

While some believe that putting cars back on Fulton will undo the effects of over 40 years of decentralization, many others agree with the *Fresno Bee* columnist who sagely asked, "What about all the dying businesses on nearby streets that have traffic running in front of them? They don't seem to be benefitting by the visibility factor."

The scheme favored by Fresno's mayor to return private cars to the mall would destroy Garrett Eckbo's outstanding landscape design, which was the basis for the determination that the mall was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (the signers of this letter prepared the nomination). Tearing up the mall would also disrupt the many businesses serving the area's Hispanic, Asian, and African American families.

—Harold Tokmakian, AICP
Ray McKnight
Linda Zachritz
Fresno, California

Thoughts on Fresno

I grew up in Fresno but left 50 years ago, sometime after the Fulton Mall had started its decline, which soon affected a wider area. As a landscape architect very interested in urban planning, I have given considerable thought to how Fresno might save its downtown.

At the time the mall was built, Victor Gruen was considered a visionary. He had civic mall projects on the boards across the country. The pictures showed tree-lined play areas, hard-to-maintain water features, and lots of flags and bunting. The designs were beautiful but not very practical (in Fresno, where temperatures rise to over 100, shoppers had to walk two or three blocks from the parking to the stores). City planners and supervisors drove a stake through the heart of the mall by continuing to approve outlying shopping centers and strip zoning along arterials.

Reintroducing vehicular traffic to the existing Fulton Mall and allowing street-side parking might help a little. But Fresno has far more serious planning problems, including the onerous tax codes as they apply to the protection of older buildings.

—Ted Green
Kaaawa, Hawaii

Values revisited

I agree with Paul Farmer when he says that, as planners, we "must revisit our core values" (Perspectives, July). I try to do just that in my new e-book, *Stranger in Shangri-La*, which has been published by Amazon as a Kindle edition. It takes an altogether new and humane approach to the topic.

—A.N. Sengupta, AICP
Smyrna, Georgia

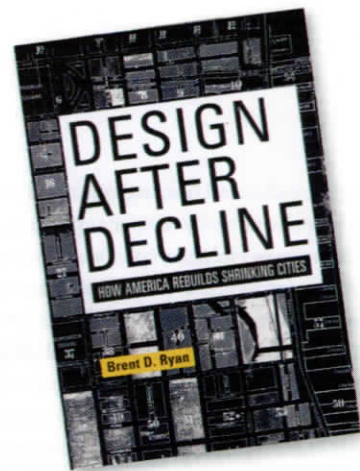
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Planned shrinkage

MIT planner Brent D. Ryan has some thoughts about modernism, everyday urbanism, landscape urbanism, and new urbanism—and how none of them speaks effectively to the situation of shrinking cities. In *Design After Decline: How America Rebuilds Shrinking Cities* (2012; University of Pennsylvania Press; 261 pp.; \$45), he focuses on Detroit and Philadelphia as two of the biggest and most needy shrinking cities, but his scope is much broader.

This author does not mince words. His preface includes a merciless one-sentence description of American urbanism after urban renewal was done away with in the mid-1970s: "Modernism had withered away, and in its place was a growing desolation, filled haphazardly and modestly by rebuilding strategies that were mostly not formal strategies, by planning departments that had lost the ability to plan; by real estate developers who quite sensibly wished to maximize profits; and by communities, most of them racial minorities, that sensed the scale of their problems but that had a collective memory of urban renewal and feared insensitive outside interference." (In the preceding paragraph he covered a neglectful federal government and "public-private partnerships" that worked only where profits were to be had.)



Concluding his section on the problems of the big cities, Ryan proposes five principles for urban design in shrinking cities:

- Palliative planning ("intervention can alleviate, though not reverse, the negative changes of shrinking cities").
- Interventionist policy (necessary even though urban renewal, still the best remembered intervention, was a disaster).
- Democratic decision making ("new housing should meet residents' needs and aspirations").
- Projective design (looking to a positive future, not new urbanism's "retreat to the past").
- Patchwork urbanism (in part, taking advantage of the chance to redo the urban fabric).

In short, this is a book both more modest and more critical than its can-do title. The author does describe what's happening, but his proposals await implementation.

Cultivating resilience

Bruce Evan Goldstein, now at the University of Colorado, Denver, was on the faculty at Virginia Tech in 2007 when a horrific multiple murder rocked the campus. As the editor of *Collaborative Resilience: Moving Through Crisis to Opportunity* (2012; MIT Press; 405 pp.; \$27), he describes the experience with particular emphasis on the ways in which members of the campus community came together in the aftermath. Out of the shared grief emerged a conviction that they were all victims and that nothing could have been done to foresee or prevent the catastrophe.

The book grew out of this rather unsettling model and out of a 2008 symposium at Virginia Tech that brought together both planners and natural resource managers seeking to find out whether such resilience