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Re-appropriating Decline
Urban Renewal of a Shrinking City

A thesis submitted to the
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by

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Abstract

This thesis proposes to investigate an intervention specific to Akron, Ohio, using the five concepts of action outlined by *Shrinking Cities* as a means to critique the current goals of Akron that resulted from the Imagine.Akron: 2025 initiative. The five concepts of action include “negotiating inequality, self-governance, creating images, organizing retreat, and occupying space.” The intervention will test the *Shrinking Cities* model specifically for a Midwest City such as Akron, Ohio.

A study of the *Shrinking Cities* model is worthy from a contemporary urban development perspective because the *Shrinking Cities* principles, at first glance, appear to be a complete reversal of the modernist principles specifically outlined by the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM). According to CIAM, urbanism consists of habitation, leisure, and work. Therefore this thesis is equally a comparative study of *Shrinking Cities* and CIAM concepts of urbanism as they can be applied to the City of Akron, Ohio. To undertake this study of Akron, the analysis will critique the master plans and goals of the city dating from the cities conception to the present. It is hoped that an analysis of the concepts contained in these diverse documents can be applied to the development and understanding of contemporary urbanism.
My thesis research began in the summer of 2008. The times were politically charged due to the upcoming presidential election and sudden economic crisis. I felt an obligation to contribute to the rebuilding of a civically responsible society. First, do architects have the tools to make the world a better place with design? This question, I admit echoes the idealisms of the modern movement in architecture, but it nevertheless should be asked. Otherwise, why would we want to become architects if our only goals are to make money and make a decent living? Architects are not taught to be politicians or savvy business professionals, but we are taught to critically think about design problems and to discover plausible solutions that can make the art of living in a home or experiencing a space more rewarding. I am trained to be an architect, so architecture and design are the tools I will use to provoke change to the status quo. The idea of social change, or at least commentary on social change has steered my research toward a further understanding of contemporary urbanism as it relates to architecture in the American Midwest.

Preface
Contents

Title Page 1
Abstract 2
Preface 4
Contents 5
List of Illustrations 6
Introduction 9
Chapter 1
   Growth v. Shrinkage 11
   CIAM 15
Chapter 2
   The Shrinking Cities Project 17
Chapter 3
   Why Akron, Ohio? 21
   Akron, Ohio continued...23
   Imagine Akron: 2025 26
Chapter 4
   Design 31
   Farmer’s Market as Connector 37
   Program 39
   Material, Structure, and Lighting 41
Conclusion 45
Bibliography 47
List of Illustrations


i-02 Map of Ohio with Summit Co. highlighted in red.  http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3a/OHMap-doton-Akron.png


i-09 Precedent Analysis of Akron Art Museum.  Image by Author.


i-11 Goodyear Redevelopment plan.  http://www.siteselection.com/ssinsider/images/pw080103e2.jpg&imgrefurl=http://akronriverwalk.blogspot.com/2008/03/this-project-has-been-called-most.html&usg=___d3nXQFnnRBfmmAWcSG8bCi8ZpG14=&h=1023&w=760&sz=353&hl=en&start=268&um=1&tbnid=YcZGBa5tISkdhM:&tbnh=150&tbnw=111&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dakron%2Bmap%26start%3D266%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dsafe%26sa%3DN%26rls%3Den%26ndsp%3D20%26tbm%3Disch:1 May 8, 2010.

i-13 Scheme 1: Park. Image by Author.

i-14 Scheme 2: Urban Agriculture. Image by Author.

i-15 Scheme 3: Housing within the Park. Image by Author.

i-16 Scheme 4: City within a city. Image by Author.


i-18 Rendered Site plan of Farmer’s Market. Image by Author.

i-19 Rendered plans of Farmer’s Market. Image by Author.

i-20 Rendered elevations of Farmer’s Market. Image by Author.

i-21 Perspective looking west at Farmer’s Market. Image by Author.

i-22 Perspective looking north at Farmer’s Market. Image by Author.

i-23 Typical Wall Section. Image by Author.

i-24 Interior perspective. Image by Author.
inter\-vence \[\text{inter\-vên}\]

verb [\text{intrans.}]

1 come between so as to prevent or alter a result or course of events

acted outside his authority when he intervened in the dispute (with infinitive)

• (of an event or circumstance) occur as a delay or obstacle to

something being done: Christmas intervened, and the investigation was

suspended

• interrupt verbally: [with direct speech] “It’s true!” he intervened

• law: intervene in a lawsuit as a third party

2 [usu. as adj.] (intervening) occur in time between events: to occupy the

intervening months, she took a job in a hospital

• be situated between things: they heard the sound of distant gunfire, muffled

by the intervening trees
Introduction

**Appropriation** is the action of taking something for one’s own use, typically without the owner’s permission. In a way, the rubber industry appropriated Akron, Ohio and transformed the city into the Rubber Capital of the World. 100+ years later, the rubber industry is gone, and the city is in search of a new identity. The scars of rubber’s initial appropriation of the city sit as the mostly vacant sites of B.F. Goodrich, Goodyear, and Firestone Rubber Companies. Akron’s wounded urban fabric is a tangible reminder of its past glory, hardships, and future uncertainties. An understanding of history, culture, context, and contemporary urbanism is needed to combat the uncertainty and begin the healing of Akron’s urban landscape.

**Re-appropriation** is the act of taking something that was used and using it again in a new way. My intentions are to reclaim the blight left by Akron’s expired rubber industry, and to reconstitute the decay as a livable environment that promotes a sustainable future for a shrinking city.
Re-appropriating Decline
Megan Stuart
23 ARCH 901
Graphic Abstract
12 October 2009

1. Map.


1. Ohio, United States
2. Summit Co., Ohio
3. Akron, Summit Co.
4. Akron

- Downtown Akron
- University of Akron

grow | grō |

shrink | shrīŋk |
The process of growth is an indispensable operation in our world and in our lives. Growth is essential to the natural development of all living things. Without growth, atoms would not combine to form the chemical elements that are in every known object throughout the universe. Without growth there would be no people, no animals, no plants, no oceans, no sky, no stars, no earth, and no solar system. The importance of growth cannot be understated. Growth is monumental. Growth is fundamental. Growth is a necessity to our very being. It is a reality that affects every activity known to man, including architecture and urbanism.

Ever since primitive man decided to shelter himself from the elements, the practice of designing and constructing buildings has revolutionized the world in which we live. Throughout history, man has used the process of growth to develop the known world. With every building built, cities have formed, cultures have expanded, and civilizations have been born. But inherent in the process of growth is the inevitable eventuality of decline. The processes of growth and decline work in tandem with each other affecting the life cycle of buildings and cities. These combined processes mirror the human experience of life and death. Buildings are born and buildings die. Cities are born and cities die. What challenges contemporary architecture and urbanism is the unprecedented number of cities that are dying from causes other than the historic examples of wars, epidemics, and natural disasters. The advent of the dying, or shrinking city establishes the need for architects and planners to reexamine the very principles and practices that contemporary architecture and urbanism have been built upon.

The world’s current population is projected at roughly 6.8 billion people and “more than half of all people live in urban areas” based on a United Nations Population Fund report released in 2007.¹ The majority of this population surge is taking

They are on the rise in Romania, Poland, and Ukraine in particular. In Russia the number of shrinking cities grew from 7 to 93 within a few years.\(^3\)

The United States saw an emergence of large cities during the first half of the twentieth century. The growth was stimulated first by the Industrial Revolution, and then by the two world wars that subsequently expanded war related industries most notably in cities throughout the Northeast and Midwest.

The Midwest has always been the heart of America—both its economic bellwether and the repository of its national identity. Now, in a new, globalized age, the Midwest is challenged as never before. With an influx of immigrant workers and an outpouring of manufacturing jobs, the region that defines the American self—the Lake Wobegon image of solid, hardworking farmers and factory hands—is changing at a breakneck speed. As factory farms and global forces displace old ways of life, the United States is being transformed literally from the inside out.\(^4\)

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\(^2\)\text{OSWALT, PHILIPP.} \text{Shrinking Cities Volume 1.} \text{Ostfildern-Ruit [Germany]: D.A.P./ Distributed Art Publishers [distributor], 2005.}

\(^3\)\text{OSWALT, PHILIPP and RIENIETS, TIM.} \text{Atlas of Shrinking Cities.} \text{Ostfildern:} \text{Hatje Cantz, 2006.}

\(^4\)\text{LONGWORTH, RICHARD C.} \text{Caught in the Middle: America’s Heartland in the Age of Globalism.} \text{New York:} \text{Bloomsbury, 2008.}
With the emergence of globalization, the rapid growth once associated with numerous industrial jobs began to subside as those industrial jobs left the Midwest. Deindustrialization and suburbanization took hold of the dense vertical cities resulting in the urban flight to the less dense horizontal suburbs. “Every metro area experienced population growth since 1950…although the cities of St. Louis, Cleveland, and Detroit lost about half their populations between 1950 and 1990.”

The reduction of population density is detrimental to the vertical city. When the vertical city becomes a shrinking city inconsistent voids begin to populate the urban fabric. The modernists believed that a reduction in a city’s density was the best way to increase the quality of life for city dwellers. Lower density would increase the exposure to sunlight and fresh air desperately needed in the cramped tenements that were a common sight during the Industrial Revolution. The theory of reduced density increasing the quality of life for the city dweller stems from CIAM’s modernist motivations to resolve the social and economic problems they observed.

Despite CIAM’s persistence to create architecture that resembles an “object in a field”, densely continuous concentrations of people are directly proportionate to the efficient functioning of the vertical city. Normal municipal services become more expensive to maintain and secure when depopulation occurs. The social energy of a place and a community’s sense of safety are undermined when an insufficient population base no longer can support social and retail activities. The urban fabric becomes a disjointed series of “unplanned abandoned and vacant areas.”

All in all, when a city is shrinking the quality of urban life is lowered. Buildings become vacant and start to decay.

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Lots become makeshift city dumps collecting garbage and debris. The vacant space of the shrinking city is a far cry from the vacant space of the countryside. The romanticism of CIAM’s theories on dwelling, working, and recreation failed to realize the likelihood of urban dereliction resulting from a depopulation of America’s post-industrial cities.

Most of the current interest in the historic preservation of old buildings and efforts to recreate the “old time” urban fabric romanticize cities of the past. The stark reality is that, for the majority of working people, the vertical city offered cramped and noisy housing, little privacy, and relatively crude public amenities… The vertical city was built to house immigrants who had little money and who could not afford cars. The horizontal city has been built for a society with much greater disposable income and different quality-of-life expectations. It is a city that owns (indeed loves) cars. It is a crude generalization, and one that the proponents of traditional urbanism resist, but the horizontal city seems to have provided a kind of life that the overwhelming majority of Americans consciously chose—in spite of their romantic image of the old vertical city.7

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It is understandable why CIAM came into existence. Living conditions for the working poor in cities were horrible during the Industrial Revolution. Construction techniques kept buildings from rising higher than six stories, which made space a limited commodity. There was no room to breathe, and it was a luxury to have access to direct sunlight in an apartment. Also, disease became rampant due to the cramped conditions and inadequate sanitation. In the Athens Charter, CIAM made observations of the conditions that affected the life of the modern city dweller, and proposed a list of design requirements to resolve the social and economic problems they observed. The Athens Charter was a manifesto for a modern utopia.

CIAM (Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne)
A series of attempts, from 1928 onwards, to solve collectively some of the dominant problems of modern architecture which were at first seen as moral rather than stylistic. CIAM's first manifesto emphasized the need to put 'architecture back on its real plane, the economic and sociological plane.' Most of the great figures of the modern movement attended its meetings and Le Corbusier dominated several of these...CIAM's most widely known document, the Athens Charter, stemmed from its 4th Congress in 1933 and dealt with what were considered the four primary functions of the city: dwelling, recreation, work, and transportation.

From The Norton Dictionary of Modern Thought

Concepts of Action

Negotiating Inequality — The modern movement dictated by the principles of CIAM was founded on the idea of social and spatial equality. For most shrinking cities, spatial equality is no longer a realistic target. But the act of confronting the inequality present in living standards can spark a new set of experiments and ideas for positive change.

Self-governance — The deterioration of public infrastructure and social services have left the matter of economic, social, cultural and urban development in the hands of individuals. Despite the fact that individuals are not provided with the necessary resources or authority to fill the gaps left by a strained government.

Creating Images — Images mold the perception of the city whether or not they are the perceptions of the cities inhabitants or perceptions from outsiders. Shrinking cities are struggling to overcome the negative effects of urban crisis on their reputation. Investing in a positive image is essential for the city’s survival.

Organizing Retreat — With the dissolution and degeneration of traditional urban structures brought on by the process of shrinkage, architects and planners must learn to regulate and/or elaborate the process of shrinkage to innovate new ideas of what the city could become.

Occupying Space — The capitalist mantra of extracting the optimal surplus value from everything does not work in shrinking cities... Usual modes of utilization must be extended to include temporary, ephemeral, non-bureaucratic and self-organizing models that both exploit the potential of the space available in shrinking cities and give local protagonists the chance to take on disused land or property and use these in unconventional ways.

Excerpt from www.shrinkingcities.com
The Shrinking Cities Project

In January 2004, the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation) with the magazine Archplus organized an international ideas competition titled Shrinking Cities-Reinventing Urbanism. The competition’s main purpose was to discover new models for action to combat the phenomenon of the shrinking city. Interdisciplinary teams from around the world were encouraged to generate projects that dealt with the peculiarities of shrinkage for one of four cities under investigation. These cities included Halle/Leipzig, Manchester/Liverpool, Detroit, and Ivanovo. The projects and research have resulted in exhibitions in the United States, Britain, Japan, Germany, Russia, as well as in print and digital publications.

The Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD) hosted one of the aforementioned exhibitions titled Shrinking Cities, Interventions. The exhibition was subdivided into five strategies of action including “negotiating inequality, self-governance, creating images, organizing retreat, and occupying space.”

Shrinking Cities approaches urbanism and design challenges in a way that I have never seen before. The projects weren’t the typical mixed-use development strategies usually presented by architects and planners of the New Urbanist persuasion. The holes in the urban fabric weren’t automatically filled with a pseudo-city within a city. Shrinking Cities challenges the conventionality of contemporary design by asking questions that confront the social issues present in the dying city.

The five concepts of action outlined by the MOCAD’s exhibition, Shrinking Cities, Interventions, are more or less the same as the aspects of urbanism presented by CIAM. Habitation, working, and recreation are all contingent to the operation of a city. The difference is in the execution of those aspects of urbanism. CIAM was based in a utopian top down approach, where as the Shrinking Cities model tries harder to ignite bottom-up action.

Philipp Oswalt, editor of *Shrinking Cities*, writes “these days, communes are degraded into administrative apparatuses that merely implement the directives of others, having lost any opportunities to shape policy because they lack freely available financial resources and are hampered by detailed regulations.”

Nikolaus Kuhnert and Anh-Linh Ngo, contributors to *Shrinking Cities*, agree with Oswalt and insist on a player-based approach that emphasizes individual interventions and empowerment strategies as a means to combat the hampering detailed regulations issued by the government.

I find this argument to be a parallel argument to Anthony Vidler’s discussion in “The Third Typology” written in 1976. Vidler breaks urbanism down into three typologies. The first typology stems from the belief in the rational order of nature as a guiding principle that links humans to the natural world. Abbé Laugier’s “primitive hut” is the primary example of the natural typology. The second typology originates in the modernist machine aesthetic. As described by Le Corbusier, design should be founded in the production process itself. Vidler looks to the works of Aldo Rossi and Leon and Rob Krier as examples of the third typology, an architectural typology that no longer speaks to essential social conventions. The third typology rejects “nostalgia” when it evokes history. It rejects unitary descriptions of the social meaning of form, and it rejects the modernist aesthetic. Vidler concludes that the third typology is a “modern movement that places its faith in the essentially public nature of all architecture, as against the increasingly private visions of romantic individualists.”


Twentieth-Century Modernists have argued almost exclusively about style, whereas their nineteenth-century predecessors found in modernity a framework for the major questions of life in the modern world—such as the purpose of modern cities, how people can live together, and what they want from their environment.

*Marshall Berman, Design After Modernity*\(^{12}\)

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Why Akron, Ohio?

I really had no reason to visit the City of Akron, but because of the recent remodel and addition of the Akron Art Museum by Coop Himmelblau, I decided to go. At first glance, I saw the City of Akron as an almost “Bilbao of the Midwest.” My naïve assumption was that it was a former industrial city that was being transformed by a shiny new art museum.

As I drove through Akron, I could feel that the city had been strong and vibrant with industry, and I could feel the hold that the rubber industry still had on the city’s identity. I would not describe Akron as an urban wasteland in the same degree as Detroit, but there are pockets of former industrial land that sit vacant and lost in an identity that no longer exists.

Akron is indeed a shrinking city that is rooted in the Midwest’s industrial history making it a great case study for a post-industrial inquiry of urbanism.

Population of Akron, Ohio

\begin{array}{ll}
1850—3,266 & 1950—274,605 \\
1860—3,477 & 1960—290,351 \\
1870—10,006 & 1970—275,425 \\
1880—16,512 & 1980—237,177 \\
1890—27,607 & 2000—217,074 \\
1900—42,728 & \text{Est. 2008—207,510} \\
1910—69,067 & \\
1920—208,435 & \\
1930—255,040 & \\
1940—244,791 & \\
\end{array}

Akron, Ohio continued...

On February 4, 1825, the Ohio State Legislature authorized the construction of a waterway connecting Lake Erie to the Ohio River. Canal navigation was the safest, easiest and cheapest mode of transportation that would facilitate the trade of Ohio’s agricultural surpluses, so the Ohio & Erie Canal was born.

It was decreed that the canal should start at Cleveland, follow the Cuyahoga River, and meander its way to the Tuscarawas valley. But the direct path of the canal was not fixed. New York engineer James Geddes undertook canal planning by surveying over 900 possible miles of routes in 1822. Engineers had decided that 41 locks would be constructed. Seventeen were needed in a stretch less than two miles long north of Summit Lake, and it is in these two miles that Akron was born.

Brigadier General Simon Perkins owned the land north of Summit Lake, and he realized that his property could become prime real estate if the canal went through his land. The shear number of locks would slow the canal boats, making the trip from Lock 1 to Lock 17 last for several hours. Perkins knew that this place would become a place where “passengers and boat captains would have plenty of time to stop and buy supplies, or loaf in taverns.”

Additionally, two basins were to be constructed to store the water needed to operate the locks. The Upper and Lower Basin would provide an ideal place for manufacturing plants to be built as well as a logical place for boats to be loaded, unloaded, constructed, or tied up for the winter. General Perkins was confident that his land would make an ideal place to start a town. So with the consent of adjoining landowner Williams, the two men hired Joshua Henshaw to survey and draw the town plat.

In July 1825, the town plat was completed and Perkins and Williams “deeded 100 of the 300 lots in the

town to the State of Ohio"\textsuperscript{15} ensuring the canal to be constructed in the town of AKRON. The name Akron was taken from the Greek word meaning “high,” which was appropriate because Akron would be the highest point that the canal passed on its journey from Lake Erie to the Ohio River.

Not long after the canal was constructed, businessmen from the East made their way to Akron to build factories. Factories could thrive because of the canal. The canal was not only the means of transport for manufactured goods, but also the water power enabled the factories to operate manufacturing processes. Flour mills, match stick companies, sewer pipe manufacturers, farm machinery manufacturers, and iron works were just a few of the industries that sprang up along the canal.

A man came to Akron, in 1870, who pioneered an industrial legacy that shapes the identity of Akron to present day. Dr. Benjamin Franklin Goodrich wanted to move his struggling rubber factory from Melrose, New York westward because the competition from eastern rubber factories was too strong. With the financial backing from the prominent businessmen of Akron, Goodrich started “the first rubber company west of the Alleghenies.”\textsuperscript{16}

In the years that followed, the B.F. Goodrich Company became the expert in rubber manufacturing, research and development. Beginning with the cotton-covered rubber fire hose, Dr. Goodrich transitioned the rubber industry from its infancy where there were few know uses for rubber into a booming business. A huge break came when a bicycle manufacturer from Cleveland, Ohio, Alexander Winton, asked if he could have pneumatic tires made for his “horseless carriage.”\textsuperscript{17} The tires were such a success that other automobile manufacturers came to the B.F. Goodrich Company demanding the product. From that point on, sales of tires would account for a major percentage

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[16] GRISMER, KARL H. Akron and Summit County. Akron: Summit County Historical Society, 1952. 630
\item[17] GRISMER, KARL H. Akron and Summit County. Akron: Summit County Historical Society, 1952. 631
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Manufacturing coupled with industry leading polymer research brought prosperity to the company. When business was good, the company expands production and built larger facilities. The original brick factory building built by Dr. Goodrich would not be alone for long.

As the years went by, the Ohio & Erie Canal would become obsolete. The historic flood of 1913 caused extensive damage not only to the canal, but also to a better part of the Ohio Valley. Canals in general were being pushed out of the transportation market because of the railroads. With the railroad, goods could be moved cheaper and faster than they could with the canal system. The combination of damage caused by flooding and rapidly becoming an outmoded form of transportation eliminated the need for the canal or the basins south of Lock 1.

The basins were soon emptied of their water and backfilled with dirt. The opportunistic B.F. Goodrich Rubber Company soon expanded its production of goods and used the adjacent land of the former basins to build more factory buildings. At its peak, the Goodrich complex would encompass “sixty buildings with seventy-five acres of space.” But by the 1980s, the prosperity always known to the B.F. Goodrich Company would no longer be a reality.

The company’s headquarters was relocated and the seventy-five acres of space that helped to fuel Akron’s economy stood empty. Some of the complex suffered the wrecking ball, but luckily much of the complex was turned into Canal Place, an adaptive reuse project. Steve Love writes in Wheels of Fortune that “Law Offices occupy former Goodrich executive suites. Embryonic businesses gain strength in the city’s incubator. Alan Robbins’s Plastic Lumber Company puts rubber’s intellectual legacy—polymer technology—to use in building

18 GRISMER, KARL H. Akron and Summit County. Akron: Summit County Historical Society, 1952. 631

Imagine Akron: 2025

is a citizen-driven planning initiative with the task of assisting the municipal government of Akron, Ohio to identify future goals for the city. The program was first outlined and initiated in 1998 by Akron mayor Don Plusquellic who had realized that it had be 25 years since the last extensive public discussion about the future of the city.  

The initiative's main objective was to focus principally on the city's delivery of services to families, education, neighborhoods, and commerce while remaining mindful of the regional impact that those issues would encompass.

Imagine Akron: 2025 expands upon the ideas and discussions generated by over 400 volunteers who participated in Imagine.Akron: 2025 between 1999-2000. A report was issued in September 2000 to the mayor and city council of Akron describing the initiative's main goals for the City of Akron.

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Imagine Akron: 2025 Goal and Requirements\textsuperscript{23}

Goal--

By 2025, Downtown Akron will be a center for transportation, business, the visual and performing arts, entertainment, and will be a residential neighborhood, hospitable to older and younger residents alike of all income levels.

Requirements--

\textit{Downtown should be attractive—}Showcase best design practices. Provide adequate green space, tree and flowerscapes, and monumental works of public art.

\textit{Downtown should be approachable—}Need good signage to identify attractions and parking. Need well-lighted pedestrian ways and visible police presence to make the community feel safe. Need a transit hub.

\textit{Downtown should be diverse—}Opportunities for entertainment, affordable housing, business headquarters and entrepreneurial start-ups.

\textit{Downtown should be interesting—}History should be readily displayed. Retail incubator for start-ups including food enterprises that can be operated by persons looking for careers later in life and young entrepreneurs who need some support to create new retail businesses.

\textit{Downtown should feel safe—}The community at large, Hospitals, Health agencies, the City should address the population of mentally ill people who gravitate to the downtown.

After the Imagine Akron: 2025 initiative was issued several redevelopment projects have been proposed. One such project is the redevelopment plan for the Goodyear Tire Company World Headquarters. The plan neglects the fact that the City of Akron is a shrinking city in need of innovative reinvention beyond the proposals for privatized mixed-use developments.

**Will architects and planners ever innovate the redevelopment of space beyond the retail/ town center?**

**What are the chances that industry will move back to Akron?**

**Are mixed-use developments and retail centers enough to stop a city from shrinking?**
With *Shrinking Cities* and CIAM in mind, I have developed urban schemes for what remains of the former B.F. Goodrich site. **Scheme 1**—Develop the site as a park while expressing the void in the city by giving it completely over to nature. **Scheme 2**—Convert the site into farmland initializing urban agriculture as a means to form a new identity for Akron. **Scheme 3**—Fill the site with mixed-use housing centered around a new city park and community gardens. **Scheme 4**—Create a hybrid of the previous three schemes.

Each scheme has its own strengths and weaknesses that have clear design implications attached to them. And in every scheme that I proposed, one building acted as the catalyst for the development of the rest of the site. This catalyst is the design of a Farmer’s Market. With the Farmer’s Market as the main architectural element of the project, I must determine which urban design scheme to develop further. In order to make the decision, I must go back to the five concepts of action outlined by *Shrinking Cities* to evaluate the schemes.

**Negotiating Inequality**—Which scheme will allow me to give everyone in Akron an equal chance to engage with the site?

**Self-governance**—Which scheme will provide communities or individuals a place to establish a better way of living?

**Creating Images**—do I want the image of Akron to be of a new mixed-use housing development, a park that acts as the lungs for the city, or an edible landscape that can educate and nourish?

**Organizing Retreat**—Which scheme creates a place of respite in Downtown?

**Occupying Space**—Should the space be designed for public or private interaction?
Scheme 1: Park

Re-establish the Upper and Lower Basin of the Ohio & Erie Canal
Scheme 2: Urban Agriculture
Scheme 3: Housing within the Park
[CIAM’s “Object in a Field”]

Farmer’s Market

Mixed-Use Housing Developments
(Privitization of the Park?)
Scheme 4: City within a City
[New Urbanist Development]
Farmer’s Market as Connector

*My site is a hole in the city’s fabric.*

*My site is a representation of an identity that exists only when looking at Akron’s nostalgic past.*

*My site has the opportunity to become a transition space that links itself to the past and to Akron’s future identity.*

1. Akron Civic Theatre
2. Lock 3 Pavilion
3. Existing Parking at Lock 1
4. Lock 1
5. Pedestrian path at Lock 1
6. Former B.F. Goodrich site
7. Former B.F. Goodrich site

*my building site*
Program

Administration--300 sqft

The administration center should hold a small office space for the director of the facility as well as a customer service desk. The customer service desk will handle program organization. It should be accessible to the public and close to a main entry.

Flexible Conference/Classrooms--500 sqft each

There should be room for two conference/classrooms that will be available for community use and employee use. The rooms should be near each other and use movable partitions to allow for flexibility of space.

Market--6500 sqft

The market is the main public space in the building. The market will sell the produce harvested from the urban farm adjacent to the site and produce from local vendors. The market can also be a place to sell cookbooks, cooking tools, gardening tools and seeds to be planted in the community gardens of the surrounding residences.

Community Kitchen--2500 sqft

The kitchen will be accessible to volunteers, employees of the market, and the community. Cooking classes will be the main function of
the space, but the space can also be rented out to cater events at the market.

**Food Sorting and Storage--5000 sqft**

The food sorting area will be the first stop for the food harvested from the urban farm. The produce will be cleaned and sorted into sections depending on type of food and the destination of the produce. This area will be inaccessible to the general public, but it will be where the majority of the volunteers work. The food storage area should be large walk-in freezer and/or refrigerator to store fresh produce.

**Locker rooms--400 sqft**

The locker rooms will be for employees and volunteers. The space should include lockers for personal belongings and be adjacent to restrooms.

**Loading Dock--1200 sqft**

The loading dock should be directly adjacent to an existing street to accommodate trucks bringing products in and out of the center.

**Food Storage --600 sqft**

Three walk-in rooms should be provided for the storage of food for the Community Kitchen; dry storage room, cold storage (refrigerator), freezer.

**Equipment Storage--400 sqft**

The equipment storage should hold the equipment needed for classrooms, conference rooms, and kitchen.

**General Storage--300 sqft**

The general storage should store the day to day equipment for the maintenance of the building.

**Indoor Seating areas--2500 sqft**

The indoor seating areas should provide a place to sit and rest for all visitors to the market during operating hours.

**Outdoor Seating/Plaza--8000 sqft**

The outdoor seating/plaza should be available for market goers and park patrons. The area should have picnic tables and benches for visitors to enjoy the outdoors during the nice weather. The area should also have the ability to be turned into a tailgating area for the adjacent baseball stadium, or biergarten for the adjacent bars.
Materiality, Structure, and Lighting

The materiality, structure and lighting of the market go hand in hand. I wanted to take cues from the surrounding B.F. Goodrich buildings and begin to incorporate some of the functional and aesthetic elements that I observed. The first being the factory form of the sawtooth roof. My use of the sawtooth roof is not to romanticize the factory form, but to embrace its practical nature as a way to effectively light large spaces. Open-web steel joists are used to span the market floor. The walls are on average 60 to 70 feet apart. In order to illuminate the space, I needed to bring light in from above.

I needed to find a way to make the market porous to the public. I had envisioned (weather permitting) that the walls of the market would completely open to the public allowing them to pass through the space and toward the park beyond. This is achieved by using 14 foot wide and 12 foot tall glass garage doors along the street front of the building.
The roof is constructed using standing seam metal panels, and the walls are concrete block with a wood cladding. The wood cladding in a sense is used to recontextualize what is thought of as a typical brick, steel, and concrete factory building. The wood is used to connect to the ephemeral quality of a natural material that shows its weathering and craft in making. Using wood as the building cladding re-images the factory motif and aligns it with the pastoral barn. An urban barn to house an urban market that continues the industrial language, but turns its focus on adds a new chapter to the language of Akron’s urban fabric.
Conclusion

I formulated this thesis by first identifying the Midwest as a region rich with industrial history, but lacking the manufacturing jobs to maintain the identity of that history. The industrial identity of the Midwest and the industrial reality of the Midwest no longer align. The post-industrial cities of the Midwest stand as decaying monuments that define the global trend termed as shrinking cities. Akron, Ohio is a city with a long history of growth through industry. It was once the “Rubber Capital of the World,” but it is now a prime example of a shrinking city.

Accepting the fact that the city is shrinking will evolve the architectural language of the interstitial voids. The identity contrived from romanticized nostalgia should be replaced by a critical nostalgia, aware of its connection to its history and its own morality. Accepting the ephemeral, non-permanance of the city will allow the Akron to find a new life. With life comes death, and with death comes life. Existence is a cyclical process that allows the exploitation of the life that is left within the city. Akron needs to own up to the fact that it is not the industrial boomtown that it once was. Room for imaginative innovation needs to be developed within the framework of any shrinking city to spur reconsideration not only of traditional ideas of the city, but also of the future development of urban worlds. Using the concepts of action from the Shrinking Cities project encourages a new discourse of urban renewal beyond the utopian ideals of CIAM.
Bibliography


