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A Reflective Practitioner Approach to Food System Planning in Calgary, Alberta

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A Reflective Practitioner Approach to Food System Planning in Calgary, Alberta

by

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Cities and municipalities across Canada are implementing food system assessments and action plans to better understand and address issues related to urban food systems. In 2012, the City of Calgary released “Calgary EATS!: A Food System Assessment and Action Plan” (CE), a comprehensive report and action plan that marked the culmination of city-wide stakeholder engagement and collaborative planning led by the municipality in partnership with the community. The goal of this plan was to support the growth of a sustainable and resilient food system in Calgary, and to inform future action and policy. However, challenges related to implementation has cast doubt on the plan’s long term effectiveness. The purpose of this thesis was to identify the primary challenges affecting the implementation of the Calgary Eats! Action Plan, and identify potential opportunities to move the plan forward. This research was conducted collaboratively with members of the local urban food partnership involved in the development of the original Action Plan. A reflective practitioner approach and a critical planning approach were used in working with representative members of the CE Action Plan partnership as key informants with expertise in the original Action Plan development process.

The qualitative methods employed in the research process included document analysis, participant observation, semi-structured interviews with key informants and collaborative consensus around key information. Findings identified key successes, highlighted procedural and interpersonal influences on outcomes, and confirmed that challenges to the implementation of the CE plan persist. Conclusions also discuss community impacts arising from the plan.

The results of this research may help to inform strategies for developing and implementing local food system action plans and provide insight into the planning, management,

and organizational challenges inherent in local food system planning involving community-based civic groups.

Key Words: sustainable food systems, local food security, civil society organizations, food system planning, community engagement

PREFACE

As a resident of Calgary, and a participant in the Calgary Food System (CFS) in various roles (urban food producer, distributor, advocate, researcher, and consumer), I have had first-hand experience with many of the challenges associated with community-based urban food systems. My undergraduate degree (B.A. Mount Royal University, 2015) was in Psychology, and my engagement in a number of formal and informal community organizations have driven my interest in the impact that various interpersonal and organizational dynamics can have on influencing activities and project outcomes. I have further explored this interest through the Master of Environmental Design to develop skills and knowledge pertinent to community planning, citizen engagement, consensus building, and reflective practice. The intention of this thesis is to study the dynamics of community based projects involving local government and non-profit sector partnerships. Because of my familiarity with the CFS, the CE action planning process was chosen to examine barriers to plan implementation.

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DEFINITIONS

Agri-food: A shorthand for ‘Agriculture and Food’, often in reference to the broad economic sector that encompasses agriculture and food.

Calgary EATS!: Refers to either the Calgary EATS! Assessment and Action Plan, which is a document approved and released by the City of Calgary in 2012, or the engagement and planning process that preceded and was responsible for the development of the report.

Calgary Food Committee: The group primarily responsible for creating and stewarding the CE Action Plan, made up of members of government, community, private sector, CSOs, public health officials, advocates, and more.

Civil Society Organization: One of the three pillars of the “triangle of food policy-making”, alongside the state and the food supply chain (p. 731, Lang, 2005), Civil Society Organizations are non-governmental actors and groups that target and address issues in key communities, typically under volunteer power and with specific mandates to improve living conditions (Koc et al., 2008).

Food Policy Council: A group of stakeholders that represent a variety of roles within a specific food system that voluntarily collaborate to shape policy, actions, and other aspects of their specific food network (National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy, 2011).

Food Security: “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” (FAO, 1996).

Food System: “A network connecting food production, processing, distribution, access & preparation, consumption and food waste recovery.” (p.11, Calgary EATS!, 2012).

Food System Planning – Impacts on the food system through stakeholder engagement, collaborative planning, and implementation of professional skills and capacities; these pursuits can integrate academic and professional aspects of planning (Campbell, 2004).

ImagineCALGARY – Refers to the large scale, multi-year engagement and planning process that began in 2005 with the goal of creating a long-term sustainability plan for Calgary (City of Calgary, 2006).

Urban – The term urban has been defined and measured in a variety of ways; for the purpose of this research, ‘urban’ can be understood as equivalent to the Statistics Canada term Population Centre, which is a centre with at least 1,000 residents and a population density of at least 400 persons per square kilometer (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Urban Agriculture – The growth, production, or processing of food and food-related products within city boundaries by individuals, organizations, or groups for private enjoyment, personal use, income generation, or other purposes (Calgary EATS, 2012).

Rural – For the purpose of this research, and with reference to the definition employed for the associated term urban, ‘rural’ is defined as all areas outside of a defined Population Centre (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Resilience – When applied to complex systems, such as food systems, resilience is the capacity of a system to absorb shocks and disturbances while preserving core functions, while also being able to adapt or re-organize when required by a short- or long-term shift in circumstances (Tendall et al., 2015).

ACRONYMS

AHS – Alberta Health Services

ALFC – Alberta Local Food Council

APA – American Planning Association

CCIS – Calgary Catholic Immigration Services

CE – Calgary Eats!

CFC – Calgary Food Committee

CFPC – Calgary Food Policy Council

CFS – Calgary Food System

CIP – Canadian Institute of Planners

CoC – City of Calgary

CSO – Civil Society Organization

FPC – Food Policy Council

MDP – Municipal Development Plan

NAIT – Northern Alberta Institute of Technology

PC – Persistent Challenge

SAIT – Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

UA – Urban Agriculture

YYC Growers - YYC Growers and Distributors Co-operative

1. CITIES & FOOD

“It is important to note that most concentrations of population will continue to rely on local, regional and global food supply, in differing proportions. This by itself is not new. What is new is that there are many more actors, including subnational and local governments, civil society and non-agricultural sectors engaging in the discussion about the future of food and the many impacts – structural, political, cultural – that the design and policy formation around food systems entails.”

(p. 5, Thomas & Escudero, 2014)

Urban food issues are of increasing importance and relevance, considering that over 55% of the world’s population currently live in urban areas, a percentage that is expected to grow to 68% over the next three decades (UN DESA, 2018); in Canada, the percentage of the population living in cities is now over 80% (Statistics Canada, 2015). As the rate of urbanization grows, so do the rates of food insecurity, undernourishment, urban poverty, and environmental hardship (Cabannes & Marocchino, 2018). While cities are often not primarily responsible for the food-related challenges they confront, they can become well positioned to address them; as cities grow and scale up, so does their capacity to innovate and respond to the problems they face (Bettencourt et al., 2007). However, to effectively anticipate and plan requires a constructive framing and basic understanding of key food issues, as well as a way to productively conceptualize urban food networks.

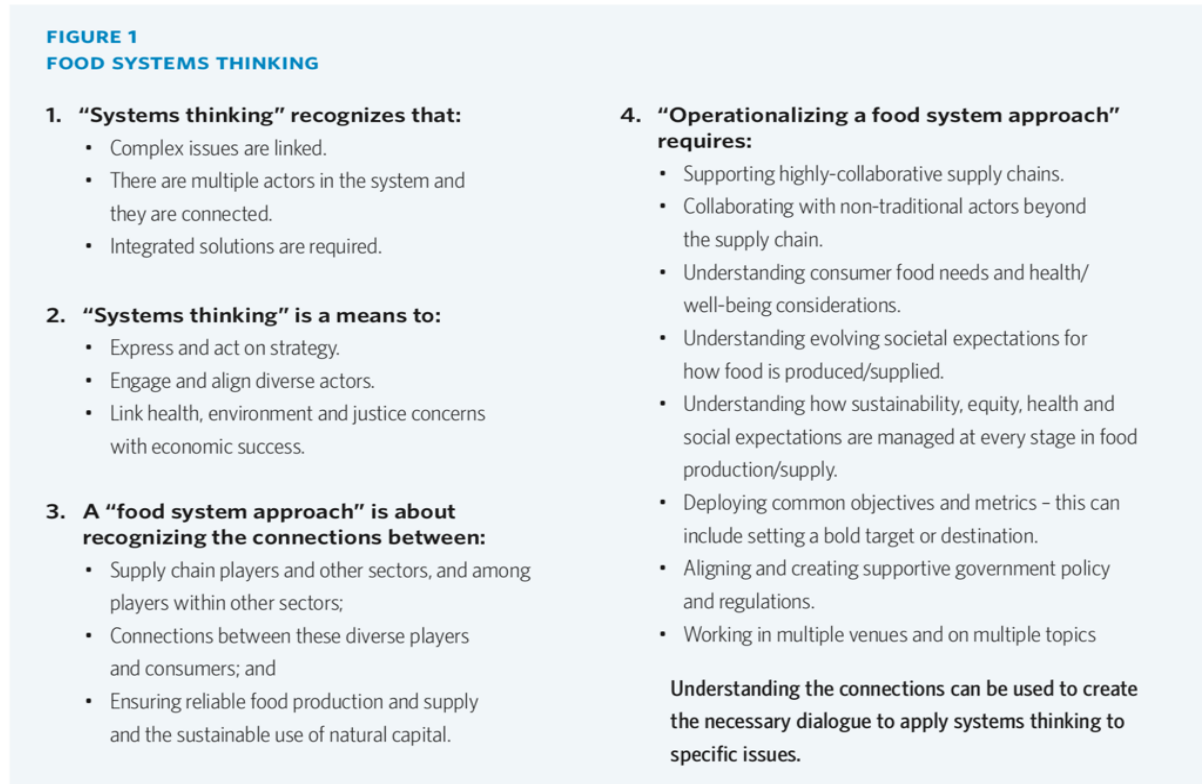
1.1 URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS

One potential way to consider the complexity inherent to urban food issues is through a food system lens, which has been employed successfully in Canada and around the world in

recent years to investigate and instigate food system planning and action (Blay-Palmer et. al, 2013; IPES, 2015; Moragues-Faus, Sonnino, & Marsden, 2017). The International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems define a food system as the actors, interactions, and processes that are connected to food, and include steps to grow, process, distribute, consume, and dispose of foods, inclusive of everything from the instruction of farmers to marketing and packaging to recycling waste materials (p. 3, 2015). In a seminal 2013 report on municipal food system work in Canada, authors MacRae and Donahue similarly describe a food system as “the chains of commercial and non-commercial actors – from suppliers to consumers, regulators to advocates for system change – who collectively determine how we grow, process, distribute, acquire, and dispose of food” (p. 4), and recommend employing a food systems approach as a way of identifying and recognizing the significance of the connections between groups both within and external to a food system. Food systems thinking provides a scaffold for constructive engagement and collaboration. Figure 1 expands on this concept to illustrate how food systems thinking can be defined, understood, and operationalized.

Figure 1

Food Systems Thinking



(MacRae & Donahue, 2013, p. 5)

While this is helpful in illustrating the complexity inherent to food systems, the definition employed by the Calgary Food Committee (CFC) in “Calgary EATS!: A Food System Assessment and Action Plan” simplifies the food system definition: “a food system in its simplest form is a network connecting food production, processing, distribution, access & preparation, consumption and food waste recovery” (p. 11, Calgary EATS!, 2012). Table 1 (below) provides a summary description of food system sectors outlined in the CE Action Plan. The CE plan emphasizes six central organizing principles based on previously established municipal planning targets related to urban food system. Specifically, the CE Plan refers to the

food system as “Local”, “Accessible”, sourced from a “Secure Supply”, “Environmentally Sustainable”, “Healthy”, and contributing to “Community Development” (p. 17-18, Calgary EATS!, 2012). Each of these principles was given associated targets intended to act as suggested benchmarks for plan implementation progress. For example, “Local” was defined as “sourced from within Alberta” and the target was stated as: “by 2036 Calgarians support local food production” (p.17, Calgary EATS!, 2012).

Table 1

CE Food System Sector Descriptions

Food System Sector	Calgary Eats! Action Plan Description
Production	The planting, growing, raising and harvesting of food, including urban and rural agriculture.
Processing	The process of altering food stuffs to create a different, more refined product.
Distribution	The distribution and storage of both raw and processed food and the retailing, wholesaling and purchasing of food products.
Access	The accessibility and affordability of food in addition to the preparation of both raw and processed food products.
Consumption	The act of consumption and enjoyment of food.
Food Waste Recovery	The diversion, management, and utilization of organic waste.

(Adapted from Calgary Eats!, 2012, p. 16)

Any conceptualization of an urban food system needs to recognize inherent systems complexity because “it is the cumulative effect of the interactions that determine how the system functions” (p. 204, Innes & Booher, 2010). It is the dynamic complexity of system interactions that are critical in system function and therefore must be considered in the design and planning

of system performance. However, while the urban food systems literature provides many definitions, there is a gap in the literature with respect to how organizational and group dynamics influence the success of urban food systems policy and planning. The functional and structural complexity of urban food creates challenges for sustainable food system planning. The purpose of this research is to explore a specific practice situation – “Calgary EATS!: A Food System Assessment and Action Plan” - and how organizational and interpersonal dynamics influence and affect both plan development and implementation.

1.2 URBAN FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING

“The planning community is now beginning to play an important role in trying to fashion a new and more sustainable food system, one that is better aligned with societal goals of public health, ecological integrity and social justice.”

(p.1, Morgan, 2013)

Cities were made possible by the domestication of wild animals and vegetation, which facilitated the increasing population densities and specialization of societal roles that characterize urban settlements (Hiller, 2014). The existing global food system is incredibly complex and dynamic, involving interacting global and regional networks of food systems linking producers and consumers. Cities and urban metropolitan regionals have long had a pivotal role in enabling and supporting food systems (Davrion et al., 2019). However, in modern history, Lerner & Eakin (2011) suggest a narrative has taken hold that separates food production - supposedly only a concern in rural areas - from food consumption – increasingly viewed as only a concern in urban areas. However, the inherent complexity, inter-connectivity, and scale of global and regional food systems cannot be accurately represented by such a reductionist representation. The

relationship between cities and food requires moving beyond a false framing of food systems as linear conduits, from rural production to urban consumption.

Specifically, Pothukuchi & Kaufman (1999) have argued that to understand the interplay between cities and food requires an acknowledgement that city dwellers play a vital role in shaping urban food systems. Their work marked one of the first significant acknowledgements in the literature of food as an urban planning issue since the Garden City Movement of the early 20th century. The Garden City Movement recognized the multi-functional nature of food and integrated urban food planning that was in place (Howard, 1902). Pothukuchi & Kaufman's paper marked an increasing interest in how to approach the issue of urban food system planning. Campbell (p. 349, 2004) has argued that a responsibility exists for planning practice to concern itself with urban food systems issues by "making them more transparent to decision makers; agency officials; local, state, and federal funders; the broader planning community; and the general public". Global urbanization has been associated with urban food system challenges. As such, urban and regional planners and policy makers will be increasingly required to address the security and sustainability of food systems.

Planners are uniquely positioned to address urban food challenges; while the planning profession may be historically culpable in promoting the perception of an urban-rural divide, contemporary urban metropolitan and regional planners are well positioned to deal with the need for integrated and responsive urban food systems (Pothukuchi, 2000). Specifically, Morgan (2015) identified how urban planning and urban food systems are closely linked, and how the multi-functionality inherent to food issues can present an opportunity to make food issues central to urban planning. In other words, food can be useful beyond literally providing sustenance and can serve as a lever to impact a myriad of aspects of urban living. This echoed Barthel &

Isendahl (2013) findings that urban agriculture (UA) and food planning provide diverse benefits to urban socio-ecological systems using historical examples from medieval Constantinople and ancient Maya cities to challenge the notion that food production and cities are discrete. The integration of food and cities has a long history, but urban planners have only recently begun to again explore the integration of food systems into urban development.

The dynamics and impact of urban food system planning has continued to emerge in the planning literature over the past twenty years. For example, a special issue of the 'International Planning Studies' journal in 2013 focused on planning for urban food systems with a series of articles and editorials exploring food systems, politics, and actions (Morgan, 2013). Prominent national professional associations are increasingly supporting food system planning. In 2007, the American Planning Association (APA) issued a policy guide addressing the need for increased integration of community and regional planning with food system needs and goals (APA). This was subsequently followed by a planning guide identifying specific successes of different communities that created new food system plans (Raja, Born, & Russell, 2008).

In Canada, the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) highlighted both the need for, and opportunity provided by urban food system planning in a 2009 special issue of *Plan Canada* that focused on the interplay between food security and urban planning. Similarly, other journals such as the *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Economic Development* have also released a 2011 special issue dedicated to the role of planners in food system work, appropriately titled "Planners Coming to the Table." According to the APA, food system planners now operate as a recognized and respected profession. By leveraging knowledge of the contextual and systemic factors that impact food systems, food system planners strive to highlight the

interconnectivity of food systems, propose solutions to persistent challenges, and encourage the development of more robust and food secure communities (APA-FIG, n.d.).

The positive impacts associated with successful urban food system planning are due to the multi-functional nature of food. Wayne Roberts, Canadian food systems activist and policy analyst, stated during an address at the 2017 Cultivating Connections conference that “food needs a big canvas” to encompass the multiple aspects of life and society it is linked to. As an illustration of this point, some of the potential benefits of food system planning include greater food network connectivity, improved health outcomes, increased social capital and capacity, greater participation in the labour market and both community and economic development (Adrianto, Rauch, & Morrison, 2012; Blay-Palmer, Conaré, Meter, & Di Battista, 2020; Duchemin et al., 2008; Koc, Macrae, Desjardins, & Roberts, 2008; Raja, Born & Russel, 2008). Anticipatory planning for city or regional scale food systems can increase resilience to sudden disruptions to international food production and distribution chains (Paci-Green & Berardi, 2015), and offer the opportunity to address potential future challenges before they emerge (Toth, Rendell, & Reitsma, 2016). The other important aspect is the opportunity for inclusive and collaborative community engagement with various sectors of and local actors in the food system. Such engagement can increase the availability of local food as well as bringing food-related concerns into the public discourse to increase public awareness of why food issues matter (MacRae & Donahue, 2013; Valley & Wittman, 2016).

Food system planning provides new opportunities for local community partnerships that can create new economic and employment opportunities as well as provide food security from potential production and distribution disturbances. However, local food system organizations also have a key role to play in collaboration, social learning, knowledge creation and consensus

building around urban food system issues and translating food system opportunities into successful action (Blay-Palmer et al, 2020; Macrae & Donahue, 2013).

1.3 THE ROLE OF POLICY & PARTNERSHIPS IN FOOD SYSTEM PLANNING

“The old food policy paradigm is running out of legitimacy.”

(p.736, Lang, 2005)

Cities have long benefitted from the advocacy, community mobilization, and citizen action groups who work to improve neighbourhood function and resources. Urban centres are key sites for the development of governance processes that are inclusive of stakeholder values and interests (Moragues-Faus & Morgan, 2015). Creating collaboration between local government, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and food supply chain sectors is an important step in integrating urban food systems with local economic and social development (Cockrall-King, 2012; Koc, Macrae, Desjardins, & Roberts, 2008; Lang, 2005).

CSOs can be either formal or informal organizations operating on a variety of scales that span a variety of interests and organizational structures. They are typically distinct from government agencies and private sector interests (Andrée, Clark, Levkoe, & Lowitt, 2019). At a local scale, CSOs often concentrate available community resources and social capacity toward targeted activities. CSO group members are usually drawn from local communities in order to readily engage with and respond to local needs. Collaboration and partnerships among individuals, CSOs and levels of government has the potential to provide informed, open, and equitable civic discussion, planning, and decision making that can contribute to improved outcomes for food system policies, interventions, and planning (Box et al, 2001).

Having support and direction from local stakeholders and community organizations can improve the likelihood that food system action planning will be effective. Dias, de Oliveira, and Serafim found in their examination of the relationship between government and grassroots UA movements in Brazil (2017) that CSOs can leverage their resources and capacity to influence local food system planning and function, and their involvement can be invaluable in community-centric planning (McInnes, 2019). Having buy-in from community and local stakeholders remains vital to the success of any plan or action that requires the contribution of their time or resources, especially if it aspires to be a “City-led, community-owned” project (p.2, MacKillop, 2014).

Urban food planning is intrinsically linked with urban food policy because urban policies frame and inform how planners interpret and execute their roles in urban system development and management. The Australian National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility has stated that “food policy is rarely connected with other policy fields and if it is to become more influential it must become more integrated with other elements of urban policy and planning” (p. 9, Burton et al., 2013). The integration of food-related policies and urban planning needs to be appropriately contextual (Blay-Palmer et al, 2020), while simultaneously operating within and reflecting a broader set of assumptions often informed by state or national level directives (McInnes et al, 2017).

Efforts to integrate food into urban policy and planning processes have been gaining momentum. For example, as part of the New Urban Agenda which was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016, urban food system planning was recognized as central to achieving commitments not just related to food but also to climate change, social equality, economic development, nutrition, energy, and

population health (United Nations, 2017). Similarly, a 2018 publication (“Integrating Food into Urban Planning”) sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations addressed how urban planning can be a strong force for food system change (Cabannes & Marocchino).

This increasing recognition of the value of urban food systems has also been recognized in the City of Calgary, Alberta. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the experience of the “Calgary Eats” process, which was an initial attempt to integrate food system development into a municipal planning and policy framework between 2010 and 2012.

2. THE CALGARY EATS PLANNING PROCESS

2.1 CONTEXT AND BRIEF HISTORY

Calgary is one of the largest cities in Canada, with 1,285,711 residents according to the 2019 Civic Census (City of Calgary, 2020), and a sprawling land area of 84,800 hectares (Alberta Municipal Affairs, 2019). It is situated in the province of Alberta, straddling the foothills and the Rocky Mountains to the west and the Canadian prairies to the east. Calgary has a long history of being an agricultural and distribution hub, as well as being heavily integrated with and dependant on the oil and gas sector. Operating as a resource-dependant city can provide times of substantial growth, and also times of downturn and hardship; when 190,000 people access emergency food services from the Calgary Food Bank between 2018 and 2019, it indicates that the food system in Calgary strains to meet the needs of the community, especially when confounding factors such as increased unemployment or economic recession are encountered (Calgary Food Bank, 2019).

Calgary has an established history of successful and collaborative food system work. Consider the legacy of Calgary pioneers such as Annie Gale, an early 20th-Century resident of the Bridgeland neighbourhood who worked with community members and the municipal government to improve local food access, renew neighbourhood spaces, and found the Vacant Lots Garden Club (City of Calgary, 2010). The oldest section of the original Vacant Lots Garden Club is still in use as a community garden and under protection as a Municipal Heritage Resource (City of Calgary, n.d.). Other examples from Calgary's early history include the work of William Reader in establishing the Calgary Horticultural Society, which now assists with over 200 community gardens in the city (MacKillop, 2014), and the founding of the Calgary

Stampede in 1914, which operates with a strong focus on agriculture, food, and community. These examples illustrate that Calgary's history of urban planning and growth is informed and impacted in part by food and agricultural issues, community advocacy, and municipal collaboration with citizen action. These examples are also an historic demonstration of the type of community-based advocacy being promoted in the international food systems literature (FAO, 2011; Haysom, 2015; Pothukuchi, 2009; Sonnino, 2009).

The most recent (2008 onwards) surge of interest in food system planning in Calgary is the focus of this thesis and involved the formation of food policy advocacy groups such as the Calgary Food Policy Council (CFPC), the Calgary Food Council (CFC), and the Calgary Food System Alliance (CFSA). All of these groups have been involved in some capacity with engagement, planning, and action relating to food system work within the CFS and have followed the precedent set by Food Policy Councils (FPCs) across North America of community organizations that integrate the voices and perspectives of multiple stakeholders to create formal organizations to influence municipal food policy (Blay-Palmer et al., 2013; Schiff, 2008). Although none of the Calgary organizations listed were formal FPCs, there are over 60 municipalities within Canada that have worked with FPCs in meaningful food planning and policy work to address food system issues (MacRae & Donahue, 2013),

Over the last 15 years, the City of Calgary (CoC) has taken steps to make urban food system issues a priority, for example through the creation of the CE Action Plan (2012) and by establishing food system targets within 'Calgary's Plan for Long Range Urban Sustainability'. Specifically, the Long Range Urban Sustainability Plan states: "by 2036, sustainable urban food production increases to five per cent... by 2036, the consumption of urban and regionally produced food by Calgarians increases to 30 per cent" (p. 5, 9, City of Calgary, 2006).

According to the literature (Moragues-Faus & Morgan, 2015; Sadler, Arku, & Gilliland, 2015; Wegener, Raine, & Hanning, 2012), it is the presence of an engaged food system advocacy group within the community, combined with a municipal government willing to engage collaboratively, that are the critical elements in the emergence of a sustainable local food system. However, the critical research question becomes – how effective are these partnerships and collaborations? Are the plans working? And what could be learned from the processes that guide them to action?

2.2 THE CALGARY EATS ACTION PLAN

“Local governments are changing the way they connect to food systems so that food is an enabler of urban economic, social and health objectives... the entire value chain needs to understand how urban food strategies can create new opportunities.”

(CAPI, 2011 p. 92)

In 2005, the City of Calgary began work on imagineCALGARY, an ambitious project tasked with planning for the sustainability of Calgary and its citizens over the next 100 years. With staff and resources provided by the City, and outreach incorporating community members and stakeholders, the outcomes of the imagineCALGARY process (i.e., Calgary’s Plan for Long Range Urban Sustainability) have been influential in shaping municipal policy and finding resources for targeted actions including urban agricultural activities, improved soil health, increased market access for local food producers, greater access to food gardens, and widespread education around food issues (City of Calgary, 2006). While some of these original 2006 targets were optimistic in hindsight (see target 69: “By 2012, total community greenhouse gas emissions

are reduced by six per cent from 1990 levels”), the inclusion of targets related to food system issues laid the groundwork for community and municipal support of subsequent food policy processes.

In 2008, the Calgary Food Policy Council (CFPC) formed as a result of community interest in urban food issues and included a variety of interests (community activists, private citizens, and professionals). The CFPC represented a citizen-led advocacy movement for food policy change and direct action around food access, nutrition, increasing UA activity, increasing awareness of food sovereignty, and opening up access to city land for agricultural use (Hughes, 2009). At this same time, the CoC was not formally associated with the CFPC. However, the CFPC recognized the targets identified in the imagineCALGARY Long Range Urban Sustainability Plan provided leverage to address their interests and sought to use the Long Range Plan’s targets to bring the CoC to the table, as mentioned numerous times on the CFPC website (Hughes, 2010).

The CFPC succeeded in raising the profile of food issues in Calgary, undertook the installation of new food gardens, and were willing to contribute their knowledge and membership to the City of Calgary.

Partly in response to the CFPC, in 2009 CoC Council provided direction to CoC Administration to report on the local food system and potential roles for the municipality, communities, and various stakeholders to participate in local food system work. This was one of the first food-specific policy actions taken by the CoC; they were interested in hearing directly from people who were involved in food system work in Calgary and the Office of Sustainability took the lead on this file. As a result, a report (“Examining Roles in Calgary’s Food System”) was released in 2010 (p.12, Calgary EATS!, 2012). This report identified gaps and next steps

needed to meet municipal food system goals. It also outlined roles the CoC could play in the food system and laid the groundwork for the collaborative large-scale Calgary EATS! (CE) project that would follow.

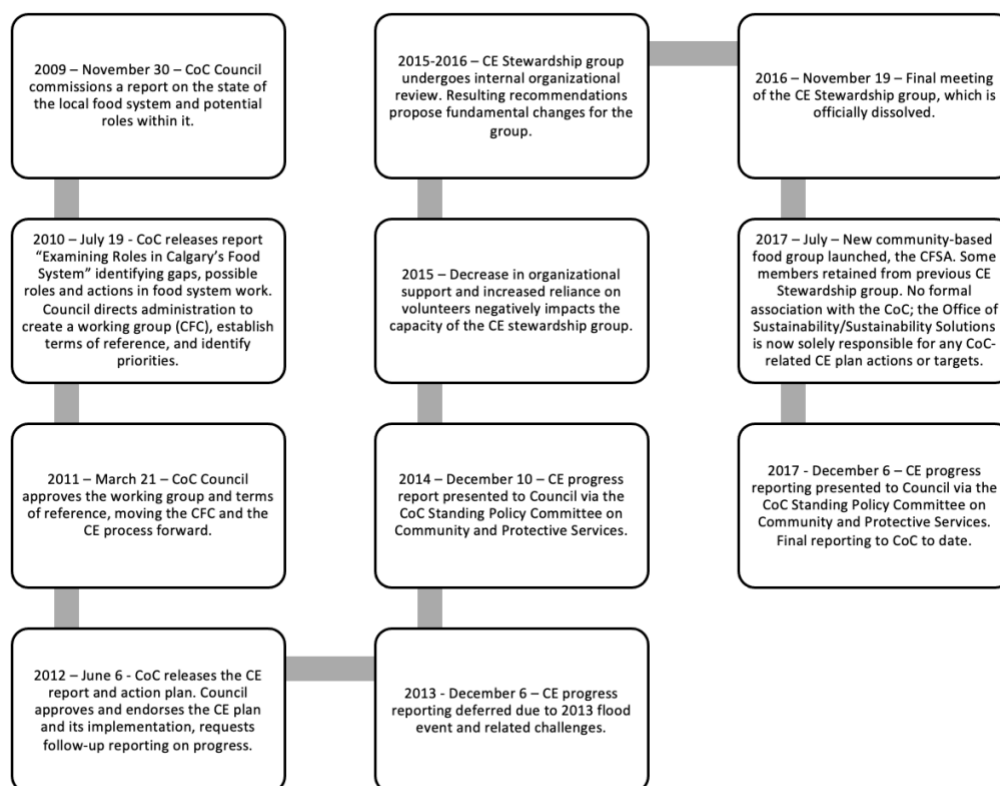
The CE project was a CoC-led, multi-stakeholder collaboration with the stated intention to “...create a sustainable and resilient food system for the Calgary region so that every Calgarian has access to local, healthy and environmentally friendly food” (p. 15, Calgary EATS!, 2012). The central committee for the project was the Calgary Food Committee (CFC), whose membership included representatives of local and provincial government, industry groups, business owners, Alberta Health Services (AHS), the University of Calgary, and select community sectors supplemented by a variety of additional speakers, experts, and contributors. The associated public engagement process included over 1,400 community members and over 360 organizations (Calgary EATS, 2012). The CE process resulted in a report that represented the most comprehensive approach to understanding and exploring the food system in Calgary to date. It succeeded in identifying many potential opportunities and solutions while also identifying some of the groups, organizations, or actors with the capacity and potential to address them.

The CFC morphed over time into the CE stewardship or CE working group. The CE working group’s mandate shifted from implementing the CE plan to focusing on advocacy and education around food issues. In the initial years after the release of the CE Plan (2012-2014), the CE stewardship group operated with organizational support and funding from the CoC under a mandate to lead small projects related the CE Plan. In 2014, a reduction in capacity combined with an inability to access outside funding sources resulted in an increasing awareness that a shift in the group structure or mandate should be explored. In late 2015 and into early 2016, the CE

stewardship group worked with Nine Lions Consulting to explore how to transition to a more effective organizational model (Calgary EATS!, 2016). As a result, in 2017 the Calgary EATS! working group held an event marking the transition to its new food system advocacy role and its new name - the Calgary Food System Alliance. The CFSA adopted a new focus on “cultivating our food future through learning and collaboration” (Calgary Food System Alliance, n.d.), and moved away from formal association with the CoC. The CFSA’s efforts focused on engaging with and educating the public, surveying municipal politicians on food issues, acting as a convenor and connector in the CFS to increase food system advocacy wherever possible.

It was the CFSA that I became an active member in from 2017 – 2018. It is my personal experience as a member of this group that provided my initial interest in this thesis work and provided me with a number of personal contacts in different food system stakeholder groups.

Following the transition of the CE working group into the CFSA, the actions and recommendations outlined in the CE plan that still fell within the scope and mandate of the CoC continued to be carried on by the CoC’s Sustainability Solutions Office (formerly the Office of Sustainability) that had been a key member in the original CFC and CE process. The Sustainability Solutions Office has continued to make progress on key actions outlined in the CE plan. Similarly, the CoC has developed “The Guidebook for Great Communities” which incorporates food targets into land use and planning recommendations, specifically related to UA, edible landscaping, and increasing community-level food-related capacity (City of Calgary, 2019). See Figure 2 for more information on the timeline of the CE process.

Figure 2*CE Timeline*

(Adapted from Calgary EATS!, 2016, Peters, 2017, & Schaefer, 2014)

The CE plan is still being referenced by the CoC in guiding policy and action for the CFS. However, the CE Action Plan was never fully implemented despite being the most comprehensive engagement process and scan of the CFS to date. Luckily, many of the groups and individuals originally involved in the CE process are still in the Calgary area and represent a significant wealth of experience and knowledge related to both the CFS and the CE process. Because of my previous two years of involvement in the CFSA and my graduate education focus on planning practice and municipal roles in urban food systems I am in somewhat unique

position to explore the limited implementation success of the CE Action Plan and whether or not the disconnection of the roles of the CoC and the CFSA may have played a role.

2.3 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

“Processes have process outcomes. Engagement in governance processes shapes participants’ sense of themselves. It generates ways of thinking and acting that may be carried forward into subsequent episodes of governance.”

(p.111, Healy, 2003)

To date, there has been no formal external assessment of CE Action Plan outcomes. Similarly, there has been no public review of the process itself despite the significant commitment of time and resources that went into the CE process and related consultation, development, and reporting activities. There have been periodic progress updates and reports to Calgary City Council in 2013, 2014, and 2017. No critical or reflective external reviews of the process for ‘lessons learned’ have been done. The objective of such a process review is to explore the key activities, challenges, and barriers within the process that affected the results of the process – both positive and negative. The results of a process review approach can help improve future municipal food system planning and strategies for plan implementation.

The absence of a critical review of the CE highlights the difficulty in assessing multidimensional food system work, which according to MacRae and Donahue (2013) can be attributed to limitations in municipal jurisdiction and authority, as well as to the often indirect nature of the initiatives themselves. Other research which has examined the impacts of food system work in Canada indicates that review and evaluation of the planning processes involved can yield insight into how to improve processes and outcomes, and can provide helpful

considerations and models (Beckie, Hanson, Schrader, 2013; Blay-Palmer et al., 2020; Clancy, 2014; Levkoe & Wilson, 2019; Mansfield & Mendes, 2013; Morgan, 2015). Moreover, it provides an opportunity to better understand what assumptions and constructs inform views of food systems and help in clarifying and achieving goals (Meter, 2011).

Planning is as much a problem-setting exercise as it is a problem-solving one and the CE process is no exception. Donald Schon has defined problem setting as “the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen” (p.40, 1983). In the act of problem setting, researchers or professionals identify both what issues and factors will be attended to, as well as how to frame the context around how these highlighted issues will be addressed (Schon, 1983). This reinforces Meter’s assertions that “the frames we use to analyze systems deeply impact what we see” (p. 9, 2011). These frames become central to the outcomes, both in that they shape the desired outcomes as well as impact the continuity and viability of the group stewarding the plan. Therefore, an assessment of the process itself is key to better understanding and explaining outcomes, as well as to improving or integrating future policy and planning work (Young et al., 2014). Mansfield and Mendes (p. 39, 2013) support this approach in a review of municipal food strategy implementation and state: “analysing barriers is important, but equally important is the need to understand the factors that enable implementation”. Consequently, a review of any planning process needs to consider not only the outcomes but also the factors that contributed to the framing of the problem and underlying procedural variables. Specifically, the questions that a reflective process review might address could include: what was achieved? Did the outcomes address the key issues identified? What problems have persisted? In addition to outcomes, and perhaps more importantly from a practice standpoint, is the question of the effectiveness of the process itself – was the planning and

stewardship group representative of the food system? Inclusive of different perspectives? Was it overly dominated by certain interests or voices? Were any key actors absent? Was the implementation considered in the planning phases? How did external forces (i.e., political, economic) influence the process?

Reflective practice is a valuable approach to reviewing and understanding planning processes that involves those who were involved in the process. This approach positions participants as ‘experts’ or key informants whose direct and experiential knowledge of the process is a primary source of insight using an active reflection technique (Schon, 1983). A process review offers an opportunity to better understand the complex dynamics that framed food system work in the context of the CE process. The CE report itself recognizes that it “provides a foundation of information for the whole Calgary food system which would be supported by future analysis and further investigation” (p. 14, Calgary EATS, 2012). Therefore, this thesis will provide some of this further analysis and investigation in order to identify some of the lessons learned from the CE process.

3. RESEARCH APPROACH

This thesis, while addressing and responding to a gap in the literature regarding reflective reviews of food system interventions, and while integrating aspects of social science research, was foremost an exercise in design thinking applied to a specific case.

The methodology for this research was selected to (1) establish a strong knowledge base related to the CFS and food system activities; (2) identify the experiences and opinions of key informants familiar with the CE process; (3) establish a consensus within the participant group regarding the key successes, challenges, and opportunities related to the CE process, and subsequent actions in the CFS. A review of the relevant methodologies indicated that interviews, workshops, and document scans are effective approaches when attempting to understand the experiences of key informants and related contextual factors (Creswell, 2014). As a result, the selected approach integrates semi-structured personal interviews with key informants, workshop protocols to expand on initial results and themes, and ways of interpreting the findings in a cooperative and iterative manner with participants with the goal of achieving results through consensus. A detailed review and analysis of archival documents, reports, and plans relevant to the CE process was included to ensure a thorough understanding of the CFS and CE context and contribute to a triangulation of results. This research drew on the personal experiences of key informants related to CE by engaging them in a reflective, collaborative process to critically review the CE process and subsequent outcomes.

Reflective practice, as explained by Schon, is a way of knowing that is embedded within practice, within experience, and is impacted by and impacts in turn the framing of issues and problem setting experiments (1983). For example, an urban planner or architect may employ

reflective investigation and experimentation in an iterative review (or series of design probes) into their own practice, allowing space for insight that influences how roles and actions could be better framed or executed; alternately, a practitioner might assist others in utilizing reflective practice to reach goals or resolve problems. In either case, the reflective practitioner attends to both the framing of the problem or situation and the features of it, leading eventually to an imposition of action or order, or move to change some aspect of it (Schon, 1983). The design of the experiment or process, in concert with how the problem is being framed, directly contributes to the solutions selected, the aspects attended to, and the most important aspect of any problem-centric activity – the resolution of an issue, attenuation of a challenge, or movement in a targeted direction. In this manner, iterations of review and critical examination can contribute greater understanding and move to improve desired outcomes.

Relating this approach to the research at hand, utilizing a reflective practice encouraged a critical examination of the constructs of the CE process, the assumptions contained therein, the framing that different individuals and organizations brought to the process, how each participant moulded the process through their own action and participation, and how additional factors may have impacted outcomes. This was accommodated through the interviews and discussions with participants that encouraged critical reflection on the CE process, and their own role within it. As a design approach, this moved beyond employing the linear tools of Technical Rationality in a reductive response to address complex social challenges and addresses the complex and dynamic nature of social processes as they are, emphasizing collaboration with participants in an open and iterative fashion. It was useful in assisting participants in this research in understanding and framing their experiences while maintaining investigative rigour through the use of instruments such as interview protocols.

Qualitative research design has been characterized by Creswell (2014) as ideal for addressing the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions within social processes. Research into procedural and interpersonal factors that shaped the CE process, centered on the experiences of people within that process, required these qualitative approaches as they offer a promising avenue to better understanding the experiences of key informants. One method of inquiry highly appropriate for this line of inquiry and compatible with the reflective practitioner approach is narrative research. Narrative inquiry, rooted in social work but employed successfully in various fields of practice (Wells, 2011), recognizes the stories (narratives) of participants as central to both understanding and reporting results, often weaving personal or parallel experiences into the discussion (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative research methodology provides a critical tool in the assessment on the experiences of key informants: the examination of a piece of an individual life or event as a story (Riessman, 2008). The benefits of integrating narrative inquiry include “providing context-dependent knowledge critical to the development of any field, critical cases with which to test theory, and atypical and other cases with which to develop hypotheses or to refine conceptualizations” (p. 8, Wells, 2011).

An investigation into the CE process therefore benefited from the inclusion of a narrative approach, integrated with the other tools and instruments included for this research, as a way to interpret and report the findings. A narrative approach allowed for the experiences and perspectives of the key informants to be the focus, creating space for the collaborative creation of knowledge required to achieve a consensus on the challenges, successes, and opportunities that emerged from the CE process. Integrating narrative inquiry also presented an opportunity to relate the findings in a manner that parallels the initial CE report by highlighting the experiences and perspectives of the people involved.

This thesis therefore employed a variety of converging qualitative methods in order to create an inclusive and consensual understanding of the CE process and the CFC group dynamics in this process. In order to position the community and participants as experts, a collaborative reflective practitioner approach was used to engage key members of the CFS. The research was divided into discrete phases:

- a context scan of available literature, reports, and conditions;
- a series of semi-structured interviews with key informants involved in the CFS who had direct experience in the CE process;
- a planned workshop phase intended to create consensus around the findings and results of the research; and,
- a final reporting phase.

The initial phase of research was intended to better understand the context of the CFS, and the work done to date. This included a comprehensive scan of available documents and reports relating to food system work in the city from the last decade, informal engagement with various members of the food system, a review of relevant Canadian and international food system research, discussion with scholars in the region who have been researching food system action and related topics, collaboration with local food system advocates, participation in regional food conferences and events, as well as creating my own primary database of actors in the CFS and their respective roles. This helped me to better understand the Calgary food system context, specifically focusing on food system planning and advocacy action, to a level sufficient to undertake the next steps in my fieldwork – identifying key stakeholders and members of the initial food system planning and advocacy groups, and subsequently engaging them.

As a result of my initial scan, including the CE report and associated documents, I was able to compile a list of prospective key informants for participation in my research. Participants had the potential to be included if they were directly involved or impacted by the CE process and were considered high priority if they had first-hand knowledge of the engagement, planning, or implementation aspects of the plan. In some cases, additional possible contacts were put forward by interview participants. In such cases the suitability of these individuals was vetted before being contacted. The total number of participants recruited for this research was 18, with full and informed consent attained in all cases (N=18). The methods and approaches used in this thesis research were reviewed and approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary. No participant engagement or interview occurred until full ethics approval had been completed. The findings and results reported within this thesis represent the general consensus of the participants consulted for this research.

Semi-structured interviews with key members of the CE group, as well as with those impacted by the CE process or who were consulted during the creation or implementation of the CE plan, were employed next. Participants were selected by compiling a list of potential experts, drawn from published reports and documents listing membership or involvement with the CE process, and from referrals through both formal and informal engagements with CFS community members. Once a potential participant was identified they were contacted by email to explain the research and request their involvement. A second request would follow if no response was received, with no further attempts made in order to avoid any real or perceived coercion. Individuals who were willing and able to participate, and who consented to an interview, were then scheduled for a meeting at their convenience.

Participants (N=18) were key informants identified for their valuable and unique perspectives, having occupied the following roles within the CFS, with some holding multiple roles: food activist, community organizer, municipal and provincial government administration, chef, educator, farmer, urban planner, non-profit operation and management, regional agri-food distributor, senior level food retail management, food processing staff, post-secondary staff, senior sustainability consultant, regional health representative, university researcher, food safety specialist, marketing professional, international development expert, and community worker. Some of the agencies and organizations represented in this research include the CoC, AHS, SAIT, NAIT, the University of Calgary, the Calgary Food Bank, The Alex Community Food Centre, various community associations, the CFSA, the CFC, and the CRP. All participants had direct involvement or knowledge regarding the CE process and related outcomes; high priority participants included members of the Calgary Food Council (N=10) and those with high-level involvement in the work resulting from the CE plan.

Open ended interviews were done in person when possible (N=13), and over the phone when the participants' circumstances necessitated (N=5). The interviews lasted from between 30 minutes to multiple hours in length. Each participant was asked a number of questions relating to their role in the food system, their perception of the challenges and opportunities within the food system, their experience within the CE process specifically, as well as their understanding of some of the persistent challenges and remaining opportunities moving forward. A copy of the interview script and questions is listed in Appendix A. All participants were asked the same set of questions, with each semi-structured interview also containing additional points of discussion and inquiry as directed by the participant. If requested by the researcher or the participant for any reason, follow-up interviews were also scheduled. In total there were 2 follow up interviews

requested by participants due to scheduling time constraints and the desire to expand on previous conversations (N=2).

A series of three workshops were offered as a follow-up to the semi-structured interviews with the goal of creating shared discussion and reaching a consensual agreement on what the successes, challenges, opportunities, and obstacles were throughout the CE process.

Consideration and planning to create an equal and respectful space were central to the workshop planning. The aim of this workshop phase was also to identify any additional factors or influences that participants experienced or observed which played a part in the process and were viewed as influential. The questions and protocols for the proposed workshops are provided in Appendix B.

Throughout all of the interviews conducted, one primary observation stood out: a consistent theme among participants of being disillusioned and “burned-out” emerged regarding their previous CE process involvement. As a result, participants were forthcoming with their skepticism, and lack of time for further engagement. Frustration with their previous CE process experience was expressed by many participants. For example, one participant responded to my statement that one of the goals of the workshops was to establish consensus on the procedural factors that impacted the CE process with: “Don’t use the word consensus - you won’t get it.” This apparent disillusionment with the CE process appeared to be one of the factors that resulted in a very low response to emailed invitations to participate in the workshop phase - despite a majority of participants indicating that they would be willing to attend workshops when initially interviewed.

This issue of the CE process not achieving agreement among CFC members is discussed further in Chapter 4.

After deliberating on the low response and engagement rate, consulting with my supervisor, and employing a reflective practitioner approach to the problem; I decided to offer alternatives to group workshops that would maintain the content and structure of the workshop protocols as much as possible. Instead of the more formal workshop structure, I gave participants the option to engage in one-on-one discussions and exchanges based on their availability and comfort, reviewing and discussing what the group had collectively identified as the top successes, challenges, and possible actions moving forward. Exchanges between the researcher and the participant could be in person, over the phone, via e-mail, or as otherwise suitable to the individual. In this way, participants could remain engaged with the group work by proxy at their own convenience while also avoiding any undue duress or hardship, while also continuing to provide their expertise and experience in a way that contributes to a general consensus.

All of the participants that responded (N=14) were open to the alternative approach and agreed to continue. Responses were circulated, summarized and re-circulated to group members via phone conversation, e-mail, and personal communication until a general agreement was reached. A summary document of the general consensus regarding the primary challenges, successes, opportunities and actions was then shared with all of the participants, including those only involved in the interview phase (N=18), for any final notes, comments, or concerns. Any additional notes or points of dissent were integrated into the document and verified with the group. Participants were then invited to submit any further thoughts or concerns for further consideration. However, to date there has been no additional feedback received. Appendix C provides the final consensus results.

The results of the interviews, workshops, and alternative engagement with participants was parsed for themes and common factors and these results are summarized in the following

chapter 4. The discussion of the findings, and implications for future food system planning and policy action are provided in chapter 5.

4. PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW RESULTS

There have been a variety of changes within the CFS that can be attributed either directly or indirectly to the work done by the CFC and associated CE Action Plan, which include:

- additional support for select UA projects, an increase of local activity in the brewery and distillery sector; and,
- encouraging pilot partnerships between the CoC and local food groups to increase the accessibility of local and regional agri-food products.

However, impediments in the CFC and CE process limited the effectiveness and scope of their ability respond to some of the key challenges within the food system. The results of the interview and workshop process with key informants and participants in this original process raised concerns as to whether or not the plan adequately met the targets identified in the vision and principles of the CE plan (see Appendix D for 2.1 Vision and 2.12 Principles from the CE Plan); and whether or not the work had gone far enough to address CFS needs such as food insecurity, increasing local UA production and processing, and engaging with major actors in the food system such as large scale retailers and distributors.

My role as a researcher was to convene and facilitate the process of reflective knowledge creation; my observations and recommendations regarding the process will be explored occasionally in this chapter, and further in Chapter 5.

In addition to obtaining important insights regarding the current state of the CFS, interview and workshop participants provided clarity into aspects of the planning process that were either helpful or harmful to the eventual outcomes. The CE process was generally perceived as success because the resulting Action Plan was used to leverage some municipal

policy changes and identified the types of business opportunities available within the agri-food sector in Calgary. However, other interview and workshop participants viewed the CE planning process as a wasted opportunity, and detrimental to future community engagement in food system planning in Calgary. Participants did find consensus on most of the key issues identified, which are described as follows. The results reported in the following subsections reflect the general consensus of the group of participants consulted and engaged with relating to their experience with CE and any related work stewarding the action plan. Each of the following subsections is followed by a summary table of the key points.

4.1 PROCESS SUCCESSES

“The alliances and convergences formed between social economy organizations and the local food movement relate to their common characteristics, values, and goals: locally embedded, locally controlled, and addressing local needs through relationship building, collaboration, and innovation.”

(p. 95, Beckie & Bacon, 2019)

The participants were able to identify and agree upon a number of successful outcomes related to the CE plan and work. There was dispute within the group as to where the impetus to change came from. In some cases, this included the community, the private sector, or as a result of the CE group work. In addition, it was challenging for participants to identify whether these changes would have happened independent of the CE work or if it resulted, at least in part, from the CE process. When asked, participants were not unanimous in their responses, but there was agreement that some of the recent changes and outcomes in the CFS can be attributed to the CE

group work including the increase of local breweries and resulting from a change in municipal policy. The actions and recommendations put forward in the CE plan that were associated with those groups or sectors that had the will and capacity to achieve them were more likely to be implemented. However, the CE process did little to identify or manifest additional resources for those groups that lacked such advantages. The general consensus of the research participants was that CE actions more aligned with the goals of the private sector would have likely happened in the absence of the CE Action Plan, such as the expansion of the capacity and resources for local producers through co-operative action. In contrast, social justice-oriented non-profit CSOs and community groups that often require additional resources did not see the same results. The 9 agreed upon successes of CE process identified from the results of interviews and workshops are described in the following subsections.

4.1.1 Increase in education and awareness related to local and regional food issues and actions.

Participants generally agreed that there has been a noticeable increase in the awareness of local food issues, increased knowledge about local and regional producers, and greater educational efforts on behalf of the public, the CoC, and community organizations to better understand the food system since the release of CE report and plan. These changes have taken shape in various ways, but participants mentioned a rise in educational workshops, food events, interest and attendance at CFS related events, publications and guidebooks exploring the CFS, academic research on food policies and systems, and concerted efforts to explore and enhance the CFS. In addition, an increased profile of local and regional food actors (including growers,

producers, chefs, breweries, retailers) has contributed to a greater regional and local focus on, and awareness of, food system issues and options.

According to the results from participants, the CoC assisted in translating the impact of food related policies on citizens and used the CE report as a jumping-off point to begin to integrate food-related targets into policy guides and plans. The development of community-led organizations such as the Alex Community Food Centre, Fresh Routes, and YYC Growers & Distributors which provide a variety of services and benefits to the citizens of Calgary also found support and were successful in sharing food skills and encouraging public conversations around food system issues and increasing access to food with an emphasis on health and dignity. Results from participants also noted how some individual members of the CE group have continued on in their personal and professional lives to address the challenges and opportunities identified throughout the plan, a very direct and positive outcome of the CE process.

4.1.2 Increase in the accessibility and representation of local and regional food producers/processors in the local market.

Food accessibility came up repeatedly in the results as a central theme in the CE report and subsequent CoC plans and initiatives such as the Enough for All poverty reduction plan. According to results from the participants, food accessibility is a multi-faceted issue that can present itself as a financial barrier (not enough money to buy food), a physical barrier (nowhere close to buy food or no way to physically access a grocery store), a psychological or social barrier (perceived or actual stigmas around food relief services or an inability to request or accept help), or a capacity barrier (not enough time to acquire food given other responsibilities).

Accessibility challenges can also be compounded when multiple barriers are present or when in times of crisis.

The CE process prioritized addressing the physical barriers to food access by increasing the opportunities to purchase and access local food. This approach reflected an understanding that physical access is more tangible and measurable, and that interventions based on physical access would be a better use of the CE group's limited resources and capacity. While some of the successes in the CFS may have occurred independent of any deliberate planning or policy change, other gains in stewarding the CE plan can be attributed to the work of dedicated individuals and groups. The City's Office of Sustainability, subsequently followed by the Sustainability Solutions Office, championed some notable initiatives on the behalf of the CoC and the CE Action plan including piloting a program to bring fresh food markets to Calgary Transit stations, and working to change by-laws to encourage the expansion of urban food production and processing.

Gains also included increasing market access to local and regional food within Calgary, despite the general lack of participation from large food retailers and distributors. A few local producers saw their profiles rise, in part due to inclusion in the CE process and associated networking opportunities related to increasing awareness of local food options and food system opportunities within the city. Some results were also very critical of the networking aspect of the CE process and Action Plan. The feeling expressed was it negatively impacted the ability of the CFC to focus on the task at hand. Overall, the CE process was able to leverage existing relationships and knowledge of the workings of the municipality in order to grow existing businesses and projects while simultaneously working towards new partnerships and initiatives. This has created opportunities for local and regional producers and processors to scale-up and

find market access which otherwise may have been restricted. This is illustrated in the start up of a Calgary-based aquaponic UA start-up with roots in the CE planning process which provided the opportunity to market their products through Calgary Co-op store locations across the city (Walter, 2020).

The results showed that some participants lamented the absence of large-scale food retailers (including Superstore, Safeway, and Calgary Co-op). At the time, these retailers represented, “approximately 70% of food retail sector” by volume sold (p. 136, Calgary EATS!, 2012). Retail and institutional distributors including Macdonald’s Consolidated, National Grocers Association, Federated Co-operatives Limited, Gordon Food Service, and SYSCO were identified by CE as central to the CFS but were conspicuously absent from CE’s final recommendations, actions, or implementation. Not including large-scale retail or market forces as central to CE planning made it difficult for the CE to have any direct impact on the accessibility or penetration of local and regional food producers into the larger retail agri-food supply chain. However, the CE process did enable food producers, processors, and distributors to find support and infrastructure necessary to scale up or otherwise overcome barriers to market access through increased dialog and collaboration. Subsequently, there has been some movement on the part of large-scale retailers to increase the visibility and accessibility of local food products. Specifically, media campaigns such as “Localize”, which initially partnered with Calgary Co-op and is now running nationally, aim to improve labelling and sourcing information for consumers (Alberta Flavour, n.d.).

4.1.3 Increased social capital and networking between members of the Calgary Food System, and as a result, greater resiliency within the food system.

The term ‘resilience’ has grown far beyond its original ecological systems context (Holling, 1973) and has perhaps become overused. Regardless, it still represents a useful way of exploring system dynamics. As it relates to complex systems, resiliency can be described as the capacity of a system to absorb shocks and disturbances while maintaining integral functions, and adapt or re-organize when facing changing circumstances (Tendall et al., 2015). Researchers that specialize in assessing food system work have argued that resiliency is a requisite pre-cursor to achieving food security (Halliday & Mendes, 2019).

The CE Action Plan identified resilience as a target for the CFS. Participant results identified that the resiliency of the CFS has been improved as a result of the CE process, most notably among those individuals or groups who were the most engaged with the process. Participant results described personal experiences of relying on relationships and networks created throughout the CE process as assisting them in resolving the impacts of unexpected weather disruptions, as well as other challenges and windfalls. As such, the perception is that the CFS has experienced a decrease in food waste together with an increased ability to deal with unexpected challenges or shifts in food system factors including:

- availability and distribution of food,
- increased collaboration between members of the CFS,
- greater knowledge and experience sharing, and,
- co-operative actions around capacity-building, purchasing, and more.

It is worth noting that while the participant results acknowledged this increase in social capital and networking, they were also expressly critical of those who came to table wanting to treat the process as primarily a networking event. Specifically, the outcomes of the CE process were perceived as negatively impacted by too much emphasis on developing connections and too

little emphasis on personal action, accountability, and investment in solutions. From this perspective, the resiliency and increased network capacity gained by the CFS may have come at the expense of other participant goals in the CE plan.

4.1.4 Bylaw changes related to local, urban food and beverage production led to growth in related sectors and an increase in new players in food-related businesses.

According to participants, one of the primary successes stemming from the CE process was a change in bylaws as they relate to urban food production, food processing, brewing and distilling operations, and other urban agri-food issues (urban chickens as emotional support animals).

This was acknowledged in the initial CE plan and subsequent public engagement activities as one area of change which would be welcomed at the community level and would require relatively little investment and pose little risk. By-law changes represent food system action that offers a long-lasting systemic shift. These bylaw updates were done in sequential stages. Initial wins became the foundation for subsequent proposals. By selectively using successful bylaw changes and UA projects with proven support, further changes were less likely to provoke controversy or political push back from local citizens or CoC Council and administration.

However, participant results also showed that there were also concerns that this censored or minimized the more controversial perspectives and voices within the CE process by attempting to make UA more palatable to the CoC. An additional criticism identified was that UA bylaw changes didn't go far enough or fast enough to address the deeper issues of food

insecurity and food access. To this point, one participant stated during their interview: “Low hanging fruit doesn’t make the best pie”. The bylaw changes made by CE were low-risk and resulted in a win for the CFC and subsequent CE stewardship group. However, nothing that might be considered controversial was addressed through bylaw changes. All proposed changes were generally framed in terms of how such changes could open up investment and business opportunities in the City, which appears to have repeatedly been a winning tactic in Calgary.

It is certainly possible that these UA friendly bylaw changes would have happened in the absence of the CE planning process, eventually emerging from local lobbying efforts. However, the results suggest that the CE process was a definite catalyst for the engagement and policy changes required to create action.

4.1.5 Secondary effects related to business and non-profit creation and growth, in sectors related to the CE scope of inquiry and action.

Secondary impacts of the CE plan emerged from the results of participant interviews affecting both individuals and organizations. Participants interview results shared their experiences of being either at a CE meeting, reviewing notes related to CE work, doing research on a CE related topic, or having an epiphany related to their own personal role in the food system. For example, one participant used the process to learn as much as possible about the CFS and then identified an actionable opportunity for food diversion and re-distribution, which developed into an organization dedicated to gleaning fruit that is still in operation. Similarly, another participant created a value-added product out of a neglected food resource and with strong community partnerships has grown a highly-respected cidery. The collaborative spirit was also present as both of these ventures work together to create key seasonal products. This is an

example of sustainable food system principles such as reducing food waste, limiting emissions by sourcing locally, and encouraging and enhancing local economic participation.

Participants results also identified other examples of how the CE planning process indirectly led them to related opportunities, ideas, collaborations, or initiatives which have since been realized to the benefit of Calgary consumers and food system workers. CE members have moved on and continued to work with non-profit organizations, community boards, planning groups, advocacy and social justice organizations, various levels of government, academia, and the private sector. The results cite participants' CE experience as significant to their personal and professional growth. A variety of non-profit pursuits, community and private partnerships, sponsorships, and collaborative ventures have emerged from participation in the CE process. One result identified was a start-up involving niche food producers finding partnerships and sponsorships with both like-minded producers as well as from corporations and private businesses. The framing of these pursuits, and their desirability to participants, is often initially focused on either the business development angle or the social justice appeal, with some straddling both. The results suggest there is an emphasis on making a business case for doing social good that seems to be a hallmark of food system work in Calgary. Social enterprise was frequently found in the results and cited by participants as a favored model for achieving food system and social justice goals in Calgary. As such there may be more secondary or tertiary effects related to the CE process that have not been detected simply because they might be framing their genesis or development in terms of economic development, community development, or alignment with internal organizational goals.

4.1.6 Knowledge creation and expertise that was beneficial to the CE process as well as in subsequent consultation and planning activities.

Another unanticipated positive outcome in the results was the creation or strengthening of a local knowledge base and increasing expertise among CE members. As identified in the participants results, this contributed to a stronger CE process and Action Plan by enabling differing viewpoints to be heard clearly and understood. It has also had positive effects on subsequent engagement, planning, and advocacy activities in the development of the Enough for All poverty reduction strategy led by the CoC. The variety of opportunities to learn expanded the knowledge of members of the CE working group and increased their value to the process. ‘Specialists’ emerged from the process to have gone on to occupy salaried positions within some of the organizations and groups that engaged with the CE process, which suggests a partial integration of the knowledge created into the groups that now operate within the CFS.

4.1.7 Increased capacity to help agri-food businesses scale-up.

The results demonstrate that CE planning placed a strong emphasis on encouraging successful businesses to grow by leveraging their specific skills and experience with an increased understanding of and exposure to the needs of the local food system. This approach helped lessen the exposure to risk or undue expense by aligning with already successful ventures and staying within the CoC mandate to encourage local business activity. This in turn encouraged operations to grow and expand to good effect, increasing the diversity and effectiveness of many Calgary businesses. The downside appears to be this approach relied on existing operations and small start-ups or non-profit models weren’t emphasized or encouraged. This risk-averse “ask for little” approach appears from the results to characterize much of the CE process, reinforced by a

participant statement that “we were setting it for the lowest possible bar of success”. A reliance on social enterprise market-oriented solutions appears to be both a default approach to resolving complex social problems as well as an approach that seems to find favour in the Calgary context.

4.1.8 Implicit and explicit recognition from the CoC regarding the importance of and need for food systems planning.

Participants results indicate that the beginning of the CE process was met largely with skepticism and disinterest from some senior elected officials within the CoC municipal government. According to participants familiar with the earlier stages of the CE process, despite the presence of a few progressive councillors, the majority opinion on Council was that food was not an issue. As one participant succinctly stated: “food isn’t sexy.”

A quote from another participant, referenced the remarks of a CoC Councillor, who shall remain anonymous, that reflected an indifference by many on Council at the time; “Why should I worry about food (planning), when I can just go to the grocery store and buy what I need?”

In spite of this political apathy towards food system issues, continuing community support, ongoing efforts from influencers within the CFS, and individual dedicated work by some key municipal departments and employees, resulted in the CoC recognizing the benefits of aligning city objectives with the will of community members to address local food system issues. This resolve and buy-in from City Council was assisted by a respected food system advocate and founding member of the Toronto Food Policy Council, Wayne Roberts, who made a presentation to Council that was mentioned by CE participants in multiple interviews as being a turning point that converted skeptical members of council and enabled endorsement of the CFC vision. The

CoC subsequently became an integral partner in and eventual leader of the process for some time before finally exiting from the formal group near the end of the CE implementation process.

However, by the time the CFC dissolved in 2014, the CoC had dedicated resources and staff, created a full-time position related to CE and the food system file, and leveraged some of their own capacity to help with the aspects of the work that fell within their mandate. The Office of Sustainability originally took the lead and played an enabling role for specific actions, bylaw changes, and internal reviews and changes to the final CE Action Plan. It was clearly identified in numerous participant statements that the initial formation and success of the CE group and initial community engagement activities could be attributed directly to the work of key Office of Sustainability employees with the ability to mobilize CoC organizational resources and influence.

4.1.9 Work done in Calgary has informed municipal and regional food system work in other contexts.

In the results of interviews with CoC officials, it often appeared that the work done in Calgary on food system issues has been part of an over-arching national trend towards municipalities sharing models and information with the goal of creating more robust, healthy, resilient, and sustainable food systems. Results show that participants agree that Calgary has been working to become a leader in municipal food systems. Specifically, work on the CE plan led to and fed into subsequent regional food policy initiative (Calgary Regional Partnership's 2017 'Food Secure' report and plan). Members of the CFC and the CE consultation group have been tapped to provide input, expertise, and to advise a variety of food and agriculture related groups, various levels of government from local and municipal to national and international

(Alberta Local Food Council). In this way, the CE plan has resulted in some foundational development work that, if continued, creates an opportunity for leadership in urban food system planning.

Table 2 below summarizes the major successes identified from the CE participants interview and workshop results.

Table 2

CE Process Success Summary Table

Process Success	Applicable to CE process	Applicable to the state of the CFS
4.1.1 Increase in education and awareness related to local and regional food issues and actions.	No	Yes
4.1.2 Increase in the accessibility and representation of local and regional food producers/processors in the local market.	No	Yes
4.1.3 Increased social capital and networking between members of the Calgary Food System, and as a result, greater resiliency within the food system.	Yes	Yes
4.1.4 Bylaw changes related to local, urban food and beverage production led to growth in related sectors and an increase in new players in food-related businesses.	No	Yes
4.1.5 Secondary effects related to business and non-profit creation and growth, in sectors related to the CE scope of inquiry and action.	No	Yes
4.1.6 Knowledge creation and expertise that was beneficial to the CE process as well as in subsequent consultation and planning activities.	Yes	No
4.1.7 Increased capacity to help agri-food businesses scale-up.	No	Yes
4.1.8 Implicit and explicit recognition from the CoC regarding the importance of and need for food systems planning.	Yes	No
4.1.9 Work done in Calgary has informed municipal and regional food system work in other contexts.	Yes	Yes

4.2 PROCESS CHALLENGES

Participant interview and workshop results identified a varied range of challenges, and the issues participants emphasized typically reflected the position and perspective of their individual experiences. However, a strong consensus emerged around 6 key challenges

encountered by the CFC and related CE participants which are described in the following subsections.

4.2.1 Issues related to CoC support.

As stated previously, participants associated with the CoC were more likely to frame their work as successful and highlight the positive outcomes of the process – conversely, some of the participants who were based within the community or CSOs had more critical views of the role of the CoC and their actions related to the CE file. The CoC played a central and significant role in the CE process as they were responsible for much of the resourcing, organizing, and structuring of the CE group work from almost the very beginning. The burden of being the lead organization imparts a disproportionate amount of responsibility to the CoC for process success and outcomes.

In context, the CoC like any large urban municipality is mandated to administer and regulate both public and private sector interests. Participant results describe the CoC as a culture of siloed decision making, risk averse, and extremely sensitive to controversy and liability issues. While this may be a true reflection of what participants observed and experienced, this is not a critique of the CoC. As was seen in the previous chapter on success factors, the CoC was responsible for many positive results and some of the most dedicated and capable people associated with the CE Action Plan were employed by the CoC. Many of the key outcomes were achieved as the result of the work done by CoC offices and departments. However, any large organization charged with administration and regulation has structural and functional issues. This is commonplace and reflected in Foster and Escudero (p. 30, 2014) finding that “in many cities there is negligible interest amongst urban administrators and planners about food and

agriculture.” Food system planning is relatively new at the municipal level, as in the case of the CFS, and requires time to convince both administration and elected officials of its benefits and the opportunities it presents. Even in cases where municipal councils support food system work, there are often multiple approval processes that must be successfully completed in order to proceed. The results of the participants interviews identifies that many members of the CoC Council have become well-versed on, and publicly supportive of, the needs of the CFS. The importance of Councillors who originally championed the food system file were recognized by participant interviews as playing a critical role in the early stages of the CE process.

However, when the CoC entered into the food system realm, it also contributed to a displacement of an existing food policy advocacy group (CFPC) by creating its own parallel group (CFC) which was oriented towards how the CoC wanted to organize and run a process. This was a strategic move, that afforded the CoC greater control over the framing of the process, its membership, and its target outcomes. Given the CoC, as a municipal authority, is averse to risk, negative exposure, disruptive public action, it makes sense that they would prefer a more CoC-centric approach to the CE process. However, this also means that many of the controversial voices and perspectives (often of those with the lived experience of poverty or food insecurity) found in the CFPC were externalized and moved further away from the central planning and governance group. As identified in participant interview results, this preferential approach to problem setting and selecting the group tasked with stewarding the process and plan implementation constrains the process by homogenizing membership in the process and keeping any diverse, extreme, and potentially incompatible perspectives marginalized in the process.

Participants identified the initial presence of some ‘disruptor’ type personalities within the group in the early stages of the process as the trigger to limit membership and maintain the

comfort and mutual respect required to have a civil association. However, it is not clear from the results, whether or not this had a positive or negative impact on the overall success of the project. But it is clear that it did reduce the pressure on the process to address less “safe” issues and actions such as more action on poverty relief, immediate implementation of food access programs for specific food insecure populations, and the rapid expansion of UA as opposed to more gradual efforts such as bylaw changes. This in turn affected the outcomes and the perception of the process from those still at the table. Specifically, some CFS voices persisted at the table for much longer than they would have otherwise simply because the CoC was present, while other voices quickly left due to a perception of inaction or poor faith on the part of the CoC.

Despite recognizing the value of the municipality in stepping up to provide resources and support, the general view from the participants was that the CoC was unwilling to provide the required level of support to the CE process and Action Plan implementation. This was attributed to a variety of factors including: counsellors’ skepticism about the need for and the correct role for the municipality in addressing food issues; the lack of an effective political champion; and resistance to provide support for unproven and innovative interventions. Interview results indicated a perception that the CoC saw the group responsible for the CE plan, especially in the stewardship and implantation phases, was insufficient and “not the right group” to partner with. The apparent resistance on the part of the CoC to want to provide resources for activities considered non-essential funding also affected the general perception of the CoC’s buy-in and enthusiasm for the process with the other participants. This contributed to a further sense of disillusionment among community and CSO partners participating in the process. In summary, and despite the valuable contributions made by the CoC, participants identified a lack of

ownership or buy-in throughout the process, a lack of political will, as well as challenges associated with large bureaucracies (such as aversion to risk, siloed decision making between and within departments, and slow rate of response to change) as the major challenges presented by the CoC's role in the process.

4.2.2 Challenges with group dynamics.

According to participants, membership and personality issues were present in the CFS groups and networks that preceded the CFC, but the challenges related to group dynamics that were present at the beginning persisted throughout the process. These issues included key participants dominating meetings and procedural aspects of the process, differences in communication styles among participants, occasional disregard for accepted governance and meeting rules such as Robert's Rules, diverging views of group aims and actions, pre-existing differences in opinion on key issues, vastly different approaches to public engagement and public education, and unresolved personal conflicts. Unfortunately, the results suggest that these issues continued to repeat throughout the process and had the unfortunate effect of reducing the diversity of the final CFC membership.

Participants also identified disillusionment with the process itself, or with the direction the group was taking, which contributed to a decline in membership and participation. Specifically, some participants wanted more direct or disruptive action, which did not align with the more moderate approach championed by key members of the group of gradual change done from within the system and with the approval of relevant communities, municipal laws, and polices. Other participants felt that the scope of the project was too limited and too narrowly focused on the small picture. One participant described the focus as "woefully inadequate" due

in large part to the absence of large sector players and disregard for macro scale food system planning. In either case, atrophy in group membership was identified as a result of a lack of confidence in the process or its aims. Conflict created by a few provocative personalities became a perceived liability to group function and concrete outcomes. As a result, controversial or confrontational individuals were largely marginalized which resulted in splinter or parallel groups which served to weaken the effectiveness of the CE group process.

According to participant results, the CFC went so far as to identify themselves as not only dissociated from certain actors but framing their position and narrative as “the opposite” of these controversial personalities. This had the effect of homogenizing the CE process and making it more palatable to the CoC. However, it also limited representation at the table of some interests and individuals involved in and affected by food system decision-making. Decreasing group diversity also decreased the legitimacy of the CFC claim to community by applying a mechanistic approach to the complex challenge of food system work. It bears noting that one participant involved with mediating and facilitating the process indicated in their interview response that as much or more time was spent “managing” the most vocal and controversial people involved in group meetings than spent on the actual planning work.

4.2.3 Lack of a formal implementation strategy negatively impacted community buy-in, resource allocation, and the ultimate success of the plan.

Participants identified that the initial release of the CE report in 2012 created an implementation challenge due to the many and varied recommendations and target actions identified in the plan. There was no formal implementation strategy for the Action Plan and participants identified that much of the work fell onto the shoulders of a few, low-capacity

groups or individuals. As a result, lack of success in achieving intended outcomes was criticized by process participants which negatively affected the morale of participants and reduced their interest in and willingness to engage in similar work in the future.

For the CFC, the transition from being primarily a planning group to becoming an implementation group presented a real challenge. As one participant phrased it, “the group wanted to do it (implement the action plan), but the focus just shifted.” There was significant feedback from group members that this inability to successfully plan implementation was one of the primary challenges faced by CE process. Lack of capacity to move to implementation negatively affected both community and CSO buy-in. It reduced the reach and effectiveness of those actions that were successfully implemented. Participant interview and workshop results supports the perception that much of the work done up until the Action Plan was released was wasted as a result of not having an implementation strategy in place. Some of the participants responses indicate that any future action related to the food system will need to have an implementation plan with measurable actions tied to discrete accountable groups or individuals in order to avoid the missed opportunities experience in the EA process.

4.2.4 Significant data gaps and insufficient data sharing between key organizations.

Available existing data on the food system and its constituent parts, connections, locations, and functions, was severely lacking. Participants who identified this problem were consistently those involved in a decision making or policy setting role. It was also explicitly identified in the 2012 CE Action Plan report: “one of the biggest challenges identified was the absence of data to establish baselines, develop indicators and measure progress toward the targets” (p. 5, Calgary EATS!). Participants attributed the absence of data to the difficulty of

finding consistent tracking data for many products that are produced, processed, and consumed in the CFS. It was also the case that when data was available, it was often inconsistent or incompatible with other sources and types of data. In other cases, if there was data its proprietary nature meant it wasn't available or accessible between different organizations, or even people from different departments within the same organization including the CoC. This tendency for organizations to be overly-protective of data has been termed "data-hugging" by epidemiologist David Fisman and has been identified across sectors in Canada (Osman, 2020). It is a pervasive challenge and impacts the capacity to make decisions based on high quality information about food system states and dynamics.

Participants identified that in the CE process did have opportunities for data sharing between different organizations including the CoC, but such opportunities were specifically for the purposes of the CE planning process with no allowance to continue data sharing once the CE process concluded. As a result, large data gaps exist about the CFS which affects tracking outcomes related to the CE work. On an ongoing basis, the lack of a co-ordinated data sharing plan, specifically in the form of GIS spatial layers, provides no decision support for food system planning and management.

4.2.5 CE Planning outcomes were insufficient in scale.

The results of participant interviews identified phrases such as "inadequate" and "underwhelming" as descriptors for the CE process and specifically related to any resolution of persistent issues within the food system. A great deal of initial interest was shown by various members of the food system in the early stages of the CE process including representatives from large social agencies, distributors, food retail chains, government, community groups and other

interest groups that were willing to work. However, as the process continued and it became evident that certain scales and avenues of action were not going to be considered, there was an exodus from the group of those related to areas of the food system that were not going to be addressed. Common critiques identified in participant responses included the observation that the scope of the project was not proportionate to the timeline and resources available. This was followed closely by the critique that the plan did not address the underlying causes of the problems facing the CFS. When asked about their future willingness to participate in collaborative planning exercises like the CE process the majority of participants voiced a skepticism about the potential benefits of participation and concerns about time and resources wasted in the process. The unfortunate outcome of this sentiment is a decreased likelihood of genuine and scale-appropriate engagement and planning in the future.

4.2.6 Implementation and/or action delegated to individuals or groups with the least capacity or resources.

Participants consistently expressed a concern with the ability of CE members to translate the plan into action. Executive level representatives of organization, sectors, or groups often have the least time or capacity for plan implantation logistics. Conversely individuals in lower organization positions or individuals engaging primarily as an observer generally lack the resources to push plans through to action. Participants observed both these situations during the CE planning and engagement processes. According to participants responses both have had a limiting effect on CE outcomes and willingness to re-engage in the future. Without any guaranteed or sustainable source of resources or funding to ensure there that the required

capacity can be retained or put in place - there is little expectation that this situation will change in the future.

Participants reported that implementation challenges were observed in earlier stages of the CE planning process and persisted through the entire process. Insufficient capacity and resources were identified as the primary issues. In some specific cases, groups or organizations were delegated tasks or actions to undertake but were not informed of their expected role. It should seem obvious that when plan implementation depends on a community or individual who is not aware of their assigned role and/or lacks sufficient capacity for implementation - then outcomes will reflect these limitations. Based on participant information this was often the case for the implementation of the CE Action Plan.

Table 3 summarizes the major challenges identified from participant information.

Table 3

CE Process Challenges Summary Table

Process Challenge	Applicable to CE process	Applicable to the state of the CFS
4.2.1 Issues related to CoC support.	Yes	No
4.2.2 Challenges with group dynamics.	Yes	No
4.2.3 Lack of a formal implementation strategy negatively impacted community buy-in, resource allocation, and the ultimate success of the plan.	Yes	No
4.2.4 Significant data gaps and insufficient data sharing between key organizations.	Yes	No
4.2.5 CE Planning outcomes were insufficient in scale.	Yes	Yes
4.2.6 Implementation and/or action delegated to individuals or groups with the least capacity or resources.	Yes	Yes

4.3 PROCESS OPPORTUNITIES

“People do not invest in problems – they invest in solutions and assets.”

(Roberts, 2017)

A number of possible avenues to address food issues in the CFS were identified by participants, including approaches specific to Calgary, as well to urban food planning work in general. While these opportunities are identified in the Calgary context they have application potential for or could be adaptable to other municipal contexts. 15 such opportunities were identified from participant interviews and are described in in the following subsections.

4.3.1. Ally with a strong political champion and ensure community support is robust and tangible.

This was a strongly agreed upon set of conditions for future success. The CE experience suggests there are two distinct but related obstacles to a smooth planning process: weak political support and a lack of community support including a lack of resources, commitment, or capacity for the implementation. In the case of the CE process, the CoC did provide limited support and community groups were largely responsible for the action that was taken. However, participants identified issues without robust and sustained support – particularly when it came to plan implementation. The presence of an effective political advocate or partner benefits both the planning and implementation stages and associated community and organizational support is vital in achieving action on the ground. Political champions are also helpful in framing proposals and requests for support strongly presenting and supporting them. Participants noted the relatively meek approach the CE group took when soliciting support from the CoC. A political

champion can leverage their public position and personal connections to gain attention and support for food issues. They can also highlight the benefits and multifunctionality of food system work for the communities they represent. Ideally, champions are also able to effectively navigate their specific municipal political and policy landscapes to gain support for proposals and get resources necessary to support food system work.

4.3.2 Ensure sufficient resources are in place from the outset to support the process.

From the beginning, the results of participant interviews suggest CE process suffered from irregular and inadequate support related to administration, data availability, and implementation capacity. This placed the responsibility of providing additional support on those actors and groups within the CFC that were already heavily burdened. While many groups and the CoC did contribute resources and support to varying degrees, this seems to have been done in a piecemeal manner with the timing and access to resources often irregular and unpredictable.

Participants indicated that engaging with relevant organizations and bodies in order to ensure sufficient resources are in place at the beginning of the process would have had a positive impact on their work by enabling those within the planning and engagement group the freedom to focus their energies on their areas of expertise. If initial pledges of support and interest are also tied to a strong commitment to implement aspects of the plan relevant to a given organization or group, then the likelihood of implantation and action would increase. The general consensus among participants was that future efforts lacking upfront resourcing commitments will face significant, if not insurmountable challenges in achieving their goals. A common suggestion was to have the organizations with available capacity provide support where possible

for recording, managing IT or email needs, and administration support much like the CoC did periodically throughout the CE process.

4.3.3 Support the creation of at least one full-time position related to food system planning and engagement not beholden to a government or industry body.

Participants identified a need for the creation of at least one full-time position to provide management continuity for the entire process. Ideally, this would be someone who can operate independent from industry and government but who is mandated and trained to work in collaboration with all stakeholders. Participant results suggested that this approach would limit real or perceived bias related to organizational affiliations and would enable the process to proceed in a robust fashion due in part to the flexibility of an independent and connected champion working with adequate resources. It could have a favorable impact on addressing administrative processes such as risk assessments, collaboration agreements, and response times for critical deadlines. The creation of a full-time position would be an explicit endorsement of the need for comprehensive food system work and could provide further avenues for growth, investment, education, collaboration, and implementation.

4.3.4 Create explicit guidelines and expectations for participants.

A common refrain from interview results, in different forms and from different sectors, related to challenges stemming from the structure of the process itself. Specifically, this included concerns with meeting formats, rules around communication and mediation, controls on individual engagement styles, lack of mandated participation, and a lack of accountability

criteria. There was general agreement among participants that future processes should incorporate strong guidelines for group dynamics, as well as additional guidelines relevant to the actual process that are fair and can be used to hold accountable those responsible for implementation. This recommendation is akin to an agreement to participate in good faith, formalized and codified to whatever degree would be required given the context. The expectation being that participants are willing to commit to engage and deliver. This would be most effective if such an agreement was created in collaboration with all parties involved. The primary goal is for all participants to agree to participate in good faith and to the best of their abilities and capacities.

Participant interview results identified differing degrees of buy-in and engagement in the CE process. This was perceived as having had a diluting effect on the strength of the process and the related outcomes. Given the success or failure of a planning process is often contingent on the participation and commitment level of those involved this issue should be addressed from the outset.

4.3.5 Appropriate and contextual framing of resource requests.

The success of food system planning and policy often depends on a contextually appropriate framing and presentation of both the need and the values involved. This applies to both presenting the proposals to the community and general public, as well as to groups or government bodies whose approval or participation is required. Participants indicated that in the early stages of the CE process, this framing process for their requests for support or their appeals for engagement was a critical step given the Calgary context, where the entrepreneurial spirit of the city is often considered one of its defining strengths. As result, CE requests were framed as

opportunities to identify and encourage entrepreneurship and create opportunities for small businesses.

Participants also identified that by requesting little in terms of resources from early partners, including the CoC, there was greater support than if CE proposals had requested significant resources. This perception also mirrors the popular narrative of Calgary as a place where self-starters can create opportunities from very little and grow them into big success stories, i.e., pull oneself up by one's bootstraps. In the case of the CE process, framing that supported local values led to buy-in from needed partners. In other contexts, framing a proposal or request to be consistent and in line with community's values should be pursued as a way to improve both community satisfaction and buy-in from relevant partners and organizations.

4.3.6 Identify common ground or goals and align actions collaboratively with existing municipal, community, and individual targets, actions, and plans.

Participants identified that there were many chances to identify and act upon opportunities that align recommended food system actions with pre-existing goals. These goals might be personal, institutional, organizational, community, family, or academic; but where goals and proposed actions align there is more likelihood of success. As an example, the integration of targets encouraging sustainable food procurement, reducing food waste, and increasing access to local produce could be aligned with the procurement, storage, and availability policies of various departments within a large scale administration such as City of Calgary or Alberta Health Services. At a community level the goals of increasing social connectivity and sharing knowledge within a neighbourhood can be aligned with food system targets of increasing spaces for shared food production and growing connections between

community members and their food system stewards. Identifying and capitalizing on these potential synergies help facilitate sharing of resources and increase chances for co-operative purchasing and avoid overlapping or redundant responses.

4.3.7 Identify and enforce an equitable and inclusive meeting format, engagement structure, and rules of attendance.

Interpersonal conflict among CFC members was not constant but its occasional occurrence, which was reported as happening more frequently early on in the process, did impact the CE process. In the case of the CE process, all of the participants interviewed agreed that there were a few key personalities that had a very strong impact on the group. In some cases, these individuals were removed from the group, and in other cases, they remained and contributed. At no point during community engagements, planning processes, and related activities should anyone be able to intimidate, mislead, or threaten other participants. This lack of civil behaviour has a disproportionate negative effect on the shared trust, sense of cohesion, and functional relationships expected in a collaborative organizational process. Anticipating the chance for a disruptive member or members of the group and developing a framework to manage potential problems such as establishing an agreed upon terms of engagement, communication, and attendance an enacting it as a ‘social contract’ for group participation is one approach protecting the civility of the process. A planning process that emphasizes collaboration needs to ensure respect and equity among all those actively participating and contributing to the process. Participants reported they were disillusioned when meeting rules or formats were perceived to be followed in an ad hoc fashion and were not employed during moments of dissent or aggression and reinforced the importance of a common set of rules and guidelines.

4.3.8 Identify and employ strong and defined indicators or measures for outcomes, accountability, and assessment.

Multiple challenges were identified through participant interviews in the context of a multi-year process that included multi-sectoral actors within complex dynamic systems. The implementation of the CE's Action plan targets has been elusive and metrics for success have shifted throughout the planning and subsequent implementation stages in large part due to this multi-year, multi-sectoral complex systems context. Changing economic and political cycles are uncertain and work against continuous support for some Action Plan actions. Identifying how CE plan success and progress is measured and monitoring how organizational, economic, and political cycles are changing was missing from the process. Specifically, the economic conditions in Calgary shifted from a robust economic cycle to relatively depressed and struggling position over the CE planning timeline. This shift reduced and limited resources available from all supporting sectors. It has also increased the scrutiny of any new initiatives and proposals. Participants suggested that measures and metrics of success must be understood and agreed upon by all, and should be consistently pursued by all parties, with accountability measures in place from the adoption of the plan. Furthermore, periodic update reports should be made on a regular basis and speak to any concerns that may come up throughout the process.

4.3.9 Ensure participants are engaged regularly to discuss and update assessment and action plans.

Although the CE process was initially completed with the release of the Action Plan, there have been subsequent events and gatherings related to the food system in Calgary, including further engagement related to the work still being done by the CoC Sustainability Solutions office. Many of the participants indicated that they would welcome and benefit from less formal opportunities to get together and re-engage with the CE group as well as other interested individuals to update and re-assess what is needed in the CFS moving forward. Support for this finding is provided by a 2016 CE report which outlined recommendations for the CFC's transition into the Calgary Food System Alliance. This report identified one of the key challenges of the transition was a "limited understanding of the current and evolving needs of the local food system and its actors" (p.2, Calgary EATS!, 2016). However, no additional review or scan has been completed since that recommendation was made, but it may be even more relevant now that the CE group has transitioned into its new Calgary Food Systems Alliance governance model. Participant responses strongly about the need for re-engagement opportunities.

4.3.10 Play to strengths.

From the outset, the CFC was careful to frame their work and proposals to City Council and municipal committees as low cost and low risk. Participants familiar with the earlier stages stated that the group wanted to leverage small wins and actions in order to gain support before moving into larger requests for resources. This early approach continued to inform the process, with the CFC asking for relatively little from the municipality and the participants with regards to resources. The success was aided by the framing of their work as identifying and supporting existing work being done in the CFS, focusing on the entrepreneurial aspect of the work being done and on the economic benefits it might provide, rather than on initiating potentially risky

interventions or actions on their own. In addition, emphasis was placed on how private business and individuals were lending their talents and resources to the food system work being done with the CFC and the CE plan as a way of providing social evidence for the desired support. This approach worked well in Calgary, where public support for community initiatives is often contingent on the demonstrated success or applicability of the plan or intervention, as well as demonstrable support from the community or private sector. The CFS is replete with examples of successful food ventures, non-profit food system actors, innovative food producers and distributors, and more; the move to highlight gains in the CFS and build on them moving forward is an obvious one. Continuing to emphasize this strength and expand on the role of Calgary's entrepreneurial spirit in food system work will likely find continued success in the CFS, and foster growth in the local and regional agri-food business sector.

4.3.11 Capitalize on newcomers to Calgary.

Canada is a country where people from myriad cultural backgrounds live and work together. According to the 2016 Government of Canada Census data, more than 20% of Canadians are immigrants, with over 800,000 making their home in Alberta alone (2019). This is reflected in the choices and cuisines reflected within the CFS. While there is strength in diversity, there is also great food, and an accessible way to integrate newcomers into communities is over shared food-related activities such as community gardens, community kitchens, community meals, and street festivals. International immigration to the Calgary region represents an important resource that can help elevate and value diverse experiences and knowledges related to food into the CFS.

This opportunity responds to concerns raised in participants responses about a perceived lack of diversity of experiences and perspectives in CFC membership. The inclusion of more diverse and cross-cultural perspectives would offer a more representative sample of the greater population of Calgary and increase the range of experience to draw upon when responding to challenges and anticipating future food system needs.

CSOs and non-profit groups have played a large role in both integrating newcomers and in strengthening the CFS. Specifically, participants have praised the action of groups such as Calgary Catholic Immigration Services (CCIS) and the Alex Community Health and Food Centres that work on capacity-retention in newcomers and immigrants in the CFS, as well as building additional capacity where possible; for instance, CCIS was instrumental in the development of some of the first successful UA collaborations between the community, CSOs, and different levels of government in Calgary with the Land of Dreams urban farming initiative (CCIS, n.d.). Given their role in supporting and growing the opportunities within the CFS, and in addressing some of the root issues that the CE process was formed to address, there is a strong need for increased integration of those CSOs and the people that they work with in future food system planning.

Participants agreed that Calgary could leverage existing successes to further develop and grow its brand as a culinary destination, highlighting the range of cuisines and culinary options in Calgary. Newcomers often bring not only a strong sense of culture and culturally-specific culinary literacy, but strong community bonds and a willingness to organize and work together. The representation in the CFS of a variety of regional and fusion cuisines, coupled with the strong work ethic and community support celebrated in Calgary and in newcomer groups, create opportunities to bring together community and export the diverse agri-food experience that

Calgary offers. This could take the form of locally produced or processed value-added products that are intended for export, or it could be an attempt to draw more visitors to Calgary in order to access the restaurants and markets first-hand.

4.3.12 Increase Urban Agriculture activities.

Participants identified the importance of increase of food production in the city, whether in a window planter box or a large-scale urban farm. Increasing UA production was identified as is one of the most accessible and actionable opportunities available to the CFS. Participants interviewed strongly agreed on the role of UA and related food-processing as a significant opportunity for the future of the CFS. Participant responses differed around how much production and spin-off could reasonably be expected from UA in Calgary relative to feeding the population of the city. But there was general consensus on the positive social, cultural, personal, and physical benefits that UA can provide. For example, the CoC, acting largely through the Sustainability Solutions Office, has moved on some of the key UA-related recommendations from the CE report by changing bylaws and policies that have legitimized UA and opened up space for increased urban food and alcohol processing, production, and distribution. The result has been a growth in local start-ups including breweries, distilleries, urban growers, food processors, and the pilot of a multi-acre urban farm on CoC land in Calgary. It is an obvious opportunity to continue to grow and explore how UA can address some of the challenges facing the CFS, as other opportunities related to UA and food processing that could be capitalized on.

4.3.13 Identify opportunities for collaboration, within the food system.

Participants identified an opportunity to increase connections among actors and organizations within the CFS, although it was also identified as a distraction to the main purpose of developing action plans and programs to address CFS issues. Participants generally agreed the networking aspect was beneficial and perhaps more so in the long run. Participants offered a variety of examples of how such connectivity was activated to anticipate and resolve problems such as helping a new food processing company adapt to unique health regulations and requirements for their operation and create support in response to unexpected challenges such as larger organizations offering capacity and resources to absorb unanticipated surplus, or waste materials from much smaller operations at no cost. The same approach can be utilized to create and further grow partnerships, co-operatives, and find opportunities for collaboration between regions, groups, organizations, and individuals. However, participants also noted this must go beyond simply creating initial connections. Specifically, it is vital that the scaffolding provided by networking is sustained to provide tangible support as required over time.

Participants also identified specific actions and potential avenues for co-operation including “big picture” ideas that would involve many different actors working together. For example, the creation of formal links between and among similar but separate retail or distribution entities in the CFS could help to share and leverage infrastructure, administration, as well as financial and human resources. Another example suggested was the creation of a regional food hub to support local and regional producers that are currently too small to access other distribution channels. As these examples demonstrate, opportunities do exist; and participant responses indicate there are many more possible ideas, such as co-operative purchasing on non-competitive items and inter-regional collaboration opportunities around processing and storage capacity. Explicit support for and encouragement of increased collaboration and networking is

needed to move these ideas and opportunities forward. However, as noted in participants responses, this should not supersede the primary goals of engagement and action planning but occur concurrently.

4.3.14 Promote a food system ‘lens’ wherever possible to raise awareness of food issues, actions, and solutions.

Participants indicated the value of employing a food system perspective (lens) to challenges at a variety of scales to address food related issues in a number of areas such as educational curriculum, institutional purchasing, land-use planning, waste patterns, personal consumption habits, and public health engagement. Values guide decisions, and by endorsing a food system perspective, actions will be considered in the context of the overall food system. The introduction of a food system lens can help address issues such as the ‘siloes’ nature of decision making and supports important system connections in collaboration processes. It represents an opportunity for communicating the complexity of the food system in public engagement and education.

4.3.15 Position the municipality as a leader in food system work.

According to participants with knowledge of municipal affairs, Calgary has emerged as a forward-thinking city in the area of food system planning that share information, best practices, and resources to help other municipalities address food and food system issues. Participants identified the value and importance of local and regional municipal governments in taking a leadership role in developing urban and regional food systems. Municipal governments are

public bodies that are accountable to local citizens and have significant land use, policy, bylaw and resource allocation responsibilities and authorities. As such, they are in a key position to support and take a leadership role to facilitate food system development planning and management. Municipal leadership opportunities provide a way to address local economic needs, especially in Alberta. The value-added processing potential of regional foods is one potential opportunity to spur growth and effect change in the food system. Where municipalities do have food system interests there is real opportunity to scale-up existing commitments. In the context of the CE process, participants suggested the CoC went halfway by stepping in to mediate and facilitate the CE process, which was key to the process, but it could have taken the additional step of being both a convenor and leader in food system work.

The following table summarizes the 15 opportunities identified as a result of CE participant interviews.

Table 4*CE Process Opportunities Summary Table*

Process Opportunity	Applicable to CE process	Applicable to the state of the CFS
4.3.1. Ally with a strong political champion, and ensure community support is robust and tangible.	Yes	No
4.3.2 Ensure sufficient resources are in place from the outset to support the process.	Yes	No
4.3.3 Support the creation of at least one full-time position related to food system planning and engagement not beholden to a government or industry body.	Yes	Yes
4.3.4 Create explicit guidelines and expectations for participants.	Yes	No
4.3.5 Appropriate and contextual framing of resource requests.	Yes	Yes
4.3.6 Identify common ground or goals and align actions collaboratively with existing municipal, community, and individual targets, actions, and plans.	Yes	Yes
4.3.7 Identify and enforce an equitable and inclusive meeting format, engagement structure, and rules of attendance.	Yes	No
4.3.8 Identify and employ strong and defined indicators or measures for outcomes, accountability, and assessment.	Yes	No
4.3.9 Ensure participants are engaged regularly to discuss and update assessment and action plans.	Yes	No
4.3.10 Play to strengths.	No	Yes
4.3.11 Capitalize on newcomers to Calgary.	No	Yes
4.3.12 Increase Urban Agriculture activities.	No	Yes
4.3.13 Identify opportunities for collaboration, within the food system.	No	Yes
4.3.14 Promote a food system 'lens' wherever possible to raise awareness of food issues, actions, and solutions.	Yes	Yes
4.3.15 Position the municipality as a leader in food system work.	Yes	Yes

4.4 PROCESS THREATS AND EXTERNALITIES

Participant interview results early in the research process identified 5 additional factors, largely external to the CE process itself, likely to impact the ongoing implementation and outcomes of the CE Action Plan. These are listed in no specific order of priority and briefly described as follows.

- A 1-in-100 year flood event impacted Calgary and the region in the year following the approval of the CE plan. This meant much of the initial work related to CE plan implementation had to be deferred in the face of flood relief and recovery work.

- Economic recession conditions emerged which impacted the province and subsequently the CoC during the later stages of CE planning and implementation. This had an unexpected negative effect on available resources and risk tolerance for work that remained to be done. Specifically, CoC Council was reluctant to extend further support and new resource requests from the CFC and the CE group were kept to the minimum. Context challenges associated with provincial economic uncertainty cannot easily be mitigated at a municipal level.
- Alberta and Calgary have historically benefitted from cyclical oil and gas related economic ‘booms’ that have created employment and general level of affluence to residents. Food issues are often not considered as high priority. This has led to a lack of concern about food system issues which are generally not perceived as high priority by municipal politicians and a larger proportion of the public. Until such time as a significant portion of the urban and regional population experiences a disruption to the food system it is unlikely that food system issues are going to be of high political priority for resource support and allocation.
- The reality of the four year timeline between municipal political cycles, combined with a tendency for food system work to be reliant on volunteers and voluntary associations has proven to be limiting for food system work in the Calgary region. This unfortunate reality is supported in the literature by Sonnino who found “changing political administrations can quickly shift priorities and funding” have a significant effect on food system work (p. 433, 2009). This is no less true in the Calgary region, and will continue to be a risk.

- There have been documented instances in the literature of over-reliance on private sector funding partnerships as the primary financial source for food system funding. While this may have advantages, it can also result in the perception of a reduced need for the role of local government in addressing food insecurity and poverty. This may actually increase the vulnerability of local food system to disruption. As Tendall et al (2015) found, while the private sector values efficiency, redundancy is often cited as a characteristic of resilient systems. This risk could be mitigated by securing multiple funding sources and integrating public and private funding sources to build resilience capacity within food systems.

When taken together, these factors are likely to have an ongoing influence on the sustainability and resiliency of the CFS. Many of the successes previously identified have stemmed from community-level action which was leveraged with support from the CoC. The most obvious path forward in the face of additional threats, disruptions and adverse conditions would be to lean into existing capacities by reinforcing and supporting the ability for the CFS to organize and mobilize. Clear communication and a commitment to collaborate will be key to maintain such long term support. It will be important to listen to the knowledge and experience of individuals and groups working within in the CFS, and act on their feedback in order to monitor food system dynamics and external impacts.

In Chapter 5, the interview results as categorized and summarized in this chapter as successes, challenges, opportunities, and threats are further discussed with respect to the CE process and the field of food system planning and policy in general.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

“It is the citizen advocates who ultimately will be the arbiters of transparent, effective and multi-stakeholder food system governance.”

(p. 37, Foster & Escudero, 2014)

The story of the CFS and the CE process is a complicated one, with this thesis representing only a fraction of the overall web of connections. Over the last decade, in the process of responding to new opportunities and confronting old challenges, partnerships have been made and relationships have formed within the CFS around common goals and parallel pursuits. While urban food systems are full of the complex and occasionally overwhelming challenges fittingly referred to by Rittel and Webber as “wicked problems” (1973), it is helpful to remember that food system work begins and ends with individuals and groups who are passionate about improving their communities, and who recognize food as a powerful unifying aspect of daily life. The example given in an earlier chapter was that of Annie Gale, the trailblazing female Alderman and community organizer who embodied the promise, and challenge, of pursuing community engagement and food system change in Calgary. Today, the CFS is lucky to have thousands of modern-day advocates following the example of Annie Gale everyday by directly addressing community issues as they arise, encouraging dialog around food system issues, participating in community planning and public engagement, growing local food businesses, and coordinating action with the municipality.

Lourdes Juan is one example of a modern Annie Gale; she is a successful multi-business owner who is the founder of the Leftovers Foundation and a member of the Calgary Planning Commission. Juan is an active and vocal advocate for social justice that has worked hard to

cultivate relationships across sectors and communities within the CFS, and outside of it; her lead-by-example approach and effective public advocacy represents the type of collaborative citizen-advocate archetype that fits well within the Calgary context. Her work, and her passion for food system issues, came up often during interviews with a variety of participants as representing the kind of effort that will be required to address whatever future challenges await the CFS.

The truth is we don't have to wait for some future date to know what sorts of disruptions urban food systems like the CFS will face. Recent events both regionally and globally have once again illustrated how interconnected people are with their community food systems, how embedded those systems are within international supply chains and policy agreements, and how easily those can be disrupted; they have also reminded us how dedicated people can be in the face of hardship to provide food where it is needed.

In Alberta, these hardships have taken various forms in recent years: the devastating floods of 2013, consecutive seasons of disruptive forest fires, intermittent trade restrictions, accelerating impacts from climate change, and most recently the global COVID-19 pandemic. Existential threats to the oil and gas sector (which historically and currently represents an important aspect of the identity and economy of Alberta), international market access challenges, and disruptions to agricultural exports have also presented Albertans with a depressed economy; in the midst and aftermath of a lockdown, these disruptions have compounded the impacts of these challenges. While these situations all offer uniquely valuable opportunities to learn and improve our systems moving forward, they also represent the challenging reality of planning in a complex and dynamic world; it is messy, uncertain, and prone to disruption. This will not change.

Urban planners, and especially food system planners, must now adapt to anticipate challenges and include measures in their practice to mitigate the potential impact of future disruptions to urban systems (i.e., urban and regional food systems). This includes a need for consideration of additional factors that might seem beyond the scope of inquiry in traditional urban planning exercises (e.g., household nutrition and food security); it may also integrate novel methods to engage and educate participants (e.g., responsive online or remote options for engagement, increased inclusion of marginalized communities or individuals in policy decisions). Planners should actively employ a food systems lens or perspective in their practice, approaching challenges and opportunities with an understanding of the complexity and dynamics that characterize complex systems, and intervening on a system level wherever possible; the form and methods employed will necessarily vary based on context and intended outcomes. This implies a requisite flexibility and responsiveness in the planning, design, and stewardship of food systems, one that makes concerted efforts to work with communities to retain and develop the required capacity to respond with resilience in the face of future disruptions; as indicated by multiple participants during this research, the retention of capacity in food systems should be emphasized as an equal if not greater goal to the creation of new capacity. While food system planners are well suited to facilitate the required work, the suggested action and solutions should result from collaborative engagement with the community and food system stakeholders (including municipalities and other levels of government).

It is no secret that the true strength of a community is the people within it; it should therefore be no surprise that the way to move the food system forward will be best known by consulting the people who make it what it is. Participants were often quick to share insights into how to encourage resilience within the food system and within themselves through individual

action and working with organizations linked to the CFS. They also provided a multitude of potential actions and interventions that could work in the CFS. If the feedback and ideas of those individuals and organizations embedded within the CFS could be paired with the resources and capacity of well-equipped CSOs, private actors, and government bodies that have expressed a willingness to support food system work, the CFS will be better for it and action can be taken. This mirrors what experts have said for years; collaboration between community groups, CSOs, government bodies, and other sectors within a food system can improve outcomes and help to achieve goals (Dias, de Oliveira, & Serafim, 2017; MacRae & Donahue, 2013; McInnes, 2019). This is an area where urban planners can employ their skills as facilitators, mediators, and convenors in the service of encouraging effective communication and collaboration within the food system. In addition, planners can offer potential avenues and solutions, and help participants navigate the realms of policy and regulation (i.e., bylaws) that might otherwise pose a challenge; one might argue that they have a responsibility to do so.

In the following section, I will discuss what the results of this research mean to the CFS, and to food system planning and policy work in general. There is some minor repetition in the findings as reported; this is intentional, with the aim to respect the varied perspectives of participants while reflecting the agreed upon outcomes as closely as possible.

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CFS

This research has made clear that there are no shortage of good ideas and recommendations to both improve upon food system successes and to resolve persistent challenges within the CFS; what is and has been primarily lacking are the resources and support required to properly implement actions and interventions. Fortunately, participants also provided

ideas on how those obstacles might be overcome, consistently identifying collaboration and “sharing the work” as a key element moving forward. According to one participant, in their considerable experience facilitating action and collaboration between public and private sectors in food system work, “it makes it easier to go the course together than to go it alone.” Another participant with years of experience operating within the food system from a provincial level indicated that the best way to “move the needle” on food issues is by partnering advocates representing a broad issue base with producers, specifically mentioning the YYC Growers and Distributors (YYC Growers) and the now-defunct NUFP as an example of the type of partnership needed.

YYC Growers, a co-operative of urban and peri-urban farmers based in the Calgary region, have been a significant force for change within the CFS. Researchers have described YYC Growers as vital in capturing attention and creating motion on food system issues at the CoC, specifically by facilitating collaborative actions with the city and by encouraging food and UA related policy changes (Beckie & Bacon, 2019). A partnership between a group like YYC Growers (that have demonstrated success creating change in the CFS through education and community support) and a dedicated advocate or advocacy group (with the associated increase in capacity and resources) would provide a chance to further scale-up an approach to food system change in the CFS that has already proven fruitful. As a few participants mentioned, this approach might necessitate the creation of an independent, full-time position that must remain independent in action and mandate. Given the current appetite for action within the CFS, it is likely that opportunities and need for these types of partnerships will only increase in the future.

Community associations were identified by participants as another one of the most effective CSOs or groups within the CFS when it came to coordinating the challenge of rallying

support, resources, municipal buy-in, and implementation of community scale food related initiatives. The flexibility of operating from a community scale, coupled with the ability to check in directly with members in order to provide a clear mandate and direction, has proven to be successful in both gauging and representing the interests of the communities in which they are located. Some notable examples from the local community (i.e., the Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association, the Wildwood Community Association) have been mentioned by multiple participants as key sites for collaboration and activation of community capacity, knowledge, skill sharing, and improving food access. The success of events hosted by or done in collaboration with community associations, which in the example of the Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association has in the past included farmers markets, seed swaps, educational workshops, food security initiatives, and much more, lends further support to the role of community associations as key actors in urban food systems, and especially in the CFS.

One way for the municipality or motivated CSOs to capitalize on existing strengths in the CFS is to support and/or partner with community associations, CSOs, or similar organizations that have demonstrated interest or existing success with addressing food system issues. The creation of dedicated systemic supports, establishing regular meetings between CSOs and other interested parties regarding current or future work in the CFS, and creating incentives or structures for co-operative purchasing or sourcing are some way to integrate the input and desires of CSOs (including community associations) into future municipal and regional food system planning and policy work within the CFS. This approach would better position the municipality to act on community feedback, and to situate the city as a potential leader in municipal food system planning. In addition, the work done in the CFS could provide valuable case studies and information on food system interventions that other municipalities and practitioners could learn

from. Utilizing this recommended approach allows the municipality, along with other interested bodies of government, to lend support either directly (i.e., funding, resources, staffing) or indirectly (e.g., leveraging partnerships, updating by-laws, offering tax incentives for target actions). Whereas policy reforms take time, food programs can be implemented much more quickly. For example, the municipality could fund programs that address immediate needs in the community and/or programs designed to incentivize increased participation in food systems over the short and medium term, aligning resource allocation with the targets found in the CE plan. This approach requires a clear understanding of shared commitments to planning and implementation by all parties to be effective, including what level of resources and support will be provided by each participant.

The creation or adoption of engagement guidelines and protocols related to developing neighbourhood or organizational level food planning can help community associations integrate a food system approach into their actions and policies. For example, this could be catalyzed by the creation and integration of a city-wide workshop/engagement template that identifies possible ways to create community-level food assessments and plans. In turn, community level activity can inform and be informed by municipal level planning and action and would help to alleviate the burden on community members and CSOs, have the potential to link neighbourhood level organizations and associations with higher order funding, and create or foster an accessible and knowledgeable citizen base with which to engage on future food planning actions. This would also offer a tangible way for larger groups and organizations, such as the CoC, to leverage their considerable administrative scope and capacity to assist in food system work. If successful, this approach could also be integrated with similar or parallel municipal or community plans, for example in pandemic response or to address climate change impacts.

It should be noted that community associations, along with a variety of other CSOs within the CFS, already contribute to a varying degree to the planning and actions that impact their communities and Calgary at large. According to participants with experience in the sector, the challenge facing many community associations and CSOs is that there are varying levels of capacity and funding accessible to each group, with the best equipped organizations often having a greater ability to engage with community members to provide input on policy and planning decisions, leaving some groups effectively out of the discussion. In some cases, CSOs (i.e., non-profits) will be in competition for funding or resources. As a result, some groups and associations are already leading the way with regards to community level food needs assessments and activities related to food issues, while others might require additional support to get started.

In order to address this imbalance, government bodies and funding organizations should prioritize the allocation of resources and capital for food system goals and targets wherever possible; in addition, CSOs that operate within the CFS should commit (or re-commit) to the achievement of the goals outlined in the CE plan (as well as food-related targets in other plans, including relevant community and organizational plans). An increased effort to integrate not only programming and policies but also funding and resource allocation between stakeholders, the various CSOs, government bodies, and other groups in the CFS would be beneficial, and in line with the overall emphasis on collaboration as a way to move forward successfully.

The establishment of a paid position for an individual or group (i.e., a new FPC) that can act as an advocate and facilitator, independent of any group or government body within the CFS, would be a valuable strategic move for food system work in Calgary. One participant emphasized this opportunity when reflecting that, “these little things between people need to

stop; we need to come together under an individual or organization not bound by city, province, or industry”. This would require ensuring that enough resources are in place to support the equivalent of one part-time position (or ideally at least one full-time position) over a year or more in order to be realistic and sustainable. This advocate or group could act to bridge different sectors and groups within the CFS, to identify opportunities and vulnerabilities, to facilitate the varied actions indicated in the CE plan in subsequent planning, and to support community members in their own food system stewardship. This recommendation could be a way of implementing some of the actions recommended in this thesis and in the CE plan; for example, the tasks of developing and sharing community-level food assessment protocols, providing communication and collaboration facilitation, researching and creating reports on aspects of the food system, or encouraging systemic changes in the CFS policy landscape. This recommendation also represents an opportunity for CFS stakeholders and participants to collaborate on meaningful and manageable actions, as the funding of this position would best if it was tied to multiple sources in a cooperative arrangement (contributing to a more redundant funding model, and one more likely to remain functional in the case of a disruption).

It became evident early in the interviews that a clear path in addressing CFS challenges is to tie food system goals and actions into parallel pursuits, such as climate change resiliency or disaster preparedness planning efforts (which is underway in Calgary, according to participants). Food represents a lever, a multifunctional entry point into a variety of connected sectors; it is part of a nexus of systems that, along with water and energy, define the essential pre-requisites for modern urban life (Zhang et al, 2019). Food system planning therefore has the ability to create “profound effects on a host of other sectors — including public health, social justice, energy, water, land, transport and economic development — and these are all sectors in which

planners are deemed to have a legitimate interest” (p.81, Morgan, 2009). The potential to integrate food system targets and goals into individual, community, organizational, and government practices and policies is improved when there are shared goals or intended outcomes, and when there is an awareness of the benefit to each party; and planning for future disruptions provides nothing if not an opportunity to identify shared goals and work collaboratively to achieve them.

Planning for discrete but interrelated goals, between multiple entities and even departments within the same organization, requires a high degree of collaboration and integration of plans and actions. “Food can be so overwhelming” one participant observed when reflecting on the complexities found within the CE process, echoing multiple other participants that the additional challenge of inter-organizational coordination would be mitigated somewhat if the goals, metrics, and actions were simple, clearly understood and agreed upon by all parties. However, the complexity of the challenges inherent to multi-sector collaboration also illustrate the potential reach of successful interventions; food system planning can align with numerous potential avenues to implement food related goals and actions, and to integrate food system targets into plans and policies that are primarily concerned with different goals or sectors (i.e., disaster planning, ecological restoration, parks maintenance, education, economic development, waste diversion) to achieve multiple targets simultaneously. For example, there was mention of the CoC moving to align action on food system needs with parallel mandated municipal emergency response planning; however, a review of available reports and documents related to the Calgary Emergency Management Agency relief planning has little to no mention of food, suggesting the work is still underway. To return to the example of the partnership between the YYC Growers and the CoC, a collaborative project aimed at providing fresh, local produce to

commuters at transit stations met the varied goals related to public health, nutritional security, improving food access, stimulating economic activity, activating underused public spaces, educating the public, and more. The CoC needs to lean into this approach and scale up support for these types of innovative food system interventions; according to a participant reflecting on the opportunity for the city to implement partnerships and food system changes, “Calgary is the place to do it!”

At a minimum, the role of the CoC in the CFS should be to clear any obstacles or roadblocks to achieving the goals they set out in the CE plan that fall within their reach (i.e., changes to bylaws, zoning, policy, procurement), and to incentivize the target actions and behaviours using whatever tools are at their disposal; so far, there has been the greatest progress in this area of response from the CoC. Any potential actions that work to integrate CE recommended policies and actions into organizational structures or policies should be done first; this sets an example to other organizations and municipalities, and even within those the CoC administration, that the CoC is “walking the walk” and that food issues are being taken seriously. Until a genuine internalization of the CE plan happens at the CoC, there is no reason to believe they are willing to act in support of or to lead other organizations and groups in food system change.

In addition, and assuming available capacity and funding, the municipality could act in more pro-active ways; for example, the CoC could develop training programs to fill the various roles required in the emerging food system (and to fill shortfalls in the current CFS), provide incubator space and training for agri-food and UA businesses and organizations, step up and assume liability insurance for Calgary food start-ups that align with the goals and principles of the CE plan, and act as a connector between the various sectors and actors in whatever capacity

they can. The CoC could lead the push for a regional food terminal in the city, one focused on regional producers and processors; if the risk associated with that, or other projects is too considerable, the municipality should investigate and solicit support from potential partner agencies or institutions to share any potential exposure. If the CoC assumes an increased responsibility for implementing the actions it put forward, the outcomes would likely be improved, and the capacity to respond would be increased. This has the added benefit of helping cushion the impact of future disruptions and challenges to the CFS. As one participant stated regarding finding and implementing food system interventions, “don’t re-invent the wheel; just bring in models that already work”.

None of this is to say that the current efforts on the part of the municipality, CSOs, private businesses and community members should stop; to the contrary, they should be applauded and encouraged to grow further. The actions, policies, and plans that are currently in place in Calgary represent the product of years of hard work and advocacy on the part of many different CFS actors and organizations and form the foundation of any future work in the city. The municipality should continue to educate itself on food system issues and best practices in order to maintain and improve the ability for the CFS to thrive over the coming years and decades, just as agri-food businesses and CSOs embedded in the food system should continue to provide valuable services and products to the community. People should continue to advocate for a better food system in their daily lives and to whatever capacity they can spare. It is in this way, and by ensuring action on the opportunities presented, that food system challenges in Calgary can be addressed moving forward.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The challenges and procedural factors that impacted the CE process, as identified from the key informant interviews, are not entirely unique to the Calgary. Similar issues were identified in my review of the food system literature relevant to other Canadian municipalities and regions. Specifically, a review of the development and implementation of Edmonton's agri-food strategy reported on incomplete or inconsistent metrics for targets and progress, perceived procedural constraints, a lack of genuine buy-in from many participants, and a general sense of frustration or disillusionment with the process and the outcomes (Beckie, Hanson, & Schrader, 2013). Similarly, Blay-Palmer, Nelson, Mount, & Nagy (2018) identified challenges in accessing resources and increasing capacity for local food system work among food system actors in Ontario. For example, in the Waterloo region of Ontario, insufficient initial policy support and a general lack of understanding around the evolving roles of planners and municipalities in food systems were identified as issues affecting food system planning work (Wegener, Season, & Raine, 2013). Even on a national level, food system planning and engagement appears to have been frustrated by insufficient resources, unchecked power imbalances, and fundamental differences in perspective and approaches (Levkoe & Wilson, 2019). These examples from the literature suggest the systemic nature of many of the challenges identified in the CE interview results. As such, lessons from the Calgary context might also provide some useful insights for food system work in other municipalities.

The 9 conclusions that follow come from the results of the CFS and CE participant interviews. However, they may have implications for the broader field of food planning in a Canadian municipal framework. The following conclusions from this thesis work can also be thought of as 'lessons learned' but with Ballamingie et al's (p. 236, 2020) note of caution about

overgeneralization: “enthusiasm to translate projects from one geopolitical or cultural context to another, or from one scale to another, should be tempered by respect for the specificity of place and scale—including the unique constellation of existing actors working on related topics in each context”.

1. Get everyone on the same page from the beginning of the process.

One of the first steps in any collaborative planning exercise involves getting participants together to collectively establish and commit to a clear understanding of certain procedural processes and practices. It is important to establish a clear understanding of the aim, scope, and timeline of the project from early on in the process; this understanding must be explicitly defined and acknowledged by the group, and periodically reviewed and revised as necessary. Participants need to be prepared to commit their time and expertise and other required support as their respective capacities allow. One way to achieve this is with a shared statement of purpose, but whatever the method employed, it is important to ensure everyone knows why they are there, what they are doing, and what is expected of them.

2. Establish an equitable and inclusive format for meetings.

It is important to agree on and communicate a code of conduct, conflict resolution mechanisms, diversity and inclusion policies, and meeting procedures. It is also important to engage groups and individuals who have a legitimate stake in the food system who may have been previously excluded or marginalized into planning activities in a meaningful way. This can require flexibility in establishing the format and timing of the

meetings and activities and once established such protocols need to be consistently enforced.

Furthermore, it is important to address the potential impact of differential power among actors in a multi-stakeholder process. There is a risk if this is not addressed that many participants may not feel safe to speak freely, or risk being dismissed or marginalized (Moragues-Faus, Sonnino, & Marsden, 2017; Levkoe & Wilson, 2019). One way to mitigate this concern is to implement a collaborative rationality approach as advocated by Innes and Booher (2010), which emphasizes the inclusion of diverse perspectives, an emphasis on collaboration in all aspects of the process, equal and shared access (and creation) of knowledge, shared efforts in action, and genuine dialog as the best way to engage in community planning.

3. Recruitment of participants who represent a wide range of perspectives.

Planning for and implementing meaningful food system actions requires representation from all areas of the food system and those affected by the food system. It is important to include individuals or groups historically excluded from participating in community planning; it also includes making an effort to identify and incorporate people and perspectives from those unable to participate in the engagement and planning process but who have a stake in the outcomes. First Nations, Metis, Inuit, minorities, youth, LGBTQ+, recent newcomers to Canada, and people experiencing poverty are some of the perspectives that would contribute to diversifying food system planning and action. However, it is also important that such inclusive approaches recognize and are sensitive to the distrust or trauma related to historical government actions. For example, excluding

or marginalizing key groups such as First Nations and Metis can happen through the way in which proposed actions are framed and/or implemented (Fournier, Kushner, & Raine, 2019). As Innes and Booher have stated: “local knowledge is critical to resilient systems and thus citizens and non-elites must be part of the policy process” (p. 206, 2010).

4. The use of assessment metrics needs to be clearly defined and agreed upon.

It is important to address what will be measured and observed and how to assess progress as early in the process as possible. If targets and metrics are likely to shift this needs to be clearly communicated. The CE process was disrupted by a shift in management at the CoC following the release of the CE report. This had the unanticipated consequence of complicating the assessment of CE Action Plan implementation. It is difficult to conduct a fair assessment of results if a stable baseline with reliable and comparable data is lacking. Regardless of how progress is measured (indicator accounting or results-based), assessment criteria need to be established and maintained. Similarly, and whenever possible it is important to establish data sharing among participants and ideally beyond the term of the process itself. The absence of data and the challenges created by the absence of data sharing was consistently identified in the results of participant interviews. A commitment from participants to data collection and continued data sharing beyond the timeline of the planning process would make a significant contribution to future food systems work.

5. Institutions, large-scale facilities and CSOs need to create and enable food system assessment within their own organizations.

Potential actions could include establishing or strengthening procurement policies that support food system planning goals such as establishing a percentage of food procured for the organization to be sourced from local and regional producers. Similar actions could also include activating unused land or other assets to increase UA food production or processing capacity. Organizational assessment and planning processes are also important for identifying additional opportunities for collaboration in different aspects of the food system.

6. Strategic framing of project proposals.

The successes stemming from the CE process benefitted from a strategic framing of the initial, and subsequent, proposals and requests for support. But the cautionary lesson from the CE process is to be wary of asking for too little at the outset. Initial underfunding has long term consequences on the ability of the process to achieve intended goals. There are unanticipated costs associated with compromise and this needs to be addressed in strategically framing proposals for support. For example, a 2019 review of national food policy engagement in Canada stated:

To be able to participate in the government's process, food movement organizations were forced to make a series of trade-offs between the three factors relating to the execution of power: access to instrumental resources vs. marginalization, a transformative vs. reformist orientation, and wresting control from others vs. working collaboratively. While there is much to gain, engaging in these processes also risks alienating groups and issues that don't fit the government's predetermined process (e.g., Indigenous food sovereignty, migrant

farm worker rights). Further, participating in the government's process risks legitimizing a process that was flawed from the outset. In addition, participation in these policy-building processes may push food movement actors to engage in activities or collaborations for strategic purposes that they would otherwise not consider (p. 115, Levkoe & Wilson, 2019).

7. **Keep the conversation around food issues alive.**

The food system is an essential aspect of our lives and people play a role in it every day. Conversations are avenues to build stronger and more connected communities and food systems. Participants noted in their interviews a need to “keep the conversation going” around food issues in Calgary. Discussing food-related issues is crucial to communicating the potential benefits to be found through integrating personal and organization-level actions with food system goals. Invited and ongoing conversations help individuals and organizations understand their role in the food system and the power of their food choices.

8. **Listen to the community, let them lead, and lend them support.**

These three points were consistently identified in participant interviews. The community, whether defined by CSOs or private citizens, has to have the ability to move quickly and reflect collective interests and needs. It is important to ensure robust support for people and organizations that are relied upon to feed the community and maintain food system functions in the face of disruption. As one interviewee stated, “we are sitting on a great asset (i.e., farmers and community members) – use them!”

9. **Employ a regional approach to food system planning.**

An urban food system is in reality part of a larger regional food system. Employing a regional approach recognizes and incorporates the different challenges and strengths that various actors in the system have and allows for greater collaboration in anticipatory planning. Having the regional sectors of the food system represented is key to successful food system engagement and planning. Adopting a regional approach provides a greater chance of integrating urban-rural consumption-production. It also reflects findings in the food system planning literature such as Ballamingie et. al., 2020; Forster & Escudero, 2014; Raja, Born, & Russell, 2008.

In 2018, the Government of Alberta passed Bill 7 - Supporting Alberta's Local Food Sector – which was receptive to a regional approach to local food planning and convened the Alberta Local Food Council (ALFC) whose membership was selected “to reflect the diversity of the agriculture industry and Alberta's local food system, gender makeup and geographic locations” and whose mandate was to identify and report on “potential barriers and challenges for local food producers and processors, including specific challenges faced by small producers and processors; local food aggregation and distribution; risk management tools for local food producers and processors; consumer awareness of and access to local food; certification opportunities for local food producers and processors” (Government of Alberta, n.d.). This move on the part of the provincial government opens the door to potential collaboration with Alberta Agriculture on local food planning initiatives, which numerous participants previously identified as a “shame” and a “missed opportunity” on the part of the province. While an encouraging

development, provincial support will only be effective if sufficient resources continue to be provided and ALFC recommendations are followed.

5.3 FINAL THOUGHTS

Taken together, the preceding 9 conclusions represent years of experience and engagement with stakeholders within the CFS as represented by the 18 key informants who participated in the interviews for this thesis research. What constitutes a successful planning process is ultimately whether or not its results leave the community better off in the long run. As stated by Harper and Stein, “the question of legitimacy in planning relates to what planners do – create new futures that satisfy human needs, in a political environment” (p. 261, 2006). With that in mind, this thesis work has demonstrated the value of a reflective and narrative approach for food system planners in reviewing the experiences of participants in food system planning processes to better understand the factors affecting the outcomes and dynamics of such processes in order to improve future processes and actions needed to meet food system targets. For example, the long term effects of the current COVID-19 pandemic may exacerbate the challenges facing the Calgary Food System (CFS) by increasing dependency on the local and regional food system. With or without COVID impacts, there is much work to be done to anticipate and address the future of the CFS and to increase its capacity to support the needs of residents of Calgary and its metropolitan region. In order to do this effectively, the experiences and lessons to be learned from participants in the food system and the CE process have a valuable contribution to make.

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APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/SCRIPT

Thank you for your participation. The following semi-structured interview will involve some scripted questions, but please feel free to discuss topics openly as you are so inclined. You are free to decline to answer specific questions at any time during this interview, without explanation.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

1) Questions about Participant / Association / Role

Please tell me your name and your role in the Calgary regional food system (CRFS).

- **Specifically, is your role related to** direct action, policy work, advocacy, employed within a specific sector?
- Could you tell me a little bit about the history of your involvement?
Specifically,
 - o **How long** have you been involved in this way?
 - o Has your individual impact/activity **changed** over time?
 - o How do you measure the success of your work?
 - o Has your work been successful? Why or why not?
- Are you currently **associated** with any organizations in the CRFS?
If so, which organization(s) are you involved in?
Specifically,
 - o **How does** this/each organization **impact** the food system?
 - o What are the **aims** of this/each organization?
 - o Is this organization - or are these organizations (if more than one) affiliated with other organizations/groups/government agencies?
 - o Is there anything you can tell me about the history of the organization(s) you belong to?

2) Questions about CRFS

- How would you **describe** the CRFS? – **Specifically, important components and relationships?**
- Have there been any **significant developments, trends, and changes** that you've noticed within the CRFS over the past five to ten years?
- In your experience, what are some of the **key factors or driving forces** that have affected the CRFS, in either positive or negative ways? **Specifically,** have any of these factors or forces changed in the past five to ten years?

3) Participant's engagement/experience

- Have you been involved in any **outreach, engagement, organizing, advocacy or other activities** related to the development or implementation of the **Calgary Eats Action Plan**?

If yes:

- o **How** were you involved?
- o **Who else** was involved? (individuals, groups, government bodies, etc.)
- o What were the **outcomes** of your involvement?
- o Were you aware of or did you experience any **key issues/challenges/problems** affecting the Action Plan's development and implementation?
- o Were these issues successfully **resolved/addressed**? If so, do you have any insight into why or why not?
- o Was there a process in place that you were aware of to evaluate or measure progress in Action Plan implementation?

4) Persistent Challenges (PCs)

In your experience, with either the development or implementation (or both) of the Calgary Eats Action Plan applicable):

- **Were there any persistent challenges and if so, can you describe them?**
- **Specifically, in what ways do you think these PCs affected either the development of implementation of the Calgary Eats Action Plan?**
- **If you identified more than one PC can you prioritize which PC was most important?**
- In your view, are the PC(s) you have identified still affecting the Action Plan?
- Are you aware of any attempt to deal with or resolve these PCs? If so, who was involved and what was the outcome?
- **Do you believe that these challenges will resolve themselves, or will they persist for the foreseeable future?**

Thank you for your time and participation.

POST-INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP

Validation

Based on my research and the interviews, my understanding is that the top 2-3 PCs are:

- Would you agree with this assessment? If not, why not?
- Would you be interested in/available/able to participate in three short workshops to further explore the PCs identified and help to create a potential action plan to address them?

Thank you for your time and participation.

APPENDIX B – WORKSHOP PROTOCOLS

Workshop 1 - Protocol

Identification & Verification of Persistent Challenges (PCs)

Thank you for attending this workshop. You have been invited and have agreed to participate in three workshops/focus groups because of your involvement with the Calgary Regional Food System and the Calgary Eats Action Plan. The purpose of my Master of Planning thesis research is focused on developing strategies to overcome PCs that have impeded the successful implementation of the Calgary Eats Action Plan over the past five years. By participating in this workshop, you are helping to identify some of the opportunities and constraints affecting Action Plan implementation.

This goal of this first workshop is to verify, through discussion and shared experience, two persistent challenges that have had the biggest impact on Plan implementation.

The format of this workshop involves each participant discussing answers from specific questions provided prior to the workshop. Discussion responses will not be associated with any specific individual, unless a participant specifically wishes to be identified with a specific statement. At the end of the workshop a summary of the discussion will be presented to participants to ensure accuracy. Questions and discussions will be tracked using paper, post-it notes, poster board, and pens. The intended output is a consensus within the group regarding what PCs they have experienced and what factors or forces are enabling these PCs to persist.

As the researcher, I have engaged in a scan of available documentation regarding the Calgary food system and the Calgary Eats Action Plan. In addition, I have completed a number of participant interviews prior to this workshop in order to identify some evidentiary documentation to support our PC discussions. On the basis of this information, I have identified some possible PCs as a starting point for facilitated workshop participant discussions.

Proposed Workshop Sequence:

Introductions (10 minutes)

Follow script, introduce myself, and have other group members introduce themselves and identify their roles in the CRFS , Calgary Eats Action Plan, and their specific involvement.

Question Circle – Individuals responses (10 minutes each x 6-7 respondents) = (60-70 minutes)

GOAL – IDENTIFY THE TOP PCs AND THE IMPACT OF EXISTING PLANS/INTERVENTIONS/ACTIONS

Facilitator asks each participant to speak based on their personal experience:

- What do you think the primary PCs are?
- Why are these the most critical PCs?
- What experiences have shaped your thinking about these PCs?
- Do you think the organization or the community of interest you represent would agree with the PCs you have identified? If not, why not?

Keep track of conversation with central documentation/poster board to identify key points/observations/etc. Encourage others to take notes and submit if desired to increase input. Please remind individuals to avoid any names, identifying information, etc.

Break (15 minutes)

Group discussion (40-60 minutes maximum)

Facilitator Questions:

- Are you aware of any specific actions that have been taken to address/resolve these PCs? If so, what were they and who undertook these actions?
- What has the outcome of these actions been? If successful how? If not successful, why not?

REVISIT questions, concerns, overlap.

DISCUSS key terms/definitions requiring consensus.

IDENTIFY any potential concerns, or missed aspects/issues/etc.

Summary, conclusion (10-20 minutes)

Summarize outcomes of workshop, conclude and thank participants. Remind them about the next workshop date/time/etc.

Workshop 2 – Protocol

Identification & Verification of Persistent Challenges (PCs)

Thank you for attending this workshop.

This second workshop will explore the PCs identified in the first workshop in greater depth. You will be discussing key factors and driving forces that may be influencing the identified PCs, and the consideration of who/what might be additionally included to have the most impact.

The format of this workshop involves each participant giving and discussing their answers in response to questions provided prior to this second workshop. At the end of the workshop, a summary of the discussion and responses will be presented to ensure accuracy. As in the first workshop, participant responses and discussion points will be tracked using paper, post-it notes, poster board, and pens. In order to maintain anonymity of participants, responses will not be associated with a specific participant, unless specifically requested by a participant.

Workshop Activity Sequence

Review of results from first workshop. Specifically,

- Revisit the PCs identified and rationale for selection,
- Briefly discuss the goals of the current workshop

Question Circle – Individuals responses (10 minutes each x 6-7 respondents) = (60-70 minutes)

GOAL – IDENTIFY THE BARRIERS TO RESOLUTION AND/OR OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY PCs

The Facilitator will ask each participant to respond to the following questions provided to participants prior to this workshop:

- What specific processes, activities, or actors are impacted/influenced by PCs in the current CRFS landscape or Calgary Eats Action Plan implementation?
- In your experience, are there potential barriers to reducing the impact of PCs?
- In your opinion, do any of the PCs in the current environment present potential opportunities for Calgary Eats Action Plan implementation?

Keep track of conversation with central documentation/poster board to identify key points/observations/etc. Encourage others to take notes and submit if desired to increase input. Please remind individuals to avoid any names, identifying information, etc.

Break (15 minutes)

Group discussion (40-60 minutes maximum)

Facilitator questions for individual participant comment and group discussion.

- Who is not presently engaged in dealing with the PCs that should be/must be? Why haven't they been involved to date? How could they be brought to the table/incentivized to participate?
- Are there some important externalities that influence the PCs (such as market conditions or political influence)?

REVISIT questions, concerns, overlap.

IDENTIFY any potential concerns, or missed aspects/issues/etc.

Summary, conclusion (10-20 minutes)

Summarize outcomes of workshop, conclude and thank participants. Remind them about the next workshop date/time/etc.

Workshop 3 – Protocol**Identification & Verification of Potential Strategies**

Thank you for attending this workshop.

This third and final workshop explores possible strategic actions or steps that could be used to advance the implementation of the Calgary Eats Action Plan. The workshop is intended to conclude with a consensus around the most feasible strategic actions factors required for their implementation (such as resource availability, political will, and volunteer support).

The format of this workshop involves each participant responding to and discussing questions provided prior to the workshop by the researcher/facilitator. At the end of the workshop, a summary of the responses will be presented to ensure accuracy. Responses and discussion points will be tracked using paper, post-it notes, poster board, and pens. Responses will not be associated with any specific participant, unless specifically requested by a participant.

Workshop Activity Sequence**Review of second workshop results**

- Review selected PCs and rationale for selection
- Review barriers and opportunities and related factors associated with selected PCs

Briefly discuss the goals of current workshop

GOAL – IDENTIFY POSSIBLE STRATEGIC ACTIONS MOVING FORWARD & PRIORITIZE

Question Circle – Individuals responses (10 minutes each x 6-7 respondents) = (60-70 minutes)

Participants will be asked to respond to and discuss the following questions provided prior to this third workshop.

Questions:

- *What would you like to see done to address the PCs?*
- *Do you know of any precedents where the approach you suggest has been used? If so, what was the result?*

Keep track of conversation with central documentation/poster board to identify key points/observations/etc. Encourage others to take notes and submit if desired to increase input. Please remind individuals to avoid any names, identifying information, etc.

Break (15 minutes)

Group discussion (40-60 minutes maximum)

Questions:

- *Are there any other factors to consider that might impact the ability to address/resolve the PCs affecting the implementation of the Calgary Eats Action Plan?*
- *What individual actors or organizations do you think would be required to participate in order to make the strategies suggested to be effective?*

Summary, conclusion (10-20 minutes)

Summarize outcomes of workshop (i.e., agreed upon barriers/opportunities, other factors), conclude and thank participants. Remind them about the next workshop date/time/etc.

APPENDIX C - Summary of Consensus Document

Hello again,

Thank you again for participating in my research on the Calgary Regional Food System, and the Calgary Eats process. I wanted to circulate some summarized results around the general agreement regarding Calgary Eats (CE) and the associated successes, persistent challenges, and opportunities as identified and reported on by the group of people I engaged with for this work. If you have any additional comments, concerns, or suggested changes I invite you to let me know at your convenience. I will send out another email when my thesis work is nearing completion in case you wish to learn more.

The successes were generally recognized and agreed upon, with some minimal dispute around attribution of where the impetus to change came from in some cases (i.e., from the community, the private sector, or because of the CE plan). They include:

- Increased awareness and education related to local and regional food issues and actions;
- CE work opened the local market to increased representation of local and regional producers/processors (e.g., Calgary Transit fresh food markets, increase in farmer's markets);
- Increased social capital and networking between members of the Calgary food system, and as a result, greater resiliency within the food system;
- Bylaw changes related to local, urban food and beverage production led to growth in related sectors, increase in new players in food-related businesses (due at least in part to the CE work);
- Secondary effects related to business and non-profit creation and growth, in sectors related to the CE scope of inquiry and action (e.g., Calgary Harvest, Sunnycider);
- Knowledge creation and expertise that was influential in subsequent consultation and planning activities (e.g., the Enough For All strategy);
- Increased capacity to help agri-food businesses scale-up;
- Recognition from City of Calgary regarding the importance of food-systems planning, both implicitly and explicitly;
- Work done in Calgary has informed municipal and regional food system work in other contexts.

The challenges identified were more varied, and often reflected the position and perspective of the person involved. However, there was strong consensus around some of key challenges, which I will list below. The top persistent challenges within the CE process include:

- Issues related to City of Calgary support were frequently identified, and included a lack of sufficient resources, a lack of ownership or buy-in throughout the process, and concerns about a lack of political will. Also, challenges dealing within large bureaucracies, and the associated risk aversion, 'siloed' decision making, and slow rate of response were also often mentioned.
- Group dynamics were frequently cited, with membership atrophy, personality conflicts, marginalization, and structure/management of the meetings being most discussed.

- The lack of a formal implementation strategy was a large challenge that impacted community buy-in, resource allocation, and the ultimate success of the plan.
- There was a huge data gap, and a lack of regular data sharing between key organizations, that had a detrimental impact on the plan and on implementation.
- A frequent concern was that, given the scope of time and effort put in, the results were insufficient (in scale, in outcome) and possibly detrimental to future food system work in the city (due to disillusionment of actors, burn-out, etc.), and were unable to address the root issues related to food insecurity/access/production/etc in the city.
- Those most relied on to implement actions were also often the least able, as they lacked capacity or resources or even awareness of the expectations placed on them.

Some resulting opportunities or actions for future work in this area, as indicated by the group, include the following:

- Ally with a strong political champion, and ensure community support is robust and tangible.
- Ensure sufficient resources are in place from the outset to support the process including required data collection, administrative support, and an implementation strategy.
- Support the creation of at least one full-time position related to food system planning and engagement not beholden to a government or industry body.
- Create explicit guidelines and expectations for participants, including an agreed upon mandate, a statement of purpose, defined expectations and responsibilities for members, and a clear accountability criteria. All parties present should be expected to participate in good faith, contribute resources, have the authority to engage fully, create action, and have a stake in outcomes.
- Employ appropriate and contextual framing when requesting resources, identifying partnerships, integrating other sectors, pursuing actions, etc.
- Identify opportunities to tie actions into existing targets, actions, plans, etc., from a municipal, corporate, individual, or community perspective (i.e. identify common ground and exploit them).
- Prioritize the voices and lived experiences of those most impacted by these plans and decisions, and take strong steps to identify, engage, and elevate those who might otherwise not be at the table.
- Identify and enforce an equitable and inclusive meeting format, engagement structure, and rules of attendance.
- Identify and employ strong and defined measures for outcomes, accountability, and assessment.
- Get people back to the table to discuss... maybe over a new micro-brew? (Having a beer came up often).
- Play to strengths – so, capitalize and expand on the Calgary entrepreneurial angle to food system work – it has been a successful aspect of the growth of the food system over the last decade, and shows great promise still. (e.g., YYC Food Trucks, growth in container farms).
- Capitalize on recent newcomers to Calgary and their diverse experience and knowledge related to food and food issues, which is also a strong aspect of our existing food system.

- Grow food in the city! Lots of room to expand urban agriculture and processing, thanks in no small part to the work of the CE group and the CoC Office of Sustainability (now Sustainability Solutions).
- Identify opportunities for collaboration, within the food system (e.g., Co-operative purchasing on non-competitive items) and between regions (e.g., areas with strong production capacity collaborate with areas with demonstrated processing or storage capacity).
- Embed a food system lens everywhere possible; within educational curriculum, institutional purchasing, land-use planning, waste patterns, etc.
- Position Calgary as a leader in food system work and innovative approaches to problems around food access, insecurity, planning, etc.

Again, thank you for your time and expertise. I look forward to future conversations around our food system.

All the best,

John

APPENDIX D – CALGARY EATS! PLAN - VISIONS & PRINCIPLES

CE Plan – Section 2.1

VISION

The Vision: to create a sustainable and resilient food system for the Calgary region so that every Calgarian has access to local, healthy and environmentally friendly food.

A sustainable food system is a collaborative network that integrates several components in order to enhance a community's environmental, economic and social well-being. It is built on principles that further the ecological, social and economic values of a community and region. A sustainable food system is one that:

- Is secure, and therefore reliable and resilient to change (including climate change, rising energy prices, etc.)
- Is accessible and affordable to all members of society;
- Is energy efficient;
- Is an economic generator for farmers, whole communities and regions;
- Is healthy and safe;
- Is environmentally beneficial or benign;
- Uses creative water reclamation and conservation strategies for agricultural irrigation;
Balances food imports with local capacity;
- Adopts regionally-appropriate agricultural practices and crop choices;
- Works towards organic farming;
- Contributes to both community and ecological health;

- Builds soil quality and farmland through the recycling of organic waste;
- Supports multiple forms of urban as well as rural food production;
- Ensures that food processing facilities are available to farmers and processors;
- Is celebrated through community events, markets, restaurants, etc;
- Preserves biodiversity in agro-ecosystems as well as in crop selection;
- Has a strong educational focus to create awareness of food and agricultural issues; and Is fairly traded by providing a fair wage to producers and processors locally and abroad.

CE Plan – Section 2.2

PRINCIPLES

2.1.2 Principles

The principles of the assessment were based on the imagineCALGARY targets that relate to food. These targets were developed through the engagement of over 18,000 citizens and specialists in 2005 in the creation of Calgary’s Long Range Urban Sustainability Plan. These targets illustrate issues Calgarians believe are important to address in achieving a vibrant and sustainable city. However, imagineCALGARY does not contain detailed definitions, baseline or methodology to be able to assess progress towards these targets over time. Through stakeholder input, data collection and analysis, definitions and interpretations of each of these targets were developed and are outlined below:

1. LOCAL

Products made, baked, grown, processed and sold in Alberta are supported, balanced in the context of national and international markets.

Target: By 2036, Calgarians support local food production.

Target: By 2036, the consumption of urban and regionally produced food by Calgarians increases to 30%.

2. ACCESSIBLE

All people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, healthy and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Target: By 2036, Calgary maintains access to reliable and quality food sources.

3. SECURE SUPPLY

There is a consistent supply of sufficient, safe, healthy and nutritious food that is not vulnerable to fluctuations such as high fuel prices and natural disasters.

Target: By 2036, the consumption of urban and regionally produced food by Calgarians increases to 30 %

4. ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE

The Calgary food system ensures the protection of air, land and water, critical for achieving healthy ecosystems by minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, potable water use and waste and maximising efficient use of land, air quality, water quality and biodiversity.

Target: By 2036, 100 % of Calgary's food supply derives from sources that practice sustainable food production.

5. HEALTHY

Food and beverages listed in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide which emphasizes vegetable, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, dairy, meats, fish and poultry. These foods are prepared and served in a way that supports national and provincial recommendations for sugar, sodium and fat.

Target: By 2010, 100 % of Calgarians have access to nutritious foods

6. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The food system supports community development and action taken locally to create economic opportunities in the community on a sustainable and inclusive basis.

Target: By 2036, sustainable urban food production increases to five %