Jerry Kaufman and food systems planning leadership:  
The APA Policy Guide as a microcosm of innovative collaboration  
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This chapter traces the authors’ collaboration with Professor Jerry Kaufman in the production of the American Planning Association (APA) Community and Regional Food Planning Policy Guide, a culminating event in a journey begun by Kaufman in 1996-97 to urge planners to treat the food system as a legitimate topic for planning attention. It showcases the process by which the Policy Guide was developed with the participation of numerous APA members, as a microcosm of Kaufman’s expansive energies in bridging academic and professional concerns in innovative ways. Along the way, he also helped colleagues such as ourselves from each domain bridge the gap to the other.

Since 2003, when Kaufman gave his keynote address at the Denver APA conference, our joint collaboration took the form of efforts to introduce food system issues into APA’s activities such as the organization’s annual conference and networking through a food planning steering committee (2005, San Francisco), and writing a White Paper on food planning with steering committee members for presentation at the 2006 APA conference in San Antonio. These and other activities climaxed in the development of a Policy Guide and its presentation to various APA constituencies in 2007, at the organization’s annual conference in Philadelphia.

This chapter recounts the sequence of events around this time that wove together our individual journeys in alternative food system movements into food planning initiatives within the APA. The chapter discusses the significance of each of these activities both for advancing the field of food systems planning as well as for the planning profession more broadly, and highlights achievements represented by and following the adoption of the Policy Guide. Finally, it traces Kaufman’s signature leadership contributions in food systems planning in bridging academic and professional concerns and assembling people of diverse backgrounds in the effort. As was the case with ethics and dispute resolution, his leadership in food systems repeats yet again -his nudging of planners to relevant issues that hitherto were invisible to them.

Our Individual Journeys

Prior to the start of our three-way collaboration in 2004, each of the three of us had interests and were involved in food systems in myriad ways. Kaufman was a member of a large committee of University of Wisconsin faculty members led by Dr. Ken Shapiro, now Emeritus at the university, who wrote a grant proposal to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. In 1996, Kaufman agreed to direct the Madison Food System Project (MFSP), one of several initiatives of the successful Kellogg proposal aimed at connecting food and agriculture to an urban constituency. MFSP’s first project was to plan and teach during the spring 1997 semester, the Capstone Seminar on community food systems planning in the graduate MURP program at the University of Wisconsin.
Kaufman recruited one of the authors, Kami Pothukuchi, then a newly-minted Ph.D. and visiting assistant professor at the university, to co-teach the course. Pothukuchi’s graduate studies at the University of Michigan had included a course and projects in global food systems. The capstone seminar was advised by a steering committee of university faculty and community-based leaders who brought expertise on agriculture, community gardens, emergency food and other anti-poverty programs, immigrant assistance, and nutrition. It also featured a seminar panel by four national experts—Rod McRae of the Toronto Food Policy Council; Kate Fitzgerald of the Sustainable Food Center in Austin, TX; Bob Gottlieb of Occidental College and advisor to the student-led LA food assessment, Seeds of Change; and Mark Winne of the Hartford Food System, CT. As Kaufman put it later, “basically, we were three steps ahead of the students, that is, we didn’t know that much about it (the food system).”

Drawing on the collaborative teaching and other research at UW-Madison, Kaufman and Pothukuchi went on to publish two papers that were foundational to the field of food systems planning (Pothukuchi and Kaufman 1999, 2000). In 1997, Kaufman joined the board of the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC), a now-defunct national organization with a mission to advance community food security through policy advocacy, regional organizing, and training and technical assistance. There he continued conversations about how to benefit communities through strategic linkages among food system components and between food and other community systems.

Following these collaborations, Kaufman launched other projects, including a research study on entrepreneurial urban agriculture with Martin Bailkey, then an adjunct instructor at the University. Sponsored by the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, their report, *Farming Inside Cities: Entrepreneurial Agriculture in the United States*, was published in 2004. Kaufman also guest-edited a special issue of the *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, published in 2004, which assembled papers on food systems planning that were presented in previous years’ conferences of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP). Kaufman also went on the lecture circuit, invited by university and community leaders, to lecture on food systems planning, including the fateful keynote at the 2003 APA conference in Denver, discussed below. Kaufman also was invited to serve on the board of Growing Power, a food justice organization founded and led by Will Allen, and soon assumed the role of board president.

In fall 1998, Pothukuchi took a faculty position at Wayne State University, where she developed an engaged scholarship agenda in community food systems. Attentive to the specific food system concerns in the city, she launched a study of planner initiatives to attract supermarkets to underserved inner city neighborhoods (presented at the 2005 APA conference); a youth-led garden in Southwest Detroit; and a food system assessment of several impoverished neighborhoods. With papers in the special issue of the *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (JPER) noted above and also in *Progressive Planning* (winter 2004), she also joined the board of the Community Food Security Coalition in 1999, just as Kaufman was stepping down after his term expired. Working with CFSC staff, she produced the *What’s Cooking in your Food System?* Guidebook for community food assessments and served as a trainer for more than

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1 JK interview, University of Wisconsin Oral History Project, June 3, 2008.
a dozen Community Food Assessment (CFA) workshops around North America. She advised several groups locally and nationally in their applications for USDA’s Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program, on whose review panel she had served for several years around this time. She also made several attempts to help student groups start a garden on Wayne State’s campus, but the attempts were thwarted by the university’s facilities staff, something that would shift in 2008.

In 1999, Pothukuchi proposed a panel on food systems planning for the upcoming APA conference in New York, although it was not included as a conference session. Entitled, “Integrating food system issues in land use, environmental, and community and economic development planning,” the proposal sought to build on the previous year’s panel in Seattle that was led by Kaufman. The 1999 proposal included Pothukuchi, Andy Fisher (executive director of the CFSC) and Bob Gottlieb, then president of the CFSC Board. While this proposal demonstrates that food system planning was being considered by some planners and academicians as early as 1999, it was clearly at the periphery of traditional planning and had not become included as a topic at APA conferences. It was six years later before Pothukuchi returned to present this paper on her supermarket research at an APA conference, this time in 2005, in San Francisco.

Prior to her collaborations with Kaufman, Deanna Glosser was engaged with her primary area of interest—protecting natural resources. Her doctoral degree from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana was focused on environmental planning within the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. Glosser’s emphasis at the time was protecting water resources, including wetlands, and endangered species. She held various positions with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources that led her to working with local governments in adopting sustainable development practices to protect their community’s natural resources. This work also led to Glosser’s involvement with the American Planning Association in the mid-1990s.

Glosser served as the Chair and Past Chair of APA’s Environment, Natural Resources and Energy (ENRE) Division through 2006, as well as vice-chair of the Divisions Council composed of the chairs of all 21 APA Divisions. She also served on APA’s Legislative and Policy Committee, which worked to identify policy issues to create stronger and more just communities. This committee also coordinates the development of APA’s official policy guides that provide the foundation for APA’s legislative initiatives and future programs and research. Glosser gained experience in the policy development process with two policy guides, both times chairing a national committee. In 1998, Glosser led the effort to develop the APA Policy Guide on Endangered Species and Habitat Protection, which was ratified by the APA Board of Directors in 1999. In 2001, she led the effort to revise the APA Policy Guide on Wetlands, which was ratified in 2002. This experience was invaluable in the 2006 effort with food systems planning.

In Glosser’s professional work, the “food system” was understood as the row-crop industrial agriculture that dominated—and continues to dominate—most of the sector in the United States. Industrial agriculture poses a significant threat to the nation’s natural resources with surface and ground water pollution from soil erosion and nutrient runoff, use of toxic chemicals, the degradation and destruction of wildlife habitat, and more. She thus saw the food system as a challenge or even an obstacle to protecting a wide range of natural resources. At this time, there
was little commonly understood distinction between industrial agriculture and local food production.

This perspective of the food system began to change as Glosser became aware of the work of Slow Food International and its chapters, including Slow Food USA. Slow Food is a not-for-profit organization founded in Italy by Carlo Petrini and a group of activists in the 1980s. The group’s initial focus was “to defend regional traditions, good food, gastronomic pleasure and a slow pace of life” – “slow food” versus “fast food”3. However, in recent years, this focus had evolved “to embrace a comprehensive approach to food that recognizes the strong connections between plate, planet, people, politics and culture.” Although Glosser’s view of the food system had broadened, her interest in the topic was more personal than professional.

Nonetheless, she began to see the importance of local food production, and the need to increase the diversity of crops and animals raised for human consumption, including the fact that there are endangered plant and animal species humans rely on for food. It became clear to her that food could be produced in a manner that did not destroy or degrade natural resources. These understandings led to her work to create a chapter, Slow Food Springfield, in 2004, with the aim of introducing the public to the local producers of food and to expand access to healthful food. Involvement in the Slow Food movement as an avocation provided the background that led to the epiphany when she heard Kaufman’s keynote address in 2003. Glosser was struck with the realization that there could be a professional as well as personal connection to the food system.

To cap this section, following Kaufman and Pothukuchi’s initial collaborations on community food systems from 1997 through 2000, each went their separate ways launching other initiatives locally and nationally, albeit under the shared aegis of the CFSC and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning ACSP. APA was not on their mutual radar for food planning advocacy after 1999. While Glosser too was interested and involved in food system issues and had experience with APA policy guides, she did not act to integrate these interests in her governance roles in the organization. All that changed in 2003, when Kaufman made his keynote address at the APA conference in Denver.

The Denver APA Conference: The genesis of the Food Policy Guide collaborations

Keynote speakers at APA national conferences were typically national celebrities who were selected to deliver an entertaining speech. Inviting an academic or even a professional planner to deliver the keynote address was and continues to be less common. The invitation to Kaufman turned out to be a fortuitous departure from the norm.

Glosser was in the audience at Kaufman’s address and remembers being overwhelmed. His address included advice—and even admonitions—to planners about what they could and even should be doing. He questioned planners on why they do not address the food system, and challenged them to do more. If planners address issues related to air, water, and land, then why not food? He also gave examples of what planners could do in order to build stronger communities. Glosser remembers scrambling to find paper to take notes. As his speech ended,

3 Source: https://www.slowfood.com/about-us/our-history/
Glosser was excited and poised to take action — but uncertain about what action to take given her lack of background in food system planning, nor her acquaintance with Kaufman.

Glosser left the 2003 APA conference committed to moving the food planning issue forward within APA. She reached out to Kaufman and found him to be warm and welcoming — and excited to learn that his remarks had left an impression. Both felt strongly that APA and planners — and communities — would benefit from integrating the food system within the planning profession. Kaufman encouraged her to explore possibilities within APA in her governance roles within APA, which she did through the following year. In the spring of 2004, the Divisions Council approved becoming a co-sponsor of the first food system session track at the 2005 APA national conference. The June/July 2004 issue of the ENRE Division Environmental Planning newsletter included the following announcement:

“Planning for the Food System” Special Track
For the first time in the history of APA’s national conferences, a special track of sessions will be devoted entirely to topics pertaining to how planning connects to and can contribute to improving the food system.”

Kaufman and Glosser hoped to solicit sufficient food planning papers to assemble seven to 10 sessions for the food system track. They ultimately offered 13 topics as possible session proposals, including creating healthy cities, the impacts of the food system on the environment and human health, and helping to build stronger local food systems.

At this point they also invited Pothukuchi to join the effort, realizing additional expertise and energy would be required to assemble the special food system track. Little did they know how true this was, as no fewer than 85 individual papers were submitted for consideration! The three of them reviewed the papers and organized them into session proposals for consideration by APA staff. The overwhelming success of the seven resulting sessions in San Francisco assured continuing support of this special track for the 2006 APA conference.

Two other noteworthy outcomes ensued at the 2005 APA conference. One, the first Food System Planning Issues Group met with approximately 40 people attending, including Paul Farmer, then Executive Director of the APA. Farmer was supportive of this new group. Two, Glosser took the issue of developing an APA food system planning Policy Guide to the National APA Legislative and Policy Committee. Because the topic of food system planning was not known within the planning community, this committee suggested that a white paper be prepared first to provide the committee an overview of the topic. The goal was to have the white paper completed for review by this committee in 2006 – along with a request to move forward on the Policy Guide.

With Kaufman and Pothukuchi as lead authors of the White Paper, we enlisted other food planning scholars to participate in developing the white paper, including Branden Born, Ph.D., Andy Fisher, Wendy Mendes, Hubert Morgan, Mark A. Olinger, and Samina Raja, Ph.D.

The Food System Planning White Paper was presented to members of APA’s National Legislative and Policy Committee at the APA 2006 conference in San Antonio. Despite the strong support experienced thus far, speakers responding to the White Paper expressed some
ambivalence. Several spoke in support of the need for planners to engage with food system issues. One person came to the microphone, however, and asked pointedly, “What’s next? Planning for clothing?” Obviously, more work was needed to build support among planners.

APA’s Legislative and Policy Committee, nevertheless, accepted the White Paper and authorized the group to draft a Policy Guide – by December 2006 – for consideration at the 2007 APA conference. Although the timeline was daunting, Pothukuchi’s sabbatical in fall 2006 and winter 2007 offered a significant resource for the work. With input from numerous planners from APA chapters nationwide, and regular conference calls between Kaufman, Glosser, and Pothukuchi, the draft *Community and Regional Food Planning Policy Guide* was completed on schedule. The presentation\(^4\) to several hundred delegates at the 2007 conference in Philadelphia drew support, some quibbles and several suggestions. After minor edits to accommodate delegate input, the Legislative and Policy Committee and then the full APA governing board adopted the Policy Guide, thereby signaling food system planning as a legitimate topic for planners’ attention. This was a momentous occasion indeed, a scant four years after Kaufman’s keynote.

The next steps would be to educate and inform the planning community of this new Policy Guide to broaden its support. Kaufman and Glosser were invited to speak at APA state chapter conferences in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, and Glosser was also invited to speak at the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy’s 9\(^{th}\) annual planning conference in November 2007, where she spoke about *Local Food Systems & Agricultural Viability*. Pothukuchi, too, was invited to speak on the Policy Guide and food systems planning more generally at national and international venues, including those to planners in Australia (2007, July), Cardiff, Wales (2008), Minneapolis (2007), and Traverse City and Kalamazoo, Michigan (2007 and 2008 respectively).

In addition, Kaufman, Pothukuchi, and Glosser wrote articles on food system planning, including:

1. Aug 7, 2007 PAS Memo, *Community and Regional Food Planning*  
   By Kami Pothukuchi, Deanna Glosser, and Jerome Kaufman

   By Jerome Kaufman, Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Deanna Glosser, Ph.D., President, Environmental Planning Solutions, Inc

   By Deanna Glosser, Ph.D.


\(^4\) The presentation was based on the final draft as submitted to the APA: Kaufman, Pothukuchi, and Glosser, *Community and Regional Food Planning: A Policy Guide of the American Planning Association*, December 14, 2006. The draft received many comments from planners prior to and at the Delegates Assembly and from APA committees. A final, amended policy was submitted by Kaufman, Pothukuchi, and Glosser on June 20, 2007.
Several remarkable events followed the APA’s adoption of its Food Policy Guide. The American Public Health Association followed suit with its own policy guide for food systems (November 2007). In 2009 (August-September), a food-themed issue of Planning Magazine was published. Policy Advisory Service (PAS) Reports on food systems were launched—Raja et al 2008, Planners’ Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning; and Hodgson et al 2011, Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy Sustainable Places. In the years that followed, APA adopted policy guides on other topics with linkages to food systems such as climate change (2011), water (2016), and healthy communities (2017). The food planning steering committee was also formalized within the organization as the Food Interest Group, or FIG. Finally, Pothukuchi was enlisted to help produce the Michigan Association of Planning food policy guide, which was both inspired and informed by the APA policy guide process.

Themes from the Food Policy Guide Collaboration

Kaufman considered the APA Food Policy Guide as a crowning achievement within food systems planning, something of which he was proud and that, by his own admission, impacted his life in small and big ways. In an oral history interview conducted in 2008 by the University of Wisconsin, he noted, “Food has been the most transformative experience, in terms of my own being, in that it’s transformed the way I think about the world, as opposed to ethics or dispute resolution. … For example, when I got into ethics, I did not become more ethical than I was before I began. I just knew more about ethics. But with food, we compost, we belong to CSA farms, we eat healthy. So, it’s had an impact on my life, unlike some of the other explorations that I have been involved in, in my academic career.” In other words, he saw the food planning work as transformational on many levels—from the personal to the community and beyond.

The achievement described here could not have been realized by any single person in our triumvirate. Each of us played an equally important role at the right time and place. Prior to his keynote, Kaufman’s association with APA was to coordinate a session at the 1998 New York conference. By himself, he was not in a position to act on his admonitions in his keynote address. Glosser’s environmental commitments and work with Slow Food placed her in a position of readiness to act within APA where she played important committee roles. She was also able to use the organization’s structures to obtain input from planners from APA chapters and divisions around the country, and serve as a liaison to the organization’s committees. Finally, Pothukuchi’s impending sabbatical as a faculty fellow at Michigan State University when she was invited to participate, enabled the dedication of attention, in a compressed timeframe, to the writing and editing.

Still, Kaufman’s leadership role is nevertheless distinctive. He brought a sensitivity to planning practice given the association early in his career with the American Institute of Planners. His commitment to practice thereby helped transcend a view of community food systems purely as an academic topic or purely as a topic for community-level volunteering and advocacy. He wanted to make sure that relevance of the topic to municipal/county level planners was underscored. Pothukuchi reports that after numerous talks, community food activists would

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recount bringing a copy of the APA Food Policy Guide to their local planning agency to start a conversation or explore a partnership with planners there. It was a tool to urge planners’ involvement in their own community’s food system. The national work with ACSP and CFSC (with Kaufman and Pothukuchi and others working jointly here as well) helped broadcast the policy guide more than would have been possible by working within just the APA.

Kaufman also brought significant experience to translating issues at the periphery of or entirely outside mainstream planning into topics of significant relevance for planners. Notably, this was the case previously with ethics and alternative dispute resolution. Thus, his experience with seeing issues on the horizon as having planning significance and moving forward with them served us well with the APA food planning process. It also did not hurt that, by the time we started working together, food was already gaining visibility and momentum in various circles with linkages to planning.

Finally, the relationship each of us developed with Kaufman in this process, and with each other, helped us move beyond our everyday boundaries and comfort zones. Pothukuchi became involved in the urban agriculture work group in Detroit, which helped develop the related ordinance. Glosser went on to adjunct-teach an environmental planning course in which she integrated food system issues more systematically. She indicates that the food system components invariably attracted significant attention from students.

To conclude, the collaborations that constituted the Community and Regional Food Planning Policy Guide process drew on Kaufman’s experience with planning practice and his affinity for linking planning academics to practice, his far-ranging vision in noticing planning relevance for topics at the margins of the field, as well his ability to assemble people of diverse backgrounds, interests, and connections, to foster innovations for the profession.

References
We can assemble a list of references of material cited in the paper formatted as needed but will wait to receive further direction.