

UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Student Report

Strategy for food system sustainability in the University Boulevard Neighbourhood

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UBC FSP 2006
Scenario 6

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ABSTRACT

Food system sustainability is of great importance for ecological, environmental, and health issues. However, it has not been fully addressed in campus planning at UBC. After reviewing the current University Town planning documents, we identified some opportunities and constraints for developing a sustainable food system on campus. With eco-village design concepts in mind, we focus on the University Boulevard Neighbourhood to propose a strategy for developing food system sustainability, with specific attention to food-related businesses. Our strategy is two dimensional, aiming first, to incorporate sustainable food system values into the decision-making process for retail leasing in the UBN, and second to maintain a long-term commitment to this goal among retailers. To further our ultimate goal of creating and maintaining a sustainable food system on the whole UBC campus, we also provide some recommendations for future action for various UBC FSP partners.

INTRODUCTION & PROBLEM DEFINITION

In order to accommodate the increasing population and traffic in the University of British Columbia, vast construction is undergoing with the intension of building a sustainable town. One of the major projects is the University Town which consist of amenities, schools, community centres and eight compact neighbourhoods including the University Boulevard Neighbourhood (UBC, 2006). The rationale of developing the University Town is to promote social, economic and ecological sustainability. Although sustainable practices are included in the development process, such as sustainable guidelines for buildings, nevertheless, food system sustainability is not an integral part of any of the planning documents (UBC, 2006).

It is necessary to study and exercise food system sustainability because there is lack of awareness in food system, benefits of local food, concepts of sustainability and current UBC sustainability initiatives among UBC community (UBC, 2006). There is lack of access to unprocessed and local foods on campus (UBC, 2006). Long food miles have contributed to many avoidable negative environmental, social and economic impacts (UBC, 2006). In addition, the UBC farm should be better integrated into the

UBC's food system. For the many reasons, it is crucial for people to understand that sustainable ecosystems are cyclical and important. Food systems include production, consumption and recycle systems. In the long run, the level of cultivation and preservation of this cycle will reflect from food system sustainability. Besides, ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable food system is influential since food is part of our daily lives. The role of food on human health and the effects on human activity, biodiversity and ecosystem health, hunger and malnutrition, and the nature of human communities are all prominent (Rojas et al, 2006).

An ecologically sustainable food system should be environmentally friendly and preserve quality lands and diversity for the future generations. For example, food should not travel long miles before being served on our plates (Food Wars, 2004). Local food purchases and composting practices are also essential to the maintenance of an ecologically sustainable food system. A socially sustainable food system implies cultural food diversity that is accessible to all ethnic groups. An economically sustainable food system means that food should be affordable to those living in the neighbourhood.

The University Boulevard Neighbourhood is to be the campus' 'front door' for students, staff, residents and visitors (UBNP 2003). With this in mind, it is important for the university community to demonstrate a positive attribute with the features of the above mentioned sustainable systems. In order to keep the University Town unique and ideal, our strategies for implementing these sustainable systems will have practical implications as well as ethical implications. In fact, Scenario 6 groups selected four focuses: the development of food sustainability policy, community connections with food, assessment of retail food outlets, and connection to the UBC farm.

Our goal is to develop a strategy for food system sustainability in the University Boulevard Neighbourhood, one of eight neighbourhoods in the University Town plan for campus development. The following guiding principles are based on the *UBC Food System Project 2006: Towards a just and sustainable UBC food system*:

1. Food is locally grown, produced and processed.
2. Waste must be recycled or composted locally.
3. Food is ethnically diverse, affordable, safe and nutritious.
4. Providers and educators promote awareness among consumers about cultivation, procession, ingredients and nutrition.
5. Food brings people together and enhances community.
6. Is produced by socially, ecologically conscious producers.
7. Providers pay and receive fair prices.

This paper focuses on the neighbourhood's commercial component – assessment of retail outlets and the process for selecting restaurants and grocery stores that promote food system sustainability. The paper starts with identifying and describing the sub-systems and aspects of UBC food system. The University Boulevard Neighbourhood is described, along with the central findings and positions of constraints and opportunities of the University Boulevard Neighbourhood Plan (UBNP) using the concept of ecovillage design. The paper continues with our strategy for food system sustainability in the UBN: mobilizing the commercial component (namely food-related retailers) to that end. Finally, we reflect on linkages between the globalized food system and our analysis of this aspect of the UBC food system, and finish with recommendations for various UBC FSP partners.

THE UBC FOOD SYSTEM: HIGHLIGHTS

The UBC Farm is the major food production site on campus. Throughout the year, it produces a wide variety of vegetables organically. In addition, chicken and lambs are also introduced in the farm system. However, due to the small-scale of the farm, it can only support 0.0007 percent of the university population (UBC Farm, 2006).

In UBC, UBC Food Services and the Alma Mater Student Society (AMS) Food Services provide most food services. The UBC Food Services operate food outlets throughout the campus and the student residences, making a profit of about \$19.1 million a year; while the AMS Food Services provides food products mainly in the Student Union Building (SUB). There is strong competition between the two food service providers, these food service providers together provide a variety of food choices including vegetarian foods, as well as ethnic foods from China, Japan, India, Italy and Mexico to meet the needs of consumers. On the other hand, there are also some other individual food outlets and small-scale grocery stores in the University Village, which are not operated by the two large food services providers.

Waste management is another important aspect of the food system. UBC Waste Management has an in-vessel composting plant to turn organic materials into a soil amendment (UBC Waste Management, 2006). Organic waste is collected from cafeteria, kitchens, residences, as well as certain public access points. Public sorting station is also set up to sort out the organic waste from other waste. In addition to organic waste management, the UBC Waste Management also takes an active role in promoting waste reduction and recycling (UBC Waste Management, 2006).

The Planning process of the development of the University Boulevard Neighbourhood started with the creation of the Official Campus Plan (OCP), that was

adopted in 1997 as a by law by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). In 2000, the Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) was created, providing a description of how each of the areas could be developed, Based on the OCP requirements and policies, and with a view of sustainable systems. For a more detailed description of the eight neighbourhoods, each is expanded upon in the CCP. Thus the University Boulevard Neighbourhood Plan (UBNP) was adopted in 2003 after being approved by the UBC Board of Governors and the GVRD.

THE UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD NEIGHBOURHOOD

The University Boulevard Neighbourhood is one of the smallest among the eight neighbourhoods in UBC.¹ It has its eastern boundary set at the intersection of University Boulevard and Wesbrook Mall and its western boundary set at the intersection of University Boulevard and East Mall (Fact, 2005).² The University Boulevard Neighbourhood is designed for academic, residential, commercial, transit and institutional uses. According to the UBNP, 4,500 m² of the land is reserved for retail and commercial uses, while 30,350 m² of the land is reserved for residential use (UBNP, 2003).

The University Boulevard is a busy transit passage in UBC. The terminals of both B-lines and regular transit routes are set near the University Boulevard and Wesbrook Mall intersection (UBNP, 2003). An approximate of 12,000 people (mostly students) enters this neighborhood every day (UBNP, 2003). The current transit station is on Wesbrook Mall, it will be replaced by a larger underground transit station to meet the increased transit needs.

¹ See Appendix I, Figure 1.

² See Appendix I, Figure 2.

According to the OCP, retail and commercial uses in the University Boulevard Neighbourhood can include restaurants, café, fast food outlets (with outdoor seating), salon, medical and dentistry clinic, travel agents, photocopy shops, offices, convenience groceries, bookstores, music stores, clothing stores and some other specialty retail shops that are intended to meet the need of the University population (UBNP, 2003).

It is expected that retail and commercial stores are of small sizes (100 m² – 350 m²) and are limited to the first two floors (UBNP, 2003). To date, only a drug store and a café have opened in the neighbourhood.

FINDINGS

THE ECOVILLAGE CONCEPT

In response to the change of our social and ecological environments, ecovillages, as new paths for people to search for a high quality of life while consuming fewer resources, have proliferated in recent years (Kierby, 2003). Ecovillages are the place where people can bring forth a new culture to strengthen their relationship with the nature, with each other in terms of social issues, and within themselves in terms of health and spirituality (Gilman, 1996). In definition, an ecovillage is ‘human scale’, where people feel that they know each other; ‘a full featured settlement’, integrating housing development, businesses and agriculture; where human activities are in harmony with the nature; ‘supportive of healthy human development’ and sustainable into the ‘indefinite future’ (Gilman, 1996). There are three layers of eco-village challenges. The first layer includes biological systems such as wastewater treatment, food production and animals. The second layer is the built environment such as buildings and roads. The third layer is the underneath human part, including the economic system and the governance,

influenced by spiritual, emotional, and cultural activities. These three layers are interwoven into a whole system challenge (Gilman, 1996).

Fundamentals of EcoVillage Design

Although the number of eco-villages is increasing rapidly, the word of ecovillage is still used loosely and applied to a wide variety of settlement patterns, which may or may not be classified as ecovillage (Mare, 2002). Therefore, Christopher Mare raises the concept of Village Design, which is a process rather than a goal and it's 'grown rather than built', to obtain true sustainability and create an authentic eco-village (Mare, 2002). He also proposes some fundamental criteria of village design based on the five aspects of the definition of an eco-village as mentioned above (Mare, 2002).

Fundamental 1: Human Scale. The scale of an ecovillage should not exceed the local carrying capacity. Generally, an eco-village has a population from 500 to 5000, neither too small as a hamlet nor too large as a town. A hamlet is not associated with complex social function, while a town is too impersonal to maintain social cohesion (Mare, 2002). The village is self-contained and self-reliant, though maybe not self-sufficient, with all the necessary economic and social requirements of a high quality life (Mare, 2002).

Fundamental 2: Full-featured. An ecovillage is intended to be a reversion-succession of traditional village life, which is ecologically viable and an integration of all ethically redeemable 21st century life with the organic social cohesion (Mare, 2002). It incorporates technologies, arts, and sciences to provide an extended, productive, healthful human life (Mare, 2002). Skilled and educated people are necessary as an integrated part of an eco-village to maintain internally a subculture of its own (Mare, 2002).

Fundamental 3: Human activities in harmony with the nature. An ecovillage is ecologically sustainable without threat to the local ecology; human habitation is ‘ecologically embedded within a larger natural ecosystem’ (Mare, 2002). The design is ongoing to maintain, utilize, and even enhance the existing energy flow such as wind, water, sun and information (Mare, 2002).

Fundamental 4: Supportive of Healthy Human Development. Healthy human development is an outcome, a consequence of thoughtful design, and cannot be purposefully designed. It arises from healthy human relationships based on truth, equality, justice, mutual respect and mutual beneficence (Mare, 2002).

Fundamental 5: Sustainable. An eco-village is the ultimate solution to the sustainability crisis. Instead of passively accepting the deteriorating environmental and ecological environments, Human can proactively bring forth eco-villages by design to prevent the sustainability crisis (Mare, 2002).

The five points listed above are priority design criteria for the establishment of ecovillages (Mare, 2002). Ecovillage design is a creative exploration of solutions to ecological crisis, and these fundamental criteria are comprehensive theoretical educational preparation for the design (Mare, 2002). However, the outcome or goal of ecovillage design should not be overemphasized because, ‘process is paramount’ (Mare, 2002). Ecovillage designers focus on sustainability by integrating society, culture and nature based on human experience of 'human habitation systems' over history (Mare, 2004).

Eco-village Design & the Food System

The food system aspect has not been explicitly elaborated upon in the ecovillage design literature reviewed here. The seven guiding principles for a sustainable UBC Food System (Rojas, 2005) are appropriate for this purpose to further illustrate the fundamentals of ecovillage design. This is a great opportunity for future research: to incorporate the food system theory into the ecovillage design, for instance, to propose some criteria for the design of food system in an ecovillage, however, it exceeds the scope of this paper.

CASE STUDY: FINDHORN COMMUNITY

There are many eco-villages in the world now. The Findhorn Community, located in northeast Scotland, is a successful example of eco-village design based on a holistic and sustainable model since 1962. As a result, the Findhorn Community won the Best Practice designation from the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in 1998. It is also used as a teaching resource for universities and schools (Talbot, 1996). Some highlights of this success:

Human Scale: The population is approximately 3000 residential visitors a year (Talbot, 1996), which is within the range from 500 to 5000.

Full-featured: The Findhorn Community integrates housing (45 ecological buildings), business (more than 40 different businesses) and agriculture (organic and biodynamic farming) together (Talbot, 1996).

Human activities in harmony with the nature: The Findhorn Community is composed of 45 ecological buildings incorporating renewable energy systems such as using solar panels for hot water heating, and waste water is recycled after biological treatment. The community uses organic and biodynamic farming methods to increase local produces and enhance food quality, covering 70 percent of fruit and vegetable

supply. Organic milk, cheeses, eggs and meat are supplied by a nearby farm, minimizing food miles (Talbot, 1996).

Supportive of Healthy Human Development: Social connections in the Findhorn Community are rich and diverse. Residents participate in projects such as a wind turbine and other physical projects, as well as community policy development. Festivals and celebrations are also part of the community life. Within the village, decision-making processes are democratic and communication is facilitated by the New Findhorn Association (Talbot, 1996).

Sustainable: The Findhorn Community is economically sustainable, involving over 40 businesses, (such as a local coffee shop serving organic drinks and food), and design and construction of natural waste water treatment systems (Talbot, 1996).

REVIEW OF PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The potential for implementing food system sustainability in the University Boulevard Neighbourhood (UBN) is shaped by existing patterns and processes of development, and by the planning documents in place, to guide further growth and change. The University Boulevard Neighbourhood Plan (UBNP) is a detailed description based on the CCP and represents the primary vision³ of how development will proceed in this “high density, mixed-use corridor,” (UBNP, 2003) where many structures are already established. This Plan, therefore, is an important tool for identifying both opportunities and constraints in creating a more sustainable food system in this area of campus.

OPPORTUNITIES

Ideas for Sustainable Buildings

The UBNP explores ideas about proposals for sustainable development. These include:

- Reduce energy consumption- ie. ekotrek program
- Ensure long life for buildings- ie. using durable materials
- Ensure high indoor air quality- ie. air vents
- Use resource efficient materials- ie. ways to lower consumption and demand on all applicable resources, both inputs and “outputs one such example is the UBC composting program.
- Conserve water- ie. Rain/graywater and building materials recycling-part of the ekotrek program.
- Reduce Waste- ie. Composting, using recyclable cutlery, for example, UBC Food-Services are working toward integrating biodegradable cutlery and are looking at the feasibility of re-usable cutlery in food service establishments on campus (UBNP 2003, 3.4.13).

These are principles that have been considered in the development of the neighbourhood to address food system-related recycling/sustainability initiatives.

Flexibility in Land Use Patterns

The longer-term condition, to 2012, envisions that “additional buildings will be completed along the north side of University Boulevard.” An opportunity to design these new buildings that will get full sun throughout the day in such a way that could accommodate future rooftop gardens would be incorporating some of the principles of urban agriculture. Furthermore, with these new buildings, businesses and new land-use patterns, we may have the potential to develop criteria into the permit granting process to suit the needs of the newly formed community.

University Boulevard is designated as a “greenway” in the OCP (UBNP 2003, 2.2.1 (I)). It describes the greenway entrance as providing a substantial landscaping component and design features. It clearly states that existing trees will be retained, whenever possible, as well as the inclusion of trees within the sidewalks, and all along

the South Side of University Boulevard (UBNP 2003, 2.4.2). We could take advantage of this by making suggestions to the landscape design to pursue a sustainable pattern similar to those described in eco-village design. For example, planting edible trees, or providing local foods in the retail shops, whether grocery or restaurants would prove as a positive addition to the neighbourhood.

Retail Shops in a Highly Accessible Location

The creation of housing on this strip will contribute to more residents living in the area, thus creating a true neighbourhood. 326 rental housing units are permitted, as per the OCP (UBNP, 2003, 2.3.3). “Residents will contribute to a broad mix of activities, and will bring life to the street at times when the campus is otherwise quiet”; the objective is to have day and night activity throughout the year (UBNP, 2003, 2.2.1). This means that that it would be socially and economically viable to have things like food coop/local produce outlets and composting facilities and communal kitchens among others because the demand would be there during non-peak academic times.

“Where appropriate, innovative infrastructure and servicing strategies will be considered to reduce the external utility needs of the University” (UBNP, 2003, 5.1). This is an opportunity for us to provide criteria for retail outlets. Creating a more integrated community with shops and services on-site in the University Boulevard Neighbourhood. Environmental costs will be reduced, and the UBC food system will be supported (especially if the food sold here is to be local) and will increase food accessibility and availability (UBNP, 2003 5.1).

The set dimensions of the retail stores are from 1,076 to 3,767 square feet, (UBNP, 2003, 1.2.2) considered to be small scale, and so hypermarkets will not be

allocated in these small spaces. This may protect the smaller businesses in the neighbourhood.

Composting

There are no specifications for a composting plan within the UBNP context. We view this as an opportunity as UBC could implement their composting plan into this new neighbourhood, thus lowering the outputs of the community. “A contribution from the service levy for new residential development is to be managed by the Association, to pay for those community services to be undertaken by the Association” (UBNP, 2003, 6.2). With the University Neighbourhood’s Association (UNA) being in charge of the UBN, services such as composting may be able to be incorporated.

Improved Access to the Local Region

The plan’s objective is to discourage vehicular traffic along this segment of University Boulevard, particularly single vehicular occupant traffic, and to “retain the transit exchange” and “ensure that development along University Boulevard does not conflict with the pedestrian and cyclist emphasis of this area” (UBNP 2003, 2.5.1). For residents in UBN and its surroundings and those users passing through, this will have the side-effect of decreasing environmental costs associated with driving to and from food retailers. This will encourage more residents to cycle through this area, and to discourage those from driving to university.

With the development of an underground bus loop, transit service will be able to meet the increased requirements for transit (UBNP, 2003, 2.5.5). Public Transit is easy to use. Furthermore, “to enhance pedestrian use on the street in inclement weather, and to help provide for year-round activity, weather protection to the grade level frontages of

buildings should be provided” (UBNP, 2003, 3.4.2). This further encourages pedestrian traffic on the streets of the neighbourhood.

CONSTRAINTS

Relevant planning documents, including the UBNP, do not address food system sustainability, although they do address some aspects of the development of the buildings. Aside from this immediate constraint on ensuring that the food system be addressed in the development process, there are other constraints on implementing strategies for food system sustainability in the UBN, and at UBC as a whole.

Inflexibility of the Planning Documents

Once the GVRD endorses a given plan as being consistent with the OCP and fulfilling the requirements for local area planning, the UBC Board of Governors considers it for final adoption. “If any provisions of this neighbourhood plan are found to be at variance with the Official Community Plan, the OCP shall prevail.” (UBNP, 2003,1.1) A possible constraint on making changes to UBNP that has been adopted is that since the draft plans have been made, to backtrack to change the OCP is a complicated process. Any input on the planning process is conveyed to the UBC Committee on University Boulevard, and the UBC Board of Governors who would then have to refer back to the UBNP and apply to the GVRD for an amendment to the OCP to reflect any of the changes (UBC Minutes, 2003).

With our recommendations for this area, it may be difficult to amend the OCP. One example would be to amend the OCP’s section on the type of retailers that are allowed in this area. How this could be remedied is by creating an environment with the

development plan that is reciprocal, and may receive input from the individual plans and be flexible to adapt to the specific area's needs. Give more power to the CCP and UBNP, to amend changes as they come up.

Retail Spaces

“Retail uses are outlined in the OCP as including but not limited to: restaurants, fast food outlets (with substantial outdoor seating); personal service, offices; convenience groceries, and other specialty retail shops (OCP, 2001).” This could be a constraint because there are no guidelines as to what services will be allowed to go in there, perhaps the biggest bidders will get the space that may not necessarily reflect the needs of the neighbourhood.

Building Design

The OCP and CCP permit buildings to be up to five-storey with commercial uses limited to the first two-storey. Upper floors of buildings are intended to contain institutional and residential uses (UBNP, 2003, 4.2). Rental housing of up to 326 units is permitted within this neighbourhood as per the CCP (UBNP, 2003, 3.2.2). Melbourne's 2030 Sustainability Plan suggests that compact living space should be developed (Melbourne, 2030). “Encouraging higher density development on sites that are well located in relation to activity centres and public transport will increase the local population base that supports activity centres and local businesses” (Melbourne 2030). Therefore, this area will be less dense, and thus maybe not be a sustainable building pattern. Ideally the buildings should have been able to house more persons. Furthermore, there is no design in the buildings for roof-top garden capabilities which would make it difficult to add one once the buildings are developed (UBNP, 2003, 4.5).

The plan also states that the development will provide narrow frontages for business to create a varied streetscape. This limits green-space in front of buildings that could have been gardens. Possible remedies to this limitation include, hanging pots on the entrances of store, or pots on the light fixture. Furthermore, a greenway is designated in the OCP along University Boulevard. However, a garden space could have been added to the landscaping pattern thus offers a limited scope for community building projects. (UBNP, 2003, 4.8)

STRATEGY

As part of the broader UBC Food System Project, we aim to address the oversight of food system issues in campus development planning, specifically with regard to the University Boulevard Neighbourhood (UBN, or ‘the neighbourhood’). We further aim to develop a strategy for achieving a sustainable food system in the neighbourhood. This is a complex problem, and food system sustainability in the UBN can be addressed from a variety of angles. In order to prevent redundancy and maximize the level of analytical detail, groups working on this scenario collectively decided to each limit their focus to only one major aspect of the problem. Three other groups working on the same scenario this year have chosen to examine: connections between UBN and the UBC Farm; connections within the community to encourage a sustainable food system; amending policy documents to incorporate food system sustainability.⁴

Our focus is on the neighbourhood’s commercial component. Given the UBN’s high-density, multi-use characteristics and designation as a transit corridor and

⁴ See UBC FSP 2006 Papers by Groups 1, 21 and 26 respectively.

commercial hub, a significant amount of space is to be allocated to businesses, many of which will be food related (UBNP, 2003). The nature of these retailers and their practices can, therefore, strongly impact success or failure of achieving a more sustainable food system in the UBN. Accordingly, our strategy for food system sustainability in the UBN is centred on ensuring that the *types* of businesses in the neighbourhood are conducive to achieving that goal, and further, that their *practices* support and reinforce initiatives for food system sustainability in the community.

Despite the obvious constraint that, thus far, planning at UBC has not overtly addressed food system sustainability – meaning it is not a top priority for those overseeing development within the UBN – we also see a major opportunity in the planning realm. An important rationale for our strategy is that few of the specifics regarding retailers in the UBN have been finalized yet, and these decisions can still be influenced to reflect sustainable food system values. We previously discussed the broad categories of businesses that are to be permitted in the UBN; these retail uses have already been laid out by the OCP, “including but not limited to” restaurants, fast food outlets, personal services, convenience groceries and specialty shops (UBNP, 2003). Aside from that, however, the specific leasing decisions have not been made (with the exceptions of two businesses that are already in place, Shoppers Drug Mart and Café Crepe), and neither has construction begun on the buildings themselves.

As one component in the broader initiative to develop a strategy for food system sustainability in the UBN, we aim to address the issue of (primarily food-related) commercial development in the neighbourhood, namely how to mobilize a positive relationship that supports sustainable food system values. Ultimately, the goal is to attract

and foster businesses that are committed to, and capable of, furthering food system sustainability; such that the commercial segment of the UBN first, does not detract from this initiative, and second, can provide leadership to the broader UBN community, as well as serve as a model for development in the surrounding University Town neighbourhoods and beyond. To this end, we have drafted a preliminary set of criteria that we hope will be used to help guide the decision-making process to determine which businesses will be granted space in the neighbourhood. In addition, we explore how that commitment might be maintained long after the initial set-up stage.

Strategy Part I: Selection Criteria

The idea to provide decision makers with ‘sustainability criteria,’ specifically geared towards food system issues, is consistent with what we perceive to be an important function of the UBC FSP: to inform stakeholders of how they can further food system sustainability on campus. That said, Linda Moore, University Town’s Associate Director of External Affairs, was largely the source of inspiration for this idea. In a personal communication to our Teaching Assistant, Catherine Jacobsen, she indicated that input from the UBC FSP regarding ‘good’ characteristics to look for in potential retailers would be a welcome addition to the decision-making process for commercial leasing in the UBN. Our set of criteria for food system sustainability should prove particularly useful to the major decision making body in this regard: a committee of stakeholders including, among others, Linda Moore and Dennis Pavlich, UBC’s Vice-President, External and Legal Affairs, and member of the University Properties Trust Board of Directors (Personal Communication). Our primary target audience, then for the

criteria is this committee that will evaluate and approve leasing proposals for businesses in the UBN over the next few years.

The specific set of criteria that food-related business applicants could be evaluated against requires more work (see Recommendations), however, we have included a guideline below. It is our hope that this list will evolve through a consultative process involving next year's UBC FSP students, the University Neighbourhoods Association (UNA) and other stakeholders. As stated earlier, the criteria should reflect a commitment and ability to support the development of a sustainable food system in the UBN and broader campus. The UBC FSP Vision Statement for a Sustainable UBC Food System informs much of our criteria's content; it states that enhancing ecosystem diversity and quality, along with improving social equity are the two main goals of a sustainable food system ('Vision Statement'). Our adaptation of this vision to the UBN highlights the following 'best practices' for retailers:

- Food ingredients and products are grown, produced and processed as locally as possible, by socially and ecologically conscious suppliers
- Organic and/or fair trade food ingredients and products are sought
- Food is ethnically diverse, affordable, accessible, safe and nutritious
- Providers promote consumer awareness about their products (eg. cultivation, processing, ingredients and nutrition)
- Food enhances the community by bringing people together (eg. social space)
- All appropriate waste is recycled or composted as locally as possible.

In addition to these qualities to look for in leasing candidates, therefore, we also provide some guidelines for the decision-makers themselves (the committee) to supplement those already included in the planning documents (like sustainable construction and energy use of buildings). For example, ensuring that the buildings are designed and built to facilitate composting and recycling programs, and ensuring that the mixture of businesses are spatially distributed along the Boulevard, provide ethnically

diverse food options, as well as satisfy a range of dietary and price preferences. We feel that users and residents of the UBN would greatly benefit from an accessible space designated for community use (including students, faculty, residents and so on) that would support food system sustainability. This could take on a variety of forms; we envision a community (food) centre and food coop/café, possibly with a kitchen where classes and activities might be held. As leasing decisions are made and space is allocated to the various incumbent businesses, a space should be reserved for just such a purpose.

Strategy Part II: Food System Sustainability Pledge

The second segment of our strategy aims to address the challenge of maintaining long-term commitments to ‘best practices’ and food system sustainability among businesses in the UBN. If the first part of our strategy is achieved, this should not be overly difficult since the businesses present should inherently promote a sustainable food system. However, we felt that an added incentive to uphold sustainable practices (like sourcing ingredients locally and composting, for example) would be an ideal complementary initiative. We therefore propose a ‘Food System Sustainability Pledge’ for food-related businesses in the UBN (and the rest of campus too).

The idea behind a Pledge is that businesses can sign voluntarily, as a documented demonstration of their commitment to food system sustainability. The Pledge will be modeled after the existing Sustainability Pledge for students, faculty and staff that is run by the UBC Sustainability Office and the Office of Student Development.⁵ Furthermore, the Pledge will have an accompanying logo to be displayed by signatories as a visible

⁵ See the Sustainability Office website at <http://www.sustain.ubc.ca>. The pledge states: “I pledge to explore and take into account the social and ecological consequences of my decisions. Furthermore, I pledge to use the knowledge I gain at UBC to improve the sustainability of the communities in which I live, learn, and work.”

testament. This might come in the form of a sticker that could go on a front door, or a cashier counter – somewhere visible to consumers. Pointedly and publicly displaying the Pledges serves two important purposes. First, it is an incentive for businesses to sign and pursue sustainable practices because of the marketing allure of a ‘green’ company. Second, it is an accountability mechanism because when customers see the Pledge logo they might comment on it to the retailer, especially if they witness business practices that contradict the pledged commitments. Having businesses sign a Food System Sustainability Pledge also links them in a support network of actors pursuing the same goal, and opens up a line of communication.

In sum, our strategy for creating a sustainable food system in the UBN has a consciously limited scope to address the planning process only as it relates to the neighbourhood’s commercial component. Essentially, we suggest mobilizing the food-related business community in the UBN to help lead the pursuit of an ecologically, socially and economically healthy food system at UBC. We recognize that this is only one aspect of a complex series of issues that must be addressed, but given the collective impact that retailers can have, especially in a commercial area like the UBN, we feel that this initiative is of great consequence.

LINKAGES TO GLOBALIZED FOOD SYSTEM

Our scenario examined the community planning and development process with respect to opportunities and constraints for fostering food system sustainability in a very small subsystem, the UBN. The central finding – that planning documents and processes fail to overtly address food system sustainability – is more than likely to be applicable in

larger scale case studies as well. That is, provincial, national and global development planning also largely overlooks food system sustainability issues. The UBN case is missing much of the complexity that exists the broader, globalized food system; it is a small geographical area with a small population, simple administrative procedures, few stakeholders and a short developmental history relative to the globalized food system. However, lessons learned from examining the UBN, or the UBC food systems can still apply to larger scales of analysis. The UBC FSP can be considered a model – simplicity its strength – that highlights and clarifies major food system sustainability issues that are also at play in far more complex systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the following actions be taken to further our strategy and the broader UBC FSP goals:

UBC FSP Class of 2006-2007

- Evaluate and elaborate on our criteria and guidelines for UBN commercial leasing decisions.
- Draft a Food System Sustainability Pledge and logo, and present it to the SO.
- Make and distribute a questionnaire for UNA residents around campus regarding their hopes for the University Town food system, and in particular, for feedback on our criteria.
- Present results to University Properties Trust, and to the committee on which Linda Moore and Dennis Pavlich serve.
- Look for ideal businesses that could be leaders in the above criteria.
- Explore the community food centre idea further; look at feasibility, funding sources, potential partners (these might include Sprouts, the UNA and the AMS).

UBC Sustainability Office (SO)

- Work with next year's class to explore and develop a Food System Sustainability Pledge for businesses on campus.

University Neighbourhoods Association (UNA)

- Explore the community food centre idea.

- With next year's UBC FSP students, provide feedback and add to our preliminary leasing criteria for retailers in the UBN (that could also be applied to other neighbourhoods).

University Properties Trust (UPT)

- Review our food system sustainability criteria for businesses; explore how it can be integrated within the decision making process.
- Reserve an accessible space for a community food centre, or explore other means of providing this space.

Alma Mater Society (AMS)

- Explore potential involvement in the community food centre idea.

Sprouts UBC Natural Food Coop

- Interest in the community food centre idea? as a new location? or as another branch?

The Farm

- Explore the possibility of entering supply contracts with some UBN retailers.
- Explore potential for linkages with a UBN community food centre.

UBC Waste Management

- Extend full composting and recycling pick-up services to UBN residents and businesses.

APPENDIX I

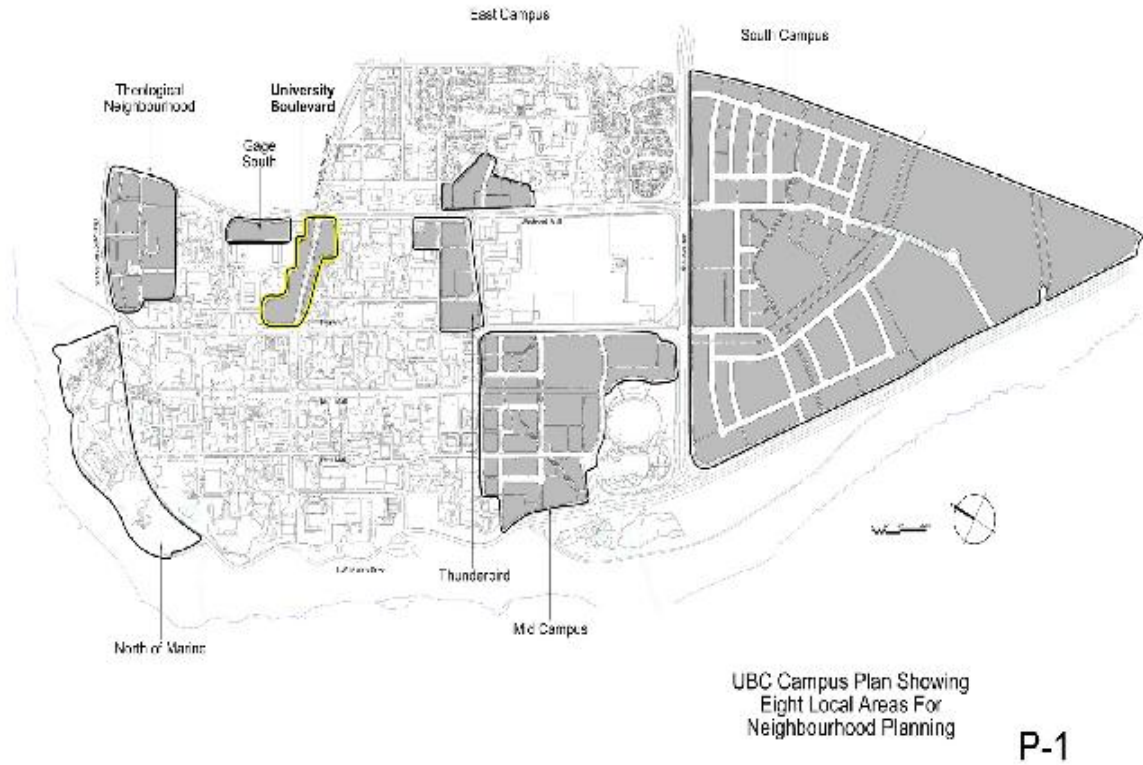


Figure 1: UBC Campus plan showing eight local areas for neighbourhood planning. The University Boulevard Neighbourhood is highlighted in yellow.

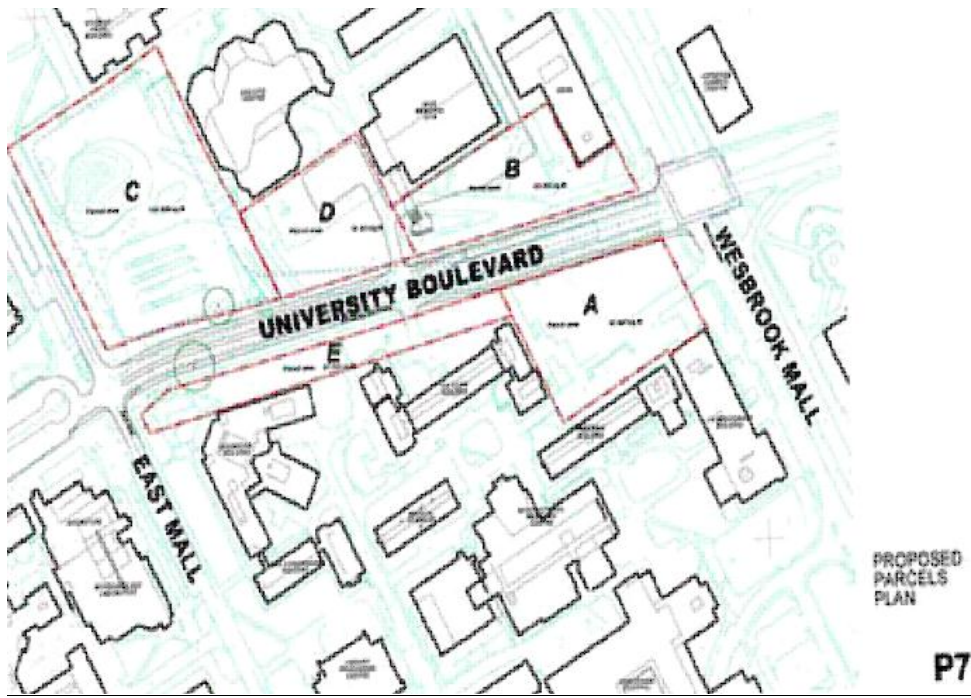


Figure 2: Map showing the boundary of the University Boulevard Neighbourhood (UBN). The UBN includes parcels A, B, C, D, and E.

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