

Appendix 4

Group A

Inspirational practice or “seed”

Group A built a future world in which greater support for local business and products emerging during the COVID-19 pandemic becomes mainstream. This inspirational practice drew from participants’ experiences with local business, food independence, and local agricultural products and practices (e.g., ‘three sisters’ of corn, squash, and beans), in addition to their desire for greater connection to place and community.

Future world

In this future world, people purchase everything at small businesses and only go to larger businesses when they cannot find a product locally. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, a cultural shift made sourcing locally a badge of honour. KW pursued urban agriculture at scale and became an agricultural hub for everyone within a day’s drive. Solutions from the past were also brought to scale, like a community fridge where people could donate extra perishable goods.

In the early 2020s, the COVID-19 pandemic recharged people’s desire to get out into the community. Networks of businesses helped move forward ideas of sustainability from an ethos of care rather than competitiveness. The community also committed to making it easy and convenient to source from small businesses. For example, small businesses could not offer everything in one place in the early 2020s. In response, an app was invented that people could use to plug in whatever they needed at the store, including everything from toilet paper to lettuce. A new service automatically sourced the desired products from local providers, which were delivered to people via solar powered drones. Additionally, local food box initiatives expanded to include products like toys, and local couriers began using electric cars or bikes for deliveries.

The community yearned for social gatherings like the Kitchener Market. In response, people started pre-ordering their groceries from multiple local vendors and picked them up at a community hub held one day per week. The hubs were accessible, so vehicles were mostly unneeded. This model broke down barriers between different social groups, bringing issues of privilege and inequality to the forefront.

As gas prices and technologies changed, local food became the only affordable option. While the region pursued aggressive climate mitigation, some degree of climate change occurred. KW began to experience more hot days and fewer freezing days, leading to a different relationship with food. For example, people used seasonally curated food menus and food boxes, community hubs became more popular, and people tried to reduce food and packaging waste.

Science fiction story

Lana is a young Haudenosaunee land defender and community leader. She has a personal mission to dedicate her work and life to stewarding the land. She feels a deep connection to the people who come after her. Everyone is her family. She is level-headed and proactively solves

problems. Her greatest fears are the collapse of agriculture, and of community members being left behind.

Lana helped bring small businesses and local products into the mainstream in the KW region. She led a shift to make land-use planning more inclusive and democratic, generating more green space and making the city less car-centric. To avoid gentrification and displacement of vulnerable people, she worked with regional leaders to even out home values and organized neighbourhoods to bring people with diverse income levels and backgrounds together. She also cultivated a platform for cooperative discussion about these unfolding changes.

Lana also fostered a weekly gathering, which became a community event for people to share a community meal or shop at a community market or hub. Everyone helped serve everyone. The event was the result of a social media campaign and became a forum for discussing environmental issues. Some people were not interested in participating in the community event because of the long tail of the pandemic; they were used to living virtually and fearful of interacting socially. Lana addressed this challenge by offering an option to tune into community events and local food shopping virtually. She also made local food available in a community fridge, so people could grab it anonymously and on their own time. Lana tried to be as inclusive as possible in her decision making by including people who were representative of the whole community.

A story in the time of Lana

"I hope you enjoy!" Said Lana, "Its my mom's old recipe." She heaped a portion of lasagna onto the plate of Paul Jessicasson. He said thanks, and that he can't wait for next week's community meal.

She looked out at the pathway underfoot, a slim line of tarmac, that was the last remnant of Ottawa Parkway, a once four lane highway that passed through this part of KW. She sighed as she saw the large community gathering, it burst the seams of the city-permitted area, but people were welcoming neighbors onto their porches, and into their gardens, so it turned out there was plenty of space.

A faint, high pitch whine approached from overhead, and Lana waved as the fridgebot descended to the kitchen to pickup and deliver today's meal. There were still quite a few folks that preferred to stay at home. And that's just fine — once size can't fit all.

As the next person in line approached her station, Lana smiled in the knowledge that this community gathering was happening in different places, and in different ways all over the city. She couldn't believe that it had already been eight years already, and the city was reclaiming land and was almost reaching its central targets. The Green Space Back Act had called for social equity and intact ecosystems as the central criteria for land-use planning and zoning, and against many odds it was happening.

As she looked down the community bikeway, Lana noted that a fair few of the houses that had, in weeks past, been resistant to these gatherings had actually opened their blinds today. Small progress — but progress nonetheless.

She heard the familiar laugh of a good friend, turned back to the queue, and went to serve another friend some lunch.

- Breakout group facilitator

Group B

Inspirational practice

Group B built a future world in which greater attention to locally grown food emerging during the COVID-19 pandemic becomes mainstream, using a local food forest as an example of an initiative that could be scaled. A food forest is a way of planting edible plants that mimics natural ecosystems. This inspirational practice drew from participants' experiences growing their own vegetables and herbs and noticing others doing the same, partly driven by the need to stay home to avoid contracting COVID-19. The group also chose this initiative because it is connected to issues of social injustice. For example, participants discussed how farms in southern Ontario may exploit migrant labourers as they try to compete in global markets.

Future world

In this future world, food forests are mainstream. The food forests began as community-based, volunteer-driven initiatives in the 2010s and 2020s, including 8 food forests started by the faith community in KW. Eventually, these initiatives scaled until everyone was expected to help maintain the forests and in turn enjoy the food they produce. The food forests created opportunities for cooperative learning and social inclusion as the community came together to harvest food, eat meals together, and store food for the winter months. As knowledge of sustainability broadened, the food forests began to challenge how people thought about conventional farming. New questions about agriculture brought together Indigenous and settler communities to share intergenerational and traditional food practices. The food forests seemed to satisfy a hunger many people felt to understand and grow their own food, and the initiatives scaled. As the food forests scaled, the community became concerned that products would become more expensive and thus less accessible to lower income people, like the community-support agriculture boxes of the 2010s and 2020s. In response, the community set up a subsidy program.

Science fiction story

The Young Urban Farmers of Kitchener-Waterloo (YUFKW) is a group of five young people guided by a charter of principles related to food sovereignty, food security, and relationships. The group reflects the diversity of the KW community, representing various backgrounds and interests including farmers and policymakers. YUFKW were a driving force behind the food forests initiative.

To scale their initiative, YUFKW needed to find land to convert into food forests. Their priority was land return, because the KW region is on the Haldimand Tract, which was promised to the Six Nations of the Grand River in perpetuity. After a tipping point in Canadian federal policy, an independent Council for Reconciliation was established as per the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations, which shifted the balance of power in the relationship between Indigenous and Canadian governance. Food sovereignty and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) became the law of the land. At this time, the father of a member of YUFKW – who was also a local farmer – worked alongside YUFKW to return large portions of land back to Indigenous communities. In addition, several churches that had closed over the course of the early 21st century returned land to Indigenous

communities or sold it to Indigenous developers. Because much of this land was fertile, the Indigenous communities had the option to convert the land to food forests. In the process, zoning policies changed to allow Indigenous architecture and green space to flourish.

YUFKW faced major setbacks in scaling the food forests initiative, including neighborhood opposition. At one point some neighborhoods litigated against them, but because of the new importance of the Council for Reconciliation and UNDRIP principles in Canadian governance, YUFKW won their day in court and set a precedent for all young farmer groups across the country.