

# Leaving Mayberry: Economic Facadism and How to Identify the Redevelopment Bubble in the Postindustrial Northeast



# Background

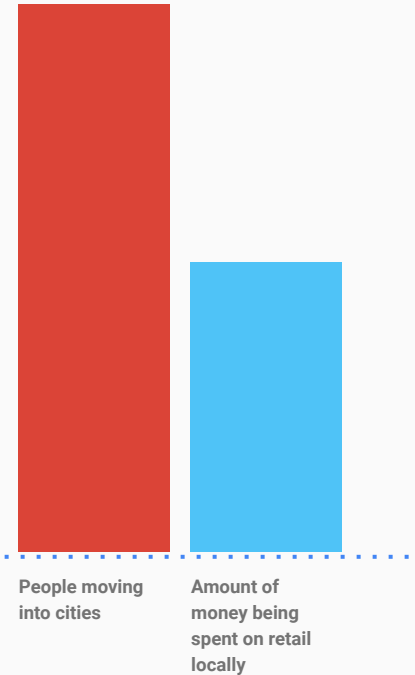
America once thrived on its strong network of small-to-midsize, “Legacy Cities,” a series of communities once hailed for their industrial productivity that have fallen on hard times as factories have moved elsewhere and whose local economies have never recovered.

Many of these cities have begun to redevelop their economies and their downtowns are beginning to see new life. Restaurants, cafes, and shops have replaced vacant storefronts, seemingly indicating a fresh start.

1. Observation
2. Prediction
3. Solution

# Observation

Despite increasing urban populations and corresponding downtown redevelopments, local economies are stagnating because shopping preferences have changed.



# Once Upon a Time...





MAIN STREET, USA



# Economic Facadism

The architectural and construction practice where the facade of a building is designed or constructed separately from the rest of a building, or when only the facade of a building is preserved with new buildings erected behind or around it.



# Prediction

If nothing is done to improve the sustainability of the downtown retail economy, even cities with bustling main streets can be on the precipice of failure. But how can this be?



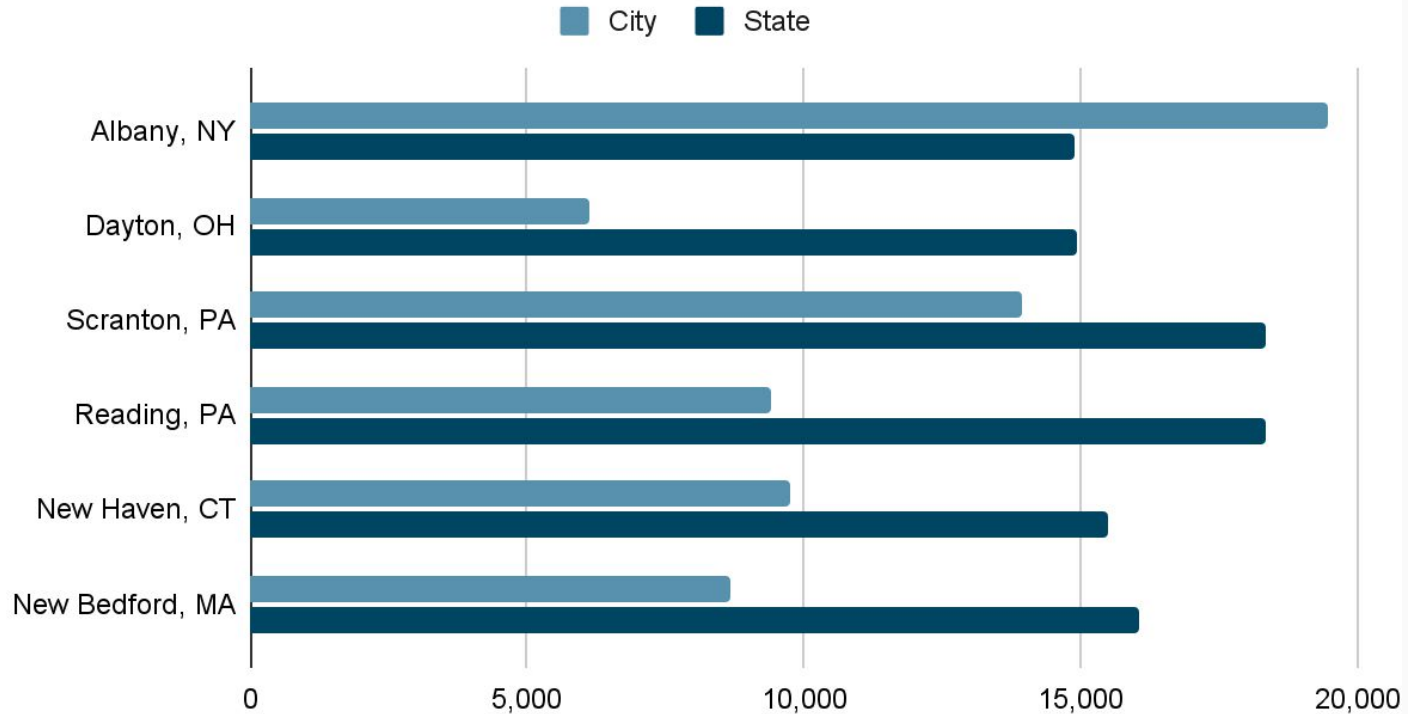
# Case Studies- An Overview

	Annual Retail Sales	Annual Retail Sales per Capita	Population Change (2010-2020)	Unemployment Rate (National Average: 6.0%)	Recent Job Growth (National Average: 6.2%)	Future Job Growth (National Average: 33.5%)
Albany, NY	\$1,905,054	\$19,484	+1.4%	7.1%	-9.1%	28.3%
Dayton, OH	\$858,084	\$6,110	-2.9%	6.8%	-4.4%	27.6%
Scranton, PA	\$1,075,280	\$13,918	+0.3%	8.7%	-6.1%	26.8%
Reading, PA	\$827,660	\$9,389	+8.0%	14.8%	-7.2%	21%
New Haven, CT	\$1,272,540	\$9,741	+5%	9.7%	-4.9%	27.3%
New Bedford, MA	\$827,089	\$8,693	+6.3%	10.2%	-9.4%	32.7%

\*Data collected from the US Census reports 2010-2020. Retail sales data was last collected in 2017.

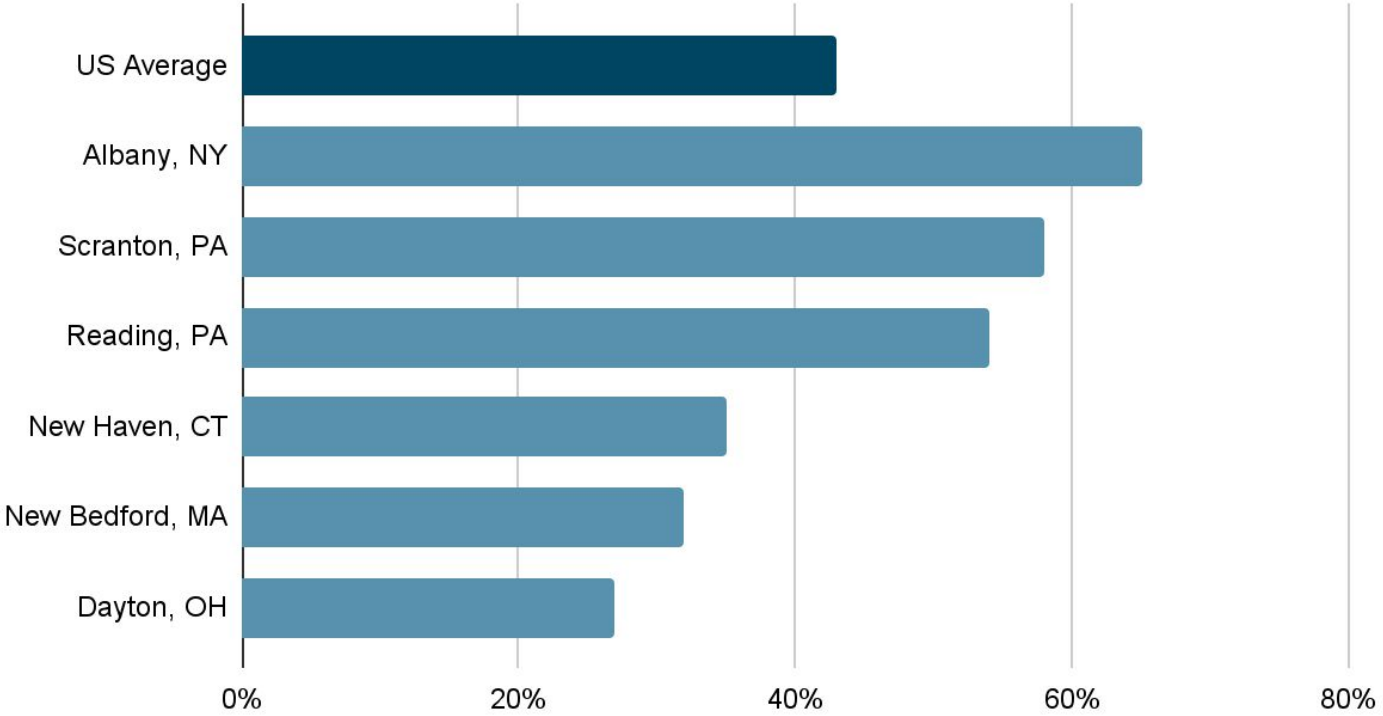
# Case Studies- Retail Sales Per Capita vs the Respective State Mean

## Retail Sales Per Capita



# Case Studies- Income Spent in Each Local Economy vs US Average

## Income Spent in Local Economy, Per Capita



# Dayton, OH



## Population Change:

- ❖ 1950: 243,872
- ❖ 2000: 166,179
- ❖ 2020: 137,644
  - Between 2010 and 2020, Dayton lost just 2.9% of its population, the lowest rate since the 1960 census

## Comparison to other Ohio Legacy Cities:

- ❖ Half as high retail sales per capita as Hamilton, OH, despite more than 2x the size
- ❖ \$7,000 less per capita and \$100,000 less than Canton, OH, despite having double its population

# Scranton, PA



- ❖ 1950: 125,536
- ❖ 2000: 76,415
- ❖ 2020: 76,328
  - GDP has flatlined, going virtually unchanged in the last 5 years
  - Scranton gained 239 people between 2010 and 2020 (0.3%) its first gain since the 1930 census

Comparison with other Pennsylvania Legacy cities:

	Scranton	Wilkes Barre	Bethlehem	Lancaster
<b>Population</b>	76,110	44,498	75,710	57842
<b>Total Annual Retail Sales</b>	\$1,075,280	\$1,328,049	\$1,641,473	\$1,222,102
<b>Annual Retail Sales Per Capita</b>	\$13,918	\$32,433	\$21,704	\$20,540

# Albany, NY



## Population Change:

- ❖ 1950: 134,995
- ❖ 2000: 95,658
- ❖ 2020: 99,224

## Percent of income spent in local economy:

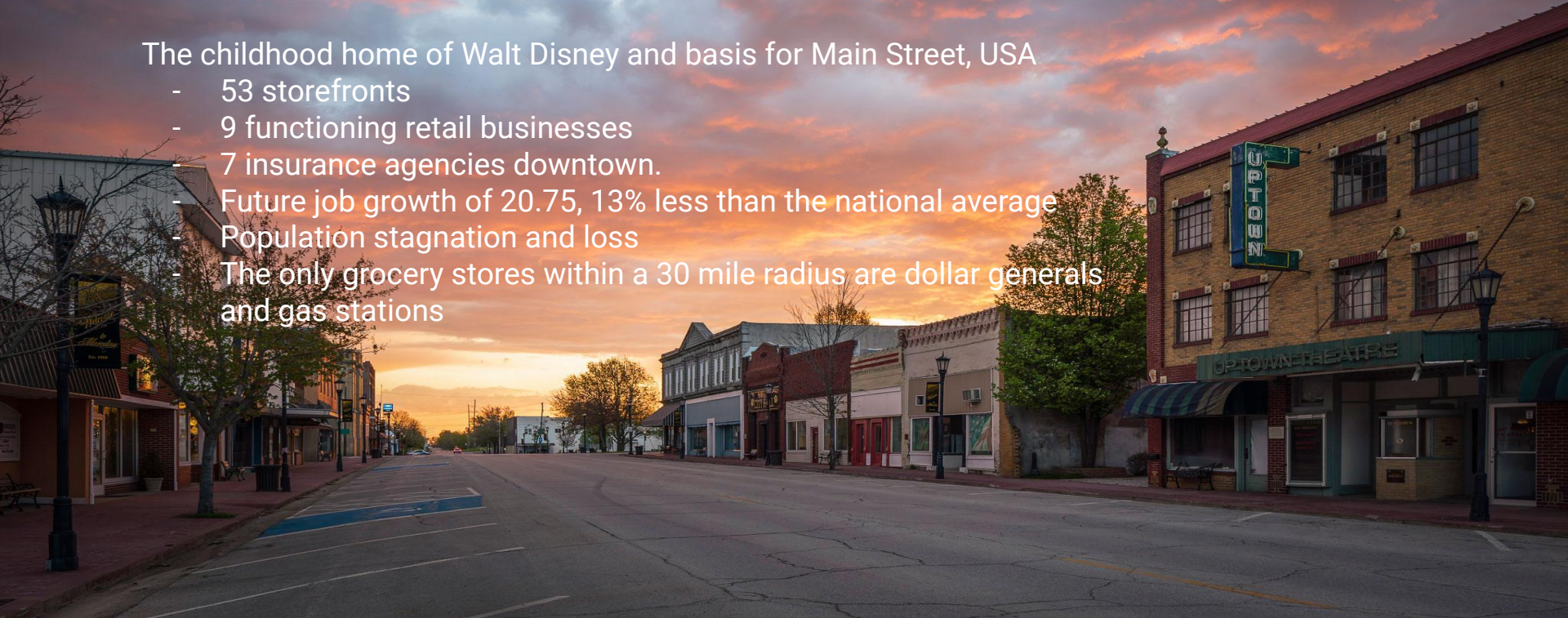
- NY spends 36%
- Albany spends 65%

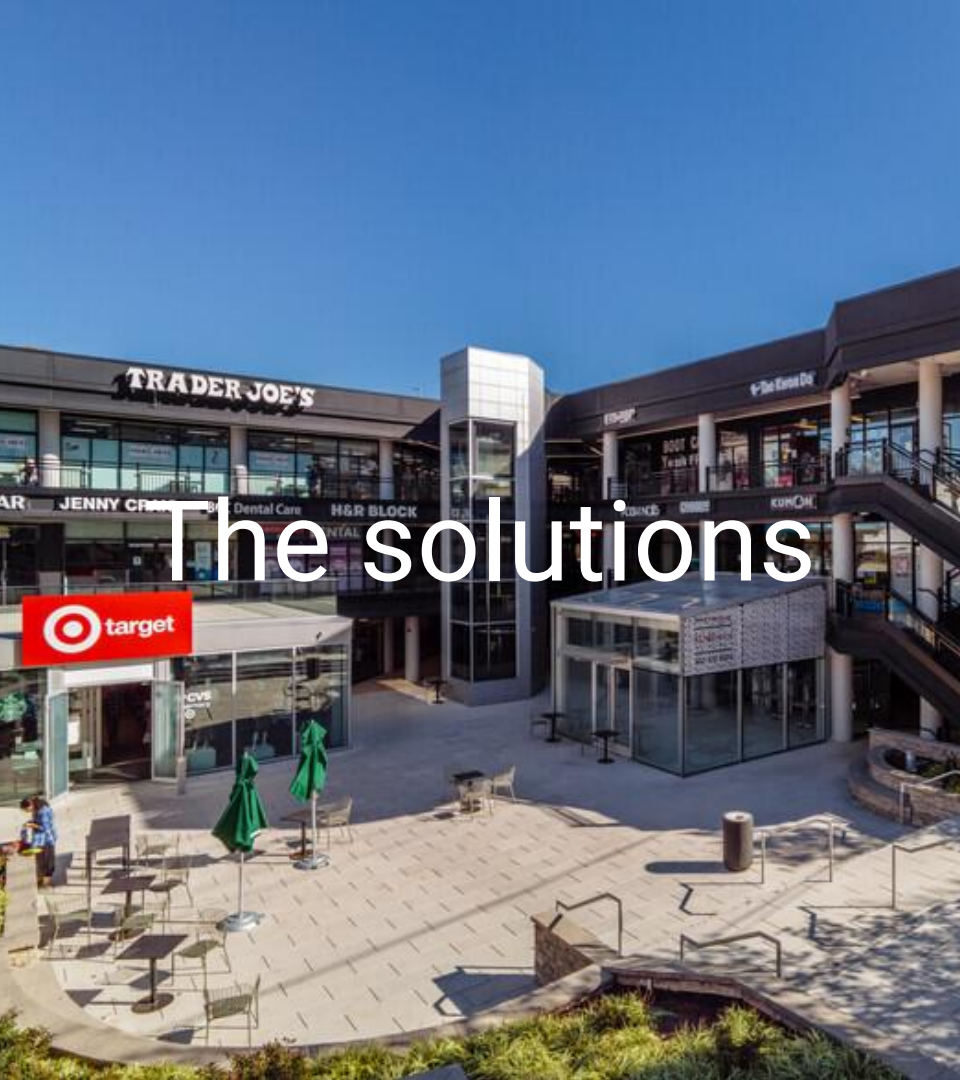
# Quick look at Marceline, MO

## the Original Main Street, USA

The childhood home of Walt Disney and basis for Main Street, USA

- 53 storefronts
- 9 functioning retail businesses
- 7 insurance agencies downtown.
- Future job growth of 20.75, 13% less than the national average
- Population stagnation and loss
- The only grocery stores within a 30 mile radius are dollar generals and gas stations





# The solutions

- Promoting the construction of box stores downtown, including new city ordinances
- Limiting reliance on tourism
- Understanding the inherent racism of “Main Street, USA”



## Recognizing Our Reliance on Box Retailers

- People want the best deals and convenience, and will always choose this over shopping local.
- Target has recognized this problem and has spent the last 10 years trying to solve it in large cities and college towns
- We can expect to see a trickle down effect as well
- We need new city ordinances which mandate accessible supermarkets
  - These new developments will not be a replacement for suburban shopping. They will offer an urban alternative, one that doesn't necessitate cars.

# Limiting Reliance on Tourism



## Understanding the Racism Inherent to “Main Street USA.”

There is a fundamental ignorance of racial demographics in downtown revitalization.

- Cities have a very different racial makeup than they did 60 years ago. We deny these residents their validity and value when we try to recapture that bygone era of America cities.

It is important to recognize that when we talk about “the old days in American cities,” we refer to a generally white era.

- The main street Walt Disney envisioned of his youth was one of racial ignorance.
- The Mayberry we envision was, with literally one exception, entirely white.
- This vision is one of privilege and short sightedness. As urban demographics have changed, we remain insistent on returning to a time when it was white, as if that is the only way a city can thrive.

# Conclusion

- ❖ Downtowns die when necessity turns into luxury
- ❖ Cities cannot become shells, designed to capture the idea of a functioning city
- ❖ A city's vibrancy doesn't come from tourists, it comes from engaged, connected residents, coming downtown out of necessity, as much as pleasure
- ❖ The hard work is already done!