



Institute for **Community** Engaged **Scholarship** (ICES)

The **Research Shop**



**Integrating a Sustainable Food Systems  
Framework into Guelph's Official Plan**

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## Introduction

A review of academic literature and contemporary practice appears to suggest that the implementation of sustainable local food systems and urban agriculture can help create and foster healthy and complete communities (De la Salle, 2010; Feenstra, 1997; Hinrichs, 2003). Evidence suggests that thoughtful integration of spaces for production, processing, distribution and consumption of food into the urban fabric in a socially just and environmentally considerate fashion will ensure that urban and rural communities alike have an opportunity to create systems that enable a thriving local food economy and inclusive local food culture (OPPI, 2011). Therefore, recognizing the multitude of economic, environmental, social and spiritual dimensions of food, municipal planning tools should be used to promote and enable sustainable development that will improve the convenience of healthy food choices, increase food accessibility and create a resilient local economy.

There are many strategies that can be employed by municipalities to create more enabling conditions for local food systems. Planners can assist in supporting to help reduce a city's ecological footprint while ensuring sustainable and sound development in the future by capitalizing on under-used areas, creating multifunctional foodscapes in each community, and fostering partnerships in urban agriculture. Meanwhile, full and complete accounting of the cost/benefit equation when it comes to our food system's local and global ecological impacts (relating to the consumption of water, energy, landfill, soil, air and other elements) will ensure transparency, if not fair and just development outcomes, for present and future generations.

While roads, sewers, subdivisions and other services have been the traditional domain of municipalities, food systems represent both a considerable challenge and an exciting new opportunity for local government to engage community stakeholders in a collaborative way. Though challenging in process, the impacts that this multi-stakeholder engagement can have on the cost-benefits for traditional municipal services (water, power, transport, urban design) can be considerable. It is therefore pertinent to address the impacts and outcomes of food system design and ensure that a process is in place to collectively steer the system in a direction that ensures healthy, safe and vibrant community futures.

## Methods/Process

At the time that this research got underway, The City of Guelph had already begun to explore the implications of their policy framework on the food system. Staff had been directed to begin exploring new language for, in particular, urban agriculture. Therefore, by the time that the City was approached by the Guelph Wellington Food Round Table in early 2011 about making the process more participatory there was relatively little leeway to make comprehensive changes to either the planning process or scope of change. None-the-less a quasi-participatory



engagement process began in early 2011 between Research Shop graduate students, the City of Guelph and the Guelph Wellington Food Round Table, a volunteer-based citizen food systems working group.

One of the main goals of this endeavour was to make the food system planning process more collaborative and participatory. While far from meeting many criteria of participatory action research, progress was made in opening the planning process to community input. In this regard, a considerable amount of trust was built up between staff, community and student researchers, in such a way as to expect future community engagement on this subject to be increasingly productive and increasingly participatory.

In addition to engaging City staff, the authors conducted a literature review pertaining to sustainable and local food systems from a mixture of Canadian and American exemplars at varying scales in order to gain a broader understanding of best practices in the policy realm. This review allowed us to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how to foster robust agricultural systems in urban areas by investigating land use policies, community development mechanisms, food security initiatives and public health directives among others. With these resources, a detailed set of policy updates were compiled and layered over the existing Official Plan framework (see Appendix I). This draft was then workshopped at a special session of the Guelph Wellington Food Round Table (GWFRT) on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011, drawing feedback from participants that were broken up into workgroups to tackle separate sections of the amendments over the course of an evening. Each breakout group was moderated by a relative expert in the field and suggestions were recorded and presented back to the entire group at the end of small group sessions. The authors were then able to collect the breakout group recommendations and gain overall impressions on the endeavour before working towards a final draft to present to City Staff. The participants in the working group represented a broad cross section of members from the GWFRT working groups on food policy, urban agriculture, food access and social welfare. Also in attendance were some academics and the Guelph policy planner who was our main contact throughout this endeavour. While the scope and depth of the session was limited by time and participant availability, the exercise proved to be both immediately beneficial to all involved as well as fundamental in constituting a foundation for future cooperation and research.

Prior to submitting a final report to the City of Guelph on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011, the report was endorsed by the GWFRT's Coordinating Committee (See Appendix III). August 31<sup>st</sup> was the last possible date that City Staff would consider submissions in regards to their Official Plan update due to the time required to digest those submissions, work them into recommendations, and put them forward at the various committee and council level readings. This endorsement was important as it demonstrated that not only did the report carry academic weight, but also the weight of the community as it was being put before staff. However, not until the new Official Plan is approved in early 2012 will researchers and community partners know exactly how much they were able to influence the language in the plan.



## Analysis

Through our review and analysis of Guelph's Official Plan a number of key areas for amendment were identified. Our recommendations can be divided into four main categories. These include,

- Full cost accounting
- Strategies to promote sustainable food production within Guelph
- Food Access
- Urban-rural linkages

Recognizing that a strategic goal of the current City of Guelph Official Plan is to “achieve sustainability by minimizing the City’s ecological footprint” (City of Guelph, 2010, p.8), we recommend that the City develop and adopt policies which account for the economic and environmental costs of the City’s food footprint. In order to achieve this, we recommend that the City start by devising strategies to measure how much energy Guelph is using to feed itself. In addition, the City should develop ecological footprint targets for food sourcing and move towards local sourcing of sustainably produced foods. As a component of this, we recommend that the City consider introducing an agricultural land compensation plan to account for agricultural land lost to development.

A second main category of recommendations we made is related to the promotion of sustainable food production within Guelph. We recommend that the City allow for and encourage urban agriculture, community gardens, green roofs, and edible landscapes in city spaces such as green spaces, neighbourhood, community and regional parks, electric transmission lines and other underutilized public lands or buildings. In order to support successful urban gardening, we further recommend that the City introduce incentives or supportive policies to enable soil testing especially in public spaces to ensure that food is not grown on contaminated lands. In addition, we suggest that the City consider schemes to promote the reuse of the City’s organic waste as fertilizer for urban agriculture.

In order to ensure that City’s urban agriculture initiatives are as sustainable as possible, we recommend that the City promote sustainable agriculture practices such as encouraging grey water separation and reuse systems, and the use of chemical free methods. In addition, we recommend that the City encourage urban agriculture operations to adopt minimum water consumption techniques such as the growth of drought tolerant species, and perennials or the introduction of mulch. As an aspect of promoting sustainable food production in Guelph, we also recommend that the City review and revise bylaws related to household yards to ensure that vegetable gardening and edible landscaping are permitted on all residential lands including front yards. We also propose that the City explore ways to allow for the sale of produce grown on site.

Ensuring sufficient access to fresh nutritious food for all Guelph residents was a further key theme of our recommendations. Our recommendations relate to both physical and economic access to food. To start, we recommend that the City attempt to reduce food deserts within Guelph by encouraging and enabling small or medium scale food sources to locate in under



served neighbourhoods. As well, we suggest the promotion of the location of food hubs along major transportation routes to ensure that, at the least, healthy foods can be easily accessed using public transportation. In relation to economic access to food, we encourage the City to recognise the link between housing prices and food insecurity and to continue to support affordable housing. In addition, we encourage the city to locate affordable housing units in mixed use and mixed income areas to reduce isolation of individuals living in affordable housing units and to ensure that social housing areas have equal access to retail opportunities. In this same theme, we recommend that the City consider innovative means of creating multifunctional community food hubs. These hubs could provide space for neighbourhood level production, processing distribution storage, celebration and education around fresh, healthy food.

A further key theme which recurred among our recommendations was the promotion of cohesive urban and rural linkages. Specifically we recommended that the city work to create linkages between the City and Wellington County to prepare a coordinated planning approach to deal with food systems planning. This planning approach should consider aspects of food distribution, processing, storage, nutrient management, provision of services for agriculture, and agri-tourism issues.

## **Conclusion**

This research comes at an interesting time for food systems planning in Ontario, arriving concurrent with the OPPI's 'Call to Action' in June of 2011. The OPPI's call specifically states that "Planners have an integral role to play in reaching out to increase communication and integration among [these] diverse interests, and in understanding and acting upon the fundamental linkages in food systems" (OPPI, 2011). This endeavour to bring a food systems lens to Guelph's Official Plan Update is a good example of planners being involved in creating linkages and involving community groups and researchers in the development of policy, but herein we conclude this was to a limited extent this time around. However, in defence of planners, they are restrained in what they can bring forth in so far as they can only roll out as much new policy as elected councillors are willing to agree on, and engaging in a process of education, awareness, and consensus building takes a great deal of time and energy.

Also noteworthy is that this willingness to engage on the part of the municipality is happening at a time when the University of Guelph and other academic institutions are increasingly interested in embedding researchers in community endeavours as is evidenced by the development of the Research Shop and Institute of Community Engaged Learning here at the University of Guelph. One might conclude, therefore, that the future looks very bright for this type of multi-stakeholder participatory research here in Guelph as all parties apparently recognize the value of participatory approaches to food policy development.

Finally, it is important to consider outputs, outcomes, and impacts in remarking on the successes and failures of this endeavour. Measuring the magnitude of these metrics was



beyond the scope of this research, but numerous indicators are pointing to the work having contributed to an increasingly rigorous dialogue around sustainable local food systems among policy makers at the City of Guelph. Furthermore, the success of this endeavour with the City is liable to translate into additional work with policy makers at The City and other levels of government over time. Together with the GWFRT's Policy working group, concurrently engaged as they are at local, regional and provincial levels on food policy issues, we clearly see a broadening in the capacity and appetite for engagement around this issue amongst multiple stakeholders.

In summary the following are among the most noteworthy translations of this endeavour:

Outputs – detailed Official Plan language, intended to impart enabling conditions for sustainable local food systems, as contained in Appendix I; detailed recommendations for future research, as contained in Appendix II.

Outcomes – Strengthened working relationship between City planners, Civil Society and University of Guelph's Institute for Community Engaged Scholarship; documentation of process challenges and opportunities with respect to citizen engagement in Official Plan updates.

Impacts – increased pressure on City Planners to move ahead with embedding enabling conditions in Official Plans; changes made to Official Plan in current update still remain to be seen as the process was taken out of the hands of researchers and community groups after recommendations were made.

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## Appendix 1: Section by Section Detailed Recommendations

In this section we make detailed, admittedly too detailed in some cases, recommendations as to how we see the Plan needing to be updated when viewed through a food systems lens. For comprehension purposes our recommendations are highlighted in yellow and those developed by City staff are in pink. By no means intended to be complete or refined, these comments should serve to highlight some areas that need work moving forward in addition to demonstrating where some immediate opportunities exist to impact the Official Plan.

### 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.3: Interpretation

##### 12. Amendments to the Plan

When considering an application to amend the Official Plan, Council shall consider the following matters:

viii) the impact of the proposed use on sewage, water and solid waste management systems, the transportation system, **food systems**, community facilities and the Natural Heritage System; and

**x) the social, environmental and food system implications of the proposed development, for both present and future generations, in an increasingly complex world where food insecurity and climate variability are becoming persistent concerns for all**

### 2.0 Strategic Directions

#### 2.1: Vision

The vision for the City is derived from the Strategic Plan and seeks a healthy and liveable community. Vision: Integrated energy, transportation, **food systems** and land use planning will make a difference in the environmental sustainability, cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity and social well-being of Guelph and the world.

#### 2.2: Guiding Principles

##### **i) Secure, Sustainable and Inclusive Food System**

**“A sustainable food system is built on principles that further the ecological, social and economic values of a community and region. A sustainable food system is:**

- Secure and therefore reliable and resilient to change, and accessible to all members of society**
- Energy, water and waste efficient**



- An economic generator for farmers, whole communities and regions
- Environmentally beneficial or benign
- Balanced in food imports and capacities
- Climate adaptive, with agricultural practices and crop choices being regionally appropriate
- Highly productive in rural and urban areas
- Supported by multiple scales of food processing, storage, distribution and retail facilities
- Celebrated through community events, markets, restaurants and more
- Biodiverse in agro-ecosystems as well as in crop selection
- Educational to create awareness of food and agricultural issues
- Ethical, ensuring quality of life for livestock and providing a fair wage to producers and processors both locally and abroad (AU, p. 37)

### 2.3: Strategic Goals of the Plan

#### 5. Economy:

c) Acknowledge that community-based economies can and do provide opportunities for socio-economic inclusiveness around services such as food provision, childcare, care for the elderly and education. Fostering these grass-roots economies can ensure stable and resilient communities that contribute to meeting residents' basic needs and are less susceptible to global market fluctuations that can de-rail and displace capital intensive private sector employers.

#### 8. Community Infrastructure:

a) Plan to meet the needs of communities by ensuring that each neighbourhood has a hub to support a range of local programming including recreation, community gardening, education, celebration, food processing, storage and distribution space for locally produced, culturally appropriate foods.

#### 13. Sustainability:

c) Foster the partnerships, infrastructure and incentives required to ensure that local sources of food which are sustainably produced and nutritionally rich are accessible for all city residents.

#### 15. Housing:

b) Acknowledge that a lack of affordable housing can contribute to a host of other social problems, including food insecurity which can result in negative health and welfare for residents and additional social and economic costs to the public purse through loss of productivity, health care costs, policing, etc.



## **18. Urban-Rural Transition & Linkages**

Insofar as both the physical space where urban meets rural and the multitude of socio-technical, -cultural, -economic and -environmental interfaces of urban and rural are key to creating a more sustainable food system and resilient landscape form, a special committee will be struck to look at opportunities and challenges at the urban edge and in other linkages between Guelph and Wellington County.

### **3.0 Planning Complete and Healthy Communities**

#### **3.5 Settlement Area/Rural Boundary Separation**

##### **3.5.2 General Policies**

**4. v) Local Food Systems Planning including distribution, processing, storage, education, celebration, agri-tourism, nutrient management and provision of other agricultural inputs, services and amenities.**

**5. the City will actively engage surrounding municipalities to foster the protection of arable and agricultural lands in the region.**

##### **3.12 Greenfield Area**

2. The Greenfield Area will be planned and designed to:

v) create high quality public open spaces with site design and urban design standards that support opportunities for transit, walking cycling, **urban agriculture and community gardens.**

##### **3.17 Culture of Conservation**

1. The City will develop and implement policies and other strategies in support of the following conservation objectives.

**vi) to encourage consumption of local and sustainable food, reducing food miles, carbon footprints and water use in agricultural production.**

##### **3.18 Energy Sustainability**

2. The City will reduce energy consumption and promote renewable and alternate energy systems by developing policies and programs for:

**vi) developing and adopting policies and programs to account for the economic and environmental costs associated with the City's food and agricultural footprint (Note: Area in need of future research).**



### 3.20 Community Infrastructure

#### Community Infrastructure

1. The City will encourage an urban open space system that may include but is not limited to **community gardens, urban agriculture**, rooftop gardens, urban squares, communal courtyards and public parks.

### 4.0 Protecting what is Valuable

#### 4.1.8.2 Policies

1. Healthy native, non-invasive trees within the *Urban Forest* shall be encouraged to be retained and integrated into proposed *developments*. **Where possible multi-functional trees, shrubs and ground covers should be encouraged and integrated into the proposed development, including food bearing species where appropriate.**

#### 4.1.9 Vegetation Compensation Plan

##### 6. Agricultural Land Compensation

**The detailed requirements for an Agricultural Land Compensation Plan will be developed by the City. The requirements once developed will be applied to determine appropriate soil and land compensation for the loss of arable agricultural land through development and site alteration (Note: Further research required).**

#### 4.2.1.3 Environmental Impact Studies

1. The Environmental Impact Study shall as a minimum address the following:

**xii) conduct a cost benefit analysis of the loss of arable land in light of the benefit accrued to developers when rezoning and developing agricultural greenfield sites in order to share the resulting profits with the public good.**

#### 4.4 Water Resources

##### 4.4.1 Objectives

**e) To encourage the design of natural and edible landscapes that demand less water so as to promote water conservation.**

**f) To encourage design and implementation of on-site grey water separation and re-use systems for edible landscaping, community gardening and urban agriculture applications.**

##### 4.4.2 Water Resource Protection and Conservation policies



14. The entire City area is considered to be a recharge area for public and private potable water supply. In order to protect this valuable water resource, the City will introduce conditions of development approval that:

viii) Chemical free urban agricultural methods, including those that make use of organic composts, natural plant-based and biological controls, are encouraged given the close proximity to vulnerable populations. Mulch, nitrogen fixing cover crops, bio-accumulators and other beneficial companion plant species are among the techniques which could be adopted.

15. Urban agricultural practices should look towards adopting minimum water consumption approaches that rely on techniques that include but are not limited to drought tolerant species selection, mulch, perennials, multi-story poly-culture food forests, etc. Exploring all possible financial incentives to create the shift to water wise edible landscapes incentives should be explored by all levels of government including the City (Note: Further research required).

#### 4.5.2 Landfill Constraint Area

##### 4.5.2.1 Objectives

d) waste diversion through nutrient recycling and composting should continue to be an important objective, ultimately making reuse of this valuable organic material in urban gardens.

#### 4.5.3 Contaminated Properties

##### 4.5.3.1 Objectives

f) To create programs and incentives that enable soil testing to occur, especially in public spaces, to ensure that urban agriculture and food production are not being undertaken on contaminated sites. When there is proof of contamination, remediation should be a priority and again appropriate programs and incentives should be devised (Note Further research required).

#### 4.5.4 Noise and Vibrations

##### 4.5.4.2 Other Provisions

19. Given that mass trucking of imported foods is both noisy and polluting, urban agriculture, community gardens and edible landscapes are encouraged to meet the food demand of the City. Reducing food miles and having fewer trucks on the road means less noise, less pollution and less cost to the City (Note: further study required).

#### 4.6.5 End use Efficiency/Conservation



1. iv) new landscaping and maintenance practices will be strongly encouraged to minimize water consumption; **these practices should be designed in such a way so as to reduce water needs and foster healthy soils to better withstand drought conditions.**

v) alternative water supply and demand management systems such as , rain water harvesting and grey water reuse is encouraged in all new development or redevelopment; **in particular, community gardens, residential food production, edible landscaping for public green spaces and urban agriculture projects should make full use of such techniques.**

ix) **food systems should be optimized around the sourcing of local provisions due to the reduced energy required to deliver local goods to end user. Similarly, food production systems should account for water consumption and evolve towards minimum water consumption approaches in order to account for how the city uses water in the production and energy in the transportation of food.**

#### **4.6.5.3 Food System Ecological Footprint Analysis & Field to Table to Field Energy Accounting (Note: Further research required.)**

**How much energy is Guelph using to feed itself? What is the carbon footprint of our food system? How much water are we using to produce our food? What are the other human and environmental costs?**

**Are these levels sustainable? Can they be improved upon, what would it cost us to improve on these levels and how much would it save us in the long run? What would reducing our energy, water and chemical use mean for the environment, both locally and globally? Would localizing our food system create greater food security and how could that be measured?**

**A comprehensive mapping and auditing system would provide the City, producers, distributors, processors and consumers with a way to evaluate the existing ecological footprint of our food system across a range of indicators such that collectively over time we could move towards greater socio-ecological resiliency.**

**Upon the completion of the food mapping process the results will be used by the City to:**

**i) provide an approach to integrate community food modeling and land-use spatial analysis to undertake strategic development of infrastructure assets and long-range planning to meet food needs and greenhouse gas objectives while accommodating expected population growth;**

**ii) track and monitor food production and consumption and provide a clear link to land-use and transportation strategies;**

**iii) identify land-use, building development and transportation practices that have a direct impact on food demand and provide the opportunity to implement a process to lower energy demands;**



**iv) enable the City and local food production, distribution, processing and storage operators to collaborate on planning for food systems and encourage activities to address local food system challenges;**

**v) inform the Official Plan and other policies to identify additional land use policies needed to achieve the targeted reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, water and energy use efficiency and harmful chemical reduction targets.**

#### **4.6.6 Transportation-Urban Form/density**

12. Improve energy efficiencies and air quality by directing land use and development patterns that ensure compact urban form that provides for a mix of employment, commerce and housing that promotes walking, cycling and the use of transit. **Transit systems should aim to connect to food hubs and markets to maximize the efficiency of transportation routes and support local food systems. Transportation routes should be planned to enhance the access to healthy, local food choices and help reduce the City's ecological footprint and eliminate food deserts.**

#### **4.6.7 Corporate Leadership**

The City will aim to achieve energy efficiency and water conservation through implementing programs and policies which include but are not limited to:

2. vii establishing greenhouse gas emission targets for municipal assets **as well as establishing ecological footprint targets for food sourcing;**

ix) implementing green purchasing and sustainable green fleet procedures; **ie. implementing green purchasing including the sourcing of local, fair trade and sustainable food through Guelph Wellington Local Food; and**

x) strongly encouraging the use of low maintenance landscaping throughout the City **and exploring partnership development on residual urban lands that could be brought to higher uses in food production.**

#### **4.6.8 Climate Change**

The development and redevelopment of Guelph needs to be conducted as an integrated system where density is the key to the development of new transport and renewable energy systems and whose systems help to meet the City's targets for greenhouse gas reductions. Trails and bike paths throughout the City will spur walking and cycling while connecting green spaces, urban agriculture, recreation and other social gathering spaces. An integrated *Official Plan* will use a systems approach to create an over-arching vision and structure that shows low carbon energy opportunities, viable sustainable transportation routes and nodes, potential for expanding open space and employment areas and appropriate housing density **and by fostering agricultural systems that are grown in a way that reduces fossil fuel dependence, that encourage carbon sequestration and are suited to Guelph's climatic conditions to create**



**more resilient food systems.** This integrated approach is essential to achieving many of the long-term goals of the *Official Plan* including taking measures to address climate change.

**4.6.8.1 Objectives**

**d) to encourage the adoption of better adapted agricultural systems such as perennial over annual cultivation.**

**e) to encourage the localization of supply chains in order to reduce transportation requirements.**

**f) to encourage seed saving in order to ensure planting seeds that are better adapted to regional stresses versus seeds from non-local sources.**

**4.6.8.4 Climate Change Mitigation**

3. The City will work towards reducing heat island effects through encouraging the use of reflective or green roofs, natural landscaping and increasing the tree canopy. **The City could also encourage and provide incentives for adopting an agro-ecological approach to food production by incorporating more trees into urban agricultural systems. These systems are more self-sufficient in nutrients when properly designed and are better at retaining water, are more resilient to climatic variability as well as regulating temperature and providing habitat/biodiversity.**

5. The City will incorporate the social **and environmental** cost of carbon emissions into its procurement, procedure, policies, capital planning and decision-making.

**4.7 Cultural Heritage Resources**

*Cultural heritage resources* are the roots of the community. They may include tangible features, structures, sites or landscapes that either individually or as a part of a whole are of historical, architectural, archaeological or scenic value. Cultural heritage resources may also represent intangible heritage such as customs, ways of life, values and activities. The resources may represent local, regional, provincial or national heritage interests and values. They include *built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological resources* **and agricultural heritage.**

The *cultural heritage resources* paint the history of the City and provide identity and character while instilling pride and contributing to economic prosperity.

**4.7.2 General Policies**

**13. It is acknowledged that agriculture has played an important role in the history of the City and as such, its lineage should be honoured to include the perspective of agricultural producers in Guelph. Agricultural heritage reflects on the strong historical linkages to Guelph's rural lifestyles and acknowledges that while agriculture is no longer the primary use of lands within the city as well as moving toward the future, both within the built up city and**





surrounding the area, agriculture still forms a vital part of the economy and culture of the City.

## 5.0 Municipal Services

### 5.7 Solid Waste Management

#### Objectives

- a) As the City's organic waste recycling system comes online, uptake of the compost outputs should be encouraged for use in urban farms, community gardens, edible landscapes, and residential gardens. Free or discounted compost should be made available to low income and community non-profit projects.
- b) Insofar as local food is produced in closer proximity to consumers and therefore requires less packaging to ensure freshness, whereas food from further afar requires more packaging and thus represents a cost to the municipal landfills and recycling facilities, the City will encourage local food consumption in order to reduce solid waste management costs.

### 5.8 Stormwater Management

#### 5.8.2 Policies

##### 9.The City

strongly encourages the use of low impact development measures such as bio-filters, grasses swales, rain gardens, etc., in the design of new development, site alteration.

Insofar as these stormwater management and other residual spaces can perform valuable ecological services they can also perform food system functions by being planted out with edible landscapes.

#### 5.11 Electric transmission lines and pipelines

##### 5.11.2 General Policies

4. Land within transmission corridors will be encouraged to be made available for urban agriculture so long as they have been deemed safe and free of residual contaminants. As with all residual and brownfield sites, comprehensive soil testing should be a priority.

### 5.12 Movement of People and Goods: An Integrated Transportation Network

#### 5.12.5 Active Transportation – Pedestrian Movement and Bicycles



**3. Due to reduced carbon emissions of bicycle transit, the City encourages the use of bicycles for transporting goods and services within the city including food wherever feasible.**

#### **5.12.6 Public Transit**

2. vi) locate higher density housing, commercial, employment centres and **healthy local food services along** major transit routes;

**5. Given the importance of public transit to low income community members not only for employment but also for access to services, including food services, all efforts should be made to create enabling price structures and routing to ensure low income communities have sufficient access to transit (Note: programming element must be considered in relation to infrastructure design and goes beyond, but not totally exclusive of, the official plan).**

#### **5.12.13 trucking and goods movement:**

4. The City will restrict the location of land uses, activities, **food system practices** and home occupations that increases truck traffic. In other words, food system design should minimize the transportation of provisions by building capacity into multi-functional mixed-use neighbourhoods where people live, work and play.

#### **5.12.18**

**3. The City will coordinate with surrounding municipalities, the province and beyond to ensure that food is brought into the City in a sustainable manner and will encourage coordinated planning around the production, transportation and processing of food.**

### **6.0 Community Infrastructure**

#### **6.1 Community Facilities**

##### **6.1.2 General Policies**

1. The City will encourage the adequate provision of community facilities in conjunction with new residential growth. For the purposes of this Plan, community facilities include, but are not limited to such things as municipal recreational facilities, institutional health care facilities, library and museum services, religious, educational facilities, **community food hubs and related infrastructure including urban agriculture, community gardens, and public spaces with edible landscapes.**

#### **6.3 Affordable Housing**

##### **6.3.1 Affordable Housing Objectives**

c) To encourage and support education and awareness programs with private, public and local community stakeholders to highlight the economic and social advantage



s of *affordable housing* including the connection between affordable housing and food security.

f) To promote innovative housing types and forms to ensure affordable, sustainable housing for all socio-economic groups throughout the city which enable community energy planning, promote water conservation, urban greening and foster community food systems (and thus greater food security).

j) To encourage affordable housing to be located in mixed income and mixed use neighbourhoods to enable access to services, and in particular food resources.

#### Policies

11. The City may establish alternative development standards for *affordable housing* development proposals as conditions of approval, including the setting of maximum unit sizes, reduced parking requirements, etc. so long as these standards do not deprive low income residents of community food system infrastructure such as potential space for community gardens, rooftop gardens, balconies, window boxes and yards.

12. *Affordable, social and special needs* housing are encouraged to locate in mixed income and mixed use areas served by transit, and other services such as, shopping, parks and other community facilities. Housing proposed in the Downtown, and the Mixed Use designations is strongly encouraged for *affordable housing* because of the availability of nearby services.

### 6.4 Barrier Free Environment

#### 6.4.1 Objectives

b) To encourage the provision of healthy food sources, cultural, recreational and educational services and facilities in order to improve accessibility by all age groups, regardless of ability or socioeconomic status.

### 6.5 Recreation and Parks

An open space system of parks and trails provides a variety of recreational activity while having regard for the City's natural areas. It plays an important role in defining the character of the City.

#### 6.5.1 Objectives

o) To promote the growth of urban agriculture, community gardens, farmers markets, food education and celebration space within the city boundaries.

#### 6.5.5 Neighbourhood Parks

Neighbourhood parks will primarily cater to the needs and interests of the residents living within its general vicinity for unorganized, unstructured and spontaneous leisure activities. Neighbourhood parks contain a mixture of passive areas, low to intermediate



sports facilities, informal and formal play areas and may contain natural areas, **edible landscaping and community gardens.**

### 6.5.6 Community Parks

1. Community parks may be developed to accommodate the conservation of *cultural heritage resources* and/or preservation of *natural heritage resources* or to provide facilities for active recreational activities at an intermediate and/or major level such as sports fields, recreation and/or community centers. Community Parks may contain natural areas, beaches, trails, picnic areas public recreation facilities, passive areas, **community gardens, urban agriculture, and associated community food hub infrastructure.**

### 6.5.7 Regional Parks

Regional parks are designed primarily to provide facilities or features that attract visitors from the local community and from the broader region. Regional parks may include: civic centres, botanical gardens, wildlife sanctuaries, natural reserves, **community gardens, space for urban agriculture,** scenic portions of waterway systems, museums, major historic sites, golf courses, university facilities, major sports and community recreational facilities **such as community food hubs where appropriate.**

### 6.5.10

**5 v) in consultation with residents, a certain proportion of parkland should be designated for urban agriculture and community garden spaces.**

**vi) In consultation with nearby community groups and urban agriculture interest groups, the industrial sector should consider dedicating their residual lands to agricultural production in partnership with private, not-for-profit and community groups.**

### 6.5.11 Other Agencies

**2. vi) where feasible, the City will encourage community gardens and agriculture uses as accessory uses for community facilities such as places of worship, schools, health centres, cultural and recreational institutions.**

## 6.6 Urban Agriculture

1. The City encourages the use of underutilized sites, and long-term development parcels for *urban agriculture* where appropriate and feasible, without limiting the potential for future development. Inappropriate locations may include potentially contaminated properties.

2. Space for community gardens may be identified as part of the development approvals process.

3. The City encourages the provision of space for *urban agriculture* in addition to common amenity space requirements for new *development*, including roof-top gardens.



4. The City will encourage community gardens by facilitating the use of parks and underutilized public lands for community gardens subject to the “Principals and Guidelines for the location of Community Gardens” as may be prepared and amended. The City may support these community gardens by providing water, wood mulch, on-site compost or other forms of in-kind support.

5. The City may identify and remove or mitigate barriers to *urban agriculture*.

6. The City may partner with community stakeholders to develop mechanisms to promote urban agriculture.

7. In consultation with stakeholders, the City will consider developing policies that advance a healthy, sustainable, secure, resilient, accessible, economically vibrant, and equitable food system. These may include policies addressing local food procurement; facilitating additional farmers’ markets or farm stands throughout the city; planning for the availability of healthy foods within walking or biking distance of all residents; planning for food security to promote community resilience to changes to the world food system; and perusing opportunities for education and community building around producing local food.

## 7.0 Urban Design

### 7.1 Objectives

n) In order to encourage energy conservation in the food system, encourage accountability for water use and ensure that all residents of Guelph enjoy improved food security, the City will encourage and support the development of community food spaces in each neighbourhood, by helping to foster partnerships between the public, private, not-for-profit and community sectors.

### 7.3 Sustainable Urban Design

5. New developments should be required to build in community food spaces that allow for neighbourhood level production, processing, distribution, storage, celebration & education of culturally appropriate, fresh, healthy food. Where possible, these spaces should be linked to transit, incorporate a market space for local and regional vendors, and promote water and energy efficient chemical free growing techniques in the associated production spaces. These multi-functional ‘community food hubs’ are therefore as much education facilities as they are areas for recreation, production, consumption, distribution and celebration.

### 7.4 Public Realm

7. Acknowledging that while all such landscaped areas can contribute to aesthetic appeal, groundwater recharge, species habitat and biodiversity, they can also provide added multi-functionality to site users and nearby community partners by being designated urban agriculture pockets and where appropriate planted out with a mixture of food bearing perennials, native beneficial species and annual fruits and vegetables. Such measures may represent not only a cost saving to property owners from decreased landscaping charges, a



cost saving to the environment due to a measurable decrease in the amount of residual under-used lawns and berms to tend with noisy gas mowers and trimmers, but also represent a social, environmental and economic capital generation opportunity for an emerging class of urban micro-farmers. (Note: Future research required)

### 7.5 Landmarks Public Views & Vistas

3. Parks, schools, places of worship, **community food hubs** and other community facilities should be established in visually prominent, central and accessible locations to serve as neighbourhood focal points or gathering places. These focal features should have good access to all forms of transportation, be created to a high standard of design, and include uses serving the local community.

### 7.7 Built Form: Low Rise Residential Form

5. To create visual interest and diversity in the built environment, a wide variety of architectural designs are encouraged **and similarly horticultural diversity that adds variety, biodiversity and resiliency to neighbourhoods should be encouraged.**

### 7.9: Built Form: Buildings in Proximity to Residential and Institutional Uses

iv) a) providing perimeter landscape buffering incorporating a generously planted landscape strip, berming and/or fencing to delineate property boundaries and to screen the commercial or employment use from the adjacent use.

**b) See section 7.4, #7.**

### Sec 7.13: Transition of Land Use

**3. Integrated food and agricultural systems call for new approaches to planning and design of transition zones, which should be seen as opportunities to address mixed use and multi-functionality rather than segregation. Several different strategies can be used to create more value from transition zones depending on the uses contesting the space. It is thereby imperative for planners, landscape architects, architects, business owners, community groups and others to collaborate on design, implementations and management of such spaces. (Note: Subject well suited for additional research.)**

### 7.14 Parking

1. Where permitted adjacent to the public realm, surface parking areas should be designed in a manner that contributes to an attractive public realm by providing screening and landscaping. Generously sized landscape strips incorporating combinations of landscaping, berming, **edible landscaping** and decorative fencing or walls shall be provided adjacent the street edge to provide aesthetically pleasing views into the site while screening surface parking areas.

### 7.16 Signage



**5. The City will endeavour to create a special policy pertaining to signage for urban farms, community markets gardens and the like, which will create enabling conditions for producers looking to alert vehicular and pedestrian traffic to their establishments.**

### **7.19 Landscaping and Development**

1. Landscaping shall:

**v) be low maintenance, minimally water consumptive and of maximum functionality in terms of agro-ecology and/or biodiversity.**

2. The selection of plant material:

**vii) where feasible is encouraged to yield food, fuel or fiber for the resident.**

**6. The retention of vegetation in front yards along residential streets is encouraged; vegetable gardening and edible landscaping in front yards in also permitted and encouraged.**

### **7.22 Urban Squares**

**5. Neighbourhood farmer's markets shall be encouraged in all urban squares.**

### **7.24 Development Adjacent to River Corridors**

2. Riverfront lands that are available for public use shall be improved through opportunities such as the development review process. The improvement of riverfront lands that are available for public use, **community gardens**, pedestrian and cycling amenities is encouraged.

## **8.0 Land Use**

### **8.1.2 Permitted Uses in All Land Use Designations excluding Natural Heritage System**

1. The following uses may be permitted in all land use designations excluding Natural Heritage System subject to the applicable policies of this Plan:

i) existing uses;

ii) public and private infrastructure;

iii) community gardens and urban agriculture; and

iv) municipal parks and recreation facilities.

#### **8.1.3.3 Agriculture**

1. Community gardens and other compatible forms of *urban agriculture* may be permitted in all designations except Natural Areas and Significant Natural Areas unless otherwise limited by the provisions of this Plan and will be subject to City by-laws and guidelines.



2. New *livestock-based agricultural* operations or the expansion of existing *livestock-based agricultural* operations will not be permitted within any land use designation. (Note: Ensure clarification that appropriate scale livestock keeping is permitted in the case of residential or community urban agriculture.)

3. Notwithstanding the above policy, this Plan does not restrict livestock-based instruction, research and animal care on any lands used by the University of Guelph.

### 8.1.2.3

**4. The sale of produce grown on site should be permitted from all land use designations, including the sale of eggs on the property of origin as permitted by the Chicken By-law.**

### 8.3.2.10.2 Convenience Commercial

1. Convenience commercial uses may be permitted that provides goods and services primarily to residents in the surrounding neighbourhood. **It is encouraged that convenience commercial uses connect with local neighbourhood producers to provide greater access to fresh, local products. Where access to convenience commercial within walking distance is not available, the City shall work with residents to find a suitable location where retailing of healthy locally produced food can be sold.**

## 8.5 Mixed Use Areas, Corridors and Centres Designation

The Community Mixed Use Areas, Mixed Use Corridors and Neighbourhood Mixed Use Centres, identified on Schedule 2 are part of the City's commercial structure which also includes the Commercial Service and Commercial-Residential designations of this Plan.

The Community Mixed Use Areas, Mixed Use Corridors and Neighbourhood Mixed Use Centres will provide a range of uses in a compact urban form that is served by transit and linked to the surrounding community by trails and sidewalks. These areas are intended to develop over time as pedestrian-oriented urban villages with centralized public spaces and provide a range of uses including **urban agricultural**, retail and office uses, live/work opportunities, and medium to high density residential uses. These designations are an important opportunity for **adding** intensification **and multi-functionality** in the City.

### 8.5.1.1 Objectives

**j) To honour the City's agricultural heritage and integrate it with urban design innovation by supporting urban agriculture where appropriate in conjunction with multi-use site development so as to capitalize on residual arable land and promote robust and sustainable local food systems.**

## 8.12 Open Space and Parks Designation

Open space and parks provides health, environmental, aesthetic and economic benefits that are essential elements for a good quality of life. Lands designated Open Space and Parks are





public or private areas where the predominant use or function is recreational activities, parks, conservation management, **urban agriculture** and other open space uses.

### 8.12.1 Objectives

a) To develop a balanced distribution of open space, active and passive parkland, **community gardens** and recreation facilities that meet the needs of all residents and are conveniently located, accessible and safe.

b) To foster strategies to cooperate and partner with other public, quasi-public and private organizations in the provision of open space, **community gardens & urban agriculture**, trails and parks to maximize benefits to the community.

f) To work with the development community to encourage proponent built parks, urban squares, **farmer's markets and community gardens**.

**h) To encourage edible landscapes and community gardens where appropriate that include indigenous species that are compatible with the site conditions.**

### 8.12.3 Permitted Uses

1. vii) **urban agriculture and edible landscapes**

## 8.13 Major Utility Designation

### 8.13.3 Permitted Uses

vi) open space uses, **such as urban agriculture**

### 8.14.2.1 Guelph Innovation District Special Study Area

**4. In light of the need to provide additional green space, community gardens and urban agriculture opportunities for City residents, the Innovation District Secondary Plan should be reviewed to evaluate the parcel's tremendous potential to become an urban agricultural district where innovation around sustainable local food systems can be fostered.**

## 9.0 Implementation

### 9.1: Official Plan Update and Monitoring

2. To facilitate the updating of the Official Plan, the City may monitor the following matters:

xi) environmental impacts, including the achievement of energy reduction and generation targets **and environmental impacts of food production, distribution, storage and nutrient recycling.**



**xii) social and economic food system, including access to food of nutritional quality (food security), cultural appropriateness of food, quantity and dollar value of local food produced and publicly procured.**

xiii) other issues as required

## 9.2: Secondary Plans

**(Note: Secondary Plans are beyond the scope of this phase of the research and may require revisions when subject to analysis through a food systems lens).**

## 9.4: Community Improvement

### 9.4.2: General Policies

**6. Recognizing that Community Food Hubs are an ideal vehicle to boost neighbourhood value and create synergies through programming and partnerships around food education, production, processing, storage, distribution and celebration, Community Improvement Plans should be actively utilized to stimulate the development of Community Food Hubs.**

## 9.10: Pre-consultation and Complete Application Requirements

3. In addition to the requirements noted in the applicable sections of the Official Plan, the City may require additional information and material to be submitted as part of a complete application. The following broad categories describe additional information and material that may be required and the type of studies or documents that may be identified during the pre-consultation process as being required to be submitted as part of a complete development application:

ix) Sustainability:

The submission of reports, studies, and/or drawings that demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the City, how a particular development proposal and/or change in land use meets the energy, water, and sustainability policies of this Plan.

This may include, but shall not be limited to:

- Completion of the City's Sustainability Checklist
- District Heating Feasibility Study
- Renewable Energy Feasibility Study
- Water Conservation Efficiency Study
- Energy Conservation Efficiency Study
- **Food System Impact Study**

## 9.12: Bonus Provisions

2. Community benefits may include:



xiii) community centres, **community food hubs** and/or facilities and improvements to such centres and/or facilities; and

### 9.19 Sign By-Law

**2. The City will endeavour to create a special policy pertaining to signage for urban farms, community markets gardens and the like, which will create enabling conditions for producers looking to alert local and tourism vehicular and pedestrian traffic to their establishments.**

### 9.22 Poultry By-Law (1985) -11952

**Enshrining the right to raise poultry subject to sound management and respect for ones neighbours, as permitted under the poultry by-law, is an important cornerstone in sustainable urban food production, education and celebration. This City should look to expand this By-Law to include all forms of small livestock suitable to urban environments, including bees, fish, snails, worms, swine, and ruminants as well as other birds and fowl. Doing so would represent an economic opportunity for urban producers, additional mechanisms for nutrient recycling and input substitution, social benefits from additional food access and food system resiliency and environmental benefits from reducing food miles.**

**Furthermore, if enshrining the right to produce food on one's property, front yard, back yard, roof-top and indoors, subject to good management and respect for ones neighbours, is a foundation for resilient food systems, it is in the City's best interest to ensure that the rest of the 'food system house' is built through education, incentive and full-cost accounting programs, Secondary Plans and By-Laws designed to ensure that we collectively foster the human resources and infrastructure capital required for these systems to manifest. While regulation and monitoring will play an important role in ensuring that urban livestock do not detract from the quality of urban living, Municipal partnerships with research and education facilities and robust community-engagement will be crucial to ensure the successful reintegration of appropriate scale local food production within urban spaces.**

**(Note: Further research required on what constitutes appropriate livestock in the City and how livestock are to be housed and cared for in the small-scale urban/residential/community context. Ex: does it make sense for backyard chicken coops to be subject to the same design considerations as large scale chicken barns? In the backyard/small-flock/free run context, for example, it makes no sense for them to be housed on a concrete floor as this would restrict their access to healthy pasture and insects, and as well limit their ability to serve as a mechanism to enrich garden soil.)**

## 10.0 Glossary

### 10.2 Definitions



**Agricultural Urbanism:** An emerging planning, policy and design framework for integrating a wide range of sustainable food and agriculture system elements into a community at a site-, neighbourhood- or city-wide scale. In short it is a way of building a place around food. (Agricultural Urbanism, p. 240)

**Community Food Security:** “A situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice” CFSC, based on Hamm and Bellows, 2011. Community Food Security Coalition. [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)

**Complete and Healthy Community:** A City that meet people’s needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing, and community infrastructure **that fosters a sense of health, wellbeing and inclusiveness** including affordable housing, schools, **a range of green spaces to permit community gardening and recreation and enhance biodiversity** for their residents. Convenient access to public transportation and options for safe, non-motorized travel is also provided. **Food security for all residents is acknowledged as a central objective of a complete community.**

**Edible Landscaping:** Edible landscaping aims to maximize food production by integrating crop-yielding plants with common ornamental vegetation to create aesthetically pleasing landscaping while producing crops.

**Food System:** “The cycle of farming (aka food production), processing, transporting, distributing, celebrating and recovering food waste in the context of larger natural, social, political, and economic driving forces.” (Agricultural Urbanism, p. 36)

**Food Security:** “A condition in which all people at all times have access to safe, nutritionally adequate and personally acceptable foods in a manner which maintains human dignity.” Canadian Dietetic Association, 1991

**Food Hub:** A hub is an intermediary led by the vision of one or a small number of individuals which by pooling together producers or consumers adds value to the exchange of goods and promotes the development of a local supply chain. This added value may be gained through economies of scale, social value, educational work or services. In other words, the pure function of distribution is only one element of the hub and the distribution function may be contracted out to a third party. The hub may also provide a means for public sector services to reach disadvantaged communities, provide a space for innovation and act as a focal point for developing a political agenda around an alternative food system. (Horrell and Natelson, 2009)

Horrell, C. and Natelson, S. (2009). An investigation into the workings of small scale food hubs. Retrieved from: [http://www.sustainweb.org/pdf/mlfw\\_hubs\\_research\\_summary.pdf](http://www.sustainweb.org/pdf/mlfw_hubs_research_summary.pdf)



**Resilience: The ability of a system to undergo change in response to external forces while retaining its basic structure and function. (AU, p.243)**

**Sustainable Local Food: Food that is locally produced and processed in an agricultural system that aims to maintain and improve the health and well-being of the biophysical environment and biodiversity while lowering energy consumption, reducing food miles and providing healthy and affordable food.**

**Urban Agriculture: The growing of crops or raising of animals for food at a small scale that is compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood. It may also include small-scale sales of urban agricultural products subject to zoning and other applicable regulations.**



## **Appendix II: Summary of recommendations to City of Guelph staff highlighting need for future research**

Production barriers to the development of a robust urban agriculture in Guelph do exist for both crops and livestock. Likewise Guelph lacks a comprehensive plan to create a sustainable food system in the face of inevitable local and global system shocks. As such increasing the resilience of Guelph's food system, ensuring food security for all while preserving and enhancing the ecological integrity of our urban green spaces and foodscapes, should be a priority. Proposed staff amendments to section 6.6 and 8.1 are a step in the right direction but as this report shows, much more work is required to infuse sustainable food systems into the Official Plan as well as By-Laws, Secondary Plans, Operational Plans and City budgets.

As the OPPI Call to Action around Planning for Food Systems in Ontario very clearly illustrated, barriers exist broadly and deeply throughout the lay of the land not just in terms of urban food production spaces, but correspondingly in the legal and planning frameworks that guide development, accounting and access to other infrastructure and amenities. Furthermore, the tensions between local and global systems, built form and growing space, as well as social justice and economic development are complex and interdisciplinary thus requiring thoughtful consideration and inclusive engagement processes.

Ultimately we see a need for both a strong set of guiding principles in the form of a policy statement (such as the GWFRT's Food Charter), and a more robust Official Plan informed by the knowledge that sustainable food systems can manifest but only will if conditions permit. This is not to say that the Official Plan is the only tool to make use of in fostering sustainable systems – much of this work has to be brought about through socio-cultural change manifested through shifts in consciousness, education and individual action. However, the literature does suggest that physical landscape, urban form and municipal infrastructure do play an important role in shaping behaviour, social norms, economic activity and environmental outcomes. As such, if planners are driven by the objective of fostering 'Healthy and Sustainable Communities' we feel it to be imperative to begin retooling the Official Plan as soon as possible.

Moving forward we hope to help you make this happen, beginning with this set of recommendations which we hope you will seriously consider both in making final changes to the Fall 2011 Official Plan draft and in the future starting this fall by strategizing on next steps to a participatory planning process with the Research Shop and GWFRT. It is our feeling at the Research Shop, that ongoing involvement from our graduate students in conjunction with expertise and participation of the GWFRT will yield a most thoughtful and effective framework. In this regard we see this report as simply the beginning of a larger process in which we hope to be mutually engaged for some time.

Once City Staff has had a chance to digest this report and consider our suggestions for both immediate uptake and future research, we would like to recommend a meeting to discuss some



areas of the plan that are ripe for further research before finalizing our fall work plan. In this regard, please consider the following subject areas:

- Consideration and detailed analysis of what constitutes appropriate vegetation, edible landscaping, and multi-functional landscape architecture in different scales and spaces throughout the City.
- Consideration of what constitutes appropriate agricultural practice at different scales, both in terms of animal husbandry and cropping, in the context of urban agriculture and how it differs from its rural counterpart. How do we balance public health considerations with the need to create capacity, opportunity and rationality in urban agriculture?
- Consideration of water and energy use in urban agriculture and some of the cropping systems, architectural considerations and socio-cultural norms that affect such use.
- Exploration of incentive schemes to encourage developers to build food system infrastructure into new developments; elements right across the food system landscape from production to education to post-harvest handling, processing and distribution and nutrient recycling.
- Exploration of how transitional lands create opportunities and challenges for agriculture; development practices in terms of soil removal and lost agricultural land resource compensation to the public good.
- Design and implementation of a Food System Report Card or Accounting System that can track performance measures such as water, energy, carbon, environmental pollution, biodiversity, economic benefits, food security, health and social justice.
- Consideration of how housing and transportation policy can affect both food security and food culture; how do mixed-use and mixed-income areas create opportunities and challenges for food system sustainability? What is the relationship between home ownership, poverty, food insecurity and health?
- Transition zone and residual urban spaces policy in relation to urban agriculture: how can we get more value from these spaces and save money on landscape maintenance costs by creating an enabling program to match these spaces with entrepreneurs and community groups that want to farm in the City?
- The Urban Edge and Rural-Urban Linkage: how can we create vibrant, high value agriculture zones in areas accessible to urban residents at the peri-urban margin of the City while preventing urban sprawl? How can we work with rural municipalities and rural residents to create partnerships that benefit urban and rural communities alike?
- What role can developers and other large private sector land owners play in creating capacity and opportunity for urban agriculture?



- What role can the City play beyond a regulatory framework to support the growth and development of a sustainable food system? Is the Community Improvement Plan mechanism an effective tool for developing neighbourhood level infrastructure to support local food systems?
- What role can institutions like University of Guelph, schools, hospitals and other large organizations play in system change?
- Are youth, seniors, new immigrant and other communities being engaged and empowered to capitalize of opportunities in the food system?
- What are some of the mechanisms that are showing the most promise in contribution to sustainable, resilient local food systems in other municipalities and how can we bring these ideas to Guelph?





**Appendix III: GWFRT Letter of Endorsement**



Tim Donegani, Policy Planner

cc: Todd Dalter, Jim Riddell

City of Guelph

August 29, 2011

Dear City Staff –

We are encouraged at having been engaged over the last four months in these later stages of the development of the Official Plan. Research Shop interns have done their very best to provide us with opportunities to voice our opinions and contribute to the development of new policy around urban agriculture and sustainable food systems. We look forward to building on both the process and the outcomes from this endeavour and in the future hope that together we can continue towards infusing food system thinking in policy plans as we strive together to make Guelph a Healthy and Sustainable City in a vibrant, prosperous and resilient bioregion.

Please consider this letter representative of our endorsement of this set of recommendations and an expression of our interest in continuing to work together with the Research Shop on behalf of the public interest in respect to creating secure, just and sustainable food systems for the future.

Sincerely –

Tegan Renner, GWFRT Chair

On behalf of the GWFRT Coordinating Committee

[www.gwfirt.com](http://www.gwfirt.com), [info@gwfirt.com](mailto:info@gwfirt.com)