

PLANNING FOR A MEAL ON THE TABLE:
HOW COMMUNITY PLANNING AND POLICY TO SUPPORT
COMMUNITY-OWNED AND OPERATED GROCERY STORES
CAN COMBAT FOOD APARTHEID

by

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The following thesis explores how food systems planning and policy can be utilized to support community-owned and operated grocery stores, specifically in seeking to combat food apartheid. Food apartheid exists because of intentional disinvestment from low-income communities, especially low-income communities of color in the US. By focusing planning and policy on community-led food justice solutions, like small-scale grocery stores owned and operated by community members, reinvestment can happen on the terms of those most-impacted by food apartheid. This thesis case studies five food systems plans from across the US, as well as two US-based grocery stores. The intention of this dual case study analysis is to assess the current state of food systems planning in the US, as well as to assess the needs and narratives of two different styles of community-owned and operated groceries: a traditional small business and a cooperatively-owned business. After assessing the needs of community-led groceries, as well as the existing tools used by planners and policymakers to support those groceries, this thesis makes ten planning and policy recommendations for municipalities looking to support such groceries within their communities.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Communities deserve to eat, and they deserve to eat on their own terms. These are some basic principles of the fight for food justice, and especially for the right to community self-determination of foodways, or communities having the ability to decide what food they consume, how it is produced and processed, and how it is prepared and shared. Because food is not only a necessary resource for basic survival, but also an expression of culture and joy, food access cannot be approached without sociocultural context.

In utilizing analysis of food systems plans to support community-owned and operated groceries, there is an inherent perspective that community-ownership and operation is valuable to food and economic justice. This perspective is supported by the work of food justice activists across the globe, who call for food sovereignty and economic sovereignty, for food systems that place power in the hands of the community members eating and living within them (USFSA). Economic sovereignty looks like a community that can operate and survive on its own terms, even if it is connected to larger and more powerful structures. This decentralized structure of power can seem antithetical to government-supported food justice solutions, but communities and their governments exist in interaction with one another. There is an inherent opportunity in that relationship for governments to choose to support the goals and existing structures of the communities that they serve.

Because food access is shaped by the locations of food retail, agriculture, restaurants, and other food provisioning, as well as the accessibility of housing and transportation in relation to these food system locations, food access is innately shaped by the planning and policy that design the built environment of a community (Slade et. al, 2016). As such, community planning is and has been complicit in the construction of food inaccessibility in the US, often creating

what is referred to in food justice spaces as “food apartheid” conditions, explained and explored later in the literature review (Brones, 2018).

Especially with the community planning decisions made in favor of displacing resources from communities with majority residents of color in cities to majority-white suburbs during the era of White Flight in the 1960s, community planning has made and continues to make decisions that starve marginalized communities in the US (Joassart-Marcelli et al., 2017, pg. 1645). Even in a modern era of critique of White Flight and suburbanization, the continued use of Euclidean zoning, wherein land areas within a municipality are divided into different uses like commercial or residential zoning, across the US perpetuates the continued separation of community members from resources (Wade, 2021). Until planning and policy are intentionally used to deconstruct these harmful systems that produce food apartheid states, they will continue reinforce and perpetuate their creation.

The operative goals of this thesis are to facilitate better and more just connections between the fields of food justice and of community planning and policy, connections that support the creation of community-led food justice solutions supported by community planning and policy. This thesis focuses on the food systems of several key municipalities within the US, as well as two community-owned and operated grocery stores, and seeks to provide ten broadly applicable recommendations for food systems planning and policy upon its completion.

The choice within this thesis to analyze not only the current state of food systems planning in the US, but also how those food systems plans can support community-owned and operated groceries is one focused on community sovereignty. Sovereignty is about self-determination, especially in the terms of communities having self-determination, rather than being acted upon by larger governmental forces. Within the US, it can seem impossible for

communities to have sovereignty over their economies and food systems, as US food systems and economies operate on national and global levels. However, community sovereignty is still possible, especially when government processes like planning and policy seek to serve the communities within the municipalities that they govern, especially through the redistribution and reallocation of resources to be under community determination.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This body of research seeks to combine the work of the food justice and planning and policy fields, meaning that there must be a development of common knowledge between those fields. As such, the following literature review explores the ideological perspective this study is being approached from, as well as necessary terms to understand in reading the following work. Additionally, this literature review serves to describe where the fields of food justice and of planning and policy currently sit, as well as their existing interactions.

Discourse on the Theory of Food Deserts

How hunger and food insecurity are measured and conceptualized influences the framing of solutions for these issues. In defining or measuring such a visceral and political issue, the context and causes of food insecurity will also be defined and calculated. Food insecurity is often designated spatially by labeling certain census tracts as “food deserts”, based on the measurement of two qualifying factors: inaccessibility of grocery stores and area poverty (Dutko et al., 2012). The nature of analyzing food insecurity through the food desert model is that it identifies a correlation between the experiences of food retail inaccessibility and poverty, as well as a compounded circumstance of harm for those living without access to food and in poverty, but it does not interrogate or engage with the sociopolitical context or causes of so-called “food deserts”.

Further, in “Getting Outside the Supermarket Box: Alternatives to ‘Food Deserts’”, Horst et al. discuss the issues with supermarket installation as the solution to food deserts. When food deserts are used as the metric of measurement for food insecurity, food insecurity becomes a geospatial question of absence. If the issue is an absence of resources, supermarkets are a natural response. However, in their article, Horst et al. identify paternalism in this perspective. By

framing residents as passively suffering from these issues of hunger and poverty, rather than continually subject to “structural drivers of poverty” and actively combatting this food insecurity, this framing denies residents agency (Horst et al., 2016, p. 11). In a similar vein, Karen Washington, a prominent food justice activist and urban farmer, critiques the term “food desert” for labeling thriving communities as desolate and without living foodways (Brones, 2018). Food insecurity is not theoretical, and an assessment that identifies only an absence of resources will not incorporate into and support the existing foodways and lives of “food desert” residents. Community members without access to the food that they want and need still continue to feed themselves and their families, and their access will only be improved when the context and reality of their experiences is brought into the perspective of assessment.

Because the majority of urban foodways are defined by food retail, as opposed to urban agriculture, it would seem natural to install more food retail to correct an issue of absence. The 2012 USDA report “Characteristics and Influential Factors of Food Deserts” discusses both the identification of food deserts and solutions, primarily supporting “supermarkets, supercenters, and large grocery stores” as a necessity to improving access to “healthful and affordable foods” because of their selection variety and pricing (Dutko et al., 2012, p. 28). While this USDA report provides a valuable analysis of census data and comparing demographic and economic data to identify correlating experiences, it is in the lack of context that its analysis becomes ineffective. “Food desert” designation identifies poverty and hunger, identifies need for food retail, but its absence model and recommendation to increase the most common forms of food retail ignores the history of supermarkets and urban areas.

In “Ethnic markets and community food security in an urban ‘food desert’”, Joassart-Marcelli et al. criticize this supermarket solution to food insecurity by bringing light to the

history of supermarkets leaving the poor, racially-minoritized neighborhoods most often identified as “food deserts” having been deserted by supermarkets and other large food retailers “during the mass suburbanization and white flight era of the 1960s and the subsequent decades of urban neglect” (Joassart-Marcelli et al., 2012, p. 1645). An absence that has been created by large-scale, corporate food retailers evacuating neighborhoods and creating food insecurity must be assessed within that socioeconomic context to be amended with justice and care to community needs and experiences.

Utilizing the Food Apartheid Perspective

Because food inaccessibility is a structural issue, not an individual one, shaped by a history of disinvestment from and direct harm to minoritized, impoverished communities, many food justice activists have called for a term to describe communities without proper food access that centers that socioeconomic context. “Food apartheid” is a term coined by Karen Washington, a prominent food justice activist and farmer in New York City, to highlight specifically the social inequalities at play. In an interview with *Guernica* magazine, she says that in calling communities in need of improved food access “food apartheid” areas you can look “at the whole food system, along with race, geography, faith, and economics” (Brones, 2018).

In this thesis that seeks to discuss how planning has influenced the creation of “food apartheid” in communities, and how planning can be utilized instead to support community-led food justice solutions, using the term “food apartheid” allows for social context to be brought in at every turn. Additionally, because the term and theory of food apartheid is from the activists that drive food justice in communities, utilizing the term “food apartheid” throughout this thesis will allow for some coalition to be constructed between planners and the social activists who are already supporting communities.

Food Sovereignty and Geographies of Self-Reliance

One of the grocery store case studies examined within this thesis is that of the grocery in the Deanwood neighborhood in Washington, D.C., a case study which is pulled from the book “Black Food Geographies: Race, Self-Reliance, and Food Access in Washington, D.C.” by Ashanté M. Reese. This book discusses not only the history of this predominantly Black neighborhood, but the loss of the thriving food system that its residents had built (Reese, 2019). Within this book, Reese highlights in particular the principle of self-reliance within the community, with the self meaning not only the individual, but the connected community. In its introduction she discusses how as long as food inequity has existed, people living under food apartheid have continued to navigate feeding themselves and one another (Reese, 2019). She utilizes the perspective that communities have developed “geographies of self-reliance”, wherein they continue to “physically navigate the food landscape”, a built environment which has been shaped by city planners, as well as the “phenomenological concerns” or experiences of living under food apartheid (Reese, 2019, pg. 8). Incorporating this understanding of how communities are self-reliant within their built environments gives agency to those impacted by planning and policy, and in choosing to connect food systems plans to community-led solutions through the discussion of community-owned and operated groceries, this thesis seeks to incorporate that self-reliant, community agency into the planning field.

This geography of self-reliance gives agency to communities in a similar way to the movement by La Via Campesina for “food sovereignty” since 1996. Food sovereignty speaks specifically to communities having “healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems” (La Via Campesina, 1996). Food sovereignty principles have been key to

food movements for the last nearly three decades of food justice activism in the US and will similarly influence this thesis' goal of supporting community-led solutions.

History of Planning as it Relates to Food

Public planning of resources, and land use in particular, has existed across a variety of historical eras marked by different perspectives on the role of government in managing public versus private resources, as well as in developing and executing federal, state, and community-level goals. However, throughout these eras, food systems and food retail have been considered to be largely outside of the public sphere of influence. Food access has not been considered through the lens of a connected, community food system, and food security has not been considered an issue of planners' concern. With the introduction of the "APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning" in 2007, this was rejected. The APA policy guide ushered in a brief era of food systems planning across the US, and while not every community has prioritized food systems planning, the field has grown immensely over the last decade-and-a-half.

The APA Food Policy Guide

The American Planning Association (APA) writes policy guides to help advance and shape the culture and theory that drives planning across the US, and in writing the "APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning" in 2007, they sought to advance the field of planning to improve community food systems. The power of planners to shape the built environment of a community will always also shape the lives and experiences of those living within that built environment, and thus also their food access.

This food policy guide situates itself within the field of planning from common planning perspectives, bringing food into the context of planning not only for community access to a basic

need, but to contribute to broader economic, environmental, transportation, equity, and emergency preparedness planning. Through seven general policies, the APA discusses the influence that planning should have on improving food systems and food access, with an eye to food justice and the complex factors that shape food inaccessibility. Within each general policy are specific policy recommendations, as well as reasons for each policy and ways in which planners can be involved in the shaping and practice of each policy.

These seven general policies call for planners to include food systems planning into comprehensive plans, as well as to focus food systems planning on growing economies, bettering public health, sustainability and ecology, and building both social and racial equity. It also calls for the use of specific policies to support these planning efforts, such as changes to the Farm Bill, state-level creation of food policy councils, and international policy choices focused on sustainability and self-reliance. These general policies specifically understand how food systems already influence these fields, and thus how they can be utilized by proper planning to improve community livelihoods.

This policy guide has driven the birth of food systems planning across the US in the last two decades and shaped much of each plan's proposed policies. As such, it is key literature in examining the plans studied within this paper, especially through its specific language on the reciprocal nature of how food systems and their surrounding communities shape one another.

Hahn's "An Analysis of Food Systems Plans: A Planners Toolkit"

Jenna M. Hahn, a graduating senior of California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo wrote their senior thesis on food systems planning in 2012, largely exploring what food systems planning could be and do. This research, having been performed over a decade ago, is missing much of the context provided within this thesis. However, Hahn's focus on the problems

that impact food systems across the US and on the absence of food systems from the sphere of traditional planning reign true. Even with an overlap in study of Multnomah County, Oakland, and NYC, this thesis is able to fill a research gap through the need for an updated assessment of the state of food systems planning in the US today, as well as through this thesis' specific focus on support community-owned and operated grocery stores and thus community-led food justice solutions.

Synthesis

This literature review has served to provide a common base of knowledge and terminology for the research within this thesis. This development of a common perspective and common language is key to accomplishing one of the ultimate goals of this work: better connecting food justice efforts with the work of planners and policymakers, as well as the fields of food justice and planning and policy. Throughout this work, the term food apartheid will be utilized to refer to communities without secure and self-determined access to food because it is commonly utilized by food justice organizers and it calls to attention the systemic nature of food insecurity, which is especially key in effective work at the food system-level. Additionally, the APA Food Policy Guide will serve as a framework of study for the food systems plans case studied within this research, because it provides a common language of study and connects the research performed here with the broader field of food systems planning and policy. These choices have been made in the interest of developing usable research that engages critically with the contexts of its fields. Any further key terminology or concepts introduced within this research will be explained within the main body.

Chapter 3: Methodologies

Because the operative goal of this thesis is to develop recommendations for how planners and policymakers can utilize food systems plans to support community-owned and operated groceries, the methodologies for this research have been centered on the critical case studying of both food systems plans and community-owned and operated grocery stores across the United States. Additionally, because this thesis intends to develop usable recommendations, case study analysis was selected for its provision of practical research into how these two spheres really operate. Ultimately, the research gleaned from this analysis will be used within this thesis to determine which policy and planning tools are most beneficial to supporting community food justice through grocery store ownership and operation. These tools will be communicated in both the food systems analysis section and recommendations section, as the former identifies tools utilized and the latter provides direction for how these tools may be used both more intentionally and by other municipalities not studied in this thesis.

This research asks several key questions, seeking to critically examine the selected case studies, as well as explore the value and use of the proposed tools. Each of the following questions have been essential to framing this thesis and look at its broader goal: the development of communities supported by planning and policy. These questions seek to guide the research performed towards actionable goals and a future of community food justice supported by the planning and policy processes.

Questions:

- *How can food systems planning and policy be used to support community-owned and operated grocery stores?*

The results of this research should clearly identify the innovative measures that have been utilized within existing food systems plans to support community groceries, as well as other potential policy and planning recommendations for expanding this support.

- *What planning and policy recommendations can be made to support a stronger relationship between governance and community organizing?*

This thesis should better align the fields of planning and policy with the work of existing community organizing for food justice. Especially in the realm of food retail, governing bodies do not often work together with community food justice projects and organizations. Planning and policy impact food accessibility and have catalyzed many other historic and socioeconomic factors that have shaped food apartheid, like mass suburbanization in the 1950s and 1960s and redlining in Black and Brown neighborhoods (Shaker et al., 2022).

- *How does planning and policy currently support food access?*

The food systems plans selected to be case studied for this research will be examined in accordance with the recommendations of the “APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning”, as well as analyzed for each plan’s particular perspective, goals, and overall quality. The mentioned APA policy guide has been discussed in the literature review chapter of this thesis for its contributions to the field of food systems planning but will also be discussed further in this section for its use as an assessment framework in community plan analysis.

- *What does a community planned to support its food systems look like?*

This thesis intends to be actionable, and its completion should result in usable planning and policy recommendations for supporting community groceries. These

recommendations should be implementable across a variety of municipalities and encourage the consideration of the context of any municipality that they are implemented in, especially the context of existing community organizing efforts.

The data utilized for this thesis includes five food systems plans from across the US, as well as two grocery store case studies from Washington D.C. and Oakland, California. The five food systems plans were selected for their innovation and unique approaches to food systems planning from an initial group of ten food systems plans within the US, with two from each major census region. After the review of those ten plans, the final five were chosen: the Multnomah Food Action Plan, made for Multnomah County in Oregon; Food Forward NYC designed for New York City, New York; the Imagine Austin comprehensive plan made for Austin, Texas; Resilient Atlanta, a community resiliency plan designed for Atlanta, Georgia; and the Baltimore Sustainability Plan written for Baltimore, Maryland. The perspectives that each plan provides to an understanding of food systems planning as a whole in the US are each uniquely valuable and will be further explored in chapter four of this thesis, which studies them each more specifically.

The food systems plans selected have been not only qualitatively studied for their policies, but also measured on a binary scale for the presence of each specific policy outlined in the APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning, with a zero marking the non-presence of a policy and a one marking the presence of that policy. These policies can be found in their full length in appendix A, alongside each plan's scoring. This binary measurement of the content and perspective of each policy allowed for them to be more quantitatively measured against one another, as well as allowed a more macro level analysis of the food systems planning

field as a whole. By utilizing the APA policy guide as a framework of what food systems plans can be and do and measuring each selected plan against that framework, it is possible to see how each plan and the kinds of perspectives that each plan represents, measure against that framework. Additionally, throughout this thesis, the specific policies of each plan are connected to related policies within the APA policy guide, further utilizing this framework for analysis.

Alongside this APA policy guide framework analysis, each plan was assessed for its perspective and quality along several lines. Regarding each plan's perspective, the five plans were selected because of their unique plan styles, ranging from dedicated food system policy plans to plans with only a few policies regarding the planning of the food systems in their communities. The plans' perspectives were examined based on their plan type, framing of food and food systems, framing of the work proposed, timeline, identified issues, and proposed goals. Each of these lines of research and analysis allow for the selected plans to represent a broader range of food systems plans across the US by highlighting each plan's unique approach and context. The quality of each plan was additionally assessed, though much of that analysis is not provided within the body of this thesis. Quality was assessed along a critique of each plan's actionability, measurability, and follow-through, as well as its readability and organization. This more qualitative analysis allows for the evaluation of each plan's perspective and approach to extend beyond theory and into an analysis of impact and practical usefulness. Because this thesis seeks to recommend tools from each plan, a quality and perspective analysis is useful because the context of those tools can be assessed.

In selecting the tools utilized from each plan, additional perspective and quality assessment was conducted regarding the specific discussion of groceries within the plan, and/or the applicability of food-related policies from each plan to groceries. Specifically, the plans were

assessed for their perspective on groceries and food retail, as well as for their perspective and approach to geospatial issues of food access, to the economic nature of food inaccess, and how each plan approaches community actions for food justice.

The grocery stores selected for this case study research each provide a unique perspective in styles of store ownership, as well as in the roles they serve within their communities.

Community Market is a symbol of self-reliance for the Black community in Deanwood and while it does not provide extensive enough grocery service to its community to entirely mitigate the impacts of food apartheid, it does still provide groceries and a source of community to Deanwood residents and has continued to do so for eighty years (Reese, 2019). Alternately, the Mandela Grocery Cooperative was fought for by the residents of West Oakland as a solution to the food apartheid conditions within their community and does seek to serve the role of a full-service grocery to its local community (Halliday and Foster, 2020). Similarly, Mandela Grocery Cooperative also serves to support community interconnection and culture for the Black community in West Oakland (Halliday and Foster, 2020).

The role of each of the selected groceries in supporting the food access need of Black communities living under food apartheid was not an intentional search criterion, the selection of each case study came about organically in a search for case studies that could provide unique perspectives into what community-owned and operated groceries could do or be for their communities. However, because food apartheid disproportionately impacts Black communities and Black communities have been at the forefront of food justice movements, it is natural that two of the most beneficial examples of community-owned and operated grocery stores happened to originate from Black communities (Shaker et al., 2022; Brones, 2018).

The following chapters of this thesis will begin with the analysis of the five food systems case studies followed by the two grocery store case studies, these will be organized to allow for the natural narrowing of scope, ending in an implications and recommendations section that will both analyze all seven case studies, as well as provide an itemized list of actionable recommendations for municipalities. This structure intends to guide the analysis of the reader before delivering usable tools for bettering the future of the field of food systems planning, such that it supports community-owned and operated groceries. Any referenced analysis that does not fit within the body of the thesis will be included in an appendix, which can be found in chapter eight.

Chapter 4: Food Systems Case Studies

Planning is a field that aims to be thorough. This is true across comprehensive plans and value or policy-specific plans, alike. Comprehensive plans detail not only the intended spatial growth and layout of a city, but also a community's policy goals for cultural and socioeconomic growth, looking to distill an imagined future for a community into actionable goals. Additionally, plans are often shaped by state and federal-level policy goals and perspectives. Plans entirely dedicated to one value or policy goal for a city do the same on a measured scale, focusing all their effort into achieving that one dedicated goal. Planning, and all its natural partnership with the policy field, intends to act intentionally and proactively to meet the needs of communities, although it does often have to work in response to existing issues. In the case of food systems planning, planning and policy may intend to preemptively design food systems that ensure food access, but community members are already living and eating in their communities, and thus planning will always have to act in response to existing foodways and food insecurity.

Unfortunately, planning and policy are not morally or politically neutral. In fact, they often act as executors of the existing powers within a municipality, leading to the history of disinvestment and harm that has created food apartheid (Shaker et al., 2022). Notably, redlining in the mid-20th century, as well as white flight and mass suburbanization in the latter part of that era led to the reallocation of resources like grocery stores from low-income city neighborhoods, populated by a majority of people of color, to white suburban neighborhoods, leaving food apartheid conditions in once thriving communities (Shaker et al). This active disinvestment was a planning and policy decision, and one that prioritized white comfort over the livelihoods and basic needs of the low-income communities of color that had their basic resources boarded up and relocated out from under them.

However, in 2005, a new drive for food systems planning dedicated to encouraging equitable food access began at the APA National Planning Conference. Sessions on food systems planning were held by APA for the first time and eighty planners showed up to learn more (*APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning*, 2007). Previously, intentional food systems planning had not been considered to be within the sphere of influence for city planners, as food systems had been labeled unrelated to the built environment and food was not considered a public good (*APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning*, 2007). This concept of food systems as unrelated to public wellbeing and unaffected by existing planning and policy ignored both the harm enacted by planning and policy on existing food systems, as well as the impactful nature of food access on community wellbeing and survival. Planning and policy had been failing communities by ignoring the assessment and management of community food systems, but a new movement over the last two decades to develop greater food systems planning on the municipality-level has led to the creation of some food systems-related policies in plans across the US, as well as some dedicated food systems plans.

The following food systems plans were selected both for their varying perspectives on and approaches to food and also for their dedication to supporting the growth of thriving local food systems. It is not yet common for municipalities to discuss the planning of their food systems, beyond mentions of food accessibility in hunger statistics and food assistance program assessment. True planning of food systems, with the intention of guiding their growth and ensuring equitable, sustainable access is not yet common practice. This thesis intends to explore and analyze the work of existing food systems plans in order to provide recommendations for those communities seeking to begin the planning of their food systems. As long as there are communities across the US impacted by the harms of food apartheid, there is a need for

improved and increased food systems planning, focused on reinvesting resources into communities that have been literally and figuratively starved of them. The following assessment and analysis will highlight the unique contributions of each plan, to be communicated in a later section of recommendations for municipalities looking to improve their food systems planning, beginning with a brief overview of each plan’s approach and perspective.

Table 1: Overview of Food Systems Plans

A brief overview of each of the five reviewed food systems plans and their basic details.

	Multnomah Food Action Plan	Food Forward NYC	Imagine Austin	Resilient Atlanta	Baltimore Sustainability Plan
Municipality	Multnomah County, OR	New York City, NY	Austin, TX	Atlanta, GA	Baltimore, MD
Plan Type	Food Action Plan	Food Policy Plan	Comprehensive Plan	Resiliency Plan	Sustainability Plan
Perspective on food systems planning	Food-focused plan	Food-focused plan	Sustainability and economy	Resiliency and economy	Climate and resiliency
Plan adoption date	December 2010	September 2022	June 2012	November 2017	April 2019
Department that made and monitors the plan	Multnomah County Office of Sustainability	New York Mayor's Office of Food Policy	Austin City Council and Austin Planning Commission	Atlanta's Chief Resilience Officer and Resilience Team	Baltimore Commission on Sustainability

Multnomah Food Action Plan¹

The Multnomah Food Action Plan, released by the Multnomah County Office of Sustainability in 2010, is a dedicated food systems policy plan, meaning that it specifically addresses the functions and capacity of the food system it has been written for. The community food system in question for this plan is Multnomah County in Oregon, including the state's largest city, Portland. This plan is the oldest studied within this thesis and was one of the first dedicated food systems plans across the US. It was written with the intention that its policies would span from the plan's creation in 2010 until 2025, making it a 15-year policy plan.

Plan Perspective

The Multnomah Food Action Plan identifies the key issues of the Multnomah County food system as being the accessibility of food, including the health of accessible food and the equitability of that access. Additionally, this plan seeks to develop a food system with a positive environmental and economic impact on Multnomah County, understanding how intrinsically related a food system is to the environment and economy it exists within.

Plan Organization

Specifically, the Multnomah Food Action Plan focuses on four pillars of approach for its policy recommendations: Local Food, Healthy Eating, Social Equity, and Economic Vitality. There is a strong emphasis within these plans on regionalizing the Multnomah County food system, with support in place for "small" and "midscale" farms, as well as urban food production (p. 16-17). Beyond regionalizing the growth of food in this food system, the plan discusses nutrition assistance programs, community work and community participation in government

¹ This section will cite from the Multnomah Food Action Plan, published by the Multnomah County Office of Sustainability in 2010.

work, and the strengthening of the Multnomah County food economy through the growth of both food sector jobs and new food retail, like community-led groceries.

The Multnomah Food Action Plan is further organized into sixteen “actions at a glance”, divided equally between the four overarching policy headings of Local Food, Healthy Eating, Social Equity, and Economic Vitality, as previously mentioned (p. 12-13). These “actions at a glance” are further outlined with smaller actions to complete them, making the plan more actionable in its specificity. This plan articulates throughout what problems currently prevent a flourishing food system for the area, with the healthy eating section discussing the inaccessibility of grocery stores, specifically (p. 18). While the specificity of this plan’s actions makes it more actionable, the Multnomah Food Action Plan lacks in structures for follow-through and measurability, making it broadly less actionable than many of the other plans discussed in this thesis. Further information assessing the quality of this plan can be found in appendix A.

Approach to Groceries and Specific Policies

Because this plan is a dedicated food system policy plan, there are a number of policies linked to supporting the development of grocery stores and food retail. It is essential here to identify which policies are specifically beneficial to supporting small, community-owned and operated groceries. Such policies include those in the Multnomah Food Action Plan’s Healthy Eating and Economic Vitality sections, where full-service, affordable groceries are identified as beneficial to the accessibility of food for a community’s health for the former, and beneficial to the regional economy in the latter. Specific policies include:

- Goal 6: Increase Equitable Access to Healthy, Affordable, Safe, and Culturally Appropriate Food in Underserved Neighborhoods (p. 20)
 - 6.1: Promote healthy food financing initiatives

- Goal 12: Create Opportunity and Justice for Farmers and Food System Workers (p. 13)
 - 12.3: Support business practices that promote opportunity
- Goal 13: Develop the Regional Food Economy and Infrastructure (p. 13)
 - 13.1: Establish a linked industry economic development cluster
- Goal 16: Create Local Food Systems Jobs (p.13)
 - 16.3: Support local food businesses

While the broader Multnomah Food Action Plan does not focus on community-owned and operated groceries, or food retail in general, the above goals support food businesses by supporting both the individual operations of small groceries, as well as the broader economies they exist within. For example, goal 13.1 looks to the broader economy as a facilitator for the growth and development of community groceries.

Conclusions and the APA Food Policy Guide

When analyzing the Multnomah Food Action Plan for the tools and perspective that it provides to the broader field of food systems planning, and for the support of community-owned and operated groceries specifically, utilizing the APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning as a framework provides multiple benefits. For one, it allows for the plan to be compared against others, and for another, it makes it easier to discuss the food policies in play. While the full assessment is available in appendix A, it is evident that the Multnomah Food Action Plan has roots in economic, health, and sustainability focuses in food systems. The tools for supporting community groceries that will be discussed later in this chapter are primarily economic in nature, with an emphasis on a regionalized economy through a regionalized food system.

Food Forward NYC²

New York City’s Food Forward NYC plan is the most recently developed plan discussed in this thesis, having been written in 2021 and released to the public in 2022. Food Forward NYC is a comprehensive food policy plan, much like the Multnomah Food Action Plan, but frames its work in a more current context and perspective. Namely, it includes significant mention of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on food insecurity and the development of a strained food system in New York, as well as grounds itself in the existing food justice work being done within NYC. It is intended to act as a 10-year policy plan, designed to operate from 2021 to 2031.

Food Forward NYC is designed to address a number of issues within the city from the positionality of its food system, including economic, health, environmental, and racial and social equity issues. It was developed by the Mayor’s Office of Food Policy and has biannual progress reports released to communicate the monitoring of its goals and actions. As the plan was developed in 2021, the first biannual assessment, Food Forward NYC: 2-Year Progress Report, was completed in 2023 and will be discussed in this thesis alongside the original plan.

Plan Perspective

The Food Forward NYC policy plan is organized into five overarching goals. The first focuses on the accessibility of “healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food”, referencing the language used in La Via Campesina’s fight for food sovereignty (pg. 3; La Via Campesina, 1996). The second and third goals address the desire to have a food system that contributes to a thriving economy and that supports “modern, efficient and resilient” supply chains within that

² This section cites from Food Forward NYC: A 10-Year Food Policy Plan, publish by the City of New York’s mayor’s office in 2022.

economy (pg. 3). Sustainability is the focus of the fourth goal, followed by a fifth and final goal that identifies a need to harness and manage the broader city systems which will support the successful execution of this plan. These goals are supported by what the Mayor's Office identifies as food's "essential role" within the city, identifying food as key to practicing culture, improving health, inspiring job creation, combating food insecurity, fighting for racial equity, developing economic security, enacting climate justice, and adapting to technological change (pg. 13-18).

Plan Organization

This plan is introduced by establishing food justice through food policy as a priority for the city government. The city's role and positionality within the food system is also discussed, identifying the NYC local government as not only essential to emergency food assistance programs, but as essential in regulating food business and infrastructure, in purchasing from the food system, and in its "unique power to convene, plan, and innovate" with the food system, which is subsequently utilized throughout the plan (p. 25). The actual policy actions outlined within the plan are organized into five goal strategies, focusing on the accessibility of "healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food", the local food economy, NYC's supply chains, sustainability, and long-term implementation (p. 36). All policy actions are additionally labeled as accomplishable in the near, medium, or long term, as well as by whether they exist as a prospective legislative action or as a part of the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP).

Approach to Groceries and Specific Policies

The Food Forward NYC plan is particularly notable among food system plans because of its breadth of actions and support for small groceries and community-led food retail solutions. It incorporates a number of active programs to support food retail including the Food Retail

Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) program and the cooperative programs with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Some specific policies and programs that support community-owned and operated groceries within the Food Forward NYC plan include:

- Goal 1A: Expand food benefits to reach more New Yorkers in more places (p. 38)
 - Expand “Get the Good Stuff”³
- Goal 1B: Distribute food more equitably (p. 40)
 - Pursue federal support for businesses and nonprofits that provide fresh fruits and vegetables in underserved communities (p. 42)
 - Study ways to improve access to cold storage in underserved communities (p. 42)
- Goal 2A: Protect food workers, improve pay and benefits, and support ownership (p. 50)
 - Create financing and technical assistance plans to support worker-owned cooperatives (p. 50)
- Goal 2B: Support small food businesses by cutting red tape and supporting innovation (p. 53)
 - Push for a NYC Small Business Recovery Tax Credit for small businesses including food businesses (p. 53)
 - Streamline regulations and enforcement processes related to food businesses (p. 53)
 - Support NYCHA food entrepreneurs⁴ (p. 53)
 - Advance initiatives that protect food business and customer data (p. 53)

³ Get the Good Stuff is a program that partners with SNAP to match dollar amounts on fresh produce purchased at participating groceries (p. 38).

⁴ NYCHA is a “business accelerator program was created to empower residents of NYCHA public housing developments and New Yorkers holding NYCHA Section 8 vouchers to start and grow food businesses” (53).

- Push for expanded and new state and federal programs that support the needs of food businesses and cooperative efforts (p. 54)
- Make it easier for vendors to participate in City procurement (p. 54)

While goals one and two contain more policies specifically pertaining to the ownership and operation of small groceries, each subsequent policy goal strengthens the broader food systems of NYC. For example, the infrastructure improvements made in goal three will provide better infrastructure for connecting both food and consumers to grocery stores, as well as provide space for the operation of small food businesses.

Conclusions and the APA Food Policy Guide

Food Forward NYC sets an excellent example for all municipalities prioritizing food systems planning and policy through its breadth of policies, as well as the plan's focus on each policy's timeframe and interactions with other existing stakeholders and policies. Food Forward NYC measures particularly well against the health, sustainability, and equity policies within the policy guide, but a full assessment can be found in appendix A. As a dedicated food systems plan, this plan provides insight into a wealth of guidance for food systems planning, however, its particular investment into planning for community-owned and operated groceries is the most beneficial in providing guidance for this thesis. Food Forward NYC understands that NYC has an extensive network of existing food businesses and that supporting the growth of others will only benefit the local economy, as well as support food justice efforts for the city.

Imagine Austin⁵

Austin, Texas' comprehensive plan, *Imagine Austin*, seeks to not only outline land use within the city and its surrounding area, but also policy and value-based goals for the municipality. As such, it calls for the development of a subplan called *Healthy Austin* which is outlined within the broader comprehensive plan and seeks to support public health within the Texas capital. Food features within several goals of the *Imagine Austin* plan but is a particularly key element in the public health goals outlined within the *Healthy Austin* subplan. These plans were created and adopted by the city in 2012, with amendments every year until 2018, when the city assessed the progress of the plan's goals thus far.

Plan Perspective

Austin's *Imagine Austin* plan approaches food as an essential basic need for Austinites, specifically connecting food access to its aspirations of being livable, being natural and sustainable, and valuing and respecting its people in city growth and development leading up to its bicentennial anniversary. The *Healthy Austin* subplan focuses on food systems planning as a tool for economic growth that "enhance[s] the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of Austin and central Texas" through support for all parts of the food system, from production to consumption (p. 194). Additionally, the *Healthy Austin* subplan identifies a thriving food system as green infrastructure that will broadly support community health through the accessibility of "local and nourishing food" as well as reduced pollution (p. 197).

⁵ This section cites the *Imagine Austin* comprehensive plan and the *Healthy Austin* subplan, both created by the Austin City Council and Austin Planning Commission in 2012, although *Imagine Austin* was amended through 2018.

Plan Organization

The *Imagine Austin* plan is not a food-specific plan, but a comprehensive plan for the city, which not only develops a “growth concept map” for the spatial design of the city, but also establishes goals for the socioeconomic and cultural development of the city (p. 96). *Imagine Austin* designs and outlines these goals through the identification of several specific “building blocks” through which a better Austin can be developed. The primary “building blocks” addressing food systems include housing and neighborhoods (HN), economy (E), conservation and environment (CE), and society (S) (p. 95). Each of these building blocks outline several proposed policies for the city in their main body within chapter four, as well as outline potential actions to achieve each policy goal, implementation metrics, and measurability metrics in chapter five.

Approach to Groceries and Specific Policies

The *Imagine Austin* plan is much longer and more extensive than the other plans discussed in this thesis, because it is the comprehensive plan for the entire city of Austin. There are many specific policies and actions addressing food systems and food justice within chapters four and five that are unrelated to food retail and are thus not discussed here. Policies specifically discussing food retail and that support community-owned and operated grocery stores include:⁶

- HN P10: Create complete neighborhoods across Austin that have a mix of housing types and land uses, affordable housing and transportation options, and access to healthy food,

⁶ These policies can be read as follows: “HN P10” begins with the coding for a building block section, here it is H for Housing and Neighborhoods, followed by either a P to mark policy or an A to mark action. Finally, 10 is used to mark the number of the policy or action mentioned. Numbers are used solely for ordered identification, not priority ranking.

schools, retail, employment, community services, and parks and recreation options (p. 138)

- The call for complete communities, with designed food accessibility, in the *Imagine Austin* plan supports justice-oriented community development, with space and resources allocated to community grocery development.
- CE A14: Identify and map food deserts and provide incentives for full-service grocery stores and farmers markets to locate in these underserved areas (p. 246)
- S P7: Provide broad access to fresh foods, local farmers markets, co-ops, grocery stores, community gardens, and healthy restaurants in neighborhoods (p. 172)
- S A8: Make healthy and local foods accessible, particularly in underserved areas, by removing barriers and providing incentives for the establishment of sustainable community gardens, urban farms, neighborhood grocery stores, farmers markets, and farm stands and mobile vegetable sales carts (p. 258)
- S A10: Develop partnerships with public and private stakeholders to promote awareness and educate residents about healthy food choices, sources, and preparation, including... the sale of sustainably produced and culturally appropriate food at farmers markets, farm stands, mobile vegetable carts, and neighborhood grocery stores (p. 258)

As a comprehensive plan, *Imagine Austin* focuses on systems-level management and changes, as well as health and affordability of food. However, one of its greatest contributions to food systems planning is its use of measurability metrics. One of the goals of the *Healthy Austin* subplan is to “improve nutrition and food access” with a measurability metric of “[home] units within ¼ and 1/2 mile of a grocery store or farm to consumer location” (p. 206). Another identified goal is to “strengthen [the] local food system” with a measurability metric of counting

the local food growing and distribution locations, providing potential opportunity to support local food-selling groceries (p. 206). These measurability metrics benefit the actionability of the plan's policies and set an excellent example for other food systems planning.

Conclusions and the APA Food Policy Plan

Community-owned and operated groceries are not a specific priority for the Austin imagined in these plans, but there are potential opportunities to support their development in the achievement of other plan goals. Additionally, while not food systems plans, both *Imagine Austin* and *Healthy Austin* rank well against the economic and health goals outlined within the APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning. Ultimately, Austin sets an example for food systems planning that incorporates the field into existing comprehensive planning, making food systems-specific planning more functional for municipalities without the capacity to create food system-specific policy plans.

Resilient Atlanta⁷

Resilient Atlanta is a resiliency plan that was made in 2017, for Atlanta, Georgia. It was developed through the 100 Resilient Cities program, established by the Rockefeller Foundation, which “helps cities around the world become more resilient to the physical, social, and economic challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century” (p. 10). The 100 Resilient Cities program establishes funding for a chief resilience officer and the drafting of a resilience strategy plan for each participating city, which is ideally the beginning of broader change. *Resilient Atlanta* specifically seeks to provide policy goals and guidance for the development of Atlanta into a city

⁷ The following plan specifically cites the Resilient Atlanta plan, developed in 2017 by the Atlanta Mayor's Office and 100 Resilient Cities teams.

that is growing and developing based on its values and community goals and that is preparing for potential 21st century acute and systemic stresses to its functions.⁸

Plan Perspective

The Resilient Atlanta plan is not a food systems specific plan. However, Resilient Atlanta does have two specific actions addressing food systems planning and broader food justice within its resilience strategy. Urban resilience requires a strong local food system in place in preparation for possible supply chain issues, as well as to strengthen the local economy more generally. As such, vision three “Build Our Future City Today”, which focuses on equitable, inclusive development in balance with the natural environment of Atlanta, highlights food-specific planning and development goals for Atlanta (p. 67).

Plan Organization

Broadly, the Resilient Atlanta plan is organized into four visions that makeup what resiliency could look like for Atlanta and then further into strategies and actions for execution. Under the aforementioned vision three, is target 3.3: “Ensure every Atlantan lives within one-half mile of fresh food by 2025” (p. 70). This target calls for Atlanta to partner with local stakeholders, especially those in urban agriculture, to combat the prevalence of food deserts within the city. Here are the only two actions that specifically address food systems:

- Action 3.3.1: Develop a resilient local food system by 2025 (p. 82)
- Action 3.3.2: Develop, integrate, and institutionalize urban agriculture into policies, programs, and projects (p. 83)

⁸ Further exploration of the 100 Resilient Cities program can be found on pages 10 and 11 of Resilient Atlanta.

Only the first action, Action 3.3.1, is directly related to food retail and thus to community-owned and operated groceries, so it will be the focus of the following analysis. The second, Action 3.3.2, specifically identifies development goals for urban agriculture within Atlanta, which has been additionally explored within the city through the “AgLanta” program (p. 83). While this has been essential to the growth and development of the Atlanta food system, it does not directly relate to community-owned and operated groceries and will not be explored within this thesis.

A weak food system is identified as a “soft infrastructure” deficiency within the Resilient Atlanta plan and improving Atlantan food systems is seen as an essential point in building resiliency within the city (p. 26). Within Action 3.3.1, a stronger food system is seen as both essential to improving basic needs accessibility for Atlantans, but also to the development of a resilient local economy. Action 3.3.1 calls for several actions to attain this resilient local food system, including:

- A “metrowide food system resilience assessment” assessing food system needs, as well as to understand the role of the local food system in “ buffering Metro Atlanta from disruptions in national or global food and transportation systems” (p. 82)
- Recommendations to the city for growing and supporting those local food systems
- Development planning that highlights food systems planning and the creation of “neighborhood-level food resilience plans” (p. 82)

This action also broadly calls for strengthening of the local food system in order to additionally strengthen the thriving local food economy, which will benefit from economic and equity improvements in the food system.

Conclusions and the APA Food Policy Guide

While only a small part of the broader resiliency plan, the incorporation of food systems planning into a resiliency plan that seeks to adapt to 21st century problems sets a precedent for food systems planning as an essential strategy for thriving cities. Resilient Atlanta approaches food systems planning from a perspective that aligns with the emergency preparedness, economic, and equity goals of the APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning, and the focus of Action 3.3.1 on neighborhood-scale planning and a localized food economy as an emergency and long-term resiliency strategy, as well as the measurability metrics outlined, will be beneficial examples for all manner of community planning that seeks to incorporate food systems at some level.

Baltimore Sustainability Plan⁹

The Baltimore Sustainability Plan was adopted in 2019 for the city of Baltimore, Maryland, following the original 2009 sustainability plan. In the introduction to this plan, the 2019 Sustainability Commission Co-Chairs wrote that the 2009 sustainability plan had had a “strong focus on environment”, but that the 2019 Baltimore Sustainability Plan sought to additionally “uplift the social and economic aspects of sustainability” (p. vi). As a sustainability plan, there was a strong focus on urban agriculture and sustainable land use by urban growers. However, its development of goals and policies in relation to the UN’s “17 Sustainable Development Goals for a better world by 2030” brings the focus of the plan outside of solely environmentalism and into the perspectives of equity and economy, as well (p. 2).

⁹ This section cites the Baltimore Sustainability Plan developed by the Baltimore Office of Sustainability in 2019.

Plan Perspective

The *Baltimore Sustainability Plan* approaches food systems planning from the perspective of all stages of the food chain, and thus all points of a food system: production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste. Additionally, while the *Baltimore Sustainability Plan* includes a focus on urban agriculture in its food systems planning, that is not the focus of this thesis. However, the focus of those urban agriculture goals on land use and financial viability of agriculture can be useful in understanding the framing of food systems planning within the broader plan.

Plan Organization

Baltimore's Office of Sustainability organizes their sustainability plan framework into five sectors: community, human-made systems, climate and resilience, nature in the city, and economy. Food-related sustainability goals are organized under community and under climate and resilience, with the community section of this plan housing discussion of urban agriculture in the city and the climate and resilience portion of the plan discussing broader food systems. Within the climate and resilience section, there is a subsection specifically addressing food systems. The strategies outlined are as follows:

- Strategy 1: Use policy to create a more equitable food system (p. 94)
- Strategy 2: Increase resilience at the household, community, and food system levels (p. 94)
- Strategy 3: Strengthen and amplify the local food economy (p. 95)

Each of these strategies¹⁰ call for the use of extensive research and planning across governmental departments in their execution. There's a focus on utilizing emergency nutritional assistance to support community resilience in the interim, but also on developing long-term strategic planning for food systems, with extensive support for community sovereignty over their food systems. Action two of strategy three specifically addresses food businesses like community-owned and operated groceries:

- Action 2: Support and cultivate local, food-based businesses to stimulate the local economy and provide much-needed work opportunities (especially for those with less access to employment). Include models that have multiple sustainability benefits, such as cooperatively-owned or not-for-profit stores, as well as projects that incubate small businesses and/or provide job training (p. 95)

The emphasis on workforce training that could strengthen the structures and staff of small, community-owned and operated groceries helps close a gap in business operational knowledge between community-led and corporate groceries that can help community-owned and operated groceries remain operating long-term.

Conclusions and the APA Food Policy Guide

In relation to the APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning, the Baltimore Sustainability Plan measures well against the guide's economic, sustainability, and emergency preparedness general and specific policies. It does not measure well against the social and racial equity policies for the policy guide, although that may be due to the difference of over a decade in time between the creation of the policy guide and of the Baltimore Sustainability

¹⁰ The actions outlined under each of these goals are too long to include as block quotes, as such, the following section will describe the overarching themes of the policy section.

Plan– the plan approaches equity in a 2019 context, rather than the standards set in a 2007-era policy guide. Ultimately, the *Baltimore Sustainability Plan* provides a perspective into how food systems planning can be approached as a sustainability measure, but also exist dynamically as an economic and equity focus for municipalities, even within a sustainability-specific plan. Food systems are key to the structures of resource access for communities, making them interconnected to a variety of municipal structures. Planning and policy must account for this dynamism and interconnection in approaching food systems or risk inappropriately assessing and managing them.

Reviewing the Utilized Planning and Policy Tools

The tools utilized by these five plans ultimately benefit municipalities along lines of financial assistance, intentional spatial planning, and administrative or policy aids. They can be further categorized into seven areas of more specific support: financing, tax credits, zoning and building incentives, spatial planning, technical assistance and/or regulative barrier elimination, SNAP partnerships, and providing physical resources. Not every category has been utilized by each community plan, as they each have different levels of and styles of support for community-owned and operated grocery stores. Table 2, below, indicates the presence of each style of support with a checkmark, or the non-presence of that support with an x-mark. The following section will describe each type of support and provide examples from the selected case studies:¹¹

- Financing: Any form of monetary assistance given to groceries
 - Ex. policy 6.1 in the *Multnomah Food Action Plan*: Promote healthy food financing initiatives; per the USDA, this typically involves the provision of grants

¹¹ Each example policy is originally introduced under the case study headings introduced prior in this chapter and citations will be included there.

and other funding to qualifying small businesses (*Healthy Food Financing Initiative, 2021*)

- Tax Credits: Another form of financial support, wherein taxes are either reduced at their collection or more money is included in an entity's tax return because a requirement is fulfilled
 - Ex. Goal 2B of the *Food Forward NYC* Plan: Push for a NYC Small Business Recovery Tax Credit for small businesses including food businesses
- Zoning and Building Incentives: A form of motivation for construction companies that provides some benefit to them in exchange for constructing a certain kind of building or meeting another construction goal
 - Ex. This could be utilized to support *Imagine Austin's* HN P10: Create complete neighborhoods across Austin that have a mix of housing types and land uses, affordable housing and transportation options, and access to healthy food, schools, retail, employment, community services, and parks and recreation options
- Spatial Planning: Developing the physical design of a community with respect to basic needs access, like determining where a grocery store would need to be to serve the most people effectively
 - Ex. *Resilient Atlanta's* Target 3.3: "Ensure every Atlantan lives within one-half mile of fresh food by 2025" which would require spatial planning to determine that half-mile access
- Technical Assistance and/or Regulative Barrier Elimination: The broadest category of support, encapsulating any action that makes running a business like a grocery store

easier, whether through the support of business processes, or through the elimination of barriers to business processes

- Ex. One feature of Action Two of the *Baltimore Sustainability Plan*: Supporting projects that incubate small businesses and/or provide job training
- SNAP Partnerships: When grocery stores connect with government programs to accept SNAP/EBT benefits, or develop other connections to SNAP/EBT that make food purchasing less expensive for consumers, but maintain income for businesses
 - Ex. A policy under *Food Forward NYC*'s Goal 1A: Expand Get the Good Stuff, which makes produce purchased with SNAP/EBT half the sale price to the consumer
- Providing Physical Resources: The gift or discounted sale of vital business resources to grocery stores, to benefit their store operations
 - Ex. A policy under Goal 1B of *Food Forward NYC*: Study ways to improve access to cold storage in underserved communities

These definitions seek to make Table 2 more comprehensible, as well as to specifically connect it to the case studies conducted within this chapter. Each of the example policies given above can be found under the heading of their respective municipality's case study, found earlier in this chapter.

Table 2: Overview of the Planning and Policy Tools Utilized to Support Grocery Stores

A brief overview of the planning and policy tools utilized by the five selected food systems plans to support community-owned and operated grocery stores.

Tools Utilized	Multnomah Food Action Plan	Food Forward NYC	Imagine Austin	Resilient Atlanta	Baltimore Sustainability Plan
Financing	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Tax Credits	X	✓	X	X	X
Zoning and Building Incentives	X	X	✓	X	X
Spatial Planning	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Technical Assistance and/or Regulative Barrier Elimination	✓	✓	X	X	✓
SNAP Partnerships	X	✓	X	X	X
Providing Physical Resources	X	✓	X	X	X

Chapter 5: Grocery Store Case Studies

Food apartheid always has a cause. In the case of many low-income communities across the US, especially those that are also racially marginalized, that cause is supermarket redlining. The term supermarket “redlining” references the historical impact of redlining, where insurance companies and government agencies caused massive segregation of and disinvestment from Black communities, leading to modern-day issues of resource disinvestment, overpolicing, and other systemic harm (Shaker et al., 2022). Supermarket redlining refers to “the tendency for grocery chains to avoid or leave low-income communities with perceived low demand, limited purchasing power, and higher operating costs” (Cohen, 2018, p. 4). This avoidance of low-income communities has caused the food apartheid conditions that leave community members to either shop within their neighborhoods at corner stores with high cost, low variety, and rarely fresh food choices, or to travel outside of their communities at their own expense, especially for those without cars, as is more common in low-income neighborhoods (Zhang and Debarchana, 2016).

Often, the solution proposed to combat this supermarket redlining is to encourage supermarkets to locate to low-income neighborhoods using incentive zoning or other planning tools to improve an area’s desirability. However, the relocation of supermarkets into low-income communities often causes large-scale gentrification and displacement (Cohen, 2018). The accessibility of a full-service supermarket makes an area more desirable to higher income residents, causing those residents to choose to move to areas with landlords and realtors eager to profit off of a market of higher income renters and homeowners. In fact, a study conducted by Zillow, a real estate website, discovered that “the typical home near either Whole Foods or Trader Joe’s costs more and appreciates twice as much as the median U.S. home” (Cohen, 2018,

p. 3). Supermarkets also operate at a macro-level, with products determined by markets larger than the communities they are located within and hold no attachment to the survival of the communities they sell to. As such, there is no incentive for them to price their products affordably to the low-income community they have been built within, making them often unaffordable, nor is there any incentive to specifically select products that best serve the communities within them, only those that will make the most money for the company.

Because supermarkets do not invest in the communities they sell to and often cause harmful gentrification and displacement, but communities still need accessible food retail, there is a need for an alternative food retail model. The alternative model this thesis proposes is community-owned and operated grocery stores, which operate at a smaller scale (in terms of size, stock, and employee count), and are owned and staffed by members of the community they serve, as opposed to national and global food retail conglomerates. Such markets include the Community Market located in the Deanwood neighborhood in Washington D.C.'s seventh ward, as well as Mandela Grocery Cooperative in the West Oakland neighborhood of Oakland, California.

These two groceries have been selected for the unique perspectives they provide in understanding community-owned and operated grocery stores. The case study of Deanwood's Community Market has largely been pulled from the book *Black Food Geographies: Race, Self-Reliance, and Food Access in Washington D.C.* by Ashanté M. Reese. Within her book, Reese studies the larger foodway within Deanwood, with a chapter specifically dedicated to the Community Market, as well as general discussion of the market throughout the book (Reese, 2019). This case study provides some historical perspective on food apartheid, as well as allows a focus on a small business model for community groceries. The Community Market is a

community-owned and operated grocery store because it is owned and operated by a community member: Mr. Jones (Reese, 2019). He runs his business with the ethos that he should be doing the best he can for his community, but it is still a traditional business operation, unlike the cooperative model present in the other selected case study (Reese, 2019). Conversely, the Mandela Grocery Cooperative provides the perspective of a business cooperative, an increasingly popular style of business operation and ownership for community groceries (Halliday and Foster, 2020). In the case of the Mandela Grocery Cooperative, a community does truly collectively own and run the store.

While these are two entirely different business styles, they have been collectively selected to represent community-owned and operated grocery stores because of their investment in the communities that they serve. These groceries are operated by community members who have felt the affects of food apartheid just as their consumers have, and who intentionally curate businesses that care for their consumer base and their community’s needs. It is this care for their communities that is ultimately necessary and that ultimately invests in combatting food apartheid.

Table 3: Overview of Community-Owned and Operated Groceries

A brief overview of each of the two selected community-owned and operated grocery store case studies and their basic details.

	Community Market	Mandela Grocery Cooperative
Community	Deanwood Neighborhood	West Oakland Neighborhood
Location	Ward 7, Washington D.C.	Oakland, California
Ownership	Traditional	Cooperative
Year opened	1944	2009

Community Market – Deanwood, Washington D.C.¹²

Community Market, located in the Deanwood neighborhood of Washington D.C.,’s Ward 7, is described by Reese as operating “somewhere between the neighborhood grocer model and the corner store model” (p. 101). It is currently operated by Mr. Jones, the second-generation owner, having inherited it from his father, who originally opened the market in 1944 as a grocery store and gas station. In her book, Reese explores not only the role of the market within the Deanwood community, but also the experience of being within the store itself. She describes Mr. Jones’ interactions with patrons, and explains that:

Many of the people who visited Community Market went there for many of the reasons I looked forward to going: the friendly banter, the feeling of almost stepping back in time, the feeling that you were going to visit someone who was not just trying to sell you something but someone who knew you and knew what was happening in the neighborhood.

In this quote Reese highlights one of the core benefits and services of Community Market, it serves the surrounding community because its owner is of the surrounding community. Mr. Jones prioritizes the benefit of his store to Deanwood. In the Jim Crow era, Community Market provided a full grocery service to Deanwood, which would have otherwise suffered from the intentional segregation of resources accessible to Black Americans and in the modern era of food apartheid, Community Market continues to serve a number of community members who would otherwise have to rely on convenience stores or stores outside of the community to eat.

Service to the Community

Reese highlights the role of Community Market in supporting and representing the values of self-reliance and communal responsibility for the Black community in Deanwood, her

¹² This section relies on information from *Black food geographies: race, self-reliance and food access in Washington, D.C.* by Ashanté M. Reese, published in 2019.

interviewees did not always shop at Community Market, but did consistently label it as essential to the community. This is heavily related to the value of economic sovereignty prioritized within this thesis, wherein communities have control over their economies. The control that Mr. Jones has over his local economy by making vital groceries available and accessible to the community is doubled by the small nature of his store, dollars spent by community members are kept within the local economy, as they are then passed into Jones' hands.

The other key benefit of Jones' small store model is the adaptability of Community Market to its community's needs. When Reese asked Mr. Jones about how he stocks his store, he told her that he stocks based on "what the customers want", Jones stocks based on "who is coming in and what they're asking for" (p. 106). Food sovereignty calls first for "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food", and in defining his store based on the desires of its patrons, Mr. Jones supports his community's food sovereignty (USFSA). When Deanwood residents recognized that food apartheid kept fresh food out of their neighborhood through the absence of the chain stores that most often stock fresh food, Mr. Jones stepped up to provide more fresh fruits and vegetables by partnering "with a local organization that supplied small grocers and corner stores with fruits and vegetables at a reduced cost to increase availability for customers in areas with low access" (p. 107).

Mr. Jones is cited by Reese as often making decisions with the intention of bettering the health of his community, including by limiting what foods kids that came in could purchase to what he felt was best for their health. Throughout Reese's interviews with him, she communicates his belief that managing public health falls into the hands of individual choices, and yet he often guides those choices for others in his community through his business practices. In this way, he reinforces the extension of the self and of self-reliance out to his interactions with

his community, supporting the idea of community interdependence and community-determined sovereignty over food and economic systems.

Planning and Policy Interactions

In considering how Community Market interacted with the policy and planning systems around it, its history provides insight into how food apartheid has been inflicted upon low-income communities. Community Market was established during the Jim Crow era in order to provide necessary food retail to Deanwood, and it became both more necessary and harder to operate during the systemic disinvestment from low-income communities of color in the years following WWII. Community Market is a response by the community in Deanwood to the harms of planning and policy that not only disregarded Deanwood's basic need of accessible food, but also holds very little care for the food and economic sovereignty of the community.

As Reese's study is primarily anthropological, there is little discussion of the specific planning and policy structures that Mr. Jones may utilize to support his store. Notably, the Deanwood Community Market is still operational in its original location because Mr. Jones owns the building and does not have to rent the space, he only has to maintain the property taxes. As such, it hasn't been hit as hard by the economic struggles of small business ownership in the 21st century.

Conclusions

Community Market in the Deanwood neighborhood of Washington D.C. is notable for all that it represents for its community, especially in representing Black entrepreneurship and community space in an era of mass commercialization and chains that refocus resources away from communities and into national and global conglomerates. Reese argues that Community Market is significant because of the "relationships that are built, the standards of care that are

established, and [its] interest in community and well-being” (p. 110). Ultimately, this case study provides an example of how communities continue to exist and feed themselves in the face of disinvestment and harm at the hands of planning and policy that does not prioritize low-income communities, even if it does not provide insight into current relationships with planning and policy tools to support such businesses.

The example of Community Market in Deanwood acts as an argument for community-owned and operated groceries, showing all that they can be and do for their communities, setting them entirely apart from chain supermarkets that boast very few connections to the communities they exist within. Truthfully, Community Market would likely benefit from the policy and planning tools discussed within this thesis and as such, it will be utilized to guide their selection, even if it cannot provide current discussion of their use.

Mandela Grocery Cooperative – Oakland, California

The Mandela Grocery Cooperative in the West Oakland neighborhood of Oakland, California is a cooperatively-owned, full-service grocery store. Located across from a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stop, the Mandela Grocery Cooperative defines itself as “member-owned, member-controlled organizations for the primary benefit of their members” on its website, explaining that upon its opening in 2009, it sought to provide grocery service to the “over 25,000 people in a 3-mile radius residential neighborhood” in West Oakland, as there had not been a “grocery store on 7th street since the 1960’s” (Mandela Grocery Cooperative). The cooperative was established in Oakland after nearly seven years of organizing by elders of the community, who knew a grocery store was necessary to the survival of their community (Halliday and Foster, 2020). It provides local food to the community with a focus on health and affordability, made

possible through partnerships with SNAP and local nonprofits focused on fresh produce access (Henry, 2018).

When the cooperative opened in 2009, it was under the nonprofit Mandela MarketPlace, which provides fresh food to corner stores in the area (Henry, 2018). The cooperative is centered not only on improving the accessibility of food to Oakland residents, but also on developing a strong community space for its members, and subsequently for the surrounding community in Oakland. Within a case study on its operations as a cooperative, Mandela Grocery Cooperative is described as being designed and operated with and for the Black community in Oakland:

The space is distinctly African American. From the art on the walls to the arrangement of products, the entire space is designed to reflect the African American community and African American ownership.

This previous quote from Halliday and Foster's 2020 study of the cooperative discusses a sense of belonging and interdependence with the surrounding community which supports the cooperatives mission of improving healthy food accessibility in West Oakland. If the space is community-focused, it is more capable of shaping foodways that serve the interests and needs of community members.

Service to the Community

The West Oakland neighborhood is marked by the USDA as a food desert, and is largely populated by corner liquor stores, not supermarket chains, or even small community groceries like those studied in this thesis (Henry, 2018). By operating within West Oakland, the cooperative provides full-service grocery store access to a neighborhood that would not otherwise have it, as well as many others who choose to access it via the adjacent BART stop (Henry, 2018).

Additionally, the cooperative provides fresh produce and other fresh food accessibility at an affordable price through fresh food sourcing with local nonprofits and a SNAP/WIC partnership that allows the cooperative to offer customers “a 50% discount on everything that does not contain sugar, salt, or grease” (Halliday and Foster, 2020, p. 249). This partnership makes it more possible for West Oakland residents to have control over their foodways by broadening the availability of fresh, local food.

Especially within the history of Oakland as the home of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, and thus also its food provisioning programs, this cooperative situates itself within the Black food justice tradition by utilizing its member-owner system to support not only economic sovereignty for its members, but the entire community (Pien, 2010). Sourcing from local farmers has supported the local agricultural community, pop-ups operated by the cooperative have allowed for community-building and the provision of other services like haircuts and educational operations at cooperative-ran events, and the re-allocation of yearly business surplus to invest into other worker-owned businesses in the area have all supported community-led development of West Oakland into a space that serves its residents, even in the face of systemic government disinvestment (Halliday and Foster, 2020). The Mandela Grocery Cooperative places its values first in its programs and seeks to support community change that dismantles systems of harm and provides for the needs of the community.

Planning and Policy Interactions

The Mandela Grocery Cooperative has benefited from several planning and policy tools, whether intentional or by the nature of its operations. Firstly, its location opposite a BART stop has made it more accessible to a larger community, as that transit-accessibility breaks down the barrier of need for a car to reach the cooperative and to get home while carrying groceries,

afterwards. Transit-planning focused on what riders are able to access, rather than just the form of the transit line, will always serve to improve the economic sovereignty of communities, as it breaks down a barrier of access for community members.

Secondly, the cooperative has utilized partnerships with the SNAP and WIC food assistance programs to make healthy food more accessible to low-income Oakland residents by discounting foods for EBT-users, based on the health of the food. Partnerships with EBT allow for the specific support of low-income residents, as well as make stores like the Mandela Grocery Cooperative more affordable for low-income customers, improving their food access in turn.

Lastly, in 2018 the cooperative sought to expand its operations through not only fundraising within the community, but also through a “proposal for soda tax funds from the city of Oakland” (Henry, 2018). While further research into this attempt yielded no proof of its success, the attempt to utilize public tax funding sets an interesting precedent for other cooperative groceries. Cooperative groceries operate by and for their communities and applying for governmental funding on that premise could help make their operation even more accessible for communities, as funding is most often a barrier to small business operation.

Conclusions

The study of the Mandela Grocery Cooperative is not only beneficial for its inclusion of policy and planning tool use in small grocery store operation, but also for setting an example of what community-owned and operated groceries can look like outside of a traditional business model. In this thesis, the goal is to support the development of communities with economic and food sovereignty over their food systems. In a globalized world where many rely on food retail for food accessibility and may never want to transition to growing their own food but do value

food sovereignty, looking at sovereignty on a community level can yield promising futures. Communities that can rely on cooperatives like the Mandela Grocery Cooperative to not only serve them, but also have their best interests at heart, can become flourishing food systems. The cooperative's focus on cultivating community and serving that cultivated community provides opportunity for self-determination of foodways within Oakland, and thus for food sovereignty in a community systemically kept from feeding itself.

Chapter 6: Implications and Recommendations

The food systems plans and grocery stores case studied in this thesis do not represent all experiences within their respective spheres, they were selected for their unique perspectives on and contributions to an understanding of their fields and to developing actionable solutions for combatting food apartheid. This final piece is core to this thesis— the ultimate goal of this writing is to contribute to combatting food apartheid by facilitating a stronger relationship between municipality governments and the communities they serve and by developing specific recommendations for how those two groups can work together for the benefit of community food security.

The food systems plans case studied earlier in this thesis provide insight into the broad perspectives community plans can provide regarding foodways and food access, as well as the differing directions in which policies can develop to meet community needs. Similarly, the grocery store case studies discussed in chapter five provided a narrative of the actual operations of community-owned and operated grocery stores, as well as context for plan and policy development. The role of this chapter is to discuss the findings and implications of those case studies, as well as to explicitly outline recommendations for municipalities that target support for community-owned and operated grocery stores, treating them as one form of community-led food and economic justice solutions.

Case Study Cross-Analysis

The five food systems plans case studied here are naturally in-conversation with one another by being community plans. No community plan is entirely original, because communities and their planners should learn from one another. However, none were selected

because they were explicitly connected and therefore the following analysis is not influenced by any concrete interactions between the plans.

The *Multnomah Food Action Plan* and the *Food Forward NYC* plan are the most directly correlated plans studied by this thesis, as both are plans dedicated to food and food systems. However, they vary vastly in regards to their structures and approach to food. The *Multnomah Food Action Plan* does not specifically outline measurable actions for its proposed food system goals, nor has it had subsequent follow-ups since its development in 2010 (Multnomah County Office of Sustainability, 2010). Functionally, it acted less as a roadmap for Multnomah County and more as a value statement for the county. Having recently followed the development of the “APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning” in 2007, the *Multnomah Food Action Plan* was one of the first dedicated food systems plans in the United States. It did not have a wealth of plans or policies to build off of, unlike the *Food Forward NYC* plan, which does act as a roadmap for New York City, with specific actionable goals, each assigned different timelines within which they should be targeted to be completed (New York City Mayor’s Office of Food Policy, 2022).

Food Forward NYC was published in 2022 and has already had a two-year progress report discussing the success of its implementation (New York Mayor’s Office of Food Policy, 2023). Additionally, *Food Forward NYC* builds upon the city’s rich history of food justice and urban agriculture movements, allowing for far more stakeholder partnerships and expansions of existing programs (Brones, 2018). Ultimately, the *Multnomah Food Action Plan* provides context for the origins of food systems planning and a historical snapshot into the past emphasis of food security work on localizing food systems and improving urban agriculture, whereas *Food*

Forward NYC has been created in an area of community-led food justice solutions and builds upon a longer history of successful policies supporting community food security.

Regarding the other plans explored, Austin's *Imagine Austin* comprehensive plan provides an example of how the field of comprehensive planning can better incorporate food systems planning, with food policies immersed throughout its plan addressing short and long-term solutions to food insecurity. Alternatively, the *Resilient Atlanta* plan and *Baltimore Sustainability Plan* illustrate how food systems can be incorporated even into policy-specific food systems plans on the basis of the dynamic interconnection of food systems with sustainability, equity, and economy structures across communities. These plans echo similar strategies to the dedicated food systems plans, *Multnomah Food Action Plan* and *Food Forward NYC*, including financial support, use of spatial planning, and other administrative supports and technical barrier eliminations. Table 2 in chapter four illustrates how the food-specific plans have a greater representation of supportive policies for community-owned and operated groceries, but this is congruent with the greater concentration of policies in these plans. Any plan that seeks to support a community's food systems should attempt the most affective approaches to do so, but it is natural that a plan not specifically addressing food systems will not have as many policies to support them.

The community-owned and operated groceries case studied in chapter five provide two different perspectives into styles of ownership for community groceries, but also two different perspectives into the impacts of planning and policy on small food businesses. Community Market in Deanwood has a largely negative relationship with its community planning and policy, which caused the large-scale disinvestment that left Deanwood in need of a full-service grocery store, even with Mr. Jones' provision of fresh produce in his market (Reese, 2018). Whereas, the

Mandela Grocery Cooperative in West Oakland makes intentional use of planning and policy tools, like its location near a public transit stop, its search for local tax-based funding, and its partnership with SNAP for reduced produce prices (Halliday and Foster, 2020).

These grocery store case study examples bring the impact of community planning to light through their narratives. As was previously mentioned, planning and policy are not morally or politically neutral. Grocery access is not a natural feature of the built environment, it is a designed feature, having been shaped both by planning and policy in a community, as well as by the efforts of community members like Mr. Jones and the worker-owners of the Mandela Cooperative Grocery. Both the food systems plans and grocery stores case studied have immense impacts on food access and food apartheid conditions in their communities. The following subsection of recommendations will explore how that impact can be both beneficial and cooperative for food systems planning and grocery store operation, alike.

Planners and policymakers have the opportunity to focus on supporting community-led food justice solutions by supporting the development and actions of community-owned and operated grocery stores as both advocates for and reflections of their communities. Planning and policy that supports community-owned and operated grocery stores is planning and policy that will support community-led food justice solutions, allowing for a natural check against the repetition of past government harm on food systems.

Planning and Policy Recommendations for Municipalities

The following recommendations are focused on how communities functionally experience government action, rather than how planners and policymakers might categorize their actions. As such, they will be organized into three types of recommended support: funding, spatial planning, and administrative/policy support. A community-owned and operated grocery

store is not necessarily going to consider funding from a tax credit any differently than grant support. In the grand scheme of their operations, those are both sources of government funding.

Funding

- Recommendation 1: Give funding to businesses that serve a specific food goal within the community (ex. provide fresh produce, sell local foods, serve priority food insecurity populations)
 - Reasoning: Prioritizing grant funding for businesses that meet a specific food policy goal will incentivize the growth of existing groceries towards community planning and policy goals, as well as provide funding for the creation of new groceries that meet those goals. This recommendation is difficult because funding is the greatest and least available resource, but it deserves to be noted because of its efficacy.
 - Associated Plans: *Food Forward NYC*
 - Groceries Using this Program: Mandela Grocery Cooperative (attempted)
 - Policy value goals: Equity, economy, sustainability
- Recommendation 2: Provide a tax recovery credit to small businesses, or other tax credits pertaining to specific business actions
 - Reasoning: Tax credits do not require specific funding to be located and allocated to small businesses, only for a reduction in taxes for small businesses, allowing for a greater profit gain and for reinvestment back into the business. This is a less strenuous way to fund small food businesses and could operate on a basis of meeting specific requirements if necessary.
 - Associated Plans: *Food Forward NYC*

- Groceries Using this Program: None
- Policy value goals: Equity, economy

Spatial Planning

- Recommendation 3: Develop communities within a food hub model
 - Reasoning: Intentionally designing communities around the accessibility of different food system needs, such as accessible grocery shopping within a certain radius by walking, biking, and/or public transportation can help prevent food apartheid conditions when partnered with a critical lens into the operations and equitability of the grocery stores made accessible.
 - Associated Plans: *Imagine Austin*
 - Groceries Using this Program: None
 - Policy value goals: Equity, localized food systems, infill development
- Recommendation 4: Support the construction of economic development clusters, or the creation of food business-dedicated business parks
 - Reasoning: Food systems require a chain of production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management. Localizing more of those steps adjacent to one another can reduce transportation and environmental costs, as well as improve accessibility for communities. This can be made possible through incentive zoning, grant allocation, or the development of business parks with an emphasis on food businesses.
 - Associated Plans: *Multnomah Food Action Plan*
 - Groceries Using this Program: None
 - Policy value goals: Economy, sustainability

- Recommendation 5: Practice incentive zoning for building development with the capacity to rent to small groceries, especially for building development adjacent to transit nodes
 - Reasoning: Incentive zoning can encourage property owners and developers to conduct specific development in specific areas. By practicing incentive zoning in areas in need of community-owned and operated groceries, especially those that may be adjacent to transit nodes, development can be targeted to the areas most in need of it.
 - Associated Plans: *Imagine Austin*
 - Groceries Using this Program: None
 - Policy value goals: Equity, infill development, sustainability, economy

Administrative and Policy Support

- Recommendation 6: Provide workforce training for traditional small business ownership and/or cooperative-style ownership
 - Reasoning: Operating a business requires a skillset that is often gatekept behind the expense of college degrees or the barriers of connections with other business owners. By providing workforce training for people looking to own and operate a grocery store can eliminate the barrier of a lack of administrative or technical knowledge. Possible workforce training topics include food ordering, pricing, managing taxes and bill payments for a business, registering as a cooperatively-owned business, etc.
 - Associated Plans: *Multnomah Food Action Plan, Food Forward NYC, Baltimore Sustainability Plan*
 - Groceries Using this Program: None

- Policy value goals: Equity, economy, stakeholder partnership¹³
- Recommendation 7: Develop a SNAP Partnership program to decrease the cost of fresh, local produce
 - Reasoning: Small-scale grocery operations often cannot compete with the low prices of chain groceries that can buy in bulk. Additionally, fresh produce is more expensive than convenience goods and can be out of price range for food insecure individuals. A SNAP partnership program will offset unaffordability from both food insecure consumers and small business owners who cannot afford to reduce their prices, while maintaining the consumer base for groceries and the accessibility of food for consumers. Additionally, this program could encourage overall increases in SNAP enrollment for those in need of food assistance.
 - Associated Plans: *Food Forward NYC*
 - Groceries Using this Program: Mandela Grocery Cooperative, Community Market
 - Policy value goals: Equity, health, agriculture-partnerships
- Recommendation 8: Identify and provide the resources needed to operate a grocery store including, but not limited to, cold storage, shelving, cash registration systems, etc.
 - Reasoning: Grocery stores require basic supplies to operate, and it can be difficult to gather the capital needed to acquire all necessary supplies when starting a business. Providing some of those resources from second-hand sources or at a decreased price due to the ability of the government to purchase items in large quantities can help eliminate that barrier.

¹³ Partnerships could be made with workforce training programs for food businesses.

- Associated Plans: *Food Forward NYC*
- Groceries Using this Program: None
- Policy value goals: Equity, sustainability, economy
- Recommendation 9: Develop marketing within the community that shares the locations and affordability programs of community-owned and operated grocery stores, as well as what they provide in terms of food assistance, local food, community space, etc.
 - Reasoning: Marketing benefits small businesses greatly and community-level marketing by planners and policymakers could offset that burden from small businesses. Additionally, this could provide opportunities for health and transit education for accessing and utilizing health food assistance programs.
 - Associated Plans: *Imagine Austin*
 - Groceries Using this Program: None
 - Policy value goals: Equity, sustainability, economy, transit
- Recommendation 10: Assess state of food insecurity and/or food apartheid conditions within a municipality, with respect to the full food chain
 - Reasoning: As a final recommendation, the assessment of the state of a food system, including its full food chain and the pressures of food insecurity and/or food apartheid conditions on that food system, cannot be the extent of food system planning, but will provide a basis of information for other planning and policy actions. This assessment should look at the accessibility of different points of the food system to community members, as well as to each other, with an ultimate goal of localized resiliency and equitable access.

- Associated Plans: *Multnomah Food Action Plan, Food Forward NYC, Imagine Austin, Resilient Atlanta, Baltimore Sustainability Plan*
- Groceries Using this Program: None
- Policy value goals: Localized food systems, resiliency, equity, sustainability

The ten recommendations outlined above are not necessarily functional or recommended for all communities, but they do all provide a potential avenue for municipalities to support community-owned and operated groceries through their planning and policy. Each goal seeks to harness the resources that exist on a municipal level to empower the work of community-led organizations because they are most capable of assessing and meeting the needs of the community they live, work, and find home within. This will ultimately support food and economic sovereignty for communities as they are more able to self-determine their circumstances and activity, as well as foster goodwill between governments and their communities through proof of public service.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Food apartheid is not accidental. It is an intentional product of historical and ongoing disinvestment from low-income communities of color across the US (Brones, 2018). In case studying the food systems plans and grocery stores explored within this thesis, it was evident what intentional effort by both municipalities and community members can mean for food systems, as a food system intentionally designed to put power in the hands of community members is a food system that will serve rather than harm its community. By providing planning and policy recommendations for municipalities, this thesis intends to improve the intentionality of food systems planning for the benefit of food insecure individuals and communities harmed by systemic food apartheid, especially through the enabling of community-led food justice solutions.

In *Black Food Geographies*, Reese explains that Deanwood residents believed that “self-reliance was as much about communal survival as it was about individual gain” (p. 26). In this message, the self is viewed not as an individual, but as a community. In understanding communities as a self, it becomes all the more necessary to support the localization of food systems, as well as the growth of food and economic sovereignty for community members. Communities suffer when they do not have control over their access to their basic needs, as has been seen time and time again with redlining and other harm enacted by governments across the US.

By targeting recommendations that reallocate municipal-level resources to the operations of community-owned and operated grocery stores, resources are given back to the community-self and the “geographies of self-reliance” that Reese discusses can be supported. Vulnerable individuals have their needs met because they are able to meet them on their own terms. Broader

systems of harm, like food apartheid, can be deconstructed by the implementation of stronger systems, like a localized food system where community members can buy from and sell-to one another.

There is no perfect answer to combatting the harms that planning and policy have enacted on communities. However, there are ways in which planning and policy can adapt to better serve their communities. The ten recommendations explored in chapter six serve to reallocate municipal-level power and resources to community members to be used at their discretion. They also seek to utilize planning and policy knowledge to encourage sustainable, equitable development. The fight to combat food apartheid is a community effort, and ultimately, these recommendations seek to put planners and policymakers in community with the neighborhoods and broader municipalities that they serve.

Recommendations for Future Work

In moving forward with this work, the next steps may come in many forms. In continuing to prioritize impact and actionability, these recommendations should be reviewed and adopted by interested municipalities alongside measurability metrics. While defining measurability metrics was not within the scope and capacity of this research, there were effective examples of measurability metrics from three of the plans in particular: *Imagine Austin*, *Resilient Atlanta*, and the *Baltimore Sustainability Plan*. Some measurability metrics taken directly from each of these plans, or adapted from these plans to suit community-owned and operated groceries in particular, include the measurement of:

- *Imagine Austin*¹⁴

¹⁴ The following recommendations come from the *Imagine Austin* plan developed by the Austin Planning Commission in 2012

- Number of community-owned and operated groceries
- Number of households within a ½ mile of a community-owned and operated groceries
- *Resilient Atlanta*¹⁵
 - Dollar values of economic activity from food businesses
 - Number of new food jobs created
 - Number of neighborhoods with accessible community-owned and operated groceries
 - Number of patrons at community-owned and operated groceries
 - Pounds of local food sold by community-owned and operated groceries
- *Baltimore Sustainability Plan*¹⁶
 - Number of new food policies enacted
 - Number of food procurement contracts connected to local food businesses

These measurability metrics prioritize the use of accessible-to-collect, quantitative data points. Additionally, they provide a variety of options for measurement to best suit a municipality’s unique needs.

In a broader sense, beyond measurability metrics, future work should include the revitalization of the food systems planning field. This was a growing field in the late 2000s when the “APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning” was first published and the *Multnomah Food Action Plan* was being created, however, this field has not seen nationwide

¹⁵ The following recommendations come from the *Resilient Atlanta* Plan developed by the Atlanta Mayor’s Office and 100 Resilient Cities Network Team in 2017

¹⁶ The following recommendations come from the *Baltimore Sustainability Plan* developed by the Baltimore Sustainability Office in 2019

prioritization in recent years. Especially in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on agribusiness and concerns over emergency food preparedness, this field would benefit from updated perspectives and policy development. Food insecurity has only become more acute across the US and many of its compounding variables have been exacerbated by public health crises and other political and economic factors. Communities need the municipal-level food systems support that food systems planning can provide, as well as the power that comes from community partnership with government resources.

Chapter 8: Appendices

Appendix A: APA Food Policy Guide Binary Assessments

The following is a table outlining the binary ranking of each of the food systems plans against the “APA Policy Guide on Community and Regional Food Planning”, published in 2007 to the American Planning Association website. Each food system plans are clearly labeled in the topmost row. Each policy is given a code in the far left column, as well as a brief description in the next column to the right. The following terms should be used to understand the coding:

- GP: General Policy
- SP: Special Policy
- Each number and letter will denote numerical ordering
 - Ex. “SP 1B” can be read as Special Policy 1B, where 1 indicates organization under General Policy 1 and A indicates its order as the first special policy under GP 1

APA Code	Plans:	Food Forward NYC	Baltimore Sustainability Plan	Resilient Atlanta	Imagine Austin	Multnomah Food Action Plan
GP 1	Comprehensive planning for food					
SP 1A	Integrate with major planning functions	1	1	1	1	0
SP 1B	Emergency preparedness and reserves	1	1	1	0	0
GP 2	Economic growth focus					

SP 2A	Food systems plan in econ. development plan	0	1	1	1	1
SP 2B	Agricultural viability	1	1	1	1	1
SP 2C	Boost food markets regionally	1	1	1	1	1
SP 2D	Impact and potential of whole food chain	1	1	1	1	1
SP 2E	Support women and minority owned businesses	0	0	0	0	0
GP 3	Healthy food systems					
SP 3A	Affordable/Culturally appropriate food for low incomes	1	1	0	1	1
SP 3B	Food that reduces health issues, esp. youth	1	0	1	1	1
SP 3C	CBO partners for healthy food access at a low income	1	0	0	1	0
SP 3D	Food work conditions and food safety in retail	1	0	0	0	0
GP 4	Sustainable food systems					
SP 4A	Support regionalizing food chain	1	1	1	1	1

SP 4B	Limit energy use, encourage renewability	1	1	0	0	1
SP 4C	Assess/mitigate ecological impact of food systems	1	1	1	0	1
GP 5	Social equity in food system					
SP 5A	Improve spatial food access for low income people	1	1	1	1	1
SP 5B	CBO partners for low income food sector employment	1	0	1	0	0
SP 5C	Grow on public land; employment and food donations	1	1	1	0	1
SP 5D	Combat rural poverty	0	0	0	0	1
GP 6	Racial/ethnic equity in food system					
SP 6A	Preserve/strengthen native + ethnic food cultures	1	0	0	0	0
SP 6B	Better regional ecology for traditional food cultures	1	0	0	0	0

SP 6C	Planning integrates traditional and ethnic food cultures	0	0	0	0	0
GP 7	Sup. FS plan policy, combat barriers					
SP 7A	Policy changes made in farm bill	0	0	0	0	1
SP 7B	Policy changes outside of farm bill	1	0	0	1	1
SP 7C	State policy/programs created for food systems	1	0	0	0	1
SP 7D	State food policy councils created for input	0	1	0	0	1
SP 7E	International policies [not at a city level, n/a]	0	0	0	0	0
Sum all	Out of 26	19	13	12	11	16

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