

Urban Agriculture

Samina Raja · Marcia Caton Campbell
Alexandra Judelsohn · Branden Born
Alfonso Morales *Editors*

Planning for Equitable Urban Agriculture in the United States

Future Directions for a New Ethic in City
Building

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Urban Agriculture

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Samina Raja 
Urban and Regional Planning
University at Buffalo, The State University
of New York
Buffalo, NY, USA

Alexandra Judelsohn 
Urban and Regional Planning
University at Buffalo, The State University
of New York
Buffalo, NY, USA

Alfonso Morales 
University of Wisconsin–Madison
Madison, WI, USA

Marcia Caton Campbell 
Rooted
Madison, WI, USA

Branden Born 
College of Built Environments
University of Washington
Seattle, WA, USA



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*In memory of Jerome L. Kaufman,
who taught us how to ask the right questions,
seek just solutions, and act on them*

Foreword

I was lucky enough to have worked with Jerry Kaufman at the University of Wisconsin–Madison between 1975 and 1996. A lot changed in American urban planning during that time and Jerry played a role in pushing along the changes.

Jerry was centrally committed to the idea that planning should benefit poor people and particularly disadvantaged minorities. He worked to fight the direct and indirect harm of racism, and to make racial equality a reality. While harder to affect, he also recognized how income inequality and poverty increased the harm inflicted by racism. These values shaped his teaching and research, as well as his work, as a planner in minority communities in Milwaukee and Chicago. These values also drew him into a number of unexplored aspects of planning practice. The first was a comprehensive examination of the ethics of planners. Later, he focused on the need to include food systems in any planning design that was intended to improve life for central-city residents.

As a practicing urban planner who came into the field in the 1950s, Jerry was particularly concerned with issues of central city decline and the growth of urban segregation as white people moved to the suburbs to escape the influx of poor Black people migrating from the South. Jerry lived through the Civil Rights Movement and Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty—national efforts to fight racial discrimination and reduce poverty. In the 1950s and 1960s, what was defined as “planning” began to broaden from its original focus on land use, zoning, and urban design to deal with “the urban crisis” now referred to more often as justice and equity issues.

Jerry came to the Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URPL) at the University of Wisconsin in 1971. University teaching offered one opportunity to change the planning field, at least incrementally, by raising the consciousness of future planners about existing injustices and possible strategies to attack them. He tried to get them to think about the kinds of roles they might play as professional planners if they faced policy issues involving controversial issues such as racial or class inequality. When I came to URPL in 1975, my interest was in the politics of planning, and I found Jerry to be someone with similar values and interests. We assumed that new planners would probably have to play a more political role in the

planning process to be effective. As academics, both of us wanted to do empirical research to see whether our hypothesis was correct.

Moreover, Jerry already had an idea that would provide focus to such a study: Interviewing practicing planners who were particularly effective in getting things done. Jerry had been intrigued by the way these planners spoke, which went far beyond the neutral, technical role that planners were assumed to play. Not only were these planners acting on their values, but they used tactics that sometimes verged on what might be considered unethical. Jerry thought it would be interesting to find out whether such planners were common, and whether planners like these thought about the professional ethics of such actions. I had come to URPL with a background in political science in addition to planning. I knew nothing about the study of ethics. But I was intrigued by Jerry's idea that some planners were playing effective political roles in their work. Asking about professional ethics might be a way to draw them out about the nature and legitimacy of this role.

In the mid-1970s, we were not the only academics thinking about the issue of roles and effectiveness among planners (Kaufman 1978). But we were the only people looking at the relationship between effectiveness and professional ethics in practice. Other people had studied empirically how planners worked in practice (Altshuler 1969; Baum 1983; Rabinovitz 1969; Vasu 1979). The image of the technician was the traditional model, a type of planner who saw himself (rarely herself) as a value-neutral analyst, an expert on urban issues who could advise elected or appointed officials about the nature of urban problems and options for dealing with them. But it was assumed that the decision-makers were the ones who should set the goals and work to get the resulting policies or programs adopted in the political system.

Even then, however, studies were finding that some planners did go beyond this technical role. Some saw themselves as responsible for bringing differing groups together to hash out their policy ideas. In doing this, planners became brokers or mediators among conflicting interests (Forester 1987). Others found job niches that allowed them to be advocates for particular groups or interests (Davidoff 1965; Needleman and Needleman 1974).

Jerry and I decided to find out what substantive values and ideas about ethics public planners brought to their work, and how these values shaped that work. What were their roles in the political and bureaucratic systems in which they worked? Jerry was already writing about the intersection of planning and politics. He developed a course called "Strategies for Planning Effectiveness" that explored what the conflicts generated by these new political strategies might be, and how they could be handled ethically. His course on central city planning explored the substantive context of planning in older central cities and the values and role models for more activist planning.

The research we developed ultimately involved a two-part study of planners' values, roles, and responses to situations that might present ethical problems. In 1978, we conducted a survey of 616 planners from the membership list of the American Planning Association. Jerry developed a series of short scenarios about planning situations that combined an action and a group that would either benefit or

be harmed by the action.¹ The respondents were asked whether each action was ethical, and whether a planner should do it. The scenarios were accompanied by a set of statements about substantive values and planning behavior with which respondents could agree or disagree. From these questions, we could get some idea of what each person's values were and what role they thought a planner should play.

The results supported our hypothesis and produced some interesting insights. In their responses to the ethical scenarios, more than half of the respondents considered many of the actions ethical. These included dramatizing an issue to overcome public apathy, organizing public support for a specific policy, creating expendable items in a proposal that could be bargained away, and providing confidential information to activist groups who asked for it. The scenarios that were generally thought to be unethical were those related to leaking information to outside groups or distorting the findings of research. These appeared to violate principles of loyalty to the planner's agency and to truthfulness. As a practical matter, these actions could also harm the planner's legitimacy.

Asking whether actions were ethical or unethical also proved to be a good way to explore how respondents shaped their professional behavior. About a quarter of the respondents thought planners should be "technicians" and try to keep their values out of their professional work. These respondents were also the most restrictive about what they considered to be ethical. Overall, however, 57% of the sample thought it was acceptable for planners to be open about their values. On the

¹Four of our ethics scenarios were:

(1) A planner who works for a city planning agency is assigned by her agency to work with the residents of an inner-city low-income neighborhood. She finds out that another unit in the agency is doing a study in the same neighborhood that recommends clearing 20 acres of land to provide housing for students at a nearby college. Without being authorized to do so, the planner decides to give the information and draft findings of this study to the head of the community group in the area.

(2) A representative of an environmental group comes into a city planning office and asks a staff planner for a copy of the recommendations of a plan for the reduction of pollution in the city's streams which is in the process of being prepared. The planner gives the representative the draft recommendations. The agency has no specific policy about releasing such information before a plan is completed.

(3) A regional planner is preparing a fair-share housing plan for the communities in a several-county region. Knowing that the idea of every community taking its fair share of low- and moderate-income housing will be tough to get accepted by the Council of Governments-type regional commission, he puts into the plan several strong recommendations which will generate very strong opposition, but which he feels are expendable and might be traded off for support from some of the commissioners for central aspects of the fair share plan.

(4) A regional transportation plan is being prepared. The city planning agency is strongly in favor of a 25-cent fare to make the system as accessible as possible to poorer people. The regional planners are opposed to this because they think a higher fare is necessary to break even. Technical meetings between city planning and regional planning representatives are being held in order to determine the economic feasibility of the two options. The chief planner for the city planning agency believes the regional planners' estimates are always conservative about the number of riders, so they can argue that the system would not pay for itself at the lower fare. In order to justify the lower fare, she always purposely develops estimates that indicate that the system would attract more riders, thus yielding higher revenues.

questionnaire, there were several scenarios that kept the action the same, while changing the beneficiary. In these scenarios, respondents tended to be more willing to help if the beneficiary was an environmental group or low-income community.

This willingness to act on their values was particularly pronounced among planners who saw themselves as what we called “politicians.” These planners were willing to lobby or organize support for a project or plan they wanted to have adopted. They were also less impressed with the efficacy of technical analysis as a primary tool for getting to that goal.

For Jerry and me, the most exciting finding was that half of the respondents valued both good technical analysis and political acumen. We called these planners “hybrids,” because while they appreciated the importance of analysis, they saw it as only one tool available to them, even if it was the primary tool. Other tools that were more political could be used, allowing these planners a wider range of actions.

From this data, we wrote several articles (Howe 1980; Howe and Kaufman 1979, 1981) and presented these at professional meetings. Jerry was then asked to serve on a professional committee drafting a code of ethics for planning. Our research was clearly of interest to planners and planning academics. We also used it in our teaching. The questionnaire and its ethical challenges became an all-purpose tool we used on students and professionals to raise and guide the discussion of ethics in our field. Jerry’s original idea that ethics might be a path into studying planning practice put ethics on the planning map.

Despite—or perhaps because of—the attention that our ethics survey received, Jerry and I came to realize that our questionnaire, with its fixed ethical scenarios, still squeezed respondents into a particular framework (technicians, politicians, or hybrids) when what we wanted was to see how planners would describe their own roles and frameworks for thinking about ethics. This led to the second part of our study, a series of 98 in-person interviews with planners in 5 randomly chosen regions: Northern California, Maryland/Delaware, Texas, Tennessee, and New York. After an interview, each planner would also fill out and send back a closed-ended questionnaire similar to the one in the first stage.

During the summer of 1982, we raced around the country, imposing on friends and family for lodging, food, and cars. My husband, Mac, a small-plane pilot, flew me around Tennessee and Texas. For an August trip to Texas, we rented a car from Rent-A-Wreck. Our cheap rental had no air conditioning, so we zoomed from one interview to the next with the windows wide open while eating quarts of rapidly melting Bluebell ice cream from the containers.

When we got back to Madison that fall, we had nearly 100 tapes that needed to be transcribed and analyzed. This kind of time-consuming, detailed work was more my style than Jerry’s, so I spent the next seven summers transcribing and analyzing the tapes. Jerry and I discussed what I was coming up with as well as what he had heard from his interviewees. At the same time, we also did more systematic research on how philosophers thought about ethics (Howe 1992).

This background work made us realize that each of us thought about ethical issues in different ways. That difference corresponded to a major divide in

philosophical approaches to ethics and to the same dividing line that we found among the planners we had interviewed.

Jerry's approach to ethics was consequentialist: Were the consequences of an action good or bad? In the case of equity or justice, he focused on whether a policy or development would benefit a disadvantaged group such as a racial minority or residents of a low-income neighborhood. Behind this judgment lay the broader understanding that the entire community would realize a larger benefit by, for example, reducing the socio-economic gap between poor minorities and whites, if only incrementally. Consequentialism had one potential problem, however, which was central to the way Jerry had designed the original survey: a good end could be used to justify means that were not entirely ethical. Unsurprisingly, as a consequentialist, Jerry thought that a value-committed planner pushing for change in normal administrative or political practices might recommend or use strategies that might be judged as unethical by other people they worked with.

By contrast, I generally thought of ethics as a matter of right and wrong. For me, making an ethical decision involved working with principles such as truth, accountability, or justice to develop a specific policy, project, or process. I did not see the question of whether an action was ethical as a question of good or bad consequences; I believe that ethical principles should apply regardless of the consequences they produce. Letting a good principle—like justice—justify violating another principle such as truth was unethical to me. No end could justify unethical means.

This distinction in how planners frame what they think about ethical behavior became a central element in our analysis. Additionally, in the years between our original survey and the interviews, planning was changing in many parts of the country. Traveling to large cities, small cities, and suburbs, and meeting with planners in local general planning agencies and specialized state ones, made us realize that the acceptance of planning, and particularly activist planning, varied from state to state. Texas, Tennessee, and Delaware were wary of planning, whereas Northern California and Maryland gave planning agencies more influence in local politics.

This variation in contexts meant that the ethical issues planners described ranged from bribery and political favoritism, to conflicts of loyalty between a planning agency and community groups they worked with, to pressure by planning directors to tailor a planner's analysis, to covertly giving information to a community group to improve the chances of adoption of a project. In the cases planners provided, they spelled out as clearly as they could how they analyzed the issues and dealt with them. Most had never thought much about ethics. A few were challenged by having to explain how they thought about an ethical choice. But many used ethical principles to determine whether an action had been right or wrong, and a smaller number thought consequentially, framing their decisions in terms of good or bad outcomes.

We saw somewhat the same roles as we had found in the original survey. But these results were often more hybridized than we expected. There were still many technicians, a role sometimes consciously chosen; but, in other instances, required by the constraints of their function, agency, or community; or merely the result of the planner's temperament. But even among self-defined technicians, there was a

group who, owing to their long tenure in their agencies, had evolved into political actors. And with this more political role came the desire and capacity to get results.

There was another role—process planner—that included both technicians and hybrids. These planners didn't care very much about particular substantive values or the implementation of their plans. Their primary concern was to keep the planning process open and responsive. They tended to work in communities where there was considerable conflict, and they gravitated toward mediating and facilitating in an effort to bring groups together to balance competing objectives. In ethical dilemmas, they were motivated primarily by principles like openness, truthfulness, and fairness, which they saw as essential to a good process.

The other large group we talked to came to be known as "activists." These planners did not think of themselves as politicians in the way we had thought of politicians from our survey. Formally they were hybrids—careful about the technical underpinnings of policy, but they also wanted to see their work implemented and were willing to be proactive to make this happen. Many had strong substantive values that they thought of as ethical—protecting the environment, working for social equity, creating good urban design—that they wanted to achieve. They accepted conflict as normal and enjoyed the political side of their jobs. Sometimes they had to find niches in which they could play this kind of role, but they often worked in places that accepted planning and its politics as something important to the community. Besides the activist planners who used substantive values as principles to guide them ethically, many other activist planners were consequentialists in the way they approached ethical issues.

The transcription of the interviews and systematic coding of each one lasted until the end of the 1990s. The coding structured the analysis, and that led naturally to writing up the results into a book (Howe 1994). During the summers when I worked on this, I was rarely in Madison. Unfortunately, during this time, Jerry and I did not develop any preliminary papers that would have made us work together on what the interviews told us. The book evolved into something quite academic on how these planners, in their particular roles, thought about ethics. Looking back, I can see that it was quite different from what it probably would have been had Jerry and I worked out the framework for the analysis together and written the book jointly.

In retrospect, I also have to ask what this research told us about whether and how planning could pursue racial and economic justice. The bottom line is that this ethics research did not deal very directly with the big issues of racism and poverty that originally brought us to ask planners about what they saw as posing ethical issues. It was up to them to tell us that, and only a few talked about these issues.

In hindsight, this is not surprising. Our research was based on surveys and interviews with individual planners. Some of them did care about social equity. In the survey where we defined the ethical issues for them, planners tended to think in the abstract: that a planner should take more political risks to help disadvantaged groups or to protect the environment. In the interviews, there were some planners who were strongly motivated by the principle of social justice. They chose to work in areas such as affordable housing, community development in low-income communities, or urban mass transit where issues of equity were common. If they were supported

by their agencies, they could sometimes work successfully to make progress on their small part of the large challenge of increasing social equity.

But for most of our respondents, race and poverty did not come to mind when they were asked about ethical issues that had affected them in practice. Social justice was not an immediate concern to them as individual planners because the underlying framework inherent in the physical, social, and political structures in which they lived and worked kept it below the surface of consciousness. Only occasionally would a community, including its planners, try to shift the structural bias a bit by promoting affordable housing, school integration, or mixed-income housing.

Despite the power of this structural bias, since the 1980s gradual progress has been made in diminishing racism, borne out by the election, in 2008 and 2012, of Barack Obama, the first Black president of the United States. Even the racist backlash against Obama, which was at least partly responsible for the election of Donald Trump, did not put race relations back to the way they were in the 1950s or 1960s. Trump's overt racism has now put the issue of racism, however divisive, squarely front and center in American politics. Additionally, the ever-widening rise in income and wealth inequality in the United States has also begun to attract more political attention.

Jerry did his best to weaken the structures that support class and racial discrimination. He voted for progressive politicians like Obama. Closer to home, he drew on his professional experience, knowledge of the planning field, the interviews we conducted, the discussions we had about those interviews, and the papers we had written in his ongoing planning lectures and teaching about ethics and central cities. He also was involved in working directly with community groups in minority neighborhoods to improve their residents' quality of life. In this process, he found another unexplored field, food systems, that he thought should be made an integral part of planning. I was not involved in this new interest, because I retired and moved away from Madison soon after the publication of the ethics book.

Professor Emerita, Department of Urban and Regional Planning
University of Wisconsin-Madison,
Madison, WI, USA

Beth Howe

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Preface

Jerry Kaufman, my father, was born in Middletown, Connecticut, in 1933 to immigrant Jews from Eastern Europe. His mother, Nechama, or Norma, as she became known, left her tiny village near Vilna, Lithuania, and arrived at Ellis Island in 1921, when she was 17 years old. Jerry's father, Leib, who came to be called Louis, had emigrated from Zhytomyr, in Ukraine, years earlier. When my father was 2, his family moved to Corona, Queens, where he grew up in a small, rent-controlled apartment. A house painter, Louis struggled to make ends meet, and sometimes the family was forced to rent out one of the apartment's two bedrooms to a boarder. Before my father's voice changed, my grandmother hired him out to lead High Holiday services at congregations across the New York area. Occasionally, he would also help Louis with house painting jobs, usually working on closets or other little-noticed spaces. Louis's profession took a toll on him, and he died of a heart attack in 1957, when my father was 24. Louis's years of toil gave my father an unshakable empathy for the poor.

My father's house was often filled with arguments. Usually, they were between my grandparents over money woes, though they sometimes erupted between Arnold, my father's headstrong older brother, and Norma. Throughout his entire life, my father always ate fast, a habit formed out of his desire to escape the dinner-table strife as quickly as possible. He found salvation in the street, where he played stickball and other city games with his Italian-American neighbors. He channeled his family's conflicts into a fierce athletic competitiveness. But those arguments, which he always stayed out of, also taught him to be a good listener and motivated him to try to resolve disputes peacefully. Developing and teaching conflict resolution skills would become a focus of his professional life.

When my father was growing up, one of New York City's great gifts to its residents was that it offered them a free college education. In 1950, my father enrolled in Queens College, and during the summers, he worked as a waiter in the Borscht Belt to pay for his books and other expenses. Throughout his undergraduate years, he was adrift, searching for a career path. One day during his senior year, he dropped by his sociology professor's office to ask for advice. The professor grabbed a book off his shelf and said, "What about planning?" The book was *The Culture of Cities*

by Lewis Mumford. My father, drawn to Mumford's eloquent critique of American materialism and captivated by his vision of a more humanistic society, devoured the book and many others by Mumford. After graduating from Queens College, my father began studying under Mumford at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received his master's degree before beginning a long career as an urban planner, a planning educator, and a visionary.

One of my father's first jobs took him to Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, where he met my mother, Judy, a Chicago native who was studying harp at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. For their first date, he asked her to sing Renaissance madrigals with him and two other friends. He and Judy fell in love and were married on a blustery day in Chicago in January 1960, surrounded by family and friends. After my mother finished college, my parents moved to South Shore, an integrated Chicago neighborhood along Lake Michigan. They developed many close friendships with African-American neighbors, an experience that helped inspire their life-long commitment to racial justice.

In Chicago, my father began working as a research director at the American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO). There, he interviewed planners from across the country to study and write about new trends in planning. It was at ASPO that my father learned to value things like detailed research and the insights of real-world practitioners. It was also where he learned how to write clear prose. This was taught to him by a kind yet demanding boss named Dennis O'Harrow, who edited my father's articles. My father would go on to teach the mechanics of writing to his university students (and to his own children; he was my first and best editor). He never tired of proselytizing *The Elements of Style*, William Strunk and E.B. White's masterful writing guide, a copy of which O'Harrow had given to my father.

In the spring of 1971, my father interviewed for a job as a professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, though he held only a master's degree. At the time, National Guardsmen were posted at the entrance of his department and at every other building on campus that he visited. The year before, the anti-war movement, which my father strongly supported, had taken a violent turn in Madison when four protesters set off a bomb at Sterling Hall, which housed the Army Mathematics Research Center, a Pentagon-funded think tank, as well as the physics department. My father abhorred violent protest like the Sterling Hall bombing, which inadvertently killed a graduate student researcher and injured three other people. He idolized Martin Luther King, Jr.'s civil disobedience and other nonviolent tactics like the "teach-in" movement against the Vietnam War, which had been hatched in Ann Arbor in 1965 by my father's brother Arnold, who was then a professor of political philosophy at the University of Michigan. Arnold became a nationally known public intellectual, anti-war leader, and civil rights activist, but in June 1971, weeks after my father's interview at Madison, Arnold was killed when a plane he was riding in collided with a military jet outside Los Angeles.

Arnold was a somewhat distant hero for my father, someone he admired and yearned to be closer to. Arnold had been a mentor to the student activist Tom Hayden at Michigan and was instrumental in helping craft the Port Huron Statement, the

manifesto of Students for a Democratic Society, in 1962. He had also taught at the Tuskegee Institute, a historically black college; marched at civil rights demonstrations across the South; led the defense of his UCLA colleague, Angela Davis, after the California Board of Regents fired her for being a professed communist; and was a close friend of Michael Harrington, the author of *The Other America*, the book that helped give rise to the New Frontier and the Great Society. Arnold's political activism deeply impressed my father.

After his brother's death, my father's work increasingly focused on finding ways to use planning to address racial and economic injustice and other moral questions. He wrote groundbreaking papers on urban education and racial segregation. In the late 1970s, with his colleague Elizabeth Howe, he wrote the first article that dealt with the ethical considerations of city planners. He later helped draft the first code of ethics for members of the American Planning Association; it posited that residents of communities should have the opportunity to play a meaningful role in the development of plans and programs that may affect them. This was a radical departure from the top-down days of Robert Moses and urban renewal.

I remember how the moral character of his work was imparted to me as a young child. Family vacations would often include visits to housing projects in Chicago and other older American cities, where he would impress upon my sister, Ariel, and me the tragic injustice of such places as Robert Taylor Homes, the enormous, now-demolished, public housing complex on Chicago's South Side. I still remember—vividly—how he told me that young children there were often too afraid to even cross the street for fear of being shot.

My father felt that injustice, and worked tirelessly to expose it to his students. One of his favorite courses to teach focused on central-city planning, and it included a three-day trip to Chicago. Students would visit a number of ethnic neighborhoods throughout the city and meet with planning officials, community activists, and residents. Many of these students came from rural Wisconsin and had never been to a large city like Chicago before, let alone visited a housing project. "He'd jump out of this van—the only white guy on the street—and he'd take us into a housing project like Cabrini-Green," Branden Born, one of the editors of this book, recalled. "He'd tell us, 'The folks here have a lot to teach you about what it's like to live in a city. The interests they have are not unlike those that you have.'"

My father cared a great deal about his colleagues, his department, and especially his students. (That devotion comes full circle with the publication of this book, which was spearheaded by a former student, Samina Raja.) To those he taught he offered devoted mentorship marked by rigorous, skeptical questioning of their theses, arguments, and research. His questions were always well-meaning, asked with the intention of aiding students' success. He gave special attention to poor and minority students, and fought hard to recruit more women and minority students and faculty to his department.

In 1982, my father received a Fulbright to teach at the Technion in Haifa, Israel, for a year. Though he admired aspects of Israel, particularly its role as a refuge for European Jews (including some of his own relatives) fleeing the Holocaust, he did not shy away from criticizing the country's increasingly brutal treatment of

Palestinians. He relished the intellectual exchange with Israeli colleagues and students, as he did with those whom he spent time with during teaching stints at the University of Amsterdam and the University of Turin. A lifelong learner and committed internationalist, he found these experiences highly rewarding, and they cemented his belief that planners needed constant exposure to new ideas and practices.

In the 1990s, my father began focusing on food systems planning, yet another area that he would pioneer. He believed that planning, a discipline with few fixed boundaries, was uniquely capable of comprehensively addressing societal problems. He grew to believe that planners should consider food systems—the ways in which groups of people are fed—as essential parts of a functioning society, like housing, education, and transportation. When he first started researching the subject, he was surprised to discover that Lewis Mumford had never addressed food in his wide-ranging studies of urbanism. My father’s landmark article “The Food System: A Stranger to the Planning Field” (co-authored with Kami Pothukuchi and reprinted in this book) argued that Mumford’s vision of a city as a place for a “vivid and autonomous personal life” couldn’t be realized without “secure, ongoing access for all citizens to high quality, nutritious food.” Jerry became widely regarded—rightly—as the father of food systems planning.

It was in this last phase of his career that he was most engaged with the wider community, and I believe that that’s what made it, for him, the most satisfying chapter of his career. In the mid-1990s, he provided expertise in the creation of Troy Gardens, a large community garden for residents of a low-income neighborhood in Madison that had been threatened by development. In 2000, a year before he retired from the university, he became president of the board of directors of Growing Power, a Milwaukee-based nonprofit urban farming organization founded by a farmer and former professional basketball player named Will Allen. Growing Power’s main site was a two-acre plot of greenhouses in the middle of an impoverished north Milwaukee neighborhood. The site was situated in what planners call a food desert—it was miles from the nearest grocery store—and it was just a few blocks from one of Milwaukee’s largest public housing projects. Yet the organization grew millions of pounds of produce on this small plot, organized a “market basket” program that delivered produce to low-income families, and provided hundreds of underprivileged young people with jobs. For his work with Growing Power, Will Allen won a MacArthur “genius” grant, and he developed a close bond with my father. “Probably the most positive person I have ever met,” Allen said of him. My father’s deep commitment to Growing Power helped sustain him, especially after he was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2011.

That year also saw Wisconsin’s newly elected Republican governor, Scott Walker, launch unprecedented attacks on labor rights, environmental protections, and the University of Wisconsin system. My father loved his adopted state, and, more than anyone I know, he embodied the Wisconsin Idea, the century-old ethos that places a moral obligation on the University of Wisconsin’s faculty to serve the citizens of the entire state. Before his diagnosis, my father participated in one of the early marches against Walker’s policies at the state capitol, where he was joined by

tens of thousands of other everyday citizens like himself. He told me he sang “God Bless America” with the crowd—a powerful moment that helped restore his faith in democracy.

On January 10, 2013, my father died. Two days before his death, I had raced back to Madison from my home in New York to pay him a final visit. His condition had deteriorated dramatically since I had last seen him, less than two weeks earlier. Now he was completely bedridden and breathing with great difficulty. In the room with me was my cousin Will, Arnold’s son, who had driven from his home in Ann Arbor at the crack of dawn to say goodbye. When I entered the room, my father gazed deeply at me for what seemed like several minutes. Finally, he mustered the strength to speak. He thanked me for coming. That was how he was. His orientation, even on his deathbed, was always outward, toward the other person. His bonds with others were what the philosopher Martin Buber would call “I and Thou” relationships; he never saw people as a means to an end but, rather, as an end unto themselves. That perspective was one of his many gifts, and a legacy that is borne out by the contributors to this book.

Contributor to *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*,
The New York Review of Books and
The New York Times Magazine
New York, NY, USA

Dan Kaufman

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We are grateful to urban growers who nourish US cities in the best and worst of times. In particular, collective efforts of Black, brown, and Indigenous growers have made US neighborhoods and cities livable in the face of limited municipal support.

Thank you to the many colleagues, students, and friends of Jerome L. Kaufman who supported this project from its inception. Special thanks to (late) Judith Zukerman Kaufman, Ariel Kaufman, and Dan Kaufman for sharing their memories of Jerry. We are grateful to our families, of birth and choice, for steady behind-the-scenes support for this book.

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Ultimately, this book came into being because of the efforts of the 53 contributors to this volume. Thank you all.

Samina Raja

Marcia Caton Campbell

Alexandra Judelsohn

Branden Born

Alfonso Morales

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About the Editors

Samina Raja is a Professor of Food Systems Planning and the Founder and Director of the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab (UB Food Lab) at the University at Buffalo. Her scholarship, teaching, and practice focus on the role of people-led policy and planning on promoting food and health equity. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6251-2736>

Marcia Caton Campbell is Executive Director of Rooted, a Madison (WI) urban agriculture and food systems organization. She is coauthor of *Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places, PAS Report No. 563* (American Planning Association, 2011), with Kimberley Hodgson and Martin Bailkey. A Past Chair of the American Planning Association's Food Systems Division, Caton Campbell was previously a faculty member in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She holds an MCRP and a PhD in city and regional planning from The Ohio State University. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8682-2256>

Alexandra Judelsohn is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University at Buffalo. Her scholarship explores the role of local governments in the US refugee resettlement program, and, broadly, her interests include how the built environment impacts health, particularly for immigrant and refugee populations. Judelsohn holds a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University at Buffalo and a PhD from the University of Michigan. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7952-5149>

Branden Born is an Associate Professor in the Department of Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington, where he studies the intersection of planning processes and social justice. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Madison (2003) as one of Jerry Kaufman's last PhD students. Born's work examines community governance, land use planning, and food systems. Branden directs the Center for Livable Communities for the Department of Urban Design and Planning, and co-directs the UW's Livable City Year program, a university-wide community

partnership effort that pairs university classes with city staff to complete research and design projects in service to community needs. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7525-2446>

Alfonso Morales is Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor in the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is also Chair of the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture. Originally from rural New Mexico with roots in family farming there and in west Texas, he is a researcher, advocate, and practitioner/consultant on food systems and public markets. He has been invited to speak on these topics nationally and internationally. He cofounded farm2facts.org, used in farmers markets around the country and co-created the USDA Local Food Economics toolkit, among other scholarly and public-facing activities. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8713-7100>

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Chapter 1

Planning for Equitable Urban Agriculture: Opportunities and Quandaries



Samina Raja 

Abstract Urban agriculture initiatives have rekindled the imagination of city residents and advocates across the United States for various reasons. Enthusiasts use UA as a source of material benefits – such as food and green infrastructure – while others use UA as a lever for social transformation in cities. UA is not without complications: Information asymmetry and elite capture within US cities limit its potential. Given these contradictions, how does one plan for equitable urban agriculture in US cities? This chapter, which introduces a collection of writings in honor of Jerome L. Kaufman, the father of food systems planning, attempts to answer this question. The overall volume explores the opportunities and quandaries in addressing questions of equity in the research, pedagogy, and practice of planning for urban agriculture.

Keywords Urban agriculture · Food systems · Urban planning · Gentrification · Community gardens · Equity · Ethics · Jerome L Kaufman

Urban agriculture initiatives have rekindled the imagination of city residents and advocates across the United States. At its core, urban agriculture (UA) is about growing food – and engaging in allied activities – in urban spaces. Community gardens, large-scale urban farms, rooftop gardens, hellstrip gardens, and edible landscaping in public spaces are but a few ways that agrarianism appears in urban landscapes in America. Urban growers grow food for themselves and their communities. Urban agriculture enthusiasts also view the practice as a means to other ends besides food. Enthusiasts view urban agriculture sites as places for building community cohesion, such as around community gardens. Others view it as a means of greening the city. Urban agriculture may also be about social transformation (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010). Some Black, brown, and indigenous people view growing as an exercise in collective agency and self-determination. For immigrants and

S. Raja (✉)

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA

e-mail: sraja@buffalo.edu

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refugees with agrarian histories, cultivation may be about creating spaces of belonging and refuge in a new country.

The increasingly popular practice of urban agriculture is not without complications. Race and class inequalities are prevalent in urban agriculture, just as they are in the overall food system (Alkon and Agyeman 2011). Observers note that the arrival of urban agriculture projects in a city may also inadvertently trigger dislocation and dispossession of lower-income residents (McClintock 2013). UA is valued as an amenity in urban neighborhoods. Neighborhoods with UA sites attract higher-income homebuyers, pushing up real estate prices, and pricing out longer-term residents. Elders on fixed incomes are especially impacted. Gentrification is often racialized, pushing lower-income residents of color out of neighborhoods. UA practice is also subject to elite capture. For example, some residents may be more proximate to localized networks of power (especially to municipal policy actors and networks) and, therefore, more readily able to access land and avail the benefits of urban agriculture. Information asymmetry between individuals or groups about accessing public (or private) land or navigating municipal policies and regulations also perpetuates inequitable access to urban agriculture within cities. The twin phenomena of elite capture (of UA) and information symmetry (between policymakers and residents and between groups of residents) have effectively undermined the potential of urban agriculture. Discussions about urban agriculture that decouple 'place' from 'people,' and overlook disparate access to policy power run the risk of turning the otherwise good idea of urban agriculture into a mechanism for perpetuating inequitable outcomes for particular groups of people in cities. How urban planners frame, understand and engage with urban agriculture mediates its potential for fostering an equitable and just city, an idea we explore in this book.

Urban agriculture is intertwined with the socio-political history of US cities (Lawson 2005), not unlike the practice of urban planning itself. Even before the Civil War era (1861–1865), people in cities raised crops and animals for human consumption. People of African descent enslaved in the United States grew food on lands adjacent to their dwellings for subsistence and trade (White 2018). In the decades following the Civil War and Reconstruction, between 1877 and 1900, the country experienced significant levels of industrialization. The arrival of electrification, trolley cars, and other new technologies changed how people lived in cities. Significant rural-to-urban migration and immigration in the late nineteenth century led to population growth in cities. Many new arrivals were likely people with agricultural skills but were employed in the rapidly industrializing urban centers. An economic upheaval between 1893–1897 rekindled interest in urban agriculture: Businesses (especially railroads) went under, banks failed, and unemployment rose, leading to hunger and economic duress. In 1894, Hazen Pingree, then-Mayor of Detroit, Michigan, called on landowners to lend their properties to impoverished families so they could grow food to feed their families. Property owners provided access to land, and the municipal government prepared lots for production. Historians report that nearly 500 families in Detroit began growing food on garden allotments of 0.5 to 0.75 acres of land on what came to be known as Pingree's Potato Patches (Warner 1987 [2019]). Several cities across the country followed suit

in the subsequent growing season, launching urban agriculture programs to fend off hunger among unemployed families. Buffalo, New York, and Detroit, Michigan – cities with thriving contemporary urban agriculture movements today – had the most extensive programs, feeding up to a couple of thousand families each growing season. Municipal support for urban agriculture was driven by a desire to mitigate the challenges of the economic upheaval rather than from a perspective that growing food was essential to urban life.

Significant social, technological, and economic shifts in the 1900s likely shaped how city residents engaged (or did not) with agriculture. Economic prosperity fueled population growth in US cities. For some Black Americans, northern cities were an escape from the racialized segregation of the US South. Though slavery had been abolished (in 1865), the persistence of racialized laws and structures in the US South – or so-called Jim Crow laws – catalyzed the Great Migration of Black Americans in the 1900s to northern cities (though northern municipalities, too, had Jim Crow laws such as sundown laws). Many southern Black Americans migrating to northern cities also brought the knowledge, practices, and memories of growing food. For example, Black urban gardeners in Buffalo, Boston, and other cities reference their experience gardening with their parents and grandparents in the US South.

The early 1900s also marked the professionalization of the fledgling urban and regional planning field as cities struggled to provide services to a growing population. For many urban poor, daily life involved living in overcrowded housing with inadequate facilities. Formal city plans, including Burnham's 1911 Plan of Chicago, laid the groundwork for grand improvements such as new parks, lakefronts, and civic and cultural centers that characterized the City Beautiful movement. These City Beautiful plans failed to protect agriculture-related activities as a core function and land use in cities. Many agricultural and allied land uses – such as fresh markets – were planned out of urban landscapes during the City Beautiful era.

Across the Atlantic in Europe, urbanists promoted the idea of a Garden City, which incorporated agriculture as a central tenet of planning new settlements (Howard 1902). Howard's ideal Garden City included farms, pastures, and fruit orchards integrated alongside housing and transportation networks. Howard's view of agricultural and food-related land uses was nuanced. In his view, agriculture land uses varied in scale (e.g., small farms and large farms), by type of crops (e.g., vegetables and fruit farms), and by type of grower (smallholder farmers versus people with health challenges growing for themselves). Howard's principles informed the design of the earliest Garden City, Letchworth, England, in 1903.

Translation of the Garden City idea in the US ushered in an era of planned new towns with green and growing spaces (e.g., Mariemont, Ohio, and Radburn, New Jersey). In Mariemont, Ohio, founded in 1923, landscape architect John Nolen planned allotment gardens for working-class families. But, the translation of the Garden City movement to the US failed to address the country's racial inequities and settler-colonial history. For example, the Garden City of Radburn, New Jersey, founded in 1929, was a sundown town that restricted Black Americans out (Loewen 2005). Planners' vision of greener new towns or cities that incorporated agriculture did not, in fact, welcome all groups of Americans.

US engagement in World War I (in 1914) fueled an unexpected interest in agriculture in cities. Leaders invoked patriotic fervor to encourage people across the country to plant gardens to assist with the war effort. The US federal government urged people to voluntarily consume less and produce more through what came to be known as *war gardening*. Several public programs were launched to support agriculture in urban and rural settings.

War was not the only societal upheaval that drew attention to urban agriculture. Leaders proposed *relief gardens* during the economic recession, or the Great Depression, of the 1930s. The US involvement in World War II (1939) following the Great Depression again rekindled interest in victory gardens. With food rationing in place (in 1942), gardening gained new fervor: Estimates suggest that in 1944, nearly 20 million *victory gardens* produced about 40 percent of fruits and vegetables consumed in the US. Some scholars have suggested that interest in formal urban agriculture initiatives waned following World War II (in the 1950s). This period also coincided with the hyper-industrialization of the food industry and with a shift toward producing processed foods (fueled partly by the investment in war-related manufacturing in the food processing sector). The decade of the 1950s saw the arrival of frozen peas, canned whipped cream, chicken nuggets, the first TV dinner, and other 'convenience foods' that are now ubiquitous on US grocery store shelves. Sure, many people in urban areas continued to grow food for themselves and their families – but without the fanfare that accompanies today's trendier forms of urban agriculture.

Growing environmental justice and health consciousness refueled people's interest in urban agriculture in the 1960s and 1970s. The publication of now-classic books such as *Silent Spring* (1962), *Diet for a Small Planet* (1971), and *Food for People, Not for Profit* (1975) drew people's attention to the links between the environment and health (and food). Environmental justice advocates noted that many urban vacant lands were often used as waste/dumping sites in communities of color. Tired of waiting for governments to fix their problems, community organizers and residents reclaimed vacant lots for community gardening. In areas on the outskirts of cities, people fought for the protection of farmlands in the face of (sub)urbanization. Some rural farms were protected even when completely engulfed by development: In Santa Barbara County, California, for example, Fairview Farms, established in the 1950s in what was a rural setting (Ableman 1998), operates today surrounded by subdivisions and development in the somewhat youngish city of Goleta, California (incorporated in 2002).

The growing civil rights, anti-war, and environmental movements of the 1960s and 1970s re-ignited interest in the food system. Black nationalism advocated for radical control of the food system, distinct from the mainstream capitalist food system in the United States. Black leaders viewed agriculture as a lever for freedom and social transformation. Fannie Lou Hamer, for example, founded Freedom Farm Cooperative (FFC) in Ruleville, Mississippi, in the late 1960s to help Black farmworkers regain control over their livelihood and lives. FFC had a comprehensive view of the infrastructure, services, and environments necessary for low-income Black people to thrive in Ruleville. In addition to establishing a cooperative farm to generate income for landless families, FFC ran complementary programs focused

on education, housing, food, anti-poverty, and political organizing. White (2018) describes Hamer's work as akin to that of Gramsci's organic intellectuals who emerge in all social strata; are aware of their economic, social, and political function; and can organize, strategize, and advocate. Hamer remains among the most powerful examples of leaders who used the food system for social transformation, even though she may not have used the phrase 'food system.' Urban agriculture sites have also been the site of fractious, oppositional, and confrontational actions by community organizers who sought to "fix" their communities in the face of apathetic or inept public institutions. For example, People's Park in Berkeley has a decades-long history as a protest site, initially rooted in a land-use dispute (in 1969). The site emerged as a locus of anti-war and anti-policing protests and continues to be a site of contestation today. Across these varying periods in the city's history, people have used People's Park for growing food.

The 1970s saw the rise of some progressive urban gardening programs supported by municipalities, likely fueled by the larger political climate. For example, on the East Coast, the city of Syracuse (NY) launched an 'adopt-a-lot' program, encouraging residents to garden on vacant land. In the Northwest, the city of Seattle (WA) launched the well-known P-Patch program, which continues today. The 1980s were a difficult time for US cities as the federal government cut federal aid and reduced anti-poverty programs (coincidentally, the 1980s were also challenging for rural farming). Businesses and capital exited older industrial cities, and land vacancy grew. The use of the so-called emergency food system, including food banks and soup kitchens, increased in response to hunger and food insecurity. Enthusiasts advocated for urban agriculture practice as a buffer against urban disinvestment. Interest in community gardening and urban growing (for food) peaked again in the late 1990s. Concerns about the rise in chronic disease in the US drew public attention to the role of structural determinants of health. Urban agriculture – and, more broadly, urban food systems – attracted the attention of public health advocates as possible means for promoting better nutrition. This focus on urban agriculture as a lever for supporting community health has grown over time.

Decoupling urban agriculture from the dynamic socio-political history of cities – and the history of city planning itself – is short-sighted. Urban agriculture has existed and evolved in relationship to cities themselves. Significant societal, political, and economic events rekindle Americans' interest in urban agriculture, as evident in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in recent years. Urban agriculture has often, if not always, been about more than growing food: it has been a tool for social transformation with deep connections to social, environmental, and other political movements.

Like in the past, today's practice of urban agriculture is often an expression of agency and resistance. Consider an example from Buffalo, NY. Gail Wells, a Black leader in Buffalo's food justice movement and Master gardener, launched Buffalo Freedom Gardens in the wake of COVID. The program provides raised beds, seedlings, soil, and technical assistance to first-time growers, especially in the city's Black neighborhoods. The initiative encourages residents to grow food in their backyards and front yards and emphasizes community building. Gardeners work with community networks to draw attention to food injustice (e.g., in 2021,

gardeners supported the agricultural pavilion at Buffalo's Juneteenth celebration). Freedom Gardens in Buffalo is a praxis of liberation and resistance in the face of challenging conditions (e.g., poor food environments in Black neighborhoods). Similar expressions of collective agency and resistance are evident in cities around the country including Detroit, Philadelphia (Gripper et al. 2022), and others.

UA can be a lever for promoting social justice in the city and a space within which people can seek justice. Equitable urban agriculture is an ideal that demands attention to fairness and justice. Such an ideal requires attention to the processes and outcomes that impact who can access urban agriculture and who can benefit from it. City planning plays a role in mediating the possibilities of equitable UA. How does local government planning for urban agriculture serve the interests of marginalized people? How are questions of equity and ethics addressed in planning for urban agriculture? Answers to these questions must inform, and we argue, precede, planners' and policymakers' engagement with urban agriculture. Failure to do so makes city planning a tool for exacerbating inequities in *and* through urban agriculture. Consider the example of the city of Minneapolis, which adopted the first known urban agriculture policy plan in the United States in 2012. Yet, some growers in Minneapolis today – primarily Black, brown, and indigenous – hold a dismal view of how the city has implemented the urban agriculture plan. [Tragically, Minneapolis was also the site of George Floyd's murder in 2020, exposing the deep racial injustices that are the undertone of US cities.] How might urban planning engage with urban agriculture by explicitly addressing questions of ethics, equity, and justice?

Urban planners must understand better how their choices amplify or limit the potential of urban agriculture to foster equitable cities. More than 300 local governments around the United States are engaging in food systems policy and de facto planning, some more actively than others. Many are passing ordinances and laws to regulate urban agriculture. Zoning continues to be the 'intervention' of choice. Some local governments are investing in urban agriculture as public infrastructure, though at lower levels than other urban amenities such as parks. And, to our knowledge, few local governments are centering questions of ethics in their approach toward urban agriculture as a public infrastructure. We need better theoretical frames to understand equitable urban agrarianism, more robust empirical evidence about its impact on people and places, and more effective policy implementation tools that move us toward equity.

Building on the legacy of food systems planning scholar, teacher, and advocate, Jerome (Jerry) Kaufman, this book examines the potential and pitfalls of planning for urban agriculture in the United States. An emeritus professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the long-time Board President of Growing Power, a pioneering urban agriculture organization in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the time of his passing (in 2013), Jerry blended the roles of activist, practitioner (of planning), scholar, and teacher throughout his professional life. Jerry was a quintessential planner, diving into disparate questions if the answers got him strategically closer to making places work better for people, especially those pushed to the margins. In his essay, Jerry's son, Dan Kaufman, provides a window into Jerry's lived experience

and intellectual trajectory; principles of fairness and justice were a central tenet of Jerry's life and work. Jerry wrote about a host of topics spanning conflict resolution, urban education and race, gender in planning, planning practice (Kaufman 1963, 1969; Goodman 1965; Kaufman and Vance 1965), planning ethics (Dotson et al. 1989; Escuin-Rubio and Kaufman 1993; Kaufman 1993; Hendler 1995) – and, of course, food systems (Kaufman 2001; Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, 2004; Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999, 2000). He taught a course on why planners should focus on inner cities while teaching at a historically white institution in the Midwest (UW-Madison) and courses on planning ethics. Jerry never published writings that explicitly connected his scholarship on planning ethics with his later work on food systems. The editors surmise that Jerry's early preoccupation with planning ethics influenced his openness toward food systems, a topic that was largely overlooked in formal urban planning practice in the US. His close colleague and co-editor of this book, Dr. Marcia Caton Campbell, notes that Jerry was incredibly broadminded about what planners ought to be considering as they practiced their profession.

This book brings together a collection of works inspired by Kaufman's work on food (Kaufman 2001; Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, 2004; Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999, 2000) and planning ethics (Kaufman 1987), connecting the history of food systems planning literature and practice with a Kaufman-esque vision to the future. Jerry's contribution to the field of planning ethics preceded his work on food. His work on food – which kicked off with his leadership of the Madison Food System Project at UW-Madison in the mid-nineties – led to an impactful scholarship and tireless advocacy that encouraged planning practitioners to think about food as part of their ethical responsibility (Raja et al. 2024). His work, along with his colleagues Kami Pothukuchi and Deanna Glosser, resulted in the American Planning Association (APA) recognizing the food system as a legitimate area of professional practice (Pothukuchi and Glosser 2024). Today APA has a formal division dedicated to food systems planning, the APA Food Systems Division (APA-FOOD, founded in 2020), with over 300 members at the time of this writing. Jerry trained a cadre of planning students and collaborated with emerging scholars, inspiring them to think about both food *and* ethics. Many of these individuals, beneficiaries of Jerry's intellectual nourishment, contributed to this volume.

The book includes Kaufman's early scholarship, such as a foundational article in the *Journal of the American Planning Association* co-authored with his close colleague Kami Pothukuchi, which asked why food was absent from the field of planning (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000). Jerry was an avid proponent of reducing the academy-practice divide in planning, often writing for an audience of practitioners. With his then-doctoral student, Martin Bailkey, Jerry wrote one of the earliest reports on planning for entrepreneurial agriculture in cities, commissioned by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000). In keeping with this spirit, this volume includes chapters written by and for planning practitioners, including a reflection on the landmark Lincoln Institute report on entrepreneurial urban agriculture.

Building on a series of books on urban agriculture from the fields of planning and landscape architecture (Dawson and Morales 2016; Hou 2010; Ilieva 2016;

Redwood 2012), and the need at this time for critical reflection on food systems planning practice, this volume ties practice back to theories of and in planning. Where do urban agriculture and food systems planning fit in planning and governance today? What is the relationship of urban agriculture to equity, community development, democracy, and neoliberalism? With food systems planning and urban agriculture being practiced in jurisdictions across North America, what do current academics and practitioners need to be aware of when attempting to shape the contemporary city? How do we examine urban agriculture with a critical lens? How does planning for urban agriculture address questions of equity and justice? Within the urban agriculture domain, who is planning, who is being planned for, and at whose expense? Authors in this book address these questions, using a post-facto lens as well as making suggestions about the future.

The book has five parts following the introduction. Part I, curated by Branden Born (2024), provides a theoretical foundation for the book. Since the publication of Kami Pothukuchi and Jerry Kaufman's early pair of articles in *Agriculture and Human Values* (1999) and the *Journal of the American Planning Association* (2000) that introduced planners to the ideas of urban food systems, numerous articles, special journal issues, and books have explored the how and why of urban agriculture and urban food systems (Born and Purcell 2006; Caton Campbell 2004; Gorgolewski et al. 2011; Scherb et al. 2012; Thibert 2012; Vallianatos et al. 2004; Viljoen et al. 2013). These works have generally focused on how to approach the practice of urban agriculture, who might be involved, why it should be done, or why it is essential in a given context. What they have mostly lacked, however, has been a close connection to theories of planning—or that relate to planning—which is somewhat ironic due to Jerry's interest in theory. In fact, Jerry often taught the Planning Theory graduate seminar at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In this part, the chapters describe foundational work in areas like ethics, community engagement, and roles of planners that Jerry explored, which collectively helped set the stage for the introduction of food systems to urban planning. The chapters also begin to assemble the contemporary use of political and social theory as it is applied to urban agriculture and urban food systems (for example, Frimpong Boamah (2024)). Part I also includes the classic article by Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) published in the *Journal of the American Planning Association* and a second piece, a reflection on the landmark report on urban agriculture published by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000). Other chapters in the section include pieces that propose new theoretical and conceptual ways – including frames for governance, justice and systems thinking – to unpack how planners engage in food systems.

Part II, curated by Alfonso Morales and Nick DeMarsh (2024), examines how civic agriculture is unfolding across urban landscapes, primarily led by not-for-profit and community organizations. In a growing number of cities, suburbs, and small towns, community groups and entrepreneurs are developing innovative approaches to producing food, and in doing so, they are fashioning various ways that consumers can relate to producers. Concrete activities connecting people to production characterize contemporary urban agriculture, and scholars are

conceptualizing and describing these practices, using various methods and towards various ends (Jarosz 2008; Raj et al. 2016; Veenhuizen 2006). Scholars detail how motivations for urban agriculture vary considerably, a feature that is largely overlooked in local government approaches (and tools) for engaging with urban agriculture. McClintock and colleagues, for example, describe motivations for urban agriculture as radical, DIY secessionist, entrepreneurial, educational, social, or eco-centric (McClintock and Simpson 2018). Failure to understand the nuanced motivations, varied participants, and disparate impacts of UA limits local governments' ability to engage with UA in ways that produce equitable outcomes. In the words of Morales (2021), addressing the concerns of urban agriculture practitioners can "transform wicked problems into wicked opportunities."

Chapters in this part of the book document various approaches people are taking to urban agriculture and describe and theorize the modalities of our understanding. Chapters explore how people are using various technologies and tools, such as social networking tools, mapping technologies, emergent land tenure arrangements, and embryonic business models, in the practice of urban food production. Chapters show how the growth of urban food production varies by the goals different people and organizations hold, and how questions of ethics, equity and justice fold into these goals. Finally, chapters bring readers back to the theme of this part of the book by looking at cities, which Jerry loved, as hubs of activities, each activity somewhat independent of the others, but also bearing on each other in different ways. Cases include a range of cities and regions from across the US, including Albany (GA), Buffalo (NY), Madison (WI), Denver (CO), and New York (NY). The case from Albany, GA (Hall et al. 2024) and Buffalo, NY (Griffin et al. 2024) grounds contemporary urban agriculture and food movements within historic Black-led movements for democracy and self-determination. Buffalo's story is especially poignant given that the authors focus on a Black neighborhood that, on May 14, 2022, was the site of a massacre of 10 individuals by a white supremacist in one of the few supermarkets in the area (the chapter was written before the massacre). Food spaces are both the sites of acute and chronic violence – and continued healing and resistance by Black, brown, and indigenous peoples in the United States.

Part III documents municipal policy and planning responses to the civic practice of UA, focusing on ways in which municipal UA policies address questions of equity. Authors report a growing interest in UA from local governments across the United States (Horst et al. 2017 [Reprinted 2023], this volume, Chap. 6), as many adopt and enact policies encompassing urban agriculture. The authors explore the limits and possibilities of new governance mechanisms, planning processes, and policy implementation tools designed to support urban agriculture. Drawing on comprehensive, national-scale research (Raja et al. 2018), the overview chapter describes the myriad ways in which city governments are planning for urban agriculture. Within municipal planning practice, UA continues to be either thinly understood or thickly ignored by those working on behalf of local governments. The predominant approach of local governments is to regulate rather than invest in urban agriculture. Local governments driven by neoliberal development imperatives continue to view urban agriculture as a beneficial but temporary land use until more traditional, large-scale development projects arrive on the horizon.

The section also recounts the history of the professionalization of food systems planning within the American Planning Association, a paper co-authored by Kami Pothukuchi and Deanna Glosser, close colleagues of Jerry Kaufman. Kami was Jerry's faculty colleague at UW-Madison when he began work on food; she brought substantive knowledge of food systems to their collaboration (having studied food systems with John Nystuen at UW-Michigan). Deanna, a planning practitioner, was a critical American Planning Association (APA) member. Collectively, the trio led a successful effort to push for the design and adoption of the first policy guidance on food systems planning by the legislative body of the APA. Policy change is also explored in this section through deep-dive case studies about cities engaged in urban agriculture planning and policy. Chapters report experiences from Baltimore (Buzogany et al. 2024), Cleveland and Detroit (Pothukuchi 2024), Denver (Gosch et al. 2024), and Seattle (Hodgson 2024) – in all chapters, authors reflect on the implications of municipal planning/policy for advancing or hindering equity and justice.

Part IV, curated by Marcia Caton Campbell and Alexandra Judelsohn, explores the possibilities for a compassionate, equitable, and just pedagogy of planning for urban agriculture. Urban agriculture offers a valuable opportunity for students (and faculty) to interrogate, teach, and learn about questions of (in)equity and ethics. The first community food assessment completed in conjunction with a planning department was published in 1977 at the University of Tennessee (Blakey et al. 1977). It took almost another 20 years for the next two to be completed, at UCLA in 1993 (Ashman et al. 1993) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1997, under Jerry Kaufman and Kami Pothukuchi's leadership (Allan et al. 1997). There were few/no urban planning classes on food systems at the time, but such courses were just about to arrive on the academic scene. Caton Campbell taught the first regular course on food systems planning in an accredited planning program at UW-Madison in 2001. Janet Hammer's 2004 survey of community food systems and planning curricula demonstrated a high watermark. Also in 2004, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) gave its national award for the best planning studio project to one focused on food systems (taught by Raja at the University at Buffalo). Since then, teaching about and teaching with the food system as a topic for experiential learning has become a standard feature of planning programs across the US and Canada (Whittaker et al. 2017). Yet, the degree to which coursework about urban agriculture and food systems wrestles with questions of equity and justice remains unclear.

This section of the book highlights the pedagogy of urban agriculture and urban food systems in planning and design education, particularly focusing on issues of equity and justice. Part IV includes chapters highlighting the trajectory of planning education on food systems, including examining the often contentious role of university-community partnerships in food systems planning pedagogy. Written by authors with deep experience in teaching (and studying) about food, the chapters outline elements of a purposeful, equitable, and community-engaged pedagogy of food systems and urban agriculture for students in planning and design fields. Chapters include a reflection on a classic planning practicum – The Fertile Ground Studio – taught at the University of Wisconsin by Jerry Kaufman and Kami

Pothukuchi (Allan et al. 1997), which was one of a handful of planning practica of its kind in the country; two prior ones included one at University of Knoxville Tennessee (Blakey et al. 1977) and UCLA (Ashman et al. 1993). Chapters also include a ten-year post-hoc reflection on an award-winning national practicum – Food For Growth (Almeida et al. 2003) – taught at the University at Buffalo that laid the foundation for a long-term community-university partnership traversing education and research, in Buffalo, NY that spans nearly 20 years (Judelsohn and Kelly 2024).

Part V explores the possibility of an equitable agrarian urban future, especially drawing on perspectives that are overlooked in US planning practice. Urban planning practice in the United States tends to be insular and parochial, with little consideration for planning scholarship or practice from the rest of the world (Raja et al. 2023). The first two chapters in this section remedy this oversight. Wayne Roberts (2024) connects the work between the United States and Canada, while Lesli Hoey (2024) shares insights from the Global South. Both allow readers to step outside the confines of a US-centric frame of how urban agriculture should interface with city planning. Moreover, US planning practice and policy rarely center on the experiences of farmers, especially Black, brown, or indigenous farmers. The third chapter in this section, by Riordan and Rangarajan, addresses this oversight by reporting on how growers of color imagine the future of agriculture in US cities.

In the concluding chapter, the authors draw on the legacy of Jerry Kaufman and the contributors of this volume to propose the idea of planning for urban agriculture as an act of public nurturance. The authors suggest that planning as public nurturance is a value-laden proposition that protects the interests of the marginalized, such as urban growers of color, within planning processes. They argue that planning institutions must be co-designed by people – and that planners must build their capacity to be effective co-designers. The onus is on planners, not people, to decode planning processes that impact urban agriculture. Decoding and demystifying planning are necessary to reduce information asymmetry between the marginalized and the privileged and between people and policymakers and, subsequently, decelerate elite capture of urban agriculture in cities.

The idea of nurturance is one that Jerry extended to his role as teacher and mentor, including supporting the editors and contributors to this volume during his lifetime. Four contributors are Jerry's former students (including two editors), 15 are trainees of Jerry's former students, and the rest are colleagues who worked directly with Jerry or his colleagues. Readers will find a series of short reflections by early career leaders interspersed in the book. The authors of these reflections are Jerome L. Kaufman fellows at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Chloe Green) and the University at Buffalo (Subhashni Raj, Kristopher Walton, and Sydney Jones). Kaufman fellows offer their vision for a new ethic in city building and challenge the discipline and the profession to do better. Jerry's intellectual nourishment and generosity are evident over generations of scholars who have contributed to this book.

We hope that the contributions in this volume stimulate readers' thinking about the role of urban planning in advancing equitable urban agriculture. More importantly, as Jerry would want it, we hope that the volume will guide readers' actions in the service of equitable and just cities.

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Samina Raja is a professor of food systems planning and the founder and director of the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab (UB Food Lab) at the University at Buffalo. Her scholarship, teaching, and practice focuses on the role of people-led policy and planning on promoting food and health equity.

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Part I
**Theories and Foundations: Ethics, Urban
Agriculture, and Planning**

Chapter 2

Theories and Foundations: Ethics, Urban Agriculture, and Planning



Branden Born 

Abstract Early work in planning for food systems emphasized practice and approaches based on common planning methods over a robust theoretical framework. This may have been a strategic choice, but it is worth re-examining. In this section of five chapters, we develop rationales for why and examples of how theory might be applied to make practice better. The section draws out implied theoretical connections in the first wave of food systems scholarship in planning and begins to outline current food systems planning thought that is explicitly theoretical and pushes scholarship in new directions. One challenge to scholars in food systems planning is to be more critical about how and where their work is situated and the implications of different types of action; we do not want food systems planning to recreate past planning errors. How can such scholarship directly consider justice, empowerment, control, and epistemologies that drive action? And, how might ethical considerations be related to food systems scholarship? This section seeks to demonstrate that theory and ethics can be motivators for advancing the field intellectually and practically.

Keywords Food theory · Food ethics · Food systems planning

Jerry Kaufman was a theorist at heart and regularly taught both planning theory and planning ethics at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. So, it is something of a surprise that as he and a handful of other academics worked to develop a definition and understanding of food systems planning, they did not seek to frame food systems planning using theory. This omission may have been strategic, considering the timing and relationship of the new topics to academic study and professional practice. In the latter, planners in government mostly worked under the theories that dominated practice at the time: a blend of rational planning and communicative planning constrained by a healthy dose of practicality. Accordingly, it is understandable that Kaufman stayed in the realm of immediate practicality given the need to both educate and then

B. Born (✉)
University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA
e-mail: bborn@uw.edu

A New Seating Arrangement: Addressing Exclusion in Current Food Systems

Sydney Jones

When you traded our bodies like cards, did you not see that we were breathing, just like you?

Did you not realize

We had a home? We had a life? We had our freedom too?

Was it too hard to see beyond your eyes blinded by dollar signs?

Exploiting our hope became your favorite pastime

But now you blame us for having dreams...

That never make it past the pillows we rest on

My ancestors had everything now we have debt and no opportunity

Try to fix it with programs that only give our shackles, continuity

Why did you invite us to a table

Only to seat us in chairs that would crumble beneath us?

Why did you shake our hands

Only to forget your promises the moment our fingers divorced?

Why?

The answer that will never come from a white face with a crooked smile

I remember when my mother would cook stew. It would simmer in her pearl-white crockpot all day, and the scent of herbs, potatoes, and sweet onions would creep up our carpeted stairs. That scent would float into my bedroom where it'd tickle my nose, and next thing I know, I'm waltzing to the kitchen to sneak a taste of Ma's stew. Everyone knows not to sneak into the pot until Ma says dinner is ready, but it's too good not to try. There were many times I've had my hand slapped away, or my mother gave me those eyes that signaled I better just wait "or else"—a childhood memory that many Black kids share. As a people, our hands are still being slapped away, and it feels like an eternal sting, passed down for generations.

The problem with our nation's food system is *where*, and more importantly, *who* value is placed on. As a student, as a researcher, as a Black woman—I can look through these distinct lenses, yet the same reality persists: Meager value is placed in and on Black communities. This deficit in human value can be seen by analyzing food environments in Black neighborhoods experiencing food apartheid. Today, the slapping away of the hand is shopping for overpriced, poor-quality food, which signals "you can eat, but you don't deserve to eat well." It's wanting to eat healthy, and be nourished, but being given bodegas and fast food as our only options. In Pothukuchi and Kaufman's article, *The Food System: A Stranger to the Planning Field*, a sound foundation to strengthening the food system was conceived. If planners and those with a hand in food systems work want to create a "*new ethic*," and build upon Kaufman's direction and vision for the food system, there needs to be a consideration of those who have been left out of our current food systems (planning). As a Jerome L. Kaufman Fellow, I know that my legacy will carry on his legacy; it is my duty to mirror his ability to tackle fresh, but difficult questions that need answers. My current question is how to get *my people*—Black people—a seat at the (planning) table.

enlist practitioners and other academics in this new addition to planning practice. Still, the limited attention to theory in a field that purports to engage in praxis—the discursive relationship of theory and practice in action—is worthy of addressing as food systems planning moves into a more mature state.

This limited theoretical consideration precluded considering systems thinking or systems theory even as planners began to investigate and describe food systems. This is all the more surprising since the food system is itself a system of systems, with stocks and flows, nodes and linkages, boundary conditions, tipping points, and other characteristics that are components of systems thinking and theory. Unfortunately, this short-term oversight (or strategy) resulted in long-term problematic approaches that failed to see a wider view of the food system and its drivers and roles for planners. Following system theorist Donella Meadows (Meadows 1997), planners did not understand at what point (in time, or in the provisioning chain) to best intervene in the food system; most of their work was reactionary.

Relatedly, early food system planners failed to see (or ignored) the deep structural elements of food system market failures, making, for example, critical race theory or political economy afterthoughts in practice. This even though community-based food system organizations regularly raised these concerns just as planners were getting involved in the mid-1990s, as evidenced by the racial and socioeconomic tensions that highlighted the election of the proposed Board of Directors at the first Community Food Security Coalition conference in 1997. Ultimately, the lack of attention to these issues as fundamental to the community food security movement probably led to the downfall of that organization some 15 years later. This might have been due to a lack of vision, or more likely given the position of planning in democratic governance, its limited taste for radicalism, preferring instead a more moderated, incremental approach to change.

This reactionary and moderate approach in planning was not limited to food systems planning in an era that was increasingly defined more by the adulation of free market power and the rise of the neoliberal state, and increasingly less by large-scale government intervention such as the War on Poverty of the mid-1960s. Even this shift in political economic theory was missed, and not just by food systems planners, as a key driver to how planning functioned at the jurisdictional level.¹ The impact of this was for government planning to turn to short-term thinking with a focus on urban development and permitting. As John Rahaim, the former Planning Director for the City of San Francisco, said in a 2019 talk at the University of Washington about the recent history of planning in his city: “[O]ver the last 30 years, most planning departments have become current planning and permitting offices,” doing less and less long-range and holistic planning (Rahaim 2019).

Other fields from which planning often draws theoretical lessons such as geography and sociology had been exploring food through multiple theoretical lenses for over a decade, providing some examples if only planners were to look for them.

¹There were some planners who saw this political economic shift coming, but the impacts were never widely understood until it was well underway.

Food systems planning was then, and still is open for theoretical examination—a practice in need of theory, as Anderson and Cook (1999) suggested about the concept of community food security in 1999.

Whether it was related to this lack of explicit connection to theory, there has also been a lack of explicit attention to the ethical underpinnings of planning that are clearly represented in food systems research and practice. These ethical dimensions, usually defined as some form of redistributive justice, are definitely drivers of change for planners. Accordingly, data-driven historic and modern descriptions of the food system have been and continue to be important. But a more considered understanding of ethics has not been a common framing for food systems planners. In this volume we asked authors in all of our sections to bring ethics into sharper focus and out of the shadows.

Disparities that trigger ethical consideration abound in the food systems of our communities, including income, food access, health status, and even life expectancy; food system issues are equity issues. But these underpinnings were engaged only partially, not principally, in most early food systems research. Certainly, it was important for planning academics and practitioners in the 1990s and 2000s to describe the conditions they were learning about, but the field might have taken on a different cast had equity and ethics been more central to the work, or even the central claim for action (in some cases it was, as in *Seeds of Change*, which suggested a right to food and explicitly considered equity) (Ashman et al. 1993). The question of right action in planning is always nuanced: any action must balance many situational factors, including community conditions and political context and timing. A closer connection to ethical practice for food systems planning is something we think Jerry would have appreciated, even in hindsight. However, his strong commitment to strategic action might have been a reason he focused on effectiveness and did not center his argument on ethics. It is likely that a professional focus on ethics would not have resonated in cities during a time where seeking market efficiencies was the order of the day.

In this section we seek to review and explore past possibilities and draw out some implied theoretical connections in the first wave of food systems planning scholarship. Some threads explicitly called for theoretical application to the field as a necessity for its development. Other threads were not explicitly engaged with theory but a theoretical frame could be reasonably inferred (not unusual in planning practice, see below). In addition to looking back, we also begin to outline current food systems thinking that is explicitly theoretical and challenges future food systems scholarship. One such challenge is for the scholarship to be more critical about how and where it is situated and what the implication of different types of action might be. How can such scholarship directly consider justice, empowerment, control, and epistemologies that drive action? Our aim here is aspirational. Instead of dwelling on what might have been, we hope to inspire practitioners and scholars to consider what might yet be.

Planning practitioners are a varied bunch. They work in different institutional settings and hold a wide-ranging set of values. They work for the state, for civil society, and for and in communities, and deal with challenging societal choices

around the use of land, water, and other resources. As such, their roles may constrain or define their ability to employ or engage with theory—especially the more transgressive lines. Urban agriculture practitioners also work in diverse settings that could be described along various spectra such as grassroots or more “corporate,” fluid and informal or formal, and ephemeral or long-lasting. The intersection of planners and UA practitioners is complex, and sometimes complicated. Some of both groups (planners and urban agriculture practitioners) would be comfortable in contemporary urban development work, tied to capitalist formations of the city. For others, dismantling the structures of capitalism, which they might perceive to be the fundamental problem of an unjust and unsustainable food system, is a life’s work.

In reality, these groups experience theory in both a lived sense and an intellectual one. For example, whether they have read Henri Lefebvre or engaged with critical theory, many have a visceral understanding of a right to the city, of usufruct rights versus rights of exchange, and UA practitioners particularly might avail themselves of these more tangible understandings of property rights. As this section unfolds we will try to be vigilant in understanding the breadth of practice for planning practitioners and UA practitioners, as well as their potential comfort or limitations with regard to engaging theory. We would hope that planners would have a degree of familiarity with planning theory, as it helps drive the field. For food systems planning, though, there exist many thought leaders from other fields and lived experiences: ideas coming from planning *or* food studies (or geography, etc.) *or* community are each necessary but insufficient. We need the combination of all of them.

That said, one of the challenges in planning has always been to define the boundaries of the field; the same is true with the subfield of food systems planning. In this section, we consider only—or mainly—the work of planners and planning academics, and only look cursorily to related fields like rural sociology, public health and nutrition, and geography, which have examined food and food systems for a longer time than planners, and also have deeper theoretical foundations. We include in our thinking geographers and others who have “crossed over” to planning, but we do not include those only considering the food system more generally or descriptively, or without action as a focus or outcome. This might seem like an arbitrary distinction, but the question of how and whether knowledge moves to action is particularly important in planning, so we set the boundaries for discussing food systems planning as those works that directly engage with planning or implementation.

We know that many mainstream planning practitioners assiduously avoid discussing theory, even to the point of equating it with ineffective, ponderous practice. Yet, in practice their choices embed ethical and political theory in everyday life. At risk of stating the obvious, we would disagree that discussing and understanding theory leads to ineffective practice. We instead find ourselves aligned with a long history of planning scholars who suggest that theory can help to inform and enrich practice, and vice versa. We think that one of the impediments for planning practitioners (beginning in their student days) is that they oftentimes equate theory only with something akin to critical theory, which is an overly restrictive understanding of the endeavor. Although planners often casually disparage theory, they also unknowingly or uncritically fall back on economic rational choice theory

(economic profit motive in cost benefit analysis) or social exchange theory (rewards or punishment within human relationships in cost benefit analysis) without considering the powerful implications of alternatives (like critical theory, or feminist theory, for example).

This reluctance to engage with theory is unfortunate, because theory offers many opportunities for planning. This is familiar to any planning scholar, as we speak regularly about how integral theory and practice are to each other. It is sometimes suggested that theory is what practitioners should turn to when they don't know what else to do. The editors have a broad understanding of planning theory, including meta and critical theory and general theories of planning to meso and micro theories in planning (Faludi 1973). Theories *of* planning allow us to address what planning does, or what it should do, and the context in which those actions are situated. It includes critical and normative approaches. Theories *in* planning address what planners do, what they should do, and how they do it, as ways of conceptualizing action and organizational activities. Both are valid approaches for theorizing planning. From a scalar perspective, then, we embrace the macro to the micro and anything in between. From a breadth of analytical frames, we think planning can be addressed by numerous social, economic, and political theories (and maybe physical, mathematical, and biological as well). Theory is an exciting motivator for the advancement of the field, intellectually and practically.

The section of the book that follows represents a selection of authors who engage with food systems and theory in different ways over different times. The section opens with one of the earliest food systems planning articles and then moves to a contemporary reflection on an influential early report on entrepreneurial urban farming. Both of these works are predominantly practice-oriented and do not significantly discuss theories of or in planning that may apply to their setting. The subsequent three contemporary chapters employ or discuss several possible theoretical framings and cover urban agriculture and food commons governance.

The first chapter is a reprint of one of the foundational articles of food system planning; arguably, without it there might be no disciplinarily formalized planning for food systems. Kami Pothukuchi and Jerry Kaufman's (2000) *The Food System: A Stranger to the Planning Field* did two important things. First, it defined the term food system, a new term and concept for urban planning (though not other fields such as rural sociology or geography). Pothukuchi and Kaufman described the elements of food systems that planners should be aware of and already address in their work, and importantly they included regulatory and institutional structures in their definition. The article also highlighted the untenable position that planners took with regard to the food system: while planning examines three of the four highest needs for humans (shelter, air, water) extensively and comprehensively, it had to that point essentially ignored the food system except for a few sub-elements (farmers markets, economic development, etc.). Planning lacked a systemic view of how food was important to human settlement. The second major contribution was an examination of planners' opinions about their engagement with the food system. By surveying city planning agencies directly, Kami and Jerry learned why planners

thought they were not or should not be engaged in food system issues and provided a baseline by which planners' perspectives could be evaluated in the future.

Perhaps due to the article's publication in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, the leading disciplinary journal of practice, Pothukuchi and Kaufman almost entirely avoided mentioning how theory might be important to food systems planning. Perhaps they did not want to dilute their core argument, or lose their audience; it very well may have been a strategic decision. But shy of a few mentions of possible theoretical frames such as community food security, community health, public interest, and sustainability, they neither provide theoretical guidance nor suggest the relevance of any type of theory for the practice-oriented suggestions they eventually make.

On balance, there is no question that this article in the main journal dedicated to practice helped introduce the topic to a new audience and steer the field of planning towards the inclusion of food systems planning. In that regard it was very important and remarkably successful. One is left to wonder what might have been had the authors taken a more directive theoretical framing of the issue to guide that developing practice. Reflecting on their roles as academic-practitioners, it is a little surprising. In the article, Pothukuchi and Kaufman place great faith in planning and planners without seriously considering the extensive evidence through history of planning working at odds with community needs and interests—something of which they were very aware. Why would they think it would be any different in the case of food systems planning? This question remains unanswered as we review this work some twenty years on.

The next chapter, by Martin Bailkey and Rosalind Greenstein, is itself a reflection after twenty years on work done by Jerry Kaufman and Bailkey, his then-PhD student (Bailkey and Greenstein 2024). The original research study and report, *Farming Inside Cities: Entrepreneurial Urban Agriculture in the United States*, was part of a larger effort funded by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy to address issues of formerly industrial cities (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000). It is almost exclusively a practical piece, and remains relevant today for its findings about the challenges of operating farms as businesses in cities.

Because of the Lincoln Institute's involvement, an interesting possible theoretical thread presented itself: the Institute is strongly influenced by the theories of Henry George and his land value tax as a way to address poverty and the excesses of capitalism. Elements of Georgist thought regularly influenced the programming or publications of the Institute. However, given a wide latitude to interpret the use of Georgist land use theory into Lincoln-funded projects, it is not surprising that these provocative ideas were not explicitly examined in Kaufman and Bailkey's study of entrepreneurial agriculture. That connection remains one to be detailed by future researchers or planning theorists.

While not directly addressing theory, as Bailkey and former Lincoln Institute Land Markets program director Greenstein note, *Farming Inside Cities* was still to some extent a reflection of rational planning analysis. It was not limited to rational planning's scope, though, as it had a broader understanding of expertise and an epistemology that included experiential knowledge and information generated by

urban farmers, not professionally trained planners. Ultimately, it was a pragmatic piece that served multiple audiences and is a demonstration of Kaufman's strategic approach to developing a body of food system literature to influence the planning field.

Bailkey and Greenstein suggest an important point about *Farming Inside Cities* and Jerry's beliefs about the roles and abilities of the public sector: they are predicated on a vision of effective public sector facilitation of food system activities that planning has yet to fully embrace. There are many possible explanations for this. The first is that the public sector simply has yet to understand and implement the many food system ideas provided by practice and research. Another possibility is that food system resources are heterogeneous, and different types require different forms of governance to steward them effectively. Perhaps the belief in consistency and effectiveness in public sector planning is itself the problem; maybe a better food system organizational strategy would be less centralized and hierarchical? These questions are examined by another chapter in this section by Frimpong Boamah (2024), who fundamentally questions the ways in which food "commons" ought to be governed, tackling a basic tension of planning about the role of state-based planning versus community-led planning.

The next piece in the section, which is also reprinted with permission from the Journal of the American Planning Association, by Megan Horst et al. (2017, this volume, Chap. 6), demonstrates how theoretical concerns began to be represented more in the food planning literature. More than just food planning, though, they examine the broader literature on urban agriculture to see connections to a set of theoretical concepts. They certainly follow other authors in planning in this regard, many of whom offered theoretical lenses to social movements and food systems practice, such as Gerda Wekerle (2004) and Kate Clancy (2004). However, Horst, McClintock, and Hoey offer more of a meta-analysis, and examine a larger literature on a narrower topic. Through their review of planning, urban agriculture, and food justice, they bring a (food) justice consideration as well as several other critical lenses. While they are dealing with a more limited topic—urban agriculture—than food systems planning, they understand the implications of not having a food justice framing to the work. They say: "Without valuation of food justice, however, urban agriculture strategies may primarily benefit the propertied class and newcomers rather than disadvantaged communities" (Horst et al. 2017, p. 278, this volume, Chap. 6). The same qualification can be made for the use of such framing with regard to normative theory in food planning. Without such consideration, planning is likely to continue as it has, benefitting most those who are already advantaged by the system.

Tellingly, the authors in this case draw from a "wider scholarly literature" (that is, beyond planning) to find and demonstrate how a critical analysis can benefit planners in prioritizing food justice, which is consistent with the values of the planning field as described by Pothukuchi and Kaufman. Such frames, as Horst, McClintock, and Hoey describe in the chapter, include a rights-based approach including a right to the city, an explicit distributive justice approach, a focus on food democracy, political economy and neoliberal governance, radical self-determinism, property rights and ownership, anti-capitalist organizing, and critical race theory.

Each of these approaches would have its own influence on planning practice and the forms of practice that would be used or even acceptable, especially as planners increasingly seek goals of sustainability and resilience in the context of urban (and other) development. Written seventeen years after Pothukuchi and Kaufman's groundbreaking work, this article is indicative of the potential of a new generation of planning thought, theoretically informed to provide a considered way forward for food systems planning. As such, it interacts well with the other modern pieces in the section written by Domenic Vitiello and Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah.

In the former, Vitiello (2024) examines urban agriculture in Chicago and Philadelphia, cities that Jerry Kaufman and Martin Bailkey also studied, and develops an argument that cities value urban agriculture differently. Some cities take a public goods approach, while others take a more economic and redevelopment value approach to understanding the potential contributions of urban agriculture to urban space. Vitiello points out these are divergent theories of urban land use and lead to different systems of urban agriculture and commensurate support institutions.

Vitiello asks what values and aims cities have ascribed to urban agriculture, how support systems have been organized accordingly, and what these choices imply for urban agriculture as a land use in cities. Teasing apart the possibilities of urban agriculture as a public good on one hand, or as providing for the public interest on the other, we see that this different conception drives how urban agriculture systems operate. Pointing out that (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000) use the community food security framework to focus food systems planning and intervention, Vitiello suggests that community food security has become “a theory of practice for many food system planners since then” (2024). The public goods versus public interest (as economic value) framing is another way to assess city performance with regard to urban agriculture and bring theory to bear on practice.

Drawing from past work of Kaufman, Pothukuchi, Bailkey, and his own work with Laura Wolf-Powers, Vitiello shows how cities use conventional planning notions of “highest and best use” to drive land use decision making—to the detriment of long-term land tenure for urban agricultural uses, even when the cities are losing population. Even when such agricultural uses are successful in economic terms, the argument is made by all of these authors that cities should recognize and more highly value the “second and third order” economic development impacts. Borrowing from Nathan McClintock's incisive critique, Vitiello suggests that a clear distinction between the public good and public interest approaches is impossible—urban agriculture is necessarily tied in to the complex dynamics of urban growth, including the paradox of elements of urban agriculture at once serving communities and neoliberal interests alike.

Looking at Philadelphia and Chicago provides an understanding of different city trajectories for urban agriculture based on the values expressed in their municipal and institutional systems. Vitiello shares the example of Chicago's NeighborSpace as a model organization that prioritizes urban agriculture and long-term land tenure. This is a break from treating urban agriculture as a temporary land use to address the ills of economic and social crises. He calls for city governments to move away from the redevelopment paradigm and to value urban agriculture for the many

things it does well. This would require prioritizing the public good approach and developing governance and other institutions to support the growth and sustainability of community gardens, farms, and what Frimpong Boamah describes as Urban Food Commons.

The section ends with perhaps the most ambitious theoretical approach to considering food systems planning, by Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah, who addresses complexity in form, function, and governance of urban agriculture. He does this by first defining how urban agricultural spaces can be considered a type of commons, which he calls urban food commons (UFCs) (Frimpong Boamah 2024). These then can be folded into the extant conversation about governance structures appropriate to different types of commons. Inherent in the definitions is the idea, shared and elaborated in the previous chapter by Vitiello, that urban agriculture can be considered a public good, with commensurate governance implications.

Frimpong Boamah opens with two questions, which themselves provide the reader theoretical grounding for thinking about UFCs: should they be governed as public or private spaces, and, at what scale should they be governed? He calls these the “public-private, state-market debate” and the “institutional scale debate.” Based on theoretical examples, he demonstrates how UFCs are not singularly defined, and thus should also be governed by an array of institutional arrangements that comport with the characteristics of the UFC. Ultimately, he lands on the concept of polycentricity, or polycentric governance, which brings together a variety of actors in UFC spaces in a governance system that responds through locally specified mixes of rules. There is no one-size-fits-all governance model for UFCs.

Frimpong Boamah breaks down polycentric UFC governance through the use of metaphorical pillars (two) and institutional design parameters (four) to demonstrate how they might be combined to achieve desired goals and manage spillover effects. The systems, he suggests, should be self-organized in support of these ends. The prospects of his ideas are exciting, and map fairly well to some urban agriculture organizations. As with most decentralized, complex forms of governance structured by adaptable rules, one is left curious about both practical efficacy and whether such flexibility would provide enough predictability for market and non-market actors to make decisions. To demonstrate how such a polycentric governance system might work in practice, Frimpong Boamah provides a case study of Chicago’s NeighborSpace (also highlighted in Vitiello’s chapter). Described in this piece in a fashion congruent with the polycentric UFC frame, we see a nested system of stakeholders and flexible decision making at multiple scales appropriate for the given outcome.

As cities continue to work urban agriculture into their physical and institutional spaces, both Vitiello and Frimpong Boamah suggest that such UFCs should be actively queried as to what value they (should) provide to the city. Both come down on the side of UFCs as public goods. Both suggest that organization and governance of these spaces and activities are not easily encompassed by one organizational or regulatory structure. Frimpong Boamah provides a theoretical path that could show the way for cities to structure and govern such complexity.

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Branden Born is an Associate Professor in the Department of Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington where he studies the intersection of planning processes and social justice. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Madison (2003) as one of Jerry Kaufman’s last PhD students. Born’s work examines community governance, land use planning, and food systems. Branden directs the Northwest Center for Livable Communities for the Department of Urban Design and Planning, and co-directs the UW’s Livable City Year program, a university-wide community partnership effort that pairs university classes with city staff to complete research and design projects in service to community needs.

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Chapter 3

The Food System: A Stranger to the Planning Field



Kameshwari Pothukuchi  and Jerome L. Kaufman

Abstract Planning lays claim to being comprehensive, future-oriented, and public-interest driven, and of wanting to enhance the livability of communities. It is concerned with community systems—such as land use, housing, transportation, the environment, and the economy—and their interconnections. The food system, however, is notable by its absence from most planning practice, research, and education. We present evidence for the limited presence of the food system in planning’s list of concerns by scanning leading journals, texts, and classic writings, and by reporting on a survey of 22 U.S. city planning agencies. We analyze this low level of attention and discuss reasons and ideas for planning involvement to strengthen community food systems.

As a profession, planning lays claim to being comprehensive in scope, future-oriented, and public-interest driven, and of wanting to enhance the livability of human settlements. It is also distinguished by its focus on numerous functional systems that make up the community, including the study of their characteristics and interconnections (Faludi 1973; Levy 1988; So and Getzels 1988). Land use, housing, transportation, the environment, and the economy are systems in which planners through history have been heavily involved, often with a view to linkages within them and between them and other community systems. More recently, the health, education, and energy systems have also garnered attention from planners.

The food system, however, is notable by its absence from the writing of planning scholars, from the plans prepared by planning practitioners, and from the

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K. Pothukuchi (✉) · J. L. Kaufman (deceased)
Department of Urban Studies and Planning, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, USA
e-mail: k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu

classrooms in which planning students are taught. By the food system, we mean the chain of activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management, as well as all the associated regulatory institutions and activities.

We recently taught a rare course for a graduate planning program on planning for a community food system that culminated in a class report titled *Fertile Ground: Planning for the Madison/Dane County Food System* (University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Urban and Regional Planning 1997).¹ This effort convinced us that the food system was extraordinarily important to the health and vitality of communities. It has led us to probe deeper into several questions:

- Why have planners paid so little attention to the food system?
- Why should the food system become important as a focus of planners' attention?
- What constructive role can planners play in the food system?

In this article, we begin by presenting evidence for the limited presence of the food system on planning's list of concerns. We examine the leading journals in planning, texts used to introduce new planners to the profession, and some classic texts that have extended the boundaries of planning thought and graduate planning curricula. We also report the findings of a survey of 22 U.S. city planning agencies that provide evidence for the limited attention that planning agencies give to the food system. Our survey of planning agencies leads to a discussion of reasons why planners give scant attention to food system issues. We conclude by offering ideas about what planners could do to contribute to and strengthen planning for community food systems.

3.1 Most Planning Literature Ignores Food Issues

Planning texts over the last few decades have provided a comprehensive overview of the planning profession while identifying several central topics. These include physical planning and urban design, land use, economic development, social planning, growth management, real estate development, public infrastructure, environmental planning, urban transportation, housing, historic preservation, and technology planning (Catanese and Snyder 1988; Chapin 1972; Levy 1988; So and Getzels 1988). None of these texts include planning for the community food system, and few of the specializations described allude to the food system.

¹To our knowledge, only two other studies of a community's food system have been conducted by planning programs. The pioneering study was done in 1977 by the graduate planning program at the University of Tennessee–Knoxville. This study, *Food Distribution and Consumption in Knoxville: Exploring Food-related Local Planning Issues*, was developed under the guidance of Professor Robert Wilson. The second study was done in 1993 by students in the UCLA program under the guidance of Professor Robert Gottlieb and was entitled *Seeds of Change* (Ashman et al. 1993).

This paucity of food system discussion has significant implications for the planning of communities. For example, a lack of food system analysis leads planners to fold grocery store development and location into a broader category of commercial retail development without considering the higher priority that food merits among household needs. Failure to systematically devise communitywide plans for composting food wastes results in their being dumped into landfills—thereby making landfills 12–15% larger than they otherwise would be and depriving households and farmers of a valuable organic fertilizer (University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Urban and Regional Planning 1997).

Even many of the classic texts of planning have given short shrift to the food system, although evidence indicates that food received more attention at some points in history and from some groups of planners than others. Ebenezer Howard's Garden City concept provides the best example by far of systematic attention to food issues (Howard 1960). Garden City proposals addressed many aspects of the food system—production, distribution, collective preparation and consumption, and waste recycling—as integral to the city. Highlights of Howard's proposals include 5000 acres of agricultural land doubling as a greenbelt, appropriate location and flow of raw and processed commodities, collective kitchens and dining halls, and recycling of food waste as fertilizer for farms. These designs sought not only to provide a livable alternative to the grimy, overcrowded, and sprawling older cities, but also to enhance local self-sufficiency. In the Garden City, the links between food and other community systems were understood and addressed in depth.

In later years, Lewis Mumford (1961) and Benton MacKaye (1962) were among the staunchest advocates of a regional and comprehensive view of planning. They urged a view of city systems from the frameworks of equity, vitality, and regional and sectoral comprehensiveness. They called for urbane cities rather than cities determined simply by market forces. For example, Mumford (1961) wrote,

The planning of cities cannot be confined to "housing, work, recreation, and circulation," the standard planner's definition. The whole city must rather be conceived mainly as a theater for active citizenship, for education, and for a vivid and autonomous personal life. (plate 61)

Yet even Mumford and MacKaye made little note of the importance of planning for local food systems. It is difficult to imagine any of the above goals being realized without secure, ongoing, and socially acceptable access for all citizens to high quality, nutritious food. To be fair, they did express concern for the loss of agricultural land surrounding cities, and for the accompanying loss of both urban coherence and regional self-reliance. This oblique reference to food issues conveys neither the significance of food as a community issue nor the importance of its links to other systems. Clarence Perry's neighborhood concept embraced the need for ready access to retail food outlets, including a grocery store, meat market, restaurant, bakery, delicatessen, and confectionery (So and Getzels 1988). However, the concept did not elaborate on how these outlets were connected to other food-related urban activities such as wholesale trade, transportation, and waste management.

The major planning journals have followed this same general pattern of overlooking food system issues. We found no article containing a discussion of community food systems in the U.S. in any of the major journals—the Journal of the American Planning Association (JAPA), the Journal of Planning Education and Research (JPER), and the Journal of Planning Literature (JPL).² This is striking. Discussions of community food issues generally are rare in the American Planning Association’s Planning magazine as well.³

More recently, feminist planners have given some attention to community food issues because of women’s roles in household food procurement, preparation, and service. Their analyses have provided a critical look at the design of neighborhoods from the perspective of these roles (Wekerle 1985), cities (Hayden 1986a, b), and the food sector’s role in women’s economic development (Tinker 1994, 1997), for example. Feminist design proposals document apartment complexes with food coops, collective kitchens and dining rooms, community gardens, and other arrangements that better mesh women’s roles with sectors of the community’s food system (Franck and Ahrentzen 1989; Hayden 1981). Valuable as these perspectives are, they still provide only a limited view of the food system and prescribe limited interventions in it.

3.2 A Survey of 22 Planning Agencies

To supplement our search of the planning literature, in 1997–1998 we undertook a survey of planning agencies to explore the extent of their involvement in food system planning. We selected city planning agencies in 22 U.S. communities,⁴ most of

²Take JAPA, for instance: In the years 1987–1999, it has carried at least 23 articles on housing, 31 on economic development, 17 on transportation, 20 on environmental and sustainability issues, 14 on energy and infrastructure, 13 on urban design, and 26 on land use and management. While planning journals have carried articles on issues that pertain indirectly to urban food concerns—predominantly farmland preservation—rarely are these concerns articulated explicitly from a food systems perspective (Alterman 1997; Bowler 1997; Daniels 1991, 1997; Daniels and Nelson 1987; Heimlich 1989; Nelson 1992; Sanyal 1987).

³In the past twelve years, the exceptions have included three articles—one each on urban public markets, street vendors, and community gardens (Deering and Ptucha 1987; Houstoun, 1993; Knack 1994)—aside from the more typical ones addressing farmland preservation (e.g. Guskind 1988; Knack 1990; Popper and Popper 1987). A significant portion of a 1984 issue was devoted to local food issues. It featured problems that cities faced with respect to food access and affordability, and documented initiatives that some municipalities were undertaking to address these problems.

⁴The communities surveyed were Albuquerque, NM; Austin, TX; Baltimore, MD; Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Des Moines, IA; Hartford, CT; Knoxville, TN; Los Angeles, CA; Madison, WI; Milwaukee, WI; Missoula, MT; New Orleans, LA; Orlando, FL; Philadelphia, PA; Pittsburgh, PA; Portland, OR; San Antonio, TX; San Francisco, CA; Seattle, WA; St. Paul, MN; and Syracuse, NY.

Table 3.1 Planners' involvement in the food system, top 10 issues

	Agencies reporting	Significant	Moderate	Minimal
Issue	Involvement	Involvement	Involvement	Involvement
Location of supermarkets, grocery stores, fast food outlets, and food wholesaling	20	8	6	6
Design of food outlets	18	8	5	5
Community gardens	12	1	4	7
Studies of impact of food sector on local economy	11	1	4	6
Farmers' markets, food festivals, etc.	10	3	6	1
Food issues addressed in neighborhood plans	10	0	4	6
Food related economic development	10	4	2	4
Food issues addressed in comprehensive plans	6	0	2	4
Hunger prevention programs	5	0	2	3
Agricultural land preservation	3 ^a	0	2	0

^aOne agency official did not rate the significance of the activity

which either had a food policy council ⁵ or an active and broadly focused food organization such as the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG) or the Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee (HTFM). Using a questionnaire that listed 18 different food system issues, we conducted a phone inquiry of senior planners in each agency.

Our survey found that these city planning agencies are at best only lightly involved in the food system arena. In most cases, when they do get involved, their role is reactive rather than proactive and piecemeal rather than comprehensive. Table 3.1 shows the 10 issues with the highest level of involvement. Other issues included mapping of food sector activities, sustainable agriculture, community supported agriculture, food cooperatives and distribution alternatives, nutrition and health education, food safety, food impacts on environment and solid waste, community food security, and other—an open category.

⁵Food policy councils (FPCs) exist in about 15 communities in the United States and Canada. The first one was created in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1981. Most were established since 1990, typically emerging out of informal coalitions of activists in hunger prevention, sustainable agriculture, and community development. Cities with FPCs are as diverse as Hartford, CT; Austin, TX; St. Paul, MN; Los Angeles, CA; and Toronto, ON, Canada. Sanctioned by local governments, FPCs are usually composed of representatives of different segments of the food system community, e.g., members of farm, hunger prevention, retail food, nutritional education, and sustainable agriculture organizations, as well as some government officials. Central venues for considering a wide range of food issues at the local level, they vary in their structures, functions, and resources. Almost all try to monitor their city's food system and work to get various rips and tears in that system mended. Most of them pursue the goals of a more equitable, effective, and ecologically sustainable food system.

Twenty of the 22 agencies said that within the past 5 years they had dealt with issues relating to the location of supermarkets, grocery stores, fast food outlets, and food wholesaling activities within their normal land use planning and zoning responsibilities. Eighteen said they had dealt with design issues related to food outlets in the context of carrying out the agency's zoning and, occasionally, design review responsibilities. Yet in both situations, only 8 respondents ranked the planning agency's involvement in those activities as significant. Most planners' responses to open-ended questions indicated that they handled issues related to location, design, or regulation on a case-by-case basis, highlighting the lack of a systematic approach to food system issues.

Food system issues were addressed in neighborhood plans in only 10 of the 22 communities; only 6 communities addressed them in comprehensive plans. However, only 3 of the former group and none of the latter indicated that food issues were treated in a significant way. Other communities reported only moderate or minimal involvement in food issues.⁶ Twelve communities also indicated that their planning agency had been involved in community gardens, with only 1 reporting significant involvement. Only one agency indicated any involvement in sustainable agriculture, and none in community supported agriculture or in alternative mechanisms of food distribution. A similar pattern of very low involvement, if any, held for nutrition and health, food safety, food sector impacts on the environment, and community food security issues.

3.3 Reasons for Limited Attention

The most interesting responses were the reasons planners gave for their low levels of involvement in food system issues. We grouped their responses into seven categories.

1. *It's not our turf.* Several planners felt that the food system only indirectly touched on the built environment, the primary area that their agencies worked on. One planner put it this way: "Food system issues affect planning only as land use, zoning, and location decisions." Another said, "We as a department don't have any involvement in food system issues unless it's a zoning issue. We only look at

⁶In fact, such involvement can actually have consequences for access by all community residents to nutritious and affordable food. In a couple of cases, respondents reported that their agencies had helped prevent or delay supermarket development in neighborhoods as a result of historic preservation regulations or neighborhood opposition to the development. Another planner reported that "the department is being asked to help close down soup kitchens because of their negative impacts on neighborhoods. The kitchens attract people with serious social problems, and crime and vandalism are a problem." She continued that her department was taking action "without judging whether the kitchen is needed or not." These cases point to instances in which planning agency involvement, far from being positive or even indifferent, may actually undermine some residents' access to food.

land uses.” Still another said, “Planners are more focused on physical development than social service issues, which the food system falls under.”

2. *It’s not an urban issue; it’s a rural issue.* These planners perceived food issues to fall principally in the domain of rural policy, centered on agriculture, farms, and food production. Because farms are located outside cities, food issues get lower priority from these city planners. They did not recognize other parts of the food chain— e.g., food processing, wholesaling, retailing, consumption, and waste disposal. One respondent said, “Planners are extremely involved where agriculture is important. Agriculture has never been important around our city. Therefore it would be inappropriate to pay attention to something that doesn’t exist.” Another said, “There’s no agricultural land [in our city] and no opportunity to become more involved in food issues.” Still another replied, “Our city is in an agricultural area, but the city doesn’t deal with agriculture or farming issues.”
3. *The food system is driven primarily by the private market.* Planners partly justify their role by claiming competence in dealing with public goods, such as air and water, and with services in which the private sector is unwilling to invest, such as public transit, sewers, highways, and parks. These planners saw the food system as being dominated by the private sector, thereby limiting the planner’s role. Comments reflecting this point of view were as follows: “The food system is primarily the domain of the private sector”; “In our community, the food system is privately run; the public sector cannot lead”; “How much is produced is up to the private sector; cities cannot control what is produced and distributed. It is up to the market and the federal government to determine.”
4. *Planning agencies aren’t funded to do food system planning.* Unlike the areas of transportation, housing, the environment, and economic development, for which federally funded programs exist at the community level, similar programs for food issues were not known to be available. As one respondent said, “Planning agencies are not funded to deal with food issues like they are for transportation, housing, and economic development.”
5. *What’s the problem? If it ain’t broke, why fix it?* Planners often deal with issues arising from perceived market failure, for example, providing more affordable housing. Some of the respondents believed that the food sector is responding well to market forces. Comments like the following reflected this view: “The food system seems to take care of itself; everywhere you go there are food stores”; “The food system works pretty efficiently—food comes in on trucks and then goes to stores”; “Residents are not bringing food-related concerns to the planning department, so there doesn’t seem to be any problem”; “Considering other problems we deal with, food is not a big issue.”

In addition to the responses above, we identified two other categories that were indirectly suggested in the comments of those we contacted.

6. *Who is addressing the community food system with whom we can work?* Because of the diffuse nature of local government involvement in food system issues, planners, who link up regularly with professionals in other agencies, are able to identify few people with whom to share information, exchange views, negotiate,

or collaborate on food system concerns. The need for more professional connection was highlighted in our interview with a planner who rated his agency's involvement in the food system as high and who credited his collaboration with a colleague in the local health department who was involved in the local food policy council. The lack of a focal agency or department for food issues in city government reduces such opportunities for collaboration among planners and thus hurts their ability to understand and articulate food-related planning concerns.

7. *We don't know enough about the food system to make a greater contribution.* As a result of the "invisibility" of the connections between food and other planning activities, planners feel burdened by what they perceive to be additional responsibilities suggested by the need to attend to food issues. Of the 93 planning schools in North America, no school, to our knowledge, offers a food system specialization. More common among the specializations relating to community systems are the ecology, land use, economic development, housing, and transportation (Fisher et al. 1996). Only 12% of the planning schools have a rural planning specialization. Although agricultural issues likely would be covered in this specialization, these are different from community food issues. Furthermore, few urban and regional planners specialize in rural planning. The most telling comment about the inconceivability of food system planning to some planners was: "If someone in the planning agency suggested we do planning for the local food system, he'd be looked at as if he came from Mars."

Finally, we asked the planners we interviewed, "Do you think planners should get more involved in food system planning in the future?" Compared to the responses that showed limited involvement in the food system in the past, views on future involvement were more affirmative: 38% responded "yes," another 38% responded "it depends," and only 25% responded "no." Also hopeful was the variety of rationales suggested by those responding affirmatively, mirroring somewhat our own views on the significance of the food system to cities:

- "Food is essential."
- "Food issues are a public good that transcends the market."
- "We're realizing more the need for holistic planning to go beyond the built environment; social issues like food are related to the built environment."
- "It is a critical part of neighborhood revitalization."
- "We need to get more involved in nutrition issues—it's important for healthy residents in healthy cities."
- "We need to recognize food as an important aspect of our local economy."
- "Better access of low-income inner-city residents to less expensive, quality grocery stores needs to be achieved."

Our respondents also identified four major food system concerns that could most immediately benefit from planning attention: agricultural land preservation; land use and zoning related to food access, especially location of retail food outlets in low-income neighborhoods; integrating food issues into economic development

activities; and documenting and mitigating the environmental impacts of the food system. These concerns have received planning interest and involvement, and may offer opportunities to integrate food system thinking into planning.

3.4 The Importance of Food System Issues

There are both conceptual and practical reasons why planners should devote more attention to the food system. A committee of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) issued a report, “Anchor Points for Planning’s Identification” (ACSP Strategic Marketing Committee 1997). This report identified six generic themes that anchored planning’s identity as a discipline. Two of these themes are relevant to this discussion:

- a focus on improvement of human settlements . . . with emphasis on making places better serve the needs of people (p. 223), and
- a focus on interconnections among distinct community facets, incorporating linkages among physical, economic, natural, and social dimensions, linkages among sectors, e.g., transportation and land use, housing and economic development, etc., and public and private enterprises (p. 223).

It is difficult to believe that planners who espouse these beliefs could disregard the food system. Air, water, food, and shelter are among the essentials of life. Clearly, it would be extraordinarily difficult to have high-quality human settlements without safe and adequate air, water, food, and shelter. Planners have been involved in efforts to improve the quality of air and water through pollution control programs, and more comprehensively in shelter planning.⁷ But the fourth essential, food, has been virtually ignored by planners. Food is unique among human needs in its basic connections, among others, to land; in the centrality of its wholesomeness and nutrition to health; and in the social, economic, eco-logical, and political implications of the locations of its sources. To be truly concerned about improving human settlements, planners need to incorporate food issues into their working models.

The second theme highlights the claim that planning’s special identity comes from its particular attention to links among functional sectors, between the public and the private sectors, and among multiple perspectives on community life. Links with the food system, though, are omitted by planners for each of these three categories. Yet, the food system is certainly a “distinct community facet” that needs to be interconnected to other sectors.

⁷One could also make a case for systems treatment for clothing—another basic human need that, like food and shelter, is mediated by geography and culture. Indeed, proponents of bioregionalism and sustainability argue that all human needs be treated from an integrated perspective that respects regional ecology and cultural identity and builds community self-reliance (see, for example, Haughton and Hunter 1994).

Whether or not planners are aware of the connections within the food system and between the food system and other community systems, these links are many and significant. This provides the practical reason for planning agencies to get more involved in the food system. Consider, for example, the following ways that food issues are embedded in the lives of community residents and the health of the community.

- Food sector establishments such as restaurants, fast food outlets, supermarkets, specialty food stores, taverns, and food wholesalers are an important part of any city's economy. For example, in 1992, retail and wholesale sales for food sector activities accounted for approximately 25% and 24% respectively of all sales in Dane County, WI (U.S. Bureau of Census 1992a, b).
- Many city residents are employed in the food sector. Of all retail jobs in 1992 in Madison, WI, 13,000 or 53% were food sector jobs (U.S. Bureau of Census 1992a).⁸ A higher percentage of lower-income residents in cities also depend for their livelihoods on lower paying jobs in food stores and eating places.
- City households spend from 10 to 40% of their income after taxes on food purchases for the home and meals outside the home (Senauer et al. 1991). Poorer households spend a larger percentage of their incomes on food than do more affluent households.
- Food waste is a significant portion of the household, commercial, and institutional waste streams. Including food packaging, food wastes make up close to a third of the total waste that ends up in many city landfills (University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Urban and Regional Planning 1997).
- City water pollution problems are exacerbated when chemical fertilizers and pesticides are used on farms in the city's region. Dairy farming in the Madison area, for example, contributes to high nitrate and atrazine concentrations in the area's drinking water. High phosphorous concentrations cause eutrophication of area lakes (University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Urban and Regional Planning 1997).
- Many health problems are food related—whether due to inadequate or unbalanced diet, or excessive intake. Among older Americans, malnutrition has reached epidemic proportions. A 1993 national sample of physicians, nurses, and administrators estimated that one fourth to one half of elderly patients suffer from malnutrition. Nutrition screening programs in a wide variety of institutional and community settings have reported elder malnutrition risk rates ranging from 25 to 85% (Wellman et al. 1996).
- Household and individual trips to grocery stores and other food outlets contribute a significant portion to urban transportation volume. San Franciscans, for example, made approximately 4 million trips to shop for food and non-food

⁸A number of statistics in this listing are derived from *Fertile Ground* (University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of Urban and Regional Planning 1997), the report of the graduate planning workshop conducted by the authors.

items in 1990 (23% of all trips), the bulk of them—about 86%—in private automobiles (Purvis 1994).

- Because the poor have fewer cars, the quality of a city's transit system becomes a major factor affecting their ability to access affordable food stores. Car ownership rates in central cities are often much lower than the average for the metropolitan area (Ashman et al. 1993).
- When affordable housing is in short supply in a city, poorer residents may be at greater risk of hunger. This is because they place a higher priority on rent than on food, given the graver short-term consequences of rent default over reduction of food intake.
- A sizable number of lower-income residents living in cities depend on emergency sources of food available in food pantries, soup kitchens, and food banks that are largely invisible to middle- and upper-income residents. Estimates indicate that the use of the emergency food system is on the rise as a result of welfare reform. After remaining stable for several years, the number of people visiting food pantries in Milwaukee rose 14% in 1996 to 42,000 a month. And the number of people receiving hot meals rose 20% (DeParle 1997).

In other words, the food system is too important for planners to ignore.

3.5 How Can Planners Strengthen the Food System?

Planners have the professional expertise and community-oriented and interdisciplinary perspectives that potentially could strengthen community food systems and food system planning. Given the conceptual and practical reasons for planners' involvement in community food issues, they could take the following steps to better integrate food-related concerns into their everyday activities. The suggested activities are incremental in their level of complexity and commitment to community food system planning. Some activities might be carried out within planning departments as they are currently structured and without additional staff, but others might require greater cooperation with other city departments and/or specialized staff. All would benefit from a special unit—like a food policy council—created to place greater emphasis on community food issues.⁹

⁹In another article, the authors suggest three municipal institutions that might provide a greater focus on community food issues—a potential city department of food, a food policy council, and the city planning department (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999).

3.5.1 Compile Data on the Community Food System

One of the principal activities of planners is to collect, compile, analyze, and interpret data on important community issues to guide future public and private investments. Planners could conduct such preliminary data gathering on the various activities related to the food system in their own communities—production, processing, wholesale and retail distribution, food service, consumption, disposal, and associated regulatory activities. These basic statistics could paint a broad picture of the condition of the community's food system. These data could also be used to raise the awareness of other professionals and public officials with whom planners regularly collaborate on the community's food system, and provide a basis for future planning that is better informed about community food issues. Information on basic indicators such as employment, sales and value added, wages, and food expenditures and consumption are readily available from the censuses of industry, retail, wholesale, agriculture, and other databases compiled by various public, private, and nonprofit sources.

Using these data, planners could describe the food system's impact on their local economy in terms of employment, wages, sales, and value added. They could estimate the value of local food exports and imports and begin to delineate strengths and weaknesses in their area's food system. They could inventory activities in the "conventional food system" exemplified by grocery retail outlets and eating and drinking places; the "emergency food system" embracing free and subsidized meal programs and vouchers; and the "alternative food system" that seeks to promote sustainable food system activities—including chemical-free agriculture, reduction and recycling of wastes, urban food production, and greater connection between local farmers and consumers.

These and related investigations of the community's food system could also help dispel some of the previously discussed misconceptions expressed in the comments of the planners we surveyed. For example, they could assess the numbers of community residents who are chronically dependent on the emergency food system, or at risk of hunger, for whom the "conventional" or market sector in food activities simply does not work. They could also illustrate the many ways in which the food system, as an urban system, is intricately connected to other systems in which planners are actively involved.

3.5.2 Analyze Connections Between Food and Other Planning Concerns

Planners are interested in and devote much attention to the links between systems. Identifying the interconnections between food and other planning concerns may be a next step. These connections could help identify categories in which data may need to be collected on a regular basis—such as number and types of trips

specifically for food procurement—and emerging community concerns that need greater short- and long-range planning.

For example, land use planners could identify the existing impacts of food system activities on the community's land use patterns and vice versa. They could analyze trends in the location, number, size, distribution, associated land use requirements, and relationship to neighborhoods of food entities such as grocery stores, community gardens, and pantries and free meal sites.

Local transit availability for low-income residents, and its connections to grocery stores, and the extent of trip generation by food shopping might also be addressed.¹⁰ Geographic Information System (GIS) capabilities could be brought to bear on these spatial analyses. Environmental planners could examine the impact of local food production, distribution, and consumption patterns on the quality of the community's air, water, and soil, or simulate the effects of future growth on the availability of agricultural land. Neighborhood planners could conduct food-specific needs and resource analyses in low-income neighborhoods. They could help analyze household expenditures on food relative to other needs and the impact of housing costs on the food security of households. Economic development planners could analyze the extent to which economic development may be stimulated by encouraging food-related businesses, or simulate the effects of food-related economic trends such as plant closures (especially of food processing plants), higher gas prices, drought, and so on, on the access of residents to quality and affordable food.

3.5.3 Assess the Impact of Current Planning on the Local Food System

An assessment of current planning and policymaking on the local food system will be especially valuable to document how planning impacts low-income groups' access to affordable food. For example, land use policies that allow community gardens to be paved and developed, policies that restrict grocery store development based on a need to maintain the historic character of neighborhoods, or activities to close soup kitchens because of neighbors' fear of criminal activity may negatively impact low-income residents' access to nutritious and affordable food. Economic development policies to attract larger supermarkets may put smaller, neighborhood grocery stores out of business. On the other hand, they may also make available a greater variety of food at lower prices. These policies need more careful analysis for their impacts on local businesses and those households with lower mobility that may not have access to larger supermarkets located at the periphery. Policies to encourage housing development on the urban fringe may also affect local food

¹⁰ Currently, data on trips and trip generation do not disaggregate retail categories by food and other retail. Hence we have no way of distinguishing between trips to purchase food from grocery stores and those to the local shoe, hardware, or department store.

production. Land use, transportation, neighborhood, social, and environmental planners may wish to examine the impact of their policy recommendations on the access to and affordability of quality food for all residents.

Each community would have to identify the effects of dominant trends salient to its food system. For example, older urban communities may experience problems with food access to low income residents as a result of abandonment by retail operations. At the same time, community gardens in abandoned lots offer a potential source of fresh produce for these neighborhoods (plus opportunities for neighborhood revitalization). Planners here may need to formulate land use and zoning policies to support urban food production and economic development policies to foster grocery store development in these neighborhoods.

Rapidly growing suburban communities, on the other hand, may experience loss of surrounding farmland, as farming is no longer able to compete with development. People in these communities may also find themselves driving longer distances for groceries. Planning for the food system in these communities may involve policies to curb farmland loss, sustain agriculture, and to connect local farmers with local consumers via farmers markets and other alternative modes of distribution.

3.5.4 Integrate Food Security into Community Goals

Strategic and comprehensive planning in communities are often based on overarching community goals such as livability, sustainability, economic vitality, healthy communities, and local self-reliance. This step envisions the inclusion and integration of a community food security goal in these larger community goals. At its most basic, community food security embodies the notion that all residents have access at all times to affordable, high-quality food through conventional (and not charity-based) sources and through means that are environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.¹¹

Planners are in a unique position to engage the community in a dialogue about the meaning and goals of a food secure community. This may lead to the development of specific strategies relevant to the community and the modification of existing activities to achieve a more food secure community. Strategies may include the development of tools to assess future planning from a framework that is informed about community food security. Conceivably, the social, economic, and

¹¹The Community Food Security Coalition, a national coalition of organizations working towards community food security, has recently formed to advocate for policies and programs to support community food security initiatives nationwide and to educate communities about community food security. In large part due to its activities, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) set up a community food projects competitive grant program in 1995 to fund creative community efforts to link food to community development activities. In 1999, the USDA also set up a new office, the Community Food Security Initiative, to support this class of food security activities more broadly. Browse for more information on the community food projects or for more information on the Community Food Security Coalition.

environmental impact statements now commonplace in evaluating proposals for new development will include a food security component. Strategies could also include ongoing evaluation of the implementation of food security goals and objectives.

Such an integration of food security goals into the larger community agenda may also result in specific forms of interaction between local municipal agencies (perhaps even the development of a city department of food), between urban and rural areas, between different levels of government, and between public, private, and non-profit agencies.¹²

3.5.5 Educate Future Planners About Food System Issues

Planning schools also need to incorporate more systematic training on food system planning and even offer specializations on the topic. Planning academics could acquaint themselves with the basic frameworks, research, and data sources on community food systems and food security. The state of such frameworks and sources is currently evolving and would only benefit from their incorporation into planning curricula. Food system research could also gain from the interdisciplinary and policy-oriented perspectives that planners are best able to contribute. Student projects that reveal more about the community's food system and its connections with other planning concerns, and that engage the public in dialogue on community food goals could also be introduced in graduate planning schools.

3.6 Conclusions

Community food system issues are low on the agenda of practicing planners, planning scholars, and planning educators. We documented this contention by analyzing the scholarly literature and surveying a group of practicing planners. We also discussed why planners pay limited attention to community food system issues. This low level of involvement is perplexing because the food system is a significant metropolitan system, and because planning claims to promote quality and livable settlements that meet basic needs and is concerned with connections between community systems.

Our conclusions about the low level of involvement by planning agencies in food system issues, to be sure, are based on a relatively small sample of planning agencies and the assumption that the planners we interviewed by phone were knowledgeable about their agency's level of involvement in food system planning. Because

¹²While city departments charged with responsibility for planning for various urban sectors (such as transportation, parks and recreation, economic development, and housing) exist, no city in the U.S. has a department of food.

we interviewed senior level planners in each agency, who presumably were informed about the broad range of activities in which their agencies were engaged, we have confidence in the accuracy of their assessments. Furthermore, the communities we contacted already had a focal point for mobilizing attention to community food security issues—focal points like a food policy council or a community-based non-profit group engaged in advocacy and programmatic initiatives related to community food security.

Our study suggests that the food system is there and yet not there. We feel that a conceptual hole exists in an area which planners continually impact both directly and indirectly. This article helps to fill that hole, by (1) explaining why the food system has a low priority among planners; (2) illuminating specific ways the food system affects the economy, employment base, environment, and health of communities; and (3) suggesting directions planners may take to strengthen community and regional food systems and food system planning.

At worst, a lack of focus on food means that planners' activities may undermine community food security. Yet food is a basic human need. As planning educators, we have started to "see" the food system and have become sensitive to the need to fill the conceptual holes related to food systems issues. Despite the omission of food from the community planning agenda, we are encouraged by our belief that planners have much to contribute to strengthening local food systems and food system planning. Indeed, the emerging "healthy cities" and sustainability movements in urban planning have raised the importance of goals related to healthful food consumption and regional self-reliance in food. Together with the community food security movement, these efforts might well result in more active and systematic involvement in the food system by planners in the new millennium.

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Kameshwari Pothukuchi Kameshwari (Kami) Pothukuchi is Distinguished Service Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Wayne State University. Her research explores food systems' linkages to planning, public health, economic development, social justice, sustainability, and higher education. She has lectured nationally and internationally, including in Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, and the United Kingdom. In 2008, Pothukuchi founded SEED Wayne, a campus-community collaborative to help build sustainable food systems in Detroit. She has also served as a co-founder and first vice-chair of the Detroit Food Policy Council, co-chair with Jerry Kaufman and Deanna Glosser, of the American Planning Association's Food Planning Steering Committee (2005–2014), and a two-term board member of the Community Food Security Coalition.

Jerome L. Kaufman Jerome (Jerry) Kaufman, FAICP (1933–2013), laid the foundation for the study, pedagogy, and practice of food systems planning in the profession of urban planning. Kaufman taught at the University at Wisconsin-Madison from 1971 to 2001, when he retired and was accorded Emeritus status. Prior to joining the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Kaufman worked for the American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO), the predecessor to the American Planning Association. Among many community and professional leadership positions, Kaufman served as the president of the board of directors of Growing Power (2000–2010) and president of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (1991–1993).

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Chapter 4

“Farming Inside Cities” – A Look Back After Two Decades



Martin Bailkey and Rosalind Greenstein 

Abstract *Farming Inside Cities: Entrepreneurial Urban Agriculture in the United States* (2000) by Jerry Kaufman and Martin Bailkey, was one of three concurrent research studies on for-market urban agriculture as a viable reuse of vacant land in major US cities. It was commissioned by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and its Land Markets program director, Rosalind Greenstein. For Greenstein, the report was part of an effort to direct Lincoln Institute resources into formerly industrial cities. For Kaufman, it represented a late-career integration of his commitment to social justice, his interest in central city revitalization, and a new belief in food systems planning as a legitimate area of professional practice. *Farming Inside Cities* did advance a domestic urban agenda within the Lincoln Institute, and was welcomed by urban farmers and representatives of the then-new community food movement as an academic recognition of their actions as change agents. Today, the report’s practical nature, a result of Kaufman’s influence, and its description of the opportunities and challenges of urban agriculture still hold up. In its practicality, however, it does not make explicit the value of farming as a symbolic and often-effective vehicle for social equity and food justice in urban communities of color.

Keywords Urban agriculture · Urban farming · Entrepreneurial urban agriculture · Vacant land reuse · Henry George · Community development corporations

M. Bailkey (✉)
Rooted, Madison, WI, USA
e-mail: bailkey@sbcglobal.net

R. Greenstein
Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA

4.1 Introduction

For Jerry Kaufman, a working paper on urban agriculture represented, broadly, a late-career integration of his long-held commitment to social justice. More particularly, it represented his strong interest as a planner in the theory and practice of central city revitalization, and a new personal belief in food systems as a legitimate area of professional planning practice best expressed in the classic article he wrote with Kami Pothukuchi (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000), concurrently with *Farming Inside Cities* (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000). Upon its completion, *Farming Inside Cities* served to advance a domestic urban agenda within the Lincoln Institute, and was welcomed by urban farmers and representatives of the then-new community food movement as a serious, academic recognition of their own belief in themselves as change agents. Today, as urban farming has become more widespread, and considered less of a novelty, the highly practical nature of *Farming Inside Cities*, directly influenced by Kaufman, and its description of the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurial urban agriculture still holds up. Despite its practical value to urban agriculture practitioners, many of them socially disadvantaged, it does not make explicit the deep value of urban farming as a symbolic and often-effective vehicle for advancing social equity, food justice, and self-determination within urban communities. Nor did *Farming Inside Cities* strongly tie urban agriculture to other elements of community food systems, many of which urban agriculture strongly connects to, such as farmers markets and other forms of direct marketing to urban consumers.

Kaufman's motivation was largely driven by his moral imagination that led him to see vacant and abandoned property as an outcome of the neglect of both private and public sectors. Indeed, where both public and private capital fled from the neighborhoods and cities that bore the brunt of the disinvestment of the 1970s and 1980s, these places and their residents had been the focus of Kaufman's career. For us, there was no difference in who Jerry was as a man, as a friend, as a teacher, as a boss, as a mentor, as a researcher, or as practitioner. Whoever he was, was not compartmentalized. That is, one reason we found Jerry to be an inspirational colleague was that his moral compass informed his professional ethics. He was an ethical man in how he treated people (community residents and professional colleagues) and his social justice commitments informed all of his actions. Central city revitalization was important to Jerry because it was a reflection of *just* actions for *real* people, not abstract people or "other people."

4.2 The Objectives of *Farming Inside Cities*

Jerry was a child of the Great Depression and Victory Gardens. So it's no wonder that he could imagine the reuse of urban vacant parcels in older industrial cities for food production. Urban agriculture combined a self-help ethic, a responsibility to

the revitalization of urban neighborhoods and their residents born of a commitment to social justice, and a belief that food was as essential to life as clean air and clean water and as planners we could not improve human settlements without paying attention to food systems (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999).

It might have seemed an odd time in his career to begin a new research area. Yet, this new field meant that Jerry had the opportunity to meet an entirely new cohort community of activists and get the opportunity to spend hours in leisurely conversations with them, driven by his wide curiosity, all across the Upper Midwest.

When Jerry came to Greenstein for funding this new area of work she was more than a bit skeptical. The skepticism came, in part, because she did not find his argument that local food systems were as important an area of planning as was any other system that affects cities a convincing one. For Greenstein, her training as an economic development planner, led her to understand food as an industry. Moreover, it was an international industry, with global supply chains, dominated by large multinational, publicly-traded corporations. From a political economy perspective, the notion that planners could somehow use vacant land and seasonal farmers’ markets to effectively plan alternative food systems seemed naïve, at best. Using the Institute’s grant-making and agenda-setting activities, Greenstein was allocating resources into topics that would be of interest to community change agents in older industrial cities. Jerry’s project would further that agenda. The pragmatic needs of a philanthropist won out over the political-economy informed skepticism and Greenstein was able to fund Kaufman and Bailkey.

4.2.1 *Value Capture*

Within the context of the Institute’s urban land markets program resources were directed towards issues around planning and development in the cities and metropolitan regions. Issues related to taxation, as well as planning and development in the suburbs, peri-urban fringe, and regional environmental issues were the purview of other programs. Despite these programmatic divisions, all program heads were guided by the Institute’s bylaws that described its purpose as the dissemination of the ideas in Henry George’s book, *Progress and Poverty* (Brown 1997). Within this overarching goal, and depending on who was sitting in the Institute’s president’s office, program directors were largely free to interpret this charge.

Greenstein interpreted George as a radical capitalist who was morally outraged by the presence of poverty in the face of plenty. Writing as the US was moving from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy, George argued that widespread access to land would reduce poverty. The single tax on land—but not on improvements—would discourage speculation and encourage placing idle land into productive use. If the poor were using this idle land for productive use, George argued, they would no longer be poor. George’s analysis is highly influenced by the agrarian economy and the imposition of a simple agrarian truth onto an industrializing and urbanizing economy. However, the argument also runs parallel to one advanced by

Thomas Jefferson, in which his social values inform the value he places on production. For Jefferson, independent farmers who were not beholden to employers were needed to guarantee a democracy. For George, if one had land to farm, one might be poor but not starving, and thus would retain dignity. It is from these social values that George argues that taxing land would force owners to put that property into productive use.

The single tax was meant as a vehicle to eradicate poverty. George's argument in favor of the single tax was based on an understanding that private urban land gets its value, not from private effort, as much as from public actions and public investment. Much of the growth in urban land value comes from the natural growth of population that creates demand, as well as public investments in infrastructure, transportation, public health and public education (see Brown 1997 for an interpretation of George in a contemporary context.) George argued that government was justified to tax the incremental value of land. In the US, the property tax is a blunt fiscal instrument that municipal governments use to capture this publicly created land-value. Planning regulations also serve as a mechanism for capturing this land value increment. In a very thorough treatment of land value recapture including intellectual history and planning application in an international context, Alterman (2012) argues that the British planning term "betterment" is useful for understanding the planning connection to land value recapture.

In an effort to extend the Institute's audience beyond its mostly suburban reach (significant Institute resources in the 1990s were spent on smart growth and land conservation land trusts—areas that tended to be of interest to actors interested in increasing land values of property owned by white suburbanites) the land markets program and the subsequent department of economic and community development, built a portfolio of research and professional training around institutional mechanism to capture the land value increment for *community benefit*. This framing justified allocating Institute resources to support the work of low-income communities and communities of color living in America's cities attempting to increase private land values in their communities through interventions that would benefit the community at-large. Urban agriculture would forward that agenda.

4.2.2 *Redefinition of Policy Maker*

In the 1990s the Institute audience was policy makers, policy analysts, elected and appointed public officials. However, the thought leaders in economic and community development broadened the definition of policy maker to "change agents," and understood policy makers as just one category of change makers. This framing allowed the inclusion of community-based non-profit organizations, city residents, and their allies in the Institute's audience. This was particularly important for professional training, where the curriculum was developed out of the research. Specifically, professional training was developed to be of use to community-based

organizations making neighborhood investments in previously disinvested cities and neighborhoods. Once again, Kaufman’s proposal would support this agenda.

4.3 Urban Agriculture in the Late 1990s

Although not its primary intention, *Farming Inside Cities* served as a snapshot of the state of entrepreneurial urban agriculture practice in the late 1990s. For-market urban farming across the United States, as considered separately from community gardening, comprised independent farm projects scattered about the country, individualistic in reflecting the characteristics of their originators and managers (often the same person[s]), and typically improvisational in execution. There were few models of success for any particular urban farm to follow, little dissemination of best practices, and few avenues by which a single urban farmer could feel herself part of a larger, national community of practice. A handful of urban agriculture projects appeared in local and national media; these included the God’s Gang Worm and Fish Project, a youth-based vermiculture and aquaponics project operating out of Robert Taylor Homes public housing in Chicago, Food From the ‘Hood, the producer of salad dressing made from vegetables grown by Crenshaw High School students in Los Angeles, and Growing Power, the revamped organization founded and led by Milwaukee urban farmer Will Allen.¹ All three projects were profiled in *Farming Inside Cities*.

Community gardens were widespread in 1998, and seen by both gardeners and observers as the contemporary offspring of earlier urban food production efforts, notably wartime victory gardens. Entrepreneurial urban farms, on the other hand, particularly those operating for five years or more, were few, and many faced uncertain futures. City farmers then faced the same primary obstacles they do today, chief among these being the struggle to generate adequate revenue and the challenge of gaining long-term access to vacant urban land.

When the *Farming Inside Cities* research began in 1998 one would find within large American cities unplanned mixes of community gardens with a handful of for-market urban farms managed by community-based nonprofit organizations using them to achieve one or more organizational goals, or farms operated as individual for-profit businesses. The extent of this mixture in a particular city would reflect a number of independent and dependent factors. These might include a city’s historic connections to agriculture (Chicago), an in-migration of residents with strong, indigenous (Albuquerque) or immigrant (New York City; Holyoke, Massachusetts) agricultural traditions, or a municipal government exploring creative approaches to vacant land reuse (Philadelphia). A large inventory of vacant land would encourage and, to a degree, facilitate the establishment of urban farms (Detroit). In cities with

¹Farming Inside Cities briefly described the process that transformed Allen’s original organization, Farm City Link, into Growing Power, Inc.

little if any available vacant land, urban agriculture would be fostered by progressive political and environmental cultures (San Francisco Bay Area).

A few cities had an organization dedicated to connecting local urban farmers – Boston Urban Gardens, Denver Urban Gardens, the Detroit Agriculture Network – but they tended to be of limited value given that their membership base was typically too busy with their own farm projects to network with peers. Other cities were fortunate to have active urban extension offices offering technical assistance to community gardeners and urban farmers; for example Cornell Cooperative Extension in New York City, and Penn State Extension in Philadelphia.

4.4 Concurrent Urban Agriculture Research

Reflecting the under-the-radar nature of urban agriculture in the US, there was little descriptive or supportive literature, in or out of academia, in the late 1990s. What did exist were practical guides, such as extension publications, for those currently doing city farming, and books and articles introducing urban agriculture to the general public as an approach to healthy living, sustainability and the greening of urban environments. There were also titles blending those two types.²

Literature on urban agriculture practice in developing nations was more prevalent. At the start of their Lincoln Institute project, Kaufman and Bailkey relied on *Urban Agriculture: Food, Jobs and Sustainable Cities* by Jac Smit, Annu Ratta, and Joe Nasr, and published by the United Nations Development Program (Smit et al. 1996). Although focused entirely on urban farming in developing regions, the book provided both a general background on urban agriculture and a research path based on case study examples across different urban contexts. More importantly, perhaps, Smit, an urban planner and the founder of The Urban Agriculture Network (TUAN), a small, Washington, DC-based research center, was an acquaintance of Kaufman from their early planning careers in Chicago. Kaufman welcomed the opportunity to reconnect with Smit over urban agriculture, and what he learned was energizing and legitimized urban farming as a viable possibility for US cities.

Farming Inside Cities was commissioned, researched and written within a 2-year period that saw the completion of three other studies on the general validity of entrepreneurial urban agriculture. Rather than harboring any concern regarding overlapping efforts, Kaufman and Bailkey welcomed the other studies as a validation of their topic. Communication and some sharing of information soon occurred with authors scattered across the country.

²One well-known urban agriculture title of the time was Michael Ableman's *On Good Land: The Autobiography of an Urban Farm* (Chronicle Books, 1999). A significant source for urban agriculture writings of all types was *City Farmer* (www.cityfarmer.info), an online portal to articles, reports, announcements, etc. created in 1994 by Michael Levenston of Vancouver, BC. Both Levenston and Ableman remain active today.

The first of these concurrent studies, and the one Kaufman and Bailkey saw as setting a direction for urban agriculture research in the US, was *Entrepreneurial Community Gardens: Growing Food Skills, Jobs and Communities* (1999) by Gail Feenstra, Sharyl McGrew and David Campbell, and supported by the University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program (SAREP, still active today). It preceded *Farming Inside Cities* by a year and was also a national overview, but with an emphasis on California projects. The examples it portrayed eschewed the strict separation between traditional community gardens and for-market urban farms adopted for *Farming Inside Cities*. Instead, Feenstra and her coauthors defined their unit of analysis, “entrepreneurial community garden,” as “any community-based garden that included a formal component in which garden products were sold or community residents were employed, or both” (Feenstra et al. 1999). Of the 27 projects reviewed in *Entrepreneurial Community Gardens*, four were profiled in *Farming Inside Cities*. One important factor distinguished the two studies. Feenstra, McGrew and Campbell dug deep into the operational and business dimensions of their projects, profiling them both individually and in the aggregate as noteworthy examples of community-based and community-scaled entrepreneurship around local agriculture. Kaufman and Bailkey followed their lead in combining the particular with the aggregate to make their case. Yet, they used the portrayals of urban farms less to highlight them as individual endeavors, and more to facilitate the creation of further such efforts by identifying and addressing their shared obstacles within city contexts having some similarities and some local differences.

The second concurrent study, *Rethinking Direct Marketing Approaches for Urban Market Gardens in Low & Moderate Income Communities* (Lawson and McNally 1999), was an in-depth analysis of a single urban farming project, the Garden Patch Youth Market Garden Program of Berkeley (California) Youth Alternatives (BYA). The research was conducted over 2 years by Laura Lawson and Marcia McNally, and also supported by SAREP.³ The BYA Garden Patch was profiled in *Farming Inside Cities* as an urban farming project with a clear social agenda, but also one where community-based goals, such as youth training and employment and sustainable neighborhood development were not reconciled with the accompanying goal to have some success as a farming business. An assessment of the project by BYA led to the decision to prioritize job and entrepreneurial training over business achievement.⁴ Today, this inability to reconcile community goals with maximizing revenue, documented by Lawson and McNally two decades ago, strongly exists as an issue facing most community-based and community-focused urban farms initiated as not-for-profit organizational programs. *Farming Inside Cities* noted the issue of competing goals, but did not express a bias towards either side.

³Prior to the BYA Garden Patch research, Lawson and McNally had conducted a broader survey of 27 entrepreneurial youth garden projects nationwide.

⁴The Garden Patch was later renamed the Urban Gardening Program and operated as part of BYA’s Environmental Training Center, with youth interns managing a community garden and orchard.

The third study was *The Feasibility of Urban Agriculture with Recommendations for Philadelphia* (2000), produced by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), and written by PHS consultant, Hope Wohl, a local market researcher. Wohl's research coincided with the later months of Kaufman's and Bailkey's work. The PHS/Wohl report essentially blended the case study approach of Feenstra et al., (examining eight active urban farms in the Northeastern US, only one of which was in Philadelphia) as individual business enterprises, with Kaufman's and Bailkey's advocacy of entrepreneurial urban agriculture as a practical and viable public policy approach for Philadelphia's 40,000 vacant parcels. An important element of the PHS/Wohl study was the outlining of six urban farm business models derived by Wohl from the eight case studies (two which were profiled in *Farming Inside Cities*).⁵ While local policymakers were part of PHS/Wohl's intended audience, another audience segment was clearly specified as "potential investors, entrepreneurs and business leaders who are interested in promoting and pursuing urban agricultural businesses" (Hope Wohl Associates 2000, p. 4). While Kaufman and Bailkey thought that *Farming Inside Cities* might make it into the hands of a few investors and business leaders, that group was not its primary audience.

4.5 Research and Writing, Theory and Advocacy

In the language of research terminology, *Farming Inside Cities* was an exploratory study; in reality, however, it was essentially an introductory inquiry that transitioned into an exploratory study. By any measure, neither Kaufman nor Bailkey knew anything about entrepreneurial urban farming at the time of Lincoln's commissioning the research. Kaufman was familiar with the concept of allotment gardening from earlier trips to European cities. Bailkey was aware of community gardens through his years of graduate study and later teaching in landscape architecture, but had no awareness of urban market farming.⁶ So, the two essentially started with no bias derived from prior experience, but instead a feeling that urban agriculture represented one positive future for distressed urban communities.

The research initially had a narrower intent to frame urban agriculture within one particular approach to central city revitalization. Kaufman felt that urban farms could be legitimate activities for community development corporations (CDCs).

⁵The six business models were: a one-acre greenhouse to grow tomatoes hydroponically, a one-half acre raised bed market garden, a one-acre greenhouse growing ornamental plants, a system of outdoor produce gardens utilizing small greenhouses, a 10,000 square-foot greenhouse business, and an urban horticulture center.

⁶Ironically, as a graduate student in landscape architecture at the University of Oregon in the mid-1980s Bailkey regularly walked past the on-campus Urban Farm, a longstanding, pioneering example of urban agriculture created and managed by one of his instructors. He regarded it as, at most, an interesting novelty.

He saw that the CDC movement had, by the mid-1990s, built a solid track record in creating new affordable housing, new central-city businesses and other types of community improvements. CDCs had also seen success at remediating and redeveloping brownfield sites, essentially addressing one of the key obstacles to farming urban land parcels. With his characteristic vision and optimism, Kaufman believed that the Lincoln project could explore the viability of CDC involvement in urban agriculture (which he felt confident about), and advocate for such involvement by CDCs.

The first research trip under the Lincoln Institute project had Kaufman and Bailkey attending the 1998 Annual Conference of the National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED) in Kansas City, Missouri. NCCED was the leading membership association of community-based nonprofit development organizations, and Kaufman saw an efficient opportunity to test his belief. Although he made his case with vigor, Kaufman came away feeling that CDCs were, by and large, essentially conservative and hesitant to veer away from what they knew how to do successfully. Even though the Lincoln research discovered a few noteworthy examples of CDC involvement with urban agriculture – most significantly by Isles, Inc., in Trenton, New Jersey, and the New Kensington CDC in Philadelphia – the idea of making CDCs a focus was set aside. *Farming Inside Cities* did devote sections to the specific obstacles to CDC involvement in urban farming and strategies for overcoming those obstacles. Bailkey also wrote an advocacy piece for the NCCED newsletter in 1999.

The experience with CDCs broadened Kaufman’s and Bailkey’s research strategy – and the working paper’s envisioned audience. Instead of non-profit community development professionals, the audience expanded beyond CDCs to those positioned to initiate urban agriculture projects in a wider range of contexts – in particular local government representatives, but also prospective urban farmers, local and national foundations, and a wider range of community-building organizations. This broadening was a key to the eventual success of *Farming Inside Cities*.

The decision to visit urban farms and interview urban agriculture supporters (and a few skeptics) as the core of the Lincoln research, along with a limited travel budget, led to the identification of three case study cities with active urban farming scenes and some evidence of supportive contexts in and out of their local governments. These were Chicago (close to Madison, and having Kaufman’s network of local government connections), Philadelphia (where the municipal government had dedicated itself to outlining a comprehensive strategy towards its 40,000 vacant residential parcels), and Boston. Boston lacked the significant vacant land inventories of Chicago and Philadelphia, thus offering a counterpoint. In addition, both Kaufman and Bailkey had a special interest in Boston’s Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) and its pioneering greening and land acquisition practices (Medoff and Sklar 1994); plus, the Lincoln Institute’s Cambridge offices were nearby. Due to Kaufman’s other commitments the bulk of the project-related travel was done by Bailkey, who made three trips to Philadelphia and one to Boston between December 1998 and June 1999. Kaufman accompanied Bailkey on visits to Chicago and Boston.

A total of 122 individuals were interviewed for the study; 67 were interviewed formally, in person or on the telephone, and 55 were interviewed informally at conferences or project sites (with some sites being outside of the three case study cities). Because of the initial exploratory nature of their research, Kaufman and Bailkey relied heavily on the snowball approach where an initial cohort of interviewees became a key source for the next.

Although Kaufman had deep knowledge of different planning theories, *Farming Inside Cities* did not intentionally connect itself to any particular one. It instead reflected the same ideology of pragmatism and practicality displayed by the urban farmers interviewed. Structurally *Farming Inside Cities* had three simple parts: (a) an overview of entrepreneurial urban agriculture, (b) the obstacles keeping entrepreneurial urban agriculture from becoming more widespread, and (c) strategies to overcome those obstacles. Kaufman was fond of using clear and simple metaphors to first clarify a concept in his mind, then present the concept to others. This was certainly the case with *Farming Inside Cities* where he created a simple visual concept, then consistently used that image to explain the research framework to others.

To imagine the framework for this study, visualize a wobbly three-legged stool. One leg of the stool represents *urban vacant land*, and the government agencies and policies affecting its disposition and management. The second leg represents *entrepreneurial urban agriculture*, a movement composed of individuals and organizations having the desire and knowledge to produce food in the city for market sale. The third leg represents the *institutional climate* within a particular city, the environment in which entrepreneurial urban agriculture would take place – be it accommodating, neutral, or restrictive. The interest behind the study was to find out whether the three legs of the stool could be made sturdier – that is, whether an increased number of entrepreneurial urban agriculture projects would be developed on vacant city land within the context of a more supportive institutional climate – or whether the legs would continue to wobble (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 3).

When reviewing Bailkey's initial drafts, Kaufman's chief role as coauthor was ensuring not just that the three stool legs were rendered clearly but that the real goal – stabilizing the stool – was presented just as clearly. This meant a strong focus on the obstacles to entrepreneurial urban agriculture, and an even stronger emphasis on how to overcome the obstacles.

From the perspective of planning theory, *Farming Inside Cities*, to the extent that one can read it as an urban planning study, displays certain characteristics of rational planning analysis. It offers a clear statement of a particular planning question – is urban agriculture a viable use of inner city vacant land parcels? – followed by a factual analysis of what keeps urban farms from being more common, and ending with strategies to promote urban farms that were clearly drawn from the preceding analysis.

Over several drafts the consistent goal of Kaufman's writing and editing was to clarify as much as possible the identified obstacles to entrepreneurial urban agriculture and related strategies to overcome those obstacles. This included first separating the obstacles unto four clear categories:

- site-related – contamination, security and vandalism, lack of long-term tenure
- government-related – essentially the lack of recognition of urban agriculture as a viable use for a city’s vacant land inventory
- procedure-related – including, among others, the lack of supportive financial resources, staffing concerns, and managing an urban farm spread across more than one site
- perception-related – negative attitudes about having agriculture in cities at all

What follows, a two-part systematic presentation of how to address these obstacles, firmly establishes *Farming Inside Cities* as an advocacy document and not merely an objective survey. First, the most common impediments to urban agriculture are summarized as six general concerns, intentionally phrased – in a very Kaufman-esque maneuver – to represent a “devil’s advocate” position against the practice:

- entrepreneurial urban agriculture projects cannot be sited on vacant city lots because these parcels are too contaminated
- entrepreneurial urban agriculture projects located in crime-ridden areas are undermined by considerable vandalism
- entrepreneurial urban agriculture projects are not economically viable as profit generators, not as operations seeking only to cover expenses, thus they are not worth initiating or supporting
- entrepreneurial urban agriculture projects are run by people who, although energetic and committed, lack the necessary management and business skills to make such ventures successful
- entrepreneurial urban agriculture practitioners operate too independently, and fail to work together to promote the potential and overall value of city farming
- entrepreneurial urban agriculture projects represent a temporary land use, lasting only until “real” revenue-producing development occurs

Each of these six are then addressed in detail, using projects in the three case study cities to counter the concern through a best practice approach. The second stage of advocacy shifts from urban agriculture itself, and is directed at the separate cohorts who determine whether there will be entrepreneurial urban agriculture in the future. Suggested actions are first offered to existing proponents to bolster their advocacy, then to key cohorts seen as gatekeepers to the creation of more urban farms: government officials (primarily local, but also federal and state), national and local foundations, and CDCs.

This clarity of thought and thoroughness of argument represent Kaufman’s biggest influence on the final form of *Farming Inside Cities*, and is arguably the key to its continued viability after two decades. A theoretical foundation in rational planning can be read between the lines. But by understanding the pragmatic concerns of its audience, *Farming Inside Cities* became at its core an outline for action.

4.6 Outcomes of the Study

Farming Inside Cities was well-received upon its release. It became one of the more popular titles among the Lincoln Institute's series of working papers aimed at policy makers, academics and students, and was later expanded into a chapter within the collection of essays summarizing the cross-disciplinary research on underutilized, abandoned and vacant land published by the Lincoln Institute during the period (Kaufman and Bailkey 2004).⁷ Its practical approach and easy availability over the Internet made *Farming Inside Cities* popular among urban farmers and organizations doing urban agriculture who welcomed the study as recognition of their work and the legitimizing of their view of themselves as community change agents.

Another outcome for Kaufman and Bailkey was their quickly becoming national "experts" on urban agriculture in general, not just its entrepreneurial side, and they were approached by other researchers and writers in the US and Canada. Kaufman, by this point, was looking beyond urban agriculture, strategizing how to establish food systems as a legitimate area of professional planning practice, and steered inquiries on urban agriculture to Bailkey. As *Farming Inside Cities* was being written, Bailkey was contacted by a freelance writer researching urban farming for a new journal on sustainable development produced by Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility. The resulting article (Lazarus 2000) was published a few months before *Farming Inside Cities*, cited it as a work in progress, followed its lead by profiling a number of projects that Bailkey directed the author to, mentioned the work of Feenstra et al. and Wohl, and interviewed TUAN's Jac Smit. While proclaiming "There is an astounding vibrancy and interest in urban agriculture in the United States today" and "No other economic development activity has as much appeal to those concerned with sustainability as urban agriculture," the article also asked the standard question, "but does it pay?" 2 years later, another freelance writer, Charles Wilson, featured Kaufman and several urban agriculture practitioners in an article for *Preservation* magazine (Wilson 2002) that mentioned some of the same urban farms as *Farming Inside Cities*, while offering more vivid personal portrayals.⁸

For Kaufman, always a firm believer in maintaining a wide network of connections, the experience of *Farming Inside Cities* bolstered his developing web of professional contacts within the community food system world. In addition to renewing his connection with Jac Smit, Kaufman's introduction to urban agriculture led to

⁷For his Ph.D. dissertation (Bailkey, M. 2003. *A study of the contexts within which urban vacant land is accessed for community open space*. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison), Bailkey, under Kaufman's supervision, broadened the *Farming Inside Cities* research to examine the public policy contexts in which residents of Philadelphia, Boston, and Milwaukee sought access to vacant land for a variety of community-based open space uses, including urban agriculture. The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy also sponsored this research.

⁸*Farming Inside Cities* did not acknowledge the striking personalities of many urban farmers, such as Growing Power's Will Allen. Charles Wilson later co-authored Allen's autobiography, *The Good Food Revolution* (Gotham Books, 2012).

several new contacts, each impressing him with their dedication and commitment to what for him was a new form of social and environmental activism. These included Alison Meares Cohen, then director of Heifer International’s Chicago project office; Pat Gray, the longtime executive director of The Food Project in metropolitan Boston; Ken Dunn, the founder of the Resource Center in Chicago (an early advocate for large-scale urban composting); and Les Brown, the founder of Chicago’s Growing Home, Inc. Kaufman continued to speak highly of each long after *Farming Inside Cities* was completed. Clearly, however, the most significant personal introduction was to Growing Power’s Will Allen. Following their first meeting in 1998, as Allen and his organization (then called Farm City Link) struggled to gain a foothold in Milwaukee, Kaufman became Allen’s friend and ardent supporter. He later led the nomination effort that resulted in Allen’s 2008 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (the well-known ‘genius’ award) and became Growing Power’s board president, a post Kaufman held until December 2012, one month before his death.

Within the context of the Lincoln Institute, the work on urban agriculture was part of an effort to create a body of work on the reuse of vacant and abandoned urban land that would benefit the communities who had borne the brunt of urban deindustrialization. Toward that end, Greenstein commissioned a series of working papers, many of which were published in *Recycling the City* (Greenstein and Sungu-Eryilmaz 2004). The Kaufman and Bailkey chapter, along with a case study on the preservation of industrial landscapes for cultural uses from the Ruhr Valley in Germany, and the reuse of an old incinerator site in Boston for what we would now call Green Development, were examples of then-innovative reuses and were presented in the final section of that collection.

This volume laid the groundwork for other Institute efforts to support community change agents to organize in favor of community-driven neighborhood investment over market-driven investment. For example, Lincoln partnered with colleagues at the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in the Roxbury section of Boston, to create a curriculum to provide training for community-based organizations working on comprehensive community change initiatives; the convening was entitled the *Community Control of Land*. The Institute commissioned curriculum and then offered extensive training on community benefits agreements, community land trusts, and inclusionary housing. These are three tools, that when controlled by residents, provide a mechanism that distributes the benefits of development to residents. These tools for community control of land were contrasted to the planning tools available to residents in higher income communities who can use zoning tools such as large-lot zoning to allow individuals (rather than communities) to have control over land.

The spirit of reallocating resources to underinvested inner city neighborhoods also informed the Lincoln Institute’s City-Land-University initiative, which was funded during this same period. Much of this activity, went on to inform work on Anchor Institutions (Perry and Wiewel 2005; Wiewel and Perry 2008). Both the urban agriculture and city-land-university initiatives are examples of planners turning their attention to urban problems with more of a pragmatist’s disposition than that of a theoretician. It is true that it is far easier to mobilize around specific

interventions (e.g., community use of university space just beyond the campus gates or accepting EBT at a farmers' market) than it is to mobilize around the theoretician's abstractions. Perhaps this is an argument for planning theorists to join practitioners in designing the planning studies in graduate planning programs?

4.7 Looking Back After Two Decades

Much of what *Farming Inside Cities* presented in 2000 holds up today, with Jerry Kaufman's three-legged stool still displaying a bit of wobble. Several of the urban farming organizations profiled are still in operation and thriving (a group that includes Growing Home, The Food Project, and Nuestras Raices in Holyoke, Massachusetts). Others, including Growing Power, are no longer operating after two decades, however, a larger group of exemplary urban agriculture organizations and projects can be found across the US, in cities big and small.

Although *Farming Inside Cities* is clearly forward thinking, it did not anticipate the importance of other forms of urban farming beyond the in-ground vegetable farms and the few examples of hydroponics and aquaponics visited during 1998 and 1999. It did not, for example, envision the growth of rooftop farms (such as Brooklyn Grange in New York City), nor today's high-volume, high-tech, highly-capitalized indoor vegetable production operations that typically occupy older industrial buildings. (One early example of the latter, Village Farms in Buffalo, was profiled in *Farming Inside Cities* but ended operations in that city soon after.)

A re-reading of *Farming Inside Cities* after twenty years reveals that its identification of obstacles to entrepreneurial urban agriculture and approaches to overcome those persist. While the obstacles identified in 2000 are still in play, more avenues exist to address them. For example, to broaden awareness of urban agriculture among policy makers, local food policy councils (not nearly as prevalent in 2000 as today) advocate for the inclusion of urban agriculture in comprehensive plans and convene stakeholders through forums directly connected to policymakers. Also still valid within *Farming Inside Cities* is the belief that urban farming will be advanced by several cohorts – urban farmers, community-based organizations (including CDCs), foundations, and local/state/federal government – acting together. Yet, two of the most significant practical obstacles that vexed urban farmers and urban agriculture organizations in 2000 vex them today – the twin challenges of long-term land access and security, and balancing the specific requirements for generating adequate revenue (i.e., simply covering costs) with the different energies required to generate beneficial, non-financial social outcomes.

Although policy makers and non-profit organizations were a primary audience, another key target for Kaufman was professional planners, and *Farming Inside Cities* can today be read and appreciated in the context of his emerging engagement with the planning community around food systems. It is also valid to believe that the thinking that led Kaufman to envision the consistent and effective public sector facilitation of community-based food system actions, including urban agriculture,

are yet to be fully understood by the planning field. Although progress here has certainly been made, younger planners having had exposure to food systems in school (Greenstein et al. 2015) or in the early phases of their careers can, as they advance professionally, find their food systems advocacy compromised by the necessary balancing of food goals with other public concerns; i.e.; having to incorporate a food system vision as part of a comprehensive plan, rather than creating a stand-alone “Food System Plan” for a city, county or region having greater detail.

And in the specific case of urban agriculture, even those dedicated to food system planning cannot solely be “urban agriculture planners,” but typically must balance the facilitation of urban agriculture with similar support for other areas of the food system. When read today by anyone familiar with the holistic concept of a community food *system*, the isolation of for-market urban agriculture in *Farming Inside Cities* from other now-accepted components of the local food movement (farmers markets, community supported agriculture, school food programming, etc.) is evident, but not particularly glaring. Its simple aim to link the opportunities offered by entrepreneurial urban agriculture to the opportunity offered by large amounts of urban vacant land is immediately evident to the reader, and sits well within the limitations of the strategic “working paper” commissioned by the Lincoln Institute. Thus, it is left to modern readers to understand urban agriculture within their personal conceptions of a thriving community food system.

Finally, while the sharp observation and clear pragmatism evident throughout *Farming Inside Cities* remains valid and useful to readers, were Kaufman to undertake the research anew today the final product would not lightly address, as did the earlier work, the significant social causes driving much of today’s urban agriculture, nor the strong cultural rootedness it often manifests. The consequences of urban disinvestment and related public policy in the neighborhoods of Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston – in particular, the existence and prevalence of vacant and undervalued land parcels – clearly drive *Farming Inside Cities*, and urban agriculture is presented objectively as a focused, proactive response to the myriad forces of financial disinvestment. Today, however, a deeper, more subjective cultural importance is attributed to the practice of urban agriculture, particularly within neighborhoods of color where an urban farm can represent deep and tangible resistance to the forces of structural racism.

This resistance is evident in the pronouncements of community-based organizations for which urban agriculture is a core activity, such as Planting Justice in Oakland and the Urban Growers Collective in Chicago. It is also evident in recent academic writing, such as Kristin Reynolds and Nevin Cohen’s account of how New York City’s urban farmers, in addition to growing food, use urban agriculture to tackle racism and economic inequalities (Reynolds and Cohen 2016). Resistance also drives Monica White’s narrative of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, and its D-Town Farm, as a contemporary manifestation of the southern black agricultural cooperatives of the 1960s and 1970s dedicated to “collective agency and community resilience” (White 2018, p. 7), referring to a group’s ability to choose actions that determine its future and resist external adversity, respectively.

However, for progressive planners with a social justice motivation behind their practice, there are important lessons from the food system movement. Specifically, the food system movement demonstrates the value of public education in movement building in 1999. Pothukuchi and Kaufman wrote:

Air, water, and food are the three essentials of life. Clearly, it would be extraordinarily difficult to have high quality human settlements without high quality air, water, and food. Planners have been heavily involved in efforts to improve the quality of air and water through air and water pollution control programs. But the third leg of the life essential stool, food, has been virtually ignored by planners. If planners are truly concerned about improving human settlements, they need to incorporate food issues into their working models. (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999, p. 220)

What happens though, if rather than transforming the way planning is conceptualized with the inclusion of food systems, by learning more about the challenge of transforming the industrial food system, urban residents changed their working models of what is possible? Through the Real Food Challenge of the late 2010s, college students challenged campus food service organizations to change procurement practices. Through their campus-based education, organizing and mobilizing they advocated for a “just and sustainable food system for all”. This campaign attracted students motivated by the impact of healthy eating on individuals, the impact of organic farming on ecosystems, the impact of workplace practices on workers, as well as the role of locally-produced food on the local economy. Coalescing around the challenge of increasing local, organic, and fair trade food in the campus cafeteria taught a generation of college students about collective action and public engagement.

Similarly, the reconstruction of Puerto Rico’s coffee industry in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, demonstrated a new understanding of resilience (Borges-Méndez and Caron 2019). In the island’s coffee growing region, producers, retailers, entrepreneurs, and cooperators responded to slow and technocratic responses, not with paralysis, but with collective action that supported self-reliance, not the dependency that characterizes and defines Puerto Rico’s colonial relationship.

Both of these are examples of challenging how food and the system that creates it can be transformed to support and contribute to our desired future. Rather than interrogate how a planning system (e.g. housing, transportation, or land use regulations) affect the distribution of power and resources, these are examples where community activists are using the food system and residents interest in food, to bring about a more just and inclusive society.

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Martin Bailkey PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison, is a special projects manager at Rooted, an urban agriculture organization in Madison, Wisconsin. He entered urban agriculture with *Farming Inside Cities*, co-written with Jerry Kaufman in 2000, and followed this with *Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places* (2011), written with Kimberley Hodgson and Marcia Caton Campbell, and *Good Food, Strong Communities* (2017), co-edited with Steve Ventura. Martin has written articles on urban agriculture for RUAF and the Community Food Security Coalition, and was project manager for *Growing Power* in Milwaukee. Before that, he taught landscape architecture at universities in Oregon, Missouri, and Wisconsin.

Rosalind Greenstein For four decades, Rosalind Greenstein has worked on the human and spatial impacts of economic structures. As the founding chair of the short-lived Department of Economic and Community Development at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Greenstein led a project on the re-use of underutilized urban land; this led to investments in the then-nascent field of planning for community food systems. Greenstein earned a BA in economics at UCSC and a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning at UNC-Chapel Hill. She teaches in Tufts University's Department of Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy and consults to companies, organizations, and municipalities.

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Chapter 5

Urban Agriculture as a Public Good: Valuing Farming and Gardening in Philadelphia and Chicago



Domenic Vitiello 

Abstract Cities in the United States have developed urban agriculture support systems with different priorities. These reflect the often-competing values ascribed and inscribed in cities' urban farming and gardening landscapes. The institutional structures of U.S. cities' urban agriculture support systems vary accordingly, with significant impacts and implications for equity and justice. Some treat farming and gardening as a public good, public space, valued for their community-building, environmental, public health, and other social benefits. Others have sought to extract more economic and redevelopment gains from urban agriculture. These represent divergent, often-opposing theories of what urban agriculture can yield, and what it should be.

In his early work on urban agriculture, Jerry Kaufman explored its community and economic development potential, raising questions with which planners continue to grapple. This chapter reflects on the evolution of urban agriculture planning, policy, and practice in two cities he studied intensively, Chicago and Philadelphia. It asks: How have different actors and institutions valued urban agriculture? How have those values manifested in practice? What goals and impacts can U.S. cities reasonably ask of urban farming and gardening? And how might planners and cities develop urban agriculture policies and support systems that promote greater equity and justice?

Keywords Community gardens · Urban farms · City policy · Urban agriculture support systems · Public good · Community development · Economic development

“Community gardens are the highest and best use of land in the city,” says Ben Helphand (2016) director of NeighborSpace, Chicago’s community land trust for community gardens. In the logic of real estate economics and urban redevelopment, he is wrong. But for cities that prioritize other values and impacts, there may be no higher and better use. Arguably no other urban land use enables people of all ages

D. Vitiello (✉)
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA
e-mail: vitiello@upenn.edu

and backgrounds to reap such a broad range of social, health, educational, and other benefits (Draper and Freedman 2010; Lovell 2010). For these reasons and others, some cities treat agriculture as a public good, permanent public space accessible to all.

Yet many municipalities in the United States, and some urban agriculture support organizations, value farming and community gardening more for their contributions to redevelopment, with narrower, shorter-term aims. Many cities are reluctant to grant long-term land tenure, viewing agriculture as an interim use waiting for “higher and better” land uses that generate tax revenue, jobs, and private investment. Some cities organize their agricultural sectors centrally around access to vacant land, pitting growers against developers. Some cities prioritize economic and redevelopment outcomes from farms and gardens, including enterprise growth, land reclamation and property value increases (Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014).

Most big U.S. cities encourage a mix of community gardens and farms, valuing urban agriculture’s various demonstrated and potential impacts, sometimes in tension with one another. Parks, health or other agencies enacting social and environmental policy commonly treat urban agriculture as a public good, prioritizing non-market benefits. Economic development and redevelopment agencies more often view it as an interim use and enterprise development opportunity. Planning departments vary in embracing these different visions and values (Hodgson et al. 2011; Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014).

Urban agriculture support systems in U.S. cities likewise differ substantially. Some cities’ urban agriculture support functions are based more in the public sector, others more in the nonprofit sector. Cities’ core institutions supporting community gardens and farms vary in their missions, scope of work, and the durability and funding streams of municipal and nonprofit programs (Lawson 2005; Lawson and McNally 1999; Vitiello and Nairn 2009). Municipalities and civil society also manage land access and tenure for urban agriculture in distinct ways. Access and tenure are key determining factors in how much a city’s urban agriculture system operates as a public good, and how much it promotes equity and justice in people’s control over land and food production (Drake and Lawson 2014; Ela and Rosenberg 2017; Lawson 2005).

In his work on ethics in the 1970s, Jerry Kaufman encouraged planners to reflect on our values and those of our constituents, as we define and promote particular visions of the malleable and contested “public interest” (Howe and Kaufman 1979, 1983). In Jerry’s later food planning research, advocacy, and leadership of institutions, he promoted urban agriculture as both a public good and a tool for community economic development and redevelopment. Jerry and Kami Pothukuchi argued that food is “among the essentials of life” and should be an important part of “public-interest driven” planning. They quoted one planner who averred, “Food issues are a public good that transcends the market”; and may be read as suggesting as much themselves, particularly in their call for planners to embrace community food security as a framework for evaluating and intervening in community and regional food

systems (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000, pp. 113, 117–118).¹ This framework has served as a theory of practice for many food system planners since then.

In their landmark study of urban agriculture in the United States, *Farming Inside Cities*, Jerry and Martin Bailkey introduced many planners to the opportunities and challenges of farming and gardening as land uses in the city. They showed how “entrepreneurial urban agriculture” in the late 1990s was tied as much to public and nonprofit support institutions as it was to the private market. This and other parts of their study raised critical questions about its potential to serve different public and private interests, including distinct visions of community and economic development (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000).

Inspired by these parts of Jerry’s work, this chapter explores how urban agriculture has been valued, governed, and supported in two U.S. cities that he and Martin studied in depth, Philadelphia and Chicago. It asks: What values and aims have these cities ascribed to urban farms and community gardens? How have the cities organized their urban agriculture support systems, including land access and tenure? What do different paradigms of policy and support mean for urban agriculture’s position as a land use, and for gardeners and farmers?

The narrative below surveys what Kaufman and Bailkey found when they visited Philadelphia and Chicago in 1998–1999 and how the two cities’ landscapes of farms and community gardens, support systems, and policies evolved over the next two decades. Chicago and Philadelphia are among the most vibrant centers of urban agriculture in the U.S. Both cities have substantial histories of community gardening and farming, histories that largely paralleled one another through the end of the twentieth century. However, in the twenty-first century, their municipal governments and urban agriculture support organizations embraced distinct visions for farming and gardening, reflecting different values. This resulted in divergent governance and support systems, with critical implications for the management, stability, and equity of the two cities’ urban agriculture sectors. While Chicago increasingly treated urban agriculture a public good, in Philadelphia its purpose and place in the city remained more contested and unstable.

This analysis is based on quantitative and qualitative research, including city-wide censuses of community gardens and farms, as well as work with growers, policymakers, support organizations, and advocates I have conducted with colleagues in the two cities since the mid-2000s (Vitiello 2008; Vitiello and Nairn 2009; Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014). It contributes to a growing literature on the purposes, meanings, and governance of urban agriculture (Cohen and Reynolds 2014; Daftary-Steel et al. 2015; Horst et al. 2017, this volume, Chap. 6; McClintock 2013; McClintock and Simpson 2018; Pothukuchi 2015, 2017, 2018; Ventura and Bailkey 2017; Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014). Comparing different cities can help scholars, practitioners, and advocates assess how equitable our urban agriculture

¹Hamm and Bellows’s (2003, p. 37) classic definition of community food security is a “condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance, social justice, and democratic decision-making.”

systems and sectors are. It helps us take stock of recent policy and practice and prioritize what we most value moving forward.

5.1 Urban Agriculture Research and Practice: Visions and Values

In *Farming Inside Cities*, Kaufman and Bailkey (2000), highlighted the entanglement of, and competition between, different visions, values, aims, and expectations of urban agriculture in U.S. cities. In the years since, their colleagues, students, and other scholars have produced a substantial literature – and engaged in policy advocacy and practice – grappling with these tensions. A central question in this research and practice concerns the extent to which urban agriculture can or should be a viable private market activity, a redevelopment strategy, or a public good.

Jerry Kaufman’s contributions to the practice of gardening and farming in U.S. cities also embodied the diversity of urban agriculture and its impacts, especially as a board member of the Madison Area Community Land Trust and board chair of Growing Power. The land trust’s major initiative, Troy Gardens, includes a patchwork of different sorts of public space, which Jerry played a central role in realizing. Growing Power showed millions of people how urban agriculture could scale up in some of the ways that Jerry and Martin, who became the in-house evaluator at Growing Power, envisioned in *Farming Inside Cities*. Its workforce and youth development programs, training centers in other cities, and numerous partnerships applied urban farming to a wide range of community and economic development strategies, some public goods, others corporate ventures. While some constituents of Growing Power saw it as proof of urban farming’s commercial viability, on more than a few occasions I heard Jerry correct people who said “GROWING power” – “It’s growing *POWER*,” he would stress, pointing to the organization’s mission to promote racial and food justice.²

Farming Inside Cities was a study of “entrepreneurial urban agriculture.” But only a few of the seventy farms they found were turning a profit. Some had closed; others were still in the planning stages. And like others who have studied urban agriculture, Jerry and Martin often found it difficult to differentiate between farms and gardens, as they recognized a range of commercial and non-market activities occurred across both categories (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000).

Kaufman and Bailkey recognized the incongruous fit between even the most profit-driven urban farming at the time and the value systems of redevelopment professionals. One of the greatest obstacles, they concluded, was the “sobering reality” that agriculture “is not seen as the ‘highest and best use’ of vacant inner city land by most local government policy officials who would like to attract ‘better’ tax

²The quotes are from conversations with Jerry Kaufman in Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin, in 2010 and 2012.

paying uses on this land” (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 84). Yet economic valuations were not all that mattered, they argued: urban farms provided “a variety of other social, aesthetic, health, and community-building and empowerment benefits.” Kaufman and Bailkey cast entrepreneurial agriculture as a worthwhile addition to cities’ redevelopment strategies for its numerous potential benefits for residents of disinvested neighborhoods, from stipends for youth growers to fresh food access (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 85).

In subsequent scholarship, landscape architect and planner Laura Lawson and her colleagues have further exposed the rifts in values and goals between different interests and actors in community gardening, farming, and redevelopment of vacant land. Lawson (2005) points up the long history of city governments, elite-led nonprofits, and philanthropists supporting urban agriculture largely in times of crisis, while their commitments have waned at other times. Meanwhile, disadvantaged and especially migrant communities from rural origins have engaged in urban gardening and farming more continuously, where and when they can. Lawson acknowledges community gardens’ impermanence and the “precarious nature of semi-public space” (Lawson 2009). She and colleagues emphasize land tenure, enduring support systems, and ongoing attention to participation as keys to gardens’ longevity (Drake and Lawson 2014, 2015; Ela and Rosenberg 2017; Hou et al. 2009; Lawson 2005, 2007, 2009; Lawson and Drake 2015; Lawson and Miller 2013).

In their study of Seattle, Jeff Hou, Julie Johnson, and Lawson (2009) make an explicit case for community gardens as a public good, “as public open space.” With the P-Patch support program in the city’s Department of Neighborhoods and P-Patch Trust and parks department holding land, Seattle is arguably the leading example of urban agriculture as public space in the U.S. Community gardens may not be locked, have signage in many languages, and are located around the city, some of the largest in working-class neighborhoods (also Lawson 2005). Other scholars and practitioners also recognize P-Patch as one of the nation’s strongest, most equitable systems (American Planning Association 2007, Hodgson et al. 2011, Horst et al. 2017, this volume, Chap. 6; Vitiello and Brinkley 2014).

By contrast, Kami Pothukuchi’s studies of Detroit and Cleveland (2015, 2017, 2018) present a powerful critique of the “redevelopment model” of urban agriculture. She illuminates how even in cities where vacant land abounds as population loss continued in the twenty-first century, politicians, city agencies, and redevelopment scholars discourage granting long-term tenure to agriculture. Their “growth paradigm” struggles to value it as more than an interim use. For the city to “foster an enduring urban agriculture sought by advocates,” she concludes, “the value of both urban land as well as agriculture will need to be reimagined.” More “conventional notions of highest and best use of land may need to be replaced... with more durable support” that treats urban agriculture as a long-term, low-profit land use, appreciated and protected for the “community value” it creates (Pothukuchi 2018, p. 2, 16).

Related research by myself and others highlights the limits but also the ways urban agriculture is successful as economic development in the U.S. Our findings contest the expectation that most urban farming can satisfy outcomes traditionally sought by economic development agencies, including profitable firms, stable jobs,

and related taxes. Instead, we echo Kaufman and Bailkey in arguing for an appreciation of urban agriculture's contributions to supplemental income, education and workforce integration, social enterprise, nonprofit jobs, and contributions to households' food budgets and networks of social support (Biewener 2016; Daftary-Steel et al. 2015; Dimitri and Oberholtzer 2016; Ventura and Bailkey 2017; Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014). The ambiguous lines between what constitutes gardening and what counts as farming only make this more important (Hodgson et al. 2011).

Indeed, to imagine a clear dichotomy between urban agriculture as a public good and for economic or property development, is clearly false. As Nathan McClintock argues, "urban agriculture *has to be both*" ... "a form of actually existing neoliberalism *and* a simultaneous radical counter-movement arising in dialectical tension," if it is to realize its potential to support social and ecological change. The variety of urban farming and gardening social enterprises of recent decades, for McClintock, are part of "urban agriculture's entanglement in various processes of neoliberalisation," the shift to market models of governance and reliance on private actors to produce social benefits. Most notable in these processes is "the roll-out of non-profits to fill in the gaps left by the rolling back of the social safety net, and the promulgation of neoliberal discourses of personal responsibility and market-based solutions" (McClintock 2013, pp. 148–149).

Even community gardens are caught up in these processes, with mixed results for disadvantaged communities. Community gardens are typically the most public, often the most equitable, form of urban agriculture, places where poor people stabilize their neighborhoods and lives. More ambiguously, gardeners help create the conditions that support gentrification and sometimes displacement: improvements to land and property values, neighborhood beautification, increased safety. Some real estate developers employ community gardens to beautify and attract interest to properties before construction. More and less public and equitable forms of community gardening thus impact – and are deployed variously within – the larger processes of neighborhood change in U.S. cities (Branas et al. 2012; Lawson 2005, 2007; Martinez 2010; South et al. 2018; Vitiello and Nairn 2009).

The uneven approaches of city governments and nonprofit urban agriculture support organizations both reflect and reproduce these tensions and variable outcomes. Only some U.S. cities have substantial public sector involvement in urban agriculture. Only some have strong citywide support systems, including community land trusts that help acquire, own, pay insurance, and sometimes manage gardens and farms. And only some of these land trusts hold a large, well-distributed, accessible, and stable landscape of community gardens or farms (Choo 2011; Drake and Lawson 2015; Hou et al. 2009; Lawson 2005; Rosenberg and Yuen 2012).

Assessing the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of urban agriculture support systems is an important part of food system planning and community development (Bleasdale et al. 2011). In many cities a large swath of the public participates in community gardens and farms (Drake and Lawson 2015; Lawson 2005). In most cities, urban agriculture is in some way contested, by neighbors, public authorities, private developers, and growers (Hodgson et al. 2011). In too many cities, urban agriculture and the policies and institutions that support it are celebrated uncritically,

and without perspective on other cities' systems. And in some cities, including Philadelphia and Chicago, urban agriculture policies, support systems, and landscapes of gardens and farms have changed considerably in recent decades.

5.2 Philadelphia

Fitting the larger narrative of urban agriculture's history in the United States, vacant land and social crisis are central to its history in Philadelphia. Like Chicago, Detroit, and New York, most histories of urban agriculture in the city begin with the Vacant Lot Cultivation Association in the depression of 1893–97, which gave people access to undeveloped land. Government gardening programs during the world wars and Great Depression scaled up food production in these and other cities again in subsequent decades, on vacant land, parks, and cemeteries, though always temporarily (Lawson 2005). Just one Victory Garden from World War Two survives in Philadelphia (Vitiello and Nairn 2009).

In 1954, elite women from the suburbs formed the Neighborhood Gardens Association, bringing horticulture programs to working-class blocks, reflecting what Lawson (2005) has characterized as Philadelphia's particularly paternalistic culture of community gardening. In the mid-1970s, the elite Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) established the Philadelphia Green Program, and Penn State County Extension became one of the first sites of the USDA Urban Gardens Program. These programs helped diverse Philadelphians, especially working-class African American, Puerto Rican, and Southeast Asian migrants, establish hundreds of gardens on vacant land around the city. In the 1980s, the two organizations established the Neighborhood Gardens Association land trust (NGA, distinct from the earlier group), to preserve some of these gardens (Lawson 2005; Vitiello and Nairn 2009).

In 1998 and 1999, Bailkey and Kaufman found farming was expanding in Philadelphia, with a mix of for-profit and nonprofit growers and diverse business models. Greensgrow Farm, "a privately-owned, hydroponic vegetable producer," had increased its seasonal workforce from three to five with Welfare-to-Work subsidies. For-profit Philaberry Farms had grown raspberries and blackberries for groceries and restaurants for 7 years on a vacant lot, a speculative real estate holding strategy "until the time is right for residential development." Nonprofit Sea Change, Inc. provided jobs and training for formerly houseless people at its tree farm, CSA, and cafe; and the nearby nonprofit Village of Arts and Humanities had recently planted a tree farm. Sea Change, however, was on "the brink of bankruptcy" due to "difficulties of fundraising, the marginal revenues produced by the CSA and Cyber Café, and the inability to resolve issues of future land access" (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 38; Vitiello 2008). Philly Farms Mushrooms, a joint venture of larger investors and the Kaolin mushroom company, still in the planning stages, and the garden at University City High School, supported by the University of Pennsylvania's Urban Nutrition Initiative, rounded out their list of "entrepreneurial" agriculture sites.

The bigger part of Philadelphia's urban agriculture sector, however, remained its non-profit community garden support system and the gardens it supported. Penn State was still one of "the city's two major urban agriculture actors" in 1999, "providing technical assistance and educational support to over 500 community gardens." In this program, "for-market production has not been emphasized or supported, primarily because its constituents are older and not interested" (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, pp. 41–42).

But PHS, which supported most of these gardens and many other spaces around the city, was exploring urban farming as part of a larger vacant land greening and management strategy. This was a priority for policy makers in a city of some 40,000 vacant lots (Pennsylvania Horticultural Society 1995, Philadelphia City Planning Commission 1995). PHS held a conference and commissioned a report on urban farming but did not start new programs for farms at the time, largely due to farming's limited economic prospects (Hope Wohl Associates 2000).

As Philadelphians elected a new mayor, John Street, in 1999, Kaufman and Bailkey wrote, "city government presently plays no explicit role in the support of urban agriculture." Instead, community gardens and farms had "a large and somewhat diffuse supporting infrastructure... outside of municipal government" (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 44). Land disposition in the city remained a barrier: "despite the positive awareness of city farming in Philadelphia, acquiring the land needed to implement it is, in practice, difficult due to bureaucratic complexity and the way in which city agencies managing vacant land guard their own interest." City council members and municipal agencies' reluctance to transfer land seemed counter to "the stated concerns of city government for the social and economic consequences of blighted properties in central Philadelphia neighborhoods." They hoped the new mayor, with his "commitment to a focused policy addressing neighborhood blight, may anticipate greater opportunities for entrepreneurial urban agriculture," including as a strategy for managing vacant land as PHS advocated (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 45).

For the most part, the Street administration proved hostile-to-uninterested in urban agriculture, but new farms grew up in the 2000s even as most of those profiled in *Farming Inside Cities* closed. Greensgrow survived, largely thanks to its CSA sourcing from the region, its nursery, and grants for its community kitchen and education programs. Philaberry, Sea Change, and Philly Farms Mushrooms (which never got into production) all folded by the early 2000s. The Village abandoned its tree farm, and University City High School was later bulldozed. By 2008, new farms included Weavers Way Coop's market gardens and orchards at Awbury Arboretum, MLK High School, and its new CSA at Saul Agricultural High School, a public vocational school. Private Flat Rock Farm sold much of its harvest to the cafeteria of a nearby private school. Mill Creek Farm, an educational nonprofit, grew out of a stormwater management project supported by the Water Department. So did Somerton Tanks Farm, a demonstration farm promoting the economic viability of the Small Plot Intensive (SPIN) Farming growing method (Vitiello 2008). By 2010, Philadelphia had about 20 farms.

Bigger changes happened in community gardening, as the city's robust garden support system declined. In 1996, Congress de-funded the Urban Gardens Program, devastating city extension offices around the country. Philadelphia County Extension kept its program going until 2000. Community gardening programs at PHS also lost their main sources of philanthropic funding and shrank dramatically (Lawson 2005; Vitiello and Nairn 2009).

In 2008, my colleagues and I visited over 700 sites in the city where Penn State and PHS had supported community gardens, as they had lost track of which gardens remained active. City Harvest, the new name for urban agriculture programs at PHS, supported just 37 sites that year. We found 227 community gardens growing food in the city, down from 501 in 1996, when Penn State last documented them (Vitiello and Nairn 2009). Philadelphia had lost more than half of its food-producing community gardens in just 12 years.

Interviews with current and former gardeners, neighbors, and city and nonprofit staff suggested three principal reasons for this decline. First, as Kaufman and Bailkey identified a decade earlier, gardeners were aging and passing away. Second, the decline of garden support programs meant many older gardeners who depended on support ceased gardening. Public and nonprofit systems for accessing a plot in a community garden were fragmented, unclear, often informal, which meant that many older gardeners were not replaced. We heard more than once, "to get a plot, you have to know someone who knows someone..." Staff at the Redevelopment Authority even lost the institutional memory that the agency was tasked with administering annual agreements with gardeners on scores of city-owned lots (Vitiello and Nairn 2009).

The third reason, compounding the first two, was Mayor Street's signature project, the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI). Launched in 2000, it sought to demolish vacant buildings, "clean and green" vacant lots, and assemble land for development. PHS scaled up its vacant land management, but not with farms and gardens. Rather, PHS and its partners planted and mowed grass ringed by trees and wood fences on thousands of properties. This stabilized many lots, and subsequent research found cleaned and greened lots had significant effects on safety and health (Branas et al. 2012; South et al. 2018).

But this "cleaning and greening" also destroyed community gardens, especially on city-owned and tax-delinquent lots in North Philadelphia. We encountered about a dozen people on different blocks who told us something to the effect that, "a man came from the city one day, said we couldn't garden here anymore, and" soon after, "a bulldozer came and cleared the garden." Most of these sites, where usually smaller gardens were displaced in the early and mid-2000s, remained vacant in 2008. Displacing gardeners, we observed, "was made easier by the fact that most community gardens are listed on city property databases... as 'vacant land'" (Vitiello and Nairn 2009, p. 37). Notwithstanding the benefits of vacant land management, these gardens and their gardeners had impacted health and safety in similar ways. They had taken care of land, getting people outdoors, growing relationships and trust, arguably in more impactful ways than fencing and mowing the same lots.

These changes helped produce clearly inequitable patterns and trends. Most of the gardens that disappeared between 1996 and 2008 were in poorer sections of North, West, and South Philadelphia, rowhouse neighborhoods where African American, Puerto Rican, and Southeast Asian residents were aging. Most of these neighborhoods would gentrify in the subsequent decade, as developers built on these and other gardens that lacked protection from displacement. The NGA land trust owned 26 gardens in 2008, most in already gentrified areas where affluent white gardeners had purchased the land and transferred it to NGA. This, we wrote, “helped reinforce the pattern of gardens in low-wealth neighborhoods disappearing while those in middle class neighborhoods more often survived” (Vitiello and Nairn 2009, p. 37).

Still, the longevity of hundreds of gardens in the city represented an important finding. Scores of community gardens had persisted for two or three decades or more. This led us to conclude, “our findings... contradict one major assumption made by many city agencies and philanthropists, namely that community gardens are simply a ‘temporary land use’” (Vitiello and Nairn 2009, p. 43).

But casting urban agriculture as an interim use was increasingly a winning strategy with politicians and redevelopment professionals. PHS responded to the limits and opportunities of city and philanthropic funding under Mayor Street and his successor Michael Nutter with new rationales for agriculture. Since the 1970s, PHS had presented its community gardening programs as bringing together residents of blighted neighborhoods to “take back” and beautify *their* neighborhoods. But by the late 2000s, its case for City Harvest emphasized contributions to property values and redevelopment. Economists’ finding that vacant land management, gardens, and other greening helped raise adjacent property values supported this new narrative (Voicu and Been 2006; Wachter and Wong 2008). This was a key part of a larger paradigm shift in the values underlying urban agriculture in the U.S., raising expectations of real estate and economic development payoffs, a vision promoted also by SPIN farming and other advocates (Hunold et al. 2017, Institute for Innovations in Local Farming and Urban Partners 2007, Vitiello and Nairn 2009).

At the same time, nationally and locally, urban agriculture policy, funders, and advocates increasingly cast urban farming and gardening as helping to solve food insecurity (Delind 2014). PHS came to promote City Harvest largely as a program for community gardens donating produce to food cupboards (Meenar and Hoover 2012; Vitiello and Nairn 2009). This fit the older narrative of urban agriculture as a response to temporary social crises.

Like its predecessor, the Nutter administration lacked a coordinated strategy for urban agriculture, perpetuating contests over where and what it should be. In 2008, advocates convinced Nutter’s first sustainability director to establish a Food Policy Advisory Council (FPAC). But in 2009, heads of the Redevelopment Authority and the Department of Parks and Recreation argued over which agency should control urban agriculture, and whether to treat it as an interim use, a stance promoted by Nutter’s redevelopment director and his director of planning and economic development. In 2010, the Redevelopment Authority and Parks and Recreation failed in

respective attempts to locate market gardens on their properties, the former since it offered only short-term leases and the latter since it threatened a longtime agricultural use, the hayfield of Saul Agricultural High School (Hodgson et al. 2011; Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014). Neither department pursued a major commercial farming project again. But in 2014, Parks and Recreation established the FarmPhilly program, supporting new and existing community gardens and farms at recreation centers and parks.

In the 2010s, gardeners and advocates turned increasing attention to the preservation of community gardens, as private development took off in many neighborhoods. The NGA land trust had never been the center of PHS or Penn State's garden support systems. In the late 2000s, PHS leaders decided to shut down NGA before PHS's new president Drew Becher, who came from Bette Midler's land trust for gardens in Manhattan, reversed this decision. PHS took control of NGA and renamed it the Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT). Under Becher, though, PHS invested more in pop-up beer gardens than in NGT (Hodgson et al. 2011).

In this context, in 2011 attorney Amy Laura Cahn started the Garden Justice Legal Initiative (GJLI) at the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia. Much like 596 Acres in New York, GJLI helped individual community gardens and farmers gain land ownership and defend against displacement, while at the same time pursuing policy advocacy in City Council and the FPAC (Public Interest Law Center). GJLI incubated Soil Generation, a coalition of growers and advocates led by Black and brown people. The first true organized group of grassroots advocates for agriculture in the city, Soil Generation's campaigns focused on threatened gardens and policies that promoted or limited community-owned agriculture. Its members included leaders of new nonprofits working on food justice in communities of color, such as VietLead and Urban Creators.

In 2012 and 2015, GJLI updated our 2008 census of community gardens and farms, assisted by geographer Peleg Kramer, political scientist Craig Borowiak, my students and me (Borowiak et al. 2018). We found significant, sustained growth of community gardens, but a more uneven growth and then decline in the number of sites growers called farms. The boundaries between those categories remained ambiguous, and the city's number of community gardens stayed below that of the 1990s (Table 5.1).

GJLI and Soil Generation altered the city's institutional ecosystem of urban agriculture, but they continued to operate within its system – and political economy – that tied urban agriculture to redevelopment. Cahn helped strengthen the FPAC's

Table 5.1 Community gardens and farms growing food in Philadelphia

1996	501 community gardens; at least 5 farms (total: 506)
2008	227 community gardens; about 8 farms (235)
2012	295 community gardens; about 45 farms (340)
2015	387 community gardens; about 31 farms (418)

urban agriculture committee, its name, the Vacant Land Subcommittee, signaling its greatest focus. She advocated treating community gardens and farms as “commons” and characterized GJLI’s “interventions to hold enclosure at bay” as a process of “mak[ing] existing community-stewarded places visible and expos[ing] pathways to access” (Cahn and Segal 2016, 196). This vision contrasted with the city’s ongoing realities.

GJLI, the FPAC, along with PHS and NGT, sought to influence and collaborate with the city’s nascent land bank. Yet their visions of land bank support for gardens and farms conflicted with other interests’ priorities for the land bank. Local council members still controlled the land bank’s decisions about transferring land, and some council members were more favorable to urban agriculture than others. Advocates’ embrace of the land bank, a tool for redevelopment whose primary purpose was putting properties back into taxpaying use, limited their ability to counter the “redevelopment model” that still dominated urban agriculture governance in the city.

Philadelphia in the twenty-first century regrew a vibrant urban agriculture sector *despite* its lack of a coordinated public strategy or strong land trust for community gardens and farms. But in the late 2010s efforts to change these conditions took important steps forward. The Neighborhood Gardens Trust expanded under subsequent leadership at PHS, from 38 community gardens in 2018 to almost 50 by 2021 (NGT). Within city government, my former student Ash Richards convinced the Department of Parks and Recreation to create the position of Urban Agriculture Director and initiate a citywide urban agriculture plan. Soil Generation led community engagement for the planning process, though the COVID-19 pandemic slowed their work after initial meetings attended by hundreds of growers. The FarmPhilly program grew to serve some 60 gardens and farms on Parks and Recreation land, along with compost, education, and other programs for other growers in the city (FarmPhilly 2021). Indeed, Philadelphia’s greatest agricultural assets were virtually all located on parkland, including Saul High School and several other large farms and community gardens. Not coincidentally, these were the sites where agriculture in the city was most clearly treated as a public good.

In Philadelphia, agriculture has operated predominantly within a redevelopment framework, but also partly as a public good. As in many older industrial cities, vacant land remained an important part of urban agriculture, with attendant tensions between different visions of gardening and farming. Like New York under Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Philadelphia experienced an era when the city bulldozed a substantial number of gardens. This plus gentrification and growing interest in urban agriculture helped inspire a new era of activism. Like Detroit, Cleveland, and Oakland, but unlike New York and Seattle, the city lacked sustained collaboration between the parks and other departments, the land trust, and other urban agriculture support organizations. This limited its ability to develop a more stable, accessible system of land preservation and assistance for community gardens and farms well distributed throughout the city. Philadelphia’s urban agriculture support systems, and by extension community gardening and farming, remained embedded in and vulnerable to the cycles of economic growth and crises.

5.3 Chicago

By contrast, in the years since *Farming Inside Cities*, urban agriculture in Chicago became a more substantial public good, with a strengthened institutional infrastructure supporting it. But up into the 1990s the two cities shared key similarities. Histories of urban agriculture in Chicago typically begin with its Vacant Lot Cultivation Association in the 1890s, world war and Great Depression era gardens. In the post-World War Two decades, an elite-led horticulture organization, the Chicago Botanic Garden (CBG), largely dominated the city's community garden support system. Even before PHS in Philadelphia, though, the CBG's community garden support program lost its core funding. By the time Kaufman and Bailkey visited Chicago, the program was closed. Indeed, the complete collapse of the prior citywide urban agriculture programs made room for Chicago to develop a new support system.

Kaufman and Bailkey did not mention the CBG in their report, nor the recently closed Urban Gardens Program run by University of Illinois Extension, which closed when Congress and the USDA defunded it in 1996. They concluded, "a strong citywide non-governmental support organization for urban agriculture does not exist to the same degree as in... Boston and Philadelphia" (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 33). Still, they highlighted emerging public and nonprofit support programs that were providing increasing support for urban farming and community gardening.

As in Philadelphia, in 1999 Kaufman and Bailkey found a "diverse array of for-market urban agriculture projects are underway," and "most are managed by nonprofit organizations" (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 29). Two farms operated under the Resource Center, a nonprofit focused on job creation through recycling and other environmental projects. The God's Gang Worm and Fish Project and the Cabrini Greens program ran indoor vermiculture and aquaculture farms at public housing projects slated for demolition. Heifer International supported these and other youth programs. Kaufman and Bailkey also highlighted three nascent farming projects: a youth project by Los Angeles-based Food From the 'Hood, in start-up phase; a job readiness program of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless called Growing Home, presently remediating its site; and a church garden that had recently begun producing vegetables, flowers, and duck eggs it planned to sell. Finally, they profiled volunteer-run Ginkgo Organic Garden, which donated its harvest to a restaurant that employed houseless people and a food pantry serving people with HIV and AIDS.

Indoor farming was more established in Chicago than in Philadelphia. The privately-owned, for-profit Chicago Indoor Gardens, reported Kaufman and Bailkey, was "growing eleven different varieties of sprouted grasses and beans under artificial conditions in a small factory building." Started in 1987, it had ten employees, supplied supermarkets and health food stores, and reported \$700,000 revenue in 1998 (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 28).

In Chicago, Kaufman and Bailkey noticed other forms of less "formal" agricultural enterprise, mainly in immigrant communities, which studies of urban farming

have often missed. These included “Hispanic women raising tilapia fish in their homes, ... a solar greenhouse project on thirteen vacant lots in a West Side Hispanic neighborhood, and a possibly clandestine operation where Asian growers are raising vegetables beside the railroad lines on the city’s north side for an informal consortium of Vietnamese restaurateurs” (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 29). These sorts of conditions also existed in Philadelphia in the late 1990s, mostly on marginal land near railroad tracks or the airport, often without ties to support organizations.

Kaufman and Bailkey expressed “guarded optimism” about city government and civil society support for urban agriculture. “Chicago’s motto, *urbs in horto*, the ‘city in a garden,’ is being realized,” they proclaimed, “by organizations in and out of government now creating the institutional context for entrepreneurial urban agriculture” (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 29). They cited three main factors: “a strong city-wide greening movement centered in local government and supported by a number of non-profit organizations, an emerging interest in urban agriculture projects by a few local foundations, and the presence of Heifer Project International” (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 30). This last institution had established “its first urban, North American office in 1996 in Chicago,” and had “become the leading institutional supporter of entrepreneurial urban agriculture projects in the city,” providing funding and technical support to ten projects, with more planned (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, pp. 31–32).

Still, as in Philadelphia, city government in Chicago supported urban agriculture unevenly, though Kaufman and Bailkey perceived opportunities in its enthusiastic embrace of urban greening. “A small cadre of people working for local government are supportive” of urban farming, they noted, “but for most local government officials the topic is not on their radar screens” (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 33). Mayor Richard M. Daley had championed various sorts of greening, though not yet urban farming. But his Department of Environment’s Greencorps program had a mission “to enable Chicagoans to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods by providing horticultural instruction, materials, and employment.” It provided “about \$3,000 worth of resources in the form of plants, materials, and soil amendments” to each of 71 gardens, and more modest assistance to another 137 groups cleaning vacant lots and planting and maintaining gardens (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 30).

One “unique public sector organization,” Kaufman and Bailkey predicted, “could be a boon to urban agriculture.” Established in 1996, NeighborSpace was an autonomous nonprofit community land trust, created through an intergovernmental agreement by the city’s Department of Planning and Development, Chicago Park District, and Cook County Forest Preserve District (the agreement was renewed in 2016). Representatives of these agencies served on its board and approved NeighborSpace’s requests to acquire land for community-managed open space, principally community gardens. It held title to 60 gardens by 1999, though only seven grew food; the rest were ornamental (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 30). NeighborSpace required “the community groups using the land to take responsibility for its management as a community project,” facilitating “public” ownership in multiple ways. Remarkably, thus far in its young history, NeighborSpace staff reported “gaining local

government support for urban agriculture was not a significant problem” (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 31).

Ultimately, Kaufman and Bailkey characterized entrepreneurial urban agriculture as “still in an embryonic stage in Chicago. There are some hopeful signs that a firmer foothold might materialize... in the future, but at present only a light layer of support exists.” However, they concluded, compared to Philadelphia and Boston, Chicago contained “both the largest core of entrepreneurial urban agriculture activities and the municipal structure closest to fully supporting city farming as an alternate use of vacant land.” (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000, p. 33).

By 2011, when Ben Helphand invited me to work with NeighborSpace and other partners on a census of Chicago community gardens, the emergent trends that Kaufman and Bailkey identified a dozen years earlier were playing out. Heifer International closed its Chicago office the year before (and its nascent office in Philadelphia), and Greencorps had cut its support for community gardens. But NeighborSpace helped convene gardeners to organize a new support system for themselves. This became the gardener-run Chicago Community Garden Association. Open to all community gardeners, this group effectively replaced the Botanic Garden and Greencorps as the citywide distributor of seedlings and other materials and support. It also gave Chicago an organized constituency of gardeners, who owned and ran key parts of the garden support system themselves.

Community gardening in Chicago has grown recently, with most gardens now growing food, and a substantial share of gardens preserved. In 2013, we identified 209 community gardens growing food in the city. While we did not find reliable figures for earlier years, urban agriculture support professionals in Chicago consistently reported that, as in Philadelphia, the number of community gardens in the city had grown from the 1970s to early 1990s, diminished in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and was clearly growing again since the late 2000s. As research by NeighborSpace and our partners in the Chicago Urban Agriculture Mapping Project (CUAMP) since then has shown, the number of community gardens grew to 279 by 2018, 242 of them growing food (CUAMP). NeighborSpace held 71 gardens in 2010, and by 2018 it held 107 gardens and two nonprofit farms, with close to 70 more gardens in city parks (Hieggelke 2010).

Chicago remained a vibrant center of urban farming, too, despite substantial turnover. New farms since Kaufman and Bailkey’s study in the late 1990s included several worked by Growing Power’s youth programs (later the Urban Growers Collective, which survived Growing Power’s closure in Milwaukee); City Farm, envisioned as a temporary installment on the former site of the Cabrini Green housing project; the largely indoor aquaponic Iron Street Farm, a nonprofit youth program; several growing sites of Windy City Harvest, a youth program run by the Chicago Botanic Garden; two farms at Growing Home, including one held by NeighborSpace; among many other nonprofit and commercial farms. By 2018, CUAMP counted 88 sites calling themselves urban farms, community farms, or gardens operated by restaurants and catering companies (CUAMP).

The group that ran CUAMP, Advocates for Urban Agriculture, established in 2002, also gave Chicago an organized constituency of farmers, home and

community gardeners working together and with NeighborSpace to influence policy. Urged by these and other advocates, in 2007 Mayor Daley's planning commission adopted the *Eat Local, Live Healthy* plan, with a goal to increase food production in city neighborhoods (City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development 2007). In 2011, Mayor Rahm Emmanuel announced, the city "relax[ed] fencing and parking requirements for larger commercial urban farms in order to hold down overhead costs for entrepreneurs and community organizations that launch and maintain these as enterprises." New policies formalized permission for hydroponic, aquaponic, and apiary systems, and committed to supporting green job creation (City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development 2011). Two years later, Emanuel endorsed a plan to make city land available for an expanded "incubator network" of workforce and small entrepreneur training farms (Rotenberk 2013). These policies embraced a neoliberal vision of urban agriculture promoted by some Chicago farmers. Yet the city's ongoing support for community gardens was arguably more significant for a far larger number of Chicago residents.

NeighborSpace brought relative stability and equity to Chicago's landscape of community gardens and system of urban agriculture support, compared to many other cities. This manifested in more than the growing number of gardens preserved and protected under its ownership and insurance. The organization grew partly out of the city's need to rectify the well-documented and visibly gross inequity in the distribution of public space in affluent versus poorer parts of the city. For many aldermen, city bureaucrats, and much of NeighborSpace's leadership this was its central reason for being. In more practical terms, as Ben Helphand reported, the city has continued to donate land to NeighborSpace through the Department of Planning and Development and "invests in the garden infrastructure because successive administrations and city council members have prioritized these community spaces, but also because our process is predictable. NeighborSpace vets applicants thoroughly and establishes ongoing relationships with community stewards so that the land will be maintained for the long-term" (Ela 2016; Ela and Rosenberg 2017; Helphand 2015).

The organization's core focus on community stewardship represented an investment in social sustainability. As Helphand noted, NeighborSpace "assists with an array of stewardship issues such as gaining access to water, fixing broken infrastructure, leadership transitions and emergencies such as a downed tree or someone driving through a fence, which might otherwise derail a community garden over the long-term." Like agricultural land trusts in other cities, it also addresses "[t]he requirements for insurance, leases, testing, permits and other hurdles that would drown [many] community gardens." Unlike NGA's experience with some of its gardens, "[w]hen a NeighborSpace-protected site is faced with challenges, such as a lack of interest or leadership capacity, it does not revert to vacancy." The organization's "staff works with the community to re-establish, deepen and/or expand community environmental stewardship" (Helphand 2015).

Chicago has had a vibrant urban agriculture sector in the last decade thanks largely to two structural factors. First, it has an organized constituency of community gardeners, farmers, and allies from around the city, with greater longevity,

control of garden support systems, and influence on municipal government than in Philadelphia. Second, in addition to liberalizing urban agriculture regulations as many cities have since the mid-2000s, Chicago city agencies have made a clear, enduring commitment to urban agriculture in their creation and support of NeighborSpace. Centering urban agriculture support in a land trust, in complement and collaboration with the Park District, means that the institutional infrastructure of the city's community gardening system is at its core dedicated to fostering permanent ownership and community stewardship. The result is a system that, compared to Philadelphia and many other cities, is more accessible, navigable, and equitable – more of a public good resembling Seattle's P-Patch system.

5.4 Conclusion

Philadelphia and Chicago experienced similar histories of urban agriculture up to the 1990s, but then took divergent paths in the structure, focus, and predominant values of their municipal and nonprofit support systems. This yielded different experiences for community gardeners and farmers, due to different levels and trajectories of land preservation, organized advocacy, and public and private support. NeighborSpace and the Neighborhood Gardens Trust resembled one another in their operations and the protections they provide for gardens (Helphand 2015; Vitiello and Nairn 2009). But NeighborSpace has operated much more at the center of Chicago's urban agriculture system, with more stable and collaborative relationships with city agencies.

To a great extent, Philadelphians and their institutions have continued to view urban agriculture as an ephemeral redevelopment strategy to address social, economic, and health crises. Until recently, even activists rarely imagined a substantial shift away from the city's focus on access to vacant land through the land bank. By contrast, Ben Helphand casts NeighborSpace as a break in the history of treating agriculture as temporary, with its attendant booms and busts in support for gardening and farming. "In order to break out of this cycle," he argues, for agriculture to "have a permanent place in the urban geography it is imperative that models are developed that provide both long-term land security and can navigate the vicissitudes of community interest." If the organization "can successfully acquire a site, it holds the title forever and cannot be uprooted," as long as community stewardship is sustained. NeighborSpace characterizes this strategy as "permanently grassroots" (Helphand 2015; Helphand and Lawson 2011).

The relationships between urban agriculture and urban economic development and redevelopment in U.S. cities were relatively unexplored when Jerry and Martin produced *Farming Inside Cities*. But a growing body of evidence from subsequent research and practice that they helped inspire suggests it is time to break with the redevelopment paradigm as a major part of U.S. cities' approach to urban agriculture. Cities build stronger, more enduring and more equitable urban agriculture systems and sectors when they situate agriculture in a policy and institutional framework

that does not seek to extract from growers a set of economic outcomes that they are not well positioned to deliver (Hou et al. 2009; Helphand and Lawson 2011; Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014; Pothukuchi 2017, 2018).

Cities should value urban agriculture for what it is demonstrably good at: in U.S. cities, mainly its social, health, and related non-market benefits. Doing this means prioritizing urban agriculture as a public good, accessible to the city's range of publics, and a long-term land use. This does not mean giving up on entrepreneurial urban farming, but rather embracing the diversity and multi-functional impacts of urban farming by nonprofits and for-profits, individuals and collectives. For governments, support organizations, advocates, and growers alike, this more realistic approach can make urban agriculture more manageable in practice, too. It means farmers and gardeners incur less risk of failing to deliver on false promises, for instance that agriculture in itself can solve poverty, obesity, or other societal problems.

Centering urban agriculture systems in land trusts – not in land banks or redevelopment agencies – is essential for producing more sustainable and equitable landscapes of community gardens and farms in U.S. cities. NeighborSpace provides a replicable model for this (Ela and Rosenberg 2017). Elite horticulture organizations still play important roles in supporting growers in many cities. But their histories remind us that institutions without a mission centrally focused on urban agriculture can easily drift away from it when funding and other opportunities pull them elsewhere. By contrast, community land trusts prioritize enduring community benefits and community control. They are also well positioned for long-term collaboration with park systems, grower support programs, and other partners with social, environmental, and health missions. This all can help make agriculture a more permanent part of cities and communities, a public good whose benefits can accrue in more sustained and equitable fashion.

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Domenic Vitiello is a professor of city planning and urban studies at the University of Pennsylvania. His research on urban agriculture has quantified food production and distribution from community gardens in several U.S. cities; traced the long history of agriculture in U.S. cities; assessed the economic development potential of urban farming; and documented the expanding links between food banks, farms, and gardens. Domenic was founding president of the Philadelphia Orchard Project and has supported the work of urban agriculture organizations around the U.S. and Canada.

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Chapter 6

The Intersection of Planning, Urban Agriculture, and Food Justice: A Review of the Literature



Megan Horst , Nathan McClintock , and Lesli Hoey 

Abstract Problem, research strategy, and findings: We draw on a multidisciplinary body of research to consider how planning for urban agriculture can foster food justice by benefitting socioeconomically disadvantaged residents. The potential social benefits of urban agriculture include increased access to food, positive health impacts, skill building, community development, and connections to broader social change efforts.

The literature suggests, however, caution in automatically conflating urban agriculture's social benefits with the goals of food justice. Urban agriculture may reinforce and deepen societal inequities by benefitting better resourced organizations and the propertied class and contributing to the displacement of lower-income households. The precariousness of land access for urban agriculture is another limitation, particularly for disadvantaged communities. Planners have recently begun to pay increased attention to urban agriculture but should more explicitly support the goals of food justice in their urban agriculture policies and programs.

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M. Horst (✉)

Toulan School of Urban Studies & Planning, Portland State University, Portland, OR, USA

e-mail: mhorst@pdx.edu

N. McClintock

Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique (INRS), Montreal, Quebec, Canada

e-mail: Nathan.McClintock@inrs.ca

L. Hoey

Urban and Regional Planning Program, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

e-mail: lhoey@umich.edu

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Takeaway for practice: We suggest several key strategies for planners to more explicitly orient their urban agriculture efforts to support food justice, including prioritizing urban agriculture in long-term planning efforts, developing mutually respectful relationships with food justice organizations and urban agriculture participants from diverse backgrounds, targeting city investments in urban agriculture to benefit historically disadvantaged communities, increasing the amount of land permanently available for urban agriculture, and confronting the threats of gentrification and displacement from urban agriculture. We demonstrate how the city of Seattle (WA) used an equity lens in all of its programs to shift its urban agriculture planning to more explicitly foster food justice, providing clear examples for other cities.

Keywords Equity · Food justice · Food systems planning · Urban agriculture

The aim of our review is to draw from a multidisciplinary literature to suggest ways in which urban planners can structure urban agriculture in support of food justice. Food justice brings attention to the significant disparities embedded in the food system, which are often reproduced in movements to change that system. Food justice advocates engage in a wide array of strategies and practices, from place-based projects to political change efforts. Urban agriculture, or cultivating food within metropolitan areas, is one place-based strategy frequently associated with attempts to address food injustice (Santo et al. 2016).

The interdisciplinary literature in the past 15 years has focused on the multiple social benefits of urban agriculture, including its contributions to food security, health, skill building and jobs, community development, and food systems change. The focus on the benefits of urban agriculture has led to an association of urban agriculture with food justice. Fully assessing urban agriculture's contributions to food justice, however, requires us to examine whether socioeconomically disadvantaged communities benefit. Urban agriculture alone cannot fully resolve many of the fundamental causes of food *injustice*, which include economic disparities, poverty, and historical and structural racism. Worse, some urban agriculture projects may perpetuate existing inequities, for example by benefitting already privileged communities, contributing to the ongoing marginalization and even displacement of disadvantaged groups. It is critical to address these concerns if urban agriculture is to foster food justice.

Planners have become increasingly involved in urban agriculture in the past 15 years. Common planning strategies have been to adopt supportive policies and remove regulatory barriers; incentivize urban agriculture through reduced utility fees and taxes; and offer funding, programming, land, and infrastructure. Without explicit valuation of food justice, however, urban agriculture strategies may primarily benefit the propertied class and newcomers rather than disadvantaged communities.

In this review, we first define food justice and note how urban agriculture is one potential strategy to foster food justice. We then discuss the range of urban agriculture forms and activities, though we ultimately focus here on food cultivation. In the

following sections, we synthesize the main social benefits of urban agriculture, emphasizing both the possible contributions to food justice and the limitations. Finally, we examine the role of planning by first discussing the common strategies used by planners to foster urban agriculture and their limitations for improving food justice.

Planners can play a stronger role in the movement for food justice by explicitly considering whether the urban agriculture efforts they plan and promote really do benefit disadvantaged communities. First, planners can embed urban agriculture into long-term planning efforts so that urban agriculture is viewed as a priority, not just a place-holder for future developments on the land. Second, planners can develop mutually respectful relationships with food justice organizations to better understand their constraints and needs. A third strategy is to target outreach, programming, funding, and infrastructure for urban agriculture to organizations led by and benefitting members of historically disadvantaged communities. Fourth, planners can increase the amount of land permanently available for urban agriculture. Finally, planners must confront and counter urban agriculture's contributions to displacement. We discuss Seattle (WA), where municipal government staff used an equity lens to better target their urban agriculture policies and programming to benefit low-income communities of color. Seattle prioritized new community garden and farm investments in neighborhoods with a high proportion of low-income people of color and has adopted more culturally inclusive outreach and programming.

6.1 Synthesizing the Multidisciplinary Literature on Food Justice, Urban Agriculture, and Planning

The discussion on urban agriculture in the planning field is largely celebratory. There is, however, a growing critical analysis of urban agriculture in the wider scholarly literature informed by deep attention to food justice (Reynolds and Cohen 2016; Tornaghi 2014). We show here how a critical analysis can assist planners in prioritizing food justice in their urban agriculture efforts.

Our review focuses on urban agriculture in the United States and Canada. There is a large body of research on urban agriculture in the Global South (Bryld 2003; Lynch et al. 2001; Mok et al. 2014), Europe (Dowler and Caraher 2003; Morgan 2009, 2013), and Australia (Mason and Knowd 2010), among other places. We do not address literature from other parts of the world given the unique social, political, economic, and land use contexts in the United States and Canada.

Our review focuses on literature published between 2000 (when the recent wave of urban agriculture planning began) and December 2016. We first examine the growing scholarship on food justice, including books (e.g., Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Gottlieb and Joshi 2010) and articles in interdisciplinary food studies journals (e.g., *Agriculture and Human Values*). We also draw from practitioners and organizations involved in food justice (e.g., Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy 2012).

Our next set of literature focuses on urban agriculture. We highlight the main social benefits attributed to urban agriculture, drawing on public health journals (e.g., *Annual Review of Public Health*) and food studies and food systems journals (e.g., *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*). We then synthesize the growing critical scholarship on urban agriculture, drawing mainly from recent books (e.g., Cohen and Reynolds 2016) and sociology and geography journals that examine the political ecology of agriculture (e.g., *Antipode, Progress in Human Geography*). We accompany this with a search of the gray literature, including reports from relevant national organizations (e.g., the American Planning Association, PolicyLink, and the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future). We finally examine the scholarship on planning and urban agriculture.

In our focus on planning for urban agriculture, we searched for relevant work in a wide range of planning journals (e.g., *Journal of the American Planning Association, International Planning Studies, Journal of Planning Education and Research, Journal of Planning Literature*) as well as professional publications from the American Planning Association. Our goal is to characterize the relationships between and among these bodies of scholarship and policy analyses. Our analysis is constrained by the reality that this scholarship is nascent, consists mainly of individual case studies, and lacks sophisticated assessment of impacts or outcomes.

6.2 Defining and Characterizing Food Justice

Food justice is one aspect of the movement for social justice and, like social justice, implies a need to contest racial, economic, and other disparities. Food justice calls attention to how both the dominant food system and alter-native food movement(s) often perpetuate the disparities that exist in broader society (Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Gottlieb and Joshi 2010). One definition of *food justice* from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (2012) is “the right of communities everywhere to produce, process, distribute, access, and eat good food regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, ability, religion, or community.” We choose this definition because, unlike some, it calls attention to the multiple ways in which socio-economically disadvantaged groups are affected across the food system.

This comprehensive definition implies a need to focus attention on procedural and distributive justice as well as structural change, a theme we focus on in this review essay.

Food justice highlights attention to disparities that exist throughout the food system, from production through distribution and consumption. Communities of color, for example, have time and time again been excluded from food production and prevented from owning and managing their own land, though they are often exploited as farm laborers (Brown and Getz 2008; Shreck et al. 2006; Yen Liu and Apollon 2011). People employed in the fast food industry, an important component of food distribution in the United States and Canada, typically experience low wages and poor working conditions (Allegretto et al. 2013; Jayaraman 2013). Low-wage

workers in turn face higher rates of food insecurity. Food justice thus demands that all people be able to access land to grow their own food and that food system workers earn livable wages.

Most of the food justice literature focuses on access and consumption-related disparities. In 2015, for example, about 13% of U.S. households experienced *food insecurity*, defined as a lack of access to food needed for an active, healthy life (Coleman-Jensen et al. 2014; Larson et al. 2009). Rates of food insecurity were higher for households with particular demographic characteristics, including low-income households, those with children headed by a single woman, and those headed by people identifying as Black and/or Hispanic. Food justice calls for an end to food insecurity, not just through emergency responses like food banks but also through the demand that all people have a right at all times to access healthy, culturally relevant, ecologically produced, and affordable food.

There are also disparities in geographic access to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant foods. Healthy food tends to be less available in neighborhoods with higher percentages of low-income residents (Lowery et al. 2016). Food in these neighborhoods, referred to by many scholars as *food deserts*, is typically more expensive (Raja and Yadav 2008), whereas fast food outlets and other sources of unhealthy food proliferate (Ver Ploeg 2010). Scholars link the combination of economic barriers, the lack of healthy food choices, and the abundance of unhealthy food choices to a number of negative health-related outcomes for both children and adults, including higher rates of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease among adults (Lowery et al. 2016; Morland and Evenson 2009; Raja and Yadav 2008). Food justice demands that people living in food deserts and food swamps have access to good food.

Food justice also demands that disadvantaged communities benefit as much as or more than privileged people from efforts to strengthen local, healthy food systems. Numerous scholars point out that the growing local and sustainable food movement has too often prioritized strategies, like food certification and labeling, that are only accessible to people of higher economic means rather than efforts targeted more explicitly to social justice (Allen 2010; Born and Purcell 2006). This critique has inspired both practitioners and scholars to prioritize food justice in the movement for better food systems.

Food justice advocates engage in a wide range of local, specific, place-based projects, like cooperatively owned grocery stores and urban agriculture, that aim to expand peoples' geographic access to good food in the short term (Rajan and Duncan 2013). Food justice scholars acknowledge that place-based projects are important because they offer people localized opportunities to develop alternatives to the industrial, corporate food system and to flex muscles in food democracy (Hassanein 2003). Place-based efforts, however, are often limited in their ability to overcome the structural drivers of inequities in the food system, including differences by race, class, gender, and other socioeconomic indicators in land ownership and access, education, economic opportunity, transportation, and political power (Broad 2016; Mares and Alkon 2011; Reynolds and Cohen 2016). Scholars largely agree that place-based projects should be accompanied by economic, political, and social change efforts.

In this review we examine whether municipal governments and planners, specifically in planning for urban agriculture, actually *do* food justice. Community organizations and government agencies are ratcheting up their use of the phrase *food justice* in their food systems work. Gottlieb and Joshi (2010) and Cadieux and Slocum (2015), however, caution that few are actually *doing* food justice. Gottlieb and Joshi, and Cadieux and Slocum, call for greater clarity and rigor in the use of the phrase and for critical greater accountability in food activism. We aim to provide greater rigor and accountability by examining who gains and who loses, to borrow from Flyvbjerg (2002), from urban agriculture planning. We identify ways in which urban agriculture planning can more explicitly benefit disadvantaged communities.

6.3 Urban Agriculture's Diverse Forms

Urban agriculture is a common strategy associated with food justice (Reynolds 2015). Many scholars loosely define *urban agriculture* as the cultivation of food within metropolitan cores as opposed to that in more peri-urban and rural areas (Golden 2013; Lovell 2010; Santo et al. 2016). Urban agriculture includes a range of activities, such as growing vegetables, fruit, herbs, and grains and raising fish (aquaculture), bees, and animals (e.g., chickens, goats, pigs, rabbits). Urban agriculturalists typically engage in the processing, marketing, and distribution of their products through, for example, farmers markets. We focus specifically on the acts associated with cultivating in this review.

Urban agriculture cultivation has a rich history in the United States and around the world. In the United States, much of the scholarly attention to urban agriculture focuses on victory gardens during World War II, but the history of urban agriculture is multifaceted. Working-class and immigrant households have for centuries engaged in growing kitchen gardens and raising animals in urban settings as well as using open space for food production (Brinkley and Vitiello 2014; Mares and Peña 2010). A range of people engage in urban agriculture today in different North American cities, from Detroit (MI), a former industrial city with a large supply of vacant lots (Colasanti 2010), to Vancouver (BC, Canada), a global city with high-rise residential towers and rapidly increasing land values (Mendes 2008; Mendes et al. 2008).

A big issue in urban agriculture, and one on which we focus in this review, is where urban agriculture cultivation is practiced, including the level of public access and the type of land tenure available to practitioners. Urban agriculture occurs at a variety of scales and locations, from a few potted tomato plants on an apartment balcony or a fruit tree in the right-of-way, to large-scale projects, such as community gardens in public parks and multiacre commercial urban farms and greenhouses on industrial land or rooftops (Hodgson 2012; Mukherji and Morales 2010).

Some practitioners grow food on private property (i.e., in the front and back yards of single-family residences, on rooftops of private apartment buildings, and on business- or church-owned property). Some people are experimenting with so-called vertical farming operations, in which food is grown in vertically stacked

layers within a controlled-environment building, such as a skyscraper, used warehouse, or shipping container (Despommier 2010).

Practitioners in these cases often either are the owners of the land or have negotiated short- or long-term use arrangements with the owners. Others grow food in public or semipublic spaces (i.e., in publicly owned lots, parks, and rights-of-way, or on public school grounds). In these cases practitioners typically have negotiated agreements about short- or long-term use with the landowner. Still others grow food with no formal agreement with the owner or with the city. Some urban agriculturalists, for example, garden on vacant privately owned properties. Others engage in *guerrilla gardening*, a more clandestine type of urban agriculture in which the practitioners produce food in a variety of spaces, such as on rights-of-way, without securing permission from the landowner (Crane et al. 2013).

The participants and goals of urban agriculture also vary widely. Many urban agriculturalists raise food solely for their personal or household consumption. Some non-profit organizations and community groups grow food for internal use (e.g., produce from a school garden may go to the school cafeteria). Other nonprofit and for-profit ventures sell their produce externally at farm stands, at farmers markets, via community-supported agriculture subscription boxes to customers, or through direct sales to restaurants and stores (Taylor and Lovell 2014). Some urban agriculturalists exchange their items via barter and other informal exchange relationships, whereas others sell food at discounted prices to low-income customers or donate it to food banks or shelters (Levkoe 2011).

Urban agriculture is clearly diverse in its scope, scale, type of access and for whom, participants, and goals. Such diversity makes it difficult to draw overarching conclusions about urban agriculture and food justice because the impacts of urban agriculture vary from situation to situation. Each urban agriculture activity needs to be evaluated on its own merit.

6.4 The Social Benefits of Urban Agriculture

A focus on urban agriculture's environmental and social benefits has led to its association with food justice. In this review, we focus on six primary categories of social benefits from cultivating food in urban areas: increasing food access and food security, improving health, generating income, building skills, enhancing community development, and developing connections to broader efforts to contest structural causes of inequities. These are fundamental ways in which urban agriculture could improve people's everyday lives and thus be an integral part of realizing a more just food system. A growing critical body of literature, however, suggests the need to examine these claims more closely so as not to overstate the ability of one strategy to resolve major societal and food systems problems (Allen 2008; Reynolds 2015; Tornaghi 2014). It is also imperative, as it is with other planning interventions aimed at promoting social justice, to examine who benefits—and who does not—from urban agriculture rather than assuming that it can and does benefit everyone.

First, urban agriculture cultivation can increase food access and food security for those involved and sometimes for recipients of donated food. This is of particular importance for food-insecure households and in food deserts (Algert et al. 2014; McClintock and Simpson 2017). A variety of research supports this claim by showing that urban agriculture practitioners save household money by supplementing some of their produce expenditures (anced access to fresh and healthyBrown and Carter 2003; Corrigan 2011; Gray et al. 2013). In Seattle, families who participate in community gardening typically offset 30% to 40% of their fresh produce needs (Hagey et al. 2012). Many urban agriculture participants grow beyond their own consumption needs and share excess fruits and vegetables with other community members and local food banks (Balmer et al. 2005; Corrigan 2011). In one specific community garden in Baltimore (MD), half of the gardeners donated their produce, earning the garden a reputation among food-insecure neighbors as a place to get free food (Corrigan 2011).

Scholars have used these examples to suggest that converting significant amounts of land to urban agriculture could lead to greater community food self-sufficiency in cities ranging from Detroit to Seattle (Colasanti 2010; Horst and Gaolach 2015; MacRae et al. 2010; McClintock et al. 2013). Increased food production in cities, however, does not guarantee that people experiencing food insecurity will access that food in the same way that merely increasing food production on a global scale does not guarantee an end to hunger (Holt-Giménez and Altieri 2012). Distribution and access matter.

Urban agriculture cultivation is limited in its ability to supply adequate food (Thibert 2012; Vitiello and Brinkley 2013). Urban agriculture's ability to contribute to food security for any particular individual, household, or city ranges widely depending on factors such as climate; the amount and type of land available; and the time, availability, and skills of practitioners (Grewal and Grewal 2012).

Raised garden beds, community garden plots, and small urban farms may be valuable sources of fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs, but are unlikely to provide all of the protein and grain needs of either individual households or entire communities. Critics also argue that urban agriculture is of little use as a strategy to increase food security for people who lack access to land, good growing conditions, and the physical capacity and skills needed to engage in these activities (Ghose and Pettygrove 2014; Wekerle and Classens 2015). It is unreasonable to expect disadvantaged populations to cultivate their own food; they are already burdened by working extra jobs and the stresses of poverty and are unlikely to have both the time and interest to spend gardening. Critics, meanwhile, charge that focusing on urban agriculture as a solution to food injustice obscures the systemic conditions, including poverty, low wages, and income disparity, that produce food insecurity (Pudup 2008; Weissman 2015). The emphasis on "grow your own" reinforces self-help and government austerity arguments, absolving government of the responsibility to address the structural and institutional causes of food insecurity (Andrée et al. 2014; Donald 2008; McClintock 2014). One takeaway from this debate is that urban agriculture should be considered one way for some households to augment their weekly food needs and only part of an array of interventions needed to completely address food insecurity.

Second, advocates and scholars laud the health benefits of enhanced access to fresh and healthy food (Alaimo et al. 2008; Allen et al. 2008; Graham and Zidenberg-Cherr 2005; Metcalf and Widener 2011). Studies show that urban agriculture participants increase their knowledge of nutrition and fresh food. One study finds that adults in households in which a member participates in community gardening eat fruit and vegetables more frequently than adults in nonparticipating households (Alaimo et al. 2008). Other studies link community gardening to lower obesity rates (Alaimo et al. 2016; Zick et al. 2013). Youth participants in urban agriculture programming were more likely to taste vegetables they grew themselves (Allen et al. 2008). The physical practice of cultivating food, including weeding, tilling, and using hand tools, offers a form of exercise that is preferred across different populations by age, gender, race, and ethnicity (Bellows et al. 2003; Park et al. 2009). Urban agriculture is also associated with reduced stress and improved mental well-being (Armstrong 2000; Draper and Freedman 2010) and may be especially beneficial for people experiencing mental illness and for people who have been incarcerated (Bellows et al. 2003).

Scholars, however, question whether urban agriculture alone can overcome the larger structural drivers, such as income disparity and poverty, of health disparities. In Buffalo (NY), youth gardeners from wealthier households were more likely to engage in healthy eating, with no measurable increase in healthy eating by youth gardeners from poorer households (Raj et al. 2016). Urban agriculture also poses specific health risks in poor communities where there is soil, water, and air pollution, all of which are more common there (Evans and Kantrowitz 2002; McClintock 2012; Nabulo et al. 2012; Wortman and Lovell 2013). One study shows high uptake levels of lead in vegetables grown in soils with high lead concentrations, with associated negative health implications (Finster et al. 2004). Some of the environmental pollution risks, though not all, can be ameliorated through appropriate training, garden planning, and infrastructure. Urban agriculture's potential for fostering significant improvements in health therefore appears to be strongly tied to socioeconomics and environmental context.

A third benefit of urban agriculture is skill building and education. Various studies show that participants in urban agriculture, in both informal community gardens and more formal urban agriculture training programs, gain knowledge about the natural environment and develop tangible skills in cultivating food (Okvat and Zautra 2011; Tidball and Krasny 2007). Gardens provide opportunities for many urban residents to develop a greater appreciation for the work of food producers and a greater connection to their food. Some expect urban agriculture training programs to provide their participants with marketable “green-collar” job skills in horticulture and edible landscaping (Pinderhughes 2007). Proponents portray urban agriculture as an economic development strategy for low-income residents. In Milwaukee (WI) and Chicago (IL), for example, the urban agriculture organization Growing Power has reported grossing more than \$200,000 per acre in urban agriculture (Lovell 2010). The organization employs a significant number of local residents, including people of color from low-income backgrounds, to grow and sell food. In Detroit, several city growers earn a significant share of their income—and a few earn all of their income—from selling their food items (Pothukuchi 2015).

It is not clear, however, that urban agriculture can support a large number of living-wage jobs in all contexts, particularly where land prices are high or where the consumer market cannot pay enough to cover costs of production and wages (Daftary-Steel et al. 2015; Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014). Urban farms report difficulties paying decent wages and rely heavily on unpaid labor (Biewener 2016; Cohen and Reynolds 2015). A 2012 survey of 370 urban farmers working in or around the United States found that roughly two-thirds were failing to make a living, reporting sales of less than \$10,000 per year (Dimitri et al. 2016). The study authors note that many urban farms rely on grant funding, donations, and off-farm income to support their farm ventures. More research is needed to know whether urban agriculture can lead to significant economic or job opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged communities.

Fourth, advocates argue that urban agriculture improves neighborhoods and builds community capacity. Some describe urban agriculture as a catalyst for neighborhood improvement, particularly when it replaces a vacant or neglected lot. Community gardens, for example, provide places for nearby residents to recreate and relax and contribute to beautification, environmental sustainability, quality of life, and community pride (Armstrong 2000; Tranel and Handlin 2006). Some researchers find that active participation in community gardens is linked with increased voter registration and civic responsibility and reduced rates of both petty and serious crime, trash dumping, and mental illness (Hagey et al. 2012; Kuo and Sullivan 2001). Some gardens function as places of cultural learning and sharing, where African-American and Latino residents, for example, and/or new immigrants and refugees can use urban agriculture as a way to build intergenerational connections and share culturally specific agricultural and culinary knowledge (Airriess and Clawson 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2014; Meek et al. 2017; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004; White 2011). Farmers at South Central Farm in Los Angeles (CA), many of them indigenous people from Mexico, recreated community traditions of agriculture and heirloom seeds (Broad 2013; Irazábal and Punja 2009; Mares and Peña 2010). The farm provided an alternative to gangs and drugs for local youth and a place where the elderly could contribute meaningfully to their community.

The context and the specifics of urban agriculture projects, however, influence which community members benefit. In shrinking cities like Detroit and St. Louis (MO), community gardens seem to contribute to the stability of neighborhoods and may benefit long-term residents, many of whom are low-income people of color (Tranel and Handlin 2006). A concern, however, is that the long-term beneficiaries of the community-building aspect of urban agriculture tend to be the propertied class and newcomers rather than more disadvantaged groups. Urban agriculture can become entangled in processes of gentrification, particularly in cities with growing populations. Urban agriculture projects can make affordable neighborhoods more attractive to economically mobile newcomers, which in turn increases the cost of living and leads to gentrification (Cadji and Alkon 2014; Safransky 2014; Walker 2015). In New York City (NY), community gardens contribute to higher home prices (Voicu and Been 2008). In Portland (OR), the distribution of household gardens correlates spatially with patterns of gentrification (McClintock et al. 2016). A similar pattern occurs in Vancouver (Quastel 2009).

Finally, many scholars and activists alike frame urban agriculture as a springboard for practitioners to increase their self-determination, contest dominant forms of property ownership, experiment with more communal forms of land management, and engage in other political efforts for food systems change (Levkoe 2011; Staeheli et al. 2002; Travaline and Hunold 2010). Some practitioners see their urban agriculture activities as an explicit rejection of the capitalist, corporate food system (McClintock 2010; McClintock and Simpson 2017; White 2011). Others use urban agriculture as a mechanism to appropriate urban space (Thibert 2012), demand the right to the city (Purcell and Tyman 2014), and create new commons (Eizenberg 2012; Roman-Alcalá 2015). Urban agriculture helps practitioners gain skills in food democracy (Levkoe 2011). Active participants often become more aware of the complexities of power and the intersections between food and various other social, economic, and environmental issues (Barron 2016). Gardeners at the South Central Farm in Los Angeles, for example, drew on organizing skills in the garden to become advocates for social justice in city decision making (Irazábal and Punja 2009). Detroit's Black Community Food Security Network uses urban agriculture as a strategy to pursue its core values of justice and African self-determination, as it describes on its website. It is important to note, however, that not all urban agriculture practitioners connect their food cultivation to political values or actions (Reynolds and Cohen 2016). The motivations of some practitioners do not extend beyond the desire for fresh food and recreation. Urban agriculture in those conditions is unlikely to be a mechanism for food democracy, other movements for social justice, or structural change.

One conclusion we draw from our review of the literature is that urban agriculture by itself cannot resolve the array of structural causes and impacts of food injustice experienced by disadvantaged communities. It is fairer to view urban agriculture as one possible strategy among an array of other needed strategies, including poverty alleviation, in seeking greater food justice. An important limitation is that disadvantaged communities may have less time for, energy for, interest in, and resources for urban agriculture than more well-off communities. The lack of interest can be complicated by historical factors, for example by the association between agriculture and slavery for some African Americans. The amount of interest among different communities varies depending on the individuals and context. Growing media attention to urban agriculture organizations led by lower-income communities of color across the United States suggests that interest among such residents is high in at least some places. For example, Natasha Bowens's (2015) book *The Color of Food* documents the stories of urban agriculturalists from various racial and ethnic backgrounds.

We also conclude that there is a risk that if problems are not addressed, even the most well-intentioned initiatives will perpetuate or even reinforce the injustices that practitioners and supporters aim to address (Reynolds 2015). This growing subset of research on urban agriculture and gentrification does not conclude that any and all urban agriculture is an automatic predictor of gentrification. This literature, however, underscores the importance of investigating which community members do and do not benefit from the community improvements associated with urban agriculture projects over the short and long terms.

6.5 Limitations to the Positive Food Justice Impacts of Urban Agriculture

A few areas of concern in the urban agriculture movement currently limit the positive food justice impacts of urban agriculture: disparities in representation, leadership and funding, and insecure land tenure. First, urban agriculture today is sometimes dominated by already advantaged communities, despite urban agriculture's historic association with diverse populations, including poor households, immigrants, and communities of color (Lawson 2005). There are no comprehensive national data on the demographics of urban agriculture practitioners, but recent case-based studies comment on the increasing Whiteness of urban agriculture. Most gardeners in New York City's nearly 1000 community gardens identify as African-American and/or Latino (Reynolds and Cohen 2016). Observers note, however, a recent increase in the proportion of young White urban agriculture practitioners, perhaps in part due to gentrification in historically low-income neighborhoods (Reynolds 2015). In Denver (CO; Teig et al. 2009) and Philadelphia (PA; Hoover 2013), urban agriculture participants are predominantly White, despite the fact that most residents in both cities are people of color. The causes of such disparities merit further investigation and also raise important questions about who benefits from public investments in urban agriculture programs.

Second, there are also disparities in representation in the leadership and culture of many urban agriculture organizations, an important part of procedural justice. Scholars point out that urban agriculture organizations often have White leadership and that White cultural values dominate (Hislop 2014; Hoover 2013; Slocum 2006, 2007; Slocum and Cadieux 2015). In Philadelphia, for example, community gardens have White leaders, even in neighborhoods with a high percentage of either African-American or Latino gardeners (Meenar and Hoover 2012). Media reports sometimes erase the presence of people of color; a recent prominent magazine article in New York featured only photographs of White gardeners (Reynolds and Cohen 2016). In Seattle, Black and Latino/a immigrant farmers reported that local urban agriculture organizations devalued their agro-ecological knowledge while privileging White and Eurocentric practices (Alkon and Mares 2012; Ramírez 2015).

There is a danger of urban agriculture being considered a *White space*, with White bodies and associated White language, culture, delivery of services, and foods associated with White foodie culture (Cohen and Reynolds 2016). The missionary zeal and patronizing tone with which some White-led urban agriculture programs "bring good food to others" (Guthman 2008a, p. 431; Guthman 2008b) offends some residents (Garzo Montalvo 2015; Ramírez 2015). Poor communities are sometimes suspicious of the long-term implications of urban agriculture, seeing it as a new form of paternalism or impending gentrification, particularly if long-term residents are not the initiators (Hern 2016; Lubitow and Miller 2013). One urban farmer noted, "A lot of times, organizations will use these poor communities and their statistics to get grants to do work that the community never wanted in the first place" (Pipkin 2017). Reynolds (2015), in her study of urban agriculture organizations in New York, identifies significant race- and class-based disparities.

White-led and professionalized organizations on the one hand have been able to take advantage of funding opportunities and have garnered policy support to expand their operations; other organizations, mainly led by poor people and/or people of color on the other hand have experienced more difficulties in fund-raising and in expanding and leveraging political support for their urban agriculture operations.

Urban agriculture organizations appear to understand that the lack of diverse representation is a problem, but we see little evidence that the problem has been resolved. Nearly 80% of respondents in a national survey of food justice organizations agreed that issues of race and class bias were important and must be front and center in their work (Hislop 2014). Yet only 16% of these organizations had policies in place to ensure diverse hiring practices or to involve more diverse people—in terms of race and class—in operating the organization.

The lack of permanent land tenure is another important barrier to urban agriculture serving as a vehicle for food justice. Urban residents who do not own single-family homes with space for gardening face significant challenges in gaining long-term access to land for gardening. There are significant race- and class-based disparities in homeownership in the United States, with White and higher-income households having much higher homeownership rates (Kuebler and Rugh 2013). People without their own private land typically garden on public land (when available), or they squat, borrow, or lease from a private landowner. Most of the time their land tenure is tenuous. There are hundreds of examples of urban agriculture practitioners witnessing the destruction of their gardens, typically when the land became amenable to a higher profit use. In New York in the 1990s, the Rudy Giuliani administration bulldozed hundreds of community gardens that had been constructed on vacant lots (Schmelzkopf 2002; Staeheli et al. 2002). The South Central Farm in Los Angeles, one of the largest urban farms in the United States, was destroyed in 2006 (Broad 2013; Irazábal and Punja 2009). Approximately 350 households of moderate means, many of them immigrants from Mexico, had participated at the farm. As one land use attorney commented, “That story gets heard again, and again, and again” (Jaramillo 2016). In most cities across the United States and Canada, urban agriculture is typically considered a temporary use of land only, better than land being left vacant but with little protection from replacement by other future uses. Conflicts will always exist between the people who are actively gardening a space and those who stand to gain economically from a different use, particularly when the land is not permanently protected for urban agriculture and when the income that can be made from food cultivation is significantly less than what can be made from doing something else on the property.

6.6 Planning and Urban Agriculture

The city planner’s role in urban agriculture has changed over time. During World War II, the federal government and many local governments encouraged people to establish victory gardens, including both backyard gardens and allotments on public

spaces (Lawson 2005; Taylor and Lovell 2014). In the 1970s, some municipalities supported community gardens as a strategy for urban revitalization to combat White flight and suburbanization. In the last decades of the twentieth century, however, planners by and large established restrictive zoning that inhibited urban agriculture (Bartling 2012; Brown and Carter 2003; Vitiello and Brinkley 2013). Many municipalities outlawed keeping chickens, bees, goats, and other livestock in residential zones and established strict regulations regarding the height and maintenance of vegetation, effectively making most food production practices illegal. Other regulations restrict composting and farm stand sales of food produced onsite. Some regulations require tall and expensive fences and lighting around both private and public urban gardens. There has been recent media attention on city governments across American fining urban gardeners for code-prohibited activities such as growing food in front yards and selling produce in front of their house (Gordon 2013; Keeling 2011). Planners in some cases ignored urban agriculture altogether and included no language in plans or codes about the practice (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000). These constraints still exist in many cities and suburbs (Butler 2012; Huang and Drescher 2015).

Municipal food systems planning and policymaking has, however, evolved significantly since 2000 (Cohen et al. 2014; Pothukuchi 2010, 2015). Planners increasingly recognize the potential for urban agriculture to contribute to many goals, such as sustainability, livability, and food justice (Neuner et al. 2011), although such goals may be in conflict to some degree (Daftary-Steel et al. 2015). The American Planning Association has published several guides about planning and urban agriculture (Hodgson et al. 2010; Mukherji and Morales 2010).

Planners use a variety of strategies to support urban agriculture, including creating a supportive policy environment; incentivizing urban agriculture; and offering programming, funding, and public land in support of urban agriculture. We briefly discuss these in greater detail below (for a more detailed overview of planning's role in fostering urban agriculture, see Butler 2012; McClintock et al. 2012; and Mukherji and Morales 2010).

First, to create a conducive policy environment, some municipalities have adopted goals and strategies in their comprehensive plans to support new opportunities for noncommercial urban agriculture (e.g., Seattle), including food production in citywide sustainability plans (e.g., Baltimore) and written plans specifically about urban agriculture (e.g., Minneapolis; Hodgson 2012). Various cities (e.g., Austin [TX]) have amended zoning ordinances and building codes to formally legalize the keeping of bees, poultry, and goats (Butler 2012; McClintock 2012) and the cultivation of crops and permanent food-producing plants, like fruit and nut trees, in front yards and planting strips (Huang and Drescher 2015). New York City encourages interim or temporary use of underused land for gardens (Public Health Law and Policy 2009). San Francisco (CA) has legalized sales of food items that are grown onsite; the city also removed earlier code language that required urban gardens to have ornamental fences, an expensive requirement (Roman-Alcalá 2011). Many cities, like Baltimore, have also facilitated the use of vacant privately owned lands for

urban agriculture by creating inventories of available land and setting up streamlined leasing processes (City of Baltimore 2013).

Second, some municipalities provide economic incentives for urban agriculture. Vancouver (Huang and Drescher 2015; Walker 2015) and some jurisdictions in California, including Los Angeles County and the city of Sacramento (Havens and Roman-Alcalá 2016), offer landowners preferential property tax assessment if the landowner restricts urban land for small-scale agricultural use for a minimum amount of time (5 years in California's case). San Francisco has reduced permitting fees (home gardens are exempt) as well as expensive fencing requirements for urban gardens (Roman-Alcalá 2011). In Cleveland (OH), the city water department allows people to access fire hydrants for urban agricultural use, at least temporarily (Hagey et al. 2012). Philadelphia exempts community gardens from stormwater fees (Jaramillo 2016). Some cities sell gray or tertiary water or allow or otherwise incentivize graywater for urban agriculture.

Third, some municipalities go beyond allowing and incentivizing urban agriculture to actually provide funding, staff support, and land for urban agriculture. Seattle, for example, coordinates and provides some staff support for almost 90 permanently protected community gardens on a variety of public land (owned by one of the city's departments or other public actors, such as Seattle Public Utilities) and private land (often church owned; Horst 2017). Seattle has used bond monies to purchase land and offers grant funds to community groups to develop and enhance community gardens or farms. Boston (MA) has provided city-owned property for new urban farms, whereas the Chicago City Council created a city-funded land trust authorized to purchase properties to protect them as community gardens (among other types of open spaces; Hodgson et al. 2010). However, many cities have relatively limited amounts of land permanently protected for urban agriculture (compared, for example, with land for playgrounds and parks) and little to no staff support for programming or garden coordination and management.

6.7 A Brief Assessment of Urban Agriculture Planning and Food Justice

Is planning's increased attention to urban agriculture likely to enhance food justice and positively affect socio-economically disadvantaged communities? A sweeping assessment of all municipal urban agriculture planning activities in the United States is beyond the scope of this review given their varied intents, approaches, and impacts and the lack of comprehensive or comparable data on the demographics of participants or impacts and outcomes of planning interventions. We also recognize that not all urban agriculture planning was intended to foster food justice. We intend not to critique individual cities or policies but instead to identify how particular planning activities are less likely to advance food justice. We point out below how the strategies of removing regulatory barriers and reducing utility fees and property

taxes are likely to benefit property owners rather than disadvantaged communities. We also point out that in some cases local governments have directed urban agriculture resources in ways that, intentionally or not, disproportionately benefit some communities over others. Finally, we discuss how many cities do not protect land for urban agriculture, leaving it vulnerable for conversion to other uses.

First, planners have focused the most attention on removing barriers to urban agriculture on privately held land. This is a commonly used strategy because it is seen as less controversial than other options and requires few city resources (Horst et al. 2016). It is an important first step. In cities as diverse as San Francisco and Detroit, removing restrictions on urban agriculture has enabled more people to participate in urban agriculture. This strategy, however, is not likely to offer significant opportunities for residents who do not have access to private land. The strategy of facilitating the use of vacant, privately owned land, though pragmatic, is also problematic because of its tenuousness. Once the original owner wants the land back, or another owner wants to purchase the land, the urban agriculture practitioners typically have little recourse.

The second common strategy municipalities use to promote urban agriculture is to reduce utility fees and property taxes for urban agriculture operations, such as community gardens or farms. Reduced fees for water and garbage services are likely beneficial to all urban agriculture organizations, including those led by or targeting disadvantaged communities. The impacts of reduced property taxes for food justice, however, are less clear. On the one hand, urban agriculture organizations could benefit from short-term access to otherwise vacant urban land for their projects. On the other hand, food justice activists in California note that the main beneficiaries of the statewide Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Act (passed in 2013) are property owners who get lower tax bills, not those people experiencing food-related inequities (Havens and Roman-Alcalá 2016). Havens and Roman-Alcalá (2016) point out that “the law could, in fact, have regressive effects for food justice concerns.” Their main concern is that property owners will, once the minimum 5-year lease period required under the law has passed, turn around and sell or develop the property. The tax reduction and its associated 5-year minimum lease do not resolve the challenges food justice organizations face in developing a long-term and effective farm project.

Gardens that receive reduced utility fees and taxes may ultimately enhance the forces of gentrification. Havens and Roman-Alcalá (2016) emphasize that *who* is involved and *how* California’s Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Act is implemented will influence who benefits. In Oakland (CA), for example, the real estate industry appears to be well poised to take advantage of low property tax rates and to use urban agriculture to attract new residents. In Los Angeles, an organized group of community organizations has demanded community consultation about each project, preference for projects led by grassroots people-of-color organizations, and resources for low-income community projects. Projects attentive to these objectives are more likely to positively affect food justice.

Third, municipal governments, at least in some cases, tend to allocate urban agriculture space and funds in ways that benefit upper-middle-class residents. In the Los

Angeles region in 2003, for example, only 10 of the more than 60 official community gardens were located in underprivileged areas (Irazábal and Punja 2009). A similar pattern was revealed in Seattle prior to 2006 or so, though subsequently the city has intentionally shifted its urban agriculture investments (Horst 2017). The causes of such disparity—whether intention, oversight, lack of outreach, or lack of interest among residents in the underprivileged areas—are unclear, but the impacts are worth investigating. In Detroit, within a very different context, the city recently sold 1500 lots (about 140 acres) at a heavily discounted rate to a private company to develop a large-scale commercial agricultural operation (Pothukuchi 2015). The impacts of this sale on the city's long-term socioeconomically disadvantaged residents are not yet clear. Meanwhile, the numerous urban agriculture projects led by long-term residents, especially low-income residents of color, have gone largely unfunded through public dollars. The city has instead demanded that urban agriculture practitioners pay increasing use and permitting fees to conduct urban agriculture on vacant properties, despite calls for help by local longstanding food justice organizations (Baker 2017).

Fourth, many cities do not invest in a meaningful way in permanently protecting land for urban agriculture. From New York to Los Angeles, demand for existing publicly provided community garden space far outstrips supply. In cities without much publicly provided land, urban agriculture is commonly practiced on vacant or underused land and often viewed by city planners as a placeholder or interim use. In Philadelphia, urban agriculture practitioners are concerned about the tenure of the 568 parcels used for farming in the city, half of which are publicly owned land (but many of which are not permanently protected) and the other half of which are on land owned by private entities or nonprofits (Jaramillo 2016). The lack of permanent tenure is especially problematic for less resourced organizations and for urban agriculture practitioners without other access to land.

6.8 Orienting Urban Agriculture Planning for Food Justice: Some Suggestions

Planning can be oriented more explicitly toward food justice. Key strategies include prioritizing urban agriculture in long-term planning efforts, developing mutually respectful relationships with food justice organizations and urban agriculture participants from diverse backgrounds, targeting city investments in urban agriculture to benefit historically disadvantaged communities, increasing the amount of land permanently available for urban agriculture, and confronting the threats of gentrification and displacement from urban agriculture. These strategies are summarized in Table 6.1 and further discussed below.

First, planners can, as a baseline, prioritize urban agriculture in long-range neighborhood and public service delivery planning, connecting urban agriculture strategies to equity and social justice. Cohen and Reynolds (2014) suggest that

Table 6.1 Strategies to promote food justice in urban agriculture planning

General strategy	Details and examples
1. Prioritize urban agriculture in long-range, neighborhood, service delivery, and other planning efforts	<p>Develop urban agriculture plan (e.g., City of Baltimore 2013)</p> <p>Integrate urban agriculture in long-range and comprehensive plans (e.g., Seattle's goal to establish a community garden for every 2500 residents in its comprehensive plan)</p> <p>Integrate attention to social justice and equity in these planning efforts (i.e., by prioritizing actions in disadvantaged communities first)</p>
2. Offer meaningful participation opportunities for food justice organizations and disadvantaged communities	<p>Develop long-term and mutually respectful relationships with food justice organizations and communities</p> <p>Establish an urban agriculture advisory board, making sure the board reflects the city's diversity and does not reproduce class- and race-based disparities</p> <p>Revise urban agriculture outreach and participation processes to make sure they are culturally responsive, accessible, and targeted to disadvantaged communities</p>
3. Target funding, resources, and incentives to benefit food justice organizations and disadvantaged communities	<p>Revise funding processes and assist groups historically unsuccessful at winning grants and contracts</p> <p>Target new urban agriculture infrastructure in neighborhoods and locations likely to benefit disadvantaged households</p> <p>Design fee and tax reductions to directly benefit food justice organizations and disadvantaged communities rather than property owners</p> <p>Offer technical assistance and training on dealing with environmental contamination</p>
4. Permanently protect land for urban agriculture	<p>Establish urban agriculture sites on public property</p> <p>Acquire privately held vacant properties</p> <p>Accompany the above efforts with permanent protection through zoning, establishing conservation easements, removing development rights, and/or conferring property ownership to a community land trust</p> <p>Require or incentivize urban agriculture space as a condition of approval for affordable and multifamily housing</p> <p>Plan for urban agriculture as an important part of a livable neighborhood and an appropriate complement to compact development rather than in competition with it</p> <p>Develop funding streams, for example property tax levies (e.g., 2008 Seattle Parks and Green Space Levy) or community development block grant funds (e.g., Madison [WI])</p>
5. Use urban agriculture to resist, rather than contribute to, displacement of disadvantaged communities	<p>Design urban agriculture projects in ways that make them least likely to directly promote displacement and most likely to benefit historically disadvantaged communities</p> <p>Situate urban agriculture planning within a variety of other antidisplacement efforts, such as creating and protecting affordable housing and business and resident retention efforts (i.e., expand affordable housing strategies and require or incentivize that all affordable housing include access to urban agriculture opportunities)</p>

cities develop urban agriculture plans as a vehicle for stakeholder involvement and stakeholder accountability. Baltimore's urban agriculture plan, released in 2013, lays out a series of actions accompanied by identified actors and a timeline for action (City of Baltimore 2013). A complementary approach is to address urban agriculture in long-range and comprehensive plans. In Seattle, the city included a goal to establish a community garden for every 2500 residents in its comprehensive plan (Born and Horst 2015). The city's community garden manager explained how effective the policy has been: "Whenever we advocate for more gardens and ask for more money from the city or other funders, we always affirm that P-Patches [Seattle's term for community gardens] are part of the comprehensive plan" (WhyHunger 2010). These planning efforts can make more explicit connections between urban agriculture and social justice and equity. It is important to note, however, that Baltimore's plan only requires that "access and equity should be *considered* in determining the scope of urban agriculture and in implementing this plan" (City of Baltimore 2013, p. 41, emphasis added). Seattle's level of service standard could be oriented even more explicitly toward food justice goals by prioritizing gardens in disadvantaged communities.

Second, municipalities can develop meaningful ways to hear the perspectives of food justice organizations and urban agriculture participants from diverse backgrounds. City staff can develop long-term and mutually respectful relationships with such organizations and communities. Cohen and Reynolds (2015) suggest establishing an urban agriculture advisory board to offer strategic direction and input on the city's urban agriculture programming, funding, and other decisions. They emphasize the importance of making sure such a board is representative of diverse urban agriculture participants and does not reproduce class- and race-based disparities. Cities can also revise their urban agriculture outreach and participation processes to make sure they are culturally responsive, accessible, and targeted to disadvantaged communities.

Third, planners can develop strategies to specifically target urban agriculture resources, including utility fee reductions, grant funding, and infrastructure investments, to historically disadvantaged communities. Cohen and Reynolds (2014) note that municipalities that want to address funding disparities need to revise their funding processes and seek out and assist groups historically unsuccessful at winning grants and contracts. When municipalities purchase land or invest in urban agriculture infrastructure, they could prioritize neighborhoods and locations likely to benefit disadvantaged households. Cities should also consider how utility fee and property tax reductions could directly benefit food justice organizations and disadvantaged communities rather than individual property owners. Cities could, in addition, require that assisted gardens remain in agricultural use for longer than 5 years. Cities can also test for environmental pollution on available land and train groups in disadvantaged communities to deal with polluted sites.

Fourth, planners can deliberately and strategically create and protect more gardens and farms, much as they do for parks and playgrounds. To best contribute to food justice, these gardens and farms should be located in neighborhoods with higher rates of disadvantaged communities. Havens and Roman-Alcalá (2016)

suggest a variety of ways cities can do this. Cities can, for example, identify existing and potential urban agriculture sites on public property, including parks, recreation and senior centers, public easements and rights-of-way, and surplus property, and convert some of the land at these public facilities to community garden or other urban agriculture uses (Public Health Law and Policy 2009). Moreover, cities can acquire privately held vacant properties. Cuyahoga Land Bank in Ohio, for example, has developed community gardens, orchards, and nurseries on more than 100 previously vacant properties acquired through its land bank (Sustainable Economies Law Center 2017). Both of these strategies need to be accompanied by efforts to permanently protect urban gardens and farms, for example by establishing an overlay zoning category (as far as legally allowed), establishing conservation easements, removing development rights, and/or conferring property ownership to a community land trust. Cleveland, for example, established an urban garden district zoning ordinance in 2007 that makes replacing a garden a public process (Sustainable Economies Law Center 2017). Planners can also require or incentivize urban agriculture space as a condition of approval for affordable and multifamily housing. The problem is that urban agriculture may be seen as competing for land with new housing, businesses, or other uses, particularly in cities experiencing population growth and encouraging compact development. We do not argue that all remaining vacant land be preserved for urban agriculture at the expense of any and all development. We suggest that urban agriculture, with its multiple social and environmental benefits, is better viewed as an important part of a livable neighborhood and an appropriate complement to increasing residential density rather than in competition with it.

Cities have also developed creative ways to fund urban agriculture land acquisition and development. In Seattle, for example, taxpayers passed bonds to support community garden development (Public Health Law and Policy 2009). The city of Chicago, the Chicago Park District, and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County together combined funds to purchase lands for community gardens.

Madison (WI) used federal community development block grant funds to support community gardens.

Fifth, one of the tougher issues for cities to tackle is the tendency of urban agriculture to contribute to gentrification. When cities invest in urban agriculture, they should solicit input from food justice-oriented organizations and from disadvantaged communities as discussed above to design the intervention in ways that would make it least likely to directly promote displacement and most likely to benefit historically disadvantaged communities. The powerful forces of gentrification go far and beyond that of urban agriculture, as do the solutions. Cities that are serious about halting the displacement of socioeconomically disadvantaged communities can situate urban agriculture planning within a variety of other antidisplacement efforts, such as creating and protecting affordable housing and business and resident retention efforts. For example, cities can expand their affordable housing strategies and require or incentivize that all affordable housing include access to urban agriculture opportunities.

6.9 The Case of Seattle: An Equity Lens and Urban Agriculture

One tool municipalities can use to guide their urban agriculture planning efforts is an *equity lens*, an additional step in a decision-making process akin to an environmental impact statement that examines the justice-related impacts of policy, funding, and program decisions. An equity lens typically guides decision makers through a series of questions about the historic and existing social inequities related to the topic, their strategies for consulting with disadvantaged communities, likely impacts of various proposals on disadvantaged communities, and whether structural barriers to overcoming disparities can be better addressed (Zapata 2017). Cities such as St. Paul (MN), counties such as Multnomah County (OR), and institutions such as the Portland Public Schools and Portland State University (Zapata 2017) are increasingly using equity lenses.

We examine in greater detail how Seattle used an equity lens to better orient its urban agriculture programming to benefit disadvantaged communities. In this case, Seattle used a *racial* equity lens to specifically target racially disadvantaged communities. Seattle began using an equity lens to guide its urban agriculture planning efforts in the mid-2000s, when municipal leaders established the Race and Social Justice Initiative (City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative 2016). As part of the initiative, all city departments, including those that implement urban agriculture policy and programming, are required to use a racial equity toolkit (their name for the equity lens) to analyze the racial equity impact of policies, programs, initiatives, and budget issues. The racial equity toolkit lays out a process and a set of questions to guide city staff in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, initiatives, programs, and budget decisions to promote race and social justice.

Seattle's equity lens guides city staff through a series of steps designed to consider the equity-related impacts of a proposed action, how to engage the people most affected, and the structural barriers to better equity results that exist:

1. Set outcomes.
2. Involve stakeholders and analyze data.
3. Determine benefits and/or burden.
4. Advance opportunity or minimize harm.
5. Evaluate. Raise racial awareness. Be accountable.
6. Report back.

It is important to note that the lens includes a suggestion for use very early on in decision-making processes and for the inclusion of people with different racial and ethnic backgrounds in the completion of the lens.

Around 2005, city staff participated in training and began using the racial equity toolkit to inform major programming and policy decisions. As a result, several of the key departments involved in urban agriculture, such as the Department of Neighborhoods and Department of Parks and Recreation, made significant changes to align their activities more strongly with food justice.

The Department of Neighborhoods, which manages the city's community gardens, acknowledged publicly that their urban agriculture interventions and resources had to date been largely located in predominantly White and higher-income neighborhoods (Horst 2015). The department subsequently made major changes to prioritize new gardens, farms, and training programs in neighborhoods with a high percentage of low-income people and people of color. The city made strategic investments in permanent community gardens, resulting in a total of 20 food security gardens located in low-income and immigrant communities using new funds from the 2008 Parks and Green Space Levy, which earmarked \$2 million for community gardens. The Department of Neighborhoods also established three market gardens at Seattle Housing Authority (subsidized housing) sites, where mainly immigrant farmers from Southeast Asia and East Africa grow food to sell onsite to other public housing residents or offsite at a store, stand, farmers market, or restaurant (Department of Neighborhoods 2014). The sales provide farmers with some income for their labor. Altogether the city provides management to around 90 community gardens, most of which are permanently protected on public property. The Seattle program is among the largest publicly managed community garden programs in the country. The Department of Neighborhoods put additional resources into youth gardening, particularly in programs that support young people from low-income communities of color. The changes in investment and programming inspired by the equity lens appear to be better targeting low-income people and communities of color. A 2010 survey of Seattle's community gardeners revealed that 71% were low income (below 80% of median income), and 23% were people of color in 2014, both categories up significantly from a decade prior (Department of Neighborhoods 2014). These numbers likely underestimate the percentage of people of color involved because the survey only included participants at traditional gardens and was based on a unilingual, English-only survey. There are no detailed data on the outcomes on food security, health, or the other social benefits discussed above, an area for further research.

The Department of Parks and Recreation has also used the equity lens to guide changes to its urban agriculture programming (Horst 2015). The department now provides funds and staff support to the nonprofit organization Seattle Tilth to operate incubator farms targeted at immigrant farmers. The department also supports a large urban farm in Rainier Beach (a neighborhood with a high percentage of low-income residents and people of color) that offers a wide variety of services, including providing educational training and outreach targeted to immigrants and youth from low-income families and bags of low-cost produce for volunteers and low-income families in the neighborhood. Staff also overhauled their various urban agriculture-related programs (part of their Good Food Program) to better target and serve low-income people and people of color not just at the farm but on all park properties. The department developed an inclusive outreach and public education guide to enhance its outreach efforts to reach out to diverse communities and hired key personnel who have competence in culturally responsive outreach and communication to specifically reach out to African-American, Latino, and immigrant communities. It also revised programming to emphasize culturally specific foods to

specific communities, for example, immigrant Laotian, Eritrean, and Ethiopian communities. Department staff attribute a 10% increase in participation by people of color in their urban agriculture–related programming in recent years to these efforts (Horst 2015). There are as yet no detailed data on the outcomes.

Seattle’s efforts demonstrate how planners and their colleagues used a racial equity lens to change their urban agriculture efforts. City staff have adopted more culturally inclusive programming and outreach efforts and ensured that city investments in gardens and programming target low-income people and people of color in new, creative ways. The city has taken steps to remove the largest structural barrier to urban agriculture, which is access to land, by opening a significant amount of publicly owned land to a diverse array of urban agriculture activities and by investing city funds to make those lands usable to urban agriculture. The available data suggest that the city’s efforts have led to the increased participation of people with lower incomes and communities of color. Future research is needed to shed light on whether increased participation has led to better outcomes, such as increased food security, less obesity, more nutritional knowledge, stronger cultural ties and sense of community, or greater political capacity.

6.10 Recognizing Urban Agriculture’s Limits and Potential for Food Justice

Much of the planning literature on urban agriculture and its role in addressing food injustice is celebratory. Our review suggests the need for a more nuanced evaluation. Urban agriculture offers a variety of potential social benefits to its participants, including increased access to healthy food, skill building, community improvements, and activism opportunities. Although these benefits are important, urban agriculture should not be viewed as a panacea. Instead, it is one potential intervention among an array of strategies, including antipoverty measures, needed to enhance food justice. Urban agriculture only enhances food justice if the benefits accrue to those residents who most experience food injustices, such as food insecurity. Disadvantaged communities experience significant barriers to full participation in urban agriculture, including difficulties securing funding, political support, and long-term land tenure. Communities may have differing levels of interest and capacity to engage in urban agriculture.

Our review of the relationship between urban agriculture, food justice, and planning is limited by the relatively sparse and case-based approach in most of the research to date. Another limitation is that a lot of the planning scholarship on urban agriculture has not been on food justice. Future research may help fill the gaps mentioned throughout this review.

Planners are becoming increasingly involved in promoting urban agriculture by prioritizing it in long-range planning efforts; removing legal barriers; offering reduced fees and taxes; and providing staff, resources, and, in some cases,

permanent access to land. Not all urban agriculture planning efforts seek to help disadvantaged residents suffering from food injustice. They may have other legitimate planning goals, such as neighborhood stabilization or general improved livability.

We suggest that urban agriculture planning can more explicitly focus on fostering food justice. One way the city of Seattle prioritized equity in its urban agriculture policy and programming was by applying an equity lens that influenced staff to target new community gardens and urban farms in lower-income neighborhoods and to conduct better outreach to disadvantaged communities for its various urban agriculture programming. In addition to using these strategies, cities can cultivate long-term and mutually respectful relationships with food justice organizations and solicit their input on potential urban agriculture policies and programming. Cities can also use a variety of strategies to ensure that disadvantaged communities have long-term access to land, including acquiring vacant properties, converting existing underused public properties into urban agriculture, protecting existing community gardens, and incentivizing urban agriculture space in new developments, including affordable housing developments. Planners must also recognize the power of successful urban agriculture projects to spur gentrification; planners should tie their urban agricultural efforts to the provision of affordable housing and antidisplacement strategies to prevent these undesirable outcomes.

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Megan A. Horst PhD, AICP is an associate professor in the Toulon School of Urban Studies and Planning at PSU. She currently is the director of the Masters of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program. Her research expertise is in food systems planning, climate action/justice planning, and land use planning, including around farmland. She mainly focuses on planning in the Pacific Northwest in the USA, and focuses on community-engaged and applied scholarship. She has recently published articles and book chapters on inequities in farmland access and tenure and climate action planning.

Nathan McClintock PhD, is a geographer and associate professor of urban studies at the Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique (INRS) in Montréal, Québec, Canada. His work on urban agriculture, food systems planning, environmental justice, green gentrification, and urban political ecology has appeared in a wide range of journals and edited volumes. Recent work focuses on everyday governance and the historical and contemporary entanglements of urban development, racial capitalism, and settler colonialism. He is an editor of the journal *Urban Geography* and serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Peasant Studies*. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3634-3799>

Lesli Hoey PhD, investigates how community-based and government-led visions of more equitable, sustainable and healthy food systems are operationalized in practice and ways that policy advocacy, collaborative planning, and evaluation facilitate or hinder implementation. Her current projects examine U.S. state food charters, local food councils, food hubs and food systems networks, strategies that cities, institutions and grassroots actors can use to promote nutrient cycling, circular economies and carbon neutrality through food systems, and policies that shape food environments and sustainable diets in the Global South.

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Chapter 7

A Polycentric Vision for Governing the Urban Food Commons



Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah 

Abstract This chapter uses polycentric governance as a lens for examining alternative governance visions for urban agriculture, or what I refer to as the urban food commons (UFCs). I draw ideas from the political and institutional economics of Vincent and Elinor Ostrom to discuss why UFCs cannot be governed through a one-size-fits-all institutional arrangement. I interlace my conceptual arguments with empirical examples, including examples from Kaufman and Bailkey’s classic work. Governing UFCs effectively, I argue, requires a mix of institutional arrangements involving centralized, decentralized, competitive market, cooperative, and command-and-control governance models. A polycentric governance vision moves us closer to building such diverse institutional arrangements to manage undesired outcomes, including the capacity to effectively internalize spillover effects from UFCs. I delineate four institutional design parameters (IDPs) to guide the design and evaluation of a polycentric governance vision for UFCs: (1) multiple decision centers (or actors) that can make decisions about UFCs, (2) opportunities for cross-scale and cross-sector interactions among UFC actors, (3) an overarching system of rules to guide decisions and interactions, and (4) adaptability of the rules to align with actors’ incentives and decisions emanating from the rules. I use Chicago’s nonprofit urban land trust NeighborSpace to illustrate how these IDPs manifest empirically.

Keywords Polycentric governance · Urban food commons · Public good · Private good · Decentralized governance · Centralized governance

E. Frimpong Boamah (✉)
Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Just Institutions Lab,
The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: efrimpon@buffalo.edu

7.1 Introduction

In *Farming Inside Cities*, Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) have discussed the vision and reality of urban agriculture (UA) in the United States. The vision of UA is “where inner-city residents grow food in the soil, in raised planting beds or in greenhouses, then market their produce at farmer’s markets, to local restaurants, or to city and suburban residents eager for fresh, locally-grown food.” In reality, however, this vision stood on a “wobbly three-legged stool” that could be made sturdier through “a more supportive institutional climate” (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000). Since this publication, several studies have discussed government and non-government actors’ governance of community gardens, backyard gardens, or community-supported agriculture (CSA) around the globe (Battersby and Muwowo 2018, Bryld 2003, Mok et al. 2014, Raja and Whittaker 2018, Smit 2018). These studies remind us that achieving an envisioned, supportive institutional climate for UA is a moving target that still requires the attention of food scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. This chapter presents ideas to help us conceptualize and design alternative governance visions for UA in the United States.¹ The UN Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (cited in Kaufman and Bailkey 2000) defines urban agriculture as “production of food and nonfood plant and tree crops, and animal husbandry, both within and fringing urban areas.” Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) employ this definition to demonstrate the compositional elements of urban agriculture: location (urban, suburban, or peri-urban), activities (crop farming, animal husbandry, horticulture, and/or aquaculture), production stages (from growth to distribution, consumption, and waste production), and purposes (consumption or as input for other production). Direct and indirect benefits result from UA: increased food supply, improved nutritional health of children, employment opportunities within the food-value chain, improved aesthetics in cities, and reduced impervious surfaces in urban areas and their associated benefits, such as reduced stormwater runoff and decreased urban heat-island effect (Hynes and Howe 2002; Maxwell et al. 1998; Mok et al. 2014; Smit and Nasr 1992; Twiss et al. 2003). These derived direct and indirect benefits for everyone explain why some scholars and practitioners consider UA as a “public good” (see Vitiello’s discussion in this book, Vitiello 2024). Considering UA as a public good has a governance implication: how to ensure that those impacted (directly and indirectly) by UA get to pay for and decide how UAs are created and managed. This implication underlies Olson Jr. (1965) “logic of collective action,” which animated and was also animated by long-standing governance debates on how to effectively govern public and other types of goods (see summary of debate in Ostrom 2010).

This chapter is organized as follows: the next section reconciles how UA fits into the long-standing governance debate about different institutional arrangements and models needed to manage various types of goods (public, private, club, and CPRs).

¹Although the chapter is restricted to the U.S. context, the arguments and conceptualization presented could apply to non-U.S. contexts.

I then turn to polycentric governance, which I advance as an alternative institutional arrangement for managing urban farms or community/neighborhood gardens, collectively referred to as urban food commons (UFCs).² Polycentric governance refers to multiple semi-autonomous decision-making centers that have competitive or cooperative interactions within an overarching system of rules (i.e., institutions). After mapping the theoretical contours of polycentric governance, I provide in the next section a framework to analyze and design the polycentric governance of UFCs. I use Chicago's nonprofit urban land trust NeighborSpace as a proof of concept. I highlight empirical features evidencing Chicago's polycentric governance of UFCs and how such features can be harnessed to develop a coherent governance vision for UFCs in other U.S. cities. A brief summary concludes the chapter.

7.2 Governing the Urban Food Commons: Beyond Market, State, Centralized, and Decentralized Models

The term “commons” signifies a natural area that is owned, managed, and valued through a social collective process, or “commoning” (Huron 2015; Nonini 2007). Even though scholars have widely discussed the urban commons (eg. in Armiero 2011, Gioielli 2011, Harvey 2011, Lee and Webster 2006, Newman 2013), Huron (2015) maintains that “...much of the extant work on the urban commons takes the city as a site for the commons without theorizing what may be distinct about a specifically urban commons.”

According to Huron (2015), two distinct features characterize the urban commons: concentration of people, competing uses, and financial investment; and representatives of the collective work of strangers. Drawing on Eizenberg's (2012) work on community gardens in New York City, Huron argues that people working together collectively built these gardens, but some scholars and policymakers also criticized the gardens for the opportunity costs they presented; that is, community gardens occupied lands that could be used for other purposes. Huron believes that theorizing the distinct features of specific commons should include the misconception that the commons is freely accessible to all. This view criticizes Hardin's classic piece “*Tragedy of the Commons*,” which begins with “Picture a pasture open to all” (Hardin 1968) and ends by claiming that “Individuals locked into the logic of the commons are free only to bring on universal ruin.” Some scholars believe that Hardin's conclusion is based on a flawed premise, “picture a pasture open to all,” because the commons is not open to all but only to a group of users who collectively manage it (Bromley 1991; Ciaracy-Wantrup and Bishop 1975). That is, enclosure of

²The use of institutions or institutional arrangements does not refer to organizations (e.g., agencies, department, non-profits etc.). In this chapter, individuals (e.g., farmers) and organizations are collectively referred to as actors. Institutions, following Ostrom (2005), refer to the rules and norms (formal or informal, implicit or explicit) used to structure actors' decisions and actions and how such decisions and actors interact.

the commons was the norm in medieval Europe and the European colonies (see Cronon 2013; Hoffmann 2014). Lee and Webster (2006) also observed that the current urban enclosures in China, evidenced by gated communities, are no different from the enclosures of rural commons in sixteenth-century Britain or Ebenezer Howard's (1965) utopian *garden city* in the twentieth century.

In what follows, I discuss why enclosure is not necessarily an inherent attribute of urban commons. Rather, underlying institutional arrangements often exist to ensure that certain people are included or excluded from benefiting, contributing to, and participating in decisions about the urban commons. I begin this conversation by (re)visiting two overlapping questions: (1) Should UFCs be governed as public or private commons? (2) Should UFCs be governed as a local or nonlocal (regional, state, federal, or global) commons? I refer to the first question as the public-private, state-market debate

Paul Samuelson's (1954) argument about public-private goods and state-market institutional forms is illustrative. Goods (or in this case commons) are defined by their degree of subtractability and excludability. Commons are considered a public good when they have low excludability (very difficult if not impossible to prevent people from enjoying the good) and low subtractability (a person using the good does not diminish what is available for other people to use). Private goods, such as a bottle of fruit juice sold in a supermarket, have high excludability (only those who pay can use it) and high subtractability (Gulick 1957; Hardin 1978; Latin 1984; Ophuls 1973; Steinzor 1998; Ackerman and Stewart 1987; Demsetz 1983; Stewart 1985; Welch 1983). Ostrom (1990, 2010), James Buchanan (1965) identified an example of commons with high excludability but low subtractability: club goods. Ostrom and Ostrom (1977) also introduced the concept of common-pool resources (CPRs) to exemplify commons that have low excludability but high subtractability.

More important, the first debate, particularly informed by Elinor Ostrom's observation, demonstrates how UFCs under certain conditions can exhibit characteristics of all four types of goods: public, private, club, and CPR (see Fig. 7.1). For instance, urban farm areas with free access (i.e., low excludability) and sufficient land for everyone (low subtractability) could be considered purely public UFCs. On the other hand, urban farm areas belonging to farmer cooperatives with members-only access (i.e., high excludability) and limited available land (high subtractability) can be considered purely private UFCs. If UFCs are purely private or public commons, then we can employ market pricing or state regulatory mechanisms (e.g., zoning and taxation), respectively, to ensure that anyone who enjoys purely private or public UFCs pays their fair share. Urban farm areas owned by farmer cooperatives (i.e., high excludability) but with sufficient spaces for every cooperative farmer (low excludability) exhibit characteristics of club goods, but urban farm areas with free access (i.e., low excludability) and insufficient space for everyone (high subtractability) exhibit CPR characteristics. Because UFCs can reflect all four types of goods, they present complicated management or governance challenges. For instance, introducing price and/or regulatory (e.g., zoning) mechanisms to manage UFCs can exclude certain individuals (especially vulnerable populations) from benefiting from UFCs. Conversely, adopting a *laissez-fair* (free-for-all) approach to managing

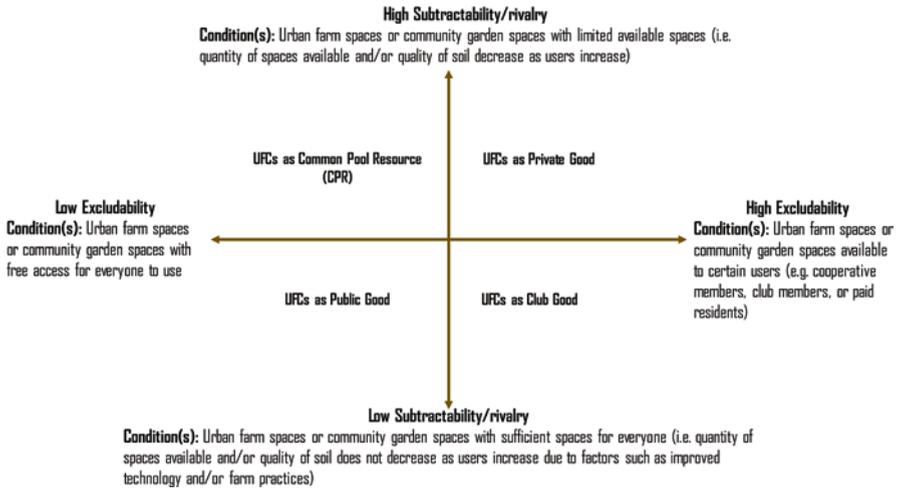


Fig. 7.1 Conditions under which UFCs reflect all types of goods. The conditions listed are not exhaustive. In reality, various conditions in specific local contexts can make UFCs reflect any or all four types of goods

UFCs, thereby relying on people’s altruism to pay for them, can constrain available resources. This second debate further complicates these challenges, especially when we consider the indirect and often non-local effects (benefits and costs) of UFCs .

The second debate, regarding institutional scale, centers primarily on the choice of small governments (decentralized local governing entities) versus large governments (centralized governing entities). In the U.S., some reformers claim that having several municipal governments and special-purpose jurisdictions (e.g., school districts) leads to inefficiencies. (Lind 1997) referred to these decentralized governments as a “horde of Lilliputian governments,” portraying metropolitan governance in the U.S. as “organized chaos” or a “crazy-quilt pattern” (see also Ostrom et al. 1961). Here, I draw ideas from environmental federalism and the decentralization theorem (Esty 1996; Oates 1972, 2001), especially the three benchmark models (local decentralized, large centralized, and cooperation) of Oates (2001) to discuss why the choice between small decentralized scale and large centralized scale governance models matter for UFCs. Figure 7.2 helps us understand how these benchmark models align with how we think about UFCs. As noted, large centralized governance or market models can better provide UFCs as purely public or purely private goods, respectively. Thinking of UFCs as local public goods (with no spillover effects) allows one to argue, based on the principle of subsidiarity, that the least centralized decision-making authority can, in theory, better provide UFCs as purely local public goods. However, the spillover effects of public goods require a mix of state-market and local-nonlocal institutional arrangements or governance models to better manage these effects.

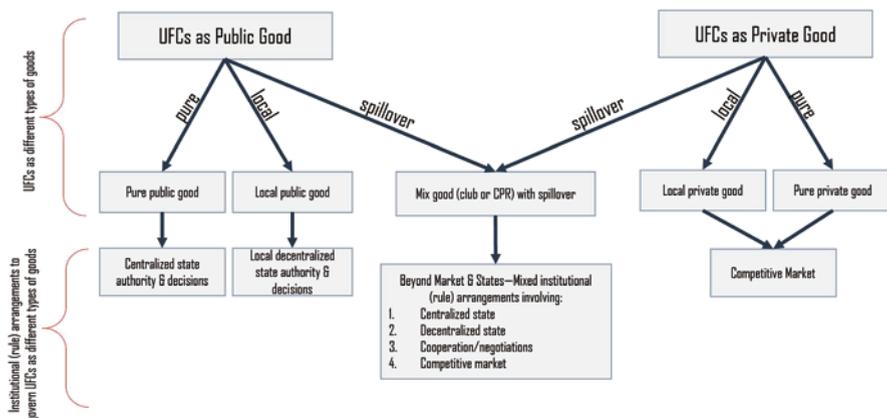


Fig. 7.2 Thinking through institutional arrangements to govern UFCs based on their characteristics and scale of institutions. A mixed institutional arrangement often accurately portrays the varied and changing urban conditions that make UFCs reflect any or all four types of goods

Attending to the mix of institutional arrangements needed to manage UFCs is important for both theoretical and empirical reasons. In theory, and as discussed above in the public-private goods and state-market institutional debate, there is more fluidity in the classification of goods: the prevailing conditions in urban areas (see Fig. 7.1) make it generally impossible to classify UFCs as purely public, private, club, or CPRs. Thus, Oates (2001) concludes that due to changing local conditions and contexts, none of the institutional arrangements is generally preferable and that “Prescribing one alternative to the exclusion of the others is, in my view, unwise.” In empirical terms, the governance of American societies resembles more of a mix of institutional arrangements (Ostrom 1972a, 2007; Ostrom et al. 1961). In reality, well-functioning and sustainable community gardens or urban farms require government, non-government, local, and nonlocal support. Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) highlighted the weakness of Chicago’s community gardens because of weak non-governmental support, compared to those of Boston and Philadelphia. Martinez (2016) documents current and specific federal, state, and local government policies that address structural barriers in local farming and food issues in the U.S. Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999) specifically examine the role of city institutions (planning and food departments and food policy councils) for supporting local food issues (see also Raja and Whittaker 2018; Vitiello et al. 2015). Thus, in reality, a mix of institutional arrangements inadvertently affect UFCs in U.S. cities. The challenge, as recognized by Ostrom (2005) and others, is to design the right mix of institutional arrangements that can affect UFCs positively: the intentional design of diverse institutional arrangements that are flexible or adaptive in different conditions to ensure that the costs and benefits of UFCs are properly and equitably internalized. I turn to the theory of polycentricity for answers on how such an institutional mix could be designed for UFCs.

7.3 Polycentric UFCs: Governing UFCs Through an Institutional Mix

Polycentricity is variously defined, discussed, and debated among scholars and sometimes across disciplines. This section will not recapitulate the various disciplinary histories and contestations of this concept (see detailed discussions in Aligica and Tarko 2012, Batty 2001, Frimpong Boamah 2018b, Green 2007, Hall and Pain 2006). In this essay, polycentricity, or what Vincent Ostrom refers to as the “compound republic,” represents a constellation of actors functioning together as a coherent governance system through interactions structured by an overarching mix of rules:

“Polycentric” connotes many centers of decision-making which are formally independent of each other...To the extent that they take each other into account in competitive relationships, enter into various contractual and cooperative undertakings or have re-course to central mechanisms to resolve conflicts, the various political jurisdictions in a metropolitan area may function in a coherent manner with consistent and predictable patterns of interacting behavior. To the extent that this is so, they may be said to function as a “system.” (Ostrom et al. 1961)

For our context of UFCs, we can consider polycentricity as the interactions among multiple actors (e.g., farmers, local government agencies and nonprofits) within diverse institutions (rules) working to ensure that under different conditions, anyone benefiting from a given commons gets to pay their fair share and decide on the commons. In other words, consider the market as made of a single institutional arrangement—the competitive market rule—whereby consumers and producers use price signals to decide when to buy, what to buy, and how much to buy. The buying and selling interactions between consumers and producers within this competitive market rule ensures equilibrium over time, so that anyone who benefits from the good (as consumers or producers) gets to pay for and decide on it. As discussed, operations within this single competitive market rule can reach equilibrium if we assume that consumers and sellers deal with purely private goods. Some scholars (e.g. Ostrom et al. 1993; Stiglitz 1989) have argued that even with purely private goods, a market institutional arrangement cannot function effectively in reality unless it is supported by other institutional arrangements such as the state’s command-and-control regulatory powers. This regulation is often needed to discipline the market through activities such as limiting market monopolies, providing conflict-resolution mechanisms (e.g., courts) to resolve private ownership conflicts, and cooperation and negotiation mechanisms to ensure the enforcement of contract agreements, for instance.

Similarly, we can define a state (either centralized or decentralized) institutional arrangement as comprising command-and-control rules that allow the state to regulate the actions and interactions of actors. These rules achieve equilibrium by ensuring *uniformity* in standards and enforcement—for example, uniform taxation and state-sanctioned permit standards. Command-and-control rules will work if goods are purely public, but even then, the state enacts and enforces its

command-and-control rules often through the use of other formal or informal institutional arrangements, including lobbying and backroom negotiations. In other words, when we think of polycentricity, we should consider how (1) multiple actors (e.g., urban farmers, community garden owners, real estate developers, local government agencies, state and federal government agencies, etc.) (2) who are autonomous can nonetheless (3) interact formally and informally with one another through cooperative, competitive, command-and-control, and conflict relationships to ensure (4) polycentric order, “spontaneous order,” or equilibrium within the system (see Aligica and Tarko 2012; Ostrom 1972b, 1991).

I now delineate the two key conceptual pillars of what could constitute a polycentric UFC system. These pillars include (1) multiple decision centers or actors with opportunities for cross-scale interactions for making decisions about UFCs and (2) flexible and adaptive rules based on actors’ incentives and rule outcomes. These pillars draw from global lessons from the governance of commons by Ostrom and colleagues in their design and deployment of the institutional analysis and development (IAD) framework (Ostrom 1990, 1998, 2005, 2010; McGinnis 1999, 2011; McGinnis and Ostrom 2012). Polycentric governance of UFCs should include at least these two features to ensure that the governance system can address tragic outcomes. The pillars discussed here are not exhaustive but are presented to stimulate conversations on the need for alternative institutional arrangements to govern UFCs, beyond conventional approaches such as state, market, local, and nonlocal governance models.

1. **First conceptual pillar of a polycentric UFC system: Multiple decision centers that allow cross-scale and cross-sector interactions for making decisions about UFCs.** At the heart of polycentricity is the need to distribute power to ensure that a single decision-making center (e.g., individual or organization) does not hold absolute power: “...the governance of metropolitan areas can occur in a polycentric political system so long as no single set of decision makers is able to gain dominance over all decision-making structures” (Ostrom 1972b, p. 21).

For effective polycentric governance of UFCs, a single decision-making center cannot dominate decisions about where, what, and how to farm or garden in cities. Decisions about farming in cities, such as location and pricing of urban farm areas, consumers’ access to farm produce, and disposal of farm waste, must address the following questions: (1) Who is making these decisions? (2) Are there opportunities for others to challenge and change these decisions? From an empirical standpoint, for instance, scholars have variously discussed the difficulty for actors such as farmers, gardeners, and food policy advocates to challenge intentional and unintentional (re)zoning practices that affect farming and food issues in U.S. cities (Cohen 2018; Heckler 2012; Raja et al. 2014; Voigt 2011).

Similarly, others should be able to challenge and change decisions made by farmers and/or nonprofits engaged in urban farming or gardening. This is where opportunities for cross-scale and cross-sector interactions and engagements become important so that actors can discuss, challenge, or agree on decisions. Figure 7.3

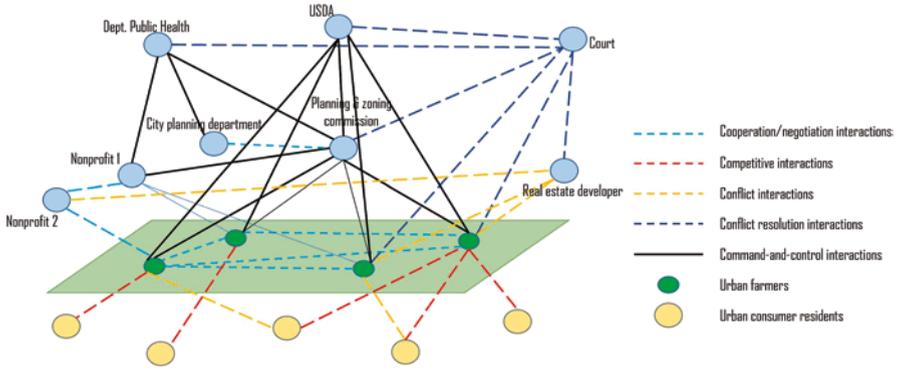


Fig. 7.3 Network of actors and interactions structured by different rule relationships. The links between nodes (actors) represent the dominant rules by which they interact. In reality, however, more than one rule can structure the interactions between two actors, even though a specific rule can dominate at a given point in time. Interactions between actors can also change over time by shifting from one rule to another

illustrates a hypothetical group of urban farmers who have local interactions with other farmers, local nonprofits, local real estate developers, and city authorities. These farmers also have cross-scale (local-regional/state/federal) interactions with the State Department of Health and the USDA. We also see cross-sector interactions between farmers (food sector) and real estate developers (housing sector) and between real estate developers (private for-profit sector) and nonprofit 1 (private non-profit sector). I discuss the nature of such interactions in terms of the second conceptual pillar.

A polycentric governance system can eventually break down into a hierarchy, or worse, chaos, if multiple decision centers cannot make, challenge, or change decisions (c.f. Aligica and Tarko 2012, Pahl-Wostl and Knieper 2014, Rudel and Meyfroidt 2014). More important, a unique advantage that cities offer to UFCs is density of people and organizations, which facilitates collective action and innovation (see Glaiser 2011; Huron 2015). Individuals’ ability to exercise diverse opinions about UFCs is necessary to (1) ensure innovation in how UFCs are organized in cities and (2) create opportunities to monitor and adjust decisions and outcomes. However, because rules structure the decisions of and interactions among multiple decision centers, the system of rules available within UFCs is also important. I discuss this next.

2. Second conceptual pillar of a polycentric UFC system: Flexible and adaptive rules based on actors’ incentives and rule outcomes. Rules are defined as when groups of individuals develop a common understanding of “who must, must not, or may take” certain actions in particular situations; those who fail to conform are subject to sanctions (Crawford and Ostrom 1995; Ostrom et al. 1994). Figure 7.3 shows how a group of urban farmers can have interactions characterized by multiple formal and informal rules. For example, farmers can have a cooperative interaction evidenced by the mutual sharing of farm inputs

and information—some form of decentralized cooperation à la Axelrod (1984) and Taylor (1987) or local self-organization à la Ostrom (1990) and Ostrom and Gardner (1993). This cooperative rule interaction can be formal (e.g., bylaws of a farmers' association) or informal (e.g., cooperation based on friendship or familial ties). Farmers can also have competitive market rule (buyer-seller) interactions with their urban consumer residents or can have conflicting rule interactions with consumer residents through, for example, residents' not-in-my-back-yard (NIMBY) protests. State and federal agencies (e.g., Department of Agriculture and Environmental Protection) can have cooperative (e.g., sharing information) or conflicting rule interactions that can affect farming within cities. For instance, Institute of Medicine (2003) highlights how both national and state governments' concurrent exercise of public health powers (see *Gade v. National Solid Waste Management Association* 1992) leads to contestations over public health infrastructure and decisions across multiple issues, such as nutrition, sanitation, and infectious diseases, and multiple governing scales (see also Gostin 2000; Mozaffarian et al. 2018). Within a polycentric system, a mix of rules structures the set of interactions between actors within and across governing scales: "Within a set of rules, autonomous decision makers are free to pursue their own interests subject to the constraint inherent in those particular rules being enforced. The many autonomous elements or units seek to order their relationships with one another rather than by reference to some external authority" (Ostrom 1994)

In other words, what separates polycentric from monocentric systems is that in the former, actors interact and adjust their actions based on multiple rules, while a monocentric system imposes a single, top-down, command-and-control rule on actors' interactions and decisions (Pahl-Wostl and Knieper 2014). The most important consideration here is that actors be able to design, redesign, choose, and enforce among a system of rules that align with their incentives and desired outcomes: "If individuals can know the relationship between particular rules and the social consequences that those rules tend to evoke under specifiable conditions, then specific polycentric orders can be created as a matter of conscious design" (Ostrom 1972b).

Ostrom's point aligns with the logic underlying Buchanan's constitutional economics (Brennan and Buchanan 1985; Buchanan 2002; Buchanan and Tullock 1962). Constitutional economics, in simple terms, posits that actors do not only make decisions and interact with each other within predetermined rules but can also choose the rules that shape their decisions and interactions (Frimpong Boamah 2018a; Kurrild-Klitgaard 2012). Rules of cooperation, competition, negotiation, and command-and-control have outcomes that differ based on multiple factors, such as the incentives facing actors. Decisions within command-and-control rules achieve different outcomes, positive (e.g., coerce free riders to pay for benefits enjoyed) or negative (e.g., exclude poor and vulnerable actors from participating in decisions), depending on the incentives of those making and enforcing these rules. For example, local governments incentivized to prioritize certain land uses, such as residential and commercial, over others, such as farmlands, in cities are likely to enforce

zoning rules favoring the former rather than the latter land use, if we assume all other things are equal. Similarly, just as competitive rules, such as market rules, can lead to positive and negative outcomes, so do cooperative rules: “Competitive rivalry among public enterprises can generate adverse social consequences as well as beneficial effects. Cooperative arrangements among public entrepreneurs can also degenerate into collusive efforts [e.g. monopoly power or patron-client relations] to raid the public treasury” (Ostrom 1972b, p. 20).

Actors’ decisions and interactions in cities are driven by their incentives, which can be (mis)aligned with the formal-informal rules within which they are embedded. Arguing for the use of one rule over others in decisions about UFCs misses the potential benefits that could result from bundling different rules. Ostrom and colleagues’ empirical studies of cases across U.S. cities found that a mix of institutional arrangements are necessary for an effective governance system, whether of UFCs or other urban commons (Ostrom 2010; Ostrom et al. 1978). Effective polycentric systems allow actors to choose and readjust the rules needed to achieve desirable outcomes: “At least conceptually, we know that markets work and have desirable welfare features because of price signals. The polycentric order is supposed to describe the conditions under which desirable emergent outcomes occur absent price signals” (Frimpong Boamah 2018b).

Cooperative rules are sometimes needed to resolve the negative effects of overly competitive rules, and command-and-control rules (e.g., anti-trust law) are also sometimes needed to address the negative effects of overly cooperative rules (e.g., monopoly). This issue invokes large-scale farming corporations such as Hantz farms in Detroit, Michigan, which was criticized for exploiting and deepening racial and income differences and environmental degradation within neighborhoods (Delind 2011; Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014). Eventually, the city exercised its command-and-control powers by voting to sell 140 acres of land to Hantz farms and later prohibited the farms from growing food (Vitiello and Wolf-Powers 2014).

Furthermore, arguing for the governance of UFCs through local community organizations (nonprofits or community boards) potentially downplays how the decisions and rules of nonlocal actors impact local decisions over time. For instance, Congress and the USDA defunded the Penn State Urban Gardening Program in 1996, which reminds us of how certain state or federal decisions, such as about funding, can be vital to the success or failure of urban farm projects (Lawson 2005; Reynolds 2011). In fact, Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) commented on this issue when discussing how, across their case studies, state and federal actors were impeding UA:

Any state’s perception of agriculture solely as a rural activity, if not prohibiting the direct marketing of urban-grown food, can affect the regulations governing such sales. Thus, urban growers in Boston find the Massachusetts laws relevant to the selling of their products confusing and open to different interpretations.

Similarly, one cannot also underestimate how local decisions and rules impact centrally governed UFCs. Martinez (2016) reminds us that because farming in the U.S. is primarily a local activity, even state and federally sanctioned food initiatives

must deal with local decisions on issues such as zoning, licensing, and market ordinances (see also Broad Leib 2013; Raja and Diao 2016). Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) averred that conflicts among various city agencies, such as the case of the Vacant Property Review Committee in Philadelphia and the idea that urban agriculture may not be the best use of city land, were among the key forces that fettered UA in their case-study cities. Several case studies on the commons in the U.S. and globally suggest that without these two conceptual pillars as the foundation, governance of urban commons such as UFCs could, over time, be dominated by competitive, conflicting, or command-and-control rule interactions, which can lead to tragic outcomes (e.g. Andersson and Ostrom 2008; Ostrom 1990). A polycentric governance vision represents an attempt to prevent or remedy such outcomes, by calling for a governance system that (1) recognizes the role of multiple actors in decisions about UFCs and allows cross-scale and cross-sector interactions for making such decisions and (2) allows actors to design, redesign, and choose different rules that align with prevailing conditions, for example actors' incentives, desired outcomes, and other contextual factors.

In the next section, I synthesize the two conceptual pillars of a polycentric UFC system by breaking them down into four institutional design parameters (IDPs) and their associated key issues or questions. I discuss how these parameters and associated issues help to achieve desired outcomes such as the effective internalizing or managing of spillovers associated with UFCs. I then use Chicago's NeighborSpace to provide empirical instances of these guiding parameters. Note that these institutional design parameters are not exhaustive (see Decaro et al. 2017; Ostrom 2005; Sarker and Itoh 2001). Again, the parameters can vary depending on other factors (e.g., type of commons under consideration, specific local conditions affecting the commons) and must be fine-tuned over time by subjecting them to different UFCs in the U.S. and elsewhere.

7.4 Achieving Polycentric Order in Governing UFCs: A Framework for Analysis and Design

An effective polycentric UFC should aim to achieve polycentric order, which means ensuring that the system can self-organize to address undesired outcomes. This requires ensuring that decisions about UFCs include the two above-noted conceptual pillars. Here, I classify these pillars into four institutional design parameters with key issues or questions, which Fig. 7.4 outlines and Table 7.1 summarizes. The first pillar is classified into two institutional design parameters: multiple decision centers or actors making decisions about UFCs (IDP 1) and opportunities for cross-scale and cross-sector interactions among UFC actors (IDP 2). The second pillar is also classified into two institutional design parameters: the overarching system of rules that guide decisions and interactions (IDP 3) and adaptability of the rules to align with actors' incentives and decision outcomes (IDP 4).

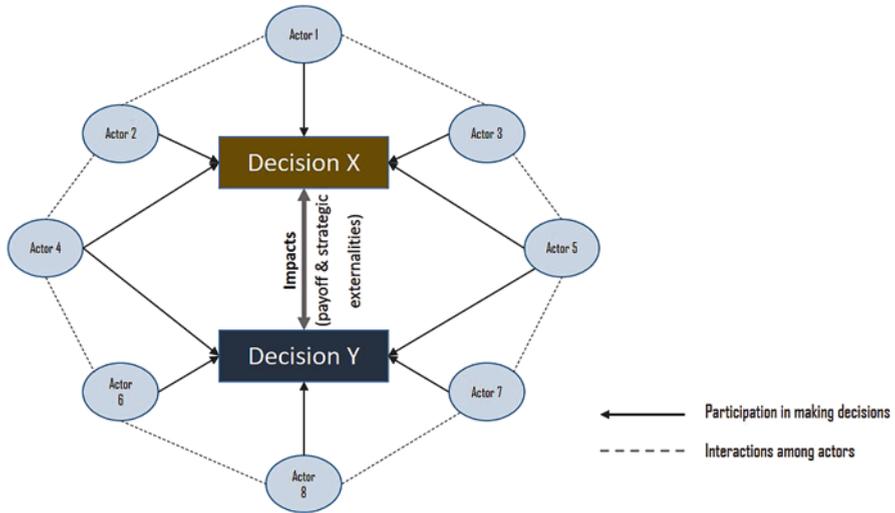


Fig. 7.4 Decisions and their impacts (externalities) as actors interact within and across scales to participate in decisions about UFCs

Figure 7.4 shows that we can consider two main decisions about UFCs: decision X (such as where to locate farm areas in cities) and decision Y (such as the value of land parcels used for farming compared to other land uses within cities). To evaluate and design effective polycentric governance of UFCs, decisions should involve multiple decision centers (IDP 1). Table 7.1 lists key issues to consider under each IDP, such as who is involved in making certain key decisions that directly or indirectly affect UFCs and which actor(s) wield(s) greater influence in specific decisions. Figure 7.4 shows that actors 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are involved in making decision X, and actors 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are involved in decision Y. Outcomes from both decisions (X and Y) can have direct and indirect impacts on each other. For instance, deciding where to locate farm areas in cities (decision X) could affect and also be affected by outcomes from appreciation or depreciation of surrounding land values (decision Y). These impacts create (1) payoff externality in decisions—when decisions impact each other—and (2) strategy externality in decisions—actors’ ability to transfer behavior, beliefs, and incentives from one decision to another (Bednar and Page 2007; Lubell 2013). We account for these externalities by attending to the rules and interactions that frame decisions about UFCs, which leads to the three remaining IDPs.

Decision centers or actors should be able to interact within and across governance scales and sectors, to make and challenge decisions and build consensus around decisions (IDP 2). These cross-scale and cross-sector interactions for making, challenging, and building consensus should be supported by diverse rules (IDP 3), which can also be adapted to align with actors’ interests and observed outcomes (IDP 4). In a polycentric governance system, interactions within and across scales and sectors for making decisions and/or changing rules present opportunities for

Table 7.1 Institutional design parameters for evaluating and designing effective polycentric governance of UFCs

Institutional design parameters (IDPs)	Key issues/questions to consider in evaluation and design
1. Multiple decision centers or actors making decisions about UFCs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the key decisions that directly or indirectly impact UFCs? 2. Who is involved in making decisions? 3. Do certain actors have more influence in the decision-making process?
2. Opportunities for cross-scale and cross-sector interactions among actors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can actors interact within and across scales in decision making? 2. Can actors interact within and across scales to participate in designing and changing rules used to make decisions? 3. Can actors interact within and across scales to enforce rules and sanctions? 4. Can actors interact within and across scales to resolve conflicts in decisions and/or use of rules?
3. Overarching system of rules to guide decisions and interactions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which rules (formal-informal, implicit-explicit) do actors use to make decisions? 2. Are there diverse rules for making decisions? 3. Do actors get to choose and design (redesign) the rules they use to make decisions? 4. How enforceable are the rules and by whom? 5. Are there sanctions associated with violating certain rules?
4. Adaptability of the rules to align with actors' incentives and decision outcomes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which decision outcomes are associated with different rules? 2. Which incentives do actors face in decisions? 3. Which rules do actors use when facing specific incentives (rule-incentive alignment)? 4. Which decision outcomes are realized when certain incentives are present in decision making (rule-incentive-outcome alignment)?

actors to freely enter and exit decision-making, rule-making, and rule-enforcing arenas (Aligica and Tarko 2012; Ostrom 1972b). Such interactions ensure that outcomes from decision X can be used to drive outcomes from decision Y, or vice versa (positive payoff externality). For instance, because actors 4 and 5 are involved in making decisions X and Y, they can learn from one decision outcome to influence the outcome of the other decision (strategic externality). Other actors can also freely enter and exit decision arenas (X and Y) or interact to learn from one another, change and/or enforce rules, and resolve conflicts. Through such interactions and free entry and exit, actors can constantly adjust their relationships (self-organize) to address undesired outcomes as conditions in cities change. We use Chicago's NeighborSpace to provide more-concrete instances of these IDPs at work.

7.5 Case Study: Chicago's NeighborSpace Illustrates Emerging Polycentric Governance of UFCs

Chicago's NeighborSpace illustrates how some of the four IDPs work in practice. My aim is not to demonstrate that NeighborSpace epitomizes the full extent of polycentric governance of UFCs; after all, there is more to be learned as NeighborSpace evolves over time. Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) observed signs of emerging polycentric governance of Chicago's UFCs, evidenced by a constellation of actors involved in UFC decisions in Chicago: "Chicago's motto, *urbs in horto*, the 'city in a garden,' is being realized by organizations in and out of government now creating the institutional context for entrepreneurial urban agriculture."

Multiple overlapping decisions occur within Chicago's UFCs, such as land acquisition and use decisions. Multiple actors (IDP 1) make these decisions through NeighborSpace, a nonprofit urban land trust formed through a 20-year intergovernmental agreement signed by three public agencies: the City of Chicago, the Chicago Park District, and the Cook County Forest Preserve District. NeighborSpace purchases land titles to vacant lands in Chicago, tests and deeds the land to community organizations, secures permits, and provides funding to insure the land. The executive director of NeighborSpace, Ben Helphand, summarizes their mission: "NeighborSpace shoulders the responsibility of property [...], so that community groups can focus on gardening and community building" (Helphand 2015).

The intergovernmental agreement ensures interagency interactions (IDP 2) that allow representatives from each of the three public agencies and other NeighborSpace board members to influence decisions about land acquisition and use. Community organizations also influence which lots they want NeighborSpace to secure and what the land is used for, such as growing food crops and/or ornamental plants. NeighborSpace requires each community organization seeking partnership to have three leaders and at least 10 community stakeholders. There is a nested system of stakeholders and interactions (IDPs 1 and 2) involved in making decisions within and across organizations (from community organizations to NeighborSpace) and governance scales (from the neighborhood to state level), which safeguard against the dominance of a single agency or individual in the decision-making process.

Supporting this nested, polycentric decision-making system are the diverse and adaptive rules (IDPs 3 and 4) that structure actors' decision making and interactions. Discussing all the formal and informal rules exceeds the scope of this chapter, so I address a few here. Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) highlighted an instance of informal cooperative rules used to govern how Neil Dunaetz (an organic vegetable farmer) interacted with young people in his neighborhood: these young people sold Neil's farm produce in exchange for 20 percent of Neil's profits. In terms of formal rules, the home clause in the Illinois State Constitution allowed the City of Chicago to establish NeighborSpace as a subsidiary jurisdiction. Furthermore, federal (e.g., US Code Title 26 §501(c)3) and Illinois state laws (POI-37, Illinois Department of Revenue and 1986 Illinois General Not for Profit Corporation Act, IL Admin. Code tit. 86 §130.120) support the creation of nonprofits such as NeighborSpace with

self-governing and tax-exempt powers. Again, Mayor Richard Daley's greening policy (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000) and the 20-year intergovernmental agreement were key sources of institutional support, which ensured the functioning of NeighborSpace. At the neighborhood level, NeighborSpaces's fiscal agency and partnership agreements also specify fiscal procedures, site guidelines, roles and responsibilities, and conflict-resolution procedures for community organizations. More important, members of community organizations not only operate within existing rules but are also allowed to design their own rules for cooperation: "NeighborSpace meddles with the management of the gardens as little as possible. We do require loose standards for safety and insurance purposes, but, beyond that, step out of the way so community can act" (Helphand 2015).

At least some of these diverse rules are adaptive (IDP 4). For instance, as narrated by the executive director of NeighborSpace, an alderman was hesitant about the permanent transfer of a vacant lot in his ward to NeighborSpace. Thus, rather than working within the existing rules of land acquisition and use, the alderman instituted ad hoc rules that required community gardens in his ward to demonstrate success for three seasons before he would sign off on the permanent transfer of land. Here, we see the free entry of an alderman in rule-making decisions regarding land acquisition, which helped to build trust among him, NeighborSpace, and community groups. Similarly, Kaufman and Bailkey (2000) demonstrated how NeighborSpace had to adapt its internal procedures and decisions as a result of conflicting interactions with community residents who opposed the organization's proposed agriculture demonstration site along North Sheffield Avenue. NeighborSpace's ability to adapt their rules and decisions helped them to learn and reconsider how they could better align this proposal with residents' interests.

This case analysis of NeighborSpace does not claim that Chicago has figured everything out. Rather, I highlight polycentric elements, such as IDPs, that allow actors to readjust their decisions and interactions in order to address tragic outcomes in the governance of Chicago's UFCs. For instance, Vitiello (see Chap. 5 in this book) discusses how NeighborSpace and community gardeners readjusted when the support of Heifer International and the Greencorps program ceased in 2011. An effective polycentric governance system is expected to reorganize and re-establish order and stability by allowing actors to (re)adjust their decisions, interactions, and the rules by which they interact and make decisions, to address undesired outcomes. This is precisely what happened. NeighborSpace helped to form the Chicago Community Gardens Association to offer new support systems to community gardens, by sponsoring plant distributions, developing and maintaining shared resources such as tools and equipment, coordinating garden volunteers, and organizing trainings and workshops for community gardeners. Whether it was deliberate or not, the emergence of Chicago's polycentric UFCs, evidenced through opportunities for local, state, and national actors to interact and decide within diverse and adaptive rules, is aptly expressed in the words of NeighborSpace's Executive Director: "It [NeighborSpace] is like an estuary where the saltwater of government agencies mix with the freshwater of communities" (Helphand 2015).

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented alternative conceptualizations for how to effectively govern urban food commons in U.S. cities. I first discussed the challenges of defining UFCs as a purely public or private good. Drawing from prior debates by Vincent and Elinor Ostrom and other scholars, I discussed how UFCs can, under different conditions, exhibit characteristics of all four types of goods: public, private, club, and CPRs. This makes it difficult to prescribe a one-size-fits-all institutional arrangement for governing UFCs. I then drew ideas from environmental federalism to discuss why UFCs should be governed through a mix of diverse institutional arrangements at multiple governance scales—including competitive market, cooperative, command-and-control, decentralized, and centralized models—to ensure that undesired outcomes are properly addressed, such as the capacity to effectively internalize spillover effects from UFCs.

To design such a mix of institutional arrangements, I used the concept of polycentric governance. Here, I identified the two conceptual pillars of polycentric governance and distilled them into four institutional design parameters to guide the design and evaluation of a polycentric UFC system. These IDPs included (1) multiple decision centers (or actors) making decisions about UFCs, (2) opportunities for cross-scale and cross-sector interactions among UFC actors, (3) an overarching system of rules to guide decisions and interactions, and (4) adaptability of the rules to align with actors' incentives and decision outcomes. To ground these concepts in empirical examples, I used the case of NeighborSpace to illustrate how some of these IDPs manifest in Chicago's UFCs. Through this case analysis, I underscored that polycentric governance is about safeguarding against the dominance of actors and the use of single, inflexible command-and-control rules in actors' decisions and interactions. Multiple actors participating in decisions and using diverse, adaptive rules within and across scales and sectors can better adapt to changing conditions within a system. Whether Chicago's NeighborSpace can endure as a model for designing polycentric UFCs is an empirical question that requires further analysis. Such analysis could occur, for example, through a comparative case study of Chicago and other UFCs, including a polycentric focus on food policy councils in the U.S., to refine and develop this chapter's analysis of polycentric IDPs.

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Dr. Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah is an Associate Professor of Urban and Regional Planning and the Community for Global Health Equity at the University at Buffalo. He is trained in urban and regional planning and institutional economics. His work seeks to understand and reform the planning processes and institutional structures (laws, norms, values) that impede and ‘weaponize’ planning interventions against historically marginalized communities. He is the Director of the Just Institutions Lab and Co-Director of Community for Global Health Equity at the University at Buffalo.

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Part II
Practical Ethics: Urban Agriculture
in US Cities

Chapter 8

Practical Ethics: Urban Agriculture in US Cities



Nick DeMarsh and Alfonso Morales 

Abstract Urban agriculture provides the opportunity to challenge the status quo within our current urban *and* food systems. The increased number and density of people in a city creates opportunities and challenges for urban agriculture. Howe and Kaufman’s ethical framework of means and ends is one way to frame urban agriculture. An emphasis on both means and ends is useful given the tendency for ethical ends (or outcomes, economic or otherwise) to preempt considerations for ethical means or processes. Using this framework, we suggest three key ideas to frame ethics of urban agriculture: a place-based historical perspective, a bridge between cities and regions, and a nested approach to reimagining healthy socio-ecological systems. Urban agriculture practitioners must understand the broader history of urban places and agricultural processes as both consequences of national historical processes, in contemporary place specific contexts, and with respect to future goals and orientations to society. The contribution of urban agriculture to environmentally sustainable futures recognizes that food production and consumption is an essential component of human life. The transformative potential of urban agriculture stems from its significant role in two systems that affect everyday life: urban and food systems. This potential for change does not imply that change through urban agriculture practice is inevitable. In this case, change requires that urban agriculture participants and stakeholders critically examine their own practices and expectations. We illustrate how this ethical framework provides an important perspective on the past, present, and future of urban agriculture.

Keywords Urban agriculture · Ethics · Food systems · Marketplaces · Social interactions · Localized histories

N. DeMarsh · A. Morales (✉)
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI, USA
e-mail: ndemarsh@wisc.edu; morales1@wisc.edu

8.1 Introduction¹

Ethics are the study of conduct, particularly the study of the conflict of ends, interests, and values. Ethical standards in planning are related to position and problem. Howe and Kaufman show this relativity of perspective through the analyses of interaction in situations planners might be part of. Such a stance is commonly labeled “interactionist” and follows from the applied philosophy of American pragmatists (Morales 1998). This interactionist analysis of contextual ethics applies to urban farmers who necessarily engage with social, economic, and political values in the process of achieving their goals. While the process of urban agriculture (UA) relates to multiple values, UA practitioners also pursue complex goals (outcomes) represented by social, economic, or environmental goals (we can call these “Wicked Opportunities” Morales 2021). Considering such opportunities illustrates how means and ends in reciprocal and iterative relationship constitute the “meat and potatoes” of UA ethics. Indeed, we should point out that Kaufman never separated the question of applied ethics from strategic planning, thinking regionally, or teaching, those among the subjects he held important (Howe and Kaufman 1980; Kaufman 1980, 1987, 1993). In this introduction and through the section chapters we show the important relationships he comprehended between geographic scale, people, and organizational activities and goals.

Inclusion vs. Creation: A Farmers Market Struggle Toward Equity

Chloe Green

As a dietetics and community and environmental sociology student, I didn’t expect that I would end up doing research in the planning department. Just when I was beginning to lose hope that I would find a position to research healthy food access, Dr. Alfonso Morales reached out, and I knew right then that I had found my home: the University of Wisconsin-Madison Kaufman Lab for the Study and Design of Food Systems and Marketplaces.

The Kaufman Lab introduced me to farmers markets as a placemaking space. I had been an avid market goer since middle school; I loved walking around and tasting new foods that I had never heard of and seeing colors of produce that I had never dreamed of. I enjoyed going back to the same vendor and having them recognize me and telling me stories and recipes for the new ingredient I would bring home. However, my thinking was limited to this individual relationship – a relationship between a middle class, white woman from West Los Angeles and her organic produce from the farmers market. The Kaufman Lab introduced me to so many more relationships between market staff, vendors, and their respective families and communities that make each

(continued)

¹The authors acknowledge Maggie Tomashek for her editorial assistance.

market its own unique space. Markets are so much more than a place to buy groceries; farmers markets are a space to be in a moment with your community.

Markets *should* be a space that does this for all communities alike, for people of any color or kin. In the current times it is often perceived that farmers markets are reserved for people who look a certain way and receive a certain pay – whether this be due to the gentrification or the high costs of locally crafted kombucha – this imagery that includes certain groups of people leads to inherent feelings of exclusion for others. At the Kaufman Lab I worked alongside many markets and organizations developing programs to be more inclusive, but as with much discrimination and structural and systemic racism in our world, decades of harm cannot be mended in a day.

Many markets across the country now accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), and other economic incentive programs. A number of markets also provide a matching program where people who use one of the aforementioned benefits can receive double (or triple) the amount of money to use at the market to increase how much produce they can buy.

When I would present my research, market staff and organizations were often disappointed that I had not found a precise answer as to how to make markets more inclusive. As I continued to think about these inquiries, I only developed more questions – one of which is whether existing markets should even work to be more inclusive, or if instead new markets should be created that are niche to their community – such as the Fondy Farmers Market in Milwaukee. There, a patron told me that she continues to shop at the market because it is where her community is: where she can shop with and buy from people who look and act like she does. Rather than striving for inclusivity in this space and the world, I think people need to focus more on embracing our differences to make a community stronger. As the only undergraduate student to be recognized as a Jerome L. Kaufman Fellow, a 26th Class Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow, and a current nutrition policy professional in Washington, DC, I believe that this process begins with a prioritization of the thoughts and ideas of people who are closest to the problems we are trying to solve, and we might just need to create a new market system with more stable roots in equity.

The definition of an urban area relates largely to the area's total population and population density. So, when we consider how UA differs from agriculture generally, one difference emerges above all else: people. As we seek to differentiate UA from agriculture as it is commonly understood (or what we may for the moment call rural agriculture) we see that the proximity of large numbers of people is a key feature. The sheer number and density of people in a city represent both practical

opportunities and challenges for UA. For this reason, the increased intensity, number, and types of interpersonal interactions frame ethical considerations of UA.

Of course, personal interaction in rural agriculture is important, just as numerous other non-social processes are important to consider within UA. However, among the many ethical considerations of UA (ecological, economic, etc.), we view social interactions as the most pressing ethical consideration for UA. We argue this perspective because many other ethical considerations can be approached beginning with how people treat each other. In addition, a focus on social interaction is central because neglecting to consider the ethics of social interaction has been a stumbling block for many UA endeavors. While focusing on the social interactionist ethic might not seem as pressing as the physical agricultural processes or outcomes, we argue that mutually agreeable and beneficial ethical considerations will be at the heart of successful projects, especially with regard the prospects for “minoritized” groups, who Kaufman wholeheartedly embraced and supported. Attention to social interaction will shape the inclusive and positive attitudes and actions that UA projects create.

What this framework suggests is that ethical UA is not limited to material results such as harvests, equipment, or growing medium. Abstractly speaking, the “growing medium” of social interaction represents the soils in which individual and collective life are rooted. Developing human capacities and relationships is just as important as the actual practice of agriculture. In short, like most other human activities, what we observe in UA processes can be more important than what we observe in UA outcomes. However, we do not want to focus only on the “measurable” aspects of a certain activity. We want to emphasize a process approach to practice that reminds us that new and unanticipated outcomes are likely to arise as we engage with UA.

Think of how this social-interactionist approach informs UA through the practical example of the opportunities and challenges in UA. The challenges of UA, for example, can include an increased number of interpersonal interactions required for a range of purposes such, as a ‘buy-in’ from neighbors adjacent to a farm, or increasingly complex relationships needed for permitting or partnership development (Covert and Morales 2014; Meenar et al. 2017). Economic benefits could include new business formation and human capital formation – in the form of self-management skills and job experience. Further, we can expect substantial non-economic benefits, for instance, community building in implementing school or community gardens, and the resulting organizational experience people can take to other activities (on the organizational experience learned in volunteer activities and translated to other activities, see Morales (2009); for an extensive list of non-economic benefits that can apply see Morales et al. (1995)). From another perspective, these challenges and benefits can also be viewed as steps within a *process* of community building, revealing that the real rewards of UA may be the ripe opportunities for personal growth through relationship development associated with UA. Opportunities for individual and community growth remind us that UA is not simply a question of food systems, but an opportunity to understand and redefine the

social dynamics that are central to *urban* systems. Indeed, we must distinguish and differentiate in order to comprehend these opportunities (Morales 2020).

Urban agriculture represents a practical manifestation of the ethical values individuals, groups, and organizations seek to advance in a broader urban system. As a tool often utilized in response to a scarcity of other opportunities, UA provides practitioners with constructive recourse to (re)define the reality of their city. UA is an idea and practice, which contradicts the common perception of what is urban and how or where agriculture is usually practiced. By intersecting these ideas and actions, practitioners challenge each system (urban and agriculture) by combining them into one term (urban agriculture). Through this process they encourage the reimagination of how food systems interact with cities. A certain appeal of UA stems from the real, tangible impact that the exercise of the imagination produces. However, while this optimism is critical to foster action, it should not mask the real challenge that is implied by the transformation which requires changing habits, values, and expectations related to these two vast systems.

Kaufman and Howe illustrate that both means (process) and ends (outcomes) are ethical considerations for planners (Howe and Kaufman 1979). While the tangible outcome of UA is a galvanizing force for practitioners, ultimately many view UA as an opportunity to have a practical effect on larger social, economic, and political structures (Morales and Mukherji 2010). This means/ends framework is valuable for UA practitioners who, like urban planners, have real influence on these larger structures they often set out to transform. In many respects, UA is unique from many other urban processes in that grassroots practitioners (rather than planners or developers) largely shape spaces that are actually or perceivably part of the public domain. Given their increased potential for significant, direct impact on urban spaces and this influence on broader social systems, the ethical considerations of urban planners described by Howe and Kaufman are uniquely applicable to UA practitioners.

Understanding how social systems are organized is imperative for ethical consideration of UA practice because practitioners will be participants in the ongoing evolution of these social systems (Morales and He 2022). Revealing, embedding, and articulating ethical considerations ensures that the potential for change represented by UA results in positive and beneficial transformation, while seeking to avoid mistakes of the past. We deepen our understanding of processes and goals through ethics-in-action. UA practitioners can approach their work in a constructive process informed by their particular experiences in tandem with insight derived from an understanding of broader social structures. Howe and Kaufman's ethical framework of means and ends is a useful and practical approach for practitioners given the tendency for ethical ends (or outcomes, economic or otherwise) to preempt considerations for ethical means or processes. Using this framework, we suggest three key ideas for an ethical interactionist framework: place-based historical perspectives, bridging barriers within cities and regions, and an iterative, nested approach to reimagining healthy socio-ecological systems. Stated another way, we illustrate how ethics shapes our perception of the past, present, and future of UA systems.

8.2 Historical Framework

Historical contextualization is essential for ethical UA for two overarching reasons. The first relates to the fraught histories of urban *and* agricultural processes in the US. Knowing these histories is important to both avoid repeating the same mistakes of history and to better work with a sense of constructive compassion. This approach recognizes the depth of generational trauma inherited by the country as a whole, but born largely by the descendants of those who have endured this trauma (often referred to as ‘trauma informed’).

Second, learning from the specific successes and failures of UA also has ethical implications, by honoring those who come before us. Furthermore, repeating their mistakes or failing to incorporate their innovations has consequences for those engaged with UA today. UA is unavoidably a demanding endeavor. To embark on this undertaking all for naught can be enough to discourage UA practice in future, undermining the long-term viability of a movement. This can ultimately reduce the movement’s inclusivity, as those with means are more capable of surmounting years of ineffective practices, while those who have been marginalized can be set back years in their own individual professional and personal endeavors by projects that unnecessarily lead to a dead-end. Avoiding the mistakes of the past makes the present efforts more effective and more inclusive.

The critique of the term “food desert” and the underlying logic is documented (Roubal and Morales 2016). This critique suggests a need for a more nuanced understanding of localized food systems to give a more complete understanding of food access served by outlets other than supermarkets, such as farmers markets. Moreover, it also reveals the role of supermarkets in decreasing food access, whether through supermarket redlining or by centralizing food purchasing in an area, thereby undermining local businesses. Finally, this reminds us that definitions matter. Definitions shape agenda setting and goals. Definitions also undergird narratives that shape how communities are perceived and how actionable decisions are made.

In response, UA practitioners must understand the broader history of urban places and agricultural processes. Both are consequences of national historical processes and place specific contexts. A historical awareness plays an important role in acknowledging the previous historic struggles against unjust urban and/or agricultural processes. This awareness can address the cycle of marginalization of people and distrust created within communities.

Given the history of racial segregation of American cities, along with the oppression and exploitation of people of color in agriculture from slavery to immigrant farmworkers today, UA couples two inherently fraught ideas (urban and agriculture) when intersected with race. Thus, ethical considerations of UA must grapple with these histories in an honest and restorative process.

While the displacement of indigenous peoples is pertinent in any place-based ethical consideration in the US (and arguably any place), it is of particular relevance to UA, as the sites of many US cities were once the sites of major population *and* food production sites for Native peoples. Examples of such places include the

Salmon Harvests in the Puget Sound (Cantzler and Huynh 2016), or the wild rice harvests in Milwaukee's Menomonee Valley (Gurda 2018).

The racialized history of slavery (Elliot and Hughes 2019) and the dispossession of land (see the work of law professor Thomas Mitchell) must be remembered in the context of UA, as it necessarily shapes problematic identity formation and the reconstruction of a place. The generational trauma that is associated with agriculture for African Americans and perpetuation of exploitation through share cropping are necessary considerations in developing UA practices that recognize the need for generational healing. Exploitation of immigrant, largely Latino, migrant workers in farm fields in more recent history creates difficult relationships with agriculture for migrant farm workers and their descendants. Though the context is different, it is important to acknowledge and work through the weight of the trauma associated with agriculture for people who have been exploited, or whose ancestors have been enslaved or exploited in agriculture. Localized histories are critical to examine, as histories associated with agriculture may have diverging generational traumas such as the loss of farmland by Japanese Americans in Southern California when they were interned during World War II.

Agricultural systems of ideas and behavior may help heal wounds for those with generational trauma associated with agriculture, and it can also provide a generational healing space for those displaced from ancestral agricultural practice (Bernado 2017). This potential for healing from a variety of generational traumas emphasizes the importance of the ethical consideration of UA because UA promises a divergent future: renewed trauma or healing. This emphasis on the historical framing is, in fact, naming a process required for ethical UA. While widely celebrated as inherently good, this points to the fact that UA, like everything, must be imbued with ethical considerations informed by history to ensure that it has the desired effect of healing. Moreover, recognizing the need for healing advances the hope of achieving this result, avoiding repetition of agricultural trauma.

The history of urban planning must also be investigated to develop an ethical framework for UA. We must remind ourselves that UA relates to urban systems just as it relates to food systems. Urban planning interventions have had a significant influence on all urban processes, including UA. Critical analysis of the history of urban planning in the US requires an understanding of the federal government's role in segregating American cities with the assistance of real estate interests (including banks) through the process commonly known as redlining (Jackson 1985). This history has a profound effect on the layout of urban communities across the US today. For example, areas that have historically experienced disinvestment, often paving the way for urban farms, did not occur naturally but instead were shaped by federal policy (see historical chapters for urban food systems in Dawson and Morales 2016).

A clear knowledge of the history of the Federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), developed through New Deal policies, is important in understanding that segregation and current racial inequality are not natural or inevitable, but instead intentionally created through policy (Bonilla-Silva 2010). This includes the history of FHA loans that were made available to primarily white families (Brahinsky

2011), a process which played a key role in their wealth development (Barracough 2009). Black families and Black communities, on the other hand, were hindered in their ability to accrue wealth because they were excluded from FHA lending (Lipsitz 2011). These actions taken at the federal level in the 1930s, nearly a century ago, along with localized policies such as racial housing covenants, have helped produce the gross inequalities of income and wealth across our nation's urban areas today.

The work of Griffin et al. (2024) in this section illustrates the importance of historical awareness by describing food justice work in Buffalo's African American community over the past century. Their chapter reveals why the institutional knowledge of both process and outcome are important to bear in mind when observing lessons from the past. The authors illustrate how these lessons can help reveal what is possible, despite the challenges of the current industrial food system. The numerous cumulative cooperative efforts throughout Buffalo's history also makes clear that even when an institution is no longer viable, its contribution to community-based knowledge does not cease *if* subsequent efforts can glean the lessons learned through historical awareness. This means allowing learning from the past to inform emergent systems and practices.

The history of food justice in the Albany, Georgia, region described by Hall et al. (2024) demonstrates the intersection of agriculture and the fight for civil rights. White landowners displaced Black farmers who supported the civil rights movement. This history also reveals the particular racial discrimination that was perpetuated in the post-civil rights era food system, when Black farmers were denied access to emergency loans. This place-specific history demonstrates the numerous layers of discrimination throughout our nation's history of agriculture, the importance of localized historical knowledge, and the importance of being cognizant of this history in UA practice today. Again, how such historical knowledge informs contemporary UA systems and practices is a matter of seeing both the ends sought, and the organizational means available to participants.

Housing policy has segregated cities. More recent federal government interventions such as Urban Renewal, which occurred in tandem with the development of the interstate system, primarily displaced communities of color. This displacement came only decades after HOLC's actions, and suburban housing covenants made living outside of these very same communities impossible. Current neoliberal urban planning policies continue to displace low-income communities of color through policies such as the HOPE VI program, which has led to the demolition of the public housing projects created during urban renewal. This combined history illustrates how urban planning decisions over the course of the past century have created a series of ongoing waves of displacement, underfunding, and unnecessary burden that shape our nation's cities today. In this section, Coen et al. show the potential to challenge this neoliberal approach by using UA as a means for community building (NYC) and resourcing communities in and beyond public housing (Denver). For this reason, ethical UA requires a clear understanding of the racist urban planning policies that have disinvested in communities of color, leading to disproportionate wealth accrual in white communities (Brahinsky 2011).

8.3 Bridging Barriers

Having rehearsed some history, we recognize that food offers a unique ability to unite. Ethical implications for UA imply that practitioners should utilize the opportunity it provides to address existing divisions within communities. Notably, most US cities are defined by segregation that often follows from urban planning policies. UA offers a rare opportunity to meaningfully challenge this status quo.

However, divisions within communities are not limited to racial segregation. Generational divides across communities illustrate the need for intergenerational engagement in food systems. Sincere community engagement can likely find long-time food activists who have extensive agricultural experience in hidden backyard gardens. Of course, culinary skills and unique recipes are in every community. Building relationships to support the continuation of these skills and recipes can yield a bounty much greater than the harvest from the well-tended backyard garden or meal from the home kitchen. Intergenerational community building can provide new energy to a community, while also helping people learn lessons from the successes and challenges of the past. By building on prior work of these legacies, this approach is not entirely different from sustainable farming practices themselves. No-till is an example of such practices which seeks to build from the rich web of life in the soil rather than tearing up these delicate fibers of life to start from scratch.

Urban and rural divides are another pronounced feature of US cities that UA can address. UA offers the means to draw linkages between food producers across regions as well as linking urban consumers to rural producers. This requires thinking of food systems at a regional level and not working in isolation within urban communities.

While this may seem to contradict the idea of urban agriculture, regional thinking is, in fact, central to urban planning. Urban planning scholars like Jerry Kaufman point to the need for regional planning to address a variety of urban problems from housing to transportation. Projects that focus on food access in urban communities based on food production in the city alone miss opportunities to not only build partnerships with rural producers for the sake of food systems, but also miss opportunities to build alliances and solidarity with people across a region.

What role do food systems play in restoring the commons? Alliances across urban and rural divides can set the stage for transformation beyond the local food system. Given that the geographic divides correlate with political divides, local food systems may offer a prism to rebuild relationships. Because of their critical role in our everyday lives and the degree to which they require complex actions and processes, food systems may provide a firm foundation to begin (or continue) to build these bridges. It is important to consider the ways in which policies at both the local, state, *and* national levels shape the landscape in which we work. The divisive nature of our socio-political environment plays an important role in perpetuating poverty and dominant food systems that affects the vibrancy of food systems within both urban and rural communities alike.

These various examples illustrate that ethical food system work requires not only working towards an 'end' such as food access, but also suggest the need to intentionally consider the role of community, alliance, and solidarity building through the vehicle (or process) of UA. The process of community building may reap even greater rewards than those associated with the original goals identified for the particular project.

Hall et al. demonstrate the opportunity for regional food system planning to address both fresh food access in the City of Albany as well as improving economic opportunities for rural farmers surrounding Albany. In this case study, Hall et al. also note that the civil rights movement in Albany involved various age groups, which contrasted from other civil rights groups in which most of the activists were young. Likewise, UA groups today risk losing a wealth of experience by failing to incorporate diverse age groups. Indeed, when engaging the means/ends thinking like Kaufman and Howe, we need to remember that people will always transmit knowledge, our desire is that the knowledge they transmit helps achieve many pro-social goals.

8.4 Nested Approach to Reimagining Healthy Socio-ecological Systems

How do we decide what a sustainable future should look like? To consider sustainability within an interactionist framework, it is important to consider how people will interact with sustainable futures (across demographic categories). In other words, if a process supports the textbook environmental, economic, and social sustainability goals but fails to be convenient, preferable or usable, its adoption rate may be minimized.

Part of the planning process for sustainable futures should consider those who will inhabit this future we seek to form in a sustainable fashion. This implies that children and teens should be engaged in shaping the plans for sustainable futures. Working with young people to create the future is a process of identifying systems the next generation is more likely to utilize and steward. We see evidence of this in the article below by Griffin et al., in which the Black Student Union members guided their work based on listening to the needs of young people.

It is also critical to have a measured approach that understands how much time food system change requires. Food system work often benefits from an incremental approach towards implementation, while still engaging in big-picture, comprehensive planning. In other words, start small but plan big. UA practice and implementation requires distinct skills, but skill development requires time to develop through practice with appropriate challenges. Inclusive food systems require a patient approach to offer the requisite time for individuals to develop the skills to be active participants in food system transformation. This patient work of skill development illustrates another reason why working with young people is common in food system work. To build a program that involves young adults, for example, a patient

approach might involve working with youth who will be young adults in five or even 10 years. This approach requires a long-term commitment to community engagement.

A long-term approach towards skill development creates a vested interest in the program to work towards retention of skilled participants and entire cohorts, just as young people develop a sense of belonging through their practical skill development. This can help to challenge the power dynamics of programming—in which participants are commodified as metrics—to one in which they are valued for their individual skills, ability to contribute through their own personal growth, and as participants in a growing and evolving program. It also creates important challenges for programs, as they must adapt programming to ensure its relevance by continuing to challenge those who accumulate skills over the years. Additionally, adopting time horizons associated with producing food and supporting people over the life course helps us rethink time as we currently impose it: in terms of the fiscal year, the grant process, the school year, or business notions of time. To recapture time and locate it in processes that serve people is an important impulse of UA. The promise of long-term approaches serves to build relationships among participants, program staff, and the broader community (Morales 2020, 2021). Programs that seek transformation within communities should attempt to build in these positive challenges that will equally challenge leaders to grow along with participants in a responsive and exploratory approach. This could be described as an urgent patience that recognizes the need to plant seeds for the future today with willingness to see growth through its natural cycles.

That said, focusing on innovative programing development can also risk hopping from one innovation to another. Long-term transformation requires long-term commitment to projects, people, and organizations. The tendency towards innovation must be tempered by an aversion among funders to chase the shiny object or among organizations that might chase the money. An innovation-above-all-else mentality causes a contradictory approach to system change that undermines the actual implementation of new systems to do the necessary work of replacing outdated and unsustainable systems. Instead, new systems are discussed and piloted but often fail to fully take flight. This, in part, is why small, incremental work is necessary in the initial periods, so that big projects do not remain half implemented. Instead, small projects can build from success toward a larger vision, while building partnerships and identifying solutions that work towards long-term goals.

Food systems require an interconnected web of skills, people, businesses, and organizations that specialize in specific areas. Many existing structures do not encourage or reward collaboration. Funders and customers are often inclined toward the biggest, most well-known entity (be it an individual, business, or organization). This dynamic can be transformed by funders or customers who recognize that this preference often implicitly supports the most dominating entity, one that might actively work to undermine others doing similar, complementary work.

How can a web or system be created by just one entity? No matter the size or scope of such an entity, it inevitably will be one that is tenuous. “The bigger they come, the harder they fall.” Funders and customers should, instead, look toward

collaborations. While material outcomes are important, so are the interactive, social *processes*. Effective and inclusive social structures that shape successful cooperation, such as collectives or cooperatives, should be viewed as ingredients in UA (a healthy, social interactive growing medium) with as much importance as the produce harvested, number of participants engaged, or profits generated. Thus, an interactionist perspective with an aim for long-term urban *and* food system change recognizes that systems that support positive and effective interaction are just as important as these material end results.

The contribution of UA to environmentally sustainable futures recognizes that food production and consumption is an essential component of human life. Bringing the processes associated with food to our cities not only reduces the distance between us and our food, and thereby addresses issues such as food miles, but also imbeds food production capacity into urban systems. This framework allows food producers to tap into the inevitable waste streams of cities and challenges the thinking of waste altogether. Along with questions regarding how much food a city can produce, this awareness can challenge us to ask questions like “what do cities, as systems, discard that could help to grow food?”

Both stormwater and food waste are challenging problems for our cities that have local consequences (such as water quality and landfill capacity) as well as global implications of climate change resilience. By incorporating agriculture into our cities, however, we can reframe these challenges into opportunities. Walsh describes stormwater as “the best type of problem, because solving it provides an opportunity to solve other problems such as the provision of water for human use” (Walsh et al. 2012). UA offers the opportunity to embrace stormwater, food waste and other challenges that falsely frame urban abundance as waste. The potential of UA reveals instead that rather than ‘waste,’ these byproducts of urban living are symptoms of structurally flawed systems. Our cities fail to repurpose the abundance as a part of a healthier, inclusive, cyclical system that UA proposes to (re)create. With this optimistic outlook we can constructively think of environmental sustainability through addition rather than subtraction, illustrating how our cities can think like planets (Alberti 2016).

Once again, partnerships are essential to this process. Composting, for example, requires food waste haulers (whether public or private sector) to work with a variety of different food processors, restaurants, retailers, and households (Suerth and Morales 2014). This also requires education to ensure food is properly sorted from trash. Gardeners, farmers, or other users of finished compost are another important partner in this process. They represent an important part of this system by providing a destination for the finished compost. Closing the loop of food waste also aids in the overall economic viability of food waste diversion by providing a market for finished compost. This illustrates how creating a new system through food waste composting requires a relatively seamless and symbiotic system of tens, hundreds, or even thousands of participants (in the case of municipal wide food waste diversion) with defined roles, an understanding of processes, and a mutual interest in both their own benefit from the system as well as in the functioning of the overall system.

In summary, from Kaufman's prolific imagination and deep concern for people flowed important inspiration and insight about how to locate the idea of ethics in concrete practices. In this section, as in the book as a whole, authors here honor not only his memory, but what he would expect of us – to honor the efforts of those we work with and serve.

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Nick DeMarsh is a PhD candidate in Urban Planning at the University of Wisconsin. As the Manager of the Kaufman Lab for the Study and Design of Food Systems and Marketplaces, his research focuses on the role of food and transportation systems in communities. For over a decade, Nick worked with advocacy groups in Milwaukee to advance community-led transformation of food and transportation systems. Nick earned his Master's Degree in Urban Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where he was an Economic Development Fellow. He was also a fellow in the Food Policy Leadership Institute at George Washington University.

Alfonso Morales is Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor in the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is also Chair of the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture. Originally from rural New Mexico with roots in family farming there and in west Texas, he is a researcher, advocate, and practitioner/consultant on food systems and public markets. He has been invited to speak on these topics nationally and internationally. He cofounded farm2facts.org, used in farmers markets around the country and co-created the USDA Local Food Economics toolkit, among other scholarly and public-facing activities.

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Chapter 9

Codification and Inclusivity of Landmark Urban Agriculture Initiatives in Madison and Dane County, Wisconsin



Micaela F. Lipman  and Marcia Caton Campbell 

Abstract Madison and Dane County, Wisconsin, are known for progressive politics and early support for community gardening, urban agriculture, and agricultural land preservation. Despite this history of regulatory innovation, the city and county have been slow to address food injustices in local food systems planning and policy development. This chapter covers the local government food systems policy and planning landscape, highlighting local government collaboration with the nonprofit sector to achieve food systems goals, and examining how codification of those goals supports or hinders urban agriculture. The COVID-19 pandemic presented both local governments with a unique opportunity to further collaborations that are more deeply inclusive of community food sovereignty.

Keywords Urban agriculture · Community gardens · Community supported agriculture · Food policy councils · Intergovernmental cooperation · Troy Gardens · COVID-19

9.1 Introduction

Madison, Wisconsin, is a growing city of just over 269,000 people located in Wisconsin's South Central region, bordering lakes Mendota, Monona, Kegonsa, and Waubesa. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the state capital are major draws to the area, providing jobs and serving as cultural epicenters. The education, information technology and agriculture, food, and beverage sectors help drive the local economy. The city boasts a long history of formal planning and policy

M. F. Lipman (✉)
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: micaelal@buffalo.edu

M. Caton Campbell
Rooted, Madison, WI, USA
e-mail: marcia@rootedwi.org

structures focused on lakefront and park preservation dating back to the 1911 John Nolen plan entitled *Madison: A Model City*, a plan that city staff still reference to this day (Nolen 1911). In Dane County, just outside of Madison, the Town of Dunn has a voluntary farmland protection program through purchase of development rights, which has been in place since 1997, and has preserved over 3,800 acres of farmland in one of the richest agricultural areas of the state (Town of Dunn (WI) n.d.)

Madison is often cited as a progressive place with a high level of resident participation in civil society and politics. As noted by Bailkey and Caton Campbell (2015), “Wisconsin’s traditional reputation as ‘America’s Dairyland’ endures, and new and long-time Madisonians alike see close connections between their urban lives and the surrounding rural and periurban farmlands. This awareness, coupled with a largely progressive political bent at the grassroots and local government levels, has resulted in a high level of awareness of and participation in the national local-food movement (p. 23).” Madison boasts many food system assets such as the Dane County Farmers Market, the largest producer-only farmers market in the United States; the South Madison Farmers Market, now in its 20th year; and a renovated historic feed mill, now a hub for local food and wellness businesses (Becker 2016; Hubbuch 2019). However, the policy structures that led to such assets tend to be more expert-driven, fostering shallow community commentary rather than true participatory planning.

There are many policy structures with indirect, but important, implications for an individual’s ability to access and participate in the food system. For example, public transportation is sparse in the outer edges of the City of Madison where low-income housing lies. A lack of public transportation drastically affects the ability of low-income individuals to access the resources they need, including food. Another example is minimum wage policies, which impact an individual’s and/or a household’s discretionary income available to purchase food. However, this chapter will not cover many of the intersectional issues that indirectly or directly impact the food system.

With respect to urban agriculture, the City of Madison is a prime example of how protecting land for food production conflicts with the pressures for real estate development in an active development market (Hodgson et al. 2011; Meenar et al. 2017). According to Nan Fey, Madison’s recent interim Director of Planning, Economic and Community Development and former long-time Food Policy Council chair, “The development pressure is a big problem. Madison is a place people want to be. It’s a private real estate system. If the city doesn’t own it, it doesn’t really control it. That’s why we’ve tried to utilize city owned land to set an example. I think ownership of land is the major barrier [to urban agriculture]” (Fey 2020). Since a zoning code rewrite was adopted in 2013, Madison’s zoning code now includes an urban agriculture district as a means to designate land for food production; however, that district designation has yet to be used and is not sufficient to counteract the pressures of real estate development and gentrification (Becker 2016). The zoning code also permits indoor urban farming (Christians 2015). Despite the city’s now-supportive regulatory environment for urban agriculture, immigrants, indigenous

people, and people of color continue to lack sufficient and secure land tenure for urban agriculture. The history of Madison is a tale of two cities, with top-down seemingly progressive policies butted up against marginalized communities vying for access to resources of all types, including physical spaces, in the city they call home (Becker 2016). This conflicting narrative reveals itself in urban agriculture practices and policy making.

This chapter analyzes the broad array of urban agriculture work in Madison, focusing on the inequities in such work, and the degree to which codified policies serve as supporting or limiting factors for urban agriculture. The first section of this chapter outlines several key urban agriculture initiatives in Madison, including Troy Gardens, The Gardens Network (of community gardens), and FairShare Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (a network of CSA farms). The second section of this chapter examines food policy structures in Madison and Dane County, highlighting key policies that inhibit or encourage urban agriculture initiatives. The third section of this chapter focuses on the inclusivity of such work, which groups and individuals are driving urban agriculture, whether communities most affected by changes in agriculture are included in the planning stages of such projects, and whether those who hold positions of power in Madison's food system are representative of the communities most affected by urban agriculture projects. This lens is especially crucial as Dane County, which is home to the city of Madison, has some of the largest racial disparities between Black and non-Hispanic white communities in the country (Wisconsin Council on Children and Families 2013). The fourth section of this chapter addresses the levels of codification of urban agriculture work. This section focuses on whether policies allowing for urban agriculture have legal backing, whether such policies are enforced, and whether such policies expire. It is important to note that while this chapter provides examples from the Madison context, it is not meant to be exhaustive of all of the urban agriculture work accomplished in this region. Madison and Dane County have been at the forefront of the food policy movement since the movement's inception, and a complete history of that body of work cannot be contained in one chapter.

9.2 Urban Farming Initiatives

9.2.1 *The Case of Troy Gardens*

The history of the land known as Troy Gardens is a classic story of the competition that arises between the government and members of the public when they envision different uses and futures for a parcel of land, setting up a conflict between the types of ends sought by different stakeholders and the differing means they envision for achieving those ends.

Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, fifteen acres of state-owned public land in the Northside community of Madison was used as a public commons by area

residents. Four acres of the land was devoted to community gardens, while the remainder of the land remained a natural area utilized for walking dogs, watching birds, and appreciating the beautiful landscape (Caton Campbell and Salus 2003). In October 1995, the State of Wisconsin placed the site on the surplus land list with the stated intention to sell it to a private developer for revenue generation (Caton Campbell and Salus 2003). Such reclaiming of public commons for government revenue assumes that common spaces are in need of reform, and devalues a community's long-term investment (emotional and otherwise) in this valuable resource. Unfortunately, within a neoliberal framework, it is common to privatize public goods, and isolate community power under the guise of economic development, by selling public land to private developers.

Community members who had invested time and resources into developing a long-term, large community garden space and caring for the natural landscape at Troy Gardens were not complacent and fought for their right to the commons, especially when the State consolidated an additional 16 acres of abutting vacant land for sale. In 1996, neighborhood residents and concerned community members enlisted support from the Northside Planning Council, representing 17 Northside neighborhoods and organizations, to fight against the potential development of the valuable commons. The Northside Planning Council joined with the Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin, the Madison Area Community Land Trust, and the Urban Open Space Foundation (a local urban land trust now renamed Rooted), to form the Troy Gardens Coalition (Caton Campbell and Salus 2003).

In 1997, the coalition succeeded at removing the land from the state surplus land list and securing a multiyear lease from the city to focus on redevelopment of the 31-acre parcel. The coalition then encountered one of the most common barriers to urban agriculture: highly restrictive agricultural leases. The community plan was to allocate 26 acres of the parcel for long-term agriculture and conservation. However, in Wisconsin, agricultural leases cannot exceed a 15-year maximum and it is difficult to build permanent infrastructure, such as metal hoop houses and sheds, on land zoned temporarily for agricultural purposes (Rosenberg and Yuen 2012). Agriculture is tied to land; investment in agriculture entails land regeneration, soil health maintenance, and ecosystem management. This investment differs from other types of business investments in that it cannot be disconnected from location. Whereas inventory in a store may be moved depending on regional and local political and economic factors, agriculture is quite difficult to relocate. If leases are not renewed, investment in the land is forgone, posing a significant risk to entering in urban agriculture, particularly for financially under-resourced community groups that depend upon their own ingenuity and physical labor to launch and develop their projects.

The Troy Gardens Coalition proposed an alternative plan, which was accepted by the community and eventually by the city in 1998. The accepted proposal was for a 50-year lease with the option to purchase, dividing the 31-acre site into three main uses with five acres set aside for mixed-income housing, and the remainder dedicated to agriculture and conservation (Denckla Cobb 2011). This proposal zoned

the area as a planned unit development allowing both housing development, farmland, and also farm infrastructure such as hoop houses.¹

Three years after the proposal's acceptance, the Madison Area Community Land Trust was able to use HUD Community Development Block Grant and Economic Development Initiative funds to purchase the land, including the entire land area, under HUD subsidy eligibility standards (Rosenberg and Yuen 2012). The Madison Area Community Land Trust (MACLT) in turn leased 26 acres of the parcel to the Friends of Troy Gardens (renamed Community GroundWorks), which then placed the land under a conservation easement held by Urban Open Space Foundation (now Rooted) (Caton Campbell and Salus 2003). The 26 acres of open space now include a five-acre urban farm, community gardens, a youth garden, a cob oven, prairie restoration areas, and other nature trails. The remaining 15 acres were held by MACLT for affordable housing development. Champions in the community, such as UW-Madison urban planning professor and community food systems planning pioneer Jerry Kaufman and Madison Area Community Land Trust founder Sol Levin, and champions at the government level, such as State Senator Fred Risser and then-US Representative (now US Senator) Tammy Baldwin, ferried the approval of the plans for Troy Gardens, prioritizing urban agriculture and affordable housing in their policy initiatives. For example, then-Rep. Tammy Baldwin secured a \$750,000 earmark for the Madison Area Community Land Trust to develop affordable housing units on Troy Gardens. Ginny Hughes, Rooted's Deputy Director, described the process of pioneering Troy Gardens, saying "It's all about people coming together with a common vision and diverse perspective, and I think we've really been able to show that a multi-use, multi-functioning site can be really successful and a way to connect people with each other, themselves [and the] outdoors" (Hughes 2020).

Troy Farm was first tilled in 2001. Community GroundWorks (now Rooted) partnered with the Community Action Coalition to share tools and infrastructure necessary to start the farm. The farm manager was tasked with deciding what to grow on the land, planting a diversified mix of vegetables while excluding such crops as sweet corn and melons, which would take up too much space. Produce grown at Troy Farm is distributed through several channels. Produce is sold to over 200 CSA members,² direct to consumers at weekly farm stands, and at a nearby shopping center parking lot. A limited amount of produce is sold wholesale to Madison grocery stores and food co-ops. In 2006, Troy Farm filled a niche market in Madison for sprouts, which has grown over the years to represent just under half the sales of produce from Troy Farm. The sprouts are sold direct to consumers at the farm stands, and wholesale to grocery stores and food co-ops.

¹Other urban farms that are not zoned as planned unit developments are prohibited from having year-round hoop houses, and all hoop houses must be licensed. Key stakeholders noted the regulation of hoop houses in the City of Madison as a main hurdle to urban agriculture. In Wisconsin's cold winters, a limitation of 180 days on keeping a hoop house covered with plastic creates a real burden for farmers trying to extend the growing season.

²Calculated for the 2019–2020 growing season.

Prior to 2020, Troy Farm hosted 14–15 interns and an additional 10–12 volunteers with worker shares annually. In 2020, Rooted³ adjusted its model to provide interns with a stipend to increase equity and compete with better wages offered by non-agricultural jobs. With the stipend offered, the number of interns able to be accommodated decreased from 14–15 to three interns for the 9-week session and three interns for the 28-week session. While several farm staff live at the adjacent Troy Gardens housing community, interns typically come to Troy Gardens from outside of the area. In addition to those volunteering and interning at the farm, Rooted offers youth development programming at Troy Farm and the Troy Kids' Garden. Over 1,000 youth interact with the gardens in any given season. Many youth who come to Troy Gardens are from neighborhoods on the Northside, which is one of the more diverse areas in Madison.

Now, some twenty-five years after the community first organized to save their land, Troy Gardens is an expression of the multifunctional ends urban agriculture can so often produce, encompassing permanently affordable housing, a variety of forms of food production, and outdoor educational and community gathering spaces. In 2020, Rooted held a strategic planning process grounded in racial equity and inclusion. As the organization creates greater space and opportunity for deep community engagement and shaping of future work, the urban agriculture means-ends framework will also change to be more reflective of community members' interests and needs.

9.2.2 FairShare CSA Coalition

FairShare CSA Coalition is a 25-year-old organization that supports farmers and consumers through its community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, with the end goal of “a future where CSA is the backbone of a strong local food system and where all families have access to locally-produced, organic food from small family farms” (Fairshare CSA Coalition [n.d.](#)). As a means to that end, FairShare endorses 45-55 farms every year; in 2020, FairShare endorsed 44 CSA farms serving Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa, which provided over 13,000 shares to more than 27,000 individuals and families. To be endorsed, a CSA farm must be certified organic or in transition to organic certification. Currently 10 such endorsed farms are located in Dane County, including Rooted's Troy Farm. In addition, some CSA programs get resources from FairShare and interact with the coalition's network of farmers, but are not endorsed.

Though the CSA model helps consumers share with farmers on an annual basis the economic risk of farming, the model is inherently inequitable for low- and moderate-income households. The model relies upon up-front membership

³In January 2020, the former Center for Resilient Cities (originally Urban Open Space Foundation) and Community GroundWorks (originally Friends of Troy Gardens) merged to become Rooted, Dane County's largest urban agriculture and food systems organization.

payments in cash or by credit card in amounts that limited-income households simply may not have available, creating a significant financial barrier to participation. Even spreading membership payments across the growing season may not make membership possible for these households.

To address this inequity, FairShare developed its Partner Shares Program for Dane County residents. The program pays half the cost of a market-rate CSA share (up to \$300) for limited-income families, so that they can purchase a CSA share from a FairShare member farm. SNAP recipients can pay with EBT dollars for the remaining portion of the Partner Shares CSA. FairShare provides a centralized administrative hub for accepting EBT so that if individual farms are not EBT-certified, residents can still purchase a CSA share from them with EBT dollars. Sheena Tesch, Rooted's Director of Urban Agriculture, says of the FairShare CSA program, "It is so hard for each farm to be an EBT vendor, but FairShare is an EBT vendor so they can process that for any farm. It's really special. Whenever I talk to other CSA farmers from other areas they're like, 'that's insane and awesome'" (Tesch 2020).

Dane County government funds a position at FairShare through the local extension office to provide agricultural advice and agricultural resources for small scale farmers in the network. There seems to be a sense of camaraderie among small-holder farmers. Claire Strader, who holds that agricultural advisor position, says "One of the strongest pieces of ag in the Madison area is the camaraderie and networking among small scale organic producers in the region. There's a huge willingness to share with other growers, including things from how I handle this pest to what my relationship is like with my life partner who is a farmer in my business. It is amazing and makes this entire community stronger" (Strader 2020).

The FairShare CSA Coalition also paves the way for new farmers to come up in the industry. The University of Wisconsin-Madison launched an Organic Farm Manager Registered Apprenticeship program in 2018. The program is a 2-year apprenticeship program in which applicants are placed at farms in the FairShare CSA network.⁴ A lack of prior experience was identified by key stakeholders as one reason why youth are not hired on farms. One key stakeholder noted, "Farms are not interested in hiring apprentices that don't have farming experiences so before they accept them as an apprentice, they need to know they have a rudimentary grasp on the systems of diversified organic agriculture." During the 2018 and 2019 farm season, no apprentices were from the City of Madison, though the apprentices are channeled into the Madison food system through partnerships with local farms. As Rooted revamps its Troy Farm internship program, they intend for their program to be a feeder into the University of Wisconsin-Madison Organic Farm Manager Registered Apprenticeship program.

⁴The Fair Share Apprenticeship program is one of several ways that folks in Madison can learn how to farm.

9.3 Community Garden Initiatives

According to Steve Ventura, emeritus professor of environmental studies and soil science at University of Wisconsin-Madison, “The most important component [of urban agriculture] is to help people understand where their food comes from. There’s something magical about a child pulling a carrot out of the ground and having some understanding that food doesn’t come from the supermarket. It’s important in the sense of community” (Ventura 2020). This quote embodies the longstanding importance of Madison’s community gardens, some of which date to the 1960s but which skyrocketed in prevalence in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

As far back as 1995, funding for community gardens was included in the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Consolidated Plan for Madison. The dedication of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for community gardens in HUD-designated low-income eligibility areas remains uncommon in other localities. In 2004, the City formally expressed its support of community gardens by contracting with the Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin (CAC) at \$100,000 annually to manage the network of community gardens in Madison. CAC instituted a sliding scale for plot fees based on a combination of poverty levels and HUD income classifications in the area surrounding each garden. Fees are managed by the gardens themselves and revenue is used for group programming, utility bills, infrastructure, and the like. A challenge is that this sliding plot fee scale creates inequities with respect to paying water and utility rates. Since low-income gardens charge lower plot fees and collect less revenue than gardens with more affluent gardener populations, the burden of water fees is much higher for those gardens, and they lack significant funds for programming and infrastructure.⁵

By 2010, there were over 65 gardens in Madison managed by the CAC, which provided hands-on support with tilling soil, organizing plots, and managing volunteers. Early in 2011, the Madison Common Council adopted a sustainability master plan that includes a goal of committing 4% of the city’s land area to urban agriculture, of which community gardens would be a significant component (Eanes and Ventura 2015). In 2014, CAC went through a restructuring process and decided to hand off stewardship of community gardens, and focus instead on pantry gardens and delivering food to low-income individuals. The Gardens Network was then formed as a collaboration of UW-Madison Extension Dane County, the City of Madison, and Rooted, which has the primary coordination and management role for the network. Extension Dane County serves as an educational partner providing trainings at various community gardens and routine translation of garden materials. The City of Madison is the landowner of many community gardens which are leased to Rooted, contributes funding to staff the Gardens Network, dedicates operational

⁵In 2020, using the operational budget for the Madison Food Policy Council, the mayor’s office began working on a pilot program to subsidize fixed fees associated with water access for community gardens that collect fewer plot fees.

funds, and lends support to community gardens from the Parks Department, Streets Department, Public Health offices, Community Development Division, and the Mayor’s Office. Rooted employs the staff member for the Gardens Network and provides organizational support for garden organizers. Community garden organizers have significant autonomy over most decisions pertaining to individual community garden locations, with Rooted stepping in to support gardens in transition, gardens that need specific technical assistance, and to address common issues that affect many community gardens. For example, language barriers pose an issue across community gardens as many gardeners speak Spanish, Hmong, or Lao, with limited English proficiency. The Gardens Network also manages the finances of two gardens. Currently there are 67 community gardens in the Gardens Network across 47 acres in Madison and Dane County. In spring 2020, the City made the decision to no longer fund community gardens with CDBG funds, ending the practice of including community gardens in its HUD 5-year plan, and instead moved the Gardens Network under the umbrella of the Community Development Division.

There exist several community gardens in Madison outside of the Gardens Network, including Madison Food Pantry Gardens, that grow food for CAC to distribute. In the 2019 season, these pantry gardens grew 12,000 pounds of produce for distribution. Troy Gardens also hosts a community garden with over 300 plots. Many of the gardeners there are Hmong, and a wide diversity of cultures and languages is represented across the gardeners. In 2020, a new community capacity-building and engagement management structure was initiated for the community gardens at Troy Gardens and other community gardens. The new program pays community leaders a stipend to assume a coordinating role at those pilot locations, while Rooted staff are readily available to answer questions and provide support as the garden leaders build their capacity. Stipends explicitly acknowledge the extra time and effort garden leaders put into their work.⁶

9.4 Local Government Policy and Planning Landscape

9.4.1 *Dane County Food Council*

The Dane County Food Council (DCFC), the first food council in the state of Wisconsin, was formed in 2005 as a partnership of the City of Madison, Dane County, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Dane County Food Council [n.d.](#)). Each of the three partners contributed \$5,000 to hire an urban planning master’s student to staff the council. Carrie Edgar, Director of Extension Dane County, noted that, “Most people didn’t know what a food policy council was at that point, and Jerry [Kaufman] was a key player in informing people about why it mattered

⁶Some community leaders who are managing the gardens declined the stipend, so not all organizers are paid.

and why it was important” (Edgar 2020). The DCFC omits policy from its name for several key reasons. First, in Wisconsin, county committees are excluded from bringing policy proposals directly to county government, though they can advocate for policy and legislation. Second, founders of the DCFC noted the importance of excluding the word “policy” to allow the committee to focus on tasks that did not include policy, such as incubation programs. DCFC’s work focuses predominantly on rural areas outside of Madison, prioritizing the needs of Dane County growers whose primary markets for sales are in Madison. DCFC meetings are publicly noticed and accessible, though general public attendance is almost nonexistent because the group meets in the evening at the County Extension offices on the far Eastside of Madison which are only readily accessible by car.

After the first year of the DCFC, the University and the City decided not to continue as partners. However, County Board Supervisor Kyle Richmond championed the DCFC and the County decided to continue with the initiative. From 2006-2010, the Council continued as an unfunded County committee comprised entirely of citizen members. During this period, the key initiative of the DCFC was to bring attention to buying and promoting local food.

A few years later, Supervisor Richmond proposed an ordinance amendment to adjust the composition of the DCFC. Now, nine individuals serve on the Council including two County Board Supervisors and seven community members (currently including one of the authors of this chapter) representing various sectors of the food system. The County Executive appoints the County Board Supervisors to the DCFC, and the County Board Chair appoints citizen members based on staff recommendations from a pool of applicants. Each council member holds their term for three years and terms are staggered to provide continuity and healthy turnover rates. The decision to include County Board Supervisors formally on the council brought more credibility and public attention to DCFC’s work. In 2010 an employee of UW-Madison Extension Dane County volunteered to staff the council. Then, in 2019, the County funded a part-time food systems educator, Jess Guffey Calkins, who staffs the food council; the position was made full-time in 2020. Following a restructuring process, subcommittees were formed that function as work groups to complete tasks between monthly committee meetings.

One landmark project of the DCFC is the Partners in Equity (PIE) Grant, which provides seed funds for projects focused on strengthening the Dane County food system. For example, the Northside Planning Council received a PIE Grant to launch Healthy Food for All, a project that recovers thousands of pounds of food from large businesses, as well as caterers and farms, and repackages it for distribution to food pantries each week. Troy Farm donates roughly 10,000 pounds of food to Healthy Food for All over the course of each growing season.

Another key DCFC-enacted policy has to do with local procurement for County institutions such as the Dane County Jail, County Nursing Home, and the Park District. The policy encourages county agencies to procure local food by allowing them to reject the lowest bid for food in favor of Wisconsin-produced food, if that food is no more than 10% more expensive than the lowest bid.

Some DCFC initiatives have been less successful. For example, the Council has placed a lot of emphasis on organic certification. However, a significant barrier to certification is the cost. To reduce the financial barrier to entry, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection fronted 75% of the initial cost of organic certification and DCFC stepped up to fund the other 25%. Even so, there were administrative barriers related to documentation and the long timeline of the application process that the DCFC’s policy did not address, and so not many farms took advantage of this opportunity.

9.4.2 Madison Food Policy Council

In 2012, then-Madison Mayor Paul Soglin was inspired by the National Conference of Mayors food interest group to create the Madison Food Policy Council (MFPC). Carrie Edgar says, “The mayor was interested in food access issues and the disparities that existed in the county, and that we are known for our foodie culture but still had people without enough to eat. He also was interested in starting a public market in the city” (Edgar 2020). In the first five years following its formation, the MFPC prioritized addressing food access disparities as its primary end/goal, conducting citywide assessments to identify and map food access improvement areas where the council intended to concentrate its program and project grant funding.

The MFPC is an official city committee with membership defined by the Madison General Ordinance, and until 2021 was staffed by a Food Policy Director whose position was located in the Mayor’s Office administratively. Of the 23 seats on the Council, three seats are designated for City Alders. One member of the Dane County Food Council is appointed jointly to the MFPC to enhance partnerships between the two councils. Other seats are designated for individuals with expertise in a particular niche of the food system, such as community gardens or school food. The remaining 14 slots are open to Madison residents with an interest in the food system. Appointments are staggered between one and three years to provide a healthy rate of turnover. The Food Policy Director makes recommendations for new appointees to the mayor, who then appoints members to officially serve on the Council. Mark Woulf, Former Director of Food & Alcohol Policy, City of Madison, states, “[The Madison Food Policy Council] is quite large and the point of doing that was to pull from all parts of the food system, elected officials, and turn it into a body that would work outside of monthly meetings, be a little nimble and start to support some of the work already going on. We knew we weren’t starting from scratch” (Woulf 2020).

One foundational piece of the MFPC is its reliance on work groups to conduct the work underlying food policy making. At its inception, the MFPC analyzed gaps in the current food system, surveyed council members on community priorities, and then developed an initial set of seven work groups. Each work group was tasked with prioritizing and addressing one food system gap. For example, the Council’s Healthy Retail Access Program emphasized supporting entrepreneurs of color and

organizations led by people of color that were working in the neighborhoods identified as food access improvement areas. The MFPC also developed a set of work groups that tackled other aspects of the food system and environmental sustainability ranging from pollinator protection to food waste reduction.

As a work group completes its charge, it is disbanded and new work groups emerge as new priorities are identified. Work groups are expected to make progress on their tasks in between monthly meetings, using the public monthly meeting space for reporting back to the Council as a whole. All food policy council members are encouraged to serve on at least one work group. Interested individuals who are not current MFPC members may also serve on work groups as ad hoc members. In addition, many former food policy council members contribute to work groups on an ad hoc or advisory basis. There have been nine work groups since the inception of the MFPC, four of which have completed their charges. A Madison Food Policy Council Prospective Member Guide lays out the expectations for food policy council members and work groups members. Mark Woulf, now Business Services Manager of the City of Boulder, Colorado, was the first city employee to staff the food policy council, with the title of Food and Alcohol Policy Director. George Reistad assumed the position of Food Policy Director in 2016 upon Woulf's departure. The Food Policy Director's position remained under the Mayor's Office until late 2021, when the position was moved to the Economic Development Division and retitled. MFPC staffing duties are now shared between that position and a food systems specialist from the staff at Public Health of Madison and Dane County.

All MFPC meetings and work groups meetings are publicly noticed and publicly accessible. When there are no timely announcements at monthly MFPC meetings, staff members arrange presentations on various food system topics, which often attract a public presence. Other than these community presentations, there typically is not a large public presence at most MFPC meetings. One possible barrier is that monthly meetings are located in the early evening in a central downtown location – a time and location that are not accessible to all, especially folks with child care responsibilities and/or transportation barriers.

Over time, MFPC work groups developed landmark policies, initiatives, and projects to strengthen the city's food system. For example, the Edible Landscape work group created an interactive city map showing which parcels of land are owned by the city. Using this map, residents are now able to identify city-owned lots and rights-of-way near their homes and apply for permits to plant edible food in those locations. City staff also created a Food Access Improvement Map, showing census tracts with low access to food outlets and where household incomes are low, and designating these areas as focal points for improvement. The City uses this map to shape food system-related project and program funding, and encourages project development in those areas.

Two important MFPC programs provide financial resources for smaller community groups and food retail entrepreneurs, focusing on people of color and targeting areas of the City where healthy food access is limited. The SEED Grant program offers grants annually of between \$2,000 and \$10,000 to community organizations working to strengthen the Madison food system through innovative start-up projects.

The Healthy Retail Access Program provides larger grant amounts to small retailers and entrepreneurs located in city-designated healthy food access priority areas.

Applicants prepare proposals that receive initial concept review from the City’s Food Policy Director before being advanced to the respective grant committees. In a collaborative approach that supports community members’ efforts and breaks down the barrier of technical grant-writing expertise, applicants revise their applications – sometimes multiple times – in response to work group questions. Proposals then advance to the full MFPC for a final decision only when they are likely to be approved for funding. As former Food and Alcohol Policy Director Mark Woulf describes, these grants are “an investment *with* community not *upon* community” (Woulf 2020). Grantees have purchased coolers to stock fresh fruits and vegetables in their stores and mercados, purchased vans to make food deliveries to customers, and, in one instance, a female entrepreneur of color received funding to support the development of a small grocery store in a South Madison neighborhood that had lost its large grocery retailer. In that case, neighborhood residents were able to walk to shop at the smaller store, where before they had had to cross a large state highway to reach the big box store.

Perhaps the greatest MFPC policy success arose from the recent efforts of the Comprehensive Plan Work Group.⁷ Prior to 2018, Madison’s comprehensive plan had but cursory mention of the food system. While the City’s planning staff worked through an 18-month participatory planning process, the MFPC’s Comprehensive Plan Work Group sought out best practices for food systems planning from around the United States. Work group members, along with then-Food Policy Director Reistad, made recommendations for specific plan language, which was provided to staff for possible inclusion in the plan. The work group reviewed the resulting comprehensive plan elements as they were developed, requesting revisions to strengthen the plan’s language around the food system. As the comprehensive plan moved through the approval process, the work group’s members advocated for desired plan language in front of 17 boards, commissions, and committees with jurisdiction over the various plan chapters. In the end, the Comprehensive Plan Work Group succeeded at integrating food systems goals, objectives, strategies, and actions into every section of the comprehensive plan, including a call for a regional food systems planning process in the plan chapter on intergovernmental coordination.

9.5 COVID-19 Response

As in all communities across the country, COVID-19 necessitated rapid responses in Madison to overcome school closings, restaurant shutdowns, broken supply chains, and an increased need for community food. Food system actors in Madison

⁷One of the authors of this chapter (Caton Campbell) was a member of the Comprehensive Plan work group.

stepped up admirably to this task. Some stakeholders noted that COVID-19 increased the perceived importance of local food. Says Claire Strader, who has a position with Dane County Extension and FairShare CSA Coalition, “The Madison consumer is pretty well informed about local food and has fairly good access to local food. A strength is an educated consumer base that is ready to think about local food and accessing it, and that has become stronger since COVID. The safety of food is a consideration that people have and they feel local food is safer and it feels more accessible and tangible than a farm in California where you don’t have the same connection” (Strader 2020).

Some local growers were able to increase production to meet increased demand. For example, Rooted was able to pivot from education to production in light of COVID-19. At its Northside location, the organization expanded Troy Farm’s production by 50%, sold all of its market-rate CSA memberships in record time, and conducted a rapid response fundraising campaign to fully subsidize an additional 85 CSA memberships for food insecure families. FairShare CSA Coalition provided matching funds for the 85 shares. Troy Farm produce also made its way into the Northside Planning Council’s FEED To Go meals, prepared at their incubator kitchens.

In addition to the no-cost CSA shares offered by Rooted, the FairShare CSA Coalition partnered with Second Harvest food bank to distribute CSA boxes to food pantries. Madison has a high density of CSA options, which have thrived during COVID-19.

At Badger Rock Neighborhood Center, its South Madison location, Rooted tripled the number of community garden beds, brought its second hoop house (constructed during the 2019 growing season) into full production, conducted container garden giveaways, and plugged into the emergency food aggregation and distribution system for Southsiders. And, the Neighborhood Center became a grab-and-go breakfast and lunch site in the Madison Metropolitan School District’s food distribution program for the remainder of the school year and over the summer.

Rooted also shifted its educational programming to meet the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. With face-to-face summer programming for children and families an impossibility, Rooted staff took their gardening and cooking lessons to a Facebook live video format, posting recipes and ingredients in advance so that people could participate in real time or at a later date. Staff also shared the youth farm and kids’ garden harvest with community centers, delivering kits of ingredients and recipes to youth groups that normally would have participated in on site field trips.

However, other market channels suffered from the pandemic. Growers and processors which typically distributed to restaurants faced significant food waste, highlighting the lack of infrastructure for aggregation in Madison. As Carrie Edgar, Dane County Extension, recounts, “One thing positive that [may] come out of the COVID experience is we really need to invest in food infrastructure like aggregation, food storage, [and] distribution... Much of the milk raised in Dane County was going to one processor to make it into mozzarella for pizzerias. They didn’t need as much milk with pizzerias closed, so [the processors] asked all their producers to dump 20% of [their] milk. We didn’t have a way to collect that milk and bottle it.

We asked if they could make it into cheese. The food pantries didn't want it because it would come in 15 pound bags and we can't distribute 15 pounds of mozzarella. So it's like how do we store food? Who is on the ground aggregating?" (Edgar 2020).

Emergency food system organizations in Madison seemed to react with resiliency to the system shocks caused by COVID-19. As Catie Badsing of the CAC shared, "There's an awareness of the issues here, a strong willingness for people to help in the food system, and we have a really decentralized food system here. In a lot of states, pantries are run by one or two food banks. And that is efficient, but can lead to some weaknesses seen in this pandemic. We've had increased food pantry usage here, but not the lines you see in Texas. We have a really decentralized system and a hyperlocal focus for feeding agencies by territory or social group or age. There's a lot of agencies doing different things that they can drill down to what their slice of the community needs, which is less efficient but leads to a lot of resiliency" (Badsing 2020).

For example, REAP Food Group (Research, Education, Action and Policy on Food Group) put together 200 market boxes to be distributed weekly by promotoras (community health workers) from Roots4Change to families and individuals who were undocumented or were working in essential positions. Rooted's Badger Rock Neighborhood Center became a mini food hub for the program, where produce, meat, eggs, bread, and tortillas purchased by REAP from local farmers were aggregated, sorted, and boxed for distribution by Roots4Change.

The County also bolstered the local food bank, providing \$3 million to purchase food from local farms.⁸ While the increased donations to food banks were critical in this unprecedented time, storage of food and transportation remain key issues.

Hopefully, COVID-19 will spur Madison to address its public infrastructure deficiencies in aggregation and storage of food. Carrie Edgar shares a positive takeaway on the ramifications of COVID-19 on strengthening the local food system: "Agencies are sharing, especially larger pantries are making connections and sharing things in a way that's never happened before. So I think it's awful that it had to happen this way, but the pandemic is making good connections and really folks are working together in new ways" (Edgar 2020).

Both the Madison Food Policy Council and Dane County Food Council readjusted their work groups in light of COVID-19. Prior to May 6, 2020, the work groups of the Madison Food Policy Council included: (1) community engagement, (2) food waste and recovery, (3) healthy retail access, (4) healthy marketing and procurement, (5) pollinator protection and integrated pest management policy review task force, (6) SEED grants, and (7) urban agriculture. In light of COVID-19, both the Madison Food Policy Council and Dane County Food Council adopted the following joint work groups to address imminent needs exacerbated by the pandemic: (1) food relief, (2) pandemic food access, (3) food recovery and resilience, and (4) regional agriculture and food sovereignty.

⁸One key challenge with this funding is it must be used by July 2020. However, most vegetable farmers in Wisconsin do not harvest the bulk of their food until after July, posing a challenge of supply and demand and showing a poor understanding of agriculture at the County level.

By pivoting to current community needs, following the lead of boots-on-the-ground leaders, and developing new collaborations around immediate food needs, the Madison community responded to the pandemic within a framework of resiliency and collaboration.

9.6 Inclusivity

Equitable and inclusive urban agricultural frameworks work to redistribute power within the food system and make way for historically marginalized groups to realize food sovereignty. To be equitable, organizations should aim to be inclusive at all levels of an initiative from inception, to leadership, and impact. In a recent white paper, the Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD) Collaborative (2019) identifies indicators of EFOD starting with equity-and-justice-first as the primary indicator, but including place-based, market-oriented, community-developed, and community-owned indicators as hallmarks of equitable and inclusive food system development. Inclusivity is critical for any functioning food system to be a just food system. Racial and socioeconomic status diversity must permeate food policy council membership, board membership, training programs, land ownership opportunities, and organization staffing in order for a food system to be truly equitable. While many Madison and Dane County organizations in the public sector and the non-profit sector have taken steps to increase racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, substantial work remains to reach equity and justice. Ultimately, community members need to play leadership roles in food systems planning and policy development for the resulting plans and policies to have any long-term relevance (Raja and Diao 2016, p. 24).

Rooted asserts a “commit[ment] to enabling people to grow and thrive in healthy, equitable, and sustainable neighborhoods” (vision), through “collaborations in food, land, and learning” (mission) (Rooted n.d.). However, diversity has not always been a strength of the organization. According to Martin Bailkey, a founding board member of Community GroundWorks (now Rooted) and Rooted staff member, “Troy Gardens was initially seen as a white person’s project and people of color weren’t invited to participate. As a result when things were more or less set in place, the folks concerned about diversity looked around and saw that there wasn’t as much diversity as they would like” (Bailkey 2020). As a newly merged organization, there is an increased emphasis on racial equity, diversity, and inclusion at Rooted. The organization has chosen to begin its strategic planning process by articulating a racial equity, diversity, and inclusion vision and plan, which will become the foundation for the more traditional strategic planning process pertaining to programs and projects.

Similarly to Rooted, the Dane County Food Council began with mainly white middle-class members. As Carrie Edgar recounted, “when I came it was an all white middle-class council and none of them were engaged in farming or worked in the food system, but were passionate and people who would describe themselves as

activists. There's been some movement away from that to have farmers and food entrepreneurs represented, so someone with a sense of food retail, food waste streams, and looking at racial and ethnic diversity” (Edgar 2020).

When organizations begin as white-led and middle class-led, imbued norms and work culture stem from the comfort of white middle-class folks. Even if the organization works to expand its leadership at a later date, work cultures can be very difficult to change. Moreover, with white middle-class leadership and direction, it can be hard for other communities, such as Madison’s Hmong community for example, to feel accurately represented and included in urban agriculture policy.

As public participation in planning processes so often reveals, there exist tensions between MFPC’s desire to build community capacity through an inclusive and representative membership, and the formality demanded of participation in city decision-making processes. MFPC struggles with finding council membership that is fully representative of Madison’s demographics. The Council’s Community Engagement work group enlisted the help of the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future to address, from a racial equity lens, how the council could be more inclusive. One finding, which mirrors the findings of the Task Force on Government Structure, is that there is a tradeoff between the professionalization of the committee and inclusivity. As then-Madison Food Policy Director George Reistad observed, “This is highly professional work. Not just some random person off the street with no experience could jump in and do it. You have to have an interest in this field of work and that’s limited, and then also have time and capacity to put into city structure work, and then you have to be able to then serve on a regular basis to do that. A lot of folks in our group, they have a lot of leeway with their paying job to do work for the council because their supervisor supports the food policy council so people can take hours a week to focus on this because it's seen as a part of their job...23% of the African American population in Madison has a college degree and everyone on the food policy council has a college degree, it’s kind of a [tacit] requirement. If that becomes an unspoken requirement, you’ve eliminated 77% of people in this demographic group from being able to serve...I don’t want to say people of more diverse backgrounds can’t meet the rigidity of the food policy council, but it has been a challenge.” (Reistad 2020).

Reistad and others note that there are assets to having a highly professionalized committee. For example, professionals bring expertise from their field, an understanding of highly technical policy language, flexibility in work hours, ability to attend evening meetings downtown, fundraising connections, and other resources that lead to the effective accomplishment of work products in a timely manner. However, limiting council membership to individuals who are comfortable working in a highly professional environment oftentimes limits racial and socioeconomic status diversity. It also discounts experiential knowledge and other forms of expertise held by community members.

One option laid out by several stakeholders is for the MFPC to maintain the professional framework of the council, expand the diversity of work groups that have less stringent attendance requirements, and provide opportunities for community feedback and input that the council members will take into account through the

community engagement work group. However, this process still centers the leadership of white middle-class decision makers and assumes that they will listen intently and work from community feedback – a lofty assumption. The council uses a Racial Equity and Social Justice Analysis (RESJI) Tool developed by City staff as a tool to analyze the impacts of proposed policies. However, the RESJI tool does not pose questions about the structural impediments to fostering diverse representation, which is the question of inclusion tied most closely to the council.

Nan Fey, former chair of the Madison Food Policy Council, aptly sums up the perceived tradeoff of inclusivity in Madison: “If you’re going to make food policy for a community, you need to be confident you are hearing from the folks to whom it’s going to make a really big difference. I think that’s the most frustrating thing for me as a leader of the group, we’ve wanted more voices at the table and it’s so hard to get them there. And it’s not their fault. It’s the fault of our cumbersome procedures” (Fey 2020).

9.7 Codification

Codification is crucial to ensure the longevity of initiatives. A lack of codified urban agriculture policies can lead to the erosion of prior gains. For example, urban agriculture permitted as a temporary land use is vulnerable to shocks such as rising land values, developer interests, and changing political priorities. Initiatives that are not codified should be valued and often represent important antecedents to codification. However, whenever possible, initiatives should be codified so they can lay the groundwork and justification for future policy work. And, once urban agriculture initiatives and policies are codified, the strength of local government commitment can be expressed through budget allocations that support urban agriculture.

Working with community and conservation land trusts, as in the case of Troy Gardens, can be an effective way to ensure equity and codification of urban agricultural investments (Caton Campbell and Salus 2003). Troy Gardens is protected by two separate land trusts. The Madison Area Community Land Trust (MACLT) owns both the five-acre parcel of land containing 30 units of low-density, owner occupied, mixed-income housing, and the adjacent 26 acres of agricultural land and natural areas, which is leased to Rooted for their urban agriculture work. Rooted, an urban land trust, holds a conservation easement on the 26 acres it leases from MACLT, providing a second layer of protection for urban agricultural uses. Agreements such as these represent highly codified strategies that ensure hard-won equitable uses of space are not short-term gains.

The structure of food councils can also enhance or detract from codification. The Dane County Food Council is staffed by the UW-Madison Extension Dane County, while the Madison Food Policy Council is now staffed by Public Health of Madison & Dane County. The MFPC intentionally added alders to its membership to ensure that the body would survive politically past the tenure of the founding mayor. Having political support on the food policy council is an asset. According to Mark

Woulf, one strength of having political representation is that “you don’t have to lobby to get attention since [the food policy council] already has attention from city council members and they can be the champions with other city councilmembers.” Arguably, this attention from elected representatives allowed the Comprehensive Plan work group to wield greater influence at the board, commission, and committee levels with respect to the inclusion of food systems goals, objectives, and strategies, as the comprehensive plan made its way through the approval process during the summer of 2018.

Nan Fey noted that, “When we did our first comprehensive plan, I knew how important it was to get stuff in the plan you could point to and say you said you were going to do this, how are you going to do it...If you can point to an ordinance, there’s enforcement. If it’s best practices, we can watchdog it.” MFPC’s Comprehensive Plan Work Group succeeded in centering food in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan (City of Madison 2018). The word “food” is mentioned 104 times in the 112-page document, excluding appendices. Strategies, concepts, and definitions codified in the 2018 Comprehensive Plan include adding agricultural land as a valued land use, including “access to healthy food” as a “basic life-sustaining strateg[y]”, acknowledging the regional food system as a resource and opportunity in the local economy, adding food as an explicit contributor to creating community spaces and events, establishing the development of guidelines for growing food in the city as an action item, and adding an action item encouraging the City to work with Dane County to develop a regional food systems plan. Such permeation of food across the chapters of the comprehensive plan enables Madison’s Common Council to prioritize the MFPC’s work while still maintaining the priorities of the driving document. It also sets the policy stage for future community food systems planning work in Madison and, potentially, Dane County.

9.8 Conclusion

Madison and Dane County, Wisconsin, exemplify how urban agriculture can be a kind of ethics-in-action. Throughout this chapter, we have shown how individuals and organizations interact with regulatory processes in frameworks to achieve both organizational and more broadly social and community goals. We showed how earlier efforts in urban agriculture became a framework upon which new efforts were built, new jobs, like food policy director, were created, and new organizations emerged, took root, and are now bearing fruit. The City and County’s long history of steady local government regulatory progress supporting urban agriculture began in the mid-1960s with community gardens, and has extended to the City’s recently adopted comprehensive plan in 2018. At times, regulatory change was stimulated by urban agriculture innovation taking place in the nonprofit sector, such as the Troy Gardens project. That community- and nonprofit-sector-led project not only resulted in a novel application of the community land trust model to a 31-acre, mixed-use housing and urban agriculture development inside Madison’s municipal boundaries,

but eventually prompted the definition and inclusion of an urban agriculture district during the City's 2013 zoning code revision.

Madison and Dane County have demonstrated a history of strong intergovernmental cooperation in the development and overlapping membership of their respective food councils and work groups, the shared management partnership (with a nonprofit organization) of The Gardens Network, and their food councils' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Jointly adopting the same work groups and together tackling everything from immediate responses to emergency food needs to longer term work on healthy food access and planning for regional agriculture and food sovereignty, the City and County have exhibited their mutual dedication to weathering the COVID-19 crisis, and creating a more resilient community and regional food system in the future.

As is the case in many cities and regions, however, food systems policy and practice in Madison and Dane County, from the government to the nonprofit sector, has been dominated by white majority culture (however well-meaning folks might be) for decades. The spring and summer of 2020 brought the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and structural racism – and the racial disparities associated with them – into sharp relief across the United States. Food systems planning must be grounded in equitable and inclusive processes, and the communities with which and for whom we plan must be in a shared leadership role. The creation of the MFPC/DCFC joint Regional Agriculture and Food Sovereignty Work Group signals local government's acknowledgment that racial equity and inclusion must be put at the forefront of the City and County's food system planning efforts. What remains to be seen is how the process will unfold.

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Micaela F. Lipman's interests and expertise are in food system planning, community organizing, and anti-adulthood. She works to explore creative solutions where food policy, economic equality, and community organizing meet. She has experience facilitating food policy councils, evaluating local food access expansion programs, and connecting her students with food justice initiatives. Lipman received her Bachelor's of Science in Development Sociology from Cornell University (2015) and Master's of Urban and Regional Planning from the University at Buffalo (2021). She is currently pursuing a PhD at the University at Buffalo. In her free time, Micaela enjoys making pottery and acrylic collages as well as gardening with neighbors and playing board games with friends.

Marcia Caton Campbell is Executive Director of Rooted, a Madison (WI) urban agriculture and food systems organization. She is coauthor of *Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places, PAS Report No. 563* (American Planning Association, 2011), with Kimberley Hodgson and Martin Bailkey. A Past Chair of the American Planning Association's Food Systems Division, Caton Campbell was previously a faculty member in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She holds an MCRP and a PhD in city and regional planning from The Ohio State University.

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Chapter 10

The Practical Ethics of Urban Agriculture in Public Housing



Nevin Cohen , Michael Stein, Annie Hancock, and Alfonso Morales 

Abstract Urban agriculture planning encompasses ethical dimensions. In this paper, two cases of housing authority-led farming and gardening projects are presented. These cases, initiated by agencies in New York City, and Denver, Colorado, show that urban agriculture has multiple multidimensional benefits, including building skills, fostering community cohesion, educating residents, encouraging healthy eating and physical activity, and generally improving the day-to-day experiences of those living in public housing developments. Both cases illustrate various lessons about applied planning ethics and suggest necessary steps for the success of these projects. In these two cases, such situations unfold and produce new interactions. However, social problems persist, but so will opportunities. Attempts to harmonize competing claims is at the root of UA practices. The purpose of this paper is to show ethics-in-interaction in the two cases. We show how the ethics of UA requires consideration of the stated goal of urban agriculture projects and the implicit goals manifested in the process. Understanding the various impacts will shed light on the feasibility and sustainability of food system initiatives. If proven environmentally and economically sustainable, as well as successful in increasing the health, economic, and social outcomes of residents, public housing investment into sustainable development and food system initiatives similar to the two cases could act as a model for public housing redevelopment across the country.

N. Cohen (✉)

City University of New York (CUNY), New York City, NY, USA

e-mail: nevin.cohen@sph.cuny.edu

M. Stein

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC, USA

A. Hancock

Denver Housing Authority, Denver, CO, USA

e-mail: ahanco@DenverHousing.org

A. Morales

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI, USA

e-mail: morales1@wisc.edu

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10.1 Introduction

Public housing agencies across the US are responsible for providing safe, affordable homes for vulnerable populations, yet are burdened by aging infrastructure, widening budget deficits, and diminishing federal support. In light of these seemingly insurmountable challenges, the urban gardening and farming programs in many public housing developments can seem like marginal quality of life improvements for a small number of residents that do not address the root problems facing public housing. Given the difficulty of allocating scarce housing resources, competing demands for space within developments, and conflicting views of the value of urban food production by residents and housing agency staff, planners face important ethical choices in designing and implementing urban agriculture programs in public housing developments.

This chapter discusses the ethical dimensions of urban agriculture planning by presenting two cases of housing authority-led farming and gardening projects initiated by agencies in New York City and Denver, Colorado. Though different in design, operation, and scale, both cases involved normative planning decisions that required ethical choices. The most basic was the decision to consider urban agriculture as a means to address complex social and economic problems, from youth unemployment to crime to the lack of social cohesion. Public housing's existential challenges (e.g., opposition to public housing, aging physical plants, financial deficits, increasingly underserved populations) require strategic, boundary-spanning interventions that address critical needs of residents (e.g., economic opportunities, improved health, and social support) while also improving the perception of public housing to non-residents. Both cases show that urban agriculture can address these needs by building skills, fostering community cohesion, educating residents, encouraging healthy eating and physical activity, and generally improving the day-to-day experiences of those living in public housing developments. While these multidimensional benefits to residents do not address repair backlogs and financial woes, they improve quality of life and potentially the perception of public housing among residents and the general public.

Beyond the initial project aims, professionals in both cities had to make specific ethical choices about the physical design of the projects, related public programming, and engagement with diverse stakeholders, from ensuring resident participation to involving relevant community organizations. The cases illustrate several lessons about applied planning ethics and suggest necessary steps to make such projects successful. An important role for urban planners is to ensure that urban

agriculture projects meet the goals of housing authorities, other relevant city agencies, NGOs, and funders working to improve public housing. Planners also need to measure and communicate the benefits and costs of these projects and strategically connect their outcomes to larger urban planning issues.

In short, neither urban agriculture specifically nor spatial interventions to address social and economic problems generally are new to public housing. Since the start of federal public housing, authorities have either tolerated or actively fostered various urban greening projects, developing diverse interventions to build community cohesion and provide job training, nutrition support, child care, senior services, and other forms of support to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and to ensure development integrity. We turn now to reviewing recent developments at the intersection of public housing and urban agriculture.

10.2 Public Housing and Urban Agriculture

For low-income urban populations, including those in public housing, maintaining health can be difficult because of the direct and indirect costs (Hendrickson et al. 2006). One of the biggest factors affecting public health outcomes is nutritious food access and food security. Healthy foods tend to cost more, and insufficient financial resources present a barrier to acquiring healthy foods. In addition to costs of healthy foods, food insecurity, affecting about 49 million Americans, stems from inadequate distribution of food and the poor quality of the food distributed within low-income areas (Coleman-Jensen et al. 2014; Hendrickson et al. 2006). The rates of food insecurity are substantially higher in low-income communities than the national average for households with incomes at or above the federal poverty line (Coleman-Jensen et al. 2014). Food insecurity develops because of economic limitations and limited access to food (Larson et al. 2009). Food insecurity in the United States takes many forms, including lack of enough food to eat, lack of resources to purchase food, and lack of access to nutritional, safe foods (Adams et al. 2003). Food insecurity can exist with or without hunger (Bickel et al. 2000).

Physical and social infrastructures of urban environments play significant roles in shaping communities and can exacerbate poverty and food insecurity. The designated use, layout, and design of urban physical structures, including its housing, businesses, transportation, food system, and recreational resources, impact the local environment and influence community health. Municipalities control and manipulate the built environment through land use decisions, zoning, and community design decisions. Social, political, legal, and economic forces also exert significant influence on urban communities and their constituencies. These elements collectively play a critical role in determining the quality of low-income residents' health (Walker et al. 2010).

By the 1990s many urban housing facilities, especially isolated and segregated high-rises in large cities, were deemed failed projects. Embracing change and new policies, The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provided funding to housing authorities to redevelop and revitalize public housing. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 2012) Through HUD's 1992, \$6 billion HOPE VI Program, local housing authorities were provided with funds to demolish failing inner-city housing projects and replace them with new or refurbished mixed-income communities (Popkin et al. 2012). Based on the ideas of new urbanism, the renovations of inner-city public housing were meant to socially and economically benefit residents and neighborhoods by developing more diverse neighborhoods of opportunity (Joseph et al. 2007). Many of the HOPE VI renovations incorporated food system initiatives, in the form of community gardens, into their planning. These gardens aimed to reconnect public housing communities with surrounding neighborhoods, reduce crime by creating visible and usable public green spaces, and foster a sense of togetherness, in addition to growing fresh produce. Gardens were created through innovative architectural design, site planning, and social services with public housing communities.

Overall, urban community food system initiatives have been successful in improving health and food access in food insecure areas, including public housing communities (Dawson and Morales 2016; Larsen and Gilliland 2009; Morales 2009). While many community food systems cannot meet the nutritional needs of an entire urban area, they promote nutrition and increased social and community engagement, which have been found to reduce consumption of unhealthy foods (Ober Allen et al. 2008; Teig et al. 2009). In general, people engaged with local sustainable food system initiatives consume a more balanced diet (Wooten and Ackerman 2011), and participants in community gardens or community supported agriculture often increase their consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables (Litt et al. 2011). Besides improved consumption patterns, participation in local food systems is associated with changed perceptions and understanding of the benefits of healthy eating (Ober Allen et al. 2008). In addition to physical health, individuals and communities that participate in various food system activities can exhibit increased psychosocial wellbeing (Bradley and Galt 2014). The act of growing food helps improve mental and emotional health, as gardeners benefit from relaxation, socialization, and satisfaction from growing their own food (Bellows et al. 2003). Many project participants experience improved self-esteem and pride in their accomplishments (Bradley and Galt 2014).

Local food system activities can also serve as catalysts for revitalizing and uniting urban communities. Local laws and ordinances legitimize growing food in the urban core (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000). Bolstering the local food system can increase community connections and foster local economic activity (Brown and Bailkey 2002). Community gardens, for example, encourage neighbors from diverse cultures and generations to interact and collaborate with one another (Schukoske 1999). Gardens can also provide spaces for residents to meet, plan, and improve an area together, interactions that involve decision-making, planning, and sustained

engagement (Teig et al. 2009; Travaline and Hunold 2010). These social interactions can improve quality of life. Self-determination, self-reliance, and community activism are often needed to overcome barriers within urban agriculture, and advocacy and coalition building to foster urban agriculture enables communities to develop new generations of active and engaged citizens (Bradley and Galt 2014; White 2010). These types of food system projects provide marginalized, isolated communities with opportunities to network, interact, and create shared opportunities through growing and distributing food (Beckie and Bogdan 2010).

In addition to building communities, urban food system initiatives can provide new economic opportunities for entrepreneurs and commercial enterprises. For example, farmers' markets can generate income for local residents and keep money rotating within the community (Berg 2014). Urban agriculture programs enable community members to learn skills in planning, project management, agriculture, horticulture, and environmental science. Growing food for local markets can also teach business skills and provide additional income. The communal and socio-economic benefits of urban farming are wide-ranging and have the potential to directly improve community life.

Many urban food system initiatives provide skills training and job opportunities. In data collected on community food projects funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), urban food system initiatives provided an estimated 2300 jobs and incubated over 3600 microbusinesses (Kobayashi et al. 2010). The same community food projects were also responsible for training an estimated 35,000 farmers and gardeners in farming, sustainable agriculture, business management, and marketing (Kobayashi et al. 2010). These serve as viable employment opportunities, catalysts for entrepreneurial endeavors, and bolster neighborhood economies (Bradley and Galt 2014). Additionally, urban food system initiatives often engage with urban youth, providing them with tangible job training and other benefits such as fresh food and fair wages (Metcalf and Widener 2011). Participating in various aspects of food system initiatives can develop significant job related skills and experiences (Holland 2004).

The multidimensional outcomes of urban agriculture and related food system initiatives address several root causes of public housing challenges: under- and unemployment; health disparities; public safety and anomie; inadequate civic spaces. With proper planning, design, and implementation, urban agriculture projects in housing developments can benefit residents and build support for public housing that will have long-term impacts.

10.3 Case 1: Farms at NYCHA

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) launched the Farms at the NYCHA (FAN) initiative to achieve four outcomes: (1) youth development and workforce training; (2) landscape transformation to improve public safety and environmental conditions; (3) increased community engagement and cohesion; and

(4) improved diets and health. FAN consists of large urban farms that have been built and operated in the center of six New York City public housing developments. The first farm was built in 2013, followed by the construction of three additional farms in 2016 and two more farms in 2018. The farms were built and are farmed by young adults who live in NYCHA developments who are trained and supervised by the non-profit organization Green City Force (GCF) and supported by funds from AmeriCorps.

An ethical dimension of planning involves evaluating interventions to ensure they are producing expected outcomes, communicating benefits and costs, and assessing whether and to what extent programs address broader planning dilemmas, from social cohesion to stormwater management. The following data come from a three-year evaluation that included resident surveys, focus groups with residents and farmers, and the analysis of farm operations data (CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute 2019).

10.3.1 Urban Agriculture as a Response to NYCHA Challenges

The multi-dimensional benefits of urban agriculture are particularly relevant to public housing developments whose residents face inter-connected economic, health, and social challenges. For example, the six FAN developments have 8024 apartments housing more than 18,000 residents, which is 4.5% of NYCHA's total population. The median household income is \$22,718, less than half the NYC median household income (Ibid). More than 80% of the households in the six developments are headed by a single adult, and one-third of residents are younger than 19. Households depend to a large extent on public benefits, like SNAP and public assistance, with nearly 40% of those surveyed noting that they have been concerned about having enough food to feed their family in the previous 30 days, a rate more than twice the 2014 NYC food insecurity rate of 16.4% (Stampas and Koible 2016). Data from the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) on specific health conditions of public housing residents *overall* indicates consistently poorer health outcomes than those who do not live in public housing, with 19.0% of public housing residents reporting ever having had diabetes and 37.4% reporting ever having high blood pressure versus 11.8% and 27.2%, respectively, for NYC residents not residing in public housing. More than 65% of public housing residents report being overweight or obese, while the rate among residents not residing in public housing is 57.4%. In general, public housing residents report consuming fewer fruits and vegetables and more sugar-sweetened beverages than people not living in public housing (CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute 2019).

An ethical approach to urban agriculture design involves addressing the goals of different entities that can benefit from these projects: public agencies; NGOs supporting housing development residents; and philanthropies. FAN is a partnership

among several agencies and nonprofit organizations. It was the initiative of Building Healthy Communities (BHC), a citywide partnership to improve health outcomes in twelve NYC neighborhoods led by the NYC Mayor's Office of Strategic Partnerships and the Fund for Public Health NYC (FPHNYC). The project also involves NYCHA, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, Green City Force (GCF), and community organizations specializing in urban agriculture that provide technical assistance and farming support. FAN also relies on the involvement of NYCHA residents and staff and local police precincts, public libraries, and other agencies and groups operating near each development.

10.3.2 Youth Development and Workforce Training

The engagement and training of NYCHA youth through the GCF Farm Corps program is a major objective. GCF hires, trains, and supervises Service Corps Members (CMs) to build and farm the sites, provide public programming, and manage weekly farm-stands that distribute the harvested produce free to residents in exchange for kitchen scraps for composting or volunteering. Corps Members (CMs) also provide nutrition education programs, host school groups, deliver cooking demonstrations, and informally interact with residents during their shifts. The aims are not only for the CMs to become activated members of their communities, educating their peers, families, and neighbors, but also to gain leadership and workforce skills. In the three years of evaluation, GCF enrolled 111 Corps Members, with 96% of the 2017 cohort (the latest data available) transitioning into full time work or school within 6 months of completing the training program (CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute 2019). Interview and focus group data also indicate that the FAN has supported the social-emotional development and leadership capacity of young NYCHA residents serving as CMs (Ibid).

10.3.3 Landscape Transformation

An important ethical dimension of planning is the allocation of public space to achieve community goals. FAN was designed to transform the landscape of the six FAN developments by turning underused land into working farms that serve as active community spaces for NYCHA residents that decrease vandalism and crime, increase perceived safety, improve quality of life by greening spaces and producing environmental co-benefits such as organic waste diversion and stormwater absorption. A convenience sample survey of residents and focus group data showed that residents consider the farms and surrounding spaces safer than other parts of their development. All FAN sites, except one, experienced decreases in total violations and misdemeanors, with reductions at three farms significantly greater than the

reduction in misdemeanors and violations within NYCHA developments overall. In terms of environmental change, between 2016 and 2018 the farms turned 13,816 pounds of organic waste into compost, saving more than \$3,000 in refuse collection and disposal costs, and absorbed an estimated 513,500 gallons of rainwater, a storm-water diversion benefit that the city has valued at more than \$300,000 (Ibid).

10.3.4 Community Engagement

The socioeconomic challenges of NYCHA residents, combined with the high rise, high-density design of most NYCHA developments, makes community cohesion difficult. FAN activities have been successful in promoting community engagement and cohesion by engaging residents and serving as places for community interactions. The six sites had more than 14,000 farm stand visitors, engaged 2,490 students in farm-based learning activities, and held 411 community events (Ibid). Resident surveys indicated that FAN farm activities had inspired residents to get involved in other kinds of activities in the development, providing a possible link for ongoing community engagement and cohesion. An important role of the CMs is to engage residents in farm activities, which they accomplish by attending development events or by knocking on apartment doors to tell people about the farm activities. Focus groups revealed that residents and CMs alike considered the farms as hubs for community building and as places to gather with neighbors and meet new people.

10.3.5 Diet and Health

The farms produced and distributed more than 56,000 pounds of produce from 2016–2018 with a retail value of nearly \$119,000. This estimate is conservative because residents have harvested some produce themselves and some produce gets distributed without being weighed and recorded. On average, residents received 3.7 pounds of produce per farm-stand visit (Ibid).

The farm output only supplies an estimated 1.2% of the recommended daily vegetable servings to residents, though the program does not aim for the farms to produce sufficient produce to feed each development. Instead, FAN aims to encourage vegetable consumption, and nearly half the residents surveyed reported that getting vegetables from the farm has meant that they eat more vegetables, and 74% of farm-stand survey respondents reported that the farm has encouraged them to eat more vegetables (Ibid). These data are consistent with focus group data that suggest that exposure to new varieties of vegetables and cooking demonstrations at the farms led to increased and more varied vegetable consumption.

10.4 Case 2: Food System Initiatives at the Denver Housing Authority

10.4.1 *Denver: Opportunities and Growth*

The local food revolution is prevalent throughout the Denver area, as evident by the popularity of local farmers markets, the growing number of restaurants and grocery stores providing local foods, burgeoning farm-to-institution programs, and growing community supported agriculture networks (Shuman 2013). Food, loosely defined, is responsible for 5–10% of the Denver economy (Shuman 2013). Of the roughly 48,300 food systems jobs in the city, three quarters are in the restaurants and food service trades and the remainder are split evenly between food retail and food manufacturing (Shuman 2013). Currently, less than 1% of food that is consumed in the Denver metro-region is produced in Colorado. More robust local and regional food system programs would allow Denver to capture a larger portion of the \$5.7 billion in economic activity associated with the city's food system.

In Denver, local food system initiatives can become part of a powerful economic development and revitalization strategy. Supporting local food systems offers a variety of benefits that include bolstering the local economy, creating jobs, providing ecological protection, as well as advancing improved nutrition, public health, and civic engagement. The Denver Housing Authority (DHA) is leading the way in utilizing food system initiatives to increase food access, and help create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities. Engaging with the City of Denver and various community partners, the DHA has been successful in developing food system initiatives aimed at strengthening health, economic opportunities, and social well-being of the community.

The DHA has been a leader within the community and the nation in promoting public and community health through investments in new urbanist infrastructure. A quasi-municipal corporation, DHA currently administers nearly 6,000 tenant-based vouchers and 4,500 public housing units in 32 properties throughout the Denver area. Through collective efforts with numerous local, state and national agencies, as well as with local residents, businesses, and community-based organizations, the DHA aims to address community and public health issues, including improved resident mobility, access to healthy food, increased energy-efficient residences, and neighborhood social cohesion (Christensen et al. 2012). Overall the DHA is in the process of revitalizing and redeveloping housing facilities that create holistic healthy neighborhoods. Their projects include pedestrian-friendly landscaped areas, greenspace enhancements, community gardens, food hubs to bring fruits and vegetables into the neighborhood through existing local markets, new stores, and farmers' markets (Ibid). The DHA's commitment to fostering development of local food systems could revolutionize Denver's urban public housing communities. However, many of the DHA food system initiatives would not have been possible without local laws and policies that enabled the development of urban food system initiatives within

the city, along with federal housing policies that promoted sustainable public housing revitalization and redevelopment.

10.4.2 Denver Housing Authority Theory of Change

As part of its redevelopment programs, the DHA sets out to do more than change the physical structure of the community. They seek to operationalize three community related goals, each nested in distinct ethical impulses, that the DHA seeks to reconcile in the course of developing relationships and implementing initiatives:

- Enhance the Neighborhood
 - Replace the concentration of poverty with mixed-income housing, and help develop a mixed-income neighborhood
 - Restore community connections and create a pedestrian-friendly environment
 - Create desirable and affordable housing in the city of Denver
 - Bring new resources and beautification to the neighborhood
- Spur Outside Investment into the Surrounding Community
 - Increase property values
 - Re-define and revitalize the neighborhood
- Revitalize the Community
 - Remove major sources of community blight
 - Build upon previous successful revitalization

Building upon these principles, DHA has incorporated them into a Healthy Living Initiatives toolkit (HLI) (Christensen et al. 2012). The HLI is a place-based revitalization that incorporates the built environment as a determinant of health outcomes for DHA residents. In doing so, the HLI establishes physical, mental, and community health as factors necessary to understand how community redevelopment actions impact the quality of life for public housing residents. The Healthy Living Initiative addresses environmental and social determinants of health, which include healthy housing, environmental stewardship, sustainable and safe transportation, social cohesion, public infrastructure, and healthy economy. While taking these factors into consideration, the Healthy Living Initiative is not a stagnant idea, but a flexible and adaptable tool for revitalization of DHA public housing. The Initiative's framework is intended to be a living implementation tool for designers, developers, and practitioners (Ibid).

As a major part of its redevelopment strategy, the DHA is facilitating a variety of food system initiatives that encourage healthy food access, healthy living, and community building. Overall, the DHA food system projects aim to improve access to healthy locally grown food, promote physical activity and wellbeing, and foster community development. The various projects have also increased community

connections, improved the local environment, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and bolstered local economic activity.

Throughout its redevelopment projects, the DHA has utilized many cutting edge environmental and sustainable practices in order to create a culture of health and sustainability and incorporate individualized “Healthy Living Initiatives” (HLI). Each HLI category, except transportation, addresses issues that directly or indirectly impact food system initiatives. Food system initiatives help the DHA meet all of its environmental stewardship requirements, increase social cohesion, develop public infrastructure, promote a healthy economy, and create vibrant housing communities. Moreover, DHA food system initiatives promote sustainable agriculture and increased access to quality foods.

10.4.3 Ethics of Agriculture Initiatives at the Denver Housing Authority

As with any community engagement project within public housing, there exist both sociological and ethical dimensions that involve assessment and evaluating of interventions to ensure they are producing expected outcomes, do not create unexpected challenges or negative consequences, and how the interventions address larger issues. One of the main issues with food system initiatives stem from equity issues and ecological challenges. Oftentimes food system initiatives aimed at low-income communities can be perceived as paternalistic, harkening back to eighteenth and nineteenth century Americanization practices (Pollans and Roberts 2014). “If they only knew...” how their food choices, eating habits, and urban environments impact them and their families, they would be willing to change their eating habits and make the extra effort to produce or purchase local and organic produce. Many proponents of urban agriculture, especially programs aimed at communities of color, immigrant communities, and lower-income communities, often tout these ideas directly or indirectly (Guthman 2008a).

This idea of accountability and self-help, facilitated by the DHA, can reflect a neoliberal mentality that has permeated the health and environmental movements. This mentality suggests food insecure residents should educate themselves and take food access and health matters into their own hands (Guthman 2008b). The DHA food system initiatives must assure residents that while they are touting personal responsibility, it is not premised on the belief that there is a single correct manner of living and eating that will lead to good health, cultural assimilation, and community acceptance into mainstream American culture (Pollans and Roberts 2014).

The ethical issues of planning and community development arise in the use of land and resources, and the questions around the investment and expected outcomes. Could the investment into local food system initiatives be utilized more effectively and achieve more substantial outcomes? Often the community and social benefits advertised by food system initiatives (increased public health, social cohesion,

community building, food access, etc.) can be accomplished just as well through other means. Devoting land and resources to food system initiatives involves tradeoffs, such as putting in gardens instead of a health clinic, grocery store, or community center. While devoting land and resources to urban food system initiatives can be beneficial, it can also raise concerns about the process for decision-making and the identity of the decision makers (Pollans and Roberts 2014).

Decisions about food systems must be context specific depending on land use, public policy, and community determination. That is why the DHA incorporates Healthy Living Initiatives into its programming, and collaborates with community groups and residents, while seeking to leverage connections in order to ensure the most effective and equitable food system initiatives.

10.4.4 Denver Housing Authority Redevelopment

DHA incorporates food system initiatives into these redevelopment goals, integrating community gardens and urban agriculture throughout public housing communities. Starting in 1994, the DHA began redevelopment of Denver's largest public housing residence, Quigg Newton Homes (Burton et al. 2002). Part of the renovations included the construction of an on-site food bank and health clinic. Survey studies of Quigg Newton Homes residents indicated few reported issues of hunger or food insecurity (Stewart 2000).

Within the Curtis Park neighborhood, DHA worked on the revitalization and rebranding of the "Villages at Curtis Park", a neighborhood which consists of a patchwork of DHA-acquired properties (McCormick 2009). Within an undeveloped site in the Curtis Park neighborhood is the DHA's Sustainability Park, an active green space that showcases urban agriculture and sustainable development. The 2.7 acre park featured pilot projects, including LED streetlights, sidewalks made of recycled materials, solar lighting, a bike share station, and several urban agriculture ventures that include an urban farm, as well as education and training programs for Denver youth. The Sustainability Park also hosted a local festival "The Big Wonderful," which featured a weekly outdoor craft fair and food market (The Big Wonderful n.d.). The DHA's revitalization efforts improved the character and quality of living in the historic Curtis Park neighborhood, increasing the property values, and investment of its surrounding communities. The Sustainability Park, rebranded S*Park has been impacted by additional development, but efforts have been made to retain the commitment to supporting urban agriculture ventures. These revitalized properties have both helped transform the Curtis Park neighborhood into a thriving mixed community and worked to combat overwhelming displacement concerns (McCormick 2009).

The Park Avenue neighborhood exemplifies the DHA approach, incorporating food system initiatives into their redevelopment goal, by weaving community gardens and urban farms throughout the community. Recognizing that these types of initiatives require additional support, DHA partners with Denver Urban Gardens

(DUG) to establish urban gardens on the site that serve local residents as well as connect the Ebert Elementary School and senior living Bean Tower communities (Denver Housing Authority 2015). These sites have become places of education and enrichment, as well as food production. Overall, DHA's redevelopment of Park Avenue revitalized the surrounding neighborhood, connected residents to the community, and helped them gain access to healthy foods.

DHA also redeveloped the La Alma/Lincoln Park neighborhood housing communities. Called Mariposa, this area has instituted advanced programming to support health throughout the community. A Healthy Living Coordinator, Patient Navigator, and Service Coordinator on-site organize walking groups, health classes, and other services for residents. Mariposa also boasts multiple community gardens for residents to grow produce, as well as a more advanced urban farming program. The site also hosts the Osage Café which offers healthy eating options and food system job training, in a neighborhood once beset with food insecurity issues. The capstone phase of the Mariposa redevelopment will include 1035 Osage, a collaborative resource facility designed to meet the needs of the Mariposa Community. Housed on the first floor of 1035 will be a local Mercado, Choice Market, which will provide healthy grab and go food options for residents and local businesses. Choice Market will work directly with DHA's Youth Employment Academy (YEA) to provide onsite job training for youth.

DHA is also in the process of revitalizing the Sun Valley public housing community. Currently the most isolated and distressed public housing community in the Denver area, Sun Valley is being redesigned to foster healthy residents, a healthy environment, and a healthy economy. Working in collaboration with the Denver Botanic Gardens, DHA recently completed the temporary installment of the Grow Garden, a 2,000 sq. ft. of raised large scale plots to foster urban farming efforts. The Grow Garden is an ongoing effort to support seasonal produce production, infuse healthy food options into the existing Sun Valley food desert, and establish a food system incubation space. Ultimately, the Grow Garden will provide fresh produce to the Grow Market, a food hub housed in the first phase of the Sun Valley transformation plan.

10.5 Food System Initiatives within the Denver Housing Authority

10.5.1 Community Gardens

Recognizing the social, emotional, and physical health of gardening, the DHA has made it a priority to incorporate garden plots in both existing and new developments. Partnering with Denver Urban Gardens (DUG), a Denver based non-profit that works to cultivate community through gardening, DHA has constructed 11 community gardens across the city. Over the past few years, the DHA gardens have

helped foster community and improve health outcomes by bridging cultural divides and putting fresh vegetables on the table.

The DHA community gardens are a collaboration between the resident gardeners, Local Resident Councils (LRC), property management, and service coordinators. The 11 community gardens provide approximately 8,800 sq. ft. of gardening space available to residents in 13 of the 20 developments. The majority are small raised bed plots, but they vary widely in terms of size and numbers. The popularity of gardening has increased considerably across the DHA properties over the past few years that gardeners are subdividing plots and property managers are working to build additional gardening space. Of the 202 plots, 95% are occupied every summer. Any plots not being planted by resident gardeners are used by local community organizations such as the Bridge Project, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, or early childhood educational programs as educational tools. Using a measurement tool developed in 2017, DHA grew an estimated 4,000 lbs. of produce across the 11 gardens. The measurement tool combines row length, standard seed distance, and approximate annual plant yield to estimate garden productivity. This tool allows service coordinators to assess yield throughout the summer instead of relying on hundreds of residents to weigh and document produce.

Apart from the high annual vegetable yield and influx of fresh food into the urban fabric, the gardens are an important tool to combat social isolation, improve physical, emotional, and mental health outcomes, and bring communities together. The gardens work as a programmatic intervention that combines community and education and shifts the responsibility of growing, maintaining, and harvesting back on the resident. At the start of the gardening season, residents, service coordinators and community volunteers come together to complete an annual clean up where they prep beds, put down new soil and compost, and weed around the plots. Throughout the year, gardeners gather for trainings and harvest parties where they can learn new skills and share their harvest. Gardening also helps bring the residents outside and work with their hands. The physical health benefits of working in the garden are integral to maintaining positive health outcomes in the community.

10.5.2 Urban Farms

More intensive than community gardening, the majority of urban farming at the DHA is managed by the Denver Botanic Gardens. Currently there are two intensive urban farms located at the Mariposa development, which combined create 2,100 sq. ft. of growing space and a new urban farm in Sun Valley with an additional 2,000 sq. ft. of growing space. While not enormous, these plots produce roughly 2,000 lbs. of produce that is distributed to DHA residents. The Denver Botanic Gardens has also developed an urban farming program and curriculum that provides DHA with training.

10.5.3 Food Distribution

While the DHA doesn't engage directly in food distribution, a number of their sites serve as access points where residents and surrounding community members can come together to engage in their local food system. The Mariposa Community plays host to weekly farmers' markets throughout the summer. These markets allow people to utilize SNAP/EBT benefits to purchase locally produced foods. The subsidized farmers' market stands provide residents affordable access to healthy local fruits and vegetables in addition to bringing together both DHA residents and surrounding community members.

The majority of the residents living at the senior/disabled properties and family row type developments are eligible for the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). The CSFP works to improve the health of low-income elderly persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA Foods. In order to improve food accessibility, the DHA facilitates USDA commodity food drop off points at 16 of the public housing developments.

There are many instances of food distribution facilitated by the DHA and various partner organizations. These primarily include produce delivery and distribution efforts from a variety of partners, including local churches, food pantries, community organizations, etc. These distribution programs increase residents' access to healthy locally produced fruits and vegetables and provide much needed food assistance to community members that cannot obtain food on a regular basis.

The DHA is working to further increase access to healthy food options through collaborations with other city entities, including the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Denver Public Schools. Through a unique collaboration with DHS and Hunger Free Colorado, a Colorado based nonprofit combating food insecurities, DHA is working to improve access to benefit programs, such as SNAP. DHA has also partnered with DPS and the State of Colorado to act as host sites for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The SFSP helps DHA youth access free and healthy summer meals, combating food scarcity and building community.

10.5.4 Education and Job Training

Education and outreach regarding healthy fresh foods are important aspects of increasing food access for low-income residents. In many of the DHA food distribution and community garden programs, the DHA and community partners provide healthy eating, nutrition, fresh foods, and local food systems training. The DHA noticed that oftentimes residents lacked understanding regarding the proper preparation and use of fresh products from farmers markets, especially foods that were not part of the DHA residents' culinary cultures and traditions. In response, recipe cards, cooking demonstrations, and healthy eating classes were incorporated into the DHA's

food system initiatives. This education increased access and awareness of healthy fresh products and resources that are available to members of the DHA community.

Recently, the DHA built a small outdoor kitchen at Hirschfeld Towers, one of its senior/disabled facilities. Adjacent to a small community garden, the outdoor kitchen is used as a teaching space. Cooking and canning classes are taught by volunteers, some of whom are themselves DHA residents. The outdoor kitchen illustrates how community gardening can be combined with education initiatives to increase the impact of the DHA's food system initiatives.

In addition to resident education and enrichment programs, the DHA also runs the Youth Employment Academy (YEA). The YEA provides mentoring, education, employment and training services that assist in addressing the educational, job readiness, and career exploration goals of low-income youth in the Denver area. Available to both DHA residents and members of the greater Denver community, the classes offered by YEA include reading, writing, math, technology/computer software basics, job readiness, occupational skill training, career exploration, and leadership development.

The YEA Culinary Academy provides community youth with job training in culinary arts and hospitality management. Students attend culinary arts classes and receive hands-on experience at Osage Café, a full-service café and catering business located on a DHA property. The Culinary Academy also manages its own garden plot and utilizes produce and ingredients produced by the DHA's urban gardens. The DHA Culinary Academy is a locally respected resource for healthy cooking and eating education. Even DHA residents not interested in food service employment take classes at the Culinary Academy to learn the basics of healthy food preparation. In providing this service, the DHA affords residents the opportunity to improve their understanding of healthy food choices.

10.5.5 Food Hubs

A place to link food and agricultural enterprises with the larger community, the Horse Barn is a large DHA owned building located in Denver's Five Points neighborhood. The building space helps link nearby urban farms to global agriculture technology by acting as a hub for thirty international-development nonprofits located in the building. In addition to housing enterprises, Horse Barn also comprises a large commercial kitchen for healthy-cooking demonstrations and nutrition classes, a demonstration garden with horticultural training, and a seasonal farmers' market that sells low-cost organic produce and accepts SNAP/EBT benefits. These programs, while not run by the DHA, support the broader community food system and have significant environmental, community, and public health impact in the surrounding neighborhood.

The DHA has also discussed incorporating a food hub into its proposed Sun Valley redevelopment. This food hub could include infrastructure that supports seasonal produce production and markets, as well as provide space and equipment for

the development of co-ops and food distribution outlets. A food hub located within a DHA site could expand farmer access to urban markets with DHA residents and beyond, and increase access to healthy fruits and vegetables for low-income consumers (Cohen and Derryck 2011). A food hub would also likely increase economic opportunities and viability within low-income neighborhoods (Schmit et al. 2013).

Overall, many of the food system initiatives undertaken by the DHA have helped to revitalize neighborhoods and unify communities. In many places they have become seasonal events where people gather to purchase food and socialize. The DHA sees sustainable development and food system initiatives as vital components of increased health and community building.

10.5.6 Challenges and Opportunities

Finding space and resources in cities for food system initiatives can be one of the most challenging tasks. Community gardens and urban agriculture need land and water. Food hubs, distribution, and education take space and resources. In most urban areas, local and state governments have primary control over land use, which can significantly impact the formation of urban agriculture programming (Pollans and Roberts 2014). As a result, land in urban areas for agriculture can be at a premium. Municipalities and urban producers often have to be creative when it comes to land access for urban agriculture. A number of cities are creating space for urban farms by making publicly owned land such as parks available to urban agricultural programs, endorsing land trusts, leasing public lands to gardening projects, and repurposing vacant lots (Berg 2014).

With a significant amount of land, high demand for local foods, and numerous community and health benefits, the DHA plans to continue fostering and developing urban agricultural programming within its properties. Nevertheless, the DHA is not in the business of farming, and requires other community partners to help facilitate food system administration and programming.

Community food systems innovations are nothing new, and they are not without challenges. The success of community food system initiatives depends on the community, the municipality, the support structure, the law, and the urban planning decisions. As part of revitalization and redevelopment programs food system initiatives can bring health, economic, social, and environmental benefits to low-income urban neighborhoods. The city of Denver and the DHA have been committed to the development and success of urban food system initiatives as part of its platform for redevelopment and revitalization. The municipality has changed and augmented laws to be more favorable to urban food system development, and the people within the city of Denver have grasped and championed local food system development. By embracing sustainable development goals and building local partnerships, the DHA has incorporated innovative food system initiatives that are creating healthy and sustainable communities. DHA residents, the surrounding community, and the city of Denver have embraced the various food system initiatives and are starting to see

the benefits, including safer neighborhoods, healthier residents, cleaner environments, and closer connections to the land and the community.

As shown by the DHA, food system initiatives within the public housing context can have profound impacts on health and improve access to healthy locally grown food, promote physical activity and wellbeing. This helps facilitate substantial and meaningful change within marginalized low-income urban communities.

10.5.7 Outcomes and Next Steps in Denver

There are many challenges to successful implementation of food system initiatives. The DHA food system initiatives are a work in progress. However, walking through the DHA sites and engaging with members of the communities, it is clear that there are positive impacts of these programs. Sites that were once vacant parcels of land are now full of families enjoying the flowers, plants, and butterflies that inhabit a local community garden. Areas that were once considered food deserts have weekly farmers markets, cooking classes, and even a full-service farm-to-table café.

The study of local food system initiatives is a new and evolving field of study. Food system initiatives and their impact on public health and community health are difficult to directly evaluate due to numerous external factors that could potentially influence the outcomes. A full impact analysis of food system initiatives is a complex undertaking. However, understanding the various impacts will shed light on the feasibility and sustainability of food system initiatives. If proven environmentally and economically sustainable, as well as successful in increasing the health, economic, and social outcomes of residents, public housing investment into sustainable development and food system initiatives similar to DHA, could act as a model for public housing redevelopment across the country.

10.6 Conclusion

Howe and Kaufman (1979) observed that in urban planning the process (means) and the final result (ends) both present important ethical challenges that planners should consider. Their work shows how practicing planners may not attend to ethics as much as more practical issues. This experience is only a guide. We show in this chapter how the ethics of UA means and ends relationships requires consideration of not only the stated goal of urban agriculture projects, but the implicit goals manifested in process and process-oriented tools deployed in project/program implementation. Thus, we recognize the complicated circumstances in which urban agriculture unfolds by showing how UA projects often have multiple goals, particularly in public housing contexts.

The DHA and NYCHA are both land rich, owning many properties and vacant lots in various stages of development. By partnering with food system organizations

in the area, both organizations have been able to make productive use of vacant land, while providing residents and the surrounding community with access to food and other benefits of local food system production. Often the organizations provide access to their land at little to no cost to their partner organizations, and in many cases they both also subsidize the water and energy needs of the partner organizations that use authority land for food production and distribution. This support is often the only way that small food system organizations are able to begin and sustain operations. We might also argue it is the best way, and that such public / private partnerships using community, shared-use agreements, or other types of agreements actually realize mutual purposes and are thus examples of pro-social ethics in application. Allowing food system organizations to use land and resources for little to no cost helps the organizations fulfill their commitments to residents and housing communities. Providing land and resources to facilitate food system initiatives also allows the organizations to fulfill the policies of their own programs, the Healthy Living Initiative program in Denver and the GCF Food Corps in New York.

In summary, it is the orientation to process found in both organizations (as well as good scholarship) that acknowledges that each new situation has new requirements for interaction. We demonstrate in these two examples how such situations unfolded and produced new interactions. We recognize that social problems will always exist; so too, will opportunities. Even if ideals may not be realized, we show here how attempts to harmonize competing claims is at the root of UA practices. Process, practice, and results are what matter, and these are realized in particular relational contexts. Thus, in short, we hope readers understand our demonstration of ethics-in-interaction in the two cases. First, by recognizing both successes and failures in advancing ethical considerations in the face of difficulties with financing, partners, and/or changes in project goals. And second, by showing how circumstances may have constrained or enabled UA practitioners and organizational partners to advance their various goals.

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Nevin Cohen is an Associate Professor at the CUNY School of Public Health and Director of the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute. His research explores the policies, practices, and infrastructure to support just, healthy, and resilient urban food systems. Current projects include a food environment equity dashboard for New York City, a five-country study of the food, water, and energy nexus of urban agriculture, research on mobility patterns and food retail access, and a study of online grocery use by SNAP participants. Dr. Cohen co-authored *Beyond the Kale: Urban Agriculture and Social Justice Activism in New York City* (University of GA Press). He has a PhD in Urban Planning from Rutgers University, a Masters in City Planning from the University of California, Berkeley, and a BA from Cornell University.

Michael Stein is an attorney who is passionate about our food and agricultural systems. He has focused his career on law and policy issues addressing environmental, social, and economic impacts of our food systems. He has a J.D. and M.S. in Environment and Resources from the University of Wisconsin, and currently works on food and agricultural policy as Professional Staff and Counsel for the U.S. House of Representatives.

Annie Hancock serves as the Director of Resident and Community Connections for the Denver Housing Authority (DHA). Annie held the role of Development and Communications Program Manager for the Real Estate Investment Department, supporting master planning initiatives and community engagement. Annie held the role of Health and Aging Programs Manager for four years at DHA, working directly in the community to enhance health and aging outcomes in the resident population. Annie has a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Colorado and a master's degree in Public Health from the Colorado School of Public Health.

Alfonso Morales is Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor in the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He is also Chair of the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture. Originally from rural New Mexico with roots in family farming there and in west Texas, he is a researcher, advocate, and practitioner/consultant on food systems and public markets. He has been invited to speak on these topics nationally and internationally. He cofounded farm2facts.org, used in farmers markets around the country and co-created the USDA Local Food Economics toolkit, among other scholarly and public-facing activities.

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Chapter 11

Ethical Lessons from Yesteryear: A History of Black Buffalo's Struggle for Food and Equity



Domonique Griffin , Gabriella Hall, and Alexander J. Wright

Abstract Historically, Black Buffalonians have adopted formal and informal means of eliminating disparities in the food system. While some of these efforts concentrate solely on improving food access, or people's ability to procure healthy and affordable food, there have also been efforts to use food as a means of transforming the economic reality of Black communities. This chapter builds on the existing body of black studies and food justice literature to examine the intersections between local food politics and ethics. Utilizing Buffalo, New York, as a case study, this chapter will explore the efforts and ethics of Black residents who envisioned food as a means to transform the sociopolitical landscape of the city. In doing so, we uncover how different groups were driven by the ethics of process and results, and embodied principles of ethical engagement outlined by Howe and Kaufman even before their time. The historical underpinnings of black food work in Buffalo, N.Y. offer valuable lessons about the accomplishments, challenges, and potential next steps toward creating community-oriented food systems.

Keywords Black activism · Ethics · Black history · Cooperatives · Food equity · Food justice · Black food activists · Black Buffalo

11.1 Introduction

Across the United States today, there are a host of community gardens, urban farms, and cooperatives that arose from a larger movement of residents seeking more voice and control in the food system. As the domestic and international fight for food justice persists, communities across the U.S. are becoming increasingly more aware of the need to amplify the agency of residents in controlling the production,

D. Griffin (✉) · G. Hall (deceased)
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: gshall2@buffalo.edu

A. J. Wright
African Heritage Food Co-op, Niagara Falls, NY, USA

processing, distribution, and consumption of culturally appropriate, healthy, and affordable food (Heynen 2009). The nation's slow but steady progress in heeding the voices of marginalized groups is tied to an extended struggle against the corporatization of food—a process that threatens to exploit the poor to the point of starvation for the sake of profit. As people of color gain positions of leadership within the food sector, gross disparities that permeate our food system persist, resulting in dire consequences for Black Americans, Latinx, immigrants, indigenous, and poor communities. In our quest to radically transform the food system and prioritize community needs, activists and scholars must work to thoroughly understand the causes of our current condition. This means not only understanding the structural forces that have undermined our progress, but the visionaries who pushed back against the system. Without these past strivings, the challenges we face today would likely be more compound.

To be clear, the commitment to food work is far more expansive than a desire to simply provide food. Instead, food activism is a vehicle by which people of color and people in poverty resist their current condition. A number of scholars have elevated the contributions of the Black freedom struggle in awakening the American conscious to the connections between socio-political power and food (Alkon and Norgaard 2009; Block et al. 2012; Potorti 2014). By recalling the work of Black freedom fighters such as the Black Panther Party (Heynen 2009) and Fannie Lou Hamer (Hamlet 1996) scholars demonstrate that food was a political tool used to help further radical visions. There was no explicit food agenda in the Black Panther Party's original 10-point program. Yet, the work of the Black Panther Party is believed to have garnered national attention around issues of hunger that may have influenced the creation of federal anti-hunger programs, such as W.I.C. and free school breakfast.

Growing knowledge of the politics of food and food struggle can be a powerful tool in informing the kind of work that we do. Still, if we are not careful of the manner in which we dissect history, we will miss out on opportunities to endow our activism and scholarship with the ethical principles that guided social struggle, producing both individual and collective change. While we may understand the political philosophies that undergirded Black social movements, there seems to be far less inquiry into the ethical parameters that guided revolutionary work.

Historians, Black studies scholars, and cultural critics alike have interrogated the strategic inner workings of national political groups and activists (Carson 1995; Farmer 2017; Gore 2012). Some exposed the moral failings of movements and individuals whose life's work was intended to center principles of justice and communal power. Yet, there is more to learn about the intricacies of how national struggles were transposed onto the local scene. Thus, this chapter builds on the existing body of Black studies and food justice literature to examine the intersections between local food politics and ethics. Utilizing Buffalo, New York, as a case study, this chapter will explore the efforts and ethics of Black residents who envisioned food as a means to transform the sociopolitical landscape of the city. In doing so, we uncover how different groups were driven by the ethics of process and results, and

embodied principles of ethical engagement outlined by Howe and Kaufman even before their time.

11.2 Black Student Union: Using Food as a Lever for Equity in Buffalo

11.2.1 Feeding the Way to Freedom

At 8 o'clock in the morning, sleepy, school-aged children eagerly crowded into the dining hall of the Westminster Community House located at 421 Monroe Street. Orderly seated between three long tables, Black youngsters stuffed their bellies with eggs, beef, grits, and juice as the fiery eyes of Malcolm X peered down on them from an affixed poster (Lumer 1969). The free hot meals provided to the youth were compliments of The University at Buffalo's Black Student Union (BSU).

Between 1969 and 1972 students from the BSU secured funds to feed local school children in the Black community. Percy Lambert, then president of the BSU, provided the following explanation for why the free breakfast program was so crucial: "We found out that kids don't do well in school because their mothers are unable to offer them a decent breakfast in the morning. So when these kids are in school, they are concentrating on the hunger pains in their stomachs instead of the school work on the board" (Lumer 1969). Beyond understanding the connection between cognitive performance and food intake, Lambert recognized that the issue of hunger plaguing school children was not merely an individual failing of the home. Instead, he acknowledged that child hunger is an indication of a structural failure. "The government has been insensitive to the needs of the people...the government has cut back on welfare and our people are just barely able to live off of it" (Lumer 1969). In an effort to address this structural failure, the BSU intended to expand their free breakfast program into a community-wide project that would require the collective effort of residents and local colleges, as well as establish an emergency fund to assist the community.

Providing free breakfast was a launching pad to providing a liberation school and free pediatric care (Black Student Union 1971a). According to an article published in the Black Student Union's *Unity: Phase One* newspaper, local youth who would usually visit the Westminster House for food were able to receive pediatric and dental screenings such as "Sickle Cell Prep, Glucose-G-Phosphate dehydrogenase, hematocrit and hemoglobin on blood, Glucose, protein in the urine, visual acuity and audiometric tests on eyes and ears" (Black Student Union 1971a). Although the services provided by the BSU were free of charge to community members, the organization's goal was to foster self-help within the Black community. The BSU's entrée into food work with the free breakfast program was the catalyst for them to ultimately become advocates for cooperative ownership within Black Buffalo. In the process of procuring food for their breakfast program, these college students

became attuned to the impact of price gouging. At first, members tried to navigate their way around the problem by conducting business with ECCO mart—a black-owned cooperative. The students also published a consumer’s education column in their newspaper to raise awareness about unethical practices and provide tips on how to make the most of the shopping experience. Yet, these means were not enough. By February of 1971 members of the BSU were working to launch a meat co-op (Black Student Union 1971b).

Rather than merely distributing food, the BSU was advocating for community control and ownership over food. Highlighting the importance of communal ownership became a recurring theme throughout the student paper. The slogan, “Prosperity through co-operative life” was plastered in their student papers, along with plans for how to rally the community in making cooperative ownership a success:

How do you give time to help the group? We will use the meat co-op as an example:

1. Student/workers inform community of meat co-op. - going into homes telling people why they should buy as a group. If living at home, you can get your parents to join co-op. If living by yourself, you can join co-op.
2. Faculty and staff/workers - joining co-op and also informing others about co-op. Setting up the legal end of co-op, bookkeeping for co-op and projecting interests of group.
3. Community/worker joining and telling others about co-op butchering of meat, helping in wiring and plumbing, and anything else that might be necessary in setting up butcher-shop (Black Student Union 1971b).

While there is no archival evidence that suggests whether or not the students were successful in launching the co-op, their decision to pursue the establishment of a cooperative marked an important shift from food work to food equity. Meaning, rather than solely focusing on the provision of food, the group was committed to ensuring that the community was becoming more involved in the ownership and process needed for food to reach the plate of the consumer.

11.2.2 Ethics Derived from Praxis

Operation of the free breakfast program nestled the BSU in the intersections of anti-hunger work and liberatory praxis. This perpetual co-mingling of theory and action means that the BSU used theory to guide their practice, and in turn the observation of their practices informed the modification of their operating theory. Of their four guiding principles, their fourth principle provides a cogent summary of how the relationship between the students and the community should operate:

The last principle is twofold: we must adhere to the actual needs of the masses, rather than what we believe they are, that is, the wishes of the masses must be self-determined. And we must never allow ourselves to be divorced from the masses. We must teach every one of our members to love the people, to listen attentively to the voice of the masses, to identify with the masses on all occasions, instead of standing above them, to immerse ourselves among them, and according to their present level awaken them or raise their political consciousness and help them gradually to organize themselves voluntarily. The only way we can understand them is by going to the masses and learning from them, synthesizing their experiences

into better, articulated principles and methods, and then by distributing propaganda within the community, calling upon them to put these principles and methods into use in order to solve their problems (Black Student Union 1971b).

Whether it be political figures, business elites, academics, or self-proclaimed activists, it is not uncommon for communities to bear the brunt of someone else's great idea. Impoverished communities especially and communities of color in particular, are continually imposed upon by outsiders and insiders who proclaim that their ideas are what the residents need. For the BSU, that mode of engagement was intolerable. If the community did not want it, then it would not be done. However, this didn't mean that the group sat by idly waiting until the residents approached them. Instead, students helped to raise awareness about the issues impacting community members so that the community could make a decision about whether they would mobilize to provoke change.

The BSU is a compelling example of the importance of ethical practice that weds means and ends. Planners Elizabeth Howe and Jerome Kaufman conducted a survey of the planning profession in which they determined that planning ethics fall into two general categories: ends-oriented or means-oriented (Howe and Kaufman 1980). While ends-oriented ethical approaches center on the ultimate goal to be achieved, means-oriented approaches prioritize process or behaviors. Howe and Kaufman suggest that effective planners resist from siloing means and ends. To dedicate sole focus to the desired outcome puts us at risk of justifying tactics that are unethical. Just as obsessing over the process can lead to an outcome that is not fruitful for communities. Although the work of the BSU precedes Howe and Kaufman's ethical framework, their guiding principles and operating strategy are a testament to the importance of considering process and results. The relationship between seemingly disconnected issues such as food systems and educational outcomes became clearer through continued interaction and learning from the community.

At times, those with the knowledge and resources to assist communities choose to disengage or wait to be approached for help before intervening for fear of being viewed as outsiders trying to impose. Yet, the work of the BSU suggests that the group understood the dangers of disengagement as well as imposition. Rather than solely waiting for community members to directly approach them, the BSU took it upon themselves to distribute information and make known their willingness to assist the community in their struggle, when the community was ready. When our goal in helping create change is to amplify the agency of communities, it is easy to allow our fear of encroachment to push us to the alternate unethical position: willful neglect. As Black people who understood some of the issues plaguing their community, and as students with access to resources that the average community member may not have had, the BSU explained that it was their duty to use what they had to fight alongside their community. For scholars particularly, it is critical to reevaluate what level of commitment there is to the people in the university's backyards, and what responsibility there is to local communities—not to impose upon them, but to walk beside them exchanging information and resources for them to lead their own pathway to change.

11.3 The Spectrum of Black Ownership

Compared to past and present champions of cooperativism in the city, the BSU was a more informal group. Unlike anti-hunger organizations, grocery stores, or cooperatives, the BSU was not formally organized to provide food services in the community. While most student bodies use their platform to focus on student life, this group utilized their resources to move beyond the campus walls and partner with local residents. Members of the Black Student Union were not by any means the first or the last group to recognize the transformative power of community ownership and envision cooperativism as a means to elevate Black Buffalo. Nor are cooperative efforts the only ones that sought to prioritize the needs of the community. Yet, this is one of the few groups for which enough of the ideologies have been preserved in writing that we might be able to piece together the ethical compass that guided their practice. There may not be enough literature on Buffalo's formally recognized Black businesses and co-ops to dissect their ethical framework; however, their challenges and accomplishments can be used to propel our thinking and organizing around food justice (Fig. 11.1).

Community-led efforts to promote access to food for the residents of Buffalo's East Side manifested in a variety of forms. Black-owned businesses provided a pathway to economic growth in underserved communities who were confronted with limited food options and devastating poverty. In some neighborhoods, corner stores and family food markets were common sources of food for community members of all ages. The popularity of these smaller shops was largely due to their ease

Fig. 11.1 Image of Ruby Butts. (Printed in the *New Perspectives Newsletter*, Vol 1 Number 1, Nov 16, 1979)



of accessibility and provision of low-price goods compared to that of full-scale groceries in predominantly white neighborhoods. Their proximity to the neighborhood allowed shop owners to develop strong relationships with the community, and at times nurture communities dealing with hunger and food access challenges. Ruby Butts and Eliza Hall (**see story below**) are two women entrepreneurs who used their business as a space to fulfill community needs.

Ruby Butts was a graduate of Spellman Seminary, the mother-in-law of civil rights activist Jessie Nash, and a nutritional powerhouse. Butts opened up the Healthful Food Shoppe at 15 East Utica Street in 1953—a feat that must have come with its fair share of obstacles considering the positionality of her gender and race during that time period (Cramer 1979). However, it was not just Butts' accomplishment as an independent owner that captivated the community. Described as a “rambunctious community minded woman,” Butts was lauded for her breadth of knowledge on health and nutrition (Cramer 1979). When customers entered her establishment, they could count on receiving nutritional guidance as well as life giving food.

There are multiple sources that credit Mrs. Butts for being Black Buffalo's pioneer for a healthy shop operated by and for the community. Although Black owned food stores had opened in the city before, it is possible that Butts' knowledge of health and nutrition positioned her to operate a store that was more health conscious than businesses that had arisen in the past. What is most compelling about Mrs. Butts' legacy is that she did not necessarily intend on pioneering a change for food in the city. Butts owned a hairdressing business that she operated in the city for over 30 years. Eventually her concern for the state of Black health moved her to shift her business focus to one that was potentially less lucrative, but more socially transformative (Uncrowned Community Builders n.d.).

Spotlighting Female Entrepreneurship

Eliza Hall's family migrated to Buffalo from Mississippi when she was a young girl. It was in Buffalo where Eliza would meet her husband, Oscar, and later raise their 10 children. Oscar worked as a Security Guard for the Buffalo Public School System and Eliza was a dedicated stay-at-home mother. As time went on, the weight of trying to support a 12-person household on one income left the Hall family in disheartening cycles of poverty, hunger and debt. Fortunately, food stamps were able to help alleviate some of the strain on the family. The Food Stamp Act of 1964 assisted low-income households with food purchases by providing stamps to be used as currency in grocery stores for purchasing food.

The challenges Eliza and her children were preparing to face were far greater than Food Stamps could resolve. Deep tragedy ripped through the fabric of their home that changed their lives forever. At 47 years old, Oscar passed away from a grueling battle with cancer that left his young children fatherless and Eliza widowed. Within a few days, Eliza's brother and father passed away.

(continued)

Eliza was forced to rejoin the labor force to support her children and with the loss of her father and brother, she identified the need for a manager of her family's convenience store, "Adam's Food Market". Located in the heart of Buffalo's East Side on the corner of Fillmore Avenue intersecting Park Avenue, Eliza employed her eldest children to help her run the register, stock the shelves, and spread the word about her store. Her store served a variety of food items that nourished the neighborhood and utilized food as a way to build community with one another and combat community-wide hunger. Her family market became a beacon of light for community members and a safe haven for youth in an area that was increasingly characterized as violent. Eliza and her children to this day recount the brutal murder-robbery of a competing convenience store's owner across the street from her. Fortunately, Eliza was never a victim of robbery, but economic devastation contributed to a surge in theft. Adam's Food Market was beloved, and was operated for and by members of Eliza's community.

As a Black, female business owner, Eliza worked directly in opposition of the projected role of women as homemakers for the family. She abandoned that role to establish an anchor of hope for those around her in the form of a food market. And as a widowed single mother, she was able to bring food to the mouths of not just her 10 dependents, but to other children dealing with their own set of challenges. Eliza's story is a triumphant one, and illustrates the extraordinary efforts of everyday residents of Black Buffalo to effect change in the community.

Devotion to people over profits is much more difficult to achieve in private businesses compared to cooperatives. Yet cooperatives that center social justice and the public good can become victims of the negative balance sheet.

Citizens Cooperative Grocery Market is one of the earliest known Black food cooperatives in Buffalo. The cooperative market opened in the fall of 1931 under the leadership of the Citizens Cooperative Society of Buffalo. The society's first attempt at running a cooperative grocery proved unsuccessful. After fighting against the wave of economic depression that swept across the United States, the co-op was defunct by the year 1933 (Fordham *n.d.*). After reorganizing under a new name and giving thought to what was needed for a successful operation, the society regrouped to initiate a new cooperative that would learn from the mistakes of the past. Under this new cooperative, Buffalo Consumer's Economic Society (later called The Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society), launched another cooperative grocery store (Fordham). Just five years after the store's launch in 1939, the business managed to make close to \$120,000 in sales and was able to hire residents (Fordham *n.d.*) (Fig. 11.2).

In August of 1971, The East Side Community Cooperative (ECCO) opened its food service center on 300 William Street as reported by *The Buffalo Challenger* in



Fig. 11.2 Citizens Cooperative Grocery Market

1971. Before opening up the brick and mortar facility, the co-op started in 1968 as a buying club. The buying club served as a source of affordable fresh food for the black community. The weekly distribution of food bags enabled cost savings for residents who were previously paying inflated prices for fresh goods (The Buffalo Challenger 1971).

These cooperatives provided a beacon of hope for how business could be conducted in a manner that protects and profits the community. If a food venture proved to be sustainable, then the success of these co-ops could have led to greater mobilization around cooperative ownership for other aspects of life. From stores, to banks, and beyond. Through cooperativism, the community would be able to thrive or at least meet the needs of basic survival that were denied to them as a consequence of living in a free market system. Inability to remain in the black was the obvious cause of liquidation, but records suggest that financial struggles were symptomatic of other structural challenges—namely lack of support: “According to Mrs. Nelson, black businesses (restaurants, etc.) did not patronize the BCES market nor offer any kind of encouragement or support for the cooperative movement in Buffalo. She felt that the unsympathetic and often “unfriendly” attitude exhibited by established black businessmen toward BCES damaged the credibility of the society...” (Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society Records n.d.).

For all of the hope that these cooperatives provided, neither the ECCO co-op nor the BCES grocery store are still standing today. The intricate balancing act between generating profits and maintaining affordability ultimately fell into a state of disequilibrium. Despite their inability to remain financially viable, these efforts sowed

a seed of hope for what could be attained when the community is willing to pull together its resources. This vision of shared struggle and shared destiny lived on in the spirits of BSU members, and continues to inspire modern day black food work in Buffalo.

11.4 Learning from the Past and Hopes for the Future: The Story of the African Heritage Food Cooperative

The African Heritage Food Cooperative (AHFC), co-founded by Alexander J. Wright, is a relatively new initiative carrying out the legacy of cooperative ownership in Buffalo, NY. Wright is a Buffalo native who was deeply inspired by the work of Dr. Ezekiel Nelson—co-founder of the Buffalo Cooperative Economic Society—along with prominent civil rights leaders who stressed the importance of cooperative economic life for black survival. Similar to BCES, ECCO, the BSU, and black cooperative efforts throughout history, the AHFC was birthed in response to racialized economic disparity crushing East Buffalo.

Frustrated with the conditions impacting his community, Wright turned to the work of Black leaders: “I began to delve in to Black American history, I focused on Booker T. Washington, W.E.B Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and the Black Panther party.” Wright dissected the varied ideologies he encountered to determine what strategies he could employ to help his own community. Some of the philosophies espoused by Washington and Du Bois were rather off putting. When explaining some of the limitations he found in their work, Wright states,

For the sake of brevity I will surmise. Washington and Dubois had an elitist approach. You had to have a certain skill or education to have worth. That divides people and evokes hubris. You cannot have efficient and prolonged progress with plebes and lords without violence and degradation. And that is something we need to avoid.

In addition to elitism, Wright recognized another fatal weakness that contributed to the demise of civil rights leaders and black revolutionaries.

Within all of the movements there was a leader. When that individual was assassinated, literally or in character, the movement died or was stalled. Therefore we needed something that was not based on one gregarious personality but the community. They cannot assassinate us all. Therefore I knew we had to have something self-sustaining and based in not one leader, but a cooperative approach. The ‘what’ was still unclear.

Food became ‘the what’ that Wright could use to help organize the community around black ownership. The overall mission of the AHFC is to “create a just and livable world wherein inner city communities can eat, better employ themselves, and prevent predatory pricing” (African Heritage Food Co-op 2019).

Cognizant of the mistakes of the past, Wright helped found a cooperative that is accountable to the community and functions through collective effort. Although Wright does not attribute the influence of his work to Howe or Kaufman, the co-ops

mission and collaborative nature embody the ethical framework of Howe and Kaufman. Rather than making the sole mission of the co-op to provide food to the community, the business stresses the need for community control and involvement in the process to achieving the goal of greater healthy food access. Individuals who join the co-op are encouraged to take the lead on any improvements they believe need to be made to the co-op. If a member feels that there are inadequacies in the membership recruitment process for example, that member is supported in outlining a new strategy to make the co-op more effective. Through this operating strategy, members are more involved in the operation of the co-op and can feel more vested in its success or failure. Everyone is responsible for ensuring the success of the co-op and because there is room for members to be involved with the tasks that interest them the most, the co-op is less likely to default if one individual member is no longer able to serve.

Along with making sure that The African Heritage Food Co-op is not a one man show, the cooperative builds on the lessons learned from the failures of the BCES cooperative grocery to craft a more inclusive membership base. What started out as a small buying club on Buffalo's East Side has evolved into a growing community of people from different racial, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds. By building partnerships with local businesses and organizations like the Greater Buffalo United Healthcare Network, the AHFC has been able to expand people's awareness of their brand. It is this growing awareness of their brand that helped the AHFC grow their membership. Within three-years, the AHFC opened a brick and mortar site in North Niagara Falls and a temporary location in Buffalo.

The Inspiration Behind the Movement

While recovering from a spinal surgery, I began to think of the legacy I was leaving behind. As a father of three, I was concerned about what I was leaving my children, the example I was setting and opportunities they may or may not have to see the success of people who looked like them. As an East Buffalo resident I remembered going to the corner stores and not seeing anyone who looked like me behind the counter.

I also thought about my time as an executive director for a not for profit. I walked into our food pantry and saw a grandmother, mother, and adult granddaughter all being served by the pantry. I walked into the next board meeting and told the board I considered us a failure. As an organization I felt that we were supposed to empower our community so the Grandmother receives food and wrap around services that will allow the daughter to excel so she and her daughter could donate and volunteer and not necessarily have to be recipients. Not for profits are to be a "stop gap" or band aid but not the solution. The solution has to be something self-sustaining. Organizations who depend on grant funding are subject to the will of the funders and that is often subject to

(continued)

will of whatever issue is popular in a given year. Also, with the creation of various not for profits, the pool of resources gets smaller while the competition increases. This idea of self-sustainability started in church for me.

I grew up in a small church about a half mile down from True Bethel Baptist Church called Holy Ghost Temple. Every Sunday I would watch the deacons struggle asking for offerings. I watched the pastor not be able to take salary and have to work full time and then try to pastor a church. It all seemed wrong to me. The Pastor was struggling, the people were struggling and the church was struggling. About this time I saw True Bethel open up a Subway in the church. I thought to myself, this is the solution. If we can open a business, it'll give people jobs, which will increase tithes or eliminate the need for them because the business can benefit the church. I was 15 or 16 then. I knew that self-sustainability meant less struggle, but how to implement that was foggy. As I lay there recovering, I thought "I'm not the first person to think like this." I began wonder why, with all of the progress black people have made, the inner city still looks and feels like a third world country.

I began to look at the needs of the Black community in Buffalo NY. I saw poverty, crime (which stemmed from poverty), and health issues; health issues particularly stemming from diet choices. There's a quote in the television series *Luke Cage* "The fork will kill you faster than a bullet." Diabetes, Stroke, High Blood Pressure and Hypertension are taking black folks off of this planet. The main reasons are lack of food access and education.

Food! It was brilliant in its simplicity. However, access was not enough. We need OWNERSHIP of our food systems. When you own it, it does not depend on the whims of those outside of the community. Also, ownership by those who use the store and live in the community, ensures the consistent evolution of products, services and income. Therefore, we needed to create a food store that we could support and use to employ individuals from our community. Thus the African Heritage Food Co-Op was born.

We started with 30 families in a community share, branched out to mobile markets, and now will be opening two brick and mortar stores in both Niagara Falls and Buffalo. Employing 10 individuals immediately and 65 in the next two years.

11.5 Conclusion

As a small, legacy city, Buffalo's story is often missing from national discussions of local struggle and food work. Unbeknownst to some, Buffalo has a rich history of local food organizing. The few stories shared in this chapter are not new knowledge. Like Buffalo, every city has stories that are fragmented and buried in archives. As we retrace and connect these histories, we can illustrate a clearer picture for the

public to digest as a whole and for us to understand more fully the pioneers that have paved the way. This research demonstrates ethical practice in that it describes the historical research begun by those engaged in contemporary food system work and shows how others may consider engaging in the history of their place before engaging in food system work. It is this knowledge that will help us to clarify how we can walk on the foundations they have laid, but also carve out our own path.

There are various lessons to be learned from informal groups, such as the Black Student Union, to formalized businesses, such as cooperatives and grocery stores. At least three of those lessons in particular can be utilized as ethical guidelines to steer activists, practitioners, and researchers in their current and future work.

First, any work that is completed should be in service with and to the community. In doing so, part of the responsibility in organizing work is to help make surrounding communities aware of the resources available to them and the potential responses to the structural barriers that they face. In this proactive approach, it is the responsibility of the activist, practitioner, researcher and other community members to address the differences that may make them “outsiders.” Then, if and when the community is ready to engage in a partnership, some level of trust has been established.

Second, businesses have a responsibility to the people and the communities that they serve. Which means that owners should be careful not to provide “goods” that are harmful to the people. Beyond the physical product that is available to the consumer, businesses also harbor the potential to be a space that educates and empowers the customers that are served. Regardless of what a particular owner sells, we should consider how communities could be impacted by businesses providing a transfer of information.

Lastly, there is a need for interregional information exchange between black owned cooperatives and black businesses alike. While black entrepreneurs are able to study the pitfalls of the past, challenges evolve over time. Information exchange with successful or struggling businesses will allow groups to better understand the current nature of the market, and hopefully draft strategies for how black businesses and cooperatives can succeed.

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Domonique Griffin is a community development professional and proud Buffalo native. With a Master of Urban Planning degree from The University at Buffalo, School of Architecture and Planning, Griffin has dedicated her career to helping companies leverage federal dollars to promote equitable development and improved health outcomes in marginalized communities. She's a firm believer in the power of grassroots activism and has conducted extensive research on black community activism in Buffalo, NY and beyond. Her other published work includes her contributions to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (UN FAO) report: *Local government planning for community food systems – Opportunity, innovation and equity in low-and middle-income countries* (2021).

Gabriella Hall (Sep 26, 2000–June 24, 2023) was a talented writer, a dedicated advocate for women of color, and an accomplished social media content strategist. Born and raised in Buffalo, NY, she brought a fresh perspective to the community-led efforts to nourish Buffalo's Black community. Her direct family ties to these vital organizing efforts inspired her to use her voice and raise awareness about community health and wellness initiatives. Gabby joined the UB Food Lab as a High School intern, and quickly rose to position of a research coordinator while still an undergraduate student at UB. Gabby graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in communication and a minor in sociology from UB in 2022. She received several journalism awards, including the Carl R. Allen Memorial Scholarship from the Buffalo Association of Black Journalists, for her achievements as a Black journalist in Buffalo. Gabby chronicled her writings and achievements on her website wordsbygabby.com. Gabby's family and friends would love for you to read and share her work with others to honor her work and celebrate her beautiful and remarkable life and mind.

Alexander J. Wright, JD has a Bachelor's of Science in Business Management, as well as a law degree from The University at Buffalo, School of Law. He is a proud product of the Buffalo Prep program and a Nichols School graduate. He began working in non-profit at 19 at a local church and has attained a level of executive director in local non-profits. He also has a consulting firm, a 22-acre farm-in which he promotes farming and land ownership for Black, Indigenous, and people of color. He is the founder and the visionary force behind the African Heritage Food Co-Op, whose motto is "Anything Less than Ownership is Unacceptable." Mr. Wright feels his mantra is the only way people in poverty can reach economic self-sufficiency. Only by owning our own businesses, supporting those businesses, and thereby creating our own economic infrastructure.

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Chapter 12

Toward a Restorative Planning Ethic: Race, History, and Food Planning in Albany, Georgia



Enjoli Hall , Shirley Sherrod, and Samina Raja 

Abstract Contemporary discussions of equity in planning for urban agriculture remains incomplete when decoupled from the history of racialized food systems in the United States. This chapter documents the decades-long experiences and practices of community-based food systems actors in the small southern city of Albany, Georgia. Through a case study of the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education, a nonprofit organization that focuses on food systems and community empowerment, we explore the practices of community actors against a complex history of racial dispossession and discrimination that they resist and strive to transform. Community food actors engage in transformative work in order to improve the city's food system and promote self-determination. The experiences of community actors in Albany, Georgia offer insights into Black people in the United States as producers of food and makers of place. Additionally, the example of Albany examines the potential for urban agriculture as a tool for racial justice, and offers a paradigm for local government public policy to support racial healing in deeply divided communities. The longer history of community-led food planning presented here illuminates the thin line between the past and the present and surfaces a *restorative planning ethic*, a planning framework that is simultaneously future-oriented and historically-informed and demands that planners engage with and enhance the self-determination of communities that act as storehouses of history and memory in order to acknowledge and account for past harms and wrongs.

Keywords Black communities · Food systems · Food hubs · Restorative planning · Southwest Georgia Project · New Communities Land Trust

E. Hall (✉)
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA
e-mail: enjoli@mit.edu

S. Sherrod
Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education, Albany, GA, USA

S. Raja
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: sraja@buffalo.edu

How curious a land is this,—how full of untold story, of tragedy and laughter, and the rich legacy of human life; shadowed with a tragic past, and big with future promise! This is the Black Belt of Georgia. Dougherty County is the west end of the Black Belt, and men once called it the Egypt of the Confederacy. It is full of historic interest.—W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

12.1 Introduction

In a growing number of cities, suburbs, and small towns across the United States, community groups and entrepreneurs are developing innovative approaches to producing food and in so doing they are fashioning various ways that consumers can relate to producers (Hodgson et al. 2011). Concrete activities connecting people to production characterize contemporary urban agriculture, and scholars are conceptualizing and describing these practices, using various methods and towards various ends. Much, if not all, of this work is motivated by questions of food equity and food justice that draw attention to how both the dominant food system and alternative food movements often perpetuate the disparities that exist in broader society (e.g., Alkon and Agyeman 2011; Gottlieb and Joshi 2010).

Food justice is a comprehensive concept, highlighting inequities that exist throughout the food system, from production through distribution and consumption to waste management. However, much of the food planning literature focuses on access and consumption-related disparities. Discussions about ‘food deserts,’ for example, have proliferated scholarship and public policy (Raja and Yadav 2008). Yet, this dominant narrative falls short in several ways. It masks the reasons why disparities exist in the first place. Deserts are healthy ecologies—food disparities are by design (Food Equity Scholars 2022). The narrative also transforms residents—largely in low-income communities and communities of color—into passive actors awaiting (planning or policy) salvation. For example, Black or African American populations are often described in their role of consumers with limited access to good food (or, worse, as people with poor eating behaviors), rather than in their full roles as farmers or entrepreneurs that drive the U.S. food system. Importantly, this discourse fails to recognize the historic work of Black farmers and Black civic organizations in strengthening communities’ food systems, as well as transforming food systems policy nationally (White 2018). To be sure, the food systems challenges in low-income communities and communities of color are many—but, these challenges, we argue cannot be understood or alleviated without understanding the ways in which communities act as agents of transformation in their own right.

We further contend that this dominant narrative of the relationship between Black communities and food systems is reproduced even in discussions of urban agriculture with its exclusive focus on production. Many discussions around the benefits of urban farms and community gardens in low-income communities and communities of color focus on how they can address ‘food deserts’ and be tied with

education programs to improve the eating behaviors of residents (Horst et al. 2017, this volume, Chap. 6). To encourage a narrative shift, we employ a broad definition of urban agriculture that includes policies, programs, projects and infrastructure in urban centers that foster connections between producers and consumers in both urban and rural areas. Beyond urban farms and community gardens, urban agriculture would also include related processing and marketing activities and physical infrastructure such as food hubs. This expanded definition may be important for understanding the benefits and limitations of urban agriculture in “urban areas” or “urban counties” that have relatively lower density and rural character, for example in some areas of the United States South.

This uneven account of food systems planning, especially around urban agriculture, in Black southern communities may stem from a disproportionate focus on urban centers in the Northeast and Midwest in much of the food systems planning literature to date. Even when other regions are the focus of national conversations on food systems, for example the South, the emphasis continues to be on food deserts and diet-related diseases, reinscribing a focus on consumption, nutrition and health. Black communities, particularly in the South, have a wide array of insights and imaginative visions for alternative realities, yet too often their contributions and needs are unrecognized and their work underfunded. Black-led organizations and institutions are often working with limited budgets and limited public support to fight against the systemic and historic challenges vulnerable producers of color face. These critical food systems actors provide important analyses and insights on the intersection of racial justice and food systems. These voices tend to be absent or sparse in national conversations on food systems, yet they hold key insights that would build a better food system for everyone.

This chapter focuses on the example of one historic organization that has led transformative work in the South to connect Black producers and Black consumers and transform a community food system. In outlining the historical context and contemporary challenges and barriers associated with developing a food hub in Albany, Georgia, this chapter seeks to amplify the voices of Black farmers and their allies leading food work; better understand the key challenges associated with developing and maintaining food infrastructure within a racial justice framework; and locate the roots of food systems planning as much deeper, more expansive, and more socially just than popularly defined. This chapter aims to lift up a more racially and geographically inclusive narrative, history, and roots in this work in hopes of lending to much more racially just imaginations for the future of community food systems and local government planning.

12.2 Research Approach and Methods of Data Collection

This chapter documents and analyzes on-the-ground community-led food systems planning practice through a case study of Albany, Georgia, focusing on the work of a nonprofit organization (Southwest Georgia Project). The case study spans events,

practices, and policies adopted from 1967 to 2022. The empirical component of the case study uses a mixed-methods approach, relying on multiple sources of mostly qualitative data. These analyses include transcripts of 16 semi-structured interviews with community advocates and local government officials, archival data, and site visits to Albany by one author. The paper also draws on self-reflections of one co-author who has decades of experience in steering and implementing community-based food work in Albany, and more broadly in rural Georgia.

The Albany case study emerged from a larger participatory action research project, Growing Food Connections, which critically examines the role of local government planning and policy in connecting farmers engaged in small- and medium-sized agriculture with low-income customers (Raja et al. 2018). As part of the Growing Food Connections project, the research team identified two types of communities (counties) nationwide: Communities of Innovation and Communities of Opportunity in the United States. Communities of Innovation are places that are already using local government planning and policy to strengthen food systems. Communities of Opportunity were defined by the research team as places that have the greatest potential for positive transformation in their food system.

Albany (and its surrounding county, Dougherty) was a Community of Opportunity in the Growing Food Connections initiative. Briefly, Communities of Opportunity are places that are agriculturally rich yet remain food insecure and, importantly, where local actors display motivation to transform their food systems. Communities of Opportunity were selected through a multi-stage process. Initially, all counties in the contiguous United States were ranked ($n = 3000$), by census region, based on an index of quantitative variables that measure agricultural potential and food insecurity using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Next, local governments of counties that ranked high in the paradoxical condition of agriculture potential and low food security were invited to apply to become a Community of Opportunity in the Growing Food Connections project. The selection process included a qualitative assessment (which included an interview by the Growing Food Connections team of researchers and national advisors) to gauge the extent to which the community stakeholders in a potential Community of Opportunity were committed to work collaboratively to strengthen food systems. Following the multi-step process, eight Communities of Opportunity, four urban and four rural counties, were selected across four U.S. census regions. Dougherty County, Georgia, where Albany is located, was selected as an urban Community of Opportunity in the southern region of the United States.

The primary empirical method for documenting experiences in Albany and Dougherty County was through open-ended interviews, field observations, and participation in community meetings. Baseline interviews were conducted by researchers with individuals in Albany and Dougherty County in spring 2015, with follow-up interviews conducted in summer 2017. Interviews were conducted with staff of civic organizations, planning staff, political leaders, and food systems stakeholders including farmers, anti-hunger advocates, and retailers. Interview questions probed individuals representing these groups about the state of the food system in Albany

and Dougherty County, and their views on the limits and possibilities of local government planning and policy in strengthening the food system to serve small- and medium-sized farmers and food insecure residents in Albany and Dougherty County. Interview questions also probed for the degree to which different stakeholders were engaged in various stages of planning and policy decision-making. Most interviews were conducted in person by the corresponding author (some were conducted by phone or by a research team member); all interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and coded using NVivo software. Additionally, the interviews from 2015 to 2017 were supplemented by reflections by a co-author who has experienced guiding and implementing community-rooted food systems work in Southwest Georgia. The authors have also made repeat visit to the city-county to gauge qualitatively the ways in which community leaders are advocating for food justice.

12.3 Case Study: Albany, Georgia

At Albany, in the heart of the Black Belt, we stop. Two hundred miles south of Atlanta, two hundred miles west of the Atlantic, and one hundred miles north of the Great Gulf lies Dougherty County, with ten thousand Negroes and two thousand whites. The Flint River winds down from Andersonville, and, turning suddenly at Albany, the county seat, hurries on to join the Chattahoochee and the sea... For a radius of hundred miles about Albany, stretched a great fertile land, luxuriant with forests of pine, oak, ash, hickory, and poplar; hot with the sun and damp with the rich black swampland; and here the cornerstone of the Cotton Kingdom was laid.—W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

In the classic 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*, African American sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois chronicles his journey through the Black Belt region of the United States South. The term “Black Belt” originally referred to a rich, dark-soil, cotton-growing region of Alabama occupied by slaveholders in the 1820s and 1830s. Over time the term has come to refer to a more generalized designation for the landscape of primarily cotton agriculture and majority African American population across the Gulf South. Du Bois sought to describe African American life and culture in the “heart of the Black Belt” by focusing upon the Southwest Georgia county of Dougherty and the county seat of Albany. Among the many characteristics of the landscape that intrigued the scholar was the function of the city as an urban center for all of the surrounding region that is more rural in character. Du Bois acknowledged the region as not only a center of Black population, but also as central in the cotton plantation agriculture of the United States.

The fortunes of Albany, Georgia, are intricately linked with those of the local and global agricultural system and the Black freedom movement. The term “Black freedom movement” generally refers to an umbrella term for the Black organizations, institutions, and figures involved with struggles for Black civil rights in housing, transportation, education, labor, voting rights, culture, agriculture, and more throughout the twentieth century in particular, but across American history more broadly. The term recasts distinctive movements, particularly the civil rights

movements of the 1950s and 1960s, as part of a historical, ongoing movement for Black freedom in the United States and globally.¹

Historically, Albany gained prominence as an agricultural trade center for commodity crops like cotton and pecans. The surrounding region was dominated by cotton plantation agriculture in the nineteenth century. Albany's strategic location on the Flint River led to its prominence as a market center for shipment of goods. This economic prosperity relied on the unpaid labor of African Americans as enslaved persons, sharecroppers, and tenant farmers. Pecan farming was introduced in the region in the late 1800s, and by 1905, several thousand trees were in cultivation throughout the city and county. Georgia quickly became the leading producer of pecans in the country, with much of the business centered around the Albany area. By the 1920s, with the decline of cotton production caused by the boll weevil, pecans became the area's leading cash crop. In 1922, the Albany District Pecan Growers' Exchange opened its factory building and warehouse, and pecans became a major Albany product, leading to the city's informal claim as the pecan capital of the world. Over the course of the twentieth century, as technological advancements changed the nature of agriculture, the city sought to diversify its industrial base.

Albany garnered national attention during the civil rights movement of the 1960s, as the city was the focus of a major campaign to challenge racial segregation and discrimination in the South. Indeed, community food leaders connect their work on food justice in Albany to their larger efforts for political justice, dignity, and freedom. In November 1961, residents of Albany launched an ambitious campaign to eliminate segregation in all facets of local life and secure equal educational and economic opportunities for all citizens. The movement captured national attention one month later when local leaders invited Martin Luther King, Jr. to join the protest. The protests in Albany were also unique in that they involved a broad inter-generational cross-section of the local community, unlike other civil rights demonstrations of the time that mainly involved college students. Despite King's involvement, the movement failed to secure concessions from local officials and was consequently deemed unsuccessful by many observers. In recent years, new reflections have identified the Albany movement as a formative learning experience for Dr. King and other civil rights organizers. The campaign has also been credited with speeding up the ultimate desegregation of Albany's public facilities which occurred a year following the movement's conclusion in August 1962.

Albany's rich legacies of community organizing for social justice extend to the present-day work on agriculture and food systems, and intersect in ways that offer promising opportunities to revitalize the city through its food system. Today, agriculture drives much of the city's commercial and industrial activities. Albany is the

¹For more background information about the Black freedom movement, see the following examples: Monica M. White, *Freedom Farmers: Agricultural Resistance and the Black Freedom Movement* (2019); Yohuru Williams, *Rethinking the Black Freedom Movement* (2015); Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (2003); Jeanne Theoharis, ed., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (2005); and Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960's* (1981).

regional economic hub for agri-businesses and some of its major employers are food processors. At the time when research for the Growing Food Connections initiative began (2012), food products made in Albany included: Kroger brand products by Tara Foods; Combos and goodness knows by Mars Chocolate North America; pecans by Sunnyland Farms; and beer, malt beverages and ciders by MillerCoors. The city is surrounded by large plantations, cypress swamps and quail reserves. Some agricultural land is located within or adjacent to the city limits and consists of actively managed and productive pecan orchards. The area sits on top of one of the most productive water recharge areas in the world, the Floridan aquifer. Important surface water resources in the area, including Lake Seminole and the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers, support agricultural activities.

While Albany is rich in natural resources and agricultural potential, many of its residents are economically insecure and its overall population is deeply divided along lines of race. Albany's 2010 population was 77,434 followed by a drop to 69,647 people in 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020, ACS 5-year estimates). The city is majority Black: About 75% of the city's residents identify as Black or African American (U.S. Census Bureau 2020, ACS 5-year estimates). Economic challenges persist in the city. Nearly 30% of the city's population lives below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau 2020, ACS 5-year estimates), and about a similar percentage of the population between the ages of 18 and 64 did not have health insurance coverage in 2019 (significantly higher than the rates in the country, around 8%). Economic and health challenges are disproportionately impact Black residents. The poverty rate for Black residents (33.8% of all Black residents for whom poverty was determined) is more than double the rate for White residents (14.1%) (U.S. Census Bureau 2020, ACS 5-year estimates). Similarly, the unemployment rate among Black residents is 13%, more than quadruple the unemployment rate of 3% among White residents (U.S. Census Bureau 2020, ACS 5-year estimates). The median household income of \$38,826 for city residents overall also masks significant racial disparities: the median household income for White householders is \$56,011, significantly higher than the median household income for Black householders of \$32,104 (U.S. Census Bureau 2020, ACS 5-year estimates).

Food insecurity, not surprisingly, follows suit: about 27.6% of households and about half of households with children under 18 rely on public food assistance to meet their food needs (U.S. Census Bureau 2020, ACS 5-year estimates). The food retail environment is dominated by restaurants, and supermarkets redline low-income neighborhoods, seriously affecting the area's incidence of diet-related diseases. Several grocery stores in the city have closed in recent years, reducing the availability and accessibility of healthy foods for the county's most vulnerable residents. There is a concentration of grocery stores on the west side of Albany, and a relative absence of grocery stores on the city's east and south sides, where there is a predominance of convenience stores with processed foods. Limited public transit service and poor walking conditions in various areas of the city create additional barriers to healthy food accessibility for residents. Residents in nearly 13% of occupied housing units in the city do not have access to a car (U.S. Census Bureau 2020, ACS 5-year estimates). While Albany Transit System operates a fixed-route bus

system and paratransit services, respondents report that transit service is often infrequent and inconvenient. These structural factors impact acute and chronic health conditions in the city, which made national headlines when it was especially hard hit in the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many Black-led organizations in the region, and in particular the representatives of the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education, are aiming to rebuild a socially, economically, and spatially fractured food system from the ground up. Today, several school and community gardens and a handful of urban farms dot the city, converting blighted vacant urban land to productive use; a farmers' market operates in a public park; a mobile market transports fresh produce to underserved neighborhoods; and a regional food hub is being planned inside a former grocery store. These and other incremental transformations connect a disjointed food system and encourage public dialogue about the state of the local food system. These narratives are in some ways familiar: grassroots-led initiatives aimed at promoting urban revitalization in cities experiencing depopulation, poverty, unemployment, vacancy and economic restructuring. Viewed through a narrow lens, it would be easy to lump the efforts in Albany as part of new movements toward urban agriculture and urban revitalization. However, the extensive history and deep roots of many of the organizations leading this work in Albany offers a unique lens into the historic origins, goals, and significance of these more recent projects, broadening our understanding of the goals of urban agriculture and the potential role of local government in food systems planning.

12.3.1 Food Planning and Community Empowerment: Evolution of Southwest Georgia Project

Founded in 1961 by Charles and Shirley Sherrod—civil rights leaders with records of organizing educational and agricultural initiatives, particularly focused on collective and cooperative farming—the Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education (Southwest Georgia Project) aims to educate, engage, and empower residents in the region through advocacy and community organizing around human rights and social justice issues, including food and agriculture. The Southwest Georgia Project has offered technical assistance to rural and urban farmers, helped to form southern rural women's support groups, shaped a regional community food network, organized voter registration drives, been an advocate for housing rights, and established a woman-owned tour company that both celebrates local cultural heritage and trains women in documentary skills. Southwest Georgia Project was formally incorporated in 1971 as a product of the civil rights movement, to empower Black families in Southwest Georgia. Throughout its history, the organization has been an advocate for social justice through grassroots organizing among adult and youth in the small cities and towns of the region. The organization builds on the strengths and aspirations of families by providing technical support to organize

local community advocacy groups, help individuals and families combat Black land loss, assist with voter education and registration drives, impact economic development through the establishment of cooperative and food businesses that thrive through partnerships with existing processing facilities.

In recent years, Southwest Georgia Project has partnered with the local school systems and developed teaching gardens at every elementary school in Albany and Dougherty County, established direct to consumer farmers markets in collaboration with Friends of Tift Park, created a farm to daycare curriculum for childcare centers, provided nutrition education to the most vulnerable in collaboration with public health departments, and supported family farmers through training, outreach and assistance. With funding from a 2013 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm to School Program implementation grant, Southwest Georgia Project launched a farm-to-school program to increase the supply of fresh, locally grown food in schools. Southwest Georgia Project worked closely with the Dougherty County School System's School Nutrition Services department to implement the program. The program has enabled several schools in the county to serve local foods, plant school gardens, and invite farmers to talk to students. Dougherty County School System has stated a farm-to-school goal of purchasing 20% of the produce served from farms within 100 miles of the county. A major barrier to program expansion is the absence of processing infrastructure for small and mid-sized farmers in the region. Despite this challenge, school district officials and community partners continue to pursue opportunities to support local farmers and the local food economy while simultaneously promoting healthy eating among students. Community advocates envision the farm-to-school program as a key component of a regional food system anchored by small farmers and food entrepreneurs.

Southwest Georgia Project has been planning a regional food hub in the city of Albany for the development of urban food infrastructure for years. The food hub aims to provide aggregation, processing, and distribution facilities for small farmers in Dougherty County and surrounding counties to clean, process, package, and ship their crops for consumption. Organizers aim for the venue to be a space for residents to buy fresh produce directly from local farmers, increasing healthy food options in Albany and fostering connections between farmers and consumers. Organizers imagine it to be a multi-purpose venue that will be designed according to the needs of the community. The food hub is designed to create jobs, within the facility but also on farms, as the provision of a large market and processing equipment will offer incentives to increasing farming activity. A food hub would support and scale up other local efforts to connect farmers and consumers, including farm-to-school programs, farmers' markets, and outreach and technical assistance to minority farmers. The project could also employ out of work persons for processing labor, create value-added businesses, serve as a training site for ongoing certification and business management courses, and provide fresh produce in underserved areas. The organization's efforts received a major boost in 2015, with the donation of a former Winn-Dixie grocery store building in Albany. The 47,000-square-foot building, valued at \$2.35 million, sits on 3.9 acres of land. Southwest Georgia Project anticipates the food hub could serve at least 100 farmers from Dougherty County and

surrounding counties for use as a processing facility and market to sell their produce. The food hub will also include retail vending and community meeting spaces.

Through the idea of a regional food hub, Southwest Georgia Project is working to change the city's food system by creating a sustainable and economically viable model of urban agriculture, providing economic opportunities for Black farmers to advocate for land use and food policy that meet community members' needs. Southwest Georgia Project leadership and staff view food not only as nourishment but also as a starting point for community education and organizing, economic growth, and racial healing. They note that many Black women in the region own land and rarely have an opportunity to learn or experience the importance of civic engagement, or to recognize their own value and power to effect change. Staff also express concerns about the negative perceptions of many residents in the Albany area toward rural areas and farming activities. Southwest Georgia Project organizes Black farmers and their allies to voice their concerns and raise their awareness of community food systems by introducing new opportunities and spaces for producing, processing, distributing and marketing healthful foods. The organization connects vulnerable consumers with local farms and local food through farm-to-school programs, farmers' markets, and community gardens, nurturing their understanding of themselves as individuals and community members connected to land and the source of their food and community history.

Southwest Georgia Project's regional food hub project is also a critical opportunity for local government to simultaneously strengthen agricultural viability and food security in Dougherty County. The non-profit organization has approached local government officials on several occasions to request a property tax exemption on the building in order to divert limited funds away from paying property taxes and towards covering many of the capital improvements that are required to transform the former grocery store building in a space for the aggregation, processing, and distribution of crops for up to 100 farmers from surrounding counties. However, the local government has denied these repeated requests, despite precedent for extending financial incentives to recruit and retain other companies to the area. One community actor explained policy recalcitrance as follows:

We are trying to build a food hub. And we're struggling to try to raise money for the building the food hub will be located in. Which will bring jobs to the area, as well as provide food here in the city, where there's some food security issues. And they're insisting on charging taxes, on a building that's empty. Not trying to help us in any way, to get this project up and running. They'll spend money with other companies, with many years of tax incentives that don't, in some cases, provide as many jobs as you would think. But no effort to try to assist us with trying to get this up and running where it helps the community, it helps the county, helps the city, in many, many ways.

Even today, seven years after the initial idea for the site, Southwest Georgia Project is still working to establish the hub. Local government can support the development of the regional food hub and other community food infrastructure through direct investment, public loans, and tax incentives that help finance these significant improvements. While these projects entail physical infrastructure development such as the construction or rehabilitation of large abandoned or underutilized buildings,

they also require specialized equipment such as refrigerated trucks. There are other ways that local government can support the regional food hub project and food infrastructure development in the county, such as programs to educate stakeholders, offer business development and technical assistance, and connect local producers. Southwest Georgia Project has identified the need for business development assistance, as well as offered opportunities for local government to purchase or co-own the building with their organization. The building is over 47,000-square-feet, but Southwest Georgia Project only needs about a third of this space for the food hub—the remaining space could be used to house grocery stores or other food retail outlets, creating an opportunity for local government to alleviate food insecurity.

12.4 Lessons from a Historical Lens on Food Planning in Albany

Southwest Georgia Project has always viewed agriculture, including urban agriculture activities, to be about human rights, racial justice and self-determination. In Black communities, food systems work is often much more than just meeting market demands—it is rooted in countering dispossession, building power, reclaiming culture, improving health conditions, growing economic opportunities, and dreaming and reclaiming alternate realities. Food hubs are one way that Black farmers and their allies in Southwest Georgia are reclaiming ownership over their food system in ways that centers racial justice, self-determination, and dignity.

It is impossible to consider racial justice without considering and understanding the dynamic and complicated history of a U.S. agricultural system birthed from exploitation, domination, and the destruction of entire populations. Food systems work is about much more than food—it is deeply connected to the myriad of ways communities of color experience injustice. In this context, the history of New Communities Land Trust in Southwest Georgia is incredibly important to note. As one of the first community land trusts in the United States, New Communities was born out of violent attacks against Black people who were working to build power and register Black people to vote during the civil rights movement. Black people faced a tremendous amount of violence, including the destruction or loss of homes and land as a result of participating in or even affiliating with voter registration and civil rights movement work. Black farmers, many whose deeds were in jeopardy for simply offering their homes as meeting places, were particularly vulnerable as well. A founding member of New Communities Land Trust described the context in which the organization developed as follows:

As we were working in the civil rights movement here in this area, not just, you know, in Albany but Sumter County, Lee County, Baker County, Worth County, Terrell County, all of these counties around, one of the things that was consistent was that Black people who decided to participate in the movement would be asked to leave the land they were living on because they were living on land owned by White farmers. So, in 1968, we attempted to try to come up with a solution to that. We had several people who went to Israel to study the

kibbutz, to look at how they were resettling people, and the whole idea was to build a community for people and create a whole community from education to health, you know. We had charrettes back when they came back with the information they had and started meeting and started to create an organization that we called New Communities. We had charrettes. And people, it was really empowering because people could actually have a chance to think and dream about the kind of place they wanted to create.

In response to the loss of homes and the fragile economic condition of Black farmers, a planning committee of civil rights organizations throughout the South (including the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives) met and created an organizational plan that involved individual homestead leases and cooperative farming leases. The group, called New Communities, purchased over 6000 acres of land in Lee County, adjacent to Dougherty County (Shirley Sherrod, the leader of Southwest Georgia Project, was a core member of the New Communities Land Trust). By 1980, after repeated droughts and active discrimination on the part of the USDA Farmers Home Administration, New Communities faced foreclosure:

We started farming and we were making, we could make enough money to actually pay the notes on the land. We couldn't implement the plans but we could hold onto the land and expand the farming operation. Things were going pretty good in that direction, but then we ran into droughts around, I think it was around '76 we had a drought. We were not getting any federal money, no loans or anything to farm. And then we had a second-year drought. So the farm manager and my husband went to the local Farmers Home Administration, that's what we called it back then, to get an application to apply for an emergency loan, something all farmers were doing. And the county supervisor said you'll get a loan here over my dead body. So the only way we could actually get an application, they had to send three people from the national office to come down and go with us to get an application. So we were in a three-year battle just to get an emergency loan. And if you're farming, three years without the proper input and you're having droughts, just was like a death blow to us. And that was intended, that was the intention. But one thing with Farmers Home, once they get a lien on, once you, well, in order to get the loan, you have to give a lien on all available assets. So even though we had assets worth more than four million dollars, we had to give them a lien on everything. Then they could really make late loans, you know, they did all the typical things you've heard that they've done to farmers to put them out of business. That's what they did to us. And in 1985, we lost everything.

However, the work and legacy of New Communities continued, and eventually, the organization shepherded by Shirley and Charles Sherrod won \$13 million as part of the *Pigford v. Glickman* lawsuit settlement. Today, New Communities has used part of the settlement money to purchase a 1600-acre former plantation at Cypress Ponds in Dougherty County, they call Resora, reclaiming the vision of New Communities as a farming collective that struggling Black farmers could join to pool their efforts for the common good. As this publication goes to press, New Communities at Cypress Ponds, Resora, Southwest Georgia Project, and other related efforts have coalesced under The Sherrod Institute, whose "mission is to develop more accessible and community-oriented food systems, while increasing opportunities for historically under-served families and farms and building a sustainable movement toward a more just society." Again, agriculture and food systems are understood and implemented as a lever for broader social transformation.

12.5 Toward a Restorative Planning Ethic

As described in the preceding case, the food systems planning of Black-led organizations and institutions can transform how we understand the goals and activities of food infrastructure and food policy, such as food hubs. This broader conception of food systems is often historically rooted in broader timeframes, enabling these vital food systems actors to simultaneously recall past discrimination and harm and imagine alternative future realities and possibilities. This broader conception and timeline of food systems work also requires a revision of the role of local government in food systems planning. An essential question emerges: How should planners in public institutions restore relationships and rebuild capacity after harm has been done to communities? A serious engagement with this question directs us toward what Schweitzer (2016) calls a “restorative planning ethic,” in which planners in public institutions have a role in healing relationships within the political community based on public memory that may prompt social and institutional transformation toward fuller inclusion across social, economic and cultural difference. In Albany, Georgia, planners can play their part by working towards reparative land and budgetary allocations, as well as infrastructure development activities, that enhance the self-determination of Black growers, both urban and rural, and facilitate more connections between them. In a food system and economy that exploits and harms Black workers, Black-owned and Black-led food cooperatives and food hubs can be generative alternatives that counter barriers to entry and access into the food system while furthering goals of self-determination. To dismantle structural inequity and create racially equitable food outcomes for all, local planners and policymakers must address challenges Black farmers and other farmers of color face around land security, USDA discrimination, access to capital and resources, education and training, and marketplace inequities.

Restorative planning is simultaneously future oriented and historically informed, informed by an understanding that there is often a thin line between the past and the present. It is the responsibility of planners to help shape not only the future visions of communities, but also account for their past. Whether intentional or unintentional, planners create narratives about places and too often these narratives are ahistorical or mask the root causes of inequities. For example, descriptions or narratives of low-income neighborhoods without supermarkets as “food deserts,” not only ignore the presence of other food retail outlets in neighborhoods, but also do not reveal anything about how and why these communities do not have supermarkets. These ahistorical narratives too often perpetuate the idea that current conditions are the consequence of the actions of current residents. Importantly, although all planning practice is future oriented, visions of the future do not always envision Black futures. Restorative planning aims to improve access and opportunity by building pathways for ownership and self-determination, which entails acknowledging and accounting for harm that has been done to communities. In the context of Southwest Georgia, restorative planning takes seriously healing, particularly racial healing, as a goal of ethical planning practice.

As we have seen in this chapter, community members' discourse and action around urban agriculture introduces an alternative means of evaluating the very nature of what constitutes community and economic development—one that emerges from the grass roots, not from the top down. The framework for evaluation they present through their discourse centers Black farmers and Black communities as constituents with voices that matter, and it acknowledges the racialized social system we live in, outlining initial steps toward local government planning and policymaking that is truly just and oriented to those they serve.

In expanding the frame within which we see urban agriculture as a policy decision, planning and policy practitioners and scholars may find ourselves with a new series of questions about local government decisions more broadly: What is the history that has brought us to this moment? How can we learn more about that history from those who have lived it? What does this activity or space represent for the community closest to it? Who gets to make the decisions here, and how do power and race inform the answer to that question? In the case of Albany, a city built through and upon systems and practices of slavery and sharecropping, asking such critical questions invariably brings us, one way or another, to the question of racism. Yet, local government planners, policymakers, and decision makers are generally unwilling to acknowledge or account for how race and racism structure every aspect of planning and development policy and practice, and of space and the environment more broadly. In this setting, Black-led community organizations act as storehouses of history and memory and bring people together with the land in order to plan for Black futures.

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Enjoli Hall is a PhD student in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Her research sits at the intersection of planning and health, and focuses on building infrastructures of community care that respond to and intervene on generational trauma and violence. She previously worked as a research assistant in the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab at the University at Buffalo, providing research support to the USDA-funded Growing Food Connections project and co-editing a special issue of the journal *Built Environment* on planning for equitable urban and regional food systems.

Shirley Sherrod is a civil rights leader whose work has illustrated the power of agriculture and food systems as a lever for promoting democracy and justice. Ms. Sherrod’s distinguished career spans civic and policy spheres, including as an organizer for the Student Non-Violent Action Committee (SNCC) in Georgia, co-founder of multiple organizations (e.g., the Southwest Georgia Education Project and the New Communities Land Trust), and as the Secretary of Rural Development for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). A farming collective, the New Communities Land Trust inspired the land trust movement in the US, and was a pivotal institution in *Pigford versus Glickman* (1999), an anti-discrimination class action lawsuit against the USDA that resulted in one of the largest civil rights settlements in favor of Black farmers. Today Ms. Sherrod directs *The Sherrod Institute*, a coalition of organizations working to develop a more just society by building community-oriented food systems that increase opportunities for historically underserved families and farms. Ms. Sherrod’s leadership in promoting social justice through agriculture—especially for rural Black farmers—has inspired action, policy, and scholarship nationally.

Samina Raja is a professor of food systems planning and the founder and director of the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab (UB Food Lab) at the University at Buffalo. Her scholarship, teaching, and practice focuses on the role of people-led policy and planning on promoting food and health equity.

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Part III
Public Policy Responses to Urban
Agriculture

Chapter 13

Municipal Planning Response to Urban Agriculture: Equity is Not Quite on the Table



Samina Raja , Subhashni Raj , and Carol E. Ramos-Gerena 

Abstract Public policy is the decision to act, or not to act, by a government entity in response to a societal issue. Nearly 40,000 local, regional, and metropolitan governments across the United States routinely develop and implement policies in a variety of domains, ranging from ensuring public safety to the provision of physical infrastructure. Since the early 2000s, community advocates and scholars, in part urged by Jerome Kaufman and colleagues, called on local governments to develop, support, and/or implement policies that strengthen, rather than hinder, urban agriculture and food systems. This chapter, an overview of a section on municipal policy for a book that honors Jerome Kaufman’s legacy, describes the extent to which local and regional governments engage in urban agriculture policy using an equity-centered, ethically grounded approach. The chapter summarizes a collection of perspectives on municipal policy co-authored by scholars and policy practitioners from around the United States. Since Jerry’s call to action for planners, urban agriculture is increasingly recognized as a space for local government engagement. That said, the authors conclude that municipal governments continue to struggle to center questions of equity and ethics in their policymaking even as they claim to have a progressive approach toward urban agriculture.

Keywords Municipal policy · Urban agriculture · Local government · Food systems planning · Food policy · Community engagement

S. Raja (✉) · C. E. Ramos-Gerena
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: sraja@buffalo.edu; carolram@buffalo.edu

S. Raj (✉)
University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI, USA
e-mail: sraj@hawaii.edu

Public policy is the decision to act, or not to act, by a government entity in response to a societal issue. Nearly 40,000 local, regional, and metropolitan governments across the United States routinely develop and implement policies in a variety of domains, ranging from ensuring public safety to the provision of physical infrastructure. In the last two decades, community advocates and scholars, in part urged by Jerome Kaufman and colleagues, called on local governments to develop, support, and/or implement policies that strengthen, rather than hinder, urban agriculture (UA) and food systems. While Jerry urged planners and policymakers nationally – and even globally – to engage with UA and food systems, he also engaged in efforts to transform policy and plans in the city of Madison, WI, where he lived and worked.

Cracks in the Food System: How Do We Plan for and Respond to Disasters Subhashni Raj

From the vantage point of the global COVID-19 pandemic it is easy to see the vulnerabilities in our local, regional, and global food systems. The pandemic is a double-header for many communities, exacerbating inequities and creating new challenges, very much as impacts of climate change would. In the pandemic's aftermath, governments are scrambling to put together recovery packages, which in many cases include food security via supporting food banks. But as one community member shared during my time in the field, how governments and agencies respond can also further exacerbate the disaster. The response itself can be a disaster if there is little thought for context and understanding of the community needs.

What we see currently is a reliance on food banks and charity infrastructure to address increased levels of food insecurity due to the pandemic, while on the production and supply chain side responses are less clear. What is becoming apparent is that beyond the hunger infrastructure, food systems interventions have not evolved to address disasters of the scale brought on by the pandemic. For example, there is little action to protect farmworkers and workers in processing plants - who are at once both essential and dispensable. In fact, as businesses, meat and poultry plants are propped up against economic failure by state and federal funds, but little is being done to protect the actual workers who keep the food supply chain viable. How much of the public funds used to prop up these businesses are being spent on testing, health care, and protective personal equipment for the food system workers? The workers are a critical part of the food system supply chain, yet under normal circumstances we pay them and their plight no heed. If not for the pandemic, the Fight for \$15 would still be on the fringes. Similarly, the reliance on the school lunch program to address childhood hunger was brought to light. Schools in many instances operated drive-through meal pickups so that

(continued)

children would not go hungry. But even then, these responses were ad-hoc and uneven. A post-pandemic evaluation of (local-regional-state) government response will be more telling of the intentionality, forethought, and efficacy of prescribing food systems solutions.

Perhaps there is something to be learned from the Global South for food systems policy and practice in the United States. Many vulnerable nations in the Global South have been preparing and responding to climatic shockwaves for decades now. To respond better, there has been a concerted effort to create response plans for different types of disaster at all levels: community, local, and national government. It is difficult to respond in the moment, and to do it well. Even with a response plan, efforts go awry, but the point is to develop a series of coordinated, representative, and concerted interventions that facilitate all members of the community to withstand the impacts (economic, social, and environmental) of the disaster and ease into recovery without much burden. What the pandemic has clearly shown us, more so than a singular climatic event could, is that the food system is embedded in a neoliberal, inequitable, and racist framework. Our response plan must go beyond the traditional (hunger infrastructure) and towards the transformative (democratization of the food system).

Jerry was the inaugural director of the Madison Food Systems Project, an action-research project funded through a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A quintessential scholar-practitioner, Jerry served on the City of Madison Advisory Committee on Community Gardens. The city government charged the Advisory Committee to develop a strategy for protecting and sustaining community gardens around Madison. In 1999, the Advisory Committee submitted to then-Mayor Bauman a report, *Growing a Stronger Community with Community Gardens*, recommending that the city recognize community gardens as a permanent land use (City of Madison Advisory Committee on Community Gardens 1999). The members wrote:

We, the members of this committee, feel the time has come for the City of Madison to recognize community gardening as a valued resource for growing food and fostering community, and we call on the City's residents, Mayor, members of the Common Council, and City staff to support, adopt and implement the [...] proposals to make community gardens a permanent and fully productive feature of our landscape.

The report outlined a series of policies and actions to protect the city's community gardening spaces, including for Troy Gardens, 4-acre site (one of the co-authors, Raja was a graduate student at UW-Madison at the time, and had the good fortune of working under Jerry's supervision as a research assistant to the Advisory Committee). Many of the ideas and suggestions in the report have come to fruition, thanks in large part to a broad coalition of community partners and academic leaders. For example, Troy Gardens has become a nationally recognized, urban agriculture-centric 31-acre planned unit development that includes green-built

affordable housing, an urban farm, community gardens, prairie restoration area, and nature trails, as described earlier in the book (Lipman and Caton Campbell 2024). Following Jerry's retirement from UW-Madison, his colleague Dr. Marcia Caton Campbell, took over as the Director of the Madison Food Systems Project and continued work on the Troy Gardens Project. As the Executive Director of Rooted, the organization that manages and programs Troy Gardens (along with a host of additional UA programming in Madison), Dr. Caton Campbell continues to shape urban agriculture and food systems (she is also the co-editor of the book in which this chapter appears).

On the planning and policy front, the City of Madison has developed a series of planning and policy initiatives to support UA, many of which are rooted in and/or inspired by Kaufman and his colleagues' early work. For example, the City's comprehensive plan explicitly supports urban agriculture and urban food systems. The zoning code includes land use designation for urban agriculture districts as well as for indoor agriculture (as outlined by Lipman and Caton Campbell (2024)). In 2012, one year before Jerry's passing, the City established a food policy council that develops and recommends policies to strengthen investments in urban agriculture and the food system. The FPC also receives a budget to advance its programming, and food policy work is coordinated by a city staff person in the Economic Development Division. In a city where Jerry did his foundational intellectual work on food systems planning, UA has been recognized and institutionalized in the local government policy and planning landscape.

Jerry's policy engagement in Madison, and later nationally, reflects his particular approach to planning: a blend of strategy and ethical vision for a just city. As director of the Madison Food System Project at UW-Madison, Jerry chose to redirect project resources from the university to community-based policy action in Madison. For example, one graduate research assistant and Jerry's doctoral advisee, Mark Stevens, coordinated a community coalition called the Research, Action, Education, and Policy on Food Group (REAP) founded in 1997 to catalyze community conversations around food. Now a not-for-profit organization, REAP continues its mission to transform communities through 'good food.' As noted earlier, Raja was lucky enough to be assigned as a graduate research assistant for the Madison Food System Project to support the writing and research that culminated in the 1999 report by the City of Madison Advisory Committee on Community Gardens. The report is possibly one of the earliest municipal planning reports calling for community gardens as a protected use of land in cities. With Kami Pothukuchi, Jerry conducted one of the country's earliest community food assessments in the city of Madison as part of a graduate planning practicum or studio course; graduates of this class, now planning practitioners and researchers, reflect on their experience in Chap. 22 (Born et al. 2024). The city of Madison served as a testing ground for Jerry's planning ideas and actions in urban agriculture, and more broadly, urban food systems. Kaufman's early national work on UA documented ways in which cities around the country were providing policy support. The resulting report (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000), authored by Kaufman and then graduate student Martin Bailkey and funded

by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, was influential in drawing attention to UA as urban land use (Bailkey and Greenstein 2024).

Since Jerry's early engagement with policy for UA in the late 1990s and early 2000s, numerous local governments around the country, including Madison, have expanded their engagement with urban agriculture, and urban food systems more broadly (Raja et al. 2018b). For example, in 2011, the City of Minneapolis adopted the country's first comprehensive urban agriculture plan. Recognizing the centrality of local governments in food systems a group of researchers and practitioners – one of whom was Jerry's former student (Raja) and another his mentee (Hodgson) – co-designed Growing Food Connections, an action-research initiative to use local government policy and planning to strengthen food systems. The original team included university researchers from University at Buffalo (Raja) and The Ohio State University (Jill Clark), and planning practitioners, including Cultivating Healthy Places (Kimberley Hodgson) and American Farmland Trust (Julia Freedgood). The national American Planning Association (APA), represented by Anna Ricklin and David Rouse, was a key partner in the initiative. The Growing Food Connections initiative, which is dedicated to Jerry Kaufman, builds capacity for research, education, and policy across the country with the support of a transformative \$3.96 million federal grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Launched formally in 2012, the Growing Food Connections initiative documented how innovative local governments around the United States used plans and policies to strengthen food systems – the team called these jurisdictions Communities of Innovation (COIs). The team was especially focused on strategies that connected farmers with underserved residents in the same region. Several COIs are featured in this book, and a series of policy briefs documenting their successes are available through GFC. Urban COIs include Baltimore (MD), Cleveland (OH), Lawrence (KA), Philadelphia (PA), and Seattle (WA), among others.

Working with a team of national advisors, the GFC team also selected eight jurisdictions that had significant opportunity to leverage local government policy for connecting farmers with food insecure residents. The team focused on capacity building in these Communities of Opportunity (COOs) (capacity building in the COOs was led by the American Farmland Trust). Selected COOs were both urban and rural, and some defied popular understanding of urban or rural (especially in the southern parts of the US). The COOs included Chautauqua County, NY, Douglas County, NE, Dougherty County, GA, Cumberland, ME, Dona Ana, NM, Luna County, NM, Polk County, NC, and Wyandotte County, KS. With support from GFC, all COOs launched community advisory groups focused on food systems planning; some started food systems planning processes while others established food policy councils. Some also struggled to make food systems central to their jurisdictions' policy priorities.

To help local governments, including COOs, learn from precedent examples, in 2014, GFC launched a national database that tracks local government plans and policies to strengthen food system (Raja et al. 2014a-present). With leadership from Cultivating Healthy Places (Kimberley Hodgson), the database established a taxonomy of urban food systems as relevant to local governments. A range of adopted

policies from around the country were gathered, coded, and broadcast to illustrate the creative ways in which local governments can strengthen food systems. The GFC policy database was the first in the country, possibly the world, to track local government action on food systems (especially adoption of plans). Today, the database, which is maintained by the UB Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab, includes a range of food-related policies including local laws, ordinances, resolutions, motions, orders, and directives, as well as plans, standards, guidelines, tax exemptions and other public financing policies. Policies in the database encompass all geographic regions of the United States. Users can search for policies by size of government, rural and urban contexts. In addition to general information about policy types, topic and adoption date, the database includes actual policy documents, or the adopted policy language for each policy. Designed to be interactive, local governments can also update their own policies. The database illustrates the significant engagement of local governments in food systems in the United States since Pothukuchi and Kaufman's call for action to planners in 2000. Among the hundreds of unique local government policies focused on food systems included in the national Growing Food Connections (GFC) database, 85 policies from 85 cities focus on urban food production (Growing Food Connections [n.d.](#)).

While this growth of local government engagement in food systems – and urban agriculture – is heartening at first glance, a deeper examination – including the lessons from the GFC initiative – reveals a complicated picture. First, engagement in food or urban agriculture activities is far from a routine city government activity in the United States compared to, say, the provision of a sewer system and garbage removal. In a 2014 national survey of American Planning Association (APA) members conducted by the Growing Food Connections initiative, only 1% of respondents reported that food was a top priority for the local, regional, and/or local government that they represented.

A recent analysis of survey data on urban local governments gathered by the Growing Food Connections initiative illustrates that although local government policy pays attention to food production (and retail and food service), there is little effort to invest in the “middle infrastructure” that would build system resiliency (Clark et al. [2020](#)). Indeed, in Part II of this book, Hall et al. ([2024](#)) note a similar reluctance from the local government to support the development of a food hub led by a noted community organization in Albany, GA, one of the GFC Communities of Opportunity.

Moreover, most local governments that are explicitly engaged in planning for UA tend to privilege a regulatory approach. Many are preoccupied with creating, modifying, and/or enforcing zoning laws, rather than deploying land, resources, or capital for urban agriculture. Regrettably, UA land also continues to be treated as a temporary use of urban land, often through short- or medium-term leases (e.g., in Baltimore). Local governments, increasingly functioning as neoliberal regimes, retain control over land in preparation for greater financial gains resulting from the future development of land. Gatekeeping by city government results in commodification of land resources.

Local governments that tend towards a more progressive stance toward urban agriculture also fall short because of gatekeepers and lack of transparency that influences the design and outcomes of policy processes. Inequities in the design of policy governance and policy processes result in inequitable UA policies (such as racially neutral UA programs), and inequitable UA policy outcomes. Of course, community networks challenge hegemonic UA practices to promote food sovereignty, but this is not the norm in public policy. Recent research by members of the UB Food Lab suggests that even in 2022 very few urban agriculture policies explicitly address racial equity. As a result, local government policies that ostensibly favor urban agriculture only serve to gentrify and eventually displace people on the margins. All the ways in which planning and policy are co-opted in other sectors of planning appear to have carried over into how local governments approach UA as well.

Chapters in this section (Chaps. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19) highlight the contested and complex engagement of municipal governments with urban agriculture. Most chapters are written by interdisciplinary teams comprised of scholars and public policy practitioners from across the country. The practitioner-scholar nature of most writing teams allows for a reflexive perspective that draws on the deep and grounded experience of practitioners combined with the more theoretical approach of scholars.

The opening chapter (Chap. 14) describes the story of how the American Planning Association (APA), the country's national association of professional planners, came to formally acknowledge food as a planning issue. Key figures in this story of transformation include Jerry himself, along with his long-time colleagues and co-authors of this chapter, Drs. Kameshwari (Kami) Pothukuchi and Deanna Glosser (Pothukuchi and Glosser 2024). The authors illustrate how their strategic and collaborative work of the trio set the stage for launching food systems planning as a formal sub-field of planning. Kaufman and Pothukuchi began collaborating on food systems research, teaching, and civic projects at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the mid-1990s, resulting in numerous publications, classes, and presentations. A 2003 keynote at the APA National Conference delivered by Jerry inspired Deanna Glosser, a practicing planner, to engage in food as a professional issue. Deanna, Jerry, and Kami's collaborative efforts catalyzed conversations about food systems as an area of relevance to planning practitioners, with a key milestone being the adoption of the APA's Guide for Community and Regional Planning in 2007. Subsequently, food system advocates and food-friendly planners around the country, and across the globe, referenced the APA guide in their efforts to call for greater attention to food within their own communities.

The subsequent Chaps. (15, 16, 17, 18, and 19) in this section delve into experiences of local government policy successes and failures from cities across the United States. Authors were asked to reflect on local governments' role in UA (and urban food systems), with explicit attention to ethics and equity. Case studies of Cleveland and Detroit (Pothukuchi 2024), Seattle (Hodgson 2024), Baltimore (Buzogany et al. 2024), and Denver (Gosch et al. 2024) show us the possibilities and pitfalls of local government policy engagement in urban agriculture.

In the Rustbelt cities of Cleveland and Detroit, the availability of vacant land opened up the opportunities for integrating agriculture into the urban fabric through the work of capable community organizations working within somewhat varied policy and governance frameworks. In Chap. 15, Pothukuchi (2024) outlines the varied UA policy trajectories of these cities. The scale of urban agriculture in Detroit is much larger than that in Cleveland. In Detroit, urban agriculture, both entrepreneurial and not-for-profit forms, operates largely independent of the municipal government. In Cleveland, both city government and land grant university extension have been involved in providing support, including grant programs and the like. Extension's leadership is both applauded and questioned. Pothukuchi reports a mismatch between the offering of extension gardener training enterprise and the community needs, suggesting that a peer-based approach to training may be preferred. In some instances, more traditional institutions may need to step back from the UA space to allow other forms of community training to materialize (see Ramos-Gerena on critical food policy literacy, 2023). Perhaps there is a need for more peer-based models of learning than the more formal trainings offered by land grant universities and extension. Cleveland has a redistributionist approach (that departs from pure market-oriented approaches) that is embedded in broader sustainability efforts and community development goals that allowed for more genuine buy-in from the local government. Comparing Detroit's pro-growth land governance municipal agenda to Cleveland's pro-equity land governance and community development model, Pothukuchi reports that municipal policy regimes in both cities treat urban agriculture as tenuous and temporary. This is especially ironic given that both cities have significant amounts of vacant land that could lead to *purposeful planning* for urban agriculture.

A city government with a sustained history of supporting urban food production, Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods has operated the P-Patch Program, an extensive network of community gardens, since 1973. The city's work in UA and food systems has expanded dramatically since the 1970s, now with a dedicated staff person who oversees comprehensive efforts to strengthen the city and county's food system. Despite the extensive local government efforts, disparities exist within the food system to this day. For example, community gardens usage is not proportionate across racial groups. Gentrification pressures raise questions about racial and social inequities in the use of and benefits of UA. The author of Chap. 16, Kimberley Hodgson, who, along with Marcia Caton Campbell and Martin Bailkey, wrote one of the earliest reports on planning for urban agriculture in the United States during her time as a staffer at the American Planning Association (Hodgson et al. 2011), notes that Seattle's current efforts are insufficient in addressing linkages between historic traumas such as colonization, segregation, and displacement, to more contemporary food injustices (Hodgson 2024). Seattle has a racial equity tool to facilitate decision making but its implementation is uneven. For example, for-profit developers out-bid non-profit developers for land around the Rainier Beach light rail station, suggesting equity tools need to filter into fiscal decision-making, such as tender and bidding processes.

Chapter 17 showcases the work of the city of Baltimore, MD, an emerging leader that has embedded urban agriculture (and food systems) into comprehensive city-wide efforts using the lens of sustainability. Food-focused work in Baltimore is urgent given the inequities experienced by residents, especially Black and brown residents. The team of practitioners and scholars who co-authored this chapter report that 43% of predominantly Black neighborhoods have low availability of healthy food compared to just 4% of predominantly white neighborhoods. The city government is responding to systemic challenges with its comprehensive Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI). The institutionalization of food through provision of staffing, execution of planning processes, and establishment of clear priorities has allowed BFPI to leverage funds, including to compensate residents for their time to participate in food policy processes. Baltimore's establishment of a Resident Food Equity Advisor group is especially notable. RFEAs are selected through a competitive application process to represent each of the city's council districts to advise on food policy. The authors writing about Baltimore posit that the city's success in moving forward on food policy is grounded in its plans and planning processes (Buzogany et al. 2024). The authors note that it is also the work of community organizations – that have an explicitly anti-racist perspective to urban farming – that compels the city to rethink its own urban agriculture work. Avoiding overly prescriptive solutions, Baltimore is slowly transitioning from representational to participatory food policies, although authors suggest the city is not there yet (Buzogany et al. 2024).

The final case (Chap. 18) of Denver, CO draws lessons from a policy failure. The team of authors, which includes researchers and a food policy leader, discuss how the conversion of vacant public land to agriculture failed to be implemented despite broad support for food systems planning within the city (Gosch et al. 2024). Denver is viewed by many as a city that celebrates food. Yet, many residents have limited access to food. Feeding America estimated that in 2018 about 11% of individuals in Denver City and County were food insecure. The Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council viewed urban agriculture as a tool to respond to food insecurity while also advancing other sustainability goals. In a policy advisory titled *City Food, City Land*, the council recommended the conversion of 100 acres of public land to urban agriculture, both commercial and not-for-profit by 2030. The policy did not, however, pass municipal review. Competing pressures for land may have played a role in a city where gentrification is a powerful force (Sbicca 2019). The authors of the chapter suggest that insufficient communication among key stakeholders, especially between food advocates and municipal agencies, may also have stalled policy adoption. Structural inequities, bureaucratic impediments, and nature of local government matters when mobilizing food system changes through policy. Broader struggles over what is the highest and best use of land may also play a role in the treatment of urban agriculture in cities that follow pro-growth regimes.

Chapter 19, the closing chapter in this section, offers comparative insights from policy processes from multiple local governments across the United States drawing on research from Growing Food Connections. The paper argues for the importance

of relational infrastructure in building UA and food systems local government policy. Irish et al. (2024) explore the emergence of interpersonal relationships in food systems planning and policy, the characteristics of social environments that foster such interpersonal relationships, and the traits/activities that foster interpersonal relationships in food systems policy processes. The authors argue that collaborative governance in food systems policy rests on the existence of interpersonal relationships that have largely been underreported. In a comparative case study of local and regional governments viewed as innovators in food policy formation, adoption, and implementation, including Seattle-King County (WA), Marquette County (MI), Staples Region (MN), and Lawrence-Douglas County (KS), the authors report five characteristics of environments that fostered interpersonal relations in food policy-making. These were the presence of a shared vision across local government and community partners; strong community support by political leaders and community at large; passionate (Individual) champions who catalyzed ideas into action; pre-existing informal relationships among actors; and professional latitude that allowed local government (and other actors) to go beyond the boundaries of their work. Some of these characteristics also have a negative side, as the authors remind us. Pre-existing informal relationships, for example, can exclude people who are traditionally marginalized in policy and social networks. As such, it is crucial that interpersonal relational infrastructure itself be critically examined, and fostered to include, not exclude, people.

Reflecting on the experiences of city governments across the country, contrasted with those offered by community-centered perspectives reported in Part II of this book, we are left with a somewhat conflicted view of local government engagement in urban agriculture. On one hand, local and regional governments have most certainly ‘discovered’ urban agriculture. Many have also developed a suite of policies and plans to support – or, rather, regulate – urban agriculture. However, these policies and plans often lack the budgetary commitment that makes them real on the ground, making them not much better than the “dusty shelf” plans of generations ago.

In addition, local governments fail to fully engage with deeper structural problems – such as racism – that beset urban neighborhoods in the United States. It is, therefore, no surprise that local governments don’t recognize how urban agriculture may interface with structural problems, both positively and negatively. There are one too many examples of cities where Black, brown, and immigrant residents’ aspirations to design, control, and imagine land uses in their neighborhoods, including for urban agriculture, have received short shrift from municipal policy leaders. In Buffalo, NY, for example, community gardening and urban agriculture was pushed into the municipal policy discourse by community actors, scholars describe as rustbelt radicals (Raja et al. 2014b). The municipal government operates largely as a handmaiden to large-scale developers, favoring a large-scale, trickle-down, form of land use development that offers limited to no benefits to the city’s Black, brown and/or poor residents. The city’s Black, brown, and immigrant neighborhoods are beginning to gentrify, placing low-income residents of color at risk of dispossession. On the other hand, the aspirations of Black/brown and low-income

residents have received limited traction from planning and policy leaders. Most recently, the local government's approval of expansion plans for the city's only Black-owned urban farm, Urban Fruits & Veggies, on the city's historically Black area have been delayed, repeatedly. The lack of municipal imagination toward urban agriculture – and more broadly Black-led community-led UA projects – is especially troubling because of persistent food apartheid in Buffalo's Black neighborhoods.

Overall, questions of ethics and equity – and racial equity – remain under-addressed in local government urban agriculture policies. So, what does an equity-centered, ethically grounded local government policy engagement in urban agriculture look like? There is no singular prescription, of course. However, there are a few general approaches that can be the basis of an equity-centered, ethically grounded approach to UA policy. A broad framework for planning as public nurturance is proposed by Raja et al. (2024) in the conclusion of the book in which this overview appears. Briefly, planners and policy leaders have to demonstrate both *individual* ethics, by behaving with integrity and transparency commensurate with the planners Code of Ethics, and *institutional* ethics, by form of adopting policies that result in equitable outcomes for those who are most marginalized in cities. Without the broader push for institutional ethics, ethical individual planners are set up for failure. Planning operates within the hegemony of pro-development government practices (see for example, the cities of Hawaii where funding is used to protect or rehab resources important for tourism versus to increase community capacity to cope with cascading disasters). Individual planners are embedded in this pro-development approach, and many planners are trained without so much as taking a class on ethics (though this is required in the PAB curriculum). Institutional and individual ethics are paramount.

As has been discussed widely in the literature, including in the chapters in this section, it is imperative that the design of planning processes foreground questions of transparency, equity, and inclusion. Elsewhere we have discussed the characteristics of food systems planning processes that are equitable and inclusive (Raja et al. 2018a).

Unfortunately, attempts to design equitable planning processes may not always ensure equitable outcomes. Jerry Kaufman, a consequentialist in his approach to ethics, recognized and wrote about this. Therefore, it is important for municipal planners who aspire to serve varied public interests to focus on both equitable processes and outcomes. A new ethic of urban agriculture policy demands that it be embedded in both procedural and distributive justice. Returning to the earlier example from Seattle, a bidding process rooted in distributive justice would have allocated more points to the non-profit development (compared to the for-profit developer) as their plans would more likely be geared to protect the neighborhood from the vagaries of gentrification. Tendering and bidding processes, too, need to adopt a racial equity lens and weight bids based on how they address structural inequities.

Importantly, planners must pivot from the unitary idea of the public interest to recognize that, (a) there are varied publics, and (b) some publics are routinely

excluded from public policy processes and public (and private) resources. In the context of UA in US cities today, municipal planners can conduct a racial equity analysis of land ownership (or land access) in their cities to determine how Black and other marginalized households are being served through UA. Only by understanding *whose* interests are protected by current UA policies – and general municipal policies – can planners strive for more equitable futures.

Of course, local governments can secure land tenure to protect UA from the vagaries of real estate markets. However, such land security must be ensured commensurately with other strategies to protect Black, brown, Indigenous, and other marginalized communities' use of and access to the secured land. When urban agriculture or food systems work is exclusively viewed through a monetary lens (e.g., in the Rainier Beach example, Chap. 16), capitalist modes of operation will likely co-opt good intentions. Failure to enact such commensurate strategies will result in the protection of UA land to work *against* marginalized *people*, by gentrifying neighborhoods and displacing them.

To conclude, a growing number of city governments show leadership in supporting urban agriculture and food systems. Many of these are highlighted in this section of the book. Experiences across the cities suggest that local context matters a great deal, and that planners ought to pay attention to these variable contexts. In some cities, land acquisition is highly competitive (e.g., in California and Hawaii), and scholars have noted that Black, brown, and indigenous farmers in such settings are on the fringes of urban growers' network, likely pushed out of policy processes. In such settings, relational infrastructure as outlined by Irish et al will look different than in other contexts. Publics, too, vary in each context, and policy processes must serve those specific publics. In places where urban agriculture planning is formalized, dominant and/or elite publics (e.g., well-resourced white farmers/gardeners) benefit from UA. Municipal governments continue to struggle, however, to center questions of ethics and equity in their policymaking even as they engage in the progressive agenda of urban agriculture. The next generation of local government policy must center equity and justice, including in the domain of urban agriculture.

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Samina Raja is a professor of food systems planning and the founder and director of the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab (UB Food Lab) at the University at Buffalo. Her scholarship, teaching, and practice focuses on the role of people-led policy and planning on promoting food and health equity.

Subhashni Raj is an Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Prior to this she was a Post-doctoral Scholar in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Davis. She is a Jerome L Kaufman Fellow (at the University at Buffalo) and Foreign Fulbright Scholar and worked for UN Women prior to joining UC Davis. Her research focuses on the impact of climate change on the land-food-water nexus in marginalized communities in the Global South and North. In her downtime, you can find Dr Raj hanging out with her toddler learning about the world together.

Carol E. Ramos-Gerena is a PhD student in Urban and Regional Planning at the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York. Her research explores the intersection between agroecology, critical food policy literacy, participatory planning, land use policies, decolonial feminism, and food sovereignty. For more than a decade, she has promoted agroecology and collaborated on environmental restoration projects in Puerto Rico. She holds a Master’s degree in Environmental Planning from the University of Puerto Rico. Currently, she works at the UB Food Lab as a graduate research assistant.

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Chapter 14

Jerry Kaufman and Food Systems Planning Leadership: The APA Policy Guide as a Microcosm of Innovative Collaboration



Kameshwari Pothukuchi  and Deanna Glosser

Abstract In 2007, the American Planning Association (APA) adopted the Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning, less than a decade after the appearance of the landmark papers establishing community food systems as a legitimate topic for planners' attention. This chapter traces the process of institutionalizing food planning within the country's largest organization of professional planners, including related collaborations among the lead authors of the policy guide, and highlights the role of Jerry Kaufman's visionary leadership in the process. Kaufman's talent for bringing to planners' attention topics of importance to communities and to professional practice that were previously ignored; his prodigious networks of current and former students, faculty colleagues, and professional planners; and his longtime leadership bridging academic and professional planning arenas all were key to the policy guide's development and its adoption.

Keywords Community Food Security Coalition · APA Divisions Council · APA Food Interest Group · Food Planning Steering Committee · Food systems planning · Growing Power · APA Legislative and Policy Committee · Madison Food System Project

Less than a decade after the appearance of the landmark papers establishing community food systems as a legitimate topic for planners' attention, the American Planning Association (APA) adopted a policy guide on the topic. How did the topic go from being "a stranger to the planning field" (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000) to its formulation as institutional policy guidance by the country's largest organization of professional planners? This chapter traces this trajectory, and along the way,

K. Pothukuchi (✉)
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, USA
e-mail: k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu

D. Glosser
Land Conservation Foundation, Champaign, IL, USA
e-mail: deanna@landconservationfoundation.org

maps both the journey begun by Professor Jerry Kaufman in 1996–97 and the unlikely collaborations it engendered among the three of us, the lead authors of the policy guide. It showcases the process by which the Policy Guide was developed, with the participation of numerous APA members, as a microcosm of Kaufman's expansive energies in bridging academic and professional concerns in innovative ways. The process also helped colleagues such as ourselves, from each domain, bridge the gap to the other.

Since 2003, when Kaufman gave his keynote address at the Denver APA National Conference, our joint collaboration took the form of efforts to introduce food system issues into APA's activities such as the organization's annual National Conference, networking through a food planning steering committee (2005, San Francisco), and writing a white paper on food systems planning with participation by steering committee members, for presentation at the 2006 APA conference in San Antonio. These and other activities culminated in the development of a Policy Guide and its presentation to various APA constituencies in 2007, at the organization's annual conference in Philadelphia. Table 14.1 lists key events in this timeline, starting with Kaufman's founding leadership of the Madison Food System Project in 1996.

This chapter weaves together our individual journeys in alternative food system movements into food planning initiatives within the APA. It discusses the significance of each of these activities both for advancing the field of food systems planning as well as for the planning profession more broadly, and highlights achievements represented by the adoption of the Policy Guide. Finally, it traces Kaufman's signature leadership contributions in food systems planning in bridging academic and professional concerns and assembling people of diverse backgrounds in the effort. As was the case with topics related to planning ethics and alternative dispute resolution, his leadership in food systems repeats, yet again, his nudging of planners to relevant issues that hitherto were invisible to them.

First, a brief note about the American Planning Association:¹ With a membership of 38,000 across 47 chapters, the organization seeks to advance planning through activities related to education, research, advocacy and ethical practice. Among APA's flagship functions are the annual national conference; the production of digital and print publications, including the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, *Planning* magazine, and *Planning Advisory Service* Reports; support for certification of planners and accreditation of academic planning programs; and vigorous public information and continuing education programs.

APA's operations include divisions and specialty interest groups that offer opportunities for professional development and training, networking, policy advocacy, and leadership. Divisions address topics such as housing, environmental planning, hazard mitigation, transportation, rural planning, and a host of others. Since 2005, as discussed below, led by Kaufman and the authors, a group came together as the Food Planning Steering Committee, later formalized as the Food Interest Group.

¹For more information, browse www.planning.org

Table 14.1 A chronology of selected events leading up to APA’s adoption of the Community and Regional Food Planning Policy Guide

Year	Key event
1996	Jerry Kaufman is invited by Associate Dean Ken Shapiro, Director of the Wisconsin Food System Project, UW-Madison College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, to form and lead the Madison Food System Project.
1997	Kaufman and Kami Pothukuchi co-teach the Capstone Planning Workshop in the Urban and Regional Planning Department at UW-Madison.
1998	Kaufman assembles and moderates a panel on food systems planning at the American Planning Association (APA) National Conference in Seattle.
1999–2000	Landmark food-planning papers appear in <i>Agriculture and Human Values</i> and <i>Journal of American Planning Association</i> (respectively, Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999, 2000).
2003	April: Jerry Kaufman delivers keynote address at the APA National Conference in Denver, urging planners to attend to food system issues. Summer-Fall: APA Divisions Council member Deanna Glosser reaches out to Kaufman.
2003–2004	Kaufman and Glosser brainstorm activities within APA, including offering a food track at the National Conference. Kaufman invites Pothukuchi; together they develop a call for papers for 2005 APA conference.
2004	Special food planning issue of <i>Journal of Planning Education and Research</i> published, with Kaufman as guest editor. Fall: Kaufman, Glosser, Pothukuchi review more than 85 paper proposals, to organize into tracks for 2005 APA National Conference.
2005	April: Seven food system tracks are organized at APA National Conference in San Francisco. Brokered by Glosser, APA Legislative and Policy Committee approves the development of the Food Planning White Paper. APA Food Planning Steering Committee is formed, with approx. 40 in attendance; several academic and professional planners volunteer to write the <i>Food System Planning White Paper</i> .
April 2006	White paper presented to the APA Legislative and Policy Committee. Glosser brokers Committee approval for a community and regional food planning policy guide to be developed and presented at the APA National Conference in 2007.
Summer, Fall 2006	Kaufman, Pothukuchi, Glosser assemble framework, broaden the group of academics and practitioners to assist, invite input from APA members, and prepare several drafts incorporating input. They submit draft Policy Guide for APA internal review and official dissemination for comment, December 17, 2006.
2007	Kaufman, Pothukuchi, Glosser present draft Food Planning Policy Guide to Chapter Delegate Assembly at Philadelphia national conference in April; incorporate comments from Delegate Assembly and Legislative and Policy Committee and submit for official adoption. The <i>APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning</i> is adopted by the Legislative and Policy Committee, April 13; by the Chapter Delegate Assembly, April 14; by the Board of Directors, April 15. Final Policy Guide posted, May 11.

A key output of the APA is the Policy Guide. Policy Guides represent the organization’s official position on critical planning issues and arm planners with the tools to advocate for policies at all levels of government. Guides are developed by APA members for planners and policymakers under the guidance of APA’s Legislative and Policy Committee.

14.1 Our Individual Food Journeys

Prior to the start of our three-way collaboration in 2004, each of the three of us had interests and were involved in food systems in myriad, but separate ways. This section describes how these individual journeys successfully came together.

Jerry Kaufman In 1994–95, Kaufman was a member of a committee of University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty members led by Ken Shapiro, former Associate Dean and now Emeritus Professor at the university's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, who wrote a grant proposal to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.² In 1996, Kaufman agreed to direct the Madison Food System Project (MFSP), one of several initiatives of the successful Kellogg proposal, the Wisconsin Food System Project (WFSP). The WFSP aimed to connect food and agriculture to an urban constituency in the state. MFSP's first project was to plan and teach during the spring 1997 semester, the Capstone Seminar on community food systems planning in the graduate Urban and Regional Planning program at the University of Wisconsin. Kaufman recruited Kami Pothukuchi, then a newly minted Ph.D. and visiting assistant professor at the university, to co-teach the course. Pothukuchi's graduate studies at the University of Michigan had included a course and projects in global food systems. The capstone seminar was advised by a steering committee of university faculty and community-based leaders who brought expertise on agriculture, community gardens, emergency food and other anti-poverty programs, immigrant assistance, and nutrition. It also featured a seminar panel by four national experts—Rod McRae of the Toronto Food Policy Council (Ontario, Canada); Kate Fitzgerald of the Sustainable Food Center in Austin, Texas; Bob Gottlieb of Occidental College and advisor to the student-led Los Angeles (California), food assessment, Seeds of Change; and Mark Winne of the Hartford Food System in Connecticut. As Kaufman put it later, “basically, we were three steps ahead of the students, that is, we didn't know that much about it (the food system).”³

Drawing on the collaborative teaching and other research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Kaufman and Pothukuchi went on to publish two papers that were foundational to the field of food systems planning (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999, 2000). In 1997, Kaufman joined the board of the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC), a now-defunct national organization with a mission to advance community food security through policy advocacy, regional organizing, and training and technical assistance. There, he continued conversations about how to benefit communities through strategic linkages among food system components and between food and other community systems. In 1998, he successfully proposed a panel at the annual APA conference in Seattle on food system planning, and moderated it.

² Kaufman interview, University of Wisconsin Oral History Project, June 3, 2008.

³ Kaufman interview, University of Wisconsin Oral History Project, June 3, 2008.

Following these collaborations, Kaufman launched other projects, including a research study on entrepreneurial urban agriculture with Martin Bailkey, then his doctoral advisee and an adjunct instructor at the University (and a contributor to this volume). Sponsored by the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, their report, *Farming Inside Cities: Entrepreneurial Agriculture in the United States*, was published in 2000 (Kaufman and Bailkey 2000). Kaufman also guest-edited a special issue of the *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, published in 2004, which assembled papers on food systems planning that were presented in previous years' conferences of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP). He went on the lecture circuit, invited by university and community leaders, to lecture on food systems planning, including the eventful keynote at the 2003 APA National Conference in Denver, discussed below. Around this time, Kaufman was invited to serve on the board of Growing Power, a food justice organization founded and led by Will Allen, and soon assumed the role of board president.

Kami Pothukuchi In fall 1998, Pothukuchi took a faculty position at Wayne State University, where she developed an engaged scholarship agenda in community food systems. Attentive to the specific food system concerns in the city, she launched a study of planner initiatives to attract supermarkets to underserved inner city neighborhoods, which she presented at the 2005 APA conference (Pothukuchi 2005); a youth-led garden in Southwest Detroit; and a food system assessment of several impoverished neighborhoods. With papers in the special issue of the 2004 *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (JPER) noted above and in *Progressive Planning* (Pothukuchi 2004a, b), she also joined the board of the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) in 1999, just as Kaufman was stepping down at the end of his term. Working with CFSC staff, she produced the *What's Cooking in your Food System?* Guidebook for community food assessments (Pothukuchi et al. 2002) and served as a trainer for more than a dozen Community Food Assessment (CFA) workshops across North America. She advised several groups locally and nationally in their applications for USDA's Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program, on whose review panel she had served for several years around this time. She also made several attempts to help student groups start a garden on Wayne State's campus, but the attempts were thwarted by the university's facilities staff, an attitude that would shift in 2008.

In 1999, Pothukuchi proposed a panel on food systems planning for the upcoming APA conference in New York, but it was unsuccessful. Entitled, "Integrating food system issues in land use, environmental, and community and economic development planning," the proposal sought to build on Kaufman's experience the previous year. The 1999 proposal included Pothukuchi, Andy Fisher (then executive director of the CFSC) and Bob Gottlieb, then president of the CFSC Board. While, admittedly, the national conference gets vastly more proposals than can be accommodated in the program, clearly, food system planning had not yet gained currency within APA circles despite being considered by some planners and academics at the time. It took another six years for Pothukuchi to present a food system-related paper at an APA conference, this time in 2005, in San Francisco.

Deanna Glosser Prior to her collaborations with Kaufman, Deanna Glosser was engaged with her primary area of interest—protecting natural resources. Her doctoral degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was focused on environmental planning within the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. Glosser’s emphasis at the time was protecting water resources, including wetlands, and endangered species. She held various positions with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources that led her to working with local governments in adopting sustainable development practices to protect their community’s natural resources. This work also led to Glosser’s involvement with APA in the mid-1990s.

Glosser served as the Chair and Past Chair of APA’s Environment, Natural Resources and Energy (ENRE) Division through 2006, as well as Vice-Chair of the Divisions Council composed of the chairs of all 21 APA Divisions. She also served on APA’s Legislative and Policy Committee, which worked to identify policy issues to create stronger and more just communities. This committee also coordinates the development of APA’s official policy guides that provide the foundation for APA’s legislative initiatives and future programs and research. Glosser gained experience in the policy development process with two policy guides, both times chairing a national committee. In 1998, Glosser led the effort to develop the APA Policy Guide on Endangered Species and Habitat Protection, which was ratified by the APA Board of Directors in 1999. In 2001, she led the effort to revise the APA Policy Guide on Wetlands, which was ratified in 2002. This experience was invaluable in the 2006 effort with food systems planning.

In Glosser’s professional work, the “food system” was understood as the row-crop industrial agriculture that dominated—and continues to dominate—most of the sector in the United States. Industrial agriculture poses a significant threat to the nation’s natural resources with surface and groundwater pollution from soil erosion and nutrient runoff, use of toxic chemicals, the degradation and destruction of wild-life habitat, and more. She thus saw the food system as a challenge or even an obstacle to protecting a wide range of natural resources. At this time, there was little commonly understood distinction between industrial agriculture and local, sustainable food production.

This perspective of the food system began to change as Glosser became aware of the work of Slow Food International and its chapters, including Slow Food USA. Slow Food is a not-for-profit organization founded in Italy by Carlo Petrini and a group of activists in the 1980s. The group’s initial focus was “to defend regional traditions, good food, gastronomic pleasure and a slow pace of life” – “slow food” versus “fast food”.⁴ However, in recent years, this focus had evolved “to embrace a comprehensive approach to food that recognizes the strong connections between plate, planet, people, politics and culture.” Although Glosser’s view of the food system had broadened, her interest in the topic was more personal than professional.

⁴Source: <https://www.slowfood.com/about-us/our-history/>

Nonetheless, she began to see the importance of local food production, and the need to increase the diversity of crops and animals raised for human consumption, including the fact that many plant and animal species that humans rely on for food are endangered. It became clear to her that food could be produced in a manner that did not destroy or degrade natural resources. These understandings led to her work to create a chapter, *Slow Food Springfield*, in 2004, with the aim of introducing the public to the local producers of food and to expand access to healthful food. Involvement in the Slow Food movement as an avocation provided the background that led to the epiphany when she heard Kaufman's keynote address in 2003. Glosser was struck with the realization that there could be a professional connection to the food system as well.

To cap this section, following Kaufman and Pothukuchi's initial collaborations on community food systems from 1997 through 2000, each went their separate ways launching other initiatives locally and nationally, albeit under the shared aegis of the CFSC and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP). Although they stayed in touch, APA was not on their mutual radar for food planning advocacy after 1999. While Glosser, too, was interested and involved in food system issues and had experience with APA policy guides, she did not act to integrate these interests in her governance roles in the organization. All that changed in 2003, when Kaufman made his keynote address at the APA National Conference in Denver.

14.2 The Denver APA National Conference: The Genesis of the Food Policy Guide Collaborations

Keynote speakers at APA national conferences were typically national celebrities who were selected to deliver an entertaining speech. Inviting an academic or even a professional planner to deliver the keynote address was, and continues to be, less common. The invitation to Kaufman turned out to be a fortuitous departure from the norm. It should be noted that Kaufman was, at the time, a familiar figure in planning leadership networks. His career as a planner was launched in the early 1960s through his association with one of APA's parent organizations, the American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO).⁵ He also served as president of ACSP, 1991–1993, and was visible for his work on planning ethics and alternative dispute resolution.

Glosser was in the audience at Kaufman's 2003 address and remembers being overwhelmed. His address included advice—and even admonitions—to planners about what they could and even should be doing. He questioned planners on why they do not address the food system, and challenged them to do more. If planners address issues related to air, water, and land, then why not food? He also gave examples of what planners could do in order to build stronger communities. Glosser remembers scrambling to find paper to take notes. As his speech ended, Glosser was

⁵ Kaufman interview, University of Wisconsin Oral History Project, April 17, 2008.

excited and poised to take action – but uncertain about what action to take given her lack of background in food system planning, and lack of acquaintance with Kaufman.

Glosser left the 2003 APA conference committed to moving the food planning issue forward within APA. She reached out to Kaufman and found him to be warm and welcoming – and excited to learn that his remarks had left an impression. Both felt strongly that APA and planners – and communities – would benefit from integrating the food system within the planning profession. Kaufman encouraged her to explore possibilities in her governance roles within APA, which she did through the following year. In the spring of 2004, the Divisions Council approved becoming a co-sponsor of the first food system session track at the 2005 APA national conference. The June/July 2004 issue of the ENRE Division *Environmental Planning* newsletter included the following announcement:

“Planning for the Food System” Special Track

For the first time in the history of APA’s national conferences, a special track of sessions will be devoted entirely to topics pertaining to how planning connects to and can contribute to improving the food system.

Kaufman and Glosser hoped to solicit sufficient food planning papers to assemble seven to ten sessions for the food system track. They ultimately offered 13 topics as possible session proposals, including creating healthy cities, the impacts of the food system on the environment and human health, and helping to build stronger local food systems.

At this point they also invited Pothukuchi to join the effort, realizing additional expertise and energy would be required to assemble the special food system track. Little did they know how true this was, as no fewer than 85 individual papers were submitted for consideration! The three of them reviewed the papers and organized them into session proposals for consideration by APA staff. The overwhelming success of the seven resulting sessions in San Francisco assured continuing support of this special track for the 2006 APA conference.

Two other noteworthy outcomes ensued at the 2005 APA conference. One, the first Food Systems Planning Interest Group met with approximately 40 people attending, including Paul Farmer, then Executive Director of the APA. Farmer was supportive of this new group. Two, Glosser took the issue of developing an APA food system planning Policy Guide to the National APA Legislative and Policy Committee. Because the topic of food system planning was not known within the planning community, this committee suggested that a white paper be prepared first to provide the committee an overview of the topic. The goal was to have the white paper completed for review by this committee in 2006 – along with a request to move forward on the Policy Guide.

With Kaufman and Pothukuchi as lead authors of the white paper, we enlisted other food planning scholars and practitioners to participate in developing the white paper, including Branden Born, Ph.D., Andy Fisher, Wendy Mendes, Hubert Morgan, Mark A. Olinger, and Samina Raja, Ph.D.

The Food System Planning White Paper was presented to members of APA's National Legislative and Policy Committee at the 2006 APA National Conference in San Antonio. Despite the strong support experienced thus far, speakers responding to the white paper expressed some ambivalence. Several spoke in support of the need for planners to engage with food system issues. One person came to the microphone, however, and asked pointedly, "What's next? Planning for clothing?" Obviously, more work was needed to build support among planners.

APA's Legislative and Policy Committee, nevertheless, accepted the white paper and authorized the group to draft a Policy Guide – by December 2006 – for consideration at the 2007 APA conference. Although the timeline was daunting, Pothukuchi's sabbatical in fall 2006 and winter 2007 offered a significant resource for the work. With input from numerous planners from APA chapters nationwide, and regular conference calls between Kaufman, Glosser, and Pothukuchi, the draft *Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning* was completed on schedule. The presentation⁶ to several hundred chapter delegates at the 2007 National Conference in Philadelphia drew support, some quibbles, and several suggestions. After minor edits to accommodate delegate input, the APA Legislative and Policy Committee and then the full APA governing board adopted the Policy Guide, thereby signaling food system planning as a legitimate topic for planners' attention (Kaufman et al. 2007). This was a momentous occasion indeed, a scant four years after Kaufman's keynote and seven years following the Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) *JAPA* paper.

The next steps would be to educate and inform the planning community—including academics and practitioners—of this new Policy Guide to broaden its support. Kaufman and Glosser were invited to speak at APA state chapter conferences in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Glosser was also invited to speak at the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy's 9th annual planning conference in November 2007, where she spoke about *Local Food Systems & Agricultural Viability*. Pothukuchi, too, was invited to speak on the Policy Guide and food systems planning more generally at national and international venues, including those to planners in Australia (2007); Cardiff, Wales (2008); Minneapolis (2007); and Traverse City and Kalamazoo, Michigan (2007 and 2008, respectively).

In addition, Kaufman, Pothukuchi and Glosser wrote articles for these varied audiences on food systems planning, including a *Planning Advisory Service Memo* (Pothukuchi et al. 2007); *The Commissioner* (Glosser and Kaufman 2008); the *Environmental Planning Journal*, newsletter of APA's Environment, Nature, Resources, and Energy (ENRE) Division (Glosser and Kaufman 2006, Glosser 2007); and *International Planning Studies* (Pothukuchi 2009). Glosser recalls with amazement that the ENRE Division devoted an entire newsletter issue to food

⁶The presentation was based on the final draft as submitted to the APA: JL. Kaufman, K. Pothukuchi, and D. Glosser, *Community and Regional Food Planning: A Policy Guide of the American Planning Association*, December 14, 2006. The draft received many comments from planners prior to and at the Delegates Assembly and from APA committees following the assembly. A final, amended policy was submitted by Kaufman, Pothukuchi, and Glosser on June 20, 2007.

systems in 2007, along with discussion on the connection of food planning to other APA divisions.

Several remarkable events followed the APA's adoption of its Food Policy Guide. The American Public Health Association (APHA) followed suit with its own policy guide for food systems (November 2007); and, in 2010, APA representatives (including Kimberley Hodgson and Marcia Caton Campbell, authors included elsewhere in this volume) led the development of the *Principles of a Healthy, Sustainable Food System*, with APHA and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly American Dietetics Association) (APA 2010). In 2009 (August–September), a food-themed issue of *Planning Magazine* was published. Policy Advisory Service (PAS) Reports on food systems were launched—Raja et al. (2008), *Planners' Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning*; and Hodgson et al. (2011), *Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy Sustainable Places*. The food planning steering committee was also formalized in 2009 as the APA Food Systems Planning Interest Group, or FIG. Finally, in 2014, Pothukuchi was enlisted to help produce the Michigan Association of Planning food policy guide, which was both inspired and informed by the APA policy guide process. In the years that followed, APA adopted policy guides on other topics with linkages to food systems, such as climate change (2011), water (2016), and healthy communities (2017). APA-FIG became APA-FOOD in 2020, and is now an official, dues-paying Division of the American Planning Association.⁷

14.3 Themes from the Food Policy Guide Collaboration

To conclude this chapter, the collaborations that constituted the Community and Regional Food Planning Policy Guide process drew on Jerry Kaufman's experience with planning practice and his affinity for linking planning academics to practice, his far-ranging vision in noticing planning relevance for topics at the margins of the field, and his ability to assemble people of diverse backgrounds, interests, and connections to foster innovations for the profession.

The achievement described here could not have been realized in the period noted by any single person in our triumvirate. Each of us played an important role at the right time and place in the realization of the policy guide. Prior to his keynote, and as it relates to food systems planning, Kaufman's involvement with APA was to coordinate a session at the 1998 New York conference, an achievement that likely was facilitated by the esteem with which he was held in professional planning

⁷The informal Food System Planning Steering Committee continued on from its 2004 founding to become the APA Food Systems Planning Interest Group (APA-FIG) in 2009. In 2018, the APA-FIG Leadership Committee began the process to formalize the Interest Group as an official Division of the American Planning Association. In 2019 the Interest Group finalized a petition of 300 members and took the request to become a Division to APA's Divisions Board, formally achieving dues-paying Division status in early 2020. <https://apafood.org/about/history/>

leadership networks. Glosser's environmental commitments and work with Slow Food placed her in a position of readiness to act within APA, where she played important committee roles and had prior experience with developing Policy Guides. She was also able to use the organization's structures to obtain input from planners from APA chapters and divisions around the country, and serve as a liaison to the organization's committees. Finally, Pothukuchi's impending sabbatical as a faculty fellow at Michigan State University when she was invited to participate, enabled the dedication of attention, in a compressed time frame, to the writing and editing based on the input coming in from members.

Still, Kaufman's leadership role is nevertheless distinctive. He brought a sensitivity to planning *practice* given the association early in his career with the American Society of Planning Officials. His commitment to practice thereby helped transcend a view of community food systems purely as an academic topic or purely as a topic for community-level volunteering and advocacy. He underscored the relevance of the topic to municipal/county level planners. Pothukuchi reports that after numerous talks, community food activists would recount forwarding a copy of the APA Food Policy Guide to their local planning agency to start a conversation or explore a partnership with planners there. It was a tool to urge planners' involvement in their own community's food system. The national work with ACSP and CFSC (with Kaufman and Pothukuchi and others working jointly here as well) also helped broadcast the policy guide to local food system advocates more than would have been possible by working exclusively within the APA.

Kaufman also brought significant experience to translating issues at the periphery of, or entirely outside, mainstream planning into topics of salience for planners. Notably, this was the case previously with ethics and alternative dispute resolution. Thus, his experience with seeing issues on the horizon as having planning significance and moving them forward served us well with the APA food planning process. It also did not hurt that, by the time the three of us started working together, food was already gaining visibility and momentum in various circles with linkages to planning.

At this stage of his career, and through his leadership history with both, the professional as well as the academic planning organizations, Kaufman also had accumulated relationships with a multitude of individuals in leadership positions nationally and internationally. Among them were faculty colleagues, former students, fellow professionals, and community leaders—diverse in their backgrounds, interests, and experiences. He drew people to him and found ways to maintain acquaintances. This was borne out in a variety of ways in our collaborations with him before the Policy Guide and afterwards.

Finally, the relationship each of us developed with Kaufman in this process, and with each other, helped us move beyond our everyday boundaries and comfort zones. Pothukuchi became involved in the urban agriculture work group in Detroit, which helped develop the related ordinance, a process that is described in Pothukuchi (2015). Glosser went on to adjunct-teach an environmental planning course in which she integrated food system issues more systematically. She indicates that the food system components invariably attracted significant attention from students.

Kaufman considered the APA Food Policy Guide to be a crowning achievement within food systems planning, something of which he was proud and one that, by his own admission, impacted his life in small and large ways. In an oral history interview conducted in 2008 by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he noted, “Food has been the most transformative experience, in terms of my own being, in that it’s transformed the way I think about the world, as opposed to ethics or dispute resolution. ... For example, when I got into ethics, I did not become more ethical than I was before I began. I just knew more about ethics. But with food, we compost, we belong to CSA farms, we eat healthy. So, it’s had an impact on my life, unlike some of the other explorations that I have been involved in, in my academic career.”⁸ This view of food planning as transformational on many levels—from the personal to the community and beyond—was, and continues to be, as true for us as it was for him.

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Kami Pothukuchi is Distinguished Service Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Wayne State University. Her research explores food systems' linkages to planning, public health, economic development, social justice, sustainability, and higher education. She has lectured nationally and internationally, including in Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, and the United Kingdom. In 2008, Pothukuchi founded SEED Wayne, a campus-community collaborative to help build sustainable food systems in Detroit. She has also served as a co-founder and first vice-chair of the Detroit Food Policy Council, co-chair with Jerry Kaufman and Deanna Glosser, of the American Planning Association's Food Planning Steering Committee (2005–2014), and a two-term board member of the Community Food Security Coalition.

Deanna Glosser directs the Land Conservation Foundation, a land trust in East Central Illinois. With a 1989 Ph.D. in urban and regional planning from the University of Illinois, Glosser has built a career in environmental planning, addressing such issues as green infrastructure, local food systems, and mitigating urban sprawl. In 2006, she founded Slow Food Springfield (Illinois), a local nonprofit engaged in food systems education and advocacy. She also co-chaired with Jerry Kaufman and Kami Pothukuchi, the Food Planning Steering Committee of the American Planning Association (APA). Between 2001 and 2011, Glosser served in various leadership positions with the APA, and as a gubernatorial appointee to the Illinois Pollution Control Board (2011–2016).

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Chapter 15

Prospects for an Enduring Agriculture in the Rustbelt: A Tale of Two Cities



Kameshwari Pothukuchi 

Abstract Detroit and Cleveland both have a vibrant agriculture that is supported by municipal policies and philanthropic resources; both also have abundant vacant land in public ownership. Despite these shared traits, the two cities differ in important ways in the ways in which agriculture is organized—whether it takes the form of community gardens managed by neighborhood groups or larger farms run by non-profits or market operations—and raises questions about why this is the case and if these differences have implications for agriculture’s long term prospects. The chapter discusses specific governance arrangements in recent history in each city, approaches to vacant land and land use, and the relationships between growers and neighborhood and public institutions, and traces their implications for agriculture’s organization, purposes, and long term prospects there. It also outlines possible lessons from each city to the other.

Keywords Cleveland · Detroit · Black power · Urban agriculture · Vacant land · Vacant land governance

Detroit and Cleveland both are home to a thriving agriculture, supportive policy frameworks and capable organizations. Due to decades of disinvestment and abandonment, and the recent foreclosure crisis, they also contain significant amounts of vacant land with few immediate prospects for development. Thus, at least from the perspective of potential availability of land, the cities hold promise for an agriculture that endures into the future.

In 2016, pushed by land-related questions emerging from the urban agriculture community in Detroit, I examined the challenges growers faced in obtaining secure, long-term access to land, and their related frustrations and successes (Pothukuchi 2017). This study discussed the many ways in which the Detroit Land Bank Authority’s (DLBA) practices—and those of previous land agencies—frustrated growers’ attempts to obtain land through purchase or long-term leases. It also

K. Pothukuchi (✉)
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, USA
e-mail: k.pothukuchi@wayne.edu

uncovered anxieties that DLBA officials, city staff and elected officials had about urban agriculture and its appropriateness and durability as an urban land use despite significant, chronic vacancy. Detroit's land governance was confirmed by this study to serve growth interests even if prospects for development are bleak into the foreseeable future (Hackworth 2014).

These findings prompted a pivot to Cleveland (Pothukuchi 2018). If Detroit's vacant land governance is all about growth, Cleveland's avowedly embraces both growth and equity agendas (Hackworth 2014). Perhaps there are lessons from Cleveland's land disposition for agriculture for Detroit. Cleveland's community development governance built over the last few decades in ways that recognize neighborhood equity and social welfare is well-known. The Re-imagining a More Sustainable Cleveland framework to productively reuse vacant land in the wake of the foreclosure crisis, adopted in 2008, also augured well for agriculture and raised expectations for the movement of land to urban farming interests.

The Cleveland study found that, indeed, publicly owned vacant land does host agriculture in important ways. Many small-plot community gardens sponsored by the Summer Sprout garden program are located on properties owned by the Cleveland Land Bank (CLB), and supported for the use by one-year license agreements with neighborhood groups. Several nonprofit human and social service organizations also lease parcels from the CLB to operate farms whose harvests are sold in neighborhood markets. Notwithstanding the sale of properties to a handful of farming operations during and after the *Re-imagining* era (2008–14), by and large, land bank properties are available only on a short term and qualified basis for agriculture. Nonprofit-led agricultural operations are also dependent on outside grants, and, around the period of the study, several had closed or were threatened with closure.

Thus, it turns out that vacant land policies in Cleveland too support agriculture in limited and tenuous ways. Agriculture in the city, in turn, responds to this and other realities to be organized around such uses as land stabilization and social service provision—besides the food self-provisioning and informal sharing enabled by community gardens, that is—rather than the incremental development of a complex urban food system as a primary goal. Despite invoking sustainability, *Re-imagining* was never envisioned as a strategy to build permanence in agriculture or other open space uses. As is the case elsewhere, agriculture in Cleveland too is viewed only as an interim use of vacant land, to be held while awaiting development.

From the perspective of vacant land policies to support agriculture over the long term, therefore, both cities fall short, at least as of this writing. Both cities display a reluctance to support with secure land tenure, an enduring agriculture that has multifunctional relationships to households, neighborhoods, local economies, and the natural environment. Given the paragraph that started this chapter, this two-city review, then, brings us back to some basic questions, with preliminary responses in this chapter that merit deeper investigation.

- What is the nature of access to vacant land for agriculture in the two cities?
- What role, if any, does vacant land governance play in the organization of agriculture in each city?

- What other factors affect agriculture in each?
- What are possible implications for an enduring agriculture in the two cities? What can each city learn from the other?

The chapter uses data from phone and in-person interviews, content analysis of documents available from public sources, map data, and windshield surveys to answer these questions. The sources are described in Pothukuchi (2017), Pothukuchi (2018) with updates, as available, for this chapter. The following sections take up each question. Below, highlights are offered of the agriculture in the two cities, to set the context for the above questions.

15.1 Agriculture in Cleveland and Detroit

Both cities are host to a storied and vibrant agriculture with some common and some divergent elements to their history and present-day organization. For example, both cities hosted gardens during the Great Wars and the Great Depression. Both cities also experienced a boost during the great migration of African Americans from farming backgrounds who fled the Jim Crow South (Fiskio et al. 2016; White 2011a, b). The two also have adopted a permissive ordinance that legitimates agriculture as an acceptable land use and defines related standards. Finally, in both cities, community, backyard, and school gardens are ubiquitous; market gardeners sell at local markets and to area outlets; and nonprofits link agriculture to social service programs.

There are also significant divergences, including Cleveland's *Re-imagining* initiative, mentioned previously, which embraced agriculture among other vacant land reuse concepts. While the city lacks independent membership organizations or those with specific goals for the city's food system, Detroit has at least two—Keep Growing Detroit and the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network. Extension plays a much greater role in convening and organizing agriculture in Cleveland. Municipal funding for agriculture is also nonexistent in Detroit, while several city departments support agriculture in Cleveland (see Pothukuchi 2018). Following paragraphs highlight significant elements of each city's agriculture, starting with Cleveland.

Cleveland Summer Sprout is Cleveland's gardening resource program since 1976, managed by Ohio State University Extension (OSUE), with partial funding from the city. In 2017, the program supported 187 gardens (Ohio State University Extension 2018). A majority of these gardens—129 out of 148 for which data are available—were established in the 2000s. Engaging nearly 3400 gardeners on 50 acres, these sites donated just under 15,000 lbs. of produce to area food charities (Ohio State University Extension 2016). Seventy out of 100 gardens that are located on publicly-owned land are on CLB properties (Summer Sprout, private communication). Sale of harvests from these gardens is forbidden.

OSUE's 10-week Market Gardener Training Program helps build capacity in entrepreneurial agriculture and small business development. Since the program's start in 2006, its 215 graduates have gone on to start 57 market gardens and 35 individuals have started other urban agriculture enterprises, according to the City of Cleveland (2015). In 2008, the city's economic development department started providing "Greenbacks for Gardens" grants¹ to entrepreneurial growers (City of Cleveland 2014, 2015, 2018). Participants who complete the Program become eligible to lease a quarter-acre plot in the Kinsman Farm—a 6-acre market garden incubator in the city's 28-acre Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone (UAIZ)—and to apply for a Gardening for Greenbacks grant. Too, since 2012, nearly \$450,000 in United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grants underwrote the installation of 95 seasonal high tunnels—also called hoop houses—in the city's neighborhoods.

Harvests from larger farms are sold at area markets, other outlets, or through CSA shares. Typically operated by nonprofit organizations, these farms embrace such social goals as training, employment, and social inclusion of vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, refugees, veterans, formerly incarcerated individuals, and those who are homeless or housing-insecure. For example, Cleveland Crops partners with the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities and OSUE to train and employ individuals with disabilities. Other examples include farms sponsored by the Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry and the Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation (Keating 2013, pp. 19 and 24), and the Rising Harvest Farm that, until recently, was a wholly-owned subsidiary of Koinonia Homes, Inc.² The six-acre Ohio City Farm (OCF) similarly is operated in partnership with Refugee Response's Refugee Empowerment Agricultural Program (REAP). OCF and REAP offer training and employment to 15 refugees from six countries (The Refugee Response n.d.).

Unless they are led by individual entrepreneurs or represent registered businesses, thus, agricultural operations in the city involve complex partnerships between neighborhood groups, public agencies, CDCs, nonprofit providers of social and human services, and local philanthropies. This has implications for the shape and future of agriculture in the city, as discussed in a later section.

Detroit Several vibrant food and agricultural programs exist in Detroit, sponsored by a wide variety of neighborhood-based as well as citywide nonprofits, Detroit Public Schools, and local universities. One citywide organization, Keep Growing Detroit (KGD), identifies 1603 gardens in its network, which involved 24,362

¹In 2008, the program granted up to \$3,000 each to selected projects. In 2012, these funds were supplemented by \$135,000 pledged over three years by CoBank, AgriBank, and Farm Credit MidAmerica. This helped increase the grant amount to up to \$5,000 per qualified applicant.

²In an exception to typical city policy, the City of Cleveland passed legislation leasing the 2.3 acre parcel of land to Koinonia Homes for 25 years, with four options to renew for additional five year periods (Cuyahoga Land Bank 2012). Recently, the Cuyahoga County Land Bank took over the Rising Harvest Farm, formerly a wholly owned subsidiary of Koinonia Homes, Inc., according to Lilah Zautner, who was interviewed November 18, 2016.

members who grew approximately 385,750 pounds of produce (Keep Growing Detroit 2018). They include 913 families, 143 schools, and 426 community gardens.

Harvests from 55 gardens are sold through KGD's Grown in Detroit Cooperative at Eastern Market and other venues; in 2018, they earned more than \$50,000. A portion of KGD's membership—34 gardens and farms—sold a share of their harvests to local restaurants and businesses, collectively earning more than \$20,000 in 2018 (Keep Growing Detroit 2018). Several growers earn significant portions, a few, all, of their income from sales at markets and to other outlets. About a dozen city-based CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farms additionally supply produce throughout an extended season to area residents. Founded in 2006 as a garden on a vacant east side lot, the Detroit Black Community Food Security's (DBCFSN) D-Town Farm has obtained a long-term lease on seven acres in Rouge Park, a city park on the west side, and also operates a seasonal farm stand on site and, as well, sells at neighborhood markets.

In 2012, the city sold 1500 vacant parcels (about 140 acres) to Hantz Woodlands.³ Initiated about that time, but culminating in 2015 with more stringent terms, RecoveryPark Farm also obtained a lease for 35 acres on the city's east side.⁴ Produce from the latter is sold to high-end restaurants and supermarkets and also distributed through a produce wholesaler in Eastern Market.

To conclude this section, Detroit's agriculture operates autonomously from city agencies and Cooperative Extension, with a large number of individual growers—both subsistence as well as entrepreneurial—supported by citywide networks operated by a nonprofit, in addition to nonprofits operating larger-scale farms. Finally, entrepreneurial operations that are operated as private businesses also supply neighborhood farmers markets, CSAs, restaurants, and other outlets.

³In 2009, financial services magnate John Hantz proposed a large-scale commercial farm in Detroit. His proposal to the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation rested on acquiring, free of charge, tax delinquent land from the city and a zoning adjustment that would create a new, lower tax rate for agriculture. He imagined hundreds of acres of farms organized as pods around which development would happen, with farm production involving orchards, hydroponics, and aeroponics (growing plants in air). To start off, he suggested a pilot farm of about 50 acres on the city's eastside (Whitford 2009). In the end, the city sold 1500 city-owned lots (about 140 acres) to Hantz Woodlands in 2013 for \$520,000 (Gallagher 2012). Since the transfer, the lots have been cleared and have been planted with hardwood trees.

⁴Submitted at about the same time as Hantz Farms, the RecoveryPark Farm proposal took much longer to resolve and eventually involved more demanding terms. The farm, which expected to spend \$15 million in the three years following the agreement in October 2015, finally got a lease for 35 acres on Detroit's lower east side. A 501(c)3 nonprofit operating RecoveryPark Farm, SHAR (Self Help Addiction Rehabilitation) would eventually own the land after paying \$105 per acre per year to lease it and then purchasing it outright for \$3,553 per acre. Under the agreement, RecoveryPark, which aims to create nearly 130 jobs for SHAR clients, would be required to secure or demolish any blighted or vacant structures on the land within 12 months of a signed term sheet (Hall 2014; Pinho 2015; Welch 2012). At least 51 percent of the employees are required to be Detroit residents for the first three years, then increase to 60 percent or more. If RecoveryPark does not meet the terms of the proposed agreement, the city retains the right to take back ownership of the land that does not have structures on it (Pinho 2015).

15.2 Access to Vacant Land for Agriculture in Cleveland and Detroit

Land banks in both cities were developed to return tax-delinquent land to productive use. Formed in 1976 as a program in the city's Department of Community Development, the Cleveland Land Bank (CLB) transferred properties to non-profit developers and neighbors for nominal sums throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Keating and Lind 2012). However, by 2007, it was ill-equipped to handle the impacts of the mortgage foreclosure crisis. The Cuyahoga County Land Bank⁵ was formed in 2009 to provide a more expansive response. Organized as an independent non-profit, it possesses a wider range of powers than the CLB, and derives revenue from more diverse sources (Keating and Lind 2012).

The Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) is a public entity created under state law to tackle vacant, abandoned, and foreclosed properties in the city and return them to productive use.⁶ In 2014, Mayor Mike Duggan empowered the DLBA, previously a small and mostly ineffective agency, to lead his blight fight with 93 full- and part-time employees (Dolan et al. 2015). As of July 2018, 95,252 properties were in DLBA's control; 65,202 of these were vacant (Detroit Land Bank Authority 2018). The DLBA is the largest landowner in the City of Detroit; holding title to approximately 25 percent of all parcels in the City of Detroit.

15.2.1 Cleveland Programs for Vacant Land

The CLB sells side-lots and offers parcels for one-year renewable licenses or one-to-three-year renewable lease. Side-lot buyers need to establish basic *bona fides* with the city, specify plans for the site, and have the financial wherewithal to enter into related agreements which include claw back provisions for failure to improve or maintain the property as proposed. Keating (2013) reports that, between 2009 and 2013, many of the 1350 vacant lots transferred from the Cuyahoga County Land Bank to the City of Cleveland were sold under the Side Yard Program. How many of these were acquired for agricultural cultivation is unknown.

⁵Formally titled the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corporation, it is commonly referred to, including here, as the Cuyahoga County Land Bank.

⁶Governed by a board of five directors, four of whom are appointed by the Mayor, the DLBA is financed through property sales, government grants, philanthropic support, and fees, among others. Prior to the reassignment of land disposition responsibilities to the DLBA, the Planning and Development Department (PDD) was responsible for land disposition. Then as now, gardeners could purchase parcels from the Adjacent Vacant Lot program or submit a purchase application, or obtain a garden permit through the Adopt-A-Lot Permit Program. After the urban agriculture ordinance was adopted but before land was transferred to the DLBA, PDD had assembled a work group which began to develop a framework to review applications for vacant parcels for urban agriculture. This came to an abrupt end when land disposition shifted hands from PDD to DLBA.

Neighborhood groups sponsoring community gardens may secure CLB properties through a one-year renewable license agreement with a \$1 payment, with conditions of eligibility similar to those for the side yard. As mentioned earlier, food grown on land bank property licensed for gardening may not be sold. Thus, such harvests tend to be used for subsistence, informal sharing, and donation to food programs. Nonprofits that operate market gardens may lease properties for terms of up to three years for a negotiated fee.⁷ For these, the lessee is also required to carry insurance.

Applicants for both license and lease are urged to seek support from the CDC serving their neighborhood and their local council member, as well as seek resources from programs such as Summer Sprout⁸ and the Market Garden Training Program. Guidance on eligibility, requirements, and procedures for filing is available on the CLB's website. Land is very seldom sold for agriculture, as noted on the land bank's website (City of Cleveland [n.d.-a](#)). A couple of nonprofits engaged in ag-related operations in the city—such as Chateau Hough Vineyards and Rid- All Green Partnership—have been able to purchase land from the CLB in depressed neighborhoods; these, however, are clear exceptions. A small network also exists of market growers who sell in area markets, but respondents from this group either reported negative experiences or no dealings with the CLB.

The existing lease and license programs release growers from tax obligations and other liabilities of ownership. How many growers—especially would-be *market growers* who have to make significant upfront investments—are dissuaded from pursuing agriculture or pursuing it more robustly due to the city's well-known reluctance to sell land for anything other than development is unknown. Thus, Cleveland's vacant land disposition policies are accessible, transparent, and predictable for their implementation. They seek to reserve land for development and prevent speculation, and allow only temporary, short-term transfers for urban agriculture.

A note about *Re-imagining* is warranted here (see Pothukuchi 2018 for details). *Re-imagining* was adopted as a sustainability framework in 2008 for agriculture and other open space use to link vacant land, policy, planning, and resources in ways that Detroit lacks altogether. A 28-acre Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone was designated along with the 6-acre Kinsman Farm in the Forgotten Triangle area of Cleveland, in which entrepreneurial growers could access land, funding, and technical assistance through OSUE. However, by 2016, when I launched my Cleveland study, not only did the UAIZ perform well below expectations, many farms that received *Re-imagining* funding had failed or under-performed. Several nonprofit led farms either lost funding, or were threatened with such loss (French et al. 2015; Snook 2015). Although it was never designed to secure land for open space uses into perpetuity, *Re-imagining* raised tantalizing possibilities for other cities, but

⁷Guidance developed by the city indicates a lease term of three years. However, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the USDA agency responsible for funding hoop houses negotiated a lease term of five years for properties on which hoop houses are located.

⁸Groups whose applications are accepted to the Summer Sprout are also eligible to receive assistance in securing parcels from the CLB.

ultimately is paradoxical given the reality of short term and contingent land transfers within a sustainability rubric.

15.2.2 Detroit Programs for Vacant Land

Two main programs exist for residents to acquire vacant land from the DLBA: the Side Lot Program and the Nonprofit, Faith, and Community Organization Program, commonly known as the Community Partner (or CP) Program. Vacant side lots can be purchased for \$100 each by owner-occupants on either side or in front of property with a maximum of two side lots per property (Detroit Land Bank Authority 2016). Purchasing a side lot is relatively easy and can be done online. A total of 9654 side lots were sold between December 6, 2014, when the program started, and July 2018 (Detroit Land Bank Authority 2018). How many were sold or are being used for the purpose of agriculture is unknown.

The CP Program requires designated community-based nonprofits to meet the following standards: Detroit location, 501 (c) (3) tax exempt status, to be current on property taxes, to be free of blight violations or fines, and to serve a geographic area no larger than 5 square miles. At \$100 per parcel, CPs may purchase up to 9 parcels per year without City Council approval. As of October 2018, 938 properties were sold under this program; in 2018, they included 23 lots. Several nonprofit organizations have purchased properties under the CP program for the explicit purpose of supporting agricultural operations; some host farm stands or markets in their neighborhoods or at external locations. No data exists on how many such lots are being used for agriculture.

Besides these programs, few avenues exist for growers to purchase land from the DLBA at other than the price of 20–24 cents per square foot set by the DLBA, a price that most farmers can ill-afford especially if they are also beginners.⁹ Entrepreneur-growers who produce for sale—nominally designated “for-profit” operations—are prohibited from using the CP program as a “pass through.” According to an informant, about a dozen market growers have been able to purchase parcels from the DLBA over the last two years in transactions that were tailored for their specific cases. No such sale was anywhere near the scale of the sale to Hantz Farms (about 140 acres) or even RecoveryPark Farm (about 35 acres), both discussed previously.

⁹A gardener interviewed shared that she was able to secure temporary use permits for two lots on the east side for \$25 a year for up to 3 years. Though the “Lease-a-lot” program, as the permit is called, was “soft-launched” in 2015 by the DLBA, few gardeners know about the program as it was never formally rolled out, and as of mid-2016, it was “taken back to the drawing board,” according to a respondent with inside knowledge, “with the idea of making it a lease program.”

Although no lease or license programs of the kind that exist in Cleveland support agriculture in Detroit,¹⁰ a majority (77 percent) of growers who participate in the Keep Growing Detroit network own the property on which they farm (Keep Growing Detroit 2018). While it is possible that a portion of these parcels under production was purchased from the DLBA including through the side lot program, the frustrations growers have experienced with securing land or tenure from land-holding agencies over the last decade are well documented (Pothukuchi 2017). Inured to red tape, lost files, and delays and non-response from especially the city's Planning and Development Department—which dealt with foreclosed properties prior to the DLBA—many growers likely obtained the land from other owners.

DLBA policy implicitly, therefore, is to sell vacant parcels in only limited and restricted ways to current residents and community-based organizations in the city, which many observers read as reluctance (Benedetti 2016; Gallagher 2015b; Guzman 2016). Some feel that with its piecemeal land disposition approach, the city is giving up on a transformational vision for large scale blue-green uses (Gallagher 2015a). While these constraints apply to any open space use, the practical effect is that growers who cannot use the Side Lot or CP programs face an uphill battle to secure land in the quantity and location desired.

To conclude this section, Cleveland's vacant land approach for agriculture predominantly focuses on short term licenses and leases with significant amounts of cultivation occurring on such parcels, while this approach is nonexistent in Detroit. On the other hand, more recently the DLBA has started to sell parcels on a smaller scale to individual growers and nonprofit organizations that sponsor agriculture. Such sales, while important, nonetheless represent a miniscule number relative to the scale of vacancy. Land accessibility thus has implications for the shape of the agricultural landscape in each city, and its connection to the broader community, as discussed in the next section. In neither city, however, is there currently a policy that links vacant land transfer (either via sale or lease) in a systematic, long-term strategy to grow urban agriculture and food systems.

15.3 Vacant Land Governance, Planning and Politics: Implications for Agriculture

Invariably, politics, policies and regulations related to land and land use, resources, and other forms of support have implications for the organization of agriculture in the city, and for its linkages to other community sectors. This section reviews these influences in each city to trace the outlines of agriculture there, and derives strengths and weaknesses in each case.

¹⁰The 7-acre D-Town Farm in Rouge Park is leased by the DBCFSN from the City of Detroit Parks and Recreation Department. This is technically parkland and not under purview of the DLBA.

Cleveland's agriculture has the benefit of many of the aforementioned institutional supports in the form of a competent community development industry that sought to stabilize neighborhoods by repurposing vacant land in the wake of the foreclosure crisis; several ordinances and other regulations supportive of agricultural activities; positive city leadership; generous grants from local foundations; and technical assistance by OSU Extension professionals. The city also has individuals with expertise in developing and sustaining agricultural programs. All these factors came together in 2008 with *Re-imagining*, even if the initiative stopped short of delivering for agriculture all that advocates might have hoped (Pothukuchi 2018). Following paragraphs discuss how these features create both strengths for agriculture as well as specific limitations.

A central feature of Cleveland's governance is its well-developed neighborhood focus and capacity, with community development corporations (CDCs) evolving over the last four decades as familiar and trusted vehicles to deliver neighborhood welfare. Combining citizen participation with fiscal and development expertise, CDCs make and implement plans within neighborhoods for housing, economic development, and physical redevelopment, all in sophisticated deals combining resources from a variety of sectors (Lowe 2008; McQuarrie 2010; Yin 1998). Neighborhood Progress, Inc. (NPI) was created to be the primary engine to help redevelop Cleveland's neighborhoods; it serves as an intermediary to municipal agencies and philanthropies while also providing technical assistance to CDCs (Yin 1998).

Thus, Cleveland's governance offers a departure from purely market-oriented policies and incorporates redistributionist goals such as affordable housing, neighborhood services, and with the adoption of *Re-imagining*, sustainability. *Re-imagining* engendered a recognition of agriculture, among other open-space uses, as an important reuse of vacant land in neighborhoods, with the potential of delivering multiple benefits. Thus, embracing urban agriculture within the frame of community development, it integrated land, land use, strategic mapping, funding, and policies, in ways that have supported community gardening and nonprofit-led market agriculture.

Re-imagining also gave a boost to urban agriculture policies (City of Cleveland n.d.-b). Although an Urban Agriculture and Green Space Zoning Ordinance was adopted by the city in 2005; its agricultural element began to gain traction in 2007 (Hughes 2014). Adopted in 2007, the Urban Garden Zoning District reserves land exclusively for garden use. It also allows production for sale and on-site sale of produce. The Chicken and Bee Zoning (adopted 2009) allows residents to keep fowl, and specifies standards for setbacks, lot size, and location of coops and cages. Finally, the city permits agriculture as a principal use on all vacant residentially zoned lots and permits sale of produce from farm stands as a conditional use (adopted, 2010). The city also offers reduced-rate water hydrant permits to urban growers between May and October (Hughes 2014).

These policies were championed by leaders such as then councilmember Joe Cimperman, then planning director Robert Brown, and agriculture advocates such

as Morgan Taggart and Lilah Zautner, among many others. The process of creating and adopting these policies, in turn, helped engender even more positive attitudes towards agriculture among community leaders, according to Walsh et al. (2015).

Re-imagining set aside funds for “signature” projects that were expected to serve as models. Thirty-two of 125 projects funded by *Re-imagining* between 2009 and 2014 were ag-related, that is, community or market gardens, orchards, or vineyards (Pothukuchi 2017). Together, they received nearly \$400,000 out of nearly \$1.4 million distributed under *Re-imagining*, an impressive level of funding over and above ongoing city support mentioned earlier, and in addition to grants offered by Neighborhood Connections and other sources.

Finally, OSU Extension plays significant roles in organizing, convening and training the city’s gardeners and farmers, and providing technical assistance to them. Summer Sprout, for example, provides assistance to new and returning garden groups with securing access to CLB parcels, obtaining basic resources such as seeds and transplants, and developing gardens; it also manages gardener networks. Other services include training and business assistance for market growers, farm-to-school initiatives, bee-keeping, and other activities organized on a county-wide basis. For an example of the activities, see the three issues of the newsletter for 2018 (Ohio State University Extension n.d.).

All these features contribute to an agriculture that has both rhetorical and practical support within city government and neighborhood and community development institutions, and from local philanthropy. Small-plot growing is encouraged in community gardens that may occupy publicly owned land, and nonprofit organizations similarly grow food on a larger scale for market while also providing human and social services to disadvantaged populations. Such social service nonprofits are preferred by the CLB for signing leases for agricultural use because they are familiar entities in community development networks that can be trusted to use vacant land productively. At the same time, they also can be trusted to get behind the redevelopment priorities of the industry should the investment climate shift, and release the leased properties (Pothukuchi 2018).

Thus, agriculture in Cleveland faces a future that is arguably less than secure due to the short-term and contingent nature of land access and evidence of retrenchment in funding to social service nonprofits that engage in agriculture. Already disadvantaged when they have to compete with nonprofits that charge lower prices for produce at markets, entrepreneurial growers and agriculture-oriented businesses experience significant challenges obtaining land from the CLB. The predominantly neighborhood-level organization of planning and politics reinforces these challenges given the inherent bias towards land redevelopment within neighborhoods and by CDCs. Many elected officials—council members as well as Mayor Frank G. Jackson—also are openly skeptical about agriculture as more than an interim use of urban land.¹¹

¹¹ For example, an article quotes Mayor Frank G. Jackson in 2012, a time of continuing economic malaise, “‘Our policy is not a shrinking city policy.’... Eventually, Cleveland would like to see all

Finally, several growers interviewed believe that OSUE convenes gardeners and provides services according to its own institutional and geographic logics rather than necessarily to satisfy bottom-up needs bubbling up from growers or to develop a layered food system through evolving market networks involving city growers, local businesses and institutions, and value-added activities. While not universally held, this view nonetheless was expressed in different ways. For example, one entrepreneurial grower recounted his experience soon after the Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone was constituted with OSUE designated as the convener for the farm incubator program:

Ohio State University Extension put together about six acres there that was one continuous area (Kinsman Farm). They wanted to develop into a co-op, a farmer-run co-op. Then when we first started self-managing, a lot of us had a vision—that (emerged from) a kind of strife between the for-profit farmer and non-profit farmer. Non-profits are generally organizations that can grant-write. They can also get thirty to forty volunteers on a weekend and stuff like that. So a bunch of us didn't want the non-profit sector in this farm. OSU Extension completely overruled that even though that was kind of our first order of business. So it was sort of like this one thing, they tell you something, then they do another. They want you to self-govern and then as soon as you self-govern they're like, "Uh, except now..." ... So I got out of what was called Kinsman Farm because it just ... (was) not moving forward. The soil was poor. The discontinuity between the farmers, (it) was very poor.

He complained about the requirements OSUE imposed which he found onerous given the relatively poor quality of resources obtained in return, and contrasted his Cleveland experience with that in a neighboring community that sold him two lots at a reasonable price to develop an orchard.

They sold me the properties and now I have two small orchards with about eighty pawpaw trees total.

(KP: Wow, pawpaw trees, nice!)

Yeah, so instead of like some (expletive) trying to make me quantify stuff that they'll never understand on paper anyways, like how many thousands of pounds of tomatoes did you grow? How much did you sell them for, by the pound? Instead of this annoying Excel spreadsheet quantification stuff that ... farmers generally aren't going to know. Eventually we get ok at that but that is not where we want to put our time or energy or thought process, especially after we've already been promised this property. The (neighboring) city folks sold me this land based on them actually seeing that I'm a pretty good grower and kind of an asset.

In contrast to interviews with Detroit growers, discussed below, few growers or organizational representatives I interviewed in Cleveland expressed visions for a future of urban agriculture that is integrated into the fabric of neighborhoods as they undergo redevelopment. Few growers also communicated goals for agriculture for the city as a whole.

Detroit lacks many of the specific public or integrated community development supports discussed above for Cleveland, or experiences them on a much smaller scale. Just as Cleveland's agriculture is influenced by the city's community develop-

its empty lots developed, but 'right now the highest and best use for that particular piece of land is agriculture,' said Jackson, 'and we use it that way'" (Sax 2015).

ment industry, so is Detroit's history peculiar for its agriculture. This history has created opportunities for both, a citywide, grassroots-led organization of agriculture, as well as one that is motivated by ideals of community self-reliance and food justice and sovereignty. DLBA lacks frameworks for vacant land for agriculture, is opaque for disposition beyond the side lot and CP programs, and quotes prices per square foot that defy comprehension in many locations. However, despite this seeming resistance and the ambivalence communicated by elected leaders and agency officials, agricultural networks are incrementally forging food system linkages in creative and resilient ways. Nonetheless, agriculture here also confronts specific limitations. These and other elements are discussed below.

In contrast to the neighborhood focus of the community development movement in Cleveland, redevelopment efforts in Detroit for the last few decades were blamed for privileging downtown and riverfront areas, serving outsiders rather than residents, and ignoring neighborhoods (Eisinger 2003). These efforts also gave business elites disproportionate influence (Hall and Hall 1993; Surgue 1996). Thus, Detroit's history of redevelopment is one of tensions between city hall and CDCs, and between downtown and neighborhood interests.

However, the city is also witness to political contradictions with positive implications for agriculture. This is, in part, a legacy of the Black Power movement of the 1960s that pushed for greater political and economic strength for African American communities (Brown and Hartfield 2001). Related organizing helped elect Detroit's first Black mayor—Coleman A. Young—and several city council members (Brown and Hartfield 2001). Significantly, food and agriculture were embraced as key elements of the movement's overall strategy for survival, self-determination, and empowerment with the development of home-grown institutions organized around co-operative rather than capitalist principles.¹² Led by Pastor Albert Cleage, founder of the Shrines of the Black Madonna of the Pan-African Orthodox Christian Church (POACC)—the movement offered both a vision and a program for a self-reliant community food system that continues to inspire grassroots efforts today.

Responding to the growing land vacancy within neighborhoods, but also drawing from his Black Power connections, Mayor Young (1974–93) created the Farm-A-Lot program. Developed in 1975, Farm-A-Lot provided gardeners with seeds, fertilizer, and tilling assistance, and even loaned pressure canning equipment to residents from neighborhood city halls. In 1974, 34 lots were leased.¹³ In 1975, the number grew to 525 and several gardeners were able to purchase the lots they farmed; five even won blue ribbons for their produce at the state fair (Bearre 1976). Farm-A-Lot was integral to Young's narrative of survival and self-reliance for the city's increasingly African-American population. The program lasted nearly a quarter century, when budget cuts led to its demise (Guyette 2001).

Farm-A-Lot made two important contributions to agriculture's future in Detroit. First, it fostered the idea of urban agriculture as a formal city response to land

¹²As noted by Paul Lee, a historian for Detroit's Pan African Orthodox Christian Church (PAOCC).

¹³Traverse City Record Eagle 1975, July 21, p. 7 (on file with the author).

vacancy stemming from neighborhood abandonment. Second, the program offered a framework for later conceptualizing support for urban agriculture as a citywide project. Farm-A-Lot therefore offered a model first in 1997 for the Detroit Agriculture Network and then again in 2004 for the Garden Resource Program (later a program of Keep Growing Detroit), as the groups sought to replicate the program's services as it faded away.

Yet another conceptualization of agriculture as a neighborhood resource is offered by the late Grace Lee and James (Jimmy) Boggs, union and community organizers.¹⁴ Opposing Mayor Young's casino proposals, Jimmy Boggs argued in 1988, "We have to begin thinking of creating small enterprises which produce food, goods and services for the local market, that is, for our communities . . . In order to create these new enterprises, we need a view of our city which takes into consideration both the natural resources of our area and the existing and potential skills and talents of Detroiters" (Guyette 2001). They founded in 1992, Detroit Summer, a program that sought to reenergize neighborhoods with community gardens and art murals built by young people.

Thus, responses related to agriculture were motivated by goals: (a) to develop Black community solutions to meet food needs while building wealth and power for the community (Pastor Cleage); (b) to minimize the impact of exodus on neighborhoods by encouraging the farming of vacant lots in neighborhoods, which also offered subsistence in a context of increasing unemployment and price inflation (Mayor Young); and (c) to harness neighborhood resources—young people included—to meet residents' needs while also offering a more relevant education and cultivating leadership for change (the Boggs). Within all these collective responses is a strand of thought and practice associated with the civil rights and Black Power movements that provided the seedbeds for much contemporary agriculture food justice organizing.

Detroit adopted an urban agriculture ordinance in 2013 following four years of research, community input, and negotiation with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (Pothukuchi 2015a, b). The ordinance received widespread support from local growers who welcomed its legitimization of their activities, and it is, in turn, broadly permissive of operations smaller than one acre. It reduces uncertainty about urban agriculture as a land use in the city, defines standards for various elements, and paves the way for growers to make longer term investments, including purchasing land from the city. Despite this, and as is the case in Cleveland, Detroit's political and public agency leadership also expresses ambivalence about agriculture's appropriateness as an urban land use and anxiety about its

¹⁴The Boggs were early participants in the Black Power struggles in Detroit. Grace Boggs, an Asian-American, describes her early intellectual development influenced more by Malcolm X than by Martin Luther King, Jr. (Putnam 2015). But she found herself revisiting the words of King as he struggled with what he saw in the cities after the rebellions of the 1960s. "He proposed that young people 'in our dying cities' needed programs that were designed to change themselves and their society.... We wanted to engage young people in community-building activities: planting community gardens, recycling waste, organizing neighborhood arts and health festivals, rehabbing houses, painting public murals." (Putnam 2015).

potential to last. Lacking an equivalent strategy to *Re-imagining*, the DLBA has muddled along in selling land on a case-by-case basis to a few entrepreneurial growers.

Finally, the role of Extension in Detroit's agriculture is of a much smaller scope than OSUE's is in Cleveland. It also was framed and guided over the last fifteen years within grassroots collaborations. For example, MSUE was identified as a key partner in the Garden Resource Program Collaborative, formed in 2004 with a USDA Community Food Projects grant, along with Greening of Detroit, Earthworks Urban Farm, and Detroit Agriculture Network. Primarily offering education and training and technical assistance for horticultural activities, today, Extension faculty also help with hoop house installation. MSUE leads no agriculture-related activity in Detroit.¹⁵

Thus, large numbers of Detroit's gardeners are organized in citywide, grassroots networks, but with "regional centers" and smaller geographies to serve them in diverse ways such as for tool lending and resource distribution, celebration, or political advocacy. Agriculture is mostly supported by foundation and private philanthropy and receives no funding from the city. Nor is it supported with a discrete policy for vacant land access, temporary or permanent. Much ag-related education and training involves peers; a cooperative helps growers optimize resources for selling at neighborhood markets and to other outlets. Detroit's history thus points to a community-driven, networked form of agriculture that was created to replace a city service, Farm-A-Lot—as with KGD and its predecessor forms—or is imbued with Black Power ideals—as with DBCFSN—and is autonomous of municipal government, Extension, or community development institutions. Agricultural organizations articulate goals of food justice and sovereignty¹⁶; advocates also convey the notion that agriculture belongs in every neighborhood—rich or poor, with low-vacancy or high. In this way, Detroit's agriculture stands in contrast to that of Cleveland.

15.4 Conclusion: Lessons from Agriculture in Cleveland and Detroit

The previous sections showed how each city's specific historical responses to questions of governance and neighborhood abandonment, contemporary politics and planning of land and land use, and the presence or absence of other forms of support

¹⁵After several years of such attempts, recently MSU unveiled proposals for an Urban Food Research Center in Detroit's Riverdale neighborhood, "working closely with neighborhood residents." Browse: <https://msutoday.msu.edu/news/2017/msu-launches-partnership-for-urban-agriculture-in-detroit/> (retrieved December 22, 2018).

¹⁶For example, Keep Growing Detroit's mission is "to cultivate a food sovereign city where a majority of the fruits and vegetables Detroiters consume are grown by residents within city limits. <http://detroitagriculture.net/about/> (accessed December 22, 2018).

shape the agriculture there, and outline its potential future. Both cities experience strengths and specific limitations in how municipal, nonprofit, business, philanthropic, and Extension support for agriculture is organized and for food system capacities that are built or stunted as a result. The ability to access vacant land and funding is crucial, but specific arrangements need to be assessed for if and what capacities they build and if they enable an enduring agriculture.

While *Re-imagining* effectuated a repurposing of land for agriculture in only short-term and contingent ways, for example, it also fostered an environment of support for community gardening and nonprofit farms with access to public land, resources, and technical assistance, in ways that render urban agriculture an apparently inevitable fixture on the city's landscape. Similarly, efforts in Detroit to replace Farm-A-Lot at the turn of the century, and absent Extension and community development institutions, have created resilient citywide networks of growers and inspired a connection with ideals of Black empowerment and neighborhood self-reliance. Although both cities' agriculture has more or less secure access to land, neither city's experience suggests that agriculture is on the cusp of extinction.

Contextually specific historical and contemporary developments, particular governance actors and resources, and locally resonant ideals are interwoven in ways that create specific outcomes for agriculture in each place at this time. As such, there can be no simple importation of practices or elements from one context to another. Each city's agriculture, nonetheless, might benefit from the experiences of the other, if nothing else than in the expansion of horizons that the experiences can offer.

Specifically, Cleveland's professionally capable, well-resourced networks that bridge city hall—neighborhood agendas on the one hand and agriculture—social service activities on the other, could inform many Detroit-based efforts for their operational particularities. Cleveland's transparent and well-developed policies related to vacant land governance could also be replicated but with greater accommodation of agriculture given the significant capacity and experience of related organizations in Detroit, the large scale of vacancy in the city, and the presence of strategic frameworks such as Detroit Future City.¹⁷ Programs for agriculture in Detroit might also learn from the powerful analysis in Cleveland that mapped agricultural soils, vacancy, and development potential, but they might also do so with a view to specifying types of agriculture that each neighborhood would best accommodate, rather than a zero-one grading.

Given the recent transformation of Detroit's city council structure to include district-based representation, Cleveland's strong neighborhood-based ties between elected officials and CDCs could be closely studied for their possible translation for agricultural support. The significant role that Extension plays in Cleveland's agriculture could also be assessed for possible translations to Detroit, though with grassroots networks continuing to set the agenda for Extension's involvement.

¹⁷For more information, browse: <https://detroitfuturecity.com/strategic-framework/> (retrieved December 22, 2018).

In turn, nonprofit organizations' efforts to organize citywide frameworks for agriculture in Detroit might be explored for lessons for Cleveland. Because this organizing was motivated by the need to replace the resources and services provided by Farm-A-Lot, there is hope for similar organizing to make up for *Re-imagining's* more disappointing results. Too, much planning and resource allocation in Cleveland is organized by neighborhood politics which can constrain entrepreneurial growers in some neighborhoods, alternative geographies that are smaller (or larger), as dictated by growers' needs, also might be usefully borrowed from Detroit.

Another lesson from Detroit involves the peer-based approach to education and training in most horticultural topics, including market gardening, season extension, seed-saving, and others. Such training is organized according to goals and needs expressed by growers themselves in annual planning that reviews the season's successes and failures. Thus, growers' networks can build significant capacity which expands incrementally as it develops a complex and increasingly layered food system.

Finally, Cleveland's agriculture might gain from networks that identify goals—such as a percentage of all produce sold within the city derived from city-based farms—and activities related to the food system in ways are autonomous from, even if supported by, Extension agencies, and public and community development institutions. A strong network can advocate for better policies related to land and other local government supports.

In both cities, nonprofit-led farms offer important human and social services. However, both sets are vulnerable to fluctuations in external funding, which tends to be capricious. Because profit margins in produce sales tend to be small, both cities could develop policies that are sympathetic to agricultural entrepreneurship rather than dismissing profit-making in the field as inherently antithetical to community interests. In both cities organizations that support agriculture could also work to build support among the general public for an urban agriculture that improves access to healthy food, builds a variety of capacities among individuals and organizations, and contributes to the development of both, the place and its food economy. This would go a long way to developing an integrated approach that includes vacant land, supportive policy, resources of different kinds, and linkages to city and neighborhood institutions.

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Kami Pothukuchi is Distinguished Service Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Wayne State University. Her research explores food systems' linkages to planning, public health, economic development, social justice, sustainability, and higher education. She has lectured nationally and internationally, including in Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia, and the United Kingdom. In 2008, Pothukuchi founded SEED Wayne, a campus-community collaborative to help build sustainable food systems in Detroit. She has also served as a co-founder and first vice-chair of the Detroit Food Policy Council, co-chair with Jerry Kaufman and Deanna Glosser, of the American Planning Association's Food Planning Steering Committee (2005–2014), and a two-term board member of the Community Food Security Coalition.

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Chapter 16

Urban Agriculture Embedded in a Food Systems Approach: The Baltimore Story



Sarah Buzogany, Abby Cocke , Holly Freishtat, Yeeli Mui ,
Mariya Strauss, and Sylvia Kelly 

Abstract The City of Baltimore has made great progress in developing its urban agriculture policies over the last decade, as part of an overall food systems approach to sustainability. This work has been the result of intensive investment in planning efforts, mapping, inter-agency partnerships, and community engagement. Specific areas of policy development include zoning and permitting, land leasing, healthy soil regulations, and incentives for growers. There have been challenges along the way, specifically around staffing and funding, appropriately including resident voices, and differing city agency priorities, particularly on the issue of land access.

Examining Baltimore's trajectory yields insights and lessons for other cities seeking to develop their own policies around urban agriculture, particularly in regards to establishing food and farming as city priorities, using food environment mapping as a powerful tool to show areas of need and opportunity, and properly framing the issues at play for decision-makers and community members. The greatest takeaway from Baltimore's experience is the importance of mainstreaming food policy into urban planning, not as a sidebar but as a consistent bedrock priority. A key community partner, the Farm Alliance of Baltimore, is highlighted at the end of the chapter.

S. Buzogany (✉) · A. Cocke · H. Freishtat
Department of Planning, Office of Sustainability, City of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD, USA
e-mail: sarah.buzogany@baltimorecity.gov; abby.cocke@baltimorecity.gov;
holly.freishtat@baltimorecity.gov

Y. Mui
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, MD, USA
e-mail: ymui1@jhu.edu

M. Strauss
Farm Alliance of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD, USA
e-mail: mariya@farmalliancebaltimore.org

S. Kelly
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: sylviake@buffalo.edu

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16.1 Introduction

Baltimore City is the most populous municipality in the state of Maryland and home to an estimated 602,000 residents. Covering about 80 square miles, divided into 14 council districts, Baltimore is the second-largest seaport in the Mid-Atlantic, serving dozens of ocean carriers (Liu 2013). Following a decline in manufacturing jobs, the steel industry, and restructuring of the rail industry since the 1950s, Baltimore has shifted to a service-oriented economy, with educational and health care services as the city's top employers today.

Urban agriculture has more recently become a growing enterprise in this setting with an estimated 100 food-producing school and community gardens and more than 20 urban farms, growing a variety of fruits and vegetables (Flickinger 2018). At the state level, food production is an important component of the economy, comprising agricultural products that include livestock, dairy, corn, wheat, and other vegetables and fruits (Census of Agriculture County Profile: Baltimore County Maryland 2012).

16.1.1 *Socioeconomic and Health Disparities*

Within this context, however, nearly one-quarter (or 146,000 residents) still face significant barriers to accessing healthy food options, and over one-third of children in Baltimore lived below the poverty line during 2012–2016 (Misiaszek et al. 2018; Iyer et al. 2017). Barriers to healthy food access reflect racial disparities. Forty three percent of predominantly Black neighborhoods have low healthy food availability compared with just 4% of predominantly white neighborhoods (Emple 2011).

In terms of the overall health status and challenges with diet-related diseases, Baltimore fares worse relative to other jurisdictions in Maryland. The overall mortality rate in Baltimore is 40% higher compared to the rest of the state, and many of the leading causes of death, including cancer and heart disease, are closely linked to food (Misiaszek et al. 2018; Wen 2018). Disparities can also be seen in the city's mortality rates, with Black and Hispanic populations facing higher incidents of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes than their white counterparts (Barbo 2014).

16.1.2 Baltimore's Food System

The food system encompasses the production, transportation, sale, consumption, recovery and disposal of food; as well as the structures, policies, goals, and values that accompany each step of the process. Food system opportunities and challenges differ with historic, social, economic, and environmental contexts. In Baltimore, structural inequities tied to historical planning and policies have led to disenfranchised communities with limited access to resources critical for healthy living and wellbeing, including access to healthy food (Biehl et al. 2018). A diverse network of food producers, processors, wholesalers and distributors, retailers, restaurants and other direct food providers, and food assistance organizations supply food to residents throughout the city (Biehl et al. 2017). However, opportunities remain to strengthen the food system, especially in communities of color and lower income neighborhoods. For example, while the number of urban farms and community gardens continues to grow in Baltimore, much of the food consumed by city residents is grown and processed into ready-to-eat form beyond Baltimore's city limits; distributed through public and privately owned warehouses in Jessup, Maryland and then delivered to city retailers.

Because of the complex and intertwined nature of the food system, and its overlap with many sectors, such as housing, economic development, and transportation, a comprehensive food policy agenda – centered on equity – is crucial.

This chapter seeks to capture and analyze how Baltimore has used its sustainability plans and other plans to anchor its food work in city government, as well as how the work, framing, priorities, and goals have evolved over the past decade. It will show how a city can move from a set of goals and recommendations to an interagency collaborative initiative with staffing and a full policy agenda on food and agriculture. This chapter will discuss various entry points for cities to engage on urban food systems and urban agriculture work, and discuss policy success and challenges Baltimore faced along the way.

16.2 Setting the Stage for a Food Policy Agenda

Plans are critical to city government. Institutionalizing priorities, goals, and policies in a plan is both a beneficial exercise for those included in the process and helps to legitimize and distill collective interests, especially to advance a “new” framework. In 2009, having a dedicated Office of Sustainability was a nascent concept among city governments (Plastrik and Parzen 2013). Baltimore's 2009 Sustainability Plan sought to illustrate how city government services and priorities could support community-based efforts, and how these efforts could align with the tenets of sustainability. This provided a guiding document to the newly created Baltimore Office of Sustainability (BOS) and would help the office establish itself within government and the community.

The 2009 Sustainability Plan is organized by seven priorities (The Baltimore Sustainability Plan 2009). Food policy and food production are captured in just one place – “Greening Goal #2: *Establish Baltimore as a leader in local sustainable food systems.*” The plan listed six high-level strategies to accomplish this goal. That same year, the Baltimore City Planning and Health Departments directed a Food Policy Taskforce, comprising professional stakeholders across city government, nonprofit organizations, and academia. The Taskforce was in progress during the writing of the Sustainability Plan and their ten recommendations were released in late 2009 (Santo et al. 2014). The Sustainability Plan cross-referenced the Food Policy Taskforce recommendations, thus, the Sustainability Plan became a guiding document and a basis for legitimizing food policy work in Baltimore.

Building from the 2009 Sustainability Plan and the Food Policy Taskforce recommendations, Baltimore developed a Healthy Food Environment Strategy that captured a wide view of the food system, reduced duplication between the two sets of recommendations, and provided a roadmap for Baltimore to launch into food policy work in full force (Santo et al. 2014). These strategies included:

1. Support resident-driven processes to guide equitable food policies, priorities, and resources
2. Improve small grocery, corner, and convenience stores
3. Retain and attract supermarkets
4. Increase the ability of the public markets to anchor the healthy food environment
5. Implement supply chain solutions that support healthy food distribution and small businesses
6. Maximize the impact of nutrition assistance and meal programs
7. Support urban agriculture, emphasizing historically disenfranchised populations and geographies
8. Address transportation gaps that impact food access

The beauty and utility of these strategies come from their broad nature, which captures the necessary elements of a comprehensive food policy agenda without being overly prescriptive and restrictive. This has allowed Baltimore to grow into its food and agriculture work over time and facilitated the incorporation of new and innovative strategies into the agenda that would not have been feasible or considered when the recommendations were first released.

16.2.1 Governance and Organizational Structure

At the time the 2009 Baltimore Sustainability Plan was written, BOS had a small staff, none of whom were responsible for specifically working on food or agriculture. Understanding that food does not fit solely into one government agency, then-Mayor Rawlings-Blake hired a full-time Food Policy Director in 2010, fulfilling a recommendation from the Food Policy Taskforce. The Director was tasked with building stakeholder capacity and agency collaboration to implement Greening Goal #2 and to “address health, economic and environmental disparities by

increasing access to healthy affordable food in Baltimore City’s food deserts” (Baltimore Office of Sustainability 2010).

In order to accomplish these goals, the Food Policy Director created the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI) to address the complex systemic problems of access to healthy, affordable food and sustainable food systems. BFPI was initially a collaboration between BOS, the Department of Planning, Health Department, and Baltimore Development Corporation, and has now expanded to many more agencies. BFPI and the Food Policy Director are responsible for implementing the Healthy Food Environment Strategy and other food-related goals and actions laid out in city plans.

16.2.2 Staffing

BFPI’s staffing structure has expanded from a part-time, grant-funded Food Policy Director to six full-time funded positions strategically placed across three agencies. In 2011, the Food Policy Director became a city government-funded full-time position within BOS, which is a division of the Department of Planning. An Environmental Planner in BOS has been primarily responsible for urban agriculture activities since 2011. Since 2013, four new city government-funded positions were created: a Food Resilience Planner and a Food Access Planner; a Food Retail Economic Development Officer at the Development Corporation; and the Baltimarket Food Access Director at the Health Department. These six positions staff BFPI to develop strategic partnerships with 13 city government agencies to address food system policies, strategies, and programs from multi-agency perspectives. The commitment by city government to embed food positions across many agencies helped Baltimore win the 2016 Milan Urban Food Policy Pact award for Governance. Concurrently, from 2009 to 2019, BOS has expanded from 3 staff to 13 (Fig. 16.1).

Creating full-time civil service positions institutionalized food as a priority in city government. Further, work completed with grant funds must often align to funder-identified priority areas and specific grant deliverables. Therefore, an additional benefit of moving these positions off of grant funding has been added flexibility to respond to unforeseen issues that arise and to adapt to changing needs over time.

16.2.3 Organizational Engagement

Since 2010, BFPI has convened and coordinated the Food Policy Action Coalition (Food PAC) to continue engagement on the Food Policy Task Force and Sustainability Plan recommendations, inform policymaking, and build upon the efforts of local organizations with missions and visions around food issues. Initially Food PAC focused on breaking down silos, reducing duplicative efforts, building coalitions, and spurring professional networking. In 2017, Food PAC became open to the public to facilitate more resident participation. In addition to a regular convening space, Food PAC serves as a mechanism for stakeholders to raise policy issues to BFPI.

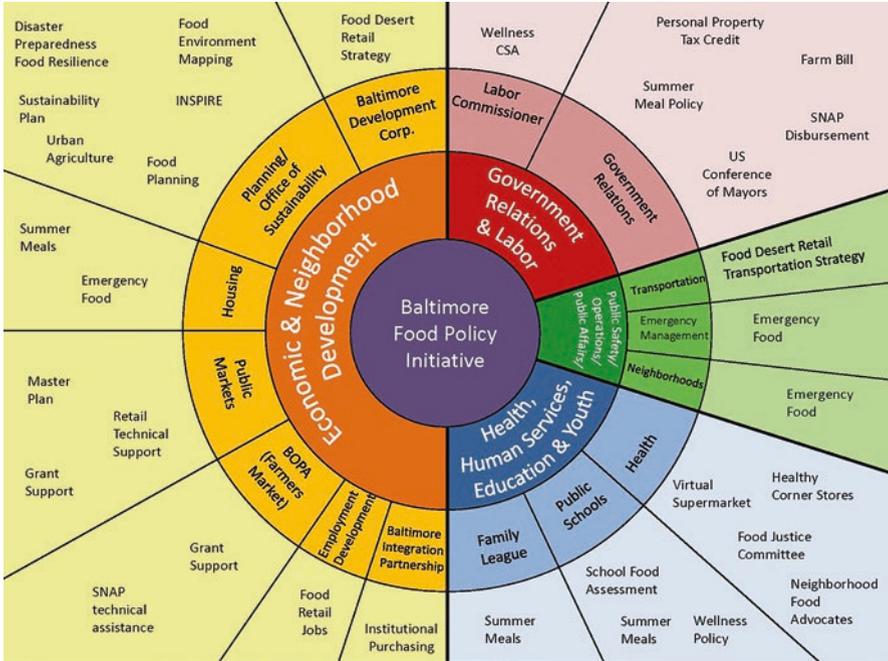


Fig. 16.1 Baltimore’s interagency collaboration on food and agriculture

16.2.4 Resident Engagement

Recognizing that resident-informed and resident-driven policy ultimately leads to the most equitable processes and outcomes, BFPI added a third component to its structure – Resident Food Equity Advisors (RFEA). Since 2017, RFEAs have met regularly with BFPI to discuss food policy and planning in a transparent way, giving residents’ voice in government and policymaking, as well as in-depth knowledge of the complexities of food access issues. RFEAs go through a competitive application process to achieve representation from each of the 14 City Council Districts. RFEAs commit to a series of six meetings and are compensated for their time. The RFEA model is an important tool to create resident-informed food policies.

16.3 Plans and Policies Strengthening Baltimore’s Urban Food System and Urban Agriculture

The Sustainability Plan and Food Policy Taskforce Recommendations helped provide the initial outline to guide a food policy agenda, which BFPI agencies have refined, built upon, and implemented over the past 10 years. Baltimore has found

that anchoring goals and commitments in plans has led to establishing legitimacy and long-term outcomes for new priorities. Baltimore's structure, framing, and collaborative approach to urban food systems and urban agriculture have created great success in implementing a policy¹ agenda.

16.3.1 Urban Agriculture Plan

Local food production has a long history in Baltimore City (Poulsen et al. 2013). The modern-day approach to urban agriculture as a means for blight reduction, economic development, and local resilience arguably emerged into the public consciousness in Baltimore in 2008, when an Urban Agriculture Task Force convened, composed of representatives from the Mayor's Office, local non-profit and business entities, and interested individuals. When BFPI and BOS were formed, the question was not how to start a new urban agriculture sector in Baltimore, but rather how to support the movement already underway as one piece of a holistic food systems approach (Fig. 16.2). In this section, we will examine the specific policy and program responses that these new institutions of government took to address the needs of growers.

One of the strategies in the 2009 Baltimore Sustainability Plan was to write an Urban Agriculture Plan. Over the course of 2012 and 2013, BOS completed *Homegrown Baltimore: Grow Local (HBGL)* (Poulsen et al. 2013). At the time, the United States Conference of Mayors Food Policy Taskforce was considering joint branding on urban agriculture initiatives, so this was branded after Homegrown Minneapolis. The Urban Agriculture Plan set out 25 recommendations to better support and expand Baltimore's urban agriculture sector, divided into the following categories: land, water, soil, capital, and support. Directed by BOS, the plan was largely written by contract employees, drawing on input and feedback from over three dozen stakeholders representing Baltimore City agencies, growers, and support agencies, organizations, and businesses. It was adopted in November 2013. An update to the plan is currently being considered to focus on neglected areas such as indoor and vertical growing; equity, diversity, and inclusion issues in agriculture; and the incorporation of expertise of immigrants and refugees into the movement.

16.3.2 Urban Agriculture Zoning & Permitting

Until 2011, farmers were required to get building permits to erect hoop houses. BOS developed and supported a bill that brought Baltimore's Building Code in line with the International Building Code by exempting hoop houses from normal

¹Policy can encompass permits, plans, legislation and shifts in how work is prioritized or carried out by the City.

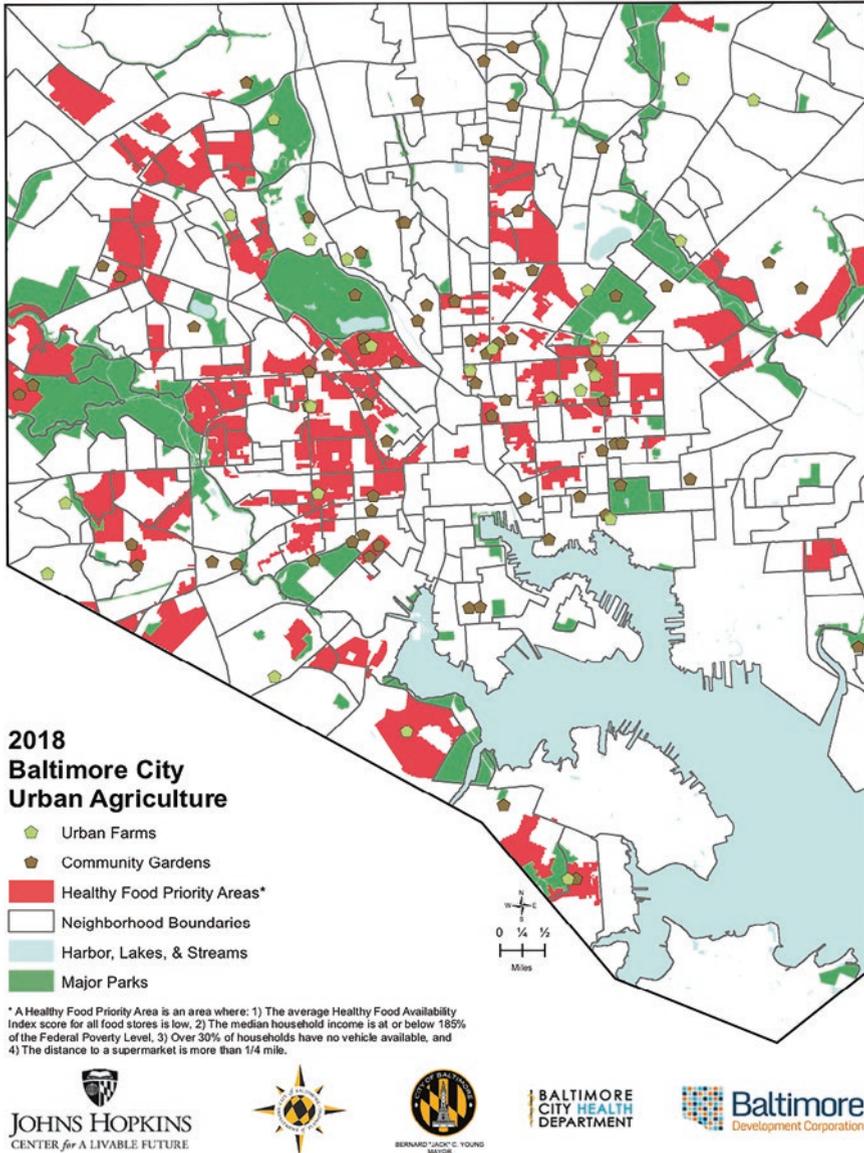


Fig. 16.2 Urban Agriculture Sites in Baltimore City, 2018

permitting requirements, making it much easier for growers to start new projects without undue cost and delay.

Another fundamental barrier for urban farmers was that Baltimore’s Zoning Code did not provide the majority of growers with a way to formally legitimize their land use. This had been a tolerable state of affairs for community gardens but proved

a serious barrier as more business-oriented farmers began to start projects in the city and could not answer the question, “Who says you’re allowed to do this?” when asked by skeptical neighbors, loan-makers or other assistance programs. This issue arose at an opportune moment, as the Department of Planning (DOP) was fully rewriting the Zoning Code in the first comprehensive overhaul since the 1970s. BOS developed new permitting categories for Community-Managed Open Spaces (including community gardens) and Urban Agriculture, drawing on model language from experts and other cities (Wooten and Ackerman 2011).

BOS convened an Urban Agriculture Sub-Committee to BFPI’s Food PAC, made up of growers and advocates, to consult on the Zoning Code language and to help identify further barriers and opportunities. This group provided crucial input on a range of issues, and in particular, helped ensure that the new Zoning Code language was balanced between providing reasonable guidance and not creating new unintended barriers. While zoning ordinances for urban farms have been controversial in other cities, the opportunity to include them in a larger rewrite of the Zoning Code made their acceptance far smoother. After a lengthy public process that largely focused on issues related to housing, the new code took effect in 2017.

In partnership with the Health Department, BOS suggested updates to the Health Code dealing with the keeping of chickens and bees. Drawing from model regulations (Wooten and Ackerman 2011), and in consultation with the local agricultural community, BOS made recommendations to expand the number of chickens and bees that may be kept on a property; add a process for community gardens and urban farms to request to keep an expanded number of chickens (up to 50); add regulations relating to rabbits, and dwarf, miniature, and pygmy goats; and waive the permit fee (normally \$80 per type of animal) for the keeping of bees, in recognition of their important ecological role.

16.3.3 *Land Leasing*

On account of a long history of disinvestment, Baltimore currently has approximately 14,000 vacant lots, of which about a third are city government-owned. BOS conducted an urban agriculture land assessment to look for parcels that were a minimum of one acre in size, flat, mostly clear of trees and shrubs, and with no short- to mid-term development plans – identifying approximately 35 acres of potentially appropriate city government-owned land. While many of these sites would prove to have significant barriers to use (such as old and crumbling impervious surfaces, use histories that raised the specter of contamination, or neighbors uninterested in having a farm next door), knowing that so much land *could* potentially be available was an important starting point.

Based on this analysis, BOS spearheaded the Homegrown Baltimore Land Leasing Program, a partnership with the Department of Housing & Community Development (HCD). BOS created a Request for Qualifications application, which asked respondents to provide an urban agricultural concept, financial plan,

community engagement plan, and other details. Applications are reviewed jointly with HCD. Qualified applicants are invited to work with city government to identify an appropriate parcel of city government-owned land, meet with the community, and, if residents are on board, to sign five-year leases at a rate of \$100/year, with the option of either renewal or an 18-month notice to vacate period at the end of the term, essentially making it a minimum 6.5 year lease.

Only two leases have been finalized through this program so far – one for 1.5 acres in west Baltimore to Strength to Love Farm, a workforce reentry initiative, and another 1.5 acres in east Baltimore to Civic Works for a second Real Food Farm site (the first being one of the oldest urban farms in Baltimore, located in a nearby park). Both of these projects are going strong. Several additional Homegrown Baltimore leases with other farming organizations, both for- and non-profit, are currently in progress at the time of this writing.

Partners have asked that city government intentionally support and facilitate urban growing activities as long-term or permanent strategies, rather than interim uses on vacant land until a “higher and better use”² emerges. As has been seen in cities such as Chicago, Detroit, and New York City, urban agriculture can be displaced in favor of development, even though often it was the urban agriculture project that helped spark a renewed interest in the area and made the market more favorable for development. This pressure has not been felt as keenly yet in Baltimore, and city government hopes to develop strategies that will encourage very long-term, if not permanent, space for growing food. A move towards land tenure could include more community and farmer control of land; incorporating permanent growing space into city-owned land that is otherwise protected, such as parks; or building growing space into both public and private housing developments.

16.3.4 Water Access Program

Many gardens and farms in Baltimore use the city government Water Access program, which provides community projects access to municipal water at a flat rate of \$120 per year via water meter pits in the sidewalk. However, meter pits are not available for all sites. To support growers in this situation, BOS worked with the Parks & People Foundation to establish a Garden Irrigation Fund. Community gardeners or non-profit urban farmers could apply to the fund for up to \$3000 towards a new water line. A total of six projects received support through the fund. Many projects turned out to cost more than the allotted amount; the hope initially had been that growers would leverage their grant from the fund to raise the additional money needed, but this proved difficult.

²Refers to the use of vacant land that is physically and financially feasible, while resulting in the highest value.

After several rounds of funding, the decision was made to use the remainder of the money in the Garden Irrigation Fund to fully fund the incomplete projects, and then to close it out. Since then, BOS has used capital bond funds from HCD to install new water lines at farm and garden sites on public land as needed and as money has been available. This has the advantage of not requiring growers to go through an application or fundraising process, but may be less equitable in terms of how funds are distributed, since the process is not open and transparent. Farms or gardens on private land are not eligible for such funds.

16.3.5 Soil Safety Policy

It was imperative for Baltimore City government to develop a set of soil safety standards in advance of the adoption of the Zoning Code, since the Use Standards for community gardens and urban agriculture required that permit-seekers who intend to grow food for human consumption and who will be using the existing soil on their site, submit soil test results and, if needed, a soil safety plan.

In response to this need, BOS developed a Soil Safety Policy with support from the Abell Foundation, the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF), and other partners. The policy provides guidance to food growers in Baltimore, and lays out requirements for permit-seekers. It covers how to identify potential risks at a particular site, where to go for testing and analysis, best practices if contamination is found, and types of remediation to consider. Over the past several years, CLF has undertaken a massive study of the soils at Baltimore's urban farms and gardens, entitled the Safe Urban Harvests study. CLF researchers and BOS staff will work together to review the results of this study and consider updates to the Soil Safety Policy.

16.3.6 Urban Agriculture Incentives

In Maryland, farmland can be assessed for purposes of property taxes at a rate of just \$500 per acre, greatly reducing the financial burden on farmers. However, a property must be at least five acres to qualify, excluding most urban farms. In 2014, at the request of Baltimore activists, the State of Maryland updated its Tax Code to allow local jurisdictions to create tax credits for urban agriculture. In response, BOS and Baltimore City Council developed a local credit. This faced internal pushback from the City's Department of Finance, which was very concerned that developers engaged in speculation on vacant land might put up a hoop house as a way to avoid taxes, then scrap their "farm" as soon as the right buyer came along. The resulting compromise bill, adopted by the Baltimore City Council in 2015, provides a property tax credit to farmers of 90%, but the property must produce at least \$5000 in gross value of plants, plant products, animals, or animal products annually (with

exemptions available for the year a farm starts up, or in the case of a disaster such as drought, vandalism, or infestation); may not be used for any other purpose that would normally subject it to property taxes; and must remain a farm for at least five years or else pay back the credit.

As of the time of writing, only one Baltimore farm has received the tax credit. Several have applied but have been turned down, usually because the site was also being used for another purpose, such as a private residence or an unrelated business. In one case, the applicant decided to subdivide the property and reapply – it is expected that this application will be approved. However, few growers have the resources and the know-how to go through the subdivision process, nor is it feasible to subdivide a property in all cases. BOS aims to update the law such that it is useful to a wider number of growers, including considerations such as scaling the credit depending on the percentage of the site used for other purposes, or applying it only to the value of the land and not to the value of any improvements.

16.3.7 2019 Sustainability Plan

Ten years after the first Sustainability Plan and learning from the policies and programs mentioned above, BOS released a full plan update (Fig. 16.3). The 2019 Sustainability Plan sought to create an equitable process for goal and strategy identification and prioritization (Baltimore Office of Sustainability 2019). Teams of Sustainability Plan Ambassadors engaged over 2000 stakeholders to hear about Baltimore’s strengths and opportunities for improvement. Answers were categorized into themes, and the plan was divided into 23 sections organized under five overarching topics: community, human-made systems, climate and resilience,

Urban Agriculture Plans and Policies in Baltimore

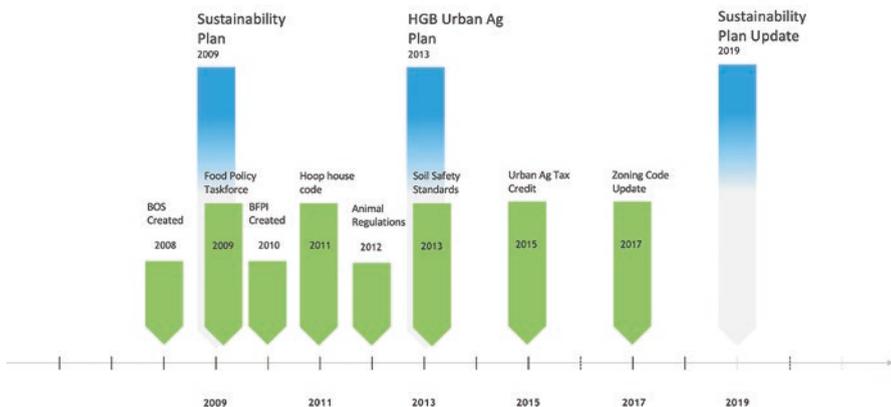


Fig. 16.3 Timeline of Baltimore’s Urban Agriculture Policies and Plans

nature and the city, and economy. Building from resident-based outreach and engagement, the plan also asks agencies and organizations to consider the implementation through an equity lens.

The 2019 Sustainability Plan has two sections dedicated to Urban Food Systems and Urban Agriculture (Table 16.1). The goals and actions will be implemented by the City and partners alike.

Table 16.1 Baltimore 2019 Sustainability Plan chapters related to food and agriculture (Baltimore Office of Sustainability 2019)

Chapter of the plan	Strategies & actions
URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS Vision – <i>A city committed to building an equitable and resilient urban food system</i>	Use policy to create a more equitable food system
	Integrate food system priorities across government
	Implement equitable food policies
	Engage residents in policy creation
	Increase resilience at the household, community, and food system levels
	Reduce acute food insecurity
	Increase overall resilience
	Support equitable food systems
	Strengthen and amplify the local food economy
	Leverage the purchasing power of city government
	Support and cultivate local, food-based businesses
	Increase food recovery
	URBAN AGRICULTURE Vision – <i>communities that historically have been excluded from access to land and to fresh, healthy, culturally-appropriate foods are those that benefit most from urban agriculture opportunities</i>
Develop criteria identifying City-owned land that may be suitable for farming	
Protect and support existing farms	
Create better defined and supported pathways to ownership	
Ensure farmers and gardeners can produce food, flowers, fiber, and fuel in ways that are safe, environmentally sustainable, and socially responsible – and educate residents on opportunities to support and engage with them	
Connect growers to educational resources and training	
Support existing social networks and non-profits of growers	
Improve strategies for engaging communities in urban agriculture projects	
Support growers to create financially viable urban agriculture	
Create and expand City programs, and connect more growers to public, private and philanthropic programs and incentives	
Support aggregation among small farms	
Increase demand for locally grown products	

16.4 Challenges

16.4.1 Staffing and Funding

While a great deal of effort has gone into creating plans for urban agriculture in Baltimore, implementation of specific recommendations, particularly around urban agriculture, has often lagged due to a lack of dedicated staff time and funds. For example, recommendations to create a farm incubator in the city or conduct a citizen education and engagement campaign around urban agriculture have crawled along or stalled out in recent years. Dedicating additional resources to this work will be crucial in moving the urban agriculture movement forward in Baltimore.

Delayed progress of the land-leasing program for farms is also evident. While the program has enabled land security for a couple of farms (with several more pending), the process has been frustrating for other aspiring farmers. Many sites look good on paper but need significant capital upgrades to be suitable, such as impervious surface removal, water and electric line installation, or fencing, but city government has been slow in identifying and expending such funds. In addition, the pace of the review and contracting process has discouraged some would-be farmers.

16.4.2 Resident Voices

In many cases, incorporating resident voices into policymaking involves slowing down the process so that more voices can guide the development and the outcomes. This can be a challenge in government where timing is often perceived as one of the most critical aspects of whether a policy will be successful.

Conflicting opinions also present challenges during community engagement. Differing resident concerns about potential new farms have shut down conversations about leasing otherwise promising parcels of land, and city government has struggled to find the right approach to measuring community acceptability for sites under consideration for agricultural land leasing. For instance, simply presenting a proposed project at a community meeting may not actually reach residents who would be impacted, but surveying all residents around a proposed project site is almost certain to turn up at least one dissenting voice. Without clear methods in place for mediating multiple opinions, and with urban agriculture having been, for a long-time, a new and unfamiliar prospect, community leaders and government decision-makers have tended to err on the side of caution and nix projects without unanimous community support. BOS and BFPI are currently considering how to streamline and improve this process.

16.4.3 Land Access

A major barrier to successful policy implementation arises when different city agencies have different, sometimes conflicting priorities, for instance, around the disposition of land. HCD, which is responsible for most of Baltimore's city-owned vacant land, tends to focus on housing and retail developments, as part of their role in revitalizing the city. Agricultural efforts have been seen largely as an interim land-holding strategy and not as a long-term community development strategy in their own right. As a result, farms have been limited to locations where there is little to no short to mid-term development potential, and, even at those sites, land tenure for farmers has so far been limited to five-year stretches at a time.

Along with preserving existing farms, through the 2019 Sustainability Plan, Baltimore has committed to identify land for new agricultural projects, both on city government-owned lots as well as institutional and private parcels. This involves a major shift in policies and priorities. DOP and HCD have worked together successfully to incorporate pocket parks and playgrounds into development projects, with the City's newly-established Baltimore Green Network program placing even greater emphasis on creating new parks, gardens, and other green spaces. So far, however, agriculture has not been a significant part of the mix of new development. BFPI and BOS staff are working with HCD to map out a strategy for how to better incorporate food production into the city's overall landscape going forward.

16.5 Insights & Lessons

16.5.1 Establishing Food and Farming as City Government Priorities

When considering staffing, it is critical for cities to assess the benefits and constraints of where to house staff. Across the nation, city-level food policy and agriculture initiatives or positions have been housed within Mayor's Offices, Health Departments, Planning Departments, Offices of Sustainability, or as special projects (United States Conference of Mayors Committees and Task Forces 2019). Each of these postings brings different levels of scope, influence, and longevity, depending on the city. Although more staffing and resources are needed for Baltimore's food policy plans to reach fruition, Baltimore is still far ahead of many cities in staffing its food-related efforts, and has particularly been successful in spreading these efforts across different parts of city government, which has resulted in longer-term sustainability of the work in Baltimore. An important next step is to place a staff position focused on greening (including agriculture) at HCD to significantly enhance the prospects of successful cross-agency collaboration and develop the consistent relationships necessary to establish successful new farms in the city.

While competing agency priorities have limited the establishment and tenure of Baltimore's farms in the past, working within those constraints to support and uplift the successes of Baltimore's farmers has improved the state of affairs. Both farms that were started under the land-leasing program have now been in existence for over five years, and, along with other successful farms in the city, have proven their benefits to decision-makers. The policy conversation is now beginning to shift towards long-term land tenure, as called for in the 2019 Baltimore Sustainability Plan. BOS, HCD, and the Farm Alliance of Baltimore (FAB) are currently in discussions about how to proceed towards this goal.

There is already a strong precedent for green space preservation in Baltimore when it comes to community gardens and forest patches, thanks to a partnership between the DOP, HCD, and the non-profit Baltimore Green Space land trust (BGS). In 2010, BGS helped city government formulate a policy by which city government-owned, community-managed open spaces can be transferred from HCD to a qualified land trust for preservation for \$1 per parcel Avins (2010). This model could be appropriate for established urban agriculture sites, especially those operating under a strong community-based model. Longer-term leases, a lease-to-own arrangement, outright purchases, or a co-op ownership model are all under discussion as other possible paths forward.

16.5.2 Food Environment Mapping as a Tool

BFPI has relied on mapping to make the strong case that food access issues are widespread in Baltimore City. In BFPI's early days, the concept of "food deserts" was entering the American consciousness, and BFPI capitalized on this dialogue to link these issues to Baltimore. The US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) original food desert definition was based on income and proximity to a supermarket and did not paint an accurate picture in Baltimore, as many areas with concentrated barriers to accessing healthy food were not included (Misiaszek et al. 2018).

Baltimore sought to create a definition and mapping tool that better reflected food access locally. BFPI and CLF released the first City-issued Food Desert Map and City-specific definition of food deserts in 2012. Compared to USDA's definition and map, Baltimore's included four factors: distance to a supermarket, vehicle availability, poverty, and Healthy Food Availability Index Score (HFAI) – a measure of whether a retail outlet has healthy food, which was measured at over 800 stores across the city. Baltimore's Food Environment Map was created to show that lack of access to healthy food was concentrated in certain areas, but that food insecurity and inequitable food environments had to be addressed citywide through policy solutions. This resonated with policymakers and led to the creation of policies like a personal property tax credit for supermarkets in Food Desert Incentive Areas.

While the impact they can have is great, citywide policies take a significant amount of time to come to fruition and show change, so it became clear that more place-based strategies would need to continue simultaneously, and BFPI began adapting its mapping to suit those needs. BFPI released City Council District maps

in 2015 and full food environment briefings for City Council Districts and State Legislative Districts in 2018. These maps include food retail, urban farms and community gardens, farmers markets, and food access sites such as summer and after-school meals for kids, senior meals, and food pantries. Food environment maps are now included in many small geographic plans such as the plans around newly constructed schools, and have proven a valuable policy tool.

16.5.3 Framing of an Issue

16.5.3.1 Urban Agriculture

How an issue is framed has a large bearing on the policies considered to address it and the coalitions that come together around it. In the early years of Homegrown Baltimore, urban agriculture was framed as a way to revitalize neighborhoods, bring fresh food en masse to under-resourced neighborhoods, and create jobs (Santo et al. 2016). Baltimore followed this ideology, and much of the Urban Agriculture Plan and available technical assistance focused on increasing for-profit food production in an urban setting. Research and experience has shown that many of the purported monetary and employment benefits did not meet expectations, but there are many other benefits to encourage using urban land for food, flower, and fiber production (Santo et al. 2016). With these realizations, BFPI and BOS shifted focus towards recognizing the benefits of urban agriculture from a broader perspective as they relate to individual participation in the food system, increased local food sovereignty, and increased household and neighborhood-level resilience.

16.5.3.2 Food Access

While national conversations and funding streams centered on food access and childhood obesity, especially through retail, outcomes of reducing obesity or food deserts are nearly impossible to show change over short to moderate periods of time. Distilling food issues down to these frames often ignores why many structural barriers exist in the first place, such as poverty exacerbated by long-term disinvestment, structural racism, and the industrialization and consolidation of the food system.

BFPI has shifted its framing to better acknowledge the core issues that cause inequitable access to healthy affordable food. Actions have included anti-racism courses and workshops for staff and stakeholders; racializing data and framing disparities in the context of racial segregation; and acknowledging that the people closest to a problem are the most equipped to fix it. One major shift included changing the name from “food desert” to “Healthy Food Priority Area” on the 2018 Food Environment Maps. While the four factors did not change, the term was changed to better characterize what is being measured and recognize that a suite of structural elements shape Baltimore’s food system. Local and national discourse claimed that the term “food desert” has negative connotations and implies low healthy food

access is a naturally occurring phenomenon (like a desert). Local residents described that food desert connotes a pejorative status to neighborhoods that are home to vibrant communities with passionate and resilient residents and on-the-ground programs that meet needs, even in the face of food access challenges.

Moving away from the term “food desert” was met with pushback as well as support. Advocacy organizations felt like the idea of food deserts had finally been entrenched in the public consciousness and that they would have to start over with a new term. Grassroots activists felt like the new term did not go far enough, instead preferring to use the term “food apartheid”³ to describe the “structural oppression based on race and class that limits access to power and resources related to food and land and results in poor health and poor people.” BFPI acknowledges and validates both of these terminologies and has tried to promote the message that the Food Environment Map has its place as a policy tool and that people experiencing barriers to healthy food should describe their circumstances any way they choose to.

16.5.4 Mainstreaming Urban Food Systems in Planning

Because the food system touches so many sectors, much of the work BFPI does is in partnership with other agencies or local organizations and communities. In the early years, the concept of food in government was very new, and BFPI had to spend time building credibility and awareness in order to convince other agencies to partner on food issues. The beauty of food policy is that because it is so broad and has so many potential priorities, a person who understands the food system can see how it intersects with any topic area.

As time went on and allies were made across agencies, a productive shift and crystallization happened by which BFPI realized that one of the primary purposes it serves in city government is to provide technical assistance to agencies that are *already* doing food work, whether they realize it or not. BFPI grew to understand that building a groundswell across city government would not be accomplished by asking agencies to change what they do, but rather by helping them see the connections between their existing work and the food system.

Moving forward, BFPI will continue expanding its scope and using food as a lens to explore solutions in new topic areas by “mainstreaming” food into planning. For example, INSPIRE is a planning effort that focuses capital investments and public-private commitments for the physical environment in the quarter-mile around new and renovated schools (City of Baltimore INSPIRE 2018). The first INSPIRE plan in 2016 did not mention food, even though food access was a known concern in that area. The project planners said they did not know enough about food policy to bring it up. Since then, BFPI has helped facilitate various food access meetings

³Most organizations in Baltimore use a definition put forth by the National Black Food and Justice Alliance (www.blackfoodjustice.org)

as part of INSPIRE and has helped include a food environment section in each plan, many of which include urban agriculture activities like community gardens.

Another area in which BFPI seeks to mainstream food is the emerging field of “resilience” so that resilience planners fully consider all of the intersections of the food system with their planning efforts. In 2015, BFPI convened a working group that ultimately led to the Mayor’s Office of Emergency Management and other agencies to come to the conclusion that “food is critical infrastructure,” and, therefore, it is part of their charge to protect food system functioning during times of emergency. Building on that, in 2017, BFPI partnered with CLF on an assessment and advisory report on local food system resilience (Biehl et al. 2018). For instance, urban agriculture has many implications related to climate change, stormwater management, self-sufficiency, and community cohesiveness – all aspects of resilience. By working to make that understanding more common in Baltimore and sharing it as a best practice nationally, BFPI hopes that urban food systems and urban agriculture will not be considered as an afterthought in resilience planning.

16.5.5 Baltimore’s Emergency Food Response

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, BFPI was charged to lead the City of Baltimore’s Emergency Food Response. BOS staff consulted with FAB and other partners in agriculture to understand growers’ immediate needs. Simultaneously, as Maryland Governor Larry Hogan’s stay-at-home order took effect on March 21, 2020, FAB requested that the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) recognize urban farmers and gardeners as essential workers who were not to be subject to enforcement actions related to the stay-at-home order. A spokesperson for BPD agreed, and FAB and the University of Maryland Extension office provided farmers and gardeners with letters of passage that could be carried to and from farms and greenhouses to prove essential worker status. Farmers and gardeners later reported that these letters of passage proved useful on several occasions.

Additional needs were written into the city’s Emergency Food Strategy, including food safety supplies and PPE for farm and market workers, critical infrastructure repairs, labor support, seedlings, and more space for food production. The needs expressed in the Emergency Food Strategy were paired with resources from the federal, state, local, and private foundation levels. As a result of this and its own fundraising, FAB was able to create the Urban Agriculture Resilience Fund with \$92,000 in support from six foundations. Since the creation of the fund in late-May 2020, FAB member farmers have received equipment, supplies, mini-grants, and infrastructure repairs to assist them through the pandemic. Some of these materials included: ground stakes, air conditioning units, produce scales, irrigation system supplies, tents, and post-harvest handling stations with food-safe chemicals and equipment. In addition, FAB started a special fund for Black-led farms in its network.

To address the need for additional seedlings for local farmers, BOS partnered with the Bon Secours Community Works Farm, a small urban farm sponsored by Bon Secours Hospital in southwest Baltimore, to grow and distribute thousands of seedlings to farmers and gardeners across Baltimore City. BOS also consulted with HCD and the Baltimore City Department of Recreation & Parks to identify additional land for growing. FAB is currently working with community members near three parks to determine a path forward for a farm incubator. Finally, to mitigate the need for additional labor for growers, BOS is working with University of Maryland Extension and Baltimore Green Space (a non-profit land trust for gardens, community farms, and other community-managed open spaces) to match volunteers with sites in need.

16.6 Conclusion

Baltimore has found long-term success in urban food systems and urban agriculture policy by anchoring its work in plans and planning processes. These processes that bridge policy and community are even more important in a time when the country is wrestling with its history of racialized policies and practices. Armed with the ability to build strategies around a set of broad recommendations and driven by resident expertise, Baltimore was able to create a roadmap that has been flexible enough to allow for evolution, growth, and responsiveness to community and City needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only heightened the importance of maintaining and expanding local food production that is essential to the city's food resiliency and sustainability. BFPI's multi-pronged approach to supporting urban agriculture during a time of crises was made possible due to established relationships between the City and local urban agriculture communities. Responses were developed quickly and collaboratively to address immediate needs, and the results have been tangible and significant.

Any of the policies or topics discussed in this chapter could be used as an entry point for cities to start or expand their work on urban food systems and urban agriculture policy. This could be initiated by a designated food policy staff member or by any subject area expert who incorporates food into their existing work and plans. There is no set template for incorporating food into planning processes and government. The most important element is for cities to give food and agricultural policies and priorities the room, legitimacy, and funding they need to grow and evolve over time. The success of this policy work is further assured through coalition-building with other government sectors and especially with residents in the broader community.

In Baltimore, there are many urban agriculture and community gardening organizations doing strong work and compelling the City to rethink urban agriculture. These organizations include The Farm Alliance of Baltimore (see Spotlight), The Black Church Food Security Network, Baltimore Green Space, and University of Maryland Extension, among many others. BFPI and BOS convened many of these organizations and other farming and gardening stakeholders in advance of the 2019

Baltimore Sustainability Plan writing, and continue to engage with diverse actors to build equitable, adaptive capacity and food resilience in the City’s food system. The challenge going forward will be to maintain a focus on local food production, ensuring that it remains a priority for the city and partners; it should not take a global pandemic to recognize that there is no food distribution without food production, and that relying solely on food resources from elsewhere is a dangerous strategy.

Spotlight | Farm Alliance of Baltimore: Urban Farms Planting Community Self-Determination

Urban farming for production – beyond the scale of the homesteader growing food for their family – has long been a tradition in Baltimore. Long-time residents and transplants alike have spent decades planting crops on vacant, city government-owned property. People grow food and flowers in the city as a means of feeding their neighbors, building healthier soils, and achieving greater economic self-determination. In 2011, farmers began meeting around kitchen tables to resolve some of the problems they had been having: accessing municipal water, getting permits to use city government-owned land for farm businesses, paying for greenhouse space and tools, and more. With help from an Open Society Institute Community Fellowship and a USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grant, farmer Maya Kosok led the effort to create the Farm Alliance of Baltimore.

The group’s mission was to support the farms by providing marketing opportunities, tool sharing, and other avenues. Its stated ambition was to make farms more economically viable as businesses by creating collective solutions to individual problems. It set up a shared market stall at the farmers’ market in Waverly, a mixed-income neighborhood near Johns Hopkins University that was quickly gentrifying. Today, this market boasts many well-to-do patrons, with vendors able to command the highest prices of any farmers’ market in the city. With foundation grants, in 2013, the Alliance was able to build a shared greenhouse on parkland, where the farms still grow seedlings in winter. Also in 2013, the Farm Alliance launched its flagship program, a Double Dollars grant that matches the dollars that those receiving SNAP and WIC benefits spend on produce from Baltimore farms. The Double Dollars program includes a year-round series of popular cooking and nutrition demonstrations in low-income housing developments, community centers, and senior citizens’ apartment buildings.

A Crisis of Representation

Six years after its launch, the Farm Alliance of Baltimore achieved the milestone of nonprofit status. Its mission statement included the sentence: “We are united by practices and principles that are socially, economically, and

(continued)

environmentally just.” Yet, in a city where nonprofit organizations frequently reproduce racial and wealth disparities, the Farm Alliance’s newfound structural stability also prompted a difficult internal conversation about its racial makeup. Questions arose about why 75% of its members and nearly all board members were European American in a city that is 64% African American. Some European-American farmers worked in majority-African American neighborhoods, and while they intended to contribute to the health and well-being of residents in those neighborhoods, the Farm Alliance had not reckoned with the legacy of redlining and racist oppression in Baltimore. Developers launched efforts to purchase land being used by Farm Alliance member farms, and Farm Alliance members realized that the farms could inadvertently become agents of displacement in poor communities. Such an outcome was unacceptable to farmers. Some members of the board and farmer members led a strategic planning process in 2017 and 2018 that identified the need to shift to an explicitly anti-racist framework for representing urban farmers if the organization was to remain relevant to the needs of existing communities.

A Shifting Identity

The explicit commitment to an anti-racist approach to urban farming meant shifting the needs of African American and immigrant farmers from margins to center. As of this writing, the change in organizational culture, practices, and priorities is beginning to yield results: in late 2017, under a new Executive Director, the Farm Alliance grew by 25%, and over the course of 2018 saw a demographic shift among both farmer members and board members, with the share of farmers who are African American growing from 25% to one-third; and the board’s share of African American members going from 22% to 40%. The change is reflected in the organization’s programs and advocacy work, too: in response to African American farmers expressing concerns about tenure on their land, water access, and the difficulties in balancing the need to feed their communities with the need to earn a living, the Farm Alliance is starting to host community conversations around African American land ownership, food apartheid, and the need for greater government support of urban farms.

Becoming Accountable to Communities

The Farm Alliance’s members and board are starting to look more like the communities they serve, but representation is only one step. A new approach to agriculture, both rural and urban, is emerging in the national conversation that recognizes the small-scale farm as critical infrastructure. Policies need to shift to remove more barriers and provide land and water security so that more existing residents can farm food without fear of displacement. Recognizing

(continued)

this national shift, as Farm Alliance advocates for greater transparency and enforceable city policies to support urban farms, it is also reaching out. If urban farming infrastructure is to survive as a long-term land use, it is necessary for the Farm Alliance to work alongside farm and food organizations that are led by people of color, LGBTQ people, and those from other marginalized communities. Urban farmers must form coalitions and bring examples of struggles from other cities to inform this work. This practice of solidarity, mutual aid, and shared struggle among urban farmers and their communities is still in the early stages; the next few years will reveal whether and to what degree city and state governments are prepared to respond.

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Sarah Buzogany was the Food Resilience Planner with the globally recognized Baltimore Food Policy Initiative from 2013–2021, striving to leverage the city's assets and dismantle institutional barriers in the food system. She previously worked on federal food and agricultural policy. Sarah holds a Master of Science in Food Policy and Applied Nutrition from Tufts University, and Bachelor's degrees in Sustainable Agriculture and Spanish from the University of Kentucky. Sarah is now the Practice Manager for Healthy Communities at the Center for Government Excellence at Johns Hopkins University where she leads a team of senior advisors to help cities better use data in service of their residents.

Abby Cocke is an Environmental Planner with the Baltimore Office of Sustainability, part of the Baltimore City Department of Planning, where they have served since 2011. They work on urban agriculture policy and coordination for the City of Baltimore, as well as on initiatives related to green schools, connecting youth to nature, and other topic areas. Prior to working for the city government, they led community greening programs for the Parks & People Foundation. Their hobbies include gardening, biking, and local theater.

Holly Freishtat has recently joined the Milken Institute as the Director of Feeding Change. She is an experienced director, transformative leader, and strategist with a 20-year track record developing and implementing food system policies and programs. Holly served as Baltimore City's first Food Policy Director and Chief of Food Policy & Planning where she founded and directed the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative. Holly spent over a decade building an equitable and resilient food environment by creating policies and programs that directly impact health & economic disparities. Freishtat has served as a food systems strategist, agricultural marketing director, nutrition educator, and grower. She holds an M.S. in Agriculture, Food, and Environment from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy at Tufts University, a B.S. in Nutrition from the University of Vermont, and an executive certificate from Carey Business School.

Yeeli Mui is a Bloomberg Assistant Professor of Food Systems for Health in the Department of International Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Mui’s research, teaching, and practice are driven by a focus to restructure structural systems – cultural norms, policies, institutions, and practices – that are consequential for the distribution of resources vital to public health. To this end, she directs research projects that harness food/food systems as a lever for cross-sector, integrated solutions and broader social, environmental, and policy change toward health equity.

Mariya Strauss is Co-Executive Director of the Farm Alliance of Baltimore. Strauss has worked in restaurant front-of-house service, as an office temp, in advocacy journalism and in grassroots organizing. She is an advocate for justice throughout the food system and supply chain, and is committed to helping Baltimore’s urban farms prosper in a changing world. A native of Oak Park, Illinois, she has lived in Baltimore since 2009.

Sylvia Kelly draws on her interdisciplinary background in urban planning and public health to increase food access and utilize food systems as a tool of economic development, with a focus on the Global South. She is a contributing author to a report on food systems planning for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization; and is a co-author of “Planning to Eat? Innovative Local Government Plans and Policies to Build Healthy Food Systems in the United States.” When not advocating for food justice, she can most often be found in her kitchen with her sourdough starter Toby.

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Chapter 17

Barriers in Community-Led Initiatives: A Case Study of Urban Agriculture Policy in Denver, Colorado



Kelsey Gosch, Avery Sirwatka , and Laine Cidlowski

Abstract Building on Denver, Colorado's long history of community-led food systems work, the local government has accelerated food-focused policies in the past decade. Such efforts culminated in *Denver Food Vision*, the first long-term plan about food. One idea championed in the plan was to dedicate 100 acres of land, an area equivalent in size to 25 city blocks, to food production by 2030. The initiative took shape in the Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council's (SFPC) City Food, City Land policy advisory. Despite the input received by the SFPC, one basic concept had been overlooked: there was simply not enough vacant land within Denver (much less appropriate for farming/gardening) to meet the hundred acres goal, city-owned or otherwise. While this policy was never adopted, there are important lessons to be learned about (i) the process of policy ideation to adoption and implementation, (ii) the intersection of land ownership and structural racism in institutions, (iii) equitable representation within decision-making, and (iv) effective government-community collaboration.

Keywords Food systems planning · Food equity · Ethics · Food policy council · Local government · Urban agriculture · Denver, Colorado

K. Gosch (✉)
Red Tomato, Providence, RI, USA
e-mail: Kgosch@redtomato.org

A. Sirwatka
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA
e-mail: ps676@cornell.edu

L. Cidlowski
Denver Department of Public Health and Environment, Denver, CO, USA
e-mail: Laine.Cidlowski@denvergov.org

17.1 Introduction

Building on the city's long history of community-led food systems work, the Mayor and City Council of Denver have accelerated food-focused policies in the past decade. Such efforts culminated in *Denver Food Vision* (Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council 2017), the first long-term plan about food. Led by the Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council (SFPC), hundreds of community members, community-led organizations, and adopted by Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock in October 2017, the plan is one of the dozens of food-focused city-county plans in the country to provide specific priorities, strategies, and actions regarding land use, investment, and public-private partnerships to strengthen food systems.

One idea championed in *Denver Food Vision* was to dedicate 99.2 acres of land, an area equivalent in size to 25 city blocks, to food production (i.e., urban agriculture) by 2030. This idea stemmed out of a policy advisory meant to incentivize responsible growth in urban agriculture within the City and County of Denver. Although the initiative was included within the plan (a success), it never passed through the mayor's office as an approved policy (a fail). This chapter seeks to capture why the idea did not reach fruition, what it means for cities to attempt bold policy moves like this, and what some intermediate steps might be that could create pathways to a bolder policy goal of this nature. Further, this chapter tackles questions of equity and ethics in the policy-making process by questioning the motivations in rejecting an initiative championed by both community groups and a mayoral-appointed board (the SFPC). Such questions bring issues of racial justice, neoliberalism in land use and the real estate market, and gentrification into the conversation about how we approach challenges and opportunities in the food system. Lessons learned will be critical as an increasing number of municipalities across the United States and Canada begin to engage further in food systems planning work. This chapter analyzes data and literature available before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has amplified the challenges presented in this chapter.

Local and regional governments' (LRGs) interest and engagement in food-related work has been rejuvenated within the United States and Canada over the past two (Raja et al. 2008, 2018). Unlike transportation and land use, food was previously "not seen to be an issue of municipalities" (Dahlberg 1994, p. 1). In recent years, however, LRGs have increasingly heeded the calls of residents, community groups, and other municipal stakeholders to develop contextually-specific initiatives (e.g., policies, plans, and programs) to strengthen community food systems (Raja et al. 2018).

While there are various ways to classify policy (Salamon 2002), Raja et al. (2018), Raja and Whittaker (2018) categorize LRG policies as (i) soft policies, (ii) official plans, (iii) ordinances, bylaws, and regulations that are legally enforceable, (iv) actions that provide physical infrastructure and (v) fiscal enactments that influence community food systems. The first two policy classifications are intended to provide guidance to LRGs, while the latter three classifications are meant to encourage implementation. Although LRGs typically utilize a combination of any or all policy typologies in their work, this chapter will focus on official or formal plans.

The scope of official plans varies widely by municipality, region, and governance arrangements. Most often, particularly for municipalities early on in the food system planning process, food-related guidance is embedded within comprehensive plans (also known as general or master plans). Comprehensive plans are long-term planning documents that address a variety of interconnected issues within a municipality (or region), including economic development, housing, land use, and transportation. Integrating food as a component(s) in comprehensive plans holds immense opportunities for municipalities and/or regions because of comprehensive plans' intrinsic systemic view, as well as the legal nature of the plans themselves. Comprehensive plans' legal nature sets the typology apart from other types of plans in which food may be a component, such as sustainability plans, transportation plans, and economic development plans (e.g., strategic plans), not all of which are typically legally binding (Hodgson 2012). Overall, municipalities vary significantly in regard to their food systems planning efforts (i.e., scope, goals, involved stakeholders, governmental oversight). Resources such as the nationally-recognized Growing Food Connections database have begun to document the extent of food systems planning efforts across the United States and Canada.¹

Despite the importance of outcomes (i.e., the adoption of food system plans and/or policies) to LRGs, equally important is the process of developing, implementing, and sustaining plans and/or policies (Hodgson 2012). Plan and/or policy-making serves as an opportunity for a diverse set of stakeholders (i.e., individuals, civil society organizations, and governmental officials/agencies) to actively shape the future of communities (Berke and Godschalk 2009). Oftentimes, however, the 'gatekeepers' (i.e., those with power to control policy input and formation) are disconnected ideologically or via 'frame' from the 'targets' of policies (e.g., food insecure individuals, small farmers, etc.). Although there may be a genuine desire amongst LRGs to engage with various stakeholders, many targets are excluded from submitting input through the policy as a result of differing frames.

The resulting gap between involved actors often generates ineffective, and inequitable, outcomes that disproportionately affect the targets of policies.

While it is easy to direct attention towards the actors themselves, Raja et al. (2018) and Clark et al. (2017) argue that a critical assessment of the policy-making *process* is key in ensuring that questions of equity and ethics are addressed throughout conceptualization and are later reflected in implementation and outcomes. In contrast to dominant policy discourse, which begins with who is invited to the policy development table, Raja et al. (2018) posit that the first step should instead address questions of "who is setting the table and designing the policy process in the first place. The design of the process—the writing of the agenda—sets the parameters for what is on the table (and off the table)" (p. 6). In essence, this framing

¹ Growing Food Connections is a national project that builds the capacity of local governments and their partners to create, implement and sustain food system plans and policies that simultaneously promote access to healthy, affordable and culturally acceptable food and foster a viable agricultural sector in their communities.

forces scholars and practitioners to consider not only who *benefits* from local government planning processes, but who is *driving* the planning process in the first place.

17.1.1 Food Policy Councils and the Policy-Making Process

Although LRGs are engaging in food-related work at an unprecedented rate, an increasingly broad network of individuals, civil society organizations, and other groups have begun working locally to improve food- and health-related outcomes (Gupta et al. 2018). Food policy councils (FPCs) are defined here as organizations that “consis[t] of representatives and stakeholders from many sectors of the food system who work with city and state governments to promote the social, economic, and environmental health of local and regional food systems” (Harper et al. 2009; Gupta et al. 2018, p. 12). FPCs play key roles in “connecting the dots” between neighborhood- and/or community-based initiatives and formalized policy work (Harper et al. 2009). Similar to the rise of LRG engagement in food systems-related work within the past two decades, the number of FPCs operating across the country has risen considerably in recent years, with over 300 active FPCs currently operating across the United States and Canada (Sussman and Bassarab 2017).

Perhaps due to the vast number of active FPCs across the United States and Canada, the structural typology of FPCs varies widely by context. Unlike the earliest FPCs, all of which were situated within a local government body (Dahlberg 1994), the newest generation of food systems leaders have begun creating FPCs as grassroots and/or community-based organizations (Sussman and Bassarab 2017; Gupta et al. 2018). According to the 2017 Johns Hopkins survey, the most common form of an FPC is a county-based grassroots coalition (33%), followed by being situated within government (21%), and operating as an independent non-profit (20%) (Sussman and Bassarab 2017). Despite the recent shift in structural typologies, (Gupta et al. 2018) argue that it “is [still] common for FPCs to have multiple links to government, including having government employees as members, receiving county, city, state, or federal funding, and/or operating under official government mandates” (p. 13).

Although FPCs engage in a variety of activities, previous work completed by Harper et al. (2009) report that the most common activity FPCs engage with is policy work, particularly in the realms of procurement (e.g., institutional purchasing from local sources) and agriculture (e.g., urban agriculture, farmland preservation). The degree to which FPCs engage in policy-related work, however, is a matter of debate, and depends on FPCs’ structural type (i.e., grassroots v. government mandate) and/or partnerships with other individuals and agencies within local government (Siddiki et al. 2015), amongst other factors. Regardless of FPCs’ structural typology, previous work by Scherb et al. (Scherb et al. 2012) found that, within policy-making processes, FPCs primarily engage in problem identification and

education rather than developing policy proposals or directly advocating to government officials. The lack of direct advocacy and policy development is due in part to a lack of resources (e.g. funding, human capital) (Scherb et al. 2012). Clayton et al. (2015) report that FPCs face a variety of other challenges in their work: “[s]ome struggle to navigate thorny political climates; balance policy and program priorities; evaluate their impact; and identify sufficient time, funding, training, and skills to advance their policy agenda” (Joseph et al. 1997; Boron 2003; Clancy et al. 2007, p. 2; Scherb et al. 2012).

To overcome such barriers, scholarship has suggested that FPCs invest meaningfully in partnerships with both government officials, who add credibility to FPCs’ work, as well as policy experts, who assist FPCs in navigating the policy landscape (i.e., key topics, stakeholders, etc.). In what Clayton et al. (2015) refer to as “strategic engagement,” working with policy experts allegedly facilitates FPCs’ ability to “tailor their policy efforts to the needs and interests of the local political context and may increase FPCs’ visibility and legitimacy as a key stakeholder in the food policy arena...a benefit that some [stakeholders] attribut[e] to the difference between success and failure in food systems policy change” (Schiff 2008; Harper et al. 2009, p. 12).

Although LRGs and FPCs are engaging in food policy at increasingly rapid rates across the United States and Canada, there are few cases that explore multi-pronged partnerships between local governments, food policy councils, community-led groups, and other stakeholders. In other words, little information exists on how LRGs and FPCs are engaging *directly* with individuals and community groups to strengthen community food systems, nor how varying perspectives, values, and goals are reconciled into equitable food system policies and initiatives.

As previously mentioned, urban agriculture is a tool that many LRGs and FPCs use as a lever in policy work to increase food production in the region. Initiatives around urban agriculture (i.e., zoning and ordinances, public-private partnerships, and budgeting) are intended to make both food and land more affordable or accessible, a strategy especially pertinent to low-income communities and communities of color that are historically more food insecure (Masters et al. 2014; Zenk et al. 2014; Thibodeaux 2016). While such initiatives encourage urban growing and greening in disinvested and economically marginalized communities, without precautionary protection of land tenure (through long-term leasing or contracts), the outcome can often be green gentrification. Economic developers are able to capitalize off the green initiative and investment as the land, intended to improve the communities’ quality of life, becomes too expensive to lease and is turned over for opportunities that offer greater economic pay-off (Alkon et al. 2019; Sbicca 2019). Urban agriculture initiatives are filled with contradiction: the greening that is supposed to improve the wellbeing of marginalized communities is also the initiative that is displacing them. It is imperative for LRGs and FPCs to approach food systems policies, including food production, through a social and economic justice lens in order to mitigate the risk of further marginalization of well-intended initiatives.

17.2 Case Study: Urban Agriculture and Planning-to-Implementation Barriers in Denver, Colorado

The City and County of Denver is among the growing number of municipalities across the United States that utilize interventions in the food system to not only increase food security, but to also improve community health and vibrancy. Over the past decade, Denver has legitimized its commitment to food-focused work through the development of formalized policies (e.g., food systems plan, food policy council, climate adaptation plan, health improvement plan). Despite these successes, the city continues to face barriers when transforming plans into tangible action, thus challenging the progress of food-focused work.

Officially known as the City and County of Denver due to its consolidated city-county government (Uncover Colorado 2020), Denver is the capital and most populous municipality within the state of Colorado (Uncover Colorado 2020). With a vibrant economy, arts scene, and access to nature, Denver is one of the fastest growing cities within the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). From 2010 to 2018, Denver grew from 600,158 to an estimated 716,492 residents (U.S. Census Bureau 2020), representing an almost 20% increase in total population. Currently, Denver's residential population is 81% White, 10% Black or African American, and 4% Asian. Thirty percent of Denver's population identifies as Latinx or Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau 2020).

Despite the recent population influx, Denver's labor market is tight: as of July 2019, only 2.7% of the population was unemployed. Personal income has increased, with the median annual family income of \$63,790, which is less than the Colorado state median (\$68,811) but higher than the national median (\$60,293) (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). While the average income within Denver is comparatively high, income levels vary significantly across the metropolitan area with over 15% of individuals living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). In fact, Denver is ranked eighth among Colorado's counties in terms of income disparity; the top one-percent of families average an income of \$1.5 million annually, while the remaining 99% earn an average of \$52,503 annually (Svaldi 2016). Rising incomes and broader forces of economic inequities and gentrification have shifted poverty in the Denver metropolitan area. Almost twice as many people are currently living in poverty in the surrounding suburbs as the city (Aguilar 2017). Furthermore, home ownership has shifted within the past few decades as 49.3% of the housing units in Denver in 2018--down from 72% in 2002--were occupied by their owners, compared to the 63.9% national average (DataUSA 2020).

Given Denver's growing reputation as a "food city," it is no surprise that the city's economy relies on various food system sectors. The food system is a source of economic opportunity for over 2200 businesses and 56,000 employees within the city. Over the past decade alone, 1 in 10 workers were employed within the food system, representing a 34% increase from the past decade. In total, the food system generates an average of seven billion dollars of revenue for the city annually, or 6% of the total economic activity (Angelo and Goldstein 2016).

Denver's food system has benefitted from decades of work by committed food-focused organizations, agencies, and other entities. Urban agriculture in Denver is particularly strong and has roots in mid-twentieth century victory gardens and, later, mayoral encouragement under the 1970's Mayor's Community Garden Program, led by then-mayor Fredrico Pena. In a formal sense, urban agriculture in Denver was launched in 1985 by Denver Urban Gardens (DUG), a non-profit organization established to support residents in creating food-producing community gardens. After the initial launch of three community gardens, DUG quickly expanded to operate 21 gardens by 1993 (Denver Urban Gardens n.d.). Within four more years, DUG had supported the establishment of 32 new gardens and the DeLaney Community Farm (Denver Urban Gardens n.d.). DUG continues to expand and currently, as of 2019, operates over 181 gardens across six counties in the Metro Denver Area (Denver Urban Gardens n.d.). DUG continues to expand and currently, as of 2019, operates over 181 gardens across six counties in the Metro Denver Area (Denver Urban Gardens n.d.).

In 2004, DUG partnered with the Colorado School of Public Health (CSPH) "Gardens for Growing Healthy Communities" initiative, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Denver Urban Gardens n.d.). This community-based initiative broadly seeks to understand how community gardens support health and well-being. The initiative is led by a conceptual framework that describes community gardens as multifunctional in the sense that they serve as individual, social, cultural, health-based, and ecological places (Denver Urban Gardens n.d.). Research findings corroborate the various benefits of community gardens, such as increased vegetable consumption, physical activity, and social involvement (Litt et al. 2011), enhanced feelings of friendship and mutual trust with other community members (Teig et al. 2009), and improved mental health (Hale et al. 2011).

The emphasis on community and community-centered knowledge is not unique to the "Gardens for Growing Healthy Communities" initiative but is rather critical to DUG's broader mission. The organization is explicit in its desire to facilitate ownership and partner *with* community members "to build and support community

gardens...[DUG] need[s] to come alongside neighborhoods, in a support role, and they work to create their own urban community gardens. [DUG] seek[s] to enable, unite and empower residents to reach out and build their own community” (Denver Urban Gardens [n.d.](#)). Community members must fill out an application to start a new garden with DUG, rather than the organization selecting plots across the city. If DUG feels as if the community garden project is not quite ready, the organization will provide technical assistance and capacity building training to increase the likelihood of beginning a community garden within the area in the future (Denver Urban Gardens [n.d.](#)).

Despite the strength of urban agriculture and other food-focused organizations, peri-urban and rural food production/agriculture has faced challenges maintaining viability. Similar to trends across the United States, Denver has an aging agricultural workforce: 80% of farmers are 35 years or older, and of these, 20% are 65 years or older. Perhaps as a result, Denver has lost an average of over three farms per year from its peak in 1935 (279 farms) to 2017 (Cornell University [1935](#)). More recently, from 2007 to 2017, the number of remaining farms halved from 24 to only 12. The decreasing number of farms is likely due to challenges such as barriers accessing agricultural inputs (i.e., land, water) and viable markets, extreme weather events, and a lack of consumer education about food production (Angelo and Goldstein [2016](#)).

Likely due to growing economic disparities within the city, not all Denver residents are benefitting from the growth and increasing prominence of the local food system. For example, approximately 1 in 6 households experience food insecurity or hunger. This rate is even higher for children (1 in 5) (Angelo and Goldstein [2016](#)). Further, approximately 70% of children within Denver Public Schools are eligible for free or reduced-cost meals (Angelo and Goldstein [2016](#)). Low access to food disproportionately affects lower-income communities within Denver, such as Westwood, Barnum, Barnum West, Villa Park, Sun Valley, North Park Hill, Northeast Park Hill, East Colfax, Elyria Swansea, Clayton, Cole, Globeville, Five Points and Montbello. Overall, almost half of low- to moderate-income neighborhoods lack “convenient access” (i.e., transportation and presence of affordable options) to grocery stores.

Like many cities across the country, food insecurity maps closely with diet-related diseases. For example, in Denver, 1 in 2 adults (and 1 in 3 children) are overweight or obese, and 33% of the population eat less than one serving of fruit and vegetables per day (Angelo and Goldstein [2016](#)). Likely as a result, 6 of the 10 leading causes of disease in the city are chronic diseases: cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory disease, diabetes and chronic liver disease (Denver Public Health [2014](#)). Within Denver, data indicate that risk factors for

chronic disease vary considerably by race and ethnicity. For example, obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes are all higher for Black and Hispanic adults than for White adults living within the city (Denver Public Health 2014). Similarly, Black and Latinx children are almost three and four times more likely, respectively, to be obese than White children, which in turn raises Black and Latinx children's likelihood of developing chronic disease(s) as adults (Denver Public Health 2014).

Despite clear health disparities, food assistance programs are lagging behind clear health disparities within the city. Although the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) operates widely across Denver, both the city and the state of Colorado consistently lag far behind national enrollment rates. For example, in 2009, Colorado ranked 50th among the entire United States and the District of Columbia for residential SNAP enrollment (Lang and Kim 2011). To increase SNAP enrollment, as well as to encourage supermarkets to locate in underserved communities, the Denver Department of Environmental Health received a grant to convene the Denver Food Access Task Force. The 38-member task force, consisting of leaders from civic, health, food retail, economic development, government, and philanthropic organizations, prepared a report in 2011 titled *Healthy Food For All: Encouraging Grocery Investment in Colorado*. The report identified barriers to healthy food access within target neighborhoods, as well as provided nine policy recommendations to increase food and health outcomes for city residents. Broadly, the outcomes centered around three primary themes: to (i) “enhance Denver City and County systems to support healthy food retail development in underserved areas; (ii) establish a fresh food financing fund modeled on the successful Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative, which provides access to capital for developing supermarkets and grocery stores,” and (iii) increase SNAP enrollment throughout Denver (Lang and Kim 2011).

The efforts of the Denver Food Access Task Force yielded slightly positive outcomes throughout the city of Denver and the state of Colorado. For example, the Task Force did achieve its goal of developing a Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund (based on the Pennsylvania model) as a public-private partnership loan/grant fund to finance food retail locations in communities with low food access throughout Colorado. However, despite the Fund's initial plan to invest an estimated \$20 million in target underserved communities (Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund n.d.), SNAP enrollment continues to remain low within Denver: less than two-thirds of eligible individuals are currently enrolled in SNAP (Ferguson et al. 2018). As a result, much of the current efforts on increasing food security have centered on alternative means, such as supporting urban production and distribution.

17.3 Food Policy in Denver

Denver has a rich set of plans and policies that seek to strengthen the local food system. While efforts were largely led by community-based organizations throughout the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century, the municipal government has accelerated its involvement in food-focused policies in the past decade, as illustrated in the timeline in Table 17.1. In more recent years, there has been increased collaboration across public and private entities on food policy which has resulted in both greater attention to local context and greater tension among stakeholders and solutions.

Steps taken to involve municipal government in food policy began in 2005 when Mayor (later Governor) John Hickenlooper launched Denver's Sustainable Development Initiative (Goldstein 2011). The initiative was informed by businesses and community partners and sought to integrate environmental impact concerns into existing municipal policies and programs. To facilitate this process, in 2006 the City and County of Denver created *Greenprint Denver*, a 5-year citywide action plan that sought to reduce global warming emissions by 20% through balanced and renewable energy and green industries by 2020. In terms of food, the plan focused on

Table 17.1 Timeline of adopted food policy in the City and County of Denver, Colorado^a

Timeline of Denver Food Policy (2008–2019)		
Year	Policy Type	Title
2006	Plan	Greenprint Denver*
2008	Ordinance	No. 59–87(b)(2)c: Keeping of Honeybees
2010	Memorandum	Formation of the Food Policy Council
2011	Executive Order	Formation of Denver SEEDS
2011	Ordinance	Ordinance Governing Food Producing Animals
2013	Plan	Be Healthy Denver: Denver's Community Health Improvement Action Plan (2013–2018)
2013	Program	Fresh Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH)
2014	Plan	City and County of Denver Adaptation Plan
2014	Project	Denver Healthy Corner Store Initiative
2014	Ordinance	Residential Sale and Cottage Goods Ordinance
2015	Policy Advisory	<i>City Food, City Land</i> **
2016	Project	Denver Food System Baseline Report
2017	Plan	Denver Food Vision
2018	Plan	Denver Food Action Plan
2018	Program	Denver Food Matters
2019	Ordinance	Healthy Food for Denver's Kids Initiative
2018	Executive Order	No. 70: Healthier City Vending Machines
2019	Project	Food in Communities

^a**Greenprint Denver was not a food specific plan but spurred initiatives within the food system;

**Never formally adopted by a government entity/agency

materials required for food-related infrastructure, production, and food waste management. *Greenprint Denver* was the first major policy within Denver that formalized a vision for the city's environmental responsibility, including in the food sector.

Likely due to the significant number of urban gardens in Denver, the next major policy update was to the city's zoning code. The city adopted a new zoning code in 2010 that legitimized urban agriculture as a land use (Elliot et al. 2011). In what was referred to as a "standout example" by the American Planning Association (Mukherji and Morales 2010), the revised code allowed for both small and commercial gardening in various capacities throughout the city (City and County of Denver 2010). In 2018, Denver's zoning code was further updated by the Denver City Council. The city's zoning code defines agriculture as a primary use. Within agriculture, urban gardens are allowed as limited use (with zoning permit review) in all districts, and gardens as accessory to residential and nonresidential uses (with limitations) in all zoning districts of the city. The code also stipulates the rules for the sale of fresh produce grown in urban or accessory gardens (as part of home occupation). Keeping of urban livestock (chickens and ducks) without a zoning permit is allowed (American Planning Association 2021, City and County of Denver 2010).

Aside from the latest update of the zoning code, the majority of formalized food-focused plans and policies were passed by current Mayor Michael B. Hancock from 2011 onwards. Mayor Hancock has declared food as a priority area for his leadership, having adopted multiple plans (Be Healthy Denver, the Denver Adaptation Plan, Denver Food Vision and the Denver Food Action Plan), programs (FRESH, SEEDS, Denver Food Matters), and projects (Healthy Corner Store Initiative, Baseline Reports, and Food in Communities). Many of these initiatives have built off of or grown out of one another to expand the reach of policies in the food system.

17.3.1 Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council and Denver Food Vision

Denver's experience suggests that even in progressive municipal landscapes policy creation, adoption, and implementation is a complicated process. Well-intentioned policies can be created but may not come to fruition in the way imagined by proponents. One experience for those interested in food policy comes from the ways in which policies proposed by Denver SFPC were adopted or not.

The Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council (SFPC) was established in 2010 under then-Mayor Hickenlooper at the request of the Department of Health with a primary purpose of promoting food policies, advising city agencies and entities on food-related plans and programs, providing recommendations to the City and County on regulations, and building public and political will to support changes within the local food system (Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council 2017). The SFPC is comprised of twenty-one members, with two co-chairs, twelve appointees from across the food system sectors, and four ex-officio non-voting members that

work in city agencies, who serve as a channel between the SFPC and other departments within the city. New members must receive mayoral appointment and approval to serve on the council, and are chosen to “represent the diversity of the food system stakeholders and the Denver community including industry sector, demographics, sexual orientation, political affiliation, and geography” (Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council 2017, p. 2). Since its inception, the SFPC has advised the Mayor on various food policies, including the City Food, City Land initiative which failed to be adopted.

Much of the SFPC’s past and current work centers on *Denver Food Vision*, the city’s first food system plan. Approved and adopted by Mayor Hancock in October 2017, the plan is meant to serve as a blueprint for Denver’s food-related work until the year 2030, as well as to align various initiatives (i.e., local food policies and programs) that were approved by the Denver City Council in years prior. *Denver Food Vision* was a result of over 2 years of work and public engagement with individuals, organizations, and food system stakeholders. Initial planning began in 2015 with a series of monthly meetings held by the SFPC, which led to the conceptualization of the plan’s initial purpose, guiding principles, and definitions for success. According to the Vision, the SFPC was a leader in community engagement during the planning process by fostering new partnerships and providing extensive outreach.

Along with the series of public meetings led by the SFPC, an Interagency Working Group was established to coordinate community engagement sessions, analyze responses, and write the full document. The working group was comprised of members from the Office of Economic Development, Community Planning and Development, Department of Environmental Health, Denver Health’s Public Health Office, Colorado State University Extension in Denver County, and the Office of Children’s Affairs. Community listening sessions were held in all 11 city districts to understand community residents’ vision for an ideal food system within the city by 2030. The sessions sought to gather information on various food-related challenges within different parts of the city, as well as necessary steps for future implementation of the plan’s goals and strategies. To ensure inclusivity within the planning process, simultaneous translation of the community listening sessions were available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Amharic, Ethiopian, and Burmese.

Focus groups were also held with 11 food-related industries. In contrast to the community events, at which the majority of attendees were residents, the industry focus groups fostered a deeper understanding of the specific needs of Denver’s food system stakeholders and helped to ensure that the resulting vision encompassed their needs and industry-specific aspirations. Industry focus groups were convened with: producers; processors; distributors; small and mid-sized grocery and farmers’ market retailers; restaurants, food trucks and caterers; institutional food buyers and food service; hunger relief providers; cooking and nutrition educators; and urban agriculture educators. Two regional focus groups were also held with state and regional experts in agriculture and community economic development, public health, and healthy food access.

The resulting food system plan has four focus areas: to be a city that is more (i) inclusive (Table 17.2); (ii) vibrant (Table 17.3); (iii) healthy (Table 17.4); and (iv) resilient (Table 17.5). Further, *Denver Food Vision*'s four focus areas are organized within a three-pronged action framework: (i) priorities, or statements of priority focus areas within the scope of influence of the city that must be addressed to achieve the Vision; (ii) strategies, or specific actions/requirements necessary to achieve the priorities; and (iii) winnable goals, or tangible, measurable impacts that demonstrate the achievement of the priorities.

Table 17.2 Summary of *Denver Food Vision*: Section 1 by goal, priority, and strategy

<i>Denver Food Vision</i> 'Inclusive Denver' Goal: To engage and support communities in building vibrant, beautiful, and complete neighborhood food environment	
Priorities	Strategies
Invest in building community driven complete neighborhood food environments	Engage diverse groups in developing neighborhood food plans for larger city neighborhood and small area plans that outline the ideal features of an equitable complete food environment
	Develop maps and other tools that highlight neighborhood assets, gaps, and opportunities for creating complete food environments in Denver's low and moderate income neighborhoods
	Leverage public and private investments to fill community identified gaps and make neighborhood food environments more complete
	Encourage neighborhood retail locations that feature food businesses in new developments and redevelopment projects
	Maintain and enhance existing neighborhood retail locations through facade and streetscape improvements
	Highlight unique neighborhood food cultures, food system innovations, and/or activation of natural or built environment features
	Work with neighborhood leaders to identify the best strategies for strengthening and promoting home, school, and community food production
Expand community food production and sharing	Enhance multilingual professional and peer learning opportunities about community food production, food preservation, food storage, food safety, and food-producing animals
	Promote opportunities to share food through residential sales of fresh produce, cottage foods, and donating excess food to local food pantries and hunger relief organizations
	Encourage community-led efforts to share seeds, compost, tools, supplies, transplants, and other inputs
	Promote opportunities for noncommercial local food production (i.e. community gardens, nonprofit educational urban farms and edible landscapes) on public and private lands in low to moderate income and high-density neighborhoods

Table 17.3 Summary of *Denver Food Vision*: Section 2 by priority and strategy

Denver Food Vision ‘Healthy Denver’ Goal: To ensure equitable access to nutritious and affordable food as the foundation and catalyst for health improvement for all	
Priorities	Strategies
Improve access to a wide variety of healthy food retail options	Expand efforts to recruit and retain full-service retailers into neighborhoods with low-food access by offering targeted financial incentives and site selection support
	Foster viable, innovative, and affordable healthy food retail models, such as mobile, online, delivery, and co-op grocery models
	Continue efforts to increase affordable healthy food options at existing convenience stores
	Integrate retail access into transportation planning so pedestrian routes, bike routes, and transit stops include healthy food retail access points
	Promote existing options for residential food sales and expand options for farm stands at community gardens, school gardens, urban farms, affordable housing projects, and public facilities
	Streamline permitting process and support increased use of public spaces for non-permanent fresh food retail, including community supported agriculture, mobile vending, and farmers’ markets
	Explore solutions to alleviate concentration of unhealthy food retailers in neighborhoods without reducing overall food access
Ensure that healthy food is affordable for everyone	Continue efforts to enroll eligible participants and eligible retailers in existing federal food assistance programs, for example Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
	Advocate for incentive programs that reduce the cost of purchasing fresh and healthy foods through the Double Up Colorado SNAP program
	Strengthen collaboration with the hunger relief network and integrate with other senior and multigenerational anti-poverty efforts to more comprehensively prevent hunger and food insecurity
	Invest in hunger relief efforts and infrastructure required to expand fresh and healthy foods at food pantries while reducing regulatory limits for hunger relief providers
Promote healthy food environments and education for youth	Coordinate with Denver Public Schools (DPS) to increase farm to school and other healthy school meal efforts, including garden to cafeteria programs, by seeking opportunities to reduce regulatory barriers
	Reduce unhealthy food options and sugary drinks in city facilities frequented by youth (for example libraries, recreation centers, and parks) by adopting a healthier vending policy
	Continue and expand access to healthy after school and summer meals programs to reach more youth in more public facilities across the city
	Encourage school gardens and farms combined with in school and out of school home economics and food literacy education
	for youth, including growing, cooking, nutrition, budgeting, and shopping for healthy foods
Increase community demand for healthy foods	Expand community-based, culturally relevant education on healthy eating, including how to shop for affordable healthy options and how to use those ingredients to cook nutritious meals
	Collaborate with food educators (e.g., health care providers, registered dietitians, chefs, and small business devoted to health and wellness) to encourage the consumption of more fresh and whole foods, fewer processed foods, more cooking at home, and more in-season, local foods
	Develop and deploy culturally sensitive public messaging campaigns to promote standard information about nutrition and affordable healthy eating

Table 17.4 Summary of *Denver Food Vision*: Section 3 by priority and strategy

Denver Food Vision ‘Vibrant Denver’ Goal: leveraging the strength of Denver’s food businesses to accelerate economic opportunity across the city	
Priorities	Strategies
Develop Denver as an epicenter for the regional food economy	Develop a nationally-recognized regional food industry through the recruitment and development of food-related businesses
	Continue efforts to strengthen connections between Colorado farms, local distributors and Denver based food businesses, and consumers
	Enhance food system infrastructure, such as aggregation and storage facilities, commercial kitchens, and public market spaces to enhance value added production
	Promote tourism leveraging Denver’s reputation for high quality food and beverages
	Increase production and export of Denver food and beverage products, brands, and innovations
Support the creation, expansion, and economic strength of Denver food businesses	Streamline city permitting process for food-related businesses across relevant agencies
	Provide multilingual business support and technical assistance to clarify and abbreviate the process to open/expand food businesses and to utilize incentives like the enterprise zone
	Support community food businesses that promote the economic opportunity and stability for Denver neighborhoods, for example, community food cooperatives and business incubators
	Foster community wealth building and economic mobility opportunities through food business ownership opportunities and the development of food businesses that support living wage jobs
	Advance city efforts and influence other institutions to preferentially purchase from local and/or healthy food and beverage businesses
	Encourage existing and new industry associations as business capacity builders, resources, and champions for business stakeholders
	Develop a high quality, versatile food workforce through food-specific workforce programs, higher education partnerships, leadership development, and custom trainings to fill job skill gaps
	Identify and support micro-businesses and nonprofits that provide culturally relevant healthy foods
Spur innovation and entrepreneurship across food and agricultural industries	Develop tailored multicultural entrepreneurship programs for innovators in the food and beverage industry, such as a business accelerator
	Conduct a study of the relevant policies and regulations to identify and address barriers to developing and growing innovative food-related businesses
	Support pilot projects and research on innovative urban agriculture production models including greenhouses, vertical growing, and rooftop agriculture
	Attract corporate research and development divisions that align with and complement the Denver Food Vision
	Leverage research from Colorado universities to encourage technology transfer and commercialization
	Coordinate existing and create new funding mechanisms to support start-up enterprises and pre-revenue innovations

Table 17.5 Summary of *Denver Food Vision*: Section 4 by priority and strategy

Denver Food Vision ‘Resilient Denver’ Goal: promoting environmentally regenerative and climate smart food systems while actively protecting regional food system assets	
Priorities	Strategies
Expand and preserve regional food system assets and infrastructure	Preserve and reactivate key historic agriculture infrastructure in Denver, such as the National Western Center
	Coordinate with surrounding counties to identify and preserve prime agricultural working lands and water that provide region with fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods
	Expand opportunities for local food production on public and private lands including those used historically for agriculture
Promote environmentally regenerative and climate-smart food systems	Encourage diverse scales and regenerative production methods for a wide variety of food products
	Support research on new crop varieties and production models, including season extension and water-saving techniques
	Promote education on residential and public efforts to protect pollinators and provide pollinator habitats
Reduce amount of food going to waste	Support consumer education to reduce the amount of food that goes to waste in Denver homes
	Encourage businesses to prevent food waste and celebrate expanded food donation by restaurants, retailers, institutional food service, distributors, and food processors
	Help connect seconds and other food waste from Colorado farms to value-added food manufacturing and green energy businesses
	Invest in hunger relief efforts and infrastructure required to rescue fresh and healthy foods that would otherwise be wasted, recognizing that direct service organizations such as shelters and pantries are often the most under-resourced segment of the hunger relief system.
	Expand residential and commercial composting opportunities to reduce bulk and emissions at landfills
	Continue full implementation of solid waste master plan program and policy initiatives

Shortly after the adoption of *Denver Food Vision*, the city released the corresponding implementation-focused document, the *Denver Food Action Plan*. *Denver Food Action Plan* aligns with *Denver Food Vision*’s implementation strategy of releasing incremental action plans to maximize funding and reach across the city in the most equitable means possible. While urban agriculture hasn’t been the priority in the policies that have come out of the two plans, they have spurred on four policy focuses/projects since its adoption: food waste, food access and food justice, the Good Food Purchasing Program, and the Healthy Food for Kids program (Table 17.5).

Efforts around urban agriculture as a means of accessible food production have been picked up by individual stakeholders and organizations across Denver where conversations among the government and SFPC have left off. The Mile-High Farmers agricultural cooperative, a co-chapter of the Young Farmers Coalition and

Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, has separately taken up the mission to grow and develop agriculture in the Denver metro area “through urban farmer advocacy, collaboration among farmers and their communities, and eater education” (Mile High Farmers 2019). The network has 12 farm/market locations throughout the City and County and is always looking for new members while mapping the location of Denver farms for the public.

17.3.2 Urban Agriculture and the City Food, City Land Policy Advisory

Urban agriculture had been the primary lever of change of the SFPC in its beginning years and was thus the focus for their first championed initiative: City Food, City Land. The initiative aimed to tackle issues around land ownership and accessibility as well as food production, especially in low-resource communities--issues falling along contours of racial and economic inequities which also led to the initiative’s downfall.

City Food, City Land was a policy advisory, proposed by the SFPC, that was never realized, signaling the importance of both political and community context in both civic engagement and policy-making and adoption. The policy advisory sought to dedicate 100 acres of public and private land for UA within Denver. For context, very few for-profit farms exist within Denver while there are many small community gardens and non-profit farms scattered throughout the City and County. There is a deep racial thread that runs through the relationship between who is farming, versus ‘gardening,’ and where. The vast majority of the farmers and gardeners—those who have the time and access to both physical and financial resources to produce their own food—in Denver are White, despite the fact that most residents in neighborhoods with community gardens are people of color (Teig et al. 2009). What’s more, land ownership closely follows these relationships of race, income, and location, with urban farms and gardens using leased land, either public or institutional, that has the potential of being sold out from underneath the growers while growers in the surrounding area have the stability of income and food source from land ownership.

City Food, City Land was proposed by the SFPC over the course of 2014–15, during which the SFPC conducted significant public engagement with local food system actors and stakeholders to gain input and understand potential obstacles in implementation. Community engagement didn’t end in the planning phase, but was a component of the advisory itself, seeking to continuously engage the public throughout site selection and production, including notifying residents when a site was selected, and structuring Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to require food producers to solicit feedback from community residents who may be potentially impacted by newly established urban agriculture sites.

The City Food, City Land policy advisory failed to be approved by the Mayor's Policy Review Committee when proposed in 2015. Despite the input received by the SFPC, one basic concept had been overlooked: there was simply not enough vacant land within Denver (much less appropriate for farming/gardening) to meet the hundred acres goal, city-owned or otherwise. Additionally, the SFPC initiative was competing for the little land that was available with other economic development initiatives from both the public and private sector, given the tight real estate market.

Due to the time and effort involved in creating the policy advisory, many members of the SFPC who worked on City Food, City Land advisory stepped down due to feelings of frustration and defeat, and the SFPC went through a period of rebuilding with little advancement of food initiatives. The impacts of the policy effort's failure were not isolated to the SFPC but were also felt across the networks involved in the advisory and public engagement processes given the optimism around the SFPC's goal and the nature of the large-scale community leadership and participation. During the subsequent phase of SFPC turn-over, what had previously been a predominantly White council, witnessed an increased representation of people of color. This, coupled with a change in leadership, has prompted a refocus towards food justice.

Yet, the idea promulgated in City Food, City Land showed up again in Denver Food Vision, Denver's food systems plan, with the hopes the initiative might be reinigorated. *Denver Food Vision* (in the community-engagement phase when the City Food, City Land policy advisory was released by the same SFPC members) calls for the conversion of 99.2 acres of land, an area equivalent in size to 25 city blocks, to food production (i.e., urban agriculture) by 2020. Although it was classified as a 'Winnable Goal' in the plan, the initiative has been sidelined for other projects.

17.4 Discussion

Although the City and County of Denver made significant strides in advancing food policy over the past two decades, the City failed to formalize one specific policy idea for integrating food production in Denver's public spaces (Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council 2016). The reasons why the winnable goal and City Food, City Land advisory were not formalized or adopted are significant in examining the structural inequities and bureaucracy in mobilizing food systems changes through policy.

While community input is critical in achieving equitable outcomes, it is often ignored during planning processes (i.e., top-down planning), or included to varying degrees (i.e., tokenism) (Arnstein 1969). Yet, as is clear through the outreach process of both City Food, City Land and *Denver Food Vision*, the Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council (SFPC) leveraged ongoing food-related work in the city by conducting a significant amount of engagement with local residents, producers, small farmers, non-profit gardeners, a cohort engaged in urban agriculture activities.

Further, the SFPC sought to continuously build relationships with, and gain input from, the communities in which they worked. In Denver's case there appears to have been an initial commitment to asset-based community development, which has made significant strides in planning practice over the last two decades (Kretzmann and Mcknight 1993). In particular, the actions of the SFPC deliberately sought to capture the experiences of local residents, groups, and organizations, and continue to involve communities by building capacity and seeking support for future decisions (Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council 2017).

Despite the SFPC's equitable engagement strategy, there were subsequently major consequences in focusing too heavily on citizen engagement and *not including* local government agencies or entities throughout the policy-making and adoption process. Although the City Food, City Land policy advisory states that the proposed policy is aligned with "numerous goals, policy recommendations, and operational mandates within the City and County of Denver" (Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council 2017, p. 1) there was little direct outreach to local government to gain their input on the strategy, or make recommendations leading up to approval and/or implementation. While Raja et al. (2008) have showcased instances when community-based organizations successfully "circumvent, challenge, or advocate for alteration of municipal policies that affect their food system practice" (Raja et al. 2008, p. 185), the SFPC's bold policy advisory necessitated that local government share the same 'frame,' or understanding of the problem and policy solution (Clark et al. 2017) with the SFPC and community groups. Had there been deeper dialogue and collaboration between the SFPC and the City and County government, the criticism that the policy idea faced (lack of enough vacant public space) may have been flagged earlier as an unattainable goal that required deeper revision.

The lack of collaboration and conversation between the government and SFPC could stem from the fact that the policy advisory was the first to be produced by the SFPC. Given the specific nature and framework of a mayoral advisory, in addition to the lack of established relationships between city agencies and the SFPC, the document may have lacked the strength and the SFPC the experience to form an effective and implementable policy. However, it is worth noting that mayoral advisories follow layers of processing and review before they are presented to the mayor. One such layer is a review by the Department of Public Health and Environment, the agency to which the SFPC is tied, and the agency that could have cut the review process short, keeping the advisory from ever reaching the mayor. The fact that the Department of Public Health and Environment did no such thing implies that the policy advisory for City Food, City Land was structured and practical enough to continue the review process, regardless of the fact that it was the SFPC's first document of the kind.

Perhaps more significant than the new relationship between the SFPC and the Denver Government were the precariousness of land tenure, the underlying contours around race, and prioritization of economic development over urban agriculture that contributed to the policy advisory's failure. As previously mentioned, the land proposed to be converted into urban agriculture was not owned by those who would have been farming. Urban farms and community gardens are primarily

utilized by Black and Latinx growers; given that the land would have been leased from either the government or institutions, Black and Latinx growers are less likely to have rights to that land. This increases the chances of the land being sold out from under them once their farms or gardens have increased the valorization of the community, contributing to green gentrification. Given Denver's competitive real estate market, there was already a greater likelihood of this occurring. This raises questions of who is barred access, pushed out, or left behind in a neoliberal context of land ownership and land use, investments, and profitability.

These underlying systemic issues are not unique to Denver. Any area with a hot real estate market faces competing interests that prioritize larger profit margins for stakeholders with greater power, privilege, and positionality.

Although City Food, City Land advisory was never formalized into policy, it may never have truly died; community members in Denver continue to identify with the values and goals embedded in the original initiative. Although the current state of the policy idea is unclear, particularly with the rapid population influx and shifting food systems governance arrangements experienced by Denver in recent years, there may yet be a chance to revive the urban agriculture initiative. Given the localized nature of food systems planning, there is no set way to develop a successful policy. However, in order to increase the likelihood of future approval, involved parties must learn from the last iteration of the policy, discern the motivations of urban greening and economic development, and adopt reflexive methods of policy-making; in other words, to understand what went wrong and what needs to be changed moving forward.

17.5 Implications for Planning Practice

The experience of Denver allows us to engage deeply with what prevents food policy *from being adopted and implemented*. We argue that, like urban agriculture successes in Minneapolis, Detroit, Cleveland, and other cities, it is equally important to understand the mechanisms behind a food policy failing, so that other municipalities that engage in similar work do not commit the same mistakes in the future.

In the case of Denver in particular, multiple groups were involved in developing the City Food, City Land policy advisory: community stakeholders (including local residents and producers), the Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council, and the Denver City Council, though all to varying degrees. While it is clear the lack of cross-engagement and partnership proved to be a detriment for the adoption of the policy advisory in the long run, the unique configuration and involvement of multiple groups may prove opportunistic for other municipalities engaging in similar large-scale food policy projects in the future. Unlike past cases discussed by Clark et al. (2017), which focus primarily on interactions between local governments and community members, food policy councils may uniquely "connect the dots" between different organizations. FPCs may avoid previously-identified problems in

inequitable planning processes, for example by providing resources to community members to participate in planning processes and, in contrast, by training local government staff to rethink how their community engagement process operates. Further, particularly in larger municipalities such as the City and County of Denver, local government entities and agencies can provide technical assistance to increase the capacity of FPCs to craft data-driven policy proposals with increased likelihoods of success within local government. Taking a cue from the case of Denver's SFPC, involved organizations could leverage assets *across* involved agencies while crafting mutually beneficial visions for the future.

While there may have been practical reasons for the failure of the City Food, City Land proposal to convert city-owned vacant land to urban agriculture purposes, the failure itself poses broader questions about what it means for local governments to reject a community-led initiative. It can easily be argued that it was entirely reasonable for the Mayor's Policy Review Committee to reject the proposal due to lack of the initiative's feasibility, as well as for the SFPC's disengagement from government agencies. Yet, there appeared to be few, if any, attempts for the Mayor's Policy Review Committee to engage in *adaptive decision making*, during which reflections on, and alternatives for, the policy advisory could have been offered. This may have been done proactively; evaluation and reflection are often ignored during policy-making processes, or typically occur after a policy has been adopted and/or implemented (if at all). We argue that evaluation -- of feasibility, resources, capacity, etc. -- should occur throughout the policy-making process itself to ensure inclusivity and equity. Such evaluation also increases potential for implementation. While trust between the involved parties is a prerequisite to such an approach, ongoing evaluation ensures that significant amounts of effort are not put to waste on formulating a policy that has little to no chance of being approved by local government officials. However, local governments may also arguably be tasked with developing alternatives to policies reactively, particularly for community-led initiatives. As Clark et al. (2017) write, equitable policy-making is not a linear process, but rather one that utilizes practices that are flexible and adaptive to changing contexts, relationships, and visions within community food systems.

Denver, a self-proclaimed "food city," has a long history of food system planning and policy-making. Yet, one of the boldest policy ideas in the city--to convert 100 acres of city-owned land to food production--failed to be adopted, causing a restructuring of the then-recently formed food policy council, and a subsequent rethinking of food policy within the city. This outcome requires acknowledging that the way land and its uses are valued relates closely to the intersection of land ownership and structural racism in institutions. While many food system scholars laud innovative municipalities at the forefront of food system planning initiatives, there is limited research that draws lessons from the barriers and challenges in food system planning processes. Although this chapter showcases the experience of only one city, we hope that other food system actors learn from the case when attempting bold policy moves within their respective municipalities.

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Kelsey Gosch is the Development Coordinator at Red Tomato. She is cross trained in environmental studies and economics and engineering from Wellesley College. Her experiences working for a small community farm outside of Boston and as a research fellow in the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab at the University at Buffalo have driven her passion for using food and farming systems as a lever for equity.

Avery Sirwatka is a graduate student in Cornell University’s Master of Public Health program. He gained early experience in food systems work through positions in agriculture and food distribution. Avery later sought to bridge theory and practice and enrolled as an undergraduate student in Public Policy and Psychology at the University at Buffalo. Avery complimented his interdisciplinary studies through research positions at the University at Buffalo’s Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab and Department of Behavioral Medicine. Avery’s current work focuses on the creation of policy-centered solutions to address food insecurity in rural communities within New York State.

Laine Cidlowski is the Food Systems Administrator for the City of Denver where she oversees the Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council and leads a team to implement the Denver Food Vision to make the city’s food systems more healthy, vibrant, inclusive, and resilient. Laine was previously the first Food Policy Director for the District of Columbia and the leader of the first DC Food Policy Council. Laine holds a Master’s Degree in City and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania and B.A. from the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill in Environmental Studies. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and serves on the leadership committee of the American Planning Association’s Food Systems Division.

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Chapter 18

Integrating Equity as a Central Theme in Urban Agriculture: The Case of the City of Seattle, Washington



Kimberley Hodgson

Abstract Local food is not a new topic in Seattle and surrounding region. Nestled in an agriculturally rich region, Seattle has a long and robust history of backyard and community gardening. A strong network of grassroots and community-based organizations work on food system issues. Many of these organizations have been actively addressing issues such as community gardening, food production, and food security since the early 1970s, long before the city government began to take an interest in the Seattle food system. The Seattle city government established the P-Patch Community Gardening Program in 1973, and the Seattle-King County department of public health has been actively engaged in nutrition issues for decades. However, it was not until the early 2000s, that the city government began engaging in systems change. The Seattle city government supports a number of urban agriculture and food systems related issues through public planning, policy and funding decisions. This chapter explores the various geographic, social, agricultural and governmental contexts at play and provides a critical examination of the city government's response to urban agriculture. The chapter describes the city government's impetus for addressing urban agriculture through public policy and an overview of the various opportunities and challenges it has faced along the way in addressing larger societal issues such as racial and social justice through urban agriculture. The author uses a critical lens to examine key policies such as the urban agriculture zoning regulations and the Local Food Action Plan, and key projects, such as the Rainier Beach Urban Farm & Wetlands Project, to better understand the impacts of urban agriculture policies on social, health and racial equity in Seattle.

Keywords Seattle, Washington · Urban agriculture · Food production · Urban farming · Social justice · Equity · Health equity · Food plan · Food subsidy · Community gardening · P-Patch Program · Rainier Beach · Zoning regulations · Community engagement

K. Hodgson (✉)
Cultivating Healthy Places, Vancouver, BC, Canada
e-mail: kim@chplaces.com

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18.1 Background

The City of Seattle is the largest city in the Pacific Northwest and the 18th most populous city in the United States (Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development 2019a). With a population of 730,400, Seattle is nestled within King County, serves as the county seat, and is the civic, cultural and economic center for the Puget Sound Region, as well as for Washington State. The Puget Sound Region is made up of 4 counties, 82 municipalities, and over 4 million people (Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development 2016a).

With a mild climate, access to nature, and diverse natural resources, Seattle is considered a highly desirable place to live. Of the 50 largest cities in the nation, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Seattle had the fastest one-year population growth in 2016 (Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development 2019a). As Seattle grows in population, the city government is also expecting a growth in the number of jobs: “115,000 additional jobs between the beginning of 2016 and the end of 2035” (Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development 2019a).

As a whole, Seattle is a very educated city. The American Community Survey 2016 estimates indicate that 63% of Seattle residents 25 years and older have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 42% in the region, and 31% in the U.S. And, over 27% of the Seattle population has a graduate or professional degree (Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development 2019b).

Many large corporations and other organizations are based in or around Seattle. These include, Boeing, Microsoft, Amazon, University of Washington, Nordstrom, Starbucks, Alaska Airlines, and others (Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development 2016b; Enterprise Seattle 2019).

18.2 Socioeconomic Disparities

Despite the high educational attainment, access to good jobs, and overall wealth of Seattleites, issues of socioeconomic disparities persist. Significant disparities by race and ethnicity continue for health, education, income, unemployment, home-ownership, vehicle availability and other indicators of well-being in Seattle. The largest disparities affect Black, Hispanic/Latino, Cambodian, Hmong, Thai, or Vietnamese residents, compared to white residents (Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development 2019c). Although 63.7% of the Seattle population is white, a growing age of the population is black, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino. Between 1990 and 2010, persons of color in Seattle increased from 26% to 34% of the population (Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development 2016b).

Approximately 14% of the Seattle population lives in poverty. The poverty rate for people of color, however, is 2.5 times greater than for white people, 24% versus 9%, respectively (Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development 2016a). Incomes for Black or African American households are less than half of white

(non-Hispanic) household incomes. Homeownership rates for Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native households, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Latino households are half that of white (non-Hispanic) households. And, almost half of households that rent their home are considered “cost-burdened”, meaning they pay over 30% of their income on housing costs (Gore et al. 2016).

Beyond these disparities, people of color are less likely to live within close proximity to a public health facility, farmers’ market, grocery store, or park than other Seattle residents. Compounding this problem, people of color are less likely to be able to find affordable and culturally appropriate fresh foods, even when a market is located nearby. For residents living in areas with poor access to public health facilities, “more adults have unmet medical needs and life expectancy for residents is lower” (Gore et al. 2016).

18.3 Race, Social Justice, Health and Equity

Given these challenges, there is a long history of race and social justice in Seattle. In an attempt to begin to tackle the complex and multifaceted nature of social equity, the Seattle government launched the Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (SRSJI) in 2004. This initiative aimed to end institutionalized racism and race-based disparities in city government by providing training to all city government employees, establishing annual work plans, and providing change teams in every city department (Nelson and Brooks 2015).

Between 2004 and 2009, the city used a Racial Equity Tool (RET) to inform budget decisions, and in 2009 the city adopted a resolution that affirmed its use in budget decisions, but also expanded its use to inform program and policy decisions. And in 2015, then Mayor Ed Murray issued an Executive Order to expand the use of the RET and require measurable outcomes and greater accountability (Seattle Office of the City Clerk 2009; Nelson and Brooks 2015). The Seattle city government was the first municipality in the United States to directly address institutional racism within city government (Nelson and Brooks 2015). The SRSJI has resulted in an increased awareness of social equity and justice issues in most city departments (Horst et al. 2017, this volume, Chap. 6). The Racial Equity Tool is a simple set of questions, as illustrated in Table 18.1.

In addition to the RET, the Seattle-King County Public Health department developed and implemented a Healthy Living Assessment Tool to encourage the inclusion of health elements in planning processes. The tool aims to identify both health assets and health gaps by enhancing community engagement practices. The tool highlights several health disparities between neighborhoods, such as life expectancy, chronic disease, food access, and park access, and encourages prioritizing the delivery of “infrastructure improvements, community initiatives, or city incentives” to improve health equity (Lerman 2011).

Table 18.1 Racial equity toolkit: an opportunity to operationalize equity

Proposal	What is the policy, program, practice or budget decision under consideration? What are the desired results and outcomes?
Data	What's the data? What does the data tell us?
Community engagement	How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?
Analysis and strategies	Who will benefit from or be burdened by your proposal? What are your strategies for advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?
Implementation	What is your plan for implementation?
Accountability and communication	How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results?

Source: Adapted from the GARE Tool Kit. (Nelson and Brooks (2015))

18.4 Long-Standing Relationship with Local Food

Public interest in local food and the regional food system is not new for Seattleites. The city is located in a highly productive agricultural region. The Puget Sound Region is home to a wide range of agricultural products such as vegetables, fruit, poultry, eggs, cow milk, beef, pork and fish. Over \$357 million dollars' worth of agricultural products were sold for the 4-county region in 2012. In King County alone, there are over 14,200 acres of preserved farmland and over 20,000 acres of land in food production (National Agricultural Statistics Service 2012a, b, c, d, King County Washington/Snohomish County Washington/Kitsap County Washington/Pierce County Washington, 2012 Census of Agriculture. United States Department of Agriculture).

Beyond regional agriculture, backyard and community gardening have been central components to the Seattle urban fabric for decades. Many grassroots, non-profit and community-based organizations, such as Seattle Tilth, have been advocating for sustainable food systems since the early 1970s. These organizations tackled issues of food security and community gardening long before the city government began to take an interest in the Seattle food system (Growing Food Connections 2015a).

The Seattle city government's interest in its food system originates from its initial support of the community gardening movement. The concept of community food production dates back to the early 1970s, with the establishment of the Seattle's first community garden, Picardo Farm, which later became known as P-Patch. Originally a forum for gardeners, the Friends of P-Patch (now known as the P-Patch Trust) evolved into a membership organization for the expanding community garden movement (Cipalla 2018).

Between the early 1970s and the early 1990s, the number of P-Patch community gardens expanded across the city. And then in the 1990s, the P-Patch Trust partnered with the City of Seattle to increase the development of new gardens and manage existing gardens. Subsequent government policies led to the protection and expansion of P-Patch gardens. City Council Resolution 20,194 "called for city support of

community gardens including co-location on other city owned property.” This ensured the protection of community gardens as property values rapidly increased (Cipalla 2018; Hucka et al. 2019).

The Seattle Comprehensive Plan also provided further protections for the P-Patch Program by including a goal of establishing one community garden per 2000 households in Urban Villages, and provided justification for addressing community gardening in the city’s various neighborhood planning processes. Additionally, the Seattle Housing Authority recognized the importance of community gardening by including gardens in the construction of new public housing (Hucka et al. 2019).

18.5 Towards a Systems View of Food

Initially, the City of Seattle government approached urban food production in a piecemeal fashion. From the 1970s to the early 2000s, the city government remained largely uninvolved in food related issues. Beyond supporting the P-Patch Program, early efforts to address food focused on health and nutrition through the work of the Seattle-King County department of health (Hodgson 2018).

In the early 2000s, with pressure from community organizations and academics at the University of Washington, the city government began to pay attention to the linkages between community gardening, nutrition, health, food production, food security, and other issues of the food system. Key community and non-governmental organizations organized to establish the Acting Food Policy Council. The purpose of the AFPC was to encourage greater collaboration among food related organizations, but also to expand upon existing food systems related work. The city government took notice. Former city councilmember, Richard Conlin, and staff person, Phyllis Shulman, worked closely with the AFPC to push the city government to engage in food policy work. And, “in 2007, Conlin championed the development of a resolution to strengthen community and regional food systems and integrate food system planning and policy in city government activities” (Growing Food Connections 2015b; Hodgson 2018).

This resolution, called the Local Food Action Initiative (LFAI), was officially adopted by City Council in 2008. One of the first such municipal resolutions in the country, the LFAI established a core framework for city departments to work on food policy. The resolution not only helped to institutionalize food as an important city topic, but was responsible for establishing Seattle’s Interdepartmental Food System Team, creating a Food Policy Advisor position, and developing an overarching Food System Policy Plan (Growing Food Connections 2015a, b). This resolution paved the way for subsequent food related programs, policies and plans, and helped to make important connections between previously disconnected issues, such as food production, food security, health, and social justice. The interdepartmental food system team, overseen by the food policy advisor position, is responsible for coordinating the food related work of all city departments (Hodgson 2018).

The Race and Social Justice Initiative, the work of key champions, and the adoption of the Local Food Action Initiative paved the way for a number of planning, policy, program and funding decisions that directly or indirectly support urban food production and its connections to larger societal issues.

18.6 Expansion of the P-Patch Community Garden Program

Initially the P-Patch community garden program primarily benefited white residents. It wasn't until 2008 with the passage of the Parks and Green Spaces Levy, which included \$2 million for community gardens, that the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods focused on increasing access to community gardens in underserved communities. The P-Patch program successfully leveraged the levy funds to raise additional funds and supported the development of new gardens and expanded many existing gardens in low-income and racially diverse neighborhoods (Seattle Department of Neighborhoods 2014a).

The P-Patch Program developed a framework that assessed neighborhood-level demographic and geographic factors to identify 21 priority areas in low-income and racially diverse neighborhoods. This led to the development of projects in 15 of the 21 priority areas. Program staff led multilingual and multicultural teams to encourage the engagement of underrepresented communities, such as refugees and immigrants, in the development of these projects (Seattle Department of Neighborhoods 2014a). As of 2010, 23% of all P-Patch gardeners were people of color; 71% were low-income; 48% lived in multifamily dwellings; and 77% had no gardening space where they live (Seattle Department of Neighborhoods 2014b).

18.7 Promoting Food Production: Urban Agriculture Zoning Regulations

In August 2010, the City of Seattle adopted an urban agriculture update (Ordinance 123,378), which revised the city's land use code to expand opportunities for urban agriculture. The code changes increased opportunities for Seattleites to grow and sell food in all zoning districts and recognizes five different urban agriculture uses: Animal Husbandry, Aquaculture, Community Gardens, Horticulture and Urban Farms. Specifically, the updates:

- Allow "urban farms" and "community gardens" in all zones, with some limitations in industrial zones
- Allow residents to sell food grown on their property
- Formally recognize farmer's markets and allow them in more areas of the city
- Allow dedicated food production on rooftop greenhouses with a 15-foot exemption to height limits in a variety of higher density zones

- Increase the number of chickens allowed per lot from three to eight, with additional chickens allowed for large lots associated with community gardens and urban farms, while prohibiting new roosters and setting boundaries for new chicken coops (Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections 2022).

According to city staff, these land use code changes were made to reduce barriers to urban agriculture within city limits, support commercial food production operations on private land, and increase the amount of land (privately held) in food production within the city (Growing Food Connections 2017).

Although this policy was instrumental into legalizing and encouraging urban food production in the city, some argue that the policy largely benefits homeowners, who are primarily white, and does not address the need to provide greater access to growing space for marginalized populations (Horst et al. 2017, this volume, Chap. 6). While the urban agriculture regulations expand opportunities for commercial agriculture within city limits, the products grown or raised by commercial entities do not necessarily improve food access for low-income residents and communities of color. One exception is the Rainier Beach Urban Farm.

18.8 Subsidizing Local Food: The Fresh Bucks Program and the Farm to Table Partnership Program

Since 2012, the city has established 2 new programs to improve access to healthy foods for low-income residents, while simultaneously supporting regional food production. The Seattle Office of Sustainability and the Environment initiated the Fresh Bucks Program in 2012 to increase the buying power of SNAP (food stamp) recipients at farmers' markets. SNAP recipients receive \$1 in "fresh bucks" for every \$1 spent at participating farmers markets across the city. While the program was started with private funding, its success in improving food access for thousands of SNAP recipients encouraged the city government first to support the program with funding from the city's general fund and subsequently the City of Seattle Sweetened Beverage Tax fund. The city continues to support the program with staff time for project management. In 2018, the program was expanded to additional farmers markets, but also farm stands, neighborhood grocers and all Seattle Safeway grocery stores. Between 2012 and 2018, the program served over 29,500 residents and spent \$1.9 million on fruits and vegetables (Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment 2019).

The city of Seattle is supporting regional food production in other ways, such as through food procurement. A pilot program started in 2010, aimed to increase access to healthy, local foods for recipients of senior meals and subsidized childcare programs. The initiative, the Farm to Table Partnership Project, provides technical support and assistance to over 300 child care and senior meal sites that use city funding to purchase and prepare food in some of Seattle's most underserved communities for the purpose of linking these sites with healthy, fresh foods from

local farms. The project helps to identify and develop sustainable purchasing models for procuring fresh local produce, and provides meal program providers with education and training for program implementation (Whitton and Hodgson 2015; Northwest Agriculture Business Center 2019).

The city government has been instrumental in supporting the Fresh Bucks program and the Farm to Table Partnership Project, as well as other programs initiated and operated by non-profit organizations, such as Seattle Tilth's Good Food Bag program (Hodgson 2018). While these efforts to address food injustices are commendable, they are dependent on limited funds. Additionally, these programs do not explicitly "support producers of color or from low-income backgrounds" (Horst 2017).

Furthermore, the price differential between what consumers can pay and what producers need to make a living continues to be a major obstacle. Bridging the gap between what businesses need to remain economically viable and what customers can afford is an area that the city government has not figured out. Staff are mindful of this inherent tension, but it is a challenging issue to solve (Growing Food Connections 2015c).

18.9 Establishing a Blueprint for Action: Seattle Food Action Plan

In October 2012, the Seattle City Council officially adopted the Seattle Food Action Plan. The purpose of the plan was three-fold: (1) to integrate the food policy approaches laid out in the LFAI in a more systematic and methodical way, (2) generate public interest around ensuring better nutrition, getting more people involved and interested in growing food, and providing more attention to farmland preservation, and (3) establish better coordination and integration of Seattle's food systems work within and outside of city government (Growing Food Connections 2015a).

The development of the plan enabled the city to respond to the public's ongoing request for the city government to take a larger role in the food system. Before the plan, the city government took a piecemeal approach to tackling food issues. The plan provided a way to connect the various disparate food related work of the city and its connections to the work of non-governmental entities (Hodgson 2018).

Equity is an overarching issue identified in the plan, in part due to the SRSJI but also because of the efforts of the interdepartmental food team. Other overarching issues addressed in the plan include: accessibility and affordability of food, the health and well-being of all people, diversity, collaboration, inclusivity, as well as racial and social justice, economic viability and environmental sustainability. The plan highlights four overarching goals to achieve a healthy food system in Seattle. The plan also outlines several "approaches" necessary to achieve these goals. One in particular spells out the need to consider equity issues: "Focus on racial and social equity and support the communities most at-risk for food insecurity and

diet-related disease.” Furthermore, the plan highlights the linkage between growing economic inequality and food affordability. The plan explicitly identifies food inequities, namely hunger, affordability, and access and how these inequities disproportionately affect low-income residents, children, seniors, and communities of color (Lerman 2012).

While equity is a major theme of the plan, city staff feel that more could have been done to actively engage low-income residents and people of color in the planning process. Several organizations that specifically work with low-income residents and people of color were engaged in various listening sessions. And, the health department conducted specific outreach to low-income communities to help identify policies and proposals that would be effective for these population groups (Growing Food Connections 2015a). However, city staff did not utilize internal resources, such as specialized public outreach and engagement liaisons that are employed by the city to engage specific cultural communities (Growing Food Connections 2017). According to key city staff, more could have been done to encourage better citywide engagement, such as additional listening sessions, scattered across the city; however this would have required more resources (Growing Food Connections 2017).

This plan creates a framework for expanding the city government’s support of urban food production. While the city government is already doing much to support urban food production, the plan provides “policy backing” for work that is happening. The plan also established a framework for developing food access policies and programs that support local farmers, such as the Fresh Bucks Program (Growing Food Connections 2017). And the plan helped to expand programs, like the Seattle Farms Program, to make city-owned land available for commercial urban agriculture. As a result, the city government has increased the number and acreage of city-owned land that can be leased to community-based organizations for food production. And the city has increased the number of community-centered learning gardens (Growing Food Connections 2015b). One example of such a farm is the Rainier Beach Urban Farm.

18.10 Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands Project

The Rainier Beach neighborhood is located in Southeast Seattle and is home to an ethnically diverse population of approximately 5000 residents, including many newly arrived immigrants. The majority of the neighborhood’s residents are people of color: about 31% of the population is Black, 31% Asian, 13% Hispanic, and 14% mixed race. Poverty rates are higher and education levels are lower in Rainier Beach than in other areas of Seattle (Rainier Beach Action Coalition 2019), and “the median Rainier Beach household makes \$49,000 per year...compared to \$80,000” (Beekman 2019).

Over the past 10 years, with the help of key neighborhood non-profit organizations, such as Rainier Beach Action Coalition and Seattle Tilth, community residents have come together to advocate for a healthier, more connected neighborhood that supports “strong communities and organizations, healthy people and families, and great places” (City of Seattle 2012). From the development of the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands Project to the update of the Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan, the residents have taken important steps to improve their neighborhood and establish food as a key pillar of their community. However, with the change in mayoral administrations, the pressures of development, and the need for more affordable housing across the city, recent policy changes may have serious, detrimental impacts to the neighborhood. This section provides a brief look into the opportunities and challenges the neighborhood has experienced.

As a result of the RSJI, new inclusive strategies were used to begin the process of updating the various 38 neighborhood plans across the city, including the Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan. In 2011, neighborhood planners worked closely with the Rainier Beach community to identify ways to broaden civic engagement. The community highlighted the goal of including “people with a wide range of backgrounds” and to “fully involve those who have been historically underrepresented in planning” (City of Seattle 2012). Special bicultural and bilingual planning outreach liaisons engaged traditionally underrepresented Oromo, African-American, Ethiopian, Hispanic/Latino, Laotian, Somali, Filipino residents, as well as renters, older adults and youth in the community. Planners utilized “hands-on workshops and smaller-scale interactive meetings” to actively engage these communities, and reported back through a “transparent process” (City of Seattle 2012). In addition, the Healthy Living Assessment tool was applied to the Rainier Beach planning process to help identify assets to preserve health and opportunities to be healthier (City of Seattle 2012).

Neighborhood residents identified food production as a key component of their future community. The neighborhood plan update focuses on 3 priorities – strong communities and organizations, healthy people and families, and great places – and highlights the development of the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands Preservation Project as a key strategy to “make Rainier Beach a neighborhood with resources necessary to live a healthful life” (City of Seattle 2012). This community initiated and community led urban food production project aimed to establish an urban farm on Seattle Parks’ property, former home of the Atlantic City Nursery. The impetus for this project originated from the desire to establish a local source for fresh produce, community gardening, economic development, and training opportunities for neighborhood residents and youth (City of Seattle 2012).

According to key stakeholders, there is a growing interest and desire to not only support a robust food economy and food system within the city that serves all people, but also to identify the actions the city can take to support such a food economy and system (Growing Food Connections 2015c). At the time of the neighborhood planning process, efforts had already been underway to relocate the Atlantic City Nursery and establish the Rainier Beach Urban Farm. When the city asked the

neighborhood what they wanted to see on the property, the neighborhood requested an urban farm. At the time, the city had never hosted an urban farm on city property. Seattle Tilth had to advocate for the urban farm to elected officials and staff. And once approved, Seattle Tilth worked with the Parks Board, the Parks superintendent and Parks staff to support the development of the urban farm and identify and document the public benefit, since the parks land is considered a public resource (Growing Food Connections 2015c).

The Seattle Food Action Plan created a framework for expanding city government support of urban food production, but also provided “policy backing” for work that was already happening, including the Rainier Beach Urban Farm. The neighborhood group that worked on the Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan update identified the food system and food economy work as one of the cornerstones of the plan – this is in part due to the existence of the Rainier Beach Urban Farm (Growing Food Connections 2015c).

The neighborhood plan update stated that the urban farm project would “serve as an innovative effort to build community pride and preservation of the area wetlands and the environment” (City of Seattle 2012). Seattle Parks partnered with Seattle Tilth and Friends of Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands (formerly called the Friends of Atlantic Nursery) to operate and manage the program. A Parks and Green Space Levy Opportunities Grant of \$500,000 was used to kick-start the project (City of Seattle 2012).

The Rainier Urban Farm and Wetlands Project is the largest urban farm in the City of Seattle. The farm provides educational activities, showcases environmentally friendly food growing practices, supplies fresh food to the community, and aims to restore the natural wetlands located on the farm. Beyond growing space, the farm is home to classroom space, a teaching kitchen, and green houses (Tilth Alliance 2019).

Seattle Tilth continues to provide fiscal sponsorship to the Friends of Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands and this group provides a direct linkage to the community. The two entities have a memorandum of understanding and jointly contract with the city to oversee the farm. Both were involved in the development of the neighborhood plan (Growing Food Connections 2015c). Seattle Tilth established a warehouse a couple blocks from the Rainier Beach Urban Farm that serves as an aggregation and distribution point for food and operates as Seattle Tilth’s food hub (Growing Food Connections 2015c).

As a result of this work, Seattle Tilth has been working in partnership with many other organizations and the office of planning and community development to think about how future development in Rainier Beach could be oriented towards the food economy. However, plans for the development of a food innovation district (FID), which aimed to serve as an anchor for a new transit-oriented development at the Rainier Beach light rail station, have been halted. The vision for the FID was to provide an “economic generator...with a full range of employment and business development opportunities...[that clustered] manufacturing, technology, and food sectors around the light rail station” (Seattle Office of Planning & Community Development n.d.).

18.11 Barriers to Integrating Food in the Culture of City Government

Despite the success of the city government in the integration of food issues in to city work, key stakeholders believe there is still a long way to go. For example, the Urban Land Institute came to Seattle in spring 2015 and conducted a study in the Rainier Beach neighborhood. At the kickoff dinner for the study, the Mayor talked about the pillars of planning and development – transportation, education, jobs, etc. But there was no mention of food. According to key stakeholders, city staff still have not fully embraced the food system as being an important part of the economy. One key stakeholder said, “I think there’s an evolution that happens over time” (Growing Food Connections 2015c). In summary, the key stakeholder commented that this evolution really depends on individuals before it becomes embedded in the culture of the city or in the culture of a city department. If staff (new or existing) do not receive training or are not encouraged to think about the food economy as a vital part of city planning or a city’s future, then this cultural change will not happen. The food system needs to become one of the cornerstones of city government, where it is always embedded in the work and therefore is always thought about and considered, and is not dependent on individuals. There haven been successes, but there is still a degree of education and buy-in that has to happen over time (Growing Food Connections 2015c).

The establishment of the interdepartmental food team and the food policy advisor position help address this hurdle. Also, being able to bring city government – both elected officials and staff – to the Rainier Beach Urban Farm to show them firsthand how such a site can “support the food system across the board and engage people from children to the elderly, will make a difference” (Growing Food Connections 2015c).

Today, Rainier Beach is one of the more affordable neighborhoods in Seattle, with home and rental prices less than in other areas of the city. Property values are also lower, on average, than the rest of the city. Despite the neighborhood plan update and the desire by area non-profits to develop a food innovation district that would attract food related jobs, provide necessary infrastructure, and develop a more food-focused economy for the neighborhood, a recent city government upzoning policy that initially was put in place to increase affordable housing across the city is having some unintended consequences for the Rainier Beach neighborhood. For-profit developers have outbid non-profit developers for land around the Rainier Beach light rail station, and are creating ambitious, high-density development plans for the neighborhood. Organizations, such as the Rainier Beach Action Coalition, fear that the ideas for a food innovation district will not come to fruition. Additionally, there is much fear among community organizations and residents that new development will cause the displacement of many people in the neighborhood. While the upzoning policy is intended to increase affordable housing, it may displace more affordable homes than it will create (Beekman 2019).

In the case of Rainier Beach, the potential future displacement of low-income residents and people of color may not be directly related to the urban food production activities happening within the neighborhood, but the promise of new development may displace plans for the food innovation district.

18.12 Conclusion

Despite the city government's efforts to centralize equity in its food systems work, addressing the root of the problem – namely poverty and low wages – and connecting food inequities to these higher-level challenges, is not always happening (Horst et al. 2017, this volume, Chap. 6). Food production and access are “quite discontinuous.” While there are some connections being made between production and access (such as through food recovery programs), the “strategic approaches [to addressing food production and food access] are quite different” (Growing Food Connections 2015a).

Additionally, the demand for and access to land for gardening and farming is much greater than the supply. For example, the waiting list for community gardens exceeds 2000 people for 90 community gardens (Cipalla 2018). And wait times vary from 3 months to 4 years (Seattle Department of Neighborhoods 2014b). The location of community gardens also varies from public, city-owned land to privately held land, which creates vulnerabilities for land tenure. Furthermore, while 23% of community gardeners are people of color, this is less than the 2012–2016 American Community Survey that estimates 34.3% of the population are persons of color (Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development 2019c). The reason for this disparity in the proportion of the Seattle population that access and use community gardens is unclear. In the face of gentrification, the city could do more to ensure greater access to land for persons of color (Horst 2017). In addition, the city government is not addressing the linkage between historical traumas (such as colonization, segregation, and displacement) and food justice in its food systems work (Horst 2017).

And finally, as is the case in the Rainier Beach neighborhood, there is a growing tension around the best use of land. Increasing property values in the Rainier Beach are proving to be cost prohibitive for non-profit developers to realize their goals in creating a food innovation district. Good intentions and hopes to improve access to affordable housing may have informed the city's upzoning policy, however many speculate that this policy will displace many low-income residents and people of color over the next several years as higher density buildings replace existing housing. It is unclear whether or not the city government is considering both the short- and long-term consequences – both good and bad – of the upzoning policy to the Rainier Beach neighborhood.

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Kimberley Hodgson, MURP, MS, AICP, RD is the founder and principal of Cultivating Healthy Places, an international consulting business specializing in community health, social equity and resilient food systems planning. As a certified planner and health professional, her work focuses on conducting policy-relevant research and providing technical assistance to the public and private sectors related to the design and development of healthy, sustainable places. Hodgson’s research has been published in varied academic and practitioner-focused venues as journal articles, policy briefs, monographs, and book chapters.

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Chapter 19

The Relational Infrastructure of Food System Policy Development



Aiden Irish, Jill Clark , Kimberley Hodgson, and Samina Raja 

Abstract The process of developing food system policies (FSP) that comprehensively address systemic issues requires the inclusion of a diverse array of actors from all parts of the food system. Drawing on literature on collaborative governance, we argue that interpersonal relationships, and the factors that facilitate their development and maintenance, are essential to FSP development. Based on this assertion, we ask: how do interpersonal relationships shape collaborative food systems policy processes? Specifically, we explore: (1) what motivates the emergence of interpersonal relationships in FSP; (2) what are the characteristics of social environments that foster such interpersonal relationships; and (3) what traits/activities foster interpersonal relationships in food systems policy processes.

This research draws on qualitative analysis of 26 semi-structured interviews in four preeminent examples of FSP development in the United States identified by Growing Food Connections (GFC), an FSP research group: Seattle, WA; Lawrence/Douglas County, KS; a five-county region in Minnesota; and Marquette County, MI. Following an inductive description of key cross-case themes responding to the previous questions, we discuss the implications of these findings for equity and ethics in FSP development. This discussion highlights that, while equity did not appear as an explicit motivation for developing interpersonal relationships, practices of humble listening by policy practitioners foster inclusive engagement as a basis for equitable collaboration.

Keywords Food system policy · Collaborative governance · Relational infrastructure

A. Irish (✉) · J. Clark
The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA
e-mail: irish.20@osu.edu; clark.1099@osu.edu

K. Hodgson
Cultivating Healthy Places, Vancouver, BC, Canada
e-mail: kim@chplaces.com

S. Raja
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: sraja@buffalo.edu

19.1 Introduction

Despite relatively long historical roots in planning practice and scholarship (Vitiello and Brinkley 2014), food system policy (FSP) has only gained widespread attention relatively recently (Goddeeris 2013, Raja et al. 2018b, Clark et al. 2015). Since the landmark works of Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999, 2000), much research has focused on documenting the types of plans and policies that communities have implemented to address the myriad negative local impacts resulting from our current global food system.

The type of problems FSP attempts to tackle – often termed “wicked” problems – require significant collaboration across sectors, communities, and issues. Wicked problems are particularly pernicious because they encompass myriad interconnected, conflicting, and/or contradicting perspectives and objectives (Rittel and Webber 1973). In response, scholars point to diverse, collaborative networks as critical to addressing such problems in order to reconcile tradeoffs and realize potential synergies (Booher and Innes 2002, Emerson et al. 2012, O’Toole 1997). Moreover, the diverse nature of these networks elevates the importance of interpersonal relationships as critical mechanisms for developing and sustaining FSP collaboration. While assessing plans and policies is important, we argue that the interpersonal processes of this diverse collaboration are essential to FSP development and, thus, deserve more scholarly attention in order to provide insight into strategies for developing FSP.

Towards this end, we draw on qualitative analysis of 26 in-depth interviews with FSP practitioners in four locations in the United States (U.S.) to inductively answer the question: how do interpersonal relationships shape collaborative food systems policy processes? Within the context of this question, we focus on (1) understanding key motivations for developing interpersonal relationships in FSP development, (2) the characteristics of the social environment that foster such relationships, and (3) the traits/activities that lead to them.

In this chapter, we begin by elaborating on the nature of FSP problems that give rise to the need for collaboration and that make interpersonal relationships particularly important to the process. We then present our research methods, findings, and discussion of implications of those findings for equity and ethics in FSP development. This discussion highlights that, while pursuit of social equity did not appear as a motivation for engaging in collaboration, it did manifest in reflexive practices of the policy professionals coordinating FSP collaboration.

19.2 Food System Policy as Relational Governance

While many policy issues deal with wicked problems, thus requiring collaboration among diverse participants, the problem space of FSP is particularly complex. Before discussing how interpersonal relationships shape FSP, we start by discussing the foundations of the collaboration in FSP, the nature of the problem space

encompassed by FSP, the associated range of participants relevant to collaboration on the topic, and the implications for how that collaboration is developed and sustained.

FSP, following community development planning, has from its inception utilized broad, inclusive, collaborative arrangements, rather than government-only approaches.¹ Perhaps this is a result of the timing of when FSP was placed on the local government agenda (after the governance revolution in the 1990s), or the systems-nature of FSP (from field to fork), or it could be the rising advocacy and expertise in civil society pressuring for planning processes and demanding a seat at the table. Or, it could be all three (Andrée et al. 2019, Raja et al. 2018b). The American Planning Association (2007) highlights collaboration as its first policy in the “Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning.” Yet, to understand why collaboration is so central to FSP development, and the complexity of that collaboration, it is useful to look at the nature of the issue area.

As a policy issue, FSP attempts to tackle a variety of different, yet interconnected problems. Thus, rather than describe the food system as a (singular) wicked problem, we might better think of it as a universe of interconnected wicked problems. Correspondingly, the types of issues and associated actors relevant to collaboration on FSP is vast. To help clarify this problem space, we outline relevant FSP issues and actors along three dimensions depicted in Fig. 19.1 of what we term the food

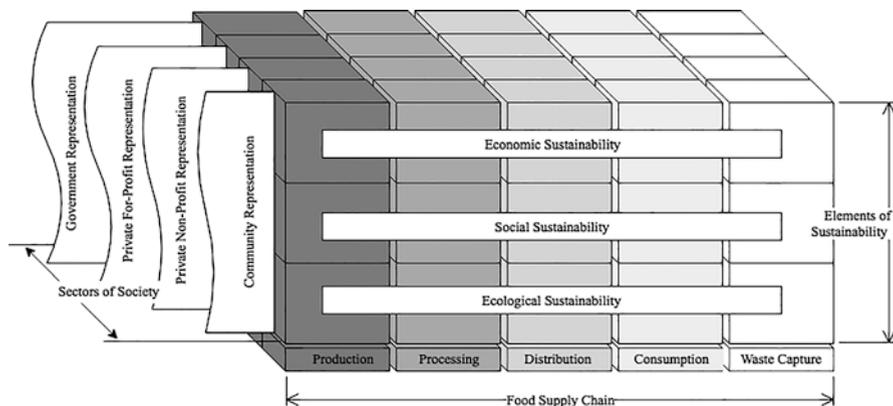


Fig. 19.1 The universe of food system issues and actors

¹A review of some of the most well-known food system plans illustrates how cross-sector coalitions are at the center of the planning process. Plans reviewed include: Multnomah County Food Action Plan (OR), Buffalo’s West Side Food for Growth (NY), Pioneer Valley Food Security Plan (MA), Dane County Recipe for Success (WI), New Haven Food Action Plan (CT), Planning for Santa Fe’s Food Future (NM), the Sonoma County Food Action Plan (CA), and the City of Columbus, Franklin County Local Food Action Plan (OH). Many of these plans are also highlighted in the documents published several years ago highlighted innovative food plans Neuner, K., Kelly, S. & Raja, S. 2011. Planning to eat? Innovative local government plans and policies to build healthy food systems in the United States. Buffalo, NY: The State University of New York at Buffalo.

system “universe”. The first dimension includes various stages of the food supply chain, from production and processing, to distribution, consumption, and waste disposal. The second outlines prominent priorities related to the three dimensions of sustainability; social, economic, and ecological. The first two dimensions of sustainability serve as broad categories for motivating factors to develop FSP, such as increasing community and environmental sustainability and resilience (Feenstra 2009, Tagtow and Roberts 2011, Schiff 2008), supporting the viability of small and midsize farms (Kirschenmann et al. n.d.), and fostering food equity and democratic participation in local communities (Fiser et al. 2003, Hodgson 2012, Renting et al. 2012).

These two dimensions can be used as a heuristic to think about both categories of issues and associated people/organizations that are potentially relevant to FSP. These two dimensions speaks to both categories of issues and types of organizations that might represent those issues. For instance, an issue area related to distribution and social sustainability might be represented by a food bank or other organization concerned with equitable access to food.

The third dimension of the universe outlines prominent societal sectors; public, private, nonprofit, and community representatives, particularly community members from diverse socio-economic, racial, and cultural perspectives within a given community. This dimension adds further complexity to understanding who might be relevant to collaborative discussions on issues of FSP. To return to the previous example, an issue area related to distribution and social sustainability might be filled by a nonprofit (such as a food bank). However, public organizations, such as a public school providing free/reduced price lunches, might also be relevant. Moreover, community representatives of neighborhoods with high levels of food insecurity also have important insight into the subject (Fig. 19.1).

The third dimension of the universe, particularly the inclusion of community representatives, speaks to the strong emphasis within FSP literature on civic engagement, democratization of power, and diverse inclusion of citizens in the policy process (Hanagan 2014, Hassanein 2003, Renting et al. 2012, Raja et al. 2014). Within FSP literature, the issue area has significance not only as a problem that needs to be solved, but as an opportunity for empowering communities and enhancing democratic engagement (Hanagan 2014, Hassanein 2003). This carries implications for what it means to create equitable FSP. At least in theory, an equitable policy might be developed by a limited group of participants. However, FSP as democratic empowerment highlights the importance of equitable engagement in the FSP development process.

To frame our study of collaborative FSP development, we draw on the concept of collaborative governance, which refers to the processes and structures that facilitate multi-sector, multi-stakeholder engagement in solving public problems (Kettl 1997, Kettl 2002, Emerson and Nabatchi 2015, Emerson et al. 2012, Huxham et al. 2000, Klievink et al. 2016, Ansell and Gash 2007). Collaborative governance – which encompasses such topics as collaborative planning (Bentrop 2001, Selin and Chevez 1995), network management (Klijn et al. 2010b, Milward and Provan 2000), and environmental governance and conflict resolution (Agrawal and Lemos 2007,

Emerson et al. 2009) – entails the constructive engagement of diverse government, nongovernment, and citizens in collective public decision-making and management processes to address public issues (Emerson et al. 2012). Collaborative governance emphasizes the inclusion of a broad array of potential participants, mirroring the diverse universe of potential participants in FSP development. As a governance strategy, it offers a means of responding to increasingly complex problems and changing societal relationships towards government (Emerson et al. 2012, p. 2) and build local capacity of the participants and the community at large to deal with wicked problems (Ansell 2016).

From early on, FSP has relied on collaborative governance strategies to support food system development. Planning scholars have long argued for planners to develop multi-stakeholder forums to engage professionals and citizens in FSP development (Reece 2018, Raja et al. 2018a). Food policy councils (FPCs) – a type of collaborative multi-stakeholder body – have long served as “link tanks” to bring together diverse stakeholders, typically as advisory councils for local policy makers and planners (Clancy 1994, Clancy et al. 2007, Schiff 2008). FPCs also function as community engagement forums, emphasizing the inclusion of community representatives, particularly of traditionally disenfranchised groups (McCullagh and Santo 2014). This discussion illuminates two broad motivations for engaging a diverse array of participants in collaboration. First, FSP is a complex issue area requiring diverse viewpoints to adequately understand and translate into cohesive policy (O’Toole 1997). Second, FSP as an opportunity for democratic enhancement brings forward the need for diverse community representation (Hassanein 2003, Coplen and Cuneo 2015, Schiff 2008). Yet, broad inclusion emphasized in FSP scholarship fosters significant challenges for developing equitable FSP collaboration for two reasons.

First, effective collaboration rests on a different foundation of logic compared to conventional “expert-based” policy development. Innes and Booher (2016) describe the underpinnings of such a capacity building approach by articulating a “collaborative rationality.” A traditional “rational” approach to public problem solving assumes a solution to the problem exists (a non-wicked problem) and adopts a stepwise, linear logic to objective and quantitative analysis that arrives at that solution. In a traditional rational approach, the planner is the expert providing solutions to the community. Collaborative rationality, however, is based in the process of deliberation, in which all affected interests equitably engage in face-to-face discussion on the problems they confront. Consensus is sought, though not always achieved. Knowledge is jointly constructed through interaction and co-learning, and is not limited by an outside agenda. Fostering this collaborative rationality in a group can be challenging, but it is further complicated by the nature of diversity in FSP development.

As previously discussed, the network of participants relevant to collaborative FSP development is extremely diverse, with potential participants representing numerous different professional viewpoints. In such conditions, the sustained collaboration of participants oftentimes cannot be coerced by a higher authority (Murdoch 2000). Rather, the ability of such a diverse group to collaborate depends

on mutual respect and trust derived from interpersonal relationships (Murdoch 2000, Kneafsey et al. 2001, Agranoff and McGuire 2001, Seppänen et al. 2007). In these conditions, where participants span institutional, organizational, and cultural boundaries, trust serves as the “lubricant” for collaboration (Williams 2002). This trust begins with individual participants adopting collaborative rationality by recognizing and being open to the different experiences of other participants and being willing to adjust their own positions and beliefs.

Without this collaborative “readiness,” particularly among community leaders, FSP collaboration is unlikely to be successful, even where communities express an eagerness to work on food system issues (Clark et al. 2017). Indications of this readiness manifests in the type of interpersonal relationships collaboration participants develop as part of the process and their motivations for developing those relationships. Recognizing this social aspect of collaborative governance, numerous scholars note trust development as a key feature of collaborative governance regimes (CGRs) (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015, Emerson et al. 2012, Ansell 2003, Ansell and Gash 2018, Ansell and Gash 2007, Siddiki et al. 2017, Getha-Taylor et al. 2018). In addition, a shared understanding of purpose and a belief that problem-solving could not be done alone, commitment to process, and “thick” communication are cornerstones of collaborative governance (Emerson and Nabatchi 2015, Innes and Booher 2016).

While formal institutional structures such as FPCs can facilitate collaboration, we argue that collaborative governance in the context of FSP rests on interpersonal relationships rooted in collaborative logic. However, little to no scholarship explores the nature and influence of interpersonal relationships in FSP development. This lack of attention to a critical foundation of FSP motivates our exploratory question of how interpersonal relationships shape collaborative food systems policy development.

19.3 Data and Methods

To answer our research question – how do interpersonal relationships shape collaborative FSP processes? – we use an inductive qualitative approach to the study of the relational context of collaborative food system governance. Research draws on in-depth interviews with participants involved in planning and policy development in four case study locations in the United States. The following describes the data collection process and methods of analysis. Interview data for this research was collected by researchers with Growing Food Connections (GFC),² a collaboration among leading food system policy and planning researchers and practitioners in the United States. After soliciting 299 potential cases of innovative food system planning from professionals and academics, GFC researchers conducted exploratory

²More information on GFC is available at growingfoodconnections.org

interviews in 20 cases and ultimately selected four cases – Staples Region, MN, Seattle, WA, Marquette County, MI, and Lawrence and Douglas County, KS – based on inclusion criteria used to define an established, successful, food system planning effort. GFC researchers then conducted further in-depth interviews with multiple community members in each case. The research in this paper draws on a total of 26 exploratory and in-depth interviews with 20 different people across the four cases. (See Table 19.1 for a breakdown of interview participants by case.) These include two multi-person interviews and seven people who were interviewed twice, once for an exploratory interview and again for an in-depth interview. Participants were significant government and non-government figures involved with food system planning. Table 19.1 provides a breakdown of participants and interviews. Researchers used two different interview protocols; one for nongovernment food system policy participants and a second for government actors involved in food system policy.

Interview transcripts from the cases described above were coded in NVivo, a qualitative analysis software, focusing on interview references to relationships and interactions with other actors in the food system policy development process (QSR International 2012). Transcript text was inductively coded for references to such relationships as well as for references to the participants' perceptions of other actors, motivations for relationships, barriers and/or challenges, and relational features or actions of the policy development process.³

Because this research was concerned with subjective perceptions, fidelity to the original text was paramount. Therefore, whenever possible, analysis used “in vivo” coding, or the use of short phrases derived directly from the text, to convey the meaning of the referenced portion of the transcript (Saldaña 2015). Resulting codes were thematically clustered by identifying and grouping together similar or overlapping codes. The process of “themeing” the data involved frequently returning to the original interview transcript to maintain fidelity to the meaning of the

Table 19.1 Case interview summaries

Case	Total interviews	Exploratory interviews	Distinct participants	Government participants	Non/Quasi-government participants
Marquette County, MI	8	2	6	3	3
Seattle, WA	7	3	5	3	2
County Region, MN	7	1	6	2	4
Lawrence/Douglas, KS	4	1	3	2	1
Total	26	7	20	10	10

³“Relational features” denote references that imply relationships without specifying a particular actor. For instance, “collaboration” suggests a relational component, but may be used without reference to a particular actor (i.e. “collaboration is essential”).

interview participant’s comments (Saldaña 2015, p. 198). We related subsequent themes to each other using concept mapping to provide initial explanation of factors that contributed to the development of positive relationships among participants and associated outcomes. In addition to low-inference analysis through in-vivo coding (Johnson 1997), other steps to ensure research rigor included frequent debriefing with a research partner (Lincoln and Guba 1986, Johnson, 1997). Furthermore, rich description of actor perceptions aids with transferability of findings by providing sufficient context to understand how they might translate to other settings (Lincoln and Guba 1986).

19.4 Study Site Descriptions

The following provides a brief overview of each of the four cases of collaborative food system governance from which interview participants were drawn. These four cases represent preminent examples of food system policy development.⁴ Table 19.2 provides a summary of key characteristics of each community. Figure 19.2 provides a map of the locations of these case studies.

City of Lawrence/Douglas County, KS (“Lawrence”) Food system planning and policy in Lawrence is a city-county collaboration aimed at supporting community-based programs and initiatives. Coordination for food system efforts utilize the 23-member, joint city-county FPC. FPC members represent public and private sectors across the food system, are appointed by city and county commissioners, and are tasked with advising on and providing coordinative oversight for food system efforts in the county. Within the FPC, a city-funded sustainability coordinator and a joint city-county health department funded food system coordinator fill policy analysis and program management roles (Fodor and Hodgson 2015). Other policy and planning accomplishments include the Common Ground Community Gardening

Table 19.2 Summary of case study sites

Site Name	Urban/ Rural	Geographic scale	Primary FSP coordinator
Lawrence, KS	Urban	City and county	City-County Food Policy Council
“Staples Region,” MN	Rural	Five counties	Region Five Development Commission
Seattle, WA	Urban	City and county	Seattle City Office of Sustainability and Environment
Marquette County, MI	Rural	County-wide	County Planning Division

⁴For more detailed review of the policies and plans by case, see the research briefs “Exploring Stories of Innovation,” found at <http://growingfoodconnections.org/research/communities-of-innovation/>



Fig. 19.2 Location of four case studies

and Urban Agriculture Program (Pictured in Fig. 19.3) established in 2012, which leases underutilized space in the City of Lawrence to residents to start urban agriculture and community gardens.

Principal among the community groups is the LiveWell Coalition, a multi-sector public-private partnership developed by a community foundation in 2009 to support physical activity and nutrition in the community. LiveWell endorsed and works to implement elements of the Douglas County Community Health Plan, with support of the health department. Plan development involved extensive community outreach that helped the steering committee – assembled by the health department’s director – to identify five key areas of work.

“Staples” Region, MN Staples Region is a five-county region in Minnesota composed of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena Counties (Pictured in Fig. 19.3). Food system planning efforts in this rural region are coordinated by the Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) in collaboration with local governments, food hubs, healthcare providers, schools, and producers. Food system collaboration was motivated by the 2009 R5DC Resilient Region plan, which identified food system sustainability as a key issue for the region.

Due to limited financial and human capital resources, many efforts rely on largely informal relationships and collaborations. For instance, collection of data on the local food system by R5DC involves pulling together resources from myriad actors, including hospitals, various governmental departments, and food access non-profits. Several notable projects in the region are described below.



Fig. 19.3 Saint Mathius Farm in Brainerd, MN within “Staples” Region. (Photo courtesy of Jennifer Whittaker)

Seattle, WA Food system planning in Seattle and the surrounding Puget Sound region aims to improve equitable access to healthy food while supporting local agriculture. The Local Food Action Initiative Resolution (LFAIR), adopted by the Seattle City Council in 2008, established the core framework for food policies, provides direction on food related issues to city departments, and created the interdepartmental food system team and food policy coordinator position to help coordinate food programs and policies. The broad objectives established by LFAIR are further detailed in the Seattle Food Action Plan (SFAP). Within Seattle City government, the Office of Sustainability and Environment is tasked with coordination among departments and organization and facilitation of food system efforts. In addition to the City of Seattle, Seattle Tilth, a longstanding nonprofit in the region that has been advocating on food and agriculture since the 1970s, played a key role in developing and shepherding food system projects in collaboration with the City.

Seattle has had a long history of urban-agriculture and community gardening since the launch of its P-Patch community garden program in 1973 (Pictured in Fig. 19.4), which involves community members in gardening and stewarding a total of nearly 34 acres across the city. More recently, the SFAP included explicit objectives to support urban agriculture in the city as part of developing equitable access to healthy food. For a more in-depth description and analysis of Seattle’s food system planning, see Hodgson et al. in this volume.



Fig. 19.4 P-Patch Garden in Seattle, WA. (Photo courtesy of Kristie McLean at the City of Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment)

Marquette County, MI The Marquette case is a largely rural county in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The County's plan and zoning review process, which is a state mandated review process wherein municipalities are required to submit city plans to the county for review, provides a means of fostering and supporting food-related plan development. County feedback on municipal plans is informed by the Marquette County Local Food Supply Plan (MCLFSP), which was primarily developed by one planner in the County Planning Division, with informal consultation with nonprofits and the Marquette Food Co-op. This planning document serves as an educational document for fostering attention to local food resiliency issues. County-level plans are echoed by cities, such as the City of Marquette and Chocolay Township, which included food as part of their mater plan updates.

Unlike other cases, local governments in the area tend not to be the leading motivators behind food system efforts, though the previously mentioned plan review process helps advance county-wide food system efforts. A prominent institutional actor in food system issues is the Marquette Food Co-op, which provided informational support on the development of the MCLFSP. Additionally, the co-op's education and outreach staff were key to promoting food system planning in the County and beyond. Similarly, Transition Marquette, a local group started by a university professor focused on sustainability and climate change issues, facilitated community outreach.

19.5 Findings and Their Implications for Equity and Ethics

In keeping with the theoretical expectations at the outset of this chapter, interviewees frequently noted the importance of interpersonal relationships as key to FSP development. In Seattle, for instance, despite the existence of a formalized coordinating entity (the Office of Sustainability and Environment), much of the food systems policy work in the city depended on one-on-one relationships; “most of the more specific work happens in smaller group meetings with different members of different departments or one-on-one relationships... I just talk to a lot of them on the phone frequently.” Furthermore, development of these relationships was a key starting place for the development of FSP. As another participant described; “we were really interested in ways that we could help build the connections between government and community, and community and community, and government and other governments, and you know, there’s all this different stuff going on.” As this quote emphasizes, participants described the development and maintenance of inter-personal relationships as an important activity in linking and supporting existing work in the community into a cohesive, integrated food system plan.

These cases demonstrate significant commonalities concerning the role and nature of interpersonal relationships. Here, we describe the findings on how interpersonal relationships shape FSP development in three parts. The first elaborates on base motivations for developing interpersonal relationships around FSP and resulting challenges. The second part describes five important characteristics of the relational environment that facilitate the creation of interpersonal relationships in the context of FSP development. The final section describes the practice of humble listening in developing cross sector relationships and two associated activities, education and interorganizational coordination. Table 19.3 provides a summary of thematic categories and example codes. Text in quotation within Table 19.3 indicates language drawn directly from relevant quotations.

19.5.1 *Motivation for Developing Interpersonal Relationships*

In all four cases, primary motivations for developing interpersonal relationships rested on desires to develop integrated approaches to policy while leveraging existing projects and creativity in the community. As a Seattle city councilperson described, “both the opportunity, and the greatest challenge, is how to integrate all [of the work related to the food system] and really work on a large system scale,” a sentiment echoed by other interview respondents. Due to the conventional, siloed approach to policy development, system integration fosters a second, related motivation; breaking down conventional issue boundaries and departmental boundaries.

Crossing conventional issue boundaries is partly a manifestation of the subject of food – which connects to myriad social equity, economic, and environmental issues – and partly a means of leveraging available financial, human, and creative

Table 19.3 Thematic coding categories, associated sub-themes, and example codes^a

Thematic categories	Sub themes	Example codes
Motivation for relationship building	“Integrated approach”	<i>Connecting to “other issues,” “bridging gaps,” “siloed departments,” government “engagement”</i>
	Leveraging resources/ideas	<i>Scarce resources, “leverage,” “opportunities,” good ideas</i>
Characteristics of the relational environment	Shared vision	<i>“alignment,” “shared values,” common “vision,” “synergy,” “buy-in”</i>
	Community “support”	<i>Community “support” and “interest, community,” “momentum”</i>
	“Passionate” champions	<i>“personal” project, “passion,” “champion,” “spearheading,” “driving force”</i>
	“Informal” relationships	<i>“ad hoc,” it happened “because we knew one another”</i>
	“Latitude”	<i>“loose network,” “flexibility,” “freedom to dabble”</i>
Humble listening	Listening with “humility”	<i>“ear to the ground,” “listening to the community,” “dialogue,” “humility,” “vulnerability,” “preconceived notions are insulting,”</i>
	“Education”	<i>“educational component,” “be persuasive,” “embedding,” “rallying theme”</i>
	“Coordination”	<i>“collaboration,” “coalition,” “partnership,” “team,” “face-to-face meetings”</i>

^aWords noted in quotation marks denote in-vivo references to coded text

resources. The universal importance of food, and its connection to myriad topics situates it as a connector issue. As a Marquette County interviewee described:

We don’t look at an agency and go, ‘hm, they have nothing to do with food, we’re not going to even approach them.’ We’re going to find that everybody eats and everybody has a connection to food, so what is it that we can do to partner with a really broad range of agencies so that we can bring so many different resources to the table that it eventually works?

Respondents also connected integration across issues with the opportunity to leverage existing work and accomplish system-wide work in spite of scarce resources. Responding to a question about key barriers to food system planning, a Marquette government official lamented that “it’s always time. There is never enough time to do everything,” and a Staples Region nonprofit interviewee iterated: “let’s be really clear, there is no money paying for this coordination. Very, very little.” The prevalence of nonprofit, for-profit, and citizen groups with a stake in, and existing work related to the food system motivated local governments to function in a facilitator role:

[City government is] looking at opportunities to leverage work that’s already happening, so, whether that’s inside city government or whether that’s outside city government... [there’s some] leverage point where we can take something and make it bigger, or make a bigger difference with it.

Relatedly, interviewees frequently identified capitalization on creativity as a key motivation for reaching across conventional issue and departmental boundaries. A Staples Region official commented that, when developing plans to foster economic development around food system issues, good ideas came from unconventional places:

The very best ideas we had for economic development did not come from well established, fantastically knowledgeable economic development practitioners or professionals. The best ideas came from innovative thinking from transportation and affordable housing people. And so, we needed to ask who else cares and put a diverse group of people together in a room, and not just diversity in terms of gender and race and economic diversity, but diversity in terms of professional abilities and the silos we put ourselves in. And that was the best thing we could do, all of the sudden there were mutually beneficial goals between organizations that we had no idea connected.

Notably, these motivations did not emphasize developing social equity or equitable processes. However, this absence makes sense in light of the vast array of issues, actors, and associated motivations encompassed by the FSP universe. In this context, one person in the group may be motivated by environmental problems in the food system (e.g., food waste, pesticide use, etc.), another might be more concerned with the lack of access to culturally appropriate food within a community. While a different problem may motivate each participant involved in creating FSP, the shared motivation – the importance of which is discussed below – is a faith that pursuing their individual motivations collaboratively will yield better outcomes for the entire community.

19.5.2 The Relational Environment of Collaboration

Despite the strong motivations to engage in collaboration, interpersonal collaboration in practice faces significant barriers, principally protectiveness and resistance to change. One Staples Region interviewee commented that “I think for the mere fact that you can put those kinds of voices together in a room is... pretty challenging in itself.” Another Staples Region interviewee noted that the expertise of community members engaged in food systems planning produces its own challenge; “I think the coordination gets hampered by the individuals’ own different strengths. Where they feel like they need to protect and hide, or feel like they need to own and get paid for every single bit of [the work].” Similarly, interview participants in both Seattle and Marquette commented on resistance to FSP due to “fear of change,” particularly from political leadership. These challenges are emblematic of low trust conditions, particularly at the beginning of collaboration, when participants are uncertain about whether their contribution will be reciprocated.

Despite this resistance, five prominent features of the social environment around FSP development in these sites beneficially contributed to the fostering of interpersonal relationships among collaborators. These features include; a shared vision,

interest and support from the community, passionate individuals who can champion and/or catalyze action, informal relationships, and professional latitude to collaborate and develop necessary relationships.

Shared Vision Both across local government and within the community, shared vision and norms played an important part in facilitating a systems approach to policy development. As a Seattle official described;

I think there is an ethic here in this community that really values the environment and the health of the community, and I think a lot of individuals who were either working in government or elected to serve in government brought that ethic into the system with them... we all share these values, I think that really helps advance the cause.

Shared values and motivations facilitated systems work both by assisting with motivational alignment between organizations and departments of local government and by creating public pressure for local government to respond, as an interviewee in Lawrence County posited;

I think one of the great opportunities that we find ourselves at, is that there's really great alignment in the community right now, where the health department is saying access to healthy foods is an issue, LiveWell Lawrence... is working on it and pushing for it. We have the Food Policy Council that is aligned toward the initiative. And the city and county commissioners are hearing from all three of these groups... related to improving access to healthy food.

Where shared vision was not prevalent, or where key community members and leadership did not share the vision, food system leaders frequently cited the need to “get buy-in” to the approach. As one Seattle figure noted, “there is a degree of education and buy-in that has had to happen over time.” This is a sentiment that was echoed by leadership in Staples Region where food system planners had to “tell [local government personnel] what we were doing, why it benefited the community, why that local unit of government should be invested in it, and we had to get their buy in.” The need for buy-in speaks to the importance of developing shared understanding of the vision and purpose of the systems approach, which was facilitated by education and outreach on the benefits of a systems approach to the community.

Notably, equitable participation and engagement does not appear in these comments about shared vision. Partly, this is because these comments reflect interviewee comments about how shared vision aided interpersonal relationships in FSP development. However, a critical view of these comments might also raise questions about the degree to which collaboration equitably engaged community members. For instance, while interviewee comments about the need to “get buy-in” reflect the importance of community/political support in FSP development (next section), it may also reflect a more classic, inform and consult approach to community engagement rather than a collaborate and empower approach (Arnstein 1969). Nonetheless, shared vision provided a key feature of the social environment that aided the development of interpersonal relationships in the collaborative process.

Community Support A second, related, feature of the social environment that supported interpersonal relationships in these cases was the need for interest and support by the community, including both political leadership and the community at large. Beyond shared vision, support entailed the facilitation of action. While interviewees commented on the importance of political support, interviewees commonly noted that widespread community support was essential to pushing collaborative FSP development forward. For instance, a Seattle interviewee commented that “what really propelled [the FreshBucks⁵ program] forward was community-based interest.”

Broad community support also contributed “momentum” to the policy process. One interviewee commented that “there’s this community momentum right now that’s just... everywhere now. People are talking about local food and access to food... and our restaurants are featuring these local food items, and it just seems like there’s this great momentum.” While momentum facilitated action, it was also a resource that had to be maintained due to the long-term nature of the planning efforts. A Staples Region participant noted that a “challenge is... trying to sustain the momentum and vision for what is a really long-term goal... Capturing the attention of folks who are outside the choir and trying to bring them in to the fold and foster that energy... can be harder to do when you’re talking about that kind of long-term picture.” This interviewee’s comment points to the central difficulty of maintaining community interest in social mobilization efforts. Similar to shared vision, community support aided FSP development in these cases both by creating political pressure to develop FSP and by fostering a supportive social environment around FSP collaboration.

Passionate Champions Beyond general community support, a third important feature of the relational environment was involvement of passionate “champions” and/or catalyzers to move ideas into reality. On the political level, governmental support often came in the form of individual political leaders. An interviewee in Lawrence commented that, “I think, as a city, we had a clear direction from our mayor and city manager to make it happen,” suggesting the importance of not only political support, but particular political champions with the authority to motivate action.

Passion of individual staff members was an often-cited component of the FSP development process. As one Marquette interviewee argues, “really, [support] hasn’t come from the government themselves... It’s been more of the individual personalities of the planners and their interaction with stakeholders and the community.” A government official in Marquette supported this assertion, noting that the impetus behind the development of the plan “started with passion from staff.” Individual passion for the work of FSP governance is likely critical to the work of

⁵FreshBucks is a program that provides funding to match SNAP benefits at farmers’ markets, increasing the purchasing power of SNAP users at farmers’ markets compared to grocery or other retail venues.

coordinating community members. Across all four cases, interview participants described the importance of particular individuals, both within and external to government, that were critical to realizing FSP plans by personally pushing for policies, coordinating involved organizations and/or departments, and negotiating between groups in the community.

While individual passion and investment was critical to FSP governance, it also came with a cost. A Seattle interviewee described how support might come from political leadership “that might be all exciting and does stuff, but then they leave. And the agenda goes with them.” This comment speaks both to the influence of political leadership in motivating action, and also to the risk inherent when support is isolated to a singular individual. Similarly, while staff passion was essential to realizing FSP, it made it difficult to fill administrative positions when individuals left. For instance, a Marquette interview participant described a key figure on the County food plan that was leaving her position; “she’s so good and has such a thick skin, and she’s so well-versed. I mean just passionate, and knowledgeable, and driven, and is not going to take no for an answer. I think that comes with intrinsic passion and also the person is going to have such a learning curve coming in.” This comment points to the important role of individual passion in coordinating diverse participants. Yet, the final phrase suggests the difficulty of replacing such individuals.

Policy scholarship has long been recognized “public service motivation” as a critical factor in effective policy implementation (Bellé 2013, Perry and Vandenaebale 2015). However, this finding on passionate champions further extends the importance of such motivation – in the context of FSP – to catalyzing and motivating the *development* of policy. However, reliance on individuals to develop interpersonal relationships and build collaboration also carries a risk that the informal relationships of these individuals – which are essential to FSP development, as discussed in the following section – may end of end up excluding particular groups.

Informal Relationships Informal relationships were essential features of the social environment of FSP collaboration. From the development of policy ideas to inter-departmental and inter-organizational coordination, interview participants frequently referenced informal interpersonal relationships as important. Part of the reason for the importance of informal interactions was that, in each case, no preexisting institutional structure existed that could be used to develop and coordinate system-wide policies. Thus, who to work with and how was largely a matter of perceived appropriateness, regardless of conventional reporting relationships. For instance, a Staples Region interviewee described how “one of the common phraseologies used in this region is, ‘who else cares about this work and can help me do this?’ You bring those people into your table, and a lot of this [work] happened over table-top conversations.” This description points to the need to creatively identify actors that were relevant to the work, regardless of the existence of formal structures for collaboration. Additionally, the participant’s use of “table-top conversations” implies that collaborative informality characterized this approach to developing relationships, rather than formalized partnerships, etc.

Informal relationships became important kick-starters for further collaborative ideas and projects. Another Staples Region interviewee described how informal relationships contributed to further ideas later on:

Once you have that relationship, you can start developing, “hey, what are other projects that we can work on, because we worked pretty well on this, how can we lead towards other things?” That’s been a pretty informal partnership... as we have ideas, and want to engage more of our community.

The role of informal relationships in facilitating future collaboration was further illustrated by Marquette, where city-county collaboration on a food hub feasibility study began with a phone call;

[Person X] called me... to let me know that the Kansas City Healthcare Foundation, that funded Kansas City to do a Food Hub Capability Study. And we had been in communication, and kind of thinking along the same path already. But it was really great timing that both grants were dispersed at the same time, it allowed us to synchronize our studies.

In this case, the opportunity to coordinate and collaborate on a shared project occurred only because of existing informal relationships.

Yet, informal relationships and reliance on individuals also has a dark side. Despite the benefits of informal social relationships as the basis for creative policy creation, and the potential of collaboration to inclusively engage underrepresented voices (Quick and Feldman 2011), reliance on the informal relationships of a small group of individuals also creates a risk of excluding traditionally underrepresented voices from policy creation with no avenue for publicly rectifying that exclusion. This exclusion need not be the result of nefarious intent. If policy or planning professionals in the position of organizing collaborative FSP development are simply unaware, or fail to consider the involvement of a particular group, then a representative of that group may be left out of the policy conversation.

This risk is particularly elevated in cases where policy creation is spearheaded by a small group of people or a single individual, as this research suggests is often the case for FSP development. Thus, while passionate individuals appear to be essential to FSP development, they also create a risk that important voices could be excluded from a conversation. As collaborative approaches become the norm in FSP, a critical question becomes who is, and is not, part of these networks? Future research on FSP should attend to the role and nature of these boundary-spanning relationships, their distribution across communities and groups in a locality, and the impact of these relationships on FSP development and social equity.

Professional Latitude Finally, essential to the ability to develop and maintain informal interpersonal relationships was professional “latitude”. Latitude – also described as “freedom to dabble” and/or “flexibility” – made it possible for collaboration participants, particularly those involved with developing and coordinating collaboration, to reach across organizational and/or issue barriers to develop informal relationships with community members. These descriptions were particularly applied to local government personnel;

At the county level, it seems to me anyway that [planners] have a lot more freedom to, as planners, determine, you know, where they're going to put their time and energy. And [Person X] had been working on the issue of local food and local food policy for a long time, so she really was the logical fit. And so, she tends to be the county representative on many of these types of things. So, she just came to the table. When we asked who would like to be part of the policy committee, she stepped forward.

Supporting this observation, a planner described his/her work as permitting “a pretty good amount of latitude or autonomy in what I get involved with as long as I get my other work done.” Likewise, another planner in Marquette noted that “the county has acknowledged that [food planning is] important enough that, you know, their planner can sit on a food policy committee, for example, or, you know, try to, you really have the freedom to, you know, dabble into some of these different topics to try to improve the situation.” In this case, latitude appears to be an important factor in the ability of local government planners to engage in systems work on an ad-hoc basis that permits them to respond to issues and develop relationships as necessary to facilitate FSP governance. As such, while latitude is a separate feature of the relational environment of FSP development, it is functionally integral to the existence of informal social relationships.

Informal relationships and the professional latitude to develop them highlight an important tension between flexibility and structure that permeates the FSP development process. On one side, flexibility to “dabble” (as one participant phrased it) allows communities to capitalize on passionate individuals who champion FSP development (Raja et al. 2014). On the other, reliance on the interpersonal relationships of a single individual may inadvertently exclude relevant participants. The characteristic of FSP that helps practitioners navigate this tension comes down to the practice of listening.

19.5.3 Relationship-Building through Listening with Humility

In keeping with the previously described importance of interpersonal relationships, interviewees frequently commented on the practice of developing new relationships. A Staples Region participant described how she put effort into maintaining relationships with various groups in the region as a form of investment in potential future collaboration; “I stay engaged in a lot of circles so that when I need them they know and have some respect for me...I didn't have to be part of the state food policy planning. But that allowed me to build the relationships that I needed...it is about those relationships.” In addition to identifying a key role of relationship development, this quote also identifies “respect” as important to fostering these relationships. This points to an important feature of the kinds of relationships developed by actors in FSP governance; namely that they rest on mutual respect and trust, and not solely strategic interdependencies or need. A Lawrence participant described how

“simply creating the relationships you need to have that trust, you need to have that understanding.” This participant noted that developed “trust” and “understanding” were critical to the effectiveness of an important champion of FSP in the location and that the individual spent a significant amount of her time fostering this trust, similar to the description offered by the Staples Region participant.

One critical activity noted by participants in these cases was the importance of listening to other members of the community, both for gathering information and also as a demonstration of good faith to the community. A Staples Region participant described how food system planners “don’t know that some of these [participants] care about these [food related issues] until we break down the silos. Throw a bunch of people in a room, even if you don’t know how it’s going to be a value to them. And brainstorm and be humble enough to know that you don’t know it all.” One particularly important word in this description is “humble,” which suggests that those in power (city/regional planners, government officials, etc.) needed to employ an open-minded form of listening in order to effectively capitalize on resources and develop trust.

Supporting the importance of open-minded listening, a Marquette participant warned that failure to openly listen to community members imperiled effective food systems work; “don’t ever use the approach ‘build it and they will come.’ You absolutely need to do this the other way around. You need to have your ear to the ground. You need to have your eyes, ears, and heart open throughout the community, and you need to be able to listen, and listen well.” This suggests that, rather than serving as experts in the comprehensive design of FSP, government officials and planners in successful FSP governance served as mediators of public input, translating community ideas and aspirations into policy.

Importantly, serving as a mediator for public input required that leaders in the planning process were willing to put aside preconceived plans and act on public input. Reiterating the previously mentioned theme of humility, another Staples Region interview participant, describing her perspective on involving community members in a brainstorming session, iterated that “if you bring people together and they give you ideas, you better be humble enough to actually deploy and implement and think about utilization of those ideas... if you have a preconceived notion of the direction you’re going to go, for God’s sake do not ask anyone else’s opinion, it is insulting.”

Relationship-building through humble listening permeated several activities, including how practitioners approached education and inter-organizational coordination. Education was a key task, not only for developing buy-in, but for “embedding” motivations within government leadership and thus overcoming reliance on individual passion. As one participant noted; “I think really an important lesson for other municipalities is to find [ways] to build that education over time and embed it... how to embed it within the institution and not just within the people.” An implication of this quote is that local governments developing FSP, while depending on passionate individuals, also needed to “embed” shared values in order to ensure that FSP work would not remain dependent on individuals.

Additionally, humble listening practices appeared in relation to inter-organizational coordination, which made system-wide work possible under conditions of scarce resources. As a Marquette participant explained, inter-organizational coordination was the “only way we can get anything done” and a Seattle participant explained that “the city itself is not gonna solve all this. I mean, one, it’s too big of a system problem, and two... we don’t have the revenue.” As this quote and others suggest, resource sharing was key motivation for collaboration.

The practice of planners and policy makers listening to community members and acting upon their input implies that civil society involvement in FSP processes can include a shift of power. As a result, collaboration in FSP development more closely resembles true collaboration than informing or consulting (International Association for Public Participation 2014, Forester 1988). Moreover, individual actions of relationship-building via listening with humility point to the role of that action and its practitioners in developing interpersonal trust, an important resource in collaborative networks (Chen et al. 2014, Gulati and Sytch 2008, Klijn et al. 2010a). An implication of this finding is that strength of relationship (i.e., level of trust) matters substantively for the results of taking a systems-oriented approach. Higher trust between participants better enables the flow of information during the policy development process while flexibility enables practitioners to develop trust-based relationships.

In spite of the lack of attention to equity as a topic in shared motivation, the practice of humble listening applied to education and coordination provides an important practice that fosters greater equity in FSP collaboration. An important takeaway from this research is the role of the motivations and ethics of the individuals and groups involved in spearheading FSP development. As a new area of policy action, leadership decisions on FSP development entail a high degree of uncertainty because there are few examples and no settled and established practices for such an approach. Not only is individual motivation central to FSP, but so too is individual ability to respond to conditions and deal with uncertainty and dynamism by exercising “reflexivity” in the form of humble listening.

Reflexivity entails the action of reflecting on professional work in order to adapt to undefined, evolving, and unique problems (Schön 1983). Reflexive individuals are able to assess not only what they do know and how it applies, but are better able to prompt self-reflection on what information they lack. This skill is foundational to FSP and the actions of passionate individuals – in the form of “humble listening” – mirror practices of reflexivity. The wicked problem universe of FSP precludes the possibility of any individual or like-minded group being able to understand the problems in that space. Moreover, the differing experience of traditionally under-represented groups within this space add further complexity to this problem universe.

Engaging participants in collaborative FSP development processes, while maintaining their individual passion and motivation, requires that practitioners exercise a kind of “passionate humility.” This involves both a conviction that their work is correct, while remaining open to and willing to consider the diverse viewpoints they

encounter (Yanow 2009). The findings of this research point to FSP development practitioners engaged in this kind of reflexivity, by being passionate about their work while “dabbling” in various issue areas and remaining open-minded to how those groups/individuals might be connected to FSP. This personal passion and motivation, combined with frequent reflection that prompts FSP coordinators to seek out new voices allows practitioners to navigate the previously discussed tension between informality/latitude and formalized structure.

19.6 Conclusion

In the face of complex, interconnected food system problems, many communities are turning to collaborative, multi-stakeholder approaches to developing food system policies. Traditional siloed approaches to policy manifest in conflicting objectives, inefficiency, and negative externalities that impede or negate the resolution of complex problems. Much research in FSP has focused on documenting the types of plans and policies that communities have implemented as a result of these processes. However, we argue that the interpersonal relationships that make up the collaborative networks of participants in developing FSP are foundational to food system policy creation. This paper draws on literature in collaborative governance to propose that FSD development depends, in large part, on interpersonal relationships involved in the FSP development process.

Towards this end, we explored how interpersonal relationships shape collaborative food systems policy processes, including the motivations for developing interpersonal relationships, the characteristics of the environment that supported these relationships, and the activities that contributed to the development of interpersonal relationships in the FSP development process. To understand these issues, we conducted and qualitatively analyzed semi-structured interviews with policy practitioners in four U.S. cases.

Importantly, this research did not point to equity as a strong motivation for developing interpersonal relationships in the FSP development process. Nor was equity highlighted as a shared vision that facilitated the development of interpersonal relationships in the policy development process. However, this research sheds important light on the role of passionate individuals in the policy development process and practices of “humble listening” in maintaining an open-minded approach to engaging community members in the policy development process. Potentially, this humble approach may be a manifestation of the issue itself, the vastness of which exceeds the capacity of even the most capable professional. Whatever its origins, this “passionately humble” approach to policy practice opens the door for equitably engaging diverse voices in the policy development process.

This research provides a limited, yet important glimpse into how interpersonal relationships shape FSP development. However, many questions remain unexplored and we hope this research spurs further research into the interpersonal processes of developing equitable food system policy. For instance, while this research benefits

from focusing on preeminent examples of FSP development in both urban and rural contexts, it does not identify how that context shapes the development of interpersonal relationships. Population size, level of rurality, and myriad other factors likely play a role in shaping interpersonal relationships that make up collaboration around FSP development. Future research can elaborate on this by attending to the role of context and its impact on the role and nature of interpersonal relationships.

A further question that arises from this research concerns the sustainability of FSP efforts. Limited formal structures and reliance on passionate individuals can improve creativity and help foster strong interpersonal relationships across institutional, issue, and cultural boundaries. Yet, these factors can also minimize the sustainability of efforts if an individual departs. A potential response to the issue of sustainability is the practice of “embedding” shared values, norms, and motivations across government agencies (Irish 2017), thereby facilitating both interdepartmental collaboration and reducing reliance on isolated individuals to push forward FSP. Future research on FSP development should devote greater attention to the role of cultural embedding in structuring and sustaining policy processes.

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Aiden Irish is a researcher and project manager for the Glenn College of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University. His research and work center on the use of multi-stakeholder collaborative planning and governance in local and regional food system development and the role of local culture in these processes. Aiden worked as a policy consultant and researcher for several nonprofits around the U.S., specializing in food system planning and development. He received his doctorate in public administration from Ohio State University.

Jill Clark is an Associate Professor, at the John Glenn College of Public Affairs, The Ohio State University. Clark's research focus is agrifood system policy and planning, centering on community and state governance of food systems and public engagement. Clark provides statewide leadership for the Ohio Food Policy Network, national leadership as an advisory board member for the Food Policy Network, international leadership as the president of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society, and local leadership as an appointment member of the city and county local food board. Clark recently was awarded the 2022 Excellence in Engaged Scholarship from the Engaged Scholarship Consortium.

Kimberley Hodgson, MURP, MS, AICP, RD is the founder and principal of Cultivating Healthy Places, an international consulting business specializing in community health, social equity and resilient food systems planning. As a certified planner and health professional, her work focuses on conducting policy-relevant research and providing technical assistance to the public and private sectors related to the design and development of healthy, sustainable places. Hodgson's research has been published in varied academic and practitioner-focused venues as journal articles, policy briefs, monographs, and book chapters.

Samina Raja is a professor of food systems planning and the founder and director of the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab (UB Food Lab) at the University at Buffalo. Her scholarship, teaching, and practice focuses on the role of people-led policy and planning on promoting food and health equity.

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Part IV
Pedagogy of Capacity Building Through
Urban Agriculture

Chapter 20

Cultivating an Equitable, Just, and Compassionate Food Systems Pedagogy



Marcia Caton Campbell and Alexandra Judelsohn

Abstract Early food systems planning pedagogy was offered through studio or special topics course formats. This section of the book reflects upon those pedagogical origins and traces how academics mapped the way they taught about the food system onto the traditional methods and processes that planning students learn. Two of the chapters, however, chart a bolder way forward for food systems planning pedagogy that revolves around equitable community engagement and racial justice. This new justice-oriented, equitable engagement approach requires planning pedagogy to confront the thornier aspects of planning for the food system, by explicitly recognizing the power dynamics, systems of oppression, and injustices that planning has created and perpetuated.

Keywords Food systems pedagogy · Capacity building · Community engaged learning · Equitable pedagogy · Community-university partnerships · Racial justice

20.1 History of Food Systems Planning Pedagogy

In his 2003 keynote address at the American Planning Association (APA) National Planning Conference in Denver, Colorado, Jerry Kaufman exhorted the planners in attendance to wake up to the importance of planning for the food system, which had received attention in planning pedagogy for some time, but was far from widespread in planning practice. In the decades since Kaufman's Denver address, planning academics have seen their way clear to regularly and more deeply engaging their students in food systems planning (Mendes et al. 2011; Greenstein et al. 2015), though planning practice—and to some extent planning pedagogy—continues to lag behind

M. Caton Campbell (✉)
Rooted, Madison, WI, USA
e-mail: marcia@rootedwi.org

A. Judelsohn
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: ajudelso@buffalo.edu

Food for Thought: A Call to Uproot Inequity in Chicago's Food System

Kristopher Walton

As a Chicago native, I have a deep passion for the well-being of the city I call home. For years, my academic and professional interests have been dedicated to ways that I can make my home a healthy and equitable place to live. Frankly, the best part of Chicago is the people who call it home. For many years, Jerry Kaufman, too, lived and worked in Chicago, and his love for the city was lifelong. Most Chicagoans share a deep passion for our city and will be quick to share our love of Chicago with anyone, whether they asked for it or not.

That love for Chicago is what drives many of us to fight for equity throughout the city. One part of that fight includes our food system. Like many larger US cities, the South and West sides of Chicago suffer from food apartheid, the past and present racially discriminatory structures that led to food insecurity in marginalized communities. Despite the many efforts to address the disparities in our food system, there is still a lot of work to be done.

The fight for food equity starts at the community level. There are many community movements that take place on the South and West sides of Chicago that address legitimate concerns such as gang violence, over-policing, and community infrastructure. With so many other concerns, food is often a second thought. While important, other things get prioritized. The question is, how do we bring light to the importance of food equity in the midst of a city plagued with issues?

The question encompasses a complex problem that requires a complex answer. We can unpack the question to figure out ways the community can band together to start a grassroots movement to bring attention to the lack of equity in our food system.

Food systems education, too, is part of the solution and it must start early. Schools throughout the city can add food and nutrition education to their curriculum and school lunches can be made to match the lessons. In addition to lessons in school, the city of Chicago should expand their support for local initiatives that promote food equity. There's a storied nonprofit (originally grassroots) movement in Chicago related to the food system: Urban Growers Collective (in various incarnations), Growing Home, and NeighborSpace, for example, have been around for decades. There are other newer grassroots efforts as well, such as Catatumbo Cooperative Farm (<https://southsideweekly.com/healing-and-funding-chicagos-food-system/>).

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has a large farm to school program, with an Eat What You Grow curriculum launching during the 2022–2023 school year. Local/regional purchasing of protein and produce within a 350-mile radius of the city has been operational for many years now. CPS (in June 2017), the City (in October 2017), and Cook County (in May 2018) have each adopted a

(continued)

Good Food Purchasing resolution and are participating in that national program (<https://goodfoodpurchasing.org/>). A large coalition of organizations, including BIPOC-led groups, restaurants, and labor unions have signed on in support of good food purchasing (<https://goodfoodcities.org/portfolio/chicago/>).

The University of Illinois at Chicago's SNAP-Ed programs focus on behavior change and ways to stretch peoples' SNAP dollars on healthy foods. Additionally, there is the Eat, Move, Save program through the Illinois Universities Extension that promotes not just cost saving on nutritious food but also active life styles on a budget. Lastly, there must be affordable and quality grocery retail options in all neighborhoods.

There are many ways to increase equity in the food system in Chicago but no matter what the solutions are, they must tackle the root causes of why nutritious, affordable, and culturally important foods are not available in the communities that need them most. We cannot continue to trim branches and not chop the roots.

the innovations of urban agriculture practitioners. With notable exceptions (including those described elsewhere in this volume), the responsibility to plan—and plan *equitably*—for the food system is still rarely formalized in planning practice (Raja and Whittaker 2018) The chapters in this section of the book trace a more recent historical pedagogical arc that is tied fairly closely to traditional methods and processes used by planners, mapping the newer substantive area of food systems planning onto those traditional methods. Two of the chapters chart a clear, bold path forward to a more equitable and community-engaged food systems planning pedagogy and practice revolving around equity. If we follow this path, food systems planning pedagogy and practice can help lead the field of planning overall into a more just and equitable future.

As is often the case when a new subfield of planning develops, food systems planning pedagogy in the United States was typically piloted in either studio or special topics course formats. Planning studios allow students to apply a blend of theory and methods learned in other coursework to a real-world problem or issue, sometimes for a real-world client. Special topics courses allow faculty to explore new research interests while simultaneously meeting their teaching load obligations. Not every food systems planning course offered in the early days is covered in what follows below, but several significant courses that led the way in accredited planning programs are featured.

In 1977, an early food systems planning studio was taught at the University of Tennessee, and resulted in a report on food distribution and consumption in the city of Knoxville. This course, and a second studio course, taught at UCLA by Bob Gottlieb, were foundational in shaping Jerry Kaufman's thinking and approach to

food systems planning. The 1993 UCLA course resulted in *Seeds of Change: Strategies for Food Security in the Inner City*, a report that led to a subsequent master's thesis written by Andy Fisher, one of the co-founders of the Community Food Security Coalition in 1996 and its long-time executive director. Then, in 1997, University of Wisconsin–Madison faculty members Jerry Kaufman and Kami Pothukuchi offered their food system planning studio, *Fertile Ground: Planning for the Madison/Dane County Food System* (Born et al. 2024; Pothukuchi and Glosser 2024). In their chapter, *Fertile Ground: Reflections on the Impacts and Implications of an Early University Food System Plan*, Born, Herbach, and Allan, alumni of the UW–Madison's then-Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URPL),¹ discuss their experience participating in this early studio. At the time, the studio course was used to explore this developing subfield of planning for both faculty and students. Born et al. reflect on how their participation in the studio shaped them on a personal level—from how they think about food in their own lives, to conducting research and teaching in their own academic and professional careers. They note that the studio's content involved addressing issues of racism, which helped to keep some of the students engaged in the field of planning (while issues of white supremacy and racism were not included in food systems planning courses early on, these topics became explicit in later studios).

In 2003, six years after *Fertile Ground*, Samina Raja, who had studied with Kaufman, Pothukuchi, and Caton Campbell at the UW—Madison, led an award-winning food systems studio as an Assistant Professor at the University at Buffalo. In *Revisiting Food for Growth: Lessons from a Food Systems Studio*, Judelsohn and Kelly (2024) offer a retrospective of the possibilities and challenges of a community-engaged food systems planning studio. While Raja had internalized what Kaufman and Pothukuchi said about ethics and equity, these topics were not at the forefront of her own course. The studio course did set the stage for a multi-decade relationship with community partners, however, and like *Fertile Ground*, influenced students to tackle food systems issues in their careers.²

By the early 2000s, food systems planning was being taught more widely in standard lecture formats (Hammer 2004), with the inclusion of some modest service-learning components. At the UW Madison, Caton Campbell had begun regularly offering an introductory course on community and regional food systems planning to masters and upper-level undergraduate students, while Beatley and Denckla Cobb had begun offering a similar course at the University of Virginia (Mendes et al. 2011). In 2015, Greenstein et al. (2015) followed up on Hammer's (2004) previous work, finding that the number of accredited planning programs

¹ URPL merged with the Department of Landscape Architecture in 2017 to become the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture (DPLA).

² Universities can play a role in local food systems planning and policy processes, and studio courses can be one way to facilitate this. Yet still, as recently as 2013, only 7.27% of accredited planning programs reported that they had offered a food systems planning studio course (Whittaker et al. 2017).

including food systems planning in their curriculum had tripled between 2004 and 2012.

Food systems planning pedagogy in the late 1990s and early 2000s did not yet focus on the social determinants of health, as Born et al. (2024) and Judelsohn and Kelly (2024) note in their discussions of the early studio courses. Much work at this time focused on “improving human and environmental well-being” (Cannuscio and Glanz 2011), rather than disease prevention, racial health disparities, or economic injustices such as redlining. By the mid-2000s, however, the American Public Health Association adopted its own food system policy guide (Pothukuchi and Glosser 2024). This interest from a field of professional practice closely allied to planning, and the concomitant resurgence of the broader connection between planning and public health, partially authenticated food systems planning for skeptics in academic planning departments. At the same time, the emphasis, carried over from public health, on nutrition and health aspects of the food system limited a fuller exploration of the links between the food system and other systems for which planners routinely plan: this despite the clarity with which Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999) argued that the food system should not be a stranger to planning (see, e.g. Rosenberg and Cohen 2018; Cohen and Ilieva 2021).

In the early 2000s, community food assessments (CFAs) began to be taught often in the studio course format, as a baseline method for planning students to understand a local food system, applying standard methods of planning analysis to the new food systems planning subfield (Pothukuchi 2004). Pothukuchi’s handbook, published and disseminated by the Community Food Security Coalition, remains a best practice manual for this type of work. Students conducting CFAs drew upon the traditional quantitative and secondary data sources relied upon by practicing planners, but supplemented them with qualitative methods such as focus groups to garner input from community members and urban agriculture practitioners that shaped action steps in plans and policy recommendations relevant to the communities being studied. By engaging more directly with community members, CFAs also surfaced the structural tensions and inequities in local food systems, but did not always tie them back to policy and practice. Broad (2016), however, describes a powerful use of CFA as a food justice organizing tool in South Central Los Angeles. Applying a food systems lens to cities, Ilieva (2016) identifies typologies of food system assessments that have become part of the standard urban food planning “toolkit,” and describes clusters of indicators and metrics around urban food system policy goals such as environmental sustainability, local economic prosperity, public health, fairness in the food system, and resilient communities.

20.2 From Community Engagement to Equity and Justice

Food systems planning courses have evolved from their early emphasis on food access, nutrition, and the physical aspects of the food system (though these remain central). Now, more planning academics are grounding their teaching in the social

determinants of health (see, e.g., Schulz and Northridge (2004), and other equity issues. Today, most planning faculty drawn to teaching about the food system tend to have interests in ethics and social justice that are less theoretical and more action-oriented. Faculty offering courses on food systems planning have typically emphasized service learning and community-based service initiatives (Mendes et al. 2011). While these initiatives can be crucial opportunities for students to practice what they have learned in class, they can also be problematic. The last two decades have seen gradual movement from a one-off service learning model in planning pedagogy, particularly in community planning, towards longer-term relationships with communities, flipping the language describing the bidirectional relationship at play from “university-community partnerships” to “community-university partnerships” and adding an emphasis on community capacity building (Botchwey and Umemoto 2020; Denckla Cobb and Bingham 2024; Whittaker et al. 2017). Over time, planning academics have learned, sometimes the hard way, that they and their students should not enter communities with preconceptions about what a community needs or wants in their food environment. (Nor should they labor under the misapprehension that urban agriculture can replace the conventional food system in feeding cities.) While food systems planning pedagogy has made steps in the right direction, planning academics must more explicitly address power dynamics and how white supremacy is woven throughout urban agriculture and the food system—but only if faculty have done the work to understand and dismantle white supremacy in themselves.³

In teaching and learning about urban agriculture and the food system, it is particularly important for faculty and students to seek out the types of knowledge that are resident in communities themselves, and to bring these bodies of local knowledge—and the experts who hold them—directly into the classroom. In a classic article that remains relevant today, Umemoto (2001) argues that learning competencies should be based on culture, ways of knowing, and ethical actions, rather than the standards or defaults of planning practice. Caton Campbell (2004) proposes that planners and planning academics “build a common table” around community food systems discourse, using stakeholder analysis to understand and bridge the values, interests, and positions of various food system actors. Usher (2015) reconceptualizes food access as a dynamic model of five intertwined dimensions encompassing “the social interactions, cultural norms, socio-political, and economic factors that influence access to resources across the landscape.” Although Usher’s model takes grocery store location as its example, the same dimensions could be adapted and applied by students in a studio course as checkpoints with communities when creating an urban agriculture plan for a jurisdiction. In addition, faculty and students alike would benefit from doing the deeper work of examining their own social identities for their impact not only on how course content is assembled, presented, and analyzed, but especially for how those identities influence interactions with communities when planning for urban agriculture and the food system. Botchwey and

³ See also Botchwey and Umemoto (2020) for a discussion of power, privilege, and inequities in the context of community planning.

Umemoto (2020) offer a thoughtful, detailed checklist of questions for faculty to use in designing community-engaged service learning courses from a capacity-building approach. Valley et al. (2020) offer an “Equity Competency Model” as an approach to underlie food system planning training. This model includes four domains of awareness for students (who will be future practitioners): “awareness of self, awareness of others and one’s interactions with them, awareness of systems of oppression, and strategies and tactics for dismantling inequity” (Valley et al. 2020).

In Chap. 24, Mendes offers a way forward for food systems planning pedagogy, building on her previous work. In the final chapter of this section, Mendes reflects upon a 2011 article co-authored with Nasr and others on food systems pedagogy, and how planning literature and pedagogy has evolved since that time. She identifies four themes from the literature that signify how the field has shifted since its inception: interdisciplinarity, social justice and ethics, community-university research partnerships, and systems thinking. These themes both signify early concerns of food systems planning educators and newer ideas of skills, values, theories, and methods that future food systems planners need (Mendes 2024). Looking back at over two decades of pedagogy, Mendes identifies themes of interest to early food systems planning educators: “Increased awareness of, and sensitivity to the diversity of people involved and affected by food systems issues; Increased attention to the importance of stakeholder involvement in planning processes; Higher awareness of the broader governance context of planning; Deeper understanding of the links between globalization and planning education; and Better awareness of the connections between food systems and sustainability principles” (Mendes et al. 2011, quoted in Mendes 2024).

In the decade since Mendes et al. (2011) was published, a sizable body of literature on urban agriculture and the food system has emerged. While some themes overlap with those identified by Mendes et al. a decade ago, planning pedagogy now has available to it numerous resources with an increased awareness of issues of equity, ethics, and the power dynamics that obtain in food systems between communities and universities, and communities and local governments. With respect to urban agriculture and the food system, Cadieux and Slocum (2015) warn of the co-optation of the term “food justice.” They argue that the term has often been used as a catch-all for anything related to urban agriculture and the food system, much of which does not actually pertain to *justice*, and that food justice is not a term that can or should be broadly applied, but instead should be intended to mean work that “seek[s] ways to intervene against structural inequalities” (Cadieux and Slocum 2015). Specifically, they say, there are four areas in which true food justice work occurs, including trauma and inequality, exchange (including themes of trust and cooperation), land, and labor (Cadieux and Slocum 2015). Community activism toward food justice and self-determination is covered powerfully in numerous examples and case studies by Broad (2016) and contributors to Alkon and Guthman (2017).

To that end, in Chap. 25, Denckla Cobb and Bingham bring us to the contested nature of food systems planning courses in the present day, explicitly acknowledging and considering the macro factors—structural racism and oppression—that have

caused inequities and injustices in the food system. The authors home in on the importance of using university resources in the community as a force for good, to advance systems change through deep partnerships with neighboring communities. In a detailed case study, they reflect on historically tense town-gown relationships in Charlottesville, Virginia, and proffer a new framework by which university classes might engage with communities more equitably. They argue that the food systems planning subfield is well positioned to bridge rifts between universities and communities, both because of the nature of the subject and because planning educators have tended to approach the food system through attempts at community-engaged pedagogy (see also Whittaker et al. 2017, on the role urban universities can play in such partnerships).

We concur with Denckla Cobb and Bingham that it is critical for academics to engage actively with the myriad ways in which whiteness plays out in the food system. In working towards equity in urban agriculture and the food system, it is essential to develop a pedagogical culture that acknowledges the key white supremacy culture narratives (individualism, paternalism, neoliberalism, and universalism) outlined by Conrad (2020) and that more explicitly and transparently addresses whiteness in the food system. Urban agriculture and food systems planning courses will perpetuate systemic injustices if faculty do not make future planning practitioners not just cognizant, but conversant in how planning practice and policy making have exacerbated systemic racial injustices and disparities around food. Furthermore, those involved in food systems practice, whether as planners or urban agriculture practitioners, are frequently confronted with issues of white supremacy; yet planning educators do not always train students (future practitioners) adequately in recognizing and addressing them when they arise.

For example, larger urban agriculture projects have often been the purview of white-led nonprofit organizations that have access to land, financial and other resources, and to whom funders are comfortable making grants. BIPOC urban agriculture practitioners are often more interested in cooperatives and for-profit entities than nonprofit structures, as these allow for greater control over the direction that their organization or business takes, rather than being tied to meeting funder priorities. Furthermore, Black farmers have had far greater challenges with respect to land acquisition and tenure, as Gosch et al. (2024) outline in Chap. 17 of this book. Future planners need to know how to engage respectfully with urban agriculture practitioners to understand the challenges they face, in order to create useful urban agriculture policies and plans. Future planners need to go beyond learning cultural competency to demonstrate *cultural humility* (Sweet 2018) in their work and *cultivate compassion* for those with whom they plan (Lyles and White 2019). In addition, planners need to take care not to conflate facilitating urban agriculture projects with achieving larger food justice goals (Horst et al. 2017, this volume, Chap. 6).

Denckla Cobb and Bingham make the case for food systems planning to lead the way towards what they term *equitable pedagogy*: “[O]f all university faculty, it is those who teach food systems and urban agriculture courses who most need to pave this way, as food lies at the heart of a community’s identity and resilience, revealing its level of compassion, care, and inclusion” (Denckla Cobb and Bingham 2024). In

the course of developing their model of equitable pedagogy, Denckla Cobb and Bingham address the four competencies that Valley et al. (2020) have argued should underlie food systems pedagogy, outlining the ways in which faculty and students engage with community partners.

Denckla Cobb and Bingham's equitable pedagogy proposes shifting the student mindset from definitive recommendations to "a more facilitative mindset of careful observation and listening to discern community interests and needs" via qualitative interviews, practicing respectful and professional communication with students, role-playing scenarios with students, and having the class devise a set of "best practices" when engaging with community members. We encourage faculty to have community partners vet these best practices for their grounding in reality, lest students run the risk of repeating past mistakes borne of privilege. Importantly, the authors note that students should be made aware of the historical narrative between a community and its neighbor university and how "a culture of white supremacy continue[s] to manifest in stark disparities in jobs, wages, housing, and health, through guest speakers and readings" (Denckla Cobb and Bingham 2024). While the authors are referring here to their experiences at the University of Virginia and in Charlottesville, the lesson can be applied to any community-university relationship, because faculty members have all too often treated communities as learning labs for their students rather than as real communities of people living in specific places.

As a field dominated by white academics, food systems planning pedagogy needs to ensure that students grapple with the power dynamics and the historical and continuing systemic oppression present in the food system. Denckla Cobb and Bingham suggest that the classroom is a place where food justice work can easily be co-opted if not done thoughtfully, given the many constraints that come with a one-semester course. They note that by explicitly addressing historic inequities and creating multi-year, community-university partnerships that build equity in the community, we can engage in food justice in our pedagogy. By asking who is at the table and redefining what we consider "expert" knowledge, we teach food systems in a justice-oriented way. In doing so, we can also begin to address the individualism, neoliberalism, paternalism, and universalism that problematically permeate the food system and limit the effectiveness of urban agriculture and food systems planning pedagogy and practice.

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Marcia Caton Campbell is Executive Director of Rooted, a Madison (WI) urban agriculture and food systems organization. She is coauthor of *Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places, PAS Report No. 563* (American Planning Association, 2011), with Kimberley Hodgson and Martin Bailkey. A Past Chair of the American Planning Association's Food Systems Division, Caton Campbell was previously a faculty member in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She holds an MCRP and a PhD in city and regional planning from The Ohio State University.

Alexandra Judelsohn is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University at Buffalo. Her scholarship explores the role of local governments in the U.S. refugee resettlement program and, broadly, her interests include how the built environment impacts health, particularly for immigrant and refugee populations. Judelsohn holds a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University at Buffalo and a PhD from the University of Michigan.

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Chapter 21

On Collaboration in Teaching a Food Planning Course



Jerome L. Kaufman and Marcia Caton Campbell 

Abstract This article fills a gap in knowledge related to the preparation of future food systems professionals and scholars. Specifically, the article explores challenges and opportunities encountered by educators who teach food systems courses in university settings. The topic of food systems has recently experienced a boost in acceptance as an area of academic inquiry and legitimate professional practice. The article presents seven first-hand accounts by university educators who reflect back on their early experiences teaching courses on food systems in the discipline of urban planning. Set within a specific global region — North America — the findings are relevant to other professions and academic disciplines grappling with the topic of food systems. The analysis points to tensions and opportunities related to the professionalization of this emergent field of research and practice.

Jerome L. Kaufman died before publication of this work was completed.

With contributions from:

Timothy Beatley, Branden Born, Kristina Bouris, Marcia Caton Campbell, Jerome Kaufman, Barbara Lynch, Kami Pothukuchi, Gerda Wekerle

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J. L. Kaufman (deceased)

Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI, USA

M. Caton Campbell (✉)

Rooted, Madison, WI, USA

e-mail: marcia@rootedwi.org

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Jerome Kaufman, Emeritus Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Wisconsin-Madison; and Marcia Caton Campbell, Milwaukee Program Director, Center for Resilient Cities.

Our story is about the value of collaboration when stepping gingerly into virgin, unexplored territory in the planning field. In 1981 one of the authors of this piece, Jerry Kaufman, joined with Elizabeth Howe to teach the first-ever planning ethics class in a graduate planning program. Twenty years later, in 2001, Kaufman entered into collaboration with Marcia Caton Campbell to teach the first-ever class in a graduate planning program on community food planning. At the time each of these courses was offered, similarities were evident. Sparse research had been undertaken in the planning community to draw upon in teaching either subject. Little demand for, let alone interest, existed among planning students and planning faculty for either class to be offered. And both subjects were decidedly on the back burner of planning practitioners.

Yet, in both cases, these two quite different fields of inquiry gradually gained acceptance and legitimacy within the planning community. With planning ethics, which has been around much longer than community food planning, that acceptance is much more apparent. Planning ethics is now well integrated into the curricula of many planning schools, and recognized as an appropriate arena for theoretical inquiry as well as empirical research. And the professional planning community clearly recognizes the importance of ethics through its codes of ethics, which provide guidance for denoting both the aspirations and limits of planner behavior. In contrast, community food planning is still at the seedling stage, but recent signs show that the plant is growing at a healthy pace and becoming more firmly rooted in the planning community.

The circumstances that led to our co-teaching a semester-long community food-planning course are worth considering. In early 1997, Kaufman was asked to head up the Madison Food System Project (MFSP), part of the larger Wisconsin Food System Partnership, a five-year program funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UWM). With little knowledge of the food system, but having a good understanding of cities and regions, Kaufman accepted this challenge with a mix of trepidation and intrigue — trepidation, because he was an outsider to food system work and had a lot of learning to do, and intrigue, because the void in the literature of planning about food issues offered him an opportunity to cover new ground.

Soon after becoming MFSP director, Kaufman decided to combine his new interest in food issues with his role as a planning educator. Since it was his turn to teach the department's required planning workshop in the fall of 1997, he decided to jumpstart the learning process in the food arena by devoting the workshop to a community food assessment of the Madison-Dane County region. This was an ambitious undertaking, given the newness of the subject, but as a senior faculty member Kaufman had considerable range to choose a workshop topic of his liking. With the assistance of Kami Pothukuchi, a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URPL) at that time, they undertook this new

endeavor. They also joined forces to do some research on the connection between food and planning, and MFSP began to engage in some field projects in the Madison area. Pothukuchi left Madison in the spring of 1998 to accept a full-time position in the planning program at Wayne State University.

Marcia Caton Campbell joined URPL in the fall of 1998 as an assistant professor. Hired primarily to teach conflict resolution, she also had a passing interest in food system issues. As a junior faculty member, however, she was initially discouraged by some of her new colleagues from joining Kaufman in what they viewed as a boondoggle. Delighted to discover Caton Campbell's interest, Kaufman soon drew her into the web of MFSP activities as its assistant director. She served as advisor to the MFSP student project assistants and collaborator with Kaufman on MFSP research and community-based service initiatives. They then began to discuss collaborating on a new course on community food planning. By then, the footing for such a course was more secure, not only among some planning students, but also with students in other campus departments, as interest in strengthening community and regional food systems began to rise. Moreover, Kaufman's colleagues in the planning department, puzzled at first by another of his wanderings into strange territory, began to think that maybe he was on to something.

Planning for Community Food Systems had its initial offering in the spring semester of 2001. Widely advertised across the UWM campus and structured as an introduction to community food planning for juniors, seniors, and graduate students, the course attracted students from diverse fields of study. The 17-student pool for this initial offering was quite broad: 6 were undergraduates and 11 were graduate students; 3 were URPL graduate students, while the rest came from at least 7 other campus departments; 5 of the 17 were self-described "hard-core foodies," while the remainder were drawn to the course out of curiosity. Kaufman and Caton Campbell were definitely teaching to the interested, but not yet to the converted.

The course combined lectures and discussion about the structure of the food system and food system issues with field trips to community food projects in the Madison area that ranged from a food co-op to community gardens and community-supported agriculture farms. A reader of articles drawn from research literature, newspapers, and magazines as the course textbook was prepared. The growing food systems expertise around the Madison campus and the Madison community was tapped by inviting guest speakers to the class. Students were assessed through a midterm exam on basic food system concepts, reflective responses to field trips, and a final paper on a food issue of their choice. In addition, students engaged in service learning, contributing 10 hours of volunteer time to a food-related community organization over the course of the semester and writing reflectively upon that work. The course was sufficiently well received that the URPL faculty thought it should be offered again, although skepticism lingered about the relevance of the food system to urban and regional planning. At the end of the 2000–2001 academic year Kaufman retired, turning the directorship of MFSP and the teaching of the course over to Caton Campbell.

After reviewing, with Kaufman, the initial offering of *Planning for Community Food Systems*, Caton Campbell decided to teach the course again in the fall of 2003 solely at the graduate level to avoid content duplication with two undergraduate-level courses in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The course remained structured around lecture, discussion, field trips to Madison area community food projects, and guest lectures by other faculty. This time, 11 of the 13 students in the class were master's students in planning. Seven of the 13 were "hard-core foodies," three of whom chose community food planning as a concentration within the URPL master's program. The seven indicated that they had come to UWM specifically to study food systems, although only a few had significant prior knowledge or experience in the area.

As before, the students wrote a midterm exam and reflective papers on class field trips. This time, however, the service learning component and individual final paper were replaced by a collaborative final project undertaken by the entire class: a white paper exploring ripeness for the formation of a local food policy council. The students ended the course by presenting the white paper to an invited audience of approximately 40 city and county planners, local government officials, professionals working in food-related agencies and nonprofits, and interested students and faculty.

Planning for Community Food Systems was offered a third time during Caton Campbell's appointment at UW-Madison, during the fall of 2005. The course again attracted 13 graduate students, now almost all planning students, 6 of whom had come to URPL to specialize in community food planning and most of whom had some prior experience in food systems work. Caton Campbell was now not teaching to the newly converted, but to people with longstanding interest in the area. In addition, by 2005 the food systems literature had developed such that several excellent books could be used as course texts in addition to the standard reader. These recently published works and the students' level of sophistication raised the level of discourse about the food system and its relationship to planning to a much higher level. The course was structured similarly to the 2003 offering; however, this time, the class undertook an ambitious, participatory community food assessment for a Madison neighborhood.

What lessons did we glean from our collaboration? First and foremost, we discovered that a small, but steady, stream of students — roughly one-sixth of the incoming URPL students annually from 2003 on — were not only interested in studying community food planning, but were drawn to the UWM campus and to URPL in particular to satisfy their desire to merge interests in the food system and planning. During the 9-year period that community food planning flourished at URPL, master's and doctoral students structured their degree concentrations around food, took courses in many other departments around campus to add breadth and depth to their substantive interest, wrote working papers and theses that developed our understanding of the local food system, formed an official practitioners and consultants, and as faculty members in other planning programs around the United States (including Branden Born; see his contribution later in this paper).

As Caton Campbell prepared to leave URPL for planning practice at the end of the 2005–2006 academic year,¹ her students compiled a guidebook of pathways through UWM courses for future students interested in community food planning. These pathways represent multiple avenues through which students might engage in food planning work, by focusing on food and land use, food and the environment, food and community development, food and economic development, and the like.

The second lesson has to do with the reaction of others: our course was legitimated at the planning department level among its originally skeptical faculty, both by the students we succeeded in recruiting to our program and by the community food planning research and activism that we engaged in outside the classroom and in the community. Community food planning offered synergies in research and professional collaboration with colleagues from other departments, including rural sociology, agronomy, and family and consumer science. Our collaborations not only attracted significant numbers of students, but garnered substantial research dollars and support for students.

Third, the collaboration smoothed the waters for Caton Campbell to become engaged in food planning teaching, research, and community service activities. Having Kaufman, as a senior faculty member, “run interference” for her in the department helped other colleagues give her the green light to pursue her multiple interests in community food planning.

Finally, by joining forces, we had the opportunity to mentor students who expressed interest in food planning and advise them on career paths. Some wanted to work specifically in food planning. Most wanted to follow more traditional job paths in planning, but with a desire to expand their prospective colleagues’ horizons about the benefits of supporting local and regional food systems. In addition, the relationship between Kaufman and Caton Campbell, with Kaufman serving as a mentor to Caton Campbell at the beginning of her tenure at UWM, soon developed into an equal partnership. We both benefited from the rich give and take of our collaboration, with a productive synergy as the byproduct.

Jerome L. Kaufman, FAICP (1933–2013), laid the foundation for the study, pedagogy, and practice of food systems planning in the profession of urban planning. Kaufman taught at the University at Wisconsin-Madison from 1971 to 2001, when he retired and was accorded Emeritus status. Prior to joining the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Kaufman worked for the American Society of Planning Officials (ASPO), the predecessor to the American Planning Association. From 2000 to 2010, Jerry served as the president of the board of directors of Growing Power.

Marcia Caton Campbell is Executive Director of Rooted, a Madison (WI) urban agriculture and food systems organization. She is coauthor of *Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places*, PAS Report No. 563 (American Planning Association, 2011), with Kimberley Hodgson and Martin Bailkey. A Past Chair of the American Planning Association’s Food Systems Division, Caton Campbell was previously a faculty member in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She holds an MCRP and a PhD in city and regional planning from The Ohio State University. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8682-2256>

¹Since then, another food system specialist, Alfonso Morales, has joined the URPL faculty, reviving the food stream in that department.

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Chapter 22

Fertile Ground: Reflections on the Impacts and Implications of an Early University Food System Plan



Branden Born , Geoff Herbach, and Majid Allan

Abstract Since the mid-1990s, food systems planning has gone from virtually nonexistent as a concept in the field to an accepted component of the planning field. The third-ever community food systems plan done by a university was conducted in 1997 by graduate students in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, under the direction of professors Jerry Kaufman and Kami Pothukuchi. This chapter, written by the three compiling editors/writers of the final document, *Fertile Ground: Planning for the Madison/Dane County Food System* (1997), is a deliberation on the history and creation of the document, and offers personal reflections on the impact of an early food systems planning class. Using a semi-structured interview as a tool to elicit both memories and current personal and professional impacts, the authors look backward and forward to contextualize the relevance and importance of the class and final report almost 25 years after it was written.

Keywords Food systems planning · Madison, Wisconsin · University of Wisconsin–Madison · Studio course · Planning pedagogy

B. Born (✉)
University of Washington, Seattle, WA, USA
e-mail: bborn@uw.edu

G. Herbach
Mankato State University, Mankato, MN, USA
e-mail: geoffrey.herbach@mnsu.edu

M. Allan
Dane County Planning & Development, Madison, WI, USA
e-mail: allan@countyofdane.com

22.1 Introduction: Food Systems Planning at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

In the mid-1990s food systems planning began to take root as an element of the urban planning field. One of the early proponents was University of Wisconsin-Madison Professor of Urban and Regional Planning Jerry Kaufman, who, along with then-visiting Assistant Professor Kami Pothukuchi, conducted the third-ever community food systems plan led by a university, as a project of the program's required graduate planning workshop. In this chapter, the editors of the final report for the class, entitled *Fertile Ground: Planning for the Madison/Dane County Food System* (Allan et al. 1997), revisit that project 22 years later and reflect on its implications for urban planning, planning pedagogy, and their professional careers.

The groundwork for the studio was laid by a UW-Madison faculty collaborative grant proposal. In 1996, Kaufman was approached by UW-Madison College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Associate Dean Ken Shapiro to participate in a W.K. Kellogg Foundation grant proposal and subsequent project designed to move consideration of food systems out of the sole purview of rural and agricultural consideration (and areas of study) and into the urban context. Through the grant, Jerry created the Madison Food System Project and as part of that effort, led the workshop class (see Pothukuchi and Glosser (2024) in this volume). These efforts were part of a larger coordinated effort at the UW-Madison to build support for food systems study. In addition to the class, the University also hosted the joint conference of the Agriculture, Food & Human Values Society and the Association for the Study of Food & Society. Combined with the activities of faculty members (mostly in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences), the guest lecturers of the Urban and Regional Planning (URPL) Food System Workshop, and the ongoing efforts of the Madison Food System Project, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the URPL students engaged with Kaufman and Pothukuchi rapidly became participants in this incipient academic food movement.

In the following pages we first provide some background on the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and the role that Planning Workshop played in the curriculum. We discuss the pedagogical method briefly and speak to the roles of the students and faculty as well as the possible outcomes and pitfalls common to such courses. We then briefly describe the report from the class before moving on to our reflections. These are organized by a series of questions each of us answered that asked about our feelings about the course, the food systems content, the importance or lack thereof of such innovation in planning curricula, and the impact that studying food systems and working with Jerry Kaufman had on our careers.

22.1.1 URPL and the Planning Workshop

The Planning Workshop (also called a studio if the planning department is in a design-oriented college) is a common requirement of urban and regional planning programs across the country. Usually driven by a project serving a local community or government and supervised by one or more faculty members to achieve a low student-teacher ratio, the pedagogical approach approximates a normal planning work process. Students are often frustrated with a lack of problem definition and structure, both of which are to be provided by the class itself. It is not uncommon for professionals to return to their planning programs and reflect on how valuable the workshop formula is, even though they were frustrated by the process as students. The role of the faculty is to assist students in problem definition, topic exploration, research design and development given time and other constraints, as well as the possible development of plan alternatives, policy proposals, and client recommendations. Students assume the role of quasi-professionals working to meet the client's needs.

The URPL workshop was the capstone class for twenty-two graduate students in Urban and Regional Planning. Taken in their second year, it allowed them to both bring together the skills they had learned in their degree program and develop new skills and knowledge through the project. The workshop lasted for a 15-week academic semester in the spring of 1997. The final report was consolidated and edited by three of the students (the authors of this chapter) the following summer with guidance provided by the faculty, Kami Pothukuchi and Jerry Kaufman, and a graduate teaching assistant.

The direction of planning workshops often hinges upon the client and project. Some are quite traditional in their scope and methods. Others are innovative and explore new planning terrain and associated methods. The Food Systems Planning Workshop was of the latter type, and at the time the entire concept of the food system was foreign to planning as a discipline (though certainly not other academic disciplines such as geography and global development). This workshop had two faculty members who were both relatively new to the food systems concept (while Pothukuchi had taken food systems coursework during her doctoral program she was gaining familiarity with Wisconsin, and Kaufman had deep ties in Wisconsin but was on a steep learning curve about the food system). Both thought the topic was very relevant to planning and important for planners to understand. They were also connected to the larger network of food systems academics and practitioners from around the country, several of whom came to the class for discussion. The workshop was the third of its kind, following a 1977 Knoxville, Tennessee, report, *Food Distribution and Consumption in Knoxville: Exploring Food-Related Local Planning Issues* (Blakey et al. 1977), and another conducted in Los Angeles in 1993 by UCLA planning students, *Seeds of Change: Strategies for Food Security in the Inner City* (Ashman et al. 1993). While the Knoxville report was inaccessible at the

time, the workshop benefitted from lectures and discussions with one of the UCLA project instructors and, later, one of its student writers (Robert Gottlieb and Andy Fisher, respectively). Importantly, *Seeds of Change* (Ashman et al. 1993) modeled a critical approach that was premised on the human right to food as a key element to food policy. Collectively, the faculty and precedents helped shape the direction and emphasis of the workshop and final report.

22.2 Fertile Ground: Planning for the Madison/Dane County Food System

The URPL Food System Planning workshop had four phases: (1) a background research phase including extensive readings on the food system, accompanied by local field trips and guest speakers, (2) team-based research on the local food system, (3) a neighborhood-level study of Madison's Northside, and (4) compilation of a final report, *Fertile Ground: Planning for the Madison/Dane County Food System*, from a dozen smaller reports produced by the class. Modeled after *Seeds of Change*, the 1993 UCLA report, the 1997 URPL report was both descriptive and evaluative (Allan et al. 1997). It applied a community food security approach that was critical of the conventional food system.

Fertile Ground was also designed to inspire action. The report described elements and impacts of the local food system, including food asset mapping and food pricing comparisons. Some of this was quite innovative. The report presented results from focus groups held with adults and young people in the city, who shared their opinions and strategies for surviving on limited food budgets. It raised alternatives for the food system, from new possibilities for a piece of property that was to be sold as surplus by the state (much of the community garden/farming and permaculture was eventually implemented, and included permanently affordable community land trust housing in the project now called Troy Gardens), to increasing community gardening citywide, growing the already successful community supported agriculture (CSA) movement regionally, and developing a local food policy council to coordinate government and private sector actions and policy decisions. Much of this activity, including the development of two local food policy councils (city and county), came to pass in Madison and Dane County (and is described elsewhere in this volume). Like many such class reports, *Fertile Ground* was ambitious in scope, and at times perhaps suffered from professional and political inexperience: the systems transformations called for would be decades in the making. However, *Fertile Ground* was well-founded empirically and was well-timed in the national and local food systems zeitgeist.

22.3 Participant Reflections on Innovation in Workshop Teaching: The Food System as Focus of a Planning Workshop, 20 Years Later

To prepare this chapter, the authors began with some reflection on the workshop class, our careers, and questions that might capture some lessons learned and where we might offer experiential insight. We met in online meetings and by email, and through these communications drafted seven questions to drive our reflections. Individually, we prepared responses to these questions, and then compiled them into one shared narrative. This section uses those questions as organizational structure. The first six questions were focused on the 1997 URPL Food Systems Planning Workshop and its lasting significance. The final question asked a more personal question about lessons we may have learned from working with Jerry Kaufman.

22.3.1 How Did Your Participation in the URPL Food Systems Planning Workshop Influence You Personally and Professionally?

In the short term, the workshop introduced us to a new subfield with issues and questions we had never even considered as budding professionals. One of us grew up in Southwestern Wisconsin and had seen the effects of the farm crisis first-hand without recognizing what it was about:

I had no idea about how the shifts in business, the growth of processing conglomerates and the changes in ensuing contracts drove all that debt and drove families out of farming and drove the use of toxic inputs in farming. The whole thing was a shock. I was a kid who lived in the middle of all that change without remotely understanding it.

We each felt that the class was important to our experience at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, as it represented the complexity of planning as it directly connected to peoples' lives, and did so in new and ever-unfolding ways:

The workshop was the single most interesting and impactful course I've ever taken as a student. Prior to my participation in the workshop, I didn't pause to consider much of anything related to food, let alone that there was such a thing as a 'food system'. As we began our research, I became hooked on the issue of food and the tangled web of connections in the food system. Here was a system that was central to human existence, but for which little coordinated planning occurred outside of the various components comprising it.

The workshop not only influenced our education, but it changed us as individuals. We thought more carefully and systemically about our food and our foodshed, and became more conscious of our eating habits and food choices. These consumer choices and the active thinking they embody remain with us today. For one of us, studying the food system had a profound professional impact, as food systems became a focus of their work as a faculty member in urban planning. For another,

the experience in food and agriculture gained in the workshop assisted in his career as a planner for Dane County, Wisconsin.

22.3.2 *The Food Systems Planning Workshop Was Only the Third of Its Kind Ever Performed: What Was Your Sense of the Buy-In or Acceptance About the Topic from Your Fellow Students? Was There Resistance to Exploring this (at the Time) New Avenue of Planning?*

At the outset, we recall there being a fair bit of student ambivalence, and some hostility, to the topic. Studying the food system seemed to be a diversion from more standard issues in land use planning. Many students, however, changed their opinion as the course developed. One thing emphasized by Kaufman and Pothukuchi—and something that is a common refrain of faculty teaching studios and workshops—was that the skills developed in the class were portable and relevant to almost any area of planning in which students were interested. Class elements like clearly defining and understanding the question(s), scoping work and sharing workloads, communicating effectively in teams and to a general audience, and writing, are standard fare for planners. The fact that the class was somewhat interdisciplinary and transferable was helpful, even if students never took a liking to the specific content. At the outset of the course, Kaufman told the class that he had changed his professional focus area numerous times over his career, sometimes developing new content areas for the field (such as professional ethics or alternative dispute resolution). His comment stood out to us then, and still does now. For one of us, this concept has driven their work as a faculty member—to explore new ideas in the field and to push planning in new directions in support of equity. Kaufman and Pothukuchi demonstrated this willingness to explore novel concepts throughout the workshop. Most students acquiesced to the requirements of the work, while some loved it and others disliked it. (The student reaction seems typical for planning workshops generally.)

22.3.2.1 *What Is Your Sense of this Feeling in the Field Now? Has the Level of Interest or Resistance Changed?*

The level of interest in the food system has clearly increased since the class in 1997. You can see it in many places, from your local grocery store where organics have become mainstream, to the growth and continued importance of community gardens and the ever-changing market for CSA farms. Now, there are academic journals dedicated to food systems, several American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service reports and policy guides to help shape planning practice, and the topics are regularly covered either in distinct elements of, or across community

plans. Even the terminology has infiltrated our planning jargon: few people have not heard of a food desert (even as problematic as that term may be). COVID19 only increased the salience of and interest in food systems planning.

Another thing that has changed with regard to food systems planning is planning itself. Food systems planning courses are now regularly offered in university planning programs in the United States and Canada (Greenstein et al. 2015). A few programs have food systems specializations or concentrations, and increasingly public health and planning are more closely connected, including joint degree programs. This is advancing both fields: public health academics and practitioners have long recognized the importance of quality food and nutrition and are coming to see the implications of spatial considerations on food systems and individuals; planners, for their part, are moving beyond traditional topics like spatial or economic analyses in consideration of public interests to include direct drivers of health such as food and nutrition. The professional organizations for practicing planners (American Planning Association) and planning academics (Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning) now include food systems planning interest groups, which are becoming more formalized in their respective organizations.

At the local, regional, and tribal levels, there is an increase in food-related planning, often focused on agricultural land preservation and economic development. At the end of 2017, the Johns Hopkins University's Center for a Livable Future verified that there were 341 food policy councils in existence across the U.S. and Canada, with all but three states in the U.S. having at least one (Bassarab et al. 2018). Several cities even have food policy directors as well, some of whom are contributors to this volume.

While food systems planning might not be standard in the discipline, it is clearly recognized as a focus in the field. Overt resistance to discussing food systems as being within the purview of municipal, regional, or state functions is greatly reduced. As adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts becomes of greater importance in policy and planning efforts, it is reasonable to expect that urban agriculture and agricultural policy overall will become even more centered. The URPL Workshop was ahead of its time—and it is incredible to consider how advanced was the Knoxville study done two decades earlier. The planning profession has caught up, though, and this represents significant growth from 1997.

22.3.3 Have any of the Recommendations in the Final Report Been Implemented?

Surprisingly, given that the report was not particularly focused on providing (many) specific policy recommendations—as a descriptive and exploratory document—many of the suggestions it made about system transformation and local government involvement have been implemented in some form. Beyond some very specific neighborhood-level suggestions for economic development (some food-related), the report called for more coordination around food initiatives, from community

gardening, to food asset mapping, to establishing a food policy council. All of these recommendations have come to pass.

City and county planners have worked on numerous food initiatives, from helping to start a farmers market in South Madison, to developing and implementing a program to promote institutional purchases of local food, to planning for a Madison public market. Madison now has a food policy council (City of Madison Mayor's Office n.d.) that manages a \$50,000 annual grant program and works on issues of food security and access, community gardening, food waste reduction, youth programming, and other topics. None of us has kept track of all the local activities, though one of us works as a planner for Dane County and is familiar with those things mentioned above (see Lipman and Caton Campbell (2024) in this volume for an accounting of 20 years of Madison's efforts). Even at the time of the report, we described the county as a "hotbed of innovation" with regard to food issues. Many of the alternatives the class detailed suggested the potential for people to have more control of their food system. Many of the activities going on in Madison tend to support this goal, though there continue to be food equity issues in the city. There are many food-related organizations and initiatives in Madison and Dane County, the detailing of which may be worthwhile in a future endeavor; however, that is beyond the scope of this chapter.

One topic the report mentioned was the productive agricultural capacity of the Dane County landscape—something threatened even 20 years ago. The *Fertile Ground* report cited a Wisconsin State Journal article that identified Dane County as, at that time, losing farmland at the second-fastest rate in the nation. Madison and Dane County have continued to grow—boom, even—and the threat to a regional farm economy is big and real. It's unclear if the class report helped "generate some of the necessary awareness" of this issue.

22.3.4 Do You Think that the Workshop and Report Contributed to Helping Establish Food Systems Planning as a Branch of the Broader Planning Discipline?

It seems to us that this is a big ask of a workshop report. Suffice to say, it may have played a part because the class was a part of a larger group effort in the U.S. that was working on food systems at that time. So, our class work and report were swept up in and part of that wave of activity. For several years we tracked the number of countries (a few) and U.S. states (many) that the report was sent to, by mail at the time. The class also coincided with the first conference of the Community Food Security Coalition, an outgrowth of the work of several of the guest speakers of the

class, and benefitted from the reputation of the UCLA *Seeds of Change* report produced a few years earlier. These university-community studies both described food systems and demonstrated how urban research methods could be applied to them. Through their distribution and the auspices of their respective universities, these reports became examples other communities could follow. As this was happening, authors such as Marion Nestle and Michael Pollan were popularizing food politics and food systems through books aimed at a general audience (Nestle 2002; Pollan 2006). The broad effect of these books cannot be overstated, as they brought to the popular discourse concepts such as food systems, food justice, and the complex politics of the regulatory system on food and food production. The URPL Workshop was in the right place at the right time.

Another way the class contributed to the growth of food systems planning was to directly or indirectly seed soon-to-be academics and practitioners who would be familiar with or practice directly what they had learned in the class. This includes two of the authors of this piece. It also helped build the foundation of food systems studies at the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture (then known as Urban and Regional Planning) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. There were then two faculty interested, a few graduate teaching assistants, and several graduate students in the masters and doctoral programs who later went on to practice or teach, and continue working with Kaufman and Pothukuchi.

For Jerry and Kami, the research the class conducted and the report it created provided them firsthand research experience, and helped them to discuss and write about food systems in a wide variety of places from a position of knowledge. They had foresight in ways none of the students did, and had connections to professional opportunities from hosting conferences to participating in relevant national conferences. These included the American Planning Association (APA); Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP); Community Food Security Coalition; and Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society and the Association for the Study of Food and Society (their joint conference was held at the UW-Madison in 1997, at the same time as the URPL Workshop). Kaufman and Pothukuchi generously supported the professional development of all three of the authors of this chapter by hosting our attendance at some of these conferences, where we presented the class findings. Jerry and Kami led efforts with members of APA and ACSP to develop first-ever conference tracks, special journal issues, policy guides, and professional advisory reports on food systems and urban agriculture. Some of these had contributions, or indeed were written by, Wisconsin graduates who had worked with Jerry and Kami, and sometimes were done under their leadership. Anecdotally, while many in the planning profession were unclear about why food systems planning should capture their professional interest, Kaufman's seniority and deeply respected status in the field provided crucial legitimacy to this new movement.

22.3.5 *What Do You Think About the Studio or Workshop Model for Planning Education, and More Specifically Advancing New Ideas, Like Food Systems Planning, in Studios?*

That workshop was the single most memorable class I've ever taken.

We feel that this workshop did a great job of advancing a new idea as well as developing a useful set of professional planning skills. Our planning faculty author thinks the studio or workshop model of experiential and applied education is one of the best things planning as a discipline offers students for training. Planning is an applied field, incorporating many hard and soft skills and techniques. It is extremely useful to students as proto-practitioners to experience these dimensions in practice, yet in an academically and intellectually safe way—meaning where they are able to stretch their abilities, even fail sometimes, under the guidance of faculty before they become professionals and are subject to the commensurate liability and responsibility—this is the heart of planning workshops.

The workshop approach provided an opportunity to dig into details, to conduct analysis, and also to learn about the broader topic. It provided a hands-on experience while reinforcing the importance of the interdisciplinary and interpersonal approaches central to planning. In addition to defining questions, scoping work, and presenting findings in written and oral form, it required the students to collaborate, cooperate, and address and resolve conflicts. These skills are all vital to planning practitioners. At the same time, because each of the groups reported the outcomes of their investigations—both findings and recommendations—to the larger group and to a panel of county stakeholders, we never lost sight of the larger picture and practical application of our work.

Again, students often complain about their studio/workshop experiences (we were no different in the URPL Food System workshop). They struggle with the ambiguity of practice-oriented education, the challenge of clearly defining questions, working with clients in politicized environments, incorporating the public, and working on deadlines external to the university. And yet, these classes often end up being favorites after they are over, and they sometimes become transformational to students' professional lives. Former students often approach our planning faculty author after they've had several years in practice and explain how studio was the most beneficial part of their education because it most resembles their daily experience. In as much as planners tackle new challenges for communities and new ideas in practice, the opportunity to explore new topics in the workshop/studio environment seems entirely fitting.

22.3.5.1 Was It Professionally or Personally Beneficial to Examine Something New? Why?

Exploring a new subject was exciting and taught valuable lessons about designing and conducting a research project.

It was absolutely beneficial to examine something new: it expanded our ideas about what planning could be. Most of the research techniques were simply borrowed from other types of planning. But when it all came together, we had developed knowledge, fairly deep knowledge at that, about an element of society we all took part in and yet was invisible to us prior to the workshop. We learned the power of storytelling in the creation of a political message, and the power of metaphor in explaining complex systems. This was important because we had to learn how to tell the story of a food system to planners to even begin sharing the outcomes of the class. This evidently had impact: one of the authors has left planning and has gone on to be an academic in creative writing! (In a small bit of irony, that faculty member used many of the planning process skills in his role as chair of an English department.)

For at least one of us, the interest in planning was not in serving the status quo, but rather exploring problems for which solutions are not yet evident – problems that take communication, collaboration, and creativity to elicit emergent properties or solutions that may not have been possible before such engagement. As such, taking on a new subfield as a class was both personally and professionally valuable. As mentioned before, Kaufman regularly emphasized the dynamism of planning and the unpredictable turns that a career would likely take; he began our development as nimble practitioners in the practice of the workshop.

22.3.6 Did Working on Food Systems Shape Your Thinking About Values or Ethics, and If So, How? If Not, Why Not?

All three of us felt that being in the food systems workshop and working on the final report helped shape our sense of ethics and personal responsibility. It framed both personal and more general understandings of our ethical stances, represented by our actions and our thinking. When we took the workshop course, we were young and privileged enough to not have to consider the impacts of our food decisions. We ate highly processed food from the industrial food system without thinking about the social, environmental, or personal health implications of those choices. That all began to change in the workshop, and the insights we started developing then have continued to grow and shape our lives to the present.

I'm not a perfect eater by any means, but I am aware of what my choices mean and the impact my choices have, and clearly exhibit a pattern of choices that support the local foodshed and low input, high nutrient agricultural practices. That metaphor—the foodshed—extends to the way I think about all consumer goods I purchase. I make better ethical choices because I had what I believe was deep training that took root in the workshop.

For the two of us who continue to work in planning, the ethical training we received in the workshop and by studying the food system has carried into our professional planning lives. It helped us develop a greater awareness of ethics in our roles as a planning practitioner and academic. Food is such a universal and yet distinctly cultural element of people's lives that decisions made about one's food practices are highly personal and can reflect the way one interacts with the world (something that many religious texts and practices have recognized). Understanding foodways—the socio-cultural practices of provisioning and eating—and seeing how personal and institutional decisions can affect our lives is like the first step of engaging in the democratic practice required of a just and fair, healthy, and joyful society. Food is a gateway for people to engage in community. For the academic among us, the deep ethical work in food systems planning has been a guiding point for continuing in the field.

Without finding food systems planning, I'm not sure I could have stayed in planning because what has become clear in the food system work is that, for example, dismantling racism (something that needs to be done across all aspects of our society) isn't just a side activity. It is THE activity. All else comes from, and after, equity, justice, sovereignty, whatever you want to call it. If planning isn't doing this work in all of its subfields (and of course it is not), then it isn't really doing the ethically necessary work of planning.

Looking at the food system allowed us to see ourselves differently, to contextualize and question our actions in a larger, complex system of which we were an unknowing part. The food system was at first conceptually distant but at the same time universally connected to us, and that unseen connection became a heuristic device for us in explaining food systems planning to others for whom it was also invisible.

Examining the food system provided a tangible way to understand the impacts our choices had, and called into question for us what responsibilities came with those choices. An interesting thing about this finding, and something that might reflect on Jerry's pedagogical style, which was more Socratic than dogmatic, is that ethics were not an explicit topic in the class. But Jerry and Kami allowed the course material to lead us to the lessons that were almost unavoidable, especially to planners who were ostensibly interested in conceptions of right action. In this regard, a workshop on food systems planning probably provided more opportunity to develop our thinking on ethics than would a more conventional planning studio.

22.3.7 Did Working with Jerry Provide Any Specific Insights for You?

Jerry was the best mentor and teacher I've ever had.

Jerry is a giant in my life.

It is no understatement to say that working with Jerry and taking classes with him transformed each of our lives. He was brimming with enthusiasm, and somehow managed to retain and harness the boundless curiosity and imagination that most of us lose in our childhood. Fortunately for those who came into contact with him, he was eager to share, and help you develop your own curiosity, imagination, and worldview. He rarely gave one the direct answer one would have desired; instead, he gave you what you needed to develop your own thoughts and discoveries.

As much as I learned from him, some of the most valuable lessons and insights had nothing to do with any academic subject and everything to do with life.

Insights we took away from our time with Jerry included the importance of positivity; he was in the words of one of us, an optimistic modernist. Progress was necessary and possible, but patience with process was important. Reflection brought about insight, and this, too, required patience.

Jerry probably was predisposed to have a patient disposition with people, but this may have also come from the benefit of a long career. He loved what he did, and he was always attracted to new things. He may have taken on five or six new and major topics that eventually became significant elements of the planning discipline. His curiosity, mixed with patience and imagination about the future, allowed him to see the possibility in new things. He knew that something was always going to come along to inspire him, and in turn, those around him. In the development of food systems planning, it became clear that many planners didn't see the importance of this new subdiscipline (though, ironically, they understood the importance of many of the subsystems of the food system!). It was equally clear that experienced (and professionally influential) planners regarded Jerry so highly that they came to believe that there must be something to food systems planning if he were so interested by it. His teamwork with a group of foresightful planners (described in Pothukuchi and Glosser (2024), exemplified creativity, imagination, and patience, along with a commitment to the planning process.

These insights of Jerry's, or perhaps his characteristic ways of being, provided a model for developing professionals. We could have an optimistic outlook, seek change in new ways, and recognize that change comes slowly. And, with attention to detail and a good deal of work, there were always new and interesting things on which one could spend professional time. Many of his lessons carried over into the rest of our lives; in this we are certainly not unique.

22.4 Conclusion

Several things are clear to us in retrospect: addressing a new topic in a workshop or studio course environment was professionally helpful and personally developmental. Of particular note with regard to teaching innovative material in a graduate class setting is that food systems became part of mainstream planning. The students in the

Fertile Ground class were more prepared for that new development than others who had not been exposed to the material.

We think the development of food systems planning also helps explain why the recommendations in the report were reasonably well implemented. The report similarly helped advance the field of food systems planning through both in its distribution and by the experiential and empirical value it had for the faculty researcher participants.

We are unanimous in our support of the studio course model of education for planning students, as it best approximates the challenges of practice. And, as practice is constantly changing to address new societal concerns, we also felt that addressing an emergent topic through this model was appropriate (even if we were at first quite skeptical). We all agreed that the richness of the study of food systems allowed us to not only develop basic planning skills of data collection and analysis, but also allowed for an examination of our ethical framing as student practitioners. This consideration of ethical behavior has continued throughout our careers and our personal lives. And finally, in related fashion, our experiences with Jerry as one of the instructors (and teacher in other classes, advisor, and mentor) have left a lasting impact on us. We recognize his optimism and enthusiasm, creativity and intellectual nimbleness, and patience with people and the professional discipline. Each of us feels inspired by his example and regard our experience working with him on the workshop and *Fertile Ground* as a high point of our academic experiences.

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Branden Born is an Associate Professor in the Department of Urban Design and Planning at the University of Washington where he studies the intersection of planning processes and social justice. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Madison (2003) as one of Jerry Kaufman's last PhD students. Born's work examines community governance, land use planning, and food systems. Branden directs the Center for Livable Communities for the Department of Urban Design and Planning, and co-directs the UW's Livable City Year program, a university-wide community partnership effort that pairs university classes with city staff to complete research and design projects in service to community needs.

Geoff Herbach is the author of nine novels. His books have received the Cybil's Award for best young adult fiction, the Minnesota Book Award, The Burr/Worzalla Award from the Wisconsin Library Association and have been listed among the year's best by the American Library Association and the American Booksellers Association. In the past, Geoff studied Urban Planning, wrote and produced a comedy show for Minnesota Public Radio, performed comedy in New York City, and traveled around the country telling stories in rock clubs. He lives in St. Peter, Minnesota, and is a Professor of English at Minnesota State University.

Majid Allan is a planner for Dane County, Wisconsin, passionate about enjoying, protecting and enhancing what makes his community special. Like so many of his generation, work does not define him any more or less than the many other hats he wears: parent, mentor, coach, union steward, chef, naturalist, dog lover.

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Chapter 23

Revisiting *Food for Growth*: Lessons from a Food Systems Studio



Alexandra Judelsohn  and Sylvia Kelly 

Abstract Over the past two decades, food has become a routine topic explored in the field of planning, with planning courses more regularly incorporating food systems planning. Planning studios, a cornerstone of planning education, provide students with an opportunity to blend the theory and methods they learn in their classes, applied to a real-world problem. In 2003 a studio was held at the University at Buffalo, resulting in the report *Food for Growth: A Community Food System Plan for Buffalo's West Side*. Through interviews with students, community partners, and faculty, the chapter explores a series of questions: (1) How, and when, does a (food systems) studio course experience influence students, community, and faculty pathways? (2) How, and when do questions of ethics/equity drive or surface in the studio course experience? (3) What are the limitations and challenges of teaching a community-engaged food systems planning studio? The chapter offers a retrospective examination of the long-term possibilities and challenges of teaching a community-engaged food systems planning studio.

Keywords Studio course · Urban agriculture · Buffalo (NY) · Food systems education · Planning education

23.1 Introduction

Planning education has played a key role in the emergence of food systems as a subfield of planning practice. As early as 1977, graduate students in a course taught by Robert Wilson in Knoxville, Tennessee, wrote a report that pointed to inequities in the city's food system. Students recommended the formation of a city-wide council to address these inequities. Subsequently, in 1981, a resolution by the city council led to the formation of what became the country's first food policy council.

A. Judelsohn (✉) · S. Kelly
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: ajudelso@buffalo.edu; sylviake@buffalo.edu

We begin with this story to illustrate the historic connections between planning education and food systems change in the United States.

In subsequent decades, a number of planning programs around the United States began offering planning studios (and/or courses) focused on food systems. Among these were the programs at University of Wisconsin-Madison, University at Buffalo, and Wayne State University (Whittaker et al. 2017). All of these studios have engaged in remarkable action-learning initiatives with real world impacts. Many, if not all, of these studios were taught by faculty who had trained with or were colleagues of Jerry Kaufman and Kami Pothukuchi at UW–Madison. Yet, there is little to no systematic examination of the *long-term* impact of food systems planning studios.

This chapter is a 16-year retrospective examination of a community-engaged studio focused on food systems, the *Food for Growth Studio*, taught at the University at Buffalo, The State University of New York (UB). On its face, the studio had several successes: (1) students won a series of local, regional, and national awards for the best student project, including the national AICP award, the first time such an award had been given to a food systems project; and (2) the studio seeded a long-term action research partnership between the community partner and the university (faculty member), benefiting both the community partner and the faculty.

This chapter offers a retrospective examination of the long-term possibilities and challenges of teaching a community-engaged food systems planning studio. The chapter explores a series of related questions: (1) *How, and when, does a (food systems) studio experience influence student, community, and faculty pathways?* (2) *How, and when, do questions of ethics/equity drive or surface in the studio experience?* (3) *What are the limitations and challenges of teaching a community-engaged food systems planning studio?*

23.2 Experiential Learning and Food Systems Planning

23.2.1 Experiential Learning Education

Experiential learning is a key part of any urban planning curriculum, a way to bridge the gap between theory and practice while giving students the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom to a real world setting (Pojani et al. 2016; Rosier et al. 2016; Vidyarthi et al. 2012). Some of the most common types of experiential learning are planning studios and service learning courses. In a planning studio, a community partner serves as a client for a group of students who commonly write a report for the client. Studio courses allow students to gain experience working with community partners while developing the practical skills they will need throughout their career (Dearborn and Harwood 2011; Larsen et al. 2014). In experiential learning courses, students blend studying and volunteering. Often for universities, experiential learning also serves as a way of engaging in the

community, strengthening community-university partnerships (Aftandilian and Dart 2013).

Community-university partnerships can amplify and strengthen community led-planning as well as serve as a tool for leveraging policy change (Sweeney et al. 2015; Whittaker et al. 2017). Food systems planners may engage in studio education as a venue for activism. By adopting a framework of equitable engagement, encouraging shared responsibility and shared learning, food systems researchers and food activists can build upon community assets and create transformative change (Sweeney et al. 2015). This blending of academic research and activism is powerful, but it can be challenging to maintain partnerships, find outside funding, and build community capacity long term (Mendes et al. 2011; Whittaker et al. 2017).

23.2.2 *Food Systems Education*

While much has been written about how the food system was decoupled from and then reintegrated into urban planning (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999, 2000; Soma and Wakefield 2011), less attention has been given to the evolution of food systems education (Greenstein et al. 2015). Food systems education reaches beyond the scope of what many would consider “traditional” planning as it “provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to identifying food system challenges and opportunities within a community and developing public policy tools to address them” (Growing Food Connections n.d.). Food systems education is deeply intertwined with themes of globalization, sustainability, public health and urbanization, and racial justice, and requires developing both critical and creative thinking (Brekken et al. 2018; Mendes et al. 2011).

In recent years the field of food systems has burgeoned with dozens of universities implementing university-wide food systems initiatives. According to a recent survey of syllabi from planning programs, the number of programs that include food systems in their curricula tripled from 2004 to 2012 (Greenstein et al. 2015; Mendes et al. 2011; Christiansen and Fischer 2010). For the purpose of this review, we have looked at both explicit and implicit food systems experiential learning.

A key theme raised in this review is the importance of how faculty frame issues and guide student interactions with regard to the communities and organizations they serve. Experiential learning is held up as a way to increase student understanding of social inequities and multicultural awareness; however, sometimes faculty and students exacerbate these issues in the ways that they engage with community partners. For example, if a student has a self-reported internal bias against individuals of a particular race, it is not appropriate to place them in a service learning experience where they would be in a position of authority over young adults of that race (Einfeld and Collins 2008). It is crucial that faculty not only be purposeful in their framing of issues of ethics and equity to ensure that students do not learn at the expense of communities, but also critical that faculty have done their own work with respect to white supremacy, structural racism, classism, and privilege. Otherwise,

faculty run the risk of not modeling appropriate behaviors for their students (see Denckla Cobb and Bingham 2024).

23.2.3 Reflections on Experiential Learning in Food Systems

A literature review on food system-focused experiential learning found that community-university partnerships are more likely to result in positive outcomes reported by communities and increased awareness of the complex political, social, and economic issues within the food system on the part of students, when there is emphasis on the systemic nature of these challenges (Aftandilian and Dart 2013; Porter et al. 2008). Lessons can be reinforced by faculty through course readings and assignments on the following: cases of social injustice related to food, social issues such as environmental justice and environmental racism, or through meetings with community members who are also engaged in food systems work (Aftandilian and Dart 2013; Larsen et al. 2014). When the systemic nature of social issues is emphasized, student evaluations indicated that participation in experiential learning increased their awareness of the institutional barriers faced by low-income individuals, people of color, and other minority groups while expressing desire to improve programs and policies at the local, state, and federal levels (Porter et al. 2008).

Also key is that faculty invest significant time in building relationships with community partners and seek partner input on all aspects of the course including developing curriculum, establishing learning outcomes, evaluation criteria, establishing division of labor, and compensation for the community partners (Aftandilian and Dart 2013; Porter and Wechsler 2018). By doing so, faculty emphasize to students that community partners are sources of knowledge, have the final say on how projects will be executed, and that the aim is to help partners achieve their long-term goals (Aftandilian and Dart 2013). That said, community partners may be more concerned with addressing proximate issues through experiential learning courses rather than affecting long-term change. Faculty who fail to frame and treat community partners as experts and equals in the partnership were not able to achieve the same positive impact, as students failed to grasp broader concepts of community and social justice (Bauer et al. 2015). This resulted in students focusing on short-term problems instead of working with a community to generate long-term change (Bauer et al. 2015; Niewolny et al. 2012), and the period of time in which they are involved in the course sometimes puts blinders to the larger, systemic issues. Experiential learning courses that fail to frame the course as such lack critical examination and may not only fail to yield positive outcomes, but can result in harm to the community.

Many challenges exist in successfully executing an experiential learning course. Building relationships with community partners needed for experiential learning is often time consuming and labor intensive for faculty members. While institutions

enjoy the positive publicity and improved community relations, they do not always provide formal support such as funding to execute the course or acknowledgment under faculty evaluation and reward structures (Niewolny et al. 2012; Whittaker et al. 2017). Community organizations also face myriad challenges in partnering with universities. Many community partners are underfunded or understaffed; engaging in experiential learning may drain their time and resources (Harris 2004; Niewolny et al. 2012; Porter and Wechsler 2018). Rather than being seen as an equal partner and source of knowledge, community partners may be relegated to a diminished role (Herrera 2018). It can be easy for students to fall prey to a “savior” mentality with regard to the communities they are serving (Bauer et al. 2015).

Food systems, in particular food production, is inexorably linked to a history of racial and social injustices (Sweeney et al. 2015). Therefore, addressing issues of equity, and racial and social justice are integral to any food systems planning course; failure to do so is a failure to teach about the reality of food systems. Between the challenging nature of such topics, the self-work that is necessary before faculty can approach them, and the time constraints of a semester, a deep dive into issues of racial and social justice can seem daunting to many faculty members. Nevertheless, it is crucial that studios highlight these embedded issues. Those studios that are willing to face these challenges see increased levels of personal investment from students and stronger community-university relationships (Aftandilian and Dart 2013; Herrera 2018; Larsen et al. 2014).

The literature on experiential learning most frequently features voices of faculty members, with few articles including student perspectives on the studio and almost none including the perspective of a community partner (Miller et al. 2012; Neuman 2016; Self et al. 2012; Smith et al. 2014; Wright 2006). This disproportionate representation poses a challenge when trying to evaluate the long-term success of experiential learning, and it is necessary to question on whose terms success can be defined.

One limitation in the literature on food systems education is the dearth of courses on food systems in rural areas. Out of a survey of food systems courses, 45% focused on food systems in urban areas, 52% addressed the linkage between rural and urban communities with regard to food, and only one course explored food systems through a rural lens (Greenstein et al. 2015). Faculty who wish to engage in experiential learning with a rural focus would benefit from examining the outcomes of other types of service learning in rural areas (Harris 2004). Faculty should also be mindful that their course material reflects issues of racial and social justice in rural contexts.

This review is not to suggest that experiential learning is too challenging to effectively engage in or that its role as a foundational piece of planning education is misplaced. Rather, it is a reflection on the deep and meaningful learning that can come from such an experience coupled with the acknowledgment that cultivating experiential learning takes a great deal of time, thoughtfulness, and investment on the part of the faculty, students, and community partners.

23.3 Methods

Sixteen years after the studio took place we contacted nine students, one community partner, and one faculty member involved in the studio. The authors conducted semi-structured interviews with participants in the studio to gauge the following: their planning education as a whole, their experience participating in a studio focused on food, and whether or not there was sustained impact or change from their involvement in *Food for Growth*. Furthermore, we reviewed the course evaluations that all students in the course completed.

Interviews were conducted both over the phone and in person. Of the eleven students that were in the studio, we were able to contact nine of them. Four students participated in interviews along with the primary community partner, Diane Picard of Massachusetts Avenue Project and the faculty member, Dr. Samina Raja, Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York. Additionally, we reviewed documents from the studio including the 150-page studio report and anonymous student evaluations from the course.

Limitations exist in our research. Unfortunately, we were not able to interview every student that was in the course. Those that responded were the students more involved in the studio; a few of them continued working on the report once the semester was over. Additionally, one student still directly engages in food systems work and two are in regional planning; thus, food is on their radar and they may have been more likely to respond. We hope that including the student reviews from all students involved in the studio addresses this issue.

23.4 The Buffalo Experience

23.4.1 *Massachusetts Avenue Project*

Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP) was formed in 1992 by neighborhood residents in West Buffalo, NY. Initially MAP aimed to provide opportunities for youth to engage in purposeful activities and reduce violence and drug activity in the neighborhood. After incorporating in 2000, their vision broadened. In 2003, MAP founded the Growing Green program with the goal of addressing youth unemployment and food insecurity. At the time, 40% of the neighborhood was under age 18. While there was a Boys and Girls Club nearby, they served a younger population. Teenagers wanted to work, but few employers were hiring them. Since Growing Green began, over 650 youth jobs have been created (Massachusetts Avenue Project [n.d.](#)). Impressively, 98% of high schoolers enrolled in the program graduate, while in 2018 63% of students from City of Buffalo schools graduated (New York State Education Department [2018](#)).



Fig. 23.1 MAP's Farmhouse and Community Food Training Center opened in 2018

In the past decade MAP has become involved in more food policy work, including but not limited to advocating for legalizing backyard chickens, supporting the establishment of a city-county food policy council, and arguing for establishing zoning for urban agriculture in the 2016 city zoning code (see Fig. 23.1). In 2019 MAP's long-awaited farmhouse opened, providing a community space, commercial kitchen, cold storage, and two apartments (see Fig. 23.1).

23.4.2 *West Buffalo*

The City of Buffalo grew as a leader in food storage and transportation with the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, allowing grain and goods to move easily from the Eastern Seaboard through the Great Lakes. The city's population grew, reaching a height of about 580,000 in 1950 (US Census Bureau 2015). Due to the closure of industry, the opening of the St Lawrence Seaway, and white flight, Buffalo's population decreased steadily to 261,000 by 2010 (US Census Bureau 2015). West Buffalo, where MAP is located, has historically been a neighborhood of immigrants. One of the most diverse areas of Buffalo, neighborhoods in West Buffalo include Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, Black and white residents (McManus 2016). While Italian immigrants first settled here, in recent decades the neighborhood has become home to growing numbers of Puerto Ricans and those arriving in Buffalo as refugees.

West Buffalo experienced decades of disinvestment from the city and crime rates rose. Residents and organizations – like those involved in MAP – worked to keep their neighborhoods safe. Between 1990 and 2000, West Buffalo experienced the

following changes: a 11.9% decrease in the average median family income, a 19.8% decrease in population, and a 27.8% decrease of families not in poverty (Almeida et al. 2003). The city as a whole experienced an increase in median family income but also lost population, although not as much (US Census Bureau 1990, 2000).

In recent years West Buffalo has changed: new businesses, toast cafes, multiple urban farms, and bike shares have popped up. People have begun talking about gentrification a concept that in 2003 few were discussing. The neighborhood surrounding MAP saw an increase in the average income as middle class residents moved in, and low income residents were pushed out by increasing rent prices. As of 2010 approximately 24% of households were below the poverty line; by 2017 only 20% of households were below the poverty line (US Census Bureau 2015, 2017). Throughout these neighborhood changes, MAP has adapted to the needs of the populations they serve.

23.5 Studio as Part of UB Curriculum (in 2003)

In 2003, one studio course was required as part of the Master of Urban Planning (MUP) program at UB. At the time, students routinely enrolled in a studio course in their third semester as an opportunity to blend the theory and methods they learned in their first year of coursework. Now, two or more studio courses are offered each semester and students choose a studio (though a choice is not always guaranteed). Studio courses are six credits, allowing students to engage in about 10 hours of dedicated class time a week with a total of 15–25 hours of work.

In 2003, Dr. Samina Raja was an assistant professor at UB, teaching a studio course for the first time in this role. While pursuing her PhD at the University of Wisconsin-Madison she had worked as a research assistant with Jerry Kaufman, Kami Pothukuchi, and Marcia Caton Campbell, who introduced her to food systems planning. Raja saw teaching a studio focused on food as an opportunity to clarify her own research agenda and to bring a new and novel subfield of planning to the department and UB.

Raja met with Diane Picard, then Program Manager for the Growing Green program at MAP. Picard described the group of community gardening stakeholders across the city she was convening. The intellectual ideas unfolding in Raja's head were being practiced by Picard and MAP. The two decided that working together on the studio was a good place to start, with the goal of conducting a community food assessment for the West Side. Unfortunately at the time there was no funding to conduct a food focused studio. Raja spoke with the then Chairperson, Dr. Kathryn Foster, who approved the studio.

Over the next decade, food became an integral part of the curriculum at UB. Currently, UB MUP students can choose community health and food systems as an area of specialization. A food systems planning course is offered yearly in

the program. Concurrently, Raja and MAP continued to work together, and won an award for excellence in community-university engagement in 2016.

23.6 Food for Growth Studio: Content, Process, and Impact

The purpose of this planning studio was to draft a neighborhood food systems plan in collaboration with residents and organizations in a neighborhood on the West side of Buffalo. Students were instructed to treat their work in the course as if they were working as a planning consultant; each student had both an organizational and thematic role in the studio. The semester was organized by the traditional components that are included in a comprehensive plan, such as “visioning” and “data collection”. Through extensive surveys (and interviews, focus groups, and site visits) with residents and store owners in the neighborhood and GIS analysis, UB students drafted a report to strengthen the food system in this neighborhood. The draft plan was reviewed by residents, and ultimately submitted to the community organization for their use.

In 2005, *Food for Growth* won the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Student Project Awards at the American Planning Association (APA) National Conference in San Francisco (American Planning Association n.d.). The news was covered in the local newspaper (The Buffalo News 2005), and some students and faculty from the course traveled to the conference to receive the award.

Lessons from the studio were disseminated nationally. Raja wrote a prospectus about the studio, *Seeking Common Ground in Smart Growth and Food System Planning: Lessons From the ‘Food for Growth’ Studio*, published on the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) website (Raja 2006). In the report Raja details how smart growth and food systems planning can be integrated, smart growth having an impact on food access. Importantly, findings from the studio were used locally and the course was the beginning of a long-term partnership, as the University at Buffalo and MAP still work together today. The report was used to guide MAP’s programming as well as in future grant proposals. Raja and Picard have gone on to collaborate on various food systems planning work in Buffalo: from advocating for a food policy council which was enacted in 2013, to co-authoring a journal article, *Rustbelt Radicalism: A Decade of Food Systems Planning Practice in Buffalo, New York* (Raja et al. 2014).

23.7 Lessons Learned

While *Food for Growth* was not the first studio course focused on food, food was not yet a topic routinely covered in planning. According to students in the course, the food system was a new topic area for them. Various lessons were learned, including, more generally, the role of studios in planning education as a way to practice theory,

methods, and justice in an environment where mistakes can be made. We lay out the benefits and challenges that come with studio education, and particularly food planning studio education, in the context of the *Food for Growth* studio. We acknowledge that reflecting on a course 16 years later was challenging for interviewees, which is why we supplement the interviews with an analysis of course evaluations.

With respect to food, the *Food for Growth* studio was an opportunity to introduce new topics to the planning program and a way for Raja to both explore and expand her research. After meetings with MAP, one theme in particular emerged: that there was a tendency for planners and researchers to come to a neighborhood with ideas on what will work, without asking the community about their issues and ideas for solutions (not a problem unique to UB). We answer the following questions: (1) How, and when, does a (food systems) studio experience influence students, community, and faculty pathways? (2) How, and when do questions of ethics/equity drive or surface in the studio experience? (3) What are the limitations and challenges of teaching a community-engaged food systems planning studio?

23.7.1 Food Systems Studios and Student, Community, and Faculty Pathways

As one of the early food systems studios in the United States, we were curious whether and how the UB studio experience affected participants both when it was occurring, as well as in the subsequent years. Studio courses are a cornerstone of planning education, as they give students an opportunity to use both theory and practice learned in other courses. While other disciplines may offer service learning classes, they do not have the depth that a six-credit planning studio provides. Raja reflects on the role of studios in planning education:

Studio is where we blend technical expertise with the art of making judgment. The key essence of planning is to be able to think what we want a future community to look like. And I think the exercise of what the future ought to be is best tested out in a studio. So that's the piece that I don't think we get in any other course. We may learn the methods, we may learn the theory, but [the place] you put it all together is in the studio. The studio is truly reflection in action, but with a little bit of a safety net. You try all these ideas while you are still a student but you also have the protection of being in a studio so you can test out some things. But it's not naive like a seminar course where you are not answerable to an external client. So the blend of both having the space to stretch a little bit, which comes in an academic setting but then being accountable to an external party, I think, makes the studio a really good learning experience.

Numerous students, both in interviews and course reviews, report that the studio was their first opportunity to put into practice what they had learned in other courses. Recalling their graduate education, one student said, "I would have likely enjoyed the program more if I was doing a studio every semester, or at least twice a year. That is where I got to see planning in action, which you don't often get in a

classroom setting.” They also stated that “you stay within the four walls of your academic building [in other courses], just to be able to get out in the world is really important.”

Studio education allows students the opportunity to work with a community that to many, may be unfamiliar. Working with a new community “brought me more compassion for the people that are there,” while another stated that “there was so much more to planning than what was in the classroom and it gave me just so much more compassion for the people that we plan with and for and just the whole idea of planning with, not planning for. That idea was reinforced and that is something that I have tried to bring forward into my career.”

Not only does the studio experience provide a wider lens through which students can view the world, but it provides an opportunity to work with different audiences. In *Food for Growth*, students worked with a variety of community members, from store owners, to youth involved at MAP, to residents living in senior housing. A student reflected on one community engagement experience, saying that when going into neighborhood markets where owners were sometimes suspicious of outsiders, the students chatted in order to put people at ease. Students learned how to overcome barriers as outsiders, a skill crucial in their planning careers. Additionally, they were required to present their findings to a variety of audiences including the city common council and the community partner.

Multiple subfields of planning are covered in food systems planning, and a food studio course gets students to consider multiple facets of planning. One student, now a regional planner, discussed how food systems planning prepared them for a career in regional planning:

Regional planning is big picture planning. You’re looking at holistic systems, we touch almost everything except education. Whether it be economic development, environment, transportation, land use, cultural and historic resources...all those different things...And the concept of food planning is very similar to that. Because it’s not just about the food, it’s not just about getting food to people that are hungry, it’s about economic planning, it’s about transportation planning, it’s about land use planning, it’s about agricultural planning. So I think the fact that something like food and food systems touches upon almost all the different areas of what planning and planners get involved in helped prepare me for a career in regional planning because regional planning is about the big picture, the food system that sort of touches everything.

Students and faculty recall other planning topics that came up in the studio that were not routinely covered including gender, and the role of immigrants. Many students report that their planning education was improved specifically by being in a food studio and that “We had never heard about food systems planning until then”. One student had known about food systems planning, as she saw Jerry Kaufman’s keynote at the American Planning Association conference in Denver the previous spring and was inspired to take the studio course. Another student said “I feel that I was fortunate to end up in that studio. Being able to work with a community group, working in a part of planning that I didn’t even know existed, but doing it in a very tangible way, it gave me so many skills that I am still realizing that I am benefitting from.” Students were surprised and moved by the experiences of community

members. Multiple students discussed the shock they felt learning about people's experiences with food. One recalled, "to hear it took them [residents] two hours on a bus to get to a grocery store...that blew my mind coming from suburbia USA. To think about something so simple as going grocery shopping, for many in our community is so much more than that, it is an all-day affair."

The studio did influence one student who went on to work in the field of food systems planning. Two other students, while not food systems planners, work in regional planning and say that food is a sub-field of planning they now think about, in part because of the studio. Overall, *Food for Growth* gave students an opportunity to thoughtfully engage with a community.

Both faculty and community partners benefitted in the long term from partaking in the studio experience. Raja reflects on her experience in the studio:

If we were to identify different anchor points in my life as a scholar, researcher and educator, I would say the studio is a key anchor point because it did several things. It helped me understand really what role planning could play in food, it also helped me understand how food actually impacts people's lives in a community setting, and it helped me draw the linkages between food and other areas of planning. In some way the studio was an exercise for the students and myself on how to unravel how food is connected to planning. It was probably as much a learning exercise for me as it was for the students.

While studios technically only last a semester, the work can nevertheless be deep, facilitating much learning in a short period of time. As stated above, studios can facilitate learning beyond the classroom, setting the stage for research and partnerships. MAP's Picard also reflected fondly on the experience, stating that the studio report influenced the work MAP has engaged in since then.

23.7.2 Ethics and Equity in the Studio Experience

In reflecting on *Food for Growth*, we aimed to understand how issues of ethics and equity surfaced. While these were not themes that were deliberately included in the course, multiple interviewees discussed the approach that students in the studio took to their work as incorporating ethics and equity. These include thoughtful collaboration and utilizing a bottom-up approach.

Community-university partnerships need to be equitable and ethical in their interactions to be successful. While a long-term relationship allows trust between community and university partners to develop, an equitable relationship must be established between the partners from the beginning. In Raja's work with MAP, this deliberate approach to an equitable and ethical relationship is evident in how the role of the community partner was framed within the studio. MAP was involved in multiple aspects of the course including developing the studio, establishing desired outcomes and providing feedback on student work performance after the completion of the studio. Raja worked to make sure that the studio aligned with MAP's organizational mission and long-term goals. Additionally, Raja ensured that the division of labor between the university and MAP accounted for the inequity in

resources between the two organizations. In addition to the creation of the *Food for Growth* plan, students created multiple posters as part of the studio. These were given to MAP as an acknowledgment of the time and resources MAP invested in the studio and were used by MAP as educational tools. Raja and the students also presented their findings to the city common council and advocated on behalf of MAP.

While the studio was the first opportunity for Raja and MAP to work together, this spurred a long-term collaboration. MAP has become a strong community partner and collaborator with Raja, and Picard and Raja have published together on multiple occasions. While some faculty work with a different client or community partner each semester, maintaining a long-term relationship has many benefits, including strengthening the relationships between community partners and universities.

Food for Growth used a bottom-up approach to planning, involving community members in each step of the planning process. The West Side neighborhood had experienced decades of disinvestment and outmigration, leaving many vacant lots and houses. While outsiders had proposed solutions, few had worked with the community. Raja reflects on the studio's aspirations for their planning process:

Some of the things that were driving us [in the studio] is that we were acutely aware, after our first few visits, that there was a tendency for planners and maybe researchers to come to the community with predefined ideas of what works. There were a lot of inequities in the neighborhood that nobody was lifting up and there were also solutions in the neighborhood that no one was lifting up. So I would say, implicitly, the ethics behind the studio were that we wanted to delve into questions of poverty and access, but I also think that we were acutely aware of how important it was to have direct voices of people in the planning process.

Student work examined the interconnected ways that access to affordable and nutritious food was affected by multiple issues such as income, disinvestment, and transportation, coming from the viewpoint of community members. Students in the studio tried to listen before presuming. One student reported that you need to “be willing to ask questions and to hear answers that you have not have thought of.” The students were also mindful of being inclusive in the planning process and engaging with community members to learn from the community what their needs were. One student said of the process:

[We were] really going to the most marginalized groups. For me, as a planner, you want to try and be as inclusive as possible, and for us in that studio we were really reaching out, we were going to where people are, not asking them to come to us. As far as what we aspire to, we need to go to the places where people are and where they have their communities and where they have their needs, in order to better understand them (the needs that they are talking about) but also to be a face to whatever issues is, to actually put a face to the issue, because it's not just an issue it's a person.

While equity was not explicitly discussed within the report, the students took an equitable approach to the research and writing the report by engaging and checking in with community members throughout the process. Picard discussed working with many academics during her time at MAP and recalled that the students involved in

Food for Growth listened to what the community needed, then designed their report, coming in with no preconceived notions. This is spelled out clearly in the report:

Public involvement is an essential component of any planning process. Without community involvement, a food system plan runs the risk of being cursory, irrelevant, misguided or ineffective. Because their personal accounts most accurately reflect the community's existing food security issues, residents must guide the planning process to ensure short and long term community food security. (Almeida et al. 2003, p. 12)

In the report, recommendations clearly build on the “seeds of a community food system” that MAP had already planted (Almeida et al. 2003, p. 68). In putting community members first, students and faculty must work from the assets that already exist in a community.

Lastly, this bottom-up approach to planning also required students to confront their own societal privileges around these issues. One student reflected on this process:

Access to food is something which most college students who are coming from a middle class, suburban background just take for granted. That it will be there, and that they have access to it, and that, ultimately, they have some sort of power to be able to get themselves to it and be able to feed themselves affordably and nutritiously...**The equity issue was front and center here.** You have the lower West Side which is not an affluent neighborhood. People are working class. They don't have the resources of people in other places to be able to shop where they like or to buy things just because they want them.

While the outcomes were not necessarily about ethics, those in the studio ensured that ethics and equity were included in the process of the studio. This experience, if executed in a thoughtful way, can be influential for planners. It is crucial to be able to understand the experiences of others and listen before making assumptions. Studio courses, especially ones that explicitly bring up ethics and equity, can help to bring these themes to the classroom.

23.7.3 Limitations and Challenges of Community-Engaged Food Systems Planning Studios

Various challenges exist in teaching a successful community-engaged food studio course. Although studios are often six-credit courses allowing students more time to focus on the course, the short duration of a semester can hinder the depth of community engagement and the resulting final product. One student, in reflecting on her experience sticking to a timeline in *Food for Growth* said, “Students are learning ...that gets sticky when condensing it to a three-month period. Be open and flexible to a timeline. Just because there is this deadline in December doesn't mean that the work has to end there. Have a gameplan for what happens after.” This should not be an issue if community partners and faculty have an ongoing relationship, but should be discussed.

The tight timeline may lead to other challenges. If it is the first time a faculty member is working with a community partner, they may be unfamiliar with the history of an organization and the area that they serve. Raja reflects on this, as *Food for Growth* was her first experience working in West Buffalo:

I think what protected us from making colossal mistakes in the studio is that we were engaging with people, we were listening to people. In other words, even though I am now aware that I didn't pay attention to the history of the West Side, what protected us from doing a bad job is that we had a very heavy community engagement component in the studio. But if we didn't have that, in hindsight, I think to myself, "wow, we knew very little about the history of this neighborhood." I think that was an oversight.

While not ideal, strong community partnerships can help ensure that students and faculty are able to successfully navigate communities which they themselves may not be a part of. Community partners can facilitate connections and provide guidance to faculty members on the nuanced relationships which exist in the community.

A further challenge is that while studios can result in a useful plan for a community partner, it is often a big lift for them. Community partners that are smaller non-profits may not have the staff time to dedicate to overseeing and engaging with a studio course. From connecting students to stakeholders, to providing feedback on the report, community partners play a large role in food systems planning studios. Students should not rely on community partners to recount information that can be found from a careful reading of their websites or to write lengthy responses. Students and faculty need to tread lightly when it comes to asking community partners for their insights.

Additionally, studio courses can be taxing for all involved: community partners, students, and faculty members. Raja reflected that she was so focused on the wellbeing of the neighborhood and community partner, especially as a new faculty member, that she did not consider the wellbeing of the students themselves. Students coming from limited wealth may have been especially triggered by the studio experience. It's crucial to consider both community partners and students in studio courses.

Lastly, teaching what was in 2003 a relatively new topic like food systems brought additional challenges. Many students stated that the studio course was their first introduction to food systems planning. Because of this, students reported needing more time dedicated to seminars. One student review said, "A little more time could have been spent in the beginning of the studio going over the basics of food security. Some people just didn't get it and it slowed the rest of the studio down," while another said "Major studio concepts needed to be ingrained in student's [sic] heads much earlier in the semester" and "I would have liked to have a better understanding of the entire process of the food system. Not just a part of it."

These challenges are common to many studio courses that cover a topic new to the field of planning. Thoughtful community engagement, clear communication with partners and students, and an understanding of what is doable within the scope of a studio are all important to keep in mind.

23.8 Directions for the Future

While food systems planning has grown to be a more routine topic in planning in the past 16 years, there is work yet to do. We include both general suggestions for food systems planning studios and recommendations for executing an effective studio course in any subfield of planning.

23.8.1 Food Systems Planning Studios

Studios continue to be a cornerstone of planning education, where students have the opportunity to apply the methods and theory they have learned in courses to a real-world client. While food systems planning studios provide an opportunity to work across subfields of planning, they also train students in a systems-based approach, which is the basis of many subfields such as regional planning. Studios give students the opportunity to work in an interdisciplinary setting and acquire experience engaging directly with communities. Studios also provide the opportunity to cover topics not discussed in core planning classes, and for students to gain experience finding commonality among diverse groups. Issues of ethics and equity must be prominent within planning studios to ensure that students are engaging with communities in ways that build on community assets and provide the means for long-term growth. The flexibility of studio experiences also is an ideal way to explore new facets of planning and connect different subfields. They provide space for emerging scholars to engage in research and explore innovative approaches to systemic issues.

23.8.2 Recommendations

23.8.2.1 Building Authentic Community Partnerships

It is important for faculty to build authentic partnerships before beginning the studio, and ensure that the community partner is engaged in the process before, during, and after the semester. Food systems are complex; they are influenced by a number of factors including geographic and economic access, local and regional restrictions on food production, and cultural norms around food. The challenges and opportunities present in the local food system may not be readily apparent to academic outsiders. Community partners provide much needed context without which food systems planning will not be effective.

Before beginning the studio, community partners should co-create goals and evaluation criteria to ensure that they are aligned with the organization's long term mission and needs. The responsibilities of community partners and faculty should be clearly established, and issues such as community partner compensation or the distribution of funding should be addressed. The community partner should work

with faculty to decide what deliverables are most useful to the partner, while the faculty member works to determine what is most realistic and appropriate for the studio.

Before beginning the studio, faculty should also ensure that students understand both how it serves the community partner's mission, what the short- and long-term goals are, and what skills students will have the opportunity to develop during the course. This is also an opportunity for faculty to help students understand how the food system ties into the broader context of local and regional planning; the food system is connected to many other areas of planning and is therefore sensitive to changes in transportation, housing, both local and national plans and policies, and environmental issues. Students should be clear on why they are engaging in this work, what the expectation is, and how food systems connect to other areas of urban planning.

During the studio there should be ongoing communication between the community partner and both faculty and students; assigning a student to be responsible for a liaison role can be helpful. Students should make periodic presentations to community partners as the work progresses, as well as conduct periodic check-ins to ensure the studio is meeting community partner expectations. Ongoing communication is particularly crucial for food systems work given the complexity of the food system. Community partners can provide insight into initial findings, and make recommendations to ensure that students are not overlooking any key areas. Faculty should be mindful that community partners may not have the capacity for extensive mentorship of students and make sure that the time invested by the community partner is not burdensome to them.

After the studio is concluded, the faculty should provide opportunities for community partners to give feedback on student performance and outcomes and incorporate this feedback into future work. There should be continued communication between faculty and the community partner regarding next steps such as a grant proposal or future research. Finally, if faculty seek to publish based on the studio, there must be opportunities for community partners to review and contribute to these publications to ensure that the perspectives of the university and community are given equal representation in the literature. Food is rooted in cultural practices and norms; it is essential to ensure that the community perspective on the food system is represented accurately.

23.8.2.2 Building on Community Knowledge

Faculty framing of issues is also an important consideration, as it will strongly influence how students approach the studio experience. It should be clear to students that the studio work needs to meet the expectations of the community partner and serve community needs. It is also important that faculty emphasize to students that they are working *with* the community. Community members should be seen as a valuable source of knowledge regarding the opportunities and challenges that they face. Practicing cultural humility should be emphasized by the instructor, especially

when working with diverse communities. Issues of ethics and equity should be emphasized by assigning students readings that discuss issues of systemic inequality and encourage reflection on the systemic barriers many communities face in accessing affordable and nutritious food.

The studio should start in the community and build up, not start in the university and work down. As Picard said during her reflection, “If you’re not a member of the community you are doing work in, it’s important to spend time in the community, get to know people in the community, the things that happen, and how people interact. Unless you do that and really have that community focus, I think your work is not going to have as much impact.” The importance of this cannot be overstated. Faculty and students must be willing to listen to communities without preconceived notions of what a community needs or the challenges it is facing. By maintaining a community focus, studios can bring together the resources of universities and the knowledge of community partners to build upon community assets and create lasting change.

Finally, a clear path for future community engagement should be presented to students at the end of the semester. Faculty should make clear what opportunities for continued work exist and are appropriate. For example, students may want to continue to volunteer with the community partner or help to advocate for policy change. Faculty should clarify for students whether or not they will be notified if the faculty chooses to publish based on the studio, and what opportunities students will have to contribute to that publication. Faculty should also make sure students are aware of other opportunities such as other community organizations looking for volunteers, food systems work by local activists, or classes and conferences where they can continue to engage in food systems education.

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Alexandra Judelsohn is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University at Buffalo. Her scholarship explores the role of local governments in the U.S. refugee resettlement program and, broadly, her interests include how the built environment impacts health, particularly for immigrant and refugee populations. Judelsohn holds a Master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University at Buffalo and a PhD from the University at Michigan.

Sylvia Kelly draws on her interdisciplinary background in urban planning and public health to increase food access and utilize food systems as a tool of economic development, with a focus on the Global South. She is a contributing author to a report on food systems planning for the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization; and is a co-author of “Planning to Eat? Innovative Local Government Plans and Policies to Build Healthy Food Systems in the United States.” When not advocating for food justice, she can most often be found in her kitchen with her sourdough starter Toby.

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Chapter 24

Critical Pedagogy in North American Food Systems Planning: Looking Back to Look Ahead



Wendy Mendes

Abstract The purpose of this chapter is to revisit, and build upon, themes that emerged from a 2011 article on food systems pedagogy in the discipline of planning (Mendes & Nasr). The chapter begins with an overview of findings that emerged from the 2011 article. This is followed by a consideration of how the literature on food systems pedagogy in planning and related disciplines is evolving, and what has held true in the intervening years. Four themes are identified from the literature since 2011: interdisciplinarity, social justice and ethics, community-university research partnerships, and systems thinking. The themes are intended to serve as signposts to signal a bridge between early concerns of food system planning educators, and the new or additional skills and capacities that may be needed to prepare future food systems planners and community leaders.

Keywords Food systems · Planning · North America · Pedagogy · Interdisciplinarity · Social justice · Ethics · Equity · Community-university research partnerships · Systems thinking

... community food planning is still at the seedling stage, but recent signs show that the plant is growing at a healthy pace and becoming more firmly rooted in the planning community. (Kaufman and Caton Campbell in Mendes et al. 2011, p. 32)

More than a decade ago, over strong espressos in a Toronto coffee shop, my colleague Joe Nasr and I began what would be a series of conversations about our early experiences teaching courses on food systems in the discipline of urban planning. Both Joe and I had been teaching university-level food systems planning and/or urban agriculture courses since 2005. Our courses included both undergraduate courses and graduate seminars in face-to-face and online formats. During our caffeine-fueled conversations, we pondered the changes we had observed since 2005. We reflected on the support (or lack thereof) of our respective institutions in

W. Mendes (✉)

Centre for Studies in Food Security, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, ON, Canada
e-mail: wmendes@torontomu.ca

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considering food systems in their course offerings, noted the rapid increase in our students' knowledge and hands-on experience with food systems from year to year, and considered the ways that global trends such as climate change and social inequality informed how we approached the topic.

It was quickly clear to us that our colleagues in planning programs across Canada and the United States who were also early adopters of food systems as a topic of instruction, may have similar observations. It was from these reflections that Joe and I embarked on the task of documenting and analyzing first-hand accounts of university educators who taught courses with a focus on food systems. Our belief was that this exercise would serve as an important point of reference within the fast-evolving realm of food systems research, teaching and practice. At the time, with a few notable exceptions (Hammer 2004), the literature on food systems planning had largely neglected the pedagogical aspects of how and why planning educators sought to teach food policy topics, what strategies they used, what professional and institutional challenges they faced, and what benefits their students may have gained. Where the literature existed, what Joe and I felt was missing was attention to educators' voices and first-hand narrative accounts of their respective experiences.

For Joe and me, and the colleagues we engaged in conversation about these questions, the result was a 2011 article entitled "Preparing future food system planning professionals and scholars: Reflections on teaching experiences," published in the *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* (JAFSCD) (Mendes et al. 2011). Our 2011 article begins with an overview of how food systems came to be decoupled from, and reconnected to urban and regional planning. It summarizes some of the key advances in food systems research, scholarship, teaching, and practice beginning with Pothukuchi and Kaufman's pioneering publications about planning having overlooked the food system (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999, 2000). The piece then takes an unconventional turn: Joe and I invited eight of our university educator colleagues in the US and Canada to provide a 1000-word reflection on their early experiences teaching courses on food systems within the planning discipline.¹ With such a small sample size, our intention was not to claim an exhaustive view of the topic, but rather to provide a space for colleagues in an emergent field to tell more nuanced stories of their experiences than a typical article format allows.²

Our colleagues' first-hand accounts are included in full in the 2011 article, followed by an analysis of key themes and findings that emerged from their reflections. We conclude our article with some thoughts on what this may suggest about current

¹ The contributors were: Timothy Beatley, Branden Born, Kristina Bouris, Marcia Caton Campbell, Jerome L Kaufman, Barbara Lynch, Kami Pothukuchi, and Gerda Wekerle.

² It is worth noting that the *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* (JAFSCD) took the unusual step of accepting our article for publication in spite of its atypical format and length.

and future training for food systems professionals and scholars. In the article, Joe and I write:

One of the primary reasons for documenting and analyzing the early experiences of university educators who teach food systems issues is to identify challenges and innovations as we move forward into an increasingly complex global context for food system research and practice (Mendes et al. 2011, p. 22).

A decade after the publication of the 2011 article it seems timely to revisit and build upon themes that emerged from our early analysis, and consider what the literature now has to say about food systems pedagogy.³ The purpose of this chapter is precisely that. I begin the chapter with an overview of findings that emerged from the 2011 article. I then consider how the literature on food systems pedagogy in planning and related disciplines is evolving, and what has held true in the intervening years. I identify four themes drawn from the literature since 2011. The themes are not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, they serve as signposts to signal a bridge between early concerns of food system planning educators, and the skills and capacities that may be need to be deepened to prepare future food systems planners and community leaders.⁴

24.1 Looking Back: Early Themes Identified by Food Systems Planning Educators

Janet Hammer's 2004 article was one of the first to systematically consider food systems pedagogy in planning curricula in the North American context. While offering valuable and pioneering insights, Hammer's article differs from the research that Joe and I, and our contributors, conducted in that the former is based on a survey of course syllabi while the latter explores individual teaching experiences. The eight educators who contributed to the 2011 JAFSCD article offered insights and observations based on their respective first-hand experiences teaching food systems and/or urban agriculture courses. Each contributor was provided with the same set of questions, and was encouraged to respond to the questions that most strongly resonated with them (Mendes et al. 2011, p. 20). The questions are:

³For the purpose of this chapter, I focus on food systems as a whole instead of treating urban agriculture in isolation. I situate urban agriculture within a "systems" approach to food that considers the full range of activities, policies and practices associated with the ways that food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed, and recycled.

⁴While cities and regions in the Global South should be recognized for their role as pioneers and innovators in food systems policy and planning, a close examination of issues in food systems pedagogy in the Global South is beyond the scope of this chapter. Similarly, while a growing literature and practice on the pedagogy of food systems planning has emerged in Europe, Australia, and elsewhere, the focus of this chapter is the US and Canada.

1. What is the title and main focus of the food course you taught (or teach), and was it (or is it) taught in a planning school or another department?
2. How did you come to propose and teach the course? What or who inspired you?
3. What specific contributions do you feel it makes to the planning curriculum and to preparing the planners of tomorrow? Are there other benefits?
4. How did you “sell” the course? Was it a struggle to offer it? Was it a challenge to attract students? If so, please tell us about these or other challenges.
5. Because food is a nontraditional planning issue, did you (or do you) adjust your teaching methods? If so, how and why? Is there anything about the topic itself that changed your pedagogical approach? Did you seek to treat it (or make it appear) as a traditional planning issue?
6. How do you feel the course is perceived by colleagues and students in your planning school or department? Does it complement other offerings in your planning school or faculty? Do you think it has broadened perceptions about emerging planning issues?
7. How would you describe the pre-existing knowledge of your students of food issues? Were you teaching to the converted? (Mendes et al. 2011, p. 20)

In response to these questions, contributors offered eloquent reflections that illustrate the richness and diversity of teaching experiences in a multi-faceted and emergent field of study. Commenting on the value of food-related courses in planning, Timothy Beatley observed that they “... seem especially potent as community catalysts” (Beatley as cited in Mendes et al. 2011, p. 44). Beatley added: “I have also learned that sustainable food and community food systems are wonderful avenues for teaching about community sustainability and sustainable place-building” (Beatley as cited in Mendes et al. 2011, p. 44). Barbara Lynch remarked: “On the whole, the class seemed to have gained a new consciousness about the centrality of food to national culture, social integration, and well-being” (Lynch as cited in Mendes et al. 2011, p. 49). Kristina Bouris wrote that her experience teaching a food systems planning course “provided an opportunity to explore the delicate forces that create and shape an emerging planning issue” (Bouris as cited in Mendes et al. 2011, p. 43). Branden Born noted the importance of food planning courses as a way to “prepare students to think about the emerging issues for society generally, and planning specifically” (Born as cited in Mendes et al. 2011, p. 40).

Threaded through the diversity of perspectives and experiences that emerged from contributors’ first-hand narratives, a number of common themes were identified as examples of intended or unintended pedagogical outcomes that contributors felt were facilitated by their courses due to the unique attributes of the topic of food systems. These themes are:

1. Increased awareness of, and sensitivity to, the diversity of people involved in and affected by food systems issues.
2. Increased attention to the importance of stakeholder involvement in planning processes.
3. Higher awareness of the broader governance context of planning.
4. Deeper understanding of the links between globalization and planning education.
5. Better awareness of the connections between food systems and sustainability principles. (Mendes et al. 2011, p. 23)

An additional theme worth noting is what contributors identified as the role of food planning courses as catalysts for community-building, activism, and social awareness (Mendes et al. 2011, p. 25). Tightly linked to this theme is the role of community-based experiential learning and/or service learning as integral aspects of the course delivery methods that contributors generally felt facilitated the community-building and activism that ensued. These and other themes and reflections offered by contributors foreshadow findings that emerge in later research on food systems pedagogy in planning. Let us now turn to how the literature on food systems pedagogy in planning and related disciplines has evolved in the intervening years, and how emergent concerns and possibilities correspond with observations from a decade ago.

24.2 Looking Ahead: The Evolution of Food Systems Pedagogy in Planning and Related Disciplines

Since 2011, a sizeable literature has evolved that addresses various aspects of food systems pedagogy in planning and related disciplines. Empirical evidence showing considerable growth in food systems planning education can be found in Greenstein, Jacobsen, Coulson & Morales' 2015 study of food system planning course syllabi. Greenstein et al. analyze US planning education programs to assess developments in food systems curricula since Hammer's 2004 study (Greenstein et al. 2015, p. 489). By analyzing growth in the number of stand-alone food systems courses offered by US planning departments, and how the courses are structured, the authors found that the number of Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) schools that include food systems in their curriculum tripled from 2004 to 2012 (Greenstein et al. 2015, p. 491). Specifically, in 2004 nine schools offered a food systems course or a course that included the topic. In 2012, 27 ACSP schools offered stand-alone food systems courses (Greenstein et al. 2015, p. 491). While still an under-represented topic of instruction in planning schools, and one that has yet to be embedded within required program curricula, the rate of growth remains noteworthy.

Comparable data do not yet exist for accredited Canadian planning schools; however, a review of the literature on food systems pedagogy reveals a number of themes analyzed by scholars based in both US and Canadian universities in planning and

related disciplines. While Greenstein et al. limit the focus of their study to the discipline of planning (ACSP planning schools), my discussion focuses on food systems pedagogy within planning and related disciplines more broadly (e.g., environmental studies, agroecology, public health, community development, nutrition, etc.). This is due to my interest in exploring issues that transcend single disciplines, and reflects what I see as the evolving nature of food systems planning pedagogy as inherently interdisciplinary, which poses both opportunities and challenges to the discipline of planning. While far from an exhaustive list, common themes include:

1. Interdisciplinarity
2. Social justice and ethics
3. Community-university research partnerships and community-based research methods
4. Systems thinking

These themes, reflecting a combination of content, pedagogical approaches, and learning objectives, are often interconnected in the literature.

24.3 Interdisciplinarity

One of the preoccupations identified by contributors to the 2011 JAFSCD (Mendes & Nasr) article on food systems pedagogy is the challenge of demonstrating the significance of food systems as a legitimate planning concern within the profession, and its rightful place in planning school curricula. While this remains an ongoing concern, a tension that adds complexity to this challenge is how to balance the need for theoretical and technical training that is specific to planning, with the recognition that food system challenges cannot be understood or solved by any one discipline, and that efforts to do so may in fact prove to be detrimental. A growing number of food system scholars argue that a singular disciplinary problem-solving approach is inadequate for the task of analyzing the multidimensional nature of food systems issues, and preparing professionals and community leaders to address them (Hilimire et al. 2014; Kolodinsky et al. 2012; Levkoe et al. 2016; Miller et al. 2012; Rojas et al. 2012; Valley et al. 2017b).

Referring to the essential skills and competencies required by future food systems professionals, Valley et al. argue that "... they will need to demonstrate individual and collective agency to advance workplace and societal missions that encompass economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainability in food and agriculture" (Valley et al. 2017b, p. 468). The authors add that achieving this aim is often hampered by the fact that in many university programs, students are educated in narrowly defined disciplines that do not reflect the complexity and systemic nature of the problems they are being trained to solve: "Graduates are thus often ill-prepared to deal with complexity in food systems or interact effectively with knowledge and practical domains outside of their specialization" (Valley et al. 2017b, p. 468). To provide an interdisciplinary approach that prepares students for

the challenges they will encounter in future work and community endeavors, food system scholars and educators point to the need for innovative curricula that are purposefully designed to make connections between diverse topics, epistemologies, practices, and other social and ecological food system dynamics (Hilimire et al. 2014, p. 725).

Contributors to the 2011 JAFSCD (Mendes & Nasr) article on food systems pedagogy foreshadowed the importance of interdisciplinarity in the frequency with which inherently systemic and interdisciplinary topics such as globalization, sustainability, community development, and governance arose in their narratives. What the more recent scholarship on interdisciplinarity in food systems pedagogy adds are specific pedagogical models and approaches designed to purposefully incorporate skills and learning based on interdisciplinarity, systems thinking, experiential learning, and collective action among others. For example, Valley et al. (2017b) propose a “signature pedagogy” for Sustainable Food Systems Education (SFSE) that combines three “structures”: (1) “surface,” referring to the learning settings and configurations that facilitate the deep and implicit structures of the pedagogy including multiple learning contexts, individual and group learning opportunities, and diverse assessment strategies (Valley et al. 2017b, pp. 473–474), (2) “deep,” referring to the ontological and epistemic beliefs of a knowledge domain and the educational conditions for acquiring them including multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinarity, systems thinking, experiential learning, and open-ended case inquiry (Valley et al. 2017b, pp. 474–475), and (3) “implicit,” referring to the choice of content, process, and behavior within a classroom including critical reflection and collective action (Valley et al. 2017b, pp. 475–476).

A clearly articulated call for purposeful interdisciplinarity with/in food systems pedagogy should not downplay the very real tensions that arise when planning educators are required to simultaneously demonstrate the specificity and relevance of food systems to planning in particular, while at the same time proving that such courses should embody interdisciplinary values, theories, and methods. As new “signature pedagogies” for food systems are developed and implemented, more attention will need to be given to how to respond to the need to define food’s “place” within traditional disciplinary structures. This may be particularly true for applied disciplines such as planning where professional accreditations and hiring practices may still rely on specific technical skills and theoretical knowledge. In addition, there are institutional and logistical challenges involved in mounting interdisciplinary courses including determining in which department they are housed, course scheduling, and procedures for determining assignments and evaluation criteria (Miller et al. 2012). Finally, and perhaps most significantly, there are important epistemological implications stemming from the ways that interdisciplinarity can productively challenge the very basis of assumptions about knowledge and truth by extending inquiry beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about knowledge production often surfaces underlying patterns of privilege and oppression that can be obscured by a single worldview – or disciplinary approach. Although not without its own gaps and omissions, food systems scholarship, education, and practice can claim a rich history of attention to

multiple worldviews and intersectional identities. The ways that this is taken up and addressed in relation to food systems planning in particular is explored in this chapter's second theme: social justice and ethics.

24.4 Social Justice and Ethics

The literature on food systems has shown consistent interest in, and attention to themes of social justice and ethics dating back decades. Since at least the late 1990s, scholars have been writing about food democracy (Hassanein 2003), food justice (Allen 2008, 2010; Hinrichs and Allen 2008; Power 1998; Slocum and Cadieux 2015; Wekerle 2004), the “right to food” (Anderson 2008), food citizenship and civic food networks (Renting et al. 2012), food sovereignty (Levkoe 2013; Wittman et al. 2011), the intersection between food justice and specific food system practices such as urban agriculture (Horst et al. 2017, this volume, Chap. 6), anti-colonial and indigenous food systems (Elliott et al. 2012; Kepkiewicz et al. 2015; Morrison 2008, 2011), and issues of race and ethnicity in relation to the food system (Bradley and Herrera 2016; Burdick 2014; Guthman 2011; Lim 2015; Moore and Swisher 2015; Pirog et al. 2015; Roman-Alcalá 2015). A smaller but growing subset of the literature examines these issues in relation to food systems pedagogy in particular (Galt et al. 2013; Niewolny et al. 2017; Parker 2015; Peña 2015; Yamashita and Robinson 2016), however very little is specific to food systems *planning* pedagogy. Contributors to the 2011 JAFSCD (Mendes & Nasr) article clearly identify the role of food systems planning courses as catalysts for community-building, activism, and social awareness (Mendes et al. 2011, p. 25), but what this means for the evolution of current pedagogical practice in the discipline of planning remains unclear. If this is indeed a gap that needs filling, how might planning educators rise to the challenge?

One possibility may be found within the nature of interdisciplinarity itself. It is worth noting that the authors of the “signature pedagogy” for Sustainable Food Systems Education (SFSE) referred to in the previous section of this chapter suggest that interdisciplinarity can and should be used to help students understand and address injustices in the food system and beyond. The authors argue that their critical (interdisciplinary) pedagogy requires students to question assumptions about knowledge, who participates in its construction, and whose version of truth prevails:

The critical nature of SFSE programs asks students to engage with historical and current injustices within the food system, often connected to privilege and oppression arising from unequal positions in social hierarchies related to class, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, dis/ability and nationality. Involving students in critical learning contexts may place students, especially from privileged backgrounds, in positions where they witness power, authority, privilege and oppression in the food system play out in the daily lives of others (Valley et al. 2017b, p. 477).

Meek & Tarlau echo this sentiment by proposing a pedagogical model that they refer to as Critical Food Systems Education (CFSE) based on a combination of theory, pedagogy, and policy intended to transform the food system, particularly in

relation to racism and other systemic injustices (Meek and Tarlau 2015, 2016). They write: “Food systems educators need to rethink how they can help their students connect interdisciplinary knowledge to transformative systems changes ... where students both learn to analyze their world of food production and access, and take actions to change these systems” (Meek and Tarlau 2016, p. 243). Similarly, Galt et al. (2013) document efforts by a teaching team at the University of California, Davis to take an interdisciplinary approach to the concept of transformative learning in food systems education, based on collaboration, openness to varying perspectives, and critical self-understanding. Leveraging interdisciplinarity as a way to help students understand and address injustices in the food system does not resolve the tension of how food systems planning must situate itself as specific to planning while at the same time woven across – and informed by – multiple disciplines. However, it does reinforce the need for more robust pedagogical approaches aimed at understanding patterns of privilege and oppression that arguably only an interdisciplinary epistemological lens can provide.

The discipline of planning, and sub-discipline of food systems planning, may already hold the seeds to a partial solution to achieving this goal. Inherent in the ability to acknowledge and address systemic inequalities is purposeful training in how to deal skillfully with conflict and disagreement that necessarily ensues when contentious issues are surfaced. Traditional courses on facilitation, ethics and conflict resolution are now relatively commonplace in planning school curricula. What is less common is training designed to engage with entrenched conflict stemming from historic injustices and systemic inequalities based on indigeneity, race, class, gender, physical ability and other aspects of identity. Existing methodologies outside of planning such as Deep Democracy facilitation, feminist and postcolonial methodologies, Critical Race Theory, and anti-colonial praxis provide frameworks for understanding and navigating difficult conversations about identity and power. Other methods include the work of practitioners such as Adam Kahane who argues for deliberate engagement with conflict, rather than avoidance, or the default assumption that consensus is the best outcome. In *Collaborating with the Enemy*, Kahane (2017) argues that in order to move towards solutions on deeply divisive issues, we must move beyond “conventional collaboration” which is typically organized around like-minded people seeking ways to work in harmony, towards “stretch collaboration” which expects engagement with divergent viewpoints, and requires the ability to embrace inevitable conflict. (Kahane 2017). What “conventional” collaboration can obscure are the underlying power relations that reinforce dominant voices and assumptions. As Paul M. Taylor, former Executive Director of FoodShare in Toronto, Canada writes: “For folks atop the power pyramid who are supported in taking up all of the space, consider listening before speaking, and follow the lead of those most affected by the issues that affect our food system and world” (Taylor 2018).

Considering the observations of contributors to the 2011 JAFSCD (Mendes & Nasr) article about the role of food systems planning courses as catalysts for activism and social awareness, along with recent findings that reveal the prevalence of food systems planning courses as spaces to train students as change agents contributing to altering power relations (Greenstein et al. 2015, p. 497), it seems reasonable to suggest that food systems planning holds potential as a space to advance these

aims by drawing from complementary methodologies that foreground identity and power. However, the common tendency in food systems work to practice “conventional” collaboration means there is considerable work left to do in pedagogy and practice. One of the ways to bring us closer to the goal of “stretch” collaboration may be found, in part, in the next theme explored in this chapter: community-university research partnerships.

24.5 Community-University Research Partnerships and Community-Based Methods

A third theme that emerges in contemporary food systems pedagogy research and practice is that of community-university research partnerships (CURPs). CURPs, and the community-based (CB) methods⁵ often associated with such partnerships, are based on the assumption that applied collaborative research between universities and non-academic partners “can enrich investigations of complex social, health, and environmental problems and lead to more meaningful outcomes” (Mendes et al. 2014, p. 166). CURPs are commonly characterized by a transition from inquiry to engagement, and from university-generated to community-generated research agendas (Rojas et al. 2012, p. 201). In this way, CURPs can be understood as one in a growing number of efforts to increase the capacity of universities and their community partners to tackle societal problems in more inclusive and accountable ways (Mendes et al. 2014). As Levkoe et al. describe it: “Working to transform any one element of the food system demands considering and acting on the multitude of internal and external factors that affect that system. No single civil society organization or campus-based actor can possibly accomplish this task alone” (Levkoe et al. 2016, p. 56).

A number of the contributors to the 2011 JAFSCD (Mendes & Nasr) article on food systems pedagogy wrote about the importance of CURPs and CB methods to their work. Contributors identified CB methods as integral aspects of contributors’ course delivery methods that contributors felt facilitated community-building and activism. For example, both Branden Born and Kami Pothukuchi observed how amenable food courses are to hands-on, community-based experiential learning and “service learning” methods of teaching. In Branden’s case, this involved a major project consisting of a client-driven paper that assisted a local food system entity (Born as cited in Mendes et al. 2011, p. 40). In Kami’s case, it involved combining lectures with a seminar series in which community-based experts discuss varying aspects of food systems” (Pothukuchi as cited in Mendes et al. 2011, p. 36). At the same time, contributors identified a number of challenges that reflect the risk borne

⁵Here, I use the terminology “community-based methods” to refer broadly to the many intellectual, philosophical, and activist traditions that require meaningful and inclusive interaction with non-academic participants, and embody principles of critical self-reflection, reciprocity, inclusion, and social equity (e.g., community-based research, action research, service learning, experiential learning). I do not intend to imply that these traditions are interchangeable.

by instructors, particularly junior faculty of embarking on what was then, and in many ways remains, an unconventional teaching and research trajectory. In relation to CURPs and CB methods in particular, this includes the challenge of teaching in an emerging field of practice in which research questions, contextual understanding, and identification of key actors necessitate active involvement in ongoing policy and grassroots efforts, which “posed opportunity costs to time for research and writing” (Pothukuchi as cited in Mendes et al. 2011, p. 36).

In spite of the challenges, food system scholars and educators continue to assert that combining experience and theory in food systems education and training is critical given the highly applied and multifaceted nature of the field. A number of food system scholars and educators identify CURPs and CB methods as important mechanisms to build community, student, and faculty capacities to create more equitable food systems, and enable the collective action required to create transformative change (Niewolny et al. 2012; Rojas et al. 2012; Valley et al. 2017a). Whitaker et al. go even further by arguing not only that universities are well-positioned to help in this regard, but they are in fact “responsible” for helping rebuild food systems through community-university partnerships (Whittaker et al. 2017, p. 8).

Arguments in favor of this approach often point to the need for students of food systems to learn to engage with practitioners and stakeholders across traditional boundaries of a range of communities and institutions, as well as disciplines (Hilimire et al. 2014; Levkoe et al. 2016; Rojas et al. 2012). Some food systems scholars and educators insist that this requires an educational approach that empowers students to work with unfamiliar practitioners and communities, under circumstances that are often ambiguous, and where “no clear right answers exist” (Hilimire et al. 2014, p. 729). The focus on developing applied skills in engaging people and place is shown empirically in Greenstein et al.’s study of food systems planning curricula where the use of participatory community projects was present in more than half of the food systems planning courses that were analyzed (Greenstein et al. 2015, p. 469).

At the same time, a growing number of scholars caution that community-university partnerships and experiential-learning strategies generally fail to address structural inequities in food systems. In essence, “a learning-by-doing approach by itself does not necessarily guarantee the development of critical thinking about food systems” (Yamashita and Robinson 2016, p. 271). In response, new approaches are being advanced that argue for the need to understand and address structural racism (and other forms of oppression) before scholars can truly engage in sustainable and equitable work (Pirog et al. 2015). With regard to food systems education, pedagogical approaches include “critical food literacy” (Yamashita and Robinson 2016), “transformative learning” (Galt et al. 2013), and “participatory praxis” (Niewolny et al. 2017), all of which are aimed at: “increasing the ability to examine one’s assumptions, grapple with multiple perspectives and values that underlie the food system, understand the larger sociopolitical contexts that shape the food system, and take action toward creating just, sustainable food systems” (Yamashita and Robinson 2016, p. 269).

In addition, new pedagogical tools and resources being developed by civil society organizations are aimed at foregrounding issues of structural inequality. For example, the organization, Food Solutions New England offers an annual 21-day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge in which participants commit to “exploring the impact of race in the food system...provid[e] an intentional way to uncover racial inequities and injustices, as well as to discover the many ways we can collectively promote a more just food system for all” (Food Solutions New England [n.d.](#)). Similarly, coalitions such as the Indigenous Food Systems Network Website (developed by the BC Working Group in Indigenous Food Systems) is designed to “allow individuals and groups involved with Indigenous food related action, research, and policy reform to network and share relevant resources and information” (Indigenous Food Systems Network [n.d.](#)).

While promising, these and other advances in scholarship and practice in relation to community-university partnerships remain far from mainstream in food systems pedagogy in general, and food systems planning pedagogy in particular. One approach that offers potential as a way to foreground underlying structural causes of inequality in food systems work is systems thinking. This leads us to the fourth theme explored in this chapter.

24.6 Systems Thinking

At its most basic, systems thinking is based on the understanding that complex issues are linked, there are multiple actors in the system and they are connected, and integrated solutions are required (MacRae and Donahue 2013, p. 5). With regard to food, systems thinking can be defined as “a multi-disciplinary and multi-actor approach that aims to demonstrate that the multi-scaled challenges of the current configuration of global food systems are not isolated issues, but indicative of underlying systemic socio-ecological problems” (Sonnino et al. 2018, p. 3). To put it more simply, applying systems thinking to food involves “making common assumptions [about the food system] visible and explicit in order to understand what needs to be changed” (MacRae and Donahue 2013, p. 5). Or, as Sonnino et al. describe it, food systems thinking “... maps the uncertainty that characterize the structure, conduct and performance of a complex system [and] unveils emerging patterns, relationships and phenomena that would not be visible under a siloed approach” (Sonnino et al. 2018, p. 2). As intuitive as this may sound in theory, food systems scholars identify the extent to which food systems work has not typically been approached this way in practice. Historically, attention has often been focused on either the supply or the demand side of food systems policy and planning at the expense of an interconnected understanding of the food system, leading some scholars to question whether the debate on food systems has gone much beyond the abstract level (Sonnino et al. 2018, p. 2). This situation is made even more challenging when considering the intersection of food systems with broader systems issues

such as climate change, poverty reduction, public health and social equity (Mendes and Sonnino 2018). However, there are recent signs of progress toward food systems thinking in planning and policy-making.

One of the tangible advances towards systems thinking in food policy and planning comes in the form of integrated municipal food strategies. A municipal food strategy is “an official plan or roadmap that helps city governments integrate a full spectrum of urban food system issues within a single policy framework that includes food production (typically referred to as urban agriculture), food processing, food distribution, food access and food waste management” (Mansfield and Mendes 2013, p. 38). Food strategies coordinate and integrate ‘stand-alone’ food policies, while also embedding them within broader social, environmental and economic goals (Mansfield and Mendes 2013). Another advance can be seen in the emergence of “alternative paradigms” that are argued to result in more integrated and systemic agri-food approaches to sustainable regional development (Wiskerke 2009).

From a pedagogical perspective, contributors to the 2011 JAFSCD (Mendes & Nasr) article reveal a strong systems sensibility in their reflections. Among the most significant learning outcomes identified by contributors about their respective food systems courses include a higher awareness of the broader governance context of planning, a deeper understanding of the links between globalization and planning education, and a better awareness of the connections between food systems and sustainability principles (Mendes et al. 2011, p. 23). While not explicitly named as systems thinking, the nature of these topics requires an ability to recognize food as a system nested within other systems. Other pedagogical frameworks discussed earlier in this chapter go further by directly naming systems thinking as an essential dimension of teaching strategies and learning outcomes in food systems courses.

While food systems pedagogy in general, and food systems planning pedagogy specifically, can be said to show advances towards systems thinking (if only in theory), what may be missing are tools and methods that assist students in what can be an overwhelming task of making sense of the full extent of a system and their place in it, rather than fragments or parts. As Social Innovation Generation (SiG) describe it: “Taking a systems approach, it becomes clear that messy, longstanding problems are created by the systems in which they exist. To innovate on these social and environmental problems, it’s necessary to find ways to see, understand and use the system itself” (Social Innovation Generation, cited in ABSI Connect n.d.). This requires approaching systems thinking not merely as a technical skill applied to processes of planning and policy-making (resulting in integrated municipal food strategies, for example), but as a “metaskill” that is essential for learning to recognize the dynamics of complex systems, root causes, power relations, underlying worldviews, and assumptions about social realities (Reos Partners 2013).

As a pedagogical strategy, using systems thinking as a metaskill may offer practical tools that students can use in applied ways to “ground” systems issues that can seem overwhelming to address. It may be an accessible way to provide students with practical signposts to move from tactical to systemic interventions in food (and other systems) challenges, a goal that is clearly echoed in a number of the

experiences of food systems educators cited earlier in this chapter. By approaching systems thinking as a metaskill within the framework of a planning course, instructors may be able to better equip future planners to identify and foreground the underlying patterns and structures of the food system as a prerequisite to “technical” food systems planning interventions such as municipal food strategies and other food policy development.

24.7 Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter was to revisit, and build upon, themes that emerged from an early study on food systems pedagogy in the discipline of planning. I began the chapter with an overview of findings that emerged from the 2011 JAFSCD (Mendes & Nasr) article. I then considered how the literature on food systems pedagogy in planning and related disciplines is evolving, and what has held true in the intervening years. I identified four themes drawn from the literature since 2011: interdisciplinarity, social justice and ethics, community-university research partnerships, and systems thinking. The themes were intended to serve as signposts to signal a bridge between early concerns of food system planning educators, and the new or additional skills and capacities that may be needed to prepare future food systems planners and community leaders.

Overall, the review of emerging themes raises more questions than answers: Where interdisciplinarity is concerned, how might food systems planning educators balance the need for theoretical and technical training that is specific to planning, with the recognition that food system challenges cannot be understood or solved by any one discipline? How does this balance affect the perception of food systems as a legitimate planning issue? Regarding social justice and ethics, to what extent are planning schools providing training that moves beyond traditional courses on facilitation and conflict, and instead (or in addition) building capacities to engage with entrenched conflict and systemic inequality? How can planning educators respond to the disconnect between the centrality of issues of social justice and ethics in food systems planning and scholarship, and the applied skills that are needed by future professionals to work skillfully with these realities in practice? On the theme of community-university partnerships, how might food systems planning educators continue to be mindful of the time and vulnerability required to cultivate genuine trust and reciprocity with community partners? How might risks to junior faculty and contract sessional instructors teaching in an emerging field of community-based practice be mitigated? Concerning systems thinking, how might food systems educators teach systems thinking not merely as a technical skill applied to processes of planning and policy-making, but as a “metaskill” that is essential for learning to recognize the dynamics of complex systems, root causes, power relations, underlying worldviews, and assumptions about social realities.

While answers to these questions will continue to evolve over time, what is clear is that Kaufman and Caton Campbell's observation that food systems planning is becoming "more firmly rooted in the planning community" (as cited in Mendes et al. 2011, p. 32) is reflected in the rapid advancement of scholarship and practice in food systems pedagogy. This holds tremendous promise for a future in which food, and other systems challenges are set to become increasingly complex.⁶

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⁶Since this chapter was initially written, systems challenges have indeed become more complex. From the COVID-19 pandemic, to global anti-racism protests, polarized civic discourse, and worsening impacts of climate change, there is now even more reason to focus efforts on advancing food systems pedagogy with a view to preparing future planners. Scholarship, pedagogical practice and activism that developed since the writing of this chapter have quickened the pace and deepened the range of an already fast evolving field.

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Wendy Mendes is a scholar-practitioner specializing in healthy, equitable, and socially resilient cities. She holds a PhD in Urban Geography, and was awarded a two-year CIHR Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at the University of Toronto's Centre for Urban Health Initiatives. Her academic expertise is grounded in nearly 20 years of applied experience as an urban planner and policymaker with expertise in sustainable urban food systems, healthy built environments, social infrastructure and inclusive local democracy. Dr. Mendes has taught at three Canadian universities and published widely on topics including local governance, municipal policy-making, sustainable food systems, community-university partnerships, and critical pedagogy.

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Chapter 25

The Art of the Town-Gown Dance: Healing Legacies of Harm in our Food System through Equitable Pedagogy



Tanya Denckla Cobb  and Shantell Bingham

Abstract As legacies of harm are surfacing in the 21st century, universities have new opportunities for addressing past traumas and transforming historically tense town-gown relationships. Food systems planning and urban agriculture faculty are perfectly positioned to help bridge the university-community divide because their work so often centers on community and equity. Urban ag and food systems faculty can use academy resources as a force for good, to advance equity and system change in the neighboring community. But this goal is challenged by the constraints of the one-semester classroom, along with the lack of adequate guidelines for faculty and students in how to navigate the complex world of community engagement that seeks systemic change to advance equity. Using the University of Virginia experience with Charlottesville, authors provide examples of why university classroom engagement with the community is fraught with landmines that can perpetuate inequities and legacies of harm. This dynamic can further erode relationships and lead neighboring communities to view universities as “extractive industries.” Coining the term “equitable pedagogy,” the authors draw on three different sets of values and best practices to propose a new framework for how university classes might engage with community. Equitable pedagogy distinguishes between engagement that aims to support grassroots and that which aims to support long-term systemic change through the grassroots. A decision tree and core values help faculty navigate these complexities, to avoid perpetuating privilege and systemic inequities and, instead, foster a relationship with community that is mutually beneficial and synergistic.

Keywords Town-gown collaboration · Equitable pedagogy · Food systems pedagogy · Community engagement · Community-university partnerships · IAP2 core values

T. Denckla Cobb (✉)
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, USA
e-mail: td6n@virginia.edu

S. Bingham
Climate Justice Alliance, Somerset, NJ, USA

25.1 Introduction

University Scenario

The student's face crumpled and tears began to roll down her cheeks. Swiping at them with the back of her hand, words tumbled out. "She was so angry! I know it wasn't about me, not really. I mean, yes, of course, it was about me because I wanted to talk with her. But all this stuff came out, like it was stored up for a long time, and I was just the trigger for it coming unleashed. It's like I was the university, and she was lashing out at everything it's ever done to the community. So I guess it wasn't directed at me, not really. I mean she was making all kinds of assumptions about me, like I must come from a family of privilege just because I'm at the university, like I didn't understand anything about their history, like I was going to be like every other student. But I had written to her, and also outlined at the beginning of our meeting what we were trying to do, how it was different. She finally calmed down and actually apologized and said it wasn't really personal, but it sure felt pretty darn personal. I was able to finish the interview, but for the rest of the day I felt shaky and couldn't focus. Couldn't sleep either. I wasn't going to tell you, but I finally decided I had to, because maybe she'll treat other students that way too. She doesn't know anything about me, and never asked. I'm not from some wealthy family, I've had to fight every inch of the way to get here, get scholarships and loans, and I still don't feel like I fit in. It all feels so unfair, I've never felt so judged by someone who doesn't even know me."

This student was not new to community engagement. In fact, this was her second food systems class, and she also had worked with local nonprofits as part of the university service outreach to community, and was now serving as my teaching assistant. She felt more prepared than ever to approach her work with community in a listening, learner's mode, respectful of the community member's agency, and thought she had the tools to meet with this individual who had served as a respected leader for Charlottesville's low-income neighborhood causes. But her distressing experience forced me to question our approach. Something wasn't working. We were employing all the best practices that I knew from my work as a public policy facilitator and mediator. Or so I had thought. What was I missing? It would take many years for me to filter and understand this and similar experiences with students. They have led me to a new place of understanding that we who teach at a university can no longer approach working with our community neighbors with the idea that good intentions and the application of best practices from other fields will suffice to ensure a mutually beneficial experience. To ensure that community experiences with students result in real benefits to community, we have to rethink our entire framework for when and how to design community engagement into our classrooms. – Tanya Denckla Cobb

Community Scenario

The Board Chair of the Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR), reminded me of my great aunt, Betty-Rose Baker. She carried a sturdy build and a head of grey hair plaited back in braids. And when she spoke, her voice carried the grounding weight of southern Black English. But most importantly of all, the Board Chair came from agrarian roots. Hailing from Kingston, Jamaica, she referred to herself as a "Kingstonian," a city child brought up working in the coffee fields picking beans during the harvest season. If you ever visited her stoop in Westhaven, a public housing community, for a meeting, she'd instruct you to lay flowers in the empty holes she'd previously dug. She'd speak to you firmly yet softly in the shade of the banana trees as you worked her small plot of garden space. But if she ever called you into her office at the Westhaven Clinic, with the woman who was both Westhaven Clinic Program Coordinator and former Vice-Mayor, you were sure to hear that firm, slightly coarse tone of hers. The one she used most frequently at the PHAR board meetings, that drew the line of business and laid a concrete foundation of solid ground for her to stand on. In unison with Clinic Program Coordinator's approachable yet steadfast demeanor, it meant there was no space nor time for debate.

I had been called to Westhaven Clinic for a meeting with both women. A community member had complained about the garden project I was spearheading as a Master in Public Health student at UVA. But she had done more than simply complain about Growing for Change. Through tears, the resident had demanded that students not come into Westhaven. She'd worked for the students, serving them daily in Newcomb Dining Hall, and wanted her neighborhood to be spared from student involvement. We had thought Growing for Change would be different. We didn't seek to engage with the community as a whole but instead work with individual families to co-design personal gardens. We attempted to assure the resident that she didn't need to participate, nor did her neighbors have to either. Everyone would have their choice respected and abided by. We hadn't expected 46 families to sign up for the project its first year, demonstrating people's value on green space and desire to grow fresh produce. An initiative that set out to empower individuals, as a collective, was now engaging an entire community requiring more than 80 student volunteers to co-design, build, and deliver gardens. The resident had been correct in some ways, and her complaint had caught the ears of Deans at the University. Moving forward, I would need to listen closely to insights and recommendations from both women to heal any harm that was brewing.

I had trouble with the University. Something wasn't quite lining up between academic theory and practice. I saw this to be most evidently true when I considered the poor working relationship between University scholars/academics and community members. I know now that it was pedagogy and community engagement that centered student experience and lacked commitment to build equity. It was community engagement working without a clear understanding of the social strata demarking grassroots and grassroots organizations. – Shantell Bingham

Though these events happened at the University of Virginia (UVA) in Charlottesville, Virginia, they might easily have happened at hundreds of other universities across the nation, at any point in the post-Civil Rights era. That these scenarios happened, in 2012 and 2015, respectively, is perhaps a reflection of how the deep legacies of harm have begun bubbling to the surface and breaking into an open boil, often in ways that might be unanticipated by the academy but in ways that may be considered long overdue by their community neighbors.

In developing this chapter, we use UVA's relationship with the City of Charlottesville as a case study and have grappled with the question of how our university might do a better job of bridging the divide with our community neighbors. This divide reflects a nearly universal experience of historical town-gown tensions, but in Charlottesville it is far more, and more accurately might be called a gulf.

More specifically, we explore how university food systems faculty and students have attempted to bridge the town-gown gulf in Charlottesville, what methods have been used for engaging with the community, and what lessons might be learned about how and why these methods for community engagement might miss the mark in terms of advancing long-term systemic change. Looking at long-established core principles for community engagement and new concepts of equitable collaboration, we conclude that the university classroom has unique constraints and needs that set it apart and require a new framework. Further, we find there is an important distinction between engaging with community as a means of providing support for community goals, and engaging with community as a means of advancing long-term systemic change for sustainable, equitable food systems. To address these constraints, we propose a new framework of "equitable pedagogy" as a faculty guide

for how urban agriculture students¹ can work with their community neighbors to maximize the possibility for win-win experiences, as well as a decision tree to guide faculty in deciding what level of engagement with community would be most appropriate for their food systems class. This chapter presents a new approach for equitable pedagogy that extends outside of the classroom and works to heal legacies of harm in our food system. The principles of equitable pedagogy are particularly relevant to food systems planning and urban agriculture courses for their historical roots and interests in community equity and also because of their focus on community systems. Though this is our focus throughout the chapter, these principles are relevant for any university department that seeks to foster equity and equitable relationships with the surrounding community.

Understanding the Town-Gown Divide

A brief overview of the history of university-community relationships is provided in Mayfield (2001), who identifies three distinct phases for how universities historically have related to their community neighbors. In Phase 1 higher education offered a religious orientation for the purpose of educating the ministry and social elite. In Phase 2 the Morrill Act of 1862 created land-grant universities to provide public service in the form of research and outreach assistance to agriculture and industry, followed by Phase 3, in which the modern academic research institution emerged with a focus on either education or academic research, where “the community was their laboratory, and the residents were test subjects” (Mayfield 2001, p. 233).

Mayfield suggests this final shift in the town-gown relationship began at the turn of the twentieth century when sociologists adopted the philosophy of the “settlement house” movement, which advocated immersion in community life and community-based research as imperative for understanding and addressing urban social conditions. But unlike the settlement house movement, which was seeking solutions to real problems, Mayfield suggests this philosophy became a justification for university academics to see the community as a laboratory for gaining knowledge.

If Mayfield is right, the settlement house movement, rooted in compassion and service, ultimately became an instrument for its antithesis, dispassionate analysis and utility. The university, once a source of community assistance and support, transformed itself into an extractor of knowledge, using the community as a handy kind of petri dish for discovery, learning, and testing hypotheses.

Through a race and equity lens, however, it is important to understand that the Mayfield model fails to examine how the town-gown relationship impacts race relations and equity to this day. The “petri dish” analogy is personal for African Americans, as race has played a role throughout the town-gown

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¹Though our focus throughout the chapter is on urban agricultural and food system planning students, we believe the principles of equitable pedagogy apply equally to students in other disciplines.

relationship. Land-grant universities, enabled in 1862 by the Morrill Act, were not designed to support all equally; Marcus Comer, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist at Virginia State University (Wikipedia 2019)² explains that when Morrill was passed, the premise of “separate but equal” still prevailed in the South which meant that separate institutions for Blacks theoretically could have been established. “However, since the majority of Blacks were still in slavery at the time and the act did not divide funds on racial lines, there were no institutions established for blacks with the exception of Alcorn State University in Mississippi” (Comer et al. 2006). In *Freedom Farmers*, author and scholar Monica White, describes the creation in 1902 of Cooperative Extension (originally named the Cooperative Farm Demonstration): “in the first three years, none of these agents were Black, and white agents refused to talk with Black farmers, whether they were sharecroppers, tenant farmers, or landowners. This was despite the fact that African American farm workers actually outnumbered whites in the South, yet the agents operated as if they could save the South [from the boll weevil infestation] while ignoring its majority” (White 2018).

Even more recently, 400 Black farmers filed a class action lawsuit in 1997, known as *Pigford I* (*Pigford v. Glickman*) against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in which they claimed that African American farmers had been systematically discriminated against on the basis of race, and consequently denied fair treatment and access to farm loans and assistance which, in turn, led to widespread financial ruin, foreclosure, and land loss by African Americans. The lawsuit further claimed that the USDA had failed to investigate properly or respond to complaints for over ten years, from 1983 to 1997. Though they won the lawsuit in 1999, the settlement would be marred by a tortuous legal path and numerous further claims of discrimination. In the first round (*Pigford I*), of the 22,145 claims filed, 15,645 received payments. In the second round (*Pigford II*), when farmers who had missed the deadline for *Pigford I* were given a second chance to file a claim, of the 65,950 claims

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²Virginia State University (VSU), itself, offers a study of discriminatory attitudes and several attempts to deny its collegiate program for Black Americans. VSU was established in 1882 as the nation’s first fully state-supported four-year institution of higher learning for Black Americans, before it transitioned to becoming a land grant university in 1920. A “hostile lawsuit delayed its opening day for nineteen months, until October 1, 1883.” This was followed in 1902 when the Virginia legislature revised its charter act to curtail the collegiate program and to change the name to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. It wasn’t until 1920 when the land-grant program for Blacks was moved back to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. But it took another three years for the college program to be restored in 1923. Its name was changed to Virginia State College for Negroes in 1930, then again to Virginia State College in 1946, and, finally, again in 1979 when the Virginia legislature passed a law to provide its present name, Virginia State University. Despite searches, this history could not be found anywhere on VSU’s website.

submitted by individual farmers within this second deadline, only 2,268 were found to have met the strict criteria that they missed the first deadline for reasons “beyond their control” (Kiely 2011).

The fact that more than 87,000 African American farmers submitted claims of discrimination in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is testimony to the continuing culture of racism and discrimination that have separated Black people from the land to which they have had historical deep attachments, and the fact that Black farmers have continued to act to improve their own circumstances and to challenge these racially oppressive rural social structures. It is structures and experiences like this that have created and reinforced suspicion and hostility among African Americans toward institutions – such as universities and government agencies – that put forward the “we’re here to help you” attitude that has rarely served to support African Americans.

Still, it is worth noting that, despite our nation’s history of systematic efforts to deny Black access to both land and knowledge, Comer points to how the Cooperative Extension, the farmer outreach branch of land grant universities, is built upon the pioneering work of Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver whose “research and outreach efforts helped to educate millions.” White observes that “in contrast to the deficit-based approach that is common among academic when addressing issues of the Black community,” the scholar W.E.B. DuBois “offered an asset-based approach that focused on community strengths and resources” (White 2018). White describes the importance of what she coins “collective agency and community resilience” (CACR), and points to the historical work of Booker T. Washington’s to build institutions like Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute (now Tuskegee University) to support community-based agriculture; George Washington Carver’s focus on building self-sufficiency through scientific contributions to organic and sustainable agricultural practices; and DuBois’s emphasis on the importance and political power of cooperatives – all of which laid the bedrock foundation for today’s movement toward CACR.

Returning to Mayfield’s town-gown model, in which he describes Phase 3 as the transition of universities into research institutions, this final phase is equally fraught with racial implications. Communities of color have a long-standing relationship with academic institutions utilizing Black bodies to advance scientific medical research. Harriet Washington, author of *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans From Colonial Times to the Present*, told Time magazine that “Tuskegee shouldn’t be the first thing people think of,” but it’s just “the example that the government has admitted to and acknowledged. It’s so famous that people think it was the worst, but it was relatively mild compared to other stuff.” As shown in both the movie and book, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, the use of Henrietta Lacks’s cells for the scientific advancement for so many medical game-changers, such as the polio vaccine, cloning, and in-vitro

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fertilization, is but one example of how people of color have been treated historically as a “petri dish” readily available for experimentation, without being accorded the same human dignity, respect, or legal rights that would have been assumed and were required for whites. Set against the backdrop of horrific experimentation and use of Black bodies for medical and white supremacist purposes, it is easy to understand that the inherent tension between university and community would be a thousand-fold stronger for African Americans.

Last but not least, another town-gown stressor is the fact that universities are joined at the economic hip with their community. They provide a steady source of service and dining jobs to the community during the academic year, and also provide steady customers for local housing, goods, and services. Despite these connections, stress lines between university and community run deep. As federally tax-exempt educational institutions, universities have power through both money and, in some cases, eminent domain (West 2019) to snap up prime real estate, causing the community to lose valuable tax income. They are governed separately from the community by their own Board of Visitors, often politically appointed, and set their own mission and goals independent of the community. They are able to make decisions regarding physical expansion, student body expansion, sports, and other issues that directly impact the community — all without consulting the community. Given these stressors, even in the best of times there are bound to be tensions and conflicts between university and community.

The University of Virginia was a center for eugenics, beginning with its first President Edwin Anderson Alderman, appointed in 1904 by the Board of Visitors that had previously governed the University. Governing for nearly 30 years, Alderman was an outspoken supporter of eugenics and had ties to white supremacy. Author and scholar Gregory Michael Dorr, whose dissertation at UVA opened a conversation about these issues, writes that “Alderman’s ties to eugenics in part legitimized the practice as a cornerstone of Southern social policy, and played a role in launching U.Va.’s medical program to the position of national repute which it enjoys today” (Dorr 2018).

Perhaps the University’s legacies of harm are best reflected in a 2012 report by the University and Community Action for Racial Equity (UCARE) in which it is noted:

We live in a community whose members often believe that they are either invisible or that their presence at the University of Virginia is not welcomed except as its lowest-paid workers. For these individuals, most of the University Grounds appear off-limits to them, their children and their community. That portion of the surrounding community that knows the University as “The Plantation” may not know its entire history, but it knows enough to comprehend and resent the deception (“Call for Reflection and Action” 2012).

While UVA remains one of the largest employers in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District, 20% live below the federal poverty-line in Charlottesville, according to the census (US Census Bureau, [n.d.](#), “Quickfacts”), while the city as a whole maintains a low unemployment rate of 2.5% (Charlottesville, VA Economy, [n.d.](#)).

Now, add to this recipe several other factors that emerged in the mid-to-late twentieth century. Add in the university’s waning interest in public service (the land grant model) and increasing priority on an inward focus of research and teaching. Add to this a growing awareness of economic disparities along lines of race and class. Add the long reach of slavery into the twentieth century through Jim Crow laws that institutionalized white privilege, effectively undermining and preventing the possibility for equal opportunity long after the demise of the laws themselves (Meisenhelter 2018). And finally, bringing it home to Virginia and Charlottesville, add in the stunning fact that in 1860 in “39 of 148 counties at least half the population was enslaved. Albemarle County, with Charlottesville as its county seat, had a population of roughly 14,000 slaves and 12,000 whites,” or 54% enslaved people (“Enslaved Population”, [n.d.](#)).

This is the story of Charlottesville. This is where, as Charlottesville entered the twenty-first century, more than 140 years after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, it was common to still hear community residents of color refer to the university as the “Plantation on the Hill.” And, nearly two decades into the twenty-first century, the university is still referred to as an extractive industry, highlighting that for communities of color, the legacy of exploitation has been long-standing and not easily healed. In fact, one might say that the social shift of working with property to working with freemen triggered a transformation towards silent forms of resistance and oppression within our society and especially the food system. These oppressive strategies, which have limited access to resources such as land and farm services, as previously highlighted, have played a role in designing urban spaces and rights to urban agriculture. Equitable engagement within the field of urban environmental planning presents an opportunity for healing legacies of harm that are both explicitly and implicitly at work. It cultivates avenues for practitioners and academics to promote collective knowledge and grassroots community ownership (rather than planning their environments for them) and thereby enabling the grassroots community to gain further control over their environment and food.

Any visitor to UVA or Charlottesville understands very quickly that our region is steeped in Thomas Jefferson, renowned for authoring the Declaration of Independence, writing the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, serving as the third President of the United States, and also signing into law in 1807 the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves, which criminalized the international trade of slaves. The blind veneration of Jefferson as a virtuous man who opposed slavery began to crumble with revelations about Jefferson’s relationship with Sally Hemings and their affirmed line of descendants. This bears mentioning only because it is but one symptom of the legacy of harm of slavery, segregation, and white supremacy that was cracked wide open in August 2017, and has created the backdrop for our current challenge of addressing the impacts of this deep history. A second aspect to this legacy is directly tied to Thomas Jefferson’s founding in 1819 of UVA, when

enslaved laborers were used for construction and continued operation of the university.

It is impossible to understand the intense suspicion, resentment, and sometimes outright hostility of community members toward UVA without understanding the long legacy of harm that continues to manifest and fester in Charlottesville. The people of Charlottesville live with deep paradox, knowing they are home to the nationally revered Thomas Jefferson, while grappling with the now “open secret” that he was at minimum a pedophile, and some even speculate a rapist (Stockman 2018). Similarly, the university is also grappling with the myth that slaves were not allowed at the university. The truth is finally being excavated and brought into the light, both figuratively and literally through archeological excavations and digging through historical records. We now know that as many as 5,000 enslaved laborers built and supported university operations for over four decades. As strange as it now seems, this truth was purposely and effectively hidden from students, faculty, and donors for nearly 200 years. But the legacy of that slavery was passed down through generations of families, never forgotten, and is a source of ongoing university-community tension.

All of these historical tensions were laid bare during the violence and trauma of August 12-13, 2017, and have remained front and center even years later as Charlottesville continues to struggle in the aftermath to chart a new course forward. White supremacists and neo-fascists marched with torches through the center of campus, terrorizing students and faculty with racist chants, and the next day through the center of Charlottesville, killing a young woman named Heather Heyer, injuring at least 30 others, and resulting in a fatal helicopter crash that killed two state troopers. Lawsuits are still underway during the writing of this chapter. Some of the injured are still contending with recovery from their injuries. It is far from “over.” This trauma brought to the surface, in a way that can no longer be suppressed or ignored, the legacy of harm that never before had been addressed.

As emotions continue to roil and boil over to this day, both city and university are undergoing intensive re-examination and discussions of their ways of doing business, and both are experiencing changes in leadership. One key element emerging from this period of reflection and consideration is a new understanding by the university that it must acknowledge and address the long legacy of harm of slavery and impacts on the university’s enslaved workers and their families, who built and then continued to serve the university for generations.

Now, as a testament to this revealed truth about the presence and vital contributions of enslaved workers and their families to the university, a Memorial to Enslaved Laborers is being constructed at UVA. Its design and location reflect the significant input gathered over the course of a year from students, faculty, and, most significantly, community residents and descendants. The university writes:

Since the University of Virginia’s founding, the belief that inquiry and knowledge are essential to a thriving democracy has stood at its core. This focus has continually led us to seek new challenges, break through barriers, and pursue uncharted paths. Today, we are leading the nation in deepening our understanding of the role of enslaved laborers in building our country and its institutions—including this University.

...The memorial acknowledges and honors the 4,000 or more individuals who built and maintained the University. In addition to clearing land, digging foundations, fetching water, chopping and stacking wood, cleaning, and completing daily chores for students and professors, they engaged in highly skilled labor—including cooking, molding and firing brick, complex carpentry work, roofing, transporting and carving quarried stone, blacksmithing, and making clothing. All these men, women, and children lived with dignity, resisted oppression, and aspired for freedom.

For more than four decades, the entire University was a site of enslavement. Now, we're confronting our past, uncovering new knowledge, and using that knowledge to teach, heal, and shape the future (Memorial to Enslaved Laborers, n.d.).

A memorial is a significant step, but much more is needed. Many are asking how the university might become a better neighbor and supportive partner to our community. How can faculty and students, with our invisible knapsacks of privilege (McIntosh 2019), support the community in an authentic, win-win way without causing harm through unwitting or unintended manifestations of our academic privilege? Closely tied to this is an equally important acknowledgment of the university's need to learn to engage with the community in new ways that support equity and community agency.

The University's new president, Jim Ryan, articulates in his draft strategic plan of June 2019 that UVA will *"be a strong partner with and good neighbor to the Charlottesville region...we will work side by side with our neighbors to help ensure that the Charlottesville region is among the best and most equitable places to live, work, and study...with humility and respect, and with the ultimate goal of creating a general sense that we are all part of the same community."* Use of the words "partner," "neighbor," and "same community" are all important signals of a significant shift in the university's desired relationship with the community.

In a separate goal, Ryan specifically calls for a key initiative called "A Good Neighbor Program," that will *"work toward being a just and sustainable community. We will work collaboratively, and with all due humility, with our community partners to address key challenges, including housing, living wages, local educational opportunities, and access to health care. We will set ambitious sustainability goals and develop a realistic plan to meet them, including an improved transportation system. To make it easier for our neighbors to interact with the University, we will create a community engagement office in an easily accessible location in town"* (University of Virginia n.d.).

If this initiative is implemented, it is likely a landmark event, signaling a turn outward by Virginia's leading public university toward service to and partnership with its community. It also signals a possible new interest in supporting student work on community issues through their coursework. As the university begins to become more outward facing, and shifts away from the centuries-old town-gown relationship to one of "good neighbors," there will be a need for a new "good neighbor" framework for community engagement in the classroom. And, it will be imperative for this community engagement to be carefully designed for mutual benefit, not to further the university's reputation as an "extractive industry," but to develop new relationships through *equitable* engagement.

For those of us teaching and working in food systems planning and urban agriculture, where so many of the core inequities we are now trying to address are the results of misguided community planning philosophies and beliefs, we must ask: Can we create bridges with our neighbors that address these historic inequities? Can we use the resources of the academy—technical knowledge, technology, skills, and student research labor—as a force for good, to build equity in our community?

We believe the answer to these questions is a *conditional* “yes.” Of all the courses that might be taught at a university, food systems planning is surely one of the classrooms where incorporating community engagement makes the most sense. To ensure that students have more than an academic understanding of food systems and are equipped to enter the “real world” by knowing how to work their way through real, complex situations, it would be a logical aspiration for students to learn through “service learning” research projects that support the needs of community urban agriculture organizations. But *how* this student work with community is designed, *how* the community is engaged, is fraught with landmines that are usually invisible to most members of the privileged academy.

So, yes, while we *can* teach our food systems and urban agriculture students through “service learning” research projects with our neighbors, it is not an easy proposition to ensure that this interaction, at a minimum, will not perpetrate existing inequities and, at best, will eventually increase equity.

25.2 A New Framework for Teaching Urban Agriculture: Equitable Engagement Through the Classroom

Against this backdrop, the two scenarios described at the beginning of this chapter are a logical manifestation of the longstanding dynamic between UVA and Charlottesville. But in as much as they reflect a frustration with the status quo, they also reflect an opportunity for change.

Through the remainder of this chapter we explore ways that university faculty and community might work together to create a new, healthier dynamic. Particularly, we will explore best practices for faculty and students, who *represent* a long legacy of institutional privilege and entitlement (even if they do not *feel* individually privileged or entitled), and how they might become ambassadors for nurturing a new kind of relationship with community that offers mutual respect and benefit.

The already complex proposition of equitable engagement is rendered far more challenging because the principles for equitable engagement are in tension, if not at direct odds, with the twin classroom goals of: (a) providing service to the community in the form of something that is meaningful to and valued by the community, and (b) creating a learning environment where students can deepen their knowledge of urban agriculture, and of food systems planning, while applying this knowledge to this “something” that is meaningful to and valued by the community.

25.2.1 *A Case Study: Incorporating Community Engagement into a Food System Planning Class*

The UVA food system planning class, a brainchild of Timothy Beatley, Teresa Heinz Professor of Sustainable Communities at the Department of Urban and Environmental Planning (Department) in the UVA School of Architecture, was launched in collaboration with Denckla Cobb in 2006 (Mendes et al. 2011). It came on the heels of discussions about how national leaders in the planning field—Jerry Kaufman, Kami Pothukuchi, Marcia Caton Campbell—were all putting food back on the table of urban planning. Beatley’s interest in developing this course grew out of his interest in how food and agriculture are essential elements of sustainable communities. Because agriculture is Virginia’s largest private industry, accounting for an economic impact of \$70 billion annually (“Agriculture Facts and Figures” n.d.), Beatley felt that Virginia had the potential to benefit from, and be a leader in, food systems planning. Denckla Cobb worked with Beatley to shape the course into a “planning applications” class (PLAC). As a public policy facilitator and mediator, Denckla Cobb wanted the class to have an impact, to do something useful and helpful to support the surrounding community. At the time, most PLACs involved asking students to apply theory to practice through projects they would *likely* face in the real world or real situations that *had already* been concluded and whose outcome was known. The idea that students would work on a real or “live” issue in the local community was still a relatively new idea, but both Beatley and Denckla Cobb felt it was important and doable.

The class was taught for eight years, jointly for the first several years, and the remainder by just Denckla Cobb. Through these years the pedagogical approach and philosophy of engagement evolved significantly, and has given us a platform for developing a new understanding and framework for equitable pedagogy.

In the first class, one of the first shifts in pedagogical approach was to focus student work on a real issue of potential import to the community: developing a regional food system assessment. But engagement with community still occurred in a manner typical of university pedagogy, e.g., with community speakers invited to join students in the classroom, and students encouraged to reach out to appropriate experts and organizations in the community. No effort was made to train students in community engagement, nor was the community consulted on the merit of conducting a food system assessment. However, a second innovation in pedagogical approach occurred at the end of the class, when Beatley and Denckla Cobb decided that students should present their findings to the community, not on campus but in the heart of the community. Both of these would demonstrate the most rudimentary category of community engagement – INFORM – as outlined by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) (Fig. 25.1).

These two pedagogical innovations were small but important. Community participants seemed genuinely surprised and grateful, on several counts. It was not necessarily a surprise that a university class would conduct an assessment about some aspect of the community for pedagogical purposes, but at the time it was a big surprise and highly irregular for the university to willingly share its findings and results. Even more irregular was for the presentation to occur off-campus, in the community, for the community, at a location that was easy for the community to access.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Fig. 25.1 IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation. (Reprinted with permission of International Association for Public Participation)

But an even bigger surprise came when community participants asked, “*What’s next? How do we move this forward? We should keep meeting to figure out what to do next.*” Participants were motivated to use the information gathered by students to begin making their regional food system more intentional and sustainable. Though it would not typically be a surprise that community members would want to solve their problems, because of the long history of community distrust of the university, it was unusual for this question to be directed at university faculty, as it signaled a new level of trust and interest in partnership. Both Beatley and Denckla Cobb were excited by this outcome, and knew the student work had struck a chord. What’s more, students were motivated and excited to take on a project that might prove useful to the community, and were proud and also surprised by the community response to their work. Students were learning that they could make a difference while at the university; they didn’t have to be isolated in the “ivory tower” while gaining knowledge and then re-enter the real world after earning their degree. The process of learning could benefit both students and community.

For Denckla Cobb, the community and student response demonstrated two things: how rare this pedagogical experience was for both community and students, and how powerful it could be as a way to educate students while also providing service to community. If Beatley and Denckla Cobb had followed the classic pedagogical formula, they would have continued to teach the same course, year after year, i.e., assign students to conduct a food system assessment of the same, or

perhaps a different nearby region. Instead, with some trepidation, they agreed to move the class into a second step of food systems planning by identifying and developing ideas for policies for community consideration. This required adjusting the syllabus, speakers, readings, and methods of student project work.

When they met with similar success and responses from both community and students in the second year, they were motivated to create yet one more iteration of the class to focus on global-local (“glocal”) connections. In this class, students examined how local food production, processing, and distribution, was dependent on the global supply chain and to identify areas where it might be made more sustainable. Again, this required adjusting the syllabus, speakers, readings, and methods of student project work. Although students and community both responded positively to this “glocal” focus, it was clear to both Beatley and Denckla Cobb that the outcomes were less compelling or useful to the community. At this point, after discussing possible next steps, the instructors agreed that a course cycling between assessment and policies, and maybe an occasional “glocal” focus, might be the best path forward. When Beatley withdrew from the course because of assuming other responsibilities, Denckla Cobb remained committed to teaching a class that would have real impact.

Slowly, as the class evolved, so did the methods for community engagement. Denckla Cobb would meet in the fall with community partners to identify specific community “clients” for the class project, to help shape the student project, and to also identify key contacts for the students to work with or interview during the spring class. Projects included developing benchmarks for a sustainable food system; developing and conducting a Food Policy Audit (O’Brien and Denckla Cobb 2012) for Charlottesville; investigating specific issues around land availability, food access, public routes of transportation and access, farm labor, and GIS mapping; food heritage and policies to support local food heritage; farmers market research;³ and developing and conducting a Food Justice Audit for Charlottesville.

For the students, who were drawn from all disciplines and levels across the university as well as planning graduate students, the class was a clear success. At the time, planning studios were known as “application courses” and, while they focused on real community issues, did not yet routinely incorporate either service or engagement. To these authors’ knowledge, the first planning applications course at our university to do this was one focused on green infrastructure planning, and it was the immediate success of this model that had emboldened Beatley and Denckla Cobb to follow suit. Every year students were excited and challenged by the food systems planning course and at least one would share how the class had changed their career course. Many have gone to work in the food system, and some are now teaching food systems courses themselves at the university level. In their final essay, many would say this course was the most significant and inspiring of their college courses *because of working on a real issue with the community*, or because of *learning how to do research that had impact*. In other words, what differentiated this classroom experience from others, making it more compelling, memorable, and transformative, was the community engagement.

³The farmers market research was a summer course at the Morven Summer Institute, initiated by Paul Freedman, Associate Professor of Politics, with Tanya Denckla Cobb, who co-taught the class with him for two years.

But was this university-based community engagement *equitable*? It had benefited the students, and thus the university, but was it bringing equal benefits to the community? If it was helping students gain knowledge, skills, and insights into applying theory to practice, was it helping to improve the lives of people in the community?

That was far harder to answer. Student presentations of their findings were always held in the community and were warmly received by the “grasstops” organizational leaders. Rarely did “grassroots” individuals attend, suggesting that little if any benefit might have been felt by them. So, while Kaufman and others put food back on the planning table, if we were not advancing equitable engagement through our student research then we likely were perpetuating—and continuing to recreate—systems of unequal access and inequality in our food system. For example, most of the research conducted by university students and faculty made strategic partnerships with grasstops leaders in Charlottesville. Due to these collaborations, knowledge generated by UVA student researchers and faculty oftentimes amassed within the upper tier of community leaders. This knowledge hardly ever trickled down to grassroots community members, therefore cultivating larger informational voids about local food systems planning. While it may be important for the university to begin working with the grasstops to build understanding and trust, if there is no effort to work directly with grassroots community members then university faculty are doing two things: creating an alignment between the tops and the university that may actually undermine trust between the tops and roots, and also continuing to marginalize the voices that need to be heard and whose agency needs to be supported.

25.3 Understanding Equity in the Context of University Pedagogy

How can a university classroom advance equity in the community? What does equity look like in practice? How does it manifest in a university pedagogy and engagement? In trying to answer these questions around equity, Bingham draws on her experience, while a master’s student in public health, of bridging the divide in setting up a gardening outreach program called “Growing for Change” in a low-income public housing neighborhood. Bingham also draws upon her subsequent work experience as program director for the Charlottesville Food Justice Network and outreach coordinator for the City Schoolyard Garden.

Grassroots Partnering

Growing for Change (GFC) started in 2015 as an urban garden initiative created to host collaboration between UVA and the Westhaven public housing-community in Charlottesville. The initiative worked across disciplines within the University (Public Health Sciences, Global Sustainability, and School of

(continued)

Architecture) and collaboratively alongside public housing residents and key community organizations, such as City of Promise, City Schoolyard Garden, and the Public Housing Association of Residents (PHAR), to design and implement individual gardens. During its first year, GFC engaged 18 families and over 50 students in a co-design process for garden envisioning and production. Key to GFC's success was a two-tiered engagement approach for partnering with grassroots community organizations and student volunteers. This two-tiered approach enhanced grassroots ownership over the process while working to equip student volunteers with understanding of town-gown relationships.

Under the leadership of the PHAR, GFC drafted a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that laid out clear partnership guidelines and expectations. This MOU was drafted in collaboration with the PHAR Board over the course of three months. The three-month deliberation allowed for participating MOU parties to not only discuss responsibilities, but also to outline clear benefits for the community as well as mutual goals they would achieve together.

The purpose of this MOU is to define PHAR's role as an advisory board for Growing for Change and their projects in Charlottesville public housing communities. PHAR will also serve as a liaison between GFC and the Charlottesville Housing Authority. In addition, PHAR will ensure that GFC is familiar with resident rights and bylaws, including lease agreements, as well as notify Growing for Change of any updates or additions to these policies that may relate to their work. PHAR will also act as a mediator should any misunderstandings or disputes that arise between GFC and residents.

GFC will support the cultivation of a healthy environment for residents through co-designing and implementing individual gardens. **GFC will attempt to meet the desired vision of individual, self-maintained gardens for public housing residents who are willingly engaged with the initiative. In addition, GFC will support PHAR's Positive Vision for Redevelopment, specifically residents' right to access green spaces in their communities.** (Emphasis added)

During GFC's first year, the concept of the MOU was brought forth by the paid community liaison, who was compensated by a project-based stipend for up to 10 hours of work per week.

Student Engagement

Student volunteers who engaged with GFC were first required to take an educational workshop on town-gown relationships. These workshops were developed by a group of students from professor Frank Dukes's Collaborative Planning for Sustainability class in the fall semester of 2015. The town-gown educational workshops included a short documentary film on the history of Vinegar Hill, "That World Is Gone: Race and Displacement in a Southern Town," by Field Studio, readings and discussion on the University and Community Action for Racial Equity (UCARE) report created by the University of Virginia UCARE Steering Committee, and orientations to

(continued)

participatory co-design created by GFC project directors with supervision from Urban and Environmental Planning professor Barbara Brown Wilson.

The Participatory Co-Designing Guide and Materials packet included 3 activities:

1. Exploring spaces together. During this activity the residents and students would explore the resident's front and backyard for a potential location of the garden. The resident would lead the process with a disposable camera and take photos of spaces they liked, didn't like or saw potential in.
2. Bringing ideas to life using model kits. Students and residents would start the conversation about what the garden can potentially look like using a matrix chart with images of different types of gardens feasible to be built and hopefully would get inspired to draw or model their future garden.
3. Drawing a diagrammatic plan of the garden. This activity was made for students to record the final design with the resident including the dimensions, type of garden, any special needs or requests, and what plants would be grown in it.

Small groups of student volunteers (3-4) were matched with 1-2 Westhaven families and were given the tools to engage with the families after completing the educational workshops. GFC project directors initiated weekly community visits on Sunday afternoons to start the initial meetings during which the students and families got to know one another. After that the students scheduled and met with the residents during more convenient times for both parties.

These experiences suggest that equitable engagement must be rooted in the people, the grassroots and neighborhoods, not the dominant white structure of privilege that typifies grassroots organizations. For low-income neighborhood residents and their organizational representatives, however, being treated as the university petri dish year after year, can create a source of ill-will and resentment toward the university. In Charlottesville, residents of color often express that they feel used—not served by the university. From their perspective, the university comes back to them and their neighbors, time and again, with the same questions, yet nothing changes. No systemic interventions by the university have changed the inequities experienced by them or their neighbors. In some cases, their circumstances have worsened over the years, even as they continue to be studied. Residents say they are tired of answering questions, and never receiving benefit from these questions. Why should they be part of a university research design if nothing has happened in the past five years that helps them improve their lives? These sentiments may be further sharpened by the fact that these residents are often working as cleaning, dining, and maintenance personnel at the university for less than a living wage (Hester 2019).

Based on these experiences, often very personal and intense, Bingham believes that equity implies friends and family, sitting on someone's porch and getting to know them as people, not as objects of information. Drawing on the principles of

“participant observation” in anthropology, equity implies action at the individual human level, as opposed to “giving back” or “service,” which comes from a place of privilege. Service might be welcomed by the grassroots, because it provides important sweat equity for a particular project. But for low-income residents who would need to see some longer-term benefit for the engagement to be considered a step towards improving their equity, the idea that they would be the object of “service” or “giving back” is offensive. The “giving back” relationship by students only serves to perpetuate the us-them, town-gown, privileged-underprivileged dichotomy of worldviews that does not heal but furthers the perception of inequity. Putting these together, equity means *developing relationships*, more than giving back or service or obtaining ideas and knowledge. And developing a relationship suggests the need for a stretch of time spanning at least an academic year, not just one semester.

In exploring emerging best practices for community engagement, Bingham challenges some of the current wisdom. For example, from an equity perspective, the concept of identifying elders or other community members to be interviewed by students is fundamentally flawed if it does not create space in the university world for paid positions as “community instructors.” Instead, the act replicates historical traditions of extraction from the community while leaving current conditions of economic inequity in place. For example, a neighborhood leader who is now in her seventies is a constant source of research guidance and classroom engagement, but still spends her evenings cleaning for the University Credit Union. While compensation for a grassroots community member’s time is now considered a “best practice,” compensation is not fixed, and oftentimes is sporadic over the course of a semester. Therefore, compensation may provide minimal temporary assistance to the individual, but does not help effectuate systemic change towards equity.

Furthermore, in the current power structure, ways to advance equity in our food system while collaborating with marginalized low-income communities of color may be limited, due to financial stress imposing pressure on people’s freedom of choice. If a person actually needs the money, for food or other day-to-day needs, there is not an easy way them to be able to say “no.” So how can this be a real choice, and if there is no real choice, how can this engagement be deemed equitable? Ideally, this community member should be compensated in a way that actually is meaningful to changing her life, to advancing the equity in her life. Such was the case in Growing for Change, when semester stipends were offered to community members for their ongoing support. This approach provided a pipeline for community feedback as residents had a key personnel contact with whom to file grievances should engagement falter. In return, the community members offered mediation support and guidance strengthening the university’s ability to work long-term in an over-researched community. Without carving a place at the table for community instructors, community members’ lives will not change by virtue of sharing knowledge through decades of serving as a reliable go-to “sources” for university officials, professors, and students.

Applying an equity lens to pedagogy means opening a pathway for the grassroots community to be able to navigate the power and privilege that is attached to students and professors. Bingham’s experience in developing Growing for Change, and her

lessons learned while a student, lead her to argue that the only way for people to be able to say “no” is if they have established a steady relationship and compensation pipeline. And the only way for this to happen is for the relationship to be built over time, requiring the need for a minimum two-semester span for the course.

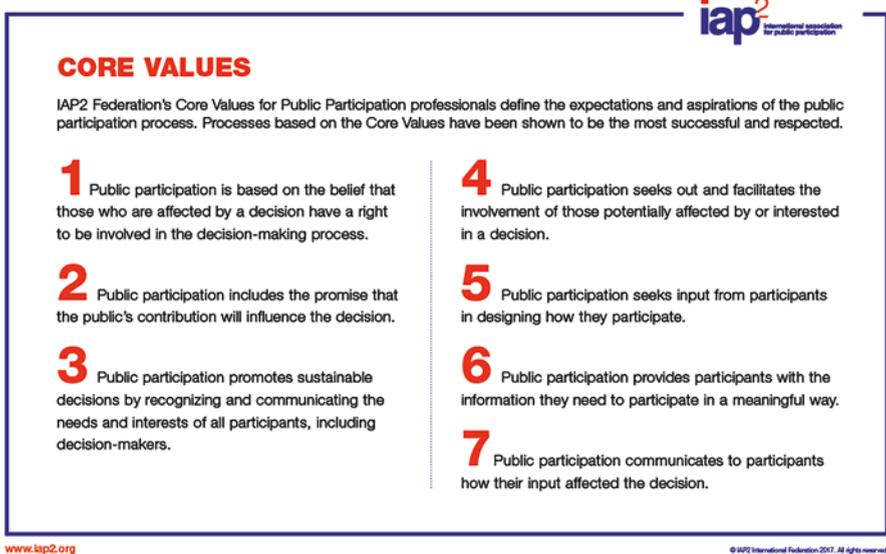
This recipe for success is supported by two case studies of community food system interventions, one in a public housing neighborhood in Portland, OR, by Janus Youth Programs, Inc., and another in Lynchburg, VA, by Lynchburg Grows. Denckla Cobb and Jones (Beatley et al. 2018) contend that the conditions for success of these food system interventions “are not about the gardens, per se, but are about creating a space for the community to have a conversation about its hopes and dreams and then facilitating pathways for the community to make its dreams real.” Change agents in both case studies were careful observers, listening to what mattered to community members, never imposing solutions from without, but realizing “greater success through a facilitative approach of listening, observing, empowering residents to make decisions and create their own visions, and then bringing resources to the table” (Beatley et al. 2018). None of the transformative systemic changes for equity in Portland’s public housing neighborhood or in Lynchburg happened overnight. The successes in both cases took careful relationship building with both the grassroots organizational leaders and grassroots neighborhood residents.

These are big concepts that present significant pedagogical challenges. Even the most well-intentioned faculty would be challenged to design a one-semester class that meets this bar for equity. Yet, of all university faculty, it is those who teach food systems and urban agriculture courses who most need to pave this way, as food lies at the heart of a community’s identity and resilience, revealing its level of compassion, care, and inclusion. Food systems and urban agriculture pedagogy needs to pave the way in addressing the hard reality that a typical university class engagement, though grounded in good intentions of bridging the divide, can paradoxically create goodwill among the grassroots leaders, while, at the same time, yield unintended consequences at the grassroots that only reinforce the divide.

25.4 Preparing Students for Community Engagement

The recipe for equitable engagement, outlined above, pushes us to explore new ideas and models for classroom engagement with community. How might a university class go about implementing this level of equitable engagement? In exploring the options, it is helpful to reflect first on the specific mechanisms that the UVA food systems class used to prepare students for engaging with community partners.

Above all, the class sought to prepare students to become more knowledgeable about the evolving professional ethics for community engagement. This meant shifting the student mindset from one of needing to come up with “answers” or “recommendations” for their papers, to a more facilitative mindset of careful observation and listening to discern community interests and needs, through discussion and student training in listening and qualitative interviews. It also meant increasing



The graphic is titled "CORE VALUES" in red. It features the IAP2 logo in the top right corner, which consists of the letters "iap" in a stylized font with a superscript "2" and the full name "International Association for Public Participation" below it. The text is arranged in two columns, separated by a vertical dotted line. Each value is numbered 1 through 7 in red, followed by a brief description. At the bottom left, the website "www.iap2.org" is listed, and at the bottom right, there is a copyright notice: "© IAP2 International Federation 2017. All rights reserved."

CORE VALUES

IAP2 Federation's Core Values for Public Participation professionals define the expectations and aspirations of the public participation process. Processes based on the Core Values have been shown to be the most successful and respected.

- 1** Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- 2** Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- 3** Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers.
- 4** Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- 5** Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- 6** Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- 7** Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

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Fig. 25.2 IAP2 Core Values. (Reprinted with permission of International Association for Public Participation)

student awareness of how the historical traumas caused by the university and a culture of white supremacy continue to manifest in stark disparities in jobs, wages, housing, and health, through guest speakers and readings. To teach students best practices for community engagement, students would work through a case study with the instructor on how to apply the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Core Values (Fig. 25.2).

To help students be better prepared to handle community questions and comments about the “Plantation on the Hill,” students would role-play specific scenarios with coaching. Last, to help students learn how to communicate more professionally and respectfully—meaning how to avoid coming across as privileged, clueless students—they would review and rewrite an email that had been sent by a previous doctoral student to a community member, who had then complained to the Provost because of the appalling lack of respect that it demonstrated. This exercise helped students understand how to manifest respect in written communication, from the choice of email salutation (“Dear Ms. X” versus “Hi”), to describing the project, to requesting an opportunity to meet in a way that emphasizes that the choice is the community member’s, at their convenience, and on their turf. To codify all of these learnings, students were asked to jointly create a “best practices” for engaging with the community that the class wanted to uphold during their work. Finally, students were told that all of their final work—whether papers, videos, or PowerPoint presentations—would be made public, and that they would be responsible for personally emailing and sharing their final reports to each community member who was part of their engagement or research work.

Despite all of this training, preparation, and awareness building, the biggest and most consistent challenges food system students faced revolved around the element

of community engagement. Overall, older graduate students who had come back to school after working for several years seemed able to grasp and execute the concepts of community engagement fairly well. Those who had the most difficulty, however, were undergraduate or graduate students who had never taken a year off to work and had not developed an ethic of professionalism.

Several lessons might be derived from this food systems class experience. First, in looking back, perhaps the single most important element missing from the training was explicit recognition of the “invisible knapsack” of academic privilege that students carry with them into the community (McIntosh 2019). Students see through their own lens of their own individual story, and believe naively that they will be seen and treated as individuals by the community member, just as they believe they will see and treat the community member. It is a shock to their system when they are not treated as individuals, but are seen as a representative of the white privilege “Plantation on the Hill.” Just as a low-income white student was offended by a community member’s implicit assumption that she came from a wealthy, privileged background, an African-American student was offended when berated for doing “white work” in seeking to elevate history and oral stories about sites of African-American food heritage in the community. Similarly, members of the community were surely offended by student assumptions and stereotypes that manifested in ways of which students were completely unaware. This points to a need for raising student awareness about their roles as “ambassadors” for the university. Just as much as gender, skin color, religion, age, or accent can influence how one is perceived, students need to understand that their very place at the university influences how they will be perceived by community members.

A second lesson from this case study is the need for faculty to distinguish in their design of community engagement between working with community “grasstops” organizational leaders, and working with “grassroots” individuals. It is this distinction that helps to explain how community grasstops partners might respond positively to the opportunity for student assistance on specific issues, while grassroots individuals might be skeptical, resentful, or even both offended and offensive. The grasstops might welcome the opportunity to work with a class, while the grassroots might feel it is just one more manifestation of the university’s “extraction industry.”

A third lesson from this case study is that, while students may have been positively affected *individually* by their experiences, long-term *systemic change* to advance community food equity was not a clear outcome. Yes, the class findings were always *community-based*—e.g., policies, ideas, and recommendations that had been elicited from community members to advance food equity—and student presentations at the end of the year—were warmly received. But the classwork did not yield a sense of advancing food equity systemically. The Charlottesville local food system was growing and thriving in every way possible, but no changes were made to the comprehensive plan, neighborhood plans, zoning, economic development incentives, or transportation system.

Now, looking back, it is possible to see that Denckla Cobb’s food system class undertook the food system assessments and policy work before the community was mobilized. In this way, it surfaces a key missing step of intentionality in

university-community engagement. One year after the last food system planning class was offered, in 2015 the Charlottesville Food Justice Network (CFJN) formed and began mobilizing other service organizations and community leadership around food system change. Through increased funding CFJN began building a foundation to cultivate grassroots leadership with programs that create paid community grassroots and student Food Equity Fellows who are working on specific issues and needs, building on Bingham's previous equity approach in *Growing for Change* of using paid fellowship positions for community members. Creating a collaborative network between the grasstops and grassroots, the CFJN collaboration opened up avenues with City Departments, eventually leading to the CFJN's broadly supported Food Equity Initiative, presented to City Council in 2018, and later leading in 2019 to being awarded a USDA grant of \$275,000 to advance food access and equity in Charlottesville. In other words, without an intention to create the grassroots support for change – to work over time with the grassroots to build legitimacy and credibility for policy initiatives – it was not possible for the class research to catalyze change at the level of city policy.

That these changes have taken time and engagement of the grassroots reflects the caution that efforts to advance food system equity requires both the grasstops and grassroots, working together.

This experience suggests that, without an intention of supporting community agency at all levels, working with both grasstops and grassroots, a university engagement class may contribute to community agency and knowledge, but only at the grasstops level, thereby failing to catalyze real change for community members. In other words, if a class works with the grasstops, this may advance equity over the long-term by providing the grasstops with research that will help them make their case for new policies. But it may not do anything to bridge the real divide between university and community, which remains at the grassroots. If a class seeks to advance equity and bridge the university-community divide to heal legacies of harm, the faculty and class would need to engage in some manner with the grassroots.

For the food systems classroom, these lessons suggest a clear need for the food systems faculty member to clarify her intentions at the outset: What are the goals for the class? If one goal is for students to engage with community to advance food system equity, then faculty should consider at what level: grasstops and/or grassroots. The model described above of equitable engagement suggests that food systems (or urban agriculture) faculty must work with the community to obtain the answer. If we seek to support our community partners in ways that would be helpful to advancing urban agriculture and food system equity, then grasstops organizational leaders should define what would be most helpful to their efforts. If the grasstops would like student assistance with classic planning course work, such as researching policies on specific urban agriculture issues, researching language for the comprehensive plan, mapping different elements of the food system, conducting windshield observation studies, developing case studies, applying GIS mapping, and so on, then a more classic form of community engagement would be appropriate for the students.

If, on the other hand, grassroots organizations believe it would be helpful for students to engage with grassroots individuals in different neighborhoods, businesses, or services, with one of the goals being to help bridge the university-community divide and build relationships to advance equity at a more individual level, then a very different form of community engagement will be needed.

Whichever path is chosen, community engagement by a university class will have specific constraints that should be considered in the engagement design. We next explore how existing professional guidelines for community engagement may be adapted for the unique circumstances of the university classroom.

25.5 The Inherent Challenge of Equitable Pedagogy

Based on our experience in designing and facilitating community engagement, and comparing it with the community engagement that occurs through the classroom and student projects, it is important to draw clear distinctions between the two. In some respects, equitable pedagogy is fundamentally more complex. While community engagement has one clear goal, to serve the best interests of the community, equitable pedagogy must always manifest the multiple goals of serving both the university and its students, while also serving the community.

We distinguish between an academic course on community engagement and a course that uses community engagement as a pedagogical tool. In the former, students would be expected to at a minimum to gain competency in the best practices for community engagement and to apply these best practices through designing an engagement process. But in the latter, students also would be expected to implement their design, complete their research project on a tight timeline, and shape and deliver findings in ways that are easily communicated to the community. The challenge with this model is that students are still learning and not yet professionals, and need a “safe space” where they can stretch, explore, and make mistakes.

In developing a new framework for equitable pedagogy, we believe that at a bare minimum, a pedagogical goal for a university class using community engagement should be that the community must financially benefit from this student engagement and co-own knowledge production. It is no longer acceptable for a university to treat a community as an “extractive resource” to teach students and gain knowledge without any clear benefits experienced by the community. If best practices are followed, then the community should drive and contribute to the project design and knowledge production, to ensure that the community is truly getting what *it* needs, benefiting from the interaction, and owning the results. This, in turn, suggests that the instructor needs to dedicate additional time to working with the community well before the class begins, to create a clear intention for the class impacts, and to have the community identify what would be most helpful.

Though these ideas may be new in the context of academia, these principles have been embodied in community based participatory research (CBPR) and widely used in the field of public health since the turn of the twenty-first century. With

theoretical roots that date back to work in the 1930s by Kurt Lewin and Paulo Freire, CBPR came into its own six decades later when, in 1997, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) identified CBPR as one of eight new areas in public health education, and also recommended that the Centers for Disease Control's Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) could improve their effectiveness by incorporating into their research a "second phase that involves research and dissemination projects that are jointly planned and produced with community partners who have joint ownership of the program" (Faridi et al. 2007). Reviews of CBPR have shown great variation in methodologies [Faridi], but the central principle is consistent. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Community Health Scholars Program defined CBPR in 2007 as a

collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community and has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change to improve health outcomes and eliminate health disparities. [Faridi]

Four years later, as an example of how CBPR was becoming mainstream in public health, the Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center at the University of Michigan School of Public Health adopted eight principles for CBPR, the first of which states that "CBPR promotes collaborative and equitable partnerships in all research phases and involves an empowering and power-sharing process." The remaining seven principles cover issues such as community identify, co-learning, asset-based approach, mutual benefits, and long-term commitment (Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center [n.d.](#)).

But these principles remain on the fringes of research in other university disciplines, and have not yet become the "norm" for university class engagement with community. Because both food systems and urban agriculture are closely linked to public health, these disciplines provide a natural bridge for public health research norms to be translated into new norms for equitable pedagogy in the arts and sciences.

If academic credit were not at stake, one way to facilitate this community-centered equitable engagement could be a recent innovation at UVA in which a few select students are funded by the university to serve as Food Equity Fellows working for and under the direction of the Charlottesville Food Justice Network. But this approach is not feasible (currently) as a course for academic credit, as students would need to be also work under the supervision of an instructor who provides theoretical and academic context for the community engagement project work. This is the inherent challenge in equitable pedagogy. So, the challenge is how to reconcile the goals of university-based community-centered equitable engagement—serving both our students and our community neighbors—which are in tension and sometimes even at complete odds with each other. Perhaps this is why so few instructors incorporate community engagement into their course work; teaching is hard enough, without adding these additional complications. Nevertheless, we believe it is possible, desirable, and achievable, if a few clear guidelines are followed.

25.6 New Framework for Equitable Pedagogy

In the search for a win-win pathway, we sought to stake out a middle ground for equitable pedagogy that meets the needs of both university and community. We first looked at best practices for community engagement, established over decades of experience, to explore if they could be adapted to the pedagogical needs of a university course which also needs to educate and provide space for student learning. Could we adapt these best practices to ensure that the community does not feel used, abused, or, in the case of Charlottesville, retraumatized by the “Plantation on the Hill”?

In 1995, Innes proposed a theory of “Communicative Action and Interactive Practice” in which planning theorists “pursue the questions and puzzles that arise in their study of practice, rather than those which emerge from thinking about how planning could or should be” (Innes 1995). The questions and puzzles that have arisen through the years in planning, community engagement, and collaborative planning, have led to a robust set of guidelines for how planners and other professionals may undertake and design community engagement with integrity.

We may be at a similar turning point with equitable pedagogy. That is, rather than seeking answers from theory, it is time for us to draw from the lessons of our practice and experience in Charlottesville to develop a new framework for university-based community-centered engagement.

One possible guidepost for this new framework is described by our colleague, Barbara Brown Wilson, Assistant Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning, in her book *Resilience for All: Striving for Equity Through Community-Driven Design*. Opening her book by blasting traditional community engagement, she writes that “many traditional methods of community engagement are useless to vulnerable communities” (Wilson 2018). Wilson observes that “consultation does not necessarily help create more equitable communities,” and goes on to argue that “equitable, systemic change in vulnerable communities involves fusing the local knowledge of residents with technical knowledge of professionals in small, nimble public projects.”

Although students are not yet professionals, they crave high-impact experiences and gravitate to courses where they will grapple with real-life issues. So finding a way to apply Wilson’s formula to the classroom could be the foundation for a possible win-win. This is not as easy as it may sound. If a food systems class were to work on an issue of importance—identified by the community—and were to “fuse local knowledge” with their food system planning skills in a small, nimble project—designed by or with key community members—then the classroom might become a viable avenue for supporting community equity. At the same time, this model would enable students to grapple with real-life issues, grow skills in applying theory to practice, and gain competencies in problem-solving, community engagement, and also become ambassadors for the university’s goal to be a good neighbor.

But this model still begs the question: are students working with grasstops or grassroots? If the class is only one semester, relationships with grassroots are just

getting formed. Also, if the grasstops are identifying who the class should engage at the grassroots, does this not perpetrate the power dynamic between the tops and roots and undermine authentic class relationships with the roots? These are questions that still need to be resolved in the coming years.

Literature on community engagement has shown, time and again, that engagement is not successful if it is merely for show. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) adopted in 2002 seven Core Values, after two years of intensive international collaboration. These Core Values insist that for engagement to be successful it must authentically seek community input, communicate to participants what they can or cannot influence, and seek out all those who are impacted or interested.

Wilson's guidepost advances the notion that, if it is to be meaningful and avoid creating harm to vulnerable communities, community engagement must also be values-driven in seeking equitable, systemic change.

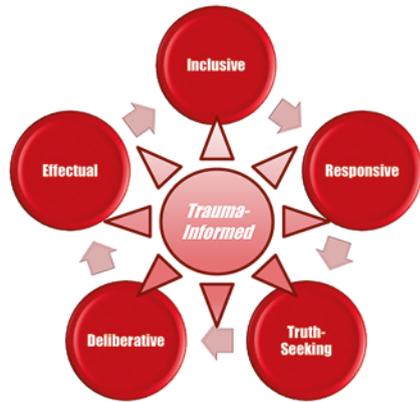
We believe the challenging issues surrounding community engagement design are doubly difficult for faculty, as the ethical principles for equitable engagement may be in tension, if not at direct odds, with faculty goals for the student experience. The goals for classroom engagement with community usually are twofold: (1) provide service to the community in the form of something that is meaningful to and valued by the community, and (2) create a learning environment where students can deepen their knowledge of urban agriculture, and of food systems planning, while applying this knowledge to something that is meaningful to and valued by community.

Yet these goals for classroom engagement are fraught with unseen landmines. Who decides what might be meaningful to and valued by the community? Is it the grasstops organizational leaders, or the grassroots residents who are experiencing the inequities that may need to be addressed? How exactly will the student research be used, by whom, and in what time frame? In other words, classroom engagement needs to be informed not just by best practices for community engagement, but also by best practices that will advance equity.

So, a third layer of consideration relates to our evolving understanding of how engagement might be made more equitable. More specifically, what would equitable engagement look like when applied to the food systems classroom? In dealing with issues of contested spaces and memorials, the UVA Institute for Engagement and Negotiation (IEN) has coined the term "Equitable Collaboration" with a set of six concepts to complement the IAP2 Core Values, for professionals who aspire to address issues of equity through their practice of collaboration (see Fig. 25.3). The IEN argues that collaboration can unwittingly serve to deepen longstanding historical inequities and perpetuate legacies of harm—an outcome that no ethical practitioner would willingly intend or support. IEN is proposing that *equitable* collaboration must be trauma-informed, truth-seeking, inclusive, responsive, deliberative, and adaptive. These concepts are further explored and explained in IEN's Transforming Community Spaces website (Institute of Engagement and Negotiation [n.d.](#)).

EQUITABLE COLLABORATION

- **TRAUMA-INFORMED** – RECOGNIZES PAST TRAUMAS; PREPARES AND SUPPORTS PEOPLE THROUGH A PROCESS, TO PREVENT AND MINIMIZE RENEWED TRAUMA
- **INCLUSIVE** – REACHES ALL SEGMENTS OF A COMMUNITY, ACKNOWLEDGES RACIAL, ETHNIC, GENDER, CLASS AND OTHER DYNAMICS AS INTEGRAL FOR MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION
- **RESPONSIVE** – ACKNOWLEDGES COMMUNITY QUESTIONS, NEEDS, CONCERNS AND IDEAS IN A MEANINGFUL WAY
- **TRUTH-SEEKING** – INVITES HONEST, MORE COMPLETE HISTORIES, ESPECIALLY WHEN SUCH HISTORIES ARE PAINFUL TO HEAR AND UNDERSTAND
- **DELIBERATIVE** – FOSTERS BRAVE SPACES WHERE PARTICIPANTS HONESTLY AND OPENLY CONFRONT PAST AND PRESENT, FOR LEARNING, GROWING, AND SHARED CIVIC THINKING
- **ADAPTIVE** – SUPPORTS EASY AND AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO A TRANSPARENT, TIME-EFFICIENT, NON-REPETITIVE PROCESS



UVA Institute for Engagement & Negotiation (IEN), 2019

Fig. 25.3 University of Virginia Institute for Engagement & Negotiation Equitable Collaboration (2019)

Together, these three frameworks—Wilson’s guidepost, IAP2 Core Values, and IEN’s Equitable Collaboration—provide a useful backdrop for developing a set of best practices for equitable pedagogy that will foster more meaningful and equitable university relationships with community neighbors.

Putting all three frameworks together, we propose that a university food systems class that incorporates community engagement—if it hopes to avoid the inadvertent perpetuation of systemic inequities and legacies of harm—would be driven by the value of advancing systemic, equitable change in the food system; informed and guided by the tested and broadly accepted IAP2 Core Values regarding public participation; and also informed and guided by the IEN best practices for Equitable Collaboration.

25.7 Proposed Core Principles for University-Based Community-Centered Equitable Engagement

The following set of core principles for university-based, community-centered, equitable engagement reflects the three frameworks discussed above. A food systems planning course is well equipped to test these core principles, as food systems planning has been infused from the beginning by a strong philosophical alignment for equity and effective engagement. We hope these core principles will spark discussion and debate among our colleagues, as well as real change in the design of our university courses to support 21st century hopes and dreams for fully engaged communities with agency to direct their own future.

For food systems and urban agriculture classrooms, this history of community tension with the university research “extractive industry” makes it all the more imperative that faculty approach community engagement by their urban ag students with eyes wide open about the potential downsides—so that they can design the engagement for maximal success for *both* students and community.

In some communities where “grasstops” organizational leaders and “grassroots” community members are communicating regularly and working well with each other, it may be possible for the urban ag class to engage with just the community grasstops to advance equity. In communities like Charlottesville, however, if one gets out ahead of the other, tensions can erupt and lead to divisions within the low-income communities. So, if a class seeks to advance equity, it may need to engage with both the grasstops organizational and grassroots residents simultaneously, and independently of each other.

University faculty working with the grasstops may assume these organizations are engaging their grassroots and will share the class work with them. But university class engagement with just grasstops organizations may fail to support the meaningful, systemic change desired, because the grassroots may feel left out and their voice not heard. In Charlottesville, for example, not all grasstops organizations automatically work with the grassroots. By working only with grasstops organizations, a class may create unnecessary and counterproductive divisions between grasstops and grassroots; grassroots may see projects that benefit the grasstops organizations as “feel good” examples of university efforts that, once again, do not address the inequities experienced at the grassroots.

Because food systems planning is often centered around issues of equity, this tension between working with the grasstops and grassroots is especially important to understand and inform class engagement. This tension also illustrates the importance for urban agriculture faculty to incorporate the principles of Equitable Collaboration to ensure that the classroom engagement is not only trauma-informed (i.e., informed about place-based history and culture of relationships) but also inclusive, responsive, truth-seeking, deliberative, and efficient (Fig. 25.3).

To guide faculty in designing their food systems course for success, we have developed two tools to help navigate the various considerations outlined above: a Decision Tree (Fig. 25.4) that walks faculty systematically through the choices available, and a “Spectrum for Equitable Pedagogy” (Fig. 25.5) that provides our theoretical framework for these choices.

First, faculty must consider: *Do I need or want this course to support equitable, systemic change for my community neighbors?* If the answer is “no,” and the food systems or urban ag course aims to build an academic foundation for understanding food systems, not for advancing equity, then the course may benefit from field trips and guest speakers but should not include student engagement with community. Student research, in this situation, would consist of standard academic research papers or other deliverables that address the theoretical and historical framework of food systems and urban agriculture.

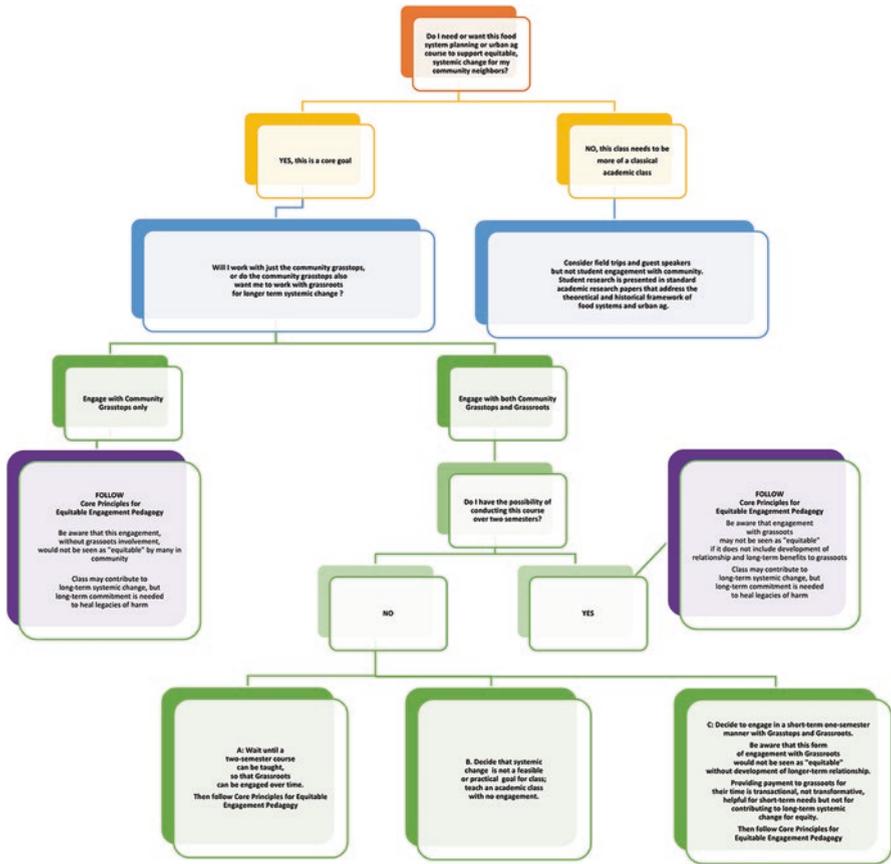


Fig. 25.4 Decision Tree for Using Equitable Pedagogy

If faculty do need or want to support equitable systemic change, then the decision tree walks them through a number of considerations, with answers being driven by consultation with the community grasstops about their needs, their desires for inclusion of the grassroots, and by faculty constraints of whether it can be a one or two-semester course. Ideally, the food system faculty works with key community “grasstops” organizational leaders (or another process at higher levels in the university) to identify small, nimble research or service projects achievable within a semester.

To be clear, however, it is not and should never be the community organization’s *responsibility* to come up with projects for university students, as that is placing a burden on the community for the benefit of the university. Instead, because it is the university that seeks to use community engagement as a tool for both instruction and for advancing urban ag in the community, the burden should be on the university for the benefit of the community. In other words, the instructor’s goal is to

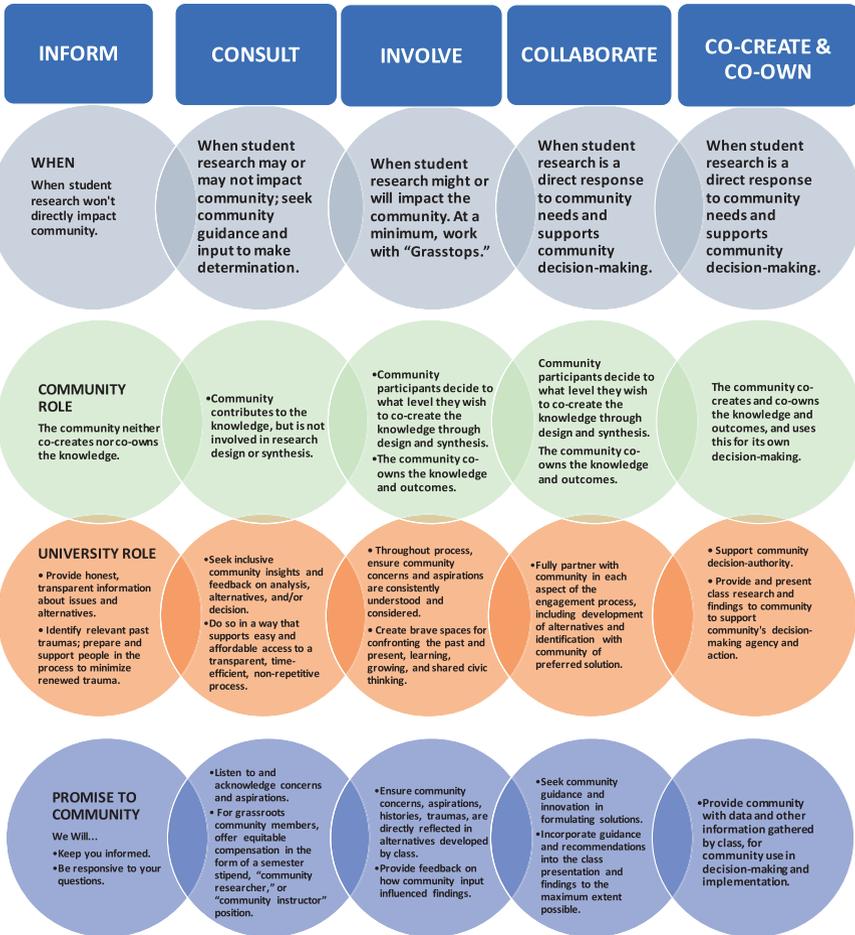


Fig. 25.5 Spectrum of Equitable Pedagogy

ensure that grasstops leaders feel they have benefitted from the class, that it was worthwhile, their time well-spent, and they would welcome continuing engagement with that faculty's class.

While engagement with community at the grasstops can occur in one semester, meaningful engagement with grassroots for equitable, systemic change has to be part of a longer trajectory, and can only be done successfully over a two-semester period along with a faculty commitment to continue this over multiple years. The engagement would be considered "successful" if and when the engaged grassroots people feel that their issues of equity are heard, seen, and in some way addressed. For this to occur, students need to develop relationships with the grassroots residents, which cannot be done over a short period of time. Recognizing the challenges of this model, faculty may wish to consider creative ways of designing a food systems course that seeks to support equitable, systemic change: perhaps a 3- or 4-credit

course could be extended over two semesters; or perhaps two faculty might co-teach a 6-credit, two-semester course together.

As a complement to the decision tree, we have formulated the following core principles and core responsibilities to help guide the food systems instructor in navigating the path toward Equitable Pedagogy. Key strategies are the need to support equitable compensation for community grassroots participants, along with community co-creation and co-ownership of the knowledge (Wainwright et al. 2017).

25.7.1 Core Faculty Responsibilities for Successful Equitable Pedagogy Include Co-Creation, Co-Ownership, and Equitable Compensation

1. If a faculty wishes to advance food system equity through class engagement with community, the faculty will at least consult the community grasstops about specific needs and small, nimble research projects that might support these goals (co-creation). There needs to be a balance between the ebb and flow of building community relationships, and the faculty may wish to seek a balance between student research and service with the grasstops, while also recognizing that “service” projects with grassroots community members may be seen as offensive. Options for student work might include reviewing policies for the community, developing suggestions for the comprehensive plan based on other policies adopted by similar communities elsewhere, policy audits, or GIS mapping.
2. Following community guidance, if a faculty decides to engage with grassroots, the faculty will work with the grasstops to identify the best ways to communicate and work with the grassroots (co-creation). For example, a faculty may not be aware of ways in which the dominant white culture expresses itself, with implicit contracts for transactions, such as sending requests through emails and expecting responses. Faculty need to learn, and in turn need to educate their students about these implicit contracts and ways in which they will need to engage more equitably with grassroots community members.
3. Faculty establish check-points through the course with the grasstops, and if appropriate with the grassroots, as well as with students, to ensure that community needs and student needs are being met.
4. Faculty find ways to include more complete place-based histories into the curriculum, to ensure that the class and community engagement is trauma-informed.
5. Faculty strive to create a “safe” or “brave space” where community members can be honest and transparent, and where students can learn, make mistakes, be themselves and authentic while also understanding their role as university ambassador. As part of this, faculty need to create time in the course to train students in careful listening and observing, through active listening and accurate note-taking.

6. Faculty seek to implement the community engagement design in a way that is respectful of community members, by being easy, affordable, time-efficient, and non-repetitive.
7. Faculty require students to infuse their technical knowledge and research with community ideas, recommendations, and knowledge in the development of their work for the community project (co-creation and co-ownership).
8. If faculty are able to work with grassroots, then faculty need to provide equitable compensation to the grassroots community members in the form of paid and named positions with the class for the duration of the class. Past forms of compensation, such as gift cards or honoraria, are no longer considered acceptable as they do not provide the level of recognition of community member knowledge in a way that contributes to building community capacity and supports equity for the community members.
9. Faculty include community engagement competency in the grading of student work, to ensure appropriate incentives for following best practices. For example, students could gain or lose points based on specific metrics drawn from the IAP2 pertaining to community engagement, such as how effective they were at seeking out and facilitating the involvement of those affected, informing their contacts how their input was or was not used, etc.
10. Faculty will require that student work becomes “open source,” meaning student work is presented to the community with opportunity for questions and discussion, and is provided to the community at the end for its own use (co-ownership). This interrupts the long tradition of universities seeking knowledge from their communities, and treating the community as a research “petri dish” which derives no benefit from the engagement.

25.8 Conclusion

As legacies of harm are bubbling to the surface, the twenty-first century is offering new opportunities for addressing past traumas and transforming the historically tense town-gown relationship. As an example, the University of Virginia’s commitment to confronting its past has opened a window of opportunity for working with Charlottesville to address legacies of harm and shape a more equitable future. Within the academy, food systems planning and urban agriculture faculty are perfectly positioned to help bridge the university-community divide, as our work often centers on community and equity. Through urban agriculture, food systems faculty can use the resources of the academy—technical knowledge, technology, skills, and student research labor—as a force for good, to advance equity and system change in community.

This goal is challenged by the constraints of the one-semester classroom, along with the lack of adequate guidelines for faculty and students in how to navigate the complex world of community engagement that seeks systemic change to advance equity. The long-established IAP2 Spectrum and Core Values for Public Participation,

Wilson's guidepost for supporting equity and systemic change, and recently developed core principles by IEN for Equitable Collaboration, can be merged and adapted to address the unique circumstances and challenges of the university classroom in undertaking community engagement for advancing equity. Putting all three frameworks together, we propose a new framework for Equitable Pedagogy to guide and support faculty in their efforts to advance community equity through classroom engagement with community, to avoid the inadvertent perpetuation of privilege and systemic inequities, and to help realize a more positive relationship between university and community that is mutually beneficial and synergistic.

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Tanya Denckla Cobb is a seasoned environmental and public policy mediator, serving since 1997 at the University of Virginia Institute for Engagement & Negotiation, and as its director since 2015. A passionate advocate for sustainable food systems, Tanya taught Food System Planning, co-founded the UVA Sustainable Food Collaborative, and has authored *The Gardener's A to Z Guide to Growing Organic Food* (Storey Publishing, 2003) and *Reclaiming Our Food: How the Grassroots Food Movement is Changing the Way We Eat* (Storey Publishing, 2011). She also co-founded and co-teaches the year-long Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute, as well as the virtual multi-university s Virginia Food Systems Leadership Institute.

Shantell Bingham Trained in public health, Shantell Bingham combats the legacies of racism by promoting a people-centered, equitable food policy. She has participated in, founded, and led multiple organizations and coalitions that promote food justice, including Growing for Change (founder), Food Justice Network (program director), and Chesapeake Foodshed Network (member). Bingham has been recognized for her work with numerous awards, including the Dalai Lama Fellowship and the Castanea Fellowship.

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Part V
Considerations for the Future

Chapter 26

Toward City- and People-Centered Food Policy



Wayne Roberts

Abstract Although writing about the importance of food systems for urban planners, Jerome Kaufman influenced the thinking of policy leaders and practitioners across the world including Dr. Wayne Roberts, the author of this chapter. A remarkable food policy leader in his own right, Dr. Wayne Roberts authored this chapter shortly before his passing, reflecting on Kaufman’s influence on the field and his own work. Roberts wrote that “the lack of imagination [in city government] resulting from professional over-specialization is a major barrier to more interactive conversation, learning, and partnership among city planners and Good Food advocates.” Roberts critiques the narrow ‘supply chain’ or ‘nutritionism’ approaches to understanding urban food systems. Rather, he argues that a broader view where “food’s many contributions to personal, psychological, cultural, spiritual, social, environmental and economic development of people, and the mooring of people in their time and place” ought to drive how cities view food. Roberts’ policy leadership in Toronto and Kaufman’s scholarship represent the best of what is possible in municipal policy through open-minded thinking and strategic action. This chapter, Dr. Roberts’ last piece of formal writing, leaves readers with rich ideas for developing people-centered municipal food policy. To learn more about food policy in Toronto, please contact the corresponding author.

Keywords People-centered food policy · Food policy · City planning · Food systems planning

Wayne Roberts passed away before the publication of this work.

W. Roberts (deceased) (✉)
Toronto, ON, Canada
e-mail: lori.stahlbrand@georgebrown.ca

Kameshwari Pothukuchi and Jerome Kaufman's classic article on food and planning was designed to influence city planners' thinking about the importance of food (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999; Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000). It probably had as much influence on Good Food advocates' understanding about cities. Both city planners and Good Food advocates face challenges in thinking about the relevance of the other group's specialization. Food is not usually identified as an issue under the formal jurisdiction of cities, with few exceptions such as city or county responsibility for restaurant food safety and food waste. Moreover, cities are deemed too parochial and under-resourced to support the policy capacity and implementation resources needed to govern nutrition, health, or food security. Beyond such considerations, the lack of imagination resulting from professional over-specialization is a major barrier to more interactive conversation, learning, and partnership among city planners and Good Food advocates. The Pothukuchi-Kaufman article of 2000 (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000) created an opportunity to re-examine the many sides of the city-food relationship and to ask: what can cities, in their broadest sense, do for food, and what can food, in its broadest sense, do for cities? Such questioning opens up entire vistas of food and city understanding that were excluded from the framing used by food and city thinkers before Pothukuchi and Kaufman's challenge. It takes two to tango, but someone has to first arrange for both to be on the same dance floor at the same time. Pothukuchi and Kaufman issued that invitation.

I came across the article on city planners' lack of awareness about food's relevance for cities shortly after it was published in 2000 (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000). It came out during a moment of intense turmoil for both me and the city I lived in, loved, and worked for. Municipal and social agencies in the newly-reminded City of Toronto were in the thick of serious rethinking about both food and cities. In 1998, the province of Ontario ordered old Toronto and the six suburban cities surrounding it to join in one centralized "megacity" – a new government that integrated a progressive, densely-populated and feisty downtown known across North America as "Toronto, the city that works" with several car-dominated, suburban and politically bland cities. It was more of a shotgun marriage than an amalgamation. Three weeks into my new job as coordinator of the 9-year-old Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC), I was asked to serve as staff co-lead of the Food and Hunger Action Committee (FAHAC), which had the job of developing a positive and unifying policy to amalgamate food and hunger policy for the newly amalgamated city. For a brief moment, the brand-new city had no policy on anything, and enjoyed a golden opportunity to apply fresh thinking from Toronto's politicians, civil servants, civil society organization and social service agencies to emerging food issues. Amalgamation, though unwelcomed by the great majority, was the equivalent of a Greenfield site that could be built up policy-wise, without any need to renovate or fit into old walls or stairways.

Permit me to quickly introduce FAHAC before proceeding to the way the FAHAC experience shaped my appreciation of Pothukuchi and Kaufman's article. FAHAC was one of those Toronto-type institutional innovations that happened when someone fairly high up cajoled extremely busy and competent people to

stretch themselves a little thinner with a project that they could handle off the side of their desk and by the seat of their pants – on the promise that something big and important could be stitched together in a tight situation. Once the cajoled person agreed, the cajoler lost all memory of any understanding as to commitment, authorization or resources. As the person cajoled to be staff lead for Toronto Public Health (TPH), I had to liaise with all public health staff while writing FAHAC policy from my perch as TFPC coordinator. My fellow staff co-lead, Susan Shepherd, represented the community and social development unit, and shepherded FAHAC proposals through her department and the city politicians responsible to City Council. Sean Meagher, assistant to the lead councilor on the file, Pam McConnell, stick-handled relations with community groups and the most engaged city councilors, We met or talked almost daily with bureaucrats, politicians and Kathryn Scharf, who was a community leader of FAHAC as well as the citizen chair of the TFPC and senior staffer with FoodShare, a rambunctious but respected community-based organization campaigning for food security. Implausible as it sounds, with about \$10,000 cobbled together from various budgets to cover the costs of a copy editor, FAHAC produced three reports (2000, 2001, 2003) and a food charter, all unanimously adopted by City Council in the winter of 2001. Subsequently, to my chagrin, our Committee, reports and charter slid somewhere close to oblivion, and we were left to our own devices to keep the hope of implementation alive and live to fight another day – which I’ve come to accept as the most anyone could hope to accomplish in this neo-liberal era. (As a final indignity, the TFPC was denied a budget to adapt these reports to meet the needs of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and the reports were withdrawn from City and Toronto Public Health sites; they are presently housed on the website of Sustain Ontario.)

I saw the Pothukuchi and Kaufman article through my FAHAC window. I used the article as a touchstone to feel my way in these early days. Afterwards, I consulted it often, using it as an intellectual anchor as I participated in various projects over the next 20 years. I’ve had the good fortune to participate in several milestone events of today’s global food and city scene – the shift in awareness as cities arrived as home to the majority of the world’s population and economic leadership in 2007; the crystallizing of food movements around such issues as local and sustainable food, slow food, and food justice; and forceful headwinds indicating a new era of food insecurity, inequality, and #ClimateEmergency. Few of these post-2000 events and developments were anticipated by the wisest articles published in the year 2000, including Kaufman and Pothukuchi’s. But I continue to feel debt and gratitude for what they wrote. The article set the bar for criticism that is informed, cool, calm, collected, and above all connected (to use Michael Walzer’s term for critiques offered affectionately from within the tradition they are challenging to improve) (Roberts 2019). The article invited everyone to participate in a new dialogue about food and city planning, while also providing a platform on which a new generation of both food and city activists could co-evolve together.

My experience as part of the leadership of Toronto’s FAHAC process from 2000 to 2003 convinced me that people engaged by food and hunger issues had at least as much to learn about the role of food in cities as city planners. The issues as well as

the professionals associated with food and cities lived inside the silos and specialties of their solitudes. Without much fear of exaggeration, I would say that Good Food activists and advocates in 2000 were oblivious to the “citness” of city food issues – every bit as much as city planners were oblivious to the “foodiness” of civic issues.

The most forceful civil society voices heard in those early days of the twenty-first century on food security topics came from “anti-hunger” or “anti-poverty” perspectives. In the professional public health world, the most forceful voices came from nutritionists or dietitians. Their ideology is best described as “nutritionism” – treatment of food as a vehicle for nutrients and fuel, and little else in terms of health or life impact. Both civil society and professional groups predated modern food movements, and were almost as indifferent to emerging food issues and organizations as they were to emerging realities and trends in urban life. If we are to appreciate how insightful is the Kaufman-Pothukuchi article, this deficiency in the thinking of Good Food advocates of the time is as important to understand as the deficiencies of planners’ thinking.

Pothukuchi and Kaufman’s article, for example, was premised on and referred explicitly to the existence of a “food system.” From a food system perspective, the specific characteristics of something such as hunger or food insecurity in economically developed societies are akin to specific qualities of an individual planet within the solar system. Hunger and food insecurity need to be seen as a product of an entire food system, much as the season or temperature of a planet depends on the operations of an entire solar system. I feel confident in claiming that few Toronto food activists or professionals outside the TFPC were familiar with food system thinking during the FAHAC years. Food activists of that day could have learned as much about food system thinking as about cities from reading the article on city planning.

As issues, food and hunger had equal billing in the name of Toronto’s Food and Hunger Action Committee, but hunger was by far the more visceral, gripping, and defining issue. This reflected the fact that hunger hit the city of Toronto hard and fast during the 1980s and 1990s – largely the result of the city losing its high-paying industrial base to outsourcing by global corporations. This trend afflicted many once-industrial cities across North America in the same time period, but the impact in Toronto was felt more intensely, thanks in large part to the city’s deserved reputation as “Toronto the Good.” A major street in downtown Toronto is called Church Street because of its many large churches. The most notorious aspect of this righteous reputation was a Sunday that until the 1990s virtually banned all but spiritually enhancing activities – a much-mocked tradition elsewhere in the country. Few appreciated that strict Sunday observance was one manifestation of the power of the social gospel tradition accepted by many Toronto Christians – an obligation in everyday and social life to live up to the social justice message embodied by Jesus. Cosmopolitans who championed open Sundays for shopping and entertainment often overlook that open Sundays mean compulsory work and the denial of family weekends for vulnerable workers. Thanks to the power of the social gospel in Toronto, a broad non-partisan consensus existed that hunger was morally

intolerable, as were efforts to address hunger through charity rather than public policies which guaranteed food as a matter of human rights. The legacy of a radical social gospel constitutes one of the major cultural differences between Canada and the US, where a moralistic and individualistic religious tradition has been dominant since the 1950s. Mayor Art Eggleton occupied the center-right in Toronto municipal politics but his sense of religious duty compelled him to oppose hunger and food banks throughout his terms as mayor during the 1980s and throughout his subsequent 30-year career as a prominent Liberal in national politics.

Under Eggleton's leadership, Toronto funded establishment of FoodShare, led by a United Church clergyman, as a charity charged with finding alternatives to food banks as the way to end hunger. A similar spirit underlay the first food bank, called Daily Bread, an obvious Biblical reference. This societal consensus led to widespread support for the formation of the TFPC in 1991, initiated by leading social democrats on City Council. The TFPC was established and staff were funded as a subcommittee of the public health department – the third FPC in the world, the first in a major city, and one of the few to this day funded by and lodged within a city. Much of the TFPC's first decade was devoted to developing policies and programs designed to “hunger-proof” cities (Koc et al. 1999) and find alternatives to food banks more in keeping with the dignity of individuals and the cohesion of a true community and a health-centered food system. This tradition was largely absent in the suburbs – falsely thought to be immune from hunger and homelessness, when in fact poverty and hunger were largely denied and ignored by municipal government leaders and staff. As a result of this city-suburban difference, the food security capability of politicians, civil servants, and civil society was substantially lower in the suburbs than in the city. People on low income facing hunger in the suburbs coined the popular saying within FAHAC circles – “the suburbs have downtown problems without downtown services.” The FAHAC was tasked with developing a consensus behind a unified understanding and institutional capacity to deal with hunger and food across the amalgamated city.

The FAHAC challenge that I and TFPC faced in this context was to preserve our food system perspective toward hunger and food security while avoiding conflict and division with people coming from an anti-hunger or anti-poverty perspective, and while convincing suburban councilors that food and hunger issues deserved to be ranked as priority municipal responsibilities. If relations within the Good Food advocacy community became sharply polarized, there was risk of a showdown that could derail the entire project of unifying the city behind food and hunger initiatives. Many a night, nightmare scenes of such a polarization woke me from a deep sleep. I feared that one group would insist that hunger was caused solely by poverty and that poverty was therefore THE overriding food issue to be corrected by the city, while another group would hold that malnutrition and other health disorders suffered by all populations across the city would not be lessened unless the city dealt with a much wider range of health-centered food system issues. Such a division with “the left” could create conditions where a more conservative and conventional view of city indifference to hunger and malnutrition would prevail.

26.1 The Poverty of Anti-poverty

Although I was fairly new to food system analysis myself – I only began to center my political organizing work around food in 1995, at the age of 51 – I knew enough to understand that an anti-poverty analysis of hunger and food insecurity was a truism that was false. Of course, poverty is the effective cause of food insecurity throughout North America. Hunger is certainly not caused by a scarcity of food. The continent is awash in food and food waste, and suffers more from overproduction than scarcity. Nor is hunger caused by the poor budgeting skills or inadequate cooking skills of people on low income. Minimum wages or social assistance programs simply do not provide any individuals with dependent children – no matter what their budgeting or cooking prowess – enough money to pay rent, pay for personal and household necessities, and afford frugal but adequate amounts of nutritious food. In the absence of adequate income, food inevitably becomes the most dispensable item in the tight budget of low-income and single income families. “Pay the rent or feed the kids” – that’s the constant dilemma of families on low income. Hunger is a sacrifice that allows people on low income to carry on with some form of settled life. By contrast, losing a place to live in is not something that can be recovered from. To this extent, an anti-poverty analysis of the immediate cause of food insecurity and hunger in North America and many other places in the world is absolutely correct.

Having said that, a simplistic and one-dimensional anti-poverty analysis lacks the framing of class or political economy perspective. While rhetorically radical in their highlighting of the role of poverty, anti-poverty proponents do not go beyond progressive liberalism and have policy views that are unintentionally consistent with basic tenets of neo-liberalism.

For food system advocates such as myself and most members of the TFPC, “cheap food policy” was on par with poverty as a factor leading to low quality food for all and low quantity and quality food for people on low and fixed incomes. Beginning with the industrial revolution in the United Kingdom during the 1800s, cheap food for underpaid industrial and urban workers has been a cornerstone of an increasingly dominant global food system. Nothing rivals the hegemonic if unstated policy of cheap food in determining food quantity or quality – or of rural poverty and urban poverty, usually concentrated among food workers and small farmers. Food industry wages to workers and food prices set for producers create huge pockets of poverty. Poverty is the first externalized price of a cheap food system – a price that is not captured in the money people pay for food, but which is paid for by degradation of human capital (aka health and well-being of people on low income) and physical capital – aka the environment. The economic and social problem with cheap food is that it makes food unaffordable for food workers, the largest grouping of employees in most cities, if food service and processing employees are counted together. It is not possible to develop a thoughtful food program countering or stemming the impact of food insecurity and chronic disease among people on low income without some recognition that impoverishment and low food quality are two sides

of the same coin of a cheap food policy. Cheap food is made possible by industrialization of food production, processing and distribution only in a context that allows environmental and health costs of industrial food to be externalized to degraded food quality and a degraded environment. Cheap food is made possible by cheap tricks permitted by government failures to confront market failures.

The problems of food insecurity, especially severe among low-income populations but also commonplace among all groups, include chronic diseases as well as hunger and food deprivation. For people on low income, chronic disease due to low-quality food is the other side of the coin of poverty incomes set by a cheap food system. Rising rates of obesity since the 1990s, for example, flow from competitive necessities of holding the line on prices in a cheap food system. Low prices account for “razor-thin margins” prevalent in food companies. The most direct way to maintain profitability when margins are low is through volume sales that make up for low margins with high volumes. Indeed, many food businesses are referred to as volume-based businesses. That is a system characteristic, engrained in the food system. Ruthless competition means that few food companies can survive by demanding a premium price that recovers the full expenses and investment of quality goods and proper treatment of producers and the environment. Around the 1970s, companies realized that a strategic advantage in volume sales could be gained by selling more to each customer – not just by competing for more customers. The larger the bottle of pop or cup of coffee, the higher the return on each sale. Therein lies the drive for volume discounts in both Business-to-Business and Business-to-Consumer sales. In Business-to-Business sales, the pressure is to increase volume purchases from one purveyor (why McDonalds sells only Coke and KFC only Pepsi, for example). In Business-to-Consumer sales, this strategy succeeds by encouraging customers to eat more than their bodies need to thrive. That economic compulsion has an inevitable result – high levels of overweight and obesity among all population groups, and especially among low-income or marginalized groups. That trend drives runaway rates of chronic disease, leading to costs externalized to (and thereby subsidized by) public-funded health, social security and welfare programs. The poor suffer most from this obsession with volume sales, partly because low-nutrient/highly adulterated products have a lower sticker price, and partly because people on low incomes are least likely to have full coverage from employee benefit plans covering medical and dental plans and sick leave. The poor suffer twice from a cheap food system – once from adequate and nutritious food being unaffordable to them, and again from the illnesses resulting from deprivation of quality foods. A truly anti-poverty approach to food security, therefore, requires that attention be paid to inadequacies of the food system, not just inadequacies of income security programs. That, in a nutshell, is how a Toronto-style food system analysis is presented.

Aside from political economy limitations of a narrow anti-poverty approach to food insecurity and hunger, a narrowly anti-poverty approach produces unintended consequences leading to unproductive and ineffective social and public health policies. A focus on problems said to be caused solely by poverty commonly leads to government programs that are targeted to people on low incomes or people who are disadvantaged – the norm in the United States, but not in Canada or Europe. I

became aware of this difference in public policy strategies during my prior career as a senior union official, when I read William Julius Wilson's 1987 book, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy*. Wilson argued that the US civil rights movements of the 1960s failed to usher in greater equality for African-Americans because of the US tradition of establishing separate, often stigmatizing, programs for people on low income (Wilson 1990). Programs for the poor inevitably became poor and stigmatized programs, Wilson argued, pushing people on low incomes into a permanent underclass. Canada, like Europe but unlike the U.S., followed a markedly more successful tradition of universal programs, Wilson argued. Thanks to universal programs in Canada, for example, there is one standard for healthcare. Healthcare is funded through progressive income taxes – which means that at tax time, the poor pay less than the rich. But at the doctor's office or hospital, the poor and rich present as equals. And if the quality of healthcare deteriorates, the rich have the resources to lobby for improvements. The same principle applies to Canadian public education, which enjoys support across the population, with both rich and poor students going to public schools and public universities.

The point of universal programs is to affirm the universality of the principle of citizenship, and to decouple rights of citizens from the effects of poverty or wealth. Universal programs are sometimes referred to as part of “the social wage,” an entitlement due to all citizens. Among the many benefits of universal programs is acceptance of taxes as a cost of democracy and civilization. Countries with universal programs do not suffer from tax revolts and tax resistance on a scale common throughout the US, where many people at working class and middle-class income levels feel they are paying for services they do not have access to – a polarization that is corrosive of good public policy. As a result, public health advocates in Canada typically insist on universal programs such as school meals and community gardens, to ensure these programs are not stigmatized and are funded as public goods on an equitable and efficient basis, through the tax system. The existence of poverty-related food insecurity in Canada is seen as a sign of inadequate universal programs, such as free school meals, free meals at childcare facilities, free access to community gardens and so on, which shield all citizens from food insecurity. Likewise, problems related to the low nutritional quality of food are identified as problems common to the entire population, and not just of interest to specific income groups. People on low income, in brief, are first and foremost defined as citizens entitled to human rights and social inclusion, not as an economic interest group – “the poor.”

How does this digression into the intricate issues of anti-poverty and food system approaches to food insecurity affect the appreciation of Kaufman's impact on the thinking of food advocates? You thought I'd never ask!!

A narrowly anti-poverty approach to food insecurity leads to indifference to the city, as a jurisdictional level of government, as a place, and as a center for citizen cohesion and participation. This may well constitute the most unfortunate of the unintended consequences of narrow anti-poverty thinking on public policy.

A narrowly anti-poverty approach to food insecurity, shorn of a political economy or food system perspective, almost inevitably treats the city as jurisdictionally

irrelevant. I know of no local government in North America which commands the financial resources or constitutional powers to counteract economic poverty leading to hunger and food insecurity. The inability of city governments to significantly redress income inequality, low wages and low incomes of people on social assistance is accepted across the political spectrum of left and right. Cities can and should act to assert the right of all citizens to access quality food stores, farmers markets, and garden allotments, to support local food security organizations, and to advocate on behalf of food security measures to higher and better-financed levels of government. But city governments can't move the needle on forces leading to impoverishment. So, it is difficult to develop a city or local government platform of direct action around food issues flowing from economic inequality.

Consequently, my co-lead Susan Shepherd and I undertook our bid to counter a narrowly-conceived anti-poverty approach by developing a four-point food and hunger program for the city. Fortunately, all the people active in and around FAHAC accepted this, and came up with an approach that maintained the unity of FAHAC.

The first of four food security themes presented to the new city by FAHAC was that city officials *advocate* for provincial and federal laws and programs to counter poverty leading to food insecurity. City officials would make a point, for example, to lobby federal or provincial governments when they were about to adopt laws or budgets that failed to deal adequately with poverty and food insecurity. On top of advocacy to other levels of government, the City would support food security with the means at a city's disposal in three ways. It would *coordinate* programs within the city that could reduce problems related to food and hunger – even by city departments and agencies not directly responsible for food security. Coordination meant that public transit authorities, for example, would ensure reasonable access to quality and affordable food outlets by people at all income levels – even though the public transit authorities have no specific mandate to deal with poverty and hunger. City departments and agencies would also *support* programs that could improve health outcomes from food activities. The parks and recreation department, for example, had no formal mandate to address hunger and food insecurity, but would ensure staff were available to set aside and prepare land for community gardens. Finally, the city vowed to *innovate* with new programs that could increase access to healthy food and healthy food environments. The city might innovate in the area of green infrastructure by supporting green roofs, for example, as a way to reduce the likelihood of stormwater flooding sewers. But such innovations would also look to the possibility of green roofs providing increased space for public food gardens.

In summary, three of the four action themes presented to the newly amalgamated city and the new city Food Charter accepted city responsibility for both food and hunger issues. Once it was agreed that there was a city realm of activity bearing on both food and hunger, we were all taking part in a new city conversation that included food as an area of civic action. The Toronto Food Charter, accepted alongside the FAHAC report *The Growing Season*, made explicit reference to the fact that food and hunger were issues of the entire city, not just specific departments. The city was not just a utilitarian jurisdiction with responsibility for parks, police and pavement. Food and hunger were not just problems *in* the city; they had become

problems and opportunities *of* the city. This began an important phase in the thinking of food advocates, few of whom had previously paid significant attention to food issues as city issues. It was not just city planners who had lagged in thinking about this file. Food advocates had too.

The proposed Food Charter – adopted unanimously by City Council in February 2001 alongside the FAHAC *The Growing Season* report – also amalgamated both anti-poverty and food system perspectives within one brief document. The Charter was drafted during a few frenzied hours prior to the City Council meeting by me and Sean Meagher, executive assistant to a leading city Council member of FAHAC, the late Pam McConnell. I ensured the views of food system thinkers were voiced and Meagher did the same for anti-poverty views. Anyone reading the Charter closely can see how it pasted two distinct perspectives into one Charter. A three-page appendix to the one-page Charter spelled out that food and hunger were issues that profoundly affected the quality and fabric of life in the city for better or worse. In turn, the city had its own city rationale to address these issues. This was the seed of a later TFPC slogan: Ask not what the city can do for food, but what food can do for the city. This formulation is designed to shift city thinking from seeing food as an expenditure to seeing food as a city-building investment – whence the title for the memoir of my time at the TFPC, *Food for City Building*.

Until such thoughts were aired in broad daylight, planners could not be blamed for missing the importance of food as a civic issue – not just a challenge and opportunity *in* the city, but a challenge and opportunity *of* the city.

26.2 Fuel for Thought

Disagreements between anti-poverty and food system advocates on the Food and Hunger Action Committee were mild compared to the tensions within Toronto Public Health between nutritionists and supporters of the TFPC. The outcome of these controversies also cleared the way for food advocates to be positively disposed to the thinking of Kaufman and Pothukuchi.

Nutritionism, the concept or ideology that food was mainly to be valued and understood for the fuel and nutrients it provided to the human engine or body, was part and parcel of the understanding of food that emerged from World War II and national food guides inspired by the wartime effort to build strong bodies that could support wartime mobilization, morale and discipline. With few exceptions, dietitians and doctors accepted this narrow understanding of food – which ignored the importance of food for pleasure, conviviality, identity, celebration, skill building, and other lifeblood functions of food. One of the exceptions was Jennifer Welsh's nutrition department at Ryerson University, a few hundred yards north of the Toronto Public Health offices. Another was the nutrition staff employed by the old City of Toronto. After amalgamation, suburban nutritionists – often sneered at as “the pumps and pearls set” by resentful Toronto dietitians – brought full-on nutritionism to the amalgamated city, marginalizing traditions expressed in documents

such as the 1992 Toronto Declaration on Nutrition (written by Rod MacRae of the brand-new TFPC). The Toronto public health department's commitment to social determinants of health, alongside the social, cultural and environmental aspects of food, was replaced by a commitment to what is often called "lifestyle" improvements which feature individuals opting for more nutritious (less fatty and sweet) foods.

The department I joined when I started at the amalgamated TPH was called "Healthy Lifestyles/Disease Prevention," a clear victory for suburbia. Health promotion via social equity and community engagement was no longer de rigeur. Within a few months of my starting, the director of policy who hired me and my immediate manager, both of whom championed the work I was doing, resigned. I stood out like a sore thumb. Unfortunately for my adversaries, I had been trained in factionalism in the labor movement and the left. Rain has more impact on a duck's back than their efforts had on me. Old Toronto managers still in senior positions managed to defend me until I passed my probation and was protected by a union. The prominence and relative autonomy of FAHAC – responsible to a team of councilors and citizens – made it difficult for junior managers to mount an all-out assault against me. The Medical Officer of Health urged a reconciliation, and my butt was saved. I retired voluntarily a decade later.

Gyorgy Scrinis's work (Scrinis 2013a, b), later popularized by Michael Pollan, has exposed the severe limits of nutritionism as a way of understanding food's robust and complex offering. Scrinis and Pollan left out one element of its negative impact on a public health unit operating within a local and city-based government. Nutritionism leaves no room for almost any of the things that a city can do for food, or that food can do for a city. It represents an obstacle to city planners' understanding of food more formidable than the narrow anti-poverty approach to food insecurity in the modern city.

A city thrives by treating food as a pivotal asset. Food and drink are the anchors of restaurant and theatre districts, the inspiration for Little Italys and Chinatowns and other ethno-cultural enclaves that bring tourists to town, the necessities of neighborhood bars, pubs, coffee shops and other "third places" that fulfill the function in an otherwise anonymous and impersonal city of a place "where everybody knows your name," as the famous TV series, *Cheers*, had it. Food is abundant at baptisms when babies are celebrated, at weddings, and at memorials. It is an ice-breaker at meetings. It is the feast that makes holy days special. It is a soft and welcoming way to be introduced to another culture. It is a soft and welcoming way to bring farmers into the city to meet and befriend urban people at farmers markets. Food and drink are also the major employer in most cities, as well as a magnet for the creative economy. It is certainly the major employer of post-secondary students who fuel an important part of the modern city and knowledge-based economy. I have barely begun to list what food brings to a city, and have not come close to mentioning nutrition, which helps bring health to a city. None of these accompaniments of food enter the food conversation framed by nutritionism. If nutritionists and public health staff missed the contribution of food, who are we to blame city planners for not seeing the breadth of food either?

It was a long and winding road that led food activists to consider the city we lived and worked in and ate in – to consider the city as a client with its own nourishment needs, to consider the city as a place that had civic as well as personal needs for Good Food policy, to consider the city as a home that needed public squares and watering holes so all its residents could feel at home and people-watch, to consider the city as a fragile and vulnerably entity in need of cohesion that can be provided by food celebrations, to consider the city as a place where people can just be, as Kurt Vonnegut put it so brilliantly – human beings and not always human doings who forget the being part of food and life. But the winding road finally led urban food activists to engage the city – ready to deal with the thoughts of the likes of Kaufman and Pothukuchi.

With FAHAC and nutritionism battles under my belt, I was in a position to read the city planners' visionary version of FAHAC – an official plan for a newly amalgamated city. When I read an early draft prepared for public discussion, I was dismayed by the way it ignored food's role in the city economy, environment, culture and health. My harsh critique, called *The Way to a City's Heart is Though Its Stomach* (Roberts 2001), was framed by the Kaufman-Pothukuchi article. Like them, I foregrounded the failings of city planners in understanding food. Unlike them, I was not a planner who understood, valued and respected planners, and who could write the kind of connected critique that Kaufman and Pothukuchi were capable of, even when correcting a severe problem their colleagues overlooked.

These many years later, I am in the process of developing what I call “people-centered food policies,” which pay tribute to the city building functions of food. I believe there are three major ways to see food. One may be called the supply chain view, which primarily understands food as a commodity that goes through its logistics – from farm to field or, in a modern circular economy version, from dust to dust. The second view may be called nutritionism, which embodies the science of its nutrient and fuel contributions to the human body. The first and second views are far too narrow, but they correspond to what federal and regional (provincial in Canada, state in the US) governments have jurisdiction over. The third view draws attention to food's many contributions to personal, psychological, cultural, spiritual, social, environmental and economic development of people, and the mooring of people in their time and place. In my opinion, this third view is the one that deserves to be made the centerpiece of local government and city efforts to enhance food systems. Now that I can see the fuller context in which planners failed to see the contributions food can make to cities, I appreciate all the more the positive and relationship-building aspects of the contribution Kaufman (and Pothukuchi) have made. We who want to see cities and food flourish should work at this together.

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Wayne Roberts was a food policy thinker, reflective-practitioner, and catalyst for change. Roberts' strategic guidance encouraged local governments to view food as a lever for creating more vibrant and healthy cities. He served as the manager of the globally recognized Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) in Canada, and was a lead author of *Toronto's Food Charter*, adopted in 2001. Roberts was also a leading member of the City of Toronto's Environmental Task Force through which he helped develop a number of official plans including the *Clean, Green and Healthy: A Plan for an Environmentally Sustainable Toronto*. A prolific writer, Roberts authored more than dozen books and monographs, including the *No-Nonsense Guide to World Food* and *Food for City Building: A Field Guide for Planners, Actionists and Entrepreneurs*. Wayne Roberts and Jerry Kaufman were kindred spirits, the former a practitioner-scholar and the latter a scholar-practitioner. Each was influenced by the other, as evident in Roberts' contribution to this book, which was Roberts' last piece of writing before he passed away in January 2021.

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Chapter 27

The Urgent Role of Urban Agriculture and Food Systems Planning in the Global South



Lesli Hoey 

Abstract What can US urban agriculture (UA) planners and scholars learn from the Global South? For many urban growers in low and middle income countries, UA is a lifeline – a vital source of their family’s food and income security – in a way not often experienced in the US. UA also plays an important role in enhancing the environmental sustainability of some city regions. In the name of “modernization” and development, however, many Global South governments actively resist UA, while others are encouraging the rapid growth of supermarkets and the restriction of informal food markets, potentially undoing any positive impacts of UA on urban food security and poverty. Food policy initiatives that have emerged to intervene in urban food systems holistically, however, could help to ensure that urban food systems are simultaneously equitable, health-promoting and sustainable. Despite the more extreme circumstances in which UA is often practiced in the Global South, urban planning scholars and practitioners in the US can draw a number of lessons about the benefits of intentionally scaling up UA, the wider lens that could be applied to address urban food system inequities, and further research that could enhance understanding about the process and impact of UA expansion.

Keywords Global South · Food security · Economic development · Food systems planning · Milan Urban Policy Pact · Organic waste · Supermarkets · Informal markets · Modernization

What can US food systems planners and scholars – and specifically those who focus on urban agriculture (UA) – learn from the Global South? Drawing from peer reviewed and grey literature, including case studies collected by the Milan Urban Policy Pact and Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security, this chapter argues that UA in the Global South takes on a much more urgent role as a life-sustaining mechanism in cities facing extreme challenges typically not experienced in the Global North. While research on UA in the Global South is too limited

L. Hoey (✉)

Urban and Regional Planning Program, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA
e-mail: lhoey@umich.edu

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to make definitive claims, growing evidence suggests that a substantial number of urban residents engage in UA, especially women, because of the role it plays in food and income security. UA also appears to play an important role in enhancing the environmental sustainability of some city regions. Many Global South governments and urban planners continue to actively resist UA in spite of these potential benefits, but some local governments have long supported UA and many others have begun to actively strengthen UA. Given the severity and scale of urban poverty in the Global South, however, UA's positive impacts even under the best scenarios cannot be considered in isolation of wider trends in urban food environments. In particular, a number of cities are encouraging the rapid growth of supermarkets and the restriction of informal food markets, which could easily undo any positive impacts of UA on urban food security and poverty. Global food policy initiatives that have emerged in recent years to intervene in urban food systems holistically, however, could help to reverse such trends and ensure that urban food systems are simultaneously equitable, health-promoting and sustainable.

The rest of this paper outlines the history and extent of UA practiced in the Global South, and the state of research on UA's food security, economic, and environmental benefits. I also describe the extent to which UA is supported by local governments, contextualize UA within wider food systems challenges facing cities in the Global South and highlight examples of longstanding and emerging UA initiatives that offer a variety of strategies that could be emulated in the Global North. I conclude by drawing out the major lessons that UA in the Global South offers UA advocates, planners, and researchers in the Global North.

27.1 The History and Extent of UA in the Global South

Agriculture was part of city building in much of the Global South, sustaining ancient cities in the Middle East and Asia, integrated into the urban fabric of pre-Colombian cities built by the Aztecs, Maya, and Inca in Latin America (Smit et al. 2001), and incorporated into the founding of many of today's cities in Africa (Obeng-Odoom 2013). UA has been sustained for centuries in some of these cities, but the practice waned in most instances or was actively suppressed, as the Spanish colonizers did in Latin America (Smit et al. 2001). Whether UA has been maintained or severed from its historical roots, in many cities across the Global South, UA has expanded in recent decades (Smit et al. 2001; Hamilton et al. 2014). Rogerson (1997) estimated that only 10–25% of populations in African cities were involved in UA in the 1980s, increasing to as much as 70% by the 1990s. More recently, based on nationally representative and comparable datasets, Zezza and Tasciotti (2010) found that UA participation rates in 15 countries across four continents was on average 33%, and as high as 70% in Vietnam and Nicaragua. A spatial analysis also found that the majority of UA is located in the Global South, including 80% of the urban irrigated cropland and 56% of the urban rainfed cropland (Thebo et al. 2014).

UA has grown largely out of necessity in the Global South, particularly when food prices have risen and incomes have fallen (Bryld 2003; Zezza and Tasciotti

2010). The first recent wave of expansion was apparent during the 1970s global economic recession and again during the 1980s as a result of structural adjustment policies, as low and middle-income countries restructured their debt through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Bryld 2003; Maxwell 1999). The suite of policies and austerity measures that accompanied structural adjustment – deregulation, privatization and the devolution of national public services, the removal of many social safety nets, the devaluation of currencies and salaries, the downsizing of public sector jobs, the removal of agricultural subsidies and price controls, trade agreements that increased food imports, and other actions – in combination, increased food prices, led to unemployment and caused the devaluation of real wages, deepening poverty and food insecurity, especially in cities (Bryld 2003; Maxwell 1999).

Other, more regionally focused forms of economic and political crises have also led to spikes in UA, like the civil war in Sierra Leone in the 1990s that forced many rural communities to migrate to Freetown in search of protection while also cutting off rural food sources (Lynch et al. 2013). Cuba is another example, where Hamilton et al. (2014) argue that there was little other option but to encourage UA, because of US embargoes and the loss of trade from the USSR post 1991. As they describe, “In retrospect, urban agriculture was the obvious answer—no fuel for tractors, trucks, or refrigeration: bring agriculture closer to/into the cities; no pesticides or fertilizers: switch to chemical-free and labor-intensive production that the populous cities could support; no export market for large mono-cultural cash crops such as sugar and limited ability to import food: produce food rather than money to buy food” (p. 54). Most recently, scholars point to another wave of UA activity associated with the 2008 global food crisis, when agricultural commodity prices rose sharply, as much as 255% for rice and 80–90% for wheat and maize between 2004 and 2008, with effects that can still be felt today (Headey and Fan 2008).

27.2 UA’s Impact in the Global South

Although no single study or meta-analysis exists to provide definitive conclusions about the variety of impacts UA is having across the globe, sufficient evidence suggests that UA has considerable food security, economic, and environmental impacts in a number of places.

27.2.1 *Impacts on Food Security*

One consistent finding across studies in the Global South is that urban residents are primarily driven to engage in UA to ameliorate food insecurity (Warren et al. 2015; Poulsen et al. 2015). Of the 805 million people who are chronically undernourished globally, 98% are located in low-income countries (FAO 2014). Increasingly, the percentage of populations in low and middle income countries that are food

insecure in cities is the same or higher than rural areas (Ahmed et al. 2007). Such wide spread food insecurity explains why UA has tended to expand around economic crises, particularly because food price increases – especially when accompanied by falling incomes – are debilitating for households in cities where people are more dependent on a cash economy and food purchases (Bryld 2003). In one study of 18 countries, households in low income countries on average spent 62% of their income on food, 42% in upper middle-income countries, and even higher proportions among poor households (Miller et al. 2016). In stark contrast, the study found that households in the three high income countries (Sweden, Canada and United Arab Emirates) spent an average of 13% on food (Miller et al. 2016). In the United States, households on average spend 6.8–9.9% of income on food (US Census Bureau 2012; USDA 2018). High sensitivity to price increases explains why hunger riots broke out across cities in the Global South during the 2008 food price crisis (Patel and McMichael 2014), in 14 cities in Africa alone (Berazneva and Lee 2013).

In this context, UA has been found to supply significant portions of urban household diets in the Global South. While UA farmers produce everything from fish to all manner of livestock, fruit, and staple foods, the greatest proportion of UA-supplied foods tend to be highly perishable, like vegetables, because of the need for shorter food chains in places that lack of refrigerated and reliable food distribution infrastructure (Moustier and Danso 2006). Zezza and Tasciotti (2010) found that UA in Accra and Kumasi (Ghana) produce 90% of the vegetables consumed in the city. Across nine cities in Africa and Asia, Moustier and Danser (2006) also found that 70–100% of the leafy vegetables consumed in the cities were produced on urban farms, and 90% of all vegetables in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). During the 1990s, Shanghai (China) was also entirely self-sufficient in urban milk production while 90% of eggs consumed came from urban farmers (Yi-Zhong and Zhange 2000).

Even if UA provides a considerable proportion of some urban diets at a city-wide level, evidence explaining the relationship between UA and food and nutrition security at the household level is still inconclusive, largely due to the low quality and quantity of available research (Warren et al. 2015; Poulsen et al. 2015). Among some of the research that does exist, urban farmers themselves often perceive that UA is essential to their food security. In one study, for instance, over 40% of UA producers in Nairobi (Kenya) believed their families would starve without the food that came from their gardens and urban farms (Memon and Lee-Smith 1993). Another survey of over 6000 households in 11 cities across 8 countries in southern Africa found that 77% of food insecure households engaged in UA, compared to less than 25% of the food secure households, suggesting that UA is a survival mechanism for households without enough, steady income to purchase food (Crush et al. 2011). Research has also shown lower rates of child malnutrition in UA households compared to non-UA households, but the causal mechanism is often unclear (Poulsen et al. 2015). Engaging in UA, for instance, may have a direct effect, increasing access to healthy diets, or an indirect effect if families supplement their income by selling what they grow to purchase healthier diets (Hamilton et al. 2014). Other research has also shown that UA increases diet diversity (Zeza and Tasciotti 2010; Badami and Ramankutty 2015), but few of these studies additionally consider

whether fruit and vegetable intake was adequate to improve health outcomes (Poulsen et al. 2015).

27.2.2 *Benefits to Income Security*

Second to providing food for their families, the other common motivation that Global South households cite for engaging in UA is for a source of income (Poulsen et al. 2015), however, the contribution of UA to household income varies widely depending on the context. Across the 15 countries Zezza and Tasciotti (2010) studied, agricultural production supplied as little as 3% of households incomes for UA households in Panama but as much as 71% in Nigeria. The share of income UA provides is also greater for lower income populations, explaining why UA tends to be more common among the poor (Zezza and Tasciotti 2010; Wagner and Tasciotti 2018). Women also make up the majority of UA farmers, often turning to UA out of desperation because of their marginalization from more secure employment options (Smit et al. 2001; Bryld 2003; Hovorka 2006; Poulsen et al. 2015). In Kampala (Uganda), for instance, 80% of UA was carried out by women who saw their gardens as a critical source of food for their family and a mechanism to gain more autonomy over household expenses and food purchases (Maxwell 1995; Hovorka 2006). In some places, however, no difference can be found in the socio-economic status of households who engage in UA, nor between long-term residents and recent migrants (Dossa et al. 2011; Mackay 2018). These incongruent findings suggest that in some cases, households with more resources and stability may engage in UA to lower expenses since even middle class families spend so much of their income on food in the Global South (Warren et al. 2015). Also in some situations, the poorest households and recent migrants may not always have access to land and other resources or may lack the stability to participate in UA at higher rates (Mackay 2018). Lack of access to secure land, loans and farm equipment are often challenges for women who desire to scale up their UA operations into a viable business (FAO 2012).

27.2.3 *Environmental Impacts*

The limited research on UA's environmental effects suggests that it may pose serious health concerns for producers and consumers, but may also have substantial benefits for urban region waterways and waste systems (Hamilton et al. 2014; Khalid et al. 2018). On the one hand, the greenbelts that farms create at the edges of many cities play an important role in reducing the urban heat island effect and in storing and draining water, controlling flooding in nearby, denser urban areas (Dubbeling et al. 2016; Kuusaana and Eledi 2015). On the other hand, government authorities have raised concerns about the role that UA may play in increasing

breeding sites for malaria carrying mosquitoes (Hamilton et al. 2014). A considerable amount of literature on UA also focuses on whether environmental contaminants and UA practices themselves pose health risks, such as the contamination of plants from air pollution in rapidly growing cities or the overuse of highly toxic agrochemicals on urban farms located near dense housing and sources of drinking water (De Bon et al. 2010; Hamilton et al. 2014; Khalid et al. 2018). One particularly widespread practice in the Global South that potentially poses both environmental benefits and risks is the use of industrial and domestic wastewater for irrigation and the application of fecal sludge and compost from urban waste, as the following describes in more detail.

The use of fecal sludge and compost from urban waste has been a part of UA livestock and produce operations for decades in many places, if not centuries. In Kano (Nigeria), for instance, peri-urban vegetable farmers have long applied and still prefer “taki” over conventional fertilizer, a mix of manure, organic waste from household trash, ash and street sweepings (Maconachie and Binns 2006). A similar system has been used for many years in Hubli-Dharwad, India, where farmers apply municipal solid waste, once bought at municipal auctions but now primarily secured through informal markets (Nunan 2000). In Cairo, two ethnic groups tied by kinship, the *zarraba* and *wahija*, referred collectively as the *zabbaleen*, have been working together since the 1930s in an intricate system of household waste collection, trash sorting and repurposing into a variety of businesses, including the raising of pigs off the organic waste (Nunan 2000).

The use of untreated industrial and domestic wastewater for irrigation has also been a longtime practice in some places, but it is a more recent phenomena in many peri-urban areas where expanding urban populations and industry competes for water (Hofmann 2013). Today it is the only option in areas where there are water shortages (Khalid et al. 2018). Only 8% of water in low-income countries is treated, and even in upper middle income countries, only 38% is treated, making clean water for irrigation purposes a nonstarter in most low and middle income countries (Sato et al. 2013). UA, however, often acts as a mechanism to filter this untreated water. One notable example has been operating in Kolkata (India) for more than a century, where fishponds covering nearly 4000 hectares of peri-urban land in the East Kolkata Wetlands filter 30–50% of the city’s sewage; the process works through a complex system of canal networks that are connected to the city’s waste disposal site and fishponds filled with water hyacinths, which then discharges the filtered water into vegetable and rice fields (Bunting et al. 2010). This system supplies a significant portion of the city’s fish and vegetables, sold at prices affordable to the urban poor, while also employing several thousand people (Bunting et al. 2010).

Especially for poor farmers, fecal sludge, composted urban waste, and untreated domestic wastewater offers a low-cost source of organic matter and nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (Khalid et al. 2018). Operations that sort through urban waste to reuse organic matter also provide a public service, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, saving waste treatment costs and energy (Hofmann 2013); one researcher estimates that organic waste makes up 50–90% of municipal waste systems, offering an opportunity to significantly reduce the amount of waste going into landfills if

composted (Cofie et al. 2006). Incorporating fecal sludge and wastewater into UA fields also helps to recycle organic waste, filters water before it re-enters surface water sources, and lowers competition for freshwater supplies (Dubbeling et al. 2016).

The use of untreated wastewater, urban compost and fecal sludge is being threatened, however, and carries risks that appear to be increasing as urban areas become more populated. Studies have documented unsafe levels of fecal contamination or heavy metals in wastewater irrigation, raising concerns about the health effects for farm workers and UA consumers (Binns et al. 2003; Hamilton et al. 2014; Khalid et al. 2018). Other research has found that the high salt content in wastewater can cause soil hardening and that heavy metals can affect germination or generally reduce plant health (Khalid et al. 2018). Rapid urban development – which is displacing peri-urban farmers further afield onto less productive land and increasing the distance between them and the sources of urban waste they have come to rely on (Kuusaana and Eledi 2015) – is also changing the composition of urban waste, introducing more plastics and chemical pollutants, and causing sedimentation in streams that transport untreated wastewater (Nunan 2000). In some places, compost from urban waste is being commercialized, reducing access as the higher quality compost is often exported, raising the costs for poor farmers, even as chemical fertilizers are subsidized, rendering them more affordable (Nunan 2000; Hofmann 2013). Attempts to ban or entirely formalize some of these informal waste recycling systems have also been attempted, though usually unsuccessfully (Drechsel et al. 2010); in the case of Cairo and the *zabbaleen*, for instance, after a long period of resistance and negotiation, a partnership eventually was forged between the informal and city-managed waste collection systems.

27.3 The Role of Urban Planners and Policymakers in UA's Expansion

In most places, local officials have turned a blind eye towards UA (Drechsel et al. 2010), but in many cities, particularly in Africa, public authorities have actively attempted to prohibit UA through fines, destruction of crops and evictions (Simatele and Binns 2008; Battersby 2013; Gore 2018). The reasons for this hostile attitude towards UA is often unfounded, but nonetheless ranges from perceptions that UA poses a food safety risk for consumers (Gore 2018), pollutes watersheds (Drakakis-Smith et al. 1995), creates hiding grounds for criminals (Ayaga et al. 2005), and competes with the existing produce market and commercial agriculture (Battersby 2019; Maxwell 1999). In most cases, public officials who oppose UA see it as a temporary, rural activity that does not belong in the city – a symbol of the failure to modernize and develop (D'Alessandro et al. 2018; Smit 2016). Despite the hostile or indifferent political environment that UA sometimes operates in, a number of cities and national governments have long been leaders in actively supporting and

incentivizing UA, while more recent, government-led actions indicate that UA is gaining a foothold as a legitimate part of many urban landscapes (D'Alessandro et al. 2018; Gore 2018).

This increased attention and support for UA may in part be due to numerous declarations that have increased interest in UA specifically, or urban food systems more broadly. One of the first declarations that inspired others was supported by government representatives from nine cities in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2000 who signed the *Quito Declaration: Urban Agriculture in Twenty-First Century Cities*. The *Quito Declaration* called for more cities to support UA as a means to address issues of urban poverty, food insecurity and environmental impacts (Dubbeling et al. 2016). Since then, other declarations signed in Hyderabad, India (2002), Nyanga, Zimbabwe (2002), Lima, Peru (2002), Harare, Zimbabwe (2003) and La Paz, Bolivia (2007) have also called on cities, countries and/or regions to create more enabling policy environments, increase participatory UA planning, offer trainings, increase access to land and loans, and ensure the right to use and improve wastewater for irrigation (Cabannes 2012). Most recently, 108 cities in 2015 (and 2015 by October of 2019) signed on to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), agreeing to strive towards healthy and affordable food access, minimize food waste, use food systems to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and encourage cross-sector coordination and policies that ensure “equitable, resilient and sustainable food systems” (MUFPP 2019). MUFPP organizers note that food systems planning is still a relatively new concept for many cities signing on to the Pact, but the activities they are reporting through the annual MUFPP award competition and at the yearly summits suggest that more cities are integrating issues of food and nutrition security with other urgent urban issues, such as climate change, migration, public engagement and economic development (Giordano et al. 2018). Some of the longstanding and more recent examples of the way that UA can expand rapidly and be leveraged to support wider city goals when governments proactively support the practice include Havana (Cuba), Seoul (South Korea), Rosario (Argentina), Curitiba (Brazil), and Quito (Ecuador). These five examples are described below.

Vegetable and herb production in Havana (Cuba) increased from 1994 to 2005 “a thousand fold” so that by the mid-2000s, 26,000 gardens were operating in Havana, producing the daily vegetable requirements of the city’s population (Koont 2011, p. 8). In addition to the political urgency that left Cuba with no other option but to produce the country’s food internally (Koont 2011), Cuba’s success with UA is attributed in part to the large amount of state-owned land that is devoted to UA (Koont 2011).

Havana also has a vast network of UA extension agents who work through the Department of Urban Agriculture and state-run “Casas de Semilla” where growers can purchase seeds, tools and other inputs (Chaplowe 1998).

In Seoul (South Korea), UA was already beginning to take hold among non-governmental organizations in the early 2000s (Son 2013) and was further encouraged by the national Act on Development and Support of Urban Agriculture passed in 2011 (Oh and Kim 2017). Seoul also passed its own UA ordinance in 2011 and dedicated a budget and staff to UA activities. Within a few years, government staff

had distributed supplies (e.g., over 43,000 vegetable pots, seeds, tools), reserved over 100 hectares of urban and suburban land for UA and launched training centers (Oh and Kim 2017). In that same time period, UA participation rates rose from 150,000 in 2010 to 770,000 people in 2013 (Son 2013). More recently in 2017, the Seoul Food Master Plan 2030 aims to increase healthy food access and address food insecurity in the city while also creating markets for farmers in municipalities neighboring Seoul through local food procurement in public institutions (e.g., schools, daycare centers and public office cafeterias) (Seulgi Son, personal communication).

In Rosario (Argentina), UA has become part of a larger strategy to address urban food insecurity, poverty and regional environmental goals. In 2000, the city began mapping vacant land, zoned particular urban and peri-urban areas for the permanent inclusion of agriculture, set up a network of urban growers, provided infrastructure and financing for the creation of small processing centers, launched farmers markets and home delivery systems, started offering trainings in marketing and food safety, created a municipal land bank and began offering tax incentives to landowners who lease land to urban farmers (Dubbeling and Merzthall 2006; Ponce and Terrile 2010). Later in 2014, as part of the city's climate action plan and concerns over the loss of the city's horticultural greenbelt as the city expanded, the municipal government turned to peri-urban agriculture. It doubled the amount of land it protected from 400 to 800 hectares, trained farmers in agroecological practices and marketing, offered them low-interest loans for farm equipment and inputs, and established a food distribution system and purchasing agreements with area hotels and restaurants (Dubbeling and Terrile 2016).

Another example of a city that is interlinking multiple urban planning goals is Curitiba (Brazil), which has tied food waste reduction to markets for farmers, jobs for urban residents, food access, pollution reduction, and other priorities. In 1991, the city of Curitiba started the "Garbage that is Not Garbage" initiative, which gives people tokens for transportation, food and school books when they bring their sorted garbage to non-profit run collection centers (Gianfelici et al. 2016). Along with an education campaign, every 15 days, in exchange for their recyclable trash, the "green exchange" program offers households fresh produce from peri-urban farms or the opportunity to buy local produce in stores at 30% below cost. The recycled materials are then sold to factories and small cooperatives who repurpose the materials into other products, including soap, cooking fuel and cement. An evaluation in 2014 found that the program recycles 22% of the city's waste and on a monthly basis, distributes food to over seven million residents (Gianfelici et al. 2016).

Quito similarly stands out for its efforts to think more holistically about the urban food system, using UA as a foundation. In 2002, the city launched the "Participatory Urban Agriculture" (AGRUPAR) program to address urban food insecurity, improve healthy food access, increase jobs, enhance ecosystem services, and promote community engagement (Dubbeling and Dueñas 2016). Over 380 community-based organizations participate in AGRUPAR, as do 12,000 urban and peri-urban growers, 86% of whom are women, and many of whom are recent rural migrants or unemployed (Dubbeling and Merzthall 2006). The program also supplies growers with

seeds, other inputs, tools and small livestock such as chickens, guinea pigs and bees, and has helped establish “investment societies” to offer small scale businesses startup capital through a rotating fund (p. 61). Evaluations of the project in 2016 reported that over 16,000 people had been trained in agroecology methods, marketing, nutrition and food processing; over 100 microenterprises had been established; more than 2500 gardens had been supported; and 14 “bio-fairs” had launched where AGRUPAR growers sell organic produce, meats and other products (Dubbeling and Dueñas 2016).

27.4 The Contribution of Wider Food Systems Planning Trends to Food System Inequities

Despite the positive impact UA can have, the extent and continued rise of poverty, food insecurity, environmental precarity, and the nutritional double burden¹ in cities all suggest that UA alone cannot resolve these multiple crises. Integrated, multi-pronged approaches such as those being implemented in Rosario, Curitiba and Quito are one way to enhance the wider effects of UA, but broader food system transformations are also needed (Dubbeling et al. 2016). As Warren et al. (2015) argue “While the existence of UA may be indicative of individual, household, or community resilience, it may also be a marker of a larger failing food distribution system which is unable to provide...all people at all times with foods that are healthy, safe, and affordable” (p. 64). Many city governments are attempting to attract supermarkets and limit informal food vendors as part of a larger agenda to drive economic growth and improve urban food access and safety. Yet as the following account of such efforts suggests, the effects may be creating more “modern” food systems at the expense of worse, not better, equitable economic and health outcomes for marginalized urban populations.

Trade liberalization and the opening of markets that accompanied structural adjustment policies in the 1980s sparked an initial rise in supermarkets, first in Latin America and Asia in the early 1990s, and by the end of the 1990s in Africa (Reardon et al. 2012). Investors and city governments often argue that supermarkets are a means to address urban food insecurity and to improve diets and health, touted for their ability to offer lower prices because of their economies of scale, greater variety of foods, and higher food quality and safety (Timmer 2009; Battersby 2012, 2019). Supermarkets are also seen as part of a wider economic growth strategy (Battersby 2019). Yet, too little is known about the extent and causes of urban food insecurity, malnutrition and obesity to know whether the rise of grocery stores will have a positive or negative effect on these pressing issues (Battersby 2012; Berger and van

¹The double burden is a recent trend in the Global South, particularly in cities, where chronic undernutrition is now accompanied by rising rates of overweight and diet-related diseases (Doak et al. 2005).

Helvoirt 2018). In some instances, evidence suggests that food insecurity is higher in locations where households come to rely on supermarkets (Riley and Legwegoh 2014) and that supermarkets are encouraging the consumption of highly processed foods (Demmler et al. 2017; Kelly et al. 2014). Studies have also found that supermarkets often have higher costs and cater to more well off customers who are food secure and who can buy and refrigerate larger volumes of food (Battersby 2012, 2019; Blekking et al. 2017; Berger and van Helvoirt 2018).

As governments liberalize and internationalize food retail, the high volumes, new quality standards and managerial expertise required by the growth in supermarkets affects the livelihoods of small-holder rural and peri-urban farmers and small-scale processors who supply informal markets (Vorley et al. 2016). Many city governments are also attempting to actively restrict informal market vendors (Anjaria 2006; Smit 2016). Similar to how UA is often perceived, informal markets are not part of the “modernization” and development plan of many cities (Berger and van Helvoirt 2018; Battersby 2019). The Kenyan national government’s 2030 vision, for instance, aims to attract more international investment for supermarkets while limiting the growth of informal retail as part of an overall strategy to address food insecurity and contribute to urban economic growth, based on the assumption that informal markets reduce tax revenues, discourage major retail investors, and make it difficult to enforce food safety and other health standards (Office of the Prime Minister of State for Planning 2012). This is in spite of studies that show that poorer households rely largely on street kiosks and informal markets for their shopping – particularly for fruit and vegetables (Poulsen et al. 2015). Government officials in Nairobi, Hanoi and many other cities, particularly in Africa, routinely harass street food vendors by arresting, fining, confiscating goods, forcibly evicting, or attempting to register and concentrate them in less visible areas of the city with less foot traffic (Smit 2016). This not only threatens the food security of poor households that rely on these vendors, but also disrupts customer ties and other vital social networks street food vendors depend on for their livelihoods (Huat 2016).

Rather than eliminate informal markets and transition entirely to supermarkets, scholars are calling on cities to ensure a variety of retail options to ensure food insecurity so that households have more options for finding affordable prices (Cadilhon et al. 2006; Battersby 2019), similar to how the Philippines, Singapore and Taiwan have encouraged growth and competition in both the formal and informal retail sectors (Reardon and Gulati 2008). Other scholars are also advocating for increased investment in informal value chains, farmer cooperatives, and employment opportunities in post-harvest processing, distribution, food manufacturing, urban food service and retail operations (Vorley et al. 2016). Together, these types of jobs account for a significant portion of the urban workforce and could address the income insecurity that often forces households to rely on UA; if structured effectively, such jobs could also have a ripple effect on the viability of small-scale rural producers, reducing the need for rural to urban migration and the concentration of poverty in cities (Vorley et al. 2016).

27.5 Conclusion

As this brief account of UA trends in the Global South demonstrates, for many urban growers in low and middle income countries, UA is a lifeline – a vital source of their family’s food and income security – in a way that is not often experienced in the US. This may explain why UA’s geographic expanse in the Global South is unparalleled to the US (Thebo et al. 2014), in spite of the fact that UA in the Global South is often not formally sanctioned or is even actively suppressed by city officials. Despite the more extreme circumstances in which UA is often practiced in the Global South, urban planning scholars and practitioners in the US can draw a number of lessons about the benefits of intentionally scaling up UA, the wider lens that urban planners could be applying to address urban food system inequities, and more comprehensive research that could enhance understanding about the process and impact of UA expansion.

First, research on the impacts of UA in the Global South reinforces with even more certainty the argument that Jerry Kaufman and his colleagues initially posed (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 2000; Kaufman and Bailkey 2000), and that scholars today still reiterate (Vitiello 2024) – that urban planners should view food systems interventions, and UA in particular, as a public good that delivers on many of the goals of urban planning (Raja et al. 2023). Environmental planners in particular could learn from numerous large-scale UA operations in the Global South that divert waste from landfills, turn urban organic waste into soil amendments, and preserve farmland greenbelts to conserve water, filter contaminants, and reduce flooding. UA has even greater potential to impact food and income insecurity in the Global South because so many households spend a major portion of their income on food, particularly marginalized women, migrants, the underemployed, and people left out of the formal economy.

In this context, the economic calculus shared by many US and Global South urban planners who view UA as a temporary activity on land that will eventually have a “higher and better use” (Vitiello 2024; Pothukuchi 2024) has more dramatic ethical implications in the Global South when it leads city officials to discourage or criminalize UA. Because of the hesitancy that still exists for UA in many places, Poulsen et al. (2015) argue that only after greater capacity building, resources, and governance structures are in place to enhance and expand UA will it be clear what its potential is to contribute to multiple urban planning goals. The five cities profiled here show what it can look like when the state incentivizes and supports UA in a concerted way, from offering subsidized inputs, training, secure land, markets via public food procurement and purchasing agreements, processing centers, delivery systems, tax incentives to landowners, loans, rotating funds and more.

Second, the passive role that many urban planners are playing in the Global South as peri-urban agricultural land is lost to city growth and the unintended effects of advocating for supermarket growth and informal food retail contraction should force urban planners in the US to consider if they too are failing to apply a wider lens to address urban food inequities. Despite the fact that a disproportionate amount

of prime agricultural land surrounds US cities (Gottlieb 2015), urban planners are doing too little to prevent farmland loss to urbanization (Gottlieb 2015; Horst and Gwin 2018; Fang et al. 2019). Compared to large-scale commodity farms, peri-urban farms are more likely to be small scaled, diversified vegetable farms that are owned by women and people of color (Ayazi and Elsheikh 2015; Francis et al. 2012; Minkoff-Zern 2018). Simply put, preserving farmland from continued urban sprawl would not only contribute to regional food security but also equitable economic development goals.

From a food retail perspective, national surveys of urban planners have shown that they often leave grocery store and other retail development to the private sector (Pothukuchi 2005), though this may be changing (Pothukuchi 2009). Fair Food Financing initiatives funded in part via the 2018 US Farm Bill have expanded efforts to reach underserved communities as have a variety of informal, innovative food distribution models (Brinkley 2013). These opportunities could be leveraged to achieve equitable food access and economic development agendas, but what remains unclear is the degree to which urban planners – as opposed to the private sector and nonprofits – are taking a lead on these initiatives or at least lowering land-use regulation barriers that often prevent them from flourishing (Brinkley 2013). Many urban planners and local governments also seem to be missing an opportunity to harness the public benefits, and potential food access and economic equity effects, of food hubs in the US that are attempting to re-localize food system aggregation, distribution and processing (Jones et al. 2018; Hoey et al. 2018).

One final insight that emerges from this chapter is the need for more research to understand the advocacy it took to get UA on so many government agendas in the Global South – as evidenced by numerous city-led initiatives, national policies, and MUFPP declarations. Understanding the capacity building and institutional dynamics that must be negotiated to successfully implement lofty UA and food systems plans and the wider political, social, and economic factors that allow particular UA models and food systems initiatives to flourish or flounder is also needed. These are all topics that MUFPP organizers say are challenges for member cities (Giordano et al. 2018) and are issues related to policy science that are generally understudied in food systems research (Hoey and Pelletier 2011; Raja et al. 2014; Blesh et al. 2019), yet such understanding would equip food systems and UA advocates in the US and elsewhere with more effective policy advocacy and implementation tools.

More comparable, rigorous research is also needed to quell concerns that much of the early UA literature in the Global South was led by an advocacy agenda (Hamilton et al. 2014; Warren et al. 2015; Poulsen et al. 2015). Methodologically, UA studies often use inconsistent definitions and measurement approaches (e.g. related to “food security,” “urban,” and even what to include in “agriculture”), include few details about the methods or the study population (e.g., how long participants have been involved in UA), or use weak research designs that tend to use small sample sizes and no comparison groups, run simple correlations, and fail to control for confounding variables (Reardon and Gulati 2008). Furthermore, research on UA in the Global South has largely concentrated on African countries (Poulsen et al. 2015), where UA has tended to be restricted more actively by local

governments than in Asia or Latin America (Smit et al. 2001; Gore 2018). Ultimately, current research on UA in the Global South may not be revealing the full range of emerging innovations, government-led interventions and impacts UA can have, as suggested by some of the cases showcased here.

Despite the continued narrative of “modernization” that is spurring many cities in the Global South to suppress UA along with parallel efforts to expand supermarkets and undermine informal food markets, increasingly, cities around the world are setting a new course for UA and wider food systems planning. As some of the examples outlined here show, cities are creating collaborative institutional arrangements and alliances with diverse actors to develop innovative and equity-oriented food policy, engaging in ambitious metropolitan-wide UA and food systems strategies, creating stronger rural-urban linkages, and tying food production and nutrition initiatives with job creation, public engagement, migration, climate change adaptation, food waste mitigation and other urgent matters (Dubbeling et al. 2016; Giordano et al. 2018). The MUFPP in particular is an encouraging development to watch as it offers a forum for cities around the world, including many in the US, to learn from one another’s efforts and become inspired by the possibilities presented by UA and wider food systems planning strategies for enhancing environmental and economic resilience, public health, and public inclusion.

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Lesli Hoey investigates how community-based and government-led visions of more equitable, sustainable and healthy food systems are operationalized in practice and ways that policy advocacy, collaborative planning, and evaluation facilitate or hinder implementation. Her current projects examine U.S. state food charters, local food councils, food hubs and food systems networks, strategies that cities, institutions and grassroots actors can use to promote nutrient cycling, circular economies and carbon neutrality through food systems, and policies that shape food environments and sustainable diets in the Global South.

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Chapter 28

Healing the Racial Divide in Urban Agriculture



Molly Riordan  and Anusuya Rangarajan 

Abstract The promise of urban agriculture (UA) is in its potential to transform the communities around it. But who is able to farm in urban spaces and the intended goals of urban farms determines the extent to which that transformation exploits or confronts systemic and institutional racism. Based on a 2019 report, the authors consider the racial divide between “commercial” and “community” urban farms, including the racist policies and practices that make UA both possible and necessary. By reframing the value of UA, city planners and urban policy makers have an opportunity to promote a racially just food system. The chapter concludes with recommended strategies to support the transformational potential of UA.

Keywords Urban agriculture · Racism · Policy

A primary critique of urban agriculture (UA) is that it will never provide for the full caloric needs of all city residents. The critique implies that urban farmers and their supporters think that UA should feed all city residents, including supplying restaurants and retail stores, when very few would make that claim. But the framing of UA as a business-oriented endeavor is rooted in white supremacy culture that privileges capitalist activity over individual and community actions of self-determination. The privileging of whiteness in urban agriculture is visible in which UA projects receive press coverage, funding, and local jurisdiction support. More insidiously, whiteness in UA obscures that white urban farmers benefit from the legacy of racist urban policies, while at the same time overshadowing the work of Black and brown farmers who use UA as a means of community and social transformation.

The uprisings for racial justice sparked by the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis, MN, police officer on May 25, 2020, were and continue to be a powerful reminder that Black and brown communities struggle for just and equitable treatment by the institutions that are supposed to protect them. To that end, Black and brown urban farmers cope with compounding inequities in access to land, capital,

M. Riordan (✉) · A. Rangarajan
Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, USA
e-mail: Mer279@cornell.edu; Ar47@cornell.edu

and resources while making a case for urban agriculture that subverts capitalist expectations of return on investment from local governments and other authorities.

Our 2019 study of commercial urban agriculture (Rangarajan and Riordan 2019) found a racial divide between farms that operated as businesses and those that operated in service of community. For-profit urban farms were primarily operated by white farmers, predominately located in economically devastated neighborhoods. Black and brown farmers were more likely to be associated with community-focused urban farms located in similarly disinvested neighborhoods, but with the goal of community transformation.

In reality, the separation between commercial and community-focused urban farms is arbitrary, as the primary output of both types is community transformation. But how the community transforms is predicated on who is allowed to farm in it. In this chapter, we argue that planners and policymakers must acknowledge how white supremacy created the conditions for and informs the support of white urban farms over Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other persons of color-led farms. By disentangling the value of a farm from its dollar-based output and fully valuing UA's transformative potential, local government officials can more appropriately address the resource needs that continue to oppress communities of color.

This chapter illustrates the divide between white urban farmers who aim to build businesses, and Black, brown, and Indigenous farmers who grow food in cities to transform their neighborhoods and provide for their communities. The divide is not absolute—people of all races participate in both profit-focused and community-focused UA—but in illustrating the divide the authors hope to redefine UA for its potential to contribute to a socially and racially just food system. We illustrate the divide by (1) recognizing the history of Black leadership in urban agriculture; (2) examining whiteness in urban agriculture; (3) broadening the definition of return on investment; (4) illustrating the tension between building commercially viable farms versus serving local food needs; and (5) reframing the value of UA. We conclude with recommendations from our original study that can specifically support city planners and policymakers to develop racially just and inclusive UA policies and programs.

28.1 Methods

The authors conducted a study of commercial urban farming in the United States, conducting interviews with over 160 UA advocates and visiting dozens of urban farms across the country. Farms presented as case studies (14) were located in the mid-Atlantic (Brooklyn, NY; Philadelphia, PA), South (Atlanta, GA; Austin, TX), Great Lakes (Buffalo, NY; Cleveland, OH; Detroit, MI; Chicago, IL), Great Plains (Kansas City, MO; Lawrence, KS), and West Coast (Portland, OR; San Francisco, CA). While the focus of the study was necessary conditions for creating commercially viable urban farm businesses, the findings from interviews and site visits naturally expanded to UA's transformational potential and the racially complex history and current state of UA in the United States.

28.2 Recognizing the History of Black Leadership in Urban Agriculture

The segregation of urban agriculture is the result of the segregation of urban areas. In the twentieth century, six million African-descended people moved north during the Great Migration (1910–1970). Prosperous northern cities, and the Civil Rights Movement they supported, seemed an antidote to the life of poverty many Black sharecroppers left behind.¹ But “white flight,” declining urban manufacturing jobs, and decades of disinvestment in urban communities of color left swaths of Midwestern and Northeastern cities—Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, Buffalo, Philadelphia, and others—dilapidated, vacant, over-policed and unsafe (Eichenlaub et al. 2010).

Urban agriculture sprouted up in these cities in part due to plentiful vacant land, and in part as a path to self-determination for communities of color (Raja 2024; Hall et al. 2024; Griffin et al. 2024). Food and farming activists used urban farming as a way to increase access to fresh food, build community capacity, celebrate inherited food cultures, and as a starting point to discuss larger, more insidious systems that undermine the health of individuals and undercut the economic vitality of communities of color (Meenar and Hoover 2012).

For many, UA represents more than just growing food. It plays a role for communities of color in the struggle for social justice through food justice; that is, the equitable distribution of benefits and risks of what, where, and how food is grown, processed, transported, distributed, accessed, and eaten (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010). Communities of color disproportionately suffer from political, economic, environmental, and social disenfranchisement that limits not only food choice, but also the capacity and social capital to overcome those injustices, including as owners of the means of food production (Gottlieb and Joshi 2010; Mares and Alkon 2011).

Perhaps because of the food justice movement’s continued struggle to distribute power and achieve a racially just food system, some urban agriculturalists of color have adopted the language of “food sovereignty.” The concept comes from the Global South, through which peasant farmers aim to define the terms of their labor separate from the exploitative global food production system (Clendenning et al. 2016). The ability to grow and provide affordable, culturally appropriate food for oppressed communities is attractive to those who feel both the modern conventional and “alternative” (local, organic, etc.) food systems have left them behind (Block et al. 2012).

“Food sovereignty is a condition that exists when you have access to land and resources from which food is produced. It is important that we tie the struggle for food justice, food security, and food sovereignty to larger struggles for human rights, self-determination, and the elimination of poverty,” said Malik Yakini,

¹For context on the Great Migration, see Wilkerson, I. (2010). *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration*. New York: Random House. See also Tolnay, S.E. (2003). “The African American ‘great migration’ and beyond,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29, 209–232.

long-time urban farmer and founder of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, at the 2016 Detroit Food Summit (Yakini 2016). The two-day summit, like a growing number of conferences and events around the country, had a strong focus on dismantling structural racism and racial privilege to empower healthier, more resilient communities through food justice work. Urban farming and gardening, particularly learning to grow one's own food, was presented as a potential solution for improving health outcomes, increasing self-reliance, strengthening community, and achieving social justice.

"Black and Brown people need their voices heard in this food movement. We're not here to replace rural farmers. We're here to get a piece of the pie and make sure this food system is inclusive," said Karen Washington, an urban farmer who led early community UA efforts in the Bronx, NY, at George Washington University's Food Institute Urban Agriculture Symposium (Washington 2016). Now farming commercially in rural NY, Washington continues to be a nationally recognized voice for the power of community gardening to improve nutrition, foster entrepreneurship, and strengthen neighborhoods for urban residents.

Washington also co-founded Black Urban Growers (BUGS), a national network of farmers of color from urban and rural areas, which she says allows farmers and food activists of color to organize around issues of empowerment and food justice. BUGS advocates for Black leadership on food system and UA issues, particularly in areas where white-dominated leadership have set priorities that do not meet the needs of non-white urban farmers. Imbedded within its mission is improved access of farmers of color to land, training, funding, agriculture networks, and policymakers, as well as expanded representation on boards of local governments and foundations.

28.3 Whiteness in Urban Agriculture

The "local" food systems movement, which includes urban farming, is observed to attract proportionally more white participants and consumers than people of color (Guthman 2008; Meenar and Hoover 2012; Passidomo 2014; Ramírez 2015). Community food efforts aim to be inclusive, but inclusivity is predicated on voluntary participation. As Ramírez (2015) finds, it is unlikely that people of color will voluntarily participate in white-led local and community food and agriculture efforts where they must grapple with the power asymmetries embedded in the whiteness of such spaces.

"It seems like an increasingly unfunny joke to note that most people working in the sustainable/fair/green/organic/local/urban food production world are white," writes urban farmer, activist, and journalist Antonio Roman-Alcalá (Roman-Alcalá 2015). Roman-Alcalá has written on the race and class differences in how urban farms operate, and privilege—having the time, alternative income, and access to resources to subsidize and support urban agricultural pursuits—is at the core (Roman-Alcalá 2013). White urban farmers are also less likely to experience

discrimination in access to land or financing, or criminalization of growing food in non-traditional spaces (front yards, abandoned lots), which are common for many Black and brown urban farmers.

White privilege is evident even in UA organizations that ally themselves with people of color in food justice and food sovereignty movements. Nonprofit organizations begun by white people with the aim of supporting Black and brown communities often make it impossible for the people they aim to serve to work for the nonprofits. Structural impediments, like education or experience requirements and low entry-level salaries, are superficial demonstrations of whiteness framing the organization's efforts. When whiteness frames an organization's mission, it breeds suspicion among those communities of color it aims to serve.

For example, Allison Boyd, former director of the Baltimore Farm Alliance, expected to find in Baltimore even greater diversity than she had experienced while working in rural North Carolina's farming community. She quickly learned that in Baltimore as elsewhere, "the resurgence of small-scale and urban ag was being typically led by young, white, educated, middle-class people" (Boyd 2015). Boyd worked to increase membership in the Baltimore Farm Alliance that reflected the diversity of the city. She also worked to change the composition of the leadership: she arrived to an all-white staff and an all-white membership, and left the Alliance with more diverse membership and three Black women at the helm of the organization.

Some white urban farmers working in communities of color are aware of the fraught circumstances their farms create. When Elisa Lane began farming in the majority-Black Whitelock neighborhood of Baltimore, everyone who helped with the project that became Whitelock Community Farm was white like her.

"We were friendly with everyone, but I think it does make a statement, even unintentional, that white people are creating this space. And I think about it: were we able to start this farm because we were the white residents of the neighborhood? What would happen if the Black residents tried to do it? Would the neighborhood association have been as supportive? Would they have gotten as much funding?" (Lane 2016). Lane says Black neighbors warmed up to the farm eventually, but it took a long time.

White farmers benefit from institutional and systemic racism because they are able to farm in cities as a result of explicitly and implicitly racist policies and practices. The right mix of circumstances—vacant properties, inexpensive access, low regulatory oversight—for urban farming occurs in disinvested neighborhoods, often those with large non-white populations (Guthman 2008). When the (white) Stevens family moved from rural western New York state to Buffalo's predominantly Black East Side to start Wilson Street Farm, for example, they chose their home because a friend living nearby suggested the 25 empty lots on the next block may be the right size for the Stevens' homestead garden (Rangarajan and Riordan 2019, p. 115). The city planning agency, eager to make improvements and decrease the burden of maintaining vacant land, leased the land to the Stevenses for just a few dollars a year. Though not long-term residents of the Black neighborhood, the white Stevens

family obtained access to land with relative ease: vacant land is readily available as a result of decades of disinvestment in the East Side.

Glenn and Paula Foore of the now-closed Springdale Farm in Austin, TX (Rangarajan and Riordan 2019, p. 169) were similarly drawn to East Austin by an offer of inexpensive land: a federal-local partnership for economic development helped the Foores purchase the five-acre parcel that housed their landscaping business since 1992. At the time East Austin was suffering from decades of disinvestment, and its residents—primarily Black and Latino, a demographic legacy of the city's segregationist policies in the first half of the twentieth century (Hill 2016)—experienced a poverty rate of 52% (GeoLytics 2000).

During the Great Recession of 2008, the Foores started to farm their land as a means to keep their staff employed. Springdale Farm became one of several urban farms in the area, all owned by white couples, as East Austin began to see a new wave of gentrification. Latino neighborhood leaders rallied against the farms as symbols of their larger battle against gentrification, leading to a multi-year zoning battle that split East Austin along racial lines: white farmers on one side, Latino community-activists on the other.

Andrew Smiley, former deputy director of Austin's Sustainable Food Center, says the imbroglio was about more than farming, or even race: "What confounded [these disagreements] was the economic divide: urban farms are taking advantage of vacancies and low property prices in lower-income neighborhoods" (Smiley 2016). In Austin as elsewhere, white-owned urban farms site themselves largely based upon land availability, but that availability is a result of the disinvestment and neglect that result from racist policies including segregation, redlining, school closures, low transit access, and more.

Michael Conard, Columbia University professor and adjunct researcher for its Urban Design Lab, maps urban farms and the deployment of funds to support urban farming projects. His research shows that vacant urban land that could be used for farming maps directly onto under-resourced minority communities. Conard (2016) suggests that such maps, which show clear evidence of disinvestment in neighborhoods of color, could be used to prioritize urban agriculture investments to benefit communities. Alternatively, they can also be used by developers looking to cash in on neighborhoods on the verge of gentrifying. For example, planners supporting the City of Philadelphia's urban agriculture plan found through a mapping project that one in three active gardens or farms are in areas with the highest intensity of new construction (City of Philadelphia 2023).

Yet many analyses "do not consider deeply enough how entrenched power structures exacerbate and reinforce landscapes of access" (Passidomo 2014). Rather such analyses tend to attract the attention of those people with 'missionary impulses' to increase healthy food access in communities that are not their own. Without recognizing their white privilege, white urban farmers who aim to increase food *access* may inadvertently "undermine the well-being of people of color" by not acting to support food justice and food sovereignty movements that require a redistribution of power and resources (Ramírez 2015). A white-managed urban farm without deep community connections can also obscure and distract from embedded racism and

poverty, and in so doing make neighborhoods ripe for gentrification. White privilege includes the naiveté to believe that healthy plants in a gritty city landscape are a sign of social progress, without having to grapple with one's own role in perpetuating an inequitable system.

28.4 Broadening the Definition of Return on Investment

Leaders of community-driven urban farms are concerned that the positive social impacts of urban farming on food justice and community empowerment could be undermined by a growing focus on commercial UA or high-tech controlled environment agriculture (CEA) by investors worldwide. A narrow focus on the commercial viability and return on investment of urban farming can obscure the social accomplishments achieved by urban farms, community gardens, and other noncommercial UA efforts.

The tendency for planners, investors, and other local decision makers to focus on economic return on investment (ROI) is pervasive in UA policy discussions. Even urban planners aware of UA's social and community benefits often struggle with setting aside land for UA because it does not represent the land's "highest and best use" or greatest potential for economic return. For example, city officials and investors privilege large, expensive CEA projects that promise jobs for residents and increased food security. In reality, these projects create a very few highly skilled jobs and limited food output (leafy greens) that must be sold at a high price to make the economics work. CEA and its investors use the language of ROI, but have yet to deliver the promised return to communities, while city officials confuse investment dollars with ROI potential.

The focus on quantifiable returns often discounts or ignores strategies to promote long-term economic resilience grounded in social change. Favoring those UA projects that seem to have the highest economic ROI may reinforce existing socio-economic disparities rather than improve community economic development or quality of life, as very few, if any, of the benefits of such UA projects accrue to the surrounding community. According to former University of California Cooperative Extension Associate and Urban Agriculture Specialist Rob Bennaton, an excessive emphasis on economic ROI "almost completely ignores equity issues that have arisen in terms of historic disinvestment in low-income communities" (Bennaton 2015).

Michael Roberts, president of the First Nations Development Institute (Longmont, CO), an organization dedicated to strengthening Native American economies and communities through grants and technical assistance, observes that commercial urban farming is not a good fit for Native-led urban farming efforts. Roberts says most UA efforts on Tribal lands are intentionally run as nonprofit enterprises that focus on helping struggling families gain access to healthy food. Even in the few cases where Native Americans are operating a commercial urban farm, the business model intentionally seeks to use economic activity as a way to drive

community-level transformation. The strategy is institutional—few Native American institutions have the access to capital to invest in commercial urban farms—but also practical: Native communities with high poverty rates are not likely to have the expendable income to support commercial urban farms.

One of the closest-to-commercial Native American-operated urban farms is Dream of Wild Health outside of Minneapolis, MN. The youth education nonprofit includes a production farm that sells food at farm stands and through its CSA. But, as Joy Persall, former Executive Co-Director, says, “We don’t want to grow food just to grow food and make money. The primary impact has to be on the community: to serve, educate, and create change in the community, driven by the community.” (Persall 2016) Despite these important development goals, the farm enterprise at Dream of Wild Health has struggled to secure grants because it did not show a high enough return on investment through the dollars earned from sales.

28.5 Serving Commercial Viability or Supplying Food?

The urban farmer’s strategy to achieve commercial viability requires optimizing crop and financial output from a limited growing area. Eight of 14 case study farms specialized in high-value, quick-succession, niche crops like salad greens and microgreens. Greenhouse-grown sunflower shoots were the “bread and butter” for Rising Pheasant Farm (Detroit, MI, now closed), while Our School at Blair Grocery’s (New Orleans, LA, now closed) Nat Turner said his farm earned \$7 per pound or more for field-grown arugula (Rangarajan and Riordan 2019).

“You may get pushed toward [growing] more expensive, high-end [products],” says Brooklyn Grange’s Ben Flanner, who, like many farmers featured in the case studies, struggles to keep their produce affordable and attractive to lower-income customers while earning enough revenue to sustain the farm, their employees, and themselves (Flanner 2015).

Building an economically viable urban farm often leads to the production of crops that are lucrative and well-suited for sale to restaurants and high-end retailers, who are competing for high-spending customers driving “foodie” culture. In several cases, this requires specializing in one or two rapid cycling crops (e.g., sprouts, herbs, or greens) in the small production area of the farm. Many farms profiled in our report also grow other crops that round out their offerings for farmers markets or CSAs in smaller quantities, but farmers state that it is the high-value crops that subsidize the greater variety for these urban farm businesses. Thus, commercial viability by default often depends on production and sales of niche crops that do not impact local community food needs, access, nutrition, or anti-hunger goals; success ends up being rooted in the privilege that food justice activists seek to dismantle.

The critique is particularly acute for CEA urban farms. These specialize in niche crops like salad greens, tender herbs, and microgreens, which typically cost more than field-grown greens and are sold primarily at retail stores that cater to higher-income customers. Their specialization in high-value crops and ever-advancing

technology has made CEA a darling of investors, who believe the ROI in CEA will be obtained from both crop sales and from a replicable franchise of growing technology that can be deployed in other cities (Brin et al. 2016).

Green City Growers (Cleveland, Ohio) is one example of a CEA social enterprise that is betting its return on investment will better the lives for its member-employees. Most of their employees, who are primarily Black and first-generation immigrants, come from the local area. The employee-owned cooperative grows head lettuce and herbs for the typical high-end markets, but also gives member-employees the opportunity to participate in programs that assist with owning a home, purchasing a car, and investing in their futures. The investment, made collaboratively with other Cleveland businesses, is in individuals and the community, helping to stabilize families and provide jobs that can bring them out of poverty.

28.6 Reframing the Value of UA

The white, U.S.-born urban farmers interviewed for the study were acutely aware of their privilege and its role in supporting the development of their own farms. These farmers are proud of their work, but do not argue that commercial urban agriculture is the only way to farm in the city. In fact, most of these commercial urban farmers struggle with the desire and expectation that they take on myriad social missions. This is in sharp contrast to the lack of demand for rural commercial farmers to do the same. Most commercial urban farms are highly visible to curious local citizens, which can be an opportunity for education but also a burden for time and business management.

For some enterprises, like Green City Growers and Growing Home (Chicago, IL), social mission is embedded in their business models. Growing Home, a non-profit commercial urban farm, uses urban farming as job training to help recently incarcerated or otherwise displaced individuals develop job readiness skills to re-enter the work force (Rangarajan and Riordan 2019, p. 135). Others, like Springdale Farm, adapt and add nonprofit arms to their organization to provide youth or adult education or agriculture experience. Still others, like Brooklyn Grange, create separate nonprofit businesses that can best manage and truly engage a non-farming public about agriculture; since its founding, more than 20,000 students have visited the Grange. This decision allowed the farm management team to focus on the business of growing food without compromising the social impact their farm can offer (Rangarajan and Riordan 2019, p. 177).

Tezozomoc (Tezo), organizer for the now-closed South Central Farm in Los Angeles, dismisses the division between commercial and non-commercial urban farming: both, he says, are the result of a failed political and economic system (Tezozomoc 2016). South Central Farm became famous for the manner in which it was eventually closed, a symbol of local government's privileging of whiteness and wealth over community needs. From Tezo's perspective, by encouraging resource

competition and granting resources to one type of farm (commercial) over another (nonprofit farms, farming for one's own consumption), it is the grantor that decides which farms succeed and which farms do not. Even with the best intentions, resource providers, including local governments, can further entrench the structural racism and disinvestment they may be trying to mitigate.

The full promise of urban food production and community transformation can only be realized when people in power recognize the value of diverse approaches to UA and create intentional policies to support that diversity. Acknowledging that UA will never entirely feed cities, urban farms' greatest output may be the way they transform communities. The question of who farms will determine how a community transforms. Whiteness in urban agriculture ingrains the idea that urban farming is for a privileged few who benefit from the legacy of racist urban planning policies and practices. The transformation, then, is toward gentrification and embedded white supremacy. But when Black and brown communities farm, the transformation is political, upending white supremacy through self-determination and self-reliance that is the foundation of food justice and food sovereignty.

Therefore, to unravel the historic and systemic injustice that makes UA both possible (from a white farmer's land access perspective) and necessary (from a Black and brown community's food sovereignty perspective), planners and policymakers must rethink how they value UA. In valuing and supporting community transformation, local government officials must necessarily improve access to land, capital, and resources, and acknowledge and celebrate that community self-determination is the highest and best return on investment for urban agriculture.

28.7 Recommendations

Most urban farmers interviewed for this study, no matter their racial or ethnic background, mention that race and racial inequality pervade and destabilize UA, making it excessively difficult for local Black, brown, or Indigenous residents to enter the profession. Implicit bias pervades extant agricultural policies, including municipal UA policies.

Promotion of agriculture types and scales that require privileged access to resources (e.g., capital, investments, loans, education, and political connections) undermines lower-resourced people, including people of color struggling to overcome the systemic racism of our nation's institutions. The below recommendations underscore strategies needed to bridge the racial divide in urban agriculture.

28.8 Recommendation: Ensure Local Plans and Funding for UA Engage and Respond to Community Input

Local planners, policymakers, and funders are not necessarily UA experts, though their decisions determine the course of UA in local communities. Robust and culturally sensitive community-engagement processes, while cumbersome and time-consuming, build trust among community members who are rightfully distrustful of institutions and systems that discriminate against them. Community participation in the design of UA programs and policies ensures that proposed UA activities best fit the needs of the surrounding communities. Engage directly with marginalized or underrepresented communities, including by partnering with Black and brown community-based organizations that advocate on their behalf, to solicit recommendations on how to design or modify programs that promote UA and ensure access to programs by all residents.

Many UA programs and incentive zones target areas with a lot of vacant land and few traditional economic development prospects. Though Rustbelt cities like Detroit, Cleveland, and Buffalo are proving that this can result in viable commercial urban farms, it is important that residents' voices are leading the conversation, says Detroit planner Kathryn Underwood (2016). Participatory planning processes that treat local residents and business-owners as partners and key informants in redevelopment planning can ensure new land use, including UA, is neighborhood-appropriate.

Kim Scott, city planner for the City of Cleveland agrees. After the 2008 housing foreclosure crisis left thousands of homes and properties vacant and abandoned in Cleveland, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) authorized \$9.4 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds to knock down blighted homes and provide incentives for people to purchase vacant land for creative reuse. But, says Scott (2015), "in areas that have been disinvested, people who see opportunities to get funding to support projects are not necessarily reflective of the people living in challenged neighborhoods. As the city considered applications for program funds, it looked at whether applications were submitted by residents living in close proximity to the area."

Scott and other Cleveland planners started talking with neighborhood residents about redevelopment, including UA. "While some of us on staff thought that people probably were not aligned with food movement conversation, we were pleasantly surprised that some were," says Scott (2015). This helped inform their planning direction, and the development of the Urban Agriculture Innovation Zone in the city's Kinsman neighborhood.

28.9 Recommendation: Conduct a Critical Analysis of Policies to Ensure that Racial Inequality in Access to Land and Resources Is Addressed when Creating New Urban Agriculture Policies

Land access and secure land tenure are two of the most critical conditions for urban farms to thrive. While land access is difficult for many farmers, Black farmers have been systematically removed from their land (Daniel 2013). Access to available vacant urban land parcels is too often limited to those prospective farmers and farm managers (mostly white) who are already well-resourced and politically well-connected. Meanwhile, Black farmers report greater difficulty accessing land in urban areas (Guzman 2016).

A critical analysis of urban agriculture land policies could include land inventories. City planning agencies and other departments have inventories of land that include demographic, economic, residential, and environmental characteristics. Inventories should be judged for their agricultural suitability (e.g., zoning, historical use, utility connectivity, proximity to other buildings, contiguity with other vacant parcels, etc.) and optimal sites should be specifically promoted to Black and brown farmers. This is particularly true in Black and brown-majority neighborhoods where poverty and land vacancy would otherwise make it easy for well-resourced (and likely-white) farmers to get first access to land.

To ensure that vacant lots or other available land for farming are promoted to all aspiring farmers and avoid perceptions of bias, municipal governments and planning organizations should consider some of the following practices:

1. Evaluate existing UA land policies and requirements for obtaining vacant land parcels and determine whether or not they eliminate barriers for low-income, low-resource, or otherwise disadvantaged residents most impacted by food system inequities.
2. Evaluate whether information about UA policies and land access opportunities is distributed in a way that ensures fair and equitable access, including language (simplicity, available in multiple languages) and distribution (not only available on a website).
3. Collaboratively design programs addressing equity in land access with Black and brown farmers and communities, urban farmer advocates, and the local, state, or federal agencies that direct and monitor such programs.
4. Compile an inventory of all available vacant or underutilized land that might be used for food production, using the resources of municipal planning agencies and other departments.
5. Examine available vacant land inventories for their agricultural suitability (e.g., zoning, historical use, utility connectivity, proximity to other buildings, contiguity with other vacant parcels).
6. Promote and facilitate access to suitable agricultural sites to long-term residents in neighborhoods where parcels are available.

28.10 Recommendation: Focus Resources and Grant Funding in Support of all Benefits (Social, Economic, Ecological) of Urban Agriculture and Promote Sustainable Development of Urban Agriculture

Most jurisdictions have programs that support small businesses, community-based organizations, or local organizers and volunteers. Local officials should consider the maximum extent to which these resources can be used to support UA efforts, including but not limited to land banking, adopt-a-lot programs, small business grants, street front improvement grants, forgivable loan programs, stormwater programs, soil improvement and conservation programs, and general greening programs. Evaluate the extent to which these programs rely on quantifiable metrics (e.g., dollar-value returns) or otherwise create obstacles for urban growers (e.g., having title to land, proof of tax payments) and remove barriers to maximize their use by UA advocates.

28.11 Recommendation: Recognize that Urban Farms Can Drive Neighborhood Revitalization and Increase the Tax Base, with Positive and Negative Consequences to Local Community Residents

Beyond their direct and indirect social and ecological benefits, urban farms may also drive neighborhood revitalization. Community gardens were employed in the second half of the twentieth century for similar reasons: connecting neighbors, increasing the presence of “eyes on the street” to ward off crime, inspiring neighborhood beautification projects, and providing a space for overall social capital cultivation. These effects can make neighborhoods more attractive to other businesses or new residents, particularly those who view an urban farm as a valuable part of the bundle of goods and services one “purchases” when renting or buying a property. Thus, urban farms can be a benefit similar to parks, grocery stores, or good schools.

As such, urban farms, including those with social missions, risk contributing to gentrification and pushing out the people who started farming (because of desire or necessity) or the residents that the farms were meant to serve. Urban planners, community groups, and future urban farmers may consider working together to site new urban farms to best achieve the outcomes of all groups.

28.12 What Do Urban Farmers of Color Want?

Urban agriculture farmer and leader Karen Washington presented a list of policy changes that would improve UA opportunities for diverse farmers at an UA symposium hosted by George Washington University's Food Institute on September 30, 2016. Among that list she named the following where planners can play a role:

1. Designate specific land in cities to be protected specifically for UA into the future.
2. Help create micro-food hubs in the most impoverished neighborhoods that lack supermarkets, and create a food economy based on entrepreneurship rather than charity. Food hubs can be equipped with infrastructure such as commercial kitchens and refrigeration.
3. Increase investment in commercial soil-based urban farms and community gardens, to support entrepreneurship and small business development.
4. Support programs that train urban farmers, including those that train them to become rural farmers.
5. Create food business incubators in neighborhoods for development of value-added products from urban-grown food.

Through comprehensive plans, corrective zoning, planned economic clusters, and collaboration with other local agencies to support programming, planners have the tools to achieve these five recommendations that will support UA and equitable food system development. Ultimately, Washington has one simple request for people in white-led and white-dominated institutions as they consider actions to support UA: "Ask us what we want."

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Molly Riordan (MRP, Cornell University) is a food systems planner, researcher, and value-chain coordinator with a focus on food systems policies that promote improved health for individuals and the environment. In addition to urban agriculture, her work investigates this potential via institutional food procurement, restorative agriculture, and land conservation. Most recently, in addition to her work with the Cornell Small Farms Program, Riordan is the Eastern Regional Program Manager for Healthy Food in Health Care at Health Care Without Harm and is Chair of the American Planning Association Food Systems Division.

Anusuya Rangarajan serves on the faculty of Horticulture at Cornell University conducting grant-funded research on sustainable vegetable production and small farm viability. She directs the Cornell Small Farms Program (www.smallfarms.cornell.edu) which hosts many projects focused on new farm development (with customized efforts for military veterans and BIPOC farmers), scale-appropriate production, business and marketing, and farmer well-being. She applied the lens of viable small-scale farming to research the conditions that allow commercial urban farms to thrive. These findings are published in “The Promise of Urban Agriculture” and inform curricula for farmers, planners and policy makers interested in urban agriculture.

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Chapter 29

Planning [for Urban Agriculture] as Public Nurturance



Samina Raja , Marcia Caton Campbell , and Alexandra Judelsohn 

Abstract This concluding chapter of a book honoring the late Jerome Kaufman, an urban planning scholar who drew attention to food systems, highlights the power of urban agriculture as a lever for promoting equity in cities. The authors argue for the idea of planning as public nurturance – an approach that can be illustrated through urban agriculture. Planning as public nurturance has several features. Planning as public nurturance is a value-explicit process that centers an ethic of care, especially protecting the interests of publics that are marginalized. It builds the capacity of marginalized groups to authentically co-design and participate in planning/policy processes. Such a planning approach requires that progress toward equitable outcomes is consistently evaluated through accountability measures. And, finally, such an approach requires attention to structural and institutional inequities. Addressing these four elements is more likely to create a condition under which urban agriculture may be used as a lever in the planning and development of more just and equitable cities.

Keywords Public nurturance · Public interests · Capacity building · Accountability · Institutional design · Ethic of care · Jerry Kaufman

When faced with a quandary, Jerry Kaufman’s former students and colleagues are fond of asking ourselves WWJD, or, What Would Jerry Do? As the book illustrates, Jerry always had an eye on the future, observing trends and asking questions before others did (Raja 2024). Jerry was among the earliest planning scholars, with his

S. Raja (✉)

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: sraja@buffalo.edu

M. Caton Campbell

Rooted, Madison, WI, USA
e-mail: marcia@rootedwi.org

A. Judelsohn

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York, Buffalo, NY, USA
e-mail: ajudelso@buffalo.edu

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colleague Kami Pothukuchi, to draw attention to the importance of the food system in planning. Jerry embodied what it means to be a visionary thinker, but his visioning wasn't purely theoretical. He translated his visions into action. In his foreword to this book, Dan Kaufman recalls that Jerry “embodied the Wisconsin Idea, the century-old ethos that places a moral obligation on the University of Wisconsin’s faculty to serve the citizens of the entire state” (Kaufman 2024). Jerry nudged planners to consider the ethical dimensions of their choices. Indeed, he was instrumental in advocating for the development and adoption of the American Planning Association’s statement of Ethical Principles in Planning in 1992 (<https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicalprinciples/>). This statement of ethical principles was the precursor to the current American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (<https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode/>), which offers aspirational principles and a set of guiding rules for practicing planners in the United States today.

True to his calling as a planner, Jerry was a pragmatist and a strategist, connecting opportunities to needs. Importantly, as a planner, Jerry was committed to building the capacity of individuals and institutions for the greater good. He urged his former students and colleagues to do the same. He was extraordinarily persuasive. Bailkey and Greenstein, his advisee and colleague, respectively, describe Jerry’s approach: “Kaufman was fond of using clear and simple metaphors to first clarify a concept in his mind, then present the concept to others.” They note that in one of his reports, Jerry “summarized the most common impediments to urban agriculture as six general concerns, intentionally phrased – in a very Kaufman-esque maneuver – to represent a “devil’s advocate: position against the practice....” (Bailkey and Greenstein 2024). Jerry was also one of the early adopters of conflict resolution techniques in planning pedagogy and practice, applying these techniques to the wicked problems planners encounter, almost as a matter of routine.

The book *Planning for Equitable Urban Agriculture in the USA: A New Ethic in City Building*, compiled by 50+ co-authors including Jerry Kaufman’s colleagues, students, and students of students, is a testament to his legacy of nurturance. Knitting together Jerry’s scholarship, teachings, and actions on ethics and urban agriculture, we argue for framing planning as *public nurturance*. This chapter describes the concept of public nurturance – and illustrates how planning for urban agriculture, in particular, may serve as a lever for promoting varied public interests, especially of those who are marginalized.

Public nurturance extends the idea of nurturance – or provisioning of material and non-material nourishment – to advance the well-being of publics that are marginalized in society. Jerry frequently reminded his students that protecting and promoting the public interest is the primary duty of planners. Urban agriculture offers multiple potential pathways for promoting public interests: access to healthier foods, greener spaces, ecological services, community and organizing spaces, and one’s control over the food system, for example.

Public nurturance demands that planning be understood as an explicitly value-laden proposition that **protects the interests of the marginalized**. Thus, public interest or collective well-being cannot be advanced if particular groups of people

are precluded from leading full and dignified lives for any reason, including by virtue of their identity or membership in a particular socio-economic group. Public nurturance requires **building the capacity** of marginalized individuals and groups so they may co-design and claim the benefits/opportunities available through public institutions. Public nurturance also requires that actions and outcomes be evaluated to ensure **accountability**, and, subsequently, resources, plans, and policies be redirected as necessary. Public nurturance requires **co-designing equitable institutions** with people so that finite resources are targeted toward those who have been historically and are currently marginalized.

29.1 Planning as Public Nurturance Protects Interests of Those Who Are Marginalized

One way of describing planning is as an exercise in using reason to protect the public interest for current and future generations (Brenman and Sanchez 2012). However, a vast body of scholarship on city building suggests that planning in the United States has fallen far short of this ideal. Given that planning is an undertheorized field (Born 2024), planners have also been misled by framing the public interest as a unitary concept, sometimes with terrible consequences for those disenfranchised by their access to socio-economic or political power. Planning has been implicated in perpetuating racial segregation, economic disparities, displacement/dispossession, and a host of other socio-economic injustices (see, e.g., Rothstein 2017; Stein 2019). Scholars have also critiqued the neoliberal turn in city building by illustrating that planning has been increasingly complicit in advancing private development interests. Too often, the city has emerged as a site of profit making. Most pertinent to this book, many of these planning and policy approaches, by neglecting the multiplicity of public interests, have laid the ground for food apartheid in urban settings (Raja et al. 2008; Reese 2019). In Buffalo, NY, for example, predominantly Black neighborhoods are underserved by traditional, large-format supermarket retail compared to predominantly white neighborhoods even when controlling for income and other factors (Raja et al. 2008) – a spatial pattern that aligns with historic redlining patterns in the city. In the same predominantly Black neighborhoods, the city’s only Black farmer has struggled to acquire land for their urban farm, while, in an example of elite capture, private development projects in the same area have benefited from public incentive programs.

Planning as public nurturance would require re-imagining an entirely different future for US cities, one that examines Gottlieb’s (2022) pathways for change toward a “care-centered politics” in the process of reclaiming planning’s role as balancing, protecting, and promoting the many public interests that exist in cities. It would require understanding whose interests are routinely marginalized, and protecting these interests through structural reforms. Public nurturance requires care for present and future generations – and promoting such intergenerational well-being requires acknowledging intergenerational trauma.

For the sake of a thought exercise, envision a hot real estate market where planners are considering using a 30-acre, publicly owned land parcel currently leased out to an urban farmer for a 5-year term (the lease is ending). Consider three fictitious (but typical) choices that city planners face: (1) renewal of the lease of land to the urban farmer for a farm, (2) a mixed-use development proposal brought forth by a developer, or (3) preparation of the site for future affordable housing development per the city's (somewhat dated) comprehensive plan. In choice 1, renewal of the urban farm's lease could ensure provision of green infrastructure in the neighborhood, helping to mitigate the effects of changing climate by managing increased rainfall. The farm may also serve as a site of food production. Choice 2, a mixed-use development with housing and retail stores, may increase housing supply and access to services. Choice 3 requires city planners to prepare the site exclusively for residential housing development to increase affordable housing supply.

On the surface, all three choices present planners with a somewhat technical land use decision. However, each of the three scenarios may have hidden institutional arrangements, agents (and beneficiaries), and power asymmetries that may position one or all of the choices as no better (or worse) future for the neighborhood residents. All of the choices may have spillover effects. In choice 1, the presence of the urban farm may increase the amenity value of the neighborhood, which may over time translate into increased property values for adjacent properties. In choice 1, even the ostensible support for urban agriculture is not without complications. One might ask a series of questions to probe who benefits (or loses). Who does the urban farm serve? What if the farm is owned and operated by an entrepreneur who does not live in the neighborhood? Who does the farm sell its produce to? What if the farm grows and sells only high-end herbs to a high-priced restaurant (and not produce food for the local residents)? What benefits does the urban farm offer the neighborhood compared to, say, an affordable housing development? Choices 2 and 3 are complex as well. The resulting development may result in a discrete increase in property tax structures for a revenue-hungry city (setting aside for a minute that the new development may demand increased municipal services, and result in the city having to expend increased public funds). As prices (and rents) and property taxes increase, residents, especially those with limited incomes, may be displaced to more affordable neighborhoods.

Agents with power (or proximity to power) may engage in – and influence – the design of planning institutions, processes, and outcomes of all three technical choices we have described. This power to wield an influence on institutions plays out in planning for urban agriculture because of information asymmetry between various publics – and between the public and the city government – about something as straightforward as how to access a vacant parcel for food production in a city. Elite capture of available resources deepens inequitable access to urban agriculture resources such as land. The trajectory of institutional arrangements and processes is set well before the outcomes see public light. Debates surrounding

gentrification, for example, emerge after development projects begin to surface in neighborhoods – well after the underlying land use plans have been adopted that set the stage for development patterns (and often without the full engagement of long-time residents of a neighborhood).

The heart of the matter is who identifies the public interest(s) for a particular neighborhood, and how a particular planning choice protects the interests of those who are marginalized. Failure to design a planning process where residents have a say from the outset – and throughout the process – creates the longstanding and well-known false dichotomy that pits community gardens or other green spaces against other land uses such as affordable housing (as outlined in choice 3). Notable examples include New York City’s history of selling off community gardens to land developers (<http://emeraldreview.com/new-york-citys-history-of-uprooting-community-gardens/>) and the destruction – and hopeful eventual restoration – of South Central Farm in Los Angeles (<https://www.southcentralfarm.org/>). When residents, planners, affordable housing developers, and urban agriculture practitioners are able to come together, they can co-design new residential developments in ways that meets multiple public interests, with urban agriculture practitioners and members of marginalized communities as part of the planning and design team. The result is vibrant, co-created community spaces like Madison’s Troy Gardens (Lipman and Caton Campbell 2024) and the Denver Housing Authority’s projects (Cohen et al. 2024).

Urban agriculture becomes part of a community’s or a neighborhood’s permanent fabric through a process of negotiation and change that planning would do well to emulate. Urban agriculture practitioners take community interests, needs, and cultural foodways and traditions into account on an annual basis, through mechanisms as simple as customer feedback on crop choices and as significant as how they expand their farms to multiple sites, and expressed in various physical forms (e.g., community gardens, educational farm, production farm) appropriate to the surrounding neighborhood (Riordan and Rangarajan 2024). Urban agriculture growers often include aspects of social enterprise in their projects, creating community capacity building, educational, and economic development opportunities for community members – an undervalued aspect of urban agriculture that is important to historically and currently marginalized communities. Creating social enterprise opportunities constitutes public nurturance, which planners would do well to recognize as they plan for urban agriculture (which is so much more than food production alone).

The point here is that planning as public nurturance requires that those who live in neighborhoods and cities must be full participants in envisioning the future of their own communities – and that this future must protect the interests of those who are marginalized. Technical decisions, such as those about land use with or without urban agriculture, too, must protect the collective interest of those who are marginalized.

29.2 Planning as Public Nurturance Reduces Information Asymmetry and Builds Capacity in Marginalized Communities

Increasing codification of planning rules and regulations in cities makes planning even more opaque to urban residents, businesses, civic groups, and, yes, urban farmers. City governments (and funders) seek ‘shovel-ready’ projects. Setting aside the irony that, in planning-speak, shovel-ready has nothing to do with farming, calls for project readiness overlook the varying capacity of urban agriculture practitioners to navigate inaccessible municipal development and policy processes. Urban farmers find their operations require them to interface with multiple city agencies from zoning and permitting to licensing, and find it especially difficult to navigate the bureaucratic maze and mechanisms of city government. Large-scale builders and developers, on the other hand, have project managers whose job includes interfacing with city government. In this case, information asymmetry between urban growers and large-scale builders about policy processes fuels elite capture of available public resources.

For their part, many city governments have created a streamlined review and permitting process for developers – but we have yet to come across a municipal government that has offered a ‘one-stop shop for urban agriculture’ in their city. The closest some cities have gotten is offering briefs or handouts for urban growers to help them navigate a city’s land use regulatory processes. Expecting farmers to submit ‘shovel ready’ land use or other plans is akin to expecting planning directors to know what produce is in season in their region.

Along with discharging their technical duties, planners who practice public nurturance have to invest in critical public education about *how planning works* in their particular jurisdiction. In a review of literature, Ramos-Gerena (2023) writes about the limited scholarship on critical food policy literacy, a gap that has severe consequences for urban growers who find municipal policy a hindrance to their work. The frame of public nurturance shifts the onus to planners, and not the public, to decode how planning works with respect to urban agriculture. Decoding processes that control publicly held material resources, such as land or grant dollars or loan funds, is especially important to reach smaller-scale, community-led efforts to plan and transform neighborhoods. Decoding and making navigable urban land acquisition and management processes in cities is especially important for urban agriculture to reduce information asymmetry between urban growers and other users competing for public resources such as land.

Academic curricula, too, must transform to embrace “equitable, just, and compassionate food systems pedagogy” (Caton Campbell and Judelsohn 2024) that trains future planners to function as capacity builders, catalysts for and animators of ideas. Building the capacity of a range of community actors around planning topics is more likely to result in mutually reinforcing ways of engaging in city-building processes, including around urban agriculture.

29.3 Planning as Public Nurturance Complements Implementation with Accountability

That planning and plans must result in action is a well-understood, if poorly enacted, principle in professional planning practice. City governments must also be held accountable — indeed, should hold themselves accountable — when their actions (or inaction) do not achieve the collective interests of the marginalized. The absence of accountability not only frays public trust but is an extraordinarily inefficient way of using and monitoring finite public resources. When planners and city governments fail to act or assure outcomes that protect the public interest, people understandably take matters into their own hands.

The rise of urban agriculture projects in the United States (Morales and DeMarsh 2024), in many ways, illustrates people’s cynicism about their local (or other forms of) government to ‘fix’ neighborhoods. Multiple authors in this book and elsewhere have illustrated that Black, brown, and immigrant communities take it upon themselves to provide mutual care and services in the face of poorly run (or missing) publicly run programs and services in cities (Raja 2020).

Again, consider Buffalo, NY, as an example. In this city, the failure of municipal (and other forms of) government to invest in its historically Black neighborhoods made national headlines in 2022, in the wake of a massacre by a white supremacist in a grocery store that resulted in 10 people being shot dead. The city’s Black neighborhoods, which lie east of Main Street, have seen negligible public investment over the decades. Relevant to urban food systems, predominantly Black neighborhoods in the region have less than half the share of supermarkets compared to predominantly white neighborhoods, even when controlling for the wealth of neighborhoods and other factors. In the neighborhood where the shooter executed his evil plans, there was/is only one supermarket where residents shopped, a structural deficit that the shooter recognized and used to his advantage to target and kill Black residents. It is important to note that though public policy has failed to protect the public interest (e.g., food access) in the neighborhood, Black-led organizations and coalitions have continued to provide collective care (Griffin et al. 2024). Urban Fruits and Veggies, a Black-led urban farm founded by Allison DeHoney, grows fresh produce but has struggled to secure land for expanding its operations. Buffalo Freedom Gardens, a front yard/backyard garden program launched in the wake of COVID by Gail Wells, promotes self-sustenance and liberation in Black Buffalo. African Heritage Food Coop, a Black-led food cooperative founded by Alexander Wright, sells fresh food and builds Black ownership of the food system. Many of these organizations went into overdrive in the wake of the shooting, forming a coalition that delivered fresh food and groceries to traumatized families. Of course, all levels of government have stepped up in the wake of the shooting, but their failure to act affirmatively for decades and their lack of accountability for that failure does not engender trust. Community advocates recognize that the absence of policy to address the Black community’s aspirations is, in fact, *de facto* policy.

A shift to planning as public nurturance would require cities not only to act, but to evaluate the short-term and long-term impacts of their (in)actions on public interest outcomes for marginalized peoples. In a hopeful turn, in Erie County, NY, where Buffalo is located, the county government has assembled a task force of multiple agencies, including planning and public health, to learn about and respond to the frayed urban food infrastructure in Buffalo in the wake of the massacre. Planning departments could conduct post-hoc evaluation of public policy (in)actions in partnership with community organizations, multiple public agencies, such as public health or social services, or academic partners that monitor and measure public interest outcomes such as health inequities (Mui et al. 2018). Accountable city governments — and planning departments — would embrace post hoc evaluations, and pivot their plans and programs to promote the interests of the marginalized.

29.4 Public Nurturance Planning Centers Equity and Ethics in the Design of Institutions

Scholars suggest that planning practitioners face ethical and emotional dissonance in their work (Lauria and Long 2017). The gaps between individual ethical stance, workplace culture, and the professional code of ethics makes planning a difficult exercise for practitioners. Of course, some planners find creative and strategic ways to *individually* advance equity-centric planning within the constraints of their planning institutions/organizations. For example, one senior planner in a city advised a resident advocacy organization about the intricacies of planning and budgeting, enabling the civic group to counter a development proposal in their neighborhood. Other planners are redefining planning as more expansive, putting their planning skills in the service of work that is more aligned with their values but outside of formal municipal planning (e.g., working with an advocacy organization). An early career planner worked with a not-for-profit organization to facilitate community gardens in a city with abundant vacant land (this required the individual to oppose the city's policies on land management). Still others find the ethical dissonance within the neoliberal state too much to bear and are simply exiting the profession.

Among the three groups of planners we describe above, the *individual* planning practitioner is often expected to navigate public interest quandaries and dilemmas, and exercise an individual ethic of care. The expectation for individual planners to exhibit an ethical stance is, of course, welcome. However, the hyper-focus on the individual responsibility of planners detracts attention away from the institutions and processes — the structures — *within* which individual planners make decisions (ethical or not). Indeed, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) expects individual planners to comply with a code of ethics, but no commensurate professional expectations exist for an institutional ethic of care (e.g., departments of planning) or for policies (e.g., comprehensive plans). An individualized ethic of care, thus, masks the necessity for structural or collective ethics of care. If the larger

structures, rules, codes, taxonomies, and power hierarchies within (and outside) of a municipal government circumscribe the actions of individual planners, what good is individuals' adherence to the AICP Code of Ethics?

Urban agriculture is, in fact, a portal into this conundrum. In its narrow fiscal hierarchy of land use, city governments do not consider urban agriculture to be the 'highest and best' use of land (Vitiello 2024). Urban agriculture advocates do. Often situated on land owned by community land trusts, conservation land trusts, or non-profit organizations that do not pay property taxes, urban agriculture will not generate the same level of property taxes as, say, a condominium development (the net fiscal impact of urban agriculture for municipalities may, in fact, be beneficial compared to the condos. Though urban agriculture generates less in property taxes, it also demands less in public services such as schools, police, etc.). Still, so long as property taxes, rather than the full suite of benefits from urban agriculture highlighted throughout this book, remain the primary (or sometimes sole) metric to gauge which land uses belong in a city, no amount of ethical decision-making by an individual planner can help advance urban agriculture. In addition, developers typically *impose* a project on a neighborhood (or offer token community input opportunities such as, "Do you like Concept A or Concept B better?") after project concepts and features are already decided upon. Urban agriculture, on the other hand, becomes part of a community's or neighborhood's permanent fabric (or so we hope) through a process of continual negotiation and change. A more equitable institutional response would suggest that cities use their full suite of policies, from laws to budgets, to invest in urban agriculture to promote the interests of the marginalized. As chapters in this book illustrate, the primary way that planners and local governments engage with urban agriculture is through regulation (e.g., zoning and permitting) (Raja et al. 2024). A public nurturance approach would seek to use all possible institutional mechanisms to maximize urban agriculture's benefits for the collective interests of people, especially those who are marginalized. Public lands could be made available for community land trusts led by and for Black and brown farmers, for example. Public budgets could be redeployed away from police expenditures – callously called public safety – to investments in urban agriculture programs or tool-lending programs. Public resources, such as compost generated by a municipal composting program, could be made available to rebuild depleted soils at urban farms and community gardens (which provide green infrastructure services). Large-scale development projects could be subject to a food (equity) impact assessment rather than the narrower (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999), but frequently used, fiscal impact assessment, to gauge their impacts on people's well-being. In a nutshell, an *equity*-centric assessment would focus on documenting the impact on those who are marginalized.

Local governments will not ultimately enact lasting structural and institutional reforms if individual planners, especially those in leadership positions, do not lead from within. Jerry Kaufman referred to this approach as planners functioning like "guerrillas in the bureaucracy" (Needleman and Needleman 1974). Indeed, landmark studies of planners' ethics by Jerry and his colleague Beth Howe identified planners who drew on their values, technical expertise, and political acumen to

advocate for change from within (Howe and Kaufman 1979, 1981); some of this change we would describe as institutional. Jerry was a consequentialist, according to Beth Howe (who distinguishes her own focus on the inherent rightness or wrongness of processes from his more outcome-oriented approach). We suspect, though we never had this conversation with Jerry, that his preoccupation with equitable outcomes was rooted in his observation of continued structural and institutional oppression of particular peoples despite planners' adherence to 'good' planning processes. Indeed, even when individual planners act ethically, the institutional structures they occupy or represent, can continue to inflict harm. Worse, an ethical planner's presence may even be used to mask institutional harm. Equitable outcomes require ethical principles be demonstrated by and acted upon by both individual planners and planning institutions. Planning [for urban agriculture] as public nurturance departs from the prevalent individualist view by suggesting that questions of equity and ethics ought to be foregrounded in the institutional taxonomies that shape planning practice – and, indeed, planners' actions.

Jerry Kaufman would expect nothing less of us.

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Samina Raja is a professor of food systems planning and the founder and director of the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab (UB Food Lab) at the University at Buffalo. Her scholarship, teaching, and practice focuses on the role of people-led policy and planning on promoting food and health equity.

Marcia Caton Campbell is Executive Director of Rooted, a Madison (WI) urban agriculture and food systems organization. She is coauthor of *Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places, PAS Report No. 563* (American Planning Association, 2011), with Kimberley Hodgson and Martin Bailkey. A Past Chair of the American Planning Association's Food Systems Division, Caton Campbell was previously a faculty member in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She holds an MCRP and a PhD in city and regional planning from The Ohio State University.

Alexandra Judelsohn is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University at Buffalo. Her scholarship explores the role of local governments in the U.S. refugee resettlement program and, broadly, her interests include how the built environment impacts health, particularly for immigrant and refugee populations. Judelsohn holds a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University at Buffalo and a PhD from the University at Michigan.

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