The Planner, Food Systems and Food Policy: An Ontario Perspective

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Imagine .... Travelling Through Time

...and in this battle we have had some successes...
Planning and Agriculture

- Natural Areas protection
- Rules - On Farm Diversification
- Farmers markets, roadside stands etc.
- Livestock facilities (MDS)
- Farmland Preservation
- Other - urban agriculture - transportation planning - etc.

Also broader connections with the Rural Community
... some successes, but...

... the future, may be altogether different...
Seven Critical Factors: Why Planners Must Actively Engage in this Issue
Critical factor 1: Climate Change (and Water)
Critical Factor 2:
Backlash, Political Indifference and the Public Interest
Critical Factor 3: Population Growth

 Ontario’s population is projected to grow by nearly 4.8 million (36.6 %) over the next 27 years (2009 to 2036)*

Every year the population of the planet increases by more than 70 million people

* Ontario Ministry of Finance
Critical Factor 4: The Loss of Productive Farmland to Urban and Rural Development

According to the Ontario Farmland Trust
The GTA lost 230,000 acres of farmland between 1976 and 2006

Every year the planet loses an area the size of Scotland to erosion and urban sprawl
Critical Factor 5: Healthy communities require a healthy food system

- Personal and Public Health
- OPPI’s Healthy Communities Initiative

Was this eye of newt locally sourced?
Critical Factor 6: Concentration of Production

• Approximately 2% of Ontario’s population is classified as farm

• Approximately 17% of this 2% (i.e. the large farms grossing more than $250,000) produces 75% of farm sales
Critical Factor 7: Peak Oil

Figure II-1. Net Difference Between Annual World Oil Reserves Additions and Annual Consumption

(Hirsch, 2005)
Critical Factor 7: Peak Oil

- Agricultural production is largely dependent on cheap, available fossil fuels

How do high fossil fuel prices or limited supply impact agricultural production?
Each of the preceding factors points to the potential for fundamental and perhaps radical shifts in our food production system...

The future may be nothing like the past...

Rural and Urban Planners are positioned to work with the broader community to develop and implement appropriate responses
Agriculture, Food and the Focus of Planning
The OPPI Survey: How 900 Ontario planners (56% male/ 44% female) see themselves in this important field.
Years in Profession (% of total)

- Less than 1
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-25
- More than 25
Respondents: Type of Organization

- Private Consulting
- Municipality
- Province
- Education (student)
- Other
Organization Primarily Involved in Planning....

- urban
- suburban
- rural
- Not Applicable
What Level of Involvement Should the Profession of Planning have in Community and Regional Food System Issues?
Dedicated Staff working on Food Systems Issues

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
Agricultural Land Preservation: Desired and Current Levels of Involvement

**Desired** and **Current** Levels of Involvement:

- **significant / top priority**
- **moderate**
- **no or minimal**

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**Notes**:
- The graph illustrates the comparison between desired and current levels of involvement in agricultural land preservation.
- The x-axis represents the different levels of involvement: significant/top priority, moderate, and no or minimal.
- The y-axis indicates the percentage of entities or participants.
- The colors blue and red represent desired and current levels, respectively.
Planning For the Location of Livestock Facilities: Desired and Current Levels of Involvement

- **Desired**
  - Significant/top priority: 90
  - Moderate: 20
  - No or minimal: 10

- **Current**
  - Significant/top priority: 30
  - Moderate: 30
  - No or minimal: 40
Urban Agriculture Projects: Desired and Current Levels of Involvement

- Significant / Top Priority
- Moderate
- No or Minimal

Desired vs Current Levels:
- Significantly / Top Priority
- Moderate
- No or Minimal

Urban Agriculture
Community Gardens: Desired and Current Levels of Involvement

- **Desired**
  - Significant/top priority
  - Moderate
  - No or minimal involvement

- **Current**
  - Significant/top priority
  - Moderate
  - No or minimal involvement

Agriculture

Urban
Food Retail Destinations: Desired and Current Levels of Involvement
Preparing Plans Community and Regional Food Issues: Desired and Current Levels of Involvement
Farmers Markets: Desired and Current Levels of Involvement

- **Significant / Top Priority**: Desired (50) vs. Current (10)
- **Moderate**: Desired (30) vs. Current (20)
- **No or Minimal**: Desired (10) vs. Current (30)

**Rural**

**Food**
Facilitating Locally Owned Food Businesses: Desired and Current Levels of Involvement
Agriculture, Food and the Focus of Planning

Agriculture

Rural

Urban

Food
Imagine ....
Thanks…