

**EXAMINING THE BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM
PLANNING IN THE GEORGIA BASIN:
OF PLANNERS, POLITICS AND THE PUBLIC**

by

KRISTINA MICHELE EVELYN BOURIS

B.Sc., The University of Victoria, 2000

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Planning

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

January 2005

© Kristina Bouris, 2005

ABSTRACT

Given its inter-disciplinary nature and community-oriented perspective, the field of planning is well poised to help create more sustainable, local food systems. Yet the food system has been virtually ignored by the planning profession (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). Such ignorance is puzzling given the enormous importance of the food system to urban sustainability, a central issue of planning practice. Drawing on the theory of urban political ecology, I propose food system planning as an approach to designing and implementing sustainable urban systems. This thesis identifies the barriers and opportunities that exist to the emerging field of food system planning. Thirteen interviews were conducted with local government planners in the Georgia Basin region of British Columbia. Two central themes emerged from the research: first, political, public and institutional will are major factors in helping and/or hindering food system planning, a finding that supports urban political ecology theorists who contend that sustainable development is as much about governance as it is about ecology, community or economy. Second, food system planning faces a major barrier in that it is perceived as lying outside the roles and responsibilities of planners, a barrier attributed to a dualistic view of planning that sees agriculture as separate from the food system, social planning as separate from land use planning, and the domain of the public sector as separate from the domain of the market. These dualisms must be overcome if urban sustainability strategies, including food system planning, are to be successfully implemented. While the future of food system planning is not without significant challenges, the experiences of participants provided valuable insight into how the food system might be more comprehensively inserted into the local government planning agenda. Strategies are presented for advancing the field of food system planning in British Columbia, including recommendations for practice, policy and further study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS	III
LIST OF TABLES	V
LIST OF FIGURES	VI
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VII
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Problem Statement	1
1.2 Research Purpose and Objectives	7
1.3 Thesis Structure	7
CHAPTER 2: URBAN POLITICAL ECOLOGY AS A SUSTAINABILITY THEORY	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 The Intellectual Roots of Urban Political Ecology	9
2.3 Urban Political Ecology Theory	11
2.4 Implications for the Design of Sustainable Urban Systems	11
2.5 Implications for Urban Governance	15
2.6 Implications for Planning	16
2.7 Conclusion	18
CHAPTER 3: THE CASE FOR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS	19
3.1 Introduction	19
3.2 The Food System	19
3.3 The Dominant Food System	20
3.4 Local Food Systems	22
3.5 Critiques of Local Food Systems	26
3.6 Conclusion	30
CHAPTER 4: FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING AS AN URBAN POLITICAL ECOLOGY STRATEGY	31
4.1 Introduction	31
4.2 Food System Planning	31
4.3 Implications for Governance	32
4.4 Food System Planning: Guiding Principles	33
4.5 Role of the Planner	34
4.6 Potential Barriers to Local Food System Planning	35
4.7 Other Potential Barriers	38
4.8 Conclusion	39

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY	40
5.1 Introduction	40
5.2 Geographic Location	40
5.3 Qualitative Research Methods	42
5.4 Why Study This Topic?	43
5.5 Methodological Assumptions	45
5.6 Research Process	47
5.7 Conclusion	54
 CHAPTER 6: PERCEPTIONS OF THE BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING	 55
6.1 Introduction	55
6.2 Types of Food System-Related Planning Activities in Which Participants Are Involved	55
6.3 Participants' Perceptions of the Barriers to Food System Planning	59
6.4 Additional Barriers Cited by the Participants	64
6.5 Conditions that Enable Food System Planning	69
6.6 Is There a Need for Planners to be More Involved in Food System-Related Planning Activities?	72
6.7 Is There a Need for Specific Focus on Food System Planning within the Field of Planning?	77
6.8 Participants' Definitions of the Attributes of a Sustainable Food System	79
6.9 Conclusion	81
 CHAPTER 7: PLANNERS, POLITICS AND THE PUBLIC: A DISCUSSION OF THE BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING	 83
7.1 Introduction	83
7.2 Involvement of Planners in Food System Issues	83
7.2 Barriers and Opportunities to Food System Planning	89
7.3 Newly Identified Barriers: The Role of Governance	90
7.4 The Governance Context of Planning	96
7.5 Newly Identified Barriers: The Responsibilities of Planners and the Role of Conceptual Dualisms	100
7.5 Moving Away From the Status Quo	110
7.6 Conclusion	111
 CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 112
8.1 Conclusions	112
8.2 Recommendations for Comprehensively Inserting the Food System into Planning Practice	116
8.3 Suggestions for Further Research	121
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 123
 APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CONDITIONS THAT ENABLE FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING	 134
 APPENDIX B: THE ATTRIBUTES OF A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM: IN THE PARTICIPANTS' OWN WORDS	 136

LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants	52
Table 6.1 Participants' Involvement in Food System Planning Activities	57
Table 6.2 Participants' Perceptions of the Barriers to Food System Planning	60
Table 6.3 Participants' Perceptions of the Conditions that Enable Food System Planning	70
Table 6.4 Participants' Perceptions About the Need For Increased Involvement of Planners in Food System Activities	73
Table 6.5 Participants' perceptions about the need for specific focus on food system planning	77
Table 6.6 Participants' Perceptions of the Attributes of a Sustainable Food System	80

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 5.1 The Georgia Basin Region of British Columbia	41
Figure 5.2 Spatial Distribution of Participants Through the Georgia Basin	52

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is the outcome of a community effort. It originates in the inspiring work of many friends and colleagues in the field of sustainable agriculture and food systems in British Columbia, Argentina and Australia. To my colleagues at Growing Green who generously provided funding for this research, thank you. To the City of Vancouver Food Policy Staff Team, I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to be part of such a hard-working and committed group- and to witness food system planning in action. Particular thanks to Wendy Mendes for helpful thesis suggestions and great discussions along the way. Many thanks to the planners who participated in this research and enthusiastically shared their experiences.

I wish to extend special thanks to my committee members, Tony Dorcey and Evan Fraser, for your encouragement, your prompt, constructive feedback and for going well beyond the call of duty to ensure that this thesis was birthed before the real baby arrived.

I owe much to an incredible network of classmates, friends and family who provided well-timed walks, phone calls and words of encouragement from afar. Thanks especially everyone in the Bouris and Scott families- that I pulled this off is a testament to your support.

Above all, my thanks are for Ian Scott. This thesis would not have been written without your insight, ideas, editing, understanding and unfailing encouragement. I have no words to adequately express how much I owe to you.

And to the baby that patiently grew inside me with every stroke of the keyboard, and for whom I am inspired to imagine a better world...this is for you.

Funding for this research was received through the Growing Green project and provided in part by the Voluntary Sector Initiative of the Federal Government of Canada via Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and by Tides Canada. Growing Green, a two-year (2002-2004) law and policy reform project for sustainable agriculture and food systems in Southwestern British Columbia, is a project of the Liu Institute of Global Issues, West Coast Environmental Law and Farm Folk/City Folk.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Statement

There is a large body of evidence pointing to the unsustainability of our current food system. In spite of major gains in agricultural yields and productivity, millions of people are undernourished or go hungry (FAO, 2004). Worldwide, the area of arable land is decreasing (FAO, 2004). In Canada, the income of farmers is at an all-time low (Statistics Canada, 2004). Chemicals used in the production of food are contaminating our water and soil (Coote and Gregorich, 2000; Acton and Gregorich, 1995). Energy costs continue to rise, threatening the ready access to cheap fossil fuels upon which the current food system depends (Jones, 2001). World fisheries are declining at a perilous rate (e.g. Myers and Worm, 2003). Increased corporate control has consolidated food production, processing and distribution in the hands of a shrinking few (Hendrickson et al., 2001). A recent trend sees mounting obesity and malnutrition associated with overconsumption (Ebbeling et al., 2002). Through it all, the physical and psychological distance between consumers and the sources of their food continues to grow (Kneen, 1993).

In the face of the increasing unsustainability of the dominant food system, growing interest has emerged in establishing an alternative, namely a food system based predominantly at the regional or local level (e.g. Renting et al., 2003; Pretty, 2002; Halwell, 2002; Norberg-Hodge et al., 2000; Shiva, 1999; Rosset and Altieri, 1997; Feenstra, 1997; Kloppenburg *et al.*, 1996; Kneen, 1993). A local food system is one in which food production, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of end products are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a particular community and place (based on Garrett and Feenstra, 1997). Local food systems aim at increasing self-reliance in food, decreasing negative ecological and

social externalities, improving health and nutrition, fostering community capacity and ensuring food security¹ for all community members at all times (see Chapter 3).

Food system sustainability has particular relevance to urban centres. Along with air, water and shelter, food is a basic need and central to the survival of human populations. As a renewable resource, food relies on ecological inputs such as water, soil, air and fossil fuels. Through external trade, cities rely on the one-way flow of imported food resources and exported waste, thus appropriating the carrying capacity of areas far outside the urban boundaries (Rees and Wackernagel, 1996; Rees, 1995) [it is estimated that the average piece of food consumed in British Columbia travels 1500 km from seed to plate (Kneen, 1993)]. As concentrated centres of consumption and production, the economies of cities are susceptible to market failures and, consequently, localized ecological degradation and social problems (Jepson, 2001). The effects of poorly functioning food systems, such as hunger, are often most visible in densely populated urban centres (Torjman and Leviten-Reid, 2003). Within cities, the food system affects urban transportation patterns (e.g. Pucher and Renne, 2003; Gottlieb and Fisher, 1996), economic development (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999), groundwater quality (e.g. MELP, 1999) and fossil fuel-related air pollution (e.g. Klindworth, 1999). The food system also affects the social sustainability of cities by influencing the character of neighbourhoods, proximity of basic services, health status of residents (Roberts, 2001), and encouraging individual and community capacity through food-related activities (GVRDSIS, 2003). On the urban periphery, the expansion of cities has direct impacts for broader societal sustainability by affecting agricultural capacity since much urbanization occurs on fertile lands (Jepson, 2001). In short, the food system plays a central role in urban sustainability.

The field of planning has an important role to play in facilitating the development of sustainable urban systems, including the food system. The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro marked an important shift in sustainable development policy, namely the

¹ Food security is defined as every community member having access at all times to food that is safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate and personally acceptable from non-emergency sources

recognition that local governments have a primary role to play in sustainability planning (Mittler, 2001). Since that time, planning activities and sustainability goals have become “inextricably linked and mutually relevant” (Jepson, 2001: 505). There are a number of reasons for this close association. On a practical level, local governments “...are the key to sustainability, for they plan and control the very elements at stake- development, resource use, waste, energy consumption, partial regulations concerning production and land use control” (Glass, 2002: 97). Second, the consequences of ecological, social and economic problems are often most visible at the local level, thus prompting local policy responses (Jepson, 2001). Third, political participation and responsiveness are highest at the local level (Ashworth, 1992). Fourth, sustainability goals and objectives are most likely to emerge from people who are “directly and personally involved in policy formulation” (Jepson, 2001: 505). Fifth, planning is by tradition inter-disciplinary and systems-oriented, and thus provides a professional and philosophical orientation that complements sustainable systems (Jepson, 2001).

Within local governments, the field of planning is well poised to help create and strengthen sustainable local food systems (Pothukuchi, 2004; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). To date, much of the work to develop sustainable local food systems has emerged from the grassroots (Welsh and MacRae, 1999; Anderson and Cook, 1999). However, recent academic attention has focused on the potential for local government- and planners in particular- to support and broaden existing community efforts and to take a more prominent role in the development of more sustainable, local food systems (Kaufman, 2004; Pothukuchi, 2004; Caton Campbell, 2004; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999; 2000; Abel and Thomson, 2001; Nichol, 2003). As an indication, the entire issue of the *Journal of Planning Education and Research* was devoted to the subject in June, 2004.

As a profession, the field of planning characterises itself as inter-disciplinary and concerned with furthering the health and well-being of people and their communities through creating secure, safe and sustainable urban and rural environments (CIP, 2004). Planning also examines the social, physical, economic and ecological dimensions of

communities and how they interact. Local government planners are further suited to facilitate involvement in the local food system because:

- The policies of upper governments may not sufficiently respond to local needs and conditions (Argenti, 2000: 7).
- Local governments are in closer contact with the local community than other levels of government (Argenti, 2000: 7).
- The key functions of planning departments already include facilitating and locating much of the infrastructure and programs necessary for supporting a local food system, such as networks of abattoirs, storage facilities, farmers markets and retail facilities (Nichol, 2003).
- More broadly, planners are already involved in planning for strategic areas critical to the development and support of local food systems, including local economic development, resource management, transportation planning, cultural preservation, community development and land-use decisions (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999).
- The skills necessary to planning practice are also instrumental in the development of local food systems. These include spatial and economic analysis, assessment, stakeholder analysis, conflict resolution, consensus building, community visioning and policy advocacy (Caton Campbell, 2004; Pothukuchi, 2004).

Clearly, there is an opportunity for local government planners to engage in food system planning. In summary, this assertion rests on four premises that I have just discussed:

1. The dominant food system is unsustainable
2. The food system is a central component of urban sustainability
3. Planners have a role to play in urban sustainability
4. Planners have a role to play in the creation of more sustainable food systems

In spite of the potential for planners to become more closely involved, the food system is at best described as a “stranger” to the field of planning (Pothukuchi and Kaufman,

2000). While planners have been concerned with the interconnections among transportation, land use, housing, environment and economy, food has been virtually ignored by the planning profession (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999; 2000). This ignorance is puzzling given the centrality of food and the broader food system to the health, vitality and sustainability of communities, issues central to progressive planning practice.

To claim that the food system is absent from the local government planning agenda is not to suggest that planners are not involved in food system issues. In fact, the food system already intersects with planning activities in many different ways (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000; Abel and Thomson, 2001). For example, planners are involved in the siting of food stores, preserving (or developing) agricultural land, zoning for food processing, promoting food-related economic development, facilitating community gardens and mitigating agricultural-related environmental impacts. The point is rather that when these and other food system-related activities do appear on the planning agenda, they are often manifested in isolated, piecemeal initiatives that fail to recognize the interactions between food and other urban systems (Borron, 2003; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). The food system is addressed neither comprehensively nor explicitly by planning agencies. In the end, the present uncoordinated efforts may actually undermine or impede efforts to create strong, stable local food systems (Nichol, 2003). The lack of attention to urban food system issues also undervalues the close cause-effect relationship between food and the broader political, economic, ecological and social conditions of cities.

Despite the evidence of the unsustainability of the dominant food system, the central role of the food system to urban centres, and the seeming opportunities for the involvement of planners, progress towards planning for more sustainable food systems is surprisingly slow. This slow pace does not result from a lack of possible actions. There is a large body of literature that clearly outlines the problems of the current food system and the trajectory that society should follow to sustain the productivity of farming and fisheries, to meet basic food security and to enhance social and natural capital. Within this

literature, there are a small but growing number of recommendations aimed specifically at local government planning efforts (Clancy, 2004; Caton Campbell, 2004; Nichol, 2003; Sustain UK, 2003; Roberts, 2001; Argenti, 2000; Abel and Thomas, 2000; Biehler et al., 1999; Guberman, 1995; etc.), namely the recommendation for a comprehensive and systemic approach to urban food system planning. As stated earlier, the food system receives limited attention from the planning field (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). An important question, therefore, is why are planners not more involved in planning for local food systems?

Two American studies have proposed some potential reasons why the food system is not dealt with comprehensively within urban planning practice (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000; Abel, 2000; both are summarized by Clancy, 2004). In brief, these studies suggested that the food system has traditionally been excluded as a focus for municipal planning practice because planners see it as a rural, market-driven issue with little relationship to the roles and responsibilities of local government planners. Furthermore, planners see many food system issues as “someone else’s problem”, the domain of upper levels of government or community agencies. In spite of the barriers, planners are involved in a few food system activities as part of their practice, albeit in a piecemeal way. Furthermore, a majority of planners in both studies identified the food system as an area in which they would like to become more involved.

One wonders whether similar findings would be found among planners in Canada. How involved are Canadian planners in food system issues? Do planners see this as an area in which they need to become more involved? What do they perceive as the barriers to food system planning? What conditions would facilitate their involvement? This study will build on these questions and further explore the barriers and opportunities to food system planning in British Columbia’s Georgia Basin region.

1.2 Research Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of this thesis is to identify the barriers and opportunities to local government food system planning in the Georgia Basin Region of British Columbia. My research objectives include:

- To identify planners' perceptions of the barriers to involvement in food system planning.
- To identify planners' perceptions of the conditions that enable involvement in food system planning.
- To test the dual assumptions that planners are not involved in food system planning activities and that they should be.
- To recommend how food system activities can be more comprehensively inserted into local government planning practice.
- And, as a broader objective, to explore the relationship of food system planning to the overall agenda of urban sustainability.

1.3 Thesis Structure

Chapter Two presents an overview of urban political ecology, which provides a theoretical framework for urban sustainability. Urban political ecology suggests that urban sustainability has as much to do with systems of politics and governance as it does with ecological, economic and social conditions. As a theory, urban political ecology proposes the attributes of sustainable urban systems, as well as a role for planning in supporting these systems. Chapter Three then situates local food systems within the context of urban political ecology theory, and describes the principles and critiques that underlie their development. The next chapter (Four), explores the newly emerging field of food system planning as a potential approach to facilitating local food systems. I also review some of the reasons why the food system is largely absent from the planning agenda, as proposed by planning academics. Chapter Five presents my thesis methodology, outlining the research location, rationale and process. In Chapter Six, I

delve into the barriers and opportunities to food system planning and present the results of 13 open-ended interviews that I conducted with planners who are involved in food system issues in the Georgia Basin. The chapter also provides insight into current food system planning activities and planners' perceptions as to the need and opportunities for further involvement. Chapter Seven relates these findings to the food system planning and urban political ecology literature. In particular, I discuss two major themes of barriers and opportunities that emerged from my research. Finally, Chapter Eight deals with specific strategies for advancing the field of food system planning, and concludes with recommendations for practice, policy and further study.

CHAPTER 2: URBAN POLITICAL ECOLOGY AS A SUSTAINABILITY THEORY

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce urban political ecology (UPE), which speaks to the theoretical foundations of food system planning. UPE examines problems that lie at the intersection of urban ecosystems, economics, society and culture, with a goal of facilitating sustainable development through the reconstruction of urban political and social systems (Keil, 2003; Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003; Harrill, 1999). As a sustainability theory, UPE is attractive not only because of its emphasis on the attributes of sustainable urban systems but also because, by focusing on the role of urban governance, UPE theory proposes a means of how to design and implement such systems. In this way, UPE suggests both the 'product' and the 'process' of urban sustainability. The goal of this chapter is to introduce both the objectives and strategies proposed by an UPE approach. In the next chapter, I situate local food systems within the context of UPE.

2.2 The Intellectual Roots of Urban Political Ecology

As a discipline, urban political ecology is an expansion upon the field of political economy, which seeks to understand and analyse the complex relationship "between the economy and politics as they affect the social and cultural life of societies" (Clement and Williams, 1989: 6). Within political economy, the two most notable traditions are liberal (associated with Adam Smith (1994)) and Marxist political economy (Marx, 1978). Both traditions originated from the examination of the development of commodity markets, and the role of labour in meeting the material requirements of human society (Clement and Williams, 1989). Where liberal political economy focuses on the interactions between markets and political systems, Marxists put weight on an analysis of class struggle and the economic system. In spite of the large ideological differences between the two traditions, Clement and Williams argue that both have been successful in so far as

they focus "...on processes whereby social change is located in the historical interaction of the economic, political, cultural and ideological moments of social life, with the dynamic rooted in socio-economic conflict" (Clement and Williams, 1989: 7).

Political ecology extends the political economy analysis to add an examination of the complex interactions between human societies, politico-economic systems and the natural world (Keil, 1998: 1). Ecological problems are not simply a result of disturbance of a system's natural state. Rather, the causes underlying such an imbalance stem from a complex intermingling of political, social, cultural and economic processes that shape our relationship with the natural world (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003). Thus, in crafting and implementing sustainability strategies, an understanding of politico-social processes is just as important as an understanding of ecological principles.

Rangan (2000: 123-4) outlines the theoretical assumptions underlying political ecology:

- The non-human environment (the biotic and abiotic surroundings) is a dynamic context (as opposed to a static backdrop) for the evolution of human life;
- Human populations and social practices are part of the spatiotemporal unit chosen for studying change (as opposed to viewing humans and their interactions as 'alienated' from or 'external' to nature);
- Spatial boundaries are dynamic, constantly changing in relation to shifting cultural values, networks of social and material practices, and political configurations over time;
- Human and non-human life are linked through dynamic processes and constantly transforming relationships which may yield unpredictable or unknowable outcomes within and across networks or political and spatial configurations.

Political ecology also acknowledges the centrality of natural capital- and not just labour- to the creation all socio-economic activity (M'Gonigle, 2000). As a result, the laws of thermodynamics, rather than the rules of the market, become governing principles (Daly, 1994). Matter and energy, the basis of natural capital and thus economic wealth, can be neither created nor destroyed (Law #1); they can only be changed from one form to another (Law #2) (e.g. Ehrlich et al., 1977). Where economic accumulation relies on a linear process that continuously increases the throughput of materials and energy, ecological economics and, by extension, political ecology, seek to "close the loop" (e.g.

Rees, 2002). Such circularity is seen as integral to sustainable systems, since the perpetual creation of entropy and material waste is unsustainable (Daly, 1999).

On the surface, market forces appear to offer a responsive and efficient feedback system—prices go down as supply goes up, prices go up as demand goes up. The feedback loops in thermodynamic systems, on the other hand, have a much slower response time. Inter-regional trade and the inherent resilience of the planet's ecosystems mask the short-term negative impacts of entropy. However, over the long term, the market system overlooks the predictably harmful consequences of increasing entropy for natural and, ultimately, economic systems.

2.3 Urban Political Ecology Theory

Within the tradition of political ecology, UPE theory focuses on issues of environmental change and socioeconomic impact within urban centres, with an explicit focus on the role of urban governance and the political process (Keil, 2003). Even at the city-level, environmental problems are not free from power struggles based on class, race, ethnicity or gender. In fact, many urban environmental problems can be explained by these very struggles (Swyngedouw and Heydan, 2003). An UPE analysis reveals, for example, that it is no coincidence that many environmental hotspots, such as nuclear reactors and garbage dumps, are located in neighbourhoods that are marginalized by poverty, culture or race (Bullard, 1994). By focusing on the underlying causes of uneven development and marginalization within the city, we can come to understand how political institutions and their processes can reinforce exploitative systems of production, which can result in negative impacts for urban environments and the human communities in their midst.

2.4 Implications for the Design of Sustainable Urban Systems

What does an UPE analysis imply for the design of urban sustainability strategies? As mentioned earlier, UPE suggests both a series of objectives to guide the creation of sustainable urban systems, as well as the means to move urban centres towards the goal. The following sections begin by discussing the elements of sustainable urban systems as

derived from the UPE literature, and conclude by discussing the implications for urban governance and, specifically, the role of planners.

2.4.1 Local and regional self- reliance

Self-reliance refers to a region's ability to meet their material and energetic needs within the boundaries of its bioregion (Sale, 1985). Currently, cities are productive only because of their near-complete dependence on the imported energy and materials of their surrounding territories (M'Gonigle, 2000). In this era of global markets, the territories stretch from the urban periphery to the global South. Urban populations and productivity will be sustained over the long term only if cities continue to have very large territorial area upon which to draw. Given that the population of the Greater Vancouver Regional District exploits an area estimated at 63 times its size to meet its material wants and needs (Smith and Rees, 2003), it quickly becomes evident that, on a global scale, cities are sustainable neither materially nor thermodynamically over the long-term. The continual one-way flow of material, energy and labour from the territories to the city reinforces the multi-step, linear-processes that lead to production of entropy and material waste, as well as associated social consequences.

An UPE analysis suggests that urban centres should "cut off their colonizing lines of supply" and place greater dependence on their own internal, circular processes by employing such strategies as demand management or industrial ecology (M'Gonigle, 1998). Self-reliance does not imply isolation from external trade (Feenstra, 1997). Rather, a self-reliant region supplements its natural productive capacity with products that cannot be produced within the region.² A self-reliant region is therefore in a strong position to manage without imports if catastrophic events occur. Surplus products are traded with other regions. The fundamental objective of regional self-reliance is to understand and exist within the ecological carrying capacity of the local region, as defined by cultural and ecological boundaries (Sale, 1985).

² It should be noted that while the concept is broadly embraced, the ecological, economic and social benefits of regional self-reliance are generally untested in practice. Some critiques of the concept are presented in Chapter 3.

2.4.2 Ecological Stability

At its foundation, an UPE analysis supports the goal of ecological stability. Cities are ecologically unstable due not only to their reliance on wasteful flows of material and energy from the periphery (as discussed above), but also because of the ecological contamination, degradation and transformation that result from human practices within the urban boundary (Rees, 2002). Such practices are reinforced by political and economic systems that fail to recognize biophysical limits and the value of ecosystems, not only as contributors to productivity but also as supporters of life on a fundamental level. UPE theory highlights the ecological erosion that occurs as a result of high levels of economic activity (Keil, 2003). It is not just capitalism that is the culprit, but rather any high level of continuous production that disrupts the steady state³.

An UPE analysis suggests the need for strategies that move towards ecological stability, both within the city as well as in surrounding territories. Particular attention should be paid to the people and the places who are impacted by policy decisions; while environmental conditions may be enhanced for those in one community, this often leads to the deterioration of environmental and quality of life for those in another community (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003).

2.4.3 Overcoming conceptual dualisms

UPE strives to create urban settlements, citizens and politico-economic systems that explicitly recognize the intimate link between urban and rural, between nature and culture (Keil, 2003). With roots in Cartesian dualism (Jones, 1988), "cities have often been seen as the opposite of nature, ecology and environment" (Keil, 2003: 729). This view is curious, given that human settlements rely upon ecological processes such as the production of air, water and soil, and are the sources of pollution, ecological degradation and environmental injustices. The results of these processes transcend urban boundaries.

³ A steady state refers to a system that is "maintained at some desired, sufficient levels by low rates of maintenance "throughput" that is, with the lowest feasible flows of matter and energy from the first stage of production...to the last stage of consumption" (Daly, 1994:104).

As a result, an UPE analysis strives to overcome the conceptual dualisms: "One of the main insights shared by most authors in UPE is that the material and symbolic, the natural and the cultural, the pristine and the urban are not dual and separate realities but rather intertwined and inseparable aspects of the world we inhabit" (Keil, 2003: 728). Put another way, "The concept of an ecological society must begin from a sense of assurance that society and nature are not inherently antithetical" (Bookchin, 1991: 342).

2.4.4 Social Justice

An UPE analysis pays particular attention to the processes, structures and systems that govern the operation of governments, institutions and the market (Keil, 2003). In the view of critical environmental theorists, the same processes and structures that have led to the domination of the environment have led to the domination of people on the basis of gender, race, culture and economic status (e.g. Shiva, 1994; Plumwood, 1994; Miller, 1994). The root causes of many social problems can be traced to the institutional and material forces influencing our economic and political systems. It is the interaction of these forces that influences, in turn, the production and distribution of wealth and leads to inequities among and within populations (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003). Therefore, just as uncontrolled competition has negative impacts for the biophysical world, so too does it have negative implications for social justice. The issue of power therefore becomes paramount to any strategy stemming from an UPE analysis:

It is the nexus of power and the social actors carrying it that will ultimately decide who will have access to and control over and who will be excluded from access to or control over resources or other components of the environment. In turn, these power geometries shape the social and political configurations and the urban environments in which we live (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003:912).

Ultimately, the project of UPE is to redistribute power from centralized corporate interests and hierarchical state institutions and devolve it to the communities living in place (e.g. M'Gonigle, 2000). On the urban scale, this means paying particular attention to those populations who are marginalized by virtue of political and economic power dynamics. The redistribution of power is an admirable goal to work towards – although, it should be emphasized, it does not necessarily guarantee social justice in and of itself. As the specifics of such a project are worked out over the long-term, there is a need the

meantime for public policy that “plans for an equitable allocation of urban resources” (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003).

2.5 Implications for Urban Governance

An UPE analysis suggests that sustainable urban systems work towards self-reliance, ecological stability, social justice and the re-linking of urban and rural. Yet how are such systems created and maintained? UPE theorists propose that urban sustainability has less to do with ecological processes than with the creation of alternative forms of governance (Keil, 2003):

The challenge of urban sustainability is ultimately a political one. The ways in which we regulate and govern ourselves, and our urban-nature relationships that sustain our cities, are largely matters of the political regulation of urban nature. *Urban political ecology*- the regulation of our relationships with nature in cities- is ultimately a question of democracy, governance and the politics of everyday life in cities” (Keil, 2003: 729).

UPE theory suggests the need to develop democratic strategies “through which a more equitable distribution of social power and more inclusive mode of environmental production can be achieved” (Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003: 914). M’Gonigle suggests that such strategies could be developed through the transformation of institutions, institutions that move away from their traditional hierarchical structure and redirect their democratic power to “support, rather than erode, the ‘preservation of the commons’” (2000: 14).

Ultimately, such institutions would aim for local and regional self-determination – rather than concentrated corporate power- in an attempt to address economic, political, ecological and social injustices (M’Gonigle, 2000). Self-determination would be accomplished by striking a balance between two poles that exist in dialectical tension in both the natural and social worlds: the centre and the territory. M’Gonigle (1998) argues that the organizations of the centre, such as corporations and political institutions, exist

only because they consume the natural and social capital from the territories upon which they depend⁴. “In so doing, [they] await their own demise” (M’Gonigle, 1998: 4).

A move away from the current centralized, hierarchical organizations that are supported by non-local resources (the centre), and towards more dispersed forms of social power that are maintained by direct production and local resources (the territory), would meet two objectives implied by an UPE analysis: 1) moving away from one-way thermodynamic and material flows of energy towards circular systems, and 2) a redistribution of social power to more locally- and community-based institutions (M’Gonigle, 1998; 2000).

While civil society will continue to play a leading role in seeking new approaches to governance that reflect an UPE approach (Keil, 2003), the state has also critical role to play (M’Gonigle, 2000). If the state neglects to become part of the shift, it will miss out on an opportunity for progressive politics, for economic opportunity and, perhaps most significantly, for the potential to take a leading role in facilitating and overseeing a shift towards new forms of governance that better serve human and ecological communities (M’Gonigle, 2000).

2.6 Implications for Planning

If, as UPE theorists suggest, long-term sustainability has less to do with planning process and substance, and more to do with the transformation of political institutions and personal ethics (Harrill, 1999), then planners have a central role to play in facilitating such a transformation. On its own, the political process is ill-equipped to handle complex issues such as sustainability, or come up with the creative yet subtle solutions demanded for sustainability strategies (Campbell, 1996). Because of their unique position as mediators between the state and community, planners can play an important role in facilitating change from within institutions.

⁴ “Centre” and “territory” should not be equated with “urban” and “rural”, respectively. Centrist and territorial organizations co-exist in every community. Contrast for example the authority of City Council or the aboriginal chieftain (centre) versus the neighbourhood association or rural townhall meeting (territory) (M’Gonigle, 1998: 2).

An UPE perspective encourages planners to adopt a more radical approach to practice (Harrill, 1999). Drawing on the tradition of social mobilization and the techniques of mutual learning, radical planning aims “to work for structural transformation of systemic inequalities and, in the process, to empower those who have been systematically disempowered” (Sandercock, 1998: 97). Harrill (1999: 72) argues that the practice of political ecology corresponds to radical planning:

Instead of merely negotiating for optimal environmental outcomes, the progressive or radical planner balances stewardship roles (advocate, mediator, translator) with other roles oriented toward action and experimentation in pursuit of social and ecological justice.

In so doing, an UPE perspective deepens the relationship between planning and urban sustainable development by encouraging planners to pay attention to more than just ecological and land use processes. As planning practice has gradually incorporated principles of sustainability over the past two decades, there has been an erroneous tendency to equate the two (Harrill, 1999). Such a superficial analysis leads to a conception of “weak” sustainability, which focuses on natural resource management and physical planning issues with little attention to social or economic dimensions of sustainable development (Harrill, 1999). In addition to paying attention to the *what* and *when* of sustainable development, planners must also focus on the *who* and *where* (Harrill, 1999).

In the end, even the loudest calls for new systems of governance and roles for planners will fall on deaf ears unless there is a significant change in the perceptions, attitudes, values and behaviour of individuals with regard to sustainability issues. Such a change is shaped by a number of factors, including an individual’s personal knowledge and education, the degree to which they are affected by an issue, their beliefs, perceptions and guiding paradigm, as well as broader social movements (Moore, 2000; Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). Public education in itself is not enough to facilitate a change (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). Political institutions usually reflect those dominant values in a culture; as a result, social change is usually initiated from outside the political or governance system (Moore, 1994). While civil society movements have a leading role to

play in facilitating social change, the individuals within an institution also have the capacity to help change social norms (Moore, 2000). At its root, the success of “strong” sustainability lies in convincing society, including planners, to embrace an alternative worldview.

2.7 Conclusion

UPE theory is concerned with the intersection of urban political economy and ecology. The ultimate goal of an UPE approach is to facilitate sustainable development through new approaches to urban governance. Sustainable urban systems, seen through an UPE lens, would work towards increasing local self-reliance, improving ecological stability, overcoming conceptual divides, and achieving social justice. Such urban systems would be supported by institutions that redistribute power from the centre towards more dispersed, territorial forms of governance.

Planners have a critical role to play in the practice of UPE, and moving towards a vision of urban sustainable development that includes social, economic and environmental justice. Such an approach acknowledges that planning practice is not only trying to influence social, political and economic context, but that these very forces also shape it.

Where this chapter introduced the theoretical basis of UPE, the next chapter applies a UPE lens to a specific urban system, namely the food system.

CHAPTER 3: THE CASE FOR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

3.1 Introduction

As introduced in the previous chapter, UPE literature provides both guiding objectives for the design of sustainable urban systems, as well as a political and institutional framework within which these objectives can be achieved. The purpose of this chapter is to set local food systems within the context of UPE theory. Because of its role as a provider of human basic needs and its dependence on (often-imported) natural and social capital, the food system is an important component of urban sustainability. Local food systems are proposed as a more ecologically-, economically- and socially-sustainable alternative to the current dominant food system. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the concept of local food systems, and describe how their development is complementary to the types of urban systems proposed by UPE.

3.2 The Food System

The term food system refers to the many stages, processes and transformations that food undergoes from its production through to its disposal. These stages include production, processing, distribution, consumption and the disposal and/or recycling of end-products.⁵ The food system is not a singular entity, but rather exists as a series of nested sub-systems at different levels, including the household, neighbourhood, municipal, local, regional, provincial, national and global (Dahlberg, 1993). This nested nature is an important feature when discussing local food systems: local food systems do not exist apart from, but rather are embedded within, the global food system (Caton Campbell, 2004).

⁵ Food system literature often focuses on food produced through land-based agriculture and its trajectory from seed-to-plate, a focus that overlooks two important elements. First, the literature's focus on land-based agriculture excludes other forms of food production, namely fisheries and wild foods (hunting and gathering). These other forms of production are significant contributors to the traditional and bioregionally-based diets of coastal British Columbia. Unfortunately, my research continues the trend of neglecting these sources of food production, and they receive only cursory attention in my discussion. Second, the focus on "seed-to-plate" neglects what happens post-plate, namely the important stage of waste disposal, where the inputs of the food system, optimally, are returned to productive use. This research includes waste disposal as a critical stage in the food system.

At first glance, the food system has the characteristics of an autopoietic system, the parts serving to regulate the functions and processes of the whole (Beers, 1981). Food appears to move seamlessly from fields to warehouses to grocery stores to consumers to the garbage dump, a decentralised network of farming, retailing, processing and distribution sub-systems that somehow, collectively, ensures that there is always just enough food to eat. A closer examination reveals that the autopoietic nature of the global food system is changing. Its cyclical nature has been transformed to a multi-step linear process that relies on material and energetic throughputs rather than recycling, leading to high entropy. The functions and processes of many stages are increasingly controlled and integrated through centralized corporations (Qualman, 2001; Hendrickson et al., 2001). As Kneen asserts, "There may be many puppets, but there are few puppeteers" (1993: 19). Hunger, obesity, water pollution and declining crop diversity are signals that the sub-systems are out of balance.

3.3 The Dominant Food System

As I will introduce, local food systems share many complementarities with the sustainable urban systems proposed through an UPE analysis. In order to understand local food systems, it is important to understand the dominant food system that local food systems are reacting to.

Over the past 100 years, the food and agriculture system has changed dramatically in North America, as in much of the world. Advances in mechanization, transportation, scientific research, food technology and communication networks have increased the productivity and scale of trade (Koc and Dahlberg, 1999). These factors have facilitated the development of the dominant globalised food system, characterized most notably by its drive for efficiency and the accumulation of wealth (Kneen, 1993). Other characteristics of the dominant food system include: federal policy and corporate support for large-scale conventional agriculture and agricultural research; a system of trade that encourages reliance on food imports and exports that travel enormous distances from

seed to plate; a heavy dependence on “cheap” fossil fuels for chemical inputs, equipment and transportation; corporate domination through “vertical integration”, which controls the food system from production of raw materials, their processing and through to their distribution and marketing; and increasing multinational oligopolies by corporations in food retailing, commodities, agricultural inputs, seeds and biotechnology (Caton Campbell, 2004).

The dominant food system has resulted in economic and social benefits. Technological innovation in agriculture and processing has brought relief from hard labour, led to faster performance of tasks, and increased the yields of food and fiber and therefore economic returns (Ponting, 1991). Food processing techniques have prolonged the lifespan of food products. A sophisticated transportation and trading system distributes large amounts of food around the globe in days, freeing consumers from the restrictions of a seasonal diet and aiding populations in times of emergency.

In spite of increases in productivity, yield and distribution, the globalised food system's driving interests of market dominance and profit maximization have led to significant social, economic and ecological impacts. For example, in Canada, low prices for grain and other agricultural commodities have caused rural economies to shrink to the point that the average on-farm income is less than \$10,000 per year (Statistics Canada, 2004). Increased corporate control of farming through direct ownership, contract farming and purchasing agreements encourages less on-farm diversification and increases farmers' susceptibilities to the vagaries of international markets (Hendrickson et al., 2001).⁶ Likewise, corporate demand for uniformity and standardized products encourages profit maximization at the expense of ecological stewardship, increases waste, decreases crop diversity (Schlosser, 2001) and shifts decision-making power from the farmer to distant head offices (Welsh et al., 2003). Within cities, decisions about where to locate grocery stores are made based on economics rather than social needs, leading to the emergence of

⁶ Corporate ownership of farms is more of an issue in the United States than it is in Canada at present. For example, 90% of British Columbia's farms were still family-run in 1999 (Lee, 2000). It should be noted, however, that corporations do control most on-farm inputs, as well as the processing, marketing and retailing of most B.C. food products (Qualmann, 2001; Lee, 2000).

“food deserts” in some urban neighbourhoods (e.g. Cummins and MacIntyre, 1999). On the consumption end, hunger has increased in Canada to the point that 2.5% of the national population relied on food banks in 2003 (CAFB, 2003a). Riches (1996) links the roots of hunger in Canada to systemic conditions of powerlessness, inequality and poverty brought on by economic and labour market restructuring “spurred on by the federal government’s neo-conservative agenda of deficit reduction, free trade, increased international competitiveness, high interest rates and faith in trickle-down economics...” (Riches, 1996:54).

Although this is only a cursory introduction into some of the impacts of the dominant food system, these examples point to the base theory of UPE: that many of the social and ecological problems have their roots in existing economic and political structures. An UPE analysis suggests the need for transformed structures that work towards ecological, social and economic objectives. Local food systems are one example of such a structure.

3.4 Local Food Systems

The recognition that something was wrong with dominant food system originated long before the emergence of the concept of sustainable development was mainstreamed. Of historical relevance to this research, the seeds of the North American⁷ alternative food systems have their intellectual roots in the U.S. regional planning movement of the 1920s (Caton Campbell, 2004), which emphasized regional self-reliance, community empowerment, social justice and ecological sustainability (e.g. Mumford, 1925).

What can broadly be termed the “local food system movement” has emerged from a variety of social movements, including the anti-hunger, food security, anti-globalization, sustainable agriculture and environmental movements (Anderson and Cook, 1999). In North America, many of these ideas converged in the 1990s into calls for the relocalisation and integration of food systems that enhance the environmental, economic,

⁷ To my knowledge, no comprehensive history of the Canadian local food system movement has been compiled. This paper is predicated on the assumption that the same general forces that worked in the United States also worked in Canada.

social and nutritional health of a particular community (Garrett and Feenstra, 1997). The objective of the local food movement⁸ is to ensure that “all people at all times have access to affordable, nutritious, culturally appropriate and personally acceptable food” (CFSC, nd) that originates from “a system of growing, manufacturing, processing, making available and selling food that is regionally-based and grounded in the principles of justice, democracy and sustainability” (CFSC, nd).

Lang (1999) has characterized differences between the global and local food systems as a landscape of competing tensions. On the one hand is globalisation, long-distance trade, intensification and loss of skills; on the other, relocalisation, proximity, extensification and acquisition of new skills (Table 3.1). Lang’s illustration is helpful in portraying the different objectives that underlie each of the two concepts. Readers are reminded that the local and the global should not be taken to exist in polemic isolation. Rather, local food systems are embedded within the globalised, dominant system.

TABLE 3.1 TENSIONS IN THE GLOBAL VS. LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM (LANG, 1999)

Globalization	Vs.	Localization
Urban/rural divisions	Vs.	Urban-rural partnership
Long trade routes	Vs.	Short trade routes
Import/export models of food security	Vs	Food from own resources
Intensification	Vs	Extensification
Fast speed, pace & scale of change	Vs	Slow pace, speed & scale of change
Non-renewable energy	Vs	Re-usable energy
Few market players (concentration)	Vs	Multiple players per sector
Costs externalized	Vs	Costs internalized
Rural de-population	Vs	Vibrant rural population
Monoculture	Vs	Biodiversity
Science replacing labour	Vs	Science supporting nature
Agrochemicals	Vs	Organic/sustainable farming
Biotechnology	Vs	Indigenous knowledge
Processed (stored) food	Vs	Fresh (perishable) food
Food from factories	Vs	Food from the land
Hypermarkets	Vs	Markets
De-skilling	Vs	Skilling
Standardization	Vs	“Difference” & diversity
Niche markets on shelves	Vs	Real variety on field & plate
People to food	Vs	Food to people
Fragmented (diverse) culture	Vs	Common food culture
Created wants (advertising)	Vs	Real wants (learning through culture)
Burgerization	Vs	Local food specialities
Microwave re-heated food	Vs	Cooked food
Fast food	Vs	Slow food
Global decisions	Vs	Local decisions

⁸ The local food system movement is also referred to as the community food system movement, particularly in the United States.

Top-down controls	Vs	Bottom-up controls
Dependency culture	Vs	Self-reliance
Health inequalities widening	Vs	Health inequalities narrowing
Social polarization and exclusion	Vs	Social inclusion
Consumers	Vs	Citizens

In spite of the effective conceptualization by Lang and others, the theory underpinning local food systems is poorly defined in the academic and activist literature (Anderson and Cook, 1999). Many of the definitions that do exist consist of vague statements of principle, loosely connected themes and suffer from “an absence of theoretical structure” that limits their usefulness to policy-makers and practitioners (Anderson and Cook, 1999). In spite of the noted absence, an examination of the principles of local food systems suggests a high degree of correspondence with the theory of UPE. The characteristics of a local food system include (for ease, these are grouped along the four themes identified in the previous chapter):

Regional or Local Self-Reliance: Sustainable food and agricultural systems aim for the goal of self-reliance (Kloppenburger et al., 1996). Food should originate from the closest practicable source, preferably within the bioregion or foodshed. Specific to the food system, self-reliance strives to: reduce dependency on fossil fuel and other energetic and material inputs, thus reducing transportation-associated pollution and waste; build the local economy by relying on a local pool of labour, inputs, distribution systems and consumers; encourage the development of regionally-distinct products; and to recycle usable end-products, thus returning valuable nutrients to the regional agro-ecosystem (Kloppenburger et al., 1996, 2000; Norberg-Hodge et al., 2000; Feenstra, 1997).

Urban-Rural Links: Local food systems are distinguished by communities, both urban and rural, who see the food system as providing an essential service (MacRae and TFPC, 1999). Such understanding is fostered through promoting economic, personal and political relations between consumers and other players in the food system (Kloppenburger et al., 1996). Local food systems seek to transcend urban/rural divides by preserving the visibility of agriculture on the urban periphery as well as bringing production into the city. Finally, by encouraging a critical analysis of the globalised food system, local food

systems explicitly link agricultural production with issues of urban food security, thus making “hunger in the city...an agricultural issue” (Kloppenburg et al., 1996: 37).

Ecological Stability: Local food systems seek to sustain and enhance the health of the environment “for use by all beings and future generations” (Kloppenburg et al., 2000:182). Local food systems promote methods that are environmentally beneficial or benign in their production and that encourage the protection of soil, water, air and habitat by enhancing natural agroecological cycles and functions (Gleissman, 2001). Although such methods often entail organic, biodynamic or ecological production methods, the most distinguishing feature is a “philosophical relationship with the land that is nonexploitative and regenerative” (Kloppenburg et al., 2000: 182). Local food systems also stress the need for ecological sustainability at other stages of the food system, including the methods used during food distribution, processing, consumption and disposal, when energetic and material inputs and by-products can have negative ecological impacts. For example, the call to reduce “food miles”, and their associated fossil fuel emissions, has been particularly successful in galvanizing support for the concept of local food systems in the United Kingdom (Nichol, 2003).

Social Justice: In a local food system, all citizens have physical and economic access to safe, nutritious and affordable food that is personally and culturally acceptable (Kalina, 2001). Access to food is considered a basic right of citizenship (Riches, 2000). Such a view recognizes “people’s need for food and nutrition because we are interdependent members of society with rights to citizenship; and because food is a social and cultural good essential to health and social integration. It also implies acknowledging the need for democratization and community control” (Riches, 2000). In a local food system, emergency food provision is viewed only as a temporary measure; the ultimate aim of a sustainable, local food system is the empowerment and capacity-building of individuals (Koc et al., 1999:1).

A local food system also promotes equitable working conditions and wages for all food system employees (Sustain UK, 2002). In addition to providing high employment

standards, equity is accomplished through fair- or cooperative- trade relationships between producers, processors, retailers and consumers at the local and global scale (Sustain UK, 2002).

3.5 Critiques of Local Food Systems

The development of local food systems is not without significant challenges. The very concept of sustainability is controversial, complex and contested. Also contested is whether a local, sustainable food system can, in fact, provide a viable alternative to the dominant food system (e.g. Avery, 1997). The proponents of local food systems face the challenge of transforming economic, political and institutional systems that support the predominantly scientific, industrialised and globalised approach to food production and distribution. Although the symptoms of food insecurity may be manifested at the local level, action at the local level will only work up to a point (Allen, 1998). Supporters of the dominant food system model view the proponents' efforts to develop an alternative as reactionary, resistant and futile (e.g. Avery, 2001; Avery, 1997).

On a practical level, local food systems raise serious questions as to whether regional self-reliance in food is achievable or even desirable. Even if we could produce sufficient food within the bioregion, what would be the implications in terms of balanced nutrition or consumer choice? Are there enough people willing and able to adopt agricultural lifestyles? Is there even enough arable land? Advocates of local food systems have responded by agreeing that complete self-reliance is impractical. Rather, the goal should be to meet regional food needs first, and only then exporting the surplus. Food needs would be *supplemented* by inter-regional trade, with an emphasis on fair trade (e.g. Garrett and Feenstra, 1997).

Other critics of local food systems take aim at the idea that all food be produced in environmentally-sound methods, arguing that organic agriculture would require more land area and result in lower crop yields, thus exacerbating food insecurity (Avery, 1997). There are limited studies to refute this claim. One study found that organic yields were 20% less than conventional yields (albeit with the application of 50% less fertilizer)

(Mader et al., 2002), while another found the difference to be only 5% (Creamer, 2001). There is also the issue of increased labour costs associated with environmentally-sustainable farming techniques, and the resulting higher food prices. In Denmark, for example, labour costs increased by approximately 38% in converting from conventional to organic farming systems (DGVI et al., 2000).

What these arguments and others based in market economics ignore is the fact that the dominant food system's true production, processing and distribution costs are hidden. For example, market valuation does not take into account the significant use of non-renewable fossil fuels needed for production and transportation in the dominant food system, use that results in water and air pollution and contributes to global climate change (Jones, 2001). Furthermore, the consolidation and corporatization of much of the food system leaves less money in the hands of producers, with most of the profits going to finance the many stages of the dominant food system. For example, a Canadian study found that farmers received less than a 0.7% return on their equity after five years, compared to 11.1%-33.8% returns for food retailers, and 13.3%-37.1% returns for fertilizer companies (Qualman, 2001).

In summary, the current market system does not value ecological resources properly, does not incorporate the indirect costs of providing goods and services, and does not respect the natural carrying capacity of resource systems upon which the economy depends (Brown, 2003). Consumers ultimately pay for negative social and environmental costs through increased taxation, health care costs and donations to charitable agencies. What is a 5% or even a 20% difference in yield or supermarket price if the products of local food systems can potentially lead to better human, ecological and local economic health over the long-term? (Of course, these claims remain to be tested, as well).

On a more conceptual level, Allen (1998) presents several reasons for caution in embracing the local food system movement. First, localism has been promoted as a goal that enhances community cohesion, promotes links with the greater bioregion, and encourages a sense of place, among other claims. On the other extreme, however,

localism has been criticized for being a fuzzy, conservative goal that enables people to focus on their own socio-economic problems with little regard or responsibility for the problems faced in other geographic places (see also Rangan, 2000). Second, underlying the concept of local food systems is the assumption that citizens will make better decisions about the future of their communities. The challenge is further exacerbated by the fact that local food systems aim at representing the interests of stakeholders across the broad spectrum of food system interests, including farmers, consumers, social justice activists, anti-hunger workers. While on the surface the stakeholders may be united around common concerns, the values, ethics and approaches that underlie their work- and vision for the future- may be quite different (see also Caton Campbell, 2004). Third, "it is unclear how reducing the scale of decision-making will give excluded people a voice and power they have not had at higher levels" (Allen, 1998:12). Local communities reflect, and sometimes magnify, the power structures at higher levels. In fact, "working only at the local level is not only insufficient to rectify power imbalances that cause material inequity, it may actually be counter productive" (Allen, 1998:12). Finally, Allen examines some of the social justice issues involved in the blending of local agriculture and the right to food (see also Anderson and Cook, 1999; Perkins, 2000). For example, the focus on organic food production threatens to re-establish class differences that disappeared due to industrialization. The distinction between luxury and basic foods began to narrow with mass production, but now threatens to reappear as food items get "branded" by origin or by means of production. Indeed,

Local food systems projects based on provincialism may tend to serve the status needs of the privileged more than the material needs of the poor. The community food security movement may be unwittingly recreating a two-tiered food system differentiated by class. Community food security, if it is to be successful, requires both self-reliant food systems and justice and equity (Allen, 1998: 13).

A more fundamental challenge to the concept of local food systems is the disagreement as to whether the dominant food system is, indeed, in crisis (e.g. Avery, 1995; Lomborg, 2001). Such critics point to existing technology, trade and human ingenuity and confidently predict that these tools will overcome potential issues of hunger, drought and disappearing farmland. For example:

Success [of the food system] depends on continued research in plant breeding, fertilization, pest control, and other high-yield agricultural systems, and free trade in farm products so we can use the world's best

and safest land to meet food needs with fewer acres and less soil erosion. Research and trade should enable farmers to feed 8 to 10 billion people comfortably from the land and water already used in agriculture (Avery, 1995: 52).

For his part, Lomborg (2001) points to increasing grain productivity in developing countries, declining worldwide grain prices, abundant stockpiles of food, and improved international trade to support his assertion that “food will get cheaper and even more people will be able to consume more and better food” (2001: 109) over the next few decades. He takes aim at pessimists who have claimed since the mid-1970s that the world was on the brink of a food crisis, and suggests that the predicted crisis has never materialised because it was never imminent in the first place.

Shrader-Frechette (1981) terms this perspective “frontier ethics”, a worldview steeped in the twinned myths of superabundance and scientific supremacy. Proponents believe that the ecological carrying capacity of systems can be surpassed because “science and technology will provide ways of solving the problems...”. Avery’s views in particular ignore the inherent ecological limits of water, soil and fossil fuel- producing systems, limits that are particularly tested when systems are faced with exponential population growth (Rees, 1995; Brown, 1996). In spite of technological optimism, one cannot simply replace land with fertilizer (Brown, 1996: 16)- nor can it be replaced indefinitely with trade. Such a view also ignores the negative social and cultural impacts associated with technological and trade ‘fixes’(e.g. Thrupp, 1993).

In presenting these cautionary notes about local food systems, I do not claim to have any magic solutions. They are unresolved criticisms of a new and emerging concept whose accomplishments, for the most part, are better-expressed in hopeful vision statements than in evidence of widespread transformation. Of particular relevance to this study, Allen’s criticisms hint at a potential role for planners and other public agents in the creation of local food systems. Planning is not a panacea. However, with careful attention and the incorporation of progressive planning principles, planners may help in overcoming some of the potential problems facing local food systems by designing processes that combat insularity, facilitate stakeholder collaboration, diffuse power hierarchies and institutionalize equitable food access. Local food system efforts need to

be multi-tiered, at once aiming to address local food system problems while addressing the larger social, political and economic contexts that influence these issues.

3.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to situate local food systems within the context of UPE theory. Local food systems have emerged as an alternative to the ecological, social and economic problems confronting the dominant food system. As I have briefly introduced here, these problems are rooted in existing political and economic structures. The principles of a local food system suggest strong complementarity with the principles of other sustainable urban systems, as proposed by UPE literature.

Whether local food systems can indeed “feed the world” will likely remain an untested claim until such time as a crisis dictates the need for local self-reliance or fossil fuel-free food systems. Like sustainability, the concept of local food systems is a normative ideal, something that society can work towards but will never fully achieve. However, the negative social, ecological and economic costs of the dominant food system are increasingly difficult to ignore. In the absence of another alternative, local food systems may present the best hope for food system sustainability. The next chapter is predicated on the assumption that, in spite of the criticisms, local food systems are worth developing and that the emerging field food system planning presents one potential avenue for facilitating their development.

CHAPTER 4: FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING AS AN URBAN POLITICAL ECOLOGY STRATEGY

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce food system planning as a potential approach to planning and governance for more sustainable food systems. In the previous chapter, I explored the strong complementarity between UPE theory and the objectives underlying the development of local food systems. UPE literature also proposes a process for the development of local food systems, by providing a political and institutional framework within which these objectives can be achieved.

In spite of its potential as a unifying theory for sustainability, UPE has been criticized as “long on critique and short on establishing goals [...], and especially on the technical and political means of establishing them” (Belskey, 2002: 275). In this chapter, I argue that because of its close relationship to UPE theory in practice and process, food system planning presents an opportunity implement UPE strategies on the ground. Broadly, UPE provides a theoretical framework that can address the problematic ways in which the food system has been neglected as an urban and local government issue, while also addressing the power relations that determine the control of the food system that is vital to life. Such an approach is not without significant challenges, and I conclude the chapter with a summary of the barriers to food system planning as identified in the literature.

4.2 Food System Planning

Food system planning, as conceptualized in this study and proposed by the academic literature, explicitly aims at the creation of sustainable, local food systems, helping these alternative systems “to establish a sturdier and more solid footing within the shadow of the dominant food system” (Kaufman, 2004: 339). As a nascent sub-field of planning, food system planning exists mainly on a theoretical level. Yet in its conception, food system planning espouses many of the underlying roles, values and principles proposed by an UPE approach. These include the creation of more sustainable local food systems;

the development of systems-oriented, participatory governance structures; and the adoption of a radical and facilitative role for local government planners.

In the absence of an established definition for food system planning, I propose the following: food system planning integrates food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste disposal to enhance the ecological, economic, social and nutritional health of a community (based on Garrett and Feenstra, 1997). Such planning efforts are tightly linked to food policy, broadly defined as any decision taken by a government institution that affects the food system (Hamilton, 2002). At the local government level, food policy is implemented through various means, including regulation, purchasing policies, programs, legislation, advocacy and financial instruments (Kalina, 2001).

On the urban scale, different food system activities are currently governed by different municipal departments, different jurisdictions and different sectors. Various authors have noted the role that planners can and have played in various stages of the food system, including urban agriculture (Smit et al., 1996; Barrs, 1998), food security (Argenti, 2000), small-scale food businesses (Nichol, 2003), community gardens (Guberman, 1995) and planning for agriculture (Smith, 1998). Food system planning would establish linkages among these divergent elements and others, and connect them to a larger, comprehensive strategy of creating more sustainable urban food systems (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999; 2000).

4.3 Implications for Governance

A local food system is one in which citizens “participate directly in the operation and governance of the food system in ways that are more complex and influential than simple market transactions” (Kloppenburger et al., 2000: 183). In contrast to the dominant food system, dominated by corporate oligopolies, a local food system encourages individual and community ownership and control (Norberg-Hodge et al., 2000). Over the long-

term, increased citizen participation “may promote a truer sense of food security than does reliance on an externally-controlled food supply” (Joseph, 1999:13).

In North America, much of the leadership for local food systems has come from the grassroots (Anderson and Cook, 1999). Many of the food system planning and policy resources that exist, for example, are aimed at community organizations rather than government institutions (e.g. Biehler et al., 1999; Kalina, 2001). It is likely that civil society will continue to play a central role in creating alternative food systems.

Yet, if communities are serious about the creation of sustainable systems, the state also has an important role to play (M’Gonigle, 2000). With respect to food system initiatives, state involvement can help to overcome the current challenges faced by grassroots projects, namely uncertainty over access to financial resources, human capital and political influence, which limit the scope and longevity of their impact (Caraher et al., 2001). The legislative, regulatory and administrative powers of local governments can be harnessed to support the creation of local food systems, just as these powers have supported other urban sustainability initiatives (e.g. Mittler, 2001). Local government involvement does not preclude a strong citizen presence in the governance of the local food system; rather, it demands alternate forms of governance that place a value on genuine participation, local knowledge and regional self-determination (M’Gonigle, 1998; 2000). At the local government level, food system planning is one such possibility.

4.4 Food System Planning: Guiding Principles

Food system planning would aim to address social, ecological and economic problems associated with the dominant food system. Although still operating within existing urban governance structures, food system planning would instill new institutional values such as participation, inter-disciplinarity and systems thinking (Caton Campbell, 2004). In reviewing the literature, one sees a high level of congruency between the principles that stem from an UPE analysis, and the theory upon which the practice of food system planning is based. These include:

- ***Interdisciplinarity*** (Caton Campbell, 2004; Lang et al., 2001; Argenti, 2000; MacRae, 1999): Food system planning and policy would be developed and implemented by teams that include professionals and community members from a range of disciplines. Particular emphasis would be given to urban and rural representation.
- ***Multisectorality*** (Lang et al., 2001; Argenti, 2000): Food system planning and policy should transcend the artificial boundaries imposed by jurisdictions.
- ***Emphasis on Macro-Policy*** (MacRae, 1999): Food system policy development would start from the macro-scale, followed by the design of specific interventions or policy tools that support the macro-policy, as appropriate.
- ***Public Participation*** (Caton Campbell, 2004; Argenti, 2000, MacRae, 1999): Food system planning and policy should be developed in collaboration with those affected by problems in need of resolution, following principles of democratic participation, genuine decision-making power and community development principles.
- ***Systems Approach*** (Lang et al., 2001; MacRae, 1999): Food system planning and policy would recognize and emulate the nested systems and subsystems that comprise an integrated food system, and apply systems thinking to the design and analysis of problems.
- ***Local Knowledge and Control*** (Caton Campbell, 2004; Kloppenburg et al., 2000, M'Gonigle, 1998): Food system planning and policy activities would be developed based on an appreciation for local knowledge in addition to scientific understanding. The end goal of policy and planning efforts would be to increase local ownership and control of the food system.

4.5 Role of the Planner

What is the role of the local government planner in food system planning? Food system planning proposes that planners provide an integrated focus that would complement and enhance community-based efforts to build local food systems (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999). In the absence of existing community efforts, planners could work with community organizations, institutions and the private sector to provide leadership for new initiatives. Pothukuchi (2004) proposes that planners use their existing skills, experience and professional orientation to insert food system issues into their practice. For example, planners might draw on their assessment and analysis tools and apply a food system lens

to assess local food security, provide empirical evidence about the benefits local food systems or illuminate market gaps in the mainstream food system (Kaufman, 2004).

Caton Campbell (2004) sees planners in a facilitative role, helping to bridge the many tensions that exist among different stakeholders of the food system. Pothukuchi (2004) suggests that planners take a strongly participatory approach to food system planning, basing practice on participatory action research, community visioning and genuine public involvement in decision-making. Her view echoes Harrill (1999) who argues that a radical planning approach is complementary to the goals of UPE, and is necessary to facilitate sustainable development. Such an approach is based on a holistic view of sustainability that incorporates a critical understanding of the role of political and social dynamics on the urban scale (Harrill, 1999; Keil, 2003).

4.6 Potential Barriers to Local Food System Planning

As proposed by academics, comprehensive food system planning remains a promising yet generally untested approach to planning for urban sustainability. Why are food system issues not more prominent on the local government planning agenda? What barriers exist to this seemingly hopeful new field?

In their seminal paper, Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) propose seven reasons why the food system is not a more prominent issue for planners, drawn from their interviews with 22 municipal planning agencies in the United States. Pothukuchi and Kaufman's 'reasons' have been re-worded as 'barriers', and form the basis of the following list. I have also enriched the description of each barrier to include the relevant findings of others who have examined the obstacles to sustainability, agricultural and food systems planning faced by local governments and their planners.

The potential barriers to planner involvement in food system issues, as identified in the literature, are:

1. ***Little perceived relationship to planners' roles and responsibilities*** (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000): Planning has traditionally been preoccupied with issues of land use, physical planning, housing and traffic control (Argenti, 2000; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). If the food system is viewed as beyond the scope of planning's jurisdiction (e.g. as a social service issue), there may be resistance to becoming involved. In the words of Pothukuchi and Kaufman, planners may feel that the food system "is not our turf" (2000:116).
2. ***Lack of relevance to the urban environment*** (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000): The urban food system owes its invisibility to a dichotomy in public perception (Kneen, 1993) and policy (MacRae, 1999) that views urban issues as separate from rural issues. In fact, one definition identifies cities by their non-agricultural characteristics: "A city is a human settlement whose inhabitants cannot produce, within the city limits, all of the food that they need for keeping them alive (Toynbee, 1970 in Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999: 215). If farms, agriculture and production are viewed as rural issues, and outside the policy jurisdiction of municipalities, they may occupy a lower priority on the planning agenda. Furthermore, if planners view the food system as comprising simply farming-related activities, and not processing, consumption or waste disposal activities, they may not see the relevance of the food system to more urban communities (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000).
3. ***Perception that food is the domain of the private market*** (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000): "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" (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000:116). Food is an economic commodity, managed by a massive industry, and one with substantial private market involvement (Knutson et al., 2004). If planners view food as the domain of the private market, and not as a public good, they may see little reason or need for their intervention (Clancy, 2004).

4. ***Lack of funding*** (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000): Federal, provincial and/or municipal financial support often exists for municipalities to undertake planning for transportation, housing, land use, resource management, social development and economic development. A lack of similar funding for food system issues may deter planners from becoming involved; indeed, a lack of funds can prevent the implementation of sustainability initiatives (Moore, 1994).
5. ***Lack of perceived problems with the current food system*** (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000): Developments in food processing, refrigeration and transportation infrastructure allow grocery stores to be well-stocked year-round (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999). As a result, the problems of food access, distribution and availability may be invisible to many planners and other municipal decision-makers, who traditionally come from higher socio-economic backgrounds. More broadly, planners may not see the problems due to *distancing*, the increasing physical and psychological separation of consumers from the sources of their food (Kneen, 1993; Smith, 1998).
6. ***Fragmentation of responsibility*** (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000): Responsibility for food system issues at the local government level is currently fragmented among a number of different departments and agencies (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999; Biehler et al., 1999; e.g. City of Vancouver, 2003a); consequently no one agency or department serves as a food system “focal point” (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). Planners interested in food system issues may feel that that they have little opportunity for collaboration with like-minded municipal colleagues (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000), and little incentive for comprehensively addressing food system issues (Argenti, 2000).
7. ***Weak understanding of the issues*** (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000; Moore, 1994): Food system planning is not formally recognized as a specialization within planning education (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000) or practice. For example,

only 12% of planning schools in the U.S. have a rural specialization, and although planning for agriculture is likely to be discussed, this is not the same as planning for food systems (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). Planners may feel that they lack the skills and knowledge needed to support food system planning activities (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). As with the general population, a weak understanding of the importance of the local food system may be exacerbated by *distancing* (point 5).

Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) proposed the above barriers based on interviews with planners in 22 major U.S. cities. Although not a primary objective of her study, similar barriers were listed by Abel (2000) in her study of municipal and county planners in Pennsylvania (summarized by Clancy, 2004). In spite of the many reasons why food is not prominent on the planning agenda, a majority of planners believed that planners should be more involved in food system issues (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000; Abel, 2000).

4.7 Other Potential Barriers

The barriers presented in previous studies were mainly focused on the practice and culture within planning agencies. An UPE framework suggests a need to consider the larger social, economic and political context within which sustainability planning initiatives operate. For example, what is the role of politics in shaping the agenda of planning agencies? How does public pressure affect the activities that planners are- and are not- involved in? What about socio-economics? Are there any regionally-specific political or cultural barriers to food system planning? More importantly, in the face of those barriers that do exist, how are planners involved in food system planning efforts? What are the opportunities for moving forward? These questions are addressed in subsequent chapters.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have situated food system planning within the context of UPE theory. Although only in the nascent stages, food system planning echoes the principles underlying UPE. Food system planning is underscored by a commitment to the values of social, environmental and economic justice, achieved through radical approaches to planning practice. Food system planning is based on an interest in public participation, new partnerships, a systems approach to policy development, as well as an explicit acknowledgement of the importance of local knowledge and control in planning activities (Caton Campbell, 2004).

The chapter also presented a brief overview of the potential barriers to food system planning, as presented in the few academic articles that have explored the topic. Many planners view the food system as lying outside the scope of urban planning practice and responsibility. On a practical level, involvement is hampered by a lack of understanding of the issues, knowledge, funding and support. In addition to the barriers gathered from the literature, one wonders whether there are other social, economic, political or regionally-specific barriers that might explain the paucity of food system planning activities within local government.

My study seeks to build on earlier studies and further investigate the barriers and opportunities to food system planning. The next chapter will outline the methodology used for my research, including the geographic location, underlying research paradigm and rationale.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

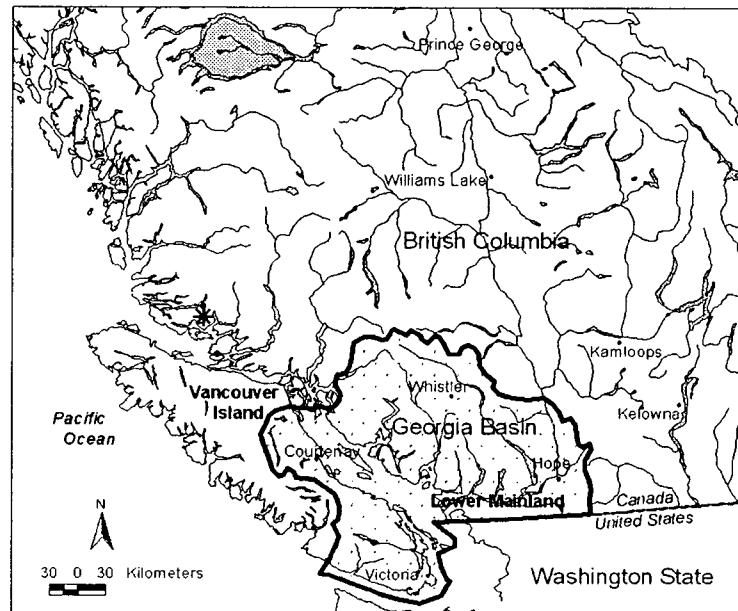
The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology that frames my research. As introduced in Chapter One, the thesis aims to identify barriers and opportunities to local government food system planning in the Georgia Basin region of British Columbia. The chapter begins by exploring the rationale behind the choice of geographic location, research methodology and topic. It then outlines the research process that guides the thesis.

5.2 Geographic Location

My research focuses on municipalities within the Georgia Basin bioregion, or “foodshed”, of Southwestern British Columbia. The foodshed delineates a conceptual territorial unit that includes the “physical, biological, social and intellectual components of the multidimensional space in which we live and eat” (Kloppenburger *et al.*, 1996: 122). Although the boundaries of the Georgia Basin often include the American Puget Sound area (Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative, 2003), I focus only on the Canadian municipalities due to their common political and legislative system (see Figure 1.1).

The Georgia Basin foodshed is home to 3.1 million people, comprising 75% of the provincial total (BC Stats, 2003). By 2020, the population is predicted to grow to more than 4 million, exacerbating existing environmental problems (Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative, 2003). The communities of the Georgia Basin are united to a large extent by common coastal geography, moderate climate, excellent soil capability, a tradition of resource-dependent economies as well as fast-growing populations and increasing urbanization (Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative, 2003). The Georgia Basin is home to a vibrant and growing alternative food system sector, supported by non-governmental organizations, organic farmers, nutritionists, small-scale food processors, restaurants and consumers (Barbolet *et al.*, 2002).

FIGURE 5.1 THE GEORGIA BASIN REGION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



5.2.1 Agricultural Land Reserve

In 1973, the province of British Columbia took action to protect the province's dwindling supply of agricultural land by implementing the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), a provincial land-use zone in which agriculture is designated as the priority use (ALC, 2004). Currently, the Georgia Basin region encompasses 5.5% of the province's ALR lands (ALC, 2003). The ALR takes precedence over other legislation and bylaws that apply to agricultural land, and is administered by the Agricultural Land Commission, in partnership with the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (BC MAFF) and local governments.

The presence of the ALR in the Georgia Basin has potential implications for food system planning for two reasons. First, the ALR is significant to the development of local food systems because it has succeeded in maintaining a large amount of peri-urban farmland, particularly as compared to other urban centres in the Georgia Basin- Puget Sound region (Northwest Environmental Watch and SmartGrowth BC, 2002). Second, the ALR is also significant since it mandates local government involvement in agricultural planning activities. Under the Agricultural Land Commission Act (Section 46) local governments

must ensure that bylaws and plans are consistent with Act. Plans that affect the ALR are required to have objectives and policies that support farming and “farm compatible activities” within the ALR.

5.2.2 Rationale: The Georgia Basin as a Research Location

In addition to the presence of the ALR and its supporting legislation, four more conditions make the Georgia Basin an ideal location for this research. First, in spite of a flourishing alternative food sector, as well as economically significant conventional agriculture, fisheries and processing sectors, preliminary studies have suggested that there are few examples of explicit local government policy and planning to support these sectors (Neumann, 1997; Anderson, 2003; Bouris, 2004). In spite of the presence of ALR legislation, local government planners are still only peripherally involved in agricultural planning activities (Smith, 1998a). Second, a network of food system stakeholders in several Georgia Basin communities⁹ has been pushing for the development of local government food system planning and policy, namely through the establishment of local government-affiliated citizen food policy councils.¹⁰ Third, the region features a mix of urban and rural, and farming and non-farming communities, thereby increasing the diversity of planning issues facing municipalities (and, it is hypothesized, the experiences with food system planning activities). Fourth, and perhaps most significantly, the food system of the Georgia Basin is one with which I am personally and professionally familiar. My work in the area of local food systems over the past few years with non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and, most recently, the City of Vancouver has exposed me to the web of issues, personalities, initiatives and political context that surround the creation of sustainable local food systems in the Georgia Basin.

5.3 Qualitative Research Methods

My study stems from the qualitative research tradition. Where quantitative research seeks

⁹ These communities include the Capital Regional District, Richmond, Surrey and Aldergrove (author, pers. obs). Recently, City of Vancouver established a mandate to work towards “the creation of a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver” (City of Vancouver, 2004).

¹⁰ Food policy councils are multi-stakeholder citizen committees that act as advisory and policy development bodies on food system issues.

to make empirically-based generalizations, qualitative research focuses on the experiences, interpretations and impressions of individuals (Robson, 2002). It seeks to explain events and their underlying causes by drawing on the attitudes, beliefs and motivations of individual participants. As with quantitative research, validity and reliability of data are critical (Shensul et al., 1999: 271). Rigour is ensured through triangulation of data from multiple data sources, encouraging participants to check and verify the accuracy of the data, and through an audit trail that describes the collection and analysis process as well as the means by which readers may refer (Shensul et al., 1999; Stringer, 1999).

5.4 Why Study This Topic?

5.4.1 The Scholarly 'Why'

The thesis increases current scholarly understanding in several ways. *First*, and perhaps most significantly, this research contributes to the newly emerging field of food system planning. More specifically, the study provides planners and voluntary sector organizations with an understanding of the barriers and opportunities to food system planning, from the perspective of Canadian planners who have already been involved in food system-related planning activities. *Second*, of particular relevance to community-based food organizations, the study draws on the experience of planners and recommends strategies for inserting the food system on the planning agenda. Many community-based food organizations lack an understanding of how to work with local government; the study aims to provide some recommendations as to how this might be achieved with respect to food system issues. *Third*, my research contributes to the on-going dialogue about the role of planners in working towards urban sustainability, namely towards cities that are more self-reliant, ecologically stable, socially just and economically viable. And, *fourth*, as a fundamental objective, the work contributes to the overall goal of urban sustainability and local food systems for Southwestern British Columbia and, potentially, elsewhere.

5.4.2 The Personal 'Why'

The choice of research topic is grounded first and foremost in my commitment to ecological and social justice. My desire to mitigate our species' impact on the planet led me to study the natural sciences: conservation biology, ecology, forest sciences. Yet as time went on, I realized that understanding natural systems seemed to have little to do with conserving or protecting them. Conservation concerns, and a desire to bridge the disconnection between theory and practice, kept pulling me toward the social sciences. My environmental studies classes allowed me to explore issues of politics, social justice, environmental education and public engagement. Still the challenge remained: how to mobilize change when most people perceive environmental issues as far-away and beyond their control?

For me, the metaphorical light bulb went on while studying in Australia for a year and I 'discovered' that, like forestry and mining, food production was also an environmental issue. As a community mobilization tool, food links us to each other through shared history, culture and ritual. Some of the most progressive models of community-based sustainable development come from community gardens, community supported agriculture and food-related local economic development. On a personal level, food security and sustainable agriculture became a way for me to combine my interests in social justice, environmental education, ecology, community development and ecofeminism.

After Australia, I worked for several years in local urban agriculture and food security projects in Victoria and Vancouver. While I thrived on the work and the network within the food community, I often became frustrated at the limited scale of the initiatives and by the way in which food-related projects were marginalized by the mainstream. In Argentina, I was introduced to community mapping, a tool for participatory planning, while helping to create a community food system map. This experience sparked my interest in community-based planning and made me wonder, how could food-related issues be inserted into urban planning processes in a more systematic way? Partly drawn

to UBC by its emerging institutional food system initiatives, I entered planning school intent on trying to answer this question.

Parallel to my studies, I have had the serendipitous opportunity to work as part of the City of Vancouver's newly established Food Policy staff team. The weekly requests that come in from organizations across North America interested in learning about and sometimes replicating the City of Vancouver's food policy initiatives have reinforced the novelty of what Vancouver is doing and, most significantly, the lack of food system planning initiatives in other places. These observations have led me to wonder whether there is room for food system planning on a broader scale, or whether it will only work in certain communities. Discussions with unconvinced colleagues and the public have also challenged my previously unwavering belief that food system planning is something that local governments *need* to be involved in. This study is an attempt to seek some clarity, if not some answers.

5.5 Methodological Assumptions

No researcher is free of cultural or personal bias. Our paradigm is the filter through which we interpret the world, our 'reality'. It shapes the question deemed worth asking, the procedures we chose and the analysis of our findings. While my own research paradigm is a synthesis of a lifetime of experiences, it shares affinities with both the critical and ecological/bioregional paradigms.

5.5.1 Critical Paradigm

The research project is being undertaken to support the development of more sustainable, local food systems in British Columbia and elsewhere. As such, my thesis aims explicitly at systemic change, an aim shared by critical researchers. Indeed, a critical paradigm seeks "...the structural transformation of systematic inequalities and, in the process, to empower those who have been systematically disempowered" (Sandercock 1998: 97). This goal is achieved by paying particular attention to ways in which "gender, class, culture, race, ethnicities and power intersect to shape inequities"(LeCompte and Shensul, 1999: 46). While critical theorists focus on the inequities levelled on human

communities, I share the views of urban political ecologists and ecofeminists who extend their analysis to the impacts of such inequities on ecological communities (e.g. Keil, 2003; M'Gonigle, 2000; Plumwood, 1997; Birkeland, 1993).

Critical research aims for congruence in both product and process. Due to time limitations, however, my research process does not follow methods of action research or popular education as proposed by critical theorists (e.g. Stringer, 1999; Thrupp, 1993). I have tried to insert some measure of critical methodology, however, by engaging in qualitative research and presenting results in the participants' own words. During interviews, it also became clear that my role was that of a researcher as well as that of an educator- a secondary role of critical researchers (Stringer, 1999)- as many participants sought information from me about the potential for food system planning as it was being practiced in Vancouver and other cities.

5.5.2 Ecological Paradigm

While my methodological approach can be described as 'critical', my analytical perspective stems from an ecological paradigm rooted in systems theory and bioregionalism. An ecological paradigm views the universe as non-dualistic, and all species, including humans, as ecological entities that are part of a larger, interconnected ecosphere (Taylor, 1992). The economy, society, communities and individuals are "inextricably integrated, completely contained and wholly dependent" subsystems of the larger system (Rees, 2002: 259). As a result, effects in one part of the system have consequences for another, typifying the dynamic, self-producing nature described by complex systems theory (e.g. Capra, 1993; Beers, 1981). My decision to take a holistic approach to the analysis of the food system (rather than simply assessing a single, reducible component) reflects this view.

Distilled to its simplest form, an ecological paradigm constitutes working within the limits of the ecosphere in order to maintain ecological sustainability (Rees, 2002). This paradigm runs counter to the prevailing expansionist economic paradigm, which views the economy (and thus society) as an isolated system, free of biophysical constraints

(Daly, 1994). In my view, the 'solutions' to the mounting ecological crisis lie in re-orienting our political, economic and societal structures to reflect the natural laws, evolutionary forces and systems dynamics that limit ecological systems (e.g. Rees, 2002; Keil, 2003; M'Gonigle, 2000).

In seeking 'solutions', my views are also strongly influenced by bioregionalism. The current economic structure has encouraged a material, political and economic dependence on regions far from our own, alienating humans from surrounding ecosystems and each other (Dodge, 1981). As an alternative, bioregionalism promotes human societies and economies that are adapted to the natural and cultural characteristics of a particular territory. Bioregionalism emphasises the need for social justice and local control over economic and political decision-making as fundamental requirements in any strategy for sustainability (Evanoff, 1999). In summary, a bioregional paradigm "places an emphasis on the region and community rather than state and nation/world; on conservation, stability, self-[reliance], and cooperation rather than exploitation; decentralization rather than centralization; division rather than polarization; and diversity rather than polarity" (Henderson, 1999:6).

5.6 Research Process

Research, according to Stringer (1999), is an iterative process that constantly cycles between looking, thinking and acting. In spite of the way it is presented below, the research process for this study was anything but linear. The major stages of the research process included:

5.6.1 Preliminary Observation

Since August 2003, I have worked first as a student intern and later as a Social Planner on the City of Vancouver's Food Policy staff team. As I have discovered, Vancouver's is the first municipal planning department (Social Planning) in North America to have an explicit mandate to work toward the development of a local food system that is both sustainable and just. My involvement in the work has introduced me to the practice of municipal planners, their involvement with the food system as well as some limitations

and opportunities for inserting food onto the planning agenda. These observations influenced the design as well as the analysis of this study.

5.6.2 Development of a Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this stage was to develop a theoretical framework that would guide data collection and analysis at later stages. Broadly, the development of this framework focused on four sets of literature: 1) academic writing on urban political ecology, which provided the broad theoretical underpinnings for this thesis; 2) academic and activist sources on local food systems, proposed as an alternative to the dominant food system; 3) academic and activist literature on the potential for food system planning; and 4) barriers to food system planning, as identified by planning academics.

5.6.3 Primary Data Collection

Because the study involved human subjects and the potential invasion of their privacy, the proposed procedures for recruitment, data collection, analysis, confidentiality and consent were reviewed and approved by the University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Board (B04-0353).

Interview Design and Technique: From the literature review, I generated a series of questions that formed the basis of semi-structured interviews (Shensul et al., 1999) with 13 local government planners. The questions were grouped around seven major themes (Box 5.1). The questions sought to establish the participants' involvement in food system-related activities, the perceived barriers and opportunities to food system planning, and to stimulate a broader discussion on the relationship between planning and local food systems. Drawing on my earlier review of the UPE literature, I was particularly interested in the conditions that prevent and/ or enable food system planning to take place, and the role of planners in promoting sustainability initiatives, including access to basic human needs.

BOX 5.1 SAMPLE LINE OF QUESTIONING FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH 13 PLANNERS INVOLVED IN FOOD SYSTEM-RELATED PLANNING ACTIVITIES

1. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of a sustainable local food system?
2. What are the major food or agricultural-related issues in your community?
3. In your capacity as a planner, are you currently involved with any food and agriculture-related activities? If so, which ones?
4. Do you believe that there is a need for increased involvement of planners in food system issues? Why?
5. Why do you believe that the food system has traditionally been left off the municipal planning agenda?
6. How would you characterize the level of support for food system issues within your department? What, in your opinion, are the reasons for this level of support?
7. Based on your experience, what is needed for planners to become more involved in food system issues?

The line of questioning went from the general to the specific. To encourage the participants to think about the range of food system planning activities, I usually began the interviews by asking about food system issues in their communities, and then segueing into the types of food system planning activities with which they had been involved. I prompted the participants as needed (*"Have you ever been involved in anything to do with food processing...?"*). This approach proved to be an effective "icebreaker", and on more than one occasion I realized that over half the allotted interview time had elapsed and the participants were still listing off their food system-related activities. Even participants who were initially doubtful about their involvement in the food system were able to see the existing connections.

From this introduction, I then used the questions in Box 5.1 as the basis for a broader discussion. I rarely followed the same order or wording of questions, and often probed the participants' responses, particularly if they related to those conditions that prevent or

enable food system planning. (e.g. *Can you explain what you mean by “the Council needs to support something for it to happen”?*).

Without exception, I found the participants’ answers to be reflective and respectful. Participants seemed genuinely interested in sharing their experiences and providing insight into their analysis of planning practice. Most interviews ran over the allotted time.

The interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, depending on the participants’ availability, and took place at a location in the participants’ communities, usually their office. All of the interviews were taped except for one, where hand-written notes were taken.

Participant Recruitment: In total, I interviewed 13 planners for my study. The criteria for participant recruitment included: 1) planners who were currently working for a municipal or regional government in any capacity (e.g. social planning, environmental planning, land use planning, etc.); 2) planners who had prior personal or professional involvement in at least one food system activity; 3) planners who were located in British Columbia’s Lower Mainland, Gulf Islands or Vancouver Island. The participants were identified through a combination of personal contacts, recommendations from a planner from the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries and Food and snowballing technique (LeCompte and Shensul, 1999). The pool of participants was deemed exhausted when the same names kept re-appearing.

Participants were generally keen to take part, however several expressed doubts prior to the interview that their work had anything to do with the food system. I tried to allay their doubts by reiterating that it was only important that they had been involved in one food-related activity, and that the purpose of my study was to probe their perceptions for why planners were not more involved. Planners who had been directly involved in agricultural planning were the least likely to question my invitation for them to participate. In total, I contacted 16 planners with requests for interviews. Thirteen agreed to participate. The other three could not be contacted in time due to conflicting holiday schedules. In the

end, I decided that it was unlikely the remaining three would have added significantly to the findings.¹¹

The participants were drawn from across the Georgia Basin (see Figure 5.1), and represented a range of communities and types of planners. For ease of analysis, these were grouped into four different demographic categories that might help explain response variations: by whether the planners were from communities that had significant agricultural land; by the planners' jurisdiction; by type of planner; and by geographical sub-region. Because of the sampling techniques used, some categories are more represented than others. My major disappointment is that all of the participants from non-agricultural communities also happen to be the only social planners who participated.

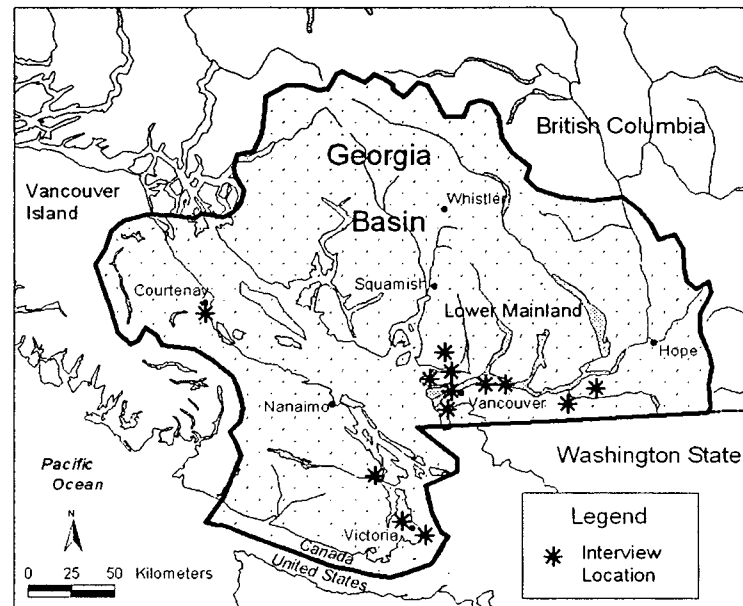
The choice to interview planners already familiar with at least one food system planning activity –rather than those with no experience- was intentional. My research design started from the assumption that those planners familiar with food system issues would also be aware of and able to discuss the attitudes of their colleagues who were not involved in food system planning activities. As a researcher, my goal was to encourage critical reflection from people who have already been involved in local food systems planning and policy about their experiences, namely the barriers and opportunities to advancing this field. I also drew on the participants' prior experience to provide insight as to whether there really is a need for a separate field of food system planning.

¹¹ Two of the three people were from departments where someone else had already been interviewed for my study. The other person was a land use planner from a community with agricultural land in the Lower Mainland, a category that already had a relatively high number of participants.

TABLE 5.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

Demographic Characteristic	Type of community		Jurisdiction		Type of planner			Geographic sub-region		TOTAL
	Non-Agricultural	Agricultural	Municipality	Regional District	Land Use	Environmental	Social	Van. Island	Lower Mainland	
Number of Participants	4	9	9	4	6	3	4	4	9	13

FIGURE 5.2 SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS THROUGH THE GEORGIA BASIN



5.6.4 Data Analysis

After transcribing the full interviews, the results were coded by hand. The coding process was based on that proposed by Shensul et al. (1999). I first identified the major themes (“domains”) that emerged from the interviews. Within these themes, I noted different variables and factors that appeared to influence the themes. For each theme, I created a matrix that quantified the number of times a factor or variable was mentioned by a

participant, categorized the demographic characteristics of the participant¹², and presented supporting quotes from the interviews.

The results in Chapter Six are grouped according to the major themes that formed the line of questioning during the interviews (Box 5.1). It is important to keep in mind that not all participants were asked every question. Therefore, the findings are best regarded as a sample, and point only to trends. The results directly represent what was said in the interviews with planners. The participants and their communities remain anonymous, and identifying comments have been removed, as appropriate.

The data analysis was challenging for two reasons. First, it was difficult at times to group the themes, variables and factors into the seven broad categories of barriers proposed by Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000), as many of their categories were closely related and dependent upon each other (e.g. “lack of relevance to planners roles and responsibilities”; “food system is the domain of the private market”- one is a more detailed elaboration of the same idea). After much deliberation, I categorized the data into the category to which it best fit. I also created five new categories that were overlooked in the earlier study.

The second challenge lay in determining which of the cited barriers and opportunities were based on the participants’ *lived* experience versus those that were based on their *imagined* experience. Consider the subtle differences between “community support has been critical to this initiative” versus “I think that more public pressure is needed to put food system issues on the planning agenda”. The former is based on past or lived experience, while the latter is based on predicted or imagined experience (albeit, steeped in professional knowledge and experience on other issues). In the end, I came to the conclusion that the difference between lived and imagined is relatively insignificant for this study. Given that my overall purpose was to have planners describe their own

¹² The abbreviations used in the tables in Chapter 6 are as follows: 1) whether the participants work in a jurisdiction without significant agricultural lands (Non-Ag.) or with agricultural lands (Ag.); 2) whether they work for a municipality (Muni.) or regional district (Reg.); 3) whether they work as a land-use planner (L.U. Pl.), environmental planner (Env. Pl.) or social planner (Soc.Pl.) – insert footnote; and 4) whether they work in a community on Vancouver Island (Van.Is.) or the Lower Mainland (L.Mnl).

perceptions of the barriers and opportunities- and not to test those perceptions- all of those barriers and opportunities that were mentioned are deemed valid and included here.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodology that frames and guides the thesis. The ecological and social context, and my familiarity with the region, makes the Georgia Basin an ideal study location. The study builds on my personal interests and seeks to contribute to the emerging field of food system planning. In so doing, it is firmly rooted within the critical research and ecological/bioregional paradigms, which collectively speak to the systemic change necessary for ecological, social and economic justice. The study relied on observation, a literature review and semi-structured interviews, and loosely followed an iterative sequence of developing a theoretical framework, data collection, data analysis and presentation of findings. My research findings are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: PERCEPTIONS OF THE BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present my findings regarding the barriers and obstacles to food system planning, as drawn from semi-structured interviews with 13 planners from the Georgia Basin region. How are planners currently involved in food system activities? Is there a need for planners to be further involved with the food system? What are the barriers and opportunities to such involvement? The chapter presents my findings for these central questions. The results are grouped according to the major themes that formed the line of questioning during the interviews (Box 5.1). Although I provide a basic quantitative analysis of my findings for each theme, the richness of the study lies in the words of the participants, also presented here.

6.2 Types of Food System-Related Planning Activities in Which Participants Are Involved

Participants were asked to identify their past and present involvement in planning activities related to the food system. The result was a diverse list of activities, ranging from the specific to the general, including programs, projects and policy (see Table 6.1). Depending on the activity, planners were involved in a regulatory, technical or facilitative role. In some cases, a particular food system planning activity was undertaken by colleague of the participant ("other planner") or by a different department within the agency altogether ("other dept. within agency"). In recognition of the fact that planners are not the only ones who undertake food system planning activities, all results are included in Table 6.1.

In total, participants identified 50 food system-related planning activities with which they, their department or their agency had been involved. Of these, 32 can be classified as activities that influence the production stage of the food system. As one might expect, these activities were undertaken primarily in jurisdictions containing agricultural lands.

Planners reported significantly less involvement in other stages of the food system. Seven participants, a mix of planners from agricultural and non-agricultural areas, were involved in food distribution-related activities. The same number was involved in activities that are classified as “system-wide”, such as regular meetings with food system stakeholders and the development of a food policy council.

The most commonly cited activities (8 participants) were the creation of farmland protection policies in official or regional plans, and regular meetings with food system stakeholders (7 participants). The former was mentioned by every almost every participant (8/9) from a community with agricultural land. The latter was mentioned by participants from agricultural and non-agricultural communities. Regular meetings took place in a variety of forums, from meetings with the local farmers institute, to participation on a task force or steering committee as part of a larger planning process. The next most cited activity also involved meetings with stakeholders, specifically those from the food production sector. Six participants mentioned that they were personally involved in coordinating or liaising with the regional or municipal Agricultural Advisory Committees.

A number of activities were mentioned by five participants, including the administration of Agricultural Land Reserve subdivision and/or exclusion applications, the administration of zoning for food processors and the siting of food stores in underserved areas. The remaining activities represent a wide variety of often-innovative involvement. These range from the administration of ALR exclusion applications to the development of an economic strategy for local agriculture to creating wildlife habitat plans. Three communities have organic demonstration farms on civic land. One Vancouver Island municipality is examining options for new agricultural land tenure systems that might increase the on-site density and thus economic viability for farmers. Another Vancouver Island regional district planner has helped to create outreach materials on the local agricultural sector.

TABLE 6.1 PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Stage of the Food System	Food System-Related Planning Activity	TOTAL number of part. involved (13)	By type of community		By jurisdiction		By type of planner			By geographic sub-region		Who is primarily involved in the initiative?		
			Non -Ag. (4)	Ag. (9)	Muni. (9)	Reg. Dist. (4)	Land Use (6)	Env. (3)	Soc. (4)	Van. Is. (4)	Lw. Mnl. (9)	Parti- cipant	Other planner/ dept.	
Production	Created ALR/farmland protection policy for Official Community/ Local Area/ Regional Plan	8		8	5	3	6	2		3	5	8		
	Liaised with and/or facilitated Agricultural Advisory Committee	6		6	4	2	3	2	1	1	5	6		
	Administered ALR exclusion and/or subdivision applications	5		5	2	3	3	2		1	4	5		
	Involved in watershed/ watercourse planning for agricultural areas (e.g. irrigation study, stormwater management)	4		4	4		2	1	1	1	3	3	1	
	Developed economic strategy for local agriculture	3		3	3		2	1		1	2	3		
	Developed wildlife habitat plan in agricultural area	3		3	2	1	1	1	1		3	3		
	Created agritourism-supportive policies (e.g. new zoning)	3		3	3		3			1	2	3		
	Established organic demonstration farm on civic land	3		3	3		3			1	2		3	
	Administered zoning for agricultural areas	3		3	2	1	3				3	2	1	
	Updated agricultural bylaws to bring them in line with provincial guidelines	2		2	1	1		2		1	1	2		
	Organized local farm tour	2		2	2			1	1		2	2		
	Undertook recreational planning in agricultural areas	2		2	1	1	1	1			2	2		
	Planned signage system for local agritourism	2		2	2		2			2		2		
	Established Development Permit Areas to protect farmland	2		2	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	
	Participated in sustainable agriculture network	1		1	1				1		1	1		
	Developed community gardens policy	1		1	1		1			1		1		
	Facilitated new community gardens	1	1		1		1				1		1	
	Studied impact of agriculture on environment	1		1	1		1			1		1		
	Developed aquaculture regulations	1		1		1	1			1		1		
	Developed agricultural area plan	1		1		1	1			1		1		
	Created outreach material on local agricultural area	1		1		1	1			1		1		
	Liaised with real estate agents/ homeowners to explain ALR requirements	1		1		1				1		1		
	Involved in public agricultural awareness activities	1		1	1			1			1	1		
	Encouraged community urban agriculture activities	1	1		1		1				1	1		
	Planned for commercial agriculture-oriented transportation routes	1		1		1	1				1	1		
	Studied economic impact of local agriculture	1		1	1		1				1	1		
	Examined options for new agricultural land tenure system	1		1	1		1			1		1		
	Examined non-farm uses of ALR land	1		1	1		1			1		1		
		Developed land-for-lease program for unused farmland	1		1						1		1	
		Sponsored local agricultural festival	2		2	2		1			2			2
Processing	Involved in zoning for food processing or value-added activities	4		4	3	1	4			2	2	4	1	
Distribution/ Food Access	Facilitated local farmers market	4	1	3	3	1	4			1	3		4	
	Involved in siting of grocery stores in underserved areas	3	3	3	5	1	4	1	1	3	3	4	2	
	Involved in siting of grocery stores in new developments	3	1	2	3		2	1		2	1	1	2	
	Facilitated community emergency food programs	1	1		1		1				1	1		
	Sponsored study on the feasibility of a community-based supermarket	1	1		1		1				1	1		
	Developed course on direct marketing/ business planning for local farmers	1		1	1		1			1		1		
	Worked with community centres on neighbourhood-based food access issues	1	1		1				1		1			

TABLE 6.1 PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING ACTIVITIES, CONT'D

Stage of the Food System	Food System-Related Planning Activity	TOTAL number of part. involved (13)	By type of community		By jurisdiction		By type of planner			By geographic sub-region		Who is primarily involved in the initiative?	
			Non-Ag. (4)	Ag. (9)	Muni. (9)	Reg. Dist. (4)	Land Use (6)	Env. (3)	Soc. (4)	Van. Is. (4)	Lw. Mnl. (9)	Participant	Other planner/ dept.
Consumption	Developed policy for communal eating/ cooking space for seniors' housing	1	1		1		1				1	1	
Waste Disposal	Administer zoning for commercial composting	1		1	1		1			1		1	
	Coordinate residential/ industrial composting	1		1	1			1			1		1
System-Wide	Met regularly with food system stakeholders	7	3	4	5	2	3	2	2	2	5	7	
	Assisted with establishment of Food Policy Council	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	1		3	3	
	Provided community grants for food/ agricultural activities	3	2	1	3		2	1		2	1		3
	Involved in creation of food policy council	2	2		2				2		2	2	
	Created sustainability charter addressing food system issues	1		1	1				1		1	1	
	Wrote proposals for agricultural grants with NGOs	1		1	1			1	1		1	1	
	Proposed creating food system plan	1		1	1				1		1	1	

In communities with little agricultural land, the most popular food system planning activity mentioned was the siting of food stores, both in underserved neighbourhoods and new developments. Local governments in non-agricultural communities (although not planners) were also involved in facilitating new farmers markets and providing grants for food-related community projects.

6.3 Participants' Perceptions of the Barriers to Food System Planning

Table 6.2 presents the perceived barriers to food system planning and the frequency with which they were cited by the participants. Under each barrier, a more detailed explanation of the barrier is provided under each heading, as appropriate. The top half of the table corresponds to barriers mentioned previously by Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000). The bottom half lists a number of "new" barriers to food system planning that emerged from my research.

6.3.1 Barriers Cited By Pothukuchi and Kaufman: In the Participants' Own Words

The richness of this study lies in the interviews conducted with 13 planners, a richness that is veiled by the simple quantitative analysis presented in Table 6.2. The following section presents a summary of the cited barriers in the participants' own words.

Barrier #1: Little perceived relationship to planning roles and responsibilities (10/13 participants). A total of 10 participants felt that the food system was not explicitly included in planning practice because it did not fit into the traditional roles or responsibilities of planners. Only one social planner mentioned this barrier. Eight participants, including 100% of the participating land-use planners, suggested that planning has traditionally focused on issues of land use and physical planning. The food system does not intersect with traditional planning

TABLE 6.2 PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BARRIERS TO FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING

Type of Barrier	TOTAL number of responses (13)	By community type		By jurisdiction		By type of planner			By geographic sub-region	
		Non- Ag.	Ag.	Muni.	Reg. Dist.	Land Use	Env.	Soc.	Van. Is.	Lw. Mnl.
		(4)	(9)	(9)	(4)	(6)	(3)	(4)	(4)	(9)
BARRIERS CITED BY POTHUKUCHI AND KAUFMAN (2000)										
1. Little perceived relationship to planning roles and responsibilities	10	1	9	6	4	6	3	1	3	7
Planning is focused on physical/ land use planning	8		8	5	3	5	2		3	5
Planning dept. not involved in social planning	6		6	3	3	3	3		3	3
Responsibility of Province/ ALC	6		6	3	3	3	3		1	5
Community agencies/ organizations already involved	1		1		1		1			1
2. Lack of relevance to urban environment	4		4	3	1	2	2		1	3
Food system is not an urban issue	4		4	3	1	2	2		1	3
3. Perception that food is the domain of the private market	8	1	7	6	2	5	2	1	2	6
Market/ industry largely controls the food system	8	1	7	6	2	5	2	1	2	6
4. Lack of funding	4		4	2	2	3	1		3	1
Budget constraints	4		4	2	2	1	1		3	1
5. Lack of perceived problems with the current food system	12	3	9	8	4	6	3	3	4	8
Invisibility of the problem	12	3	9	8	4	6	3	3	4	8
Societal disconnection with the food system	7	1	6	5	2	4	2	1	3	4
6. Lack of opportunity for professional collaboration	4		4	1	3	2	2		1	3
Responsibility of another profession	4		4	1	3	2	2		1	3
7. Weak understanding of the issues	5		5	2	3	2	3		1	4
Lack of education/ knowledge about food system planning	5		5	2	3	2	3		1	4
ADDITIONAL BARRIERS CITED BY PARTICIPANTS										
8. Lack of political will	12	3	9	8	4	6	3	2	4	8
No legislated mandate for involvement	7	2	5	5	3	2	3	3	1	6
Lack of Council/ Regional Board political will	5	1	4	4	1	2	2	1	3	2
Council's fear of failure with new initiatives	3		3	2	1	3			2	1
Resistance to perceived downloading	3		3	1	2	2	1		2	1
Lack of farmer political representation	2		2	2		1	1		1	1
Saturation with agricultural issues	1		1	1		1				1
9. Lack of community pressure	6	1	5	4	2	2	3	1	2	4
Lack of community pressure	4	1	3	3	1	1	2	1	1	3
Farmers resistant to planner involvement	3		3	1	2	1	2			3
Public opposition to specific issues	2	1	1	2		1		1	2	
10. Lack of institutional will	4	2	2	4		1	1	2		4
Lack of senior manager will	2	1	1	2			1	1		2
No time for new issues	2	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1
Departmental resistance to change	1		1	1			1			1
Planning is reactive, not pro-active	1		1	1		1				1
Lack of empowerment of individual planners	1		1	1			1			1
11. Wrong scale	6	1	5	4	2	4	1	1	1	4
Food system planning better-suited to the region, not municipalities	4	1	3	4		2	1	1	1	3
Food system planning better-suited to municipalities, not the region	2		2		2	2			1	2
12. Other cited barriers										
Lack of leadership at the provincial/federal level	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2
Low respect for farmers	2		2	1	1	1	1		1	1
Too big of an issue	1		1		1		1			1

functions, such as zoning, subdivision design, roadways and other infrastructure and therefore is not addressed by planners. Some examples:

With housing and transportation, you can actually plan for them. For example, in transportation planning, you can build roads. Food system planning is more general, and not grounded physically. (F)

Another reason for the lack of attention to food system-related planning issues, particularly those relating to food distribution and consumption, is that they are perceived as social planning issues. Few municipalities and regional districts have designated social planning departments or social planners, and therefore are not involved in certain food system issues:

[Food access issues are] where we fall down as regional district planners, we're not involved in a lot of social planning and that is unfortunate, because it should be first and foremost in our thinking, environmental and social considerations should all build into any of the policies we develop. (B)

[Are there issues of food access or hunger that come to public attention?] ...we don't have a social planner, we don't have a social planning department, we certainly recognize that it is a regional issue, but I guess most of those kind of social planning issues are happening [in more urban centres]. (A)

Another reason participants cited for why the food system is not viewed as part of planners' roles and responsibilities is because the provincial Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, and the Agricultural Land Commission are both involved in aspects of agricultural policy and planning. Provincial regulations and processes restrict a local government's ability to control activities within agricultural areas:

I think, whenever I raise agriculture or creation a sustainable agriculture plan or something like that, it always comes back to 'that is not our responsibility, that is a provincial responsibility'. So there seems to be this real frustration with the fact that the municipality cannot control what happens in the ALR. (D)

[Agriculture] all happens within the ALR, and frankly, we don't have a lot of jurisdiction or overarching jurisdiction. Then you're dealing with the Agricultural Land Commission. (E)

The Agricultural Land Commission is a reason that local government doesn't pay as much attention to agricultural issues and planning, since there is the perception that someone else is taking care of it...(K)

One participant also mentioned that community organizations are already effectively addressing system issues, particularly those related to hunger and food access. There is little need for planning agencies to become involved.

Barrier #2: Lack of relevance to the urban environment (4/13 participants). The food system is viewed as a rural, production-oriented system and not an urban system. If planners are involved at all, then the food system is the jurisdiction of regional or rural planners, and not urban planners.

I guess part of the reason you wouldn't see [food system planning] is that planners don't really have a big interface with agriculture. There are many, many more urban planners than rural planners. In rural area, they are dealing with more land use style issues than whether or not the farmers can survive or are sustainable. (I)

Well, planning is really urban-oriented, isn't it. You know, when you're a student, you look at all of the urban issues- density, types of housing, industry, transportation. You know, really urban stuff. We're not trained...I think three or four generations ago, we were all farmers and today nobody is a farmer now that I'm aware of, we're all urban folk. (G)

Barrier #3: Perception that food is the domain of the private market (8/13 participants). Food is an economic commodity. Most aspects of the food system are controlled by market forces and hence are not the realm of public agencies, including planners:

Some aspects of the food system are market-driven, so planners don't tend to get involved. (F)

There are some very powerful producer organizations, and I don't see local government needing to duplicate the role in a lot of those issues. (E)

We don't typically think of food production as part of the public sector. Transportation planning and design and construction, civil engineering and all that has a role in the public sector, but we typically haven't thought of agriculture in the same way. (A)

One social planner explained how her planning department had been trying unsuccessfully to get food stores into an underserved neighbourhood for many years. Ultimately, it was market demand, and not planning efforts, that led to new stores for the area:

And there are a few green grocers that have sprung up. And that is not a function of meeting the needs of long-standing citizens who are lower-income, that is a function of meeting the needs of the incoming people, because we are densifying....So now they [the food stores] are responding to that population, and coming with green grocers and meat markets, and there is more variety now. (J)

Barrier #4: Lack of funding (4/13 participants). New policy or program areas require increased funding. Due to provincial cutbacks and other funding restrictions, funds for food system planning would be unlikely:

Historically, planning, especially in small community like this haven't gotten much staff resources and so as a result you traditionally do what land use planners do and any sort of efforts to branch out beyond that is looked at with a bit of a skewed look, because the politicians aren't always comfortable with that. If they see the municipality being pulled in areas where traditionally they've not had a role, they are very reluctant to take on a role that simply means they are going to be doing more without a sense of where the resources are going to come from. (K)

Barrier #5: Lack of perceived problems with the current food system (12/13 participants). The most commonly cited barrier was that the general public does not perceive major problems with the existing food system. The ecological, economic and social impacts of the current food system have not hit crisis proportions. As a result, neither the public, nor politicians, nor planners are demanding widespread change. For most people, food is cheap, accessible and plentiful:

And we haven't had a lot of food shortages. We go into the supermarkets, and there is always tons of food there, if you have the money, you can buy it, right? (D)

I mean,[food] has just gotten cheaper and cheaper and cheaper, and not reflective of the full cost of food...It is accessible, it is cheap, and it is from all over the world, and we don't spend much money on it.(H)

People don't think about food, because it is ubiquitous and really, anybody you talk to about this on a global sense, there is more food than we can eat. (I)

Several participants specifically commented on the invisibility of hunger and food access issues in their communities:

Perhaps we're in a little bit of the sense of denial here, we're going through some of that here, that we don't see [hunger] as an issue here. (A)

Hunger is not apparent here...[this community] is no worse than any other community of the same size. (F)

Participants largely attributed the invisibility of the problem to society's physical and experiential disconnection from the food supply. A lack of understanding of where their food comes from causes consumers to take their food system for granted, and have little concern about the conditions under which their food is produced or distributed:

We're well past, we're many generations past, the time when we actually knew where our food was coming from and we actually saw the source of our food. (A)

There is a disconnect. Even as a planner, I think we have to be reminded time and time again, this trip to the grocery store and you're food is going to be there- that is not guaranteed. (B)

Barrier #6: Lack of collaborative opportunities (4/13 participants). The food system is seen as another profession's responsibility. There is little collaboration between planners and other food-related professions. Planners do not understand food system issues, and nutritionists, agrologists and farmers do not understand planning issues.

Planners are not the only social agents around. There are other people- there are agrologists, who handle this as part of their professional routine. There are growers and farmers and their organizations need to take care of it. (I)

I think that the food system has been put into categories around agrology, or production, at least the agricultural side...I'm thinking of the kind of education leading to professional experience- it is like the "aggies" study in agriculture, and then the food access was more in the social programs, and then there is the whole home economics side of food to me, and I think on the planning side the link to food systems as a component of complete communities has largely been assumed to have been addressed elsewhere. (H)

Barrier #7: Lack of education (5/13 participants). Planning school education does not prepare planners to address food system issues. Planners have neither a strong understanding of nor first-hand experience with the food system. They do not possess the skills or knowledge necessary to become involved.

There is not specific training in schools for cross-fertilization between agrology and planning. So when people come out of planning school, they really don't know anything about agriculture, and if you come through the route of agrology, you really don't know anything about land use planning. And agrologists and planners really don't talk the same language. (I)

6.4 Additional Barriers Cited by the Participants

The following five barriers were identified in my study and not mentioned by Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000):

Barrier #8: Lack of political will (12/13 participants). A lack of political will was seen as a major barrier to food system planning. In general, the decisions of Council and/or the Regional District Board dictate those issues that planners are involved in. A lack of political will impedes a planner's ability to work on a particular initiative.

One of the things that really bugged me about planning school is that we were given the impression that we could make decisions. And the truth is, again in my experience, that we don't make decisions. We are given topics that we have to research or provide information on. We provide recommendations to Council and they make decisions. (D)

...I can't foresee in the next 10 years that [food system planning] is going to be something that I spend a lot of my time working on, because there is no political will. (L)

One reason for the lack of political will is that local politicians perceive that they have no mandate to work on food system issues. Municipal and regional governments have not been granted the powers, jurisdiction or mandate by the province to get involved in certain food system activities, except agricultural planning activities to some degree. This barrier was cited by participants in communities with agricultural lands...

...maybe the provincial government needs to give enabling legislation to municipalities because it always seems to come back to 'we don't have the legislation to do that' at the municipal level, to say 'you can create a local food system and you can pass bylaws...' (D)

I don't think the region can play that much of a role [in moving towards more sustainable farming practices], we have no jurisdiction in telling [farms] how to operate, that would be a health issue. (E)

Definitely, we have no regulatory role, with respect to farming. We do have a regulatory role with respect to land use in terms of the green zone protection (I)

...as well as communities with no agricultural lands:

Well, when you understand the role of local government in Canada, we do the things we do mostly for two reasons. One, we have the legislative mandate to do it. We have a charter that guides us... So out of that legislation, that mandate, the city structure and functions deal with that. Well, we don't have that in terms of food policy. No one has told us we should do food policy. (M)

However, the lack of a specific mandate was not considered a barrier for one participant:

...it is not really that long ago that we were told [the municipality] has no role in welfare. Well, if you give people affordable housing, and you give people better access to good nutrition and free food or support the agencies that do that, you're involved in welfare. (C)

Local government politicians may also be reluctant to engage in food system planning if it is perceived as downloading:

Well, I'm kind of interested to see what is going to be downloaded by the provincial government around this whole topic [the food system]. A lot of what we see as new as coming to the local level is stuff that has been downloaded from the province. Now to put a pessimistic spin on it, but you can't help but be a little cynical around that kind of thing. (A)

Or, if there is any suggestion that a food system-related planning activity could fail:

One of the things we've talked about with our community gardens policy is what happens if, what would happen if we set up a community garden and nobody came? How would that reflect on us? (A)

Two participants thought that the low number of farmers who hold Council positions also influences the lack of political will since the issues facing the farming community do not have a direct line to reach the political agenda. Finally, one participant suggested that her Council had dealt with a number of agricultural issues lately, and that there would likely be little appetite for more in the near future.

Barrier #9: Lack of community pressure (6/13 participants). Public pressure determines which issues get on the planning agenda. Public pressure can come from individuals or through organized constituency groups. A lack of public pressure suggests that food system issues are of low importance to the community and therefore provides little encouragement for local governments to get involved.

...You know, municipal governments tend to operate on a kind of a squeaky wheel principle, you know the parts of the community that squeak, that make a lot of noise, those are the parts that get attention, and for every one person who complains that we don't have a community garden, or that we don't have access to food, there are a hundred families complaining that we don't have enough hockey time. So what do we do? We expand the rink. (A)

The farm community, in particular, may be resistant to food system planning initiatives if it means that planners are further involved in regulating agricultural activities:

...when I talk to farmers, their view of planners is people who get in the way, usually. People whose regulations are impeding the ability to do farming. People who are making them jump through hoops. So more involvement by planners is not necessarily considered by the farm community to be a good thing. (I)

The public is not necessarily supportive of all food system-related planning activities, even if they are intended to enhance the local food system. Public opposition to a food system-related initiative can lead to its political defeat and lack of implementation.

Well, we tried to put a small grocery store in [a certain neighbourhood], on a 10-acre parcel for development. We encouraged a small commercial village concept and the community didn't go for it- they like their suburban values and they wanted to drive 15 minutes to get their groceries. So sometimes [putting food stores in] underserved neighbourhoods doesn't work. (A)

Barrier #10: Lack of institutional will (4/13 participants). A lack of support on the part of senior managers, administrators or the broader culture of the planning department will restrict planners from engaging in food system planning initiatives. Senior staff is the bridge between Council and more junior planners. If they are unsupportive of food system planning efforts, or do not foster a culture of empowerment, it is unlikely that planners will be able to effectively work in food system-related activities.

I'm a planner but then I report to a manager who reports to a director, who reports to an administrator, who reports to Council. So at every single level, there is the opportunity for [a food system initiative] to be chopped up, honed down, changed and by the time it gets to Council, it may not look anything like what it did. So depending on...what is happening in the political sphere, people's personalities come into it, people want to take ownership for things, they don't want to have a junior planner take credit for things. (D)

Another reason for a lack of institutional will is that planners are already overstretched and do not have the time or resources to address another, new initiative such as food system planning.

First of all, we feel we have plenty to do (laughs). In terms of jurisdiction, it's like the in-tray is toppling over...In the case of a new idea, such as food policy, it would have to be put in the hopper with the new ideas list, and dealt with accordingly. There are only so many hours in the day. (J)

As a result, planning agencies are resistant to new ideas and initiatives that will broaden their scope and expand their responsibilities. One participant suggested that planning reacts to problems; it does not seek out opportunities. Planners will become involved in food system activities when there is a specific request (e.g. a controversial zoning application) or demonstrated need.

Barrier #11: Wrong scale (6/13 participants). Several participants suggested that food system planning would be better-addressed at another scale. Four participants felt that food system planning would be addressed most effectively at the regional level, because municipalities are too small and lack the political clout to achieve results over the broad-scale.

We are not even 50,000 people...There has to be some idea of where food system planning makes sense. For me, it makes sense at the regional level, first. (J)

I see the benefit of doing [food system planning] on a regional level...I think agriculture can benefit because frankly, a poultry farmer in Abbotsford has more in common with a poultry farmer in Chilliwack than the dairy farmer in Abbotsford. (E)

On the other hand, two participants from regional districts thought that food system issues would be addressed more effectively at the municipal level, as regional districts do not have the legislative powers such as zoning to regulate many local food system activities.

Barrier #12: Other cited barriers. Participants cited three other barriers to food system planning in addition to those presented above. Three participants suggested that there was little incentive for local governments to undertake food system planning since there was no leadership from higher levels of government on the issue. In particular, participants pointed to existing higher government policies that detracted from the goals of sustainable food systems. For example:

...I think the provincial side of things is where things have been- you know the 35% cut across the board, including in the Agricultural Land Commission, and in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and in the Ministry of Environment or Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection- I think those kinds of messages don't bode well for the region because [it] and local government don't want to be downloaded upon and it also expresses a lower level of importance. So, if there was an increased activity, involvement, interest, or level of importance from the province, then [this region] might be more motivated to partner on those kinds of things. (H)

A lack of societal respect for farmers may also contribute to a lack of food system planning efforts. Until the general begins to respect farmers and the vital role that they play in supporting communities, food production issues will continue to be maligned on the local government planning and policy agenda:

...Right now, farmers, I think, are still considered to be kind of stupid, "well you couldn't get a better job so you're a farmer" type of thing. But if farmers realized the power that they have over people, and if they realized that they hold one of the most important things in survival, that they could take that power and instead of charging the lowest price, charge the highest price. (D)

Finally, one planner felt that the food system was too complex and too big of an issue for local governments to concern themselves with:

The food system is probably too big to think about because it is all wrapped up with energy, transportation, regulation and trade practices and international relations and California water [...] you'll get lost. You'll get totally, totally lost.(I)

6.5 Conditions that Enable Food System Planning

In many regards, the participants identified the conditions that enable food system planning as the inverse of those that constitute the barriers (e.g. political support, public pressure, relevance to existing roles and responsibilities, etc). The enabling conditions do not correspond directly with the frequency in which the barriers were mentioned, however. Table 6.3 presents a list of conditions, identified by participants, which were thought to facilitate involvement with food system planning issues. In some cases, the conditions refer to participants' experience with a specific food system planning activity; in others, the conditions refer to participants' imagined involvement with a broader field of food system planning and policy. As with the barriers, the differences between real and imagined enabling conditions were deemed insignificant for the purposes of this research, and all are included here.

Participants mentioned a wide range of enabling conditions. The most commonly cited condition was the need for a supportive Council (12/13 participants), followed by community pressure (10/13). Eight of thirteen participants indicated that they were involved in a food system planning activity because it fit into their existing planning roles and responsibilities. Participants felt that community agricultural identity, public involvement, and relations with other levels of government also influenced the presence or absence of food system planning activities.

TABLE 6.3 PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CONDITIONS THAT ENABLE FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING

Enabling conditions	TOTAL number of responses (13)	By community type		By jurisdiction		By type of planner			By geographic sub-region	
		Non-Ag. (4)	Ag. (9)	Muni. (9)	Reg. Dist. (4)	Land Use (6)	Env. (3)	Soc. (4)	Van. Is. (4)	Lw. Mnl. (9)
Championing by Council/ Regional Board members	12	3	9	8	4	6	3	3	4	8
Public pressure	10	3	7	8	2	5	2	3	4	6
Fits into existing roles and responsibilities	8		8	4	4	5	3		2	6
Individual planner initiative	6	3	3	4	2	2	1	3	2	4
Complementary to existing policy area	6	3	3	5	1	2	2	2	1	5
Food system part of community identity	5		5	3	2	5			2	3
Broader social trend	5	2	3	4	1	2	1	4	1	4
Agricultural Advisory Committee initiative	4		4	2	2	2	2			4
Community discussion on another issue	3	1	2	3		2		1	1	2
Changes to provincial regulations required involvement	3		3	3		3			1	2
Intergovernmental partnership	3	1	2	2	1	2		1	1	2
Desire for economic opportunity	2	2		1	1	2			2	

6.5.1 Conditions that Enable Food System Planning: In The Participants' Own Words

The following section presents the participants' own descriptions of the conditions that enable food system planning activities. Only the top five enabling conditions are discussed here. The rest can be found in Appendix A.

Enabling Condition #1: Championing by Council/ Regional Board members (12/13

participants). The support and leadership of the regional board or municipal Council is critical to planner involvement in food system activities:

[This] Council has always historically viewed the preservation of agriculture as one of the important values of the community. So, from [this community's] point of view, and I must say it is very different than other municipalities in the Lower Mainland, that the preservation of agricultural land has always been at the forefront. (G)

[A comprehensive food policy] wouldn't happen, I don't believe, unless it was spearheaded by Mayor or a few Council members who say 'yes, I want our staff to be doing this. (J)

Enabling Condition #2: Public pressure (10/13 participants). Public pressure and support contributes to the involvement of planners in food system-related activities. Pressure may stem from organized groups, or through the demands of individual citizens, and is exerted on both local government politicians and planners.

[How would you characterize the level of support for agriculture within the general community here?] Very high. Without community support for agriculture, there wouldn't be municipal support. (G)

Usually, local government responds to the pressure of the community that they serve, they regulate. (M)

When the plan was done [for a particular neighbourhood] in 1986, the community all came together and said "We really need a grocery store, we don't have any grocery stores, we have to drive to Timbuktu to get one". In the plan, they said "OK, this area right by [the park], we want banks, we want a coffee shop, we want all these things, and it came to fruition..."(L)

Enabling Condition #3: Fits into existing municipal/ planner roles and responsibilities. (8/13 participants). Planners become involved in a particular food system-related activity because it is considered part of their normal roles and responsibilities. As a result, involvement in food system planning is not necessarily an explicit or primary goal, but rather 'incidental' to their other duties. As one regional planner explained,

In terms of other agricultural-related issues, the ALR is an overriding issue. It is both an agriculture issue, and an urban boundary issue. Frankly, as a regional planner, I'm much more interested in the boundary aspect. But because I want the boundary to be firm, I have to be interested in agricultural viability. Farms have to be able to survive economically and socially, because if they disappear, there is no rationale for the urban boundary. So, although I have a primary purpose in making sure that the city doesn't spread too far, a secondary purpose is to make sure that farms are still OK...(I)

[Our planning department supports the issues of farmland preservation and community gardens] because they are obvious and more mainstream. And they fit into the context of what we do here, how we've been trained and educated, the experience we've had with our work. (A)

Enabling Condition #4: Individual planner initiative (6/13 participants). Depending on the culture of their department, planners may have a strong opportunity to initiate new programs and policy and advocate for food system planning issues. In some communities, the initiative of individual planners has been an important contributor to their involvement in food system activities.

...[Explaining why there is a strong agricultural emphasis in the regional plan] It was just a little bit of personal interest. That is part of my job, too, you know, the personality kind of shines through on a few issues....So, I think that this is really the biggest reason that this took off, is that I saw an opportunity for the region to do something positive...(E)

...I look at my colleagues here, and the things we are really interested in, and end up working on, is largely based on what our own personal interests and hobbies are to begin with. I ended up doing the harbour planning because I have an ecological bent. I'm interested in food because- I couldn't tell you why I'm interested in food stuff...it is

just something I care about, what I eat and so it just hangs over into your work. I think planning is the type of profession that you can bring some of your own little pet projects to influence your day-to-day work. (K)

Well, [my involvement in the food security task group] started with personal motivation. It wasn't formalized until later. For the first year, my participation was more related to wanting to learn from the other people involved, rather than sitting at the table with official representation. (M)

Enabling Condition #5: Complements an existing policy initiative (6/13 participants). Planners became involved in food system issues because they were perceived as a complementary extension of an existing policy initiative. For example, the location of food stores is linked to existing policy frameworks for complete communities (5 participants)....

...We promote [complete communities] because we think it is sustainable, and you shouldn't have to be relying on your car-we see the downsides of it, people come into complain about traffic, and it is because they are all in their cars driving 15 minutes to the grocery store and they can't get out of their cars and walk. (A)

So that was an issue [siting of food stores] that has grown to be more recognized as a serious issue because food stores are an important part of creating neighbourhoods centres. (C)

Our neighbourhood plans typically have urban centre or neighbourhood centre where we like to focus those activities, we don't want them scattered throughout the neighbourhood because it creates chaos. But we do like to see a grocery store, video store, services, restaurants located within walking distance of each neighbourhood. (L)

...while the broader issue of food policy was perceived as an extension of an existing sustainability policy (1 participant):

I'd mentioned earlier the development of food policy in [this community] was facilitated by the fact we were already engaged in developing a sustainability agenda. And the understanding of sustainability is such that it involved environmental, economic and social issues under one big umbrella, making [our community], our society a better place from all of those perspectives...So having that kind of understanding makes it a lot easier to take an area of policy, like food, and understand it as a component of this major approach. (M)

6.6 Is there a need for planners to be more involved in food system-related planning activities?

Participants were asked whether they felt there was a need for the increased involvement of planners in food system-related activities. The majority of respondents responded positively, offering either "yes" (9/13), while a minority answered "it depends" (3/13) (see Table 6.4). The answers of two participants were unclear.

TABLE 6.4 PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE NEED FOR INCREASED INVOLVEMENT OF PLANNERS IN FOOD SYSTEM ACTIVITIES

Is there a need for planners to be more involved in food system activities?	TOTAL number of responses (13)	By community type		By jurisdiction		By type of planner			By geographic sub-region	
		Non-Ag.	Ag.	Muni.	Reg. Dist.	Land Use	Env.	Soc.	Van. Is.	Lw. Mnl.
Yes	9	3	6	7	2	4	2	3	4	5
It depends...	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1		3
No	0									
Position unclear	1		1							1

6.6.1 Perceptions About the Need for Further Involvement of Planners in Food System Activities: In The Participants' Own Words

In reviewing the participants' explanations as to why they felt that there was a need for more involvement, three major themes emerged. Planners need to be further involved in food system issues because of 1) their professional skills and experience; 2) their role in sustaining the agricultural landbase; and 3) their role in facilitating community quality of life, an issue of importance to planning practice.

Planners as Contributors of Professional Skills and Experience. Several participants felt that planners could contribute specific skills and experience, particularly stakeholder facilitation skills, an ability to help shape the policy agenda, and capabilities in public education.

Planners can play an important role in facilitating and linking different food system interests:

I think that is exactly what planners are trained to do, is...not to take a side, but to figure out which interests are involved, which interests should be involved in making decisions, bring them together and provide the opportunity for discussion to occur and for movement to be made forward so it is a dynamic process, so that it is not a static process where one group tells the other group what they want. (D)

So, I think planners can be facilitators in that kind of thing [food system planning]. And I think they are also good at linking some of the users with the system, with the farm community. (K)

I guess as a planner, just on a day-to-day, in a small kind of place, it is connections. Somebody comes in and says "Oh, I'm thinking of doing something" and I'll sort of think, "Oh, I know somebody that has tried that"...Where they might have just stopped there, you might be able to say, "You know, a good resource is this". You make the connections. (B)

I think [food system planning] is something that the community has to understand. And the community has to raise and put it on the agenda. They have to be the ones to raise the issue and say that this is a concern....I think part of the role of the planner, though, is when you go to the community, you bring these issues up, because people might not think of them. (D)

One person stated that a facilitative role is the only positive role for planners involved in food system activities:

Would it be a good thing to have a lot more planners involved...well, if they are planners as regulators, probably no, that is probably going to be bad. Planners as control mechanisms- I've never thought planners were terribly good at that. Planners as facilitators, planners as people to help work the system, sure. But we're much too often regulators, so...I think planners do best when they facilitate, when they aid any of those groups, whether it is government, industry, we are helping them get done what they want to get done. I think planners don't work very well as advocates for their own axes to grind, but that is just my view...a lot of people view planners as visionaries. I don't think we are any more. We've been turned into kind of generalized bureaucrats, and we have to know how systems work, how people work, have to know how to get things done. And, we work best when problems come in and we try to figure out how to do it, that is where planners' applications are. (I)

Planners also have a role in food system planning because of their ability to influence the public policy agenda:

[Is there a need for increased involvement of planners in food system issues?]. Absolutely. And actually, not only because of the nature of food policy, and the importance of the issue, but even theoretically, in understanding the role of professional staff in developing public policy, how agendas get set. As you know there is a lot of theory about how public policy is developed. It is usually assumed, and this is part of the legislation, that elected officials are the ones who sanction public policy, and this is true for [this municipality], and any other local government. But the agenda items that are brought forward to Council, quite often are generated by staff. And actually, on many occasions, we are better positioned to come forward with proposals with new initiatives and projects than many other people. We're the people, for example, monitoring trends, looking at policy developments in other jurisdictions, the correlations with other policies that are being adopted and so on. So sometimes, it is even easier for staff to come forward and advocate for adoption of particular policies. (M)

Planners also have a role in educating the public, politicians and other planners about food system issues, particularly in areas where there is not a high level of awareness:

If there is not consciousness about the need to develop [food system policy], maybe the role of the planners and other professionals is to educate about the food system....So a good question is what is the role of planners in educating colleagues and communities and elected officials on particular issues. In our system, by definition, that is our role. Social planning, go to our website, the role of social planning is to monitor social trends and educate

elected officials and the [other staff] on the need to address social issues. So that is our mandate. For planners to be successful in another city, to be able to educate others, I think it is very important for that to become part of their mandate, part of their role. (M)

Planners as Regulators of the Agricultural Land Base. The regulatory activities of planners have direct and indirect impacts on the agricultural land base. Because of this impact, some participants felt that planner involvement in food system issues was important in those municipalities or regions that had agricultural lands:

So I think, yeah, certainly those jurisdictions that contain some rural areas, it is definitely something that has to be part of our work plan. (A)

I would say that municipalities that have an agricultural component need to look at the impacts of urban decisions on agricultural land. And the other way around- the impacts of agricultural decisions on the urban lands. (G)

The food system should also be of concern to planners in areas without agricultural land because of the impact that urban settlements have on the surrounding landbase:

Well, [another city] has very little agricultural land, they have some... So yes, they need to take care of that land. But more importantly, they need to think about their influence on the region. And the food that we grow out here goes out there, and the impact of sending all their people who want to build mega-houses on our farmland and then not farm it. I mean, that is more of a regional, societal issue. But that is something that the [other city], more urban areas, need to look at. (G)

Planners as Facilitators of Community Quality of Life. Several participants felt that planners should be further involved because food system plays a central role in sustainability of human settlements, and contributes to the basic needs and quality of life of individuals:

I guess when I reflect on what planners do, planners are trying to make communities where people can live for generations to come. That is the way I see it. So for me, when I look at that, I think OK that means we need to keep the environment clean, we need to keep our societies functioning well, so we need to have people who feel comfortable in their surroundings, without hatred and bigotry and all that. And food is one of the most important things for physical survival- water, food and air- we need to have those things to survive. So absolutely, I think food system planning is crucial. (D)

Environmental sustainability, social sustainability, food is one of the essential ingredients to that and it is also, in terms of creating livable neighbourhoods, food is one of the main things that draws people together. So, for a whole variety of reasons, planners should know something about the issue. And also, more importantly, the municipal level [has] to take an active role in that issue. That is the first part, whether it is land use planners, or social planner, or the health department, the park board, engineering, all have potential roles in helping out. (C)

6.6.2 The need for involvement depends on the context

Some participants felt that the need for increased involvement would depend on what role the planners were going to take:

[The involvement of planners in the food system] depends on what level. I think it would have to be carefully included. I say that coming from the perspective of having been at a place 15 years ago when everything was in my in-tray. There was nothing that didn't get hived off, because it was felt that everything fit. It was felt that planners should be involved in every realm of human activity. There has to be some idea about what our key role can be, our priority. How can we best be used, or facilitate? (J)

If appropriate, if it ties into the work we do, [the increased involvement of planners in food system activities] is something we could support. I wouldn't go so far as to say that we SHOULD be involved. Every place is different. If it is appropriate, places could get involved. (F)

6.6.3 Is there a need for increased involvement of planners in facilitating food distribution and consumption activities?

In reflecting on whether they felt there was a need for the increased involvement of planners in food system issues, 6/13 participants answered the question with reference only to the agricultural or food production stage of the food system. For example:

[Do you think there is a need for planners to be more involved in food system planning activities?] Yeah, I would say that municipalities are already involved in agricultural planning- it is the degree. Because agriculture is a land use. And even by doing nothing, you are still doing something. (G)

[What are your thoughts on the involvement that you and others in your department have with food system issues? Do you see a need for more involvement?] I think this region has shown some commitment now, and an understanding that agriculture is a very important issue.(E)

In these cases, if time allowed, I asked a follow-up question about whether there was a need for planners to become involved in other food system issues, namely food distribution, access or consumption. While not a complete sample, these following comments indicate that some participants are doubtful that planners should be involved in food distribution and consumption issues:

[Is there a need for increased involvement of planners in food distribution and consumption?] That one I'm not- that one is tougher for me to comment on in terms of just what exists at all...I would say kind of question mark from my end, 'cause I think it is addressed [by community agencies]. (H)

[Is there a role for planners in food distribution and consumption?] I can't see a specific role. (F)

6.7 Is there a need for specific focus on food system planning within the field of planning?

Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) suggest the field of planning should include a specific focus on food system planning, in the same way that planning has specializations that focus on land use, transportation, and housing. During the interviews, I briefly introduced Pothukuchi and Kaufman's argument, and then asked participants what they thought.

The answers to this question were split (Table 6.5). While 7/13 participants felt positively towards to the idea of a specific focus on food system planning within the field of planning, only four replied with an unqualified "yes". Three others offered qualified "yeses": one planner felt the there was "some" need, one planner felt there was a need at the regional level, and one felt that there was a need but that planners were already involved. Two planners suggested that there might be a need in the future when there is more of a demand, while two were unsure. Finally, one participant felt there was no need for a specific focus on food system. One answer was unclear. The range of answers appears to be split across demographic categories.

TABLE 6.5 PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE NEED FOR SPECIFIC FOCUS ON FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING

Is there a need for a specific focus on food system planning within planning?	TOTAL number of responses	<i>By community type</i>		<i>By jurisdiction</i>		<i>By type of planner</i>			<i>By geographic sub-region</i>	
		Non-Ag.	Ag.	Muni.	Reg. Dist.	Land Use	Env.	Soc.	Van. Is.	Lw. Mnl.
	(13)	(4)	(9)	(9)	(4)	(6)	(3)	(4)	(4)	(9)
Yes	4	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2
Yes, some	1		1	1			1			1
Yes, but only at the regional level	1	1		1				1		1
Yes, planners already have a focus	1		1	1		1				1
Maybe in the future	2		2		1	1	1		1	1
Unsure	2	1	1	1				1	1	
No	1		1	1		1				1
Answer unclear	1		1							1

One participant felt that there is a need for some agency to take direct responsibility for local food system issues, and that planning departments may be well-positioned to do so:

I think there is a need to have some agency touch on [the food system] in a direct measure, whether it is planners-maybe it is planners that are the best to serve. There are people doing it in all agencies, they are sort of raising that awareness, but planners are fortunate in that they deal with the public, they are tied to regulation, they can implement change, so yeah, I think, I have a personal interest, I think it would be great if we did [create a designated field of food system planning]. (B)

However, the danger in creating a separate field for food system planning is that food system issues can get 'stovepiped', such that the issues become compartmentalized and only dealt with by designated people or departments:

...the concern I have is whether the term "planner" gets reified to mean you have a department, therefore the people who do planning are in that department, or the people who do social planning are in that department, or cultural planning. It is one thing to have expertise, it is another to stovepipe it, so those planners only look at the world from that perspective and become advocates only for those initiatives.(C)

Every time you get into a specialization, you risk losing the connections with other disciplines and things and I think that is problematic. I think it is good to focus some research specifically on food systems and have that core research. I don't know that it needs to be its own...you do tend to get too entrenched in your own world, and it can be frustrating on the one hand when you don't make progress, and it can also be isolating because you don't have the connections to other stuff that is going on. (D)

I am really questioning the usefulness of having any discipline out there on their own. Planning to me is such a- it is so much about systems. You can't just plan housing without planning for transportation, without planning for food, planning for parks. It has to be a coordinated effort. There is not much value in planning any one item in the absence of all of the other things that you need to support it. (L)

Overall, it may be too early for a field devoted to food system planning. Planning as a whole incorporates new sub-disciplines when there is a demonstrated need. With respect to food system planning, the need or pressure for planners to become explicitly involved is not yet present:

Do professional planners need to be as focused on agricultural issues as they are on land use and transportation issues? Well...not yet. It's not a core activity of the profession, as you said. People are talking about it, primarily from an academic point of view, thinking about it theoretically. (I)

Well, if you look at some of your other examples [land use planning, transportation planning, housing planning], I think we've moved into those areas as we have seen the need arise. And I would think this [food system planning] would be very similar.(K)

One participant suggested that the field of 'food system planning' already existed, namely in the form of agricultural planning, and that the amount of attention given to the field simply needed to be increased:

...I would say that municipalities are already involved in agricultural planning- it is the degree. Because agriculture is a land use. And even by doing nothing, you are still doing something. (G)

Another planner said she was unclear about what a specific model underlying a field food system planning would look like:

[A specific focus on food system planning] would be such a change in the way we view things.... I can't imagine a model yet, and I can't imagine what my role in that model would be yet. (A)

Finally, one participant felt that there was no need for a specific focus on food system planning, due to the more abstract nature of food system issues:

[Is there a need for a specific focus on food system planning within the field of planning?] I would say no. With housing and transportation, you can actually plan for them. For example, in transportation planning, you can build roads. Food system planning is more general, and not grounded physically. This is hard to answer. It is not something I've thought much about.(F)

6.8 Participants' Definitions of the Attributes of a Sustainable Food System

Sustainability, as any student of the term knows, is a contested and elusive concept. As part of the interview, participants were asked to define "a sustainable food system". The most commonly mentioned attributes were: significant local food production, local self-reliance in food, diversity of agricultural products, and affordability of food (see Table 6.6). Those participants from jurisdictions with agricultural lands were more likely to list attributes associated with the production of food (e.g. diversity of agricultural production, sustainable source of inputs, agro-ecological production techniques), while those from non-agricultural areas, who also all happened to be social planners, were likely to mention attributes associated with consumption and distribution (e.g. meets nutritional needs of residents, supports community development, locally-owned food stores). Attributes such as significant local food production, public awareness of food system issues and a closer connection between producers and consumers were mentioned equally by those from jurisdictions with and without agricultural lands.

The participants' descriptions of the attributes of a sustainable food system provide rich insight into the depth and breadth of issues that surround the concept. The descriptions are an important reference for this research, albeit a long one. As a result, I have included the descriptions in Appendix B.

TABLE 6.6 PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

Attribute	TOTAL number of responses (13)	By community type		By jurisdiction		By type of planner			By geographic sub-region	
		Non- Ag. (4)	Ag. (9)	Muni. (9)	Reg. Dist. (4)	Land Use (6)	Env. (3)	Soc. (4)	Van. Is. (4)	Lw. Mnl. (9)
Significant local food production	9	4	5	7	2	3	2	4	3	6
Local/ regional self-reliance in food	5	1	4	4	1	4		1	4	1
Diversity of local agricultural products	3		3	1	2	1	2		1	2
Affordability of food	3	1	2	3		1		2	1	2
Sustainable supply of inputs (water, air, soil, fertilizer)	2		2	1	1	1	1		1	1
Agro-ecological production methods	2		2	1	1		2			2
Organic production methods	2	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1
Public awareness of local food system issues	2	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1
Close links between producers and consumers	2	1	1	1	1		1	1		2
Reduces transportation energy requirements	2	1	1	2			1	1		2
Meets nutritional needs of residents	2	2		2				2	1	1
Reliable supply of labour	1		1		1	1			1	
Citizens have access to garden space	1		1	1		1			1	
Redistribution of surplus food	1		1	1		1			1	
Diversity of producers	1		1	1		1			1	
Respects animal welfare	1		1	1			1			1
Food system integrated into urban policy	1		1		1		1			1
System persists over the long-term	1		1	1	1		1			1
Resiliency of food system	1		1	1			1			1
Economically viable	1		1	1			1			1
Negative environmental impacts of production reduced	1		1				1			
Provides for food 'needs' instead of 'wants'	1		1	1			1			1
Community development around food	1	1		1				1		1
Local control over food supply	1		1		1	1			1	
Citizen involvement in food system decision-making	1		1	1			1			1
No hunger	1	1		1				1	1	
Decreases food waste	1	1		1				1	1	
Moves away from charity model of food distribution	1		1	1				1	1	
Locally-owned food stores	1	1		1				1	1	
Future generation have access to food	1	1			1			1		1
Respect social relations	1	1			1			1		1
Integration of different parts of the food system	1	1			1			1		1

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter presents a summary of the findings collected during interviews with 13 planners involved in food system-related planning activities in the Georgia Basin. The results suggest that the planners in this study were involved with a number of activities, mostly related to food production. Participants listed a number of potential barriers to food system planning. Many of these could be grouped into seven categories previously identified by Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000). These included the invisibility of the problem, the lack of relevance to planning's roles and responsibilities and the perception that the food system is the domain of the private market. Of particular interest were the additional barriers that participants identified in this study, including a lack of political will, community support and institutional will.

The participants also listed a number of conditions that have or would enable the field of food system planning. Many of these could be described as the inverse of the barriers. Most significantly, political support, public pressure and the initiative of individual planners figured highly in the responses.

When asked if they thought if planners needed to be further involved in food system planning activities, all participants answered positively. Participants saw the involvement of planners as desirable because of their specialized skills and experience, their participation in the regulation of agricultural land development and their contributions towards community quality of life. In spite of feeling that planners needed to be further involved, participants were divided as to whether 'food system planning' needed to be a specialization within the broader field of planning. While the majority felt that it should be its own field, some participants expressed some hesitation about the possibility of 'stovepiping' food issues, as well as the feeling that it was too early for a separate field.

Finally, participants provided their definitions, or attributes, of a sustainable food system. "Local food production" figured prominently in the results, with food self-reliance, a

diversity of agricultural products and affordability of food also mentioned. Planners from agricultural areas were more likely to mention production-related attributes, while social planners from non-agricultural areas were likely to mention attributes related to food consumption and distribution.

What do these results suggest about the barriers and opportunities to food system planning in the Georgia Basin? More significantly, what do they suggest about the future of this emerging field, and the role of planners within it? These questions will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7: PLANNERS, POLITICS AND THE PUBLIC: A DISCUSSION OF THE BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced local government planners' perspectives on the barriers and opportunities for food system planning. The purpose of this chapter is to further delve into these ideas and discuss their implications for the emerging field of food system planning, as situated within the literature on UPE. I begin with a discussion of the current involvement of planners in food system-related activities, followed by the potential for a distinct field of "food system planning". I then explore the barriers and opportunities to food system planning that surfaced in my findings. I focus my discussion on two central themes within the identified barriers and opportunities: the role of governance in the planning process, as well as the role of conceptual dualisms in defining the roles and responsibilities of planners. The discussion forms the basis of the recommendations in Chapter 8, which propose how the food system can be inserted more comprehensively into the local government planning agenda.

7.2 Involvement of Planners in Food System Issues

A primary research objective for the thesis was to test two basic assumptions put forth in the food system planning literature: the first, that planners are not involved in food system planning and, the second, that they should be. This section will address both of these assumptions in turn.

Are planners involved with food system planning? Based on my findings, the answer to this question is a qualified "sort of". Previous studies have found that planners intersect with many areas of the food system, through their land-use, transportation, social, economic and ecological planning activities (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000; Abel, 2000). My findings confirmed and went beyond these earlier surveys, by revealing a wider range of food system-related planning activities in which planners are involved.

For example, participants in this study were involved in regular meetings with stakeholders, creating public outreach materials on local agriculture, researching new agricultural land tenure options, amending zoning to allow food processing and facilitating emergency food programs.

I qualify these findings, however, because there is a distinction between *food system planning*, *food system-related planning activities* and *agricultural planning*. The former refers to the comprehensive, systemic planning approach introduced in Chapter Four, where the goal is to build an integrated local food system that supports the ecological, social, economic and nutritional health of a particular community. The second, *food system-related planning activities*, refers to individual planning activities that happen to be food or agriculture-related. They may be undertaken for any number of reasons, but do not comprise part of an overall strategy to support integrated local food systems. *Agricultural planning* refers to policy and planning activities that support farmland protection and the “largest number of agricultural opportunities over the broadest possible extent of our agricultural land base” (Smith, 1998a). In British Columbia, local governments are mandated to participate in agricultural planning activities in the Agricultural Land Reserve under the Agricultural Land Commission Act and the Local Government Act.

The results of this study suggest that, although their involvement was often innovative, most of the participants took part in what would best be classified as food system-related planning activities or agricultural planning, and not food system planning. As a result, the participants are similar to those in other food system planning studies, whose current food system-related planning activities are best described as “piecemeal” and disconnected from a larger strategy of working towards local food systems that are ecologically stable, equitable and economically viable (e.g. Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000; Abel, 2000).

The one exception was the two participants from the City of Vancouver, where social planners have been directed to undertake food system planning as part of the recent municipal Food Action Plan. The Plan, passed by City Council in December, 2003,

mandates the City to work towards the “development of a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver that fosters equitable food production, distribution and consumption; nutrition; community development and environmental health” (City of Vancouver, 2003a). As part of the initiative, two social planners are working exclusively on food policy issues, in collaboration with other city departments (including planning), and a multi-stakeholder citizen’s food policy council.

As mentioned earlier, food system planning also needs to be distinguished from *agricultural planning*. In my observation, a number, although not all, of the planners from communities with agricultural lands equated the two concepts. I discuss the possible causes and implications of this problematic equation later in this chapter (Section 7.5.1). If food system planning is to emerge as a new focus within planning, planners will need to expand their focus beyond simply food production (agriculture) and address it in *concert* with other stages of the food system, namely distribution, processing, consumption and waste disposal. A systems approach, as advocated by both UPE and food system planning theory, recognizes that the sustainability of one part of the food system depends on the sustainability and integrity of the whole system. It also recognizes that the sustainability of urban settlements is intimately related to the sustainability of rural communities, and vice versa (Keil, 2003; Swyngedouw and Heynen, 2003). My findings suggest, however, that the comprehensive approach proposed in the literature may be easier in theory than in practice.

7.1.1 The potential for a distinct field of food system planning

These distinctions provide important context for the discussion of the second assumption that my research sought to test, that planners should be more involved in food system planning activities. As introduced in Chapter Four, a number of recent articles have made the case that such involvement is not only desirable but necessary for the health of communities and their food systems (e.g. Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000; Kaufman, 2004; Pothukuchi, 2004; Clancy, 2004). When asked if they thought that planners needed to be more involved in food system planning, 9/13 participants in this study offered an unqualified “yes”, while 3/13 answered “it depended” on the role the planners were going

to take.¹³ These results showed a higher level of support than that found in an earlier study (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000), although it is difficult to directly compare the different findings since my sample included only those planners who had a professional or personal interest in food system issues, whereas the other study surveyed a more random sample of planners¹⁴ from cities where community-based food system initiatives were underway.

Given my earlier discussion, it should be kept in mind that, in spite of my efforts to define the concept during the interview, some participants' understanding of "food system planning" may not have been the same as mine. For example, six participants discussed why planners needed to be more involved in food system planning with reference only to agricultural issues. Some, albeit a minority, stated that they did not see a need for planners to be involved in consumption or distribution stages of the food system, or for planners to undertake food system planning in communities where there was no agricultural land.

To point out these possible misunderstandings is not to suggest that there were no participants who understood the more systematic and integrated concept of *food system planning*. In fact, many participants spoke of the contributions of food system planning to the larger issues of sustainability, community quality of life and social justice (Section 6.6.1). An appreciation for the broader links between the food system and other urban systems was further evidenced by the participants who expressed concern that a specialized field of food system planning would isolate food system issues from the broader context, and lead to food system issues being compartmentalised as only one individual or department's responsibility. For example:

I am really questioning the usefulness of having any discipline out there on their own. Planning to me is such a- it is so much about systems. You can't just plan housing without planning for transportation, without planning for food, planning for parks. It has to be a coordinated effort. There is not much value in planning any one item in the absence of all of the other things that you need to support it. (L)

¹³ One participant's position was unclear.

¹⁴ In their telephone survey of 22 senior planners from US cities with a major food system community organization, Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) found that 38% responded yes, 38% responded "it depends" and 25% responded "no".

In other words, a specialized field of food system planning could in itself undermine the very systems-approach that the field seeks to embrace.

In general, however, the results were mixed on the question of whether the food system needed its own field within planning. Some answered with an emphatic “yes”, stating that the skills and experience of planners put them in a strong position to take the lead in building local food systems. Others felt that it was “too early” for food system planning, since the need had not yet been demonstrated, or that the food system was not “grounded physically” enough for it to be part of planners’ roles and responsibilities.

When considered collectively, these findings suggest that although planners generally support the idea of being involved in more *food system-related planning activities*, they are more divided on the topic of whether they need to be involved in *food system planning*. The contributions of planners to the former should not be disparaged or undervalued. However, if planners and communities wish to achieve more than just isolated, issue-specific accomplishments, and truly work towards local food systems over the long-term, there is a need to move beyond isolated *activities* and adopt a broader framework of *policy and planning*. Such a framework would necessarily be founded on the recognition that all sustainable systems, including the local food system, are based on natural cycles, limits and variability, and that the current fragmented approach undermines the ability to meet the ecological, social, economic and nutritional needs of the local community.

As presented in Chapter Three, giving planners the mandate to plan for local food systems would, in theory, help to achieve many of the goals proposed by an UPE analysis: sustainable urban systems that aim for self-reliance, social justice, ecological stability, and bridging urban-rural divides. Because of food system planning’s focus on public participation, inter-disciplinarity and collaboration, a mandate to plan for local food systems could also help to resolve some power imbalances that UPE identifies, such as the exclusion certain of communities in the planning process (Keil, 2003), and the

disproportionate weight of ecological, social and economic impacts borne by low-income citizens and their communities (While et al., 2004). My findings suggest, however, that although planners are generally supportive of increased involvement, that they do not necessarily understand the transformative objectives of food system planning as proposed by academics. As a result, any mandate to plan for local food systems will need to have a clearly defined vision. Food system planning is a new concept, and its underlying objectives and principles are neither clearly articulated nor understood. Many participants had difficulty differentiating food system planning from existing agricultural planning, or conceptualising how issues such as hunger relate to the sustainability of the local food system. Likewise, it is not universally understood that food system planning aims for the democratization of the planning process, through stakeholder involvement and collaboration (e.g. Caton Campbell, 2004).

Without a clearly defined vision, the risk is that food system planning can easily fall into the trap facing many other sustainability planning initiatives, which is essentially repackaging the *status quo*:

The increased weight being given to environmental and ecological criteria in newly-developing urban institutions does not automatically mean that modes of social regulation and state strategies are being reoriented around deep green or "strong" sustainability approaches. For all the talk of major eco-related shifts in the capitalist mode of production, corporate capital, in both public and private sectors, has proved remarkably adept at selectively incorporating environmental concerns in order to manage ecological dissent or pursue new accumulation strategies (While et al., 2004: 554).

In my opinion, unless planners understand the theory underlying food system planning, the power issues it is trying to address, and the overall objectives of self-reliance, social justice and ecological stability, they are doing little more than upholding what exists today: a food system that is neatly dissected into different agencies and sectors, where those few connections that do exist are maintained by market forces at the expense of local ecosystems, economies and communities. The success of food system planning over the long-term lies in understanding and exploring those barriers to food system planning that exist today, with a view to overcoming them.

7.2 Barriers and Opportunities to Food System Planning

Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) identified seven categories of reasons, or barriers, as to why planners were not more involved in the food system. Using these categories as a starting point, my study sought to identify planners' perceptions of the barriers to, and the opportunities for, food system planning in the Georgia Basin. My findings suggest that Pothukuchi and Kaufman overlooked several crucial barriers, namely those that relate to the larger governance and institutional context necessary to support urban sustainable development. My findings also suggest that the narrow view that planners take of their roles and responsibilities is a significant barrier to food system planning. Although Pothukuchi and Kaufman identified this latter barrier, my interviews shed light on some of the deep-seeded conceptual reasons that underlie it. The discussion here will focus only on these two overarching themes.

Over the next few pages, I discuss the opportunities for food system planning jointly with the barriers. It made sense not to separate the two, as many of the opportunities are best-considered the inverse of the barriers (e.g. barrier: food system is not related to planners' roles and responsibilities; opportunity: specific activity is part of planners' existing roles and responsibilities).

7.2.1 Comparison of My Findings to Those Identified in the Literature

Collectively, the participants in my study reiterated each of the seven barriers to food system planning identified by Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000). In summary, participants perceived that the food system was not more prominent on the planning agenda due to a:

1. Lack of perceived problems with the food system, stemming in part from society's disconnection with the food supply
2. Lack of relevance to planners' roles and responsibilities, which are traditionally focused more land use or physical planning (further discussed in Section 7.5)
3. Perception that the food system is the domain of the private market, and not the public sector (discussed in Section 7.5.3)
4. Lack of planning education and technical knowledge about the food system
5. Lack of relevance of the food system to the urban environment

6. Lack of funding for food system planning
7. Lack of opportunities for planners to collaborate with other professionals on food system issues.

7.3 Newly Identified Barriers: The Role of Governance

The more interesting findings are three “new” categories of barriers, categories that had not been identified in Pothukuchi and Kaufman’s previous study. These barriers speak to the broader governance context within which planners operate, and the role that politicians, community members and planning institutions play in shaping the planning agenda. Based on the frequency with which these factors were cited, it suggests that these factors are just as important, if not more so, than the seven barriers mentioned above.

These findings support the literature on UPE, which proposes that urban sustainability is as much about the ways in which our cities are governed as about the ecosystems, communities and economies in their midst (Keil, 2003). Sustainable urban systems are created mainly through a shift to governance structures and political institutions that value equity, democracy, and the devolution of power to local communities (Keil, 2003; M’Gonigle, 2000). Indeed, “sustainable development not only refers to a fundamental change in material flows (e.g. waste reduction) and environmental behaviour (e.g. land use), but also to a fundamental shift in the organization of the political-administrative system and its relation to civil society” (Astleithner and Hamedinger, 2003: 56). By neglecting the role that political, community and institutions play in supporting food system planning, Pothukuchi and Kaufman’s (2000) previous study ignored the broader governance context within which the actions of individual planners are situated.

7.3.1 Lack of Political Will

Twelve of thirteen participants perceived a lack of political will as a reason why planners were not more involved in food system issues. The importance of this barrier was

confirmed by the 10/13 participants who identified Council or Regional Board¹⁵ support as a condition that *enabled* their participation in food system planning-related activities. Council decisions often directly dictate the activities of planners; political support is therefore critical to the future of food system planning. The level of political support for a planning initiative is influenced by the political stakes involved, as well as a politician's access to political resources (Ranney, 1969).

Within the broad category of "lack of political will", some participants offered more detailed explanations for the factors that might contribute to a low level of political support for food system planning. For example, an absence of farmers on Council or a fear of failure for new initiatives (such as food system planning) could account for a lack of political support. Council may also be unlikely to support planners' involvement in an area for which the provincial government has not mandated them to act. In British Columbia, the Local Government Act delegates the roles and responsibilities of local government. While the Act lays out the involvement of local governments in agricultural operations (S.915), there is no mention of other parts of the food system such as food distribution or consumption, and therefore no mandate for local government involvement.

It is reasonable that Councils would be reluctant to take on duties outside their perceived mandate, however, this suggests a narrow interpretation of the Local Government Act. The Act states that the purpose of local government includes (S. 2): a) providing good government for its community; b) providing the services and other things that the local government considers are necessary or desirable for all or part of its community; c) providing stewardship of the public assets of its community; d) and fostering the current and future economic, social and environmental well-being of its community. With little effort, arguments could be made that a local food system contributes to each of these purposes.

¹⁵ In British Columbia, Regional Boards are made up of municipal directors (appointed councillors from member municipalities) and electoral area directors (LGA, S. 784). Here, I use the term "Council" to refer collectively to members of municipal council and regional boards.

In any case, participants felt that a lack of political mandate impeded the potential for food system planning. Likewise, politicians' resistance to downloading might also impede the potential. Downloading, where the provincial or federal government assigns new responsibilities to local governments without corresponding transfer of financial resource (or where higher levels of government simply abandon a service), has been a major issue of contention in contemporary Canadian politics (Graham et al., 1998). Although no level of government in Canada has responsibility for a comprehensive approach to sustainable food system planning or policy (MacRae, 1999), local politicians may be resistant to adopting such an approach if it is seen as someone else's responsibility, even in part. In this study, several participants suggested that aspects of food system planning fell under the jurisdiction of other government agencies, such as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (food safety) and BC MAFF (planning within the ALR).

7.3.2 Lack of community pressure

The second "new" barrier that participants identified was a lack of community pressure for food system-related planning activities and food system planning as a whole. Public pressure is a central factor in determining the policy and planning agenda of local governments in Canada (Graham et al., 1998; Tindal and Tindal, 2000). Community organizations, in particular, play a large role in local politics by representing the interests of their members and communities, educating the public and acting as a "sounding boards for new policy ideas" (Graham et al., 1998: 129). This last point "is true from the perspective of both local politicians and bureaucrats" (Graham et al., 1998: 129). The degree to which community members get involved in a particular planning issue depends on the resources that they have available to them, as well as the degree to which a particular issue affects them (Ranney, 1969).

My finding that community pressure plays a central role in determining the success of food system planning generally supports the UPE literature. On a practical level, community members not only advocate for sustainability initiatives, but are also increasingly involved in developing and implementing them. In an era of government

cutbacks and increasing neoliberalism, civil society organizations are picking up the pieces where governments no longer have the capacity to be involved (Rydin et al., 2003). Indeed, "non-profit organizations and community and environmental groups, alongside those of a longer-standing role, such as business, voter and local state interests...seem intent on taking up environmental concerns where government has failed" (While et al., 2004: 553).

Government failure aside, the involvement of civil society in sustainability planning is desirable because the community- as well as the private sector- may be better positioned to push for and implement sustainability initiatives:

Many of the changes necessary to achieve sustainable development are based in the behaviour of organizations and actors outside the state. This means that non-state organizations are involved in both policy formulation and implementation, blurring the boundaries between public and private (Rydin et al., 2003: 548).

This is certainly true of food system planning initiatives, where efforts to build a local food system will rely on the collective efforts of community-based food security and agriculture groups, private industry and public institutions (Caton Campbell, 2004).

Over the long term, community participation and the broader democratization of planning will determine whether sustainable development is, itself, sustainable (Campbell, 1996; Harrill, 1999; M'Gonigle, 1998). In the opinion of Dorcey and MacDaniels (2001:271),

The phenomenal growth of civic engagement through the creation of and participation in associations and networks relating to sustainability issues from the local to the global level is seen as one of the most hopeful signs that the daunting challenges posed by looming environmental, social and economic crises might be met.

M'Gonigle (1998) argues that sustainable development demands an overhaul of institutional power, and a shift from traditional centrist structures to new, alternative forms of governance that are more dispersed, on-the-ground, and where members have a direct stake in the resources of a particular territory (M'Gonigle, 1998). As a result, civic engagement and the resulting social power are central to supporting new territorial forms of social organization. With respect to this study, community support for food system planning efforts is critical not only in determining whether an issue makes it to the

planning agenda but, more importantly, in determining whether there is the social organization necessary to support local food systems over the long term.

Public involvement is generally perceived in a positive light in both planning (e.g. Sandercock, 1998; Friedmann, 1987, etc.) and UPE literature (e.g. M'Gonigle, 1998; While et al., 2004, etc.) However, my findings suggest that public involvement does not always bode well for the local food system. Just as community pressure can enable food system-related planning activities, so too can it defeat them. Two participants gave the example of how planners wanted to locate new food stores in underserved neighbourhoods, but that public opposition led to the plans being abandoned. Other participants suggested that farmers, in particular, have a negative view of planners and that they may be unsupportive of planners getting more involved in the food system, particularly if they think it will be in a regulatory capacity. These examples point to the need for planners to communicate their ideas and motivations clearly to the community and politicians, to seek feedback, to undertake public education as part of the planning process, and to accept that not everyone will see the creation of local food systems as a priority issue.

7.3.3 Lack of Institutional Will

In addition to political will and community pressure, institutions also play a role in whether the food system finds its way to the planning agenda. Here, "the institution" mainly refers to the culture of the planning department, a culture that, from the participants' accounts, varies from community to community. Drawing from my results, if the culture of a department is reactive, resistant to change and already too busy, it is more difficult for planners to become involved in new initiatives, such as food system planning. Likewise, if managers neither support new initiatives, nor empower their junior staff to take on their own projects, food system planning will be more difficult to achieve.

The importance of institutional will in enabling food system-related planning activities was confirmed by the 6/13 participants who explained that they took on a particular food system-related planning activity through their own initiative (Section 6.5.1). Business

administration and management literature has confirmed the importance of employee empowerment, not only for the personal satisfaction of workers, but also for the development of the institution as a whole. Empowered employees have "...responsibility, a sense of ownership, satisfaction in accomplishments, power over what and how things are done, recognition for their ideas, and the knowledge that they are important to the organization" (Turney 1993: 30). In the case of this study, planners who felt empowered to follow their own personal interests participated in food policy roundtables, included agricultural viability as an objective in the regional plan, and assisted local community sustainable agriculture groups to secure funding.

The empowerment of individual planners is particularly crucial, given the role that planners can play in shaping the Council and policy agenda. To reiterate the words of one participant:

...On many occasions, [planners] are better positioned to come forward with proposals for new initiatives than many other people. We're the people, for example, monitoring trends, looking at policy developments in other jurisdictions, the correlations with other policies that are being adopted and so on. So sometimes, it is even easier for staff to come forward and advocate for adoption of particular policies. (M)

Perhaps because UPE still exists more in the realm of theory rather than in the realm of practice, I could find little discussion of the role of institutional will in supporting urban sustainable development. While the literature makes broad reference to the collaboration, cooperation and negotiation strategies demanded by an UPE approach (e.g. Astleithner and Hamedinger, 2003), it usually refers to these strategies in the context of establishing working relationship between municipal departments, rather than within departments.

The omission of a discussion on intra-departmental culture is curious given that, at the end of the day, it will be up to individual planning departments and their planners to take the lead in facilitating many sustainability initiatives. My findings suggest the need to further examine the role of planning department culture and organizational behaviour in sustainability planning and, specific to my research, food system planning.

7.4 The Governance Context of Planning

As stated earlier, I believe that Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) overlooked some critical reasons why the food system is not more central on the planning agenda. Returning to Pothukuchi and Kaufman's (2000) original list of barriers, one can classify them as mainly affecting the service of planners (e.g. the lack of relevance to planning roles and responsibility, lack of relevance to the urban environment, lack of collaboration with other professions, etc). To focus only on service-specific issues provides the narrow impression that planners operate within a vacuum and set their own agendas, independent of a larger political or social context. Although not likely the authors' intention, this narrow interpretation of planning practice harkens to the day of the rational planner, when planners saw themselves as objective experts, unconstrained by political and community influence (Friedmann, 1987).

When considered collectively, Pothukuchi and Kaufman's (2000) seven original categories of barriers and the three "new" ones highlighted here confirm the importance of governance to shaping urban sustainability initiatives, such as food system planning. Several UPE authors have documented how the shift from *government* to *governance* has been fundamental to supporting urban sustainable development (e.g. While et al., 2004; Rydin et al., 2003; Astleithner and Hamedinger, 2003). Unlike *government*, which is focused within the margins of the state, *governance* broadens the political constituency to include organizations sitting both on the margins and outside them (Rydin et al., 2003).

Governance involves working across boundaries within the public sector or between the public sector and private or voluntary sectors. It focuses attention on a set of actors that are drawn from but are also beyond the formal institutions of government. A key concern is the processes of networking and partnership (Stoker, 2000:3).

Although published 35 years ago, Ranney (1969) demonstrated insight into contemporary governance for sustainability by proposing that planning decisions are made as a result of three forces: the service of planners, governmental actors and non-governmental actors (see Figure 7.1). Collectively, these form a model that depicts the findings of this study

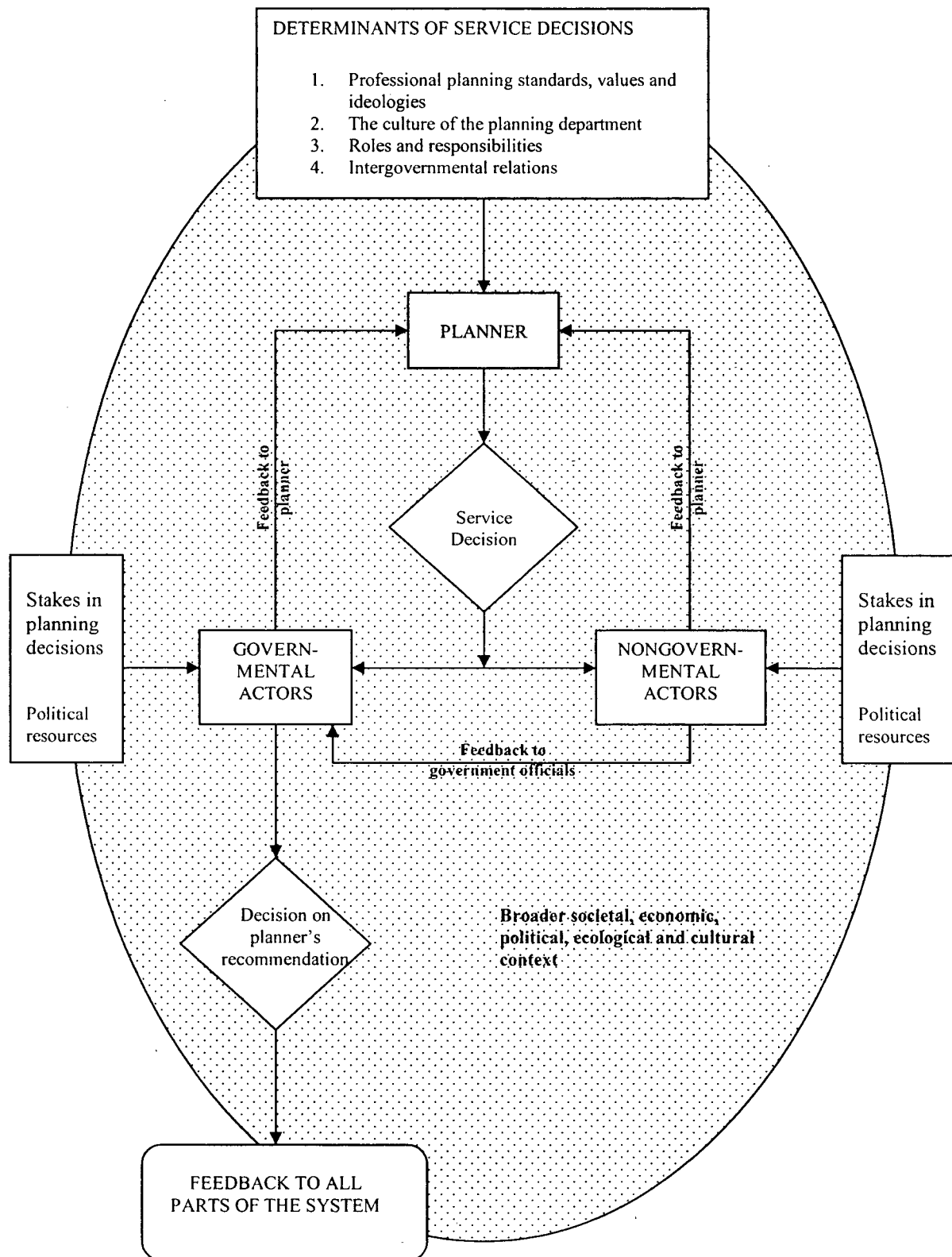
and the overall governance context within which issues find their way to the planning agenda.

The first force, the service of planners, is shaped by the ideology and values underlying planning practice, the culture of the planning department, planners' roles and responsibilities, and the department's relationship with other government agencies. The second force, governmental actors, is influenced primarily by the political will of City Council, the city manager, the mayor or other governmental partners. Non-governmental actors, the third force, are members of civil society, individuals and organizations who will be directly or indirectly affected by a planning decision. All three forces are connected through a feedback loop, and jointly influence local government planning decisions.

The relative strength of each of the three forces depends on the theory of local governmental public policy-making to which one subscribes. Urban regime theorists suggest that local government decisions are primarily a result of the pressure from informal coalitions of nongovernmental actors (public bodies and private interests) that come together around a particular issue (Graham et al., 1998: 26). Elite theorists suggest that policy decisions are made by coalitions of business and social elite at the top of the local power hierarchy (Graham et al., 1998). Pluralists also emphasize the role of nongovernmental actors, and see local government decisions as stemming from a process of political compromise and bargaining among different groups and individuals (Brooks, 1998; Gagnon, 1995).

Public choice theorists view the individual as the basic unit of action, and local government policy as the result of governmental actors and planners taking decisions to maximize their own best interests and access to capital resources (Brooks, 1998; Gagnon, 1995). Marxists view all policy as relating back to class struggle and determined through the political and social conflict that is inevitable in a capitalist society (Brooks, 1998; Gagnon, 1995). Finally, political economists "focus on the structural conditions of

FIGURE 7.1. THE GOVERNANCE CONTEXT OF PLANNING DECISION MAKING
 (adapted from Ranney, 1969: 15)



economic relations, specifically the processes of capital accumulation, production and consumption, and the conflicts generated by these forces” (Graham et al., 1998: 27).

Their analysis suggests that City Hall decisions are often balanced in favour of those with economic and social power, such as developers and business associations (Graham et al., 1998).

Clearly, the latter theory complements the theoretical framework of UPE that underlies this thesis. However, depending on the particular community and its political context, other theories may provide better explanations for why local food system-related planning decisions are and are not made. The purpose in presenting these theories is not to pick the “one” that best describes the planning context in the communities included in this study, but rather to support the participants’ views that planning decisions are as much a result of political and public pressure as they are the individual initiative of planners. This “holy trinity” of planning politics- the planner, the politicians and the public- was referred to by participants on multiple occasions throughout the interviews.

These findings support the assertion of UPE theorists that the actions of planners are not devoid of a larger political, social and economic context (Harrill, 1999). UPE theorists propose the creation of governance structures to create more territorial, democratic and representative institutions in order to support urban sustainability initiatives. Such a fundamental transformation requires planning academics, professionals and community members to acquire a sophisticated understanding of the context within which local government decisions are made. It is not as simple as an individual planner having a good idea and then implementing it. While individual planners may hold sustainability principles as their beacon, they often fall short of their goal due to the obligations of existing roles and responsibilities. As Campbell (1996: 297) notes, “...serving the broader public interest by holistically harmonizing growth, preservation and equality remains the ideal; the reality of practice restricts planners to serving the narrower interests of their clients, that is, authorities and their bureaucracies”. As suggested by my findings, the public, too, can restrict the activities of planners.

7.5 Newly Identified Barriers: The Responsibilities of Planners and the Role of Conceptual Dualisms

As discussed in the previous section, my findings suggest that the widespread adoption of food system planning will require the mutual support of the public, the politicians and the planning institution. However, no amount of political pressure or community lobbying will lead to increased involvement if society, including planners, do not embrace the food system as an area of importance and relevance. The next section discusses a major barrier to food system planning that emerged from my study, and one that operates at the level of the planning institution: the perceived lack of relevance to planners' roles and responsibilities. In my opinion, overcoming this barrier is central to any prospect for food system planning.

Drawing on the results of this study, I propose that the reason why planners do not see the food system as within the scope of their roles and responsibilities is ideological, and stems from a fragmented, reductionist view of the relationship between society and the natural world. In the scientific paradigm that has shaped modern Western society (Capra, 1994), urban issues are seen as distinct from rural issues, social issues are distinct from economic issues, and the natural wilderness is distinct from inhabited civilization. Yet, in the view of UPE theorists and others, overcoming these conceptual dualisms is critical to the success of urban sustainable development (Keil, 2003). Not only are cities- and all other phenomena- fundamentally "embedded in the cyclical processes of nature" (Capra, 1994: 335) but the process of urbanization actually augments the existing interdependence and creates "new and more complex relationships of society and nature" (Keil, 2003: 729).

The scientific paradigm has had consequences not only for our conceptualization of the natural world, but also how we conceive of our planning institutions and the roles and responsibilities of planners within them. In breaking public policy issues into parts, we have created a bureaucracy of silos, where there is little discussion among departments or agencies. As sustainability issues gain prominence on the planning agenda, there is a need to take an interdisciplinary, systems approach (Davoudi, 2001). Yet this is easier

said than done. For example, Campbell (1996) suggests that planners still have a tendency to separate ecological or land use activities from socio-economic factors when planning for sustainability. This separation inhibits planners from taking a comprehensive, systemic view of their professional practice and, of relevance to this study, the food system.

If, as UPE theorists propose, 1) conceptual dualisms are at the root of urban ecological problems and, 2) overcoming them is central to urban sustainability, then recognizing and understanding those dualisms that exist is an important first step in urban sustainable development. Here, I highlight three dualisms that emerged from my research and that I believe have significant implications for planners' involvement with the food system: the view that food production is separate from the rest of the food system; that social planning issues are separate from land use and environmental planning issues; and that the food system is the domain of the private market and not the public sector.

In fairness to the participants, the perception that the food system was not within the roles and responsibilities of planners did not necessarily reflect their own, personal view. Participants were asked to comment on why the field of planning *in general* neglected the food system. In fact, many of the planners in this study became involved in a food system-related planning activity precisely because they considered the activity as part of their roles and responsibilities.

7.5.1 Planning for Agriculture vs. Planning for the Food System

At the outset of this chapter, I stated that several participants equated agricultural planning with food system planning, and that this was problematic since it overlooked the dependent relationship between the agricultural sector and the other stages of the food system. I return to this earlier discussion by exploring potential reasons for the conceptual separation between agriculture and the rest of the food system, and why the two need to be reconciled. Among the reasons for the separation are the economic importance of agriculture; the traditional dissociation of food consumption and production; and, specific

to British Columbia, legislation that narrowly mandates local government involvement in planning for agriculture.

Consider the focus on issues of agriculture and food production in my findings: 32 of the 50 examples of food system planning activities cited (Table 6.1) were from the production stage of the food system. In defining the attributes of a sustainable food system (Table 6.6), the top three characteristics all referred to production-related aspects (significant local food production, self-reliance and diversity of agricultural products). Some participants felt that food system planning was relevant only in communities with agricultural lands (Section 6.6.1). Many answered the majority of their interview questions with reference only to agricultural issues.

Certainly, sampling biases may partially account for some of these results. The high frequency with which production-related issues were mentioned may stem from the fact that there were more land use and environmental planners participating in this study than social planners. Unfortunately, due to sampling design shortcomings, all of the land use and environmental planners were also from communities with agricultural land. By virtue of their job description, as well as geography, common sense dictates that these planners are more likely to be involved with production issues and, therefore, these issues would be prominent during interviews.

Sampling biases aside, the success of future food system planning initiatives lies in expanding the view of the food system from agriculture to encompass all stages of the food system, and the interconnections and dependencies that exist amongst them all. A focus merely on agricultural production is problematic to a long-term strategy for local food systems because "...it does not recognize that in the longer term, [agriculture] can be successful only to the degree that other portions of the food system *and* the larger society become more sustainable and regenerative" (Dahlberg, 1993: 82). The development of more comprehensive food system strategies and policies must begin from a starting point that acknowledges the current fragmented approach and the importance of taking an integrated view (Dahlberg, 1993).

The fragmented view of the food system also obscures less apparent linkages among different stages of the food system, such as the connections between food production and food consumption (Clancy, 1993). For example, hunger issues are typically dissociated from farming issues. Clancy's (1993) analysis of U.S. agriculture suggests that this disconnect is influenced by factors such as the innate conservatism of the farming community, massive structural and economic changes in agriculture, and policies that have made trade-offs between environmental concerns and social justice issues. Hunger and farming *are* connected, however, by corporate policies that impact costs for both family farmers and the hungry (Qualman, 2001; Riches, 1996); by the role that agricultural policies have in perpetuating ecological degradation (Troughton, 1995) and social inequities (Clancy, 1993); and by the fact that "the country, including the agricultural sector, is not going to prosper if a growing portion of the population, especially children, remains unskilled and hungry (Clancy, 1993).

Planners are not alone in their narrow view that equates food production with the rest of the food system. Agriculture typically gets more attention because it is recognized- and marketed- as a large player in the provincial and national economy (Dahlberg, 1993). The concept of the food system as an integrated whole is further challenged by the fact that corporate and market interests have compartmentalised the dominant food system into diverse, isolated sectors (Koc and Dahlberg, 1999). Different companies, often in different regions of the world, control different stages of the food system (e.g. Qualman, 2001). There is little physical or conceptual connection between the feedlot, the slaughterhouse and the ground beef on the Safeway shelf. Participants in the dominant food system are isolated not only "...spatially and temporally, but by their functionally different interests" (Koc and Dahlberg, 1999: 112). The economic system reinforces the compartmentalization; those few linkages that do exist are created and maintained by trade, financial agreements and organizations such as World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund (Koc and Dahlberg, 1999).

For planners in British Columbia, the disconnection between food production and the rest of the food system is further exacerbated by legislation that affects local government planning decisions. Most agricultural land in the province is designated as part of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and controlled in large degree by the Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA). The goals of the ALCA are primarily aimed at the food production stage: to preserve agricultural land; to encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest; and to encourage local governments, First Nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies (S. 6 (a-c)). The Act refers to activities in other stages of the food system, but only insofar as they take place on the farm itself (S. 2 (2) a-c). For example, the ALCA permits limited on-farm processing and retail sales. Outreach materials for planners such as *Planning for Agriculture* (Smith, 1998a), *Planning Subdivisions Near Agriculture* (ALC and MAFF, 1997), and *A Guide for Bylaw Development in Farming Areas* (MAFF, 1998) support planners in focusing almost exclusively on food production activities. Predictably, there are no publications entitled *Planning for Local Food Systems*.

The presence of the ALCA may also exacerbate the lack of food system planning efforts in another way. Several participants in this study perceived the ALCA as limiting their community's ability to support a viable local food system, by restricting local governments' ability to adopt new practices such as alternative farmland tenure options or defining alternative uses of agricultural land. Furthermore, the presence of the ALC may dissuade planning departments from becoming involved in the first place: "The Agricultural Land Commission is the reason that local government doesn't pay as much attention to agricultural issues and planning, since there is the perception that someone else is taking care of it..." (K).

In spite of these valid criticisms, it is not my intent to suggest that we do away with the ALR and the ALCA. The presence of the ALR and the broader framework for agricultural planning has led to agricultural land protection, the containment of urban sprawl and enhanced recreational amenities for residents (e.g. Simpson, 2003; NEW&

SmartGrowth BC, 2002). I want simply to make the point that the ALCA should be applauded for what it is- a legislative framework for agricultural planning - and not be confused with a broader strategy for local food system sustainability.

7.5.2 Social Planning vs. Land Use Planning

Another interesting explanation that emerged as to why planning the food system was not part of planners' roles and responsibilities- particularly in issues of food distribution and consumption- was "our department doesn't do social planning". Involvement in these stages of the food system, and the associated issues such hunger and food access, was suggested to be the jurisdiction of social planners, and not land use planners. This view, although expressed by a minority (6/13), points to another conceptual dualism that limits the potential for food system planning.

Social planners work with groups and other civic departments to address critical social issues facing the community (City of Vancouver, 2004a). They work with a wide range of organizations, provide leadership and facilitation, and make recommendations to Council regarding civic policy as it relates to a range of social issues, with particular emphasis on those involving seniors, immigrants, youth and other marginalised populations (City of Vancouver, 2004a). At first glance, the issues of food distribution and consumption would appear to be more closely related to the roles and responsibilities of social planners than with land use planners. As a result, the lack of involvement in food distribution and consumption activities by other types of planners is understandable since few local governments have social planning departments or social planners in the Georgia Basin region.¹⁶ Social planning, if it is undertaken, is often accomplished

¹⁶ Currently, only three municipalities in the Georgia Basin have social planning departments: City of Vancouver (Department of Social Planning); City of North Vancouver (Community Planning Department) and City of Victoria (Community Development Department). Several other municipalities have at least one person with responsibility for social planning on staff, however the exact number has not been calculated (Sands, pers.comm.). In spite of the small number of designated social planning efforts, legislation encourages all BC local governments to adopt social planning functions (SPARC, 1996). Bill 25 (1994) enables and encourages local governments to provide social planning functions, and the Local Government Act allows Official Community Plans policies of the local government relating to social needs, social well-being and social development (S. 878 1(a)).

through community-based organizations, municipal advisory committees or formal social planning councils.¹⁷

Yet there is a danger in ghettoizing issues like hunger and food access as simply social planning issues. The roles and responsibilities of land use planners already intersect with the food distribution and consumption activities (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999). For example, land use planners can assist in ensuring bus routes connect low-income residents with food stores, locating food stores and restaurants within walking distance in neighbourhoods, rezoning for small-scale food processing facilities, and facilitating the lease of civic buildings by emergency food providers. Land use planners can also facilitate food distribution and consumption activities through their involvement with street vending bylaws, the design of community centres (which can include commercial kitchens) and the siting of local farmers markets. On a broader scale, land use planners' actions to support working farms on the urban fringe ensure that there is at least the potential for fresh, local foods to be used by emergency food provision agencies.

Furthermore, to view planning as simply addressing land use and physical planning represents a narrow interpretation of what planners "do". It is true that modern planning has its roots in the physical design of cities and the regulation of land uses (Hall, 2001). However, planning has evolved over the last century from being a technical, objective discipline to a *transformative* action that addresses the problems of patriarchy, racism, poverty, exploitation and ecological degradation (Friedmann, 1987). As participants in this study confirmed, planners are facilitators of change, and their mandate is tightly linked to sustainability and community quality of life. This interpretation echoes UPE theory which proposes that planners – and their departments- take an expansive view of the roles and responsibilities of planners (Harrill, 1999). Since ecological and land use problems issues cannot be divorced from the social and political context, then all planners, even land use and environmental planners, must incorporate social planning issues into their work. Even among those with a more conservative interpretation of

¹⁷ Twelve Georgia Basin communities have community-based social planning organizations and 15 communities have municipal social planning advisory committees (SPARC BC, 2004).

planning's purpose, it is widely accepted that professional planners work inter-disciplinarily and must consider and address social issues within their practice (e.g. CIP, 2004).

There is also a danger in viewing social planning as something that only urban centres need to undertake. One participant explained that her suburban local government was not involved in hunger and food access issues because they were social planning issues, and that it was not involved in social planning issues because they were seen, rightly or wrongly, as an "inner-city" problem. With relevance to food, such a view is problematic because it ignores that food-related social issues occur in every type of community. For example, rural poverty is a cause of food insecurity and hunger in Canada (CAFB, 2003). Likewise, the decline of rural farming and fishing economies lies at the root of some localised social problems (e.g. Krug, 2000).

As a final note on this topic, it is interesting that none of the *social planners* included in this study mentioned a lack of relevance to their roles and responsibilities as a barrier to their involvement in food system planning. One did, however, state that he did not see this as an obstacle:

...My view is that the barriers between social planning and health planning and land use planning are, you know, people get in their mind that they are different fields and I don't think that they are fundamentally different. The reason we do land use planning is for the people we are planning for. (C)

Although beyond the scope of this study, I wonder if this more expansive view of their roles and responsibilities stems from the nature of social planning, which the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (1996: 2) describes as encompassing "any issue that has an impact on people in a community, regardless of whether it can be further identified as having an environmental, economic, cultural, or other impact". Or perhaps from the fact that many social planners do not necessarily come from a traditional "planning school" education (author, pers.obs.) and are therefore not constrained by the perceived roles and responsibilities that traditionally constitute planning practice. These hypotheses merit further exploration.

7.5.3 Responsibility of the Market vs. Responsibility of the Public Sector

Another conceptual dualism that affects how planners viewed their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis the food system was the dichotomy between the public and private sector. Planners, participants suggested, are involved in public sector activities, such as planning for “housing and transportation” and “pedestrians and cyclists”. The food system, in contrast, is controlled by the private sector, and therefore beyond the scope of planning’s roles and responsibilities. If the food system is to find its way onto the planning agenda, and local food systems are to become truly sustainable, this dichotomy must be reconciled.

There is no doubt that the market exerts a large amount of control over the dominant food system. A recent study outlines the extent of corporate involvement in most aspects of the Canadian food system (Qualman, 2001). Yet in spite of the influence of market forces, there are indications that the market system is not ensuring the sustainability of the food system. For example, market failures have been implicated in the Canadian hunger crisis (Riches, 1996); the demise of family farms (due to power imbalances between family farms and the multinational corporations that control the farming sector) (Qualman, 2001); as well as broader agro-ecological impacts (e.g. Thrupp, 1993; Troughton, 1995).

Taking a step back, it is curious that food is left to the market at all. Food, along with air, water and shelter, is a basic human need (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). “Planners have been involved in efforts to improve the quality of air and water through pollution control programs, and more comprehensively through shelter planning. But the fourth essential, food, has been virtually ignored by planners” (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000: 8). The irony of this situation was noted by one participant:

[Food] is distributed through private enterprise. It’s not a public good. It’s not seen as a public good and it should really be treated as such and right now it is being treated as an independent economic output and yet, as long as it is in that realm...I mean, if we thought of water in that way, holy cow, that is scary, right? And if people had control over water the way they have control over food, we’d be...that would be scary. (D)¹⁸

¹⁸ There are indications that water, too, is increasingly being treated as an economic commodity. For a review of the Canadian situation, see Barlow and Clarke (2003).

There is a long history of the commodification of food that is beyond the scope of this paper (see for example, Belasco and Scranton, 2002). In spite of history, or perhaps because of it, there are increasing calls for the public sector to become more involved in the food system (e.g. Torjman and Leviten-Reid, 2003; Hamilton, 2002; Lang et al., 2001; Riches, 1996; Dahlberg, 1993). Riches (1996; 2003) has called for governments at all levels to recognize food as a basic human right, a recognition that would fundamentally shift the way in which food is viewed by the state. As a basic right, access to food would be guaranteed by citizenship and the state would ensure that all citizens- including the unemployed, the mentally ill and those living in poverty- would be able to feed themselves and their families. Ironically, Canada has signed onto a number of international conventions that proclaim food as a basic human right. However, current market-driven welfare reforms undermine the ability of many Canadians to meet their basic nutritional food needs (Riches, 2003). At the local level, governments can assist in re-orienting food as a basic human right or need through comprehensive food policies, such as the one adopted in Kamloops (Kalina, 2001), by direct service provision and, more controversially, through supplementing welfare allowances (Torjman and Leviten-Reid, 2003).

It is also important to remember that there are many parts of the local food system that the market does not control, or even consider. For example, the market places little value on the informal food economy, consisting of backyard and community gardens, home-based food preparation and preservation, backyard composting and emergency food provision (Dahlberg, 1993). With reference to planners, there are many food system activities that are completely or partially within the purview of local government. An inventory of food-related programs, services and policies within the City of Vancouver system revealed involvement in a variety of activities including zoning for agriculture and food processing, supporting the establishment of farmers markets, creating food procurement policies for civic-owned facilities, and providing grants for community gardens, emergency food provision and childcare centre meal programs (City of Vancouver, 2003b). For planners interested in becoming involved in food system

activities, these latter activities are a logical place to start, as they are squarely within the mandate and roles and responsibilities local governments (although not necessarily within the scope of planners' direct responsibilities).

7.5 Moving Away From the Status Quo

The discussion thus far has been built on the assumption that planners need to be involved in food system planning activities. Yet what would happen if planners continued to see the food system as outside their roles and responsibilities? What would be the consequence if local government planners, communities and politicians continued with the *status quo*?

Planners will not, on their own, stem the flow towards the globalisation, consolidation and McDonaldisation of the dominant food system. However, following the *status quo* would overlook the fact that, at this time in history, local governments are in a position to help stem the tide and support a movement towards an alternative.

On a practical level, continuing with the current piecemeal approach would ignore the fact that planners are already involved with food system-related activities, and that planning actions, decisions and regulations determine, in no small measure, the face of the local food system and the surrounding city (Roberts, 2001). At worst, a lack of comprehensive food system planning and policy may undermine existing attempts to build a more sustainable alternative (Nichols, 2003; Welsh et al., 2003).

More broadly, by sticking to the *status quo*, planners would miss an opportunity to link a vital urban system to existing issues of sustainability and community quality of life, issues that participants identified as central to the goals of planning practice. They would forgo the chance to play a part in building alternative local government institutions and political structures that embrace territoriality, local democracy and participation. They would fail to provide for the basic needs of all community members, and to ensure the health of local ecosystems and economies. They would relinquish the opportunity to rediscover the ideological, visionary roots of planning practice (Davoudi, 2001), and to

be truly responsive, as a field, to a growing social movement. In short, planners would concede defeat to Castell's (1996) challenge: "The world has changed: can planning change?".

7.6 Conclusion

In summary, the participants in this study were mostly involved in what can appropriately be termed food system-related planning activities and/or agricultural planning. While these contributions should not be minimized, there is little evidence of the implementation of comprehensive *food system planning* in practice or principle. However, a number of participants expressed an appreciation and support for such a comprehensive approach.

Comprehensive food system planning faces a number of barriers and opportunities, and my discussion focused on two major themes. First, the study highlighted how politics, community and institutional will can help or hinder the food system planning planning agenda. This supports the premise of UPE that the adoption of urban sustainability is as much an issue of governance as it is an issue of ecology, community or economy.

Second, food system planning faces a major barrier in that it is not perceived to be within the purview of planners' roles and responsibilities. This perception can be attributed to a dualistic view of planning that sees agriculture as independent from the food system, social planning as independent from land use and environmental planning, and the domain of planners as independent from the domain of the market. UPE theorists propose that these dualisms must be addressed and overcome if urban sustainability strategies, including food system planning, are to be successfully implemented.

As presented here, the future of food system planning is not without significant obstacles. However, the experiences and ideas of participants provided valuable insight into how the food system might be more comprehensively inserted into the local government planning agenda. This insight forms the basis of the conclusions and recommendations in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Conclusions

Using qualitative research methods, this thesis identified the barriers and opportunities to food system planning in the Georgia Basin region of British Columbia. Using the literature on UPE theory and food system planning as a point of departure, my results suggest that a comprehensive approach to food system planning faces a number of challenges. Some of the challenges are practical, and relate to the importance of building a constituency of political, community and institutional will for food system issues. Other barriers are more conceptual in nature and speak to how planners perceive the roles and responsibilities of their profession. In my view, this latter category of barrier presents the greatest challenge to the future of urban sustainability.

If food system planning is to advance as a field, the local food system, and the comprehensive treatment that it demands, must be made relevant to planning practice. Obviously, planners are not solely to blame for the conceptual dichotomies that see agriculture as separate from the greater food system, social planning as separate from land use planning, and the food system as a private and not a public sector issue. However, planners can be part of the solution in overcoming these puzzling divides. On a practical level, the participants in this research, as well as other studies (e.g. Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000); Nichols, 2003; City of Vancouver (2003a), etc) have pointed to the many ways in which food system-related activities are already part of local government planners' roles and responsibilities. This is particularly true of production-related activities but also of activities in other stages of the food system. Planners and planning departments interested in advancing the food system planning agenda would be well-served to use these activities as entry points upon which to base a broader agenda.

The move from piecemeal food system-related planning activities to a comprehensive strategy of food system planning will also demand that the food system be made relevant to planners' roles and responsibilities on a philosophical level. Urban sustainability

planning, including food system planning, should be based on the principles of inter-disciplinarity, multi-sectorality, a systems approach, community participation and facilitation (Caton Campbell, 2004; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000; Argenti, 2001; MacRae, 1999; Keil, 2003; M'Gonigle, 2000). Planning for sustainability requires a philosophical perspective, that "...has a pro-active dimension. It is ideologically socially responsive and interventionist. Here, planning is seen as an activity which is leading rather than following the state's policies. The planners' role is to defend the environment and the local identities against the risk associated with contemporary economic processes..." (Davoudi, 2001: 90).

In theory, convincing planners of the philosophical relevance of comprehensive food system planning to their existing roles and responsibilities should not be difficult. The principles that underlie sustainability planning are remarkably similar to those that supposedly underlie planning practice already (CIP, 2004): integration, holism, participation, a forward-looking orientation and a goal to "meet the needs of all sectors of society". Yet, this thesis has shown that taking a truly systemic view, when it comes to the food system at least, is a challenge. There are conceptual, institutional and legislative barriers that impede planners from considering the integrated food system as part of their roles and responsibilities. Planning academics will play a large role in creating a planning culture that embraces a systemic, integrated view of sustainability issues.

Certainly, planners and planning departments need to understand and embrace food system planning as relevant to their practice. Focusing on the practice of planning is only a first step, however. Even the most hopeful first step will be hobbled if there is not the governance context to support a comprehensive approach to food system planning. To return to Keil's comment in the second chapter,

The challenge of urban sustainability is ultimately a political one. The ways in which we regulate and govern ourselves, and our urban-nature relationships that sustain our cities, are largely matters of the political regulation of urban nature. *Urban political ecology*- the regulation of our relationships with nature in cities- is ultimately a question of democracy, governance, and the politics of everyday life in cities (Keil, 2003: 729).

It therefore falls to the combination of the public, politicians and planners to advocate for and implement a comprehensive approach to food system planning that links policy to a larger agenda to work towards the ecological, social, economic and nutritional health of the community. For their part, community members are most effective at policy advocacy through a combination charismatic leadership, building a broad constituency of support and recasting political discourse in terms of existing local government priorities (Graham et al., 1998). Politicians can help promote policies that address the real needs of their community through public education, redefining the mission of local government, forging collective dialogue and identifying what local government can contribute (Benest, 1996).

Once there is a supportive constituency in place, Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999) recommend three potential local governance structures where responsibility for a comprehensive approach to urban food system issues could rest. Each potentially involves planners. The first is a municipal department of food (see also MacRae, 1999b), which would take a systems approach to food policy development and implementation, and be organized along the lines of food subsystems. No such municipal department exists in North America. The second, the food policy council, is a multi-stakeholder citizen's council either affiliated with local government or existing as a community-based entity (see also Hamilton, 2002; Borron, 2003). Often featuring City Council or staff representation, the council undertakes projects and makes policy recommendations to better address food system issues. Food policy councils are characterized by taking a systemic view of food system issues, focusing on long-term rather than emergency strategies and including community representation from wide range of sectors (Dahlberg, 1993; Hamilton, 2002). The final structure, the local planning department, would see planners taking a central role in inserting urban food system "more systematically and as integrated as other urban systems" (Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999: 220). The food system would thus become as integral to urban planning as concerns about air, water and shelter, the other basic needs for human survival.

The promise and potential of each of these models needs to be explored. All three models would rest on a foundation of a comprehensive and integrated food policy that

mandates local government to support a food system that is self-reliant, ecologically stable and socially just. Such a policy would necessarily build relationships with other disciplines and maintain sight of the bigger context, while focusing on the strategic areas in which local governments have the capacity to act.

Of course, neither the public nor politicians nor planners will support food policy or food system governance structures unless they understand the problems of the food system and local governments' role in addressing them. The "invisibility of the problem" is a major barrier to food system planning. While planners and community organizations can help raise public awareness, education will only be successful to a point, as support for sustainability issues is also affected by knowledge of the issues, the locus of control, economic factors, personal factors, values, social traditions as well as the degree to which one is personally affected (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). As a result, widespread community and political support for comprehensive food system planning within a particular community may not be forthcoming until the conditions are ripe.

In the meantime, planners wishing to engage in the food system can continue their involvement in food system-related planning activities, helping to build the foundation for an eventual comprehensive approach to food system planning. Such involvement will be facilitated if it is framed within their existing roles and responsibilities, or an existing policy framework. Even without a formal mandate, planners can apply a food systems lens to the analysis of existing planning issues, and ask how new developments or projects will affect local agriculture and food security. Individual planners can begin to think about food- and an integrated local food system- as an essential public good, and not just as an economic commodity. They can then educate their colleagues and councillors, collaborate with community organizations with similar views, and advocate for food security and local food systems within their institutions. Over the long term, seeing the food system as a vital urban system and basic human need has significant implications for the way cities are planned, the ways they are governed, and for whether a community genuinely values the health of its ecosystems, economy and citizens. In other words, there are significant implications for the roles and responsibilities of planners.

8.2 Recommendations for Comprehensively Inserting the Food System into Planning Practice

It is always easier to identify the problems than the solutions. Considering my research findings, what strategies can be recommended for inserting the food system more comprehensively into urban planning practice? The participants in this study identified a variety of conditions that had enabled their participation in food system-related planning activities in the past, and those that they thought might in the future. Drawing on these suggestions, and the analysis of my results, I propose the following list.

8.2.1 For Planning Academics:

Recommendation #1: Develop a framework that better-defines food system planning

If food system planning is to advance, academics, professionals and politicians must clearly understand the vision, theory, objectives, possibilities and relevance of this emerging sub-field. A food system planning framework would also propose models for implementation, and address practical concerns such as how to promote inter-disciplinary collaboration and a systems approach.

Recommendation #2: Offer food system planning courses at planning schools

A number of participants suggested that planners' lack of understanding of food system issues could be overcome by including food system planning as part of the planning school curriculum. A brief internet survey of Canadian planning school curricula revealed that York University was the only school that offered a food system planning course (see York University, 2004). In the United States, only 13% of planning schools (9 programs) have ever offered a course on local food systems, either as a stand-alone course or within another course (Hammer, 2004). Local food system issues can readily be incorporated into existing planning courses such as community economic development, research methods, sustainable communities, etc. For further breadth and depth, however, it is preferable to offer a stand-alone course that will expose students to the diversity of tools, skills and partnerships necessary for food system planning (Hammer, 2004). Such a

course would necessarily be taught from a critical, systems-oriented perspective and incorporate such key issues as urban sustainability, the role of local governments and the link to other issues such as health, agriculture, economic development and politics.

Professional planners can learn about the relevance and application of food system planning to their work through forums such as Planning Institute of British Columbia workshops and conferences (very relevant given the recent professional development requirement); courses through Simon Fraser University's City Program; and lecture series.

8.2.2 For Planners:

Recommendation #3: Cultivate relationships with community organizations already working on local food system issues

A number of participants attributed their interest and involvement in food system-related activities to regular meetings with food system stakeholder organizations. These groups included Agricultural Advisory Committees, food policy organizations, sustainable agriculture networks, the local farmers institute and various stakeholders participating in on-going planning processes. These relationships with community organizations educate planners about relevant food system issues within the community, provide community members with a contact "inside City Hall", and help cultivate a strong base of public support for the involvement of planners.

Recommendation #4: Cultivate political support for food system planning

Political support is critical to the success of food system-related planning activities. With the help of senior managers, planners can develop Council leadership by making them aware of local food issues, the initiatives of community organizations and the best practices in other cities. Most importantly, staff can help educate Council members on the relevance of food system planning to local government roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation #5: Make the link to existing planning roles and responsibilities

Interested planners can frame food system planning within their existing roles and responsibilities, and link the food system to existing policy commitments. This can start with an inventory of all of food system-related planning activities that the planning department is involved with (see City of Vancouver, 2003b), as a basis for building a case for how the local economy, community and environment would benefit from a more integrated approach. In making the link, planners need to take a broad view of what constitutes planning practice, and see their roles as facilitative, inter-disciplinary, transformative and forward-looking.

Recommendation #6: Apply a food systems lens to planning practice

While a comprehensive approach to food system planning and policy is desirable for a number of reasons, not every community is willing, ready or able to implement such an approach. For planners wishing to incorporate local food system objectives in the meantime, they can begin by applying a food system lens to their existing practice (Pothukuchi, 2004; Kaufman, 2004). For example, they might incorporate 'food system impacts' as part of the discussion in policy reports; assess the state of local food system as part of a social plans; and evaluate the economic impact of the local food system as part of an economic development strategy. A comprehensive food system planning approach builds on such individual food system-related planning activities.

Recommendation #7: Accept that food system planning is not appropriate for every community

The trinity of public, political and planning institution support is critical to the adoption and implementation of food system planning strategies. Simply imposing a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach to food system planning or policy, without basing it on demonstrated community need may undermine the locally-based, territorial approach to sustainable development that underlies food system planning. Food system planning needs to stand on a broad foundation of support, and this may take years to build.

8.2.3 For Council Members:

Recommendation #8: Adopt a comprehensive food policy

Local governments can follow the models of several other North American cities and adopt a comprehensive policy framework for local food systems (see Canadian Food Security Network, nd, for a selection). Such a food policy links local government activities to the objectives of food security, agro-ecological stability and economic viability of the local food systems (Hamilton, 2002; MacRae, 1999). It is based on the principles of inter-disciplinarity, macro-policy, multi-sectoriality, participation, local control and, most importantly, a systems approach.

On a practical level, such a policy recognizes the role that Council mandate plays in dictating the activities of planners. More broadly, such a policy can strengthen existing policy areas such as sustainability, complete communities and social development, and ensure that local governments are truly meeting the needs of their constituents and fulfilling their purpose as outlined in the Local Government Act.

Recommendation #9: Establish a municipally-affiliated food policy council

Local governments can support the adoption of comprehensive food system planning and participatory governance by establishing a municipally-affiliated food policy council. Food policy councils are multi-stakeholder citizen advisory committees made up of representatives from all sectors of the local food system that develop local food policy. Currently, over 25 cities in North America have food policy councils (Borron, 2003). Although not always affiliated with the municipal system, those councils that are most successful have a clear mandate and representation from City Council, at least one full-time staff member, and a dedicated budget (Borron, 2003; Dahlberg et al., 2002; Yeatman, 1994). Due to the close involvement of community members and organizations, the creation of a food policy council presents an opportunity for local governments to draw on high quality and low-cost expertise, to adopt new forms of

governance and to ultimately implement policy that more closely reflects the community's vision for their local food system.

8.2.4 For Community Food and Agriculture Organizations:

Recommendation #9: Become policy savvy

Community organizations play a central role in shaping the planning agenda. At the same time, however, many organizations are unfamiliar with how to interact with local government and demand policy change (author, pers.obs.). Organizations can help ensure their long-term success by becoming educated about how to work with local government through speaking with planners, organizing workshops or consulting resources (e.g. Dobson, 2003; Geggie, 2003). As part of their campaigns, community organizations working on local food system issues should identify specific changes to local government policies and programs that are needed to support their efforts, build a strong case, build networks and bring their policy recommendations to the attention of planners and councillors (NSNC/ AHPRC, 2004).

Recommendation #10: Frame food system initiatives in terms of existing local government responsibilities and policy

The perception that the food system is not the domain of local government is a major barrier to the prospects of food system planning. Given that obstacles such as funding constraints, Council resistance to downloading and lack of a mandate are unlikely to disappear in the near future, community organizations advocating for local food system initiatives should recast food system issues within existing political discourse. For example, initiatives could be linked to existing Smart Growth, economic development, social development or sustainability policies (Clancy, 2004).

8.2.5 For the Agricultural Land Commission and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries:

Recommendation #11: Expand the Agricultural Land Commission and Local Government Act to include other stages of the food system

In British Columbia, the food system-related planning activities of local government planners are dictated in large part by the Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA) and the Local Government Act (LGA). The widespread adoption of agricultural planning activities reported in this study alludes to the success that results from a strong policy and legislative framework, supported by outreach efforts to planners. Yet, the Acts have little connection to food system activities other than agricultural planning, thereby reinforcing the fragmented approach that many planners have of the food system. By rewriting the Acts to explicitly encourage a focus on comprehensive food system planning, rather than simply agricultural planning, it is likely that such a strategy would be adopted more quickly than if it were left to individual municipalities to take up on their own.

8.3 Suggestions for Further Research

1. A logical evolution of this study is to test the perceived barriers and opportunities to food system planning in communities that have adopted comprehensive food policy or planning. Including input from councillors, senior managers and community organizations would also help inform the study. Has a Council-supported mandate for food policy in cities such as Vancouver, Kamloops, Merritt, Toronto and Prince Albert led to an increased involvement of planners in food system planning activities? Has it led to a more comprehensive approach to planning for food system issues?
2. Given the central role that civic society can play in influencing food policy and planning, research is needed to better understand of how civil society efforts can contribute most effectively to the development of planning agendas and, more specifically, the institutionalisation of food system planning and policy.

3. Research is also needed into the specific forms of governance that will support urban sustainability and, especially, a comprehensive approach to urban food issues. While the academic literature is heavy on the principles that should guide such governance forms, it is relatively light on specific models (see Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999 for an introductory exploration).
4. More empirical data is desirable on the purported benefits of local food systems. Currently, the benefits exist mainly as hypothesized statements of principle. More studies are needed to quantify the economic, ecological and social impacts of a globalised food system on local communities. Fundamentally, there is still the need to answer the question of whether a locally self-reliant food system is realistic given the existing land base, population pressure and nutritional needs.
5. Finally, further research should be conducted into the benefits of local governments adopting food system-oriented policy and planning. This research would include potential cost-savings and the direct social, ecological and nutritional benefits that would stem from food system planning efforts. Without a clear understanding of how food system planning can overcome existing problems, it is unlikely that politicians, planners and the public would support food system planning as a potential solution.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abel, J. 2000. *Assessing the Involvement of Pennsylvania Professional Planners in Food System Activities*. Pennsylvania State University : Unpublished Masters Thesis.
- Abel, J. and J. Thomson. 2001. *Food System Planning: A Guide for County and Municipal Planners*. Pennsylvania State University: College of Agricultural Sciences, Cooperative Extension.
- Acton, D.F. and L.J. Gregorich. 1995. **The Health of Our Soils: Towards Sustainable Agriculture in Canada**. Ottawa: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Retrieved from www.res2.agr.gc.ca/publications on September 19, 2004.
- Agricultural Land Commission. 2004. *ALR and Community Planning Guidelines*. Victoria, BC: Agricultural Land Commission. Retrieved from http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/publications/Community_Planning_Guidelinescolour.pdf on September 29, 2004.
- Agricultural Land Commission. 2003. *Area Included/Excluded from the ALR by Regional District 1974 to December 31, 2003*. Victoria, BC: Agricultural Land Commission. Retrieved from http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/stats/A5_incl-excl_RDallyears.htm on November 1, 2004.
- Agricultural Land Commission and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. 1997. *Planning for Subdivisions Near Agriculture*. Victoria, BC: British Columbia Agricultural Land Commission and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.
- Allen, P. 1998. **Community Food Security and Federal Food Programs: Finding Common Ground**. *The Cultivar*, Summer/Fall 1998: 7-14.
- Anderson, E. 2003. *Agricultural Planning in the GVRD*. University of British Columbia, School of Community and Regional Planning: Unpublished Masters Thesis,
- Anderson, M.D., and J.T. Cook. 1999. **Community food security: Practice in need of theory?** *Agriculture and Human Values*, 16: 141-150.
- Argenti, O. 2000. *Food for the Cities: Food Supply and Distribution Policies to Reduce Urban Food Security*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Food into Cities" Collection, DT /43-00E.
- Ashworth, G. 1992. *The Role of Local Government in Environmental Protection*. Essex: Longman.
- Astleithner, F. and A. Hamedinger. 2003. **Urban sustainability as a new form of governance: Obstacles and potentials in the case of Vienna**. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences*, 16(1): 51-76.
- Avery, A. 2001. *Nature's Toxic Tools: The Organic Myth of Pesticide-Free Farming*. Churchville, VA: Centre for Global Issues. Retrieved from http://www.cgfi.org/materials/key_pubs/Natures_Toxic_Tools.pdf on November 2, 2004.
- Avery, D. 1997. **Saving Nature's Legacy Through Better Farming**. *Issues in Science and Technology Online*, Fall 1997. Retrieved from <http://www.nap.edu/issues/14.1/avery.htm> on April 10, 2003.
- Avery, D. 1995. **Saving the Planet with Pesticides**. In *True State of the Planet* (R.Bailey, ed.). New York: Free Press.
- BC Stats. 2003. *BC Regional District and Municipal Population Estimates*. Victoria, BC: BC Stats. Retrieved from <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/pop/mun/Mun9603e.htm> on November 2, 2004.

Barbolet, H., R. MacRae and L. Alexander. 2002. *cities^{plus} Foundation Paper Series: Agricultural Systems*. Vancouver: The Sheltair Group. Retrieved from http://www.ffcf.bc.ca/gg_new2/Premise.html on October 25, 2004.

Barlow, M. and T. Clark. 2003. *Blue Gold: The Fight to Stop the Corporate Theft of the World's Water*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

Barrs, R. 1998. *Urban Agriculture: The Potential for South-East False Creek*. University of British Columbia, School of Community and Regional Planning: Unpublished Masters Thesis.

Beers, S. 1981. *I Said, You Are Gods*. London: Teilhard Centre for the Future of Man.

Belasco, W. and P. Scranton, eds. 2002. *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*. New York: Routledge.

Belsky, J.M. 2002. **Beyond the natural resource and environmental sociology divide: insights from a trans-disciplinary perspective.** *Society and Natural Resources*, 15: 269-280.

Benest, F. 1996. **Serving customers or engaging citizens: What is the future of local government?** *International City/County Management Association*, November. Retrieved from <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/benest.html> on October 7, 2004.

Biehler, D., A. Fisher, K. Seidenburg, M. Winne and J. Zachary. 1999. *Getting Food on the Table: An Action Guide to Local Food Policy*. Venice, CA: Community Food Security Coalition.

Birkeland, J. 1993. **Ecofeminism.** In *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals and Nature* (G. Gaard, ed.). Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 23-59.

Bookchin, M. 1991. **An Ecological Society.** In *The Ecology of Freedom* (Bookchin, M. ed.). Montreal: Black Rose.

Borron, S.M. 2003. *Food Policy Councils: Practice and Possibility*. Eugene, Oregon: Congressional Hunger Center. Retrieved from http://www.lanefood.org/pdf/food_policy_councils/food_policy_council_report_february_2003.pdf on November 2, 2004.

Bouris, K. 2004. *Planning for Sustainable Local Food Systems: Examples of Model Official Community Plans, Agricultural Area Plans and Bylaws from Southwestern BC*. Growing Green Working Paper #2. Vancouver, BC: Growing Green.

Brooks, S. 1998. *Public Policy in Canada: An Introduction*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Brown, L. 2003. *Plan B: Rescuing a Planet under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble*. New York: Norton & Company.

Brown, L. 1996. *State of the World 1996*. New York: Worldwatch Institute.

Bullard, R. 1994. **Environmental racism and the environmental justice movement.** In *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory* (Merchant, C., ed.). New Jersey: Humanities Press, pp. 254-265.

Campbell, S. 1996. **Green cities, growing cities, just cities?** *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 62: 296-312.

Canadian Association of Food Banks. 2003a. *Hunger Count 2003*. Toronto: Canadian Association of Food Banks. Retrieved from <http://www.cafb-acba.ca> on April 21, 2004.

Canadian Association of Food Banks. 2003b. *Hunger in Rural Canada*. Toronto: Canadian Association of Food Banks. Retrieved from http://foodbank.duoweb.ca/documents/RuralHunger_word.pdf on October 8, 2004.

Canadian Food Security Network. Nd. *Declarations and Charters*. Retrieved from http://www.ryerson.ca/~foodsec/affiliated_02.html on November 2, 2004.

Canadian Institute of Planners. 2004. *What Planners Do*. Retrieved from <http://www.cip-icu.ca/English/aboutplan/what.htm> on April 20, 2004.

Capra, F. 1994. **Systems theory and the new paradigm**. In *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory* (C. Merchant, ed.). Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, pp. 334-341.

Caraher, M., G. Hewitt and E. Dowler. 2001. *Food Action Projects in London: A Report to the Food Action Network*. London: London Regional Office NHS.

Castells, M. 1996. **An interview with Manuel Castells**. *Cities*, 13(1): 3-9.

Caton Campbell, M. 2004. **Building a common table: The role for planning in community food systems**. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 23(4): 341-355.

City of Vancouver. 2003a. *Action Plan for the Creation of a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver*. Vancouver BC: City of Vancouver Social Planning Department. Retrieved from <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/ccclerk/20031209/rf1.htm> on November 2, 2004.

City of Vancouver. 2003b. *Draft Inventory of Food-Related Policies, Programs and Projects*. Vancouver, BC: City of Vancouver Social Planning Department. Retrieved from <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/pdf/inventory.pdf> on June 15, 2004.

City of Vancouver, 2004a. *Social Planning: About Us*. Retrieved from <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/about.htm> on October 8, 2004.

City of Vancouver. 2004. *Social Planning: Food Policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/index.htm> on October 2, 2004.

Clancy, K. 2004. **Potential contributions of planning to community food systems**. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 23(4):435-438.

Clancy, K.L. 1993. **Sustainable Agriculture and Domestic Hunger: Rethinking a Link Between Production and Consumption**. In *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability* (P. Allen, ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 251-294.

Creamer, N. 2001. **Myth vs. reality: Avery's rhetoric meets the real world of organic**. *Organic Farming Research Foundation Information Bulletin*, 10: 1-5. Retrieved from <http://www.ofrf.org/publications/news/IB10.pdf> on November 2, 2004.

Clement, W. and G. Williams. 1989. **Introduction**. In *The New Canadian Political Economy* (Clement, W. and G. Williams, eds). Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Community Food Security Coalition. nd. *What is the CFSC?* Retrieved from www.foodsecurity.org on June 19, 2004.

- Coote, D.R. and L.J. Gregorich. 2000. *The Health of Our Water: Toward Sustainable Agriculture in Canada*. Ottawa: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Retrieved from www.res2.agr.gc.ca/publications on September 19, 2004.
- Cummins, S. and S. MacIntyre. 1999. **The location of food stores in urban areas: A case study in Glasgow.** *British Food Journal*, 101: 545-553.
- Dahlberg, K. 1993. **Regenerative Food Systems.** In *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability* (P. Allen, ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, pp.75-102.
- Dahlberg, K., K.Clancy, R.L. Wilson and J. O'Donnell. 2002. *Strategies, Policy Approaches, and Resources for Local Food System Planning and Organizing: A Resource Guide*. St. Paul, MN: Local Food System Project. Retrieved from <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~dahlberg/Resource-Guide.html> on November 2, 2004.
- Daly, H. 1994. **Steady-State Economics.** In *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory* (Merchant, C., ed.). New Jersey: Humanities Press, pp. 96-106.
- Daly, H. 1999. **First Law of Thermodynamics.** *Ecological Economics and the Ecology of Economics: Essays in Criticism*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Davoudi, S. 2001. **Planning and the Twin Discourses of Sustainability.** In *Planning for a Sustainable Future* (Layard, A., S. Davoudi and S. Batty, eds.). London: Spon Press, pp. 81-94.
- Davoudi, S. and A. Layard. 2001. **Sustainable Development and Planning.** In *Planning for a Sustainable Future* (Layard, A., S. Davoudi and S. Batty, eds.). London: Spon Press, pp. 1-17.
- DGVI (Agriculture), DGXI (Environment) and Eurostat. 2000. *Agriculture, Environment and Rural Development: Facts and Figures- A Challenge for Agriculture*. Strasbourg: European Union. Retrieved from <http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg06/envir/report/en/index.htm> on October 25, 2004.
- Dobson, C. and Vancouver Citizens Committee. 2003. *The Citizen's Handbook*. Vancouver: Vancouver Citizens Committee. Retrieved from <http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/> on October 6, 2004.
- Dodge, J. 1981. **Living By Life: Some Bioregional Theory and Practice.** *CoEvolution Quarterly*, 32: 6-12.
- Dorcey, A.H.J. and T. MacDaniels. 2001. **Great Expectations, Mixed Results: Trends in Citizen Involvement in Canadian Environmental Governance.** In *Governing the Environment*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 247-302.
- Ebbeling, C.B., D.B. Pawlak and D.S. Ludwig. 2002. **Childhood obesity: public-health crisis, common sense cure.** *The Lancet*, 360(9331): 473-483.
- Ehrlich, P.R., B. Ehrlich and J. Holdren. 1977. *Ecoscience: Population, Resources and Environment*. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman & Co.
- Evanoff, R. 1999. **A Bioregional Perspective on Global Ethics.** *Journal of Asian and International Bioethics*, 9: 60-62.
- Feenstra, G. 1997. **Local food systems and sustainable communities.** *Journal of Alternative Agriculture*, 12(1): 28-36.
- Food and Agriculture Organization. 2003. *Desertification*. Retrieved from www.fao.org/desertification on September 19, 2004

Food and Agriculture Organization. 2004. *The State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) 2003*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization. Retrieved from www.fao.org/documents on September 19, 2004.

Friedmann, J. 1987. *Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gagnon, Y. 1995. *The Theory and Practice of Public Policy-Making in Canada: Metapolicymaking*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.

Garrett, S. and G. Feenstra. 1997. *Growing a Community Food System*. Washington State University: Washington State University Extension Service. Retrieved from <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/wrep0135/WREP0135.pdf> on November 2, 2004.

Geggie, L. 2003. *Youth Hands! Youth Voices! Youth Policy Engagement Through Local Action Projects: A Toolkit for Youth Organizers*. Vancouver: Youth Action Affecting Environmental Change. Retrieved from http://www.eya.ca/yaec/for_youth.html on October 6, 2004.

Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative. 2003. *Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative: A 5-Year Perspective*. Retrieved from http://www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/GeorgiaBasin/reports/5_year_perspective/GBEIreport_2003_e.pdf on November 2, 2004.

Glass, S.M. 2002. **Sustainability and local government**. *Local Environment*, 7(1): 97-102.

Gliessman, S.R. 2001. *Agroecosystem Sustainability: Developing Practical Strategies*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

Gottlieb, R. and A. Fisher. 1996. *Homeward-Bound: Food-Related Transportation Strategies for Low Income and Transit Dependent Communities*. Los Angeles: University of California Transportation Centre.

Graham, K.A., S.D. Phillips and A.M. Maslove. 1998. *Urban Governance in Canada: Representation, Resources and Restructuring*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace.

Greater Vancouver Regional District Social Issues Subcommittee. 2003. *Components of Regional Social Sustainability- A Framework (draft)*. Burnaby, BC: Greater Vancouver Regional District.

Guberman, C. 1995. **Sowing the seeds of sustainability: Planning for food self-reliance**. In *Change of Plans: Towards a Non-Sexist Sustainable City* (Eichler, M., ed.). Toronto: Garamond Press.

Hall, P. 2001. *Cities in Civilization: Culture, Innovation and Urban Order*. London: Trafalgar Square.

Halwell, B. 2002. *Home Grown: The Case for Local Food in a Global Market*. Worldwatch Paper 163. Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute.

Hamilton, N. 2002. **Putting a face on our food: How state and local food policies can promote the new agriculture**. *Drake Journal of Agricultural Law*, 7(2): 408-456.

Hammer, J. 2004. **Community food systems and planning curricula**. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 23(4): 424-434.

Harrill, R. 1999. **Political ecology and planning theory**. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 19(1): 67-75.

Henderson, M. 1997. *A Protocol for Studying the Social and Economic Dimensions in the Lake Superior Basin*. Retrieved from www.nmu.edu/sbp/superiorbasin/study4/study4.html on April 8, 2003.

- Hendrickson, M., W.D. Heffernan, P.H. Howard and J.B. Heffernan. 2001. *Consolidation in Food Retailing and Dairy: Implications for Farmers and Consumers in a Global Food System*. Washington, D.C.: National Farmers Union.
- Jepson, E.J. 2001. **Sustainability and planning: Diverse concepts and close associations.** *Journal of Planning Literature*, 15(4): 499-510.
- Jones, A. 2001. *Eating Oil: Food Supply in a Changing Climate*. London: Sustain UK.
- Jones, A. 1988. **From Fragmentation to Wholeness: A Green Approach to Science and Society (Parts 1 and 2).** *The Ecologist*, 17(6): 236-240 and 18(1):30-34.
- Joseph, H. 1999. **Redefining Community Food Security.** *Community Food Security News*, 3:12-13.
- Kalina, L. 2001. *Building Food Security in Canada: From Hunger to Sustainable Food Systems, A Community Guide*. Kamloops, BC: Laura Kalina.
- Kaufman, J.L. 2004. **Introduction: Special Issue: Planning for Community Food Systems.** *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 23:335-340.
- Keil, R. 2003. **Urban Political Ecology: Progress report.** *Urban Geography*, 8: 723-738.
- Keil, R., D.V.J. Bell, P. Penz and L. Fawcett. 1998. **Editor's introduction: perspectives on global political ecology.** *Political Ecology: Global and Local*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-18.
- Kloppenburg, J., S. Lezberg, K. De Master, G.W. Stevenson and J. Hendrickson. 2000. **Tasting Food, Tasting Sustainability: Defining the Attributes of an Alternative Food System with Competent, Ordinary People.** *Human Organization*, 59(2): 177-186.
- Kloppenburg, J.J., J. Hendrickson, and G.W. Stevenson. 1996. **Coming into the Foodshed.** *Agriculture and Human Values*, 13: 33-42.
- Klindworth, K. 1999. *Draft: Agricultural Transportation Challenges for the 21st Century: A Framework for Discussion*. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service.
- Kneen, B. 1993. *From Land to Mouth: Understanding the Food System*. Toronto: NC Press.
- Knutson, R.D., J.B. Penn and B.L. Flinchbaugh. 2004. *Agricultural and Food Policy*. Pearson- Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ.
- Koc, M. and K.A. Dahlberg. 1999. **The restructuring of food systems: Trends, research and policy issues.** *Agriculture and Human Values*, 16: 109-116.
- Koc, M., R. MacRae, L.J.A. Mougeot and J. Welsh. 1999. **Introduction: Food Security as a Global Concern.** In *For Hunger-Proof Cities: Sustainable Urban Food Systems* (M. Koc, R. MacRae, L.J.A. Mougeot and J. Welsh, eds.). Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.
- Kollmuss, A. and J. Agyeman. 2002. **Mind the Gap: Why do people act environmentally and what are the barriers to pro-environmental behavior?** *Environmental Education Research*, 8: 239-260.
- Krug, K. 2000. **Canadian rural women reconstructing agriculture.** In *For Hunger-Proof Cities: Sustainable Urban Food Systems* (M. Koc, R. MacRae, L.J.A. Mougeot and J. Welsh, eds.). Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

- Lang, T. 1999. **The complexities of globalization: The UK as a case study of tensions within the food system and the challenge to food policy.** *Agriculture and Human Values*, 16:169-185.
- Lang, T., D. Barling and M. Caraher. 2001. **Food, social policy and the environment: Towards a new model.** *Social Policy and Administration*, 35(5): 538-558.
- LeCompte, M.D. and J.L. Shensul. 1999. *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research. Ethnographer's Toolkit, #1.* Lanham, MD: Altamira Press.
- Lee, M. 2000. **Farms and the Future of Food in BC.** *BC Commentary*, 3(4). Retrieved from <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/> on October 25, 2004.
- Lomborg, B. 2001. *The Skeptical Environmentalist.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- M'Gonigle, M. 2000. **A Dialectic of centre and territory: The Political economy of ecological flows and spatial relations.** In *Nature, Production, Power: Toward an Ecological Political Economy* (F.P. Gale and R. M. M'Gonigle, eds). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- M'Gonigle, M. 1998. *The Dialectic of centre and territory.* University of Victoria, Faculty of Law and School of Environmental Studies: Unpublished paper.
- MacRae, R. and Toronto Food Policy Council. 1999. **Not just what, but how: Creating agricultural sustainability and food security by changing Canada's agricultural policy making process.** *Agriculture and Human Values*, 16: 187-201.
- MacRae, R. 1999. **Policy failure in the Canadian food system.** In *For Hunger-Proof Cities: Sustainable Urban Food Systems* (M. Koc, R. MacRae, L.J.A. Mougeot and J. Welsh, eds.). Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.
- Mader, P., A. Fließbach, D. Dubois, L. Gunst, P. Fried and U. Niggli. 2002. **Soil fertility and biodiversity in organic farming.** *Science*, 296 (5573): 1694-1697.
- Marx, K. 1978. **Ideology in General.** In *The Marx-Engels Reader* (R.C. Tucker, ed.). New York: Norton, pp. 150-155.
- Mendes, W. 2004. **Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver.** *Cities Feeding People Workshop Paper* International Development Research Centre August 29 – September 2, 2004, Toronto. Retrieved from http://www.ryerson.ca/foodsecurity/Documents/Mendes_CFP_IDRC_PaperJuly30.doc on October 1, 2004
- Miller, A. 1994. **Economics and the environment.** In *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory* (Merchant, C., ed.). New Jersey: Humanities Press, pp. 78-87.
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. 1998. *Guide to Bylaw Development in Farming Areas.* Victoria: British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. 2004. **General Responsibilities.** Retrieved from http://www.gov.bc.ca/bvprd/bc/channel.do?action=ministry&channelID=-8377&navId=NAV_ID_province on September 29, 2004.
- Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. 1999. *Tackling Non-Point Source Water Pollution in British Columbia.* Victoria, BC: Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. Retrieved from <http://www.wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wat/wq/bmps/npsaction.html#2> on April 21, 2004.

Mittler, D. 2001. **Hijacking sustainability? Planners and the promise and failure of Local Agenda 21.** In *Planning for a Sustainable Future* (A.Layard, S.Davoudi and S.Batty, eds). London: Spon Press, pp. 53-60.

Moore, J.L. 2000. **What is stopping sustainability? Examining the barriers to implementation of Clouds of Change.** In *Fatal Consumption: Rethinking Sustainable Development*. Vancouver: UBC Press, pp.101-129.

Moore, J.L. 1994. *What's Stopping Sustainability? Examining the Barriers to Implementation of Clouds of Change*. University of British Columbia: Unpublished Masters Thesis.

Mumford, L. 1925. **Regions- To Live In.** *The Survey Graphic*, 54: 151-152.

Myers, R.A. and B. Worm. 2003. **Rapid worldwide depletion of predatory fish communities.** *Nature*, 423: 280-83.

Neumann, J. 1997. *Farmers' Markets: Connecting Citizens with Local Agriculture in BC*. Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Victoria.

Nichol, L. 2003. **Local food production: Some implications for planning.** *Planning Theory and Practice*, 4(4): 409-427.

Norberg-Hodge, H., T. Merrifield and S. Gorelick. 2000. *Bringing the Food Economy Home: The Social, Ecological and Economic Benefits of Local Food*. London: International Society for Ecology and Culture.

Northwest Environment Watch and SmartGrowth BC. 2002. *Sprawl and Suburban Growth in Greater Vancouver*. Seattle: Northwest Environment Watch. Retrieved from http://www.northwestwatch.org/press/recent_vansprawl.asp on October 6, 2004.

Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre. 2004. *Food Security for All: A Workbook on Food Security and Influencing Policy*. Halifax: Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre. Retrieved from <http://www.foodthoughtful.ca> on October 6, 2004.

Perkins, E. 1999. **Public policy and the transition to locally-based food networks.** In *For Hunger-Proof Cities: Sustainable Urban Food Systems* (M. Koc, R.MacRae, L.J.A.Mougeot and J. Welsh, eds.). Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

Pirog, R. et al.. 2001. *Food, Fuel and Freeways: An Iowa Perspective on How Far Food Travels, Fuel Usage, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. Ames, IA: Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University.

Plumwood, V. 1994. **Ecosocial feminism as a general theory of oppression.** In *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory* (Merchant, C., ed.). New Jersey: Humanities Press, pp. 207-219.

Plumwood, V. 1997. **Feminism and Ecofeminism.** In *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (V. Plumwood, ed.). New York: Routledge, pp. 19-40.

Ponting, C.A. 1991. *A Green History of the World*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Pothukuchi, K. 2004. **Community food assessment: A first step in planning for community food security.** *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 23(4): 356-377.

Pothukuchi, K. and J. Kaufman. 2000. **The food system: A stranger to the planning field.** *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 66(2): 113-124.

- Pothukuchi, K. and J. Kaufman. 1999. **Placing the food system on the urban agenda: The role of municipal institutions in food systems.** *Agriculture and Human Values*, 16(2): 213-226.
- Pretty, J. 2002. *Agri-Culture: Reconnecting Land, Community and Culture*. London: Earthscan Books.
- Pucher, J. and J.L. Renne. 2003. **Socioeconomics of Urban Travel: Evidence from the 2001 NHTS.** *Transportation Quarterly*, 57(3): 49-78.
- Renting, H., T.K. Marsden and J. Banks. 2003. **Understanding alternative food networks: exploring the role of short food supply chains in rural development.** *Environment and Planning A*, 35(3): 393-411.
- Qualman, D. 2001. *The Farm Crisis and Corporate Power*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Retrieved from <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/> on September 26, 2004.
- Rangan, H. 2000. **Political ecology and regional sustainability: Reflections on contemporary debates and material practices.** In *Nature, Production, Power: Toward an Ecological Political Economy* (F.P. Gale and R. M. M'Gonigle, eds). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Ranney, D. 1969. *Planning and Politics in the Metropolis*. Columbus: Merrill.
- Rees, W.E. 2002. **Globalization and sustainability: Conflict or convergence?** *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*, 22(4): 249-268.
- Rees, W.E. 1995. **Achieving sustainability: Reform or transformation?** *Journal of Planning Literature*, 9(4): 343-61.
- Rees, W.E. and M. Wackernagel. 1995. *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth*. Gabriola Island: New Society Press.
- Riches, G. 2003. **We are what we eat: Food security and social policy.** *SPARC BC News*. Vancouver: Social Planning and Research Council of BC, Winter 2004: 10-12.
- Riches, G. 2000. **The Human Right to Food: Engaging the Debate About Globalism, Employment and the Quality of Life.** In *Proceedings of Socio-Economic Security: Globalization, Employment, and Quality of Life*, HUGG Sydney, Toda Institute and the University of Sydney, Australia. November 28-29, 1998. Retrieved from <http://www.toda.org/conferences/conf.html> on November 1, 2004.
- Riches, G. 1996. *First World Hunger: Food Security and Welfare Politics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Roberts, W. 2001. *The Way to a City's Heart is Through its Stomach: Putting Food Security on the Urban Planning Menu*. Toronto: Toronto Food Policy Council.
- Robson, C. 2002. *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner- Researchers*. London: Blackwell.
- Rosset, P. and M.A. Altieri. 1997. **Agroecology versus import substitution: A fundamental contradiction of sustainable agriculture.** *Society and Natural Resources*, 10(3): 283-296.
- Rydin, Y., N. Holman, V. Hands and F. Sommer. 2003. **Incorporating sustainable development concerns into an urban regeneration projects: How politics can defeat procedures.** *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 46(4): 545-561.
- Sale, K. 1985. *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books.
- Sandercock, L. 1998. *Towards Cosmopolis*. Chichester: Wiley.

- Sands, J. 2004. (Project Coordinator, Social Planning and Research Council of BC) Personal Communication. October 6, 2004.
- Schlosser, E. 2002. *Fast Food Nation*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Shrader-Frechette, K.S. 1981. *Environmental Ethics*. Pacific Grove, CA: Boxwood Press.
- Shensul, S.L.; J.J. Shensul and M.D. LeCompte. 1999. *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews and Questionnaires*. Ethnographers Toolkit, #2. Ladham, MD: Altamira Press.
- Shiva, V. 1999. *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of The Global Food Supply*. London: South End Press.
- Shiva, V. 1994. **Development, ecology and women**. In *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory* (Merchant, C., ed.). New Jersey: Humanities Press, pp. 272-280.
- Simpson, A. 2001. *The Toronto Food Policy Council*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.
- Simpson, S. 2003. **BC Farmland Reserve Blocks Sprawl**. *Alternatives Journal*, 29(3): 20-22.
- Smart Growth BC. 2003. *Smart Growth BC's Position on the Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)*. Retrieved from <http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/index> on April 21, 2004.
- Smit, J., A. Ratta and J. Nasr. 1996. *Urban Agriculture: Food, Jobs and Sustainable Cities*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.
- Smith, A. 1994. *The Wealth of Nations*. New York: Modern Library.
- Smith, B. 1998a. *Planning for Agriculture*. Victoria, BC: Agricultural Land Commission. Retrieved from <http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/publications/planning> on April 21, 2004.
- Smith, B. 1998b. *Purpose of Planning for Agriculture*. Victoria, BC: Agricultural Land Commission. Retrieved from <http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/publications/planning/purpose.htm> on November 2, 2004.
- Smith, D. and W.R. Rees (eds.). 2003. *Footprints to the Future: Tracking Sustainability in the GVRD*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia School of Community and Regional Planning. Publication forthcoming.
- Social Planning Council of British Columbia, 2004. *Social Planning Contacts in British Columbia, 3rd Edition*. Vancouver: Social Planning Council of British Columbia. Retrieved from http://www.sparc.bc.ca/supportitems/Social_Planning_Contacts_2004.pdf on October 4, 2004.
- Social Planning Council of British Columbia. 1996. *Social Planning for BC Communities*. Vancouver: Social Planning Council of British Columbia: A resource guide for local governments. Retrieved from <http://www.mcaws.gov.bc.ca/lgd/irpd/growth/PUBLICATIONS/social/> on September 30, 2004.
- Statistics Canada. 2004. **New Farm Income**. In *The Daily*, Thursday, May 27, 2004. Retrieved from www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/040527/d040527b.html on June 2, 2004.
- Statistics Canada. 2002. *Census of Agriculture*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Retrieved from www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/stats/census/number.html
- Stoker, G. 2000. *The New Politics of British Local Governance*. London: MacMillan.
- Stringer, E.T. 1999. *Action Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sustain UK. 2003. *The English Regional Development Agencies: What are They Doing to Support Sustainable Food Economies*. Sustainable Food Chains, Briefing Paper #4. London: Sustain UK. Retrieved from <http://www.sustainweb.org/pdf/briefing4.PDF> on November 2, 2004.

Sustain UK. 2002. *Local Food: Benefits, Obstacles and Opportunities*. Briefing Paper #1. London: Sustain UK. Retrieved from <http://www.sustainweb.org/publications/downloads/briefing1.pdf> on November 2, 2004.

Swyngedouw, E. and N. Heynen. 2003. **Urban political ecology, justice and the politics of scale**. *Antipode*, 35: 898-918.

Taylor, D. 1992. **Disagreeing on the basics: Environmental debates reflect competing world views**. *Alternatives Journal*, 18(30): 27-35.

Tindal, C.R. and S.N. Tindal. 2000. *Local Government in Canada*. Toronto: Nelson.

Thrupp, L.A. 1993. **Political ecology of sustainable rural development: Dynamics of social and natural resource degradation**. In *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability* (P. Allen, ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 47-74.

Torjman, S. and M. Leviten-Reid. 2003. *The Social Role of Local Government*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.caledoninst.org/PDF/553820495.pdf> on November 2, 2004.

Toynbee, A. 1970. *Cities on the Move*. London: Oxford University Press.

Troughton, M.J. 1995. **Agriculture and rural resources**. In *Resource and Environmental Management in Canada: Addressing Conflict and Uncertainty* (B. Mitchell, ed.). Toronto: Oxford University Press, pp. 151-182.

Turney, P.B.B. 1991. **Beyond TQM With Workforce Activity Based Management**. *Management Accounting*, September: 28-31.

Welsh, J. and R. MacRae. 1998. **Food citizenship and community food security: Lessons from Toronto, Canada**. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, 19:237-255.

Welsh, R., B. Hubbell and C.L. Charpentier. 2003. **Agro-food system restructuring and the geographic concentration of U.S. swine production**. *Environment & Planning A*, 35(2): 215- 230.

While, A., A.E.G. Jonas and D.Gibbs. 2004. **The environment and the entrepreneurial city: Searching for the urban sustainability fix in Manchester and Leeds**. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 28(3): 549-69.

Yeatman, H. 1994. *Food Policy Councils in North America: Observations and Insights*. Final Report on a World Health Organization's Travelling Fellowship. Retrieved from <http://www.uow.edu.au/health/Pdf/WHOTravelFellowReport.pdf> on November 2, 2004.

York University. 2004. *Master in Environmental Studies Course List*. Toronto: York University. Retrieved from http://www.yorku.ca/fes/programs/mes/cs_courses.asp on October 5, 2004.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CONDITIONS THAT ENABLE FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING

(continued from Section 6.5)

Enabling Condition #6: Food system part of community identity (5/13 participants).

Planners are involved in food and agricultural activities because of their significance to the economic, cultural and historical identity of certain communities. In some cases, this identity translates to strong political or community support for food system issues.

Enabling condition #7: Broader social trends (5/13 participants). Planners'

involvement in a particular food system issue reflects a growing societal awareness of and shift towards ecological sustainability, good nutrition and health. This shift is often reflected (and some might argue, initiated) by the media. Social change is often the catalyst for community or political pressure, which contributes to planner involvement.

Enabling Condition #8: Agricultural Advisory Committee initiative (4/13 participants).

Agricultural Advisory Committees are committees of municipal council- or regional board-appointed agricultural stakeholders, charged with liaising with governments and making recommendations on land use, regulatory and economic development matters as they related to the agricultural community. Agricultural Advisory Committee initiative has led to planners being involved in some specific food system issues such as an economic strategy for agriculture and farm tours.

Enabling condition #9: Community discussion on another issue (3/13 participants). In

some cases, the initiative for a new food system planning activity resulted from discussions with community members on another issue. For example, one community decided to explore options for locating food processing industries on low-capability agricultural lands as a result of meetings with farmers to talk about how to address flooding problems.

Enabling Condition #10: Changes to provincial regulations required involvement (3/13 participants). Planners became involved in specific food system issues due to changes to provincial regulations, which required municipal or regional regulations to be updated. This was particularly true in the last few years with the updated Farm Practices Act and other ALC regulations, which affected municipal and electoral area by-laws.

Enabling Condition #11: Intergovernmental partnership (3/13 participants). Planners have become involved in food system activities as a result of the invitation of another government agencies, such as MAFF or the health authority. For example, one regional district collaborated with MAFF and other stakeholder groups to produce an economic viability strategy for agriculture. Another municipal planner cited her strong working relationship with the local MAFF planner as the reason for initiating a regional Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Enabling Condition #12: Economic opportunity (2/13 participants). Planners became involved in food system activities as a result of political interest in exploring new economic opportunities.

APPENDIX B: THE ATTRIBUTES OF A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM: IN THE PARTICIPANTS' OWN WORDS

(Continued from Section 6.8)

In this section, I present the four most common attributes of a sustainable food system as explained in the participants' own words.

Local food production. Locally-produced food was the most commonly cited characteristic of a sustainable food system. Although no participants specifically defined the term "local", all referred to food that is either produced and consumed within the local or regional vicinity:

We'd like to see a very high percentage of locally-produced food available, local food production, a high percentage. (A)

Say here is 100%...to be sustainable, you would have to guarantee that up to 70% is something that is tangible, something that you have control over. So in this case, it is local, it is protected, you have controls over your input, so that you are reducing your risk. (B)

I think we need to have much more local food production. I really am totally dismayed at the whole loss of farmland, local farmland, I am totally dismayed. That is a huge mistake. (J)

Food is produced locally, it reaches local markets. (C)

...there would be locally produced, consumed, healthy, organic food which is readily available to everybody. (L)

Only one participant explained the rationale behind why local food would be central to a sustainable food system:

When you look at issues related to food policy from the economic perspective, it makes sense that foods are produced locally, because eventually it will be cheaper, because you save on the transportation costs from bringing food from far away. From an environmental perspective, it makes sense that by producing locally, you don't burn all of the fuel from transportation. And socially, you provide sources of employment, to the local community, making therefore the local economy healthy.(M)

Self-reliance. Self-reliance refers to an area's ability to meet a certain level of it's own food needs within its boundaries. A total of five participants, including all of four of those from Vancouver Island, saw some degree of self-reliance as an attribute of a sustainable food system (of interest, all four also mentioned the commonly cited statistic

that Vancouver Island produces only 10% of the food that it consumes over the course of the interview). While no participants explicitly used the term “self-reliance”, they made reference to the need for food supply that is sourced locally and independent of external forces, such as market forces and ferry stoppages. For example:

Ultimately, I think a sustainable food system is a food system that you can depend on if transportation shuts down, you know you’ve got enough supply in your local community that you’re not going to starve. (A)

I guess, to me, a sustainable food system would be one where you are not so totally dependent on an independent source that you can’t look after your own needs. Vancouver Island only produces 10% of what it consumes, so we have a long way to go in terms of food sustainability, if we looked at just the Island. Certainly, that would be a wonderful goal if we were able to achieve even a 100% increase, that would be pretty significant. (K)

Really, it comes back to bioregionalism as well, that so much of the food we eat is not from here. (L)

Self-sufficiency goes on step beyond the concept of self-reliance, and refers to an area’s ability to meet 100% of its needs within the local or regional territory. One person from the Lower Mainland made reference to the concept, and did not feel that self-sufficiency in food was a requirement for a sustainable food system:

I would not claim that we have to be food self-sufficient. I think trade is something that people have done for 10,000 years and will continue to do long into the future. You will have specialization. You just want to make sure that you don’t overspecialize. And this region doesn’t. This region produces a wide variety of crops, suitable to the local environment...Food self-sufficiency wouldn’t be one of the things that I would be concerned about for food. (I)

Diversity of local agricultural products. Three of the thirteen participants thought that a sustainable food system should feature a diversity of crops and value-added food products within a local area:

...In order to be sustainable you need some diversity, you can’t put all of your eggs in one basket. You can’t have all of your wheat production in one place, and all of your beef production in one place on the planet, you need to spread it out. You need diversity. (A)

I think it is primarily regionally-based agriculture with an agro-ecological focus that involves a diversity of commodities, diversity of products that are managed so that they sustain the landbase in perpetuity and also that they are serving the people within the region, predominantly. (H)

You will have specialization. You just want to make sure that you don’t overspecialize. And this region doesn’t. This region produces a wide variety of crops, suitable to the local environment...(I)

Affordability. Four participants said that, in a sustainable food system, food would be priced such that all citizens could afford to eat. Two participants also qualified that the food should be both affordable and locally-produced.

...[Food] can't be dramatically more expensive than what agri-business does, at the end of the day...I think to me it is ultimately an issue of economics, because people have to eat, they want to eat everyday and they want to have at least the appearance of having a diversity of food, even if tomatoes taste like cardboard, most people will buy them if they are much cheaper than better things...(C)

...Let's start with the basics. Is it possible for every member of our community to meet their nutritional needs with the income they have? (J)

Food is available at reasonable cost to people. This would largely be a cost issue, people should be able to afford to buy local food. (F)

...There would be locally produced, consumed, healthy, organic food which is readily available to everybody. (L)