

The Shrinking Cities Project

Shrinking Cities in the USA



Structure



1. Definition of shrinkage in the USA
2. Distribution of shrinking cities in the USA
3. Cases of shrinking cities in the USA
 - *Pittsburgh*
 - *Youngstown*
 - *San José*
4. Conclusions

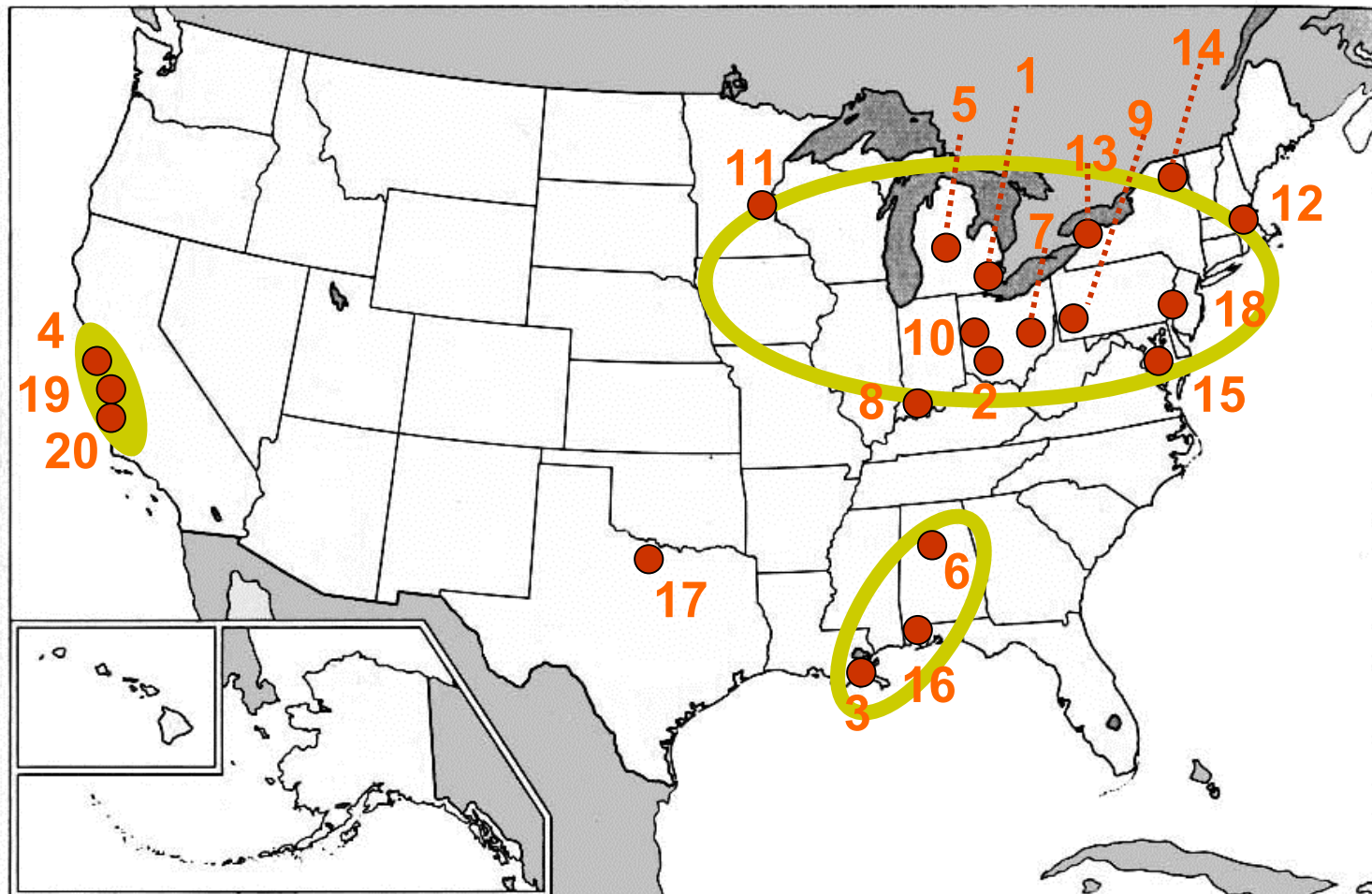
1. Definition of shrinkage in the USA



- Stigmatized:
Shrinkage is perceived as a taboo; focus on the growth paradigm
- Interdependent:
Shrinking and growing are processes that can be observed in a parallel mode
- Patterned:
Suburbanization processes have caused a 'doughnut-effect' by 'hollowing out' urban cores
- Multidimensional:
Shrinking processes are taking place on the larger scale of the region

2. Distribution of shrinking cities in the USA

- 1 Detroit
- 2 Cincinnati
- 3 New Orleans
- 4 San Francisco
- 5 Flint
- 6 Birmingham
- 7 Cleveland
- 8 Evansville
- 9 Pittsburgh
- 10 Dayton
- 11 St. Paul
- 12 Boston
- 13 Buffalo
- 14 Rochester
- 15 Washington
- 16 Mobile
- 17 Wichita Falls
- 18 Philadelphia
- 19 Sunnyvale
- 20 Daly City



2000-2004

3. Cases of shrinking cities in the USA

- Pittsburgh/Pennsylvania
- Youngstown/Ohio
- San José/California
- *different paths of shrinkage and of the related strategies*



Pittsburgh's story of revitalization: the shrinkage process

- The “traditional” pattern:
 - Decline of the steel and manufacturing industries
 - Loss of almost half of the population since the 1950s
 - „Hollowing out“
 - Strategy: revitalization of the city center
- Despite the efforts, shrinkage continues until most recently:
 - Between 1980 and 2000 loss of 89,375 people in downtown
 - In the same period of time the suburban region (Allegheny County) was losing 12 % of its population
 - Out-migration of young people

Pittsburgh's story of revitalization: planning reactions



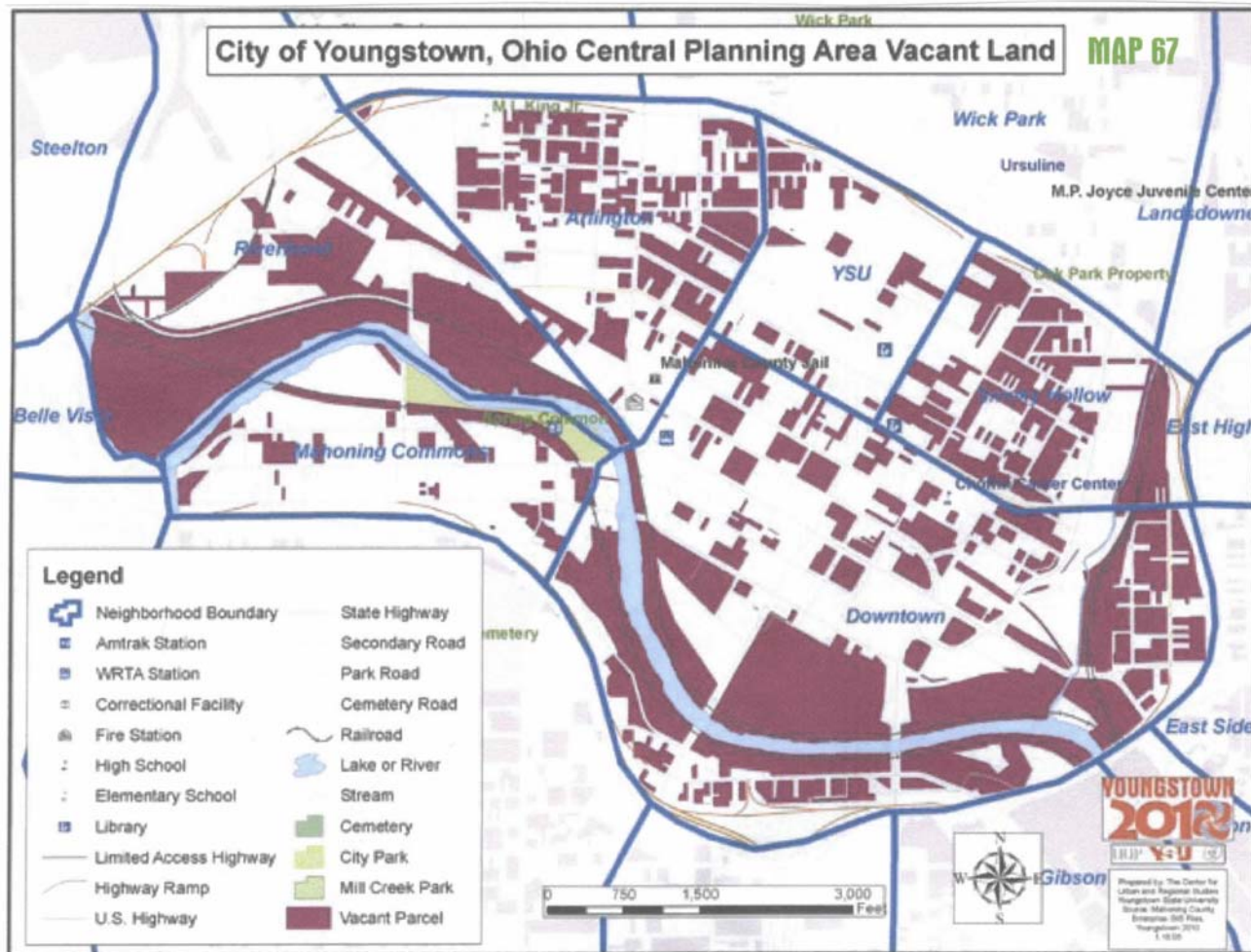
Different paradigms of revitalization

- 1950s: Tear-downs and new constructions
- 1960s and 1970s: preservation of historic buildings and enhanced citizen participation
- 1980s: Diversification of the economy, community building, focusing on key projects and events
- 1990s: Mixed use in the city center, reconsidering pedestrian-friendly spaces
- 2000s: Regional approaches?

Shrinkin' down in Youngstown: the shrinkage process

- Downturn in the steel industry
- Population cut in half:
from 166,000 (in 1960) to 82,000 people today
- Loss of vitality: older quarters disappearing, desolate abandoned spaces remaining
- Displaying a large number of vacant industrial and housing units
- **No** chance to experience a significant rise in population **ever** again
- Problem: maintaining a largely oversized infrastructure
- ➔ *Conventional planning reaching its limits*

Shrinkin' down in Youngstown: the shrinkage process



Shrinkin' down in Youngstown: planning reactions

- Planning process Youngstown 2010: Realistic vision
 - Accept that Youngstown is a smaller city
 - Define its role under the premises of a new economy
 - Improve Youngstown's image and quality of life
 - Call for action
 - Important parts:
 - Regional governance: search for solutions on a regional scale, stronger inter-local cooperation
 - The ecological component: rebuilding the city as a "greener" system of space and place
- ➔ *Shift in paradigm leading from growth to „shrinking smart“*

San José – shrinking after the growth hype: the shrinkage process

- Shrinking observed at the regional and the local scale (years 2001 – 2004):
 - San Francisco Bay Area: 450.000 job losses
 - Santa Clara County: 200.000 job losses
 - San Jose: 50.000 job losses
- Trend: population flows (in-migration versus out-migration)
- Changing quality of life
- Shrinkage does not result in housing vacancies, but in abandoned office buildings

San José – shrinking after the growth hype: the shrinkage process



Silicon Valley: Vacant technology park

San José – shrinking after the growth hype: planning reactions

1. Real estate sector:

- Shift from producing office buildings towards providing housing

2. City and regional planning:

- Large and long planned-for flagship projects can no longer be realized (Coyote Valley, extension of San José's airport)
- Less growth or even shrinkage seem to be a relief for the region's housing shortage and infrastructure needs
- Consequences regarding office space vacancies remain unclear

→ *No strategic approach to manage the process of downsizing*

4. Conclusions

- Shrinking cities in the USA are perceived as part of the discourse around suburban space versus the city center
- Planning in these areas is to a large extent only focused on revitalizing the distressed city centers
- New planning efforts: the „green“ as a model for planning and revitalization
- Youngstown: an attempt of a shrinking city to turn away from the existing growth paradigm, not a trend reversal
- Shrinkage in the USA is more complex than perceived by urban and regional planning thus far
- ➔ *“Progressive” question: Will planning be capable of dealing with a stigmatized topic in a pro-active way?*