Food Policy Councils in North America - Observations and Insights

Final Report on a World Health Organization’s Travelling Fellowship, August 1994

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The views contained in this report are those of the author. Any misinformation reported or misrepresentation made is unintended and a function of the author’s limited time in each location. Where possible, the data have been cross-referenced with other work in the field.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY .......................................................................................................................... 4
RECOMMENDATIONS ........................................................................................................ 5
BACKGROUND ..................................................................................................................... 6
OBJECTIVES OF FELLOWSHIP .................................................................................... 7
DATA COLLECTION .......................................................................................................... 8
STRUCTURE OF REPORT ................................................................................................. 9
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMMENTARY - NORTH AMERICA AND AUSTRALIA ......... 10
POLITICAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES ............................................................ 11
    Systems of government - State and national ......................................................... 11
    Systems of government - Local .............................................................................. 12
    Belief about government ....................................................................................... 13
SOCIAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES ................................................................. 14
    Community values ................................................................................................. 14
    Attitudes regarding charity .................................................................................. 15
    Civil violence .......................................................................................................... 16
OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS ................................................................................... 17
SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS ................................. 18
    Programs/Events .................................................................................................... 18
    Infrastructure ......................................................................................................... 19
    Policies .................................................................................................................. 19
SIGNIFICANT FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS ................................................................. 20
    Work prior to the establishment of the food policy council ..................................... 20
    Establishment of the food policy council by local government ordinance .................. 20
    Appointment of members of the council by the Mayor .......................................... 21
    Staff support .......................................................................................................... 21
    External Consultants .............................................................................................. 22
    Members ................................................................................................................ 22
    “Champions” ........................................................................................................... 23
    Related events with external significance ............................................................. 23
DIFFERENT MODELS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS ................................................................. 25
DISCUSSION - RELEVANCE OF FINDINGS TO AUSTRALIA .................................... 28
SITE DESCRIPTIONS AND HISTORIES OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS’ ACTIVITIES .......................................................... 33

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND ................................................................. 34
Location description ................................................................. 34
History of food policy council’s activities ............................ 34
Goals ....................................................................................... 34
Significant factors ................................................................. 34
Overview and Discussion ....................................................... 35
Summary ................................................................................ 37

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA ................................................. 39
Location description ................................................................. 39
History of food policy council’s activities ............................ 40
Achievements / Accomplishments ........................................ 41
Significant factors ................................................................. 41
Overview and Discussion ....................................................... 41
Summary ................................................................................ 42

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT .......................................................... 44
Location description ................................................................. 44
History of food policy council’s activities ............................ 44
Goals ....................................................................................... 45
Achievements / Accomplishments ........................................ 46
Significant factors ................................................................. 46
Overview and Discussion ....................................................... 47
Summary ................................................................................ 48

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE .......................................................... 50
Location description ................................................................. 50
History of food policy council’s activities ............................ 50
Goals ....................................................................................... 51
Achievements / Accomplishments ........................................ 52
Significant factors ................................................................. 53
Overview and Discussion ....................................................... 54
Summary ................................................................................ 56

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA ................................................. 58
Location description ................................................................. 58
History of food policy council’s activities ............................ 58
Goals of FAT ........................................................................... 59
Achievements / Accomplishments ........................................ 60
Significant factors ................................................................. 61
Relevant problems experienced .......................................... 61
Overview and Discussion............................................................................. 62
Summary......................................................................................................... 63
TORONTO, CANADA.................................................................................. 65
Location description..................................................................................... 65
History of food policy council’s activities.................................................... 65
Goals............................................................................................................. 67
Achievements / Accomplishments ................................................................. 68
Significant factors........................................................................................ 68
Overview and Discussion............................................................................. 69
Summary......................................................................................................... 70
ATTACHMENTS ........................................................................................... 72

ATTACHMENT A - PEOPLE INTERVIEWED
ATTACHMENT B - TABLE OF MODELS OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS
SUMMARY

A study was undertaken of six local food policy councils in North America to gain an understanding of their development and their impact. The case studies included Baltimore, Maryland; Charleston, South Carolina; Hartford, Connecticut; Knoxville, Tennessee; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Toronto, Ontario, Canada. A detailed description of each of the sites is given, together with discussion of the factors which were significant in the development and implementation of food policy at that location.

In all locations the total food system was the focus of the food policy councils' activities. Individual councils then selected specific aspects of the food system to target their activities. The types of activities included: programs/events, such as retail awards to food businesses, hydroponic gardens and farmers' markets; infrastructure change, including changes in city government procedures, purchasing and managing a supermarket and supporting grocers' associations; and policy development.

Five models for the development of food policy councils are derived and discussed briefly. Unfortunately evaluation or monitoring of the activities of the food policy councils had not been undertaken at any of the sites visited. It was thus not possible to make comment on the effectiveness of local food policies as a strategy in the promotion of better nutrition.

A number of factors were identified as significant in influencing the establishment and maintenance of food policy councils. These factors included: research and activities undertaken as background to the establishment of the food policy councils; use of local government ordinance to create the food policy councils; the appointment of members of the councils by the Mayor; the level and quality of staff support; the use of external consultants; the individual commitment of the councils' members; related events of significant importance outside of the local area (nationally or internationally); and the important role of “champions” of food policy work.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Three recommendations were made.

Recommendation 1: Appropriate criteria be developed to enable local food policy initiatives in Australia to be monitored and evaluated with regard to their impact on the food system and on the health of Australians.

Recommendation 2: The Department of Health and Human Services make available copies of this report to local governments and health services.

Recommendation 3: The Department of Health and Human Services facilitate the conduct of workshops and seminars with interested local governments and the health professionals and food business personnel in their areas, on the implementation of local food policies.
BACKGROUND:

In September 1992, the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services released the national Food and Nutrition Policy for Australia\(^1\). This policy was based on the following two fundamental principles. That

1. sound nutrition is a vital component of health, and that
2. the Government has a role to facilitate and support action through the entire food and nutrition system in order to achieve better nutrition for Australians, especially for those most disadvantaged\(^2\). Objective 2 of this policy, *Incorporation of food and nutrition objectives into a broad range of policy areas and sectors*, identified local government authorities as one sector which will be encouraged to take food issues into account\(^3\).

Within Australia, local government authorities have a tradition of involvement in monitoring food standards and hygiene regulations. However, involvement with other aspects of the food system has been spasmodic. Local food needs often have been overlooked when local government decisions are being made which have a direct impact on various aspects of the food system. For example, zoning regulations can affect the availability of land for local food production and the likelihood of fresh food outlets being located near to residential areas. In order to encourage local government authorities to increase their involvement in food and nutrition issues, guidance and support may be necessary, based on experiences from elsewhere.

A World Health Organization (WHO) Fellowship was awarded to investigate the experiences of local government authorities in North America.
**OBJECTIVES OF FELLOWSHIP:**

1. To document the history of the development and implementation of food and nutrition policies in local regions / cities in North America.

2. To identify key events or structures which have enabled the successful establishment and/or implementation of these food and nutrition policies.

3. To develop a framework for the establishment and implementation of food and nutrition policies by local governments and regions in Australia, as recommended by the Australian Food and Nutrition Policy (1992).
DATA COLLECTION

Five locations were visited by the Fellow to collect information on food policy council activities, and another location was visited to establish contact with an internationally renowned expert in the field of food and nutrition policy. The locations were as follows - Baltimore, Maryland; Washington, DC; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Charleston, South Carolina; Knoxville, Tennessee; and University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC.

At each site visited, audio-taped, semi-structured interviews were conducted by the Fellow and written materials [annual reports, minutes of meetings, media articles] were collected. The interviews were transcribed by the Fellow and all of the material was collated into standardised, summary reports on each location. Information on a food policy council was not collected in Washington, DC, as the organisations visited were not able to provide information on such a body in their city. Subsequently, a contact person was located and contacted by letter, but no reply has been received.

Other information is included in this report. Information was collected by the Fellow on separate visits to Toronto, Canada and Hartford, Connecticut, both of which have established food policy councils within the last three years.
STRUCTURE OF REPORT

The report has been divided into three major sections.

I Social and political commentary - North America and Australia

This section outlines the key areas of difference and similarity between the two regions which have an impact on the development of food policies. It has been included to highlight that the experiences of food policy council work in North America, particularly in the U.S.A., may not be directly relevant to Australia. Such experiences should be considered within the specific political and social environments of the regions concerned.

II Overview of major findings

This section specifically addresses the objectives of the fellowship, including:

- Significant achievements of food policy councils
- Establishment and maintenance of food policy councils
- Different models for the establishment of food policy councils
- Relevance of findings to Australia

III Site descriptions and histories of food policy councils' activities

This section provides detailed information on each of the sites visited. This information is important not just in the clarification of the observations made. It also provides detailed information for practitioners in Australia who are interested in developing food policy activities within their own areas. Detailed information on the structures of the councils is included, as is a synopsis of the history of the development of the councils and the key influences in that process.

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2 ibid, p. 1
3 ibid, p. 17
I SOCIAL AND POLITICAL COMMENTARY - NORTH AMERICA AND AUSTRALIA
POLITICAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Systems of government - State and national

The governments of Australia, Canada and the United States of America are all federal systems. They are based on a federation of states/provinces with the national government responsible for policies with a national focus, such as those affecting defence, currency and international trade. However, it is important to recognise that the types of federal systems of the three countries varies significantly and can have a major impact on policy activity at the local level.

As discussed by Galligan, Hughes and Walsh¹, both the leading characteristics and the primary loci of power vary between the three different federal systems. In Australia, the leading role of the federal government is fiscal, as the federal government has a monopoly on income tax and the states are not able to raise sales taxes. This ensures that the federal government retains fiscal power and as a consequence, most power lies with the national government. Both in Canada and in the United States of America, sales taxes can be levied at the provincial/state level, as well as nationally. This increases to a certain extent the autonomy of the provinces/states. As a result, in Canada the national government holds a more executive role, with power being balanced between federal and provincial governments, and the total system being somewhat more decentralised. The situation in the U.S.A. is different again. Taxes may be raised at all three levels of government and the local level traditionally has kept a number of powers. Thus the balance of power between the different levels is quite diffuse and varies with different policy/program areas. The leading characteristic of the federal government is the development and administration of grant-in-aid programs which are allocated down to state and local levels.

In examining the development and implementation of policy at the level of local government, it is important to be cognisant of the different types of power relationships between the different levels of government within a country. The power held by national and state governments over local activities, as well as the type of assistance that the higher levels of government may provide to the local governments, may significantly influence policy development and implementation at the local level. An example to illustrate this involves the welfare benefits to unemployed adults. The U.S. federal government provides block grants to the states for distribution to eligible recipients. The type of arrangements negotiated by the different states with the federal government will influence the amount of money allocated to that state. The state can then allocate its block grant independently of other states, resulting in different amounts of money being
provided to eligible recipients in different states. Different conditions also may apply, resulting in a cut-off of welfare benefits in some states after two years, while in other states they may only receive them for 16 months before the benefits are withdrawn. Such differences will significantly impact on the demand for emergency welfare services at the local level. Such a variation of benefits in different states does not exist in Australia.

Another example is the school breakfast program. In the U.S.A., federal money is available to schools to assist in the provision of free and reduced price breakfast to eligible children. In some states the state government has mandated that all schools provide such a breakfast for children. In other states such as California, it will vary from school to school whether children are receiving such a breakfast, as the state has not stepped in to support the federal program. In those states, children are more likely to be going to school hungry and to have impaired education. This situation varies from that in Australia in two ways. In Australia, welfare benefits are consolidated within financial support provided to eligible recipients. There are no federal food programs. Secondly, welfare benefits do not vary from state to state. Decisions regarding eligibility and amount of benefit are made at the federal level, representing a more equitable distribution of support.

**Systems of government - Local**

What is meant by local government varies between the three countries. In the U.S.A., local government may mean city or county. Neither Australia nor Canada have a county level of government.

The areas of responsibility also may vary. County government is usually responsible for health matters, shared in part with state government. However, this will vary between locations. Of the case study sites visited, city governments in Charleston, SC and Hartford, CT had health responsibilities which they shared with their respective counties. Responsibility for school education and police are usually found at the city (or possibly county) level. This differs from Australia where these responsibilities lie with the state government.

One would expect that the level of autonomy and flexibility of action at the local level would be higher in the U.S.A. due to their fiscal role. However, there are many factors which impede this autonomy. Important amongst these are the independently elected boards which govern many aspects of local government work. The school districts each have their own elected board, as does up to 100 other local instrumentalities, including
police, water, mosquito abatement, electricity, environment, housing, and so on. The result of this is that each elected board is independent of the others, making their own policy decisions. Attempting to develop a unified, comprehensive approach to health concerns at the local level is very problematic, requiring co-ordination and consensus between many different, independent governing boards. Added to this in the food system is the strong, fiercely independent of government, private sector, including retail, agriculture, transport, production and media. Reaching agreement on a local food policy may take many years, but that would be relatively straightforward compared to achieving implementation of such a policy in any co-ordinated and consistent fashion. Change would be very incremental, if at all. Incrementalism is the pattern of American politics, due to its diffuse power relationships both vertically and horizontally. Within Australia, the political system is more compact, resulting in less diffusion of power and greater opportunities for comprehensive policy making.

Belief about government

The dominant view held within the United States of America is that government is not to be trusted and that where possible, actions should be decided in the market place. In more recent times, the 1960's and 1970's, there was an upsurge in intervention by the national government in particular, with a number of welfare and social programs being introduced. It was at this time that the majority of the 14 federal food programs were introduced. However, these programs, together with the other socially-oriented programs, were significantly cut back in the 1980's. The 1990's have seen a partial reversal of these cuts, and in some areas such as WIC\(^2\), greater allocations have been made. However, the dominant view in American society is that the government should not be involved in welfare support of any kind. This should be left to charitable groups.

In contrast, both Australia and Canada have much stronger social mandates for government. In both countries there are strong social welfare programs and universal health care. It has been more widely accepted that the government has a role to play in the equitable distribution of resources and that the economy may benefit from a not so invisible hand. This belief has been weakened somewhat by the dominance of current economic philosophies but in the main still holds true, especially in comparison with the U.S.A.
SOCIAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Community values

American society portrays the classic characteristics of capitalism. Faith in the free market, fierce independence and looking out for oneself, and a disdain for those who are not participating in the market, i.e. the unemployed. These beliefs tend to dominate in the groups which have power in the society.

However, there are other factors which shape American society, in particular ethnic tension. African Americans and Hispanic people are the two major non-Caucasian groups in America. Both groups tend to have much poorer social profiles than white Americans, based on health and welfare indicators. They experience higher rates of poverty, unemployment, illness and death, as well as poorer living conditions and lower levels of education. The problems are entrenched and in many ways are perpetuated by society. One startling statistic that represents this situation is that one in every two African American babies is born to a single mother. There is a one in four chance that the baby will be underweight and a one in five chance that his/her mother will be less than twenty. The problems experienced by African Americans will exist for another generation at least.

Even given the significantly higher rates of health and welfare problems of these two ethnic groups, by far the largest number of people with health and welfare problems are white. The statistics for American society as a whole are very poor. More that one in five children live in poverty and in California alone, 2.1 million children have no health insurance, either public or private. Discussion of food-related issues must be held within this framework, dominated by poverty and hunger.

Use of the concept of poverty is problematic, due to the different definitions used and the adequacy of those definitions. In the U.S.A., poverty is defined by multiplying the cost of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economy Food Plan by three, as survey data in 1955 showed that families spent one third of their incomes on food. Not only has the spending patterns changed, with families now spending far greater amounts on housing, but the food plan used is widely criticised as being inappropriate to most American families. Several recent studies have identified that poverty in the United States should be set at a level at least 25-30 percent higher. The inadequacy of the definition is verified when considering that eligibility for most of the food support programs in the U.S. commence at levels either 130% or 185% of poverty.
The scenarios in Australia and Canada are somewhat different. Widespread poverty are
not present, even though the rates of unemployment may be as great or greater.
Government social security programs are sufficient to maintain a family. This in part may
be attributed to a difference in societal values, particularly in Australia (I am not as
familiar with the Canadian situation). Australia has a long history of community action on
issues, fighting for human rights and dignity and the government's responsibility to
maintain these. The most notable example of this has been the trade union movement in
Australia, which can be credited with welfare benefits for the unemployed and ill, and for
the level of the minimum wage. Although less than many European countries, these
income security measures are significantly higher than those found in the U.S.A. As a
result, people can maintain their position within mainstream Australian society during
times of hardship and not fall into the abject poverty experienced by many people in the
U.S.A. A safety net exists and is sufficiently high to maintain people's rights to adequate
food and shelter. Food policy debate within Australia thus has focused on quality of the
diet issues, rather than adequacy.

**Attitudes regarding charity**

One comment that was made by a number of people interviewed was that Americans
feel good about doing charity work and about volunteerism. It appears that charity work
salves the conscience of middle class America. It is this attitude toward poverty that
underpins the emergency food system. It is not only the recipients that gain benefit from
this process, but many of the providers as well.

In part this attitude toward charity work blinkers the service providers to other strategies
that may be employed to relieve the situation of poor people, or to even think about why
there is a need in the first place. The current poverty situation in the U.S.A. would be
unthinkable in Australia or Canada and yet it is socially accepted in America. People are
not asking why does this problem exist, but merely accepting it as inevitable and trying to
minimise the damage that may occur as a result.

Similarly in the area of recycling and waste management. Many of the emergency food
programs rely on donations of foods and meals from manufacturers and restaurants. Not
wanting to accept the wastage of second grade foods or of uneaten meals, these are
recycled, often by inefficient or expensive processes. The priority is not what can be
done to reduce the creation of waste, but rather let's make the waste useful. Such
practices have specifically been avoided by most welfare groups in Australia as being
particularly demeaning to the food recipients. The impact on the recipients in America
has not been considered.
Civil violence

American society cannot be discussed without some mention of the high level of violence in the community. Because it is so pervasive throughout the country, and is particularly prevalent in those communities which are experiencing food access and availability problems, violence tends to dominate the political debate. Both violence and food insecurity are symptoms of problems within American society which are brought about by ethnic disunity, economic hardship and inequities in the judicial and social system. In many ways it is difficult to consider solutions to food security issues and the adequacy of food policy without taking into account the broader framework within which this work would take place. Thus this study of food policy in North America in undertaken within the societal and political frameworks of the countries involved. Recommending adopting food policy processes or strategies from one country in another without considering these frameworks would be completely inappropriate.

2 WIC is the Women, Infants and Childrens’ program administered by the Federal health department, with the aim of increasing the nutrition and health status of low income pregnant and lactating women and children under five years.
3 Children Now (1991) Children. They’re the only future we’ve got. Here’s how you can help. A Children’s Now action guide. Children Now, 633 13th Street, Oakland, CA 94612
II OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS
SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS

It is difficult to report on the significant achievements of the food policy councils because of an overall lack of any systematic evaluation or monitoring of their activities. Most of the councils reported on their activities in their annual reports, but did not comment on the impact of these activities on the food system, on food access of low income residents or on health, welfare or poverty indicators. Thus it is not possible to comment on the effectiveness of the different activities in which the councils were involved.

An additional complicating factor with regard to evaluation relates to the impact of state and federal policy changes. During the period that the food policy councils have been active, major declines were experienced in the funding of federal and state welfare programs, and in the national economy. The result was a dramatic increase in the numbers of people eligible for welfare support but not receiving it, and in the number of inner city retail outlets which closed. This had a flow-on effect with regard to the need for emergency food services. Thus during the life of the food policy councils, the numbers of people needing food-related assistance grew dramatically, reflecting poorly on the impact of the strategies of the councils.

The reported activities of the different food policy councils are included in the case study reports. What is common to these activities is the food policy councils' attempts to identify and address problems affecting the total food system, from farm, through food processing and distribution, to household consumption and nutrition. Not all aspects were tackled by all councils, but the total picture was considered. A summary of the different activities follows, to provide insight into the range of possible strategies that food policy councils can implement.

**Programs/Events:**

- Retail awards to food businesses which assisted consumers to make low energy, nutritious choices.
- Community workshops and fora to investigate local food-related issues or to develop strategies to deal with such issues.
- Agricultural programs, including community gardening, hydroponic gardens, local greenhouses.
- Establishment of farmers' markets.
- Nutrition education programs in schools, low income neighbourhoods, at local farms.
Infrastructure:

- Improved co-ordination between and delivery of emergency food services and of federal food programs.
- Assisting grocers' association in developing co-operative buying agreements and in providing technical assistance to small, retail food stores.
- Purchasing and managing a supermarket on a co-operative basis.
- Linking federal food programs with local fresh food outlets (for example, using coupons to buy from farmers' markets).
- Establishment of food banks.
- Incorporation into City government's activities and roles specific functions concerning the food system (for example, access to food impact assessments for new developments).
- Networking and collaboration between the different organisations within a city involved with food issues.

Policies:

- Development of city-based food policies, aimed at improving the sustainability, quality and equity of the local food system.
- Development of specific roles for local government departments with regard to the city-based food policy.
SIGNIFICANT FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS

In reviewing the different case studies, it was apparent that there were a number of factors influencing the establishment or maintenance of the food policy councils which they had in common. Eight such factors are discussed in this section.

1. Work prior to the establishment of the food policy council
In all instances substantive background work had preceded the establishment of the food policy councils. The type of background work varied and included:

- A comprehensive study of the local food system, including agricultural production and practices, food transport, food storage, food processing, food retailing, food quality and range, food accessibility and availability to local residents, emergency food services and their co-ordination, and disposal of food waste.
- A needs assessment of food access and availability, and of nutrition and hunger issues, conducted amongst local community organisations and government departments.
- An established history of community-based action either involving the local emergency food services and their co-ordination, or prior work on local food access issues, including developing farmers’ markets, community gardens and/or other community-based food production initiatives.
- A history of involvement of the city and state in broadly-based health promotion initiatives with the city as the focus and incorporating a healthy public policy focus.

2. Establishment of the food policy council by local government ordinance
It would appear that the establishment of the food policy council by an act of local government helps to assure the longevity of the council. This may be for any of the following reasons:

- Once created by a city ordinance, the disbandment of a food policy council would need another city ordinance. This may be difficult due a perceived lack of constituency support for such a move.
- By formally creating a food policy council in this manner, its role and function must be clear, as must be its official position with regard to powers and responsibilities for action.
- Formally creating a council also involves identifying where the council is administratively positioned, with what staff support and budget. When this is clear, it is much easier to develop plans of action and to monitor actions accordingly.
3. **Appointment of members of the council by the Mayor**

In only one of the case study sites did members of the council nominate themselves. In the other four locations the Mayor nominated the members. This has a number of **advantages**.

- Nomination by the Mayor would require certain guidelines to be in place, such as the length of time the member could serve on the council.
- Another guideline would cover the range of representation required for the council. This would ensure that different interests within the food system are included.
- The Mayor could gain prestige by inviting prominent members of the community to serve on the council.

Two important **disadvantages** of the Mayor appointing the members of the council would be:

- cronyism; and
- inaction on the part of the Mayor, causing positions to remain empty for significant periods of time.

4. **Staff support**

It is imperative that food policy councils have support from staff that can provide on-going services to the council and its members. This needs to be clearly identified as part of the responsibilities of that staff person’s substantive position, whether the person is a city government employee or with a community agency.

The qualities and skills of the staff people involved with council work are critical to the on-going effectiveness of the council. The range of skills required by the staff (jointly, not necessarily individually), include:

- ability to bring together a wide range of people and to maintain their collective interest on issues;
- ability to conduct community fora and to distil the knowledge and feelings of the groups involved into action oriented reports for council attention;
- ability to access and effectively utilise local media;
- an understanding of and regular access to city planning information;
- strong, community-based networks of food-related organisations and businesses;
- a working knowledge of and strong commitment to local food issues, especially of disadvantaged groups;
- ability to provide effective and efficient administrative support to the council; and
- ability to communicate effectively with council members, both verbally and in written form.
5. External Consultants
The food policy council in Knoxville regularly utilised the services of an external consultant to the council and its staff. Two other councils not covered by this report (in St Paul, MA and Onondaga county, NY) also utilised the services of external consultants\(^1\). The advantages of having an external consultant include:

- an independent and often broader view of the issues involved in the local food system, reducing the dominance of any one sector during the discussions (for example in the U.S.A. hunger issues tend to dominate food policy work);
- an independent, well respected person is available to brief new members of the council;
- provision of an historical perspective to the work of the council, important when staff and members may turn-over on a regular basis;
- an objective view on the maintenance requirements of the council, including for example the need for annual planning retreats, or for strategically written and submitted annual reports to city government, which facilitate the necessary government support for the council's activities; and
- published reports can be produced with a consistent, professional quality.

6. Members
As mentioned previously, collectively the members of a food policy council must represent a broad spectrum of the interests in the local food system. Interests which may be included are:

- local government (planning; environmental health; parks; institutional food services; chambers of commerce);
- other government departments (transport; education/training; health; agriculture);
- welfare or religious groups;
- other non-government organisations (e.g. small business association; grocers' association)
- private, food-related businesses (retail; wholesale; food services/catering; food producers);
- unions;
- schools;
- academic institutions;
- farming/primary production;
- environment; and
- consumers.

Care should be taken in the selection of the members to ensure that:
- there exists a balance in the type of people involved;
members are personally interested in and have a high commitment to the work of the council; and

the needs of the different members will be met in the conduct of the meetings. Individuals working in the welfare area have different expectations of meetings than business people, causing conflict or disinterest. This has led to ineffective council meetings or to total disbandment of meetings, thus being a critical factor in the success of a council's work.

7. “Champions”
In most of the case studies investigated, there existed one or two people without whom the food policy council would not have existed or continued. This person(s) was very active in the work of the council, provided a great deal of motivation to individual members and often provided opportunities to establish credibility or prestige for the work of the council. It would appear that such a person is critical to the success of a food policy council, but it is difficult to advise on how the involvement of such a person can be incorporated into the planning process for a food policy.

• If this person was the Mayor, the council would be created, but its longevity would be short, as political demands would divert this person's attention or a new Mayor may be elected.

• An external consultant could fulfil this role, but probably would not, as they would be most useful in an objective, professionally supportive role.

• A member of the council could fulfil this role very well, provided that they did not dominate the council's activities, leading to inactivity on the part of other council members.

• A staff person could fulfil this role, providing impetus from below, through on-going guidance regarding new and innovative strategies for the council's work, and through the efficient turn-around of council's administrative tasks.

8. Related events with external significance
In most of the case studies presented, an event with external significance occurred which acted as a trigger to the establishment of the food policy council. These events included:

• The World's Fair in Knoxville (1982) highlighted to elected government representatives and private businesses the need for a co-ordinated approach to food transport, mass catering, waste disposal and the food access needs of inner city residents displaced by Fair.

• The United States Conference of Mayors (1984-85) invited a number of city governments to participate in its project on municipal food policies, modelled on the then active Knoxville Food Policy Council. In Charleston, the Mayor used this invitation to participate to initiate a study of the food system and its problems within
his city. In Philadelphia, much activity had been underway outside of city government prior to this time, and so the Mayor took the opportunity to acknowledge this activity and to endorse the proposals for a city food policy.

- In the beginning of the 1980's, severe cuts to the federal food programs and to welfare spending nationally led to a dramatic rise in all U.S. cities in the demand for emergency food services and in the need to examine people's access to affordable food.
- In Toronto, city government had prepared a planning document, Healthy Toronto 2000, which outlined the city's role in maintaining and promoting the health of its residents. Nutrition and food access were key elements of this plan. The plan itself was based on earlier work in Ottawa and Toronto, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, on a consistent, international approach to health promotion, and to the creation of a network of healthy cities throughout the world. Toronto was one of these cities.
DIFFERENT MODELS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS

The different locations visited presented a range of different models for the establishment of food policy councils at the local level. They are as follows.

Model A (refer Charleston, SC):

The Mayor initiates the development of the food policy council (in the case study of Charleston, following an invitation to participate in the US Conference of Mayors project). The Mayor commissions an extensive study into the food system of the city and based on the results of that study, a standing commission (council) on food policy is established. Voluntary members are appointed by the Mayor and administrative support is supplied from the Mayor's office. The council is not formally part of any city government departments. The role of the council is advisory but is reflective of the interests of the Mayor. A systematic approach to improving the sustainability and accessibility of the local food system, and city government's role in this, is not necessarily undertaken.

This model is very dependent on the support of the Mayor. As such it is vulnerable to changes in political circumstances and its longevity is uncertain. The power of the council is determined by the relationship which is maintained between the council and the Mayor.

Model B (refer Hartford, CT):

This model is of a food policy advisory group to city government, established and appointed by the Mayor, but operating within a broader framework of long-term food system change established by an independent group. The impetus and background research to support the establishment of the council is from outside of city government. The members of the council act in a voluntary capacity. Administrative support for the council comes from the members' organisations. The role of the council is to ensure that all of the city government's activities take into account the impact on the food security of residents.

The Mayor is not a critical a factor in the support and maintenance of the council. The maintenance of the council is dependent upon the relationship between the council and the more broadly-based, independently funded, food systems group, together with the enthusiasm and support of the individual members. The latter factor is transient in nature. The former is more secure.
Model C (refer Knoxville, TN):

The impetus for the food policy council, in the form of extensive background data on the local food system and identified community-based organisational support, is from outside the city government. The food policy council is created by a city ordinance. Members are appointed by the Mayor on a voluntary basis, with provision for staff support from departments within city government, including the Mayor's office, and a leading social advocacy group in the city. An external advisor to the council is used extensively.

The council is concerned with all aspects of the food system. It regularly calls meetings and workshops with community organisations to provide additional direction and support to its work.

Structurally, the council is located outside of city government. The maintenance of the council is independent of the Mayor, being largely dependent on a strong staff group, including an external adviser. The commitment of the members also is of critical importance to the level of achievement of the council.

Model D (refer Philadelphia, PA):

Although an extensive survey of the local food system is not necessary for the establishment of the food policy council, there is expressed a broad base of interest and commitment to the establishment of such a group by community and government departments. The food policy council is completely independent of local government but with a significant number of members coming from local government departments. The steering committee of the council exists but does not include local government representation. Members nominate themselves onto the steering committee.

The Mayor's role with the council is to accept their recommendations and to publicly support their activities. The council is not structurally aligned with any organisation, and as such lacks administrative support except on an ad hoc basis from members' organisations. Staff support is sought through applying for external grants.

The food policy council presented in this model is politically vulnerable. It relies heavily on clear definition of its role and function (absent in the case study investigated), energetic support from key individuals and the ability to maintain wider interest through activities which create status and prestige for the group.
Model E (refer Toronto, Canada):

The food policy council is created within the city government, under the administrative responsibility of one of the departments, for example public health. The background to the council consists of extensive academic discussion on the city's role in maintaining and promoting public health. Local efforts are required in response to local, national and international expectations created by these discussions. The city has developed a broadly based plan outlining its role in promoting the health of its residents.

The council is located within city government and operates with a large degree of autonomy. It has its own Board of Management with representation from a wide range of organisations. City government supplies the budget and an administrative infrastructure.

A summary of the different models, in table format, is included as Attachment B.
DISCUSSION - RELEVANCE OF FINDINGS TO AUSTRALIA

The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986)\(^2\), developed and supported by the World Health Organization, identified that healthy public policy was an effective strategy for the promotion of health in the community. The World Health Organization, through their Healthy Cities networks, also has espoused the importance of the city as an important level at which to focus health promotion action. The (then) Commonwealth Department of Health, Housing and Community Services built on these two factors when it identified that local government was an important sector which should be promoting better nutrition and health through incorporation of *food and nutrition objectives into a broad range of policy areas*. \(^3\) However, there is little available data on how health issues can be incorporated into public policy, what *structures* are required to enable this to happen, what is required to effectively *implement* such policies and what is the *effect* on the community's health (and nutritional status) which results from the development and implementation of healthy public policies.

In attempting to address such issues in the area of food and nutrition, this research has identified a number of lessons which can be learnt from the experiences of cities in North America who have established food policy councils during the last decade.

In reporting on the observations made and the important factors identified, it must be clearly stated that the political and social situations in North America and Australia differ significantly. These differences would have major impacts on the food and nutrition issues addressed, the political support for the work of the food policy councils, the implementation activities undertaken and the likely impacts achieved by the work of the food policy councils. Having stated this, the results still provide important insights into processes involved in promoting health through the avenue of healthy public policies, and to the specific area of developing food policy initiatives at the level of local government. This discussion will address the four questions posed above.

Firstly, *how* can health issues be incorporated into public policy? This study identified that two factors may be important. In the majority of case studies establishment of the food policy councils were preceded by the collection of systematic and comprehensive data. These data covered the local food system and the organisations involved, the problems it was experiencing, together with comments on its inherent inequities and/or lack of sustainability. The availability of such data was clearly important in influencing the decision-makers regarding the creation of food policy councils.
Additionally, however, there often was an important trigger which enabled the political decision to create the council to be made. The triggers varied with the different locations, but did share a common feature, that of political or economic importance external to the city. Involvement in the U.S. Conference of Mayors project, a World Fair, important academic/political statements and conferences on health promotion, all immediately preceded the establishment of food policy councils. Thus an element of opportunism which capitalises on other, related events, may be critical in the successful placement of food policy issues on the political agenda. Alternatively, this may be viewed as a stimulus for the consideration of broad, food-related issues. In either case, the decision-makers were in a position to seriously consider a proposal which concerned the local food system.

This factor should be carefully considered by Australian professionals concerned with the establishment of food and nutrition policies. Food policy advocates need to be opportunistic with regard to key local or national events, or systematic in the creation of an environment in which food system issues can be considered politically viable. An example of the former may be the conduct of the Olympic Games in Sydney in the year 2000. The same issues that confronted Knoxville decision-makers leading up to the World Fair will be present. Federal, state and local governments will be involved and this may present an excellent opportunity to make direct and real links between the national food policy and all sectors of the food system. Alternately, councils may be ready to consider food system issues if they have already considered other, broadly-based issues such as environmental health policy or, as in the case of Toronto, developed a health promotion planning document for the city.

The second question was, what structures are required to support food policy initiatives? Each of the locations visited considered it important to create a separate entity such as a council, to examine and implement strategies focusing on the total food system. This was because there were so many sectors involved in the food system that no one sector had an overview, nor a commitment to the total system. Such an overview and commitment was felt important because decisions made regarding one aspect had flow-on effects in other areas.

This study identified 5 models for establishing food policy councils. Only one of the models was completely external to local government. This one experienced most uncertainty and vulnerability during its life span. It disbanded after several years of operation, with the most impact being made in networking between community-based organisations. Three of the other models, all U.S. based, established volunteer councils, appointed by the Mayor, but located outside of local government. One council was
directly linked to the Mayor's office, and one was linked through the members involved, to a more broadly-based food systems group that was privately funded. The third such group was strongly supported by an experienced group of staff drawn from local government, the Mayor's office and a local welfare group. The final model was of a food policy council located within local government. This model, located in Canada, whose political system most closely relates to our own, would appear to be the model most easily adopted in Australia. However, the other models also offer interesting options in locations where there exists opportunities for innovation.

Incorporated into the formal structure of councils was another key factor, that of an external adviser. Such a person(s) served to provide an overview of the food system, thus avoiding the dominance of any one sector, and objective insight into the maintenance requirements of the council. In establishing food policy councils in Australia, consideration should be given to the appointment of such a person(s).

The final two questions related to the impact and effectiveness of the food policy councils. Unfortunately, both in the area of overall impact and with regard to specific strategies undertaken, little monitoring or evaluation was undertaken. This was understandable, given the uncertain basis of the councils. They were very pre-occupied with retaining political support and soliciting their meagre funds with which to undertake their activities. Unfortunately this provides others with no indication of the impact that a food policy council can have. This is particularly the case, given the worsening social and welfare situation over the last decade. In most locations the numbers of people requiring emergency food support or who were disadvantaged in terms of access to a quality food supply, skyrocketed in the same period that the food policy councils were operational. However, this could be attributed to changes in the state, national and international political and economic arenas. The degree to which the food policy councils were able to reduce the impact of these changes in their cities is not known. Clearly, if food policy initiatives are to be undertaken in Australia, clear guidelines need to be developed to ensure that on-going monitoring and evaluation of their activities are undertaken. In this way, the impact of their activities can be assessed and recommendations can be made regarding effective strategies for implementation at the local level. It is important to develop appropriate criteria for such evaluation, taking into account the long-term nature of any policy initiative and the lack of previous work undertaken in this field. A new initiative in the U.S.A. to establish 5 new local food policy councils, may provide an opportunity to develop some international collaboration regarding this.4
Recommendation 1: Appropriate criteria be developed to enable local food policy initiatives in Australia to be monitored and evaluated with regard to their impact on the food system and on the health of Australians.

Other factors also are important in the establishment and maintenance of food policy councils. These factors mainly relate to personal qualities of the people involved, including staff, members of councils and to particularly motivated “champions” of food systems. It is difficult to discuss the relative importance of these factors, as they are determined by the personality dynamics which are operating at the local level. Similarly, the different activities reported are in many ways a function of the local environment and local issues being experienced at a particular point in time. Each city is different.

It thus is not possible to propose a single framework for the establishment and implementation of food and nutrition policies at the local level. However, the information gathered by this study does provide a wealth of insight for local governments wishing to become more involved in the development of local food and nutrition policies. It is clear that there is no one solution or preferred method of implementation and that the conditions in Australia are significantly different to those in America. An attempt will not be made to make specific recommendations regarding these experiences in this report. Each local government and city is different and they will benefit from the information in this report in different ways. It thus would be appropriate for a copy of this report be made available to all local governments involved in food policy initiatives. Additionally, this report may provide an opportunity to undertake workshops or seminars with professionals in the field, to discuss the observations made and to assist local governments to utilise this information in their own endeavours. It is recommended that the Department of Health and Human Services facilitate the conduct of workshops and seminars with interested local governments and the health professionals and food business personnel in their areas, on the implementation of local food policies. In this way the important information gathered in this study can be discussed in a practical manner and applied to the local conditions of the participants.

Recommendation 2: The Department of Health and Human Services make available copies of this report to local governments and health services.

Recommendation 3: The Department of Health and Human Services facilitate the conduct of workshops and seminars with interested local governments and the health professionals and food business personnel in their areas, on the implementation of local food policies.


4 Professor Kenneth Dahlberg, University of Western Michigan, in collaboration with Professor Kate Clancy, Syracuse University, and others, have received funding to initiate 5 new food policy councils in the U.S.A. At the present time they are still to develop criteria for the evaluation of their study. However, contact has been established with both of the principal investigators and they have indicated an interest in collaborating on this matter. This group represents the key researchers and practitioners in the field of local food and nutrition policy in the US.
III SITE DESCRIPTIONS AND HISTORIES OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS’ ACTIVITIES
Baltimore, Maryland

Baltimore is the base of the Maryland Food System group. This group was visited to gain insights into a state-based organisation. The group has traditionally been concerned with co-ordination of emergency food services. However, the focus was changing to one which recognised the need for changes to underlying societal factors which gave rise to the need for emergency food services. Welfare reform and the need for a living wage had become high priorities on their agenda.

This report is an abbreviated one, due to the fact that documents were lost in transit from the USA back to Australia. However, the discussion section is particularly insightful as it is based on an interview with the Co-ordinator of the group.

Location description:

Baltimore is a medium sized city located one hour to the north of Washington, DC. It has a population profile similar to the poorer parts of Washington, with large numbers of African American people and a high percentage of people living in poverty.

Being closely located to Washington, it has been in a more favourable position with regard to federal policy decisions, as significant financial aid has been allocated to the area in the past. However, the employment and economy of the state has traditionally been based in the defence forces and with supplying administrative support services to the capital. Both of these industries have experienced major cut-backs over the last few years, resulting in significant increases in unemployment and a decline in the local economy.

History of food policy council's activities:

Not available.

Goals:

Not available.

Significant factors

Not available.
Overview and Discussion:

As an agency whose prime mission was to co-ordinate emergency food services throughout Maryland, the Maryland Food System group had recognised some fundamental flaws in the food system as a whole which needed addressing if people's food needs were to be met.

Decisions about the federal food programs significantly impacted on the number of people needing emergency assistance with food. Changes in eligibility criteria limited the number of people who qualified for assistance, but did not reflect their actual need for food assistance. This increased the numbers of people seeking emergency food assistance from non-government agencies. With capped programs such as Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and the Elderly Nutrition program, the amount allocated on an annual basis did not reflect the need. When the money ran out, so did the assistance. During the 1980's both the eligibility criteria of programs became more restrictive and the amount allocated to capped programs was significantly reduced. These policy decisions resulted in marked increases in demand for emergency food support, which needed to be dealt with at the local level by welfare organisations.

The federal food programs have created other problems as well. Food stamps, which people use instead of money to purchase food and other household items, has become an entrenched part of the food retail system in many areas. Smaller retail outlets in poor areas are particularly dependent on food stamps to assure their business. Food stamps tend to underpin what are inefficient businesses. Food stamps also do not provide value for money, as many poor people are forced to make their purchases at these local shops where food prices often are much higher than in suburban areas where there is competition between retailers. The Maryland Food System undertook a market basket survey in 1985 and found a 44% higher cost for the same basket of food in the inner city area. This situation was further exacerbated by a much more limited range of food items being available in the inner city, particularly of fresh food products and quality meat items.

The effects of these broader changes on the work of the Maryland Food System group was their acknowledgement that emergency food assistance had become mainstream. There would not be a reduction in the need for these support services. In fact, the welfare services in Baltimore were experiencing their third wave of “new poor”, reflecting the continual decline in the financial situation of people in the community. Additionally, better off people enjoyed charity work. Volunteerism had strong support in the
community. People also felt good about minimising waste ("recycling mentality") when efforts were being made to redirect second grade food items from manufacturers or producers to the emergency food services or when uneaten meals were taken from restaurants to be served in soup kitchens. Emergency food services had become an entrenched part of American society but people were no longer asking why there was a need for these services or what was causing the problems.

In answering these questions, the Maryland Food System identified declining benefits being provided via the government welfare system and erosion of real wages as prime reasons why the situation was in decline. Financial support via the welfare system had declined significantly, both in real and adjusted terms, over the past decade, and in particular over the last 3 years. People who had received between $450-500 a month in 1990 would receive $300-350 a month in 1994. With regard to jobs, the minimum wage was $4.73 per hour. This meant that a worker in full-time employment supporting a family of four, would still be below the poverty level. At the same time, the most rapidly growing employment field was temporary employment agencies. People employed in this manner receive no benefits, no medical coverage and no job security. Thus to say that people are employed is not necessarily indicative of reduced need for emergency food support. The Maryland Food System group started to focus its attention on these issues, becoming advocates for policy change at a state and national level.

However, advocacy for welfare and industrial change is very difficult, long-term and limited by policy decisions in many other areas. In part the group appeared to be limited by its title. Food is a narrow concept to most people and thus their endeavours in economic reform, job creation initiatives or broadly based welfare reform were limited by other people's perceptions of their role. Additional to this was the fact that the majority of their constituency did not see the purpose behind this alternative, long term approach to providing food security. The service providers were receiving personal satisfaction out of their charitable services or were more focused on the immediate need of feeding hungry families. Acting as food advocates was a foreign task to them.

One of the areas of advocacy where the Maryland Food System group is currently active is in the support of union members for higher minimum wages. In Baltimore and Washington a major expansion is being experienced in the tourist industry. This requires large numbers of food service staff, of varying degrees of responsibility and training, to run hotels, clubs and restaurants. The MFS group is providing support to the workers in their claims that the expansion of the tourist industry should not be at their expense, in terms of wages and conditions of employment. The MFS group is supporting their claims for payment of a living wage, one sufficient to feed and house themselves and their...
families. At the present time the industrial negotiations are continuing, as it could set precedents for industrial conditions in other states.

Summary:

The type of activity and policy direction that the Maryland Food System group were taking was of interest for a number of reasons. Firstly, it tended to be a different direction to that taken by other food system groups. One level of involvement of food activists, by far the most common, was at the level of co-ordination of emergency food services and the full provision of federal food programs within their area [ensuring that people have food to eat]. The next level, often taken by food policy councils, examined access to food within the mainstream agriculture/retail/economic systems [ensuring that people have access to an affordable, sustainable, quality food supply]. The next level of activity, the one at which the MFS was becoming active, examined the changes that needed to occur to reduce the level of poverty that disadvantaged people were experiencing [ensuring financial security]. Action at all three levels will be necessary if hunger-related and nutritional problems in North America are to be addressed.

The implications from this case study for Australia are clear. Australia has been fortunate that very early on adequate provisions were established via the level of welfare benefits available and minimum level of wages were set at a high enough level for living. People can afford to feed, house and clothe themselves and their families. Additional services also are available, such as subsidised child care, universal health care and so on, that also support people in times of need. It would appear that it is these very broadly-based policies that have ensured that Australians have not experienced the degree of hunger that is prevalent in America today. Thus Australia has not created a dependency on federal food programs (which cost more that $33 billion dollars annually²) nor a reliance on emergency food services (10.4% of the USA population or 25,970,319 Americans use emergency food services annually³). It is thus imperative that individuals and departments that are responsible for food and nutrition policy within Australia carefully monitor any policy changes in the Social Security Act, and any changes which will lead to a reduction of people's wages, to assess the impact on food purchasing ability.
WIC became fully funded in 1994, and the federal government has agreed to allocate the amount necessary to meet the needs of all women and children who are eligible.


CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Limited information was collected regarding Charleston, South Carolina. The Mayor's office did not provide any information on a food policy council as the current staff members were not aware of its former existence. Staff of the Trident Health District (Charleston, Dorchester and Berkeley counties) were very helpful in providing information on nutrition services in the area but limited information was available on the food policy council work. This report summaries the relevant information that was gained from the visits in Charleston, together with information gained from elsewhere.

Location description:

- Charleston is the main city within Charleston county and is the second largest city in South Carolina. It is the largest container port in the south east of the U.S.A. and is a major tourist attraction, historically being a wealthy southern town and the starting place for the American civil war.
- The population of Charleston county was 295,039 in 1990, of which 36% were non-white.¹
- The population of Charleston was 80,414 in 1990.²
- County rate of unemployment was 3.5%. 17% of the population had incomes below the poverty level³
- Federal food assistance programs were not adequate to serve all of those eligible in the county. Only 11% of people eligible for WIC⁴, 11% of people eligible for Food Stamp and 48% of children eligible for free school lunches were being served.⁵
- Infant, neo-natal and maternal death rates for non-white people in Charleston county were above the state average, while those for the white population were below the state average. 58% of non-white babies were born to single mothers and 25% of non-white babies were low birth weight, probably associated with the high rate of births to young mothers (20% of non-white babies born to mothers under 20 years of age).⁶
- Charleston has a long history of involvement in public health, appointing the first city/county Health Officer in the 1926, when the city and county Departments of Health were combined.⁷ They were the first city to introduce pasteurisation of milk and to record births and deaths. A US Senator from the area undertook a campaign against hunger in the 1970's which led to the introduction of food stamps.⁸
- Health problems in the area have historically been associated with the port (rats and sexually transmitted diseases), with the climate (smallpox, yellow fever) and with the socio-economic/geographic situation (communicable diseases, filariasis, internal parasites).⁹
History of food policy council's activities:

- Very little information was available regarding the food policy council, despite the fact that the same Mayor has been in office and had initiated the food policy work in 1984.
- Charleston did participate in the United States Conference of Mayors Municipal Food Policies project (1984-5).
- A Food Policy Study Committee (FPSC) was appointed by the Mayor to examine food related issues and policy implications for addressing those issues. This Committee submitted an extensive report on the city's food system and recommended the adoption of a municipal food policy, which was later passed by Council resolution. The Study Committee became “a standing City Commission with responsibility for studying on an on-going basis community concerns regarding food supply and distribution and for developing recommendations on the appropriate role of city government in addressing those concerns”.
- The FPSC had divided into 3 sub-committees to undertake studies of food related issues in more detail. Those areas were: Food assistance and nutrition; the Food Stamp program; Economic development and emerging systems; Economic development and existing systems; and Land use and urban gardening.
- A presentation was made to the FPSC by the same consultant used by the Food Policy Council in Knoxville, TN.
- The Food Policy Commission comprised representatives of the business community, a local marine biology research program, the director of the County Co-operative Extension Services, a representative of the Crisis Assistance Ministry and the director of planning of the Medical University of South Carolina (which was based in Charleston). The Mayor assigned his own administrative aide to work on the project and an intern was hired by the Mayor to provide research and other support.
Achievements / Accomplishments

- The City of Charleston was awarded a contract by the State's Department of Social Services to process and distribute food stamps to city residents using fire stations as distribution sites.\(^{14}\)
- Hydroponic gardening was investigated but not proceeded with.\(^{15}\)
- A large farmers’ market was established in the centre of the city.\(^{16}\)
- Community gardens were established in the poor areas of the city.\(^{17}\)

Significant factors:

- The Food Policy Commission was active until hurricane Hugo devastated Charleston in 1989.\(^{18}\)
- The Mayor was very action oriented and liked to “fix the problem”. He also was very active in the Conference of Mayors.\(^{19}\)
- The historical involvement of the city in public health issues was unusual for America and was conducive to involvement in the food and nutrition field.

Overview and Discussion:

Although Charleston is a high need city in terms of its demographic profile, including the number of poor and the high risk of low birth weight babies in the city, the issue of food and nutrition appears to have gone from the agenda of the city government. The historically active role of the city in dealing with public health issues provided a framework for the Mayor to instigate what appeared to be a broadly-based municipal food policy. This was in response to the Conference of Mayor's invitation to participate in their Municipal Food Policy project.

It would appear that the Mayor was a major influence in the establishment and maintenance of the Food Policy Commission, appointing the original Study Committee, steering the resolution through City Council and providing administrative support. However, this also may have been to its detriment, as the Mayor's attention would be directed elsewhere over time and the initial support provided to the Commission would wane. This was particularly relevant as the Mayor was a problem-oriented person, not a long-term change agent.

Although active for at least 3-4 years, there is limited information available on the achievements of the Food Policy Commission. The information provided by a publication in 1985 was not added to at all by later discussions with the consultant to the
Commission or by an occasional member of the Commission, indicating that little more was achieved in the years following its establishment. It would appear that the onslaught of hurricane Hugo may well have provided an excuse to disband what was already a faltering Commission. Attempts will be made to clarify this impression with relevant people in Charleston and elsewhere.

Summary:

The model of a food policy council (Model A) developed in Charleston, SC, incorporated a strong mayor who had championed food issues upon the invitation of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. An extensive study of the food situation in Charleston was undertaken, and based on the results of that study a Food Policy Commission was appointed. Being a standing commission, the security of the Commission was not assured, however it survived for a number of years with administrative support from the Mayor's office. One significant structural change was achieved by the Commission, the establishment of food stamp outlets at city fire stations, making this program much more accessible and convenient for clients. Very little other tangible results appear to have been achieved by the Commission in its five years of operation.

Smith-Carson (1994), op cit


WIC is the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program run by the US Department of Health, to improve pregnancy and early childhood outcomes of low income women.

Smith-Carson (1994), op cit

Smith-Carson (1994), op cit

Banov L (1970) As I recall. The story of the Charleston County Health Department., The R L Bryan company, Columbia, SC

Tolomere, B, pers comm (August 1994)

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United States Conference of Mayors (October 1985) Municipal Food Policies. How five cities are improving the availability and quality of food for those in need p 9

United States Conference of Mayors (October 1985), op cit, p.10

Wilson, R, pers. comm (August 1994)

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United States Conference of Mayors (October 1985), op cit, p.13

Wilson R, pers comm (August 1994); and Tolomere, B, pers comm (August 1994)

United States Conference of Mayors (October 1985), op cit, p.13

Tolomere, B, pers comm (August 1994)

Tolomere, B, pers comm (August 1994)

Tolomere, B, pers comm (August 1994)

Tolomere, B, pers comm (August 1994)
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

The Hartford Food Policy Commission was established in 1992 as one component of the Hartford Food System. This latter group was established in 1978 as a private, non-profit organisation. The mission of this group was to increase the access of lower income and elderly Hartford residents to high quality, affordable food, to be achieved through the long term development of a more equitable and sustainable food system\(^1\). As such, this report will summarise activities of both groups, as they are relevant to the study at hand.

Location description:

- Hartford is a medium sized city of 139,000, with a significant percentage of African American and Hispanic groups.
- Hartford is the 6th poorest city in the USA, despite being located in the richest state of the USA. 27% of its residents live below the poverty line. Almost 44% of the children in Hartford live below the poverty line.\(^2\)
- Connecticut has traditionally been a major agricultural area, however the number of farms in the state have declined from 22,240 in 1944 to 3,500 in 1992. Overuse of the New England fisheries also has affected the state’s food production capacities.\(^3\)
- The number of inner city supermarkets has declined sharply in the last two decades, from 13 in 1968 to 2 in 1993.\(^4\)
- A 1990 survey of childhood hunger in Hartford identified that 41% of respondents experienced hunger and 35% experienced food shortages that put them at risk of hunger. 76% of the households in low income Hartford neighbourhoods experienced one or more indicators of hunger.\(^5\)

History of food policy council’s activities:

- The establishment of the Hartford Food System (HFS) pre-dated the hunger situation of the 1980’s but corresponded with a period of inflationary food prices and concern for ecological/sustainability issues.
- Activities of the HFS included\(^6\):
  - community gardens
  - farmers markets
  - greenhouses
  - hydroponic greenhouse
  - community supported agriculture project at a local farm
  - supported the Hartford Grocers Association in developing co-operative buying agreements and in providing technical assistance to retail food stores
• price surveillance of food sold in supermarkets
• purchase of a supermarket as a co-operative venture
• nutrition education programs to low literacy populations in the city
• a food delivery system for seniors
• WIC coupon program linked with farmers' markets
• establishment of a food bank
• establishment of the Connecticut Anti-Hunger Coalition

• The HFS commissioned a report on the extent of hunger in the city. One of the recommendations of that report was the creation of a municipal commission to evaluate city government's impact on the food system.
• Hartford's Advisory Commission on Food Policy was created by City Council ordinance [Chapter II, Article V of the Municipal Code; Division 13, Advisory Commission on Food Policy] in October 1991.
• The Mayor appointed the 15 members of the Commission who work in a voluntary capacity with staff support from the City Health Department. Members comprised government, welfare, private, schools and community representatives, but did not include agriculture or environmental interests.

Goals:

Mission/Purpose:
• The purpose of the policy shall be to integrate all agencies of the city in a common effort to improve the availability of safe and nutritious food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need.

Goals:
• To eliminate hunger as an obstacle to a happy, healthy and productive life in the city;
• To ensure that a wide variety of safe and nutritious food is available for city residents;
• To ensure that access to food is not limited by economic status, location or other factors beyond a resident’s control;
• To ensure that the price of food in the city remains at a level approximating the level for the state.
Achievements / Accomplishments

Programs/Events:
• Hartford residents gained access to higher value promotional coupons from suburban supermarkets.
• The use of food stamps was promoted to eligible residents.
• An in-classroom breakfast program was promoted to increase participation and design of a training program for school teachers on in-classroom breakfasts.
• A measure was created to gauge the participation in social welfare and emergency programs that fed city residents ["Documenting the Hungry"] to provide a general perspective on the scope of food- and public-assistance programs in Hartford.
• Media events were conducted to advocate for the hungry and poor and to raise the consciousness of food access problems.

Infrastructure:
• The City of Hartford Supermarket Working Committee was formed in 1993 to work towards the establishment of a full-service, chain supermarket to Hartford.
• More land was made available for community gardens, through an arrangement made between the Hartford Redevelopment Agency and a local, non-profit organisation.
• Summer meal sites were extended to schools through an arrangement between the City Parks & Recreation Department and the public school system.

Policies:
• None reported

Reports:
• None reported

Health outcomes:
• None reported

Economic outcomes:
• Supermarket relocation to the inner city is being planned.

Significant factors:
• The existence of a well established group such as the Hartford Food System provided an excellent infrastructure for a government-based Commission to examine food system issues in the city.
• The commissioning and public release of the report on hunger in Hartford by the HFS, conducted using the standardised protocol of the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project (CCHIP), created an outcry which demanded a city government response.
• The city government was unusual in that it had a Health Department (normally a county responsibility) and thus viewed health concerns as within its areas of responsibility.
• The Hartford Food Policy Commission is still in its early days, being only 3 years old. To date its activities have been supported by having the Executive Director of HFS as its Chairperson and the administrative support of the Health Department and of the many organisations who employ its voluntary members.

Overview and Discussion:

Hartford Connecticut is located in the rich agricultural lands of the New England region of the USA. As such it has a history of association with the land. It is located in a very affluent region of the country but is itself very poor, particularly in the non-white population.

Concerns existed in the 1970's about rising food prices and a declining number of supermarkets in the inner city making it difficult for local residents to gain access to affordable, quality food. These were coupled with concerns about the declining agricultural base of the state, both in terms of numbers of farms and lack of sustainable agricultural practices. These concerns led to the creation of the Hartford Food System in 1978.

The Hartford Food System undertook a very wide range of activities to fulfil its long term mission of developing a more equitable and sustainable food system capable of addressing the underlying causes of hunger and poor nutrition. As one aspect of its work, the HFS commissioned a study of the extent of hunger in the city of Hartford. The release of this report led to the establishment of the Hartford Food Policy Commission with the city government. As such, the Commission represents one of a number of strategies of the HFS in its endeavours to tackle the food system problems in Hartford. This is an unusual situation, different from any of the other case studies presented here, or which are known about by the author.

The Hartford Food System is independent of government, being privately funded through foundations. The Food Policy Commission is under the auspices of the city government but is not receiving any funding for its activities from the government, except in-kind services of government employees co-opted to serve on the Commission or to serve Commission members.
The work of the Commission principally relates to the areas of responsibility of the city government, ensuring that government decisions and actions take into account the impact on the food system. At the same time it is trying to ensure that government related activities, such as economic development and planning, directly target issues related to the food system, such as encouraging supermarkets back into the inner city area.

At the same time as the city government is addressing food system issues within its own jurisdiction, the Hartford Food System is attempting to tackle broader food system issues. This presents an added dimension to the situations elsewhere. In most of the case studies presented, local government has principally been interested in affecting changes in those areas for which it has responsibility. Changes in other components of the food system either have been ignored or left to other organisations to incorporate into their routine programs. This case study presents a model for the involvement of city government in food policy issues within a more broadly based, independent group's activities, whose sole function is to address the food system. Such a model is dependent on independent funding being available for the establishment and on-going support of a group such as the HFS. Australia has a very small number of foundations and thus this type of support is unlikely.

Summary:

The model presented in Hartford (Model B) is quite different from the other case studies presented in this report. The Food Policy Commission is appointed by the Mayor and acts in a voluntary capacity. Its role is principally to ensure that all of the city government's activities take into account the impact on food security of residents. Operating with a broader focus is the Hartford Food System, which is attempting long term development of a more equitable and sustainable food system. Given that the current chairperson of the Food Policy Commission is also the Executive Director of the Hartford Food System, it may be considered that the Food Policy Commission is operating as one strategy under the broader framework of the Hartford Food System.

Thus this model is of a food policy advisory group to city government, established and appointed by the Mayor, but operating within a broader framework of long-term food system change established by an independent group.
3 Winne M (1993), op cit, p.2
4 Winne M (1993), op cit, p.2
5 Winne M (1993), op cit, p.2
6 Winne M (1993), op cit,
WHO Travelling Fellowship Report  Food Policy Council - Knoxville

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

Location description:

- The population of the city was 165,121 in 1990, and had decreased 5% per decade\(^1\). African Americans accounted for 15% of the city's population (1980)\(^2\).
- Approximately 14% of those living in the County were considered poor and 71% of the poor live within the city limits\(^3\). The average unemployment rate was 4.7% (1993)\(^4\).
- Knoxville is the third largest city in the state of Tennessee\(^5\).
- In 1993, 73,270 food bags were given out, an increase of 25% on the previous year and 1900% from 1980 [significant given that the population decreased 5% during that time]\(^6\). It has been estimated that at least 20% of the residents participated daily in some form of public feeding program\(^7\).
- Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Area is East Tennessee's centre for trade, commerce and government\(^8\). 25% of all industrial, wholesale and retail establishments are food-related; 14% of all value-added sales by manufacturing is food-related; and 15% of all retail employees work in food stores and eating and drinking places\(^9\).
- Knoxville, even though reasonably affluent itself, is within the poor Appalachian region which receives special assistance from the federal government to improve the economy of the region\(^10\).
- Prime land in Knox county is being taken over by development and this is decreasing local food production significantly\(^11\).

History of food policy council's activities:

- A report on Knoxville Food System, conducted in 1977 as an academic exercise by the City Planning Department, University of Tennessee, acted as a stimulus and basis for action. It was subsequently published by Rodale Press, as part of their Cornucopia Project\(^12\).
- The Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) had a grant (1979-81) to improve the food supply system in three communities (originally with an emergency food focus). At the end of the grant an approach was made to the Mayor of Knoxville to develop a city-based food policy.
- World Fair, Knoxville 1982, stimulated Council representatives to consider a range of issues related to the food system, eg transport, waste disposal.
• The Food Policy Council was created on July 1 1982, following on from a City Council Resolution R-202-81 which stated that "local government has a proper role to play in ensuring that all citizens have access to an adequate and nutritious food supply."\textsuperscript{13}

• The FPC consists of 9 members (originally 7) appointed by the Mayor for a term of 3 years. Three broad criteria are used:
  • governmental ties;
  • working knowledge of the food industry; and
  • experience in advocating neighbourhood and consumer interests.

Membership has been dominated by the food industry and welfare interests, with little representation from agriculture, environmental or worker groups.

• United States Conference of Mayors used Knoxville as a model in their Municipal Food Policies project (1984-85)\textsuperscript{14}

• Mayor awarded a “Service Award” to FPC members and staff at a public meeting, 1984\textsuperscript{15}

• FPC and Dixie Petry received publicity outside of Knoxville, with other cities who were developing FPCs and at the World Health Organisation's International Conference on Healthy Public Policy (Adelaide, 1988).

Goals:

• The Food Policy Council (FPC) is advisory to the City Council, the Mayor and to the community in general. It may prepare reports directed to the Mayor, and/or City Council, prepare publications for general distribution, or communicate through the media. The FPC prepares an annual report on the status of the food system with suggestions for strengthening system performance.

• The FPC has no authority to operate food distribution facilities, to regulate or control any aspect of the food system, or to intervene in the operations of private businesses, non-profit organisations, or others involved in the food system.

• Implementing the Council's proposals depends on voluntary co-operation by other public agencies, by non-profit organisations, and by firms in the food industry.

• The FPC had committees which no longer operate:
  - Nutrition & Health Advisory Committee (was the longest standing and most effective)
  - Food Industry Advisory Committee (was important in food transport issues but became inactive quickly)
  - Agriculture and Land Resource Advisory Committee (was never particularly active)
**Mission/Purpose:**
to "continually monitor Knoxville's food supply system and to recommend appropriate actions to improve the system as needed."

**Goals:**
- Ensure that an adequate and nutritious food supply is available to all citizens
- Strengthen the economic vitality of the private food industry.
- Improve the quality of food available to all citizens.
- Encourage citizens to accept and consume nutritious food.
- Minimise food-related activities which degrade the natural environment; limit wasteful use of scarce resources needed for future food production and distribution.

**Achievements / Accomplishments**

**Programs/Events:**
- Sponsored "Calorie Conscious Consumer" awards to recognise food businesses which help consumers make low-calorie, nutritious food choices.
- Sponsored multi-neighbourhood forum to consider a strategy to create a more effective grocery store network to serve inner city.
- Sponsored a public hearing on populations at-risk for a lack of adequate or nutritious food [due to poverty, institutionalisation or geographic isolation].

**Infrastructure:**
- Successfully encouraged the expansion of the school breakfast program to all Knox County schools.
- Negotiated a bus line extension "grocery bus" to increase access from low income neighbourhoods to modern supermarkets.
- Encouraged Knox County School Board to staff a Nutrition Educator position as a system-wide resource for incorporating nutrition education into both classroom and cafeteria experiences (position approved but never funded).
- Achieved incorporation into City Council's activities and roles, specific functions concerning the food system [eg Metropolitan Planning Commission had to look at the impact on access to food for people in an area where housing developers wanted to operate, prior to giving any approvals for work].

**Policies:**
- Developed and published comprehensive food policy recommendations for the city.
- Initiated inclusion of food distribution policies as a component of General Development Policies adopted by City and County.
Food issues became incorporated into the City's General Plan. [Unfortunately de-emphasised in the most recent one, reflecting the waning influence of the FPC - “I think a lot had to do with how we formatted the plan, things that we did want to emphasise, and it just, food just fell out, as a major item versus what we viewed it as before.”] 19

Reports:
- *Food Policies for Knoxville, Tennessee.* Recommended policies for maintaining and improving the availability and quality of food for citizens of Knoxville, Food Policy Council, October 1988.

Health outcomes:
- None reported

Economic outcomes:
- None reported

Significant factors:
- There existed two influential figures throughout the development of the FPC.
  - A highly motivated and well connected person with the Community Action Committee, who acted as a staff person for many years and was the driving force behind the establishment and general functioning of the FPC.
  - A city planning consultant who has been present throughout the entire process, supervising the very first study of the Knoxville food system, assisting the CAC in their early food system work, making presentations to the Mayor, and then acting as a consultant to the FPC and assisting the staff in their administrative and planning duties. His focus was more broadly based and influenced the FPC work, steering it away from a purely welfare/emergency food provision orientation.
- Extensive research and program development on food system issues had been undertaken prior to an approach to City Council being made.
- The approach to City Council was timely, coinciding with the build-up to the World Fair in Knoxville in 1982, when food systems issues would be current (eg waste disposal, food transport, displacement of inner city residents, feeding large numbers of people) and when public and private enterprise were co-operating on a common goal.
- The FPC in Knoxville became well known elsewhere, bringing kudos to the city and its Mayor. It was the first food policy council in the USA; it was used as the model for the Conference of Mayor's project; the staff members and the Mayor were asked to give presentations at state and federal level; the key staff person was invited to...
Australia in 1988 for the 2nd International Health Promotion conference sponsored by the World Health Organisation.

- The functioning of the FPC depended on the availability of the staff people, provided by the Community Action Committee, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, the Mayor's office, the Knoxville Community Development Corporation and the outside consultant.
- For many years the FPC had been staff driven, mainly by the key staff person. However, as she has now moved on, the roles of the FPC members and of the staff are being redefined, and the FPC is experiencing a period of transition in which it has been less active.
- The networking between different organisations provided both by the staff and the FPC members has been very important in achieving the results that they have.
- Staff from MPC have had important input into the work of the FPC, providing demographic data, income data, and surveys of inner city food sources, supermarkets, restaurants, as well as providing land use information.

Overview and Discussion:

Knoxville is a small, inland city in eastern Tennessee. Nestled next to the Appalachian mountains and on the upper Tennessee River, it is situated in prime farming land and has acted as a major distribution centre for agricultural products, as well as for manufacturing and retail. It has experienced an erosion of its farming lands for residential and urban uses, and at the same time has had to cope with increasing poverty in its urban areas. The latter was brought on in large part by changes in federal welfare policies during the 1980's.

A Food Policy Council became established in Knoxville due to three main factors. Firstly, a city planner with experience in examining the food systems of a city (gained in New York city) moved to the local university in the late 1970's and started a number of studies with his students on the food system in Knoxville. At the same time, an activist in the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee, a local group concerned with welfare issues, was granted funding to examine food access and hunger issues in three inner city areas. These two people got together after finding out about their shared concerns, and jointly made a submission to the Mayor of the city. This submission was broadly based, outlining all aspects of the city's food system and highlighting specific major concerns of hunger, inner city food access and lack of co-ordination of the city's food system. This submission was made at a time that the local council was heavily involved in planning for the 1984 World's Fair. Thus the Council members were aware of and concerned about a number of key issues of the city's food system, such as
displacement of inner city residents, mass food transport, large scale food provision for World's Fair visitors and concerns about waste disposal. An integrated vision of the city's food system, with ideas of how to deal with some of these issues was thus attractive to City Council and a Food Policy Council was established.

As with most of the food policy councils, the Council in Knoxville was appointed by the Mayor and held an advisory position to City Council. The KFPC was established by a City Council Ordinance, which also made provision for staff to administer the Council through arrangements with three city departments and the CAC. A small budget was allocated to pay for incidental expenses and the services of an external consultant. The KFPC has been in continual existence from 1982 to the present time.

The Food Policy Council maintained its advisory position over the years for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was established by a Resolution of Council and as such could only be disbanded by the same means. It would be a difficult action by an elected person to call for the dissolution of a group that has been acting on a clear social agenda and had an established reputation. Secondly, the Food Policy Council became well known for its work outside of the local area. State, federal and even international recognition flowed to the small town due to their activities. In some ways it was better known outside of Knoxville than within the city itself. Thirdly, the work of the FPC was broadly based and thus was not dominated by any one sector within the city. This meant that many different needs could be met, both of organisations working with the FPC and of the residents themselves. It also meant that new networks of groups were formed, as different issues were tackled. Casting the net very broadly like this, it was possible to involve most of the powerful interests within the city and create wide ranging support.

Unfortunately, agriculture was traditionally a county concern, and the politics between city and county meant that joint initiatives of the two levels of government involving this aspect of the food system were extremely unlikely to occur. This proved to be the case. Similarly in the area of nutrition. Health was a county responsibility. Following some successful initial joint activities focusing on nutritional problems within Knoxville, nutrition and health issues tended to be dealt with separately from the FPC.

The other major factor leading to the success and longevity of the FPC was the people involved. Two people played very significant roles in the FPC. One drove it from below and maintained its momentum. The other was a stabilising force, offering a broad vision and an underpinning of sound academic advice, consistency of presence and the necessary data to assure its credibility and importance. It is significant that with the departure of the first person, the FPC has experienced a number of years of depressed
activity as the members have struggled to redefine their role and it has attempted to regain its former momentum.

Summary:

The model of a food policy council (Model C) present in Knoxville, TN, is one of an advisory council to the Mayor and City Council, appointed by the Mayor and with provision for staff support from both city government and the leading social advocacy group in the city. An external advisor to the council is used extensively, and has been the same person through the 12 years of the existence of the council. The KFPC uses a broad vision of the food system on which to base its work and regularly calls meetings and workshops with community organisations to provide additional direction and support to their work. The activities of the council have focused on food access for inner city residents, worksite and school based nutrition promotion and influencing the city government to incorporate food impact assessments into planning and zoning decisions. The success of the KFPC largely could be attributed to the personal contributions of two individuals and to the wider recognition achieved by the council and the status this brought to the city.
Food distribution and consumption in Knoxville, found that:

- there were significant numbers of low-income and elderly people in the city who were defined as “high-risk” groups;
- there was no central co-ordinating agency in the city to “perform a broad oversight function” relating to food, and which would facilitate planning and implementation of long-term solutions;
- the city's produce supplies were being handled by an inadequate and ageing wholesale facility;
- comprehensive monitoring of the nutritional deficiencies of the “high risk” groups and co-ordination of public programs aimed at assisting them was lacking;
- local agricultural production was being negatively affected by the loss of agricultural land in the surrounding areas.

Source: United States Conference of Mayors (October 1985)
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Location description:

Philadelphia is a large shipping port located on the Delaware River, and is historically significant, being the site of the signing of the American constitution. It has a population of 1.5 million people, of which 40% are African Americans. Approximately 21% of the population live below the poverty line and in 1987 $16.75 million worth of food was distributed via emergency food centres, soup kitchens and shelters. $47.4 million of food was used in child nutrition programs in the same year.¹

A study in 1988² found over 5,200 farms within the Philadelphia metropolitan area, generating almost $0.5 million annually. Food, horticulture and agriculture together engaged 20-25% of the area's workforce and generated over $23 billion in local revenues. Philadelphia acts as a hub for food distribution. Food and agriculture comprised 27% of the port’s imported non-fuel cargo in 1987 and the Philadelphia Food Distribution Center handled about $3.75 million of fresh food each year. A large proportion of the food consumed in Philadelphia is imported from other areas.

History of food policy council's activities:

A Food and Agriculture Task force (FAT) was established in 1984 under the leadership of the Mayor, but independent of local government. It was an advisory group, concerned about access to food, its production and distribution, good nutrition, land use, economic development and job retention in the food industry.³

FAT was a broadly based group of over 100 individuals representing public and private agencies.⁴ A 15 member steering committee of the FAT co-ordinated the activities of three working groups/committees - Food assistance and nutrition; Land use, greenspace and urban gardening; and Economic development⁵ FAT was disbanded in 1990, although there are actions underway at the present time to re-activate it.
**Goals of FAT:**

- An adequate, safe and nutritious food supply for all citizens
- An educated citizenry with a basic understanding of nutrition.
- Effective use of neighbourhood greenspace for home and community food production, recreational gardening activities, and the development of new enterprises based on local production, preservation and distribution.
- Preservation of the region's farmlands and a thriving regional agriculture.
- Continuing economic vitality of the local food industry.
- Increased local tax base from these improvements.⁶
Achievements / Accomplishments

Programs:
• Nutrition education at a local community-owned farm
• Colloquium on open space issues, 1988
• Conference, “Critical food safety issues for the 90’s”, 1989

Infrastructure/positions:
• Philadelphia appointed its first Public Health Nutritionist
• Mayor signed a 10-year lease with the National Park Service for land used as a community garden and park by 63 families in public housing (this assured the continuation of a vegetable, fruit and flower gardens already established 10 years)
• Establishment of an inner-city, worker-community-owned full service supermarket (this later failed)
• Members developed understanding of various sectors of the food system, how they operate, etc.
• Developed co-ordination and support networks by acting as a focal point

Policies:
• Developed policy statement, “Food and agriculture - A policy statement”

Reports:
• Report, “Agenda for action: The impact of food, horticulture, and agriculture on the economy of the Delaware Valley”, sponsored by FAT and written by R Koppel

Health outcomes:
• None reported

Economic outcomes:
• Community-worker owned and run supermarket was a failure
• No other economic achievements reported

Other:
Member organisations also accomplished a number of food-related activities, either on their own or in collaboration with other groups.
• local hunger assessment
• community gardening, community greening and composting
• farmers’ markets
• refrigeration at the local Food Distribution Center, to improve its competitiveness
Significant factors:

- There was a key instigator and support person for the project, whose background was agriculture extension.
- Poverty issues, made worse by the welfare cuts of the 1980's, and ecology/sustainable agriculture concerns which arose in the 1970's appeared to be the key motivating factors leading to the demand for the establishment of a food policy council.
- Prior to FAT being established, there existed over 200 food pantries, a hunger hot line and a major food bank in Philadelphia; an extensive community gardening program, begun in the early 1970's produced about $2 million in fresh produce for local gardeners; farmers markets had been developed. Thus Philadelphia had established emergency food networks, which allowed the FAT to focus on broader food systems issues.
- 1984 (Jan) “Food and Agriculture: A development path for Philadelphia”, conference, led to formation of FAT.
- 1985 the Mayor accepted a food policy for the city.
- Participated in US Conference of Mayors 1984-5 project to develop municipal food and agriculture policies.
- Mellon Bank hosted meetings in its boardroom (providing prestige to the Task Force meetings and ensuring a broad spectrum of business representation).
- Merger with Food and Energy Systems Inc. to gain tax-exempt status and ability to seek funding for staff, etc. in late 1980's.
- Deliberate and incidental development of networks between members and participants, and the groups/networks they represented, appeared crucial for the development and implementation of strategies.

Relevant problems experienced

- There was an on-going issue of role definition for FAT. Needed to clarify if it was a service/program provider or if it should act as a catalyst for projects and action by other organisations.
- FAT had difficulty moving from policy development to implementation.
- Could not get co-operation between the states (Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware) for a regional approach to an integrated food system, but local activities were dependent upon this.
- Local government role was unclear (educational? funding? facilitation? providing administrative and/or staff support? providing an existing infrastructure?); Local
government had very little influence on local wages and on welfare benefits, the key factors leading to insufficient funds for food purchase.

- Staff director mismanaged funds and his administrative duties, leading to confusion regarding the role of FAT and ultimately to a lack of funds to continue.

**Overview and Discussion**

Philadelphia is a large city with a significant mix of ethnic groups and poverty. Prior to the establishment of a Food and Agriculture Task force, it had an established emergency food distribution network, as well as a history of involvement in food and agriculture issues. It had traditionally acted as a farming centre and food distribution hub via the large port facilities. It also had developed a number of alternative food production and distribution networks (community gardens and farmers' markets) from the 1970's. This was in addition to the large infrastructure of food retail and service industries found in city of Philadelphia’s size.

Thus in the early 1980's when the effects of the welfare changes started to be felt, there existed a large number of individuals and organisations with an interest in improving the effectiveness of the food system. These groups began to get together and to focus their activities on the food system as a whole. At the same time, the United States Conference of Mayors began a Municipal Food Policies project. The Mayor of Philadelphia was able to take up the opportunity to participate in this national project by supporting and endorsing the ground swell of food system activity already underway in his city. He adopted the food policy for the city when it was presented to him, but did not need to establish a formal food policy council within the city government, as the FAT had been established independently.

As an independent group, under no structural umbrella, the FAT was vulnerable and marginal. While prestige and interest existed, the work of FAT proceeded. However, with the loss of the draw card of the Mellon Bank as a meeting place and the termination of the Conference of Mayors project, support for the work of FAT from powerful interests within the city, including the Mayor and business interests, waned. This withdrawal of support highlighted the limitations of FAT, in particular its marginal nature and the lack of clarity of its role and function. This was then coupled with mismanagement of funds and changes in direction of many of the individuals and organisations involved with the group. By 1990 the FAT was disbanded.
Unfortunately, the increasing dysfunction of the FAT and its ultimate collapse was not accompanied by a decrease in need for such a group. In fact the opposite occurred. During this same period and into the 1990's following its disbandment, the poverty situation within Philadelphia became much worse, food access for inner city residents did not improve, the number of local farms continued to decline and there existed no indication that the nutritional health of residents improved. If the situation in Philadelphia was similar to the national data, nutritional status declined. Government interests also were elsewhere, with no mention of food system issues or of the food policy in any recent City of Philadelphia documents.

Summary:

The model of a food policy council (Model D) presented in Philadelphia was a large group, completely independent of local government but with a significant number of members coming from local government departments. The steering committee of the FAT did not include local government representation. Although the FAT had a very strong network of members and a broad vision of the food system and thus of strategies that could make an impact on local food security, the marginal nature of the group made it vulnerable. Although active for a number of years in the mid 1980's, activity waned and the group was disbanded in 1990. Careful examination of the achievements of the group indicate that limited long-term change occurred.

2 Koppel R (1988) op cit

3 Food and Agriculture Task Force *Philadelphia Food and Agriculture Task Force*. - information sheet, undated. c/- Philadelphia County Co-operative Extension Services of The Penn State University, 5799 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19141

4 United States Conference of Mayors (October 1985) *Municipal Food Policies. How five cities are improving the availability and quality of food for those in need*. US of Mayors, 1620 Eye Street, Northwest, Washington, DC 20006

5 United States Conference of Mayors (October 1985) op cit

6 *Food and Agriculture - A policy statement*. Unpublished statement. p. 2

7 US Conference of Mayors (October 1985), op cit


9 US Conference of Mayors (October 1985), op cit

10 Dahlberg KA *Report and recommendations on the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Food System - Draft*. c/- Department of Political Science, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1994

11 Dahlberg KA, op cit, p.4

12 Temple-West, op cit

13 Temple-West, op cit

14 Temple-West, op cit

15 US Conference of Mayors (October 1985), op cit
TORONTO, CANADA

Location description:

- Toronto is the capital of Ontario, Canada and is situated on Lake Ontario. It is an important shipping port and is surrounded by Canada's richest agricultural lands.
- The population of metropolitan Toronto is 3.5 million and of the greater Toronto area is 4.2 million.
- 15% of Toronto families cannot afford a nutritious diet (1992) and 150,000 Torontonians use food banks each month (1992).

History of food policy council's activities:

- Canada has had a history of involvement in the processes of defining of health - Lalonde report (1974). This influenced the City of Toronto's Department of Public Health (DPH) in their strategic planning document *Public Health in the 1980's*.
- In 1984, the conference *Beyond Health Care*, held in Toronto influenced the establishment of the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities program in Europe and then later as the Healthy Communities Project in Canada.
- In 1986 the Ottawa *Charter for Health Promotion* was released, a WHO statement arising from a meeting in Ottawa, Ontario.
- The hunger crisis rose throughout the 1980's and then climbed dramatically at the beginning of the 1990's, linked with international economic downturns.
- Sustainable food systems were an increasing concern of environmentalists, consumers and public health professionals in the 1980's.
- *Healthy Toronto 2000* (HT2000) released in 1988, was a vision statement and report, which put forward the following two goal processes:
  1. A health agenda for Toronto to be addressed by all City Departments; and
- Recommendations 6 & 7 requested the establishment of the Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC).
- The Board of Health undertook a consultative process to determine the goals, objectives and activities of the TFPC, together with membership criteria and composition, authority and relationships with other bodies.
- The Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) was established in 1990 and operates as a sub-committee of the Board of Health but is not accountable to it.
The functions of the TFPC are as follows:

- advocate for food that is culturally acceptable and affordable
- review the food related policies and practices of public and private sector agents
- recommend appropriate policy to City Council
- co-operate with other organisations to provide education on the food system
- take leadership in researching food policies elsewhere
- co-ordinate with others in communicating food issues to the public and decision makers
- liaise with community groups on local issues and initiatives

TFPC consists of people from the community development, business, Labour, and food system sectors, along with the Board of Health, the Board of Education and City Council itself, for a total of 19 members. A City Councillor and a community member co-chair the TFPC. Three staff persons consist of a Co-ordinator, a consultant and a secretary (provided by Health Department).
Goals:

Mission/Purpose: TFPC will work to develop a just and environmentally sustainable food system for all Torontonians.

Guiding principles: TFPC will recognise the cultural and economic diversity of the city; enable communities to be actively involved in developing policies; and facilitate collaboration among all sectors of the food system.

Goals:
Operational goals:
I. To end hunger and the need for a food distribution system based on charity.
The TFPC will:
1. recognise the causal relationships between poverty, hunger and ill-health, and advocate for improved wages, income support programs and affordable housing;
2. work with the Boards of Education and all levels of government to establish sound nutrition programs in all Toronto area schools. This would include measures addressing both immediate and long-term food and nutrition needs of children in Toronto; and
3. in conjunction with concerned community groups, the corporate sector and municipal agencies, work to improve physical access to affordable and nutritious food.
II. To promote food production and distribution systems which are equitable, nutritionally excellent, and environmentally sound.
The TFPC will:
1. heighten public awareness of the nature of the current food system including: ecological sustainability, economic interdependency, and health implications;
2. advocate for improved food labelling and advertising to assist the consumer in making food choices; and
3. work with all concerned sectors of the food system to promote healthy food production by encouraging local production of the most nutritional food possible and the elimination of excessive food packaging.
Achievements / Accomplishments

Programs:
• School food programs: working towards creating food programs for 320,000 Ontario students
• Community Kitchens: Improving people’s nutrition and food preparation skills.
• Pre-natal Nutrition: Improving nutrition for pregnant women.

Infrastructure/Positions:
• Field to Table: Finding innovative ways to link local growers with low-income people in Toronto, with a target of serving 10,000 Torontonians by 1994
• Community Green Markets: Providing fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income Torontonians
• Food Buying Clubs: Increasing access to nutritious staple foods.
• Community Gardens: Creating 5 new garden sites in the City of Toronto by 1994.

Policies:
• Toronto City Council adopted a *Declaration on Food and Nutrition*, in November 1992.\(^2\)

Health outcomes:
• no information

Economic outcomes:
• Maintaining jobs, increasing local food processing and distribution in the Stockyards Industrial District

Significant factors:

• Canada's involvement in the broad definition of health and of health promotion set the tone for city-based activities with a strong public health focus. The food policy work was one component of this all-encompassing health agenda for the city (HT2000).
• Although based within a city health department, the role of the TFPC has been broadly based, including agriculture issues, food access issues and economic development at the local level. Involvement in this range of activities would be unusual for a health department.
• A large network of organisations was canvassed to gain insight into the direction of the TFPC, and the Board of Management that subsequently was established also had extensive representation. There was some indication given that such a large Board of Management, representing a broad range of interests, was not a functional arrangement for the program implementation phase of the TFPC\(^3\).
Overview and Discussion:

The political structures in Canada are closer to those of Australia and thus the establishment of a food policy council in Toronto is of particular relevance. However, there still exists differences at the level of city government. Toronto's city government is responsible for an area much greater than any similar city government in Australia. Additionally, most city governments do not have a Board of Health, as occurs in Toronto.

The scenario represented in Toronto is still of interest, as the food policy council became an arm of the city government, something that has not occurred in the USA. This was possible due to the different attitudes toward government in Canada (and Australia) and the USA. People in the USA have a basic mistrust of government, preferring above all else that the size of government be reduced and that government does not interfere in what are considered everyday matters. Canada, in contrast, has a faith in government which is underpinned in their constitution. Like Australia, Canada has a universal health care system, an extensive social security system and people hold the belief that government has a role to play in the smooth and equitable running of the country. Direct intervention by the government in the food system thus is accepted, if not expected. This presents another model for the establishment of a food policy council, one which may be particularly pertinent to the political and social situation in Australia.

The establishment of the TFPC must be considered within the spectrum of other activities that had taken place in Canada and in Toronto in particular. There existed an extensive history of political and academic debate about health, its definition, the role of government in maintaining health and well-being, and how health can be effectively promoted. International discussion had occurred on the role of cities in the promotion and maintenance of health. Toronto had specifically addressed this issue, producing a very comprehensive report on what it would be doing to maintain and promote health. The establishment of a food policy council was but one of a number of recommendations which arose out of that report. This wide range of activities and well-informed discussion must have provided a very supportive environment for the establishment of the TFPC and for its work. Personal knowledge of and commitment to a broadly-based approach to dealing with food and nutrition issues, would be high amongst decision makers and politicians.

To some extent this background of debate on health and health promotion has occurred in Australia. Starting with the release in 1978 of the Davidson report on health promotion in Australia, discussions about and reports on health promotion continued during the 1980's and 1990's. However, few cities would be in a position to produce and act on a
report such as HT2000, providing the umbrella under which a food policy council could be created. For the establishment of a food policy council to occur, and for it to subsequently be effective in implementing the broadly-based initiatives necessary to impact on the food system, extensive work may need to occur to more fully equip city governments with an understanding of influence on health of the city as a whole. Within such a philosophical framework can occur discussions of the role of a food policy council.

Summary:

The Toronto Food Policy Council presents a model (Model E) which could readily be adopted in Australia. The Council is located within the city government and has a very broad role in influencing the food system to become more sustainable and equitable. It operates with a large degree of autonomy, as it has its own Board of Management with representation from a wide range of organisations. The city government principally supplies the budget and an administrative infrastructure. A number of innovative programs are underway but limited measures of its impact are available due to the short time that it has been operational.

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2 Toronto Declaration on Food and Nutrition (1992)

Preamble

Whereas the City of Toronto:
- wants to promote the health and well-being of each resident, worker and visitor
- recognises that a nourishing diet is essential to good health
- recognises that all citizens, from all ages, need to have the means available to acquire a nourishing diet
- wants to ensure that a secure food supply is available to residents
- wants to continue to set an example by the way it addresses food and nutrition issues
- values its cultural mosaic and is committed to addressing the diverse and changing needs of its people

Therefore, be it resolved that the Council of the City of Toronto adopts the following food and nutrition principles to guide its actions, and urges all members of the community to similarly adopt these principles to guide their actions.

Guiding Principles
Action by the City of Toronto relating to food and nutrition shall follow these guiding principles:

- to develop the Corporation as a model promoter of healthy food choices
- to ensure that City initiatives promote adequate access to food in the City
- to use Health and Welfare Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating as the framework for nutrition policy and programming
- to focus on changes that increase the range of healthy food choices for individual selection without prescribing and restricting
- to support Ontario farmers to help ensure the availability of a high quality, environmentally-sound food supply
- to take a preventive approach so that nutrition-related health problems are avoided
- to provide the community with the information needed to make informed choices on food and nutrition matters
- to encourage public participation in the development of policies and programs
- to co-ordinate action with other levels of government and other sectors
- to ensure that the City's involvement in food and nutrition issues is consistent with its other policy statements: on the environment; on multiculturalism; on community development; on equitable access to City services.

3 MacRae, R, pers. comm., June 1994
ATTACHMENTS
ATTACHMENT A - PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Professor Kenneth Dahlberg, University of Western Michigan, Kalamazoo

Ms Linda Eisenberg, Maryland Food Systems, Baltimore, MD

Mr Mike Haga, Food Research and Action Center, Washington, DC

Ms Gail Harris, Mr Jim, Community Action Center, Knoxville, TN

A/Professor Betsy Haughton, Chairperson, Knoxville Food Policy Council University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN

Mr Buzz Johnson, Metropolitan Planning Commission, Knoxville City Council, Knoxville, TN

Dr Rod MacRae, Toronto Food Policy Council, Toronto

Professor Nancy Milio, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Ms Barbara Missroon, Ms Ben Tolomere, Public Health Department, Charleston & Trident County Health Dept., Charleston, SC

Mr Greg Sandor, From the Ground Up (Food Bank), Washington, DC

Mr Patrick Temple-West, Nutrition Education Services, Philadelphia, PA

Philadelphia Food Distribution Center, Philadelphia, PA

Dr Robert Wilson, Consultant, Knoxville, TN

Mr Mark Winne, Hartford Food System, Hartford, CT
## ATTACHMENT B – MODELS OF FOOD POLICY COUNCILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Model A</th>
<th>Model B</th>
<th>Model C</th>
<th>Model D</th>
<th>Model E</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initiation</strong></td>
<td>Mayor initiated, upon external invitation (to join US Conference of Mayors’ project)</td>
<td>External approach by independent food systems group to city govt and Mayor</td>
<td>External approach by two individuals to city govt and Mayor</td>
<td>Externally initiated</td>
<td>Internally initiated as one recommendation of govt planning document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background Information</strong></td>
<td>Extensive study of food system, commissioned by Mayor</td>
<td>Based on 12 years work in the area by external group</td>
<td>Extensive background research, plus prior work in the area</td>
<td>Limited background information on status of food system; relied on organisations’ experiences; extensive network of food agencies</td>
<td>Background discussions on role of city in the promotion of health of its residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key external event / recognition</strong></td>
<td>* US Conference of Mayors - supportive * Hurricane Hugo – led to disbandment</td>
<td>None known</td>
<td>* World’s Fair; * US Conference of Mayors * national and international recognition</td>
<td>Local conference on food and agriculture</td>
<td>A series of international conferences on health promotion and healthy cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key food policy advocates “Champions”</strong></td>
<td>Mayor was key advocate, for a period independent food systems group</td>
<td>Yes, from within independent food systems group</td>
<td>Yes, from welfare group and academic consultant</td>
<td>Yes, from agriculture extension services</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>Model A</td>
<td>Model B</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship with city government</strong></td>
<td>* Created by city ordinance * Operates as arm of Mayor’s office * Mayor’s support critical</td>
<td>* Created by city ordinance * Advisory to city government * Mayor’s support not as important</td>
<td>* Created by city ordinance * Advisory to city government * Mayor’s support important</td>
<td>* Created by agreement between local organisations * Advised city govt * Mayor’s role to accept recommendations * Independent of local govt, but with local govt membership</td>
<td>* Created by city ordinance * Positioned within a city govt department for administrative purposes * Advisory to city government, as well as undertaking own projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
<td>* Appointed by Mayor * Voluntary * Health; business; welfare; local govt</td>
<td>* Appointed by Mayor * Voluntary * Health; business; education; local govt</td>
<td>* Appointed by Mayor * Voluntary * Health; business; education; welfare; local govt</td>
<td>* Members volunteered * Health; business; education; welfare; local govt</td>
<td>* Members of Board of Management appointed by Mayor * Voluntary * Health; business; education; welfare; local govt; agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure of Council</strong></td>
<td>* Aligned with Mayor’s office * 3 sub-committees</td>
<td>* Autonomous group, dependent on enthusiasm of members * no known sub-committees</td>
<td>* Autonomous group, dependent on enthusiasm of members * Uses sub-committees with varying success</td>
<td>* Large membership * Steering committee plus a number of smaller committees</td>
<td>* Large representation on Board of Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
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</table>
| Staff                       | Supplied by Mayor’s office                    | Supplied informally by members’ own organizations | * Formally created part-time positions, from within and outside city govt  
* Actions critical to on-going success | * No staff            | * 3 Staff are city govt employees |
| External consultant         | Preliminary meetings with consultant from Knoxville; visited other locations | None, but relies heavily on experience of independent food systems group | Used one key person extensively | Used one person to undertake key study | No one formal consultant; makes use of local academics |
| Focus of Council’s activities | Role of city govt in addressing community concerns regarding food supply and distribution | Ensure that all city govt activities take into account the impact on the food security of residents | Concerned with all aspects of the food system; focus is broader than just city govt’s own activities | Concerned about access to food, its production and distribution, nutrition, land use, economic development and job retention in the food industry | Concerned with development of a just and environmentally sustainable food system for all residents; also has a goal to end hunger and need for charity food distribution |
| Funding                     | In-kind, provision of staff support from Mayor’s office | None from city govt; members’ organizations provide in-kind staff support | Minimal level for external consultant and minor administrative costs | No formal funding; sought external grants | Full funding by city govt to provide for staff and administrative costs; project costs on an ad hoc basis |