Growth Appropriate Planning in Canada:

What factors lead to the implementation of progressive planning and economic development policy in Canadian communities?

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

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

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

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ABSTRACT

A key feature of Canada's urban system is the uneven distribution of population and economic growth. The 2011 Census showed that in the past five years more than 80% of the country's growth was concentrated in the 10 largest Canadian Metropolitan Areas. As a result, more than 33% of Canada's population centres lost population while another 27% experienced slow growth. Despite affecting a third of the country's communities, population loss was concentrated primarily in remote communities with a population of less than 10,000.

To better understand the processes and effects of slow growth and shrinkage in Canada this research was guided by three questions:

- How do planners, economic developers and local officials define slow growth, decline and shrinkage?
- What factors cause a community to implement growth appropriate planning tools and strategies and;
- What components should be part of growth appropriate planning and economic development strategies?

These questions were addressed using a qualitative survey which was answered by 70 participants in 51 communities.

Overall there was little variance in how respondents defined decline and shrinkage. Given their stigma, each term was primarily associated with population loss, vacant structures and a variety of problems including financial stress and the loss of employment opportunities. When asked approximately 80% of Canadian communities used at least one progressive planning tool or strategy. The implementation of these tools was largely in response to the effects of slow growth and shrinkage as well as future economic outlook, support from local actors (municipal staff and officials, residents, local businesses) and senior governments. Few communities however used these tools to acknowledge or explicitly deal with their slow growth or shrinkage as it was feared that accepting either trend would scare away future investment.

Almost all of the research participants agreed that areas of slow growth and population loss required different planning strategies than those experiencing rapid growth. These strategies included altering existing strategies to meet local needs and or creating entirely new planning tools and strategies, collaborating with other professionals, amending existing or creating new roles for planners, leverage local resources for community improvements and using an approach

which equally addresses a community physical, economic, environmental and social needs. In addition, respondents noted that more research was required on how to plan in growth challenged areas and in particular, small rural communities.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the past two hundred years, rapid growth has transformed nearly every facet of life. Driven by industrialization and high fertility rates, urban regions, national populations and economies expanded at a rate unpanelled in history. As a result the proportion of the world's population living in urban areas has steadily increased from 2 to 3 percent in 1800 and 13% in 1900 to more than 50% in 2011 (Reineits, 2009, p.233; United Nations, 2011, p.1) By 2050, it is expected that 5.2 billion people or more than 60% of the earth's total population will live in cities (United Nations, 2011, p.1).

But there are signs that this period of rapid growth has come to an end. The rate of urban growth in every global region has slowed in recent decades and is expected to continue decreasing until 2050 (United Nations, 2011, p.1).Slow growth and shrinkage, once thought of as plights affecting peripheral cities, are increasingly becoming a 'normal' path of urban development (Bernt, 2009). Between 1990 and 2000, more than 370 cities or 1 in 4 of the world's cities with more than 100,000 residents experienced temporary or long-term population loss, an increase from 1 in 6 cities during the 1980s (Reineits, 2005a; Bernt, 2009, p.754). Although slow growth and shrinking communities can be found in every corner of globe the majority are located within industrialized regions. This is particularly the case in Europe where growth has been slowing and reversing in some cases since the 1960s (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2007).

The growing prevalence of either trend reflects the structural forces which are changing global demographic and economic patterns. With regard to demographics, global fertility rates have been slowly decreasing over the past twenty years in response to growing household

income and greater access to birth control. In a number of industrialized nations such as Japan, Germany, Canada, Russia and a handful of post-soviet states, the fertility rate has fallen well below the level required for natural population growth (Oswalt, 2005). The greying population found in many of these regions also reflects medical advances and social programs which have helped extend lifespans (Reiniets, 2005a). Given their demographic structure, some regions such as Canada and Germany rely almost exclusively on international immigration for new population growth.

This new pattern of urban growth (or shrinkage) also reflects the restructuring of national and regional economies caused by globalization and a shift to knowledge and service-intensive industries. In this new global economy, the winners have tended to be large urban regions with a diverse economic base and a wide range of educational and cultural amenities. On the other hand many smaller and isolated communities have struggled to maintain their population as a result of poor opportunities for employment and or education (Polese, 2009). While the loss of manufacturing and resource extraction jobs is a function of offshoring it also reflects the rising productivity of industrial processes. Despite employing six million fewer employees, U.S. manufacturing firms were able to produce the same amount of goods in 2010 as they did in 2000 (Uchitelle, 2012). Similarly, Leadbeater (2009) notes that while mining employment in Sudbury fell from around 25,000 in 1970 to fewer than 6,000 in 2008 productivity has been maintained or increased in some cases.

While suburbanization is a global trend its effect of slowing or reversing growth in central cities has been most pronounced in North America, Europe and Japan to a certain extent. For example while the population of St. Louis, MO and Cincinnati, OH dropped 63% and 41% since 1950, their metropolitan area's expanded by 50% and 70% during the same period (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2011). Due to falling growth rates, suburbanization is now occurring in the context of regional population loss meaning that the only communities experiencing growth are those on the very edge of the metropolitan area.

1.2 Research Context

Despite posting the fastest growth rate of any G8 nation[1], Canada is not immune from these trends. As mentioned earlier, low fertility rates have forced the country to rely almost exclusively on immigration from abroad for population growth. Furthermore, economic restructuring has produced a pattern of uneven growth that favours the country's largest metropolitan areas at the expense of manufacturing and resource extraction based communities in the periphery. According to the 2011 Census, nearly 33% or 313 population centres[2] experienced population loss while more than 27% experienced slow growth from 2006 to 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012). While the number of shrinking communities decreased from the 2006 Census as a result of the resource boom in the prairie provinces, many continue a trend that began two or three decades earlier.

Despite the prevalence of either trend, the discussion of slow growth and shrinkage in Canada's has unfortunately been limited. Seasons (2007) for instance notes that population and economic decline [is] the 'policy elephant in the living room' (p.6). The lack of discussion amongst Canadian academics may be related in part to the nature and pattern of these trends. Unlike the United States or Europe, shrinkage in the Canadian context is largely confined to small and isolated communities with fewer than 10,000 residents. In addition, the slow rate of

[1] According to the 2011 Census, Canada's population expanded by 5.9% between 2006 and 2011.

[2] For the 2011 Census, 'urban areas' have been renamed to 'population centres' and include all communities with a population of 1,000 or more and a minimum density of 400 persons per square kilometre (Statistics Canada, 2011) Small population centres have populations between 1,000 and 29,999; medium sized population centres from 30,000 to 99,999 and large population centres have a population of 100,000 and greater.

population loss in many of these communities tends to avoid producing the widespread abandonment found in many shrinking communities throughout the United States.

The lack of discussion may also reflect the stigma associated with slow growth and shrinkage (Hall, 2008; Victor, 2008; Bernt, 2009; Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Unlike Europeans, Cox (1999) notes that North American's have tended to view cities primarily as an engine of economic growth. Moreover, North American culture places an emphasis on rapid growth regardless of its effects on the surrounding environment or community (Stokes, 2012). Reflecting these ideals, the explicit objective of most government policy is to promote economic growth (Victor, 2008).

Not surprisingly Leo & Brown (2000) found that academics and public officials frequently treated slower urban growth or population loss as a malaise. Similarly, Hall & Hall (2008) note while Canadian academics are more than willing to discuss the challenges of growth they are hesitant to discuss the challenges associated with slow growth or shrinkage:

> [While it] is perfectly reasonable, indeed desirable, for [Canadian] scholars to write about their own back yards, but it must be recognised that this does contribute to the exclusion from the literature of those urban areas that are more likely to be experiencing decline or no growth. (p.7)

The absence of scholarly articles may also reflect the belief that rapid growth is a permanent feature of global demographic and economic trends. Under this assumption any period of population loss or slow growth regardless of its length or severity may be viewed as a temporary aberration:

> Our history and planning have given us a sense that the U.S. population is on a permanent roll, that it will inevitably continue to increase everywhere. This belief has in it a strong element of myth. In fact, the U.S. has experienced population spurts at various times and in various places, but that increase is by no means universal. It has occurred in some parts of the country but not others. Thus, the

> American infatuation with growth has always meant overlooking an important chunk of reality. (Popper and Popper, 2002, p.1)

However unsettling slow growth or population loss may be its prevalence in Canada and elsewhere highlights the need for an honest and open discussion as to how planning can better adapt to these conditions. Regardless of their intensions, contemporary planning and economic development strategies are poorly suited to deal with the challenges found in slowly growing or shrinking regions (Leo & Brown, 2000; Oswalt, 2005; Hall, 2007; Beauregard, 2009; Bernt, 2009; Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Beohlke, 2011; Hollander, 2011b; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Schwartz, 2011; Schilling & Logan, 2012). In part this is due to the nature of planning which was and still is viewed as a platform to facilitate and mitigate the effects of rapid growth (Reiniets, 2005b; Victor, 2008; Schatz, 2009). Nowhere is the gap between planning theory and economic reality clearer than in the Province of Ontario's *Northern Growth Plan*. In her examination, Hall (2008) is critical of its narrow focus on economic growth and its failure to acknowledge the social characteristics and limited economic prospects of many northern communities.

More importantly, contemporary planning has little understanding of how slow growth and shrinkage work. Oswalt (2005) comments that planning is "merely reactive because – unlike with growth – it has little influence on the main forces at hand: deindustrialization, demographic change, or even suburbanization" (p.16). So while planning may have a plethora of tools for managing growth it has few if any strategies to effectively address the destabilizing effects of population loss on a community's socio-economic, financial and natural environment.

Canada's reliance on resource extraction also necessitates a set of planning tools that can improve and maintain a community's quality of life in both periods of boom and bust. While

resource communities have traditionally used high birth rates to maintain their population during periods of outmigration this is no longer a feasible strategy. As a result, Polese & Shearmur (2006) note that any population loss automatically translates into prolonged shrinkage. Moreover, planning needs to ensure that communities are resilient in the event that regional resources and its accompanying economic activity are exhausted.

In short, planning academics and professionals must discuss how planning can effectively use the scarce financial resources of communities to improve the quality of life for residents.

1.3 Problem Statement and Research Questions

Despite a dearth of research regarding planning in slow growth and shrinking communities, Canadian scholars have periodically addressed the topic of growth appropriate planning (Leo & Brown, 2000; Leo & Anderson, 2006**;** Foster, 2007**;** Randall & Lorch, 2007; Seasons, 2007**;** Hall & Hall, 2008; Polese, 2009). More specifically, the research of Hall (2007), Pyl (2009), Schatz (2009) and Ortiz-Guerrero (2010) used case studies (Sudbury, ON and the Rainy River District in northwestern Ontario) to discuss two topics: how planning can adapt to the challenges in slow growth and shrinking regions and what factors block the implementation of growth-appropriate planning. This research seeks to build on these findings by expanding the focus to a larger number of slowly growing and shrinking Canadian communities. More specifically, this thesis seeks to answer three questions:

1) **How do municipal planners, economic development officers and local officials define slow growth, decline and shrinkage?**

Within the literature there is no accepted definition over what exactly constitutes a shrinking community (Schatz, 2009). Hollander & Nemeth (2011) for example note that the term 'shrinking cities' has become a broad umbrella to describe communities dealing with population loss and the effects that result from it. In addition there is no consensus on what differentiates a

slowly growing community from one that is experiencing rapid growth (Leo & Brown, 2000). Uncovering how local actors define each trend may help to illustrate the processes and rationale used when determining the direction and content of a community's planning policy. In addition, this question is also designed to help understand what characteristics are associated with each term.

2) **What factors cause a community to implement growth appropriate planning tools and strategies?**

According to the literature, the tools and strategies used in a community's planning policy are determined by a number of variables including geographic location, level of economic diversity and local leadership. Identifying which factors lead to the implementation of growth appropriate planning is beneficial by clarifying the decision making processes in slow growth and shrinking communities. As a result local policy makers and officials can strategically focus their time and efforts on the factors which have the greatest ability to foster change. To uncover these factors, this thesis will ask local planners to identify the opportunities and challenges confronting their respective communities, current planning tools and strategies, the limitations of these tools, and whether or not their community has ever tried implementing key aspects of growth appropriate planning.

3) **What elements do planners and local economic development professionals believe should be a part of growth appropriate planning policy.**

Despite growing interest, academics and officials have yet to outline what features comprise growth appropriate planning. In addition, much of the discussion concerning planning in slow growth or shrinking environments has focused largely on the application of right-sizing[3] and has been undertaken primarily by academics, artists and philosophers. This is unfortunate

[3] Right-sizing is a planning tool whereby the physical layout of a community is adjusted to its current and projected population. This is usually accomplished through widespread demolition and the removal of municipal infrastructure and services from highly vacant neighbourhoods.

given the valuable insights local planners, economic development officers and leaders possess. The goal of this research is to bring these individuals into the discussion by asking them what they consider to be progressive policy. More specifically, this question asks what kind of growth appropriate tools should local professionals use, the role of planners in slow growth and shrinking communities, opportunities either trend may provide for communities and the role each level of government (municipal and senior) should take to address the economic, social, environmental and physical challenges in these communities.

1.4 Thesis Organization

This thesis is organized into nine separate sections. Chapter Two focuses on how shrinking and slow growth communities are defined by academics and the mass media as well as the regional use of term 'shrinkage' The third chapter begins by outlining the prevalence of slow growth and shrinking communities in Canada and compares it to the processes occurring in other industrialized regions such as Australia, Europe, the United States and Japan.

In Chapter Four, three structural causes of long term slow growth and shrinkage are examined (demographic, socio-economic and suburbanization) while Chapter Five outlines the wide range of effects that both trends exert on communities. Chapter Six begins by discussing the short-comings of contemporary planning and economic policy in slow growth and shrinking communities and ends by outlining the elements which comprise progressive planning policy. The methodology employed in this research is discussed in Chapter Seven and in particular, the rationale and advantages and disadvantages of using online survey methods. The focus of Chapter Eight is to describe the results of the online survey and how they relate to the literature and the three research questions previously mentioned. Finally, Chapter Nine presents the conclusions and recommendations and additional research in this field.

CHAPTER TWO: DEFINING SHRINKING AND SLOW GROWTH

2.1 Introduction

Shrinking and slow growth communities are by no means a new phenomenon. History demonstrates that a large number of the world's settlements have at some point experienced either trend to varying degrees. Slater (2000) illustrates that during the middle ages most of Europe's settlements experienced population loss as a result of prolonged wars, famines and disease. London and Rome for example lost more than 100,000 and 750,000 inhabitants respectively during this period (Woodward, 2001, p.6). Many communities even disappeared by either being destroyed or made uninhabitable by natural disasters and changing climate patterns.

After 300 years of near continuous growth however, slow growth and population loss are no longer viewed as a natural part of a community's life cycle. Instead, they have become associated with a severe malaise. But with growth slowing or reversing in a growing number of communities, academics and policy makers are beginning to explore how planning can operate in such environments. Despite the interest, there remains no concrete definition for what the term's 'shrinkage' or 'slow growth' actually constitutes. For instance, Schatz (2009) and Hollander & Nemeth (2011) acknowledge that 'shrinking cities' has become an umbrella term to describe communities dealing with population loss and the effects that result from it. In part, this not only reflects the complexity of either trend but also relatively recent emergence of the growth appropriate planning field. This chapter will therefore explore the various definitions that make up the terms slow growth and shrinking.

2.2 Shrinking Communities

2.2.1. Event Based Shrinkage vs. Structural Shrinkage

According to the literature there are two distinct categories of shrinking communities. Before the turn of the last century, population loss was largely caused by so called short term 'fateful catastrophes' such as war, catastrophes, famines and epidemics (Reineits, 2005a). Although technology has certainly reduced the number of deaths from these threats, it has simultaneously increased the risk of shrinkage occurring from widespread destruction. Reineits (2005a) explains that:

> …the greater destructive power of weapons technology destroyed more lives and cities in the twentieth century than ever before, and more and more often the battles are fought in the cities and not on open fields. The dropping of one single bomb was enough to destroy two-thirds of [Hiroshima] in one blow – humans and buildings alike. Additionally, many left their cities because of expulsion or evacuation, not to mention the victims of resettlement, deportation, and ethnic cleansing. Many cities were abandoned and left completely unoccupied by their residents, such as the northern Iranian city of Abadan, which lost over 90% of its residents during a siege by Iraqi troops in the early 1980s (p.27).

In addition to war, large scale environmental contamination has rendered large areas of land uninhabitable. The Chernobyl nuclear accident for example displaced more than 300,000 and rendered a 30km ring around the plant uninhabitable (Saunders, 2011). More recently, the meltdowns at the Fukushima nuclear plant in Japan created a 12 mile evacuation zone and forced 80,000 residents from the their homes (Onishi & Fackler, 2011). Closer to home, contamination from years of industrial activity forced the relocation of more than 1,000 families from Love Canal, N.Y.

With the advent of global climate change there is also the spectre of more displacement as the intensity and frequency of extreme weather increases. This is particularly true in areas

with lax environmental controls. According to Reiniets (2005a) the number of people fleeing environmental disasters 'is estimated to be between 10 million and 25 million…[with a quarter of those] living in countries that made up the former Soviet Union…(p.30).

Communities in industrialized countries are not immune to these disasters. Prolonged droughts in Australia have forced a number of farmers to abandon their land and move to coastal cities or regional hubs (Jowit, 2008). A similar situation may play out in the American West and Canadian prairies as scientists predict that prolonged and severe droughts will occur with greater frequency through the end of the 21st century (D'Aliesio, 2012). Coastal areas may also be rendered uninhabitable as higher sea levels and stronger storms overwhelm flood mitigation infrastructure.

While Hurricane Katrina was attributed for the loss of 100,000 residents since 2005, New Orleans had been shrinking long before the hurricane made landfall. From its peak of 627,000 in 1960, the city's population had fallen to 484,000 by 2000. But New Orleans is far from being an anomaly[4]. Commenting on the rapid increase of shrinking cities throughout industrialized nations, Reineits (2005a, p.21) state that shrinking communities "…are a new phenomenon because the [loss of population] has no negative external causes such as wars, epidemics, or famines, and because it is happening in times of peace and during a period of unprecedented prosperity."

Reineits (2005a) identifies that this form of 'peaceful shrinkage' is largely the result of structural changes to a community's, region's or nation's demographic, economic and political environment. Moreover, Reineits (2005a) points out that this form of shrinkage typically preceded the rapid growth rates associated with industrialization. As a result, the onset of

[4] Michigan State Rep. LaMar Lemmons III stated that Detroit has been hit with an economic Katrina whose effects have been occurring for the past 30 to 40 years (Johnson, 2006)

shrinking began in those cities and towns where the industrial revolution first began such as London, Liverpool and Manchester, England. Shrinkage soon spread to other notable European communities like Paris, Dresden and Vienna and eventually to North America after World War II. During the 1970s, long term shrinkage soon confronted communities in Japan and Italy. As a result, the number of shrinking cities with a population of 100,000 or more increased by more than 100% between 1960 and 1990 whereas the number of growing cities increased by only 60% (Reineits, 2005a, p.21).

Rural jurisdictions, particularly those with no natural resources have also been experiencing shrinkage (du Plessis et al, 2001; Shearmur & Polese, 2007; Bourne et al, 2011a). Despite the boom and bust nature of the agriculture and resource extraction economy, rural communities in Canada and the United States have experienced continual population losses going as far back as the 1930s (Popper and Popper, 2002; Hall, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Bourne et al, 2011).

Shrinkage on the plains began largely on its western edge (such as Montana, southern Alberta and south-western Saskatchewan) where agricultural lands were heavily irrigated and soils vulnerable to degradation (Popper and Popper, 2002). By the 1950s, population loss was seen throughout most sections of the Great Plains and Canadian prairies as increasing farm sizes and poor economic and educational opportunities pushed residents into larger towns and cities. A similar situation caused many isolated communities in Canada's periphery to lose population (Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Alasia, 2010; Bourne et al, 2011a). Although some areas such as western North Dakota and parts of Saskatchewan, Alberta and northern B.C. have seen a reversal due to the extraction of oil, natural gas and potash reserves, many areas, particularly those without valuable natural resource deposits are continuing to shrink.

2.2.2 Decline vs. Shrinkage

Despite growing interest from academics, there is no widely accepted definition of what constitutes a 'shrinking community'. According to a number of authors, the absence of a conceptually coherent definition stems from a lack of comprehensive and cross-national research on the topic (Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Pallagst, 2010; Hollander, 2011b).

Population loss is among the most common definitions for shrinkage and has been used by Fishman (2005) to describe central city shrinkage in the U.S., Bontje (2004) on the challenges of shrinking cities in East Germany and Lunday (2009) in outlining rightsizing strategies in the Rust Belt. Furthermore, Franz (2004) and Buhnik (2010) demonstrate that this trend can occur even in areas of economic growth. Further uses of population loss to define shrinking cities can be found in Rybczynski & Linneman (1999), Martinez-Fernandez & Wu (2009), Cunningham-Sabot & Fol (2009), Florentin et al (2009), Krohe Jr. (2011) and Mallach (2011a).

Some academics have also defined population loss as a temporal phenomenon. Leadbeater (2009, p.89) explains that the "process of 'shrinking' in a given urban area or region refers to a long-term population decrease, whether it is a persisting decline or a reduction to a lower, more-or-less stable scale." In his attempt to uncover whether shrinkage in U.S. central cities was brought on by new forces, Beauregard (2009) differentiates between declining and shrinking cities. According to his criteria, declining cities lost population from 1950 to 1980 while those that shed population from 1980 onwards were classified as shrinking. His conclusion notes that there is little difference between the two terms:

> …any claim that shrinkage is an aberration, and thus different from systemic decline, will be difficult to defend. Thus, the issue for anyone researching shrinking cities is the persistence of loss from earlier decades, not what new forces have suddenly brought about shrinkage. The key question is: Why have these particular cities not (yet) rebounded from the prior years of decline? (2009, p.68)

While Oswalt and Reiniets (2006) state that term 'first and foremost describes [the] symptom of population loss' they nevertheless acknowledge that 'a wide variety of processes and causes can be hidden behind this symptom…' (p.6). Economic decline is one factor for explaining population loss as Pallagst (2008, p.81) notes that '…the loss of employment opportunities tends to spark out-migration...and as a consequence – the transformation of urban areas.' Similarly, Hollander & Nemeth (2011, p.349) explains that 'economic decline has led to a new wave of population decline throughout the US, meaning more and more cities are shrinking.' Bunting & Filion (2001) also use the term to describe the social conditions for a hypothetical shrinking city in 2026 that is losing both population and employment opportunities.

Nonetheless there have been attempts to create a formal definition of the term. Weichmann (2006) for instance created a detailed criterion to classify shrinking cities:

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

The term has also been used to describe a new paradigm within the planning profession. Oswalt (2005, p.13) states that 'shrinkage…represents a new potential to construct a new urban core, a compact city representing the ideal of European [and neo-traditional] urban development.' Morrison (2011) adds that shrinkage based planning policy represents an opportunity for planners to collaborate with residents, designers and other stakeholders to produce strategies for managing population loss. Moreover, shrinking cities have come to symbolize the razing of largely vacant neighbourhoods, urban homesteading and the return of urban land to farmland, green space and nature preserves (Stohr, 2004; Birg, 2005; Logan & Schilling, 2008; Glaesar,

2009**;** Huffstutter, 2009; Streitfeld, 2009a,b; Young, 2010**;** Boehlke, 2011; Hollander, 2011b; Morrison, 2011; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Schwartz, 2011).

In some cases, 'shrinkage' has been used to describe the structural changes occurring to global demographic and economic patterns. Audirac et al. (2010) for instance views shrinking cities as a harbinger of dramatic economic and demographic change that are 'qualitatively and quantitatively different from previous encounters with urban decline (p.51). Similarly Oswalt (2009) and Audirac et al (2010, p.51) identify shrinking cities as "canaries in a coal mine – the industrialized world's early warning signal of the impending global urban crises of modernization, suburbanization and metropolitanization." The term was also used by Audirac et al (2012) to link the effects of shrinkage to Post-Fordist economic and urban development trends:

> …[the] combined process of population loss, economic downturn, employment decline and social crisis, is today intimately linked to local and regional economic growth processes brought on by global investment and trade, and by global restructuring of industrial organization (p. 226)

The most comprehensive definition of shrinkage to date was found in Martinez-Fernandez (2012a) who associated it with the wide range of processes listed above:

> The term 'urban shrinkage' is used to stress the fact that this phenomenon is a multidimensional process with multidimensional effects and having economic, demographic, geographic, social and physical dimensions that not only continue to evolve as a result of new global and local realities, but also influence theories and research offering diagnosis, prognosis and remedies. The term expands our understanding of 'decline' beyond the simple linear process that is generally understood to follow deindustrialization (p.214).

Within an international context the term is used most often in Europe and in particular Germany, where it originated as '*schrumpfenden stadte'* in Häußermann and Siebel (1988)'s article describing the effects of deindustrialization (Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a). While no particular reason was given as to why the term was accepted into vernacular of the academic and

public realm in Europe, it appears to be borne out of the frustration of contemporary renewal policies:

> Only a few years ago, shrinkage was a politically taboo subject in Europe and systematically disregarded as a dominant development trend in specific areas. This was also true for East Germany, despite the fact that the real shape of development had long since been obvious. But within the administrative system, traditionally oriented towards growth objectives, shrinkage was considered to be intractable. (Weichmann, 2008b, p.6)

The reality of prolonged shrinkage was one of the primary reasons the German government funded the *Shrinking Cities* project in 2002. Headed by Philipp Oswalt, the project employed four interdisciplinary teams of artists, architects, journalists and cultural and social scientists to better understand the context in which shrinkage occurred, how it affected communities and provide strategies to address the problems associated with population loss.

There is also considerable use of the term in US academic and media literature. In most cases, the term is applied to communities that have suffered severe population and economic loss. Among the most referenced communities in the literature are Detroit and Flint, MI, Youngstown, OH, and Cleveland, OH. Rybcyznski & Linneman (1999) were among the first in North America to use the term in their description of how suburbanization affected central cities. Use of the term expanded in the aftermath of the 'Great Recession' as academics examined the effects of population loss as well as the inability of conventional planning and economic development theory to address them (Schilling & Logan 2008; Glaeser, 2009; Pallagst, 2009; Reineits, 2009; Beohlke, 2011; Dueweke & Lewinski, 2011; Hill & Wolman, 2011; Hollander, 2011(a,b); Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Mallach, 2011a, b; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

Within the Canadian context, few researchers have used the word 'shrinkage' and have instead opted to employ the more traditional terms of 'declining' or 'distressed' when describing population loss. For example, Bourne and Simmons (2003) and Simmons and Bourne (2007) discuss the challenges faced by growing and declining regions while Polese and Shearmur (2006) and Bourne et al (2011a) examine the factors causing Canada's peripheral regions to decline. The most visible example related to the regional use of shrinkage can be found in *Plan Canada's* issue (volume 47, issue 2) devoted to planning in growth constrained environments. While the Canadian authors used 'decline' to describe population loss at the community and regional scale, only Hollander and Popper, both of whom are American, employed the term 'shrinking cities' in their respective articles. In fact, only Bunting & Filion (2001), Leadbeater (2009), Schatz (2009), Pyl (2009) and Ortiz-Guerrero (2010) have used 'shrinkage' to describe communities experiencing ongoing population loss within the Canadian context.

2.2.3 Popular Culture

In North America, the term 'shrinking' is largely viewed as a negative phenomenon. Unlike Europe, where shrinkage is readily associated with word class cities like Vienna, Berlin, Paris and Copenhagen, North Americans have come to associate the term with significant population loss, vacant property and severe socio-economic problems. As a result, the process of shrinkage is linked primarily with the images and stories that emanate from places like Detroit and Flint, MI, Gary, IN, and St, Louis, MO.

The creation of this typecast can be attributed in part to the way in which the mass media has covered their plight. In their examination of how the image of Youngstown, OH, had changed since the steel plant closures of the 1970s, Russo and Linkon (2003) found that the city was commonly portrayed as a lost cause, a place of desperation and in one article, a prison from

which few could escape. Likewise, Michael Moore's 1989 documentary film *Roger and Me* portrayed Flint, MI as a city rapidly entering into a cataclysmic nightmare[5].

Herron (2005) adds that Detroit's legendary reputation is a result of mass media's desire to "…deliver the last word and preside over the corpse of the first great American city to die" (p.342). A quick internet search supports this notion with a number of articles frequently referring to shrinking cities as dying when referring to the challenges associated with massive population loss (24/7 Wall St, 2010). The exploitation of decay and dispair explains why Buffalo, NY is commonly singled out by news organizations but ignores Rochester and other upstate New York cities that have experienced population loss for the past half century.

Ruins however have always been a point of interest. The French artist Hubert Robert is well known for being the first painter to imagine how an existing structure (in this case the Louvre) might appear after a future cataclysm (Woodward, 2001, p.55). During the Renaissance, writers, artists and the well to do visited Rome to tour the ancient ruins of the city (Woodward, 2001).

In the modern age, one might even say that the power of ruins to captivate the imagination has grown. After almost 200 years of non-stop growth, the decay of buildings and in some cases entire neighbourhoods makes us confront a possibility that is otherwise unknown to this or the previous two generations. This may perhaps explain the overwhelming popularity of Alan Weisman's book *The World Without Us* and the explosion of online websites and photo galleries dedicated solely of documenting the abandonment and decay of shrinking cities.

Known as 'ruin porn,' these galleries (which have been shown on numerous news outlets such as Time, Guardian and New York Times) are meant to focus solely on a landscape that

[5] Of particular note is the infamous rabbit scene where the film shows a local resident callously killing domesticated rabbits for consumption.

resembles less of an American city than that of a war zone (Morton, 2009**;** Oosting, 2009; Malone, 2011). Morton (2009) describes how many of these galleries, particularly those found on news sites, create a false 'image' of the city by purposefully withholding the context for the emptiness and excluding any sort of life that are still found in many neighbourhoods:

> For several blocks on either side there's nothing visible except waist-high grass and crumbling strips of asphalt. [But] if you angle the camera the correct way it looks like you're in the middle of nowhere—but then you turn a little to the right and there's a well-maintained, fully functioning factory, and to the left there's this busy office park. Still, people love to take this shot, crop it so it's just prairie, and be like, 'Look, this is a mile from downtown, it's turned into woods.' These blocks didn't just fall apart by themselves, the city did this intentionally. They spent $15 million clearing everyone off the land so it could be used as an industrial park that stalled out.

The prevalence of negative stereotypes also emanates from popular culture. Herron (2005) documents how RoboCop, despite being shot in metro Atlanta, contributed greatly to the image that Detroit was a crime ridden, unsalvageable city. The Beverly Hills Cop franchise used also exploited Detroit's reputation as a tough hard scrabble city as a way to distance Eddie Murphy from his white and considerably tamer LAPD counterparts.

In more recent times, Neill (2005) argues that Eminem's music and movie *8 Mile* has continued the city's image of societal breakdown and failure by placing 'gangsta rap amidst the overgrown remains of a city' (p.730). Their success, according to Herron (2005) is based on engaging the emotions of consumers and by showing them a reality that simply is incomprehensible in this era of unprecedented growth and prosperity:

> The made-up Detroit that everybody knows all about is a city we had to invent because the real place is too painful and too genuinely dangerous to contemplate. But we have to be able to see the worst; our appetite for 'reality' demands that we fear most in ourselves; we act out all our bad dreams there (p.347).

So while these communities are often used to engage our imagination and give substance to our personality, their images have been exploited in a manner that typecasts population loss as a precursor to imminent disaster. These negative stereotypes may play a part in persuading officials or residents to not accept the prospect of long term population loss or label their community as shrinking. In addition, the negative connotations of shrinkage also stem from a culture that values rapid growth as an ideal and slow growth and urban decline as a malaise (Leo & Brown, 2006; Oswalt, 2005; Hall, 2008; Schatz, 2009)

2.3 Defining Slow Growth

2.3.1 Slow Growth in the Literature

Despite its longevity, the discussion of slow growth and how to plan for it is highly sporadic within the literature. Interest in slow growth first appeared in the early 1970s due to a number of emerging trends. Citing increasing pollution and environmental degradation, the Club or Rome produced *Limits to Growth* in 1972 which predicted that growth would slow or completely reverse in the 21st century. The falling birth rates or 'baby bust' of industrial regions also gave reason for some academics to address the issue. Cowgill (1974) for instance examined the socio-economic reasons for the different birth rates in developing and developed regions while Chisholm (1976) noted that falling population growth and structural changes to Britain's economy necessitated sweeping changes to the country's regional planning policies.

Likewise, Phillips & Brunn (1978) hypothesized about the United States entering into a new era of urban growth characterized by slow growth. While the discussion of slow growth centered on the plight of Rust Belt cities in the 1980s and early 1990s (Bradbury et al, 1982; Borchert, 1983; Jacobson, 1984; Downs, 1994) academics increasingly discussed slow growth in

situations where growth management policies were implemented from the mid-1990s onwards (Navarro & Carson, 1991; Richer, 1995; Daniels, 1999; Gainsborough, 2002; Marwasta, 2010).

Outside of these two areas, there are few examples of academic articles which explicitly mention or discuss slow urban growth. Gottlieb (2003) for instance examines the relationship between slowly growing US metropolitan areas and the growth of per capita income. In their analysis of eastern European cities, Turok & Mykhnenko, (2007) use slow growth as an indicator to illustrate growth patterns from the 1960s to 2005. After reviewing economic development literature, Naqvi (2010) notes that a large number of articles view slow growth as a key indicator of ineffective policy.

Within the Canadian context, Burghardt (1971) noted that the slow, steady rate of relative growth characterizing large prairie cities was due to their relatively large hinterland. While the topic received little interest for the remainder of the decade, the severe economic recession of the early 1980s forced many academics and practitioners to reflect upon their profession. In 1983 for example, planners, politicians and academics from western Canada gathered for a seminar in Edmonton, AB entitled *The Practical Implications of Slow Growth: "Do we really need to plan?"* Two years later, Currie & Thacker (1985) conducted a survey measuring the quality of life of residents in Winnipeg, MB and Edmonton, AB. The study found that residents in the "slower growth city [Winnipeg] tended to evaluate their city attributes (quality of life) more positively, except on economic variables." (p.32)

Since 2000, literature related to slow growth has largely discussed the problems of using conventional planning practices in areas not experiencing rapid growth. For example, Leo & Brown (2000), Bourne & Rose (2001), Bourne & Simmons (2003), Leo & Anderson (2006) discuss the need for slow growth communities and regions to abandon the 'growth imperative'

and adopt policy that reflects local opportunities and constraints. Similarly, Hall (2007) and Randall & Lorch (2007) discuss the difficulties of conventional planning practices in Thunder Bay and Sudbury in the wake of their declining resource extraction and processing industries. Lastly, Montreal's slow growth is recognized by (Bourne et al, 2011b) as one of the reasons why its central areas have retained a large share of lower-tier professional services and back-office functions.

The scarcity of slow or no-growth academic articles in Canada has not gone unnoticed. In their examination of the country's peer-reviewed literature, Hall & Hall (2008) found that only 4.4% of all articles between 1995 and 2005 mentioned no-growth or shrinkage as a trend affecting urban areas. As mentioned previously, this may reflect the stigma associated with both phenomena.

2.3.2. Defining Slow Growth

Within the literature, there are two definitions of what constitutes the conditions of slow growth: population and economic decline and relatively slow rates of economic and population growth. Levin (1983) and Robinson (1983) for example refer to slow growth as a period of prolonged economic recession. Similarly, Dernoi (1983) replaces the term slow growth with that of 'implosive development' (p.26). For Gottleib (2003), slow growth describes both relative declines and minimal growth in a city's population and economic output. On the other hand, the term has also been characterized by a steady pattern or slow or no growth rates of population and or economic growth (Burghart, 1971; Markson 1983; Voith 1992; Leo & Brown 2000; Leo & Anderson 2006; Duranton 2007; Beauregard, 2009)

However in many of these cases, the criteria used to define what actually constitutes slow growth are absent. When slow growth is defined, it is typically used to describe areas with less

than 1% annual population growth. For example, Downs (1994) classifies cities growing less than 10% a decade as slowly growing. Similarly, Turok & Mykhnenko (2007) note that rapidly growing cities exhibited more than 1% annual growth. In classifying global growth rates**,** Glaeser & Shapiro (2003) and Audirac & Alejandre (2010) split slow growth into two categories with countries experiencing 0.6-0.9% annual growth as 'slow growers' and those growing between 0.1 – 0.5% annually as 'very slow growers.' For this research, slow growth is classified as less than 1% annual population growth.

2.4 Summary

After reviewing the literature it is apparent that academics have not fully agreed as to what the term 'shrinking' actually constitutes. For some, the term describes economic loss while a large proportion of the literature views it as a phenomenon of population loss. At the same time the term has also come to signify a new planning paradigm as well as a symbol of structural changes to global economic, urban development and demographic systems. It is also interesting to note that use of shrinkage is regional. While the term is used largely in Germany, Europe and the United States it is largely absent from the Canadian literature.

At the cultural level, shrinkage has largely been cast in a negative light as the mass media is active in exploiting the interest in decay as well as the reputation of downtrodden communities such as Detroit. Not surprisingly the term is commonly associated with vacant structures, urban prairies, crime, poverty, crumbling infrastructure and poor fiscal conditions. The negative stigma may also reflect the cultural belief that rapid growth equates progress and anything less symbolizes failure.

While not as popular or entertaining, what constitutes a slowly growing urban area is similarly unclear. For a number of authors the phenomenon is associated with population and

economic declines. In contrast, the bulk of the literature describes it as the exact opposite, a period of gradual growth. Adding to the confusion, most authors fail to explicitly define what constitutes slow growth. In the few articles that do, slow growth is typically defined as population and or economic growth of less than 1% a year. As previously mentioned, this thesis defines shrinking communities as those experiencing five years of population loss and slow growth communities as those with less than 1% annual population growth.

CHAPTER THREE: SLOW GROWTH AND SHRINKAGE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

Shrinking and slow growth communities are by no means a new or localized problem. Despite being associated with industrialized regions some of Latin America's largest cities such as Mexico City and Sao Paulo are experiencing slower growth or shrinkage as a result of large scale developments on their periphery (Audirac, 2010). China's north-eastern rust-belt was created when the area's metallurgical and mining operations were moved elsewhere (Audirac & Alejandre, 2010).

In 2010, nearly 21% of the world's urban agglomerations of one million or more were experiencing slow growth or shrinkage (Audirac, 2010, p.15). By 2020, 79% of these areas are expected to experience significantly slower growth as their current median growth of 1.9% is expected to be approximately 1.6 times higher than the projected growth rate for 2020-2025. As mentioned earlier, smaller cities are also experiencing a similar trend as Reineits (2005a) notes that one in four cities with a population of 100,000 or more are experiencing population loss.

Due to a number of factors the majority of slow growth and shrinking communities are located within industrialized regions. These factors include structural shifts in national demographic and economic patterns which are characterized by the loss of low-skilled manufacturing jobs, rationalization, falling birth rates and an aging population. Moreover, many of these areas also demonstrate higher rates of peripheral growth or suburbanization. In cases where annexation is not possible, central communities have experienced 'regional restructuring', a process which redistributes the central city's population, economic activity and political power throughout the metropolitan region. To better understand these growth patterns in the Canadian

context, this chapter will explore how slow growth and shrinkage are affecting communities in Japan, Australia, Europe and the United States.

3.2Canada

With a growth rate of 5.9% from 2006 to 2011, Canada is growing faster than any other G8 country. However not all Canadian communities equally shared in this growth. Of the country's 940 population centres[6], more than 33% experienced shrinkage, 27% experienced slow growth (< 1% annual growth) while the remaining 40% experienced rapid growth with annual growth rates of 1% or more (Statistics Canada, 2012).

Table 1: Absolute Number and Proportion of Shrinking, Slowly Growing and Rapidly Growing Population Centres by Province. (Organized by proportion of shrinking communities)

Province	Shrinking Communities	Slowly Growing Communities	Rapidly Growing Communities
North West Territories	2 (67.7%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0%)
Nova Scotia	22 (59.5%)	10 (27.0%)	5 (14.5%)
Newfoundland & Labrador	15 (50%)	8 (26.7%)	7 (23.3%)
New Brunswick	17 (53.1%)	6 (18.7)	9 (28.2%)
Ontario	108 (40.0%)	84 (31.1%)	78 (28.9%)
Quebec	79 (32.7%)	60 (24.9%)	102 (42.4%)
Alberta	28 (25.7%)	22 (20.2%)	59 (54.1%)
British Columbia	25 (25.0%)	35 (35.0%)	40 (40.0%)
Manitoba	9 (20.5%)	11 (25%)	24 (54.5%)
Saskatchewan	7 (11.1%)	12 (19.0%)	44 (69.8%)
Nunavut	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)
Prince Edward Island	1 (14.2%)	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)
Yukon	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Total	313 (33.3)	251(26.7%)	376 (40%)
Source: Statistics Canada, 2012			

[6] Statistics Canada defines a 'Population Centre' as any area with a population of at least 1,000 and a population density of 400 persons or more per square kilometer. It includes all population living in the cores, secondary cores and fringes of census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and census agglomerations (CAs), as well as the population living in population centres outside CMAs and CAS. Large population centres are those with populations above 100,000; medium sized 90,000 – 30,000 and small < 30,000.

According to the 2011 Census it appears that a community's size is a significant factor in determining its growth rate. Between 2006 and 2011, more than 86% of the country's growth occurred in the ten largest CMA's with more than two-thirds of it concentrated in areas of more than a million people (Statistics Canada, 2012). As in previous census', the country's largest CMA's (Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver) accounted for more than 45% of the country's growth (Statistics Canada, 2012).

Table 2: Growth Trends in Population Centres by Size

Population	Shrinking	Slow Growth	Rapid Growth
< 9,999	279 (89.1%)	193 (76.9%)	270 (71.8%)
10,000 – 29,999	27 (8.6%)	26 (10.5%)	61 (16.2%)
30,000 – 99,000	5 (1.6%)	21 (8.4%)	27 (7.2%)
> 100,000	2 (0.6%)	11 (4.3%)	18 (4.7%)
Total	313 (100%)	251 (100%)	376 (100%)

While the majority of medium sized population centres experienced rapid growth, more than 35% of small population centres (< 30,000) experienced population decline (Table 2). In contrast, only 6.5% and 9.3% of large and medium sized population centres lost population from 2006 to 2011. The largest communities to experience population loss were Windsor, ON (-2.6%) and St. Catharines, ON, (-0.4%) with populations of 210,891 and 131,400 respectively[7] (Statistics Canada, 2012).

Despite the large number of shrinking communities, the average rate of population loss was relatively low at 3.1% or 105 residents between 2006 and 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012). This low rate of shrinkage reflects in part the large number of shrinking communities with populations under 10,000 (Table 2). In fact, of the 313 population centres losing population, 279 or 89.1% had a population beneath this threshold. Not surprisingly many of these communities

[7] Two additional incorporated areas of 100,000 or more shrank from 2006-2011; Thunder Bay, ON and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, ON.

are located in the remote regions of northern Ontario, rural Newfoundland and Quebec and the interior of British Columbia (Statistics Canada, 2012).

The 2011 Census also showed that despite growing by 1.1%, the proportion of Canada's population living in rural area's fell to 18.9%[8] (Statistics Canada, 2012). Not surprisingly, much of this growth was concentrated in two regions: within the commuter-shed of CMAs, CAs or regional service centres and in areas of new or expanded resource exploration and extraction. In fact rural regions close to CMAs or CAs expanded by 4.3% on average compared to only 0.7% in more isolated areas (Statistics Canada, 2012). This trend is by no means recent as Alasia (2010) illustrates:

> …about three-quarters of communities within 30 kilometres from an urban core had positive, and often large, population growth [while] almost three quarters of communities that were located more than 80 kilometres away from an urban agglomeration of any size experienced population decline between 1981 and 2006. [Moreover] Compared to the average community (located in proximity of an agglomeration of 150,000 people), a community located near a centre that is 100% larger (i.e. 300,000 people) had an expected population growth approximately 1 percentage point greater, from 1981 to 2006 (p. 13).

It should be noted that the number of shrinking communities actually declined as the 2006 Census showed that more than 55% and 33% of small and medium sized population centres lost population. The drop is largely attributed to increased immigration rates[9] and the resource boom occurring in Saskatchewan, Alberta and portions of northern B.C. For instance, after experiencing more than a decade of population loss, the cities of Estevan, SK and Yorkton, SK have grown by 9.6% and 4.2% since 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2011). Similarly, Winnipeg, MB's growth rate increased from 2.2% to 4.8% during the same period (Statistics Canada, 2011).

[8] Of the G8 nations, only the United Kingdom has a lower proportion of its residents living in rural area's (Statistics Canada, 2012).

[9] Immigration has been particularly important for Manitoba's growth. The 2011 Census showed that as a result of its skilled worker nominee program the province attracted more than 15,000 new immigrants in 2010 alone (Kaur, 2011).

Canada's uneven growth distribution has been shaped by a number of long-term and structural changes to its demographic and economic patterns. While traditionally structured around low-skill manufacturing and natural resources, the country's economy has been transitioning to one centered on high value manufacturing and the production and management of ideas and services. As a result, employment in manufacturing, agricultural production and natural resource extraction and processing have fallen drastically[10] in the past thirty years while the information-rich services and knowledge intensive sectors (professional, scientific and technical) have exhibited the fastest rates of growth in the country (Polese & Shearmur, 2005; Alasia, 2010; Rubin, 2011). Not surprisingly, the number of manufacturing firms in rural communities has decreased by 7% between 2003 and 2007, though this number is higher for communities isolated from urban areas and those highly reliant on one industry or corporation (Rothwell & Bollman, 2011).

Among the most discussed of these structural changes is globalization and in particular, the movement of production facilities to the United States and elsewhere in an effort to reduce labour costs. Decreasing employment in the goods-producing and resource sector is also the result of rationalization (the substitution of human labour with machinery) and a shift to the production of higher value products which require fewer inputs of labour per unit of output (Leabeater, 2008; Polese, 2009; Bourne et al, 2011). It should also be noted that cyclical events (rising Canadian dollar, high oil prices etc.) have also contributed to the loss of employment opportunities in Canada.

Although a large number of communities have benefited from new resource extraction activities, the lion's share of national growth has taken place in large urban centres. Their growth

[10] Agriculture employment has been declining since the end of the Second World War. According to Rubin (2011) more than 627,000 manufacturing jobs were lost between 2000 and 2011.

reflects the need for knowledge based services to access a large and readily available skilled labour pool:

> The glue that ties knowledge-rich service industries to large cities is the need for face-to-face contacts. Scientific and managerial functions associated with large hydroelectric projects (often located in the North) create more employment in large metropolitan areas than at the project site. By the same token, it is reasonable to assume that oil exploration in northern Alberta is fuelling the growth of the PST (professional, scientific and technical) and FIRE (finance, insurance and real estate) sectors in Calgary, just as offshore exploration is fuelling employment growth in these same sectors in St. John's. (Bourne et al, 2011, p.51)

Small communities within existing areas of resource extraction have been hardest hit by these trends. The combination of rationalization and 'fly-in, fly-out' labour practices has meant that mine labourers and machine operators no longer live in nearby communities but rather, in larger urban centres (Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012b). This development, in conjunction with low fertility rates no longer insulates remote communities from outmigration during economic downturns (Polese & Shearmur, 2005, p. 27). For communities unable to diversify their economy and attract new immigrants, population losses will no longer be cyclical but rather a long term feature.

As noted in the previous quote, the knowledge sector within Canada's cities is not uniform. Whereas Toronto's PST services have developed due to the presence of large financial and cultural and entertainment institutions, Calgary's and St. John's are closely linked with resource extraction. The problem as noted by Shearmur (2010) and Bourne et al (2011) is that due to the footloose nature of these services, many may leave once regional resources are exhausted. According to Bourne et al (2011b, p.52) "this is a classic Canadian challenge: to build strong (diversified) urban economies while resource booms last, hoping that the bubble will not burst too soon."

The growth of Canada's large urban areas also reflects their ability to attract immigrants from abroad. Due to the country's low fertility rate, no other country has a higher proportion of its growth as a result of immigration from abroad than Canada (Statistics Canada, 2005). Traditionally, new immigrants have overwhelmingly chosen to reside in the country's three largest CMAs: Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. According to Simmons and Bourne (2007, p.18) these global cities are the preferred destination for new immigrants for a variety of reasons including access to "international air flights, large established immigrant communities and employment networks, chain migrations of family members and perceived economic opportunities."

Although these three CMAs remain the preferred destination for most international immigrants, an increasing number are moving into smaller cities on the prairies. Increased immigration into Calgary & Edmonton, AB can be attributed to its booming regional economy while streamlined provincial immigrant nominee programs have helped skilled workers settle in Winnipeg and Brandon, MB as well as Regina and Saskatoon, SK. Once again, the attractiveness of these cities is tied to their modern transportation infrastructure (i.e. airports, highways), established immigrant communities, government services and economic and educational opportunities.

While some small and medium sized population centres have managed to attract immigrants and create vibrant downtown cores and knowledge based sectors, the majority remain highly reliant on low-skill manufacturing, resource extraction and public sector employment for growth (Simmons & McCann, 2006). Given their poor economic and cultural opportunities, the age of these communities is often higher than those of CMAs. In 2009, the

proportion of people age 65 and older in small and medium population centres was 15.5% compared to 12.9% for CMAs[11] (Statistics Canada, 2009).

It should also be noted that suburbanization has also slowed growth for a number of cities. The most notable of these is Winnipeg, MB which has experienced slow growth and short periods of population loss since the end of the 1950s. Despite doubling its growth rate in the past five years, adjacent communities continued previous trends of expanding at rates nearly three to four times faster than Winnipeg's (Statistics Canada, 2012). In one case, the community of Niverville, located less than 30 minutes south of Winnipeg grew by an astonishing 43.7%.

3.3 Australia

With nearly 85% of its population located in urban areas, Australia is one of the world's most urbanized countries (Martinez-Ferninandez, 2010, p.52). Its urbanized population is also one of the most concentrated as 71% of Australians live in its 10 biggest cities, most of which are either territorial capitals or located along the coast (Kenyon, 2009, p.3). The glamour of the coast, particularly with relatively wealthy urban retirees, has propelled the growth of many small seaside 'lifestyle communities' (Cavaye, 2007, p.19). While this concentration of population along the coasts began in the 1960s, it accelerated rapidly over the past three decades in what has been called the 'clamour for the coast' (Kenyon, 2009; Martinez-Ferninandez, 2008, 2010). Since 1980, coastal regions have consistently grown at a rate of 1.8%, with metropolitan areas growing 1.2% annually (Cavaye, 2007, p.19).

While rural areas grew at an annual rate of 0.5%, the majority of it was concentrated in communities close to urban centres and in regional centres featuring amenities and a sizeable service sector. The uneven growth rate is particularly pronounced in communities reliant on

[11] At the time this thesis was written, Statistics Canada had yet to release data concerning the age structure of communities.

traditional industries which are in a state of transition such as mining, forestry and dry land farming (Kenyon, 2009). Of the country's 456 rural municipalities, 215 have been in a process of sustained population loss since 1976 with seventy losing up to 20% (Martinez-Ferninandez & Wu, 2009, p.32). In 1999 alone, 245 rural communities lost population with many moving to nearby regional service centres or larger metropolitan areas (Kenyon, 2009).

The sustained population losses of these rural areas are similar to those found in other industrialized nations. Over the past 40 years, mechanized farming along with decreasing farm profitability from low commodity prices and drought has changed the country's rural employment and population patterns (Cavaye, 2007, p.20). With the average farm size doubling and the number of farms being halved, the proportion of the country's workforce in agricultural has plummeted; in Queensland the proportion decreased from 45% in the 1960s to 18% in 1961and just 5% in 2007 (Cavaye, 2007, p.20).

Many rural communities also feature older populations as young residents and households move to larger centres in search of better employment, educational and entertainment opportunities. Areas with the largest population losses tend to be isolated from major highways and other infrastructure. Wahlquist (1999) also notes that many rural communities have struggled with the loss of 20,000 public sector jobs during the 1990s.

The fortunes of industrial communities, most notably company mining and mill towns are tied inexorably to fluctuations in commodity prices and corporate decisions (Martinez-Fernandez, 2012b). Mature mining and industrial communities are particularly vulnerable as mine operators seek to increase the technical efficiency of their operations while reducing employment levels. In her study of three mining communities Martinez-Fernandez (2010) notes that employment related to mining dropped by over 50% from 1960 to 2005 while production has remained

constant or increased. Local employment is also being suppressed by corporate labour practices that use fly-in/fly-out mining contracting companies to bring managers and other skilled labour from abroad (Martinez-Fernandez and Wu, 2007).

According to Audirac & Alejandre (2010) and Martinez-Fernandez (2010), shrinkage has also affected areas of Australia's largest metropolitan areas. In a reversal from the post-war era, the middle ring of suburbs built in the 1950s and 1960s is shrinking while their respective central cities grow. This is partially the result of waterfront urban renewal projects such as the Darling Harbour in Sydney which relocated low income residents to the periphery. These displacements, while beneficial to the images of central cities, exacerbated the mounting socio-economic issues of surrounding suburbs brought on by the ongoing loss of manufacturing jobs and large numbers of recent immigrants (Audirac & Alejandre, 2010, p.24).

Despite recent trends, it is expected that Australia's growth will significantly slow within the next twenty to thirty years due to its low fertility rate. Similar to Canada and other regions, Australia relies heavily on foreign immigration for population growth. According to a government study, overseas migration accounted anywhere from 50% to more than two-thirds of the country's population growth on an annual basis between 2000 and 2010 (Department of Infrastructure and Transport, 2011, p.18). In light of an aging population, it is expected that immigration alone will not be able to maintain growth rates. By some estimates, Australia's growth rate will fall below zero sometime in the mid 2030's (Martinez-Ferninandez, 2010, p.52). For Australia's major and coastal cities, it appears that the era of rapid growth may be replaced by one of slowing growth or even shrinkage.

3.4 Europe

According to a 2011 Eurostat population projection, the European Union's population is expected to peak at 526 million around 2040 with 12 of its 27 member states expected to experience absolute population declines ranging from 1% to 28% by 2060 (Eurostat, 2011, p.3). Not surprisingly, only three states are projected to grow rapidly during the same period. Simultaneously the proportion of seniors (65 and over) is expected to increase from 17% in 2010 to 30% in 2060 while the proportion above the age of 80 will also grow from 5% to 12% (Eurostat, 2011, p.1).Given these trends, it is not surprising that almost a quarter of the world's shrinking cities with a population above 100,000 are located in Europe (Mykhnenko & Turok, 2008, p.326; Weichmann, 2008).

These trends of slow growth and shrinkage are by no means new. During the 1960s, Europe's urban areas were experiencing annual growth rates of 3%, with one in five cities growing at 5% (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2007, p.170). Growth rates however began slowing in the 1970s and by the late 1990s the number of shrinking cities outnumbered those experiencing growth (Audirac, 2010; Fol & Sabot, 2008; Turok & Mykhnenko, 2007; Reineits, 2005). In fact only 30% of Europe's urban areas have experienced continuous growth since the 1960s. The majority have either experienced continuous or brief periods of population loss stretching back to the early 1980s or 1990s (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2007, p.171).

Due to the economic, demographic and cultural diversity of European nations, the patterns of slow growth and shrinkage are not uniform. The largest differences occur at the continental scale between Western European nations and the post-socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2007). Part of the difference lies in their historic rates of growth; whereas western cities began experiencing slower growth in early 1970s, eastern

cities continued growing until 1985. With the collapse of the Soviet Union however urban growth plummeted at a rapid pace. According to Mykhnenko & Turok (2008):

> The number of growing cities has fallen dramatically from around 144 (96% of all cities) between 1960 and 1985 to just 27 (18%) in the period 1995–2005. By the early 2000s, there were only three cities growing at more than 1% per annum anywhere (p.326).

At first glance, the obvious rationale for the large number of slowly growing and shrinking communities can be traced to the political and economic upheaval of the 1990s in which some Eastern European communities lost more than 90% of their population (Mulder, 2009, p.1149). These losses were caused in part by dismal economic and living conditions which encouraged urban residents to move back into rural areas or into Western Europe where economic conditions were substantially better. The latter is particularly pronounced for those eastern nations recently accepted into NATO and the EU where the removal of travel and work restrictions accelerated the rate of emigration to the West (Mykhnenko & Tuork, 2008, p.329). Aside from economic reasons, population loss has also been caused by fertility rates that are among the lowest in the world and a rising mortality rate. Between 1990 and 2005 nearly half of the nation's found in Eastern Europe experienced a greater number of deaths than births (Mykhnenko & Tuork, 2008, p.315).

Cities that have maintained a positive growth rate since the 1980s typically house national or regional administrative functions and or maintain a status as a principal centre in rural regions dependent on agriculture. Their growth also reflects the ability to lure people from smaller cities. Not surprisingly, small and medium sized communities with a uniform economy and which are not connected to modern infrastructure have experienced the highest rates of population loss. Plöger (2012) adds that the majority of these communities feature shrinkage on a regional scale meaning that both city centre and suburbs and contracting.

In Western Europe, only Germany is expected to experience absolute population declines by 2035. For the majority of Western European states, their slow growth will continue albeit at a diminishing rate due in large part to continued immigration (both from other EU states and abroad) and fertility rates that are higher than their Eastern European counterparts. Despite these trends, shrinking cities have nonetheless become a common feature in many Western European countries. Nearly one-third of French urban areas shrank between 1990 and 1999 while vast swaths of eastern Germany and the northern U.K. have hollowed out (Sabot & Fol, 2008). While the nature and geography of slow growth and shrinkage varies in each country a generalization can be made regarding these trends.

In essence, there are three types of shrinking communities. The first are large urban areas or conurbations whose shrinkage results from the loss of local mining, port industries or other economic activities (Sabot & Fol, 2008, p.19). The second and largest category includes small rural and urban communities which are isolated from major transportation infrastructure and feature poor economic prospects. For example Hanell et al. (2002) documented that approximately 90% of Finland's inhabited area experienced shrinkage during the 1990s.[12] There are also a number of shrinking cities occurring within a growing region. Similar to Australia and the United States, some central cities and suburbs are shrinking as the outer suburbs expand. This is particularly true for large cities in the U.K., France, Italy and Germany whose inner cities are characterized by an outdated housing stock and an antiquated industrial infrastructure (Kidd, 2004; Zakirova, 2008; Deboosere, 2010). In some cases, the pollution from heavy manufacturing or environmental damage from previous operations has helped encourage residents to relocate into suburban communities (Camarda et al, 2011).

[12] Similarly, the Dutch Government is predicting a significant movement of people from rural and small communities in the border regions to its urban areas in the western part of the country from 2025 – 2050. (Borgman, 2010, 7)

Similarly there are three types of communities experiencing slow growth. The first and most prominent category includes large cities with a global status, national administration functions and a sizeable service economy (Deboosere, 2010). Medium sized cities are also experiencing growth particularly those with large post-secondary institutions and feature a mixture of industrial and service sector employment (Mulder, 2009). In both cases, growth is being fuelled not only by the return of young and highly educated individuals from the suburbs and smaller cities, but also by international immigrants (Deboosere, 2010). Lastly, growth can also be found in rural communities that serve as a regional hub or have a strong tourist component to their economy (Sabot & Fey, 2008, p.21).

3.5 Japan

Depending on the prediction being used, Japan's current population of 127 million is expected to decrease by 19 to 35 million people by 2050 making it the fastest shrinking society on earth (Fluchter, 2005, p.83; Population Reference Bureau, 2010, p.1; United Nations, 2004, 2007). While the country managed to add nearly 288,000 people from 2005 to 2010, much of this growth was concentrated in Japan's megalopolis (Tokyo-Osaka-Nagoya) (Cox 2011). Not surprisingly, during the same period, 38 of Japan's 47 prefectures lost population, an increase from the 2005 Census when only 30 Japanese prefectures experienced shrinkage **(**Buhnik, 2010, p.142). At the municipal level, 43 of 110 cities with a population of 200,000 or greater lost population while only six cities grew at more than 1% annually (Cox, 2011). The remaining 61 cities were considered to be growing slowly.

The abundance of slowly growing and shrinking communities in Japan has been attributed to a rapidly aging population[13], an extremely low birth rate[14] and a culture that does

[13] By 2050, it is predicted that 36% of Japan's population will be above the age of 65. (Oswalt, 2005, p.82)

not promote immigration from abroad (Fluchter, 2005; Fuiji, 2005; Oswalt, 2007; Inoguchi, 2009; Buhnik, 2010). Since the post-war era and increasingly in the past two decades, urban growth in Japan has become a zero sum game. Communities that have been on the losing end of this game have typically been small rural villages and towns, manufacturing cities with domestic port facilities and the suburban 'new towns' constructed in the 1960s and 1970s (Buhnik, 2010, pp.144-45).

Despite recent attention from the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami, rural depopulation is by no means a new phenomenon in Japan. Accounts of rural peasants moving to industrializing communities have been occurring as far back as the Edo Period some 400 years ago. But in the post-war economic boom, this historic trend reached a level never before seen. Enticed by better employment and educational prospects, the country's share of rural population has been steadily declining from 30% in 1970 to 28% in 2001 (Fujii, 2005, p.25).

Not surprisingly a large number of Japan's rural communities, particularly those dependent on natural resources and isolated from urban areas, have been shrinking for the past three decades (Fluchter, 2005; Onishi & Fackler, 2011). Small hamlets of 15 households or less are the most vulnerable as Japan's Ministry of Agrictulure, Forestry and Fisheries estimates that between 1,000 and 2,000 will disappear within the next twenty five years (MAFF, 2007, p.45). These 'kaso' (places with too few people) are often located in mountainous terrain where 50% or more of the population is above the age of 65 (Fujii, 2005).

As is the case in many rural regions across the world, the out-migration of young residents is the culmination of numerous factors that include low wages as well as poor employment and educational opportunities. Natural resource industries, the economic mainstay

[14] As of 2012, Japan's total fertility stood at 1.39, even lower than the rate of Germany's 1.41. A total fertility rate of 2.1 is required to maintain a stable population. (CIA World Factbook, 2012)

for many of these communities, has been negatively impacted by globalization and government policies which not only increased imports of cheap coal and lumber, but also placed stringent regulations on resource extraction (Fluchter, 2005; Fujii, 2005; Buhnik, 2010).

Cities with large manufacturing sectors (particularly company towns) and domestic port facilities have also experienced significant population loss. Once viewed as an economic advantage, the importance of these port facilities has fallen drastically with the increased use of airfreight and the inability to compete with international deep-water facilities (Fujii, 2005). Much like its counterparts in the North American Rust Belt, these cities have also witnessed a significant decline in manufacturing employment due to offshoring and the inability for small local firms to compete in the global marketplace.

The unwillingness or inability to diversity their economic base has also entailed a loss of economic and political importance in their respective regions, particularly to cities with administrative functions or a large service industry. Compounding these economic problems is widespread inner city urban blight caused by a poor housing stock and rampant suburbanization. Despite experiencing prolonged population loss, Hakodate, Hokkaido's suburban wards have expanded by 30% between 1985 and 2000 while its historic city centre wards shrunk by over 40% during the same period (Oswalt, 2007).

Japan's largest cities have grown not only by drawing residents from these remote communities, but also from the far flung suburbs or 'new towns' in their metropolitan area. Designed to accommodate populations of 100,000 or more, these new towns were built in response to escalating land prices, wide spread office construction, a growing population and the preference for single detached housing. While popular during the 1960s and 1970s, their growth began stagnating in the 1980s and reversed in the mid-1990s. The ongoing shrinkage of these

communities reflects a number of socio-economic trends including significant decreases in real estate prices, government policies to encourage urban renewal as well as new residential and university construction within central cities. In addition, changing cultural preferences have made housing in an urban and mixed use environment a desirable feature for many young households (Fujii, 2005).

While virtually all of the 'new towns' are shrinking, those with poor transportation connections to the central city have seen the largest population losses. Of particular concern is the ability for residents whom cannot leave to successfully age in place. Many new towns are located in areas of uneven terrain and are characterized by single family dwellings and multi-story buildings with no elevators. In addition, the mobility of residents, particularly those without a car has decreased as the construction of large peripheral shopping malls has shuttered many neighbourhood stores (Inoguchi, 2009).

The high number of slow growth communities is not only attributed to the country's current demographic trends, but also to the immense economic and political power of Tokyo's metropolitan region. According to Fujii (2005) and Cox (2011), 56 percent of Japan's growth over the past 50 years has been concentrated in the Kanto region (which includes Tokyo). In fact four prefectures in the region added 1.14 million or 4 times the population gain of the entire country in the previous census (Cox, 2011). Despite reversing nearly four decades of population loss, Osaka's role as an important economic hub has been waning over the past three decades as many local corporations move their headquarters to Tokyo in an effort to better posture themselves in a global economy Fujii (2005).

3.6 United States

While slow growth and shrinking communities can be found in virtually every corner of the globe, it is most often associated with the industrial cities in the Rust Belt and mid-western regions of the United States. The notoriety of these communities is not only based on their significant population losses, but the subsequent disinvestment and abandonment of property and infrastructure which followed. Despite a half century of continuous rapid growth, 26 of the 77 country's large cities shrank by an average of 24 percent, with seven declining since 1950 and many since 1970 (Beauregard, 2011).

In some cases, the population losses have been staggering; Detroit and St. Louis lost 61% and 59% of their population while Buffalo, Pittsburgh and Cleveland lost 45% (Rappaport, 2003, p.19). More recently, the inner or first ring suburbs of shrinking central cities have experienced slow growth and shrinkage (Audirac, 2008). While these areas accounted for 40% of the US population in the 1950s, they account for only 20% today (Audirac, 2008, p.73). Despite a reversal of fortunes for some shrinking cities (most notably Washington DC, Boston, MA, and New York, NY) a significant number continue shedding their population albeit at a much slower rate (Beauregard, 2011).

Despite the perception, prolonged slow growth and shrinkage has been occurring in the United States since the 19th century. Most notably, the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 initiated a seven decade long period of shrinkage in northern New England states as residents flooded into the Great Lakes and Midwest region (Popper & Popper, 2011). In the 20th century, shrinkage and slow growth are primarily the result of uncontrolled suburban expansion and structural changes to the national economy.

While suburbanization has occurred in virtually every nation, the sheer scale and effects from it are greatest in the United States. Between 1950 and 1990, the total population of small cities increased by 17.3%, compared to 6% for large cities and 9.7% for the nation as a whole (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999, p.31). During the same period, suburban communities consumed land at a rate approximately 50 percent greater than population growth (Rusk, 1999; Squires, 2002). The explosion of peripheral development is the result of a number of factors including cultural preferences for single family dwellings, increased employment opportunities, the construction of federally funded freeways, an abundance of cheap and open land for construction, racial tensions in central cities and federally insured mortgages (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Leo & Brown; 2000;Fishman, 2005; Gordon, 2008; Sugrue, 2005; Hollander, 2011a).

Large cities that were able to grow did so not through intensification but rather with aggressive policies of annexation. As a result, many of these communities nearly doubled their geographic area (Gibson, 1998; Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Cohen, 2007). The ease with which cities can physically expand their legal boundaries helps explain why metro areas in the South and West have fewer governmental units but with larger populations than the smaller, highly fragmented metro areas in the Northeast and Midwest (Johnson et al, 2000; Cohen, 2007). For central cities unable to physically expand their boundary, the loss of population and employment has led to a process known as 'regional restructuring' in which the suburbs wield considerable political and economic power over older and poorer municipalities (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Leo & Brown, 2000; Gordon, 2008).

While central city shrinkage occurred in the midst of regional growth for most of the 20th century, this is no longer the case in some areas. In the wake of severe economic contractions, a

number of metropolitan regions have entered into a prolonged cycle of out-migration (Pallagst, 2008; Hollander, 2011a). The largest of these regions is the state of Michigan which according to the 2010 Census, was the only state to lose population in the last decade. Globalization is often to blame, but the loss of jobs in the Great Lakes and Midwest also reflects the trend of firms moving work to regions with favourable climates, economic incentives, anti-union and low-wage environments (Gordon, 2008; Glaeser, 2009). It should also be noted that rationalization has allowed U.S. manufacturers to produce the same amount of goods in 2010 as they did a decade ago but with six million fewer employees (Lowrey, 2012).

Although many Sun Belt cities were able to grow faster than the national average for the previous two decades, the foreclosure crisis and resulting recession of 2008 has slowed growth considerably and forced some to reconsider their regional economic strategies (Hollander, 2011a). A number of cities previously dominated by construction and tourism are now attempting to attract and foster knowledge-intensive clusters.

Despite predictions of a rural revival in the early 1980s, vast tracts of rural America continue to shrink. In fact large sections of the Lower Mississippi Delta, central Appalachia, the northern Midwest and central Alaska have been slowly losing population for decades. Among the hardest hit regions has been the Great Plains where depopulation began in the 1880s after a series of poor growing seasons and accelerated during the Dust Bowl of the 1930s (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Popper & Popper, 2011). Despite adding more than 3.7 million people between 1950 and 1996, many areas were so depopulated that they had reverted back to frontier (Rathge & Highman, 1998; Popper & Popper, 2011).

The redistribution of America's rural population's is similar to the patterns in Canada and Australia. Population growth in the Great Plains has occurred primarily in metropolitan and non-

metro counties with a city of at least 20,000. More often than not, this growth came at the expense more isolated areas which lost nearly 223,000 people over the 46 year period (Rathge & Highman, 1998, p.19). Rural counties that lacked a community of at least 2,500 people witnessed the most dramatic shrinkage losing more than a third of their population between 1950 and 1996 (Rathge & Highman, 1998, p.19). The causes of rural shrinkage have been tied to low fertility rates, the mechanization of agriculture, poor employment and post-secondary education opportunities and a highly uniform economy that is tied to fluctuating commodity prices.

3.7 Summary

While slowly growing and shrinking communities can be found in nearly every country in the globe, they are primarily concentrated in industrialized regions. This is a result of structural changes to economic and demographic systems which have diminished employment opportunities and reduced national fertility rates. In the wake of these changes growing communities tended to have one or more of the following features:

- A population of greater than 100,000
- Housed political administration functions
- Large service or knowledge based economy
- A diverse economic foundation
- Located on major transportation infrastructure
- Modern and efficient industrial equipment and processes

In contrast, communities that experienced population loss were typically smaller on average, isolated from modern transportation infrastructure and large urban agglomerations, were dependent on a single corporation or industry and had a much older population than their respective national average.

Within ***Canada***, growth is overwhelmingly concentrated in the ten largest metropolitan areas, regional distributional centres and in areas of new resource extraction. In contrast, areas of slower growth and shrinkage tended to have a population of less than 10,000 residents, were

dominated by a single industry or company and were isolated from Census Metropolitan Areas or larger population centres. Although 33% of the country's population centres are shrinking, their rates of population loss are generally small and fall within the margin of error of the Census. Slow growth has also been caused by suburbanization in most metropolitan areas.

Similarly, growth in ***Australia*** is concentrated in the country's largest coastal cities and regional distribution hubs while slowly growing or shrinking communities are isolated and dependent on natural resource extraction. Suburbanization has also slowed growth in a number of large and medium sized communities.

The pattern of slow growth and shrinkage varies significantly in ***Europe***. In Western Europe, smaller communities dominated by a single industry and or isolated from the national infrastructure network have experienced significant population loss. Suburban development has also slowed growth or caused population loss in a number of medium and large urban communities. In Eastern Europe, only large cities with administrative or commercial distribution functions have experienced growth with the remaining areas depopulating as a result of emigration to the west, rural areas and larger urban centers.

In ***Japan*** growth is concentrated almost entirely within the Tokyo metropolitan area due to its economic and political hegemony. Slow growth and persistent population loss is found in almost every community but is particularly pronounced in areas dominated by resource extraction or uniform economic activities. Until the great recession of 2008, rapid growth was concentrated within the southern and western portions of the ***United States*** while slow growth and shrinkage were concentrated in the Great Plains, Great Lakes and New England states. The slow growth and shrinkage of central cities and first-tier suburbs occurs in both growing and declining regions. Like many other industrialized regions, the causes of slow growth and

shrinkage are related to suburbanization and structural changes to the country's economic landscape.

CHAPTER FOUR: CAUSES OF SLOW GROWTH AND SHRINKING COMMUNITIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

While slow growth and shrinkage may be a global phenomenon the context in which it occurs varies significantly. For example Fishman (2005) notes that the effects from economic restructuring tend to be less severe when they are spread over a span of decades rather than years. Moreover, areas with a diversified economic base are more resilient during and after economic crises than those reliant upon one industry or corporation (Martinez-Fernandes & Wu, 2009; Polese, 2009).

The ability to provide residents with a high quality of life is also an important factor in determining the extent of slow growth or shrinkage. Communities with an antiquated housing stock, high tax burden, little green space, a prevalence of social ills, environmental pollution and poor transportation and community infrastructure tend to suffer higher rates of population loss than those which do not (Downs, 1994; Fishman, 2005; Sugrue, 2005; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Schatz, 2009; Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the size and location of communities may also determine whether they grow or experience population loss. Senior government policy, (particularly those concerned with immigration and economic development) has also been shown to impact the ability of communities to attract new residents and economic activities.

Despite their variety, the micro-level factors affecting North American communities are largely the result of three global trends; economic restructuring, suburbanization and changing demographic and migration patterns (Leo & Brown, 2000; Fishman, 2005; Oswalt, 2005; Muller, 2005; Weichmann, 2008a; Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). While it is recognized that socio-political issues are a significant cause of population loss in a number of regions

(particularly those of the former Soviet Union) this is not an issue within Canada and will therefore not be discussed in this chapter.

4.2 Demographic Restructuring

Despite a global population boom, many OECD countries are experiencing the exact opposite; slow growth and population declines. In fact, according to Audirac & Alejandre (2010) nearly ninety-five percent of the world's population growth is derived from developing countries. This trend is by no means new. Since the 1960s, industrialized nations have been experiencing what Buzar et al. (2007) calls a 'second demographic transition' which "…involves new family relations, less and later marriages, declining fertility rates, population aging, smaller households and postponement of child-bearing…" (,p.651)

This trend has been particularly prominent in Canada, Japan, Russia and much of Europe where the average fertility rate has decreased an average of 40 percent from their respective postwar high's (Downs, 1982, p.178). Not surprisingly, the combination of increased life expectancies and lower births has made many of these regions among the world's oldest[15]. By 2060 it is expected that Europe's old age dependency ratio[16] is projected to increase from 26% in 2010 to 53% in 2060 meaning that for every person aged 65 and over, only two person between the ages of 15 to 64 would exist (EuroStat, 2011, p.2). Not surprisingly, regions undergoing these transitions are expected to shrink in the next fifty years with the European Union reaching its peak population around 2040 and Japan beginning to shrink in the next ten years (Oswalt, 2005; EuroStat, 2011).

[15] The median age of Germany, Japan and Italy are 44.9, 44.8 and 43.9 years respectively. In contrast, China, India and Brazil, three of the world's fastest growing economies are significantly younger and boast median ages of 35.5, 26.2 and 29.3 years (CIA, 2011).

[16] The Old Age Dependency Ratio measures the proportion of the population not in the labour force and is used to measure the pressure placed on productive

Despite growing by 5.6% from 2006-2011, Statistics Canada has predicted that the country's natural growth rate may reach zero by 2030 because of a rapidly aging society and stagnant fertility rates[17] (2011, p.4). It is also projected that immigration will account for more than 80% of Canada's population growth in 2030 compared to the current level of 67% (Ibid). Isolated rural and smaller urban areas are particularly vulnerable to these demographic shifts as limited employment, educational and entertainment opportunities tend to push younger households and individuals to larger communities.

With the exception of Japan, the majority of industrialized countries have relied upon immigration from abroad as their primary source of population growth. In Germany however, immigration is merely delaying the inevitable as the current shortfall of births is expected to increase to from 190,000 in 2009 to 750,000 in 2050 (Birg, 2005, p.113; Muller, 2005**;** Moore, 2010). As mentioned in the previous chapter, many eastern European nations such as Romania, Hungary and Latvia have experienced absolute declines as residents migrate to western countries for economic opportunities.

4.3Economic Restructuring

In conjunction with widespread demographic shifts, slow growth and shrinkage have been caused in part by globalization and the economic restructuring that accompanied it (Leadbeater, 2009; Cunningham-Sabot & Fol, 2009; Martinez-Fernandes & Wu, 2009, Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011; Audirac et al, 2012). Despite its complexity, Muller (2005, p.35) states that at its core, globalization is the expression of three dominant trends:

- First the liberalization of trade in commodities, currencies, and capital, which was introduced in the 1980's…undermined the foundations of the old-style national economies and nation-states.

[17] Canada's birth rate is currently 1.58, well below the rate needed to sustain a population (CIA, 2011).

- Second, technological revolutions have reduced the costs of transport and communication so much that processes of wealth creation can be distributed among several continents…
- Third, fueled by both of these trends, a new international division of labour has emerged to fundamentally change the geographic pattern of the world economy.

One of the most prominent outcomes of globalization has been the substantial increase in industrial efficiency. Facilitated by advances in technology, industrial rationalization is characterized primarily by the replacement of human labour with machinery, the closure of smaller and less efficient plants and the creation of 'just-in-time' or 'on-demand' inventory (Uchitelle, 2006). Not surprisingly, while global industrial output grew by 30% between 1995 and 2002, more than 22 million manufacturing jobs were lost in the world's twenty largest economies (Portes, 2008, p.4-5).

The impact of rationalization is particularly pronounced in single industry or company communities. Using Sudbury, ON as an example, Leadbeater (2009) demonstrates that despite maintaining or increasing production, the city's total mining employment has fallen from its peak of 25,000 in the 1970s to fewer than 6,000 in 2008. Likewise, rising farm productivity has helped reduce the number of agricultural workers in Canada from 1.2 million in 1946 to slightly more than 300,000 in 2002 and increase the average size of a farm by four times (Bowlby, 2002).

In addition to rationalization, communities are also losing employment due to the increasingly 'footloose' nature of transnational corporations (Leadbeater, 2009; Martinez-Fernandez & Wu, 2009; Cunningham-Sabot, 2009; Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011; Audirac et al., 2012). A key hallmark of globalization has been the concentration of capital and power into large multinational corporations (Leadbeater, 2009; Schatz, 2009). While national firms were once tied to geographically specific areas, corporate consolidation, technology and

the liberalization of foreign markets has allowed firms to expand their operations with relative ease (Audirac et al, 2012; Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a,b).

This shift in the balance of power has substantially weakened the power of labour and communities as capital, when challenged, could more easily threaten to go elsewhere[18] (Leadbeater, 2009, p.93; Audirac et al, 2012). Martinez-Fernandez & Wu (2009) note that this footlessness is particularly prominent in remote communities where labour and the technologies used to extract and refine resources are imported from abroad. As a result the benefits from these operations are largely confined to the company's compound and larger communities abroad.

The trend of capital's increasing mobility can be traced to the post-war era as manufacturing operations moved from their multi-story central city factories to the periphery (Gordon, 2008). In some cases, industries went a step further and relocated to an entirely different region in an effort to reduce labour costs and take advantage of generous tax incentives. By the early 1980s, capital was no longer bound by national borders as the proliferation of free trade agreements along with advances in logistical and transportation technology[19] made international trade easier than ever. Enticed by the low wages and lax employment regulations in a number of overseas countries, manufacturers began moving labour intensive stages of production to these areas in a process known as offshoring (Gordon, 2008; Audirac et al, 2012). By the end of the century, offshoring had grown substantially to include entire branches of production in addition to higher order functions such as financial services and entire research and development departments (Schatz, 2009).

[18] London, ON's Electro-Motive shop was recently closed down with production being shifted to Indiana and elsewhere after workers refused the company's concessions of a 50% pay cut. Similarly, an auto-plant in Oshawa was shuttered after its work was moved to a plant in Tennessee where workers make an average of $14 an hour.
[19] Polese (2009, 36) notes that between 1920 and 1990, the average [shipping] unit costs fell by some 75 percent for sea freight, 85 percent for air transport and over 95 percent for transatlantic telephone calls.

For many developed countries, economic restructuring has created an urban dichotomy: cities that reap the benefits of globalization and those that do not. Fassman (2006) explains that:

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

According to Simmie (2001) and Montgomery (2007) such dichotomies are a result of capitalism's dynamic nature. Citing Kondratieff's theory of business cycles or long waves, Montgomery (2007) argues that growth favours areas where new technologies are applied to commerce, trade and production processes (2007, p.8). To continue growing, regional economies must remain flexible by continuously adapting to the new realities and technologies of the next economic wave. For example, the growth and relative decline of Manchester, UK, Youngstown, OH and Detroit, MI are a direct result of their inability to diversify their respective economies from the cotton, steel and automotive industries (Montgomery, 2007). In a globalized era where labour can be easily moved, these areas are most vulnerable to slow growth or population loss.

More importantly, Montgomery (2007) explains that despite cultural perceptions, rapid growth is episodic in nature:

> London enjoyed a golden age in the sixteenth century, another in the 1840s and one in the 1960s. Paris's golden age was in the later nineteenth century, New York in the 1920s and 1950s, Los Angeles in

> the 1930s and 1990s. Some cities only manage episodes of rapid growth once in a lifetime. In the 1870s Buenos Aires and Adelaide were the two fastest growing cities of the time, but since then have stagnated and/or declined (p.5).

Similarly, Temin (2002) explains that Western Europe's rapid growth in the post-war period was based on a number of unique and finite circumstances:

> …why was growth so rapid in Western Europe during the Golden Age of Growth? The answer is disequilibrium. The normal catch-up that works in general was not important right after the war, but other kinds of disequilibrium were. The most important of these was the misallocation of resources that came from the lack of international trade during the preceding thirty years. In this state of arrested industrialisation, too many resources still were employed inefficiently in agriculture. The institutional factors cited by Eichengreen (1996) helped create the needed demand; reallocated labour rapidly enhanced the supply (p.19).

Despite widely held cultural beliefs, rapid growth is not "normal" but is instead an episodic correction of socio-economic conditions, demographic trends and institutional responses at a given point in time.

4.3.1Economic Restructuring within the Canadian Context

As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, urban growth in Canada is overwhelmingly concentrated in the ten largest Census Metropolitan Areas. The growth of these areas largely reflects the diversity of their local and regional economies as well as their ability to attract residents from inter-provincial and international immigration. The attractiveness and economic resiliency of these areas reflects their opportunities for post-secondary education, level of amenities and services, access to modern infrastructure and a large skilled labour pool (Polese, 2009; Bourne et al, 2011a).

On the other hand, urban centres in the country's periphery are experiencing slow growth and shrinking populations largely because they lack the above mentioned attributes. However,

Leadbeater (2009) notes that growth is also being suppressed by federal cutbacks in employment and social programs. In addition, environmental limits on producing and consuming resources as well as growing political resistance from Aboriginal nations have limited access to resources for an increasing number of communities[20]. Reduced employment opportunities have also been linked to the shift towards high-value manufacturing which requires fewer labour inputs than low-skilled manufacturing processes.

Leadbeater (2009) also notes that despite growing demand, annual GDP growth rates for advanced capitalist nations have fallen dramatically since their postwar highs due to global shifts in economic and demographic patterns[21]. Polese and Shearmur (2007) note that even in areas where resources are not exhausted, employment opportunities have diminished as the rate of productivity has increased faster than demand. More importantly Schatz (2009) notes that the demand for Canadian resources has fallen as the world's geo-political situation stabilized:

> … the reconstruction of Europe, coupled with phenomenal material growth throughout the western world, ensured growing demand for Canada's natural resources. On the other hand, alternative sources of supply, in the Soviet Union and its dependencies, were not easily available to fuel this growth. Political instability in many Latin American countries also limited supply (Shearmur & Polèse, 2006, p.34).

As previously mentioned, the inability for many local and regional economies to diversify is a key factor in explaining the uneven growth pattern within Canada. Despite promises of new development, Polese and Shearmur (2003) illustrate that the knowledge economy has not been able to flourish in peripheral areas despite growing internet access. Schatz

[20] The collapse of the Northern Cod fishery in the early 1990s is perhaps Canada's best and most tragic example of resource depletion. Although rural area's had been losing population for some time it accelerated dramatically after the moratorium on fishing. From 1986 to 1998, the Northern Peninsula and South Coast regions both lost 18% of their populations while the Burin Peninsula and Notre Dame Bay fell by 14% and 13% respectively. (Hamilton, 2001, p.8).

[21] According to Leadbeater (2009), annual GDP growth rates fell from 4.6 percent between 1950 and 1973 to 2.6 percent between 1973 and 1989.

(2009) notes that 'the internet, while good at transmitting codified knowledge, is not good transmitting tacit knowledge and thus face-to-face meetings are still important…[thus] placing them at a severe disadvantage for attracting industries that rely on the use of tacit knowledge.'(p.41)

Communities dominated by large production plants or resource extraction operations are at a particular disadvantage as they suffer from what Polese (2009) calls Intrusive Rentier Syndrome:

> *First*, they make it difficult, or impossible to start up a profitable (export) operation in manufacturing in industries that cannot compete with the 'artificially' high wages paid by aluminum and paper plants. *Second*, they discourage smaller manufacturing firms from training their workers; for once trained they will leave for a better paying job in a big plant. The combined effect of these "intrusions" is easy to guess: few if any business start-ups in other industries. (p.20)

Although peak oil is expected to increase transportation costs, distance is still working against many communities. While manufacturing is often the only practical means of diversification, the large number of inputs required to make high value products places remote communities at a significant disadvantage compared to centrally located ones [22]. Ironically, while technological advances may have reduced the friction of distance, they have also increased the importance of place and location (Bourne and Simmons, 2003).

As new technology allows previously unattainable resources to be extracted a number of peripheral communities will experience rapid growth in the near future. However, an even greater number will continue to be impacted by globalization, rationalization and the shift to higher value goods which require fewer labour inputs per unit. As a result of these structural

[22] For example, the production of wooden doors requires products from other peripheral regions in Canada (wood chips), Montreal (plastic laminate), India (adhesive) and China (steel handles, hinds and finishes) Polese (2009).

trends, Polese (2009) believes that once population losses begin, they will in many cases be irreversible.

4.4 Suburbanization

While the effects of suburbanization on central city growth are global in scope, they have been most pronounced in North America and in particular, the United States. Regional restructuring in addition to deindustrialization has led to spectacular population losses for a large number of American cities during the last half of the 20th century. For example, St. Louis, MO lost 59% of its population while Pittsburgh, PA and Youngstown, OH lost 50% of their respective populations (Reineits, 2005a, p.2). In some cases, the exodus to the periphery was aided by racist real estate practices (i.e. blockbusting and redlining) as well as the race riots of the mid to late 1960s (Sugrue, 2005; Gordon, 2008).

In some communities the flight of capital and residents has led to the wholesale abandonment of neighbourhoods, chronic socio-economic issues, significant financial stress and the deterioration of transportation and community infrastructure. Within Canada, the effects of suburbanization have been much less severe. In most cases, the results of this development pattern have slowed growth in the central city and created underutilized or blighted areas in the downtown core or inner city neighbourhoods. For example, despite growing by 4.8% between 2006 and 2011, Winnipeg's growth rate was eclipsed by surrounding municipalities which grew by at least two to three times faster[23] (Redekop, 2012). This peripheral growth is one of the reasons why surface parking lots occupy almost 50% of downtown Winnipeg (Skerritt & Kives, 2012).

[23] The town of Niverville, MB, located only 30 minutes south of Winnipeg grew at an astonishing rate of 43.7% between 2006 and 2011. (Redekop, 2012)

It is also important to note that the process of suburbanization is occurring in both growing and shrinking regions. The distinction between the two is an important one to recognize particularly with regard to policy formulation. In the former, the revitalization of inner city neighbourhoods can be accomplished by promoting the attraction of traditional urbanism based on density, active transportation and a pedestrian street life (Fishman, 2005; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Schatz, 2009). A number of cities such as Boston, MA, Milwaukee, WI and Minneapolis, MN have been able to slow and even reverse population losses by attracting residents from abroad and the suburbs into revitalized historic neighbourhoods. This strategy has also been shown to be effective in luring high-tech, high-finance and 'new-economy' employment back into the inner city (Fishman, 2005). Such policies however are ineffective in slow growth or shrinking regions primarily because residential and commercial demand does not allow for central city repopulation without causing decay in the suburbs (Fishman, 2005; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Mallach, 2011b).

The spread of suburban development was and continues to be facilitated by a number of factors including government policy, technological advancements and cultural preferences. Anxious to kick-start the economy and solve chronic housing shortages, the American and Canadian governments altered mortgage policies by guaranteeing mortgages, lowering interest rates and increasing the payment period from five to twenty to thirty years (Fishman, 2005). Senior governments also constructed large infrastructure projects such as water-treatment plants and regional freeways to service new development on the periphery (Fishman, 2005).

In addition, Rybczynski & Linneman (1999) and Glaeser (2009) note that the expansion of air travel, the evolution of modern telecommunications and advances in sewer and water treatment facilities facilitated peripheral growth. Simultaneously, entertainment and

communication technologies reduced the sense of cultural inferiority and isolation that historically characterized life in small cities (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999, p.32). Fishman (2000) notes that the rise in shrinking cities was partially the result of central air conditioning which helped facilitate the rise of enclosed shopping malls and helped transform the Sunbelt into a hospitable climate. The growth of smaller cities also reflected the antiquated infrastructure and high land prices of many central cities which imposed high capital and operating costs on businesses (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Glaeser, 2009).

Suburbanization was also driven in large part by cultural preferences. In the United States, anti-urban sentiment can be traced to Thomas Jefferson who believed that urbanism was a breeding ground for immorality:

> I think our governments will remain virtuous for many centuries as long as they are chiefly agricultural; and this will be as long as there shall be vacant lands in any part of America. When they get plied upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become corrupt as in Europe. (Vazquez, 2006)

The frontier mentality in Canada and the United States also contributed to this anti-urban sentiment. For many, the harsh but seemingly endless frontier represented an opportunity for a new life regardless of past mistakes made in the city.

By the nineteenth century, the promise of a new and fulfilling life shifted from the frontier to the nearby suburbs. According to Fishman (2005, p.69), the suburbs 'had come to symbolize the privilege of escape from the crowded and unhealthy city to a family-oriented world of nature.' In stark contrast, central cities were viewed as havens for crime and recent immigrants who had little money and could not afford cars (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999). The continued popularity of the suburbs is also a reflection of society's growing personal retreat

and enclosure movement which is difficult to facilitate in a dense urban environment (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011).

4.5. Summary

Within North America, slow growth and shrinkage have been caused by three structural trends. Falling fertility rates are forcing many countries, including Canada to rely almost exclusively on immigration from abroad for growth. As a result, urban growth is highly concentrated in communities that offer a wide range of cultural, employment and educational opportunities.

Simultaneously, economic restructuring due to globalization and the footloose nature of capital is causing significant job losses in a number of industrialized regions. In particular, communities or regions centered on a single industry or corporation are more likely to experience prolonged slow growth or shrinkage than areas with a diverse economic base. Moreover, the depletion of natural resources such as the cod fisheries and minerals has caused a significant number of communities to experience prolonged and irreversible population loss.

While suburbanization is a worldwide phenomenon, its effects have been greatest in North America. Beginning in the 1950s and continuing today a substantial number of central cities and first-tier suburbs are experiencing slow growth and shrinkage while peripheral communities experience rapid growth. It is particularly important to differentiate between regions that are growing and shrinking. In the latter, traditional strategies of repopulating inner city neighbourhoods typically fail due to low demand or by causing blight in the suburbs.

In the United States, suburbanization has caused a large number of communities to experience widespread vacancy, poverty and municipal service reductions. North of border, the effects of peripheral development have been far less severe and has typically slowed the growth

of central municipalities and created pockets of underutilized and or blighted properties in the inner city and downtown.

CHAPTER FIVE: EFFECTS OF SLOW GROWTH AND SHRINKAGE

Does anyone here tonight
Remember those times?
Can anyone here tonight
Just tell me what they felt like?
I can't tell you how
this old story ends
I can't touch you now,
like they did back then
Sam Roberts, "Detroit 67"

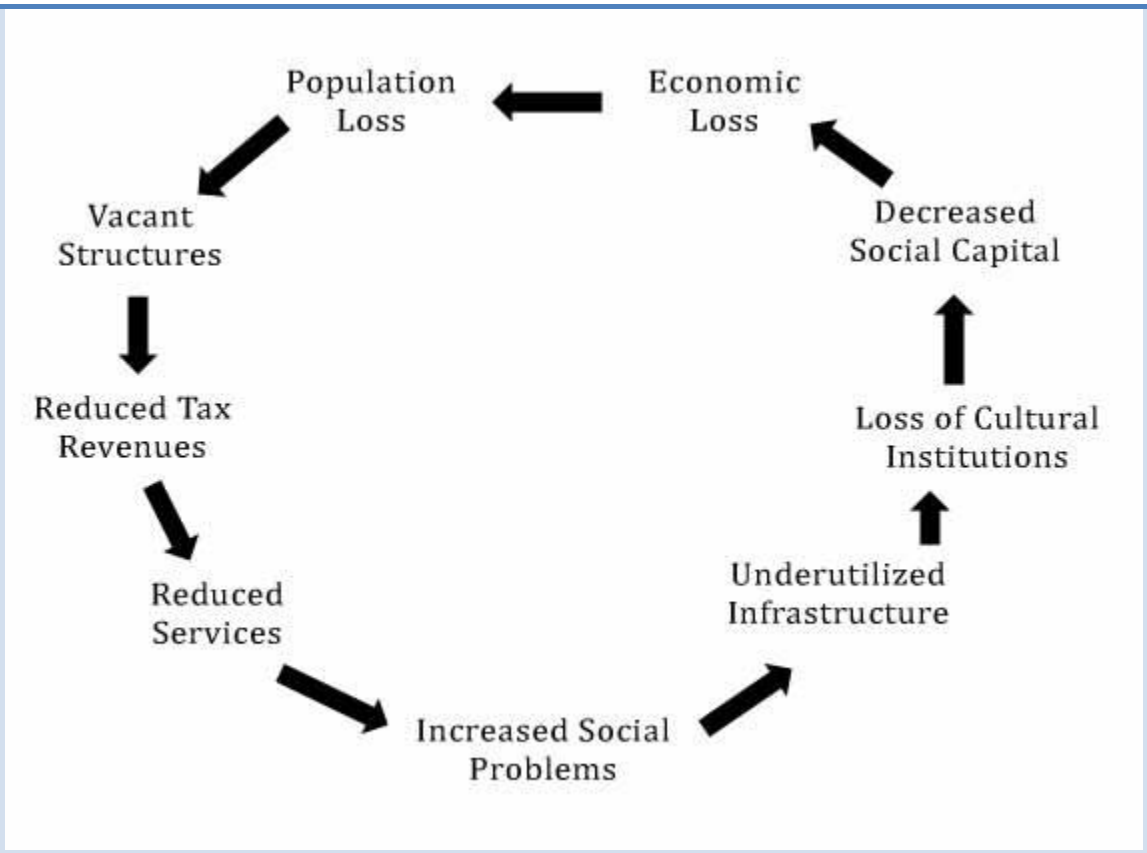
5.1 Introduction

As previously noted, the effects from slow growth and shrinkage can be experienced on a number of spatial levels ranging from a handful of neighbourhoods to an entire region. According to the literature, the severity and geographic extent of these effects is determined in large part by local characteristics such as the condition of the housing stock and infrastructure, tax burden, extent of socio-economic problems and the quality of municipal services (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Leo and Brown, 2000; Prigge, 2005; Belson, 2007; Leadbeater, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Mallach, 2011b). As a result, no two communities experience slow growth or shrinkage in exactly the same manner.

Due to the lack of academic research, the effects of slow growth and shrinkage on a community are not fully understood (Schatz, 2009). Nevertheless there is growing consensus among academics that if improperly managed either trend can initiate a cycle of loss or negative path dependence (Leo & Brown, 2000; Oswalt, 2005, Bernt, 2009, Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerreo, 2010). Once started, this cycle tends to multiply experiences of loss by exacerbating disinvestment and social problems, reducing municipal revenues and services and accelerating further population and economic loss (Figure 6.1). Gordon (2008) provides a vivid description of this process in St. Louis, MO:

This general condition, in St. Louis and elsewhere, is the seemingly iron law of urban decay: Rising incomes breed suburbanization. Suburbanization robs inner cities of their tax base [and] encourages even more people to escape the fiscal wreckage (baser public services, underfunded schools) left behind. Over time, the City dipped below the demographic and economic thresholds necessary to sustain even basic urban activities or expectations (public transit, downtown retail and leisure, industrial clusters). As social and fiscal challenges accumulated, the City's political clout – in state and nation – evaporated. And, over time, the logic and consequences of urban decay reached inner-ring suburbs as well (p.9).

Figure 1: Negative feedback loop regarding the effects related to population loss.



(Oswalt, 2005; Schatz, 2009; Gordon, 2008; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010)

But slow growth and population loss do not necessarily lead to the implosion of communities. Rybczynski & Linneman (1999) and Leo & Brown (2000) demonstrate that despite prolonged periods of slow growth and shrinkage, a number of western European cities have managed to maintain their built environment, prosperity and quality of life. Similarly, Schilling & Logan (2008) and Pallagst (2010) note that the prevalence of vacant property offers the chance for communities to construct green space and remediate past environmental damage. To better understand both the positive and negative effects of slow growth and shrinkage, this chapter will examine how both trends affect a community's economy, infrastructure, land uses and civic culture.

5.2 Economic Effects

While economic decline is often thought of as a cause of population decline, it is also in many causes a consequence of it (Schatz, 2009). During periods of economic restructuring and population loss, local service sectors tend to contract as lower property values and household incomes reduce real estate and retail activity. Simmons (2003, p.5) for example found that declining cities in Canada tended to have 17 percent lower real estate activity, 7 percent fewer stores per 1,000 population and 15 percent lower retail sales per capita than growing cities. In many slowly growing and shrinking communities the reduction or slow growth of local retail activity means that few communities can support healthy commercial districts in the downtown and periphery. Not surprisingly many of these areas are characterized by the prevalence of vacant commercial and retail space in the central city (Leo & Brown, 2000; Synder et al, 2006).

More importantly, the stigma of population loss and inner city decay can also lead to greater disinvestment by existing firms and or discourage the entry of new ones into the market (Leo & Brown, 2000; Beauregard, 2003; Simmons, 2003; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Bernt, 2009;

Schatz, 2009).While Simmons (2003) notes that locally owned stores may view this as a benefit, he explains that only the strongest independent stores will survive the increased competition for fewer customers. Not surprisingly, communities experiencing prolonged periods of population loss also tend to be characterized by higher than average unemployment rates[24](Fishman, 2005; Schatz, 2009; Audirac et al, 2012). Given their limited economic opportunities, many of these communities have a higher median age than rapidly growing communities (Audirac et al, 2012; Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a). This is largely because younger households are more likely to move to areas with better employment and educational opportunities than older individuals whom have stronger ties to the community or may be less vulnerable to layoffs due to their seniority (Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a).

In addition to reduced commercial activity, many slow growth and shrinking communities also experience significant financial stress (Mallach, 2011a; Scorsone, 2011). At its core, the problem stems from the inability of municipal revenues to match the increasing cost of providing services and maintaining infrastructure (Leo & Brown, 2000; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Bernt, 2009; Blais, 2010; Scorsone, 2011). This funding gap is particularly problematic in shrinking communities where the demand for social services increases (due to high unemployment and other socio-economic problems) but revenues decline as a result of falling property values and economic activity (Bernt, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Mallach, 2011a).

Financial stress is also caused from a number of factors outside of the community. Due to relatively high debt levels and stagnant or declining revenue streams, many slow growth and shrinking communities face higher borrowing costs as municipal bond ratings are downgraded (Hackworth, 2002). Increasing infrastructure costs also reflect the actions of senior governments.

[24] As of December 2011, the unemployment rate in Cape Breton was approximately 15.9% while the average unemployment rate for rural Newfoundland reached 41% in 2001 (Government of Canada, 2005;Grant, 2012)

In recent years provincial and federal governments have engaged in widespread service downloading while simultaneously reducing funding grants and imposing stringent regulations on water and sewage treatment (Foster, 2007). The dilemma for many slow growth and shrinking communities is how to balance municipal finances while attempting to stimulate new growth and preserving the quality of life for residents. While significant tax increases and service reductions may balance a municipality's finances, they may also initiate a cycle of decline causing further financial stress in the near future.

A diminishing labour market may also deter new businesses from locating in slow growth and shrinking communities (Harden, 2003; Schatz, 2009; Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a). In many cases, individuals with the means and skills to find employment elsewhere are the first to leave (Schatz, 2009; Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a). The disappearance of these skills and knowledge from the local labour force has been shown to have a negative impact on small and medium businesses and prevent the formation of a critical mass of risk-takers that can produce new employment opportunities (Harden, 2003; Reineits, 2005; Polese, 2009; Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a).A community's transition to a knowledge and service based economy may also be hampered by the skills of the remaining labour force:

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

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the presence of existing industries may also limit diversification in a process that Polese (2009) refers to as *Intrusive Rentiers Syndrome*. In addition, Friedrichs (1993) and Schatz (2009) explain that local industry elite may attempt to maintain influence and prestige by dissuading attempts at diversification. In an interview to explain the cause for Cleveland's dismal ranking in venture capital, David Morgenthaler[25] argued that the city "did not breed enough good horses to be on [because]…Cleveland lives off the past, and the executives from these old industries are still the community leaders" (Harden, 2003) Similarly, efforts to shift Detroit's economy away from the automotive industry in the early 1980s failed because of opposition from industry leaders, unions and city officials (Friedrichs, 1993; Schatz, 2009).

It is also important to note that a shrinking population does not always correlate with a lagging economy (Buhnik, 2010; Schatz, 2009). In his study of major Eastern German cities, Franz (2004) found 'no concurrent demographic and economic decline' but instead a pattern of economic growth which he characterized as 'jobless growth'. While he does admit that local housing industries and municipal programs will suffer, he nevertheless argued that the regional economy as a whole may not be negatively influenced by population loss. Similarly, Leo and Anderson (2006, pp. 180-81) noted that while Winnipeg's population growth was substantially slower than Vancouver's through 1994 to 2003, the former enjoyed similar GDP growth per capita but with substantially lower unemployment figures for most of the time.

5.3 Infrastructure

One of the most pressing problems facing slow growth and shrinking communities is the maintenance of hard and soft infrastructure. Despite lower demand, shrinking municipalities face

[25] At the time of the interview, Mr. Morgenthaler managed more than $2 billion worth of venture capital from his office in downtown Cleveland, OH.

increased costs to operate and maintain their infrastructure (Koziol, 2005; Schatz, 2009; Dueweke & Lewinski, 2011). Koziol (2005) explains that these costs not only reflect a reduction in municipal revenues, but the engineering and health challenges that are associated with over-built infrastructure:

> [Despite lower usage]…the costs for Frankfurt/Oder's city waterworks have increased from around €10,000 to € 60,000 per year over the last ten years. At the same time, the amount of water needed to maintain the wastewater network multiplied by a factor of six between 1999 and 2001. Lower utilization in the drinking water network leads to increased standing times and thus a significantly increased risk of contamination. [In addition]… failure to maintain the required minimum flow velocity in wastewater pipes [can lead] to deposits that cause odor problems, corrosion and necessitate frequent scouring (Koziol, 2005, 76-77).

These increased costs are borne out of the simple fact that the efficiency of network infrastructure increases in areas with high densities and a continuous urban form (Blais, 2010). In many shrinking communities, these characteristics have been replaced with a perforated landscape.

While inefficient infrastructure is typically associated with shrinkage, Leo & Anderson (2006) note its occurrence in slow growth communities as well. The problem in the latter stems largely from contemporary planning practices which increase a community's built area faster than its population growth (Blais, 2010). As a result, slow growth municipalities often duplicate their services using a relatively static revenue base:

> Once occupied, a new subdivision requires community centres and library branches, and the same response time for fire fighters, police and paramedics that more densely-populated areas of the city enjoy. Street cleaning, snow removal, grass cutting, insect control, and other municipal services will have to serve empty parcels of land as well as full ones… (Leo, 2008, p.34)

Building on this, Blais (2010) explains that increased operating and maintenance costs are also a result of declining densities found in suburban and semi-rural areas:

> Generally, the per-unit cost of constructing and maintaining water and sewer infrastructure falls as density increases. A contiguous built-up urban fabric also minimizes infrastructure costs, as does redevelopment of already–urbanized areas, where water and sewer capacity already exists. Higher costs are due to the fact that the water distribution and sewer collection mains are the most significant cost components – representing a much larger share of total costs than transmission mains, pump capital costs, or pump energy costs. In short, larger lots [and leap frog development] require longer distribution and collection mains, the most significant cost component. Also, pressure losses are higher for longer lengths of pipe, which increases pumping costs. Moreover, home-watering on larger lots tend to use significantly more water, principally for watering their expansive lawns in summer. This additional usage generates higher infrastructure costs – for larger pipes, higher pumping costs, and higher water treatment costs. (p.108)

Rising costs also reflect the relative age of infrastructure which in central cities is often nearing the end or has surpassed its designed lifespan[26] (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Seasons, 2004). Mirza (2008) explains that the old age of Canada's infrastructure is a reflection of the country's socio-economic conditions since the end of the Second World War:

> Most of Canada's infrastructure was built between the 1950s and 1970s in response to the population growth due to the 'baby boom,' high immigration levels and rapid urbanization. However, the rapid inflation and high interest rates in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, and the resulting recession led to scarcity of funds for maintenance, which was deferred routinely leading to accelerated deterioration of infrastructure assets (p.32)

The relatively old age of municipal infrastructure also helps explain why federal and provincial governments have increased standards related to the treatment of drinking and wastewater. While beneficial for the environment, slow growth and shrinking communities have received little if

[26] According to Mizra (2008) more than 60% of Canada's infrastructure is 40 years or older.

any funding from either level of senior government to fund these necessary upgrades (Foster, 2007).

The relatively old age of Canada's infrastructure also means that much of it is not suited for the country's present or future demographic trends. Simmons (2003) and Muller (2005) note that while a declining fertility rate requires fewer schools and daycares, an aging population needs improved healthcare services. Without significant increases in density, even stable neighbourhoods with no decay are experiencing infrastructure overcapacity due to the growing number of single and two person households. Moreover, the population of many slow growth and shrinking communities is decidedly older than growing communities as younger households pursue educational and employment opportunities elsewhere (Leo & Anderson, 2006).

Despite these challenges, many slow growth and shrinking communities continue to build infrastructure to service new suburban developments. Not surprisingly, many have incurred a significant infrastructure deficit and or financial stress. According to Mirza (2008, p.34), the above mentioned factors have pushed Canada's infrastructure deficit to $123 billion for upgrading existing infrastructure and more than $115 billion for new infrastructure. More importantly, Mirza (2008, p.34) goes on to state that without any significant action, these figures will increase to two trillion dollars by 2067.

While commonly associated with urban centres, approximately 40% of the infrastructure deficit accrues from rural areas. The state of rural infrastructure is particularly poor in isolated regions. A 2008 Senate Committee on rural poverty found that the highway, water and sewage networks in many northern Ontario communities were on the brink of collapse. The same report also noted that many communities were forced to rely on surface and underground water sources

that received inadequate and infrequent testing. In some cases residents have resorted to unorthodox measures to repair local and regional infrastructure[27].

Financial stress and crumbling infrastructure are not confined to Canadian municipalities however. According to a 2009 study, nine out of ten American cities reported fiscal difficulties and posted an average budget shortfall of three percent (Muro & Hoene, 2009, p.1). At the extreme end of the spectrum Gary, IN has projected that its tax revenues and grants will be unable to cover the operating costs for its fire, paramedic and police services let alone any other public service by the end of 2012 (Mason, 2010). Reiss-Schmidt (2006) notes that similar experiences can be found in Germany as well:

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

5.4 Land Use

Unlike network infrastructure, changes in a community's land use patterns are often the most visible effect of slow growth and shrinkage. At its core, vacant property reflects a real estate market whose supply of residential and commercial structures is far higher than its current demand (Rybcznski & Linneman, 1999; Glock & Haubermann, 2004; Bernt, 2009; Mallach, 2011b). According to the literature, the presence of vacant properties is problematic for a number of reasons. Among the most obvious is the visual stigma associated with poorly maintained buildings and land. As previously mentioned, the presence of blighted buildings can dissuade investment from firms both within and outside of the community (Bontje, 2004). Leo &

[27] Residents in Leader, SK, made a nude calendar to alert provincial politicians to the poor state of Highway 32, the main link between the town and the Trans-Canada Highway. The roadway was in such poor condition that local ambulance drivers were reluctant to use it on account of regularly losing hubcaps and breaking axles (**CBC News, 2010)**

Anderson (2006) note that despite experiencing slow and steady growth, Winnipeg, MB was often misinterpreted and mislabelled as a declining city because of the high number of vacant buildings in its downtown and surrounding neighbourhoods.

More importantly, vacant structures have also been shown to increase criminal activity in their immediate vicinity (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999). A survey in Austin, TX found that crime rates on blocks with open abandoned buildings were twice as high as rates on matched blocks without open buildings (Bass et al, 2005, p.3). The same survey also found that 41 percent of abandoned buildings could be entered without use of force. Within these open buildings, more than 83 percent showed evidence of illegal use by prostitutes, drug dealers, property criminals, and others." (Bass et al, 2005, p.3)

Vacant property also imposes a significant financial burden on residents, businesses and local governments. It is estimated that the average abandoned residential property costs the City of Buffalo, NY almost $12,000 over a period of five years from repeated nuisance responses, inspections, maintenance, foregone taxes and demolition (Schilling and Logan, 2008). In addition, vacant properties have a tendency to reduce the value of adjacent properties. A study by Bass et al (2005, p.7) showed that buildings within a 300 foot radius of a vacant structure depreciated by as much as $7,000, while buildings within 300 to 450 feet of a vacant structure experienced average decreases of $3,000.

Perhaps the greatest problem of vacancy is that it encourages further blight (Bernt, 2009). Rybcznski & Linneman (1999) note that as vacancies increase, local retail and social activities close due to an insufficient population base which, in addition to reduced services, causes further flight from the area. Similarly, Glock & Haubermann (2004) and Bernt (2009) note that while

low housing prices may be seen as an asset to increase home ownership and stabilize neighbourhoods, it often accelerates the process of neighbourhood decay:

> When existing houses sell for less than their replacement cost and have little likelihood of appreciating over time, developers have no incentive to build new houses on vacant land, and home buyers have no incentive to rehabilitate houses that have fallen into disrepair. That, in turn, further depresses the demand for houses in urban neighborhoods, and reduces homeownership rates as more purchases are by investors or speculators rather than families planning to occupy the home they buy. Between 1970 and 2006, Youngstown's homeownership rate dropped from 68 percent to 60 percent. With homebuyer demand weak, most sales at present in shrinking cities are to absentee investors, many of whom are short-term speculative buyers likely to leave their properties worse in a few years than when they bought them. (Mallach, 2011b, pp. 11-12)

It is important to note that while a community may be losing population, its physical footprint is not shrinking. As previously mentioned, decreasing neighbourhood densities tend to increase the costs of providing municipal services as a result of declining infrastructure efficiency and municipal revenues (Rybcznski & Linneman, 1999; Koziol, 2005; Bernt, 2009; Blais, 2010). Despite this, some shrinking cities have consciously chosen to expand their physical footprint through the construction of large infrastructure projects (roads, convention centers etc.), shopping centres and new subdivisions on the periphery. Leo & Brown (2000) note that such policies are often constructed out of the belief that 'any growth is good' while Bontje (2004, p.17) adds that it may be the result of misguided policy:

> The political philosophy (if any) behind this was that the huge population flux out of the city since 1990 should be offered suburban housing opportunities in the Leipzig region as much as possible, so that at least the regional population would not decline too dramatically.

In addition, Couch et al (2005) and Leo and Anderson (2006) explain that many of these communities are in a weak bargaining position in determining where new developments will

locate. Regardless of the rationale, the promotion of peripheral expansion in slow growth and shrinking regions is largely a zero sum game as it often comes at the expense of established neighbourhoods (Couch et al, 2005).

According to the literature, the prevalence of vacant property and its resulting effects are dependent on a number of local characteristics. These include the type and quality of available housing, the quality of municipal services, the severity of socio-economic problems and the presence and quality of local neighbourhood amenities such as historic structures and parks (Gordon, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Mallach, 2011a). For example, neighbourhoods characterized by an old and poorly constructed housing stock have a higher risk of experiencing widespread vacancy than those with ample green space, good schools and solidly constructed housing[28].

The prevalence of vacant property is also determined in part by the length and severity of a community's slow growth or population loss. According to Leo & Brown (2000), Boehlke (2011) and Hollander (2011a), communities experiencing slow growth and modest population losses have fewer vacant properties on average than communities experiencing significant shrinkage. In the former, blighted properties are typically confined to the downtown core and surrounding inner city neighbourhoods. However, in rapidly declining communities and regions vacant property tends to be widespread and affects even moderate income neighbourhoods and first-tier suburbs.

Given the importance of local characteristics, a number of academics note that the distribution of vacant property varies considerably in shrinking cities (Hollander, 2011b). For instance, Boehlke (2011) illustrates that despite losing half of their respective populations, the pattern of vacancy in Saginaw and Flint, MI are highly different:

[28] According to Rybczynski & Linnemann (1999) this is because older housing typically requires expensive retrofits to the electrical and plumbing systems to meet current building codes. In addition, they add that many of these houses do not cater to the needs or preferences of most contemporary home purchasers.

> Saginaw's abandonment is mostly concentrated on one side of town although prices are depressed across the city. The abandonment pattern leads to whole blocks nearly depopulating while other areas of the city maintain much of their original character. In Flint there are also thousands of abandoned properties and vacant lots, but the city has whole neighborhoods with only modest vacancy usually due to the presence of local institutions and buffers such as parks. Large areas are fully scarred by abandonment, but other areas present themselves as recoverable although even the finest houses in the city sell for prices so low that low income households can buy homes but aren't able to maintain them (pp. 130-131).

It should be noted however that population loss does not always lead to vacancy. According to Leo & Brown (2000), a community may maintain its vitality and urban form if the number of households remains constant and the built area does not increase significantly.

Despite the negative effects associated with shrinkage, they may also present communities with new opportunities to improve their built and natural environment. Vacant buildings, particularly those of a historic nature, can become particularly attractive for new residential, cultural or even clean industrial uses (such as technology incubators) (Simon, 2012). The clearance of derelict buildings on large parcels of land may also facilitate the construction of green energy sources[29] or new employment uses. In addition, numerous academics have touted the ability for central city neighbourhoods to construct urban agriculture and green space for residents on vacant land (Sander, 2006; Logan & Schilling; 2008; Schwartz, 2011).

5.5 Civic Culture

While the physical effects of shrinkage and slow growth may dominate the literature, it is also important to examine how both phenomena affect the socio-cultural health of a community. One aspect which requires particular attention is the effect of losing meaningful employment on individuals, their households and the surrounding community. Fassman (2006) explains that

[29] The largest urban wind farm in the world is located on the grounds of a former steel mill in Lackawanna, NY (Staba, 2007).

such this event tends to produce multiple experiences of loss because employment "structures the lives of individuals, secures their income, and defines their position in society…[it] is the anchor of every individual in the course of his or her life and in the structure of society." (p.74).

For individuals and households, the loss of meaningful employment has been shown to first lead to depression, alcoholism, drug addiction, despair, mental disorders, and increased violence (Catlin, 1993). Following this, Russo & Linkon (2003, p.202) note that individuals also tend to experience a "…loss of faith in institutions (business, unions, government, religious, family) that failed to provide the economic and social protection they had seemed to promote." Individuals may also begin to question their identity as the loss of neighbourhood and community institutions is exploited by outside observers and serve as a daily reminder of their plight (Russo & Linkon, 2003). Jeanne Suave, a community worker in northern Ontario described this trend to a Canadian Senate Commission on rural poverty in 2008:

> "[w]e need only look around; there are many abandoned houses; *there has been a drop in local pride*.[Emphasis added] Our roads are in bad shape, because our population drops from one year to the next" (Fairbairn et al, 2008, p.107).

A similar sentiment was echoed in Danny Brown's 2011 song *Fields* which describes his experience growing up in Detroit:

> Sitting on porches of abandoned houses
> Or sitting in the field on bed bug-ridden couches
> It's like they all forgot
> Nobody cares about us
> That's why we always end in the prisons instead of college
> I'm living in the system working the kitchen for chump change
> Lost in the streets n-----s playing that gun game
> Where nobody wins just a bunch of mommas losing
> Dead body in the field nobody heard the shooting
> Living in the streets where the options is limited
> Because there's burnt buildings instead of jobs and buildings
> And where I lived it was house, field, field

Field, field, house
Abandoned house, field, field

Durrschmidt (2005) adds that despite its intension, right-sizing may impede the ability of residents to reconcile their battered identity:

> Euphoria about innovative urban planning ideas [are] out of place as it is not understood that wastelands in terms of people's life… cannot be simply "rearranged," "reduced," or "recolonized." Each demolition is not only an adjustment made to the level of vacancy…it is also an incalculable loss of identity and meaning…as it will always be a gap in the "collective memory." (p.274)

The literature also notes that long-term unemployment and the loss of friends and meaningful employment may also produce feelings of helplessness or "fear of a future that can neither be individually or collectively influence[d]" (Durrschmidt, 2005, p.275) In his study of shrinking cities in eastern Germany, Durrschmidt (2005) identified that the combination of these factors led many people to withdraw themselves completely from public life to avoid further social shame from neighbours and outside commentators. According to Harden (2005) this directly impacts the ability of communities to take progressive or risky economic or planning initiatives as residents are fearful of trying new strategies in fear of continued failure.

While slowly growing communities may not suffer the same kind of despair and identity crisis, some nevertheless possess an inferiority complex. The cause is rooted in the pervasive notion that cities are first and foremost, 'machines for growth' (Logan & Molotch, 1987; Jonas & Wilson, 1999; Leo & Brown, 2000). Since the end of the Second World War, North Americans have not only come to believe that all growth is good, but that rapidly growing cities or those that have grown to a significant size are thus successful, desirable and progressive (Cox, 1999; Leo and Brown, 2000; Victor, 2010). In contrast "cities that are growing slowly are often

thought to be in trouble for no other than slow growth...and are often conflated with that of a declining population" (Leo & Brown, 2000, p.194). Cox (1999, p.32) explains that this inferiority complex often compels small towns to construct modern commercial structures in an effort to avoid being labelled as a "cowtown" or "hicksville."

Not surprisingly local residents often place pressure on local officials to increase growth as is demonstrated by the following online comments regarding Winnipeg's slow growth:

> "why is ok to be in the middle of the pack? dont we want to live in cit[i]es like Calgary Edmonton and Saskatoon where people make great money?"[30](barry, 2012).

> I really don't see what the big harm is in IKEA setting up shop in Winnipeg. Really. Not that I am a huge fan, but it's a desirable store by many, and if the demand exists, build it. *The fact that this city is even on the radar shows that we are not some deadwater city with no potential, as these kinds of stores don't set up in places like Sudbury*. [Emphasis added] It's private investment in the city and everyone is crying for private investment, right? I say bring it. (Greco Roman, 2008)

In the face of this pressure, municipal leaders often welcome every development proposal regardless of how their location, density and design impact a neighbourhood's attractiveness or a community's ability to deliver services and infrastructure (Leo and Brown, 2000). Although many slow growth communities suffer from inner city decay, lackluster street life and cultural amenities, Leo and Anderson (2006) contend that these are issues not caused by slow growth itself, but by the mismanagement of what little growth occurs. Such decisions not only exacerbate infrastructure deficits but they also "undermine the city's collective self-confidence and ultimately its viability" (Leo and Anderson, 2006, p.185).

Despite the negative perception, slow growth can provide a number of advantages for communities. These may include affordable housing prices, less congestion, a higher quality of

[30] Made in reference to Winnipeg's 2011 Census results which showed that the city was the slowest growing major city in Canada.

municipal services and the ability to adequately respond to and plan for changing service needs (Baldassare, 1981, p.140; Currie, 1985; Leo and Anderson, 2006).

5.6 Summary

Population loss is by no means a neutral phenomenon. As was demonstrated in this chapter, the onset of shrinkage has the potential to unleash a cycle of further population and economic loss. While shrinkage is often initiated by the loss of economic activity, it is also a consequence of it due to a smaller consumer base, lower real estate prices and little to no investment. In an effort to address declining revenues, many communities may accelerate population loss by cutting municipal services and increasing property taxes and user fees. Despite declining revenues, municipal operating costs often increase as a result of an oversized infrastructure network, increased demand on social services and a growing number of vacant structures. Financial stress may also result from increased borrowing costs and failed urban renewal and local economic development projects. While often excluded from the literature, population loss also has a negative impact on the well-being of its residents and the identity of a community.

Similarly, the effects of slow growth depend on how well a community manages the small amount of growth it experiences. Contemporary planning practices tend to produce inner city blight and increase infrastructure costs by expanding the built area of a community at a rate much faster than its population growth. In doing so, communities exacerbate infrastructure deficits and increase financial burdens by duplicating services and infrastructure while municipal revenues remain static. On the other hand, the experience in Europe demonstrates that if properly planned, slow growth and shrinking cities can have vibrant and attractive urban environment that provides a high quality of life for residents.

Most importantly, no two communities experience slow growth or shrinkage in a similar fashion. Local conditions such as geography, characteristics of local housing and economic markets, level of municipal services etc. not only influence the duration and severity of slow growth and population loss, but how the built environment is affected.

CHAPTER SIX: GROWTH APPROPRIATE PLANNING POLICY

6.1 Introduction

Urban planning is by no means a stranger to the effects of depopulation and economic loss. During the 1920s, the Chicago School of urban sociology explained that the decline of cities and their neighbourhoods was caused by a natural lifecycle that began with new development and ended in abandonment (Martinez-Fernandez, 2012a). Since then, numerous strategies have been devised to facilitate rapid growth and combat the effects of slow growth and shrinkage. These strategies, which range from the modernization projects of the 1960s to the cultural and entertainment schemes currently being used, have been at best, a mixed success. In some instances planning interventions have actually exacerbated the financial plight, socio-economic problems and population loss they were designed to reverse (Gordon, 2008).

Despite the increasing prevalence of slow growth and population loss, the discussion of growth appropriate planning is only being undertaken by a handful of academics and practitioners (Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2011; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). The purpose of this chapter is to gather the information from these discussions and outline the necessary components of a growth appropriate planning strategy.

In doing so, this chapter is organized into three sections. Section 6.2 briefly discusses contemporary planning strategies from the 1960s to the present in an effort to demonstrate how the planning profession has dealt with slow growth and depopulation. Building on this, Section 6.3 outlines three dominant criticisms of these approaches while Section 6.4 discusses what general components are needed to make planning better suited for areas experiencing less than rapid growth. These components include employing realistic growth projections, amending the role of urban planners, broadening the focus of planning strategies to include the economic,

social, environmental and physical issues and ensuring that comprehensive and strategic plans are representative of local characteristics and features.

6.2 Contemporary Approaches to Slow Growth and Shrinkage

According to the literature, the goal of contemporary planning is to generate investment and timely growth to ensure that neighbourhoods, cities and or regions do not fall behind other areas in prosperity (Victor, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Gunder, 2010). During the past half century communities have employed a number of strategies to reverse blight and stimulate growth. In the 1950s and 1960s, a large number of communities initiated ambitious urban renewal projects to modernize downtowns and inner city neighbourhoods. The demolition of historic buildings and neighbourhoods was predicated on the belief that new expressways, office tower complexes and civic structures would lure residents from the suburbs and attract future economic investment (Beauregard, 1993; Warkentin & Vachon, 2012). Simultaneously, communities were also attempting to stimulate job growth with new industrial parks, lucrative tax breaks an subsidized loans and infrastructure (Polese, 2011).

As manufacturing employment moved overseas in the late 1970s and 1980s, communities increasingly turned to high-tech industrial parks, clusters of economic activity and community based development to provide long-term growth (Polese, 2011). Confronted with diminishing opportunities for attracting increasingly mobile capital, Harvey (1989) noted the increasing use of 'entrepreneurial' urban strategies. By financing the construction of stadiums, festival pavilions, parks and other entertainment and cultural facilities, local leaders sought to rebrand their community, generate new economic activity and capture revenue from suburban residents in addition to domestic and international tourists (Gordon, 2008; Ahlfeldt & Maennig, 2010).

Similarly the commissioning of highly visible pieces of public art or internationally recognized architects is designed to create the image of a 'big-league' or 'world-class' city (Cox, 1999; Eisinger, 2000). More recently, communities have engaged in a fierce campaign to attract and retain members of the so-called 'creative-class'. According to Florida (2004), only those cities that have the capacity to attract, retain and pamper members of this highly educated group will be able to reap the rewards of a knowledge and service based economy. Unlike the 'bread and circus' model employed by communities in the 1980s and 1990s, planning and economic development strategies are striving to 'create' authentic neighbourhoods complete with historical buildings, walkable streets, plenty of independent retail and a large array of cultural amenities (Peck, 2005).

6.3 Criticisms of Contemporary Planning Approaches

Despite their popularity, Lovering (2007, p.358) explains that "there is no consistent evidence that increasing the openness of the local economy, encouraging inward investment and flows of trade and tourism, has had a positive effect on growth, much less on employment rates and per capita incomes." Eisinger (2000) adds that even in the rare instances when showcase projects are financially successful, their benefits are felt primarily by local elites and concentrated to a small geographic area. The failure of planning to address the challenges of slow growth and shrinkage can be boiled down to three deficiencies: its growth imperative, narrow focus on economic issues and disregard local for conditions or characteristics (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Leo & Brown, 2000; Popper and Popper, 2002; Owalt, 2005; Hall, 2008; Victor, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Hollander, 2011a; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

The growth imperative which dominates the discourse of the planning profession reflects the age in which it was developed (the height of the industrial revolution) and adopted by senior governments and municipalities (post-war era). As a result, urban planning's values and tools operate under a shared belief that increasing growth is not only possible in all situations but is also necessary to counter the effects of depopulation and blight.

This quest and glorification of growth is by no means limited to planning and in fact reflects widely accepted cultural norms which began some 350 years ago. Beginning in the 18th century, writers and philosophers discussed and defined the value of progress as a "sequence of events which led and were expected to continue improving all facets of individual and social experiences" (Victor, 2008). In contrast, sequential events which led to a worsening situation were not considered to be progress but rather decline. Prior to this, traditional societies were not governed by the idea of linear progression but by recurring cycles defined by seasonal changes and religious beliefs about death and reincarnation (Victor, 2008).

The emphasis for facilitating rapid growth also stems from the actions of senior governments. Following the Second World War, national governments placed full employment and economic growth as their most important policy objective. In part this was a response to the fear that poor socio-economic conditions would lead to social unrest or an armed insurrection among returning soldiers. Arnt (1978) and Victor (2008) add that the Soviet Challenge and Cold War would help politicize economic growth in an effort to illustrate the success of one governance system over another.

As a result, Molotch (1976) notes that by the early seventies cities were valued primarily for their economic capability: "…the political and economic essence of virtually any given locality, in the present American context, is growth . . . The very essence of a locality is its

operation as a growth machine" (p.10). Similarly, Wolfe (1981) adds the use of population growth to measure the success of policy reflects how deeply embedded growth has become into American politics (Weichmann & Pallagst, 2012).

The significant focus on promoting economic growth is however being increasingly viewed as inappropriate for use in slowly growing or shrinking communities (Leo & Brown, 2000; Popper & Popper, 2002; Oswalt, 2005; Hall, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Hollander, 2011a; Hollander, 2011b; Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Weichmann & Pallagst (2012) note that the cultural value attached to growth has helped dissuade many no growth or shrinking areas to continue using inappropriate strategies:

> Growth is still a valid, and most often an unchallenged, planning paradigm — even, paradoxically, in shrinking cities. Many shrinking cities in Europe and in the United States have long underestimated the persistence of shrinkage in urban development, as manifest in a diminished economic basis, an out-migrating population, and housing vacancies (p.263).

In the scramble to attract increasingly mobile and scarce capital, local leaders often prioritize world rankings, their image and increasingly the 'coolness' of their community over the needs and desires of local residents (Peck, 2005). Many of the entertainment and cultural led revitalization projects touted to 'right the ship' have instead marginalized long-term residents by pricing out those with lower incomes, providing low skill, low pay employment and displacing households through gentrification (Leitner, 1990; Eisinger, 2000; Miles, 2005; Peck, 2005; Ponzini & Rossi, 2010). Gordon (2008) adds that due to their limited finances and economic power, local governments often promote the construction of flagship projects without considering how its urban design and operations affect the surrounding neighbourhood or community as a whole.

The effectiveness of contemporary planning in slow growth and shrinking communities has also been hampered by its tendency to ignore local conditions or characteristics (Leitner, 1990; Leo & Brown, 2000; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Schatz, 2009). A common criticism of planning and urban renewal policy is its disregard for the condition of local real estate markets. In particular, Leitner (1990) and Mallach (2011b) comment that communities often construct office space or housing regardless of the long term demand or viability for either use.

Adding to this, area based initiatives often fail because of a mismatch between the scale at which the problem is conceived and the scale at which it is addressed (Rae, 2011; Mallach, 2011c; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). The literature also notes that the implementation of 'cookie cutter' policy may also result from political ambitions (Leitner, 1990; Catlin, 1993; Eisinger, 2000; Gilman, 2001; Rae, 2011), the desperation of local residents and politicians to reverse slow growth or shrinkage (Leitner, 1990; Leo & Brown, 2000; Boland, 2007; Lovering, 2007; Rybczynski, 2010) as well as limited financial resources and political constraints (Harvey, 1987; Peck, 2005).

6.4 Growth Appropriate Policy

Contrary to the current planning paradigm, growth appropriate policy departs from the growth imperative to one that integrates 'growth and decline' as simultaneous and interrelated urban processes (Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a). Viewed as a natural stage in the lifecycle of an urban area, growth appropriate planning seeks to exploit the opportunities they provide to increase the quality of life for residents (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Popper & Popper, 2002; Pallagst & Weichmann, 2005; Weichmann, 2008b; Schatz, 2009; Pallasgt, 2010; Hollander, 2011; Hollander & Mallach, 2011; Mallach, 2011b; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Schilling & Logan, 2012). For instance, Rybczynski & Linneman (1999) explains that:

> [U]rban planning for shrinkage is fundamentally different for growth. [The] question for shrinking cities is not "How can we grow big again?" but rather, "How can we prosper and have a wonderful, smaller city?" The goal must be to make cities more livable, more attractive, and probably, even smaller [to] be competitively viable in modern times (p.40)

Similarly, Popper & Popper (2002) note that addressing prolonged population loss requires a completely different strategy:

> Smart decline means leaving behind assumptions of growth and finding alternatives to it [and] purposefully planning for less-fewer people, fewer buildings, fewer land uses-demands its own distinct approach. [It also] requires thinking about who and what remains and may entail reorganizing or eliminating some services and providing different ones. It may involve promoting certain land uses and landmarks more as historical remnants than as sources of growth (pp. 20, 22)

The importance of this paradigm shift reflects the inability of contemporary planning practices to not only increase growth, but improve the community:

> How [cities] reconfigure their physical environment and repurpose their surplus buildings and vacant land, stabilize their economies and utilize their human capital and capitalize on their man-made and natural assets, is likely to determine whether their future will be one of continued decline, or of newly-found vitality…(Mallach, 2011b, p.2).

Making this paradigm shift necessitates changing the tools and strategies currently being used as well as the roles of planners and other stakeholders in the planning process. These changes include using realistic growth projections, creating holistic policy and instruments, greater public participation, leveraging local assets and entering into collaborative governance models with regional and senior governments.

6.4.1 Realistic Growth Forecasts

One of the most fundamental differences between growth appropriate and contemporary planning is the use of realistic growth forecasts (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Popper and

Popper, 2002; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2011a; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). For instance Schatz (2009) argues that "planners need to let go of the ultimate goal of attracting future growth and instead tailor policies to realistic demographic prospects" (pp.68-69) while Kabisch et al (2006) notes that "shrinkage processes unveil the need to deal with urban regions beyond growth." (p.1) Similarly, Schilling & Mallach (2012) explain that the effectiveness of local planning interventions depends on the accuracy of socio-economic projections:

> Comprehensive plans offer potential solutions for revamping land-use policy and revising stale development patterns. However, the comprehensive plans of many cities in transition are out of date – in some cases decades old – and disconnected from current conditions, market realities, and growth trends. [As a result]…plans rest on obsolete assumptions of steady growth and development and are not geared for managing decline or stabilization (pp.42-45) [31]

Rejecting the growth imperative and accepting a community's current and future reality is often the first step in improving the effectiveness of local policy. Numerous authors note that being realistic allows local officials, municipal staff and other stakeholders to shift their gaze inward (as opposed to abroad) to uncover how local assets can foster positive change (Popper and Popper, 2002; Schatz, 2009; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Hollander, 2011a; Schwartz, 2011; Schilling & Logan, 2012). This may include finding innovative uses for vacant spaces, expanding parks and recreational spaces, restoring natural environments and collaborating with important institutions (such as universities, hospitals etc.) to coordinate developments and share resources.

[31] Saint John's 1973 Comprehensive Plan projected that the city's population would triple from 90,000 to 265,000 within 25 years (Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2011, 17). More importantly, planners also ignored the fact that the city had started losing population as early as 1966. As a result, the plan supported the construction of highly dispersed, low-density developments on the periphery while the inner city lost population and experienced significant blight.

Accepting lower growth projections may be a difficult proposition for many communities however. Planners may be reluctant to adopt a different paradigm given the lack of progressive planning tools and theory (Oswalt, 2005). The reluctance to accept realistic projections also reflects the fear that such labels may dissuade future opportunities for investments (Leo & Brown, 2000; Beauregard, 2003; Simmons, 2003; Bernt, 2009; Schatz, 2009). The cultural obsession with using rapid growth as a measure of progress may also provide a roadblock for accepting one's reality:

> …population decline as well as slow growth produce feelings of inferiority, sometimes verging on panic, while rapid growth frequently results in self-congratulation that takes little account of the problems of rapid growth. To suggest that Vienna, Brussels, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Naples and Rome…are all suffering from some kind of urban malaise more marked than the problems suffered by cities in general would be considered idiosyncratic at best…(Leo & Brown, 2000, p.195)

Despite the difficulty, it is imperative that communities address the gap between policy and reality given the difficulties which arise from such mismatches. As previously mentioned, the consequences of expanding a community's built area faster than its population growth tends to increase the cost of delivering and maintaining municipal services, produce vacant property and disinvestment and exacerbate local and regional infrastructure deficits[32] (Leo & Brown, 2000; Gilman, 2001; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2011;Turenne, 2011). What's more, the marquee projects designed to stimulate growth often destroy the very elements that may attract future investment such as historic buildings, landscaped areas or unique businesses and cultures (Gordon, 2008).

The pursuit of growth also has a number of less noticeable effects within the community.

[32] Due to a reduction in funding and an expanding road network including the 1.5km extension of an inner-ring road in 2011, Winnipeg officials have stopped the rehabilitation of streets in 'poor' condition and shifted their resources to maintaining streets in fair condition (Turenne, 2011).

For instance, Schatz (2009) explains that high-profile revitalization projects may negatively impact the morale of local officials:

> Policies aimed at growth – particularly if it is employment growth that is being sought – are very likely to fail. Repeated failures discredit development policies and lead to burnout amongst development officers and planners. Instead, policies should be geared towards qualitative changes and managing the decline. (Shearmur & Polese, 2007, p.36)

Despite their perceived benefits, planning and economic development strategies (grants, subsidies, new infrastructure, job training programs etc.) designed to attract branch plants have a tendency to raise local taxes, exacerbate peripheral development and create greater economic uncertainty as they are more likely to leave the community during times of labour struggle or times of economic recession[33]. Similarly, Goodman (2003) noted that the attraction of export-oriented businesses alters a region's existing economic path and eliminates the jobs that may have otherwise been created in local sectors.

6.4.2 Integrating Plans, Policy and Programs

Although planners must increasingly look within their own community to discover opportunities for improvement, they must also be cognizant of the scale at which these problems occur at (Rae, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). The literature notes that while population loss and its effects may be concentrated in central cities, they are also the result of regional development patterns (Leo & Brown, 2000; Gordon, 2008; Logan & Schilling, 2008; Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2011). This is particularly true in shrinking regions where aggressive competition for investment often results in a zero-sum game for municipalities [34] (Leo & Brown, 2000; Schatz, 2009).The effectiveness and efficiency of policy can also be affected by poor

[33] The most recent example of this can be found in London, ON where Caterpillar moved its locomotive factory to Indiana and Mexico after employees refused steep wage concessions.

[34] Schilling & Logan (2008, p.91) note that in the Buffalo, NY metropolitan region, there are six Industrial Development Authorities whose sole purpose is to lure economic development away from its neighbouring communities.

communication and competition between municipal departments for increasingly scarce resources (Rae, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

To properly manage the effects of slow growth and population loss, Schilling & Mallach (2012, pp. 34-35) suggest that local governments coordinate their planning activities to ensure that:

- Policy is addressed at the scale problems are conceived;
- Public and nongovernmental entities are working together and;
- Local planning documents add up to a coherent strategy.

In addressing the geographic mismatch of policy, a number of authors have called for the creation of regional cooperative agreements particularly for transportation, housing, planning and economic related activities (Rybczynski & Linneman , 1999; Jessen, 2006; Scott, 2007; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Hollander 2011a). The benefits of such agreements include diminishing fiscal disparities among municipalities (Rybczynski & Linneman , 1999), increasing the efficiency of infrastructure by reducing duplicate investments (Jessen, 2006; Schatz, 2009) and the opportunity to construct innovative policy by facilitating the exchange of ideas, expanding dialogues and attaining new skills from various entities throughout the region (Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

The use of regional policy is also needed to address the complexity and scale at which the problems of slow growth and shrinkage occur and are caused:

> Due to varying levels of commercial retail vacancy within the suburbs surrounding Buffalo, no single prescriptive strategy will resolve the vacant property issues. Without a coordinated policy across jurisdictional boundaries, the current structure facilitates competition and not strategic collaboration. Regional and local leaders, developers, and the retail/commercial property owners and managers should devise a holistic "wellness" strategy that gathers critical market data and then uses that info as the foundation for a collaborative vision for regional reinvestment. New policies could help protect the existing places as viable areas for redevelopment (Schilling & Logan, 2008, p.89)

More importantly, senior governments must cooperate with communities and their respective regions by providing funding and policy decisions which support their visions and strategies (Leitner, 1990; Bradford, 2004; Couch et al, 2011). Fox& Axle-Lute (2008) illustrates that state infrastructure funding has helped contribute to the problems facing slow growth and shrinking communities:

> …of the $382 million spent from the Michigan Transportation Economic Development Fund since 1988, 78 percent—or $297 million—has gone to new suburbs or rural areas, while just 22 percent—or $85 million—has made it to cities. Similar patterns exist in other states. (p.36)

In Canada, municipalities are facing significant financial stress in part from their growing number of responsibilities and the declining resources to fund them (Bradford, 2004; Foster, 2007; Mirza, 2008). Bradford (2004) adds that this is largely due to the subordinate status of municipalities which allow senior governments to download services by making "unilateral fiscal cuts, program withdrawals and institutional restructuring with little regard for the fall-out in different cities and communities." (p.40)

To better integrate the actions and policies from senior governments, Bradford (2004) advocates for greater dialogue and coordination in five specific spheres of interaction:

- ***Policy formulation***, based on the reality that the different orders of government in the interconnected and mobile world are almost always stakeholders in each other's decisions;
- ***Budget development***, given the importance of long term planning, more predictable revenue streams, and respect for the single taxpayer;
- ***Service delivery***, helping ensure that all government interventions regardless of "ownership" respond to multi-faceted citizen and community needs in a timely, cost effective manner;
- ***Public administration***, allowing professional staff at each level of government to better appreciate the pressures on, and perspectives of, their counterparts working elsewhere; and finally,
- ***Political relations***, where leaders need to cultivate a problem-solving ethos valuing trust and common understanding across each of the four previous domains. (p. 41)

In some American states greater dialogue between senior and county governments has led to infrastructure policy which concentrates state funding in core areas and limits expansion projects that facilitate sprawl.

Despite the need to integrate policy and actors at a regional and national scale, it is equally important to ensure that local plans and public and nongovernment agencies are coordinated (Schilling & Mallach, 2012). In most communities, the planning functions of private, nongovernmental and public entities often operate in isolation of each other. As a result, scarce resources are often wasted through lobbying efforts, duplicating investment and enacting policies or developments which undermine the efforts of other entities (Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2011a,b; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). To better link policy with strategic resource allocation, Schilling & Mallach (2012) advise planners to develop meaningful participation with outside organizations and other municipal departments. Both authors add that such collaborations may create strong allies or proponents of progressive planning initiatives throughout the community.

6.4.3 Holistic Planning Instruments

According to the literature a key component of growth appropriate planning is the creation of holistic policy that accounts for and understands the social, economic and demographic trends affecting a community (Schatz, 2009; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). In the circumstance of slowly growing or shrinking communities holistic planning encompasses the following characteristics:

- **Context specific or place based policy**(Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Popper & Popper, 2002; Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008; Hall, 2008; Logan & Shilling, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Boehlke, 2011; Hollander, 2011; Krohe Jr., 2011; Rae, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

- **Flexible to account for unforeseen changes in growth or problems** (Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008; Weichmann, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2011; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012)
- **Alternative Indicators for Measuring Change (**Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Popper & Popper, 2002; Grossman, 2004; Allweil, 2007; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2011; Lepeska, 2011; Mallach, 2011b; Morrison & Dewar, 2011) and,
- **Operate on a long-term time frame** (Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008; Weichmnn, 2008; Boehlke, 2011; Krohe Jr, 2011)

6.4.3.1 Place Based Policy

Despite the need for regional planning, a number of authors (Popper & Popper, 2002; Fox & Axel-Lute, 2008; Weichmann, 2008; Schatz, 2009) have stressed the importance of crafting and implementing policy at the local level:

> [While] regional plans have the ability to focus on major smart decline and growth issues about which disparate groups can debate, deliberate, agree and disagree, such as transportation plans, infrastructure development, environmental protection, heritage and historical preservation and proposed economic drivers [they] must not dictate what is to be done in each locality comprising the region[and] leave each municipality in control of the built environment and the construction (or destruction) of actual places, spaces and structures (Mallach, 2011a, 361)

Moreover, Hollander & Nemeth (2011) warns that any attempt to implement smart decline from the regional level may fail given that such a perspective does not properly account for a community's history, its political and economic engines and existing power structures.

The need for context specific planning reflects the reality that no two communities experience slow growth and shrinkage in exactly the same manner. For example, Fox & Axle-Lute (2008) found that smaller communities are more susceptible to the destabilizing effects of vacant structures than larger cities. Similarly, Boehlke (2011) and Mallach (2011a) explain that the patterns and types of buildings susceptible to vacancy depend on a number of local

conditions such as housing preferences and the rate of population loss. The success of local planning initiatives is also tied to the health and interconnectedness of a community's social and financial capital (Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008;Ortiz-Guererro, 2010; Morrison & Dewar, 2011).

Despite this, contemporary planning practices tend to "treat all low demand communities as similar since they all have too many houses for the population that wishes to live there." (Boehlke, 2011, p.128) Such practices tend to reduce the effectiveness of policy by producing large information gaps about what is required to address the problem and where to channel the appropriate resources (Bradford, 2004; Vey, 2012). For example, the *Northern Ontario Growth Plan* is frequently criticized for its broad treatment of different settlement types (urban centres, small resource and First Nations communities) and optimistic projections for population and economic growth in the entire region (Hall, 2008; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010).

Similar problems exist between slow and rapidly growing communities. While homelessness is a challenge in both Winnipeg, MB and Vancouver, BC, their different growth rates created unique challenges for each city:

> In Vancouver, the resources of service providers to the homeless are stretched to the limit trying to deal with the numbers of people on the street and in temporary shelters. In Winnipeg, meanwhile, service providers assessing the homelessness situation and recommending action to deal with it gave top priority, not to shelters and services for street people, but to prevention of homelessness through the provision of more affordable housing (Leo & August, 2005). This more constructive approach to the problem is a luxury that Vancouver service providers cannot afford, but those in Winnipeg can, because they are not overwhelmed by throngs of clients. (Leo & Anderson, 2006, pp.178-79)

According to Schilling & Mallach (2012, p.78) the creation of place based strategies requires two levels of focus: a city-wide framework strategy and neighbourhood level implementation program. The goal of the former is to increase the attractiveness of a community by identifying available opportunities for collaboration (both within the region and abroad),

discovering assets and liabilities to be leveraged and addressing and targeting neighbourhoods for strategic investment. While both authors assert that there are successful examples of independent neighbourhood strategies they suggest that a citywide framework can provide better support for local efforts.

Within this framework, Schilling & Mallach (2012) also argue that the role of neighbourhood based strategies is to concentrate on increasing the desirability of the local housing stock, maintaining its stability and increasing the value of local amenities. To identify which aspects are most important, they advise planners to develop active and meaningful relationships with residents.

6.4.3.2. Flexible Policy

A second component of holistic policy is the use of flexible planning strategies and tools (Bontje, 2004; Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008; Weichmann, 2008a; Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2011; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). In the wake of structural economic and demographic changes, communities, particularly those based on resource extraction or processing, are highly vulnerable to unexpected swings in population and economic growth. For example, Weichmann (2008a) notes that Dresden's rigid population projections left it unprepared for the loss of 60,000 residents during the 1990s (due to overly optimistic projections) and the population growth of the mid-2000s (due to overly pessimistic projections). Similarly Fox & Axle-Lute (2008) warn against the tendency for communities to 'cannibalize' physical assets during economic downturns in the case growth resumes in the near future.

For many communities, improving adaptability will involve revisions to their planning documents and practices (Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Schwartz, 2012; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Outdated and overly strict land use by-laws may be relaxed to allow temporary or 'non-

traditional' uses on vacant land that may have otherwise been discouraged. Cleveland and a number of American cities have taken this approach by amending their zoning by-laws to establish 'urban garden zoning districts' which permit residents to raise chickens, ducks, rabbits and bees in urban neighbourhoods (Schwartz, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Other alterations may include permitting non-residential uses in areas of high vacancy, moving to a form based code or changing how municipalities assess the merits of new development and activities (i.e. change in the quality of life) (Schatz, 2009; Schwartz, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

While Schilling & Mallach (2012) promote the creation of a strategic framework if resources prevent the revision of a comprehensive plan, a number of authors have suggested abandoning master plan's altogether (Albrechts, 2006; Weichmann, 2008b; Schatz, 2009). Their rationale is based on the high cost and length of time required to create comprehensive plans and their tendency to 'lock-in' a community's policies for a set period of time (Albrechts, 2006; Schatz, 2009). Both authors are also critical of the tendency for master plans to thinly spread resources over a wide number of policy areas.

The flexibility of local planning also depends on the ability for residents to actively participate in the planning process. Weichmann (2008b) notes that strategic plans are successful when they are open-ended and allow for a collective learning process during the creation, implementation and evaluation of interventions. Similarly, Mallach (2011a) explains that by engaging residents and collecting multiple forms of data, planners may find themselves in a position where "rather than being a single right answer, or a single right strategy, there are a multitude of conflicting answers, each with their own trade-offs, which need to be mediated through process." (p.373)

6.4.3.3. Alternative Indicators for Measuring Change

A number of academics have also called for alternative methods of measuring the success of planning interventions. Victor (2008) notes that gross domestic product (GDP) is a poor indicator in measuring a community's overall health as it excludes the distribution of growth, externalities, unpaid work and includes items that may by growing as the quality of life declines (i.e. security, police, environmental remediation, commuting, repairs etc.). Delkin (2008) and Hollander (2011b) for instance asked residents in shrinking and growing communities in Germany and the U.S. to rate their happiness as well as the quality of their neighbourhood. In both studies the authors found that residents in growing cities were no happier than their counterparts from areas experiencing population loss.

The majority of authors however (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Popper & Popper, 2002; Allweil, 2007; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2011; Lepeska, 2011; Mallach, 2011b; Morrison & Dewar, 2011) suggest that the health of a community should be measured by the quality of life it provides for its residents:

> The growth paradigm as a cultural pattern has translated into routines of perception and action. Such a routine of action is the town planning which sees itself as designing by means of steering growth. Another routine of perception is the measuring of successes in the competition of cities by spectacular construction projects, economic benchmarks and not least by great events. According to a change of paradigm in the direction of sustainability these categories could be replaced by categories of quality of life. (Grossman, 2004, p.22)

6.4.3.4 Long Time Frames

Given the structural causes of slow growth and shrinkage, the problems facing these communities are not just complex according to Bradford (2004, p.40), they are *wicked*. As such

contemporary planning strategies and tools must not only be flexible and spatially based but operate over a significant period of time (Rae, 2011). Traditionally the duration of planning policy is short lived due to a number of factors including insufficient resources, changing political mandates and diminishing patience from residents (Schatz, 2009; Rae, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Despite their support for right-sizing strategies Schilling & Logan (2012) warn local leaders and planners to carefully consider how such decisions may impact the surrounding area(s) for 50 years or more.

While local stakeholders may demand immediate results, Rae (2011) argues that truly effective policy is inter-generational and would "view 25 rather than five years as an appropriate time-frame in which to effect change." (p.344) In part, this reflects the very nature of the challenges which are being addressed:

> The processes that lead to the challenges smaller industrial cities face—abandonment, fiscal problems, or regulatory hurdles to investment—are systemic. The responses need to be as well. Saving and renovating a handful of houses will not do any long-term good if an equal or a larger number, one block over, slides away into the hands of speculators and then to abandonment. (Fox & Axel-Lute, 2008, p.52)

Despite the attractiveness of 'classic economic development fixes' both Krohe Jr. (2011) and Boehlke (2011) warn against using such a model given the structural challenges facing slow growth and shrinking communities:

> Regardless of the nature of the community, its housing stock, and its reasons for decline, the baseline recognition is that the customers have lost confidence in the place as a community that can thrive. This loss of *confidence* can't be resolved by a single action; there isn't a loan product or a code compliance program or a housing project that is adequate to rebuild this confidence. The challenge is simply too complicated and it requires that the community face the impact of the strong *competition* for households, the reality that customers have an enormous range of *choice*, that people are seeking stable places with greater *continuity (where markets are predictable or "things just make*

> *sense")*, and that local communities have only limited *capacity* with which to respond to a complex set of customer decisions. (Boehlke, 2011, p.133)

A long-term time frame also allows resources to be used more efficiently as policy becomes more responsive through the use of a "double-loop learning" approach. As explained by Rae (2011, p.344) "double-loop learning occurs when error is detected and corrected in ways that involve the modification of an organization's underlying norms, policies and objectives." Despite the benefits of this approach, Rae (2011) is doubtful that the political nature of policy-making will lead to a change in practice.

Within the Canadian context, long-term planning can also help communities better prepare for the challenges associated with the natural boom and bust cycle of the resource industry and in some cases, the eventual depletion of non-renewable resources:

> Planning for the long term is especially important in smaller industrial cities because relatively small changes can have big effects. Smaller industrial cities need to plan ahead for ways to cushion the effects of these cycles. This means, for example, making sure that social service agencies stay funded and prepared during times of prosperity and that crucial physical assets are not cannibalized during economic downturns (Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008, p.52).

6.5 The Role of Planners

To properly manage the effects of slow growth and shrinkage, the literature suggests that planners will be forced to play a different role than their counterparts in rapidly growing communities (Schatz, 2009; Dueweke & Lewinski, 2011; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). As mentioned previously, the traditional role of planners has been to facilitate and manage the effects of rapid growth. These roles have been criticized in the literature for their inability to address the challenges of slow growth and shrinkage and by preventing the implementation of progressive planning policy (Oswalt, 2005; Schatz, 2009; Schilling & Logan,

2008; Dueweke & Lewinski, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). According to Schatz (2009) planners in these environments must amend their existing roles and adopt new ones in the following ways:

- Managers of slow growth and depopulation processes;
- Innovators and pioneers for policy;
- Facilitators and consensus builders and;
- Sources of local knowledge

6.5.1 Planners as managers of slow growth and depopulation

Rather than pursuing growth, a growing number of academics have advised planners to shift their focus and manage the effects of slow growth and shrinkage instead (Oswalt, 2005; Schatz, 2009; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Dueweke & Lewinski, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Morrison & Dewar (2011) for instance encourage planners to abandon the growth imperative and find holistic methods that:

> …respond to and shape the forces that cause disinvestment and abandonment…in a manner that achieves goals other than the traditional ones of encouraging or controlling growth to manage depopulation and disinvestment. (p.85)

Similarly, Schilling & Mallach (2012) suggest that planners should be identifying and directing attention to important issues such as trends in vacant property and the conversion of owner-occupied housing into rental housing. The need for such awareness is rooted in two important factors: preventing small scale blight from degrading otherwise healthy neighbourhoods and the reality that planning does not have the ability to reverse the structural forces causing slower growth and population loss:

> "…urban planning has never generated urban growth, but rather enables and controls it by means of planning. Likewise, urban planning can hardly stimulate the opposite process - shrinkage – nor can it reverse it. However, it can guide the process to the best urban solutions possible." (Reineits, 2005b, p.6)

By managing the processes of slow growth and decline, planners may also find themselves using a growing number of unconventional strategies (Schatz, 2009). For instance, rather than focusing on ways to distribute population growth, planners in shrinking areas need to examine how to improve the quality of life for residents who remain (Muller and Siedentop, 2004). To do so, planners may use tools that are experimental and created by local stakeholders. Some of these experimental tools currently being proposed include smart decline or rightsizing[35], growth boundaries, temporary uses on vacant property, land banks, identifying legacy assets such as parks and heritage structures and collaborating with local anchor institutions that function as urban magnets (Morrison & Dewar, 2011).

To facilitate such a shift, the mindset of planners and local stakeholders must shift from one that treats slow growth and shrinkage as a malaise to one that approaches it as an opportunity for improvement. In doing so however, Bontje (2004) and Weichmann (2008) note that planners must be neither too optimistic nor pessimistic in their future growth projections noting that *some* communities may experience population growth in the future[36]. The key according to Bontje (2004) is to be both realistic and flexible to reflect the dynamic processes of the urban environment.

6.5.2 Planners as innovators and pioneers of policy

Given the unique challenges associated with slow growth and shrinking communities planners must also expand their role as innovators or pioneers in the tools and strategies they amend or create from scratch (Oswalt, 2005; Reiniets 2005b; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Dewar, 2011; Mallach, 2011b; Morrison & Hollander, 2011; Schwartz, 2011; Plöger, 2011;

[35] Both terms refer to the process of matching a community's built area to its current and projected population through the use of demolition, strategic investment and other techniques.

[36] In his examination of Leipzeig, Bontje (2004) notes that after reunification city leaders were overly optimistic in their growth projections but too pessimistic later in the decade and were unable to properly forecast population growth.

Schilling & Mallach, 2012). The need for innovative policy reflects the poor understanding of how each trend affects a community:

> …[when] faced with the phenomenon of shrinkage, urban planning is merely reactive because – unlike with growth – it has little influence on the main forces at hand: deindustrialization, demographic change or even suburbanization. (Oswalt, 2005a, p16)

Similarly, Schilling & Logan (2008) explain that:

> urban policymakers and practitioners are challenged by shrinkage because they lack models of how existing and foreseeable future population levels influence urban systems…Planners must develop new policies and strategies to address the challenges shrinkage presents. (p. 453)

Planners must also contend with fewer resources than their counterparts in growing communities as municipal departments compete to maintain funding in the face of stagnant or shrinking revenues (Schilling & Logan, 2012, p.122).

Given the scarcity of resources and the complexity of slow growth and population loss, planners will also have to expand their perspective by forming partnerships across all levels of government and sectors (non-profit, business, civic, philanthropic etc.) (Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Traditionally, the 'planner's perspective' has been narrow and as a result limited their involvement in the effort to create land use tools such as vacant building registries, land banks or the creation of dedicated housing courts (Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). While this may be slowly changing, these programs have largely come from the efforts of lawyers, judges, policy specialists and public officials (Morrison & Dewar, 2011).

Sander (2006) and Schatz (2009) note that planners also need to look at the experiences of other cities. Jessen (2006) explains that planners in East Germany have treated their communities as "laboratories where…prototypes are being developed and new categories for describing, analyzing, and planning are being tested; new concepts and actor constellations,

cooperation with neighbouring disciplines are being experimented with." (p.1) However Schatz (2009, p.98) cautions that there are "limits to how much knowledge can be transferred form one case to another" while Morrison & Dewar (2011) note that the innovation of planners is limited in part by the political and social processes which they operate under.

Despite the need to change there is little guidance for planners on how best to manage slow growth and population loss. Given their stigma, senior governments have in many cases refused to acknowledge that communities and regions are struggling (Foster, 2007). There is also little support from academics as Hall & Hall (2008, p.10) found that between 1994 and 2005, only 4.4% of Canadian journal articles discussed decline or no growth.

Although persuading local governments and residents to reform policy may be a lonely and unpopular struggle, Sanders (2011) argues that it is the moral responsibility of a planner to do so:

> [The role of a planner] is to know when it is the right time and place to offer our traditional expertise and when it is time to more fully support the city's awareness of its life conditions so it can respond appropriately. This is about being in tune, both as a profession and as individual practitioners, with what our cities are asking us to do…not what we want to do, but what is being asked of us…(Sanders, 2011, p.30)

6.5.3 Planners as facilitators and consensus builders

While meaningful citizen participation is viewed as a prerequisite for successful planning its importance is elevated in the context of slow growth or shrinkage (Reiniets, 2005b; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2012; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). The financial constraints of municipalities mean that the success of policy is increasingly reliant on residents to take an active role in implementing programs and initiatives. More importantly, residents may have innovative ideas on how to reuse and leverage local assets to improve the community.

Without public support however there is little chance for success. Pattison (2004) explains that the failure of County Durham's village relocation program was caused by its predominant focus on economic objectives, inflexible adherence to an idealized planning model and the absence of public participation. The relocation and demolition of small 'out-ports' in Newfoundland and Labrador was also stopped because it failed to consider how the quality of life of relocated residents would be affected (O'Connor, 2011a). More recently, Detroit's attempt to create a strategic framework has encountered significant resistance from residents. Eager to kick start the process, planners began imagining the city's future without dealing with long standing grievances in the community. As a result Morrison & Dewar (2011) note that public meetings became a setting to air complaints, grievances and suspicions rather than discussing the city's future.

These challenges require that public participation go beyond the traditional practices of open houses, charrettes and identifying core needs. The loss of community institutions necessitates that planners understand how residents relate to their neighbourhood, other residents and the community at large (Neuman, 1998; Schatz, 2009; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). More importantly, planners must earn the trust of residents whom may be weary from the broken promises of previous planning strategies and tensions between different socio-economic classes (Schatz, 2009). According to Hollander & Nemeth (2011) this is possible only when planners "...facilitate discussion and debate about what the state should do…in an inclusionary and transparent fashion…so that different social groups may recognize and appreciate other people's claims." (p.359) Similarly, Morrison & Dewar (2011) argues that to discover the true issues of concern and clear suspicion, planners must:

> "…act like family therapists [by] acknowledging the history and civic identity of the city, engage citizens where they are, listen as people talk about their struggles, aspirations and deep feelings of injustice, distrust and loss [and most importantly] deal honestly and respectfully with each other." (p.94)

In doing so, planners become the conduit by which various stakeholders learn about the extent of the transition taking place in their neighbourhoods and voice their emotions/values/ideas etc. on how to achieve a smaller but healthier community.

6.5.4 Planners as a source of local knowledge

Lastly, planners must enhance their role as a source of knowledge, particularly with respect to the conditions and processes affecting neighbourhoods (Dewar, 2006; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). For instance Dewar (2006) explains that the redevelopment of derelict property depends largely on the accuracy and depth of local policy and vacant land inventories. Similarly, Schilling & Logan (2008) comment that planners need to be alert for trends in vacant properties, demographics and local businesses that may threaten stable neighbourhoods or present new opportunities for improvement.

While this monitoring may occur through the use of gathering statistics, a more accurate picture of the community can be obtained by traversing its sidewalks and communicating with local residents to see how they are adapting or utilizing the effects of depopulation (Mallach, 2011a; Boehlke, 2011). For example, despite the absence of a formal land bank or blotting program, residents in Detroit have been annexing neighbouring vacant properties for a number of years. In this case, the role of the planner would be to formalize "…progressive practices that already exist, but that are underappreciated and have little legitimacy." (Armborst, D'Oca, & Theodore, 2007, p.16; Schatz, 2009)

Morrison & Dewar (2011) add that developing an intimate knowledge of a community may also uncover opportunities on how to use local assets to improve the quality of life. Such opportunities may be found in the form of identifying 'legacy assets' (e.g. art museum, collection of historic structures, buried streams), opportunities for expanding or rehabilitating naturalized and landscaped areas and collaborating with local institutions for place-specific improvements (Schilling & Logan, 2008; Schwartz, 2011; Morrison & Dewar, 2009).

6.6 Summary

Growth appropriate planning represents a significant departure from contemporary planning and economic development practices. At its core this new planning paradigm views growth and decline as interrelated and natural processes. To ensure that a community is utilizing the right tools and strategies the literature notes that planners must use realistic growth projections. This is in stark contrast to contemporary practices which often use overly optimistic projections to justify expanding municipal services into peripheral areas, expensive infrastructure or economic development projects or simply ignoring a community's reality.

Building on this is the use of holistic policies and tools which are context specific or place based. By incorporating local conditions, policy is better able to address the unique concerns and opportunities that are associated with slow growth and population loss. Holistic policy is also defined by its ability to adapt to changing demographic situations, using alternative community indicators to measure changes in the community as well as the effectiveness of policy and by the use of a long-term time frame.

Lastly, growth appropriate planning also requires that planners change their existing roles and adapt new ones. Traditionally, planners have been managers of growth and treated slow growth and shrinkage as an illness that required treatment. In communities experiencing these

phenomena it has been suggested that the growth imperative be abandoned in favour of a role that actively manages the effects of each trend. Doing so requires that planners become innovators and pioneers as the preeminent focus of stimulating growth has left the planning and economic development professions with few tools or strategies that can operate in such environments. As discussed earlier it is also necessary for planners to enhance their role as facilitators and consensus builders given the role residents will play in creating and implementing new planning strategies. Lastly, planners will also have to develop a greater understanding of their community and in particular, how local assets can be leveraged, neighbourhood and regional trends and how residents are coping with slow growth and population loss.

CHAPTER SEVEN: METHODOLOGY

7.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this thesis seeks to build on the findings of Hall (2007), Schatz (2009) and Ortiz-Guerrero (2010) by answering three questions:

- How do municipal planners, economic developers and officials define slow growth and shrinkage?
- What factors cause a community to implement growth appropriate planning tools and strategies?
- What elements do planners and local economic development professionals believe should be a part of growth appropriate planning policy.

Unlike previous studies this thesis did not utilize a case study design but instead opted for an online questionnaire. In part this strategy was chosen on the basis that each community experiences slow growth and shrinkage differently and as such, may provide a wide range of information to compliment and add to the existing literature (Mallach, 2011a). This chapter will outline the rationale for using a qualitative research methodology, its strengths and weaknesses as well as the construction of the online survey tool.

7.2 Qualitative Research Strategy

Although most surveys employ a quantitative research strategy to easily identify trends and minimize errors within the data, this research does not. The decision to use a survey that mixes both qualitative and quantitative elements was based primarily on the nature of the data to be collected and to improve the quality of responses. According to the literature there are no less than eleven different factors that have the potential to influence local planning and economic development policy (Table 3). Using a purely quantitative strategy would unfortunately produce closed-ended information and potentially exclude crucial information to explain the influence that these or other unidentified factors may have.

Table 3 – Indicators for Survey Questionnaire

Indicators	Rationale for Use	Source
Definition/Perception of Slow Growth and Shrinkage	- If decline is thought of negatively, municipalities may be hesitant to shift policy	- Leo & Brown, 2000 - Oswalt, 2006 - Schilling & Logan, 2008 - Pyl, 2009 - Hollander, 2011a - Schwartz, 2011
Economic Characteristics	- Structure of local and regional economy influences strategy/perception of municipalities	- Oswalt, 2006 - Schilling & Logan, 2008 - Polese, 2009
Demographics - Socio Cultural Characteristics	- Plays a large role in the perception of a municipality - Indicates challenges municipality faces	- Cox, 2005 - Steglich 2006
Perception of Municipality's Current and Future Economic Health and Population Levels	- Municipalities will not change their planning strategy if they believe their community is not slowly growing, shrinking or on the cusp of rapid growth.	- Schatz, 2009 - Schilling, 2008 - Steglich 2006 - Weichmann, 2008a
Amount and concentration of vacant land/structures	- Large numbers of vacant land/structures may force the city to acknowledge structural shrinkage and damage neighbourhoods	- Schatz, 2009 - Steglich 2006 - Koziel, 2006 - Weichmann, 2008 - Mallach, 2011b - Fernandez-Martinez, 2012b
Fiscal conditions	- The inability to maintain essential services and infrastructure may force some cities to change their planning strategy	- Koziol, 2004 - Steglich 2006 - Schatz, 2009 - Scorsone, 2011 - Martinez-Fernandez, 2012b
Characteristics of Municipal Government	- The drive to change planning strategy depends largely on the will of municipal governments	-Hall, 2007 - Mallach, 2010 - Schatz, 2009 - Steglich, 2006
Assets of city	- The attractiveness of a city may be improved by the quality and presence of cultural, entertainment facilities in addition to geographic location to large urban centres	- Deohler-Behzadi, 2006 - Grunzig, 2006 - Schilling & Logan, 2008 - Pallagst, 2009 - Schwartz, 2011 - Morrison & Dewar, 2011 - Schilling & Mallach, 2012
Population	- The size of a municipality can determine the type of strategy feasible	- Beauregard, 2009 - Cox, 2005 - Hall, 2007 - Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008
Public life	- As isolation among residents grows, perception of 'big solutions' becomes more favourable	- Cox, 1999 - Leo & Brown, 2000 - Durrschmidt, 2006
Planner Education	- Level of education/experience may impact direction of policy	- Hall, 2007 - Schatz, 2009

Despite a number of varying definitions, the primary purpose of qualitative research is to understand *why* a phenomenon has occurred by using words as opposed to numbers (Taylor and Trumbull, 2005; Cresswell, 2009). Thus, rather than using a rigid and experimental setting as most quantitative methods do, qualitative research employs a flexible and interpretive approach to "make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.3). In other words, qualitative research seeks to determine the point of view of respondents. It does so because the perspective of others is believed to be meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit (Patton, 2002, p.341).

Traditionally, qualitative data has been obtained using three separate methods; in-depth interviews, participant observations and focus groups (Mack et al, 2005). Only recently have surveys been employed in qualitative research as Patton (2002) and Cresswell (2009) note their use in ethnographic research as well as narrative stories.

The suitability of a qualitative method for this research was also confirmed by Sofaer (1999) who stated that qualitative strategies were particularly effective in the following situations and circumstances:

- Complex phenomena that require rich descriptions
- There is a desire to track unique or unexpected events
- There is a need to move towards explanations
- Giving voice to those whose views are rarely heard
- Increased sensitivity to contextual factors

There are however a number of disadvantages which arise from the use of qualitative data. Unlike quantitative data whose validity can be easily tested using mathematical and statistical functions, the validity of qualitative data is largely dependent on the discretion of the researcher in a process called coding (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Basit, 2003). Despite being systematic

and disciplined, the potential to misinterpret meaning, salience and connections in the data can be significant.

7.3 Benefits and drawbacks of online questionnaires

In choosing a research strategy, a number of factors had to be considered. The first and most pressing issue was the large number of Canadian communities to be surveyed (200) and their vast geographic distribution. The rationale for using such a large number reflected two needs; to ensure data validity; and to reflect the diverse nature of Canada's urban and rural communities. It was determined early on that visiting each of these communities was impractical given the amount of resources (money, time, information etc.) required for such a strategy. Given these constraints, an online survey questionnaire was considered to be the ideal tool to provide the information necessary to answer my research questions.

According to Wright (2006) and Shaughnessy et al (2008) there are a number of advantages for using online surveys as a primary tool for collecting data:

- **Efficiency**: Surveys can be sent out almost instantly to the entire survey population regardless of their location. In addition, data from finished surveys can be easily copied and pasted to other documents for analysis unlike paper surveys.
- **Cost**: The cost of producing paper surveys and the postage required to distribute them to the survey population can escalate quickly.
- **Convenience**: Participants can answer the survey at any time or place and the possibility of misplacing the survey is eliminated.

Despite these advantages, a number of disadvantages are also associated with the use of online surveys. Biemer and Lyberg (2003), Wright (2006) and Shaughnessy et al (2008) also mention the following problems related to their use:

- **Response Rates**: According to Wright (2006) and Shaughnessy (2008), online surveys tend to have lower response rates than comparable mail or telephone surveys. Due to the busy workload and sensitivity of the subject matter, a sizeable number of the survey's population may not answer the questionnaire.

- **Collection time:** Unlike telephone surveys, the time between sending and receiving completed surveys can be significant.
- **Data quality:** Unlike interviews, survey questionnaires do not easily allow researchers to conduct follow-up questions with respondents. There is a possibility that important data could be left out the survey responses. In addition, there is some concern given the sensitivity of the topic that some respondents may not answer truthfully. The absence of an interviewer to clarify and probe for more answers may also create less reliable data.
- **Data coding:** According to Biemer and Lyberg (2003), a potential limitation could be improper coding of the qualitative data which would severely limit the accuracy of data.

Since the survey population consists solely of randomly chosen economic development, planning and municipal officials, this study avoids a number of sampling errors (such as over-representation) commonly found in online surveys studying the general public or a specific sub-group.

7.4 Survey Construction

The structure and content of the survey was based primarily on two methods: a literature review to uncover the factors which influence each of the three research questions and the results from two pilot surveys. With regard to the literature, eleven factors were identified (as indicated in Table 1) that may possibly influence the direction of policy. For each factor, the survey will ask a question(s) to determine its power in influencing local policy. In addition, interview questions used in Hall (2007) and Schatz's (2009) case studies of Sudbury, ON helped influence the nature of the questions.

As mentioned above, construction of the survey was also influenced by the findings from three pilot surveys. According to van Teijlingen & Hundley (2001), pilot surveys are a crucial element of designing an accurate questionnaire by identifying practical problems which may arise from the range of answers or the wording and order of questions. Sapsford (2007) adds that

pilot surveys can also identify which questions tend to be skipped by informants. To augment the data provided by the survey, Sapsford (2002) also recommends talking with participants to:

> …uncover what questions were difficult or out of place, what topics they thought had been left out or whether they felt that it was not possible to say what they really wanted to say, and how they think the questionnaire could be improved (p.227).

Given the nature of the topic, the first pilot survey consisted of fourteen open ended questions with no prompts or pre-determined answers to choose from. Of the 29 surveys sent to different respondents in Atlantic Canada, only eight completed the survey. The results from these completed surveys however were of little use as most of the responses consisted of 'Yes', 'No' or 'I am unsure'.

To rectify this situation, each question in the second pilot survey featured a variety of responses to choose from. For example, when asked to define slow growth, decline and shrinkage, respondents were asked to use a Likert Scale to rate how well the listed variables characterized each term (Table 4). In a number of other questions, respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed with the statement provided. Respondents were also encouraged to leave open ended responses through written statements at the beginning of each survey section and by providing a blank space beneath every question. To provide better comparisons with the literature, the number of questions increased to 35.

The second pilot survey was then sent to the eight respondents who completed the first pilot survey. As predicted, using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches for each question provided data of a much higher quality. This is because while quantitative methods allowed trends to emerge throughout the data, forcing respondents to choose an answer also made them more likely to elaborate on their position with a qualitative response. After

reviewing the surveys, each respondent was asked to identify how the questionnaire could be improved. Among the most common complaints were its length and repetitive nature.

Table 4 Defining Slow Growth – Example From Second Pilot Survey Question

Using the scale below please rate what signs best indicate that a community is experiencing slow growth? Please provide any additional criteria or comments in the space below.

Indicators	(1) Poor Indication	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) Strong Indication	Unsure/Not Applicable
Small population increases (<1% annually)							
Small population decreases (< 1% annually)							
Rising unemployment							
Falling GDP							
Vacant commercial and residential structures							
Municipal service cutbacks							
Deteriorating infrastructure							
Rising Poverty							
Increasing social problems (crime, substance abuse etc.)							
Loss of community institutions (commercial, cultural etc,)							
Loss of confidence in one's self, community & institutions (govt, church etc.)							
Additional Signs/Comments: [Space for open-ended responses]							

These concerns were incorporated into the third pilot survey which reduced the number of questions from 35 to 25. Rather than using the same sample group, 25 new participants from western Canada were randomly chosen. The response rate however was extremely low as only two surveys were fully completed. While this may be a result of a busy workload, there were also two cases where respondents explicitly refused to participate on the basis that their community was growing. It should be noted that the letter of invitation and a number of questions in the survey explicitly mentioned that the rationale for their participation was based on their slow growth rate or population loss from the 2011 Census. To increase future

participation, all references to the growth rate of a participants' community were removed and replaced with a neutral statement.

Additional input regarding the construction of the survey was provided by faculty from the University of Winnipeg's *Department of Geography*, the Institute of Urban Studies and the University of Waterloo's *School of Planning*.

7.5Survey Population

The survey's population as previously mentioned is composed entirely of municipal leaders (mayors, CAO's and councillors on local planning committees) as well as planning and local economic development officials residing in slowly growing and shrinking communities and regions. Individuals were contacted primarily by obtaining their e-mail address from their municipality's corporate website. Suitable areas were chosen using data from the 2011 Canadian Census that met the following criteria:

- Shrinking communities were those with population losses in the past five years and
- Slow growth areas with less than 1% annual population growth.

These communities were then classified according to their growth (slow growth or population loss) and their population[37] (Small Population Centres < 29,999; Small Urban Centres 30,000 – 99,999 and Large Urban Centres >100,000). While an attempt was made to stratify the number of communities based on their size, this was not possible given the large number of communities which did not provide contact information for municipal officials or planning and economic development staff. It should also be noted that a large number of rural communities did not employ planners or economic development officials due to insufficient resources. As a

[37] Based on the criteria used by the 2011 Canadian Census

result, many rural communities are governed by regional planning and economic development districts whom were contacted whenever possible.

Surveys were sent to 430 potential respondents in 166 communities (71 slow growth and 95 shrinking) in all ten provinces and two territories. The large sample size was based on two principles: to uncover multiple viewpoints from the same community and address the low response rate which was anticipated early on in the research process and in subsequent pilot surveys.

In total, 70 respondents from 51 communities either partially or fully completed the survey for a response rate of 16%. Not surprisingly, municipal planners comprised the majority of respondents with 41 individuals (8 planners, 16 senior planners and 17 directors) while 13 economic development officials (9 led officers and 4 directors) and 13 municipal leaders (11 mayors and 2 councillors) took part in the study. The remaining four respondents declined to provide their job title. Of the 51 communities represented, 32 were considered to be small population centres with less than 30,000 residents, 12 were designated as a medium population centres and the remaining 7 communities had a population of greater than 100,000.

7.6 Anonymity of Respondents

Ensuring the anonymity of survey respondents was a key concern for two primary reasons. The first is that information collected from surveys may draw negative feedback or worse from their respective employer. Secondly, ensuring anonymity was also seen as a way to increase the validity of data by allowing respondents to speak freely and provide detailed descriptions and assessments of current policies in addition to the community's future economic and population trends.

To err on the side of caution, all respondents were given and identified with a confidential and randomized number. In addition, any reference which could be attributed to a specific community was removed from any quote used in the thesis. The latter is in response to Schatz's (2009) caution that respondents may be identified based on their knowledge of the municipality. It should be noted that before surveys were sent out to the study population, it was reviewed and given clearance by the University of Waterloo's *Office of Research* to ensure that the identities and rights of respondents were fully protected. Respondents were also asked if they authorized the use of their responses to be quoted in this thesis.

7.7 Methods for Analyzing the Data

Given the mixture of quantitative and qualitative data within the survey, two methods of data analysis were required. With regard to the quantitative data, almost all of the questions utilized ordinal data and were analyzed by looking at the means and standard deviations of the data for each question. Due to the relatively small and diverse sample population, it was not possible to perform any further statistical analysis on the data.

Unlike quantitative data, the material collected through qualitative research has a tendency to be unstructured and difficult to use. In response, many qualitative researchers have employed the use of data coding or categorization to provide coherence and structure to research data while maintaining the original accounts of individuals (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Basit, 2003; Priest et al, 2002). This is accomplished primarily by subdividing data into codes or categories that operate as a way of allocating meaning to the descriptive or inferential data compiled during a study (Basit, 2003; Dey, 1993).

Basit (2003) and Taylor and Gibbs (2010) note that the creation of codes and categories is extremely flexible and can be attached to a varying amount of words, phrases, sentences or

whole paragraphs. While a number of different coding strategies can be found within the literature, almost all appear to be based in some part on Bryman and Burgess (1994) coding technique.

The first stage of coding used for this research was designed to create a general overview of the data. Approximately 15% to 20% of the data was carefully read to identify and make notes regarding key ideas, the range of responses as well as recurring themes and issues which emerge as important to the respondents (Taylor and Gibbs, 2010). These notes according to Bryman and Burgess (1994) are an important stepping stone in the process of conceptualizing the patterns which will emerge in the later stages of the coding technique.

In the second stage, the amount and detail of text examined increased. During this stage all of the collected data was examined in an effort to identify new and recurring issues, concepts and themes. Those identified as significant were highlighted and assigned a code which was used to organize the data in subsequent stages. After coding all relevant data, broad themes which are commonly known as thematic indexes are created to organize groups of repeating ideas. Some of these thematic indexes included effects of population loss and factors influencing policy to name a few.

While indexing provided a general overview of the data, a process known as charting was used to refine the contents and ideas within each thematic trend. Using relevant literature, the thematic indexes created in previous stages were organized and concentrated into a small number of key subject areas. Within each subject area, the large number of coded statements was organized into distinct headings and subheadings to represent different aspects or ideas within a particular subject. The headings used during this process were taken largely from the literature to help uncover similarities or potential differences between the experiences and opinions of

respondents, academics and other professionals. In the final stage of coding, the mapping and interpretation of the data was organized in relation to the three research questions being asked.

7.8 Summary

This thesis is attempting to answer three unique research questions: how do planners, economic developers and municipal officials define slow growth, decline and shrinkage; what are the factors that influence a community to pursue growth appropriate planning policies and what elements constitute growth appropriate planning. Within Canada, almost all of the research regarding slow growth and shrinking communities has utilized a case study approach. To better understand how slow growth and shrinkage impact communities as well as their planning processes, an online questionnaire was distributed to more than 400 individuals in 166 communities across Canada. After two invitations to participate 70 respondents from 51 communities either fully or partially completed the survey

While most surveys do not employ a mixture of qualitative and quantitative elements, the complex nature of the problem and research tool made it necessary to include both. To analyze the completed surveys, a four stage coding method was employed to organize the data, compare it to the literature and answer the three research questions being asked.

CHAPTER EIGHT: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

8.1 Introduction

The basis for this research was based on a small but growing field of literature that examines the inability of contemporary planning strategies to address the challenges found in slow growth and shrinking communities. In particular, academics have been particularly critical about a number of characteristics including its:

- Growth imperative and narrow focus on economic issues
- Exclusionary nature
- Inattention to local characteristics
- Overly optimistic growth projections
- (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Leo & Brown, 2000; Popper and Popper, 2002; Oswalt, 2005; Leo & Anderson, 2006;Schatz, 2009; Ehrenfeucht & Nelson, 2011; Hollander, 2011a; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012),

In contrast, growth appropriate planning is characterized by its flexibility, long-range time frame, inclusionary nature, balanced focus on social, economic, environmental and economic issues and is built to reflect local features.

This thesis seeks to add to this discussion by building off of the work Hall (2007), Schatz (2009) and Ortiz-Guerrero (2010) by asking three research questions:

1) **How do municipal officials and professionals define slow growth, decline and shrinkage?**

2) **What factors influence a community to implement growth appropriate planning and economic development tools and strategies?**

3) **What elements do municipal officials and professionals believe should be a part of growth appropriate planning and economic policy?**

These three research questions formed the basis of a 25 question survey which was fully or partially completed by 70 respondents in 51 communities. This chapter will examine how the results of this survey and subsequent conversations with respondents compared to the literature.

8.2 Survey Demographics

Of the 430 suitable respondents, 70 municipal professionals and leaders fully or partially completed the survey. Within this group, 41 indicated they were planners (8 planners, 16 senior planners and 17 directors), 13were in the economic development field (9 led officers and 4 directors) and the remaining 13 respondents were local officials (11 mayors and 2 councillors). The remaining 4 respondents indicated other. While previous studies asked respondents about their tenure in the community it was found that this was not a factor in determining the direction of planning policy and was not asked.

Geographically, respondents worked in 51 different communities and regions across nine provinces and one territory. Not surprisingly Ontario has the highest representation as surveys were filled out from eighteen different communities. The remaining 33 communities were split amongst the rest of the provinces (Table 5) with 18 in western Canada, 14 from the Atlantic Provinces and one from the North West Territories. With regard to size, the majority of communities in this study (32) had a population of less than 30,000 and were considered to be a small population centre. Of the remaining communities, 12 were designated as a medium population centres (> 30,000 to < 99,999) and 7 were labelled as a large urban centre (>100,000).

Table 5 Geographic Distribution of Survey Respondents

Province/Territory	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	NWT
Number of Communities	9	6	1	2	18	0	7	5	1	4	1

8.3 Defining Slow Growth, Decline and Shrinkage

To understand how local officials and professionals defined each term, the survey listed a number of attributes which the literature commonly associates with slow growth and population loss (Table 6). Respondents were then asked to rate each attribute using a Likert scale with 1 indicating that the attribute was a poor indicator of the term and a six indicating that it was a strong attribute. In addition, respondents were also encouraged to provide the rationale for their answer in the survey and in subsequent conversations. This section will examine how respondents defined each term and explain the rationale for their decision.

Table 6: Attributes of Slow Growth and Shrinking Communities

Duration and Severity of population growth/decline	Leadbeater, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Hollander, 2011; Fernandez-Martinez et al, 2012; Schilling & Mallach, 2012
Rising Unemployment	Beauregard, 2003; Oswalt, 2005; Weichmann, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Powers, 2010; Audirac et al, 2012; Grant, 2012
Falling GDP	Simmons, 2003; Pallagst, 2008; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011
Prevalence of Vacant Buildings	Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Schatz, 2009; Mallach, 2011a; Pallagst, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012
Municipal Service Cuts	Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Gordon, 2008; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Anderson, 2012
Financial Stress	Gordon, 2008; Brophy, 2011; Anderson, 2012; Audirac et al, 2012
Deteriorating Infrastructure	Leo & Brown, 2000; Foster, 2007; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Brachman, 2011; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Audirac et al, 2012
Rising Poverty	Beauregard, 2003; Oswalt, 2005; Gordon, 2008; Schatz, 2009
Increasing Social Problems	Catlin, 1993; Beauregard, 2003; Gillette, 2005;
Loss of Community Institutions	Russo & Linkon, 2003; Durrschmidt, 2005; Allweil, 2007; Anderson, 2012
Loss of Community Confidence	Leo & Brown, 2000; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010;

8.3.1 Defining Slow Growth

Within the literature, slow growth is often synonymous with either small increases and or decreases to a community's economy and population. For instance, Levin (1983) and Robinson (1983) define slow growth as a period of prolonged period of economic recession. On the other hand a number of authors describe slow growth as less than 1% annual growth (Downs, 1994; Leo & Brown, 2000; Glaeser & Shapiro, 2003; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Turok & Mykhnenko, 2007; Audirac & Alejandre; 2010). Gottlieb (2003) takes a more neutral approach by describing slow growth as relatively small declines and or growth in a community's population and economic output. Regardless of what it constitutes, slow growth is often regarded as a negative phenomenon and a failure in planning and economic development policy (Leo & Brown, 2000; Victor, 2008; Naqvi, 2010).

When asked to define slow growth, most survey respondents agreed with Gottlieb (2003) noting that the term encompassed both population increases and decreases of less than 1%. While small population increases was the highest ranked attribute with a mean of 4.7 and a standard deviation (s.d.) of 1.4, small population decreases was ranked third and had a mean of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 1.7.It is important to note that not everyone agreed with this definition:

> I would not assume that slow growth is synonymous with decline. They are quite different things. Slow growth need not be a negative description. A community that is slowly growing is still growing. (Participant 41)

> It is my understanding that growth, however small, is positive and many of these questions are better directed to a question of decline as in question 5 [which asks respondents to define the term 'decline']. (Participant 8)

Table 7: Attributes of Slow Growth		
Attributes	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Small Population Increases	4.7	1.4
Vacant Property	4.4	1.4
Small Population Decreases	4.3	1.7
Rising Unemployment	4.2	1.5
Deteriorating Infrastructure	4.1	1.4
Loss of Community Institutions	4.1	1.4
Rising Poverty	3.9	1.5
Municipal Service Cutbacks	3.9	1.4
Financial Stress	3.9	1.5
Loss of Confidence	3.7	1.7
Falling GDP	3.6	1.6
Increasing Social Problems	3.5	1.5

Interestingly slow growth was also strongly attributed with the prevalence of vacant buildings (mean: 4.4; s.d: 1.4), rising unemployment (mean: 4.2; s.d: 1.5) and the loss of community institutions (mean: 4.1: s.d. 1.4). Despite the relatively high mean for rising unemployment, falling GDP had the second lowest mean with a score of 3.6. The difference in means may reflect the growing productivity of industrial processes which has reduced employment while maintaining or increasing output:

> I struggle with linking 'economic growth' to 'population growth'... with automation and globalization, economic growth no longer equals job growth. I think this is the most important factor particularly in primary and secondary based regional economies (Participant 7)

Some respondents also believed that some of the attributes listed on the survey were not exclusive to slow growth alone. Participant 39 for instance said that financial stress is being felt in all communities regardless of their growth rate and that social problems can also be found in rapidly growing centres.

When asked to label their community's rate of growth 68% of individuals from slow growth communities[38] agreed that they were in fact experiencing slow growth. In contrast, one respondent believed that their community was rapidly growing, seven indicated that they were not growing and two labelled their community as in decline. Of the seven communities labelled as not growing, five had annual growth rates of less than 0.3% while the remaining communities grew at approximately 0.6% and 0.9% annually.

The decision to label a slowly growing community as declining or rapidly growing may reflect previous growth patterns. In the two cases where respondents felt their community was declining, recent population gains were preceded by prolonged periods of population loss[39]. Similarly, the lone respondent to label his slow growth community as rapidly growing experienced 0.3% annual growth in the last census after ten years of more than 1.1% annual declines.

Given slow growth's association with population loss it was not surprising to find that nearly half of the respondents from shrinking communities used the terms slowly growing (25%) or not growing (25%) to label their respective growth rates. Overall there was little difference in the rate of population loss for either category as 'slowly growing' communities declined by an average of 1.3% while communities labelled as 'not growing' lost an average of 1.1% annually. In one case a local economic development professional felt that his community was slowly growing because of recent mineral exploration activity despite experiencing a 15% drop in population in the 2011 census and nearly 20 years of continuous population loss.

Due to the relatively small survey population and its diversity it was not possible to statistically test if planners, L.E.D. professionals and local officials defined slow growth

[38] For the purposes of this research, communities labelled as slowly growing are those experiencing less than 1% annual population growth

[39] In one community, population losses began in the late 1960s.

differently. In a number of cases however multiple respondents from the same community made it possible to see how uniform their responses were. Of the eight slowly growing communities with multiple respondents only two featured diverging opinions. In one case, an L.E.D. professional believed that the area was rapidly growing while a senior planner disagreed by indicating that it was in fact not growing. Similarly, four respondents from one community managed to produce three different labels: two respondents (a planner and LED professional) believed that their community was not growing while two planners used the terms slowly growing and declining to describe the current growth rate.

8.3.2 Defining Decline and Shrinkage

One of the key questions guiding this research was whether a difference existed in how planners, L.E.D. practitioners and local officials defined decline and shrinkage. Despite a growing interest in the subject academics have yet to agree on what constitutes 'shrinkage' and how it differs from the more traditional term of decline. For instance, Hollander & Nemeth (2011) note that the term 'shrinking cities' has become a broad umbrella to describe communities dealing with population loss and the effects that result from it. While population loss is the most common definition (Bontje, 2004; Franz, 2004; Fishman, 2005; Fernandez-Wu, 2008; Fol & Sabot, 2008; Rybczynski & Linneman, 2008; Lunday, 2009; Florentin et al, 2009; Krohe Jr, 2011; Mallach, 2011a),some academics have also noted that the term may include economic loss (Pallasgt, 2010; Hollander and Nemeth, 2011) and a temporal aspect as well (Leadbeater, 2009).

When asked, respondents did not see much of a difference between a community that was declining and one which was shrinking. As shown in Table 8, the top three attributes for declining and shrinking cities were long term population loss, large absolute population loss and vacant properties. In fact the largest difference in means between the attributes of each term was

0.3. Reflecting these trends, a number of respondents stated that they perceived little difference between either term:

> I don't agree that there is a clear distinction between communities that are in decline and those that are shrinking. It is the same process (Participant 33).

The similarities between each term may also reflect the relatively recent use of shrinkage in the literature and media. As a result, some of the survey respondents were unfamiliar with the term:

> While I've heard this term [shrinking], I've not seen a definition as to exactly what characteristics of a community are considered (Participant 64)

Table 8 - Comparison of Means for Declining and Shrinking Definition

Attributes	Declining Mean	Shrinking Mean	Declining S.D.	Shrinking S.D.
Long Term Population Loss	5.5	5.5	.84	0.91
Large Absolute Population Loss	5.3	5.4	0.96	1.0
Vacant Property	4.7	4.6	1.1	1.2
Rising Unemployment	4.6	4.3	1.2	1.2
Municipal Service Cutbacks	4.2	4.3	1.4	1.4
Deteriorating Infrastructure	4.2	4.2	1.3	1.4
Loss of Community Institutions	4.2	4.3	1.5	1.3
Financial Stress	4.0	4.3	1.3	1.3
Rising Poverty	4.0	3.8	1.4	1.4
Falling GDP	4.0	3.9	1.5	1.4
Loss of Confidence	4.0	3.9	1.6	1.5
Small Absolute Population Loss	3.9	4.2	1.4	1.3
Increasing Social Problems	3.9	3.6	1.5	1.5
Short Term Population Loss	3.4	3.9	1.5	1.6

Of the twenty respondents whose communities lost population in the 2011 Census, only six chose to label their community as ‘declining’ while three used the term ‘shrinking’. There may be a number of possibilities for these diverging definitions. As noted above, some practitioners may not be aware of what the term shrinkage comprises or may not see a difference between it and decline. For example, two planners from the same community chose to describe their current growth rate as declining and shrinking respectively. As previously mentioned, the remaining eleven respondents used the terms ‘rapidly growing’ (1), ‘slowly growing’ (5) and ‘no growth’ (5).

While the length and severity of population loss was thought to be a factor in determining how respondents labelled their community this was not the case. On average, communities which were labelled as ‘declining’ lost an average of 4.1% of their population while ‘shrinking’ communities lost 5.7% between 2006 and 2011. During the same period, communities which lost population but were labelled as’ slowly growing’ or’ not growing’ averaged a loss of 6.4% and 5.8% respectively. Even when one ‘slowly growing’ community (which shrank by 15.5%) was removed, the average population loss was 4.1%. Each category featured one or more community with double digit losses during this period.

It should also be noted that the use of these labels is not a function of geography or regional cultures. For example, four remote resource communities in one region, each experiencing decades of unabated population loss each chose different labels to describe their growth. The unwillingness to label a community as declining or shrinking may very well reflect the stigma surrounding each term and the perceived ability to attract future investment. On the other hand future prospects for economic growth did appear to influence how respondents perceived their community’s growth. Respondents in areas of proposed or new resource

exploration and extraction tended to use slow growth or rapid growth more frequently than their peers which did not have these activities nearby.

8.3.3 Slow growth and population loss as a malaise

Another definition which was not asked but became evident through the pilot and final survey was the stigma associated with slow growth and population loss. As shown in Table 9, the largest variance in means for each attribute was only 0.4. In general respondents felt that slow growth was associated with short term population loss while decline and shrinkage characterized communities experiencing prolonged and severe population losses. It was also felt that while slow growth was associated with a number of challenges, they were generally less severe than in declining or shrinking areas.

The stigma of the topic was also illustrated by the response of potential research participants. Despite showing an interest in the study, a number of individuals were reluctant to participate due to the sensitivity of the topic. Moreover, a number of participants only completed the first two portions of the survey and skipped the remaining two sections which dealt with their community and growth appropriate policy.

This however was not a complete surprise. Pilot surveys sent out to communities in Atlantic and western Canada had response rates of 20% and 2% respectively. The difference in response rates may reflect regional cultures as well as exposure to prolonged shrinkage. For example, a number of respondents from western provinces noted that they did not have the time to complete the survey as they were "too busy growing" (Participant 73). The poor response rate may also reflect the notion that growth is a panacea for a community's problems:

> [the community's] largest employer announced that it was permanently closing its 80 year old pulp and paper operations. The community responded by adopting an aggressive Economic Development Plan focused on job creation, increased assessment and

> population growth. I am pleased to report that [the region's] population both in the community and in the immediate surrounding area has increased. Therefore, we will not be participating in the survey. [Name of the community withheld for privacy reasons] (Participant 72)

Table 9: Differences in Slow Growth, Declining and Shrinking Attributes

Attributes	Declining Mean	Shrinking Mean	Slow Growth
Long Term Population Loss	5.5	5.5	N/A
Large Absolute Population Loss	5.3	5.4	N/A
Vacant Property	4.7	4.6	4.4
Rising Unemployment	4.6	4.3	4.2
Municipal Service Cutbacks	4.2	4.3	3.9
Deteriorating Infrastructure	4.2	4.2	4.1
Loss of Community Institutions	4.2	4.3	4.1
Financial Stress	4.0	4.3	3.9
Rising Poverty	4.0	3.8	3.9
Falling GDP	4.0	3.9	3.6
Loss of Confidence	4.0	3.9	3.7
Small Absolute Population Loss	3.9	4.2	4.3
Increasing Social Problems	3.9	3.6	3.5
Short Term Population Loss	3.4	3.9	N/A

It must be noted that not all respondents treated slow growth or shrinkage as a malaise. Similar to Leo & Brown (2000), one professional noted that the negative characteristics of both phenomena were a result of misguided policy and society's fixation on growth:

> …a lot of the indicators listed above have more to do with political ideologies regarding the role and function of municipal government, perceptions, and in many cases an over-designation of lands (and thus

> dilution of inventory) which lead to residential and commercial vacancies and all of the effects related to such disinvestment. (Participant 7)

8.4 Factors influencing the adoption of Growth Appropriate Policy

To determine the rationale for a community's planning and economic development policy it was necessary to uncover the factors which influenced their adoption and continued use. These factors, which were identified by the literature, included the challenges and opportunities for a community to increase growth, the effectiveness of existing policy and their outlook for future growth. In addition, the survey asked respondents to identify which contemporary and growth appropriate planning and economic development tools they were using as well as the rationale for their use.

8.4.1 Challenges and Opportunities for Slow Growth and Shrinking Communities

As previously discussed in Chapters Three and Six no two communities experience slow growth and population loss in exactly the same manner. According to the literature, this is largely because the effects from either trend are dependent upon a number of local and regional characteristics. For instance Bourne & Simmons (2003), Polese (2009) and Bourne et al (2011b) note that the duration and severity of slow growth and shrinkage depends in part on the location of the community and the diversity of its economy. Similarly, the ability to retain and attract residents depends upon the condition of a community's housing stock, the extent of its socio-economic problems, the quality of municipal services and access to post-secondary education and other amenities (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Popper & Popper, 2002; Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008; Hall, 2008; Logan & Shilling, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Boehlke, 2011; Hollander, 2011a; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Krohe Jr., 2011; Mallach, 2011a; 2011b; Rae, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

The effects of slow growth and shrinkage are also affected by the size of a community. For example, Fox & Axle-Lute (2008) found that smaller communities have a much smaller tolerance for vacant structures than larger ones. Larger communities may also have more resources and assets to leverage than smaller communities.

To better understand these processes, respondents were asked about the challenges facing their community (Table 10). Given the large number of small and rural population centres in the survey, it was not surprising their distance from large urban areas and or lucrative resource deposits was identified as the most significant challenge (Mean: 4.0; S.D. 1.6) Some of the challenges associated with their isolation included limited services, a small labour force and higher costs of living:

> I would suspect that a large number of rural areas have a similar situation where the wages are lower and the costs are higher. A lot of the subsidies for transportation have been downloaded and they [rural residents] are paying some of the highest gas and food prices in the country. [We] still have high cost of housing because of land speculation. It makes urban areas so much more attractive to younger clientele (Participant 26).

Distance was also a problem for a number of medium and large urban centres in the survey. Despite being located in southern Ontario, some communities noted that their distance from the GTA was a barrier to retaining and attracting young residents as well as outside investment.

Table 10: Challenges Facing Slow Growth and Shrinking Communities

Impediments to growth	Mean	Standard Deviation
Location to popular centres/areas of resource extraction	4.0	1.6
Loss of employment opportunities	4.0	1.5
Regional competition for development and services	3.9	1.2
Uniform economy	3.4	1.2
Poor opportunities for post-secondary education	3.3	1.5
Lack of confidence in community	3.2	1.5
Loss of essential services	2.6	1.4

An equally pressing challenge for many communities was the loss of employment opportunities (Mean: 4.0). While the most frequent cause of diminished employment opportunities was the closure of local manufacturing and processing facilities some respondents discussed some of the elements outlined in Chapter Six. These elements included depleted resources, health of commodity markets, and structural changes to the economy including rationalization:

> In our instance, the petro-chemical industry is at its most profitable in the last 100 years, but due to technological advancement is doing it will a quarter of the employees needed in the 1960s (Participant 7);

and globalization:

> In a globalized economy it is very difficult to predict the future; particularly when decision-making and influence is truly held in the petro-chemical board rooms of Calgary and Toronto and not at the local level (Participant 7).

> However, the local economy is very influenced by global economic trends due to the reliance on the tourism economy. [This community's] location will be an asset into the future, but how that translates into growth will be more dependent on the economic growth elsewhere (Participant 51).

> …its recognizing that the working world has changed, the environment has changed, economic development has changed and we are going to have maybe ten to forty percent of the population that will never be gainfully employed in today's economic world because its become a global village so to say. This community's own economy has undergone a significant transformation recently. Our transportation based industries have declined by 60% over the past three years. The plywood mill (which was originally a pulp and paper industry) went from having three shifts at the plant to one and from upwards of 250 employees to 45. We have now morphed into a resort or tourism type base which is minimum wage based...but that is not enough to raise a family or afford local real estate (Participant 26).

Regional competition for development and services was also a challenge for many communities with a mean of 3.9. This was particularly problematic in regions that had experienced prolonged population loss and whose adjacent municipalities were aggressive in attracting new investment. Factors which had a moderate part in supressing local growth included poor access to post-secondary education, a lack of community confidence and the loss of essential services.

While it was not listed, some respondents noted that vacant structures were a noticeable problem in their community. Evidence of this problem was also demonstrated by the number of vacant building rehabilitation and tracking programs communities had implemented. The extent of the problem was dependent on local conditions. For example the absence of vacant structures in some communities reflected a decline in household size rather than in the number of households. In comparison, one participant noted that the prolonged decline in both the size and number of households had created a significant vacancy problem in the region:

> We have seen 50 straight years of decline [but] the absolute size of our declines is important too. In round numbers, we have lost over 30,000 people since 1966. Vacant and abandoned housing, negative real estate values and derelict commercial districts are a logical outcome of 50 years of decline. In addition to having many surplus residential and commercial buildings, many of which are not in bad shape we have a large amount of brownfield remediation going on where there really is not a significant market driven after use. (Participant 45)

Poor planning and economic development decisions were also a cause of vacant property. For one community the strategy of attracting real estate investment from abroad backfired when the 2008 recession struck North America:

> To a large degree there was a push for Alberta investors as it was seen that they would continue investing and allow the town [to] provide a higher level of service and the business community to cater to those kinds of needs. However that has not materialized and in fact we have

> had a fair amount of decline in our downtown area from retail moving out but we still some of restaurants and alcohol serving establishments in the area. The local real estate market has yet to adjust to the economic situation. A lot of the houses in the $300 - 350,000 range were going between $400,000 – 600,000 only two years ago. Some [of the developers] have certainly gone bankrupt, there have been tax sales, and we have a lot of vacant properties because of that. In the homes that are occupied many are being rented or leased by local residents from their respective owners (Participant 26).

Respondents also noted a number of additional challenges including an aging population, deteriorating infrastructure, rising unemployment and social problems, financial strain and in some cases, an inferiority complex characterized by low self-confidence and a sense of helplessness. Of particular interest was the confirmation that some communities were witnessing a negative feedback or path dependence. Ortiz-Guerrero (2010) describes this cycle as one which obstructs economic diversification and diminishes the quality of life and self-confidence of residents by repeating and enhancing the negative symptoms of slow growth and population loss. Respondents noted that this cycle was typically initiated by decreasing employment opportunities, falling municipal revenues and service cuts:

> A big challenge is capacity tends to be reduced with slow growth or decline. Municipal staff cuts that accompany lower demand for [development] services result in fewer staff attempting to manage what are equally difficult challenges in their own right to those faced in a fast growing municipality. (Participant 36)

> With slow or low growth, municipalities lose their ability to fund public works. Usually the first to leave are the better employers and employed. Those who remain typically rely upon municipal services. Tax dollars decline. (Participant 32)

> Unless there is a significant increase in employment opportunities there is no reason to come to the community or even stay in community. In addition the underlying negativity of the community would make a person or company think twice about locating in the community (Participant 48)

> With decline will likely come a plummeting tax base. Other costs, such as policing may rise. This will prove challenging in respect to maintenance of infrastructure etc. (Participant 64).

> There is a disconnect between the ideals city council may have and the financial capabilities of the town. In this case we have a declining population, hollowing out of the school population, an over-abundance of the 18-30 year old and we lose the 30-45 year olds for family formation or when they do have a family they tend to move out of the area because of the lack of economic opportunities in the area (Participant 26).

The severity of these symptoms was also tied in part to the trends occurring at a regional level. For instance, financial strain and social problems tended to be more severe in communities where the surrounding region as a whole was losing population. While most respondents were fairly vague in describing these trends, one participant provided a detailed account of how prolonged and severe population loss was affecting the region:

> We have had [a] unitary regional government for 16 years, and that has given us some capacity to cope with the decline, but we are quickly reaching the end of that capacity to deal with the challenges… and we have not really dealt with the last 50 years of decline, let alone what is to come. Our age specific forecasts indicate that there is no bottom to [the] decline, and more of our decline each year is due to a much greater number of deaths than births. Outmigration continues, but it reaches points where most of who[m] can leave have left. The remainder are dying off and there is no end in sight for this trend unless significant government intervention is used to stimulate immigration by producing jobs. Although we have [a] one tier regional government that has created efficiencies in providing services, senior government's [are] continually raising the regulatory requirements and thus the cost of all municipal services, but there is no revenue to pay for these mandated requirements. In this years' budget, staff are recommending to Council that we abandon all attempts to treat sewage, most of which is discharged directly on the shoreline. We not only lack the capital to build these structures, but we cannot afford the operating cost of them either (Participant 44).

These challenges are by no means limited to Canadian communities. A number of authors noted similar processes (vacant buildings, financial stress, socio-economic problems etc.) in the

United States, Europe, Japan and Australia (Catlin, 1993; Leo & Brown, 2000; Russo & Linkon, 2003; Durrschmidt, 2005; Fujii, 2005; Koziol, 2005; Oswalt, 2005; Fassman, 2006; Fairbairn et al, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Hollander, 2011a,b; Schilling & Mallach, 2012; Martinez-Fernandez et al, 2012a; Weichmann & Pallagst, 2012).

Table 11: Opportunities to Increase Growth in Slowly Growing and Shrinking Communities.

Opportunities for Growth	Mean	Standard Deviation
Recreational Amenities	4.8	1.0
Infrastructure	4.5	1.4
Diversity of local economy	3.9	1.2
Location to popular centres/areas of resource extraction	3.9	1.5
Access to post-secondary educational facilities	3.8	1.4
Heritage resources	3.5	1.5

Respondents were also asked to identify opportunities which could be used to improve their community or increase growth (Table 11). Of the six opportunities listed on the survey, the quality of local recreational amenities was thought to be the best option with a mean of 4.8 and a standard deviation of one. The relatively high mean not only reflects in part the large number of communities that were in the process of constructing new or upgrading existing sports and waterpark complexes and active transportation infrastructure. For many, improving the image and quality of life was one of the most important tools to retain residents and attract growth from abroad:

> I believe [that] the cultural and social challenges of the community [are] resulting in population loss. Most people do not want to stay in our community long-term. Their primary reason for coming to our community is a job, but [many] feel that the community does not have the amenities they desire. Unemployment is low, but there is a high rate of transitional citizens (Participant 11).
>
> Our Council has not typically placed a high degree of emphasis on this issue [attracting employment opportunities], concentrating instead on

> residential matters. Notwithstanding that, both growth of the university coupled with a strong urban design emphasis and a diversifying service sector make the town attractive. (Participant 64)

In some cases, the use of these quality of life initiatives reflected the limited opportunities for attracting or developing manufacturing or processing facilities.

The quality of local infrastructure and proximity to major transportation infrastructure were also identified as important tools for planning and local economic development policy (Mean: 4.5 S.D: 1.5). Some of these assets included the quality of local roads, frequency of snow removal, deep water ports, proximity to highways and the presence of rail, water and air transportation facilities. For respondents, these assets played an important role in creating or maintaining a high quality of life, reducing the isolation of the community and providing a catalyst for future growth:

> The Village of [Name Removed] is a community with lots of potential and just needs that little nudge. It is a resource for the neighbouring areas that are now experiencing growth. Focusing on this area as it declines and bringing it back by improving communication, developing its tourism potential, and improving municipal infrastructure will certainly be of benefit (Participant 19).

> Our community is located in Northern Ontario, which creates some transportation and supply chain logistic challenges. We expect that to be somewhat alleviated in the coming years with the completion of the 4-laning of Highway 11 (Participant 70).

For a number of communities, economic diversity was not only seen as an important opportunity for future growth but also as a way to protect against structural economic trends:

> We have a diversified economy that is not reliant on any one sector or any particular market. This allows slow but stable economic growth. Proof of this is the manner which the community weathered the global economic crisis in recent years (Participant 51).

Rather than pursuing multi-national corporations, most communities in the survey were diversifying by utilizing local assets. This included expanding or creating new tourist, arts and

entertainment sectors as well as starting new manufacturing businesses with local residents. In some areas, an aging population was viewed as an opportunity to expand local healthcare and services related employment. Simultaneously, some semi-rural communities reversed their prolonged shrinkage as retirees converted summer cottages into full-time residences.

Curiously, despite being identified as one of the primary causes of slow growth and shrinkage, respondents also noted that their location provided opportunities for future growth (Mean: 3.9). In fact the mean for location as a barrier and asset featured a difference of only 0.1. There are two possibilities for this situation. The first is the rather large number of communities in the survey which are in close proximity to areas of new and existing resource extraction activities:

> Oil and agriculture run our community. We have several other services but without those two the others wouldn't be here. If both decline then we'd decline (Participant 39)
>
> The area would still be stagnant without the potential potash development. Our strategies have very little to do with the potential future growth (Participant 15).

A second is that these communities may have attributes which are conducive for economic growth but are unrealized as they require external forces to intervene and invest in the area.

Similar to the findings of Polese (2009) and Bourne et al (2011b), post-secondary institutions were being used as a tool for economic and population growth in a number of communities. The actual or perceived effects of these institutions however were not confined to their host community. One respondent believed that the two post-secondary institutions in a medium sized population centre more than 45 minutes away was a selling point for the town. Although the preservation of heritage structures and districts received the lowest mean, a number of communities noted that the revitalization of their downtown core was successful in improving

the quality of life and retaining residents. The low mean may reflect the relatively young age of some communities or the loss of such structures through neglect or other factors.

8.4.2 Contemporary Planning Approaches in Canadian Communities

To determine the appropriateness of a community's planning policy it was necessary to uncover what contemporary and growth appropriate tools they were already or considering using. The tools listed on the survey were identified through recent planning and economic development literature including Victor (2008), Schatz (2009), Gordon (2010), Ortiz-Guerrero (2010), Boehlke (2011), Hollander (2011a), Mallach (2011b), Morrison & Dewar (2011) and Schilling & Mallach (2012).

Given its prevalence in provincial legislation and planning education, it was not surprising to learn that almost 70% of respondents used comprehensive or master plans to guide policy and improve their community. In response to changing socio-economic conditions, a number of respondents noted that they had recently or were in the process of amending their official plans.

Table 12: Use of Contemporary Planning Tools

Contemporary Planning Tools	Being Used	Not In Use
Comprehensive Master Plans	48 (68.6%)	22 (31.4%)
Public Space Improvements	47 (67.1%)	23 (32.9%)
Image Branding	34 (48.6%)	36 (51.4%)
Heritage Preservation	33 (47.1%)	37 (52.8%)
Inclusionary Planning	22 (31.4%)	48 (68.5%)
Small and Medium Business Grants	18 (25.7%)	52 (74.2%)
Tax Increment Financing	17 (24.2%)	53 (75.7%)
Social Policy	13 (18.6%)	57 (81.4%)
Vacant Building Registries	11 (15.7%)	59 (84.2%)

Given the emphasis on improving a community's quality of life, more than 67% of respondents improved public spaces such as parks, streetscapes, open spaces, town squares and recreational trails. Almost half of respondents also reported using image branding and heritage

preservation for similar purposes. In a number of cases, particularly in medium and large population centres, all three tools were used in tandem. For smaller communities, only two of the above mentioned tools were used simultaneously on account of their limited financial and or historic resources.

In addition, more than 26% used grants to attract or improve the efficiency of small and medium sized businesses. Some of these initiatives included HR training, updating equipment, tax rebates and finding new markets for local products. To lure new businesses and renovate vacant structures, 24% of respondents used tax increment financing while only 16% communities established a vacant building rehabilitation program. Some additional tools not listed on the survey included streamlining development processes and regional economic development policies to pool financial and human resources.

With regard to social aspects, only 31% of respondents used inclusionary techniques when creating their comprehensive plans and other related tools. The most frequently cited methods of inclusionary planning included design charrettes, visioning processes and crowd sourcing. Similarly only 18% of communities created policy to deal with the social challenges associated with their slow growth and population loss.

8.4.3 Forms of measurement

Seasons (2003) notes that while formal monitoring and evaluation programs are among the most important ways of ensuring policy remains effective they are often thwarted by a number of obstacles. Some of these roadblocks include inappropriate indicators, competition for resources, organizational culture and political realities. In addition, a large number of authors have called for communities to use alternative indicators for measuring the effectiveness of policy (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Popper & Popper, 2002; Grossman, 2004; Allweil, 2007;

Schilling & Logan, 2008; Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Victor, 2010' Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2011; Lepeska, 2011; Mallach, 2011b; Morrison & Dewar, 2011). While Delkin (2008) proposes replacing the traditional variables of population and economic growth with the overall happiness of residents, most of the above cited authors suggest using quality of life.

When asked to identify the criteria used to formally measure the success of public policy more than 36% of respondents said that they had none. Similar to Seasons (2003), respondents noted that politics as well as inadequate human and financial resources prevented them from carrying out the monitoring of policy. This was particularly the case in many small communities (particularly those with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants) where limited resources prohibited the creation of a planning department let alone a monitoring program. When such programs were implemented in small population centres they typically measured only two or three variables. In contrast medium and large population centres tended to formally measure four or more indicators.

Table 13: Community Indicators Being Formally Monitored

Community Indicators	Frequency
No Formal Measurement System	38.6%
Quality of Life	24.3%
Amount of Vacant Property	17.1%
Change in Property Values	15.7%
Unemployment Figures	14.3%
Poverty and Income Levels	10.0%
Change in GDP	10.0%
Happiness of Residents	8.6%

Despite the absence of a formal monitoring system, planning and economic development practitioners were nevertheless keeping tabs on local and regional trends. For example one respondent was aware of the community's rapidly declining school enrollment because his

neighbour was a teacher at the local elementary school. Similarly, other participants noted that they were informally monitoring a number of indicators such as community demographics, household size and construction permits:

> We have areas within our municipality that are shifting in 'growth'. We are experiencing a population decline, but permit trends are showing growth in areas that used to be summer residents only. People are retiring and building new or retiring and renovating old (Participant 19).

> We also have a lower Population per Dwelling (which is consistent with an older population), which means we need more houses in order to accommodate less people. We are confident that infrastructure investments will help overcome these challenges (Participant 70).

In two cases local professionals noted that they were in the process of implementing a program of measuring indicators for their community.

The importance of a formal monitoring program lies in its ability to shape policy and alert municipal leaders and stakeholders to trends within the community. Accordingly, some communities were unaware that they were experiencing no-growth and shrinkage simply because there was no way of quantifying these trends. In addition, despite knowing about declining school enrollments and an increase in vacant properties, one municipal leader denied that shrinkage was occurring until the census figures showed a 3% drop in their community.

When formal measurement programs were in place, the most commonly used indicator was quality of life with 24% of respondents using it. There are two possible factors for its use. The first is the large number of communities which are building or improving community amenities and services in a bid to attract growth from abroad. For a number of shrinking areas, creating and maintaining a high quality of life is viewed as the only feasible strategy to retain residents. Secondly its use as a measurement also reflected the values of some local professionals and political officials whom view social issues as a top priority in their community.

The second and third most used indicators included the amount of vacant property (17%) and change in local property values (16%). Unemployment rates and local GDP were the fourth and fifth most popular measurements with 10.5% and 8.8% of respondents utilizing them. While a number of professionals noted that while they believed the GDP was a good indicator, their small size made it all but impossible to use. Indicators being used by less than five percent of respondents included new jobs created, the number of redeveloped sites and the happiness of residents.

8.4.4 Growth Appropriate Planning Approaches in Canadian Communities

In addition to conventional planning approaches respondents were also asked about which growth appropriate tools (nine were identified by the literature) were being using in their community. To reflect the complex processes behind policy decisions, the survey provided four choices relating to the implementation of these tools:

- No consideration for its use
- Previously considered for its use
- Currently being considered for its use
- In use/implemented

As shown in Table 14, growth boundaries was the most used tool with 50% of respondents working with it and an additional 7.4% indicating that their community was considering its use. The second most used tool was community driven processes and oversight with more than 47% of respondents using it and a further 18.9% considering its use. This is a point of interest as only 31% of respondents indicated using inclusionary techniques earlier in the chapter. What was interesting is that charrettes, task forces and crowd sourcing were cited as examples of increasing public participation for both terms. This may mean that respondents see little difference between the terms community driven processes and inclusionary planning.

Table 14: Growth Appropriate Tools Being Used by Respondents					
Attributes	**No Consideration**	**Previously Considered**	**Currently Being Considered**	**In Use/ Implemented**	**Neutral/ Unsure**
Growth Boundaries	25.9%	11.1%	7.4%	50.0%	5.6%
Community Driven Processes and Oversight	18.9%	9.4%	18.9%	47.2%	5.7%
Smart Growth	37.3%	7.8%	9.8%	37.3%	7.8%
Strategic Planning/ Neighbourhood Renewal	21.8%	10.9%	27.3%	36.4%	3.6%
Realistic Growth Projections	17.1%	4.3%	14.3%	35.7%	2.9%
Collaborating with local institutions	9.3%	11.1%	37.0%	35.2%	7.5%
Regional Governance/ Cooperation	20.4%	9.3%	33.3%	33.3%	3.7%
Land banks	51.0%	16.3%	14.3%	12.2%	6.1%
Smart Decline	64.6%	0.0%	7.1%	7.1%	12.5%

Terminology aside, improving the quality of life was not the sole reason for using community driven processes. In at least one case, crowd sourcing was used to reduce municipal costs by having local residents maintain public parks and green spaces. Similarly one shrinking community allowed residents to prioritize the funding of city services in a bid to balance its budget.

Strategic and neighbourhood renewal plans were the third most utilized growth appropriate tool with more than 36% already using it and an additional 27% considering its use. Among the most popular areas for strategic plans were downtown and neighbourhood revitalization, quality of life initiatives and infrastructure expenditures.

Not far behind was the use of realistic growth projections with 35% of respondents using it and an additional 15% debating its merits. The adoption of this tool generally hinged on two factors. First, due to the growing economic uncertainty many communities sought to incorporate greater flexibility into local policy. Secondly, the use of realistic projections arose because of the growing gap between previously 'optimistic' forecasts and the current reality:

> We've been experiencing 'slow growth' here for several decades and as a community have tried to counteract that by pursuing growth as an end for quite some time now. Based on the last round of projections in 1996, we should have 15% more people than we actually do - the gap between reality and the projections was becoming very stark. In 2010, the County adopted new population projections that are based on age-specific trends experienced dating back to 1996 and are simply applied moving forward (Participant 7).

> In 2006 and 2007 we had an average of 30 to 40 single detached houses being built but no one looked at how sustainable it was. To me, the lack of visioning done for the Official Community Plan did not consider whether this was an apparition or if decline was an ongoing trend. Prior to this growth the town had two declines of about 3.5 –4% and one increase of 1.5% over five year time periods. To predict 3% annual was extremely optimistic especially when you consider that only one single detached unit was built during the past two and a half years. We now have three fully serviced subdivisions which have an excess capacity of 150 lots. The one good part is that we do have a Holiday Inn Express that will be constructed and on another note, one of our major employers, their main plant burned down so they will be coming in to build a new plant…so there will be some building in the next year (Participant 26).

Approximately 33% of respondents also collaborated with local institutions such as universities and local hospitals to increase employment opportunities, retain young professionals and residents as well as attract students and residents from abroad. More than a third of respondents also noted that they were working with regional governments or adjacent municipalities to create policy and administer services while another 33% were exploring if it could be done. In a number of cases these collaborations were the result of provincially

mandated regional governments and or planning commissions in an effort to reduce administrative costs in rural areas. This was not the case in all communities however. One respondent explained that a regional economic development strategy with three adjacent counties was created to address the structural challenges they were facing:

> Geography and recent changes in the global economy have caused recognition of a joint approach to redefining/rebuilding our economy. Atrophied private sector interest and minimal provincial supports have required the municipalities to partner with all who have an interest to move forward on the economy (Participant 32).

When asked if their communities had enacted policies utilizing the principles of 'smart growth' 37.3% indicated that they did. While 9.8% were considering its use more than 45% were not considering using smart growth to guide their development in the foreseeable future. The decision not to use smart growth policies reflected a number of variables including opposition from local stakeholders, the small size of the community and the absolute population losses some communities were experiencing (for which this tool was not designed to deal with).

In contrast only 7.1% of communities were employing the principles of smart decline while another 7% were considering its use. More than 47% of respondents noted that they were not considering using smart decline which reflected the large number of slowly growing communities in the survey population as well as the relatively small population losses most experiences experienced. As well more than 10% also indicated that they were not familiar with the components of smart decline. Only 12% of respondents reported using land banks which may reflect the small size of many of the communities in the survey.

8.4.5 Factors affecting the effectiveness of Local Planning and Economic Policy

When asked to rate the effectiveness of their community's policy on a scale from 1 to 6 (with 1 representing no improvement and 6 signifying a large improvement) the average mean

was 3.8. Overall most respondents felt that their community's policy was only moderately effective as over half of respondents (59%) chose either three or four for their answer (Table 15). In comparison only 7.7% of local professionals thought that municipal planning and economic development policy had made a significant improvement in their community.

Table 15 Perceived Effectiveness of Local Policy

Effectiveness	Frequency of response
1	0.0 %
2	15.4%
3	23.1%
4	35.9%
5	17.9%
6	7.7%

As outlined in Chapter 7 there are a number of factors which influence the effectiveness of policy. A number of authors (Leo & Brown, 2000; Hall, 2007; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Rybczynski, 2010) demonstrate that municipal politicians wield considerable power in shaping the content and eventual implementation of planning and economic development policy. For instance, Schatz (2009) and Schilling & Logan (2012) note that the use of marquee projects and branch plants to stimulate growth reflects the short time frame in which municipal leaders have to show progress is being made. The sensitive nature of slow growth and shrinkage also mean that few politicians are willing to admit their reality for fear of driving away potential investment (Cox, 1999; Leo & Brown, 2000; Hall, 2007; Schatz, 2009).

When asked, more than 40% of respondents indicated that the biggest impediment to effective policy was insufficient staff or resources while 51.4% were unsure. More than 31% of respondents also reported that their community's policy was undermined by its tendency to thinly spread resources in the community. In a number of cases this was due to the wide

geographic area and or the competing agendas between municipal departments and interest groups in the community.

Table 16: Factors Impeding the Effectiveness of Local Policy			
Factors	**Yes**	**No**	**Unsure**
Insufficient staff or funding	28 (40.0%)	6 (8.6%)	34 (51.4%)
Spreads resources too thinly	22 (31.4%)	3 (4.3%)	45 (64.3%)
Little Political Support	15 (21.4%)	7 (10.0%)	48 (68.6%)
Not Designed for Slow Growth or Decline	13 (18.6%)	7 (10.0%)	50 (71.4%)
Opposition from Local Business Interests	8 (11.4%)	7 (10.0%)	55 (78.6%)

Similar to the literature more than 21% stated that political interventions have blocked the implementation of progressive planning policies:

> After 25 years in the business of land use planning, I have learned that the key problem is not [p]lanners, it is the elected officials who refuse listen to the professional planners, and just pay "lip service" to the good advice provided. I've stopped counting the number of times an elected official tells publicly me that s/he fully understands how "planning" works in his/her municipality, when they have absolutely no clue what they mean (Participant 12).

> Planning is not progressive. Planning is too political and good planning does not get implemented (Participant 52).

> ….to keep taxes down, politicians in the mid-eighties axed the recreation and planning departments. It was not until 2000 that they started to get back into regulation and into a recreation function. That set the stage why there wasn't a check and balance system in the OCP to ensure that its projections were correct…(Participant 26).

In one of the more extreme cases, Participant 5 noted "being led out of the Mayor's Office with [the] Planning Dept. working in the background" after suggesting the municipality review its planning policy.

The reluctance to accept the community's reality or institute progressive policy was in many cases done to avoid casting the community in a negative light. For instance Participant 35

explained that “politicians look for every possible way to put a “positive” spin on reality [as] there is a strong reluctance to admit decline and negative growth…” This was particularly the case in one community where the mayor rated the effectiveness of local policy with a five while a municipal professional used a three. Similarly, when asked about the poor support from local officials for growth appropriate policy Participant 7 stated:

> I wouldn't say that there is 'little' support, but there certainly is a bit of a schism between the 'realists' and the 'optimists' as they've coined themselves. There is a fear that if we anticipate population decline, than it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy and will scare away future opportunity.

The reluctance of municipal politicians to shift policy away from growth also reflects the tendency to resist change until drastic events take place:

> There are a wide range of possible "planning tools" that can be used; however a wholesale shift in "economic attitude" is often required at the political level and unfortunately [that] happens after an economic debacle, not beforehand (Participant 12).

Not surprisingly, communities with highly effective policy tended to have strong support from local decision makers. For instance, the decision to create a Comprehensive Plan which incorporated both slow growth and decline as a future scenario was implemented because local politicians championed the strategy. Participants from this community expressed some concern however over whether or not the newly elected city council would continue supporting the plan. Their concern was not unfounded as one respondent in another community criticized new city leadership for pulling its support for progressive planning strategies.

The support of growth appropriate policy also reflects the capabilities and opinions of municipal planning and economic development staff. Participant 12 noted that the survey should have added the term ‘lack of knowledgeable staff/poor training’ to the options listed in this question. In one community, municipal staff did not implement progressive policy because they

were unable to adapt to changing circumstances and did not provide sound advice to local leadership:

> New staff has been more flexible and able to adapt to new conditions than old staff. To put things in context all of our management staff except for one (out of eight) has been new hires in the past two years. So therefore we bring a different perspective on a variety of fronts. We have a CAO who has a good approach to things. Previous CAO's have basically had no control over staff. Whatever council wanted, they got in respect to projects being done or not done. In other words there were just too many projects for them to be addressed adequately or addressed at all in the manner in which they should have been. They had a lot of haphazard policies in place and a lot of projects that were not completed. However our current CAO has indicated that there is a process and that he is council's only employee in management staff. So it has been a completely different approach of dealing with things and it has been made clear to council that staff reports to the manager and no one else. If politicians want an answer they go through the CAO. So the role has been a re-education for council that they are to go through the CAO and that their role is to set policy and not be in the weeds on the employment front…it makes a lot better working environment and it means that we can get a reign on what projects and overall philosophies of municipalities should be (Participant 26).

Despite the power of municipal officials and practitioners, effective policy also depends on the level of support and coordination with different government agencies, regional and senior governments. Policy from senior governments has largely been ineffective because of its growth imperative and its tendency to not account for or acknowledge local conditions (Leitner, 1990; Leo & Brown, 2000; Bradford, 2004; Fosterm 2007; Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008; Gordon, 2008; Hall, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Couch et al, 2011). In addition, Bradford (2004), Gordon (2008) and Schilling and Mallach (2012) explain that the effectiveness of local policy is also affected by uncoordinated policy between different government agencies, neighbouring municipalities and non-governmental organizations. In many regions, particularly those which are shrinking,

competition for development has turned into a zero-sum game for all those involved (Leo & Brown, 2000; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Mallach, 2011b; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

What is clear from some of the respondents is that the many of the above mentioned problems are in fact occurring. In one community, policy was being undermined by the intense competition for scarce investment in the region:

> [The] community has not seriously considered that slow growth or decline is a permanent possibility [as] [r]egional competition for development precludes the potential to seriously plan for prolonged or permanent slow growth or decline (Participant 58).

Competing agendas also prevented a regional planning organization from implementing a comprehensive social plan. On the other hand some regional governments were to blame for creating inefficient policy:

> [The] municipal district engages in some regional marketing initiatives and provides networking opportunities for local govt officials. [However] they have failed to provide sharing of resources to the extent that could be beneficial (equipment/personnel) (Participant 22).

Similar to the literature government agencies and senior governments had interfered with municipal activities. Three respondents noted that regional economic development agencies, some of which were contracted from a different province, were preventing progressive planning policies through their growth oriented strategies and poor communication:

> [The] economic development is done by separate agency with little formal connection /reporting to City Lack of Provincial focus on economic development in rural vs. urban areas in the Province (Participant 17)

There were also numerous complaints regarding the actions of provincial and federal governments. One of the most frequent criticisms was that senior level policy did not acknowledge local conditions or consider the impact they would have on municipalities:

> We would need very significant senior government intervention to create thousands of jobs to offset past decline and attract immigrants - probably from Asia or Africa. This is really the only thing that would stabilize this region. This would take a massive intervention, and there appears to not only be no political will on the part of senior government, but there is a systematic denial that the problems exist. Although we have [a] one tier regional government that has created efficiencies in providing services, senior government[s] are continually raising the regulatory requirements and thus the cost of all municipal services, but there is no revenue to pay for these mandated requirements (Participant 45).

> The limitations are not so much legal limitations as a completely inadequate governance structure. We need a regional government structure that has significant chunks of what is now under Provincial Governance. It needs a revenue base that is progressive and accountable. And we need direct access to equalization money from the Federal level (Participant 28).

> [The] Provincial Policy Statement paints the entire province with the same brush. While the intent of the PPS is well intentioned it must provide more flexibility for slow growth areas to be more aggressive in attracting businesses. Slow growth areas are at a significant disadvantage to growing areas. But perhaps that's how the powers-that-be want it (Participant 48).

As seen in the last sentence from Participant 48, some respondents from isolated rural areas felt ignored by senior governments. There were a number of reasons for this response. In one case, a participant noted that the province had blocking all development proposals in the planning district because of political posturing with local Aboriginal groups. Some respondents also felt that provincial governments ignored their community or region simply because of their poor prospects for future growth or small population:

> Provincial and federal politicians will most likely invest where they will get more votes or greater pressure. Growing communities will make more noises (Participant 3).

> Provincial purse strings they are currently shallow and short and the majority of the money they do spend is geared toward growth areas because that's the population that screams the loudest so therefore it is

> more visible. But when your 800km away from Toronto or 400km away from Sudbury…nobody hears you (Participant 26).

The lack of support for community or regional planning also reflected the little interest some provincial and federal governments had in such matters:

> While the province is currently attempting to implement a new Regional Service Model, planning in general is not really on the political radar and is not required throughout the province (Participant 54).

> There's been a decades' long migration pattern underway for decades now where growth is directed towards the major urban areas and minor urban areas are simply unsustainable and have been in decline for a number of years. It is about time that these areas are recognized for not only their vital function, but that they need to be maintained. Part of the issues have been that because they have been creatures of the provinces for so long, that the federal government has taken a hands-off approach to giving grants and putting in place strategies that deal with the rapid decline of rural areas. There needs to be a more coordinated approach between the three layers of government (Participant26).

It should be noted that this was not the case in every province. A number of isolated shrinking communities noted that resources from senior governments helped improve the effectivness of local initiatives and policy. One respondent even believed that rural communities were being lavished at the expense of larger urban centers due to their over-representation at the federal level of politics.

Schatz (2009) explains that in addition to support from local and senior governments, successful policy requires buy-in from local residents and businesses. Pattison (2004), O'Connor (2011a) and Morrison & Dewar (2011) explain that the poor communication between planners and residents doomed the planning interventions in a number of shrinking regions. Similarly, the desperation of some residents to reverse slow growth or shrinkage may pressure politicians to

implement policies or projects which are capital intensive but provide little reward (Leitner, 1990; Leo & Brown, 2000; Boland, 2007; Lovering, 2007; Rybczynski, 2010).

In contrast policy is most effective when residents were actively engaged throughout the entire planning process and are fully aware of the structural factors impacting their community (Schatz, 2009; Morrison & Dewar, 2011). More importantly, the limited resources of many communities require residents to implement a number of the programs such as vacant lot and park maintenance.

Given their power it was not surprising that the impact of residents and businesses was brought up on numerous occasions. On one hand a number of participants noted that the active participation and support from local stakeholders was a key factor in creating progressive policy:

> We have VERY proactive community with over 384 non-profit groups in population of 30,000 for whole coast. Inclusionary planning is key… (Participant 30)

In contrast, more than 11% of respondents noted that opposition from local interests was thwarting growth appropriate planning efforts for a variety of reasons. As mentioned earlier, some residents resisted new policy in an effort to avoid admitting their limited prospects for growth:

> Reality will not always spur a community to realistic action. People can cling to outmoded beliefs, imaging that growth will come again rather than facing the fact that it may not (Participant 64).

More importantly, Participant 48 confirmed Koziol's (2005) paper by explaining that the desperation of local leadership (both political and in the greater community) was producing poor policy:

> [A challenge is the community's] lack of self-confidence and sense of helplessness. [E]very elected official or organization leader (chamber of commerce, or other) think they have the key to this dilemma and everyone tries to put forward initiatives with no success and all it does

> it sets us back one more step. We need a strong leadership with one direction for all.

Local culture, particularly in rural regions was also identified as barrier:

> A majority of the rural population do not see the benefits of land use planning and reject land use planning tools "telling them what they can do on their property".
>
> It has been a lack of community support for efforts that are made. Staff and Council want to do the right thing but residents still cannot move on from the amalgamation issue that happened 15 years ago (Participant 48).
>
> The locals want a lot of environmental and social issues addressed in the OCP but whenever it comes to regulation they say "We don't want regulation…we don't want to be governed (Participant 26).

There were also a number of examples where local business interests interfered in the planning process. Real estate developers in one community successfully prevented development charges and land banking from being instituted by threatening to move future investments to adjacent municipalities. In another, the presence of large manufacturing plants gave leaders the impression that rapid growth would follow:

> We are currently looking at revising population & employment projections to "down-grade" the previously approved projections, and we now seen those previous projections as being highly optimistic, if not unrealistic (large car manufacturing & assembly plants do that to the elected officials)… (Participant 12).

8.4.6 Future Outlook in Canadian Communities

The adoption of growth appropriate planning can also be influenced by a community's prospect for future growth. Schatz (2009) noted that Sudbury's projections for future growth helped persuade local leaders and planning professionals to continue using contemporary strategies and pursue growth from abroad. Similarly, Hollander (2011a) found that many sun-belt cities were reluctant to address their vacant housing problems (due to foreclosures) with

progressive planning strategies because planners predicted that growth would rebound in the near future. In contrast, Youngstown, OH rationale for implementing a smart decline strategy was based on its projections of continued shrinkage and the sheer volume of problems associated with previous population losses (Schatz, 2009; Pyl, 2009; Morrison & Dewar, 2011).

When asked about whether or not their community's current growth trend would continue the majority agreed that it would. Overall more than 73% of respondents felt that their rate of population growth or loss would continue in the near future. In comparison only 17% felt that it would change while 10% were unsure. With regard to slowly growing communities more than 77% believed that they would continue growing at their current rate while an additional 15% were unsure. The remaining 7% felt that their community's slow growth would either decrease or significantly increase. In contrast only 66% of respondents in shrinking communities believed that their decline would continue with the remaining 34% predicting a reversal of their shrinkage.

Not surprisingly, the prospect for future growth was the predominant factor influencing the outlook for a community:

> At the end of the day, economic conditions and the cost of energy have a much greater influence on communities than planning policy. The decisions people make about how and where to spend their money will trump even the most well laid out planning policy. This is also true with demographics. An aging population is less mobile and has different needs than most municipalities are used to. This will have a profound effect on communities over the next 20 years (Participant 62)

As previously mentioned the prospect of new mines and resource extraction was cited as the only source of growth for many communities. Despite the possibility that new resource projects would be delayed or cancelled, many were preparing for a dramatic increase in the number of construction, mining and service related jobs. All of the communities predicting rapid growth in the survey had populations of less than 30,000.

In comparison, medium and large resource oriented communities were predicting slower growth. This may reflect that because of their larger size, the jobs created from new projects represent a smaller proportion of the community's overall population. A large number of manufacturing communities were also predicting slow or no growth due to diminishing job opportunities from rationalization, offshoring as well as the cyclical nature of some industries. Similar to the literature, slower growth was also caused by competition from neighbouring communities for growth as well as local constraints:

> We continue to see approximately 100 new homes being constructed on a year in, year out basis. This appears to be the upper limit to the local construction sector's capacity. Our construction sector is also unduly limited by the fact that a very large percentage of developable lands are held by a single landowner that builds at their own pace. We are also seeing population growth in the small neighbouring communities, even though there is no obvious reason for these communities to be growing (i.e. no new industry). This indicates that overflow population is finding its way to the nearby bedroom communities (Participant 70).

In some cases projections for future growth were based on the perceived or actual success of economic diversification strategies and innovative strategies:

> As opposed to going after the "let's conduct a study" approach the four municipalities have put together a series of initiatives including an area economic strategy, a new tourism initiative, a downtown revitalization program and a private sector led vehicle to coordinate area economic development. This is year one – progress is being made (Participant 32).

> With the work that has been done in the last few years we are starting to see results and this should carry forward in the coming years (Participant 37).

> Our community will continue the current growth level into the future, and perhaps expand on it. The current economic base (resources) is healthy and projected to continue to be healthy, and the Town is pursuing a number of projects to diversify the local economy, specifically targeting the local retail and tourism sectors. Land will be

> opening up soon for the growth of the industrial sectors as well (Participant 35).

On the other hand poor policy was also identified as an impediment to growth. As mentioned earlier, some respondents noted that senior governments provided little help to encourage growth or immigration in smaller population centres.

Projections for shrinkage were often based on the negative perception and or poor employment opportunities in a community:

> Unless there is a significant increase in employment opportunities there is no reason to come or even stay in the community. In addition the underlying negativity of the community would make a person or company think twice about locating [here] (Participant 48).

Additional barriers to attracting residents and investments from abroad included an aging population, poor municipal services and a high cost of living. The poor prospect for growth prompted a number of respondents to become more conservative and flexible in their growth projections.

As mentioned previously the impact of an aging population on a community and its outlook varied considerably. For some an aging population presented an opportunity for new growth in the local construction, healthcare and service sectors. But for many, an aging population was a negative phenomenon characterized by further population losses, a declining local economy, infrastructure and service cutbacks as well as increased operating costs. These effects were particularly pronounced in areas with a high proportion of low-income seniors.

These demographic challenges are not confined to small or remote communities. One participant from a medium sized population centre in southern Ontario stated that the projected population losses in his community were a result of structural changes to the national economy. Despite being located less than three hours from the GTA, the rise of the knowledge-intensive

economy meant that young residents were leaving the community and others like it throughout the province for the opportunities and amenities found in largest urban centres.

Geography was therefore an important factor for many communities as the distance from major population centres and high energy costs were identified as contributing to slowed or negative growth:

> As we are 2 hours from Halifax, and over 1.5 hours to the airport, we have locational challenges. We also will see the Trans-Canada Highway moving away from the Town (currently, we have 2 sets of lights on the TCH). As well, like many smaller communities, our population base is aging. These all represent challenges (Participant 64).

> Our community is located in Northern Ontario, which creates some transportation and supply chain logistic challenges. The biggest challenges regarding economic development are likely a smaller labour market base and the high price of energy (Participant 70).

In most cases respondents from the same community had similar outlooks for future growth. For example, two planning professionals believed that their community's shrinkage would stop within ten years due to the cyclical nature of their manufacturing base and new opportunities for economic development. When there was a disagreement it was borne out of how severe the problems confronting their community really were. The optimism of one municipal official for growth was countered by the opinion of a local planning professional:

> The community's population will continue to decline as there are limited access to economic opportunities, higher costs for transportation of goods and services while few services are provided in comparison to areas of comparable size due to population demographics and hollowing of the age groups (Participant 26).

Given their poor prospects for growth some communities have begun the process of creating or implementing growth appropriate policy. Similar to the findings of Martinez-Fernandez et al (2012b) most communities only began discussing the probability of long-term

slow growth or shrinkage once either trend had occurred for at least a decade. In some cases however, the effects from 2009's Great Recession forced community leaders and local planning and economic development professionals to revaluate their strategies and growth projections. The difficulty in accepting and planning for prolonged slow growth and shrinkage not only reflects the stigma associated with either trend but the tendency for brief periods of growth to cloud the perception of local residents and officials:

> Accepting long term decline is something that's occurring now. From 2006 to 2008 I believe there was maybe an increase and it was seen as a very positive vibe but it was never a sustainable thing. But everyone got on the bandwagon saying it's so positive that all this is going to continue. In reality, 2008 came upon them but no one recognized what was really going on because everyone in the municipality had the blinders on. So when the mayor found out about the census figures last month, she said 'I thought we would have grown'. But she knew previous to that I was saying I felt we were declining given that the school enrollment was greatly diminished. I am not sure why any politician would think that if their school enrollment had gone down considerably over the past five years that they would be in a growth situation. Since the previous OCP looked at growth projections that were on the extreme high side of 3% annually and to overall have an overall net decline of 3% over a five year period certainly means that we have to readdress things. That's why I have triggered a major review of the OCP because I am saying are we asleep, none of those growth projections were correct, none of that growth occurred from 2008 on. (Participant 26)

In almost every case, planning practitioners were the first to bring attention to these trends.

8.5 Appropriate elements for Growth Appropriate Policy

8.5.1 Four pillars of growth-appropriate literature

Within the literature, growth appropriate planning is guided by four fundamental pillars:

- Slow growth and population losses cannot be reversed in ALL communities (Oswalt, 2005; Hall, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Beauregard, 2011; Hollander, 2011a,b; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012; Weichmann & Pallagst, 2012).
- Slow growth and shrinking communities should have different planning and economic strategies than fast growing communities

(Logan and Schilling, 2008; Hall, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Hollander, 2011a; Schilling & Mallach, 2012)

- Slow growth and shrinkage can provide opportunities to improve communities (Leo & Brown, 2000; Popper & Popper, 2002; Logan & Schilling, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2011; Mallach, 2011a,b; Schwartz, 2011; Schiling & Mallach, 2012)
- More research needs to be conducted on how to plan in slow growth and shrinking environments (Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

The basis of the first pillar reflects the structural changes occurring in industrialized regions. In North America, these changes (as outlined in Chapter 5) include suburbanization, demographic shifts characterized by falling birth rates and prolonged life expectancy and the transition to a knowledge based economy as a result of globalization and rationalization (Berg, 2005; Fishman, 2005; Oswalt, 2005; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Montgomery, 2007; Gordon. 2008; Glaeser, 2009; Polese, 2009; Schatz, 2009, Shearmur, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Moore, 2010; Eurostat, 2011; Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011; Audirac et al, 2012;Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

The emphasis on using different planning strategies for different rates of growth reflects contemporary planning's inability to deal with the challenges of slow growth and shrinkage (Leo & Brown, 2000; Oswalt, 2005; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Hall, 2007, 2008; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Hollander, 2011a,b; Mallach, 2011a,b; Audirac et al, 2012 Martinez-Fernandez, 2012a,b; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Among the primary reasons for this is planning's emphasis on promoting growth regardless its feasibility or impact on residents, ignoring local characteristics and poorly understanding either trend and their effects. As a result, contemporary policies tend to ignore or miss the opportunities slow growth and shrinkage may provide for communities to improve the quality of life for residents. In addition, searching for outside investment tends to obscure the local assets which may be

leveraged to improve the area for a much lower cost. Such practices also tend to build social capital which in some slow growth and shrinking areas may be low due to the loss of friends, local institutions and meaningful employment (Durrschmidt, 2006; Morrison & Dewar, 2011).Lastly, given the relatively recent emergence of the growth appropriate planning field there is a death of research on virtually every aspect related to either trend.

8.5.1.1 Reversibility of slow growth and shrinkage

When asked if slow growth or population losses could not be reversed in ALL communities, more than 81 percent agreed with the statement while 9.3% were neutral. Only 9.3% of respondents believed that slow growth and shrinkage could be reversed in every community. For many, the inability to reverse either trend was tied directly to the structural forces affecting the country's demographic and economic systems:

> There are many factors - local, provincial, national, international - that are out of the control of municipalities. If you do not have a solid economic base then there is not much one can do to reverse slow growth or declining growth (Participant 15).

> Sometimes slow growth or decline communities are a result of structural change in industries, for example either agriculture or forestry. For any community currently solely dependent on this industry, they will feel the impact of decline due to long-term trend of downward prices, and mechanization of previously employed positions (Participant 11).

> In the case of slow growth, planning policies alone will not speed the growth along. For a declining community, economic forces usually outpace any public-policy decisions (Participant 41).

On the other hand, respondents who disagreed with the statement believed that progressive policy could increase growth regardless of the circumstance:

> If the desire exists within the community there is always an opportunity to reverse slow growth/decline. It is very important for the majority of community members to be cohesive and to reach out for

assistance in planning - to look at the challenges and opportunities (Participant 65).

One local economic development officer also provided a four stage process to reversing slow growth and shrinkage:

1. There is always a niche to be developed
2. Once a niche is defined then a strategy and plan can be developed
3. Collaboration and cooperation by all levels of government and sectors is needed to get the strategy rolling
4. There are opportunities to 'turn the ship' and improve old strategies and mindsets (Participant 43)

Table 17: Four Pillars of Growth Appropriate Literature

Questions	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Population Trends in slow growth or shrinking communities cannot be reversed in ALL communities	81.5%	9.3%	9.3%
Slow growth and shrinking communities should have different planning and economic strategies than fast growing communities	94.4%	0%	5.6%
Slow growth and shrinkage can provide opportunities to improve communities	77.8%	5.6%	16.7%
More research needs to be conducted on how to plan in slow growth and declining environments	85.2%	7.4%	7.4%

8.5.1.2 Planning Strategies for Slowly Growing and Shrinking Communities

A second tenet of growth-appropriate literature is the need for slowly growing and shrinking communities to utilize different planning and economic strategies than rapidly growing communities (Leo & Brown, 2000; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Hollander, 2011a,b; Hollander and Nemeth, 2011; Mallach, 2011c). Rather than focusing on growth, the literature calls for planners and economic development officials to focus on improving the quality of life using techniques that exhibit the following characteristics:

- Cooperative
- Flexible,
- Strategic,
- Balanced,
- Inclusionary,
- Experimental,
- Holistic and
- Utilize local assets (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Friedmann, 2004; Fox & Axel-Lute, 2008; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Weichmann, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Pallagst, 2010; Hollander, 2011; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

Mallach (2011c, 2) emphasizes that policy plays a significant factor in determining a community's future:

> How [communities] reconfigure their physical environment and repurpose their surplus buildings and vacant land, how they stabilize their economies and utilize their human capital, and how they capitalize on their man-made and natural assets, is likely to determine whether their future will be one of continued decline, or of newly-found vitality as smaller but stronger cities…

When asked if they agreed with the literature 94.4% indicated that slowly growing and shrinking communities should have different strategies from rapidly growing areas. The remaining 5.6% were neutral. There was however, some division as to how policy should differ. On one hand, some respondents felt that contemporary tools could be used in both all communities regardless of their growth rate. The only difference would be in how communities adapted them to local conditions.

Some respondents however called for a completely new set of tools. In a number of cases, the current emphasis on growth and property assessment was called unsustainable both in terms of its ecological and economic significance:

> Our current level of growth simply cannot be sustained…because we have a lot of prime agricultural land across the country that has been gobbled up and [will] never come back. When people start to realize how much single detached units cost they are never really going to

> pay for themselves. Once people start to find out that it has a great impact on their taxation, they will start wanting the needs of the infrastructural aspects kept within check. You start to wonder if it's really a sustainable model and in my mind its not…(Participant 26)

In the call for new tools three respondents referred to 'smart decline' as a suitable strategy to deal with shrinkage:

> I have seen examples in Europe where decline was used as a means of centralizing the population and thereby services resulting in a more sustainable community. No one wishes to admit they are in decline so many focus on growth rather than dealing with their circumstances. Finding ways to maintain quality of life in the face of decline (and thereby hoping to achieve a sustainable, stable population) is critical for many communities (Participant 64).

The majority however were unable to list any other tools citing a lack of research in the field of planning in slow growth and shrinking environments.

8.5.1.3Opportunities from Slow Growth and Shrinkage

Despite the stigma surrounding slow growth and shrinkage, there is a growing literature suggesting that both trends can provide opportunities for communities to improve the quality of life. In their *Blueprint Buffalo* report, Schilling & Logan (2008) note that the prevalence of vacant land in Buffalo could be used for a wide range of new uses including active infrastructure, urban agriculture, green power generation and the restoration of ecological and watershed functions. Similarly, Mallach (2011b), Morrison & Dewar (2011) and Schwartz (2011) describe how these uses may be applied in Detroit, MI, Cleveland, OH and Youngstown, OH. Communities experiencing slow growth are also believed to benefit through the prevalence of affordable housing (Leo, 2007) and the ability to effectively respond to changing service needs (Leo & Brown; 2000; Leo & Anderson, 2006).

According to the survey, almost 78% of respondents believed that slow growth and shrinkage can provide opportunities to improve a community. While an additional 16.7% were

neutral or unsure, only 5.6% disagreed with the statement. For some, this statement reiterated the purpose of planning which was to improve the quality of life for residents regardless of economic conditions:

> Slow growth is still growth, and can be fluctuated by economies dependent on oil-patch, or bad years of agriculture. Not all can be fixed, or sped up from any one action. But there are opportunities to prepare for downturns, as well as increase benefits from upturns (Participant 39).

There were also a number of individuals who felt that rapid growth was ecologically unsustainable in the long run:

> I don't think growth is the key to everything...we're already consuming too much…communities CAN'T be about continued growth (Participant 12).

Table 18: Opportunities in Slow Growth Communities to Improve the Quality of Life of Residents

Questions	Little Opportunity	Moderate Opportunity	Significant Opportunity	Neutral/ Unsure
Increase community green space, trails and other recreational features	14.8%	46.3%	37.0%	1.9%
Provide affordable housing	14.8%	38.6%	31.5%	3.7%
Increase social capital within neighbourhoods	19.2%	50.0%	23.1%	7.7%
Ability to effectively respond to changing service needs	18.9%	43.4%	34.4%	3.8%

Participants were also asked to identify some potential opportunities that slow growth and population loss may provide. In slowly growing areas (Table 18) more than 83% felt that there was a moderate to significant opportunity to increase community green space, trails and other recreational features. Coming in second was the ability to effectively react to changes within in the community with 77.8% indicating it as a moderate to significant opportunity:

> …high growth may not be a great thing. At least stable or declining populations give you the opportunity to really look at your

> infrastructure, at what the community needs, what need to strengthen and what you really need to get back to basics on. It's a little easier in a lower growth, no growth or declining situation [as it] gives you that opportunity to reassess things (Participant 26).

Increasing affordable housing (73%) and providing affordable housing (70.1%) were considered to be the least viable of the listed opportunities.

Table 19: Opportunities in Shrinking Communities to Improve the Quality of Life of Residents

Questions	Little Opportunity	Moderate Opportunity	Significant Opportunity	Neutral/ Unsure
Restore natural features	24.5%	32.1%	24.5%	22.6%
Increase community green space, trails and other recreational features	28.3%	41.5%	15.1%	15.1%
Provide suitable areas for green energy production	24.5%	47.2%	11.3%	17.0%
Increase social capital within neighbourhoods	26.9%	40.4%	11.5%	21.2%
Ability to effectively respond to changing service needs	21.2%	51.9%	9.6%	17.3%

With regard to shrinking communities (Table 19), respondents believed that the most prominent opportunity was the ability to effectively react to changing conditions with 61.5% rating it as a moderate or significant opportunity. Despite being the most prominent opportunity in slowly growing communities, only 56.1% of respondents believed that shrinking cities could utilize vacant land by building new recreational infrastructure. In fact green energy production (58.3%) and restoring natural features (56.6%) both received more support than new community green space. The least viable option was the ability to increase social capital within neighbourhoods as only 51.9% of respondents believed it was a moderate or significant opportunity.

After comparing the data from both questions, it is evident that municipal officials and professionals see far less opportunity in shrinkage than they do in slow growth. For instance no more than 19.2% of respondents indicated that there was 'little opportunity' to use utilize any of the benefits potentially created by slow growth. In contrast, no less than 21% of respondents felt the same way regarding the opportunities provided by population loss. This trend may reflect the view that the diminished financial resources of shrinking communities limit their ability to leverage these opportunities. One respondent added that engaging stakeholders may be more difficult in areas that are losing population:

> The increasing of social capital can only happen if opportunities to have a conversation about the future of the community [are] provided. I do not think it is a direct result, but definitely an opportunity that decision-makers and/or planner can leverage (Participant 15).

8.5.1.4Research Gaps

A recurring theme within the growth appropriate planning literature is the dearth of research related to slow growth and shrinakge. Schatz (2009) for instance notes that the absence of an accepted definition for 'shrinking cities' is likely due to recent emergence of the field. Similarly Hollander et al. (2009) challenges academics to better understand the dynamics of slow growth and shrinkage:

> First, little is known about how existing planning tools used in growing communities can be adapted to be used in a shrinking environment. And second, 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 (p.2).

The lack of research was also attributed the sensitive nature of the subject (Leo & Brown, 2000; Oswalt, 2005; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Hall and Hall, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010).

Not surprisingly, more than 85.2% of respondents agreed that more research needs to be conducted on how to plan in slow growth and shrinking environments. While 7.4% of participants were unsure or neutral, the remaining 7.4% disagreed and felt that the literature which existed was adequate for practitioners in these environments. When asked in follow-up interviews what areas required more research two key themes emerged. The first was the need for more research in smaller urban centres as the majority of existing research focused primarily on large urban centres. The second and most dominant theme was that more research needed to be conducted on virtually every aspect relating to slow growth and shrinkage:

> More research needs to be done on pretty much everything! We're in a bit of an interesting position here as we're slow growth and our closest neighbours - Port Huron, Detroit and Flint - are in the throes of rampant population loss - so we get to watch their evolution (and bankruptcies) very up close and personal. I think the biggest issue is urban dispersion, the costs of carrying all that fixed infrastructure over the long-term, and the pitfalls that should be avoided when cities are forced to struggle and adapt. I could go on and on - and the approaches needed for 'slow growth' and 'population loss' cities are so starkly different. Some prelim work has been done in Germany, Michigan and Kent State as you probably well know, but it's a little thin and somewhat inconclusive (Participant 7).

> As a planner, this type of work [in reference to the thesis] is very valuable and assists to provide information and focus to the issues that could potentially be addressed through proper master planning and active community planning and good old land use planning. The potential is there, we just need to develop and adjust (Participant 19).

> What do you do with the maturing population if they don't have healthcare facilities in rural areas? A lot of times they move out because they can't afford to go back and forth to the centralized health facilities. So what happens is that you are left with middle aged individuals who have limited economic opportunities and it is even more limited for the younger crowd because they don't have much in the way of their environment to become competitive. It's a whole philosophy of things that planning schools do not get involved in. Many of the areas were put into place because of the railroad or a mine, they had the forestry…they had reasons to be there that may no longer be relevant. But what do you do with all the people that are out

> there…do you give them a subsidy to live there…do you close the town out…I know in Ontario there have been various towns that have disbanded because they can't afford the basic modes of operation. Policy in urban and rural areas needs to evolve ….(Participant 26)

8.5.2 Factors influencing the adoption of growth-appropriate planning policy

Few communities are willing to acknowledge slow growth and shrinkage much less adopt progressive policy without a prompt. As was shown earlier, many communities only began the discussion of how to deal with slow growth and shrinkage after a prolonged period of either trend, a significant loss of employment opportunities or the severity of other symptoms. Schatz (2009) found that the poor prospect of future population growth helped push Youngstown into adopting growth appropriate policy. The length of population and economic loss was also found to be a factor in pushing Cleveland, OH, Flint, MI and other shrinking communities in the U.S. and Europe to adopt growth appropriate planning and economic development strategies (Bontje, 2004; Oswalt, 2005; Steglich, 2005; Weichmann, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2011; Morrison & Dewar, 2011).

When asked, respondents felt that the severity and length of either trend played the most important factor in determining whether or not a community would adopt growth appropriate planning policy and tools. In fact more than 98% of respondents indicated that the severity of financial problems and population and economic losses had a moderate to strong influence. Of these, the most influential was the severity of population loss with 75% believing that it had a strong influence compared to 68.8% for severity of economic loss and 41.2% for severity of financial stress. Not far behind was the duration of slow growth or population loss with almost 94% of respondents indicating that it had a moderate to strong influence.

Table 20: Potential Factors to Convince Communities of their Low or Negative Growth Reality					
Factors	No Influence	Little Influence	Moderate Influence	Strong Influence	Neutral/ Unsure
Severity of Population Loss	0.0%	1.9%	23.9%	75.0%	0.0%
Severity of Economic Loss	0.0%	2.0%	29.4%	68.8%	0.0%
Severity of financial stress	0.0%	2.0%	56.9%	41.2%	0.0%
Length of slow growth or population loss	0.0%	5.7%	37.0%	56.6%	0.0%
Severity of vacant property	2.0%	15.7%	51.0%	31.4%	0.0%
Low prospect of future population growth	3.8%	13.2%	50.9%	32.1%	0.0%
Severity of social problems	2.0%	18.0%	50.0%	30.0%	0.0%

The least influential variables included a low prospect for future population growth as well the severity of vacant property and social problems which were thought to have a moderate to strong influence by 83%, 82.4% and 80% of the respondents. While location was omitted from the choices listed on the survey (as it was addressed in the challenges and opportunities subsection) Participant 12 noted that it was also a key factor. Four respondents added that community leadership also played an important role in helping a community acknowledge its current and future situation.

As previously mentioned the push by some local leaders and municipal professionals to adopt growth appropriate policy came from a combination of the above mentioned factors. For example, planners in one community began the discussion of amending local policy after a prolonged period of no-growth as well as mounting financial pressures from a dispersed development pattern. Similarly, another respondent called for smart decline to be used in his region because prolonged shrinkage had created a perforated settlement pattern and significant financial stress. There were also a number of cases where official community plans were revised as a result of prolonged decline and or the economic shock from the Great Recession.

8.5.3. Requirements for a Community to Fully Accept Slow Growth and Shrinkage

While acknowledging a community's reality is an important and necessary step, it is of little use if local stakeholders do not accept it. According to the literature there are at least four factors which help residents come to terms with their situation. The first entails the realization that a community will probably never experience rapid growth or regain its peak population. For example Schatz (2009) and Morrison & Dewar (2011) explain that the decision to 'right-size' Youngstown was made in large part because the community accepted it would never reach its peak population again.

The ability to use growth appropriate strategies also requires that residents and other stakeholders recognize that despite the challenges, both slow growth and shrinkage can provide opportunities to improve their community (Popper & Popper, 2002; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz,2009; Hollander, 2011a,b; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Mallach, 2011a; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). To uncover these opportunities and gain support from residents, it is also necessary that planning processes and decisions are inclusionary and acknowledge the needs and aspirations of residents (Reiniets, 2005b; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2012; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

The final but perhaps most difficult step to accepting long-term slow growth and shrinkage is abandoning the growth imperative in favour of managing the effects and processes of either trend (Rybczynski & Linneman, 1999; Leo & Brown, 2000; Popper & Popper, 2002; Oswalt, 2006; Leo & Anderson, 2006; Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2011; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Schatz (2009) notes that despite its

departure from contemporary planning practices, local leaders in Youngstown, OH aimed to 'shrink' the city in an effort to make it more attractive for future growth.

Table 21: Factors Necessary to Accept Slow Growth and Shrinkage

Roles of Planners	Necessary	Not Necessary	Neutral
Planning decisions must be inclusionary and acknowledge the socio-economic situation and aspirations of residents	79.6%	9.3%	11.1%
Residents and local leaders view slow growth and decline as an opportunity to improve their community and quality of life	74.1%	11.1%	14.8%
Residents and local leaders acknowledge that their community will probably never completely regain the population it lost	69.1%	20.0%	10.9%
Planning and local economic policy must move away from attracting new residents and businesses and instead manage slow growth and decline	50.0%	35.2%	14.8%

Overall, respondents felt that the most important factor needed for a community to accept its reality was to ensure that planning and economic decisions were aware of and incorporated the values of local residents. While no participant elaborated on why this point was so important, its ranking may reflect points discussed earlier such as the need for residents to implement various planning related initiatives. At the same time more than 74% of respondents believed that residents and local leaders needed to view slow growth and shrinkage as an opportunity to improve their community.

Despite being mentioned repeatedly throughout the literature, accepting that a community will most likely never regain its peak population was the third most important factor as more than 69% of respondents said it was necessary. For some, the discussion of these trends was among the most important factors to improve the community:

> Inherent in all of this discussion is if continued growth is ecologically possible. Do we need growth or improvement? Or should we be aiming for growth or improvement? (Participant 51)

Not surprisingly, shifting policy completely away from a growth attraction model was thought to be necessary by only 50% of survey respondents. While this may reflect the real or perceived ability of some communities to attract future growth, it also highlights the difficulty for many individuals to break from the growth imperative which has dominated North American culture and politics for the past 60 years:

> Generally speaking, Ontario's land use planning policies (for decades) has assumed that positive growth is the ONLY thing that matters. That assumption was fine as long as the population was growing at high rates. We are no longer able to use this assumption due to a wide range of factors. Instead, we should be focussing on a policy "paradigm shift" whereby the ecological continuum of growth includes both positive and negative aspects to "growth". More simply put, those who only look upwards, and never downwards, will eventually have to stare into the precipice they previously, blindly ignored (Participant 12).

> To look at a 3% annual growth was extremely optimistic but that's just the way the individuals [who made the OCP] were because they came from areas with high growth orientation and felt everything had to be high growth. They wanted to put in and provide for bonus density and even put forward in the zoning bylaws bonus density type programs in which they would down-zone and have developers pay for an upgrade in zoning. It is very difficult to try and promote that when you don't have growth occurring (Participant 26).

8.5.4 Role of Planners in Slow Growth and Shrinking Communities

According to Schatz (2009), Hollander and Nemeth (2011) and Schilling & Mallach (2012) planners in slowly growing and shrinking communities must play a "qualitatively different role" from those in rapidly growing communities due to the unique challenges associated with either trend. Some of these new and heightened roles of planners include:

- **Mangers of slow growth and shrinkage (i.e. utilizing realistic population forcasts)** (Leo & Brown, 2000; Hollander et al, 2009;

Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2011; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012)

- **Innovators and pioneers of policy and practices** (Schatz, 2009)
- **Greater collaborate with other professionals to fill gaps in knowledge** (Morrison & Dewar, 2011)
- **Adopting balanced policy which addresses a communities economic, environmental, social and physical needs** (Hall, 208; Schatz, 2009)

Table 22: New or amended roles for planners in slow growth and shrinking environments

Roles of Planners	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Planners should adopt a balanced approach in addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community	94.4%	3.7%	1.9%
Planners should use processes that are strategic, flexible and emphasize citizen participation	90.7%	1.9%	7.4%
Planners should collaborate with other professionals (lawyers, judges, policy specialists and public officials) to fill gaps in knowledge and develop strategies	87.0%	11.1%	1.9%
Planners should actively work with community stakeholders in the creation and monitoring of policy and initiatives	83.3%	11.1%	5.6%
Planners should take on the role as an innovator and pioneer for new growth appropriate policy	77.4%	5.7%	17.0%
Planners should increase their role as a facilitator and source of citizen empowerment	56.6%	17.0%	26.4%

When asked, the majority of respondents agreed that planners should take on new roles and amend existing ones. As shown in Table 22, more than 94% believed that planners should broaden their focus from facilitating economic and population growth to one that evenly addresses a community's physical, economic, environmental and social needs. With 90.7% of support, the second most favoured role among respondents was the use of tools that are strategic, flexible and seek greater public participation.

While more than 83.3% viewed greater collaboration with other professionals as helpful in creating new policy and tools some did not agree with Morrison and Dewar's (2011) assertion:

> Lawyers and judges are not key professionals to provide insight into slow growth challenges (Participant 61).

> Leave the judges/lawyers/public officials out of the planning process and talk to business owners, operators to see where they can grow, how their industry is doing, as small business runs small towns. These small businesses becoming larger in the region, bring in more people (Participant 14).

The difference in opinion may reflect the different laws regarding vacant property in the United States and Canada as well as the severity of the problem. While the survey has demonstrated that vacant property is an issue in some communities, few feature the widespread vacancy found in a number of American cities.

The fourth most appropriate role was to actively work with community stakeholders in creating and monitoring policy and other initiatives. Despite being mentioned earlier, respondents once again noted that gaining community support was essential for policy to be effective in meeting its objectives:

> Of course the [p]lanner can only be as good as the community is prepared to allow. A strong Planner may run into a community that just isn't ready to consider the issues. So in agreeing with all of this I accept that Planners cannot be all things to all people (Participant 39)

> In order to gain momentum you need to influence other organizations to participate and create some consensus building (Participant 3).

> Political support and adequate funding are required to bring about change. In many respects, I think that the planner needs to be part of the team that precipitates the crisis, identifies the issues and leads to solutions. Only a very clear crisis will galvanize political awareness and steel the political fabric for the very tough decisions ahead (Participant 46).

Reflecting the growth oriented nature of most planning strategies, more than 77% of respondents also believed that planners should take on a role as an innovator or new policy. While 17% were unsure about this role only 5.7% disagreed with the statement. It was clear from

many respondents however that the creation of new policy and tools should be done with the help of stakeholders in the community and abroad:

> I do not know if planners must always be the innovator and pioneers, but they most definitely should be open and facilitate new ideas that come up through research, the community, or even the private sector (Participant 51).

> I think there is a significant role for planners to facilitate unconventional ideas regarding slow growth or decline among stakeholders that would not typically interact (Participant 58).

In addition, many respondents felt that the job of municipal planners was to be a voice of reason in the community:

> Its one of those things were politicians and planners get into that wrong direction very easily by saying the bandwagon's good now but they don't look further down the road which is why having good projections and people who can do some visioning on staff really helps a lot. Sometimes I think one of staff's actual duties is to bring council back down to earth and say 'Is this realistic?' 'How long can we do this?' and 'What is it going to cost?' (Participant 26)

Regardless of what shape this new role would take, respondents noted a need for planning tools better suited for slow growth and shrinkage:

> We need to develop new planning tools based on a concept of community triage. We need to identify what we can save and what we require for our dwindling and ageing population, concentrate our effort in the central area of [the region] that can survive and compassionately abandon the former mining towns. This requires funding for rebuilding as well as demolition - funding to abandon roads as well as rebuild some. It needs a strategic triage plan that is designed to accept those things that we cannot change and consolidate and change those things that we cannot accept. A very difficult political Gordian Knot, but one which becomes stark and inevitable with every passing day (Participant 45).

The least favored change was increasing a planner's role as a facilitator and source of citizen empowerment as 56.6% agreed with the statement and 26.4% neutral or unsure.

8.5.5 Role of Senior Governments in Slow Growth and Shrinking Communities

A central feature of growth appropriate planning theory is the coordinating policy with relevant governments (regional, senior etc.) as well as non-governmental organizations (Leo & Brown, 2000; Gordon, 2008; Logan & Schilling, 2008; Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2011; Rae, 2011; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Traditionally, municipal departments and other government agencies have worked independently of each other despite their shared interest in improving the community. Not surprisingly the result has often wasted scarce resources through lobbying efforts, duplicating investments and enacting policies or developments which undermine the actions of other entities (Schatz, 2009; Schilling & Logan, 2012).

Poor coordination between local and senior governments has also created policy poorly suited to local conditions. Despite its intensions Hall (2008), Schatz (2009) and Ortiz-Guerrero (2010) note the *Northern Ontario Growth Plan* provides little help for a number of communities by failing to differentiate between settlement forms and focusing primarily on economic growth. Hall (2008) adds that to be effective, the *Growth Plan* should create realistic demographic and employment projections, develop new creative strategies like marketing the silver lining of slow or no-growth, expand its focus to address the key issues in the region in addition to identifying and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of government.

Given the importance of this topic, the survey asked participants how the relationship and role of municipal and senior governments could change to improve local and regional planning and economic development policy (Table 23). Overall, respondents felt that the most important way senior governments could help municipalities was to concentrate infrastructure funding into existing built-up areas (Mean 5.2). New peripheral infrastructure as it was pointed out, often

increased the operating costs and financial stress of communities at a time when municipal revenues were stagnant or shrinking.

Table 23: Relationship with Senior Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Concentrate infrastructure funding in existing areas	5.2	1.3
Policies need to be place based and match local needs and characteristics	5.1	1.1
Better coordination between levels of government and residents	4.9	1.2
Greater flexibility in using resources for strategic renewal and investments	4.9	1.3
Streamline regulatory and institutional tools	4.8	1.3
Senior governments need to provide municipalities with guidance and assistance in planning for slow growth and population loss	4.4	1.5

It should be noted that not all respondents felt this way. As mentioned earlier, many rural communities felt neglected by senior governments in part because a significant proportion of funding is concentrated in urban centres where the potential for growth (and future votes) is highest. This was particularly the case for smaller population centres that could not obtain funding for infrastructure improvements:

> Concentrating funding in "existing areas" is a very short-sighted way to plan. To develop a plan based on today's reality does not acknowledge changing demographics at all. Funding slow growth communities can be a difficult thing to do with little perceived return on investment but developing a tool to show how those communities contribute to the overall economic future of the region or nation can help to show why some investment is important to maintain (Participant 39).

Echoing the comments found throughout the literature (Hall, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Boehlke, 2011; Hollander, 2011; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Mallach, 2011a;

Schilling & Mallach, 2012) respondents also strongly believed that senior governments needed to create policies which were place based and matched local characteristics and needs. In many cases respondents noted senior governments forced their community to use tools and strategies which were oriented for high growth scenarios. When asked why this occurred most attributed it to the little interest or reluctance of senior governments to acknowledge their challenges and prospects for growth.

Tied for third with a mean of 4.9 were the options of providing greater flexibility in using resources and better coordination between the levels of government and public entities:

> Planners alone cannot be effective. There needs to be an alliance with the key political leaders to shape change. Changing and streamlining governance is essential to deal with this level of decline. In my opinion the land related functions of the Provincial Government should be given to local government - land registry, mapping including property mapping and the whole assessment taxation function needs to come under local control. In turn, policing, and education need to be completely taken over and funded by the Province (Participant 45).

> There's been a decades' long migration pattern underway for decades now where growth is directed towards the major urban areas and minor urban areas are simply unsustainable and have been in decline. It's about time that these areas are recognized for not only the vital function they have, but that they need to be maintained. Part of the issue is that because they have been creatures of the provinces for so long the federal government has taken a hands-off approach to giving grants and putting in place strategies that deal with the rapid decline of rural areas. There needs to be a more coordinated approach between the three layers of government (Participant 26).

Interestingly, the least favoured option by respondents was having more guidance and assistance from senior governments. While there was little explanation for why senior governments should not increase assistance, one respondent explained that there was simply no capacity for additional help:

> Senior levels of government will have their hands full dealing with spiralling health care costs. They cannot afford to spend increasing resources propping up declining communities. I believe these communities will have to look inward for many of their solutions - not unlike a century ago (Participant 64).

However some respondents felt that senior governments could provide better guidance (and policy) simply by engaging in an honest dialogue about the current and future state of their communities:

> Guidance needs to come - not as a top down prescription for our ills (We need less of that.) But we need to talk as peers with Federal and Provincial people to first and foremost agree on what is happening to our community, and then what we can reasonably do to stabilize it. We have hundreds of hectares of surplus land, including fully serviced land, much of it owned by Federal and Provincial agencies. We need to return some of this land to urban and rural forest or agricultural use, and densify our most central community and redevelop and building suitable housing for a very aged and declining population. We have too much land banked by empire protecting Federal agencies, who have too much money and no realistic plan to stabilize this area. It requires a very disciplined, realistic approach to save and rebuild the one urban community where there used to be five urban concentrations. (Participant 45).

8.6 Summary of Key Findings

8.6.1 Definition of slow growth, decline and shrinkage

Similar to the literature respondents had varying definitions of what constituted slow growth, decline and shrinkage. For many, slow growth was associated primarily with small increases and decreases (less than 1% annually) in population in addition to the presence of vacant structures. In comparison, decline and shrinkage were both correlated with long term and large absolute population losses. Interestingly, each term was associated with the prevalence of vacant structures.

As shown on Table 8, there was not a significant difference in how respondents defined each term. In fact, the largest difference in means for each attribute was no more than 0.4. That

being said, respondents felt that the negative attributes listed on the survey were more problematic in declining and shrinking communities than in ones experiencing slow growth. More importantly the survey and subsequent conversations indicated that most respondents believed decline and shrinkage to describe the same process. What can be inferred from this survey and the literature is that 'shrinkage' is currently a buzz-word created and perpetuated by the mass-media and academics. Its status as such will remain until academics and professionals apply the term to a specific set of criteria.

What can also be concluded from the results is that one's definition of each term is based on a variety of factors including education, personal beliefs and time spent in areas experiencing slow growth or population loss. For example, a number of respondents from areas experiencing long-term shrinkage tended to exclude population losses from their definition of slow growth. Upon reflecting on my own definition of each term it was evident that all three factors had a considerable impact. For instance, growing up in Winnipeg, MB during the 1990s and 2000's in addition to the undergraduate classes taught by Dr. Christopher Leo cemented my view that slow growth was comprised of small population increases, economic growth and that the negative features associated with it could be mitigated with growth appropriate policy. Moreover, I had not heard the term 'shrinkage' until I began the literature review for this thesis.

8.6.2 Factors influencing the adoption of Growth Appropriate Policy

According to the survey more than 80% of respondents used at least one growth appropriate tool in their community. While only one respondent reported using eight of the tools listed, 31.5% reported using four or more of these progressive strategies while 47.3% used one to three of the tools. In addition, more than 18%[40] of the respondents were considering using one or more of the tools in the near future. On the other hand, approximately 20% of respondents

[40] The figure represents the average for all nine categories.

indicated that they were not using any of the progressive planning and economic development tools in their community. The varied use of these tools partially reflects the circumstances under which some tools such as smart growth and decline can be implemented. Some respondents also noted that they were not large enough to effectively utilize some tools or that they did not have enough resources to implement them.

The adoption of progressive policy was also dependent on the possibility for future population and economic growth. In general, communities which were anticipating or experienced growth after a period of population loss were less likely to examine the appropriateness of their policy than those which were projecting slow growth or shrinkage. Location was also a key factor in influencing the outlook and policy of some communities as areas located in close proximity to major infrastructure (i.e. highways, ports, fibre cable networks) and large urban areas were far more optimistic about future growth than isolated communities with poor access to lucrative resource deposits.

That being said, there was a growing recognition amongst participants (even in areas projecting higher growth) that contemporary planning and economic development strategies were unable to properly address the growing problems in their municipality. Some respondents from resource dependent areas were being pro-active in their attempts to understand how planning could improve and maintain their community's quality of life during the inevitable periods of boom and bust. But for many, the search for new planning tools was in reaction to a number of following factors:

- Address rising infrastructure deficits,
- Download costs to residents,
- Address fiscal stress by prioritizing spending on projects and programs (i.e. snow clearing)
- Maintain quality of life and attractiveness of the community and

- Build flexibility into local policy in recognition of structural changes to the country's economic and demographic

The delay in properly responding to these challenges was tied to the belief that accepting and labelling a community as slowly growing or shrinking would scare future investments away. It was also noted that the lack of a formal monitoring system also contributed to the delay in acknowledging either trend was occurring.

Accepting their reality and addressing it with progressive policy was contingent on the actions from three key groups: municipal leaders and their staff, local residents and businesses and senior governments and other government agencies. For many participants, the attitude of municipal leaders was a key obstacle in two ways: by either denying that slow growth and shrinkage were occurring or paying 'lip service' in supporting growth appropriate policy. Even when such strategies were enacted there was some difficulty in maintaining support for them when new leaders were elected. Some respondents also felt that the poor training/ lack of knowledgeable staff prevented such policies from being enacted or alerting local leaders to the reality of long-term slow growth or shrinkage. In one community, a high turnover of staff provided a new perspective on the community that helped identify their recent shrinkage as a long-term trend.

But even when municipal leaders and staff are ready to move forward, there were examples of local businesses and residents preventing progressive policy from being adopted. While there were no examples of residents blocking policy because of poor participation, the anti-regulatory culture of some communities, particularly in isolated rural regions, prevented policy of any kind from being implemented. Local businesses also tended to oppose new policy if they felt their interests were being harmed or operating costs increased. It should also be noted

that the desperation of local leaders and stakeholders to increase growth pressured municipal leaders to implement policy which exacerbated their fiscal stress and other problems.

While some communities benefitted from the policy of senior governments they were few and far between. Most respondents were highly critical of senior level policy primarily because it failed to acknowledge their condition or local characteristics. Poor communication between government agencies was also cited as a barrier to implementing progressive strategies particularly when economic development agencies were operating out of a different community. Numerous practitioners, particularly in remote rural regions also complained of being ignored by senior governments due to their low prospects for growth and low population.

8.6.3 Appropriate elements for Growth Appropriate Policy

As previously mentioned, the growth appropriate planning literature is guided primarily by four pillars:

- Slow growth and population losses cannot be reversed in ALL communities
- Slow growth and shrinking communities should have different planning and economic strategies than fast growing communities
- Slow growth and shrinkage can provide opportunities to improve communities
- More research needs to be conducted on how to plan in slow growth and shrinking environments

When asked, no less than 77.8% of respondents agreed that the above statements were true. For many, slow growth and shrinkage represented a significant departure from traditional growth patterns in Canada. To effectively deal with these changes and utilize the opportunities of each trend, respondents felt that the framework under which planning and economic development currently operates under required a drastic overhaul.

Confirming what was previously mentioned most respondents believed that a significant push was required for communities to adopt growth appropriate strategies. Due to the negative

stigma and relative unpredictability of either trend, it was believed that the severity of financial stress as well as population and economic losses had the strongest effect in persuading a community to review its planning and economic development strategies. Another significant factor was the duration of each trend.

Overall most respondents felt that the role of planners in slow growth and shrinking communities should be different than those in areas of rapid growth. These roles included taking a more balanced approach (as opposed to focusing only on attracting growth) and using processes which were strategic, flexible and emphasized public participation. The rationale for these new roles was to acknowledge the limited potential for future economic development, the need to utilize existing resources in the community more efficiently and improve the quality of life for residents.

Given the complexity of the processes arising from slow growth and shrinkage, most respondents also felt that planners should collaborate with other professionals and actively work with the community to create a formal program of monitoring policy and community trends. In both cases respondents saw planners as one of many key actors in creating and implementing planning initiatives. The need for collaboration also highlighted the fact that planners and stakeholders may be required to create much of their policy from scratch given the dearth of research on the matter.

A significant component of growth appropriate planning is coordinating policy with senior governments and non-governmental organizations. When asked, respondents noted that the best way to coordinate policy was to concentrate infrastructure funding in existing areas rather than on the periphery to facilitate development. For many respondents, effective policy

meant ensuring that both rural and urban areas received adequate support to ensure that the latter is not left to decay.

In addition, respondents also noted that to improve policy, senior governments need to incorporate and respect local characteristics, coordinate their actions between all relevant stakeholders and provide greater flexibility in using resources for strategic investments. Although some respondents acknowledged that there was little hope for additional financial resources, they nevertheless desired for senior governments to not only acknowledge their reality, but discuss possible ways of stabilizing and improving the community for residents who remain.

CHAPTER NINE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Introduction

While it remains a sensitive topic, planning in slow growth and shrinking areas is an issue that requires further discussion. Unlike in previous decades, many Canadian communities can no longer rely on rapid growth to address their growing problems. This reality reflects the complex changes occurring to the country's demographic and economic patterns as well as the heightened exposure to shifts in consumer patterns, government policy (both domestic and foreign) and competition from abroad. To continue ignoring the proverbial 'white elephant' that is slow growth and shrinkage may lead to a future of greater population and or fiscal loss, crumbling infrastructure and heightened socio-economic problems.

In order to better understand why communities chose to adopt or shun growth appropriate planning and economic development policy this thesis asked three research questions:

- How do municipal planners and local economic development officials define slow growth, decline and shrinkage?
- What factors cause a community to implement growth appropriate planning tools and strategies?
- What elements do planners and local economic development professionals believe should be a part of growth appropriate planning policy?

Rather than utilize a case study approach, my research employed an online questionnaire which was answered by 70 participants in 51 Canadian communities. The following chapter will revisit some of the key findings from my research and how they relate to the literature, their implications for planning academics, planning and economic development practitioners as well as municipal and senior governments. It concludes with some additional questions and topics for further research which resulted from this thesis.

9.2 Recommendations

9.2.1 Recommendations for Local Communities

As was demonstrated, a sizeable proportion of communities are currently using at least one growth appropriate planning tool. In many cases however, their adoption was not in recognition of long-term slow growth or shrinkage but rather to address the growing problems in their community. That being said there were a number of respondents whom were using or trying to implement these tools and strategies explicitly because of their prolonged slow growth or shrinkage.

While using growth appropriate tools is important step forward communities must be also be ***realistic*** in terms of their future growth projections and economic opportunities. This is because the effectiveness of these tools and strategies relies in large part on making communities more liveable at a given population (Schilling & Mallach, 2012). A number of authors note that the rightsizing techniques used in some German and American cities must be used with caution to ensure that assets which may be of value in the near future are not demolished (Schilling & Logan, 2008; Hollander, 2011a; Mallach, 2011c; Schwartz, 2011).

Although many communities will not experience rapid growth in the future many will also not experience an endless cycle of population loss. As shown by Bontje (2005), Weichmann (2008) and respondents, some communities that were thought to be in terminal decline were able to post population gains in recent years after decades of population loss. But for some communities, growth may never return and the population may either level out or in the most severe cases, disappear completely.

Producing realistic growth projections is by no means an easy task but there are ways of improving its accuracy. Respondents noted that using multiple community indicators helped

produce a more accurate picture of current and future population trends. Such indicators may include federal and provincial census reports, construction permit activity, school enrollments, quality of life and surveying the attitudes of local businesses (Brophy, 2011). More importantly, such measurements need to be regularly monitored to ensure that projections maintain their accuracy. An added benefit of using multiple indicators is the ability to reduce interference from local or outside interests whom may benefit from overly optimistic projections.

The accuracy of projections may also be improved by examining previous population trends as far back as 20 to 25 years to understand how the community reached its current population. Some respondents explained that brief periods of growth caused community leaders to create optimistic projections simply because they ignored long-term trends. Practitioners may also look at communities with similar characteristics (i.e. population, location, services, economic diversity etc.) to compare projections and the criteria used to create it.

Equally important is the need for policy to be ***place based***. Similar to the literature (Leo & Brown, 2000; Popper & Popper, 2002; ; Fox & Axel-Lute, 2008; Weichmann, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Mallach, 2011a,b; Schilling & Mallach, 2012) no two communities in the study experienced slow growth or shrinkage in exactly the same fashion. For some the symptoms of either trend were manageable while others struggled to fund basic services. The differences between these experiences were primarily a result of local or regional trends and characteristics.

Crafting local policy therefore not only requires realistic growth projections but also sober reflections on the challenges and opportunities that a community may possess. Contemporary approaches to slow growth and shrinkage have been ineffective in part because they ignored local real estate conditions, prospects for future growth and the resources of a

community (Cox, 1999; (Fox & Axle-Lute , 2008; Gordon, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Eisinger, 2000; Lovering, 2007; Victor, 2010; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). In addition, contemporary policy rarely acknowledged the reality that small towns and cities require different strategies (Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008). For example, Ortiz-Guerrero (2010) noted that small towns need to engage more in networking and collaborative based approaches (both within the community and the surrounding region) than larger communities on account of their limited resources. A number of local officials also agreed with the literature stating that in a global economy, chasing after growth had become a zero-sum game (Cox, 1999; Leo & Brown, 2000; Peck, 2005; Schatz, 2009). These practices, which tended to provide a poor return on expenditures, also obscured the local advantages it had over competitors.

The effectiveness of progressive planning and economic development policy is also tied to how well it addresses and leverages local assets and characteristics. Although respondents agreed that slow growth and shrinkage could provide opportunities to improve their community, their ability to utilize them hinged on many of the local factors mentioned earlier. Crafting policy to local conditions also allows residents and other stakeholders to become actively engaged during the construction and eventual implementation of planning strategies. As noted throughout this paper and in the literature, this is a key factor in determining the success of policy.

While often overlooked, local planning and economic development policy should also adopt a ***balanced approach*** when addressing the social, environmental, physical and economic needs of a community. While this is a common criticism of contemporary planning practices, Durrschmidt (2005) and Hollander & Nemeth (2011) note that right-sizing planning techniques have tended to focus primarily on the built environment at the expense of the social processes within a community. Both authors in addition to Schatz (2009) explain that the effectiveness of

policy depends on addressing all of a community's needs as opposed to one or two key areas. Such practices tend to leave communities no better off as unbalanced policy tends to improve one aspect of the community at the expense of another (Schatz, 2009; Schilling & Mallach, 2012).

According to some respondents, a significant component of balanced policy is the use of ***full-cost accounting*** when debating the merits of a particular strategy or project (Schilling & Mallach, 2012). In many communities economic incentives and infrastructure or renewal projects were built without considering the effects it would have on the community, environment or municipal operating costs (Cox, 1999; Eisinger, 2000; Leo & Brown). Full-cost accounting helps to avoid these issues by examining the full short and long term environmental, social and economic costs of each project. The criteria used to examine projects may include quality of jobs created, costs per potential job created as well as the impact of development on existing neighbourhoods (Victor, 2008).

Given the scarcity of resources and the unpredictability of future growth, policies should also be ***flexible and strategic*** in nature (Weichmann, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). This is particularly true for communities reliant on natural resources whose fortunes regularly boom and bust. In part this may be accomplished by diversifying local economies through the exploitation of niche markets and promoting locally made goods and services (Martinez-Fernandez, 2012). With regard to land use policies, planners should also identify and promote key areas or strategies that will have the greatest impact in improving the community.

Likewise, municipal capital projects and private investments should be assessed for their impacts on the community as well as their resiliency to economic and population shifts. Despite its growing popularity, the removal of municipal infrastructure from vacant neighbourhoods has

been criticised not only for its financial and social costs, but also for the possibility that these areas and their structures may become inhabited once again (Mallach, 2011c). Schwartz (2011) explains that Cleveland uses three types of right-sizing techniques to ensure unsuitable or inappropriate developments are not built on vacant land with a potential for future growth.

According to both the literature and respondents, planners must ***engage in meaningful participation with local stakeholders and other professionals*** (Reiniets, 2005b; Schilling & Logan, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Mallach, 2011a,c; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Freedman & Rottenberg-Walker, 2012; Schilling & Mallach, 2012) The absence of a consensus from residents and local businesses was identified by a number of professionals and academics as a significant impediment to implementing policy (Pattison, 2004; O'Connor, 2011a; Morrison & Dewar, 2011). In particular, a number of respondents noted that many stakeholders were reluctant to accept new policy on the basis of its increased costs and the prospect that future growth would be scared away. But planners must stress that the cost of maintaining the status quo will be higher than any pain caused in the short term. Doing so will require presenting local stakeholders with an honest and comprehensive overview of their community's historic and future trends as well as the short and long term costs of maintaining contemporary planning practices.

While meaningful participation is needed to implement policy, it is also a useful tool to help planners in their role as ***innovators and pioneers*** of new strategies. Despite their wealth of knowledge, planners may be unaware of local trends and practices used by residents to improve their neighbourhoods (Morrison & Dewar, 2011). In Detroit for example, planners did not know that residents were purchasing adjacent lots in a process known as blotting (Schatz, 2009). More importantly due to the strained resources of some communities local residents may be required to

implement policy through crowdsourcing techniques. Depending on the issue being addressed planners may also have to collaborate with professionals whom may not be normally associated with planning. Their unique training and point of view can be beneficial in crafting new policy and identifying the limitations of new or existing strategies.

Implementing these recommendations however will most likely be an uphill and potentially lonely task. North America's obsession with growth means that discussing let alone acknowledging a community's slow growth and population loss is 'taboo'. Many respondents for example were leery of participating in this study due to the sensitivity of the subject. Despite this planners must nevertheless be pro-active in discussing the need for growth appropriate policy and provide data and advice which municipal leaders and residents may not want to hear. It is also important that this data be shared with other municipal departments to not only create support for planning initiatives but foster a culture which promotes progressive initiatives at city hall.

All too often however the discussion of whether policy is appropriate for a community is done after it has reached the proverbial 'rock-bottom'. To avoid the cycle of decline, planners should begin discussing early on how they and other stakeholders can effectively address the challenges and opportunities that are associated with slow growth and shrinkage.

9.2.2 Recommendations for Planning Educators

As mentioned throughout this thesis the lack of discussion related to slow growth and shrinkage stems in part from the reluctance of academics to seriously delve into these sensitive issues (Oswalt, 2005; Hollander et al, 2009; Schatz, 2009; Hollander, 2009; Hollander & Nemeth, 2011; Mallach, 2011a; Morrison & Dewar, 2011; Martinez-Fernandez, 2012; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Not surprisingly the curriculum of most planning, geography and local

economic development programs is oriented towards facilitating and dealing with the challenges of rapid growth. Similarly, there are numerous post-secondary institutions to assist communities with their transportation and heritage related issues but few, if any that provide guidance for communities experiencing slow growth or shrinkage. This orientation leaves a growing number of communities and students ill-equipped to effectively plan in such environments. This is unfortunate as respondents stressed the need for further research in the topic.

The answer to this dilemma is simple, balance the orientation of curriculum. Rather than focusing solely on growth, courses should be designed to help students better understand these complex processes and how to plan for it. For example, design studios should allow students to explore possible reuse options in areas with little or no prospects for redevelopment such as MIT's Shrinking Cities Studio course. Given the need for new and innovative policy, students should also be exposed to a wide range of interdisciplinary courses (political science, local economic development theory, geography etc.) that demonstrate the complexity of the problem as well as their subsequent solutions.

A key obstacle brought up in the literature and by respondents was the fear that labelling a community as slowly growing or shrinking would deter future investment. While demonstrating the benefits of both trends (and how to leverage them) may help more communities accept their situation, the cultural obsession with growth must also be addressed. Such a discussion may involve examining and better publicizing the negative effects of rapid growth (social, environmental etc.), documenting how growth challenged communities successfully managed to maintain and improve their quality of life, creating alternative economic models and illustrating that continuous rapid growth is not natural. Dismantling the growth imperative will be by no means a quick or easy process. It is however a necessary one if we are

to properly address slow growth and shrinkage and the impact our activities our having on the planet.

Academics and students should also collaborate with municipalities whom have already or are seeking to implement growth appropriate policy. Such learning experiences are beneficial by providing valuable knowledge for both students and practitioners. Lastly Canada's post-secondary institution(s) should seek to create multi-disciplinary think tanks similar to those found in the United States (Shrinking Cities Institute, Creative Exchange Lab) and Europe (Cities ReGrowing Smaller) to provide a forum for academics and practitioners to discuss new planning approaches.

9.2.3 Recommendations for Senior Governments

The role of senior governments cannot be understated. Given their constitutional powers and access to resources they have a direct impact on the health of communities. To assist these areas with the challenges of slow growth and population loss both provincial and federal governments should change the way they approach these situations. Similar to municipalities, senior governments need to be realistic in their growth projections for communities and regions. Ignoring either trend by blinding pursuing growth will only exacerbate the problems senior policies are trying to address.

More importantly, senior planning policies must not only acknowledge the unique features of each community but also provide guidance to local officials on what to do (Hall, 2008; Schatz, 2009; Ortiz-Guerrero, 2010; Mallach, 2011a; Schilling & Mallach, 2012). Such guidance may take the form of outlining a set of best practices, providing technical assistance in the creation and monitoring of strategic plans and identifying the opportunities that slow growth or population loss may provide communities. Funding for infrastructure projects should follow the

'Fix it First' models found in a number of American states which prioritizes the maintenance of existing infrastructure over new projects that promote sprawl or increase operating costs for municipalities (Fox & Axle-Lute, 2008; Brachmann, 2011; Morrison & Dewar, 2011).

To acknowledge the need for place based solutions, municipalities should also have greater flexibility in how these use provincial or federal grants. However none of these recommendations will be of any use if the policies between all three levels of government are poorly coordinated. Respondents and literature noted the importance of coordinating policy and relevant actions to ensure that resources are not only being efficiently spent but are also meeting their goals.

Implementing these proposed actions is easier said than done. Accepting and projecting slow growth or population loss may be a highly unpopular proposal and could scuttle the electability of a politician. Like many municipal leaders, the short time frame in which provincial and federal politicians operate in may dissuade some from implementing policy whose effects are either subtle or occur over a lengthy period of time. On the other hand, some senior governments may be reluctant to label areas as slowly growing or shrinking for fear of deterring future investment.

But perhaps the greatest impediment may be the attitudes between local and senior governments. A large proportion of respondents felt that seniors' governments ignored their plight, particularly if they were from isolated rural areas. The most glaring example of this attitude is the use of service downloading to reduce costs at the provincial level (since local municipalities are legally prohibited from running a deficit). Respondents in Atlantic Canada were particularly vocal about how this tactic was inducing financial stress in their communities.

9.3 Recommendations for Further Research

In 2009, Hollander et al challenged planning academics to better understand how existing planning tools could be adapted in a shrinking environment and how planners and other relevant stakeholders could manage the symptoms associated with it. Since then great strides have been made to better understand these processes and to bring attention to the importance of this emerging research field. For instance the American Planning Association recently featured a panel on shrinking cities at their latest conference and published a manual for planners on growth appropriate techniques[41].

Despite these positive steps forward, much work remains. Research on how slow growth and shrinkage affect communities in Canada is particularly scarce and when it is studied tends to focus on larger urban areas. The following questions were a direct result of this research:

- How can population loss be properly managed in a large geographic area characterized by dispersed settlements? Is it possible to maintain all communities and still provide essential services or a high quality of life?
- What techniques can planners use to help persuade local officials and residents to begin preparing for slow growth and decline before either trend occur? In many cases respondents had to convince these groups that either trend was already occurring by showing a dramatic departure from previous projections.
- Can planning successfully shift from a growth scenario to one of slow or negative growth in short succession? Some respondents in resource dependent areas criticized contemporary planning strategies for being unable to the maintain quality of life or address community concerns during economic downturns.

[41] See Schilling & Mallach, 2012

- Are there methods to increase the flexibility of planning strategies to reflect the impact technology is having on the economic landscape? Can planners work with engineers and possibly industry to create flexible infrastructure which can be dismantled and stored during downturns and erected during periods of growth?
- More work needs to be conducted on the social processes occurring in slow growth and shrinking communities. Ortiz-Guerrero (2010) illustrated that rural areas feature complex social processes which may impact their ability to cope with either trend. A key research gap according to some respondents was how aging populations cope with the loss of essential services and community institutions.
- Despite the emphasis on implementing progressive planning and economic development policy more work needs to be conducted on how to evaluate their impact on a community.
- Echoing one of Schatz's (2009) main research questions, what does planning for no growth or 'accepting permanent decline' look like? Is such a plan even possible when growth and wealth defines how successful (and happy) an individual or region is? More importantly, are there ways to break down these cultural beliefs?

9.4 Conclusion

After nearly 300 years of near continuous rapid growth it appears that slow growth and population loss are the new norm for many regions within the world. Contrary to most beliefs, this slowdown is normal when examined against historical trends, technological advancements

and the ecological limits of the earth. It is acknowledged however that regardless of how natural these trends are, the destabilizing effects they have can be extremely unsettling.

How well communities adapt to this new reality depends in large part on how they manage these trends and their symptoms. Those which continue to ignore this new economic and social climate will in many cases will face a self-fulfilling prophecy as the symptoms of either trend overwhelm the local capacity to deal with them. On the other hand, communities which confront and embrace the opportunities afforded by this new reality can be known less for their growth challenged status and more for the high quality of life their residents enjoy.

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APPENDIX: COPY OF SURVEY

Section 1: Demographic Characteristics

1. Please state your job title.

Planner
Senior Planner
Director/Manager
Local Economic Development Officer
Mayor
Other

2. How long have you held this position?

0 – 5 Years
6 – 10 Years
11 – 14 Years
15 – 19 Years
20 Plus

3. What is your educational background ? (i.e. BA, MA, PhD) Do you have any professional accreditations?

Bachelor's
Master's
PhD
Diploma
MCIP
Ec.D
Other education or professional accrediatations

Section 2: Perception of Slow Growth and Decline

3. Using the scale below please rate what signs best indicate that a community is experiencing slow growth? Please provide any additional criteria or comments in the space below.

	(1) Poor indication	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) Strong Indication	Unsure/Not Applicable
Small population increases (<1% annually)							
Small population decreases (< 1% annually)							
Rising unemployment							
Falling GDP							
Vacant commercial and residential structures							
Municipal service cutbacks							
Municipal financial stress (e.g. structural deficits)							
Deteriorating infrastructure							
Rising Poverty							
Increasing social problems (crime, substance abuse etc.)							
Loss of community institutions (commercial, cultural etc,)							
Loss of confidence in one's self, community & institutions (govt, church etc.)							
Additional Signs/Comments:							

4. Using the scale below please rate what signs best indicate that a community is experiencing decline? Please provide any additional criteria or comments in the space below.

	(1) Weak Indication	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) Strong Indication	Unsure/Not Applicable
Short term population loss							
Long term population loss							
Small absolute population losses							
Large absolute population losses							
Rising Unemployment							
Falling GDP							
Vacant commercial and residential structures							
Deteriorating infrastructure							
Municipal service cutbacks							
Municipal financial stress (e.g. structural deficits)							
Rising Poverty							
Increasing social problems (crime, substance abuse)							
Loss of community institutions (commercial, cultural etc.)							
Loss of confidence in one's self, community & institutions (govt, church etc.)							

Additional Signs/Comments:

6. Using the scale below please indicate what signs best characterize communities that are labelled as "shrinking". Please provide any additional criteria or comments in the space below.

	(1) Weak indication	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) Strong Indication	Unsure/Not Applicable
Short term population loss							
Long term population loss							
Small absolute population losses							
Large absolute population losses							
Rising unemployment							
Falling GDP							
Vacant commercial and residential structures							
Deteriorating infrastructure							
Municipal service cuts							
Municipal financial stress (e.g. structural deficits)							
Rising poverty							
Increasing social problems (crime, substance abuse)							
Loss of community institutions (commercial, cultural etc.)							
Loss of confidence in one's self, community & institutions (govt, church etc.)							
Additional signs/comments. :							

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7. Please indicate which of the following phrases best describes your community's growth.

Rapidly growing
Slowly growing
Not growing
Declining
Shrinking

8. Using the scale below, please rate the CHALLENGES associated with economic development and planning in your community? Please provide any additional challenges or comments in the space below.

	(1) No challenge	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) Significant Challenge
Location (to population centres and/or resource extraction sites)						
Regional competition for development and services						
Loss of employment opportunities						
Uniform economy						
Lack of confidence in community						
Poor opportunities for post-secondary education						
Loss of essential services (hospital, school etc.)						

Additional challenges/comments:

9. Using the scale below, please rate the OPPORTUNITIES associated with economic development and planning in your community? Please provide context or additional OPPORTUNITIES in the space provided below.

	(1) Little opportunity	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) Significant opportunity	Unsure/Not Applicable
Location (to population centres and/or resource extraction sites)							
Infrastructure (highways, ports i.e.)							
Diversity of local economy							
Heritage resources							
Access to post-secondary education							
Recreational/community amenities (libraries, schools, parks etc.)							

Other opportunities/comments:

10. Please indicate some of the economic development and planning strategies/tools/initiatives your community is using to increase growth and improve the quality of life in your community.

Comprehensive Master Plans
Heritage preservation
Public space improvements (streets, parks, schools etc.)
Social policy
Image branding
Inclusionary planning
Small and medium business grants
Tax increment financing
Vacant Building Rehabilitation
Additional strategies/tools/initiatives and or comments

11. Please elaborate on the strategies/tools/initiatives identified in Question 10 by identifying specific policies or initiatives used in your community (i.e. updating population forecasts annually, identifying neighbourhoods for investment, crowd sourcing etc.).

12. Based on your answers in Question 10 and 11, do you believe that your community's current growth level will continue into the future? Please elaborate on your answer in the space provided below.

13. Using the scale below, please indicate how effective your community's current planning and local economic strategies/tools/initiatives have been with regard to improving quality of life and increasing growth.

1 – No effect at all
2
3
4
5
6 – Large Improvement
Unsure

14. Please indicate which of the following criteria are used to measure the success of public policy in your community.

Change in GDP
Change in property values
Unemployment figures
Poverty and income levels
Amount of vacant buildings/land
Quality of Life
Happiness of residents
No formal measurement of policy

15. In your opinion, what has limited the effectiveness of your community's planning and local economic development strategies?

Insufficient staff or program funding
Little political support
Opposition from local business interests
Spreads resources too thinly
Not designed to deal with the challenges of slow growth or decline
Other (please specify)

16. Has your community ever considered or implemented the following planning and local economic development tools to improve the quality of your community?

	(1) No consideration for its use	(2) Previously considered for its use	(3) Currently being considered for its use	(4) In use/ implemented	Unsure
Realistic growth projections					
Smart growth					
Smart decline					
Growth Boundaries					
Community driven processes and oversight					
Regional governance/cooperation					
Strategic neighbourhood/district planning/investments					
Cooperating with local Anchor Institutions (i.e. universities, hospitals)					
Land banks					

Additional Tools/Strategies that have been considered but not implemented:

17. Please elaborate on the planning strategies you identified as CURRENTLY BEING CONSIDERED or IMPLEMENTED in Question 16 by listing specific policies or initiatives. (E.G. Community driven processes: collaborate with local businesses and residents, crowd sourcing for park maintenance, social programs etc.)

18. What reasons or factors led to the dismissal or implementation of the planning and local economic development tools listed in Question 16? Please elaborate on your answer in the space provided below.

Lack of political interest
Opposition from local real estate development industry
Opposition from local residents
Optimistic growth projections
Not enough information on how one of more of the tools operates
Existing planning tools are efficient in improving community
Other (please specify)

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19. Please indicate the response that best suits your opinion for the following statements. After providing your opinion, please elaborate on your position in the space provided below.

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Population trends in slow growth or declining communities can be reversed in ALL cases.			
Slow growth and declining communities should have different planning and economic strategies/tools/initiatives than fast growing communities.			
Slow growth and decline can provide opportunities to improve communities			
More research needs to be conducted on how to plan in slow growth and declining environments			

Other (please specify):

20. What factors may cause a community to create policy that acknowledges and accepts its smaller population or slower growth?

	Strong Influence	Moderate Influence	Little Influence	No Influence	Neutral
Length of population loss or slow growth					
Severity of population loss					
Severity of economic loss					
Severity of building and land vacancy					
Severity of social issues					
Financial issues/strain					
Low prospect of population gain					

Additional Factors/Comments:

21. In your opinion, which of the following statements are NECESSARY in order for a community to fully accept slow growth or decline as a long term trend?

	Necessary	Not Necessary	Neutral
Residents and local leaders acknowledge that their community will probably never completely regain the population it lost			
Planning and local economic policy must move away from attracting and facilitating new residents and businesses and instead manage slow growth and decline			
Planning decisions must be inclusionary and acknowledge the socioeconomic situation and aspirations of residents			
Residents and local leaders view slow growth and decline as an opportunity to improve their community and quality of life			

Further comments:

22. Please indicate how the role of urban planners should adapt when working in slow growth or declining communities. Please provide the rationale for your answer in the space provided below.

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Planners should no longer assume that growth will occur in the future			
Planners should use processes that are strategic, flexible and emphasize on citizen participation			
Planners should adopt a balanced approach in addressing the physical, economic, environmental and social needs of the community			
Planners should take on the role of as an innovator and pioneer for new growth appropriate policies			
Planners should increase their role as a facilitator and source of citizen empowerment			
Planners should actively work with community stakeholders in the creation and monitoring of policy and initiatives			
Planners should collaborate with other professionals (lawyers, judges, policy specialists and public officials) to fill gaps in knowledge and develop strategies that address the challenges of slow growth and decline			

Other roles/comments:

23. In your opinion what kind of opportunities does slow growth provide for communities? Please provide the rationale and or examples for your answer in the space provided below

	Little Opportunity	Moderate Opportunity	Significant Opportunity	Neutral
Increase community green space, trails and other recreational features				
Provide affordable housing				
Increase social capital within neighbourhoods				
The ability to respond adequately to changing service needs				
Other opportunities/comments/examples:				

24. In your opinion what kind of opportunities does population decline provide for communities?

	Little opportunity	Moderate Opportunity	Significant opportunity	Neutral
Restore natural features				
Increase community green space, trails and other recreational features				
Provide suitable areas for green energy production				
Increase social capital within neighbourhoods				
The ability to respond adequately to changing service needs				
Other opportunities/comments/examples:				

25. In your opinion how can Provincial and Federal Governments provide better assistance for communities experiencing slow growth or decline? Please provide additional comments or ways that upper level governments can assist slow growth or declining communities in the space below.

	(1) No Help	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5) Very helpful	Unsure/Not Applicable
Senior governments need to provide municipalities with guidance and assistance in planning for slow growth and population loss						
Greater flexibility in using resources for strategic renewal/investments						
Policies need to be place based to meet local needs and characteristics						
Better coordination between levels of government and residents						
Concentrate infrastructure funding in existing areas						
Streamline regulatory and institutional tools						

Additional comments.:

26. Please indicate whether you authorize the use of anonymous quotations from your responses to be used in this thesis or any publications.

YES
NO