

## Les *shrinking cities*: une réalité diverse

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<http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr/glossaire/shrinking-city>

### Doc 1 This map shows the fastest growing and shrinking cities in America over the last decade

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<https://www.businessinsider.fr/us/2020-census-fastest-growing-and-shrinking-metro-areas-2021-8>

### doc 2 :How Some Shrinking Cities Are Still Prospering

A study finds that some shrinking cities are prosperous areas with smaller, more-educated populations. But they also have greater levels of income inequality.

By [Richard Florida](#), professor at the University of Toronto's School of Cities, 13 June 2019,



Youngstown, Ohio, has served as a poster city for deindustrialization. Brian Snyder/Reuters

The phrase “shrinking cities” conjures up images of economically ravaged places, defined by declining populations and massive job loss. A [USA Today](#) report earlier this year listed declining Rustbelt cities like Johnstown, Pennsylvania; [Youngstown, Ohio](#); and Pine Bluffs, Arkansas as among America’s 25 fastest-shrinking cities. These places not only suffered from massive population loss, but high rates of unemployment and violent crime.

But a [new study](#) suggests that shrinking population and economic decline don’t always come hand-in-hand: A striking subset of cities with declining populations are in fact economically prosperous. The report by Maxwell Hartt, my former University of Toronto colleague who is now at Cardiff University, examines the economic performance of American cities with shrinking populations, looking at their performance on indices of income, unemployment, job growth, and economic inequality from 1980 to 2010.

Other studies have found that more than 40 percent of U.S. cities (those with at least 10,000 residents) qualify as shrinking cities, having lost population between 1980 and 2010. But Hartt estimates the real number is closer to 35 percent, or 886 cities, because he disqualifies cities which saw their land areas or census boundaries redrawn and decrease.

The map below, from the study, charts all 886 shrinking cities. The Rustbelt has large numbers of them, along with the Sunbelt and the Northeast. Less than a fifth of shrinking cities are principal cities (cities that are the largest incorporated place in a core-based statistical area or

meet a threshold both for population and working population). Eighty percent of them are suburbs or smaller communities.



Annals of the American Association of Geographers

In the next map, Hartt charts the location of prosperous shrinking cities. Overall, Hartt finds that more than a quarter of shrinking cities (27 percent) can be defined as prosperous, having economic indices—the four factors mentioned earlier—greater than their regional average. Just 4 percent of prosperous shrinking cities are principal cities; the vast majority are suburbs and smaller places. For example, the affluent suburb of Mountain Brook, Alabama, has faced population decrease while maintaining high income and talent levels.



Annals of the American Association of Geographers

Not surprisingly, a relatively large percentage of prosperous shrinking cities are clustered near large, successful metros like New York, San Francisco, Chicago, and Miami. Over 30 percent of the shrinking cities in the Pacific, Mountain, Middle Atlantic, and New England census

divisions are prosperous, whereas those in the West North Central and West South Central divisions were least likely to be prosperous, only about 11 to 12 percent.

In Hartt's words, "the absolute number of prosperous shrinking cities appears to be relatively proportional to the number of shrinking cities. The relative proportionality suggests that prosperous shrinking cities might be a consistent subset of shrinking cities, rather than a geographically distinct phenomenon."

The study found no connection between the prosperity of cities and either the size of their population or the severity of population loss. "Remarkably, the severity of shrinkage was found to have no effect on income," Harrt writes. "The lack of relationship between severity, persistence, and income demonstrates the diversity and complexity of urban shrinkage processes."

The researchers find that the main thing that distinguishes prosperous shrinking cities from a solely shrinking city is a particular type of talent. The strongest factor is college grads: 97 percent of prosperous shrinking cities had a higher proportion of college-educated individuals than their regional average.

This reflects the ongoing march of what Bill Bishop long ago dubbed the "[big sort](#)." It's not just that places are losing or gaining people in general. They're specifically losing less-educated people while gaining more-educated people, a sorting process often exacerbated by expensive housing. Population growth is a crude measure of prosperity: As long as a place attracts or retains specific talent, it can lose general population and still be prosperous.

As a result, prosperous shrinking cities are also more unequal. More prosperous cities, even when they are losing people, have both greater levels of education and greater levels of inequality.

Of course, population loss and economic decline do inherently affect each other. Population loss can result in decreased tax revenues from income tax or real estate. This reduced fiscal capacity may result in fewer or poorer social services, resulting in even more population loss, dubbed the "feedback cycle of shrinkage." Cities can break the shrinkage cycle by "planning for less"—diminishing the supply of housing or municipal expenditures in order to match city infrastructure with its population without excess.

The fact of shrinking, or losing population, does not condemn cities to economic decline in and of itself. More than a third of America's shrinking cities are still economically successful by acting as talent magnets. And like other winner cities, they too suffer from the same [new urban crisis](#) brought on by their success.

### **Doc 3 : How America's shrinking cities can 'rightsize'**

At least 80 US cities are shrinking in population but some have found strategies to still improve the quality of life for those who stayed

[Matt Krupnick](#) Thu 13 Feb 2020

A community never wants to be known as a "shrinking city" these days, no matter what the numbers say about how many people have moved away and how many old factories or homes are vacant, weeds and trash having taken over properties that once marked important industrial centers.

Although most US cities in that predicament have gone to great lengths to avoid admitting shrinkage publicly, with many branding themselves as "legacy cities", some have taken innovative steps to accept the new reality: that they will never return to their former glory and need to adapt to their smaller size.

“We cannot go back to where we were,” said Ivonne Audirac, an associate professor of planning and landscape architecture at the University of Texas at Arlington who has studied shrinking cities. “Let’s accept that.”

Former industrial cities such as Youngstown, Ohio; Detroit; Cleveland; and Baltimore have had decades to come to terms with population loss. Youngstown, for example, has lost about 100,000 residents since 1960, while Detroit has lost more than a million in the past 70 years. At least 80 US cities with 50,000 or more residents are shrinking, according to Cleveland State University researchers; nearly all of those cities are clustered in the rust belt area of the north-east. It’s difficult to put that figure in historical perspective because of changes in household sizes and housing availability, experts said.

Some cities have turned to “rightsizing”, or shifting their focus from returning to their historical peak and instead toward improving life for the remaining residents. Sometimes that means turning to drastic measures, such as eliminating services to largely empty neighborhoods or demolishing thousands of buildings.

Those decisions are fraught with racial and class considerations, making it difficult to find consensus among decision-makers.

“You can do a lot of things, but you need local buy-in,” said Daniel Campo, an associate professor and program director of city and regional planning at Morgan State University in Baltimore.

A handful of cities have had some success achieving that achieved that buy-in:

### ***Tear down empty houses***

#### **Baltimore, Maryland**

Baltimore had about 950,000 residents in 1950, but more than a third of its population has left in the past 70 years. Beset by vacant properties – 16,000 houses and 18,000 lots – and crime, the city has turned its planning efforts to “a graceful decline as opposed to a really awful decline”, said Chris Ryer, director of Baltimore’s planning department.



A row of abandoned homes border Eager Park’s playground, Baltimore, which opened in 2017. Photograph: JM Giordano/The Guardian

In the past few years, the city has implemented a series of dramatic policies aimed at improving its fortunes as a smaller metropolis. Among its strategies: tearing down thousands of empty houses, “the sharp knife in the drawer”, Ryer said.

The demolitions haven’t been easy, even when the homes have been empty for years. It has been challenging for the city to figure out who owns many of the buildings, Ryer said, and many of them are rowhouses, so it’s particularly difficult to knock down one without demolishing an entire block. Still, the city has averaged about 1,000 demolitions a year the past four years or so, he said.

“If you do that for 10 years, it makes a huge difference,” Ryer said.



The newly emptied lots have given Baltimore options. Some are turned into community gardens or parks, while others have given the city the opportunity to build new neighborhoods. Take Johnston Square, home to the city jail and one of Baltimore's poorest neighborhoods. More than half the rowhouses there were vacant, Ryer said, so the city has knocked down many of them to stimulate development, including new apartments, stores and restaurants. The city hopes to stem its decline through such projects.

"Where you are able to attract these millennials, you will be able to sustain your population," Ryer said.

### ***A ttract tourists***

#### **New Bedford, Massachusetts**



The Green Bean cafe in downtown New Bedford. Photograph: Boston Globe via Getty Images

Once one of the world's foremost whaling cities, New Bedford's population peaked at more than 120,000 in the 1920s. A combination of factors – most notably a 1938 hurricane that devastated the area – led to a steady decline; about 95,000 people live in New Bedford today. As with many shrinking cities, New Bedford's policies have differed from its public message, said Justin Hollander, a professor of urban and environmental policy and planning at Tufts University who has written about New Bedford.

"The discourse was largely about, 'Let's reverse this trend,'" Hollander said. "But a lot of the actions they took belied that rhetoric."

While Baltimore has focused on essentially redesigning its city to adapt to the smaller population, New Bedford has relied partly on marketing and partly on development to brand itself as a quaint, attractive New England fishing town.

The city has mixed its redevelopment strategies with its quest to become [a tourist destination](#). Its tourism website touts "one of the oldest and most charming small zoos in the country", as well as a whaling museum and ornate theater.

That marketing follows years of adapting to a dramatically changed economy. The city tore down some of the old textile mills that lined its waterfront, making the district more pedestrian-friendly while maintaining the practical side of the nation's most profitable fishing port. Other mills have been turned into artist studios.

And New Bedford has created more open space by transforming empty lots created by building demolitions into small parks or by allowing neighbors to buy the lots at a reduced price in order to expand their yards.

"We're just trying to make it clear that things are happening in the town," said Tabitha Harkin, the city's planning director.

### ***More open space***

#### **Youngstown, Ohio**

No article about shrinking cities would be complete without mentioning Youngstown, which has spent 60 years coping with precipitous population loss.

Once one of the nation's steel capitals, Youngstown lost the entire industry within a few years in the 1970s. The population plummeted, leaving behind vacant property and rising crime rates. In 2005, desperate to find a way out of the quagmire, city leaders adopted the [Youngstown 2010](#) plan, which provided a path to rethinking Youngstown as a more vibrant smaller city rather than an empty big one. The plan described Youngstown as “a size 40 man wearing a size 60 suit”.

The blueprint envisioned more open space, less land devoted to factories and housing, and better use of the Mahoning River waterfront. The city chose to focus its early transformation on the Idora neighborhood, where 120 vacant lots were turned into parkland, gardens, farms and other open space.

The attempt to stabilize the city hasn't been without its bumps. Some have criticized the city for focusing revitalization efforts on wealthier areas while leaving low-income neighborhoods without city services. Shrinking cities face a variety of tough decisions on how to spend limited funds, said Jessie Grogan, a senior policy analyst at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. “I think we're still trying to find the most equitable way to do that,” she said. “I don't think anyone has figured that out.”

### **Doc 5 :États-Unis - Détroit : une « Shrinking city », entre crise automobile, ségrégation et évitement**

CNES geoimage

<https://geoimage.cnes.fr/fr/geoimage/etats-unis-detroit-une-shrinking-city-entre-crise-automobile-segregation-et-evitement>

### **Doc 6: Sortir du mythe de la panacée. Les ambiguïtés de l'agriculture urbaine à Détroit, [Flaminia Paddeu](#), « Métropolitiques », 13 avril 2017.**

<https://metropolitiques.eu/Sortir-du-mythe-de-la-panacee-Les-ambiguites-de-l-agriculture-urbaine-a-Detroit.html>