Real Food on the Colorado Plateau: The professional planners’ role in planning for community food systems in Flagstaff, Arizona

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What Is Planning?

“Planning lays claim to being comprehensive, future-oriented, and public-interest driven, and of wanting to enhance the livability of communities. It is concerned with community systems – such as land use, housing, transportation, the environment, and the economy – and their interconnections. The food system, however, is notable by its absence from most planning practice, research, and education.”

“Like air, water, and shelter, food is essential for life. Food plays a central role in our health, customs, heritage, and culture. For planners, the corollary is that healthy communities also require healthy food systems.” (Hodgson 2009)
Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning

- **Support**
  - comprehensive food planning process at the community and regional levels;
  - strengthening the local and regional economy by promoting local and regional food systems;
- **Support food systems that**
  - improve the health of the region's residents;
  - are ecologically sustainable;
  - are equitable and just;
  - preserve and sustain diverse traditional food cultures of Native American and other ethnic minority communities;
- **Support the state and federal legislation** to facilitate community and regional food planning
Research Questions

1. What are the current food system alternatives in Flagstaff, Arizona, and how are they being supported?

2. What is the potential role of local governments in fostering policies that will encourage food planning?

3. What are practical recommendations for food planning in Flagstaff, Arizona?
Research Framework

Shared Goals

Market
Government
Economy
Polity

Efficiency
Productivity
Stability
Equity
Literature Review

- History of Industrial Agriculture in the United States

- Contemporary Food Issues in the United States
  - Public Health Concerns
  - Environmental Concerns
  - Food Security
  - Economy

- History of Food Planning in the United States

- Contemporary Food Planning in the United States
History of Industrial Agriculture in the United States
In 2002 the top 3% of farms accounted for 62% of all sales
Contemporary Food Issues in the United States

- Public Health Concerns
- Environmental Concerns
- Food Security
- Economy
Obesity Trends* Among U.S. Adults
(*BMI ≥30, or about 30 lbs. overweight for 5’4” person)

South has highest diabetes levels

West Virginia leads the nation with the highest diabetes rate. About 90 percent of U.S. cases are linked to obesity.

Adult diabetes incident rates (per 1,000 people)

- 5 to 7.9
- 8 to 10.9
- > 11

Minnesota: Lowest rate 5
West Virginia: Highest rate 12.7

NOTE: White states have no data

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC.
Foodborne Disease Outbreaks Are Deadly Serious – What You Can Do to Avoid Them (CDC 2011).

**Risky eggs, 2010.** Chicken and egg contamination results in 400M eggs recalled. Cause: Salmonella Enteritidis (SE).

**Prevention**
- Passes prophylactic controls for egg producers such as buying chicks from suppliers with SE control programs, testing poultry houses for SE, and setting temperature requirements for storing and transporting eggs.

**Manufacturing**
- Peanut butter crackers to pet treats, 2009.
  - Processing plant contamination results in many foods causing sickness in 46 states. Cause: Salmonella Typhimurium.
  - Prevention:
    - Keep factories clean, separate raw and processed foods, ensure that steps to reduce contamination work.

**Recall**
- Tainted turkey burgers, 2011:
  - 50,000 lbs of ground turkey recalled following illness in 10 states. Cause: Salmonella Hadar.
  - Prevention:
    - Employ pre-harvest food safety strategies to reduce Salmonella in animals, prevent contamination at slaughter, reduce contamination of ground product from all sources, ensure that steps to reduce contamination work.

**Distribution and Delivery**
- Contaminated ice cream, 1994:
  - Trucks holding raw eggs, then ice cream, shed 200,000 salmonella. Cause: Salmonella Enteritidis (SE).
  - Prevention:
    - Clean and disinfect trucks between loads, keep cold shipments at correct temperatures, track shipments and storage.

**Preparation and Consumption**
- Poor kitchen practices cause food to be undercooked and cross-contaminated. Cause: Salmonella Montevideo.

**Prevention**
- Cook chicken and meats thoroughly, separate raw chicken and meats from other foods, train and certify managers in food safety at all restaurants.

**Preparation and Consumption**

**Prevention**
- Make sure cooking instructions are clear and correct, use a food thermometer, ensure that manufacturers indicate power levels on microwave ovens.
Environmental Concerns

- Air pollution
- Biodiversity loss
- Chemical fertilizers & pesticides
- Damage to soil structure
- Effluence of pollution in waterways
- Factory Farms
- Genetically Modified Organisms
- Heavy reliance on fossil fuels
Food Security

Prevalence of food insecurity, average 2006-08

Source: Calculated by ERS based on Current Population Survey Food Security Supplemental data.
Economy

• Employs 17% of the labor force
• Industrial agriculture contributes to job opportunities in the food industry
• Contributes to the national economy
• Contributes to city economies
Food Planning in the United States

Special journal issues devoted to food planning *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (Summer 2004) and *Progressive Planning* (Winter 2004).

Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning (APA 2007)

Helping local, regional, and state governments address food system challenges (APA 2011)

Google Groups: APA Food Policy Council Briefing Report: useful for all, especially planners

YouTube: APA Healthy Communities Webinar Series: Get Healthy Philly

http://youtu.be/w-S9F682gPA
Research Methods

Study Site

Semi-structured Interviews
  Key Informant and Participant Selection
  Informed Consent

Content Analysis
Results from Interviews

Research Question #1 - Interview responses related to existing alternative food systems

“Recent research by those concerned with shopping practices, argued that shopping is more than an individual act but is rather a practice whereby meanings and values are made” (Blake et al., 2010: 412).
List of alternative food systems and businesses that participate in alternative food systems

Backyard gardens; Front yard gardens; Community gardens; School gardens; Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) - shares and garden starts; CSA store; Flagstaff Community Farmers’ Market; Cottonwood Community Farmers’ Market; Sedona Community Farmers’ Market; Karma Farm (Prescott); Farmer’s Market on 4th Street; Camp Verde farms; SLUGG (Students for Sustainable Living and Urban Gardening, student organization at Northern Arizona University); Trout Farm (Page Springs); Dairy Farms (Glendale); Neighborhood Coop delivery for organic bulk items; Diablo Trust; Bountiful Baskets Cooperative; Harvesting from the wild (mushrooms); Pick your own farms (Sedona and Cottonwood); Food vendors - weekend farm stands; Local honey producers; Local restaurants that use local foods (Brix, Cottage Place, Criollo Latin Kitchen, Diablo Burger, Morning Glory Cafe, New Jersey’s Pizza); Local Alternative Catering; Flying M Ranch; Trading and purchasing local eggs, chickens, and raw goat milk; Hunting wild game; Purchasing online
Results from Interviews

Research Question #2 -

Interview responses related to the potential role of planners

Education
Partnerships
Public Health
Economy
Education

“I’m not sure that contemporary issues such as food planning are covered in the planning curricula. There are a lot of people in the community that know about growing food here and that dialogue needs to open up.”

“Planners need practical knowledge of farming and gardening, social knowledge of how communities create food systems, and political knowledge; and they need to be able to weave the knowledge together.”

“I need to learn more and I am learning more. Planners would support it, but don’t fully understand it. We need to understand the difference it would make to the community.”
The Potential Role of Planners...

- Support community gardens
- Partnerships
- Working with local businesses
- Educate the public and each other
- Land use and zoning (lifting restrictions)
Results – Content Analysis of Food Policy Councils

Analysis of 113 Food Policy Councils
   28 state level
   8 regional level
   30 county level
   27 local level

In-depth Analysis of Eight Food Policy Councils
10 factors

1. Food access (related to transportation)
2. Food security (hunger, presence of “food deserts”)
3. Public health concerns (obesity and diet related diseases)
4. Economic development through local and regional food systems
5. Environmental concerns
6. Community health (access to nutritious food through social development)
7. Food safety
8. Education
9. Farm-to-School programs
10. Food justice (related to policy processes)
Issues addressed in 93 FPCs
Flagstaff Foodlink offers strong educational, organizational and fundraising tools to the exciting, emergent local food movement in the greater Flagstaff community. Our country is in the midst of a health and well-being revolution. Local, healthy, nutritious, and locally grown food, and the growth of local economic opportunities for our young people who want to grow food, are catalyzing a grassroots movement.

Some of the key issues and opportunities for CFAC are:

- Committee (F) Farm Project: Help Flagstaff Public School kids get to know where their food comes from.
- Get more people involved in growing food in their own backyards. In an educational setting, John is teaching gardening and beautification.
- We have a lovely new website.

**Farmland Conservation**

Farm and ranchlands are the foundation of our food system. Yet, the most productive soils are often the most susceptible to development pressures. In the past 25 years, Missoula County has lost 3 football fields of working farmland every day. CFAC members are working at multiple levels to ensure future development patterns do not continue the these trends. Read more about these efforts [here](#).

Be sure to [sign our petition](#) to Missoula's County Commissioners and City Council to conserve the best farm and ranchlands for current and future generation. Only 8% of Missoula County has agricultural soil.
Critique of Research Methods

Semi-structured Interviews
  Key Informant - “elite” informant
  Participant Selection - selection bias

Content Analysis
  Not a way to ensure the information was comprehensive or current
Summary

Research Questions

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Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Community

Public Involvement

City Council

Planners

Other Divisions
Studies show that community food systems supported by a government sanctioned policy have a greater likelihood of enduring.