JOURNAL OF URBAN AFFAIRS
2020, VOL. 42, NO. 3, 351–370
https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2018.1454820

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

Planning with justice in mind in a shrinking Baltimore

Jeremy Németh[a], Justin B. Hollander[b], Eliza D. Whiteman[c], and Michael P. Johnson[d]

[a]University of Colorado Denver; [b]Tufts University; [c]University of Pennsylvania; [d]University of Massachusetts Boston

ABSTRACT

In our 2011 paper, "The Bounds of Smart Decline: A Foundational Theory for Planning Shrinking Cities," we outline 5 propositions for just planning processes in cities losing population: inclusion, deliberation, recognition, transparency, and scale appropriateness. Each proposition addresses a perceived weakness of planning processes in shrinking cities, and with each we list a set of actions that planners can take in "moving the dial" toward more just outcomes. In this article, we test this theory on what we call Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy, a series of citywide policy interventions intended to facilitate the productive reuse of vacant and abandoned properties. Through a series of interviews, participant observation, and archival research, we find that although the city's strategy has laudable goals, city officials manage it in a way that limits the potential for long-lasting community empowerment. We propose that this and similar efforts employ these 5 propositions in evaluating their own smart decline initiatives to help ensure that future processes include voices and concerns that need to be heard most.

In their 2002 article in *Planning* magazine, Deborah and Frank Popper first used the term *smart decline* when they argued for "leaving behind the assumptions of growth and finding alternatives to it" (p. 21). Their article focused on the many Great Plains towns losing population and questioned the notion that places will endlessly grow in population, industry, and economic prowess. Instead, as their title reads, they believe that "Small Can Be Beautiful," and planners would be prudent to acknowledge that some cities and towns may not—and perhaps more important, *should not*—grow to their former splendor.

A number of scholars have picked up on this argument, and cities and municipalities have as well. For example, the city of Youngstown developed a master plan that accepted the likelihood of further decline and proposed a smart decline land use strategy oriented around lower housing densities and nonresidential uses of formerly residential land and buildings (Schatz, 2010). Through the foundation-funded and non-profit-led Detroit Future City planning process, a major rethinking of land use and development was conceived for the Motor City. The plan acknowledges and responds to the 60% decline in population since 1950 and the resultant 100,000 vacant lots by planning for the conversion of vacant residential land into everything from standard sports fields, retention ponds to help manage stormwater, campgrounds, urban meadows, and even light industrial uses (Hollander, 2013). Although both Youngstown and Detroit have received much media attention for their innovations, smaller but equally important smart decline initiatives have been implemented in cities across Europe, Asia, and North America (Pallagst, Wiechmann, & Martinez-Fernandez, 2014; Weaver, Bagchi-Sen, Knight, & Frazier, 2016).

But smart decline attempts have not been without controversy; some have accused such initiatives of being thinly veiled attempts at a "new urban renewal" (Gratz, 2009). Others argue that "smart decline is dumb" (Piiparinen, 2017, n.p.) or at the very least "is how 'not' to save a city" (Florida,

CONTACT Jeremy Németh jeremy.nemeth@ucdenver.edu College of Architecture and Planning, University of Colorado Denver, CB 126, P.O. Box 173364, Denver, CO 80217.

© 2018 Urban Affairs Association

2011, n.p.). Most of these concerns center on the procedural aspects of planning for shrinking cities or how and by whom decisions are made about which areas of cities should or should not shrink and how and by whom "the future" of these places and spaces is envisioned. As such, smart decline is fundamentally about planning and planners and designing processes that make explicit the inherent power imbalances involved in urban politics and decision making.

The question we ask in this article is whether there is a way to acknowledge that there may be some merit in smart decline planning while also assuaging the concerns of the critics rightly concerned about the wholesale demolition of neighborhoods and livelihoods. We believe that the answer is "yes," that we can indeed find a middle ground by focusing on the ways in which planners can manage these processes while keeping justice and inclusion foregrounded. But by what measuring stick might we measure a process? What questions should we ask or assertions should we make when undertaking a smart decline planning process?

These are some of the same questions that motivated our 2011 paper (Hollander & Németh, 2011) in which we advanced a foundational theory of smart decline that holds as its starting point notions of equity and social justice. This theory relies on existing planning, political science, and geography literature that outlines best practices in attaining procedural justice. Now we ask: Do these assumptions hold, and how can their application to actually existing processes help us better tailor both the theory and practice of smart decline?

The timing of this research is important for several reasons. First, as smart decline ideas have been adopted by more and more cities, there are increasing concerns being raised both inside and outside academia about how fair or just smart decline really is. Second, in 2011, smart decline was a novel idea that was beginning to see limited adoption in a few cities, but today the practice has grown significantly and has been integrated into scores of local government plans and policies (Pallagst et al., 2014; Weaver et al., 2016). So whereas the intention of our 2011 paper was to offer a broad and hypothetical set of ideals to guide fair and just practice, we now have a number of cases that we might examine to understand how smart decline initiatives actually measure up to those ideals. Indeed, one of the author's experiences in Baltimore provided a compelling and revelatory opportunity to get inside a notable smart decline initiative and test our earlier propositions. And third, inequality continues to increase in U.S. cities, and although we have seen minor economic comebacks in cities such as Detroit, high levels of poverty and degradation still persist. The distribution of social and public services to those who need it most is still lacking due to constantly shrinking municipal budgets, and access to economic opportunity and infrastructure is still out of reach for the most marginalized groups in these struggling cities. Stable, working-class manufacturing jobs have yet to return to many such cities, even as some "craft" businesses are attracted to the low rents these places offer. In other words, the need to rethink how we distribute populations and services is as strong as ever.

What we find from analyzing Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy case is that just planning and plan-making in shrinking cities are particularly difficult for a number of reasons. First, planning processes often prize technical, objective analyses over lay, subjective discourse. Second, the propositions for just planning in shrinking cities require patient and time-consuming outreach to affected individuals and groups, a costly endeavor for any municipality but particularly onerous in places suffering from long-term budget deficits due to a shrinking tax base. Third, a number of strategies used in Baltimore and elsewhere are quite reminiscent of urban renewal processes used in the mid-20th century in the United States and abroad that decimated cities and uprooted families and social networks for many generations to come. Finally, recognizing legacies of discrimination that have shaped decline and degradation of Baltimore and elsewhere can be a painful process that involves owning up to past mistakes and failures.

Next we briefly outline the planning-oriented literature on shrinking cities and smart decline processes and then report on the findings of the Baltimore case study.

Shrinking cities

The Shrinking Cities International Research Network defines a shrinking city as "a densely populated urban area with a minimum population of 10,000 residents that has faced population losses in large parts for more than two years and is undergoing economic transformations with some symptoms of a structural crisis" (Hollander et al., 2009, p. 224; Wiechmann, 2008). Shrinkage has affected cities internationally, with estimates showing that even before the Great Recession, 25% of all cities with more than 100,000 were in decline (Oswalt and Reinitz, 2006). Though shrinkage occurs for different reasons in different places, typical causes include a combination of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and/or demographic shifts. Other causes may include population decline, housing vacancy, employment loss, or decreased neighborhood quality as well (Hollander et al., 2009; Martinez-Fernandez, Audirac, Fol, & Cunningham-Sabot, 2012).

Beauregard's (2009) analysis of shrinking U.S. cities from 1820 to 2000 argued against any single explanatory factor for depopulation, concluding instead that causes of population decline vary from one historical period to another. A conference report from the Urban Affairs Association's annual meeting affirmed that view, where a global group of scholars discouraged a "one-size-fits-all" explanation for why places lose population (Großmann, Bontje, Haase, & Mykhnenko, 2013).

Many scholars have sought to quantify and measure the extent of shrinkage in the United States and abroad, offering rich case studies and solid empirical evidence to document the severity of this problem (Dewar & Thomas, 2012; Hollander, 2011; Neill & Schlappa, 2016; Pallagst et al., 2013; Richardson & Nam, 2014; Ryan, 2012; Weaver et al., 2016). Though population is used frequently, some researchers rely on housing demolition or occupied housing density to assess how a place is changing over time (Hollander, 2011; Ryan, 2012; Weaver et al., 2016). Lists of demolished housing structures are often available through local planning departments and easily geocoded. Frazier, Bagchi-Sen, and Knight (2013) examined the association between demolitions at the block group level and crimes through a comparative statistical analysis. Farfel, Orlova, Lees, Rohde, and Ashley (2005) used spatial analysis to measure the environmental influence of demolition.

Other shrinkage measures are defined based on specific study needs and data, such as research interests, data accessibility, and subjective assessments of the condition of study areas (Newman, Park, Bowman, & Lee, 2017). For example, Morckel (2014) uses a scale of housing abandonment that is scored by local residents and planners through interviews.

Smart decline in theory and practice

Popper and Popper (2002) define smart decline as "planning for less—fewer people, fewer buildings, fewer land uses" (p. 23). Smart decline is a set of policy and planning strategies that actively build demographic and housing projections into decisions about land use, zoning, economic development, and housing, within the context of overall depopulation trends. These strategies can include relaxed zoning to allow nonresidential uses of land, reduced spending on infrastructure such as street lights or trash collection in depopulating neighborhoods, or the active acquisition and repurposing of vacated land for community facilities such as parks, open space, or gardens. When cities experience such population loss and economic decline, citizens are allowed to reflect on community change, to engage with questions of who they want to be, and to focus on long-term goals for improving quality of life and envisioning a more just future (Beauregard, 2009). This notion lies at the heart of smart decline thinking.

Smart decline planning processes can play a powerful role in whether the results—the outcomes—are acceptable and sustainable. In our 2011 piece (Hollander & Németh, 2011), we outline three main critiques of such processes. First is the propensity for smart decline planning to be top-down in orientation: they frequently originate from *and* are implemented by political and administrative leadership within city government (see also Hollander, 2009; Schatz, 2010). This approach differs from idealized bottom-up processes that derive from grassroots organizations or neighborhood

groups with implementation duties shared across governmental and nongovernmental organizations (Hollander & Németh, 2011). The second is that they often operate from an assumption of a blank slate or the notion that planning for the future means breaking with the past. The third is the assumption—even requirement—that "the public" is engaged but only to the extent that citizens do not impede progress or participate in a manner that might change the desired course of action of planners and policymakers. These three areas thus provide a basis for the development of our theory of "just planning for smart decline," which we outline below.

Just planning for smart decline

We begin with the assertion that justice entails a "just distribution, justly arrived at" or that justice in the city building milieu must attend to both distributive and procedural questions, including the recognition of how identity and difference shape participation in political and planning processes (Harvey, 1973, p. 97; Schlosberg, 2009). To develop our core propositions, we draw on thinking from both political theory and communicative planning literatures. These benchmarks are broad and acontextual and are thus adaptable to multiple circumstances across different scales and settings, although we recognize that cultural norms and many other factors shape how they might be interpreted or deployed. Nonetheless, the generic nature of these norms also allows planners to establish agency; that is, to recognize that though structures and institutions shape the decision space for planners and that their ability to effect change when working within the development process is often quite limited, seeking an equitable redistribution of resources without attending to process sets up an unattainable set of expectations for the planner. Instead, we believe that by attending to process, by engaging with the everyday thoughts and concerns of the publics for whom they serve, planners can make, in the words of Gorz (1967), non-reformist reforms, or simple interventions that sow the seeds for more revolutionary or systemic transformation.

Similarly, when planners attempt to assess how principles of distributive justice might be met, the definition of *need* is a slippery one, as is the determination of the mechanisms, tools, and techniques that should be employed in order to more equitably allocate shared resources (Hollander & Németh, 2011). Even if the public is highly charged and demands redistribution of resources in the form of money, time, amenities, or infrastructure, decisions about who gets what and how they get it are often left to powerful actors working on behalf of the public: the powerful control both the resources and their means of distribution. Along these same lines, a focus on distribution places the emphasis more squarely on what people get but not on who they are or what they do. A singular focus on distribution has the danger of assuming that the public is more homogeneous than it actually is.

Indeed, distributive paradigms are concerned with allocation more than domination, inclusion, oppression, and power, all constructs that affect and define who we are and how we get along in the world. Emphasizing process can build a sense of ownership for historically disenfranchised citizens and, ideally, result in a sense of bottom-up control over the actual means of distribution, wresting the power over who gets what from those who typically wield it. This emphasis on empowerment—of the taking of authority—is, many political theorists argue, the only way that structures of oppression can eventually be overcome (see Young, 1990). This goal of representation and deep and authentic inclusion in the public forum provides the basis of our theory of just planning for smart decline.

The following five propositions allow us to assess the quality of the planning process itself and, as such, speak to planners engaged in such processes. They touch on issues of scale, scope, power, agency, and the authenticity of engagement, fundamental questions to planners acting in any context but, we argue, especially in the context of controversial actions related to decline and deprivation. As mentioned earlier, these propositions are drawn from existing thinking on planning in the public realm but are tailored to smart decline planning processes. In addition, these propositions are explained in further detail and illustrated with case examples in our 2011 paper (Hollander & Németh, 2011); as such, this article should be read in conjunction with that one.

Inclusion: Smart decline planning processes must include and explicitly recognize multiple voices

Related to the notion of franchise, or the number and diversity of people involved in political actions, inclusive smart decline processes must extend decision-making channels to multiple publics and foster direct and authentic engagement within and across these groups. Recognition and elevation of multiple, diverse voices allows for a variety of policies and proposals to be debated and, ideally, enacted (Dryzek, 1996). Along these lines, Purcell (2008) argues that although current and future residents are often the key stakeholders in any planning action, their voices are not always valued as much as those with an economic stake in the project; indeed, he argues, developers' and property owners' concerns are always foregrounded—they always have a seat at the table—even though their long-term presence in the community is quite rare.

Deliberation: Smart decline planning processes should be political and deliberative in nature

A deeply democratic politics is one that is deliberative, that relies less on finding some common good that exists and instead values the democratic process itself. Deliberative processes legitimize public contestation and the often-opposing viewpoints of those with varying levels of, and access to, financial and property resources (Benhabib, 1996; Wolin, 1996). This proposition acknowledges and values difference; proponents believe that reliance on attaining the common good can in fact reinforce the status quo, thus "planning the ideology of planning" and allowing the powerful to proceed having completed their mandated community outreach (Harvey, 1978).

Recognition: Smart decline planners should be cognizant of different communication techniques and should provide information that enables citizens to recognize and challenge power imbalances and structures of domination

Planners in smart decline contexts must recognize that folks are differently positioned within society. So, for example, valuing certain forms of (typically) male, heteronormative, dispassionate address can promote certain views over others. Publics involved in such processes must note the "dynamics of rhetoric" and the fact that forms of communication can deter or foster inclusion in planning processes. As such, planning in the face of power means explicitly recognizing that individuals and groups are differently positioned within society and that this is a result of structures of domination and oppression. In the context of shrinking cities, planners must then be stewards of the public by making equity concerns explicit. They must also provide information that allows citizens to understand important forces such as the fiscal rationale for redevelopment; the functioning of housing markets; the relationships between the public, private, and nonprofit sectors; and the mandates of public works, engineering, and other infrastructure providers. Lastly, it is essential that planners provide a deep understanding of "where we came from"; that is, the historical trends that precipitated decline in the first place.

Transparency: Smart decline planning processes must be transparent and value different types and sources of information

Planners must value different forms of information and data and become mediators between the sometimes-clashing rhetorical styles of participants in these processes (Howe, 1995). Planners should not elevate different styles of communication over others—for example, quantitative projections over impassioned narratives—and should instead recognize "alternative, subjective, perceptual, and indigenous knowledge and visions as acceptable forms of data" (Hollander & Németh, 2011, p. 361). Nearly a half-century ago, Arnstein (1969) argued that planners must elevate the focus of community

engagement from one of manipulation and placation to the ultimate delegation of power to citizens to decide their own fate, on their own terms.

Scale-appropriateness: Smart decline planning processes should be regional in scope but local in control and implementation

Young (2000) argues that the scope of justice must be global but that regional control is critical for implementation. She defines a "region" as a place where 50% or more of residents live in the population center, where residents experience similar climatic/topographical conditions throughout the area, and where nearly all of those in the labor market both live and work in the region. Regional thinking is important for those seeking justice because they allow localities to debate and deliberate their futures "across boundaries." Indeed, transportation, water, environmental issues, and economic drivers do not obey the boundaries that governance institutions often give them. A regional focus "requires that local governments take the interests of others in the region into account, especially where they are affected by the actions and policies of that locale" (Young, 2000, p. 233). Indeed, to some extent, all policy realms and domains are set within regional regulatory frameworks regardless of whether decisions are made within or across political and jurisdictional boundaries.

These principles are not limited to city, regional, and community planning. Johnson, Midgley, and Chichirau (forthcoming), in a presentation of new frontiers in the discipline of community operational research, identify urban planning and community development as one domain in which community or notions of meaningful engagement of communities, represented by characteristics such as intervention, local engagement and impact, disadvantaged, underrepresented and underserved populations, and a critical approach and concern for ethics, can broaden the notion of prescriptive modeling for improvements in public programs and processes.

We now apply these five propositions of smart decline planning to an ongoing smart decline initiative in which several of the authors have been involved from March 2013 to January 2015. To conduct this research, we employed a rigorous case study methodology, drawing on Yin (2013) where we employed multiple research methodologies to achieve triangulation around key concepts and ideas: (a) eight interviews with officials and community leaders (Whiteman, 2014), (b) review of the extant literature on Baltimore, and (c) review of contemporary policy and planning issues and initiatives in newspapers, official government websites, and policy reports.

Population decline in Baltimore

Baltimore is a typical example of a shrinking city: between 1970 and 2016, its population decreased from 906,244 to 614,664, a population loss of 32.2% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Pagano and Bowman (2000) estimate an abandonment rate of about 22.2 abandoned structures per 1,000 residents. Sustained economic and social decline has resulted in continued outmigration, increased housing vacancies, multiple waves of building demolitions, and poor-quality infrastructure, predominantly in the city's east and west sections (Cohen, 2001; Schoenbaum, 2002).

Between the Civil War and World War I, Baltimore went through rapid industrialization. Speculatively built row houses provided shelter that modestly paid workers could afford and symbolized homeownership and stability for the city's working and middle classes (Hayward & Belfoure, 1999). Those row house neighborhoods were within walking distance to local employment and amenities.

According to Hollander, Johnson, Tu, and Drew (forthcoming), in the 19th century, more affluent families tended to live in high-ceilinged, three-story row houses, which were often built along main streets or looking onto parks. Poorer families inhabited tiny row houses—shallow, lower-ceilinged, two-story dwellings. Some of those 19th-century dwellings, particularly on the alleys, were just 10 to 12 feet wide (Hayward, 2008; Hayward & Belfoure, 1999).

After World War II, the intimate relationship between workplaces and housing frayed. The decline in urban manufacturing, especially along the Baltimore waterfront, was associated with a deterioration of nearby residential areas. Residents increasingly relocated from high-density and walkable row house neighborhoods to job-rich suburbs designed for vehicle transport and dominated by tract houses (Hayward & Belfoure, 1999). As more residents moved out, neighborhoods became poorer and crime-ridden; many houses were sold to absentee landlords or deteriorated after their elderly owners died. Landlords exploited their properties for cash and abandoned them when they turned unprofitable. Derelict houses have given some neighborhoods a run-down appearance, exacerbating the perception of decline (Langdon, 2001).

Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy

For much of the 2000s and 2010s, under the leadership of three mayoral administrations, the city of Baltimore has maintained a fairly consistent strategy, which we label as their "Abandoned Housing Strategy." The strategy has had several distinct components ranging from master planning, to code enforcement, to urban greening. These programs, taken together, have focused city resources around the active reprogramming of vacant and abandonment properties for largely nonresidential use—a key dimension of smart decline. In this section, we offer a brief introduction to each component of this broader strategy and then explore more closely to what extent these efforts meet the earlier benchmarks for smart decline.

Master planning

PlanBaltimore, the city's master plan from 2000, outlined the city's approach to abandoned housing (Kromer, 2002). The plan emphasized the necessity of working with specific neighborhoods to design neighborhood-level strategies, as well as the importance of blight elimination. Lastly, it suggested demolition in areas that were well suited for redevelopment and land assemblage (Cohen, 2001). Baltimore has developed a number of policies for addressing vacancy and abandonment over the years that address these goals. Interventions have focused on code enforcement, streamlining of property acquisition, and homebuyer supports, as well as targeted demolition, reinvestment, and rehabilitation. More recently, urban greening initiatives such as urban agriculture and environmental management strategies have been employed.

Homebuyer supports

Starting in the 1970s as a response to the "urban crisis" of crime, arson, and abandonment being experienced by many U.S. cities, Baltimore promoted vacant-housing ownership under the guise that federal disinvestment was the root cause of the strife and that homeownership would serve as a preventive measure against further urban decay (Lieb, 2010). This initiative was strongly linked to the 1968 Federal Housing Act, which promoted home ownership for the poor. Well-intentioned in its directive, this campaign in Baltimore often resulted in sloppy rehabilitations of vacant houses and rampant predatory lending in poor, predominantly Black neighborhoods, which only exacerbated the problem of vacancy and disinvestment (Lieb, 2010).

Other creative homebuyer support strategies, such as the Dollar House Program and Rehab Express from the 1970s and 1980s, offered an elite class of potential homeowners very inexpensive prices on vacant homes coupled with low-interest construction loans (Hinds, 1986; Lieb, 2010). These programs were designed to preserve the city's housing stock, stabilize neighborhoods, and attract people back to the city from the suburbs (Hinds, 1986). Though this form of urban homesteading assistance was popular, it required significant city subsidies and therefore was not considered a long-term, sustainable solution to abandonment. Homebuyer supports still exist today, both as part of comprehensive vacancy management programs and as a component of private real estate development incentives.

Property acquisition and code enforcement

Acquisition of vacant properties is often challenged by the difficulty of tracking ownership and limited city staffing (Cohen, 2001). To combat these obstacles, a strong theme is evident in Baltimore of designing policy that grants the city more authority for the acquisition of abandoned properties. For example, in 1999, the "quick-take authority" in the city was expanded, effectively allowing the municipality to file a petition in district court seeking condemnation and possession of an "abandoned property" (Clagett, 2003). In 2003, this authority was expanded again by House Bill 424, which authorized the city to condemn and take immediate possession of any "distressed property" (Clagett, 2003).

In 2002, then-Mayor Martin O'Malley launched Project 5000 (Lydersen & Krohe, 2011; United States Conference of Mayors, 2006). The goal of this plan was to acquire 5,000 vacant and abandoned properties in 2 years. The plan included the aggressive pursuance of tax sale foreclosures, quick-takes, and traditional acquisitions; transfer of surplus vacant properties owned by the city; and use of law firms, title companies, and others to help clear titles. Project 5000 had four primary steps: (a) strategic identification of properties; (b) strategic partnerships (primarily to provide free and reduced-rate legal and litigation services); (c) building new infrastructure in the form of new legal manuals, new staff, and a more uniform process; and (d) moving beyond acquisitions, which included public–private partnerships for property disposition and heightened code enforcement (United States Conference of Mayors, 2006). By 2006, the program had acquired 6,000 abandoned properties with clear titles, returned 1,000 properties to private ownership, and designated an additional 2,000 properties for specific development outcomes (United States Conference of Mayors, 2006).

In 2005, the HABC launched TEVO (Targeted Enforcement Toward Visible Outcomes). The program was designed to identify and pursue negligent homeowners and enforce either sale or necessary repairs to bring vacant properties into compliance with housing code. TEVO targeted blocks where the pressure of prosecution would be likely to spur homeowners to take action (Ransome, 2007). At its inception, TEVO identified 6,000 vacant properties.

Demolition

According to Cohen (2001), given the scope of the vacancy problem in the city, one of the primary strategies for addressing vacancy in the city has been demolition. Former Housing Commissioner Daniel P. Henson aimed to eliminate 11,000 of the worst units by 2003—out of this goal, more than 4,000 houses were demolished between 1996 and 1999. Due to scattered demolitions across the city that left gaps in some blocks and caused adjacent buildings to collapse, this plan was criticized for being unsystematic and counterproductive in its approach. Additional critiques pointed out that there was often no plan for reuse and many of the cleared lots became public health and safety nuisances.

In 2000, as a response to these criticisms, Housing Commissioner Patricia Payne declared a moratorium on demolitions, except in emergencies. Starting in 2001, the city allocated $2 million annually for demolitions, which was sufficient funding for 300 houses. The new plan prioritized houses that posed imminent danger to residents, followed by a focus on areas with highest vacancy concentrations, with overall poor block conditions, and where demolition could help protect future redevelopment efforts (Cohen, 2001). An attempt was made to pursue whole-block demolitions, as well, rather than the "snaggle-tooth" approach used in the past.

Development revitalization and relocation

In the 1960s, the idea was hatched to revitalize Baltimore's inner harbor area into a public space incorporating commercial and cultural establishments. This development plan came to fruition in the late 1970s, when Baltimore planning officials reached out to developer James Rouse (known for developing Faneuil Hall in Boston), who agreed to aid in the construction of a social space along the waterfront consisting of dining and shopping opportunities. Baltimore's "harbor renaissance"

brought in more than $160 million in local property tax revenue, dramatically increased tourism in the area, and was soon replicated in cities around the world, including Long Beach, California, and Sydney, Australia (Rosenblatt, 2011).

Despite the success of the inner harbor and several other notable revitalization projects in the city, Baltimore's "resource-poor, weak-market" economy necessitated heavier reliance on local foundations and "med and ed" revitalization efforts rather than on the more traditional commercial real estate and development market (Stoker, Stone, & Worgs, 2008). One such redevelopment project, the East Baltimore Development Inc. (EBDI), is a revitalization, housing, and biotech park project started in 2000 and linked to the Johns Hopkins University campus in East Baltimore. In order to clear the land deemed necessary for the redevelopment, EBDI relocated 700 East Baltimore families, 98% of whom were Black (Farquhar, 2012). Though EBDI deemed this "responsible relocation" because residents were given some choices in the relocation, the process has been criticized as being a contemporary form of urban renewal. Farquhar (2012) found evidence to support this critique:

> Despite policymakers' protestations that EBDI and urban renewal were vastly different, their relocation policies and their effects were remarkably similar. … EBDI's program of responsible relocation sought to define East Baltimore residents as people without choices and to define relocation as an intervention that transformed and empowered residents by providing choice. (Farquhar, 2012, p. iii)

EBDI defends this involuntary relocation on the grounds that, first, by providing choice in the process, they lessened the negative impacts of relocation and, second, the only solution for the level of blight and deterioration in some neighborhoods was to remove residents, demolish, and start fresh.

Urban greening and sustainability efforts

In addition to strategies specifically related to demolition and rehabilitation, the city has attempted a number of urban greening and sustainability efforts on vacant lots. Currently, the Office of Sustainability has an initiative called Growing Green, the goal of which is to employ innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective methods for reusing vacant lots and mitigating the negative impacts that vacancy can have. The program uses strategies such as growing food, greening of lots, and storm water management.

Local food systems development has been a goal within the city for the past several years. The 2009 Baltimore Sustainability Plan outlines 29 goals for creating a healthier, stronger Baltimore, which included as its second goal establishing Baltimore "as a leader in sustainable, local food systems." In pursuit of this goal, in 2013, the Office of Sustainability created Homegrown Baltimore (HGB), a new urban agriculture plan for the city. HGB simultaneously promotes the goals of the Baltimore Sustainability Plan, the mission of the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative, and the mission of Vacants to Value (Baltimore Office of Sustainability, 2013). Specifically, HGB addresses the goals of these various initiatives by developing an urban agriculture plan, putting more land into agricultural production, and clearing and maintaining vacant land for interim and future uses (Figure 1).

Urban agriculture has a long history in the city, and using gardening as a strategy for managing vacant lots is not a novel strategy. There is evidence of people gardening on vacant lots as a means for civic improvement and beautification in the city dating as far back as 1910 (Baltimore Office of Sustainability, 2013). In 1973, a Neighborhood Garden Committee was formed to clean vacant lots and provide soil so that city residents could garden. This committee stemmed from a City Council Special Sanitation Committee investigation into what could be done with the city's large number of vacant lots. The Neighborhood Garden Committee was subsequently replaced by the Adopt-a-Lot program, which still exists today. Urban agriculture takes many forms in the city today, including farms, community, school, home, and rooftop gardens, aquaculture projects, apiaries, and orchards (Baltimore Office of Sustainability, 2013).

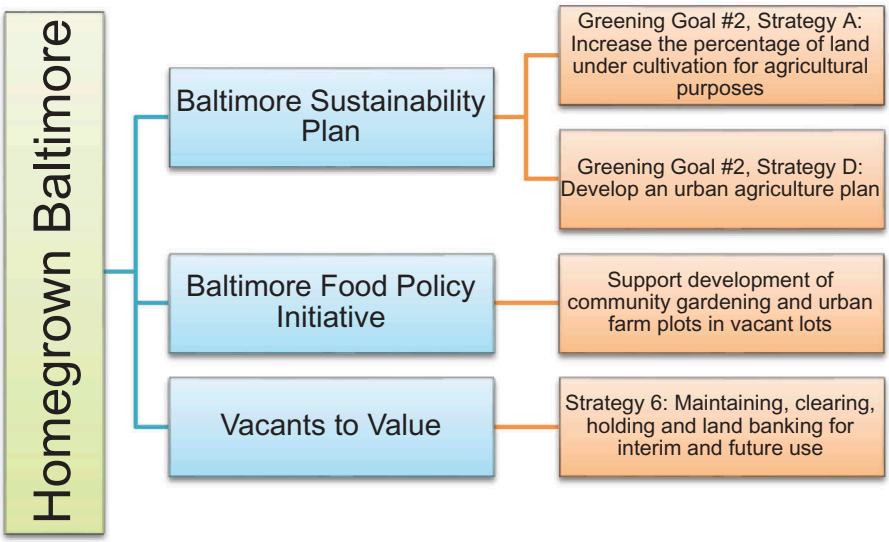

Figure 1. Homegrown Baltimore's linkage to Baltimore city initiatives. Data from Baltimore Office of Sustainability (2013).

The promotion of urban agriculture on vacant land has received renewed attention in the city in recent years. In 2010, the planning department conducted a GIS mapping land inventory to identify all of the city-owned land that would be suitable for urban agriculture. Necessary site characteristics were determined based on meetings with local farmers. Parcels were considered if they were city-owned and larger than one acre. They also needed to meet certain physical criteria including tree coverage, slope, and location within a flood line. Parcels slated for development or parkland were excluded. The first assessment identified 35 acres and 16 sites and more parcels have been identified subsequently. If the city were to include nonadjacent, smaller plots in this inventory, 240 acres would meet the criteria, which is roughly 0.5% of the city's total land area.

As outlined in Baltimore Office of Sustainability (2013), the city is now advocating for the development of more urban agriculture because of its potential to increase food security, provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables, create jobs, and bestow environmental benefits. To realize this goal, the city has decided to prioritize small-scale farms in weak-market areas with high unemployment. Another approach for using urban agriculture as part of vacant land management has been the Power in Dirt Program, which was started in 2011. This program focuses on helping volunteers revitalize vacant lots, often through community gardening.

Another important greening program was the Growing Green Initiative (GGI), launched by Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake in 2014 at a time when there was an estimated 16,000 abandoned buildings (Baltimore Office of Sustainability, 2015a; Henneberry, 2017). The program continues today. Through a series of policy interventions, the GGI reframes the conversation in Baltimore around the productive reuse of vacant and abandoned properties, focusing local funds and priorities that can be characterized as "smart decline." The goal of the GGI is to employ innovative, sustainable and cost-effective methods for converting vacant lots into plots for urban agriculture or stormwater management and mitigating the negative impacts that vacancy can have. Led by Baltimore's Office of Sustainability, a small unit within the city's planning department, the GGI shapes much of the efforts of the city's government and nongovernmental actors working in these areas. A *Green Pattern Book* was written in 2015 and was widely distributed by the city; the book offers guidance to residents and

organizations on how to turn vacant and abandoned properties into green spaces, a quintessential smart decline activity (Baltimore Office of Sustainability, 2015b). The book identifies a long list of Growing Green workgroup members, including the directors of the city's planning and public works departments and senior executives in the city's housing and community development, transportation, recreation and parks, planning, and public works departments.

Within the context of the GGI, several of the authors worked, in collaboration with the city of Baltimore, to develop a feasible mechanism for incorporating decision modeling into the city's Abandoned Housing Strategy. This particular aspect of the strategy aimed to explore the utility of a mathematical modeling approach to help the city make decisions about which parcels or clusters of parcels to program for certain future uses, including agriculture, residential or commercial development, or storm water management. This process entailed the identification by various city staff from the planning and housing departments and the Growing Green advisory committee of appropriate criteria metrics (e.g., physical size, cost), as well as identified redevelopment or end-use options. These variables were then inputted into a mathematical decision model with the vacant lots throughout the city, with the goal of producing a set of "solutions" that would represent the preferred tradeoffs between various city objectives and be consistent with the city's strategic goals. The intention of the modeling process was not to replace or dictate the actions of planners but instead to provide possible prescriptive solutions that could support the decisions of planners and other practitioners.

Additional comprehensive strategies

The housing market typology (HMT) originated with PlanBaltimore in 2007 and was developed by the planning department and the housing and community development department (Kromer, 2002). The HMT was updated in 2011 with the assistance of The Reinvestment Fund. Designed to aid in city efforts to strategically match limited resources to neighborhood housing market conditions, the HMT is a market classification scheme that is based on cluster analysis, which is a method of statistical analysis applied to data that exhibit "natural" groupings or clusters. The cluster analysis in Baltimore was performed on the basis of nine housing market variables:

(1) median sales price;
(2) sales price variation;
(3) vacant lots;
(4) vacant house notices;
(5) foreclosure filings;
(6) residential permits >$50,000;
(7) percentage owner occupied;
(8) housing units per square mile; and
(9) commercial to residential land ratio.

Based on these variables, each section of the city was grouped into one of five cluster categories: regional choice, middle market choice, middle market, middle market stressed, and distressed.

The HMT is used both by the Vacants to Value (V2V) program to address vacancy issues and by code enforcement for assistance in designing interventions and strategies for neighborhood conditions. The Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) developed V2V in 2010 with the goal of strengthening neighborhoods, eliminating blight, and spurring development and revitalization efforts across the city. The V2V program is considered by the city to be a mechanism for encouraging change by re-envisioning Baltimore as a vibrant and growing city.

According to the HABC, as of 2013, the majority of vacant properties in the city are in severely distressed areas (11,000 vacant properties, or 65%) and cannot be rehabilitated because there is not sufficient development demand. The remaining 5,000 vacant properties (31%) are in transitional

neighborhoods. Lastly, a limited number of emerging markets have been identified in distressed areas that, with resource assistance from code enforcement, could support the rehabilitation of 700 properties (4%; Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development, 2017). Using the HMT as a guiding framework for determining the ideal solution in a given area, V2V employs a comprehensive seven-point strategy (Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development, 2017):

(1) Streamline the disposition of city-owned properties.
(2) Streamline code enforcement in stronger markets (on transitional blocks).
(3) Facilitate investment in emerging markets.
(4) Target home-buying incentives.
(5) Support large-scale redevelopment in distressed areas.
(6) Demolish and maintain severely distressed blocks.
(7) Provide concentrated green, healthy, and sustainable home improvements.

General challenges and critiques of Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy

There is an inherent tension between the neighborhood planning model in Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy and the need for a more comprehensive approach. This causes a struggle between a more top-down policy and one that incorporates a deeper level of community input, because city interests are often in conflict with neighborhood interests. As outlined by Cohen (2001), the primary challenges to Baltimore's abandoned housing strategy are (a) the expense (both social and financial) of neighborhood revitalization planning when the need for consensus and a comprehensive approach are taken into account; (b) property acquisition; (c) prevention of abandoned housing; and (d) rehabilitation and marketing of new houses, particularly with regard to increasing the desirability of row house design and making rehabilitated properties affordable.

In addition to the critique of Baltimore's vacant housing strategies as being piecemeal and counterproductive, researchers have noted weakness in data collection, environmental practices, and community response. Using Philadelphia's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (a housing market typology-type model) and strategies from several other cities as a comparison, Culhane and Hillier (2001) observed the lack of data being used to guide operational decisions around housing vacancy in Baltimore and also identified a need for increased modeling and evaluation in the city's process.

> Little is likely to change [in relation to abandoned housing] unless city governments assume leadership and make a persuasive case to both public and private sources for a well-targeted effort with a high probability of impact. To do so, cities need to create citywide planning strategies for land aggregation and neighborhood stabilization and to develop analyses of the risks and opportunities associated with redevelopment opportunities in specific markets. (Culhane & Hillier 2001, p. 449)

V2V is one response to the need for a more strategic, targeted approach. But even given these new efforts, Baltimore can learn from the successes and failures of other cities facing similar challenges with depopulation and abandonment.

City residents have also expressed dissatisfaction with the city's efforts to abate vacancy and abandonment. East Baltimore residents surveyed between 2000 and 2002 voiced numerous negative reactions to demolition and redevelopment in their neighborhoods (Bowie, Farfel, & Moran, 2005). In addition to feeling that the development projects were conducted without proper notification, residents expressed concerns about environmental and safety hazards (including rats, lead paint, and asbestos) and a particular fear that these environmental threats were due to social inequities. Interviewees also reported a range of psychological impacts from the demolitions, including relocation, disruption of ordinary life, and inattention to the needs of the community. Lastly, residents provided recommendations for how development projects could be improved, which included

increasing notification and education about the projects, strengthening community involvement, and enhancing the safety and security of the demolition sites.

The high level of distress in certain areas of the city poses a particular challenge for planners and other city officials. As one city employee we interviewed stated, "You could eat up your whole budget just on East Baltimore." City officials expressed a notable conflict between targeting money in one area versus spreading the funds more evenly across the city. Some expressed the opinion that targeting funds in a more strategic manner would have a larger impact, whereas others emphasized the importance and political necessity of equitable distribution of demolition dollars across the city.

In areas of the city with less blight, management strategies tend to center around where demolition is cheapest. The vacancy is so extensive in certain areas such as East Baltimore, however, that the city has instead used a more targeted selection process for demolition clusters so as to bolster existing redevelopment efforts.

> There is so much vacancy in these [East Baltimore] neighborhoods that you could throw a dart gun and hit something, but where do you do it to be more strategic and how do you balance costs with places that will be more strategic? Sometimes places that are more strategic cost more. These issues are true throughout the city but are magnified in East Baltimore. (City official)

As an example of this, several city officials with whom we spoke pointed to the targeted demolition efforts in the Oliver neighborhood that are geared at bolstering existing development interest and reinvestment initiatives. Oliver was highlighted as a special case because of the large number of nonprofits that have adopted the neighborhood in recent years. Thanks to these reinvestment efforts, vacancy in Oliver is down by a third. Demolition in this neighborhood largely revolved around a desire to support these initiatives.

Generally speaking, Baltimore's demolition management strategy today is iterative and seeks to incorporate many different stakeholder and agency priorities. City officials with whom we spoke generally agreed about the need for a city approach to managing vacancy and abandonment that is multipronged, prioritizes blight elimination, and employs strategic demolition in areas with high vacancy and concentrated rehabilitation where possible. Interim uses (such as greening) were also stressed as critical placeholders until the market unfolds or other uses are identified.

Funding constraints loom large in these conversations, and there is considerably less agreement about the most effective and equitable way to spread limited resources across a city struck by such a high prevalence of blight and abandonment. Within the planning department, there seems to be a new discussion emerging about the importance of explicitly identifying goals and values that can be more transparently integrated into the decision-making process.

Assessing Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy

Regarding the benchmarks for smart decline outlined earlier, below we analyze the extent to which Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy performs on each. Our analysis is based on the cumulative assessment from interviews with city officials about the GGI modeling and Abandoned Housing Strategy, as well as a review of city policies and outcomes of abandoned housing programs. Through a review of these initiatives, we sought to understand the city's strategic vision for addressing vacant properties and to identify explicit attention, through either language, criteria, or procedure, to the benchmarks of just smart decline. It is important to note that we group a number of initiatives together and that each has its own more and less redeeming qualities, performing well on certain propositions/benchmarks and poorly on others. Thus, under each benchmark below we alternate between drawing on illustrative examples from singular initiatives and assessing the overall Abandoned Housing Strategy.

Inclusion

Like most urban initiatives, the various initiatives under Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy involved extensive public outreach through public meetings, publicly accessible websites, and city officials' direct outreach to various stakeholders. In doing so, the initiatives included multiple voices, engaging with historically disadvantaged groups when they developed the Care-a-Lot, Lots Alive, and Neighborhood Greening Grants programs to provide resources for members of Baltimore's most impoverished neighborhoods, such as Druid Heights and Sandtown Winchester, to beautify vacant lots in their own neighborhoods (Baltimore Office of Sustainability, 2017). Additionally, our interviews with city officials revealed an intimate knowledge of neighborhood concerns regarding individual vacant parcels based in part on having received requests from the community or community organizers to target efforts in certain locations. This indicates both a solid working knowledge among city officials of neighborhood-level issues as well as the inclusion, even if not explicit, of vocal community advocates in the city's decision-making process.

Nonetheless, in a significant aspect of the city's work, leaders explicitly sought to limit involvement to local officials only. In particular, the decision model, created by the authors as part of the GGI strategy, was calibrated in order to be most useful to key city decision makers, but community leaders, nonprofit organizations, and activists were kept out of all planning meetings. Under the rationale that the project was in its early stages and that it centered on technical or expert-driven information, city leaders kept the decision model out of the public eye.

Deliberation

Proponents frequently present the city's Abandoned Housing Strategy as apolitical and as an objective solution to a pressing urban problem and, thus, project details are rarely debated in the public realm. The city's work is a predominantly top-down process, decision making is largely centralized, and the leaders provide only minimal opportunities for alternative voices to be heard. That said, the city has made great strides in recent years to expand vacant housing initiatives beyond the Department of Planning and to strive for an interagency approach to addressing vacancy. Through our interviews, the decision-making process for a most recent round of property demolitions was described as drawing on collective knowledge from various agencies—including the HABC, the Office of Sustainability, planning, and historic preservation—to tackle the vacancy problem. After initially using geospatial analysis to identify vacant parcels, representatives from the various agencies worked together to choose demolition clusters based on priorities ranging from urban greening, to crime reduction, code enforcement, and housing market support. Though some city officials expressed that the process included a number of metrics by which to determine outcomes, others felt that the selection process was more of a case-by-case evaluation than a metrics-based one.

Despite opening the conversation within the city, which expands the scope of stakeholders involved in abandoned property initiatives, the city has still done little to create an open exchange of ideas with city residents whereby competing notions about future uses, priority areas, and redevelopment eligibility criteria might be debated. Instead, the result has been, at times, an aggressive relocation program. For example, in the EBDI East Baltimore development project alone, more than 700 families were relocated between 2004 and 2011, 98% of whom were Black (Farquhar, 2012). Whereas in our interviews, city officials were insistent that relocating people against their will was a non-option, in the case of the EBDI relocations, the city asserted that the relocation funding they provided sufficiently offset the inconveniences to those forced out. Still, there has been little opportunity provided to openly debate the questions of forced evictions. This is particularly disheartening, because we know from decades of work on this subject that "home" means much more than a physical structure in a neighborhood; in many cases, these buildings in Baltimore have been owned or operated by the same families for generations, and relocating folks means disrupting the rootedness of their social and financial networks (Fullilove, 2005). The city's plan to demolish the homes and green the lots hints at a

kind of green gentrification or the displacement of low-income residents with middle-income residents due to public investments such as parks, greenways, and trails. In this case, the city initially sought to relocate marginalized residents to other parts of town, only for the city to turn and offer the land for sale to businesses and, in some cases, wealthier occupants (Agyeman, 2013; Gould & Lewis, 2016). A wider and more thoughtful public engagement process might have uncovered this important concern.

Recognition

The city of Baltimore's outreach efforts involve the dissemination of information, presented in differential modalities, but do little to proactively enable citizens to understand and utilize that knowledge. The city uses a website to provide detailed information about successes to date and links to related organizations but offers little in the way of recognition of the existing power imbalances and structures of domination present in Baltimore society. Among other things, the information provided on the website might describe the fiscal rationale for vacant lot reuse programs; the mandates of the infrastructure sector, including agencies dedicated to utilities, energy, and service delivery; and the exigencies of the housing market, along with an understanding of its principal actors and historical trends. The "recognition" proposition is notoriously difficult to achieve in any such process but is especially elusive in a context of ongoing population decline linked with Baltimore's historic patterns of racial segregation and discrimination.

Transparency

In this realm of smart decline, Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy has performed fairly well. In addition to standard census data and administrative data collected by the city, leaders depend heavily on insights from city staff members assigned as community liaisons to East and West Baltimore. These community planners translate citizen concerns and opinions in a manner that can be understood and then incorporated into program changes by city leaders. Another key example of Baltimore's openness to use novel data sources and analytic approaches is the decision modeling project performed in conjunction with GGI. In that effort, the city valued the ability of an operations research approach that gave explicit voice to wide-ranging assumptions about city priorities. The development of a decision model helped city officials understand the ways in which concerns around future development, urban agriculture, stormwater management, and blight elimination could both conflict with each other and potentially generate a wider range of compromises.

Despite openness to multiple data sources, the city officials with whom we spoke professed to limitations in the decision-making process about demolition parcels, which highlight places where city initiatives may be lacking in transparency. In particular, officials we spoke with in relation to the decision modeling process noted that this experience made them aware of the lack of explicit conversations about goals and objectives in prior abandoned property decision processes. This weakness identified by city officials is critical, because without defined objectives by which the city is making decisions, it is difficult to design a transparent process or to evaluate the alignment of outcomes with identified community values and priorities.

Scale appropriateness

This proposition would seem especially important to the city given the legal framework for regional planning in Maryland. The Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) was created by the Maryland Legislature in 1956 and provides advisory services for Baltimore, Annapolis, and their surrounding counties:

> The Baltimore Metropolitan Council promotes cooperation among local governments in the Baltimore metropolitan area to share information, collect data, and solve common problems. It also anticipates future needs in infrastructure, the environment, and economic development. Under formal agreements among its members, the Council provides regional planning for solid waste management and transportation. (Maryland State Archives, 2017, para. 2)

Given the inherently regional nature of population decline and its links to suburbanization and broader land use patterns, one might expect the city's Abandoned Housing Strategy to be deeply intertwined with the BMC, but it is not. Among the seven partnerships the city refers to in its Growing Greener Initiative website, the BMC is not one. Despite this omission, two of the partner organizations *are* explicitly regional in nature: the Central Maryland Transportation Alliance, a nonprofit alliance of organizations in the region looking to measure progress toward improved transportation, and the Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition, a loose affiliation of civic and private groups committed to improving open space and wild areas in the region. Regardless of these partnerships, the lack of formal collaboration with the region's own metropolitan council is surprising given the potential for such a partnership to generate political buy-in and support from surrounding municipalities.

Discussion

Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy has successfully introduced the idea of smart decline into the public consciousness in Baltimore. Much good has come from the program in terms of project outcomes, most notably the city's measurable progress around reusing vacant properties, establishing a land trust, and increased tree plantings in publicly owned lands (Baltimore Office of Sustainability, 2015a). But it has done so following a planning model that is mostly top-down and that relies on little to no meaningful public input. Meetings are most often held behind closed doors and initiative leaders tend to engage the public primarily to disseminate and report out information, with public meetings never approaching more than what Sherry Arnstein might call "tokenism" (Arnstein, 1969).

The strategy case provides us a number of additional reasons why just planning and plan-making can be particularly difficult to achieve in the context of shrinking cities. First, this case shows that developing solutions for housing abandonment can involve complex calculations of taxes, municipal finance, and population projections. Such modeling often includes technical, expert-driven analyses that do not lend themselves to more participatory methods of discussion. Second, officials in Baltimore and other shrinking cities have recognized the need to act comprehensively when acting to demolish underutilized or abandoned properties. Acting comprehensively across a city or region means that individual voices and stories are diminished and/or undervalued in favor of policies or programs undertaken on a broader scale. Processes that involve outreach to individuals or small groups are very costly and require many hours of staff time, neither of which is in abundance in cities suffering long-time property tax decreases due to shrinking populations. Third, many strategies put forward by the city of Baltimore involve the forceful relocation of people from their homes and neighborhoods. Such displacement—often by invocation of eminent domain—can uproot families and social networks in responses eerily similar to urban renewal projects and processes endemic to U.S. cities in the 1960s and 1970s. Fourth, and finally, recognition of the sort that our theory espouses requires recognition of past and existing power imbalances and structures of domination; as such, these discussions open old wounds linked with Baltimore's—and other cities'—deeply discriminatory histories that reverberate today. As we see, these lessons are important for planning in shrinking cities but are also relevant for political, planning, and policy dynamics in cities with stable or growing populations.

Shifting focus to the tool itself, the five propositions allow for a quick assessment of how well such processes live up to ideals. It identifies ways in which a process falls short, providing important information for planners as they introduce mid-course corrections or begin their own process, relying on assessments of similar processes for lessons learned and best practices. It is important to note that this rubric is not intended to serve as a scorecard because justice is never fully achieved; instead, we present these propositions as aspirations, as yardsticks against which to measure our actions. The work of the planner in these and similar processes, then, is to "move the dial" toward more just processes and, in turn, most just outcomes. These propositions allow us to identify relevant chokepoints or barriers that prevent moving the process toward more just ends. Along

these same lines, we believe that improvement on one proposition—for example, in becoming more transparent—should not come at the expense of another proposition, such as inclusion.

Conclusion

In this article, we begin to answer whether and how smart decline–oriented planning processes might live up to certain fundamental principles of justice. We briefly reviewed the scholarship and practice of smart decline and then presented a foundational theory of "just planning" for smart decline originally outlined in our 2011 paper (Hollander & Németh, 2011). We tested this theory and its set of five propositions in the case of Baltimore's Abandoned Housing Strategy, assessing it against these five propositions and briefly outlining where it falls short of these ideals. We find that these five propositions provide a concise and adaptable rubric for efficiently identifying potential barriers to moving toward justice in smart decline planning processes.

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the staff from the Baltimore City Planning Department and the efforts of numerous research assistants.

Funding

We acknowledge the financial support of the Abell Foundation.

About the authors

Jeremy Németh is an Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Colorado Denver. His research focuses on issues of urban environmental justice and the politics of public space and his work has been published widely in academic journals of urban studies, design, geography, and urban and regional planning. More information can be found at http://jeremynemeth.com.

Justin B. Hollander is an Associate Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning and Director of the C. A.G.S. in Urban Justice and Sustainability at Tufts University. His research and teaching is in the areas of shrinking cities, Big Data, brownfields, and the intersection between cognitive science and the design of cities. He is the author of seven books on urban planning and design, most recently *An Ordinary City: Planning for Growth and Decline in New Bedford, Massachusetts* (Palgrave, 2018) and *A Research Agenda for Shrinking Cities* (Edward Elgar, 2018).

Eliza D. Whiteman received her PhD from the Department of City & Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania. Ms. Whiteman's research focuses on food insecurity, urban health disparities, and social policy. She uses a mixed-methods approach to explore spatiotemporal dynamics of food and health across the urban planning, public health, and social welfare disciplines. Ms. Whiteman earned a master of public health from the University of Pennsylvania in 2017 and both a master of science in nutrition policy and a master of arts in urban & environmental planning from Tufts University in 2014.

Michael P. Johnson is Professor in the Department of Public Policy and Public Affairs and affiliated faculty in the Urban Planning and Community Development program at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Dr. Johnson's research focuses on developing decision models and decision support systems to improve operations and strategy design of nonprofit organizations and government agencies. His primary applications focus is on affordable and subsidized housing, community development, and public services. Dr. Johnson has published widely in academic journals of decision science, decision support systems, urban planning, and housing policy. His most recent book is *Decision Science for Housing and Community Development: Localized and Evidence-Based Responses to Distressed Housing and Blighted Communities* (Wiley, 2016). Dr. Johnson earned his PhD from Northwestern University in operations research in 1997 and his bachelor of science from Morehouse College in 1987.

ORCID

Michael P. Johnson http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4466-5886

References

Agyeman, J. (2013). *Introducing just sustainabilities: Policy, planning and practice*. London, England: Zed Books.

Arnstein, S. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, *35*(4), 216–224. doi:10.1080/01944366908977225

Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development. (2017). The nuts and bolts of V2V. Retrieved from http://static.baltimorehousing.org/pdf/V2VNutsBolts1.pdf

Baltimore Office of Sustainability. (2013). *Homegrown Baltimore: Grow Local. Baltimore City's Urban Agriculture Plan*. Baltimore, MD: Baltimore Department of Planning.

Baltimore Office of Sustainability. (2015a). City of Baltimore 2015 annual sustainability report. Retrieved from http://www.baltimoresustainability.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/UPDATED_CS_2015-Final-_June2016-min.pdf

Baltimore Office of Sustainability. (2015b). *Green Pattern Book: Using Vacant Land to Create Greener Neighborhoods in Baltimore*. Retrieved from http://www.baltimoresustainability.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/12/Green_Pattern_Book.pdf

Baltimore Office of Sustainability. (2017). Growing green initiative current projects. Current projects. Retrieved from http://www.baltimoresustainability.org/projects/growing-green-initiative/growing-green-initiative-competition/

Beauregard, R. (2009). Urban population loss in historical perspective: United States, 1820–2000. *Environment and Planning A*, *41*, 514–529.

Benhabib, S. (1996). The democratic moment and the problem of difference. In S. Benhabib (Ed.), *Democracy and difference: Contesting the boundaries of the political* (pp. 3–18). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bowie, J., Farfel, M., & Moran, H. (2005). Community experiences and perceptions related to demolition and gut rehabilitation of houses for urban redevelopment. *Journal of Urban Health*, *82*, 532–542. doi:10.1093/jurban/jti075

Clagett, V. P. (2003). House bill 424: Baltimore city—Condemnation and immediate possession and title of distressed property. *University of Baltimore Journal of Environmental Law*, *11*, 71–74.

Cohen, J. (2001). Abandoned housing: Exploring lessons from Baltimore. *Housing Policy Debate*, *12*, 415–448. doi:10.1080/10511482.2001.9521413

Culhane, D. P., and Hillier, A. E. (2001). Comment on James R. Cohen's "Abandoned housing: Exploring lessons from Baltimore".. *Housing Policy Debate*, 12(3), 449–455

Dewar, M., & Thomas, J. M. (2012). *The city after abandonment*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Dryzek, J. (1996). Political inclusion and the dynamics of democratization. *American Political Science Review*, *90*, 465–487. doi:10.2307/2082603

Farfel, M. R., Orlova, A. O., Lees, P. S., Rohde, C., & Ashley, P. J. (2005). A study of urban housing demolition as a source of lead in ambient dust on sidewalks, streets, and alleys. *Environmental Research*, *99*, 204–213. doi:10.1016/j.envres.2004.10.005

Farquhar, S. E. (2012). *Making a university city: Cycles of disinvestment, urban renewal and displacement in East Baltimore* (Doctoral dissertation). The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.

Florida, R. (2011). How "not" to save neighborhoods. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/03/28/the-incredible-shrinking-city/how-not-to-save-neighborhoods

Frazier, A. E., Bagchi-Sen, S., & Knight, J. (2013). The spatio-temporal impacts of demolition land use policy and crime in a shrinking city. *Applied Geography*, *41*, 55–64. doi:10.1016/j.apgeog.2013.02.014

Fullilove, M. (2005). *Root shock: How tearing up city neighborhoods hurts America, and what we can do about it*. London, England: One World/Ballantine.

Gorz, A. (1967). *Strategy for labor: A radical proposal*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Gould, K., & Lewis, T. (2016). *Green gentrification: Urban sustainability and the struggle for environmental justice*. New York, NY: Earthscan/Routledge.

Gratz, R. (2009). Demolition a wrong answer for imperiled neighborhoods. Retrieved from www.Citiwire.net

Großmann, K., Bontje, M., Haase, A., & Mykhnenko, V. (2013). Shrinking cities: Notes for the further research agenda. *Cities*, *35*, 221–225. doi:10.1016/j.cities.2013.07.007

Harvey, D. (1973). *Social justice and the city*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Harvey, D. (1978). On planning the ideology of planning. In R. Burchell & G. Sternlieb (Eds.), *Planning theory in the 1980s* (pp. 213–233). New Brunswick, NJ: CUPR Press.

Hayward, M. E. (2008). *Baltimore's alley houses: Homes for working people since the 1780s*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Hayward, M. E., & Belfoure, C. (1999). *The Baltimore row house*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press.

Henneberry, J. (2017). *Transience and permanence in urban development*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Hinds, M. D. (1986). Baltimore's story of city homesteading. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/1986/01/16/garden/baltimore-s-story-of-city-homesteading.html

Hollander, J. B. (2009). *Polluted and dangerous: America's worst abandoned properties and what can be done about them*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England.

Hollander, J. B. (2011). *Sunburnt cities: The Great Recession, depopulation and urban planning in the American sunbelt*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hollander, J. B. (2013). Contemporary perceptions of nine decades of depopulation in New Bedford, Massachusetts. *Urban Design International*, *18*(1), 6–23.

Hollander, J. B., Johnson, M. P., Tu, J., & Drew, R. B. (forthcoming). Changing urban form in a shrinking city. *Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science*.

Hollander, J. B., & Németh, J. (2011). The bounds of smart decline: A foundational theory for planning shrinking cities. *Housing Policy Debate*, *21*, 349–367. doi:10.1080/10511482.2011.585164

Hollander, J. B., Pallagst, K., Schwarz, T. B., & Popper, F. J. (2009). Planning shrinking cities. *Progress in planning*, *72* (4), 223–232.

Howe, E. (1995). Introduction: Part II—Ethical theory and planning practice. In S. Hendler (Ed.), *Planning ethics: A reader in planning theory, practice and education* (pp. 123–140). New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research.

Johnson, M. P., Midgley, G., & Chichirau, G. (forthcoming). Emerging trends and new frontiers in community operational research. *European Journal of Operational Research, Special Issue: Community Operational Research: Innovations, Internationalization and Agenda-Setting Applications*.

Kromer, J. (2002). *Vacant-property policy and practice: Baltimore and Philadelphia*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. Retrieved from http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/reports/2002/10/metropolitanpolicy%20kromer/kromervacant.pdf

Langdon, P. (2001). The disappearing rowhouse neighborhoods of Baltimore and Philadelphia: What's an urbanist to do? Report for the Knight Program in Community Building, University of Miami School of Architecture. Retrieved from https://cbp.arc.miami.edu/publications/researchpdfs/phil%20langdon%

Lieb, E. (2010). *Row house city: Unbuilding residential Baltimore, 1940–1980* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Lydersen, K., & Krohe, J., Jr. (2011). The incredible shrinking city. *Planning*, *77*(9), 10–15.

Martinez-Fernandez, C., Audirac, I., Fol, S., & Cunningham-Sabot, E. (2012). Shrinking cities: Urban challenges of globalization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *36*, 213–225. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2011.01092.x

Maryland State Archives. (2017). *Maryland manual on-line: A guide to Maryland government*. Retrieved from http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/html/mmtoc.html

Morckel, V. (2014). Predicting abandoned housing: Does the operational definition of abandonment matter? *Community Development*, *45*(2), 121–133. doi:10.1080/15575330.2014.892019

Neill, W. J. V., & Schlappa, H. (Eds.). (2016). *Future directions for the European shrinking city*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Newman, G., Park, Y., & Lee, R. J. (2018). Vacant urban areas: Causes and interconnected factors. Cities, 72, 421–429.

Oswalt, P. (Ed.). (2006). *Shrinking cities: Vol. 1. International research*. Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz.

Oswalt, P., & Rienitz, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Atlas of shrinking cities*. Ostfildern: Hatje Crantz.

Pallagst, K., Wiechmann, T., & Martinez-Fernandez, C. (2013). *Shrinking cities: International perspectives and policy implications*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Pagano, M. A. & Bowman, A. O. M. (2000). *Vacant land in cities: An urban resource*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy.

Piiparinen, R. (2017). "Smart decline" is dumb. Retrieved from https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/03/smart-decline-is-dumb/518640/

Popper, D. E., & Popper, F. J. (2002). Small can be beautiful: Coming to terms with decline. *Planning*, *68*(7), 20–23.

Purcell, M. (2008). *Recapturing democracy: Neoliberalization and the struggle for alternative urban futures*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ransome, K. T. (2007). *Housing abandonment and vacancy in Baltimore city* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Richardson, H. W., & Nam, C. W. (Eds.). (2014). *Shrinking cities: A global perspective*. London, England: Routledge.

Rosenblatt, P. (2011). *The renaissance comes to the projects: Public housing, urban redevelopment, and racial inequality in Baltimore*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University.

Ryan, B. D. (2012). *Design after decline: How America rebuilds shrinking cities*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Schatz, L. (2010). *What helps or hinders the adoption of "good planning" principles in shrinking cities? A comparison of recent planning exercises in Sudbury, Ontario and Youngstown, Ohio* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON.

Schlosberg, D. (2009). *Defining environmental justice: Theories, movements, and nature*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Schoenbaum, M. (2002). Environmental contamination, brownfields policy, and economic redevelopment in an industrial area of Baltimore, Maryland. *Land Economics*, *78*, 60–71. doi:10.2307/3146923

Stoker, R. P., Stone, C. N., & Worgs, D. C. (2009). Policy Subsystems and the Politics of Neighborhood Policy in Baltimore. American Political Science Association (APSA) Conference Paper.

Stone, C., Stoker, R., & Worgs, D. (2008). Neighborhood inequality and revitalization: An exploration of five themes through the Baltimore case. *Conference Papers - American Political Science Association*, 1–47.

United States Conference of Mayors. (2006). Combating problems of vacant and abandoned properties: Best practices in 27 cities. Retrieved from http://www.usmayors.org/bestpractices/vacantproperties06.pdf

U.S. Census Bureau. (2017). *Population and housing unit estimates tables*. Retrieved from www.census.gov/programs surveys/popest/data/tables.html

Weaver, R., Bagchi-Sen, S., Knight, J., & Frazier, A. E. (2016). *Shrinking cities: Understanding urban decline in the United States*. Abingdon, England: Routledge.

Whiteman, E. D. (2014). *Managing urban vacancy: Decision strategies for vacant lot reuse in Baltimore, Maryland* (Master's thesis). Tufts University, Medford, MA.

Wiechmann, T. (2008). Errors expected—Aligning urban strategy with demographic uncertainty in shrinking cities. *International Planning Studies*, *13*, 431–446. doi:10.1080/13563470802519097

Wolin, S. (1996). Fugitive democracy. In Benhabib, S. (Ed.). *Democracy and difference: Contesting the boundaries of the political*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Young, I. M. (1990). The ideal of community and the politics of difference. *Social Theory and Practice*, *12*, 1–26. doi:10.5840/soctheorpract198612113

Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.