

The integration of the food system into the land-use planning framework in southern Ontario

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Abstract

Food security is integral to the health and well-being of communities. However, regional food systems, which (in part) facilitate food security are unevenly acknowledged in Ontario's land-use planning framework. The intersection of regional food systems, provincial land-use planning and policy development processes is well known. However, the primary focus of this relationship by decision-makers is generally the financial outcomes of the agricultural sector and the food system, and how to leverage the planning framework to maximize profits, for the benefit of economic development. As a result, public health considerations, environmental values and the right to nutritious and sustainable food may be less prioritized, rendering gaps in the way we manage this critical resource. This study seeks to understand how Ontario's current land-use planning framework can be adapted, to expand inclusion and consideration of the non-market values of regional food systems to achieve comprehensive regional food security in Ontario. Using a foodshed approach, I developed a rubric to evaluate land-use planning frameworks across Canada and two American jurisdictions to better understand the state of food systems in relation to planning. I conducted a Jurisdictional Scan to report my findings and conducted interviews with subject matter experts to understand the current interactions between the food system and planning in Ontario. The results of my research study indicate that while food systems are almost completely absent from Ontario's planning framework, there are many lessons learned and best practices that can be integrated in Ontario. Furthermore, there is an infrastructure in place that can be expanded through amendments to existing legislative, regulatory and policy infrastructure to include more comprehensively food systems in the planning system.

Foreword

This major paper is the final component of the Faculty of Environmental Studies' Master program at York University, specializing in Planning. My Plan of Study details learning objectives I set out to for the duration of the program which include: gaining knowledge of main streams of thoughts and practice in land-use planning in Canada; to learn the history of food security policy development in Canada to better understand gaps in food security and to gain in-depth knowledge of the political and policy forces that cause gaps in food security to understand the climate in which food policy is developed or, is dis-incentivized. The research I conducted on the intersection of food systems, land-use planning frameworks in Ontario and the policy development process enabled me to accomplish those learning objectives. In addition, the research I conducted was further nuanced due to the foundational knowledge I gained through course work, and the field experiences I undertook, which allowed me to see planning occur in real time.

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Contents

The integration of the food system into the land-use planning framework in southern Ontario ...	1
Abstract.....	2
Foreword.....	3
Acknowledgement.....	4
Section 1: Introduction	7
Definitions	10
Food System.....	10
Land-Use Planning	12
Policy Development	12
Section 2: Methodology and Data Collection.....	14
Theoretical Frameworks: Food Shed Analysis and Efficiency-Substitution-Redesign Framework	14
Instruments	16
Jurisdictional Scan.....	16
Semi-Structured Interviews.....	20
Interview Limitations.....	21
Additional Data Collection:.....	22
Section 3:.....	23
Legislative Climate and Policy Development	23
Part 1: Influence of federalism and the Constitution on legislation and policy development in Canada and Ontario	23
Federalism	23
Constitution.....	25
Policy Development	27
Legislation.....	32
Part 2: Roles and Responsibilities: Federal vs. Provincial Government	33
Land-use Planning	33
Land-use planning in southern Ontario	34
Food and Agricultural System	37
Section 4: Food Systems Planning.....	40
Background	40
Approach to Food Systems Planning.....	41
Food Systems Planning in Ontario and Canada	42
Section 5: Intersection between Planning and Food Systems	48

Interaction of provincial planning framework and food	48
Provincial Policy Statement, 2014	50
A Place to Grow: Growth Plan of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019	51
Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System, 2020.....	56
Decision-making Authority for Planning in Ontario	58
Section 6: Findings	61
Jurisdictional Scan.....	61
Interview Themes	65
Participants:	65
Independent Planning Commission.....	68
Thoughts on a Ministry of Food and the provincial management of the demand-side of the food system	69
Recommendations.....	69
Conclusion	73
Bibliography	74
Appendix A: Rubric	83
Appendix C: Interview Transcript	84
Interview 1: Senior Planner, Ontario Public Service.....	84
Interview 2: Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	86

Section 1: Introduction

Canada's second largest food retail store Sobeys carries a line of "ethically made"¹ reusable bags made of 20% recycled plastics² which are wrapped in uplifting and whimsical messages of different sizes and fonts.

"Sobeys, better food for all". "We make sustainable attainable". "Eat better. Feel better. Do better." "Good food is not a luxury it's a right".

Disregarding the irony of a retail food conglomerate pontificating sustainability, health and access to food, Sobeys's advertising is accurate. As a social determinant of health, wealth, and progress, food is not a luxury. Consumption of healthy³ food leads to healthier populations and a more productive society. As a United Nations State Party on the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, the Canadian government formally recognizes the human right to food. This is defined by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food as "the right to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensure a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear" (OHCHR, 2000). It thus follows that as a State Party, Canada is obligated to ensure food security at the national, regional, and local levels.

However, despite societal dependence on food for survival, considerations of food, food systems and food security occupy a strange realm. As a public good and a necessity (much like air and water), food is often dismissed as an issue of "private" interest due in part to current models of land-ownership, the relationship between private land ownership and farming, and intellectual property rights of farming and other food related inputs (MacRae & Winfield, 2016). Issues of food insecurity are as a result siloed, isolated as a socio-economic challenge, rather than an indication of a malfunctioning food system. Furthermore, the absence of extreme manifestations of hunger such as widespread famine means there is a misconception of how well the food system functions (Bhagwan, Saraf-Uiterlinden, & Zheng, 2019) and the state of food security in general in Canada.

¹ As described on a Sobeys reusable bag

² Ibid

³ Ibid

According to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, in 2016 the Canadian national agriculture and agri-food system (including but not limited to agriculture, food and beverage processing, food retail and food service) “generated \$111.9 billion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) [accounting] for 6.7% of Canada’s total GDP” (Government of Canada, 2017). In Ontario, the food system in its entirety contributes approximately “\$15.1 billion to Ontario’s GDP annually” (Kubursi, Cummings, MacRae, & Kanaroglou, 2015), in addition to generating many other economic benefits such as fulltime equivalent jobs and tax revenue (Kubursi, Cummings, MacRae, & Kanaroglou, 2015). As with the national food system, the regional food system in Ontario plays an important role in the economic well-being of the province. However, despite the wealth and opportunity generated through the food system, food insecurity and food system instability are a prevalent issue at household and regional levels. For example, approximately four million people are affected by household food insecurity in Canada annually (PROOF, 2017) and, in Ontario alone, our dependence on imported food is in the tune of almost \$20 billion annually (Kubursi, Cummings, MacRae, & Kanaroglou, 2015). This scenario begs the question: how can a country that profits from the growth, production, distribution and retail of food and agriculture, and depends on this sector as a significant part of the economy, have such a precarious food system that depends significantly on external forces to ensure viability, and lends itself to deficits in both regional and household food security? Moreover, what are institutions (specifically provincial government) doing to address this issue?

Food security is a complex and multifaceted subject that needs to be explored through a variety of levels such as household, community, regional and national. Defined as the “physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle” (UNFAO, 1996), issues of food security can only be adequately addressed through an interdisciplinary approach that builds on existing research and seeks to bridge gaps between different yet concurrent initiatives. Traditionally, considerations of food security occur in relation to households and the communities they encompass (for example, access to food by individuals and families). However, there are systemic barriers at a broader scale that contribute to food insecurity which require simultaneous examination. Relevant social, economic, environmental, planning, political, regulatory, institutional, and community perspectives need to be acknowledged to better understand the resilience of our entire food system and how that translates to food stability at the different levels described above. Furthermore, examining this issue through a systems approach ensures resiliency in the face of economic, political and climate disruption (MacRae, 2011).

Land-use planning plays a significant role in determining access to and availability of food (especially in relation to zoning and land use designations). If this gap between food systems and land-use planning is not adequately managed, we risk potentially destabilizing a vital resource. Furthermore, if we do not have an overarching policy and governance system that manages all facets of the regional food system, we cannot achieve regional food security and will perpetuate and perhaps exacerbate the issues we face today.

The objective of this study is to contribute knowledge to the pursuit of food security in Ontario. As this is a broad subject area, I would like to examine in particular the relationship between land-use planning, the regional food system, and the policy development process to understand how the current land-use planning framework in Ontario can be adapted to achieve comprehensive regional food security in Ontario. I will focus on the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region, as this area holds Canada's largest city, and its food system stresses can speak to the future pressures we will face, and how that will shape our food systems. I am approaching this research study through the perspective that access to food⁴ is a human right, as defined by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (OHCHR, 2000). Right to food requires (amongst other things) institutional action, and a supportive policy and regulatory environment. In Ontario, incorporating considerations of the regional food system into land use planning is in large part a responsibility of the province, as the primary legislative and regulatory authority on land-use planning and, as partially responsible (with the federal government) for the oversight of various aspects of the food system.

This study examines a gap not well addressed in Ontario, at the provincial government level. Different areas of the food system (and their associated land-uses) have a cross sector impact, including but not limited to community health, economic development, neighbourhood vitality and the environment (American Planning Association, 2007). However, food systems are not currently part of the provincial planning process in Ontario (except to some extent the agricultural sector and agricultural land). Historically in Canada, food policy was driven by agricultural production (MacRae R. , 2011). While there are myriad regulatory, legislative and policy instruments used to address issues related to parts of this system, there lacks a cohesive approach that requires all these moving parts to work in tandem. Food systems, and high-level consideration of food security are generally removed from most traditional urban and land-use planning practices (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). Consequently, I would like to understand the

⁴ As stated by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food "The right to adequate food shall therefore not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with a minimum package of calories, proteins and other specific nutrients. The right to adequate food will have to be realized progressively." (OHCHR, 2000).

viability of incorporating aspects of the food system into land-use planning at the provincial level, as “provinces control primary areas of public policy” (Makarenko, 2009). While it is important to acknowledge the role of the federal and municipal governments within these realms, land-use planning falls under the purview of the province and narrowing the focus of the food system to the regional level will help bound my research project.

Specifically, I would like to explore the question: if Ontario uses a foodshed approach to building regional food security, how would the appropriate parts of the land use planning system be changed? Is this a feasible approach to address gaps in achieving regional food security? What would need to change about the current system to make this a reality?

Food systems, land-use planning, and government policy are inextricably linked yet unnecessarily siloed. Despite their overlapping impact on human health and welfare, economic stability and development, the built and natural environments, societal progress and community resiliency, they are rarely considered and addressed in tandem. People need access healthy⁵ and appropriate⁶ food and meals to survive. The system that provides them with that healthy, accessible, appropriate food must operate without interruption, and there must be a mechanism in place that ensures it is equitably available to everyone, no matter how much money they make or where they live. Consequently, the underlying piece that connects these three seemingly disparate topics is food security.

Definitions

Food System

The food system, as defined by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, is “the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, transportation, distribution and disposal of food products” (Nguyen, 2018). Understanding the food system plays an integral role in achieving food security as, “the negative impacts of malfunctioning food systems” (Raja, Morgan, & Hall, 2017) include (among other issues) the persistence of food insecurity at all levels. Household food security targets the availability of nutritious food, affordable and culturally appropriate for individuals and

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Appropriate food can be defined in many ways, including but not limited to culturally appropriate, allergy and dietary specific, and even personal preferences.

their respective local communities. It is important to note that household food security is also closely intertwined with household income, which has implications beyond land use planning. These aspects will not be directly addressed in this study, as this research paper focuses on whether the planning and policy frameworks in Ontario can be adjusted to support regional food security.

Regional food security is defined as a diverse food system that is comprised of locally produced, imported and exported products and, is supported by a variety of legislative, regulatory, policy and program instruments applied to comprehensively govern all aspects of the food system at the provincial level. Regional food security also depends on collaborative relationships between the different actors targeting the various lenses of food security, including but not limited to partnerships with local government, civil service organizations and advocacy groups. Examples of areas that regional food security touches include reducing dependence on imported products by shoring up local and regional agricultural production, sustainable agricultural land use (in Ontario, this may necessitate examining the purpose of and opportunities presented by the White Belt⁷), reducing food deserts and food swamps, and the facilitation of public markets and market cities. Regional food security relies on mechanisms at the provincial level to reduce siloes between different facets of the food system.

Furthermore, as much of the Canadian local, regional and national food system is mired in the implicit and explicit rules of a global context, shifts in geopolitical issues and relationships such as climate change and trade agreements, global economic conditions (including the increasing wealth gap) and the rise of populism are a few examples of the types of factors that influence and impact the global food system (Kloppenburger, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). Global actions have local consequences, and as a result the issues raised above have a domino effect on regional food security at home in Ontario, as regional food systems are more vulnerable to disruption when there is less local control and management of the food system (ranging from inputs to waste processing). This in turn contributes to the difficulty in achieving overall food security.

Planners may not recognize the need to incorporate the food system into the planning framework (American Planning Association, 2007). According to the APA, three reasons why food systems are not addressed within traditional planning is the seemingly tenuous link of the

⁷ The White Belt refers to a parcel of land situated between the outer limit of settlement area boundaries of the Inner Ring of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and the inner boundary of the Greenbelt. Retrieved from <https://www.neptis.org/publications/story-so-far/chapters/note-about-whitebelt>

food system to the built environment, the idea that food is not considered a public good (unlike air and water), and that the food system is not “broken” (American Planning Association, 2007). Furthermore, a reliance on industrial farming, the commodification of inputs, and the focus on the agri-food system and its respective interests means that food is associated with the free market and food security is primarily viewed as a social issue related to poverty. It is therefore often examined at the household level, from an income-inequality and access perspective. This highlights the prevalent gaps that still need to be addressed in the drive for overall food security in Canada and demonstrates partially why developing a comprehensive approach to address regional food security is often fragmented, ad hoc and depends primarily on local jurisdictions to carry out any kind of action.

Land-Use Planning

Planning is the formulation and implementation of spatial public policies (Yiftachel, 1998). As a discipline, traditional land-use planning concerns itself primarily with the management of services, facilities and public goods within the built environment (American Planning Association, 2007), which can occur in urban, rural and/or peri-urban areas. Planning is often perceived (by the public and/or planners themselves) to be a rational and professional activity that results in the creation of some type of a public good (Yiftachel, 1998). In Ontario, the province and municipalities both manage land-use planning; however, the province is responsible for creating a land-use planning system and provides legal and policy direction to municipalities to carry out planning processes. The *Planning Act, 1990* is the primary legislation that sets out rules for land use planning in Ontario and determines how land use is managed and by whom. The Provincial Policy Statement⁸ (PPS) “provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land-use planning and development...and sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land in Ontario” (Government of Ontario, 2014).

Policy Development

Policy development is defined as a “statement of direction intended to guide present and future actions and decisions, to address an identified problem and/or objective for public good”

⁸ In 2019, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 underwent a review and public consultations as part of the *More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan*. As the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 did not take effect until May 1, 2020, the version referred to in this research paper is the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014. However, it is interesting to note that on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website, the webpage dedicated to the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 has already been archived, and is considered out of date.

(Ontario Public Service, 2014). Policy development (as part of the regulatory system) can serve as institutional tool for government intervention to respond to gaps in food security. These solutions can provide an overarching framework and direction for federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions to create more nuanced strategies to address food insecurity. Furthermore, government has the authority to formalize the solutions put forward by community groups, NGOs and planners to address food insecurity.

The Canadian federal government and provinces have varying regulations, standards, policies and protections for different parts of the food system (including but not limited to agricultural lands, food and phytosanitary safety, food retail and competition) (MacRae & Winfield, 2016), which will be further explored in Section 2 of this research study. However, until recently Canada did not have a comprehensive policy that ensures long-term, equitable access to and availability of food (MacRae, 2011). In June 2019, the federal government brought forward the Food Policy for Canada, an initiative that hopes to: reduce household food insecurity, ensure a more resilient and sustainable food system, reduce food waste and support the economy (Government of Canada, 2017). This policy and its related programs (still in their infancy) is the federal government's answer to an absent national food policy in Canada, something that has been attempted by previous administrations (MacRae R. , 2011). However, the policy in this iteration is limited in scope and seems to focus on household and individual food security. It does not seem to speak to regional food security, nor do partnerships exist currently with provinces to tackle this issue at a regional scale.

Section 2: Methodology and Data Collection

The intent of this research project is to answer the following question: “If Ontario uses a foodshed approach to building regional food security, how would the appropriate parts of the land use planning system be changed? Is this a feasible approach to address gaps in achieving regional food security? What would need to change about the current system to make this a reality?”. The purpose of the foodshed approach to planning (and regional food security) is to connect communities to each other and to the land within the applicable local and regional food system, rather than as a by-product or afterthought (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). By placing our institutions into the system that sustains us, we can gain a measure of understanding and control over our own health and wellness, unlike the effect of the global food system which leaves much of that to chance (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). It is therefore imperative to understand how we can realign the current planning framework in Ontario, such that economic development (in a variety of forms) is not considered the sole driver of food security, community well-being and sustainability. The goal is to obtain a broad range of information to help identify areas of Ontario’s planning framework, that can be amended and be used to secure opportunities to shift towards focusing on people and land as the centre of land-use planning and food security.

Theoretical Frameworks: Food Shed Analysis and Efficiency-Substitution-Redesign Framework

Foodshed analysis is a theoretical lens which examines, disassembles and transforms food systems (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996), in the way one would a watershed (per Arthur Getz’s analogy) and provides a unique opportunity to make more accessible a multifaceted, complex and ingrained system. “Foodshed analysis involve(s) investigation of the existing food system in order to inform strategic decisions regarding opportunities for self-protection and secession” (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996) and allows a flexibility to set your own parameters and boundaries based on what you’re looking for as a researcher. This “variable type of theoretical framework” (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996) enables me to apply an analytical lens to Ontario’s specific needs. The foodshed lens also enables connections to the various components of this research study, namely the connection between land-use planning, food systems, government policy and food

security as the concept of “food shed ... provides a bridge from thinking to doing, from theory to action” (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996).

Viewing food systems through foodshed analysis provides a visual representation of “where our food is coming from and how it is getting to us” (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). Furthermore, it places people within the food system — it connects the different actors who work in and around the food system with the consumers who depend on it (which also includes the actors), thereby closing an otherwise loose feedback loop. Kloppenburg et al argue that one of the biggest issues in achieving a healthy food system (and by extension regional food security) is the spatial, economic and social distance between people, what they eat, where it comes from and where it is made (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). Reconfiguring the system such that people not only think about what they are getting on their plates but making resources more accessible so they can better understand the complicated ins and outs of the global food system goes a long way in figuring out how to incrementally take back and localize aspects of the global food system (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). Localizing the food system supports regional food security as it reduces environmental degradation, encourages better farm practices and land-use and management practices, increases the nutritional value of food and creates stronger links between community and the economy amongst other things (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996) and builds resilience in the face of global food systems disruptions.

The MacRae and Hill Efficiency-Substitution-Redesign (ESR) framework can be used to analyze the transition from the existing land-use planning policy framework to an adjusted framework that may support the integration of parts of the food system into the land-use planning framework in Ontario. The ESR framework can be used to “analyze and organize transition from conventional to sustainable” practices (Hill & MacRae, 1996). It can also be used to examine the transition of the traditional institutions of land-use planning in Ontario to those that integrates a variety of elements of the food system within it.

The global food system is well intertwined with different parts of our lives. It is difficult to move to support local production (in whatever capacity possible) as globalization is so deeply ingrained in the way we live in North America. Therefore, it is necessary to take an incremental approach. Combining the ESR framework and foodshed analysis can help us better understand the way we can affect incremental change. The ESR framework shares several elements with Kloppenburg et al’s foodshed analysis. Specifically, the notion of “Succession” which details the “conscious and incremental transfer of resources and human commitments from old food-

associated relationships and forms to new ones...[through the] strategy of slowly moving over from the food system to the foodshed” (Kloppenburger, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996) mirrors the MacRae-Hill “Efficiency stage” (Hill & MacRae, 1996), wherein minor changes are made within the conventional institutional arena that are low in cost, simple and can repurpose existing policies and procedures to effect a different outcome (Hill & MacRae, 1996).

Instruments

To better understand the opportunities available to the Ontario government to adjust the existing planning system, I used qualitative data collection and analysis, (consisting of semi-structured interviews) and secondary data collection (culminating in a jurisdictional scan). The data supporting the jurisdictional scan was obtained primarily from online sources including but not limited to government offices, civil society organizations, academia and their research databases, journal articles, books and media clips. As the foodshed approach to planning and food security is a novel concept in Ontario, I chose to examine jurisdictions inside and outside of Canada, with a similar governance system that may have some existing knowledge of how to incorporate the foodshed perspective into Ontario’s planning framework. This is the ideal time to take advantage of lessons learned elsewhere, as over the last four years, both the Canadian federal government and a number of provinces (namely Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Quebec) have embarked on the development of food and land-use planning policies targeting “production, processing, distribution and consumption of food” (Government of Canada, 2017). In June 2019, the Canadian federal government developed a Food Policy for Canada. Furthermore, there is a significant shift in Canada towards the importance of incorporating environmental issues into the economy, health and every day civil society. This presents an opportunity to follow through with an integrated approach to food security.

Jurisdictional Scan

Jurisdictions included in the scan are as follows:

- the nine other Canadian provinces (excluding the territories as they are subject to federal jurisdiction and have different authority and decision-making processes),
- the City of Vancouver (developed food systems planning framework)

- Buffalo, NY (home of the Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab at the University of Buffalo),
- the City of Madison, WISC (home of the Kaufman Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison)

The Provincial Food and Planning Policies Jurisdictional Scan (J scan) is a two-part review of existing food and planning policies, of the chosen geographic areas. The intention of the J scan is to identify current practices (if any) around food security and land-use planning, including food systems planning initiatives. It also seeks to gather best practices, actions, and lessons from outside of Ontario. To a certain extent, the J scan also evaluates the current state of food systems planning across provinces in Canada (as well as the two non-Canadian jurisdictions I chose) and assesses where the responsibility to develop the policy and legislative frameworks and any associated programs and initiatives in the context of food systems planning occurs. I chose to examine Vancouver, Buffalo and Madison because a lot of the information that I found and tools I used while conducting research, originated from these areas. Therefore, I thought it pertinent to go to the source.

The criteria used for the J scan came from three sources. The first is the Growing Food Connections, Local Government Food Policy Database and accompanying Global Database, which provide a “searchable collection of local public policies that explicitly support community food systems. This database provides policymakers, government staff, and others interested in food policy with concrete examples of local public policies that have been adopted to address a range of food systems issues” (Growing Food Connections, 2019).

The second is the Strengthening Farmland Protection Assessment Toolkit, from the Agricultural Land Use Planning: Farmland Protection Research Protection. This research program aims to “assess the state of farmland protection through agricultural land use planning (AgLUP) in Canada. The main goal of the research program is to provide the first comprehensive, nation-wide assessment of the state of farmland protection in Canada” (Connell, 2012). I also used the resources made available in the Assessment Toolkit (such as the Instruction Manual) to develop the comprehensive rubric detailed below.

The third are principles from the theoretical frameworks guiding this research paper. The first is drawing from Kloppenburg et al, in using the concept of the foodshed and the “moral economy” (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996) to determine appropriate keyword searches of land use planning and food related documents. The idea that the success of a food

system centres on profits rather than the number of people fed (Kloppenburger, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996) contradicts Canada's obligations as a United Nations State Party on the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, wherein the Canadian government formally recognizes (but has failed to implement) the human right to food. Therefore, this research project strives to utilize a rights-based lens in examining solutions that may be emulated in Ontario.

It is necessary to note that Kloppenburger et al have adapted Getz's definition of foodshed (which technically includes the global food system), to focus on local foodsheds, and the "alternative and oppositionalist elements that could be the building blocks for developing foodsheds: food policy councils, community supported agriculture, farmers markets, sustainable farmers, alternative consumers" (Kloppenburger, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). This research paper will use this definition as the normative meaning of foodshed throughout the paper, as it provides a tangible example of what regional food security can look like in the GTHA in the future. Foodshed objectives include reducing distance between source and consumption, increasing knowledge of what people eat and how it is produced and made available, giving consumers a say in what they eat and how it is produced, shifting focus from profit to human need, creating more resilient local and regional food options, increasing nutrition within food stuffs, and re-establishing connection between people, their communities and land (Kloppenburger, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996).

The second part of the theoretical framework guiding this research paper is Hill and MacRae's Efficiency-Substitution-Redesign (ESR) framework, as it provides a pathway to institutions such as the provincial government to transition from conventional to sustainable agriculture (one of the pillars of achieving regional food security and requires the consideration of the food system). The ESR is invaluable in determining the way by which Ontario may adopt aspects of sustainable agriculture and provide guidance on how to develop a legislative or policy framework to implement these changes. Furthermore, if a jurisdiction emphasises sustainable agriculture as one aspect of land-use planning, it is helpful to note as a potential option for Ontario.

These three sources enabled me to develop the following set of questions, that could be answered through the J scan, which would lay the groundwork to answering the main purpose of the research project.

- Does this jurisdiction's planning framework and associated documents acknowledge food systems, food security or local food production?
 - In what capacity is it acknowledged?
 - Is it cursory and open-ended? Is there a plan or initiative that receives consistent funding and input from decision-makers and applicable stakeholders?
 - Is it approached in the context of agri-business, or does it focus on human health and safety, community well-being and environmental sustainability?
 - Is it a collaborative effort from a broad range of sectors including government, industry, academia, civil society organizations, advocacy groups?
 - Is it cross referenced with other social and environmental programs or initiatives?
 - What kind of timelines are associated with a project or initiative?
 - Who has the final authority?
 - Is it approached through an economic development lens?

- Does this jurisdiction's planning framework and associated documents acknowledge agriculture?
 - Is it conventional or sustainable agriculture?
 - Is it approached in the context of agri-business, or does it focus on human health and safety, community well-being and environmental sustainability?
 - Is it approached through an economic development lens?
 - Does it include the long-term protection and preservation of farmland and potential farmland?

- Does it consider the expansion of farmland through conversion or reclamation?
- Who has the final authority?

The questions above led me to create a comprehensive rubric, including some of the same keywords used by the sources listed in the resources above, as a starting off point to search for relevant data. However, these keywords change through the J scan, depending on the type of policy instrument examined (legislation, regulation, enabling / enforceable policy, programs, initiatives, guidelines etc. with respect to food, agriculture, and land-use planning). In addition, I adjusted the keywords based on the information present in the various documents I read. I then used the rubric to assess the areas in the J scan, to determine where there may be lessons learned, best practices and any downsides, that may be pertinent to Ontario. It is important to note that I did anchor my research to Ontario planning legislation, regulation and policy frameworks as the outcomes of the research need to be applicable to Ontario's planning context.

Semi-Structured Interviews

To ensure I had access to different perspectives, I chose to interview people who have professional, academic and community knowledge and experience in land-use planning, government decision-making, and the food system / food security realms. The interviews were conducted either in person or over the telephone, and were chosen according to the following criteria:

- individuals' location (based in part on the jurisdictions reviewed in the J scan),
- area of expertise (determined partially by the keyword searches in the J scan),
- the office an individual represents,
- whether an individual is a decision-maker on behalf of their respective office,
- what role the office plays in broader regional decision-making processes as a stakeholder.

The objectives I was trying to achieve with the interviews were to:

- To obtain a baseline understanding of Ontario provincial planners' knowledge about the foodshed approach to land-use planning and, the intersection between planning and food security. Also, to understand what (if anything) they think is necessary to achieve to ensure future food security and self-sufficiency in Ontario, through the planning context.
- Gain the perspective of researchers and planners who have knowledge about the foodshed approach to land-use planning and experience in the field of food systems planning, and what they think is necessary to achieve to ensure future food security and self-sufficiency.
- Gain the perspective of representatives from the agricultural industry and their thoughts on food systems, present-day agricultural production and operations, and what they think is necessary to achieve to ensure future food security and self-sufficiency.

I found potential participants through articles, organization and company websites, INFO-GO (the Ontario Public Service address book that is publicly available), LinkedIn and the network I had established as a former Ontario Public Service employee. I contacted individuals through email and LinkedIn, and if they responded, I set up a phone call to introduce myself, provide additional information and answer any questions they may have had about the research project. While I had a list of questions to guide the conversation, due to the different areas of expertise of both participants, the questions varied between both participants. In addition, the interview evolved into a structured conversation, that yielded not only answers to my questions but an insight into the thought process of current provincial planners. A complete transcript (including questions and responses) is available in Appendix C.

Interview Limitations

It is necessary to note, the semi-structured interviews originally planned included representatives from non-government, academic, and community advocacy groups, and civil society organizations from other parts of Canada, the United States and the European Union. However, the COVID – 19 pandemic made it very difficult to connect with parties of interest. Furthermore, attempts to reach out to alternate interview participants were also left unanswered. Consequently, I was required to modify my project accordingly. I was successful in obtaining

two interviews. Both individuals are planners with the Ontario Public Service (OPS), and I had worked on common projects with both of them, during my time as a planner in the OPS. It is necessary to note, I consulted with my supervisor prior to sending the participants an interview request. One is an expert in agricultural and rural planning, with some familiarity with food systems planning and the intersection of planning and food security. The other is an expert in the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (as well as its' previous iterations), and the Greenbelt Plan. Both planners describe their knowledge of food systems planning and the intersection between planning and food security as limited. It is necessary to note that due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, and the participants' respective areas of expertise I did not have the exact same questions for both participants and did not ask the questions in the same order. My reasoning for this approach was to create an open and non-judgemental dialogue, mindful of the changing political climate in which they work as well as their own level of comfort with answering questions about not only their profession but to an extent, their employer.

Additional Data Collection:

Data collection for this research project is as much about gathering and presenting information about the landscape of land-use planning and food security in Ontario, as it is an exercise in reflexivity of the planning experience. Therefore, I have also chosen to draw general observations from my own professional experiences with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry as well as the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. At three separate occasions, under two different governments I was a Planner or Policy Analyst working in planning offices that were either responsible for leading or contributing to the review of provincial plans and accompanying legislation. As a former Ontario Service employee, I have hands-on experience with and insight into the decision-making processes around the land-use planning system, and the priorities of the government of the day.

Section 3:

Legislative Climate and Policy Development

To better understand the state of land-use planning, food systems and food security, it is necessary to examine the historical development of policy and legislation at both the national and provincial scales. This requires us to understand the foundation of decision-making in Canada, and the legal framework that guides and enables it. The decisions a government entity is permitted to make are rooted in the kind of authority they are assigned, which determines jurisdictional boundaries.

Part one of this section examines the influence of federalism and the Constitution on legislation and policy development in Canada and Ontario, and the jurisdictional challenges of the federation system. Part two reviews the roles and responsibilities of the Canadian and Ontario governments with respect to land-use planning and the food system, and how these translate (or do not) into food security. Part three looks at how the current legislative and policy frameworks have shaped contemporary land-use planning frameworks and food systems in Ontario.

Part 1: Influence of federalism and the Constitution on legislation and policy development in Canada and Ontario

Federalism

Federalism is the “division of jurisdiction and authority divided between at least two levels of government” (Makarenko, 2008). In Canada, the Constitution determines the division of power between the federal (national) and provincial (regional) governments. Federalism enables a degree of financial, political and cultural autonomy, as each level of government can make decisions relevant to their respective jurisdictions with minimal interference from a central power while still taking part in a larger community (Makarenko, 2008). Historically, federalism prospered in Canada for three main reasons. The first was to unite disparate factions of the British Empire in North America and to transition to self-government model while protecting the

regional identities and interests of the provinces⁹; the second reason was to foster a degree of economic independence for the colonies; and the third was to stave off potential incursions by the Americans (Government of Canada, 2018). Consequently, the adoption of a federalist state became foundational to what is today Canada, albeit entrenched in the British colonial system for years as a semi-sovereign nation.

Federalism enables a check on the absolute power of one government over another, the protection and growth of regional interests and the easier management of larger geographic areas (Makarenko, 2008). It was adopted to address the political, social, cultural, and economic realities of more than 150 years ago. The underlying causes that deemed federalism necessary have changed today however, its approach has not. As a result, the current application of federalism as directed by the Constitution results in ideological stalemates and entrenched points of view under the guise of protecting regional interests (Makarenko, 2008). This in turn influences the development of policy and legislation on matters that have impact across borders and party lines. A cumulation of circumstances have rendered the federalism of Canada's inception as obsolete (Makarenko, 2008). This includes but is not limited to: the effect of competing interests and conflicting priorities across regions in Canada, improvements to the legal rights afforded to the public, especially First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, a more diverse population with varying interests and needs and a greater global integration of communities.

There are some basic needs shared by all people, regardless of geographic location, age, race, gender, ability, religion, socio-economic status, etc. and sometimes these needs are inconsistently fulfilled across Canada, in part because of the historical division of power between jurisdictions. This situation is best demonstrated by the management of food, food systems and the ensuing challenges that contribute to food insecurity in Canada. Food is key to human survival. If a region is unwilling or unable to ensure access to food and to maintain a healthy food system, there are very few mechanisms that would enable a centrally located institution such as the federal government to make decisions in the interest of impacted communities, without facing both real and imagined boundaries. The ownership and management of food will be further expanded on, in the section on jurisdictional challenges.

⁹ Given the significant changes in global political systems between the 18th and 19th centuries, which had a domino effect on Great Britain and its North American colonies, the introduction of federalism and a degree of autonomy helped reduce the financial and political burden on Great Britain (Government of Canada, 2018).

Constitution

In Canada, the Canadian Constitution stipulates the division of power and responsibilities of the federal and provincial governments (Hessing, Howlett, & Summerville, 2005), through the *Constitution Act, 1867*¹⁰. Canadian federal and provincial governments are comprised of a: “strong form of executive government in which major decisions are made by political leaders...and debated in legislative bodies” (Hessing, Howlett, & Summerville, 2005); and sections 91, 92, and 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* determine which level of government makes decisions on myriad subject areas. As a “supreme law” (Makarenko, 2007), the Constitution has precedence over any other law in Canada and if there are conflicts between the Constitution and another Canadian law, the Constitution prevails (Makarenko, 2007).

As a “parliamentary democracy” (Makarenko, 2007) following the Westminster model, the Canadian government is made up of three branches, Executive, Legislative and Judicial. Canada’s Parliament is comprised of the executive and legislative branches. The executive branch is made up of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (also known as the Prime Minister’s Executive Council), and the legislative branches are comprised of the House of Commons (where the MPs sit) and the Senate. The judiciary interprets laws and regulations through the various courts and renders a decision in times of conflict or disagreement. Provincial governments in Canada exist in a similar vein, except instead of the Prime Minister as the head of Parliament it is the Premier. Territories do not have Constitutionally enabled powers, and the federal government delegates power to them under the authority of the Parliament of Canada (Intergovernmental Affairs, 2017). Similarly, provinces delegate decision-making powers to local government including but not limited to regions, municipalities, counties, boards and agencies.

It is necessary to note that Canada is also technically a Constitutional monarchy as the formal Head of State remains Queen Elizabeth II. The Constitution limits her powers with respect to governance, however the Governor General is her representative in Canada and each province has a Lt. Governor that represents the Queen at a regional level (Makarenko, 2009). While these are primarily ceremonial positions, both the Governor General and the Lt. Governors are responsible for ensuring the existence of government in the provinces and as a result, on rare occasions are tasked with taking a more active role (Makarenko, 2009).

¹⁰ Known originally as the *British North America Act, 1867* and subsequently renamed the *Constitution Act, 1867* in 1982 until it was amended significantly to become the *Constitution Act, 1982* (Makarenko, 2007).

The federal government retains jurisdiction over areas that are shared by all provinces and territories per Section 91 of the Constitution. This includes (but is not limited to) the foreign policy, First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities, data collection through the census and statistics, the postal service, military, criminal law, managing public finances and revenue generation, shipping and navigation, the seacoast and inland fishing and regulations regarding trade (Intergovernmental Affairs, 2017). They also govern parts of areas that are primarily under provincial jurisdiction such as health, communication, human rights, intellectual property, competition, and food safety. A potentially contentious aspect of federal government authority is the concept of "...Laws for Peace, Order and good Government of Canada [POGG]" (Department of Justice, 2019) which means powers that aren't delegated to the provinces under Section 92 of the *Constitution Act 1867* are subject to federal government decision-making. Consequently, POGG can also be used by the federal government to justify the introduction of new programs, policies and legislation that have national impacts. There are arguments that this option in the Constitution is a loophole to allow for federal interference in provincial matters and may as a result contradict provincial interests, especially since there are legislative and policy considerations today that did not exist at the original creation of the Constitution or even at the time of its review in the 1980s. An example of this is the National Carbon Pricing Plan that was derided by some provinces as unconstitutional, namely Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Provinces are enabled by Sections 92, 92(A) and 93 of the Constitution to have the authority to make decisions that affect their own jurisdiction (Makarenko, 2008), without influence from the Federal government or other Provincial governments. Based on the division of legislative power, provinces have the autonomy to develop mandates and accompanying legislation and policies. Areas of sole provincial jurisdiction include (but are not limited to) health, social services, municipalities, education, and the environment¹¹ (such as natural resource management, conservation etc.) (Winfield, ENV5 5178 Environmental Policy I: Institutions, Ideas and Interests - Lecture 5 Institutional Framework I: Cabinet and Parliament, 2017). Consequently, policy development across the provinces and territories is inconsistent and developed based on their respective political, social, economic and environmental interests (Makarenko, 2008). Section 95 of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, enables "concurrent powers" (Makarenko, 2008) meaning provincial and federal governments share jurisdiction and can both

¹¹ Provinces have dominant say over environment-related issues in their jurisdiction, with some federal intervention (Winfield, ENV5 5178 Environmental Policy I: Institutions, Ideas and Interests - Lecture 5 Institutional Framework I: Cabinet and Parliament, 2017)

develop legislation with respect a number of areas such as agriculture, old-age and disability pensions, and immigration (Makarenko, 2008).

Policy Development

Policy development is defined as a “statement of direction intended to guide present and future actions and decisions, to address an identified problem and/or objective for public good” (Ontario Public Service, 2014). While policy development occurs in many different circumstances, for the purpose of this research study, policy will be examined solely from a government context. As an expression of a government’s vision and an instrument for change, traditional policy development occurs in a cycle. The general format is:

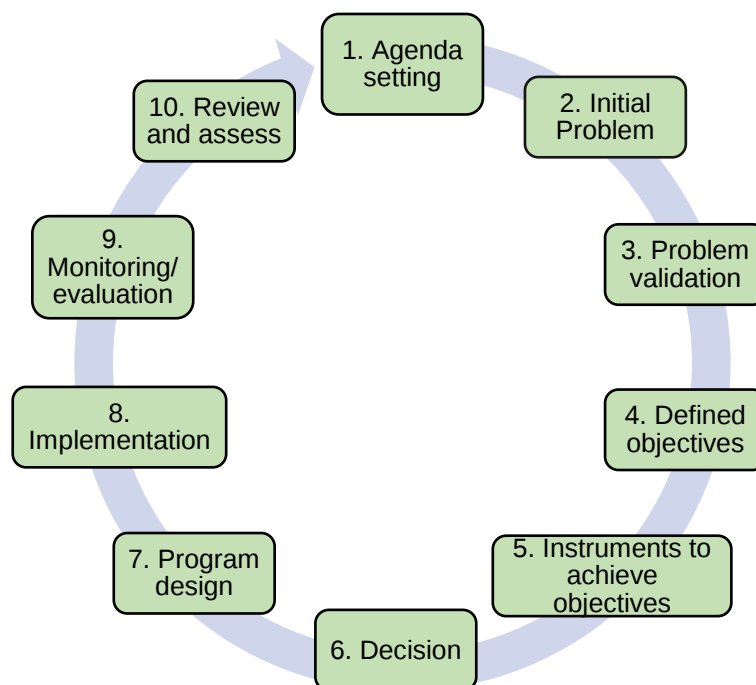


Figure 2.1 Policy Cycle

(Ontario Public Service, 2014)

In both the federal and provincial arenas, the development of policy is usually based on the priorities of the political entity in charge. The government, which refers to the Prime Minister and Cabinet at the federal level and the Premier and Cabinet at the provincial level establishes a number of “visions, values and beliefs, promises and what they assume to be the public and stakeholder interests” (Ontario Public Service, 2014). The ideas conceived during the election cycle as a party platform are then usually refined to become instruments of change once a party is elected into office. Policies are further informed by the Throne Speech which describes the government’s agenda and introduces government initiatives over its term (Makarenko, 2009) and the Budget, which determines an estimate of the government’s future revenue, and where the money may come from and details government expenditure (how much money will be spent and how it will be allocated) (Makarenko, 2009).

Policies can be referred to as “translating public needs, demands, expectations and interests into effective and appropriate solutions” (Ontario Public Service, 2014). “Good” policy is thought to occur when each of the steps described in Figure 2.1 is followed sequentially, with best practices woven into the cycle to better extract the intention of the proposed policy and understand the impact of it on an assortment of areas. The following table (adapted from the Ontario Public Service, Introduction to Policy Handbook) represents this process:

Policy Development Cycle		
Stage	Purpose	Best Practices
Agenda Setting	Mandate that clarifies organizational objectives	Publicly available Mandate Letter
Initial Problem	Define problem, hypothesize solution	Informed by Mandate letter, Throne Speech, Budget, public interest
Problem Validation	Develop consensus of problem	Develop project plan and conduct research (jurisdictional scan, public consultation, risk analysis, financial analysis etc.)
Defined Objectives	To define the objectives of the policy	Set out key objectives as a means of evaluating

		options, to determine what success looks like
Instruments to achieve Outcomes	Develop options to achieve the stated outcomes using policy instruments ranging from minimum to maximum government oversight	Analyse the ways by which options can be effectively implemented i.e., guidance document, self-regulation, development of programs, introduction of legislation or regulation etc. Use measures like public consultation
Decision	Decision-maker chooses best suited option to execute policy	Decision influenced by advice that is evidence-based, fiscally sound, transparent, integrated with applicable other areas and includes a robust and transparent consultation
Program Design	Development of policy to facilitate implementation	Define specifics of program, collaborate with appropriate partners, ensure iterative process that stays on time on budget
Implementation	Public introduction of policy	Provide advance notice to the public and an estimated timeline of roll out
Monitoring/Evaluation	Determine whether objectives met	Data collection, establish key performance indicators, opportunities for public feedback
Review and Assess	Review policy and its efficacy	Determine whether to continue, adjust or terminate policy

Table 1: Ontario Public Service, Introduction to Policy Handbook, 2014

(Ontario Public Service, 2014).

The policy cycle detailed above demonstrates incremental policy development, which occurs in a linear fashion, is highly routine, follows a predetermined path and results in relatively small adjustments but allows some flexibility to ease away from the status quo (if it is in the interest of the governing party to do so). Furthermore, this is an iterative process that allows for a collaborative approach to develop the best options to solve the problem at hand. This is the ideal iteration of policy development. One drawback of traditional policy development is that solutions and their alternatives are often developed by subject matter experts, public servants, industry stakeholders and others, and are ready in the event of a policy window (Winfield, 2017). This approach does not leave a lot of room for discussion, analysis and input, and requires a level of power and privilege that is afforded only to a few in the policy development process. In addition, in Canada and Ontario, a “fused” executive and legislative branch (Makarenko, 2009) and the importance of winning a majority in the Westminster Parliamentary Model, has the potential to make policy development a highly politicized exercise.

Policy development can also be envisioned in other, more radical ways. Drawing from Winfield’s “issues-attention cycle” (Winfield, 2012), a high level of public interest and media coverage can also set the policy agenda. This is further described by Kingdon who argues that opportunities for policy changes occur when three “streams” of policy development converge: problem, policy and politics, to create a “policy window” (Winfield, 2017). “Problems” refer to issues that impact the public and require a solution. “Policy” refers to potential solutions provided by subject matter experts, academics, public servants etc., and there are a few options presented that can be used by decision-makers. “Politics” refers to political issues that may be occurring and have garnered public and media attention (Winfield, 2017). These changes are generally actioned by individuals who drive their interpretation of a solution for the matter at hand, and timing, place and appropriate circumstances are integral to the consideration and adoption of a solution (Winfield, 2017).

Policy development serves as an effective tool for government to facilitate intervention into issues of food insecurity. Until recently, institutional pursuits of food security have been inconsistent and often unfinished. MacRae discusses the history of food policy development in Canada of which some examples include World War II measures enacted by the federal

government, Canada's Action Plan for Food Security in 1998, and the introduction of the federal, provincial and territories agricultural policy framework (MacRae R. , 2018). However, myriad non-government organizations have worked consistently over decades to address food insecurity within their respective regions. The ongoing, and often siloed community food activism could have benefitted from an overarching government supported framework to help integrate and formalize solutions put forward.

In an effort to develop the first national food policy in Canada that seeks to address the "production, processing, distribution and consumption of food" (Government of Canada, 2017), (although, not the first iteration of any food policy) the Canadian federal government did began consultations for a proposed national food policy in May 2017. The national food policy was first introduced in the Liberal Party of Canada's 2015 election platform, wherein they took an incremental policy development approach. Consultations through an online survey, a two-day conference and in-person engagement sessions across Canada included input from private citizens, NGOs, the agricultural industry, academics, Indigenous leaders, health and nutrition practitioners and environmental activists. Jurisdictional scans were conducted and information about food policy in other countries has also been made available. In 2019, the Canadian government released the Food Policy for Canada, an initiative that hopes to: reduce household food insecurity, ensure a more resilient and sustainable food system, reduce food waste and support the economy (Government of Canada, 2017). Additionally, individual departments in the federal government also address food security separately, such as Health Canada and their work on household level food security. It should be noted however that the issue of food insecurity and ensuing gaps is exacerbated by: inadequate data on household food insecurity as provinces can opt out of surveys conducted by Statistics Canada monitoring this issue (PROOF, 2016), differences of opinion on the drivers of food insecurity, and whether issues of food are a priority within a particular jurisdiction.

At around the same time, Ontario also began public deliberations on the merits of a food security strategy for the province. As part of a wider poverty reduction strategy, known as the Ontario Basic Income Pilot Project, was the development and consultation for a provincial food security strategy that focuses on "supporting community-specific solutions; creating a shared vision for collective impact based on the best available knowledge; increasing economic access to food; and finding innovative solutions" (Government of Canada, 2017). However, it is important to note that in 2015-2016, Ontario chose not to collect household data on food insecurity in the province by abstaining from Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health

Survey (Syal R. , 2017), raising questions about their commitment. Furthermore, in 2011 the long form census was altered and no longer mandatory. While that is no longer the case, this may have affected the ongoing decision of provinces to include data on food insecurity. In 2019, the three-year basic income pilot was cancelled and any discussion on a province-wide food policy has stalled (The Canadian Press, 2018).

Legislation

Despite the creation of the Food Policy for Canada, there is no single legislation that anchors both the demand and supply sides of the food system. Instead, there exists a patchwork of statutes that speak to different aspects of the food system (MacRae R. , 2018). However, there are aspects of the food system that are completely underserved by the regulatory system. A majority of these areas deal with the supply-side of food, in particular areas that are often attributed to the realm of the “private” sector. The agricultural industry is often regarded as an issue of national and provincial interest, due to the noticeable impact it has on the economy through revenue generated, opportunities for employment and trade implications. In addition, agri-businesses (which don’t necessarily include family farmers) play a partnership role in the development of legislation and agreements. However, the relationship between access and affordability is considered a household or individual issue. Without a comprehensive regulatory structure that establishes the parameters of food governance, there becomes an opportunity for inconsistencies and gaps, which in turn enables the proliferation of food insecurity.

Part 2: Roles and Responsibilities: Federal vs. Provincial Government

Land-use Planning

Land-use planning, defined in Chapter 1 as “the formulation and implementation of spatial public policies” (Yiftachel, 1998) concerns itself traditionally with the management of lands, resources, services, facilities, public goods, growth and development within urban, rural and/or peri-urban environments (American Planning Association, 2007). As a discipline, planning is often perceived (by the public and/or planners themselves) to be a rational and professional activity that results in the creation of some type of a public good (Yiftachel, 1998). Decisions regarding land resources are dependent on jurisdiction, and any other delegated authority.

Federally owned land (in right of the Queen) includes the territories of Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut; Reserve land on which First Nations communities subject to the *Indian Act, 1985* are situated¹²; National and Historic Parks and land located offshore, under water within Canada’s marine jurisdiction (Natural Resources Canada, 2017). It should be noted however, the impact of land claim settlement agreements on land management in the territories and the shift of the balance of power from federal to First Nations governance.

Land-use planning occurs primarily at the provincial level, as stipulated by section 92 of the Constitution, which specifies that provinces have absolute control of the “Management and Sale of the Public Lands belonging to the Province” (Department of Justice, 2019). The federal government does not have any say with respect to land-use planning in the provinces, on land owned by the province. Consequently, land-use planning varies across provinces, based on the needs and priorities set by provincial government.

In Ontario, land-use planning manifests in a variety of ways, depending on the area and type of planning action undertaken. Planning in southern Ontario vs. northern Ontario differs significantly due to geographical and access considerations, the type of land available and the status of land claims and Reserve land management, First Nations governance, and jurisdiction of the federal government. As a result, there are land-use planning statutes, policies and plans that are tailored to specific geographic areas and issues in Ontario. Land in Ontario can be

¹² Self-governing First Nations communities are not subject to the *Indian Act, 1985* and own and manage their own land (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2010)

categorized as either Crown land (public land, generally owned and managed by either the provincial or federal government, in right of the Queen) and private land (privately owned land, generally managed by a municipality and subject to provincial rules).

87% of the province is comprised of Crown land, occurring between the southern boundary of the Far North and the southern border of the Area of the Undertaking¹³ (central and northern Ontario) (Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, 2019). Most of southern Ontario is private land, that is managed by municipalities and obligated to conform to provincial rules. A majority of Crown land occurs in central and northern Ontario, and is governed by the *Public Lands Act, 1990*. Land-use planning on Crown land is area-specific, designated by a primary use and has policies that describe permitted uses for that designated use. Examples of Crown land parcels include provincial parks, conservation authorities, general use areas, provincial wildlife areas, wilderness areas, forest reserves and enhanced management areas (Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, 2019). Examples of permitted uses include hiking, ATV use, forestry, power generation and trapping (Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, 2019).

Land-use planning in southern Ontario

This research project will focus on land-use planning in southern Ontario, particularly the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region. This geographic area houses Canada's largest city, and the food system stresses we currently face from residing in a large urban centre can speak to the future pressures we will face, and how that will shape our food systems. It will also influence the way urban and rural spaces will manifest, especially considering the convergence of multiple factors including, but not limited to, rapid urbanization, growth of a multi-million, multicultural population with diverse needs, an economy that supports a significant part of Canada's GDP, employment and industry opportunities, biodiversity and ecologically significant natural environments, productive farmland and a robust agricultural sector (Government of Ontario, 2018). The *Planning Act, 1946* was the first of many iterations of provincial planning legislation in Ontario that worked with other statutes to better regulate, manage and plan for the allocation and use of land (Doumani & Foran, 2018). Population growth, rapid urbanization and unprecedented development in the 1940s were influenced in part by the technological advances

¹³ Refers to land in central and northern Ontario, approximately north of Parry Sound, Bancroft and Pembroke on the southern border, west of the border with Quebec, east of Kenora and south of southern boundary of the Far North.

of the Second World War, increased immigration and domestic migration to urban centres as well as the return of soldiers back to Ontario (Doumani & Foran, 2018).

The ensuing increased demands on the built environment (including but not limited to housing, infrastructure and servicing, transportation etc.) required a more centralized, comprehensive and focused approach to the “public regulation of the land development process” (Doumani & Foran, 2018). An important part of land-use planning is the balance between urgently competing interests, including but not limited to, public goods vs. private land ownership, environment, conservation and development, the impact of an expanding built environment on the health, access and wellbeing of the general public and the access to basic building blocks of society, like food. Consequently, land-use planning (or lack thereof) underlies the success or disenfranchisement of communities.

In Ontario, the province and municipalities both manage land-use planning however, as stated above the province is responsible for creating a land use planning system and provides legal and policy direction to municipalities to carry out planning processes. Municipalities are somewhat limited in their development of local land-use plans, as over-arching planning goals are established through provincial direction. The *Planning Act, 1990* (the Planning Act) is one of the leading pieces of legislation that sets out rules for land use planning in Ontario and determines how land use is managed and by whom. The Provincial Policy Statement, 2014¹⁴ (PPS) “provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land-use planning and development...and sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land in Ontario” (Government of Ontario, 2014).

The PPS is enabled under the Planning Act and sets out both permissive and limiting policy directives. Areas of provincial interest include but are not limited to: the protection of agricultural resources, the orderly development of safe and healthy communities, the minimization of waste, the adequate provision of a full range of housing including affordable housing, the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water, the protection of public health and safety and; the resolution of planning conflict involving public and private interests (Government of Ontario, 2014). It is important to note these “areas of provincial interest”

¹⁴ In 2019, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 underwent a review and public consultations as part of the *More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan*. As the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 does not take effect until May 1, 2020, the version referred to in this research paper is the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014. However, it is interesting to note that on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website, the webpage dedicated to the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 has already been archived, and is considered out of date.

(Government of Ontario, 2014) in particular because they all in some way connected to the regional food system and in turn regional food security.

In addition, there are several corresponding provincial land-use plans and accompanying legislation that provide direction to specific geographic areas in the province (Government of Ontario, 2014), in order to “meet certain objectives such as growth management, protecting agricultural lands and the natural environment” (Government of Ontario, 2014). These plans work in concert with the Planning Act and the PPS, however sometimes provincial land-use plans take legal precedence over the PPS based on the area they cover. It is important to note that in areas of the province that do not have a provincial land-use plan in effect, the PPS (and the Planning Act) are the primary provincial land-use planning systems to be adhered to, in addition to the municipal planning framework.

Municipalities are responsible for implementing the broad guidance and requirements provided by the Planning Act, PPS, any relevant provincial land-use plans and other planning legislation (including but not limited to the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994* and the *Public Lands Act, 1990*). Municipalities present their long-term goals and objectives for their respective community through an Official Plan and ensure these goals are implemented by corresponding by-laws. The Official Plan and any corresponding by-laws must conform to all provincial plans, legislation and policy statements.

The layering of various land-use plans and policies, as well as the integration of different statutes and their respective timelines at different levels of government attempts to create a thorough planning system in Ontario. At this time, there are seven provincial land-use plans that, as mentioned above focus on a geographic area and have targeted objectives. The PPS as well as several provincial land-use plans speak to the delineation, management and protection of the agricultural land base. However, excepting the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011, the provincial land-use plans focus around or in close proximity to the GGH region¹⁵. We are thus faced with three issues in the planning system as we currently know it. The first is, the complexity that ensues from overlapping plans and jurisdictions that target different but connecting subject matter means there could be contradictory policies within the planning framework, making implementation a challenge. This is further explored in section four of this research study. The second issue we face is the provincial land-use planning focus predominantly on one geographic region in Ontario (the GGH) potentially resulting in

¹⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/crown-land-planning>

inconsistencies in the approach to planning across the province as the plans seem to ignore planning in a large part of the province.

Furthermore, the breadth of this plan means that it tries to be everything to everyone and may not be cohesive in any of the areas it touches. The plan is too general to have any significant impact and so the areas covered under this plan depend more heavily on local planning, which differs between municipalities. The third issue, and one that relates specifically to regional food security in Ontario is that the inclusion of only a few parts of the regional food system (the Agricultural System, meaning the agricultural land base and the agri-food network, water, waste water systems and natural heritage features important in relation to food production) in the planning framework reinforces the gaps present in our comprehensive acknowledgement and management of the food system, which in turn is reflective of how existing systems of governance do not adequately contribute an overarching consideration of regional food security.

Raja reinforces the idea that simple acknowledgement of food systems and food insecurity in a policy document is not enough to address ever present vulnerabilities (Raja, Morgan, & Hall, 2017). In Ontario, the entire concept of food systems planning is reduced to one line in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 and the Greenbelt Plan, 2017 and is solely in relation to the enhancement of the Agricultural System. This demonstrates the missing link between food security strategies, and the development of land-use plans (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000), which may be especially damaging since protection of agricultural land and the agri-food system is often conflated with regional food security and food systems planning (MacRae & Winfield, 2016).

Food and Agricultural System

As mentioned above, agriculture and the food system are subject to federal, provincial and in some cases municipal government oversight. The federal government is generally responsible for developing and implementing guidelines with respect to issues of national concern such as “cross-border commerce, farm financial safety nets, agricultural research and technology development, food and phytosanitary safety, food standards, packaging and labelling, nutritional health and trade across borders” (MacRae R. , 2018). In addition, at the federal government level there are a number of parliamentary committees (including but not

limited to) agriculture and agri-food, health, environment, natural resources and human rights that have the potential to contribute to legislation related to agriculture and food systems (MacRae R. , 2018).

Provinces (with financial and technical assistance from the federal government) take a more hands-on approach to program design and support national issues in their local contexts. Examples include “commerce and food safety within their boundary, land use and agricultural land protection, property taxation, many areas of environmental protection, and agricultural extension” (MacRae R. , 2018). The province also takes a lead role with respect to program delivery but may delegate certain aspects of it to their municipalities (MacRae R. , 2018). Municipal roles with respect to agricultural and food system varies based on their location and classification as either an urban or rural municipality, although household and food waste management is an area generally under municipal purview (MacRae R. , 2018). Despite being an issue that affects the wellbeing of both rural and urban municipalities, consideration of agriculture and the food system are split based on traditional interpretations of urban vs rural spheres of knowledge and activity. Consequently, rural municipalities deal more frequently with “agricultural land and food production and agriculture supply, through zoning, property and education tax decisions” (MacRae R. , 2018), whereas urban municipalities consider issues of “public health, nutrition, food inspection and zoning policies for retail food location” (MacRae R. , 2018).

Despite the overlapping legislation and policies from different tiers of government that projects interest in agriculture and food systems, the federal and provincial government support and attention on these systems is seemingly geared towards the supply side. The most glaring indication of this is the lack of any one statute, department or committee dedicated solely to the demand side of agriculture and food. There is no Ministry of Food, and there is no mention of food as a basic right in the Canadian Constitution or the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This results in an unbalanced food system, that focuses on only one perspective of many; and serves only a small portion of the population. This is especially concerning considering Canada’s ratification of the United Nations right to food (OHCHR, 2000). The complex nature of food systems resulting from the shared jurisdiction of agriculture and food systems between jurisdictions (MacRae R. , 2018) and the lack of one specific government department, legal authority or governance mechanism (MacRae & Winfield, 2016) further renders the development of a viable food security policy fragmented and ad hoc. Furthermore, the opportunity for conflict between competing mandates from different jurisdictions means that that

there is an inconsistency in the way we manage our food systems. This in turn may translate to more frequent and acute occurrences of food insecurity provincially and nationally, because conflicting and sometimes contradictory policies may result in a stalemate.

Section 4: Food Systems Planning

Background

This section of the paper introduces food systems planning, its importance to public wellbeing and explores the current state of food systems planning in Ontario. Food systems are defined as “the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, transportation, distribution and disposal of food products” (Nguyen, 2018). This includes “all the resources, technologies, stakeholders, relationships, policies and laws that shape and influence how food moves through the system – from farm to plate and back to the farm again” (Growing Food Connections Project, 2017). Furthermore, the “organization of food systems reflects and responds to social, cultural, political, economic, health and environmental conditions and can be identified at multiple scales, from a household kitchen to a city, county, state or nation.” (Chase & Grubinger, 2014).

The food systems approach to land-use planning facilitates the transition to a more comprehensive and sustainable food system and seeks to strengthen local and regional food system capacities (Donald, 2008). The intent of this approach is (amongst other things) to increase equal access to food and support consumer visibility and knowledge of the food being consumed, thereby offering more healthful diet choices, shortening supply chains to lessen the environmental foot print and reduce vulnerability to shocks in the global food system, and support the local economy and jobs (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999). Food systems planning is an approach that re-envision the often “linear” (Chase & Grubinger, 2014) and one-dimensional view of the food system and recognizes the interconnections between different actors, activities, influences and behaviours that create the food system (Chase & Grubinger, 2014).

Nutrition, fitness and lifestyle industries have become omnipresent over the last few years. Reaching millions of viewers on social media and other platforms, are a variety of personalities that focus on cultivating a highly curated version of your “best” self, that is increasingly anchored to “respect” for your body. That respect manifests through a variety of (paid and cost-free) physical and mental health regiments geared to both individuals and groups, the promotion of products that may support your goals and of course, the proliferation of diets, superfoods and nutritional supplements of questionable origin. The common thread that binds this, is that the individual is ultimately accountable for their self-improvement. Through will

power, perseverance and some guiding tools, you can essentially pull yourself up by your own bootstraps to achieve your goals. While individual responsibility to one's health is essential, this narrative does not account for the culmination of factors that may assist or prevent an individual's ability to take charge. This is particularly true when it comes to food. The variety of foods that sustain healthy, wholesome and active lives are influenced by myriad considerations including but not limited to access, affordability and availability.

A fair assumption is that most people in Ontario and Canada: do not grow their own food, depend on the food system to supply their dietary needs and do not exercise any kind of control over the food system (other than buying choice, which in itself is conditional). Consequently, communities are subject to fluctuations in the food system at any given time. Although this paper focuses on the provincial (regional) scale, it is necessary to remember that the food system manifests through different levels, the most familiar being the individual or household level, rather than the local, regional or national levels (Chase & Grubinger, 2014). When we try to understand food insecurity at the individual or household level, we realize there is almost a societal cognitive dissonance between the burden of responsibility to make "correct" food and diet choices placed on the individual and household, in comparison to the lack of recognition that food system failures such as malnutrition, hunger, obesity and other forms of food insecurity go beyond the actions of one person or household. Instead, these are often blamed on human failure, regardless of external circumstances that shape the choices that are made. This illustrates how we take for granted that the very system meant to facilitate the attainment of healthy lifestyle goals is equally accessible to all.

Approach to Food Systems Planning

"Systems thinking is aimed at understanding the underlying structure of the connections, not just the individual parts" (Chase & Grubinger, 2014). The systems approach bridges our assumptions, and the underlying causes of an issue. It allows us to better understand the "larger context of a problem...and recognizes the inherent difficulty in managing complex sets of interactions" (Chase & Grubinger, 2014), which appropriately describes the food system and our understanding of it. Consequently, a food systems approach to land-use planning forces us to examine individual, institutional, societal and industry relationships with food through a lens that illustrates factors that lie beyond the control of the individual and provides a better context for problems that are often dismissed as externalities, including but not limited to pollution, land

degradation and hunger. Adopting a system approach not only presents the gaps in our thinking, but also in the activities we undertake to achieve human health and wellness. It enables us to be better equipped to address the shortcomings of our current food system and ultimately combat food insecurity. This shift from the individual to the systems approach needs to occur simultaneously at all levels of the food system, but especially in the arenas where formal decision-making processes can lead and support changes at the individual and household levels.

An important function of land-use planning is “to improve the welfare and health of people and communities through the logical arrangement of land, resources and facilities” (Soma & Wakefield, 2011). This can be interpreted to mean, that land-use planning is comprised of different subject areas that overlap, which is not only acknowledged in the plans, but these commonalities are also integrated into the land-use planning framework and policies developed. While many aspects of “traditional planning”¹⁶ intersect with the food system, “none...fully incorporates food system planning” (Soma & Wakefield, 2011). Despite institutional support for the adoption of food systems planning ((American Planning Association, 2007); (Ontario Professional Planners Institute, 2011)), Soma and Wakefield, and Pothukuchi and Kaufman demonstrate that the absence of food system considerations in mainstream planning endeavours and in planning education courses ((Soma & Wakefield, 2011); (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000)) implies that food systems planning is not considered its own “subfield” (Soma & Wakefield, 2011) and is relegated a planning “niche” (Soma & Wakefield, 2011). The failure of land-use planning to integrate food systems results in gaps in the efforts undertaken by planners to generate complete communities¹⁷ as the absence of a well functioning food system translates to a precarious community (Chase & Grubinger, 2014).

Food Systems Planning in Ontario and Canada

In Ontario, and for the most part across Canada, food systems are almost completely absent from the provincial planning process and the development of land-use plans, with the exception of agriculture systems mapping and the protection of agricultural lands. However, land-use planning plays a significant role in determining access to and availability of food (especially in relation to zoning and land use designations). Between 2007 to 2011, there was a

¹⁶ Based on examples provided by Soma and Wakefield including but not limited to “rural, urban, land-use, transportation, environmental, economic development, etc.” (Soma & Wakefield, 2011).

¹⁷ As defined by *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019*.

surge of interest in the inclusion of food systems planning by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), coinciding with similar attention by the American Planning Association (which began much earlier and has more consistently developed guidelines for adopting food systems into existing land-use planning frameworks in the US since the early 2000s). The OPPI position paper, *Healthy Communities Sustainable Communities* (Ontario Professional Planners Institute, 2007) and 2010 OPPI Symposium on Healthy Communities and Planning for Food both make references to the need to include food in Ontario's planning framework. The OPPI 2011 "Call to Action" report, *Healthy Communities and Planning for Food Planning for Food Systems in Ontario*, further reiterates the necessity to "make healthy community planning, and in particular, planning for healthy food systems, a priority" (Ontario Professional Planners Institute, 2011).

Unfortunately, since then, the circumstances regarding food systems planning in Ontario have not changed. In 2017, the Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy published a discussion paper on developing the province's first Food Security Strategy as part of the three-year Basic Income Pilot Project. However, the strategy examined access to food from an income inequality lens, and how the provision of a basic income impacts the mental and physical health and wellbeing of the participants, including but not limited to food security, mental health, stress and anxiety, housing stability and education and training (Government of Ontario, 2017). Following the 2018 Ontario provincial election, the pilot project was dismantled. Some Ontario municipalities (such as Toronto, Waterloo and Hamilton) have either developed food policy councils or food strategies, as measures to address local issues presented by the food system. However, municipalities do not have the jurisdiction to create more widespread implementable plans, including integrating considerations of the food system into the planning framework.

The absence of food systems planning from the planning framework in Ontario can be credited to three reasons. The first is the lens through which institutions like government regard food systems, and how the food system is consequently understood (Chase & Grubinger, 2014). The second is that the food system does not align with the land-use planning framework in Ontario, which results in gaps in the way we manage our food systems. The third, is that food systems are incorrectly attributed as rural planning issues, stemming from the traditional paradigms of food flowing from rural areas to cities (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000).

In Ontario (and the rest of Canada) the success of the food system is principally measured by its "market-based economic value" (Kubursi, Cummings, MacRae, & Kanaroglou, 2015). Agriculture and agri-food industries are often considered synonymous with the food

system, rather than one aspect of it. The value of these cannot be discounted, as demonstrated by the Dollars and Sense Report which relays that in 2015, the agricultural sector in Ontario generated approximately \$11.5 billion dollars in farm products (Kubursi, Cummings, MacRae, & Kanaroglou, 2015). In addition, agriculture and the agri-food industry also account for approximately 6.7% of Canada's overall GDP and approximately 12.5% of Canadian employment in 2016 (Government of Canada, 2017). However, a cursory view of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs website turns up a list of "popular topics", most of which are targeted primarily to the agri-food industry and farmers, meaning they address the supply side of the food system but almost completely ignore the consumer side, with exception to Food Inspection Programs.

Greater examination leads to information on Ministry Initiatives such as the Local Food Approach, but even that is expressed through the contributions of the local food industry to Ontario's economy (Government of Ontario, 2018). This may be attributed in part to Ontario (and Canada's) colonial history and the Staples economic model. Despite diversification from natural resources industries to the services and manufacturing industries, of which food and beverage processing accounts for around 17.3% of employment in Canada (Government of Canada, 2017), the Canadian economy overall does still depend on the export of natural resource commodities, and the import of goods. According to the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance "Canada exports \$56 billion a year in agriculture and agri-food products and approximately half of everything we produce is exported as either primary commodities or processed food and beverage products" (Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance, 2020).

This is problematic as the implicit value of the food system is not just the amount of revenue generated or businesses supported, rather that it feeds people. A well-functioning food system cannot be valued by how much money it earns, because people do not eat money. Unfortunately, this perspective seeps into every scale of the food system, from individual to local to national. As pointed out by Pothukuchi and Kaufman, by limiting consideration of the food system to its economic contributions at the local level, the development and placement of retail food spaces like grocery stores are accounted for in zoning by-laws through commercial designations, rather than on their own merit (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000). Since the advent of the industrial revolution and the expansion of food system supply chains, food retail outlets have replaced the direct market access of farms to households (Donald, 2008). The decision to prioritize the economic value of these outlets supports food insecurity as an externality. Food retail outlets are considered successful, if they generate the appropriate revenue and ultimately

contribute to the economy, regardless of whether they fulfill their purpose of facilitating access to food for various communities. Consequently, the food system at large is considered functioning, despite the massive gaps in access, affordability and availability. This demonstrates at most a patchwork approach to the management of the food system by Ontario government institutions.

A consequence of the way the food system is viewed in Ontario, is that it does not align with the current land-use planning framework. As a provincial responsibility, land-use planning is rooted in the *Planning Act, 1990* and guided the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014¹⁸ (PPS), which “provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land-use planning and development...[the] Provincial Policy Statement sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. It also supports the provincial goal to enhance the quality of life for all Ontarians” (Government of Ontario, 2014). As discussed in Section 2 of this research paper:

“there are several corresponding provincial land-use plans and accompanying legislation that provide direction to specific geographic areas in the province (Government of Ontario, 2014), in order to “meet certain objectives such as growth management, protecting agricultural lands and the natural environment” (Government of Ontario, 2014). These plans work in concert with the Planning Act and the PPS, however sometimes provincial land-use plans take legal precedence over the PPS based on the area they cover. The layering of various land-use plans and policies, as well as the integration of different statutes and their respective timelines at different levels of government attempts to create a thorough planning system in Ontario.”

which alludes to a substantial level of government intervention in planning and demonstrates both prescribed and suggested sets of rules that guide planning decisions in Ontario. This statement also indicates a systems approach to land-use planning in the province, as it illustrates how different guidance documents, legislation and regulations work in tandem to support comprehensive planning initiatives. Unfortunately, an equivalent approach to food systems in Ontario does not exist. Chase and Grubinger refer to the food system as “webs of people and the resources and behaviors they affect.” (Chase & Grubinger, 2014) and make connections between the myriad complexities of the food system. However, the primary

¹⁸ In 2019, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 underwent a review and public consultations as part of the *More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan*. As the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 does not take effect until May 1, 2020, the version referred to in this research paper is the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014. However, it is interesting to note that on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website, the webpage dedicated to the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 has already been archived, and is considered out of date.

consideration of the food system through an economic lens results in gaps in the system, due to the absence of an integrated approach. The planning framework is still a highly technocratic exercise in Ontario and if the institutions that are responsible for the development and implementation of planning do not incorporate food systems planning as its own entity into their purview, it will continue to be a specialist exercise in the broader planning field (Soma & Wakefield, 2011). This in turn invites working in silos and results in missed opportunities from the institutional lens to develop parameters to reduce issues of food insecurity and food system instability.

The third potential cause for the absence of the food system from the planning framework is that food systems are incorrectly attributed as rural planning issues and are associated with the protection of agricultural land and the support of the agri-food network. This stems from the traditional conceptions of urban centres depending on rural areas for agricultural production to supply food. However, the advent of the industrial revolution, the shift to a globalized food system and the expansion of supply chains interrupted the flow of food from rural to urban areas within a specific regional geography (Kloppenburger, Hendrickson, & Stevenson, 1996). It is interesting to note that despite the continued belief in this outdated relationship, as evidenced by the way food systems planning is separate from land-use planning frameworks in Ontario, the domestic food system has shifted to account for the role of the global food system and Ontario's obligations under the World Trade Organization and various bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

This has rendered movement of agricultural outputs from farms to the domestic market in Ontario less frequent and consequently unstable which is reinforced in current provincial land-use plans such as the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014¹⁹, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019) and the Greenbelt Plan (2017). These planning frameworks all limit their depiction of the food system as the management of agricultural land, for the purpose of supporting agri-food businesses in their supply to the global food system. Ironically, if Ontario's treatment of the food system from an economic perspective adopted this outdated conception, the domestic market may have more stability and be less vulnerable to external conditions because of reinforcement of domestic production, which in turn may fortify the agricultural industry and agri-food network in Ontario and for Ontario. (Kubursi, Cummings, MacRae, & Kanaroglou, 2015). In addition, the importance of domestic food and beverage manufacturing, the rise of urban agriculture and the potential impact of national initiatives such as the Food

¹⁹ Ibid

Policy for Canada demonstrate it is time for a paradigm shift in the way we view the food system and its relationship to land (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000).

Section 5: Intersection between Planning and Food Systems

Interaction of provincial planning framework and food

As discussed in the previous section, there is an absence of a food systems planning approach in the planning framework in Ontario. This section examines the current state of land-use planning in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region, for the purpose of illustrating gaps in an otherwise relatively comprehensive planning framework, since it is necessary to “identify and understand food system challenges so as to reduce food insecurity. Looking at the food system allows that” (Growing Food Connections Project, 2017). A literature review of applicable provincial land-use plans, and corresponding guidance documents further demonstrates the inconsistencies in provincial government management and control of land-use planning, the Agricultural System²⁰ (Ag System) and the management of food systems in their entirety, which in turn impacts the access to and availability of food in Ontario. The review further highlights institutional contributions to food insecurity in Ontario as land-use planning plays a significant role in determining access to and availability of food (especially in relation to zoning and land use designations), as stated in earlier sections of this research study. The plans to be reviewed include *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019* (A Place to Grow), and the *Greenbelt Plan, 2017* (GBP). The *Provincial Planning Statement, 2014* (PPS), and the *Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020* (IPAS) will also be reviewed as they are intrinsic to the planning framework and the food system and Ag System and would play a substantial role if the province undertakes a food systems planning approach.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) is a region in southern Ontario, considered to be the “economic engine of Ontario” (Government of Ontario, 2019).. In this area occurs the convergence of multiple factors including but not limited to rapid urbanization, growth of a multi-million, multicultural population with diverse needs, an economy that supports a significant part of Canada’s GDP, employment and industry opportunities, biodiversity and ecologically significant natural environments, productive farmland and a robust agricultural sector

²⁰ Defined in the GBP as: “the system mapped and issued by the Province, comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components: an agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, and rural lands that together create a continuous, productive land base for agriculture; and an agri-food network, which includes infrastructure, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector”. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/document/greenbelt-plan-2017/definitions>.

(Government of Ontario, 2019) and is also the site of Canada's largest city. By 2041, the GGH is "forecasted to grow to 13.5 million people and 6.3 million jobs" (Government of Ontario, 2019). The food system stresses we currently face from residing in a large urban centre with an anticipated steady growth such as the GGH speak to the future pressures we will face, and how that will shape our food systems as well as urban and rural spaces. It is therefore necessary to examine the shortfalls of our regional food system from different perspectives, the focus of which is the planning framework for this research study. The GGH is governed by four overlapping provincial land-use plans; A Place to Grow, the GBP, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2014 (ORMCP) and the Niagara Escarpment Plan, 2014 (NEP). These four plans provide guidance for unique landforms, urban and rural areas, including the Greenbelt²¹, the Niagara Escarpment²² and the Oak Ridges Moraine²³.

All four plans are provided direction by the Provincial Policy Statement 2014²⁴ which "provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest...Sets the policy foundation for regulating development and use of land" (Government of Ontario, 2014). Legislative guidance for the above four plans is provided by the *Planning Act, 1990* in general, and then the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, the *Greenbelt Act, 2005*, the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001* and the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, 1990*. Provincial land-use plans are reviewed and updated a minimum of every 10 years, except for the NEP which is reviewed every five (5) years. Following the provincial elections in 2018, A Place to Grow and the Provincial Policy Statement were revised. The *Planning Act, 1990* underwent regulatory changes under Bill 108 *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019* omnibus bill. However, the GBP, ORMCP and NEP have not undergone any changes. This makes for an interesting planning dynamic that will be discussed further below.

²¹ The Greenbelt is comprised of approximately 800,000 hectares of protected land, including farmland, forests, wetlands, watersheds and urban river valleys and greenspace, located in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region of southern Ontario. It spans 325 kilometers from the eastern boundary of the Oak Ridges Moraine to the western boundary of the Niagara River, and includes both the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment. Sourced from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-greenbelt>

²² The Niagara Escarpment is a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, that spans "725 kilometers from Queenston on the Niagara River to the islands off Tobermory on the Bruce Peninsula". Retrieved from <https://www.escarpment.org/LandPlanning/NEP>.

²³ The Oak Ridges Moraine is an "irregular ridge stretches 160 kilometers from the Trent River in the east to the Niagara Escarpment in the west. The Escarpment, the Moraine and the Greenbelt Plan's Natural Heritage System together form the foundation of south-central Ontario's natural heritage and green space systems. Strategically located north of and parallel to Lake Ontario, the Moraine divides the watersheds draining south into western Lake Ontario from those draining north into Georgian Bay, Lake Simcoe and the Trent River system. The Moraine shapes the present and future form and structure of the Greater Toronto region, and its ecological functions are critical to the region's continuing health". Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/oak-ridges-moraine-conservation-plan-2017>

²⁴ In 2019, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 underwent a review and public consultations as part of the *More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan*. As the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 does not take effect until May 1, 2020, the version referred to in this research paper is the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014. However, it is interesting to note that on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website, the webpage dedicated to the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 has already been archived, and is considered out of date.

Provincial Policy Statement, 2014

The PPS “provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land-use planning and development...[It] Sets the policy foundation for regulating development and use of land” (Government of Ontario, 2014). However, for a foundational document upon which every provincial land-use plan depends to provide planning guidance, it contains very little to no direction on food systems planning. In Section 1, Part 7 (entitled Long-Term Economic Prosperity), it has one line on the support of local food and the sustainability of the agri-food sector (Government of Ontario, 2014). With respect to agricultural planning, Section 2 details permitted uses on and protections for agricultural land. While this document should be high level to ensure municipalities have the flexibility to conform with provincial planning guidance in a way that suites their respective geographic areas and planning needs, this is one of the main documents that anchors the planning framework in the GGH. The absence of even the acknowledgement of food systems planning from a lens outside of economic development demonstrates this planning approach is not even on the provincial planning radar.

The core platform to the Ford administration is economic development and job creation. Consequently, every other facet of government work is viewed through the lens of its respective market value. However, as demonstrated by the PPS and the focus of the following provincial plans this perspective is not new in relation to the food system in Ontario, as it “exists in global marketplace” (American Planning Association, 2007). The emphasis on economies of scale, the integration of supply chains often leading to the consolidation of power by corporate interests in the food retail arena and the food system, could result in market failures. What this means, is the influx of larger organizations taking over the means of food production, and the resulting loss of competition within the food system contributes in part to unstable regional and local food systems. The bulk of the system is ultimately dependent on / controlled by the actions of a few players, who determine what occurs in the system based on their own agenda (usually profits) rather than ensuring the availability of and access to nutritious food. This in turn, paves the way for an increase in food insecurity (American Planning Association, 2007). A focus on solely the economic lens also further removes decision-making power from the multitude of participants within the food system and adds more barriers between people and their food. If communities do not know what they are eating, where it comes from and how it gets to their plates, they not only start to lose control over their residents’ health and wellness, but the also connection to the land the community occupies. If that weakens, residents no longer actively participate in their communities and begin living in silos.

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019

Ontario's planning framework in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) is simultaneously comprehensive and fragmented. Despite the latticed approach of multiple provincial land-use plans with different geographic-specific policies and permitted uses customized to the GGH that also provide guidance to municipalities in their planning exercises, food seems to be an afterthought. Access to and availability of food seems to be a happy coincidence of a planning exercise, rather than the lens by which planning occurs notwithstanding, the efforts and input into the Ag System by the province to maximize economic benefits. This is best demonstrated by the primary land-use plan responsible for growth management in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Area (GGHGA), A Place to Grow. This document "informs decision-making regarding growth management and environmental protection in the GGH" (Government of Ontario, 2019). Furthermore, it is characterized as a strategic plan that is "an overarching strategy that provides clarity and certainty about urban structure, where and how future growth should be accommodated and what must be protected for current and future generations" (Government of Ontario, 2017), whereas the other plans (GBP, ORMCP and NEP) are applicable to more niche areas of the GGH.

The GGHGA consists of an inner ring and outer ring²⁵ and policies in the plan attempt to cater to the unique needs of the municipalities (single, upper-tier and lower-tier) in each ring, while setting out broader guidelines for land-use planning across the GGH and province. In addition to its focus on growth management (increasing density and intensification in delineated built-up areas with expansion into designated greenfield areas tightly controlled by forecasted growth), the purpose of A Place to Grow is the "achievement of complete communities...in a way that supports economic prosperity, protects the environment and helps communities achieve a high quality of life" (Government of Ontario, 2019).

According to A Place to Grow, protection of productive agricultural land (as it is a finite resource), ensuring an adequate supply of land and the long-term support of the agri-food network is integral to the management of growth, and to guarantee "a productive agricultural economy and secure food supply" (Government of Ontario, 2019) and "the provision of healthy,

²⁵ The boundaries for the outer ring of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan Area consists of Barrie, Brantford, Guelph, Kawartha Lakes, Orillia, and Peterborough; the Counties of Brant, Dufferin, Haldimand, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe, and Wellington; and the Regions of Niagara and Waterloo. The boundaries for the inner ring of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan Area consists of Hamilton and Toronto and the Regions of Durham, Halton, Peel, and York. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/document/growth-plan-greater-golden-horseshoe/definitions>.

local food for future generations” (Government of Ontario, 2019). Consequently, the province works with municipalities in the GGH to identify map and refine the Ag System, defined as:

“As a continuous productive land base for agriculture the Agricultural System is comprised of

- a. prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, and rural lands that together create a continuous, productive land base for agriculture; and*
- b. an agri-food network²⁶, which includes infrastructure, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector [including] regional infrastructure and transportation networks; on-farm buildings and infrastructure; agricultural services, farm markets, distributors, and primary processing; and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities” (Government of Ontario, 2017).*

To that effect, the province also embarks on “integrated planning for growth management, including goods movement and transportation planning, will consider opportunities to support and enhance the *Agricultural System*” (Government of Ontario, 2019) meaning planning for the protection of agricultural land and the agri-food network is part of a systems approach. Additionally, the provincial plans (in particular A Place to Grow and the GBP) include descriptions of minimum standards for transit considerations, employment, housing, infrastructure, public service facilities, the environment, natural heritage features, hydrological features, the long-term viability and productivity of agriculture, the conservation of cultural heritage resources, climate change considerations and even watershed planning (by way of the GBP). However, the one benchmark missing is what happens between the protection of agricultural lands and the agri-food network, and food products ending up in households. If a systems approach is encouraged in almost every planning document, where municipal boundaries are rendered moot in favour of widespread, consistent policies, especially to manage an anticipated increase in growth, it seems odd there would not be a corresponding consideration of the entire food system, rather than a few elements of it. While it has been established that the food system occupies a strange realm between public and private interests, so do any of the aspects of planning listed above.

²⁶ Defined by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs as “infrastructure, services and other agri-food assets needed to sustain and enhance the prosperity of the agri-food sector. For example, this includes transportation systems, agricultural services, farm markets, distributors and primary food processors” (Government of Ontario, 2020).

The definition of the Agricultural System²⁷ is the closest consideration of the food system that exists in up-to-date planning documents in Ontario. It lacks however, an acknowledgement of the interconnected parts of the food system that are necessary to sustain a healthy and successful Ag System, including the various participants and relationships that occur to enable the Ag system, the end results of the crop, animal and horticulture and food manufacturing industries (meaning food products), their distribution, sale, consumption and waste. While that may seem like an out of scope exercise or externality to the planning framework, as iterated above, the vision of A Place to Grow is to “support the achievement of complete communities [such that] residents will have easy access to food, shelter, education, health care, arts, recreation and information technology” (Government of Ontario, 2019).

It is necessary to note that the IPAS in its current form is the result of collaborative research projects / papers undertaken by the Province, municipalities and stakeholders since the 1970s to better convey the importance of comprehensive protection of agricultural land and the necessity to integrate land-use planning and economic development, to ensure the long-term viability of the agricultural sector in Ontario (Government of Ontario, 2020).

The outcomes of the Agricultural Systems approach include:

1. *“Active planning for agriculture and rural economic development based on reliable mapping, data and tools.*
2. *Improved viability of agriculture and growth of the agri-food sector.*
3. *Better protection of the agricultural land base.*
4. *Increased land use planning consistency and certainty across municipalities.*
5. *Reinforcement of the synergies between agricultural, natural heritage and water systems, as outlined in provincial policy.*
6. *Collaboration between the Province, municipalities, farmers and businesses with a common interest in a strong agri-food sector.”*
(Government of Ontario, 2020)

²⁷ Defined by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs as both the *agricultural land base* (“consists of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas and rural lands, that together create a continuous productive land base for agriculture” (Government of Ontario, 2020)) and the *agri-food network*.

The Agricultural System as well as the provincial land-use plans and the PPS all demonstrate the potential good that may occur through comprehensive, integrated, systems approach to planning. However, that vision cannot be realized, if there is only partial consideration of the various pieces that make that vision a reality. As the Ag System is valued primarily through the economic benefits it affords the province, other less traditionally profitable aspects of the food system are almost ignored, because they do not fit into that “value-added” perspective. Food is therefore isolated from the idea of what makes a community “complete” and only merits a cursory and high-level mention in provincial plans. It is a misnomer to argue that agriculture and food are the same. Agriculture is a vital part of the food system, but the food system encompasses more than just protected, valuable agricultural lands and the networks by which it is produced and distributed. Compact built-form and intensification apparently go hand in hand, as does effective multi-modal and active transportation, employment, and housing, but for the most part food is absent, and this is not unusual. In A Place to Grow, considerations of food are reduced to a check box:

“2.2.1 Managing Growth

4. Applying the policies of this Plan will support the achievement of complete communities that:

d) expand convenient access to:

iv. healthy, local, and affordable food options, including through urban agriculture”.

“4.2.6 Agricultural System

7. Municipalities are encouraged to implement regional agri-food strategies and other approaches to sustain and enhance the Agricultural System and the long-term economic prosperity and viability of the agri-food sector, including the maintenance and improvement of the agri-food network by:

a) providing opportunities to support access to healthy, local, and affordable food, urban and near-urban agriculture, food system planning and promoting the sustainability of agricultural, agri-food, and agri-product businesses while protecting agricultural resources and minimizing land use conflicts”.

Ontario's Greenbelt is over 2 million acres of protected land located in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region (Government of Ontario, 2017). This area aims to protect ecologically significant features (including but not limited to the Natural System²⁸, biodiversity, habitats, green and open spaces, farmland, hydrological features etc.), tourism and recreational pursuits. The intention is also to improve and fortify linkages between areas of the Greenbelt (especially since it is intersected with Settlement Areas²⁹ including major urban areas like the City of Toronto), and connect the Greenbelt to the Great Lakes, through the “protection of natural and open space lands” (Government of Ontario, 2017) while balancing unprecedented growth in the GGH. Examples of landforms present in the Greenbelt include the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Rouge National Urban Park.

Unlike A Place to Grow, the GBP remains unchanged from the version released in 2017. Described as the “cornerstone of Ontario's Growth Plan³⁰” (Government of Ontario, 2017), the GBP in cooperation with the ORMCP and NEP “identify where urbanization should not occur in order to protect the agricultural land base and ecological and hydrological features” (Government of Ontario, 2017). The plan is a combination of long-term, strategic direction over the proposed planning horizon (2041), a land-use plan in the traditional sense in that it provides some land-use designations to be applied by municipalities in their respective Official Plans and is also in part an implementation guideline for municipalities (Government of Ontario, 2017). The lands described in the GBP, ORMCP and NEP are all part of Ontario's Greenbelt. Like A Place to Grow, it builds on the planning foundation provided by

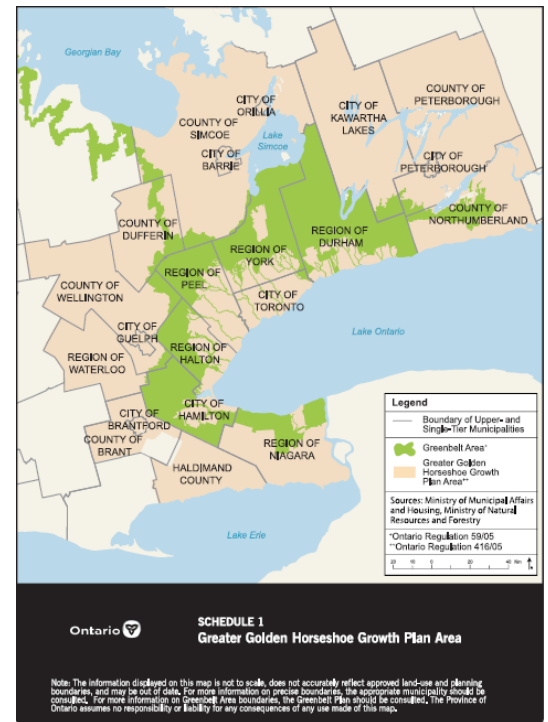


Figure 1. The Greater Golden Horseshoe (Source: Government of Ontario, 2019)

²⁸The Natural System “identifies lands that support both natural heritage and hydrological features and functions, including providing for pollinator habitat, which is essential for agricultural production and for ecosystems”. Sourced from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-greenbelt>. It is also “comprised of the Natural Heritage System, Water Resource System and key hydrologic areas, key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features”. Sourced from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-greenbelt>.

²⁹Defined in the Greenbelt Plan, Settlement Areas are “urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are: (a) built-up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and (b) lands which have been designated in an official plan for development in accordance with the policies in the Growth Plan. Where there are no lands that have been designated for development, the settlement area may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated (Growth Plan)”. Sourced from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-greenbelt>.

³⁰ The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, also known as the Growth Plan is the former name of A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019.

the PPS, 2014 to “support the achievement of complete communities” (Government of Ontario, 2017), and the protection of “agricultural lands, water resources and natural areas” (Government of Ontario, 2017). However, the GBP takes the additional step to working towards a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions and a future of low carbon communities (Government of Ontario, 2017). The Greenbelt consists of Protected Country Side, [a land use designation that has the Ag System, the Natural System (NS) and Settlement Areas], environmentally protected lands (as described by the ORMCP and NEP) and agricultural lands (Government of Ontario, 2017). The GBP is also aligned with Ontario’s former Climate Change Strategy, although this program is no longer in effect because of the change of government.

One major focus of the GBP is the protection of the agricultural land base in the GGH to sustain the long-term capacity of the land, by preventing its “loss and fragmentation” (Government of Ontario, 2017), and the encouragement of agriculture as a “predominant land use” (Government of Ontario, 2017). As noted above in the review of A Place to Grow, it works closely with the other land-use plans applicable to the GGH to achieve this goal. Furthermore, the protection of the agricultural land base and the support of the agri-food network does not occur in a vacuum, as the GBP also examines development and resource use in the context of a web, that considers the vision for the NS (including watershed planning), Urban River Valley areas and the interaction of lands predominantly addressed by other plans. The integration of these otherwise disparate subject areas demonstrates a willingness to make connections across the spatial landscape in order to comprehensively and systematically address land-use planning in the region. This again, indicates a systems approach to planning in the GGH. However, as A Place to Grow and the GBP share a lot of the same policies, land-use designations and language pertaining to the Ag System and food systems, there is a reinforcement of a missed opportunity to address agricultural protection from a food systems lens, especially in a land-use plan that is known primarily for its protection of specialty and unique lands (like prime agricultural lands). Once again, the consideration of food and food systems is relegated to a few lines in the plan without any guidance or further thought.

Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System, 2020

The *Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System, 2020* or IPAS is a supplementary document to A Place to Grow, that identifies and maps the Ag System in the GGH and, provides guidance to municipalities on how to implement Ag System policies from A

Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan. It was first developed in 2017, with the goal of highlighting that farmland (the agricultural land base) and related infrastructure, and assets (the agri-food network) “need to coexist and be compatible with rapidly growing communities” (Government of Ontario, 2020).

The IPAS was revised in 2020, following the change in provincial government in 2018. Almost immediately, the IPAS introduces implementation of agricultural planning policies through an economic lens, referring to the agri-food sector as “a key economic driver” (Government of Ontario, 2020). With the exception of an introductory statement on the importance of sustainable and nutritious food, primarily highlights the importance of protecting the agricultural land base and agri-food sector to strengthen Ontario’s economy. It does not discuss the increased quality of life for residents in the GGH, the adoption of an “Agricultural System approach” (Government of Ontario, 2020) for agricultural planning in the GGH and emphasis on “cooperation between land use planners, economic developers, different levels of government, communities and the agri-food sector” (Government of Ontario, 2020). It identifies different types of agricultural land, and designates appropriate land-uses for them, while underscoring the importance of a “continuous and permanent land base for agriculture” (Government of Ontario, 2020) ensuring we understand the linkages between the different types of land and their respective features, to ultimately prevent the undue conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses (Government of Ontario, 2020).

The IPAS is divided into two parts. The first provides history of and context around the Agricultural System, and the way by which agricultural land is identified by the province and interacts with other land-use designations (such as the natural heritage system and the water resource system. The second part speaks to the implementation of the agricultural system policies from the provincial plans, in municipal Official Plans and any corresponding zoning by-laws. The document states that through the “implementation of the *Agricultural System* policies, municipalities have the opportunity to actively plan for agriculture and food systems” (Government of Ontario, 2020). It discusses the avenues through which they can plan for agriculture in their respective jurisdictions, including the “Official Plan Review process, economic development initiatives, asset management plans, and multi-regional collaborations” (Government of Ontario, 2020). It also discusses different requirements around the types of agricultural land-use areas (speciality crop areas, prime agricultural areas, and candidate

areas), interaction other land-use designations such as natural heritage features as well as the process around consultations and support from the province.

The examination of the documents above underscores the need for government intervention and leadership in the provincial planning framework, to achieve a certain standard of living for the residents of the GGH. A prime example of how government intervention and collaboration may better serve a sector and communities is demonstrated by the development of agri-food asset mapping in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. This initiative resulted from the collaboration between the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance, municipalities and the Province. By “combining many data sources and GIS, they produced a database and mapping to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing agri-food assets, gaps and new opportunities” (Government of Ontario, 2020). Demonstrably, Ontario seeks to address and manage holistically parts of the food system, to ensure it prospers. However, this cannot happen effectively if the aspects of the food system that are integral to healthy lives and communities are missing. Limiting our conception of the food system to the economic and market value it offers, and the traditional definition of the food value chain means that communities will remain incomplete.

Decision-making Authority for Planning in Ontario

Planning in Ontario is a technocratic exercise and is enshrined in a top-down mechanism. As mentioned previously, in the Canadian constitution provinces are responsible for management of land within their boundaries and provide legal and policy direction to municipalities within their jurisdiction. Therefore, the province is the final authority on planning rules, regulations, and decisions. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is the lead ministry on land-use planning in Ontario. Using the “One Window Planning Service”³¹ they work with partner ministries³² to provide advice on conformity to provincial planning rules. The provincial government also seeks the views of advisory agencies and government commissions, such as the Greenbelt Council who provide advice on planning matters related to the

³¹ Defined by the Ontario government as “the process whereby the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides municipalities, planning boards, developers and the public with one-stop access for provincial planning services”. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/document/citizens-guide-land-use-planning/plan-review-and-approval-process>.

³² Partner ministries include: “Environment, Conservation and Parks; Natural Resources and Forestry; Transportation; Tourism, Culture and Sport; Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Energy; Northern Development and Mines; Infrastructure; Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; and Health and Long-Term Care”. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/document/citizens-guide-land-use-planning/plan-review-and-approval-process>.

development and implementation of the GBP, A Place to Grow and the ORMCP (Government of Ontario, 2017); or, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, a provincial government agency under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry that is responsible to “develop, interpret and apply policies that maintain and enhance the vitality of the Escarpment’s unique environmental and landscape features.” (Niagara Escarpment Commission, 1973).

While balance of power over planning decisions rests with the province, collaboration with municipal, First Nations and Métis communities, residents, and myriad stakeholders is emphasized in the land-use plans applicable to the GGH. While best practices in policy development make the case for engagement with applicable communities, industries, advocacy groups and organizations, in Ontario consultation on decision-making is not mandatory. There is no legal obligation to carry out consultations unless it is stated explicitly in legislation or regulations such as the Environmental Bill of Rights. This presents a gap, reducing the opportunity for expanded ways of thinking, and the incorporation of different points of view that may improve a public service system, program, activity, or initiative. The power of consultation and engagement, and ability for the public (including other government entities, non-government organizations and groups) to influence policy is tangible. While some postulate that the best conditions for public influence over government decision occurs during the time of some sort of upheaval (such as an election, or an issue with a high level of public interest), that is not necessarily the case.

This is best demonstrated by the public interest during the proposal of Bill 66, *Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act*, which was an omnibus bill aimed at increasing opportunities for economic development and job creation introduced by the Ford Administration in 2018. Schedule 10, also known as the open-for-business planning by-law proposed an amendment to the *Planning Act, 1990* to allow municipalities to pass “open for business by-laws” (Government of Ontario, 2019) which would in theory allow municipalities to approve development projects on land otherwise protected as farmland or ecologically sensitive lands containing natural heritage and hydrological features, and may have even made it possible to build in the Greenbelt (The Canadian Press, 2019). Due to 508 public comments, strong public disagreement from municipalities (especially those on or around the Greenbelt) the proposed amendment to the *Planning Act, 1990* was voted down in the Standing Committee on General Government and repealed from Bill 66 (Government of Ontario, 2019). This kind of response was only possible because the *Planning Act, 1990* and legislative counterparts to the land-use plans applicable to

the GGH (listed above) requires varying types of consultation with municipalities and with the public depending on the specifics listed.

Section 6: Findings

In this section, I will share the results of my field research. It is organized by the methods of data collection: the jurisdictional scan, semi-structured interviews and general observations based on my experiences as a planner with the Ontario government. The section will be summarized with a list of recommendations on actions or best practices that can be integrated into Ontario's planning context, to enable a transition to a food systems approach to land-use planning.

Jurisdictional Scan

None of the provinces in Canada take a food systems approach to land-use planning. Economic development and maximizing profits are the primary lens, whereas individual and community health, access, knowledge and sustainable agriculture are secondary or tertiary considerations, if at all. While this is not surprising, it confirms the premise that governments take a fragmentary approach to the food system and focus on what is considered the most traditionally profitable aspects of the system, rather than the system as a whole and benefits it provides. The j scan illustrates that provinces across Canada have one of three scenarios, regarding their planning structures (see Appendix B for details).

The first is a strong legislative framework that is highly prescriptive and enables the development of enforceable policies. This reflects a centralized approach to decision-making and can help ensure consistency and stability across a region (Connell, 2012). A drawback of this, is that a one-size fits all perspective does not necessarily take into account the local conditions and operational challenges for communities subject to the rules.

The second, is a flexible legislative framework that relies on enabling policies to support programs and initiatives (put forth by either the provincial or municipal government, or in some cases occurs as a hybrid option between private and public interests). Some provinces (namely in western Canada) also have advisory committees that are comprised of non-political staff (selected through public recruitment or appointed by government) to manage these issues, but the government is the final decision-maker. This reflects a decentralized approach to decision-

making, where local conditions are paramount to the process. This may result in inconsistencies across a region and could result in complicated situations arising (Connell, 2012).

The third is a haphazard approach of some legislative guidance that is flexible, and only applies to certain situations, resulting in disjointed programs and opportunities to achieve land-use planning goals. The J scan also indicates that some of the provinces that adopt this style of planning also suffer from acute food insecurity, although there was no evidence of a causal or correlational relationship between these two factors. Provinces that have lighter planning frameworks and do not have consistent policies around food and agriculture, generally seem to address issues of food insecurity through health and income assessments managed by their respective departments of health and economic development. This may present as hands-off legislative oversight or financial support for Indigenous communities, CSOs, institutions of higher education and other organizations, to develop programs targeting food insecurity.

The way agriculture and food are addressed in the planning context at the provincial level (if at all) may indicate the level of importance of these sectors to the government. As the J scan demonstrates, inclusion of these sectors in planning documents occurs differently across provinces, not only with respect to existing practices, but how they are planned for in the future. Some provinces focus on resolving the current issues related to these sectors, whereas others also develop long-term strategic plans. This is in part influenced by the planning structures discussed above, wherein some provinces rely on municipalities to manage agriculture and related areas within their respective jurisdictions, and perhaps expect that “market forces will properly allocate resources” (MacRae R. , 2021). It also indicates the priority these issues hold and the capacity of provincial governments to address them. This is problematic because when provincial government chooses to delegate responsibility of these sectors to municipalities (as illustrated in the J scan), there results a patchwork administration of a basic human right within the province and may contribute to severe food insecurity.

Regardless of land-use planning frameworks that govern them, municipalities across Canada have taken it upon themselves to develop programs targeting food insecurity, which also try to loop in land-use planning to the best of their ability. Examples include³³ Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Markham, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Vancouver and Waterloo. Some are enabled by provincial legislative and policy frameworks and have the capacity to

³³Per the J scan, it is also necessary to mention the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative in Manitoba. This provincial government initiative supports local food production, access and building food self-sufficiency in remote and northern communities in Manitoba. The province provides funding, guidance and resources to organizations and partners that work in myriad communities to deliver local and regional food security projects.

undertake this feat, others have established collaborative relationships with institutions that may provide them with assistance through financial resources, knowledge sharing and other kinds of support. Some are a mix of both these approaches. While some provinces like Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec provide guidance or resources to the municipalities, Ontario does not. As mentioned in Section 5 of this research paper, access to “healthy, local and affordable food options” (Government of Ontario, 2019) is briefly acknowledged in A Place to Grow.

However, the province does not provide any guidance on how the policies of A Place to Grow will support and facilitate that access. Furthermore, municipalities are subject to provincial oversight, as determined by the Canadian constitution. Therefore, it is the province’s obligation to bring a food systems approach to planning, as they have the power to do so. If municipalities choose to pursue food systems planning as part of their long-term vision or are left the responsibility for developing opportunities for food systems planning, they require financial, knowledge and labour resources to assist them with this endeavour, and a minimum of implementation guidelines, which again falls to the province. This reinforces that neither the food system in its full iteration nor food security has a place in Ontario’s planning framework at this time. This is curious because there are many other areas in planning where the Ontario government provides comprehensive support, rather than assigning responsibility to another entity.

Despite the narrow perspectives applied by provincial governments around the importance of food and agriculture, opportunities exist to tweak the system, using existing legislation, regulations and every day business practices such that elements of the food system are more fully integrated into the planning practice. Two provinces that Ontario may adopt best practices from are British Columbia and Quebec. These provinces also have strong, centralized legislative frameworks that are prescriptive enough to support the development of enforceable policies (through regulations). While a top-down planning exercise may be concerning because operational policies that are developed may not be applicable to the communities they target, the provinces’ (legislative) mechanisms for consultation and practice of collaboration serve as a balancing force that not only enables the needs of a community to be highlighted and addressed, but offers partners, stakeholders and the public a measure of involvement. In addition, despite recent changes to the Planning Act and priorities in Ontario, the infrastructure for municipalities, the public and myriad other stakeholder to weigh in on planning matters does

still exist, and so does the public appetite. Therefore, Ontario is well positioned to integrate a food systems approach to planning.

Furthermore, aspects of food system integration already occur in all three provinces. This is evidenced by: land reserves subject to agricultural protection (the Agricultural Land Reserve in British Columbia, the Agricultural System in Ontario and the Agricultural Zones in Quebec); municipalities in these provinces have the flexibility to develop food systems plans that apply to their jurisdictions and several of them have (for example Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal), the economic opportunities presented by the agricultural sector are vigorously prioritized and the importance of strengthening the local food sector is emphasized. This demonstrates that the planning framework can be used to strengthen connections between consumers and their food, because it has been done to strengthen the connections between the land base and the economic development of the agricultural and food sectors.

Following the 2018 election the planning framework in Ontario underwent significant changes. Land-use planning in the GGH is presented as a highly comprehensive framework, that uses a systems approach to adequately address a complex situation. For example, in the introduction to A Place to Grow, there is an emphasis on collaboration with different tiers of government, residents, First Nations and Métis communities and a variety of stakeholders to balance sometimes contradictory interests, all in pursuit of a strong economy and liveable communities that have the necessary public service and infrastructure connections required (Government of Ontario, 2019).

It is interesting to note however, the pursuit of the ideal living, working and commuting conditions change depending on the government in power. The planning framework in Ontario is in flux due to the change in provincial government in 2018 and all the land-use plans, planning legislation, procedural and guidance documents are at risk of changing (several which already have). However, as not all provincial land-use plans (especially those applicable to the GGH) have been revised, there are some contradictions in the conformity to and implementation of the plans. This adds unnecessary burdens to municipalities attempting to conform to provincial policies as timelines become compressed, financial and other resources are exhausted, capacity is stretched beyond means, there is confusion around implementation and municipal and regional governments are left in limbo and cannot adequately address on-the-ground planning issues. When changes happen at the province, they impact municipalities. Budgets get slashed, priorities get rejigged, and instability ensues, across regions. A have and have not situation is created.

Interview Themes

As stated in Section 2, one data collection method I used was to interview Ontario Provincial Planners. While the interview transcripts (including questions and responses) can be found in Appendix C, I want to share some of the insights provided, on the adoption of a food systems approach to planning in Ontario, and on land-use planning in general. It is necessary to note that these are not direct quotes, rather snapshots of the conversation I had with each participant. I chose these because they speak to some of the themes I have explored in this research paper including but not limited to: the place of food systems approaches in the planning framework; the lens by which food and agriculture are viewed (economic, health, income, and systems); consistency of planning across the province and the potential for silos and gaps; factors that influence the development and review of planning systems and accompanying tools; the establishment of planning interests; governance, roles and responsibilities regarding land-use planning; and definitions of the foodshed and food systems planning.

Participants:

Participant One³⁴ is a Planner with the province. They have intimate knowledge of planning and policy development in Ontario. As a generalist, they understand planning in a variety of contexts and have a hands-on understanding of the province's long-term planning vision, and the decision-making that goes into this process. I wanted their take (if applicable) on what can be done to broaden the integration of food systems and components of the food system into the general planning framework. The questions were designed to enquire beyond the protection of agricultural land (if anything) and associated economic interests.

Participant Two³⁵ is also a Planner with the province. However, as a Rural Planner with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs he not only has the same fundamental understanding of planning and policy development in Ontario as Participant One but is also a subject matter expert in the realms of planning, food systems and agriculture. I wanted his perspective on whether food systems fit within the planning realm, and how that may

³⁴ Participant One requested total anonymity.

³⁵ Participant Two consented to sharing some basic information.

occur. The interview questions for Participant 2 are therefore customized to better reflect his area of expertise in the planning field.

Definition of good planning

Balancing interests, regard for various perspectives, inclusion of factors outside of the planning framework and consideration of the long-term are critical to planning. Conventional planning is formulaic, where you match provincial interests to the existing planning framework (legislation, regulations and policies) and use that to determine good planning. However, this approach ignores the intricacies of communities and how planning decisions may impact them.

The establishment of provincial interests

It changes over time, in response to new and emerging issues or advice provided by staff who are seeing issues or situations arise in communities. Other times, an election cycle is the primary factor in determining priorities.

Definition of the food system and food security in the context of planning

A cycle occurs from the production of food to eating what is on a plate. There are many stages that take place in this cycle, and they have relationships with many different factors that make up the system. OMAFRA does not have a formal definition of food security, because it is not within their official purview. While there is encouragement to eat local to Ontario, the focus is mainly on the food industry rather than retailers or consumers. Food insecurity is also considered outside the scope of the ministry policies and legislation. Part of the reason for that, is the ministry was historically centered on the agricultural industry. When their authority expanded to food, it was only considered through an economic lens which has continued to this day. Furthermore, the ministry has not cultivated knowledge in other areas of planning that overlap with the agricultural sector, such as public health. This speaks to a gap in planning throughout the Ontario government. If departments are very focused on what they consider to be their core business, they can easily overlook areas that may be on the periphery but important to their work nonetheless. That does not mean that food is never considered. The intrinsic relationship between food and the agricultural sector is known and reflected in internal

documents and guidance. Since food is vital to agricultural land, there is a necessity to develop policies around this intersection, and there has been a start with acknowledgement of access to food in various planning documents.

Consistency of planning throughout the province and tailoring planning to geographic areas

Planning does not occur equally across the province. This is in part because it is challenging to balance policy and implementation at the correct scale. Issues emerge from municipalities through conformity exercises and the review of development applications. Planning documents are as a result constantly reviewed to develop better approaches to address these issues. It is for that reason changes to the planning system occur with some frequency outside of legislated timelines (e.g., Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments and decisions from the Ontario Lands Tribunal). Scaling provincial plans to geographic regions is one way to help manage issues and develop correct policies, but it is imperative to remember that while scale and complexity might be different, people's basic needs are the same. One way to then look at this, is that issues facing larger urban centres are not very different than those facing smaller urban centres, and perhaps the planning system should reflect that.

The place of the food system in land-use planning

The food system occurs in different iterations of the planning system. It isn't possible to extricate planning from food systems because it occurs in the protection of land, transportation of food to market, establishment of land-use designations and zoning for grocery stores and farmer's markets, and overarching policy frameworks that enable urban agriculture. There are many areas that planners do not get involved in, especially with respect to municipal and federal areas of responsibility. However, the food system has an immense role to play in the planning system and can help facilitate innovative solutions to food security issues, and not exacerbate them. It is also necessary to point out that the inherent value of land and its related processes (air, water) is protected when agricultural land is protected. Without this, we cannot survive. Furthermore, without careful management of our food systems, we are at risk because we cannot grow everything we eat and are therefore heavily reliant on outside forces.

The place of food security and the food system in planning instruments (e.g., provincial plans)

Food security and protection of agriculture are very important because we all eat. However, this issue requires a multi-disciplinary perspective because it is impacted by myriad factors. In Ontario, protecting agricultural land is well understood. However, other areas such as economic perspectives are not as well integrated as they should be, into the planning system. For example, farmers are getting older, so how do you encourage younger people to get into farming? What kind of tax incentives are available? A Place to Grow has a new tool, PSEZs (Provincially Significant Economic Zone), which protects land from conversions to ensure economic output. An example includes the Ontario Food Terminal. However, there may be other policy and economic levers that can be applied under this tool. Another area to consider is education and resources for planners on the intersection of food and planning is long overdue. If this is included in curriculums, it will help drive a more comprehensive management of something that is integral to our lives.

Discussions of the demand-side of food in the planning context, beyond economic development and protection of agricultural land

Conversations around how food flows from facility to the consumer have evolved over time. The way our relationship with food has changed is also reflected in the way we carry out planning in the realm of food. There is movement from purely focusing on the protection of agricultural land, to managing sprawl, to taking into consideration the supply chain and distance travelled by food, to adopting a systems approach through the Agricultural System, emphasising access to and purchase of local food and seasonal diets. Many municipalities are taking the lead on these conversations and how to make locally food available, accessible and not cost prohibitive. It is interesting to note, historically OMAFRA's perspective of some local food initiatives was to bolster sales of Ontario products and producers.

Independent Planning Commission

Ontario has advisory committees such as the Greenbelt Council and municipalities have advisory committees that are meant to provide guidance. For the most part, even though it is the provincial government that appoints advisors, they generally do so through a process that

determines the suitability and subject matter expertise of the appointee. However, the selection of people whose approach to finding solutions to problems is in line with the governing organization of the day is not unexpected. That being said, outside of the appointments process, if the advice provided is not binding, there is nothing compelling a government to take it. However, having the option to gain knowledge and best practices outside the confines of the political cycle can be helpful to decision-makers and to long-term planning.

Thoughts on a Ministry of Food and the provincial management of the demand-side of the food system

Agriculture and food policies are intertwined but are not treated as such. People working in these realms need to acknowledge their linkages and indicate that changes to one has an impact on and influence the other. A ministry dedicated to food would be an interesting way to address this, but with respect to management of the demand-side, it has not really come up as an option or consideration. The expectation is that OMAFRA deal with both sides of the coin, but perhaps their purview is more towards the supply-side. This is demonstrated by the proposed Ontario Food Policy in 2016, as part of the Minimum Income Pilot Project. While food security was one avenue explored by the initiative, OMAFRA (if engaged in this process) was not an initiator during the pilot program. There are campaigns through Foodland Ontario that are encourage buying local when available, but it might be helpful to see what other jurisdictions have done to manage both perspectives.

Recommendations

- 1) Land-use planning is only as stable as the authority that manages it

The government in power determines land-use planning priorities. The interests of an authority can result in rapid changes that may lead to inconsistencies in land-use planning. This is evident in Ontario per the changes to some planning legislation and policies, but not others. The Planning Act, 1990, A Place to Grow, 2020, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020, the Greenbelt Plan, 2017, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2017, and the Conservation Authorities Act, 1990 are meant to work in concert. However, as not all provincial land-use plans (especially those applicable to the GGH) have been revised, there are contradictions in the conformity to and implementation of the plans. This adds unnecessary burdens to municipalities attempting to conform to provincial policies as timelines become compressed, financial and knowledge resources are exhausted, capacity is stretched beyond means, there is confusion

around implementation and municipal and regional governments are left in limbo and cannot adequately address on-the-ground planning issues.

Recommendation: Create a more consistent, coherent and integrated planning architecture that integrates checks and balances to political decision-makers. Planning needs to have a measure of independence from the political process to ensure consistency, stability and longevity. Therefore, I propose a separate planning commission, similar to Quebec, that is quasi-independent and could be appointed through the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

2) Comprehensive is in the eye of the beholder

In traditional land-use planning, some areas are considered mainstays whereas others are not (though they should be). Food systems is one of those areas because of the persistent view that food is solely an issue of health and the market economy thus food insecurity is an outlier of planning. Thus, when planning documents are developed or reviewed, gaps occur because the scope is limited to what is known. An example of this was brought up in one of the interviews, around public health planning and missed opportunities to incorporate food insecurity in the planning framework. Centralizing the food system and using the systems approach with social determinants of health will make food systems way more accessible

Recommendation: The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (the lead ministry for land-use planning in Ontario) has several Partner Ministries with whom they collaborate on overlapping files. These relationships already exist and should be used to their fullest extent. Furthermore, in the realm of agriculture and land-use planning, shifting towards a circular economy perspective, allows for otherwise conventional “externalities” to be included into a sustainable economic model by focusing on regeneration and innovation, including food (European Commission, 2020). This may require some changes in legislation and create or leverage existing programs (for example, Community Improvement Plans or Community Benefits Charges) to incentivize private companies to adopt more sustainable business practices. When food becomes a profit-driven endeavour, there lays the risk of people going without adequate food and communities suffer.

3) Oversight matters

Municipalities are subject to provincial oversight and rely on the province to assist with the implementation of various programs. In Ontario, there is a significant difference between the resources and capacity of municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (for example, Toronto), than there is outside. Not having access to basic provincial direction and support for an issue such as food security, results in municipalities having to either forgo addressing this issue or bringing in costly support. Municipal boundaries should not determine access to a successful food system.

Recommendation: Replace perfunctory acknowledgements of access to food in provincial plans, and create an addendum to the Provincial Policy Statement, that addresses food systems planning in a robust way. As the one provincial planning document that goes beyond the Greater Golden Horseshoe region, it can provide direction to municipalities across the province while taking into account their very unique local conditions. Provide support for an action plan, that has a timeline and accompanying milestones, key performance indicators and review and evaluation. Facilitate linkages with options for tax benefits or low-interest loans, similar to the Community Improvement Plan process. In addition, leverage the existing relationships with other ministries to provide additional support. Without consistent support from the primary authority of municipal planning initiatives, it is much harder for municipalities to support food system initiatives.

4) Increased education

Inclusion of food systems approaches to planning curricula is a theme that has arisen in both secondary data collection and in interviews with study participants. A lack of understanding of what the food system is, and why the demand-side of food is necessary to planning contributes to the gap between food and planning. There needs to be a shift in the mindset, from the “individual” to the “collective”.

Recommendation: Courses on food and the planning system (beyond agriculture) should be mandatory, as it is one of the only essential parts of planning that is not addressed by planning. This also speaks to the recommendation above, around the unknown. If Planners are equipped to speak to areas of planning that are generally outside the planning realm, they are better equipped to bring them to light for mitigation. Universities often collaborate with governments around the world. Since existing relationships occur between the Ontario government and

Ontario universities, this could be one avenue to explore, with respect to obtaining research, innovation and best practices around planning.

Conclusion

Food systems are intrinsically linked to land-use planning and policy development but are often left out of the planning process, as they are not considered a traditional aspect of planning. My research question was to examine the relationship between these three areas, and use a foodshed approach to understand how the current land-use planning framework can be adapted to achieve comprehensive regional food security in Ontario. I tried to achieve this by understanding how land-use planning occurs in jurisdictions close to Ontario (in governance and geographic proximity) to determine if there are best practices that can be incorporated into Ontario's planning system. At this time, the food system (except the agricultural sector and farmland protection) is fairly removed from land-use planning in Ontario. However, the existing infrastructure with respect to legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks can be adapted to make room for it. Therefore, there is potential to expand current conceptions of planning to incorporate the food system in a more holistic way, thereby supporting regional food security efforts. Recommendations on how to achieve this include: maintaining collaborative relationships between government departments that have a planning perspective, ensuring stability and longevity of land-use planning through the use of a quasi-independent commission and educating planners on non-traditional aspects of planning.

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Appendix A: Rubric

Note: Please see the Jurisdictional Scan for more comprehensive information

[illegible]

Appendix C: Interview Transcript

Interview 1: Senior Planner, Ontario Public Service

- 1) What do you define as good planning, based on knowledge, experience and education?
- 2) do you know how the provincial interests get set? Do planners in the province provide guidance and suggestions? Is it up to the govt of the day to determine?
- 3) Do you find with advent of social media and people becoming more engaged in the way they communicate, does that play a role in agenda setting?
- 4) From your understanding in terms of planning occurs in province, planning act is primary piece of legislation guiding planning in the province and then supported by the PPS – how do the other plans factor in and other legislation like public lands act
- 5) Bearing in mind certain plans are geared towards southern ON, do you have a perspective on the other plans that impact planning across the province and do you have any thoughts on the consistency of planning throughout the province or the tailoring of planning towards particular geographic areas or anything to that effect?
- 6) Circling back to previous question on different areas that can influence the way policy development in planning occurs, do you see any benefit in an independent body that manages planning on behalf of the province and is split up geographically and look at more area specific pressures but keep in mind individual needs are their needs. Keeping in mind the balancing act, something that would be a bit independent from political platforms and the ministries that would carry out their work and independent from social media and the way public is engaging with the government and developers in the planning process (including development industries etc.)
- 7) Shifting gears, a little more you mentioned that periodically reviews do occur to try and go back and look at what has happened over a period of time and what adjustments may need to be made. The coordinated review occurred between 15/16 and came into effect in
- 8) Subsequent to that there was another review conducted by a different government that made changes to the GP. No new plans but new PPS. Judging by the importance of agriculture to ON and the importance of food in general to everyone in province and need for food for survival do you think issues of food security and issues related to the food system have a place in one of the four plans? How, if at all do you see that fitting in?

9) Even beyond the economic perspective, agricultural piece is robust (protection of land, mapping, implementation etc.), we have this multi billion-dollar industry in ON but there is still food insecurity at the local level. Adopting an urban agriculturalism perspective that's like "how do we get from the manufacturing/development of food to the protection of the inputs and the space where food is grown, to food on people's tables. In your experience, have you ever encountered those kinds of conversations as a planner?

10) You talked about sort of the perspective of local food considerations and the work municipalities could be doing to anticipate the needs of their communities, do you think the province has a role to play in that from the planning perspective? From farm to plate, what do you see as the province's responsibility, if that?

11) What are your thoughts on having a ministry of food?

11a) I should clarify, I meant the ministry of food, looking less so from a supply side of food but rather the demand side and a government department that would address the demands for food and all of the outlying factors that could impact that.

12) It's interesting because up until 2017 through the Anti-Poverty Secretariat the Ontario government was pursuing a Provincial food policy that addressed some of the demand side issues and they were associated with the Anti Poverty Secretariat because sort of tied in with the minimum income pilot project and those other initiatives. Its funny because a lot of the food security measures food insecurity focus is on unaffordability of food and economic side and household income side rather than perhaps the way we develop our cities and regions with access to food in mind because food is a public necessity but private entity and in other research that has been done its been demonstrated to be a precarious balance between the two – interesting to hear your thoughts as someone who knows this system inside and out, to get a sense of how can we make this more mainstream and more commercial, any thoughts on that?

13) Do you think the province has a role in that price difference between imported and local food? Do you think they have any kind of thing to do there?

14) My final question for you is, when you think of food systems where do you see land use planning within that, just your immediate sort of gut reaction?

15) One final follow up question, bearing this in mind, how would you in your own estimation as a planner define food systems planning

Interview 2: Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

- 1) The first thing I was wondering if you could explain to me is how you and if you feel comfortable your organization how do you define food security in the context of land use planning in the province with respect to agriculture, rural affairs and food in general?
- 2) Follow up question: Why do you think that is? That the ministry doesn't really look at so much as the demand side of food rather than the supply side?
- 3) Another follow up question to that would be, bearing this in mind and understanding the history and responsibilities of the ministry of agriculture, do you think it could be incorporated in the future considering the importance and very survival of humans on food?
- 4) And I'm sorry to keep digging at this, why do you think there are just undercurrents and just baby steps in reference to food? And who do you think from your own knowledge, understanding and experience would be the best to sort of lead a more proactive charge to look at food in the way planning is done at the provincial level rather than just acknowledgement of it, say in the PPS or in the greenbelt plan or the growth plan.
- 5) I wonder though, with the more intertwined relationship between urban and rural needs considering that access to food, water and shelter and clean air and soil if there aren't some divisions that have historically occurred because of the nature of urban issues vs rural issues and if they can't be...sorry I'm thinking out loud now...if there aren't more similarities between the two different geographic spaces than differences and what your thoughts are on that?
- 6) Jumping back a bit you had mentioned, when we talked about the way food security is defined, you mentioned local food. Uhm and I understand some of the province wide food access initiatives supported by OMAFRA are I think the local food act and the local food strategy. Can you expand on that and what perspective OMAFRA comes from to support local food and how that could potentially translate to land use planning policies or incorporating more of a systems approach uhm to food supply?
- 7) Bearing in mind what you said earlier about there are quite a few ministries or organizations that could be involved in looking at the demand side of food and acknowledging the demand side of food in land-use planning, uhm, and I should preface that by saying in consideration of potentially contentious relationships between countries where in Ontario we rely almost 20% of our food is imported and we don't really have a ministry of food that ensure from the seed to waste that there is an infrastructure in place to make sure people are eating properly, uhm do you think that OMAFRA has a role to play with respect to food systems resilience at all? Or does it again tie back to that economic development perspective and supporting Agri business or insuring that at least one part of the input of the land is available, can you speak to that and, the second part of that question (and I'm happy to repeat) what from OMAFRA's perspective is one of the biggest threats to the food system in ON considering potentially contentious trade negotiations, the reliance on imports, climate change these sort of things, can you speak a little to that?

8) Thank you for walking me through that, I have about two more questions, I am mindful that we've been speaking for about half an hour, and I don't want to take up too much of your time. So, in terms of government initiatives in relation to food, considerations of food security about two or three years ago the poverty secretariat had started to bring in considerations of an Ontario food policy. And as sort of an accompaniment to the minimum income pilot project, I'm not sure if they got to the consultation phase but I know the poverty secretariat started looking at what an Ontario food policy would look like, what areas it would hit, what areas it would need support from, and what the impact would have on the province. Do you have any information about whether OMAFRA consulted with them, internally (colleague to colleague) or anything to that effect?

9) Ok fair enough! And along that vein, as I'm sure you're aware the Federal government came out with the National Food Policy came out in June 2019, and I was wondering if any of the provincial ministries (I know you wouldn't know about any of the other provincial ministries) do you know if OMAFRA was also involved with that and providing advice or consulting with the Feds?

10) I guess my final question or vein of questions is with respect to what Ontario will look like in the future. You had mentioned that food is cursorily mentioned in the PPS and the growth plan and green belt plan, but from your perspective as a planner, what would you see, if you have a vision of this, as ideal with respect to the intersection of planning and the food system in Ontario to ensure that demand is met locally (all over the province). Do you have anything you'd like to speak to with respect to that? Something that is aspirational perhaps or something you may have given thought to, in terms of what the future could look like for food security in the province with respect to some of the governance aspects with planning being a provincial matter.

11) This is very interesting, it's a very niche area of planning that you have knowledge of this because you work in an industry of food and agriculture and the overlap with planning and most other planners, well it might be an incorrect assumption but most planners don't have that.