ABSTRACT

The case has been made by a growing number of authors for the inclusion of food system planning within the responsibilities of municipal planners. However, few specific tools or strategies for planners to use in supporting sustainable food systems have been outlined by these authors. This thesis explores ways in which local government planners can become engaged in food system planning by addressing the establishment, operation and expansion of farmers markets. Farmers markets, it has been established in previous studies, offer significant potential for contributing to sustainable food systems.

The thesis is based on a study of experiences and perceptions related to planning for farmers markets in three major cities. The cities, which share a common bio-region, are Vancouver, B.C., Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon. Interviews were conducted with market proponents and municipal staff; relevant local government documents were analyzed.

The study finds that planners can address farmers markets in five functional areas: 1) policy making and regulation; 2) land use planning and urban design; 3) site planning; 4) administration, and; 5) facilitation. Within these five areas, planners can make substantive contributions by: 1) defining farmers markets in zoning regulations; 2) streamlining permitting processes; 3) addressing issues with health regulations; 4) integrating infrastructure, amenities and services for farmers markets into the design of public places; 5) assisting with financing and advertising; 6) communicating among stakeholders; 7) conducting community consultation; 8) carrying out research; 9) responding to complaints; 10) educating colleagues, the public, and market organizers about issues relevant to farmers markets; 11) advocating for farmers markets within the City and the community; 12) building relationships with market associations; 13) addressing affordability issues; and 14) connecting planning for farmers markets to a broader food system planning agenda.

The study suggests that one major opportunity for planners to support farmers markets lies in their ability to facilitate the interaction between market organizations and local governments. A second major opportunity lies in their ability to promote attention to farmers markets when public places are being designed. A third key opportunity lies in their ability to consider policy and regulatory changes that promote farmers markets as unique and legitimate uses of public space, and provide them with longer term security.
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PREFACE

Over the past 11 years, I have been involved in a number of community organizations promoting sustainable food systems in Victoria and Vancouver. For one year, I also apprenticed with a small scale organic farmer on Vancouver Island. From these experiences, I developed an interest in understanding the ways in which government planning and policy can be harnessed as a tool to support grassroots initiatives and small businesses that embody the principles of sustainable food systems.

While completing my Masters degree, I have also worked as a teaching assistant in two Land and Food Systems courses, and as a co-investigator in two community-based action research projects carried out through these courses (the UBC Food System Project and the Vancouver Food Security Project). These activities have exposed me to recent literature on food system sustainability, to qualitative research methods, and to information on food system sustainability and food security collected by the students involved in these projects. These experiences have shaped my interest in and approach to this thesis. In 2004, I also had the opportunity to engage, as a student intern, in the initial stages of the City of Vancouver’s food policy work. This experience exposed me to some of the opportunities and challenges of working within local government to support sustainable food systems.

My wish to further probe the relationship between the sustainable food systems movement and local government is founded upon a belief in the potential for this intersection to generate productive and mutually beneficial outcomes. Coupled with this optimism is a realization of the practical difficulties in effectively introducing new areas of planning and policy into government institutions. This research project is therefore part of a personal journey to better understand the municipal planning landscape, as well as the tools and strategies available for food system planning. Researching planning for farmers markets offers a window through which this exploration can take place.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem Statement

Food system planning is an emerging field with the potential to contribute significantly to urban and regional sustainability. As the field is in its infancy, further research is required to bring shape to its theory and practice. The term food system is used in this thesis to describe the web of processes through which food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed, and disposed of as waste, or re-integrated into the productive cycle. Food system planning can be defined as the planning of integrated strategies to enhance sustainability and social justice in all food system processes (Adapted from Bouris, 2004). One might also conceive of a planning sub-discipline aimed at enhancing economic efficiency and productivity of the global food system. However, the definition of food system planning applied in this thesis carries with it connotations of sustainability and social justice.

Food has not traditionally been incorporated within the realm of municipal planning and policy in a coordinated manner. The absence of food from municipal planning agendas is surprising, since planners have long played a role in planning related to other basic necessities, such as housing, water, and transportation. As well, planners play a role in a number of key areas that impact the food system, including community and economic development, resource management, and land use.

The case has been made by a growing number of authors for the inclusion of food system planning within the responsibilities of municipal planners (see for example Abel & Thomson, 2001; Bouris, 2004; Caton Campbell, 2004; Clancy, 2004; Hammer, 2004; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000), on the basis that planners have a responsibility to create sustainable communities, as well as unique skills and resources to draw from. The
argument for supporting sustainable food systems also derives from a large body of literature pointing to sustainability challenges in the dominant food system, which will be discussed further below. However, only a few local government departments have staff working on food policy (e.g. in Vancouver, Toronto, and Portland) (Bouris, 2004; Pothukuchi & Kaufman 2000). The literature that exists on food system planning focuses largely on the potential contributions of planners to sustainable food systems – there is little assessment of actual results. While recommendations for planners’ involvement in the food system have been articulated, few specific tools or strategies are outlined by authors writing on food system planning (see for example Abel & Thomson, 2001; Bouris, 2004, Caton Campbell, 2004; Clancy, 2004; Hammer, 2004; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; Pothukuchi & Kaufman 2000). The appropriate role for planners in supporting sustainable food systems, therefore, largely remains to be defined.

Despite a lack of strategic involvement in the food system, planners do nevertheless become engaged in activities related to sustainable food systems (e.g. establishing community gardens, locating sites for grocery stores, drafting agricultural land use policy, etc.) (Bouris 2004, Pothukuchi & Kaufman 2000). However, the role of planning agencies in these activities has been described as “reactive rather than proactive (Pothukuchi & Kaufman 2000, p.4).” Planners typically become involved in these initiatives on a case-by-case basis, in response to community demands, rather than as a result of coordinated planning and policy aimed at improving the sustainability of food systems (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). Specific policies, tools and strategies for planners to proactively engage in food system planning are therefore needed to provide direction for municipalities embarking on food systems planning.
1.1.1. Farmers Markets and Sustainable Food Systems

Establishment of farmers markets is one example of an initiative that offers potential to contribute significantly to sustainable food systems. Because farmers markets influence several sectors of the food system (distribution, consumption and production, in particular), facilitating farmers markets is one vehicle through which planners may be able to proactively approach food system planning.

Various studies of farmers markets in the US and Canada have documented their social and economic impacts with respect to customers, farmers, neighbourhoods and communities (Brown, 2002; Corum, Rosenzweig & Gibson, 2001; Feagan, Morris & Krug, 2004; Govindasamy, Italia, Zurbriggen, & Hossain, 1998; Govindasamy Zurbriggen, Italia, Adelaja, Nitzsche, & VanVranken, 2003; Hilchey, Lyson & Gillespie, 1995; Johnston, 2002; Neumann, 2003; Project for Public Spaces, 2003a; Project for Public Spaces, 2003b; Spitzer & Baum, 1995). Researchers are also beginning to situate these analyses on the role of farmers markets within a food systems framework (Feagan et al., 2004; Neumann, 2003; Project for Public Spaces, 2003a).

Within these studies, numerous benefits of farmers markets to sustainable food systems are cited, including:

- Providing economic opportunities for small scale farmers and food processors, which in turn supports local economies;
- Providing access to fresh, nutritious food;
- Building relationships between farmers and consumers;
- Creating a sense of community in urban neighbourhoods;
- Providing a forum for education and mobilization around food, farming and nutrition issues;
• Acting as a catalyst for sustainable growing practices, and
• Supporting farmland preservation.

Farmers markets are also considered to decrease “food mileage”, or the distance that individual food items travel from farm to consumer, along with the associated energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions resulting from this transport (Bentley & Barker, 2005; Pirog & Benjamin, 2003).

While the benefits of farmers markets are celebrated by advocates of sustainable food systems across North America, markets typically make a relatively small contribution to overall food distribution in North American cities. Recent estimates suggest that 1-2% of national food distribution occurs through farmers markets in the US (Brown, 2002). Numerous barriers to the development and expansion of farmers markets have been cited. These include issues with health and zoning regulations, licensing and permitting, location, space, funding, parking, promotion, education, and farmer recruitment, as well as difficulties in the relationship between markets and city officials (Govindasamy et al., 1998; Oberholtzer & Grow, 2003; Neumann, 2003). Additionally, farmers face challenges related to macroeconomic trends in the food system, such as competition with supermarkets, high input costs, and labour shortages (Griffin, 2001; Griffin & Frongillo, 2003).

Access to farmers markets for different segments of the population may also be an issue. In some instances, farmers markets are applauded for providing fresh food at a lower than average cost to consumers in low income neighbourhoods (Project for Public Spaces, 2003a). In other cases, markets are criticized for their lack of affordability, and for catering to a higher income clientele (Brown, 2002; Faegan, Morris and Krug, 2004). In spite of these challenges, data on the growing popularity of farmers markets and the growing demand for locally grown
food in both the US and Canada suggest that the potential exists for markets to expand their contribution to sustainable food systems (Feagan et al., 2004; Kremen, Green & Hanson, 2003).

1.1.2. Planning for Farmers Markets

With the emergence of food system planning, an additional opportunity exists for municipal planners to address some of the abovementioned barriers, and to proactively engage in planning for farmers markets as a component of sustainable food systems. Municipal planning documents and web sites in many North American cities make reference to farmers markets. These references range from policy statements declaring City support for farmers markets, to mention of farmers markets in neighbourhood plans or as a permitted land use in zoning by-laws, to specific by-laws regulating operation of the markets (see for example City of Davis, 2004; City of Prince George, 2004; City of Victoria, 1993; SF Environment, 2003). In cities where food system planning is taking hold, recommendations to support and expand farmers markets have originated from Food Policy Councils and planning departments (e.g. Vancouver, BC; Madison, WI; Portland, OR, Toronto, ON) (APA, 2005; Mendes, 2003). What is missing from these scattered references is evidence of a coordinated approach to farmers markets in municipal planning, and direction on the specificities of implementing these recommendations.

While a brief set of suggestions for the ways in which agricultural extension agents in the US might support markets has been proposed by Abel, Thomson & Maretzki (1999), to my knowledge, local government planning strategies for farmers markets have not been developed. Investigation of the present and potential roles of planners and planning agencies in supporting the establishment, operation and expansion of farmers markets would contribute to further development of such strategies. Because facilitating farmers markets is one specific avenue
through which planners may approach food system planning, such research would also contribute to the emerging body of knowledge in this field.

1.1.3. Broader Food System Sustainability Challenges

The argument that food system planning, including initiatives such as farmers markets, should be part of municipal government agendas, flows from the idea that cities have a responsibility and a capacity to address the challenge of creating sustainable communities, of which food systems are an integral component. The argument for supporting sustainable food systems also derives from a large body of literature pointing to sustainability challenges in the dominant food system.

In the past 60 years, four major trends have shaped agriculture and food systems: increasing urbanization; consolidation and globalization of agri-business; technological intensification of agriculture and food processing; and the development of subsidized, international transportation networks. These changes have been founded to a large extent upon access to inexpensive oil supplies. As the scale of food systems has shifted from local, diversified systems towards a more globally integrated food system, new sustainability challenges have emerged.

On the production side of the food system, industrial farming, with its intense demand for fossil fuel and water, and its use of biocides, is implicated in large scale environmental problems such as climate change, aquatic and terrestrial pollution, soil erosion, water depletion and contamination, and the decline in biodiversity (Brown, 2003; Pretty, 2000). In food distribution, the dramatic increase in international trade of food products is a significant contributor to energy consumption and climate-altering emissions of carbon dioxide (Halweil, 2002; Norberg-Hodge
Merrifield & Gorelick, 2002). Also in the distribution sector, globalization and consolidation of agri-business is contributing to the inequitable distribution of the economic benefits of the agriculture and food trade, as well as the spread of food-borne illness (Madeley, 2000; Kloppenberg, Hendrickson & Stevenson, 1996; Waltner-Toews & Lang, 2000; World Health Organization, 2002). Despite gains in agricultural productivity in the past 50 years, world hunger persists in juxtaposition with abundance – currently, an estimated 1.2 billion people in the world are undernourished, while 1.2 billion are over-nourished, both of which are forms of malnourishment (Gardner & Halweil, 2002).

In the midst of this social inequity, the pressures of urbanization are converting productive farmland into housing developments and raising the cost of agricultural land, threatening the ecological and economic stability of agriculture (Brown, 2003). Additionally, declining farm incomes are forcing farmers to increase the scale of their operations, seek off-farm employment, or forfeit their livelihoods (Patriquin, Edwards, Gimby, Jobin, & Samson, 1991; Statistics Canada, 2003). Cumulatively, these factors have led to the decline of local, agricultural knowledge, and the psychological dissociation of people from our food sources (Berry, 2002; Pretty, 2000; Kloppenberg et al., 1996).

In recent years, a host of community-based initiatives have emerged with the common goal of addressing these sustainability issues. This sustainable food systems approach takes not only production, but also consumption, processing, distribution, and recycling (or waste) of food into consideration. Such an approach is based on the premise that the complex problems inherent in the global food system are interlinked, and require attention on multiple fronts (Dahlberg, 1993). Within this movement, there is an emphasis on local self-reliance, proximity of producers and consumers, ecological and cultural diversity, equity, health, sharing of knowledge, and community control (Kloppenberg et al. 1996; Kloppenberg, Letzberg,
DeMaster, Stevenson & Hendrickson, 2000; Kneen, 1989). The sustainable food systems movement aims to minimize the negative externalities of dependence on the dominant, industrial food system, and to cultivate ethical and sustainable relationships between producers, processors, consumers, and others involved in the local food system. Ultimately, the goal of this movement is not to operate to the exclusion of the dominant food system, but to increase the overall diversity and resilience of food systems by strengthening and re-introducing locally-based initiatives that reflect the principles of sustainability and equity. Establishing and providing support to farmers markets is one initiative that local governments can take to contribute to the sustainable food systems movement.

1.2. Thesis Purpose

It is within this context of the broader sustainability challenges in the dominant food system, the search to strengthen local alternatives, and the emergence of food system planning, that this thesis is grounded. I operate under the assumption that, based on the food system sustainability challenges described above, the movement toward more sustainable food systems appears desirable. Under this assumption, questions around the feasibility of sustainable, locally-based alternatives become deserving of systematic investigation. As potential tools to enhance the feasibility of local food systems, both food system planning and farmers markets therefore warrant further exploration.

The purpose of the thesis is to explore the roles that local government planners and planning agencies play and could play in supporting the establishment, operation and expansion of farmers markets. I embed this study within the nascent field of food system planning. As a means to this end, this thesis will address the following questions:
1. What are the present and potential roles of local government planners in supporting the establishment, operation and expansion of farmers markets in US and Canadian cities?

2. What changes could planners make in their practice to better fulfill their potential for supporting farmers markets?

1.3. Scope

The focus of this thesis is on the relationship between municipal government planners and farmers markets in North American cities. The emphasis on local government has been chosen because this is the level of government at which the field of food system planning is presently emerging. Without question, higher levels of government have a responsibility for many issues affecting the food system and farmers markets. However, local governments are considered to be better poised than higher levels of government to engage with civic organizations and to instigate direct change in communities (Selman, 1996). Given that the sustainable food systems movement has emerged from the grassroots, and will likely continue to be driven forward by the efforts of civic organizations, the alliance between community organizations and local government appears to be the most appropriate level at which to examine the potential for food system planning, and within this planning to support farmers markets, at this time.

I study both U.S. and Canadian cities. Canadian and U.S. cities both experience a lack of integration of food system issues into municipal planning. At the same time, many North American cities have embraced planning for sustainability in some capacity, thus creating an opportunity for innovative areas of planning that fall within this realm, such as food system planning, to take hold. Another commonality between some Canadian and U.S. cities is the rise
in sustainable food system initiatives, including farmers markets, in recent years. Since these initiatives have been largely community-driven, the roles of local government planners in responding to the sustainable food systems movement, and to farmers markets, remain similarly undefined in both countries. Although the municipal planning and legislative contexts in Canada and the U.S. differ, this thesis assumes that similarities in the functional roles of planners in both countries permit lessons to be drawn from each that will be applicable across jurisdictions.

The emphasis on urban farmers markets in this thesis has been chosen in part because food system planning is emerging in cities, but also, because I believe that the potential to expand farmers markets is greater in cities with neighbourhood population densities high enough to support such markets, as well as the planning capacity to experiment with new initiatives.

1.4. Definitions

Definitions are offered below for the following terms used in this thesis: planner, farmers market proponent, farmers market, food system, sustainable food system, and food system planning.

The term planner is used to mean an employee of a local government working in a planning or policy development capacity (i.e. not limited to employees of the planning department).

Proponents of farmers markets include current or former representatives of non-governmental organizations operating farmers markets (e.g. farmers market associations).

A farmers market is a food market with the primary function of providing a direct marketing outlet for local farmers and food processors. Farmers markets are typically open-air markets, operated on a seasonal and weekly or bi-weekly basis. Farmers markets by this
definition may be distinguished from public markets, which serve primarily food retailers, and are operated on a more permanent (year-round, daily) basis.

As elaborated upon in the next chapter, the term food system is used to describe the web of activities through which food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed and disposed of. A sustainable food system is one that supports sustainable agriculture, food security, nutrition, community development, social justice and ecological integrity.

Food system planning can be defined as the creation and implementation of integrated strategies to address sustainability and social justice in all food system processes, from production through to processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal or recycling (Adapted from Bouris, 2004).

1.5. Thesis Structure

Chapter 2 introduces the concept of a food system, and presents the case for food system planning, by exploring the sustainability challenges in the dominant food system. Ecological and socio-economic implications, as well as the theoretical foundations of the dominant food system, are also discussed. Chapter 3 presents a conceptual framework for food system planning, including attributes of sustainable food systems, a definition and principles for food system planning, as well as a set of roles for the food system planner. The theoretical foundations of food system planning are also explored. Chapter 4 introduces planning for farmers markets as one aspect of planning for sustainable food systems. A brief history of municipal farmers markets is provided, and the benefits and limitations of farmers markets in the context of sustainable food systems are elaborated upon. Existing information on municipal planning of farmers markets is also summarized. Chapter 5 outlines the questions and methods
applied in primary research conducted for this thesis. Chapter 6 presents the central findings from this research on the role of planners and planning agencies in supporting the establishment, operation and expansion of farmers markets. Chapter 7 situates these findings in the context of planning for sustainable food systems. Chapter 8 presents conclusions and implications of the findings, as well as suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER 2. THE CASE FOR FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING: Sustainability Challenges in the Dominant Food System

2.1. Introduction

The emergence of food system planning represents one response to the sustainability challenges in the dominant food system. The purpose of this chapter is to explore this broader sustainability context within which food system planning is situated. I begin by defining the concept of a food system, and then proceed to explore the ecological and socio-economic implications of the dominant food system, with respect to sustainability. I conclude with a discussion of the theoretical foundations of the dominant food system, and contrast these with the theoretical foundations underpinning the concept of sustainable food systems and food system planning, the topic of Chapter 3.

2.2. Food Systems Defined

The term food system is used to describe the web of activities through which food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed and disposed of, including the inputs and outputs at each stage. This web of activities is shaped by numerous political, economic, social, cultural and technological forces (Fig. 2.1) (Harmon, Harmon & Maretski, 1999). As part of a food systems approach, the socio-economic and ecological implications of food system processes are considered at different geographic and political scales, and over time. Household and community relationships, as well as regional, national and global interactions, are viewed as a series of embedded sub-systems. The food systems approach reflects an attempt to understand the dynamic interrelationships in the processes by which food travels from farm to plate to
compost or landfill, and to offer a conceptual framework for addressing the complex challenges therein (Dahlberg, 1993).

Figure 2.1. The Food System (Adapted from Harmon et al., 1999)

2.3. The Dominant Food System: Trends and Implications for Sustainability

2.3.1. Trends

In the past 60 years, several important trends have greatly influenced the shape and form of food systems worldwide. These include: the technological intensification of agriculture
coupled with technological development in food processing and transportation (e.g. improved shelf life, refrigeration); the expansion of long distance transportation networks paired with increased global trade of agricultural products, and; rapid urbanization. Improved access to cheap fossil fuels has been largely responsible for making these transformations possible (Brown, 2003; Halweil, 2002; Lang & Heasman, 2004). These trends have created a food system that is capital-intensive, highly mechanized, reliant on a relatively small number of large-scale industrialized farms, and specialized according to regional comparative advantage (Lyson & Green, 1999). The expanding scale of agriculture has been matched by increasing consolidation and global integration of agri-business, resulting in long distribution chains with fewer and fewer dominant players (Halweil, 2002; Koc & Dahlberg, 1999; Lang & Heasman, 2004; Lyson & Green, 1999). Biotechnology is also increasingly being applied to agriculture, with the stated but contested goals of raising yields, boosting nutritional quality, improving the environmental tolerance of crops, and reducing biocide usage (Altieri & Rosset, 1999; Borlaug, 2000).

2.3.2. Sustainability Implications – Positive Aspects

The sustainability implications of this changing food and agricultural landscape are vast. On the positive side, industrial farming techniques have succeeded in raising production to match a historically unprecedented rise in population (Lang & Heasman, 2004; Pretty et al., 2001). As a result of these increased outputs, the rate of world hunger, as a percentage of total population, has dropped since 1950 (Lang & Heasman, 2004). Global trade in agricultural products has contributed significantly to economic development in many nations. For consumers with adequate income, this global food trade has also resulted in availability of a wide variety of foods at all times of the year (World Health Organization, 2002). Additionally, well-
established trade and transportation networks have made emergency response to food shortages possible in times of disaster.

In spite of these achievements, there are also many detrimental ecological and socio-economic implications of the dominant food system related to the trends discussed above. The following paragraphs provide an introduction to some of these impacts.

### 2.3.3. Ecological Implications of the Dominant Food System

With respect to industrial food production, current harvests are sustained through the over-consumption of natural capital, resulting in a suite of ecological impacts, including depletion of non-renewable groundwater resources, soil erosion, and desertification (Brown, 2003). Chemical-intensive, industrial agriculture is also blamed for aquatic and terrestrial pollution, generated as a by-product of biocide and fertilizer application (Norberg-Hodge et al., 2002).

Energetically, the food system is highly inefficient, consuming far greater amounts of energy than it generates. For example, the “transcontinental lettuce,” grown in California and shipped 5000 km by refrigerator truck to Washington, DC, consumes 36 times more energy in transport alone than it provides in food energy upon arrival (Halweil, 2002). Climate change-inducing carbon dioxide is another ecologically significant output of this long distance transportation. Temperature rises associated with increasing carbon dioxide levels are creating a negative feedback loop, stressing crops beyond their heat thresholds, and reducing yields (Brown, 2003).

Originally posited as the next technological advancement to boost production, crop biotechnology has done little to raise yields of staple grains in the last twenty years (Brown,
2003). Critics also point to environmental and health risks of crop biotechnology. For example, there is the risk that crops engineered to be herbicide resistant will affect beneficial insect predators and kill non-target insects, or transfer genes to wild relatives, leading to the creation of super-weeds. As well, there are health risks of engineering plants to produce new proteins, such as the potential creation of new allergens or toxins, or the reduction of nutritional value. Critics also claim that the development of biotechnology has been profit-driven rather than need-driven, and that cultivation of homogeneous, transgenic crops will only exacerbate the existing problems of monoculture agriculture (Altieri & Rosset, 1999).

The conversion of diverse landscapes to monocultures, and the accompanying cultivation of fewer varieties of crops and livestock, has resulted from the demand to serve large, homogeneous markets. This practice has led to the reduction of on-farm biodiversity, including both wild and agricultural species. This loss of agri-biodiversity may place agricultural systems at greater risk of susceptibility to changing environmental conditions (Pretty, 2002).

The stability of this globally-integrated, energy-intensive food system is showing signs of faltering. In recent years, world grain harvest has fallen short of consumption for the first time in decades (Brown, 2003). Urbanization is also affecting agriculture by placing increasing development pressure on farmland, and necessitating transport of greater volumes of foodstuffs into cities, further exacerbating the problems associated with long distance transport (Brown, 2003; Lang & Heasman, 2004). Imminent declines in oil production, and resulting price increases, also pose a significant threat to a food system that, at every step of the chain from production to consumption to waste disposal, is highly fossil-fuel dependent (Duncan, 2003; Jones, 2001).
2.3.2. Socio-economic Implications of the Dominant Food System

In addition to these ecological impacts, there are also significant socio-economic implications of the dominant food system. As a consequence of the highly concentrated food distribution sector, the percentage of the food dollar retained by farmers has been declining. One author reports that the share of the dollar returned to U.S. farmers decreased from more than 40 cents in 1910 to just over 7 cents in 1997 (Halweil, 2002). Farmers’ incomes are suffering as a result. For example, in 2003, despite increases in productivity, net farm income in Canada plummeted to its lowest level since 1977 (Statistics Canada, 2004).

At the same time as the financial viability of farming is declining, large agri-businesses have significantly increased their earnings. For example, the large multinational agri-business ConAgra increased its profits by 45% between 1994 and 2001, and Monsanto’s earnings more than doubled during the same time period (Wallach & Woodall, 2004). Not only are agribusinesses profitable, but they are also increasingly monopolizing world food markets. As an indication of this trend, two companies now control 70-80% of the world grain trade, while five agri-businesses control nearly two thirds of the world pesticide market, and one quarter of the global seed market (Norberg-Hodge et al., 2002).

Hunger, as well as health and nutritional issues, also present a persistent social sustainability issue. Although the overall rate of hunger has declined in recent years, these declines have not met international targets agreed upon at the World Food Summit in 1996 (FAO, 2003). The FAO states that 852 million people in the world were undernourished between 2000 and 2002, including 28 million in the countries in transition and 9 million in industrialized countries (FAO, 2004). At the same time, up to 1.2 billion are reported to be over-nourished and suffering from obesity, a condition which is associated with increased risk of diet-related illness such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and certain types of cancer (Gardner &
Halweil, 2002; Lang & Heasman, 2004). This juxtaposition of hunger and over-consumption persists at a time when world food production is theoretically adequate to meet demand. An estimated 4.3 lbs of food are produced for every person every day, including 2.5 lbs of grain, beans and nuts, 1 lb of meat and eggs, and 1 lb of fruits and vegetables (Madeley, 2000). In this context, poverty is the major determinant of inequitable food distribution (Allen & Sachs, 1993; Madeley, 2000).

Under neo-liberal economic policies, trade liberalization is purported to be the solution to poverty in developing nations (International Monetary Fund, 2001). However, the evidence that trade liberalization results in economic growth is inconclusive (FAO, 2001). Some authors claim that trade liberalization, mandated through such initiatives as Free Trade Agreements and the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture, has in fact led to increased inequity between wealthy and poor countries, further loss of farming livelihoods, and greater food insecurity among the world’s poor. Since the WTO Agreement on Agriculture was signed, the surge in imports has outstripped the increase in exports in many developing countries, thereby exacerbating food insecurity in these nations (Madeley, 2000; Wallach & Woodall, 2004). As well, after 20 years of intense trade liberalization, although some countries have benefited economically, others have become more marginalized (FAO, 2003; Madeley 2000; Oxfam International, 2004).

In terms of food safety, global sourcing of food has introduced new risks of contamination and food-borne illness. The World Health Organization reports that globalization of the food chain presents a major health risk, because consolidation of the food industry creates the potential for food-borne illness from a single high-volume facility to reach many consumers, generating widespread outbreaks. The international spread of meat and bonemeal from cattle infected with bovine spongiform encephalitis (BSE) is a current manifestation of this health risk.
One further, social implication of the dominant food system is the loss of local agricultural knowledge. Mechanization of agriculture, coupled with urbanization, has reduced the percentage of the population engaged in food production in industrialized countries. Farm populations are also aging (Statistics Canada, 2002). Consequently, local agricultural knowledge is being lost (Pretty, 2000). Psychological distancing is yet another result of the separation of people from their food sources. As Kloppenberg et al. (1996) state: “Provided with an apparent cornucopia of continuously available foods, few consumers have much knowledge of the biological, social, or technical parameters and implications of food production in the global village (p.5).”

### 2.4. Theoretical Foundations of the Dominant Food System

A suite of philosophical and theoretical assumptions underpin the dominant food system. Neo-classical economic theory forms the conceptual foundation of the move toward increasing scale and global integration of the food system. According to neo-classical economics, the well-being of society is assumed to be the by-product of an efficient and unrestricted economy. Maximizing productivity and profitability are understood to be goals of farm and food businesses (Lyson & Green, 1999). Associated with these assumptions is the theory of comparative advantage, which posits that the differences in productivity and opportunity costs between nations make it advantageous for countries to specialize, producing and exporting goods that they can most efficiently produce. Greater efficiency is equated with economic growth, and the maximization of human welfare. The theory of comparative advantage is predicated upon the idea of perfect competition and the internalization of external costs, two assumptions which have
been challenged by ecological economists (Costanza, Cumberland, Daly, Goodland, & Norgaard, 1997; Daly, Cobb & Cobb, 1994). Nevertheless, the idea of comparative advantage continues to drive trade-related policy at national and international levels (FAO, 2003).

The impetus to increase the scale of the agriculture and food industry is also based on the concept of economy of scale, which refers to a property of production, whereby the costs of per unit production decrease as total production is increased. Economies of scale apply particularly to capital-intensive industries, such as industrial agriculture, where the capital costs can be distributed across a large number of production units. Economies of scale also justify trade liberalization, in that national markets may not be adequate to absorb the outputs of large scale production, and thus open, international markets are desirable.

Lang and Heasman (2004) describe the set of values and beliefs that dictate international policy and underpin the dominant food system as the “Productionist Paradigm.” The overarching goal of agriculture, within this paradigm, is to increase the production and quantity of food for urbanized populations through increased scale of farms, processors and distributors, increased use of inputs, and greater reliance on trade. Lang and Heasman (2004) argue that this Productionist paradigm is being replaced by a “Life Sciences Paradigm,” which takes a mechanistic, scientific approach to agriculture and nutrition. In this paradigm, environmental and human health issues that are externalities of the dominant food system are viewed to be rectifiable through the application of emerging scientific technologies, such as biotechnology. However, this Life Sciences Paradigm is described as “little more than a modernization of the Productionist Paradigm (p. 25),” in that it continues to support industrial, monocultural production, as well as the globalization and concentration of the food industry.

The philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the dominant food system contrast with what Lang and Heasman term the “Ecologically Integrated Paradigm.” This paradigm takes
a more holistic, integrated approach to food and agriculture, in that it “recognizes mutual
dependencies, symbiotic relationships and more subtle forms of manipulation (Lang & Heasman,
2004, p.26),” supporting the application of ecological principles to agriculture. One core belief
of this paradigm is that “diverse natural communities are productive and should be supported
(p.27).” Knowledge-intensive, rather than input-intensive, agricultural systems are valued.
Small-scale marketing, with a regional and local focus, is encouraged. Collaborative
institutional structures are favoured for policy development. In essence, the ecological paradigm
advocates “working with nature, rather than on it (p. 30),” and supports the infusion of
democratic principles throughout all aspects of business and governance. Attributes of
sustainable food systems reflective of this paradigm will be elaborated upon in Chapter 3 in the
context of planning for sustainable food systems.

2.5. Summary

This chapter introduced the concept of a food system, and proceeded to discuss some of the
characteristics and sustainability implications of the dominant food system. Key
accomplishments of the dominant food system reviewed in this chapter include its success at
increasing food production to match population growth in the past 50 years; its ability to deliver
an unprecedented variety of foodstuffs to all corners of the globe through well developed trade
and transportation networks; and its capacity to transport large amounts of food rapidly in
response to crisis situations. Key failures with respect to ecological sustainability include over-
consumption of resources, as well as pollution and simplification of ecosystems. Key socio-
economic sustainability challenges relate to the inequitable distribution of benefits from the
global food system, which manifest in the form of undernutrition and overnutrition,
compromised economic viability of farming, loss of knowledge about the production and origin
of food, and overall erosion of food security in entire regions and countries. This cursory
examination of the characteristics and sustainability implications of the dominant food system
illustrates a suite of beliefs which Lang and Heasman (2004) have termed the Productionist and
Life Sciences Paradigms. Central to these paradigms is an emphasis on the application of
scientific technology to large scale food production and processing, served by a similarly large-
scale distribution network that is made possible through a globally-integrated system of trade.
The assumptions implicit in this paradigm contrast with those of the Integrated Ecological
Paradigm, upon which the concept of sustainable food systems is built. This set of beliefs will
be elaborated upon in Chapter 3 in the context of planning for sustainable food systems.
CHAPTER 3: PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to propose a conceptual framework for food system planning. As a preface to the introduction of this framework, arguments for the inclusion of food systems within the broader discipline of planning will be presented, and recent developments in the field will also be outlined. A definition, guiding principles, goals, and examples of food system planning will be proposed. Roles for planners and planning agencies undertaking food system planning will also be identified. Additionally, the theoretical foundations of food system planning will be explored. Finally, limitations and criticisms of sustainable food systems and food system planning will be discussed.

3.2. The Case for Food System Planning

Many voices challenge both the theoretical foundations and demonstrated deficiencies of the dominant food system, and call for a more holistic, critical, and integrated approach to food, nutrition, and agriculture. Participants in this movement, including farmers, civic organizations, activists, and academics, proclaim the need for an alternative food system that is based on principles of ecological stewardship and social justice (Allen, 1993; Berry, 2001; Halweil, 2002; Kloppenberg et al., 1996; Kneen, 1989; Norberg-Hodge et al., 2002; Pretty, 2002). This sustainable food system movement incorporates a rich, recent history of grassroots activism. I use the phrase sustainable food system movement here as an umbrella term to describe initiatives from various sectors, including the community food security, anti-hunger, sustainable
agriculture, “slow food”, and urban agriculture movements, as well as the efforts of health and nutrition professionals, emergency food providers, environmental educators, and others. These various movements and initiatives are not philosophically homogeneous. Rather, each contributes a slightly different perspective to a diverse and continuously evolving movement toward more just and sustainable food systems. It is from this milieu of community-based initiatives that food system planning has emerged.

In essence, food system planning at the local government level represents an alliance of the grassroots, sustainable food system movement with the state. Numerous authors have made the case for this alliance, and for the inclusion of food system planning within the roles and responsibilities of local government (Abel & Thomson, 2001; Bouris, 2004, Caton Campbell 2004, Clancy, 2004, Hammer, 2004, Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). These authors point out that, of all the basic necessities – air, water, food, shelter – only food has escaped the attention of the profession. They argue that the inclusion of the food system in the suite of issues concerning planners is logical for a profession claiming to be comprehensive, attentive to interconnections, and driven by the public interest.

To further illustrate this argument, Pothukuchi & Kaufman (2000) draw attention to the many ways that food system issues intersect with urban planning in the US. In the production sector, urban sprawl and loss of agricultural land are two central issues relevant to both food production and to the creation of compact, complete communities. In the distribution sector, food intersects with economic development planning in that the food outlets, such as restaurants, wholesalers, grocers, and supermarkets, form an important component of the local economy, and generate significant employment in cities. Trips to grocery stores also contribute significantly to urban transportation volumes. In terms of food access, urban households spend an estimated 10-40% of their income on food. More importantly, food security and hunger issues affect lower
income residents in many cities, as evidenced in part by the expanding emergency food
distribution sector. Lack of affordable housing also contributes to the inability of low income
residents to purchase adequate food, since rent takes precedence over food expenditures. As
well, in some cities, there are fewer supermarkets and grocery stores serving low income
neighbourhoods, creating food accessibility issues in these areas. Many health problems
afecting urban residents are also food-related, including the current obesity epidemic, which is
also disproportionately affecting low income individuals. Finally, food and food packaging form
a significant component of urban waste, comprising up to one third of the garbage delivered to
landfills in some cities.

Despite the many issues relevant to both food and planning in urban areas, very few
planning agencies have embarked on food system planning in a comprehensive manner. No
theoretical framework for food system planning has been developed in the literature as of yet,
and few practical strategies or tools for food system planning have been documented. However,
a number of recent events show that food system planning is gaining momentum as a sub-
discipline of the planning profession. In 2004, an entire issue of the Journal of Planning
Education and Research was dedicated to food system planning. The Winter 2004 issue of
Progressive Planning magazine, a publication of the Planners Network, was also devoted to food
system planning. In 2005, for the first time ever, the American Planning Association (APA)
hosted a track on food system planning at the organization’s annual conference. A Food System
Planning Working Group was formed at this conference, and the steering committee for this
group, which includes a Canadian representative, is taking steps to educate planners and to
integrate food system planning into the profession (APA, 2005). Plans are also underway for
another food system planning track at the 2006 APA conference.

In terms of activity within local government, a number of Canadian and US cities have
formed municipally-affiliated Food Policy Councils (e.g. Toronto, ON, Vancouver, BC, Portland, OR, Knoxville, TN) aimed at providing advocacy and policy advice on municipal food system issues. A more limited number of cities also have staff positions supporting food system planning and policy. For example, the City of Vancouver has two positions, a Food System Planner and Food Policy Council Coordinator, and the City of Portland, OR, has a part time Food Policy Council coordinator, working out of the City’s Office of Sustainable Development. In the realm of planning education, the first course in local government Food System Planning and Policy taught at a Canadian university took place in June, 2005 at the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia. Together, these various developments in planning literature, the American Planning Association, selected North American municipal planning agencies, and planning education, indicate that recognition of the importance of planning for sustainable food systems is growing.

3.3. Building a Conceptual Framework for Food System Planning

In spite of these developments in the field of food system planning, existing literature on the topic is limited. As a result, I necessarily draw on several additional sources to develop a conceptual framework for the field, including literature on sustainable food systems, as well as selected resources on sustainability planning and local economic development planning. I present the conceptual framework for food system planning in two parts: I) Attributes of Sustainable Food Systems, and II) Food System Planning.

Because food system planning has been borne out of the community-based food system movement, the fundamental concepts and vision behind food system planning derive from academic literature reflective of this movement. Attributes of sustainable food systems have
been articulated by a number of authors (Altieri, 2000; Deumling, Wackernagel & Monfreda, 2003; FAO, 2001; Francis et al., 2003; Gliessman, 2000; Kalina, 2001; Kloppenberg & Lezberg, 1996; Kloppenberg et al., 2000; Kloppenberg et al., 1996; Lyson & Green, 1999; Pretty, 2002). I synthesize these attributes, and propose that one central goal of food system planning is to further the creation of a food system that reflects this vision. Obviously, sufficient consensus must be achieved among planners about the significance of this vision in order for food system planning to be embraced by the profession. As the field of food system planning matures, a modified set of goals based on the input of planning practitioners may emerge. Nevertheless, in the absence of such a framework, I use the sustainable food system literature to define the attributes of sustainable food systems to be embraced by this new field of planning. Building on this foundation, in Part II I propose a definition and set of principles for food system planning, as well as roles for the food system planner and planning agency, gleaned from existing food system planning articles.

3.4. Part I: Attributes of Sustainable Food Systems

Numerous authors have articulated attributes of sustainable food systems (Altieri, 2000; Deumling, Wackernagel & Monfreda, 2003; FAO, 2001; Francis et al., 2003; Gliessman, 2000; Kalina, 2001; Kloppenberg & Lezberg, 1996; Kloppenberg et al., 2000; Kloppenberg et al., 1996; Lyson & Green, 1999; Pretty, 2002). Table 3.1 outlines a set of sustainable food system attributes, synthesized from these authors. These attributes are organized around five macro-principles, or dimensions, of a sustainable food system. As indicated in Table 3.1, these dimensions include: ecological sustainability; a sound economy; social justice; diversity and resilience; as well as location scale and function.
### Table 3.1. Attributes of Sustainable Food Systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecological Sustainability</td>
<td>Recognizes ecological limits and minimizes ecological footprint</td>
<td>Deumling, Wackernagel &amp; Monfreda, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agroecological approach</td>
<td>Altieri, 2000; Francis et al., 2003; Gliessman, 2000; Pretty, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preserves farmland</td>
<td>Lyson &amp; Green, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Economy</td>
<td>Embedded in a moral economy</td>
<td>Kloppenberg, et al., 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supports a diverse, vibrant local food economy</td>
<td>Lyson &amp; Green, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflects principles of ecological economics</td>
<td>Daly, Cobb &amp; Cobb, 1994; Rees, 2002; Constanza et al., 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>Provides food security</td>
<td>Kalina, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food is enshrined as a right</td>
<td>FAO, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair trade and labour standards</td>
<td>Kloppenberg et al., 2000; Oxfam International, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge-respecting and enhancing</td>
<td>Kloppenberg et al., 2000; Lang &amp; Heasman, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and Resilience</td>
<td>Participatory and democratically-governed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location, scale and function</td>
<td>Proximate and place-based</td>
<td>Kloppenberg et al., 1996; Kloppenberg &amp; Lezberg, 1996; Lang &amp; Heasman, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Global network of nested foodsheds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fosters self-reliance and commensality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.4.1. Dimension 1: Ecological Sustainability

With respect to the first dimension, an ecologically sustainable food system is one that recognizes ecological limits, seeks to minimize the ecological footprint of the food system in a given region, takes an agroecological approach, and preserves farmland. The concept of an
ecological footprint, as described by Deumling, Wackernagel & Monfreda (2002), refers to “the area of biologically productive land and water needed to produce the resources consumed by a given population and to absorb its waste (p. 1)” Footprints are measured in the unit of a “global acre,” which is an acre of land with a global average biomass productivity. The food footprint calculated by Deumling, Wackernagel & Monfreda (2002) incorporates “global acres” of cropland, pasture, fisheries and energy. According to these authors, the global food system currently consumes the equivalent of 40% of the earth’s biologically productive area. At this level, they claim that the food footprint significantly impacts the total biological capacity of the planet.

An ecologically sustainable food system also incorporates an agroecological approach. Agroecology, which is equivalent to the “Integrated Ecological Paradigm” articulated by Lang and Heasman (2004), seeks to create food systems that “close nutrient cycles, depend more on renewable energy, reduce inefficiencies in production, and promote environmental health (Francis et al., 2003, p.103).” This is achieved through such practices as soil-building, diversified cropping systems, organic disease and pest control methods, on-farm nutrient cycling, rainwater harvesting, and integration of wild and agricultural landscapes (Altieri, 2000). Originally emphasizing the production sector of the food system, agroecological theory is expanding to encompass all of the processes through which food travels from farm to plate. This expansion reflects a growing understanding of the interconnectedness of these food system processes, and the need to address the socio-economic and ecological implications of each link in the global chain of food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste, in order to address sustainability (Francis et al., 2003). Finally, an ecologically sustainable food system preserves farmland as a fundamental necessity for continued food production (Lyson & Green, 1999).
3.4.2. Dimension 2: Sound Economy

A sustainable food system is economically sustaining. An economically sustaining food system is one that is embedded in a moral economy, supports a diverse and vibrant local economy, and reflects the principles of ecological economics. The concept of a moral economy, as outlined by Kloppenberg et al. (1996), refers to the “re-embedding of food production primarily within human needs (p.7)”. This perspective reflects a view of food as more than a commodity, and “permits us to see the centrality of food to human life as a powerful template around which to build non- or extra-market relationships between persons, social groups, and institutions (p.7).” An economically sustaining food system also supports a diverse, vibrant local food economy, in which a host of small and medium-sized farmers and food business operators, along with their employees, enjoy a good standard of living (Kloppenberg et al., 2000; Lyson & Green, 1999). Additionally, an economically sustaining food system reflects the principles of ecological economics. Ecological economics views the economy as nested within the ecosphere. Implicit in this nested view is the idea that there are ecological limits to economic growth, dictated by the earth’s capacity to regenerate in response to consumption, and to absorb the wastes created through human economic activity. Ecological economics also views the economy as a consumptive rather than productive entity, meaning that economic processes consume and release energy and matter back into the ecosphere in a degraded form. Ecological economics therefore shifts the emphasis of development from quantitative growth to qualitative improvement (Rees, 2002).

3.4.3. Dimension 3: Social Justice

A sustainable food system is also a socially just and ethical food system, in that it
provides food security, enshrines food as a right, and supports fair trade and labour standards. Food security is achieved when all people, at all times, have access to nutritious, safe, personally acceptable and culturally appropriate foods, produced in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just (BC Food Systems Network, 2001). As part of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, 185 countries have declared that access to safe, nutritious food, and freedom from hunger, are fundamental human rights (FAO, 2001). Access to food must be assured through fair trade, and labour standards must also be in place to ensure that farmers and workers in the food industry receive a living wage (Kloppenberg et al., 2000; Oxfam International, 2004).

A socially just and ethical food system also respects and enhances local knowledge and makes accurate information about the food system available to the public (Kloppenberg et al., 2000). A socially just food system is democratically-governed, meaning that citizens “participate directly in the operation and governance of multiple components of the food system in ways that are more complex than simple market transactions (Kloppenberg et al., 2000, p.183).” One goal of this citizen participation is that food becomes “the basis for the reinvigoration of familial, community and civic culture (Kloppenberg et al., 1996, p. 7).”

3.4.4. Dimension 4: Diversity and Resilience

Sustainable food systems are diverse and resilient. Ecological diversity is supported through small, diversified farms cultivating locally-adapted varieties of food plants. Landscape diversity is achieved by interspersing farmland with wild, uncultivated areas (Altieri, 2000). Socio-economically, diversity is attained through the existence of a range of small and medium-sized farms, food-related businesses and organizations that span the spectrum of food system sectors. Social diversity also includes participation in local food systems by individuals ranging
in age, class, gender, and ethnic background. Cultural diversity is further supported through the preservation of different cultures’ farming and food preparation methods (Kloppenberg et al., 2000).

3.4.5. Dimension 5: Location, scale and function

Sustainable food systems are proximate and place-based. They support the development of a global network of foodsheds, and build self-reliance and commensality within these regions. Analogous to the watershed, the foodshed provides a conceptual and physical setting within which a local food system can be defined (Kloppenberg & Letzman, 1996; Kloppenberg et al., 1996). The foodshed concept provides a framework for examining the flow of food into and out of a region, and through each food system process - from production to disposal or recycling. The sustainable food systems movement promotes the enhancement of local foodsheds, in which each food system sector within a geographic region is developed to its full potential. Proximity between food producers, processors, distributors, and consumers is encouraged in order to maximize the local economic benefits of agriculture, and increase regional self-reliance. Self-reliance means increasing the flow of locally produced food within a given region, restoring community control over the different elements of the food system, and building local knowledge of food system processes. The goal is not to achieve self-sufficiency, but rather to minimize the negative externalities of dependence on the dominant, industrial food system, and to cultivate ethical and mutually beneficial relationships between producers, processors, consumers, and others involved in the local food system. It is a balancing act, one that does not exclude trade, but rather encourages fairer trade. As one aspect of self-reliance, proximate and place-based food systems also aim to nurture commensality, in which “collective responsibility for
stewardship of people and of the land becomes a necessity rather than an optional value (Kloppenberg et al., 1996, p.10).

3.5. Part II: Food System Planning

Food system planning at the local government level recognizes the attributes of sustainable food systems described in section 3.4 as goals, and aims to further these goals. The puzzle of food system planning in its early stage of development, however, is determining the ways in which these goals can be addressed within the jurisdiction and capacity of local government. With this limitation in mind, in the following section I propose a definition and principles for food system planning, as well as a set of roles for the food system planner, and offer examples of activities that constitute food system planning.

3.5.1. Definition of Food System Planning

Food system planning can be defined as the implementation of integrated strategies to address sustainability and social justice in all food system processes, from production through to processing, distribution, consumption, and disposal or productive recycling (Adapted from Bouris, 2004). Food system planning engages individuals from across this spectrum of food system sectors in assessing and influencing the ways in which food impacts our lives and neighbourhoods (Social Planning Department, 2004). Fundamentally, food system planning involves nurturing and strengthening the vision and attributes of sustainable food systems (Kaufman, 2004). By definition, food system planning means sustainable food system planning. One might also conceive of a planning sub-discipline aimed at enhancing the global food system.
However, the evolving conception of food system planning applied in this thesis is rooted in principles of sustainability and social justice.

3.5.2. Principles of Food System Planning

While no specific set of principles for local government food system planning has been articulated in the literature, several general principles can be gleaned from existing articles. First, food system planning incorporates a systems approach, in that planners should apply systems thinking in analysis and policy development, and promote interconnections between different sectors of the food system to achieve multiple sustainability objectives. Second, food system planning should reflect participatory planning principles, in that it should take a collaborative and facilitative approach, emphasize local knowledge and control, and seek to foster community participation. Given its interdisciplinary nature, food system planning should also be flexible, with teams being assembled and disassembled to accomplish different tasks (Anderson & Cook, 1999; Caton Campbell, 2004; MacRae, 1999). Finally, food system planning should seek to create a food system that reflects the attributes described in section 3.4; one that is ecologically sustainable; economically sustaining; socially just and ethical; diverse and resilient; as well as proximate and place-based.

3.5.3. Roles for the Food System Planner

Several authors have proposed roles for the food system planner (Bouris, 2004; Caton Campbell, 2004; MacRae, 1999; Pothukuchi, 2004; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). These roles are similar to those offered by Roseland (1992) in his discussion
of planning for sustainability. Several of these roles are also identified by Blakely and Bradshaw (2002) in their discussion of planning for local economic development. Drawing on each of these authors' work, I propose the following series of ten roles for the food system planner.

The first three roles for the food system planner relate to planners' analytical abilities, and include the planner as Analyst, Systems Thinker, and Integrator. As analysts, planners can collect, compile, analyze, and disseminate data on the food system, and use this information as a basis for constructing action plans to address food system issues. As integrators and systems thinkers, planners can identify the connections between food and other planning concerns, and incorporate sustainable food system goals into their professional practice. They can also integrate these goals into planning processes that seek to promote the broader objectives of liveability and sustainability. As systems thinkers, planners can link individual, sustainable food system initiatives into a more comprehensive strategy, thereby improving what has thus far been a piecemeal approach to food system planning.

A second set of roles for the food system planner relates to planners' communication and facilitation skills, and includes the planner as Facilitator and Educator. As facilitators, planners can engage communities in a dialogue about the meaning and goals of sustainable food systems. Working with communities, they can perform mediating, consensus-building and bridging functions, and develop specific strategies to address food system issues. They can also build partnerships with community organizations and private businesses working to create sustainable food systems, and facilitate the formation of support networks. As educators, planners can raise awareness amongst their colleagues about the importance of food system issues, and educate future planners about the field.

The third set of roles for the food system planner speaks to the planner's function as an intermediary between the community and the state, and includes the planner as Advocate,
Liaison, and Fundraiser. As advocates, planners can speak on behalf of the community to their colleagues in other City departments, and to decision-makers. As liaisons, planners can form working relationships with other departments, and with other levels of government, to implement strategies to support the creation of sustainable food systems. Planners can also administer funding, in the form of community grants, to organizations working on sustainable food system initiatives. Or, they can work to leverage funding from other sources for specific community projects.

One additional role for the food system planner is as a Stakeholder who participates directly in community food system projects. The role of the planner as a stakeholder represents closer involvement with the community-based movements out of which food system planning has emerged than the intermediary roles listed above. Caton Campbell (2004) comments that planning agencies will likely be unwilling to contribute scarce staff resources to direct participation in food system projects until the field gains further credibility. Therefore, acting as a stakeholder is a potential role for the food system planner.

One final, critical role for the food system planner is as Regulator. With the ability to influence policy and legislation, planners can translate community goals into land use plans and zoning by-laws to support the food system. They can incorporate food system elements into comprehensive plans, official community plans, and development plans. As well, they can propose broader policy statements to support sustainable food system goals.

In addition to this suite of roles for the food system planner, several roles for the planning agency have also been noted. In their discussion of planning for local economic development, Blakely and Bradshaw (2002) suggest that the planning department can act in an entrepreneurial capacity by providing seed capital and land, and retaining buildings in public ownership for local economic development initiatives (such as farmers markets). Planning agencies can also deliver
specific programs and services targeted at sustainable food systems (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999).

3.5.4. Theoretical Foundations of Food System Planning

The theoretical foundations underlying food system planning derive from several sources. The goals of food system planning reflect the field’s genesis out of the sustainable food systems movement, and demonstrate an affinity to the broader field of sustainability planning. The process of food system planning, including the proposed roles for planners, also reflects theories of radical planning and communicative planning. These conceptual roots are discussed further below.

Food system planning can be viewed as a subset of planning for sustainable communities. Beatley and Manning (1997) offer the following definition of sustainability planning:

*The paradigm of sustainability views the community in its entirety: its environmental impacts and how they can be minimized; how well its citizens are living and how programs and policies can be coordinated and implemented to enhance quality of life; its resource needs and how they are being met; and the environmental and social impacts of meeting those needs* (p. 19).

They argue that planning for sustainable places is “the next natural progression in the evolution of planning history (p. 18).” Roseland (1992) states that supporting local agriculture is one component of planning for sustainable places. He also outlines a number of goals of sustainability planning, which closely reflect the goals of planning for sustainable food systems. These goals include: minimizing the ecological footprint of a place; employing integrative and holistic strategies to achieve multiple sustainability objectives; nurturing a sense of place; supporting social justice, equity, and cultural diversity, and; applying full-cost accounting (one tool of ecological economics). As a means to achieving these goals, Roseland (1992)
recommends that planners engage the public in dialogue, build partnerships, and act as regulators, educators, analysts, and facilitators. These statements reflect the roles for the food system planner identified in the previous section, as suggested by authors writing on food system planning. Essentially, food system planning applies a food system lens to these broader goals and means of planning for sustainability.

In addition to echoing the principles of sustainability planning, food system planning also reflects radical planning theory. One central characteristic of radical planning, as described by Sandercock (1998), is that it is borne out of social mobilization, with the goals of structural transformation and empowerment. Because of this, radical planners often find themselves in opposition to the corporate economy and/or the state. Planners’ roles in this process involve using their skills in such areas as analysis and synthesis, grant-writing, communication, and management of group processes, as well as their specialized knowledge of particular issues, to address systemic inequities. With respect to its genesis out of the community-based, sustainable food system movement, food system planning reflects a radical planning model. The goals of food system planning -- to confront the systemic inequities that manifest in the form of food insecurity, corporate control of the food system, environmental externalities, and such -- also reflect the transformative goals of radical planning. Additionally, there are parallels between the roles identified for the radical planner and the food system planner. The roles of the radical planner include acting as an advocate by mediating between the community and the state, or as a stakeholder by participating directly in community-based work. The radical planner may also fulfill the more traditional role of regulator, translating community goals into policy and legislation. In this respect, the development of food system planning reflects a radical planning process that Sandercock (1998) describes as “that of crossing back and forth, of blurring boundaries, of deconstructing (‘community’ ‘the state’) and reconstructing new possibilities
In addition to radical planning, food system planning also reflects communicative planning theory. According to communicative planning theory, as described by Fischler (2000), the principle activity of the public planner is to facilitate, or participate in, processes of deliberation between civil society and the state. One goal of this deliberation is to foster more democratic decision-making. The emphases on facilitative and intermediary roles for the food system planner, and on participatory planning processes, echo these elements of communicative planning theory.

In summary, the origins and goals of food system planning, as well as the proposed roles for the food system planner, demonstrate conceptual affinity to existing theories of sustainability planning, radical planning, and communicative planning. These theories add flesh to the conceptual skeleton of food system planning as it takes shape in close proximity to its community roots, and with an emphasis on respecting ecological limits, as well as fostering equity through participatory planning processes. In order to illustrate the application of these theories, the following section will offer several examples of food system planning.

3.5.5. Examples of Food System Planning

In 2000, Pothukuchi & Kaufman wrote of municipal food system planning as having a limited presence in North American cities. Examples of cities that have embarked on food system planning and policy certainly exist (e.g. Toronto, ON, Vancouver, BC, Portland, OR, Knoxville, TN). However, the literature that exists on food system planning focuses largely on the potential contributions of planners to sustainable food systems – there is little documentation of outcomes. As the field develops and planners begin to experiment in their workplaces, more
documented examples of the practice of food system planning within local government organizations will undoubtedly emerge. As a step in this direction, the American Planning Association’s Divisions Council recently posted an overview of food system planning on the organization’s website, including examples of policies aimed at supporting sustainable food systems, drawn from several sources (including the Portland-Multnomah County, Oregon, Food Policy Council, the Toronto, Ontario, Food Policy Council, and a paper by the Executive Director of the Madison, Wisconsin, Planning and Development Department) (APA, 2005). In the area of food production, policies from this summary direct decision-makers to:

- **Enhance the viability of regional farms by ensuring the stability of the agricultural land base and infrastructure** (Portland-Multnomah Food Policy Council);
- **Make community gardens a permitted use in all zoning districts** (Madison Department of Planning and Development)

In the area of food processing and distribution, policies direct the City to:

- **Promote regional food products and producers through a combination of farm-direct sales, farmers' markets, a public market and grocery stores** (Portland-Multnomah Food Policy Council)
- **Consider ways to make farmers markets and fresh food markets standard features across the city** (Toronto Food Policy Council)
- **Place a high priority on creating permanent sites for farmers markets and urban agriculture, incorporating necessary utilities, parking, and loading areas into the design, and provide these facilities at minimal cost to farmers markets** (Madison Department of Planning and Development)

In the area of food consumption and access, the Toronto Food Policy Council directs City Council to:

- **Designate retail access to fresh food as an essential service in every community** (Toronto Food Policy Council)

And in the area of food disposal, a sample policy directs the City of Toronto to:

- **Set a goal of "zero nutrient loss" from food waste for City resource management systems** (Toronto Food Policy Council)

It is not surprising that recommendations from Food Policy Councils comprise two of the three sources referenced in this list. Much emphasis has been placed on the establishment of
Food Policy Councils in the food system planning literature (e.g. Caton Campbell, 2004; MacRae, 1999). As citizen bodies aimed at providing advocacy and policy development on municipal food system issues, Food Policy Councils are seen to embody the principles of food system planning, including systems thinking and a participatory approach to governance. Whether Food Policy Councils will be successful in furthering these ideals remains to be seen, since most Food Policy Councils in the US and Canada are relatively new, and operate in provincial and national policy environments fully supportive of the increasing globalization of the food system. Dahlberg (1994) reviewed the experiences of five Food Policy Councils in the US, and commented on their relative successes, but not on their ultimate success or failure at supporting the development of more sustainable food systems.

In addition to creating food policies and forming Food Policy Councils, Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000), as well as Bouris (2004) have documented numerous other activities that can be included within the realm of food system planning. In Pothukuchi and Kaufman’s survey of 22 US planning agencies, the top ten areas of planner involvement in the food system included: 1) location of supermarkets and grocery stores; 2) design of food outlets; 3) involvement in community gardens; 4) studies of the impact of the food sector on the local economy; 5) involvement in farmers markets and food festivals; 6) addressing food issues in neighbourhood plans; 7) food-related economic development, 8) addressing food issues in comprehensive plans; 9) involvement in hunger prevention programs, and; 10) agricultural land preservation. Bouris (2004) identified 50 different food-system related activities that planners in the Georgia Basin had been involved in. In addition to many of the activities mentioned above, other forms of involvement included: administering grants and writing grant proposals for food-related projects; outreach and education for agriculture and food businesses; working with various community groups on food-related activities; coordinating municipal composting programs; agricultural land
use planning, and; zoning for agriculture and food processing. Bouris also included facilitating farmers markets among these activities. The studies completed by Bouris (2004) and Pothukuchi & Kaufman (2000) indicate that planners do already undertake many activities related to the food system. However, these authors also argue that these individual initiatives need to be pursued more proactively and linked together in a comprehensive food system planning agenda.

In summary, the examples outlined above exemplify the principles of food system planning described in this chapter. They demonstrate a systems approach in that they incorporate all sectors of the food system, from production to waste management. They also reflect a participatory approach to planning, in that there is an emphasis on citizen involvement in decision-making through the formation of Food Policy Councils. The examples illustrate several of the roles for the food system planner outlined in section 3.5.3, including facilitation, education, and fundraising, as well as incorporating food system issues into land use planning and legislation. Involvement in farmers markets is also listed among planners’ activities, and sample food policies directed at local government call for support for farmers markets as well. In spite of these many examples of activities that fall within the realm of food system planning, there are limitations to their implementation, which will be explored in the following section.

3.5.6. Limitations of Food System Planning

There are many tensions and tradeoffs, both pragmatic and ethical, inherent in the movement toward sustainable food systems. There are also considerable barriers facing the incorporation of food system planning into the profession. These tensions, tradeoffs and barriers will be discussed further in this section.
3.5.6.1. Tensions and Tradeoffs in Sustainable Food Systems

First, there is a tension between the goals of sustainable farming and meeting world food demands in the short term. Ongoing debate exists over the ability of agroecological production techniques to generate sufficient yields. Recent studies have shown that organic methods can produce yields equal to conventional methods, while increasing soil organic matter and decreasing energy use (e.g. Pimentel, Hepperly, Hanson, Douds & Seidel, 2005). The UN Food and Agriculture Organization, however, maintains that yields from organic production vary greatly between farming systems, and that there is not enough data available yet to assess the potential for organic production to meet world food requirements on a large scale (FAO, 2005). Furthermore, organic methods are only one element of sustainable production systems.

Second, there is a tension between sustainable production techniques and affordability. Sustainably-grown and processed products are generally more expensive than conventionally grown foods due to higher labour costs and limited supply relative to demand. Sustainably-grown and processed foods also incorporate factors beyond the costs of production, including costs related to environmental protection and enhancement, as well as higher animal welfare standards. Conventional food prices do not incorporate these factors (FAO, 2005). Higher prices put sustainably-grown foods out of reach of low income consumers, presenting a trade-off between ecologically sustainable production and food affordability.

A third tension exists between the goals of encouraging food production for domestic consumption versus food production for international trade. Much of the literature on sustainable food systems omits discussion of the benefits of international food trade, or discounts these benefits. Trade in agricultural products has brought economic gains to many countries, albeit these gains have been highly unevenly distributed. Trade is also essential to countries dependent on imports of staple foods to meet dietary needs (FAO, 1999). Trade and transport of
food can also reduce vulnerability to local natural disasters. These benefits need to be weighed against the deleterious ecological impacts of the high volume of goods transported around the globe, and the presently inequitable distribution of the economic benefits of international trade.

In encouraging greater self-reliance, the sustainable food systems movement does not promote isolation of regional food systems. Rather, the idea is to shift from export-driven agricultural policy, to a policy of 'feeding the family and trading the leftovers' -- production to meet local needs, coupled with export of surpluses (Kneen, 1989).

Fourth, there is a tension between seasonal and regional eating, and serving the global, culinary tastes of citizens in many international cities. The value of US food imports may outstrip exports in 2005 for the first time in over fifty years, a possibility which has been attributed in part to consumer demand for imported foods (Pibell, 2005). In multicultural and globally-influenced cities, seasonal and regional eating may present a tension with providing culturally acceptable food. Again, moving toward sustainable food systems means balancing these interests.

Fifth, there are possible tradeoffs between enabling local decision-making and encouraging decisions that favour sustainable food systems. This tension can be illustrated by the example of the Agricultural Land Reserve and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) in British Columbia. The Agricultural Land Reserve was established by the provincial government in 1973. Until 2002, decisions about removal of lands from the ALR were made entirely by the Agricultural Land Commission, a provincial decision-making body. In 2002, the ALC was divided into six regional panels, and the Commission was given the option of delegating power to local governments to make decisions about non-farm land use and subdivision of the ALR (Agricultural Land Commission, 2002; Alexander, 2002). ALR advocates fear that local governments are viewing the ALR as a reserve for urban and industrial development rather than
a farmland reserve. Recent applications from local governments to exclude land from the ALR provide evidence that this suspicion is already being confirmed (ALR Protection and Enhancement Committee, 2005). As this example suggests, if preservation of agricultural land is one important goal of food system planning, then perhaps the assumption within food system planning that local governments are more responsive to local sustainability issues should be re-evaluated.

Clearly, attempting to create more sustainable food systems presents complex issues and decisions. There is no simple answer to the resolution of these tensions. Rather, careful analysis and weighing of options in different circumstances must be made with the goals of sustainability and social justice in mind.

### 3.5.6.2. Barriers to Food System Planning

Separate from, and in addition to, these tensions in the creation of more sustainable food systems, there are also barriers facing the adoption of food system planning by the profession. Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) have identified seven barriers to the implementation of food system planning, which include:

1. Perceived lack of relevance to planners’ roles and responsibilities;
2. Perceived lack of problems with the food system;
3. Perception that the food system is regulated by the private market, and is not the responsibility of the public sector;
4. Lack of knowledge about the food system;
5. Perception that the food system is a rural issue, not an urban issue;
6. Lack of funding for food system planning;
7. Difficulty identifying colleagues to collaborate with on food system issues.

Bouris (2004) confirmed these constraints in a study of food system planning in the Georgia Basin region of British Columbia, and found three additional barriers, including: lack of political will, lack of community pressure and lack of institutional will. Bouris (2004) situates the barriers faced by planners in embracing food system planning within the broader governance context of particular localities, and concludes that the interplay of these three forces together enables or inhibits the implementation of comprehensive food system planning agendas. In order for the field of food system planning to advance, these barriers need to be overcome. As the field progresses, the tensions and tradeoffs inherent in the move toward more sustainable food systems will also need to be addressed at each stage of development.

3.6. Summary

This chapter outlined a conceptual framework for food system planning. As an introduction to this framework, arguments for the inclusion of food system planning within the broader discipline of planning were presented, demonstrating the many linkages between planning concerns and the food system. The recent emergence of food system planning in the planning literature, the American Planning Association, and planning education was noted as an indication that interest in the field is growing.

The conceptual framework presented for food system planning consisted of two major components: 1) a set of attributes of sustainable food systems, and 2) a definition and principles for food system planning, as well as a set of roles for the food system planner. A sustainable food system was defined as one that is ecologically sustainable; economically sustaining;
socially just and ethical; diverse and resilient; as well as proximate and place-based. Food system planning was defined as a process of developing and implementing strategies to encourage sustainability and social justice in all of the food system sectors, from production through to disposal. Guiding principles for the field included employing a systems approach, embodying participatory planning principles, and seeking to foster the attributes of sustainable food systems listed above. Roles for the food system planner ranged from analysis and systems thinking, to facilitation, participation in community food system projects, and fundraising, as well as policy development and regulatory functions.

The theoretical foundations of food system planning were explored. Based on its genesis out of the community based food system movement and its emphasis on participatory planning process, food system planning was described as reflective of radical and communicative planning theories. Based on similarities to sustainability planning, food system planning was described as applying a food system lens to this broader planning theory. Finally, limitations of food system planning were discussed. A number of tensions and tradeoffs in the concept of sustainable food systems were explored, including the tension between existing sustainable production techniques and issues of productivity and affordability; the tension between the benefits of food trade versus the benefits of production for local consumption; as well as the question of whether local decision-making equates to sustainable decision-making. Barriers to food system planning, related to lack of understanding and will, were also outlined. Chapter 4 will introduce planning for farmers markets as one activity which is nested within this conceptual framework of food system planning.
4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the concept of planning for farmers markets as one aspect of planning for sustainable food systems. Farmers markets are linked by many threads to the sustainable food systems movement, and for this reason, provide a rich terrain of investigation into the feasibility of addressing sustainability challenges in the global food system. Because farmers markets are an important initiative within the sustainable food system movement, planning for farmers markets can also be seen as fulfilling a central function of food system planning, which is to assist in implementing the vision of this movement. As well, because they are a public space, farmers markets fall naturally within the planner’s domain.

In order to demonstrate how farmers markets relate to the broader concept of sustainable food systems, this chapter will discuss cited benefits of farmers markets to sustainable food systems, as well as the limitations of these contributions. As an introduction to this discussion, a brief history of municipal farmers markets will be given. Finally, existing information on municipal planning for farmers markets will be summarized, followed by a discussion of the relationship between farmers markets and public markets.

4.2. A Brief History of Farmers Markets

Marketplaces first emerged in ancient Egypt, India, Phoenicia, Arabia, Greece and Rome. In Greek cities, markets organized by public authorities took place in a designated marketplace, or agora, that served as a forum for commerce, as well as civic, political, judicial and festive
activities. In the US, the first market opened in the early to mid 1600’s (markets appeared in New York and Boston almost simultaneously) (Shakow, 1981). In Canada, several markets claim to be among the first, including the Halifax market, which opened in 1750. The system of municipal markets in the US, including networks of neighbourhood markets in such cities as New Orleans and Baltimore, remained functional until the mid 1900’s (Shakow, 1981). With the rise of supermarkets and global marketing in the 1960’s and 1970’s, farmers markets declined in number and importance. Post WWII, the increasing scale of agriculture led to a bimodal system -- farms became either very large, in order to compete with the expanding scale of agriculture, or they remained very small. Small farms unable to compete in this economy of scale became more dependent on local markets in order to sell small volumes of agricultural products. The resurgence of farmers markets that occurred in the 1980’s was in part a response to this demand for local, small scale markets (Gerbasi, 2004). In the US, another factor in this resurgence was the passing of the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act in 1976, coupled with the provision of funding for related community projects. Prior to the passing of this Act, the direct sale of agricultural products had been illegal (Gerbasi, 2004; Project for Public Spaces, 2003a). The number of markets in Canada and the US has grown significantly in recent years. In the US, the number of markets grew by approximately 79% between 1994 and 2002. Canada has seen a similar increase, with the number of farmers markets almost doubling since the late 1980’s, making a total of 425 (Feagan et al., 2004). Farmers markets are experiencing a renaissance, a rise which brings with it many potential benefits for the creation of more sustainable food systems.
4.3. Benefits and Limitations of Farmers Markets

4.3.1. Introduction

In the current North American context, farmers markets are considered to be one of a number of vital institutions aimed at contributing to more sustainable food systems (Feagan et al., 2004; Halweil, 2002; Norberg-Hodge, et al., 2002; Pretty, 2001). The goals of farmers markets are linked by many threads to the goals of sustainable food systems. By providing a direct sales outlet for a variety of local farmers and food processors, markets attempt to foster a diverse, local food economy. By linking farmers directly to consumers in both an economic and social exchange, they aim to build respectful relationships in which farmers’ knowledge is valued, and citizens gain an appreciation for the origins of their food. By improving access to locally grown, fresh, nutritious foods, they also aim to foster food security. By supporting the economic viability of small scale, locally-owned farms, markets attempt to indirectly preserve farmland and support local economies. Many markets also have policies in place to encourage sustainable farming practices. As well, by reducing the physical distance between farmers and consumers, markets aim to reduce the ecological and social costs of long distance food transport. Farmers markets bring together these many threads as part of a broader intention to foster the creation of more self-reliant, place-based food systems, or foodsheds. The following paragraphs draw on existing studies of farmers markets to elaborate upon the successes and limitations of farmers markets with respect to fulfilling these goals.

4.3.2. Benefits of Farmers Markets

Strengthening the economic viability of local agriculture and food processing businesses
is one central goal of farmers markets and sustainable food systems. With respect to the role of markets as a direct sales opportunity, numerous authors have reported on the economic benefits of farmers markets to vendors. Farmers markets are considered to be an important source of income for small farms and businesses that do not produce at a large enough scale to serve major wholesale markets. With minimal overhead and start-up costs, markets offer a low-barrier sales outlet for new businesses. Direct sales also enable vendors to capture more of the food dollar than through wholesaling (Alexander, 1996; Dawson, 2002; Gerbasi, 2004; Govindasamy et al., 2003; Graber, 1999; Griffin & Frongillo, 2003; Hilchey et al., 1995).

Additionally, markets serve a business incubation function, providing an opportunity for farmers and food processors to test new products before launching into larger scale production, as well as an opportunity to advertise their other sales outlets, such as farm gate stands (Feenstra Lewis, Hinrichs, Gillespie & Hilchey, 2003; Gerbasi, 2004; Graber, 1999; Hinrichs, Gillespie & Feenstra, 2004). Because of their interactive nature, markets also foster social learning among vendors, and allow them to monitor customers' preferences and changing tastes, further contributing to business development (Hinrichs et al., 2004). In addition to these economic benefits for vendors, markets have also been shown to have a positive effect on surrounding retail businesses on market days. Customers and vendors purchase other items from nearby businesses, supporting neighbourhood retail and re-circulating money in the local economy (Dawson, 2002; Feagan et al., 2004; Gerbasi, 2004; Hilchey, et al., 1995; Oberholtzer & Grow, 2003).

Combined with the economic benefits of farmers markets are a number of cited social benefits to vendors and customers. The importance of relationship-building between vendors, between vendors and customers, and among customers, is frequently noted. These relationships are valued not only for their contribution to business development, but also for their role in
creating a supportive and enjoyable social environment (Alexander, 1996; Graber, 1999; Griffin & Frongillo, 2003). Studies have shown that customers' primary reasons for attending markets are to socialize with community members and to support local farmers. The educational benefits of socialization and relationship-building have also been noted. Markets help raise awareness about numerous food system issues, such as the origin of food, seasonal eating possibilities, and nutrition (Baber & Frongillo, 2003; Gerbasi, 2004; Graber, 1999; Griffin, 2001; Oberholtzer & Grow, 2003). Some markets further facilitate educational opportunities by offering booth space to voluntary organizations and hosting cooking demonstrations. These social benefits of markets extend to the broader community. In particular, the role of markets in revitalizing urban neighbourhoods, creating vibrant public spaces, and fostering a sense of community has been documented (Johnston, 2002; Project for Public Spaces, 2003a; Feagan et al., 2004).

While multiple social and economic benefits of farmers markets manifest through their role as a direct marketing outlet and public space, markets also address access to food, and in this respect touch on the consumption sector of the food system. In a sustainable food system framework, access is understood broadly in terms of providing food security. Food security can be defined as all people, at all times, having access to nutritious, safe, personally acceptable and culturally appropriate foods, produced in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just (BC Food Systems Network, 2001). Markets influence several aspects of food security. First and foremost, they provide a source of fresh, local, high quality produce and other food products (Graber, 1999; Griffin, 2001; Novak, 1998). This is the most commonly cited advantage of markets for consumers. Several studies have also indicated that markets influence nutrition, in that market customers consume more produce and diversify their diet over time (Gerbasi, 2004; Griffin, 2001; Project for Public Spaces, 2003a). With respect to affordability, there are conflicting reports on the role of markets as a source of fresh produce for lower income.
shoppers. Some authors report that prices at farmers markets are lower than supermarkets, and therefore offer a more affordable source of produce (Dawson, 2002; Griffin, 2001; Project for Public Spaces, 2003a). Other authors admonish markets as an expensive option available only to the relatively wealthy (Brown, 2002; Faegan, Morris and Krug, 2004). In the US, some degree of success at serving lower income customers has been achieved by having markets operate in conjunction with federally-funded food stamp programs. Efforts have been directed at outfitting markets with the machines necessary to process electronic food stamp cards (Griffin, 2001; Oberholtzer & Grow, 2003). Canada, however, does not have a comparable program.

Another initiative designed to improve access to food is the donation of leftover food to food banks and soup kitchens, an activity which some markets engage in (Project for Public Spaces, 2003a). Although charitable food distribution can be critiqued within a food security model as not providing dignified access to food, this connection nevertheless provides one source of fresh local food to low income residents. By encouraging food recycling, this initiative also intersects with the food disposal sector of the food system.

Providing access to culturally appropriate food is another element of food security. Some authors celebrate the diverse nature of customers and vendors at farmers markets (Gerbasi, 2004; Graber, 1999). A Project for Public Spaces (2003b) study noted the diverse selection of food available at markets established in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods, and commented on the role of markets in providing a sales outlet for farmers who have recently immigrated and started small businesses. However, this function of markets has not been explored in depth elsewhere in the literature.

Several ecological benefits of farmers markets are also referred to. Farmers markets are considered to indirectly support the preservation of farmland, encourage sustainable methods of production, and reduce the energy consumed in transportation of food products. For example,
New York City’s greenmarkets claim partial responsibility for keeping 35,000 acres of farmland preserved in the region¹ (L. Halter, personal communication, Tuesday, September 30, 2005). Graber (1999) also found that farmers markets encourage farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices through customer demand for food produced using such methods. Given that the average produce item in North America travels an estimated 2500-4000 km from farm to plate, the locally-sourced farm products sold at farmers markets also require less energy in transport than their supermarket equivalents (Bentley & Barker, 2005; Halweil, 2002).

4.3.3. Limitations of Farmers Markets

In spite of the many stated benefits of farmers markets, there are also numerous limitations on their contributions to sustainable food systems. The overall impact of farmers markets on distribution of food in North America is minimal (estimates suggest that 1-2% of the food consumed in the US is marketed directly to consumers, through farmers markets or other direct sales outlets) (Brown, 2002). Thus, the benefits of farmers markets stated above are occurring on a very small scale. Although they do support the financial viability of small businesses, farmers markets alone cannot protect farmers and small business owners from the effects of macroeconomic trends in the food system, such as competition with supermarkets, high input costs, labour shortages, and so forth (Griffin, 2001; Griffin & Frongillo, 2003). Markets also sometimes have trouble attracting farmers and customers (Project for Public Spaces, 2003a). Additionally, markets are labour intensive for farmers, requiring long hours for the economic return that they provide. As a result, markets on their own are rarely adequate to

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¹ 35,000 acres is the total amount of land farmers selling in Greenmarket are stewards of, including rented and owned property, cultivated acres and pasture, as determined by acreage information included on the farmers’ annual applications.
support vendors' livelihoods – diverse sales outlets are required. Multiple sales outlets are also important to counter the risk of depending solely on farmers markets for marketing, since long term operation of farmers markets is often not assured.

From the customer's perspective, with respect to affordability, while prices vary from market to market, more expensive markets also have to be wary of serving a wealthier population (Faegan, Morris and Krug, 2004). Additionally, although the value of markets as a public space has been celebrated, this is not always reported to be the case, a factor which no doubt varies greatly from market to market (Project for Public Spaces, 2003a). In spite of the stated benefit of markets in terms of relationship-building and social learning among vendors, markets can also be a source of internal conflict and disagreement over market operations (Cummings, Kora & Murray, 1998; Gerbasi, 2004; Graber, 1999). External conflict may also arise when surrounding businesses complain of unfair advantages to vendors because of their low overhead costs (Cummings et al., 1998).

Despite these limitations, the growth in popularity of farmers markets in recent years suggests that considerable opportunity exists to expand the role of farmers markets in the effort to create more sustainable food systems. Farmers markets certainly do not address all of the sustainability challenges discussed in Chapter 2. Rather, they represent one initiative within many, but one that has many direct and indirect links to the goals of sustainable food systems. Planning for farmers markets is therefore one avenue through which such goals may be furthered. However, the potential of farmers markets to contribute to these goals may be enhanced or diminished by the policy and planning environment in which they are operating.
4.4. Planning for Farmers Markets

Planning farmers markets is not an entirely new concept for local government. Historically, farmers markets were located on public property, on land set aside by the city's founder or a land donor. These first markets were created and operated by city officials who passed ordinances to minimize competition with the market (e.g. prohibiting sales outside the markets), and to ensure that all vendors benefited equally from the marketplace (Gerbasi, 2004). Municipal governments have also been involved in planning retail, public markets, such as the Pike Place market in Seattle (Shakow, 1981). Food system planning studies show that involvement with farmers markets ranks fairly high among the limited ways in which planners have engaged in activities related to the food system. Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) found that 10 of 22 planning agencies surveyed had been involved in some capacity with farmers markets. Of these agencies, six had been moderately involved, and three significantly involved. Bouris (2004) found that four of thirteen planners surveyed in municipalities in the Georgia Basin had been involved in “facilitating farmers markets (p.57).” While neither figure is particularly dramatic, in both of these studies, involvement of planners with farmers markets occurred relatively frequently in comparison with the other food system planning activities reported. However, while it appears that planners are involved in some capacity in work related to farmers markets, it is not clear from existing research what this involvement means. It is also not clear whether this involvement includes retail public markets such as those mentioned above, or farmers markets as defined in this thesis. Thus, it is difficult to gain a picture of the degree to which planners are involved in farmers markets at present, or the nature of this involvement, from existing literature.

From the perspective of market proponents, several studies make reference to challenges faced by markets that either directly or indirectly intersect with local government
responsibilities. These challenges include arduous permitting processes, difficulties with health regulations, zoning issues, parking issues, conflict over securing a location, and funding concerns, as well as the lack of permanence afforded to farmers markets by local governments (Alexander, 1996; Cummings et al., 1998; Govindasamy et al., 1998; Neumann, 2003; Oberholtzer & Grow, 2003).

A desire for local governments to promote farmers markets has appeared as part of the emerging food system planning agenda in the form of recommendations to City Council by Food Policy Councils in such cities as Toronto and Portland, and in planning processes in other cities (e.g. San Francisco, CA, Madison, WI, Vancouver, BC). For example, the Madison Department of Planning and Development recommended that City Council “place a high priority on creating permanent sites for farmers markets and urban agriculture, incorporating necessary utilities, parking, and loading areas into the design, and providing these facilities at minimal cost to farmers markets (as cited in APA Divisions Council, 2005).” Similarly, the Toronto Food Policy Council recommended that Council “consider ways to make farmers markets and fresh food markets standard features across the city.” An interest in enhancing farmers markets as a component of food system planning has also emerged in Vancouver, BC, where facilitating farmers markets is one item in the Action Plan for Creating a Sustainable Food System, adopted in 2003 as part of the City’s Food Policy agenda. Specifically, the City’s goals are to “seek creative ways to increase the quality and number of farmers markets in Vancouver by reviewing zoning and health regulations (Mendes, 2003).” Several cities also describe successes with respect to municipal involvement in farmers markets. The Department of Neighbourhoods (2003) at the City of Seattle credits a community matching fund program with assisting in the establishment of one of the city’s neighbourhood farmers markets, and contributing to site improvements at other markets. In San Francisco, SF Environment (a municipal government
department) lists the establishment of three new neighbourhood farmers markets among its recent accomplishments with regards to food and agriculture in the City (SF Environment, 2003). The Toronto Food Policy Council (2001) also lists working with a local Business Improvement Association to improve farmers markets among its successes. However, these fleeting references do not provide information on the specific actions taken, forms of support given, or roles played by City staff or departments. As will be explained in the following chapter, the task of this thesis has been to further explore what roles planners and planning agencies have to play in supporting these achievements, and implementing the policies mentioned above.

4.5. Farmers Markets and Public Markets

It is important to note the distinction between public markets and farmers markets in this discussion, since the two fulfill complementary but different functions, and have been treated differently by local governments. The essential difference between public markets and farmers markets is that the primary function of farmers markets is to provide a direct sales outlet for local producers and processors; whereas, although public markets may choose to showcase local foods, they also function as a retail outlet for small, locally-owned businesses. Another difference between farmers and public markets is that the former are typically seasonal, and operated on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, rather than a daily, year-round basis. As well, public markets are often centrally-located, rather than neighbourhood-based, food distribution outlets. There is no absolute dividing line between farmers markets and public markets. The two are perhaps best represented on a continuum with three main characteristics: their ratio of direct marketing to retail marketing; their frequency of operation; and their centrality of location (Fig.
Two of the three cities investigated in this thesis have well-established and successful public markets; specifically, the Granville Island Public Market in Vancouver and the Pike Place Public Market in Seattle. Both markets reflect the goals of sustainable food systems. In addition to highlighting fresh, local foods, the Granville Island Public Market provides space for producers to set up stalls on a daily basis, and hosts a small outdoor farmers market two days per week on a seasonal basis (see www.granvilleisland.com). The Pike Place Public Market also highlights local foods, and supports local producers through other initiatives, including a Community Supported Agriculture program, where customers purchase shares in local farms in return for a weekly delivery of produce (see www.pikeplacemarket.org). In Portland, the Portland Public Market Society has also been working toward the establishment of a public market with a focus on local foods, which the society views as contributory to the network of farmers markets in the city. A feasibility study for this market states:

*Public markets can be complementary to farmers markets; the experience of other cities suggests that Portland can expect that having both of these types of markets will expand the overall demand for fresh, locally grown and prepared foods, allowing both types of markets to thrive (Bay Area Economics et al., 2005, p. 3).*

The Ferry Plaza Market in San Francisco achieves the function of both a public market and a
farmers market in one venue. Operated by the Centre for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture (CUESA), this market includes dozens of vendor stalls where farmers, ranchers, and small scale food processors sell their goods four days per week. The farmers market is located directly adjacent to the Ferry Plaza building, which houses food retailers, restaurants and other small businesses that are open on a daily basis. Thus, the market incorporates both direct marketing and retail sales on one site (Ferry Building Investors, 2003).

There is much to be said for the retail function of public markets, when we consider the examples discussed above, as well as thriving markets outside of North America. For example, La Vega (the Central Market) in Santiago, Chile, is credited with being “one of the most important centers of activity in Santiago, not only because of its commerce, which has importance at the national level, but because of the social activity and cultural elements that are concentrated there (Ducci, 2004, p.4).” Thousands of individuals depend directly on the market for employment (Ducci, 2004). Although this thesis focused on the North American experience with farmers markets, market traditions outside of North America offer a potentially rich source of information on the contributions of markets to sustainable food systems, and present an opportunity for further research.

While public and farmers markets certainly fulfill similar goals, their functions are not identical, and they have been treated differently by municipal governments. Public markets have received greater attention from municipal governments. For example, the City of Seattle established a special Pike Place Market District in the 1970’s in order to facilitate revitalization of this market (Shakow, 1981). The permanent, year-round, and daily nature of public markets necessitates considerable investment in infrastructure, and requires retail vendors who can operate businesses full time. A different planning approach is therefore needed for public markets, as compared with farmers markets. I limit my investigation to planning for farmers
markets out of an interest in addressing the specific planning-related challenges faced by these markets, and an interest in supporting their primary function as a direct marketing and neighbourhood food distribution outlet. Undoubtedly, there are opportunities for further research into the relationship between public and farmers markets, and the role of municipal planning in this collaboration, which will be discussed further in Chapter 8.

4.6. Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to introduce planning for farmers markets as one initiative within the emerging field of food system planning. After their municipally-sponsored genesis, followed by a period of demise, farmers markets in North America are experiencing a renaissance within the movement toward more sustainable food systems. As described in this chapter, the goals of farmers markets are linked by many threads to the goals of food system planning. In particular, they are applauded for providing economic opportunities for small scale farmers and food processors; providing access to fresh, nutritious food; building relationships between farmers and consumers; creating a sense of community in urban neighbourhoods; providing a forum for education and mobilization around food, farming and nutrition issues; acting as a catalyst for sustainable growing practices, and; supporting farmland preservation. Farmers markets are distinct from public markets in that their primary function is to provide a direct marketing outlet for small scale food producers and processors, whereas public markets fulfill a retail function.

By planning for farmers markets, local governments can build on community-based efforts to enhance these multiple contributions of farmers markets to more sustainable food systems. Planning for farmers markets could also become a cornerstone of a more
comprehensive food system planning program. As part of the emerging food system planning agenda, recommendations to support farmers markets have been put forward by various Food Policy Councils and planning departments. Cities are also listing support for farmers markets among their recent achievements with respect to food, agriculture and community development. However, specific strategies for the food system planner to employ in implementing these recommendations, or facilitating these achievements, have not been articulated. This gap points to the central questions of this thesis -- what are the present and potential roles of local government planners and planning agencies in supporting the establishment, operation and expansion of farmers markets in US and Canadian cities? And, what changes could planners make in their practice to better fulfill their potential for supporting farmers markets? Chapter 5 will describe the methods that I have used to research these questions.
CHAPTER 5. METHODS

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods used in this thesis. The design of this thesis is based on a qualitative research methodology. My interest in and approach to the thesis has been shaped by a number of personal experiences, as well as my affinity to a set of values and beliefs which can be described as an ecological paradigm. The research process reflected both an interpretive and a critical research paradigm. Specific methods employed included a literature review, as well as a survey of experiences with farmers markets in Vancouver, BC, Seattle, WA, and Portland, OR. This survey included a document analysis and interviews with planners and farmers market proponents in each of the three cities. Informed consent and confidentiality of the participants were ensured to address ethical considerations. Triangulation and maintenance of an audit trail were used to address validity and reliability.

5.2. Qualitative Research

The design of this study is based on a qualitative research methodology. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define qualitative research as a form of interpretive, naturalistic inquiry, in which researchers “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p.5).” Qualitative researchers recognize that research is value-laden, and that there is an intimate relationship between the researchers and what is being studied (p.13).” They employ practices that “make the world visible... transform the world... [and] turn the world into a series of representations, including
field notes, interviews, conversations... (p.5).” The goal of this interpretive practice is to discover patterns of meaning that emerge in particular contexts. Forms of qualitative research may also have more emancipatory goals, seeking to not only understand socio-cultural problems in communities or institutions, but also to use research to solve problems or help bring about positive change (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

5.3. Personal Values and Paradigm

Given the recognition that research is inherently value-laden and value-driven, and that meaning is constructed by both the researcher and the research participants, qualitative inquiry demands that the researcher demonstrate an awareness of the relationship between her personal values and the design and implementation of the research project. With this in mind, the following paragraph describes my personal paradigm as it relates to this research topic and design.

My interest in sustainable food systems is rooted in what can be described as an ecological paradigm. A paradigm is a philosophical framework that guides how we look at the world, and how we interpret and give relevance to what we see. The core beliefs of an ecological paradigm, synthesized from several authors, include the following:

- Ecological integrity is more important than economic growth;
- Diversity of life in human and non-human forms is inherently valuable (i.e. biodiversity, diverse ways of life, cultures, occupations, and economies);
- Humans have environmental rights (i.e. the right to clean air, water, food, a safe and healthy work environment, etc.);
• The integration of fact, value, thought, and feeling is more valuable than science alone in the creation of knowledge, and;
• Place-based knowledge, and local participation in decision-making, should be respected and fostered (Naess, 1994; Taylor, 1992; Taylor, 2000).

In its emphasis on ecological farming methods, food security as a human right, and participatory governance, the movement toward sustainable food systems reflects the abovementioned principles of the ecological paradigm. My wish to contribute to the development of sustainable food systems is one manifestation of these broader beliefs about the nature and current state of social and human-ecological relationships.

5.4. Research Paradigm

The ecological paradigm described above relates to my interest in and approach to this research topic. However, the process by which I have designed and implemented the methods and analyzed the results of this project has also been informed by a specific research paradigm, or set of ideas and beliefs about how research is to be conducted. My research is infused with elements of both an interpretive and a critical paradigm, as outlined by Schensul & LeCompte (1999). An interpretive approach to research recognizes that knowledge is constructed as people interact with each other over time in specific social settings. It aims to achieve an understanding of human behaviour in these settings. The researcher is subjective and involved in the research. In contrast to an interpretive approach, the critical paradigm places greater emphasis on research as an empowerment tool, aiming to uncover social inequities and find ways to transform institutions, through dialogue, policy, political action, and so forth. This research project is
consistent with an interpretive paradigm in that my intention is to gain a better understanding of the relationship between local government planners and farmers market proponents. However, this research also reflects elements of a critical approach in that my parallel goal is to reveal possibilities for institutional transformation by identifying roles for local government in a largely unfamiliar terrain -- planning for farmers markets and sustainable food systems -- and by investigating how the grassroots, sustainable food system movement can harness the resources of the state in this particular context. Both the interpretive paradigm and critical paradigm also propose participatory methods as integral to the research process. This project does not conform to this aspect of either paradigm in that the methods used were not participatory in nature, a choice which I made largely due to time and resource constraints. With this exception, however, I feel that the research incorporates central elements of both the interpretive and critical paradigms.

5.5. Research Design and Processes

5.5.1. Review of Literature and Development of Conceptual Framework

A review of the literature pertaining to farmers markets, food system planning, and sustainable food systems informed the development of my research and interview questions. This literature, as well as readings on sustainable urban development, radical planning theory, and communicative planning theory, informed the construction of the conceptual framework for food system planning outlined in Chapter 3.
5.5.2. Primary data collection

5.5.2.1. Survey of Experiences with Farmers Markets in Three Cities

A cross-sectional research design was applied in this study, whereby experiences with farmers markets in three cities were surveyed more or less at the same point in time (Bryman, 2001). Cities selected for the survey included Vancouver, BC, Seattle, WA and Portland, OR. Criteria-based, purposive sampling was employed, whereby selection of the cities to be sampled was made by evaluating known characteristics about the cities against a set of criteria (LeCompte & Schensul 1999; May, 2001). Criteria for selection of the surveyed cities included: 1) the availability of documentation on farmers markets; 2) evidence of interaction between farmers market proponents and city planners; 3) the existence of a network of farmers markets in the city (more than two markets), and; 4) the willingness of the potential key informants to be interviewed.

Vancouver, BC, Seattle, WA, and Portland, OR, were selected for the survey because these cities satisfied the above criteria. These three cities also share a common bioregion, a region which experiences a mild climate and long growing season, as well as many months of outdoor urban life. In all three cities, documents obtained through internet searches and from City staff members suggested that there had been interaction between farmers market proponents and planners in each city. In Vancouver, this included references to farmers markets in policy documents, by-laws, reports to Council, and Park Board meeting minutes. In Seattle, this included references to farmers markets on departmental websites and in neighbourhood plans, discussion of farmers markets in Park Board meeting minutes, and a summary of the Department of Neighbourhoods’ Farmers Market program obtained from a city staff member. In Portland, this included references to farmers markets in Food Policy Council recommendations to City
Council, minutes from a workshop organized to bring together farmers market proponents and City staff, and a zoning analysis completed for farmers markets obtained from a city planner. This information satisfied the first two criteria for selection of cities, in that documented evidence of some form of interaction between farmers market proponents and planners existed for each city. Vancouver, Seattle and Portland also each have three or more existing farmers markets, satisfying the third selection criterion. As well, all of the interviewees who were approached in each city agreed to participate in the study, satisfying the fourth selection criterion.

The survey of experiences with farmers markets in these three cities included analysis of documents pertaining to farmers markets and interviews with key informants in each city. Local government policy documents, reports and by-laws pertaining to farmers markets were obtained via internet searches on local government websites, and by requesting publicly-available documents from planning agencies in the surveyed cities.

Criteria-based and snowball sampling methods were used to identify potential interviewees (Bryman, 2001; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Criteria for selection of interviewees included: 1) degree of experience with farmers markets, and; 2) willingness to be interviewed. Farmers market proponents were identified through internet research to find the farmers market organizations in each city. Seattle and Vancouver each have one predominant farmers market organization. In the case of Portland, where there are a number of independent farmers market organizations, the organization operating the greatest number of markets was approached, under the assumption that this organization had the highest degree of experience. One to two representatives in management positions with each organization were sought for interviews.

Local government planners were identified in two ways. Some planners were identified
through the document search, because their names were listed on local government documents and minutes of decisions pertaining to farmers markets. Others were identified through snowball sampling, whereby interviewees were asked to identify City staff members who they knew had been involved in farmers markets in some capacity. Contact information for planners was obtained via online government directories.

All potential interviewees were sent a letter of introduction by email, explaining the purpose of the study, and requesting their participation in an interview. The pool of farmers market proponents was deemed exhausted when representatives of the farmers market organization in each city had been interviewed. The pool of city employees was deemed exhausted when all planners identified through the document search and snowball sampling had been interviewed.

5.5.2.2. Interview Design and Technique

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, either in-person or by telephone, with farmers market proponents and City employees in each of the three surveyed cities, making a total of five interviews with market proponents and five with City staff members (Table 5.1). All but one of the in-person interviews were audio-recorded. Notes were taken during telephone interviews. Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and 90 minutes. The longer interviews took place with market proponents. The shorter interviews took place with local government employees whose involvement in farmers markets was limited in comparison to that of market proponents.
Table 5.1. Number of Farmers Market Proponents and Planners Interviewed in each City.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
<th>Seattle</th>
<th>Portland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market proponents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City employees</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviews with farmers market proponents were structured around three central, open-ended questions. Participants were asked: 1) to describe their interactions with any City departments in the course of establishing and operating the markets; 2) to describe any issues which emerged in the course of this interaction, and how these issues were resolved, or might be resolved in the future, and; 3) to describe any additional involvement from the City that they believe would assist them in operating or expanding the markets. To probe for further detail during the interviews, I inquired about existing and desired roles for the City in relation to the following specific issues:

- Finding and securing suitable sites for the market
- Obtaining start-up funding
- Permits and licenses
- Long term security of the market sites
- Future development and plans for expansion
- Other policy/regulations (including health regulations)
- Infrastructure and services (shelter, washrooms, water, waste removal, maintenance, etc.)
- Accessibility (e.g. parking, traffic, transit, pedestrian and wheelchair access)
- Conflict with neighbours, nearby businesses, etc.
- Administration of the markets
- Conducting research on markets
Advertising markets

I developed this list of specific issues through review of the literature on farmers markets combined with my own knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of local governments and planners. When reviewing the literature, I made note of cited challenges faced by farmers markets that related to the roles and responsibilities of local governments, and included these in the list of specific issues. In the interviews with farmers market proponents, I inquired about each of these issues. In the style of a semi-structured interview, the order of the specific issues discussed varied as the interview took shape, based on participants' responses (Bryman, 2001; Wengraf, 2001). Also, because some interviewees discussed certain themes in greater detail, not every issue was covered within the time allotted for every interview. Interviewees were also asked whether there were any City staff members with whom they had worked who might be interested in participating in the study.

Interviews with city employees were structured around three central, open-ended questions. Participants were asked 1) to describe any work they had done with respect to farmers markets, or ways in which they had interacted with market organizers through their work, and; 2) to describe any issues which emerged in the course of their work on farmers markets, and how these issues were resolved, or might be resolved in the future, and; 3) to describe any additional ways that they thought they could assist in facilitating farmers markets.

The above list of specific issues was again used to probe for further detail in the interviews. In some cases, however, city employees' involvement centred around one specific issue (e.g. zoning) due to the nature of their positions. Thus, even though interviewees were asked if they had been involved in any other ways with farmers markets, the interviews tended to remain focused around these issues. Planners were also asked if they knew of anyone else in the
5.5.3. Data Analysis

Interview transcriptions and notes were coded by hand based on the process of item-level analysis outlined by Schensul & LeCompte (1999). Item-level analysis involves the identification of discrete, concrete units related to the research questions. Patterns, or collections of items that are related to one another, are then formed. Applying this approach, I identified a number of roles for planning agencies and planners as items, and then grouped these items under broader categories. In order to identify and label these roles during the coding process, I began by examining the roles of the planner/planning agency that were revealed in response to the specific issues discussed in the interview. I also took note of action words describing planners’ activities to elicit additional roles. Because the interview and research questions inquire about past, present and potential activities of planners and planning agencies, I made a distinction in the analysis between existing and proposed roles.

The document analysis was carried out using a qualitative content analysis approach, as described by Bryman (2001). The roles of planners revealed in the text of policy documents, or as reflected in the existence of by-laws or documents, were again used as item-level units of analysis.

5.5.4. Ethical Considerations, Validity and Reliability

Ethical considerations inherent in research involving human subjects include the importance of ensuring informed consent of participants, and the need to respect participants’
rights to privacy and confidentiality (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Because this research involved human subjects, the proposed methods of participant recruitment and consent, primary data collection, and analysis were reviewed and approved by the University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Board (File No. B05-0451).

Two methods of ensuring validity and reliability of qualitative research include triangulation and maintaining an audit trail (Bryman, 2001; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). I employed triangulation in this study by obtaining data from multiple sources and methods to answer the research questions. Analysis of interviews with farmers market proponents was triangulated with interviews with local government planners, and also with analysis of local government policy documents, reports and by-laws. I maintained an audit trail by transcribing all audio-recorded interviews and taking field notes in all non-recorded interviews.

5.6. Summary

This chapter discussed the methods used in this thesis. The design of this study was informed by a qualitative research methodology. My personal experiences in community-based food systems work, as a teaching assistant and co-investigator of two research projects in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems, and as a Food Policy intern at the City of Vancouver, combined with my philosophical affinity to what can be described as an ecological paradigm, influenced my interest in the research topic and shaped the development of the study itself. In its exploratory approach and its intent to reveal possibilities for institutional transformation, the research process reflected both an interpretive and a critical research paradigm. A literature review informed the development of the research and interview questions, as well as the conceptual framework for food system planning outlined in Chapter 3. A survey of experiences
with farmers markets in Vancouver, BC, Seattle, WA, and Portland, OR, involving document analysis and interviews with planners and farmers market proponents in each city, was completed. Analysis of interview transcriptions and notes, as well as documents, was performed through a process of item-level analysis to identify roles for planners. Ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring informed consent and respecting the confidentiality of the participants. Validity and reliability were addressed by employing triangulation and maintaining an audit trail. The next chapter summarizes the findings from this study on the roles of planners in supporting the establishment, operation and expansion of farmers markets.
CHAPTER 6. FINDINGS ON THE ROLES OF PLANNERS IN SUPPORTING FARMERS MARKETS

6.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present my findings on the roles that local government planners play, and could play, in supporting the establishment, operation and expansion of farmers markets. These findings are based on interviews with planners and market proponents, and analysis of planning documents, from Vancouver, BC, Seattle, WA, and Portland, OR. Findings on the roles of planners are grouped according to five major themes: 1) policy making and regulatory functions; 2) land use planning and urban design; 3) site planning; 4) administrative roles, and; 5) facilitative roles. In addition to roles for planners grouped under these five themes, two other proposed roles that emerged from the interviews are also discussed, including: 1) addressing affordability, and 2) connecting planning for farmers markets to a broader food system planning agenda. Under each of these categories, I include both existing and proposed roles for planners, as identified in interviews\(^2\) and documents. I also discuss the issues that these interventions are intended to address. Where differences between the responses of planners and market proponents were apparent, I have noted these. As a preface to these findings, I provide a brief profile of the farmers markets in the three cities studied.

\(^2\) To distinguish responses from farmers market proponents and planners in the findings, farmers market proponents are referred to as A1, A2, etc., and planners are cited as B1, B2, etc.
6.2. Profile of Farmers Markets in Vancouver, Seattle, and Portland

The farmers market associations operating multiple markets in Vancouver, Seattle and Portland are all non-profit organizations. In Vancouver, Your Local Farmers Market Society (YLFMS) operates three neighbourhood farmers markets. In Seattle, the Neighbourhood Farmers Market Alliance operates six farmers markets. Three markets are operated by the Portland Farmers Market.

In all three cities, these farmers markets are temporary, occurring once per week, and involving complete set-up and take down each day. They are also seasonal, running between four and nine months of the year. As well, the markets are located different types of sites. In Vancouver, two markets are situated in the parking lots of neighbourhood parks, and one market takes place on the street adjacent to a neighbourhood park. Seattle Neighbourhood Farmers Market sites include private parking lots, park land, and School District land. Portland Farmers Market has two markets on park land and one on a private parking lot belonging to a non-profit, environmental organization.

Each of the non-profit organizations running the markets is dedicated to supporting local producers and processors, as evidenced by their mission statements. The mission of Your Local Farmers Market Society in Vancouver is “to foster community health and local economic development through the creation of a venue where community members have greater access to safe, healthy, locally produced, environmentally friendly food, and where BC producers can market their goods directly to urban consumers (YLFMS, 2004).” Similarly, the mission of the Neighbourhood Farmers Market Alliance (NFMA) in Seattle is “to support Washington’s small farms and farming families by providing effective direct sales sites for our region’s small farmers, and by educating consumers about farm products and the benefits of buying direct from local farmers (NFMA, 2005).” Finally, the mission of Portland Farmers Market is “to support
the region’s farms and to build community (Portland Farmers Market, 2005).”

Regulations regarding products for sale are also similar at each market. Permitted items for sale in Seattle include fresh farm foods, processed farm products, fish products, baked goods, flowers and nursery stock from Washington State vendors. Portland Farmers Market has similar requirements, except that vendors from both Oregon and Washington are accepted. Vancouver’s markets differ slightly in that crafters are also given space to sell. However, the majority of stall spaces are reserved for food sales. Additional activities taking place at the markets in the three cities include live music, booth displays by non-profit organizations, and children’s activities. As well, Portland and Seattle have cooking demonstrations. Overall, while there are slight differences between the markets in Vancouver, Seattle and Portland, they are similar in that they are all seasonal, temporary markets run by non-profit organizations on a variety of sites, with the primary aim of supporting local, small scale food producers and processors.

6.3. Roles for Planners

6.3.1. Policy Making and Regulatory Functions

Several roles for planners emerged under the category of policy-making and regulatory functions, including: 1) addressing zoning and permitting issues; 2) policy development and implementation; and 3) addressing issues with health regulations. These roles will be elaborated upon in the following three sections.
6.3.1.1. Addressing Zoning and Permitting Issues

Farmers market organizations become tenants under various land owners (e.g. the Park Board, the School Board, private landowners). These sites have different zoning laws and permits governing their use, which affect whether or not markets are legally allowed to operate. Table 6.1 summarizes the relevant zoning and permitting arrangements for different types of sites in Vancouver, Seattle and Portland.

Interviewees discussed a number of ways in which challenges with zoning and permitting have played out in each city. A market proponent in Vancouver commented that zoning restrictions prohibiting mobile vending on private property forced market organizers to relocate the first market established several years after it began. Existing zoning also limits the possibilities for new market sites (A1). A Portland planner noted that farmers markets on private property currently operate ‘under the radar’ - without permits, and in some cases without appropriate zoning. Markets on park and school property typically operate under temporary use regulations. However, because markets exceed the time limits outlined for temporary uses, complaints about the markets could trigger enforcement of these regulations and place these markets at risk of closure as well (B4). In Seattle, although it is possible to obtain a special event permit to operate legally on both private and public property, market proponents noted that applying for this permit is a cumbersome and expensive process (A3, A4). Additionally, market proponents in all three cities described having difficulty navigating the City bureaucracies in order to understand zoning restrictions and/or obtain appropriate permits for the markets (A1, A3, A4, A5). Long term security was also identified as an issue by market proponents in the three cities, as well as one planner, since these situations do not provide any assurance that the farmers markets will be able to occupy existing sites over the long term (A1, A3, A4, A5, B5).
Table 6.1. Zoning and Permitting Arrangements for Farmers Markets on Different Sites in Vancouver, Seattle and Portland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private Property</th>
<th>Park land</th>
<th>School property</th>
<th>Streets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vancouver</strong></td>
<td>Prohibited by street vending by-law, unless explicitly included as a permitted use in zoning by-law (currently no private properties are zoned for farmers markets).</td>
<td>Permitted through Park Board special event permit.</td>
<td>Schools are located in various zones. The RM-5A zone permits farmers markets as a conditional use (subject to the approval of the Development Permit Board). This zone applies to only one property in the City.</td>
<td>Permitted by special event permit issued by Engineering Services (streets are not zoned).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seattle</strong></td>
<td>Permitted through special event permit.</td>
<td>Permitted through special event permit.</td>
<td>Permitted through special event permit.</td>
<td>Permitted through special event permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portland</strong></td>
<td>Commercial zoning allows for markets; residential zoning does not.</td>
<td>Permitted as a temporary use through Park Board special event permit. However, markets contradict the definition of “temporary use” in the zoning code.</td>
<td>Schools are located in various zones. Zoning allows for markets as a temporary use on some school sites, but school policy prohibits commercial activity.</td>
<td>Permitted through Department of Transportation permit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planners and planning agencies have been involved in addressing these zoning and permitting issues in a number of ways in each city. In Vancouver, City staff conducted a rezoning process, resulting in an amendment to the zoning by-law to allow a farmers market to operate on a school site (Thomsett, 2001). Prior to the rezoning, the market had been operating under a by-law relaxation granted by City Council. This by-law relaxation presented a legal
issue for the City, due to the fact that the Vancouver Charter (the Act through which the Provincial government delegates authority to the City) does not permit Council to approve land uses that are not stated in the zoning by-laws (B1). Thus, the rezoning resolved legal issues for both the market organizers and the City³.

Vancouver Park Board staff members also addressed zoning and permitting issues by completing an assessment, at the request of market organizers, to determine whether a farmers market could be established on park land (Recreation Division, 1997). After concluding that the market did not trigger a zoning issue, they decided that it would be possible to issue a special event permit to hold the market on a weekly basis, a solution that one staff member said “might be a bit of a stretch, because a special event is usually a one time event, but it kind of fit (B2).” Two of Vancouver’s markets currently operate on park land under such special event permits, which are renewed annually.

Despite this involvement of City staff members in zoning and permitting issues, zoning still requires further attention from planners, according to one Vancouver market proponent, because it limits opportunities for future expansion of the markets to new sites. Long term security of the markets could also still be at risk if someone were to challenge the fact that the markets are actually recurring, regular events (not temporary, special events, for which the special event permit was designed). However, this same market proponent commented that this is unlikely to occur, due to the strength of the community support behind the markets (A1).

In order to address zoning issues in Portland, one planner recently completed a zoning code analysis for farmers markets, at the request of the Portland-Multnomah Food Policy Council. This analysis identified all the ways in which the Portland Zoning Code affects the location of farmers markets and their continuation over time, and recommended changes that

³ However, this market later ceased to operate on the school site for other reasons not related to the zoning.
would create consistency in the code in order to provide greater stability for the markets. Because of existing regulations, markets on school and park property could be at risk of being shut down in response to complaints. Although temporary use permits exist for these sites, the definition of temporary activities is inconsistent with the regularity of farmers markets, and thus the existence of the markets under this designation could be challenged. Although specific action on the recommendations from the zoning code analysis has not yet been taken, a Portland planner stated that many of these changes will be taken care of through a larger Bureau of Planning project to resolve discrepancies in the code (B4).

With respect to permitting, Portland’s farmers markets also obtain special event permits in order to operate on Park Property. While the special event permit allows markets to occur legally on park sites, a Portland market proponent commented that the market had nevertheless experienced difficulty operating on park property because other activities with priority for park use forced them to cancel some markets. After much negotiation over the years, the Portland Farmers Market and Parks Department recently agreed upon a five-year contract which outlines the rental fee, and secures the times and dates that the market will be operating. Now proceeding to City Council, this agreement offers greater long term security for these markets (A5).

In addition to this contract, many other permits are required for markets in Portland (for noise, fire, street closures, etc.), which have to be approved by the police and the neighbourhood associations. Because of the time and effort required to obtain all these permits, a market proponent claimed that streamlining this process would greatly assist the market organizers (A5).

The situation with permits in Seattle is unique among the three cities. In 2001, the City revised its special event permit process to incorporate permitting for events, such as farmers markets, taking place on public or private land (City of Seattle, 2001). When in place, this permit protects the liability of both the event organizers and the City. According to market
proponents, however, this permit offers only partial resolution to the problem of legal market operation. Market proponents stated that the existing permitting process is expensive ($375 per market per season) and time consuming, as it requires documentation of parking impacts and neighbourhood impacts, as well as preparation of architectural drawings (A3, A4). As a result, the market organizers don’t apply for permits if no one from the City contacts them. They simply set up the markets and accept the risk that complaints about the markets could jeopardize their ability to operate. In light of this situation, Seattle market proponents commented that help with permitting would be a desirable role for a government agency (A3, A4). Permitting addresses only one aspect of security, however, particularly for markets located on private property that exist “at the grace of the landlord (A4).” On these private sites, each market has a different lease agreement, or lack thereof (A4). Thus, although permitting is in place to enable markets to operate legally on different types of sites, the issue of long term security for the markets has still not been resolved. This situation prompted one market proponent to comment: “that might be [the City’s] best sponsorship role, is to secure your location somehow, on their own land or... at least have them be that advocate for you in that respect, either find you a home or secure it in some way (A3).”

Several planners discussed next steps in addressing zoning and permitting issues. Commenting on several problematic aspects of the zoning issue, a Vancouver City staff member stated that by legitimizing farmers markets in a city-wide zone, numerous properties throughout the city would then become possible sites for farmers markets, which would limit the City’s control over the location of markets (B1). He proposed that one way of addressing this is by including a conditional use permit as part of the zoning, with guidelines adopted by Council to be followed when approving permits. However, the creation of suitable guidelines is problematic, according to this planner, due to the difficulty of defining farmers markets (e.g. to
distinguish them from flea markets, which are considered undesirable by the City), and the fact that the City cannot dictate who is allowed to operate the market in the zoning (i.e. the City is not legally permitted to require that the markets be run by a non-profit organization). Thus, the issue of addressing zoning for farmers markets remains unresolved in Vancouver.

Similarly, a Portland planner also discussed the difficulty of defining farmers markets in a way that provides security to the markets without being too legalistic (i.e. to allow for flexibility in how they operate) (B4). Another Portland planner commented that one approach is to ignore the zoning issue for the time being, because there have not been any complaints to generate problems (B5). Planners in Portland and Vancouver noted that examples are needed from other cities in order to determine the best approach to the zoning and permitting issues, but that they do not have time to carry out this research themselves (B1, B4).

In conclusion, City planners and other staff members have been involved in addressing zoning and permitting in a number of ways in each of the three cities -- through a zoning code analysis, a re-zoning process, and by adapting special event permits to accommodate farmers markets. However, this involvement has not yet fully resolved the issues of long term security and expansion to new sites for farmers markets, nor revealed an approach that completely satisfies the interests of both the market organizers and the City in any of the three locations. Zoning and permitting issues are particularly complex because they are site-specific; they differ based on the type of property in question, as well as the legislative context in each city. In light of this situation, planners have a continued role in seeking creative solutions to zoning and permitting regulations in order to confer greater permanence and stability on the markets. The longer term contract recently established between the Portland Farmers Market and the Parks Department represents one example of progress toward such security. Based on responses from market proponents, a second role for planners in addressing zoning and permitting issues is to
assist farmers market organizations with existing permit application process, and work to streamline this process.

6.3.1.2. Policy Development and Implementation

In addition to zoning laws and permits, broader policies can also affect whether markets are permissible on particular sites, and can create opportunities for planners to take action to support farmers markets. Neither the document analysis nor the interviews revealed specific policies on farmers markets in Vancouver, Seattle, or Portland. However, planners and market proponents in each city commented on the ways in which other, broader policies have presented, and could present, both opportunities and barriers for farmers markets.

In Vancouver, with respect to establishing a market on school property, a market proponent noted that School Board policy initially presented a barrier. School Board policy allows community organizations to use school sites for educational activities. However, one market proponent claimed:

*When I tried to argue that this [farmers market] was education, they didn’t buy it because education is considered curriculum education – K-12, right. So the fact that this is life long learning doesn’t fit within the mandate of the school board (A1).*

As a result, market organizers had to apply for a by-law relaxation in order to establish the market. In light of this, the market proponent stated: “I think the schools need to have a mandate that this [hosting farmers markets on school sites] is part of their community work (A1).”

On Park property, however, policy was perceived to be more supportive of farmers markets by both a market proponent and planner interviewed. The market proponent commented that the Park Board mandate of providing recreation had been stretched to accommodate farmers markets (A1). Rather than perceiving this to be a stretch, a City staff member claimed that
farmers markets dovetail smoothly into existing park policy, stating:

*Well, if you were to look at our strategic plan, without being able to quote it, I think it fits into the area of providing opportunities for the public to recreate....So, I think it fits in with our overall mission statement and our strategic plan really nicely. It's a very positive, healthy opportunity for the public for sure. And I think, I mean, health and wellness is a big part of our mandate, and so you know, fresh food and meeting other people, it all kind of fits in very nicely (B2).*

There is additional potential for planners to support farmers markets through implementation of the City's new food policy agenda, according to one market proponent, who notes:

*I think the fact that Council passed a motion to create a just and sustainable food system on its own says to me that City staff has a responsibility to take that into consideration when making choices, making decisions about events or projects or programs in the City (A1).*

One of the action items within this food policy agenda is to “seek creative ways to increase the quality and number of farmers' markets in Vancouver” by carefully reviewing zoning and health regulations (Mendes, 2003). Although this action item has not yet been implemented, the mandate does give staff the direction and justification to take such action. However, rather than pursuing this action item with further policy creation, a Vancouver market proponent stated, “I hesitate real policy, even though there may be times that it is needed (A1).” Instead, this market proponent favoured other, creative solutions to address market challenges in order to avoid the lengthy process of policy development.

Seattle market proponents claimed that there is a lack of comprehension of farmers markets in policy-making in this city. One market proponent stated:

*Nobody's really looking out for farmers markets at a policy level, at a governmental level, or at a university level...People just don't think of farmers markets when they're thinking about policy (A4).*

In light of this situation, another Seattle market proponent proposed that one role for the City would be to alter policy so that farmers markets become a legitimate use of open and recreational
space, creating the potential for a long term arrangement between the farmers market association and the Department of Parks and Recreation (A3).

In Portland, references to policy related to farmers markets appeared in a 2003 report to City Council, in which the Portland-Multnomah Food Policy Council recommended that the City facilitate the establishment of a network of farmers markets throughout the City (Portland-Multnomah Food Policy Council, 2003). Although these recommendations have not translated into official City policy as of yet, planning for farmers markets is being included in a broader town centre development initiative, which will be discussed in section 6.3.2 of this chapter. Portland planners differed in their opinions on the need for policy development to support farmers markets. One Portland planner commented that it would be a good idea to work on including farmers markets in the City’s comprehensive plan, while the other maintained that it is too early to codify farmers markets (B4, B5). A Portland market proponent, however, did propose policy change as one role for local government in supporting farmers markets. She commented that School Board policy makes schools off limits for commercial activity (although Coca Cola can sell products within the schools), and that she would like to see schools available for use by farmers markets (A5).

In summary, while policy specific to farmers markets was not apparent in the three cities studied, both market proponents and planners see opportunities for support of farmers markets through interpretation and expansion of existing, related policies. These responses suggest that one important role for the food system planner is to point out and capitalize on synergies between existing policies and the actions needed to support farmers markets. Based on market proponents’ interest in using school sites for markets, and in using policy to support long term tenancy with the Parks Department, a second potential role for the food system planner is to explore the possibility of expanding existing policies where needed in order to accommodate
6.3.1.3. Addressing Issues with Health Regulations

Health regulations can impact the success of farmers markets because they affect the range of products that markets are permitted to sell. Experiences with health regulations ranged between Vancouver, Seattle and Portland. Market proponents in Seattle and Vancouver both discussed difficulties with health regulations that restrict the types of goods that can be sold at markets, whereas the Portland market proponent indicated that all desired food items were permitted for sale.

Vancouver markets face the greatest restrictions on sales due to health regulations. Originally, the City’s regulations on mobile vending restricted the sale of any goods except produce. Frustrated with the lack of movement by health officials to amend the guidelines, market organizers resorted to breaking the rules and selling meat illegally in order to get officials to meet and discuss this issue with them (A1). This led to a 1999 decision by City Council, at the recommendation of the Environmental Health department, to expand the list of permitted item to include pre-packaged, refrigerated or frozen meat products and cheeses (Losito, 1999). The sale of poultry, however, is still prohibited. Market proponents would like to be able to sell meat out of refrigerated trucks with butcher shop type counters installed in them. However, health regulations prohibit this as well (A2). Market proponents would also like to be able to sell hot, prepared foods (A1, A2). However, none of the market sites have adequate provision of power or water to meet health regulations for the sale of prepared foods (A1, A2). Vancouver’s markets strive to provide a complete spectrum of food products, so that customers can purchase everything that they need at the market (A2). However, health regulations limit the markets’
ability to achieve this. Because of this, one Vancouver market proponent indicated that assistance in overcoming these barriers would be a valuable role for planners (A2).

Market proponents in Seattle also spoke of having difficulty getting Health Department staff to come to the table to talk with them about health regulations. Initially, meat, poultry and eggs were not permitted for sale. Eventually, markets were placed under the Health Department's mobile unit code, and the guidelines were re-written to permit the sale of meat, poultry, eggs, cheese and yogurt. Vendors are charged a fee for a permit to sell these items at any market in the region. Market proponents commented that this permit was initially very expensive, but that the price has been reduced after many meetings with health officials, and careful monitoring of vendor food displays by market managers to ensure food safety (A3, A4).

In Portland, a market proponent commented that vendors can sell everything that they want to, including meat, dairy, prepared foods and wine. Temporary restaurant permits also allow for cooking demonstrations and wine tasting. Additionally, because they are a non-profit organization, the farmers market association is not charged for this permit (A5).

In each city, only market proponents commented on health regulations. The planners interviewed did not have direct experience with this issue. Health regulations fall under the jurisdiction of a regional health authority in Vancouver, and county health boards in Seattle and Portland. No direct roles for planners in addressing health regulations were discussed in interviews, or identified in documents. However, no interviews were conducted with health department staff in any of the three cities. Given that market proponents in both Vancouver and Seattle remarked on having difficulty getting health officials to come to the table, a potential role for the food system planner is to facilitate the interaction between the health department and farmers markets. This liaison role will be discussed further under the theme of facilitative roles for planners in section 6.3.5 of this chapter.
6.3.2. Land Use Planning / Urban Design

Another role for planners in supporting farmers markets is by integrating markets into land use planning and urban design. This has been pursued and implemented in Vancouver, Seattle and Portland in different ways, and to varying degrees.

In Vancouver, farmers markets are being included in redevelopment plans at two market sites, and potentially at a third. In all cases, the redevelopments involve improvements to the parks that the markets are located on or adjacent to. Market proponents have been included as stakeholders in each of these redevelopment planning processes (A1, A2). On one site, a permanent structure for the market has been included in the Master Plan for the redevelopment (Vancouver Park Board, 2005). Planning for the other sites is still underway, but the potential exists for permanent structures to be constructed at these locations as well. Although redevelopment presents opportunities for the markets, a concern of one market proponent is that the construction phase may disrupt market operation for a time (A1).

In Seattle, planners have supported farmers markets by implementing existing neighbourhood plans that include markets in their vision. One market proponent commented on this, stating:

*All the different neighbourhoods in the City have a neighbourhood plan that was put together by the community quite a number of years ago, and most neighbourhood plans have a farmers market in their vision. So the City has been able to help neighbourhoods fulfill their vision by working with us to work with the neighbourhoods. So that’s been a good partnership (A4).*

In Portland, planning for farmers markets is being included within a broader town centre development initiative, spearheaded by the Office of Sustainable Development. The purpose of this initiative is to:

*...support investment in urban centres as a means to manage growth, provide catalysts for*
private investment, encourage a sense of community among residents, and fulfill goals for successful land use management in the region (Portland Planning Commission, 2005).

These proposed sites for town centres have already been designated through the Portland Metro’s 2040 Growth Concept. Included in this town centre proposal is the creation of public plazas that include amenities for farmers markets. Roles of planners in this initiative include educating citizens, public officials, and other public servants about the concept of town centres, and advocating for their creation. As an example of this, one planner interviewed hosted two “brown bag seminars” to encourage individuals involved in public places and local government officials to think about how to design public places to accommodate farmers markets (B5).

In summary, these findings suggest that planners have the opportunity to support farmers markets through their role in land use planning and urban design in several ways. They can capitalize on redevelopment opportunities to integrate improvements that will benefit markets. They can also incorporate amenities for farmers markets into the design of public places. As well, they can respond to community visions by implementing neighbourhood plans that include farmers markets. More specifically, planners may be able to fulfill these roles by including farmers market representatives as stakeholders in redevelopment processes for market sites on public land; educating urban design professionals, public officials, and citizens about designing public places for markets, and; advocating for the implementation of such re-designs.

6.3.3. Site Planning

Several roles for planners and planning agencies emerged under the theme of site planning. One key, proposed role is facilitating the construction of public infrastructure to be used by farmers markets (i.e. permanent, covered structures). A second, potential role for
planners is liaising with other City departments to address the provision of amenities and services for the markets, and to address accessibility issues (particularly parking).

Construction of infrastructure on public property was discussed as a role for local government by market proponents in all three cities, and by one planner in Portland. None of the three cities has infrastructure for the markets (most markets take place in barren parking lots). In Vancouver, the desired infrastructure was described as a multi-use, covered structure with stall spaces for vendors, and with truck access at the rear of each stall (A1, A2). Such facilities would serve the markets on market days, but also provide covered areas for picnics or other events on non-market days. One market proponent referred to the example of Davis, CA, where a covered structure of this type was constructed for the farmers market through the redevelopment of the public park where the market had been operating for a number of years (A1). Market proponents in Seattle and Portland, as well as a Portland planner, also expressed a desire to have covered structures in place for the markets (A3, A4, B5). Seattle market proponents noted that such a shelter would extend the season of the markets, thereby increasing revenues (A3, A4).

Additional amenities and services listed by market proponents as valuable to market success include washrooms, water fountains, electricity, water, children's play areas, seating, garbage collection, and shade-providing trees (A1, A2, A3, A4). Many of these amenities were also discussed by participants in the Portland brown bag seminar on public space and farmers markets referred to in the previous section, as recorded in the minutes from this meeting (Portland Office of Sustainable Development, 2004).

Different arrangements exist for fulfilling these requirements in each city. Some sites offer these amenities, while others do not. Some services are provided by the landowner or the City, while others are contracted and paid for by the market organizers. Ensuring that these services are in place can create tension between the City and the market. For example, in
Vancouver, garbage generated by the markets has been an issue. As an example of collaboration between the City and market organizers, this issue was resolved at one site by changing the garbage pickup times to 5 am, so that garbage would be removed before the opening of the market, thus preventing an overflow of on-site collection capacity (A2). Although planners are not directly responsible for services of this nature, this experience suggests that one potentially supportive role for planners is liaising with appropriate departments to ensure that the necessary amenities and services are in place for farmers markets, where these are lacking, or when new market sites are being selected.

Planners also have a potential role to play in addressing site accessibility (particularly parking). Parking is an important issue in all three cities, affecting both market proponents and landowners, particularly when parking space is in short supply. Parking issues have created conflict with neighbours, and other users of the market sites. Lack of parking may also limit the success of the market. In reference to one market with limited parking, a Seattle market proponent commented:

*When I say that market shopping is sort of at capacity, part of it is just that issue right there. It’s not easy to park. You’re open for four hours on a Thursday. I mean, you go right down the list. You either make an effort to get there or you go to a grocery store at night (A3).*

Interaction between market organizers and City departments over parking has created tension, and also led to collaborative solutions. For example, in Vancouver, market organizers have worked closely with park staff at two locations to address parking issues with site-specific, creative solutions (A1, A2, B2). At a third site, market organizers faced a recurring problem when they arrived in the morning to find cars parked in stalls where the market operates. Drivers were not obeying the existing no parking signs, likely because they were too small and difficult to read. These issues were resolved through collaboration between the market and the Engineering Department, whereby the City paid for and installed larger no parking signs to warn
drivers of the market’s presence. Additional involvement with physical logistics, such as road closures in the case of markets located on streets, is desired by Vancouver market proponents (A2). Again, while planners are not directly responsible for such logistics, one potential role for planners is to liaise with the appropriate departments to address these issues.

In summary, these examples suggest two central ways in which planners could address site planning for farmers markets. First, planners could facilitate interaction between farmers market organizations and appropriate City departments to ensure that the necessary amenities and services are in place for farmers markets, where these are lacking, or when new market sites are being selected. Additionally, planners could facilitate the construction of covered structures for farmers markets.

6.3.4. Administrative Roles

Two main roles for planners emerged under the theme of administrative roles to support farmers markets. These included leveraging and administering funding, as well as advertising. Direct administration of markets by the City was not perceived to be a desired role for local government in any of the three cities.

Funding for farmers markets was identified by market proponents for several reasons. As non-profit organizations, markets depend on limited sources of revenue (vendor fees and fundraising, primarily). Permit fees, portable toilet rentals, and other such expenditures, can present significant cost to markets, especially as they strive to keep vendor fees affordable.

Vancouver, Seattle and Portland had a range of experiences with funding. According to a planner and market proponent in Portland, the City does not yet provide funding in any form to the markets (A5, B5). One planner commented that part of the reason for this is that farmers
markets are a different type of community development than the City currently thinks about (B5).

Similarly, in Vancouver, virtually no funding has been provided by the City. One market proponent commented that fees for permits have been reduced and waived on occasion, providing one form of minimal funding to the markets, and that it is also possible for the markets to apply for small community grants of $5-10,000 (A1). In light of this situation, another market proponent stated that financial support is a critical, desired role for the City, and proposed that this funding take the form of a small contingency fund for handling issues that come up with new markets (e.g. paying for ‘no parking’ signs, road barricades, etc.) (A2).

In Seattle, funding has been provided to farmers markets by the City’s Office of Economic Development. The Office of Economic Development administers Community Development Block Grants that originate from a federal funding source, which has to be used for low-income neighbourhoods. Start-up funding for one market was provided through this grant. Start-up funding for another market was obtained through the Department of Neighbourhoods’ matching grant program. The Office of Economic Development also funded the creation of a feasibility plan to explore different growth models for the markets. This money facilitated the formation of the Neighbourhood Farmers Market Alliance (B3). In reference to the funding situation, one Seattle market proponent stated:

With each market, we've been able to find either a grant, or the City has – because the neighbourhood has fit within their criteria for low income neighbourhoods they can get federal government money, and give that to us. So, we've been lucky, although we sure don't – we're not aware of anything on the horizon (A4).

Market proponents also remarked that the percentage of funding received from the City decreases annually, and expressed some doubt as to whether the markets would attain an adequate degree of self-sufficiency as funding declines (A3, A4).
In addition to leveraging and administering funding, one additional administrative role for planners that emerged in Vancouver was advertising. A Vancouver market proponent expressed desire for City involvement in advertising the markets through several means, including: 1) permanent (seasonal) signs posted on throughfare streets leading to the markets; 2) highway signs listing the markets as an attraction; 3) seasonal banners on lamp posts that advertise the farmers markets; 4) collaboration with tourism agencies to promote the markets as a destination; 5) subsidizing the cost of flyers; 6) inclusion of the markets in the City’s event promotion activities, and; 7) waivers allowing permanent signs advertising the markets to be posted on market sites and nearby streets (at present there are fines for leaving signs up on park sites and boulevards) (A2). Only Vancouver market proponents expressed a desire for assistance with advertising from the City. Market proponents in Seattle and Portland remarked that they had found other avenues for advertising (A3, A4, A5).

These responses indicate that leveraging and administering funding, as well as assisting with advertising, are two additional roles for planners in supporting farmers markets. However, the degree of need for funding and advertising from the City is related to the resources available to the market association from other sources. These two roles for planners are therefore highly context specific.

6.3.5. Facilitative Roles

A number of actions for planners to take in supporting farmers markets emerged under the theme of facilitative roles. These facilitative roles ranged in their level of direct involvement of planners with farmers market organizations. Less involved, facilitative roles include such activities as communicating among stakeholders, conducting community consultation, carrying
out research, and responding to complaints. Facilitative roles reflecting an intermediary level of involvement included raising awareness and educating multiple audiences about farmers markets; advocating for farmers markets within the City and the community, and; building relationships with farmers market associations. Facilitative roles with a high level of involvement included establishing formal partnerships with farmers market associations, as well as designating a City staff person to work directly with farmers market organizations, and to coordinate work on farmers markets within the City. These highly involved, facilitative roles did not yet exist in any of the three cities.

Farmers market proponents and City staff members differed in their perception of the desired level of involvement of planners in farmers markets. Farmers market proponents proposed a greater level of involvement by planners, whereas City staff members’ perceptions on the appropriate level of involvement ranged from relatively hands-off to highly involved.

6.3.5.1. Less-involved Facilitative Roles

Various examples of the first set of facilitative roles for planners, which include community consultation, communication among stakeholders, research, and responding to complaints, emerged among the three cities. One City of Vancouver staff member commented on carrying out a community consultation processes before a new market was established. This consultation process involved surveying community opinion on the proposed market and delivering the results of this survey to decision-makers with a recommendation to allow the market to go forward, based on positive community feedback. Establishing this market also involved communicating and coordinating among the multiple users of the park where the new market was sited. In another instance, expansion of market hours to include an additional day of
the week was rejected based on community consultation (B2).

Conducting research is another facilitative role for planners, and one that has been either carried out or sponsored by City staff and agencies in all three cities as one component of their involvement with farmers markets. A Vancouver market proponent proposed that one further, desired research activity by the City would be to complete a feasibility study to determine the best location for a new market (B2).

In addition to research, one other role identified for planners is responding to complaints about the markets when they occur. Although complaints were not identified as an issue in Vancouver or Portland, a Seattle market proponent commented that, in response to complaints about garbage, parking, and noise, “the city has been very supportive of us and sort of guided us on what we need to do to make sure they have what they need to do to try to appease that person (A4).” Responding to complaints, performing research, conducting community consultation and communicating among stakeholders are four actions representing the less-involved end of the spectrum of facilitative roles for planners.

6.3.5.2. Intermediate Facilitative Roles

Facilitative roles representing intermediate levels of involvement include actively raising awareness about and advocating for farmers markets, as well as establishing working relationships with market organizers. Planners demonstrated these intermediary roles in a variety of instances in each city.

Raising awareness was identified as an important role for planners by both market proponents and City staff members. Market proponents commented on the challenges they had faced in battling misconceptions about farmers markets. As one Seattle market proponent stated:
...these were farmers markets and they needed to be looked at as legitimate economic incubators – that they were supporting small scale farmers; that this was a business. I don't know what people were thinking. I think they were thinking, well, what a cute little country fair with balloons (A3).

A Vancouver market proponent also noted the educational effort required during establishment of the first market in this city, in order to allay people's fears that the farmers market would become a flea market (A1). A Portland market proponent noted that, at first, the markets were contentious, but through efforts to raise awareness about the purpose of the markets, relations with the City had greatly improved (A5). A Portland planner and market proponent both commented that the work of the Food Policy Council had been instrumental in raising awareness (A5, B5).

Several educational roles for planners were referred to in interviews. Educating City staff internally about the markets was identified as a valuable role for planners by one Vancouver market proponent, who described asking a planner to explain the City's motion to support a just and sustainable food system to another City employee, in order to obtain a fee reduction for an expensive permit. This internal communication successfully resulted in support for the market (A1). Educating the business community about the fact that farmers markets have a positive economic impact on surrounding businesses was also identified as an important action that planners could take (A1, B5). On the flipside of education carried out solely on behalf of the markets, a Vancouver City staff member also noted the importance of educating farmers market organizers on issues relevant to the City, such as dealing with parking problems on site (B2). These examples suggest that planners have a valuable role to play in educating multiple audiences, including their colleagues, the public, and market organizers, on issues pertinent to farmers markets.

In addition to education, advocacy is another means through which planners can support
farmers markets. A Vancouver farmers market proponent commented on the important advocacy role played by a City staff member, who:

...already had a working relationship with me, had respect for what we were doing and felt that we were quite responsible, and could speak on our behalf to the community... [and who] helped me go through the steps of getting the community on board, and getting the park board [on board](A1)...

Planners in Seattle and Portland also described their role as one of advocacy in different situations, such as in advocating for permit fee reductions for the markets, and advocating for design of public places to accommodate farmers markets (i.e. the town centre development described in section 6.3.2) (B3, B5).

In addition to advocacy, both planners and farmers market proponents, particularly in Vancouver and Portland, emphasized the importance of building relationships. For example, a Vancouver City staff member involved directly with the markets commented that:

...communication is really important... you have to have good relationships, and you have to be able to talk about things, and you have to be forthright (B2).

A Portland market proponent also noted that working hard to establish relationships with City officials and staff had alleviated initial difficulties in this interaction (A5). Based on these examples, it is clear that intermediary, facilitative roles, such as educating and raising awareness, advocating for farmers markets, and building effective relationships with market organizers, can be important forms of planner support for farmers markets.

6.3.5.3. Highly-involved facilitative roles

In addition to these intermediary roles, facilitative roles reflecting a higher level of involvement were proposed by market proponents in all three cities, as well as by one Portland planner. Interviewees described these roles in slightly different ways, but each description
reflected interest in greater involvement of City staff with farmers markets. A Seattle market proponent described this desired situation as “an agency that has our interests as one of its priorities. Because I think we go to bat for ourselves all the time (A4). Another Seattle market proponent stated:

_We’ve created our own little monster in a way. People look at us and say, ok they’re doing what they do pretty well. And we’re saying, wait a minute. You’re not looking at farmers markets at all. So they run after the hole that’s not filled, to rationalize their work. I wish they would look at farmers markets and work with us, because farmers markets truly are grabbing a small percentage, but it’s a consistent percentage, of the food dollar. And they’re gaining recognition. More people are making that choice to shop at a farmers market, or shop locally, or shop with a local farmer, whatever. I’m wishing that we were partnered more than we are (A3)._

Similarly, a Vancouver market proponent commented that it would be valuable to have a staff person in the City who has farmers markets as part of her/his portfolio, to assist with cutting through the ‘red tape’ when establishing new markets and operating existing markets (A2). As well, a Portland planner and market proponent both expressed interest in having a coordinator, housed in the City’s Office of Sustainable Development, who would work on farmers market issues, and help to streamline the bureaucratic process involved in establishing and operating markets (for example, improving access to required permits) (A5, B5).

With the exception of this Portland planner, most City staff members did not propose highly involved, facilitative role for planners. Rather, one Seattle City staff member commented that the markets are good at doing what they need to do, and thus, beyond sitting at the occasional Board meeting, City staff members do not have a role in direct involvement with the markets (B3). As well, a Vancouver City staff member involved in rezoning commented that his role was a technical and neutral one, not one of advocating for or against a particular initiative (B1).

These responses suggest that planners and planning agencies have a number of facilitative roles to play to support farmers markets, which range in their level of involvement.
Less involved facilitative roles include communicating among stakeholders, conducting community consultation, carrying out research, and responding to complaints. Intermediate roles include educating colleagues, the public, and market organizers about issues relevant to farmers markets, as well as advocating for farmers markets within the City and the community, and building relationships with market organizers. Highly-involved roles, proposed but not yet exemplified in any of the three cities studied, include forming partnerships with market organizations, and designating a staff person to work on market issues.

6.3.6. Addressing Affordability

A need to address affordability of the food sold at farmers markets was discussed by market proponents in Vancouver and Seattle, as well as a Portland planner. In reference to affordability of food at the farmers markets, a Vancouver market proponent commented:

*I always felt really funny about that. I can afford to buy there, and I do buy there, but it's not accessible for everybody. So, I guess that might be the other thing. How can we make local food accessible for everybody (A1)?*

Another Vancouver market proponent proposed that the City fund and administer a coupon program in order to make food more accessible to lower income individuals (A2). In Seattle and Portland, where federally-funded food stamp programs exist, assistance with logistical challenges and start-up costs was proposed. For example, a Seattle market proponent suggested that the City could cover the one time cost of purchasing the electronic devices required to accept food stamps, or cover the transaction costs, as a way to make it easier for the market to accept food stamps (A4). A Portland planner commented that markets are beginning to install the machines needed to accept food stamps, and that there is a role for the county and state to promote this to their clientele (B5). These responses suggest that there is a potential role for the
food system planner to address affordability of locally grown food, perhaps through the creation of coupon programs. However, opportunities to fulfill this role vary between the US cities included in this study and Vancouver, due to differences in the federal programs operating in the two countries.

6.3.7. Connecting Planning for Farmers Markets to a Food System Planning Agenda

In Vancouver and Portland, interviewees’ comments reflected a perception that farmers markets are only one element of what needs to be a broader strategy to support sustainable food systems. Reflecting on the City’s role in supporting farmers markets, one Vancouver market proponent stated:

... what can the City do to encourage the growth of farmers markets? I think from my perspective part of it is to raise awareness about the value of locally grown stuff, but I actually see it as bigger than that. And this is part of what we’re doing with urban agriculture. It’s not just locally grown. I think there’s a responsibility that we all try to grow for ourselves (A1).

A Portland planner also commented that the value of farmers markets is in more than their function as a sales outlet for local produce, but also in the educational role that they play in terms of helping people to understand food and agriculture (B5).

Market proponents in Vancouver and Portland both remarked on how their organizations are diversifying their activities to support sustainable food systems. A Vancouver market proponent mentioned that the mission of the farmers market organization had expanded to encompass not only markets, but also urban agriculture and food security education more broadly, as well as farm-to-school and farm-to-hospital programs, initiatives which dovetail nicely with the City’s new food policy agenda (A2). A Portland market proponent also noted that the organization’s strategic plan included, in addition to farmers markets, such initiatives as
farmer marketing cooperatives and farm-to-school direct purchasing (A5).

These comments reflect an awareness among interviewees that planning for farmers markets is only one initiative among many needed to support more sustainable food systems, and suggest that one potential role for the food system planner is to foster connections between planning for farmers markets and planning for sustainable food systems more broadly.

6.4. Summary

This chapter presented my findings on the roles of local government planners and planning agencies in supporting the establishment, operation and expansion of farmers markets. Roles for planners and planning agencies emerged under five major themes: 1) policy making and regulatory functions; 2) land use planning and urban design; 3) site planning; 4) administrative roles, and; 5) facilitative roles. In addition to roles for planners grouped under these five themes, two other proposed roles that emerged from the interviews were also discussed, including: 1) addressing affordability, and 2) connecting planning for farmers markets to a broader food system planning agenda.

Under the theme of policy making and regulatory functions, existing and proposed roles for planners included:

1. Seeking creative solutions to zoning and permitting issues in order to foster greater permanence and stability for farmers markets;
2. Capitalizing on synergies between existing policies and the actions needed to support farmers markets;
3. Facilitating the expansion of existing policies where needed to accommodate farmers markets, and;
4. Facilitating interaction between farmers market organizations and health authorities in order to address prohibitive health regulations.

Under the theme of land use planning and urban design, specific roles for planners included:

1. Capitalizing on redevelopment opportunities on public property to integrate improvements that will benefit markets;
2. Including farmers market proponents as stakeholders in redevelopment processes;
3. Implementing neighbourhood plans that include farmers markets, and;
4. Incorporating amenities for farmers markets into the design of public places.

Under the theme of site planning, specific roles for planners included:

1. Facilitating the construction of infrastructure for farmers markets, and;
2. Liaising between farmers market organizations and City departments to ensure that required services and amenities are in place for farmers markets.

Under the theme of administrative roles, specific roles for planners included:

1. Leveraging and administering funding, and;
2. Assisting with advertising.

Under the theme of facilitative roles, specific actions for planners included:

1. Communicating among stakeholders, conducting community consultation, carrying out research, and responding to complaints;
2. Educating colleagues, the public, and market organizers about issues relevant to farmers markets; advocating for farmers markets within the City and the community; and
building relationships with market associations;

3. Forming formal partnerships with market organizations, and designating a staff person to work on market issues.

Addressing issues around the affordability of food at farmers markets emerged as a potential role for planners requiring further exploration, as did connecting planning for farmers markets to a broader food system planning agenda.
CHAPTER 7. PLANNING FOR FARMERS MARKETS AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

7.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to further explore the findings in the previous chapter on the roles of planners in supporting farmers markets, and to situate these findings within the context of the emerging field of food system planning. I frame this discussion around what I feel has emerged to be an overarching theme in the findings, which is that many of the challenges in the relationship between local governments and farmers market proponents, as well as the roles for planners in addressing these issues, stem from a lack of recognition of farmers markets as a unique and legitimate use of public space and means of food distribution. This lack of recognition is evident in the challenges that farmers markets face around zoning, land use and health regulations, as well as in the lack of consideration of farmers markets in the design of public spaces. I suggest that this lack of recognition is symptomatic of the omission of food system considerations in planning practice more broadly.

Fundamentally, the roles for planners in supporting farmers markets involve facilitating a shift in perception through which farmers markets, as one key element of the food system, come to be recognized as deserving of enhancement through city planning. This perceptual shift can be facilitated through the integration of farmers markets into the existing functional areas of planning discussed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, I explore the relationship between planning for farmers markets and food system planning in greater depth, focusing on three areas of planner involvement in farmers markets: 1) the policy and regulatory sphere; 2) planning and design of public places, and; 3) facilitation and partnership formation.
7.2. Recognizing Farmers Markets – Recognizing Food Systems

One overarching theme that ties together many of the issues in the interaction between local governments and farmers markets, as well as the roles for planners in supporting markets, is that farmers markets are not recognized by local government officials and planning departments as a unique and legitimate use of public space and means of food distribution. This lack of recognition is apparent in policies, land use regulations and health by-laws, as well as in the design of, and planning for, public spaces. For example, in the three cities studied, as a result of the absence of specific zoning regulations for farmers markets, market proponents and planners have adapted regulations and permits for temporary uses and special events to accommodate markets. As I described in the previous chapter, this categorization of farmers markets as a temporary activity contradicts the fact that markets are recurring, regular events, and places their long term security at risk. A second example of the lack of recognition of markets in the regulatory sphere is the incompatibility of existing health regulations with the sale of food at farmers markets, a restriction which market proponents in two of the three cities studied have faced. Similarly, farmers markets are not integrated into the planning and design of public spaces. This is apparent in the lack of infrastructure, and the often incomplete provision of amenities, to accommodate markets in public spaces. In order to allow the markets to function, market organizers have conformed to the constraints of available sites, which are typically barren parking lots or streets.

The lack of recognition of farmers markets in land use planning and regulation is perhaps a symptom of the lack of recognition of the food system as a whole in municipal planning, as discussed in Chapter 3. As Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) point out:

...city planning agencies are at best only lightly involved in the food system arena. In most cases, when they do get involved, their role is reactive rather than proactive and piecemeal rather than comprehensive (p. 115).
Reflecting on the actions required to address this situation, Bouris (2004) comments that:

_The move from piecemeal food system-related planning activities to a comprehensive strategy of food system planning will...demand that the food system be made relevant to planners' roles and responsibilities on a philosophical level (p. 112)_

As one key element of the urban food system, farmers markets also need to attain a perceived relevance to planners roles and responsibilities, in order to garner support from planning departments and local governments.

The findings of this thesis demonstrate instances where a lack of awareness of the relevance of the food system inhibited support for farmers markets, and also where increased awareness benefited markets. For example, a Portland planner reasoned that the lack of municipal funding for farmers markets was due to the fact that they were a different kind of community development than the City currently thinks about. From this comment, it follows that funding currently allocated for this purpose might become available to farmers markets if the City were to recognize their community development function. Both a Portland market proponent and planner remarked that the receptiveness of the City to the idea of farmers markets had improved over time, in part due to the work of the Food Policy Council in raising awareness. A Vancouver market proponent also discussed the role of one planner in increasing support for the markets by educating staff internally about the City's food policy agenda. These examples underscore the role of food system planners in facilitating the perceptual shift required to enable their colleagues, the public, and elected officials to recognize farmers markets as a unique element of the public realm, and one that is worthy of the attention of planners and local governments.

Equally important in this perceptual shift is the understanding that planning for farmers markets is one element within a broader arena of food system planning. This systems
perspective of farmers markets goes hand in hand with making the shift from a piecemeal to a more comprehensive approach to food system planning. One aspect of a comprehensive approach to food system planning involves addressing sustainability issues in all sectors of the food system – from production, processing, and distribution through to consumption and disposal – and promoting interconnections between these sectors. Another aspect of comprehensive food system planning involves addressing multiple goals of sustainable food systems simultaneously.

For example, in cities where food policy is emerging in municipal government (including Vancouver and Portland), the goal of supporting farmers markets is nested within a range of initiatives spanning all sectors of the food system. This is evident in the City of Vancouver’s Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System (Mendes, 2003), and in policy recommendations from the Portland-Multnomah Food Policy Council (2003). These actions in the food policy arena mirror the changes that farmers market proponents describe in planning for their own organizations. In Vancouver and Portland, market proponents commented on the expansion of their strategic plans to reflect a more diversified approach to local food distribution and production. These examples demonstrate a growing awareness, within both municipal food system planning and community organizations, of the importance of a more comprehensive and interconnected approach to planning for the food system.

Similarly, there is also a growing awareness of the need to fulfill multiple sustainability goals concurrently within projects and programs designed to strengthen food systems. As described in Chapter 4, farmers markets embody this multi-dimensional approach, in part through their contributions to a variety of food system sustainability goals, including:

- Providing economic opportunities for small scale farmers and food processors, and supporting local economies;
• Providing access to fresh, nutritious food;
• Building relationships between farmers and consumers;
• Creating a sense of community in urban neighbourhoods;
• Providing a forum for education and mobilization around food, farming and nutrition issues;
• Acting as a catalyst for sustainable growing practices;
• Supporting farmland preservation, and;
• Decreasing food mileage.

However, one additional goal of sustainable food systems is to foster food security, which includes ensuring that food is affordable for all. The findings from this thesis draw attention to an inherent contradiction in farmers markets as a key element of sustainable food systems, in that affordability may be compromised while other food system sustainability goals are being pursued. Access to the produce sold at farmers markets for low income shoppers was identified as an issue in Vancouver, Seattle and Portland. Other authors have discussed this tension, with the conclusion that specific strategies are needed to establish successful markets in low income neighbourhoods. For example, a recently completed Vancouver Food System Assessment recommended that:

_A strategy should be developed to make farmers' markets more accessible to low-income populations, including strategies such as providing subsidies in the form of coupons, hiring neighbourhood residents, tailoring product mix to the needs, tastes and incomes of the community, and developing transit programs to bring people to the market (Barbolet et al., 2005, p.41)._ 

Similarly, an evaluation of nine case studies of farmers markets in low income communities in the US concluded that, in order to be successful, such markets need to be subsidized; offer basic foods at affordable prices; hire staff from the neighbourhood; foster a sense of neighbourhood
ownership over the market; and ensure transit accessibility (Fisher, 1999). These studies lend further support to the findings of this thesis regarding the need for specific strategies to address affordability of the food sold at farmers markets.

Based on this discussion, I suggest that there are several key elements to the perceptual shift needed to accompany the adoption of planning for farmers markets and sustainable food systems. As one aspect of developing more comprehensive food system planning, farmers markets need to be viewed and pursued as one of many diversified initiatives aimed at creating more sustainable food systems. At the same time, farmers markets also need to be recognized as a forum through which multiple goals of sustainable food systems may be pursued concurrently, including the objective of food affordability. Planners may be able to facilitate this shift in perception of food systems, and of farmers markets as one key element of urban food systems, through the integration of farmers markets into five functional areas of planning practice, as discussed in the previous chapter. I delve into three of these spheres of planning practice in the remainder of this chapter to further illustrate these opportunities.

7.3. Policy Development

I elaborate here on the policy development functions of planners in order to highlight the importance of broader policies in reinforcing the specific actions needed to support farmers markets. The importance of broad policy was evident in several interviewees’ comments, who noted both opportunities and barriers that policies presented in terms of gaining support for farmers markets. One opportunity for planners was evident in comments from a Vancouver City staff member, who noted that the complementarity between the experience offered by farmers markets and existing Park Board policy on recreation, health and wellness supported the
presence of markets on park land. The City of Vancouver’s mandate to support the creation of a just and sustainable food system was also perceived to present an opportunity to garner support for farmers markets. Utilizing such synergies to support the operation of farmers markets relates to the role of the food system planner as integrator, as discussed in Chapter 3. As Pothukuchi (2004) states, one role for the food system planner is to integrate food system goals into the broader community agendas of liveability and sustainability. The previous examples suggest that food policy, health, wellness, and recreation are additional policy areas where the agendas of farmers markets may find resonance. The examples above also suggest that new policies pertaining explicitly to farmers markets are not necessarily needed; rather, perceptual links need to be made to existing and implicit municipal policies. Making these links between broad policy and the specific actions needed to support farmers markets and sustainable food systems could be an important tool for the food system planner.

7.4. Regulation

I focus here on the regulatory role of planners because I wish to further explore the lack of resolution of the zoning and permitting issues in the three cities studied. Two options related to this unresolved problem emerged in the findings. One option, as discussed by a Portland planner and Vancouver market proponent, is to leave the zoning situations in these cities as is, given the fact that there haven’t been any significant complaints about the markets. The Vancouver market proponent reasoned that the strength of community support behind the markets would prevent Council from closing the markets in response to individual complaints. This comment points to an important consideration regarding the roles of planners in supporting farmers markets and food systems, which is that planners do not act in isolation, but rather as
actors in a conversation that also includes the public and elected officials. In a study of food system planning in the Georgia Basin, Bouris (2004) comments:

...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... (p. 99).

Planners’ decisions regarding allocation of their efforts toward revising zoning regulations, and other aspects of planning for farmers markets, need to be weighed in this context.

However, even though existing solutions to zoning and permitting issues may suffice for the time being, planners and farmers market proponents did acknowledge the importance of eventually revising zoning regulations to support farmers markets. Several authors have also identified a comparative role for the food system planner in revising land use plans, regulations and policies to support the food system (Caton Campbell, 2004; Pothukuchi, 2004; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). In Chapter 3, I describe this as the role of regulator. With respect to regulating farmers markets, planners commented that a key barrier to resolving zoning issues was the difficulty of defining farmers markets in a way that satisfies the City’s need for control over the markets, while providing enough flexibility for market operators.

Historically, farmers markets in the US did have a place in municipal laws. The first markets in the US were located on public sites, on land set aside by the city’s founder or land donor. These markets were created and operated by city officials, who passed ordinances to regulate market competition and maintain an equal benefit to all vendors (Pyle, 1971). Currently, public markets are still recognized as a unique feature in land use regulations. For example, in the early 1970’s, Seattle City Council established a seven-acre Market Historical District to revitalize and preserve the Pike Place public market (Shakow, 1981). However, scanning the treatment of farmers markets in various cities’ zoning by-laws and codes, it appears that many draw on temporary use and special event categories as a way of defining and
regulating farmers markets (see for example Municipal Research and Service Centre of Washington, 2005). Others simply list farmers markets as a permitted use in certain zoning districts without defining what the term “farmers market” means (see for example City of Prince George, 2004). Still other cities have developed specific ordinances and by-laws to regulate farmers markets (see for example Capital Regional District, 2001; City of Davis, 2004; City of San Francisco, 2005).

For example, the Davis, CA municipal code includes a chapter specific to farmers markets, which acknowledges the need for flexibility in market management. The stated purpose of this ordinance is to offer “a flexible system of management over a Farmers Market that is responsive to public input and acts in the interest of all the residents of Davis (City of Davis, 2004, p.1.).” The definition of the term “market” offered in this ordinance is simply: “A farmers market, certified by the Yolo County Agricultural Commissioner and located on city-owned property, including, where authorized, temporary use of streets and/or parkland (p.1).” Accompanying this definition, the State of California has a law in place that defines a “certified farmers market” as a location where producers sell agricultural products directly to consumers, and as a venue that is operated either by a group of producers, a non-profit organization, or a local government agency (California Code of Regulations, 2005). The existence of this legal framework, along with the fact that Davis, CA has only one farmers market, may make it easier to create tailored regulations, as compared to cities in states without such legislation, and where the regulation of multiple existing and potential market sites must be addressed.

In a survey of farmers markets across North America, Hamilton (2002) reported that the definition of the term “farmers market” is highly variable. He proposed that the definition of farmers markets be addressed by state policy, in order to ensure consistency between markets, and also noted that very few states have such a definition in place. Given the lack of an
established legal definition of farmers markets, planners' comments on the difficulty of defining markets in municipal legislation are not surprising.

The treatment of farmers markets as temporary and special events is also not surprising, since no other precedent for the legal treatment of farmers markets appears to have been set. Based on the cursory exploration of the regulations surrounding farmers markets above, it appears that the treatment of farmers markets as temporary and special events in Seattle, Portland and Vancouver is not an isolated occurrence. Markets are typically categorized under temporary use and special event regulations, rather than specific by-laws or ordinances like the Davis example. Aside from examples such as this of regulations tailored to specific markets, there does not appear to be a readily available model for planners to follow in order to define and regulate farmers markets as something other than a temporary event. This gap underscores the importance of the role identified for the food system planner in revising land use regulations to better define farmers markets.

7.5. Design of Public Places

I elaborate here on the integration of farmers markets into the design of public places through provision of amenities and infrastructure because this has been proposed and pursued, but not yet implemented, in all three cities. It also represents a significant step toward providing greater permanence for the markets. As well, it is something that cannot be done on public property without City support. I draw on existing case studies of cities with infrastructure and amenities for markets, in order to further support this role for planners. Finally, I relate this role for the planner in urban design for farmers markets to the roles identified for the food system planner.
A Vancouver market proponent pointed to Davis, CA, as an excellent example of municipal provision of infrastructure for farmers markets. In 1985, the City of Davis initiated a master planning process for the City's Central Park. The farmers market had been operating on the adjacent street. The master planning process involved considerable public consultation. The participants' design included water features, gardens, and a teen center, as well as indoor and outdoor gathering spaces. An open-air pavilion, the only permanent market shelter in California, was built to house the farmers market, and also to accommodate other activities that might take place in the park on non-market days. The expansion has allowed the farmers market to increase the number of activities associated with its operation each week. In the summer, the number of visitors to the market reaches 7000, which is greater than 10% of the population of Davis. The Davis case is an excellent example of the value of municipal provision of infrastructure for farmers markets, as well as the potential for seizing redevelopment opportunities in order to facilitate such improvements (Project for Public Spaces, 1999).

Beaverton, OR, also constructed infrastructure for the farmers market as part of a public space redevelopment project. A 2003 report by the Portland-Multnomah Food Policy Council describes the integration of improvements to this market into a library redevelopment:

_When a new library was built in Beaverton, the City of Beaverton planned a multi-use space that could accommodate a farmers' market and support other public events. The market draws 12,000 weekend visitors who come to shop, play in a fountain and check out books. It is also open on Wednesday evenings, bringing life to the area mid-week (p.7)._

The Ithaca, NY farmers market is yet another example of the contribution that infrastructure and amenities can make to farmers markets. In a case study of the Ithaca Farmers Market, Alexander (1996) describes the process of securing a permanent location and shelter for this market:

_Negotiations with the City of Ithaca commenced in 1982 to obtain a permanent home for the rapidly growing farmers market. After years of deliberation and frequent conflict, a 20-year_
lease for Steamboat Landing was agreed upon... The culmination of this effort came in the building of a market pavilion in 1989. Funds for the project came from membership contributions, a matching funds grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture, and community donations, including a $10,000 donation to build wooden flooring. By the early 1990’s, partial wooden flooring and electrical service were added to the pavilion along with an office, a handicapped-accessible bathroom, two additional restrooms, park benches overlooking the lake, member-designed and -tended landscaping, and a 350-car parking lot. The IFM Member Guide proclaims, “[o]ne of the first of its kind in the nation, the Ithaca Farmers Market is a community-built project that has become a vibrant tourist attraction and a vital force in promoting agriculture in Tompkins County and surrounding counties (p.5).”

These examples highlight the value of constructing infrastructure and amenities for farmers markets. The first two examples also illustrate the opportunity that planners have to capitalize on public space redevelopment processes in order to make such improvements possible.

The examples above also point to the role of urban design in planning for farmers markets. Among the roles for food system planner identified in the food system planning literature, there is a notable lack of emphasis on urban design for the food system. This is surprising, given that many of the proposed strategies for fostering sustainable food systems have design implications. In the area of food production, community gardens are a prime example, in that they require programming of open space to include such elements as cultivable soil, composting, irrigation, tool storage, and so forth. Lawson (2004) asserts that the planning profession has not legitimated community gardens as permanent public resources in the same way that parks and other recreational facilities have been legitimated. She claims that community gardens have been treated as social actions, rather than physical entities. The same could be said for farmers markets.

Although examples of design initiatives aimed at enhancing the food system are not common, they do exist. In a design study of the Renfrew Collingwood neighbourhood in Vancouver, BC, Hohenschau (2005) compiled and proposed metrics for food system elements, such as neighbourhood allotments (area per capita) of community gardens, in the same way that
standards for acres of parks and other neighbourhood amenities are calculated. Vancouver’s Official Development Plan (ODP) for the proposed sustainable neighbourhood of Southeast False Creek also includes provisions for food system elements, such as sites for demonstration food gardens, on-site composting facilities, and targets for the coverage of green roofs to be incorporated into the development. Furthermore, the ODP recommends that design guidelines be created for community garden plots at the time of re-zoning (City of Vancouver, 2005).

While both the Southeast False Creek ODP and Hosenschau’s design treatment of the Renfrew Collingwood neighbourhood recommend setting aside sites for farmers markets, neither addresses specific requirements for infrastructure or amenities for these markets. Consideration of the site requirements of farmers markets, as well as desirable infrastructure and amenities, would augment these plans. Design guidelines for farmers market sites, or for public plazas with the potential to host markets, could also be drafted (similar to the intent of the Portland Town Centre redevelopment proposal discussed in the previous chapter).

Integrating farmers markets into the design of public places is also one specific way that planners can incorporate design into the emerging field of food system planning. Although the plans discussed above illustrate that theoretical examples of design for the food system do exist, the design implications of enhancing the urban food system are something that the small body of food system planning literature has yet to delve into. A May-June 2005 edition of the Journal of Architectural Design, entitled “food and the city,” demonstrates an initial consideration of the food system by this design-oriented profession. The role of the planner in urban design for the food system could be emphasized further as the field of food system planning develops.
7.6. Facilitative Roles for Planners

I focus here on the theme of facilitative roles because the role of the planner as a facilitator, educator and advocate permeated many of the other themes discussed in the findings, such as addressing health regulations, site planning and land use planning. I also focus on facilitative roles in order to further explore the proposed roles of planners in forming partnerships between farmers market associations and local governments, and acting as designated staff persons responsible for farmers markets, two proposals which emerged more strongly from market proponents than city staff members. As well, I compare the facilitative roles for planners in supporting farmers markets with the roles for the food system planner discussed in Chapter 3, in order to further explore the relationship between food system planning and planning for farmers markets.

I described a series of facilitative roles in the findings, which I arranged on a spectrum of what I perceived to be lesser to greater levels of involvement. The less involved facilitative roles included: communicating among stakeholders; conducting community consultation; carrying out research, and; responding to complaints. Intermediate levels of involvement included: educating colleagues, the public, and market organizers about issues relevant to farmers markets; advocating for farmers markets within the City and the community; and building relationships with market associations. Highly involved facilitative roles included: forming partnerships between market organizations and local governments and acting as designated staff persons responsible for farmers markets.

I also identified facilitative roles for planners under the broader themes of addressing health regulations, site planning and land use planning. With regards to addressing health regulations, I suggested a role for planners in liaising between the health department and farmers markets in order to facilitate what has been a challenging interaction in two of the cities studied.
Under the theme of site planning, I also suggested that planners facilitate the interaction between farmers market organizations and appropriate City departments to ensure that the necessary amenities and services are in place for farmers markets, where these are lacking, or when new markets are being established. Under the theme of land use planning and urban design, I described the role of planners in including farmers market representatives as stakeholders in redevelopment processes for market sites on public land; educating urban design professionals, public officials, and citizens about designing public places for markets, and; advocating for the implementation of such re-designs.

These facilitative roles for planners in supporting farmers markets reinforce a number of the roles for the food system planner introduced in Chapter 3. I revisit several of these now to illustrate the parallels between the two sets of roles, and to suggest that many of the general roles identified for the food system planner can be applied to the specific activity of planning for farmers markets.

In Chapter 3, I wrote of the planner as analyst, facilitator, educator, advocate, and liaison. Included in the descriptions of these roles were such activities as: collecting, compiling, analyzing, and disseminating data on the food system; mediating and consensus-building; building partnerships with community organizations and businesses; educating colleagues about the importance of food system issues; speaking on behalf of the community to colleagues in other departments and to decision makers, and; forming relationships with staff members in other departments to support the creation of sustainable food systems. Each of these roles emerged as functions that planners can apply to the specific task of planning for farmers markets, demonstrating the centrality of facilitative roles to planning for both farmers markets and food systems.

Within the theme of facilitative roles, one interesting finding was the desire for the
formation of stronger partnerships between the local government and the market organizations, in part through the roles of planners in facilitating this relationship. This desire was articulated by more market proponents than city staff members.

Support for the formation of partnerships between civil society and local government has been articulated by authors writing on sustainability planning and food system planning. For example, in a European study of local sustainability practice, the majority of respondents considered partnerships between local government and civil society to be important for implementing sustainable development at the local level (Evans, Joas, Sundback & Theobald, 2005). Civil society respondents tended to value partnerships slightly more than local government respondents in this study, a finding which is similar to responses of interviewees in this thesis.

Authors writing on aspects of the sustainable food systems movement also list civil society – local government partnerships among the instruments leading to successful outcomes. In a study of community food assessments completed in cities across the United States, Pothukuchi (2004) states that community food security advocates are finding that “building partnerships with relevant public agencies... is essential to developing lasting and effective solutions (p. 360).” Similarly, reflecting on a case study of the food justice movement in Toronto, Wekerle (2004) reports:

*The food security movement in Toronto also exemplifies an approach to planning from within civil society, which incorporates work within the regulatory and policy environment, including policy change, and links with the local state as partner rather than supplicant... Local government continues to be a key actor, providing leadership, staffing for joint initiatives, funding, and policy implementation at the scale of the city and beyond (p. 382).*

These statements acknowledge the importance of relationships and partnerships between local government and community groups, reinforcing the role of the planner in facilitating the formation of these partnerships. These statements also suggest that civil society – local
government partnerships are valuable not only to planning for farmers markets, but also to food system planning as a whole.

7.7. Summary

In summary, the key roles for planners in supporting farmers markets identified in this thesis resonate with the emerging roles for food system planners. Facilitative roles, in particular, are central to both planning for farmers markets and sustainable food systems. The desire articulated by market proponents for partnerships with local government, and for planners to facilitate this partnership, is supported by the food system planning and sustainability planning literature.

Integrating farmers markets into the design of public spaces is another key role for planners, and one which is supported by success stories of markets in other cities. Planners can seize opportunities for public space redevelopment in order to facilitate these improvements in infrastructure and amenities for farmers markets, a strategy which has also been applied successfully in other cities. This role for planners in urban design for the food system is one that has not yet been emphasized in the food system planning literature, but one that offers potential for both planning for farmers markets and sustainable food systems.

With respect to the question of addressing zoning and permitting issues, while the categorization of markets as a temporary or special event may suffice in some cases, planners have a role to play in revising zoning regulations to better define farmers markets in order to ensure their long term security. From a cursory exploration of regulations in other cities, it appears that food system planners will be forging new territory in their search for flexible zoning and permitting regulations that suit cities with multiple market sites.
Through all of these activities, one overarching role for the food system planner is to facilitate a shift in perception by which farmers markets, as one key element of sustainable food systems, come to be recognized as a legitimate use of public space and form of food distribution, and one that is deserving of the attention of planners and local governments. This philosophical shift will both contribute to, and be enhanced by, the emerging acceptance of the food system as a terrain of concern to the planning profession.
CHAPTER 8. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Conclusion

In the introduction to this thesis, I stated that specific tools, strategies and policies were needed for planners to proactively engage in food system planning. My goal was to explore planning for farmers markets as one avenue through which planners might engage in food system planning.

One conclusion that has emerged from this investigation is that planners already have a suite of tools at their disposal to support farmers markets. Each of the five functional areas discussed in this thesis as arenas of opportunity for planners to support farmers markets (policy development and regulation; land use planning and urban design; site planning; administration; and facilitation) reflect existing tools of planning practice. However, these tools need to be applied in a coordinated manner to support the establishment, operation and expansion of farmers markets. Of these, urban design is one tool that has not been emphasized in the food system planning literature, but one that offers creative potential for planning for farmers markets as well as other physical elements of the food system.

In terms of strategies for food system planning, one conclusion that emerges from this thesis is the importance of partnerships between market organizations and local governments, and the roles of planners in facilitating this relationship. Although I have focused on the roles of planners in this thesis, planning for sustainable food systems ultimately involves an alliance between civil society and local governments, as the case of planning for farmers markets illustrates. In a field that is nascent from and engaged with civil society, partnerships, as well as the suite of facilitative roles identified for planners in this thesis, form a key strategy in nurturing
This alliance.

With regard to policies, one conclusion that emerges from this thesis is that broad policy has an important role to play in terms of presenting opportunities and barriers to farmers markets. This conclusion lends support to the creation of food policy as a broader framework within which specific, sustainable food system initiatives can find support and direction.

Fundamentally, the roles for planners in supporting farmers markets point to one overarching goal, which is to facilitate a shift in perception so that farmers markets are considered to be a legitimate use of public space and form of food distribution by local government planners, elected officials, and the public. This perceptual shift will both contribute to, and be propelled by, an improved understanding of the relevance of all aspects of food systems to cities, to sustainability, and to the planning profession.

The significance of planning for farmers markets is rooted in this understanding of their contribution to the broader goals of sustainable food systems. Farmers markets are only one initiative within many aimed at fostering more sustainable food systems, and a humble one at that. Their overall contribution to food distribution in Canada and the US is minimal at present. However, they represent a significant attempt to manifest many of the attributes of sustainable food systems outlined in Chapter 3. They attempt to demonstrate that it is possible to produce, distribute and consume food in a way that: encourages agroecological methods of food production; preserves farmland; supports a diverse, local food economy; strengthens food security; respects and enhances local knowledge; and fosters regional self-reliance. Farmers markets by no means fulfill all of these goals. Their significance instead is in their capacity to highlight the potential that exists to nurture a food system reflective of these attributes.

Planning for farmers markets is one conduit through which planners can connect with the agenda of creating more sustainable food systems. By supporting farmers markets, planners can
contribute to restoring the social and economic connections between urban eaters and rural farmers, and in turn support stewardship of their region's farmland. They can provide citizens with the opportunity to purchase fresh, nutritious, locally-grown food within their neighbourhoods. They can help to foster awareness of, and respect for, the origins of our food, the people who produce it, and the land that sustains us. They can promote a model of food distribution that reduces the fuel consumed in transportation to consumers. By supporting farmers markets, planners can also help to create vibrant public places in urban neighbourhoods where the interconnections between food, health, nutrition, community, land, and agricultural livelihoods are celebrated.

Farmers markets are dynamic, diverse and evolving institutions. The intersection of this dynamism with the planning capacity and resources of local government has the potential to generate new, productive and mutually beneficial outcomes. However, farmers markets are only one among many initiatives aimed at creating more sustainable food systems. Planners should not pursue planning for farmers markets alone, but rather as part of a broader, more comprehensive food system planning agenda. A comprehensive food system planning agenda is one that addresses all sectors of the food system in an integrated manner, with the goals of fostering place-based, self-reliant food systems that are socially just, ecologically sustainable, and economically sound.

The benefits of this approach are that the capacity of individual initiatives, such as farmers markets, can be enhanced through intersections with other, related initiatives. For example, locating community gardens on park land adjacent to a farmers market may create the potential for the direct sale of produce from these gardens. Or, a strategy for institutional procurement of local food may provide local farmers with an additional, direct marketing outlet to supplement their returns from farmers markets. Or, capital funding for a commercial,
community kitchen facility may reduce the barriers that small scale food processors face in businesses start-up. The possibilities are numerous. The point here is that it is not farmers markets, per se, but the broader goals that they contribute to, that should be of fundamental concern to planners. A comprehensive food system planning agenda can allow planners to pursue the full spectrum of these goals, and maximize the productive interactions between different sustainable food system initiatives.

It is important to remember, however, that planners are only one force affecting the implementation of food system planning. As Bouris (2005) notes, “the widespread adoption of food system planning will require the mutual support of the public, the politicians and the planning institution (Bouris, 2005, p.100).” The task of those concerned with the creation of more sustainable food systems is to communicate the relevance of this agenda to each of these three audiences.

At its root, this task is one of advocacy. In the preface to this thesis, I commented that my previous experiences had led me to take an “interest in understanding the ways in which government planning and policy can be harnessed as a tool to support grassroots initiatives and small businesses that embody the principles of sustainable food systems.” I also commented that “my wish to further probe the relationship between the sustainable food systems movement and local government is founded upon a belief in the potential for this intersection to generate productive and mutually beneficial outcomes,” coupled with, “a realization of the practical difficulties of effectively introducing new areas of planning and policy into government institutions.”

From the inception of this thesis, my own position has been one of advocacy. Upon completion of the thesis, I remain convinced that local government planners, and local governments as a whole, have a responsibility to address the challenge of creating more
sustainable food systems. There are many benefits to be gained from this endeavour, and many intersections to be made with other local government agendas, such as health and wellness, economic and community development, and sustainability. As this thesis highlights, local government planners also have tools and resources to offer to the task of planning for sustainable food systems. I recognize that, in advocating for food system planning and support for farmers markets, I am calling for implementation of an agenda that faces many barriers, such as a lack of political will; lack of community pressure; lack of understanding of the problem; lack of knowledge; and lack of funding (Bouris, 2004; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). In spite of these barriers, I remain optimistic that planners can harness and build the potential of food system planning to become a significant tool for enhancing the feasibility of creating more sustainable food systems.

8.2. Implications for Action

8.2.1 Planners

There is considerable potential for planners to support farmers markets by seizing the opportunities identified in this thesis. However, the suggested roles for planners presented here are only a beginning. The opportunities identified in this thesis need to be tested and modified. Some of the roles identified for planners, such as defining farmers markets in regulations, point to gaps needing to be filled, without any resolution of how to proceed. The issue of affordability of food at farmers markets, in particular, illustrates a tension in the pursuit of more sustainable food systems that requires further attention and problem solving by planners and others involved with farmers markets. This will require collaboration with higher levels of government. In the
case of American cities, federal and state agencies responsible for farmers market nutrition and food stamp programs are existing partners on this issue. In the case of Canadian cities, provincial ministries responsible for agriculture and health, as well as regional health authorities, are possible collaborators.

8.2.2. Farmers Market Proponents

Although not the focus of this thesis, farmers market proponents are an integral part of the equation in planning for farmers markets. Market proponents have multiple roles to play in order to seize the potential identified here for support from local government planners, such as:

- Encouraging local governments and planning departments to engage in planning for farmers markets;
- Building relationships with municipal planners and other staff members;
- Encouraging the formation of partnerships with planning departments;
- Educating planners, the public, and local officials about the value of farmers markets and sustainable food systems;
- Working with planners to create a flexible legal definition of farmers markets;
- Advocating for arrangements that provide longer term security for the markets;
- Making opportunities for improvements to farmers markets known to public officials and planners;
- Participating as stakeholders in redevelopment processes for public places that are existing or potential farmers market sites, and;
- Providing planners with information on the contributions of farmers markets to local economies and communities in order to support planning and decision-making.
8.3. Implications for Further Research

1. Food system planning and food policy are relatively new concepts at the municipal government level. The linkage discussed in this thesis between broad policy and support for farmers markets points to a need for further investigation into the connections between food policy and the development of specific food system initiatives. One strategy of Vancouver’s food system planners has been to emphasize both policy and programs in their work (W. Mendes, AGSC 250 lecture, November 8, 2005). Exploration of the effectiveness of strategies such as this, in terms of balancing policy creation with implementation of programs and initiatives, would assist resource-strapped planners in determining how best to allocate their efforts in order to advance the field of food system planning.

2. In cities where food policy has been incorporated into municipal government activities for some time (e.g. Toronto), evaluation of the outcomes of this work would contribute to knowledge of successful and failed strategies for local government food system planning. Research into other avenues, in addition to planning for farmers markets, through which planners might contribute to sustainable food systems, would also help to expand knowledge of the tools and strategies available to planners for implementing food system planning.

3. Given that the scope of this thesis was limited to Canadian and American experiences with farmers markets, and that countries outside of these two have longstanding, successful market traditions, research into experiences with farmers markets elsewhere
may offer valuable insights into planning for farmers markets in Canada and the US.

4. Although this study focused on the relationship between local governments and farmers market associations, the roles and responsibilities of higher levels of government are also relevant to the challenges faced by farmers markets. Thus, research is needed into the possibilities for collaboration between municipal governments and other agencies, including regional health authorities, on topics of concern to farmers markets (e.g. prohibitive health regulations). Similarly, research is needed into the interactions between municipal governments and higher levels of government with respect to addressing issues of inter-jurisdictional relevance (e.g. strategies to improve the affordability of local foods, legal definitions of farmers markets).

5. Farmers markets face challenges and limitations unrelated to the roles and responsibilities of local governments. Thus, valuable research could be conducted into other factors presenting difficulties to markets, as well as strategies to address these challenges. Additional, empirical research into the benefits and limitations of farmers markets in terms of their contributions to the goals of sustainable food systems would assist with developing such strategies. Such research might also provide additional justification for local government support of farmers markets.

6. The findings of this thesis draw attention to the relevance of urban design of public places to planning for farmers markets. Research into design options for incorporating farmers markets and other physical elements of the food system into public places, as well as private developments, would contribute to the development of this tool for food
7. The unresolved challenge of defining farmers markets in zoning regulations points to a need for research into the treatment and definition of farmers markets in legislation across Canada and the US. Such research would inform revision of legislation to support farmers markets. Similarly, the unresolved challenge of prohibitive health regulations points to a need for an inventory of health regulations conducive to market sales. An inventory of food safety research related to the methods of vending used at farmers market would also be useful to inform discussions about health regulations.

8. Although the scope of this thesis was limited to farmers markets, many cities have public markets that also contribute to the goals of sustainable food systems. In order to develop a coordinated, city-wide strategy for farmers markets, research into the possibilities for collaboration between public markets and farmers markets would be valuable.
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