IV. LOCAL FOOD POLICY ORGANIZATIONS [F-6, F-7, F-8, & F-9]

In this section you will find a historical timeline of work that has been done on local food systems planning over the past several decades written by Kate Clancy. Also, there are some summaries as well as the complete reports prepared by Ken Dahlberg on the local food policy councils in Knoxville, TN, St. Paul, MN, Onondaga County, NY, and Philadelphia, PA.

A. "A Timeline of Local Food Systems Planning." Kate Clancy, 1996. [F-6]

B. Local Food Policy Councils:

1. Knoxville. [F-6]

   a. "Minnesota Food System; Slow Start, Model Concept," Nutrition Week, Vol. 23, No. 27 (July 23, 1993), pp. 4-5. [An abstract done by the Community Nutrition Institute of the report immediately below].

3. Onondaga County, NY. [F-8]


5. Toronto, Canada. [F-9]
   Rod MacRae, "So Why is the City of Toronto Concerned about Food and Agricultural Policy? A Short History of the Toronto Food Policy Council." Culture and Agriculture, Winter 1994, pp. 15-18.
Minnesota Food System; Slow Start, Model Concept

In the mid-1980s, the U.S. Conference of Mayors began a project to establish local food policy councils. Dr. Kenneth Dahlberg, of Western Michigan University, has studied these food councils and the impact they have had on their local food systems. Dahlberg's report on St. Paul's Food and Nutrition Commission is excerpted below.

Few citizens or officials are aware of how dependent their city is upon distant national and international systems (public and private) for their food and how vulnerable those systems are. Neither are they aware of the extent and complexity of their local food systems, much less, their potential and the need to develop that potential. No U.S. city has a department of food. Equally, few people are aware that the value of the produce from all U.S. gardens (urban and rural) is roughly equivalent to that of the corn crop -- some $18 billion a year.

History of the Commission

One of the sources of the creation of the Food and Nutrition Commission was a 1981 fight by concerned citizens trying to prevent demolition of old Farmer's Market, which for 80 years had been located [downtown]. The fight created a strong coalition of farmers and consumers which eventually became the Minnesota Food Association (MFA). Another source was the Home Grown Economy project initiated by Mayor George Latimer in 1982. This project emphasized utilizing local resources both to strengthen the local economy and to make it more self-reliant, especially in terms of energy, and to some degree, food. The mayor was open to participating in the U.S. Conference of Mayors project when he learned about it.

Latimer, with the backing of a Council resolution, created the "Mayor's Ad Hoc Taskforce on Municipal Food Policy," chaired by then City Councilman (and now Mayor) James Scheibel. Following a series of public hearings, the Task Force submitted its report in June 1984 and made subsequent recommendations which led in June 1985 to a Council resolution which created a Food and Nutrition Commission. In 1987 the City Council adopted the Food and Nutrition Policy of the City of Saint Paul based on recommendations drawn up by the Commission in consultation with neighborhood representatives, food retailers, health professionals, consumers and farmers.

An important strategic decision was to present the City Council with a broad and general policy statement and to have a separate annex with a detailed set of implementing recommendations. This was in contrast to the approach used in Minneapolis, where a combined set of broad policy and detailed implementation recommendations were presented for approval and were defeated, largely on the basis of the nature and cost of some of the recommendations.

Mayor Uncertain

The birth of the FNC by resolution, rather than by ordinance, meant the FNC started as an advisory and largely voluntary group looking for a home and staff support. In additional to the slow process of commission members educating each other about the nature and operation of the local food system, a sorting out of priorities would be required. Latimer's unsureness as to how and where the FNC fit into the city led to a delay in identifying a home. The St. Paul/Ramsey County Nutrition Program was eventually chosen, but the staff felt a bit of apprehension and resentment at having this "adopted child" forced upon them with no additional resources provided.

A period of little activity and no meetings ensued until the FNC assimilated the priorities of the Nutrition Program, and by 1991, FNC had begun developing an annual work plan. The FNC was recognized by city ordinance in July 1992 as a full fledged commission with assigned duties, including review powers, staff and budget.

Organizational Dynamics

Changing from an advisory to an official body raises questions about FNC's role as well as its internal and external relations. Previously FNC could only recommend actions to the City Council. It occasionally endorsed proposals, such as requiring mandatory training for food handlers. It did not comment on others, such as the ordinance restricting the spraying of lawn pesticides or the ordinance requiring that virtually all grocery store plastics be recyclable. FNC also will be able now to initiate its own actions and review the food-related actions and budgets of other city agencies.

FNC's duties under the new ordinance include making policy recommendations, reviewing the relevant portions of the City's Comprehensive Plan and the proposed annual operating and biannual capital budgets of the Division of Public Health and the Department of Planning and Economic Development, as well as preparing an annual report.

An important consideration is to keep a healthy balance between the various sectors of the food system -- between production (conserving farmland, community gardens); processing and distribution (processors, wholesalers and grocers); food access (farmers markets, the emergency and supplemental feeding system, location of grocery stores, food

St. Paul’s Demographics

Within St. Paul, different income groups spent widely varying percentages of their income on food. In 1986, those earning $5,000 or less (17 percent of households) spent 85 percent of income on food; those earning $5,000 to $10,000 (19 percent of households) spent 29 percent, those in the $10,000 to $15,000 range (22 percent of households) spent 22 percent; the overall average for all households was 15 percent. St. Paul's excellent emergency and supplemental feeding system has largely been able to keep up with the increasing number of people requesting assistance, but is nearing its current capacity. In 1988, 20,000 households were served in Ramsey County as compared to slightly over 35,000 in 1992. The number of individuals served was 68,000 and 125,000 respectively.

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programs such as school meals, WIC, food stamps and elderly nutrition; recycling (food banks, composting), and disposal (landfills, packaging restrictions). Typically, there is a tendency for emergency and supplemental feeding system issues and concerns to dominate in local food councils, and St. Paul is typical.

The City of Knoxville [TN] has found that an annual retreat is very effective. The agenda and issues to be discussed at the annual retreat are prepared by an outside consultant after coordinating with the Food Policy Council chair and staff. The outside consultant also prepares the annual report.

Accomplishments
Food policy councils deal in large part with the informal sector which is less visible than the formal sector, and often more difficult to assess because it involves coordinating the activities of individuals, volunteer groups and public agencies -- a vital function but difficult to document.

One of the major accomplishments, as Mayor Scheibbel noted, is that the FNC has survived its initial ups and downs and has become part of the city -- something that will give it a much greater operational and outreach capacity.

More specifically, FNC has sponsored the SL Paul "Food and Nutrition Honor Roll". The Mayor on behalf of the City Council recognizes individuals or organizations for their contributions to nutrition education, nutritious meals, chemical-free produce, low-cost basic foods, hormone-free and jcan cut meats and marketing Minnesota-grown and labeled foods.

Background reports on various aspects of the local food system have been prepared, and educational materials have been provided, including a flyer, "Nutrition Programs for Older Persons in Ramsey County." Focus groups have been organized to study important areas of the food system. One topic has been hunger, nutrition and food which involved staff from public agencies. One outcome of this was the publication of an interagency newsletter to link food service providers. Another group is studying a model K through 12 food curriculum which would include food, nutrition and gardening, although teachers are reluctant to participate.

While FNC has clearly strengthened some St. Paul social support programs, it has done much less with farmland, gardens, or environmental issues and problems.

Continuing Issues
In terms of regional food production, there is a need to continue to focus on conserving regional farmland. Farmers producing for the Farmer's Market who have been displaced by roads or real estate development have found it almost impossible to find comparable land within the required 50-mile radius.

Gardens should be encouraged both in public housing and the various neighborhoods. An inventory and evaluation of vacant lands with the city suitable for gardens is needed. City procedures for obtaining water for community gardens need to be clarified and improved.

FNC would benefit from more interaction with various grassroots organizations. These include co-ops, environmental, social justice and neighborhood groups. District Planning Councils were involved in some FNC dialogues some years ago, but there has been less contact recently.

Food safety is an emerging issue of importance. There has been much publicity about pesticides and other chemical residues, concern about irradiated foods, bovine growth hormones, etc. These concerns need to be placed in a larger framework which includes food handling in stores and restaurants and the safety of having assured local food supplies.

FNC is in a good Position to stress the need to see food "wastes" as resources. Besides supporting efforts at gleaning and the recycling of usable foods, composting food and yard waste needs to be stressed. Prohibition in January 1993 of landfilling of yard wastes is an opportunity for encouraging household composting and more household gardens.

National and state trends are likely to undermine the "safety net" provided by the city's informal natural and social support systems, including the "environmental services." This increases the need for self-reliance by the city, and will involve a basic shift from defining food problems as hunger and poverty and solutions as emergency feeding and welfare to new and broader concepts of local economic development, energy efficiency and environmental improvement.

For copies of the report on the Saint Paul Food System or other information on community food studies, write to Dr. Kenneth A. Dahlberg, Department of Political Science, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI. 49008. (616) 378-5686

A Pioneering Effort
Keep in mind the initial years of a food council are particularly difficult. The effort is pioneering. It involves exploring new territory which few have thought about systematically. A significant amount of time is required for members to learn about the various sectors of the food system, how they operate, and which agencies and persons are active where. Efforts to devise a viable and locally functioning structure also require a lot of trial and error.
Report and Recommendations

on

The Saint Paul, Minnesota Food System

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March 1993
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA FOOD SYSTEM

by
Kenneth A. Dahlberg
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INTRODUCTION

This report on the St. Paul food system and the St. Paul Food and Nutrition Commission (FNC) is the second of six on cities and counties around the country. The reports are part of a larger research project entitled, "Local Food Systems: Policies and Values Influencing their Potential." The other study sites are: Knoxville, TN; Onondaga County, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Charleston, SC; and Kansas City, MO. All except Onondaga County participated in a 1984-85 project conducted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors to establish local food policy councils.

My interest in municipal food systems follows on from earlier work on sustainable agriculture - where the idea of localizing food systems is stressed. Curiously, the role of cities and towns in increasing the amount of locally grown food for local consumption has been neglected. This project thus seeks to explore the potential of cities to be more self-reliant and more efficient in operating their local food systems. Much greater development of this potential is not only desirable, but may be required in the shorter term if federal and state funds for food-related programs remain stagnant or decline. Development of this potential will definitely be required in the longer term as fossil fuel prices increase and multiply prices throughout our energy-inefficient food system.

One of today's major challenges is that few citizens or officials are aware of how dependent their city is upon distant national and international systems (public and private) for their food and how vulnerable those systems are. Neither are they aware of the extent and complexity of their local food systems, much less their potential and the need to develop that potential. This is reflected in the fact that no U.S. city has a department of food. Equally, few people are aware that the value of the produce from all U.S. gardens (urban and rural) is roughly equivalent to that of the corn crop (approx. $18 billion/year!).

I have sought to understand how local food systems and cycles operate at the household, neighborhood, and municipal levels. At each level I have also sought to understand the issues associated with each portion of the food system: from production issues (farmland preservation, farmers markets, household & community gardens), to processing issues (local vs. external), to distribution issues (transportation, warehousing) to access issues (inner city grocery stores, school breakfasts & lunches, food stamps, the WIC program, etc.), to use issues (food safety and handling, restaurants, street vendors), to food recycling (gleaning, food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens) to waste stream issues (composting, garbage fed to pigs, etc.). Besides the social and environmental issues associated with the above, there are also a number of ethical and value issues involved which I have also sought to understand and describe.

My visit to St. Paul (June 1991) and subsequent work have been greatly facilitated by the extensive and generous help of Kate Dienhart and Joanne Anderson-Kendrick, respectively past and present Coordinators of the FNC; Richard Goebel, Chair of the FNC and Executive Director of Second Harvest: the Saint Paul Food Bank; and Ken Taylor, Executive Director of the Minnesota Food Association and oft-time consultant to the FNC.
THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL SETTING

Saint Paul, Minnesota, is the capital of the state and the second largest city, the largest being Minneapolis, its adjacent and "twin" city. The larger metropolitan area includes over one-third of the state's population. In 1990, the population of Minneapolis was 368,383. The 1990 population of St. Paul was 272,235, of which blacks accounted for 7.4%, Asians and Pacific Islanders 7%, Hispanics 4.2%, and American Indians 1.3%. St. Paul is also the seat of Ramsey County, which has a population of 485,765. While some additional minority group members live in the county, 83% of the county's minorities reside in the city. 11.4% of the county's residents have incomes below the poverty line. Most of them (79%) also live in the city.

The city has historically served as the distribution and transportation center for a vast Midwestern farm area. Extensive air, rail, and truck transport is complemented by significant amounts of barge traffic on the Mississippi. Minneapolis has historically been a major grain milling and exporting city and a major producer of farm equipment. Regional attitudes described to me included a strong work ethic, an emphasis on reliability, and a desire for self-reliance at the family level. At the social level, the presence of the "progressive" political tradition is still in evidence. Also, many urban people grew up on farms or have farm/rural links and thus have and interest in, and a sympathy for the farm family. Some indicated that not as much value is placed on open space and farmland preservation as in the East.

Agricultural trends in Minnesota are similar to those throughout the country during the 1980's. Minnesota lost more farmers than any other state with the farms declining from some 132,000 in 1967 to some 91,000 in 1989. The farmer's of the food dollar declined (from near 40% in the 1960s to 25% in 1988) and dependence upon foreign markets remained (with cash receipts attributable to international exports averaging 27% in the 1980s). Trends in the seven county Metropolitan Area are similar. The number of farms decreased from 5662 in 1982 to 5175 in 1987, while in the same period farmland in the area decreased 6% to a total of 52% of the region's land. The 1980 Minnesota Agricultural Preserves Act may have helped some in preventing even more farmland from being converted to urban uses. Most of the farms in the metro area are conventional, which means that their production practices generate significant risks and costs in terms of surface and groundwater contamination, soil erosion, and pesticide residues on food. Direct marketing of metro food products to individuals was $3.6 million in 1982, about 1% of total agricultural sales. In terms of food marketing more generally, the same trends towards consolidation in food wholesaling and retailing found nationally are found in Minnesota.

Within St. Paul, different income groups spent widely varying percentages of their income on food. In 1986, those earning $5,000 or less (14% of households) spent 85%; those earning $5,000 - $10,000 (19% of households) spent 29%; those in the $10,000 to $15,000 range (22% of households) spent 22%; the overall average for all households was 15%. St. Paul's excellent emergency and supplemental feeding system has largely been able to keep up with the increasing numbers of people requesting assistance, but is nearing its current capacity. 20,000 households were served in Ramsey County in 1988 as compared to slightly over 35,000 in 1992 (the respective number of individuals served was 68,000 and 125,000).

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION COMMISSION

One of the sources of the creation of the Food and Nutrition Commission was a 1981 fight by concerned citizens trying to prevent demolition of old Farmer's Market, which for 80 years had been at
Tenth and Jackson. Besides raising public awareness regarding food system issues, the fight created a strong coalition of farmers and consumers which eventually became the Minnesota Food Association (MFA). Another source was the Home Grown Economy project initiated by Mayor George Latimer in 1982. This project emphasized utilizing local resources both to strengthen the local economy and to make it more self-reliant, especially in terms of energy, and to some degree food. This meant that the Mayor was open to participating in the U.S. Conference of Mayors project when he learned about it.

The Mayor, with the backing of a Council resolution, created the "Mayor's Ad Hoc Taskforce on Municipal Food Policy," chaired by then City Councilman (and now Mayor) James Scheibel. The Task Force, made up of a diverse mix of twenty citizens, held a series of public hearings in late 1984. In setting its agenda, it also drew upon the background report on food system trends prepared earlier by the MFA. The Task Force submitted its report in June of 1984. The Task Force then met periodically with the Mayor to work out specific recommendations. These were adopted in a Council resolution of June 20, 1985, which created a Food and Nutrition Commission of nine members and charged it with preparing a food policy statement for consideration by the City Council. The Commission, chaired by Jim Scheibel, worked with neighborhood representatives, food retailers, health professionals, consumers, and farmers to develop a set of recommendations. These were adopted on November 9, 1987, by the City Council, which designated them the Food and Nutrition Policy of the City of Saint Paul.

The early years of the FNC have been characterized by several phases involving various ups and downs. The gestation of the FNC through the Taskforce was a high energy effort involving many people. An important strategic decision was to present the City Council a broad and general policy statement and to have a separate annex with a detailed set of implementing recommendations. This was in contrast to the approach used in Minneapolis, where a combined set of broad policy and detailed implementation recommendations were presented for approval and were defeated, largely on the basis of the nature and cost of some of the implementing recommendations.

The birth of the FNC by resolution, rather than by ordinance, meant that the FNC started as an advisory and largely volunteer group looking for a home and staff support. The very broad mandate of the FNC - developed by the MFA - also meant that in addition to the slow process of commission members educating each other about the nature and operation of the local food system, a sorting out of priorities would be required. Mayor Latimer's unsureness as to how or where the FNC fit into the city led to a delay in identifying a home. The St. Paul/Ramsey County Nutrition Program was eventually chosen, but the staff there felt a bit of apprehension and resentment at having this "adopted child" forced upon them with no additional resources provided.

The combination of delay and uncertainty regarding staff, and then an initially unenthusiastic home meant that there was a period of little activity and no meetings. This changed with the appointment of a new Director of the Nutrition Program (Kate Dienhart). She worked with Jim Scheibel (then a City Councilman) to arrange an evening retreat. Several items the Nutrition Program was interested in were presented to the FNC for action - something that got things going again. Since then, there have been a series of dialogues and in 1990 a series of speakers was organized by MFA to review the operation of the St. Paul food system and the major issues facing it. In 1991, the FNC worked to identify and prioritize several objectives by developing an annual work plan.

Another major effort, beginning in 1991 and culminating in 1992 was to have the FNC recognized by a city ordinance as a full fledged commission with assigned duties including a review power, staff, and budget. This ordinance was adopted July
members. The budget FNC will have to go through the regular city process. Support for a half-time what FNC leaders have pushed for. As yet, budget support has not been forthcoming even with informal backing from the Mayor and some Council members. The ordinance also refers to the possibility of Ramsey County adopting a parallel ordinance which would expand the coverage of the FNC to the county. Informal efforts are underway to encourage this. It is proposed that there be fifteen members in the joint city-county FNC and that the St. Paul/Ramsey County Nutrition Program continue as the staff base.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS

The change in the status of the FNC from an advisory to an official body raises questions about its new role(s) as well as its internal and external relations. Previously, the FNC could only recommend actions to the City Council (such as the Food and Nutrition Honor Roll). It occasionally endorsed proposals, such as one requiring mandatory training for food handlers. It did not comment on others, however, such as the ordinance restricting the spraying of lawn pesticides or the ordinance requiring that virtually all grocery store plastics be recyclable. The FNC will continue to have the power to recommend new actions to the City Council, but will also be able to initiate its own actions and review the food-related actions and budgets of other agencies within the city bureaucracy.

If the FNC also becomes the subject of a county ordinance, this will give the FNC - like the St. Paul/Ramsey County Nutrition Program - a fairly unique location which will organizationally bridge the city and county on food system issues. It will also link food system issues with the health care system more generally. Such a geographic expansion should also encourage the FNC to address various production, farmland preservation, land use, waste stream, and welfare issues more than it has.

Assuming that the expected half-time staff support will be made available to the FNC, this will greatly facilitate it carrying out its duties under the new ordinance. These include making policy recommendations, reviewing the relevant portions of the City's Comprehensive Plan and the proposed annual operating and biennial capital budgets of the Division of Public Health and the Dept. of Planning and Economic Development, as well as preparing an annual report. It will also be able to organize joint meetings with other groups, etc. However, it also raises questions about maintaining a healthy balance between the commissioners and the staff. The City of Knoxville has found that an annual retreat is very effective in doing this. The agenda and issues to be discussed at the annual retreat are prepared by an outside consultant after coordinating with the Food Policy Council chair and staff. The outside consultant also prepares the annual report.

This points to another important question. Since the MFA has played such a crucial role in helping to create and in assisting the FNC through its down periods, what should be its role vis-a-vis the new and more institutionalized Commission? Given the importance of having outside and independent expertise to provide both perspective and new ideas, it would seem appropriate to have an ongoing and regular role for the MFA to play in assisting the FNC and its staff. This could range from doing the annual report to preparing an annual retreat to preparing a series of dialogues to doing in-depth studies on emerging issues. The main point is that the MFA is well equipped to continue to assist the FNC in important ways.

Another important consideration is to keep a healthy balance between the various sectors of the food system (i.e., between production [conserving farmland; community gardens], processing and distribution [processors, wholesalers & grocers], food access [farmers markets; the emergency and supplemental feeding system; location of grocery stores; school breakfasts, etc.], processing and use [restaurants; food handling; food safety], recycling [food banks; composting] and disposal [land fills,
Typically, there is a tendency for emergency and supplemental feeding system issues and concerns to predominate in local food councils. Several people mentioned this as a potential concern in St. Paul as well.

This links in to the issue of the diversity of the commissioners and the constituencies they represent. Several observations and recommendations on this are listed below, along with some suggestions on having staff liaisons from several other departments or divisions. Also, given the tendency for some commissioners not to attend regularly, the provision for removal contained in the ordinance should be enforced.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

While the accomplishments discussed below may not seem to be dramatic, it must be kept in mind that the initial years of a food council are particularly difficult. The effort is a pioneering one in several senses. It involves exploring new territory which few have thought about systematically. This means, that, as noted above, there is a significant amount of time required for members to learn about the various sectors of the food system, how they operate, and which agencies and persons are active where. Efforts to devise a viable and locally functional structure also require a lot of pioneering effort, including trial and error.

Even when fully functional, the fact that food policy councils deal in large part with the informal sector -which is less visible than the formal sector - means that it is often difficult to point to specific achievements. Also, one of the key capabilities of most food councils is their ability to coordinate the activities of various individuals, volunteer groups, and public agencies so that much more is accomplished in terms of providing/maintaining social support systems than would otherwise be the case. This coordination and leveraging of informal and formal resources is also difficult to document and portray.

These comments are definitely applicable to the emergency and supplemental feeding system, which had evolved and become vigorous prior to the creation of the FNC. The presence of a vigorous emergency and supplemental feeding system meant that the FNC has not had to become heavily involved with these issues, although it has been able to draw on the experience of its current Chair on these matters.

A. Given the above, one of the main accomplishments, as Mayor Scheibel, noted, is that the FNC has survived its initial ups and downs and has now become part of the city - something that will give it a much greater operational and outreach capacity. The creation of a city/county FNC would extend this even further.

B. Development and operation of the "Food and Nutrition Honor Roll" where the Mayor, on behalf of the City Council, recognizes individuals or organizations for their contributions to providing nutrition education, nutritious meals, chemical-free produce, low-cost basic foods, hormone-free and lean cut meats, and marketing Minnesota-grown and labeled foods. The FNC works with a panel of nutritionists, grocers, low income advocates, and restaurant reviewers to make award recommendations to the City Council. This activity has given the FNC some visibility in the community and has provided some legitimacy to the efforts of those honored. It has taken a fair amount of volunteer time on the part of the commissioners to conduct this program.

C. Development and distribution of a flyer, "Nutrition Programs for Older Persons in Ramsey County." This flyer outlines the various programs that are available and how to obtain more
information about them. To try to get the widest possible distribution, the plan was to include the flyer with utility bills, but this proved impossible because of budget constraints.

D. Beginning with the 1991 Work Plan the FNC has sought to explore other important areas of the food system through a series of focus group meetings. One topic has been hunger, nutrition, and food. This group, which includes many agency people, has met several times and has published an interagency newsletter to keep people informed. Another group has been exploring the development of a model K-12 food curriculum which would include food, nutrition, and gardening. There have been some difficulties in getting teachers to participate. Other topics include strengthening summer feeding programs and a cooperative harvest (gardening) program.

E. The FNC, with modest financial support from the Mayor's Office, has had the Minnesota Food Association prepare several background reports on various aspects of the local food system which have provided a valuable compilation of information.

Summary: While the FNC has clearly been able to strengthen some of St. Paul's social support programs (nutrition, emergency and supplemental feeding programs), it has done much less with farmland, gardens, or environmental issues and problems.

THE SOURCES OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

There are a number of sources underlying the above accomplishments. First, there has been a high degree of commitment and patience on the part of most commissioners. Most commissioners have taken this volunteer job very seriously and have devoted time and effort to keeping the FNC going.

Second, there has been good support from Mayor Scheibel. He not only served as Chair of the FNC prior to his election as Mayor, but has pushed for staff support. He has helped to make the funds available for the MFA studies and in 1991 assigned an intern to follow hunger issues. Councilwoman Janice Rettman also played an important role in developing and facilitating passage of the new ordinance.

Third, as noted above, the MFA has been crucial in helping to get the FNC established as well as providing ideas, expertise, and programs to educate and strengthen the operations of the FNC.

Fourth, the presence of a strong emergency and supplemental feeding system allows the FNC to address the many other important food system issues, while still coordinating with the emergency and supplemental feeding system through its current Chair.

Finally, the minimal amount of staff time available from the coordinators in the Nutrition Program has been used very effectively.

ISSUES NEEDING CONTINUING OR ADDITIONAL WORK

A. In terms of regional food production, there is a need to continue to focus on the importance of conserving regional farmland. A couple of farmers producing for the Farmer's Market who have been displaced by roads or real estate development have found it almost impossible to find comparable land within the required 50-mile radius. While the Metropolitan Planning Council has made some efforts at farmland preservation beyond those contained in the 1980 Agricultural Preserves Act, the seven county area it covers would have to be expanded to thirteen to be effective. Also, new techniques and more vigorous efforts will be required.
B. The FNC has spent relatively little time on household and community another source of production and community-building. Gardens should be encouragement both in public housing and in the various neighborhoods. In 1991 and 1992, Green (run by the Minnesota Horticultural Society) ran a demonstration program public housing site. With the help of some state funding, there will be an expansion gardening efforts in 1993, this time run by the Self-Reliance Center. Another approach is the one conducted by Merrick Community Service, where they have developing community gardens with the support and participation of private corporations.

There needs to be an inventory and evaluation of vacant land within the city to see which lots are suitable for gardens. Beyond this, city procedures for obtaining water for community gardens need to be clarified and improved. Although there wasn't time to explore the pros and cons, consideration could be given to having District Councils grant long-term permits for gardens on suitable lots. Another approach is to create a community land trust which would hold title to community garden lands - as has been done in Philadelphia. As community gardens are expanded, the issue of lead in garden soils will also need to be addressed more systematically.

C. An expansion of community gardens would be particularly helpful in addressing the need to integrate various Asian groups, and especially the Hmong, into all aspects of city life. Since some 80% of public housing is used by Asians and since many of them are interested in gardening, this is another reason to promote community gardens in public housing. This needs to be accompanied by many other measures, ranging from the translation of gardening and nutrition information (something the Extension Service is doing some of), to providing consumer and nutrition education, to improving food handling in restaurants, to encouraging the development of Hmong restaurants. One local restauranteur indicated a willingness to help with these issues.

D. The FNC would benefit by being able to interact more with, and draw upon the resources of various grassroots organizations. These might include co-op, environmental, social justice, and neighborhood groups. One strategy might be to involve them on advisory committees and/or to join with them on issues of joint interest. In regard to neighborhood groups, one approach might be to work more with the seventeen District Planning Councils. They were involved in some of the FNC dialogues some years ago, but there has been less contact recently. Perhaps the FNC could work with them and the Dept. of Planning and Economic Development to do a survey and ranking of potential garden sites. A system where the Councils would be asked to submit RFPs (requests for proposals) might be used if modest funding was available. This might be for developing community gardens -although systematic preparations would be needed to avoid the ironic situation with occurred with the community garden in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood. Their garden had won a national prize from the American Community Garden Association, but was closed down because of odor problems from its compost pile (something which resulted from lack of turning the pile regularly).

E. The FNC could help to encourage increased awareness of the emergency and supplemental feeding system as the demand for assistance increases. The United Way list of food shelves and other assistance could be publicized or published and circulated as. a directory as has been done in Syracuse, NY. Somewhat related to this is the problem of a decrease in food access in certain areas, especially near shelters. One major emergency shelter on the near East side has no food available within walking distance after 5:00 PM or on weekends. The downtown has only one grocery store. One community-oriented grocer indicated that for financial reasons he had to close one near downtown store (at University and Lexington), something that leaves only convenience stores in that area.
F. The FNC needs to encourage the use of WIC and food stamps at the Farmer's Market, especially now that food stamp reporting rules have been simplified and political support for WIC at the national level appears stronger. The pilot WIC project run there, where WIC participants got a voucher worth $10 towards produce, had to be cancelled because state matching funds were withdrawn. Even those seeking to get into the regular WIC program suffer from delays due to the lack of sufficient federal funding of this program.

G. Other food access issues include the need to make sure that mandated school breakfast programs are actually served with sufficient time for students to eat. There is a need to expand and simplify summer feeding programs. While difficult to do given the complex and burdensome USDA regulations and paperwork, some type of assistance might be provided. A related area is the need to explore how well the nutritional needs of day care children are being met and how to encourage the use of USDA supplemental feeding programs in day care centers.

H. While some valuable work has been done in the LUNCHPOWER Program to reduce the amount of fat and salt in school lunches, while keeping the meals nutritious and appealing, there is a broader need to expand both nutrition and food system education. One way of doing this which more fully engages students than purely academic approaches is to use the Grow Lab indoor garden and curriculum developed by the National Gardening Association and various science teachers groups. This can be built into the K-6 science curriculum and gets kids directly involved with growing food and other plants. Diet, nutrition, food safety (e.g. pesticide residues, etc.), and composting can take on new meaning from this kind of hands-on approach. This curriculum also involves a broader educational constituency than nutritionists alone.

I. Efforts to encourage greater use of locally-grown produce need to be The concerns that local users (such as county purchasing agents, the common school kitchen, grocers, and restaurants) have regarding the reliability of delivery of needed quantities of locally-produced food may require better networking, cooperation, organization among local producers. The FNC might explore ways to assist the

J. Food safety is recognized as an emerging issue of importance. There much publicity about pesticide and other chemical residues, concern about irradiated foods, concern about the impacts of bovine growth hormones, etc. These concerns to be placed in a larger framework which includes food handling in stores and restaurants, and in the safety of having assured local sources of food. This means preserving farmland and farmers, encouraging farmers markets, promoting community gardens, as well as exploring new approaches such as "community supported agriculture (CSAs)" or "food maintenance organizations (FMOs)" whereby users share the farmer's risk by advance purchase of shares in the crop.

These food safety issues - broadly defined - can also be seen to fit in to the new approaches suggested by the World Health Organization's "Healthy Cities" Program. The FNC would be the logical organization to try to promote these broader concepts of food safety and how they fit into building better and healthier cities.

K. The FNC has spent little time on the food waste stream. The St. Paul Food Bank does an excellent job of re-cycling both useable foods as well as plastics and other wastes. The FNC is in a good position to stress the need to see food "Wastes" as resources. Besides supporting efforts at gleaning and the recycling of useable foods, the importance of composting food and yard wastes needs to be stressed. The prohibition of landfilling of yard wastes as of January 1993 provides an opportunity for encouraging household composting - and thus more household gardens. This will require a
somewhat different promotional approach than that for community gardens. Also, the FNC could endorse the efforts of MINNTAP (the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program) to encourage the feeding of commercial food wastes to pigs.

EMERGING AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Many current national and state trends are likely to further undermine the "safety nets" provided by the city's informal natural and social support systems. These "safety nets" include the "environmental services" which natural systems provide communities in terms of clean air and water, plus the healthy soils needed for the city's vegetation and for gardens. Social support systems include all of the real, but informal services which households, neighborhoods, and a wide variety of volunteer and charitable groups provide to a city. While the long-term decline in federal and state support to cities may level-off somewhat with the new administration, it is doubtful that cities will regain former levels of funding. Thus, they will need to increase their self-reliance. This is especially the case for all local food systems, whether at the household, neighborhood, or metropolitan levels. The challenge is to try to maintain the viability of current support systems as much as possible, while building the foundations for greater self-reliance - all at a time when most people do not see any immediate or pressing need to do so. A crucial part of this will involve a basic shift from the way we currently define food problems (as problems of hunger and poverty) and solutions (as emergency feeding programs and welfare) to new and broader concepts emphasizing the opportunities for local economic development, energy efficiency, and environmental improvement that would result from pursuing a self-reliant strategy based upon a broadened version of the World Health Organization's "healthy cities program."

A. There is a need to start planning for an expanded or new Farmers Market which will provide more stalls and better parking. This will help meet the increased demand for membership, especially from the Hmong. As mentioned above, this should be tied to the need to conserve urban farmland.

B. Linked to this is the need to also emphasize the importance of green space within the city and of green belts around the Metro area. Wisconsin has a program which provides matching funds for cities to purchase green space and community gardens. Green belts not only help conserve farmland, but help to prevent urban sprawl and when combined with a "healthy city" approach, can encourage urban re-development.

C. The FNC needs to start developing a strategy for moving food systems issues from their current "low profile" status to a medium profile status. Particularly important in this regard is the education of the younger generation in the city - which does not have the rural or farm heritage that many adults have. This is where a wide variety of educational and hands-on experiences are needed -ranging from the Grow Labs mentioned earlier, to nutrition education, to education and experience with hunger and poverty issues at all levels. There are a variety of useful simulation games, including the new _Foodgame_ which has recently been published.18

D. To do this, the FNC will need to try to educate various groups regarding the importance and operation of the larger food system and how their activities relate to it. In doing this, the FNC should also seek to build new constituencies and networks. It clearly could work more closely with a range of grass-roots organizations, such as household and community gardeners, neighborhood associations, food safety advocates, co-op people, environmentalists, recyclers, etc.

E. In terms of building these new foundations or frameworks for the future, the need for energy and resource efficiency and environmental soundness in natural support systems and the need for equity and social justice in social support systems should be highlighted throughout.
ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Once budget and staff are allocated to the FNC, the FNC should set up a committee to work with the city's (and also the county's) Personnel Departments to establish the job description and interview procedures for hiring the staff coordinator.

B. In addition to the half-time staff coordinator for FNC, efforts should be made to have four to five staff liaison persons from other city and county agencies assigned to the FNC. On the city side these should include someone from the Mayor's office (to reflect the "strong mayor" structure of the city), someone from the Dept. of Planning and Economic Development, and perhaps someone from Public Housing. Other possibilities would include the Parks and Recreation and Environmental Health Departments. On the county side someone from the Health Division should be included, and perhaps someone from Extension or the Metro Council. The choice of which liaison people should be included will depend upon the discussions of what new goals and priorities are appropriate to the expanded FNC. Having such liaison persons is valuable: 1) in helping to extend food systems concerns into these agencies, 2) in reviewing both FNC and the agency plans, and 3) in gaining support for the implementation of policy.

C. As mentioned earlier, it is important to ensure diversity and a good balance between the different food system sectors among the commissioners themselves. It is useful to have a City Councilperson serve. A county Commissioner should also serve once the county joins. Such people can help to promote or implement the policies recommended. The sectors that currently are not adequately represented include: household and community gardens; the commercial sector (grocers and restauranteurs); the waste stream/composting portion of the food system; the food safety sector (broadly defined); education (both schools and the general public); and the energy and environmental aspects of the food system. While there are not this many additional positions available, it is important in making recommendations for new members to the Mayor's office (and the County Commission Chair) to seek diversity and balance.

D. Another and complementary way of doing this is for the FNC to establish taskforces and/or advisory committees. This has worked very well in Knoxville in providing diversity and expertise in addressing a particular area or problem. Some of the focus groups which have were started the past year (those on nutrition, developing a model curriculum, and community gardens) might well serve as the foundation for such committees. The one on community and household gardens should include composting. Other possible taskforces or advisory committees could gradually be established in the following areas: 1) farmland preservation and local marketing; and 2) food safety (broadly defined), which would also include industry representatives.

E. At some point the larger planning implications of localizing the food system and making it more self-reliant also need to be addressed - perhaps by working with city, county, and Metro planning personnel. The concept of "sustainable development" which is gaining currency in Third World development circles as well as among agriculturalists needs to be extended to urban planning. An advisory committee or taskforce here might also include people from the food industry (processors, transporters, wholesalers, etc.) who have been largely absent from FNC deliberations.

F. Establish a procedure (and a budget) for obtaining regular outside consulting services. These would presumably be provided by the MFA - given its expertise and past contributions. As suggested above, this could include organizing an annual retreat or dialogues on specific issues, writing the
annual report, or doing specific studies. It is important to have an outside, independent source of ideas and evaluation.

G. If possible, the annual report of the FNC should be presented and discussed at a meeting of the City Council (and at a meeting of the County Commission, once it becomes a joint sponsor).

H. Given the number of requests that both the St. Paul Food Bank and the Nutrition Program receive for information on the FNC, two types of materials should be prepared: 1) an informational brochure that highlights the goals, structure, and activities of the FNC; and 2) background materials, such as copies of the original policy and objectives, the implementation strategies, and the new ordinance, should be printed up and made available to those seeking detailed information on the history, development, and structure of the FNC. Copies of each annual report are also useful references for a variety of purposes. In addition, a packet of orientation materials for new commissioners needs to be prepared. Finally, it would also be valuable to try to have one of the local colleges undertake a comprehensive history of the FNC. This should be accompanied by efforts to gather photos, slides, clippings, etc. of the FNC and its members. These could also be used in public briefings and/or in the brochure and orientation materials.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The St. Paul Food and Nutrition Commission has done a great deal in developing a series of basic reports and recommendations and in educating its members on the nature, problems, and needs of the local food system. The food policy which it developed for the city, and especially the implementing recommendations, are comprehensive and innovative. The passage of the new ordinance which promises the necessary staff support to start implementing some of these recommendations offers an exciting range of possibilities to the FNC, particularly if it is able to expand its jurisdiction and coverage to include the county. These possibilities will require the creation of a process to set priorities, while at the same time making more groups aware of the FNC and its concerns. Hopefully this report will be of use in both those efforts.
ENDNOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This report is based upon work supported by the Ethics and Values Studies Program of the National Science Foundation under Grant No. DIR-9022243. The government has certain rights in this material. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.


3. Their thoughtful comments and suggestions have greatly improved earlier drafts of this report and have helped me to avoid errors and misinterpretations. Any that remain are my responsibility. Also, I would like to thank all those that I interviewed and/or talked to on the phone. They gave me a much better sense of the dynamics and issues facing the Food and Nutrition Commission than would otherwise have been the case.


5. These figures were provided by Second Harvest: the St. Paul Food Bank.


7. The MFA was created in 1983 as the St. Paul Food Resources Project. It did a detailed study and report on national, state, and local food production and consumption issues - which became a background paper for the Mayor's Ad Hoc Task Force on Municipal Food Policy.


9. The fortuitous visit by a member of the Knoxville, TN, food bank, who mentioned the U.S. Conference of Mayors project to Dick Goebel, Executive Director of Second Harvest: St. Paul Food Bank, led him to encourage the Mayor to participate. The U.S. Conference of Mayors offered to include both St. Paul and Minneapolis in the project, but Minneapolis declined.

10. Much of the information in this paragraph is drawn from United States Conference of Mayors report, *Municipal Food Policies*. [See reference #2.]


12. The efforts in Minneapolis grew out of the work of the Self-Reliance Center, which since 1976 had helped area residents create community gardens. In part stimulated by the activities in St.
Paul, they approached the Minneapolis City Council in the fall of 1985 (with the help of Councilman Steve Cramer) requesting support for developing food policy recommendations. The Council passed a resolution of support and the Minneapolis Food Policy Task Force was created in April of 1986. With the financial support of the Minneapolis Foundation and several corporations, the Task Force organized itself into three committees and over the next year met with various technical experts, held a number of hearings (with the help of the Minnesota Food Association), and prepared its policy and implementing recommendations. These were contained in: *A Municipal Food Policy for Minneapolis: The Report of the Minneapolis Food Policy Task Force*, Minneapolis, MN: Self Reliance Center, May 1987. [For further information, contact: Self-Reliance Center, 1916 2nd Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55403; Phone (612) 870-4255.]

13. The present staff coordinator (like the previous one) is currently able to devote only some five to six hours per month to the FNC - something that makes the appropriation of funding for the half-time coordinator crucial.


15. In February 1993, the Food and Nutrition Council received a list of currently vacant lots it can work from to develop criteria for determining which are most suitable for gardening. The actual evaluations might be done by the Dept. of Planning and Economic Development and/or the District Planning Councils.

16. Minneapolis has streamlined its procedures for getting garden water it has also surveyed and ranked vacant lots in terms of their potential as gardens and has created short- and long-term lease arrangements and a permit system that is run through the Self-Reliance Center. In St. Paul, a new water policy will be pilot tested the summer of 1993.


19. The first group of recommendations are organizational, the next relate to policy, and the last to the future. These draw upon the important set of recommendations contained in: Saint Paul Food & Nutrition Commission, *Draft to the Mayor and Saint Paul City Council*, St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Food Association, January 1991, and in the FNC's 1991 Work Plan.