Food Policy Councils

Innovations in Democratic Governance *for* A Sustainable and Equitable Food System

Prepared for the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force

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Executive Summary

The Food Policy Council model has emerged in North America over the last three decades as an attempt to address inadequacies and gaps in food policy and planning. Despite its fundamental importance to society, food and food policy is shaped by a disparate array of government departments and agencies without coordination or recognition of the linkages between food-related sectors. The result is policies that seek to remedy specific food-related problems – diet and nutrition, agriculture, hunger, food business, etc. – in narrow and sometimes ineffective ways.

The Food Policy Council (FPC) model is a policy and governance innovation that brings together diverse stakeholders to study a localized food system and offer recommendations for policy change. FPC members represent the full spectrum of food activities: they are typically farmers, gardeners, chefs and restaurateurs, food processors and wholesalers, grocers, consumers, anti-hunger and food security advocates and government representatives. Though they take many forms and serve different purposes, Food Policy Councils are united in their interest to transform the food system through collaborative policy making.

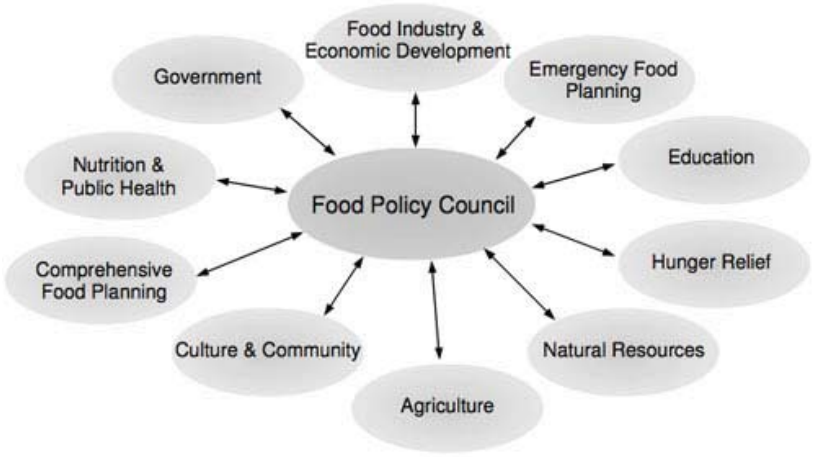

Image 1. Food Policy Council Model.
Source: Lane County Food Policy Council http://www.fpclanecounty.org

The Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force formed in October of 2009 to establish a food policy agenda that promotes equitable access and environmental sustainability in the Los Angeles regional foodshed. Part of its mandate is to consider the development of a Food Policy Council, or other permanent entity, to advance its recommendations. To support the Task Force in this effort, this study explores the purpose, structure and development of Food Policy Councils, the processes and participants that developed them, and the outcomes of their implementation.

The research provides a review of relevant literature and explores four case studies of existing FPCs in other locales: Toronto, New York City, San Francisco and Detroit. Out of the 90 known Food Policy Councils in North America, the researcher selected these four councils for parallel characteristics or perceived valuable lessons for application in Los Angeles. A literature review along with field research, interviews and qualitative analysis focused on the four case studies highlights key concepts and practices of the FPC model and lessons for its application in Los Angeles.

Four Case Studies at a Glance. (Right)

	Toronto	San Francisco	New York	Detroit
Location	Government, Toronto Public Health	Government, SF Dept of Public Health	Government, Advisory Council to: (1) Office of Food Policy Coordinator (2) Speaker Quinn's FoodWorks NYC	Independent, Community-Based
How Created	City Council, Community organizing	Executive Directive	(1) Mayor Bloomberg (2) Speaker Christine Quinn	City Council, Community organizing
Purpose	Citizen advisory body to provide research & recommendations for food policy, Promote "food systems thinking" in City	Advisory body to Mayor to oversee implementation of Executive Directive	(1) Food Policy Task Force to coordinate program activity among various city directors (2) Ad-hoc advisory council for FoodWorks NYC	Provide research & recommendations to policy makers, Organize communities to engage with policy making
Policy Engagement	Provide research, testimony, initiate motions through Board of Health, 2 Council members on FPC	Monitor timelines, Review progress on Directive, Make recommendations for further food policy	(1) Implementation of specific policy objectives related to Office of Food Policy Coordinator (2) Recommend specific outcomes for FoodWorks NYC	Work with city government to promote urban agriculture, monitor implementation of Food Security Policy, Produce research & provide recommendations for policy
Composition	30 food system experts & food sector representatives	9 city department directors, 9 NGO representatives	(1) Directors of Gov't Departments (2) Food system experts & scholars, some food sector reps	12 seats – food sector reps, 6 seats – general public, 3 seats – appointees of Mayor, City Council & Director of Health and Wellness
Membership Selection	By FPC Staff Manager in consultation with FPC members	By FPC Staff & Mayor's Deputy Chiefs of Staff	By Food Policy Coordinator & Speaker Quinn, respectively	First, by Steering Committee of community leaders, then by FPC members
Staff	Full-time Staff Manager, Administrative support, Policy Associate(s) (Budget permitting)	Director of Food Systems for Dept of Public Health	(1) Food Policy Coordinator & Administrative support (2) Speaker Quinn's staff	Currently none, plans for paid staff. Elected Co-Chairs provide leadership

Key Findings about Food Policy Councils

- Policy Change: Despite its name, this research found no FPC with the power to single-handedly develop and implement policy. FPCs work to develop policy change through research, analysis, testimony, providing recommendations and monitoring implementation. Others focus on program development and coordinating activities among food system stakeholders. FPCs with the latter focus tend to see themselves as building capacity and supporting partnerships among various food system players in the service of policy change.

- Location: Three of the four case study FPCs are located in government. The majority of local level FPCs are independent of government, though still enjoy some formal acknowledgement by city officials and would even prefer official location in government. Food Policy Councils often serve as a coordinating entity or intermediary between community stakeholders and local government. Many argue that officially locating in government provides more stable resources and staff and a measure of authority among city staff. Others argue that independence from government empowers an FPC to critique or hold public officials accountable in order to move forward a policy agenda.

- Decision Making in the Food System: A popular theory about the Food Policy Council model is that it is an experiment in democratic governance. The innovation of the FPC model is that it brings citizens, experts and public officials together in a cross-sector planning process. By bringing multiple stakeholders to the table, FPCs can cultivate "food systems thinking," which could support the creation of more holistic and comprehensive policy. In practice, many FPCs are composed of public sector administrators and experts appointed by public officials, though seats are reserved for certain community-based representatives such as an anti-hunger or community garden advocate.

- Influence and Impact: The FPC model varies significantly in purpose and structure throughout North America, making it difficult to evaluate their impact on local food systems. Though the model has a 30-year history now, Food Policy Councils are still in development conceptually and practically. Councils that can ask city departments to meet certain benchmarks within a time frame are able to evaluate their progress more systematically. Because the work of an FPC is so relationship-based, an alternative way to evaluate its impact is to track the number, composition and character of collaborative projects before and after the presence of an FPC. This information could stand as a proxy for how widely the impact of the FPC has been felt and how many communities have potentially benefited from the efforts of an FPC. The FPC model would be strengthened if practitioners in different jurisdictions collaborated to develop standards for documenting and evaluating impact, both quantitative and qualitative.

Considerations for Los Angeles

The study of particular strengths and weaknesses of Food Policy Councils in Toronto, Detroit, San Francisco and New York City offers ideas for how the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force could proceed in the development of an FPC or similar body in Los Angeles.

- Assess strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in the Los Angeles context. The strength of these FPCs lies in their reliance on studies and community expertise to inform membership, goals and activities. An honest assessment of the "state of the food system," informs where an FPC should allocate its focus at different stages of its development. Successful FPCs have a solid sense of their political and community allies, the most pressing needs and interests of the community and the political priorities of the City when establishing the structure of the Council.

- Understand the difference between movement building and policy-making, and clarify how the FPC will interact with both. Some FPCs – like those in San Francisco and New York City- focus on streamlining or coordinating policy among government players. Others focus on building capacity and generating input for food policy change among community-based organizations and other food system stakeholders, such as the Councils in Detroit and Toronto. Many FPCs strive to fit both roles but lose clarity about the ultimate goals for food system change in the process. The FPC must resolve this question: Is the FPC another aspect of government or a movement building entity or both? A new FPC would greatly benefit from a clear dialogue among its founders about what kind of social change the FPC will work toward in the food system and how the FPC will use the policy making process to achieve those goals.

- Structure the FPC according to the goal. A conversation about social change goals and the role of policy in achieving those goals will have important bearing on where the FPC is located: inside government, outside government but with official recognition, or completely independent of government. It can also best determine the membership of the FPC and the details of how decisions will be made.

- Commit to a long-term process but mark the road with quick victories. Identifying "low hanging fruit" can inspire momentum and establish credibility. However, the promise of the FPC model is to cultivate systematic approaches to food policy and planning, which takes extensive relationship building and idea exchanges over a long time.

- Identify leadership and staff to plan for phases of the Councils development. Food Policy Councils need strategic leadership with foresight to plan for phases of the Councils development. A new FPC would benefit from identifying leadership with credibility in multiple food sectors and experience in both building coalitions and developing policy. In several cases observed, this person (or persons) acts as a Co-Chair, a paid staff Manager for the FPC or other staff based in city government.

- Systematize an evaluation process that fits the model. Every FPC is unique, however all FPCs would benefit from a built-in strategy for assessing their own impact. There is a dearth of "best practices" with regards to evaluating progress and impact. A new FPC could contribute to the field of food systems planning by crafting an evaluation system that reflects its overall goals.

Image 2. Farmer's Market at City Hall in San Francisco. Source: City & County of San Francisco. Executive Directive 09-03 Healthy and Sustainable Food for San Francisco. Mid-Year Report. (February 2010.)

Introduction

Introduction

About the Project

In September of 2009, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and other city officials joined the broader Los Angeles community to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the first Farmer's Market in Los Angeles. Planning for the event opened dialogue between the City and food system stakeholders on how local government can strengthen a sustainable regional food economy and expand access to nutritious food for all Angelinos in the longer term. What emerged from these discussions was the creation of the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force (LAFPTF), an ad-hoc team of experts representing several phases of the food system, with the goal to recommend how the City could promote equity and sustainability in the local foodshed. The purpose of the LAFPTF is to craft a "Good Food" agenda for Los Angeles - an agenda that promotes food that is "nutritious, affordable, and fairly and sustainably produced."

The LAFPTF has convened monthly for the past 8 months to develop a report that assesses the state of Los Angeles's food system and identifies opportunities and potential partnerships between public, private and community institutions. Another major objective of the report is to analyze options for a permanent body that can cordinate collaborations, programs and the policy development process in the name of the Good Food Agenda. The Food Policy Council model was considered a potential vehicle for this function.

Project Objectives

The Steering Committee of the LAFPTF requested research to be conducted on the goals, structures and impact of Food Policy Councils (FPC) in other parts of North America. This assessment critically explores the purpose, structure and development of Food Policy Councils, the processes and participants that developed them, and the outcomes of their implementation to discover useful lessons for Los Angeles.

The research is grounded by four major case studies of existing FPCs in other locales: Toronto, New York City, San Francisco and Detroit. Out of the 90 known Food Policy Councils, these four were selected for parallel characteristics or perceived valuable lessons for application in Los Angeles. The factors analyzed for each case study include the following:

- Political, economic and geographic context of case study
- Catalyst and process for developing policy
- Demographics and interests of stakeholders involved in policy development
- Means for policy implementation, if applicable
- Strengths and weakness of the FPC to achieve its intended goals
- Impact of the policy on other policy arenas in locale
- Impact of FPC on growth of community-based movement for food equity
- Relationship between process, product and outcomes of policy

The research concludes with a discussion of the relevance of the case studies to the Los Angeles context and the determination of "best practices" and recommendations for the creation of a Los Angeles Food Policy Council.

In each of these case studies, I am investigating the social, political and economic factors that empowered or weakened a Food Policy Council's ability to achieve its goals. I studied the formal structure of the Council, the makeup up of its membership, the process of creating and implementing the Council and the legal and political power or influence it holds. Actual policy change outcomes as well as qualitative assessments of how the Council has "democratized" food system decision-making are both considered in determining the success of a Council.

Methodology

This study is driven by field research, interviews and qualitative analysis focused on the four chosen Food Policy Councils. The Toronto Food

Image 3. Four Case Study Food Policy Councils.

Policy Council acts as an anchor case study because of its prominence in the history of Food Policy Councils and thanks to the generous support of the Hildebrand Fellowship for Canadian Studies, which allowed me to spend nearly a week in Toronto in January. While in Toronto, I formally interviewed six current Council members, the current and former Managers of the TFPC, the co-chair of the Toronto Youth Food Policy Council, two former Council members and one staff from Toronto Public Health who works closely with the TFPC. I was invited to attend a "closed session" meeting of the TFPC and I toured two local non-profits working on food access and urban agriculture in Toronto.

The opportunity to visit sites, meet stakeholders and explore the urban context of Toronto in person provided me as a researcher a richer context for how the TFPC operates within city government and as a participant in the local food movement in Toronto. All interviewees understood the purpose of the research and were asked to share their practical understanding of the development, function and activities of the FPC as well as their analytical assessment of its development and achievements. Several Council members have written extensively about the political and social foundation and impact of the TFPC in academic and professional contexts, and shared their opinions on that basis. Some interviewees asked for specific comments to remain off the record. In those cases, I do not cite the source.

Interviews for the other three case studies were conducted via telephone and follow-up questions and discussion occurred with several interviewees via email for weeks throughout the duration of this study. In addition to formal interviews, several of the interviewees in all four cases shared with me personal analysis, draft documents and other formal documents not otherwise available to the public. I also drew from newspaper articles, scholarly publications, government staff reports, policy documents, publically available presentations and correspondences, and organizational websites specific to the case studies and to Food Policy Councils generally.

Image 4. Indoor Farmer's Market in Toronto.
Photo Credit: Elisa Salcedo.

Food Policy Councils: An Overview

If Food Policy Councils Are A Solution, What Is The Problem?

A Food System Divided

The Food Policy Council model has emerged in North America over the last three decades as an attempt to address inadequacies and gaps in the food policy arena. One of the principle problems of food system planning is the way policies that impact the food system are scattered across a disparate array of government departments and agencies without coordination or recognition of the linkages between food-related sectors. Schiff (2007) identifies this fragmentation in regulatory institutions dedicated only to parts of the food supply chain, such as departments of agriculture, transportation and health.[1] An environmental regulatory agency, for example, might focus on "end of pipe" agricultural problems like air, water and soil pollution and miss an opportunity to support farmers in reducing their ecological footprint.[2] A municipal health department may focus on treating diet-related disease, but fail to grapple with the way the federal Farm Bill or discriminatory grocery industry practices impact access to quality food. Sustainable food advocates prefer to see the movement of food in an unbroken chain of activity, and lobby for government action that reflects this continuum. Dahlberg (1994) notes that:

> "At each level there are major issues associated with each portion or sector of the food system: from production issues (farmland preservation, farmers markets, household & community gardens), to processing issues (local vs. external), to distribution issues (transportation, warehousing) to access issues (inner city grocery stores, co-ops, school breakfasts & lunches, food stamps, the WIC program, etc.), to use issues (food safety and handling, restaurants, street vendors), to food recycling (gleaning, food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens) to waste stream issues (composting, garbage fed to pigs, etc.)."[3]

Without careful analysis of these sectoral relationships, specialized and narrow policy solutions are at risk of aggravating problems up or downstream in the food system.

An all-encompassing "Department of Food" does not exist to systematically address multiple food-related problems, making it difficult to prevent problems by getting at "cause of the causes." (Toronto Public Health, 2010). Municipal governments have rarely engaged in the development of local or regional food systems, especially in urban areas. Historically, food has been seen as pertaining to agriculture and therefore a mostly rural problem.[4] The invisibility of cross-regional linkages between food production, distribution, processing, consumption and waste management have made system-wide food planning seem like an added burden to planners in both rural and urban jurisdictions (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). The federal government has provided the most leadership on food policy, though it also tends to separate food policy in terms of agriculture, food safety, or nutrition, missing key links with transportation, waste, economic development and land use – for example (Schiff, 2007). "What is created as a result of this compartmentalization," notes Schiff, "is a food policy vacuum where the absence of comprehensive food systems planning leaves gaps and inadequacies in food-related decision-making processes." (Schiff, 2007, p. 67)

This policy vacuum also leaves the door wide open to influence from major agricultural and food industry corporations such as Cargill, Monsanto and ConAgra who stand to gain from federal crop subsidies and weak environmental and labor regulations. Large corporations have the vast resources required to navigate and shape a disjointed food policy landscape. Advocates argues that increased transparency and interconnectedness in food policy efforts would increase insight about levers of power and empower citizens to craft their own vision for the food system.

Integrated policies that treat food as a multidimensional issue are

1 Schiff, R. (2007) Food Policy Councils: An Examination of Organisational Structure, Process and Contribution to Alternative Food Movements. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Murdoch University, Western Australia.

2 Toronto Public Health. (2010, February). Food Connections: Toward a Healthy and Sustainable Food System For Toronto. Toronto: City of Toronto.

3 Dahlberg, K. (1994). Food Policy Councils: The Experience of Five Cities and One County. A Paper Presented at the Joint Meeting of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society and the Society for the Study of Food and Society.

4 Pothukuchi, K. & Kaufman, J. (2000). The Food System: A Stranger to the Planning Field. APA Journal, 66(2) 113-124.

needed to fill the vacuum left by government silos and market failures. MacRae (2000) suggests a five-point program for a new food policy-making system.[5] First, food policy should apply a macro-policy perspective that "starts with an examination of the global questions and options, and then, as appropriate, develops more specific policy tools." That way specific policies are strategically targeted to overarching goals.

Food policy should consider the integrated responsibilities and activities between agriculture, health and food as vital information for comprehensive planning. As such, food policy must also be a transdisciplinary endeavor and employ the expertise of professionals and stakeholders in a broad array of fields. Also important is increased proximity of policy makers to the diverse groups affected by problems to cultivate a sophisticated understanding of those problems and ensure democratic accountability. Finally, MacRae suggests that food policy should be designed to engage the entire food system and that "policymakers apply systems thinking to the analysis of problems and design of solutions." Food Policy Councils have the potential to embody this suggested policy development process by convening a broad array of food system stakeholders in dialogue and collective capacity building.

The Trials and Triumphs of Democracy

The fragmentation of food policy produces disconnection between food system stakeholders and the policy making process. A single mom in the city trying to feed her family with public food benefits may not feel connected to the plight of a small family farmer in her region, and neither one of them may feel empowered to change the federal, county and city policies that affect their circumstances. Amid the disparate experiences and expertise in the food system, notions of "sustainability" and "equity" may be hotly contested. Hassanein (2003) argues this sort of conflict is inevitable and should not be avoided.[6] Instead, Hassanein encourages broad participation from diverse sectors in the debate about what values guide decision-making about food policy. "Food democracy," she writes, "is the idea that people can and should be actively participating in shaping the food system, rather than remaining passive spectators on the sidelines." Lang (1999) advances the same concept as a transformation from food consumer, whose power lies only at the point of sale, to food citizen who holds actual leverage in the food system.

Food Policy Councils represent an earnest experiment in democratic governance. They can be the location where disparate stakeholder groups hear from each other, sometimes for the first time, and collectively expand their ability to make change in the food system. FPCs can also be the site of strategic planning and coordination among organizations with differing foci and tactics for making change. The process of the Food Policy Council is what embodies an activated democracy. Theorists of organizational ecology recognize the need for organizations to "match or mimic the diversity and complexity of the ecosystem problems." (MacRae, 2000, p. 189) In principle, the membership and activities of Food Policy Councils reflect the needs and desires of the entire food system, and bring into collaboration members of the public, private and non-profit sectors in the policy-making process. For many FPC supporters, the intangible success of democratic decision-making is just as important at tangible policy outcomes. As Rod MacRae remarked, "how each policy area gets transformed is transformative."[7]

5 MacRae, R. (2000). Policy Failure in the Canadian Food System. In Koc, M., MacRae, R., Mougeot, L., & Welsh, J. (Eds.) For Hunger-Proof Cities: Sustainable Urban Food Systems. (pp. 182-194). Ottawa, Canada: International Development Resource Centre.

6 Hassanein, N. (2003) Practicing Food Democracy: a pragmatic politics of transformation. Journal of Rural Studies, 19, 77-86.

7 R. MacRae, personal communication, January 12, 2010.

A Brief History of Food Policy Councils

Knoxville Food Policy Council

The first Food Policy Council in the United States was inspired by research from Robert Wilson and students at the University of Tennessee who documented the lack of nutritious food available in the inner-city of Knoxville in 1977.[8] The report broke new ground by arguing that food was just as much a municipal responsibility as transportation or housing. The Mayor and City Council conceded to this idea and passed a resolution to support food system planning efforts including a recommendation to form a Food Policy Council. The KFPC officially commenced in time for the World Fair held in Knoxville in 1982, drawing international attention to the Food Policy Council innovation.

The initial by-laws of the Knoxville Food Policy Council set the blue print for generations of FPCs to come: the KPFC was mandated to evaluate food system performance on an annual basis; identify problems in the food system and develop research for suggested remedies; articulate goals and objectives for the food system; communicate findings and recommendations to the Mayor, City Council, County Commissioners and other government entities; and act as a forum for discussion and coordination of community-wide food efforts.[9] Knoxville FPC efforts have led to the creation of a Nutrition Specialist position for the school district and the institutionalization of free or subsidized breakfasts to low-income students; the development of 27 community and school gardens; and a food access review of updates to routes and service lines by the regional transportation authority.

Food Policy Councils in Connecticut

Formed in Connecticut in 1978, a non-profit called the Hartford Food System laid the groundwork for a city-sanctioned Advisory Commission on Food Policy in 1991 (Schiff 2007). Using key insights from the non-profit's community work, the Commission monitors quality and availability of food in Hartford, collects data on hunger and nutrition, analyzes the City's food distribution programs, and recommends new programs and policies or advises the elimination of unnecessary or harmful city programs (Zodrom & SSAWG, 2005). An example of HFPC activity is the monitoring of grocery store prices to engage grocery chains in equitable pricing in low-income communities. Unlike Knoxville, the Hartford case shows how a community-based effort can inform, shape and collaborate with a public sector endeavor.[10]

Connecticut later became the first state to devise a food policy council to oversee with inter-regional food and agriculture policy. The Connecticut Food Policy Council is composed of the Chief Administrators (or designee) of several state departments (Agriculture, Administrative Services, Education, Transportation, Health and Social Services) and specific sector representatives designated by state statute: agriculture, anti-hunger advocacy, food retailer, produce wholesaler, and Cooperative Extension System.[11] The purpose of the CFPC is to develop, coordinate and implement food system policy that links economic development, environmental protection and preservation with farming and urban issues; review and comment on proposed state legislation and regulations that impact food policy and food security; make recommendations to the Office of the Governor; and prepare and submit an annual report to the General Assembly.[12]

8 Harper, A., Shattuck, A., Holt-Gimenez, E., Alkon, A. & Lambrick, F. (2009). Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned. Oakland, CA: Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy.

9 Zodrom, D. & Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (SSAWG). (2005). How Food Policy Councils Are Organized and Operate. Food Security Begins At Home: Creating Community Food Coalitions in the South.

10 Gottlieb, R. & Joshi, A. (2010) Food Justice. Unpublished book. Boston, MA: The MIT Press.

11 Linda Drake. Personal communication with Cynthia Torres, July 2008. "Subject: RE: New FAPC in Boulder, CO Seeks Advice." Retrieved from Community Food Security Coalition. North American Food Policy Council Webpage. http://www.foodsecurity.org/.

12 Connecticut Food Policy Council. Background. Retrieved March 2010 from http://www.foodpc.state.ct.us/.

What is a Food Policy Council?

Evolving Definitions

A Food Policy Council can take many forms and serve different purposes depending on the local context and intention of its creators. Hamilton (2002) offers a common definition: "A food policy council is an officially sanctioned body of representatives from various segments of a state or local food system, and selected public officials, asked to examine the operation of a local food system, and provide ideas or recommendations for how it can be improved. A council initiative tries to engage representatives from all components of the food system- consumers, farmers grocers, chefs, food processors, distributors, hunger advocates, educators, government, and consumers {sic} in a common discussion to examine how the local food system works."[13] (Emphasis added.) The Drake University Ag Law Center's State and Local Food Policy Council Project Website[14] adds that FPCs are often created by "Executive Order, Public Act or Joint Resolution however, some Councils have formed through grassroots effort and operate without an official convening document."[15]

The way a FPC comes into existence – whether driven by community organizing or the will of public officials – can often greatly shape the character and activity of the Council. For example, Fiser (2006) reflects the hope of many community food advocates when he emphasizes the role of consumer participation: the FPC "allows consumers to play an active role in influencing food policy at the city and state levels, and is built upon inclusivity and democratic decision making."[16] FPCs that operate in this vein tend to see their work as convening and coordinating community-based efforts and acting as an information resource to non-profits and public sector officials alike. However, other FPCs host a membership fully appointed by a Mayor, City Council or Governor and focus on coordinating efforts between government departments not necessarily supporting the involvement of consumers or other stakeholders.

Do Food Policy Councils Work on "Policy"?

Many feel the term "policy" in Food Policy Council is misleading. Numerous FPCs develop and sustain programs such as student nutrition literacy classes or community garden workshops, but steer clear of actual policy development. This is often due to limited staff time, resources or lack of credibility within government but also sometimes because FPC members are interested in "actionables and deliverables."[17] Some have suggested that "Food Systems Council" or "Food System Coalition" may be more accurate depictions of their activity (Schiff, 2008).

For those FPCs who do engage in "policy work," this usually looks like research, writing, amending, advocating, recommending or even monitoring policy. This study found no FPC with the power to single-handedly implement policy change. For FPCs that intend to impact the public policy arena, "obtaining a government mandate specifically to work on policy recommendation was of primary importance in forming the organization" (Schiff 2008, p. 211). A formal location within government is also extremely useful.

The adaptability of the FPC model can be both a strength and a weakness. The strength is that Food Policy Councils can be shaped to meet the desires of involved stakeholders and the particularities of a local context. The weakness is that FPCs across the continent vary so greatly that it can be difficult to determine "best practices" and difficult to measure the extent of their impact. Based on the shifting definition of Food Policy Councils, numerous studies indicate that one of the most important first steps for a new FPC is to determine clarity about the purpose for the Council, relationship to policy work, and location in or outside government.

13 Hamilton, N. (2002). Putting A Face on Our Food: How State and Local Food Policies Can Promote the New Agriculture. Drake Journal of Agricultural Law, 7, p. 442.

14 Neil Hamilton is the Director of this project.

15 Drake University Agricultural Law Center. State and Local Food Policy Councils. Retrieved November 2009 from http://www.statefoodpolicy.org/.

16 Fiser, D. (2006). Democratic Food: Food Policy Councils and the Rebuilding of Local Agriculture. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Chicago, Illinois.

17 Schiff, R. (2008). Quote from Interviewee 7 in The Role of Food Policy Councils in Developing Sustainable Food Systems. Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition, 3(2), p. 211.

Despite variations, Harper et al (2009) deciphered four main activity areas that almost all Food Policy Councils participate in, which resonated with the findings of this research as well. Food Policy Councils (1) Serve as forums for discussing food issues, (2) Foster coordination between sectors in the food system, (3) Evaluate and influence policy, and (4) Launch or support programs and services that address local needs (Harper et al, 2009). How, among whom and to what end FPCs engage in these four main activities differs according to context.

Overview of Structural Considerations for FPCs

Relationship to Government: To Be or Not To Be?

Historically, FPCs tend to have a formal relationship to government, whether as a joint government-citizen commission, a task force made up of city officials, an advisory body composed of citizens appointed by elected officials, or an advisory group housed under a specific government department. For example, the Portland/Multomah County Food Policy Council is a citizen-based advisory council to the City and County. The Michigan Food Policy Council was created by Executive Order and includes the heads of several state departments as well as food system stakeholder representatives. The Toronto Food Policy Council is a citizen body located within the City of Toronto Department of Public Health. Harper et al (2009) found that half of state-level FPCs are located in government agencies, but that "most county and local level FPCs are entirely independent of government." (p. 3)[18]

Nevertheless, many advocates feel that a Food Policy Council without some sort of relationship to government is meaningless.[19] Government ties can provide "instant status in a community, having a political infrastructure to support and enact its findings, and the funding and office space necessary to function," which ordinary non-profits do not necessarily enjoy (Zodrom & SSAWG, p. 48).

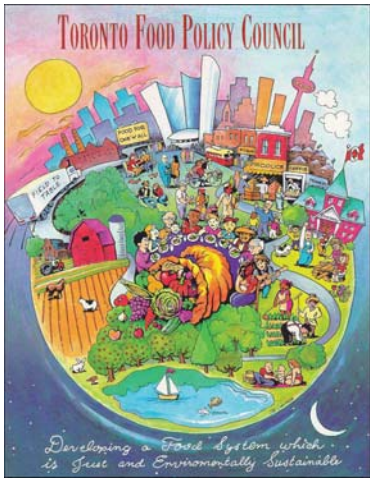

Image 5.
Toronto Food Policy Council.
Source: Toronto Food Policy Council
http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm

The innovation of the FPC model, on the other hand, lies in the hybrid form where a Council enjoys some recognition or relationship to government, but is also community-driven and oriented. In this fashion, the FPC is seen as the mechanism to translate the voice of the people to government. As one interviewee explained to Schiff (2008): "That's been the power of this particular model: is the fact that it straddles both the community-based organisation, non-profit model, and the government-bureaucracy-institution model and because it straddles both worlds I think it has the opportunity to be able to articulate a very specific stance without having to deal with the politics all the time or with the non-profit side all the time." (p. 214) Wayne Roberts, Manager of the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC), and others connected with the TFPC argue that government-backed but community-oriented FPCs can use their hybrid identity to win trust on both sides.[20] An FPC with the security of government funding is also able to independently raise funds for local community groups, not just for itself, which is another credibility builder.

Others caution of the political limitations of full-fledged government association, and have structured FPCs as a coordination hub for non-profits and community groups. For example, the Detroit Food Policy Council intentionally chose to locate itself outside of govern-

18 "Food Policy Councils: Lessons Learned" by Alethea Harper, Annie Shattuck, Eric Holt-Giménez, Alison Alkon and Frances Lambrick of FoodFirst provides the most up-to-date account of FPC practices through a survey of 40 current or former FPCs out of 75 contacted.

19 Etter, J. Personal communication, January, 13, 2010.

20 Roberts, W. Personal communication, January 12, 2010.

ment (though a City Council resolution called for its creation) due to financial and political instability in the City. Dahlberg (1994) notes that "If a FPC is a part of the Mayor's office, then the degree of support it receives (whether budgetary or policy) can change significantly as mayors change. Also, the FPC is more likely to be politicized and to be pushed/pulled according to the priorities of the current mayor. On the other hand, if a FPC is distant from the mayor's office, then it is much freer to pursue its own agenda and priorities, but may not receive as much support for them from the mayor's office." (p. 4) Concern about freedom to critique the existing food policies of the City or County is another reason some FPCs locate outside of the government purview.

Staff for Longterm Sustainability

The majority of FPCs have no staff or only one part-time staff (Harper et al, 2009), though many practitioners cite staff resources as vital for longevity and effectiveness. Those FPCs that do have staff tend to share staff from other City departments. Many FPCs have closed their doors due to the inability to move activities forward with only volunteer support.

Membership Composition

While almost all FPCs attempt to represent the entire food system, a majority of them include solid representation from the production, distribution and consumption sectors of the food chain, but tend to lack representation from food processors or waste management organizations (Harper et al, 2009). This usually includes small to medium size farmers, community gardeners, urban agriculturists, food distributors and wholesalers, food bank managers, labor representatives, grocery retailers, farmers market managers, chefs and restaurant owners. Food Policy Councils also often rely on the expertise of academics and prominent non-profits working on food security, food justice or anti-hunger efforts. Typical government officials who sit on FPCs hail from departments of health, the environment, education, social services and economic development. Very few FPCs include membership from individuals who are negatively impacted by food system disparity such as EBT/Food Stamps users, farm workers, or residents in "food desert" neighborhoods. Some FPC practitioners have expressed reluctance to include all members of the food system: for example, many have not invited corporate retail chains or agribusiness companies to participate due to historic mistrust of those entities among activists or community members.

Membership Selection

The way FPC members are selected also reflects the character and intentions of the FPC. For example, in an attempt to advance a more democratic process, both the newly formed Oakland and Detroit Food Policy Councils conducted an extensive public recruitment, application and review process overseen by a diverse committee of city and community representatives. The review committee sought to balance the final FPC membership in terms of food system sector, race, gender, and age. The Oakland FPC also sought to balance representation among "working communities" defined as "business, labor, community organizations and citizens, rural and regional businesses and organizations, health and educational organizations, and local governance." (Harper et al, 2009, p. 18) Despite these examples, Harper et al (2009) found that 55% of local FPCs members are "self-selected," while 36% are appointed and only 10% use an application process. Conversely, state-level FPC membership is 67% appointed and 33% self-selected. County-level FPCs are evenly spread between "self-selected," "apply" and "elect or nominate," (28%) with only 14% using appointments.

A good number of FPCs are likely to employ some combination of self-selection, election (by other Council members) and appointment by government officials. In the case of the Detroit Food Policy Council, for example, three seats are reserved for an initial appointment by the Mayor, the City Council as a whole, and the Director of Health, while a time-limited Convening Committee will select 12 members from various food system sectors and 6 members who are consumers or "general public." After the initial terms run out, the Council itself will reviewapplications and select new (or renewed) members.[21]

21 Detroit Food Policy Council. (2009). Recommendations on the Establishment, Structure and Functioning of the Detroit Food Policy Council. Retrieved from http://www.detroit-

Brief Overview of the Four Case Studies

Four Food Policy Councils were selected as illustrative of the diversity of structure and intention among FPCs. Based on a review of pertinent literature and an informal scan of the almost 90 FPCs in existence in North America, this study identified four examples which highlight re-occurring and yet diverging philosophies about the FPC model. These four were also selected for their potential applicability to the Los Angele context and for their unique contribution to the field of food policy and innovative governance.

The Toronto Food Policy Council was chosen due to its successful eighteen-year track record in a diverse, largely immigrant metropolis with similarly underutilized assets as Los Angeles, such as proximity to regional agriculture. The tireless commitment of Council members, their political savvy and simultaneous commitment to inclusive governance in Toronto seemed full of useful insight for a Los Angeles Food Policy Council.

The Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force identified racial justice in access, distribution and consumption as a priority for the future Food Policy Council. As such, the Detroit Food Policy Council was chosen as a case study because of its foundation in grassroots activism in the African American Community. A local community-based organization called the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network played a major role in lobbying the Detroit City Council to adopt a Food Security Policy for the city as well as implement the policy through a Food Policy Council. The effort paid special attention to urban agriculture opportunities in Black communities as a requisite for local control, empowerment and decision-making around healthy food choices.

San Francisco chose a very different route than many other cities with Food Policy Councils. The Council, initiated in the summer of 2009, will sunset after a year. Its specific raison d'etre is the implementation of a mayoral directive that mandates all city departments to bolster their food-related activity. The directive itself came about from a feedback process in which city staff identified already approved food-related

policies or projects that were never implemented. This time-limited approach to a very specific goal differs significantly from the kind of Food Policy Council that adopts new priorities as it grows and exists to stimulate a policy environment more than implement specific policies. The argument for this approach is that the Council can focus on achieving tangible outcomes under the pressure of the Mayor and a deadline.

Finally, the last case study will focus on an active landscape of food policy underway in New York City that is not being coordinated by a Food Policy Council in a conventional sense. Speaker Christine Quinn recently announced FoodWorks NYC, a four-year initiative focused on sustainability through the food supply chain. Quinn hopes this project will leverage the work of Mayor Bloomberg's Food Policy Coordinator, who has focused on increased food retail in underserved neighborhoods. Both the Office of Speaker Quinn and the City's Office of the Food Policy Coordinator rely on advisory committees made up of food system experts and stakeholders. The New York City case study looks at democratic and multi-sector input into the policy-making process that is not in the traditional Food Policy Council formation, but nevertheless borrows components of the FPC. The purpose of this case study is to assess alternative means for food system planning outside the Food Policy Council.

In each of these case studies, I am investigating the social, political and economic factors that empower or weaken a Food Policy Council's ability to achieve its goals. I am interested in the formal structure of the Council, the makeup up of its membership, the process of creating and implementing the Council and the legal and political power or influence it holds. Actual policy change outcomes as well as qualitative assessments of how the Council has "democratized" food system decision-making are considered in determining the success of a Council.

foodpolicycouncil.net/ in February, 2010.

The Link-Tank: Toronto Food Policy Council

Image 6. Patrons meander at a Farmer's Market in Toronto.
Photo Credit: Elisa Salcedo.

In Brief

The Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC): "The Link-Tank"

The TFPC is one of the most widely respected Food Policy Councils in North America. The TFPC acts like a sub-committee of the Board of Health, which is the commission overseeing the Toronto Public Health. The Council itself is composed of established food system experts, academics, and community leaders, and staffed by at least one full-time public servant. The TFPC has been successful in leveraging its position in the City to move specific legislation around rooftop gardens and city local procurement, for example. Perhaps more significantly, the TFPC has cultivated broad consciousness among city departments and agencies about opportunities for food policy change. Currently, the TFPC has helped with the development of a comprehensive "Food Strategy" for the City of Toronto, which identifies food-related policy opportunities for every city department in ways that achieve multiple City goals at once. The TFPC has also raised millions of dollars of federal and private funding for community-based food system activities, and convened coalitions of stakeholders to initiate new projects. TFPC Manager Wayne Roberts describes this functioning of cultivating partnerships between government and the community as being a "link-tank."[22]

History

One of the oldest and most respected of Food Policy Councils, the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) emerged from a convergence of community activism and political concern on three fronts: anti-hunger advocacy, public health awareness over rising rates of nutrition-related disease, and an environmentalist interest in sustainable agriculture and the increasing distance between food producers and consumers (MacRae, 2010). A tactical coalition began meeting in the late 1980's in Toronto in response to rising rates of hunger and the arrival of food banks to Canada. Many activists at the time felt that the food bank approach to hunger needed to be strictly temporary; they saw the institutionalization of food banks in the United States as an entrenchment of hunger in society.

The question of food banks in Canada opened discussion about the structural factors that lead to hunger and ways the City of Toronto can ameliorate the problem in a more systemic way. Activists invited Professor Tim Lang, who was the Director of the London Food Commission at the time, to discuss his experiments with developing a Food Policy Council in England. Together with Lang, the coalition developed a set of one hundred or so recommendations for the City of Toronto called "Health City"– a few of those dealt with the formation of a Food Policy Council to encourage the City to "partner with business and community groups to develop policies and programs promoting food security."[23]

The community organizers had a political ally in City Councilor Jack Layton, now a leader of the federal New Democratic Party. Layton provided advice on how to approach and frame the proposal, and how to garner support from other members of City Council. As Chair of the Board of Health (BOH), Layton also had influence on the ad-hoc subcommittee tasked with the design of the Food Policy Council, which ultimately decided to locate the FPC as a formal part of the BOH (MacRae, 2010).

22 Wayne, R. (2010) Food Policy Encounters of a Third Kind: How the Toronto Food Policy Council Socializes for Sustain-ability. Unpublished draft manuscript.

23 Toronto Food Policy Council. Retrieved from http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm in December, 2009.

Food Policy Framework

The TFPC helped establish a broad policy framework for the City of Toronto first through the Toronto Declaration on Food and Nutrition in 1992 and then the 2001 Toronto Food Charter.[24] The Charter describes the City's commitment to protecting the human right of every Toronto resident with regards to food, and suggests a series of policy directions that could achieve the overarching vision that:

- Every Toronto resident should have access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally-appropriate food.
- Food security contributes to the health and wellbeing of residents while reducing their need for medical care.
- Food is central to Toronto's economy, and the commitment to food security can strengthen the food sector's growth and development.
- Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity and is an important part of the city's culture.

While some interviewees suggested that these two documents were mostly "spiritual" and lack the teeth of implementation,[25] former TFPC Manager Rod MacRae cites the Declaration and the Charter as policy touchstones that situate the activities of the TFPC within larger goals (MacRae, 2010). Once passed, MacRae explains, the TFPC could justify its activities and advocate for the implementation of the documents' goals.

Approach and Strategy

In its 19-year history, the TFPC has built a reputation for innovation, passion and accomplishment through the growth of key approaches and dynamics.

Strategy 1: The Inside-Outside Strategy

Several TFPC members and other leadership from non-governmental organizations describe the TFPC as operating an "inside/outside strategy" between government and community stakeholders. A commonly held perception is that the TFPC adds value to a local movement for food equity and sustainability by navigating "inside" government discussion on how the city can support community initiatives or change policy to empower community-driven progress. At the same time, the TFPC animates and coordinates stakeholders to engage with government to make change or push for specific policy reform, as needed. The TFPC builds the capacity of community-based organizations by training leaders in the "inside/outside" strategy, increasing their ability to access resources and navigate government, which sometimes, as Rod MacRae describes, "could make the difference in Council votes." (MacRae, 2010) MacRae says the TFPC has the ability to "reduce frustration among activists and increase insight about levers of power." In other words, the TFPC stimulates more effective public participation in government activity in the food system.

Image 7. Indoor food production at The Stop, an anti-hunger organization in Toronto. Several staff at The Stop are current or former TFPC members. Photo Credit: Elisa Salcedo

24 City of Toronto. (2001). Toronto's Food Charter. Toronto, Canada: City of Toronto. Retrieved from www.toronto.ca/food_hunger/pdf/food_charter.pdf.

25 Interviewees. Personal communication, January 2010.

The unique "hybrid" structure of the TFPC as a citizen body with formal location in city government enables this communication and coordination between the City of Toronto and food system constituencies. The 30-seat Council behaves as a sub-committee of the Board of Health, an entity made up of City Council members that acts as supervisory body for Toronto Public Health. The Board of Health already had a history of civic involvement prior to the TFPC, including the use of citizen deputations. TFPC members have used this openness to their advantage over the years by requesting deputations on food policy matters and putting forward motions for the consideration of the Board. As a body of City Council members, the Board of Health has forwarded suggestions and motions to the whole City Council. Also, City Council appoints two members to serve on the TFPC at any give time, and one always serves as Co-Chair.

In terms of making impact within government, the staff Manager plays a crucial role. As a civil servant, the Manager is granted access and asked for input to policy at the gestation stage. In this way, other city staff benefit from the perspective of community leadership vis a vis the Manager of the TFPC without risking giving one or two groups preferential treatment. "As a civil servant, I know the language and concerns of city staff and can translate community demands in language that staff connect with or resonate with, including awareness of precedents followed in other areas," explains TFPC Manager Wayne Roberts.[26] While the TFPC is a force for translation between government and community generally, the staff Manager himself is the translator, operating in both worlds.

Literature from the Toronto Department of Public Health discusses this kind of hybrid function as a "collaborative infrastructure"[27] that has been developed throughout the entire City of Toronto over time (Toronto Public Health, 2010, p. 6). Noted as a necessary public asset for large-scale food system reform, "'collaborative infrastructure'… [provides] opportunities for people from all walks of life to work together on solutions to common problems, instead of splitting into polarized groups." (p. 8) The inside-outside operations and structure of the TFPC can lead to some confusion about to whom the Food Policy Council belongs: the inside or the outside? A city staff member who works on food policy (but not for the TFPC) depicted the TFPC as a "citizen body," while many TFPC members and other community leaders describe the TFPC as a "government body." Longtime TFPC members were not surprised to hear about these dual perceptions, and linked it back to the effects of an inside-outside strategy.

The Inside-Outside Strategy in Action: The Toronto Food Strategy

On February 16, 2010, the City of Toronto Department of Public Health formally released its first attempt at a comprehensive "Food Strategy," officially titled "Food Connections: Toward a Healthy and Sustainable Food System for Toronto." The Medical Officer of Health, chief administrator for Toronto Public Health, initiated the Food Strategy in 2007 as a strategic blueprint for identifying and leveraging food-related assets across every city department.[28] The philosophical approach of the document is that food cuts across the silos of government activity, and therefore has the power to address multiple problems at once.[29]

The Food Strategy promotes the idea that food-related programs and policies can help the City achieve multiple goals at once: goals related to health, the environment, economic development, public safety and neighborhood cohesion. "The goal is not to make food a priority that competes against other issues for resources," states the Food Connections document, "but to identify opportunities where food can address and enhance local government objectives." (Toronto Public Health, 2010, p. 15) The Strategy is careful to locate food initiatives in terms of

26 Roberts, W. Personal communication. May 23, 2010.

27 Quoted in Toronto Public Health, 2010 from Kanter, R.M. (1995). World Class: Thriving Locally in the Global Economy. New York: Simon & Schuster.

28 Dorfman, P. Personal communication, January 11, 2010.

29 Wayne Roberts uses the example of healthy street food vending. Street food vending can increase access to affordable foods, enliven the pedestrian environment and support culturally diverse entrepreneurs. It could also support "clean air, traffic safety and crime-free streets" because "street and pedestrian access to take-out reduces air pollution from stop-and-go traffic at drive-through take-outs, while increasing traffic safety in an era when a quarter of meals are eaten in the car by reducing the numbers driving under the multitasking influence of junk food, and by adding to a bustling street scene that makes streets busier and therefore safer."

Image 8. Front Cover of Toronto's "Food Strategy" Document.
Source: Toronto Public Health

economic and political restraints: "At a time when the City is facing severe budget pressures, the ideas below also focus on ways to tap into, and maximize, our existing underused, paid-for food assets." (p.18)

For two years, public health staff met with a special Task Force of both food system stakeholders as well as top government managers to clarify local government's primary "levers" of power regarding the food system. The first lever is public policy. The City can revisit regulations (such as food business permits or food safety protocol), insert food into already existing policies (such as considering food access in transportation planning updates) or consider its own proprietary power as a supplier of food through, for example, programs for children or the elderly. A second lever is the City's ability to be a "community animator" by setting an example and "tapping the creativity of residents and fostering collaboration among them on projects." (p.17) The third lever involves the City's power to partner with and advocate to larger levels of government for food policy issues that extend beyond the City's reach.

Given these three areas of influence, the Food Strategy suggests the City of Toronto leverage food-related assets in six ways that match the City's current policy direction.

Six Directions to a Health Focused Food System

1. Grow Food-friendly Neighbourhoods [sic]
2. Make Food a Centerpiece of Toronto's New Green Economy
3. Eliminate Hunger in Toronto
4. Empower Residents with Food Skills and Information
5. Use Food to Connect City and Countryside
6. Embed Food System Thinking in Government.

What role has the Toronto Food Policy Council played in the Food Strategy? Several TFPC members and the current Manager of the TFPC Wayne Roberts sat on the special Task Force convened to advise the Food Strategy. Peter Dorfman, principal author of the Food Strategy, consulted several times with the full TFPC for feedback on the draft document. Toronto Public Health will continue for several months to host a feedback sessions with various city staff, community groups and food system sectors to generate consensus around the Food Strategy (Dorfman, 2010.) The TFPC has leveraged its own networks and assisted outreach efforts by hosting feedback sessions. Looking ahead, the TFPC may have an important role in overseeing the implementation of the Food Strategy once it becomes official policy. Members will need to decide how much of an advocacy role they would like the TFPC to take on behalf of the Strategy.

The advisory role of the TFPC (and its individual members as Task Force participants) in the development of the Food Strategy and the TFPC's role in stimulating input for its future implementation demonstrates the inside-outside strategy in action. TFPC members are influential academics and leaders of non-profits with significant membership. Their position as Food Policy Council member elevates, in a sense, the experience and expertise of individual members and the "communities of practice" they reflect in the realm of government policy-making (Harriet Friedmann quoted in Roberts, 2010). Meanwhile, the TFPC

transmits awareness of the Food Strategy into their own community networks, so that a broader audience of stakeholders is engaged in the process.

Furthermore, the TFPC has a specific role to play for the sixth proposed "direction": embed food systems thinking in government. This direction acknowledges that:

> "Food's many benefits, as well as its far-flung problems, cannot be addressed comprehensively within one governmental silo or department. Food is, by its nature, a cross-divisional matter. It requires horizontal management or, in a municipal context, collaboration across City divisions. The upside for governments in an era of constrained public resources is that effective collaboration within government and with the community can often leverage assets that working within silos couldn't. Successful cities will be those that become adept at developing programs that address multiple needs at one time." (p. 24)

Indeed, historically, this is a service the TFPC has provided the City: the ability to think about food across silos and research "elegant policy" that engages multiple sectors of the food system at once (Roberts, 2010). To this end, the Food Strategy recommends that the TFPC "work with residents to engage all city committees in relevant and appropriate food related discussions and actions." (Toronto Public Health, 2010, p. 24) As such, the TFPC will likely be the site where the Food Stategy continues to expand with fresh ideas.

Interestingly, a separate recommendation in the Food Strategy is to establish government mechanisms "to identify food opportunities, coordinate food initiatives and partnerships both within government and the community." (p. 24) The Strategy does not tap the TFPC directly for this task, though this too is a traditional area of activity for the TFPC. The TFPC approaches food systems thinking by socializing throughout the food system, and creating effective linkages between actors, capacity and resources, as discussed in the following section.

Strategy 2: The Independent Link-Tank

TFPC Manager Wayne Roberts describes this function of building and connecting key players within food policy scenarios as that of a "link-tank." (Roberts 2010) Roberts argues that food policy councils ought to start by accepting an unpleasant reality in many locales: the total lack of comprehensive food policy. The piecemeal way that food policy and planning is scattered across various government departments or NGO projects with little communication means fundamental problems in the food system go unaddressed, or worse – they exacerbate. "There is no-one in government who has a real job with serious operational responsibility who has the time or mandate to hear, deal with, champion or implement a comprehensive and sustainable food policy," writes Roberts, "Food policy—with the implementable meat of resources on its bones, as well as directors with overarching responsibilities and resources to animate and orchestrate the whole food sector – exists mostly in our imaginations." (Roberts, 2010, p. 3)

The food policy council model attempts to address this challenge by "harvesting ideas" and "harnessing capacity" toward the creation of a policy environment from which comprehensive planning may emerge (MacRae, 2010). The idea is that Council members exchange expertise and relationships with each other and the City, expanding the universe of perspective and democratic participation in the policy making process. Instead of focusing on policy alone, which may be a pre-mature endeavor in Robert's view, the TFPC philosophy is to develop the ingredients that go into policy – such as awareness among city staff, effective community mobilization, buy-in from legislators, as well cultivating research and ideas. An example of how this is executed is through popular bi-monthly public meetings where community groups present about their work and where a "Local Food Hero" is recognized each time for her/his contribution to advancing sustainability in Toronto's food system. Numerous community projects and even businesses have emerged as a result of ideas shared and connections made at TFPC public meetings (Roberts, 2010).

Toronto Food Policy Council At A Glance

Location	Government, Toronto Dept of Public Health
How Created	City Council, Community organizing
Purpose	Citizen advisory body to provide research & recommendations for food policy & promote food systems thinking throughout City
Policy Impact	Provide research, testimony, initiate motions through Board of Health (composed of City Councilmembers)
Composition	30 food system experts & food sector representatives
Membership Selection	By FPC Staff in consultation with FPC members
Staff	Full-time Staff Manager, Administrative support, Policy Associate (Budget permitting)

Strengths

- ⊕ Full-time staff and strong leadership maintain momentum for ambitious projects over a long period of time.
- ⊕ Formal location in gov't brings credibility with city staff and public officials, while composition of Council itself brings trust with community-based groups.
- ⊕ Strategic planning brings clarity about hybrid function of FPC as vehicle for building capacity of local food movement and advancing policy change within City.
- ⊕ Cultivation of "food systems thinking" in all gov't activities leads to more comprehensive policy proposals.

Weaknesses

- ⊖ Emphasis on community-based activity can slow progress on policy change.
- ⊖ Hybrid identity of FPC leads to confusion about if FPC is part of government or not.
- ⊖ Focus on cultivating "food systems thinking" is less tangible outcome than targeting specific policy reforms.

The Link-Tank Strategy in Action: The Good Food Box Program

The TFPC also works to identify the capacity to implement outside of government in an effort to continuously build a local movement for food sustainability. One notable "link-tank" success story is found in the Good Food Box program run by a prominent food advocacy organization called FoodShare. In the mid-1990's, TFPC staff and members traveled to Belo Horizonte, Brazil where the local government had launched a broad-reaching anti-hunger program. Chief among these efforts were the sacolâo markets, where bulk purchases of regionally-grown produce by the city government allowed for below-market prices in low-income neighborhoods. The sacolâo markets of Belo Horizonte inspired the Torontonian visitors. Upon return from the trip, the TFPC sponsored a study of how a similar program might occur in Toronto (MacRae, 2010). Hired consultants presented a community-driven approach at a public TFPC meeting, originally conceived in the Field to Table Feasibility Study.[30] In attendance was the new Executive Director of FoodShare Debbie Field, who saw the centralized purchasing program as a good direction for her organization.[31] With additional funding from the TFPC, FoodShare was able to launch the Good Food Box program, which now distributes 4,000 boxes of fresh affordable produce through 200 neighborhood drop-off points in low-income neighborhoods of Toronto every month. The Good Food Box program employs a similar centralized purchasing and distribution model as the sacolâo markets. Through bulk purchases and negotiations at the Ontario Food Terminal and with smaller local producers, FoodShare is able to sell produce boxes at a sliding scale that account for economic need.[32]

At every point of the realization of this program, the TFPC played a catalytic role. First, the TFPC initiated a cross-cultural exchange of best practices by sending a small delegation to Brazil. Then the TFPC put resources into the further study of how Belo Horizonte-inspired models could work in Toronto. The TFPC was the place where the ideas were matched with local capacity through FoodShare. And finally, the TFPC supported FoodShare financially and through technical assistance to launch the program. The noteworthy difference between what the TFPC saw in Brazil and what came to be in Toronto, of course, is that the City of Toronto did not implement the program.

Limitations of the Link-Tank

Though it is located within city government, the TFPC tends to focus on community capacity outside of government. Critics believe this places an unfair burden on already cash-strapped non-profits to implement the ideas generated at the TFPC. The TFPC will often be the site where ideas for new projects incubate, but the hard work of carry out the vision often falls to non-governmental organizations. However, due to its stable government funding, the TFPC is able to generate funds for the benefit of local non-profits and community groups. Roberts and MacRae estimate that the TFPC has raised over 20 million dollars over its lifespan to support community-driven projects and food system ac

30 FoodShare. A Tale of Two Cities: Toronto and Belo Horizonte. PowerPoint Presentation. Date unknown.

31 Field, D. Personal communication, January 12, 2010.

32 Parvinian, Z. Personal communication, January 12, 2010.

tivity (MacRae, 2010 & Roberts, 2010.) Many interviewees (TFPC mem bers and not) felt that this is a major trust builder between community advocates and the TFPC.

Perhaps another drawback to the focus on "link-tanking" outside of the government realm is a slower transformation of food policy. By locating itself as an active ally in a local food movement, the TFPC may enjoy less attention as a credible government entity among city staff, as evidenced by the perception by some that the TFPC is a "citizen group." However, the TFPC has influenced some key legislative changes in the City of Toronto. The TFPC provided key research and expert testimony for the development of the City's Green Roofs program. While energy efficiency and cost savings was a major driver for the program, Toronto City Planning was also persuaded by arguments about the potential for urban agriculture on rooftop gardens.[33] The Green Roof by-laws require green roofs on all new buildings.

Other legislative work has tested the strength of the TFPC to move a more comprehensive vision of the food system. Toronto's Local Food Procurement Policy, which City Council passed in October 2008, is an example. In 2007, the City Council passed the Climate Change, Clean Air & Sustainable Energy Action Plan, which included a provision for the promotion of local food production, a review of City procurement policies and an increase of community gardens in an effort to reduce green house gas emissions and smog pollution associated with importing food to Toronto.[34]

The Local Food Procurement Policy set an ultimate target of 50% locally grown food sourced to city operations "as soon as possible." The City's Children's Services Division implemented the first phase of the policy with a modest increase of $15,000 allocated to its budget to initiate a pilot program in 37 city daycares. As of June 2009, Children's Services realized an increase of 13.4% more locally produced food above the baseline, a total of 33.4% of food procurement.[35]

However, the policy restricts the purpose of city food procurement to local production ("local" defines as the Greater Toronto Area, the Greenbelt of Ontario and other regions of Ontario) and does not include standards for fair labor or sustainability practices. Sustainability is mentioned in staff reports but is discounted as difficult to certify or define, even though a well-respected local non-profit called Local Food Plus offers certification for pesticide-free production, animal welfare, fair labor practices, habitat restoration and energy consumption.[36] This means the City could be a big purchaser of food sprayed with pesticides and under harsh working conditions simply because it fell within the defined "local" geography.

"The issue was a very thorny one for us," recalls Roberts, "because so much of the City's food service expenditures of over $30 million a year are provided free -- to people in homes for the aged or children in childcare, for example -- and there's no way for the City to cover the additional costs of local and sustainable foods through increasing the sale price. So we just couldn't find any place to leverage the benefits of local and sustainable food. The stars have to be aligned as well as the policies, and sometimes wisdom is the better part of valor and we have to wait for the right time to push really hard on innovative policy. We're not out to win a battle but lose the war, so we sometimes have to work with others in setting leadership precedents. That's what's happened; at least two other municipalities near Toronto, Markham and Hamilton, have provided leadership on this issue."[37]

33 Stott, S. Personal communication, April 12, 2010.

34 City of Toronto. (2008). Local Food Procurement Policy and Implementation Plan. Staff Report. Toronto, CA: City of Toronto.

35 City of Toronto. (2009). Local Food Procurement Policy and Implementation Plan - Update. Staff Report. Toronto, CA: City of Toronto.

36 Hanes, A. (2008, October 24). Toronto's Target: 50% Local Food. Posted Toronto. Retrieved in April 2010 from http://network.nationalpost.com/NP/blogs/toronto/default.aspx.

37 Roberts, W. Personal communication, April 4, 2010.

Design of the Council

TFPC members and staff pointed to key features in the design and operations of the Council as vital to its longevity and success. The following outlines the elements that make the TFPC work as it does:

- The TFPC is staffed by at least one full-time manager, an administrative assistant and a part-time policy associate, all paid for by the City of Toronto. At various times, the TFPC has enjoyed a staff of up to 3 full-time employees. The absolute need for full-time staff with secure funding was re-iterated in several interviews.
    - The Council Manager position requires a combined skill set of policy research, political advocacy, high-level networking, organizing, teaching and administration. According to current TFPC Manager Wayne Roberts, the position requires one to "punch above his/her weight" to achieve influence and credibility in the public sector and the activist community of NGO's (Roberts, 2010). Both of the TFPC's managers over its history have provided a great deal of visionary power to the development of the TFPC as well. Roberts and MacRae are extensively published and sought-after thinkers within the world of sustainable food system reform.
    - Furthermore, the Manager must successfully navigate many different worlds that may have differing interests. Roberts describes himself as "the most accountable public servant in Toronto" because he must respond to goals of the City (as a civil servant), the Department of Public Health where the TFPC is located and the Food Policy Council itself (Roberts, 2010). Former Manager Rod MacRae described the challenge of operating in three worlds: political, bureaucratic and community-based (MacRae, 2010). In the formative years of the TFPC, MacRae says much of his work involved constructing consensus by documenting and synthesizing discussions in a way that a multitude of stakeholders could "see themselves" in the vision.
- Formal ties to the Board of Health have provided a strategic location within the City (MacRae, 2010). The TFPC is a formal sub-committee of the Board of Health, which is comprised of City Council members and oversees the Department of Public Health.
    - The Board of Health (BOH) had a history of openness to civic involvement prior to the creation of the TFPC, especially through its use of citizen deputations for intelligence gathering and research. Given this history, the TFPC as a citizen advisory within government has been taken seriously.
    - The TFPC has also used its relationship to the BOH to put forward motions, which in some cases move along to the entire City Council for consideration once passed by the BOH.
    - The importance of the TFPC's position within the City is re-enforced by its formal connection to a friendly government body that essentially acts as a gateway to the City Council.
- The TFPC is made up of 30 members who reflect a collective stakeholder experience within the food system.
    - New members are nominated by the Manager in consultation with the TFPC and sometimes as a reference from a City Council member or the Mayor. The Manager brings nominations to BOH for approval. According to Roberts, this process has been conflict and controversy-free throughout the history of the TFPC.
    - Members are chosen for knowledge and expertise on an issue not as a representative of stakeholder group. Members understand that as a TFPC participant they represent their own opinion not that of the organization or company they work for. Community Co-Chair Janice Etter felt this approach ensured efficiency (because members could freely decide without waiting for approval from their organization's leadership) and avoided

the power dynamics of stakeholder politics (Etter, 2010). Member terms are for 4 years (until recently, the terms were 2 years.)

- The TFPC elects a Community Co-Chair for a 4-year term, a position that amounts to volunteer staff. The Community Co-chair works closely with the staff Manager to develop meeting agendas; run public, closed-door and steering committee meetings of the TFPC; consult with constituents, public officials and their staff and community groups; and represent the TFPC publically. The TFPC also has a Political Co-Chair, which is a member of City Council.
- The TFPC direction is devised by a Steering Committee – appointed through consensus among the entire TFPC- with support and guidance from the staff Manager.
- The TFPC holds formal public meetings in City Hall every other month. Though these meetings are formal and employ Robert's Rule of Order, the TFPC public meetings enjoy voluminous turnout from students, activists, academics and other interested parties. The TFPC meeting spaces are described as a place for socializing and networking in addition to official business of the Council. The public meetings are not the place where controversial or unfinished issues are discussed or resolved. On the off-month, the TFPC meets privately to deal with stickier issues and to further develop new ideas of projects (Roberts, 2010).

How to Measure Success: Relationships Not Metrics?

The TFPC is not charged with the implementation of policy though its initial goals require far-reaching impact: the TFPC was founded "to end hunger and the need for a food distribution system based on charity," and "to promote food production and distribution systems which are equitable, nutritionally excellent, and environmentally sound." (Toronto Food Policy Council) However, the TFPC project has been just as much about creating a culture of change within government and supporting the capacity of the local food movement as it has been about advancing policy change, which makes "progress" difficult to quantify.

From Wayne Robert's point of view, the core commitments for any Food Policy Council are accountability and effectiveness, and the use of metrics to evaluate progress is subordinate to these larger goals.[38] Roberts submits goal reports and performance evaluations to his director on a quarterly basis, a formal report to the public at the open TFPC meetings in City Hall and an annual report to the Toronto Board of Health. The TFPC also keeps track of some "growth impact" measures such as number of subscribers to the TFPC list serve (for which, the goal of adding 500 new members in 6 months has been identified) and number of attendees at public TFPC meetings (Roberts, 2010).

The purpose of the TFPC is to facilitate idea exchange, relationship and capacity building to create a policy environment for food systems change. It does not, and was never intended to, create policy itself. "How do you measure a good relationship?" Roberts wrote me, "When you understand that food is about relationships, not commodities, then the old dogma about 'if you can't measure it, you can't manage it' loses some sheen." The TFPC sees their work as a gradual, relationship-driven, community-based effort that infuses systems thinking into city government and across various food sectors.

Finally, the TFPC culture emphasizes the need to spotlight and empower community-based efforts or the work of other city departments. The Council is a "behind-the-scenes" actor that adds value to other efforts.

38 Roberts, W. Personal communication, February 16, 2010.

In that way, argues Roberts, it is important not to overly claim credit in a way that could diminish trust with community organizations or detract from the work of movement building. Still, even the relationship-based attributes of the TFPC could be documented and disseminated in ways that attempt to measure the impact of the TFPC on Toronto's food system. For his part, Roberts (and others like Rod MacRae and TFPC members Harriet Friedmann and Wally Seccomb) has done an excellent job writing and theorizing about the work of the Food Policy Council. Numerous other FPCs would benefit from a systematized and transparent evaluation mechanism, in that the TFPC serves as a model across North America. Furthermore, local policy leaders may be able to better defend the expert testimony and research of the TFPC if they could point to an analysis of the Councils overall impact on the local food system.

Grassroots Power In The Policy Arena: Detroit Food Policy Council

In Brief

The Detroit Food Policy Council (DFPC): "Grassroots Power Meets the Policy Arena"

The DFPC arose from grassroots organizing by several community-based organizations with leadership from the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN.) The DBCFSN enlisted a local City Councilwoman as an ally in the creation of a comprehensive City of Detroit Policy on Food Security to address the rising issue of hunger in "food desert" neighborhoods. Unanimously passed by City Council, that policy called for the formation of the DFPC to oversee the implementation of the Food Security policy. At the request of the City Council, the DBCFSN and other grassroots leaders conducted a thorough community process to determine the purpose, activities and membership of the DFPC. Newly formed, the DFPC will recommend food policy changes to the City, issue an annual Food System Report, work with City departments to streamline the development of urban agriculture projects as well as monitor the implementation of the Food Security policy. The DFPC is purposefully not located in the public sector due to financial and political instability in the City of Detroit. True to its roots, the DFPC is intended to serve as a coordinating and mobilizing hub for the many urban agriculture and food justice projects throughout the city, as well as advocate for policy reform.

Image 9. Community members enjoy a garden run by the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network. Photo Credit: Malik Yakini

History and Purpose: "Creating a Food Secure Detroit"

As one of the newest FPCs in the nation, the Detroit Food Policy Council is attempting to implement cutting edge theories and practices in the genre. The DFPC project is especially important as an experiment in genuine participatory democracy in the name of social, racial and economic justice. The DFPC began officially meeting in November of 2009, but community-based organizing work drove the creation of the DFPC for years prior.[39] After several members attended Community Food Security Conferences in Atlanta (2005) and Vancouver (2006), a local non-profit called the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN) presented to the Neighborhood and Community Service Standing Committee of the Detroit City Council about the need for a comprehensive food policy. They argued that the City lacked a strategy for coping with chronic racial and economic disparities in the local food economy, hunger and malnutrition among children, and general urban food insecurity in Detroit. The Committee agreed and enlisted the DBCFSN to conduct a public research process to devise such a policy (Yakini, 2010).

In its roots, the DFPC was a community-organizing endeavor. The DBCFSN created a Public Policy Committee that researched and presented recommendations at a public review session (Detroit Food Policy Council, 2009). DBCFSN also enlisted the input of Professor Kameshwari ("Kami") Pothukuchi, one of the nation's leading urban planning experts on food system planning and a professor at Wayne State University in Detroit. Feedback from Dr. Pothukuchi and community participants at the review session factored in significantly to the City of Detroit Policy on Food Security that was presented to the City Council's Neighborhood and Community Service Standing Committee. The Chair of that Committee JoAnn Watson, an ally to the DFPC, brought the policy to the whole City Council, which unanimously made it law in March 2008.

39 Yakini, M. Personal communication, February 24, 2010.

The policy, "Creating a Food Secure Detroit," is most likely one of the most progressive, visionary and comprehensive food policies in the nation. The policy commits the City to ensuring that Detroit is a "food secure city in which all of its citizens are hunger-free, healthy and benefit from the food systems that impact their lives."[40] The City also pledges to support "sustainable food systems" that offer employment and "contribute to the long-term well-being of the environment." On that basis, the Detroit Policy on Food Security explores current access to quality food in Detroit; hunger and malnutrition; impacts/effects of an inadequate diet; citizen education; economic injustice in the food system; urban agriculture; the role of schools and other public institutions; and emergency response in the event of a food-related crisis.

Disproportionate negative impact in each of those policy areas on the African American community in Detroit is explicitly detailed, embedding in "food security" a call for racial justice. The policy describes "actions needed" for each section, which includes things the City can do with its own property, resources and planning mechanisms as well as initiatives the City can support through material resources or advocacy. The policy also calls for the creation of the Detroit Food Policy Council "devoted to addressing the issues outlined."

After extensive research on Food Policy Councils across North America, a visit from Toronto FPC Manager Wayne Roberts to the Detroit City Council and another major community input meeting (convening 75 attendees representing more than 28 local organizations), the DBCFSN presented a strategy for the Detroit Food Policy Council to City Council (Yakini, 2010). The "Recommendations on the Establishment, Structure and Functioning of the Detroit Food Policy Council" outlines the following 7 goals for the Council:

1) Advocate for urban agriculture and composting being included as part of the strategic development of the City of Detroit;
2) Work with various City departments to streamline the processes and approvals required to expand and improve urban agriculture in the city of Detroit including acquisition of land and access to water;
3) Review the City of Detroit Food Security Policy and develop an implementation and monitoring plan that identifies, priorities, timelines, benchmarks, and human, financial and material resources;
4) Produce and disseminate an annual City of Detroit Food System Report that assesses the state of the city's food system, including activities in production, distribution, consumption, waste generation and composting, nutrition and food assistance program participation and innovative food system programs;
5) Recommend new food related policy as the need arises;
6) Initiate and coordinate programs that address the food related needs of Detroiters;
7) Convene an annual "Powering Up the Local Food System" Conference.

Taking lessons from the Toronto Food Policy Council, the DFPC is intended to "create a policy environment" by monitoring and advising the City and initiating programs and partnerships. Recent discussions at the newly formed DFPC have identified the third goal, pertaining to the implementation and monitoring of the Food Security policy, as the top priority for the Council (Yakini, 2010).

Detroit Food Policy Council At A Glance

Location	Independent Community-Based
How Created	City Council created FPC in Policy on Food Security after extensive community organizing
Purpose	Work with city government to promote urban agriculture, monitor implementation of Food Security Policy, produce research and provide recommendations in food system
Policy Impact	Provide research and recommendations to policy makers, organize communities to action
Composition	12 seats - food sector reps, 6 seats - general public, 3 seats appointees of Mayor, City Council, Director of Health & Wellness
Membership Selection	First, by Steering Committee of community leaders, then by FPC members
Staff	Plans for paid staff. Elected Co-Chairs provide leadership.

Strengths

- ⊕ Extensive community engagement helped shape FPC.
- ⊕ Support from numerous community-based groups as well as City Council members.
- ⊕ City's Policy on Food Security provides comprehensive policy framework, justification and purpose for FPC.
- ⊕ Clarity about role as coordinating body for local food movement.
- ⊕ Independence from gov't allows room to critique.

Weaknesses

- ⊖ No formal ability to keep City accountable on policy change.
- ⊖ Insecure funding and staff resources.
- ⊖ Ambitious policy change goals could lead to slower pace of progress.
- ⊖ Uncertain credibility with city staff and agency directors.

40 City of Detroit. (2008). City of Detroit Policy on Food Security. Retrieved from http://www.detroitfoodpolicycouncil.net/ in February, 2010.

Structure and Function of the DFPC

Relationship to Government: A Tentative Alliance

A strongly articulated concern in community meetings during the research phase for the DFPC was about the Council's relationship to government. Chronic fiscal and political "confusion" at Detroit City Hall made many stakeholders mistrustful of the local government. The architects of the DFPC also felt that an independent status was necessary to effectively critique and hold accountable city government as necessary. However, DBCFSN also recognized the value of the official sanction of government, especially if the Council would recommend policy change (Yakini, 2010).

In an effort to strike a balance, the DFPC reserves 3 seats for one appointment from the Mayor, the City Council (as a whole) and the Director of Health and Wellness Promotion each. After a two-year term, these seats will be filled in the same manner as the other 18 seats will be filled: by application and review by the Council itself. The first slate of members was hand-selected by a 7 person Convening Committee and then approved by the whole City Council. The Convening Committee itself was appointed by Councilwoman Watson and made up of many of the early advocates for the Food Security Policy. In addition to filling the first seats, the Committee was responsible for drafting by-laws for the DFPC, determining where the DFPC would be housed, write job descriptions for staff and identify funding sources (Detroit Food Policy Council, 2009). In this way, the City Council and other public officials influenced the early framework for the DFPC and the first round of member selections. Moving forward, however, the DFPC will operate as an independent organization, possible a 501(c) 3 non-profit entity (Yakini, 2010).

Membership and Selection

The Convening Committee determined the desired sectors for representation and issues letters of inquiry to "major players" in those sectors. The small list of individuals who responded to the letter was asked to submit information online. The Committee reviewed these applications, selected one candidate from each sector and submitted recommendations to the City Council (Yakini, 2010). The DFPC by-laws mandate that 12 seats be reserved for representatives from the following sectors:

Sustainable Agriculture
Retail Food Stores
Wholesale Food Distributors
Food Processors
Farmers Markets
Environmental Justice
Nutrition and Wellbeing (non-governmental)
Food Industry Workers
Colleges and Universities
K-12 Schools
Emergency Food Providers
Urban Planning (non-governmental)

Six more seats go to consumers or the general public. The by-laws indicate that a "Special effort should be made to ensure that grass roots, low income community members and others with an earnest stake in our community are represented on the DFPC." A balance of gender, age, socioeconomic status and ethnicity is also required. Like in Toronto, DFPC members are asked to represent themselves alone and not the agenda of the organizations or companies they work for to retain distance from inter-group or industry politics and cumbersome decision-making. Half of the sector and community seats will be 2 year assignments and the other half 3 years. After the initial terms, the DFPC will solicit new applications (or applications for a return Council member) and select new Council members. The government appointed

seats are 2-year term positions. No Council member can serve on the DFPC for longer than 6 consecutive years. The DFPC by-laws name the need to nurture "community-based leadership" to hold positions on the Council. (Detroit Food Policy Council, 2009).

A Community Food Movement Hub

Many community-based organizations have expressed high hopes for the DFPC to provide leadership to a multilayered food justice movement (Yakini, 2010). Urban agriculture has a particularly strong history in Detroit. The many African Americans who migrated from the south in search of jobs in the automobile industry brought with them a tradition of growing one's own food. Legislative initiatives throughout Detroit's history have encouraged this skillset, including Mayor Coleman Young's "Farm a Lot" program in the 1970's, which empowered residents to farm vacant properties. Detroit is home to more than 700 community gardens, 3 full-fledged farms, 40 school gardens and many backyard gardens (Yakini, 2010). Given this rich legacy, the irony that Detroit is home to some of the most severe "food desert" neighborhoods has spurred activism and discontent. Because there is "so much going on," around community food advocacy and urban agriculture, says DFPC Co-Chair Malik Yakini, "there's a feeling that there needs to be a unified or coordinated approach."

The hope is that the DFPC can maintain enough "objectivity" to facilitate collaborations, which could provide strategic direction and leverage outside funding options. Currently, the DFPC has a pledge of $30,000 from the Kellogg Foundation and interest from other funders, and plans to hire three full-time staff members in a Detroit Food Policy Office. The DFPC has also emphasized its own potential to raise millions of dollars of funding for City programs, a point often made by Toronto FPC Manager Wayne Roberts about their own strength. "That's the language the City Council speaks," says Malik Yakini.

The DFPC founders were conscious of the power of a Food Policy Council to "change decision-making power in the food system." (Yakini, 2010) The DFPC has taken painstaking steps to ensure "inclusivity and transparency" in its process, which Yakini feels has "built support and legitimacy" for the Council. Yakini vows that the DFPC will continue to offer multiple entry points for stakeholders to participate in changing the food system, whether through subcommittee membership, partnerships or community hearings.

Image 10 & 11: Urban agriculture in Detroit. Photo Credit: Malik Yakini

Mayoral Muscle:
San Francisco Food Policy Council

In Brief
The San Francisco Food Policy Council (SFFPC): "Mayoral Muscle"

The SFFPC is unlike most Food Policy Councils around the country because it is time-limited and organized entirely around a mayoral Executive Directive. With the close support of the Mayor of San Francisco, the Director of Food Systems at the Department of Public Health organized an Executive Directive (ED) on "Healthy and Sustainable Food for San Francisco" based on the reports and recommendations already on the books at several city departments and agencies. Once issued by the Mayor, this Executive Directive essentially gave city departments the "mayoral muscle" needed to implement their own recommendations within a specific timeframe. The SFFPC is an advisory body to the Mayor and to the Director of Food Systems to oversee the implementation of the Executive Directive. Half of the composition of the FPC is chief administrators of city and county departments and half of the membership is non-government food system representatives. The SFFPC meets every other month and follows a pre-organized work plan designed by the Director of Food Systems. The process surrounding the Executive Directive and the SFFPC is not a highly visible or public process.

The San Francisco Food Policy Council was created for the express purpose of overseeing the implementation of Mayor Gavin Newsom's Executive Directive on Healthy and Sustainable Food for San Francisco, which was issued in July of 2009.[41] The Directive declares food security and sustainable food practices a priority for the City and mandates each City department to deliver on some aspect of achieving that vision.[42]

The City's Director of Food Systems within the Public Health Department, Paula Jones, played an important role in researching, coordinating and writing the Directive. Her strategy was to compile recommendations from a multitude of task force studies about San Francisco's food system and coordinate with the Mayor's Office to provide a clear way forward for policy change (Jones, 2010). The Directive attempts to cover the entire food system from production through waste management. The effort has generated national attention for its comprehensiveness and the strength of its "specificity," which goes beyond non-binding plans and resolutions."[43]

City departments had already agreed to much of the wording of the Executive Directive in their own findings. "They had already acknowledged that we can and should do this," explained Jones in an interview, "What we needed was to give it the muscle through the Mayor." (Jones, 2010). In some cases, the Directive recommends general policy change, such as the requirement that all departments dealing with nutrition assistance programs "ensure adequate staffing to maximize the City's use of federal funding." (City & County of San Francisco, 2009).

The majority of the recommendations tap specific departments for specific programs. For example, the Redevelopment Agency is required to develop a "Food Business Action Plan" to "recruit and incubate new food businesses" within a 180 day period. The Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development is asked to finalize facility expansion plans for the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market, and all departments having jurisdiction over property must perform a land audit for urban agriculture.

Other deliverables pertain to internal government protocol such as the requirement that "all city departments and agencies purchasing food for events or meetings using city funds will utilize guidelines for 'healthy meetings' and purchase healthy, locally produced and/or sustainably certified foods to the maximum extent possible." The Directive has 16 of these line item requests. All departments were required to submit a contact person responsible for follow up within 30 days and an initial plan within 60 days. A goal of 12 months was set for the implementation of all recommendations in the Executive Directive.

The Directive also calls for the creation of a Food Policy Council to monitor the progress of the Directive. The FPC meets every other month to review work products submitted by city departments and offer recommendations. Jones herself developed the work plan for the Council and manages the process of documentation, research and

41 Jones, P. Personal communication, March 5, 2010.

42 City & County of San Francisco. Office of the Mayor. Executive Directive 09-03 Healthy and Sustainable Food for San Francisco. (July 9, 2009).

43 Cohen, Nevin quoted in City & County of San Francisco. Executive Directive 09-03 Healthy and Sustainable Food for San Francisco. Mid-Year Report. (February 2010.)

follow-up. The FPC members include representatives of 10 public agencies and departments and nine community stakeholder groups, and were selected by the Mayor's Office and Paula Jones. Other city staff is encouraged to attend but the meetings are not advertised to the public. "Community groups only really come if there is a role for them," says Jones, who emphasizes that the goal is to keep city staff on task with the implementation of the Directive (Jones, 2010).

The entire process has not been high profile to the public, according to Jones, which is a matter of "capacity and efficiency." To manage a highly public process requires more dedicated staff time and slower delivery of policy outcomes. Jones developed the charter, structure and function of the FPC in consultation with the Deputy Chiefs of Staff for the City of San Francisco. The strategy behind the design of the FPC and the Directive was to use the momentum of a sunset date (one year after the release of the Directive) to move policy change quickly (Jones, 2010). The emphasis is also on engaging city administrators and staff directly. To achieve this, Jones favored using the power of the Mayor's Office over an involved community input process. "I can call the departments and say 'I'm giving the Mayor an update, what's happening?' And they have to respond," says Jones.

After recently passing the "half-way" mark for the year program, it is clear that some recommendations will take longer than 12 months to realize. The FPC voted to continue to exist beyond a year. In terms of setting a deadline for deliverables, the San Francisco approach is clearly the most efficient. The strategy to limit the amount of time initially devoted to implementation seems to be an effective way to keep participants energized. As Jones pointed out in an interview, "Who wants to attend more meetings? The people we want to be involved are very busy people."

A major drawback, however, is that because the Executive Directive was not developed through a grassroots community process, it is unclear if the benchmarks established in it reflect the priorities of those most affected in the food system. Additionally, the minimal commitment of the Council may not best capture the wisdom in the room. Since Council members are weighing in on a pre-determined set of recommendations within
the framework of a pre-determined work plan, the Food Policy Council may not have the opportunity to incorporate new ideas or vision beyond a year's worth of planning.

San Francisco Food Policy Council At A Glance

Location	Government, SF Dept of Public Health
How Created	Executive Directive
Purpose	Advisory body to Mayor to oversee implementation of Executive Directive
Policy Impact	Monitor timelines, Review progress on Directive, Make recommendations for further food policy
Composition	9 City Department Directors 9 Non-gov't representatives
Membership Selection	By FPC Staff & Deputy Chiefs of Staff
Staff	Director of Food Systems for Dept of Public Health

Strengths

- ⊕ Executive Directive details specific programs and policies for every city department, making goals very clear.
- ⊕ Mayoral mandate keeps departments accountable to act in timely manner.
- ⊕ Requirements in Executive Directive based on previous research and plans already agreed upon by City departments.
- ⊕ Sunset date of 1 year keeps Council motivated and focused.

Weaknesses

- ⊖ FPC not designed for long range food system planning.
- ⊖ FPC meetings not open to the public. FPC process is a "behind the scenes" decision-making process.
- ⊖ No avenues for community engagement other than appointed FPC members.
- ⊖ Membership, structure and work plan determined by Council staff. Goals may not reflect desires of stakeholders.

In some ways, the specificity of the Executive Directive is both a strength and a weakness. The goals and objectives set are well within reach and will no doubt have some meaningful impact on San Francisco's food system. However, their specificity limits the Food Policy Council to a set of narrow tasks and misses an opportunity to create democratic transformation in governance and decision-making, as FPCs elsewhere have attempted. The actionable vision of Mayor Newsom's Executive Directive should be attempted elsewhere. The endeavor could be strengthened through a commitment to large-scale community engagement and planning policy changes that deepen notions of sustainability and justice.

Alternative Advisors: New York City Advisory Councils

In Brief
The New York City Advisory Councils: "Alternative Advisers"

New York City does not have a formal Food Policy Council. The City is home to several food policy initiatives and representative advisory councils have been established to offer recommendations. Two main efforts include the establishment of the Office of the Food Policy Coordinator by the Mayor and Speaker Christine Quinn's four-year plan called FoodWorks NYC. Both projects rely on coordination within the City as well as input from community stakeholders. Elements of the FPC model have been employed to meet this need, but many feel that a formal and permanent Food Policy Council is unnecessary and could even slow the process. The New York City case offers a the perspective that diverse input and cross-sector coordination can be achieved without a permamnent Food Policy Council.

New York City is home to a slew of food policy reports, plans and programs among various levels of local government.

- Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC 2030, a comprehensive sustainability plan for the city's future, includes segments pertaining to food's environmental impacts.
- Earlier this year, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer released FoodNYC: A Blueprint for a Sustainable Food System in conjunction with non-profit groups at the NYC Food and Climate Summit held at New York University.
- Three years ago, Mayor Bloomberg created an Office of the Food Policy Coordinator, a position that reports to the Deputy Mayor of Health and Human Services and focuses on food access and nutrition.
- Speaker of the Council Christine Quinn, with a legislative track record on health and nutrition, has initiated her own long-term planning process for sustainability and economic development in the food system- an initiative she calls FoodWorksNYC

Among these various players, a slate of food-related programs has appeared over the past several years.

- Most notable among them is FRESH (Food Retail Expansion to Support Health) a collaboration of City Planning, the New York Economic Development Corporation and the Department of Health to use zoning and financing incentive to bring grocery stores to underserved neighborhoods.
- Another project, championed by Food Policy Coordinator Ben Thomases, is the Green Carts initiative, which allows for special permits to produce cart vendors in neighborhoods lacking access to fresh fruit and vegetables.

Amid the dizzying array of food policy plans, New York City is not home to a Food Policy Council. At least, not the kind resembling the FPC model seen elsewhere. However, a closer look at two elements of the New York food policy landscape- the Office of the Food Policy Coordinator and Speaker Quinn's FoodWorks NYC – reveal aspects of the Food Policy Council at work.

The Office of the Food Policy Coordinator was created by the Mayor at the request of the City Council in 2007.[44] The Office is a one-man operation, led by Ben Thomases, with three very specific goals:

1. First, Thomases works to promote and expand utilization of federal food support programs, such as SNAP and the School Meal Programs.
2. Second, Thomases oversees improvement to the quality of meals served by City agencies. For example, the City developed nutrition standards for school meals that exceed the federal standards and Thomases works with school kitchen staff on meal planning and procurement of food.[45]
3. Lastly, the Coordinator works to promote healthy food retail access and demand. To that end, Thomases helped develop the Green Carts program, a relatively controversial affair given the history of mixed feelings about street vending in New York City.[46] The program introduced 1,500 new vendors into "low access neighborhoods" where at least 12% of adults reported to eating fruits and vegetables the prior day.[47]

44 The City of New York. Office of the Food Policy Coordinator. Retrieved in April 2010 from http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/html/programs/food_policy.shtml.
45 Mayor Bloomberg has jurisdiction over the schools.
46 Brannen, S. Personal communication, April 15, 2010.
47 City of New York. (2007) Mayor Bloomberg and Speaker Quinn announce Green Cart legislation to improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables in neighborhoods with greatest need. Press Release. New York City: City of New York.

As a branch under the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human services, the Food Policy Coordinator is limited in scope, and does not venture directly into the sustainability aspects of the food system. On the other hand, Thomases's Office has convened a Food Policy Task Force made up of representatives of government departments and agencies to coordinate nutrition and health efforts.[48] In partnership with the Food Trust, the Food Bank of New York and the representatives from the grocery industry, the Task Force has independently raised up to $175,000 dollars to promote better supermarket access in all New York City neighborhoods (City of New York, 2007).

Noting some of the limitations to viewing food policy solely in terms of access and nutrition,[49] Speaker Christine Quinn initiated FoodWorks NYC to develop goals for every "phase" of the food system, described as production, processing, government procurement, consumption and post-consumer output (Brannen, 2010). To produce this vision, the Speaker's Office convened an advisory committee of academics and experts hailing from the private sector, government (including state government), and non-profits working on issues of hunger, urban planning, agriculture and gardening, and general food advocacy, all with "at least 15 years experience" in their respective fields. Staff in the Speaker's Office began meeting with food system stakeholders about a year ago, and the advisory group was hand-picked for their expertise (Brannen, 2010).

The next phase of the plan's development is to vet recommendations with advocates around the city, and solicit conversation on priorities the city should consider. This process will culminate with the release of the FoodWorks NYC plan in June, which will include an elaboration of the problems, the goals for each food "phase," and metrics that should measure achievement in meeting those goals.

Much of the implementation will rest on the Mayor's will to carry forward the recommendations throughout various city departments. However, one of the big pieces of FoodWorks NYC includes an "omnibus" reporting bill in which the City Council can ask city departments to report on food-related outcomes. For example, the Council could ask for information regarding city food purchases or the amount of money the economic development agency allocates toward assisting food processing. With this data in hand, the City Council can be a more effective oversight body to the city's involvement in the food system. Another goal with this measure is to stimulate thought among government administrators and staff about their role in terms of food (Brannen, 2010).

For all intents and purposes, the advisory team supporting Speaker Quinn's efforts functions in much the same way a Food Policy Council does. Similarly, the Food Policy Task Force connected to the Office of the Food Policy Coordinator parallels that of the San Francisco FPC in that it is a body of public officials called together to advise on the

Image 12. New York City Green Carts, an initiative of the Food Policy Corrdinator Source: www.eatsmartagesmart.com

48 Cardwell, D. (2007, January 21). City Hires Coordinator of Food Policy. New York Times. Retrieved in March 2010 from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/21/nyregion/21food.html.

49 Bosman, J. (2009, December 7). Council Speaker to Unveil Policy on Food for the City. New York Times. Retrieved in March 2010 from http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/07/nyregion/07food.html?_r=1&ref=nyregion.

achievement of specific goals.

Nevin Cohen, professor of environmental planning who participates in the advisory body for FoodWorks NYC, says that getting government directly engaged is more meaningful than devising a Food Policy Council.[50] He argues that a Food Policy Council may be helpful in places where local government is not yet active in food system planning. But if several sectors of local government are moving a progressive food policy vision forward of their own volition, as Cohen asserts is the case in New York City, then a Food Policy Council could be more cumbersome than helpful.

He further asserts that government leaders working on food policy offer a plethora of ways for community advocates and experts to weigh in on the issues. New York City is home to vocal and organized food security, health and sustainable food advocates, whose symposia and forums are attended by public officials. Still, the process for formal input through Speaker Quinn and Ben Thomases's advisory committees seems weighted toward expert professionals and scholars, and not accessible to those most impacted by failures in the food system.

For Cohen, the outcomes might outweigh the process. The real test of food policy impact, he argues, rests in the kind of authority that can mobilize multiple city departments to act, namely the Mayor himself. Very few, if any, Food Policy Councils have that level of power. Cohen concedes that coordination could deepen the impact of New York City's many food policy initiatives, but feels that a Food Policy Council without cross-jurisdictional power would further silo food away from the daily activities of government. The point is to integrate food systems perspective into all government activity, not separate them away as a speciality policy concern.

In sum, food policy reforms are plentiful in New York City without the intervention of a Food Policy Council. Apparently, some avenues for non-government input do exist through advisory committees, though these avenues seem to be less accessible than FPCs that prioritize democratic participation. On the other hand, the decentralized momentum among various sectors of the City of New York to make change in the food system could translate to substantial reform.

New York City Food Policy Advisory Councils At A Glance

Location	Government, Advisory Council to: (1) Office of Food Policy Coordinator (2) Speaker Quinn's FoodWorks NYC Plan	**Strengths** ⊕ Focus on specific policy initiatives with clear objectives. ⊕ In case of Food Policy Task Force, strengthens intra-government communication and coordination. ⊕ In case of Speaker Quinn's Advisory Council, provides for holistic planning with food system expert perspective. ⊕ Stability of funding and staff resources as long as political priority.
How Created	(1) Mayor Bloomberg (2) Speaker Christine Quinn	
Purpose	(1) Food Policy Task Force to coordinate program activity among various city directors (2) Ad-hoc Advisory Council for FoodWorks NYC	
Policy Impact	(1) Implementation of specific policy objectives related to Office of Food Policy Coordinator (2) Recommend specific outcomes for FoodWorks NYC plan	
Composition	(1) Directors of Gov't Departments (2) Food system experts and scholars, some food sector representatives	**Weaknesses** ⊖ Lack of transparency or broader community engagement. ⊖ Lack of representation by food system stakeholders, only "experts." ⊖ Membership, structure and workplan determined by city staff. Goals may not reflect desires of stakeholders. ⊖ Multiple food policy and planning initiatives are not being coordinated for greater impact.
Membership Selection	By Food Policy Coordinator & Speaker Christine Quinn, respectively.	
Staff	(1) Food Policy Coordinator & administrative support (2) Speaker Quinn's staff	

50 Cohen, N. Personal communication, March 10, 2010.

Analysis and Conclusion

Analysis of Findings

This report focused on the design, implementation and impact of Food Policy Councils (FPC) in cities attempting to promote systemic equity and sustainability in local food systems. The research is grounded in an exploration of four notable models: Food Policy Councils in Toronto, Detroit, San Francisco and New York City. Out of almost 90 Food Policy Councils throughout North America, these four were selected for parallel characteristics or perceived valuable lessons for application in Los Angeles. The four case studies also reflect the great diversity among Food Policy Councils. While some common characteristics define the model – and link the four under study here- many key differences surface for the purpose, objectives, structure and membership, and method of evaluating progress. Based on a review of the most relevant literature and a focused exploration of the four case studies, this report offers the following considerations for the development of a Los Angeles Food Policy Council.

Food Systems Thinking

• In different ways, each of the four case studies are concerned with addressing the food system in its complexity, which defies government silos. Many FPCs across the nation identify part of their purpose as cultivating "food systems thinking" among policy makers and the public.

• The idea behind "food systems thinking" is to move beyond a piecemeal approach to policy reform and instead identify ways to achieve multiple goals at once.

• By using food policy to achieve several policy goals at once, the City can save time and money. The long-term efforts of the Toronto FPC to stimulate a systems approach in that city has led to the creation of the Food Strategy, which is a comprehensive and financially-neutral approach to improving the entire urban-rural foodshed. Many municipal departments in Toronto stand to benefit from the creative, cost-neutral strategic planning that went into the Food Strategy. The TFPC "added value" to already existing policy and programs in the city using food as the anchor issue.

Relationship to Government

• A majority of FPCs, including all of the four above case studies, are either located within government, include public sector representation or were created by government. Studies find that the connection to the public sector is stronger the higher up the level of government. On a local level, studies find that only a minority of FPCs are housed within government (20%), while 20% are independent but created by government and 60% of local-level FPCs are independent (Harper et al, 2009).

• Despite the low numbers of local-level FPCs located in government, this research found that practitioners emphasize the need for close relationships and credibility with city and county staff. FPC members and staff in Toronto emphasized "there is no point" in forming an FPC that is not officially affiliated with local government, since often the goal is to change public policy. Even the architects of the Detroit FPC acknowledged the need for some official sanction by the city, while intentionally choosing an independence from government. In the case of San Francisco and New York, food policy reform efforts are highly centralized within government. All of the case studies, except for Detroit, rely on full-time city staff with expertise in food policy.

• The Food Policy Council's relationship to government should reflect the goals of the Council. There are some trade-offs to locating a FPC inside government, including potential loss of independent voice and shifting priorities between administrations. If the goal is to coordinate community-based partnerships and initiatives, it may make more sense to form the Council as an independent organization. If the goal is to influence the City to make policy change, the Council will need to have enough proximity to the government to be a credible player in the policy-making realm. Many believe that the more the Mayor or City Council legitimizes the Council, the greater influence and impact the Council will have on food policy.

Democratizing the Food System

• The Food Policy Council model has been lauded by some as one of the most democratic institutions in the United States today. Academic and policy literature emphasizes the ability of Food Policy Councils to democratize decision-making power in the food system by acting as an information hub for system-wide stakeholders and by engaging community input in policy formation.

• With better access and information, food system stakeholders in both community and government can collaborate and coordinate efforts in strategic ways.

• Collaboration and coordination inside and outside government is an important concept for both the Toronto and Detroit Food Policy Councils. Council members in Toronto see that city's Council as a "hybrid" model of a citizen group within government. The Detroit approach is that the Council will provide leadership and coordination to a grassroots movement for a sustainable and equitable food system.

• The San Francisco and New York models are much less concerned with in active stakeholder participation and community input. In both cases, experts were hand-selected by elected officials or senior city staff for ad-hoc input. One justification for this is that policy change can happen much more quickly and efficiently if the focus is on engaging local government players.

Food System Impact

• Due to wide variation in structure, function and activity, quantitative evaluation of the impact of Food Policy Councils on improving the food system is nearly impossible to decipher. Most FPCs lack institutionalized evaluation mechanisms. The FPC model could be strengthened if practitioners in different jurisdictions collaborated to develop standards for documenting and evaluating impact.

• Councils that can ask city departments to meet certain benchmarks within a time frame, like in New York and San Francisco, are able to evaluate their progress more systematically. However, those metrics may not be an accurate reflection of experience of food system stakeholders, especially if community collaborations were weak in the process of determining outcomes for the Council.

• An alternative way to evaluate the impact of an FPC is to track the number, composition and character of collaborative projects before and after the presence of a FPC. This information could stand as a proxy for how widely the impact of the FPC has been felt and how many communities may have benefited from the efforts of a FPC. The Toronto FPC employs a similar method to assess its strengths and weaknesses. The disadvantage of this method is that the number or quality of community partnerships facilitated by a FPC does not necessarily reflect improvements to public health disparity, access to nutritious food for all, environmental footprint of foodshed or quality of employment opportunities in the food system.

Influence on Food Policy

• Typically, FPCs function to provide research, recommendations or monitoring of implementation of food policy. Rarely do FPCs have the ability to implement policy alone, but rather they convene the necessary players to move a policy vision forward.

• FPCs who are able to accomplish many policy objectives have the active support of City Council, the Office of the Mayor or other high-level government officials who are willing to champion the ideas of the Food Policy Council.

• The New York City Food Policy Coordinator, the San Francisco Food Policy Council and its associated mayoral Executive Directive have very specific food-related policy goals. The simplicity of the tasks laid out for these entities, in a sense, enable the city to accomplish reforms quickly. However, in both cases, policy initiatives are not necessarily strategically linked or coordinated, nor is the public involved in decision-making.

• The Toronto and Detroit approach to food policy is rooted in food systems thinking and relationship-building. This takes more time but cultivates more local leadership around food issues (inside and outside of government). The Toronto Food Strategy may have a broader and deeper impact on the food policy environment than New York, for example, because of the extensive research and strategic planning that went into its development. However, the TFPC needed nearly 20 years to lay the groundwork for the Food Strategy, and the Food Strategy project did not come directly out of the TFPC: it needed the political will of the Chief Medical Office of the Department of Public Health.

Conclusion: Applications for Los Angeles

The four case studies of Food Policy Councils in Toronto, San Francisco, New York City and Detroit offer insights that are illustrative of larger issues facing the Food Policy Council model itself. The following discussion offers the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force (LAFPTF) some "best practices" for the formation of a Food Policy Council in Los Angeles.

- **Assess strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in the Los Angeles context.** There is no recipe for the perfect FPC that can be repeated across multiple jurisdictions. While certain traits do re-occur – the FPC generally brings together diverse stakeholders in the food system to discuss ways to make change across sectors – the FPC is truly a homegrown crop. The Food Policy Council model emerges in drastically different forms based on the local context. On-the-ground realities like available resources, organizational capacity, the specific policy context, political and community allies, and most pressing needs determine what the FPC can and should respond to. The most effective FPC's rely on studies of their community's food concerns and assets, or devote resources to developing such studies. The study is not the achievement in and of itself. Rather, FPCs can use such research to inform its own purpose, membership, the design of an FPC in Los Angeles should be strategically rooted in the current realities facing this city and region.

- **Understand the difference between movement building and policy-making, and clarify how the FPC will interact with both.** Despite disagreements about definitions, the history of the FPC model does locate its function in terms of policy change. But is policy change alone the end goal? If it is, how will the FPC ensure that food policies introduced or amended address the most salient and urgent concerns of the local food system? How will the FPC change the way decision-making happens around food policy? What broader social transformations can the FPC embody through its own governance structure? Beneath these inquiries lies the heart of the question: how the FPC intends to create change through policy. Is the FPC an effort to strengthen a local food movement or is it solely a mechanism for moving forward policy change?

  For the San Francisco and New York Councils, policy change is the end goal. This may achieve concrete policy implementation faster than Toronto and Detroit, but the FPC construct and process employed does nothing to change the decision-making process in the food system. The approach preserves the status-quo where a privileged class of experts make decisions and the most impacted stakeholders (e.g. the hungry) remain far away from the policy-making table.

  For the Detroit FPC, the goal is community empowerment and policy change is one way to achieve that goal. This approach may or may not preserve amiable relationships between city officials and food system advocates, depending on whether pressure or agitation is needed to move their vision forward. Progress in terms of legislation could be slowed to prioritize building the capacity of disenfranchised communities. The hybrid function attempted by the Toronto FPC holds the promise of the FPC model itself: to build movements and to make systemic change through policy work. To achieve this, an FPC should be prepared to balance the sometimes-competing interests of government officials and the community.

Ultimately, a strong, organized community is the necessary infrastructure to make meaningful policy change. Without authentic community participation in the development of policy, the FPC will not achieve comprehensiveness. Its change impact will be limited. The LAFPTF should invest in discussion about the FPC's relationship to movement building and policy-making and clarify how the two work together through the FPC.

- **Structure the FPC according to the goal.** Many FPCs choose to first resolve the question of location, relationship to government, membership and decision-making without clarifying the type of social change sought. This can lead to miscommunication, lack of credibility (with government and the public) and a split personality that renders the FPC ineffective. Again, clarifying how the FPC prioritizes movement building and policy change can best inform where the FPC should be located, whether as a new public sector entity, a citizen body housed within government, or an independent community-based group and who should sit on the Council.

- **Commit to a long-term process but mark the road with quick victories.** The four case studies evidence that the establishment of a viable FPC is a long road. In New York and San Francisco, city officials are able to move a policy vision forward quickly thanks to many years of community activity and interest by policy makers. In Detroit and Toronto, years, if not decades, of community activism, discussion and planning helped support the formation and clarity for the FPC in those cities. Identifying "low hanging fruit" can inspire momentum and establish credibility. However, the promise of the FPC model is to cultivate systematic approaches to food policy and planning, which takes extensive relationship building and idea exchanges over a long time.

- **Identify leadership and staff to plan for phases of the Councils development.** A new FPC would benefit from identifying leadership with credibility within multiple food sectors and experience in both building coalitions and developing policy. In several cases observed, this person (or persons) acts as a Co-Chair, a paid staff Manager for the FPC or other staff based in city government. Full-time staff support is essential to sustain relationships and organize the FPC's many activities over the long term.

- **Systematize an evaluation process that fits the model.** Every FPC is unique, however all FPCs would benefit from a built-in strategy for assessing their own impact. There is a dearth of "best practices" with regards to evaluating progress and impact. A new FPC could contribute to the field of food systems planning by crafting an evaluation system that reflects its overall goals.

The Food Policy Council model is a useful innovation in democratic governance that could help advance the Good Food Agenda for Los Angeles. Ultimately, the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force will need to assess current political and community realities with sober eyes, determine how the FPC will interact with local food movement building efforts and how policy fits into the larger social change goals of the Good Food Agenda. These three factors will be the most important in determining the location, membership, activities and protocol of a Food Policy Council.

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