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# Treasure Amongst the Ruins: The Policy and Practices of Adaptive Reuse of Urban Industrial Buildings in Ontario

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## Abstract

The practice of adaptive reuse is a unique concept of city building, where demolition and traditional brownfield redevelopment have been common practice. Though an already established method, adaptive reuse is becoming increasingly popular due to a greater intensity to protect heritage, reuse materials and structures, and offer unique architectural spaces. To achieve this, there must be sufficient policy in place to incentivize and mitigate the increase cost and risk which are usually associated with this type of development. This thesis combines a province-wide content analysis of Official Plans in Ontario's 51 cities, with a more in-depth case study investigation on how adaptive reuse is implemented through policy and practice in London, Ontario. This thesis illustrates that cities in Ontario are actively promoting reuse as a tool for several of today's planning predicaments such as: affordable housing, intensification, revitalization in the urban core, and creating spaces for creative and vibrant industries. However, when investigating the policy more closely, it seems that many initiatives are superficial in nature, and more closely resemble buzzword or fast policy.



**Keywords**

Canada; adaptive reuse; cities; economic development policy; industrial decline; land use planning; manufacturing decline; Ontario.

## Lay Summary

The changing economy and loss of manufacturing jobs in many economies has left cities with a surplus of vacant industrial buildings. Often, these buildings remain untouched by developers who view them as risky and expensive projects to undertake. Those that do get purchased for development, are frequently demolished, with a new structure built on top. Recently however, the practice of adaptive reuse – altering an existing building for a different use than its initial operation, is becoming more widespread in an attempt to preserve the cultural aspects of the building while also creating new economic opportunities for the community. This practice is being promoted by municipal governments in the attempt of mitigating part of the loss experienced when the industrial origins of the building ceased operation. This thesis explores how municipalities in Ontario, Canada are supporting an environment for reuse within their local economies and how this policy is being translated to actual practice. There has been little investigation into the role the regulative environment plays on reuse projects and this thesis contributes to filling this gap. It was found that many communities in the province have identified manufacturing decline and reuse as a tool to mitigate it, but many of the actual policies did not include substantive implementation steps and in some cases were found to be word-for-word copies of the provincial policy guidelines. Further, when policies were actually employed, those who implement reuse projects found many of them to be improperly scoped to the intricate nature of reuse development. This thesis offers recommendations for policymakers around the industrialized world dealing with the negative externalities of industrial decline in their local communities.

## Co-Authorship Statement

The following thesis contains two manuscripts which have either been submitted for publication to peer-reviewed journals or in preparation for submission.

**Chapters Four and Five** have been written by Marcello Vecchio with Dr. Godwin Arku as a co-author. In both manuscripts, Marcello was the principal author and performed all research design, data collection, analysis, and multiple writings. The following citations are provided to indicate the destinations of the manuscripts.

**Chapter Four**: Vecchio, M., and Arku, G. (2020). Promoting Adaptive Reuse in Ontario: A Planning Policy Tool for Making the Best of Manufacturing Decline. *Urban Planning 5*(3), 338-350. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.17645/up.v5i3.3188

**Chapter Five**: Vecchio, M., and Arku, G. (2020). From Policy to Practice: Investigating the City of London's Environment for Adaptive Reuse of Former Industrial Buildings. (Currently in preparation for submission).

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

As elsewhere in advanced economies, the erosion of manufacturing jobs in Ontario has been a prominent issue for the last several decades. Among other factors, manufacturing decline can be attributed to transitioning to the knowledge economy, global economic restructuring, and technological changes (Hobor, 2013; Mah, 2012; Sands, 2010). The socio-economic impacts of plant closures have been profound for local communities, involving issues of direct and indirect job loss, rising local unemployment, reduced output, creation of an emotional and civic void, loss of community identity, and overall hallowing out of the manufacturing sector (see: Bazen & Thirlwall, 1991; Vanchan, Bryson & Clark, 2015: 3). Additionally, closures have left physical scars in the form of unutilized industrial buildings on the urban landscape (Wang & Nan, 2007; Wilson, 2010), often unusable in their current state for other non-industrial uses. These wide-ranging problems have pushed all three levels of Canada's government to initiate mitigating policies and programs to deal with these issues (Arku, 2015; Cleave, Arku & Chatwin, 2017; Vinodrai, 2015).

The overarching goal of governments is to ensure that their respective jurisdictions are able to transition smoothly from traditional manufacturing to a knowledge based - 'new-economy' (Sands, 2010; Vanchan, Bryson & Clark, 2015). As well, within the context of environmental sustainability, governments are also keen on redeveloping abandoned industrial sites. The assumption is that given the right parameters, under-utilized industrial buildings can be repurposed into non-industrial uses, which efficiently reutilize existing infrastructure and furthers the economic revitalization of the locales. Despite the plethora of policies and programs that currently exist to this, their effectiveness is unclear.

## 1.2 Research Context

This research seeks to provide context into the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings and the local policy which promotes and guides it. This study will fill a gap in the scholarship on how policy is currently being contextualized by municipalities and offer illustrations of how policy and practice do not always see eye-to-eye. To date, there is limited literature on how policy influences reuse, often being limited to a sub-section within larger case studies and investigations (see: Bullen & Love, 2011; Faria, 2008; Shipley, Utz & Parsons, 2006; Stas, 2007; Sugden, 2018; Wilson, 2010; Zuk, 2015). Indeed, there has been few comprehensive studies into policy and how it reflects into reuse practice. Further, this study contextualizes reuse through the lens of local economic development. This differs from past investigations which have predominantly been situated in architecture, heritage preservation, and development/construction finance.

The pressures of the changing economy and implementation of neoliberal strategies has hallowed out the industrial core of many advanced economies (Jessop, 2002; Rutherford & Holmes, 2014). As municipalities are pressured by these changing economic factors, the development trends from the last several decades have increased the chance of urban industrial buildings in the downtown to become vacant and derelict. As a result, many cities have been inundated with a large supply of expensive, use-specific, and sometimes hazardous properties. Nonetheless, cities and development markets are now slowly adapting to this new frontier of land-use redevelopment. Planning terms such as infilling and brownfield development have become synonymous with contemporary planning and private sector activity in the last decade (De Sousa, 2017).

One specific approach is the reuse of buildings that previously operated in some industrial capacity for more profitable and location-suited uses. These traditional industrial uses can range from automobile manufacturing to food packaging, with everything in between. The aim is to find adaptive reuses for these buildings which are often found in the core and most economically deprived areas of the city (Wilson, 2010). This is in contrast to non-urban industrial redevelopments, which by their nature are commonly retrofitted for other industrial operations, rather than alternative land-uses (Gao et al., 2017). For these

reasons, the impetus of urban manufacturing plant reuse is finding new, economically viable uses for these former industrial properties within the city.

### 1.3 What is reuse and why is it important?

The definitions of 'adaptive reuse' are varied and convoluted. Often, the term gets conflated with other related terms and practices. According to Mah (2012:41),

> "No single, well defined, accepted, and acknowledged term that indicates the practice of changing existing buildings in functional and architectural mode within the wide variety of scholarly studies. Instead, a variety of different terms are used, such a adaptive reuse, adaptation, alteration, transformation, conversion, refurbishment, revitalisation, rehabilitation, renovation or remodelling."

The term "adaptive reuse" itself generates a number of academic debates on its meaning and applicability in planning and city development. Often, it is understandably conflated with brownfield redevelopment, intensification, regeneration, and industrial remediation, however, there are specific factors that make it a unique process. The major theme that distinguishes adaptive reuse from a more traditional brownfield redevelopment is an emphasis on reusing the existing building for an alternative use other than its original purpose (Caves, 2004). Sugden (2018) cites Shen and Langston (2010) who define reuse as breathing new life into existing buildings by leaving the basic structure and fabric intact but changing its use. Despite the apparent multitude of what one calls reuse in the literature, adaptive reuse is a growing professional practice that is being identified by name in municipal policy (see Chapter Four). Although, the concept is not new, there has been a growing popularity of utilizing reuse for addressing topical planning issues (Bullen & Love, 2011).

This entire study bases itself on the notion that the adaptive reuse of former industrial plants is a worthwhile practice. To come to this same conclusion, the following sub-sections will briefly describe four instances of reuse being a beneficial practice. More detailed explanations will be discussed in Chapter Two when situating this study in the appropriate literature.

### *1.3.1 Environmental*

Environmental impacts of the development process have seen in increased awareness in the last several decades, with recycling materials and or buildings at the forefront of minimizing the impact (Mangialardo and Micelli 2020). Reuse lends itself as utilizing existing infrastructure to achieve what Shen and Langston (2010) refer to as 'breathing new life' into the building. The process of reuse is formulated on the concept that the majority of the building will be reutilized in the new chapter of its use. Further, when you combine this practice with the remediation of often contaminated industrial sites, reuse further applies itself as an environmentally conscious form of 'new build'.

### *1.3.2 Cultural*

Reuse also serves as a cultural impetus to protect and preserve the heritage and tradition of both the built environment as well as the former use within the building. These industrial buildings often stood as intergenerational employers, serving the surrounding community for years (Wilson, 2010). Further, many of the buildings considered for reuse, provide a sought-after unique architectural space that increases the demand for the preservation of these sites. The cultural significance of these buildings often goes hand-in-hand with local heritage priorities of preserving noteworthy contributions to the community.

### *1.3.3 Economical*

As mentioned, there is a newfound demand for reused industrial spaces in many urban centres. Loft apartments, reclaimed manufacturing spaces – converted into offices, and light industrial areas to house artisan trades such as microbreweries and bakeries, are being sought after by many consumers – especially those in the younger generations (Hu & Haag, 2020; Zuk, 2015). Further, reuse also provides economical savings on building materials by maximizing the residual utility of existing assets (Sanchez, Rausch, and Haas, 2019).

### *1.3.4 Social*

Finally, reuse is often leaned on to help revitalize areas in cities which have experienced economic downturn. This is due to the fact that many of these buildings are located on the fringes of the urban core and are often situated in areas with similar former

uses (Mah, 2012; Wilson, 2010). If alternative uses can be found for the building, the hope is that it will cause an economic ripple in the surrounding community. A scenario of which is covered in Chapter Five of this study.

### 1.4 PCLIP

As mentioned in section 1.1, this study is conducted through the lens of local economic development policy. This is part of a broader study into plant closures and the localized response to manufacturing decline. PCLIP - Plant Closures: Local Impacts and Policy, is a group interested in providing a sound, evidence-based understanding of the impact of plant closures in small and mid-sized communities. This includes understanding the socio-economic impacts of plant closures on communities, as well as responses to the closure by those affected, the local government, as well as provincial/state governments. The study research is located in The Province of Ontario, Canada and The State of Michigan, USA. These two locations are important areas of study, as they have experienced the effects of plant closures. Since 2000, Ontario has lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs (500,000 across Canada), and experienced at least 250 plant closures since 2008. In the same time period, Michigan has lost more than 400,000 jobs in the automotive sector, and over 800,000 jobs altogether. Within this broader study, this thesis examines an outcome of plant closure that is often not considered – what happens to these buildings after the companies leave?

### 1.5 Research Objectives and Questions

Considering the aforementioned benefits of reuse, the broad question for this thesis is: ***How does municipal planning policy facilitate an environment for the reuse of former urban industrial buildings in Ontario cities?*** To answer this however, two further sub-questions must be asked*:*

*(1) How do cities in Ontario contextualize the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings within their Official Plans and what policy tools are being offered to facilitate this development?*

*(2) Is the current policy helping or hindering a successful environment in current industry practices? Is there a disconnect between industry stakeholders and policymakers?*

How the study will address these questions will be discussed in further detail (see Chapter Three). A multi-method approach will be necessary to encompass the broad goals of this thesis, as well as provide a comprehensive foundation in the literature for further research.

## 1.6 Thesis Format – Integrated Articles

The study goal of providing context into the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings and the local policy which promotes and guides it presents a research opportunity to investigate how cities are responding to this phenomenon. Why cities in Ontario were selected will be discussed at large throughout this thesis (specifically see: Chapter Three). Although, the research is limited to the province, the findings and themes presented, are broadly informative and transferable to cities and other jurisdictions that are affected by industrial decline.

The two sub questions mentioned above, present two unique scopes to view local policy in. The first requires a broad study looking at policy from across multiple cities. The second requires a more detailed approach that investigates the individuals involved in creating and using the policy for the practice of adaptive reuse.

The methodology and study design are described briefly in this section; however, more detailed descriptions are available in Chapter Three. Further, the relevant research and findings for each study are presented in each of the two manuscripts (Chapters Four & Five).

### *1.6.1 Manuscript 1: Content Analysis of Official Plans in Ontario*

The first study (Manuscript 1) seeks to answer the primary research sub-question: *How do cities in Ontario contextualize the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings within their Official Plans and what policy tools are being offered to facilitate this development?* To evaluate this question, there are three major areas that this article will focus on: (1) catalogue economic development contextualization within Official Plans, including identifying specific strategies; (2) identify emerging themes related to adaptive reuse within the policy; and (3)

investigate whether the local economy (through its industrial base) impacts what policies appear in these plans. This investigation provides insight into how cities choose to create policy for reuse based on their own unique localized factors and creative incentive platforms. Official Plans were selected as the documents analyzed due to their role in the development or urban space, inclusion of economic development themes, and regulated and mandated structure.

This article will focus specifically on Ontario, Canada, and the current Official Plans of all 51 of the province's cities, and how they are addressing adaptive reuse in former industrial areas and unique ways in which they address this problem.

Investigating local policy responses to economic issues in Ontario is a well studied topic (Arku, 2014; Cleave et al., 2017, 2019a, 2019b; Reese & Sands, 2007). Local policy has the unique ability to cater strategies to localized factors and issues, as opposed to broad regional approaches. As such, this study aims to gauge how municipalities in Ontario are 'localizing' their policy and what themes or patterns are visible between cities. To measure whether cities change policy based on size or industrial composition, this study also includes comparative analysis with demographic and industry composition data. This is important for reuse policy, as it will help answer whether or not municipalities approach reuse policy in a homogenous or heterogeneous way.

### *1.6.2 Manuscript 2: Case Study of London, Ontario – Policy into Practice*

The second study (Manuscript 2) follows up on the first study's investigation by providing context on the stakeholder-policymaker interaction. This formulates itself in the second research sub-question: *Is the current policy helping or hindering a successful environment in current industry practices? Is there a disconnect between industry stakeholders and policymakers?* The investigation into policy and practice is an important consideration when attempting to make implications on the policy experience. Indeed, this study attempts to provide detailed context into the experience of industry practitioners, as well as the policymakers who are responsible for the strategies in the first place.

The City of London was chosen as a case study due to its established history in industrial decline, as well as its isolationism from the pressures and factors of the Greater

Toronto Area (a point which will be discussed at length throughout this thesis). There are two major facets to this study. The first is a review of the specific policy documents relevant to the London adaptive reuse process. This included: The London Plan; McCormick Area Study and Secondary Plan; Development Charges By-Law; and the Brownfield Community Improvement Plan. The second provides individual context for stakeholders involved in the reuse process. 16 qualified individuals were interviewed in order to gain insight on specific projects such as the former McCormick's candy factory, and the former Kellogg's cereal factory, as well as general discussions on reuse policy and initiatives within the city.

This study is meant to provide a detailed compliment to the first manuscript which deals with more broad and regional themes. Combining both allows for two integral perspectives into the reuse policy discussion and seeks to answer the overarching question of: ***How does municipal planning policy facilitate an environment for the reuse of former urban industrial buildings in Ontario cities?***

### 1.7 Organization of Thesis

This thesis is separated into six chapters, including this one. Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature surrounding reuse and policy. Chapter Three provides a high-level discussion on the methodological approach of both manuscripts as well as situating and describing the study area of Ontario within the broader literature, and the key analytical strategies utilized in this study. Chapters Four and Five comprise of the two aforementioned manuscripts that address the key research questions laid out earlier in this chapter. Finally, Chapter Six provides a synthesis on summary and contextualization of findings in both studies, scholarly contributions, future research, and final thoughts by the author.

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# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter situates the thesis study within the context of the relevant literature. The chapter also sets the theoretical framework for the subsequent chapters (Chapter Four and Five). This chapter is organized into four components. First, the economic background will be discussed to provide the impetus for the issue of industrial decline in western economies. Second, the outcomes of this decline on the built environment will be outlined. Third, the context of responding to industrial decline and the outcome of vacant urban industrial buildings in Ontario will be set. This section will also discuss the geographical factors that makes the response to adaptive reuse unique to Ontario. Finally, the chapter will outline the relationship between policy and practice in relation to economic development and planning policy strategies. While this chapter provides only a high-level contextualization of the literature, more detailed descriptions are found within the studies themselves, as well as the study design (Chapter Three through Chapter Five).

## 2.2 A Precedent for Vacancy – The Post-Industrial Economy

The transformation of many Western nations from traditional economies, which relied heavily on manufacturing and resource extraction, to new-economies, which rely on knowledge and service-based industries, has led to a flight of manufacturing jobs from cities (Bunting & Filion, 2006; Hobor, 2013; Mah, 2012; Sands, 2010; Vinodrai, 2015). Post-industrialism forms itself in societies where the value and wealth of knowledge outweighs material production and manufacturing. According to Bell (1973) – who popularized the term of post-industrialism, this means that knowledge or 'human capital' becomes the dominant form of 'production' within a society. In more lay terms, this can be simplified into an economy where the production of goods is increasingly replaced by the provision of services. Vast work has been done on the sociological and economic implications of this period in economic history, though for the purposes of this study, the investigative scope will be restricted to the effect on industrial building vacancy.

By the early 1950s in Canada, jobs in manufacturing and goods production was at its height of 53% of the total labour force. A decade later this dropped to 44%, and by 1981 it was 34% (Picot, 1986). In 2019, the total goods producing sector was at 20.1% of the total labour force (Statistics Canada, 2020). The service industry has seen an inverse trend and continues today in most Western economies. The steady decline of the industrial sector in post-industrial economies has been attributed to several factors including the emergence of new global commodity chains and the continued fragmentation of production (Dicken, Kelly, Olds, & Yeung, 2001). At the centre of this is the continuous evolution of global economies and transferable production and costs worldwide – especially in favour of production savings within the developing world (High, 2003; Vanchan et al., 2015; Vinodrai, 2015).

The emergence of free trade policies and the neoliberal political and economic structure championed in the 1980s, replaced the collapsed system of Fordism (Jessop, 2002). This new form of economic policy dictated that economic, political, and social relations are best organized through free choices of rational actors in a free society. The roll back of Keynesian interventionist policies by some of the major Western leaders (Ronald Reagan – United States of America, Margaret Thatcher – United Kingdom, Brian Mulroney – Canada, Bob Hawke – Australia) challenged the notion of macro-economic planning and management (Peck, 2002; Ward, 1998). This economic shift 'trickled' from the national level to the local level, where competition between cities and individual firms was encouraged. Economists like O'Farrell and Crouchley (1983), bolstered by work from Porter (1990, 2000) suggest that plant closures are a natural event of economic cycles, allowing resources to be freed for more productive sectors in the market. Indeed, neoliberal motifs dominated the early study of plant closure within post-industrial economies. In the 1970s-1980s, studies into manufacturing decline and plant closures focused on redundancies in older manufacturing areas and a shift of economic priorities – often on a local geographical base (Pinch and Mason, 1991).

Stafford (1991) suggests that there are five closure types (Figure 2.1) and adds that it is vital when discussing plant closure to differentiate between closures attached to product cessation and ones that are attached to abandonment of a certain plant (while production continues). This is a relevant discussion to be had when addressing what Keil (2002) calls the "cousin" of neoliberalism – globalization. Certainly, with the political and economic regime changes of the 1980s, free trade and expanded global economic structures evolved from the

antiquated economic isolationism that still held a grip from the early 20th century. Deindustrialization in Ontario was magnified by the liberalization of trade in North America during the 1980s, as international competition broke down the protective barriers that many of the manufacturing industries were accustomed to (Holmes, Rutherford, & Carey, 2017; Rutherford & Holmes, 2014). Agreements such as the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement of 1989 (precursor to the North American Free Trade Agreement) and the European Single Market of 1993, culminated the height of neoliberal policies from the previous decades. Simultaneous evolutions in Asia such as the 'Opening of China' in the 1980s and other Asian markets, made outsourcing and plant movement easier and more economical. This exodus of production from Western economies was exacerbated by the growth of advanced manufacturing techniques, which required new infrastructure and a redundancy of human power through automation and robotic manufacturing (Acemoglu & Restrepo, 2017). Indeed, it is important to consider that the aforementioned deindustrialization of Western economies such as Canada was not a reduced level of world productivity for a specific product. Rather as Stafford (1991) puts forth, these were often *Selective (II)* closures, where the product is maintained or expanded, but has shifted to another site of production. Figure 2.1 illustrates Stafford's typology of plant closure, indicating that although from the local economy's perspective the outcomes of closure are the same, from a broader economic perspective it is important to differentiate cessation closure from selective closure so that effective policy can be used to target the causal effects.

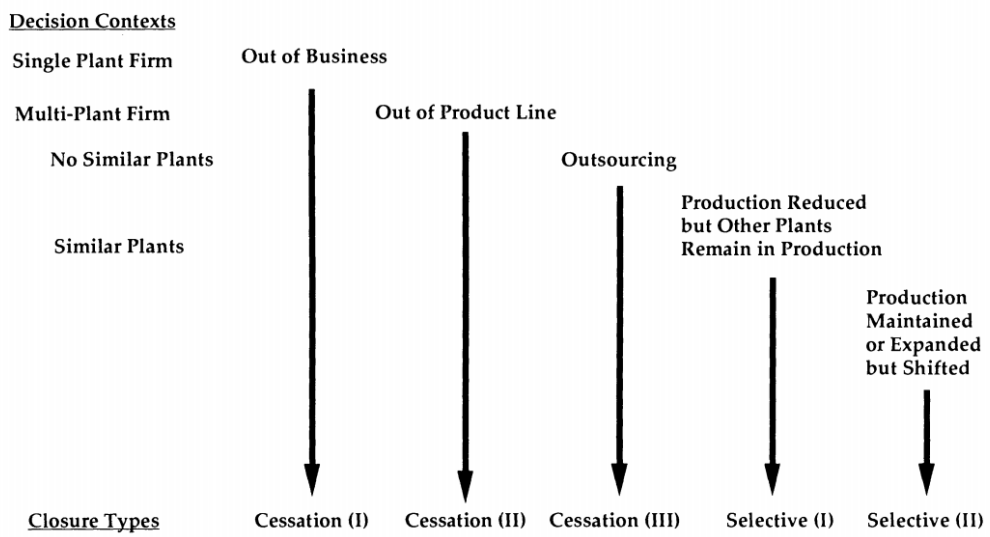


**Figure 2.1** Stafford's (1991) Typology of Closure. This figure describes the consequences of decisions for firms of different sizes and the closure types which they may experience. "The consequences for the firm are to go entirely out of business (cessation type I), get out of the product line (cessation type II), cease production in-house and rely on outsourcing (cessation type III), reduce production but with other similar plants remaining open (selective type I), or maintain or even expand corporate production but at other sites (selective type II)" (Stafford, 1991:53).

By the mid and late 1990s, the rapid adoption of neoliberal policies, coincided with tensions brought upon by its ideals (Jessop, 2002). The result was not a complete rebuke of the policies, but one that rolled back the standard of limited intervention to a more flexible "crisis-avoiding" model that relied on "regulated self-regulation" (Jessop, 2002:461). This transition's effect on the industrial landscape of Western economies did little to dampen the competitiveness of local economies and if anything, the coinciding rise of the tech boom in the late 1990s and early 2000s resulted in a further depredation of traditional manufacturing (Harvey, 2006; Hobor, 2013; Peck, 2004).

Despite the neoliberal interpretation of plant closures being a by-product of a firm or market agitating to reach equilibrium, a more recent theorization, and one steeped in the rebuttal of classic economic interpretation, some have suggested plant closures involve more than market forces and pure case-by-case resource reallocation. Pike (2005) discusses the following reasons for closure: declining profitability, import penetration, loss of market share, technological obsolescence, under-investment, and weak productivity. The contrasting debates

on the causes of plant closure delve deep into political theorization and illustrates the difficulty for policy makers to address and pre-empt local industrial decline. It is clear that the broad phenomenon of plant closures, like many others, is steeped in political and economic divide. It is often difficult to see clarity in the quagmire of theorization and pontification on the true causes of plant closure in industrialized economies. Despite this, the outcome of deindustrialization formulates itself in a similar way. So, how local governments are responding to this change is a more pertinent discussion to have, but it is important for scholars to be aware with the broader phenomena at play. This enables local policy responses to be uniquely scoped while considering the large political and economic actors which ultimately influence their decisions.

It is difficult to pinpoint the true effect of manufacturing decline when viewing large and diverse (in terms of industry) geographical areas. Indeed, the story of the simple transition of manufacturing to service-based jobs may look clear-cut when viewing national or subnational statistics (Sassen, 1990). However, Wolfe (2009) and Vinodrai (2015) caution on generalizing economic issues, as each city has unique issues that are indicative of their specific economic path dependence. This is apparent when considering the differences some locales have had in adjusting to plant closure and economic transition within their local economies. In Canada, the three largest cities by population (Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal) overwhelmingly attract the 'new economy' growth that comprises of technological, knowledge creation, and serviced based industries (Sands, 2010). The famous or in some perspectives - infamous work by Richard Florida in 2002 – Rise of the Creative Class, outlined that the "Three Ts" of economic growth are Talent, Tolerance, and Technology. The ensuing cult of policy decisions and municipal strategies on improving a city's "quality of place" attempted to replicate what major urban centres already contained – the complex environments that new economy jobs attract to (Sands, 1990). As such, smaller and mid-sized communities are in a constant game of 'catch-up' to divert the service and technology driven expansion to their communities.

## 2.3 Rotting Relics of a Time Gone Past – Urban Industrial Stains

The industrial timelines which produce these adaptable buildings are varied and often have significant causal effects on the demand or success for adaptation of these buildings (Wilson, 2010). Despite this, in Ontario and to a degree – North America as a whole, the era of industrial buildings for reuse typically fall into the late 19$^{th}$ to early 20$^{th}$ century (Llorens and Zanelli, 2016). Sugden (2018) cites that buildings of this period in Ontario are often 'Daylight Factories,' which according to Banham (1986) were proliferate in the built environment in the early twentieth century. As will be shown later, this holds true when this study investigates cases in the City of London, Ontario. "Daylight factories" represent concrete framed multistoried buildings that include large open floors with concrete pillars and substantial window space highlighting the 'daylight' aspect of the architectural style (Banham, 1986). Figure 2.2 shows an example of the typical open concept and excess of window-light that is synonymous with these types of industrial buildings. Several reasons are suggested to as why this time period of industrial heritage is most common for adaptive reuse projects in North America. First, the late 19$^{th}$ century to early 20$^{th}$ century is considered as the golden age of industry or second industrial revolution (Atkeson and Kehoe, 2007). This era included the rapid expansion of mass production, electric and steam powered production lines, and the new influx of labour from formerly rural residents looking for work in the cities, all which caused a mass construction of factories which could house these new advancements (Chin, Juhn, and Thomson, 2004). Secondly, these buildings were located near urban centres and major transportation nodes (Ward, 1998). This meant that the city often 'grew' around them throughout time, causing the buildings to be presently located in central locations. Thirdly, as previously mentioned, the architectural composition of these buildings is considered to be "over-engineered" with substantial elements of concrete and steel (Cantell, 2005; Rabun and Keslo, 2009). Thus, many of these buildings are still structurally sound and can handle large scale renovations. Finally, and rather ironically, a common qualifier for their abandonment was the same purpose for their initial construction – technological advancement and the need to locate near major transportation nodes. Recent industrial practices often require expansive single floor assembly plants fitted with modern machinery and a layout that can be easily adapted to new products or processing techniques – often seen in modern automobile plants (Dashchenko, 2006). Furthermore, as cities

encompassed these original industrial buildings, transportation and logistics became difficult. Often the highways are located on the fringes of the city, meaning that products and materials need to get through congested city streets to reach the factory. With these factors considered, it is understandable why many of the abandoned industrial buildings in North American cities are from this era, and indeed understandable why they are often the best candidates for reuse.

**Figure 2.2** McCormick's Candy Factory – London, ON: Example of a typical 'daylight factory' (Urban Explorer Resource, 2019).

It would be remissive to only focus on why these buildings are conduits for adaptive reuse, without discussing why they are not. It is important to realize that many of these factories closed in the late 20th century into the early 2000s, and many still sit vacant for very significant reasons. The impetus of this thesis is to address how local policy is mitigating the risks of reuse, so it is logical to first familiarize oneself with what the common deterrents are. Industrial reuse often intersects with brownfield remediation (Hayek, Arku, & Gilliland 2010). Though typical brownfield development in Ontario consists of demolition and site clean up, there are a number of occasions when the building may be preserved, but

the structure and the surrounding property still require extensive clean up due to environmental contaminants (Shipley et al., 2006). Various jurisdictions approach brownfield remediation and incentive programs to different degrees. Ontario's approach will be discussed in subsequent chapters, but in even the most interventionist locales, the developer is often still responsible for partial costs and partial liability. The aforementioned super duo of concrete and steel may make these structures sturdy, but the less attractive duo of asbestos and lead piping can make clean up expensive and time consuming – two major deterrents to development (Cantell, 2005). Two leading investigators into the costs and barriers of adaptive reuse are Bullen and Love (see Bullen and Love, 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2011b). Figure 2.3 describes the three main decision factors that typically occur in a prospective reuse project (capital investment, asset condition, and regulations). Through a number of case studies and interview investigations, the rather obvious primary concern for developers who weigh the benefits of adaptive reuse or demolition and rebuild, was costs. These costs formulated themselves through development costs, project costs, investment returns, and a desire for short-term profits (Bullen and Love, 2011a). Further, the structural components of the property must clearly be worth consideration for adaptive reuse in the first place. The several case studies conducted on successful reuse projects emphasized key factors such as: asset condition, location, uniqueness of architecture, ability to convert, and a market demand for unique real estate (Bullen and Love, 2011b; Sugden, 2018; Wilson, 2010). The factors which must be considered for successful reuse projects are complex and project specific, which exemplifies the importance of creating a successful environment for reuse if the community wishes to capture the positive externalities of these projects – a theme which will be discussed in detail throughout this study.

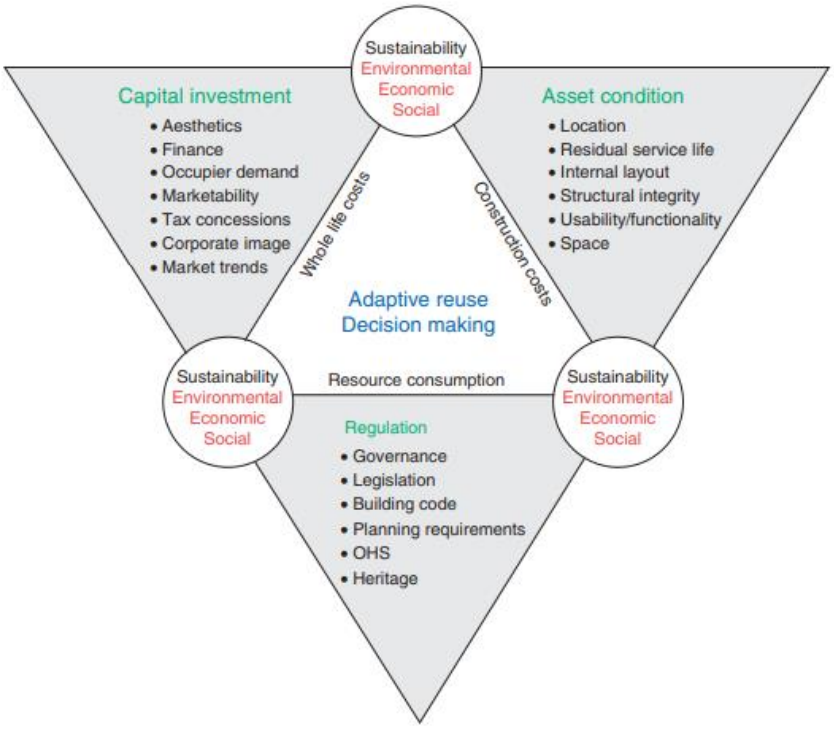


**Figure 2.3** Bullen and Love (2011a): A model for adaptive reuse decision making.

## 2.4 Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Carl Elefante (2012) confidently stated, "The greenest building is the one that is already built."

**Reduce?** The advantage of reuse from a planning perspective is the reduction of a reliance on urban sprawl and the myriad of environmental impacts it has on built environments. Many adaptive reuse projects are located near the core and major transit lines within urban centres (Myers and Wyatt, 2004). This increase of urban density is often the top priority for local planning departments and regional offices (Chapter Four). Buildings are estimated to contribute one third of the total world's greenhouse gas emissions during construction and operation (UNEP, 2009). As mentioned in the previous section, industrial reuse is often synonymous with brownfield development. The complications that arise from brownfield sites are detrimental to the surrounding environment and neighbourhoods as the contaminated spaces pose threats to the well-being of the community. Traditional brownfield development where the building is demolished, can actually increase the threat as the

disturbance and expulsion of dust and particulates is common during demolition (Xie, 2015). Industrial clean up is expensive, but necessary for communities to remediate. When paired with an adaptive reuse project, contaminant remediation is propelled by economic possibilities and more likely to succeed (Conejos et al., 2016; Sugden, 2018). Environmentally, progressive projects and ideals are now selling features for local governments, especially in the context of moving to the 'new economy' (Cleave, Vecchio, et al., 2019). It has been shown that adaptive reuse has the opportunity to integrate environmental consciousness with cultural retention and offer economic opportunity for buildings that have become sinks for 'anti-green design' ideals (Snyder, 2005).

**Reuse?** One of the hardest measurables of reuse is the recapturing of cultural significance when a building can be reused. Intrinsically, this is tied to heritage preservation and planning. As was often the case in history (pre mid-20$^{th}$ century), old buildings were seen as obstacles to modernization and the functional city (Lamandi, 1997). It was not until a new generation of thinkers such as Jane Jacobs (1961) and Kevin Lynch (1960) that an emphasis on the livability of urban areas and an attachment to the community became prevalent. Indeed, there was a shift in heritage preservation that changed contemporary attitude from a purely conservation of an older building to functional integration of an older building (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel, 2019). Though reuse itself is not limited to heritage significant buildings, there is more to the process than a simple reuse of the physical space. Rather, reuse provides the opportunity to reactivate "intangible aspects, such as traditions, craftsmanship, or local narratives" (Plevoets & Van Cleempoel, 2019:56). These cultural and social benefits are difficult to quantify when comparing it to the economic or environmental outcomes reuse can have. Conservation however does not need to be a deciding factor in a reuse project. In some cases (see Bullen et al., 2006; Wilson, 2010), it was economic decisions that motivated reuse, not cultural preservation. This is more in line with the traditional notions of reuse where conversion was out of economic necessity, rather than a broader ideal for preservation and sense of place (Powell, 1999). Yet still, in the modern age, cultural integration with financial opportunity is the motivator for most reuse projects.

Certainly, cultural preservation and community flourishment may be top priorities for local governments and their planners, but for developers and property owners, this is all

but a positive externality to the true priority of financial success. Thus, it is important to understand why reuse projects are attractive to investors. The demand for former loft industrial and open floor structured layouts has increased exponentially in urban centres, especially by the emerging tech sector (Longley, 2017). The younger generation is looking for a revamped idea of the traditional office where collaboration, unique spaces, and reclaimed historic buildings are sought after (Hu and Haag, 2020). Some equate it to trendy counterculture of traditional glass office buildings, others attribute it to a more complex idea of continuity of industrial innovation and stability (Bowman, 2004; Bullivant, 2018). Shipley et al. (2006) found that when "risk taking and creative developers" can envision the outcome of reuse projects and identify successful candidates they can capture on the demand for aesthetically and structurally unique spaces. Pairing these economic prospects with the aforementioned cultural planning benefits clearly illustrates the opportunity reuse can provide. Figure 2.4 showcases a converted steam locomotive repair shop that incorporates both exposed industrial architecture and modern office design. This building was converted for a technology company that wanted to combine high-tech and the traditional industrial spirit of innovation and production.

**Figure 2.4** A converted industrial space in London, Ontario that now houses an emerging tech company that wanted a unique and open office space (Vecchio, 2020).

**Recycle?** Environmental efficiencies and green building regulations are standard in most cities in the western world. A sensitivity to the environmental impact of development has been raised in many jurisdictions, with recycling materials and or buildings at the forefront of the minimizing impact (Mangialardo and Micelli 2020). Frey (2008: 2) said,

> "The common perception is that historic buildings are energy sieves, and that the environmental costs of demolition and new construction are far outweighed by the energy saved by the operation of more energy efficient buildings. Yet preliminary research reveals that there are major environmental impacts associated with demolition and new construction. Reusing buildings and reinvesting in older and historic neighborhoods offer a means of avoiding these negative impacts."

Indeed, when buildings can remain whole the energy used for building and materials is no longer a sunk cost. Even when components of the building must be disassembled for reuse, recent advancements in construction management (see Sanchez, Rausch, and Haas, 2019) have been developed to maximize the residual utility of existing assets. Interestingly, a study done in the UK found that buildings built before 1900 within the Ministry of Justice's building portfolio were the most energy efficient even when compared to buildings from 1990-2000 (Wallsgrove, 2008).

### 2.5 Industrial Reuse in Ontario

The literature on adaptive reuse in Ontario is relatively recent but a growing body of investigation. The province of Ontario offers a unique outlook into the reuse of industrial buildings and one that has experienced a large shift from traditional manufacturing to a service-based economy (see Chapter 3.1 for further detail on 'Why Ontario?'). Ontario – like many other jurisdictions has seen the concepts of infilling and brownfield development become synonymous with contemporary planning and private sector activity in the last decade (De Sousa, 2017; see also, Chapter Four). The simultaneous hollowing out of Ontario's manufacturing core (Rutherford & Holmes, 2008; Vinodrai, 2015; Wolfe & Gertler, 2001) with the rise of brownfield and adaptive reuse projects (Chung; 2004; De Sousa, 2001; Hayek, 2010) suggests more than coincidence. The impetus of plant closure discussed in Chapter 2.1-2.2, gave (and continues to give) Ontario a surplus of vacant industrial buildings.

As with most research on planning and economic development policy in Ontario, the focus is often on the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Of course, this is prompted with good reason, as the population of the GTA when combined with Hamilton (GTHA) is 7 million people (almost one fifth of Canada's entire population). The consequence of this is that when studying reuse in Ontario, two paradigms must be considered – reuse in the GTA and reuse elsewhere. Toronto for example has a rich and documented history of adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings: MOCA Toronto (a former aluminum foundry), The Distillery District (a former brewery complex seen in Figure 2.5), Evergreen Brick Works (a former brick manufacturing plant), and the Toronto Carpet Factory to name a few (ERA, 2020; Wilson, 2010). It was found that the heightened real estate demand in Toronto required a less interventionist approach for promoting brownfield development as the provincial density targets drove the market to make these projects economical (De Sousa, 2017). As previously discussed, the success of adaptive reuse projects is on the contingency that property owners can make a profit. Thus, when market forces create a heightened demand for space – as is found in the GTA, the motivation of finding that profit is much easier.


**Figure 2.5** The Distillery District in Toronto, ON. A reclaimed brewery district which now houses a combination of food, breweries, arts, and entertainment (Javanrouh, 2012).

The typology of the studies done in Ontario are mostly case studies on successful or prospective reuse projects, especially within the GTA (see Faria, 2008; Stas, 2007; Sugden, 2018; Wilson, 2010; Zuk, 2015). Studies such as, Shipley et al. (2006); Sanchez, et al. (2019); Chan, Bachmann, Haas (2020), concern themselves with the financial and construction process of the projects themselves. Yet, there has been little in regard to research into local planning policy and the fruition of that policy into development practice. Indeed, many of the case studies include a paragraph or subchapter on the effect of local or regional policy, but there is little to the effect of a comprehensive analysis of the local policy environment in Ontario, or how these policies directly influence reuse projects. In addition, understanding how reuse is enacted in cities without the real estate pressures of the GTA will enable one to better understand reuse in the rest of the province, especially amongst small and mid-sized cities.

## 2.6 Policy and Practice

It is the local policy where the majority of this thesis will be concentrated. It has been illustrated in several studies, that local policy plays a major role dictating the environment for successful reuse (Plevoets & Cleempoel, 2011; Sugden, 2018; Yung & Chan, 2012; Zuk, 2015). Key considerations such as local comprehensive plans, zoning restrictions, building codes, heritage designations, and financial incentives can ‘make or break’ the ledger line on a project’s profitability (Wilson, 2010). Returning to Figure 2.3, the three decision categories suggested by Bullen and Love (2011a) for reuse were: capital investment, asset condition, and regulation. Capital investment as discussed, is heavily dependent on market demand and larger economic conditions. Even when the conditions are favourable financially, policy decisions can change that outcome. For example, the heritage designation of a building in Ontario can severely change the attitudes of developers, who often view it as a precursor to inflexibility in design and material selection (Shipley et al., 2006; Chapter 5). Further, when asset condition was discussed it was found that building age, location, and materials initially used were key deciders in whether the building was a candidate for reuse (Cantell, 2005; Rabun & Keslo, 2009; Wilson, 2010). It can be seen that both capital investment and asset condition are rather static, non-changeable factors when

considering reuse. Conversely, the third factor – regulation and policy, is relatively dynamic and to a degree, adaptable. Thus, understanding effective policy and its applicability to reuse can ensure that the factor of 'regulation' in the decision factor triad is not a hinderance.

It has been well documented in both economic development and planning policy that the neoliberal motifs discussed in Chapter 2.1 have driven cities to rapidly enact policy to respond to the issue de jour in local economies. Whether it be the race to the creative class, embracing place branding, or providing incentives to promote reuse, the policy often metastasizes to superficial and non-empirical based 'fast policy', which practitioners believe will be the panacea to all problems (Cleave, Arku, Sadler & Gilliland, 2016; Peck, 2002; Reese & Sands, 2014). In broader economic development studies in Ontario, it has been found that municipalities often approach policy in a 'buzzword' like fashion, where either consultants or 'cut and paste' practitioners ensure that their municipality is not without the newest policy in the lot (Arku, 2015, Cleave et al., 2017; Cleave et al., 2019). Further, there is an interesting conversation surrounding 'policy transfer', defined by Stone (1999) as, the practices of national policymaking elites who utilize policy developed elsewhere in the belief that it will be similarly successful in a different context. McCann (2011:111), adds to this discussion by suggesting that the traditional viewpoint of policy transfer often leads to "narrow typologies" . Thus, the traditional approach has been pushed towards a more encompassing approach of 'policy mobility' that (McCann, 2011; Prince, 2017) consider the construction of networks and pipelines of policy knowledge across space, and the ease of policy movement between varied geographic and economic environments. In the context of reuse policy, this is illustrated in the common approaches that many municipalities take in responding to manufacturing decline (Cleave, Vecchio, et al., 2019) and economic development policy (Cleave, Arku, & Chatwin, 2019). Identifying 'mutations' in the mobility of the policy (Peck, 2011), will allow for insight into how the local context can adapt what is seemly a homogenized policy approach (see Chapter Four).

When it comes to reuse, gauging how municipalities approach relevant policy – keeping the unique path dependence of every locale in mind, will enable readers to evaluate the type of policy presented by municipalities. Faria (2008) suggests that the public sector must take a clear role in incentivizing reuse through a "carrot-and-stick" policy approach,

while also providing educational resources on the benefits of reuse projects. Tangible policies such as waiving development fees, height and density bonusing, and direct incentives for brownfield remediation or studies are found to be most commonly used by municipalities (Shipley et al., 2006; see also, Chapter Four). Further, Bullen & Love (2011a) and Conejos et al. (2016), conferred that innovative and explicit policy writing that expedites planning procedure, has flexibility in planning regulations, and assist in mitigating the unique economic barriers to this type of development, can have a immense impact on reuse projects.

The traditional relationship between the policymaker and developer has centred around what many describe as an antagonistic tug-of-war between regulation and development opportunity (Adams & Hasting, 2001; Leffers, 2018; Ploger, 2004; Ruming, 2010). This however evolved in the late 1990s and early 2000s, as the popularity of institutional theory suggested that political actors and both formal and informal institutional stakeholders engage in a series of conventions that modify or stray from formal policy components (Leffers, 2018; Lowndes, 2001; Peters, 2000; Ruming, 2009). In more recent literature, this has further evolved into a promotion of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and the collaborative ability to join the motivations of the policymaker and the developer (Othman & Mahmoud, 2020). Specifically, when considering the implications for adaptive reuse projects, partnerships have been shown to mitigate the risks associated with this type of development in a number of international contexts (Macdonald, 2011; Othman & Mahmoud, 2020). PPPs on a reuse project serve as a convergence of two different motivations; the public sector wants to provide access to the culturally and socially significant space and the private sector wants to utilize the unique spaces for a profitable endeavor (Cheong & Macdonald, 2014). This is additionally useful on buildings Rypkema and Cheong (2012) call “white elephant buildings”, which are buildings that the private sector will not take the risk alone. An example – which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five, is the McCormick’s building in London, ON (Figure 2.6); the building sat vacant for many years until the City of London purchased it, assisted in the remediation of contaminants, and finally tendered off the building to a developer.


**Figure 2.6** The McCormick's Factory in London, ON was purchased by the city and proposed out to private developers in the hope for its successful reuse (Ivey Family London Room, Central Library, London Public).

## 2.7 Summary

This chapter provided a contextualization of the study within the current literature. Beginning the underlying economic influences, it presents why the practice of adaptive reuse of industrial buildings is a topical issue. The political influences of neoliberal ideals, the simultaneous economic transition, and the recent technological advancements in manufacturing, were all described as catalysts for an increased surplus of vacant industrial buildings in urban areas. Further, the chapter describes a high-level summary of both the benefits and barriers to reuse projects – in a general and Ontario-specific context. The chapter also discussed how adaptive reuse is situated in the environmental perspective and how the reuse of these buildings supports the common objective of sustainable cities. Finally, the relationship between policy and practice was illustrated in regard to economic development and planning strategies.

The following chapter (Chapter Three) will provide a high-level description of the study design and how the methodological approaches address the key questions of this study. Further, a detailed section on the study area will be provided, as well as study approaches to data collection, selection, and analysis.

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# CHAPTER THREE

# STUDY METHODS

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter will lay out a high-level summary on the study design for the research investigations included in this thesis. Detailed information will be provided within the specific study chapters themselves (Chapters Four and Five). The following sections will provide an overarching description of the research included in this thesis and outline the decision-making process for the study. As well, theoretical arguments will be presented for the methodologies used in both manuscripts.

## 3.2 Study Area

In the early stages of this thesis, the geographical foundation was paramount in deciding the direction of the study topic. As mentioned in Chapter Two, previous work has been done specifically on the plant closures and the economic development practice within the Province of Ontario and this thesis serves as an extension of that previous groundwork. Although the research is specific to Ontario, it is important to consider that the province is not unique in its struggle with industrial decline and a surplus of vacant industrial buildings (Chapter Two). Indeed, Ontario only serves as a spatial boundary for like-policy and local government structure, a point which will be expanded upon in the following section (3.2.1).

Due to the extensive investigation into policy documents for every city in Ontario (at the time of this study), it was important that the research objective did not overexert itself by attempting to incorporate a larger study area for the purposes of a master's thesis. Surely, if time was not a factor, a comparative study area between two dissimilar geopolitical and economic structures would garner an even more fruitful discussion than a singular analysis – however, Ontario uniquely provides a large and distinct dataset even within a single political boundary.

### *3.2.1 Why Ontario?*

The Province of Ontario represents a useful case study for studying manufacturing in the context of local economic development policy and industrial land reuse for several reasons. It is the key economic region of Canada, containing one-third of its population and nearly half of its economic output. From a contextual perspective, Ontario faces many of the same issues related to manufacturing as other advanced economies (Cleave et., 2019; Wolfe & Gertler, 2001). The contemporary political-economic issues that have spurred on economic change – the global capitalist system, globalization and the resulting reorganization of industrial sectors, flight of large-scale firms to emerging and peripheral markets through spatial fixes, and the reorientation of local economies – are felt in both Ontario and abroad (Bradford & Wolfe, 2013; Hall, 2015; Harvey, 2001; Rutherford & Holmes, 2008; Vinodrai, 2015; Wolfson & Frisken, 2000).

The hallowing out of the industrial core of Canada has created a rapid alteration of many local economies, especially in Ontario – the historic industrial powerhouse of the country. Since 2001, the country has lost approximately 500,000 manufacturing jobs – Ontario accounting for a dramatic over 225,000 of them (Statistics Canada, 2016). The devastation trickles down further as cities in Ontario have seen a decline of manufacturing employment of 33% between the 2001 and 2016 censuses (Statistics Canada, 2001, 2016). Table 3.1 illustrates this decline city by city in Ontario.

**Table 3.1** The Decline of Manufacturing Jobs by City in Ontario

| City | Population (2016)[1] and Type[2] | Manufacturing Jobs (2016)[1] | Manufacturing Jobs (2001)[1] | 2001 to 2016 % Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barrie | 141434 (M) | 7705 | 9205 | -16% |
| Brampton | 593638 (L) | 45780 | 43100 | 6% |
| Brant | 36707 (S) | 3095 | 3705 | -16% |
| Brantford | 97496 (M) | 8900 | 12220 | -27% |
| Brockville | 21346 (S) | 1010 | 1990 | -49% |
| Burlington | 183314 (M) | 9930 | 13320 | -25% |
| Cambridge | 129920 (M) | 14455 | 19330 | -25% |
| Clarence Rockland | 43577(S) | 2790 | 1885 | 48% |

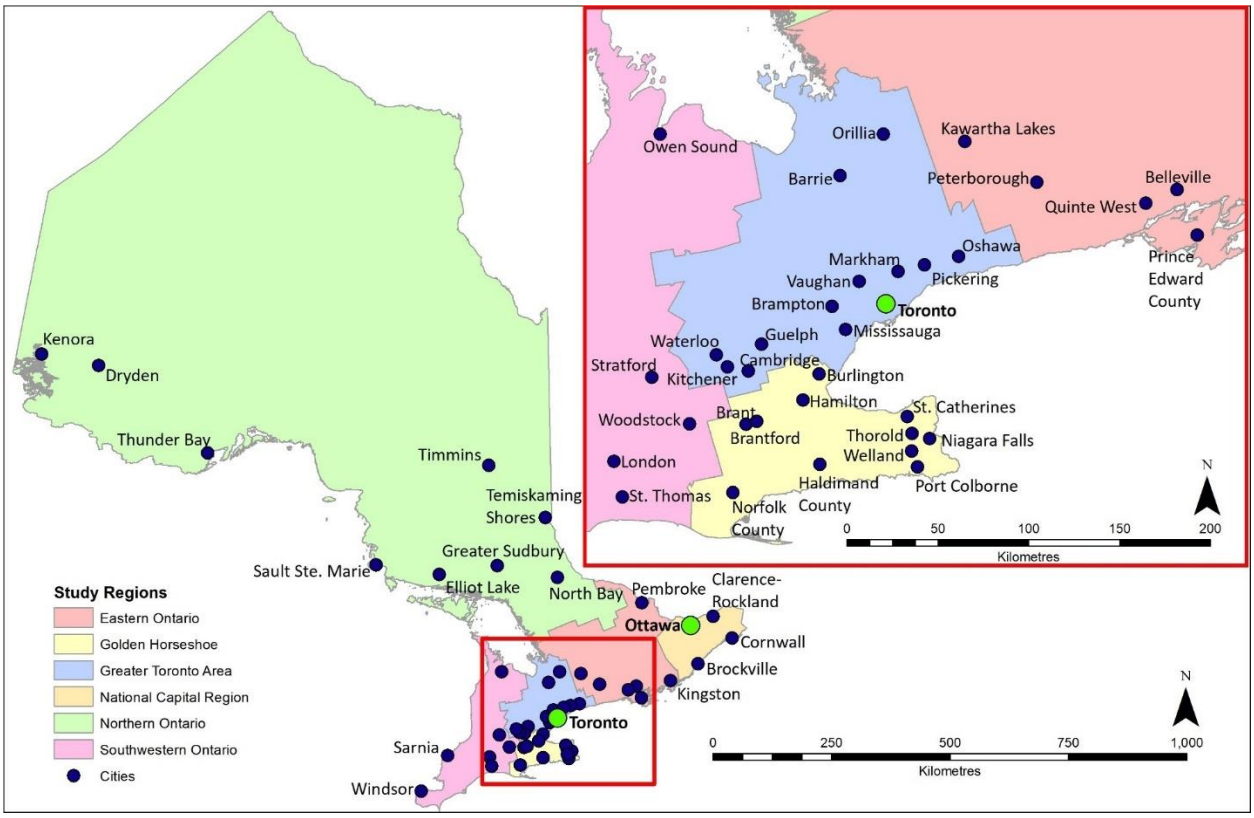
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cornwall | 46589 (S) | 1965 | 4845 | -59% |
| Dryden | 7749 (S) | 310 | 985 | -69% |
| Elliot Lake | 10741 (S) | 115 | 165 | -30% |
| Greater Sudbury | 161531 (M) | 3675 | 4865 | -24% |
| Guelph | 131794 (M) | 14310 | 15460 | -7% |
| Haldimand County | 45608 (S) | 3255 | 4445 | -27% |
| Hamilton | 536917 (L) | 31550 | 49005 | -32% |
| Kawartha Lakes | 73432 (S) | 2780 | 4650 | -38% |
| Kenora | 15096 (S) | 335 | 720 | -53% |
| Kingston | 123798 (M) | 2295 | 3810 | -40% |
| Kitchener | 233222 (M) | 21370 | 28155 | -24% |
| London | 383822 (L) | 19335 | 25375 | -24% |
| Markham | 328966 (M) | 14165 | 16015 | -5% |
| Mississauga | 721599 (L) | 43080 | 61780 | -35% |
| Niagara Falls | 88071 (M) | 3285 | 5835 | -44% |
| Norfolk County | 64044 (S) | 1140 | 1775 | -36% |
| North Bay | 51553 (S) | 1140 | 1775 | -36% |
| Orillia | 31166 (S) | 1105 | 1550 | -29% |
| Oshawa | 159458 (M) | 7950 | 15070 | -47% |
| Ottawa | 934243 (L) | 15670 | 35275 | -56% |
| Owen Sound | 21341 (S) | 1130 | 1565 | -28% |
| Pembroke | 13882 (S) | 240 | 500 | -52% |
| Peterborough | 81032 (M) | 2730 | 4245 | -36% |
| Pickering | 91771 (M) | 3470 | 6216 | -44% |
| Port Colborne | 18306 (S) | 1125 | 1840 | -39% |
| Prince Edward County | 24753 (S) | 835 | 1430 | -42% |
| Quinte West | 43577 (S) | 2790 | 4815 | -44% |
| Sarnia | 71594 (S) | 3570 | 5150 | -31% |
| Sault Ste. Marie | 73368 (S) | 3520 | 5290 | -33% |
| St. Catherines | 133113 (M) | 5760 | 10875 | -47% |
| St. Thomas | 38909 (S) | 3395 | 4955 | -31% |
| Stratford | 31465 (S) | 3545 | 4900 | -28% |
| Temiskaming Shores | 9920 (S) | 315 | 470 | -33% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Thunder Bay | 107909 (M) | 2850 | 5930 | -52% |
| Timmins | 41788 (S) | 740 | 1255 | -41% |
| Toronto | 2731571 (L) | 106385 | 186870 | -44% |
| Vaughan | 306233 (M) | 16990 | 15730 | 8% |
| Waterloo | 104986 (M) | 5930 | 9415 | -37% |
| Welland | 52293 (S) | 2340 | 5145 | -55% |
| Windsor | 217188 (M) | 19655 | 29145 | -33% |
| Woodstock | 40902 (S) | 740 | 4570 | -84% |

[1] 2001 and 2016 were selected as the Canadian Census was conducted in these years
[2] S = Small city, pop. less than 75,000; M = Mid-sized City, between 75,000 and 350,000; L = Large city, greater than 350,000
[3] Richmond Hill was not considered a City in 2016 or at the time of data collection for this thesis

As discussed in Chapter Two, deindustrialization in Ontario was further exacerbated by the gradual liberalization of trade in North America since the early 1990s (Cleave et al., 2019; Wolfe & Gertler, 2001). It would be wrong to suggest that this itself was a unique issue for Ontario, as it was well discussed that many western economies at the time were experiencing the same trend (Chapter 2.1). However, the legislative formation of municipalities in Canada does lend itself to a 'double jeopardy' of economic pressures. The Canadian Constitution gives provinces in Canada the mandate to control and create cities and municipalities at their own discretion. Paragraph 8 of Section 92 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, gives the provinces exclusive control over "Municipal Institutions in the Province." More so, provinces are given exclusive power over the "Property and Civil Rights in the Province (paragraph 13 of section 92) and "Generally all matters of a merely local or private nature in the Province" (paragraph 16 of section 92). Indeed, the established legal phrase 'creatures of the province' is often sardonically used to describe the legislative relationship between municipalities and their constitutional overlords (Courchene, 2001; Good, 2020). The result of which, means that the legislative controls by the province, forces municipalities to creatively address issues with their local economy, a subject that will be expanded on in the following sub-chapter. Figure 3.1 presents the geographical location of cities in Ontario, note the cluster of cities around the populous City of Toronto.

**Figure 3.1** Map of Ontario's cities and study regions




Source: Cleave, Vecchio, Spilsbury, Arku (2019)

### *3.2.2 Creatures of Burden – The Continuous Offloading by the Province*

The constitutional framework between Ontario and its municipalities largely restricts cities' ability to use financial tools as mitigators for economic development issues and responses to industrial decline (Cleave, Arku, Sadler, Gilliland, 2017; Reese & Sands, 2007). In jurisdictions such as the United States, local governments often have the ability to utilize approaches such as prioritized tax breaks, financial bonuses and direct monetary incentives (Malecki, 2004; Taabazuing et al., 2015). A broader critique of the relationship is the continuous 'offloading' of problems and costs by the Province to the municipality. It is here where cash stricken provincial governments often have downloaded costs to municipalities in the hope for relieved pressure in their own financial ledgers (Fanelli, 2014). In Ontario, some attribute the precipice of downloading to the election of Mike Harris' Conservative Government in 1995 and the apparent rekindling of neoliberal policies that championed tax and program cuts (Kozolanka, 2007). Cities in Ontario often find themselves struggling to

raise income through the few vehicles they currently have – property tax, development charges, user fees, and fines (Dachis, 2018). Thus, municipalities in Ontario must find unique policy responses without significant financial costs.

## 3.3 Study Overview

As mentioned in Chapter One, this study is divided into two manuscripts that combine several methodological approaches to effectively investigate the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings in Ontario and the policy which guides them. Broadly, this thesis uses a qualitative approach that enables the study to investigate the individuality of policy formation amongst municipalities. During the impetus of the thesis, a quantitative approach was considered to measure the number of industrial reuse projects in the province using real estate data. Inventories and mapping of these sites are currently unrepresented in the literature (Hayek, 2009). However, it became apparent to the author that this type of undertaking required copious access to private real estate data across the province and the manpower to sieve through it – both which were not available for the scope of this thesis. Further, as it was thoroughly discussed in Chapter Two, there has been a large body of research in the province on specific sites and factors which go into making an adaptive reuse project successful. However, there lacks a proper qualitative investigation into the province as a whole and how the policy environment is situated in each municipality. A largely qualitative approach was further supported by the fact that this study was in the rare position of analyzing the entire population, rather than studying a sample (all cities in Ontario were included in the first manuscript – Chapter Four).

### *3.3.1 The Use of Content Theme Analyses for Policy Documents*

Lasswell (1968) pioneered using content analyses to solve policy conundrums through his work in the 20$^{th}$ century. Howland et al. (2006) cited Lasswell when discussing that the framework for proper inquiry into policy issues can be broken down into five categories: (1) clarifying goals; (2) describing trends: (3) analyzing conditions: (4) projecting developments and inventing: and (5) evaluating and selecting alternatives. When considering the wide range of information and city-specific policies in the collection of documents, it is

imperative to select a methodology that is conducive to extrapolating broad themes and patterns with a large qualitative dataset. Document analyses apply themselves as an efficient way to describe phenomenon, events, organizations, or programs within the documents (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). However, the use of document analysis for analysing policy has had a contentious history within academia. Cohen and Lindblom (1979) and Dryzek (1982) have cautioned of what in their opinion is the ultimate endpoint for policy analysis – losing oneself in the quagmire of political advocacy.

Indeed, it has been well documented in the literature that economic development and planning policy is intrinsically tied to political mechanics (Auerbach & Gorodnichenko, 2012; Filion, Reese, & Sands, 2019). Dryzek (1982) goes on to suggest that policy analyses often fail to connect back to the relevant stakeholders after seeking for an understanding of the social and political world. Further, some have suggested that content analyses can only describe characteristics or identify relationships between these features (Howland et al., 2006; Neuendorf, 2002). Yet still, in more recent literature, document analyses have emerged as a useful avenue for hermeneutic inquiries, with scholars suggesting that an interpretive approach to the policy is necessary since policy is a collection of meanings and definitions of societal problems in a certain point in time (Bowen, 2009; Kay, 2009). This approach is bolstered when the document analyses can be combined with methodologies that "study the relationship between messages, senders, and receivers" (Howland et al., 2006:210), such as polls, surveys, and interviews – a concept that was a key motivator for the design of Chapter Five.

### *3.3.2 Using a Case Study to Situate the Policy and Practice*

In the case of this thesis, the aforementioned '*messages, senders, and receivers'* that content analyses fail to account for, is equated to '*policy, planners (policy practitioners), and developers*.' Indeed, on its own, the study undertaken in Chapter Four is limited to broad interpretation and thematic analysis of the policy itself. What it fails to accomplish is understanding how that policy is activated in an actual community. It is within this context that a case study of an Ontario city is utilized to address the methodological shortfall of content analyses. As discussed, case studies are popular approaches to investigating adaptive reuse projects within certain geographical areas.

Robert Yin (2018: 16) who published the 6th edition of his seminal work on the methodological approach to effective case studies, describes the study type as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') in depth and within its real-world context". Yin goes on further to suggest that the primary use of this approach is as part of a larger evaluation, where the case study serves as a compliment to the wider research at hand. The complexities of policy creation and experiences by end users requires a qualitative approach that enables the description of a human's experience with phenomena such as adaptive reuse policy (Berg & Lune, 2012). Further, qualitative approaches are appropriate when the literature lacks sufficient background for the topic in question (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Though several case studies have been completed in Ontario on adaptive reuse projects, there has been almost no concentration on the various political strategies utilized to create an environment for reuse in the province.

The most practical way to 'enable the description of human experience' with the policy is through interviews. Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest that in-depth interviews allow for the researched to collect in-depth information through probing questions. These interviews and other qualitative research are not required to be representative of the population but rather allow the study to develop logical inferences and general description of patterns and phenomena (Baxer & Eyles, 1997; Pacione, 2005). More quantitative and statistical based analyses run the risk of missing robust in-depth factors that are 'filtered' out when applying successive constraints or variables (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). When considering the unique outliers that make each reuse project different – especially in the projects relation to policy, one must consider that a high-level quantitative approach would reduce the ability of the study to gauge the complex relationship of policy and practice. Certainly, the interview approach allows for this rapport between policy practitioner and developer to be examined. This is especially true given the study's usage of semi-structured interviews. Dunn (2005:79) describes semi-structured interviews as "a form of interviewing that has some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the informant." This type of interview has the advantage of further exploring issues that the participant feels are important (Clifford et al., 2010). This is crucial when discussing specific reuse projects and the policies that affect them, as the factors vary for each project and experience.

### *3.3.3 Data Selection and Collection*

Both Chapters Four and Five in this thesis describe the two studies which formed this investigation. Specific methodological approaches on data collection, analysis, and research approach are indicated in each subsequent manuscript. Both of the studies use primary data collected solely by the researcher and both have distinct approaches in their data selection and collection.

Chapter Four uses the dataset of all 51 cities in Ontario. The selection of Ontario has been discussed at length throughout this thesis, and due to the fact that the researcher had the unique opportunity to study every city in the province, the study is able to provide the somewhat rare analysis of an entire population, rather than a sample. This is possible due to Official Plans (the policy document used in the study) being mandated for every city by the Province of Ontario. This is different from past regional economic development policy studies that had limitations in collecting a document from each city, and one that followed a similar structure (see, Arku, 2014; Cleave et al., 2017, 2019a, 2019b; Reese & Sands, 2007). Further, data collection was expedited by the fact that all municipalities publish their Official Plans to their respective websites and are easily accessible to researchers. To understand the true thematic underpinnings of policy approaches in the region, having every city in the dataset is highly effective in describing true conclusions and trends. This first study also incorporated labour and demographic statistics from Statistics Canada to bolster the analysis of the policy and see how employment concentrations and city size may alter policy strategies.

The second study (Chapter Five), comprises of a case study of London, Ontario that provides an in-depth analysis of how the policy strategies discovered in Chapter Four translate into actual policy. The selection of London for the investigation is fourfold. First, London has a long and documented history of experiencing several economic shifts that has changed the focus of their employment (Bradford, 2010). Secondly, London has several examples of adaptive reuse of an industrial building in different stages and conditions. This allows the researcher to view how policies may affect projects in a temporal aspect in their status of reuse. Thirdly, the geographical position of London largely puts it outside of the influence of the GTA. This allows the researcher to see how cities that are not under the same

real estate pressures seen in Toronto, can approach effective reuse policy. Finally, the policy directives of the city were found to be quite expansive in regard to other cities in the province (Chapter Four). Thus, analyzing the relationship between policy and practice is a more robust undertaking when the policy instruments are there to begin with.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the case study is centred on in-depth interviews with important stakeholders in the process of adaptive reuse. The participants comprised of City of London planners, developers of reuse projects in London, building owners or tenants of a reused industrial building in London, and economic development practitioners in the city (n = 16). The sample size is indicative of the niche phenomenon of adaptive reuse of industrial buildings in a mid-sized city, as well as reaching a point of saturation where additional interviews were not providing significant information that had not already been discussed (Hay, 2005). These four groups of participants were selected based on their expertise of dealing with reuse projects in the city and their considerable years of experience in the field. The planners selected were either tied directly to an application dealing with an industrial reuse property or were integral in the development of the policy that governs these endeavors. Developers were targeted if they had played a role in the development or redevelopment of industrial conversions in London. Property owners and tenants of reused industrial buildings were selected based on their experience with inhabiting this type of urban environment and to understand the decision process in selecting a reused space. Finally, the economic development practitioners were selected based on the ability to provide context on the broad strategy of the city in terms of economic transition and business attraction and retention. All four groups provided unique and invaluable insight into the reuse process and how policy shapes their approach.

The interviews used question guides (Appendix A & Appendix B) to provide the researcher with a guided approach in undertaking the semi-structured conversations. Clifford et al. (2010) make it clear that formulating strict question constructs goes against the very nature of the semi-structured interview. Rather, question guides should be loosely tailored to the specific group of participants and constructed in a way that allows for open-ended discussion. In this study, using two sets of question guides – one for policy practitioners (planners and economic development practitioners) and one for industry practitioners

(developers and building owners/tenants), was used to ensure the probing questions were applicable to each expertise and experience. More detailed information on transcription and analysis procedure is discussed in Chapter Five.

### 3.4 Summary

This chapter provided a high-level discussion on the methods used throughout this thesis. The study location and selection of data play integral roles in formulating how policy within the region is being contextualized in Ontario, as well as how this policy actually creates in environment for reuse within an Ontario city. Choosing both a high-level regional analysis of current policy and a 'deep investigative dive' into a specific city gives this thesis a robust overview of the effect of planning policy on reuse in Ontario.

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# CHAPTER FOUR

# MANUSCRIPT 1: Promoting Adaptive Reuse in Ontario: A Planning Policy Tool for Making the Best of Manufacturing Decline

## 4.1 Introduction

What are cities doing with their former industrial lands? This article explores how cities in the Province of Ontario, Canada are approaching this question through a comprehensive analysis of Official Plans. While situated in an urban planning context, this issue is also very much one of local economic development practice as it considers how official planning is used to respond to economic change, as well as a tool to stabilize, redefine, and grow local economies. Additionally, these planning efforts are embedded within the transformation of traditional economies, which relied heavily on manufacturing and resource extraction, to new-economies that rely on knowledge and service-based industries (Bunting & Filion, 2006; Hobor, 2013; Sands, 2010). These service-based industries require human capital–and as a result, cities are now in need of housing (both quality and quantity) to help attract and retain workers.

Over the last two decades, in particular, cities in Ontario have experienced the pervasive trends of deindustrialization and economic restructuring similarly seen in other industrialized societies. Historically, manufacturing formed the backbone of Ontario's economy, as industrialization was part of government economic policy for well over a century. The province's aggressive industrial policy has been helped by its proximity to the United States which facilitated trade, and the availability of capital, manpower, and resources—all of which gave the province and its cities the necessary ingredients to build their economies around manufacturing and related activities. Since the early 2000s, however, hundreds of industrial plants across Ontario have shut their doors, no longer able to keep afloat in an increasingly globalized and post-industrial economy (Bourne, Britton, & Leslie, 2011; Bradford, 2010).

This transition has had an impact on the urban landscape of cities, due to where industrial sites were located. Traditionally, industry focused on minimizing the transportation costs of materials and the finished product to large urban markets, as well as the access to an ample low wage workforce (Blair & Premus, 1987). Thus, manufacturing and industrial

firms were typically located in cities to make use of these locational proximity advantages, including access to rail lines (Ward, 1998). Surrounding the industrial plants were often low-density residential and commercial uses to serve the large working-class populations.

Due to the historic location of industrial complexes, many of the current abandoned industrial buildings are situated in prime areas in the city, often close to the downtown core and major transportation nodes. In most cities, the buildings are often below the standards of other areas in the city and therefore have been relatively untouched by the real estate market. As a result, the spaces once occupied by factories have not been replaced and these areas now sit unused, slowly deteriorating as a stain on the urban landscape (Collaton & Bartsch, 1996). Indeed, the development trends from the last several decades have increased the chance of urban industrial buildings in downtown areas to become vacant and derelict (Wilson, 2010). Many cities have been inundated with a large supply of expensive, use-specific, and sometimes hazardous properties.

Beyond the aesthetics, the lack of redevelopment also means that cities are not maximizing tax revenue, nor are they addressing issues of urban sprawl. Eidelman (2010) argues that it is underutilized lands within the core, which have the opportunity to increase the marketability of these areas and prevent the often easily profitable, sprawl-like development. The impact of this is two-fold. First, in Ontario and other advanced economic regions, cities are increasingly responsible for providing services to residents (rather than upper levels of government), so a lack of economic activity in these areas means that less capital is available for reinvestment. Similarly, there has been concurrent movement within city planning to increase population density within urban cores. In part, the push for intensification is a reaction against the prevailing sprawling patterns of urban development. The policy foundation for this in Ontario is situated in the *Places to Grow Act* of 2005 (Government of Ontario, 2005). This act was paramount in addressing the growing concerns of urban sprawl within the populated Greater Golden Horseshoe (a relatively small geographic area of Ontario which accounts for 24.5% of Canada's entire population). The province has made it clear that through practices such as intensification, brownfield redevelopment, and core revitalization, cities can address the challenges faced in urban areas today. As a result of this and other guiding provincial policies, there is a need for cities to find adaptive reuses for these underutilized buildings which are often found in the core and

most economically deprived areas of the city. Thus, concepts of infilling and brownfield development have become synonymous with contemporary planning and private sector activity in the last decade (De Sousa, 2017). However, in a climate characterized by financial stress, there is a lack of direct financial assistance to remediate the risks which come with brownfield and industrial reuse projects (Hayek, Arku, & Gilliland, 2010), rather the Province prefers a less intrusive voluntary cleanup approach that has created a reactive response by cities and developers (De Sousa, 2017).

Despite this increase in identifying the benefits of building reuse, there is a missing link when considering how Ontario municipalities are guiding their policy collectively and what themes of industrial building reuse are dominant. It is well understood that current industrial and economic practices in a specific location are path-dependent on the history of economic composition and decisions made by stakeholders (Martin & Sunley, 2006). Thus, a city's stock of underutilized industrial buildings is indicative of the unique historic timeline of that locale.

In light of this context, where cities need to consider what to do with these areas, this article asks: How are cities contextualizing and responding to local economic development change—specifically related to industrial and manufacturing decline—within their official plans? To evaluate this question, there are three major areas that this article will focus on: (1) catalogue economic development contextualization within Official Plans, including identifying specific strategies; (2) identify emerging themes related to adaptive reuse within the policy; and (3) investigate whether the local economy (through its industrial base) impacts what policies appear in these plans.

This investigation provides insight into how cities choose to create policy for reuse based on their own unique localized factors and creative incentive platforms. Understanding the policies and themes within the document can provide a useful tool for comparing how market stakeholders are reacting to this policy and create potential for future studies into the stakeholder-policymaker interaction. This comes from the well-discussed relationship between land-use policy and actual development practices (Leffers, 2018).

### *4.4.1 Local Institutional Context for Planning in Ontario*

All levels of government regulate land use in Canada, each with their own distinct jurisdiction and legislative powers. In Ontario, the province enacts planning policy framework through legislative tools including the *Planning Act* (1990; Government of Ontario, 1990a), *Ontario Heritage Act* (1990; Government of Ontario, 1990b) and the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2005 and 2014; Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2005, 2014) which are meant to guide municipalities in their localized land use planning. Despite the broad provincial legislation, local governments have traditionally been the greatest actors of land-use control, which has occasionally been critiqued as an inhibitor to more collective regional planning (Eidelman, 2010). The policy vehicle for local planning is the Official Plan, a binding piece of legislation that describes how land, infrastructure, and planning objectives should be utilized within the municipality (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2010). These documents are an imperative piece of policy when dictating the process and trajectory of land and building use, within their jurisdictional area.

In Ontario cities, this presents itself as Official Plans; a provincially mandated policy document that each municipality must pass through their governing body and must be regularly revised and updated (Government of Ontario, 1990). The Planning Act requires municipalities to update their plans ten years after a municipality prepares a new comprehensive Official Plan or every five years after an update is done through an amendment to the plan. There were cities who had plans dating back to the 1980s (e.g., Brantford) and several in the 1990s. Though this itself, is no indication of whether cities are accounting for economic decline, it does bring up questions of how plans whose main structures predate NAFTA (which was replaced in 2019 by USMCA) adequately account for modern economic trends in their planning policy. These policy documents are typically written in-house by municipal planners, but at times they are contracted out to private consultants.

From this central document, development of urban space (i.e., vacant industrial building reuse) is controlled through secondary plans, Zoning By-Laws, and Community Improvement Plans. Furthermore, direct measures are also available, including financial incentives such as waiving development charges, breaks on property taxes, and providing

height and density bonuses used by municipalities to become a partner in the process (Hayek, Novak, Arku, & Gilliland, 2010; Shipley, Utz, & Parsons, 2006). These direct measures are done on a case-by-case basis, so interpreting the success of their applications has to be on an individual development project level.

### 4.2 Methods

As noted, this article seeks to understand how cities in Ontario are contextualizing and responding to local economic development change within their Official Plans and to determine if local economic realities influence policy. To achieve this, a comprehensive content analysis was performed on the Official Plans for the 51 cities in the province. In Ontario, cities are municipalities that have populations over 10,000 and have applied and received official designation based on the parameters set out in the Municipal Act (2001; Government of Ontario, 2001). Data was collected before Richmond Hill officially became Ontario's 52nd city. There are several reasons why these documents are key sources of analysis. First, all cities in Ontario have an Official Plan as they are mandated by the province who holds strong institutional control over cities. Second, all Official Plans are publicly available on city websites. Third, the plans contain information about how the built environment within the jurisdiction will be governed and zoned and provide a framework for local regulation and standards, providing a unique local interpretation of how the land and buildings should be used. Finally, unlike economic development documents—which have been well studied (see, Arku, 2014; Cleave, Arku, & Chatwin, 2017, 2019; Cleave, Vecchio, Spilsbury, & Arku, 2019; Reese & Sands, 2007)—that act as broader strategy guides for cities and their development, Official Plans are legally binding documents that local governments must adhere to when (re)developing their city. As a result, these documents represent a rich text to analyze and understand city priorities and strategy in their response to local economic development change.

Content analysis of city documents is a useful approach to understanding the perspective, strategy, tactics, and framing of issues by identifying, isolating, and describing the way that phenomenon, events, organizations, or programs are perceived and codified by local governments (Bowen, 2009; Kay, 2009). An advantage of document analysis is that

broad conclusions can be drawn from a number of sources, as long as they are representative of the population being examined (Chatwin, Arku, & Cleave, 2019; Cleave et al., 2017; Moynihan, 2006)—which is true in this study as all cities in Ontario are examined. To ensure rigour in the analysis and validity of findings, a comprehensive approach was used to catalogue, classify, and analyze the content of the Official Plans. Initially, the complete plans were read independently by the researcher to "achieve immersion and obtain a sense of the whole" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1279), and to conceptualize the broad understanding of land-use policy within each municipality. Following this initial read-through, a set of thematic codes was established based on a collection of data using a bank of key words related to the topic. 18 themes were initially found in the first comprehensive read through by the researcher. Subsequently, these themes were then scrutinized and consolidated (based on repetition and redundancy) to the 10 used in this study (Table 4.1). The documents were then read a second time to assign content to each relevant theme. Afterwards, occurrences were documented using NVivo software to quantify incidences for each thematic code. These themes were then examined to understand the ways cities in Ontario are dealing with manufacturing decline and the resulting urban change, which is expanded upon in the results section of this article.

**Table 4.1** Summary of Theme Consolidation Process

| Original Theme List | Consolidated Theme List | Theme Description |
|---|---|---|
| Planning for an economic transition | Acknowledgement of Industrial Decline and Economic Transition | An overall recognition by the policy document that economic changes (predominantly occurring from industrial decline) require specific policy actions from a land planning perspective. |
| Deindustrialization and the increase of the service economy | | |
| Increased incidences of brownfields and closed factories | | |
| An employment shift within the urban area from manufacturing to service employment | | |
| Encouraging specific industrial employers to move to more appropriate land types | Support the Relocation of Industrial Uses to Targeted Employment Lands | Policy measures that enable more sensitive lands within an urban core to be freed up for the possibility of adaptive reuse, while existing employers operate in specific employment lands. |
| Make employment land available to attract both new and existing industrial employers | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Specific policy for a closed down industrial building. | Site Specific Targeting Area for Industrial Reuse of Redevelopment | Policy which targets specific locations or neighbourhoods where industrial decline has left underutilized land or buildings. |
| Specific policy for a neighbourhood-wide derelict industrial land issue. | | |
| Reuse as a Tool for Affordable Housing | Reuse as a Tool for Affordable Housing | Identifying the possibility for the adaptive reuse of buildings to increase the housing supply. |
| Reduction of urban sprawl by retooling the existing built environment. | Reuse as a tool for Intensification | Policy which identifies adaptive reuse as a tool to meet provincially and local density targets. This coincides with the reduction of peripheral sprawl and utilization of existing infrastructure. |
| Meeting increased density targets by utilizing vacant buildings within the core. | | |
| Reducing core vacancies by encouraging alternative economic uses of existing buildings. | Reuse as a Tool for Revitalization of the Urban Core | Policy which identifies adaptive reuse as a tool to mitigate the recent trend of core and downtown decline within Canadian urban centres due to the dependency of suburbs and greenfield development. |
| Encourage the conversion of buildings to commercial, office, and high density residential within the core areas. | | |
| Creation of a Community Improvement Plan for Brownfield Reuse/Redevelopment | Creation of a Community Improvement Plan for Brownfield Reuse/Redevelopment | Using a Provincially legislated sub-policy to offer financial assistance for community improvement. |
| Reuse of Industrial Buildings to Light Industrial Uses | Reuse of Industrial Buildings to Light Industrial Uses | Encouraging more compatible industry to other land uses. |
| Non-CIP related financial incentives. | Grants, Subsidies, or Unique Policy that Promotes Industrial Reuse | These included incentives and policy outside the realm of Community Improvement Plans that enable a stronger environment for reuse. |
| Unique Policy that Promotes reuse. | | |
| Strong Protection From Building or Site Conversion within Employment Lands | Strong Protection From Building or Site Conversion within Employment Lands | Policy which was protective of any changes to industrial lands and did not support easy land conversion. |

One limitation of the content analysis format was the lack of ability to capture thematic patterns which were only glanced upon or suggested as possible approaches within the policy documents. As such, it was difficult to quantify broad policy themes as they often did not have the specificity and detailed approach that more targeted policies had. This was

especially true when attempting this without breaking from the sound methodological approach above. Though a limitation in this study, the researchers intend to investigate more individual city approaches in future research now that the broad provincial overview has been examined within this article.

As previously noted, the third key concern of this study is investigating whether the local economy (through its industrial base) impacts what policies appear in these plans. In short, are the themes that emerged from the content analysis different between cities at different economic stages—particularly related to manufacturing and its decline? To categorize cities, a location quotient (LQ) of the Goods Producing Labour Force of each city was used to compare its concentration within the economic base of cities in Ontario. Employment data was collected from Statistics Canada and comprises of information from the 2016 Census. Goods Producing Industries are defined as the combination of the North American Industry Classification System codes 11 to 33 (Statistics Canada, 2020), which provides a standardized classification cut off for the calculation of LQs. The local sums of these industries were divided by the local labour force, equating to the proportion of the city's labour force that was in the goods producing sector. Each proportion was then divided by the province-wide equivalent. The cities were then divided into four groups (Table 4.2) based on whether their LQ was 1.25 and above (High Industrial Base), 1.0–1.24 (Moderate Industrial Base), 0.75–0.99 (Moderate Non-Industrial Base), and 0.74 and below (High Non-Industrial Base). This classification is adapted from previous studies (Baer & Brown, 2006; McLean & Voytek, 1992) where targeted LQ cut offs of above 1.25 and below 0.75 were considered significant from a policymaker's perspective. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the themes that emerged in the content analysis, allowing a comparison of the strategies of cities with different compositions in their economic base. This descriptive approach allows for an in-depth analytical examination, complementing and extending the qualitative and policy findings of the content analysis.

**Table 4.2** City Characteristics

| City | Population | LQ | LQ Category | # of Theme Occurrences |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barrie | 141,434 | 0.95 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 5 |
| Belleville | 50,716 | 0.87 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 6 |
| Brampton | 593,638 | 1.01 | Moderate Industrial Base | 4 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brant | 36,707 | 1.55 | High Industrial Base | 9 |
| Brantford | 97,496 | 1.28 | High Industrial Base | 5 |
| Brockville | 21,346 | 0.86 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 6 |
| Burlington | 183,314 | 0.81 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 4 |
| Cambridge | 129,920 | 1.41 | High Industrial Base | 8 |
| Clarence-Rockland | 24,512 | 0.91 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 6 |
| Cornwall | 46,589 | 0.84 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 7 |
| Dryden | 7,749 | 0.94 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 3 |
| Elliot Lake | 10,741 | 0.88 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 5 |
| Greater Sudbury | 161,531 | 1.02 | Moderate Industrial Base | 5 |
| Guelph | 131,794 | 1.25 | Moderate Industrial Base | 8 |
| Haldimand County | 45,608 | 1.57 | High Industrial Base | 6 |
| Hamilton | 536,917 | 1.02 | Moderate Industrial Base | 8 |
| Kawartha Lakes | 75,423 | 1.24 | Moderate Industrial Base | 4 |
| Kenora | 15,096 | 0.87 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 6 |
| Kingston | 123,798 | 0.50 | High Non-Industrial Base | 4 |
| Kitchener | 233,222 | 1.17 | Moderate Industrial Base | 3 |
| London | 383,822 | 0.82 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 6 |
| Markham | 328,966 | 0.68 | High Non-Industrial Base | 2 |
| Mississauga | 721,599 | 0.83 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 3 |
| Niagara Falls | 88,071 | 0.74 | High Non-Industrial Base | 3 |
| Norfolk County | 64,044 | 1.65 | High Industrial Base | 8 |
| North Bay | 51,553 | 0.67 | High Non-Industrial Base | 6 |
| Orillia | 31,166 | 0.81 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 7 |
| Oshawa | 159,458 | 0.99 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 5 |
| Ottawa | 934,243 | 0.41 | High Non-Industrial Base | 4 |
| Owen Sound | 21,341 | 1.00 | Moderate Industrial Base | 9 |
| Pembroke | 13,882 | 0.70 | High Non-Industrial Base | 3 |
| Peterborough | 81,032 | 0.73 | High Non-Industrial Base | 8 |
| Pickering | 91,771 | 0.80 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 4 |
| Port Colborne | 18,306 | 1.22 | Moderate Industrial Base | 9 |
| Prince Edward County | 24,735 | 1.20 | Moderate Industrial Base | 2 |
| Quinte West | 43,577 | 1.07 | Moderate Industrial Base | 7 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sarnia | 71,594 | 1.07 | Moderate Industrial Base | 9 |
| Sault Ste. Marie | 73,368 | 0.93 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 6 |
| St. Catherines | 133,113 | 0.88 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 8 |
| St. Thomas | 38,909 | 1.25 | High Industrial Base | 6 |
| Stratford | 31,465 | 1.39 | High Industrial Base | 8 |
| Temiskaming Shores | 9,920 | 1.11 | Moderate Industrial Base | 2 |
| Thorold | 18,801 | 0.88 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 5 |
| Thunder Bay | 107,909 | 0.78 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 9 |
| Timmins | 41,788 | 1.30 | High Industrial Base | 4 |
| Toronto | 2,731,571 | 0.64 | High Non-Industrial Base | 6 |
| Vaughan | 306,233 | 0.97 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 5 |
| Waterloo | 104,986 | 0.77 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 7 |
| Welland | 52,293 | 0.94 | Moderate Non-Industrial Base | 8 |
| Windsor | 217,188 | 1.25 | High Industrial Base | 10 |
| Woodstock | 40,902 | 1.55 | High Industrial Base | 8 |
| **AVERAGE** | **187,917** | | | **5.85** |

### 4.3 Results

All 51 cities in the Province of Ontario had an Official Plan. Both the mean and median of the plans were nine years old, ranging from 33 years (Brantford) to one (Norfolk County) seen in Table 4.2. 45 of the plans were written in-house by planners, while the remaining six used private consultants to formulate a plan for council approval. Within the Official Plans, local economic development themes were prevalent across all cities—every Official Plan analyzed contained at least two themes, ranging from two (Prince Edward County) to 10 (Windsor), with an average of 5.85 themes appearing in each document (Table 4.2). There were ten themes that emerged from the content analysis (Table 4.3). Although wide-ranging in focus, these ten themes do form three larger clusters of development strategy: (1) framing and planning; (2) industry-focused land reuse; and (3) urban-focused land reuse.

**Table 4.3** Theme Clusters and Characteristics

| Theme | # of Occurrences in Plans | Characteristics |
|---|---|---|
| **Framing and Planning** | | |
| Acknowledgment of Industrial Decline and Economic Transition | 41 | These themes represent 'high-level' efforts by the cities to engage with issues of manufacturing decline. Ranging from the recognition of economic trends - suggesting a shift from manufacturing to service-based industries, to specific financial measures and unique policies that actively target industrial decline within communities. |
| Creation of a Community Improvement Plan for Brownfield Reuse/Redevelopment | 39 | |
| Grants, Subsidies, or a Unique Policy that Promotes Industrial Reuse | 18 | |
| **Industry-Focused Land Reuse** | | |
| Support the Relocation of Industrial Uses to Targeted Employment Lands | 25 | This cluster includes specific strategies that the cities use to support, maintain, and locate remaining industry within their jurisdiction to more appropriate lands. These themes shared a commonality of mitigating isolated traditional manufacturing buildings for more appropriate uses to the surrounding community. This included pure relocation efforts to employment lands, or refitting buildings for light, more "community friendly" industry such as artisanal companies like bakeries, craft breweries and butchers. |
| Site Specific Targeting Area for Industrial Reuse or Redevelopment | 40 | |
| Reuse of Industrial Buildings to Light Industrial Uses | 16 | |
| **Urban-Focused Land Reuse** | | |
| Reuse as a Tool for Affordable Housing | 14 | This group of themes emphasized ways former industrial lands could be re-deployed to address urban development goals. With both provincially mandated and municipal set urban growth goals, cities are creating policy to meet the common standards of higher density, increased affordable housing, and the revitalization of underutilized lands. Adaptive reuse was suggested by the policy as a tool to meet these goals within communities. Equally important, was policy from some cities that stated the importance of protecting industrial lands from possible redevelopment or conversion. |
| Reuse as a Tool for Intensification | 40 | |
| Reuse as a Tool for Revitalization of the Urban Core | 32 | |
| Strong Protection From Building or Site Conversion within Employment Land | 34 | |

### *4.3.1 Framing and Planning Themes*

The framing and planning cluster focuses on broader issues of governance and addressing local economic growth through key themes of 'Acknowledgement of Industrial Decline and Economic Transition,' the 'Creation of a Community Improvement Plan for Brownfield Reuse/Redevelopment,' and 'Grants, Subsidies, or a Unique Policy That Promotes Industrial Reuse.' These represent 'high-level' efforts by the cities to engage with issues of manufacturing decline. Notably, there was a pattern between whether this framing was included in the Official Plan and the city's industrial base (Table 4.4). The relationship between LQ and the themes contained in the Official Plans were tested for independence,

though no significant result was found (using Chi-square). This suggests that there is homogeneity in the approaches cities use to contextualise and form policy. However, this study is in the uncommon position of analysing the entire population, so descriptive statistics will be used to describe the findings of the content analysis and draw conclusions. Cities with a high industrial base (100%) acknowledge industrial decline and an economic transition more often than those with a small base (50%). Similarly, high industrial based cities more frequently include policy measures like enacting Community Improvement Plans (91%) and unique grants and policies (55%), which are tangible tools to reuse former industrial lands for more sensitive uses. Inversely, it was the high non-industrial based cities that were more likely to support strong employment land policy (88%), compared to high industrial based cities (45%). A potential explanation for this pattern is that many of the cities which make up the high non-industrial based grouping are those surrounding Toronto, whose expansive residential, commercial, and office-built environment, makes industrial lands in high demand.

**Table 4.4** Thematic Descriptions by Economic Base

| | High Industrial Base (n = 11) | Moderate Industrial Base (n = 11) | Moderate Non-Industrial Base (n = 21) | High Non-Industrial Base (n = 8) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acknowledgement of Industrial Decline and Economic Transition | 11 (100%) | 10 (91%) | 16 (76%) | 4 (50%) |
| Creation of a Community Improvement Plan for Brownfield Reuse/Redevelopment | 10 (91%) | 7 (58%) | 17 (81%) | 5 (63%) |
| Grants, Subsidies, or a Unique Policy that Promotes Industrial Reuse | 6 (55%) | 4 (36%) | 7 (33%) | 1 (13%) |
| Support the Relocation of Industrial Uses to Targeted Employment Lands | 8 (73%) | 6 (55%) | 8 (38%) | 3 (38%) |
| Site Specific Targeting Area for Industrial Reuse or Redevelopment | 10 (91%) | 8 (73%) | 16 (76%) | 6 (75%) |
| Reuse of Industrial Buildings to Light Industrial Uses | 7 (64%) | 5 (45%) | 4 (19%) | 0 (0%) |
| Reuse as a Tool for Affordable Housing | 3 (27%) | 1 (9%) | 6 (29%) | 4 (50%) |
| Reuse as a Tool for Intensification | 10 (91%) | 8 (73%) | 18 (86%) | 4 (50%) |
| Reuse as a Tool for Revitalization of the Urban Core | 10 (91%) | 7 (64%) | 13 (62%) | 2 (25%) |
| Strong Protection From Building or Site Conversion within Employment Land | 5 (45%) | 6 (55%) | 16 (76%) | 7 (88%) |
| **Average** | **8 (73%)** | **6 (56%)** | **6 (29%)** | **5 (63%)** |

‘Acknowledgement of Industrial Decline and Economic Transition’ was the most common theme of the analysis as 81% of the Official Plans had some reference to economic decline and the need to plan for a transitioning economy. This theme is unique, as it is not a specific policy initiative, but rather a contextual framing of the changes and challenges that cities face. For example, the City of Elliot Lake (2018:23) frames itself as, “a young, progressive community in a state of transition.” Expanding on this, the City of Burlington’s Official Plan (2018:138) provides greater description of the transition occurring and the challenges it faces, “The manufacturing-based economy has entered a period of transition where issues of globalization, technology changes, including automation and labour force changes, all contribute to a new role in the economy for manufacturing.”

Along with the ‘Creation of a Community Improvement Plan for Brownfield or Industrial Reuse’ and ‘Grants, Subsidies, or a Unique Policy that Promotes Industrial Reuse’ these themes create a framework for policy development. The City of Hamilton (2013:36), for instance, has a measure to incentivize reuse, and policy goal of the city is “to facilitate the intensification and adaptive reuse of such properties…allow reduced parking or other site and amenity requirements.” This idea of compromising on certain city requirements was a common theme across the board, though it formulated itself in different ways. Norfolk County (2019:240) used a bonusing approach indicating that “brownfield sites may be developed at densities higher than 75 units per hectare, without amendment to this Plan, but should be of a scale and massing that is generally consistent with the Residential, Medium Density designations.” Similarly, the City of Belleville (2002:52) entices reuse with a circumvention of lengthy and costly Official Plan amendments,

> *Where re-use of any land designated Industrial land use on the land use schedules for a purpose other than industrial is proposed and the alternative use is in keeping with the main objective for the Bayshore planning area, such reuse may be permitted without amendment to this Plan.*

Similarly, the creation of Community Improvement Plans was by far the most common tool for promoting adaptive reuse and the related brownfield redevelopment. 75% of cities either had one in place or would consider the implementation of one. Made available by the province in the Planning Act of 1990 (Government of Ontario, 1990), Community Improvement Plans are plans that focus on the maintenance or rehabilitation of targeted areas, in which municipalities can make grants, loans, or tax programs to help pay for certain

costs. These grant and loan programs are available for the city to setup in an attempt to promote reuse and brownfield redevelopment and is one of the few provincially mandated tools to address these issues.

### *4.3.2 Industry-Focused Policies*

The industry-focused land reuse of grouping of themes focused on specific strategies that the cities used to support, maintain, and locate remaining industry within their jurisdiction. This includes 'Support the Relocation of Industrial Uses to Targeted Employment Lands, Site Specific Targeting Area for Industrial Reuse of Redevelopment,' and 'Reuse of Industrial Buildings to Light Industrial Uses.' Cities on a whole, targeted specific sites within their plans for redevelopment or reuse of industrial lands and buildings, this does not appear to change when accounting for industrial base composition (Table 4.4). This, however, is contrasted with policies that supported the relocation of existing industry to employment lands. For these policy tools, the high (73%) and moderate industrial based cities (55%) were more likely to include this tool in their policy than cities with lower concentrations of industry (38%). This result is not surprising, as one would assume that cities which are dependent on industry would likely have more focused industrial lands on which to move existing businesses. Finally, cities with a high industrial base (64%) and moderate base (45%) indicated in their policy the idea of transitioning traditional industrial buildings into more community sensible light-industry uses. When comparing this to moderately non-industrial bases (19%) and high non-industrial bases (0%), it is clear that cities with larger industrial compositions are actively targeting the transition away from traditional manufacturing, at least in the urban context.

Nearly half of the cities in Ontario indicated that they support the relocation of incompatible industrial uses outside of planned employment lands. This often situated itself as pockets of existing industrial uses within predominately residential or commercial areas that were incompatible with the growing use around them. Predictably, these sites serve as prime examples of potential adaptive reuse projects. For example, from London,

Remnant industrial parcels may exist within residential neighbourhoods, in locations where they are no longer compatible with surrounding land uses. On such parcels we will support the relocation of any remaining industrial land uses and the repurposing of these parcels for land uses that are compatible with the neighbourhood context. (City of London, 2016:293)

The targeting of specific sites or areas of cities was widespread amongst the plans (79% of documents; second most common theme). Cities ranged in specificity from large areas like waterfront areas historically used for industrial purposes (a common theme in several lake bound cities) to more specific identification of individual closed plants. Port Colborne, who cites a goal of converting 150 acres of former industrial to tourism or recreational uses, notes, "The City has been actively involved in assessing and addressing underutilized lands throughout the community. [Specifically] through innovative approaches to brownfield and waterfront development" (City of Port Colborne, 2013:26).

Haldimand County (2006:191) further illustrates more specific targeting,

> *The potential redevelopment and/or reuse of the former Smucker's plant should have consideration for the comprehensive redevelopment and/or reuse of the property to ensure compatibility with the character of the surrounding area through appropriate street and block patterns, and land use and built form transitions with the residential neighbourhood cluster to the east (Brant Street and Brace Street) and adjacent employment area.*

### *4.3.3 Urban Land-Use Policies*

The urban-focused land reuse cluster of themes emphasized ways former industrial lands could be re-deployed to address urban development goals. This grouping of themes included policies on 'Reuse as a Tool for Affordable Housing Reuse, as a Tool for Intensification, as a Tool for Revitalization of the Urban Core,' and 'Strong Protection from Building or Site Conversion within Employment Lands.'

Further, issues surrounding employment lands were often mentioned in the Official Plans. These areas were typically set aside for industrial uses, often near major transportation hubs such as highways, airports, and harbours, and the places that cities were trying to relocate isolated industries to. The stronger the protection of these lands through policy prohibiting conversion to non-employment uses, and major bylaw amendments and studies that are needed if someone tries, the more unlikely reuse in these areas will occur. Some cities, however, were more open to conversion of these lands and indicated that reuse in these

areas could still be beneficial. The City of Vaughan's (2017:302) plan, for example, is "supporting the reuse and/or repurposing of older industrial buildings and/or Employment Areas for cleaner and more affordable employment uses." Other cities like Brampton (2006:74) were much more protective of their lands, noting, "Conversion of industrial or employment land will not be permitted unless it is assessed as part of a comprehensive review in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement." Congruently, it was cities with a high non-industrial base (88%) and moderate non-industrial base (76%) that included strong employment land protection measures in their policy. When comparing this to moderate industrial based cities (55%) and high industrial based cities (45%) it is clear that cities which cannot provide vast swaths of land (especially those situated in urban dense regions like the Greater Toronto Area) are much more protective of their existing stock.

The City of Belleville (2002:65), for example, discussed its West Village area as a target for intensification through reuse,

> *The West Village neighbourhood is on the west side of the Moira River north of Bridge Street with older industrial and warehousing uses. Some of the intensification opportunities are: Conversion of the historic industrial buildings that back onto the River into loft condominium apartments or live/work spaces; Wherever possible, turning new infill development to face the river and add decking or terraces; Reclaiming or preserving public access to the River; and maintain and upgrade the street housing along Coleman Street.*

In addition, nearly two-thirds of cities identified 'Reuse as a Tool for Revitalization of the Downtown Core.' The City of Peterborough (2017:234) discussed core revitalization through reuse,

> *The Industrial Conversion Area is situated in the south-west portion of the Central Area and recognizes a node of old, predominately single-storey industrial buildings. The focus of the Industrial Conversion Area is to provide policy flexibility allowing industrial buildings and sites to be utilized for a wide variety of alternative uses including retail commercial uses, office and studio uses, institutional and recreational uses, service commercial and service industrial activities.*

Finally, it was cities which had a high non-industrial base (50%) that proposed 'Reuse as a tool for Affordable Housing' compared to the next three industry-based groups (29%, 9%, and 27% respectively). When considering that cities in the high-non industrial base also include some of the Province's most expensive cities to live (Toronto, Ottawa, and

Markham), it is not unexpected to see them actively addressing affordable housing issues with reuse.

### 4.4 Discussion and Conclusion

This research considers the implications of manufacturing decline and economic change on land planning policy—specifically focusing on how former industrial lands are being, or planned to be, used. Several findings provide distinct conclusions of how cities in Ontario are planning for this change. Firstly, it was evident from the collection of documents the wide range of composition of planning and policy. On the whole, Ontario cities do acknowledge that the economy is in transition, resulting in an influx of underutilized industrial lands. This replicates findings in Cleave, Vecchio, et al. (2019), who found that manufacturing decline was an established theme within a city's economic development plan. Although, the goal of an Official Plan is not necessarily to account for economic development policy, it is notable that there is congruence with land-use policy. It was clear cities with higher industrial composition (Tables 4.2 and 4.4) generally employed the policies and themes identified here at higher rates than those with smaller industrial bases. This suggests that cities that still have some remaining industry are both more acutely aware of the potential for losing it and are being pre-emptive in ensuring there are plans to efficiently and effective use this land to stabilize and support urban and economic development. What is interesting about this finding is that existing literature typically asserts that smaller cities are disproportionately affected by economic and industrial decline (Siegel & Waxman, 2001). This has seemingly set the stage for adaptive reuse to be implemented as a tool to assist in both the transition of the local economy and the reflection of the economy in the built environment.

Within the plans, it was clear that cities preferred a site-specific targeted approach, rather than a broader city-wide initiative. Though city-wide approaches such as a Community Improvement Plan for the city's whole stock of brownfield sites were suggested, the most common approach was targeting specifically in-need areas. What was interesting was that cities with higher industrial bases were more aggressively targeting specific areas, and more precisely, specific sites. The Smucker's plant in Haldimand County was already mentioned,

but this was joined with the Bata Shoe Factory in Quinte West, Abitbi Mill in Kenora, Woolen Mill in Kingston, and the Waterford Mill in Norfolk County.

### *4.4.1 Adaptive Reuse, a Unique Policy Tool*

One of the more evident discoveries was the lack of congruence when it came to policy promoting reuse. This was surprising given findings of past studies on economic development policy in the province (e.g., Cleave, Vecchio, et al., 2019). Indeed, previous studies find that cities approached policy in a homogenous, frankly cookie cutter fashion. Reuse policy seems to be a much more localized driven approach, where outside of Community Improvement Plans cities are left to their own creativity and determination to see these sites reused or redeveloped. It is worth noting that during the data collection phase, it was clear that the majority of Official Plans have been created in-house by the municipality itself, not with the use of consultants. Only 6/51 cities used consultants to create their official plans: Brockville, Clarence Rockland, Elliot Lake, Kenora, Prince Edward County, and Timiskaming Shores. It should be noted however that all six of these cities are under 25,000 people (Table 4.2), which suggests that some smaller cities do not have the in-house facilities to undertake a labour extensive task like formulating an official plan for provincial approval. On an interesting side note—this differs from the approach used by economic development plans, where a small number of prominent consultant firms provide the majority of policy for the province (Cleave, Vecchio, et al., 2019). This suggests there may be a relationship between in-house policy creation and the production of unique strategies to combat industrial decline with adaptive reuse, though further investigation into this phenomenon is necessary.

Emerging from the documents is an indicator of unique planning and land-use approaches for industrial lands in specific historical contexts. For example, the City of Brampton (2006:17) directly addressed this in its plan, stating, “Large-scale industrial development started in Brampton only 40 years ago, but today this sector represents the major employer for Brampton residents. Office and service facilities have followed manufacturing but at a slower pace.”

However, Brampton is unique for its short manufacturing history. Adaptive reuse is likely less prevalent in those cities where their industrial building stock is newer and planned in a more sensible fashion. Now that the broad policy themes of the province have been

investigated, incorporating a metric to measure historic industrial composition would be an interesting next step to this study.

Notably were the narratives in many water-bound cities, which focused on revitalizing the waterfronts. This makes sense as waterfronts are traditionally important industrial lands used in importing and exporting resources. As the economy has transitioned away from the goods producing sector, there seems to be widespread demand to reclaim the waterfront for more community usable spaces. What once stood as the anchor for industry in Ontario, has now become the hottest area for adaptive reuse, often preserving the industrial architecture for a uniquely reclaimed atmosphere. The City of Owen Sound (2017:124) articulates this within their plan as, "Commercial uses are slowly replacing the industrial uses historically located along the eastern harbour. Potential for new development areas exists in the underutilized harbour areas."

The reclamation of waterfronts and the reuse of industrial buildings in these areas best describes the ability of reuse for communities to preserve their industrial past, offer a unique space for living and recreation, and meet the common goals in official plans of environmental remediation and reconnection to the cities natural resources. Reuse has the unique opportunity to both preserve the industrial spirit of these once bustling areas, while also allowing for a transition to the new economy.

A potential limitation of planning policy—specifically relevant to targeted planning and development efforts—is that policy in of itself is not a direct indication of actual practice (see Bobrow, Eulau, Landau, Jones, & Axelrod, 1977). This presents itself when considering the result of Community Improvement Plans being seemingly 'thrown in' by many cities to address reuse. Brownfield Community Improvement Plans read as buzzwords in many plans who showed no further attempts to actually implement one. Obviously, Official Plans serve as the broad stepping stone for other municipal policy, but there is no apparent reason why some cities went into specific detail on the implementation of their Community Improvement Plans while others mostly copied word for word the language in the Planning Act (Government of Ontario, 1990) putting forward that the cities had the opportunity to use Community Improvement Plans as a planning tool.

In a similar vein, intensification was one of the most common concepts in the documents as references to reuse as a tool to intensify a city's building stock was seen in all but 11 plans. Rather aggressive targets set out by the province, have seemed to cause many cities to enter into a frenzy with addressing their own intensification goals. As Peterborough (2017:27) said in their plan, "The City will strive to ensure that at least 10% of new residential units resulting from new residential development and residential intensification through conversion of non-residential structures, infill and redevelopment, to be affordable housing." The language itself is a common theme in almost every planning policy, 'Strive to ensure' indicates a rather soft target and was replicated repeatedly when discussing reuse policy.

An interesting aspect of the data presented itself in a temporal fashion, where cities in Ontario have been updating older outdated plans within the last decade. With a median age of nine years and the aforementioned literature discussing the growing number of plant closures since the early 2000s, it is understandable that addressing vacant industrial lands is ever-more pressing for municipal planning offices. Only six plans that remain in the catalogue of Ontario cities were originally drafted before the year 2000 (Table 4.2). Again, it is important to keep in mind that Official Plans undergo regular revisions and reviews, but what is clear is that as new plans continue to be drafted, industrial decline will be more evident to those writing the policy. Indeed, based on additional research by the authors, new plans in Ontario are largely cyclical in their formation due to the Planning Act (Government of Ontario, 1990) stipulation of continuous updates to the plan. Most cities drafted new plans every 20–35 years, and from the data in Table 4.2, it is clear that most cities have or are entering a new 'generation' of official plans in the last 10 years. These plans have and will be constructed in an era where the decline of manufacturing is well documented and the principles of policies such as the Growth Act (2005; Government of Ontario, 2005) will be well entrenched in municipal planning policy. Further research into the historic timeline of official plans in Ontario and their context of manufacturing decline between plans of different ages is the next logical step in investigating whether planning policy addressing deindustrialization is path dependent.

Ontario cities have clearly identified that industrial decline requires direct policy in the remediation of plant closure and underutilized industrial lands. Reuse serves as a common theme throughout Official Plans as a tool to address some of the most pressing issues de jour for municipalities. Cities have proposed that affordable housing, intensification, revitalization in the urban core, and creating spaces for creative and vibrant industries can be addressed by the promotion of reuse in the community. For those with strong industrial history, the applicability of reuse allows for communities to preserve their industrial heritage, while at the same time shift uses to the new economy, one where waterfront breweries, reclaimed industrial office space, and manufacturing themed loft apartments have become all the rage. If cities can develop unique policy to their specific local situation, which promotes reuse in their communities, they will be able to harness the positive benefits of this tool.

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# CHAPTER FIVE

## MANUSCRIPT 2: From Policy to Practice: Investigating the City of London's Environment for Adaptive Reuse of Former Industrial Buildings

### 5.1 Introduction

*How does local planning policy affect the process of former industrial adaptive reuse and development in London, Ontario?* It is a long-established game of cat and mouse, perhaps with each side describing themselves as the mouse. The dichotomy of city planning, and private land development is no stranger to academic investigation, yet this is for good reason as their relationship is what builds cities and communities. This article discusses a specific instance of this dichotomy in relation to adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings. An already understudied topic within the literature, this article provides a view into adaptive reuse within a city that has gone through major economic restructuring and how this process is played out in both the policymakers and development industry. Reviewing the current policy in place, broader regional comparisons, and comprehensive interviews with key stakeholders involved with specific development projects, allows this study to analyze the current environment for reuse and how the policy is reflected in actual practice.

On the surface, the investigation into this topic seems minute in scope, if not detrimentally narrow, however this matter is a part of a much larger examination into the cause and effect of plant closures in post-industrial economies. In the Canadian and Ontario context, there have been a small but growing number of academic investigations into plant closures and its effects on communities (see Bradford, 2010; Bourne et al. 2011; Cleave et al., 2019; Vinodrai, 2020), and specifically on the adaptive reuse of industrial and other historic buildings in Ontario (See Shipley, Utz, & Parsons, 2006; Stas, 2007; Wilson, 2010). What has not been thoroughly investigated, however, is the examination of a specific case study in a mid-sized city outside the well studied Greater Toronto Area (GTA) that is not focused on traditional brownfield development. Mid-sized and smaller cities present an interesting investigation area due to the scholarly assertion that smaller cities experience unproportioned economic decline compared to their larger counterparts (Siegel & Waxman, 2001). It is within this context that an inquiry into the industry response of local policy can

identify how policymakers can directly influence the process of adaptive reuse and how they cannot.

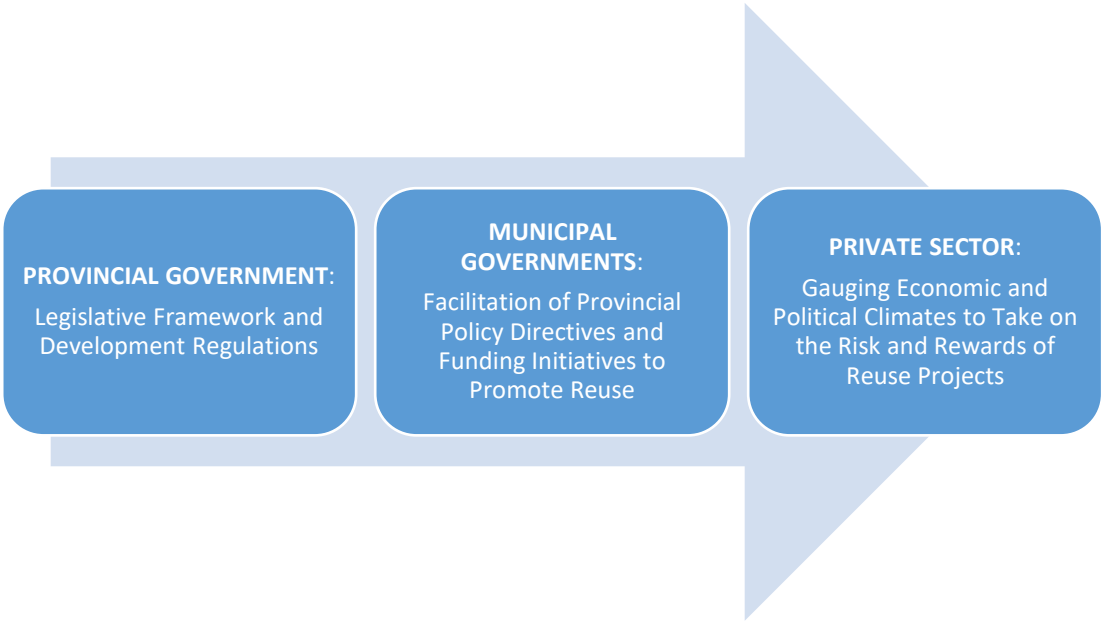
The term “adaptive reuse” itself generates a number of academic debates on its meaning and applicability in planning and city development. Often, it is understandably conflated with brownfield redevelopment, intensification, regeneration, and industrial remediation, however, there are specific factors that make it a unique process. The major theme that distinguishes adaptive reuse from a more traditional brownfield redevelopment is an emphasis on reusing the existing building for an alternative use other than its original purpose (Caves, 2004). Traditional construction techniques have increasingly been criticized for high environmental impact and in response there has been a recent push for green design and sustainable cities (Itard & Klunder, 2007; Sanchez & Haas, 2018). Cong, Zhao, and Sutherland (2017) discuss the importance of moving away from the ‘take-make-dispose’ linear product cycle and the benefit of having a profitable ‘End of Life’ strategy. Sanchez and Haas (2018) connect this discussion with the adaptive reuse of buildings, especially former industrial ones. Indeed, the trendy slogan of the 3 Rs – reuse, reduce, recycle has slowly, but surely been replicated in the city building process. It is not surprising that the more buildings that can be reused and repurposed, the less of an environmental and in some cases financial burden they have on their respective geographical settings. Langston (2008) explicitly states that by ‘breathing new life’ into existing buildings there can be both positive social and physical (environmental) benefits within the urban area.

Although the benefits of adaptive reuse may be clear, the factors which play into a successful manifestation of the process is anything but clear. Further, with a focus on former industrial uses, the complexity of adaptive reuse is only exacerbated. One must first consider the origins of the building stock to be reused. Pike (2005) discusses the following reasons for industrial plant closure: declining profitability, import penetration, loss of market share, under-investment, weak productivity, and obsolescence. The physical obsolescence of the building itself is furthered purported to be more temporal, where rapid technological changes (especially amongst industrial production methods), and swift economic restructuring from traditional manufacturing to a service-based economy , are quickly making buildings inappropriate for their original use (Langston, 2008; Wilson, 2010; Sanchez & Haas. 2018).

The multitude of explanations for building obsolescence is indicative of the multitude of conditions for successful reuse. Buildings present themselves in various conditions and social significance which clearly are determinate of their outcome. In Ontario, historically significant buildings and to an extension - older industrial buildings, are often demolished for new structures in a process which is more similar to traditional brownfield development. The cause of this is attributed to the financial feasibility and perceived tighter margins of historic building reuse (Shipley et al., 2006). With industrial buildings, the costs to reuse are only aggravated by contaminants, large building spaces to renovate and fill with tenants, and the commonality of being situated in areas where a project's return on investment may be dictated by the regeneration of the area. Yet, with all this in mind the high risk, high reward for returns and savings in construction (Kholer & Yang, 2007) makes adaptive reuse a growing and profitable undertaking for developers, but it is clear the environment must be right to undertake such a project (Bullen & Love, 2009).

It is the environment for success where this investigation is situated. Whereas the feasibility factors and economic considerations of producing a profitable environment have been relatively studied at large (see Ball, 2011; Bullen 2007; Heath. 2001; Shipley et al., 2006; Wilson, 2010), the implications of local policy have been rather uninvestigated in the literature. It is apparent from Ontario specific research (see Hayek et al., 2010; Sugden, 2018) that adaptive reuse in the province is enabled by three main actors and their respective roles: Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1** Main Actors of Adaptive Reuse in Ontario




The implications of policy initiatives creating the environment for reuse is under-researched, largely due to the complexities and broadness of policy tools available to governments. In a previous related study (see Chapter Four) a province wide investigation into the themes and occurrences of adaptive reuse was undertaken for every city's Official Plan in Ontario. It was found that Ontario cities have clearly identified that industrial decline requires direct policy in the remediation of plant closures and underutilized industrial lands. Reuse serves as a common theme throughout Official Plans (OPs) as a tool to address the most pressing issues de jour for municipalities such as: affordable housing, intensification, revitalization in the urban core, and creating spaces for creative and vibrant industries. The limitation of this study however is that policy is not a direct indication of actual practice (Bobrow et al., 1977), and it is important to investigate the success certain policy tools have on the practice of adaptive reuse. It is here, where a case study into London, Ontario's situation will be helpful.

## 5.2 Why London, Ontario?

There is no shortage of cities in Ontario to investigate the effects deindustrialization has had on the stock of obsolete industrial buildings. Due to the changing economy, plant closures have become a common feature for many cities in advanced economies (Tomaney et al., 1999). Communities that have historically thrived on manufacturing are now faced with economic degeneration and closed plants (Arku 2015; Wolfe & Gertler, 2001). However, there are five key factors which make London a fitting and interesting case to investigate. First, it was found in previous studies that mid-sized cities in Ontario struggle to adapt policy to the transition to the new economy (Arku, 2014, 2015; Cleave et al., 2017; see also Chapter Four). At a population just under 400,000, London experiences large city problems, without large city revenues. Second, the geographical location of London sets it apart from the GTA, whose population when included with nearby Hamilton is over 7 million people. As such, most studies done in Ontario on adaptive reuse have centred around this area (see De Sousa, 2003; Sugden, 2018; Wilson, 2010), leaving London and other cities not directly influenced by a large metropolitan area understudied.[1] Third, the history of London provides a unique, yet common story of a city whose economy was once dominated by manufacturing and industrial productivity but has slowly changed into a service based economy, losing many of its major industrial employers, and leaving scars of empty buildings within the urban fabric (Bradford, 2010). Four, London currently has two prominent examples of large-scale reuse in culturally significant former factories and several smaller projects. These projects have allowed for a rigorous testing of the policy and they have led to several important changes which will be discussed throughout. Five, London has recently taken a much more active approach to planning and land use decisions within the community. The recent approval of their Official Plan (2016) has detailed a commitment by the city to adaptive reuse and creative infill strategies. This was different from cities whose municipal policy was less intensive and more reactive to establishing an environment for reuse (Chapter Four).

[1] There are several factors which mid-sized cities face when it comes to adaptive reuse compared to larger metropolitan areas. These factors will be covered throughout the paper.

## 5.3 Methods

There are two major facets to this study. The first is a review of the specific policy documents relevant to the London adaptive reuse process. This included: The London Plan; McCormick Area Study and Secondary Plan; Development Charges By-Law; and the Brownfield Community Improvement Plan. These documents were compiled in consultation with City of London planners on applicable legislative tools within the municipality. Although the province sets the framework for planning legislation, the municipalities themselves are tasked with creating specific policy for their communities (Hayek et al., 2010; see also Chapter Four). These documents were read in detail and were highlighted through the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo. Relevant information pertaining to adaptive reuse and industrial redevelopment were isolated and compiled and used in conjunction with the second facet of the study.

After the policy was studied in detail to gain knowledge into the local environment for reuse, in-depth interviews were conducted to assess if the policy or local environment was enabling the industry to practice adaptive reuse and reap the benefits of this sustainable development. To do this, 16 key stakeholders were interviewed on broad reuse policy within the city and on specific industrial reuse projects. The interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 120 minutes, with the average lasting approximately 1 hour and took place between June 2019 and February 2020. Interviewees were identified through publicly available planning proposals from the City of London website as well as on the recommendation by interviewees in a type of snowball sampling strategy. They were selected based on their knowledge on the topic and/or experience with a reuse project. Over 30 stakeholders were contacted with 16 taking part in the study. These individuals come from four main professional backgrounds (Table 5.1). The interviews were conducted in an open-ended non-conforming style where a question guide was used to frame topics but still allow for the unique responses provided by the participants. Each interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim for further analysis.[2]

[2] Due to the sensitive information of the development sector, disagreements within the municipality about policy direction, and discussions about active development applications and projects, all names and identifiers have been removed and quotes will simply be referred to by a profession identifier.

**Table 5.1** Interview Profession Breakdown

| Interviewee Profession | n = |
|---|---|
| City of London planners | 7 |
| Developers of reuse projects in London | 4 |
| Owners or tenants of a reused industrial building within London | 4 |
| Economic development practitioners | 1 |
| **TOTAL** | 16 |

Once the interviews were transcribed and compiled, a line by line coding method (typical for interview analyses, see Strauss & Cobin, 1990) was first attempted to analyze key response categories in a weighted scored system. Although some findings were presented, the niche nature of the topics within the interviews caused the data to lose its applicability to the broader policy discussion as there was a lack of congruence within the initial response categories. As a result, the information is presented in a qualitative discussion format, focussing on four result sub-topics: Policy environment and formation, current industry practice, development charges in relation to industrial conversion, and London's next steps.

## 5.4 Situating Reuse Within the Relevant Policy

This section will outline the policy context where London's reuse policy is laid out. First, understanding the provincial policy environment is necessary as municipalities in Ontario must abide to strict regulatory mandates in planning and economic development (Hodge & Gordon, 2015). Second, London's Official Plan will be examined to evaluate how the city's current planning policy contextualizes reuse. Finally, the Brownfield Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for the City of London will be examined, as this is one of the key strategies municipalities in the province use to address brownfields and promote reuse.[3]

[3] In Chapter Four of this thesis, it was found that 41/51 cities in the province indicated in their Official Plans that creating a CIP for brownfield reuse/redevelopment was a tangible tool in promoting alternative uses.

### *5.4.1 A Change in Strategy: The Provincial Environment for Reuse*

The scope of relevant policy for industrial adaptive reuse in London is situated within a broader provincial legislation that guides all municipalities within the province. The foundational Ontario Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, directs municipalities on how land can be controlled and planned. It also directs cities in Ontario to formulate Official Plans - a provincially mandated policy document that each municipality must pass through their local council and must be regularly revised and updated (Planning Act, R.S.O., 1990). The Planning Act requires municipalities to update their plans ten years after a municipality prepares a new comprehensive Official Plan or every five years after an update done through an amendment to the plan. As well, the Planning Act gives municipalities the ability to identify *Community Improvement Areas* (CIPs) where the local council can direct special funding and focus on solving specific urban issues. These individual plans are also influenced by documents such as the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and the Places to Grow Act, S.O. 2005 (and the subsequent Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006 – revised in 2014). Relevant sections for each of these policies can be found in Table 5.2. The highlight of the current provincial legislation is the mandate of intensification and creative sustainable development strategies to minimize the environmental and social costs of sprawl. It is evident that after the instrumental changes to the Growth Act, the provincial government has adopted a position that promotes regeneration, renewal and curbing sprawl (De Sousa, 2017). Indeed, these principles were reinstated in the most recent version of the Provincial Policy Statement (a consolidated statement of the government's policies on land use planning).

**Table 5.2** Summary of Relevant Reuse Policies

| Policy Document | Reuse Relevant Information |
|---|---|
| **Ontario Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990** | - (14) An official plan shall contain policies that identify goals, objectives and actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and to provide for adaptation to a changing climate, including through increasing resiliency. 2017, c. 23, Sched. 3, s. 5 (2)<br>- (4) When a by-law has been passed under subsection (2), the council may provide for the preparation of a plan suitable for adoption as a community improvement plan for the community improvement project area and the plan may be adopted and come |

| | |
|---|---|
| | into effect in accordance with subsections (5) and (5.1). 2006, c. 32, Sched. C, s. 47 (1).<br>- (7) For the purpose of carrying out a municipality's community improvement plan that has come into effect, the municipality may make grants or loans, in conformity with the community improvement plan, to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings within the community improvement project area, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, to pay for the whole or any part of the eligible costs of the community improvement plan. 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (8). |
| **Provincial Policy Statement, 2020** | - Planning authorities shall establish and implement minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment within built-up areas, based on local conditions (1.1.3.5).<br>- Healthy, integrated and viable areas should be supported by…b) promoting regeneration, including the development of brownfield sites (1.1.4.1).<br>- Intensification: means the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through a) redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites (6.0, pg. 45).<br>- Residential Intensification: means intensification of a property, site or area which results in a net increase in residential units or accommodation and includes…e) the conversion or expansion of existing industrial, commercial and institutional buildings for residential use (6.0, pg. 50). |
| **Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006 – Revised in 2014[4]** | - Better use of land and infrastructure can be made by directing growth to settlement areas and prioritizing intensification, with a focus on strategic growth areas, including urban growth centres and major transit station areas, as well as brownfield sites and greyfields (2.1).<br>- It is important to optimize the use of the existing urban land supply as well as the existing building and housing stock to avoid over-designating land for future urban development while also providing flexibility for local decision-makers to respond to housing need and market demand (2.1).<br>- Within settlement areas, nodes, corridors, and other areas that have been identified by municipalities or the Province to be the focus for accommodating intensification and higher-density mixed uses in a more compact built form. Strategic growth areas include urban growth centres, major transit station areas, and other major opportunities that may include infill, redevelopment, brownfield sites, the expansion or conversion of existing buildings, or greyfields (7.0). |

[4] Although London does not fall into the geographical jurisdiction of the Growth Plan, this policy document was a revolutionary step in Ontario Planning Policy. Its themes and principles are found in municipal legislation throughout the province (Vecchio & Arku, 2020).

### *5.4.2 Reuse Within A Local Planning Context*

The City of London's Official Plan illustrates the integration of the provincial focuses within a local planning context. Interviews with the City of London Planners revolved around policy set forth in the London Plan, "The London Plan is the city's guiding document, and one that we are very proud of with all the community involvement that took place" stated one planner. Another planner said in their interview, "We've taken the provincial direction of intensification and utilizing existing infrastructure and made it a focal point throughout the plan". From a basic word occurrence analysis, related terms are littered throughout the policy: "intensification" is mentioned 143 times within the 481-page document, adaptive "re-use" is mentioned 22 times, "brownfield" is mentioned 12 times, and conversion (when related to buildings) is mentioned 31 times. Word counts however, can only provide a superficial analysis of the policy. What is more important is actual content. *Policy 76* of the London Plan mentions that "The London Plan places an emphasis on growing "inward and upward" to achieve compact development." This quote is a policy line which is almost verbatim to the language in the provincial growth plan. Further, *Policy 543* states, "Encourage adaptive re-use of older industrial buildings to create spaces for new uses that support the development of the knowledge economy and labour force attraction." Supported by *Policy 563* "In conformity with the Urban Regeneration policies in Our City part of this Plan, initiatives will be taken to support the adaptive re-use of cultural heritage resources to facilitate economic revitalization of neighbourhoods and business areas." This language found in municipal plans is not surprising, as municipalities in Ontario are deemed 'creatures of the province' – a phrase which describes the legislative relationship between province and locale (Good, 2020).

More specific policies within the plan include, *Policy 1121* "Remnant industrial parcels may exist within residential neighbourhoods, in locations where they are no longer compatible with surrounding land uses. On such parcels we will support the relocation of any remaining industrial land uses and the repurposing of these parcels for land uses that are compatible with the neighbourhood context" and Policy *165* "Community improvement plans may also be used to encourage heritage conservation, the provision of affordable housing or the redevelopment of old industrial and brownfield sites."

As was subsequently mentioned in Chapter 5.1, results from study #1 (Chapter Four) made it clear that the foundation of industrial decline and support of reuse projects was common throughout the province. What was not clear however, was if the broad policy statements found in official plans was being replicated in actual practice. In London's case, this meant investigating more specific policy such as secondary plans, CIPs, and the perspectives industry practitioners have on the policy.

### *5.4.3 The CIP – One of the Few Monetary Tools for Ontario's Municipalities*

In Chapter Four, it was clearly illustrated that cities in Ontario plan or are currently using CIPs to address reuse and brownfield development. This legislative tool is one of the few measures cities in Ontario have at their disposal to directly incentivize certain development practices (Hayek, 2009). London is no exception to this practice – in 2006 the city's council adopted a CIP for the entire urban growth boundary of the city to provide financial support to brownfield redevelopment. This plan grew from an interest of sustainability, environmental concerns, and intensification (Hayek et al., 2010). The program has at times struggled to find funding in the municipality's budget. The program funding is ultimately decided when a grant application is provided to council, yet even with approval the developer must complete the remediation or redevelopment to trigger the grant. One planner with the city commented on this, "We also have many previously approved brownfield incentives that we are still committed to, but the developers have not completed the remediation yet". This suggests that the external environmental factors are still preventing these projects to carry through. The plan itself offers four main incentive programs (City of London, 2006):

***Contamination Assessment Study Grant:*** *This program provides a grant for 50 percent of the cost to conduct a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment, Remedial Action Plan and/ or Risk Assessment in accordance with the requirements under the Environmental Protection Act. The maximum grant provided is $10,000 per property, subject to available funding.*

***Property Tax Assessment Grant****: This program provides for the cancellation of 25 percent of the municipal property taxes for up to three years during which rehabilitation and development activity is taking place. The property would also be eligible to receive matching*

*education tax assistance from the Province, subject to available funding and approval by the Minister of Finance.*

***Development Charge Rebate**: This program provides a grant for up to 50 percent of the normal development charges to cover eligible remediation costs. This rebate is intended to reduce the "up-front" development costs and encourage investment by landowners.*

***Tax Increment Equivalent Grant:** This program provides a grant equal to the increase between the pre-development and post-development municipal property tax after rehabilitation and development has taken place. The grant can be provided for a maximum of three years from the date of the increase in assessed value.*

London like other Ontario municipalities (see Chapter Four), seemingly has the policy and legislative language in place to support adaptive reuse of industrial buildings. However, the key question remains – how does this policy actually reflect itself in development practice? To answer this, the following section will be separated into two sections. First, two case studies of industrial reuse in London will be discussed in detail. Second, general findings and 'perspectives on policy' will present how relevant policy vehicles are currently viewed by those who created them and those who must follow them.

### 5.5 Reuse Project #1: McCormick's Candy Factory

In 2015 after years of study, London city council adopted the McCormick Area Secondary Plan. This area is a historically industrial section of the city's urban core. For generations, major employers anchored the area and surrounding low density neighbourhoods. However, in line with the larger economic shift mentioned before, the area started losing these large companies, leaving dozens of empty and derelict industrial buildings (McCormick's Secondary Plan, 2017). For the most part the conversions within the area were organic, most predating the adoption of the policy. However, the namesake of the policy – the former McCormick cookie factory and the subsequent closure of the Kellogg's cereal factory were severe blows to the area's vitality and precursors to the formation and update of the policy document (both projects will be discussed in detail in the following sections). Main tenets of the policy include supporting the reuse of culturally significant

buildings in the area while keeping the industrial heritage, developing the mainstreet, and improving the transition from the surrounding single-family neighbourhoods. Bonusing policies are also laid out to promote development of 'exceptional quality' with one of the requirements being, *Adaptive reuse of a property identified as having cultural heritage value or interest* (City of London, 2017). Also included are unique land designations in certain sections of the area such as, 'Industrial-Commercial'. The intent of this designation is to "encourage the retention of established businesses, transition out heavy industrial uses over time and create the opportunity for new low-impact light industrial and associated office and commercial uses to integrate within the neighbourhood." This transition of heavy industrial to light industry/commercial was a documented strategy by many cities in the province (Chapter Four).

The occurrence of adaptive reuse in the policy is rather contemporary (De Sousa, 2017; see also Chapter Four). However, the practice at least in London, has an extensive past. One city official illustrates that in the early decades of the 1900s London went through a period of deindustrialization where many downtown factories (many in the food packaging industry) closed up shop and moved to the then fringes of the urban core. The planner noted that, "The old McCormick's building used to be across from the former city hall on Dundas Street (London's Main Street) and adjacent to the major rail line. You can see how location-wise, priorities have changed." Another planner added, "There were a number of clothing factories in the Downtown, whose large open floor space and high ceilings made the transition to office space relatively seamless in the early century". Indeed, the demands of industrial practice at that time were rapidly changing, causing closures and relocations throughout the urban area. By the 1920s and 1930s factories required larger and quicker access to resources which made their location outside the urban core important. According to the official and supporting city records, buildings were mostly transitioned to residential apartments and office space, since at the time the sturdy building material and cost of unmechanized demolition was too high for knockdown and redevelopment. When this generation of industrial buildings slowly fell out of use in the 1980s and 1990s (the onset of the deindustrialization of Ontario), the complex buildings and now ease of demolition led to the tear down of many former industrial buildings in the city (LACH East London Survey, 2014). Another planner was critical of this era and the development practices,

> "There appeared to be a strong contingent of developers in London, who seemed to be set in their ways and the way they ran their business. In this context, more destruction than reuse. The early history of change in London from an industrial hub to financial one, could be a reason for the lack of adaptable buildings in the downtown and this trend continued in the outskirts of the downtown in the 80s and 90s. The push of industrial buildings to the constantly expanding fringes meant industrial buildings were often found surrounded by neighbourhoods."

Finally, in the current era, the aforementioned desire to preserve cultural assets, reuse building materials, and minimize environmental distress pushed adaptive reuse to the forefront again. There seems to be a resurgence of sensitivity to the protection and reuse of buildings within the core, as one planner puts it, "now that only a few examples of our industrial heritage remain, we are much more cognisant in protecting their cultural significance and promoting a reuse of the building."

The remaining large examples of reusable buildings near London's core are found east of the downtown. This historically industrial area encompasses the McCormick study area previously mentioned, as well as several others which once served London's industrial sector. Two of the largest buildings are the former McCormick's factory and Kellogg's cereal factory. Both these buildings are identified in the study area as well as other municipal reports (see LACH East London Survey, 2014) as integral project areas for the regeneration of the area.

The McCormick's site itself, was built in 1913 as a state-of-the-art facility built for the production and packaging of cookies and candy. At its height, the "sunshine palace" as it was described due to the exterior walls being 68% windows, the factory employed close to 1,000 workers (Carruthers, 2019). This building is now considered an example of a 'daylight factory' with the key identifiers of an open concept floorplan and access to natural light (Banham, 1986). It closed its doors in 2008, sitting vacant for years and racking up almost $1million in unpaid taxes. The city felt it was time for them to react, "Another role is playing the role of mitigating risk. The owner at the time of McCormick's was just sitting on it, letting it rot and nobody wanted to buy it. The city ended up obtaining the building after initiating a complex RFP program that identified someone willing to buy the land from the city, which enabled some of the risk too be passed on to us. We stuck our neck out with taxpayer's money, but ultimately we felt something had to be done," commented one of the officials in the decision process. The company bought the land for $1, though the clean up

alone was estimated at $8 million with $2.5 million provided by the city (Carruthers, 2019). When pressed why the city went through with this, the city official responded,

> "A lot of these struggling industrial buildings are embedded in urban areas where large scale industrial transportation is just unfeasible and costly for both the operator and city. Public hazards, fire, environmental contaminants, love canal[5]…the areas surrounding these plants often need a 'shot in the arm' to spur regeneration and revitalization of the surrounding residential and commercial. The cultural and physical energy that went into constructing the building should be reclaimed in a sustainable way instead of tearing it down and starting from scratch."

It was the hope that the city selling the building to a developer with a plan could be that shot in the arm. Unfortunately, however, movement on the building has slowed to a crawl.[6] One developer commenting on the project said, "McCormick's is a great example of what happens to a lot of developers who take on a cheap industrial building to redevelop and then find out later about the astronomical costs and countless steps needed to attempt to convert it. The magnitude of cost to reclaim industrial buildings is so dependent on the condition it was left in." This is one of the main issues with the reuse of industrial buildings, the leadup to the plant closure can have a significant effect on the possibility of a successful reuse project. One planner commented on the phenomenon on occupied deterioration, "in all buildings and often with these factories and plants, the financial situation that leads to their vacancy is not good. This usually means that cutting operating costs and building maintenance is quite often the easiest savings these companies can make." In contrast, one participant remarked "The typical era that these buildings were built in London (referring to the early 20$^{th}$ century) makes them insanely expensive to demolish. They were often 'over-built' using an abundance of steel and concrete and are for the most part incredibly structurally sound." The proposed reuse of the building is a mix of commercial and residential units with supporting residential and senior living structures being built around it (Sierra Developments, 2017).

[5] In reference to an infamous neighbourhood in Niagara Fall, New York, where a residential neighbourhood was built on top of a toxic landfill resulting in a medical and environmental catastrophe in the 1970s.
[6] In early 2019, the property had seen several exterior (non-significant) buildings demolished, but as of July 2020, little to no progress has been made.

### 5.6 Reuse Project #2: The Kellogg's Cereal Factory

Kellogg's, the cereal factory, was another major plant closure that the area witnessed. Built in 1924, the plant served as employment to generations of Londoners eventually closing 90 years later in 2014. The company cited "changes to global supply chain network" and soon after announced the expansion of a plant in Thailand (CTV News, 2014). The one million square foot complex was sold to a local company in 2016 that specialized in converting industrial buildings into warehouses. Unlike McCormick's, the plant was quickly bought without the need of municipal intervention and aggressive construction began soon after (with multiple phases already completed). The plan for the site includes a multi-use complex that houses Canada's largest indoor entertainment facility (known as "The Factory"), a brewery named 'Powerhouse Brewery', a distillery, multiple office tenants, and future tenants such as: The London's Children Museum, The Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, and other planned uses. This aggressive development was the first of its kind for the company, who usually converts old plants into warehousing around Ontario. Yet even with the seemingly quick turn around, it was still not what the company expected,

> "It has taken much longer than we anticipated. Some of the things that have slowed us down quite honestly is the bureaucracy around the project. We are used to quick and done deals, especially in small towns, where getting permits is never a problem and the community welcomes the employment opportunities and building reuse with open arms. The city bogged us down where we have had multiple meetings, even recently where we are still not seeing eye to eye. We do not want to be treated any differently, but the margins on these projects are tight enough, and we have run into slow down after slow down…They have been trying to clean up this area for decades and attract a large investment and that is exactly what this project should be," said one of the project's spokesmen.

The planners interviewed from the city regarding Kellogg's said they had learnt from their mistakes with McCormick's and justified that perceived slowdowns are a part of all developments of this size. One official responded to questions on the perceived delay by saying,

> "We've seen situations where property owners take on these large projects without knowing or familiarizing themselves with the process and task it will entail, this sometimes causes property owners to become surprised or angry when they realize the process scope of the project they are trying to do…These large projects require patience and just because it is adaptive reuse or a worthwhile project for the City, doesn't mean process and structure can be abandoned."

The city touted the initiative of appointing a 'point-liaison' to act as an intermediary between the city and the developer, hoping that having one voice would help alleviate some of the complexities within the project. When this was brought up during the interview with the developer, they commented on the early success of the liaison but also mentioned some issues,

> "We had a liaison for the site plan portion which was extremely helpful for that process of the application since the individual acted like a point person and they were able to reach out to the various arms of the city for us. That feathered out eventually as we moved past site planning and now for the building division, we do not have the equivalent and we are finding it a much more arduous process since the person we were appointed does not have the 'power' we need to get things done. There seems to be confusion within certain departments where they come to us before consulting with their colleagues at the city and we have to act as the intermediate which is a time-consuming practice."

This presented itself as a common theme throughout the interviews with practitioners, as the initial project often resulted in collaboration and a "new perspective on the development process" as one developer put it, but as they projects dragged on, that initial optimism seemed to fizzle out.

Regulatory efficiency issues are not the only factors affecting these projects. One issue unique to large buildings undergoing a reuse transition such as Kellogg's, is the holding costs. One developer commented,

> "Holding costs are the killer really. The building was bought for around $8 a sq. ft. To build this much space brand new today would be closer to $1000 a sq. ft. and that is not to say the building is poorly designed. A lot of these early 20th century factories were built with no limits on materials like steel and concrete like we see today. These things are insanely solid and well built. But it is the holding costs. Hydro costs (a colloquial term for electricity in Ontario) alone are $50,000-60,000 a month just to keep the mostly empty building going. You have to get it turned over fast. Not to mention the banks will not finance you unless you have leases lined up so for a project like this you need a crazy amount of cash to keep it afloat until it is ready for tenants…the average person cannot do this."

With the lack of incentives for these types of developments, the complete financial onus is on the owner, who needs to be certain the project will be profitable to make back the capitalized start up costs. Another developer had a similar complaint, "With these buildings in Toronto or Waterloo, you are almost guaranteed to fill the space before you even finish due to the crazy demand, here in London the commercial and office vacancy rates are abysmal so its

difficult to rationalize forking millions of dollars upfront." Indeed, it was not only those in Kellogg's that experienced this issue. Several developers highlighted the lack of proper incentives and indicated that although it seems like the policy is there, in reality, there is a disconnect between policy and practice. The following section will discuss this disconnect in more general terms, outside the aforementioned projects.

## 5.7 The 'Policy- Practice Disconnect' and Perspectives on What Works and What Does Not

### *5.7.1 CIPs*

The idea of CIPs and brownfield incentives are widely used in the Province (Chapter Four). However, the usage of these incentives was a surprising finding within this study. Three of the four developers who have been part of an industrial reuse project said that they either did not qualify for the grants due to definition discrepancies between brownfield redevelopment and adaptive reuse or viewed the process as too bureaucratic and time consuming for the funds you may or may not receive based on the 'council of the day'. One developer interviewed said the following, "the incentives are either too constricted that nobody qualifies, or the time and money spent to qualify for them just doesn't make sense if council decides not to grant them. I wish there was more direct incentives for adaptive reuse since everyone seems on board with it". Further, another developer involved in a reuse project said,

> "We didn't qualify for any big grants since the building was almost all conversion and the brownfield incentives were limited to demolition and cleanup of contaminants. We wish the city or province could be more supportive of these types of projects where we aren't simply tearing down the entire building scraping off the soil and treating it like a greenfield development afterwards. Grants need to be extended. I hear more about fees and taxes than I do about incentives and grants."

The usage of this program in London has come into question before within the literature (see Chapter 5.8), yet still, the focus of these programs seems to be situated in traditional brownfield development and not on adaptive reuse. The lack of scoping the policy towards reuse is a common theme that will appear in several further sections.

### *5.7.2 Heritage Protection or Excessive Barrier to Building Conservation?*

As mentioned in the literature chapter, a key factor that often arises in reuse projects – especially amongst Ontario's historic industrial past, is heritage. The governing legislation in Ontario is the *Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990*. This piece of legislation gives municipalities the power to list and/or designate buildings and properties within the city. When a property is designated, changes to significant aspects require a heritage alteration permit and public consultation. One official mentioned that "many of the designations for these types of buildings are focused primarily on the façade and street view of them, whereas the interior is mainly interchangeable due to the constant updating by the original uses." That fact that many of these closed factories served the community for generations, it creates a notable attempt for both the community and city to preserve the cultural history of the former use. Some aspects, however, cannot be preserved as one planner states,

> "the physical presence of some of these buildings is intrinsic to the community. Some things you cannot preserve with reuse, there are memories of toasted corn throughout the immediate neighbourhoods from the Kellogg's factory, that everyone in the community knew the source. A little further down the street and you would smell marshmallows at McCormick's. These things are lost, but having the building still is helpful. Photos and documents can never capture, what made these places important, having some incorporation of living history is ideal."

The previously discussed McCormick's building is one of the few that is designated, with some developers alluding to as the real cause of its slow progress. Other building owners and developers have fought against the idea, "Heritage designation was presented by the city early on and we looked at the cost benefit and decided it wasn't in our interest to tie our hands per say by the Heritage Act to the minimal economic benefits. So, we had to do a number of studies and meetings to explain why it shouldn't be designated. Keeping the heritage aspects of the building was already centred in our vision so we were perfectly capable of doing it without the City's help." Many developers and building owners said they could do a much better job preserving the heritage without the guidance of the city, "In some cases designation actually makes it harder to preserve the heritage since they often sit and rot since nobody wants to jump through those hoops. Whereas, if a great developer buys it with the intentions of reusing the building and filling it with uses that will keep the heritage alive it accomplishes that goal, even if the window glazing might not be time-period accurate." It was made clear throughout the interviews however, that the city was concerned with the

likelihood of these buildings undergoing ‘demolition by neglect’, where a building owner purposely allows the deterioration of a structure to make their case for demolition stronger.

Related to the findings surrounding the discussion on heritage. The industry believed that the process of application comments was a burden on their margins and ability for success. One developer who fought against designation mentioned,

> “Now even four years later we are still butting heads with heritage on almost every step of the process even though we thought that was resolved early on. We are accommodating but we just don’t understand when we are not going for designation why heritage continues to be a sticking factor on our design. Even when we resolve something whether it be heritage or another department, the same comments are fought over. Its so repetitive and so costly.”

When planning management was pressed on this, they admitted a need for change,

> “management within the city has noticed the need for change with the way application comments are submitted and resubmitted. If a comment has been resolved or tabled, it should not keep becoming a contentious point on each resubmission. The city needs to see the end game and keep messaging on point to make the project successful and make the city a better place…we cannot fight over everything.”

This issue is obviously one felt by many developers, but when you consider that many of these large reuse projects include multiple phases, one can see how continuous conflict on the same issues is detrimental to the success of the building.

### *5.7.3 Development Charges: An Example of Policy Change Through Consultation*

One issue that all reuse projects shared until recently was the overbearing cost of development charges (DCs) when converting from industrial to another use. Development charges are a tool given to municipalities by the province to charge developers the external costs of growth for each project (Tomalty & Skaburskis, 2003). The city sets the cost of pricing and London conducts a review every 5 years to look for needed changes. Prior to the recent change in London, if one was to convert an industrial building into a ‘higher rate of use’ commercial building for example, they would be required to pay for the full DCs even if zero construction took place. This meant that these often-expansive industrial spaces cost developers incredible sums of money, often causing many to not even consider reuse. One developer said,

> "Development charges are based on square metre and recreation businesses, that these spaces often get converted to need a lot of space. You picture a volleyball gym that needs a couple hundred thousand square feet of floor space, which many buildings in London have, but once you convert that from industrial, you would easily be paying over $1 million in DCs without building anything new."

Some developers were blind sided by the costs, "If I ever knew about the DCs in the first place, I would have never even considered this project."[7] Another supported this sentiment by discussing the process of opening up his dream business,

> "We submitted for our permits all excited after finding the perfect building, an abandoned steel foundry, and the city said back to us 'that will be $260,000 in DCs' for only 12,000 square feet. The city was very professional about it, but they were a shock to us. When you look at these original industrial spaces, they often paid zero in DCs when they were constructed and until the recent changes, anyone who wanted to use the space had to pay."

Many in the industry voiced their opinion and in the time frame of this study, the city collaborated with the developers to find an alternative to the policy. One official when pressed on the issue, admitted, "The DC issue got in the way of the developer's goal of profitability and we needed to address that issue. It definitely stopped people from doing these types of projects in the past where buildings like these could have been reused. It was just a loophole in the policy that we needed to hear it wasn't working". In the 2019 review of the London DC Bylaw, the following changes were made in response to the developers concerns,

> 3.7 Conversion Credits A change to the conversion policy is incorporated in the 2019 DC By-law with respect to one form of non-residential use to another form of non-residential use. As a result of the non-residential rate policy consultation and review, a key issue was raised in terms of the existing policy. The City of London classifies non-residential development by ICI which results in different DC rates. Thus, the issue of converting a lower rate non-residential use to a higher rate non-residential use (i.e. Industrial to Commercial) triggers a DC payment. This approach may act as a barrier to redeveloping existing non-residential space, even though the servicing impacts of the change of the use may be marginal. In order to address this issue, the 2019 DC By-law includes a provision to exempt DC payments resulting from conversion from one non-residential use to another non-residential use when no additional floor space is being added (City of London, 2019).

This change was welcomed by the industry, even to those who had to pay the charges previously, "Honestly, we are just happy people don't have to deal with this like we did, it was so unproductive when we are all trying to see these buildings reused" commented one

[7] This specific developer received a Development Charge bill of $5 million

developer. Another discussed how this was a great example of those who implement the policy working with those who facilitate it and telling them it was not working, “This was a great example of what collaboration with the people who actually implement these buildings can do. Sometimes we all just need to work together.”

### *5.7.4 General Perspectives of Reuse in London and Moving the Policy Forward*

It was clear from all participants in the interview that changes needed to be made going forward. “I think because these projects are becoming more numerous and more important, we all need to sit down and think this out, for too long it has been pushed aside” said one city planner. Each planner was asked whether a comprehensive strategy should be enacted to deal specifically with adaptive reuse projects, and all but one, said it should be on a case by case basis instead. One planner said, “its too complicated to have a plan that identifies everything since each project and location is so unique”. The developers however, disagreed with this sentiment, complaining that a lack of congruency lead to inconsistencies;

> “the issue with planners always saying it’s a case by case basis, is the outcomes are different every time and the enormous amount of variables in the municipal development process can make or break these projects any time in their journey. Also, you want a system resilient to bad actors, where you got large developers’ projects that may get through due to “knowing the game” when the smaller players cannot.”

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, a recurring discussion was the issue of the divide between planners and the developers who implement the policy. It seems that although the policy is present, it is not scoped to the specificity of reuse development and there is a disconnect when moving towards change for some of the policies, “when creating the vision, it has to be done with the industry in tandem so there can be no ‘surprises’. If you create an academically based plan - as good as it might be and drop it on the community, you have problems. Perhaps we need less plans, and more partnerships”, one prominent city official confided. Indeed, this sentiment was shared by the industry, who voiced concern for policy created by planners with “no understanding of our economics or margins.”

However, all was not lost on the policy front, both planners and industry practitioners gave their responses on what they would like to see changed. One planner said,

> "we mentioned in the Official Plan that there is a possibility to offer money to relocate industrial property owners to employment lands outside of the city. It is hard to plan an area in piecemeal as industrial businesses slowly move out versus relocating en mass and planning as a whole. No program exists so far, but we are considering looking into it."

Further, a finding discovered in Chapter Four, is that municipalities often utilize local targeting in areas that are well situated for reuse. When asked whether it would be worth targeting specific areas and buildings for the transition of industrial buildings outside the core (or out of business entirely) a planner responded,

> "of course, but the City just isn't doing it. We look at vacant land for industrial every year, we look at planning for new subdivisions, and neighbourhoods in classic greenfield development, but other than some quotes in the official plan or other plans, there seems to be no tangible focus from a planning perspective on targeting the preservation or reuse of these buildings."

Engaging in a relocation policy would allow for comprehensive instead of piecemeal planning and help alleviate issues such as conflicting uses. One official mentioned one of the difficulties of having some buildings industrial and some buildings a less sensitive use in the same area,

> "There is something called D series guidelines of proximity of industrial to residential to prevent land use conflicts (provincial legislation). It makes repurposing difficult sometimes, since you are bringing these sensitive uses into industrial areas. There are ways to get around this like agreements with owners and building design to prevent noise…etc., but it is still a difficult situation to plan in."

From initial findings, it seems that although a comprehensive planning strategy such as the McCormick Secondary Plan can be enacted, there still needs to be a piecemeal dedication to specific reuse projects as was done with McCormick's and Kellogg's.

On a similar note, when discussing the overall trends of industrial decline and the changing economic structure from manufacturing to serviced-based employment, one planner stressed the importance of getting ahead of the issue,

> "We need to identify the shift of the market, identify what pockets of the city will be affected by that (industrial decline), and being proactive to identify them needing help. Perhaps they are doing that in economic development, where they can match incoming use to an existing building, but planning needs to have a role in that as well."

Overall, the sentiment of reuse in London appears to be growingly positive. Changes in the DC Bylaw and the completion of several industrial reuse projects shows that the current policy is adaptable and fluid, yet still, there are major policy factors which still need to be addressed and provide some context towards the larger discussion around the effects of policy on reuse.

### 5.8 Discussion - Moving from Policy to Practice

A common theme throughout the discussions with key stakeholders was that there was a disconnect between the policy and the practice. Whether it was the now resolved issue of DCs, or the lack of practical follow up of planning documents, both the city planners and developers wanted a more grounded approach. One planner, who was upset at the lack of tangible planning directives on adaptive reuse bluntly stated, "urban design only goes so far to capture what these buildings can offer, you cannot design your way out of social or economic issues. There needs to be some relationship with social and economic issues on the built environment, more so than a header in OP." This was a critique brought up earlier in Chapter Four when looking at the broad policy approach by cities in Ontario. This idea of 'disconnect' between policy and practice is perfectly illustrated when delving deeper into the discussion around CIPs and their usage as a tool to promote reuse. Interestingly, Hayek et al. (2010) completed a study that surveyed developers and officials in London purely discussing brownfield development (not adaptive reuse) and asked their respondents a similar question for the then only four-year Brownfield CIP program. The responses were extremely similar with the study quoting their own participant as saying, "participation in our program has been extremely low up to this point…private developers have not taken advantage of the incentives provided in the city's CIP." Now more than a decade later, the program still seems to be inefficient or at least underutilized. This supports the finding in Chapter Four that the presence of CIPs are seemingly 'thrown in' by many cities to address reuse. Brownfield CIPs read as buzzwords in many plans who showed no further attempts to actually implement one.

Indeed, in London's case even though implementation of a CIP was carried through, it does not seem to have made a difference, as the current incentives are underutilized and out of reach for most adaptive reuse projects.

The utilization of 'buzzword policy' is not new for municipalities, especially in the realm of economic development and planning (Cleave et al., 2017). Certainly, it appears that London, like many cities, is on board with adaptive reuse but has yet to carefully investigate and formulate successful policy that is specifically scoped to reuse projects. If London, and other municipalities want to utilize reuse as a tool for industrial decline mitigation, more needs to be done on enabling the process of development.

The issue with the CIP and other indirect incentives is that the developer still assumes total risk of the project. When the market is in a boom, or a company has the assets to absorb this risk (i.e. Kellogg's), this is not a major barrier, however for most of the time and for most developers, reusing or redeveloping large industrial properties is too risky when the draw of greenfield development or downtown condos is present. If municipalities want to increase the likelihood of reuse occurring, more aggressive tactics need to be employed. Largely this revolves around absorbing some risk as the municipality. As was with the case in McCormick's, the city had to 'enter the game' and lower the risk enough for a company to engage. This was discussed at length with the planners when asked whether or not the city needs to take an active role in development or 'wait it out' until the market produces favourable conditions. One planner responded,

> "In some cases, the city can play the role of a developer through an RFP (request for proposal) program. If the servicing is in the ground, all the studies are completed and passed, it creates an essentially 'shovel ready site' that companies can essentially 'bid' on. The downfall of always waiting it out, is the problem accumulates as the building sits and rots. Waiting it out also delays regeneration and ultimately tax income. The downside to this idea is the risks and required resources and political will with these projects. Becoming a part of the chain of ownership means becoming a part of the chain of liability."

This idea of public-private partnerships (PPPs) is not a London specific idea. Indeed, in reuse projects the literature is clear that PPPs can help alleviate risk and create opportunities for developers who would otherwise not engage on these 'white elephant' buildings (Macdonald & Cheong, 2014; Rypkema & Cheong, 2012). It is here where a balance needs to be set between municipalities being aggressive enough to take charge, but still ensure public funds

are correctly being used. For many councils who are experiencing an increased downloading of provincial costs however (see Chapter 3.2.2), this is just too risky of an endeavor for their limited budgets and funding vehicles.

Less risky – but still costly, is a policy alternative that was found to be considered by many cities in the province – the idea of industrial land relocation (Chapter Four). Again, the issue is moving beyond consideration and into implementation or at least, a feasibility study. Cleave, Vecchio, et al. (2019) found that only a small percentage of urban municipalities within the GTA were concerned about a lack of serviceable industrial land. This is one of the few advantages small and mid-sized cities seem to have in the promotion of industrial reuse. If companies within an area posed for reuse are contemplating moving, they can be spurred on by either a land swap with the city to more appropriate industrial lands or at least incentivized to help with the move. There are numerous benefits if the city can move quickly in clearing out these areas. First, the conflict of existing uses is minimized. When you have half an area operating heavy industrial and the other half attempting to transition to uses of lighter intensity, there are a number of land conflicts that will arise. Second, the city will have the ability to plan the area as a whole, instead of in a piecemeal fashion. This not only makes policy more effective, but also strengthens the confidence in the marketplace of a successful transition. Third, finally, the integration of infrastructure such as public transit, parks, bike paths, and other livability themed programs can be more easily and rapidly laid out.

Finally, from a policy standpoint, there seems to be a lack of knowledge on the scope of the issue in London and throughout the region. Each planner was asked whether they knew the scope or number of urban industrial buildings in London that were currently vacant. None of respondents, could produce or point to a resource that had this information. The question was followed up with whether an inventory of these sites would be beneficial for the city to engage in targeted policy. The response was often situated in the difficulty of classification or privacy of property owners being infringed, “ownership and the legality of classifying someone’s property as a brownfield would be tricky for us” said one planner. Hayek et al. (2010:391), raised this issue a decade ago in their own analysis of a brownfield inventory,

> "In spite of the municipal support, the city of London does not have a brownfield inventory to identify the location of brownfield sites or the magnitude of the problem. The city of London is not alone in this regard; such inventories are rare for Canadian cities … In particular, the authors argue that planners and policy-makers need to know the extent of a city's brownfield problem before they attempt to create effective policies and legislations for redevelopment and before developers and municipalities make large monetary investments."

A similar conclusion was made in the initial investigation for this thesis, where municipal databases for brownfield developments or properties throughout the region could not be found. Certainly, the legality of classification is a concern that would cause issues for the municipality, however simply identifying vacant properties is a modest and already practiced task by some cities. In London, The *State of the Downtown Report* identifies street level vacancies in London within the downtown core and is updated every few years. There is no foreseeable reason why the same standard and methodology could not be used for an urban industrial building inventory. Further, if privacy was still a concern, any list could be kept for internal purposes only and when presented to the public could be disseminated to remove specific identifiers. It was rather surprising that planners believe they could accurately form policy without a supporting inventory of data.

Simply an ongoing issue, there is a tension between the developer-city relationship. This, however, is not unique to London, nor any other study area which could have been chosen. This disagreement is a natural process of development, but it is important for both sides to voice concerns to one another on fractures in the process or policy. This was no better illustrated when considering the changes made to the development charges structure as communication veins were opened and the industry was able to illustrate that the policy was not working. This will need to be a common occurrence in cities that must adapt their policy to a scoped approach to adaptive reuse. Relatedly, on the issue of piecemeal versus comprehensive planning for reuse, planners in the study identified that developers need more comprehensive proposals and plans for the entirety of the development at the forefront of applications. If the applications are piecemealed and original designs are regularly changed, it is difficult to ask the municipality not to respond in an equally piecemealed fashion.

Although, the study of London's current reuse environment has produced several poignant considerations, a more regional discussion should not be left out. A common theme when discussing Ontario planning and economic development policy and practice is the

discrepancy between mid-sized cities and large urban ones (especially those situated in the Greater Toronto Area - GTA). Several studies (see, Arku, 2014, 2015; Cleave et al., 2017, 2019; De Sousa, 2017; Reese & Sands 2007; see also Chapter Four), look at how mid-sized cities may address economic development and planning policy differently to larger ones in Ontario. When considering adaptive reuse, the major factor is the pressures of the real estate market in the GTA. Particularly, De Sousa (2017) completed a case study of Waterloo, Kingston, and Toronto, investigating the story of brownfield development in each locale. It was found that the heightened demand in Toronto required a less interventionist approach for promoting brownfield development as the provincial density targets drove the market to make these projects economical. Smaller cities like Waterloo and Kingston however, had less demand for high density housing in core areas and thus it was suggested that "identifying brownfields suitable for redevelopment—along with stricter controls on greenfield sprawl—might be better suited for smaller cities" (De Sousa, 2017:15). Indeed, cities like London that are situated generally outside market externalities from the GTA, have and should continue to practice intervention-based policies to promote reuse and brownfield redevelopment.

There is no arguing that facilitating effective policy in the support for adaptive reuse is a challenging one. The financial, political, and general disagreements between policymakers and industry practitioners requires a comprehensive and encompassing approach by all stakeholders. The fact of the matter is, that these buildings are a conduit for regeneration as well as capitalizing on a unique and important history of the area. From a policy perspective, municipalities need to move beyond the theory and buzzword policy and realize how planning tools are actually being implemented and used by the industry. The "less plans, more partnership" mentality may be able to address the seemingly ever-growing policies and guiding plans that appear on a city planner's bookshelf. This may be especially true in smaller cities like London, where the struggle to make reuse and redevelopment more economical than traditional greenfield development is a concern that has not yet been addressed. If cities can first identify the vacant properties through an inventory and then weigh the cost and benefits of mitigating risks through partnerships, the countless paybacks of reuse development will come to fruition.

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# CHAPTER SIX

# SYNTHESIS

## 6.1 Introduction

This final chapter is meant to incorporate both studies into a final discussion on adaptive reuse policy in Ontario and abroad. Drawing from the major themes produced in both Chapter Four and Five, an overview of the relationship between policy and practice and why adaptive reuse is a worthwhile practice is examined. Finally, limitations to this study and the opportunity for future research will help provide final considerations for this thesis and its position within the literature moving forward.

## 6.2 Summary and Contextualization of Study Findings

The practice of adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings has been well situated in the broader discussion of industrial decline throughout the last five chapters. It has been shown that cities in Ontario, like other post-industrial economies are dealing with the proliferation of vacant industrial buildings, which at one time often served as the economic hubs for these locales. The benefits of reusing these buildings in some capacity are numerous (see Chapter Two), yet there are also many barriers which keep developers at a distance and often result in the continued dereliction of these buildings (Shipley et al., 2006; Wilson, 2010). Indeed, it is clear from the literature (Bullen & Love, 2011) and through the investigative work done in this thesis (see Chapter Five), that one of the main barriers and decision-making factors is that of the regulatory environment. It is here, where this thesis attempts to understand the local context of adaptive reuse in municipal policy and how this policy ultimately reflected itself in practice.

The recently garnered attention of adaptive reuse in the policy is not by chance. Indeed, the impetus of this development practice is part of broader issues situated in the manufacturing decline experienced by many Western Economies (Filion & Bunting, 2006; Hobor, 2013; Mah, 2012; Sands, 2010; Vinodrai, 2015). As with other economic development issues related to the transitioning economy, there is an increased focus in the ability of local actors and governments to illicit the change necessary to meet these new and

challenging phenomena (Cleave, Vecchio, et al., 2019; Rees & Sands, 2007). With this in consideration, investigating the local response to reuse and the policy tools currently being utilized by municipalities was an important aspect of this thesis and one that distinguishes itself from other related studies, a point which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

The study area which is comprised of every city in The Province of Ontario, as well as a more detailed study in a mid-sized city within the province, enabled the study to truly investigate the unique approaches used by municipalities who have experienced industrial decline in different degrees of intensity. Indeed, Ontario served as a useful representation of a region that has been decimated by the exodus of the manufacturing sector in its local economies (Vinodrai, 2015). Furthermore, the province has undertaken a simultaneous movement to practice sustainable development and a reduction of sprawl and low-density housing (De Sousa, 2017). These two scenarios offer the 'perfect storm' for studying adaptive reuse and enabled this thesis to utilize Ontario as an effective case study. The practice of reuse addresses both the issue of manufacturing decline, as well as promoting sustainable built environments, thus making this study a relevant investigation for policymakers in post-industrial economies.

Again, the purpose of this thesis was meant to answer the following overarching questions: *How does municipal planning policy facilitate an environment for the reuse of former urban industrial buildings in Ontario cities? As well as two specific sub-questions: (1) how do cities in Ontario contextualize the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings within their Official Plans and what policy tools are being offered to facilitate this development? (2) Is the current policy helping or hindering a successful environment in current industry practices? Is there a disconnect between industry stakeholders and policymakers?* To answer these questions, two manuscripts were completed (Chapter Four and Five) to provide a theoretical foundation for reuse policy and the implementations of this policy in actual practice.

In answering these questions, this study utilized a largely qualitative approach with the understanding that qualitative methods are appropriate when the literature lacks sufficient background for the topic in question (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Indeed, this study has taken the rather unstudied approach of investigating the relationship between local economic

development and the policy and practice for reuse. Due to the fact that the literature has not yet been expanded into this niche topic, this study had to set its own independent framework for investigation.

To begin, a broad and regional understanding of how different municipalities in Ontario were contextualizing and responding to local economic development change within their Official Plans and to determine if local economic realities influence policy, was the initial approach. This study (Chapter Four) utilized a content analysis of the 51 cities in Ontario's Official Plans – a guiding policy document that is mandated by the province for each municipality's regulations on land use. Each plan was read and analyzed, identifying key policies and themes that both differentiated and linked municipalities in their approach to reuse. This study provided a high-level basis to how the policy in the region was responding to reuse and industrial decline within their planning documents. However, this study like many high-level content analyses, failed to properly connect the findings back to the relevant stakeholders and individuals involved in the reuse process (Dryzek, 1982). Thus, a more localized and intimate case study was utilized in Chapter Five to provide a greater understanding of how the policies discussed in Chapter Four are actually being experienced by stakeholders. To achieve this, the local policy was further analyzed in detail in a combination with in-depth interviews that were conducted with 16 stakeholders in policy making, development, and ownership of a reused former industrial building. This case study and interviews, provided context on how the policy investigated in the first study was implemented at a local level, providing a deep understanding of reuse policy and practice in local Ontario economies.

### *6.2.1 Overview of Major Themes Within Manuscript 1 (Chapter Four)*

The findings in Chapter Four found that on the whole, Ontario cities and their Official Plans acknowledge that the economy is in transition, resulting in an influx of underutilized industrial lands. The finding was interesting as the goal of an Official Plan is not necessarily to account for economic development policy, so it is notable that there was congruence with land-use policy and other economic development studies conducted in Ontario (see Cleave, Vecchio, et al., 2019). Further, this study also made it clear that cities with higher industrial compositions contained the policies identified in the study at a greater frequency than those

with a smaller industrial composition. The policies which were identified, fell into three major thematic groupings. One, 'Framing and Planning' policies represented high-level efforts by the city to engage with issues of manufacturing decline. Two, 'Industry-Focused Land Reuse' policies included specific strategies related to cities supporting, maintaining, and locating remaining industry within their jurisdiction to more appropriate lands. Three, 'Urban-Focused Land Reuse' policies emphasized ways former industrial lands could be re-deployed to address urban development goals. These thematic groupings and the policies within, indicated that Ontario cities are indeed responding to industrial decline and reuse within their planning policy, but more so this study found several interesting patterns that became further apparent in Chapter Five.

One of these patterns was the interesting discovery that cities illustrated a lack of congruence when it came to planning policy promoting reuse. This differed from past studies in Ontario economic development policy, which found that cities often approach policy in a 'cookie cutter fashion' (e.g. Cleave, Vecchio, et al., 2019). This strengthened the literature in Chapter Two, which discussed how cities' local economies were dictated through their local path dependence (Wolfe, 2009). For Ontario cities, this meant that reuse policy tools were locally driven, relying on the unique approach based on the individual factors of that community. This did not mean however, that the body of language within the plans was heterogenous. Rather, there were several recurring themes that were present in almost all documents. This was illustrated when looking at the usage of Community Improvement Plans by cities across the province. These sections often seemed 'thrown in,' with language that was dictated word for word from guiding provincial legislation. This was not entirely surprising when considering that municipalities in Ontario are 'creatures of the province' (Chapter Two), however there was little indication on why some cities provided detailed follow up and implementation of their CIPs, while others did not. These buzzword, non-substantiated policies were a common finding in both studies, something which will be discussed further.

Similar to the findings with CIPs, the language surrounding intensification and utilizing reuse as a tool to identify a city's building stock, was one of the most common themes discovered - 78% of cities identified this within their plans (Chapter Four). The provincial mandate of sustainable development and smart growth discussed in Chapter Two,

has seemingly caused many cities to enter into a frenzy with addressing their own intensification goals. As Peterborough (2017:27) said in their plan, “The City will strive to ensure that at least 10% of new residential units resulting from new residential development and residential intensification through conversion of non-residential structures, infill and redevelopment, to be affordable housing.” The take away from this finding was not only the fact that cities are using reuse to respond to intensification, but also the language itself is a common theme in almost every planning policy, ‘Strive to ensure’ or a similar phrase was littered throughout documents as a rather soft target and approach. Indeed, it was apparent in this study that the foundations for the policy were present in the Official Plans, but a more detailed investigative effort was necessary.

### *6.2.2 Overview of Major Themes Within Manuscript 2 (Chapter Five)*

Chapter Five also noted several interesting themes. As a more specific oriented study, this manuscript was able to gauge local issues which arise with reuse based on the policy enacted by the city. It was clear throughout the study that there was a disconnect between the policy and those who implement adaptive reuse within it. Industry practitioners cited several policy concerns that could or did affect their reuse projects. First, London’s Brownfield CIP was found to be underutilized and often non-accessible for the industry to utilize the incentives for reuse. This arose from definition issues where reuse of an industrial building did not specifically count as brownfield redevelopment, and when it did – it was only a small portion of the project. Further, it was found that the process to receive grants was so political and arduous that many in the industry did not find it worth it to engage in the process. This finding represented a much larger issue in reuse policy. As mentioned in Chapter One, reuse as a term is often convoluted or ‘mixed in’ with other more established planning terms such as brownfield or intensification development. This seems to be more than a superficial issue; it is directly affecting the policy surrounding reuse. CIPs, Development Charges, and Heritage Regulations were additionally described by the interview participants to be inappropriately scoped to reuse development in London. Often, these policies were unable to account for the niche and unique aspects that affect reuse development projects. In some cases, working with the municipality enabled industry to voice their concerns on policies that hampered the success, and ultimately the frequency of reuse projects in the city.

There was a recurring theme throughout the discussions with both policy makers and industry practitioners about moving towards a system of 'less policy – more partnerships.' This is supported by the literature discussed in Chapter Two, where Private Public Partnerships were found to be effective tools in mitigating 'white elephant' buildings – which are buildings that the private sector will not take the risk alone (Rypkema & Cheong, 2012). The idea of risk was mentioned throughout the conversations with those in industry, who identified it as one of the major considerations before entering in reuse projects. On the other hand, those representing the municipality identified the dilemma of tying taxpayers' money to risk ridden projects. Indeed, as was shown with the former McCormick's building in London, ON in Chapter Five, even when a municipality steps into the process, the outcome of successful reuse is not guaranteed. However, the sentiment of 'less policy – more partnerships' still holds true. It seemed in the case of London, that the policy foundations for promoting reuse are present, but it was increasingly shown that other than surface language in policy documents, there was little in the regard to detailed implementation. One might suggest this is due to the fact that adaptive reuse is a niche and at times – an infrequent event, but in reality the issue of buzzword or superficial policy in these documents has been well recognized in the broader economic development literature throughout the region (Cleave et al., 2017; Cleave, Vecchio, et al., 2019). When the municipality and the industry were able to reach agreements, the policy was able to be scoped to adaptive reuse. This was illustrated when the development charge by-law was changed in London, which removed a substantial cost barrier to initiating this type of development.

Finally, it seems that municipalities are aware of industrial decline increasing the amount of vacant buildings within their urban cores, due to the fact that their policy includes this language and regularly identified decline as an issue (Chapter Four). However, when discussing this issue with local planners in London, none of them were actually aware of the actual scope of the problem – in other words, how many industrial buildings or brownfield sites were currently vacant. Some cited privacy issues, others could not see how it would be useful, yet they were happy to discuss policy strategy and planning for reuse projects. This is not a London specific issue; Hayek (2009) found that it is not common for Ontario municipalities to keep such inventories. Indeed, it seems that municipalities are implementing policy without the necessary background information – a similar critique

voiced by the industry during the interviews. Further investigation would be needed to confirm this, but it appears that reuse policy is often drafted as 'fast policy' in the sense that it often fails to meet the specificity of actual reuse development. This concern emphasized the need for more investigation into how local policy affects adaptive reuse projects – a literature void that this thesis is attempting to fill.

### *6.2.3 Comparative Analysis between Manuscript 1 and Manuscript 2*

As mentioned in Chapter One, both studies were meant to compliment each other in a broader investigation into reuse policy within the region. Table 6.1 summarizes the key research findings for both manuscripts. There was expectedly a number of overlaps in the significant findings from both studies, and several warrant a further description of how they connect.

First, it was shown in both studies that industrial decline is indeed now integrated within planning policy in Ontario. It was unknown whether or not land use planning had incorporated the attitudes to deindustrialization similar to that of their economic development strategy counterparts (Cleave, Vecchio, et al., 2019). More so, reuse was seen as a mitigator in the detrimental effects this hallowing out of the industrial core has created. Cities identified reuse as a tool to solve many contemporary issues in urban affairs, and the practitioners interviewed in Chapter Five supported this sentiment. The social, economic, environmental, and cultural benefits of reuse as discussed in Chapter One and Two, were often brought up in the policy, in discussions with the policy makers, and when interviewing the development industry. Reuse was overwhelmingly considered a worthwhile practice, but how to implement it into policy was more convoluted.

It was apparent that reuse policies were often dictated by localized economic factors. This was illustrated when discussing how cities who had a larger industrial composition were often more inclined to include measures that promoted reuse or identified de-industrialization as an issue. In the second study, London's industrial history was a central theme in the protection and utilization of its former manufacturing history. Interestingly, although London does not have a large labour composition of industry currently, it historically did and thus created the large stock of vacant industrial buildings. In both studies, localized factors were often front and centre in the discussion around policy. Whether it was identifying specific

plants that had closed, or discussing a certain industry type that had cultural significance in the community, there was often specific features in which the policy was situated in.

Relatedly, it was shown that small and mid-sized cities have a greater responsibility to create an environment for reuse in their community. In places like Toronto or other large cities in the Greater Toronto Area, reuse is a much more natural, laissez-faire situation, where heightened property values, restricted greenfield development, and an exponential demand for new spaces creates a favourable economic environment for developers to engage in the costlier and riskier reuse projects. In smaller cities however, these factors are not as present and are often paired with an abundance of outward and sprawl-type growth. In these situations, the developers often will not engage in reuse projects due to the easier and financially stable alternatives. This was apparent in both the regional plans, as well as in the discussions with stakeholders from London – a mid-sized city. It was often alluded to that cities like London have big city problems without big city funding. As such, smaller cities needed to utilize more unique policy initiatives and approach reuse in a more interventionist style. This was supported by the call for public-private partnerships and increased financial incentives to lower the risk and cost of reuse developments.

Finally, and one of the more interesting themes shared by both studies, was the discussion around buzzword policies – or fast policy. This presented itself in two ways – with one unique to each study. First, in the regional analysis, it was apparent that certain language was often dictated word for word from guiding provincial legislation for a number of sections. This itself was not directly an issue, however the plans often failed to provide implementation strategies or detailed follow up. Second, this superficial approach was replicated in the case study (Chapter Five) where certain policies were implemented such as a Brownfield Community Improvement Plan but were considered ineffective by the industry and often remained underutilized.

**Table 6.1** Summary of Key Research Findings

| **Manuscript 1:** Promoting Adaptive Reuse in Ontario: A Planning Policy Tool for Making the Best of Manufacturing Decline | **Manuscript 2:** From Policy to Practice: Investigating the City of London's Environment for Adaptive Reuse of Former Industrial Buildings |
|---|---|
| **Key Issues:** How are cities responding to their former industrial lands through reuse policy? Provide insight into how cities choose to create policy for reuse based on their own unique localized economic factors and creative incentive programs | **Key Issues:** Understanding how local planning policies affect the approaches and strategies to reuse development. Also providing insight to whether policymakers and industry practitioners see eye-to-eye on utilizing certain policy instruments |
| **Data and Methods:** Content analysis of Official Plans in the 51 cities in Ontario; descriptive statistics, demographic qualifiers, and industry composition data | **Data and Methods:** In-depth interviews with 16 stakeholders in London, comprising of city planners, economic development officers, developers, and owners/tenants of reuse projects |
| **Key Findings (see below):** (1), (2), (3), (4), (6), (7) | **Key Findings (see below):** (1), (2), (4), (5), (7) |
| (1) **Awareness of industrial decline within planning policy** – it was unknown whether the notions of deindustrialization were identified or integrated into planning policy, as it has seen in local economic development documents. This study, however, indicates that planning policy in Ontario is indeed aware of industrial decline and more importantly, actively addressing it with the promotion of adaptive reuse (Manuscripts 1 and 2). | |
| (2) **Reuse as a policy implementation tool** – the findings of this study show that municipalities are identifying reuse as a cure-all for a plethora of topical urban issues such as sprawl, affordable housing, sustainable development, and revitalizing the urban core (Manuscripts 1 and 2). | |
| (3) **Polices encouraging reuse are generally heterogenous between municipalities** – this study illustrates that cities are largely utilizing different strategies to promote reuse based on their local economic path dependence and unique factors (Manuscript 1). | |
| (4) **Buzzword Politics** – see Chapters Four and Five describing how certain policies tools promoting reuse are often superficially written in planning documents without the necessary follow through to reflect in actual practice (Manuscript 1 and 2). | |
| (5) **Less plans, more partnerships –** the discussions with industry stakeholders in Chapter Five showcased that the industry is yearning for ways to reduce the heightened risk in reuse development by partnering with municipalities to encourage mutual benefits share by both parties (Manuscript 2). | |
| (6) **Reuse policy is dependent on industrial composition** – this study has suggested that the more 'industrial' a city's labour force is (or was), the more likely reuse | |

| |
|---|
| polices are focused on in planning policy. One exception is cities which have rapidly increased their industrial composition in the last few decades (Manuscript 1). |
| (7) **Small and mid-sized cities have a more difficult time promoting reuse in their local economies –** both studies have shown that a number of factors make reuse harder to create an environment for in smaller economies. This often has to do with the more economical alternatives that developers have in these cities compared to the demand for real estate in larger cities (Manuscript 1 and 2). |
| (8) **Site Specific over City Wide Policy** – municipalities are shown to favour more targeted approaches in creating an environment for reuse. Several cities identified certain vacant industrial buildings within their Official Plans (Manuscript 1). However, industry stakeholders have criticized this approach for providing an inconsistent experience for each developer or project (Manuscript 1 and 2). |

### 6.3 Research Contributions

This thesis provides contributions to the field of adaptive reuse and more broadly, local economic development and land-use planning. Although both studies were situated in Ontario, Canada, the literature in Chapter Two clearly indicated that Ontario is not alone in addressing manufacturing decline and an increased inventory of vacant industrial buildings, within the urban context. The economic and political systems in Ontario are shared by many jurisdictions in the Western world and combined with the process of deindustrialization, makes this study applicable beyond the scope of Ontario and even Canada. Further, Ontario is in a stage where the economic transition to a serviced based economy is largely complete. The late stage of post-industrialism serves as an informative outlook to reuse and local economic development policy for regions who are in early stages in their industrial lifecycle.

This local economic development and planning context is one of the main factors which makes this research unique. Although, reuse has been well studied in Ontario in terms of case studies of various projects and the factors that go into successful reuse (see Faria, 2008; Stas, 2007; Sugden, 2018; Wilson, 2010; Zuk, 2015), the contextualization around reuse policy has been lacking. This research expands on what Bullen and Love (2011) identified as one of the main decision factors for reuse projects – how regulation creates a favourable environment. Incorporating a geographical perspective further exemplifies how the research is relevant to policymakers and industry stakeholders in several important facets: One, regional analyses of manufacturing decline allows for more comprehensive

understandings of how regional differences – and ultimately their local economic identifiers, can affect the policy direction taken by municipalities. Two, adaptive reuse is dependent on how an individual or community interacts with the built environment and more specifically, the cultural significance of reusing a former industrial building in a community. Three, the impetus of reuse policy was found in this study to be in the land-use planning contextualization, further supporting the notion of reuse being a conduit for sustainable and unique land development. Finally, the degree to which cities must engage in reuse policy interventionism seems to be dictated on their geographical location and relation to larger regional economies. Indeed, the geographical perspective is common throughout this study, however this does not suggest that the contribution of this research is limited to geographical interpretation. Rather, the approach this study uses ensures that it is relevant to a multitude of academic fields.

The second key contribution involves the methodological approach used in this thesis. Although it was largely qualitative, this study followed the established principle set out by Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009), who suggest that qualitative studies are appropriate when the literature background is insufficient. Thus, this thesis provides a literature background on local reuse policy and industry reaction that can now be expanded on using a more quantitative approach. By using a broad regional analysis of over 50 cities, as well as a more in-depth approach in a specific city that has experienced severe changes in its economic makeup, this thesis provides researchers moving forward with a comprehensive analysis on the implications of certain policy tools and how certain city types must respond to the promotion of reuse within their communities.

Lastly, this thesis, especially the second manuscript, identified several common policies that industry stakeholders found to be contentious or at the least ineffective. Each of these policy topics (heritage, development charges, planning process, CIPs, etc.) can now be further investigated to identify more sensible and effective approaches as well as carrying out tests of existing policies to further recognize what policies create an effective environment for reuse and which policies do not.

## 6.4 Contributions to Practice and Policy

Due to the nature of the information discussed in this study, the contributions to practice and policy may be more relevant than the contributions to the broader scholarship. Indeed, this study provides critical lessons for policy makers in Ontario and abroad on what other municipalities are doing in terms of promoting reuse, and how these policies may be implemented and received by those in the industry. A key takeaway for municipalities engaging in reuse-oriented policy, is the realization that directives must come from a place of empiricism and not engage in the easier, yet ineffective buzzword-based policy.

Instead, local planners and municipalities need to first understand the scope of the issue in their community. This can be done through the creation of inventories or at the least identifying buildings which are vacant and could possibly be reused. On a much broader level, the integration between land-use planning and economic development needs to be strengthened in Ontario. Through this thesis, it was clear that how municipalities plan and use their built environment can dictate how resilient they are to economic changes. When the policy for reuse is already in place, further deindustrialization and the ultimate increase in former industrial building vacancies can be mitigated. By incorporating clearer economic development strategies, local planning can ensure the built environment is situated for the continuous changes this global and integrated world economy seem to bring.

Finally, this study made it clear that policymakers must work with the development industry in finding solutions to policies and practices that hinder successful reuse projects. Reviewing outdated or ineffective incentive programs or reviewing how policies for brownfield development are not often scoped for reuse, was shown to be an important task for municipalities to capitalize on the mutual benefits that adaptive reuse can bring. As was discussed in Chapter Five, municipalities need to move beyond the theory and buzzword policy and realize how planning tools are actually being implemented and used by the industry. Through private-public partnerships and other risk mitigating practices, cities (especially small and mid-sized) are more likely to get closer to the panacea many policymakers seem to believe reuse is.

## 6.5 Limitations

Due to the study approach and broad context, there are some limitations that may limit some potential takeaways from the information presented. Most however, result from the fact that this thesis was written to serve as a foundational inquiry into the relationship between policy and reuse. Thus, most of these limitations can be addressed through future studies as the literature continues to grow.

First, both Chapter Four and Five offer a snapshot of policy and practice of reuse in Ontario. The nature of both content analyses and case studies creates a temporal aspect that is at the time of the study. This limits the research in two relevant ways: One, policy and specifically Official Plans are temporary, despite their relative long life in regard to policy documents (typically 20-25 years). This limits the study's relevancy as time continues without periodical updates through additional content analyses. This itself, provides an interesting research opportunity which will be discussed in the next section. Secondly, case studies of buildings undergoing reuse or those who already have, is again dictated by the time in the study. Although the results and significance of the findings can continue to be applied, the snapshot of development which was included in Chapter Five may reduce the rigor of replication studies as the variables are unique and continuously changing.

A second limitation of this thesis was not being able to have multiple cities in the stakeholder interview study. Due to time restrictions and the onset of Covid-19, the probability of reaching enough interviews in a comparable city study approach was not strong enough to move beyond a one city investigation. Again, this limitation can be easily addressed as the literature around reuse and policy increases.

Finally, the lack of quantitative methodology does hinder some more definite conclusions that could have been made with the data. Unfortunately, when first considering this thesis topic, there was little to no comprehensive datasets that could be used for statistical analyses. As a result, the majority of the data used throughout this study was primary data – collected and analyzed by the author.

## 6.6 Future Research

Based on the contributions this thesis has made, there are a number of exciting opportunities for future research. First, it was made apparent in both the initial attempts to find a large dataset and through speaking with policymakers that an inventory of reuse projects or properties that have or can qualify as a brownfield site is lacking. This inventory could be combined with a much-needed mapping analysis of vacant industrial sites in Ontario or any other jurisdiction lacking a comprehensive inventory.

Another research direction would be to address one of the aforementioned limitations in this thesis and investigate the temporal aspects of policy overtime. It would be interesting to see how policies of different generations responded to industrial decline and reuse, while being compared to how the local economy may have also changed overtime. This would allow for greater explanation of the brief temporal findings that were produced in this thesis. Further, it would strengthen the assertion that path dependency is truly an indicator of policy related to reuse.

Finally, additional case studies in different jurisdictions would provide a greater understanding of how policy is implemented in practice. Although, London shared many issues with other cities in Ontario, broader geographical research should be undertaken to confirm the patterns seen in this study and investigate if the issues found in London, are comparable outside Ontario.

## 6.7 Final Remarks

In this thesis, the practice of adaptive reuse of formal industrial buildings and how policy can either create an environment for reuse or hinder it was investigated. The two studies provide a foundation in the literature that was lacking on how policy and practice are facilitated in industrial reuse. Though a relatively niche topic, the findings can be applied to the broader discussion on manufacturing decline in Western Economies as well as the localized response by municipalities. As the economy continues to change, more emphasis will be needed on transitioning not only the labour force, but the built environment as well. Understanding that former industrial sites offer an untapped potential in garnering economic,

cultural, and social benefits will illustrate to policymakers that adaptive reuse is a worthwhile practice to target through effective policy. The key takeaway from this thesis is that policy does indeed play a large role in creating an environment that promotes adaptive reuse, however the policy must be based on empirical evidence and through consultation with the end user – the development industry.

This master's thesis has been an invaluable experience in my own professional development. The skills I have learned throughout this project will undoubtably stay with me as I begin a career and continue to contribute to building better communities and cities. Speaking with stakeholders, reviewing policy, and expanding on the existing scholarship are just a few of the opportunities I was privileged to experience. The acknowledgements at the beginning of this thesis only go so far in thanking those who have made this body of work possible. It was an honour to work with such a dedicated supervisor who took me on as an arrogant undergraduate student and helped develop the skills and mentality that is expected of graduate students. Working on this project, as well as others at Western over my six years has been nothing but a pleasure. I look forward to where this project and the skills which I have acquired, takes me in my future endeavors.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A Interview Script – Local Industry Practitioners

**Background Information**

| # | Question | Follow-up/Prompt |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | To start, could you please describe your role at your company? | a) What type of development does your company primarily focus on? |
| 2 | Does your company have any experience in redeveloping brownfield sites or reusing former industrial buildings in London or elsewhere? | a) How long has your company been engaged in the redevelopment of brownfields? |
| 3 | What advantages are there in reclaiming or repurposing these former industrial buildings? | |
| 4 | Is the market demand growing for these types of developments? | If so, what are some of the major factors that you believe are causing this growth?<br><br>Is this sort of development a relevantly recent practice? |

**Development Process of these Sites**

| # | Question | Follow-up/Prompt |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | What are some of the major factors in selecting an applicable building to reuse? | |
| 6 | What are the major risks a developer can run into on these types of developments? | a) Environmental? Physical? financial? |
| 7 | Do you think that adaptive reuse for former industrial buildings is a worthwhile practice? | Prompt: Why not just demolish the buildings and start over, or leave the buildings vacant? |
| 8 | Are there any special processes that are involved in these types of developments when compared to more traditional projects? | |

**Current Policy Environment in London**

| # | Question | Follow-up/Prompt |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | Can you provide an overview of the current policy environment in London concerning these developments | |
| 10 | What are some of the major tools that developers can use that are provided by the city? i.e. financial incentives, grants, collaboration…etc. | |
| | In your opinion is the current policy environment promoting the reuse of the buildings, or inhibiting it? | Is the current policy around Development Charges in London a barrier to this type of development? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 11 | What specific policy details are effective in this process? | |
| 12 | What specific policy details are ineffective in this process? | |

**Specific Project Your Company was involved in**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | Can you briefly describe the development your company was involved in? | What was the original use of the building?<br><br>What is the new (proposed) use?<br><br>What shape was the original structure in? |
| 13 | Did you utilize any tools or incentives provided in municipal policy? | If there were any, what were some of the major barriers or setbacks (policy-wise) you experienced? |

**Relationship with the City**

| # | Question | Follow-up/Prompt |
|---|---|---|
| 14 | How important is it to have a productive relationship with the city when approaching these projects? | a) Would you consider the relationship between the City and developers a productive one?<br>b) What areas do you see improvement being needed? |
| 15 | How does the city work with developers to ensure these projects are successful for the residents of London? | a) Where do you often see major issues arise?<br>b) Are there specific guidelines on how the city may assist with major barriers such as toxic soil or industrial waste removal? |
| 16 | Does the city have an effective understanding of the current development market, in which their policy reflects what the consumer demand is in the development industry? | If not how can the industry bridge this gap? |
| 17 | Should the city take an active role in redeveloping these sites or should it play a passive role until the market is ready to move forward? | |
| 18 | How should the city and industry work together in the future when redeveloping these sites? | a) Do you think the more projects, the better the relationship will grow?<br>b) What can you do in your role to improve the working relationship? |

**Conclusions**

| # | Question | Follow-up/Prompt |
|---|---|---|
| 19 | What do you think the future will hold for former industrial buildings in London? | a) Is there potential for more redevelopments?<br>b) If so, how do you see the process changing in the future? |
| 20 | Do you think policy-wise there needs to be a different approach by the city? | a) Should there be a specific planning document addressing this issue? |
| 21 | Do you have any final thoughts or perspectives that you would like to share? | |

## Appendix B Interview Script – Local Policy Practitioners

**Background Information**

| # | Question | Follow-up/Prompt |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | To start, could you please describe your role with the City's planning department | b) How long have you been in your position? |
| 2 | How would you describe brownfield and adaptive reuse development in London, ON? | |
| 3 | Can you describe the overall inventory of London's brownfield and vacant industrial sites? | a) What areas of the city are they most prevalent?<br>b) In your opinion is the inventory growing or decreasing? |
| 4 | How are these buildings typically used in London? | a) Has London effectively used its former industrial sites for alternative land uses?<br>b) Do they often sit vacant for many years? |

**London's Approach**

| # | Question | Follow-up/Prompt |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | What is London's current approach for promoting adaptive reuse? | |
| 6 | Has this approach changed in the last 25 years? | a) Did this change come from planning directives or changes in the industry, upper levels of government?<br>b) What is a planner's role in this process?<br>c) Could you describe how you have specifically been involved in this process? |
| 7 | Do you think that adaptive reuse for former industrial buildings is a worthwhile practice? | Prompt: Why not just demolish the buildings and start over, or leave the buildings vacant? |
| 8 | How important do you think this kind of redevelopment is on the City's planning policy within the scheme of urban growth management and efficient land use? | Prompt: Is it in the public's best interest to see these building's reused? |
| 9 | How much of a role should the municipal government play in facilitating these redevelopments? | a) How much of a role should the provincial government play in facilitating these redevelopments?<br>b) How much of a role should the federal government play in facilitating these redevelopments?<br>c) How much of a role should that private stakeholders play in the facilitating these redevelopments? |

**Tools to Promote Reuse**

| # | Question | Follow-up/Prompt |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | What specific tools can the city use promote adaptive reuse of these buildings? | a) What motivated these tools? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Are there financial incentives? | b) How useful have these been in promoting adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings? |
| 11 | From your experience, are the financial incentives effective in promoting these redevelopment projects? | a) Have you personally been involved in a project of this nature? If so, could you describe the project briefly? |

**Barriers Faced During the Process**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | What do you see as the barriers for these buildings to be reutilized? | a) What were the key factors that you saw in specific redevelopments that have happened in London?<br>b) Is there an onus on the city to work to remove these barriers?<br>c) How can you as a planning practitioner facilitate this? |
| 13 | Do you see any of these obstacles originating or fueled by the structure of the various municipal departments and policy environment? | Should these projects be given extra-ordinary attention due to the negative effects these large vacant sites have on the city? |

**Relationship with the Industry**

| # | Question | Follow-up/Prompt |
|---|---|---|
| 14 | How important is it to have a productive relationship with the industry when approaching these projects? | c) Would you consider the relationship between the City and developers a productive one?<br>d) What areas do you see improvement being needed? |
| 15 | How does the city work with developers to ensure these projects are successful for the residents of London? | c) Where do you often see major issues arise?<br>d) Are there specific guidelines on how the city may assist with major barriers such as toxic soil or industrial waste removal? |
| 16 | Are the values in the London Plan such as adaptive reuse, efficiency within the built environment, and brownfield redevelopment, shared by the development community?<br><br>If not how can the city bridge this gap? | |
| 17 | Should the city take an active role in redeveloping these sites or should it play a passive role until the market is ready to move forward? | |
| 18 | Based off your experiences with specific projects, how was the relationship between the developer and City? | a) What are some common areas that the developers needed to address?<br>b) What are some common areas that the city needed to address? |
| 19 | How should the city and industry work together in the future when redeveloping these sites? | a) Do you think the more projects, the better the relationship will grow?<br>b) What can you do in your role to improve the working relationship? |

**Conclusions**

| # | Question | Follow-up/Prompt |
|---|---|---|
| 20 | What do you think the future will hold for former industrial buildings in London? | c) Is there potential for more redevelopments?<br>d) If so, how do you see the process changing in the future? |
| 21 | Do you think policy-wise there needs to be a different approach by the city? | b) Should there be a specific planning document addressing this issue? |
| 22 | Do you have any final thoughts or perspectives that you would like to share? | |

# Appendix C Ethics Approval

**Date:** 21 May 2019

**To:** Dr. Godwin Arku

**Project ID:** 113793

**Study Title:** Treasure Amongst the Ruins: The Policy and Practices of Adaptive Reuse Surrounding Former Urban Industrial Buildings in Ontario

**Short Title:** Industrial Redevelopment Practices in London Ontario

**Application Type:** NMREB Initial Application

**Review Type:** Delegated

**Full Board Reporting Date:** 07/Jun/2019

**Date Approval Issued:** 21/May/2019 16:25

**REB Approval Expiry Date:** 21/May/2020

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Dear Dr. Godwin Arku

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

**Documents Approved:**

| Document Name | Document Type | Document Date | Document Version |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interview Script (Industry Practitioners) - April 15. 2019 | Interview Guide | 18/Apr/2019 | |
| Interview Script (Policy Practitioners) - April 15. 2019 | Interview Guide | 18/Apr/2019 | |
| LOI (Industry Practitioners) (verbal consent) - May 21 2019 | Verbal Consent/Assent | 21/May/2019 | |
| LOI (Industry Practitioners) (written consent) - May 21 2019 | Written Consent/Assent | 21/May/2019 | |
| LOI (Policy Practitioners) (verbal consent) - May 21 2019 | Verbal Consent/Assent | 21/May/2019 | |
| LOI (Policy Practitioners) (written consent) - May 21 2019 | Written Consent/Assent | 21/May/2019 | |
| Recruitment Email - April 29 | Recruitment Materials | 30/Apr/2019 | |

No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Harris, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

***Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).***

# CURRICULUM VITAE

| | |
|---|---|
| **Name:** | Marcello Vecchio |
| **Post-secondary Education and Degrees:** | Western University<br>London, Ontario, Canada<br>2014-2018 (B.A. Honours)<br><br>Western University<br>London, Ontario, Canada<br>2018-2020 (M.A) |
| **Honours and Awards:** | Edward G. Pleva Fellowship<br>2018-2019<br><br>SIOR Urban Development Award<br>2018<br><br>Dr. William R. Code Scholarship in Financial Feasibility of Urban Development<br>2018 |
| **Related Work Experience** | Project Manager<br>Human Environments Analysis Laboratory<br>2020-Current<br><br>Teaching Assistant<br>Western University<br>2018-2020<br><br>Land Planning Technologist<br>City of London Planning Department<br>2019 |

Research Assistant

London Development Institute (LDI)

2018-2019

**Presentations:**

Vecchio, M, (2020). Guest Lecture and Presentation on Manufacturing Decline and the Integration of Local Policy Response. Presented in Geography 3465: Urban Economic Development Policy, Western University, London, Ontario.

Vecchio, M. (2019). Manufacturing and Contemporary Economic Development: How cities in Ontario, Canada understand and plan for manufacturing. Paper presented at the 2019 Canadian Association of Geographers Conference on May 30 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Vecchio, M (2019). Guest Lecture and Presentation on Utilizing the Time Value of Money for Development Feasibility in Geography 3464: Financial Feasibility of Urban Developments, Western University, London, Ontario.

**Publications:**

Vecchio, M., and Arku, G. (2020). Promoting Adaptive Reuse in Ontario: A Planning Policy Tool for Making the Best of Manufacturing Decline. *Urban Planning*, *5*(3), 338-350. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.17645/up.v5i3.3188

Cleave, E., Vecchio, M., Spilsbury, D., & Arku, G. (2019). Manufacturing change and policy response in the contemporary economic landscape: how cities in Ontario, Canada, understand and plan for manufacturing. *Regional Studies*, 6(1), 469–495.