

What is the Future of Utica?
Alternative Futures and Design Opportunities for a Rust-belt Community

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Accepted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Design Management
at
The Savannah College of Art and Design

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Industrial Design Department
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Masters of Fine Arts

By

Krista Siniscarco

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Prologue

For many years after receiving my undergraduate degree in graphic design I worked in the design field as an instructional designer and multimedia specialist. I participated in challenging projects and built strong partnerships, but I always felt that something was missing. There was a piece of the puzzle that I couldn't quite describe or define by was lurking in the background. When I started to explore graduate programs, I just happened stumbled across *design management* and suddenly a light bulb went off in my head. I didn't completely understand what design management was but I knew it could lead me down the path I was in search of.

After 2-years as a student in the Design Management program at the Savannah College of Art and Design, I've finally found my passion and professional trajectory. I've been immersed in design research, analysis, synthesis, prototyping, defining, redefining and reframing problems. I've been exposed to and excited by design thinking and the non-linear and creative problem solving processes. I've found that the piece of the puzzle I was previously missing was a new and holistic way to view, understand and approach the puzzle itself. I have been particularly drawn to the concept of "wicked problems" and the design of social innovations—themes that have consistently run through my project work through my second year of graduate study.

When it came time to define my thesis topic, I choose something close to my heart. I wanted to explore the future of my hometown—the economically depressed, post-industrial, small city of Utica located in upstate New York. The tragedy of the rust-belt city is nothing new to the US. We often hear about the issues plaguing large cities like Detroit and Buffalo. But just like corporations that were deemed "too big to fail" by the government following the 2008 economic crash, perhaps these cities could also be considered too big to fail. But what about the smaller communities with similar problems and issues? Are we ignoring the cities with populations under 200,000 simply because no one would notice if they disappeared?

My goal for this study was to re-immense myself in the community that I grew from and work with them to design tools to empower the citizens in shaping their future. My journey through this process has been cataloged by way of the blog, <http://futureofutica.wordpress.com/>. It is my hope that the people of Utica embrace and move forward with this process to become a leading example of revitalization in the post-industrial age.

What is the
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Abstract

What Is the Future of Utica?
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Many of the United States' once booming industrial communities have been devastated by the migration of manufacturing out of the Northeast and Midwest. The cities of the US rust-belt—spanning from Central New York State, through parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois—are heading down the path to a bleak future. This thesis focuses on a case study of one such rust-belt city, Utica, NY, as a way to examine the unique past, present, and future problems and opportunities of these communities. The concept of wicked problems is used as a conceptual framework for the study and the research will take a holistic approach to framing issues and designing solutions. This study uses participatory design methods as a way of collecting data and employs scenario planning tools to craft alternative future scenarios. These scenarios are the foundation for discovering design opportunities for the Utica area. The results of the study include media-based narratives of alternative futures and recommendations and design solutions for the local residents and government.

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

Background

Utica is a small city, with a population of approximately 62,000, located in the geographical center of New York State (see Figure 1). The town was settled in 1773 and incorporated in 1798. The city is located along the Mohawk River and was known as a trading post along a popular trade route in New York. The Erie Canal, which was completed in 1825, runs from the Hudson River in Albany to Lake Erie in Buffalo, and flows directly through Utica. Utica's location as the midpoint on the Erie Canal stimulated its industrial development, economic growth, and rapid population growth. With the arrival of the railroad and Chenango Canal, the City became a transportation hub and commercial center.

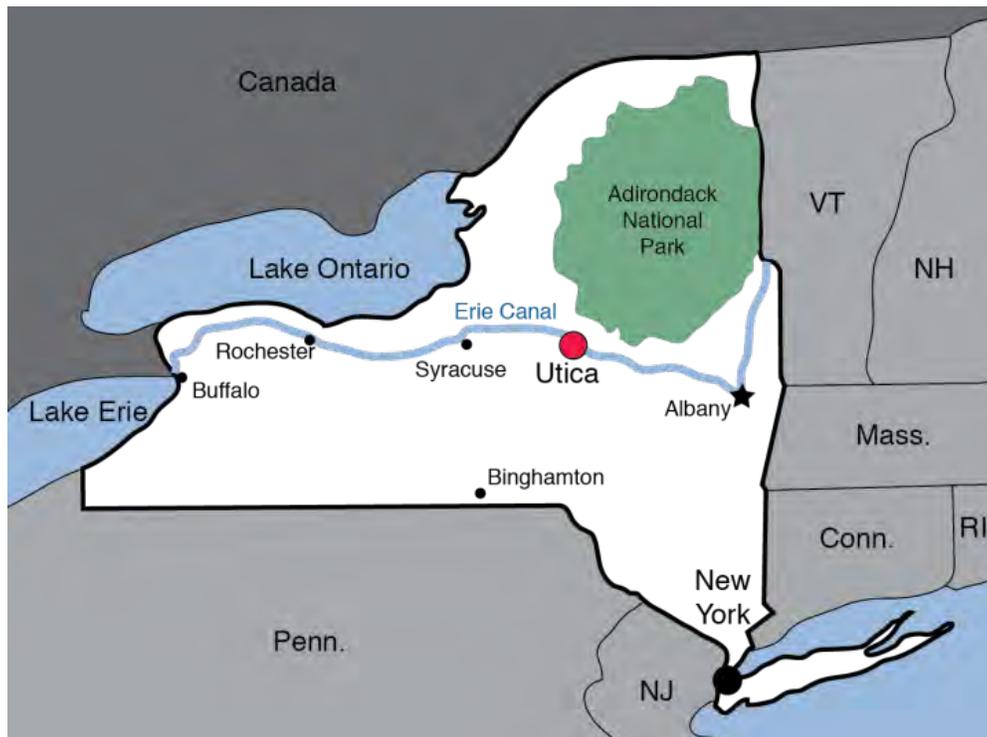


Figure 1.1. Map of New York State

Stages of Industrialization

In 1807, the US government passed an Embargo Act cutting off English textile production. Local investors in the Utica area saw this as an opportunity and started investing in local textile manufacturing, which soon became a booming industry. In the mid to late 19th century, textile manufacturing began to move from the Northeast to the American South. The textile factories in Utica turned from textiles to tool and die manufacturing. In the early 20th century, Utica saw a dramatic increase in its population with many Italian immigrant settlers. By the 1950s, Utica's population peaked at 100,500 (Bottini and Davis, 2007).

Post-Industrialization

In the later part of the 20th century, manufacturing began to leave Utica with large companies like General Electric and Lockheed Martin closing their doors. Since the 1960s the city has seen a steady population decline, which now stands at 62,000. In the 21st century, the city experienced a new wave of refugee immigrants (Pula, 1994). There were far fewer jobs for these newcomers. Consequently, the city has an increasingly high unemployment rate and close to 25% of the population is living under the poverty line (2010 US Census). Utica has become a classic rust-belt city.

The Rust-belt

A rust-belt community is defined as a once heavily industrialized area containing an aging infrastructure and factories, particularly of the type that are marginally profitable or that have been closed. In the United States, the rust-belt runs from Central New York through Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Southern Michigan and parts of Indiana and Illinois. It includes cities such as Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Detroit and Chicago (see Figure 2). The problems of the rust-belt community are systemic and widespread. With the economic crash of 2008 and the downturn in the American automotive industry, the situation is steadily getting worse. These cities are becoming neglected communities riddled with joblessness and economic hardship and considered irrelevant in the current environment. If this downward spiral is not stopped and if there are no opportunities identified to turn the situation around, these communities will continue to slide into obscurity.

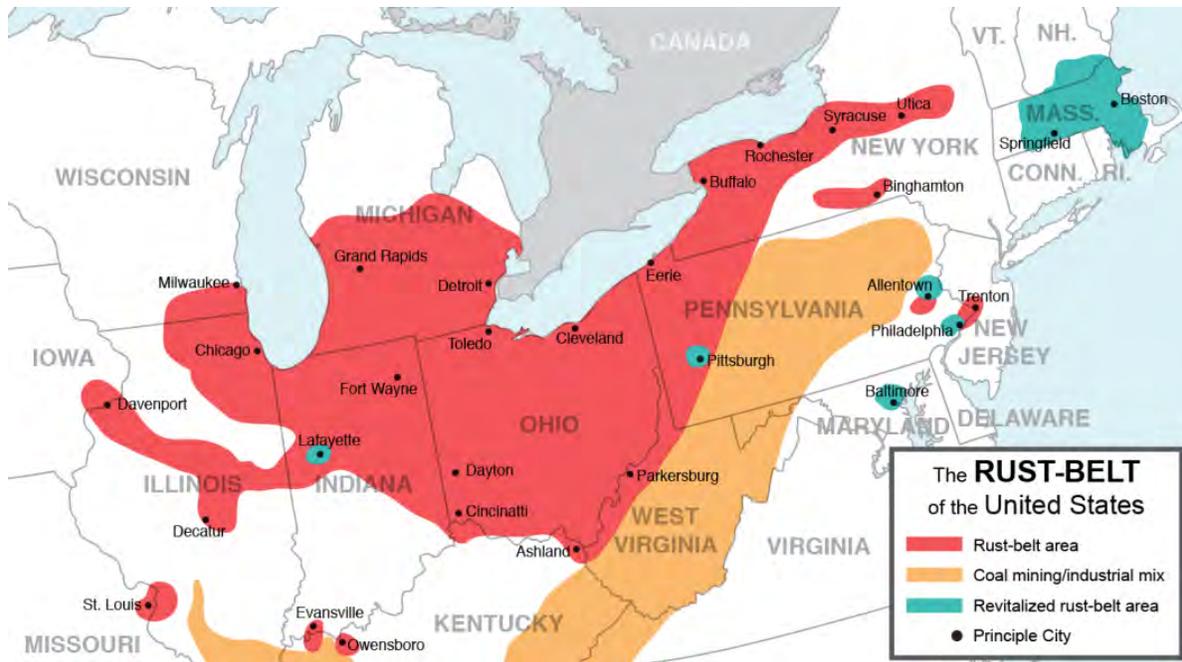


Figure 1.2. Map of US Rust-Belt

Thesis Statement

We are living in the post-industrial age. For many communities in the US who grew from dependence on industrialization and manufacturing, the utopian state of the 1950s is a distant dream or forgotten memory (Wilson & Wouters, 2003.) Once thriving communities have become depressed cities riddled with abandoned factories, condemned buildings, poverty under-employment and unemployment. They have a large population of jobless, skilled and unskilled laborers and have few opportunities for those with professional skill and advanced education. What is the future of the growing numbers of rust-belt cities in the United States? Although there are some cases that provide hope for these cities, too often, we turn our backs on these small cities and dismiss their recovery as being too economic and resource intensive and therefore beyond saving. But there is rich history and culture worth preserving and opportunity in these communities for revitalization. Citizens of these communities need partners to assist them in identifying, envisioning and implementing these opportunities in order to grow and move into the future (Spinuzzi, 2005.)

Design Problem

Large-scale issues facing urban areas can often be described as wicked problems (Rittel and Webber, 1973.) Problems within rust-belt communities are compounded by economic depression, lack of opportunities and, at times, loss of identity. Due to their inclination towards a human-centered approach and non-linear process to addressing problems, designers are an appropriate choice for leading multi-disciplinary teams attempting to tackling wicked problems (Buchanan, 1992.)

Design thinking, a concept integral to design management, begins with a holistic examination of the system to gain understanding before converging to a more narrow focus. It is made successful by knowing the driving forces, organizational objectives and the motivating factors behind decision-making. Design management tools and processes—divergent, convergent and lateral thinking, mind mapping, affinitizing and judgment-free brainstorming—seek to foster new perceptions and continuous renewal of the points of view of industry, partners, customers, and community. It is this design thinking approach that will be used to address the revitalization of rust-belt communities in this study.

Research Questions

1. What is the rust belt?
2. How might opportunities for economic growth and revitalization in rust-belt communities, specifically Utica, be identified? What are the obstacles?
3. How have changing demographics shaped the history, culture and community of Utica? How might this change affect the future of the city?
4. Given current global and local trends and forces, what possible alternative futures could exist for Utica?

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify opportunities for transforming the growing number of rust-belt communities by conducting a case study on the city of Utica, located in Upstate New York. This inquiry will explore the history of the city as well as global and local trends and use scenario-planning tools to propose alternative futures for the community. The study will also examine opportunities for growth and design solutions for revitalization.

Summary

The following chapters document the research process of this study. Chapter Two provides a review of literature related to the topics of study. The literature is discussed in relation to four key constructs—the history of the rust-belt, social innovation, participatory design and scenario planning. Chapter Three outlines the methodology used for data collection and analyses and limitations of the study. The primary research methods for data collection included interviews, workshops and an online survey. Chapter Four provides a detailed description of data analysis, insights, and findings. Chapter Five describes the process of scenario planning using participatory design and explores the creation of future scenarios for the city of Utica. The chapter introduces alternative storylines for the growth and development of the city. The final chapter discusses final conclusions and directions for future research and presents the value proposition.

Industrial History of Utica

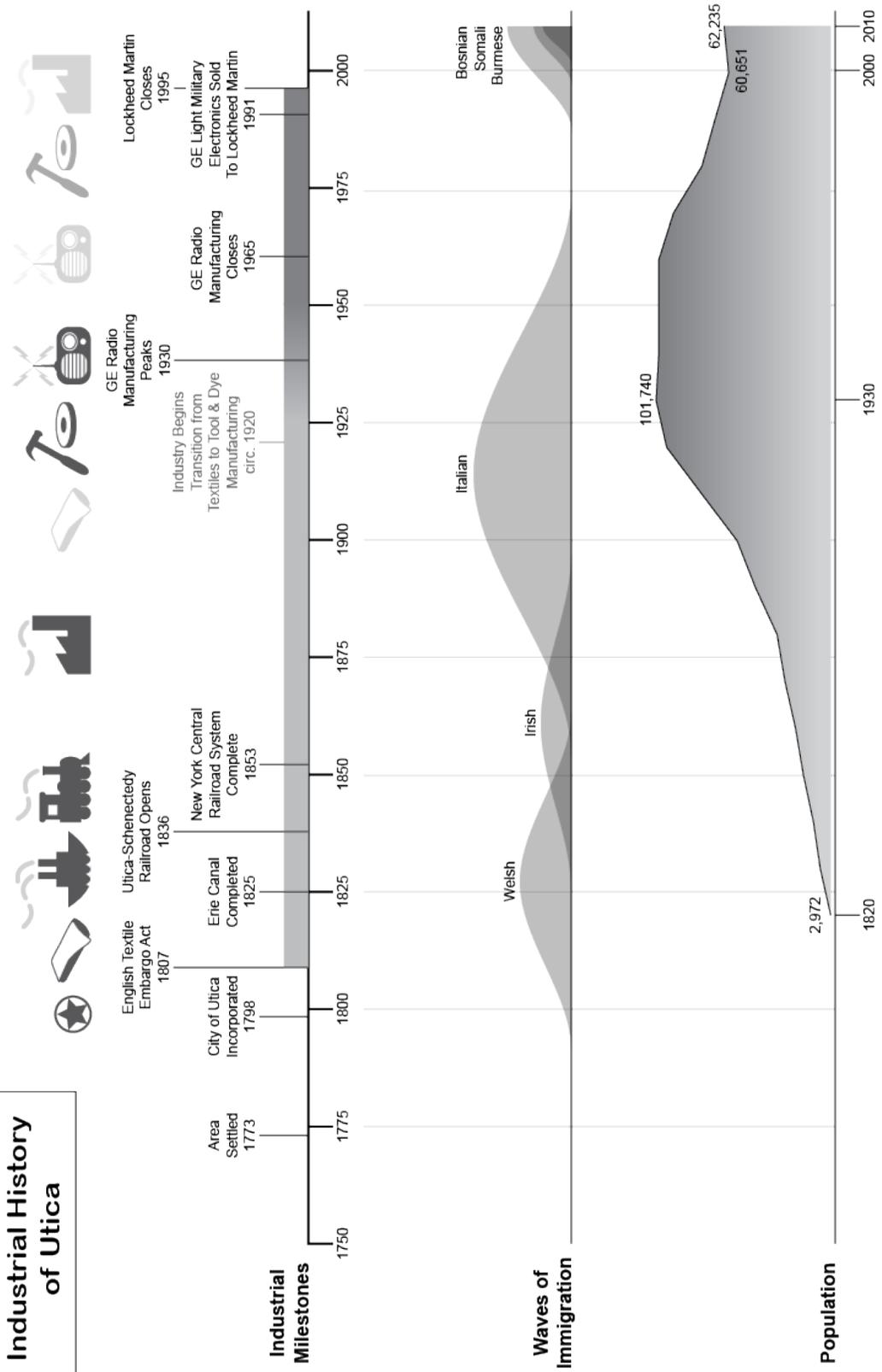


Figure 1.3. Timeline visualization of the industrial history of Utica

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In order to gain a more holistic foundational knowledge base for this study, a review of literature was conducted. This literature review is composed of four primary constructs—history and origins of the rust belt, social innovation, participatory design and scenario planning. These constructs map to the research questions to be addressed by this study. The secondary research will serve as the basis for defining the rust-belt in the United States. The research will discuss how social innovation can be used as a frame for defining and approaching rust-belt issues. Participatory design methods and case studies are referenced as examples to be used in this study. And lastly, scenario planning process and methods serve as a guide for the design solution and deliverable.

The Rust-belt

The rapid industrialization of the Northeastern United States was made possible through several large-scale infrastructure projects including the construction of the Erie Canal in 1825 and completion of the New York Central Railroad system in 1853. Both projects, connected the New York City port to the midwest through the Great Lakes and small manufacturing cities began to spring up along the route (Bottini and Davis, 2007.) The cities and manufacturing industry in the northeast grew through the industrial age of the US up until the 1950s. However, starting in the 1970s, manufacturing started migrating from the northeast and midwest to the American south and overseas to reduce costs.

The term post-industrial was first popularized by American sociologist Daniel Bell in the 1970s. In his book, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1976), Bell characterized a post-industrial society as a major shift from manufacturing to services. A post-industrial economy grows through the production of ideas as opposed to producing goods. With this economic shift also comes a shift in power from unionized, blue-collar workers for educated white-collar workers. The graphic below visualizes this shift from a manufacturing economy (goods) to a post-industrial economy (services.) This economic change occurred in the United States from the 1970s-1990s (Wilson and Wouters, 2003.)

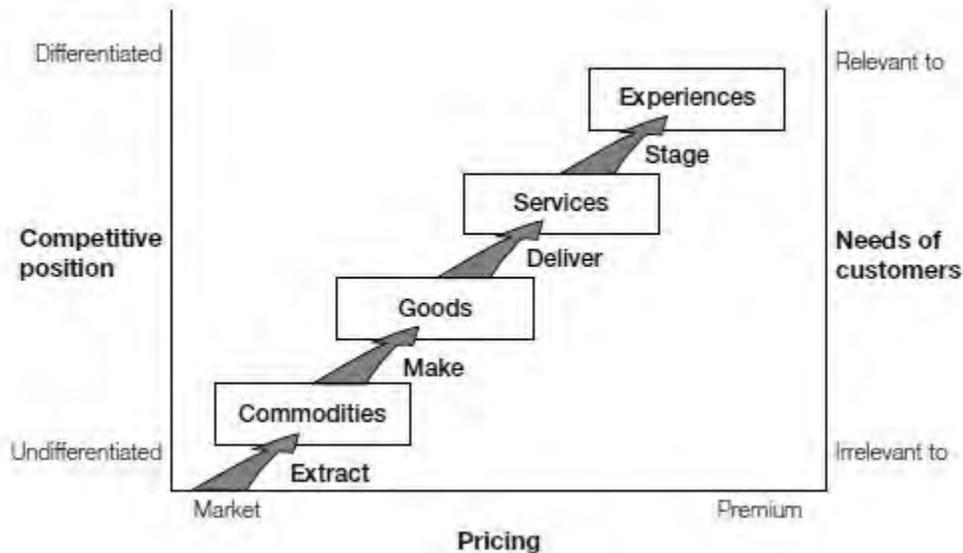


Figure 2.1. Progression of Economic Value (Pine & Gilmore, 1999)

The term “rust-belt” came into the public vernacular during the 1980s. As manufacturing moved out of the American northeast and midwest, factories lay abandoned and the former booming industrial sites, literally and metaphorically began to rust. For the purposes of this study, rust-belt is defined as a once heavily industrialized area containing older factories, particularly those that are marginally profitable or that have been closed. The US rust-belt stretches from Upstate New York, through Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Southern Michigan, Northern Indiana and parts of Illinois.

Social Innovation

Wicked Problem is a phrase originally used in social planning to describe “a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. Moreover, because of complex interdependencies, the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems” (Rittel and Webber, 1973.) Rittel used wicked problems as a way to describe large-scale social problems effecting a community or society. According to Rittel, there are text characteristics of a wicked problem:

1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem.
 - Defining wicked problems is itself a wicked problem.

2. Wicked problems have no stopping rule.
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but better or worse.
4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem.
5. Every solution to a wicked problem is a "one-shot operation"; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial and error, every attempt counts significantly.
6. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan.
7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique.
8. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.
9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution.
10. The planner has no right to be wrong.
 - Planners are liable for the consequences of the actions they generate.

Richard Buchanan expands on the concept of wicked problems and its relation to design thinking (1992.) Buchanan emphasizes the importance of multi-disciplinary teams when approaching wicked problems. Buchanan argues that while scientist may be the subject matter experts on social issues, it is designers that have the knowledge, experience and comfort level to address the problems using non-linear processes and abstract/creative thinking.

“...many scientist and business professionals, continue to find the idea of a linear model attractive, believing that it represents the only hope for a ‘logical’ understanding of the design process. However, some critics were quick to point out two obvious points of weakness: one, the actual sequence of design thinking and decision making is not a simple linear process; and two, the problems addressed by designers do not, in actual practice, yield to any linear analysis and synthesis yet proposed (Buchanan, 1992.)”

Buchanan’s article supports the argument that wicked problems can benefit from a designer perspective to defining and approaching the issues.

Several case studies have been conducted to specifically examine the problems of post-industrial, of rust-belt, cities. One such study was done on Syracuse, NY. Syracuse is a city of approximately 145,000 in population located 55 miles west of Utica. Syracuse has experience similar economic and population decline to Utica, though not as severely due to the presence and activity of Syracuse University. This study focuses primarily on the need to change the perceived image of rust-belt cities through rebranding. "To call a city "industrial" today in the United States is to associate it with a set of negative images: declining economic base, pollution, a city on the downward slide. Cities with more positive imagery are associated with the postindustrial era, the future, the new, the clean, the high-tech, the economically upbeat, and the socially progressive (Short, Benton, Luce, and Walton, 1997.)" The study suggests that "selling the image" of the city needs to come from within to manage the interests and concerns of local businesses and citizens. The problems of the city should be well defined and addressed. The city shouldn't try to hide its industrial past but should showcase it through projects that involve the revitalization of the downtown area. "The increasing mobility of capital and the growing competition between cities to attract capital is the economic backdrop to new rounds of civic boosterism, public relations campaigns, and the 'renaissance' of the downtown that now figure so largely in contemporary America (Short et al., 1997.)"

Effective solutions to wicked problems are often considered social innovations. For the purposes of this study, social innovation will be defined as new strategies, concepts, ideas and organizations that meet social needs of all kinds and that extend and strengthen civil society improving the viability, sustainability and resilience of the entire system.

Participatory Design

Many social innovation initiatives prove to be successful through the inclusion of a participatory design component or methodology. Participatory design is an approach to design that attempts to actively involve stakeholders in the design process. There is strong precedent for using participatory design in addressing urban issues. One such organization that takes this approach is Living Cities. Through the

values of collaboration, innovation, leadership and impact, Living Cities “harnesses the collective power of philanthropy and financial institutions to improve the lives of low-income people and the cities where they live (<http://www.livingcities.org/>, 2012.)” In an article for the Stanford Social Innovation Review (2011), Living Cities CEO, Ben Hecht states, “We needed to help cities build and sustain the right ecosystem of actors, public and private, who could combine resources, measure results, and adapt to changing conditions to solve their most pressing local problems.”

In his article, *Managing the Development Process: Community Strategies in Economic Revitalization* (1990), Ross Gittel uses four rust-belt cities as a case study to argue “an alternative approach to the problems of depressed industrial cities [by assessing] the role of local development initiatives undertaken by local citizens and public and private organizations, addressing the question of what depressed industrial areas employing various motivating, diagnostic, and organizing agents can do toward recovering economic vitality.” The comparative analysis of Gittel’s data suggested that “diagnosis, local organization, and citizen mobilization around community economic development are important. They can change community image, the attitudes and behavior of individuals and organizations, and the local investment climate.” Gittel debates that to create this climate of change, citizens need to feel empowered by being part of the problem definition and process for designing solutions.

While the above-mentioned authors argue the benefits of participatory design in addressing social issues, Clay Spinuzzi offers suggestions for methods and best practices. Spinuzzi breaks participatory design methodology into three stages; 1) initial exploration of work, 2) discovery processes and 3) prototyping (2004.) The first stage is comprised of traditional ethnographic methods, including observations, interviews, and artifact collection. The second stage involves heavy contact and interaction between the research and participants. Methods in this stage can include “organizational games, role-playing games, organizational toolkits, future workshops, storyboarding and workflow models and interpretation sessions.” The final stage involves the researcher and participants working together to model and test possible design solutions.

With participatory design it is important to not just assess the final solution but also the design process itself. As will the process, users should be included in the evaluation of the process and results (Spinuzzi, 2004.) Spinuzzi states that participatory design is an iterative process and therefore it is important to have “continual participation” and “sustained reflection.” While not without its limitations, participatory design is tested and proven methodology for design research and problem solving.

Scenario Planning

Participatory design methods can be used in conjunction with scenario planning. Scenario planning is a strategic planning process of visualizing what future conditions or events are probable, what their consequences or effects would be like, and how to respond to, or benefit from them. One of the fathers of scenario planning is Pierre Wack. Wack used scenario thinking to change the mindset of executives at Royal Dutch Shell and allowed them to prepare for the oil crisis in the 1970s. The use of scenarios, gave life to different global, economic and political factors. The constructed narratives had strong impact and made the Royal Dutch Shell executives take notice, allowing them to make informed decisions and plan accordingly (Schwartz, 1991.) Since then, scenario planning has been used in making strategic business and planning decisions in the public and private sector.

The process of scenario planning begins with research to identify forces and drivers—factors that can influence the players in a scenario. The forces and drives can then be categorized for organization and analysis. Several sources recommend the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological), STEEP (Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political) or STEEEPA (Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Educational, Political, Aesthetic) as frameworks for identifying and organizing forces and drivers (Van der Heijden, 2005.) In the *Scenario Planning Handbook*, it is suggested that each force and drivers is evaluated on its level of impact and degree of uncertainty. The forces and drives with the highest impact and uncertainty for the basis of the scenarios (Ralston and Wilson, 2006.)

The forces and drivers are weaved together and expanded to create alternate narratives. "Scenario thinking is an art not a science... Scenarios are not conceived of one at a time. You develop a range of two or three potential futures, allowing you to address an array of possibilities and rehearse your responses to each of them (Schwartz, 1991.)" The ultimate product of scenario planning is compelling stories. "The stories need to be provocative, memorable, eliciting a rich imagery (Van der Heijden, 2005.)" The final narratives should resonate with the audience to motivate change and effective decision making.

This review of secondary sources will guide the primary research methodology, data analysis and final design. In this study, wicked problems is used as a way to frame the social issues plaguing rust-belt communities which include lack of employment opportunities, poverty, failing infrastructure and budget problems. The methodology and processes described in the following chapters are approached as a potential social innovation as a way of addressing wicked problems. Participatory design methods are employed in primary research data collection and the final stages of the design process. The artifact created from this study include alternative future scenarios and stories for the case study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Approach

The purpose of this study is to model a process of participatory design and scenario planning to address the growing social issues in small rust-belt cities. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method data was collected during the course of this study. Partnerships were formed and data was collected from current residents of the city of the Utica, New York, and surrounding suburbs through three primary research methods—a broad survey of residents, interviews of key individuals in the community and targeted workshops. The area that the field research encompassed is known as the Utica-Rome Metropolitan Statistical Area, as defined by the United States Census Bureau. As of the 2010 census, the area had a population of 299,397 and encompassed two counties—Oneida and Herkimer. The cities in the defined area are Utica (population 62,235) and Rome (population 33,725.)

The data collected from the primary research was analyzed through various methods described in detail in Chapter Four. The field research was supplemented with secondary data found in local news and social media outlets. Themes, insights and findings from the data were affinitized and clustered in a scenario planning matrix (Ralston and Wilson, 2006.) This data served as the basis for the final scenarios created as the result of this study.

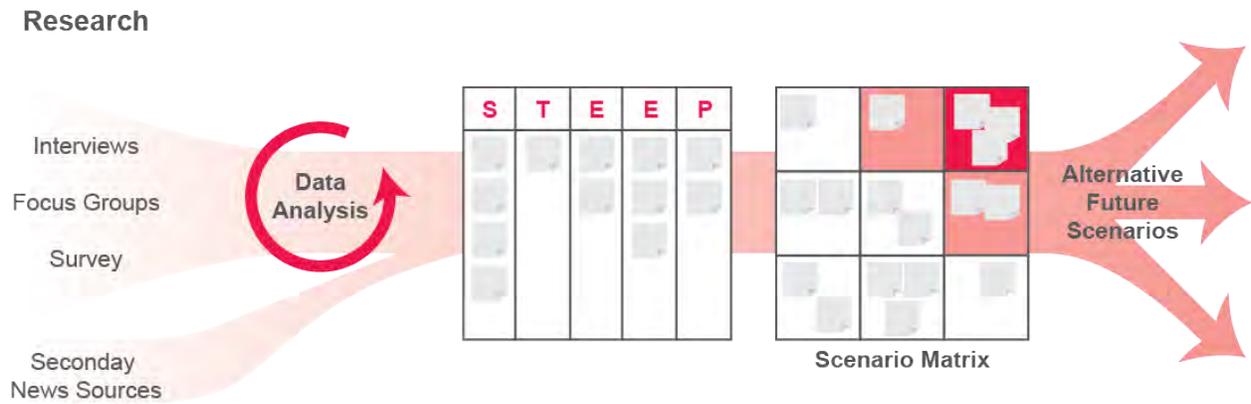


Figure 3.1. Visualization of the research approach

Research Timeline

The majority of the primary field research was conducted in December 2011. The timing was such that the local elections were completed and the researcher would have adequate access to the community members.

Develop research plan	October 2011
Collect resources	November 2011
Schedule interviews and workshops	November -December 2011
Conduct interviews	December 9-29, 2011
Facilitate workshops	December 15 & 19, 2011
Design and test survey	March 2011
Survey open	April-June 2011
Begin data analysis	May 2011

Figure 3.2. Research timeline

Methods of Data Collection

Interviews

Five interviews were conducted during the course of this study as a method of field research. Three of those interviews were of local politicians—the Mayor-elect of Utica, an elected Common Council Member and the New York State Assemblyman for District 116. The elected officials were all newly elected and did not have strong political backgrounds. Two of the officials were local professionals in their 30s with young families. All of the officials had grown up in Utica and had strong ties to the area.

The remaining two interviews were conducted with young creative professionals. Both interviewees are advocates for the growth and development of the greater-Utica area and promote events and organizations through social media. The interviewees are also deemed to be super connectors. Super connectors are individuals who maintain contact with large numbers of other people, businesses and organization from diverse background, interests and industries. The two interviewees qualify as super connectors through their involvement in various community organizations and events and their strong social media presence in the community.

All interviews were audio and video recorded. In addition to the recordings, the interviewer took notes during the sessions and later transcribed the recordings. A list of interview questions and participants can be found in Appendix A and B respectively.

Workshops

Two workshops were facilitated during the course of this study. Each group was comprised of educated professionals aged 25-40 years who were current residents and had lived and worked in the greater Utica area for at least five years. Group A had eight participants and Group B had five participants. In addition to the parameters previously outlined, the members of Group B were creative professionals, working in design and fine art businesses.

The workshop participants were asked to engage in four activities conducted during a two-hour period. The first was a SWOT analysis of the greater-Utica area. Each participant was asked to write strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on separate post-it notes. The group then came together to affinitize, categorize and name the clusters within each section. The second activity was a cultural mapping. Participants were provided with a blank map of downtown Utica. They were asked to identify significant businesses, events and points of interaction. They were then asked to add positive assets that were no longer in downtown and assets they would like to see in the area in the future.

For the third activity the group was presented with two photographs of abandoned properties. The first was a storefront in Downtown Utica, the second an abandoned 16-acre industrial property in the north-east section of the city near Route 90 (NYS Thruway.) The group was asked to individually brainstorm uses for the properties that would be a positive asset to the community. The group then came together to cluster the ideas under common themes and add to the collective. In the final activity, participants were given two index cards and asked to complete the following sentences:

1. In 20 years from now, I *think* Utica will be...
2. In 20 years from now, I *hope* Utica will be...



Figure 3.3. Photos of workshop activities

Survey

An online survey was designed and distributed to current and former residents of the Utica area to collect demographic information and relational data on activities, investment and vision of the community. The sample for the survey was as broad as possible with the goal of encompassing a large demographic set. Any person currently living in the greater Utica area was a potential respondent. The survey was distributed via email and Facebook and posted on the blog associated with this study. A link to the blog post also appeared on the blog for the local newspaper, the Observer Dispatch. The survey data gathered a macro view of citizens' feelings on the current and future conditions of the city as well as informing directions for further research and exploration. The survey was created using Google Forms and was active for 3 months. During that time period, 127 responses were collected. Google forms generated a spreadsheet of survey responses for review and analysis. (A full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix C.)

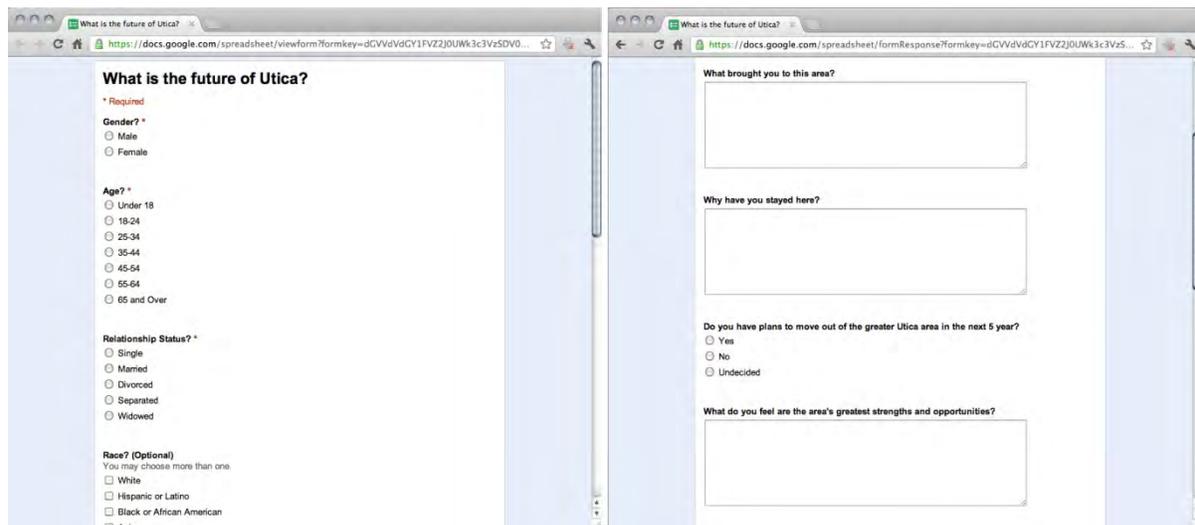


Figure 3.4. Screen shots of online survey

	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
	Gender?	Relationship Status?	Race? (Optional)	What is your highest completed education level?	What is your current employment status	What is your current household income?	Do you have plans to move out of the greater Utica area in the next 5 year?	What brought you to this area?	What do you feel are the area's greatest strengths and opportunities?	What do you think is currently happening in the area that could lead to significant changes in the near future?	If the greater Utica area were an automobile, what kind of car would it be? Why?	How long have you lived in the greater Utica area?
13									strong in food + diversity people, we have room for more businesses to come.	layoffs, unemployment	ford focus. looks nice, but cheap + has potential.	More than 20 years
14	Male	Single	White	Some College	Employed for wages	\$20,000 - \$39,999	Undecided	born here	Location is our strength and the proposed Nano technology center will be our future.	The SUNY-IT College and the Future Technology center.	A Yugo.....LOL. Bosnian, Vietnamese, Russian	More than 20 years
15	Male	Married	White	2-Year Degree (Associate's)	Retired	\$60,000 - \$79,999	No	Born and raised in Utica, NY				More than 20 years
16	Male	Married	White	Some College	Employed for wages	\$80,000 - \$99,999						More than 20 years
17	Female	Single	White	Master's Degree	Employed for wages	\$80,000 - \$99,999	No	Born in the area.	Community, e.g. Heart Run & Walk, Boilermaker	Charter school proposals School consolidation discussion New mayor in Utica Congressional redistricting Census changes (rise in immigrants)	Depends on what part of the greater Utica area you are in. In downtown Utica it would not be made in America and would probably be a baseline model. In some communities it would be a luxury car.	More than 20 years
18	Male	Single	White	4-Year Degree (Bachelor's)	Employed for wages	More than \$100,000	Yes	School	Historic architecture, small but committed arts community, numerous colleges in vicinity.	There is a more progressive civil society forming around "The Other Side" in South Utica. I think harnessing their ideas and energy would benefit the city greatly.	The rusty car sitting out on a lawn in New York Mills. It's near Notre Dame school on Bursstone road... Go check it out, really, a porcho, it has	6-10 years

Figure 3.5. Spreadsheet of survey responses

Limitations of the Study

While there is significant overlap in the issues plaguing rust-belt cities, each community is unique. This investigation was focused on a single case study with the goal of gaining an in-depth understanding of a single community. This study originally planned for greater numbers of interviews and workshops; however, given limitations of time and access, a smaller sample size for the research protocols was used. In order to compensate for the smaller sample size, study participants were selected based on criteria including age, education, employment status, years living in the Utica area and short-term plans to remain in the area. While the replication of research protocols and methodology is possible, broader application of the data collected during this study is limited.

Chapter Four: Analysis and Findings

Methods for Analysis

Primary research data was collected using various methods as outlined in chapter three including a broad general survey, two focus groups and five individual interviews. This contextual inquiry was used to address the questions of opportunities and obstacles to economic growth in the city and how the changing demographics have shaped the present conditions and possible future. The data sets were first examined separately, and then combined to identify findings that will inform the design of future scenarios for the Utica area. Various manual and digital tools were used to organize data and find patterns. A working wall was created to display information for easy viewing and analysis and to share and review data with colleagues and advisors.



Figure 4.1. Primary research working wall

Interviews

The five interviews—three local politicians and two super connectors in creative fields—were video recorded. A super connector is an individual who maintains contact with thousands of people in different social, professional, and/or special interest networks and knows those individuals well enough to initiate personal contact with them. Hand-written notes were also taken during the interviews to serve as a guide for the conversation and later transcription and reflection. The video recordings were later transcribed and coded. The sections of the interview were coded by question, topic and theme. Field notes were also analyzed in conjunction with the transcriptions. The three interviews of politicians were compared to find patterns and common themes in conversation. The two interviews with super connectors were analyzed in a similar fashion. The data sets were affinized to find patterns and discern common themes. Quotes from the interviewees supporting the themes were highlighted, recorded on index cards and posted on the working wall. The two interview sets were then compared to one another.



Figure 4.2. Notes from interview with Palmieri



Figure 4.3. Video capture of interview with Palmieri

Workshops

Data from each focus group was captured on easel paper, post-it notes and index cards. The sessions and artifacts were also photo documented. The SWOT analyses were affinized and categorized within each group. The results from both groups were then combined and condensed into a single SWOT document representing strong themes presented by the groups.



Figure 4.4. Focus group summary of SWOT analysis

During the mapping exercise, participants were asked to add, locations, events, activities, memories and ideas to a map of downtown Utica. In the property development exercise, the participants were presented with two vacant locations and asked to brainstorm around development opportunities for the properties. The mapping and property development documentation from the separate workshops were compared to one another, based on quantity, themes and diversity of ideas, and similarities and differences were

Surveys

Google Forms was used to create and distribute the online survey to a broad audience. The survey was distributed via email, Facebook and the blog maintained for this study. The survey was available to any current resident of the greater Utica area and 126 responses were collected. The survey data was automatically recorded and cataloged in a Google Spreadsheet (similar to Microsoft Excel) for easy viewing, sorting and analysis. The first nine questions of the survey were multiple choice questions related to demographics of the survey respondents. (A full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix C.) The quantitative data was exported to Excel and graphs were generated from the data. Data from each question was analyzed individually. Data from two or more fields was also combined into a single chart for deeper comparison and analysis.

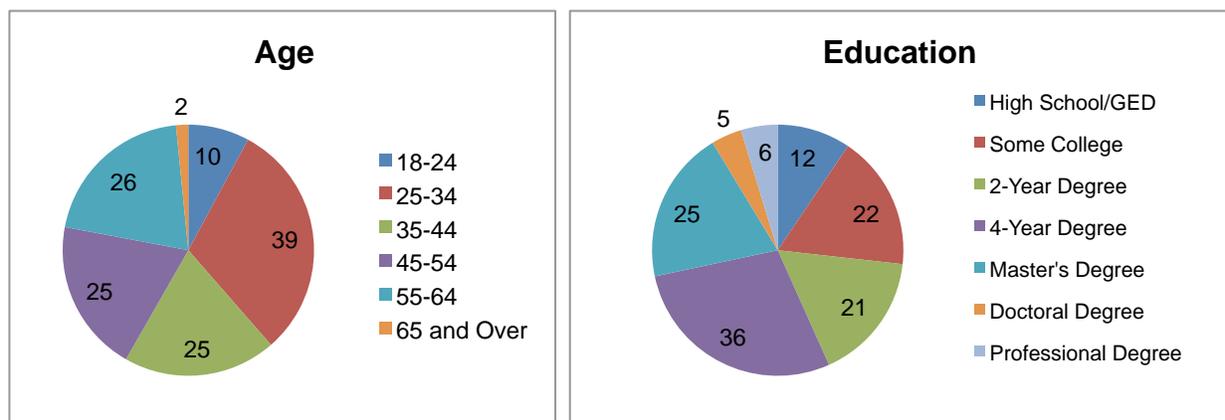


Figure 4.8. Graphs from survey demographics

Questions 10-17 of the survey were comprised of open-ended questions. The qualitative data for each question was visually reviewed and coded. The text was also imported into Wordle and WORDij. Word clouds, visual and text analysis of the responses to each question were generated (as with the focus group responses) for further comparison and analysis.

Survey Questions:

10. What brought you to this area?
11. Why have you stayed here?
12. Do you have plans to move out of the greater Utica area in the next 5 year?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Undecided

13. What do you feel are the area's greatest strengths and opportunities?
14. First, what do you think are the biggest issues that need to be IMMEDIATELY addressed in area?
15. Second, what issues do you think need to be addressed in the area within the next 10 years?
16. What do you think is currently happening in the area that could lead to significant changes in the near future? What news stories are generating "buzz"?
17. If the greater Utica area were an automobile, what kind of car would it be? Why?



Figure 4.9. Word cloud from survey question 11

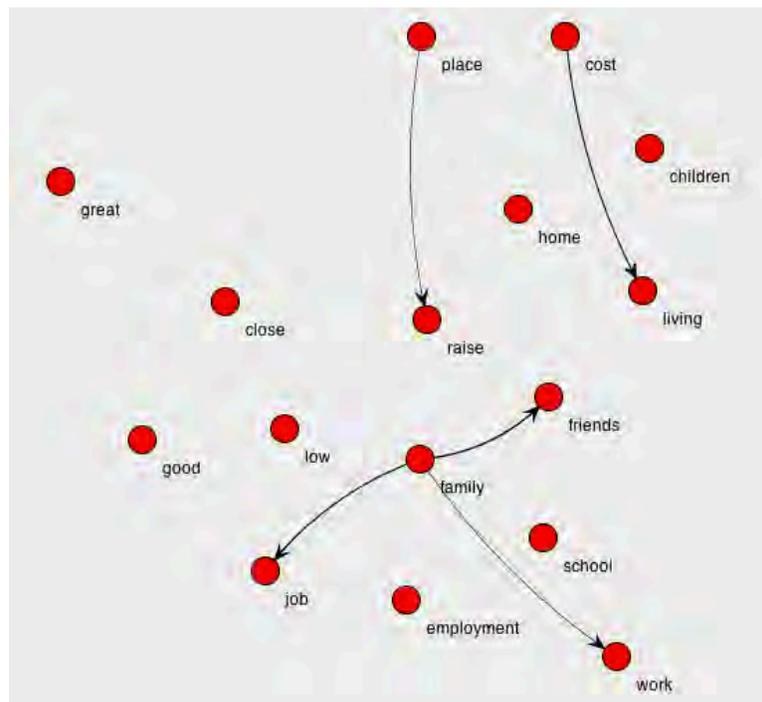


Figure 4.10. WORDij visual analysis of survey question 11

In addition to the visual representation of words and relationship (Figure 4.10) WORDij also produces a list of words and their frequency of use (Figure 4.11.) The words and pairs are ordered with the most frequently appearing at the top. Word pairs provide a better understanding of the context in which words are used and word associations.

Words	Word	Pairs
family	family	friends
job	family	job
friends	cost	living
area	family	work
home	place	raise
great	family	home
good	family	employment
place	family	good
cost	family	close
living	family	cost
love	family	living
work	family	great
close	job	school
utica	friends	family
not	place	children
community	good	job
leave	low	cost
school	low	living
life	great	family
children	great	place
employment	raise	children

Figure 4.11. WORDij word and word pair analysis of survey question 11

Findings

Interviews

Lack of employment opportunities was a large focus of the interviews and mentioned by all 5 of the interviewees.

“So many young people leave the area, because its very difficult to find a job in an area that has been so economically depressed for the past three or four decades.”

While the politicians spoke of the need to attract business to the area, the super connectors spoke of supporting and promoting small local businesses in the community.

“We need to market the area and we need to bring business back. If I were in the urban development office, I would send a letter to every corporation within 100-200 mile, to say ‘look, if you’re expanding, come to Utica I have something to show you.’”

“There are people putting on events, benefits, there are businesses putting on events, things to get people out of their houses. New local businesses are springing up. And I’d really rather visit a local business than a big chain. All of these great things are happening the buzz is just not reaching the masses.”

Without provocation from the interviewer, all three of the local politicians, mentioned the need to overcome the history of political corruption in the city. The “friends and family plan” was mentioned multiple times in the interviews. This is a phrase familiar to locals, describing the past nepotism of local officials, who promoted friend and family into position for which they are not qualified. The officials acknowledged the damage such actions have caused to the city and the need to not repeat past mistakes. The politicians also spoke about the need for collaboration and non-partisan attitudes among city officials and between local and state officials in order to make effective, positive changes.

“I am no stranger to wanting to help my family first, but what I don’t understand is helping my family at the expense of someone else while my family may not be qualified.”

In contrast to the politicians, the super connectors spoke about more grassroots efforts to revitalize the city. The connectors spoke at lengths about the local music, arts and culture scene, diversity of the city

and successful local, small businesses. Both connectors expressed these elements as the keys to revitalization in the area.

“There is always a ton of things to do. There are clubs and organizations. There is a whole group of people who are compelled to this area for live music. Last weekend we had the ‘Indie Garage Sale.’ There are ski clubs, professional organizations, Saranac Thursday, food and music and cultural events happening all the time.”

Many of the comments made during the interviews supported a focus on fixing existing problems and marketing the area over focusing on non-linear growth and expansion. This was indicative of finding that would later come from the workshops and survey.

Workshops

As was consistent with the interview and survey data, during the SWOT analysis the workshop participants unanimously listed the lack of employment opportunities as the greatest weakness of the Utica area. A theme that continuously arose was citizens’ feelings that Utica is a caring community and “great place to raise a family” that many of their friends and family would choose to call home. However, they felt that many educated young professional were forced to relocate outside of the area due to the lack of opportunities.

During the property development exercises conducted in the workshop, the participants showed little creative or out-of-the-box thinking around brainstorming development opportunities in the city. The participants seemed too focused on current issues to envision a future radically different than the current state of the city. This short-term focus suggests a lack of vision in the community.

The concept of branding or rebranding the area to encourage tourism was also a common theme across the three research protocols. The following quote was written as part of the future visioning exercise in the focus groups:

“In 20 years from now, I hope Utica will be a thriving artist and young business community with a plethora of shops, eateries, bars, entertainment. Revive the manufacturing facilities and textile factories. The city would be rebranded through downtown and return to the greatness we heard about when our parents were kids – a booming main street with lots of business and activity.”

Participants in the survey and focus groups also commented on the current brand of Utica as “The Gateway to the Adirondacks.” Utica is geographically located just south of the Adirondack National Park in New York and is a main roadway access point to the park. However, most respondents felt the brand was in name only, as the city and local businesses do not take advantage of the ready-made tourism market.

Survey

Some unexpected insights in terms of the Utica’s population and attitudes on the current state of the city came from the survey data. For example, while analyzing the demographic data, it was discovered that there is a generational disparity in employment of the city’s population (see figure 4.12.) The majority of respondents aged 25-34 indicated having a Bachelor’s degree or higher and their average salary amounted to \$62,000. While the majority of respondents in the 55-64 age range had less than 4-years of college education but had an average salary of \$85,000. This generational disparity is a symptom of the lack of professional jobs that was outlined as a strong area of concern by survey respondents.

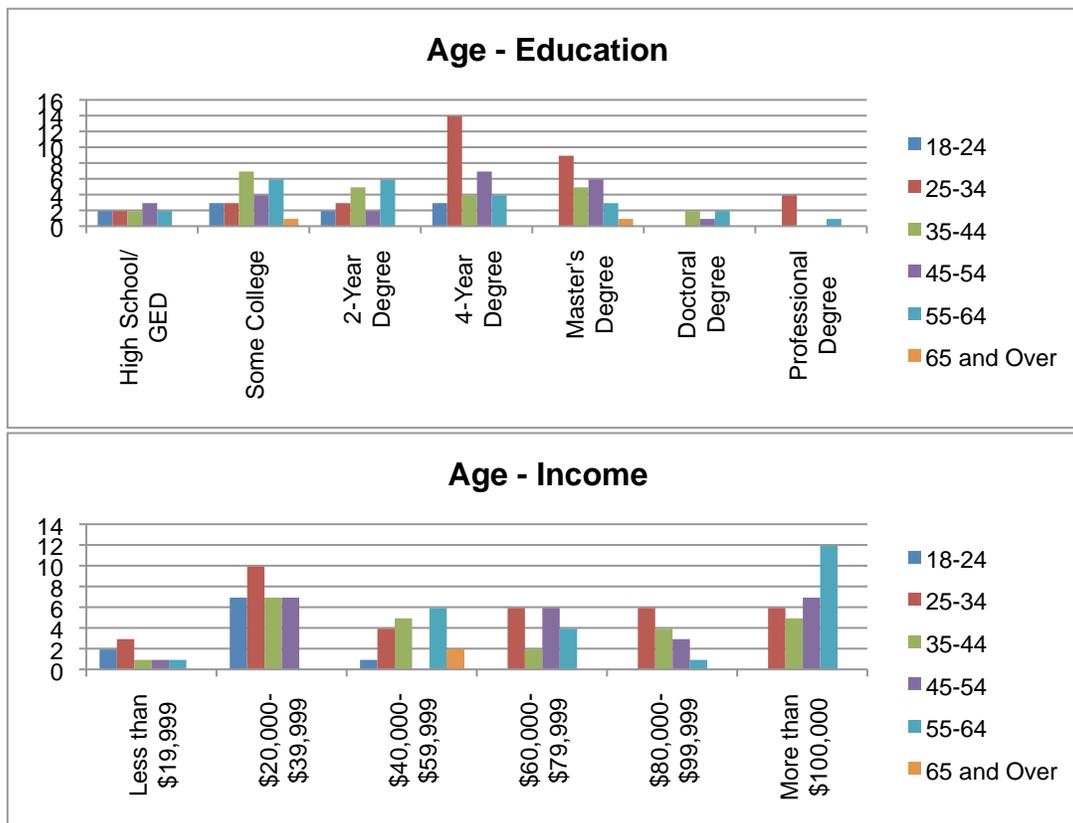


Figure 4.12. Survey demographic data on Age compared to Education and Income

The final survey question asked, “If the greater Utica area were an automobile, what kind of car would it be? Why?” A diverse set of answers was given but captured a common sentiment:

“Utica is like an old, rusty Cadillac. It’s a reliable, American classic. It’s seen better days but has potential and could be great again.”

The citizens of the city see Utica's situation as dire but they are not without hope for a changed future.



Figure 4.14 Utica as an automobile metaphor

Forces & Drivers

The STEEP model—an acronym for Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental and Political—is knowledge management framework and analysis tool used to evaluate various external factors impacting a business or organization. Forces and drivers are key factors, used in the scenario planning process, that have potential to shape or change the future of direction of a business or organization (Ralston and Wilson, 2006.) Through the analysis of the primary research, forces and drivers were identified. Additional forces and drivers were included from secondary research and local news stories reported after the primary data was collected. The forces and drivers were written on post-it notes and organized under the STEEP framework.



4.15. Affinitizing to develop STEEP

The forces and drivers were organized with related and/or influencing factors aligned horizontally. The forces and drivers were vertically organized with the most frequently mentioned factors appearing at the top of the list. As previously stated, the lack of jobs was seen as the largest issue facing the city of Utica across all research protocols. Therefore, employment and related factors such as development of a Nano-technology center, the brain drain and influence of newly elected officials appears at the top of the chart. Where as the merger of the local hospitals, which has strong potential impact on the area, but was not announced until after the research was collected, appears at the bottom of the chart.

Social	Technological	Economic	Environmental	Political
Brain Drain	Nano-Tech Center Chip Plant Rome Labs	Generation Income Gap Under-employment Young Prof. Poverty Line 25%		Newly Elected Officials History Political Corruption
Prison Closing Drug Crime				Cuts to Police/ Fire Depts.
Climate (4 seasons) Gateway to ADK Outdoor Tourism			Hydro-Fracking	
Growing "Arts" District Food Culture Immigrant Population Central Location Strong Family Connection Strong Sense of Community	Telecommuting	Affordable Housing		City's Master Plan City Branding (rebranding)
	Failing City Infrastructure	City on Verge of Bankruptcy Drop in National Investment Rating	"Brown-fields" Rust 2 Green	
Hospital Merger				

4.16. STEEP diagram

Design Opportunities

The major insight gained from the analysis of the primary research is that the citizens and local officials of Utica *can't see the forest through the trees*. The members of the community are so overwhelmed by the immediate problems that the city faces (lack of job opportunities, history of political corruption, loss of identity, budget cuts, failing city infrastructure), they cannot envision and plan or prepare for alternative future paths. The community is very close-knit and the citizens are dedicated to and protective of the city. They want to stay in the area, raise a family and preserve the city's unique culture and history, but they recognize the lack of employment opportunities and general economic depression are resulting in a brain drain of young, educated professional and a limited number of small, local businesses. The community does not feel empowered or inspired to make changes, as they can't see past the current problems to envision a creative alternative path.

A potential opportunity lies in partnering with citizens of the greater Utica area and working through a strategic planning process. Creative, non-linear thinking informed by findings and insights from this study have the potential to empower the community to envision alternative future scenarios and pose possible solutions to the “wicked problems” facing the city (Buchanan, 1992.) Scenario planning—a strategic planning process of visualizing what future conditions or events are probable, what their consequences or effects would be like, and how to respond to, or benefit from them—and participatory design methods can be used to inform and inspire the approach to address the revitalization of the city.

Chapter Five: Design Concept Development

Design Development Methods

The basis for the possible future scenarios of Utica comes from the forces and drives identified through primary and secondary research. To identify leading factors, the forces and drivers were placed in a 3x3 matrix using a scale of low to high “impact” and “uncertainty” (Ralston and Wilson, 2006.) The impact axis measures the potential influence or effect a force or driver can have on the city’s future. The uncertainty axis measures the multitude of directions or limits in knowledge of the influence of a particular factor. Those forces and drivers that fall into the boxes of highest impact and uncertainty, serve as the foundation of the scenarios.

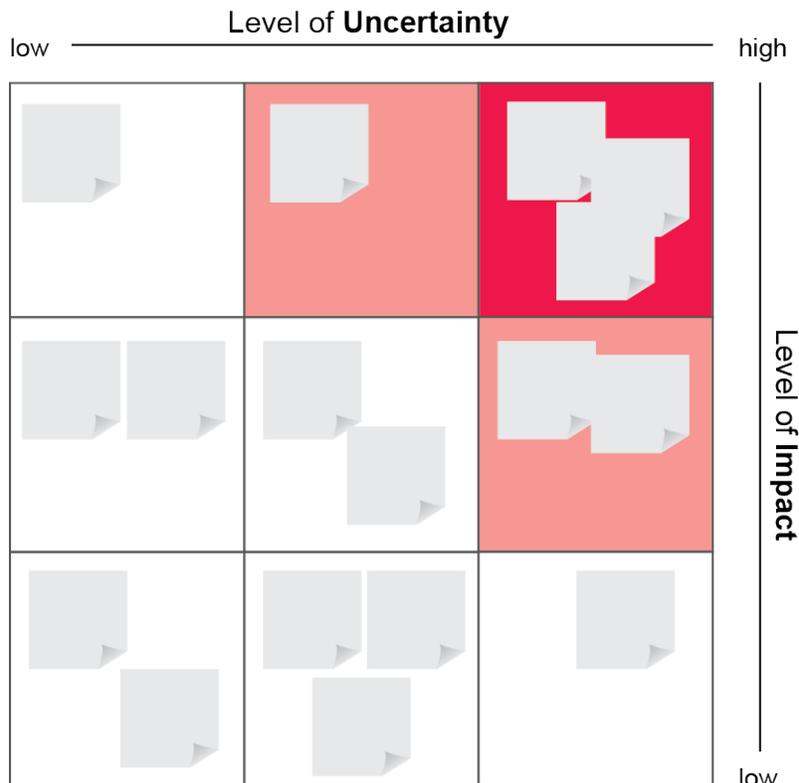


Figure 5.1. Impact vs Uncertainty Matrix

After placing the forces and drivers into the matrix, it was interesting to note certain patterns that emerged. The social factors had the highest level of impact, while the environmental factors had the lowest. A similar relationship occurred with technological and political forces and drivers—the technological factors having a lower degree of uncertainty and the political factors clustered in higher uncertainty boxes. The location/relationships of the factors as they appeared in the STEEP framework and the degree to which they were commented on by study participants did not seem to have any effect to their placement in the 3x3 matrix of impact and uncertainty. This can be explained by the participants focus on immediate problems and not long-term impact or development of the area.

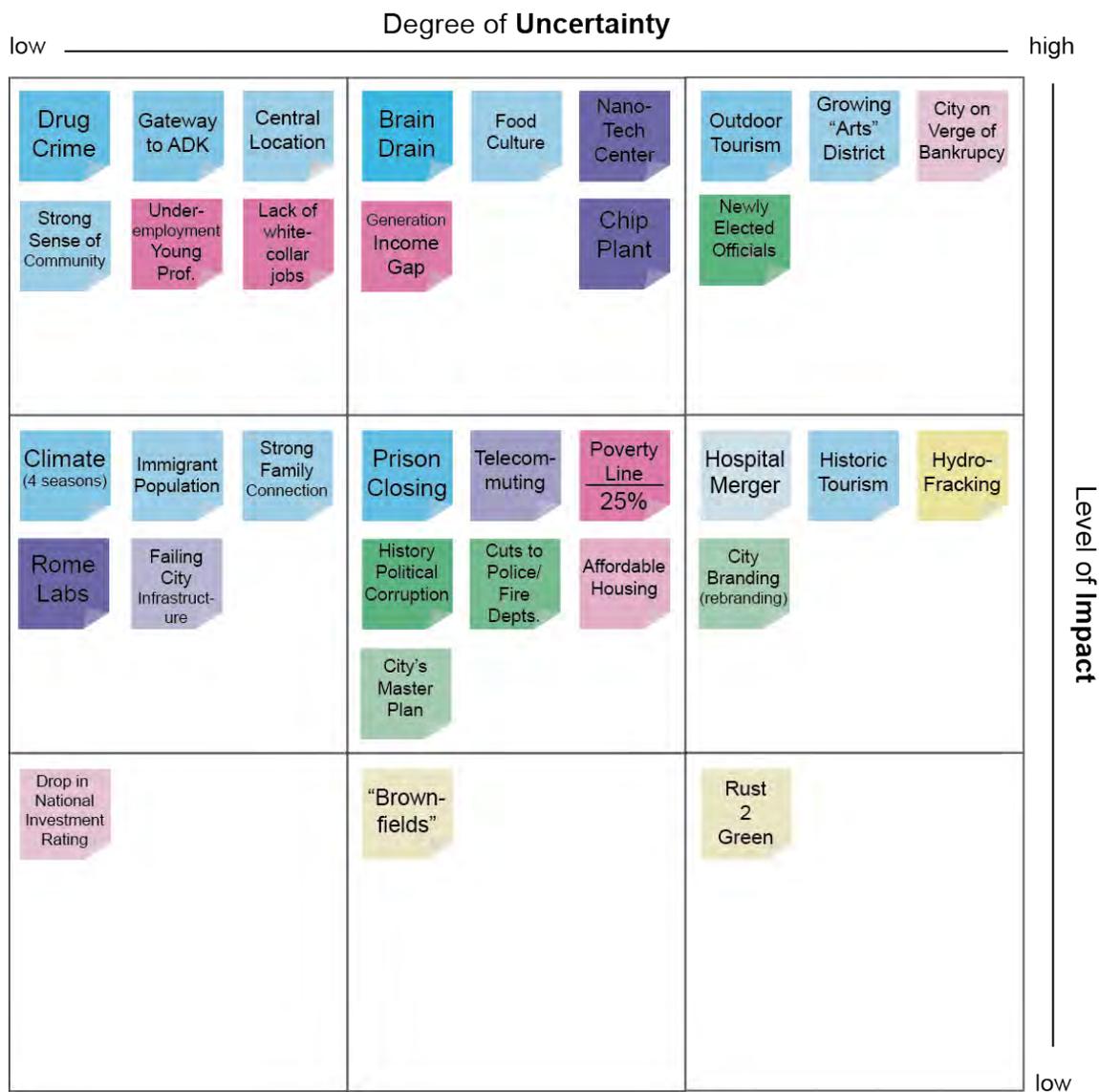


Figure 5.2. Completed Impact vs Uncertainty Matrix

The forces and drivers with the highest degree of uncertainty and level of impact and consequently, those that will serve as the basis for the scenarios are as follows:

- **Social**

- **Outdoor Tourism** – the area is geographically located just south of the Adirondack National Park and benefits from a 4-season climate. The Adirondack Park receives 7-10 million visitors a year, most of whom participate in outdoor activities (camping, hiking, fishing, skiing, etc) and many of whom travel through the Utica area en route to the park.
- **Growing Arts District** – a portion of the west-side of the city is turning into an arts district centering around the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute and Museum. Working artists are moving into renovated spaces, galleries and cafes have opened, a new Player's Theater was constructed and local businesses have seen growing patronage (Barber, 2012).
- **Brain Drain** – brain drain is the emigration of highly trained or educated people from a particular location. Often this trend is symptomatic of economic hardship but can have further-reaching impact and implications.
- **Food Culture** – the area has long been known for its local Italian restaurants, deli's and wholesalers, but with the growing immigrant population a more diverse culinary selection has become available. The local Slow Food chapter has organized local food tours and promoted local farms. A more formal culinary tourism initiative has yet to be created.
- **Historic Tourism** – the area is rich in history with settlements dating from the 1700s, battlefields and forts from the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars, the Erie Canal and New York Central Railroad.
- **Hospital Merger** – In late 2011, it was announced that the two hospitals in Utica, Faxton-St. Luke's and St. Elizabeth's, would be merging. As of the completion of this study, a detailed plan for the merger has not been released. (Roth, 2012)

- **Technological**
 - **Nano-technology Center / Chip Plant** – A NanoCenter has been proposed to live on the SUNYIT campus in Utica. The center would offer 900 blue and white collar jobs and a partnership with the college to train and employ graduates (Bader, 2011). As of the completion of this study, construction on the NanoCenter has not begun.
- **Economic**
 - **City on the verge of bankruptcy** – the city’s 2011-2012 ran over by \$640,000 and most of the fund balance has been used to cover other expenses resulting in significant cuts to police and fire departments, education and city maintenance.
 - **Generational Income Disparity** – one finding from this study was the gap in income between educated young professionals (25-34 years) and their less-educated but much higher earning counterparts in the 55-64 age range. This generational disparity is a symptom of the lack of professional jobs and upward mobility in the area.
- **Environmental**
 - **Hydro-fracking** – the greater Utica is part of the area included as a possible hydro-fracking site in New York State. As of the completion of this study, legislation on how and where hydro-fracking can occur has not been passed (Kaplan, 2012).
- **Political**
 - **Newly elected officials** – The 2011 elections brought new faces to the local government and several young, educated professional. Many of the officials have tried to distance themselves from the past corruption, promising transparency and collaboration.
 - **City Branding (rebranding)** – the city of Utica has had several monikers including *Sin City*, *Second-Chance City*, *Renaissance City*, and *Gateway to the Adirondacks*. The data analysis from this study showed that residents feel that these “brands” were in name only. The community needs to capitalize on its strengths and opportunities and brand the city accordingly to change internal and external perceptions.

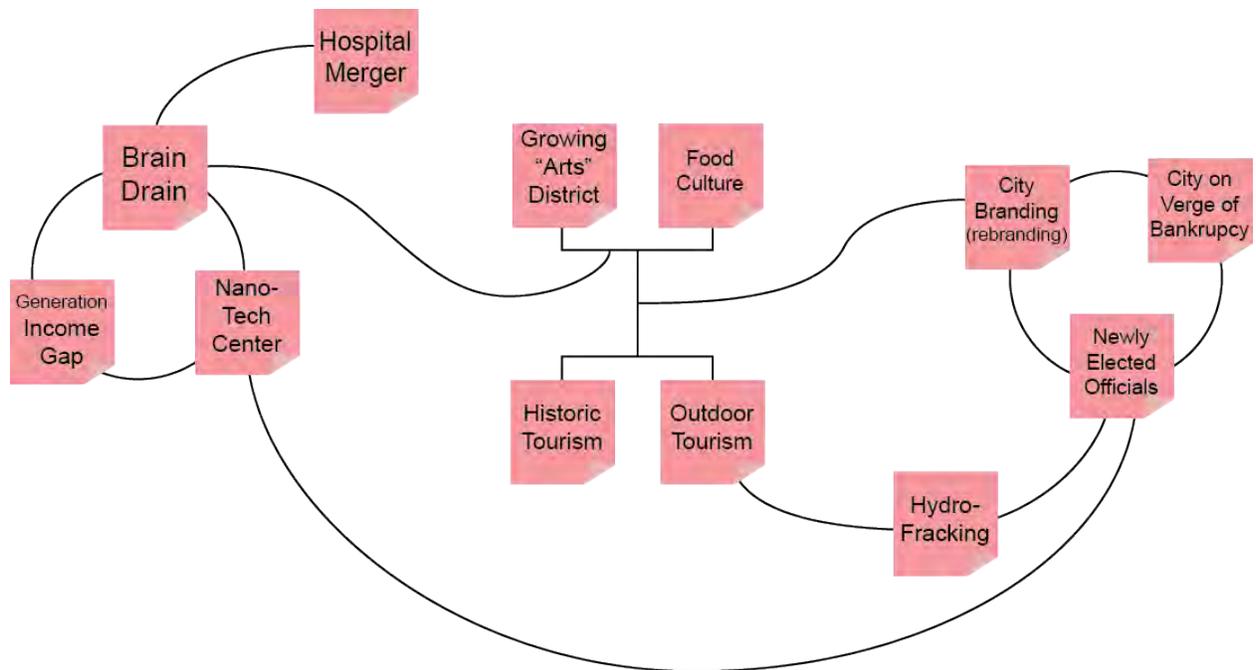


Figure 5.3. Scenario drivers and relationships

Design Process

The scenario drivers were then placed in three scenarios and expanded upon to begin creating stories. The complete storylines begin to paint a picture of the possible futures for the city, providing a vision of the community in 10-15 years. Each scenario was based on one of the following questions:

- *What if the situation got better?*
 - The city took advantage of its strengths and opportunities, resulting in economic growth and prosperity in the community.
- *What if the city continues on the current path?*
 - The city makes a few small changes but no significant change in direction or focus occurs.
- *What if the situation worsens?*
 - The city is overcome by its weaknesses and threats, there is continuous loss of jobs and economic downturn.

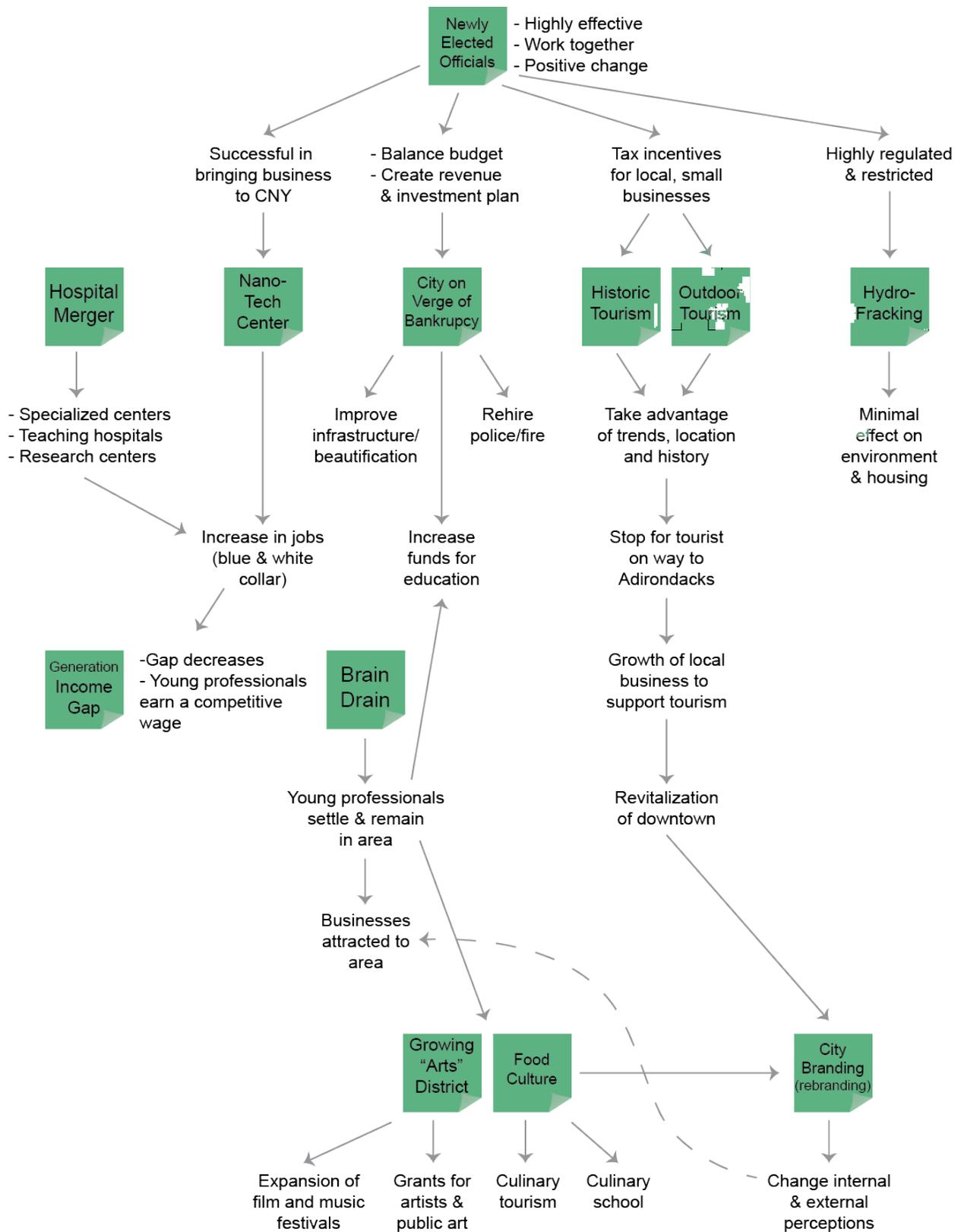


Figure 5.4. Scenario A: What if the situation got better?

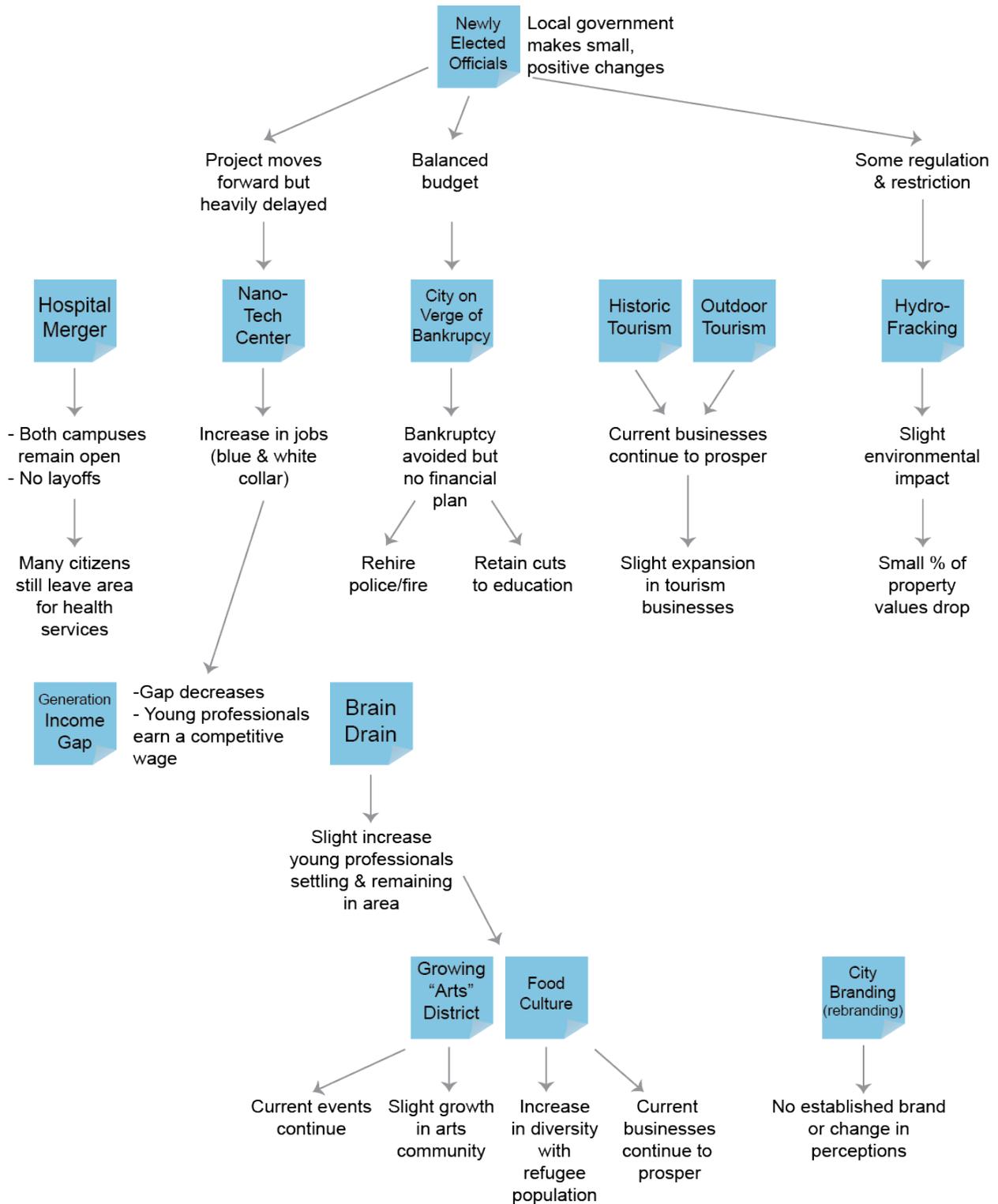


Figure 5.5. Scenario B: What if the city continues on the current path?

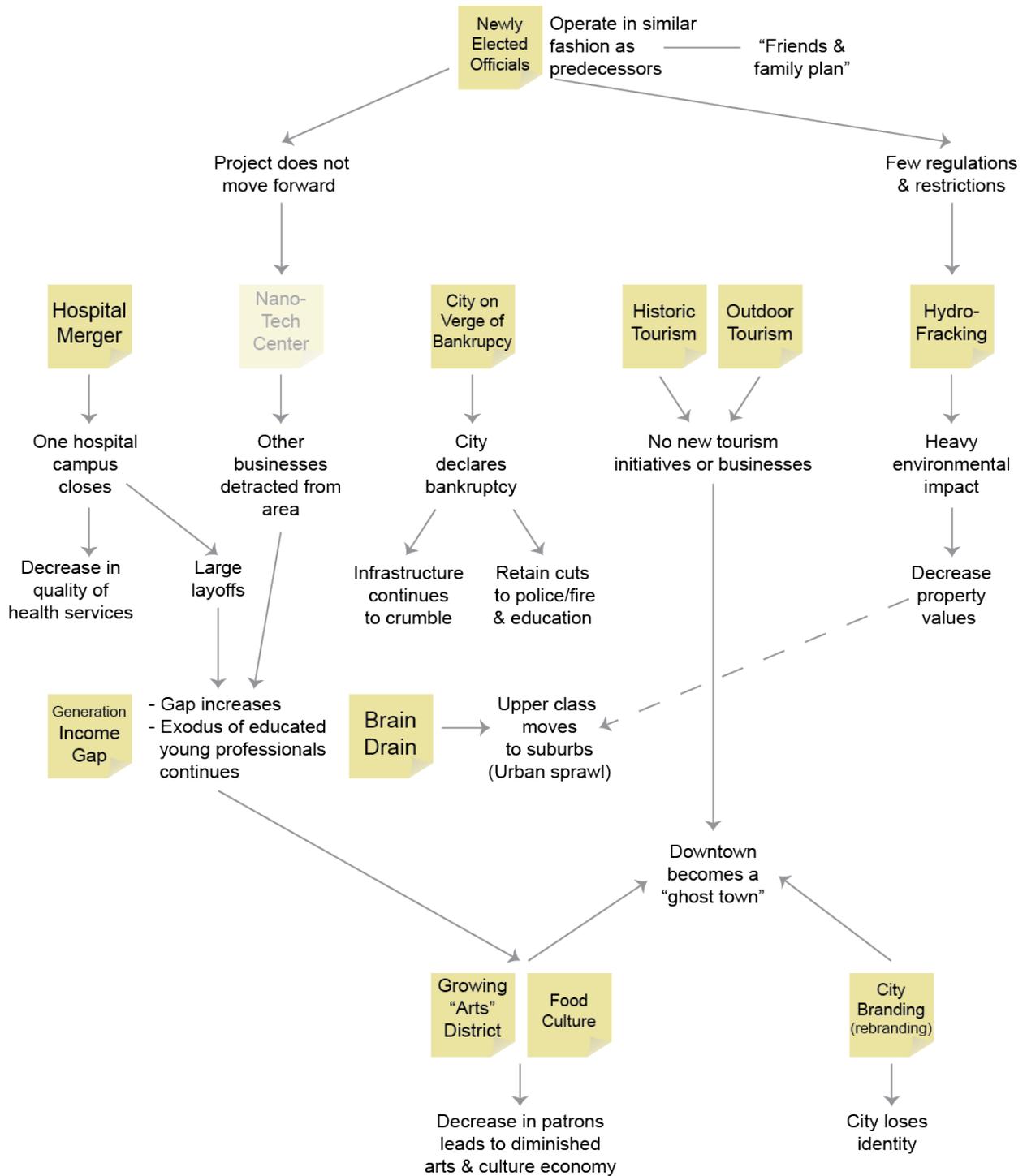
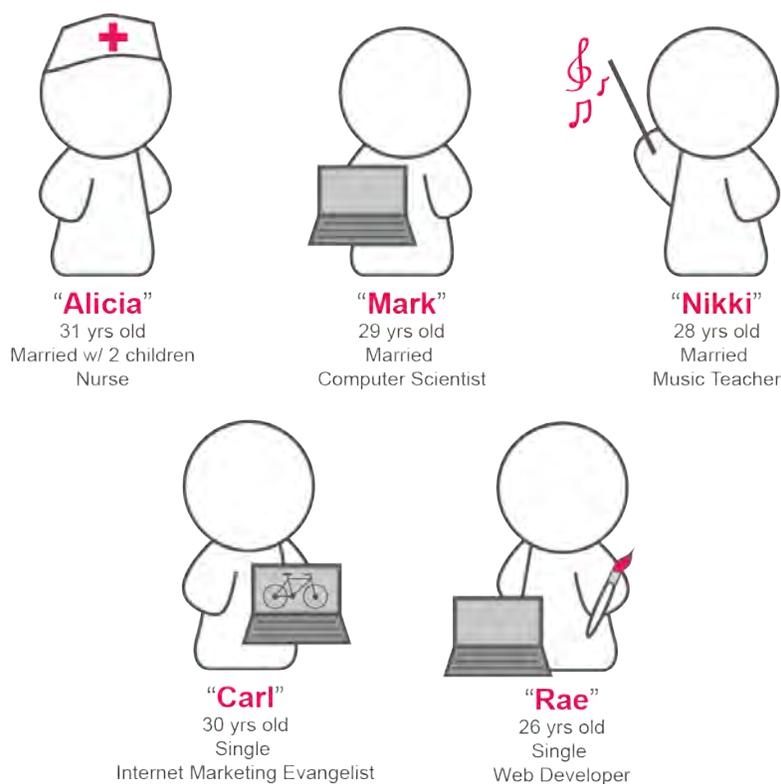


Figure 5.6. Scenario C: What if the situation worsens?

Participants from the workshops and interviews were contacted and asked to participate in crafting personal stories around sections of the scenarios. Those who were agreeable were presented with a description of the study and goals along with an explanation of scenario planning. They were also given a description of the scenario drivers and relationships (Figure 5.3) and an outline of each of the scenarios (Figure 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6.) The scenario authors worked with the researcher to choose a driver or drivers to create a narrative around and an appropriate format for the delivery of the narrative. The authors selected storylines that were of personal or professional interest to them.



The authors were also asked to offer suggestions for expanding upon and naming each of the scenarios.

The final scenario names are as follows:

- Scenario A: A Recovering Metro
- Scenario B: A Stagnant City-Town
- Scenario C: A Declining Town

Design Solution

The citizen-authors and design researcher worked closely together to develop and craft the scenario stories. The authors were directed to “paint a vivid picture as to elicit an emotion response from the audience.” The final narratives took on a variety of formats and were posted to the blog that was maintained as part of this study (<http://futureofutica.wordpress.com/>.) (See Appendix D for an archive of the stories.)

Author	Story Title	Drivers	Scenario	Format
Alicia	Hospital Collaboration a Success	Hospital Merger, Brain Drain	Scenario A	Letter to the Editor
Alicia	DOH Makes the Right Decision	Hospital Merger, Brain Drain	Scenario B	Letter to the Editor
Alicia	Cost of Healthcare Too Much for Utica to Handle	Hospital Merger, Brain Drain	Scenario C	Letter to the Editor
Mark	Utica’s Future in Nanotechnology	Nano-Tech Center, Brain Drain	Scenario A, B	Newspaper Article
Nikki	An Amazing Year for the Arts	Growing Arts District	Scenario A	Journal Entry
Nikki	Just Another Day in Utica	Growing Arts District	Scenario B	Journal Entry
Nikki	So Frustrated!	Growing Arts District	Scenario C	Journal Entry
Rae & Carl	Moving On Up	Nano-Tech Center, Brain Drain	Scenario A	Journal Entry
Rae & Carl	Waiting for an Offer	Nano-Tech Center, Brain Drain, Generational Income Disparity	Scenario B	Journal Entry
Rae & Carl	Moving Out, If We Can	Nano-Tech Center, Brain Drain, Generational Income Disparity	Scenario C	Journal Entry

Figure 5.8. Catalog of scenario narratives

The following text is an excerpt from a story written by Alicia addressing the Hospital merger in Scenario

A, *Hospital Collaboration a Success*:

“Given the state of our economy and the federal government’s new guidelines for Medicare reimbursement, neither organization would have been able to survive such cuts without this collaboration. SEMC and FSLHC have put their differences aside to do what is best for our community and keeping quality healthcare available to the residents of the Greater Utica area and the Mohawk Valley.

Now that the merger is complete, the hospital administration can work on a strategic plan for the future of the two campuses and services they offer. As an employee I see strong possibilities in specialization of services and research opportunities, which could lead to additional staff positions and improvements in the quality of healthcare provided to our community. I see a bright positive future coming for the healthcare industry in Utica’s future.”

A link to the blog was distributed through email and Facebook, inviting people to view and comment of the stories, scenarios and study itself. Visitors to the blog were also invited to contribute their own stories based on the outlines scenarios. Those invited to participate, included the political officials interviewed for this study.

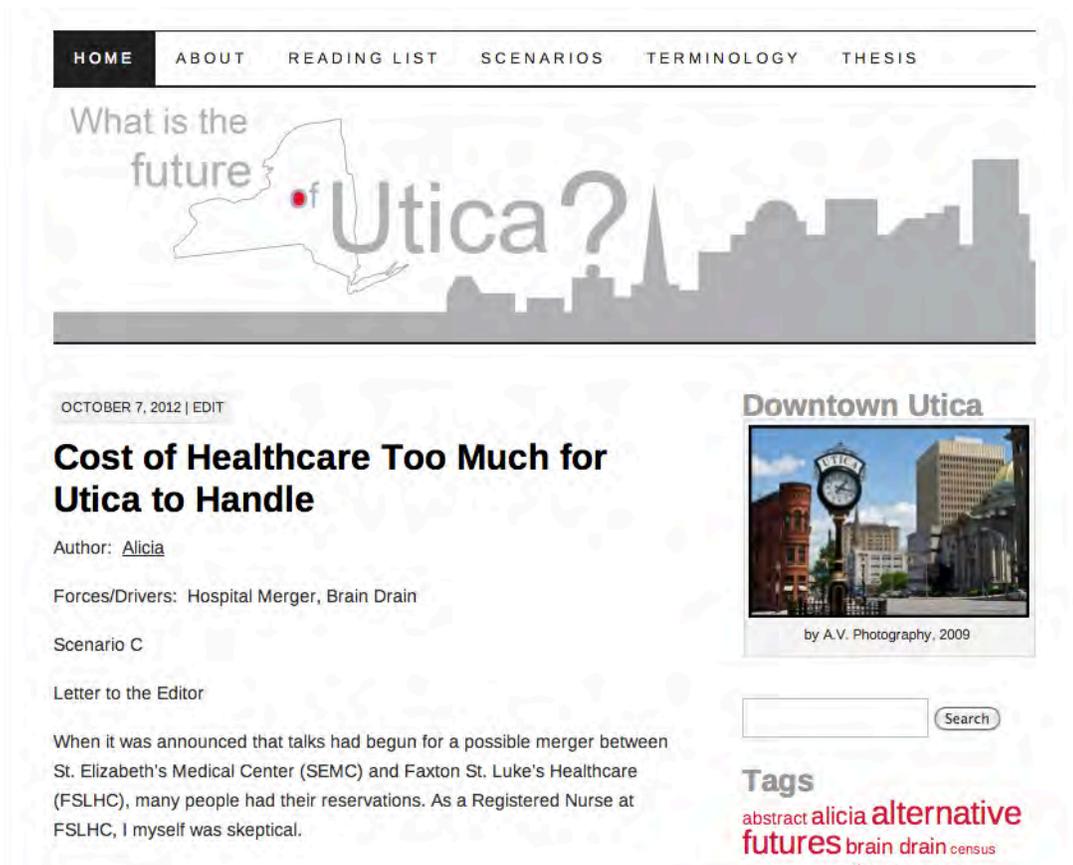


Figure 5.9. Screenshot of Future of Utica blog

In addition to the blog, a final report was created from the results of this study. The final report included the motivations for the study, methodology, data analysis, scenario planning process, final scenarios and stories and recommendations for the city. The report is intended to be a digestible, actionable reference for the city of Utica to use in strategic planning initiatives. A digital copy of the final report is available to the public for through the blog. Printed copies of the report was bound and given to each of the three officials interviewed as part of this study—Mayor Robert Palmieri, State Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi and Utica Common Councilman Joseph Marino. A letter was included with the report to each of the officials offering the opportunity for face-to-face meetings to discuss the results of the study and the opportunity to host a public forum for the community.

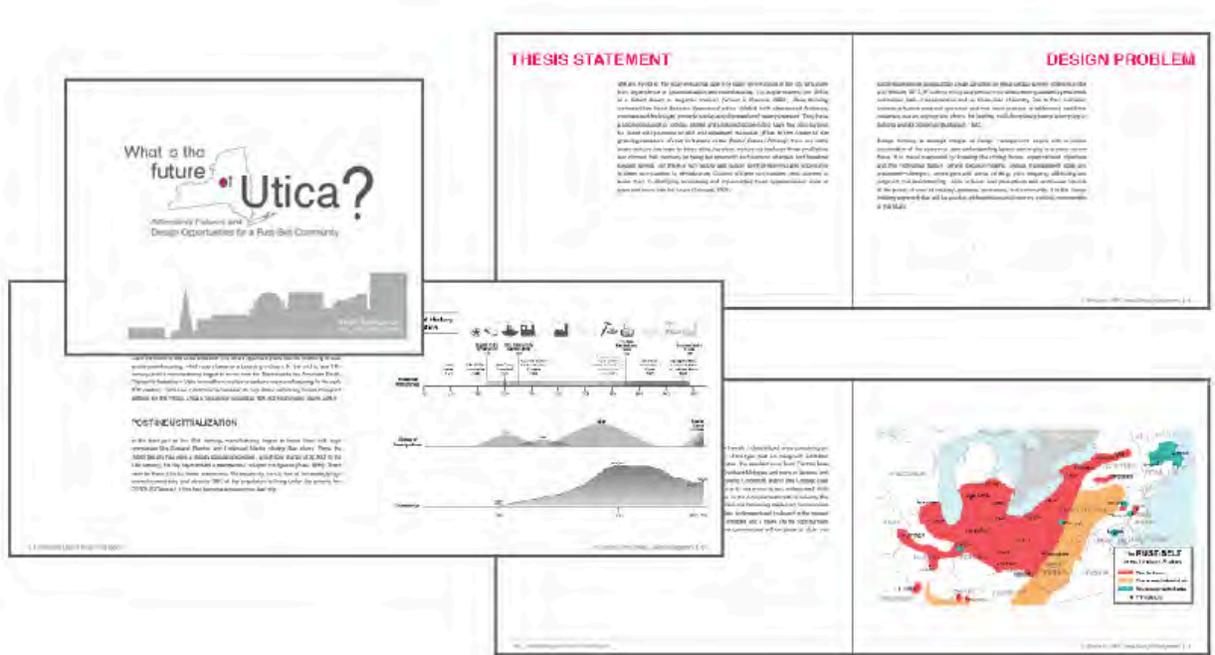


Figure 5.10. Final report

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Future Direction

Findings

Many young people from the Utica area want to settle and build their lives within the community, provided that employment opportunities exist for them. They know change is necessary, but don't know where to begin or do not feel empowered to make a difference. While the area is faced with some heavy challenges, it is not without hope and opportunity. The workshop participants had much to say and voiced very strong opinions, but until this study they did not have an outlet or facilitator for discussion. The citizens of the greater Utica area are lacking vision and inspiration. The scenario planning process gave them the direction and forum for envisioning creative alternatives to the current path the community is facing.

Conclusion

Wicked problems, by nature, are unique, complex and have no definitive beginning or end. Because each attempt to solve a wicked problem counts significantly, careful planning is important. Defining a process, identifying stakeholders and recruiting a diverse team are essential. By inviting stakeholders to be part of the process, a more holistic view of the context and issues can be gain. The skills and insights gained through Design Management—creative facilitation, divergent-convergent thinking, contextual inquiry, participatory design and scenario planning—were fundamental to this study.

The goal of this study was to help the citizens and officials of the greater Utica area realize a future within their grasp but outside of their current vision. This study was intended to serve as a catalyst and means of

facilitating creative thinking and conversation within the community. That objective was fulfilled through the dialog engaged in by participants of the workshops, scenario authors and public comments on the Future of Utica blog. This study represents the beginning of a much larger conversation for revitalization but can serve as a foundation for the process. It is the intention of the study that it would provide both inspiration and ideas for many other communities facing similar challenges in the post-industrial era.

Value Proposition

For citizens, politicians, and stakeholders residing in rust-belt cities **who** wish to identify opportunities to revitalize and rebuild their communities, **this** study provides design solutions and recommendations for growth and innovation.

We did this by partnering with citizen through the use of participatory design methods along with implementing scenario-planning tool to craft alternative futures with the goal of discovering opportunities and creating a vision for the future.

Unlike other research addressing rust-belt revitalization, which often takes a singular focus and point of view, while offering no actionable recommendations, **this** study used the concept of 'wicked problems' as a theoretical framework and lens through which to view the issues in rust-belt communities (Buchanan, 1992). The research process, synthesis and analysis took a holistic approach to identifying solutions and empowering community members.

Future Directions

The final report from this study will be handed to local officials in the Utica area including the Mayor, State Assemblyman and members of the Common Council. The report will also be publically available through the study's blog for any interested members of the community. Opportunities for a public forum or town hall meeting to discuss the study with the community will also be explored. Within the Greater Utica community, the results of this study can be used to engage the residents in a dialog and strategic planning initiatives for the area's future development.

As explain in earlier chapters, this study had limitations in research sample. The methodology employed can be replicated to include a broader population, thus expanding the scope of the study. One population, in particular, that presents an opportunity for future study is the growing refugee population in the city. Utica was used as a case study for this examination of rust-belt communities. While some insights and findings may be unique to this specific context, others have broader relevance. The participatory design methodology and approach along with the scenario planning and crafting process can be reproduced and applied in other rust-belt cities or communities in need of strategic foresight and planning.

Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocols

Newly Elected Officials

- Why have you chosen to remain in the Utica area?
- Why do you feel that so many people leave?
- Why did you decide to run for office?
- What issues do you feel need your immediate attention in the area?
- What is your plan for tackling these issues?
- What are your thoughts on the “Master Plan?”
- How is the refugee population changing the city?
- What are the area's biggest strengths and opportunities?
- How do you feel about the city's current brand? Would you change it? How?
- If you could picture the area in 15 years from now, what would it look like?

Super Connectors

- Why have you chosen to remain in the Utica area?
- Why do you feel that so many people leave?
- Can you talk about the social media efforts facilitating to promote the area?
- What issues do you feel need immediate attention in the area?
- What are the area's biggest strengths and opportunities?
- How do you think local citizens can effect positive change in the area?
- How do you feel about the city's current brand? Would you change it? How?
- If you could picture the area in 15 years from now, what would it look like?

Appendix B: Interview Subjects

Newly Elected Officials

Anthony Brindisi
New York State Assemblyman, District 116
Utica, NY

Joseph Marino
Utica Common Council Member-elect (at time of interview)
Utica, NY

Robert Palmeri
Utica Mayor-elect (at time of interview)
Utica, NY

Super Connectors

Michael Beck
Graphic Designer and Entrepreneur
<http://thekdcf.com/>
Whitesboro, NY

Jason Sumner
Web Designer
<https://www.facebook.com/allthingsutica>
New Hartford, NY

Appendix C: Survey Questions

What is the future of Utica?

* Required

18. Gender? *

- a. Male
- b. Female

19. Age? *

- a. Under 18
- b. 18-24
- c. 25-34
- d. 35-44
- e. 45-54
- f. 55-64
- g. 65 and Over

20. Relationship Status? *

- a. Single
- b. Married
- c. Divorced
- d. Separated
- e. Widowed

21. Race? (Optional)

You may choose more than one.

- a. White
- b. Hispanic or Latino
- c. Black or African American
- d. Asian
- e. Native American
- f. Pacific Islander
- g. Other:

22. Have you immigrated to the United States within the past 10 years? *

- a. Yes
- b. No

23. What is your highest completed education level? *

- a. Less than High School
- b. High School/GED
- c. Some College
- d. 2-Year Degree (Associate's)
- e. 4-Year Degree (Bachelor's)
- f. Master's Degree
- g. Doctoral Degree
- h. Professional Degree (MD, JD)

24. What is your current employment status *
- Employed for wages
 - Self-Employed
 - Out of work and looking for work
 - Out of work but not currently looking for work
 - Homemaker
 - Student
 - Retired
 - Unable to work
25. What is your current household income? *
- Less than \$19,999
 - \$20,000 - \$39,999
 - \$40,000 - \$59,999
 - \$60,000 - \$79,999
 - \$80,000 - \$99,999
 - More than \$100,000
26. How long have you lived in the greater Utica area?
- Less than 2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-15 years
 - 16-20 years
 - More than 20 years
27. What brought you to this area?
28. Why have you stayed here?
29. Do you have plans to move out of the greater Utica area in the next 5 year?
- Yes
 - No
 - Undecided
30. What do you feel are the area's greatest strengths and opportunities?
31. First, what do you think are the biggest issues that need to be IMMEDIATELY addressed in area?
32. Second, what issues do you think need to be addressed in the area within the next 10 years?
33. What do you think is currently happening in the area that could lead to significant changes in the near future? What news stories are generating "buzz?"
34. If the greater Utica area were an automobile, what kind of car would it be? Why?

Appendix D: Scenario Narratives

Hospital Collaboration a Success

Author: Alicia

Forces/Drivers: Hospital Merger, Brain Drain

Scenario A

When it was announced that talks had begun for a possible merger between St. Elizabeth's Medical Center (SEMC) and Faxton St. Luke's Healthcare (FSLHC), many people had their reservations. As a Registered Nurse at FSLHC, I myself was skeptical.

I would like to commend both organizations for handling the situation as well as they did and for keeping their employees informed throughout the process. The transition has been smooth and fairly painless. While being overseen by one CEO and Board of Directors, maintaining the hospitals unique identities has been a key factor in the flawless transition. I feel that the employees at both institutions have been walked thru this process step by step, which has helped to ensure nothing but the best quality of care for our patients.

Given the state of our economy and the federal government's new guidelines for Medicare reimbursement, neither organization would have been able to survive such cuts without this collaboration. SEMC and FSLHC have put their differences aside to do what is best for our community and keeping quality healthcare available to the residents of the Greater Utica area and the Mohawk Valley.

Now that the merger is complete, the hospital administration can work on a strategic plan for the future of the two campuses and services they offer. As an employee I see strong possibilities in specialization of services and research opportunities, which could lead to additional staff positions and improvements in the quality of healthcare provided to our community. I see a bright positive future coming for the healthcare industry in Utica's future.

DOH Makes the Right Decision

Author: Alicia

Forces/Drivers: Hospital Merger, Brain Drain

Scenario B

When it was announced that talks had begun for a possible merger between St. Elizabeth's Medical Center (SEMC) and Faxton St. Luke's Healthcare (FSLHC), many people had their reservations. As a Registered Nurse at FSLHC, I myself was skeptical.

The Department of Health has recently turned down the institutions request to combine services and collaborate as one healthcare organization. Their reason for doing so was that there would be too many duplication of services and/or would create a monopoly in the area of healthcare in Utica.

While both hospitals clearly are only concerned with their financial gain and how the merge would affect their bottom line, at least the residents of Utica have the DOH looking out for their best interests. A merger would have given the area residents no choices as to where they receive their healthcare, but would have also resulted in hundreds of layoffs. When large scale layoffs like that occur, many people would have left Utica in search of other jobs. Is that really what we want for our area? More people leaving in search of better jobs and a better life? Let's hope this idea of a merge between the two healthcare organizations in Utica has been put to rest for good.

Cost of Healthcare Too Much for Utica to Handle

Author: Alicia

Forces/Drivers: Hospital Merger, Brain Drain

Scenario C

When it was announced that talks had begun for a possible merger between St. Elizabeth's Medical Center (SEMC) and Faxton St. Luke's Healthcare (FSLHC), many people had their reservations. As a Registered Nurse at FSLHC, I myself was skeptical.

After years of talking, planning and implementation of the merger, the decision to close the St. Elizabeth's campus still comes to a shock to most area residents. SEMC has been a landmark on Genesee St for decades and has served hundreds of thousands of people.

The reasons for closing the campus are stated as both financial and quality; financially it is just more cost effective to offer all services in one location, and the institution claims that this will provide a better quality of care to area residents.

But what about the quality of life of all the employees that will now be with out a job? FSLHC may take on some of the employees as transfers, but many will have to go out of the area to find work. The same pattern of jobs leaving and residents leaving continues. It is with great sadness that this area is losing so many jobs, many good, hard working people and a landmark in the community.

I am currently waiting to hear about the status of my own position. Though if I make it through this round of lay-offs, there is no guarantee of job security for the next few years. If I do lose my job, my family and I may be forced to leave the area. I have already begun looking for positions in Albany and Syracuse. Even if we do manage to stay, I fear for the quality of healthcare that will be available in the community. With only one hospital, residents of the area will have no options for healthcare. So many people already seek treatment outside the area for major issues and I fear that trend will only continue to grow.

This hospital merger has brought the loss of hundreds of jobs, the closing of an iconic healthcare campus and the potential for a dramatic decrease in the quality of health services offered to our community. We are already a depressed area can we handle another blow to the economy such as this? I leaves me wondering, what is next for Utica?

Utica's Future in Nanotechnology

Author: Mark

Forces/Drivers: Nano-Tech Center, Brain Drain

Scenario A & B

In 2009, New York State along with partners and universities announced a plan to bring the nanotechnology industry to central New York. The plan involved development of two facilities to be built in Albany and Marcy, New York. New York State partnered with IBM, Intel, and SEMATECH to fund the 225 million dollar project. The facility in Albany, NY will be responsible for research and development of the nanotechnology "system on a chip" product. The facility in Marcy, New York will be held at SUNYIT and focus around integration of technologies, testing, and evaluation of the chips. The development of this state of the art facility has created a huge buzz around the Utica-Rome area, as a potential to re-vitalize the area that took a huge hit when many Radio Frequency electronic jobs left the area back in 1990s and early 2000s. The question on whether the project will spark a re-vitalization of economic growth or have no significant impact on the declining economic trends has yet to be answered.

The nanotechnology project's Marcy facility development could be the spark that the Utica-Rome area has been looking for since the Griffiss Air Force Base downsized its footprint in the area and many other technology companies closed their doors. The Mohawk Valley (MV) Edge group owns a 400-acre property across from the land on SUNYIT's campus where the nanotechnology buildings are being built. The MVEdge group has been attempting to attract business partners (like chip suppliers and other major nanotechnology contractors). A number of companies have started to make a presence known already with Indium Corporation, Valutek, and infrastructure investing in positions at the SUNYIT location. If MVEdge were successful in bringing other business partners into the area, would provide a strong foundation for a new technology face in the area. The Griffiss Business Park could provide a strong location for additional business development, with a lot of space available and the Oneida County airport utilizing the runways and hangers left available after the Air Force downsize. The Air Force still has a footprint in Rome, NY with the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) still residing on the base. The

AFRL could also become a strong business partner for the nanotechnology center, if appropriate, which could also attract major defense contractors back to this area. As part of the project a curriculum is being developed at SUNYIT and SUNY Albany to help educate young professionals on nanotechnology and help them obtain a job after they graduate. The success of this technology center would help to keep local youth in the area, something that the Utica has been suffering from for an extended period of time. If the nanotechnology center is able to attract business to area, young professionals from outside the area might also be interested in moving to the central NY region. The development of these facilities and potentially new facilities of other interested businesses would also help the local construction businesses as well. Many of them would see a spike in business and the potential for hiring new employees with skillsets. Local schools will also see a spike in jobs with more teachers being required to meet in the influx of family members to nanotechnology workers.

The nanotechnology center could also just fall into an isolated technology business where it holds it's own but does not attract any other interest from the nanotechnology community. If other businesses fail to become interested in having a close proximity then a small subset of jobs would have been created but not enough to grow the area and stop the export of young, talented professionals. Economic Development Departments in the Utica-Rome area would be left to determine other opportunities to grow the area but an excellent opportunity would have been wasted. There could be major delays in the process of developing the nanotechnology centers, such as funding cuts, construction delays, or technology roadmap alterations (the interest in nanotechnology subsides due to other technology development). With the economic climate being as dreary as it is, many businesses are not dedicating funds to expansion or new development. Nothing is a sure thing in this economy and businesses could decide that there are higher priorities and decide to back out of interest in the nanotechnology center. If the nanotechnology center were to be halted and/or cut from future development, that would cost between 400-500 immediate impact jobs and would crush the chances of drawing other nanotechnology style businesses into the area. Young, talented nanotechnology professionals would be forced to search other locations for jobs. Economic developers would be left scrambling in an attempt to figure out how else to spark economic growth in the area.

Any number of paths can be taken with the future of the nanotechnology center project. While all indicators point towards a successful development of the center and surrounding environment, nothing is ever guaranteed. While the future remains uncertain, the development of the nanotechnology project has certainly created a lot of positive buzz around a community that has been suffering for years. The nanotechnology project has provided a positive path forward, now it is up to the local community to make sure the path is traveled. Once known as the "RF Valley", the Utica-Rome area is working overtime to show that it has everything it takes to be the "Nano Valley" of the future.

An Amazing Year for the Arts

Author: Nikki

Forces/Drivers: Growing Arts District

Scenario A

Dear Diary,

October 5, 2012

This has been an amazing year for the arts district in Utica. The arts have truly flourished in this area and I love being a musician and music teacher more than ever! The city of Utica has really taken advantage of its strengths and opportunities, resulting in economic growth and prosperity in the community.

The streets, bars, coffee shops, and restaurants in West Utica are busy and filled with people of all ages listening to live music and art from both famous and local people. Each week, while the F.X. Matt Brewery hosts their weekly "Saranac Thursday," I had the opportunity to listen to some local and famous bands, and it only costs me \$5 to get in! I am thoroughly impressed with how the area is growing and how people actually want to come to the area and be a part of what is going on, instead of running away from the city the way people have been up to last year.

The growing arts district has progressed so much that there is no longer a separation between music and art; Munson Williams Proctor Institute is now hosting music concerts in their facility, the Utica Music Festival has both music and arts lined up on the streets for people to see and hear.

As a professional musician and music teacher, it is so wonderful to see that the arts are becoming an outlet for people. They are providing a break away from everyday stresses of work and life, providing younger people and outlet of "things to do" on the weekend, it is keeping people out of trouble and off of the streets for crime, and it is rejuvenating the economy because people are going out of their houses. Not to mention that this is an incredible way to showcase all of our local talent in the area.

It makes me feel like music and art are no longer “just something to do” in the area and that people are excited about going out now and like spending the money to support the talent and society.

See you tomorrow!

Just Another Day in Utica

Author: Nikki

Forces/Drivers: Growing Arts District

Scenario B

Dear Diary,

October 5, 2009

It seems as though everyday is just another day here in Utica. Nothing has really changed here in the last year and everything just seems like each weekend is becoming a routine. The city seems to have made a few small changes and it appears as though Utica is not heading in any sort of direction.

I was really hoping that the arts would start to take over and become more prominent in the community, but I was wrong. Almost every weekend I try and go to a coffee shop, bar or restaurant to listen to live music somewhere around the city, but it seems as though I just keep finding the same local talent no matter where I go. Don't get me wrong, there is plenty of local talent, however, it would be nice to see different genres and talents. A few of the local bands have even stopped performing, or only perform on rare occasion because performing does not "put food on the table" and does not "put money in their wallet".

With the city losing some local businesses and the younger population not settling or staying in Utica, there is not much revenue circulating. I would love to see the city bring in some famous acts to come and perform, but I do not think that the city is generating enough revenue for that. Even the F.X. Matt Brewery has cut down its weekly "Saranac Thursdays" to bi-monthly because people, old and young, stopped attending.

Being a music teacher, it is sad to see that students and younger musicians are losing out on opportunities to express themselves and show off their talents outside of their stresses of everyday life and school. I find that my students truly excel at the arts because it is not math, science, English, etc...

The arts are 100% about them!

I really hope that the economy and Utica figure out a way to re-stimulate the economy so that the arts do not fade away.

See you tomorrow!

So Frustrated!

Author: Nikki

Forces/Drivers: Growing Arts District

Scenario C

Dear Diary,

October 5, 2015

I am so frustrated with the path that the city of Utica has surrendered to. A few years back, the economy and the city was booming and the arts were truly flourishing, and now it is the complete opposite. The city has been overcome by its weaknesses and threats, and there is a continuous loss of jobs and economic downturn.

My biggest disappointment in the Utica is the loss of, what use to be, its "growing arts district". We have lost many of the city's venues that promoted music and arts due to lack of revenue floating around. The Munson William's Proctor Institute for the arts has closed down, which means no more art classes for kids and adults, no more music concerts, and no more historic art museum. The F.X. Matt Brewery has stopped their weekly "Saranac Thursdays" because people could not afford to come out and listen to music. This was another huge loss for the city because "Saranac Thursdays" used to be a way to get older and younger people out of the house to listen to local and professional musicians perform while socializing. Perhaps the biggest loss for the arts is the "Music and Arts" Festival which highlighted all local musicians and artists. This was a 4 day event that took place all around the city, promoting the arts.

As a music teacher in the area, it is terribly sad to see that students have no way of expressing themselves, or showing off their talents outside of school. I have noticed that the quality of my band program has diminished over the years because students are not able to purchase, repair, or take private lessons on their instruments to enhance their talents. More and more I am seeing that my students know that music is not as important to society because what are they going to do with music after school?

It worries me that with businesses closing, younger people moving out of the city, and the city possibly on the verge of bankruptcy that crime will soar. We have already lost the arts in the area, how much more can we bear to lose?

See you tomorrow.

Moving on Up

Author: Rae & Carl

Forces/Drivers: Brain Drain, Nano-tech Center

Scenario A

I just started in my new position today. A few years ago, I thought we might have to leave Utica if either of us wanted to advance in our careers; there just wasn't much of a market for our skills beyond entry-level. At least, not if we wanted to be paid a fair wage. Since the new Nano-Tech center opened up, even more business have moved into the area and our small intranet services sector has grown along with it. My company has grown to the point that I can finally put those management skills I learned in college to use.

With all the new jobs, it seems like more graduates from the local colleges are staying in the area. I'm starting to see more young faces at events hosted by the bike club and the quilting club—which is great. For a long time, Carl and I were "the young ones," Now, if we can just convince them to join the leadership—both boards often express a desire for young blood and new involvement (how many times did I hear *that* when I first started serving my terms).

I wasn't sure that we'd stick around for the long run when we bought the house... maybe 10 years so... but it's starting to look like Utica may be where we stay.

Waiting for an Offer

Author: Rae & Carl

Forces/Drivers: Brain Drain, Nano-tech Center, Generational Income Disparity

Scenario B

Well, we did it. The house went on the market today, and we have a few leads on jobs elsewhere.

Rachael is growing restless, tired of doing essentially the same job for years, with no real advancement or attempts by her company to keep ahead of the ever-evolving Web field. I'm finally ready to admit that we could be doing better in another area, and some days I'm not sure if my own company is going to stay afloat. I've been looking at the possibility of a new job, but there's not much out there for me unless I want to start my own company. Internet services companies pop up occasionally, only to fail from lack of business. Plus, it seems like every new client we get doesn't care much about mobile devices or social media—if they even understand what they are. There aren't many younger people moving into higher positions within companies around here because they've all moved away. We thought it might improve when that Nano-tech plant was talking about moving in, but that fell through.

All the efforts at improving the arts and entertainment events and other things to do seem to be falling short lately, as well. Nothing has been pulling people in. Just the other day, the bike club decided to stop running their weekly time trial races during the summer because hardly anyone is coming out to them any longer. The few who do have been doing it for twenty years at this point and are ready to call it quits.

I hope the house sells in a decent amount of time. The housing market isn't too bad, but it doesn't seem like many people are looking for a 3-bedroom house these days unless they're starting a family. The private elementary school next door was a selling point in the past, but with the falling enrollment, they ended up merging it with the high school across town and closing the building.

For now, we're just waiting on offers and trying to decide where to go.

Moving Out, If We Can

Author: Rae & Carl

Forces/Drivers: Brain Drain, Nano-tech Center, Generational Income Disparity

Scenario C

It hasn't been an easy few months. Ever since that Nano-tech plant passed over the area, it seems like more and more tech jobs have been leaving. Carl's company just folded—the worsening local economy means that companies aren't focusing on their Web presence. He has hopes for finding another local job, but I think that even if he does, he won't make what he did at the last one. My job doesn't seem much more secure, and even if it is, I've come to terms with the fact that there's no promotions in my future—my company is just too small for me to move up.

I think we're going to be leaving Utica soon. I've been looking for jobs elsewhere, and am trying to get him to consider it as well. The only problem is the house; while it hasn't lost too much value, nothing seems to be selling, since no one is in a position to buy it. With the school next door closed, the St. E's campus down the street in danger of shutting down, and the general decline of the neighborhood, South Utica isn't looking as nice as it once was. Thankfully housing prices have been pretty low in Utica for years—we can get by for a while with Carl out of work, but we'll probably be willing to sell it to whoever makes an offer that covers the rest of the mortgage.

A lot of our friends have already left the area, so it's not like we'd be moving away from everyone if we did move. Some of our younger friends were fed up with trying to find decent schools for their kids, while some of our older friends decided that even the low cost of living couldn't keep them here for retirement. They want things to do—entertainment, good food, fun events (and sometimes, nicer weather).

I'm not sure where we're headed next, but it'll be anywhere but here as soon as we can find a way out.

Glossary

[A]

Affinity Diagram – a business tool, used to organize ideas and data, which allows large numbers of ideas stemming from brainstorming to be sorted into groups, based on their natural relationships, for review and analysis.

[C]

City – (in the U.S.) an incorporated municipality, usually governed by a mayor and a board of aldermen or councilmen.

Small City = < 200,000 population

Medium-sized City = 200,000-500,000population

Big City = 500,000-1,000,000 population

Major City = >1,000,000 population

Contextual Inquiry – a structured, well-defined user-centered design ethnographic research methods used to collect data about users in the field, interpret and consolidate that data in a structured way, use the data to create and prototype product and service concepts, and iteratively test and refine those concepts with users.

[D]

Design Thinking – an approach to design, commonly used in community development, service design, problem formulation and product design, typically in complex and contentious situations or to break out of a period of stagnation.

Diffusion – the process of increasing the adoption of an innovation by a population.

[E]

Economy – the wealth and resources of a country or region, esp. in terms of the production and consumption of goods and services.

[F]

Forces/Drivers – key factors, used in the scenario planning process, that have potential to shape or change the future of direction of a business or organization

[I]

Infrastructure – the underlying physical and organizational structures and facilities needed for the operation of a service, process or system.

Innovation – an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption (as defined by Everett Rogers.)

[P]

Participatory Design – an approach to design that attempts to actively involve stakeholders in the design process.

Post-industrial – characteristic of, relating to, or denoting work or a society that is no longer based on heavy industry. American sociologist, Daniel Bell, popularized the term in the 1970s.

[R]

Rust-belt Community – a once heavily industrialized area containing older factories, particularly those that are marginally profitable or that have been closed. The US rust-belt stretches from Upstate New York, through Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Southern Michigan, Northern Indiana and parts of Illinois.

[S]

Scenario Planning – a strategic planning process of visualizing what future conditions or events are probable, what their consequences or effects would be like, and how to respond to, or benefit from them.

Social Innovation – new strategies, concepts, ideas and organizations that meet social needs of all kinds and that extend and strengthen civil society improving the viability, sustainability and resilience of the entire system.

STEEP – acronym for **S**ocial, **T**echnological, **E**conomic, **E**nvironmental and **P**olitical. A knowledge management framework and analysis tool used to evaluate various external factors impacting a business or organization.

Super Connector – an individual who maintains contact with thousands of people in different social, professional, and/or special interest networks and knows those individuals well enough to initiate personal contact with them.

SWOT Analysis – a strategic planning method used to evaluate the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats involved in a project, service, organization, system or business venture.

[W]

Wicked Problem – a phrase originally used in social planning to describe a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. Moreover, because of complex interdependencies, the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems (Rittel and Webber, 1973). According to Horst Rittel, who coined the term, there are ten characteristics of a *wicked problem*:

1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem.
 - a. Defining wicked problems is itself a wicked problem.
2. Wicked problems have no stopping rule.
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but better or worse.

4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem.
5. Every solution to a wicked problem is a "one-shot operation"; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial and error, every attempt counts significantly.
6. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan.
7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique.
8. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.
9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem's resolution.
10. The planner has no right to be wrong.
 - a. Planners are liable for the consequences of the actions they generate.

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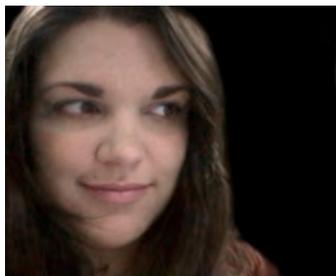
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About the Author



Krista Siniscarco was born and raised in Utica, NY. She attended the Rochester Institute of Technology to study graphic design and received her BA from the State University of New York, Empire State in Graphic Design and Multimedia Studies. After college, she began working as an Educational Technologist at Hamilton College in Clinton, NY. While at Hamilton, Krista focused on instructional design and media literacy and acted as the information technology liaison to the Arts. In 2010, she began work on her Masters of Fine Art in Design Management at the Savannah College of Art and completed her degree in the fall of 2012.

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