Integrating Food System Resiliency into Regional Planning Processes

Q:
• “How can rural regions approach food system resiliency while maintaining a focus on local economic diversity?”
• “How can planners be involved in food system resiliency?”

Guiding Questions:
• What does food system resiliency look like in the Canadian context, and how does it connect to local economic diversity?
• How are innovative regions currently approaching food system resiliency?
• What practices and processes could be, or are being, used to enhance regional food system resiliency?
• What other NGO regional approaches are happening, as well as lower tier government approaches regarding food system resiliency?

Selection of Case Studies:
• Ontario and BC were selected because of their comparability, vibrant agricultural and planning systems, and potential to achieve food system resiliency.
• Niagara Region (Ontario) and the Capital Regional District (BC) were chosen as case study regions because they are comparable in that they both have urban populations and rural areas, have access to markets and transportation, and are thinking about food system resiliency.

Current Findings:
• The majority of food related policy or planning falls into one of two categories: urban focused or rural farmland preservation.
• Both urban and rural, traditional agriculture and non-traditional agriculture, local and global, need to be recognized and integrated to create and maintain a resilient food system.
• Example of jurisdiction doing this: the District of North Saanich’s Whole Community Agricultural Strategy in BC – incorporates traditional and non-traditional agriculture, interactive community focuses, integrates action items into planning process.

Next Steps:
• Continued data gathering.
• Conducting interviews in the Capital Regional District during December 2013, and in Niagara Region during early Spring 2014.

Analysis
• Analysis of practices, processes, and gaps.
• Develop generalized recommendations.

Products
• An academic thesis to be completed in early Summer 2014.
• Thesis results will also be formatted as a resource guide to encourage practical application, and potentially as a course on planning for resilient food systems.

A: Coming soon in the form of an academic thesis and resource guide!

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