

A 'One Planet' Food System for Victoria

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Pathways to a Sustainable Food System

- Introducing the problem: Victoria's Foodshed
- Steps in the right direction. Four short stories:
 - Chris Hildreth and Topsoil
 - Chris Adams and urban homesteading (the "zero-mile diet")
 - Local ginger: weighing our impacts
 - Pasture-raised chicken: towards an ethics of sustainable meat consumption
- Some recommendations (and challenges) for a 'One Planet' food system





Large-scale

Certified Organic

Sustainable

Non-Certified “organic”



medium-SCALE

Conventional

industrial

Local

GMO

Imported / Non-Local

Small-scale

Large-scale

Certified Organic

Sustainable

Non-Certified “organic”



Conventional

industrial

medium-SCALE

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GMO

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Small-scale

Thinking Clearly About Food



- We commonly mix up three different aspects of food production:
 - 1) The **way** in which food is produced; the growing practices, the methods, the inputs involved; organic or conventional.
 - 2) The geographical **location** of food production; how far did it travel; what are the transport emissions; is it adapted to the area in which its grown?
 - 3) The **scale** at which it is produced; small, medium, or large-scale farms. Who are we supporting and what are the associated impacts?

All three aspects are involved in creating a sustainable food system.

Local Is Not Enough

- Local food is hugely important
 - Creates 'food security' and accessibility. Many Canadians still use food banks and access to food is a huge problem.
 - Reduces or eliminates transportation emissions
 - Keeps money local: Spending a dollar at a local business means about 45% of it returns to the local community, compared to 15% when a purchase is made at a business that is not locally owned. The same holds true for farms, which are businesses after all.
- But we also need a greater emphasis on *how* food is grown and much greater support for the organic sector
 - Although organics industry grows by 11-20% per year, only 3% of BC's farms are organic; 1% of cropland globally.
 - The organic sector is valued at over \$4 billion, but is still niche
 - There are many social and ecological benefits to organic production (biodiversity, fertility, carbon sequestration, nutrition, health and wellbeing concerns, less water consumption).





Topsoil at Dockside Green



- **Story 1:** Chris Hildreth and **Topsoil**. Chris has helped change bylaws for growing food in city and has developed an innovative business that produces naturally grown food for three restaurants (Spinnakers, Fiamo, and Canoe Club). Plant starts are grown in Saanich, finished at the 'farm' at Dockside Green, and then pedaled across the water.



Chris Adams: Urban Homesteading

- **Story 2:** The “zero-mile” diet. Getting livestock back into the city. Producing as much of your own food as possible.

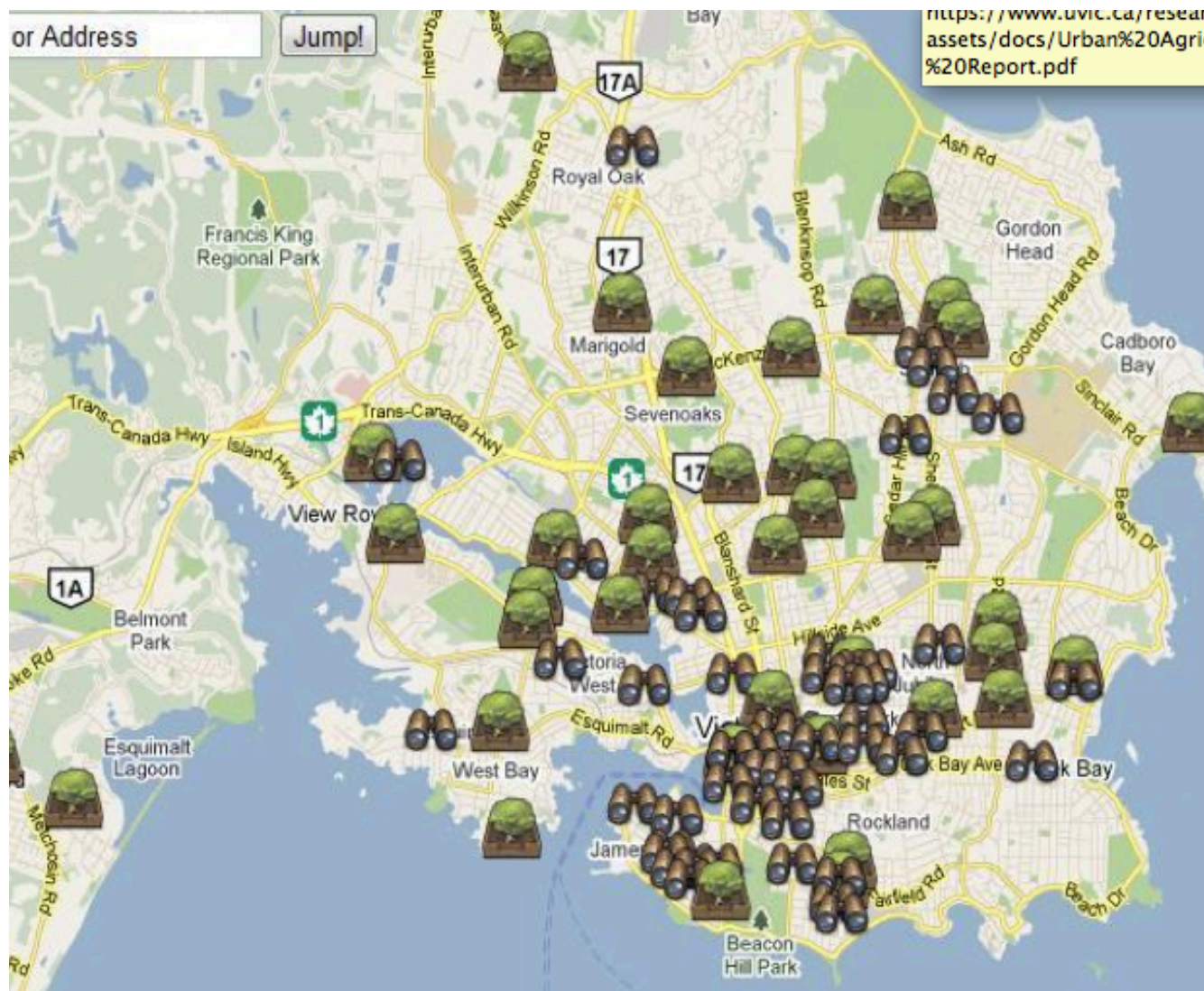




Urban Food Production in James Bay

- The Adams family, in James Bay, gardens a small lot, but produces all of its own eggs, nearly all of its annual vegetable needs, and raises chickens, quails, ducks, and rabbits for eggs and meat. Chris is a beekeeper, too, and active wildcrafter and fermenter.
- Chris and his family grow potatoes, carrots, garlic, kale, kiwis, onions, salad greens, apples, and much more
- He now gardens in other, area backyards

Garden in Someone Else's Backyard



Groups active in gardening in area backyards, or coordinating such efforts, include City Harvest and LifeCycles (via its Urban Agriculture Hub).



Local Ginger at SunTrio Farm, Saanich

- **Story 3:** SunTrio is (to my knowledge) the only farm growing it locally.
- Growing crops in greenhouses requires energy, but allows us to grow tropical foods locally, thereby reducing transportation emissions and increasing self-sufficiency.
- Ginger is a rhizome from SE Asia, today grown in Asia and also in Peru.
- How do we balance our impacts and meet our demand for foods unadapted to our climate?



Terra Nossa Farm in Mill Bay

Story 4:
Raising
livestock
more
sustainably

- Pasture-raised hens at Terra Nossa Farm in Mill Bay. This system increases soil fertility, greatly reduces off-farm feed needs, and treats animals humanely. Animals are immensely valuable in organic agriculture. The problem is not the eating of meat; it's how much we eat and how it's raised.

How can Greater Victoria move toward a 'One Planet' Food System?

- Educate young farmers to farm *and* run a business
- Revive the ALR, protect land, and provide access to land for young farmers
- Encourage the growing of more staples
- Continue to support farmers markets, CSAs, CSFs, box programs, and farm-stand sales
- Support agroecological values; the Ministry of Agriculture is too focused on profits
- The CRD and the Province should commit to concrete targets for local food production, as the Province of Ontario has done, and to support organics. (The City and the CRD are working on these issues, and also attempting to reduce food waste.)



Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable

Our Vision:

- A region where local, sustainable and healthy food is celebrated, abundant and central to the cultures, health and well-being of residents



Values:

- Health, Ecological, Equitable, Economically Viable, System View



Good Food 2025

