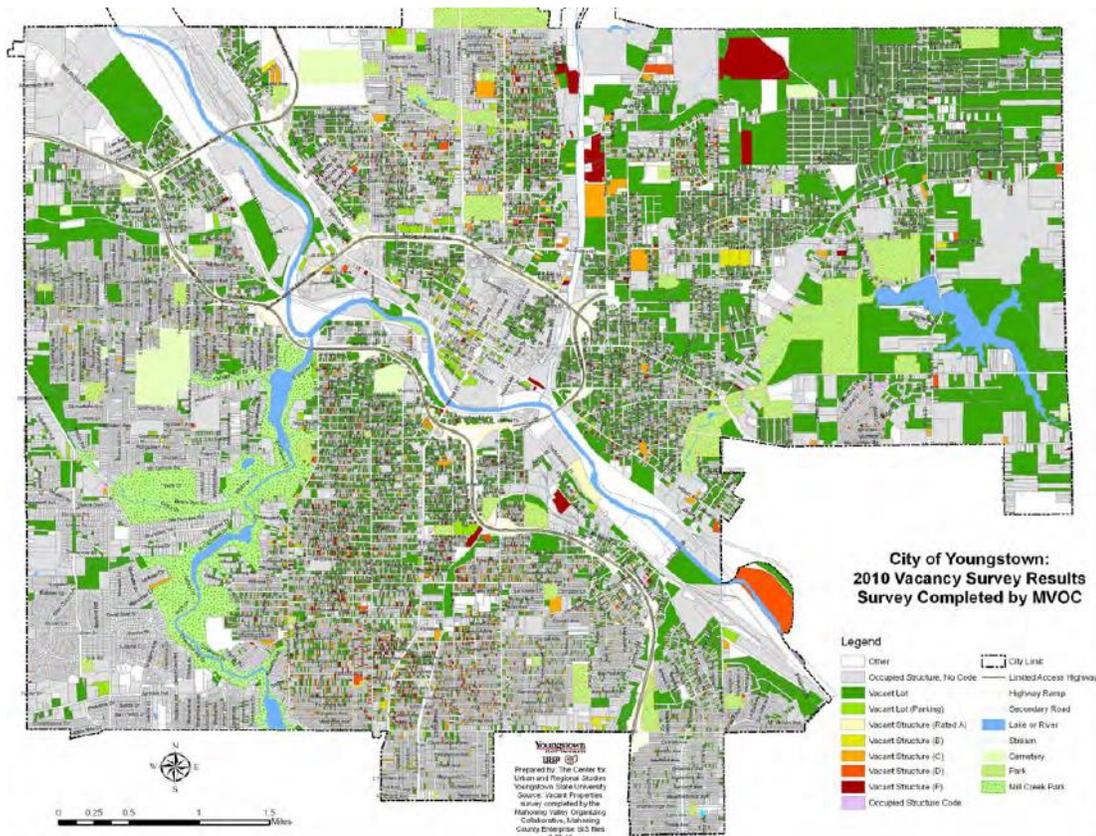
Source: (The Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative (MVOC), 2011, p. 14)

By 2002, momentum supporting change had gathered in Youngstown as the city initiated a new regional action and implementation plan, "Youngstown 2010." Hunter Morrison, a former Director of the Cleveland City Planning Commission and Director of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies at Youngstown State University,

noted that the "shift in thinking about the future of the city began with a C.S. Mott Foundation-commissioned report from the Harwood Group. The report asserted that Youngstown had assets and opportunities but was 'waiting for leadership' to take action" (Dewar, Kelly, & Morrison, 2013, p. 291). Spearheaded by the head of the city's Community Development Department, Jay Williams, the popularity of both the plan and Mr. Williams himself paved the way for his election as mayor in 2005.

The Youngstown 2010 plan, honored with the APA's 2007 National Planning Excellence Award for Public Outreach, called for the city and region to accept that the city is smaller and demonstrated a need to redefine and reinvent itself to achieve any measure of sustainability (City of Youngstown, 2005; American Planning Association, 2006). The city is unique in the United States in its decline-oriented governance and its progress in questioning the dominance of growth in public policies demonstrates that alternative trajectories are possible. In the case of Youngstown, the fortunate combination of "public sector actors…receptive to a new approach, draw[ing] on local knowledge and expertise from key nonprofit actors and residents, and act[ing] with less influence from business interests" has enabled this transition (Schatz L. , 2013, p. 102).

6.2.8.1   Knowledge Center Responses

The respondent in Youngstown spoke about decision making in reference to all six of the Models used in the Steinitz Framework: Decision, Impact, Change, Evaluation, Process, and Representation. The respondent did not reference the importance of planning for vacant and abandoned lots within the city-wide planning environment during his interview. He did, however, indicate in his survey responses that he considered these activities to be important for both the city and himself relative to his own job responsibilities.

6.2.8.1.1 Decision

A Decision Model topic that came up during the discussion was related to the factors associated with change that the planning department has the ability to control.

One factor mentioned by the respondent was the amount of support that political players in Youngstown have for ongoing planning efforts. In regards to the city's recent "Youngstown 2010" planning effort and its inclusion of long-term planning goals,

> I would say that the plan was obviously adopted, and that's the premise of the plan, with a lot of public input and a lot of public support. The thing is that politicians change and as those politicians change, some subscribe to it and some don't. Some just don't want to hear about it. The majority of politicians and the majority of the people subscribe to a concept of making every investment count.

The respondent in Youngstown believes that there are two main motivations in the city. His personal motivation is to act where there are opportunities for improvement.

> It's hard to speak for the rest of the city because I think there's two schools of thought. One, there's some issues that we need to address to deal with abandoned and vacant properties no matter where it is. I've always kind of felt, and I think that's one of the premises of the city's comprehensive plan, is do it where it's going to have an impact. You're going to be able to see some sort of result, whether it's some economic result or some improvement to the environment result. So that's my direction.

The second motivation that he sees is that of elected officials who are being motivated to react to problems.

> I think there's some people that don't subscribe to that and most of them are elected officials that are dealing with their territory and want to see results regardless of whether it will have an economic or environmental impact.... Someone is complaining about something and they want it taken care of it so they'll take care of it whether it's going to have an impact on the stability of the neighborhood or the stability of anything… it's just some person complaining. No real rational discussion. It's not a safety issue, it's just [do it].

The respondent identified one policy that could help the city to achieve its objectives in addressing vacant and abandoned lots would be an amendment to the way that the federal government distributes grants to local governments.

> I think, yeah, the formulas that they use for NSP and CDBG, they amended them a little bit last year. There's like 2 tiers of the way they figure it out. But it needs to be more needs based than it is. It seems heavily weighted towards population. So as the city's needs are increasing because the population is decreasing, you've got this dichotomy of greater needs and less resources. And part of that is a federal issue that they need to figure out.

6.2.8.1.2 Impact

The respondent indicated that decision-making in the city has been affected by concerns that emerged during the "Youngstown 2010" planning process. He said that "we heard a lot of 'we don't want to see anything change.' In other words, they don't want to see more abandonment, new development. They just want things to stay the way they are."

In the wake of these discoveries about citizens desires for the future of the city, the respondent indicated that planning for the city had become constrained by the desire to minimize change.

> I think a lot of people would like to see investment in certain areas but it seemed like a lot of it was 'just leave it the way it is, stop it from deteriorating any further.' And I think a lot of it had to do with some of the main development that was taking place… the only [residential] development that was taking place in the city were these low income housing tax credit houses that were being built. So even in some of the more distressed areas, they did not want to see that type of housing being built. Single family rental for 15 years. … I think a lot of the people that attended the meetings were disgruntled owner occupant people who were concerned about the neighborhoods and they didn't want that even in their backyard.

6.2.8.1.3 Change

When vacant lots become a problem in Youngstown, one of the first questions that is asked to determine what type of action to consider is location.

There's been a couple of different strategies. And it does depend on the location… some of it is just out there in undeveloped areas on the east side and we just… it doesn't even get maintained. It's kind of almost reverted back to nature. ... Some of them have streets. Some of the areas were rural development to begin with and as that abandonment took place, it was just let go back to nature. In some of the other areas where the market has pretty much spoken as well, the abandonment started 25, 30 years ago and has continued up to this date and fairly well emptied out. Maintenance is more for safety purposes only. Like they'll cut the grass at street intersections and things like that. Everything else is just kind of [let go]. And then in more sustainable areas where there is neglect, we'll cut the grass.

The respondent mentioned a project that the city had undertaken recently in the Idora neighborhood of Youngstown. The city invested a significant amount of municipal money in the neighborhood to test the needs and effectiveness of some of their vacant lot and rehabilitation strategies.

We don't have the resources to do wholesale, city-wide things. We've focused a lot of resources into the Idora neighborhood. That has been our pilot strategy of seeing "at this point in time, there are 45 homes that need to be torn down. Let's tear them all down. How many more can we save?" And we save them. I think we've put close to $2 million into rehabbing homes in that neighborhood as well as the funds that were spent to demolish the structures that needed to be demolished and then repurposing the lots. But that type of strategy can't be done city-wide. You have a strategy, how to replicate it? One of issues, it was a tough neighborhood. It was in transition. There were 45 homes that needed to be demolished when we identified that as the target neighborhood. There are others that aren't that bad yet and developing a strategy and starting at these neighborhoods that aren't as far gone as Idora would be easier to accomplish.

6.2.8.1.4 Evaluation

An Evaluation Model topic that emerged in the interview is related to a strategy that the city used to decide to take action on purchasing vacant parcels. The city has operated a land bank since the mid-1990s and the original strategy was to only accept parcels when an end user was identified.

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Somewhere probably in about 2003 I think we switched that strategy to taking anything and everything whether there was an enduser at all. The actual reason for that was that the county was getting ready to sell the tax liens so we knew that that would then pretty much get rid of the land banking ability if the tax liens were being sold to a third party because it has to be certified tax delinquent: once they sell those liens they wouldn't be certified tax delinquent. So we actually switched the strategy to go after the top ten … we researched what was … there were some holding companies or some defunct development companies that had multiple parcels that were all certified tax delinquent so we kind of sorted by that and then went after the top ten, so to speak. So we probably acquired close to 1000 parcels just through that process right there. Those [tax liens] were not sold. Those properties are not in the city of Youngstown's land bank. And then we identified parcels that we felt had real development opportunities and asked the treasurer not to sell the tax liens and they didn't. And that was in an area… the housing authority was doing about a $20 million reinvestment and they demolished some public housing and then kind of redid… it was a Hope 6 project[12].

A local CDC has made suggestions to the city about streamlining the way that they evaluate demolition decisions.

We've had some suggestions from the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation for a prioritization of demolitions and they did a model. I don't know if that actually is something that the leadership has bought into. But it was kind of based on the results of those three surveys that were done. And then some of the capacity within the neighborhood and strengths of the neighborhoods, this was supposed to be able to prioritize where demolition should occur. It was a pretty good model and again I would question site-specific… using that data that was accumulated by volunteers and then plugged into GIS.

One of the benchmarks that Youngstown uses to evaluate the impact of proposed changes to vacant and abandoned lots in the city is the concept of "neighborhood sustainability". The respondent described this as a neighborhood

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[12] The HOPE VI program was begun in 1992 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The intent was to shift federal housing assistance from project-based assistance to mixed-use housing and "housing subsidies to prevent the concentration of troubled, low-income households" (Popkin, 2002, p. 1)

Where there's still… even the term housing market now is debatable as to what constitutes a housing market. But I think that's one of the keys, where there's still an existing housing market. Where there are actual people buying and selling homes, freely. In some areas you couldn't give a house away. And that's just a fact so we shouldn't be making long term investments in those areas. The market isn't, why should we? And then again I think where, even where there isn't a working housing market, if there's a higher percentage of owner-occupancy, I think you want to try to preserve that neighborhood as well. Even though there might not be a real housing market with people buying and selling. If you have people who are owner-occupants, living in their home, the majority of the people in that neighborhood, then it warrants to be deemed a sustainable neighborhood. Another factor is maybe just the general density of the neighborhood. Where is its proximity in relationship to commercial uses that are accessible to the neighborhood…

6.2.8.1.5 Process

A process that is contributing to the creation of vacant and abandoned lots in the city of Youngstown is sprawl.

Because the problem exists and is that there are all of these borders around the city and there is very little that the city can do outside of its borders. The sprawl issue of building further and further out, that is affecting what's happening here. Mahoning County population in 1950 is the same as it is today. But there's a lot less people living in the city, so it's just shifting out. I think we do need to try to localize strategies to address the issues of trying to keep people here and repurpose lots, but I think that's about the extent of it.

Both Youngstown and Dayton specifically call out sprawl as a contributing factor to the creation of vacant and abandoned lots in their cities. It is likely that this is a contributing factor in the majority of Legacy Cities, but only Dayton and Youngstown specifically reference it, suggesting that they have spent time investigating the process.

6.2.8.1.6 Representation

One primary source of data used in the city of Youngstown to plan for vacant and abandoned lots is a recent property survey of the entire city. This was partially done by citizen volunteers.

In 2004 as part of the city's comprehensive plan was the first time we actually did a property-by-property survey of 'what are the conditions of all the property?' It was done again in 2008 and then again in 2010. So we've deliberately done out and surveyed the property conditions of every parcel in the city. Every parcel. We've done property condition surveys, and I think the first one was kind of rudimentary with good, fair, and bad (levels of measurement) and then I think it got a little more sophisticated the next two times it was completed, where they were actually checking on vacancy and occupancy as well and adding that in as well. It's deliberately done for the purposes of determining what is happening and then we've been comparing the results of each survey.

The Respondent indicated that the main source of manpower for these surveys was volunteers. They were trained by the city, initially, during the comprehensive planning process, and then organized by a local neighborhood capacity-building organization. In reference to the validity or reliability of the data collected in this manner, he said that

I would never kind of trust it as 100 percent, but I think it was a good representation of… because it was done by parcel and a lot can happen... Somebody could be looking at a map and not recording the proper information, could be a couple off or something like that. And having the volunteers do it, then actually taking that information and transferring it again into GIS. I would never say that it was 100 percent but I think it did give a good, accurate representation of the general conditions.

The respondent indicates that he would not base decisions entirely off of the data that this survey contains, but that follow-up surveys were able to use the data to track changes in the neighborhood. His comments about the survey indicate that it was a productive way to encourage citizen involvement in the comprehensive planning process and resulted in a useful work product for the planning department.

6.2.8.1.7 Growth Paradigm

A number of topics related to the growth paradigm came up during the interview in Youngstown. The respondent noted the reality of being a being a shrinking city is getting conflated with the idea that the city is actively "planning to shrink."

> It's undeniable. I think it's a fact. Part of it… the issue is that people don't want to say we're planning to shrink. And I don't think we're planning to shrink either. I think we're planning to deal with what's already occurred and what is likely to continue occurring. Not planning to shrink. They think it's giving up if you say… yeah I think a lot of people just kind of say it is, it's happening, there's no denying it.

The respondent also spoke to some of the advantages, and disadvantages, that he had seen come about as a result of the city having a smaller population. In the survey, he had mentioned that the city government had the "ability to better connect with the population and build consensus." When asked about this in the interview, he clarified

> I think it goes the other way. We are able to connect a little bit easier with the people and the people can connect better with the government as well. People have mentioned 'hey, I lived in Pittsburgh for the last ten years. Moved here, never met the guy that does your job in Pittsburgh. I don't even know who he is or how you get hold of him.' Here, you are… so yeah, that kind of thing. You're coming to our neighborhood and talking to us.

While he identified this closer connection between residents and government personnel as a benefit of Youngstown becoming smaller, population-wise, he also noted that there was a potential for this closer relationship to be potentially disadvantageous for the interests of non-active citizens.

> I think it cuts both ways. I think you get groups of the population that are trying to push an agenda and trying to maybe dictate things that they may or may not be able to have any control over or say in. A good example is we just tore down an old historic theatre, the Paramount Theatre. There were some people that were crazed about it. But what can you do? It sat vacant for 30 years and nobody invested a penny into it. It got to the point where there was nothing else you

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could do but tear it down and as part of that whole idea of shrinking, how many theatres can we have in the city? We have the Warner, Powers Auditorium, Stambaugh Auditorium, the Oakland Center for the Arts. There's just so much that's sustainable from that perspective anyways. It's not like it's the only historic theatre in the city of Youngstown and it should be saved for that reason, it's… They made noise about that kind of thing. Another which is along the same lines was when we were going through the whole redevelopment code process, there was a strong vocal group about fracking and another strong group about the whole urban agriculture movement, things like that. Those can somehow alienate people too when they don't get their way.

Youngstown has made the decision that as a shrinking city, it is not going to use some of the traditional planning tools that might be used in other cities, like the process of eminent domain. The respondent explains that

the use of some of the heavy handed things like eminent domain is another thing where we're not politically inclined to do that. I think we've used eminent domain where there is a street being extended or something like that where it's necessary, but not for any kind of an economic or urban renewal type case. [Developers] wanted us to use eminent domain [for the site of a recent redevelopment project] because there's some holdouts, people who have lived there and want to continue to live there. The plan couldn't be quite implemented with a whole new neighborhood with some of those issues there. The city would not use eminent domain to force anybody… a lot of it hasn't been accomplished (the people are still there.)

The city's reluctance to use such heavy-handed planning tools, like eminent domain, has resulted in the incomplete implementation of some economic development plans, where existing owners, reluctant to move, have had their neighborhood redeveloped around them.

The city has also been modifying traditional planning tools for use in shrinking cities. One recently used was the inclusion of a Limited Services Overlay (LSO) zone in its recent Youngstown 2010 plan. This is an overlay area "created to enable the City to designate areas of the city where more limited municipal services will be offered and where significant investment and reinvestment is not encouraged" (City of

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Youngstown - Planning Commission, 2013, p. 59). Understanding that this overlay could prove difficult, politically, the boundaries of the overlay area were not included in the Redevelopment Code document that established it. The respondent in Youngstown talked about the sensitivity of this land use change and why it was not included

> There's a reason. It's a tool that's in the toolbox for the purposes of getting the document [the comprehensive plan] passed and the map passed. We did not want to do too much… you start fights over this, fights over that… The tool in the toolbox of the LSO was just 'this would be nice to have' we'll fight about it later where we want to use it, where we want to implement that. Again, using a little bit of foresight of 'how do we discourage,' and that's really the basis of the whole thing, is we want to encourage development in sustainable areas and not encourage it in areas that aren't sustainable. So the use of the LSO is publically saying, once we put it on the map, that this is not an area that we want… So how do we go about accumulating or acquiring lots of land and not tip off somebody else and have them come in, so we thought, if we had this LSO we could just say ok, this is the general direction we're going in and we're going to acquire all this land, reassemble it, move infrastructure and create an urban wetland mitigation bank.

The respondent explained the city's approach in adapting traditional planning tools for their shrinking city's needs, saying that they are both using these growth oriented tools and creating new ones as needed.

> The [growth-paradigm planning] tools that we have, we're trying to use them. The zoning we use to kind of limit what happens on property. The land banking and potentially the use of urban renewal or eminent domain are kind of the big picture items. We're putting new tools in the toolbox for Youngstown. And I think a lot of other cities need to look at that as well. Like agriculture. Most urban zoning codes don't address the big picture of agriculture. That LSO - just kind of even having flexibility in reuse of land, having that codified and put into the zoning ordinance, that's a big idea.

When questioned in the interview about what 'flexibility in reuse of land' meant in the context of Youngstown, the respondent gave an example of how their planning department had worked to expedite the re-zoning process to increase flexibility of use.

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Well, one of the things we've kind of established in the zoning ordinance is this reuse of existing structures, for some uses that we're going to permit. Whereas in the traditional zoning, it's pretty much hard and fast, it's either permitted or not permitted, or some conditional type of use. We have a conditional reuse that says we'd rather have any use than no use at all. It's more or less kind of saying to people 'you don't have to go through this 3 month process of getting property rezoned if you want to reuse this. We might be able to expedite that process into a month's timeframe by just having this one public hearing in front of the board of zoning appeals rather than going through this public hearing before the planning commission or referral to the city council and adopting a new land use.' Expedite it.

A final growth paradigm topic that emerged was the discussion of what the effects of shrinking had been on the city. The respondent indicated that in

[T]he past 10 – 15 years we've seen a change of despair to maybe one of hope. We can turn this around. Once we stopped kind of fighting some of the outside forces that caused us to be where we are… this downtown, once we came to the realization that retail is gone and it's not coming back, and there is a demand for housing downtown, and we can make this a kind of nightlife place where we have the eating and drinking establishments, and reinvented it for the most part, it was a big step. Kind of breaking away, saying 'steel is not coming back, how do we diversify our economy,' and had a lot of success there. I think that's been… these old steel mills and the slag dumps have all been repurposed into these industrial business parks full of different light manufacturing and distribution type businesses that 15-20 years ago didn't exist. It's not 40,000 jobs but it's better than nothing exactly.

6.3 Discussion

Through the use of the Steinitz Framework, the preceding chapter illustrated the various ways that each of the eight cities interviewed worked through the decision-making process in regards to vacant and abandoned lots. While each city has assembled a distinct, contextual process, there are similarities that can be drawn across this group of Legacy Cities.

6.3.1 DECISION MODEL

6.3.1.1 Planned Density Changes

A common Decision Model topic, mentioned in Buffalo, Cincinnati, and Dayton, was the idea of the city buying the homes of people living in depopulated areas with the goal of being able to close down or stop servicing that area of town. This was mentioned in Buffalo as an idea for which the city was not yet ready. The respondent noted, however, that the city was proactively purchasing homes in these areas as they became available, with the goal of achieving a more sustainable built-up area of the city and retaining an urban footprint. The respondent in Cincinnati said, similarly, that there was not any political will in the city, yet, for this type of action, but that the city would purchase these properties if there were an end-user interested in developing the sites. The Dayton respondent, similarly, noted the political unpopularity of this decommissioning idea, noting that it was already happening informally through market forces.

Three such prominent mentions of this topic indicates that while each respondent has clearly indicated that their respective city is not currently taking these actions, decommissioning is a topic being discussed. As noted in the literature review, there are multiple forms that these density changes may take, from right-sizing through to inner-city suburbanism, blotting, and urban islands. As the issue of vacated areas becomes apparent or dire in these cities, these ideas of urban density changes may become more politically palatable. While these approaches are not currently feasible decisions for planners in these cities to make, political administrations and economic conditions change frequently and there is a good chance that these ideas will be revisited.

6.3.1.2 Overwhelming Volume of Vacant Land

Respondents in Baltimore, Buffalo, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh all noted that the sheer amount of vacant land in the city had profound impacts upon decision-

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making. In Baltimore, the volume enables the city to undergo experimentation on the lots, while it is largely seen as an opportunity for action by developers in Buffalo, although this perspective is neighborhood dependent in Buffalo. In Philadelphia, vacant lots are seen as opportunities more often when a developer has a proposal for individual spaces. In all three cities, the volume of vacant lands is largely seen as a maintenance problem, a burden, and a challenge to manage. On the other hand, the respondent in Pittsburgh noted that the presence of vacant lots all over the city, rather than concentrated in any one area, has really motivated the city to taking action on it.

6.3.2   IMPACT MODEL

6.3.2.1   Lack of Definitions

As seen in the survey results, there is a gap in planning for vacant and abandoned lots at the Impact Model level. During the interviews, it was only in Cincinnati and Youngstown that the topic was addressed. The Cincinnati respondent noted that the city had no strategy for addressing vacant lots. As a result, there were no established benchmarks for evaluating proposed action, completed action, or definitions of meaningful impact. The respondent did note, however, that the city was using federal money to support action on many of these lots, and that there is a reporting requirement attached to these funds. Federal funds are a common source of money for many of these Legacy Cities. It is possible that the reporting requirements attached to them may spur cities to develop their own set of benchmarks and definitions of meaningful impact as evaluation becomes a regular activity.

From interview results, Youngstown appears to be the only city operating with any sort of definitions of Impact. The respondent said that planning in his city was constrained by citizens' desire to minimize change and preserve the post-shrinkage status quo, as no impact was the desired level by Youngstown residents. This manifested in a desire for neither additional development nor abandonment. As a

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definition of quality impact, the desire for no change is not helpful in helping to direct action on vacant lots.

6.3.3   CHANGE MODEL

6.3.3.1   Unknown Futures

In both Cincinnati and Cleveland, respondents indicated that their respective cities are having difficulty in adapting to the needs of operating as Legacy Cities. In Cincinnati, not knowing what the future growth prospects are for the city, including whether, when, and how many people will return to the city inhibits doing long term planning for vacant lots. In the absence of any knowledge of future prospects, the city has adopted a defensive attitude towards these lots, trying to keep them from hurting their surroundings and the city at-large. Rather than attempting to answer these questions, however, Cincinnati is still trying to follow the growth model of attracting developers and ignoring the changed status of the city.

In Cleveland, there is a hesitance to try innovative uses or programs on vacant lots. This hesitance stems from a fear that these actions could result in unwanted conditions. Instead, the city tends to keep doing the same programs, using the same tools because they are familiar and their outcomes can be anticipated. While survey results suggested that innovative programs and tools are coming out shrinking cities, the fear of the unknown will not serve Cincinnati or Cleveland well in terms of creating new solutions.

6.3.3.2   Reluctance to Lead

Respondents in three cities mentioned that they saw a reluctance for their respective cities to take the lead on creating vacant lot uses. In Cleveland, the city has connected their inventory of vacant lots to activities undertaken by groups with whom they have existing partnerships, to make their partners' products more attractive to the

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market, and to get individual lots out of their inventory through a predictable, knowable process.

Dayton's position is that the city is not to control or direct what happens on vacant lots. Its attitude is more along the lines of helping to provide tools for those who wish to act in these spaces, and facilitating the transition of these vacant spaces to active use. While Philadelphia does not have the same attitude about its responsibility towards creating uses on these lots, it has taken the position of letting the city's strong CDC community spearhead much of the vacant lot action.

6.3.3.3   Inability to Lead

The respondent in Buffalo, on the contrary, indicated that they saw other groups in the city taking the lead in acting on vacant lots due to a lack of resources. Other agencies, like the Buffalo Sewer Agency and other city departments, take the lead in determining what types of change can happen on vacant lots.

There are, however, ramifications for handing over responsibility for action on these lots to non- or quasi-governmental actors. In Buffalo as well as cities like Cleveland and Philadelphia, there is the possibility that the decision-making process has been largely curtailed by letting these outside groups take the lead in proposing and undertaking changes.

6.3.3.4   New Parks

A common Change Model topic was the determination by city park departments that they would not accept the responsibility for additional park land. Mentioned by respondents in Baltimore, Dayton, and Philadelphia, each said that the position of the park department constrained their decision-making process. The respondent in Baltimore noted that decisions about what to do with vacant lots was made more difficult because one option that is popular for urban residents, turning them into pocket parks and urban greenspaces, is automatically off of the table. In Dayton, the respondent mentioned how this lack of resources in the park department to take care of

new parks specifically constrains the planning department's ability to do long-term, large-scale greenspace planning. The city may have an opportunity now to acquire vacant land to set up large, regional parks that will serve them into the future, but this option is not currently viable. Philadelphia, similarly has been limited in their decision-making process, although they do have the ability to designate parks if there is maintenance and stewardship established for the spaces. In the current financial climate, this requirement might not make parks any easier an option in Philadelphia than they are in Baltimore or Dayton.

In all three cities, these decisions come down to the resources that the parks department have to care for these proposed parks. Lack of resources is a common problem cited by a number of cities (see below), but it is telling that this one type of resource-dependent use was mentioned by planners in three cities, one of which is technically growing. That these three planners specifically mention it indicates that reuse as a park become a commonly suggested use for these lots, common enough that each city's parks department has had to establish an official position on the topic. Respondents indicated a number of different tools and policies that they are currently using, or have used in the past, to address the problems associated with vacant and abandoned lots. Table 6.3 presents these tools and policies, stratified by either type of tool or policy or the principal actors driving the use of the tool.

6.3.4   EVALUATION MODEL

6.3.4.1   Standardization

While distinctly different decision-making processes occur in these cities, there were three topics that came up in the Evaluation Models of a number of these cities. The first was the ongoing attempt in Baltimore, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Youngstown to clarify how each city made evaluations about proposed vacant and abandoned lot changes.

Table 6.3: Tools and Policies in use in Case Study Cities

Tools and Policies Engaged by Case Study Cities	
City	**Tool/Policy**
Development Strategies	
Dayton	Green/Gold Initiative/Development Strategy
Baltimore	Growing Green Strategy
Vacant Lot Management Strategies	
Philadelphia	Vacant lots managed through Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's ex-offender management program
Cincinnati	"Bright Sites" landscapes vacant lots post-demo
Baltimore	Vacants to Value program; demolition of houses
Baltimore	City developing post-demolition lot stabilization specifications
Buffalo	State of New York Urban Homesteading Program
Cincinnati	Changes in weed control ordinance to facilitate natural landscaping
Buffalo	Discussion during Green Code community meetings to establish system of community stewards to organize residents' care of vacant lots.
Vacant Lot Uses	
Philadelphia	Some gardens, but not large scale ones as in other cities
Philadelphia	Have had some temporary art installations on vacant and abandoned lots
Pittsburgh	"Green Up" program; five years of creating parklets, doing decorative gardens, etc. – stopped when funding ran out.
Buffalo	"Grassroots Gardens" program – covers liability for community groups doing gardens, organizes leases on city-owned lots
Buffalo	Ten year lease on first urban farm
Zoning Strategies / Innovative Land Uses	
Youngstown	Limited Services Overlay as way to start new wetland mitigation bank; avoids the issue of takings
Dayton	Trying to adapt existing planning tools to use in unusual situations
Youngstown	Trying to adapt existing planning tools to use in unusual situations
Baltimore	Stormwater mitigation bank/green infrastructure
Youngstown	District in new zoning code that allows for liberal use of vacant land for urban agriculture
Buffalo	Buffalo sewer authority doing stormwater/greening projects around city to address combined sewer overflow problems
Non-Profit Actors	
Philadelphia	CDCs are very active, taking on affordable housing and economic development activities; transforming their missions
Municipal	
Pittsburgh	Working to develop "Vacant Lots Toolkit" to help citizen know the providers they can work with, tools the city can provide, and what process is; lets the city facilitate private action on these lots
Baltimore	Whole block demolition strategy
Baltimore	Relocation of residents through Vacants to Value funding
Baltimore	Mayor's ten year plan, ten million dollars per year on demolition
Dayton	Using city's Real Estate Acquisition Program to get vacant lots into hands of those who can make use of them
Baltimore	Working with researchers from Boston-area universities to develop model to help evaluate between conflicting proposed uses for vacant lots
Buffalo	Citywide 5-in-5 demolition plan

Source: Author

In Cincinnati, the city has required that every act the city undertakes be "signed off" on by the planning department as advancing the goals of the comprehensive plan. Cleveland is taking a bit of a different approach although it is still working to standardize its evaluations. The city is focusing on areas that have already been agreed upon by the city and local CDCs as model blocks, targeting their actions within these established perimeters.

In Baltimore, the city is working with university researchers in the Boston area to create a mathematical model to determine between conflicting proposed uses. Pittsburgh has created a suitability analysis for the city that established what types of uses are better than others in certain areas. It is also working to create a more data-driven evaluation process in the realization that the current process works well for those who are already engaged but not so well for those who are not.

Finally, a local CDC in Youngstown has suggested that the city's planning department use a model that they have developed to help rank vacant buildings for demolition. The city has also been strategic about choosing what vacant lots to go after relative to getting them into the city's landbank. It has been purposefully conserving resources by going after large-scale holders of delinquent properties, and acquiring properties that represent development opportunities. Youngstown is also choosing to intervene more in neighborhoods that still have a higher percentage of owner-occupancy, to reward or support the homeowners who have stayed and invested in their neighborhoods.

Each of these cities brought this topic up as a way that they were working to standardize their evaluation process. This indicates that being seen to have a transparent process, and being able to work within and offer citizens a stable set of decision-making parameters is a goal of these cities. On the other hand, Dayton has not created a set of benchmarks for evaluating proposed uses, making decisions more on an ad hoc basis as someone comes to them with a proposed use. The city is specifically setting the

hurdles low because they want to get out of managing these spaces, due to lack of resources.

6.3.4.2   Use of Scarce Resources

The second Evaluation Model topic that commonly emerged revolves around how the cities decide where to use their scarce resources to intervene. Respondents in Baltimore, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Dayton all spoke to this difficult evaluation process. Baltimore is using market data done by TRF to identify four market types of neighborhoods, and choosing to become more active in neighborhoods at the bottom of this hierarchy. Buffalo's decision making is more centered around where there is funding, as they tend to focus on the tipping point neighborhoods that still have an active private market as well as eligibility for federal funding. What actions the city can take in each neighborhood is strongly predetermined due to the rules that are attached to each source of funding. Cleveland focuses on the areas that have been established as model blocks as well as areas that are proximate to strong markets to that it can build on existing strengths. Dayton, however, chooses to focus its investment on the hardest hit areas in the city, mainly focusing its resources on demolitions.

In each of these cities, the planning department has chosen to focus on a different category of housing market for investment, whether this is shoring up the area, using demolition as a tool, or doing multifaceted neighborhood investments. There is no real consensus about the best type of neighborhood to invest in, or the way to get the best monetary return or result.

6.3.4.3   Ongoing Evaluation

Interview responses from Buffalo and Cleveland indicate that some cities are being cautious yet flexible about leasing or selling city-owned vacant land. Buffalo is undertaking ongoing evaluation of larger uses of city-owned vacant land, like the city's new large urban farm. Having these uses operate through leases rather than outright sales gives the city more control about what occurs on these large parcels. It also helps

the city to protect its long-term ability to develop both physically and environmentally in a desired manner. They are also being judicious about selling vacant land to homeowners, resulting from the city's desire to maintain its traditional density.

Cleveland has a similarly considered approach to evaluating applications to purchase or lease vacant city-owned land. Each application goes through a number of city departments while officials go into the community to ask neighbors about the proposed usage. Cleveland is also using one, three, and five year leases so that it can do ongoing evaluations about the uses, giving them more control over their assets and the flexibility to respond to changing market conditions.

6.3.5 Process Model

In each interviewed city, the process that is understood to create vacant lots is different. The Baltimore respondent noted that the city understands the interconnected nature of urban problems (as discussed in Figs. 3.4-3.6 of the literature review), and have structured decision-making to be multi-faceted and inclusionary across multiple departments, city-wide. A conversation occurring in Cincinnati revolves around the process of creating new vacant lots through demolition. Demolitions are no longer seen as "solving" problems, but potentially creating additional ones, again in-line with the processes illustrated in Figs. 3.5 and 3.6.

A process unique to Pittsburgh revolves around the city's hilly topography. It is understood to be one of the driving factors causing vacant lots, due to historically low construction standards and natural hazards. Again, as in Cincinnati, the demolition of these homes only exacerbates the problem as often nothing then occurs outside of minimal maintenance, because Pittsburgh does not have sufficient resources to take the property through the legal process to obtain title for eventual disposition. Finally, both Youngstown and Dayton specifically call out suburban sprawl as a contributor to shrinking processes, including the creation of vacant lots, in their cities.

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6.3.6 REPRESENTATION MODEL

The interviewed cities all have very different approaches to gathering data, including the choice of what type of data to include in their decision-making process. Cleveland and Pittsburgh appear to have developed the most widely-sourced data sets. Cleveland, unique amongst this group, uses what it calls "Strategic Geographies," which are in the form of model blocks, created by the city and local CDCs working together. By working with local CDCs to create these groupings, the city is able to leverage these relationships to gather different types of data that can help them to make better informed vacant lot decisions. In Pittsburgh, the city has created in-house data source "PGHSnap" that helps them to understand neighborhoods through the use of indicators. The city has also, uniquely for this set of cities, come up with a common definition of vacancy through the recent comprehensive planning process.

Philadelphia is actively working to create a database inventory of vacant and abandoned lots. To assist in the best decision-making possible, the city's planning department is actively ground-truthing the data that it gets from other departments to make sure that their decisions are based on the most accurate and timely data. Finally, Philadelphia, like Baltimore, is using TRF market analysis as source of data for decision-making.

Youngstown has leveraged their active citizenry to offset their lack of monetary resources by using data, created through a citizen participation project where volunteers did property surveys of the entire city, in the decision-making process.

6.3.7 MULTIPLE-MODEL FINDINGS

6.3.7.1 Resources

In addition to Steinitz Framework Models questions asked in the interview that resulted in common topics, there were some common topics that emerged across a number of different models. The first of these is the topic of resources. It was mentioned in two different model levels in two cities, Buffalo and Cincinnati.

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In Buffalo, the respondent mentioned resources in his response to an Impact Model question in the survey. He indicated that resources were something that constrains the city to only being able to cure problems, rather than taking advantage of opportunities. The lack of resources has left the city with the option of either acquiring problem lots and depleting resources, or saving their resources and watching these problem lots spread to their neighbors. The respondent in Buffalo also mentioned resources in his answer to a Change Model question in the interview. The respondent indicated that he felt that they had no control over the amount of resources that the city had and the way they are used. The city has a declining budget each year yet is required to spend more every year to maintain vacant lots. The respondent in Cincinnati also mentioned resources as an Impact Model topic, noting that because of the lack of resources in the city, vacant and abandoned lots are limited to being seen only as challenges. The lack of ability to spend money or time either deliberating or acting on these lots stops them from being a real opportunity for Cincinnati.

The lack of resources is a pervasive problem in these cities. It affects the decision-making process at more than one point, constraining options and leading planners to feel out of control over this basic requirement for effecting change.

6.3.7.2 Interventions Associated with Special Interests

The second topic that was discussed across a range of models was that of action or intervention associated with special interest groups. Respondents in Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Youngstown all made mention of this facet of decision-making in their cities.

In Cincinnati, the topic came up while Decision Models were being discussed. The respondent noted how determinations about resource targeting in his city often fell prey to the city's political process as City Council members prioritized taking action in response to constituent complaints over action that was truly important. Commenting on Change Models, the respondent in Philadelphia noted how initiatives in the city

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tended to begin and end with each new administration, regardless of their effectiveness. As each initiative has an unknown lifespan, it is hard to plan around them.

An Evaluation Model topic in Pittsburgh that came up revealed that the city's current evaluation process makes it easy for those who want to be engaged in decision making to get engaged, but it does not help the city to discriminate between actual needs and wants. Those who want to get engaged and get their desires implemented can do so easily with the current process but their wants are not automatically what the city needs.

Finally, the Youngstown respondent noted, as a Decision Model topic, that elected officials in the city are often motivated to act on vacant and abandoned lots solely because they want to be seen to be active about what is going on in their constituency, regardless of the soundness of their actions. The city also has a relatively recent Youngstown 2010 planning effort that was currently supported by the administration, but as administration and politicians change, the support for the plan could also change. He also mentioned, while talking about the growth paradigm, the possibility that a smaller population in the city enabled special interests to have an outsized voice on issues with which they were particularly engaged. These comments on the ability of special interests to interfere with the decision-making process indicate that, in general, these processes are vulnerable at many points to the actions of special interests.

6.3.7.3 Interagency Cooperation

Investigating the Decision Models level of the framework, respondents in both Dayton and Philadelphia specifically spoke to the challenge that a lack of interagency cooperation has on the ability of the city to effectively make decisions on these lots. In Dayton, not only is there no interagency cooperation in the planning process, but different agencies do not even have the same goals regarding vacancy. In Philadelphia, there have been political initiatives encouraging interagency cooperation, but as these

are associated with specific administrations, the emphasis on cooperation is subject to the objectives of each new administration.

Interagency Cooperation also emerged as a theme in the Change Models during the discussion with the Baltimore respondent. In that city, the government has a strong culture of interagency cooperation, which has enabled planning for these lots. Survey findings that the issue of vacancy and planning outside the growth paradigm goes beyond the planning department support the city's move to create multidisciplinary conversations around this topic.

6.3.7.4   Using and/or Adapting Growth Paradigm Planning Tools

The final topic discussed across multiple cities is related to the use or adaptation of growth paradigm-oriented planning tools. The respondent in Buffalo was specific about how he felt that he was unprepared for planning in a shrinking-city environment, largely because the needs of the immediate, short-term, and long-term futures were so unique. This finding harkens back to survey findings about the city-wide planning environment (Section 5.5.1) as well as the literature review.

In Cincinnati, the respondent noted that the city's refusal to accept that shrinkage had occurred barred planners from either using or adapting non-traditional planning tools. In this environment, the knowledge or ability of individual city employees to work in a non-growth environment is of less import than the city's acceptance of the need for these practices to be developed and used.

Respondents in Dayton, Pittsburgh, and Youngstown delineated how they had been able to either use or adapt existing growth-paradigm planning tools to the needs of their shrinking cities. In Dayton, the respondent noted that the city was using overlays to encourage uses in the city, accommodating uses that might encourage growth or business. They are using zoning in a similar way, reducing requirements to minimize any regulations that might act as disincentives to locating a business, residence, or commercial enterprise in the city. They have also started using Form-Based Coding to replace their stricter Euclidean zoning. This coding is more liberal

about accepted or allowed uses, again adapting more standard planning tools to the needs of the shrinking city.

Pittsburgh is creating a "vacant lot toolkit" that residents can use to get started, determine what types of uses are permitted on lots, who are non-profit technical advisors they can contact, and how to go about getting permissions, without the need for the city to get involved. Their approach is to facilitate residents who want to be active and make it as easy as possible for them to act, while still guiding the process to ensure that uses are in-line with what the city has deemed appropriate.

Youngstown has been particularly active in picking and choosing amongst the tools and policies associated with growth paradigm planning for use in their city. They have chosen to not use eminent domain to move people out of areas that are being redeveloped. Developers have wanted them to do that, but the city has taken the perspective that it is not willing to use these heavy-handed tactics in aid of private development. The city has also created an overlay district, similar to the one in Dayton, although the district in Youngstown was created to dis-incentivize residential development in a largely depopulated area of town. They are similarly using the standard planning tool of zoning but have adapted it by including urban agriculture as a standard use. They have also worked to expedite the zoning process, particularly as it relates to re-zoning properties. Like the approach in Dayton, Youngstown does not want to give potential users any reason to not develop or use a site, including a delay in official approval. Both cities have been able to adapt these standard planning tools and processes to their particular needs. This ability indicates that while there may be a need for tools and processes that are shrinking-cities oriented to be developed, until that happens, shrinking cities can work with the tools that they know and make them work for their needs.

6.3.8 SURVEY AND INTERVIEW RESULT COMPARISON

Interview results, for the most part, confirmed those of the survey. One of the most startling insights from the survey results was the general lack of benchmarks being

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used in cities, both shrinking and stable-to-growing, to determine the quality of proposed interventions. Beyond interview findings indicating Youngstown's desire for no meaningful change, and Dayton's survey response about success coming if someone else was maintaining the lots, results indicate that these cities have not established any sort of common definition of what would constitute impacts worthy of taking action. Without establishing this definition, it will not be possible to create comprehensive benchmarks to measure this impact, nor to evaluate between different proposed actions/changed. Through the use of the Steinitz framework, this fundamental gap in the decision-making framework has been exposed.

Another insight resulting from the combination of survey and interview findings is the degree to which decision making in shrinking cities has been constrained by outside forces. Mention was made, repeatedly, to the lack of resources, support, and legislation which has forced cities to put options such as parks off the table, and has encouraged them to work with, or give responsibility for decision-making to, outside groups. In both cases, legitimate needs or desires of citizens in these cities may be curtailed, jeopardizing the democratic nature of the relationship between citizens and their local government. One bright side to these distressed circumstances is that in some shrinking cities, the lack of resources has led to the development of alternative, non-market uses for these parks, supporting the old adage that necessity is the mother of invention.

Interview and survey results are complementary in the case of Evaluation processes being undertaken to measure proposed vacant lot uses and evaluate their impacts. A survey question about evaluation measures being used to evaluate impacts indicated that shrinking cities have developed both qualitative and quantitative measures for this purpose. Interview results suggest that these same cities are in the process of developing, or have developed, standardized sets of evaluative measures for the purpose of clarifying decisions regarding proposed vacant lot uses. Taken together, both sets of results suggest that there is a knowledge of the need for transparent and

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predictable evaluative processes, most likely resulting from both limited resources and the blighted conditions existing in many of these cities.

Interview results of Process model questions asking about the creation of vacant lots in these cities dovetail with survey results to similar questions. Survey respondents indicated that the majority of the processes leading to the creation of these lots were either local or lot-specific. Similarly, interviewees spoke further in depth about the specific processes they see creating these lots spoke about the processes they see at work in their cities and they were, again, largely either local or lot-specific. While both sets of responses are mutually supportive, they are not what had been expected from the initial literature review.

A relationship between acceptance of the occurrence of shrinking, self-identification as shrinking, and the ability to successfully plan as a shrinking city becomes apparent when results of survey and interview questions about the growth paradigm are linked (See Fig. 6.1 below). Survey results show that there is a level of reluctance among officials in certain shrinking cities to accept their city's new status and thus to identify as shrinking. Interview results indicate that the identification of/as shrinking is connected to a city's ability to proactively plan to address the results of shrinkage, and that until this identification happens, any attempts to plan from this altered starting point will be unsuccessful.

Figure 6.1: Hypothesized Relationship between Acceptance, Self-Identification, and Ability to Plan in Shrinking Cities
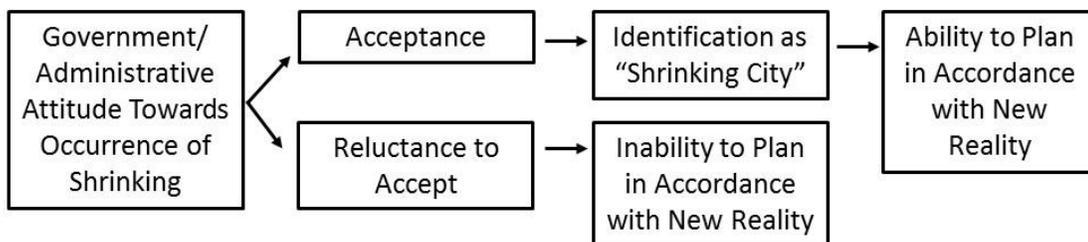
CHAPTER 7: RESEARCH RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

7.0 Introduction

Results of this research suggest that there are multiple ways that planning for shrinking cities is similar to planning for growing cities. Issues of resources, the political process, and special interests prevail in both types of cities. However, Rybczynski and Linneman's assertion that "just as aging is not merely adolescence in reverse, urban planning for shrinkage is fundamentally different than planning for growth" is also justified by this research (1999, p. 40).

Shrinking cities are a special subset of U.S. cities, operating outside of the traditional growth paradigm, which has historically prevailed in this country. Cities that are no longer growing, and are in fact losing population and contracting, pose challenges for those who wish to guide and shape the future of these places. Urban planners, as professionals tasked with ensuring the orderly progression of cities, are at the forefront of managing in an entirely unknown environment. As results of this research show that professionals of a number allied disciplines share the responsibility of planning for these cities, the importance and widespread implications of investigating this topic have become more apparent.

Within these cities, it is vacant lots that represent the most tangible evidence of a city's population decline, as well as possibly the best opportunities for re-imagining form and function relationships. This research has asked how planners, and affiliated professionals, in these cities, operating outside of the growth paradigm, have undertaken the decision-making process in regards to these spaces, in the hopes of answering a number of questions:

- In what ways have planners applied or adapted techniques developed for growing cities to shrinking cities?

- In what ways have they created new techniques specifically for planning shrinking cities?

- When making decisions about vacant or abandoned land, do these planners attempt to restore former conditions and thereby meet well-established benchmarks of success, or do they attempt to form a new image of the city and employ new measures of success?

By employing methodological triangulation amongst literature reviews, surveys, and interviews, this research has established both a broad set of commonly undertaken steps in the decision models used by planners in Legacy Cities[13], as well as a number of unique approaches based in the geography, history, and political context particular to each city.

7.1 Literature Reviews

7.1.1 SHRINKING CITIES LITERATURE

This research began with a review of the current literature on shrinking cities. As a developing topic within planning, definitions and terminology continue to evolve through emerging products of research. This evolution carries through to such basic descriptive categories as the causes and effects of shrinking cities. Part of the difficulty in making definitive determinations is the cyclical way in which the effects of shrinking also, in turn, become causes of further shrinking, *ad infinitum*. In the case of the Legacy Cities herein studied, Jurgen Friedrich's Theory of Urban Decline (Fig. 2.1) succinctly demonstrates this recursive relationship between lack of economic diversity, economic decline, and demographic decline. How this decline translates into the built environment was similarly hypothesized by Schwarz and Haase in their Decline and Relocation Model (Fig. 2.2). Schwarz and Haase's proposed relationships between population decline, vacancy, community perforation, underutilization of infrastructure,

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[13] Legacy Cities is a term created during the 110th American Assembly in April, 2011 that specifically refers to "a group of American cities that have rich histories and assets, and yet have struggled to stay relevant in an ever-changing global economy" (The American Assembly of Columbia University, 2011, p. 0; Mallach A. , Personal Communication, 2013)

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and relocation strongly mimic the process of vacancy as described by survey and interview respondents in this research.

Following on the heels of a number of academic research projects into the topic area of shrinking cities, this project is unique in its approach to the subject. Previous studies have chosen to either focus on one city or compared two for the purpose of investigating one particular planning tool or policy. As in-depth case studies, these projects have an assured place within the research arena. This, however, is the first national study: of the practice of planning in shrinking cities, investigating how seven different shrinking cities are planning for vacant and abandoned lots, and comparing planning practices in shrinking and stable-to-growing cities around the same topic.

7.1.2 VACANCY LITERATURE

The second literature review undertaken in this study reviewed the concept of vacancy in the U.S. built environment. It again uncovered multiple types of definitions and terminology being used, although the reason for the discrepancies can be traced to differences between the multiple professional and academic fields which interact with vacant lots on a regular basis. Even within individual fields there may be conflicting definitions, leading to further challenges in studying the topic, as emerged in a review of the history of research on vacant land in the U.S. Previous studies of vacant land have been largely quantitative, treating vacant land as unimportant, a temporary use of land waiting to be converted to productive use. It is only in the past decade or so that vacant land has been studied as a distinct type of land use. These studies have largely been instituted by individual cities as part of a vacant land management or comprehensive planning process. Despite this transitioning attitude towards the importance of studying vacant lots, the research project undertaken here is one of the first to investigate these lots as parcels that pose distinctive planning problems for planners and affiliated professionals.

This literature review continued with an investigation into the effects of vacant lots on multiple facets of urban life. Wilson and Kelling's Broken Windows theory

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suggests how an increase in social and physical disorder can lead to an increase in the perception of crime and a decrease in community cohesion. Figure 3.4, a hypothesized model including the above relationship suggests that, once again, the break-down of a community is cyclical in a manner reminiscent of the models describing the recursive nature of shrinking cities' population and economic decline. While this study did not focus, *per se*, on public health, Figures 3.5 and 3.6 illustrate how Cohen et al. and Kruger, Reischl, and Gee hypothesize the effect of community deterioration upon lowered health outcomes. Where these vacant lots are located in lower socio-economic class neighborhoods, the equity implications of planning for these lots tie together issues of race, class, disability and health.

Another vacancy topic covered in the literature review was the concept of space and place, and how vacant lots on a street or in a neighborhood can prove disruptive to the coherency of urban fabric. A more nebulous concept, ideas of vacancy disrupting a city came up numerous times in both the survey and interview portions of this research project. The frequency with which planners and affiliated personnel referred to ideas of place, space, placemaking, and structure reinforce the notion of vacant lots as both a physical planning problem and a policy-dependent problem.

The final topic covered in the vacancy literature review was the various types of vacant lot interventions that have been used in U.S. cities, including government, individual, and group-led interventions as well as proposed changes to urban fabric. The majority of the vacant lot interventions in the U.S. today are government led, top-down projects. However, survey and interview results indicate that individual and group-led interventions are becoming more widely used as familiarity with alternative land uses becomes more widespread and local government are giving individuals and groups more latitude to take the initiative on projects. One type of vacant lot intervention that continues to be a topic of contention is purposeful, government-led changes to the urban fabric, in the form of right-sizing, demolitions, and density changes. Right-sizing has been divisive since its first publicized, controversial

proposed use in the 1970s in New York City. While still contentious, its use in select cities in the U.S. such as Baltimore has kept the topic relevant and in discussion, as revealed in both survey and interview results.

7.2   Methodology: The Steinitz Framework

As discussed earlier, this study could be posited as a baseline investigation of the applicability of the Steinitz Framework for general urban planning research, practice, or education. As such, it is possible to draw a number of conclusions from the use of the framework in this research project. One of the first is the resiliency of the framework to application in an emerging field with evolving definitions and uncertain relationships. Despite the amorphous nature of "vacancy" as a concept, the use of the framework enabled a consistent, systematic investigation of the concept with regard to the decision-making process in planning within both the survey and interview portions. The framework was instrumental in constructing a cohesive, thorough survey. Its use enabled the revelation of unspoken assumptions, customary policies, and non-transparent processes in both survey and interviews. Its inherent structure was also influential in organizing the mental processes as well as the reporting of an otherwise unrelated set of responses related to the city-wide planning environment, decision-making, attitudes about growth regimes, and planning tools and policies. The success of the framework for the purpose of researching such a topic suggests that similar benefits could result from using it in both planning and education for similarly unwieldy subjects.

While the strict requirements of the framework, which include working methodically through all six levels, does add to the difficulty of application, the requirements also expose gaps or limitations that might be overlooked in more lax or loosely applied investigatory methods. In this research, such a gap was exposed at the Impact level of the framework. Both survey and interview results revealed a general lack of benchmarks being used in cities, both shrinking and stable-to-growing, to

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determine the quality of proposed interventions. Beyond interview findings indicating Youngstown's desire for no meaningful change, and Dayton's survey response about success coming if someone else was maintaining the lots, results indicate that these cities have not established any sort of common definition of what would constitute impacts worthy of taking action.

Previous research into the Steinitz framework for the purposes of application has revealed a number of modifications, including combining levels, adding intermediate levels, and eliminating levels. None of these modifications emerged as needed changes during this research, although that is not to say that required modifications could not become apparent through additional testing and application of the framework in practice, education, and research.

7.3   The City-Wide Planning Environment

Through the literature review into vacancy in the built environment in the United States, it is clear that vacant lots have long stood out as a special type of use, or non-use, of urban land. While early research into land uses did not focus specifically on vacant land, it was always called out as a distinct land-use type. Vacant land has also been shown to have a unique effect on perceptions of community disorder and public health, threatening both through the simple fact of its existence in a given area.

One common finding in this research, found in both the survey and the interview results and supported by literature review, is the multi-disciplinary approach needed by those working on the topic of shrinking cities. Models shown in Figures 3.4 − 3.6 illustrate the effect of vacant lots on issues as diverse as public safety, criminal activity, and public health. Survey results suggest that there is a recognition of the diversity of fields required to be included in any planning process centered around these spaces, and that Legacy Cities have been working to create collaborative inter-agency processes.

7.4 Relationship of Shrinking Cities' Planning Approach to the Growth Paradigm

Planners in shrinking cities are confronted on a daily basis with the simple fact that their cities are not growing. Survey respondents indicated the multiple ways that they had seen their cities change due to decades of shrinking. These changes support the literature review's findings that shrinking affects multiple aspects of cities beyond the obvious signs of population loss. These changes are measured in social, physical, economic, and equity terms across the city. They have resulted in a strain on services, a lack of resources, increased social and racial residential disparities, and an increased dependent on the assistance of non-profit organizations. (See Table 7.1)

Table 7.1: Observed Changes in Cities Resulting from Shrinking

Disparity between income areas within city; large swathes of vacant properties; increasing amounts of trash; accompanying impacts on city services.
Excess residential structures, never enough resources to demolish them.
Increased emphasis on economic development to bring jobs to city; results of suburban growth and again infrastructure becoming apparent; city becoming more desirable due to investments in economic development projects; challenge of addressing declining neighborhoods with available tools becoming challenging.
Increased number of vacant and abandoned building units; neighborhoods ruined by blight; financial burden of addressing blight.
Increasing levels of poverty and social/demographic change due to "white flight"; a built environment serving only 3/5 of it's intended users; excess housing and commercial properties not being maintained.
Increasing Need to Address Stock of Vacant and Abandoned Structures. City can only address fraction of these existing structures without additional funding/sustained resources.
Stress on maintenance/management of infrastructure - same amount to care for with less human and financial resources. Partnerships, volunteers, non-profits stepping up to take care of properties, parks, and other lands.

In many ways, the issues that are facing planners in these cities are just as difficult, just as "wicked" as any facing planners in large metropolitan cities (Rittel & Webber, 1973). The main difference is that while planners in shrinking cities may have

taken courses or done exercises to prepare them for typical growth-paradigm issues, it is much less likely that they have done so for problems associated with shrinking cities.

Two topics emerged in the survey and interview that are supported by literature review findings. They are: a reluctance to admit to shrinking having occurred or identify as shrinking and the related topics of the (non)usefulness of standard pro-growth planning tools, as well as the development of alternative non-growth tools and techniques. Survey results indicate that there is a reluctance to admit or identify as shrinking that is unrelated to the growth status of Legacy Cities. A city's outlook is more likely to be related to the political culture of the city and perceptions of growth than to any real population growth, as documented by the U.S. Census, supporting Jonas & Wilson's contention that "urban boosterism and the desire to present cities in a positive light have become integral elements of… contemporary politics" (1999, p. 4).

Planners in Legacy Cities are able to adapt some growth-oriented planning tools and techniques for use in the shrinking context. There is, however, a frustration with the prevalence of these tools in current practice and education that is correlated with identification as shrinking or growing. The cities that do identify as shrinking seem to be actively requesting a shift in the way that planning is taught, or at least an addition of skills and tools for planning. It appears that making the identification as shrinking is what opens the door for planners in these cities to advocate for the creation of new shrinking-oriented tools rather than settling for the adaptation of existing growth-oriented practices. As shown in Figure 6.3, acceptance of the occurrence of shrinking and subsequent identification as a "Shrinking City" facilitates the ability to move forward with planning for the new *status quo* in these cities.

7.5   The Decision-Making Process

7.5.1   DECISION MODELS

Decision Models in shrinking cities are distinctly different from those used in stable-to-growing cities. For planners in shrinking cities there are two key priorities: resources and reducing the visceral effects of damage. The former was the most frequently mentioned motivation or constraint upon decisions by planners in shrinking cities while the latter was ranked most often as the primary motivation for change. Surprisingly, planners in these cities listed a similar number of opportunities and challenges as motivations for change on vacant and abandoned lots, indicating that their shrinking cities status has not reduced their ability to think beyond immediate needs and take advantage of existing opportunities.

Planners in stable-to-growing cities have a different set of key priorities motivating change: improvement and renewal, and managing and guiding reuses on these lots. As expected, planners in these cities associate more opportunities than challenges with making change on vacant and abandoned lots, while even the challenges that they cite reflect the operation of an active real estate market.

In both shrinking and stable-to-growing cities, results indicate that the ultimate decision to take action on these lots is discretionary in the majority of cases, up to individual planners or municipal government actors. Further results indicate that there are political or legal restrictions and/or concerns as to what types of changes can actually be instituted on these lots. The intersection of these two sets of findings suggests that the decision to take action could easily fall prey to intergovernmental political pressures or the influence of active special interest groups in shrinking cities.

A final finding regarding Decision Models that differentiates between planning in shrinking cities and planning in stable-to-growing cities lies in the policies, plans, and actions for aid given by other levels of government. In shrinking cities, surveyed respondents indicate that the primary level of government that they feel could aid their vacant lot actions is the federal level, followed by state aid. Their responses are split

between a desire for federal aid and federal or state policies and laws to enable their action on these lots.

The majority of planners in stable-to-growing cities, however, indicate that state aid would be most useful in assisting with their objectives regarding vacant and abandoned lots. This divergence may be related to any number of differences, ranging from the types of funding made available by the federal government as compared to state governments, to the fiscal status of the states in which the shrinking cities are located. While the specific reason for one type of aid as compared to the other is not made explicit, planners in stable-to-growing cities are more focused on the ability of the state to make policies, processes, and laws that will enable action on these lots.

One additional finding from the interview helps to contextualize findings from the literature review and give insight into the operation of these cities. A topic commonly brought up during the interviews was the idea of the city making purposeful density changes in the face of population decline. While it seems that this topic has come up in a number of the Legacy Cities interviewed, only Baltimore has been able to successfully move people from one home to another in a denser area as part of its whole block demolitions. There does not yet seem to be political will or popular demand in other cities for moving people; however, the popularity of the topic suggests that it will continue to be debated as populations decline and vacancy becomes more visible.

7.5.2 IMPACT MODELS

As noted in the interview results, there is very little in the way of suggesting that Legacy Cities in the U.S. have developed definitions of impact, outside of the desire of the citizens of Youngstown to maintain the city as it is. This gap in the decision-making framework suggests that the definitions of success being used to make determinations are ambiguous at best, and most likely arrived at arbitrarily. There appears to be no clear connection between the decisions that ultimately result from this level of the framework and the preceding Model levels. This will inhibit cities' abilities

to perform conventional cost-benefit analysis, among other tasks, due to success being undefined and its achievement indeterminate.

7.5.3 CHANGE MODELS

The lack of resources in many Legacy Cities has multiple repercussions on the way that planners are making decisions about what types of change to institute on vacant and abandoned lots. Three topics in particular arose in this research: the common desire for no additional parkland, the inability or reluctance of cities to take the lead on making changes, and the innovations deriving from lack of a private real estate market.

While the literature review covered a number of potential uses of vacant land that incorporated green space, recreation, and natural uses, the cities involved in this research were largely adamant that no new parks be created, due to a lack of resources. The same lack of resources has been driving shrinking cities, more so than stable-to-growing cities, to develop or permit innovative activities on these lots in the absence of private demand for development. Finally, a number of cities indicated their reluctance or inability to be the driving force behind creating and implementing alternative uses, due to both a lack of resources and a fundamental philosophical approach about the responsibilities of government. One potential drawback of the desire to let non-governmental actors lead is the possibility that outcomes will become predetermined or curtailed by the interests of these actors.

7.5.4 EVALUATION MODELS

Evaluation Model findings illustrate a key difference in planning for shrinking cities as compared to stable-to-growing cities. In shrinking cities, the most commonly mentioned primary benchmark used for initiating action on vacant and abandoned lots was the appearance of either private or public redevelopment interest in the lots. In these cities, the most commonly mentioned benchmarks, overall, were complaints, followed closely by measures related to liabilities and requirements for enforcing

codes. In stable-to-growing cities, the most commonly mentioned primary benchmark, and one of the two most commonly used benchmarks, was related to code violations.

These findings appear to be the reverse of what one would assume to be the primary sort of benchmarks being used in either type of city. However, when considering the lack of redevelopment interest that most likely exists in the majority of these shrinking cities, it becomes understandable that any redevelopment interest would be seen as an opportunity that could not be missed and a prime motivation for action.

In stable-to-growing cities, where there is presumably a higher degree of routine interest in being able to redevelop lots to satisfy an active housing market, it is logical to think that other types of benchmarks would be used instead. The one cited by these cities as the primary motivation, code violations, makes sense as initiating action, due to the ability of violations to pull a city into legal actions, slow redevelopment processes, or incur public relations ramifications due to unforeseen results.

In shrinking cities, while the most commonly cited measure was complaints, none of the survey respondents listed this as their primary measure or benchmark used to make the "take action" determination. A question arises about the discrepancy between the most commonly used measurement and the primary measurements being used in these cities. It is possible that there is an unwillingness to list "responding to complaints" as the primary benchmark. This could be related to an image problem or concern that listing complaints as the primary benchmark would serve to confirm that complaints about these lots exist. Operationally, perhaps this reluctance to acknowledge the importance of complaints as instigating action could be translating into a hesitancy to either respond to complaints or create a well-functioning complaint response service for the public.

The immediacy of the commonly cited types of benchmarks for taking action are another place where planning in shrinking cities differs from planning in stable-to-growing cities. In shrinking cities, these are benchmarks related to responding to both

immediate threats and long-term opportunities. In stable-to-growing cities, the most commonly cited types are benchmarks related to intermediate-range threats to assets and stemming loss of value as well as long-term opportunities.

In shrinking cities, as discussed above, the prime motivation and most commonly cited motivation belong to two disparate categories. This duality of priorities represents the need for planners in these cities to be able to balance immediate and long-term needs. This dual-motivation set also establishes the existence of a mental or operational mindset in shrinking cities that is not solely based on responding to emergencies and contains mental space for longer-term planning strategies.

Another difference between planning for the two types of cities is found in the site considerations. Both types of cities include a wide range of characteristics that support the ability to make decisions based on viewing each lot as an individual site within the city. Some shrinking cities, however, are working to create models to regularize this process and contribute to the systematic use of an established set of site considerations for all evaluative decision-making. Planners in shrinking cities are working to create both more transparent and standard evaluation processes as well as more flexible ones. These findings indicate that there is a recognition of the usefulness of benchmarks, particularly in the face of dwindling resources. There is, however, as mentioned above, a gap in the definitions of quality Impact that these cities are using, which will only impede their further development of standard, transparent benchmarks.

Finally, planners in shrinking cities are using a more extensive set of benchmarks to evaluate actions on vacant and abandoned lots after they have been implemented. Their benchmarks include a similar number of qualitative and quantitative measures, reflecting the need to use un-quantifiable measures in cities without strong real estate markets. Planners in stable-to-growing cities indicate that their less extensive set of benchmarks includes quantitative ones twice as often as qualitative ones, reflecting both a reduced use of benchmarking after taking action and a reduced need for establishing non-market oriented ones.

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7.5.5   PROCESS MODELS

Results from questions associated with Process Models reveal both similarities and differences between the planning experiences in these two types of cities. Dissimilarity is seen in the types of sub-questions that planners ask when attempting to discern what should be done with vacant and abandoned lots in their cities. In stable-to-growing cities, most of these questions center on the existence and type of redevelopment market for the lots. In shrinking cities, however, there appears to be no assumption that a market exists for these lots, as the questions asked seem to explore non-market oriented possibilities for the lots. Stable-to-growing cities planners do not consider these non-market types of uses, nor do they consider the effects of the lots upon their surroundings. This is, however, a common consideration for planners in shrinking cities as they appear to have internalized the processes interacting with vacant lots as shown in Figs. 3.4 – 3.6.

Similarities are seen in the way that the sub-questions related to action on vacant lots are organized around the topic in both shrinking and stable-to-growing cities. In both cities, these questions are primarily related to effecting the changes and considering immediate effects. Few questions are considered that relate vacant lot planning to other issues in the planning arena or to ongoing planning activities. Planners in both types of cities did ask a small number of questions related to political considerations, such as how to connect these lots to mayoral priorities, or political hurdles to taking action. However, for the majority of planners, in both types of cities, planning for these lots is considered a localized event and process, not contingent upon other actions or decisions, and without similarly external ramifications.

This shared, limited, view of the effects of planning for these lots is supported by the way that planners in both types of cities consider the trends that lead to the creation of vacant and abandoned lots. In both shrinking and stable-to-growing cities, a plurality of the causes is considered to be the result of local and regional trends, closely followed by factors related to the individual properties themselves.   This view

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of the local and regional, or site-specific, source of trends causing vacant and abandoned lots suggests that the "answers" or "cures" for these lots should be similarly sourced.

There is a discrepancy, however, between the source of the problems and the types of aid requested by planners in shrinking cities, as revealed through the Decision Model questions. The majority of the problems are believed to lie in either local/regional trends or be related to individual properties. Yet the type of aid that shrinking cities planners largely see as possibly assisting them is at the federal level. There is the possibility that planners in shrinking cities do not look for local or state aid because they know that their cities or states are also lacking in resources.

7.5.6 REPRESENTATION MODELS

Planners in both set of cities note that GIS data is their most common source of data. They do not state where the GIS data originates, who assembles it, or what pieces of information are included in it, among other question. A follow-up question must be asked about how this inclusion or exclusion of data pre-determines what types of decisions are eventually made by influencing the processes that are understood to be happening, the benchmarks that are used, etc. Furthermore, is the decision to include or exclude data an ongoing conversation happening in planning offices and are data that are not in GIS-friendly formats excluded from use as base data? Finally, what are the ramifications of this type of technological determinism on the vacant and abandoned lots applications that occur?

The biggest difference in the type of information and data used by planners to make decisions regarding vacant and abandoned lots in shrinking cities and stable-to-growing cities appears to be the result of whether or not the city has a working real estate market. In this way, the Process Model topic of how the local real estate market works, or does not work, affects the type of data that planners are able to access. Representation Model questions indicate that in shrinking cities, information comes from standard sources like GIS, city records, and the United States post office. In

addition, planners depend upon personal information about ongoing projects or nearby assets that could be capitalized upon. They are also more likely to use field surveys as an additional source of information, indicating that perhaps their data sources are not likely to be as up-to-date or complete as they should be and need to be augmented by information gained from site and neighborhood visits.

Planners in stable-to-growing cities indicate that they have a more formalized set of relationships with various companies and individuals representing the local development community. These networks of information, their most frequently used source, can give them comprehensive data on a city-wide scale, forestalling a planner's need to do field surveys or discover ongoing projects and nearby assets on their own.

7.6   Types of Tools and Policies being used in Cities

One of the prime drivers of this research was a search for the types of tools and policies being used to address vacant and abandoned lots. This search included a desire to understand the usefulness of standard planning tools and policies, those designed within planning's prevalent growth paradigm, to address problems occurring in cities operating outside of this paradigm.

As a national survey of Legacy Cities and their non-shrinking corollaries, this research has resulted in a compendium of practices being used in shrinking cities and growing cities to address vacant and abandoned lots. This compendium includes both practices considered and those actually implemented. It has information on conditions in these cities that have both supported and depressed these vacant lot practices. Finally, it also contains information about the usefulness of growth paradigm tools for planning in shrinking cities, the ability of shrinking cities planners to adapt these tools for their particular needs, and examples of these adapted or repurposed tools.

Table 7.2 demonstrates that planners in shrinking cities have developed a more extensive set of activities often considered for application to these lots. These cities have not entirely given up hope that there is redevelopment potential for these lots, as

is indicated by the number of cities who consider redevelopment as an option. Nor have they assumed that they must be the ones to take action, as code enforcement, reuse incentives, and working with the land bank are options that are considered. These types of approaches work to involve either landowners, potential developers, or other city agencies in the future of the vacant lots.

Table 7.2: Policies, Plans, and Actions Most Often Considered in regard to Vacant and Abandoned Land

Shrinking Cities	Stable-to-Growing Cities
5 Redevelopment	6 Investment from Outside Owners
3 Disposition	3 Aesthetic improvement
2 Alighment with City Comprehensive Plan Strategy	2 Code Enforcement
2 Foreclosure	2 Incentive Zoning
2 Greenway Development	2 Investment by Adjacent Owners
1 Acquisition	1 Acquisition with community partners
1 Alignment with Neighborhood Plans	1 Actions to take possession and transfer to more productive use/owners
1 Brownfield Cleanup	1 Construction of parks and playgrounds on publicly owned parcels
1 Code Enforcement	1 Control of Nuisance Lots through Legal Action
1 Community Gardening	1 Engage community partners for temporary uses of publicly owned parcels
1 Developing Interim Strategy to Avoid Blight	1 Handle on case-by-case basis through staff contact
1 Federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program	1 Market studies to encourage development
1 Fines	1 No Policies Established
1 Identifying Use for Property	1 Process properties through Hearing Authority
1 Implement Reuse Incentives	1 Sheriff Sales
1 Individual Garden Leases	
1 Demolition Assessment on Lot to Influence Future Use	
1 Seeding, Mowing, Maintaining Lots	
1 Slope Stabilization	
1 Stabilization of Lots	
1 Urban Agriculture	
1 Urban Tree/Plant Nurseries	
1 Use as Open Space/Parks	
1 Work with County Land Bank	

The surveyed shrinking cities have, however, created a wide range of non-typical uses that are considered for application, from plant nurseries and urban agriculture to greenway development and garden leases. They have also created non-

typical approaches to planning for the future of these lots, with the development of interim strategies, using demolition assessments to gain a degree of control over future uses on the lot, and bringing the lots into alignment with neighborhood plans. These approaches all represent cities taking advantage of a current problem to achieve a better future urban environment.

Table 7.3: Vacant Lot Actions being Undertaken in Surveyed Cities

Shrinking Cities	*Stable to Growing Cities*
Process/Procedure	Process/Procedure
Sale of Side Lots	City Purchase of Lots
Recently Developed Land Bank	Cleaning and Maintaining publicly owned properties
Adopt-a-lot Program	Code Enforcement
Assist Developers in Acquiring Vacant Lots	Contacting Owner
City acquisition	Incentives for development
Developing integrated land management software	Land Assembly for Single-Family Home Construction
Economic Development	Mowing and Cleaning Property, Billing Owner
Established set of partners to all work with same priorities	Working with adjacent property owners
Help Community Gardens gain access to Water Supplies	Working with other units of government or non-profits
Mini-Grants to Improve Vacant Lots	Working with Private Investors
On-site surveys of lots coming into Land Bank	Working with Taxing Bodies
Regular Code Enforcement	
Sale to Neighbors	
Streamlining properties through City Land Bank	
Targeted Demolition	
Volunteer Community Clean Ups	
Types of Re-uses	Types of Re-uses
Community Gardens	Developing Infrastructure onsite to spur nearby investment
Using lots for Stormwater Management	Private Development
Bioremediation of Contaminated lots	
Creating Official Open Space Areas	
Expanding Park Lands	
Rain Gardens	
Testing greening strategies	
Urban Agriculture	
Urban Plant Nurseries	

The considered options in stable-to-growing cities are less innovative and more standard, reflecting these cities' more limited experience with, and problems resulting from, vacant and abandoned lots. Few of the actions considered in these cities contemplate the idea of the city taking ownership or responsibility for the lots. The majority of the considered uses include selling the lots to developers or transferring them to more productive private or public use. For the most part, the considered uses

are in-line with the actual uses that these stable-to-growing cities have employed, as shown in Table 7.3.

The occurrence of these lots throughout shrinking cities have been a material challenge, but have also lead to the development of innovative practices. As noted above, the decision-making practices in shrinking cities demonstrate the need to solve a problem for which there are no easy or ready solutions led to the development of novel tools. During the interviews, a whole additional set of tools and policies emerged as being used by shrinking cities to address these lots. These range from more usual development strategies such as the Green/Gold and Growing Green strategies in use in Dayton and Baltimore (respectively) to innovative land uses and large scale municipal strategies. (See Table 7.4)

Addressing the problem of vacant lots in these cities has provided many shrinking cities with a first attempt at using standard growth paradigm planning tools in a non-growth paradigm context. Without an active private real estate market and developers to help the city grow out of the problem, they have adapted existing tools and created new ones to solve their problems. Survey results indicate that, largely, shrinking cities planners find growth paradigm tools to be unhelpful, one respondent saying that that there should be courses "in planning school on managing population loss and planning to shrink." (See Table 7.5)

Table 7.4: Vacant Lot Actions being Undertaken in Interviewed Cities

Tools and Policies Engaged by Case Study Cities

City	Tool/Policy
Development Strategies	
Dayton	Green/Gold Initiative/Development Strategy
Baltimore	Growing Green Strategy
Vacant Lot Management Strategies	
Philadelphia	Vacant lots managed through Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's ex-offender management program
Cincinnati	"Bright Sites" landscapes vacant lots post-demo
Baltimore	Vacants to Value program; demolition of houses
Baltimore	City developing post-demolition lot stabilization specifications
Buffalo	State of New York Urban Homesteading Program
Cincinnati	Changes in weed control ordinance to facilitate natural landscaping
Buffalo	Discussion during Green Code community meetings to establish system of community stewards to organize residents' care of vacant lots.
Vacant Lot Uses	
Philadelphia	Some gardens, but not large scale ones as in other cities
Philadelphia	Have had some temporary art installations on vacant and abandoned lots
Pittsburgh	"Green Up" program; five years of creating parklets, doing decorative gardens, etc. – stopped when funding ran out.
Buffalo	"Grassroots Gardens" program – covers liability for community groups doing gardens, organizes leases on city-owned lots
Buffalo	Ten year lease on first urban farm
Zoning Strategies / Innovative Land Uses	
Youngstown	Limited Services Overlay as way to start new wetland mitigation bank; avoids the issue of takings
Dayton	Trying to adapt existing planning tools to use in unusual situations
Youngstown	Trying to adapt existing planning tools to use in unusual situations
Baltimore	Stormwater mitigation bank/green infrastructure
Youngstown	District in new zoning code that allows for liberal use of vacant land for urban agriculture
Buffalo	Buffalo sewer authority doing stormwater/greening projects around city to address combined sewer overflow problems
Non-Profit Actors	
Philadelphia	CDCs are very active, taking on affordable housing and economic development activities; transforming their missions
Municipal	
Pittsburgh	Working to develop "Vacant Lots Toolkit" to help citizen know the providers they can work with, tools the city can provide, and what process is; lets the city facilitate private action on these lots
Baltimore	Whole block demolition strategy
Baltimore	Relocation of residents through Vacants to Value funding
Baltimore	Mayor's ten year plan, ten million dollars per year on demolition
Dayton	Using city's Real Estate Acquisition Program to get vacant lots into hands of those who can make use of them
Baltimore	Working with researchers from Boston-area universities to develop model to help evaluate between confliction proposed uses for vacant lots
Buffalo	Citywide 5-in-5 demolition plan

Table 7.5: The Usefulness of Growth Paradigm Tools and Policies in Shrinking Cities

Best Practices can be Great Tools - However Each City is Unique and Sometimes New Ideas Need to be Explored
Not Much Help - Traditional Tools are Geared Towards Controlling Growth
Not really - Learning as we go along
Should offer Course in Planning School on Managing Population Loss and Planning to Shrink. Recently attended course on Form Based Zoning which was all Predicated on Growth - asked Question about Foundation solely based on Growth, and was told that City would Eventually Grow
Some Tools are Useful, such as Comprehensive Planning. Emerging Theories like Resilience, Environmental Urbanism, and Tactical Urbanism offer new ways to be Flexible
Yes - We Copy What Many other Cities are Doing, Using Input from Community and Partner Organizations to put a Local Spin on Those Models
Yes and No. Complicated Question Could Take Years to Answer

Planners in these cities are, however, not pessimistic about their ability to effectively plan and make changes. They overwhelmingly note that while existing tools may not be entirely useful, they are making do, adapting, using what works and discarding what does not, and learning from others. Not only are they adapting their tools, but they are also adapting their practices to their new situation. (See Table 7.5) These planners are taking advantage of assets that might be seen as problems to cities focused solely on their tax structure, capitalizing upon an abundance of vacant land, water, and a large built infrastructure as compelling draws for new business. They are learning how to plan for decline and shrinkage simultaneously, learning how to be flexible and create plans for neighborhoods with very different needs.

7.7   City-Specific Findings

While Legacy Cities share a number of specific characteristics that define them as a group, specific attributes intrinsic to each of these cities emerged during the survey and interview process. Baltimore's experience with shrinking is colored by its status as a rowhouse city. This status has led the city to follow the path of "block demolitions",

tearing down an entire block-face of rowhouses to avoid the costly stabilization of individual rowhouses when their neighbors are intermittently removed. The need to remove upwards of five houses at a time, some of which are still inhabited, has led the city to develop successful strategies and processes for moving residents to more densely populated neighborhoods. It has also opened up large parcels of land for both temporary and long-term green infrastructure uses.

Pittsburgh, similarly, has had a unique experience with shrinking due to its morphology. With hilly topography, pockets of depopulation can be isolated from neighboring areas, serving to both emphasize depopulation for those within the depopulated areas, and to mask the depopulation from outsiders. Pittsburgh's hilly topography has also helped to accelerate the depopulation process as workforce housing built on hills has fallen prey to a combination of poor construction standards, steep slopes, landslides, and drainage problems. This combination of issues has also come together in Cincinnati. Topography has intersected with depopulation in unexpected and distinctive ways in both cities.

Philadelphia, while no longer shrinking, is taking advantage of its vacant land to address a common problem among large east coast cities. The city has a combined sewer overflow system, and has a consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement green infrastructure as part of the management process (Kray, 2012). Vacant city lots will form a key part of Philadelphia's approach to managing this problem. Five U.S. universities are conducting research projects on the issue, and it is likely that findings to come out of this study will have repercussions for a range of Legacy Cities.

Youngstown is often spoken of as a shrinking cities exemplar. It has been able to create a zoning code that discourages future investment, invest heavily in one neighborhood to ascertain the achievable outcomes associated with varying levels of investment, and capitalize upon local university, citizen, and non-profit involvement to take action. The city, however, still faces the challenge of citizens reluctant to see any

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change come to Youngstown, hampering its ability to make investments for an uncertain future.

Among the cities interviewed, Buffalo appears to have the most resistance to the type of morphological changes that occur when vacancies are introduced. The city is determined to maintain its current urban densities by restricting the number of vacant lots that neighboring homeowners can purchase, by not changing or relaxing zoning codes, and by stabilizing homes that are on sustainable blocks in the city. They have a substantial new immigrant population that has helped to shore up their densest neighborhoods.

In contrast, Dayton is actively demolishing homes to deter blight and has acknowledged that the Dayton of the future will not have a uniform density as in the past. The city has also been working to create a more flexible zoning code to deter any extraneous regulations that might deter economic development and accommodate unusual or otherwise prohibited uses. Whether Buffalo or Dayton's approach will succeed is anyone's guess, but the multiple paths that are being taken by Legacy Cities as they attempt to deal with shrinking will give planners around the country examples to emulate or avoid.

7.8   Contributions

This research into the decision-making frameworks used by planners and affiliated professionals in Legacy Cities in the U.S. demonstrates both the progress that some cities have made towards thriving in their new identities as well as the obstacles still in the way for other similar cities to succeed.

This study has explored the use of the Steinitz Framework for an investigation into planning processes, a new and unique use of the framework. It has been useful in exposing the gap in the framework that exists at the Impact Model level. It has also been useful in demonstrating the way that the multiple levels relate with and support

each other, illustrating the repercussions of having one model level inadequately developed.

The framework has been successful in exposing the ways that Legacy Cities operate in regards to vacant lots, including the ways in which multiple levels along the decision-making framework can be supported or restricted by one unique circumstance, such as a lack of resources or the existence of a private real-estate market. It has also been useful in suggesting ways that local, state, and national governmental organizations may be able to assist planning officials in making changes on these lots.

A prime finding confirms the existing literature on shrinking cities which suggests that there is a distinct need for planners in these cities to be educated and given tools which function within a non-growth environment. Planners themselves are asking for these skills. Another important finding revolves around the identification of cities as shrinking, as there is a suggestion that the refusal to accept this identification hampers a city's abilities to plan and innovate for a better future.

As an emerging, and maturing, field within the planning literature, there will be many studies following on this one. Many of the most interesting, unusual, and surprising findings emerged during interviews with planners in their offices during a typical workday. Perhaps the most important finding of this study is how eager planners are to talk about difficult subjects, that are vital to them and their communities, if anyone is willing to listen.

Appendix

Questions for both Shrinking and Stable-to-Growing Cities:

1. Name:

2. Title:

3. General Responsibilities:

4. Years working as planner in this town:

5. Years in planning in total:

6. Other cities worked in:

7. Relative to all planning activities in your city, how important are vacant and abandoned lots? [check one]

___ The city's most important issue
___ Very important (among the 3 or 4 most important issues)
___ Important
___ Not important
___ Rarely considered

8. When considering issues related to vacant or abandoned lots, what are your primary motivations for action?

Rank   Motivation

9. The question, "What should be done with vacant or abandoned lots?" can be considered an umbrella question, because it spans many other questions that must be asked and answered. What related or sub-questions do you consider when you consider, "What should be done with vacant or abandoned lots?"

Sub-questions related to the question "What should be done with vacant or abandoned lots?"

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10. When considering issues related to vacant or abandoned lots, what are the most important sources of data you use? List in the data or data sets in order of importance (1=most important). Are these data collected and compiled by the city, or is an outside data source used? (Note: If the city significantly transforms outside data for its own purpose, it should be considered city data for this survey. An example might be United States Census data, which many municipalities cross-tabulate or otherwise tailor for their specific needs.) As best as possible, please list them in rank order (1 = the most important data source).

Rank	Data	Collected by City	Collected by others
1			

19   OTHER DATA ALSO CONSIDERED

11. When considering issues related to vacant or abandoned lots, how does your city make determinations of when a lot or property becomes "vacant" or "abandoned"? For example, is this determination based in legal statute, is it based upon site visits to the property in question, etc.? Are these determinations explicitly laid out in state or city documents, or is this an implicit determination left to individuals within city government?

12. Data are meaningful because they are understood to contribute to processes that operate in a place. How do the data identified in the previous question contribute to social or biophysical processes that are significant to understanding places in your city that are, or that are near, vacant or abandoned lots? Please list them in rank order (1 = most significant process).

Rank	Process
1	

13. In the previous question, you were asked to clarify how data representing information contributes to processes which are significant to understanding what is going on near vacant or abandoned lots in your city. Where does this

knowledge of HOW information affects or leads to processes originate? Is it based upon previous occurrences in your city or region? Is it based on prior research that has been done? It is considered general knowledge?

14. Given the processes you identified in Question 6, what are the measures, indicators, or benchmarks that you typically use to determine if/when/where/how to take action, when it becomes clear that some kind of action is required? Please list them in rank order (1 = most important indicator).

Rank	Measures that indicate how well a process or a place is functioning
1	

15. Regarding Question 8, If some kind of action is determined to be required in response to a process which is not working as desired, at what point are implicitly or explicitly determined interventions made? Are these points explicitly stated in laws, codes, statutes, etc? Are they implicit judgments made by government officials? What types of action are permitted in response to this decision to intervene?

16. When considering taking action on vacant lots in your city, which factors associated with the possibilities of change are completely within your ability to solve? Which factors are beyond the control of your office? Which factors can you influence but not control?

Factors Associated with possibilities of change	Within Ability	Beyond Control	Influence

17. Given a poorly performing process or set of processes, what kinds of policies, plans, or actions are most often considered in your city? Please list them in rank order (1 = most commonly considered).

Rank	Changes considered to address vacant or abandoned lots
1	

18. How has your city determined which potentially meaningful options for change are most appropriate on a given site? What are the methods that have been used to identify and develop these options? Are they based upon ongoing practices within your city? Are they based upon precedents seen to be useful

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in other cities? Are they options which the city is uniquely advocating? Are they based in the literature of emerging ideas in planning?

19. Please answer the more accurate of the two following questions for your planning experience with vacant lots in your city:

    a. When determining options for change, is it most accurate to say that your decision-making process is largely done in the hope of curing or easing a "problem" in your city? Why do you feel that your actions have been constrained in this manner?

    b. When determining options for change is it most accurate to say that your options which you are able to consider in your decision-making process are ones that might take advantage of an undesirable situation and create an "opportunity" for your city? Why do you feel that your actions have been enabled in this manner?

20. When considering issues related to vacant or abandoned lots, how do you evaluate the impact of the proposed change or changes? Do you have qualitative or quantitative thresholds or benchmarks that indicate that a proposed change should be "successful enough" to proceed? Please list these thresholds or benchmarks in typical order of importance (1 = most important).

Rank   Threshold or benchmark for success
1

21. How are these qualitative or quantitative thresholds or benchmarks arrived at? Are there explicit or implicit definitions of meaningful impact which you are using?

22. When considering whether a proposed change is considered "successful" are your measurements largely based upon minimizing some externally determined "bad" condition, or are they based upon maximizing some externally determined "good" condition?

23. Can you enumerate the types of actions, changes, or interventions which your city has used to ameliorate the effects of vacant and abandoned lots? Please list these actions, etc. in typical order of the most widely or frequently used in your city (1 = most widely or frequently used). Please also list these actions,

etc. in typical order of those which have been considered the most "effective" in your city (1 = most effective).

Frequency of Use	Effectiveness	Type of vacant or abandoned lot change/action/intervention
1		

24. Are there any changes that your city has suggested implementing to vacant and abandoned lots but which have not been found to be feasible, for any reason? What might occur to stop or hinder certain types of action or change from being taken in response to vacant or abandoned lots? What in your city has enabled certain types of action or change to be made?

25. Each of the preceding survey pages has focused on a different aspect of the reasoning done to make decisions related to vacant and abandoned lots. Among these different aspects, which do you think has the greatest uncertainty?

Check One	Aspect of reasoning about vacant and abandoned lots
	Decision intentions and motivations
	Data that describes the current conditions
	Social and biophysical processes that operate on or through the city
	Evaluation of processes operating on the site
	Possible planning changes
	Impacts of possible changes

Additional Questions for Shrinking Cities that are associated with Growth Paradigm:[14]

1. This study is interested in the practical differences between planning in a city that has an increasing population, planning in a city which has a declining population, and planning in a city which is shrinking. Do you feel that your city positively identifies with one of the above "types" of city? Why or Why not?

2. If your city is not identified with/as a shrinking city, is there a reason for this alternative identification?

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[14] This second set of questions was only sent to planners and affiliated professionals working in cities which were declining in the 2000 – 2010 decade, according to 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census numbers.

a. Can you describe the sources or reasons behind this?

3. When working as a planner in your city, do you feel that tools and theories which are associated with the traditional "growth paradigm" within planning are useful in your work? Why, why not?

4. Are you able to adapt traditional "growth paradigm" tools and theories to a non-growing city? If so, how? If you don't feel the need to, why not?

5. Have you developed alternative tools in your planning practice? If so, what are they?

6. Can you list some of the projects your city has taken on in regards to vacant/abandoned lots?

7. Which are the ones that you are most proud of?

8. Which have been most successful? How do you operationalize "success"?

9. Which ones have not worked? Do you know why?

10. Can you imagine that there might be benefits associated with a smaller population in your city?

    a. If so, what are they? If not, why not?

11. What are the main changes that you have seen in your city as population has declined? Are they economic, social, infrastructural, etc?

12. Are these changes which you feel you have the tools to address?

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