

A photograph of a community garden with raised beds and people walking through it. The garden features several raised beds, some with blue and white borders, containing various plants and flowers. A group of people, including children and adults, are walking through the garden, some looking at the plants. The background is filled with lush green trees.

# *Investigating the opportunities for creative cooperation around place-based food systems: Reflections over the past decade*







# The Role of Food & Agriculture in the Design & Planning of Buildings & Cities

May 2-4, 2008

Ryerson University Department of Architectural Science  
Faculty of Engineering, Architecture and Science 325 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M5B 2K3

eligible for OAA Core Learning Hours credit

This symposium will investigate the opportunities for creative cooperation between shapers of the built environment and actors in urban food and agriculture systems.





# Carrot City Designing for Urban Agriculture

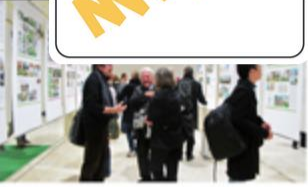
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Design practitioner  
Team in design firm  
Researcher  
University professor  
Urban farm coordinator

# Categories of survey questions

- 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food
- 2) “Creative cooperation” around the design and planning for urban agriculture and food
- 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food
- 4) The future of the design and planning for urban agriculture and food



1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**From your perspective, how has the “role of food and agriculture in the design and planning of buildings and cities” (as the title of the 2008 symposium stated) **evolved** during the past decade?**



Cidades Sem Fome, Sao Paulo

1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What trends related to urban agriculture and food were not yet on the horizon a decade ago, and how have these trends been relevant to design and planning?**



Daniels building, Regent Park, Toronto



- 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What trends related to urban agriculture and food were not yet on the horizon a decade ago, and how have these trends been relevant to design and planning?**

### **Planning & policy trends**

Integration into urban master plans.

Allotment & community garden policy

Recognition by government, resulting in legislative changes

### **Economic trends**

Highly capitalized, high-tech food production on urban sites (esp. hydroponics & aquaponics)

Development of licensed, for-rent incubator kitchen facilities



- 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What trends related to urban agriculture and food were not yet on the horizon a decade ago, and how have these trends been relevant to design and planning?**

### **Socio-cultural trends**

Preservation and maintenance of historic farmsteads

Community gardens as model to experiment different combinations of activities

Rediscovery of growing things together, desire to connect

Renewed interest in farming as a career

Interest in resiliency and healthy living

Community as leaders of projects (rather than experts imposing their vision)

Social and equity issues entering the conversation

- 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What **trends** related to urban agriculture and food were not yet on the horizon a decade ago, and how have these trends been relevant to design and planning?**

### **Cultivation trends**

Garden sharing

Embedding food-growing spaces in new developments

Rooftop farming

Urban beekeeping/Pollination

Permanent and temporary raised beds

Labels like “spray-free” rather than organic – practices rather than certification



- 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What trends related to urban agriculture and food were not yet on the horizon a decade ago, and how have these trends been relevant to design and planning?**

### **Design trends**

Building-integrated agriculture

Vertical agriculture

Design to mitigate negative externalities, ex: electricity usage

### **System trends**

Urban food systems/city-region food systems

Urban-rural nexus

Interest in local/community/urban grown food

Movement from urban ag to food planning

Policy considering the entire food chain

Attention to different scales (urban region, neighborhood...)

- 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

What **opportunities** for designing and planning for urban agriculture and food are available now which were not available a decade ago?



MILANO 2015

Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life



## 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

### **What **opportunities** for designing and planning for urban agriculture and food are available now which were not available a decade ago?**

- Increased public awareness and appreciation of local/urban food
- More resources available (reports, books, policies...)
- Funding for research and for implementing projects
- Teaching a new generation of food-literate planning/design students
- Key events (e.g. EXPO 2015, Milan Urban Food Policy Pact)
- Increased interest from some real estate developers and building owners
- Urban development projects that embed food production spaces
- Use of remnant and under-utilized parcels of land for urban ag
- Increased potential for long-term use of land for growing food

# 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

## **What **opportunities** for designing and planning for urban agriculture and food are available now which were not available a decade ago?**

- Changes in legislation, regulations, etc. giving detailed requirements and incentives for including food and ag in design
- Diversification of farming systems on rooftop and other spaces
- Establishment of multi-stakeholder food system platforms
- Shift from initial emphasis on design for urban ag alone to all the food networks in cities
- Private and public clients paying/employing planners, designers and others for food and ag work
- Growing acceptance of climate science making urban ag and food strategies more accepted



1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What particular challenges have emerged in the past decade relative to the design and planning for urban agriculture and food?**



University of Toronto rooftop garden

# 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What particular challenges have emerged in the past decade relative to the design and planning for urban agriculture and food?**

## **Basic challenges**

- Same old, same old: money and time
- Consistently talking the talk, but have not come very far in walking the walk

## **Private sector challenges**

- ‘Green-washing’ undermining the original aims/goals of UA protagonists
- Branding ploys for ‘lifestyle’ real estate development that don’t advance urban ag & food in a more inclusive, holistic way
- Increasingly strong real estate markets make it challenging for agriculture to compete for space.



# 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What particular challenges have emerged in the past decade relative to the design and planning for urban agriculture and food?**

## **Public sector challenges**

- Current “UA hype” fading without permanent change in design and planning legislation/strategies
- Despite huge strides in policy and design, turning policy into practice on the ground still very difficult
- Uneven spread of urban ag policies, zoning by-law changes and code revisions spread in cities, with erratic and difficult implementation
- Glacial pace of change in policies and procedures, and in getting institutions and silos to work together
- Land access and support provision through municipal programs
- Federal/national policy far from considering seriously urban agriculture
- No control by cities over their food system

## 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What particular challenges have emerged in the past decade relative to the design and planning for urban agriculture and food?**

### **Practice challenges**

- Finding the means of putting discourses and proposals into practice still challenging.
- Regulatory, logistical and technical obstacles still preventing rooftop farming from becoming viable for farmers
- Concerns about food safety and soil contamination requirements, regulations, fear of potential liability discourage projects

### **Capacity challenges**

- Greater risk in ad hoc arrangements for collaborative community gardens than where clear institutional ownership and structure
- A garden, by itself, can rarely catalyze revitalization of a larger community or significant economic or physical improvement in it

# 1) Changes in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What particular **challenges** have emerged in the past decade relative to the design and planning for urban agriculture and food?**

## **Measurement and communication challenges**

- Higher interest from policy makers leading to need for evidence of value and benefits of urban ag quantitatively and qualitatively
- Scholars and advocates not so effective at making empirical case for multiple values of urban ag

## **Consultation and dissemination challenges**

- Failure to balance interests of developers, entrepreneurs and planners with practicalities of growing food and needs of those who will eat it
- Inadequate consultation of latter in a meaningful way
- Not enough incentives and programs to expand interest of developers and property owners to reach industry as a whole



## 2) “Creative cooperation” around the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

What **“creative cooperation”** between shapers of the built environment and actors in urban food and agriculture systems can you identify?



Milky Way Garden Design Launch, Toronto

## 2) “Creative cooperation” around the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What “creative cooperation” between shapers of the built environment and actors in urban food and agriculture systems can you identify?**

- Joint research projects with academic/theoretical and/or implementation aims
- Participatory/co-design projects to establish local urban ag and/or other food-focused projects
- Cooperation between professions to make historic farmsteads in urban areas alive and rentable
- Designers collaborating with leaders of creative urban food initiatives
- Projects that support the urban-rural nexus
- Collaboration between various actors where urban agriculture is only one element of large projects
- Some strong cooperative networks

## 2) “Creative cooperation” around the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

### **What “creative cooperation” between shapers of the built environment and actors in urban food and agriculture systems can you identify?**

- NGO as shaper of urban ag governance changes through collaboration with public sector actors
- Forum for urban farmers helping them find their voice and linking them to the public sector and the media
- Small entrepreneurs acting as drivers of change through pop-up public events or new kinds of organizations/activities
- Collaboration between some developers and urban ag experts advising new residents
- University food-growing projects as sites for collaboration
- Agricultural professionals seeking out inter-sectoral collaboration with urban planners, environmental and public health professionals, mainstreaming food in city planning



### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

**What professions have you seen emerge as key to urban agriculture and food systems?**



Eastdale Collegiate school, Toronto

### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

**What professions have you seen emerge as key to urban agriculture and food systems?**

**food-systems planners**

**urban farmers/farm managers**

**professional green roof certification**

**venture capitalist urban farming**

**spin farmers**

**urban agriculture/farming consultant**

**greenhouse consultant**

**Food justice advocates**

**Educators teaching growing**

### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

**Food design is also seen as a new specialization, perhaps within landscape architecture.**



Lafayette Greens, Detroit, Michigan



### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

**Food design is also seen as a new specialization, perhaps within landscape architecture.**



Grant Park “Art on the Farm,” Chicago, US

### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems



rooftop growing experiments, AgroParisTech, Paris



### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

#### New technical expertise



Lufa Farms, Montreal



### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

## Venture capitalists focusing on urban farming



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Our Story

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An aerial illustration of a farm in an urban setting. The farm features rows of young trees, a large log, and several houses. A person in a green coat is seen from behind, looking out over the farm. The text "Our Story" is overlaid in the center.

# Our Story

## Hantz Farms Detroit

### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

## What professions have you seen emerge as key to urban agriculture and food systems?

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## GARDEN JUSTICE LEGAL INITIATIVE (GJLI)

Community gardening has substantial and immediate benefits for Philadelphia, where a quarter of all people live in poverty, more than 40,000 plots of land lie vacant, and over 300,000 people face hunger and malnutrition.

Community gardens provide reliable sources of healthy food and income, and they help communities revitalize and reclaim their neighborhoods. But even established sites of urban food production face legal difficulties that can make them difficult to sustain – not the least of which is the difficulty faced by community groups and individuals seeking to grow food on public and

### STAFF ON THE CASE



**Ebony Griffin**

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**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

**What key challenges have confronted the practice of built-environment professionals in shaping urban agriculture and food systems?**

**Failures in communication between designers and their clients: from growers to community groups to social entrepreneurs, have led to failed urban agriculture projects.**



### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

**What key challenges have confronted the practice of built-environment professionals in shaping urban agriculture and food systems?**

**Demonstrate value... a challenge when food from large-scale production can be cheaper.**





### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

**What key challenges have confronted the practice of built-environment professionals in shaping urban agriculture and food systems?**

**“Many of the professionals around [the] built environment come from architectural studies and they do not know anything about agriculture.”**



### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

**Are there particular issues or projects for built-environment professionals that are now quite common to work on (if any) in relation to urban agriculture and food systems?**

**596 acres**



### 3) The built-environment professions and urban agriculture and food systems

**Are there particular issues or projects for built-environment professionals that are now quite common to work on (if any) in relation to urban agriculture and food systems?**



*corn muffins for sale!*



*a volunteer baking the muffins at the oven*

## Regent Park Bake Oven



#### 4) The future of the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

What significant changes do you *expect* to see happen in the next decade in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food?

“potential crisis in land availability”





#### 4) The future of the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

**What significant changes do you *hope* to see happen in the next decade in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food?**

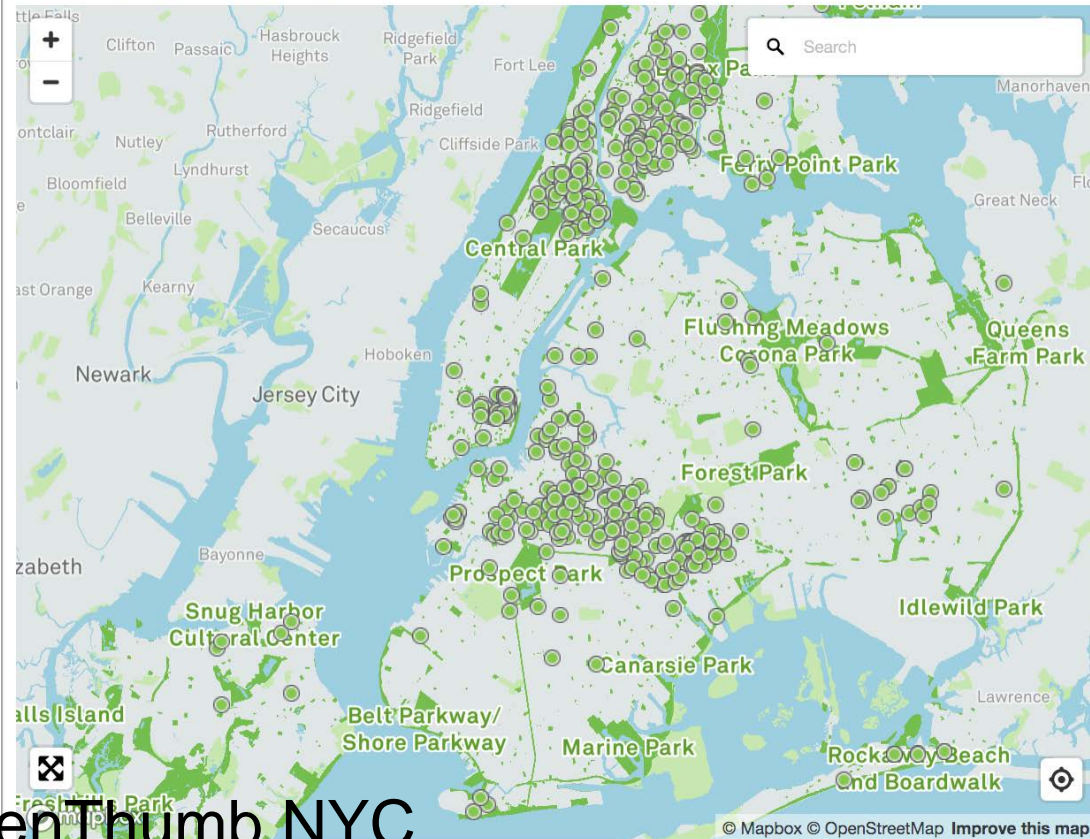


Ryerson (rooftop) Urban Farm

#### 4) The future of the design and planning for urban agriculture and food

What significant changes do you *hope* to see happen in the next decade in the design and planning for urban agriculture and food?

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GreenThumb NYC

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**Thank you for your  
attention**