THE CITY OF COLWOOD: HOW CAN THIS COMMUNITY, WITH NO FUNCTIONAL ALR OR OTHER AGRICULTURAL LAND, MOVE TOWARDS GREATER FOOD SECURITY?

By

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The City of Colwood: How can this community, with no functional ALR or other agricultural land, move towards greater food security?

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ABSTRACT

Food security continues to be an area of concern worldwide. In Canada, our ability to feed ourselves has diminished significantly and on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, we produce less than 5% of the food we consume. A number of factors have influenced this decline including the globalization of food systems and an increase in regulations. Cities have an opportunity by way of by-laws to increase local food security. In this case study, The City of Colwood has little functional agricultural land but a significant opportunity to expand its urban agriculture activities. Although the community supports such initiatives, the local government has not yet implemented supportive policies and by-laws. This municipal government has the ability to increase local food security through the use of its legislative abilities.
# CITY OF COLWOOD

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The City of Colwood is governed by a progressive mayor and council who are “seeking innovative solutions to the challenges of governing in today’s world” (West, 2009, p. 19). In cooperation with the City of Langford, Colwood updated its Official Community Plan (OCP) in 2008, and it provides extensive direction with regards to urban agriculture. Although the Local Government Act does not commit the municipality to implement polices specified in the OCP, it does require that “all bylaws enacted or works undertaken by a Council after the adoption of an OCP must be consistent with the Plan” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 1-2). The underpinning of this OCP was “to harness development forces to contribute to sustainable and positive change” (p. 1-4), and it is seen by the community as their “sustainability road map” (p. 2-1). Local food production is prominently featured in this OCP with an entire section dedicated to food. The growing of food in the community is seen as possible “everywhere” (p. 5-8), and urban food systems are noted as part of the integrated infrastructure of Colwood (p. 12-2). In addition, a number of community organizations in and around Colwood are working to support local food production and increasing public awareness of the issues of food security and sustainability.

Globally, there has been a serious interest in food security and sustainability for over two decades. As early as 1987, the Brundtland Commission Report identified food security as a factor of sustainable development (Brundtland, 1987). In 2008, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), along with other international agencies, began speaking publically about a global food crisis. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) includes as part of its stated objective a secure food supply, recognizing that increasing greenhouse gas emissions and subsequent climate change will have dramatic impacts
on food availability, in particular for the poorest nations. Today, there is a rapidly growing food movement around the globe (Holt-Gimenez, 2009).

During this past decade, our relationship with food has changed. What was once a “fringe” issue has turned into an “obsession,” particularly in relation to locally and organically grown food (Borborygmi-GOOD, 2009).

In Canada, it is apparent that growing numbers of consumers want to purchase and support food that has been harvested and produced locally. A 2006 Ipsos-Reid poll found that 56% of Canadians “always” or “usually” check where their fruits and vegetables come from, and 42% buy local food regularly. Interest in and “support for local food is also apparent from the success of books such as The 100-Mile Diet and The Omnivore’s Dilemma, and the expansion of initiatives that support farmers’ markets, urban farming, and community supported agriculture (CSA) across the country…. 93% of Calgarians say farmers markets are important to their community while the number of farmers markets in Ontario has increased from 60 in 1991 to 132 in 2007” (Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, 2008, p. 1). “Canadian consumers are also concerned about the contribution of long-distance food travel to climate change and see a local diet as a means to cut carbon emissions” (D, p. 1) The demand for local food in Canada is increasing (D, p. 2) along with the interest in food generally. “A third of user-generated content” on the Internet is related to food. (Borborygmi-GOOD, 2009).

In the Capital Regional District of British Columbia, the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria has, and continues to be, the regional voice for issues of food security and sustainability through the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR):
CR-FAIR, formed in 1997, is a coalition of organizations and individuals involved in our local food system …. CR-FAIR’s mission is to increase knowledge of and bring about positive change in the food and agriculture system within the Capital Region. (CR-Fair)

CR-FAIR has representation from a broad range of sectors including non-profits working on issues of food security, regional government, provincial government from both agriculture and health, and organizations representing farmers and food processors (CR-Fair).

In 2004, CR-FAIR undertook a baseline assessment that examined the state of food security in the region (Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable, 2004, p. 3). The report identified “the need to increase the amount of food being grown within the region” as the most “pressing concern” (p. 3). Two contributing factors identified were that the area does not have sufficient professional farmers, especially younger farmers, and that there is a significant amount of agricultural land not under cultivation (p. 3). In addition, the region is “particularly vulnerable to a disruption in food supply” due to its island geography and its significant reliance on imported food (p. 5). Any disruption to transit services, a natural disaster, or a temporary closure of the border with the United States, would quickly lead to food shortages on Vancouver Island (p. 5).

Since the industrial revolution after World War II, the Canadian food system has changed significantly. What was once a system supplying local food to local people has become one of commodities and cash crops. According to Dale, most nations were self-sufficient with regards to food in the early 1960s, but now, in spite of the green revolution that promised high yields, only a few are.

Canadian farmers, who once represented the majority of the country’s population, currently account for only 2% of the population (Kneen, 1995). In addition to a declining
farming population, the number of farms has decreased while increasing in size. In 2006, “there were 29,870 farm operators in BC, a decline of almost 1.5% from 2001,” and the median age of farmers had reached 53 (British Columbia’s Farm Population). In 1935, the average Canadian farm provided food for 11 people, but by 2001, this had increased to 211 (Statistics Canada, 2008a).

Although farm size and total cash receipts have increased (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 101), net income has decreased. During the 30 years starting in 1971, take-home pay, as a portion of total farm cash income, declined from 26% to 8% (Statistics Canada, 2008b). Today, the bottom one-third of farms receive 4% of the country’s total farm revenue, while the top one-third receive 79% (Kneen, 1995). Even though revenues have increased, BC farm net income has become negative and continues to decline (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 101). As a result, over half of farm operators in Canada have off-farm employment or are self-employed (Statistics Canada, 2008a).

According to a recent study by the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Land, British Columbia produces 48% of the food it requires; however, some of this food is not consumed within the province. Less than 5% of the land base of British Columbia is suitable for agriculture, and “its availability for food production is declining” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 7). Although no baseline assessment has been conducted for Vancouver Island, a recent assessment conducted on Salt Spring Island concluded that only 4% of the vegetables and 7% of the fruit required to feed the island’s population are produced there (Reichart, 2005). One might conclude that the situation on Vancouver Island is similar. These tremendous declines in production, number of farms, number of farmers, and net income are evidence of an unsustainable Canadian
food supply system. The situation on Vancouver Island is indicative of our need to look beyond the status quo and introduce new ways of producing and distributing food.

Farmers can be impacted by all levels of regulatory systems; international, national, provincial, inter-provincial, and municipal, regardless of the range of their marketplace (i.e., domestic vs. export). Internationally, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) both have sections dedicated to agriculture. NAFTA’s intent is to open up the trade corridors between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. With regard to agriculture, the agreement requires that “parties shall work together to improve access to their respective markets through the reduction or elimination of import barriers” and that domestic support measures should be such that they “have minimal or no trade distortion or production effects” (North American Free Trade Agreement, 2008). The WTO, established in 1995, “is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations” (World Trade Organization, 2008) with 152 members as of May 2008. The WTO’s Agreement on Agriculture was implemented in 2001. Again, its intent is to make worldwide trade in agricultural products easier by creating a more level playing field.

At the national level, farmers are impacted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), responsible for issues of food safety in Canada and the Natural Products Act, legislation overseen by the federal government. Provincially, regulatory systems include marketing boards that oversee supply-managed products like milk and eggs, provincial health authorities, the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) (Agricultural Land Commission, 2008), and the BC Assessment Authority (BC Assessment, 2008), which determines property tax rates. In 2007, British Columbia and Alberta signed an inter-provincial agreement, the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA, 2009), which came into full effect in 2009. This
agreement applies lower financial limits to purchase values to ensure that all contractors, regardless of province, have equal access to contracts. It does not allow for location of input to be a factor in determining the successful bidder, excluding local food from taking preference.

Municipal governments, through powers conferred upon them by the Province (Benidickson, 2009, p. 39), impact farmers by implementing bylaws. While most urban municipalities, like the city of Colwood, contain an insignificant amount of land zoned agricultural, this does not in and of itself preclude agricultural activities. Urban agriculture is an attempt to bring farming and food production back into cities.

Although bureaucracies at all levels of government have the ability to impact farming and local food production, it is city and municipal governments that can have the most influence with regard to urban agriculture. Urban agriculture has an important and positive role to play in the future of both our food security and sustainability, and its expansion will serve to add resiliency to our food system by creating a buffer during times of uncertainty and increasing local food availability in general (Final Report, Phase 2, 2008 p. 7). Municipal governments must come to view urban agriculture as a positive addition to their communities rather than an activity that should be disallowed or one that needs to be tightly controlled.

According to Ellis and Sumberg (1998), municipalities should implement a number of strategies to facilitate the existence of and increase urban agriculture. They should revoke bylaws with regards to land use that are unenforceable, replace existing bylaws with uncomplicated, broad-scale zoning, identify public land that could be converted to urban agriculture, create criteria for access to urban agriculture land, ensure security of tenure for urban farmers, set aside land for urban agriculture during the planning process, encourage non-profit agencies providing
support to urban farmers, and permit the widest possible range of opportunities for urban farmers.

We live in an increasingly urban world, with the majority of people residing in cities. Between 1951 and 1981, the Canadian population residing in cities increased from 57% to 76% (Kneen, 1995). This urbanization has changed what were once “local, cyclically integrated ecological production systems” (Rees, 1997) into “global, horizontally disintegrated throughput systems” (Rees, 1997). This urbanization has resulted in “distancing” (Kneen, 1995) between the food producer and the food consumer and has resulted in city residents paying between 10% and 20% more for their food than suburban and rural residents (Mougeot, 1993). Urban agriculture is one way to reconnect people with their food, from a social and fiscal sense, while at the same time increasing both the sustainability and security of our food supply system.

According to Rees, “urban agriculture includes any activity associated with growing crops and some form of livestock in or very near cities for local consumption, either by the producers themselves or by others when food is marketed” (1997, p. 1). The economic depression in the US during the late 1800’s was the catalyst for the first organized gardening program, started in the city of Detroit, Michigan (Patel, 1996). During the next 60 years, urban agriculture seemed to fade away each time there was an economic recovery and return with the advent of economic hard times (Patel, 1996). In 1944, 40% of the food grown in the United States came from Victory Gardens (Patel, 1996).

Urban agriculture provides many other benefits besides the production of food for local consumption. The proximity of the food to the consumer reduces the need for packaging, refrigeration, and transportation; it can contribute to increased biodiversity; it can facilitate the establishment of new industries and employment opportunities; and it provides an opportunity to
close the nutrient cycle, thereby re-establishing local, cyclically integrated ecological production systems (Rees, 1997). In addition, greenhouse gas emissions are further reduced by the diversion of methane-producing substances from the landfill and the lack of utilization of chemical fertilizers (Rees, 1997). These organic production methods create an opportunity for increased stability in soils, reducing erosion, and decreased costs to farmers and prices to consumers due to lower input costs (Rees, 1997).

Due to its prevalence within cities, urban agriculture is most directly impacted by regulations at the municipal level. Studies of urban agriculture found that policies tend to fall within two main categories, those within the realm of municipal planning and those more closely related to typical agricultural policy. While the planning arm focuses on land access issues, the agricultural arm is more concerned with inputs and outputs of urban agriculture farming systems (Ellis & Sumberg, 1998). As such, municipalities play a key role in the preponderance of urban agricultural endeavours within their city limits and have a significant opportunity to increase both food security and sustainability for their constituents. In addition, increased food security empowers both individuals and communities, builds community pride, cleans up vacant lots, provides leisure activities, exercise, relaxation, and a refuge through working the land and an opportunity to reconnect with nature (Chaplowe, 1994).
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Definitions

Food security: “a sustainable and secure local food and agriculture system that provides safe, sufficient, culturally accepted, nutritious food accessible to everyone.” (CR-FAIR, 2008).

Sustainable food production: a system of food production that reconciles the three imperatives of sustainable development; provides for the ability to exist within the carrying capacity of our environment; allows for a democratic system whereby all players are able to live by their values; and, ensures that food producers are able to be fiscally sustainable and that consumers are able to afford to purchase the food. (Dale, 2001)

Food sovereignty: “people’s right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically and sound and sustainable methods and the right to define their own food and agriculture systems.” (Holt-Gimenez, 2009, p. 6)

Urban agriculture: “backyard, rooftop, balcony, boulevard, and school gardens, community and allotment gardens, fruit and nut trees and orchards, nurseries, flower, and herb gardens, and also the raising of chickens, fish, rabbits, and other small livestock in and around cities for personal, community, or commercial purposes.” (Food Matters! n.d., p. 6)

Food charter: a document that “presents a vision, principles, and priorities for a community’s food system. They are developed and endorsed by the community and its decision-makers.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 23)

Food system assessment: “A food system assessment compiles baseline information on assets related to food production, distribution, access, and consumption. This information helps communities determine their needs and opportunities for a sustainable food system.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 28)
Density bonus provision: rezone land for higher than specified levels of density provided that certain amenity contributions are provided by the landowner. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 50)

Transition Town: a movement that aims to “equip communities for the dual challenges of climate change and peak oil”. It is “an example of socioeconomic localization.”
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transition_Towns retrieved April 25/10)

Sustainable Development

As the Earth’s population nears 7 billion people, the demand for more goods and services grows. According to Dale (2001), this increasing demand results in more development that can be described as changing the biosphere and the application of resources to provide human needs and improve quality of life. Although, for many years, it seemed as though our capacity for growth was limitless, we have come to realize there is a limit to the growth that our Earth can sustain and the development resulting from it. The Earth is a closed system and, as such, is limited in natural resources as well as its capacity for assimilation.

Sustainable development is defined by the Brundtland Commission Report as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (1987, p. 12). Others, like Rees (1997), have extended the definition to more accurately reflect the need for sustainable development to go beyond the environmental implications of development and to take into account the social needs of individuals and communities (Dale, 2001). Herman Daly, an economist, highlighted the need for sustainable development to ensure the physical sustainability of the Earth maintaining that the rate of society’s throughputs did not exceed the Earth’s assimilative capacity (Dale, 2001). Dale noted that sustainable development must reconcile three imperatives – ecological, social and
economic — and that an equitable access to resources is necessary to its implementation. In short, development that is sustainable must limit itself to the capacity of our ecosystem in the long term while ensuring that the economic and social needs of our society are met now and into the future.

Today, we are collectively consuming more natural resources than the Earth has to offer. Ecological Footprint analysis (Wackernagel & Rees, 1996) looks at various types of human needs like food and shelter and, based on the individual’s or community’s lifestyle, applies an appropriate amount of productive land area, known as global hectares (gha) to it. Currently, the Earth is only able to supply us with 1.8 gha per person; however, we are using 2.2 gha per person (Global Footprint Network, 2006), resulting in an ecological deficit. Although most developing countries utilize far below the Earth’s capacity, developed nations, like Canada and the US, use much more than their fair share. For example, the ecological footprint of the United States is 9.6 gha per person, and in Canada it is 7.6 gha. Of the various goods and services required by Earth’s population — food, shelter, services, goods and mobility — food creates the largest ecological footprint in Canada and, except for shelter and mobility in higher income brackets, is consistently higher regardless of income (Mackenzie, Messinger, & Smith, 2008). Also, the ecological impact of food changes little from low-income households to higher-income households, making it a significant contributor for all Canadians.

Food Security and Sustainability

Food sustainability has become an important issue for many, in large part, due to the ongoing and escalating global food crisis. As early as 1987, the Brundtland Commission Report identified food security as a factor of sustainable development and identified subsidies, degradation of the resource base, pressure on forests, neglect of the small producer, and
government intervention as “signs of crisis” (p. 124). In particular, government intervention was cited as suffering three deficits — interventions lack an ecological orientation, policies tend to be national rather than regional, and incentive structures tend to result in overproduction of certain crops. In 2008, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), along with other international agencies, began speaking publically about a global food crisis. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) includes as part of its stated objective a secure food supply, as they recognize that increasing greenhouse gas emissions and subsequent climate change will have dramatic impacts on food availability, in particular for the poorest nations.

According to Dale (2001), sustainable development must reconcile three imperatives: the environmental, social, and economic. Therefore, in order for our food system to be sustainable, it must meet at least three criteria:

- It must provide for the ability to exist within the carrying capacity of our environment.
- It must allow for a democratic system whereby all players, consumers included, are able to live by their values.
- It must ensure that food producers are able to be fiscally sustainable and that consumers are able to afford to purchase the food.

The industrialized food system that feeds us today is not sustainable for it fails to meet any of these three criteria.

Food insecurity worldwide continues to rise. In the US alone, the number of hungry people in 2008 increased from 36 million to almost 50 million from the previous year (Holt-Gimenez, 2009). This translates into 17 million families (Holt-Gimenez, 2009). “The main cause
of hunger now and for the last half century has basically been that we have a vulnerable food system” (p. 2). The system that has been created is dominated by a few corporations who control the foods available to society. “Bunge controls 80% of the world’s grain, and Monsanto controls a fifth of the world’s seed” (p. 4) These vertically integrated companies “control our food from farm to fork” (p. 2). This has “created a highly volatile system, which is very vulnerable to both economic and environmental shock” (p. 2).

The contention of companies like Monsanto is that the only way to feed the world’s population is with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). In order to prove this, Monsanto and the World Bank initiated a four-year study, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (Holt-Gimenez, 2009). The results did not support their hypothesis, and it was shelved (Holt-Gimenez, 2009). In fact, during the 1960s and 1970s, the “heyday of the Green Revolution” (Holt-Gimenez, 2009), “per capital production went up by 11%,” but the number of hungry people also increased by 11% (Holt-Gimenez, 2009). “In capitalist times, food security and self-reliance have been obstacles to capitalist acquisition in the food system” (Toronto Food Policy Council, 1994, p. 6).

Canada has “the most oligopolistic food economy in the Western world. A small number of powerful players (4 and fewer) control 40% and greater of many sectors of the food economy” (Toronto Food Policy Council, 1994, p. 8). “As a consequence of urbanization, what were once local, cyclically integrated ecological food production systems have become global horizontally disintegrated throughput systems” (p. 30). “Although the Science Council of Canada raised the issue of food self-reliance as part of a sustainable agriculture system as an important policy question in the late 70s, little policy work has been done” (p. 17).
Since the 1980s, both the per capita grain production and area of grainland available per capita has been in decline (Rees, 1997). About 86 million hectares of land, twice the area of Canada’s cropland, has been lost to production worldwide due to degradation, and the remaining arable land is already under cultivation (Rees, 1997). Increased production under the current situation is likely limited as many believe that technological benefits resulting from the Green Revolution have been maximized (Rees, 1997). In British Columbia, “sustainable, long-term food production … faces a number of inter-related challenges, including access to land and water, an aging farm population, and the difficulty of making a living at farming” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. iv). Access to land by BC farmers is typically hindered by cost. “In Saanich, land prices have risen from an average of $25,480 per hectare (1974) to $304,851 (2005) to $666,504 per hectare (2006)” (Cotteleer, Stobbe, & van Kooten, 2007). Based on a North American diet, it has been estimated that 0.5 hectares of land is required to feed one person for one year (B.C.’s Food Self-Reliance, n.d.), of which 10% requires irrigation. In 2005, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands estimated that 189,000 hectares of land was under irrigation (B.C.’s Food Self-Reliance, n.d., p. 2). It is estimated that BC’s population will reach 6,036,000 by 2036 (B.C.’s Food Self-Reliance, n.d.). This means that, for BC to be food self-sufficient, 3,018,000 hectares of arable land will be required, of which 301,800 will need to be irrigated, a 60% increase over 2005 estimates.

In addition to access to land, food prices are impacting our ability to become food secure because farmers in British Columbia are not fiscally sustainable. In recent years, “farm total net income has become negative and continues to decline, despite the increasing value of total cash receipts” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 101). In order for our food production to be
sustainable, it requires that all three pillars of sustainability are met. “If food production is not an economically profitable enterprise, the future of food production in BC is questionable” (p. 11).

Although retail prices of many foodstuffs have increased significantly during the past 30 years, the portion accruing to the farmer has not kept pace. The price of a sirloin steak “rose in price by $6.47 per kilogram while the price received by the farmer only rose by $0.27 per kilogram” (Martz, 2006). As well, cornflakes increased in price from by $1.96, while the price of corn decreased by $0.01 per box (Martz, 2006). Food prices are not set locally, but globally. This results in local prices often being set by the availability of cheaper imported products. Local agricultural production will only increase as prices paid to farmers increase, which is heavily dependent on world prices. (B.C.’s Food Self-Reliance, n.d., p. 13)

Canadians spend less on food as a proportion of income than any other developed nation. Across Canada, “household expenditures allocated for food steadily declined from 1981 to 2005,” and in 2008, Canadians spent only 11% of their income on food (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2009b). However, there is an increasing segment of the population with an interest in supporting a more sustainable food system. A recent study found that BC consumers spend in excess of $65M directly at farmers’ markets, and more than $53M at nearby businesses (Connell, Taggart, Hillman, & Humphrey, 2006).

Climate change has become the most recent incentive for supporting and promoting sustainable food production. Agricultural land use management plans “that maintain and increase soil carbon stocks can generate multiple benefits, including climate change mitigation, increased agricultural food production, pro-poor income generation, environmental services, and improved resilience/adaptive capacity of farming systems” (Mueller, Mann, & Lipper, 2009). Although food miles are often cited as significant contributors to climate change, a recent study
demonstrated that “greenhouse gas emissions associated with food are dominated by the production phase, rather than transportation. In the United States, production contributed 83% of the average American household 8.1 t CO2e/year footprint for food consumption, while transportation represented 11%” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 106, footnote 98). Salt Spring Island, BC, recently conducted a community energy baseline and found “that almost 40% of GHG emissions … could be attributed to the consumption of imported food” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-1).

They [small farmers] are the ones who are going to cool the planet. They don’t produce all the emissions. They sell locally, they rely primarily on organic material for fertilization, which means they actually capture carbon in the soil rather than emitting carbon and rather than emitting nitrous oxide. (Holt-Gimenez, 2009, p. 5)

This “unfolding global food crisis” demonstrates a need for “localized, self-sufficient economies, of which local production of food for local consumption is a vital component” (Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, 2008, p. 3). “What we have to realize is that the answer to the hunger crisis, to the agricultural crisis, to the crisis of poverty around the planet, is, in fact, small holders, small farmers” (Holt-Gimenez, 2009, p. 4). Food systems are sustainable when they “meet current and future societal needs for food … and they do so by maximizing the net benefit to society when all costs and benefits of the practices are considered” (Tilman et al., 2002). This sort of food production is sustainable due to its diversity. This diversity makes it “resilient to changes in climate, pests, diseases and public need” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 1). In addition, this sort of food system can feed the world now and well into the future, as has been evidenced by a University of Michigan study and corroborated by the United Nations: “So we have to rebuild farm economies around the world …. they are key to the
world’s food security” (Holt-Gimenez, 2009, p. 5). On Vancouver Island, many communities are rallying around the issue of “food self reliance” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-1), in large part due to the fact that “up to 95% of the food” consumed on the Island is “imported leading to negative impacts on GHG emissions, traffic, nutritional quality and local economy” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-1).

History of Farming and Food Production in British Columbia and Vancouver Island

Since the Industrial Revolution after World War II, the Canadian food system has changed significantly. What was once a system supplying local food to local people has become one of commodities and cash crops. According to Dale (2001), most nations were self-sufficient with regards to food in the early 1960s, but now, in spite of the Green Revolution that promised high yields, only a few are.

Canadian farmers, who once represented the majority of the country’s population, currently account for only 2% of the population (Kneen, 1995). In 1901, the number of census farms totaled 511,100, peaking at 732,800 some 40 years later. As machines made it possible to do more work with fewer people, census farms decreased in number. By 2001, there were only 246,923, down almost 11% since 1996 (Statistics Canada, 2008a). Although farms have decreased in number, they have increased in size. In 1935, the average Canadian farm provided food for 11 people, but by 2001, this had increased to 211 (Statistics Canada, 2008a).

Although farm size has increased, net income has decreased. During the 30 years starting in 1971, take-home pay, as a portion of total farm cash income, declined from 26% to 8% (Statistics Canada, 2008b). Today, the bottom one-third of farms receive 4% of the country’s total farm revenue while the top one-third receives 79% (Kneen, 1995).
In 1980, 21.5% of farm census families [Canada wide] on unincorporated farms earned 75% or more of their total income from net farm income … by 2000 the figure had slipped … to 7% … overall, less than 18% of Canadian farming families are depending upon their net farm income for more than half of their family income. (Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable, 2004, p. 9)

Even though revenues have increased from $138.5M in 2001 to $163.7M in 2006, on average, farmers in Canada are now experiencing negative net earnings (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 101). According to the National Farmers Union (NFU), the farming crisis in Canada has spanned over the last 20 years with negative income levels as high as $15,000 per year per farm (National Farmers Union, 2008).

According to a recent study by the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Land, British Columbia produces 48% of the food it requires; however, some of this food is also exported. In addition, if this production is compared to Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Living, “BC’s food self-reliance drops to 34%” (B.C.’s Food Self-Reliance, n.d., p. 1). BC contains 3.5% of Canada’s farmland (Agriculture and Agri Food Canada, 2009), and “all 27 regional districts and 107 municipalities in BC have land in the ALR” (Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, n.d.). However, the availability of agricultural land in BC “for food production is decreasing” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 7).

Farming in British Columbia has experienced a significant change during the past 100 years. Statistics indicate a trend towards larger and fewer farms and an aging and shrinking farm population. During the past century, the percentage of British Columbia’s population living on farms has decreased from 22% to about 1.5% (Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable, 2004, p. 10). From 1931 to 2006, the number of farms decreased from 26,079 to
19,844, while the size of these farms increased from 55 hectares to 143 hectares” (Statistics Canada, 2006). In addition, during this same period, “the number of BC citizens living on a farm dropped from 1 in 7 to 1 in 68” (Statistics Canada, 2006). In 2006, the number of farm operators had declined 1.5% from 2001 to 29,870 (Statistics Canada, 2008c). In general, farmers in British Columbia are becoming older with an average age over 50 years old (The Land Conservancy, 2009).

The trend towards centralizing our food production in British Columbia is also evidenced in the farm cash receipts. In 2008, the agriculture sector generated over $2.6B in farm cash receipts” (BC Stats, 2009). In 2005, “only 10.2% of BC farms had gross farm receipts over $250,000, but they accounted for 80.8% of the total gross farm receipts” (Statistics Canada, 2008a). Although farms are becoming larger and attempting to take advantage of economies of size, they continue to become more fiscally unsustainable. From 1995 to 2005, BC farms spent $0.90 for every dollar they earned (Statistics Canada, 2008b). Although total cash receipts continue to rise, during the period 2004-2008, “BC farm total net income has become negative and continues to decline” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 101). One of the reasons for this decline is that during the early part of this decade, similar to the situation across Canada, “inflation on farm inputs rose more quickly than inflation on prices that farmers received for their products. While inputs experienced an inflation rate of 9.6%, products sold only increased by 4.2%” (Statistics Canada, 2008a.). In order to compensate for these losses, “54.9% of all farm operators had an off-farm job or business in 2005” in British Columbia, about 6% higher than that of farmers across Canada (Statistics Canada, 2008a).

Vancouver Island produced about 85% of its food requirements only 50 years ago, but this has declined to less than 10% (Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable,
Today, the agricultural landscape on the Island can be divided into three types of farms: small artisan, medium niche, and large conventional. Although the medium-sized farms contribute only 20% to the Island’s food production, this food tends to access the marketplace by way of farm gate and farmers’ market venues, providing farmers with a truer value for their products. The large conventional farms provide the majority of food for the Island; however, they are moving their operations off the Island to access less expensive production options. Also, food production has decreased. One reason for this is the continued exclusion of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). As in other jurisdictions across the province, “agricultural land on Vancouver Island is disappearing rapidly” (p. 9). During the 15 years beginning in 1974, Vancouver Island experienced a net loss of agricultural land equal to 17,000 hectares (p. 8). Vancouver Island’s remaining ALR is 103,319 hectares (p. 8). Given a population of almost 800,000 people and the need for 0.5 hectares for person in food-producing land, this leaves the Island almost 300,000 hectares short. Although a baseline assessment has never been completed for Vancouver Island, a recent study conducted on Salt Spring Island indicated the production of fruits and vegetable there range from 4% to 7% (Reichart, 2005).

The situation in the Capital Region is similar to that found in the rest of British Columbia and Canada. Earnings for farmers are in decline, dropping almost $2,000 per annum between 1995 and 2000 (Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable, 2004, p. 9). The average age for farmers in the Capital Region is 53, with only 95 of the 1,450 farm operators being under 35, while 600 are over 55 (p. 10). Less than 10% of the agricultural land in the Region is devoted to vegetable production, while “almost 9,000 acres are devoted to growing hay” (p. 10). These factors contribute to a very insecure Island food economy and “with so much of the food supply of the Islands imported from elsewhere, the first and most significant
challenge to the Region’s food security is increasing the amount of food that is grown and processed close to home” (p. 7). These tremendous declines in production, number of farms, number of farmers, and net income are evidence of an unsustainable Canadian food supply system. The situation on Vancouver Island is indicative of our need to look beyond the status quo and introduce new ways of producing and distributing food.

Current Regulatory Framework

Farmers can be impacted by all levels of regulatory systems: international, national, provincial, inter-provincial, and municipal, regardless of the range of their marketplace (i.e., domestic vs. export). Internationally, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) both have sections dedicated to agriculture. NAFTA’s intent is to open up the trade corridors between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. With regards to agriculture, the agreement requires that “parties shall work together to improve access to their respective markets through the reduction or elimination of import barriers” and that domestic support measures should be such that they “have minimal or no trade distortion or production effects” (North American Free Trade Agreement, 1993). The WTO is “the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations” (World Trade Organization, 2008), with 152 members as of May 2008. Established in 1995, the WTO’s Agreement on Agriculture was implemented in 2001. Again, its intent is to make worldwide trade in agricultural products easier by creating a more level playing field.

At the national level, farmers are impacted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), responsible for issues of food safety in Canada (Canadian Food Inspection Agency, 2008), and the Natural Products Act which is administered by the Canadian Marketing Board. Most recently, the CFIA has required that meat processing plants on Vancouver Island become
licensed. This has required capital upgrades and the presence of an inspector during times of operation that has resulted in a decrease of services locally. Provincially, regulatory systems include marketing boards that oversee supply-managed products like milk and eggs, provincial health authorities, the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) (Agricultural Land Commission, 2008), and the BC Assessment Authority (BC Assessment, 2008), which determines property tax rates.

In 2007, British Columbia and Alberta signed an inter-provincial agreement, the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA, 2009), which came into full effect in 2009. This agreement applies lower financial limits to purchase values to ensure that all contractors, regardless of province, have equal access to contracts. It does not allow for location of input to be a factor in determining the successful bidder, excluding local food from taking preference. Municipalities impact farmers by implementing bylaws. While most urban municipalities contain an insignificant amount of land zoned agricultural, this does not, in and of itself, preclude agricultural activities. Urban agriculture is an attempt to bring farming and food production back into cities.

Urban Agriculture

Given the significant barriers to more traditional forms of food production, urban agriculture is one viable option to increasing food security. However, urban agriculture is also facing barriers. Even though it has a long history worldwide and many successful examples are available, “official acceptance and the provision of essential infrastructure” (City Farmer, 2000, p. 23) continue to be roadblocks to its growth. Historically, “urban agriculture has received little attention from professionals and government unless in direct relation to job creation and prevention of urban blight” (p. 22), which have typically been deemed to be “its primary benefits” (p. 22). Although urban agriculture activities can be found in many major Canadian
cities, “officially adopted policies which support and encourage it are rare …. Most urban agriculture initiatives have resulted from demand at the grass roots and tend to differ between communities depending on civic support and city regulations (p. 22). In the Capital Region, some examples of recent government initiatives exist; however, the extent of urban agriculture food resources “is difficult to measure because no data has been collected (Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable, 2004, p. 6).

The active support of urban agriculture provides extensive benefits to the community:

- Urban agriculture “has the potential to fit into many on-going programs in urban centres today” (City Farmer, 2000, p. 21). It has the ability to “create edible landscapes that are physically, economically, socially and ecologically more sustainable” (p. 21).
- Urban agriculture can be useful in reinvigorating “lost urban space” (p. 23).
- Urban agriculture can increase biodiversity in a city (p. 23).
- Urban agriculture can have a positive impact on “the roofscape of a city” (p. 23).
  “Rooftop gardens have many economic and environmental uses. They help insulate the building, they capture rainwater and keep it out of sewers, they beautify any view form the top. Green roofs can also be made into ‘bountiful food gardens for occupants’” (Toronto Food Policy Council, 2001, p. 14).
- Urban agriculture is a way to engage the community (City Farmer, 2000, p. 23).
- Urban agriculture can “expand municipal revenues and cut operational cost through partnerships with other land use and economic activity” (City Farmer, 2000, p. 24).
- Urban agriculture can empower citizens (City Farmer, 2000, p. 2).
- Urban agriculture can provide “for hands-on nutritional education. Since gardening is typically a woman’s activity, it enhances women’s control over food production and
sales, increasing the likelihood that household nutrition will improve” (City Farmer, 2000 p. 4).

- Urban agriculture can facilitate the “consumption of local organic food” which can improve community health (Toronto Food Policy Council, 1999, p. 30).
- Urban agriculture can “assist low income people to meet their nutritional needs” (Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable, 2004, p. 6).
- Urban agriculture, through “small scale intensive agriculture, can be the focus of an important part of urban economic development and affordable urban renewal” (City Farmer, 2000, p. 24).

The Role of Municipal Government

Although bureaucracies at all levels of government have the ability to impact farming and local food production, municipal governments can have the most influence with regards to urban agriculture.

As “creatures of the provinces” for constitutional purposes, municipal and local governments lack constitutional autonomy. Their executive and legislative powers are exercised on the basis of delegation, primarily by means of provincial legislation. But once conferred, such powers include the capacity to enact fully enforceable bylaws reflecting the decisions of municipal or local officials. As subordinate instruments, such bylaws cannot exceed the scope or contradict the intent of corresponding provincial legislation. (Benidickson, 2009, p. 39)

Local governments can play an important role in addressing the challenges being faced by more traditional food-producing methods. As such, agriculture needs to be included in planning and decision-making frameworks (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. iv). Air, water,
food, and shelter are among the essentials of life. Typically, “planners have been involved in efforts to improve the quality of air and water through pollution control programs and more comprehensively in shelter planning. But the fourth essential, food, has been virtually ignored” (Toronto Food Policy Council, 2001, p. 3). By not being “conscious” of food issues, the impact of planners can go beyond neutral to being negative (Toronto Food Policy Council, 2001, p. 3). “Sustainable food production is a vital component of a community’s food system. It influences a community’s well-being, and it needs to be supported and enhanced by local government” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. ii). In addition, it “keeps your food system resilient in the face of influences such as climate change and changing energy prices” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. iii). As well as using their legal authority, local governments can support urban agriculture and thereby increase food security locally by providing support in the form of staff time, promotion, and agricultural education (Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable, 2004, p. 34).

Locally, the Capital Region Food and Health Action Plan (2008) includes recommendations that promote urban agriculture, build community resilience by increasing the capacity of neighbourhood and local food system organizations, and consider food supply and land protection as an integral part of emergency preparedness plans (Final Report, Phase 2, 2008). A number of municipalities within the Capital Region have taken action to support local food production by including bylaws and policies that support urban agriculture. Oak Bay, a seaside community bordering Victoria to the northeast, was incorporated in 1906. With a land mass of 2,552 acres and a population of almost 18,000 people (Statistics Canada, 2008c), Oak Bay is predominantly a residential community for higher-income earners. Until December 2007,
urban agriculture was not allowed within Oak Bay. At that time, Oak Bay Council enacted a new bylaw to provide a definition of Small Scale Urban Agriculture:

“SMALL SCALE URBAN AGRICULTURE” means a subset of the general class of agriculture, carried out as a secondary use of land and consisting of the cultivation of a portion of the parcel for the production of fruits or vegetables for sale or exchange for money or other valuable consideration. (Bylaw 4381, December 17, 2007)

This use is now included for all residential lots in the municipality and has not only facilitated the growing of produce but removed the barrier to sale of this same produce that existed previously. Without the opportunity to sell produce grown within the municipality, the opportunity for the expansion of local supply would have been severely limited, as only those growing their own gardens would have had access.

Also adjoining Victoria is Esquimalt, home to one of Canada’s two naval bases. With a population of 17,000 people, Esquimalt has a diverse range of designated land uses that do not include agriculture (Corporation of the Township of Esquimalt, 2007). In March 2007, Esquimalt updated its Official Community Plan (OCP). Although there is no specific mention of urban agriculture, the Township does support the incorporation of “sustainable development objectives” (Official Community Plan, 2007) and the promotion of “green (sustainable) business leadership and practices, in addition to providing assistance, support, tools and programs” (Official Community Plan, 2007).

During 2008, Esquimalt did pass into law two bylaws that support urban agriculture, both allowing up to four laying hens on residential properties. According to Bylaw 2694:

“Urban Hens” means female fowl kept for the purpose of laying eggs for food and does not include fowl kept for breeding purposes.”
“Urban Hens” — The keeping of no more than four (4) Urban Hens is permitted use in the RS-1, RS-2, RS-4 and RS-5 zones provided that:

a. No roosters, cocks, or cockerels are kept on the property;

b. The structure containing the hens or chickens, whether portable or stationary, is always located at least 1.5 metres from any property line;

c. Only one (1) structure containing hens or chickens is permitted on a parcel.

And Bylaw 2699 states:

Notwithstanding the restriction, contained elsewhere in this Bylaw, on placing Accessory Buildings in front of the front face of a Principal Building, Structures used to house Urban Hens, as regulated by the Animal Bylaw, may be located within the front yard setback provided that the Structure is screened by vegetation of a sufficient height and width to prevent the Structure being visible from the street or from any adjacent residence.

It should be noted that these bylaws do not support the sale of eggs within the municipality, only the production for personal use.

View Royal, a neighbouring community to the City of Colwood, recently (2010) updated its bylaws to allow for urban hens and bees on residentially zoned land within the municipality:

(1) The keeping of chickens and bees is permitted on properties within the R-1, R-1A and R-1B zones with the following restrictions:

Chickens

(2) No more than 4 hens may be kept on a property, all of which must be over the age of 4 months;

(3) Roosters are prohibited in all residential zones;
(4) The sale of eggs and meat is prohibited in all residential zones;
(5) The slaughter of chickens is prohibited in all residential zones;
(6) Henhouses shall be located in the rear yard of a residential property and must be set back a minimum of 3 meters from the rear, side and flanking lot lines;

Bees
(7) On properties up to and including 650 m\(^2\) no more than 2 beehives are permitted;
(8) On properties greater than 650 m\(^2\) no more than 4 beehives are permitted;
(9) To ensure the proper height of a honeybee flight path:
   (a) the top of the beehive must be situated 2.4 meters or more above ground level;
   or
   (b) the beehive entrance must be directed away from all neighbouring properties and the beehive must be situated behind a solid fence or hedge that is a minimum of 1.82 meters in height and runs parallel to the property line; or
   (c) a beehive must be located a minimum of 7.5 meters away from any rear, side or flanking lot lines. (Bylaw 761)

The City of Colwood

The City of Colwood, part of the Capital Regional District, is located just west of Victoria, BC. Although services within the community have been increasing, it has been predominantly a bedroom community of Victoria, with a strong contingent of military families due to the presence of CFB Esquimalt military housing. Colwood is a “predominantly urban community, and has very little farmland” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-1). In comparison to the Region as a whole, Colwood tends to have younger residents (38.7 vs. 43.6 years old), and families tend to be larger (p. 15-1). Residents are more likely to own their own
homes (69.7% vs. 64.7%), and these tend to be single family detached dwellings (56.9% vs. 42.5%) (p. 15-1).

With a total area of 2,609 hectares, of which 324 hectares are covered by water and foreshore area (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009), Colwood has little useable agricultural land. Although over 200 hectares are zoned agricultural, the vast majority is taken up by the local golf course (Jim Dodd, personal communication, September 8, 2009). Only a small portion is accessible for agricultural purposes; some within a municipal park and some privately owned (Judith Cullington, personal communication, September 6, 2009). Colwood is expecting continued population growth rates, with the population expected to reach 32,000 by 2028. “This represents an additional 18,000 persons” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, 15-2).

The City of Colwood has been active, both within and outside of government, furthering a sustainability agenda. In addition to becoming a Transition Town (Community Council, 2009, p. 4), the City recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Royal Roads University. Although current bylaws do not reflect any significant support of sustainable development, during 2008, Colwood undertook to update its Official Community Plan. This document clearly illustrates the interest of residents in creating a more sustainable community.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Question Restated

This thesis asked the question “The City of Colwood: How can this community, with no functional ALR or other agricultural land, move towards greater food security?”

Approaches

Three approaches were used in this research: a literature review, a questionnaire, and the application of the Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production, a publication of The Land Conservancy of British Columbia and Farm Folk City Folk.

Literature Review

The literature review provided definitions of key terms and explore a variety of interrelated concepts including “sustainable development,” “food security,” “sustainability,” and “urban agriculture.” As well, the review considered the history of farming and food production in British Columbia and Vancouver Island and the current regulatory framework related to food production in Canada. The regulatory framework discussion concentrated on the role of municipal government and how it can positively impact local and sustainable food production by way of policies and procedures. A review of the City of Colwood, including demographic information, zoning, bylaws, policies, and the Official Community Plan is included.

Questionnaire

A small yet highly targeted group of City of Colwood elected officials and staff and key informants from the community were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix A) based on the tools provided in the Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production (The Land Conservancy, 2009). The questionnaire sought to determine if the municipality is implementing any of the tools contained within the Toolkit and to identify areas of opportunity. In qualitative
research, the number of interviews is not the critical issue but the quality of the informant-interviewer exchange (Kaskutua, Schmidt, Weisner, & Greenfield, 2000). In person and/or telephone interviews were used for purposes of clarification.

*Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production*

“The toolkit focuses on farm-based agriculture, but the tools, information, and resources can be applied to urban food production” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. ii). This toolkit was utilized to assess the current status of policy and planning vis-à-vis the view provided by the toolkit. In addition, the toolkit was utilized to formulate recommendations for further policy and planning that would support an increase in local food production. Given that this community lacks a significant agricultural land base, not all of the tools in the toolkit were applicable. In this thesis, each tool was analyzed as follows:

- Summary description of the tool.
- Its applicability to the Colwood situation
- If applicable, is it being applied in Colwood? If so, how?
- If it is not being applied, could it be applied to support sustainable, local food production in the Colwood urban setting? How?
CHAPTER 4: APPLICATION OF THE TOOLKIT

Public Awareness, Education, and Communication

“This tool introduces communication and education techniques to increase public awareness about the importance and benefits of agriculture, and encourage people to buy locally and sustainably produced food” (Toolkit, p. 19) “Considerable marketing and consciousness raising is required for consumers to recognize the real costs of sustainable food production.” (Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable, 2004, p. 3)

Findings

The City of Colwood is currently active in increasing the community’s awareness about the importance of supporting local and sustainably produced food; however, the community is undertaking many initiatives without the direct support of the city. Colwood:

- Provides financial support in the form of grants and marketing support by way of links on the City’s website to Colwood Community Place (www.colwoodcommunityplace.ca), a community-based initiative working collaboratively with the City of Colwood and the West Shore Chamber of Commerce.

- Actively participates by providing staff to talk to people about the importance of local food at the Colwood Farmers’ Market which operates each Wednesday evening at the Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre from June through September.

- “Royal Roads University and the City of Colwood today signed a memorandum of understanding to partner on a series of sustainability issues to help Colwood become Canada’s first ‘Green Learning City.’” The agreement calls for the university and the city to work together on projects, research and education in support of Colwood’s goal to
become a community that is carbon neutral, energy-positive and water smart.” (Royal Roads University, 2009.)

- OCP recognizes “the need to be prepared for a doubling of the region’s population and the recognition that new residents will require greater access to more services and green spaces” (West, 2009, p. 2)

- “the City of Colwood has been a community in transition for over two years.” (West, 2009, p. 19)

- “Mayor and Council are progressive and seeking innovative solutions to the challenges of governing in today’s world, and are working to support community collaborations that serve to enrich quality of life through events and activities that celebrate our art, culture and heritage” (West, 2009, p. 19)

- “partnership recently struck between the City of Colwood and Royal Roads University to work together in nurturing the city’s mission to become a “green learning city.” (West, 2009, p. 5)


- “there is an active focus on meeting the impacts of climate change through the active reduction of carbon footprints” (West, 2009, p. 2)

In addition, the community is involved in significant activities supporting and encouraging local food security initiatives. Current activities and initiatives include:

Climate Action West Shore (CAWS)

Colwood Farmers’ Market

Go LOCAL Tomato Challenge
This small grouping of tools is comprised of measurement, planning, and governance structures that can assist in making communities more food secure. In order for a community to make useful decisions with regards to local, sustainable food production, it must first appreciate its current situation. With this information, it can set about to determine its best course of action. These initiatives require an overseer that is representative of the entire community.

*Food System Assessment*

“This tool introduces a method to assess the assets, strengths, and vulnerabilities of your food system and recommends appropriate actions.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 28)

“A food system assessment compiles baseline information on assets related to food production, distribution, access, and consumption. This information helps communities determine their needs and opportunities for a sustainable food system.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 28)

“A food system assessment can;

- Provide a comprehensive picture of the current state of your food system
- Provide a framework for understanding how different components of your food system act together to contribute to your community’s health and well-being
- Provide information for decision-making and program and policy formation
- Increase community awareness of and participation in food-related projects
- Help articulate a vision of how your community wants its food system to function
- Help set priorities and goals to improve your local food system
- Identify potential partners, community resources, and opportunities
- Build new and stronger networks, partnerships, and coalitions
- Provide data that can be used in future proposals and reports
- Establish a long-term monitoring system with a clear and valid set of indicators
- Generate information for funders, including community food security funders, who are increasingly requiring evidence-based research to substantiate proposal requests (Miewald, et al., 2007, pp. 3-4)

**Findings**

The City of Colwood has not undertaken this work “at the government level” (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009) however the community as begun to actively investigate the current food initiatives and to explore further opportunities to improve food security in Colwood.

**Agriculture Area Plan**

“This tool introduces a process for developing plans that help guide agricultural decision-making in farming areas that are entirely or partially within municipalities and/or regional districts.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 31)

**Findings**

The City of Colwood, in large part due to its insignificant agricultural land base, has not undertaken this work, however the OCP “contains policies and objectives pertaining to the
support of community agriculture and commercial farming” (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009). The OCP does not include any wording with regards to an Agriculture Area Plan. Although the community, through the GO LOCAL West Shore Food Strategy, defines some activities to promote food security in the area, an agricultural area plan is not included.

Advisory Committees

“This tool introduces a framework to provide advice and recommendations about food and agricultural issues to local government staff and elected officials, and facilitates communication between government and local communities.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 35)

“Food Policy Councils (FPCs) create communication bridges between communities and local government on food-related topics.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 35)

“Food policy councils can:

- Bring together individuals, agencies, and organizations that do not typically work directly with each other or are not normally involved in food production and food policy
- Examine overlooked issues such as the effectiveness of food assistance programs
- Recognize and focus on links between different parts of the food system (e.g., food production and health)
- Consider how government decisions affect all levels of the food system (land, farmers, food buyers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers) (The Land Conservancy, 2009, pp. 25-26).

Findings
The City of Colwood does not have a food policy council, however, a neighbouring community, Metchosin, does (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009). Work relating to urban agriculture resides officially with Colwood Parks, Recreation and Culture Committee and action on local food issues are currently delivered through Colwood Community Place and the Colwood Farmers’ Market. (Cindy Moyer, personal communication, October 15, 2009)

Policy: Official Community Plan (OCP)

“This tool introduces a process for including information and policies about agricultural lands in your Official Community Plan.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 39)

“An official community plan is a land use plan and policy document for a community.” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 1-2)

“They guide local government decisions, as all new bylaws must be consistent with the OCP.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 39)

The Local Government Act Section 877(3) says that municipalities “must include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the area covered by the plan, and policies and actions of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 105). This mandate could be used to support increasing local food production as it is the production phase of agriculture that is the most significant contributor to greenhouse gas emission.

Findings

The City of Colwood officially adopted its 2008 OCP on June 24, 2008 by ratifying “Bylaw No. 999 – A bylaw to designate a community plan as the official community plan for the City of Colwood” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008). This OCP devotes an entire chapter to
“Our Food System” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008) and contains a number of polices supporting sustainable food production within the municipality. The West Shore GO LOCAL Food Strategy was used as a guiding document in preparing the OCP (Cindy Moyer, personal communication, October 15, 2009). “Making progress on a vibrant and robust food system will require a vigilant focus on localizing all aspects of the food production, processing and distribution system” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-1). “Food has only recently become an important topic of consideration for community planning. Increasingly, food is becoming one of the most important issues to address due to its associations with human and environmental health and the economy, and its vulnerability in the face of rising energy costs and climate change” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-1).

The City of Colwood worked jointly with the City of Langford, an adjoining municipality, in reviewing their respective OCPs “with the objective of creating an integrated and sustainable future for both communities” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 1-3). Colwood identifies this OCP as its “sustainability road map” (2-1) and the “imperative” for the OCP “to harness development forces to contribute to sustainable and positive change” (1-4). According to the OCP, many of the “community sustainability goals” could positively impact food security for the municipality (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 2-2).

In addition to policies directly related to the food system, the OCP contains other policies and references that could support increased food production, including:

- Green roofs are noted in concept for city centre (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008).
- Pocket parks and greenway walks are noted in concept for Village Centre (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008).
- Green pedestrian links throughout are noted in Mixed use Employment Centre concept (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008).
- Neighbourhood parks and greenway are noted in neighbourhood centre concept (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008).
- Parks, greenway corridors, riparian areas are noted in neighbourhood concept (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008)
- “allowable density for centres” – all (city centre, village centre, neighbourhood centre, missed-use employment centre and business or light industrial centre) could be provided increased density with the inclusion of community gardens or food production (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, pp. 3-25)
- “create liveable streets” “street trees” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008. pp. 5-4) as part of their built environment
- “promote urban agriculture in the built environment” – extensive information in Objective 5.10 (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008. pp. 5-7)
- With regards to existing building stock, “develop incentive programs (e.g., tax or permit discounts, density bonusing) possibly structured around other incentive programs (e.g., Senior level government incentive or grant programs) for promoting green renovation and/or energy efficient retrofits of existing buildings for all uses” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008. p. 9-2)
- “encourage existing businesses to stay and grow in and welcome new businesses into the community” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008. p. 10-1)
- “integrated infrastructure” notes “use waste as a resource” as a principle for sustainable and integrated infrastructure (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008. p. 12-1)
▪ Urban food systems are noted as part of the integrated infrastructure (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008)

▪ Water, wastewater and rainwater noted in OCP (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008)

*Food Procurement Policy*

“This tool introduces a technique for local government to define what kind of food its institutions will purchase, and how.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 43)

“As a local government, you can tailor your food procurement policies to meet your area’s specific needs, strengths, and concerns.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 43)

“When local institutions, government, businesses and households source local products it brings many beneficial social and economic multiplier effects to our region.” (*Food Matters!* N.d., p. 6)

“Food procurement policy can;

- Provide markets for farmers
- Support your local economy and create jobs
- Generate community awareness of healthy food alternatives
- Support urban connections to surrounding rural communities
- Encourage food production practices that protect and enhance the environment

*Findings*

The City of Colwood has no formal Food Procurement Policy however the municipal council does attempt to purchase locally for their meetings (Judith Cullington, personal communication, September 15, 2009) The 2008 OCP recommends the development of a municipal procurement policy.
“Policy 11.2.7 – Develop a municipal procurement policy to purchase local food” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-3).

Although initially feared that the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) would restrict municipal governments from making local procurements (Sinclair, 2009, p. 2), the final agreement endorsed by all Canadian provincial governments, excludes municipal governments.

In an effort to support municipalities in becoming more “green,” the BC Ministry of Community Services introduced the Local Government Green Communities Statutes Amendment Act in April 2008. This act is intended “to support local governments in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy and working towards creating greener, more sustainable communities. As part of this initiative, local governments are required to “set greenhouse gas emission targets, policies and actions in Official Community Plans and Regional Growth Strategies” (Local Government [Green Communities] Statutes Amendment Act, 2008).

The requirement to set greenhouse gas emissions targets provides another incentive for the City of Colwood to institute a food procurement policy that favours local, sustainably produced foods. In doing so, they have an opportunity to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

*Bylaws: Zoning*

“This tool introduces a framework for local government to regulate and support agricultural land use.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 47)

“The Local Government Act, Part 26, Division 7 outlines the powers of local governments to use zoning to regulate land use. Local governments can also use zoning to regulate buildings and other structures, the siting, size and dimensions of buildings, and the location of uses on the land.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 47)
Findings

The City of Colwood only permits agriculture in three zones – AG1, AG2, and A1 totaling approximately 428 acres. “By virtue of the fact that agriculture is not included in the ‘Permitted Uses’ lists of other zones, it is implied that they are restricted in these other residential, commercial, industrial and institutional zones” (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009). In addition, the current bylaws do not recognize “urban agriculture” as separate and different from “agriculture.” The 2008 OCP contains one policy that supports changing bylaws to be more supportive of farming activity within the municipality. Policy 11.2.2 – Implement changes to the zoning bylaws to support farming activities where needed and where appropriate. (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-3)

Resources

These two tools provide ways for municipal governments to create fiscal resources to support local food production. They recognize that the benefits of local, sustainable agriculture accrue to the entire community and, as such, the broader community should contribute to their support.

Density Bonus Provision

“This tool introduces a process to develop agricultural benefits using amenity contributions from non-agricultural developments.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 50)

“Section 904 Zoning for amenities and affordable housing of the Local Government Act allows local governments to rezone land for higher than specified levels of density provided that certain amenity contributions are provided by the landowner. These amenity contributions can be designed to help a community achieve social, economic, and environmental benefits related to agriculture.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 50)
“Local governments can define the amenities required as the term amenity is not defined in legislation. According to Density Bonus Provisions: A guide and model bylaw from the Office of Housing and Construction Standards, an amenity is “generally understood to be something that enhances the desirability of a property such as a view, access to water, underground parking, child care space, open space, or an environmentally sensitive area.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 50)

“The guidelines recognize that, in some situations, it may be impractical to provide an on-site amenity and there may be value in pooling amenities from several development projects. Cash in-lieu of direct provision of a physical amenity may be appropriate.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 50)

“Amenities for bonus density are generally set out in the Official Community Plan.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 50)

*Findings*

The City of Colwood has used this application on one occasion to date (Essencia Project) where “a proposed urban agriculture activity was one minor component in a package of community amenities” (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009). However, the city has not legislated this activity within its bylaws. The 2008 OCP does reference density bonusing as a method of increasing food production within the municipality.

Policy 11.1.1 - Amend bylaws to allow density bonusing for inclusion of community gardens in new residential developments.” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-2)
Policy 11.1.10 - Allow density bonusing in exchange for green roofs on multi-family, commercial and/or institutional buildings that can facilitate food growing or gardening.” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-2)

Local Conservation Fund

“This tool introduces a method to fund acquisition and conservation of sustainable farms and the environmental benefits they provide.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 52)

“One way to support farm practices that are environmentally beneficial is to establish a Local Conservation Fund.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 52)

“To acquire money for a Local Conservation Fund, establish a local service and levy a parcel tax on each property within your jurisdiction.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 52) (An example is south Cowichan.)

“This type of fund has been used by local governments throughout Canada and the United States to conserve watersheds, wildlife habitat, and open space, and support recreation and local food production.” (East Kootenay Conservation Program, 2008)

Findings

The City of Colwood has not created a local conservation fund, but the 2008 OCP supports this sort of initiative as it relates to community gardens and the creation of infrastructure. (Judith Cullington, personal communication, September 15, 2009)

Policy 11.1.3 – Leverage funds from new developments on a per unit basis to generate funds to acquire new lands for community gardens and supportive infrastructure.

(Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-2)

Farmer Support

Leasehold Subdivision
“This tool introduces a process for local government to grant subdivision approval to food producers who want to lease part of a parcel of agricultural land for longer than three years.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 55)

Findings

Given the significant lack of accessible agricultural land, this tool may have limited value. The City of Colwood bylaws do not currently allow for leasehold subdivision; however “subdivisions under Section 946 of the local government act provide for residences for relatives may be considered” (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009).

Government Land Lease

“This tool introduces a process for local government to lease land for food production, support sustainable uses of public land, and protect and enhance the environment.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 57)

“As a local government, you can also lease or rent public land to farmers. This creates opportunities to support your local economy, increase food security, and support community development.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 57)

Findings

The City of Colwood does not currently have legislation that supports government land lease, however the 2008 OCP contains a number of policies in support of this initiative. OCP Policies 11.1.5 and 11.1.7 imply land should be available for community agriculture and Policy 11.2.1 establishes intent to consider lease agreements for urban agriculture (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009)
Policy 11.1.5 – Make community gardens a permitted use in all commercial and residential zones and in public places (e.g., parks, right of ways, utility corridors, etc.).

(Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-2)

Policy 11.1.7 – Encourage planting of edible plant species as part of landscaping in private developments, parks and local streets where appropriate.” Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-2)

Policy 11.2.1 – Require sustainable agriculture practices on city-owned parcels where and when appropriate through lease agreements. (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-3)

Within the community, the Climate Action West Shore has, as part of its deliverables, “victory” or community gardens.

Infrastructure

“This tool introduces opportunities for local government to develop and support the local infrastructure that is associated with food production.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 60)

“Food production requires supporting infrastructure such as distribution points, cold storage, processing facilities, equipment dealers, repair shops, seed stores, and veterinary hospitals.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 60)

“BC farmers’ markets contribute an estimated $65.3M annually to local economies. It has been demonstrated that this money also benefits neighbouring businesses that support farmers’ market vendors for an additional $53.3M per year.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 60)

Findings

The City of Colwood actively supports the Colwood Farmers’ Market by providing funding and staff time to speak with market visitors about the importance of supporting locally
grown food. During the 2009 season, the market welcomed over 6,500 visitors (West, 2009, p. 17). In addition, as part of the Essencia Project, the City provided an opportunity for the developers to include food-related activities on the site even though the current bylaws do not allow for it (Judith Cullington, personal communication, September 15, 2009).

Yes, farmers’ market, supported rezoning for Essencia property (Judith Cullington, personal communication, September 15, 2009)

In addition, the 2008 OCP contains a number of policies that support Infrastructure. (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009.)

Policy 11.2.8 – Amend zoning so as to permit farmer markets in public facilities (parks and schools).” (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-3)

Policy 11.2.9 – Actively promote one or more weekly farmers’ markets including small pocket markets and/or street markets. (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-3)

Policy 11.2.10 – Provide support for food fairs, farmers’ markets and/or celebrations for local food producers. (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-3)

The community, through Climate Action West Shore (CAWS), has as part of its deliverables “markets (large-scale and pocket) and community farm resources (farm equipment co-op) (Capital Region Food and Agricultural Initiatives Roundtable, 2004).

Extension Services

“This tool introduces a method for local government to provide professional agricultural support and resources to farmers and communities.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 62)

Findings
The City of Colwood has “no staff persons currently with this capability” (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009). However, the City does support community initiatives that may have the capacity to provide some of these services.

Environment

*Riparian Tax Exemption*

“This tool introduces a process for local governments to exempt property taxes on protected riparian areas of agricultural land.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 65)

*Findings*

The City of Colwood does not provide riparian tax exemptions; however, the 2008 OCP “recommends examining the potential implementation of farm tax exemptions policies” (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009).

Policy 11.2.3 – Perform cost-benefit analysis on the institution of farm tax exemption policies as a means to establish local farms. (Holland Barrs Planning Group, 2008, p. 11-3)

*Water Management*

“This tool introduces activities for local management and monitoring of water quantity and quality to benefit sustainable food production.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 69)

“While water falls primarily under provincial and federal jurisdictions, local governments also play an important role in its management.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 69)

“There are many competing stakeholders for water resources (residential, industrial, agricultural, fish). (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 69)

“Evidence of increasing water challenges can be seen across Canada and in BC. Between 1994 and 1999, one quarter of all Canadian municipalities reported water shortages as a result of
high consumption, drought, or infrastructure problems. In 1999, 8% of the 300 classified aquifers in BC were found to be at risk due to heavy use. In 2003, severe droughts affected much of the Okanagan Valley and Vancouver Island, and in 2006, the town of Tofino, on BC’s “wet” coast, almost ran out of water at the height of the tourist season. Finally, 235 of 300 streams in the South Okanagan are fully recorded, which means there is no additional water available or new water licenses.” (Brandes & Curran, 2008.)

“As water demand increases and water availability decreases, local governments have a role to plan in ensuring continued access to water for sustainable food production.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 69)

The City of Colwood undertakes no water management responsibilities at this time but relies primarily on the Capital Regional District for things water-related (Alan Haldenby, personal communication, September 8, 2009).

Advocacy: Policy Guidelines for Agricultural Land Protection

“This advocacy item suggests advocacy directed at professional associations to develop standardized policy guides that support agricultural land protection.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 74)

“In 1999, the American Planning Association adopted their Policy Guide on Agricultural Land Preservation. This policy provides planners with a framework they can use when they develop land use plans in agricultural areas and make legislation and policy recommendation.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 74)

Advocacy: Tax Exemption for Ecologically Sensitive Areas
“This advocacy item suggests advocacy to amend provincial legislation to allow local governments to establish bylaws exempting ecologically sensitive areas from municipal property tax.” (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 76)
CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS

The research and analysis provided by this report underlines the importance of the need for positive action to increase food security in island local communities. Colwood has made strides towards integrating a sustainability framework into its planning but this report shows, courtesy of the Toolkit, that there are many viable and practical strides that the municipal government can take as a facilitator of change. The fundamental recommendation of this report is that Colwood should take steps towards becoming a leader in supporting the development of urban agriculture. The following specific recommendations are provided to guide thinking and planning:

1. Develop a municipal strategy to support local food production and distribution
   a. Create a Department of Sustainability (Final Report, Phase 2, 2008)
   b. Become a signatory of the Capital Region Food Charter and use it as a guide to decisions and actions. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p.24)
   c. Using the Food Charter as a guide, initiate a Food System Assessment in partnership with community groups. Integrate the process and information acquired into your sustainable community planning. The City of Vancouver (City of Vancouver, 2009) received funding for their Food System Assessment from Western Diversification.
   d. Become involved with Smart Planning for Communities (SPC), “a BC-wide initiative that provides resources and tools for planning socially, culturally, economically, and environmentally sustainable communities.” www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/programs/smart_planning.html. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 14)
e. Offer workshops to local realtors and developers on zoning. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 19)

f. Use the City of Colwood website to post information about local food production:
   i. Food Charter
   ii. Farmers’ Markets
   iii. Workshops
   iv. Community initiatives
   v. Land for lease
   vi. Food-processing facilities
   vii. Educational opportunities
   viii. Report food system indicators (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 19)

g. Continue the ongoing partnership with Royal Roads University. Expand current initiatives to include the use of university greenhouses for food production; partnership with Habitat to use their kitchen facilities for food processing/teaching, and the creation of courses and programs geared towards sustainable food business. (Royal Roads University, 2009)

h. Using the Food System Assessment as a base, identify potential local government and provincial Crown Lands that would be suitable for lease to food producers. Provide long term leases for sustainable food production. Create a database of land available for rent. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, pp. 57, 62)

i. Incorporate sustainable food production expertise into an existing staff job description as a way to provide municipal Extension Services (The Land
Conservancy, 2009, p. 62). This cost and service could be shared with surrounding municipalities.

j. Support the creation of networks between food producers and social service agencies in order to facilitate the purchase and/or donation of surplus food.

k. Work with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Land to hold workshops for food producers and farm market organizers on laws and regulations related to farming and food sales. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 62)

l. Support the community in its current and ongoing efforts to create a more secure local food system by providing grants, staff time and the direct involvement of municipal staff and officials.

m. Create policy and planning to ensure that food producers in the community continue to have access to water for irrigation. Develop a Water Use Plan and make reclaimed water available for agriculture (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 72). Hold irrigation workshops to provide information about new water saving technologies (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 70). Offer reduced water rates for urban agriculture food producers.

n. Integrate edible landscapes into landscape plans for all municipal lands and new developments within the municipality.

2. Create enabling legislation

a. Add “urban agriculture” as an approved use for all zoning designations. Urban agriculture should include both plant and livestock production to the extent that it is feasible, in particular fowl, bees, and rabbits.
b. Allow for the sale of urban agriculture products from the source of production. Traffic concerns could be mitigated with the restriction of access to pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

c. Require all new developments to support local food production and, in exchange, provide an Amenity Density Bonus. This support could come in the form of on-site or off-site food production capabilities, on-site or off-site space to market local food products, cash to support community efforts to create a more food secure community, to purchase land, to purchase or lease processing facilities, to access greenhouses, and storage facilities. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 51)

d. Require all new developments to incorporate food infrastructure in relation to the size of the development by creating bylaws, policy and planning documents. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 60)

e. Support the marketing of locally produced food by establishing bylaws to allow for adequate signage. (Final Report, 2008, Phase 2)

3. Provide incentive grants on a partnership basis to facilitate community action

a. Food Security Collective examples (Food Matters!, 2009, p. 8)

b. Establish a Local Conservation Fund by attaching a levy onto all properties within the City of Colwood. Funds from the fund could be used to provide matching grants to community based initiatives furthering local food production and distribution, and to purchase land for food production. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 52)
c. Support the community in its current and ongoing efforts to create a more secure local food system by providing grants, staff time, and the direct involvement of municipal staff and officials.

4. Develop a food procurement policy
   a. Support the establishment of a Food Policy Council and officially adopt their recommendations. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 36)
   b. Establish a policy that requires the municipality to give priority to locally produced food and not allow price to be the determining factor. (The Land Conservancy, 2009, pp. 44, 45)

5. Work with other municipalities to influence other levels of government
   a. Facilitate staff to advocate that their professional associations develop and adopt a policy guide on agricultural land protection and the legislated inclusion of urban agriculture initiatives (The Land Conservancy, 2009, p. 74)
   b. Work with the CRD and surrounding municipalities to encourage other levels of government to support local food production. Create joint strategies so that submissions from various municipal and regional government bodies are cohesive and mutually supportive.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

During the last 60 years, our food supply systems have become more concentrated and remote. As the world’s population continues to grow, an increasing number of people find difficulty in accessing food, especially those in developing countries who have little in the way of financial resources to purchase what they need.

Examples of urban agriculture, particularly in Havana, demonstrate quite clearly the many benefits possible. Here in the developed world, although, for the most part, food is still accessible to most, the uncertainty of the future and the dangerously reduced local food supplies create an unsustainable situation with little resiliency. Lack of necessity seems to play a large part in the implementation and support of urban agriculture, but it is clear that urban agriculture has a significant role to play in injecting resiliency into our local food systems. Urban agriculture can assist in reducing the vulnerability of our urban populations to the impacts of climate change by ensuring that food is produced as close to our vast urban populations as possible eliminating the risks posed by the distancing of our food supply. Municipalities should take preemptive action. They should not wait until an emergency presents itself to implement urban agriculture policies within their jurisdictions, but be proactive to ensure that their urban populations are well positioned to feed themselves now and into the future.
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Appendix A
The City of Colwood
Interview Questions

My name is Karin Lengger and I am Masters candidate at Royal Roads University. My thesis is looking at the City of Colwood and asking the question – How can the City of Colwood, in the absence of a significant agricultural land base, become more food secure? I am using a tool recently developed by The Land Conservancy of British Columbia – Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production - to answer this question.

The City of Colwood covers a total area of 5,112 acres of which 4,312 acres is comprised of land and 801 acres is land covered by water and foreshore area. Of this, approximately 450 acres, or about 10% of the land mass within the city of Colwood is zoned Agricultural and is land within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The vast majority of this Agricultural land is zoned AG1 (98%) and is currently being utilized as a golf course.

It is estimated that Vancouver Island produces less than 5% of the food that its population consumes. Given that the City of Colwood has virtually no agricultural land, any increase in local food production falls within the realm of urban agriculture. Urban agriculture includes any activity associated with growing crops and some form of livestock in or very near cities for local consumption, either by the producers themselves or by others when food is marketed.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. If you have no personal information about any of the following questions, please feel free to answer N/A and/or provide a possible lead (name and contact information) to an individual who you think would have relevant information to provide. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

1. What is your name?

   Alan Haldenby

2. How would you describe your connections to the City of Colwood?

   Deputy Director of Planning, City of Colwood

3. What is your telephone number and email address?

4. With regards to locally and sustainably produced food, what public awareness and education initiatives are taking place in Colwood?

   “GO LOCAL Food” – www.colwoodcommunityplace.ca is a privately-operated initiative.

5. Does Colwood have a Food Charter?

   No
6. If not, are you aware of any initiatives currently underway to create a Food Charter for Colwood?

No

7. Has Colwood undertaken a Food System Assessment – an assessment of assets, strengths and vulnerabilities of your food system?

No, not at the local government level.

8. Does Colwood have an Agricultural Area Plan – a plan that establishes a vision, policies and actions for supporting and promoting agriculture?

No, but our Official Community Plan (OCP) contains policies and objectives pertaining to the support of community agriculture and commercial farming.

9. Does Colwood have an Agricultural Advisory Committee/Commission?

No

10. Does Colwood have a food procurement policy that favours locally produced food?

No, but recommended in OCP Policy 11.2.7.

11. Are you aware of any land use Zoning within Colwood that supports the production and/or distribution of food?

The following zones permit agricultural use in Colwood:

- Agricultural 1 (AG1) Zone
- Agricultural 2 (AG2) Zone
- Rural (A1) Zone

12. Are you aware of any land use Zoning within Colwood that restricts/inhibits the production and/or the distribution of food?

By virtue of the fact that agricultural uses are not included in the ‘Permitted Uses’ lists for any zones other than AG1, AG2 and A1, it is implied that they are restricted in those other residential, commercial, industrial and institutional zones. However, OCP Policy 11.2.2 recommends changing zoning bylaws to support farming activity wherever appropriate.

13. The Local Government Act (Section 904) allows local governments to rezone land for higher than specified levels of density provided that certain amenity contributions are provided by the landowner (an amenity is generally understood to be something that enhances the desirability of the property). Does Colwood use this to create opportunities for food production?

In one rezoning which was approved in 2009, a proposed urban agriculture activity was one minor component in a “package” of community amenities which resulted in
density bonusing. The subject development is referred to as the ‘Havenwood’ site
(formerly known as the ‘Essencia’ site) on Heatherbell Road in the Esquimalt Lagoon
area of Colwood. This development has not yet proceeded to building permit stage.

OCP policies 11.1.1 and 11.1.10 also recommend density bonusing as a means to
encourage community agriculture in new developments.

14. Does Colwood have a Local Conservation Fund (a fund created by levying a parcel tax
on each property which would then used for the acquisition and conservation of
sustainable farms)?

No, but recommended in OCP Policy 11.1.3.

15. Does Colwood allow Leasehold Subdivisions (a method of allowing subdivisions of
agricultural land for the purpose of facilitating a lease to a tenant farmer)?

No, although subdivisions under Section 946 of the Local Government Act for
providing residences for relatives may be considered.

16. Does Colwood currently lease or rent public land to farmers/food producers?

No, although OCP Policies 11.1.5 and 11.1.7 imply that public land should be made
available for community agriculture. Also, OCP Policy 11.2.1 establishes the intent
to consider lease agreements on City-owned land for urban agriculture purposes.

17. Does Colwood support food production infrastructure? (ie. farmers’ market, cold
storage, etc.)

Yes, recommended in OCP Policies 11.2.8, 11.2.9 and 11.2.10.

18. Does Colwood provide professional agricultural support and resources?

No, there are currently no staff resources with this capability.

19. Does Colwood exempt property taxes on protected riparian areas of agricultural land?

No, although OCP Policy 11.2.3 recommends examining potential implementation of
farm tax exemption policies.

20. Does Colwood currently manage and monitor water quantity and quality?

No, this is done primarily by the Capital Regional District.

21. How is Colwood actively supporting community initiatives that support local food
production and/or distribution?

A grant to Colwood Community Place has been included in the 2010 budget.
Information advertizing events and initiatives are made available at the counter in
City Hall.
22. Do you have any further comments or information that you wish to share?

Not at this time.

23. Can you provide the name and contact information for at least one other individual who could provide insights into the issue of food production and/or distribution in the City of Colwood?

Cindy Moyer
The City of Colwood
Interview Questions

My name is Karin Lengger and I am Masters candidate at Royal Roads University. My thesis is looking at the City of Colwood and asking the question – How can the City of Colwood, in the absence of a significant agricultural land base, become more food secure? I am using a tool recently developed by The Land Conservancy of British Columbia – Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production - to answer this question.

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Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. If you have no personal information about any of the following questions, please feel free to answer N/A and/or provide a possible lead (name and contact information) to an individual who you think would have relevant information to provide. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

24. What is your name? Judith Cullington

25. How would you describe your connections to the City of Colwood? Long time resident, community activist, councillor since 2009.

26. What is your telephone number and email address?

27. With regards to locally and sustainably produced food, what public awareness and education initiatives are taking place in Colwood? Island Chefs Collaborative (food festival end of May), Colwood farmers market, Climate Action West Shore (part of West Shore Chamber of Commerce), Colwood Community Place (see www.colwoodcommunityplace.ca), Pacific Family Services food coordinator, participation in CR_FAIR, Go Local Tomato Challenge

28. Does Colwood have a Food Charter? No

29. If not, are you aware of any initiatives currently underway to create a Food Charter for Colwood? No

30. Has Colwood undertaken a Food System Assessment – an assessment of assets, strengths and vulnerabilities of your food system? No

31. Does Colwood have an Agricultural Area Plan – a plan that establishes a vision, policies and actions for supporting and promoting agriculture? No
32. Does Colwood have an Agricultural Advisory Committee/Commission? No

33. Does Colwood have a food procurement policy that favours locally produced food? Not formally. We try to use local for our meetings.

34. Are you aware of any land use Zoning within Colwood that supports the production and/or distribution of food? No – allowed to have bantams.

35. Are you aware of any land use Zoning within Colwood that restricts/inhibits the production and/or the distribution of food? Yes – ALR land is golf course and park! Not allowed to have chickens.

36. The Local Government Act (Section 904) allows local governments to rezone land for higher than specified levels of density provided that certain amenity contributions are provided by the landowner (an amenity is generally understood to be something that enhances the desirability of the property). Does Colwood use this create opportunities for food production? Not to date.

37. Does Colwood have a Local Conservation Fund (a fund created by levying a parcel tax on each property which would then used for the acquisition and conservation of sustainable farms)? No

38. Does Colwood allow Leasehold Subdivisions (a method of allowing subdivisions of agricultural land for the purpose of facilitating a lease to a tenant farmer)? No

39. Does Colwood currently lease or rent public land to farmers/food producers? No

40. Does Colwood support food production infrastructure? (ie. farmers’ market, cold storage, etc.) Yes – farmers market. Also supported rezoning for Essencia property – will include local food production and perhaps some food processing.

41. Does Colwood provide professional agricultural support and resources? No

42. Does Colwood exempt property taxes on protected riparian areas of agricultural land? n/a

43. Does Colwood currently manage and monitor water quantity and quality? No – done by Ministry of Environment and Esquimalt Lagoon Stewardship Initiative

44. How is Colwood actively supporting community initiatives that support local food production and/or distribution? Yes – funding support to Colwood Community Place

45. Do you have any further comments or information that you wish to share?

46. Can you provide the name and contact information for at least one other individual who could provide insights into the issue of a food production and/or distribution in the City of Colwood? Cindy Moyer
CITY OF COLWOOD

The City of Colwood
Interview Questions

My name is Karin Lengger and I am Masters candidate at Royal Roads University. My thesis is looking at the City of Colwood and asking the question – How can the City of Colwood, in the absence of a significant agricultural land base, become more food secure? I am using a tool recently developed by The Land Conservancy of British Columbia – Local Government Toolkit for Sustainable Food Production - to answer this question.

The City of Colwood covers a total area of 5,112 acres of which 4,312 acres is comprised of land and 801 acres is land covered by water and foreshore area. Of this, approximately 450 acres, or about 10% of the land mass within the city of Colwood is zoned Agricultural and is land within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The vast majority of this Agricultural land is zoned AG1 (98%) and is currently being utilized as a golf course.

It is estimated that Vancouver Island produces less than 5% of the food that its population consumes. Given that the City of Colwood has virtually no agricultural land, any increase in local food production falls within the realm of urban agriculture. Urban agriculture includes any activity associated with growing crops and some form of livestock in or very near cities for local consumption, either by the producers themselves or by others when food is marketed.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. If you have no personal information about any of the following questions, please feel free to answer N/A and/or provide a possible lead (name and contact information) to an individual who you think would have relevant information to provide. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

47. What is your name? Cindy Moyer

48. How would you describe your connections to the City of Colwood? Citizen, Member of the city’s Parks, Recreation & Culture Committee, Member of the Mayor’s Task Force on Energy and Economic Growth, Director of Climate Action West Shore/West Shore Chamber of Commerce. I work directly with elected officials and staff to support community-wide networking and communications related to climate action and building vibrant local economies. The focal point of these efforts is currently related to the Colwood Community Place (CCP) initiative www.colwoodcommunityplace.ca and the various actions supported by CCP (growing challenges, local food cooking challenges, etc.).

49. What is your telephone number and email address?

50. With regards to locally and sustainably produced food, what public awareness and education initiatives are taking place in Colwood? Colwood Community Place (which includes focused food-related outreach at the weekly Colwood Farmers’ Market at the JDF Recreation Centre), various other food-related outreach activities through Climate Action West Shore (CAWS), WestShore Teaching Garden (School District #62 – Sooke), Capital Families Assn Food Security Initiative (community gardens, garden in motion outreach, gardening friends program, etc.), gardening and cooking programs through West Shore Parks & Recreation, various programs (growing and enjoying local foods) through Continuing Studies at Royal Roads University, the Shop the Wild events that happen via
RRU Non-Timber Resources (including their annual guide produced with the support of Thrifty Foods), Harvest Supper (awareness raiser for the Goldstream Farmers’ Market).

51. Does Colwood have a Food Charter?  Not yet, but Colwood is actively implementing recommendations included in the GO LOCAL West Shore Food Strategy, which was developed together by Climate Action West Shore and the Capital Families Assn Food Security Initiative in 2008 (attached).

52. If not, are you aware of any initiatives currently underway to create a Food Charter for Colwood? Not at this time, although Colwood is demonstrating active support for the development of an Intermunicipal Task Force on Food, which would include the five West Shore municipalities plus Sooke. Such was initially recommended at the 2009 GO LOCAL West Shore Food Summit, and is anticipated to be a focal point of this year’s summit in early March.

53. Has Colwood undertaken a Food System Assessment – an assessment of assets, strengths and vulnerabilities of your food system? I am not aware of any general assessments done by the city subsequent to a rather superficial assessment done during the development of the city’s Official Community Plan, which was ratified in mid-2008. Much of this level of research has been the purview of the Capital Families Assn Food Security Coordinator over the years, and it is anticipated they have such documentation. That said, we are all very clear on what the assets, strengths and vulnerabilities are. Those challenges are reflected in the recommendations of the GO LOCAL West Shore Food Strategy.

54. Does Colwood have an Agricultural Area Plan – a plan that establishes a vision, policies and actions for supporting and promoting agriculture? At present, Colwood lacks the ALR to base an AAP on, so are working primarily on delivering on the urban agriculture recommendations found in the GO LOCAL West Shore Food Strategy.

55. Does Colwood have an Agricultural Advisory Committee/Commission? No, but neighbouring Metchosin has such a Commission. Work relating to urban agriculture outreach and action plans reside officially within Colwood’s Parks, Recreation & Culture Committee and action is currently being delivered through the Colwood Community Place project and Colwood Farmers’ Market.

56. Does Colwood have a food procurement policy that favours locally produced food? Not yet, but is being discussed.

57. Are you aware of any land use Zoning within Colwood that supports the production and/or distribution of food? Colwood is clearly open for green business, and keen to explore meaningful incentives relative to local food production and processing. Colwood is also a strong proponent of culinary tourism, as witnessed by its support of the annual Island Chefs’ Collaborative Local Food Festival which takes place in May at Colwood’s Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site.

58. Are you aware of any land use Zoning within Colwood that restricts/inhibits the production and/or the distribution of food? Restrictions do apply, as Colwood is largely an urban area. Details on zoning can be obtained from Colwood’s Director of Planning,
59. The Local Government Act (Section 904) allows local governments to rezone land for higher than specified levels of density provided that certain amenity contributions are provided by the landowner (an amenity is generally understood to be something that enhances the desirability of the property). Does Colwood use this create opportunities for food production? Yes, it has and this is considered a ‘growing’ priority. The Essencia project at Esquimalt Lagoon, next door to RRU is an example of progressive food-related amenities being built into the mix even prior to development, as witnessed by the organic garden/greenhouse and food-related events held there (including a groovy cob oven funded by the developer and created as a community-building activity in 2008) www.essenciavillage.ca The charrette report on the website can provide a more detailed overview. Other developments have also indicated willingness to integrate food gardens into their projects, or in the case of the Aquattro project (also at Esquimalt Lagoon), the developer is generously supporting the heritage apple orchard found there and celebrates local use of the harvest each year.

60. Does Colwood have a Local Conservation Fund (a fund created by levying a parcel tax on each property which would then used for the acquisition and conservation of sustainable farms)? Not yet, but is expected to be discussed at the upcoming GO LOCAL West Shore Food Summit in March.

61. Does Colwood allow Leasehold Subdivisions (a method of allowing subdivisions of agricultural land for the purpose of facilitating a lease to a tenant farmer)? I do not know for certain, and suggest you contact Simon Lawrence or Alan Haldenby (pls see #12 above for contact info).

62. Does Colwood currently lease or rent public land to farmers/food producers? Not yet, largely because of either drainage issues, site remediation concerns, etc.

63. Does Colwood support food production infrastructure? (ie. farmers’ market, cold storage, etc.) Yes, enthusiastically. Colwood provides funding for the Colwood Farmers’ Market and is actively involved on-site throughout the season to speak with citizens and visitors about the city’s commitment to local food security.

64. Does Colwood provide professional agricultural support and resources? As Colwood does not have agricultural land of its own, it does not currently have professional staff and/or material resources available for use by the public.

65. Does Colwood exempt property taxes on protected riparian areas of agricultural land? I do not know, and suggest you contact Simon Lawrence or Alan Haldenby (pls see #12 above for contact info).

66. Does Colwood currently manage and monitor water quantity and quality? My understanding is that this is a direct Capital Regional District responsibility, although it is my understanding that Colwood has representation on the CRD committee responsible for water.

67. How is Colwood actively supporting community initiatives that support local food production and/or distribution? Colwood is providing financial, in-kind and strong
political support for local food through Climate Action West Shore and the Colwood Community Place project, which keeps council and staff apprised of emerging opportunities where the city could engage in production and/or distribution opportunities.

68. Do you have any further comments or information that you wish to share? I am very interested in receiving the report on your study findings, which will hopefully further inform our food security efforts here in the City of Colwood.

69. Can you provide the name and contact information for at least one other individual who could provide insights into the issue of a food production and/or distribution in the City of Colwood? I would strongly recommend you consult with Jennifer Girard, Food Security Coordinator with Capital Families Association.