CREATING A 'JUST AND SUSTAINABLE' FOOD SYSTEM

IN THE CITY OF VANCOUVER:

THE ROLE OF GOVERNANCE, PARTNERSHIPS AND POLICY-MAKING

by

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ABSTRACT

Food systems, understood as the ways that people produce, obtain, consume and dispose of their food, have historically played an integral part in processes of urbanisation. Over and above the role of nourishing populations, food and food systems have often come to symbolise a society's beliefs and struggles around ideals of social redistribution, justice, and democracy itself. Due to a range of factors, the 20th century witnessed a deep rift between cities and their food systems. Now, after decades of estrangement, food and food systems are once again being conceptualised as an urban governance concern. This reconciliation is being felt in many Canadian cities where food is reappearing on the agenda of a growing number of local governments. Such a shift reflects changes in the ways that food, and other social and environmental dimensions of urban life are recognised and managed in local governance arrangements that are themselves undergoing transformations in their social, political and spatial composition.

Based on an in-depth study of one Canadian city, Vancouver, this dissertation analyses the ways that food policy as a sustainability issue came to find a place on the local governance agenda; how, by whom and at what geographical scales ensuing tensions were mediated; and what food policy may reveal about the role of local government in coordinating governance strategies at different scales and contexts, particularly where 'sustainability' is involved. The pressures generated by Vancouver's adoption of food policy raise important geographical questions that are central to this dissertation. Specifically, where and how do policies on sustainability develop, what groups and interests are involved in their formulation, and what are the resulting types of local policy and governance? The aim is not to determine a formula that assumes uniformity between and within places. Rather it is to consider why certain sustainability approaches are adopted in some places and not others, and why at particular times and not others. Underlying all of these questions is the importance of the broader Canadian context characterised by active debate over the need for new governance arrangements and inter-governmental relations that better reflect Canada's shifting realities.

Keywords:

In memory of Judith Gibbons

(1949 – 2005)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve
CAFO	Confined Animal Feeding Operation
CFO	Community Food Organisation
COPE	Coalition of Progressive Electors
DTES	Downtown Eastside
FAO	Food and Agriculture Association of the United Nations
FCM	Federation of Canadian Municipalities
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GVRD	Greater Vancouver Regional District
ILO	Intensive Livestock Operation
LMFC	Lower Mainland Food Council / Coalition
LRSP	Livable Region Stategic Plan
NAFTA	North America Free Trade Association
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPA	Non-Partisan Association
NPHS	National Population Health Survey
OCP	Official Development Plan
RCS	Regional Context Strategy
RGS	Regional Growth Statement
SEFC	Southeast False Creek
SOE	Special Office of the Environment
SRI	Sustainable Region Initiative
TEAM	The Electors Action Movement
TFPC	Toronto Food Policy Council
UA	Urban Agriculture
UBCM	Union of British Columbia Municipalities
VA	Vancouver Agreement
VAFTG	Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group
VFPC	Vancouver Food Policy Council
VFPO	Vancouver Food Policy Organisation
VERC	Vancouver Electoral Reform Commission
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WUF	World Urban Forum

INTRODUCTION

> There is concern in many quarters that Canadian cities are living off investments made decades ago and that out-dated governance structures and limited policy imagination block their capacity for renewal (Bradford, 2002, p. iii).
>
> Food is both a symptom and a symbol of how we organize ourselves and our societies. It is both a vignette and a microcosm of wider social realities. From the political perspective, it makes sense to see the dynamics of the food system as a titanic struggle between the forces of control and the pressure to democratize (Lang, 1999a, p. 218).

Food systems, understood as the ways that people produce, obtain, consume and dispose of their food, have historically played an integral part in processes of urbanisation. Over and above the role of nourishing populations, food and food systems have often come to symbolise a society's beliefs and struggles around ideals of social redistribution, justice, and democracy itself. Due to a range of factors, the 20th century witnessed a deep rift between North American cities and their food systems. Now, after decades of estrangement, food and food systems are once again being conceptualised as an urban governance concern. This reconciliation is being felt in many Canadian cities where food is reappearing on the agenda of a growing number of local governments. Such a shift reflects changes in the ways that food, and other social and environmental dimensions of urban life are recognised and managed in local governance arrangements that are themselves undergoing transformations in their social, political and spatial composition. Based on an in-depth study of one Canadian city, Vancouver, this dissertation analyses the ways that food policy as a sustainability issue came to find a place on the local governance agenda; how, by whom and at what geographical scales ensuing tensions were mediated; and what food policy may reveal about the role of local government in coordinating governance strategies at different scales and contexts, particularly where 'sustainability' is involved.

Food policy in Vancouver

On December 11, 2003, dozens of representatives from a broad range of local food-related agencies and organisations convened on the City of Vancouver's Council Chamber to learn whether the proposed *Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver* would garner enough votes to be approved as an official policy direction for Vancouver. A 'just and sustainable' food system was defined as one in which food production, processing, distribution, access, consumption and recycling are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a particular place (City of Vancouver, 2003a; Garrett & Feenstra,1997). The Action Plan represented the culmination of months of consultation with a Food Policy Task Force initially made up of over 70 representatives from a wide array of food-related interests, and reflected at least a decade worth of lobbying for local government recognition of food as an urban issue. The Food Policy Task Force included representatives from City Council, Vancouver Park Board, Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver School Board, plus community representation from a range of organisations and interests including farmers markets, community kitchens, community gardens, food banks and other emergency food providers, small scale food processors, organic and / or sustainable food-related businesses, community centres, youth groups, anti-poverty groups, environmental groups, nutritionists, dieticians and others. After hearing from twenty-seven delegates, and days earlier, having been briefed by City staff, Council voted in favour of the Action Plan with the caveat that final approval of expenditures take place in the context of 2004 budget discussions.

Alongside apparent support for food policy in Vancouver, a number of conflicts were immediately evident. From the time the motion to support the creation of a just and sustainable food system for Vancouver was passed in July 2003, City Council was divided on the perceived appropriateness of adopting food policy as an official City mandate. On the one hand, food policy had been carefully aligned by many of its supporters – both inside and outside of City Hall – with the umbrella goal of making Vancouver more 'sustainable' for its citizens.[1] Specifically, the Food Action Plan was

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[1] It is important to note, however, that community stakeholder disagreements over the meaning, aims and desired outcomes of a 'just and sustainable food system' were also at play.

backed at least in part because it was argued to reinforce the social, environmental and economic goals embodied in the City's existing commitment to sustainability.[2] This association can be understood in the context of wider calls to elevate the importance of the social and environmental dimensions of Canadian cities, where current governance arrangements and inter-governmental relationships are often cited as out-dated and unresponsive (Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Smith & Stewart, 2003; Bradford, 2002). In this capacity, it is argued that recognition of Canadian cities as key strategic spaces of innovation and social capital is hampered by existing policy, governance and financial arrangements in which local authorities do not constitute a formal level of government, but rather are defined as 'statutory bodies,' accountable to provincial or territorial governments.

In this way, the appearance of food policy on Vancouver's local governance map foregrounded conflicts over local government intervention in social and environmental policy where no corresponding legislative authority, or financial supports exist. In particular, opposition to the Food Action Plan coalesced around concerns about compromising the City's economic performance, its limited jurisdiction to formulate such policy, and the lack of resources necessary to implement it. In addition, opposition was bound up with competing notions of why and how to pursue sustainable urban development in the context of the perceived necessity for the City to remain 'competitive,' or at the very least, to pursue urban development trajectories oriented more towards economic development than social redistribution and citizen-led governance. These tensions were evident at City Hall. Only days before the Food Action Plan was brought forward for approval, Vancouver City Council had been informed that the Dominion Bond Rating Service (DBRS) had reclassified the

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[2] In April 2002, the City of Vancouver adopted a definition for a 'Sustainable Vancouver,' along with a set of sustainability principles that aimed to coordinate the City's sustainability policies. Sustainable Vancouver is defined as "a community that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a place where people live, work and prosper in a vibrant community of communities. In such a community, sustainability is achieved through community participation and the reconciliation of short and long term economic, social and ecological well-being. Sustainability is a direction rather than a destination. A sustainable city is one that protects and enhances the immediate and long-term well being of a city and its citizens, while providing the highest quality of life possible. Sustainability requires integrated decision-making that takes into account economic, ecological, and social impacts as a whole" (City of Vancouver, 2002a). The City's commitment to sustainable development can be argued to reflect a strong environmental sensibility characteristic of the region as a whole, where sustainability principles are embedded in regional development strategies. Furthermore, sustainability figures as a cornerstone of major international events to be hosted by Vancouver including the World Urban Forum in 2006 and the Winter Olympic Games in 2010.

City of Vancouver's credit rating from AAA to "AA High with a stable trend" due to concern over the level of taxpayer supported debt and salary pressures. Some senior managers, and the Mayor himself, minimised the significance of the reclassification as "related to large regional expenditures over which [Vancouver City] Council has no direct control" (City of Vancouver, 2003b). Even so, the reclassification allowed detractors within City Hall to cast food policy as a symptom of a financially damaging trend in policy-making.

Tensions were equally evident among the public at large as reflected in local press reports. *The Vancouver Courier*, for example, characterised the proposed Food Action Plan as a "veggie pie in the sky," implying that questionable spending decisions were being made by City Council (Carrigg, 2003). In this capacity, food policy encapsulated growing ambivalence over an increasing number of issues not conventionally understood as 'City business' that were finding their way onto the local governance agenda. Environmental issues including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, along with 'social sustainability' issues including child care provision and substance abuse prevention preceded the official endorsement of food policy. These issues reflected competing understandings of how activities of local government, particularly those framed as sustainability issues, were conceptualised, and at what geographical scales they were addressed.

The pressures generated by Vancouver's adoption of food policy raise important geographical questions that are central to this dissertation. Specifically, where and how do policies on sustainability develop, what groups and interests are involved in their formulation, and what are the resulting types of local policy and governance? The interest here is not in determining a formula that assumes uniformity between and within localities. Rather it is to consider why certain sustainability approaches are adopted in some places and not others, and why at particular times and not others (Gibbs, Jonas, & While, 2003; Gibbs, Jonas, & While, 2002a). Vancouver's experience with food policy raises additional questions of significance to geographers: What specific tensions are generated by local government adoption of food policy? How, by whom and at what spatial scales are these tensions resolved in policy, planning and regulation? And what does food policy reveal about the role of local government in coordinating governance strategies at

different geographical scales and contexts? Underlying all of these questions is the importance of the broader Canadian context. Many argue that Canada's cities are currently at an historical crossroads characterised by active debate over the need for new governance arrangements and inter-governmental relations that better reflect the realities of a highly urbanised nation. Factors including globalisation, immigration flows, age demographics, social and cultural diversity, and the rise of civil society are producing a much richer and more complex urban fabric than in previous eras. As such, the re-scaling of local governance in the Canadian context has suggestive implications, particularly where emerging sustainability issues are concerned.

Governance and scale

This type of inquiry calls for a conceptualisation of scale not as a "pre-given, natural, and immutable level upon which social life occurs," but rather as "a socially constructed way of representing reality [that] divid[es] the world for specific political purposes" (McCann, 2003, p. 160). Many geographers argue that urban politics and policy-making are in fact constituted by multi-scaled sets of interlinked governance and regulatory processes driven by political strategies that frame reality (Gibbs et al., 2003, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Martin, McCann, & Purcell, 2003; Gibson-Graham 2002; Gibbs & Jonas, 2001; Swyngedouw, 1997). In this way, various actors mobilise particular scalar framings in an effort to:

> ... convince others of the merits of their particular understanding of how the world is, how it should be, and the policies that will make it better in the future (McCann 2003, p. 160).

These tensions and strategies emerged in Vancouver's case, where a complex and fluid re-scripting of the scales at which food policy was argued to be most appropriately mobilised was undertaken by various actors both inside and outside of City Hall in order to achieve local government endorsement of food system goals. For instance, the local scale needed to be actively constructed by proponents as an appropriate – and indeed irrefutable – site for food policy activities where it had not previously been understood as such. At the same time, the local scale was argued to embody an important site at which to respond to perceived gaps in social and

economic redistribution originating from other spatial scales of governance including that of the province. Specifically, by 2002, one year after coming to power, the Provincial Liberal government's New Era policies had generated $2.1 billion in income and corporate tax cuts, alongside unprecedented cuts to health care, education, and welfare characterised by many as an "anti-poor agenda" (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2002, p. 1). These cuts were being deeply felt at the local level where collaborative governmental and non-governmental responses to social program and service gaps were being sought, of which municipally-supported food policy was argued by proponents to be one.

Furthermore, reflecting the perception that 'local' food system problems are often tied to larger, national and global political economic structures (Allen, 1999), Vancouver's adoption of a food policy mandate was evoked by some supporters as a 'natural' antidote to dissatisfaction with activities associated with globalisation. Inherent in this association is the assumption that local government intervention in food policy constitutes a means to counteract trends of distant economic concentration, social disempowerment and environmental degradation (Hinrichs, 2003, p. 33). Significantly, these concerns align with all three commonly-cited 'pillars' of sustainability (social, environmental and economic), underscoring the common framing of food policy as a (global) sustainability issue (Koc & Dahlberg, 1999; Koc, M., R. MacRae, L.J.A. Mougeot & J. Welsh, 1999).

In all cases, from local to global, the contours of food system problems being framed including the spatial characteristics of their proposed solutions did not always correspond neatly with the specific social, political or economic circumstances of Vancouver. Of particular interest here is the extent to which Vancouver's early food policy development was conceived as a local or a global endeavour (or both) and whether these conceptualisations enabled or constrained its success. Fluid scalar understandings were further complicated by that fact that the food system problems being identified often lacked geographical differentiation by neighbourhood or identification of the varying needs of the specific population groups who lived in different parts of the city (e.g. children, youth, women, low-income, HIV+, aboriginal people). This becomes particularly striking given that the

Vancouver neighbourhoods with highest concentrations of food programs and services are predominantly those where the most vulnerable populations in the city are found. This raises the additional question of whether Vancouver's food policy development reflects a stakeholder-based or geographically-based movement, and whether this matters.

It was amid these household through to global conditions that food policy proponents in Vancouver struggled to diagnose the parameters of their food policy goals and strategies. In Vancouver's case, the shifts in geographical scales at which food policy was understood to be most appropriately mobilised were accompanied by shifts in what food policy itself was understood to be by various actors, and assumptions about whether outcomes should be mobilised 'on the ground' in the city's neighbourhoods, or indeed in other places altogether. Also implicated were perceptions of institutional opportunities and limitations, primarily on the part of local government, as food policy moved into implementation phases. In this way, Vancouver's experience with food policy exemplifies a complex set of circumstances, sites and rationales implicated in the adoption of what are understood to be sustainability issues by local governments. This dissertation examines how the official adoption of food policy by local government in Vancouver involved the privileging of certain actors, types of action, understandings of food policy, and scales of intervention over others, and the ways that these, and broader processes of change were coordinated in a specific case.

Research questions

1. *What conditions enabled the adoption of food policy by the City of Vancouver in 2003?*

2. *What specific tensions were generated by the City of Vancouver's adoption of food policy? How, by whom at what geographical scales were tensions addressed in policy, planning and regulation?*

3. *What can food policy reveal about the role of local government in coordinating governance strategies at different geographical scales and contexts, particularly where 'sustainability' is involved?*

Research objectives and contributions

This inquiry contributes to geographical and related literatures in at least three ways. First, the dissertation contributes findings from an in-depth case study of the ways in which the adoption and early implementation phases of a specific sustainability issue – food policy – were conceptualised and mobilised by various actors. Of particular interest is how strategies were conditioned by locally specific struggles, and how and by whom particular actions and scales were privileged. In this way, the research enriches geographers' understandings of how 'the local' and other scales are conceptualised in relation to sustainability, and the ways that these framings inform the resulting types of local policy and urban governance.

An additional dimension of this scholarly contribution involves attending to an identified gap in the local governance literature of particular interest to geographers. This gap pertains to "the material and spatial character of the spaces in which politics takes place" (McCann, 2002, p. 77), including, in particular, institutional spaces. This approach, referred to by some scholars as institutional ethnography (Smith,1987), seeks to analyse and theorise the institutions, organisations and bodies that govern human relations rather than the governed themselves (Hyndman, 2001). Accordingly, the research contributes a fine-grained analysis of professional and everyday practice that considers the perspectives of those who perform its daily activities. Specifically, although often predicated on discourses of joint government-citizen decision-making, Vancouver's food policy development was characterised by a number of disagreements about the 'place' of advocacy in local government institutions, the nature of public policy as an exclusive or collective endeavour, and the institutional and organisational limitations inherent in governance for sustainable urban development where problems consist of "multiple dimensions and cause-and-effect chains which are complex and difficult to determine unambiguously" (van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof, 2005, p. 48). These tensions were often expressed through a series of enduring binaries between 'citizens' and 'the state,' collective change (from below) and policy change (from above), that together revealed assumptions about the conceptualisation, practices and spatialities of governance and social change. These contributions are situated within the Canadian context, a site identified by scholars, policymakers and other stakeholders as in need of better theorisations of changes to urban politics

and the re-scaling of local governance arrangements (Blomley, 2004; Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Bradford, 2002; Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues, 2002; Smith & Stewart, 1998).

Second, in addition to analysing the specificities of place and scale in the adoption and implementation of food policy at the local level, the research contributes important findings related to the ways that governance activities are shaped by the structures of the state in terms of resources, powers and the ability to act (Gibbs et al., 2003, pp. 3 – 4). Where food policy is concerned, one mechanism often cited as a vehicle to resolve tensions inherent in multi-scaled sustainability issues is that of local partnerships or networks. Local partnership approaches are described as the facilitation of collaborative relationships between government, local institutions and community organisations to address cross-cutting urban problems (Larner & Craig, 2002). The results are argued to include shifts between previously understood scales, mandates, accountabilities and participants in modes of governance (Ibid.). Indeed, these shifts can be understood to reflect a deeper re-thinking of the very question of who and what cities are for (Amin, Massey, & Thrift, 2000).

Proponents argue that partnership approaches benefit from local knowledge and propose locally-appropriate solutions based on collaborative inclusionary processes, consensus-building practices, and local 'ownership' of solutions (Craig, 2004; Healey, 1996). In relation to food policy, this trend has been referred to as 'networked movements,' described as a form of citizen-based governance characterised by "development from below" of knowledge and solutions to urban problems (Wekerle, 2004; Welsh & MacRae, 1998). Community-based 'food movements' have been cited as exemplary networked movements (Wekerle, 2004). As such, the ways that food movements construct policy and participate in other networked activities from positions in civil society and in partnership with the state is the subject of growing interest to scholars and practitioners.

In Vancouver's case, the non-governmental organising efforts and multi-sectoral consultation processes leading up to and including the presentation of the Action Plan to City Council were

touted as "the most open and democratic process" that many observers – elected officials, City staff and other stakeholders alike – claim to have ever seen. Community delegates' presentations to City Council in support of the plan earned them a rare standing ovation from elected officials who were clearly taken aback by the number and range of stakeholders who had been working collaboratively for over a decade in support of food system issues. Local networks had by then achieved a number of successes in lobbying, designing and delivering programs, as well as raising awareness about food system issues. For the organisations involved, who were well accustomed to working in multi-sectoral networks to achieve food system goals, the approval of the Action Plan represented not only support of the recommendations codified in the plan, but equally, it represented recognition of the local partnership approaches used to achieve the changes being sought. Using Vancouver's experience with food policy as an illustrative case, this dissertation contributes findings from an analysis of the role of local partnerships, aimed at promoting collaborative relationships between local government, community organisations and other actors, in addressing urban food system problems.

Third, the research responds to an identified need for more comprehensive accounts of the evolution of urban food policies themselves, with a particular focus on the role of local government and other actors in developing various concepts and approaches. Food system scholars, Rocha (2001), Mougeot (2000), Pothukuchi (2000), Pothukuchi & Kaufmann (1999), MacRae (1999), Lang (1999a), and Koc & Dahlberg (1999) among others, argue that more comprehensive accounts of the evolution of local food initiatives are needed. One of the primary benefits of more comprehensive accounts is argued to be a better understanding of the correlations between food policy, sustainable development and collaborative forms of decision-making at the local level (Dubbeling, 2004; Mougeot, 2000; Koc & Dahlberg, 1999; MacRae, 1999). This dissertation adds to this body of scholarship, while at the same time contributing to a particularly neglected aspect of food policy analyses: the extent to which scales of food policy intervention are often either assumed or unspecified. The Iowa Food Policy Council (2005, p. 1), for instance, defines a food policy as:

... any legislative or administrative decision made by a government agency, business, or organization which effects how food is produced, processed, distributed, and purchased, designed to influence the operation of the food and agriculture system.

Examples of food policies include trade regulations; regulatory health and safety requirements for food based business; food ingredient labeling; decisions made by public institutions to purchase foods raised by local farmers; land use decisions pertaining to rural, urban and peri-urban agriculture; and policies designed to alleviate household-level food insecurity. These examples point to the extent to which food policies can be typified by overlapping and sometimes competing geographical and jurisdictional interests. Often striking is the ways in which shifting scales of food policy intervention are either taken as a pre-given or not specified at all as is the case in Iowa's definition.

Compounding this challenge is the conceptual genealogy of food policy that until relatively recently has been associated with concerns in the international arena, specifically, global hunger, 'national food security planning' and other aspects of structural adjustment initiatives (Hindle, 1990). In addition to the 'food security' issues of malnutrition, hunger and famine, a range of concerns with the 'global' food system often stand in for food system issues at all scales. Issues include commercialisation, corporate concentration of power, industrialisation, the role of institutional actors, diet and health, social impacts, food surpluses, food trade, and new environmental technologies. Given these global shifts and geo-political legacies, the challenge then becomes one of defining the scope and geography of an *urban* food system while acknowledging the differential impacts of food production, supply and distribution processes, and the multiple scales at which they operate. The past decade has seen a re-framing of food policy as an urban issue expressed in a growing trend towards cities and local authorities intervening directly in urban food systems issues (Argenti 2000, p. 3). As such, a small but growing number of local governments across the Americas and elsewhere are adopting and implementing municipally-affiliated food policies and

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food charters.[3] However, insofar as these locally-situated interventions often remain understood as expressions of, or indeed synonymous with, larger national or global political economic structures and scales, urban interventions in food policy provide a rich, and under-studied category of analysis within which to frame the inquiry.

Together, the three areas of scholarly contribution speak to the broad questions of how and why food policy as an issue associated with sustainable development was adopted in Vancouver; the specific tensions and mitigating strategies generated by its introduction; the challenges of its implementation; and the correlations between food policy and changing spatialities of the state at the local level.

Method and data gathering techniques

The methodology for this dissertation is informed by conceptual concerns that arose at least in part from my experience as a Social Planner for the City of Vancouver, and as of December 2004, the City's Food Systems Planner. I began working for the City in 2001. Initially my portfolio of projects was varied, but as time went on my work gradually became more focused on issues that relate to the City's goal of achieving social, environmental and economic sustainability. By July 2003, when I was asked to act as one of the project leads for the staff team who facilitated the work of the Food Policy Task Force, most of my major projects related to sustainability.

As a core member of the food policy staff team, my immersion in the City's emerging commitment to food policy involved the co-design and implementation of two intensive consultation processes with the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force. The first consultation process (September –

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[3] Canadian cities with food policies and / or food policy councils include Toronto, Ottawa, Kamloops, and Vancouver. In addition, food policy initiatives are under development in Winnipeg, Manitoba and Halton, Ontario. American cities considered innovators in food policy include Berkeley, CA; Portland, OR; Knoxville, TN; and Hartford, CT. It is important to note that many cities in the global south have for years been proposing solutions to urban food system vulnerabilities, often in response to crisis levels of hunger and poverty (International Development Research Centre, 2003; Argenti, 2000; Rocha, 2000; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2000a, 2000b, 1998; Dubbeling, 2001; Mougeot, 2000; Koc et al., 1999). The development of analytical frameworks to facilitate comparative research and information sharing between cities in the developed and developing world is paramount given the lack of data available to assess different processes, mechanisms and outcomes. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, a close examination of urban food policies in the developing world is beyond the scope of the project.

December 2003) led to the formulation of the City's Food Action Plan. During the second consultation process, from April to July 2004, I continued working with my food policy staff team colleagues to design and facilitate the process leading to the election of Vancouver's Food Policy Council.[4] In addition, I continued to provide support to on-going food-related City projects including farmers' markets, community gardens and a city-wide food system assessment. Over the course of this work I forged a number of linkages with community groups, non-profit organisations, service agencies and universities as a guest lecturer, workshop facilitator and information liaison. I became increasingly embedded in, and familiar with the City bureaucracy through a range of cross-departmental processes involving staff, senior management, and at times, City Councillors, relating to the approval and implementation of the Food Action Plan, election of the Food Policy Council and related projects. These experiences, in combination with my scholarly interest in responding to gaps in current geographical debates and related scholarship, placed me well to conduct research that aims to better understand the social, political and spatial dimensions of policy development and implementation. As such, the methodology for this dissertation is broadly situated within the traditions of ethnography and action research, approaches that recognise the role of the researcher as a participant in knowledge production, and assumes that such engagement yields valuable results.

The dissertation was conducted using a single case study approach. The research examines food policy development in Vancouver BC from June 2003 – December 2004, within a context of food policy activities in Vancouver that date to 1990. In keeping with the action research approach of this dissertation, a variety of data gathering techniques were employed throughout the research process. Using a policy cycle analysis as a guiding framework, three techniques were used: (1) semi-structured interviewing; (2) document analysis; and (3) participant observation. Data were analysed through the use of coding, triangulation and integration. The policy cycle analysis and data gathering techniques are explained further in Chapter Two.

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[4] A food policy council (FPC) is an officially sanctioned voluntary body comprised of stakeholders from various segments of a state / provincial or local food system. FPCs are collaborations between citizens and government officials that give voice to food-related concerns and interests. FPCs are asked to examine the operation of a local food system and provide ideas or recommendations for how it can be improved (Iowa Food Policy Council, 2005, p. 1).

Although Vancouver is far from the first North American city to take steps to intervene directly in food system issues, it is emerging as prototypical for reasons that are explored in depth in the dissertation. In brief, the official adoption of the City of Vancouver's Food Action Plan makes it one of only two cities in Canada with policies and mechanisms embedded within a City department rather than acting in a non-governmental or advisory capacity. Vancouver is the only local government in Canada with two designated food policy staff positions. Consequently, the range of food policy supports and supporters both 'inside' and 'outside' of local government in Vancouver provides a unique opportunity for a close reading of a partnership-based policy experiment that is still unfolding. Furthermore, Vancouver's food policy initiatives are based on a sustainable food systems philosophy, an approach that was codified in the Food Action Plan approved by City Council in 2003. In practice, this means that instead of isolating individual aspects of the food system (e.g. urban food production, public health or anti-hunger), Vancouver's mandate assumes an over-arching, multi-sectoral approach to addressing problems from food production through to recycling of food waste. The uniqueness of a City-mandated systems approach to food policy began to draw national and international attention to Vancouver after less than a year of its existence. At the same time, because of its uniqueness, Vancouver's case also presents the opportunity to examine the challenges inherent in attempting to operationalise such a wide-ranging approach.

Organisation of the dissertation

Chapter One of the dissertation outlines the conceptual framework upon which the research is based. Chapter Two presents the methodology used in the dissertation. Chapter Three provides a baseline mapping of food policy at local, provincial and federal scales in Canada. Chapters Four through Eight present the case study findings. Lastly, the conclusion summarises the findings and outlines future research directions.

CHAPTER 1
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Reconceptualising the links between local governance, sustainability and policy-making

The conceptual framework for this dissertation stems from an identified need to better connect and theorise the links between governance,[5] sustainability and policy-making at the local scale (Keil, 2004; While, Jonas, & Gibbs, 2004; Gibbs et al., 2003, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Chatterton & Style, 2001; Lake & Hanson, 2000). Of particular interest are questions of how and at which spatial scales policies on sustainability develop, the types of groups and interests involved in their formulation and the resulting types of local policy and governance. This approach asks whether 'sustainability' brings to local politics particular material and discursive practices. It also asks whether actors aiming to shape policy face changing opportunities and constraints that can involve strategic shifts in arguments, participants and political practices (McCann, 2003, p. 160; Gibbs, Jonas, & While, 2002c, p. 132). Among the findings of these inquiries is that the sustainability agenda is profoundly reshaping governance at multiple scales, although explanations vary as to the causes, nature and extent of changes (Jonas, 2004; Keil, 2004; Gibbs, 2002; While et al., 2002; Lake, 2000). Informed by these conceptual approaches, this dissertation examines why and how a specific sustainability issue, food policy, was adopted in the City of Vancouver. Issues that are examined include the tensions inherent in coordinating governance strategies at different spatial scales and contexts; how, by whom and at what scales tensions were resolved; the challenges of institutional change and capacity in support of 'sustainable' cities; the role of non-governmental participation in governance and policy-making; and practices of partnership-based decision-making.

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[5] 'Governance' is understood here as: "shifts from centralised and bureaucratic forms of decision-making to a plurality of coexisting networks and partnerships that interact as overlapping webs of relationships at diverse spatial scales from the neighbourhood to the globe" (Hubbard, Kitchin, Bartley, & Fuller, 2002, pp. 175 – 176).

The Canadian context

The changes to local governance being analysed in this dissertation are situated in the Canadian context where governance arrangements are undergoing transformations in their social, political and spatial composition. In a 1998 report entitled *Making Local Accountability Work in British Columbia: Reforming Municipal Non-Electoral Accountability*, Smith & Stewart pose the provocative question: Why we should we care about the study of our local governing? After all, Canadian municipalities do not comprise a formal level of government according to the Constitution, but rather 'statutory bodies' accountable to provincial or territorial governments.[6] At the same time it is clear that local governments have become key players in the governance of Canada and its provinces. Local governments make far-reaching policy and development decisions with at times global impacts, they oversee multi-million dollar budgets and are recognised as the Country's 'economic engine.' Smith & Stewart (2003) theorise this tension as the 'mushy middle,' a situation in which provincial governments, while retaining authority, allow local governments to exercise power, or in the absence of provincial direction or prohibition, power is exercised in any event. In this capacity, two competing versions of local governance in Canada can be identified:

> The first 'democratic' definition represents local authorities as the first order of government, a training ground for democracy and responsible government, accountable, participatory, accessible, important and independent service providers. The second 'restricted' definition emphasizes local governments as creatures of the province, administrative arms of senior jurisdictions, puppets on a shoestring. Both descriptions contain grains of truth (Smith & Stewart, 1998, p. 3).

The contradictions that emerge from these understandings reflect the "often ambivalent position this local order of governing has held in [the Canadian] framework of governance" (Ibid). However, the fact remains that Canada is a nation of cities with almost 80% of Canadians now living in urban settings, approximately two thirds of whom in metropolitan centres (city-regions of over 100,000 population) (Ibid.). Canadian cities are currently caught in the throes of competing imperatives to

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[6] Municipalities in Canada, do however, have a number of areas of direct responsibility. These can include water, sewage, waste collection, public transit, land use planning, libraries, emergency services, animal control, and economic development. For the purpose of this dissertation, I use the designation 'local government' or 'municipal government' while recognising the constitutional relegation of municipalities to the status of 'creatures' of provinces and territories.

'compete globally' while at the same time responding to mounting social, environmental and infrastructural demands in their localities, typically with limited resources. For these and other reasons it is difficult to deny that, in Canada, local politics matter profoundly. In this sense, this dissertation can be situated within studies of Canadian urban governance that seek better theorisations of changes to urban politics and the re-scaling of local governance arrangements (Blomley, 2004; Bourne & Simmons, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Bradford, 2002; Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues, 2002; Smith & Stewart, 1998). A number of reasons for studying Canadian urban governance can be identified. First, and most obvious, is the fact that Canada is now so highly urbanised. Second, its major city-regions face mounting social and environmental problems related to imbalances between city responsibilities and revenue sources, the latter being limited almost exclusively to a property tax base. Third, there is growing pressure caused by senior governmental downloading of responsibilities onto local governments without corresponding local revenue raising capacity. Fourth, Canada is contending with the challenge of ensuring the wellbeing of the domestic economy, while also responding to real and perceived pressure to ensure its 'international competitiveness' (most often linked to the 'competitiveness' of its cities).

At the same time, a focus on economic viability risks overlooking equally important dimensions of the study of Canadian cities. Specifically, studies of local governance in Canada can lead to better understandings of the reasons behind mounting calls for better accountability, local democratic participation and representation in local government and civic life (Canadian Research Policy Networks, 2005; Shields, 2005; Bradford, 2002). In this capacity, among the most notable trends in Canadian cities is the proliferation of community and institutional experimentation often spear-headed by previously under-represented groups seeking new avenues for meaningful input and participation in civic life (Smith & Stewart, 1998). Described as the "democratisation of local institutions" or "development from below" of knowledge and solutions to urban problems (Amin *et al.,* 2000), these trends, although not without questions as to whether they present genuine transformations, have nevertheless become features of Canada's urban, and indeed national, governance landscape. In policy terms, this focus reflects the growing significance of the social and

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environmental dimensions of urban life. The way that these dimensions become expressed in Canada's local governance arrangements and inter-governmental relationships has become a key question for scholars and policymakers, and one that is taken up in this dissertation through a focus on one city's experience. Of particular significance are disagreements over the nature of shifts in governmental activities. Smith & Stewart, for example, argue that:

> ... local governments [in Canada] are often more limited by their own lack of imagination or political will as much as by either strict constructionism or constitutional and legislative hindrances of senior jurisdictional authority (2003, p. 2).

Equally significant is the new discourse of 'social capital' and 'social economies' that has recently emerged in Canadian federal politics. This discourse calls into question relationships between government and society by proposing 'new accountabilities,' in which the non-profit sector and other voluntary organisations are expected to shoulder additional responsibility for social service provision (Shields, 2005). These developments are particularly salient where sustainability is concerned, comprising as it does, an equally prevalent trend in Canadian cities, and one that is typically predicated on principles of inclusiveness and broad participatory impulses. As such, this dissertation can be situated within studies of the links between local governance, sustainability and policy-making that are attentive to the specificities of Canadian urbanism and local politics.

Key assumptions

This dissertation is based on a number of key assumptions. The first assumption relates to the meaning of sustainability, understood broadly as: "the ability to meet current needs without jeopardising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Currently, the scope of the sustainable development literature is wide-ranging and multi-faceted. This dissertation is concerned with those aspects of the literature that examine the widespread adoption of sustainability agendas in urban contexts, opening a now well recognised 'policy space' linking sustainability principles with urban development and local politics (Keil, 2004; Keil & Desfors, 2003; Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003; Gibbs, 2002; Gibbs et al., 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Bruff & Wood, 2000; Keil & Graham, 1998;

Keil, 1998a). Specifically, the dissertation is situated within a conceptual approach to theorising sustainable cities that understands sustainability not as a normative exercise,[7] but as a *governance project* involving trade-offs between various actors and interests operating at different spatial scales in the resolution of conflicts (Jonas, 2004).[8] Of particular interest is a recognition of the need to spatialise debates on sustainable urban development by examining the scales at which locally-grounded tensions are resolved, including the regional, national and international contexts within which they unfold (Gibbs et al., 2002c, p. 126). Accordingly, a second key assumption upon which this dissertation is based is that urban politics and policy-making for sustainability are constituted by multi-scaled sets of interlinked governance practices involving the movement of state power 'down' to local and regional scales, but also "upwards and sideways" (McCann, 2003; Martin, McCann, & Purcell 2003; Gibbs et al., 2001; Swyngedouw 1997). As such, this dissertation is informed by a growing tradition in geography that takes scale itself as an object of inquiry that can enable better understandings of governance and urban politics (McCann, 2003; Martin et al., 2003; Swyngedouw, 1997).

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[7] Normative approaches to research can be understood as those theories or methods which concern "what ought to be" (Dictionary of Human Geography, 2000, p. 557). Normative approaches can be contrasted with positivist approaches which concern "what is, was, or will be" (Ibid.). In this way, normative approaches express a value statement about whether a situation or process is desirable or not. In relation to research on urban sustainability, normative approaches often seek to identify 'best practices' that are assumed to be transferable between and among cities without attention to the specificities of different locales. One objective of this dissertation includes a practical orientation towards identifying solutions to the challenges of sustainability governance in a specific case. However, this should not be interpreted as an interest in identifying normative judgements about sustainable cities broadly. In this way, my central concern is not whether sustainability is on or off a governance agenda, but rather the ways in which social, economic and environmental issues are balanced to achieve a locally-appropriate solutions in a particular case.
[8] It is recognised that definitions of sustainability are marked by deep disagreement over what is to be sustained, by whom and for what purpose. While understandings vary, most definitions evoke a number of core principles including: Quality of life (social, economic and environmental); care for the environment and / or ecological carrying capacity; thought for the future and the precautionary principle; fairness and equity, participation and partnerships in decision making; long term planning; resilience and viability (Jepson, 2001; State University of New Jersey, Centre for Urban Policy Research, 2000, p. 8; Rees and Wackernagel, 1996, p. 224). Apart from these general characteristics and the broad definition cited by the World Commission on Environment and Development, this dissertation does not assume – or seek – a fixed understanding of sustainability, but rather concerns itself with the relationships between governance activities and locally-specific understandings of sustainability.

Geography, governance and scale

In geographical thought, at least three meanings of scale can be identified: cartographic,
methodological, and geographical (Sayre, 2005; Dictionary of Human Geography, 2000, pp. 724 –
725). Cartographic scale refers to the level of abstraction at which a map is constructed. This type
of scale reflects the size and detail of what is represented, and therefore determines what is
included and excluded in a map (Ibid., p. 724). Closely related is an understanding of scale as a
methodological issue inherent to observation. In this sense, the assumption is that:

> the scientific observer must consciously choose a scale (or scales) suited to his or
> her question, in full recognition of the methodological and epistemological
> significance of the decision (Sayre, 2005, pp. 280 – 281).

In this way, scale reflects choices made by a researcher in the attempt to gather information to
answer a research problem (Dictionary of Human Geography, 2000, p. 725). An example might
include using census tract data to determine levels of income or educational attainment in a given
place. The third meaning of scale, geographical scale, refers to dimensions of specific landscapes
over and above conceptual abstractions. So, for example, the regional, urban, national or global
scales, while subject to analysis according to administrative or political boundaries, can also be
analysed in relation to specific social, historical and cultural conditions.

Until the 1980s, methodological and geographical meanings of scale were not clearly
distinguished, with geographical scale often assumed to be the product of methodology or taken
unproblematically as a given (Ibid.). Over the course of the 1980s and 1990s earlier assumptions
about scale began to be called into question leading to a still unfolding theoretical debate about the
nature and role of scale in geographical research (Smith, 1993; Lefebvre, 1990). While the full
genealogy of these debates will not be traced here, what is significant to note for the purpose of
this dissertation is the assumption that geographical scale is neither natural or given, but rather is
socially constructed, historically contingent and subject to contestation (rescaling) (Brenner, 2001;
Swyngedouw, 1997; Smith, 1993). In this sense, scale has been described as "sites to situate and

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explain events" (Swyngedouw, 1997, p. 138), as "the geographical resolution of contradictory processes" (Smith, 1993, p. 99), and as "platforms for specific kinds of social activity ... from the body, the home and community, through the local, regional, national and global (Dictionary of Human Geography, 2000, p. 725). As such, social and political processes are argued to be characterised, and indeed conditioned, by particular scalar arrangements which are in turn mobilised to achieve particular outcomes (Martin et al., 2003, p. 115; McCann, 2003). For example, local government adoption of food policy in Vancouver was characterised by a fluid set of framings of scale by actors both inside and outside of City Hall. Various scales from the local through to the global were evoked in order to achieve local government endorsement of food system goals while at the same time attempting to reconcile issues that local government could not address directly through its own policy, planning and regulatory capacity. In this way, scale is understood as an important tool to analyse spatial strategies of "containment and empowerment" in achieving particular outcomes (Dictionary of Human Geography, 2000, p. 726). It is precisely the relationships between scalar reframings, competing assumptions about state reorganisation, and ensuing local governance responses that are of most significance to this dissertation.

Food policy as a sustainability issue

A third key assumption is that food policy is an issue of sustainability. The rationale for this assumption is that food policy is typically, although sometimes problematically, aligned with all three 'pillars' of sustainability (social, environmental and economic) (Koc & Dahlberg, 1999). In this capacity, the dissertation is informed by a small but growing body of scholarship on sustainable food systems in planning, community development and international development research. A number of gaps have been identified in this burgeoning literature: First, the need for more comprehensive accounts of the evolution of food policies and sustainable food systems in specific cases; Second, the need for more robust theoretical and conceptual tools to assist in analysing food policy development, particularly in relation to the roles and benefits of different stakeholders; And third, the need for better understandings of the correlations between food policy, sustainable development and inclusive forms of decision-making at the local level (Wekerle, 2004; Dubbeling, 2004; Rocha, 2001; Mougeot, 2000; MacRae, 1999; Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; Lang, 1999;

Koc & Dahlberg, 1999). This dissertation attends to the identified gaps in the sustainable food systems literature while at the same time responding to neglected aspects of food policy analyses: the under-theorisation of governance issues, and the ways in which scales of food policy intervention are often either assumed or unspecified.

It is here that a number of the original contributions of this dissertation are made. In addition to spatialising food policy analyses (discussed later in this chapter), the research also foregrounds food policy as an emerging sustainability issue for which no coordinated governance imperative exists at any scale, but for which new governance arrangements are being voluntarily forged. The emergence of municipally-affiliated food policies and / or food policy councils in growing numbers of cities in Canada lends a suggestive counter-perspective to arguments that "the range of politically legitimate options in public policy seems to be narrowing rather than widening" (Peck, 2001, p. 446). The 'political narrowing' argument suggests that policy programs are being selectively oriented away from social citizenship and need-based social redistribution in favour of new political-economic 'settlements.' At the same time, it is argued that against the backdrop of apparently inevitable state 'rollback,' that governmental intervention and public spending may in fact be increased (or 'rolled out') in areas such as "the micro-management of the poor, immigration controls and labour market flexibility initiatives" (Ibid, p. 449). In contrast, food policy represents a non-statutory policy area for which no clear or coordinated mandate exists at any level of government in Canada. In effect, it cannot be argued that Canadian governance at any scale is being 'oriented away' from food policy (or indeed, 'oriented back') because no coordinated mandate has historically been held for its delivery. In this way, food policy presents a compelling opportunity to more carefully examine the internal dynamics of so-called 'bottom-up' governance and policy development and its actual – rather than rhetorical – potential for "deepening and democratizing local institutional capacities" (Ibid, p. 451).

This contribution is particularly valuable given that much of the existing literature on sustainability and governance privileges tensions between the environment and the economy at the expense of a range of additional issues that are implicated in local government adoption of sustainability

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issues. When approached from a systems perspective,[9] food policy can embody a host of 'sustainability' goals including environmental protection, public health and nutrition, anti-poverty, community capacity building, participatory decision-making, social inclusion and community economic development among others. Although not without its own set of internal contradictions, such a multi-faceted approach can enable multiple and disparate community groups, agencies and individuals to engage and organise around an issue in which they all have a stake. What has been seen to follow is collaboration not only among community groups and organisations with at times widely differing mandates and constituents, but also between communities and governmental bodies. In this way, the multi-faceted nature of food policy can allow numerous conceptual and bureaucratic points of entry into institutions and organisations with the capacity or potential capacity to realise desired outcomes. The result is an opportunity to study multi-dimensional changes to the spaces and processes of local governance that are not limited to an environment / economy dualism.

Partnership approaches to governance for sustainability

The fourth and final assumption is that governance aiming to enable sustainability (and sustainable food systems) requires multi-stakeholder strategies involving a range of actors. At the same time, it is recognised that there is little agreement over the types and number of actors involved in multi-stakeholder processes, or whether they actually result in more inclusive and participatory decision-making. Furthermore, the ability of institutions to adapt to new arrangements is inconclusive. The challenge lies in analysing proposed responses to the problematic of multi-stakeholder approaches to urban sustainability. One mechanism often cited as a vehicle to resolve tensions is that of local partnerships or networks. Although 'partnerships' and 'networks' are often used interchangeably in the literature, in the context of this dissertation local partnerships are understood to involve 'formalised arrangements' between groupings of both 'influential actors' and non-traditional actors including community and voluntary organisations, activists, non-governmental agencies, universities and others, resulting in shifts between previously understood scales, mandates,

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[9] A systems approach to food policy typically refers to an over-arching, multi-sectoral approach to addressing problems that include the full 'spectrum' of food issues including production, processing, distribution, access, consumption and recycling of food waste. A systems approach can be contrasted with an approach that isolates individual aspects of the food system (e.g. urban food production, public health or anti-hunger).

accountabilities and participants in modes of governance (Larner & Craig, 2002, p. 4).[10] Networks are understood here as flexible open-ended configurations of allies (of which specific partnerships may form a part), that may be created and disassembled for different tasks, and who aim to build collaborative solutions by working both inside and outside of local government (MacRae, 1999, p. 194). Both local partnerships and networks are understood to embody specific process-based characteristics including collaborative decision-making, local responsiveness and increased capacity for participatory governance. In relation to food policy, this trend is often referred to as 'networked movements,' described as a form of citizen-based governance characterised by "development from below" of knowledge and solutions to urban problems (Wekerle, 2004; Appadurai, 2001). In addition to their alleged benefits, partnership approaches to governance have been subject to scrutiny and criticism for reasons that are discussed later in this chapter, and analysed in the context of the case study in later chapters.

The key assumptions of this dissertation draw together three areas of research that have developed with surprisingly few connections between them: (1) sustainability as a governance project; (2) partnership approaches to sustainability governance; and (3) sustainable food systems. While all three continue to make important contributions to understandings of local politics, sustainable urban development and policy formulation, there has been relatively little attention given to the points of intersection between them. This chapter provides a conceptual framing of the major debates of each, and demonstrates the ways in which this dissertation forges better links between them.

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[10] For the purpose of this dissertation it is important to distinguish between partnership approaches to statutory and non-statutory services. The trend towards contracting statutory services to non-governmental and private actors has a different set of implications when it comes to governing alignments and agenda setting, particularly where the trend towards public / private partnerships is concerned.

1. Sustainability as a governance project

Conceptualising sustainability as a governance project requires an examination of advances in understandings of governance itself. In recent years geographers have shown increasing interest in theorising the relationships between the state, the market, civil society and other interests including issues relating to governance, citizenship and social justice[11] (Hubbard et al., 2002, p. 175). Often drawing on the tools and approaches of political science including coalition and regime theories, regulation theories, policy agenda setting theories, and policy network theories, geographers have developed new approaches to questions related to modes of governance particularly at the local scale (Ibid, p. 176). This dissertation is most concerned with issues relating to two major themes in the urban governance literature: (1) the nature of organisations and the social processes that operate within and outside of formal political institutions including in particular, the blurring of previously assumed distinctions between the state, market and civil society leading newly configured networks and partnerships; and (2) the ways that governance functions across space and in specific geographical contexts, including institutional contexts (Martin et al., 2003; Hubbard et al., 2002; Hyndman, 2001; Dictionary of Human Geography, 2000, p. 317). Furthermore, the dissertation assumes a focus on *modes* of governance reflecting an interest in theorising changes in state intervention rather than assumptions of a withdrawal or weakening of government (Hubbard et al., 2002, p. 190). One of the cornerstones of the modes of governance approach is the concept of urban governing alignments, described as the coalitions and power structures that set and carry out governing agendas. A key correlation becomes the relationship between who governs (coalition composition) and what they seek to accomplish (coalition agenda) (DiGaetano & Klemanski, 1999, p. 8). The concepts of governing alignments, governing coalitions, power structures and governing agendas, as they have been understood in the urban literatures, are summarised in Table 1:

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[11] Although not central to this dissertation, there is an emerging stand-alone sub-literature that theorises the links between sustainability and social justice. Contributors include Agyeman (2005a, 2005b); Wekerle (2004); Sundberg (2003); Agyeman & Warner (2002); Appadurai (2001); Escobar (2001) and Anand (2000). This literature typically examines themes related to resistance to globalisation, 'environmental citizenship,' activism 'from below,' and social movements. Some aspects of these themes are taken up in later chapters of this dissertation, in particular, Chapter Five.

Table 1: Governing alignments, coalitions, power structures and governing agendas

Urban governing alignments	The arrangements of urban governance including governing coalitions, power structures and governing agendas.
Governing coalitions	Constellations of leaders that come together around particular sets of issues or problems.
Power structures	The informal relations through which governing elites allocate political resources and carry out governing agendas.
Governing agendas	The strategies (policies, programs, etc.) that ruling coalitions use to tackle the problems at hand.

Source: DiGaetano & Klemanski, 1999, p. 87

A number of different types of governing coalitions have been identified. These include pro-growth coalitions, characterised by members including elected officials, development officials and economic leaders; growth management coalitions including elected officials, planners, and environmentalists; social reform coalitions made up of elected officials, progressive development and planning professionals, and lower-class community activists; and caretaker coalitions made up of fiscally conservative elected and professional officials and small property owners (Ibid, p. 9). Scholars speculate that the creation of governing coalitions may stem from the constitutionally limited scope and authority of the local state. In the context of relatively weak local states, the contention is that it has been necessary to construct informal structures of power to compensate for the limited direct authority of government (Ibid, p. 19). The purpose of forming urban governing coalitions is therefore a matter of "pooling resources, not winning elections or legislative votes" (Ibid, p. 16).

One of the weaknesses of the governing coalition approach is that the role of 'ruling elites' can be over-privileged at the expense of non-governmental actors, particularly community-based groups and networks. While a conventional governing coalition approach can succeed in challenging the notion that urban politics are dominated by "monolithic interest groups" who exercise influence "only by virtue of their electoral power" (Hall & Hubbard, 1996, p. 156), the approach can overlook the fact that access to local politics is uneven, and that certain coalitions enjoy more favourable opportunities even when their composition is defined more flexibly to include non-elite groups. Moreover, coalition theories have been criticised for obscuring the "multitude of conflicts,

compromises and other political manoeuvrings that constitute policy-making" (Stone & Saunders, 1987 in Hubbard et al., 2002, p. 182). They are also criticised for reducing urban issues to purely political economic factors, overlooking social and cultural influences, or what in a sustainability paradigm would be referred to as the 'social pillar.' This is not to suggest that the notion of power is not a central concern for governing coalition theorists. The ways in which ruling coalitions govern is acknowledged to depend heavily on urban power structures, or the ability to carry out governing agendas. It is the dispersal of power among groups that is in question. In this regard, some theorists view political power in a highly stratified manner with resources concentrated in the hands of social, economic and political elites (Domhoff ,1978). Conversely, other more pluralistic thinkers understand political power as being dispersed among organised political groupings producing multiple sites of power (DiGaetano & Klemanski, 1999, p. 18).

Readings of the role of coalition building in local governance reinforce the conceptual framework of this dissertation in a number of ways. First, coalition building is recognised as a practice common to liberal democratic politics whose function is:

> ... to find common ground among differing interests as a means to work out
> collective solutions, if possible. In this sense, governing coalitions unite civic and
> political leaders with different interests and outlooks around a common policy
> agenda (DiGaetano & Klemanski, 1999, p. 14).

In this way, the inherently conflictual nature of urban citizenship and governance is acknowledged, including the inevitable but necessary conflicts involved in negotiating the two (Amin et al., 2000). Second, in gesturing towards the persuasive techniques involved in 'pooling resources' to achieve outcomes, what is suggested is the significance of the role of discourse in shaping contemporary urbanism. Instead of relegating discourse to the category of 'mere representation,' (Harvey, 1989) the power of discursive strategies can be shown to effect wide ranging social, economic and material consequences. When the production and deployment of discourses are brought into crisper focus in analyses of local governance and policy development, as attempted here, what can result is a richer, more complex account of changing economic and political alignments.

Regulation theory

Another framework used to analyse modes of governance is that of regulation theory. Regulation theory can be understood as the attempt to integrate the structural dynamics of capitalism with the institutional forms of society (Gibbs 2002, p. 15). The theory seeks to explain how relatively stable social and economic conditions are maintained in order to secure the expanded reproduction of capitalism, including the processes of 're-regulation' that result from changes in patterns of production and consumption. *Modes* of regulation, then, refer to the collection of social relations (e.g. social institutions, behavioural norms, and governmental regulation) that act together to mitigate against failures – or respond to transformations – in capitalism (Gibbs, 2002, p. 16; Hubbard et al., 2002, p. 187). Because modes of regulation are understood to be social processes, they may emerge as particularly relevant where sustainability governance and policy-making are concerned (Gibbs, 2002). The social concerns inherent in sustainability issues mean that their development involves new regulatory balances between and among traditional and non-traditional actors and institutions. For the purpose of this dissertation, regulation theory is understood as a useful frame of reference to analyse broader shifts in the economy and society generally, particularly given its focus on the role of scale and discourse in shaping governance outcomes (Gibbs, 2002). However, as with coalition theories, regulation theory should be approached critically because of the implicit assumption that the "expanded reproduction of capitalism" (Jessop 1990) is a necessary outcome of contemporary shifts in the economy and society. As Mitchell (2004, p. 9) and others argue, shifts in governance and regulation do not have capital accumulation as their only and inevitable purpose. Instead, it should be recognised that multiple forces "constitute the state and affect its tactics and targets" (Marston in Mitchell 2004, p. 9). These forces include the economic realm, but equally the role of social and cultural discourses in challenging – and at times transforming – practices of governance and the politics of scale (Ibid., pp. 9 – 10).

Governance and sustainable urban development

While new approaches to governance continue to be theorised by geographers, few frameworks have until recently, integrated sustainability. Reflecting the explosive growth of sustainability discourse and practice over the past decade, this gap is beginning to be addressed. This can be

interpreted at least in part, as a response to criticisms of sustainability research as being normative in character, focusing narrowly on best practices, and under-theorising issues of governance. Studies of sustainable urban development are now examining the regulatory pressures on governments, and how political practices influence the ways in which sustainability issues are incorporated into development and planning strategies (Gibbs et al., 2002c, p. 124). Among those doing work in this area are a group of UK scholars who have undertaken a comprehensive comparative study of the geographies of economic and environmental governance in England. This body of work asks whether local authorities, local firms, government departments, and pressure groups have coalesced to create relatively coherent institutional structures and governing coalitions for managing economy-environment tensions at the sub-national scale (Jonas, 2004; Gibbs et al., 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; While et al., 2002). Similarly, Chatterton & Style (2001) examine how the concept of sustainable development is being put into practice by local policy partnership networks in Newcastle, UK. In addition, Roger Keil (2004, 2003, 1998a) has investigated the relationships between environmental policy-making and state restructuring in the cities of Toronto and Los Angeles.

An equally important factor leading to new analytical approaches to sustainability is that it is now conceived as having relevance to urban settings, a link that was not always evident in early conceptual framings. The urbanisation of sustainability is commonly associated with the Agenda 21 manifesto adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. Agenda 21 emphasises the key role of local authorities in delineating sustainability goals and implementing them at the local scale (Lake, 2000, p. 70). The questions of how cities have come to be understood as environments worth sustaining, and how these understandings become institutionalised in municipal governance and planning are now analysed with more regularity. The result is a growing literature that examines the 'policy space' linking sustainability principles with urban development and local politics. These inquiries assert that the close of the twentieth century was marked by new distinctly new forms of urban growth that are being articulated with discourses on environment, nature and sustainability in unprecedented ways:

> Fordism and globalisation have affected natural and built environments as well as social relations and political processes. The reinsertion of nature into urbanisation, then, is specifically related to the crisis of societal relations with nature engendered by the social and spatial dynamics of Fordism and globalisation (Keil & Graham, 1998, p. 101).

The linking of these shifts with broader global processes is echoed by other scholars:

> Nature changed in the 1970s ...With decolonisation and the environmental movements of the 1960s and 1970s coupled with the oil shock of 1973, the utilitarian presumptions that undergirded so much of the relationship to nature under capitalism hit their limits .. The very grounds of capitalism's global ambition – environmental as much as spatial – had been altered (Katz, 1998, p. 46).

While these analyses tend to focus on shifts in how the environment and 'nature' are conceived both globally, and in relation to the city, equally significant are the social dimensions of sustainability. In particular, the issue of uneven access to the benefits of urban sustainability has emerged as a key question with important governance implications. For instance, a study of local Agenda 21 programs in the US reveals that:

> [Agenda 21 programs in the US] are not found ... anywhere in the declining industrial mid-western section of the country ... All are relatively small, middle-income communities with relatively homogenous populations and high levels of educational attainment (Lake, 2000, pp. 77 – 78).

These links reveal the ways in which issues of social justice and more inclusive, participatory governance have become important elements in urban sustainability scholarship and practice.

This dissertation assumes an approach to sustainability as a governance project, while at the same time attending gaps in the emerging literature. First, my approach is attentive to the specificities of *urban* sustainability as a scale that have not until recently been considered systematically in relation to sustainable development or to governance. Second, where sustainability *is* assumed to have urban governance implications, my approach responds to a tendency to privilege tensions between the environment and the economy at the expense of a range of additional issues that are implicated in local government adoption of sustainability issues. When approached from a systems

perspective, sustainability implicates issues that relate to the environment, the economy, as well as a host of issues that can be considered to fall within the social realm or sphere of sustainability. In so doing, what results in an opportunity to take account of increasingly multi-faceted contexts for local governance involving regulation 'from above' and activism 'from below' (Gibbs et al., 2002c). A literature that expresses these participatory impulses and analyses their alleged attributes in depth is that of local partnerships. Local partnerships are emerging as a suggestive, although at times problematic, example of initiatives aimed at strengthening local communities and improving opportunities for local active participation (Larner & Craig, 2002; Healey, 1996). Local partnerships constitute the second main body of research that informs this dissertation.

2. Local partnerships

Partnership approaches to governance have emerged as an area of active geographical debate. They can be broadly understood as the incorporation of non-governmental actors into the formulation of policy-making and regulatory frameworks (Craig, 2004; Larner, 2004a; Larner & Craig 2002; Hubbard et al., 2002; Chatterton & Style, 2001). As a strategy to address cross-cutting urban problems, local partnership developments are argued to involve "sustained efforts to formalise partnership arrangements" resulting in shifts between previously understood scales, mandates, accountabilities and participants in modes of governance (Larner & Craig 2002, p. 4). As an expression of networked governance, local partnerships are cited as new vehicles to enable risk-sharing and trust-building between the public, private, voluntary and community sectors (Geddes, 2000, p. 784). Proponents argue that local partnerships hold the potential to draw on local knowledge and propose locally-appropriate solutions based on collaborative inclusionary processes, consensus-building practices, and local 'ownership' of solutions (Craig, 2004; Healey, 1996). Partnership approaches are cited as new ways of creating policy and informing governance by drawing on "vital policy intelligence" (Bradford, 2002, p. v) found at the level of neighbourhoods where people live and where community organisations are based.

At the same time, it is recognised that local partnerships have emerged out of an increasingly complex context for social service delivery and governance, and a growing diversity of

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stakeholders. Local partnerships encompass a range of meanings and applications resulting in disagreement over what partnerships achieve and who they serve. Debates over the nature and uses of partnerships raise a number of important questions, many of which are deeply geographical in nature: Which governance issues should be addressed locally, regionally, nationally and globally? Who comprises 'the community' in these processes, and can they be located geographically? What is the role of local government in social redistribution functions? And finally, what challenges are raised for non-governmental actors and self-defined activists who are participating in processes "where larger scales may remain powerfully determinant" (Craig, 2004; Larner & Craig, 2002). Over and above the conceptual slippages related to 'what partnership really means,' there is little agreement over how a partnership might be quantified (i.e. How many partners? How many of which types of actor? What is the minimum duration of a partnership arrangement?). Although not of central importance in every case, these questions can have implications particularly around issues of participation in partnership arrangements (i.e. who is included and who is left out?).

Within this context of varying meanings and applications, local partnerships can perhaps be most usefully conceptualised as one in a series of new institutional forms with its own set of challenges and opportunities. The suggestion that local partnerships can increase the capacity of systems of governance to tackle issues in more inclusive and accountable ways rests on the extent to which they succeed in achieving community participation that surpasses mere tokenism or window-dressing (McCann, 2002; Geddes, 2000). The literature suggests that the capacity of local governance to tackle social problems can be enhanced through partnerships when the following conditions are met: (1) local knowledge is shared through a partnership framework that helps develop a more thorough understanding of problems and local conditions; (2) the 'necessary currency' of mutual trust between government and other actors, particularly community-based groups, is established; (3) levels of policy coordination and integration are adequate to ensure activities of different organisations are oriented to a common purpose; (4) partnerships foster policy innovation in the form of new approaches to cross-cutting issues that transcend the policy domain

of individual agencies; and (5) coordination and integration result in the ability to pool financial and human resources, and leverage further resources (Geddes, 2000, pp. 789 - 91).

Evidence has shown that these conditions are not easily achieved. Although partnership is often portrayed as "returning politics to the people," critics have observed that there is "a glaring absence" of evidence to justify such claims (Ling in Hubbard et al., 2002, p. 179). Particularly for community and other non-governmental actors, there can be high transaction costs and low resourcing of coordination involved in attending meetings, and working across institutions to integrate policies and actors (Geddes, 2000; Craig, 2004). Complications also arise as a result of lingering competitive contractualism for service delivery creating a situation in which community groups are expected to simultaneously compete and cooperate. There are additional challenges related to lack of clarity around accountabilities and the alignment of mandates (Craig, 2004) especially in relation to emerging policy areas such as food policy for which no clear political responsibility exists at any scale of governance. Furthermore, criticism has been levelled against governments for wanting 'everything at once:' "local service efficiency *and* community engagement; centralised control *and* local responsiveness; clear universal outcomes *and* community engagement" (Ibid, p. 7). Finally, the enduring question of whether local partnerships represent a vehicle to address 'democratic deficits' in local politics (Canadian Research Policy Network, 2005), or simply a new management strategy for 'soft' social policy areas including sustainability (Lake & Newman: 2002), remains inconclusive.

Local partnerships and sustainable governance

It is clear that local partnerships, while offering potentially beneficial outcomes, face a number of inherent tensions as they seek to address emerging policy priorities. In relation to urban sustainability and governance, the role of partnerships becomes even more complex, and returns to the questions of whether partnerships enhance the capacity of local governance to tackle certain problems, and whether some policy areas are more amenable to a partnership approach than others. The wide range of sectors, organisations and individuals with an interest in policies for sustainable development mean that the blending of priorities inherent in partnership approaches

has been unavoidable. Although the effectiveness of local partnerships in addressing sustainability has come under scrutiny for many of the same reasons already discussed, there are suggestive process-related differences that may set sustainability apart. Most notable is the explicit association of sustainable development approaches with community consultations, action plans and visioning exercises to the extent that sustainable development is not considered complete or legitimate without such citizen-based participation (Dorcey & McDaniels, 2001). In this capacity, local partnerships configured to assess and respond to sustainable development issues at the local level have been characterised as 'model ethical projects' (Larner, 2004) because of their emphasis of participatory decision-making and building stronger more inclusive 'sustainable' communities.

In relation to food policy, the connection to local partnerships may be even more compelling. Evidence suggests that local partnership has become not only a *de facto* approach to food policy development, but a deliberate one. Often referred to as 'networked movements,' food policy is argued to embody:

> ... dense, interlocking networks of community agencies, advocacy groups, place-based movements, municipal agencies, and staff that collaborate on policy innovations, education and specific projects (Wekerle, 2004, p. 381).

Community-based 'food movements' have been cited as exemplary networked movements (Ibid.). As such, the ways that food movements construct policy and participate in other networked activities from positions in civil society and in partnership with the state is the subject of growing interest to scholars and practitioners. Theorisations of networked movements and local partnerships figure in the conceptual framework of this dissertation by responding at least partially to questions of *who* participates in local governance and *what* gets identified as a priority. What is missing is a theorisation of the question of *how* the demands of various groups in the population become translated into items competing for the attention of elected officials. How do issues on the public agenda (those issues which have achieved a high level of public interest and visibility) make it onto the formal agenda (the list of items which decision makers have formally accepted for serious consideration) (Cobb, Ross, & Ross, 1976, p. 126)? This process, referred to as policy

agenda setting, comprises an additional sub-set of the literatures which informs this dissertation. Before moving to this discussion, it is first important to point to an additional aspect of in the interplay between partnerships and sustainable development. This aspect involves the challenge of reconciling governance for sustainability with the institutional structures in which decisions for sustainability are taken.

Partnerships, sustainability governance, and institutional change

Scholars have noted that the relationship between governance for sustainable urban development and institutional change is complex, involving more than procedural changes to decision-making (van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof, 2005; Bruff & Wood, 2000; MacRae, 1999). Governance for sustainability also requires structural changes to the institutions within which decisions are taken and actions carried out. In this capacity, sustainability – and food policy by extension – presents inherent challenges because of its multi-dimensional nature where the issue itself is concerned, but equally in relation to administration, jurisdiction, and organisational structure. As van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof (2005, p. 48) observe "radical institutional change is at the core of sustainable development." However the authors concede that "the more governance arrangements respect the institutional context in which they are used ... the higher the chance of their success" (Ibid, p. 48). The recognition of the need to work both within existing institutional forms, while at the same time working to achieve a better 'match' between sustainability goals and the institutional environment produces a number of tensions and opportunities (Ibid.). In geographical literature, these debates often involve the concept of 'institutional thickness,' described as the facilitation of governance by:

> ... an active institutional presence of development agencies, trade associations, and / or voluntary agencies (Gibbs et al., 2001, p. 106).

Institutional thickness is assumed to enable certain types of partnerships and 'strategic actions' but preclude others (Ibid.). The concept offers the opportunity to consider not only economic factors in analyses of local governance, but also a range of social, cultural and institutional forms that may qualitatively and quantitatively change development outcomes.

Where food policy is concerned, challenges related to institutional change and institutional thickness have inspired a number of proposed models for an integrated or 'nested' food policy. These models are emerging at a number of scales of governance. Although few have been implemented, examples at the scale of the nation-state include Norway and Finland where national food policy councils and food and nutrition policies have been created to provide integrated advice that combines public health and sustainable food system goals (Barling, Lang, & Caraher, 2002, p. 568). In the Canadian context, MacRae (1999, p. 193) proposes an integrated food policy structure based on ecological principles. MacRae argues that institutional structures and processes should mimic the diversity of the ecosystem problems they are attempting to solve. The ways in which the contours of institutional structures, including the daily practices and interaction patterns of those who work within them, have, and will continue to be modified to enhance sustainability and food policy goals is an area of key interest to this dissertation. However, the barriers to the institutional changes necessary to achieve certain outcomes have been shown to depend on the complexity of the policy problems being addressed, the governance arrangements designed to solve them, and the perceived urgency for change (van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof, 2005). These issues lead back to the question of policy agenda setting.

Policy agenda setting

The study of agenda setting is described as the analysis of the rise and fall of issue salience over time, and the relationships between actors' agendas (Soroka, 2002, p. 5). Others describe policy agenda setting as the analysis of the "less visible but crucial" processes by which an issue or a demand becomes or fails to become the focus of concern and interest within a polity (Cobb & Elder 1971, pp. 903 – 904). In most situations, the number of potential public issues far exceeds capacity of decision-making institutions to respond to them. The way that different groups participate in the process of policy formation is directly informed by competition for a place on the decision-making agenda (Cobb et al., 1976, p. 126). The study of agenda setting then, requires an understanding of the ways in which different subgroups in a population become aware of and participate in political conflicts. In examining the strategies used by various groups to achieve policy recognition, and the

factors which influence their success or failure, patterns are revealed that may otherwise be obscured by a focus on the decision-making process alone (Ibid., p. 138).

In analysing how different groups compete for policy space, a number of conceptual distinctions should be made. The first is between issues and agendas. The former refers to conflicts between groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of resources (Cobb & Elder, 1972, p. 82). The latter refers to a ranking of the relative importance of various public issues. The public agenda is understood to be all issues which (1) are the subject of widespread attention or at least awareness; (2) require action, in the view of a sizable proportion of the public; and (3) are the appropriate concern of some governmental unit, in the perception of community members (Cobb et al., 1976, p. 127). The order of issues, based on salience, is an agenda (Soroka, 2002, p. 6).

A second distinction is drawn between types of publics. Within the mass public, a separation is made between the attentive public and the general public. The former is understood to comprise small groups in the general population who are most informed about various public issues. It is these groups who attempt to raise awareness of an issue either because they want to promote its expansion or because they want to prevent it. The latter, the general public, is not likely to become involved in controversies either because they lack awareness of an issue or do not believe it affects them (Cobb et al., 1976, p. 129). A third type of public that should be identified is that of the marginalised public, referring to those groups who do not participate in awareness raising and agenda setting because of social exclusion or other barriers.

Models for agenda setting

In an effort to account for variation in the ways that different publics participate in policy formation, and the way that different issues achieve formal agenda status, a number of approaches to agenda setting have been proposed. A widely accepted triptych of models upon which a number of variations have since been developed is that of Cobb et al. (1976). The first of their proposed models, the outside initiative model, is described as the process through which issues arise in non-

governmental groups and are then extended to reach, first, the public agenda, and then, the formal agenda. The second, the mobilisation model, is concerned with issues that are initiated inside government and consequently achieve formal agenda status almost immediately. Lastly, the inside initiative model refers to issues which arise within the governmental sphere and whose supporters do not try to expand them to the mass public, relying instead on a belief in their ability to apply sufficient pressure to achieve formal agenda status (Ibid., pp. 127 – 28).

These models provide a useful framework for considering various processes, scales and configurations of actors involved in agenda setting. Clearly, however, a number of variations have since developed that reflect an increasingly complex context for local governance in Canada and elsewhere embodied in approaches such as networked movements and local partnerships. The interest here is analysing why certain food policy approaches are adopted in some localities and not others, and why at particular times and not others. The value of this broader approach is that it enables an analysis of the types of changing opportunities and constraints faced by actors seeking to shape food policy development at the local level, and the strategic shifts in arguments and political practices to achieve their goals. For the purposes of this dissertation, the goals in question relate to creating sustainable urban food systems, an agenda with a multifaceted genealogy in policy, scholarship and practice.

3. Sustainable food systems

The third body of literature that informs this dissertation is that of food policy and sustainable food systems. Within the burgeoning field of food studies, scholars have examined a vast number of issues including the political economy of food systems (Doel ,1999; Leslie & Reimer, 1999); global agri-food systems (Lang, 1999b; Whatmore, 1995); bio-regional ecologies and sustainable agriculture (Fraser, 2002); hunger and malnutrition (Riches, 2004, 1999; Sen, 1981); the role of food in the study of social histories (Glennie, 1998); cultural and sociological aspects of food and consumption (Cook, Crang & Thorpe, 1998; Bourdieu, 1984; Barthes, 1967); feminist and post-structural studies of food, identity and the body (Bell & Valentine, 1997; Probyn, 2000; Crang, 1996); and urban food policy and planning (Bouris, 2005a; Rocha, 2001; Pothukuchi, 2000;

Mougeot, 2000; MacRae, 1999; Lang, 1999a; and Koc & Dahlberg, 1999; Pothukuchi & Kaufmann, 1999).

Food studies as an inherently multi-disciplinary project offers a rich set of entry points to a number of inquiries. Although food studies implicate a host of epistemological and methodological perspectives, what is needed is an unpacking of specific facets of food studies that are most relevant to this dissertation. These include: (1) food policy in the context of global and local food systems; (2) the urbanisation of food systems; and (3) food policy and urban planning. Furthermore, gaps in the sustainable food systems literature are identified including two particularly neglected aspects of food policy analyses: the under-theorisation of governance issues, and the ways in which scales of food policy intervention are often either assumed or unspecified.

Food policy, food systems and scale

Food policy is now recognised as a fast emerging issue with very little corresponding academic research that examines the connections between governance and food system issues. Food system scholars Rocha (2001), Pothukuchi & Kaufman (2000); MacRae (1999), Lang (1999a), and Koc & Dahlberg (1999) among others, argue that there is currently a pressing need for more comprehensive accounts of the evolution of food initiatives. The benefits of more comprehensive accounts are argued to include better tools for facilitating food policy implementation; more robust theoretical and conceptual tools to assist in analysing food policy development; and better understandings of the correlations between food policy, sustainable development and inclusive forms of decision-making (Dubbeling, 2004; Mougeot, 2000; MacRae, 1999).

Food policy can be defined as those policies that affect who eats what, when and how it is produced, processed, distributed, consumed and recycled, and its impacts (social, environmental and economic) (Iowa Food Policy Council, 2005, p. 1). Food policies involve a range of issues and jurisdictions spanning from the local (e.g. where grocery stores are located, how food waste is disposed, opportunities for urban agriculture, emergency food distribution, development of the local food economy); regional and national (e.g. public health, nutrition, agriculture, natural resources,

fisheries) and global (e.g. international trade agreements, climate change impacts on agriculture). This range of issues and geographies points to the central significance of spatial scale in food policy issues. When conceived as a system, food policies exist as an interconnected set of sub-systems ranging from the household to the global level (Dahlberg, 1993).

A 'systems' approach to food policy issues reflects the multi-faceted and inter-related nature of food policy. By extension, a systems approach reflects the perceived need to holistically address problems in the ways that food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed and recycled, instead of addressing individual problems of the food system in isolation (Garrett & Feenstra, 1997). A systems approach to food policy studies is further characterised by a recent focus on ideals of justice and sustainability. A 'just and sustainable food system' is defined as one in which food production, processing, distribution, consumption and recycling are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a particular place (Ibid.). This shift reflects changes to conceptual understandings and practical applications of food policy that have taken place over the past decades, particularly at national and global scales.

Food policy 'old' and 'new'

As a modern development approach, food policy has its roots in the early 1970s. At this time, a world food crisis triggered renewed concern over the availability of and access to food (Maxwell & Slater, 2003). Where it had previously been possible to speak only of problems of food supply, governments and policymakers began to take stock of the previously overlooked connections between supply- and demand-side issues. The 1970s also saw the first meetings of the World Food Council and the World Food Conference. By the early 1980s, a discursive paradigm shift had moved the issue of food access to the fore. Amartya Sen (1981) is credited with re-theorising the access question by shifting the discourse towards the notion of 'food entitlement,' which was to become the foundation of the emergent concept of food security commonly defined as the condition in which:

> ... all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe
> and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active
> and healthy life (FAO, 1996).

Food security also came to enshrine connections between food and human rights by reaffirming:

> ... the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with
> the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from
> hunger (FAO, 1996).

Over the course the 1980s and 1990s, prior to these declarations, food security was gradually becoming the dominant discourse, particularly at global and national levels, with many governments, donors and international agencies developing an enthusiasm for 'national food security planning' as an aspect of structural adjustment initiatives (Hindle, 1990). For industrialised nations, the 1980s saw similar challenges to earlier productionist modes of agriculture and food policy but for very different reasons. Specifically, by the 1980s, most colonial preferential trading regimes in staples and commodities had broken down, leaving colonial centres to reconstitute their power and access to resources through a new set of international agencies such as the World Bank and World Trade Organisation and new instruments such as structural adjustment, trade liberalisation, 'consumer sovereignty' and self-regulation of food industries.

For industrialised and industrialising nations alike, the trend toward a more integrated systems approach has been informed by the appearance of a number of additional issues on the food policy agenda. Over and above the 'food security' issues of malnutrition, hunger and famine, a range of problems with the food system, most of them associated with globalisation, became evident over the course of the 1990s. Issues include commercialisation, concentration of power, industrialisation, the role of institutional actors, diet and health, social impacts, food surpluses and new environmental technologies. Accompanying these problems have been a number of contentious 'solutions' including 'food aid,' economic restructuring and the proliferation of genetically modified organisms. Some scholars characterise these changes as constituting a substantive shift from 'old' to 'new' food policy. Maxwell & Slater (2003), for example, argue for the

ascendance of a 'new food policy' that has emerged as a result of globalisation, rapid urbanisation, industrialisation of the food system and other conditions. Other scholars insist that while shifts have occurred, these changes have done little to address and challenge the structural causes of a globally insecure food system. Instead, shifts and consolidations are argued to reflect wider political and economic processes that continue to serve and protect production interests (Barling et al., 2002).

Food policy at the local scale

While the practice and politics of global food systems remain controversial, a growing number of observers argue that the most profound changes are taking place not only at international scales, but equally at local levels, and indeed at many scales in between. Bouris (2005) argues that the emergence of a 'local food movement' in North America can be traced to the coalescence of concerns of four groups. First, community nutritionists and educators who focus on providing sound nutrition education and providing community-based strategies to address food insecurity; Second, grassroots sustainable agriculture activists who express concern about food safety, the disappearance of productive land, growing distances between producer and consumer, environmental degradation and corporate concentration of agri-business; Third, anti-hunger advocates who are concerned about reducing hunger and poverty; And fourth, anti-globalisation activists who protest the homogenisation of culture, goods and services including food. The ensuing strategies, often described as 'food system localisation,' typically embody a range of initiatives aimed at counteracting distant economic concentration, social disempowerment and environmental degradation (Hinrichs, 2003, p. 33). Significantly, these concerns align with all three pillars of sustainability, underscoring the common association of food policy as a sustainability issue involving social, environmental and economic elements (Koc & Dahlberg, 1999).

This typology raises a number of suggestive issues that are relevant to this dissertation. First, scholarship on sustainable food systems often fails to account for the specificities of *urban* food systems, revealing an assumption that food system issues are either inherently non-urban, or

indistinguishable from non-urban strategies and concerns. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations describes *urban* food policy as:

> ... a set of goals, objectives, strategies or programs designed to improve access of urban households to stable supplies of good quality food through efficient, hygienic, healthy and environmentally sound food supply and distribution systems (Argenti, 2000, p. 12).

While acknowledging the inextricable connections between urban and non-urban food systems, scholars have observed that current definitions of food policy generally downplay critical differences between urban and non-urban food issues particularly where the importance of integration into local political, economic and ecological systems are concerned (Mougeot, 2000).[12] This observation can be traced at least in part to the fact that like sustainability more broadly, food policy as a post colonial development approach was not initially conceived as an urban strategy. It is now being recognised that the separation between food production and cities, and their recent reconciliation, is a very recent phenomenon in human history. It was only over the course of the past few decades that a renewed awareness emerged of the need for cities and local authorities, primarily those in the developing world, to play a proactive and coordinating role in alleviating urban food insecurity (Ibid.).

One of the reasons that the specificities of urban food systems remain undertheorised can be traced at least in part to the fact that locally-situated interventions are often collapsed within larger national or global political economic structures and scales. Instead of taking scale for granted as is the case in many food policy studies, this dissertation argues that like sustainability more broadly, food policy should be similarly understood as a governance project involving the need to find a locally appropriate balance between social, environmental and economic concerns that interact at multiple scales. In this way, the framing of food policy as an issue of sustainability provides an opportunity to enrich geographers' understandings of how 'the local' is conceptualised in relation to

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[12] The FAO definition, and others like it, typically emphasise food access and distribution, while 'non-urban' definitions typically emphasise food production. This underscores need to adopt a coordinated systems approach to food policy.

a specific, and inherently multi-faceted, sustainability issue, and the ways in which these framings inform the resulting types of local policy and urban governance.

Second, urban food initiatives such as those in Vancouver are frequently identified as innovators where policy and governance are concerned. Reasons cited typically include strong citizen participation, inclusiveness, broad accountability, and cross-cutting approaches to sustainability issues that bring simultaneous benefit to the economy, environment and public health (Wekerle, 2004; Toronto Food Policy Council, 2002; MacRae, 1999; Welsh & MacRae, 1998). However, compelling links to these outcomes are inconclusive, particularly where the complexities of multi-scaled governance are concerned. In this capacity, this dissertation is attentive to the processes and outcomes of food policy as a 'new state space' of policy and governance, while exploring the extent to which these new spaces may be implicated in new patterns of governance or simply contributing to established patterns.

Food systems on the urban planning agenda

If there is a scholarly literature that has attempted to address issues specific to *urban* food systems it is that of planning. A small but growing literature in planning-related fields addresses the question of why food has "taken a back seat to other urban systems like housing, transportation, employment and the environment" (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999, p. 213). Pothukuchi & Kaufman cite a number of factors that have limited municipal food system planning in the North American context. First, they argue that most North American urbanites take the food system for granted, with relatively few experiencing first hand the problems related to food access, availability, or affordability.[13] Second, they argue that the historical process of urbanisation has led to the development of a false but enduring binary between urban and rural issues. By the early twentieth century, the authors argue that 'the urban' had come to be defined as 'non-agricultural,' thereby

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[13] This may be changing as food access and associated problems of poverty and homeless are sharply on the rise.

cementing the conceptual division between food and the urban.[14] Food failures in cities were understood as farm failures, rather than symptomatic of broader systemic failures involving distribution and access (Ibid., p. 215). By the latter half of the twentieth century, various models for urban form and land use became codified in practice. As a result of the emergence of dominant models that privileged particular uses in central areas, agricultural activity was effectively prohibited in central locations, losing to uses that could bid higher rents and conform to non-agricultural zoning regulations (Ibid., p. 215). Third, the rise of technologies including mechanised farming, long distance transportation, refrigeration and food processing in industrialised countries meant that the loss of local farmland that historically served cities, went largely unnoticed in local grocery stores (Ibid, p. 215). Lastly, at the level of public policy, it has been argued that urban and rural issues have now been thoroughly dichotomised (Ibid., p. 216).

To validate their analysis, Pothukuchi & Kaufman conducted a survey of 22 US city planning agencies to determine why planners do not often engage with food system issues. Their findings reinforce and add to research findings echoed in related scholarship (Clancy, 2004; Koc et al., 1999; MacRae, 1999; Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). Reasons for a lack of engagement by planners in food system issues include the following: First, planners felt that the food system was "not their turf," pointing instead to the built environment and land use regulation as their primary responsibilities. Second, many planners perceived the food system to be a rural rather than an urban issue, underscoring the false dichotomy between urban and rural policy where food issues are concerned. Third, planners felt that food is regulated primarily by the private market. As public sector workers, planners felt unqualified or unwilling to "take the lead" on an issue that they perceived to be the domain of the private sector. Fourth, planners cited a lack of funding to initiate and implement food system programs and services. Fifth, many planners reported that they did not perceive any problems with the current food system. The pervasiveness of food on supermarket shelves led many planners to assume that food was well managed by the

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[14] Currently, the rapid rise in urban agricultural activities as a component of city planning has challenged this paradigm. As a sub-set of the food system planning literature, urban agriculture is now well documented in scholarship. The literature considers urban agriculture in relation to issues including: Food security, hunger and nutrition (MacRae, 1999; Power, 1999; Dahlberg, 1999); urban ecology (Smit & Nasr, 1992); participatory governance and community development (Dubbeling, 2004); gender (Hovorka, 2003); and economic impacts (Nugent,1999a, 1999b). The majority of this literature focuses on cities in the developing world.

private market. Sixth, a lack of knowledge about community groups with whom planners could work on food system issues was cited. Lastly, lack of knowledge about food system issues was reported. Planners felt that they lacked the training and expertise to intervene in food issues even if they wanted to (Pothukuchi & Kaufman 2000, pp. 215 – 17).[15]

In the Canadian context, Bouris (2005) conducted a study of planners in BC's Georgia Basin (which includes Vancouver), located in the southwest corner of the province. In addition to the barriers identified by Pothukuchi and Kaufman, Bouris cites three additional barriers: lack of political will, lack of public pressure and lack of institutional will (2005, pp. 90 – 95). Significantly, these barriers speak to the broader governance context within which planners operate, and the role that politicians, community members and governing institutions play in shaping the planning agenda (Ibid., p. 97). As Bouris observes:

> To focus only on service-specific issues provides the narrow impression that planners operate within a vacuum and set their own agendas, independent of a larger political or social context (Ibid., p. 96).

The failure to acknowledge the broader governance and policy-making context within which planning takes place reveals the Planning literature's greatest weakness. It is here that the importance of forging better conceptual and practical links between sustainable urban food systems, governance and policy-making becomes paramount.

Food policy and governance

The implication of food policy in new forms of local governance is closely bound up with the governance of food itself. Former Coordinator of the Toronto Food Policy Council Rod MacRae, describes the issue of food and cities as "hiding in plain sight" (Lecture delivered at UBC Green College conference on urban sustainability, March 22, 2004). MacRae's analogy points to tensions between the apparent pervasiveness of food in many societies, and unanswered questions about

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[15] The 2005 Annual meeting of the American Planning Association (APA) featured a series of seven dedicated food planning sessions. The recognition by the APA that food system planning forms an emerging part of the profession marks a significant shift in the perceived legitimacy of food as a planning issue in North America.

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how, by whom and in whose interest food is governed. Food governance can be understood as the application of policies and decisions that:

> ... shape the type of foods used or available as well as their cost, or which influences the opportunities for [producers] ... or effects food choices available to consumers (Iowa Food Policy Council, 2005, p. 1).

Although a trade model has emerged as the dominant economic and ideological driver for 'governing' food in most jurisdictions, a growing number of issues such as ethics, public health, social justice and environmentalism are challenging this paradigm. Many of these issues are coalescing into new citizenship movements that demand different ways of governing food. By extension, this shift has inspired a rethinking of the role of the state in food policy. Fundamentally then, food governance reveals the extent to which food is treated either as a commodity or a public good.

Increasingly, attempts are being made to better define and plan for food governance at the local scale. A number of organisations and experts continue to promote better understandings of the relevance of municipal budgeting, tax policies, public service delivery, trade regulations, land use planning and regulation, for urban food supply and distribution. For adherents, urban food governance is a matter of city and local authorities "doing what they already do in a better way" (Argenti, 2000, p. 3), or to use MacRae's analogy in reverse, of moving food 'into plain sight' of city governments and citizens. The links between food policy and local governance are already being operationalised in Asia, Latin America and Africa. The regional seminar, *Feeding Asian Cities*, held in Bangkok in November 2000, declared as its premise that:

> ... city and local authorities can play a key role in enhancing access to food especially in the context of continuing urbanisation and decentralisation (Yasmeen 2001a).

Furthermore, a commitment was made to develop better awareness, understanding and appreciation among municipal, state, provincial and national decision makers to integrate urban food security with sustainable social, economic and environmental development (Ibid.).

In Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa, multilateral commitments to food system goals are currently enshrined in agreements including the Declaration of Quito codified in April 2000. The Declaration commits thirty-three cities and local governments to the goal of:

> ... replicating and improving Urban Agriculture municipal policies and actions developed in Latin American and Caribbean cities as to enhance food security, address urban poverty, improve urban environment and health management, and develop more participatory and less excluding governance processes, as well as to protect urban biodiversity with the support of the Urban Management Program for Latin America and the Caribbean (Declaration of Quito, 2000, p. 3).

Other multilateral commitments include the Dakar Declaration[16] by the African Mayors participating at the sub-regional seminar, *Food Supply and Distribution to Francophone African Cities*, in April 1997; The Medellín Declaration[17] of the Mayors and Municipal Health Officers at the 3rd Congress of the Americas of Municipalities and Healthy Communities in March 1999; and the Barcelona Declaration[18] by Mayors, City Executives and Representatives of City and Local Governments at the 34th World Congress of the International Union of Local Authorities in March 1999.

A number of Latin American cities are well into implementation stages of treating food systems as a legitimate governance issue. The City of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, has been implementing policies based on the principle of food security as a right of citizenship since 1993. Programmes reach over 800,000 people daily, or close to 38% of the total municipal population at a public cost of less than 1% of the city's total budget (Rocha, 2001). The City of Rosario, Argentina has been recognised for its food policy development with a United Nations Best Practice Award for its Urban Agriculture

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[16] Signatories commit to "recognise the important role which African city and local authorities can play in ensuring urban food security" (cited in Argenti, 2000, p. 6).
[17] Signatories recognise "the need to increase access of all consumers, and low-income consumers in particular, to healthy food through participatory and intersectorial programmes designed to strengthen the efficiency of private systems for the supply and distribution of low-cost food and employment creation" (cited in Argenti, 2000, p. 6).
[18] Signatories "recognise the importance of ensuring access to food by low-income constituencies in low-income countries as a main objective of local development policies and programmes, following the recommendations of the World Food Summit held in Rome in 1996" (cited in Argenti, 2000, p. 6).

Programme which arose from the 2001 economic crisis in Argentina, that in Rosario manifested with levels of poverty of 60% (United Nations Human Settlements Program, 2004).

Clearly, the majority of these cities are proposing solutions to urban food system vulnerabilities in response to crisis levels of hunger and poverty. In the context of cities in the developing world, differences in social, economic and political climates, governance and community capacities must be considered. While rapid urbanisation, rising urban poverty, food insecurity, and the loss of agriculturally productive land can be identified as worldwide trends, these factors take place in the developing world at rates and intensities unknown in most industrialised nations. Most affected are Asian and Latin American cities. By 2015 it is estimated that 16 of the world's 26 cities with populations of 10 million or more inhabitants will be in Asia. The number of urbanites in China increases by 15 million annually while India contributes approximately half this figure (Argenti, 2000). In Latin American cities it is estimated that the number of people who go to bed hungry has increased by 20% in less than 30 years, affecting as many as 65 million people (IDRC Urban Agriculture Policy Brief, No. 2, 2002). In light of these disparities, it is understandable that the majority of research to date has focused on cities in the developing world. However, this research focus has left the specificities of cities in industrialised countries unexamined, and the potential for comparative studies unrealised. In response to this gap, this dissertation contributes findings from an in-depth case study on the evolution of food policy in Vancouver, a Canadian city where an innovative experiment in food policy is currently underway.

Linking sustainability as a governance project, partnership approaches to governance and sustainable urban food systems

Some scholars and experts argue that we are now entering a new phase of state involvement in food policy, governance and policy-making characterised by proactive partnerships, with the state playing the role of facilitator, educator, and promoter of efficiencies. There is speculation as to whether such a model might bolster neo-liberalism, or could signal a new collectivism (Lang, 1999a, p. 221) with food policy projects serving as an example of alternative governance practices and precedents for policy change (Wekerle, 2004). What is clear is that repercussions of new approaches to food policy and governance in Canada are, and will continue to be most acutely felt

in cities where virtually no direct authority to govern food exists, but where the most mouths to feed are found. This chapter has provided a conceptual framing of the major debates of sustainability as a governance project, local partnership approaches to governance and sustainable urban food systems, three literatures between which few conceptual and practical links have been made. Table 2 summarises the main assumptions, influences and gaps of the literatures.

Table 2: Conceptual Framework Summary

LITERATURE	MAIN ASSUMPTIONS	INFORMED BY	GAPS / PROBLEMS
Sustainability as a governance project	Sustainability is not a normative exercise but a 'governance project' that involves finding a locally-appropriate balance between social, environmental and economic concerns that interact at multiple scales.	Urban sustainability Modes of governance Coalition theories Regulation theory	'Social pillar' of sustainability missing Need to move beyond environment / economy dualisms to recognise the multi-dimensional nature of sustainability issues Need to spatialise analyses of sustainability governance
Local partnership approaches to governance	Local partnerships are an emerging trend involving the incorporation of non-governmental actors into the formulation of policy-making and regulatory frameworks.	Policy agenda setting Participatory governance Inclusive decision-making	Need to consider the role of partnership approaches in non-statutory policy areas for which no coordinated governmental mandate exists Need to consider the role of partnerships in the economic management of 'soft' policy areas
Sustainable food systems	Sustainable food systems are characterised by an integration of food production, processing, distribution, consumption, access and recycling to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a particular place.	International development Community development Food systems planning	Specificity of *urban* food systems missing Significance of spatial scale missing Role of governance under-theorised

In bridging these literatures, this dissertation makes the following theoretical contributions: First, the dissertation contributes findings from an in-depth case study on the ways in which the adoption and early implementation phases of a specific, and multi-faceted sustainability issue, food policy,

were conceptualised and mobilised by various actors (Gibbs et al., 2003, p. 4). Of particular interest is how strategies were conditioned by locally specific struggles (Ibid.), and how and by whom particular actions and scales were privileged. In this way, the research enriches geographers' understandings of how 'the local' and other scales can be conceptualised in relation to sustainability, and the ways in which these framings inform the resulting types of local policy and urban governance. This gap includes attention to the material and spatial character of the institutional spaces within which governance takes place. This contribution is particularly valuable given that much of the existing literature on sustainability and governance privileges tensions between the environment and the economy at the expense of a range of additional issues that are implicated in local government adoption of sustainability issues.

Second, the research contributes important process-related findings related to the ways that governance activities are shaped by structures of the state in terms of resources, powers and the ability to act (Gibbs et al., 2003, pp. 4 – 5). Of particular interest is the role of local partnerships or networks, often referred to as 'networked movements,' in relation to food policy. Research on partnership approaches to governance often focuses on public/private arrangements to address statutory issues in the context of an assumed shrinking state. This dissertation contributes a suggestive counter-perspective to arguments that public policy options and governance activities are narrowing rather than widening at the local level. This analysis is framed through the lens of food policy, a cross-cutting policy area characterised by explicit claims to construct policy and participate in networked activities from positions in civil society and in partnership with the state (Wekerle, 2004; MacRae, 1999).

Third, the research responds to an identified need for more comprehensive accounts of the evolution of urban food policies themselves, with a particular focus on the role of local government and other actors in developing various concepts and approaches. This research contributes to this body of scholarship, while at the same time contributing to two particularly neglected aspects of food policy analyses: theorisation of the links between food policy and governance, and the extent to which scales of food policy intervention are often either assumed or unspecified. Together, the

three literatures speak to questions of how and why food policy as a sustainability issue was adopted in Vancouver including the role of broader social and political economic shifts in Canadian governance; the specific tensions and mitigating strategies generated by its introduction; the challenges of its implementation; and the correlations between food policy and the changing spatialities of local governance.

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this dissertation is informed by conceptual and practical concerns that arose at least in part from my role as Social Planner for the City of Vancouver, and as of December 2004, the City's Food Systems Planner. These experiences, in combination with an interest in attending to gaps in geographical scholarship on issues of governance and sustainability, afforded me a unique set of insights on the research topic, and placed me well to undertake research that aims to better understand the extent to which policy development and implementation are inherently social and political processes (Gibbs et al., 2002a). Accordingly, the methodology for this dissertation is broadly situated within the traditions of ethnography and action research, approaches that acknowledge the role of the researcher as a participant in knowledge production, and assumes that such engagement yields valuable insights into research problems.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research design and methodology for the dissertation. First, the research questions and hypothesis of the dissertation are stated. Next, the rationale for choosing ethnography and action research as the main methodological approaches are outlined. An overview and rationale for the choice of a single case study, as well as the grounds for selecting the research site are then explained, followed by a framework for facilitating food policy and planning developed by Dubbeling (2001), including an explanation of how the framework is used to examine Vancouver's experience with food policy development. Lastly, the data gathering techniques used to assess Vancouver's experience are detailed.

Research questions

1. *What conditions enabled the adoption of food policy by the City of Vancouver in 2003?*

2. *What specific tensions were generated by the City of Vancouver's adoption of food policy? How, by whom at what geographical scales were tensions addressed in policy, planning and regulation?*

3. *What can food policy reveal about the role of local government in coordinating governance strategies at different geographical scales and contexts, particularly where 'sustainability' is involved?*

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this dissertation is that the adoption and early implementation phases of food policy in the City of Vancouver were enabled by a series of locally specific conditions involving a fluid privileging of actors, actions and scales. At least four factors reflecting the specificity of Vancouver's social, political-economic and institutional context are argued to be significant in this regard. The first factor is the considerable base of experience and expertise that had been built among food networks of community groups in Vancouver. Specifically, the fact that the organisations involved had been developing and delivering a range of food-related programs and services in Vancouver for over a decade facilitated the adoption of an official food policy mandate by local government, and strengthened the perception of its legitimacy.

A second contributing factor is a shift in local politics that took place in the civic election of November 2002 when the city's left-leaning Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE) swept to power. The election earned COPE eight of ten City Council seats, five out of seven Park Commissioner seats and seven out of nine School Trustee seats, in addition to electing their Mayoral candidate, ex-coroner Larry Campbell. Significantly, a number of the COPE elected officials came from a background of community involvement and grassroots activism. The result was a Mayor and City Council open to considering a range of governance issues not previously considered to be 'City business,' including an openness to experimentation with multi-scaled approaches to these issues.

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The third factor relates to the framing of food policy as a sustainability issue. In this capacity, I contend that food policy was approved at least in part because it was argued to reinforce the social, environmental and economic goals embodied in the City's existing commitment to sustainability. I assert that the framing of food policy as a sustainability issue made the 'story' to which food policy was attached more versatile, and the tools and actors available to leverage action potentially more varied than in other jurisdictions where food policy is often associated with singular goals such as public health or anti-hunger approaches. The inherently multi-faceted nature of food policy as an issue of sustainability increased the number of conceptual and bureaucratic points of entry into institutions and organisations with the potential to realise desired outcomes.

The fourth contributing factor is a pre-existing commitment to sustainability on the part of Vancouver's local government. By 2004, when the food policy mandate was granted, the City of Vancouver had a well developed history of leadership on sustainability issues. The City's commitment to sustainability had by then been institutionalised through a number of City departments, policies, developments and other mechanisms. This correlation had the benefit of attaching food policy to an already familiar policy mandate and organisational structure. In this way, I argue that the approval of food policy was facilitated by internal education campaigns on sustainability that had already taken place in the organisation, as well as staff with expertise in theoretical and technical aspects of urban sustainability. In this way, even though the acceptance of food policy as a legitimate governance issue was far from universal, an institutional culture and structure existed to facilitate its adoption and early stages of implementation.

While recognising the role of locally-grounded circumstances in the adoption of food policy in Vancouver, I argue that these factors must be understood within the wider social and political contexts within which they evolved. In this regard, Vancouver is well disposed to the research project because it is situated in a region (Greater Vancouver Regional District) and province (British Columbia) particularly receptive to, and concerned about sustainability issues. Other factors include shifts in regional, provincial and national governance priorities, particularly where

the role of cities and possibilities of inter-governmental reform were concerned; and high profile concerns about the integrity of the global food system being expressed at regional, national and international scales. In this way, I assert that the adoption of food policy in Vancouver depended not only on specific social, political-economic and institutional conditions, but equally on the ability of local government and other stakeholders to coordinate governance strategies between and among geographical scales. Specifically, because of the inherently multi-faceted and multi-scaled nature of food policy, a fluid re-framing of what food policy was understood to be, and the scales at which it was argued to be best mobilised was undertaken by various actors both inside and outside of City Hall. This fluidity, involving both opportunities and tensions, informed the resulting types of local policy and urban governance responses to food policy.

Research tradition: Ethnography (Institutional)

The methodology for this dissertation is set within the traditions of institutional ethnography and action research. Ethnography, like other methodologies, varies in its principles and approaches. A number of characteristics can be identified that are relevant to this dissertation. First, ethnography is generally understood to involve participant observation in which the researcher spends considerable time observing and interacting with a social group or groups. Participant observation has the benefit of helping the ethnographer understand how a group develops sets of relations and assumptions that bind it together. One of the main strengths of ethnography is that it can effectively de-naturalise what groups take for granted, and thereby reveal the knowledge and meaning systems that underpin social action (Herbert, 2000, p. 551).

In the case of this dissertation, the City bureaucracy itself is treated as an 'actor.' Dorothy Smith describes such an approach as institutional ethnography, a method that produces "accounts of institutions from the standpoint of those who perform their daily activities" (Smith, 1987). The goal of institutional ethnography is thus to analyse and theorise the institutions, organisations and bodies that govern human relations rather than the governed themselves (Hyndman, 2001). However, because one of the research goals is to analyse the types of partnerships or networks involved in food policy development, a blurring of previous categories of those who govern and

those who are governed is assumed. This distinction points to an important methodological assumption of the research, namely, that the goal of theorising the City of Vancouver's food policy development necessarily involves examining not only the City bureaucracy, but also groups not typically assumed to participate in governance and policymaking. Second, ethnography allows for observation and analysis of changes to phenomena over time, analysis of the significance of a phenomenon for future events, and analysis of the relation among parts of a phenomenon (Reinharz, 1992, pp. 164 – 165). In the case of this dissertation, participant observation at the study site took place both before and after food policy became an official City mandate. In this way, I was able to observe changes to the ways in which social groups within and outside of the City bureaucracy perceived food to be an urban issue, including how institutional behaviours, rationales, governing practices and policymaking techniques changed accordingly.

Third, as a methodology of engagement, ethnography is particularly attentive to the role of the researcher as a participant in knowledge production. Such an assumption is assumed to result in more textured stories and more accountable analyses (Hyndman, 2001). In my case, I was literally a producer of a number of the policy documents and processes I simultaneously studied. The dual roles of producer and researcher, insider and outsider allowed for more layered and reflexive analyses than would have resulted had I adopted the opposite assumption, that as a researcher I stood outside the groups and processes I studied. At the same time, ethnographic fieldwork does not simply stand in for knowledge (Hyndman, 2001, p. 265). While the strength of ethnography is its engagement with 'the field,' it is precisely this engagement that has resulted in criticisms of its rigour. The most common criticisms are that ethnographic interpretations are overly idiosyncratic; sample sizes are too small to be significant; and that findings are not replicable or generalisable. These charges will be addressed in more detail later in this chapter. For now, it will suffice to underscore the fact that contemporary ethnography is an inherently multi-method approach usually involving observation and participation, but also interviewing, and analysis of policy, archival and media documents, thus combining the assets and weaknesses of each (Reinharz, 1992, p. 46). In this way, methodological robustness is ensured by triangulating participant observation with other methods.

Research tradition: Action research

In addition to ethnography, this dissertation is informed by a second methodology of engagement: action research. Like ethnography, action research is based on observing and interacting with a social group or groups; seeks to understand how a group develops sets of relations and assumptions that bind it together; is attentive to the role of the researcher as a participant in knowledge production; and is based on the assumption that "the mere recording of events and formulation of explanations by an uninvolved researcher is inadequate in and of itself" (Stringer, 1999, p. 7). Action research and ethnography also share an interpretive approach, that unlike experimental research that reports on observed relationships between variables, presents "narrative accounts that reveal the ways that people experience a specific issue in a specific context" (Ibid., p. 178).

Action research is commonly associated with the goal of aligning researchers with community-based groups to work for social change. In this way, research is understood to be done *with* rather than *for* the groups in question. Such research 'partnerships' are typically assumed to involve collaborative approaches to designing and implementing the research project. Action researchers' goals may include sharing research skills and building capacity among research 'partners.' (Dictionary of Human Geography. 2000, p. 574; Reinharz, 1992, p. 181). While the implicit assumption of this approach may be that action researchers typically engage with grassroots groups to address social, economic or political inequalities, action research can also be understood as a practical tool for solving problems experienced by people in their professional lives (Stringer, 1999, p. 11). In this way, action research has equal relevance in institutional settings where it can be applied to understand the problems of practitioners including the conflicts they encounter and solutions they propose in specific situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). While recognising the importance of community-based dimensions of action research, it is an institutional / professional orientation of action research that is assumed in this dissertation. Specifically, I assert that the practical orientation of action research makes it particularly suitable given that the main objectives of the dissertation include institution strengthening that will further enable the City of Vancouver's food policy development; the ability to identify themes for further research and development

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including partnerships and information exchanges; and development of capacity to improve practices in Vancouver and elsewhere. Furthermore, this approach reinforces the goals of institutional ethnography including the aim of de-naturalising taken-for-granted assumptions and studying the mechanisms of governance, rather than the governed themselves.

Single case study

This dissertation was conducted using a single case study approach. The case study methodology can be characterised as a method for studying social phenomena through the in-depth analysis of an individual case. This method gives "a unitary character to the data being studied by inter-relating a variety of facts to a single case" (Reinharz, 1992, p. 164). A single case study approach also provides an opportunity for the intensive analysis of many specific details that can be overlooked with other methods. Among the major purposes of case study approaches to problems are to generate and test a theory, to analyze change in phenomena over time, or to analyze relations among parts of a phenomenon (Ibid., p. 164). Although it has been argued that the case being studied should be typical of cases of a certain type so that generalisations may be made, there is an equally compelling argument for using the approach to explore new issues and pose provocative questions that may have few precedents against which to compare. In this dissertation, the latter scenario applies. Specifically, food policy is a fast emerging urban issue with very little corresponding academic research that examines the role of local governments in food systems issues, while at the same time making links to broader inter-governmental restructurings and rescalings.

Case selection

Vancouver is a city of approximately 560,000 inhabitants set within a region (the Greater Vancouver Regional District, or GVRD) of just over 2 million. Vancouver is the largest city in the province of British Columbia and the third largest in Canada. It covers an area of 113 sq km (City of Vancouver, 2005, General Information, para. 4). Vancouver lends itself particularly well to an in-depth case study of the research topic for a number of reasons. First, for a study concerned with the changing role and dynamics of local governance in an emerging policy area, Vancouver

presents a number of unique conditions at local, regional and provincial scales that enrich the inquiry. At the local level, Vancouver is bound by its own Charter instead of the Local Government Act (until 1998, the Municipal Act), to which all other BC municipalities and regional districts must adhere. The Vancouver Charter dates to Vancouver's founding in 1886 when it was designed to respond to the particular needs of what was then one of the only urban areas in British Columbia. The Charter is a provincially enacted piece of legislation that gives Vancouver the authority to pass by-laws, collect certain taxes, approve expenditures, take on debts, give grants and hire and discharge employees (Vancouver Charter, 2004). One of the key features of the Vancouver Charter that distinguishes it from the Local Government Act is the ability to buy and sell property. In this regard, the Charter gives Vancouver more control over development and ownership of public areas, whereas in other BC municipalities, public areas, roads and parks belong to the Province.

At the regional scale, Vancouver is set within the GVRD, Canada's only unamalgamated metropolitan area comprising twenty-one municipalities and one electoral area. Created in 1967, the GVRD is not a regional governing body. Rather it is a municipal partnership responsible for the delivery of region-wide essential services including water, sewage and drainage, and solid waste management, as well as various activities relating to environmental stewardship of the region, including air quality, regional parks and housing (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2004, About GVRD). This voluntary governance arrangement stands as another point of uniqueness, particularly within wider Canadian trends towards (sometimes forced) municipal amalgamation and regionalisation (Sancton, 2000; Beaudreau, 2000; Graham, Phillips, & Maslove, 1998).

In the provincial context, the role of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) is noteworthy. Established in 1905, the UBCM was founded to provide a "common voice" for local governments in BC. While most provinces have municipal associations representing staff and elected officials, BC, Quebec and Nova Scotia are the only provinces with a single organisation representing the political interests of all municipalities in their respective provinces (Tindal & Tindal, 2004; Graham et al., 1998). In Vancouver's case, the historical role of the UBCM in defining public policy has been important, especially where inter-governmental negotiations are concerned. Of

particular significance is the Protocol of Recognition between the UBCM and the Province of British Columbia signed on September 18, 1996 in which the Province recognises local government as "an independent responsible and accountable order of government" (Government of British Columbia and Union of British Columbia Municipalities, 1996). The Protocol, the first of its kind in Canada, speaks of "shared responsibility," "promoting public confidence" in government and enabling "sound planning" (Ibid.). At the same time, given Vancouver's size and economic importance in the province, along with the existence of the Vancouver Charter, the actual significance of the UBCM as a conduit to represent Vancouver's interests is inconclusive. Furthermore, it is important to note the extent to which the City of Vancouver has sought inter-governmental mechanisms with the federal, rather than provincial government. For example, the City of Vancouver is a member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Big City Mayors caucus, as well as the 'ten hub cities' caucus, both of which provide avenues to attempt to influence policy and governance at the national scale. Even so, the UBCM stands as an important point of reference in the provincial context. Together, these circumstances at local, regional and provincial levels provide the opportunity to examine the ways in which Vancouver participated in the negotiation and management of sustainability issues within a set of unique governance conditions.

The second factor that makes Vancouver a suitable research site is that it is recognised (and promotes itself) both locally and internationally for progressive urban governance and planning based on principles of sustainability. The City has a well developed history of leadership on sustainability issues that began to be institutionalised in an official capacity in 1990 with the creation of the Special Office for the Environment (SOE). What began as a focus solely on environmental concerns, broadened over the course of the 1990s to include social and economic aspects of sustainability. In April 2002, the City adopted a definition for a 'Sustainable Vancouver,' along with a set of sustainability principles that aimed to coordinate the City's sustainability policies. To facilitate this goal, a Sustainability Sponsor Group, made up of representatives from Senior Management, was approved and funded by City Council in 2002. While a comprehensive strategy

on sustainability that draws together environmental, economic and social concerns continues to be developed, a number of significant environmental policies can be identified:

1990	Special Office for the Environment (SOE)
1990	Clouds of Change
1991	Central Area Plan
1994	Solid Waste Management Plan
1995	CityPlan
1996	City Environment Policy and Action Plan
1997	Vancouver Transportation Plan
2000	Southeast False Creek[19] Policy Statement
2001	Downtown Transportation Plan
2002	Creation of Sustainability Sponsor Group and Steering Committee
2003	City support for Kyoto Protocol and initiation of Cool Vancouver Task Force to reduce Greenhouse Gases
2004	Corporate Climate Change Action Plan for the City of Vancouver
2004	Community Climate Change Action Plan for the City of Vancouver
2005	Green Building Strategy

In keeping with City's commitment to an integrated approach to sustainability, a number of additional policies with specific links to the social and community economic development aspects of sustainability can be identified, although a number of overlaps with environmental issues exist. These policies and plans are designed to address social issues and / or guide social development activities in the city (City of Vancouver, 2005b).

1993	Safer City Initiatives
1994	The City's Mission Statement
1994	Civic Public Art Program
1995	Civic Youth Strategy
1998	Downtown Eastside Strategic Actions
2001	Social Housing Policies

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[19] In 1991, City Council directed that Southeast False Creek (SEFC) be developed as a residential community that incorporates principles of energy efficient design in its area plan and explore the possibility of using SEFC as a model "sustainable community." SEFC comprises a total of approximately 36 hectares (80 acres) of former industrial land near downtown Vancouver. The vision of SEFC is to be "a sustainable urban neighbourhood, will integrate into its urban context while protecting and enhancing the social and economic health of its community, as well as the health of local and global ecosystems" (Retrieved July 8, 2005, from http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/currentplanning/sefc/SEFCpolicy.htm#introduction).

2001	Four Pillars Drug Strategy
2002	Moving Forward Childcare: The Cornerstone of Early Childhood Development Services
2003	Peace and Justice Committee
2003	Food Policy Action Plan
2003	Vancouver Electoral Reform Commission
2003	Supervised Drug Injection Site
2004	Creative City Task Force
2004	Social Sustainability in Southeast False Creek (SEFC) (Draft document for SEFC Stewardship Group)
2004	Childcare Inter-governmental Protocol
2005	Ethical Purchasing
2005	Women's Task Force
2005	Mayor's Working Group on Immigration
2005	Definition of Social Sustainability
2005	Social Development Plan

The City of Vancouver's policies on sustainability are set within the context of a number of concurrent regional initiatives including the GVRD Liveable Region Strategic Plan / Sustainable Region Initiative,[20] and the Cities[Plus] 100-year plan for a sustainable region.[21] While the perception of Vancouver as a prototypically liveable and sustainable City make it an exemplary site to study issues related to urban sustainability, a number of contradictions exist that are just as instructive for the research. First, although Vancouver can claim a number of successes in the area of sustainable development, the City and region continue to face many pressures and problems associated with urbanisation. When Vancouver is analysed using sustainability indicators such as traffic congestion, road building, pavement, greenhouse gases and 'smart growth,' a number of disparities between the City's sustainability ideals and its current reality become evident (Smart Growth BC, 2004).

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[20] The GVRD's Sustainable Region Initiative (SRI) provides "a framework, vision, and action plan for Greater Vancouver based on the concept of sustainability that embraces economic prosperity, community well-being, and environmental integrity. The intention is for the GVRD to be the catalyst for a process which has many owners and many actors who are engaged in the task of providing for a better region for this and future generations" (Retrieved July 8, 2005, from http://www.gvrd.bc.ca/sustainability).

[21] Cities[Plus] (or cities Planning for Long-term Urban Sustainability) is a project that involved 500 experts and participants from 30 cities across Canada that worked to develop a 100 year sustainability plan for Vancouver. The 2-year long exercise, culminated in Team Canada being awarded the Grand Prix at the international Sustainable Urban Systems Design competition in Tokyo June 2003 (Retrieved July 8, 2005, from http://www.citiesplus.ca).

Equally significant are the growing social and economic inequalities in the city. Like most other BC municipalities, Vancouver is struggling to contend with unprecedented cuts to social programs and services created by the Provincial government. These cuts are being exacerbated by broader national trends showing a growing income gap in Canadian cities and concentrations of poverty in specific neighbourhoods. In Vancouver's poorest neighbourhoods – the Downtown Eastside; sectors of the Mount Pleasant and Grandview Woodlands Local Areas; and Eastside Kingsway corridor – some census tracts reveal rates of low income individuals at higher than 85% (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2003; Ley & Smith, 2000; Myles, Picot & Pyper, 2000). Clearly, a scenario in which the daily conditions of the city's most vulnerable citizens – children, the homeless, First Nations, the mentally ill, refugees, single-parents, and those on fixed incomes – are worsening, is not sustainable. In Vancouver's case, the situation is more dramatic due to a concentration of social services in the city's most disadvantaged neighbourhood, the Downtown Eastside, effectively making it a magnet for the disenfranchised seeking services that may no longer be available in their home communities.

Many Vancouver citizens are showing a decreased tolerance for the contradictions between the city's image and the reality of growing social and economic disparities. The City of Vancouver's 2004 Budget Allocation Study found that the 'Most Important Issues Facing Vancouver' were perceived to be crime prevention, followed closely by social issues including specific mention of homelessness, poverty, and lack of affordable housing. Reiterating these concerns, citizens identified 'Top Priority Service Areas (Last Areas In Which to Make Cuts)' as policing and support for community services associations. While the appetite for addressing Vancouver's growing social problems is clearly on the rise, the survey findings also reveal a tension between the desire on the one hand to alleviate inequity, while at the same time contending with deepening anxieties about

crime, break-ins, drugs and personal safety.[22] It is here that questions of what is being sustained and for whom in Vancouver's vision of a sustainable city come to the fore.

The third factor that makes Vancouver a highly suitable site for the research is that fact that it had a pre-existing interest in food policy prior to the formal mandate. Although a growing number of Canadian cities have food policies or food policy councils in place, Vancouver is unique in a number of ways. Vancouver's food policy emerges out of a well documented history of various policy actors (governmental and non-governmental) attempting to formulate a municipally-endorsed food policy in the city for over a decade. Living memory and documentation of the formal and informal strategies leading up to the City's official endorsement of food policy in 2003 / 2004 allow an examination of how and by whom local state intervention in food policy has been sought and justified in Vancouver over time.

Additionally, food policies and food policy councils in other Canadian cities often stem, ideologically and bureaucratically, from public health issues. In Toronto, for example, food policy is formulated and delivered under the auspices of the City's Board of Health, thereby shaping the content and scope of its initiatives, and strategies of its adherents. In contrast, the City of Vancouver has been without a Health Department since 1996 when the majority of health issues became a provincial responsibility. Without a City-administered Health Department, Vancouver's food policy initiatives are necessarily attached to different city agendas to justify their existence. Specifically, Vancouver's food policy initiatives take a sustainable food systems perspective, an approach that was codified in the Food Action Plan approved by City Council in 2003. This approach attempts to link food policy to pre-existing food-related programs and services from across the food system

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[22] On November 18, 2003, Council instructed the City Manager to implement a public consultation initiative related to the service levels and taxation choices required to balance the 2004 Operating Budget. The process involved three components: (1) A public opinion survey was undertaken by Mustel Group, a local polling company. The survey sought the opinions of 602 Vancouver residents on a range of service and taxation options; (2) The "City Choices 2004" process involving an information flyer, a message line and e-mail box for comments and a mini-questionnaire that could be faxed or mailed back to the City. This flyer, printed in English and Chinese, was also made available on the City's website where the questionnaire could be completed on-line; (3) Two Mayor's Forums were held on February 11 and 14, 2004, focusing the budget discussion on two themes: (i) Poverty, Homelessness, and Provincial Offloading (ii) Crime and Safety (Retrieved July 9, 2005 from http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20040309/rr1b.htm).

that are already delivered through various City departments. The point here is that even without a coordinated food policy prior to City Council approval, Vancouver had significant experience delivering or providing funding support to a wide range of activities related to food system issues.

In August 2003, an inventory of food-related programs, services and projects currently provided and/or supported by the City of Vancouver (including the Park Board and School Board) was undertaken (City of Vancouver, 2003c). Programs include community gardens, farmer's markets, urban agriculture, water conservation and rain barrel programs, green streets and greenways, backyard composters, and emergency food distribution. Although not a national leader in urban agriculture, farmers markets and other food policy and planning initiatives, the City of Vancouver does have a wide array of food-related programs and services delivered both through City departments and community organisations. The City of Vancouver also has a number of existing regulatory tools that facilitate food policy and planning. A second inventory, undertaken in August 2004 summarises City of Vancouver by-laws, policies, guidelines, decisions and information reports related to various elements of the food system. The inventory provides reference information on existing City policies that may have a bearing on future food policy initiatives. The ways that such a wide range of programs and regulatory tools have, and continue to be reconceptualised as 'food policy' make Vancouver's situation unique.

A fourth factor that makes Vancouver highly suitable for the research relates to a growing trend towards entrepreneurial governance and global aspirations. In addition to its green sensibilities, Vancouver is also a city with unambiguous aims to achieve international competitiveness through specific governance trajectories and economic development plans. Like other Western cities, the political economy of Vancouver has undergone significant shifts over the past two decades. In Vancouver, factors including deindustrialisation, the rise of a service economy, high immigration and a globalised property market have reshaped the both the urban economy and urban politics (Blomley, 2004, p. 29). The emerging trend towards competitiveness is taking place alongside the equally pronounced goal of making the city more socially, environmentally and economically sustainable for its citizens. Although these parallel trends might be perceived as inherently

contradictory, this may not in fact be the case. For a host of reasons, it is clear that Vancouver's international reputation for sustainability is being leveraged as a vehicle to promote competitiveness strategies.[23] This combination may be best exemplified in the successful bids to host international events such as the World Urban Forum[24] (WUF) meeting in 2006 and the Winter Olympic games in 2010. WUF 2006 is held as an opportunity for Canada to:

> position itself as a global leader in sustainable cities by showcasing Canadian best practices and technologies, engaging citizens on key policy issues linked to Canadian and global urban sustainability, and strengthening domestic and international partnerships in the development of sustainable urban communities.[25]

Similarly, the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver and Whistler will be the first "green" Olympics, "incorporating the principles of environmental sustainability into all aspects of planning and preparation." Stan Hagen, British Columbia's previous Minister of Sustainable Resource Development claimed in a 2002 media advisory that 'sustainability,' far from being an impediment to economic growth, is in fact what is *needed* to ensure the success of the 2010 Vancouver / Whistler Olympic Games, an event which Hagen asserts will leave a lasting legacy for "[British Columbia], business, and the world." The pressure on Vancouver to 'compete or perish' in global markets does not make it unique. Nor is Vancouver set apart because the goals of competitiveness and sustainability are becoming increasingly entangled. Rather, the particular mix of these pressures make Vancouver an instructive case study.

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[23] Over the past number of years Vancouver has consistently scored top ratings in international 'quality of life' surveys including the Mercer Quality of Life Survey, FORTUNE, Andersen Best Cities Survey, and KPMG Competitive Alternatives Survey. Significantly, these surveys typically link quality of life directly with economic competitiveness.
[24] The World Urban Forum is an initiative of the United Nations' Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT). Held every two years, the World Urban Forum invites governments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and other experts on urban issues from around the world to discuss the challenges of urbanization (Retrieved July 30, 2005, from http://www.wd.gc.ca/ced/wuf/default_e.asp).
[25] Retrieved July 30, 2005, from http://www.wd.gc.ca/ced/wuf/default_e.asp).

Policy cycles as a framework for analysing food policy and planning

As a study concerned with the dynamics of governance and the policy-making process, the methodology for this dissertation is informed by elements of policy cycle analysis. Dye (in Howlett & Ramesh, 1995) defines public policy as: "anything a government chooses to do or not to do." Theories of the stages in which public policy develops have been proposed by a number of scholars. Kingdon (1995), for example, identifies four policy cycle phases: (1) agenda setting; (2) specifying alternatives; (3) making choices; and (4) the implementation of the decision. Similarly, Howlett & Ramesh (1995) characterise the stages in the policy cycle as comprising: (1) agenda setting; (2) policy formulation; (3) decision making; (4) policy implementation; and (5) policy evaluation. The identification of policy cycle phases and characteristics allow for analyses of variations in the ways that different actors engage in activities at various stages in policy development.

In the food system planning literature, particularly where urban agriculture is concerned, the value of policy cycle frameworks in assessing similarities and differences has been noted (de Zeeuw, Gundel, Gundel, & Waibel 2000, UMP-LAC, IDRC, IPES, FAO, & Municipality of Quito, 2001). One such framework has been developed by Dubbeling (2001) based on municipal case studies undertaken between 1998 and 2002 in South America, the Caribbean and East Africa.[26] In documenting approaches to urban food policy-making and planning, five phases were identified (Table 3):

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[26] It is important to note that the proposed framework was developed for urban agriculture, not food policy more broadly. However, the assumption is that urban agriculture takes place in the context of sustainable development making the framework equally suitable for an assessment of a systems approach to food policy.

Table 3: Policy cycle framework for food policy. Adapted from Dubbeling 2001

	Name of Phase	Key Issues
Phase 1	Awareness-raising and lobbying	Who is represented?
		Who is affected by, or affects food policy?
		Who possesses information, resources, expertise?
		Who controls implementation instruments?
Phase 2	Diagnosis and stakeholder commitment	Participatory diagnosis
		Building collaboration
		Forging consensus
		Developing baseline studies
Phase 3	Strategy formulation and action planning	Identify, review and expand on priority issues through multi-actor platforms
		Identify solutions to local needs and problems
		Strengthen capacities of local actors
		Formal adoption of an action plan by local authorities
Phase 4	Implementation	"Turning point" - Planning into action
		Pilot projects
		Normative and legal frameworks and / or municipal policies
Phase 5	Institutionalisation and 'anchoring'	Monitoring and evaluation
		Build issue and participatory processes into procedures, norms and ideas of local stakeholders and institutions
		Inclusion of processes into normative, legal and operational instruments of city (e.g. strategic plans, zoning plans, district development plans)

This dissertation takes the above policy cycle model as a guiding framework. The framework is not used as an analytical tool, but rather provides a narrative basis and a heuristic device to address the research questions in a way most relevant to food system issues.[27] Chapters Four through Eight correspond with each phase of the framework, thereby situating the specific case study being examined in this dissertation within the context of existing research on food policy and local governance. Benefits of using this framework include:

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[27] The exception is Chapter Eight (Institutionalisation and Anchoring) which serves as a summary of research findings. Because of its focus on the multi-actor approaches and re-scalings of governance necessary to maintain and possibly expand existing food policy commitments (the foundational questions upon which this dissertation is based) six factors were chosen to assess institutionalisation and anchoring. These factors, including the rationale for choosing them, are detailed in Chapter Eight.

- Facilitates data analysis and ability to answer research questions.
- Builds needed knowledge about the coordination of governance and mitigation of tensions associated with the adoption of food policy by local government and its subsequent implementation using an existing framework to document a specific case.
- Facilitates institution strengthening that will further enable the City of Vancouver to formulate, implement and evaluate food policies and programmes that are appropriate to local conditions.
- Enables the sharing of experiences and dissemination of knowledge about urban food policy design and implementation as a way to improve practices in Vancouver and elsewhere.
- Identifies themes to be addressed in the future and opportunities for comparative research to be undertaken.

It could be argued that the guiding framework being used to discuss Vancouver's case risks over-structuring the process of food policy development, producing an implied narrative that seals off unexpected possibilities and disregards overlaps between stages. In response to this caution, it is important to reiterate that the framework is intended as an organisational device within which elasticity is assumed, and in fact, valuable. My contention – which bore out during data analysis – is that the data were not confined to particular stages of the framework. Instead, many overlaps and slippages were found, a number of which are described throughout the dissertation. Recognising the relative elasticity of the framework is instructive, revealing as it did, some of the most significant points of tension and possibility. At the same time, the framework provides an important baseline structure that allows for a careful analysis of the ways in which particular periods of food policy development in a specific case conform to, and differ from, commonly cited phases and characteristics in policy development. In so doing, an important methodological contribution is made to analyses of food policy development. Specifically, in analysing Vancouver's case in relation to a pre-existing policy cycle framework, emergent dimensions for consideration in other cases can be added to each phase, providing more depth to a baseline food policy cycle framework.

In analysing Vancouver's food policy development according to a pre-determined policy cycle model, the goal is not to evaluate 'success' and 'failure' on the basis of a set of fixed criteria. On the contrary, as a number of experts have noted, municipally-supported food policy development can and should be assessed in terms of context-specific conditions at particular times (Dubbeling, 2001; Koc & MacRae, 1999; Dahlberg, 1994). The assumption is that food policy development, like other participatory urban processes, is dynamic and necessarily evolutionary (Cabannes, 2004a), making an evolving baseline guiding framework for policy development particularly suitable.

A further rationale for using a policy cycle analysis to guide the research stems from the importance of responding to what geographers identify as the need to meaningfully contribute to public policy (Imrie, 2004; Lees, 2003; Hamnett, 2003; Dorling & Shaw, 2002; Peck, 1999). Recent years have seen active debate over whether and in what capacity geographers should reinvigorate a commitment to engage with current public policy issues. Concerns have been raised by some geographers that much geographical research is irrelevant to public debates (Imrie, 2004, p. 697), that the discipline has "turned its back" on policy issues, particularly those related to poverty and inequality (Dorling & Shaw, 2002), and that geographers have had surprisingly little to say about important emerging issues on the public agenda (Lees, 2003, p. 572). Part of the challenge includes an under-valuation of policy work by academia, a tendency to engage in critique rather than action, and a lack of dialogue between academic researchers and policy-makers (Peck, 1999). In response, geographers are re-examining their practices and attitudes towards policy-oriented research in an effort to better engage with 'real world' issues and problems. At the same time, some geographers caution against uncritically embracing the 'policy turn' in geography, particularly given concerns that geography's 'policy relevance' might come to be gauged purely in relation to formal ties with government and other policy-makers (Imrie, 2004, p. 705). What is being sought by many geographers is broader conceptualisation of how and where geographical ideas are making a difference to policy and practice without reducing geographical research to particular sites of activity or focus (Ibid., p. 705). My own position on the policy relevance debate reflects this

need to strike a balance between critical scholarship and contributions to policy-oriented practice. It is in this capacity that the policy cycle framework is used.

Periodisation

The research period was June 2003 – December 2004 spanning the months immediately before the City Council motion of July 2003, through to the election of the Vancouver Food Policy Council in July 2004 and hiring of a Food Policy Coordinator in September 2004 and a Food Systems Planner in December 2004. A timeline showing major events during the research period, and their correspondence with the phases of the organising policy cycle framework, is summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Timeline of major events in Vancouver's food policy development

PHASE	EVENTS	DATES
Awareness raising and lobbying (1)[28]	Awareness raising and lobbying (Period 1)	1990 – 1995
	Awareness raising and lobbying (Period 2)	1996 – 2003
	City Council Motion	July 8, 2003
Diagnosis and stakeholder commitment (2)	Creation of Food Policy Task Force	August - September 2003
Strategy formulation and action planning (3)	Consultation Process #1 (Formulation of Food Action Plan)	September - December 2003
	Presentation of Food Action Plan to City Council (City Council approval in principle but no funding or other supports)	December 9, 2003
"Grey area" - No clear food policy mandate January - March 2004		
Implementation (4)	City Council approval of funding for two proposed staff positions. Clear food policy mandate.	March 11, 2004
	Consultation Process #2 (Formulation of Terms of Reference and process for creating Food Policy Council)	April - July 2004
	Election of 20 member Food Policy Council (Food Policy Task Force Dissolves)	July 14, 2004
Institutionalisation and anchoring (5)	Food Policy Coordinator hired	September 1, 2004
	Food Policy Council begins meeting	September 20, 2004
	Food Systems Planner hired	December 1, 2004
	Vancouver Food Policy Council completes preliminary stages of work plan	December 31, 2004

The periodisation of the research upon which this dissertation is based does not imply that there were no significant food system tensions being negotiated in Vancouver prior to the period being examined. Clearly, the 'return' of food to the city in Vancouver's case, and other cities like it, reflects an actual and perceived divorce between and many food issues and urbanisation. Aspects of the broader historical context of the 'loss' and 'rediscovery' of city farming and other food-related

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[28] Periods 1 and 2 before the City Council motion of July 8, 2003 are not formally a part of the research period, however they are cited as major events because they inform the research. An analysis of conditions before the Council motion of 2003, provides an essential point of reference to enable analysis not only of how the Council Motion came to pass, but equally, how configurations and strategies of partnerships and framings of food system issues would change once food policy had earned an official mandate and 'place' within the City bureaucracy.

issues as they relate to urban development and broader (often global) socio-political trends are treated in Chapter 5. However, a comprehensive analysis of these trends in general terms, or in Vancouver's case in particular, is beyond the scope of the research.

Data gathering procedures

In keeping with the ethnographic and action research approach of this dissertation, a variety of data gathering methods were employed throughout the research process. The three primary methods were (1) semi-structured interviewing; (2) document analysis; and (3) participant observation. Data were analysed through the use of coding, triangulation and integration. The coding process included a thorough review of observations, interview and document material; identification of patterns; matching patterns in the data with the analytical framework; identification of initial codes; analysis according to code categories; refinement of codes and extraction of major themes for reporting (Markey, 2003; Berg, 1998). The end result of the coding and integration process was the identification of specific case findings regarding (1) The mechanisms and actors involved in the official adoption of food policy by the City of Vancouver in 2003; (2) The role of local partnerships, aimed at promoting collaborative relationships between local government, community organisations and other actors, in addressing food system problems in Vancouver; and (3) The capacity of food policy to strengthen and diversify Vancouver's sustainability goals.

Semi-structured interviewing

The choice to conduct interviews as a component of the methodology is in keeping with the intensive, as opposed to extensive, nature of the research approach and philosophy. Research interviews can be described as a verbal exchange between two people in which the interviewer seeks information from the participant on a pre-determined topic (Pole & Lampard, 2002). The aim of the interview technique is not to produce representative generalisations but rather to understand how individuals and groups attribute meaning to experiences, processes, ideas and social contexts (Dunn, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Valentine, 1997). As part of a multi-method approach to research questions, interview data reveal nuanced dimensions of research problems that may be missed by more generalisable methods. The strengths of interviewing include the ability to fill a gap

in knowledge that other methods such as observation or statistical methods are unable to address; the ability to examine complex behaviours and motivations; and the ability to collect a diversity of opinions and experiences (Dunn, 2000).

Although a number of different types of interviews exist, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are an appropriate method for the research project given their ability to generate information linked with pre-determined questions, while at the same time providing flexibility to respondents to raise issues that the interviewer may not have anticipated (Silverman in Valentine, 1997; Berg, 1989). A total of 31 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Provincial staff, Municipal staff, Municipal elected officials (City Councillors, Park Commissioners and Vancouver School Board Trustees), GVRD staff, representatives from community and non-governmental organisations, and other key participants in food policy initiatives.[29] Interview subjects are listed below:

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[29] Mainstream food producers and food retailers were not interviewed. The reason for not interviewing these actors stems from the fact that they did not participate in the Food Policy Task Force consultation processes. The rationale for not inviting mainstream actors was based on the advice of the Coordinator of the Toronto Food Policy Council who counselled the Vancouver interim food policy staff team to concentrate first on building a coordinated foundation of food policy work among existing supporters before branching out to include mainstream players. An analysis of mainstream views before and after Vancouver's food policy mandate is outside of the scope of this project.

INTERVIEW SUBJECTS	NUMBER
Community-based participants	
Emergency Food Provisioner	1
Public Health Worker / Nutritionist	3
Food System Consultant	4
Farmers Market representative	1
City of Vancouver Elected Officials	
Vancouver City Council	3
Vancouver Park Board	1
Vancouver School Board	1
City of Vancouver Civil Servants	
City of Vancouver Senior Manager	2
City of Vancouver Department Manager / Director	2
City of Vancouver Planner / Social Planner	8
Greater Vancouver Regional District	
Manager	1
Provincial	
Policy Analyst	1
Manager	1
Independent experts	
Sustainability expert	2
Agriculture expert	1
TOTAL	31

The majority of the interviews were conducted between January and August 2004, with four conducted prior to this time. I selected interviewees based upon their status as participants in Vancouver's food policy development or sustainability initiatives more broadly, and therefore their ability to act as key informants. I also interviewed a select number of participants in Toronto's food policy process. The decision to interview more governmental representatives than representatives from the Food Policy Task Force is in keeping with the research goal of studying the changing institutional structures and boundaries of the City bureaucracy itself, including the assumptions, perspectives and activities of those who work within it. Governance for sustainable development

presents a number of challenges because of its multi-dimensional nature where the issue itself is concerned, but equally in relation to administration, jurisdiction, and organisational structure. As such, the importance of analysing the contours of institutions and the ways in which the people work within them to facilitate or resist the adoption of emerging cross-cutting policy areas is particularly significant. Furthermore, because so few examples of municipally-supported food policy development exist to the extent that exists in Vancouver's case, the methodological decision to focus on governmental perspectives reflects a unique opportunity to carefully examine the institutional context of such changes.

Interviews lasted between one half hour and one and a half hours and were recorded and transcribed. Interview topics focused on areas of significance to the research questions but varied somewhat depending on each participant's position in the policy process and institututional or community context. In general, my questions fell into five categories: (1) General questions about the perception of food policy as an appropriate issue for local governments to address; (2) Questions about the specific mechanisms, actors and networks involved in the official adoption of food policy by the City of Vancouver in 2003; (3) Questions about food policy as a 'sustainability' issue; (4) Questions about the tensions that arose in Vancouver's food policy process and strategies for resolving them.

A number of the interviews can be characterised as 'elite interviews,' which is a particular type of semi-structured interviewing in which participants are prominent, influential and well-informed people in an organisation or community. Elite interviewing is useful for my research because of its institutional ethnographic approach that aims to analyse the actors and institutions that govern human relations rather than the governed themselves. Elite interviewing has the benefit of:

> ... encouraging us to think again about the significance of local power relations [by raising] the possibility of researching the powerful, rather than the powerless (Cochrane, 1998, p. 2122).

Such interviews are also valuable because elites are often able to provide in-depth answers about organisational structure, legal or jurisdictional issues, past history and future plans. I was cautious, however, in considering the ways in which elites were defined, and by whom, or assuming that elite interview subjects would necessarily yield more accurate information. There is a danger that elite interviewing can become "self-referential and self-fulfilling" (Cochrane, 1998, p. 2128) in the sense that elites often know how to deflect difficult questions, avoid recounting contradictions or mistakes in policy processes, and at times provide highly generalised answers. Consequently, my focus in conducting elite interviews was not necessarily the elites themselves, but the broader systems, narratives, processes and structures of which they are a part. Furthermore, because my research assumes a blurring categories between those who govern and those who are governed, I perceive elites to be one part of a broader range of participants in the research process.

In interviewing City employees and community participants involved with food policy in Vancouver, I was constantly aware that I wore two 'hats:' Social Planner and PhD researcher, and was continually clarifying which 'hat' I wore in which situation. This dual role had benefits and drawbacks. On one hand, because I continued to play a prominent role as a local government employee in the City's food policy development, I was able to build relationships of trust and familiarity both with my City colleagues, other governmental and non-profit representatives, and community organisations. These relationships enabled me access to people, groups and information that might not otherwise have been available or knowable. When approaching potential interview participants I was very upfront about the context and purpose of my request for an interview, and which hat I was wearing. Interview participants seemed accepting of my dual role.

On the other hand, I recognise that I was likely perceived by some community members as belonging to 'the elite' in the sense that as a City 'insider,' it may have been assumed that I had influence in decision-making around food policy issues for which community members were lobbying. Regardless of whether this perception bore out in reality, these perceptions may have informed some of the responses I received from interview subjects. In spite of this drawback, I believe my dual role provided more benefits than disadvantages.

Document analysis

Document analysis is the second major data gathering technique used in this dissertation consisting of a selective review of policy, media and archival material. This review took place from July 2003 to December 2004. The review consisted of a content analysis of relevant policy documents relating to food programs, services or policies in Vancouver from 1990 – 2004. City of Vancouver policy documents and other City materials were obtained from the City of Vancouver archive, the City Clerk's Office, the City of Vancouver website, and City employees. The document review and analysis also involved a selective archival review of organisational records, newsletters, reports and meeting minutes from select food-related organisations. These were obtained by approaching representatives from the organisations in question. Media analysis consisted of a review of local newspapers (*The Vancouver Sun, Vancouver Courier, Westender, and Georgia Straight*) from Fall 2003 until Fall 2004 for news articles relating to food policy. Materials were reviewed, coded, and triangulated with other data sources.

Discourse analysis was used when reviewing and examining the documents in question. In my analysis, I drew from an approach that understands discourse as "part of a process through which things and identities get constructed" (Lees, 2004, p. 102). In this approach, discourse is understood to "actively construct actors and the relations between actors" (Rydin in Lees 2004, p. 103). Although my analysis also involves a sensitivity to discourse as ideology and as an instrument of persuasion (in the tradition of Marxian political economy), a poststructural approach prevails because it does not take as pre-given the identity of political actors. However, my methodological approach recognises that "the world is not changed by language alone." Rather, my analysis assumes that language should be understood as "the nervous system of a whole body of broader technical, institutional and representational practices" (Appadurai, 2001, p. 34) that inform urban change.

Participant observation

Participant observation is the third major data gathering technique used in this dissertation. Participant observation can provide the researcher a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied, and illuminate nuances of attitude and behaviour that might escape researchers using other methods (Babbie, 1989, p. 262). Participant observation is particularly appropriate for research topics that appear to "defy simple quantification" (Ibid.). As a study based on ethnographic principles with a focus on the nuances of policy processes, participant observation was integral to my research. Once again, however, my dual role as Social Planner and researcher (i.e. participant / producer and observer), presented benefits and drawbacks.

The major benefit of my dual role is that I had access to a number of events and encounters – chance and intended – that would not otherwise have been available to me simply as a researcher. For instance, I participated as an observer and a participant / producer in almost all of Vancouver food policy processes from July 2003 until the completion of this dissertation.[30] Events included Council meetings, committee meetings, staff meetings, community meetings, Task Force meetings, consultation meetings, focus group meetings, workshops, lectures, and public presentations. In addition, as a City 'insider' I benefited from everyday casual encounters with my City colleagues and community members. As such, I gained a tremendous amount of first hand knowledge about policy contexts, and institutional relationships and behaviours that was instrumental in the interpretations I reached.

The drawback is that my position as an insider and direct participant in the policy-making process may have resulted in personal bias that I did not fully account for in the final analysis because of my immersion in the process. Participant observation has been criticised precisely on this issue: that immersion in the research site may influence and detract from the trustworthiness of research findings. In my case, I do not believe that my dual role detracted from the trustworthiness of the

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[30] The exception was January – April 2005 during which time I took a leave from my job at the City in order to finish writing this dissertation.

research findings for three reasons: First, throughout the research I remained highly reflexive about my dual role; Second, although it was not always clear cut, I attempted to be explicit with my City colleagues and the research participants about which hat I was wearing under which circumstances; And third, methodological robustness was ensured by triangulating participant observation with other data gathering techniques (in my case, interviews and document analysis). In this way, there was a cross-checking and verification device built into the broader methodological approach.

Reliability, validity and replicability

Methodological design and research results are typically questioned for their 'reliability,' 'validity,' and 'replicability.' In the case of ethnographic, action research and other qualitative methods, a different approach is often taken to these considerations. Specifically, in cases where the research goal is not to produce apparently objective, distanced, transferable findings, other cross-checking mechanisms come into play. A growing number of qualitative researchers have developed criteria more appropriate for qualitative research that recognises the value of qualitative approaches. Hyndman (1995, p. 200), for example, describes qualitative research-based fieldwork as:

> ... a site to critique, deconstruct, and reconstruct a more responsible, if partial account of what is happening in the world.

Similarly, Scott and Katz (in Hyndman 2001, p. 266) argue for the necessity – and appropriateness – of recognising the researcher's experience as at once an interpretation and in need of interpretation. Other scholars have retheorised notions of 'validity' to suggest alternative criteria against which to consider the credibility of a study. Creswell (1998), for example, uses the term "verification" instead of "validity," while Lincoln & Guba (1985) use the terms "trustworthiness" or "authenticity." None of these reconceptualisations implies a lack of empircal rigour, but rather acknowledges the interpretive nature of all research. In this dissertation, verification was ensured in three ways: First, through the triangulation of the three data gathering techniques (interviews, document analysis and participant observation); Second, through select review of some chapters

with participants; And third, through my immersion in the process and dual role as insider and outsider.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the research design and methodology used in this dissertation. First, the research questions and hypothesis of the dissertation were presented. The rationale for choosing ethnography and action research as the main methodological approaches were explained. An overview and rationale for the choice of a single case study, as well as the grounds for selecting the research site were then presented. Next, a framework for facilitating food policy and planning developed by Dubbeling (2001) was presented, and an explanation offered of how the framework is used to examine Vancouver's experience with food policy development. Lastly, the data gathering techniques used to assess Vancouver's experience were explained. In the following chapters, (Four through Eight), I present the case study findings. First, in Chapter Three, I provide a baseline mapping of food policy development Canadian cities in the context of broader trends and governmental approaches to food policy and food governance in Canada.

CHAPTER 3
FOOD POLICY IN CANADIAN CITIES

One of the objectives of this dissertation is to determine how tensions that arose as a result of the City of Vancouver's adoption of food policy were addressed, and in some cases resolved, through policy, planning and regulation. Accordingly, a baseline mapping of current trends and governmental approaches to food in Canada is an important foundation for the dissertation given that one of the primary scales of analysis, local government, is the site of least direct authority to govern food. In analysing how and why food policy as an issue associated with sustainable development was adopted in Vancouver, it is therefore important to understand the broader governance and policy climate within which local governments in Canada operate. This analysis is important in that it highlights the challenges in governing for food in Canada, both in scalar terms and also in the coordination of goals and responsibilities.

The current inter-governmental relationship and division of powers between legislative authorities at the federal, provincial and municipal levels is enshrined under the Constitution Act, 1867 (formerly the British North America Act, 1867). In particular, Sections 91 and 92 divide legislative powers between the federal and provincial governments, with "municipal institutions," "property and civil rights" and "all matters of a merely local or private nature in the province" falling under provincial legislation (Constitution Act, 1867). In this way, municipalities are considered statutory bodies only, "restricted to powers expressly conferred by provincial statute" (Wong, 2002, p. 1). Of particular concern to municipalities is their limited ability to generate and increase revenues. Although widely recognised as Canada's 'economic engine,' cities have only three main sources of revenue: property tax, user fees and other government transfers. From 1996 - 2001, municipal revenues grew at about half the rate (14%) of provincial, federal and territorial orders of government (25%) (Ibid.). An understanding of Canada's governance context is particularly important given that food policy is a cross-cutting policy area for which no clear or coordinated mandate exists at any scale. Of significance then are the inconsistencies that arise at multiple

scales of food governance in Canada, and the ways that local governments manage, or indeed circumvent, these tensions within a broader context of debates over the need for new governance arrangements and inter-governmental reform. The baseline mapping in this chapter addresses food governance and policy trends at three intersecting scales: (1) municipal (food policy in Canadian cities), (2) provincial (British Columbia), and (3) federal (Canada).

1. Coordinating governance for food policy in Canadian municipalities

There are few jurisdictions in the world at any scale of governance that have a comprehensive and integrated set of food policies and programs. In this regard, Canada is no exception. The possibility of identifying a coherent food policy from among Canada's governmental practices and policy statements is hotly debated. While the federal government has publicly committed to a number of 'food security' goals including sustainable agriculture and improving nutritional quality, critics characterise the Canadian government's view of food and food policy as "mechanistic, technocratic, incomplete, fragmentary, and contradictory" (MacRae, 1999, p. 182). Others argue that Canada's food policy is effectively an agricultural policy that since the 1980s has operated as little more than an "ideologically-driven campaign of deregulation, privatization and budget cutting" similar to IMF-style structural adjustment programs (Qualman & Wiebe, 2002, p. 4). These views indicate deep divisions in what food policy is understood to be, the scales at which it is governed, and its intended outcomes. Although there is no singular understanding of what constitutes food governance in Canada, two broad approaches to food policy can be identified. The first approach seeks to establish a sustainable food system involving a focus on the production and supply of food, while the second aims to eliminate poverty and hunger by ensuring reliable access to food (Power, 1999, p. 30). While these approaches may appear to be complementary, the mechanisms developed to achieve Canadian 'food security' on these terms, the principles upon which they are based, as well as the outcomes sought, can vary dramatically.

Where local governments are concerned, many of the same challenges and competing understandings are at play. Significantly though, while local governments have the least direct authority to intervene in food system issues, it is in cities where many concerted attempts are being

made to better coordinate food policy and planning for food governance. While most efforts begin and are sustained at the community level, local governments including Montréal, Toronto, Ottawa, Regina, Prince Albert, Kamloops, and Vancouver currently engage in some form of food-related program delivery, policy-making or urban planning. Recent years have seen growing interest in food policy development in cities including the creation of formalised food charters, pilot projects (community gardens, farmers markets, community orchards, community kitchens, emergency food provision, collective small-scale processing centres, etc.) and food policy councils. Table 5 shows the types and locations of a selection of food policy activities.

Table 5: Type and location of select food policy activities in Canadian cities

	Vancouver	Calgary	Regina	Winnipeg	Ottawa	Toronto	Montreal
Food policy council	✓			Under development	✓	✓	
Food Charter / Food Policy Statement	Under development				✓	✓	
Farmers Markets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Gardens / Urban Agriculture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Kitchens	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Food Security / Emergency Food Programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

In many cases, food policy activities remain primarily community-based with minimal or unstable local government support in the form of funding, staffing and systemic institutional up-take. In other cases, local government has taken a more direct and active role. The City of Toronto, for example, is widely viewed as an innovator in paving the way for municipally-affiliated food policy in Canada. Toronto was one of the originators of, and among the first world cities to sign onto the United Nations' Healthy Cities movement in 1989 (Toronto Food Policy Council, 2002). This, and other developments led to the creation of the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) in 1991, described as a response to the "absence of federal and provincial leadership on food security" (Toronto Food Policy Council, 2005, para. 1). The TFPC operates as a sub-committee of the Toronto Board of

Health. Since their inception in 1991, the TFPC has gained an international reputation for their work with consumer, business, farm, labour, multicultural, anti-hunger advocacy, faith, and community development groups on issues including public health, community food security and sustainable agriculture (Ibid.). Another early adopter of food policy was Kamloops, BC where a range of food policy initiatives including community gardens, community kitchens and a food policy council have been in operation since 1994. Elements of Kamloops's food policy and food security priorities were integrated into Kamloops Social Plan in 2001. These forerunners have been shown to play an important role in helping to put food security and food policy development on the municipal agendas of other Canadian cities. This was certainly the case in Vancouver, where Toronto's experience was heavily cited as a policy model on which to base its own development. Similarly, in the 1990s, during early phases of lobbying for adoption of food policy in Vancouver, the experience of Kamloops proved instructive. In this case, the community nutritionists in Kamloops played a role in influencing community nutritionists in Vancouver who were among the first professional groups in the Lower Mainland to organise and lobby for food policy at the provincial and local scales. There are indications that Vancouver is now participating in this type of inter-local policy transfer as a 'role model' in its own right, by providing materials and advice to the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg and the Regional Municipality of Halton, Ontario in their respective community consultations on the development of food policy in those localities.[31] It appears that inter-local policy transfer emerges as a strategy for food policy development in the Canadian context generally, particularly in light of the complexity of Canada's multi-scaled governance landscape and the variation that exists in levels of municipal support. An overview of food policy councils (FPCs) in four Canadian cities provides one indication of the variation in local

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[31] The generic term 'policy transfer' refers to a host of concepts describing the process of moving policies, programmes, ideas or institutions from one time and space to another (Nedley, 2000). A important distinction drawn in studies of the temporal and spatial transfer of policy knowledge is that between voluntary lesson-drawing (Rose, 1991) and coercive policy pushing (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). The former is described as "friendly exchange" of "action oriented conclusion[s] about a program or programs in operation elsewhere" (Rose, 1991, pp. 4 - 8), while the latter is described as the direct or indirect imposition of policy by one country or organisation on another (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). Further evidence of inter-local policy transfer in the adoption of food policy in Vancouver is identified in Chapter Four. This evidence should be considered to fall within the 'voluntary' category of policy transfer, involving as it does, 'friendly exchanges' of policy in a 'lesson-drawing' capacity. However, an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon on policy transfer in Vancouver's case and others is beyond the scope of the dissertation. Policy transfer does, however, constitute an important area for future comparative research, particularly in relation to concepts such as 'fast policy regimes' where 'almost perpetual reform is generated' (Peck, 2001; Jessop & Peck, 2000).

government involvement in food system issues and the different levels of commitment offered (Table 6).

Table 6: Food policy councils in four Canadian cities

	Toronto	Kamloops	Ottawa	Vancouver
Body	Toronto Food Policy Council	Kamloops Food Policy Council	Ottawa Food Security Council	Vancouver Food Policy Council
Year established	1991	1994	2003	2004
Number of members	15	25 – 30	10	20
Mandate	Food security (public health)	Sustainable food system (public health)	Food security (food access)	Sustainable food system
Institutional 'home'	Toronto Board of Health	Grassroots. No governmental affiliation, but connections to Social Planning Council of Kamloops	Social Planning Council of Ottawa	City of Vancouver Social Planning Department
Dedicated staff	1.5 Full-time	No paid staff	1 Part-time	2 Full-time (1 food policy coordinator and 1 food systems planner)
Elected Officials	City Council liaison	1 City Council liaison	1 City Council liaison	2 City Council liaisons; 2 School Board liaisons; 1 Park Board liaison
Funding source	City of Toronto operating budget (Health)	Various funding sources	Various funding sources (City of Ottawa, Foundations, donations)	City of Vancouver Contingency reserve (first year), then regular operative budget
Major policy or program focus	Public health, community food security, sustainable agriculture	Health, wellness, food recovery	Food security and anti-hunger	Sustainable food system

FPCs, while forming a common element of food policy development, are just one tool among many possible types of local government support of food issues. Food policy councils are not necessarily affiliated with local governments. Many FPCs stem instead from networks of community

organisations operating in a non-governmental paradigm. However, as a frequent feature of municipally-affiliated food policy initiatives where they exist at the local level, FPCs provide a useful illustration of differences in dedicated staff resources, stability of funding and elected official participation in food system issues.

Of particular significance in Table 6 are levels of staff support and the stability of budget allocations. Dedicated food policy staff positions, where they exist, are often assigned to support the work of a food policy council. Borron (2003) and Dahlberg (1994) observe that dedicated staff provide important support to food policy councils, including continuity and key connections to governmental departments particularly during implementation stages. However, even once local government commitments are in place, evidence has shown that the notion of food as a local government responsibility remains contentious and vulnerable to budget cuts and political shifts. The experience of the City of Toronto is a case in point. Since 1991 the Toronto Food Policy Council has weathered a number of challenges to its existence, losing 1.5 of three original dedicated staff positions. Another challenge in Toronto has been that of institutional up-take of food policy. The former Food Policy Coordinator of the City of Toronto described the chilly reception given food as an issue for local governments to address:

> In the beginning [in Toronto] it was sort of a, 'what is this'? kind of reaction, sometimes even within the Public Health Department. Depending on what issues we decided to get involved in there was a certain confusion. I remember a lot of meetings where I would be talking about what were doing, and would get these blank stares (Independent Expert, 6)

During his tenure as Food Policy Coordinator, he cited a continued lack of understanding and support of food as an urban issue:

> I'm not sure that other than Public Health, anybody really understands food as a municipal agenda ... I never felt that we really got successful around this larger understanding of food (Independent Expert, 6).

And further:

> In other departments, it was even worse. Planning never really got it even by the
> time I left ... we never really had any success at getting the Planners to fully
> embrace food as an urban planning issue. It's not really in the Official Plan
> (Independent Expert, 6).

These observations reflect two broad concerns about food policy as a municipal responsibility in Canada. First, tensions commonly arise over the operationalisation of food policy within local governments as institutions where consensus around an 'appropriate' fit, both administratively and in relation to the practitioners responsible for its implementation, is rarely a given. Compounding this challenge are disconnections between the type of issue that food policy is understood to be in different cases (e.g. public health, sustainability, environmental, or anti-hunger) and pre-existing institutional experience and capacity to deal with such issues. In Toronto's case, a factor contributing to the apparent inability of Planners to "embrace food as a planning issue" was arguably the fact that food policy in Toronto was framed conceptually and administratively (at least in its early years) as a public health issue, and therefore not perceived to be closely aligned with 'typical' planning and development functions. Second, concerns are commonly expressed in terms of the perception that municipalities as a whole have limited jurisdiction to formulate such policy, and lack the mandate and resources necessary to implement it. One Senior Social Planner at the City of Vancouver described it this way:

> There are those that believe that [food policy at the local scale] is downloading.
> There are many people in the City system that could be supportive of food policy
> but they believe that is within the mandate of other levels of government not
> necessarily within the mandate of the City (Senior Social Planner, CoV, 7).

Echoing the same concerns, a City of Vancouver Manager registered the following observations, placing food policy within the context of the growing number of social issues being addressed by local governments:

It is a difficult tension that everyone is seeing in BC as the province has cut and
reduced staff. Everyone is afraid of downloading. Because the municipalities
[don't] have the mandate for providing services [or] the funding for providing these
services, yet citizens look to the level of government closest to them. So I think
there is a real wariness over the last few years about taking on provincial and/or
federal cuts especially in the social area. We have seen these cuts in welfare
policy, childcare, welfare subsidies, women's issues. The list goes on and on,
justice services ... Health services, even if [the municipality] wanted to take on
that, they don't have the funding. And ... the Healthcare system, over a hundred
million locally. How in any way shape or form can the municipality take on that
level of funding changes? So the municipalities are very wary of social issues that
they are forced basically to take on. And it is in that context that food arrives, or
women's issues arise, or youth issues arise, or at-risk kids arise (Manager, CoV,
24).

A host of additional challenges exist where municipally-supported food policy is concerned. These

include tensions between program delivery and policy development (involving disagreements over

which should be the priority, and who is best suited to each task); questions over the extent to

which institutional capacity exists to develop food policy and implement cross-departmental

changes; a continued lack of awareness of what constitutes food policy; the politics of achieving

'visible' food policy outcomes; and particularly where partnership approaches to food policy are

being tested, a lack of clarity over the roles and accountabilities of food policy actors inside and

outside of City Hall. These tensions often turn on competing assumptions of the legitimacy of food

policy, and the scales at which it is understood to be most appropriately mobilised.[32] Many of these

tensions are complicated by a parallel trend that sees local governments and other local actors

organising to challenge constitutional limits on their ability to make independent decisions and

generate additional revenue. For example, in 2001, at a meeting of the Federation of Canadian

Municipalities' (FCM) Big City Mayors' Caucus, a national campaign was launched to promote:

> ... the urgent need for the federal, provincial and municipal governments to work
> together to give Canada's cities the tools and resources they need to compete with
> other world cities (Canada's Cities: Unleash Our Potential, 2001, Backgrounder,
> October 21, 2001).

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[32] These tensions were apparent in Vancouver's case, and are analysed in detail in Chapters Four through Eight.

Echoing these concerns, a 2002 study by the Canada West Foundation found that although local governments are clearly wary of the repercussions of downloaded services, these apprehensions appear to be matched by a growing wave of interest in creating new multi-scaled governance strategies that are designed and mobilised not solely to increase 'competitiveness,' but equally in response to what are perceived to be urgent needs of Canadian cities. Although often driven discursively by concerns about global economic competitiveness, calls for increased governing autonomy at the local scale are also coming to reflect a preoccupation with developing new multi-jurisdictional strategies for addressing areas of social and environmental policy that were significantly eroded over the course of the 1980s and 1990s including child care, affordable housing, immigrant settlement and poverty reduction among others (McBride & Shields, 1997). In this regard, the Canada West Foundation study found that recommended changes to Canada's current inter-governmental structure include establishing a federal urban strategy based on federal-municipal collaborations; the enhancement of tripartite (federal-provincial-municipal) agreements and formal consultation mechanisms to allow 'urban projects' to proceed; and Constitutional reform that would consider municipalities as a legitimate level of government (Wong, 2002).[33] Other approaches include a 'power and resources' strategy in which the autonomy of cities is enhanced through enabling legislation and increased taxation powers; and a 'mutual respect and partnership' strategy that seeks to forge new relationships among Canada's levels of government. The goal is to move from "the culture of non-recognition and neglect" to one of "recognition and collaboration" (Bradford, 2002, p. vi). In all cases, the message is the same: there is a perceived need for a recalibration of governance and scale in Canada, where dissatisfaction with historical inter-governmental mechanisms appears to be growing.

A highly anticipated vehicle to enable more power and resources to local governments is Prime Minister Paul Martin's New Deal for Cities and Communities. As one of his first acts as Prime Minister of Canada on December 12, 2003, Paul Martin created a Cities Secretariat within the Privy Council Office with the Hon. John Godfrey as his Parliamentary Secretary. In July 2004, the Prime Minister named Mr. Godfrey as Minister of State (Infrastructure and Communities) to address New

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[33] The study was based on interviews with senior politicians, public servants and municipal association executives.

Deal commitments (Infrastructure Canada, 2005, para. 2). The New Deal is understood to comprise a number of key areas including environmental sustainability, adequate housing and infrastructure. Under the auspices of the 'New Deal,' the federal government has committed to allocating federal gas tax revenues toward maintenance and development of municipal infrastructures, and the total rebate to cities of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). At the provincial level in British Columbia, similar calls for increased power and resources are reflected in the Community Charter Act (Bill 14-2003). Enacted on January 1, 2004, the Community Charter is legislation that purports to provide BC municipalities with greater autonomy including "the authority and discretion to address existing and future community needs" (Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, 2003, Community Charter).

Inter-governmental reform has been called for to respond to specific needs of cities as a whole, but equally at the neighbourhood scale. In this regard, a frequently cited example of a new model of multi-scaled governance is the Vancouver Agreement. Signed March 9, 2000, the Vancouver Agreement is an urban development agreement among the governments of Canada, British Columbia and the City of Vancouver. The agreement commits governments to:

> ... cooperate in promoting and supporting sustainable economic, social and
> community development of the city of Vancouver, focusing initially on the area
> known as the Downtown Eastside (Vancouver Agreement, 2000, p. 3).

In all cases, new agreements and reforms are controversial, with questions being posed as to the equilibrium between autonomy and 'downloading,' and the actual capacity of local governments to determine their own affairs. Geographers theorise these political shifts as "new localism" characterised by various actors and institutions assuming new roles in governance and policy (Elwood, 2005, p. 755). What often remains unexamined in these processes is the extent to which new policies and practices actually result in greater local autonomy, capacity and meaningful participation by local state and civil society actors (Ibid.). At the same time, criticisms that 'new localism' reforms constitute a top-down approach can be complicated by an additional dimension of the Canadian debate on inter-governmental reform. Specifically, calls for inter-governmental reform

are emerging not only from 'above,' but equally 'from below,' where calls for better accountability and representation in local government are in some cases leading to new avenues of input and participation in civic life by previously under-represented groups. There are indications that the existence of the Vancouver Agreement and models like it, may reflect what Amin *et al.* (2000) argue is a contemporary re-thinking of the very question of who and what cities are for. In this capacity, food system issues are argued by some to be among the spectrum of social policy and sustainability issues into which local governments are voluntarily intervening in response to community pressure and new expectations about levels of participation in civic life. Also shifting, may be the expectations and practices of those working within local governments. Some interview respondents from the City of Vancouver reflected this view:

> I think of [the] question [of why cities should have a role in food policy] ...
> obviously turns back to the fundamental question of what local government is for. I
> think that fundamentally local governments are about working toward the quality of
> life for their citizens, for their communities (Social Planner, CoV, 27).

Others described local government involvement in terms of immediate accountability to citizens:

> It is the form of government that is closest to people. It is the most accessible.
> There we are, we are right here. A bus ride away from anybody to come and talk
> directly to their elected representatives and to get something happening. So on
> one hand in terms of the community they are coming to the level of government
> closest to them. In terms of the politicians, that's their electorate so I think they
> are more responsive (Planner, CoV, 15).

In Vancouver's case, what is most suggestive about indications both for and against local government intervention in food policy, is that they are expressed not only by community members and other non-governmental actors, but from public servants themselves, revealing a complex landscape of simultaneous support and resistance to food policy at the local scale. These ambiguities become even more suggestive when combined with specific areas relating to food governance at provincial and federal scales. Tensions between local and provincial scales are particularly significant given that a number of the dimensions of food policy into which local governments are intervening fall within provincial jurisdiction, bringing this scale of governance into

frequent play. In what follows, two broad policy areas relating to food governance in British Columbia (BC) are examined. The areas are agriculture, and health and nutrition (including policies relating to poverty and hunger). The discussion also touches on the significance of advocacy, activism and citizen involvement in food governance issues in BC.

Food policy and governance in British Columbia

Just as there is no fixed understanding of what constitutes a food governance framework at a federal level in Canada, a similar ambiguity exists at the level of provincial governments including BC. In BC, as at the federal level, two broad approaches to achieving 'food security' can be identified, one that seeks to establish a sustainable food system, while another aims to eliminate poverty and hunger. While a number of programs and policy tools exist to try to realise these goals, British Columbia experiences governance challenges in contending with competing agendas; a lack of coordination in policies and programs; and challenges of implementation. These challenges become even more complex where their intersections with urban food systems are concerned.

Agriculture in British Columbia

Agricultural policy in British Columbia (BC) can be characterised by a dual emphasis on increasing exports, while at the same time committing to the goal of sustainability (Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries, *Performance Plan 2001/01 – 2003/04*). Implementation of the goal of sustainable food production in BC has been hindered by the growing emphasis on competitiveness through export, compounded by cuts to provincial agricultural land and environmental protection programs (Barbolet, MacRae, & Alexander, 2002, p. 16). Although governmental and non-governmental interest groups have suggested that certain regions of British Columbia have the potential to become models for sustainable food production, critics argue that the socio-economic system as a whole has created conditions that discourage environmentally sound food governance and a coordinated approach to food system issues more broadly. Reinforcing these beliefs are the conclusions of multi-stakeholder initiatives such as Growing Green, a law, policy and regulatory reform project focused on sustainable food systems for British Columbia. Growing Green findings show that in many instances, farmers incur penalties for adhering to 'sustainable practices'

because such practices increase costs thereby making farms less competitive (Growing Green, 2005). In addition to tensions between the dual goals of competitiveness and sustainability, BC contends with highly concentrated settlement patterns that coincide with the most productive agricultural land in the province.[34] Approximately 79% of British Columbians live in on less than 3% of BC of the land base, centred on the Okanagan Valley and southwest corner of the Province, regions that are increasingly being urbanised. These same areas are home to about 78% of BC's gross farm receipts (Smith, 1998). Pressure from both human settlement and agricultural production have resulted in intense competition for a very limited supply of arable land.

In spite of the challenges facing BC in agriculture, there are a number of government, industry and community programs in BC that encourage voluntary stewardship of farms. Such programs can be linked to a number of factors that make BC atypical. First, more than 90% of BC farms are still family-run, with virtually no direct corporate ownership of agricultural land (Kneen, McDougall, & Kneen, 1997).[35] Second, agricultural operations in BC are generally smaller and less industrialised than most of the US and the rest of Canada (Barbolet et al., 2002). Lastly, agriculture is an important part of the provincial economy and many local economies in BC. The agricultural sector, including processing, directly employs about 50,000 people in the province, producing over 200 agricultural and 80 seafood products (Ibid., 2002, p. 7). At the same time, BC contends with challenging trends including the loss of BC food processing plants to Alberta and Washington State, gradually eroding BC's food self-reliance. As a result, BC is likely the largest net importer of food and beverage products from other provinces (Barbolet et al., 2002, p. 8; Kneen, McDougall, & Kneen, 1997).

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[34] The most favourable growing conditions in BC are found in four regions: Southern Vancouver Island, the Okanagan, the Peace River and the Fraser Valley. Climate and soil factors make Greater Vancouver a prime growing area. The Fraser Valley is one of the three most productive valleys of Canada (Barbolet et al., 2002, p. 6).
[35] However, in many instances, agricultural land is controlled indirectly by private interests through the structure of agricultural production, marketing and distribution.

Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

One of the most potentially powerful levers used to protect agricultural land in BC comes in the form of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). In 1973, the Agricultural Land Commission Act (ALCA) was passed, bringing the ALR into being. The ALR, made up of approximately 4.5 million hectares of land, was created in response to a number of concerns including the limited amount of agricultural land in the province, the importance of agriculture to the provincial economy; and growing pressures on farming areas due to rapid urbanisation. Prior to the passage of the ALCA, many decisions about the use of privately held agricultural land rested almost exclusively with the municipal and regional district governments. With the advent of ALCA and ALR, the mandate to preserve agricultural land could supercede local decisions (Smith, 1998). However, the rules of the Agricultural Land Reserve and its governing body, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) were changed on November 1, 2002. At this time, a number of key changes took place, including decisions to decentralise the Commission by creating six regional panels of three commissioners each, and to encourage the Commission to devolve more authority to local governments on issues of land use within the reserve (Smart Growth BC, 2003). These changes have inspired a great deal of concern among producers and community groups about the future integrity and effectiveness of the ALC and ALR, particularly in the cases of urban areas where local pressure to develop ALR can be high.

Heath and nutrition in British Columbia

In addition to agriculture, food governance in British Columbia has important links to health and nutrition. While provincial government intervention in the realm of health takes place primarily under the auspices of the Provincial Ministry of Health Services, the Ministry directly delivers few nutritional programs and services. Instead, other public health professionals, such as BC's community nutritionists and dieticians have been particularly active since the early 1990s in forging explicit connections between food policy and positive health outcomes. Over the course of the 1990s a great deal of organising was undertaken by BC's nutritionists and dieticians culminating in several important multi-stakeholder campaigns and policy documents. Among these documents is

Feed Our Future, Secure Our Health (1997), an advocacy report produced by a coalition made up of the Dieticians of Canada and approximately 15 organizations participating in the BC Food Security and Nutrition Advocacy Committee. The report, presented to BC's Ministry of Health, contained a series of policy recommendations encompassing issues of nutrition, food supply and food access (Heart Health Coalition, 1997).

Between 1997 and 2003, BC nutritionists and dieticians, particularly those working in the Lower Mainland, continued to reach out to food producers, academics, non-profits, government, food banks, school boards and other organisations to promote the links between food security and public health (Eisler, 2004). During this time, nutritionists and dieticians continued their active involvement in the burgeoning Lower Mainland Food Coalition, a community food policy organisation that had been hosting conferences and producing policy documents of their own since 1994. By 2003, planning and advocacy culminated in the creation of another important document entitled, *A Framework for Core Functions for Public Health* (Population Health and Wellness, Ministry of Health Services, Province of British Columbia, 2005) which proposed food security as a core function for each of the health regions in British Columbia (Ibid., Section 8.2.6). A companion document, *Food Security Evidence Paper, Food Security and Public Health: Making the Connection,* supports the core program document and provides an expanded rationale for the need for food security to be articulated as a "core function" for Health Regions in BC (Eisler, 2004).

The work of public health nutritionists in BC has been critical due to escalating levels of poverty and hunger in the province. In British Columbia, 84,317 people used food banks in March 2004, an increase of 16% in one year. Almost 8,000 more BC children needed emergency food in 2004 than in 2003, an increase of 41.7%. (Canadian Association of Food Banks, Hunger Count, 2004, p. 13). Echoing these trends, the Dieticians of Canada's annual report, *The Cost of Eating in BC,* found that the ability of many British Columbians to access safe and healthy food in a dignified manner is becoming much more difficult (Dieticians of Canada, 2004, p. 2). In response to these and related challenges, a growing grassroots advocacy network dealing with food issues has evolved in communities across the province. A number of non-governmental entities such as the BC Food

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Systems Network (formerly BC Food Democracy Network) and Farm Folk / City Folk actively promote and engage in local-level action related to food governance. Furthermore, some provincial politicians such as BC Green Party leader, Adrienne Carr, made food an election issue in 2004. Referring to a devastating outbreak of avian flu in April 2004, in which the federal government ordered the slaughter of 17 million birds (80 percent of the farmed poultry in BC), Carr commented:

> Where food comes from used to be of little interest to most of us; now that the
> worst case scenario is making headlines, it's suddenly serious food for thought
> come voting time. Mad cows, toxic salmon, and now sick chickens have made
> healthy, safe food – not cheap food – the front-burner issue for people (Observer,
> 2004, April 8 – 14. Greening the vote. *Westender*).

Growing levels of advocacy and community organising in BC – and some political acknowledgment of the issues – suggest shifting approaches to food governance in BC that will likely continue to challenge existing policy and decision-making frameworks. For example, on September 26, 2005, BC Health Minister, George Abbott, announced $4.2 million in ActNow BC funding aimed at providing information, resources and support "for healthy lifestyles." ActNow BC is:

> ... government's cross-ministry, partnership-based, community-focused healthy
> promotion platform that helps British Columbians make healthy lifestyle choices to
> reduce tobacco use, improve nutrition, increase physical activity and promote
> healthy choices during pregnancy (British Columbia Ministry of Health, 2005).

The funding includes significant commitments to invest in nutrition and community-based food resources. The cross-ministry nature of the ActNow funding, along with its discursive focus on partnerships, and emphasis on nutrition make this an initiative that will be closely monitored by community members and government alike.

Food governance in BC: Links to the local scale

Two of the broad areas of food governance in BC: agriculture; and health and nutrition (including policies to address poverty and hunger), intersect with governance at the local level in a number of ways. First, tensions in provincial agricultural policy including contradictions between the goals of competitiveness and sustainability, dependence of food imports, and the erosion of agricultural

land have been taken up by food organisation networks including the BC Food Systems Network, Food and Farm Folk / City Folk, and Growing Green. These food networks have worked to highlight the implications, at multiple scales, of what they argue are unsustainable food systems. These organisations work to break down conceptual and spatial dichotomies between what are assumed to be urban and non-urban food system issues. This strategy complicates assumptions about what constitutes food governance, where it takes place, and the spatial organisation of its outcomes. Second, where health and nutrition are concerned, provincial-level organising and policy development by community nutritionists has come to be expressed at least in part at the level of the home municipalities in which nutritionists live and work. This is evidenced in the case of cities including Kamloops and Vancouver, both of which have developed municipally-affiliated food policy initiatives that include 'provincial' governance responsibilities. Nevertheless, with limited resources and even less direct authority to 'govern' food, the ways that local governments in BC recognise and respond to growing concern with food system issues vary considerably. Responses range from no acknowledgement of food as a local governance issue, to symbolic support of the issues, to the provision of a relatively broad range of supports to achieve food system goals. Part of the challenge relates to an additional level of policy and governance within which local governments in Canada operate, that is, the federal.

Food policy and governance in Canada

Where federal policies and practices are concerned, many of the same tensions are at play: competing agendas; a lack of scalar coordination of policies and programs; and challenges of implementation. In what follows, four broad policy areas relating to federal food governance will be examined. These areas reflect Canada's historical focus on particular food system issues, as well as emergent themes. The areas are agriculture; trade; nutrition and food safety; and sustainability. It is perhaps the last area, sustainability, where the most complicated tensions are being played out. These tensions include the framing of food policy as a sustainability issue where little agreement exists over the spatial dimensions of the food systems to be sustained, the urban or non-urban nature of the food systems in question, the rationales for engaging in 'sustainable' practices, or the actors involved in implementing changes. Another important point of intersection

between the federal and local scales of food governance pertains to Canada's role as signatory to a number of international trade agreements including NAFTA and GATT. In this case, what often emerges is a failure to distinguish between locally-situated interventions and larger national or global political economic structures and scales. At the same time, 'the local' and 'local food systems' can become framed as a 'natural antidote' to 'global' food systems, suggesting a conceptual and practical binary between these scales (Hinrichs, 2003). These tensions are analysed later in the dissertation. For now, the four broad policy areas relating to federal food governance are reviewed.

Agriculture in Canada

Agriculture has been a primary driver of food policy in Canada since confederation. In the 19th century, Canada's agricultural policy focused on fulfilling colonial obligations and efforts to secure national boundaries including the settlement of the prairies (Skøgstad in MacRae, 1999, p. 182). Like most industrialised nations, state regulation of food in Canada began to shift during the postwar period (1950s – 1970s). Key processes of this era include strong state protection and organisation of the food economy, expansion of agricultural production, and the provision of income security to farmers to protect against market fluctuations. Such interventionist strategies were in keeping with other welfare state provisions of the era, reflecting the acceptance of Keynesian principles in Canada generally (Bradshaw, 1999, p. 14). Another indication of the 'interventionist regime' of the 1970s was the creation of national supply management agencies, including the egg, milk and poultry marketing boards that were created under the 1972 Farm Products Marketing Act. These marketing agencies were given the authority to implement and administer national marketing plans, allocate quota and market share and generate revenue through levies, all with the aim of regulating and stabilising both the supply of food as well as prices received by farmers (Institute for Local Self Reliance, 2004, para. 2).

The global oil and food crises of the early 1970s combined with contradictions of institutionalised food surpluses, price instability, breakdown in multilateral agreements, increased competition in export markets, and the economic cost of farm subsidies, led to cuts in state support for agriculture

(Atkins & Bowler, 2001, p. 29). In Canada, the shift towards reduced government intervention and de-subsidisation of the agricultural sector can be traced to the 1980s when new federal strategies emphasising international competitiveness and self-reliance became dominant. By the 1990s, the reversal of earlier agricultural strategies had been formally institutionalised through trade deals including North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), in addition to the 1995 Canadian federal budget in which many subsidies were eliminated to promote a transition towards market-determined rates (Bradshaw, 1999). Overall, Canadian agricultural policy reform since the 1980s can be characterised by reduced state subsidisation, elimination of income stabilisation provisions for producers, and a shift towards a globally competitive, market-oriented industry. These trends have led critics to argue that Canada does not have a systems-based food policy framework, but rather an agri-food *industry* geared toward global markets at the expense of the "optimal nourishment of the population" (MacRae, 1999 p. 182), social cohesion, and the protection of the environment.

Canada's role in Food and trade agreements

As a signatory to a number of trade agreements including NAFTA and GATT, Canada's objectives and policy decisions regarding food production and trade have for a number of decades been influenced by international requirements. However until the mid-1990s, the original GATT contained a number of loopholes regarding agricultural trade, allowing for the continued use of some non-tariff measures such as import quotas, and export subsidisation. January 1, 1995 marked the end of agricultural exemptions from GATT rules for signatories including Canada. It was at this time that the Uruguay Round final agreement of the GATT came into force, reorganising it, and the agreements of previous rounds of negotiation, under a permanent trade body, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Bradshaw, 1999, p. 23). Under the auspices of the WTO, the Agriculture Agreement (AA) was struck. The mandate of the AA is to implement reforms in the global agriculture sector and make policies more market-oriented (World Trade Organization, Agriculture: Fairer Markets for Farmers, 2005a, para. 2).

While Canada's stated objectives for on-going WTO Agriculture negotiations include "eliminating trade distorting subsidies and significantly improving market access opportunities" (Agriculture & Agri-food Canada, Canada's Negotiating Objectives, 2004, para. 1), the implementation of these goals remains controversial. A number of the most significant changes to Canada's food policies and programs over the past two decades have been made specifically to meet WTO requirements. For instance, the 1995 federal budget announced a 30% reduction in the dairy producer subsidy over a two-year period, and a 30% reduction over three years of funding for various stabilisation programs. A full phasing out of many subsidies was announced in subsequent federal budgets (Bradshaw 1999, p. 26). The full cost accounting of the impacts of these changes has yet to be determined.

Health, nutrition and food safety in Canada

Another common focus of food governance in Canada is that of health, nutrition and food safety. Health concerns achieved some policy status in the early part of the 20th century. Early food regulatory efforts focused on public health, sanitation and prevention of adulteration and disease (Marsden et al., 2000, p. 19; MacRae, 1999, pp. 182 – 183). Currently, Health Canada is the main agency responsible for nutritional and food safety policies and programs. In aiming to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply, Health Canada's primary tools are nutrition labeling and meeting Food and Drug Act regulations. Although there is no national nutrition policy, Health Canada is also responsible for setting dietary and 'healthy eating' guidelines.[36]

During the late 1970s, the federal government attempted to combine agricultural and health concerns into a systems-oriented food policy (MacRae & The Toronto Food Policy Council, 1999). Motivated by the National Nutrition Survey of 1973, the Lalonde report on health promotion (1974), and the Mustard report on diet and cardiovascular disease (1976), the federal government developed a food strategy in 1977 / 78. The strategy was also precipitated by food price increases and financial difficulties for farmers (Ibid., p. 184). The integrated strategy was characterised by an interdepartmental approach to food issues; a commitment to ensuring that the economics of

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[36] In 1992, Canada released a federal *Plan of Action on Nutrition* in response to the International Conference on Nutrition, held in Rome in 1992.

agriculture not supercede nutritional priorities; and attention to issues of production, processing, distribution and consumption. The approach was ultimately unsuccessful because nutrition and consumption goals remained secondary to those of production and agri-food industrial interests (Ibid., p. 185).

Poverty and hunger in Canada

Approaching food security from an anti-poverty and hunger perspective starts from the premise that although an adequate supply of food may exist, access to food may be constrained for a range of reasons. Within this paradigm, food *in*security is defined as:

> ... the inability to obtain sufficient, nutritious, personally acceptable food through normal food channels or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so (Davis and Tarasuk in Power, 1999, p. 30).

In Canada, there is not a problem with producing enough food, but rather with distribution and access (Koc & MacRae, 2001, p. 8). Because food in Canada is primarily produced, distributed and consumed in the context of a market economy, it is assumed that food insecurity results from people's lack of money to buy food (Power, 1999, p. 30). Although many of the roots of these problems are structural and macroeconomic, they are also closely intertwined with Canadian social policy (Riches, 2004). Specifically, wide-spread hunger in Canada began to grow in conjunction with the unravelling of Canada's social safety in the 1970s, reaching serious proportions in the 1980s. One of the first indications of a hunger problem in Canada was the appearance of the first food bank in 1981 (Power, 1999, p. 31). Since 1981, food banks have become the predominant response to hunger. Food banks are now found in every province and territory. The Canadian Association of Food Bank's annual Hunger Count (2004) reveals a rapid escalation in the use of food banks. The number of people using a food bank in one month of 2004 was 841,640. Food bank usage has increased by 8.5% since 2003, 26.6% since 1997, and 122.7% since 1989 (Ibid., p. 3). Of growing concern is the new profile of food bank users of whom 13.3% are employed. Even more noteworthy is that 39.75% of food bank users are children (Ibid., p. 3).

Another way of measuring food security in Canada is by quantity and quality of diet. According to the National Population Health Survey (NPHS), released by Statistics Canada (2001), about 8% of Canadians, or just under 2.5 million people, had to compromise the quality or the quantity of their diet at least once in 1998/99 because of a lack of money. In the same period, an additional 0.5 million people worried that they would not have enough to eat because they could not afford it. In total, the survey found that an estimated 3 million Canadians, about 10%, were considered to be living in what is known as a "food-insecure" household at some point during 1998/99 (Statistics Canada, 2001). At a federal level in Canada, direct policy responses to poverty and hunger are few. Although food insecurity is inseparable from employment rates, social and economic polarisation, high housing costs and other social policy issues, there are few policies that specifically address food access. What has arisen instead is an industry of charitable food distribution and community-development food projects that does little to address systemic causes of food insecurity in Canada. These trends produce particular tensions in cities where the highest concentration of Canada's population is found.

Shifts to 'sustainable' food systems at federal and provincial scales: Implications for cities

Over the past decade, a new set of emergent themes has entered the repertoire of Canada's food governance. Of particular significance is the federal government's public commitment to the goal of sustainability in agriculture, agri-environmental reforms, and other food-related areas. In addition to making Canada "the world leader in food safety, innovation and environmentally-responsible production," (Agriculture & Agri-food Canada, Science and Innovation, 2004, para 1), the government of Canada promises that sustainable agriculture has a number of potential spin-off gains including the reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions (National Climate Change Secretariat cited in Barbolet et al., 2002) and other community-based benefits. While this shift, echoed at the provincial level in BC, appears to signal a more coordinated systems approach to food issues, it embodies a number of contradictions. Alongside the commitment to sustainable agri-food, both federal and provincial (BC) governments are simultaneously pursuing aggressive export-led strategies aimed at gaining 'competitive advantage' and 'leveling the playing field' for Canada's agri-food industry. The belief that Canadian products and bulk commodities represent a high

growth area has led Canada to pursue strategies that many argue are far from sustainable. A recent study from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives contends that:

> ... since the 1980s, the federal government has systematically imposed a radical restructuring on Canadian farmers and rural Canada that is indistinguishable from an IMF structural adjustment program: export expansion, reduced government spending, deregulation, liberalized foreign investment, privatization, termination of subsidies and price supports, devaluation of the currency, and a general move towards 'market-oriented' economic reforms (Qualman & Wiebe, 2002, p. 13).

A number of challenges have arisen as a result. First, growing concern is being voiced over the ability of agricultural trade liberalisation to resolve financial crises affecting certain sectors of Canadian agriculture. Instead of benefits to people and the environment accruing domestically, the effects of these adjustments have been criticized for accelerating the transfer of wealth from local producers to transnational corporations (Ibid.). Second, there is mounting skepticism that the trend towards free-market agriculture will be able to deliver improvements in agri-environmental practice. The goals of investment in environmental stewardship on the one hand, and production for the global marketplace (necessarily requiring cost-efficiency strategies) on the other, are fundamentally contradictory. As Bradshaw (2003) argues, the erosion of income stability for farmers due to market liberalisation and reductions in farm subsidies mean that farm-level investments in agri-environmental stewardship will likely be limited. Put another way, while the global market encourages producers to externalise their costs (environmental and social), domestic policy encourages an internalisation of costs (MacRae, 1999, p. 186). Third, the large-scale industrial production practices that are required to 'compete' in global trade arenas are inconsistent with the social, environmental and economic principles underlying sustainability. A key principle of sustainability is the importance of respecting social, economic and environmental limits. Using hog mega-barns as an illustration, Ervin et al. (2003, p. 1) describe the encompassing ripple effects that result from the pressure to exceed limits for the sake of competitiveness:

Hog mega-barns – also known as Intensive Livestock Operations (ILOs) or Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) – are tightly linked to corporate packing plants and have completely transformed how hogs are produced: the ownership and control of the barns, their relationship to the communities in which they are located, the destination of profits, conditions of work; treatment of animals, the barns' impact on the environment, and the relation of local citizens to their government. Part industrial revolution and part globalization, the shift towards factory hog farm production mirrors and drives larger changes in our communities and economies.

At the same time, the emergence (if only discursively), of a sustainable systems approach to agriculture and other food system issues in Canada indicates a broader reconceptualisation that may open new avenues of strategy and action at all scales. For example, although a significant proportion of the food produced in Canada comes from large-scale industrial production that uses biotechnology and intensive livestock, aquaculture or agricultural operations, it is also true that alternative practices and public concern about food system issues are on the rise. Voluntary stewardship activities are becoming more common, and smaller-scale organic businesses are emerging as a growth industry. There is growing public concern about wide-reaching health and environmental hazards linked to large-scale agri-business practices. During the writing of this dissertation, outbreaks of 'mad cow' disease, avian influenza, concerns with genetically modified crops, and sea lice associated with farmed salmon were frequent features in local, national, and indeed, international news media. The same can be argued for a number of non-agricultural food system issues in Canada. For instance, escalating rates of hunger and an emerging crisis in obesity and other health and nutrition-related illnesses has prompted considerable calls for changes to the current food system that are being leveraged using sustainability frameworks.

For Canadian cities, operating within an already contentious environment characterised by debates around inter-governmental reform and voluntary intervention in a range of non-statutory 'sustainability' issues, the adoption and implementation of food policy will continue to be marked by tension and disagreement. It is the processes of mitigating these tensions, reflecting an evolving relationship between governance for sustainable urban development and policy-making, changing institutional structures, and the assumptions and practices of those who work with and within local

government, that show food policy to be an area of such rich inquiry. The intensely creative, if conflict-ridden possibilities inherent in food policy's unfolding at multiples scales become even more suggestive when combined with fragmented legislative and policy environments, and the limited constitutional ability of cities to directly govern food.

It was into this contentious policy terrain that the City of Vancouver entered in 2003 when City Council approved the motion supporting the creation of a 'just and sustainable' food system. While the 2003 Council motion marked the beginning of the City's consideration of food policy as an official mandate, it represented the culmination of more than a decade worth of community organising and lobbying for official recognition of food policy by local government. From this new mandate would emerge competing understandings about the locations, participants and accountabilities of food governance, and the spatial organisation of its outcomes. Also at play would be the significance of how food policy is framed (e.g. sustainability, public health, environmental, or anti-hunger); the nature of the food systems in question; and the polarisation of food policy issues as either non-urban (primarily related to production) or urban (predominantly related to consumption).

In order to set the stage for an in-depth analysis of Vancouver's case, this chapter has provided a baseline mapping of current trends and governmental approaches to food in Canada. The assumption is that before analysing the mitigation of tensions that arose as a result of the City of Vancouver's adoption of food policy, it is important to understand the broader governance and policy climate within which local governments in Canada operate. Having provided a baseline mapping of current trends and governmental approaches to food in Canada, the following chapters, (Four through Eight), present the case study findings of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 4
FOOD POLICY & URBAN POLITICS IN VANCOUVER

A year or two before [the Council motion of 2003], we were being told explicitly by [Senior Management]: food is not the City's business (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

[Winning local government support for food policy] is a combination of public support and momentum. At the same time, you need someone to carry the ball, so I think it's that balance. Then you need the right time. And what is the power structure like? And it is ready to change? Is it under pressure to change? Are they receptive? Are they willing to hear the message? (Independent Expert, 5).

Putting food policy on Vancouver's local governance agenda

On July 8, 2003, the following motion was moved and carried unanimously by Vancouver City Council:

C. THAT, in order to provide leadership in developing a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver that fosters equitable food access, nutrition, community development and environmental health, Council establish a Vancouver Food Policy Task Force.

D. THAT the Food Policy Task force work with City staff to develop a just and sustainable food policy and action plan for the City of Vancouver.

E. THAT the Food Policy Task Force be comprised of Councillors Bass, Woodsworth and Louis; a representative each from the Vancouver School Board, the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Coastal health authority; and representatives from appropriate and interested community groups as identified by the Co-chairs; with Councillor Louis and the General Manager of Community Services as Co-chairs.

F. THAT the Food Policy Task Force:

(i) report back by November 18, 2003 on the components needed to ensure a just and sustainable food action plan for the City of Vancouver drawing on the work of the Toronto Food Policy Council;

(ii) report back with suggestions for a Community Food Policy plan and suggestions on what role the City can play to help facilitate the safe and equitable growing, distribution and provision of food in Vancouver;

(iii) seek assistance from regional and senior governments and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to assist in the development of an Action Plan to meet any food policy targets adopted by Council.

The motion was perceived by many as a catalytic moment in local food policy development. In reality, community organising with the goal of creating a coordinated food policy for the City of Vancouver had been taking place among various stakeholders since as early as 1990. This relatively lengthy incubation period allows a unique opportunity to identify processes, participants and mechanisms involved in two identifiable periods of development: 1990 – 1995 and 1996 – 2003. Both periods can be characterised by varying configurations and strategies of multi-actor networks, culminating in the framing of food policy as a sustainability issue and the beginning of a process of local government involvement that is still unfolding. The two periods are also characterised by specific rescalings of food policy on the part of key actors. Together, these strategies and rescalings become significant in assessing why and how food policy was adopted in Vancouver.

One of the main arguments of this dissertation is that the adoption and early implementation phases of food policy in the City of Vancouver were enabled by a series of locally specific conditions. These conditions involved specific re-framings of the scale at which food policy was assumed to be most appropriately mobilised, and new strategies for coordinating governance at and between these scales. At the same time, I argue that local conditions must be understood within the wider social and political contexts within which they evolved. This chapter tests these assertions in the context of phase one of the policy cycle model used as the guiding framework to address the research questions of this dissertation (Table 7):

Table 7: Policy cycle framework for food policy (Phase One)

Policy Cycle Framework for Food Policy	
Phase 1	Awareness-raising and lobbying
Phase 2	Diagnosis and stakeholder commitment
Phase 3	Strategy formulation and action planning
Phase 4	Implementation
Phase 5	Institutionalisation and 'anchoring'

According to Dubbeling (2001), the first phase of the policy cycle framework concerns issues of awareness-raising among organisations and community groups, and strategies for lobbying local government. Key issues include stakeholder representation in generating awareness, consensus-building and local ownership of the issues. In addition to key stakeholders, other relevant players are argued to include those who are affected by, or affect food policy; those who possess information, resources and expertise; and those who control implementation instruments (Ibid.). Challenges are argued to involve the identification of vulnerable and marginal groups; dissemination strategies to raise awareness; the definition of the role of outside experts; and the implementation of communication strategies.

Not represented in phase one as outlined by Dubbeling are a number of important elements relevant to policy agenda-setting as it relates to food policy that I argue must be added to the analysis. These elements include the type of issue food policy is understood to be; and the implications of the broader social, political-economic and institutional contexts within which official recognition of food policy takes place. Also implicated in this analysis are theorisations of the changing trajectories of awareness raising and lobbying involving a "blurring of categories between volunteers and bureaucrats, governance and management" (Larner, 2004a, p. 16). This is argued to occur when non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other community-based groups assume new roles as intermediaries between government and citizens (Larner & Craig, 2002). Some scholars link the role of intermediaries, or 'strategic brokers' (Craig, 2004, p. 12) to a set of skills required to sustain collaborative networks essential to "getting things done from within a bureaucratic organisation." As Craig further describes it:

> ... brokering collaboration strategically between multiple agencies is becoming a necessary, day-to-day task for a range of multi-skilled people sitting in community agencies, local government, funders and service providers (Ibid., p. 12).

In this way, the role of intermediaries or strategic brokers, both before and after local government intervention in food policy becomes an important element of this phase of the policy cycle.

Central to all of these added elements are shifts in the scales at which food policy is understood to be governed, and the capacity to coordinate governance among the scales involved. For example, the Council motion of July 8, 2003 makes direct reference to no fewer than four scales of governance in addition to the municipality itself: the 'community' (i.e. neighbourhoods and the local organisations who work within them); the region (GVRD); the province (Coastal Health Authority); and the national scale ('senior government,' and also the Federation of Canadian Municipalities). The Council motion also refers to two additional local administrative bodies, the Vancouver School Board and the Vancouver Park Board. Such an intrinsically multi-scaled and multi-jurisdictional approach to food policy is suggestive of the need to coordinate governance between and among the scales involved. It also suggests a shift from a categorical position that "food is not the City's business" (Senior Planner 18), to one that was willing to reconcile food policy as a legitimate activity for the municipality, if only in coordination with other scales. This indicates changes in what food policy was understood to embody, how and by whom it should be governed, and its geographical situatedness as an urban issue. In this way, I argue that this phase of food policy development must be analysed in relation to the baseline elements identified by Dubbeling, but also with reference to the additional elements described above and summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: Phase one: Baseline elements (Dubbeling) plus additional elements

PHASE ONE: BASELINE ELEMENTS (Dubbeling 2001)	PHASE ONE: ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS
▪ Representation in awareness–raising and lobbying efforts (who is affected by, or affects food policy?) ▪ Consensus-building and 'local ownership' of issues	▪ Rescaling of governance ▪ Role of partnerships and networks ▪ Role of 'intermediaries' or 'strategic brokers' ▪ Significance of the broader social, political-economic and institutional context ▪ Significance of the lens through which food policy is framed (i.e. sustainability, public health, or anti-hunger)

An analysis of this wider host of elements in Vancouver's case helps explain municipal endorsement of food policy in 2003 where previous attempts had failed. It is important to note that a number of the recommendations made to local government that were ultimately endorsed in 2003, had already been made over the course of earlier periods of lobbying in Vancouver. This raises broader questions about how and why conditions changed, over and above questions of who was represented in lobbying activities. For example, in 1995 the City's Medical Health Officer presented two reports to City Council, informing them of the existence of The Vancouver Food Policy Coalition and their discussions about generating a food policy for the City of Vancouver. The proposed *Framework for Municipal and Community Action,* brought forward as an appendix to the Council reports of 1995, cited as primarily goals of the coalition: (1) Support local food production and local economic sustainability; (2) Improve food accessibility; (3) Reduce inequities by addressing the food needs of vulnerable populations; and (4) Develop and deliver food nutrition and education (Vancouver Food Policy Committee, 1994). Although unsuccessful in 1995, all four of these goals resurfaced during the period leading up to and immediately after the City Council motion of July 2003, and were ultimately codified in the Food Action Plan formulated by the Food Policy Task Force and approved by City Council in December 2003.

The reasons behind the shifts that led to the City Council motion of July 2003 and subsequent facilitation of food policy development in Vancouver are examined in this chapter. The chapter is organised into two main sections. First, an analysis is provided of the actors, mechanisms, scales and framings of food policy during two awareness-raising periods in Vancouver's food policy development (1990 – 1995 and 1996 – 2003). Second, an analysis of the key factors implicated in bringing about the City Council motion of July 2003 is presented with particular attention to the role of scale. An analysis of conditions before the Council motion of 2003 provides a point of reference to enable analysis not only of how the Council Motion came to pass, but also how partnership networks and coordination of governance at multiple scales would change once food policy had earned an official mandate and 'place' within the City bureaucracy. The major events involved in the awareness-raising and lobbying phase of Vancouver's case are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Timeline of major events in Vancouver's food policy development (Phase One)

PHASE	EVENTS	DATES
Awareness-raising and lobbying (1)	Awareness raising and lobbying (Period 1)	1990 – 1995
	Awareness raising and lobbying (Period 2)	1996 – 2003
	City Council Motion	July 8, 2003

Table 10 shows the key actors in early food policy development in Vancouver during the period being analysed.[37]

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[37] Key actors were determined by analysing interview data, meeting minutes, event announcements, and other materials from the governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in lobbying efforts, plus analysis of related policy report and public education documents.

Table 10: Key actors in food policy development in Vancouver

	Period 1: 1990 - 1995	Period 2: 1996 - 2003
NON-GOVERNMENTAL		
City Farmer (est. 1978)	✓	✓
Farm Folk / City Folk (est. 1993)	✓	✓
Your Farmers Market Society (est. 1995)	✓	✓
Vancouver Food Policy Coalition (1990 – 1995)	✓	
Vancouver Food Policy Organisation (1995 – 2002)		✓
Lower Mainland Food Council/Coalition (2002 – 2003)		✓
Greater Vancouver Food Bank (est. 1982)	✓	
Vancouver Food Providers' Coalition (est. 200x)		✓
Network of East Vancouver Community Organizations (NEVCO) (est. 200x)		✓
BC Dieticians and Nutritionists Association	✓	
GOVERNMENTAL		
Vancouver Community and Public Health Nutritionists	✓	✓
City of Vancouver Health Department (became a provincial responsibility in 1996)	✓	
Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group (est. 2002)		✓
City of Vancouver Social Planning Department		✓
Vancouver City Council		✓

In addition to the key actors, a number of secondary actors and events contributed to awareness raising and mobilisation. Because the main focus of the analysis is networked manifestations of food policy development, secondary actors whose work took place outside of, or parallel to food policy networks are described where appropriate in sections that follow.

Period 1 (1990 – 1995): Defining goals, forming networks and testing scales

The period of food policy organising between 1990 and 1995 can be characterised by a number of important factors. First, this period saw the emergence of a discernible multi-stakeholder network, the Vancouver Food Policy Organisation (VFPO). Another characteristic included experimentation by the network (involving both governmental and non-governmental actors) with policy and knowledge transfer between and among scales, particularly where determining a locally-

appropriate definition and action plan for food policy were concerned. Knowledge transfer began in 1990 when community and public health nutritionists in Vancouver initiated internal discussions about the need to enhance food security at the local level. Initial steps included a study of food policy issues with a particular interest in examining food policy in the United Kingdom and Australia where food policy developments were already underway. Issues discussed during these early stages of development included local food security (i.e. availability and access to food), the production and supply of adequate quality foods, and people's ability to acquire them.

Through networking with other agencies, nutritionists quickly encountered a broad range of organisations and community groups who shared their concerns. By 1993, as momentum grew, the nutritionists sought to formalise the growing network by inviting partners to form an informal Food Policy Coalition (Eisler, 2004). Members included representatives from the Vancouver Health Department (nutritionists, community health nurses, health educators), Farm Folk / City Folk, Vancouver Health Department, BC Ministry of Agriculture, BC Dairy Foundation, REACH Community Health Centre, Chinese Cultural Centre, BC Dieticians and Nutritionists Association, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank and the Council of Marketing Boards of BC. Other members included farmers, social activists, economists, as well as governmental representatives from Vancouver School Board. Significantly, this phase of organising also included the participation of the City of Vancouver's Social Planning Department, indicating pockets of support for food policy goals within local government.

The creation of a multi-stakeholder network had the effect of expanding the range of issues being discussed to include agricultural land sustainability, the Buy BC First program, food support programs and nutrition education programs among others. The network enabled broad-based outreach activities including gatherings and conferences on the theme of food security. It also informed the scales at which proposed solutions were assumed to have the most purchase. In particular, network-building and knowledge transfer taking place in the Lower Mainland were influenced by various innovative food initiatives that were being tested in other parts of British Columbia. As one interview respondent described it:

Almost every Health Authority [in BC] was trying new things. So [Vancouver] nutritionists were trying to find a way to frame this in a broader context ... and were working with the BC Nutrition Council and with the other Health Authorities trying to find a way to present this into a format (Manager, Provincial Government, 14).

The emergent multi-scaled approach to food policy was drawing influences not only from provincial initiatives and precedents, but also from international cases (UK and Australia), regional interests (agricultural sustainability advocates and food banks), and a range of locally-based organisations.

As work to define spheres of action progressed, the emerging food network was also beginning to address the challenges of framing, scale and representation. In this capacity, a number of specific goals were identified. First, with the aim of "creating a cohesive network of food security activists, food policy councils and food security stakeholders / partners," (Conference Flyer, 1995) one of the first major food security conferences was held. The conference, entitled, *Food Security: Action and Policy*, was held on October 27th and 28th 1995 at the Chinese Cultural Centre in Vancouver. Sponsored by Farm Folk / City Folk, the Chinese Cultural Centre, Vancouver Health Department, VanCity Credit Union and the BC Dieticians and Nutritionists Association, the conference aimed to:

... draw together community members and professionals from the areas of agriculture, food distribution and marketing, health care, and emergency and social services for an action-oriented session on building food security (Conference Flyer, 1995).

Reflecting the goal of a more inclusive approach to food issues, conference themes included physical and economic access to food; environmental and economic sustainability of agriculture; food quality; proximity to food production; cultural appropriateness of available food; community education and peer group learning. The conference marked the official formation of the Vancouver Food Policy Organisation (VFPO), the mandate of which was to "enhance food security in the region by lobbying government for policies supportive of farmers, and increasing access to local, fresh produce by educating consumers" (Conference Flyer, 1995). An underlying assumption of

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VFPO members was that its work should be responsive to the needs of communities, and ensure inclusive participation. While consensus over the mandate of the network was emerging, there was little clarity about the territorial or jurisdictional focus of the group's work (e.g. Vancouver, Lower Mainland, British Columbia or beyond). Furthermore, although this early period of organising can be characterised by careful attention to ensuring inclusive participation, the challenges of achieving broad-based representation were already beginning to surface, particularly where grassroots anti-hunger groups were concerned. Analysis of interview data, meeting minutes, event announcements, and other materials reveals that although food security and anti-hunger were arguably among the foundational issues that motivated food policy organising, direct participation of anti-hunger organisations was not always achieved. Reasons may have included parallel organising on the part of anti-hunger groups who viewed their issues and strategies as unique in nature and immediacy, a lack of capacity by VFPO members to identify marginal groups and engage them in the process, and a lack of capacity on the part of grassroots anti-hunger groups to connect with broader sustainable food system issues. The relation between anti-hunger and sustainability approaches to food policy would continue to prove contentious as the work evolved in later periods.

In support of the work of the newly formed VFPO, a second priority in addition to the conference, was to secure funding to hire a Coordinator. Seed money was secured through a combination of support from the then Vancouver / Richmond Health Board and the Greater Vancouver Food Bank. As one nutritionist describes it, Health Board money was secured because a Senior Manager at the time understood public health and the value of a community development approach. It was, as the nutritionist described it, "the golden era of the social determinants of health" (Task Force Member, 9). Along with money to hire a Coordinator, the Health Board also provided in kind support including office space, a desk, computer support, printing, copying, "so that we could get our start" (Task Force Member, 9). This priority reflects two themes that would emerge as key to the success of later organising: the perceived importance of 'internal' staff support to coordinate multi-stakeholder networks, and the role of 'champions' in enabling food policy goals.

Report to Vancouver City Council in 1995

Although early food policy organising took shape as a multi-scaled endeavour, there were few clear delineations of the geographies and jurisdictions at which changes were being sought. One of the first indications that more focus was being brought to the work of the VFPO began in 1995 when the network began to frame some of their work in the context of a 'municipal' plan. As a result of extensive research, networking and outreach to a range of partners, a food security framework for Vancouver was developed with the goal of defining food security in "its broadest sense" (Task Force Member, 9). The document, entitled, *"Food Policy Discussion Paper: A Framework for Municipal and Community Action,"* outlined four primary themes to be addressed by a local food policy: (1) agricultural sustainability; (2) access to food; (3) reduction of inequities in food access; and (4) nutrition education. However, in spite of the discussion paper, much of the work of the VFPO prior to 1995 focused on issues at the Provincial scale including the creation or improvement of a Provincial Food and Agriculture Policy, a Provincial Food and Nutrition Policy, and the development of links between them. Although some progress was being made by the VFPO, it was clear that food policy issues were not widely perceived as 'municipal issues, particularly given the regional and provincial nature of a number of the themes identified in the discussion paper. As one respondent described it, "we ran into brick walls all over the place" (Task Force Member, 10). When Vancouver's Medical Health Officer agreed to report to Vancouver City Council on the food policy discussions that had been taking place in the community, members of the VFPO turned their attention more concertedly to opportunities at the municipal level.

In August and October 1995, the Medical Health Officer presented reports to City Council informing them of the existence of the Vancouver Food Policy network and their discussions about generating a food policy for the City of Vancouver. Significantly, the call for a Vancouver food policy listed in the reports was not framed as public health-related, but rather as environmental: "increasing the sustainability of our food systems and farming methods," and social: "supporting healthy families and communities." Even with this shift in framing and the links made to existing City programs and services including community kitchens, community gardens, food retail access and farmers markets, City Council reception was not enthusiastic, reflecting a lack of

understanding of food policy as an urban issue, and a lack of willingness or ability to coordinate governance for food policy among overlapping scales and interests at this stage in the evolution of food policy organising:

> It took a long time, but over the years we were able to get people at least being comfortable with the idea that food policy was something that should interest [City Hall] whether it was from transportation standpoint or housing or greenways or whatever. So, in '95 that wasn't there, it was just beginning and people still didn't see the connections (Task Force Member, 10).

Interview respondents who were members of the VFPO at the time described City Council's reception of the report as "very polite" but not engaged. Adding,

> [The report presentation] came and went and at the time we were told, 'you know, just bring it up and don't ask for any money, don't request anything because you won't get it. But bring it up and have it sanctioned,' which is as far as it got at the time (Task Force Member, 9).

Interview respondents from within local government offered a blunt explanation for lack of City Council up-take at the time:

> [City] Council didn't want it [in 1995]. It is one of those things that you often get signals from Council. Council didn't really want anything that would tie their hands in any way (Manager, Provincial Government, 14).

Resistance to having 'hands tied' by unfamiliar policy areas reflects underlying perceptions of what constituted 'real' City business on the part of the City Council of day. Interview respondents from within local government spoke of "a very different Council [in 1995]," one that was much more business focused and motivated by traditional approaches to urban management:

> [City Council] was not doing a lot of fluff [in 1995]. The era that they would sort of do nicey nice things had passed. It was a much more 'things are tough, get your head down, do the things that we have to do.' It wasn't mean or anything like that, it was just they weren't going to take on fluff. It was a very experienced Council. They had seen a lot of this stuff before. They had seen that nothing would happen

with it and so they just decided, in my opinion, that because 'it is not very real we are not going to do anything' (Manager, Provincial Government, 14).

Lack of City Council support for food policy in 1995 must be understood in the context of the ideology of the Non-Partisan Association (NPA), the ruling civic party of the day. Founded in 1937, the NPA maintained that partisan politics had no place in running a city and that local government "should concern itself only with questions of a technical nature, that is, with ensuring the honest and efficient management of municipal services and resources" (Vogel, 2003: 53; Tindall, 2000). The NPA ruled City Hall virtually without opposition from its founding in 1937 until 1967 when a new phase of Vancouver's political history is argued to have begun (Vogel, 2003). Specifically, 1967 saw waves of popular protest against various 'urban renewal' projects. Protest against unrestricted growth and the NPA's apparent unwillingness to address issues of concern lead to the emergence of two new civic parties: The Electors Action Movement (TEAM) and the Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE). Scholars suggest that the 1990s represent yet another phase in Vancouver politics characterised by changing political alignments due to broader social and economic re-alignments. Over the course of the 1990s these changes are argued to have significantly bolstered counter-hegemonic politics in Vancouver, specifically for COPE as a progressive political party (Vogel, 2003, Stewart, 2003). Even so, in 1995 when information about the nascent VFPO was presented to City Council, the prevailing NPA model of 'efficient urban management' may have informed levels of willingness to consider food policy as a legitimate governance issue.

It is important to note however, that it was under NPA rule that a number of significant policies and demonstration projects based on sustainability principles were initiated over the course of the 1990s (e.g. Clouds of Change report, 1990; Special Office for the Environment, 1990; Southeast False Creek demonstration community, 1991; Environmental Action Plan, 1996; and Transportation Plan, 1997). These developments suggest a growing willingness to entertain emerging policy areas that fell outside of conventional understandings of municipal services. Nonetheless, it is clear that food policy was not yet considered within this framing. Task Force members' recollection of the lead-up to the City Council reports in 1995 included meetings with

senior City staff where VFPO members were told that their request for local government recognition of food policy was "not going to fly." Ex-VFPO interview respondents explained that in addition to lack of understanding on the part of City staff and senior managers of the place of food policy on the City agenda, the issue of community capacity was also at play:

> The higher ups [in City Hall] didn't get it at the time. And there wasn't at that time the number of groups that were in the position willing or ready to put together the submission to articulate it, to go and ask for a dedicated Food Policy Council with money attached to it. We just weren't probably organised enough at that time. It had only been a few years since we had started working together as a coalition. A lot of the community development projects hadn't sprung up yet at that time. I don't think we had the Farmer's Markets yet and I am not sure if the Community Kitchens Program had funding, it may have just started back then. So, we were kind of getting our wings at the time and we all understood it (Task Force Member, 9).

Another respondent put is this way:

> ...there wasn't anybody [within the VFPO] with either the strategic or academic [background] or ... [there] wasn't a critical mass of people with the background to sit down and really do strategic plans, business plans for developing [it] (Task Force Member, 10).

And further:

> The approach to the City [in 1995] was basically just one more of those really good events [organised by the VFPO] and really good initiatives that didn't have any cogent thought behind it that would move it forward. We had the idea then that we needed to work more closely with the City and we made overtures and talked to people and basically the responses that we got were, 'oh yes, this is interesting but what does it have to do with us?" (Task Force Member, 10).

It is important to note that the goal of a broad-based food policy was not the only objective being pursued, nor was the VFPO alone in its organising. A number of specific food-related initiatives were taking root in the city during this period. One notable development was the creation of Vancouver's first Farmers Market in 1995 at the Croatian Cultural Centre.

Farmers Markets

The idea for a farmers market in Vancouver was sparked in 1994 at a meeting of the VFPO. By

early 1995, the East Vancouver Farmers Market Society had been formalised. The process of

getting the first market up and running met many challenges. The first hurdle was that at the time in

Vancouver it was illegal to sell fruits and vegetables off the back of trucks. Further, there were no

areas in the city zoned to accommodate a Market. Even so, the Society members and their

supporters continued to organise and lobby for changes to the appropriate regulations. A former

member of the Farmers Market Society recalled a lengthy and challenging process to start the first

market, particularly in relation to City Hall:

> We kept getting 'no' to every question we asked. But we didn't know where to
> start so we started with the blue pages in the phone book. Everyone we spoke to
> was the person who answered the phone and they had their pat answer for select
> questions. When we said we wanted to do a farmers market in a parking lot at
> such and such a place, the immediate answer was, 'you can't do that because
> there are no permits for that kind of thing.' We didn't have the knowledge or the
> experience of knowing how to get around some of those barriers (Task Force
> Member, 13).

The promise of progress came in the form of a meeting arranged by the Medical Health Officer

between farmers market proponents and senior City staff:

> So we had this meeting and I clearly remember, this is still 1995, there were five of
> us who walked in all very clearly knowing what we wanted to do, and these five
> department heads ... with binders that were ten inches thick were sitting at
> opposite ends of the table. [One of them] looked at us and said, 'how can I help
> you?' I said, 'this is what we want to do and every person we have talked to says
> no to us. How can we get a yes out of you?' What [the Medical Health Officer]
> had basically said [to us] was 'meet with the heads of the departments. Don't start
> with the blue pages, go straight to the top and talk to these folks and hopefully
> you'll get what you need.' So we were really expecting that we would get a yes. It
> was one of the senior health inspectors, the head of licensing, the head of
> engineering, the head of traffic. It was all these guys, and as I said, with their very
> thick binders. We are talking about what we wanted to do. They would open the
> binders and start flipping through their pages looking for ... 'oh well let me just see
> if we can cover it in this section, oh no, let me see if we can cover it in this section,
> no there is nothing in there. Sorry but there is nothing in this very thick binder that

will allow you to do this.' I basically reached over and I said, 'here is a blank piece of paper. Why don't we just write down what we want to do and find a place to put it in that binder?' They just looked at me like, 'excuse me, we can't do that. It has to fit in with the numerical system, it has to be approved.' [One of the senior Managers], I remember him saying, 'you mean if [my wife] wants to make a zucchini bread and sell it at one of these farmers markets she can't do that?' The health inspector said, 'that's right.' He just kind of looked puzzled. So we left that meeting no further ahead except that what we realised was we got a quick line to no at the top rather than going through several steps along the way (Task Force Member, 13).

What the farmers market example illustrates is that while intermediaries or strategic brokers with the ability to work between and among non-governmental and governmental interests were emerging (notably the City's Medical Health Officer and the Provincial public health and community nutritionists), few were able to engage effectively at the level of local government. This can be attributed to a number of factors. First, food policy programs and initiatives, where they were acknowledged as legitimate governance issues at all, were overwhelmingly associated with the mandates of higher levels of government. At the same time, ex-VFPO members who were interviewed added that a number of City of Vancouver Planners and Social Planners at the time "got it," clearly understanding food policy and the role that the City as a local government could play. The extent to which 'sympathetic' Planners and other local government bureaucrats became strategic brokers during the second period of organising is discussed in the later sections.

Second, the recognition of food policy programs and initiatives within local governments was hampered by a lack of consensus about the 'appropriate' place of food policy administratively and in relation to the practitioners responsible for its implementation. Compounding this challenge were disconnections between the type of issue that food policy was understood to be (e.g. public health, sustainability, environmental or anti-hunger) and pre-existing institutional experience and capacity to deal with such issues. This was certainly evidenced in the inability to cope administratively with an emerging food-related program area with no corresponding 'reality' in Managers' 'very thick binders.' Third, and related, a lack of community capacity to connect food policy initiatives with existing City mandates, policies and decision-making tools hampered the ability to achieve local government recognition of food policy as a legitimate issue.

In 1995 the first farmers market eventually opened, marking a turning point that would usher in a period of intensive capacity building as network members gained more expertise and experience in delivering food system programs and services in the city. However, the regulatory and legal challenges associated with Farmers Markets endured even as the Markets grew in number and popularity. By its second year of operation, a market manager was hired. In year three, the Society[38] had secured a permanent location at Trout Lake Community Centre. By the end of year four, the Market was serving between 2000 and 5000 customers each week, with total sales of approximately $400,000 (East Vancouver Farmers Market Society, A History). In year five, the West End Farmers Market was approved on a one year trial basis. By 2003 there were three markets operating in Vancouver: Trout Lake, the West End Market (opened in 1999) and the Nat Bailey Market (opened in 2003 after a three week trial in September 2002). The requirements for yearly reporting back to City Council and renewals of zoning relaxations left the tenure of sites, and therefore the long-term viability of the markets unstable. Zoning relaxation approvals were required at the Croatian Centre site in 1995 and 1996 until the market moved in 1997 to Trout Lake and applied for a Park Board special event permit to allow it. As long as the West End Market took place at Lord Roberts Elementary, a zoning relaxation approval was required every year from 1999 to 2003 until the market moved to its current Nelson Street location.

Overall, the first period of food policy organising between 1990 and 1995 can be characterised by the emergence of the Vancouver Food Policy Organisation (VFPO); experimentation with policy and knowledge transfer between and among scales as locally-specific goals and strategies were defined; and community capacity-building as VFPO member organisations gained more expertise delivering food system programs and services in the city. The first period of food policy organising can also be characterised by the beginning of a definitive shift from the framing of food policy as a public health, nutrition and anti-hunger issue to one of sustainability based on systems principles. This shift was due in part to the participants involved, but also what was emerging as a strategy to align goals with local government mandates. Notably, this strategy (that took shape during the

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[38] In June 2000, the East Vancouver Farmers Market Society changed its name to Your Farmers Market Society.

second period of awareness-raising) did not necessarily originate from non-governmental actors. Together these characteristics would inform the second period of awareness-raising and lobbying in Vancouver.

Period 2 (1996 – 2003): Developing new networks, partnerships and capacity

The first challenge encountered by the VFPO and related food organisations during the second period of awareness-raising was the loss or suppression of certain 'soft' City entities that had acted as strategic allies to the burgeoning food movement. First, by the end of 1995 the City had completed an extensive reorganisation resulting in the removal of the Social Planning Department and related social policy interests from the Corporate Management Team. Instead, Social Planning was relegated to the status of a department like any other service group. The result was that high level discussions and decision-making on the social role of the City as an organisation took place without champions of social issues at the table.

Second, in 1996, the functions of the Vancouver Health Department (health promotion, prevention, seniors' health, continuing care and wellness) became a provincial responsibility. As long as the City had a Health Department that was part of the City system, certain food policy activities could be justified under the auspices of local government business. The movement of all health-related responsibilities to the provincial level, combined with a lingering conceptualisation of food policy as primarily a public health issue, left the ability of the VFPO to lobby at the local level in a vulnerable state:

> I think the traditional role had been ... to look at ... the poverty end of it. I think the
> Health Department had a role and mandate in providing nutritional advice but
> that's where I think the focus was, and I think that was where the focus of the City
> of Vancouver was. When the Health Department left to move into the provincial
> Health Authority I think the mandate around food policy, whatever that meant,
> moved across with them (Manager, CoV, 24).

A third loss occurred when the Director of Social Planning at the time, a supporter of food policy development, left the City system:

> When the Director of Social Planning went to be the advocate for the [provincial]
> Children's ombudsman, the softer side of the City started to disappear. At the
> same time the Health Department left the City of Vancouver so the two biggest
> soft areas of the City were no longer there (Manager, Provincial Government, 14).

Even in the absence of a City-administered Health Department, discussions and work on

community-based food policy initiatives continued. Important breakthroughs were made in 1998

when the Vancouver Food Policy Organisation, in anticipation of becoming a registered non-profit

society, came together as a group to reach a 'basis of unity' on the VFPO's mission, guiding

principles, goals and objectives. The meeting took place on February 21, 1998 and was attended

by VFPO members representing a wide range of food system issues (Vancouver Food Policy

Organisation, Basis of Unity meeting minutes, 1998). Among other actions it was decided that the

mission of the VFPO was to "promote and support an equitable, healthy and sustainable food

system in the Vancouver region."

The year 2000 ushered in what was described by some interview respondents as a 'dark time' in

the VFPO's work in terms of their ability to develop their own capacity to formulate policy, advocate

for change and empower other groups to do the same.

> Basically [the VFPO] kept meeting and we kept getting funding and we then
> formed a Society, a non-profit Society. We continued on. When things got rough
> was when we could no longer get funding from the Health Board because the
> government shifted here, our funding fell apart (Task Force Member, 9).

The shift in government refers to the election in 2001 of a Liberal government in British Columbia

who initiated what was widely considered to be a shift to the right in Provincial politics. Urban and

rural communities across the province struggled to contend with massive cuts to social programs

and services wrought by the Provincial Liberals. For the VFPO, this shift constituted yet another

loss of an essential ally, this time a primary funder: the Regional Health Board, who did not renew

their financial support in the context of severe budget cutbacks and rationalisation of services in the

provincial Health Ministry.

Lower Mainland Food Council / Coalition

In spite of the challenges, between 2000 and 2003, a wide range of community organisations continued to develop and deliver food-related programs and services in Vancouver. Some of this work took place under the auspices of the Lower Mainland Food Council (LMFC), a new manifestation of the Vancouver Food Policy Organisation that came into being after an initial meeting on December 9, 2002. The LMFC was described by one Task Force member as "a totally new coalition of community-based food organisations" (personal email communication, November 18, 2003). The LMFC included some previous VFPO members and Directors, but represented a 'new core group' of members including farmers, nutritionists, media, researchers, and citizens interested in food security issues. Meeting regularly during the Spring of 2003, the group created a mandate for what they wanted to achieve, plans and goals for action, and a background document, *Closer to Home: A Recipe for a Community-Based Food Organisation* (Vancouver Food Policy Council Orientation Manual 2004: 31). The document made a case for the creation of a "community-based food organisation" (CFO), described as an entity that:

> ... partners with local businesses and community groups to develop policies and programs that promote equitable access to food, nutrition and environmental health. It's a forum for discussing and integrating issues that often fall between the cracks of established channels and authorities. At its core is a group of volunteer representatives from each of the key stakeholders, as well as city councillors and other elected officials. CFO staff and council members serve as catalysts and brokers, bringing together leaders from various organisations and businesses to address existing problems and forge new alliances. While the CFO has no direct authority to pass or enforce bylaws, its influence comes in harnessing the power of ideas, the creativity of individuals and of empowered communities (Lower Mainland Food Council, 2003, p. 7)

The proposed CFO (or food policy council) as envisioned by the LMFC, marked the beginning of a rearticulation of key strategies characterised by more definitive set of rescalings of governance for food policy. Of most significance was the emergence of CFO members (governmental and non-governmental) as 'catalysts' and 'brokers' who would act an intermediaries to address issues that "'fall between the cracks of established channels and authorities" (Craig, 2004). Equally significant

was a more clearly defined conceptual and geographical shift to the local scale as the site where governance strategies for food policy would be coordinated.

The shift in focus to the local scale can be traced to growing awareness on the part of the Lower Mainland Food Council that working outside of the municipal structure had not yielded desired results. As such, by 2002 there was a renewed effort to include City staff and elected officials in planning processes and lobbying efforts generally. As a result of this shift, and with the assistance of supportive City staff, the LMFC began to more clearly articulate their food system goals and objectives in policy terms that coincided with the City's mandates, tools and levers (e.g. by-laws, regulations, approaches to land use, existing policies). In this way, as the goals of the LMFC evolved into terms more recognisable to City Hall, community pressure on local government to respond became more compelling. Other characteristics of this period include a more decisive shift towards a sustainable food system approach; and the emergence of new intermediaries and strategic partnerships, particularly the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group (VAFTG),[39] outside consultants, and some City staff.

A key event during this period was a June 2003 workshop supported and funded by Health Canada, Growing Green,[40] and the VAFTG. The workshop helped solidify a new set of relationships between the LMFC, VAFTG and local government that would prove instrumental in achieving a rescaling of governance for food policy by these three key actors:

> ...Prior to being involved with the City, we were doing a lot of great things and had a lot of good information and understanding, but no legs. As soon as we hooked up with the City, there were legs and some momentum that was created because we knew at first intuitively and later, I think empirically, that there was not much that we were going to accomplish unless we really were much clearer on what channels of communication and decision making were, what the pressure points were, and how we might leverage the kinds of things we were doing. But [prior to

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[39] The Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group was a sub-committee of the Vancouver Agreement struck to focus on issues of food security in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.
[40] *Growing Green* was a two-year (2002-04) law, policy and regulatory reform project focused on sustainable food systems for southwestern British Columbia. Its goals were to develop practical recommendations for law, policy and regulatory reform in strategic areas and to strengthen the capacity of voluntary sector organisations to contribute to agri-food policy development.

that time] there wasn't that willingness to partner with us (Task Force Member, 10).

It was at this workshop, designed to develop an Action Plan for the creation of the community-based food policy council, that the Lower Mainland Food Council would undergo one final change of name from the Lower Mainland Food *Council* to Lower Mainland Food *Coalition* to reflect the networking and coalition-building principles upon which the group was based.

The rescaling of food policy in Vancouver and its region

With new partnerships being forged and priorities re-articulated in terms more familiar to local government, the LMFC and a number of related organisations moved into what was arguably the most eventful period of their existence. Clearly, however, the timing for these changes was not arbitrary. There were a number of concurrent contributing factors that led to renewed – and ultimately successful – awareness-raising and lobbying efforts on the part of the LMFC and others. Central to these shifts were at least three specific scalar re-framings (Table 11).

Table 11: Shifts in the scale at which food policy was assumed to be most appropriately mobilised

	SCALE OF INITIAL FOCUS	RESCALING
City of Vancouver	Regional / Provincial / Federal	Municipality
Lower Mainland Food Council/Coalition	Provincial / Regional	Municipality
Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group	Neighbourhood (Downtown Eastside)	Municipality

First, the Lower Mainland Food Coalition shifted its focus from provincial and regional scales to that of the municipality where it capitalised on the emergence of new strategic partnerships, particularly the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group, funders and some City staff. Second, although the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group was originally mandated to operate with a first focus on the Downtown Eastside, over time the VAFTG shifted its attention from the neighbourhood scale to the municipal scale in recognition of advances that could be made by working with and through existing city-wide food networks. And third, the City of Vancouver itself was willing to shift its focus from regional, provincial and federal scales to the municipal scale as a site for the coordination of

food policy activities, albeit in partnership with other scales and actors. In practice, this meant that although the City of Vancouver was unwilling, and structurally unable, to shoulder the full burden of food policy governance, it emerged as the main 'brokering institution' through which multi-scaled configurations of food policy could be mediated. In this way the City Council motion of July 2003 can be understood as one expression of the rescaling of food policy. These rescalings reveal changing opportunities and constraints involving shifts in arguments and political practices, but also a blurring of assumptions about actors working 'inside' and 'outside' of City Hall, and an evolving capacity to coordinate governance for food policy at multiple scales. A summary of key factors at play in these processes is shown in Table 12 and analysed in what follows.[41]

Table 12: Key factors that led to the rescaling of food policy and the City Council motion of July 2003

1.	Intermediaries / strategic brokers	
	1.1 Strategic inter-sectoral or inter-institutional partnerships	■ Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group ■ United Way of Lower Mainland ■ City staff
2.	Social and political-economic context	
	2.1 Political shifts	■ COPE City Council ■ Political champions in local government ■ Timing
	2.2 Broader public awareness	■ Growing awareness of food issues ■ Mainstreaming of food issues ■ Uniqueness of British Columbia context
3.	Partnerships and networks	
	3.1 Maturation of community / non-governmental food networks	■ Track record, expertise and momentum
	3.2 Key events, personalities and outside experts	■ Visit by City of Toronto Food Policy Coordinator ■ Lower Mainland Food Coalition June 8 2003 Workshop
4.	Framing of food policy / institutional context	
	4.1 Emergent City of Vancouver issues	■ The Dugout[42] ■ Farmers Markets
	4.2 Pre-existing policy architectures	■ Framing of food policy as a sustainability issue

[41] Key factors were determined by analysing interview data, meeting minutes, event announcements, and other materials from the governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in lobbying efforts, plus analysis of related policy report and public education documents.

[42] The Dugout is a drop-in social centre that delivers a free breakfast program to vulnerable populations living in the Downtown Eastside.

1.   Intermediaries / Strategic brokers

1.1   Strategic inter-sectoral and inter-institutional partnerships

Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group (VAFTG)

The Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group emerged in May 2002 out of an umbrella VA committee that was focused on social and economic development. The Food Task Group was formed as:

> ... a response to community concerns about rising number of patrons, neighbourhood impacts, conditions in which food is currently distributed and an increase in violence seen in line-ups for free and low cost food services (Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group Discussion Paper: Food Security in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, 2002).

Due in part to its location in the gentrifying area of Gastown, the early morning breakfast line-ups at the Dugout became a flashpoint of tension between Gastown residents and program users leading to direct intervention by the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group.

> Anecdotal reports from community agencies over the past six months describe concerns with increasing line-ups at other locations. Public disorder and violence are common. Recently, concerns for safety resulted in the decision to significantly reorganize a food bank depot located at the Ray Cam Community Centre. The concerns of the local business community and community service providers about food line-ups are forcing local government and community groups into crisis management (Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group Discussion Paper, 2002).

The Food Task Group was initiated by a Senior City Planner who wanted to address the food security issue because he worked with many Downtown Eastside groups including a number of emergency food providers. Due to his awareness of the specificity of food issues, and his membership on the economic subcommittee, he initiated a sub-group to address food security. At that time, the sub-group was still a part of the economic subcommittee but gradually became its own entity.

I initiated [the VA Food Task Group], and it came out of my work starting with work on the Dugout [an emergency breakfast program], and the City's concern there which was more of a conflict resolution issue because of the line-ups at the Dugout. As I became involved with that issue, we were trying to establish a second early morning breakfast program it got me more information about how this emergency food system was working, and I started meeting some of the people involved in the issue, the general issue, and it struck me that we didn't have a way of getting funds targeted to feed very hungry people, and that there were better ways of doing it (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

Another member of the VAFTG described the benefits of the multi-actor composition of the committee:

When we first formed [the VAFTG] it was really loose. We knew there were ... food security issues that needed to be addressed in the Downtown Eastside. But because we knew no one level of government had a dedicated department, or a dedicated funding stream to address food issues, it took us a while to identify issues on how we could be effective in terms of addressing the food security issue, how broad or how narrow the focus should be. There was a debate for quite a few months. We had a lot of on-going discussions in terms of how we structure the group, should we involve community groups, or should it be just government representatives. So that took quite a few months. We had eight members from all three levels of government and it is very good representation for the Vancouver Agreement. And it is good that way because we [brought] in more expertise. And [brought] in new perspectives. It was really good that way (Senior Policy Analyst, Provincial Government, 11).

According the Senior Planner who initiated the VAFTG, the initial intention was to engage in a public process on food-related issues. Before that process was initiated, the VAFTG learned about the work of the Lower Mainland Food Coalition and decided instead to support them in their work. The intention was to connect to a coalition that the Task Group thought was "reasonably inclusive," and work with that group to help determine city priorities on food issues. The shift from addressing food governance gaps at the scale of one specific neighbourhood, the Downtown Eastside, to a city-wide approach involving an existing food network, made the VAFTG the first VA sub-committee to re-define its scale of intervention. This constituted one of three decisive rescalings of governance for food policy by key actors that enabled the Council motion of July 2003.

A number of interview respondents identified the Vancouver Agreement generally, and the Food Task Group in particular, as a significant factor in raising awareness of food issues within the City system after a notable loss of momentum and institutional support over the course of the late 1990s. In addition to the general value attributed to the role of the VAFTG, two specific contributions were noted. The first contribution relates to the support provided by the VAFTG in enabling the Lower Mainland Food Coalition to hold its two-day workshop in June 2003. Rather than acting as a passive funder, the VAFTG provided guidance by suggesting participants from different levels of government and facilitating invitations with a strategic focus on those actors who would have the capacity to move the food agenda forward into action, both in terms of policy and 'on-the-ground' program development.

> We linked [the LMFC] to who should be invited, who absolutely you had to make sure should be at the forum. In terms of policy recommendations and any discussions, we made sure that there were government officials. So we got representatives from all three levels of government at the table. We have representatives from Coastal Health, from Health Canada, I think we got people from [Provincial Ministry of] Children and Families, we got a lot of nutritionists, we got people from Social Planning, Central Planning from the City of Vancouver. We also made sure we went over the invitation list to make sure that it is a good presentation of businesses, non-profit groups, and more groups from the Lower Mainland, like in Vancouver, Burnaby, inner cities. Just make sure there [would] be people attending the forum who [had] the ability to follow-up and work with the groups (Senior Policy Analyst, Provincial Government, 11).

The second specific contribution relates to a VAFTG mandate to support community coalition building.

> We were looking for ways ... to help develop food networks or coalitions in Vancouver. Of course, the Lower Mainland Food Coalition was one of the groups that we liked to help develop capacity and strengthen. So when they approached us, I think in the spring of 2003 to sponsor their food forum ... [it was] something that we [could] accommodate. We provided them with a very small grant but we gave them resources in terms of working with them to develop the invitation list. They wanted to invite government officials. We got four Councillors and one MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly] out, so that really helped them in terms of raising profile (Senior Policy Analyst, Provincial Govt. 11).

The provision of support to facilitate coalition-building was important. As one former Task Force Member reported, the challenge of funding for coalition-building had plagued the LMFC during the 1990s, leaving the group vulnerable to collapse at a number of times during its existence.

> It is very difficult, as you know ... to get funding from funders for coalition building. [Funders] love to fund hands on projects like a breakfast program for a school or a community kitchen but we couldn't get money for coalition building (Task Force Member, 9).

The VAFTG was not the only inter-sectoral partnership that facilitated the awareness-raising and lobbying efforts of the LMFC. One of the Lower Mainland's major non-profit funders, the United Way of the Lower Mainland, also contributed to building a broader food security network in Vancouver.

United Way of Lower Mainland

The United Way of the Lower Mainland (UWLM) is a social service fundraising organisation. In 2002, the UWLM introduced a new funding stream that they called, "Relief of Poverty." This funding program was mandated to provide three year grants to agencies delivering a food security initiatives. For the funding period 2002 – 2005, 27 applications were granted funding amounting to a total of $327,817. The significance of the UWLM funding stream is twofold. First, it represents the only funding stream that was dedicated entirely towards the support of food system goals. The availability of such a funding stream helped community groups build capacity and deliver services related directly to food security instead of having to couch their goals in more general terms. Second, in keeping with the trend towards multi-actor funding of community projects, the UWLM food security funding stream helped motivate the VAFTG to work in partnership with other funders on projects outside of the Downtown Eastside, and subsequently to participate in broader food network/coalition-building efforts (Lee 2005, personal communication). An example includes the Collingwood Neighbourhood House - Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute, an initiative supported by both UWLM and VAFTG. The mandate of the Food Security Institute was "to create and implement a Learning Institute that would facilitate community volunteers to provide breakfast programs, community kitchens, fund cooking for families and food growing programs in Renfrew

Collingwood" (United Way of Lower Mainland, Service Enhancement Grants 2004, Multi-year Funded Projects 2002 – 2005, Relief of Poverty). Since approximately 2001, other major funders including the Vancouver Foundation and VanCity also began to provide funding for food policy and food security projects, although not through a dedicated funding stream such as that of UWLM.[43]

Two additional factors make the role of both the VAFTG and UWLM significant. First, although the focus of both organisations was hunger, poverty and health concerns, the local government recognition they helped enable was ultimately granted under a broader sustainability framing. The implication of this shift would be felt on a number of levels as the work progressed. Repercussions would include challenges of inclusion of those groups and individuals most affected by poverty and hunger – ironically, those constituencies around which the respective mandates of both organisations focused. The losses and gains associated with this shift would be felt in later stages of development. Second, the involvement of the VAFTG and UWLM signalled the beginning of a formalisation of links between non-governmental and (local) governmental actors in food policy development. This formalisation saw the emergence of new intermediaries (often local government bureaucrats), and a focus on a new scale of governance (the municipality) where food policy was concerned.

2.   Social and political-economic context

2.1   Political shifts

The rescaling of food policy in Vancouver can also be linked to a number of specific social and political-economic conditions. The factor most commonly cited by interview respondents as a major influence in bringing about the Council motion was the historic shift in local politics that took place in the civic election of November 2002 when the city's long-ruling Non-Partisan Association (NPA) was swept from power by the left-leaning Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE). COPE, for the first time in its history won a decisive victory earning eight of ten City Council seats, five out of seven Park Commissioner seats and seven out of nine School Trustee seats, in addition to electing

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[43] The trend towards co-funding of community projects is an important one, revealing important questions about the role of funders in setting policy agendas. Analysis of this issue is beyond the scope of the project.

their mayoral candidate, ex-coroner Larry Campbell. With the highest turnout in more than a decade, voters expressed their desire for change especially on issues of transit, education and the Downtown Eastside, COPE's main campaign platform. Specific election promises included safe injection sites for drug addicts, social housing and democratic reform, all of which reflected the desire for a more 'caring government' at City Hall. In his acceptance speech, the newly elected Mayor Campbell, assured Vancouverites that,

> .. civic democracy is alive and well ... this is about citizens telling us they want
> into city hall (Democracy alive and well at City Hall. November 12, 2002.
> *Vancouver Sun,* p. A-3)

Interview respondents from within local government uniformly cited the new City Council as a crucial factor in opening the possibility for food policy development. The COPE Council was clearly distinguished from the 'business oriented' City Councils of the past. They were described by respondents as 'social reformists' with 'a softer side,' who governed with a broader view of the perceived mandate of local government particularly in relation to the social role of cities.

The COPE victory would impact not only the types of issues being considered by the new City Council, but also the geographies of the constituents being represented. The core areas of support for Vancouver's two major civic parties (NPA and COPE) have been more or less consistent for decades. Specifically, COPE receives the most support from the Commercial Drive / Kitsilano corridor, while the NPA primarily relies on voters from the Southwest corner of the city (Stewart 2003: 22). However, voting participation rates on the west side of the city, where middle class voters overwhelmingly support the NPA, have typically exceeded that of the east side by 15 – 20%. As a result, over time voting patterns in Vancouver have come to reflect an East / West dichotomy along lines of social class and other factors (Vogel, 2003, p. 53). The COPE victory in 2002 represented for many eastside constituents, a meaningful shift in their ability to participate in civic life and have 'their issues' represented in City Hall. Where food policy was concerned, the victory represented an opportunity to attend to the parts of the city where 'food insecurity' was arguably most acute.

Political champions and 'first hand' community experience

Another common observation made by interview respondents was that a number of the new Councillors had themselves come from a background of community involvement and grassroots activism. The focus on local solutions to local problems steeped in first hand community experience was cited as a highly significant factor in bringing about the Council motion. The fluidity of boundaries between 'the community' and City Hall was noted particularly by members of the food movement lobbying for change. It was noted that a number of elected officials on City Council, Park Board and School Board had "come out of the community-organisation-type movement" and had "a greater understanding of what the community could do for itself." As one interview respondent put it:

> How can somebody relate to [food policy] issues if they haven't had to see them or
> deal with them or live through them? (Task Force Member, 16).

Among the newly elected officials who were frequently acknowledged by interview respondents as food policy champions were Councillors Tim Louis, Ellen Woodsworth and Fred Bass; Park Board Commissioner, Eva Riccius; and School Board Trustee Andrea Reimer. Significantly, all of these 'champions' brought community-based experience to their elected official roles.

Timing

A calculated assessment that the time was right to launch renewed awareness- raising strategies was clearly made by the LMFC and other groups lobbying for local government support of food policy. Respondents both inside and outside of City Hall recognised that the timing was right for change:

> When COPE got elected there was a definite buzz. I remember being at a party
> with [a newly elected official] ... [after COPE] swept to power, and talking about
> the food policy council, and [the newly elected official] saying, 'this is the time. We
> can do it.' (Social Planner, CoV, 27)

Other respondents noted that "the timing was just excellent all around" (Elected Official, 12), that "momentum was really growing ... [reflecting] many more arenas that the food sector involved" (Task Force Member, 16); that "it was the appropriate time to move forward" (Task Force Member, 13); and that a "critical mass" had been reached (Senior Social Planner, CoV, 17).

2.2 Broader public awareness

Additional factors reflecting the social and political-economic context within which rescalings were taking place were cited by interview respondents as factors contributing to the Council motion of July 2003. These include:

- The mainstreaming of food issues including the organics movement, the 'cosmopolitan' nature of food, composting, street vendors, and organic grocery stores.
- Rising public awareness and concern about food issues particularly as they relate to public health issues including bovine growth hormones, Mad Cow disease and genetically modified organisms.
- Rising public awareness and concern about the environment and sustainability including the need to preserve agricultural land and support farmers.
- Rising public awareness and concern about 'controlling local food supplies.'
- The uniqueness of the BC context as a region particularly receptive to, and concerned about food system issues.

These factors suggest that a broader public awareness of food system issues played a role both in receptivity by the general public to food system concerns, but also willingness on the part of elected officials to consider food as a legitimate governance issue.

3. Partnerships and networks

3.1 Community / non-governmental food networks: Track record, expertise and momentum

The rescaling of food policy by local food networks, most notably the Lower Mainland Food Coalition, can be linked to the development of considerable experience and expertise in delivering a range of food-related programs and services at the municipal level. Over the course of the second period of awareness raising and lobbying (1996 – 2003), a number of popular programs and services had become well established in the city. The most notable examples are the Farmers Markets, community gardens and community kitchens, all of which delivered highly visible and successful food-related initiatives. At the same time, as the city's main food policy lobbying network continued to evolve through its many incarnations – the Vancouver Food Policy Organisation, the Lower Mainland Food Council, and finally, the Lower Mainland Food Coalition – the network gained valuable experience, earning them a track record for delivering results:

> [The community network] had been doing our work so it wasn't as if this was a brand new idea and we were approaching this new government. We had the history behind us (Task Force Member, 13).

The tenacity and track record of the city's main community food network was noted by a number of elected officials and staff members. As one elected official noted:

> The community, as is so often the case, is miles ahead of [City] Council, miles ahead of the politicians, far more knowledgeable. I remember getting an email from the senior spin doctor at COPE after the food policy task force had been approved. COPE had been inundated with a huge number of emails in support and he was mystified. He couldn't understand why he had received all these positive emails so... So the community certainly gets credit (Elected Official, 20).

Members of Vancouver's 'community' food network were not the only non-governmental actors who contributed to building a track record for food policy initiatives. Certain faculties and research centres at Vancouver's two major universities, the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser

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University,[44] were active in research and teaching that supported food system goals. The influence exerted by academic involvement with food system issues was noted by interview respondents from City Hall:

> One more [thing] that ... made [City Hall] sit up and pay attention [to food policy] was when Moura Quayle was appointed to the head of the [UBC] School of Agriculture. We knew Moura because of Greenways[45] and we associated her with forward thinking. So it made us sit up and pay attention that maybe [food] is something that we should be looking at (Senior Planner, CoV, 15).

Another respondent reiterated the role of academics and other professional groups in building a wider profile for food policy:

> We began to connect with Graham Riches and the School of Social Work, and also Moura Quayle and Dr. Art Bomke. So there were academics too on board that really helped us and it was a mutual thing. So there were all kinds of leaders at the time (Task Force Member, 9).

Building the membership and expertise base of the food movement in Vancouver was not the only focus of the network. Also cited as significant were a number of specific events and visiting experts who contributed towards a more focused lobbying effort.

3.2   Key events and personalities

In the period immediately preceding the City Council motion, specific community events and outside experts were cited by interview respondents as contributors to successful lobbying, and ultimately to the rescaling of food policy. One event in particular was the June 2003 workshop organised by the LMFC with the support of a range of actors including the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group. The aim of the workshop was to create an Action Plan for creating the proposed

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[44] UBC's Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and SFU's Centre for Sustainable Community Development (formerly Community Economic Development Centre) are the main examples.

[45] Vancouver Greenways are considered to include: waterfront promenades, urban walks, environmental demonstration trails, heritage walks and nature trails. In 1991, Vancouver City Council appointed an Urban Landscape Task Force to "report on the current use and future management of Vancouver's urban landscape." The final Task Force report, *Greenways-Public Ways*, recommended the development of a citywide system of Greenways. In 1995, Council adopted the Vancouver Greenways Plan and implementation strategy (Retrieved April 10, 2005, from, http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/engsvcs/streets/greenways/)

community-based food policy council. The purpose of the food policy council would be to develop innovative, practical strategies to facilitate and coordinate the growing number of food-related programs from community gardens to anti-hunger initiatives. The workshop was attended by representatives from different levels of government including some Vancouver City Councillors. This allowed direct dialogue between the community and elected officials about the role of government in supporting food policy. As one interview respondent described it:

> I think [the] invitation to the [City] Councillors [to attend], and for them to be part of the process, I think that had a huge impact for sure (Task Force Member, 16).

The workshop featured a catalytic speaker, Dr. Wayne Roberts, Coordinator of the Toronto Food Policy Council. Dr. Roberts generated great interest from attendees, and inspired one City Councillor, Tim Louis, to later step into the role of Chair of the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force (Mendes 2004). During the time leading to the June workshop, a number of long-time activists from the food community worked closely with some members of City staff, particularly those working with the VAFTG, to help align their goals with the tools and levers that local government could exercise. The process leading up to and including the June 2003 workshop resulted in a relationship built between the LMFC, VAFTG and other City staff, that would prove instrumental in enabling new channels of cooperation between the LMFC and local government in the months to come. These new partnerships represent a key turning point in gaining local government support for the food system goals being proposed by non-governmental groups. The reconfiguration of partnerships at this stage in Vancouver's food policy development turned on the extent to which various actors began to work across the boundaries between governmental and nongovernmental organisations.

4.   Framing of food policy / Institutional context

4.1   Pre-existing policy architectures

Although food policy was not widely understood or accepted by many parts of the City bureaucracy during the time leading up to the Council motion, the fact that it was framed a sustainability issue was reported by many interview respondents as a contributing factor towards the motion being

moved and passed. The City's pre-existing commitment to sustainability was cited by respondents as "helping immensely" to get food policy on the governance agenda. As one respondent described it:

> I think it is a movement, for the lack of a better terminology, a movement toward sustainability that parallel to [food policy] has also been evolving in the City corporation, that has facilitated the understanding of food issues as being part of a more comprehensive reality. Sustainability is the unifying thread. The City of Vancouver did approve in 2002 general principles and a mission statement related to the Sustainable City that gives room to the development of the comprehensive food policy as part of it (Senior Social Planner, CoV, 7).

In this capacity, food policy was positioned by proponents as a "next step" in the City's sustainability policies and developments.

4.2   Emergent City of Vancouver issues

Amid the parallel organising that was taking place within and outside of City Hall, two specific incidents can be identified as catalysts for the Council motion of July 2003. These emergent issues reveal the extent to which seemingly isolated concerns can contribute to a broader coalescing of factors leading to a major shift in the City's position on a policy area. The first issue relates to a conflict surrounding the Dugout, an emergency breakfast program in Vancouver's Gastown neighbourhood. As one interview respondent described it:

> [The Dugout] brought us right into the heart of the food issue, but it didn't start as a food issue (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

The Dugout became a flashpoint of tension between people accessing the service, and local residents and business owners who complained of fights breaking out and long line-ups that were blocking entrances. For those accessing the service, complaints included a lack of dignity and safety especially for parents with small children who were forced to wait outside on the sidewalk for hours. When Senior Management at City Hall intervened by directing staff to resolve the issue, the

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priority was not framed as an issue of food security, but rather an issue of conflict resolution in response to

> [Management] saying, 'the Gastown folks are sitting in my office every day and complaining about this, please do something.' And so the Director of Planning said, 'okay we'll do something because other departments won't' (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

Nevertheless, the Dugout conflict allowed City staff to learn about, and develop more targeted responses to what were in effect, food policy issues. Furthermore, it was the Dugout that in part influenced the creation of the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group.

Farmers Markets

The second specific incident was a zoning text amendment that came before City Council as part of the same agenda item calling for the creation of a Food Policy Task Force. At issue was a City requirement that yearly conditional use zoning approval be granted to the Farmers Market Society to operate their West End location. Questions arose among some elected officials as to why the yearly approval was necessary. The discussion evolved into questions about the broader spectrum of food issues, and ways to address issues in a more coordinated manner. As the Coordinator of the Farmers Market Society expressed it:

> Every single year I have to come and make this presentation before City Council. You can imagine the amount of work that I have to do, the amount of good we try to do in the community, the number of projects we try to build out of the Farmers Market. If I would only be able to spend as much energy on those as I do on preparing a presentation to City Hall every year, we could get a lot more done.

This message appeared to take root with a number of sympathetic COPE councillors. The result was that in preparation for the Council meeting at which the Farmers Market issue was addressed, the COPE caucus crafted a motion calling for both the West End Farmers Market zoning amendment *and* the formation of a Food Policy Task Force to advise on how to move towards a just and sustainable local food system. The outcome was a two-part motion, with items A and B

addressing the Farmers Market text amendment, and C through F (see page 1 of this chapter) addressing broader food system goals.

Conclusions: Coordinating governance for food policy at the local scale

The case of Vancouver presents a number of compelling conditions when considered in the context of the awareness-raising and lobbying that took place leading up to the Council motion. First, at least three specific re-framings of the scale at which food policy was assumed to be most appropriately mobilised can be cited as significant in Vancouver's case. The Lower Mainland Food Coalition shifted its focus from provincial and regional scales to that of the municipality; The Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group shifted it focus from a specific neighbourhood to the municipal scale; And the City of Vancouver shifted its focus from provincial and federal scales to the municipal scale as a site for the coordination of food policy activities, albeit in partnership with other scales and actors. These rescalings of food policy resulted in a coalescence at the local scale of previously disparate scalar framings of food policy and the emergence of the City of Vancouver as the main 'brokering institution' through which multi-scaled configurations of food policy could be coordinated.

Second, it is clear that the dramatic shift in local government that took place in November 2002 was instrumental in allowing food policy a space on the local governance agenda. As DiGaetano and Klemanski (1999, p. 87) observe:

> Urban polities, like national political systems, periodically undergo profound and abrupt changes in the structure and substance of governance. These critical governing realignments ... reconfigure coalitional arrangements and governing agendas of cities.

In Vancouver's case, the reconfiguration of governing coalitional arrangements can clearly be linked to widespread endorsement of a campaign platform based on a host of social reforms. At the same time, the decisive COPE victory was viewed at least in part as a reflection of deep public anger over a swing to the right in provincial politics widely perceived as resulting in punitive policies against the most vulnerable of the province's populations. In this way, shifts in local governing

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coalitions and agendas are revealed to have implications at multiple scales of governance.

Third, as Cobb *et al.* (1976, p. 126) observe, agreement that an issue merits formal consideration by public officials does not imply that the outcome will match the goal of the issue's proponents, or even that the outcome will result in action or implementation. In Vancouver's case, to a large extent, both outcomes ensued. From the outset, the City of Vancouver's willingness to consider a possible role for itself in food system issues surpassed the threshold of symbolic acknowledgement of a problem. In immediately assigning a group of City staff the task of facilitating the Task Force process and Action Plan formulation, a resourced commitment to action was implied early on.[46] The City's commitment to action would be confirmed in December 2003 with the approval of the proposed Food Action Plan, and March 2004 with the approval of funding for two dedicated staff positions to support food system goals. This commitment took place in spite of lingering controversy over the City's role in food policy that did not dissipate once the motion was passed. If anything, the expectation that food policy 'prove its worth' as a City responsibility grew once the mandate was resourced. The tensions are examined further in the chapters that follow.

Fourth, the trajectory of awareness raising and lobbying was not a linear process where community strategies and stories infiltrated local government in a uni-directional manner, or in what Cobb *et al.* (1976) would categorise as an outside initiative model. Rather, the process was decidedly multi-directional and multi-layered involving actors and processes both inside and outside of City Hall, evoking a range of causal stories. The extent of this multi-directionality is best captured in the fact that when the City Council motion was passed, the Lower Mainland Food Coalition "didn't have a clue it was coming" (Social Planner, CoV, 27). The LMFC expected instead that their requests would formally appear before City Council via a parallel City mechanism, the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group following on the heels of the June 2003 workshop. Instead, as the Senior Planner who initiated the VAFTG observed, City Council "raced right by us, and that was great" (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

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[46] Implicated in this set of actions is the extent to which consultation with local organisations provides important forms of legitimation for government policies and programs. This trend is discussed in later chapters.

This situation reflects what Larner (2004, p. 16) describes as a "blurring of categories between volunteers and bureaucrats, governance and management." The increased movement of people between sectors and institutions is argued to reflect a shift from participants in grassroots social movements defining themselves in opposition to mainstream institutions, to a deliberate strategy of engagement from within these institutions (Larner & Craig, 2002, p. 18). The result, as evidenced in Vancouver, is a situation in which policy actors occupy multiple roles both inside and outside of local government leading to broader knowledge of the constraints and concerns of different sectors, and different approaches to partnership building. The significance of this blurring of categories and boundaries was explicitly identified by some interview respondents. One respondent in particular referred to it as the 'inside/outside strategy:'

> We went to the City and said, 'we would like you to work with us.' They said, 'oh we would be happy to advise.' We said, 'no, we don't want you as advisors, we want you on the team, we want to work with you.' They were very surprised ....
> because that hadn't been done before as far as we know. People [in the community] always either saw them as the enemy or were fighting them, or in the case of developers, they either work very closely with them or work against them. Never as teams. It was a relatively new, if not completely new approach and there was a huge enthusiasm for it (Task Force Member, 10).

Enthusiasm for the inside/outside strategy in the case of Vancouver can be traced to a number of factors, including a number of elected officials and Senior Planners having previous or concurrent experience in grassroots organising, as well as grassroots organisers repositioning their strategies and representing their capabilities within the parameters of public management discourses and practices. As the respondent noted, "if [the inside/outside strategy] didn't happen, we still would be nowhere" (Task Force Member, 10). The inside/outside sensibility was equally evident among City staff who worked together with LMFC members as "essential allies" to frame food policy in terms that City Hall would recognise:

> I think the Lower Mainland Food [Coalition] had its own connections to our new [City] Council that would have [eventually] led us somewhere, but instead of [staff] being positioned as opponents, we were seen as essential allies. [A Senior Social Planner] and myself had said to [an LMFC member] at that point, 'we'll help you

> translate [your recommendations] for [City] Council. We figured that [the LMFC]
> would need the report to try to get [City Council] buy-in, so they would recognize
> [food] as a City issue (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

Fifth, and related, the development of new forms of expertise within community organisations and networks resulted in the emergence of community activists both as highly skilled and articulate organisational leaders and lobbyists (Larner & Craig, 2002, p. 22). The contemporary rise of a "new cohort of activists" is often argued to be a key consequence of neo-liberalism in which specialist practical knowledge, once a part of the core public service, is shifted to sub-contracting organisations. As a result, not-for-profit organisations are argued to have became a key site for new forms of professional and technical capacity in which networking abilities, language skills, and cultural competencies became formally recognised (Ibid., p. 18).

While such an analysis has particular resonance in the context of the contractualisation of statutory responsibilities, the development of new forms of expertise in the context of non-statutory issues such as food policy may share similar but certainly not identical dynamics. The development of an increasingly skilled network of local actors in Vancouver can more appropriately be linked to two factors. The first relates to the blurring of boundaries already discussed in which overlapping links between government, other professional groups, community and voluntary sector networks resulted in increased knowledge about, and experience working within a range of organisational contexts:

> This is a really organised community. I don't know if it would have been really
> different if you had a community that wasn't nearly as organised or involved or as
> well spoken, politically connected (Social Planner, CoV, 27).

Second, shifts in grassroots organising resulted in a growing understanding of the political significance of strategic community networks resulting in 'the community' being identified with community organisations, rather than "ad hoc groups of grassroots individuals with no existing networks" (Larner, 2004, p. 16).

Dissension and opposition to food policy

While the City Council motion of July 2003 was perceived by the community food coalition and related organisations and supporters as a resounding victory for food policy, it remained far from universally understood and accepted. Over and above a lack of consensus about the role of local government in food policy, concerns about downloading were often articulated:

> There is a fundamental problem. Right now it is the province's responsibility to make sure that people are properly fed and they are clearly not doing it. The minute the City steps in there and says, fine we'll do it, the province is going to be real happy and probably cutback even further knowing that they are not going to cause that much damage because the City is picking up the slack (Senior Social Planner, CoV, 17).

Related concerns about resourcing new responsibilities were also expressed:

> I don't see anyone at the staff level [in Parks Department] who is jumping up and down, who says '[food policy] is going to be my job,' because they've got so many other things to do (Elected Official, 12).

> It is complicated because within our current context we have a lot of ... priorities, and unless you bring in new resources or drop priorities your workload cannot be managed. So in managing new issues in the workplace and looking at the existing resources, we have got to decide what we are going to put on the side and what we are going to drop (Manager, CoV, 24).

Perhaps more significantly, a lack of clarity around "a unified objective" for food policy development was expressed by some community network members themselves. According to one respondent, "there were a lot of people who weren't really sure what we were asking for." City staff and managers expressed similar concerns over a lack of clarity about defining what was being requested by City Council:

> A couple of our politicians were making a statement by passing a motion that was at one-time so vague and incomprehensible, that to figure out whether it was deliverable [was difficult]. That was the trigger event. They did pass it. We had to look at it, and they passed something that I don't think anyone could understand

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what the hell it meant. But we were collectively able to put a team of people together along with community, and to start the movement to define it (Manager, CoV, 24).

The implications of competing understandings about the parameters of what food policy was understood to comprise in Vancouver by the actors involved in its development is the focus of Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5
FOOD POLICY AS A MAINSTREAM
URBAN GOVERNANCE PROJECT

> Now, this goes back to the challenge: What is food security? What are we talking about? Are we talking about the ability for a person on welfare to buy the food basket? Are we talking about producing all of our food in the Lower Mainland? Are we talking about not relying on California? It get so all encompassing that people have to compromise and bring something to the table that is real (Manager, Provincial Government, 14).

> 'A just and sustainable food policy,' I mean, the title makes me kind of wonder. I think we've got a very just [food system] in the sense of low prices, it's very good. That's what the [private sector] does. It delivers us very low prices, so in that sense it is just (Elected Official, 19).

An assessment of the actors and mechanisms involved in the lead-up to the City Council motion of July 8, 2003 reveals a great deal about the links between food policy, governance and scale at the local level. Among other things, an analysis of contributing factors points to the ability of an evolving network of disparate community groups, agencies and individuals to organise around an issue in which they all had a stake. It also reveals decisive rescalings of governance for food policy by key actors that enabled a new governance arrangement conducive to further food policy development in Vancouver. What such an analysis does not clarify is the question of what exactly food policy was understood to comprise in Vancouver by the actors involved in its unfolding.[47] This question is key because it moves beyond the issue of whether food policy is on or off Vancouver's governance agenda, and focuses instead on the ways in which food has been defined and incorporated into strategies and policies locally, and the type of governance that ensues. If Vancouver's experience with food policy development is argued to stand as a suggestive example of the aim of achieving a sustainable city, then it becomes important to examine more carefully

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[47] The actors under consideration in this chapter include members of the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force (non-governmental and governmental) and those representatives from local government who were involved in the early stages of Vancouver's food policy development.

what is meant by food policy in Vancouver. By whom is it framed as such? What is its geography? What is its conceptual genealogy? Who are its main beneficiaries and who is left out?

Noting the absence of clear definitions of what food systems and food policy comprise, many food system scholars call for "a common language" to unify the wide range of stakeholders often involved in food policy development including researchers, practitioners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community members, and other actors (Campbell, 2004; Feenstra, 2002; Mougeot, 2000; Anderson & Cook, 1999; Gottlieb & Fisher, 1996). The call for clear definitions must be understood in the context of a plethora of food system terminology with under-defined socio-spatial parameters. Similarly unclear is the extent to which these terms constitute ideals, models, methodologies or objectives:

> ... there are sustainable food systems, regenerative food systems, foodsheds, sustainable agricultural systems, community food systems, local food systems, urban food systems, regional food systems, bioregional food systems, and agroecological food systems (Bouris, 2005b, lecture notes).

Focusing on urban agriculture (UA) as one element of food policy and planning, Mougeot (2000, p. 3) is among those who argue for the importance of a coherent architecture in content and form to help UA and other food system interventions reach their conceptual maturity:

> Concepts are mental tools that we forge – and eventually rework – to better understand, interact with and modify our real-world experience. They are historically and culturally bound, relevant in some places and less so in others, fitting today but perhaps less so tomorrow. The UA concept needs to evolve out of our need to codify and refine our perceptual experience with a rather new world phenomenon, so as to ensure that it remains or becomes more useful to us where we will need it. Its identity depends on this external functionality as much as on its internal coherence.

Mougeot argues that it is only with greater internal coherence (an overarching definition that accounts for local specificities) and external functionality (how UA positions itself relative to other policy areas) that UA and other elements of food policy will evolve into distinctive and useful tools. In this capacity, it is argued that conceptual yardsticks for food policy interventions are necessary:

.... as policy and technology interventions need first and foremost to identify meaningful differences and gradations if they are to better assess and intervene [appropriately] (Mougeot, 2000, p. 4).

Even so, the extent to which common ground for food policy and food system discourse is needed or desirable is inconclusive. This is particularly true given the conceptual binary between localisation and globalisation that emerges as a common characteristic of food movements and the food policy recommendations that ensue. Specifically, in formulating food policy at the local scale, the goal of 'food system localisation' is often evoked as a 'solution' to the 'problem' of globalisation. In some ways, the emergence of this binary is unsurprising. As many scholars and policy-makers observe, food policy initiatives originate almost exclusively from the communities in which they are found. In the majority of cases, it is either individuals, community groups or local NGOs that take the lead in spearheading food policy efforts 'in their own backyard.' This place-based tendency is noted in a host of food policy initiatives ranging from urban agriculture and farmers markets to community kitchens and emergency food distribution (Wekerle, 2004; Clancy, 2004; Dahlberg, 1999; Welsh & MacRae, 1998). Often manifesting as a defensive position against the 'homogenising effects' of globalisation, 'community' food initiatives typically emphasise inclusiveness, equity, empowerment, community action, local decision-making and finding a sense of place. The localisation of food issues is argued to provide "deep social benefits" to communities as a whole (Norberg-Hodge, 2002, p. 79; Atkins & Bowler, 1999). As one food system scholar notes, "the ideas that 'place matters' and '[local] scale matters' have been argued to be crucial to the community food security approach" (Allen, 1999, p. 119).

It is ironic then, that specific categories of place and scale often become pitted against one another in an oversimplified and problematic local / global dichotomy whose spatial characteristics may not correspond neatly to political, social or economic conditions (Hinrichs, 2003, p. 33). The underlying assumption is that localisation is equated with necessarily desirable forms of social and environmental relations that offer a 'natural antidote' to necessarily 'bad' globalisation. As Hinrichs explains:

[The] 'local' often serves as a talisman. But behind that pleasing magic, shapes shift. The term 'local' appears to amalgamate these shifting shapes into a stable, coherent concept (Ibid, p. 33).

What remains unexamined are the numerous and varied interconnections between local and global scales that engage not only these two spatial extremities, but equally the many dimensions of the places and scales between them. Another consequence of an overdetermined but underdefined local scale are assumptions about the boundaries and participants of 'community.' (Hinrichs, 2003; Power, 1999). Anderson & Cook (1999, p. 148) argue that:

... the highest priority task in developing a theory of Community Food Security is clarification of its definition and determinants, including the meaning of community.

As such, attempts have been made on the part of food localisation proponents to define what is meant by community. Most definitions remain fluid and determined by community members themselves:

Residents decide the exact geographic boundaries of a community food system. We suggest, however, that a "community" should be local enough that its residents come to know each other, have opportunities to interact with one another in mutually satisfying ways around food, and that transporting food and farm inputs in and out of the community is considered when making food system decisions. The area can be as small as a neighborhood or as large as a town or city, including its nearby growing region. We encourage each "community" to define its own area so that an increasing proportion of its food needs can be met as practically as possible through local sources (Garrett & Feenstra, 1997, p. 4).

While this process may uphold important community empowerment goals, there may also be a tendency to reify an undifferentiated idea of community that presumes equal capacity to participate in community organising and benefit from outcomes. Such a view risks obscuring important social,

economic, and political differences, and assumes that 'community' is achievable while leaving intact underlying power inequities:[48]

> Community has no practical meaning independent of the real people who construct it and act in it. What community means is mediated by income, wealth, property ownership, occupation, gender, ethnicity, age and many of personal characteristics. Geographical proximity does not overcome social and economic distance, and may increase it (Allen, 1999, p. 120).

In addition to spatial assumptions about what constitutes 'local' and 'non-local' then, similarly problematic assumptions may arise around who belongs to the 'local community' and who does not. In this way, localism can be based on "a category of otherness that reduces the lens of who we care about" (Hinrichs, 1999, p. 37).

A simplified local / global binary, including beliefs about what 'community' is understood to comprise, informs the ways in which food system issues are mobilised into action in policy settings. In this sense, the aim of clarifying conceptual yardsticks for food policy is not to determine a fixed typology but rather to consider how, and based on what specific scales and framings certain food policy approaches are adopted in some localities and not others. This is particularly relevant in cases where the conceptual elasticity of a cross-cutting issue such as food policy may enhance the ability to strategically shift arguments, scales and practices to achieve certain goals. Where governance and policy-making are concerned, an important dimension of this analysis is captured in what Stone (1989) refers to as the role of causal ideas in policy agenda setting. Stone contends that problem definition in agenda setting is a process of image making, where the images result in attributing cause, blame and responsibility:

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[48] Alongside potentially problematic uses of 'community' at the local scale, there is a parallel trend towards neo-liberal uses of the rhetoric of 'community' to forward agendas of deregulation and downsizing of government. In this paradigm, the appeal is made to 'communities' to take responsibility for the welfare state (Power 1999) in the context of government withdrawal from a range of social service functions. Also see Darcy (1999) on discourses of 'community' in social housing development, and Larner (2004b) on the politics of ascribing geographical fixes to 'communities.'

Conditions, difficulties or issues thus do not have inherent properties that make them more or less likely to be seen as problems or to be expanded. Rather, political actors deliberately portray them in ways calculated to gain support for their side (Stone, 1989, p. 282).

The result is the "ascription of harms to actions of other individuals or organizations," leading to the perceived "right to invoke government power to stop the harm" (Ibid., p. 282). In this way, Stone argues that causal stories have both an empirical and moral dimension. Where the latter is concerned, causal stories are fought for and defended against competing stories in a continual struggle to have stories believed (Ibid., p. 293). The focus then becomes the ways in which certain stories are accepted over others:

If problem definition is a great tug of war between political actors asserting competing causal theories, one wants to know what makes one side stronger than another. What accounts for the successes of some causal assertions but not others? What are the political conditions that make one causal theory seem to resonate more than others? (Ibid., p. 293).

The role of causal stories in formulating alternative policy responses is significant because in fighting to have causal stories believed, the 'burdens of reform' are located very differently (Ibid., p. 283). With respect to food policy, these considerations are important because they point to the need to spatialise food policy development by examining not only the causal stories that are evoked to legitimate governance responses to a problem, but equally the ways that governance is coordinated among scales to address the problems identified. These processes become relevant in assessing correlations between Vancouver's municipally-supported food policy development and phase two of the policy cycle model used as the guiding framework to address the research questions of this dissertation (Table 13):

Table 13: Policy cycle framework for food policy and planning (Phase Two)

Policy Cycle Framework for Food Policy and Planning	
Phase 1	Awareness-raising and lobbying
Phase 2	Diagnosis and stakeholder commitment
Phase 3	Strategy formulation and action planning
Phase 4	Implementation
Phase 5	Follow-up and consolidation, institutionalisation and 'anchoring'

The second phase of the framework addresses problem diagnosis and the creation of stakeholder commitment. This involves the development of baseline assessments including information on the present state of a local food system; the local, socio-political, cultural and political-institutional context; the current impact of food issues on urban management; the actors involved, and their roles, needs and visions. Other processes associated with phase two include problem diagnosis, building collaboration and formalising commitments for the future (Dubbeling 2001). However, what is often overlooked before baseline assessments, problem diagnosis and related processes are undertaken, is the need to question assumptions about the meanings and uses of food policy, and the characteristics of the food system in question, including in particular, its spatial dimensions. This chapter addresses these gaps by analysing various framings and applications of food policy used by the actors involved in the early stages of Vancouver's case. The aim is to identify and analyse various views, uses and desired outcomes involving the ways that often competing understandings of food policy, and the causal stories intended to mobilise action were evoked by different actors in the process. Such an analysis is important because it speaks to unresolved questions raised during phase one of the policy cycle framework: What is meant by food policy? What is the geography of the food system in question? What are the motivations for adopting particular strategies over others? And what is the role of scale in defining food systems and coordinating governance and policy responses to its identified problems?

Food policy in Vancouver: A unified concept?

In the case of Vancouver, a sustainable food systems approach was adopted early in the policy development process, appearing in the July 2003 Council motion and later codified in the Food Action Plan approved by City Council in December 2003. The framing of food policy as a

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sustainability issue can be traced at least in part to the views of the partnership network driving the lobbying effort:

> [Food policy was framed as a sustainability issue] because of the Lower Mainland Food [Coalition] and the agricultural people ... were more broadly based. And the [City] Councillors who were championing it were viewing it through that lens because it makes more sense in the broader context (Senior Social Planner, CoV, 7).

Although this may suggest consensus around the participants, goals and desired outcomes of Vancouver's food policy process, research findings reveal potentially significant differences. The Council motion and subsequent consultation processes held with the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force were triggered by multiple factors and agendas in the context of sometimes competing notions of what the goals and outcomes of a coordinated food policy for Vancouver should be, and how food policy should be coordinated from a governance perspective. These multiple understandings reveal important insights into who came to define the parameters of the early stages of Vancouver's food policy development, how agendas were mobilised, and who may ultimately benefit from its outcomes.

The tensions regarding perceived meanings and uses of food policy in Vancouver are similar to those found within the broader concept of sustainability itself, an idea often criticised for the lack of a clear theoretical and practical architecture. Concerted efforts have been made over the past decade to build a more robust conceptual framework around the notion of sustainability. One group of experts determine the following to be prerequisites for urban sustainability:

> A comprehensive geographic perspective on urban sustainability ... entails focusing on process rather than outcomes; on geographic context ... rather than on universal recommendations; on contingency and specificity ... rather than on homogenous solutions; on flows and linkages across space; on flexibility rather than predetermined outcomes; and on building local capacity for managing unintended consequences, deflecting external shocks, and responding to global pressures (State University of New Jersey, Centre for Urban Policy Research, 2000, p. 8).

This definition shows the challenge of addressing the spatialities of sustainability in concrete terms where the parallel goals of 'building local capacity' and 'responding to global pressures' are cited. Commenting on this problematic, Myers and Macnaghten (1998, p. 334) argue that too often the discussion of sustainability:

> ... remains at a level of abstraction at which the tensions within the public understanding of [urban] sustainability can be glossed over, and the complex contexts or responses can be simplified or generalised.

At an even more fundamental level the concepts and practices of urban sustainability continue to be marked by disagreement regarding what is to be sustained: "ecosystems, capitalist relations, global development, consumption patterns, or cultural 'life styles,'" and at what scales (State University of New Jersey, Centre for Urban Policy Research, 2000, p. 8; Lake & Hanson, 2000). Equally contentious is determining how to implement change within complex bureaucracies, competing political and economic interests and mis-matching jurisdictions. Echoing these apprehensions, scholars and planning professionals have raised concerns about instances where the term 'sustainable' is added to existing urban policies and planning tools, creating an assumption that sustainable development is necessarily taking place (Keil & Desfors 2003; Low, Gleeson, Elander, & Lidskog, 2000; Buckingham-Hatfield & Percy, 1999).

When framed as a sustainability issue, food policy shares many challenges related to multiple meanings and uses. A number of these challenges began to emerge during phase two of the policy cycle framework. The major events involved in this phase are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Timeline of major events in Vancouver's food policy development (Phase Two)

PHASE	EVENTS	DATES
Diagnosis and stakeholder commitment (2)	Creation of Food Policy Task Force	August – September 2003
	Beginning of action planning	

In Vancouver's case, the 'just and sustainable food system' called for in the Council motion of July 2003 was defined as one in which food production, processing, distribution, access, consumption

and recycling are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a particular place. Out of this broad ideal, a number of issues arose during the formation of the Food Policy Task Force and early action planning that provide an opportunity to examine the ways in which tensions due to different meanings and uses of food policy and food systems were, or continue to be mediated in a specific case. These issues are examined by unpacking the goal of a 'just and sustainable food system.' First, the scalar dimensions of the food system in question are analysed, with attention to the politics of urbanising food systems and food policy. Second, the question of what makes the food system in question 'sustainable' is asked. In so doing, the implications of emphasising sustainability approaches to food policy over an anti-hunger focus are considered. Lastly, the parameters of 'justice' in a 'just and sustainable food system' are questioned by examining the argument that food policy acts as a 'leveler' that enables 'food citizenship' and other new mechanisms for participation in civic life. Although resolution of these issues was not achieved during this phase of food policy development, the identification and analysis of key tensions serves to foreshadow the limitations and opportunities that would arise in subsequent phases, and the ways both were perceived and engaged by the actors involved.

1.   Food policy in Vancouver: A local, global or multi-scaled endeavour?

In Vancouver's case, the nature and territorial dimensions of the food system in question emerged as tightly bound with the question of what the ultimate goals of food policy were perceived to be by various actors. Also implicated were varying perceptions of institutional and jurisdictional limitations, primarily on the part of respondents from local government. Interview data reveal a concerted interest in linking local food policy development in Vancouver with issues at other scales, from regional to global. However, evidence shows a set of dual but connected challenges: one that relates to whether and by whom Vancouver's early food policy development was conceived as a local or a global endeavour (or multi-scaled), while a second pertained to whether and by whom it was conceived as an urban or non-urban strategy (or both).

On the first issue, perceptions varied. Under a more globally-minded COPE City Council, the City of Vancouver as an organisation was engaging with a growing number of governance issues of a

multi-scaled nature at the same time that it was considering the adoption of food policy. Examples include the Peace and Justice Committee, mandated to "consider what initiatives can be taken by municipalities acting together, to further the aim of reducing the possibility of war and ensuring justice" (City of Vancouver, 2003d), and the Cool Vancouver Task Force, mandated to "assist the City in developing Climate Change Action Plans (CCAPs) for both the City as a corporation .. and for the city as a whole community" (City of Vancouver, 2004a). These types of initiatives, in conjunction with the City's pre-existing policy commitments on sustainability may explain the pragmatic attitude on the part of local government staff respondents towards addressing the multi-scaled implications of food policy, particularly where the 'local' intersected with what were understood to scales at a greater distance. Data reveal that local government respondents, more so at the staff level than that of elected officials, tended to ground food policy in a practical focus on what the City could concretely address, while at the same time identifying the necessary governance arrangements at other scales outside of its jurisdiction:

> What ends up happening is if you take your eyes off this global goliath ... you can actually start making staggering amounts of progress piece by piece by piece. It's the 'yes I'm a global multinational but I buy my vegetables locally because they are fresh.' So I kind of ignore [globalisation] now. I used to get all troubled by it, but now I just ignore it and get on with building what works locally (Manager, CoV, 25).

> I think the City can make sure that there are opportunities for things like community gardens, or compost demonstration gardens where people will learn how to compost and cut back garbage in the landfill. For me it is about immediate and close to home goals. It is not our job in the City to figure out how to solve world hunger. It really is about what can we do in the City of Vancouver (Elected Official, 12).

In this way, while recognising its multi-scaled implications, local government respondents often approached food policy simply in terms of what the City as an organisation could do or facilitate, and what it could not. For Food Policy Task Force members, the multi-scaled nature of food policy was also recognised. However, for this group, ideological inflections of local versus global food systems emerged, particularly where counter-globalisation trends were concerned. In this capacity,

Task Force respondents were influenced not only by 'community food security' ideals of localism, but also by the rise of international food movements.

In the 1980s, organisations such as Slowfood along with a growing number of smaller but inter-connected movements and food associations worldwide began to organise to protest the 'globalisation' of the food system, and re-invigorate centuries-old connections between food, place, culture and identity.[49] Some of these sentiments are embodied in *The Manifesto on the Future of Food* (2003: 2) published by the International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture. The Manifesto is described as:

> ... a synthesis of the work and the ideas espoused by hundreds of organisations and thousands of individuals, actively seeking to reverse the present dire trend toward the industrialisation and globalization of food production.

Although it has been suggested that the adoption of a systems approach to food policy with its emphasis on inter-related scales and nested food systems offers resistance against the conceptual polarisation between local and global (Dahlberg, 1993), in Vancouver's case some Task Force respondents echoed polarised views of food systems:

> I think we're seeing more and more [food policy] in cities. In some ways I think partly what fuels this is that we're seeing the emergence of counter-globalisation (Independent Expert, 6).

> ... people like Vandana [Shiva] and Maude [Barlow] were saying that the transnational corporations are taking over our [local] food system. We are losing democratic control of our food (Task Force Member, 10).

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[49] Slowfood, founded in 1986, is an international organization whose aim is to "protect the pleasures of the table from the homognenisation of modern fast food and life." It promotes gastronomic culture, develops taste education, conserves agricultural biodiversity and protects traditional foods at risk of extinction. Slowfood currently has over 80,000 members in 100 countries. In October 2004, I attended the international Terra Madre conference in Turin, Italy. The event was hosted by Slowfood, in partnership with the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and Forestries, the Piedmont Regional Authority and the City or Turin. The conference brought together 5,000 small scale sustainable producers from 130 countries to meet and share information on issues including the use of 'traditional' methods of production, protection of biodiversity, food safety, supporting local food economies, strengthening connections between food, place and culture, and promoting traditional foods. Terra Madre represents one of a growing number of such events worldwide.

Reinforcing dualistic discourses of food system localisation, other respondents spoke of making connections between the fragility of the global food supply and the need to bring food choices 'back home.' Furthermore, the role of 'global' issues including genetically modified organisms, 'mad cow' disease, and other food safety issues were cited in opposition to localisation:

> I think a lot of the [success of food policy in Vancouver] had to do with ... global things from genetic engineering to mad cow to SARS and everything else (Task Force Member, 10).

At the same time, recognising the need to problematise local / global binaries by Task Force members in Vancouver does not mean that proximity or distance were considered unimportant, or that other scalar relations were not considered. In Vancouver's case, over a decade of organising, lobbying and program delivery by food network members at the local scale meant that there was considerable experience engaging with multiple scales on food policy issues including the provincial level, particularly where the work of the community nutritionists was concerned, as well as the national level, around issues including federal agricultural policy and food safety. In this way, although local / global binaries were certainly evoked, 'the local' was not completely fetishised at the expense of other scales. In this way, as Hinrichs argues:

> '[The] Local' ... is much more (or perhaps much less) than it seems ... Fractures between the spatial, the environmental and the social feed into the sometimes contradictory politics of food system localisation. The differing political inflections in food system localisation begin with the spatial referent for 'local,' but vary in their assumptions about the boundaries between the 'local' and the 'non-local' (Hinrichs, 1999, p. 36).

Other scholars share the concern with over-determining global / local binaries. Drawing from their experiences in a range of academic and non-academic settings, Gibson-Graham observe that the disavowal of local projects and relegation of localities as necessarily subservient to the global, seems to be a "visceral ... recourse to the obviousness of global power" (2002, pp. 26 – 27). By drawing attention to the power differential inherent in binaries of global-local, space and place, Gibson-Graham note that what is overlooked are the limits of large entities (e.g. multi-national corporations, nation-states), and the relative effectiveness of small ones (Ibid., p. 28).

Furthermore, global / local binaries obscure approaches that understand the global and the local as scales of analysis or interpretive frames. Taking this perspective, the focus becomes one of examining processes that connect the global and the local, instead of polarize them (Ibid., pp. 30 – 31).

The complexities of scale were evident in Vancouver's case. For instance, the 'contradictory politics' of food system localisation were most evident not in attempts to reconcile local and global scales, but rather in reconciling geographical scales and spheres of action at greater proximity. Specifically, from an operational perspective, the main scalar conflict in Vancouver's early food policy development was disagreement about the role of the regional scale. This issue surfaced a number of times over the course of formulating the Food Action Plan, and again during the process of electing the Food Policy Council. Task Force members argued that the 'just and sustainable' food system being considered by the City of Vancouver could not end at the city limits, but instead had important regional dimensions:

> What do we mean by food sustainability in the City of Vancouver as opposed to the GVRD or the Lower Mainland? I don't know. I mean if you are going to talk sustainability you've got to go from the ground to the manure pile. And that's very cyclical, and I don't think Vancouver can lead that because on the food sustainability continuum, Vancouver is a consumer not a producer (Task Force Member, 29).

Initially, local government representatives also questioned the logic of a municipal, instead of regional approach to food policy:

> Food is clearly a regional responsibility. Vancouver cannot be self-sufficient so you can't say that a food policy in Vancouver makes any sense at all (Manager, Provincial Government, 14).

However, the rationales and implications of a focus on the regional scale differed significantly. For local government respondents, the regional focus was linked to apprehension over the growing number of social and environmental issues being 'voluntarily' addressed by the City of Vancouver.

Conversely, for Task Force members, at issue was the nature and territoriality of the food system itself. To better understand this link, some context about regional governance in the GVRD is provided.

The role of the regional scale in food policy governance

Geographers show increasing interest in theorising tensions between local and regional governance as a reflection of wider state rescalings (While, Jonas & Gibbs, 2004).[50] Gibbs and Jonas (2001, p. 270) argue that the region has become materially and discursively significant in managing tensions around sustainable development, social regulation and global competitiveness. In the Canadian context, tensions between local and regional governance are well documented (Bradford, 2002; Sancton, 2000; Beaudreau, 2000; and Graham et al., 1998; Keil, 1998b). In recent decades, a number of regional reforms through different models and approaches have taken place in cities including Ottawa, Toronto, Montréal and Halifax. Often, reform consists not of rescaling specific policy areas such as sustainability, but rather wholesale restructuring (often through amalgamation) of previously independent municipalities into uni-cities or regional districts. Rationales for regional reform typically include increased efficiencies in municipal service delivery, reduced costs by centralising municipal management, and increased economic competitiveness. The ensuing strategies are argued by proponents to be essential to Canada's cities because:

> ... the city's problems of urban sprawl, air and water pollution, social polarization and spatial segregation, transportation gridlock, and decaying economic infrastructure will only be solved at [the regional] scale of action (Bradford 2002, p. v).

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[50] Although beyond the scope of this dissertation, a growing literature exists on issues related to city-regionalism (Jonas, While, & Gibbs, in press; Ward & Jonas, 2004; Jonas & Ward, 2002; Gibbs & Jonas, 2001; Scott, 2001). Issues that are considered in this literature include the internal and external dynamics of global city-regions, their competitiveness, and the social and political problems that face them (Fainstein, 2001; Scott, 2001). Other dimensions of the literature analyse city-regions in relation to state restructuring including the role of class interests, poltiical alliance formation and the mitigation of conflicts between collective consumption and social reproduction (Ward & Jonas, 2004).

However, in some cases, such as Toronto, regionalisation was imposed by Provincial decree resulting in highly contentious struggles around local democracy, decision-making and citizenship. In Toronto's case, the conflict escalated into a court battle at the Ontario Legislature in which five of the six municipalities being merged in Toronto challenged the amalgamation on the basis on its constitutionality. A July 1997 ruling by Mr. Justice Borins from the Ontario Superior Court upheld the legality of the amalgamation. Furthermore, the ruling re-emphasised the lack of constitutional status of municipal institutions in Canada, including their subordinate status as 'creatures' of the provincial legislatures with no independent autonomy or powers (Lee, 2005, p. 54).[51] The obligatory re-casting of Toronto's urban and regional geographies encapsulates the often deeply conflicting views about regionalisation in Canadian municipalities, and also wider challenges due to Canada's current constitutional framework.

In contrast to wider Canadian trends, regional reform in Greater Vancouver has been characterised by a "politics of gentle imposition" (Tennant & Zirnhelt in Graham et al., 1998). The key distinguishing characteristic of the Greater Vancouver Regional District's (GVRD) governance arrangement is that responsibility for major urban services in the GVRD is left to the discretion of its member municipalities (Graham et al.,1998). Vancouver is one of twenty-one municipalities and one electoral area that make up the GVRD. Created in 1967, the GVRD is not a regional governing body, rather it is a municipal partnership responsible for the delivery of region-wide essential services, as well as various activities relating to environmental stewardship of the region.

Reflecting the focus on environmental stewardship, one of the main functions of the GVRD is the development of a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), used as the framework for making regional land use and transportation decisions. Adopted in 1996 with the formal support of all municipalities (with the exception of Richmond), The Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) is Greater Vancouver's RGS. The primary goal of the LRSP is to "help maintain regional livability and protect

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[51] A full analysis of the politics of regionalisation and municipal amalgamation of Canadian cities and city-regions is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

the environment in the face of anticipated growth" (Livable Region Strategic Plan, 1999).[52] Adherence to the Regional Growth Strategy by GVRD members is voluntary, although the creation of a Regional Context Statement (RCS), showing the relationship between the regional growth strategy and the municipality's plan, must form a portion of a municipality's Official Community Plan (OCP). However, once again, Vancouver emerges as an exception in that it does not plan using OCPs but rather through its own neighbourhood-based CityPlan process. This is due in part to the fact that Vancouver is bound by its own Charter instead of the Local Government Act (until 1998, the Municipal Act), to which all other BC municipalities and regional districts must adhere. The Vancouver Charter provides additional powers and privileges including land ownership and decision-making that other municipalities do not enjoy (Lee, 2005).

It is in the context of a flexible and voluntary regional governance association, and additional governance powers afforded by the Vancouver Charter, that the reasons for evoking the regional scale with regard to food policy development in Vancouver must be understood. In this regard, for local government and Task Force actors seeking to coordinate action and share the 'burden of reform' with the regional scale, food policy emerged as an ambiguous case. First, the model often cited for Vancouver's food policy development was the City of Toronto where governance took place on a regional basis. This factor led local government actors in Vancouver to initially assume some level of regional participation in Vancouver's food policy development. However, as a model predicated on public health, it quickly became clear that there were gaps between Toronto's approach and Vancouver's context in terms of jurisdiction and policy expertise. Second, the LRSP, as a regional – but voluntary – development plan based on sustainability principles, was recognised as a possible place for food policy. However, there were no clear provisions in the LRSP for food policy, making arguments for regional involvement ultimately unpersuasive from a governance perspective. Conversely, Vancouver's policy commitments to sustainability at the local scale already encompassed a number of food policy initiatives including urban agriculture, community kitchens, farmers markets and emergency food distribution, making its links to food

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[52] In 2001, the LRSP came under review using the framework of the Sustainable Region Initiative (SRI). The goal was to review and better coordinate regional sustainability goals with a view to creating a formal network of governmental and non-governmental partners working towards the goal of regional sustainability (Ibid.). The SRI received formal endorsement by the GVRD Board of Directors in July 2002.

policy more apparent from a governance perspective. Third, upon sensing that regional uptake – or rather, municipal resourcing of a regional strategy – was unlikely, Task Force members understood that an insistence on regionalism may jeopardise approval by Vancouver City Council. Consequently, Task Force members themselves backed away (at least temporarily) from this demand, re-emphasising instead, the importance of municipal intervention.

Significantly then, while a compelling governance 'fit' could not be found at or with the regional scale, neither could a coordinated mandate for governing food be found at any other level of government:

> No [government] department has a dedicated mandate or program to address
> [food]. We were trying to find a match or try to find a Ministry that had a mandate,
> or closely enough to address it (Policy Analyst, Provincial Government, 11).

In effect this meant that while food was not broadly recognised as a City responsibility, neither was it clearly identified as the responsibility of the region or any other level of government except on a piecemeal basis. This governance gap ultimately served as the window of compromise between competing aspirations for determining a working territorial and jurisdictional spatiality for food policy in Vancouver. The result was a stipulation that the food policy issues to be addressed by the City of Vancouver's evolving Food Action Plan should be those "within the City's jurisdiction." For other food policy targets, assistance would be sought "from regional and senior governments and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities." While not completely satisfactory to all parties, it did allow the process to move ahead with some common understandings of what the spatiality of a proposed food policy framework for Vancouver was and what it was not.

Not captured in this compromise was an additional dimension of local governance responses to food system issues: the challenge of linking what are understood to be urban and non-urban activities both conceptually and in practice. For Task Force members, local / regional tensions were not necessarily linked to governance issues at all (i.e. broader or more appropriate legislative or regulatory powers) but rather to conceptualisations of the nature and territoriality of the food system itself. Specifically, by insisting on a regional approach to food policy, Task Force members

were aiming to close the conceptual and material gap between food policy issues as either non-urban (primarily related to production) or urban (predominantly related to consumption). This strategy reflects a common challenge faced by cities in the global north where the distinction between places of food production and places of food consumption often remains sharp. Vancouver's proximity to the Fraser Valley, one of the three most productive agricultural areas in Canada, exacerbated the call to enable better connections between Vancouver and its region with the goal of drawing production and consumption into closer proximity. What Task Force members understood was the opportunity to achieve this goal could be lost if Vancouver's food system was too rigidly delineated along municipal boundaries.

This brings to the fore questions of how food systems are understood from a territorial perspective, particularly where urban and non-urban categories are concerned. The challenge then becomes one of defining the scope and geography of an *urban* food system while acknowledging the different impacts of food production, supply and distribution processes, and the multiple scales at which they operate. One of the biggest challenges remains the lingering conceptual and material gaps between spaces of food production and spaces of food consumption. The 'separation' and 'reconciliation' between food and cities is described by Mougeot (1994, p. 1) as a very recent phenomenon in human history. As Mougeot and others observe, "[the divorce between food and cities] has been far from universal and shows increasing signs of being repaired in both North and South." Still, the gaps remain, and were clearly at issue during Vancouver's early food policy development where issues of governance and jurisdiction further complicated the divide. This tension implicates a second issue that arose during the early stages of Vancouver's food policy development: the 'sustainability' of the food system being proposed, both in terms of territoriality, but also in relation to the consequences of emphasising sustainability approaches to food policy over an anti-hunger focus.

2. A 'sustainable' food system: Reconciling anti-hunger and sustainable food system approaches

One of the assumptions inherent in attempts to find a 'common language' for food policy development is that the meaning of a 'sustainable' food system is clear and uncontested. However, at least two broad approaches to food system organising can be identified: a sustainable food systems approach and an anti-hunger approach. The extent to which similarities can be found between these approaches is uncertain, with some scholars arguing that they are not necessarily compatible and may even be contradictory (Allen, 1999; Power, 1999). On the one hand, sustainable food system approaches work to build a community-based food system that supports local agriculture and enhances local decision-making. Such an approach is argued to focus on systemic change involving:

> ... community level change in food sources and resources, transportation and food access, nutrition and dietary health, food safety, employment opportunities in food production, and reduction of environmental hazards in food production and processing (Gottlieb 2001 in Campbell, 2004 p. 346).

Conversely, anti-hunger movements generally do not focus on how or where food is produced, but rather on improving access to food for vulnerable populations (Winne et al. in Allen, 1993). This contrast reveals a division that is geographical both in terms of its urban / non-urban implications (connecting spaces of production and spaces and consumption), but also in terms of the immediate needs and daily geographies of the poor and marginalised:

> The mainly privileged proponents of [sustainable food systems] are most concerned about collective or public goods, such as food quality, health and the environment. For poor people, the issue more immediate and more personal – how to put food on the table for the next meal (Power, 1999, p. 34).

Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999) observe that anti-hunger efforts have not been successful in mobilising a broad constituency or involving diverse food system stakeholders. Even so, scholars and practitioners argue that many complementarities among food system stakeholders and issues

are possible. Examples include making connections between a city's emergency food system, sustainable agriculture, and the community food security movement:

> ... local farmers, community gardeners, and urban agriculture entrepreneurs could
> be encouraged to donate surplus produce or deliberately 'grow a row' of surplus
> food for area food pantries, meal programs, and summer meal programs for
> school-age children (Ibid, p. 348).

In Vancouver's case, because food policy was identified as a sustainability issue so early in the process, it was expected that a number of respondents would reinforce this perception. This view was consistent with a broader commitment to a systems approach to food issues that had evolved over the course of more than a decade of organising by food network members, and is summarised most simply in the following observation:

> How are you going to have a sustainable community if you have no control over
> your food? (Task Force Member, 10).

However, the 'sustainable community' being sought during early stages of Vancouver's food policy development was generally not delineated by geography (i.e. conceptualised at the level of neighbourhoods or specific areas of the city). Nor were members (or by implication, non-members) of 'community' defined. For instance, over the course of the formulation of the Food Action Plan by the Food Policy Task Force, priorities including the creation of more opportunities for urban agriculture, increasing the number of farmers markets, improving emergency food distribution and creating a food policy council were conspicuously lacking in geographical differentiation or identification of need based on specific population groups (e.g. children, youth, women, low-income, HIV+, aboriginal people). Instead, a city-wide approach based on sectoral representation was adopted, raising the question of whether Vancouver's food policy development reflected a stakeholder-based or geographically-based movement, and whether this mattered. Often manifesting as a tension between a sustainability or anti-hunger approach to food policy, the ways that this issue was negotiated among Task Force members is taken up in Chapter 6 where an analysis of the formation of the Food Policy Task Force and Food Action Plan is examined in detail.

Of particular interest in the current chapter is how local government respondents, as new 'partners' in food policy development, understood potentially competing approaches to this emerging policy area. This focus is an important one because it speaks to the institutional capacity to perceive, interpret and operationalise goals related to an emerging policy area. It also helps identify the ways in which institutional understandings of food policy would coincide or diverge from those of Task Force members, prefiguring sites of tension that would arise during implementation phases of food policy.

Perceptions of food policy and food systems by local government respondents in Vancouver

The issue of local government perception of what constituted 'food policy' and 'a sustainable food system' is significant because it speaks to the institutional limitations and opportunities involved with governance for sustainable urban development. Scholars have noted that governance for sustainability requires changes not only to procedures and decision-making, but also to the structures and institutions within which decisions are taken and actions carried out (van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof, 2005; Bruff & Wood, 2000; MacRae, 1999). Like other sustainability issues, food policy presents the challenge of needing to adhere to existing institutional forms, while at the same time working to achieve a better 'match' between often multi-faceted and cross-cutting sustainability goals and their institutional environments (van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof, 2005). In Vancouver's case, an established policy commitment to sustainability involving existing structures and operational expertise provided an advantage where 'buying in' to food policy was concerned. Many local government respondents were able to relate understandings of food policy to the City's existing commitment to sustainability, identifying it as one element found of under the broader sustainability 'umbrella:'

> What the sustainability agenda did was create an umbrella that all of these things [such as food policy] could be brought together ... in a common vision with a common understanding and in an environment where we begin to think of these things as not individual actions or individual policies or entities, but in fact you build them together under a banner of sustainability that gives broader meaning, to the parts (Senior Manager, CoV, 31).

You know you've got the environmental health folks. You've got the School Board. You've got the early food programs. You've got inspectors. It is a lot like sustainability, because in fact this food policy fits under sustainability (Senior Manager, CoV, 30).

I think [food] has been framed as part of being more sustainable. I think that when you look at it in that way you see that there are a multitude of aspects that you can address. From the provision of food and the benefits of food to all of the things that are associated with growing food, to the environmental benefits of food production and the uses of greening the site. I think it is much better to think of it that way (Senior Planner, CoV, 21).

This finding reveals a tendency to reconcile cross-cutting policy areas within pre-existing institutional structures, policies, and legislative tools. Moreover, the specificities of these framings were further informed by the priorities and structures of specific departments and working groups, revealing connections between emerging policy issues and the immediate opportunities and constraints of daily practice within a bureaucracy. For example, under the broad food policy 'umbrella,' food policy was often further aligned with particular 'pillars' of sustainability (social, economic or environmental). Parks and Recreation respondents, for instance, ranked food policy as a sustainability issue with priority placed on the environmental sphere. 'Environmental' issues including banning pesticides from community gardens and the development of urban agriculture policies were identified as the lens through which food policy was framed. At the same time there was an awareness that certain Park Board programs and services spilled into other spheres of sustainability, most notably those related to food security and distribution:

The second level [of importance] would be food security in that our community centres ... make decisions around whether community kitchens happen, whether the food bank can use the centre for distribution ... that kind of stuff. They do make decisions around food programs that are more in the vein of food security (Elected Official, 12).

A second City department with a strong 'environmental' sustainability agenda is Engineering. Issues including composting, greenways, recycling, and water conservation were cited as having connections to food policy. However, here again, broader links to sustainability were made:

> The whole sustainability agenda ... is evolving and in a state of flux. And I think new issues are arising that are just coming to the fore that perhaps we didn't think about in the past. And so I would put food policy in that area. Where that goes or how comprehensive that is, is still a matter of debate and uncertainty I think at this point in time (Senior Manager, CoV, 31)

Within broad sustainability discourse and practice, there is often considerable slippage between the terms 'sustainability' and 'environmental.' Even though it is generally recognised that sustainability is comprised of three pillars: the social, the economic, and the environmental, the term 'environmental' is still often used to imply 'sustainability' more broadly. In Vancouver's case, this view showed evidence of being challenged by concerted efforts to analyse the role of 'social sustainability' in the organisation's practices.

A number of precedents for possible models of social sustainability can be found in Vancouver and its region. Most notable is the GVRD where a framework for the *Social Components of Community Sustainability* was formulated by the regional Social Issues Committee made up of representatives from a number of GVRD municipalities. The framework, completed in 2004 but underway during early phases of food policy development, aimed to "assist local governments, the GVRD, community groups, and citizens in their community planning activities (Ibid., p. 3). Also significant at the municipal level was the existence of a stand alone Social Planning Department in Vancouver with over 30 years of experience in social policy development and facilitation of community process. These factors reflect a receptiveness towards, and understanding of the social dimensions of local governance and planning in Vancouver. As such, a number of local government respondents identified food policy in Vancouver as an issue that best corresponded the social sphere of sustainability:

> I think it is hard to divorce [food] from the basic things that are necessary to survive. I kind of think that it is more a social issue, a social equity issue, than anything else (Senior Planner, CoV, 21).

> I think [farmers markets] have to do with locals meeting the farmer and all that stuff ... the emphasis on health and the emphasis on a social activity (Planner, CoV, 23).

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> I thought that [food policy] was a Social Planning issue primarily. Not that Planning shouldn't be a partner, like other departments, that others shouldn't play a role. I would see that there is a citywide social problem with significant policy implications for hunger and nutrition in children, economic viability, all those kinds of implications are social issues (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

One respondent identified the social role of food policy as embodying an innovative response to a growing number of social issues being addressed by local governments in Canada:

> I suspect there will be more social issues coming to the municipal agenda. Some triggered by Federal opportunities. Some triggered by need. Innovation is going to be key in those partnerships. We are on the way to redefining some [issues such as food policy] and also the role of the municipality. All this is going on now and we are taking a big part of it. More to come (Manager, CoV, 24).

The perception of food policy as a social issue may be best reflected in the fact that it would later find its institutional home, including staff positions and reporting structure, in the City of Vancouver's Social Planning Department. The process and rationale behind these decisions are analysed in Chapter 7.

Local government perception of food policy as an anti-hunger issue

Anti-hunger framings, where they emerged at all as an issue for local government respondents, centred around notions of justice and inequality, issues for which corresponding institutional structures and policies were less common. Accordingly, opportunities to reconcile this framing with daily practice were less frequently cited. Where an anti-hunger and food access framing was cited by local government respondents, it was often expressed to draw attention to inconsistencies between a sustainable food systems approach and an anti-hunger approach to food policy development and implementation. Particularly for those local government respondents whose work focused on the Downtown Eastside or was associated with the work of the Vancouver Agreement, the immediacy of poverty and hunger could not be ignored:

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We're still years or decades away from it being an urgent priority to grow locally and other kinds of food issues. I think eventually those things will happen and it will take on a different priority and it is good for us to be ahead of the game, to be preparing in urban agriculture and a lot of things that we have been talking about because they will become very important to us in the medium term or the long-term. But the immediate issue is really a poverty issue, a basic nutrition issue for the homeless, and for the growing number of children in poverty in the city (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

The [food] access issues remain. These programs have to be geared toward the poor people, right? The people at the lowest end of the scale. How will it help them? If you can't show me how it will help them then I don't know. Healthy Heart programs drive me crazy because they are always talking about things that happy healthy wealthy people can do. Happy healthy wealthy people aren't the ones having the heart attacks. It is the poor people (Manager, Provincial Government, 14).

These sentiments reflect the views of some scholars and anti-poverty activists who insist that no matter how integrated, a sustainable food system approach obscures the specific and immediate needs of hungry people (Hassanein 2003 in Campbell 2004, p. 346). In Vancouver's case, it was here that differences in perception about what constituted food policy and food systems began to turn on ideas of justice and social equity. Charges of elitism and ignoring the needs of the poor were cited as objections to a sustainable food systems approach.

The food security issue for the broad population is probably ten or twenty years out [in the future], but the food security for the lower income people is ten to twenty years old, at least (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

Because of the nature of our work in the Downtown Eastside we were looking into emergency food programs, or policy development. So it is a different kind of issue: People who are hungry because they have no money versus what kind of food they can buy. It is a different issue. It is more like the crisis food issue we were talking about when we first started (Policy Analyst, Provincial Government, 11).

Vigorous concern about the ability to reconcile anti-hunger and sustainability approaches was registered by both local government and Task Force respondents. Of biggest concern was the potential for issues of hunger to be obscured within a framework of sustainability that was not

precise enough to address the geographic and demographic specificities of issues related to poverty, nor immediate enough to feed hungry people in the short term:

> I think the issue of food security for marginalised populations in the City can get really lost in the whole issue of sustainability (Task Force Member, 29).

Although the ability to reconcile anti-hunger and sustainability approaches was not immediately evident, mitigation strategies did begin to emerge over the course of later phases of Vancouver's food policy development. These strategies are discussed in later chapters. What is relevant in the context of the phase of Vancouver's food policy development being analysed here, is the extent to which notions of food justice and the right to food – concepts associated with both anti-hunger and sustainability approaches – represented an important dimension in the discussion of meanings and uses of food policy in Vancouver, but one that presented the most difficulty from a governance perspective. The close association between food policy and ideals of justice is the third aspect of Vancouver's proposed 'just and sustainable food system' to be unpacked in this chapter.

3. Food policy and ideals of justice

The association of food policy with ideals of justice is embodied most simply in the notion that 'everybody eats,' positioning food as a leveler that cuts across lines of race, class, gender and other types of difference. This notion is codified in Article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) where it is stated that "everyone has a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself [sic] and his [sic] family, including food." Recent shifts in community food movements have revealed a focus on the 'right to food' as an element of a more democratic and just society, and most recently, a reframing as food justice movements (Wekerle, 2004, p. 378). A number of associated ideals such as food sovereignty, food democracy, food citizenship, and the right to food, are now commonly cited as examples of breakthrough innovations in "re-knitting relationships among food and community," by enshrining "good food as a citizen's right" (Riches, 1999). Further, food security projects are argued to contribute to a more encompassing politicisation of citizens, enhancing engagement with other areas of civic life. This connection is argued to stem from opportunities to "participate in [community food] projects in

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which [people] feel that they can make a difference; to make concrete change in time and space that can be realized and seen" (Allen, 1999, p. 120).

Food justice movements mirror a trend that sees notions of social and economic justice entering processes of local governance and policy-making more generally (Blomley, 2004; Sommers & Blomley, 2002; McCann, 2002; Amin et al., 2000; Sandercock, 2000; Holston, 1999; Douglass & Friedmann, 1998). Although ideals of social inclusion and social justice have long been debated in relation to the city, many scholars now observe that early analyses of urban social justice failed to accept multiple definitions of social difference other than simply a class-based critique (Young, 2000). In response, the recent configuration of these debates manifests in the form of the notion of the 'just city,' or 'rights to the city,' a theoretical revival that combines an interest in examining the dynamics of inclusionary urban decision-making processes, the achievement of socially, environmentally and economically 'just' conditions, and 'sustainable' outcomes. At the same time, a number of scholars are careful to point to the immediacy of notions of rights and justice to the daily lives of urban citizens at the level of households and neighbourhoods. In this capacity, the focus shifts to the politics of participatory governance and access to decision-making processes.

The trend towards collaborative governance and equitable access to decision-making can be identified discursively and in practice in many policy-making processes in Canadian cities. Characterised by a focus on 'bottom-up' input from neighbourhoods, 'horizontal networking' and partnerships in local places, the resulting strategies to address social exclusion and other 'equity' issues in cities are often argued to depend on "fine-grained interventions based on local contextual intelligence" (Bradford, 2002 p. 38). However, the extent to which the ideals embodied in what are, in effect, calls for social justice, result in meaningful change remains inconclusive at best.

For food movements, the emphasis on justice and rights is clear when the food policy agendas of various Canadian cities are examined. For example, the City of Toronto's food policy priorities include reducing the need for food banks; increasing access to affordable food; and a healthy food delivery system for low-income citizens. The City of Prince Albert has adopted a Food Charter that

outlines a vision for the future of the kind of food security the city aims to achieve. The Charter outlines possible actions including creating more community kitchens, increasing access to food programs by seniors, making better use of vacant urban land for community gardens, and providing free public transit to people to ensure access to healthy, affordable retail food outlets. In Kamloops, one of the main goals of the Food Policy Council is to provide nutritious and affordable food to all citizens. To achieve this goal, the Kamloops Food Policy Council encourages initiatives aimed at local food self-reliance such as community kitchens and community gardens, the Organic Food coop, and the Kamloops Farmers Market. These initiatives reveal not only a concern about 'social justice' often expressed as a desire to 're-localise' aspects of the food system for the benefit of local citizens, but also suggest a retooling of the policymaking process involving changes to the spaces and participants in contemporary urban governance.

In Vancouver, connections between food system issues and justice were clearly expressed at all points during the consultation processes by both Task Force members and local government representatives. Significantly, expressions of the importance of food justice came across most often in the context of local / global binaries, whether it was the injustices of 'global' food system conditions, or the importance of 'bringing food choices home:'

> [The Lower Mainland Food Coalition] moved ... towards starting to use the term food sovereignty, which means having the right over our own local food supplies and having the right to control how food is produced, transported, distributed, how it is processed, and methods of consumption. So food democracy is basically ... we can't fight the transnationals, then [create] farmers markets, community gardens, community kitchens ... localise the food system (Task Force Member, 10).

> Everyday people in Paraguay suffer because they pick coffee beans in a way that really is not very good for them. Poultry workers are the number one occupational hazards job in North America. You go through this whole thing where every action you are going to take is going to have this very direct daily impact (Elected Official, 26).

At the same time, food policy was perceived to be unique in what it enabled around social justice because of its 'leveling' character:

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> [Food] touches everybody I think, whatever you are doing, whoever you are, everyone eats. It affects everybody ... whether you are a senior or a young mom. I think it just opens up [dialogue] and makes it broader for more people to have ... something to relate to, something that they can discuss and bring their issues to (Task Force Member, 16).

> Food is a great leveler in society in that we all sit down to dinner somewhere, anywhere, and we are eating the same food as [our] neighbour or whatever, right? (Elected Official, 12).

While these findings reveal perceptions of food policy as a justice movement in Vancouver, what they do not show is how food policy development may provide opportunities to make claims for new rights to the city, new decision-making processes and new mechanisms for participation in civic life, as has been suggested by local government and community groups alike. In this capacity, links between justice and the place-based parameters of how food system issues affect people's daily lives were cited, although less frequently:

> ... There is something really unique about food policy as a way to bring citizens more into the process of the way the City is run from a governmental perspective (Task Force Member, 16).

> There is this linking thing that is happening [around food policy] and ... it will connect around gardens, and will connect around greening, and will connect around safety, and it will connect ... where people live and what concerns them immediately. They might hear 'food policy' and they don't connect. They might hear 'sustainability' and they don't connect. They hear, 'organise and clean up that lot there at the end of the street,' or 'we need to get together to do something about the break-ins.' Or 'we need to get together because our Safeway is being closed down.' I think if you can get people where they live, that will reach them (Senior Planner, CoV, 15).

Even so, 'justice' emerged as surprisingly lacking in neighbourhood specificity with the exception of references to the Downtown Eastside (DTES). This is particularly striking given that many of the pivotal issues that brought food policy to the attention of Vancouver's City Council were related to concerns about growing poverty and hunger in Vancouver, much of which could be located very precisely in a number of city neighbourhoods, most notably, the Downtown Eastside, Mount

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Pleasant and Grandview Woodlands Local Areas; and Eastside Kingsway corridor (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2003; Ley & Smith, 2000; Myles, Picot & Pyper 2000). Food bank line-ups, the geographical dispersal of emergency food services to targeted neighbourhoods, school meal programs, community kitchens, good food box programs and the emergence of specific food mandates by funders including the United Way of the Lower Mainland and the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group revealed a great deal of specific knowledge about where food insecurity was located in the city.[53] This awareness appeared to be echoed by citizen concern about growing social polarisation in Vancouver. Citizen surveys including the 2004 Budget Allocation Study registered homelessness, poverty, and lack of affordable housing as the 'Most Important Issues Facing Vancouver.' Still, what often emerged in Vancouver's case was a selective imaginative geography of the 'justice' of its food system in which the links between 'justice' and the place-based parameters of how food system issues affect people's daily lives remained generally abstracted except where they could be easily polarised between local and global issues, or between Vancouver as a whole and its poorest neighbourhood, the Downtown Eastside. Sommers & Blomley (2002) describe the problematic links between affluence and social polarisation that characterise Vancouver's landscape and socio-economic realities:

> Instead of the unfettered consumption and spiraling housing prices that mark the affluent side of the widening [social] gap, it is their inevitable corollaries, begging homelessness, food banks, soup kitchens, and the expanding street economy centred on the drug and sex trades, that have been constituted as the indicators that something is wrong in Vancouver (Sommers & Blomley, 2002, p. 440).

The authors argue that not only have the 'evitable corollaries' of affluence become pathologised in general terms (instead of affluence itself), but so too have conditions of hunger, poverty,

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[53] The importance of the neighbourhood as a scale of analysis is an issue that has been identified by geographers and other scholars, particularly where the health dimensions of urban sustainability are involved (Larsen et al., 2004; Lawrence et al., 2003; Curtis, Cave & Coutts, 2002). For the purpose of this dissertation, the neighbourhood scale is acknowledged as an important site. However, an analysis of its significance in Vancouver's case is not presented due to limits in data corresponding with the study period. Future analyses may be possible, particularly given the emergence of more neighbourhood-based research on Vancouver including a Vancouver Food System Assessment completed in 2005 by a consortium of researchers called Forum of Research Connections (FORC).

homelessness and addiction become conceptually and spatially fixed in the Downtown Eastside (DTES):

> The wider city of Vancouver ... imagines the outcast population of the Downtown Eastside as morally isolated from the rest of the city. The notion of neighbourhood decline as a relationship between poverty, drugs, and disease situates the area as a place apart and radically different from anywhere else in Vancouver ... However, claims of isolation jar against the experience of place where expensive condos stand just around the corner from a drug market where cocaine and heroin are openly offered and exchanged (Sommers & Blomley 2002, pp. 25 - 26).

This conceptual and spatial separation may similarly be linked to the uneasy coexistence of sustainability and anti-hunger approaches to food policy in Vancouver, particularly where ideals of justice are concerned. Due at least in part to the participation of the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group and membership of DTES agencies on the Food Policy Task Force, the only specific neighbourhood that was evoked during the early stages of Vancouver's food policy development was the Downtown Eastside. However, as Sommers and Blomley (2002: 25) argue, the extent to which the Downtown Eastside has come to be understood as a pathology to be contained, or at least treated on site before it spreads to other parts of the city, reflects broader underlying tensions in the ways Vancouver imagines itself and the growing disparities between affluence and poverty. In this way, it is important to consider the membership of the Task Force who defined the 'just and sustainable food system' being sought, but also the characterisations of food insecurity (from a food justice perspective) as either sets of polarised local / global conditions, or spatially containable in those Vancouver neighbourhoods understood to be most emblematic of poverty and hunger. In both cases, what remains lacking are more careful analyses of the interplay between 'food justice' and specific social and geographical dimensions of the city.

Conclusions

This chapter analysed the meanings and uses of food policy by the actors involved in the early stages of Vancouver's case. The aim was to determine various views, uses and desired outcomes involving the ways that different understandings of food policy. This analysis has particular relevance to phase two of the policy framework used to address the research questions of this

dissertation. Specifically, in addressing the baseline assessments, problem diagnosis and related processes associated with phase two of the framework, what is often overlooked is the need to question assumptions about the meanings and uses of food policy, and the governance and territorial characteristics of the food system in question.

The question of what Vancouver's 'just and sustainable food system' was understood to comprise is not easily answerable. Where conclusions can be drawn, they are multi-layered and shifting. First, from an operational perspective, a regulatory understanding of Vancouver's food system emerged in the form of a stipulation that the food policy issues to be addressed by the City of Vancouver's evolving Food Action Plan should be those "within the City's jurisdiction." For other food policy goals, assistance would be sought from regional and other levels of government. The compromise satisfied, at least temporarily, Task Force members' insistence on a regional approach to food policy that reflected their aim to close the conceptual and material gap between food policy issues as either non-urban (primarily related to production) or urban (predominantly related to consumption). This finding reveals the extent to which local / regional scalar conflicts were linked both to governance issues and also to conceptualisations of the nature and territoriality of the food system itself including what were perceived to inter-connected spaces of food production and consumption.

Second, Vancouver's food system was understood in terms of the institutional capacity to perceive, interpret and operationalise goals related to a policy area that few civil servants initially understood, or understood only through a variable lens of 'sustainability.' Findings reveal a tendency to reconcile cross-cutting policy areas such as food policy within pre-existing institutional structures, policies, and legislative tools. The specificities of these framings were further informed by the priorities and structures of specific departments and working groups. Anti-hunger framings were centred around notions of justice and inequality, issues for which corresponding institutional structures and policies were less common. As such, opportunities to reconcile this framing with daily practice were less frequently cited. The challenges that emerged around sustainability and anti-hunger approaches were not only institutional but also conceptual, involving assumptions

about divisions between 'citizens' and 'the state,' collective change (from below) and policy change (from above).

Lastly, connections between food system issues and justice were clearly expressed at all points during the consultation processes by both Task Force members and local government representatives. However, a selective imaginative geography of the 'justice' of its food system emerged in which the links between 'justice' and the place-based parameters of how food system issues affect people's daily lives remained generally abstracted except where they could be easily polarised either between local and global issues, or between Vancouver as a whole and its poorest neighbourhood, the Downtown Eastside.

Overall, although resolution of these issues was not achieved during this phase of food policy development, the identification and analysis of key tensions serves to foreshadow the limitations and opportunities that would arise in subsequent phases, and the ways both were perceived and engaged by the actors involved. A summary of the tensions and opportunities that arose in relation to these issues is summarised in Table 15:

Table 15: Summary of tensions and opportunities related to interpretations of food policy in Vancouver

Issue	Common Assumptions	Tensions / Contradictions	Opportunities
1. Scalar dimensions of food policy	■ Producing local benefits in the context of global concerns ■ Counter-globalisation ■ Bringing food choices 'home'	■ Polarisation of local / global scales at expense of other scales ■ Difficulty reconciling local and regional scales of intervention ■ Territoriality of food system in question ■ Absence of clear governance mandate for food at any scale ■ Jurisdiction: fear of downloading	■ Food governance 'gap' provides opening for adoption of food policy at local level
2. Meanings of 'community' and 'local'	■ Food system localisation necessarily beneficial ■ 'Local community' defines its own members and geography	■ Simplistic dichotomy between local and global food systems ■ 'Community' not delineated by geography or population group ■ Who is included and excluded from 'community'?	■ Food policy as community-building *tool* that enables multiple outcomes
3. Anti-hunger or sustainability approaches	■ Anti-hunger and sustainable food system approaches are reconcilable	■ Issues of hunger become obscured in sustainability framework	■ Policy complementarities ■ Conceptual flexibility enables multiple strategies and outcomes
4. Food policy and ideals of justice	■ Ideals of justice and social equity central to food policy	■ Elitism and ignoring needs of the poor ■ Justice for whom? ■ Polarisation of local / global and / or city as a whole and its poorest neighbourhoods	■ Food policy as a 'leveler' ■ Enables 'food citizenship,' new mechanisms for participation in civic life

These issues reflect disagreement over the apparent need for "a common language" to unify the wide range of stakeholders often involved in food policy development. What emerges in

Vancouver's case may not be a fixed typology, but rather an opportunity to be attentive to the specificities of place in relation to food policy development, and the changing opportunities and constraints faced by actors seeking to shape food policy development at the local level (Gibbs and Jonas 2002). Furthermore, underpinning all issues are what scholars identify as challenges inherent in partnership approaches to cross-cutting issues involving a wide range of stakeholders. Specifically, the process of defining meanings and uses of food policy is informed by the positionality, roles and responsibilities of the partners in question, and the composition of the partnership arrangement as a whole. Assumptions about the meanings and uses of food policy were carried into subsequent phases of Vancouver's food policy development, particularly those involving strategy formulation and action planning. It was during this phase of development, often identified as the most difficult stage in the process, that many conflicts over these issues would continue to be mediated.

CHAPTER 6
STRATEGY FORMULATION & ACTION PLANNING
FOR VANCOUVER'S FOOD POLICY DEVELOPMENT

> Our approach in the past has been such that by the time you get out to the community often you have a fully formed project and people are going, 'hey, nobody asked me about this so I'm going to oppose it.' We are to the point now where we work differently with the community and I think they like it better (Senior Planner, CoV, 15).

> I think [local] government has facilitated the [food policy consultation] process ... and supported a little bit more openness to all this. But I think the community groups certainly are providing the cues. I think the City is also right there on board, but more so the community groups. They've had the experience, they've had the background, they've had the passion, they've been working on this for years (Task Force Member, 16).

> In light of the mixed conclusions about [partnerships] and the uniformly positive discursive frames through which they are being advanced, it is critical to continue examining the implications of collective governance practices for the role and power of citizens and voluntary organizations (Elwood, 2005, p. 756).

Participatory strategy formulation and action planning for food policy

Practices of collaborative decision-making and participatory governance are argued to be a new terrain in which changing accountabilities between citizens and state are being determined. The proliferation of local practices designed to expand citizen involvement has been characterised in geographical scholarship as part of "a fundamental shift in the processes through which local-level urban change is planned, negotiated, and implemented" (Elwood, 2005, p. 755). This trend is seen frequently in areas related to sustainable development where consultations, action planning, and visioning exercises are understood as the legitimising stamp of approval of any policy exercise (Dorcey & McDaniels, 2001). Discourses of collaboration are perhaps even more pressing for food

policy where partnerships are often cited not merely as preferable, but rather as an integral approach (Wekerle, 2004). These practices have been critiqued by some scholars as 'window dressing' that result in little autonomy or influence in shaping urban change (Elwood, 2005; Geddes, 2000). Further, 'collaborative' forms of governance have been cited as a mechanism through which responsibility for social service delivery is shifted to voluntary organisations within the context of broader state restructuring (Lake & Newman, 2002). At the same time, collaborative processes have been argued to provide opportunities to raise arguments that "question and subvert 'business as usual' and occasionally produce surprising and sometimes progressive results" (McCann, 2002, p. 78). In both cases, what is recognised is the extent to which discourses of partnership and collaboration can shape the ways that actors involved in policy-making processes achieve the outcomes they seek (Elwood, 2005, p. 758). These debates have particular resonance in the context of phase three of the policy cycle model being used to frame the discussion of Vancouver's experience with food policy (Table 16).

Table 16: Policy cycle framework for food policy and planning (Phase Three)

Policy Cycle Framework for Food Policy and Planning	
Phase 1	Awareness-raising and lobbying
Phase 2	Diagnosis and stakeholder commitment
Phase 3	Strategy formulation and action planning
Phase 4	Implementation
Phase 5	Follow-up and consolidation, institutionalisation and 'anchoring'

Key issues associated with phase three include identifying and expanding on priority issues through multi-actor networks; identifying solutions to local needs and problems; strengthening capacities of local actors; and the formal adoption of an action plan by local authorities (Dubbeling, 2001). Not represented in the framework are two additional elements that I argue must be considered in this phase of the analysis. The first element stems from the criticism that the spaces and processes of 'collaborative' policy-making and action planning can remain "frustratingly undefined" (Harvey in McCann, 2002). This gap speaks to the importance of theorising the specificities of the social, political and institutional contexts within which partnerships are enacted. Vancouver's experience, although predicated on discourses of joint government-citizen decision-

making, was characterised by a number of disagreements about the 'place' of advocacy in local government institutions, the nature of public policy as an exclusive or collective endeavour, and the institutional limitations inherent in governance for sustainable urban development where problems consist of multiple and often ambiguous problems and proposed solutions (van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof 2005, p. 48). Further, Vancouver's case must be analysed in the context of a number of underlying issues that shaped attitudes towards participatory action planning where food policy was concerned. These include the presence or absence of necessary operational and funding commitments to resource more inclusive and participatory planning; institutional attitudes toward citizen participation as reflected in policy and regulation; and a broader history of disagreement over citizen representation in Vancouver, exemplified in debates over at-large versus ward electoral systems.

The second additional element is the role of discourses and practices of citizen participation at the local level. Among the most important reasons for this focus is the potential to better explain the role of local actors in mediating between and among various scales as they work to achieve urban change (Elwood, 2005, p. 758). In Vancouver's case, this focus emerges as significant given the competing meanings, geographies and jurisdictions of the 'just and sustainability food system' being sought. The ability to reach consensus on a set of food policy recommendations in spite of sometimes competing goals depended on new scalar compromises between and among local actors and institutions. This challenge has important links to the goal of analysing collaborative planning processes, reflecting as it does, questions of how various 'partners' contribute to action planning and strategy formulation, but also who and in what capacity groups are consulted. Although not always neatly resolved, the ways that these and other issues were addressed is the focus of this chapter.[54] In analysing these tensions, this chapter focuses on the period from August – December, 2003 when the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force was struck, and the first of two consultation processes was undertaken (Table 17). Given that the outcome marked a transition

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[54] Although research has shown that broader state structures and transformations play an important role in determining local decisions and actions where citizen participation in concerned, a full analysis of these 'higher' scales is beyond the scope of this analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a close reading of local and regional factors associated with participatory planning for food policy in Vancouver while acknowledging the significance of factors associated with higher scales, particularly provincial and national policies, discourses and practices.

from existing to potentially new food policy networks, and hence governance arrangements, it was during this period that a number of intensive debates over the future of food policy in Vancouver took place.

Table 17: Timeline of major events in Vancouver's food policy development (Phase Three)

PHASE	EVENTS	DATES
Strategy formulation and action planning (3)	Consultation Process #1 (Formulation of Food Action Plan)	September - December 2003
	Presentation of Food Action Plan to City Council	December 9, 2003
	City Council approval in principle but no funding or other supports	December 11, 2003

The consultation process with the Food Policy Task Force leading to the development of Vancouver's Food Action Plan was intended to build on the expertise of community-based organisations that, by the time of the consultation, had been developing and delivering food-related programs and services in Vancouver for over a decade. By building on existing community knowledge and expertise, a commitment was made by the City to design and conduct the consultation in an 'open, transparent and democratic' manner. This commitment included enabling Task Force members to help guide the process and identify needs and possible solutions. While success was achieved in some areas, concerns remained unresolved in others.[55]

Theory and practice of participatory strategy formulation and action planning

A number of theoretical and practical frameworks for participatory strategy formulation and action planning at the local level have been proposed over the past decades. One commonly cited tool used to assess interaction between citizens and government in planning processes is Sherry Arnstein's 'ladder of participation' (1969). Arnstein's eight rung ladder ascribes different levels of

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[55] The analysis of strategy formulation and action planning is based not only on interview transcripts and other primary and secondary data sources, but also on my direct observations as a member of the interim food policy staff team. In this capacity, I was a participant in designing and implementing both Task Force consultation processes, drafting the Food Action Plan and presenting it to City Council on behalf of the Food Policy Task Force.

engagement and citizen empowerment to consultation processes encompassing stages of 'non-participation,' 'tokenism,' and 'citizen power' (Ibid.). The stage of citizen power (the goal of participatory action planning), comprises three 'rungs' of the ladder: 'partnership' where degrees of decision-making are increased, trade-offs are exercised and responsibilities shared; 'delegated power' where decision-making capacities are transferred to non-governmental groups; and 'citizen control' where community groups assume full control of all stages of planning, policy-making and management including funds (Ibid.). It is the slippages between the 'rungs' of citizen power and those of tokenism that have often been contested in the context of government interaction with community groups.

Using the principles of Arnstein's ladder as a springboard, contemporary urban scholars continue to theorise the tensions between citizen empowerment and tokenism in decision-making. Often invoked in these analyses is the discourse of participatory planning, an approach that is characterised by attentiveness to the multiple meanings of the "city of everyday life" (Friedmann, 2002 p. *xxiv*) animated by the "diverse practices of insurgent citizens" (Ibid: 84). Like Arnstein's ladder, participatory or insurgent planning is concerned with addressing unequal degrees of decision-making by citizens and the power imbalances they imply. This is in many ways an exercise in the politics of identity and visibility, where attention from a city's "power brokers" is demanded (Ibid., p. *xxiv*), and absences from official representations and planning processes contested. These contestations, in the form of participatory, collaborative 'counterplanning' (Ibid., p. *xxiv*) can be found in a growing number of cities worldwide, however the sticky question of access to decision-making remains. Some scholars insist that substantial, if not total decision-making control by citizens is the only way to avoid co-optation of citizens by government actors:

> Relationships are defined by who controls decision-making about protocols, analysis, interpretation, and distribution of results and follow up activities. The greater the exclusive involvement of citizens in these choices, the greater the degree of citizen control. Conversely, the more government controls decisions, the more citizens become co-opted and lose their independence (Savan, Gore, & Morgan, 2004, p. 614).

Others argue that participatory planning can exist only when power is "balanced enough to make [actors] interdependent, to make their problem-solving a joint enterprise, not the decision of one party visited upon the others" (Forester, 2000, p. 167). However, the ability to transcend power differences during a decision-making exercise is a dubious theoretical assertion implying that public processes can create conditions apart from the daily spaces and social conditions of its participants. Such an approach can obscure the social, economic, and political arrangements underlying existing practices, and assumes that egalitarian decision-making is achievable while leaving intact those underlying relationships (Lake & Hanson, 2000, p. 17).

Processes of strategy formulation and action planning that strive to achieve more inclusive and collaborative conditions are not without major challenges, the least of which being the risk of tokenism where the participation of citizen groups is concerned. The process of striking a balance between 'views from below' and regulation 'from above' can be a delicate one. However, as a number of scholars have argued, there are a multiplicity of types of collaborations and partnerships in government-citizen decision-making with creative potential and possibility for mutually-beneficial outcomes. Of key importance to this approach is the commitment to recognising inevitable conflict in cities of increasingly complex social, economic, cultural and linguistic difference (Friedmann, 2002; Amin et al., 2000; Forester, 1999; Fincher & Jacobs, 1998; Friedmann & Douglass, 1998; Healey, 1997). In this sense, the mediation of conflict between actors acknowledges multiple 'sites of (often unequal) power' (Friedmann, 2002), but works to maximise opportunities for meaningful participation by affected groups:

> Insurgent practices operating at all interlocking sites of power must engage the
> many agencies of the state and statelike formations without which no lasting
> solutions can be found (Friedmann, 2002, p. 84).

It is here that participatory planning becomes operationalised as a component of wider governance processes including partnership-based approaches to decision-making and policy agenda setting. One of the areas in which a broader governance approach is particularly relevant is that of sustainability, and by extension, food policy.

Participatory strategy formulation and action planning for sustainability

The proliferation over the past decade of sustainability principles involving social, environmental and economic imperatives has inspired a search for new forms of governance to mediate conflicts among stakeholders (Dorcey & McDaniels, 2001). The commitment to citizen involvement in sustainable development recognises that the planning process involves more than land use decisions and design of built form. Rather, it responds to demands for increased participation of citizens and other stakeholders in all facets of sustainability decision-making. In this sense, assumptions about the link between sustainability and new forms of governance can be characterised as involving the valorisation of collective forms of decision-making, and a break-down of dichotomies between citizen groups and 'the state' (Ibid.). In the context of Canadian sustainability[56] governance, two major periods of innovation in citizen involvement have been identified (Dorcey, 2003; Dorcey & McDaniels, 2001). The first period corresponds with widespread environmental and social concerns beginning in the second half of the 1960s. The main focus of this wave in Canada included planning for urban development, river basin management, and assessments for project development. Participatory techniques included information brochures, media releases, citizen surveys, public hearings, workshops, task forces and advisory committees (Dorcey, 2003). After a waning of support in the late 1970s, sustainability governance re-emerged as a priority issue in the 1980s. By the latter half of the 1980s a new set of techniques had emerged that can be described as a second period of citizen involvement in sustainability governance. This period involved multi-stakeholder consultations, conflict resolution techniques and consensus building (Ibid.). A third period of innovation is now argued to be in formative stages. This period has been characterised as a response to unprecedented threats to global sustainability involving commitments to deepen democratic governance and enable responses that are necessarily more far-reaching and fundamental:

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[56] There is considerable slippage between the terms 'sustainability' and 'environmental' by scholars and practitioners who work with these issues. Even though it is generally recognised that sustainability is comprised of three pillars: the social, the economic, and the environmental, the term 'environmental' is still often used to imply 'sustainability' more broadly. My usage of sustainability governance assumes a three-pillared conceptualisation of sustainability.

... the third wave [of sustainability governance] is ... about whether the techniques and processes introduced during the first two waves can ever be expected to achieve their goals without much more fundamental changes to the governance systems within which they are employed (Dorcey, 2003).

The deep-seated changes implied by Dorcey (2003) and others refer not only to citizen involvement, but also to models of democracy based on broader concepts of citizenship steeped in pluralist assumptions. Examples of the third stage of sustainability governance in Canada include the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE). Legislated by Parliament in 1994, NRTEE is an independent advisory body providing recommendations to governments and the Canadian public on for promoting sustainable development (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, 2005). Examples of transformations in Canadian sustainability governance at other scales include the Fraser Basin Council, a coordinated effort to manage the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the Georgia Basin in southwestern British Columbia; and the Sustainable Region Initiative, a long-range sustainability action plan led by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (Dorcey, 2003).

Although there is evidence of 'third wave' precedents in Canadian sustainability governance, critics argue that the needed changes to governance systems have not yet transpired, and not enough has been done to prepare public bureaucracies to "initiate or manage complex collaborative relationships" (Langford in Savan et al., 2004, p. 610). Proponents argue that what is needed is a coherent framework to engage citizen groups, the necessary time to build trust and construct necessary relationships, and more clearly defined roles for citizen-government partnerships (Savan et al., 2004, pp. 610 – 611). While no universal approaches to meet these challenges are offered, what can be identified are conditions that impede more effective government–citizen partnerships in strategy formulation and action planning for sustainability. Barriers include lack of widespread awareness of actions taken; inadequate resources to develop proposed actions; lack of institutional capacity to manage complex social, economic and environmental issues from an integrated perspective; and lack of knowledge about the specific needs of community and non-governmental actors with a stake in the issue (Ibid., p. 608). Another set of barriers relate to a lack of clarity of

roles and responsibilities of government and non-governmental actors; and the risk of unresourced responsibility being devolved onto citizen groups (Dorcey, 2003).

Analytical gaps in theories of sustainability governance

Theories of sustainability governance based on participatory principles often fail to account for a number of key elements. Two of these elements were raised at the beginning of this chapter: First, the importance of theorising the specificities of the social, political and institutional contexts within which local partnerships are enacted; and second, the role of the discourses of citizen participation. A related element stems from the lack of analysis of how new models of sustainability governance express themselves at the local level. Potentially significant differences can be found between citizen involvement at national or provincial scales, where most analyses tend to focus, and those at the level of cities, neighbourhoods or even households. Challenges relate to the complexity and necessarily multi-scaled nature of sustainability, including the limited jurisdiction of cities to implement needed changes, and the immediacy with which issues are experienced at the local scale. If the third stage of sustainability governance is argued to depend crucially on finding approaches to public engagement that build on the strength and expertise of both government and citizens (Savan et al., 2004, p. 617), how do these conditions play out where *urban* sustainability is concerned? What is their role in the production and reproduction of urban geographies? How are the specificities of local socio-political contexts accounted for, including a local government's history with public involvement exercises? And more to the point, as an issue of sustainability commonly predicated on principles of inclusive, collaborative decision-making, what are the implications for urban food policy and planning? Before examining these issues in Vancouver's case, an overview of the basic parameters of the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force and the first of two consultation processes is provided.

Strategy and action in Vancouver: Striking the Vancouver food Policy Task Force

The primary vehicle of joint citizen-government decision-making in Vancouver's case was the Food Policy Task Force, a body that included representatives from City Council, Vancouver Park Board, Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver School Board, plus community representation from a range

of organisations and interests including farmers markets, community kitchens, community gardens, food banks and other emergency food providers, small scale food processors, organic and / or sustainable food-related businesses, community centres, youth groups, anti-poverty groups, environmental groups, nutritionists, dieticians and others.[57] Some elements of the Task Force membership were mandated in the Council motion of July 2003. Specifically, it was stipulated that the Task Force should include:

> Councillors Bass, Woodsworth and Louis; a representative each from the Vancouver School Board, the Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Coastal health authority; and representatives from appropriate and interested community groups as identified by the Co-chairs; with Councillor Louis and the General Manager of Community Services as Co-chairs.

Invitations to participate on the Task Force were sent from the office of the General Manager of Community Services to governmental and non-governmental agencies and organisations. The initial invitation list was compiled based on a number of sources. First, because of the work done to ensure a representative participant list for the June 2003 Lower Mainland Food Coalition workshop, this list formed the basis of the Task Force invitation list. Second, drawing from their growing familiarity with Vancouver's food community, particularly groups delivering services in the Downtown Eastside, the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group made relevant additions to the list. The Task Force co-Chair, Councillor Tim Louis, also made additions. Third, a interim food policy staff team[58] that was struck to facilitate the consultation process included two 'outside' members (i.e. non-City staff), a consultant and a Planning intern, both of whom had extensive knowledge of, and experience with Vancouver's food network to help ensure a representative invitation list. After the invitation to participate was circulated, the Task Force list was administered

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[57] While a number of understandings of what constitutes a task force exist, they can be broadly understood as temporary interdisciplinary or multi-sectoral teams responsible for accomplishing a specific task. According to City of Vancouver guidelines for creating new Task Forces and Committees, Task Forces "provide timely, focused input to Council on emerging issues or new policy questions." They are generally time-limited, they are considered most effective when recommendations fall within the City's jurisdiction, and have "a reasonable number of recommendations that are prioritized." City of Vancouver Task Forces can be distinguished from Committees in their focus on emerging, rather than on-going issues (City of Vancouver Advisory Body Task Force - Report One, 2003e, p. 12).
[58] The interim food policy staff team was made up of existing City staff (myself included), a consultant and a part-time Planning intern. The Planning intern was later hired as a paid staff team member during the second consultation process.

by the interim food policy staff team through the department of Social Planning. The membership list grew in size over the course of the consultation process in an organic manner. After the invitation to participate was issued, all subsequent communications with Task Force members included a request to forward information about the Task Force to any organisation or agency that had been overlooked. Because of the already networked nature of the groups involved, this strategy appeared to be an effective approach.

Although the Task Force membership list was never considered closed to new members, there were limitations in terms of types of members solicited. With some exceptions, representatives of governmental and non-governmental agencies and organisations, not individuals, made up the Food Policy Task Force. The initial Task Force membership list included 67 members from a range of food organisations and interests including farmers markets, community kitchens, community gardens, food banks and other emergency food providers, small scale food processors, organic and / or sustainable food-related businesses, community centres, youth groups, anti-poverty groups, environmental groups, nutritionists, dieticians and others. In addition, the Task Force included 30 government representatives from local, provincial and federal levels including those mandated in the Council motion. Over the course of both consultation processes, the number of Task Force members grew to a total of approximately 160 governmental and non-governmental members. However, it is important to note that some Task Force members participated in only some aspects of the consultation process, while others did not actively participate at all except as recipients of material being circulated to the Task Force list. An indication of active participation rates is provided in Table 18 which shows the number of participants who RSVP-ed their attendance at the two full Task Force meetings in September and October 2003.

Table 18: Consultation #1: Full Task Force Meetings RSVPs

	Total invited	Governmental RSVPs	Non-governmental RSVPs
Meeting #1: September 15, 2003	97	58	27
Meeting #2: October 15, 2003	97	40	28

Consultation Process #1

The first consultation process was designed and facilitated by the interim food policy staff team. The process consisted of two meetings of the full task force; informal small group meetings; feedback mechanisms between meetings; consultation with recognized experts in urban food policy; staff liaison with community, Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), City departments, universities, and other stakeholders; and research on existing models of successful urban food policies. Working in small groups, with the assistance of background papers, discussion guides and other resources, Task Force members were asked to produce recommendations including short and long-term food system goals, food policy frameworks and governance models. Like the Task Force membership composition, some of the activities of the Task Force were similarly mandated by City Council. The Task Force was asked to report back to City Council by November 18, 2003 "on the components needed to ensure a just and sustainable food Action Plan for the City of Vancouver drawing on the work of the Toronto Food Policy Council;" it was asked to "report back with suggestions for a Community Food Policy plan and suggestions on what role the City can play to help facilitate the safe and equitable growing, distribution and provision of food in Vancouver; and to "seek assistance from regional and senior governments and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to assist in the development of an Action Plan to meet any food policy targets adopted by Council." The Action Plan brought forward and approved by City Council on December 9 and 11, 2003[59] (pending 2004 budget decisions) was made up of three recommended components:

(i.)   Vancouver Food Policy Council

The Food Policy Task Force recommended the creation of a Vancouver Food Policy Council (a voluntary citizen body with formal links to the City system) with a mandate to act as an advisory and policy development body. The aim of the Food Policy Council was identified as improving the health and security of the local food system.

(ii.)   Interim Work Plan

In preparation for linkages with the work of the Vancouver Food Policy Council, an interim work plan was proposed. This work plan was intended to be the first stage of a more comprehensive long-term set of actions that will be developed over the longer term. The action items in the interim

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[59] A three-week extension on the original deadline was granted by City Council.

work plan were chosen because they provided immediate opportunities to coordinate, maximize and expand upon food-related programs and services already provided and/or supported by the City of Vancouver, as well as those under development. The five action items are as follows:

City-wide food system assessment
Rooftop gardens
Community gardens
Farmers' markets
Coordinated food processing and distribution facility for low income citizens

(iii.) Implementation Supports (staffing)

The Food Policy Task Force recommended the creation of two full-time dedicated City staff positions to facilitate food system goals. The two positions are a Food Policy Coordinator (permanent full-time) and Food System Planner (temporary two year).

Source: City Council Report: Food Action Plan, December 2003

Vancouver's Food Policy Task Force and participatory action planning

For the purpose of this analysis, more significant that the actual components of the Action Plan were the methods used in its formulation, the stakeholders involved, and assumptions about the geographies and scales of policy outcomes. The question of who came to participate in Vancouver's Food Policy Task Force process raises a range of issues including not only membership itself, but also the choice of a task force as the vehicle for consultation. In this capacity, the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force can be understood as symptomatic of the "more participatory and democratic political style" (Vogel, 2003, p. 108) pledged by the COPE-dominated City Council elected in November 2002. When COPE swept to power in 2002 it was on a platform of more open and accessible civic government and a promise to "build strong alliances with and among local social movements, [and] to give expression to those voices and issues that [had] been marginalised" (Ibid., pp. 107 – 109). The COPE campaign banner, 'New solutions. Fresh Ideas,' gave rise to a wide range of initiatives to support various constituencies and issues once COPE took office (Ibid., p. 108). This claim does not discount the wider constellation of triggers (analysed in Chapter Four) that were implicated in bringing about the Council motion of July 2003. Nor does it suggest an absence of receptiveness to participatory styles of consultation at the City of Vancouver prior to 2002. Rather, what is significant is the types of issues examined, many of which were not

conventionally understood as 'city business' under previous administrations. Five examples including food policy are shown in Table 19.[60]

Table 19: Examples of consultations initiated under COPE (Task Forces and Advisory Committees)

Issue Area	Initiated
Cool Vancouver (Emissions Reduction)	2003
Food policy	2003
Women	2003
Ethical purchasing	2004
Peace and justice	2004

Notably, these issues exhibit many of the same 'framing' traits that afforded food a place on the City's policy agenda. Specifically, all of the issues can be characterised by the absence of a clear mandate at the local level, and in some cases a governance gap at any level of government, that provided an opening for the creation of new mandates. Furthermore, all of the issues can be considered multi-scaled in their scope, within which localised responses were being sought. In this sense, food policy can be understood in the context of a political environment characterised by explicitly multi-scaled – although not uncontentious – thinking around emerging policy areas. At the same time, understandings of the nature and role of task force-based (and indeed other) consultation, must be contextualised within broader examinations of the changing nature of public involvement in the City of Vancouver from a regulatory and institutional perspective, many of which were inherited by COPE. Where the former is concerned, City Council policy on public involvement is expressed in the City's Principles for Public Involvement (1998), which defines the by-laws and resolutions that regulate the composition and actions of over twenty bodies that City Council creates and appoints (City of Vancouver, 2002b). The question of public involvement from an

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[60] An additional example of Vancouver's local government intervening in unconventional policy areas emerged in 2005 in the form of the Mayor's Working Group on Immigration. The mandate of the group was "to recommend key policy and program directions to Mayor and Council regarding immigration issues, to act as a reference group to advise on issues coming out of the Big City Mayors working group and to set a context for Vancouver and its community partners to have a voice in the development of policies and programs related to immigrants and refugees" (City of Vancouver, 2005c, p. 3).

institutional perspective raises a host of additional questions, many of which involve process-related issues including the extent to which participatory strategy formulation and action planning contributes to the 'success' or 'failure' of its identified goals. If the aim of this phase of Vancouver's food policy development included stakeholder satisfaction with the process, and changed interaction patterns in which "interdependencies between actors have changed ... [leading] to changes in the problem-solving space" of local government (van Bueren and & Heuvelhof, 2005, p. 49), then a more careful examination of the institutional mechanisms that existed to enable or constrain such change is instructive.

The changing nature of public involvement in Vancouver

In 1996, the City of Vancouver initiated a Public Involvement Review aimed at examining and improving the ways that citizens participate in City programs and processes. A November 2002 City Council Report found that there are typically over twenty Council appointed advisory bodies created during a Council term (City of Vancouver, 2002b). Some of these bodies are required by legislation and / or are considered "fully integrated into City processes." These include the Board of Variance, the Library, Police and Theatres Board, the Urban Design Panel and Development Permit Board.[61] Others are created to advise on specific issues considered to be "topic" or "area-based" designed to address "access and integration" issues (City of Vancouver, 2003e, p. 3). Topic areas include Seniors, Disability, and Cultural Communities, while area-based issues include the Vancouver City Planning Commission, Public Art Committee, as well as heritage planning committees specific to Gastown and Chinatown.[62] In addition to Advisory Committees, Council appoints a number of time-limited Task Forces as part of particular work plans, or in response to emerging issues (Ibid.). During the first phase of the Public Involvement Review, over 100 citizen engagement mechanisms were identified. These included one-time programs, on-going processes,

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[61] This category includes the Heritage Foundation and the Economic Development Commission, two registered non-profit societies to which City Council appoints members, but that operate independently of the civic structure (City of Vancouver, 2002b).

[62] This category can be understood to include citizen groups established by City staff (e.g. CityPlan Implementation Committees), and citizen groups established by Park Board, Police Board and Library Board (e.g. Van Dusen Botanical Gardens Society, Chief Constable's Diversity Advisory Committee, Friends of Vancouver Public Library).

time-limited task forces and partnerships with communities (City of Vancouver, 2002b). Examples are shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Examples of Civic Engagement, (Source: City of Vancouver, 2002b)

One-time programs	On-going processes	Task Forces	Partnerships
CityPlan Community Visions Transportation Plan Downtown Transportation Plan Financing Growth City Budget "Choices"	Rezoning Development Applications Traffic Calming Park Development Greenways Community Visions Implementation	Urban Landscape Urban Noise Clouds of Change Safer City Vancouver Arts Initiative	Local Improvements Neighbourhood Matching Fund Community Service and Cultural Grants Community Centre Operating Agreements

In 2002, during a later stage of the review, a survey of committee members, staff and City Council members was conducted. The survey found a number of perceived strengths and weaknesses of the current civic engagement mechanisms. Strengths were found to include timely resolutions and responses to emerging issues, a variety of perspectives and expertise on issues, and forums for information sharing and education that is open and transparent (City of Vancouver, 2002b). Perceived weaknesses included unclear mandates; lack of integration within the civic structure; insufficient orientation, training and protocols for members; inconsistent member selection process; and poor communication between the bodies and Council, staff and the community (Ibid.).

In 2003, City Council created an Advisory Body Task Force that included representatives from City Council, City staff and the public whose mandate was to review topic and area-based advisory bodies to assess the effectiveness of this form of civic engagement (Ibid., p. 12).[63] The review was informed by the findings of the 2002 survey, but also by an assumption that many advisory bodies were created at a time when there were limited opportunities for the public to access and participate in civic decisions. The belief was that since that time, the City had developed a wide array of programs in which the public participates directly, making a review of current practice necessary. By July 2003 the Advisory Body Task Force produced a draft report that contained

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[63] Although the review looked primarily at Council appointed advisory bodies, it was noted that the recommendations may be relevant to time-limited task forces as well.

recommended options including functional improvements such as training and orientation; improvements to bodies that focus on access and integration issues such as clarifying mandates, and addressing under-representation of various groups (Aboriginals, people on low incomes, and lesbian/gay/transgender/bisexual communities) in City programs; improvements to planning and heritage-related bodies; and guidelines for the creation of future committees and Task Forces (City of Vancouver 2003e, pp. 4 – 5). It was recommended that City Council adopt the proposed improvements including the proposed guidelines for the creation of future City advisory bodies as outlined in the report.

Clearly, a concerted interest in improving mechanisms and outcomes of public involvement in Vancouver cannot be attributed to COPE alone, particularly when considering the trajectory of reform that dates well into previous NPA mandates. Even so, a number of useful observations can be drawn from an analysis of public involvement trends in Vancouver in relation to strategy formulation and action planning for food policy. First, although the Public Involvement Review was based on the principle of examining "how the public is represented on and by the committees and how their work is integrated into City decision-making" (City of Vancouver, 2002b), some of the findings of the review reveal a collapse of the process-related goals of participatory strategy formulation and decision-making, with the goal of achieving wider access to information. For instance, one of the examples cited as an indication that current advisory structures may not be the most effective approach for civic engagement was the claim that many public programs and services "had evolved to such a point that they are now meeting the objectives which some of these advisory bodies were created for in the first place" (Ibid.). It was noted in particular that technological innovations including the Community Web Pages that provide information on rezonings, development applications and street construction have "allowed for greater access to civic information on a day to day basis" (Ibid).

However, greater access to information does not have a necessary link to more inclusive decision-making. It is significant to note, for instance, that email became an essential feedback mechanism tool between City staff and the Food Policy Task Force when the Food Action Plan was being

drafted into the Council Report that was taken forward for approval. Email enabled the staff team to circulate multiple iterative drafts of the Food Action Plan to all Task Force members, solicit feedback and revisions from participants, incorporate changes and recirculate drafts, all within a very condensed timeframe. During earlier stages of the consultation process, email also allowed the staff team to circulate and verify outcomes from each Task Force meeting and focus group to ensure participants' recommendations were being captured accurately. The use of technology in this instance, had a strong participatory impulse that would have been negated had the exercise been limited to one of information sharing alone. In this sense, although the goals of better integration of advisory bodies and their work plans into the civic structure, and better decision-making capacities of advisory bodies are recommended in the review, a great deal of ambiguity remained about how to achieve these aims.

Second, ambiguity around integration and decision-making has particular implications for public involvement where issues are *predicated* on principles of inclusive, collaborative decision-making. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the City of Vancouver, in the first phase of the review, understood 'partnerships' as a separate function from other public involvement mechanisms. The 'partnerships with communities' cited in the Public Involvement Review typically involve citizen groups engaging in contracted service delivery (community centre operating agreements or community service grants), rather than recommending policy directions or participating in decision-making processes.

Third, Vancouver's policy responses to public involvement do not always acknowledge that more inclusive and participatory planning requires higher allocations of time, staff resourcing and funding. Higher resourcing costs are required to ensure accessibility, foster and support partnership forums, and address barriers to participation (Elwood, 2005, p. 766). These requirements often conflict with a growing emphasis on faster policy formulation and delivery of planning decisions (Elwood, 2005; Jessop & Peck, 2000). In the case of the Food Policy Task Force, a turn-around time of approximately four months was given by City Council to conduct an inclusive, multi-jurisdictional consultation process, and formulate policy recommendations. This

timeframe was a significant factor in determining the scope of Task Force representation and participation. These factors are discussed later in this chapter.

Lastly, it is significant that the issues addressed in the City's Public Involvement Review do not include sustainability, a major policy and development direction for Vancouver. Emerging issues such as food policy can be characterised as multi-scaled, cross-cutting, oriented towards social justice, and predicated on direct decision-making. All of these traits can be linked to institutional and organisational limitations inherent in governance for sustainable urban development, but also to questions of democratic representation itself. In this capacity, equally significant to this analysis is the recognition that reconceptualisations of public involvement mechanisms and democratic processes in Vancouver have taken place not only on a topic- and area-specific basis, but also at a city-wide scale. This is most evident in the context of a broader history of disagreement over citizen representation in Vancouver, best exemplified in debates over at-large versus ward electoral systems.

Debates over democratic reform in Vancouver

Vancouver has had an at-large electoral system for much of its history. Although founded in 1886 on the basis of a ward system, an at-large system came into operation in 1936 that endures to this day, making Vancouver the only major city in Canada that uses this system of representation (Berger, 2004).[64] Under a ward (or 'neighhourhood constituency') system, citizens are elected to represent neighbourhoods, whereas in an at-large system, citizens are elected from among the general population in order to represent city-wide interests. The main argument in favour of the at-large system is that citizens elected from wards do not consider the interests of the city as a whole, but instead become preoccupied by neighbourhood issues at the expense of more comprehensive planning and governance. The argument against the at-large system is that it leaves

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[64] The exception was from1920 to 1923 when Vancouver experimented with the single transferable ballot, a form of proportional representation (Berger, 2004).

neighbourhood interests under-represented at City Hall and reduces access to elected office because of costly city-wide campaigns and other socio-economic factors.[65]

Although initially uncontentious, the at-large system emerged as the subject of much controversy in the years following World War II (Ibid.). 1968 marked the first in a series of unsuccessful campaigns for wards that would characterise Vancouver's political landscape up to and including the 2002 election in which wards once again emerged as a main feature of COPE's electoral platform. Upon election, COPE fulfilled its campaign promise by establishing The Vancouver Electoral Reform Commission (VERC) in 2003. The mandate of the VERC was re-examine the ward / at-large question, and find ways to improve civic democracy. Lead by former Supreme Court judge, Thomas Berger, the Commission held 17 public forums in Vancouver neighbourhoods during the first six months of 2004. The purpose was to hear from citizens about the merits of the at-large system and possibilities for alternatives (Berger, 2004). In his report to City Council on June 8, 2004, Berger recommended that the question of whether the at-large system should be changed to a ward system be put to citizens (Ibid.). For Berger, the ward question held particular significance in light of apparent inequalities between democratic representation and vulnerable populations situated in specific areas of the city. As he observed:

> Wards will address the inequality of representation between the East Side and
> West Side of the city. Disparities in income and education, family status (for
> instance, Vancouver's 19,000 female single-parent families are concentrated on
> the East Side), facility in the use of English, and so on, have led to disparities in
> voter turnout. As a result, our City Councillors have largely been chosen by (and to
> a large extent from among) West Side residents. This is not a truly democratic
> arrangement (Berger, 2004, pp. 5 – 6).

In response to Berger's report, a plebiscite on the question of whether citizens were "in favour of, or are opposed to, abolishing the at-large system and electing members of City Council by a ward

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[65] A number of other models of democratic representation have been proposed and in some cases implemented at the local level in Canada and elsewhere. These include single transferable ballot, proportional representation and a mixed or partial ward system. A full analysis of these models is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

system," was held on October 16, 2004. Although the plebiscite was defeated with only 46%[66] of voters in favour of wards, what is significant is the extent to which Vancouver's history of debate on electoral reform and democratic process has deeply geographical implications, not only in terms of representation, but also the scale at which decision-making takes place and the production of urban geographies that result. In this way, analyses of public involvement, representation and democratic reform in Vancouver under the new COPE administration reveal a social, political and institutional environment receptive to restructuring, but not without contradiction. For example, even with its commitment to improving civic democracy by supporting neighbourhood-based representation, COPE was showing a penchant for new policy areas that were decidedly non-'area'-based. Issues including climate change, peace and justice, ethical purchasing, and food policy, were in effect, city-wide or stakeholder-based concerns not typically differentiated by neighbourhood or other regions of the city. At the same time, Berger and others registered an acute awareness on the part of Vancouver citizens of issues impacted the entire city, but were typified by specific needs in particular neighbourhoods:

> We all know something about ... neighbourhood concerns, whether they are confined to one or two neighbourhoods or arise in a number of areas: missing women in the Downtown Eastside, slot machines at Hastings Park, the fate of the Woodward's building, safety on the streets, big box stores, redevelopment of major sites, affordable housing, rapid transit, and so on. These are neighbourhood issues but they have implications for the city as a whole (Berger, 2004, p. 5).

This awareness was reflected in a number of surveys and studies conducted by the City of Vancouver to determine citizen preferences for the 2004 budget allocation (City of Vancouver, 2004b). These surveys showed a decreased tolerance for the growing social and economic disparities in the city, and support for giving priority to social policy issues including homelessness, poverty, and lack of affordable housing, issues with well-recognised geographical concentrations on the city's map (Ibid.). As such, the ways that civic democracy was understood and practiced, including its geography, whether it was neighbourhood-level, based on an east / west division, or

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[66] The total number of ballots cast was 66,317. Relative to the 293,263 registered voters in the November 16, 2002 civic election, turnout for the Decision 2004 plebiscite was 22.6 % (Retrieved July 28, 2005, from, http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/decision2004/). Since voters could vote at any one of 44 voting locations across the city, it is not necessarily accurate to infer geographic trends or comparisons from poll-by-poll data.

city-wide, brought often competing assumptions about citizen participation and inclusion into conflict. Within this context, strategy formulation and action planning for food policy presented its own internal challenges, many of which were similarly expressed as related to scale. It is to these tensions that the discussion now turns, before returning to some of the broader issues of representation specific to Vancouver's case.

Vancouver's Food Policy Task Force and the challenge of representation

In addition to the institutional mechanisms and pre-existing public debates that existed to enable or constrain food policy development in general terms, there were a number of issues specific to food policy that unfolded during the strategy formulation and action planning phase. The first of these challenges relates to the way the Task Force was struck (by invitation), who participated (representatives of organisations, not individuals), the role of multi-actor networks, and the ability to reach consensus on a set of recommendations in spite of sometimes competing food system goals. Also important then, is who defined and controlled the process itself (McCann, 2001, p. 208), and the extent to which the vision for a 'just and sustainable food system' could be actualised. Together, these issues reveal inclusive, participatory planning practices as sites of struggle in the production of urban geographies (Ibid.). An analysis of these issues also reveals potential contradictions between discourses of collaboration, transparency and inclusion, typically viewed as integral to food policy development, and the realities of how processes unfold given various constraints.

Ensuring broad participation and an open, democratic process has been identified as critical to the success of municipal food policy development and its integration into local governance structures (International Development Research Centre and Urban Management Program for Latin America and the Caribbean, Guidelines for Municipal Policymaking on Urban Agriculture, 2003, No. 1, 2, 3, 8). Although evidence that this approach to food policy development actually results more inclusive decision-making processes is inconclusive, decisions about how to formulate Vancouver's Food Policy Task Force were clearly significant. One of the first specifications about Task Force composition was made not by food network members alone, but by City staff, albeit in consultation

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with a number of community organisations and agencies. Specifically, it was decided that consultation on Vancouver's food system issues would take place at the level of agencies and organisations, not individuals. A lack of power and control over key consultation decisions has been identified as an important factor that informs future urban geographies. While the decision to consult at the level of organisations may be interpreted as local government control over the process, additional factors were at play. Specifically, the rationale for the decision can be linked at least in part to the fact that the first Task Force consultation process came immediately on the heels of a community-based brainstorming process from which a set of priorities and recommended actions had been identified. There was a sense that 'starting from square one' would be both inefficient and potentially dismissive of the considerable work already done by citizen groups.

The community-based consultation process in question was the June 2003 Lower Mainland Food Coalition workshop where an Action Plan for the creation of a community-based food policy council was developed. The proposed Action Plan in turn built on other recent work of citizen and professional groups. Of particular significance was the background document, *Closer to Home: A Recipe for a Community-Based Food Organization* produced in Spring 2003 by the Lower Mainland Food Council. Other advances in articulating local food system problems and solutions were being made under the auspices of the Growing Green and Cities[Plus] initiatives, both of which saw participation from a number of groups actively involved in lobbying local government for recognition of food system issues. A great deal of work had also recently been undertaken by community-based organisations in the Downtown Eastside in partnership with the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group to identify issues and propose solutions to issues of food distribution and access. The public health and community nutritionists continued to contribute policy documents and recommendations to healthcare-related, as well as broader food policy networks such as the LMFC.

As a result, the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force consultation process was conceived and implemented to build on existing work of citizen groups that was by then well articulated, instead of

disregarding the priority areas and recommendations developed by the groups with the most knowledge of local issues. Setting some initial criteria for participation and building on existing work also helped prevent the formative Food Action Plan from "devolving into inconsequential and expensive wish lists for the future" (Myers & Kitsuse, 2000, in McCann 2001, p. 210). This is precisely the criticism often leveled against Vancouver's CityPlan Visioning consultations, a neighbourhood-based planning process with fewer stipulations. While this does not suggest total inclusivity of all possible stakeholders, the experience of community groups, the multiplicity of roles of individual members, and recent work done to articulate problems and goals were compelling factors in the decision to consult at the level of organisations, not individuals.

Another rationale for the decision to consult agencies and organisations was decidedly more pragmatic. Specifically, City Council mandated the Food Policy Task Force to report back with recommendations within four months of the Council motion. This turnaround time proved a challenge for the interim food policy staff team even when organising a process for agencies and organisations only. The possibility of consulting meaningfully at the level of individuals during the same timeframe would have proven even more challenging. In this way, the ability to achieve open, collaborative and inclusive decision-making depends equally on organisational capacity to conduct processes that are often time-consuming and heavily resource dependent.

Most notable in their absence from the consultation process were individual consumers, particularly the hungry. The absence of consumers reflects a potentially significant gap that risks obscuring the specific conditions and food needs of people at the household and neighbourhood levels. This gap has important links to the fact that food policy in Vancouver was framed as a sustainability issue that was assumed to encompass anti-hunger interests. Concern about the absence of individual consumers was expressed by Task Force members and others at a number of points during the consultation process, but was mediated in three ways during this phase of policy development. First, in keeping with the nature of the policy area, a number of Task Force members occupied multiple roles as professional service providers or policymakers, community members, and activists lobbying for food policy. In this way, the decision to seek participation through

organisations did not necessarily preclude the views and experiences of everyday citizens, rather it potentially brought added levels of reflection and first-hand understanding of food system issues.

Second, and related, although Task Force members were invited to participate via a pre-existing organisational affiliation, once the Task Force was struck, members were assumed to 'represent themselves.' The goal was to 'de-bureaucratise' the process by avoiding a situation in which Task Force members would be accountable to their respective organisations for each recommendation made, potentially slowing the process and miring it in competing organisational goals. In this sense, the agency / organisation entry point for consultation can be understood in part as a vehicle to ensure broad representation of food system issues and encourage freer brainstorming, instead of acting as a mechanism of exclusion.[67] Third, because of the continued support and participation of members of the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group in the Food Policy Task Force process, anti-hunger actors were – or more importantly, perceived themselves to be – adequately represented in spite of lingering concerns about their issues being eclipsed by sustainability agendas. Even so, the absence of individual of consumers from the Task Force was symbolic of the underlying tension between anti-hunger and broader sustainable food system goals. This tension would continue to simmer over the course of both consultation processes culminating in a more striking divergence during the second consultation process (April – July 2004) when the Vancouver Food Policy Council was elected.[68]

The challenge of geography: A municipal or regional food system?

A further set of issues encountered over the course of the consultation process relates to disagreements over the nature and territoriality of the food system in question. This tension had emerged during earlier phases of food policy development. Instead of conceiving of Vancouver's proposed 'just and sustainable food system' along administrative or legislative lines, many Task

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[67] Also absent from the Task Force were mainstream producers and retailers who were not invited to participate in the Task Force process. The rationale for not inviting mainstream producers was based on the advice of the Coordinator of the Toronto Food Policy Council who counselled the Vancouver interim food policy staff team to concentrate first on building a coordinated foundation of food policy work among existing supporters before branching out to include mainstream players.

[68] The dynamics of this process are analysed in Chapter 7.

Force members were instead aiming to collapse the conceptual and material distinction between food policy issues as either non-urban (primarily related to production) or urban (predominantly related to consumption). This approach conflicted with the views of elected officials and some senior managers who insisted that the food system issues to be addressed should be those "within the City's jurisdiction." This view also conflicted with the views of some City staff in a range departments whose buy-in was necessary, but who were in some cases resistant to accepting what were perceived to be additional responsibilities in an unfamiliar policy area. A temporary resolution to the conflict was found in order to move and pass the Council motion of July 2003. The resolution, analysed in Chapters 4 and 5, consisted of a rescaling of governance on the part of key actors in the process, such that Vancouver's local government emerged as the brokering institution for food policy development, albeit in partnership with other levels of government. However, during the formulation of a Food Action Plan, the tension flared again. This time, new strategies were employed that would help facilitate goals that were both municipal and regional.

Regional representation on the Food Policy Task Force

One of the ways that tensions over the geography of the food system were mediated was by ensuring that the membership of the Task Force was not limited to City of Vancouver organisations, thereby responding in part to Task Force members' concerns about limiting the geographical scope of food system interventions. Regional organisations included the GVRD, and regional non-governmental organisations, and organisations based in specific GVRD municipalities other than Vancouver. It was anticipated that these representatives would keep a regional food system analysis in view while focusing in the first instance on Vancouver-specific recommendations. It was also hoped that regional representation on the Task Force would pave the way to bringing about similar policy commitments by the GVRD and its other member municipalities, thereby sharing the burden of food policy reform across the region.

Making connections to existing City of Vancouver policies, services and by-laws

Drawing regional perspectives into the consultation process had to be balanced with a reinforcement of the City Council directive that recommendations should reflect issues within the

City's jurisdiction. To achieve this balance, it was necessary to demonstrate two things. First, that the City of Vancouver already had a track record in delivering or supporting food policy initiatives; and second, that opportunities existed to strengthen and better coordinate existing programs. To achieve these goals, the interim food policy staff team conducted an inventory that showed that even prior to the City Council motion, Vancouver already had significant experience delivering or providing funding support to a wide range of activities related to urban food policy. The process of gathering information for the inventory had the added outcome of allowing City staff groups who previous had not seen themselves as having a role in urban food policy, to perceive of their existing programs through a food 'lens,' and in some cases, begin to actively suggest new possibilities (Mendes, 2004). Connections were also made between evolving Task Force recommendations and a number of existing City policy and development goals, including in particular, those relating to sustainability. The results of this approach were twofold. First, for elected officials, senior managers and some City staff, a better understanding emerged that "issues within the City's jurisdiction" encompassed a much wider-range of – already resourced – activities than first thought.[69] As one interview respondent described it:

> I think [the Council motion] gave the municipality a way to say, 'what are we really doing here?' And the motion was so vague it allowed the knowledge around sustainability to reframe the work in a much wider context. Saying, 'we are doing all this [food policy] work here, nobody really knows that we are doing all this work' (Manager, CoV, 24).

In this way, the potential for the City of Vancouver to emerge as a leader in the field of food policy, just as it had where sustainable development is concerned, was used as leverage to justify the call for further policy and program development. Of particular importance was the ability to achieve results with minimal expenditure. Second, the inventory of existing food-related programs and services provided the Task Force with an additional decision-making tool to more strategically focus their work at the level of the municipality. As Savan et al. (2004, p. 608) argue,

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[69] Examples include community gardens, farmers markets, recycling programs, urban agriculture, water conservation and rain barrel programs, green streets and greenways, backyard composters, and emergency food distribution.

> If citizen-based organisations are to make a contribution to government activities,
> they need to be able to design their activities in the context of government
> agencies known direction and programs.

The inventory showed that there was much to build on at the level of the City of Vancouver alone, while at the same time pointing to concrete points of entry into local decision-making via pre-existing policies and programs. The role of the inventory in helping to further refine the focus the work of the Task Force was noted by some City staff who observed that without concrete areas of focus, the Council motion would have been "something that would plod on in a thousand directions," or "would have been one of those ... reports that would be put on a shelf" (Manager, CoV, 24).

Proposed job descriptions of Food Policy Coordinator and Food System Planner

A third method through which tensions over the geography of the food system were mediated involved the design of the two staff positions proposed by the Food Policy Task Force. To address the perceived need to connect City food system priorities with those of other jurisdictions (or in the conceptual framing of Task Force members, to connect urban and non-urban aspects of the regional food system), certain stipulations were built into two job descriptions. The first proposed City staff position was a Social Planner with an exclusive focus on food system issues:

> One Temporary Regular Full Time Social Planner I for a period of two years with
> an mandate to internally coordinate and implement both existing and new food-
> related programs and services within the City's jurisdiction (City of Vancouver,
> 2003a).

The description of this first position reinforces the focus on existing programs and services within the City's jurisdiction. More significant was the job description of the second proposed position, the Food Policy Coordinator:

One Regular Full Time Food Policy Coordinator with a mandate to act as an on-going catalyst for leading, coordinating and facilitating both the existing work of the City on food system issues and new policy work in partnership with community groups, the Vancouver Agreement, higher levels of government, Vancouver School Board, Vancouver Park Board, Vancouver Coastal Health, and other stakeholders (City of Vancouver, 2003a)

Further descriptions of the Food Policy Coordinator position included a "focus on partnerships and collaborations" and "acting as a catalyst for issues both within and beyond the City government" (City of Vancouver, 2003a). In this way, the Food Policy Coordinator position was clearly designed as an attempt to bridge jurisdictional and territorial divides where the food system was concerned.

Policy actor partnerships

Attempts to share the burden of food policy reform occurred not only across geographies and jurisdictions but also among policy actors. The development of informal partnerships between the City of Vancouver and other governmental and non-governmental organisations was a key strategy in developing a coordinated approach to food policy. In its most modest expression, partnerships involved Food Policy Task Force membership. In other cases, it involved project partnerships and formal expressions of support and commitments to future collaboration. Table 21 shows some of the new partnerships forged.

Table 21: Policy actor partnerships

ORGANISATION	PARTNERSHIP
Health Canada	▪ Represented on Food Policy Task Force
Provincial Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services (MCAWS)	▪ Represented on Food Policy Task Force
Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group	▪ Represented on Food Policy Task Force ▪ Project partnerships (involving Health Canada and MCAWS)
Greater Vancouver Regional District	▪ Represented on Food Policy Task Force
Vancouver Coastal Health	▪ Represented on Food Policy Task Force.
Vancouver School Board	▪ VSB Trustee Andrea Reimer acted as Food Policy Task Force member. ▪ On December 1st, 2003, Vancouver School Board trustees voted unanimously to approve the food policy report in principle and expressed strong support for the aims of the food policy task force.
Vancouver Park Board	▪ Park Board Commissioner Eva Riccius, and Queen Elizabeth District Director Liane McKenna acted as Food Policy Task Force members. ▪ The Food Policy Action Plan received Park Board concurrence before being presented to City Council.
Charitable Foundations	▪ Represented on Food Policy Task Force ▪ Discussions about possible collaboration with Foundations such as the Vancouver Foundation and the United Way of the Lower Mainland.

The significance of this mitigation strategy would grow as the work progressed, representing as it did, a re-thinking of what constitutes a partnership approach policy-making and governance at the local scale, including the possibility to collaborate on multi-scaled and multi-jurisdictional projects.

Reaching consensus: Formal adoption of the Action Plan by City Council

In spite of disagreements over the nature and scope of participation in the Task Force consultation process, and competing assumptions about the 'just and sustainability food system' being sought, consensus was finally reached on a set of recommendations that were presented in the Food Action Plan. The formal adoption of the Action Plan by City Council took place in three stages. First, on December 9, 2003, the report was presented to City Council by the interim food policy

staff team as a 'report reference' during a regular Council meeting. The meeting minutes record the procedings as follows:

> Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver (File 3001-1): Jacquie Forbes-Roberts, General Manager of Community Services, introduced a Report Reference on an Action Plan for creating a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver. She provided a background to the creation of the City of Vancouver's Food Policy Task Force, which developed the Action Plan contained in the Policy Report "Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver" dated November 20, 2003. Ms. Forbes-Roberts also advised Council has received a number of requests to speak on the report. The speakers will be heard at the Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets meeting on December 11, 2003.

> Wendy Mendes, Social Planner, described the proposed Action Plan, and presented highlights of the three components of the plan: the creation of a Vancouver Food Policy Council; an interim Work plan; and an implementation support system. Ms. Forbes-Roberts, Jeff Brooks, Director - Social Planning, Mario Lee, Social Planner, and Herb Barbolet, Flood and Agriculture Consultant, responded to questions. Council thanked staff for the presentation (Meeting Minutes, Regular City Council Meeting, December 9, 2003).

The report was received by City Council as information. Two days later, at meeting of the Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets, speakers were heard and City Council was asked to decide on the recommendations in the Food Action Plan. Meeting minutes record the following:

> Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver (File 3001-1): Vancouver City Council, at its meeting on Tuesday, December 9, 2003, received a Report Reference regarding an Action Plan for creating a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver. Council referred this item to the Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets meeting on Thursday, December 11, 2003, in order to hear from delegations.

> Accordingly, the Committee had before it a Policy Report dated November 20, 2003, in which the Food Policy Task Force recommended Council adopt an Action Plan for creating a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver. The report also outlined the components of the Action Plan and the resources needed to implement it. The strategic focus of the proposed Action Plan is on areas that fall within the jurisdiction of the City of Vancouver. The City Manager recommended adoption of recommendations A, B1, B2, B3 and C, noting that the work of the Food Policy Task Force demonstrates the benefits of the proposed Action Plan to Vancouver's citizens.

> Jacquie Forbes-Roberts, General Manager of Community Services Group, Jeff Brooks, Director of Social Planning, Mario Lee and Wendy Mendes, Social Planners, and Nathan Edelson, Senior Planner - Central Area Planning, were available to respond to questions (Meeting Minutes, Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets, December 11, 2003).

Dozens of Task Force members attended the meeting, many of whom spoke in favour of the Action Plan. Speakers' comments emphasised the many ways that City support would advance food system goals. Examples included improving the untapped economic benefits of the local food economy (farmers markets, restaurants, local growers, food delivery companies); opportunities to partner with community groups and other governmental organisations; links between food and 'healthy, connected communities;' improving food access for low-income families; and the ability to make far-reaching change with modest resources. A recurring theme in speakers' comments was the need for the proposed staff positions to support food policy goals (Meeting Minutes, Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets, December 11, 2003). After hearing from speakers, Councillor Fred Bass moved the following motion which was carried unanimously:

> MOVED by Councillor Bass
> THAT the Committee recommend to Council
>
> A. THAT Council receive the proceedings of the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force for information, as distributed to Council on December 9, 2003.
>
> B. THAT Council adopt the three components of the recommended Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver as outlined in B1, B2, and B3.
>
> B1. THAT Council approve the creation of a "Food Policy Council" with a mandate to act as an advisory and policy development body on food system issues within the City's jurisdiction, as described in the Policy Report dated November 20, 2003, entitled "Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver".
>
> B2. THAT Council approve an "Interim Work Plan," as described in the Policy Report dated November 20, 2003, entitled "Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver", to lay the foundation for future linkages to the work of the Food Policy Council once it is established.

Although perceived as a success by Task Force Members who earned a rare standing ovation from City Councillors, the December 11 meeting did not in fact resolve the issue of resources. A careful reading of the motion reveals that while the Action Plan may have been approved in principle, any commitment to resources would be "subject to 2004 budget considerations" when "Council [would] consider implementation support" in the form of the proposed staff positions and food policy annual budget request (motion item B3). Although there was considerable

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disagreement among Councillors over the approval of requested resources, and in some cases outright opposition, the funding request was ultimately granted on March 11, 2004.

The reasons cited by Councillors for approving the funding request varied widely. First, there was the argument that food policy supports the social, environmental and economic goals embodied in the City's existing commitment to sustainability, and as such has inherent value as a neighbourhood empowerment tool and as an alternative citizen-led approach to governance; Second, the role of local food economies as a key pillar in urban economic development and community economic development was voiced by some Councillors as the most valuable element of the plan; Third, the significance of the Food Action Plan was linked by some to upcoming international events including the 2010 Winter Olympics and the Habitat Plus 30 Congress, both of which have strong sustainability agendas, as well as promising to earn Vancouver international prominence and competitive advantage. Although no single reason for approval emerged, and scepticism remained, Vancouver's Food Action Plan was a reality, providing a suggestive example of municipally-led a strategy to achieve a 'just and sustainable' city.

Strategy and action for Vancouver's Food Policy Task Force: How collaborative was it?

This chapter analysed a number of key issues associated with the strategy formulation and action planning phase of Vancouver's food policy development. I argued that at least two elements must be considered in addition to those already associated with this phase of the analysis: First, the importance of theorising the specificities of the social, political and institutional contexts within which local partnerships are enacted; and second, the need for further analysis of the discourses and practices of citizen participation. A related element stems from the lack of analysis of how new models of sustainability governance express themselves at the local level. Where the importance of context is concerned, the research analysed three factors that can be understood to have played a role in shaping the opportunities and constraints of the Food Policy Task Force. These factors are summarised in Table 22.

Table 22: Specificities of social, political and institutional context related to food policy development in Vancouver

Element	Factors	Tensions / Contradictions	Impact on Food Policy
Specificities of social, political and institutional context	1. COPE support of multi-scaled policy issues (e.g. women, peace & justice, emissions reduction, ethical purchasing)	▪ Focus on fast policy turn-around. ▪ Contradictions between addressing neighbourhood-based needs and support of non-'area-based' policy areas.	▪ City Council experience and readiness to seek localised responses to multi-scaled policy issues BUT Task Force constraints due to limited timeframe for consultation and lack of attention to neighbourhood and household scales.
	2. COPE commitment to improve civic democracy including creation of Vancouver Electoral Reform Commission (2003)	▪ Pressure to address specific geographical inequalities in Vancouver, while also supporting cross-cutting, multi-scaled policy areas.	▪ Active city-wide public debate over issues of local democracy and civic participation BUT corresponding shifts in governance structures inconclusive.
	3. City of Vancouver Public Involvement Review	▪ Collapse of process-related goal of participatory decision-making, and goal of achieving wider access to information. ▪ 'Partnerships' understood as separate function from other public involvement mechanisms. ▪ Lack of recognition of need for higher allocations of time, staff resourcing and funding.	▪ Existing City policies and processes in support of citizen participation BUT under-defined parameters in key areas including citizen participation in decision-making and policy-making. ▪ Lack of integration with existing sustainability policies and commitments.

The identification of these three factors should not suggest that others were not also potentially significant. What these factors provide is an indication of some of the most significant contextual issues at the local and regional scales that informed decisions about how the Food Policy Task Force was struck, and the ways that it would carry out its mandate to create the Food Action Plan. The second element that I argued must be considered during this phase of policy development is

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the role of discourses and practices of citizen participation. Here, the research found three key tensions that are summarised in Table 23.

Table 23: Discourses and practices of citizen participation related to Vancouver's food policy development

Factor	Tensions / Contradictions	Mediated through:
Discourses and practices of citizen participation	1. Consultation at the level of agencies and organisations, not individuals	■ Task Force members occupying 'multiple roles' ■ Task Force members 'representing themselves' not organisations ■ Continued support and participation of prominent anti-hunger actors
	2. Missing participation of individual consumers, especially the hungry	
	3. Municipal or regional food system?	■ Regional representation on the Food Policy Task Force ■ Making connections to existing City of Vancouver policies, services and by-laws ■ Proposed job descriptions of Food Policy Coordinator and Food System Planner ■ Policy actor partnerships ■ Reaching consensus on priority issues through multi-actor platforms

The research shows that in spite of the need to mediate differences around issues of representation and geography, some of which remained unresolved, Task Force members were generally satisfied with the consultation process. The perception that the procedural goal of creating an open, inclusive and transparent process was achieved in spite of inevitable disagreement over some issues, is reflected in the extensive unsolicited feedback received by interim food policy staff team members (personal communications). Positive feedback was also received from City managers, staff and elected officials with extensive experience conducting public processes. One elected official remarked that the work of the Task Force was "the most democratic [process] he had ever seen in the City" (personal communication). Another interview

respondent reiterated this view, while making an important observation about the focus and scale of the consultation process:

> The process that led to [food] policy ... was much more democratic and transparent and inclusive than other processes. And thorough. But [the food] program was much more unique, and the scale a lot smaller in terms of the stakeholders and constituents. You [were] not dealing with a neighbourhood of 50,000 [like the CityPlan consultations] (CoV Planner, 22).

Another interview respondent from local government linked the successes of the process with the fact that it was a stakeholder-based strategy instead of a neighbourhood-based approach:

> I am not sure I have seen [food lobbying] much at the neighbourhood level. It is more at the stakeholder level ... where local groups have a specific interest and can be very effective to lobby for change (Manager CoV, 31).

What is not known is the views of those who may have opted out of Task Force participation because they were dissatisfied with the process. From an outcome perspective, criteria for this phase of food policy development include identifying and expanding on priority issues through multi-actor platforms; identifying solutions to local needs and problems; strengthening capacities of local actors; and the formal adoption of an Action Plan by local authorities. While not disregarding inevitable unresolved tensions and omissions, all four of the procedural criteria were addressed in some measure in Vancouver's case. Of particular significance was the formal adoption of the Action Plan, enabling the work to be carried forward. However, issues of collaborative governance and participatory policy-making would become even more challenging as stages of implementation unfolded. The ways that the food policy mandate moved into stages of implementation is analysed in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER 7
IMPLEMENTING FOOD POLICY ACROSS SCALES

Isn't a new bee-keeping by-law a deliverable? To me that is a deliverable with a policy that is going to have a lot more impact than starting an education program on backyard beekeeping, right? I guess it's all in the way that you look at it. If we have a great beefed-up urban agriculture policy that actually gets implemented, like in Southeast False Creek, to me that's a bigger success than having three rooftop gardens that we've micro-managed (Social Planner, CoV, 27).

I think the [food policy] mandate helps, and I think awareness helps. And the resources help. It's the complete package. Policy without the resources, it's like developing a community plan [that] sits on the shelf if you don't have resources to help people implement it. It's the same thing with food policy (Planner, CoV, 22).

Moving from strategy development to implementation involves a host of challenges, some of which are reflected in the interview excerpts cited above. Effective implementation of food policy strategy at the local level turns on the ability to strike a balance between a number of factors that may vary from case to case. Factors to be balanced include innovation and organisational capacity; program delivery and policy development; resources and responsibilities; and re-defined roles of old and new multi-actor partnerships. These issues are captured in phase four of the policy cycle framework being used to guide the analysis of Vancouver's experience with food policy development. Phase four is described as the turning point between strategy development and the process of implementation of food policy activities (Table 24).

Table 24: Policy cycle framework for food policy and planning (Phase Four)

Policy Cycle Framework for Food Policy and Planning	
Phase 1	Awareness-raising and lobbying
Phase 2	Diagnosis and stakeholder commitment
Phase 3	Strategy formulation and action planning
Phase 4	Implementation
Phase 5	Follow-up and consolidation, institutionalisation and 'anchoring'

Implementation can take a number of different forms including pilot projects, integration of food policy into normative and legal policy frameworks, new models of fund allocation, and new institutional mechanisms to facilitate participation and citizen engagement (Dubbeling, 2001). Analyses of factors associated with food policy implementation in specific cases are important because they respond to criticisms of the literature on sustainable development as being normative in nature, and failing to examine the impact of local political practices on local development and planning strategies (Gibbs et al., 2002c, p. 124). Responding to these gaps, this chapter contributes a careful reading of the ways that Vancouver's local government, citizen groups and other actors endeavoured to put food policy into practice. This approach involves examining the strategies adopted and issues encountered as tensions were managed at the local scale (Ibid.). It also involves examining the innovations and unexpected opportunities that arose. This chapter focuses on Vancouver's food policy implementation during the period beginning March 11, 2004[70] when City Council approved funding to support the recommendations in the Food Action Plan. The period being analysed ends on July 14, 2004 when the Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC) was elected, and the Food Policy Task Force dissolved (Table 25).

Table 25: Timeline of major events in Vancouver's food policy development (Phase Four)

PHASE	EVENTS	DATES
Implementation (4)	City Council approval of funding for two proposed staff positions. Clear food policy mandate granted.	March 11, 2004
	Consultation Process #2 (Formulation of Terms of Reference and process for creating Food Policy Council)	April - July 2004
	Election of 20 member Food Policy Council (Food Policy Task Force Dissolves)	July 14, 2004

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[70] Between December 2003 when City Council approved the Action Plan in principle, and March 2004 when the resources needed to implement that plan were approved, the food policy staff team and the Food Policy Task Force operated in a grey area where implementation was concerned. With a food policy mandate having been granted in principle only, there was no provision to maintain earlier levels of support (staff, consultation budget, etc.), nor were staff empowered to undertake substantive work on the interim work plan items because of the possible funding requirements the work might generate. During this period, the staff team was reduced to two half-time positions, and little activity took place among members of the Food Policy Task Force apart from their pre-existing commitments. The 'grey area' period is not analysed in this dissertation.

Analysis of food policy implementation, institutionalisation (i.e. 'anchoring'), and other activities that took place between July and December 2004 is found in Chapter Eight.

Moving from strategy development to implementation in Vancouver

In Vancouver's case, the progression from strategy development to implementation followed two, inter-connected strategies. The first strategy focused on advancing food policy from within local government itself. The aim was to enhance and better coordinate some of the program areas named in the Food Action Plan. At the same time, work was undertaken to systematically integrate food issues into existing policy frameworks and programs areas of City departments. Challenges encountered in this first implementation stream included a continued lack of awareness of what constituted food policy; tensions between program delivery and policy development; the roles of actors inside and outside of City Hall; the politics of achieving visible outcomes; and the perceived need to prove the worth of food policy in economic terms.

The second strategy involved the creation of Vancouver's first municipally-supported Food Policy Council. The Food Policy Council was conceived as a multi-actor platform whose mandate would be "to act as an advocacy, advisory and policy development body on food system issues within the City's jurisdiction" (City of Vancouver, 2004c). The VFPC was to serve as a mechanism to formalise new working relationships between citizen groups and City Hall. Tensions encountered in this implementation stream included the politics of situating the VFPC as a body working both within and outside of the City bureaucracy; and what the 'advocacy, advisory and policy development' mandate of the VFPC would mean in the context of a formalised relationship with local government.

An analysis of both implementation strategies brings into crisp focus a number of questions that are central to this dissertation. Specifically, having emerged as the main 'brokering institution' through which multi-scaled configurations of food policy could be mediated, what new tensions emerged for the City of Vancouver as an organisation when it came to actualising the Food Action Plan? With an official mandate and 'place' within the City bureaucracy, how did configurations and

strategies of food policy partnerships change? Were partnerships more or less fluid than before the local government mandate was granted, and what kinds of tensions did new configurations generate? What actors and mechanisms were involved in the resolution of tensions, and at which scales did this take place?[71] These questions are particularly salient considering the rapid changes that had taken place in food policy activities in a relatively short timeframe. Between July 2003 (Phase 1 of the policy cycle) and March 2004 (the beginning of Phase 4), a number of transformations had occurred: Specific re-framings of the scale at which food policy was assumed to be most appropriately mobilised took place involving The Lower Mainland Food Coalition, The Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group, and The City of Vancouver itself. The primary members of Vancouver's food policy partnership networks had shifted in composition from the Lower Mainland Food Coalition and various community-based anti-hunger coalitions, to one comprised primarily of the City-mandated Food Policy Task Force and various governmental partners (City staff, elected officials and other governmental supporters). New intermediaries and strategic partnerships had emerged including the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group, outside consultants, and some City staff. A decisive shift in the way food policy was framed had taken place, from a public health / anti-hunger focus to one of sustainability. Lastly, food policy goals had evolved from those of achieving local government recognition, to formulating an Action Plan embedded within the City's institutional structure.

These changes were further complicated where implementation was concerned, requiring as they did a much more careful delineation of partner roles and responsibilities, and detailing of the goals outlined in the Action Plan. Furthermore, competing understandings of the jurisdiction and territoriality of Vancouver's food system endured. Underscoring these challenges was the fact that there were few precedents to follow where implementation of a municipal Food Action Plan was concerned. In approving the Food Action Plan, a food policy council and two dedicated staff positions, Vancouver became the one of only two cities in Canada with policies and mechanisms embedded within a City department rather than acting in a non-governmental or arms-length

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[71] Analyses of these questions should be understood in the context of early implementation stages of food policy development. Additional issues will invariably arise as time goes on allowing for future comparison with new experiences as they evolve.

advisory capacity. Furthermore, Vancouver became the only local government in Canada or the United States with two designated food policy staff positions. These conditions provide the opportunity to examine connections between food policy, as a new municipal policy area, and the politics of operationalising the goal of achieving a sustainable city.

Strategy 1: Implementing programs and policy from within local government

The task of implementing food policy from *within* local government during early stages fell primarily to the interim food policy staff team.[72] The existence of a dedicated staff team mandated to advance food system goals makes Vancouver's case unique. In most other documented cases of food policy development in North America, staff resources are either non-existent or considerably more modest. Dahlberg (1994) argues that the generally low priority of food issues in local government is reflected in the low level of budget and staff support provided:

> As with any 'new' issue ... that doesn't fit into existing bureaucratic rubrics, it is difficult either to generate new budget/staff or to reallocate from existing programs, many of which are underfunded.

In other jurisdictions in the US and Canada where staff resources do exist in relation to food policy, these resources are typically dedicated to support the work of a food policy council (FPC). As Yateman (1994, p. 21) argues,

> It is imperative that food policy councils have support from staff that can provide on-going services to the council and its members.

The average staff allocation to food policy councils in US and Canada is one half-time position which, although modest, is argued to provide important support, continuity and key connections to governmental departments particularly during implementation stages (Borron, 2003, p. 8).

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[72] At this stage in Vancouver's food policy development, the interim food policy staff team was made up of two part-time Social Planners (of which I was one), one consultant and one part-time Planning Intern. In addition, a senior Social Planner acted in a supervisory capacity. The team was considered interim because the two food policy staff positions mandated in the Food Action Plan (one permanent full-time Food Policy Coordinator and one two-year full-time Food System Planner) had not yet been hired. Community-based program development and service delivery continued to take place outside of, and in some cases, in tandem with City Hall.

However, even in cases where a part-time staff position exists, it is not unusual to see the position's responsibilities split between a number of duties, only one of which may be supporting a food policy council. It has also been noted that such piecemeal staff resources are particularly vulnerable to political shifts due in part to unstable funding structures (Ibid).

The uniqueness of Vancouver's case can be distinguished by the fact that both full-time positions were new positions, not reallocations from other program areas. Furthermore, both positions became line items in the City's operating budget providing more funding stability.[73] The positions were conceived in recognition of the need to work both inside and outside of local government to implement food system goals. The first full-time position, the Food Policy Coordinator, was mandated to support the work of the Vancouver Food Policy Council. In addition, the Coordinator was mandated to "act as catalyst for issues both within and *beyond* the City government, and to develop partnerships with other stakeholders and levels of government" (City of Vancouver, 2003a, my emphasis). The second position, a full-time (two-year) Food System Planner was mandated to "work *within* local government to monitor and develop food-related programs, services and projects currently provided and/or supported by the City of Vancouver (including Park Board and School Board); and to act as a catalyst between City departments" (Ibid., my emphasis). In other jurisdictions, aspects of these functions are sometimes filled by staff liaisons from relevant agencies or departments who voluntarily attend FPC meetings as a part of their existing duties. Dahlberg (1994) argues that the role of staff liaisons serves important functions:

> The presence of such liaison staff in FPC meetings encourages a two-way
> information sharing between the FPC and the respective agencies, plus offering
> possibilities for a more general coordination of programs and sometimes
> leveraging of resources.

However, voluntary staff liaisons are connected only to the work of the FPC, not necessarily to broader food system goals, nor to complementary City mandates such as sustainability. In Vancouver's case, the creation of a staffing infrastructure that mirrors the systems ethos of food

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[73] However, the Food Systems Planner position was approved for a two-year period only, while the Food Policy Coordinator position was considered on-going.

policy itself, greatly enhanced the ability to work inside local government to affect institutional change, as well as working closely with the Food Policy Task Force (and later, the Food Policy Council), and other 'outside' groups and agencies. The existence of a dedicated staff team as a bridging mechanism between local government and outside groups proved particularly beneficial when it came to mitigating challenges and maximising opportunities around implementation that arose both inside and outside of City Hall.

As part of its bridging function, the staff team was uniquely positioned to increase institutional buy-in by raising awareness of the City's existing food policy programs and services across departments. This process quickly emerged as essential to advancing food system goals. Accordingly, the internal priorities identified by the staff team included enhancing and better coordinating the program areas already delivered or supported by the City of Vancouver, particularly those named in the Food Action Plan. During the period March – July 2004, the interim food policy staff team played a role in supporting and facilitating a number of City projects as outlined the Food Action Plan, as well as emerging projects.[74] Some of these projects included the following:

- Community gardens
- Farmers Markets
- Green roofs
- City-wide Food System Assessment
- Urban Agriculture in Southeast False Creek
- Fruit trees in City parks
- Urban Apiculture (bee-keeping)
- Emergency Breakfast Program

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[74] At the same time, the food policy staff team was designing and implementing the second consultation process with the Food Policy Task Force. The time-consuming nature of the consultation process, in conjunction with an initial focus on awareness-raising within local government, meant that in many cases, a support function was all that could be achieved where projects were concerned.

Most of these projects required the staff team to work closely with community groups as well as developing partnerships with other agencies including Vancouver Park Board, Vancouver School Board, and Vancouver Agreement.[75] In some cases, the projects were led by other City departments or staff groups, with the food policy staff team playing a consulting role by request. The staff team also continued to develop a number of research projects in support of the goals outlined in the Food Action Plan. These included an expansion of the City of Vancouver inventory of food-related programs and services to include by-laws and other regulatory tools; and a research partnership with Faculty of Agricultural Sciences at University of British Columbia (now called the Faculty of Land and Food Systems). The staff team also provided support to a community-based consortium of researchers, Forum of Research Connections (FORC), who were conducting a food system assessment of the City of Vancouver focusing on the Downtown Eastside. However, before any specific projects could be undertaken comprehensively, the first step was to build a more solid foundation for understanding the role of local government in food policy. The goal was to integrate food issues into the broad policy frameworks, program areas and daily practice of local government as a whole. This awareness-raising strategy was first undertaken when the July 2003 Council motion was passed. At the time, one of the tools used to raise awareness and gather information about the City's food policy activities was the inventory of food-related programs, services and projects. Initially, the staff team found that there was little understanding among City staff of what constituted food policy, and its place in local government (Mendes, 2004). Over the course of gathering information for the inventory, staff groups who had not previously seen themselves as having a role in food policy began to perceive of their existing programs and services through a food 'lens,' and in some cases, began to suggest new possibilities (Ibid.). By March 2004, when the City had been granted an official food policy mandate, the inventory continued to serve as an important vehicle to collect baseline information about the City's existing food-related commitments, as well as an effective tool to educate City departments about food as an urban issue, and the City's current and potential role in delivering a

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[75] Support and facilitation of projects by City staff should not imply City 'ownership' of projects. In many cases, most notably where urban agriculture, farmers markets, community kitchens and other community-based initiatives were concerned, the role of City staff was to respond to specific challenges identified by community groups, who continued to 'own' their projects, and define them according to principles of community empowerment.

coordinated host of food policies (Ibid.). However, beyond a piecemeal awareness-raising function, the inventory achieved limited success in creating a broad understanding of the City's new food policy mandate, leaving essential buy-in across the City system sporadic. Lingering confusion as to what food policy encompassed and its role in the organisation was reported by interview respondents:

> Someone from the [City organisation] stopped me a while ago and asked me,
> 'what is this food policy? I don't get it' (Manager, CoV, 24).

An elected official put it this way:

> I couldn't really tell you what [food policy is]. I know it has something to do with ...
> helping food banks coordinate food, and then it has got to do with roof gardens
> and [growing] more food, and then I kind of lose it a bit there (Elected Official, 19).

Lack of familiarity with food policy in general terms was often compounded by the multi-departmental nature of many food system issues, and the need to work collaboratively to reach food-related goals. Although multi-departmental approaches were not uncommon in the City bureaucracy, the challenge was to bring into focus the parameters of collaboration in an unfamiliar policy area. Of particular assistance in addressing this challenge was the framing of food policy as an extension of the City's existing commitment to sustainability.

The role of sustainability in raising food policy awareness in local government

From its inception, Vancouver's Food Action Plan was argued to reinforce the City's commitment to sustainability. This correlation had the benefit of attaching food policy to an already familiar and well articulated policy architecture and organisational mandate. When it came to implementation, food policy benefited from internal education campaigns on sustainability that had already taken place in the organisation. Interview respondents, particularly those who had been involved with the early stages of Southeast False Creek (SEFC) and the City's Office of Sustainability, described an initial climate of resistance and fear of change when it came to the introduction of sustainability as a City priority beginning in the mid- to late-1990s. One Senior Planner described months of "hand

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holding exercises" needed to assure senior management at City Hall that "[sustainability] wasn't a danger" (Senior Planner, CoV, 21). Eventually, resistance gave way to an openness to learning about sustainability:

> There was a lot of learning about doing things differently, and it started permeating through the organisation ... from every department: Social Planning, Cultural Affairs, Engineering, Planning, the Park Board. You name it. One of the first things that we did when we were putting the [sustainability] policy statement together was have a series of educational sessions where we invited in speakers. [They] brought informed viewpoints on some of the issues that we were grappling with. Then we invited other staff. It wasn't just the people that were working on Southeast False Creek (Senior Planner, CoV, 21).

Another Senior Planner echoed this view:

> In terms of sustainability, even before there was an Office [of Sustainability], there was a big push in [Planning] by some of us who felt that the City wasn't moving fast enough on sustainability issues. We started a speakers series as a way of trying to push the agenda within the bureaucracy without coming right out and saying, 'you guys aren't doing anything.' Well within about six months there was ... a task force formed on sustainability (Senior Planner, CoV 15).

By 2004, when the food policy mandate was officially granted, the City of Vancouver had earned an international reputation for excellence in sustainable development, along with a cadre of staff with expertise in theoretical and technical aspects of urban sustainability. The City's commitment to sustainability had by then been institutionalised through a number of City departments, policies, developments and other mechanisms including the Sustainability Sponsor Group, made up of representatives from senior management whose mandate was to facilitate sustainability initiatives. The legitimacy of sustainability played an important role in helping to defuse resistance to food policy, if only on a case by case basis. Furthermore, because of the cross-cutting nature of sustainability, most City departments had first hand experience working collaboratively in the City system to implement sustainability goals. This knowledge and experience provided a practical framework on which City departments could hang food system goals and envisage concrete outcomes.

The food policy staff team encountered a number of instances where the food policy mandate, bolstered by an umbrella sustainability agenda with which most departments had first hand experience, facilitated the implementation of food policy goals. For example, in 2004, the Your Farmers' Market Society moved its West End Market from Lord Roberts School to its present location at Nelson Park. During this time, the Society encountered a problem involving to the need for a special event market permit to allow a street closure. After failing to resolve the issue themselves, the Society approached the food policy staff team for help. Food policy staff were able to act as a conduit between the Society and the division of Engineering Services where such permits are processed, clarifying the broader context of the request including the priority given to farmers' markets in the Food Action Plan and its broader relevance as part of the City's sustainability agenda. As a result, the request was expedited. This is not to suggest that the situation may not have otherwise been resolved through community initiative alone. What is notable is the fact that the implementation balance was tipped by situating the request within the context of a broader City mandate.

The 'food lens' approach, along with the reinforcement of food policy as a sustainability issue, illustrate the challenges of coordinating local governance for an emerging policy area with relevance at multiple scales. Of particular significance are the often overlooked institutional spaces of local government as sites and 'agents' of rescaling (Elwood, 2005). As discussed in earlier chapters, the conceptual elasticity of cross-cutting issues such as food policy has been shown to enhance the ability to strategically shift arguments, scales and practices to achieve certain goals. In Vancouver's case, the fact that food policy lacked a fixed meaning apart from its broad framing as an expression of sustainability, opened more avenues to engage with City departments and agencies on practical terms familiar to them. In this way, a better understanding of the shifts from perceived constraints to opportunity by those tasked with the operationalisation of food policy from within local government can be identified. Implicitly, these issues reflect debates about the apparent need for a common language to unify food policy development. Another relevant aspect of the analysis pertains to the role of language as an 'image maker' in policy development. While

Stone (1989) and others argue that language plays an important function in policy *agenda setting* (i.e. locating sites of responsibility and reform), this dissertation found an equally significant role of language as a legitimising tool during *implementation* phases.

The role of 'sustainability language' in legitimising food policy

The role of pre-existing policy commitments and first hand experience implementing sustainability goals have already been argued to have helped legitimate food policy as a new development direction for Vancouver. There is further evidence to suggest that the permeation of sustainability ideas from which food policy benefited took place not only through association with a policy framework on which City departments could attach food system goals, but also through language itself. The significance of 'sustainability language' in bringing sustainability – and food policy – agendas to life was described by an interview respondent:

> [Sustainability language] ... burrow[s] into your being and [it doesn't] let you go, even if you don't give a rat's ass about any of it. It's easy for [City Council] to pass a motion, and then the City's bureaucracy grinds into motion, digests it and then it infects the bureaucracy. And the bureaucracy, like a Hebrew Gollum, comes to life embodying sustainability agendas, totally unbeknownst to itself simply because its political masters said, 'you will report back on what it takes to create a sustainable and just food system' (Manager, CoV, 25).

In Vancouver's case, the role of 'language permeation' in enabling food policy implementation can be linked to a number of unanticipated outcomes. Over and above the work priorities identified by the interim food policy staff team, unexpected opportunities began to manifest at the level of City departments and partner institutions where food references began to appear, often unbeknownst to food policy staff, in program descriptions (e.g. CityPlan Visions documents, Southeast False Creek documents), meeting minutes (e.g. Park Board, School Board) and departmental websites (e.g. the Office of Sustainability), culminating in food policy being featured in the City of Vancouver's annual report (2003). Although direct causal relationships cannot be empirically determined, it is suggestive that food-related program areas that only months earlier had been deemed unfeasible, began to be re-considered just as 'food policy language' began to appear more frequently in a range of City materials and in a variety of contexts. Most notable were the possibilities of legalising

backyard beekeeping[76] and planting fruit trees on public land,[77] both of which were initially deemed unviable, but later pursued by the food policy staff team at the request of other departments, or in the case of beekeeping, the Mayor. The importance of language in enabling food policy implementation was not lost on the food policy staff team. The 'food lens' strategy, first initiated using the inventory exercise, relied at least in part on the power of language to create new understandings of the role of food in existing City projects, policies and programs. As the early implementation phase progressed, the food policy staff team proactively sought opportunities to apply the food lens logic to current projects and policies. The goal was not to over-determine the significance of food issues in City policies and programs, but rather to draw attention to the many taken-for-granted expressions of food as an urban issue in public servants' daily practice, particularly those related to sustainability.

Contributing to the permeation of food policy language through the City system was the appearance of a number of newspaper articles and radio stories profiling Vancouver's food policy activities. Only months earlier, media coverage had been sporadic regarding the appropriateness of food policy as a City mandate. Between March and July 2004, local interest stories on food-related issues appeared in publications including *The Georgia Straight, The Vancouver Courier* and *Business in Vancouver.*[78] These articles generally focused on food-related opportunities rather

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[76] The issue of urban beekeeping was added to the work plan of the food policy staff team in Spring 2004 at the request of the Mayor. It was found that a number of Lower Mainland municipalities including North Vancouver District, Surrey, New Westminster already had beekeeping by-laws in place. In the City of Vancouver, a health by-law prohibited the keeping of bees or the operation of an apiary within the City (except where associated with a research laboratory or zoo). The links between beekeeping and food policy include urban pollination, protection of plant bio-diversity, honey production and supporting small-scale honey vendors. Research on practices in other municipalities, the role of senior levels of government, and identification of stakeholders and interested parties within the food policy community was undertaken by the interim food policy staff team. On July 21, 2005, City Council voted unanimously to lift the prohibition against hobby beekeeping in Vancouver, as well as approving a set of guidelines for beekeepers.
[77] At the Vancouver Park Board meeting on Monday, February 9, 2004, a motion was passed requesting City staff to explore the possibility of planting fruit trees along streets, community gardens and parks. At a follow-up meeting held on May 13, 2004, staff discussed benefits and drawbacks relating to planting fruit trees in parks, community gardens and on streets. The group identified possibilities including introducing a trial program of planting selected fruit tree varieties on streets; considering the possibility of a community orchard if an established group is willing to steward it; and running educational programs out of our community centres focusing on fruit production (Bouris, 2004).
[78] For example: Angela Murrills, "Produce city: The need to sow urban seeds," *Georgia Straight*, March 18 – 25, 2004, 23 – 24 ; Glen Korstrom, "Lower Mainland farmers' markets under fire: Addition of jewelry, trinkets to produce mix changing the face of popular seasonal sales venues," *Business in Vancouver*, July 6 – 12, 2004, issue 767; "Putting up a bee condo bears fruit for urban gardeners," *The Vancouver Courier*, July 11, 2004, 22w.

than impediments related to a range of issues including the creation of the Food Policy Council, urban agriculture, farmers' markets and beekeeping. Significantly, a number of the reporters who began to write more supportively about food policy in the city had first-hand experience with some aspect of urban food policy, whether it was urban agriculture or beekeeping.

The role of language in legitimising food policy emerged as important in at least two capacities. First, while the 'image-making' qualities of language have been analysed in relation to policy *agenda setting* (i.e. moving an issue from the public to the formal political agenda), few correlations have been made between language and *implementation* where new policy areas are concerned. Implementation has been shown to bring with it a host of new challenges in coordinating governance responses. In Vancouver's case, the deployment of the language of food policy and sustainability was significant in enabling the operationalisation of a still relatively unfamiliar policy area within local government. This occurred by situating food policy within the more familiar policy framework of sustainability, while at the same time drawing out the food-related aspects of taken-for-granted aspects of civil servants' daily practice. Second, if land use planning and regulation can be understood as "crucial sites of political struggle in the production of urban geographies" (McCann, 2001, p. 207), and if these struggles are often understood to uphold dominant interests, then food policy may offer new ways of thinking about connections between language, planning processes and the urban geographies that result. In Vancouver's case, language was not used to impose pre-determined priorities but rather to further alternative policy and planning goals within the institutional spaces of local government itself.

'Building on strengths:' The challenges of new collaborative partnerships

Internal education and awareness-raising make up a critical foundation for institutional buy-in and more effective government–citizen partnerships in implementing food policy. Without institutional awareness and buy-in, the ability of local government bureaucracies to work collaboratively with citizen groups can be constrained. The early stages of Vancouver's food policy implementation saw gradual – although not yet widespread – growth in understanding and awareness of food policy. However, as Dorcey (2003), Savan *et al.* (2004), van Bueren and ten Heuvelhof (2005) and

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others observe, even once a broad-based understanding of an issue has been achieved, most public bureaucracies remain unprepared to manage complex collaborative relationships, particularly where sustainability issues are concerned. During the early implementation stages of Vancouver's food policy development, the biggest challenges in this regard included a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for citizen-government partnerships, and a context-specific analysis of which actors were best suited to, and most appropriate for the different facets of food policy implementation. One interview respondent described the challenge as follows:

> What is the role of the City in this, and what's the role of individual staff members? To me, you take an issue like [the coordinated food processing and distribution centre].[79] There is no reason that the City should be around that table. The community should be leading that because the community organisations, they're great at programs. That's what they do. They're [not good] at policy, as we saw for ten years of spinning wheels, right? And so it's about building on strengths (Social Planner, CoV, 27).

Other interview respondents raised these issues in the context of the challenge of creating a coherent framework to maintain citizen engagement:

> Food policy is the framework within which we are going to justify or rationalise doing a whole bunch of things including community gardens, or getting the Safeway [Restrictive] Covenant[80] dealt with, or a lot of the urban agriculture stuff. You've got this framework, but in and of itself it won't do anything. You somehow have to connect that ... with all these folks [in neighbourhoods] (Senior Planner, CoV, 15).

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[79] A coordinated food processing and distribution centre was a project pursued in partnership with the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group and a number of non-profit organisations. The proposed centre was to serve as a common facility where a number of organisations could store, sort, process and distribute food donations, as well as receive skills training.

[80] Restrictive covenants (RCs) are development restrictions that are registered on the title of a property prohibiting certain uses. RCs have been particularly controversial where supermarkets sites are concerned because they have been shown to have significant food access implications. RCs are intended to "limit competition that might affect nearby supermarkets owned by the chain that is closing the store" (City of Vancouver, 1998). As of 1998, six out of 14 closed supermarket sites in Vancouver had restrictive covenants placed on them limiting the amount of floor space for food sales that may be located on the site, and precluding new grocery stores. A 1998 City of Vancouver supermarket report found that by restricting the opportunity for other food retailers to locate on these sites, covenants "negatively affect the future viability of neighbourhood shopping streets." The City is not a party to RC agreements, and therefore has no direct legislative power to challenge them on regulatory grounds.

From these challenges flow a number of related tensions. I will focus on three: The balance between program delivery and policy development; the politics of achieving visible outcomes; and the perceived need to prove the worth of food policy in economic terms. Analysis of these tensions provides more depth and nuance to sustainability literatures that are often criticised for failing to examine how local specificities affect planning and governance for sustainable development.

Tensions between program delivery and policy development

Nowhere did the challenge of collaborative partnerships and implementation become more acute than in the tension between program delivery and policy development. Food policy implementation at the local level is argued to take a number of different forms including pilot projects, new models of fund allocation, and new institutional mechanisms to facilitate participation and citizen engagement (Dubbeling, 2001). One of the most critical expressions of food policy implementation includes the development of 'anchoring mechanisms' that allow for lasting integration into local government structures. Of particular significance to developing anchoring capacity are normative and regulatory policy frameworks that lead to more comprehensive food policy integration on which program development can be built and justified (International Development Research Centre and Urban Management Program for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2003).

Normative food policies might include an over-arching framework that codifies a city's broad goals and targets, while at the same time encompassing a series of smaller policy areas or sub-systems that correspond with individual, but connected aspects of the food system from production through to consumption and food recycling. Examples might include an urban agriculture policy, a food access policy, a food recycling policy, or policies that refer to specific programs such as farmers' markets. Normative policy statements should have corresponding regulatory mechanisms such as by-laws, land use designations and other enabling tools that can be brought to bear on programs, development projects or comprehensive land use plans (Argenti, 2000).

The biggest challenge lies in the fact that like sustainability, food policy is not a stand-alone issue, but rather is cross-cutting in nature. As such, food policy development involves the creation of a

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multi-scaled, multi-dimensional policy architecture. Food system scholar, Rod MacRae (1999) identifies five key principles on which a coordinated food policy should be based. Principles include integrated responsibilities and activities; an emphasis on both macro- and micro-policy; a transdisciplinary policy development; the need for policymakers to work closely with the diverse groups affected by problems; and the need for systems thinking in analysing problems and designing solutions (Ibid.). To make matters more complex, Dahlberg (1992) observes that local food systems operate at multiple spatial scales including the household, neighbourhood and the municipality. Each of these scales encompass issues that correspond with different aspects of the food system including production (farmers markets, community and household gardens); processing (local or extra-local); distribution (transportation, warehousing); access (grocery stores, school lunches); consumption (food safety, restaurants, street vendors); and food recycling (composting, landfills) (Ibid.).

MacRae (1999, p. 192) argues that few if any precedents exist for a policy making system consistent with the goal of creating food security and sustainability that integrates key principles at multiple scales. In this sense, it is perhaps unsurprising that in Vancouver's case, an official food policy mandate was granted in the absence of an actual or proposed food policy architecture. Although policy development was implicit in Vancouver's Food Action Plan, no specific policies were proposed or approved in the Plan itself. Among the implications of such a gap include a lack of formal codification of food policy within the City's broader sustainability commitments. Equally important is a lack of normative or regulatory tools corresponding to specific policy areas (e.g. urban agriculture, food access, food recycling etc.) that together would constitute a comprehensive policy architecture.

An illustration of Vancouver's food policy gap can be found in the City's approach to urban agriculture. By March 2004, a broad host of food-related programs and services in the area of urban agriculture could be identified. These included community gardens, administered primarily by the Park Board; green streets, grow natural and recycling programs administered primarily by Engineering Services; and individual urban agriculture strategies specific to development projects

such as Southeast False Creek. However, no comprehensive urban agriculture policy existed to link what were all, in effect, urban agriculture initiatives. As a result, decisions were being made in a piecemeal fashion without a city-wide needs assessment, targets for increasing urban agriculture opportunities, or links to broader food policy goals. The lack of a coordinated urban agriculture policy also had operational implications. For instance, although community gardens were administered primarily by the Park Board, gardens also existed and were administered by other departments including Engineering Services and Real Estate Services depending on the type of land on which the garden was located. As a result, even the process for initiating and maintaining a community garden lacked uniformity, making it potentially more difficult for citizen groups to participate in urban agriculture activities, and work collaboratively with local government to maximise urban agriculture opportunities.

The lack of a coordinated urban agriculture policy was mirrored in a lack of policy in other aspects of the food system. Another area where the absence of policy posed challenges was farmers' markets. Since their inception in 1995, farmers markets operated on trial use permits that required yearly renewal. As one interview respondent observed: "There has been no policy on [farmers markets]. It has been very much seat of the pants" (Planner, CoV, 23). In recognition of the need for policy on farmers markets, a June 20, 2003 Policy Report to City Council recommended that farmers' markets be introduced into particular district zoning schedules as a conditional approval use (City of Vancouver, 2003f). By 2004, with the possibility of zoning amendments and conditional uses still unresolved, additional questions regarding guidelines for suitable farmers' market sites were being posed:

> There can be guidelines that can give us advice about where [a farmers' market] would be approved but ... what kind of a guideline would we write? What is the criteria that would make for a good farmers market site? I don't know what the criteria is ... It is piece of land ... is it a central location? Not necessarily. It is away from a residential area? Yes, that would probably be better but maybe not if you want to have it all folksy and neighbourhood-like. Maybe the schools might be good. So I don't know what the guidelines are (Planner, CoV, 23).

Gaps in individual policy areas preventing a comprehensive food policy architecture point to the lack of a clear geographical delineation of the food system in question. As discussed in earlier chapters, Vancouver's food policy development was for the most part not conceptualised at the level of neighbourhoods or specific areas of the city. Nor were problems and solutions specific to population groups identified. The lack in geographical differentiation or identification of need assessments based on specific geographies and population groups made a comprehensive approach to food issues even more challenging. These questions underscore the multi-dimensional and multi-scaled nature of food concerns. However, the lack of guidelines, normative policies and regulatory tools on these and other issues did not impede implementation some food policy goals during early implementation stages. Spring and Summer 2004 saw the successful relocation of the thriving West End Farmers' Market, as well as progress on a number of popular urban agriculture projects and other initiatives. Policy gaps, did however, point to the need for research, consultation and policy development on a host of food policy areas if a comprehensive food policy architecture was to be designed to ensure lasting integration into local government structures and processes.

The need to lay foundations for a food policy framework as an essential component of Vancouver's early implementation strategies was complicated by a number of factors including a lack of precedents for such an integrated policymaking system, and an under-defined geographical knowledge of Vancouver's food system. Just as significant was the need to balance program delivery with policy development in the context of competing expectations around roles, responsibilities and outcomes, particularly where partnerships were involved. The need to balance policy and programs became acute when the time- and resource-consuming process of policy development ran up against widespread pressure to achieve 'quick wins' to demonstrate the 'value' of food policy in the short term. Pressure to demonstrate quick wins came from both inside and outside of City Hall. On one hand, in order to demonstrate fiscal responsibility and responsiveness to voters, elected officials expected tangible results from their very public political investment in food policy. As one elected official described it, "somehow [food policy] has got to be financially useful" (Elected Official, 19). Reflecting on the future activities of the Vancouver Food Policy

Council, another Elected Official noted:

> [The Food Policy Council] will need achievements. It is very important that it does
> develop an agenda of items it wants to implement, a timeline for implementing the
> items on that agenda, and a commitment to retrospectively measure its success
> on a pre-scheduled frequency (Elected Official, 20).

At the same time, some groups in the food community held their own expectations related to specific program goals involving immediate concrete outcomes and assumptions about who should be responsible for fulfilling them. One City staff member described the situation this way:

> [Now that a food policy mandate exists], you now have community members who
> say, 'oh the City can do that.' We're not there to take their role. I get the sense it's
> like, 'oh, [the City] can help us [with] fundraising.' We are not a program delivery
> agency. So, yes, my advice [to the food policy staff team] is stick to the policy.
> Crank out the policy reports. Get of lots of stuff changed but do what we are good
> at and focus on using policy [to] enable the programs that are ... initiated, delivered
> and implemented by the community groups (Social Planner, CoV, 27).

Lack of consensus over the relative importance of policy or program development, and who is best suited to undertake it, emerges even among strong supporters of urban food systems. For instance, Wayne Roberts, Food Policy Coordinator for the City of Toronto, contends that the real contributions of food policy are not expressed through policy at all, but rather through the development and delivery of programs (Public lecture, Vancouver Planetarium, October, 2003). A focus on program delivery, argues Roberts, is what saves food system issues from being "swallowed up by the bureaucracy" (Ibid.). Rod MacRae, Roberts's predecessor, maintains that a balance between policy and programs is necessary, with the ideal situation being one in which each approach is used to leverage the other (Public lecture, University of British Columbia, Department of Geography, March 23, 2004). It is the process of leveraging, he argues, that provides the most potentially productive spaces in which gains in both policy and programs can be achieved (Ibid.). As an expression of the strategy of leveraging, the process of striking a balance between policy and programs in Vancouver's case often turned on a politics of visibility and a politics of proving the 'worth' of food policy in economic terms.

Proving the worth of food policy in terms of visibility

In describing how the Toronto Food Policy Council set its agenda, the former Toronto Food Policy Coordinator places the need to strike a balance between policy and programs front and centre:

> In terms of the short term stuff, [the Toronto Food Policy Council] immediately started working on school nutrition programs, school feeding programs, and this non-profit food distributor that became Field to Table. Those things basically saved us politically and made the political machinery see us as useful because it allowed the politicians and say, 'the City is doing something about hunger.' At the time that was the critical thing because of the explosion of food bank use in the city. And then we could work on the longer-term stuff in the background (Independent Expert, 6).

Significant in these observations are two factors. First is a perceived need to demonstrate the 'usefulness' of food policy, and second is a politics of visibility posited as a necessary means to achieve the former. The emphasis on producing visible outcomes in the urban landscape that can be pointed to as food policy 'successes' emerges as a common theme in the documentation of Toronto's food policy development (Toronto Food Policy Council, 2002; 2001; 2000). The importance of "making various parts of the food chain visible within the city" has been cited as essential to advancing food system goals in Toronto and elsewhere (Independent Expert, 6):

> In the end, things like urban gardening ... [as much] as it is [about] the pragmatic questions of having food grown locally, it's about the visibility of it. If we do it in a way that it's all behind fences, on rooftops, I mean, those things are important too, but if it doesn't have more visibility then we lose that opportunity to make the processes in the food chain more explicit (Independent Expert, 6).

Like Toronto, the theme of visibility arose frequently in Vancouver where interview respondents in local government and community groups alike pointed to the perceived importance of delivering tangible program-oriented results that could be 'seen.' Often these sentiments were expressed as a necessary protection against the perceived vulnerability of food policy in the City system, including in particular, the staff positions and dedicated funding:

I think the [Food Policy] Council ... has to be very clear that they have to deliver.
At least in the next year there has to be some outcome that they can say 'we did
this.' Because it is one of those things that a future [City] Council could say, 'well
this is one of the least important things that we do.' So I think right off the bat [the
food Policy Council] will have to pick something that is do-able in the short term
that will show good results. That they can say, 'look, we are important.' (Elected
Official, 12).

And further:

I think that the [food policy staff] positions ... will have to definitely have
something to show for [themselves] in order for ... funding to continue (Task Force
Member, 13).

In Vancouver's case, the perceived need to create visible short-term food policy successes reflects
a strategy to embed food policy more permanently in local government structures by 'proving' its
usefulness. However, the visibility strategy employed in Vancouver also reveals a lack of clarity
around roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to partnership approaches to cross-cutting
issues such as food policy that transcend the policy domain of individual agencies as well as
governmental / non-governmental divides (Craig, 2004; Larner & Craig, 2002; Geddes, 2000;
Atkinson, 1999). Implicit in these issues are questions concerning how to best balance policy and
programs to facilitate Vancouver's food policy implementation, who should be responsible for
delivering results, how 'usefulness' is best measured, and ultimately, what constitutes the most
meaningful outcomes for user groups. Significantly, many interview respondents expressed
frustration at a perceived lack of specificity when it came to visible, tangible outcomes of food
policy, not for reasons of political expediency, but rather linked to creating the broadest positive
impact:

For whatever reasons things have gone towards the program thing, but I do think
the policy has broader impact and benefits over the long term for a greater number
of people (Social Planner, CoV, 27).

Others linked visibility to the need to create immediate outcomes 'on the ground' from which
neighbourhoods can benefit in the short-term:

That has ... been my criticism ... 'what real tangible [things] do you want people to do?' It is nice to talk about food security and all that sort of stuff, but what is it? What is it that you are asking [people] to do? (Manager, Provincial Government, 14).

Other respondents echoed this view:

It seems to me that that closer you actually get to the ground, and something concrete, the more effective it is (Senior Planner, CoV, 15).

The question of the balance between policy and programs, and roles and responsibilities in Vancouver's newly configured food policy partnerships surfaces again in later discussions of the Food Policy Council. Before returning to this discussion, one additional matter, linked to perceptions of how the 'usefulness' of food policy is best measured, merits attention. This issue concerns interest in the economics of food policy.

Proving the worth of food policy in economic terms

The first act of Vancouver City Council upon approving the Food Action Plan in December 2003 was to request a memo from City staff outlining possible areas of cost savings, revenue generation opportunities and funding partnerships that might ensue as a result food policy. This request may be interpreted in a number of ways. As cities struggle to contend with budget cuts and downloading of responsibilities, some observers might read such a request as a reflection of the trend towards the economic management of 'soft' social policy areas in cities (Lake & Newman, 2002). In this capacity, the request can be seen to represent an expression of the search for non-governmental actors and mechanisms to fulfil the social development and redistributive functions of cities. While not dismissing the often deeply-felt effects of these trends, others argue that complexities and subtleties of such changes may in some cases be underestimated, obscuring unanticipated activities and claims, often by those portrayed as 'victims' (Larner, 2004). As Larner (2004) and others have noted, many community organisations have become incubators for capacity-building,

including the emergence of community activists and other non-governmental actors as skilled socially-conscious entrepreneurs.

This observation may be equally true where 'the market' is implicated in new partnership approaches to governance and policy-making at the local scale. The case of food policy development in Belo Horizonte, Brazil is a compelling case in point. Belo Horizonte participates in a number of private-sector partnerships designed to benefit not distant corporate interests, but local producers and consumers (Rocha, 2001). Examples include the following:

> To enable the market to function more fairly, the city [of Belo Horizonte] teams up with university researchers who, each week, post the lowest prices of 45 basic food commodities at bus stops and broadcast them over the radio. Patches of city-owned land are now available at low rent to local farmers as long as they keep prices within prices within the reach of the poor. The city redirects the 13 cents provided by the federal government for each school child's lunch away from corporate-made processed food and toward buying local organic food (International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture, n.d., p. 10).

Another example of local state partnering with private interests to facilitate food policy goals includes the phenomenon of micro-credit financing of urban agriculture and other small-scale food industries (Cabannes, 2004a; Yasmeen, 2001b). Micro-credit strategies for urban agro-producers, vendors and retailers at the municipal level reflect transformations in approaches to urban self-employment and urban entrepreneurialism increasingly prevalent in regions of Latin America, Southeast Asia and elsewhere (Ibid.). Micro-credit financing is described by Yasmeen (2001b: 100) as:

> ... an opportunity for [food] vendors to have their voices heard, on the condition that new forms of urban governance are truly democratic and include all stakeholders in the decision-making process.

These shifts reveal growing recognition of the the importance of food in local and regional economies as a key pillar in urban economic development (Sustain, 2002). Food economy activities include a number of sub-sectors including food processing and manufacturing, food

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distribution, food retailing, food service, tourism, hospitality, and restaurants among others (Toronto Food Policy Council, 1999). Fostering the development of the local food economy has been shown to result in a number of direct benefits to cities including:

- Creation of jobs and retention of money in the local economy
- Opportunities for community economic development and skills training
- Enhancement of local distinctiveness and a sense of local identity
- Attracting tourists with farmers' markets, local food in restaurants and hotels, and other specialty niche and ethnic markets.
- Opportunities for the creation of viable social entrepreneurships (public-private partnerships and/or for-profit businesses, owned by non-profit organizations) (Ibid.).

The links between the local food economy and opportunities for socially-conscious entrepreneurialism are growing increasingly common. The growth of organic grocery delivery services, natural food stores, restaurants who feature regional cuisine, agri-tourism, small-scale food processors and other micro-enterprises are examples of the growth of a different kind of food economy that aims to benefit local communities and promote the distinctiveness of place.

In Vancouver's case, an entrepreneurial sensibility was already well rooted among the city's non-governmental food organisations by the time the Food Policy Task Force was struck.[81] Consequently, many Task Force members were not easily accepting of the assumption that food policy development and implementation should take place on a traditional charity-based model. Describing the approach to running one the city's best established food organisations, one Task Force member explained:

> I run it from a business perspective so I am able to make sure that we have funding, that we always have it and most of it is from our own money (Task Force Member, 13).

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[81] This is not to suggest that charity-based food distribution went unrecognised as a still essential mechanism to address hunger and poverty.

And further,

> Our mandate [is] community economic development. We want to help incubate
> micro-businesses (Task Force Member, 13).

Other Task Force members reflected on the awareness of the business opportunities related to
sustainable local food systems that grew over the course of Vancouver's community-based food
policy development:

> [Over time] we all got quite inspired with global perspectives, and the connection
> to economic development ... the business side of food, became more prominent.
> And that's when it started moving away from just the health aspects into more
> economic development and that kind of thing (Task Force Member, 10).

The socially-conscious entrepreneurial ethos of Vancouver's food community affected the ways
that City staff participated in food policy activities. For instance, the objective of the food system
assessment undertaken by the community-based research consortium with the support of the City,
was to focus on "the unrealized opportunities in the food system to create and support food-related
social enterprises for residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES)" (Forum of Research
Connections, 2005). The interest in food-related social enterprises was brought to the table not by
City staff, managers or elected officials, but by the research consortium themselves. This is not to
suggest that issues related to Vancouver's local food economy were overlooked by City staff.
Interview respondents from local government also reported perceptions of unrealised opportunities
in relation to the food economy:

> If you look at how many trips we take in our cars directly or indirectly ... related to
> food: twenty-five percent, one out of every four vehicles we watch going by every
> hour is food-related somehow. The financial implications in transportation planning
> alone are staggering around food. And then if you start thinking about jobs and the
> supply, manufacture packaging, retailing ... (Manager, CoV, 25).

These perspectives cast a decidedly different light on the City Council request for a memo outlining
economic benefits of food policy. The same interview respondent as above observed:

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> The discipline brought to the food agenda by asking for economic defensibility is excellent ... It should be seen as a way to make [food policy] more sustainable, to make defensible economic value out of the things that you are doing to get your social or environmental objectives out of. The chances of it being undermined and dismantled are greatly reduced (Manager, CoV, 25).

Although it is not typically local government convention to examine a sustainability issue though a revenue generation lens, particularly in areas perceived to be the domain of social policy, food policy raises suggestive possibilities. While not without very real potential pitfalls, the entrepreneurial sensibility involved with advancing food system goals has begun to permeate aspects of both programs and policy in many cases, bringing into focus the possibility of re-configured models of local food governance and policymaking in food policy implementation. This is perhaps best encapsulated in the following observation from the former Food Policy Coordinator for the City of Toronto:

> I remember one guy sitting in front of me and I was telling him what I did. At one point he looks up and smiles and says, 'you're a policy entrepreneur.' He got it, to his credit (Independent Expert, 6).

The question of the role of non-governmental and community organisations as food policy and program 'entrepreneurs' represents yet another tenuous balance that must find a context-specific equilibrium in the sites where it takes place. More than any other, this issue raises critical questions about a proposed local food system 'solution' to which a city's most vulnerable populations may not have access, and that may result in further polarisation. The very real danger of obscuring issues of hunger and food access through a quasi-private model of social entrepreneurialism is a debate that will continue to unfold as food system localisation gains wider popularity among the general public. Where food system goals are concerned, it is perhaps here that the politics of economics and visibility merge. As Dahlberg observes: "there is a tendency of both the public and city governments to see hunger and related health issues as the main local food issue" (1992, unpublished report). Food bank line-ups are, after all, among the most visible expressions of food insecurity on the urban landscape. To return to an earlier observation made by an interview

respondent on the balance between programs and policy, it was the *visibility* of hunger and the desire of elected officials to be *seen* as responsive to the explosion of food bank use that informed much of Toronto's early food policy work.

Ultimately, the questions of how configurations and strategies of food policy partnerships changed during early implementation stages, and whether these changes effected the role of local partnerships in addressing food system problems in Vancouver rests on much more than the activities the food policy staff team alone. To assess these questions fully, an essential part of the implementation equation took shape in the form of the election of Vancouver's first municipally-affiliated Food Policy Council.

Strategy 2: The Vancouver Food Policy Council

The Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC) was conceived as a multi-actor body whose mandate would be "to act as an advocacy, advisory and policy development body on food system issues within the City's jurisdiction" (Vancouver Food Policy Council, 2004). From May to July 2004, the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force produced and ratified a set of recommendations for the creation of the VFPC. Recommendations included VFPC member roles and responsibilities, principles and protocols: vision and mandate; structure and election process. The result was the election of a twenty-member multi-sectoral food policy council on July 14, 2004 as the last act of the Food Policy Task Force before it dissolved. Among the tensions encountered during the consultation process were issues related to the VFPC's role, mandate and capacity for action within the context of a formalised relationship with local government. Some of the ways that these issues began to unfold in practice once the VFPC was elected are analysed in the next chapter. What is relevant here are the ways in which the Task Force and City staff envisaged the best way to implement food system goals, using the VFPC as one of the tools at their disposal.

FPCs: Rhetoric and reality

Food Policy Councils (FPCs) are one of the most commonly cited vehicles for implementing urban food policies. An FPC is an officially sanctioned voluntary body comprised of stakeholders from various segments of a state / provincial or local food system (Borron, 2003, p. 4). MacRae (1999, p. 195) describes FPCs as:

> ... multi-sectoral roundtables ... where many interests are represented and many different kinds of sectoral resources can be offered to solve problems.

FPC membership might include representatives from sectors and organisations including producers, distributors, environmentalists, farmers, gardeners, grocers, hunger groups, business, education, health and nutrition, processors, restauranteurs, schools, food waste, and agriculture (Dahlberg, 1994; Yateman, 1992). One of the defining functions of FPCs is argued to be the creation of working collaborations between citizens, community agencies and government officials that give voice to food-related concerns and interests. FPCs are asked to examine the operation of a local food system and provide ideas or recommendations for how it can be improved. While the contributions of citizen advisory committees may at times be considered largely symbolic, FPCs, in contrast, are often identified as one of the more dynamic areas of innovation in City governments across North America (Borron, 2003; MacRae, 1999; Dahlberg, 1994; Yateman, 1992). Reinforcing this view, it is often claimed that FPCs are in a unique position to contribute directly to policy development, to increase the capacity of the City to act on sustainability principles, and to:

> ... increase public and City understanding of the synergies flowing from the linkages of programs directed towards food security, healthy public policy, and social, economic and environmental sustainability (Toronto Food Policy Council 2002, p. 9).

The unique positioning of FPCs is argued to stem from a number of structural and procedural elements including strong citizen participation, broad accountability, and active working committees. Perhaps more suggestively however, FPCs also claim a number of distinctive

characteristics including the 'right to free speech,' the ability to lobby and act as an advocate around food issues, and a cross-cutting approach to food system issues that aims to bring simultaneous benefit to the economy, environment and public health (Ibid.). As the Toronto FPC describe it:

> [Food Policy Councils are] an exciting experiment in working through an emerging 21st century set of relationships between politicians, government staff and engaged citizens. Perhaps [they] anticipate what some have called the reinvention of government (Ibid., p. 17).

By linking the goals of a 'reinvented government' to notions of free speech, the capacity to lobby and a desire to reconstitute current bureaucratic 'categories,' what emerges is a suggestive picture of shifts in thinking and practice in local politics. While the goals of advocacy, systems approaches and citizen engagement might be expected from the 'community' (i.e. groups outside of local government), what makes FPCs so compelling is that they claim to represent a reconfigured approach to food issues drawing from the expertise of both governmental and non-governmental actors. Some food system scholars theorise FPCs as exemplary 'networked movements' (Wekerle, 2004; MacRae, 1999; Welsh & MacRae, 1998). As such, the ways that FPCs implement programs and policy and participate in other networked activities from positions in civil society and in partnership with the state is the subject of growing interest to scholars and practitioners (Wekerle, 2004). However, the claims of what FPCs represent in rhetoric and what they achieve in reality must be weighed against a number of factors including their relative position within government structures, their mandated roles, and their human resource capacity to participate in policy exercises. In this regard, other observers, including some of those involved with Vancouver's food policy development, suggest that evidence of the apparently unique ability of FPCs to create policy, and implement programs remains inconclusive:

> I don't know that there is a fundamental difference between a food policy council and other innovative multi-stakeholder approaches ... that we even have in our own region: The Fraser Basin Council, The Commission on Resources and Environment ... And to be honest I am not sure that in Vancouver's model there is a heck of a lot of difference between any other City advisory committee and what

we are doing. When you look at Sherry Armstein's ladder of citizen participation, the citizens still don't have full decision-making [power]. They still have to defer to the Director of Social Planning ... [The VFPC will still have] value in and of itself. I mean, it is a collection of stakeholders who represent all these different interests around food, or moving toward a common vision. You know, dialogue, tons of community networking opportunities. That's value in and of itself. But let's not make claims that it is changing urban government structures (Social Planner, CoV, 27).

The 'value' of the VFPC was often projected instead – at least by some commentators 'within' government – to be one of consolidating food interests 'in one place' bringing comprehensive local knowledge to bear on advocacy efforts and government advising activities:

> [The VFPC will have] people and resources, maybe not financial but brain resources, thought power, that [will] all be in one place and [that] you [can] access around pilot projects or campaign strategies. There [will] be a body that [can] put pressure on [other governmental bodies] (Elected Official, 12).

These views reflect the importance of local knowledge of where urban problems are located and who is affected. In this regard, the VFPC, as a body representing a number of food-related interests, was expected to bring a wealth of localised knowledge to the task of solving systemic food-related problems requiring a collaborative approach on the part of a number of institutions and organisations. However, this view may not have been held by Task Force members themselves, who expected a more direct participatory role and decision-making capacity.

VFPC: Expected roles and responsibilities

Based on the results of small group exercises and summaries from the Food Policy Task Force consultation meetings, it was clear that many members felt that Vancouver's FPC should – and indeed would – have direct participation in policymaking and decision-making over and above a symbolic advisory role (Consultation meeting notes 2004; Direct observation). This was ultimately reflected in the tri-partite mandate of 'advocacy, advising and policy development' codified in the VFPC Terms of Reference. The expectation of direct decision-making and policy development was

further complicated by the role of advocacy which emerged, in theory and later in practice, as an intended vehicle to achieve the other two elements of the mandate.

An illustration of the complexities of notions of advocacy where Vancouver's food policy development is concerned would arise during the early phases of the VFPC's work. As an official body situated in between community and local government tasked in part with an advocacy mandate, the VFPC was forced to grapple early on with how best to exercise advocacy activities. One of the first challenges emerged in November 2004 when a VFPC-initiated resolution was passed by City Council calling for a re-affirmation of the City of Vancouver's opposition to the removal of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve in another GVRD municipality. Perceived as a success by many VFPC members who saw it as their first concrete 'win,' the resolution created political friction among City Councillors, some City staff and even some VFPC members themselves, who questioned the appropriateness of prescribing land use restrictions on other GVRD municipalities. For the VFPC, this act raised questions over how to level criticism against neighbour municipalities with whom a partner relationship would surely be needed to advance regional food system goals. While specific tensions such as this one could not be fully anticipated during Task Force consultation stages, what was underestimated were more fundamental questions of the place of advocacy in local government that would be further complicated by the multi-scalar nature of food policy. The result would be an uneasy equation representing a further expression of at least two factors already identified as challenges in implementing the Food Action Plan: potential imbalances between policy development and program delivery, and under-defined roles and responsibilities for the actors involved.

On the first point, based on the experiences of other North American cities, evidence of FPC participation in policy development as primary contributors is minimal. This is not to suggest that the contributions of FPCs have not been essential and in some cases far-reaching. In Toronto's case, Welsh and MacRae (1998, p. 252) contend that the Toronto Food Policy Council has served as an essential mechanism that enabled a range of new projects and networks based on partnership principles. Programs including food security projects, student nutrition projects or food

box programs are cited as examples of initiatives that provide thematic and geographical bridging points to enable multiple outcomes (Ibid.). The wealth of food-related programs and services in Vancouver similarly reflects a richness in collaborative approaches to neighbourhood-based program delivery. However, the extent to which such program delivery constitutes, or even leads to policy development is uncertain. Furthermore, competing expectations related to the balance between policy development and program goals raises important questions about who should be responsible for their respective fulfilment. In the enthusiasm surrounding the establishment of FPCs, it is the importance of carefully matching the food system goals set by affected groups, with the actors and tools best positioned and equipped to deliver them, that is often underestimated. In Toronto's case, for example, the Food Policy Council found after a number of years in operation that its goals did not match the skill set of its members:

> After two or three years the [Toronto Food Policy Council] agenda started to shift more into, 'okay, now we have to really deliver. It's much more nuts and bolts' ... And when that agenda started to happen, only about a third of the members could effectively participate in that. Only about a third of them really had the skills to function at that level (Independent Expert, 6).

In this way, while the TFPC may have achieved what they considered to be the important goal of a representative Council, the representation they achieved became a liability when advanced stages of policymaking and implementation were reached.

At the same time, broad FPC representation commonly emerges as a key factor that can ensure breadth and depth of food policy networks, and enhance their effectiveness working in partnership with local government. Broad FPC representation helps to ensure that no single food interest over-determines the agenda. As Dahlberg observes, hunger advocates and issues have historically dominated FPCs, resulting in an under-emphasis on other food system issues:

> Given their immediacy and visibility, hunger issues can easily come to dominate both food policy council agendas and city awareness. As a result, the many other important aspects of local food system issues often receive little or no attention unless the food policy council or other groups push them vigorously (Dahlberg, 1994, p. 4).

Broad representation also reflects the importance of what MacRae (1999, pp. 194 – 195) identifies as "flexible teams who are created and disassembled for different tasks." Like Toronto, Vancouver's Food Policy Task Force held up the importance of broad representation as an essential element in ensuring that local food system knowledge and expertise would be best harnessed. The Vancouver Food Policy Task Force recommended that the VFPC should have equal representation from all parts of the food system (production through consumption and waste management). The rationale was to ensure "inclusion and participation of a broad range of voices, including people at all stages of life, people from disadvantaged populations, and those most affected by food insecurity" (Vancouver Food Policy Council, 2004). As such, it was recommended that VFPC members should consist of two members from each of the following seven sectors: (food) production, processing, distribution, consumption, access, waste management and system-wide.[82] To further ensure broad representation and participation, the Task Force recommended that five seats be reserved for at-large candidates whose expertise would be needed by the Council, but may or may not be affiliated with any of the sectors comprising the council (Ibid.).

The changes wrought by Food Policy Councils, their mandate, participants, and activities both outside and within City bureaucracies, provide a suggestive example of the blurring of previous assumptions about the participants and processes of local governance. However the conception of Vancouver's FPC left a number of important questions unanswered particularly in relation the VFPC's role, mandate and capacity for action within the context of a formalised relationship with local government. The ways that these tensions would unfold in practice once the VFPC started to meet regularly is discussed in Chapter Eight.

Conclusion

With few precedents to follow, the progression from strategy development to implementation can be characterised by the emergence of a number of new tensions for the City of Vancouver as the main 'brokering institution' through which multi-scaled configurations of food policy would be

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[82] As part of the candidate application process, individual candidates decided the sector with which they felt they were most closely affiliated.

mediated. Implementation took two, inter-connected strategies. The first strategy focused on advancing food policy from within local government itself. The aim was to enhance and better coordinate some of the program areas named in the Food Action Plan while at the same time integrating food issues into existing policy frameworks and programs areas of City departments. The second strategy involved the creation of Vancouver's first municipally-supported Food Policy Council. In both cases, challenges included a continued lack of awareness of what constituted food policy; enduring conflicts over jurisdictional and territorial understandings of what constituted Vancouver's food system; tensions between program delivery and policy development; lack of clarity over the roles of actors inside and outside of City Hall; the politics of achieving visible outcomes; and the perceived need to prove the worth of food policy in economic terms. An analysis of both implementation strategies offers new ways of thinking about connections between food policy, pre-existing sustainability policies and the urban geographies that result, including the ways in which alternative policy and planning goals can be advanced within the institutional spaces of local government itself.

As Chapter Eight demonstrates, by September 2004, once the full constellation of food policy supports were committed and in place, food policy became more formally integrated within local government. In analysing this process, represented by the 'institutionalisation and anchoring' stage of food policy and planning framework, Chapter Eight provides an opportunity to assess the overall correlations between food policy, as a new municipal policy area, and the politics of operationalising the goal of achieving a sustainable city.

CHAPTER 8
FINDING THE GOVERNANCE EQUILIBRIUM
FOR FOOD POLICY IN VANCOUVER

> Looking to the local government as somebody to take this on, to help facilitate
> [food policy] or... to provide the manpower ... is just huge ... It brings permanence
> to the issue. I think it allows for development of more core policy around the issue
> (Task Force Member, 16).

> The City has levers of power, zoning abilities, by-law abilities, that the community
> doesn't. The community has all the wisdom, has all the ideas. Tragically the
> bureaucrats and the politicians always have their hands on the levers of power,
> and what we need to do is somehow either put the levers of power in the
> community's hands or the wisdom in the bureaucrats or politicians hands. Or
> maybe a bit of both (Elected Official, 20).

Anchoring food policy in the City of Vancouver

September 20, 2004 marked the inaugural meeting of the Vancouver Food Policy Council. With
fifteen of twenty VFPC members in attendance, plus City staff and official liaisons, the first task of
the VFPC was to begin formulating a plan outlining how it would work with the City and other
partners on the goal of creating a just and sustainable food system for Vancouver. The food policy
staff team, by the time of the VFPC meeting, had been continuing their behind-the-scenes
integration of food issues into existing policy frameworks and programs areas of City departments,
while at the same time preparing to support the emerging objectives of the VFPC. Underlying all of
these processes was the goal of ensuring lasting stability for the City's new food policy
infrastructure so both short-term and long-term goals could be achieved. This aim is reflected in
phase five of the framework being used to guide the analysis of Vancouver's experience with food
policy development (Table 26).

Table 26: Policy cycle framework for food policy and planning (Phase Five)

Policy Cycle Framework for Food Policy and Planning	
Phase 1	Awareness-raising and lobbying
Phase 2	Diagnosis and stakeholder commitment
Phase 3	Strategy formulation and action planning
Phase 4	Implementation
Phase 5	Institutionalisation and anchoring

Phase five encompasses food policy institutionalisation and anchoring. This phase is characterised by long-term processes to change the way things are done, building new issues and participatory processes into procedures and norms (Dubbeling, 2001). In Vancouver's case, institutionalisation and anchoring must be understood in the context of a constellation of implementation strategies and supports that had been committed or set in place by September 2004. These included a multi-sectoral food policy council; five elected official liaison positions (two from City Council, one from Park Board and two from School Board); a strong complementary City mandate (sustainability); formal and informal multi-actor mechanisms for planning and dialogue; a full-time Food Policy Coordinator; and a full-time (two-year) Food System Planner.[83] In this way, an analysis of institutionalisation and anchoring, with its focus on new processes, partnerships and participants provides the opportunity to analyse how the assertions upon which this dissertation is based bore out in Vancouver's case. The institutionalisation and anchoring lens is particularly suitable to this task because it implies a relatively advanced stage in food policy development in that certain commitments on the part of local government must exist in order for such an assessment to take place.

The argument of this dissertation has been that the adoption and early implementation phases of food policy in the City of Vancouver were enabled by a series of locally specific conditions involving a fluid privileging of actors, actions and scales. Factors that enabled the adoption of food policy were found to include a critical mass of community expertise, political shifts at multiple scales, the

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[83] I was officially hired as the Food System Planner on December 1, 2004. Until then I filled the role in an interim capacity. With the Food Policy Coordinator having been hired in September 2004, the permanent staff team was considered to be in place by December 2004. The team included a Senior Social Planner who continued to act in an advisory capacity.

framing of food policy as a sustainability issue, and a pre-existing commitment to sustainability on the part of Vancouver's local government. At the same time, this dissertation has held that these factors must be understood within the wider social and political contexts within which they evolved. In Vancouver's case this included shifts in regional, provincial and national governance priorities; and high profile concerns about the integrity of the global food system being expressed at regional, national and international scales. Furthermore, the adoption of food policy in Vancouver was shown to depend not only on specific social, political-economic and institutional conditions, but equally on the ability of local government and other stakeholders to coordinate governance strategies between and among geographical scales, and mitigate tensions that arose. Due to the multi-dimensional nature of food policy, a fluid re-framing of what food policy was understood to be, and the scales at which was shown to be best mobilised was undertaken by various actors both inside and outside of City Hall. This fluidity informed the resulting types of local policy and governance responses to food policy.

In Vancouver's case, the process of finding an appropriate governance balance for the adoption and implementation of food policy in Vancouver was not without conflicts and challenges. In spite of an impressive infrastructure of food policy supports and clear early successes, a number of complex issues that had arisen over the course of Task Force deliberations re-surfaced less than half an hour into the first VFPC meeting. VFPC members questioned the ability to have their issues taken seriously by the bureaucracy given that both staff positions reported to a City department instead of the VFPC. They opposed the implication that they were at liberty to address only those food system issues within the City's jurisdiction instead of broader territorially-defined food systems, and grappled with how to balance their mandated roles as advocates, policymakers and advisors in relation to City roles and mandates. The demanding nature of new partnership approaches and the multi-scalar coordination of governance they entail was experienced equally by the staff team, who faced a still prevalent lack of understanding of food policy by a number of City departments that would be needed as essential partners in food policy and program implementation. As one Senior Manager expressed it:

[Food policy] is certainly not mainstream [within the organisation]. I can safely say that (Manager, CoV, 31).

These tensions reveal the complexities inherent in coordinating governance for emerging policy areas with no clear territorial or jurisdictional 'home.'

Assessing institutionalisation and anchoring

The institutionalisation and anchoring phase of Vancouver's food policy development corresponds formally with the period September 1, 2004 – December 31, 2004 (Table 27).

Table 27: Timeline of major events in Vancouver's food policy development (Phase Five)

PHASE	EVENTS	DATES
Institutionalisation (5)	Food Policy Coordinator hired	September 1, 2004
	First Food Policy Council meeting	September 20, 2004
	Food Systems Planner hired	December 1, 2004
	Vancouver Food Policy Council completes preliminary stages of work plan	December 31, 2004

Because this phase draws together the foundational questions upon which this dissertation is based, the analysis of institutionalisation and anchoring spills into all phases of Vancouver's food policy development.

In assessing institutionalisation and anchoring of food policy in Vancouver's case the goal is not to evaluate 'success' and 'failure' on the basis of a set of fixed criteria. On the contrary, as a number of experts have noted, institutionalisation can and should be assessed in terms of context-specific conditions at particular times (Dubbeling, 2001; Koc & MacRae, 1999; Dahlberg, 1994). The assumption is that food policy development, like other participatory urban processes, is dynamic and necessarily evolutionary. In this way it is argued that the legal formality accorded to emerging policy areas by 'anchoring' them in the local state apparatus is essential to achieving broader participation and citizen inclusion in decision-making, particularly where policy areas of concern to

vulnerable populations are involved (Cabannes, 2005; 2004b). The question then become how best to achieve 'the equilibrium point' – what to institutionalise and what not to – in finding a locally-appropriate balance between ordinances 'from above' and flexible citizen dynamics 'from below' (Ibid.). Although a universal set of assessment criteria cannot be assumed, a number of factors have been cited as influencing food policy institutionalisation and anchoring in general terms. These include community organising prior to the establishment of a food policy mandate; the location of food policy processes and mechanisms within a local government bureaucracy; staff and budget support; degree of integration into normative and regulatory mechanisms; participation of external consultants; 'champions' supporting food policy; related events with external significance; and overall leadership and management (MacRae, 1999; Yateman, 1992; Dahlberg, 1994).

Reflecting the specificity of the tensions and challenges that arose in Vancouver's case, six factors were chosen to assess the degree of institutionalisation and anchoring. The factors are drawn from existing research on food policy and planning where similar factors have been used to make comparable assessments (International Development Research Centre and Urban Management Program for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2003; Dubbeling, 2001; Argenti, 2000; Dahlberg, 1994; Yateman, 1992).[84] Furthermore, the chosen factors reflect aspects of the desired results of action planning and implementation strategies expressed in Vancouver's Food Action Plan and the evolving goals being developed by the VFPC. The chosen factors, while not exhaustive, encompass both structural and procedural issues. Structural factors refer to certain organisational arrangements and commitments involving local government. The natural corollary of structural factors are procedural factors that focus on "who is involved, when, how and where" (Dorcey, 2003), and therefore speak more directly to the role of how different actors work together to operationalise food policy goals and coordinate governance in the context of the structural commitments available. The structure-based factors are as follows:

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[84] The literature on participatory budgeting was also used as a source for factors used to assess institutionalisation and anchoring of emerging urban issues that are predicated on partnership approaches. In this regard, the work of Cabannes (2005; 2004b) was particularly instructive.

- Legal status and mandated role for food policy
- Dedicated staffing and budget support
- Integration of food policy into normative and legal frameworks

The procedural factors being used to assess institutionalisation and anchoring include the following:

- Involvement of joint-actor partnerships and networks in planning and policy-making
- Citizen participation mechanisms including marginalised populations
- City-wide, neighbourhood-level and household-level expressions of food policy

To provide a comparative benchmark, the factors are analysed in the context of the periods before and after City Council approval of the Food Action Plan. This reflects a crude dividing line between the presence and absence of a formal food policy mandate. Table 28 shows a snapshot of the factors before and after City Council approval of the Food Action Plan. The symbol '✘' represents absence of the factor. The symbol '✓' represents presence of the factor. '✘/✓' represents partial presence of the factor suggesting both limits and benefits.

Table 28: Institutionalisation and anchoring factors

	Before City Council Approval of Action Plan	After City Council Approval of Action Plan
1. Legal status and mandated role	✗	✓
2. Dedicated staffing and budget support	✗	✓
3. Integration of food policy into normative and legal frameworks	✗/✓	✗/✓
4. Involvement of joint-actor partnerships and networks in planning and policy-making	✗/✓	✓
5. Citizen participation mechanisms including marginalised populations	✗/✓	✗/✓
6. City-wide, neighbourhood-level and household-level expressions of food policy	✗	✗/✓

Table 28 suggests that varying degrees of institutionalisation and anchoring were achieved in Vancouver. It is assumed, however, that all six factors embody a range of effects from symbolic achievements with little impact on the city, to more significant impacts on Vancouver's governance system including 'measurable impacts' in improving the quality of live of citizens (Cabannes, 2005). A closer analysis of the factors reveals the strengths and weaknesses of each factor as a strategy coordinating governance for food policy, and shows what food policy in particular brings to the approach. Furthermore, a closer reading of the factors suggests answers to the more fundamental questions of the role of local government in coordinating governance strategies at different geographical scales and contexts, particularly where 'sustainability' is involved.

Structural factors

1.   Legal status and mandated role

The question of what a mandate and legal status brought to institutionalisation and anchoring of food policy in the City of Vancouver may not be as simple as it first appears. On a purely instrumental level, it can be concluded that the approval of the Food Action Plan on March 11, 2004 (including the recommended staffing and budget resources) marked an important turning point from a lack of formal status for food policy, to one of official acknowledgment. This turning point was viewed by the Food Policy Task Force, other organisations, and supportive City staff as an important victory. One Task Force member described the significance of the City's new food policy mandate as "bring[ing] permanence to the issue (Task Force Member, 16). The legal basis for Vancouver's local government to pursue food policy as an official development direction is found in Section 202A of the Vancouver Charter, which is the provincial legislation to which Vancouver is bound.[85] Section 202A includes a clause that allows for the development of Social Planning issues (Vancouver Charter, Section 202A, 2004). The clause states that:

> [City] Council may provide for social planning to be undertaken, including research, analysis and coordination relating to social needs, social well-being and social development in the city.

From an organisational perspective, there is no question that an official food policy mandate and legal status enabled the Food Action Plan to move into implementation stages. Without it, the resources and authorisation to advance food policy under the auspices of local government would have been limited at best. As one interview respondent described it: "...[Staff] get our marching orders directly from [City] Council" (Planner, CoV, 23). While this observation may overstate the

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[85] As discussed in earlier chapters, Vancouver's constitutional authority to act within the British Columbia context is unique because it has its own Charter. Every other municipality in British Columbia is bound by the Provincial Local Government Act. The Local Government Act also contains allowances for possible links to food policy. These are found primarily in Section 878 where a range of policy areas that can be included in an Official Development Plan for a city are listed. Most relevant to food policy is reference to the ability to address social needs, social well-being and social development, maintenance of farming land, agricultural uses, and preservation of natural environment (Local Government Act, Section 787, 1996).

rigidity of City Council / City staff working relations, it is evident that the significance of the mandate and legal status factor is complex and raises some important questions. For instance, what specific outcomes did the official food policy mandate and legal status enable? Did the mandate outline the specific parameters of what local government's role in food policy would be? Did it define the roles and expectations of other food policy actors? And finally, although the broad representative composition of the Food Policy Task Force is indicative of an inclusive partnership approach to consultation, to what the extent did the process reflect citywide awareness of, and participation in the identification of food system problems and proposal of solutions? In other words, whose vision of a food policy mandate was approved?

These questions bring back to the fore issues of policy agenda setting, described as the processes by which issues or demands move from the public agenda to the formal governance agenda (Cobb & Elder, 1971, pp. 903 – 904). To a growing extent, the number of public issues far exceeds the capacity of decision-making institutions to respond to them (Cobb et al., 1976, p. 126). This is particularly true in Canadian cities, where constitutional arrangements and other divisions of legislative and fiscal responsibility mean that local governments are often limited in their capacity to respond to the growing number of cross-cutting issues being brought to their doorstep to address. Earlier chapters of this dissertation outlined the growing disparity in Canadian cities between the fiscal capacity of local governments and the growing responsibilities they are expected to meet (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003, p. 2). Further, it was observed that "the property tax base [upon which cities rely] is too limited and regressive to support the wide range of social, economic and environmental challenges that local governments now face" (Ibid., p. 2). In spite of constitutional and legislative limitations, it is clear that local governments are attempting to respond to demands of their constituents by taking on issues including social development, affordable housing and poverty reduction (Torjman, 2002). However, this has resulted in a highly competitive field of issues vying for political space on local governance agendas. It is in this context that lobbying for local government recognition of food policy in Vancouver must be understood.

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Among the influences in achieving an official food policy mandate in Vancouver included a City Council openly sympathetic to a broader range of public policy issues than was the case in previous administrations. Other areas competing for policy space on Vancouver's governance agenda at the time, and in most cases achieving it, included childcare, social sustainability, homelessness, emissions reduction, women's issues, peace and justice, and addictions treatment. Of particular significance in these examples is the fact that they can all be characterised as multi-jurisdictional, and most encompass geographies far beyond Vancouver's territorial boundaries. One interview respondent characterised Vancouver's openness to exploring non-statutory issues as innovative and forward-thinking: "As a local government we ought to go where we ought not to be [constitutionally]" (Senior Manager, CoV, 30). The same respondent qualified the response by adding the caveat: "[Should] Vancouver [have] stepped in[to food policy]? Yes, they [should] have. Should they do it forever? No."

What this points to is a commitment to tackle major urban issues, while at the same time recognising that increases in the number of issues being accorded official recognition by City Council calls into question the ability of the organisation to respond with appropriate resources and expertise in the long term, particularly in the context of limited revenue-generating powers to pay for statutory services. As one interview respondent described it:

> Maybe it takes a thousand great ideas to get one that is going to work, and somebody's got to defend the institution from the nine hundred and ninety-nine that are terrible or that would just [be confusing] (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

According to many interview respondents, the effectiveness of Vancouver's food policy mandate rests on the need to better clarify the roles and responsibilities of local government, and promote what some scholars call an asset-based approach to addressing local concerns (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003). This approach encourages "the identification and building of strengths to expand local capacity and opportunities" including building relationships between organisations and sectors, better coordinating the services already provided, and collaborating with partners (Ibid., pp. 5 – 6). As one Manager put it:

[We need] clarity around the role of what a municipality can do [in the area of food policy]. If you look at the Food Policy Council, at this point there is no intention for it to be a granter [funder]. There is no intention for it to be a service deliverer, but rather its intention is to facilitate, coordinate [funding] partnerships elsewhere, bring the communities together and look at ways we can use either existing resources, new policy areas, things that have little or no cost that we were already going to be doing, to advance that policy (Manager, CoV, 24).

Others echoed a view that can be described as reflecting a partnership ethos:

What the local government does have is the agility, the confidence, and ... we've created a place where we hatch and facilitate our responses, where the ... other levels of government can't bring themselves to [do] it. They actually don't know how to do it (Manager, CoV, 30).

While many interview respondents pointed to the role of local government as a facilitator and coordinator in addressing food policy,[86] they also emphasised the importance of sharing responsibility with other jurisdictions:

We still need to get the GVRD and the senior levels of government involved and still get their buy in ... I think that is really important so they know there is still a role for the senior governments to play (Senior Policy Analyst, Provincial Government, 11).

The question of sharing the burden of reform where food policy is concerned is an important one. It raises the question of what set food policy apart in the eyes of a local government facing multiple requests for official acknowledgment of a range of emerging, often non-statutory, policy areas. One factor that may have made a difference is that compared with policy areas such as childcare and drug treatment, food policy is an area for which no clear mandate exists at other levels of government. While there was no widespread agreement that this translated into a natural fit with local government, the fact that no other level of government could be identified as a more

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[86] Social Planning, CityPlan and the Office of Sustainability were often noted as examplary sites of expertise in facilitation and coordination of new policy directions and neighbourhood-based issues.

compelling statutory 'home,' made it easier to rationalise local government stepping in, if only in the capacity of facilitator or broker. This is particularly true given that many of the recommendations of the Task Force involved programs and services in which the City already had a role (e.g. community gardens, farmers markets, environmental protection, community development). Once the mandate was granted, the question of its intended uses and outcomes came to the fore. In this regard, two factors may suggest how and by whom the mandate would be deployed. First, the inherently multi-sectoral nature of food policy lent itself to 'multiple outcome' thinking similar to the City's sustainability mandate where social, environmental and economic benefits are sought in equal measure. In granting a food policy mandate, City Councillors themselves articulated a range of perceived benefits that spanned community capacity building, social sustainability, environmental protection, and local economic development.

Second, the mandate itself as a City Council 'marching order' was shown to have inherent influence in facilitating outcomes. As one interview respondent put it:

> The most interesting thing to me is the fact that this community garden project that we are working on will have a different profile, and probably be easier to move through the bureaucracy with this [food] policy [mandate]. It's like a lot of other projects that ... the more conservative parts of our bureaucracy – who are the ones who have the purse strings and control the properties and so on – are often reluctant to ... get involved with. But now when there is a Council policy [mandate], I think having that is really important and that it will move things (Senior Planner, CoV ,15).

Third, by the time an official food policy was granted, a considerable base of expertise and experience had been built among a range of community groups and food networks with proven records in delivering a range of food-related programs and services. The track record for delivering results meant that in theory, responsibility for developing and delivering appropriate food system solutions could rely on a number of 'outside' and 'in-between' governance mechanisms including the VFPC and other community networks. In this way, the question of sharing responsibility for food policy extends from government partners to other non-traditional partners.

At the same time, what remained lacking was a clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of different actors in implementing food system goals. Similarly lacking was a nuanced vision of the city's food system needs based on geography and population. Lastly, the mandate itself was granted on the basis of consultation processes that, while broad-based, did not engage individual consumers, particularly the hungry. The tools needed to address these questions were found, at least in part, in the provision of various structural factors including dedicated staffing, budget supports and planning and management tools.

2.   Staffing and budget support

The creation of dedicated staff positions had clear benefits in helping to institutionalise and anchor food policy in the City of Vancouver. The creation of two dedicated staff positions – one full-time Food Policy Coordinator and one full-time (two-year) Food System Planner – emerged as a strong recommendation of the Food Policy Task Force. The Task Force recommendation was supported by research that finds that staff support is critically important to the success of food policy councils, and by extension, food policy development more broadly (Borron, 2003; Toronto Food Policy Council, 2002; Dahlberg, 1994, 1992). The benefits of dedicated food policy staff are argued to include consistent leadership, organisational stability, keeping food system goals on the radar of local governments and avoiding lapses in activity (Borron, 2003; Toronto Food Policy Council, 2002). The specific responsibilities of food policy staff are argued to include promoting consensus around food issues, garnering support, developing policy, navigating implementation details, finding champions, and facilitating experimental programs (Ibid.).

In Vancouver's case, the two proposed staff positions reflected the need to fulfil both 'inside' and 'outside' functions associated with institutionalising and anchoring food policy. Specifically, the Food Policy Coordinator was designed to act as a bridge between the City and 'outside' citizen groups including in particular the VFPC, while the Food System Planner would facilitate action 'from the inside' of the bureaucracy. The 'inside/outside' approach had been characteristic of community organising and lobbying around food issues in Vancouver prior to the official food policy mandate being granted. While this strategy cannot be argued to be unique to Vancouver, what sets

the city apart is the approval of both positions, making the resources available to achieve effective inside/outside planning and management mechanisms considerably more robust.

The creation of food policy staff positions was supported not only by the Task Force, but also by a number of interview respondents from local government who argued that the dedicated positions were an essential mechanism to ensure long-term stability for food policy within the organisation :

> When [the City of Vancouver] got the child advocate [position] ... people said, 'what is this person going to do?' But a couple of the child advocates were outstanding, and have gotten the City to look at children's issues. Every time we don't have a strong child advocate ... children's [issues] disappear. It is having a position [for food policy] that will make a difference ... Otherwise, when they get into tight times, you start going down through the list, the sewer stays and the water stays and the street paving stays, and the child advocate and the food person goes. That's the way cities work (Provincial Government, Manager, 14).

Other respondents noted the link between the creation of dedicated positions to help institutionalise new policy areas, and the success and longevity of those areas:

> [For] the past five or ten years now, when we do something [new], we have somebody whose job it is to work with the rest of the bureaucracy to introduce that policy ... 'These are the approved directions that relate to what you do, and here is how they can help you in directing what you do – your services and programs and funding – to meet these approved policies.' So that we ... go and work on that with other staff. If we didn't I don't think they would get it. I think [having] a [Food Policy] Coordinator and being an advocate for [food] policy is really important (Senior Planner, CoV, 15).

While the approval of two staff positions has been shown to be beneficial to the process of institutionalising and anchoring food policy in Vancouver, two specific staffing-related tensions emerged during early implementation stages. The first related to the organisational location of the food policy staff and food policy council, and the second, related to the reporting structure of the staff positions.

Organisational location and staff reporting structure

A number of trade-offs and advantages associated with the organisational location of food policy staff and food policy councils have been noted by scholars:

> The particular department/agency where the FPC is located makes a real difference as does the type of support that a FPC is able to build with other departments or agencies through formal or informal linkages (Dahlberg, 1994, p. 4).

The location of a food policy council and staff close (institutionally and in reporting terms) to the Mayor's Office can bring benefits and drawbacks including the politicisation of food policy leading to fluctuating budgetary or policy support depending on who is in power. Conversely, if an FPC is situated 'further away' from the Mayor's Office, it may have a less direct linkage to direct decision-making. However, a distant location may bring more freedom to pursue independent agendas and priorities (Ibid.).

There was considerable debate over the organisational location of the city's food policy work stemming from precisely this trade-off. Initially, many Task Force members believed that food policy goals would be more easily achieved if the VPFC and staff were located close to the Mayor's Office (Food Policy Task Force small group worksheets, consultation #1, meeting #2). As the consultation processes unfolded, including the development of proposed mandates of the VFPC and staff, the views of the Task Force, and even staff shifted, marking an important change in perceptions about the optimal composition of local partnership approaches to food policy. Because of the strong existing links to communities and community organisations, the Task Force ultimately recommended that the food policy staff and the VFPC be closely affiliated with the Social Planning Department (City of Vancouver, 2003a). As one City staff member described it:

> I think every municipality is going to be different [as to] where [the FPC and staff] needs to live. Social Planning had so many advantages ... in that it is already established, it deals with community, it deals with social development [so] it is a good match. I think in the end the discussion about the trade-offs and advantages needs to be carefully thought out (Manager, CoV, 24).

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The 'good match' between the Social Planning Department and food policy reflected the sustainable food systems philosophy of Vancouver's approach to food policy. Unlike many other cities where food policy stems bureaucratically and ideologically from public health issues, most notably hunger and poverty, Vancouver's food policy was 'nested' within the pre-existing policy framework of sustainability and social development, making its location within a department catering to a host of cross-cutting community-based issues, arguably appropriate. In addition, Social Planning was home to a group of staff with expertise in many of the policy areas embodied in sustainable food system goals. Another factor that may have influenced the recommended location of the City's food policy work was the advocacy mandate of the VFPC, an approach that may have been less compatible with the politicised atmosphere of the Mayor's Office. This factor is discussed further in the context of factor 4: joint-actor networks and partnerships.

Perhaps more controversial was the reporting structure of the staff positions. The Food Action Plan recommended that the positions report to the Director of Social Planning. However, once the VFPC was elected and began to meet, this stipulation was met with considerable resistance by VFPC members who wanted the Food Policy Coordinator in particular to report to them. The concern was that without a staff position directly accountable to the VFPC, the ability to have their voices heard and participate meaningfully in new governance structures would be compromised. The same tension has arisen in Toronto where "neither individual TFPC members, nor the TFPC as a whole, can supervise, evaluate or discipline TFPC staff" (Toronto Food Policy Council, 2002, p. 20). In Toronto, the staff coordinator is expected to implement decisions made by the citizen-based Toronto Food Policy Council, while at the same time being accountable to Toronto Public Health. What this requires, according to the TFPC is "extra doses of mutual respect and tolerance from both TFPC leaders and the Toronto Public Health managers" (Ibid., p. 20). This tension reflects the risk of governmental actors remaining determinant in partnership processes and outcomes in spite of claims of equal participation and input (Craig, 2004; Lamer & Craig, 2002). In this way, the question of which interests have power and control over decision-making processes becomes a key determinant in the production of urban geographies (McCann, 2001).

Budget support

Another emerging urban practice highly dependent on participatory processes is that of
Participatory Budgeting (PB). Although a number of definitions of participatory budgeting exist, in
general terms, a Participatory Budget is "a mechanism (or process) through which the population
decides on, or contributes to decisions made on, the destination of all or part of the available public
resources" (Cabannes 2004b, p. 20). In analysing budgetary allocations for PB, Cabannes
underscores the extent to which this factor impacts the quality and the level of consolidation of the
entire process. In what Cabannes calls 'minimalist' situations, local governments internalise the
costs of the municipal personnel in charge of the Participatory Budget, but with reduced or non-
existent operating costs (Cabannes, 2005). He notes that in some cases, these municipal workers
are funded by NGOs or other agencies leading to "fragile processes in terms of durability and
political will." A more advanced situation in terms of institutionalisation and anchoring would be one
in which cities allocate a specific budget for the staff team and its functioning including the
possibility of resources for communication, research, dissemination of results, or documentation of
the experiences (Ibid.).

The parallels to the experience of food policy development are noteworthy. Like PB, the
importance of allocating specific budgetary resources to food policy staff and other supports has
been shown to be essential to the success and stability of food policy (Borron, 2003; Dahlberg,
1992). In Vancouver's case, the two full-time positions that were approved were new positions, not
reallocations from other program areas. Furthermore, both positions became line items in the City's
operating budget providing more funding stability. In addition to staff salaries, City Council
approved an annual budget of $15,000 for the Food Policy Council:

> ... for the planning and implementation of events incorporating outreach activities
> and information sharing, holding regular meetings in the community, conducting
> food system research and promoting awareness of food policy issues, plus start
> up costs estimated to be $10,000, managed by the Director of Social Planning
> (City of Vancouver, 2003a).

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The source of funds were added to the operating budget in 2005. In this way, the budgeting support factor can be argued to contribute significantly to institutionalising and anchoring food policy.

3.   Integration of food policy into existing normative and legal frameworks

The integration of food policy into normative and legal frameworks of local government in Vancouver was discussed in Chapter 7 where it was found that in Vancouver's case, an official food policy mandate was granted in the absence of an actual or proposed food policy framework. Although a wide array of food-related programs and services are delivered or supported by local government in Vancouver, no specific policies were proposed or approved in the Plan itself. The consequences include a lack of normative or regulatory tools corresponding to specific policy areas (e.g. urban agriculture, farmers markets, food access, food recycling etc.) that together would constitute a comprehensive policy structure. Equally important is the lack of formal codification of food policy within the City's broader sustainability commitments, or within multi-jurisdictional policy frameworks. For these reasons the policy integration factor can be considered to yield only partial benefits in Vancouver's case during the period being examined in this dissertation. However, it is important to bear in mind that Vancouver's experience in this regard is not unique, but rather reflects a wide recognition that:

> ... food policy offers a substantial challenge to governments as it reaches across a
> number of policy areas, demanding responses across these different policy
> sectors (Barling et al., 2002, p. 556).

Achieving policy integration across policy sectors and departmental boundaries is a generic problem for governments made more complex where food policy is concerned due to an unusually high number of implicated issues including the environment, agriculture, public health, anti-poverty, community building and local economic development among others (Barling et al., 2002; MacRae, 1999). While food policy has often been cited as a policy innovator for proposing a range of integration solutions involving public bodies and other organisations, what is missing is a

coordinated and strategic approach to such policy interventions (Wekerle, 2004; Barling et al., 2002; Argenti, 2000; Sustain, 2002). As Barling et al. describe it:

> A socially responsive and sustainable food policy necessitates political
> mechanisms and processes that can frame policy options in a broader and more
> inclusive fashion than has been achieved to date (2002, p. 567).

In response to this need, a growing number of proposed models for an integrated food policy are emerging at a number of scales of governance. Although few have been successfully implemented, frequently cited examples at the scale of the nation-state include Norway and Finland where national food policy councils and food and nutrition policies have been created to provide integrated advice that combines public health and sustainable food system goals (Ibid., p. 568). In the Canadian context, Riches (2004) argues that the vast potential of food policy in producing integrated policy outcomes at the national level stems from the fact that:

> ...food connects us all. It has the potential of bringing together different sectors of
> our communities to talk about achieving food security and how to address a range
> of community issues (Riches, 2004, p. 11).

Riches proposes a new perspective on national food security that requires a rethinking of our current approach to social policy, development and advocacy (Ibid., p. 11). In Riches's view, this includes a re-consideration of the role of national social policy organisations such as the Canadian Council on Social Development in monitoring Canada's Action Plan for Food Security (1998), the Canadian response to the 1996 World Food Summit, and proposed actions in both the domestic and international arenas (Ibid., p.12).

Another Canadian response is offered by MacRae (1999, p. 193) who proposes an integrated food policy structure based on ecological principles. MacRae argues that institutional structures and processes should mimic the diversity of the ecosystem problems they are attempting to solve. He cites a number of ecosystem characteristics that he argues should be in place to ensure an institutional environment best suited to achieving integrated food policy successes:

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- Well established intelligence networks that focus on key indicators of activity and change;

- Open-ended networks of interdependent allies inside and outside of the organisation to build collaborative solutions;

- Decision-making shifted to people closest to the environment;

- More lateral lines of communication;

- Risk is spread by investing in more than one approach to solving a problem;

- Teams are created and dissassembled for different tasks. (MacRae 1999, pp. 194 – 195).

MacRae argues that existing structures that are consistent with the ecological model do not exist at the level of national governance in Canada, but asserts that certain characteristics of the model do exist at the local level. Specifically, MacRae contends that FPCs, as multi-sectoral roundtables, represent an expression of the ecological model where many sectoral interests are involved in solving local food system problems (Ibid., p. 195). While this may be the case, MacRae's analysis does not account fully for the broader governance context in which FPCs operate. MacRae and others assert that "FPCs can be structured to interact formally with municipal government." However, interaction cannot be equated with integration, where formal decision-making tools and policies help secure lasting structural and procedural change. Some scholars ask whether indeed local and regional governments have the capacity to provide the structural platforms needed to promote new integrated food policy approaches on a widespread basis (Barling et al., 2002, p. 571). Other scholars insist that it is precisely at the local level where alternative food policy structures are being advanced most successfully (Wekerle, 2004). In this capacity, local level interventions have been described as "islands of policy innovation, re-thinking and challenging the dominant paradigms of food policy" (Barling et al., 2002, p. 569).

The benefits of an integrated approach to local food policy development brings us back to the question of how Vancouver can develop appropriate policies from its existing food-related programs and services, and achieve better institutional integration of these policies without confining them to a single department or sector framed by particular interests (Barling et al., 2002).

Concerns about policy 'confinement' in Vancouver's case were expressed by some interview respondents. One Social Planner described it this way:

> Maybe it's not about having an explicit area of focus [for food policy]. Maybe you need an explicit area of focus at the very beginning to get it going and get it on to people's radar. But hopefully what it becomes is when you draw up your social plan or your land use plan that those kinds of values are just infiltrated. You know, at the end of the day, to me that is the mark of success. So maybe it takes that huge awareness raising to get it on the agenda at first but then you wait until ... it percolates. So I don't know if that percolation can happen without it being its own area of focus for a while (Social Planner, CoV, 27).

Another respondent drew an analogy between food policy and the City's approach to childcare:

> When we first started [working on childcare policy at the City] there wasn't much ... reason for the City to want to be involved ... Now it is a given. Now we recognize that childcare, children's issues are a part of any new major project or development. I think food policy may go the same route (Manager, CoV, 24).

In effect, these concerns emerge as another dimension of coordinating governance, where the institution of local government itself is seen to be a site of struggles around the coordination of interests and responsibilities. There are a number of ways that Vancouver can develop a systems-based integrated food policy that would contribute further to institutionalisation and anchoring while avoiding policy confinement. Some of these approaches are already present in Vancouver's case.

First, prior to the City Council mandate, Vancouver already had a wide range of food-related programs and services, and even some stand alone policies. This means that many of the building blocks for a more integrated policy architecture are already in place. Second, the links between food policy and the City's existing sustainability commitments from which food policy already benefits, can be strengthened and formalised. It has already been shown that food policy embodies a host of 'sustainability' goals including environmental protection, public health, anti-poverty, community building and local economic development among others. These connections were observed by interview respondents, some of whom framed the connections in terms of specific development projects including Southeast False Creek:

> The Southeast False Creek Policy Statement brought everything forward: social
> objectives, economic objectives, environmental objectives, at all issues, all levels.
> And as a way of seeing it through to the next level they said, 'you have to do an
> urban agriculture strategy' (Manager, CoV, 25).

Others perceived food policy as an opportunity to develop more robust and comprehensive
sustainability policies:

> The whole [idea] of sustainability as we move forward, as we bring the balance to
> it beyond the environment, to social and to the economic kind of drivers, [where]
> food policy is concerned, there's a vacuum (Senior Manager, CoV, 30).

Existing policy commitments where sustainability is concerned extend to international events
scheduled to take place in Vancouver beginning in 2006. The implementation of the Food Action
Plan was argued to provide "significant advances to upcoming City initiatives and commitments
including the 2010 Winter Olympics and the Habitat Plus 30 Congress, both of which have strong
sustainability agendas" (City of Vancouver, 2003a). These connections provide compelling
opportunities to develop and showcase leadership and innovation in the development of integrated
food policy frameworks at the local level.

Third, in terms of organisational structure, Vancouver's food policy development, particularly within
a sustainability framework, matches a number of criteria of MacRae's ecological model of
integrated policy. In particular, the existence of well-established, open-ended networks of
interdependent allies inside and outside of the organisation to build collaborative solutions; lateral
lines of communication; and flexible teams who are created and disassembled for different tasks.
(MacRae, 1999, pp. 194 – 195). Such an approach maximises the 'asset-based' or 'value-added'
approach to addressing local concerns (Torjman & Leviten-Reid, 2003; Geddes, 2000) in which
local capacity is expanded through civil society links with the local state "as partner rather than
supplicant" (Wekerle, 2004, p. 382).

Fourth, the multi-faceted nature of Vancouver's food policy 'movement' itself has enabled disparate
community groups, agencies, governmental bodies and individuals to engage and organise around

an issue in which they all have a stake. This, combined with the fact that urban food policy initiatives typically originate from the communities in which they are found means that food policy typically embodies issues relevant to the daily lived experiences of a broad cross-section of citizens in their immediate environments. At the same time it was shown that regional, national and global connections often stemmed from Vancouver's local food initiatives. Interview data reported in earlier chapters reveal a concerted interested in linking local food policy development in Vancouver with food system issues at multiple scales. Connections were often articulated in the context of producing local benefits to neighbourhoods and communities. Although questions arise as to how food justice movements operate simultaneously at local, regional, national and international scales, such a scenario suggests that food policy holds potential to serve as a policy tool that enables a number of inter-related outcomes at multiple scales.

Lastly, an integrated food policy architecture can be developed in Vancouver because of the scale at which changes are being sought. Specifically, at the local scale there are fewer competing food interests with which elected officials, policymakers and citizens in Vancouver must grapple. For example, healthy eating messages expressed in national or provincial health policies can conflict with contradictory messages permitted by the regulatory frameworks of other arms of government (MacRae, 1999, p. 190). Similarly, environmental stewardship messages often compete with a paradigm of national economic competitiveness and international trade liberalisation where food and agriculture are concerned (Barling et al., 2002, p. 571; MacRae, 1999, p. 190). Local food policies and their associated regulatory tools focus instead on achieving locally-appropriate solutions within municipal activities and responsibilities that are existing or constitutionally possible. Where they fall outside of jurisdictional or territorial boundaries, other mechanisms are sought to facilitate responses. Examples include budgeting, tax policies, public service delivery, land use planning and regulation. In this way, a coordinated food policy framework will result in Vancouver "doing what [it] already [does] in a better way" (Argenti, 2000, p. 3). The result can be potentially more rapid and widespread implementation of creative solutions.

Procedural factors

The structural factors being used to assess institutionalisation and anchoring of food policy in Vancouver, while essential, are insufficient on their own in helping to ensure lasting integration of food policy. The corollary of the three structural factors just discussed are procedural factors that focus on how, when and where different actors work together to operationalise food policy goals in the context of the structural commitments available. These factors are particularly significant in answering questions related to the coordination of governance for food policy. The procedural factors being analysed are (4) involvement of joint-actor partnerships and networks in planning and policy-making; (5) Citizen participation mechanisms including marginalised populations; and (6) city-wide, neighbourhood-level and household-level responsiveness. Because of the close links between factors 4 and 5, they are discussed together.

4.   Involvement of joint-actor partnerships and networks in planning and policy-making

5.   Citizen participation mechanisms including marginalised populations

In Vancouver's case it has been shown that a number of new food policy partnership arrangements were formalised or re-constituted during the research period. These include the creation of a food policy council, two staff positions with 'inside / outside' functions, and official liaison positions. Other joint-actor partnerships were developed or formalised around specific community or academic projects, former community networks and non-profit organisations. Some of the ways in which new partnerships resulted in shifts between previously understood scales, mandates, accountabilities and participants in local governance can be analysed through the lens of institutionalisation and anchoring. The first two of three process-based factors being discussed: joint-actor partnerships and citizen participation mechanisms, offer important insights into this phase of food policy development. This research finds that there were both limits and benefits where these two factors are concerned when analysed before and after the City Council approval of the Food Action Plan.

Roles, responsibilities and outcomes: Competing expectations

Proponents argue that among the conditions needed to improve partnership approaches are clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the actors involved (Savan et al., 2004, pp. 610 – 611). As a corollary to this view, other scholars ask how 'food justice movements' can operate simultaneously on place-based projects and also at the policy level (Wekerle, 2004, p. 382). These issues reveal the need to balance program delivery with policy development in the context of competing expectations around roles, responsibilities and outcomes. This dissertation found that the need to balance policy and programs in Vancouver's case became acute when the time- and resource-consuming process of policy development encountered widespread pressure to achieve 'quick wins' to demonstrate the 'value' of food policy in the short term:

> When you have a new policy being driven politically, what the politicians need and want is a public manifestation of it. There will be some impatience as we try to strengthen the [food] policy framework. [The community] will want it to manifest right now, and the politicians are going to want that as well because they are going into an election. And that's our reality (Senior Manager, CoV, 30).

This tension was intensified by a lack of clearly defined roles and expectations for both community and government partners. On the question of defining roles and responsibilities, the same interview respondent added:

> ... As the community engagement increases, as the community ... takes ownership [of food policy], I mean, that's why they want to take ownership of it ... you don't want the implementation to stay with the same people who helped to build the policy. So you've got to find that balance (Senior Manager, CoV, 30).

While the balance being sought must be attentive to local specificities, goals and strengths of the actors involved, Wekerle (2004, p. 382) observes that where food policy is concerned,

> ... local government continues to be seen as a key actor in providing leadership, staffing for joint initiatives, funding and policy implementation at the scale of the city and beyond.

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This may be attributed to a number of factors including staff expertise, knowledge of the bureaucracy and familiarity with legal statutes. In this sense, local government responsibility for certain key functions of partnership approaches to food policy may in fact be appropriate given that community partners can lack the experience of operating within bureaucratic processes or access to the legal or regulatory levers that facilitate implementation and anchoring (Geddes, 2000, p. 793). This finding emerged in Vancouver's case where a number of Task Force respondents reported a lack of understanding of how to work with the City bureaucracy, particularly during early phases of organising:

> [At the beginning] ... we didn't know where to start so we started with the [government] pages in the phone book. Everyone we spoke to was the person who answered the phone and they had their pat answer for select questions. We didn't have the knowledge or the experience of knowing how to get around some of those barriers (Task Force Member, 13).

This finding carries a strong caution that the balance of roles and responsibilities between citizen groups, local government and other actors stems equally from the critical need for community participation to surpass tokenism or window dressing in order to contribute meaningfully to partnership processes. In this way, both the types of community partners involved and the nature of their contributions become significant factors in ensuring inclusive outcomes.

With regard to the former, Chatterton and Style (2001, p. 440) ask whether established partnership networks play a dominant role in defining food policy to the detriment of a range of groups outside the policy process. An earlier section of this chapter asked whose food policy vision was approved in Vancouver's case. It was argued that although the broad representative composition of the Food Policy Task Force is indicative of an inclusive partnership approach to consultation, the process may have reflected a selective interpretation of food system problems and proposal of solutions according to the most established food policy network members. In Vancouver's case, the food policy consultation process depended heavily on established partnership networks, most notably the Lower Mainland Food Coalition. What this raises is the recognition that while partnerships have been shown to draw a range of actors into the process of local governance, this does not mean

that "all of the key actors whose decisions will shape local futures are 'signed up' to the partnership programme" (Geddes, 2000, p. 792). The challenge of engaging with the wider local community, including in particular, the city's most excluded groups is one with which Vancouver will continue to grapple.

At the same time, the ideal of inclusive participation may have different levels of significance that vary according to each phase of food policy development. While inclusive participation may be particularly critical during early phases of problem identification and proposal of solutions, it may be less critical during implementation and anchoring phases where different mechanisms of collaboration and communication can be put in place. While this may seem a radical claim where goals of inclusivity are at play, it should be emphasised that determining the balance of roles and responsibilities of citizen groups, local government and other actors must correspond with the food system goals set by affected groups. In Toronto's case, for example, the Food Policy Council found after a number of years in operation that its goals no longer matched the skill set of its members. In this way, while the TFPC may have achieved what they considered to be a representative Council, the representation they achieved became a liability when advanced stages of policy-making and implementation were reached. To avoid such a situation, the actors involved in Vancouver's case must recognise that the cycle of goal-setting, implementation and anchoring is dynamic and subject to continual revisiting as food policy development evolves. What MacRae (1999) identifies as the need for flexible teams, who are created and disassembled for different tasks, provides a concrete functional model to conceive of how to ensure participation, while at the same time capitalising on strengths of the actors involved. It must be noted however, that the model depends fundamentally on valuing not only the 'expert' codified knowledge of formal organisations, but equally the experiential knowledge of community partners (Chatterton & Style, 2001, pp. 441 - 442.).

Finding Vancouver's food policy equilibrium point

The highly sensitive issue of roles and representation where joint-actor partnerships are involved brings to the fore the question of finding Vancouver's food policy 'equilibrium point,' described as the balance of "what to institutionalise and what not to" (Cabannes, 2005). While there is no

standard or static formula to determine the balance between ordinances "from above" and flexible and creative citizen dynamics "from below," the findings of this dissertation reveal a number of suggestive perspectives on what some interview respondents described as the "ownership" of food policy in Vancouver. Referring to a cover story on Vancouver's food policy development that ran in a local newspaper on August 1, 2004, one respondent observed:

> I think that in the Courier [newspaper] article, everyone seemed to have ownership of [food policy]. That's probably the notion of success that no one felt, wherever it lived [in the organisation], no one felt the [Social Planning] Department or the City took it over, but that the community really still owned it and had a partnership with the City. That's a big story. In fact the biggest story if you're going to look at how to move social sustainability into ... governance. If we can achieve that, it is a very positive story. What does it mean to achieve it, and what's all the work involved so that a community can say, 'it's really ours' (Manager, CoV, 24).

Other respondents reflected on conditions necessary to ensure success of food policy over the 'long haul.' Some pointed to the potential risks of over-bureaucratising food policy :

> ...Over the long haul, the success of this process and program is not government dependent. I don't want it to bureaucratise. What I want it to do is to become a powerful enough entity that can influence and shape food policy at all levels. The more that government sometimes gets into places, the less the community takes ownership. So we have to find a fine balance between the food policy which is important for us to facilitate but it becomes less successful if we own it. Bureaucrats tend to want to own it (Senior Manager, CoV, 30).

Some interview respondents reported strategic reasons for guarding against over-bureaucratisation that related specifically to ensuring future successes for food policy at multiple scales of governance:

> Food policy is one area that as near as I can tell the federal and provincial governments have never even considered ... that local governments might get involved in, so they haven't cut off [the] escape valves, [the] places that we could actually have meaningful impact. I think if we act, not quickly, but prudently ... we could create some really stunning precedents that would have a really big impact on food quality and access for people in the Lower Mainland (Elected Official, 26).

The notion of escape valves and precedent-setting is intriguing as it suggests an implicit advocacy agenda on the part of local government that balances a recognition of the limits of the City's constitutional and resource-related capacity to act, with an interest in facilitating and 'incubating' new, sometimes radical ideas. While often associated with community actors, the possibility that this notion might apply equally to the ways in which local government endeavours to show higher levels of government that their own precedents are worthy of further investment is a strategy that merits further research, the consideration of which is beyond the scope of this dissertation. For the purpose of this dissertation, what can be determined is a multi-faceted role of advocacy on the part of both community actors and local government in finding Vancouver's food policy equilibrium point where institutionalisation is concerned.

Food justice movements

The issue of advocacy is closely related to the role of 'food justice' as an underlying current in Vancouver's local food governance. Food governance has been described as the application of policies and decisions that:

> ... shape the type of foods used or available as well as their cost, or which
> influences the opportunities for [producers] ... or effects food choices available to
> consumers (Iowa Food Policy Council, 2005, p. 1).

These decisions have profound implications at every spatial scale from the household to the international arena, making the notion of food governance deeply entwined with a number of related issues including trade, poverty, the environment and health. Accordingly, this dissertation found that in spite of the still pervasive assumption that "the characteristics of food are only a governance issue when a product enters a market" (Phillips & Wolfe, 2001, p. 6), issues such as social justice, 'food democracy' and environmentalism have begun to challenge dominant paradigms of food governance in Vancouver. The most obvious result can be seen in the shift in the role of Vancouver's local government in food policy, including changes in the types of actors involved in its development and implementation.

In relation to the coordination of governance, a number of questions will remain important to examine as Vancouver's food policy development evolves. These questions relate to the extent to which local partnership approaches to food policy increase the capacity of institutions to address social exclusion, particularly in parts of the city where problems are most entrenched (Geddes, 2000, p. 784). As Geddes argues:

> With a few exceptions, local partnerships studiously avoid engagement with the question of 'who are the excluders?' and with the structural social, economic and political implications of an assault on social exclusion (Ibid., p. 797).

Further, Geddes asserts that the ability of local partnerships to increase the capacity of systems of governance to tackle problems rests on the extent to which they incorporate key interests, both local and supralocal (Ibid., p. 787). For local governments, responses to what they can regulate directly and what they must seek to influence through other means are particularly significant. These questions are salient in the Canadian context where dissatisfaction with historical inter-governmental mechanisms is leading to a growing wave of interest in creating new multi-scaled governance strategies that are designed and to address areas of social and environmental policy that were significantly eroded by the federal government over the course of the 1980s and 1990s including child care, affordable housing, immigrant settlement and poverty reduction among others.

At the provincial level, one of the factors cited by interview respondents as exemplifying the need for recalibrated governance to support social and environmental policy was the BC Liberals 'New Era' commitments. In 2002, one year after coming to power, and after bringing in $2.1 billion in income and corporate tax cuts, the provincial government embarked upon what many considered to be an unprecedented overhaul of social programs in British Columbia (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2002, p. 1). The government undertook a program of radical reform and budget cuts to health care, education, welfare and legal aid characterised by many as "an anti-poor agenda" (Ibid.). 'New Era' reforms have been summarised as including:

> ... restricted welfare eligibility; income-testing; rate cuts; offloading to families and the community; user fees; withdrawal of home support services; cuts to long-term

care beds, hospitals and hospital beds; school closures; program cuts to communities in crisis; cuts to child care; tuition increases; and cuts to legal aid, victim services and programs for at-risk youth (Ibid., p. 9).

Although New Era commitments and other inter-governmental factors were cited by interview respondents as factors in exacerbating social exclusion in Vancouver and other regions of British Columbia, the capacity of Vancouver as a local government to respond to the consequences of such far-reaching cuts is clearly limited.[87] The decisions made to address issues of social exclusion through regulation, funding, facilitation, advocacy, and other action must therefore be undertaken with an even more strategic multiple-outcome approach in mind. At the same time, these observations do not absolve the City of Vancouver and other local agencies and institutions as 'excluders' in their own right. For instance, the research found that in Vancouver's case, issues of local hunger may have been obscured within a framework of sustainability that was not precise enough to address the geographic and demographic specificities of issues related to poverty, nor immediate enough to feed hungry people in the short term. The research also found that a key institutional link between sustainability and hunger was lost in the transition from consultation to implementation and anchoring. This link was the Vancouver Agreement Food Task Group. Interview respondents noted this disconnection and expressed a desire to re-build the links:

> I would have kept the Vancouver Agreement [link] functioning, but that can always be rebuilt. There is a place holder for it, and there is an acknowledgement by the Vancouver Agreement that this is an issue, so the three levels of government have the potential to fund it, so that the [link] could be reconstituted (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

The loss of the Vancouver Agreement Task Group was perhaps symbolic of broader underlying tensions in the ways Vancouver imagines itself and the growing disparities between affluence and poverty. This dissertation found that a selective imaginative geography of the 'justice' of its food system emerged in which the links between 'justice' and the place-based parameters of how food system issues affect people's daily lives remained abstracted except where they could be polarised

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[87] City Council, did however, mandate the Social Planning Department to monitor the provincial cuts and provide feedback on mitigation strategies. Furthermore, the City's Community Grants criteria were amended in light of this new reality.

either between local and global issues, or between Vancouver as a whole and its poorest neighbourhood, the Downtown Eastside. What remained lacking were more careful analyses of the interplay between 'food justice' and specific social and geographical dimensions of the city.

6. City-wide, neighbourhood-level and household-level expressions of food policy

The third procedural factor being used to assess institutionalisation and anchoring in relation to partnership approaches to food policy pertains to the governance and territorial characteristics of the food system in question. This factor relates to the extent to which Vancouver's food policy has the capacity to address food system issues that are simultaneously regional, city-wide, neighbourhood- and household-specific. On this factor, Vancouver had both successes and limits. From an operational perspective, the food policy issues to be addressed by the City of Vancouver's evolving Food Action Plan were determined to be those "within the City's jurisdiction." For other food policy goals, assistance would be sought from regional and other levels of government. At the same time, Task Force members continued to insist on a regional approach to food policy that reflected their aim to close the conceptual and material gap between food policy issues as either non-urban (primarily related to production) or urban (predominantly related to consumption). This finding shows that local / regional scalar conflicts were linked both to governance issues and also to conceptualisations of the nature and territoriality of the food system itself, including the inter-connected spaces of food production and consumption. From an institutional perspective, Vancouver's food system was understood in terms of the institutional capacity to perceive, interpret and operationalise goals related to a policy area that few civil servants initially understood, or understood only through a variable lens of 'sustainability.' In this capacity, the reconciliation of cross-cutting policy areas such as food policy took place within pre-existing institutional structures, policies, and legislative tools.

The next step in Vancouver's food policy development must necessarily be to address neighbourhood- and household-level concerns within a citywide context. Only by weaving together a more comprehensive and detailed picture of food system assets and vulnerabilities will a truly systems-based approach to food policy be achieved in Vancouver. Such an approach must be

attentive to the daily food choices, struggles and opportunities of Vancouver's citizens, and the important links between them. In this regard, the development of locally-responsive responses to problems and identification of appropriate solutions will benefit from the research already in progress to better define the characteristics of Vancouver's food system including those most affected by its problems, at a number of scales. For this to be enhanced, a concerted effort to coordinate and systematise both quantitative and qualitative data on Vancouver's city-wide, neighbourhood- and household-based food system issues would need to be undertaken. This information will yield important information not only on current needs, but allow for realistic goals to be set to improve local conditions. Furthermore, as food policy commitments become institutionalised within other local governments and professional associations[88] in Canada and the United States, opportunities exist to extend partnership approaches to a national scale of city to city exchanges of information, expertise and strategies.

Conclusions: Food policy and sustainable cities

The six factors identified with the institutionalisation and anchoring phase of food policy development provide the opportunity to analyse how the assertions upon which this dissertation is based bore out in Vancouver's case. What emerges is a set of locally specific conditions set within wider pressures involving a fluid privileging of actors, actions and scales in the coordination of governance for food policy. Furthermore, findings suggest some important links between food policy and understandings of 'sustainable cities' more broadly. When approached from a systems perspective, food policy embodies a host of 'sustainability' goals including environmental protection, public health and nutrition, anti-poverty, community capacity building, participatory decision-making, social inclusion and community economic development among others. In examining food policy as an inherently multi-faceted issue, what emerges is an opportunity to enrich existing debates on sustainability and governance in which tensions between the environment and the economy are privileged at the expense of a range of additional issues that are implicated in local government adoption of sustainability issues. The result is the ability to study

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[88] The 2005 Annual Meeting of the American Planning Association marked the first time that food system planning was accorded its own stream of dedicated sessions. A total of eight food system planning sessions were offered including approximately 35 presenters from cities across the US and Canada.

multi-dimensional changes to the spaces and processes of local governance that are not limited to an environment / economy dualism. A further contribution made by food policy in the realm of sustainable cities is the extent to which it offers the opportunity to learn more about governance responses to non-statutory policy area for which no clear or coordinated mandate exists at any level of government, but for which new governance arrangements are being voluntarily forged.

CONCLUSION

> [There is a] linkage between the passion that is always associated with food, and the decision-making issues that affect food, and thus impact the passion. So when you harness a topic that people feel pretty passionate about, you may be actually accessing ... citizens that don't normally get accessed, and generally feel powerless. When you get to access their power and drive it in a direction ... that gets them access to the decision-making process, that's transformative (Manager, CoV, 25).

> [The] choice in [the] November [2005 civic election] will be between ... two visions of the city – the activist and the managerial. More of the same or back to the future? Hands on or hands off? Each has its merits and articulate advocates. The only cash I'd wager says it'll be a lot closer than last time (Pat Johnson, "Activism in vogue at city hall," *Vancouver Courier*, August 10, 2005, p. 10).

The prospects for food policy in Vancouver: 'More of the same or back to the future?'

By December, 2004, after months of infighting and much speculation, the split in Vancouver's governing civic party, the Coalition of Progressive Electors, became official. It was then that Mayor Larry Campbell announced that he and his allies, Councillors Jim Green, Raymond Louis and Tim Stevenson, would form an independent caucus within COPE. Calling themselves The Friends of Larry Campbell, the Mayor's 'COPE Lite' group set about to reinforce their identity as centrists, in contrast to the 'COPE Classics' who were further to the left on the political spectrum. Conflicts stemmed from COPE Lite's support of issues including the introduction of slot machines in Vancouver, and the controversial 'RAV line' (Richmond-Airport-Vancouver Rapid Transit Project), but equally from COPE Classic support of issues considered to be 'ideological,' including women's issues, peace and justice and ethical purchasing. The split in the party became irrefutable in early 2005 when the 'Friends' began to actively fundraise for the November 2005 civic election. On June 30, 2005, a further shock was registered on the local political scene when Mayor Larry Campbell held a news conference to announce his decision not to run in the upcoming November election, stating that he had "accomplished everything he had set out to do" including the establishment of a

safe injection site for intravenous drug users, the redevelopment of the Woodward's building,[89] the RAV rapid-transit line approval, more social housing and the referendum on the 2010 Olympics ("Larry Campbell Calls it Quits," June 30, 2005, retrieved August 11, 2005, from http://www.cbc.ca).[90] This announcement set in motion the transformation of The Friends of Larry Campbell into a new civic electoral organisation called Vision Vancouver. In July 2005, an attempt to broker a 'unity deal' which would see Vision Vancouver and COPE each run five Council candidates thereby maintaining a centre-left majority on City Council, was rejected by COPE members. Under the deal, each group would nominate five City Council candidates and jointly support Jim Green as the Mayoral candidate. Park and School Board candidates would remain under the COPE banner. In a July 13, 2005 COPE press release, External Chair Gary Onstad stated: "COPE remains committed to a unified, centre-left slate. However, the members have not accepted this particular proposal. That does not mean COPE will not continue to work for a unified centre-left coalition." Onstad added: "A core value of COPE is open government and accountability. COPE respects democratic process. It will now be up to the [COPE] Executive to explore further negotiations [with Vision Vancouver]." Meanwhile, the NPA indicated their intention to reinforce their historical role as 'pragmatic managers' of the city's affairs, opting for an approach to governing that perceives direct involvement of City Councillors in specific city projects and agendas as "muddying the water" of local governance (Johnson, "Activism in vogue at city hall," *Vancouver Courier*, August 10, 2005).

These developments suggest shifts in a local political landscape that only three years earlier had seen a landslide COPE victory in the civic election. The COPE victory in 2002 reflected a widespread call for more than 'good management' of Vancouver, including demands for solutions to the city's most glaring problems. Towards the end of the COPE mandate within which food policy's formative development took place, enthusiasm for the 'radical' and 'activist' experiments in governance called for in the 2002 election showed signs of wavering. Although tensions reveal important dimensions of activist versus managerial approaches to city governance, a number of

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[89] The former Woodward's Department store is located in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Once serving as the heart of the neighbourhood, Woodward's shut its doors in 1994 after years of decline in the surrounding area. Woodward's has since become a flashpoint of tension in the neighbourhood representing conflicts over community 'ownership,' and scriptings of the 'moral landscapes' of the neighbourhood (Blomley, 2004; Somers & Blomley, 2002; Blomley, 1997).
[90] Less than two months later, Mayor Campbell was appointed by Prime Minister Paul Martin to Canada's Senate.

other elements can also be identified. First, the shift coincides with the adoption of a more cautious set of expectations on the part of local governments across Canada where the promised fruits of Prime Minister Martin's New Deal for Cities and Communities were concerned. Where initial indications were that cities could expect long-awaited federal funding for urban infrastructure, child care and other priorities, the Prime Minister's approach was soon diluted from a focus on the specific needs of cities, to one of 'cities and communities' in both urban and rural areas. With only some 'new deal' commitments materialising, local governments were left to continue their agitation for inter-governmental reform, while at the same time contending with mounting pressures to assume additional and more complex responsibilities with limited resources.

Second, the shift coincides with increasingly visible consequences of what were perceived by many to be the impacts of BC Liberals' cuts to a range of social programs initiated in 2002 (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2002). While deep concern about the potential impacts of the cuts was expressed in 2002, by 2005 an escalation of social problems was being seen and felt on city streets. For example, the 2005 Greater Vancouver homeless count indicated that the number of homeless people in Greater Vancouver had increased by over 100% since the homeless count in 2002 (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2005 Homelessness Count). Although a clear causal link is unclear, associations were nevertheless made between such dramatic changes and the erosion of social supports initiated under the provincial Liberals' mandate.

Third, the shift reveals contradictory assumptions about what is considered to be a 'sustainable city,' and who defines it. In Vancouver, the 2002 COPE victory revealed deep citizen dissatisfaction with the city's "most obvious failures" (Johnson, 2005), particularly those related to poverty, homelessness and addiction. However, for the most part, the strategies designed to address these problems continued to be conceptualised and operationalised *alongside* sustainability agendas through separate mechanisms such as the Vancouver Agreement, not as integral components of the vision for a 'Sustainable Vancouver.'

Together these elements raise questions about what impending political changes might mean for specific sustainability issues such as food policy, as new and relatively unproven agendas. The elements also underscore a central concern of this dissertation: the need to better understand processes of conflict mitigation related to the coordination of governance between and among geographical scales, territories and jurisdictions, particularly where sustainability issues are involved. With a glimpse of what the future may hold for food policy in Vancouver, when then, can be said about food policy, governance and policymaking at the local scale during the research period analysed in this dissertation (July 8, 2003 – December 31, 2004)[91]?

Summary of findings

This dissertation analysed why and how food policy as a sustainability issue came to find a place on Vancouver's local governance agenda; how, by whom and at what geographical scales ensuing tensions were mediated in policy, planning and regulation; and what food policy may reveal about the role of local government in coordinating governance strategies at different scales and contexts, particularly where 'sustainability' is involved. The premise of the dissertation has been that the adoption and early implementation phases of food policy in the City of Vancouver were enabled by a series of locally specific conditions involving a fluid privileging of actors, actions and scales. Factors included a critical mass of community expertise, political shifts at multiple scales, the framing of food policy as a sustainability issue, and a pre-existing commitment to sustainability on the part of Vancouver's local government. At the same time, this dissertation has argued that these factors must be understood within the wider social and political contexts within which they evolved. In Vancouver's case this included the uniqueness of the BC context as a region particularly receptive to and concerned about sustainability issues; shifts in regional, provincial and national governance priorities, particularly where the role of cities and possibilities of inter-governmental reform were concerned; and high profile concerns about the integrity of the global food system being expressed at regional, national and international scales.

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[91] As indicated in Chapter Two, the two periods of awareness raising and lobbying (1990 – 1995 and 1996 – 2003) were not formally a part of the research period, however they provided an important point of reference to enable analysis not only of how the Council Motion came to pass, but equally, how configurations and strategies of partnerships and framings of food system issues would change once food policy had earned an official mandate and 'place' within the City bureaucracy.

The findings of this dissertation indicate that these factors and contexts did indeed enable the adoption of a food policy mandate by local government in Vancouver. However, the research also found that the adoption and early implementation phases of food policy depended not only on specific social, political-economic and institutional conditions, but equally on the ability of local government and other stakeholders to mitigate tensions and coordinate governance strategies between and among geographical scales, jurisdictions and territories. The multi-faceted and multi-scaled nature of food policy meant that a re-framing of what food policy was understood to be, and the scales at which it was argued to be best mobilised was undertaken by various actors both inside and outside of City Hall.

The research identified a number of tensions that arose as a result of these re-framings. Tensions included the tendency to collapse or failure to specify the nature and territoriality of the food system in question; lack of specificity about the scales of food policy intervention being sought, accompanied by shifts in what the ultimate goals of food policy were perceived to be; and actual and perceived institutional limitations on the part of local government particularly where policy, planning, regulation and financial implications of food system issues were concerned. Tensions were found to be linked to inconsistencies between the attributes of the food system problems being identified, including the spatial characteristics of their proposed solutions, and the specific social, political and economic circumstances of Vancouver, including its broader governance context. Of particular significance is the finding that challenges in mitigating conflicts were most evident not in attempts to reconcile local and global scales, but rather in reconciling geographical scales and spheres of action at greater proximity. Specifically, from an operational perspective, the main scalar conflict in Vancouver's early food policy development was disagreement about the role of the regional scale. Additional tensions that arose during later phases included a continued lack of awareness of what constituted food policy; enduring conflicts over jurisdictional and territorial understandings of what comprised Vancouver's food system; disputes between a 'sustainable food system' and 'anti-hunger' approach to food policy; inconsistencies between program delivery and

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policy development; the politics of achieving visible outcomes; and the perceived need to prove the worth of food policy in economic terms.

The research found that in Vancouver's case, the mitigation of differences was enabled by two mechanisms: local partnership and 'inside/outside' approaches to governance. Where local partnerships are concerned, the research found that an evolving network of community organisations, governmental and non-governmental actors played an important role in facilitating food policy adoption and implementation. Six factors were used to analyse the extent to which partnership approaches and related elements enabled institutionalisation and anchoring of food policy within the City of Vancouver's structures and processes:

- Legal status and mandated role for food policy
- Dedicated staffing and budget support
- Integration of food policy into normative and legal frameworks
- Involvement of joint-actor partnerships and networks in planning and policymaking
- Citizen participation mechanisms including marginalised populations
- City-wide, neighbourhood-level and household-level expressions of food policy

The partnership approach, although not without its limitations, was shown to have clear benefits in the context of mitigating tensions and coordinating governance for food policy. However the research found that effects ranged from symbolic achievements with little impact on the city, to more significant impacts on Vancouver's governance system including "measurable impacts in improving the quality of live of ... citizens" (Cabannes, 2005). Of most concern was the difficulty in resolving issues relating to the roles and responsibilities of actors inside and outside of City Hall, and the risk of governmental actors remaining determinant in partnership processes and outcomes in spite of claims of equal participation and input (Craig, 2004; Larner & Craig, 2002).

Second, and related, the mitigation of tensions was facilitated by an 'inside/outside' approach. This refers to a situation in which policy actors occupy multiple roles both inside and outside of local government bringing broader knowledge of the constraints and concerns of different sectors, and different approaches to partnership building. This trend reflects a shift from participants in

grassroots social movements defining themselves in opposition to mainstream institutions, to a deliberate strategy of engagement from within these institutions (Larner & Craig, 2002, p. 18). Support for the inside/outside strategy in Vancouver's case can be traced to a number of factors including a number of elected officials and Senior Planners having previous or concurrent experience in grassroots organising, as well as grassroots organisers repositioning their strategies and representing their abilities within public management discourses and practices.

Contributions

The findings of this research make a number of important contributions to geographical and related literatures. First, the research responds to the need to spatialise debates on sustainable urban development by examining the scales at which locally-grounded tensions are resolved, including the regional, national and international contexts within which they unfold (Gibbs, et al., 2002, p. 126). This enriches geographers' understandings of how 'the local' and other scales are conceptualised in relation to sustainability, and the ways that these framings inform the resulting types of local policy and urban governance. The research builds on these themes in the literature by foregrounding food policy as an emerging sustainability issue for which no coordinated governance imperative exists at any scale, but for which new governance arrangements are being voluntarily forged. Second, food policy represents a suggestive example of a widening of public policy options involving so-called 'bottom-up' governance of a multi-faceted policy area.

This contribution is particularly valuable given that much of the existing literature on sustainability and governance privileges tensions between the environment and the economy at the expense of a range of additional issues that are implicated in local government adoption of sustainability issues. When approached from a systems perspective, food policy embodies an unusually high number of 'sustainability' goals including environmental protection, public health and nutrition, anti-poverty, community capacity building, participatory decision-making, social inclusion and community economic development among others. The result is an opportunity to study multi-dimensional changes to the spaces and processes of local governance that are not limited to an environment / economy dualism.

An additional dimension of this scholarly contribution involves attending to an identified gap in the local governance literature pertaining to the institutional spaces within which politics, planning and policy-making take place. This approach seeks to analyse and theorise the institutions, organisations and bodies that govern human relations rather than the governed themselves (Hyndman, 2001; Smith, 1987). This dissertation has provided a fine-grained analysis of professional and everyday practice that considers the perspectives of those who perform its daily activities. In this way, the research findings contribute additional dimensions to existing understandings of the institutional and organisational limitations inherent in governance for sustainable urban development. Specifically, although often based on discourses of joint government-citizen decision-making, Vancouver's food policy development was characterised by a number of disagreements about the 'place' of advocacy in local government institutions, the nature of public policy as an exclusive or collective endeavour. In addition to analysing the specificities of place and scale in the adoption and implementation of food policy at the local level, the research contributes important process-related findings related to the ways that governance activities are shaped by the structures of local government in terms of resources, powers and the ability to act (Gibbs et al., 2003, pp. 4 – 5).

A further contribution of the research is its response to the identified need for more comprehensive accounts of the evolution of urban food policies themselves, with a particular focus on the role of local government and other actors in developing various concepts and approaches. One of the primary benefits of more comprehensive accounts is argued to be a better understanding of the correlations between food policy, sustainable development and collaborative forms of decision-making at the local level (Dubbeling, 2004; Mougeot, 2000; Koc & Dahlberg, 1999; MacRae, 1999). This dissertation contributes to this body of scholarship, while at the same time responding to a particularly neglected aspect of food policy analyses: the extent to which scales of food policy intervention are often either assumed, unspecified or characterised by overlapping and sometimes competing geographical and jurisdictional interests. Compounding this challenge is the conceptual genealogy of food policy that until relatively recently has been associated with concerns in the international arena including global hunger, 'national food security planning' and other aspects of

structural adjustment initiatives (Hindle, 1990). This research contributes takes on the challenge of defining the scope and territoriality of an *urban* food system while acknowledging the differential impacts of food production, supply and distribution processes, and the multiple scales at which they operate.

Lastly, the findings of this dissertation contribute to existing literatures that identify the extent to which sustainable development mandates still require a great deal of interpretation and coordination at the local level in order to be applicable to particular contexts or practice. As Bruff and Wood describe it:

> Clearly, a large conceptual leap exists between the acceptance of sustainable development as a policy objective and detailed policies to see it implemented by the local ... authority. The way in which local ... authorities make this conceptual leap to interpret sustainable development takes place within the policy space created by the national, political climate and the local context, a unique combination of economic, political, cultural, and physical and spatial factors which may result in a distinctive approach to policy at the local level (Bruff & Wood, 2000, p. 594).

Furthermore, recent research on the institutional dimensions of governance arrangements in support of sustainable cities reveal that the chances of successful governance increase "when governance arrangements are better tuned to the environments that it tries to change" (van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof, 2005, p. 47). These analyses are equally relevant in the case of Vancouver's experience with food policy, where processes of interpretation and coordination of interlocking contexts, jurisdictions and scales informed the governance balance that resulted.

Future research directions

This dissertation has addressed the questions of how and why food policy as an issue associated with sustainable development was adopted in Vancouver; the specific tensions and mitigating strategies generated by its introduction; the challenges of its implementation; and the correlations between food policy and changing spatialities of local governance. The findings point towards a number of future research directions.

1. Comparative research

Comparative food policy studies in the Canadian urban context

This dissertation was conducted using a single case study approach which provided the opportunity for an in-depth analysis of one city's experience with food policy. With growing numbers of local governments in Canada choosing to intervene in food policy, the opportunity for comparative food policy studies in the Canadian urban context will provide an even richer conceptual and practical understanding of the dynamics of governance and policymaking in this emerging field. While Canadian cities including Montréal, Toronto, Ottawa, Regina, Prince Albert, Kamloops, and Vancouver already engage in some form of food-related program delivery, policy-making or urban planning, a number of additional cities are soon to follow suit. During the writing of this dissertation, cities and regional districts including Winnipeg, Manitoba and Halton, Ontario embarked upon significant food policymaking exercises. A cursory assessment of the growing number of local governments already engaging in food policy activities reveals suggestive differences in the ways food policy is conceived, what the goals of food policy are understood to be, the models of institutional integration, strategies of engagement with local populations, and links to broader pressures associated with inter-governmental reform at provincial and federal scales.

Comparative food policy studies between global North and South

Given that rates of urbanisation, poverty, food insecurity, and the loss of agriculturally productive land take place in Southern cities at rates and intensities unknown in the global North, it is understandable that the majority of research on food policy has focused on cities in the global South. However, this focus has left the specificities of cities the global north unexamined, and the potential for comparative studies unrealised. With increasing numbers of North American cities engaging in municipally-endorsed food policies, we are fast approaching a situation where there are sufficient cases to examine and compare with Southern experiences. Using a North / South comparative framework, questions could be asked about why cities engage in food policy in the first place and what they seek to achieve. Is the priority to feed people? Is it to improve the urban environment? Or, is it to enable community building, social inclusion and civic engagement? What,

if any are the links between local expressions of food policy and uneven global geographies of resource extraction and distribution? Such comparative studies could yield rich insights into the coordination of governance where different food policy priorities, and indeed different national contexts, are at play.

Policy transfer

Comparative research between and among Canadian cities, as well as North / South studies, hold a rich potential for the study of information sharing and policy transfer experiments between cities. Policy transfer refers to processes of moving policies, programmes, ideas or institutions from one time and space to another (Nedley, 2000). Common distinctions drawn in the temporal and spatial transfer of policy knowledge include voluntary lesson-drawing (Rose, 1991) and coercive policy pushing (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). The former is described as "friendly exchange" of "action oriented conclusion[s] about a program or programs in operation elsewhere" (Rose, 1991, pp. 4 - 8), while the latter is described as the direct or indirect imposition of policy by one country or organisation on another (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). This dissertation found anecdotal evidence of inter-local policy transfer in the adoption of food policy in Vancouver (of the 'friendly exchange' variety), however an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon was beyond the scope of the project. Policy transfer does, however, constitute an important area for future comparative research, particularly in relation to what Peck (2001) and Jessop and Peck (1999) identify as 'fast policy regimes' where continual reform is generated.

Precedent setting by local government actors

Another theme that lends well to future research is that of policy precedent setting. Scholars such as Appadurai (2001, p. 34) have observed that the introduction of community control of a central piece of any policy process requires local knowledge. He adds that combining 'expert' and local knowledge constitutes:

> ... a politics of show-and-tell ... and 'do first, talk later' ... creating a border zone
> of trial and error ... within which poor communities, activists and bureaucrats can
> explore new designs for partnership (2001, pp. 33 – 34).

For Appadurai, this type of precedent-setting is a practice initiated and exercised primarily by community actors, especially the poor, in order to show officials that their precedents are good ones and "encourage such actors to invest further in them" (Ibid.). However, the possibility that this notion might apply equally to the ways in which local government actors endeavour to show higher levels of government that their own precedents are worthy of further investment is a strategy that merits further research. In Vancouver's case, findings reveal an implicit advocacy agenda on the part of some local government actors who sought to balance a recognition of the limits of the City's constitutional and resource-related capacity to act, with an interest in facilitating and 'incubating' new, sometimes radical ideas. The extent to which "risk-taking activities by bureaucrats ... allow the boundaries of the status quo to be pushed and stretched" (Ibid, p. 34) can be identified as a future research direction, and one that may play an important role in the coordination of governance at the local scale.

2.   Food policy as a tool for community development and capacity building

Over the course of the research, a theme emerged that did not coincide directly with the research questions but which merits further examination in the future. Namely, a number of local government actors perceived food policy as a *tool* for community development and capacity building. Although a host of definitions for capacity building exist, it can be described generally as:

> ... collaborative processes of community empowerment to identify problems, and propose and implement appropriate solutions in a manner that meets local needs but also contributes to information sharing, education, learning and networking opportunities (GVRD Social Issues Committee, 2004).

In relation to urban governance, capacity building typically refers to the combination of support provided at the municipal or other governmental levels in response to community issues, and the social infrastructure that exists within the community to support processes and outcomes. These concepts have particular relevance to food policy as an area commonly aligned with community development and more inclusive decision-making processes. The importance of facilitating a democratic and participatory process for food policy development is often cited as a necessary

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precondition for the integration of food policy into local governance structures. In practice, such an approach aims to improve the capacity of citizen groups to identify problems and organise to achieve solutions as direct actors in the process of influencing outcomes (International Development Research Centre and Urban Management Program for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Guidelines for Municipal Policymaking on Urban Agriculture*, 2003, No. 1, 2, 3, 8).

Interview data reveal that local government respondents in Vancouver, particularly Planners, reinforced the importance of facilitating a democratic and participatory process for food policy development just as they would for a host of other public processes and policy areas. Where understandings took on a different light was in evidence suggesting that not only could planning for food policy *facilitate* local capacity building and citizen involvement; but that food policy was itself a *tool* for community building because of its multi-faceted nature:

> [Food] is a very interesting issue, and it ties into poverty issues as well as environmental issues and development issues (Senior Planner, CoV, 18).

> I think where [food] fits into the scheme of things is as a community development tool. Something that you can organize communities around, very practical, and the end results are very tangible (Social Planner, CoV, 17).

> For me [food] is also a way to bring community together. It is something that everyone needs, you can talk about it with anyone (Elected Official, 12).

> An interesting piece on food and growing food and food banks and whatever people do with food there seems to be this other community capacity [building] that also occurs and is maybe even more important (CoV Manager, CoV, 24).

Emerging evidence in Vancouver and elsewhere suggests a complex correlation between food policy and more inclusive urban governance. This correlation associates food policy with specific attributes that allow it to act as a catalyst for capacity building and facilitator of multi-faceted program delivery (International Development Research Centre and Urban Management Program for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Guidelines for Municipal Policymaking on Urban Agriculture*, 2003, No. 1, 2; Dubbeling 2001).

3.   The role of neoliberalism and the 'shadow state'

As cities continue to experience budget cuts and downloading of responsibilities, critics argue that other actors and mechanisms are being sought to fulfil the social development and redistributive functions of cities in a continuation of market based neoliberalism. In this capacity, the dynamics of governance coordination that were studied in this dissertation have at times been implicated in a trend towards the economic management of 'soft' social policy areas in cities (Lake & Newman, 2002). In this framing, it is suggested that new approaches to governance may be less a reflection of a responsive local government, and more an expression of weakened governance capacity in an era of continuing neoliberalism and globalisation (Geddes, 2000). Critics ask whether these changes truly embody the participatory and collaborative impulses they claim, or whether they constitute:

> ... part of the apparatus of social control and state legitimation which is a major element of the state's response to the economic marginalisation and social disintegration of many localities (Geddes, 2000, p. 785).

This dissertation did not directly engage with scholarship related to neoliberalism. Instead, the research was situated within the Canadian context, a site identified by scholars, policymakers and other stakeholders as in need of better theorisations of changes to urban politics and the re-scaling of local governance arrangements. This is not to suggest that neoliberal forces were not, or are not at play in Canadian social and political-economic contexts. Rather, such a focus reflects an interest in avoiding what is at times an over-determination of neoliberalism that obscures its complexities and subtleties. This includes the rise of unexpected political activities and claims, often by those portrayed as its victims (Larner, 2004). Examples of new participants and political projects who capitalise on neoliberal techniques and structures are growing increasingly common. For instance, the appropriation by community organisations of techniques including audits, benchmarking and process evaluations is well documented (Ibid.). Similarly overlooked is the extent to which community organisations have become a key site for professional and technical capacity-building, including the emergence of community activists as highly skilled and articulate organisational leaders and lobbyists (Larner & Craig, 2002, p. 22). In a broader sense, the approach can fail to

recognise that the coordination of governance at the local scale is not simply reducible to the economic and social policies of neoliberalism, but rather "represents a broader project of cementing and reordering the social and moral landscape of the contemporary urban order" (Keil & Kipfer, 2002, p. 235). As a future research direction, these debates merit further analysis in relation to the major themes of this dissertation.

4.   Methodology: My own 'inside / outside' status

The methodology of this dissertation is informed by conceptual and practical concerns that arose at least in part from my role as Social Planner for the City of Vancouver, and as of December 2004, the City's Food Systems Planner. These experiences, in addition to my interest in responding to gaps in geographical scholarship on issues of governance and sustainability, provided me with a unique set of insights on the research topic, and meant that I was well placed to undertake research that aims to better understand the extent to which policy development and implementation are inherently social and political processes (Gibbs et al., 2002a). As such, the methodology is broadly situated within the traditions of ethnography and action research, approaches that recognise the role of the researcher as a participant in knowledge production, and assumes that such engagement can yield valuable insights into research problems.

This dissertation analysed the need to strike an 'equilibrium point' in the coordination of governance in the City of Vancouver. In researching and writing this dissertation, I was often aware of the need to recalibrate my own equilibrium point as a researcher and participant in the processes I was studying. One of the future research directions that I look forward to exploring relates to the experiences I registered as someone who very much embodies the 'inside/outside' approach that I observed in the networks and mechanisms I studied. Methodologically, my positionality is implicit throughout this dissertation. Clearly, a number of the analytical findings were informed by my 'insider' status and experiential understandings derived from the participatory dimensions of the research. At the same time, for the purpose of this dissertation, a conscious decision was made to leave my personal impressions and more overtly subjective (often methodological) reflections in the realm of subtlety. This is not to minimise the fact that I was in

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some cases an active participant and producer of the processes and outcomes I studied, but rather to draw out what I believe to be the importance, for the purposes of this specific project, of allowing the process itself and those involved in its unfolding to be foregrounded. The research is, after all, about them. At the same, there is much to share (and hopefully learn) about my experiences as an 'embedded researcher,' including the opportunities and challenges that my dual role afforded me.

Finale: The future of food policy in Vancouver

This research project, dealing as it did with multiple scales of governance, was as much a physical journey as it was intellectual. The research took me from neighbourhood consultation meetings held at community centres in Vancouver neighbourhoods to official presentations in Council Chamber at City Hall. It took me to community gardens and emergency food distributors, farms and farmers markets. It took me to Canadian and US cities to learn about domestic and international experiments in municipal food policy. It took me to action-oriented meetings convened by the International Development Research Centre that aimed to coordinate urban agriculture strategies among international partners. It took me to *Terra Madre, The World Meeting of Food Communities* in Turin, Italy where I was one of thousands of delegates from over 115 countries in five continents who met to share experience and forge strategies to address pressing food system concerns. It took me to the European Institute for the Studies of the History of Food in Tours, France, where I was immersed in learning about changes and innovations in the histories and cultures of food. The most important lesson that I took away from my travels near and far is the need for multi-faceted approaches to solving food system, and other 'sustainability' problems. Of particular significance is the need to re-think previous assumptions about who participates in what capacity, in addressing complex problems for which cross-cutting solutions are necessary, and how local governments manage often quickly changing circumstances. Municipal food policies and programs comprise one set of tools that can be applied, along with many others, to the task of realising alternatives in our own backyards, as well as those in distant lands.

As the City of Vancouver moves into new political mandate and a new phase in food policy development, flexible responses and adaptability will be paramount. But there are promising signs

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of further food policy embeddedness in the City as an organisation and the city at large. Urban agriculture is being considered in the design phases of two new major residential developments (Southeast False Creek and East Fraserlands) as well as the redevelopment of a college campus (Langara). Opportunities for green roofs are being considered as part of the City's new Green Building Strategy. An ethical food purchasing strategy for institutions is being sought as part of the City's existing Ethical Purchasing Policy. The Food Policy Council is nearing readiness to take its proposed Food Charter out to the public for consultation and feedback, then back to City Council for approval. A coordinated Urban Agriculture Strategy is underway that may concretise policy commitments for community and roof gardens, farmers markets, edible landscapes and public orchards. A recent Food Policy Public Forum hosted by the Food Policy Council attracted over 150 participants to network and share information about food system initiatives underway in Vancouver. Despite a possible regime change in Vancouver's local government, all of these developments suggest that there are good reasons to expect further phases of food policy from which to learn.

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