The Implications of Good Food: Urban Entrepreneurialism, Creative Class Development and the Creation of an Urban Amenity in Columbus, Ohio

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Mollie-Marie Workman, B.A., B.A.
Graduate Program in Geography

The Ohio State University
2011

Thesis Committee:
Becky Mansfield, Advisor
Edward Malecki
Mary Thomas
Copyright by

Mollie-Marie Workman

2011
Abstract

Alternative food – a wide-ranging term, which can include anything not considered a part of the conventional food system – in the United States has been gaining momentum in both mainstream media and academic literature. Until recently academic literature has viewed the alternative food movement as a social panacea that could heal both individual bodies and whole communities. My work is in response to the current call in food literature to take a more critical look at alternative food and the need to be explicit about the definitions and the ethics that are attached to alternative food. This work ties together David Harvey's urban entrepreneurialism theory, the growth of Richard Florida's creative class theories and current alternative food discourses as a framework to understand the City of Columbus, Ohio's recent involvement in the promotion of alternative food. It examines how the ideologies of neoliberalism, urban entrepreneurialism, and alternative food work with each other, revealing insights into how these ideologies have become reified through their interaction. This project used a mixed methods approach in order to generate a variety of data to explore this topic. I conducted this research using archival, textual analysis, observation and interview methods for data generation.

I argue that the ideas espoused by the alternative food movement have been incorporated into creative class-centered development tactics and marketing ideas for the City of Columbus, resulting in policies that appear to be highly supportive of the goals of
the alternative food movement and the image of a sustainable city and yet do not actually address the problems of food access in many neighborhoods. While these initiatives and policies are promoted as increasing food access for underserved populations, they effectively turn food into an amenity specifically targeted towards creative class residents. Participation in the alternative food movement is used as a tool to aid in the image building of Columbus for the competition for business development and retention and as such, alternative food has been reproduced as a cultural amenity for the city. Food, in particular access to fresh, local, 'good' food, has become an economical and convenient way for Columbus to engage in creative development strategies and to portray itself as a cutting-edge, green, socially just city.
Acknowledgments

I would like to first thank my advisor Dr. Becky Mansfield for her support and guidance throughout this process. I would also like to thank the additional members of my graduate committee, Drs. Ed Malecki and Mary Thomas for their insight and advice on this project. I would also like to thank Dr. John Sheridan for his understanding and his words of wisdom regarding graduate school.

My graduate tenure at The Ohio State University would not have been possible without the support of my parents, who listened, provided meals and most importantly encouraged me to keep pursuing my educational aspirations. I’d also like to thank Chris Worth for his daily support throughout graduate school, his help in maintaining sanity and his encouragement to pursue graduate school. I could not have done this without the help and support of all of my friends who provided constant words of encouragement and understanding. Finally I want to thank Christine Bitzel, Jenny Wray and Emily Butler for their friendly support and encouragement throughout this process and the many, many cups of coffee.
Vita

1996.................................................................Columbus Alternative High School

2001.........................................................B.A. International Studies, The Ohio State University

2001...............................................................B.A. Theatre, The Ohio State University

Fields of Study

Major Field: Geography
# Table of Contents

Abstract................................................................................................................................................. ii

Acknowledgments..................................................................................................................................... iv

Vita................................................................................................................................................................. v

List of Tables.................................................................................................................................................. vii

Chapter 1: Introduction, Methods and Framework.................................................................................. 1
  Methodology................................................................................................................................................. 9
  Framework .................................................................................................................................................. 13

Chapter 2: Urban Entrepreneurialism and Creative Class Development .............................................. 30
  The City of Columbus, Urban Entrepreneurialism and city-to-city competition......................... 31
  How do we compete? Columbus's turn to creative class development strategies:.................. 37
  Keeping the Young Professionals ......................................................................................................... 37
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................................................. 51

Chapter 3: Columbus and Alternative Food Movements........................................................................ 53
  Get Green Columbus and the rise of alternative food as a sustainability measure................. 54
  Local, good food as the answer to Public Health.............................................................................. 64
  Community gardens and Columbus................................................................................................. 77
  Conclusion .................................................................................................................................................. 87

Chapter 4: Conclusion............................................................................................................................. 90

References.................................................................................................................................................... 97
List of Tables

Table 1: Suggested Strategies to Increase Food Access.....................................................68
Chapter 1: Introduction, Methods and Framework

Introduction

Alternative food – a wide-ranging term, which can include anything not considered a part of the conventional food system – in the United States has been gaining momentum in both mainstream media and academic literature. From the books of activist Michael Pollan to Michelle Obama's White House garden, to television shows such as “Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution”, which highlights concerns regarding lunches served in the nation's public schools, discussions about the 'right' way to eat have taken over America. These ideas have promoted alternative food as the answer to America’s food crisis; as a solution to obesity, diabetes, and the environmental harms of conventional food; and as a way to eliminate food deserts. The physical trappings of this movement are evidenced by community gardens and farmers markets appearing in cities across America. These, along with the growth of organic food, local food, and the slow food movement, represent a definitive shift in how the United States discusses and views food. These alternative food movements have presented the idea that providing America with the right kind of ‘good’ food will result in a healthier, more socially just country.

The motivations and definitions of these new food movements are unclear, and are disputed by activists, practitioners and academics. While academic literature customarily refers to a single, unified ‘alternative food movement’, this term more accurately denotes a number of smaller movements, linked together through their
promotion of alternative food, or food outside of the conventional food system. It is important to note that this term, alternative food movement, represents a set of ideas that “are particularly diverse, involving many types of outlets and strategies, the dynamics of which are poorly understood” (Dupuis, 2009, p. 17). This lack of understanding has led to a movement whose worth is evaluated on its mere existence instead of on its successes and failures. These alternative food movements have been remarkably successful in creating and promoting a whole discourse around food that uses certain key words such as 'good food,' 'healthy food,' 'fresh food,' and 'artisan food' to promote the 'goodness' of alternative food. Attached to these terms are sets of various ethical motivations that make participation in the movement appear to be crucial for the health of our individual bodies and the sustainability of our communities. I will use this term 'alternative food movement' to refer to these many different outlets, strategies and ethical motivations that promote a type of food (alternative) as separate from and better than the food produced by the conventional food system. Further, as the alternative food movement has grown, it has particular salience in an urban context, and many US cities have adopted it as the 'correct' way to talk about food, health and food access. This thesis examines the outcome of one city's adoption of the alternative food movement's language and ethics. In the City of Columbus, Ohio alternative food outlets are often referred to as fresh, healthy and most importantly local. It is not clear who is defining what constitutes healthy and local food for the City of Columbus, but what is clear is that the city has associated alternative food with a particular set of urban ecological and social outcomes.

This project examines how alternative food discourse in Columbus is reproduced in city policies as more than just an answer to local food access. I will show that in
Columbus these ethics attached to alternative food have aided in the construction of 'good food' as an attractive urban amenity. This amenity building has been done with a specific purpose in mind: to attract creative class residents. Central to this is the rise of “urban entrepreneurialism,” defined by David Harvey as the standard operating procedure for how cities currently function and encourage development (Harvey, 1989). Cities now compete with each other for capital accumulation, causing local powers to “maximize the attractiveness of the local site as a lure for capitalist development” (Harvey, 1989, p. 5). The current trajectory of city development encourages cities to market themselves to one specific portion of the population: the creative class. For Columbus, food has become a key part of this process. Richard Florida's rhetoric surrounding the importance of the creative class for city development and the specific likes and dislikes of the creative class have become normative rhetoric in urban development policy. Florida posits that “creativity is the driving force of economic growth” (Florida, 2002, p.ix), and as such the presence of a strong creative class is essential to having an economically successful city. The attention paid to the well educated, cultural elite of Florida's creative class is significant because it leads to policies that function almost at the exclusion of other classes. Richard Florida's works have emphasized that the creative class choose where they live based on “not only opportunities and amenities, but openness to diversity” (Florida, 2002, p. 11). Key to this is the task of “developing new forms of social cohesion appropriate to the Creative Age” (Florida, 2002, p. 12). As a result it is no longer enough for a city to offer competitive jobs, they must offer “a wide range” of competitive, cutting edge 'cool', “lifestyle amenities” in order to compete with other cities for ideal residents (Florida, 2002, p. 15). Columbus is just such a city and evidence of
this can be seen in its current development policies and strategies which have embraced this creative class discourse.

In this thesis I argue that the alternative food movement has been adopted by the City of Columbus as a means to meet some of many amenities sought by the creative class. The amorphous nature of the definition of alternative food impels the convoluted process of food itself becoming a creative class amenity. While this results in new policies and initiatives that attempt to address issues of food access, it is also reproduced as a key marketing strategy, albeit one with no explicit metrics, frequently obfuscating whether or not accomplishments are actually being made. The construction of alternative food as an urban amenity results in strategies and policies that fall short in actually helping the underserved populations they aim to serve. Instead it is the creative class that benefits the most from this creation of an 'authentic' food culture, bolstered by the presence of community gardens and farmers markets.

Columbus, Ohio

Columbus is the 16th largest city in the United States and is the state capital of Ohio. It has a population of 787,033, and contains the head offices of businesses such as Nationwide Insurance, Limited Brands, Cardinal Health, Wendy's International, as well as housing various regional banking headquarters. It is a well-educated city with a strong knowledge economy, and is home to the Battelle Memorial Institute, which the world's largest private research and development foundation; Chemical Abstracts Service, the world's largest clearinghouse of chemical information; and OCLC, an international provider of online library services. It is also home to the Ohio State University, Columbus College of Art and Design, and a number of other higher learning institutions.
All of this appears to make Columbus a prosperous city that is still experiencing growth even in hard economic times. According to Mayor Coleman, Columbus has “weathered this severe economic downturn better than other cities” and “is the only major city in the country that has the highest credit rating among all three major rating agencies” (Office of the Mayor, 2011). As a result, Columbus is able to continue evolving its economic plans even in a recession and development has not come to a standstill. The current urban development climate encourages cities to compete for human capital and to showcase themselves on various lists that rank cities based on numerous and constantly changing attributes.

Columbus has long sought an identity; doing so is seen as key to its economic success. Columbus is in need of an image it can sell to attract businesses, tourists, and new residents and, most importantly, the creative class. Currently there is no tag line to define Columbus, just a laundry list of current colleges and companies. The city has been experiencing something of an identity crisis – its best-known nickname (“Cow Town”) is so far removed from the actual benefits the city offers as to be essentially meaningless. Columbus’ largest problem, according to Mike Brown, the former spokesperson for the the mayor and current tourism spokesperson, is that “for years is that we always try and be everything to everybody which dilutes the market too much and then we didn't put money behind any of it”, but that is now changing (Mike Brown Interview, 2011). In 2010, the New York Times published an article discussing Columbus's lengthy search to find a slogan identifying the niche that Columbus best fits into, but the search continues (Eckholm, 2010). In fact, Columbus needs to brand itself in an era of city development that insists on city-to-city competition and development centered around attracting and
retaining Richard Florida's creative class and it is working on branding a new image. According to city leaders Columbus “must develop a messaging mooring-post that different groups can use to describe our authentic strengths” (Eckholm, 2010). One of these authentic strengths is Columbus's food culture. Good jobs and lower costs of living are no longer enough to compete, because they do not make an impression when it comes to competing for the attention of the ever-elusive, highly sought-after creative class resident. This lack of image serves as the primary impetus for the development path Columbus is currently seeking. According to Mike Brown this development path is going to consist of marketing two truths about Columbus, “the word smart and the word open. That’s not the marketing slogan it’s the truth of it all. We are one of the honestly per capita smartest towns in America, we need to own that and we need to find ways to show it. I don't care if it’s through funky grungy indie rock or a scientist in a lab coat they are both true about smart. Open is GLBT and international, ethnicity” (Mike Brown Interview, 2011). Columbus has decided that food plays an important role in both of these 'truths' and it has become a key component of the city's new “visceral experiential marketing effort” (Mike Brown Interview, 2011).

The alternative food movement in Columbus is long standing, but in the past decade the movement has grown by leaps and bounds. This movement has developed alongside Columbus's foodie movement which has been expertly marketed as one of Columbus's selling points. The community gardens and farmers markets promoted by the city help “make the story [of Columbus's foodie culture] true. And if you are going to build your brand around that as one of your core messages, you want your people to be able to enjoy it at every level” (Mike Brown Interview, 2011). In 2010/2011 three new
magazines centering on Columbus's’ food culture have been launched and have so far proved to be successful ventures. These magazines represent the breadth of Columbus's’ new food culture. *Columbus Crave* magazine is a quarterly magazine that details the very active upscale Columbus restaurant scene. *Food City* is a biannual magazine that highlights Columbus's “flavorful food landscape” and “celebrates all Columbus has to offer in the realm of repasts and restaurants” (Stolz, 2011, p.8). *Edible Columbus* is perhaps the most reflective of Columbus's alternative food and foodie culture scene. It is “an independently-owned, community-based publication devoted to connecting you to your local food community. We focus on local, sustainable food sources and the people who work the land to bring this bounty to our tables. From the farmers, to the distributors, to our local artisans, entrepreneurs and leaders, we aim to make all partners in the local food chain empowered and engaged in the building of a true local food system”(edible Columbus). This rhetoric is reflective of the very active movement in Columbus at this time.

The press for Columbus's food scene is not just local; it has garnered national attention as well. In this same time period there have been a slew of articles written about Columbus's vibrant local food scene: “The Impulsive Traveler: Columbus, Ohio, a new destination for food lovers”, in *The Washington Post* (Black, 2011); “Fresh fare in Ohio: Foodies are discovering Columbus has embraced fresh local fare in restaurants and on the street” in *The Toronto Sun* (Newton, 2010); “Columbus, Ohio: The New Foodie Mecca” in the *San Diego Reader* (Fleishman, 2011). These articles discuss more than just the restaurants but also highlight the farmers markets and community gardens in Columbus. Most recently Columbus was listed in National Geographic's 'Best Fall Trips
2011'. This was the result of very intentional work by the city over several years.

According to Mike Brown who worked extensively on this project, Columbus's food culture played an important role in the city's selection for this list. “They [National Geographic] wanted something that was different and a little bit unexpected and that was phenomenal for us. That is an international publication with massive credibility. And how did we win really them over just like so many others? With good food, really high quality authentic food... If we have it we have to sell it.” (Mike Brown Interview, 2011).

According to the city this 'authenticness' is evidenced by the community gardens and farmers markets throughout Columbus. Businesses have grown up around alternative food; it is now possible to buy tickets for 'alternative food tours' of the city that visit local restaurants and food trucks and have enough interested customers – and a wide enough variety of eateries to have differently themed tours each weekend. This has all been combined with a large growth in community gardens and farmers markets in the past several years to create a very specific food culture for Columbus.

As the alternative food movement has gained momentum, the City of Columbus has taken an active role in the promotion of alternative food venues and methods through various initiatives, policies, funding and most importantly, advertising. This poses the question of why, after so many years, the city has begun to pay attention to alternative food, particularly farmers markets and community gardens. What is the motivation to promote local food for the citizens of Columbus? Farmers markets and community gardens are used “as proof points of what a cool foodie town this is. It is an intentional thing. I want to be very clear about that, this is not something that we just bumped into. This is very intentional. We are trying to craft and build upon our foodism because we
think it is good for the system and its good for our image” (Mike Brown Interview, 2011). Statements such as this only emphasize that this has not happened by accident, that this influx of food culture has been intentionally fostered by the City of Columbus. In City materials, alternative food outlets are frequently referred to as fresh, healthy and, most notably, local. I will argue in this thesis that the ideas espoused by the alternative food movement have been incorporated into creative class-centered development tactics and marketing ideas for the City of Columbus, resulting in policies that appear to be highly supportive of the goals of the alternative food movement and the image of a sustainable city and yet do not actually address the problems of food access in many neighborhoods. My argument is that participation in the alternative food movement is used as a tool to aid in the image building of Columbus for the competition for business development and retention and as such alternative food has been reproduced as a cultural amenity for the city. Food, in particular access to fresh, local, 'good' food, has become an economical and convenient way for Columbus to engage in creative development strategies and to portray itself as a cutting edge, green, and socially just city.

**Methodology**

This project used a mixed methods approach in order to generate a variety of data to explore this topic. I conducted this research using archival, textual analysis, observation and interview methods for data generation. The motivation for combining multiple research methods was to approach this topic from different viewpoints in order to acquire a well-rounded set of data. I considered my own positionality throughout this research project as I have been active in community gardening in Columbus, consider myself to be a part of the local foodie scene, and an active member of Columbus's art and
music scene. As a result of this I used my knowledge as a resource, but I was aware of how my own existing ideas and roles in the communities I researched influenced my perspective.

I used the online archives of the City of Columbus and local media to examine the growth of creative class development and the alternative food movement in the City of Columbus. Archives were used to understand the development of the city’s current discourses over time to more fully understand “the local transformations of particular places” and ideas (Harris, 2001, p.4). This was done by conducting a thorough search of the city’s online archives of Columbus City Council, the Mayor’s Office, Columbus Public Health, the Department of Development and the Get Green Initiative. This included all press releases available, city newsletters, websites, meeting minutes, policy documents and speeches. Research was also conducted using local newspapers; The Columbus Dispatch, Columbus Alive, and The Other Paper were used as a source to discern how the local media has framed these issues. I used this research to build a timeline of events in order to more fully understand when and where the city has engaged with alternative food movements. This research also used the archives of local arts and development organizations: the Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC), the Wexner Center for the Arts, and the Columbus Chamber of Commerce. I used an inductive research process which allowed for new discoveries and did not limit the research to the initial intended sources. I took care to remain flexible in my discoveries in order to avoid “imposing [my] preconceptions on the archive” (Harris, 2001, p. 3).

Archival methods for textual analysis were used to gain a historical context in order to examine the question of how the more recent growth of the alternative food
movement has temporally affected the public and government discourses. I concentrated on examining the specific language and visual cues used to discuss food within city marketing and policy documents. I used this research to inform my interview process and to gather “prompts related to particular issues identified in documentary review” (Mallinson et al., 2003, p. 776).

The benefit of using archival methods is that it allowed for the development of a timeline of both events and of changing discourses. The inherent “bias of literate people such as ourselves to suppose that records, books, manuscripts, and other materials mean only what the words in them say” was taken into consideration at all points of this research (O'Toole, 2002, p. 59). During this whole process I took into consideration what was, as well as what wasn't mentioned in the texts used. Because certain questions should naturally be addressed in these documents, their absence is conspicuous. I take such absences as indirect evidence, and in interviews, I made sure to ask about the points which appear to have been at best overlooked and at worst omitted. I also kept in mind the positionality of the authors of the official documents and the motivations behind creating the document was questioned throughout the process (O'Toole, 2002).

I conducted four individual interviews using a semi-structured interview format. The selection of these four individuals was made by identifying people who were involved in either Columbus's alternative food movement or the city. I interviewed Mike Brown, a former spokesperson for Mayor Coleman and the current director of development and public affairs for Experience Columbus, greater Columbus's convention and visitor’s bureau. His interviews helped me to gain essential insight into the role of food as a marketable asset in Columbus. Mike Brown worked closely with Mayor
Coleman and wrote several of the speeches cited in this thesis. As a result, his input on the mayor's office and the content of the State of the City Addresses has been invaluable. I also conducted an interview with an employee of Columbus Public Health who works with several different programs that include food as a portion of their programming. A third interview was conducted with an Ohio State employee who works with the development of regional food policy in the state of Ohio and is an active member of her neighborhood area commission. The fourth interview was conducted with a local artist who is currently creating a film centering on Columbus's gardening movement. The last two interviews were used for informational purposes to discover the projects and initiatives that were not readily available from archival research. These interviews were conducted near the end of the research process, so that the archival data could inform the topics of the interviews. Because interviews are “an intense social and political site in which subjectivities come under scrutiny”, they served the purpose of examining how alternative food discourses have been interpreted by my interviewees (Dyck & McLaren, 2004, p. 514). The ability to generate data on how individuals are involved in various aspects of the food debate, allowed me to gain insight into the ways issues of food access, alternative foods and city policy are negotiated. The main pitfall of using interviewing lies within the process of interpreting my constructed data. It was of paramount importance to ensure that I remained reflexive and to account for “the uncertainties of translating local knowledges into academic knowledges” in order to avoid invoking objective 'truth-making' in my own constructions of data (Dyck & McLaren, 2004, p. 516). In light of this goal, I made sure to justify my conclusions with textual and documentary sources, providing an empirical base to any conclusions drawn in the
process of interpretation, thus avoiding inadvertently recasting subjective notions as academic truth.

For the observation portion of the research I attended monthly local food forum meetings on topics such as community gardening, food justice, food access, and food entrepreneurialism. These meetings were led by the editors of a local food magazine *Edible Columbus*, a local foods group Local Matters and farmers from a local organic farm Wayward Seed. These meetings were highly publicized, open to the public and conducted as brainstorming sessions. As a result these meetings exposed me to a large variety of information and opinions on these different topics. I attended a forum on community gardening that was conducted over an afternoon with a large variety of community garden leaders from Columbus. I also visited local farmers markets and community gardens on a regular basis. This research was used in order to gain an understanding of what issues were present in the community, as a source for the archival research and as a means to ground-truth the information gathered in interviews and the archive. The observation process was mainly used to inform the other steps of this research.

**Framework**

This section presents the framework used for this thesis. The first section discusses the perspective of critical geographers on both good food and the possible repercussions of the alternative food movement. The section following presents the argument for the development of 'good' food as an urban amenity. An outcome of both this critical approach and the growth of food as an urban amenity is the reproduction of neoliberal ideals and distinct forms of citizenship, which is presented here as well. The
final section presents the argument for community gardens as the exemplar of the ethics attached to 'good' food, neoliberal ideals and producing the right kind of citizens. All of these have contributed to Columbus' promotion of community gardens as an ideal urban amenity.

Examining 'Good food'

Current calls in geography have pointed towards a need to turn a more critical eye to what is described in the literature as the alternative food movement (Buller, 2010; Freidberg, 2010; Goodman, M., Maye & Holloway, 2010). This stance is not meant to criticize alternative food, but to more fully understand the implications of the many aspects included in the alternative food movement. The call for a new examination is important due to the growth of alternative food practices and more importantly, due to the broadness of the term 'alternative food'. This term has become blackboxed because of its definitional weakness and is in need of further examination. Perhaps one of the most commonly agreed upon definitions is that it is the antithesis of conventional food, yet this is not really a definition but a set of things that it is not. Alternative food is defined by traits that it may embody and as the antithesis of conventional food. Most commonly alternative food is described as allowing for shorter distances between producers and consumers, involving small scale organic/holistic farms or non-mainstream food retailers, being sustainable and possessing the ability to enact social change (Jarosz, 2008). Alternative food means something slightly different for everyone and this definitional weakness makes it easily adoptable for many different purposes. As a result there are many differing voices within the alternative food 'movement'. Many activists and academics alike believe that alternative food has the ability to sustain the environment,
add value to local economies, preserve farmland, increase access to food, increase the quality of food, increase food security, improve individual health, break down the rural divide and create community cohesion (Donald, 2008; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006). This description is large and unwieldy allowing much room for interpretation. It is this lack of definition that has allowed the term alternative food to become an easily adoptable 'buzz' word for urban planners and the mainstream media.

Alternative food supporters often stress the spatial significance of local food (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006). This spatial significance equates local with alternative and quality, and conversely equates global with conventional and lacking in quality, extending these binary categories out to other place-based definitions of the food system. In setting up many of the traits of alternative food as anti-conventional, this 'definition' sets up a good versus evil paradigm for alternative versus conventional food, without clearly defining what is meant by alternative. In action, the definitional weakness of the term alternative allows it to stand for everything and nothing at all. It embraces sustainability, local connections, community and nutrition. Alternative food “redistribute[s] value through the food chain, reconvene[s] 'trust' between produces and consumers, and articulate[s] new forms of political association and market governance” (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006, p.183). All of these definitions have embraced the idea that alternative food is going to solve the ills of the conventional food system by introducing a specific set of values to the production and consumption of food.

Until recently academic literature has viewed the alternative food movement as a social panacea that could heal both individual bodies and whole communities. This has commonly been framed in the alternative food movement as an issue of lack of access to
food (Guthman, 2011). These discourses about the 'goodness' of alternative foods, whether the food is local, organic, or from a community garden, have also become embedded in current urban planning movements (Dupuis & Gillon, 2009). The promotion of alternative food venues, such as farmers markets and community gardens, is the outcome of a distinct discourse that has become enmeshed in ethical judgments about food that paint the alternative food movement as beyond reproach, and as an exemplar of the correct manner in which to address social ills within communities. As a result “food itself is now virtuous, freighted with an array of semiotic and material values that far transcend its purely nutritional and metabolic functionality” (Buller, 2010, p. 1876).

Viewing food as a social panacea is limiting and prevents a true understanding of how the rise in 'good' food has truly affected the social structures that limit people's access to food. It is important to keep in mind that “the creation of alternatives simultaneously produces places and people that for various reasons cannot be served by an alternative and therefore are put beyond consideration” (Guthman, 2011, Chapter 1, para. 12).

There has been a call in recent academic literature to be more explicit about who is currently setting the criteria for alternative foods and to explore “what gives authority to ethical claims” in the diverse alternative food movement (Freidberg, 2010, p.1872). It is unclear what metrics are being used to determine what constitutes ‘good’ food in the United States. The literature cautions us to be more aware of the socioeconomic inequalities that may be reproduced by alternative food practices. A common critique of the alternative food movement is that it is dominated by the white elite (Cook, 2006; Donald & Blay-Palmer, 2006; Guthman, 2008) and as a result “the relationally performative ethics of alternative foods reproduce an overt and rather disturbing
inequality” (Goodman, M., Maye & Holloway, 2010, p. 1785). The movement reinforces neo-liberal ideologies about citizenship and consumption surrounding food and espouses an ethos whereby it can literally grow a better form of citizen through gardening and consumption (Baker, 2004; Pudup, 2008). Given this, it is easy to see why alternative food practices offer city governments an attractive solution to mediating the problems of disenfranchised neighborhoods. However, doing so moves away from the most fundamental ethical question of whether the basic needs of people are being met.

Dupuis and D. Goodman have taken these ideas one step further by explicitly stating that local institutions, class, and politics are shaping the definitions of alternative food (Dupuis & Goodman, D., 2005). They argue that these influences have resulted in “norm-based and ethical narratives” about the local food system that only fuel the binary categories of conventional and alternative food (Dupuis & Goodman, D., 2005, p. 360). In order to move away from these binary categories, Dupuis and D. Goodman have argued for the use of the reflexive politics of localism “to envision a localism that is more socially just while leaving open a definition of social justice” (Dupuis & Goodman, D., 2005, p. 361). While this is a useful approach in trying to open up the normative ideas surrounding food, the idea of re-creating local still infuses alternative food with ideas about how food (specifically, local food) can enact social justice.

If, as M. Goodman and colleagues state, “morality is a key and growing currency in the provisioning of food in much of the postindustrial North and beyond”, then it is natural to question how this morality has affected food provisioning (Goodman, M., Maye & Holloway, 2010, p. 1783). This definition of the food system is itself socially constructed and enacted, and is therefore “entangled in discourses and practices which
have and indeed always will have ethical implications for the humans and nonhumans, societies and environments, involved in its production-consumption relations” (Goodman, M., Maye & Holloway, 2010 p. 1782). Our efforts to recognize the ways in which 'good' food changes with different conceptualizations are effectively preempted if we do not attempt to examine how this definition is produced and reproduced by the actions of everyday living within our cities. Of particular interest for this project is Bryant and M. Goodman's acknowledgment that “state behavior including bureaucratic politics and discursive articulations of policy practice” has a large effect on how alternative food is defined and produced by governance (Bryant & Goodman, M., 2004, p. 347). It is vital for researchers to note that the association of alternative food with positive ethical norms does not represent any empirical, factual truth about the form and function of the food system within our society.

At work in the alternative food movement “is the sense that the values involved in the politics of food are multiple, complex, and often in conflict” (Barnett, 2010, p. 1182). It is then important to examine what values and ethics are involved. For the purposes of this project it is the ethics that have become attached to 'good food' such as food justice, 'doing good' and the environment that are of particular importance. Due to the relatively unclear definition of the alternative food movement and the 'good food' produced by it, the ethics attached to alternative food are highly dependent on the contexts in which they are working. These “contextualized ethicalities of food work to make and remake the place(s) and space(s) of food” (Goodman, M., Maye & Holloway, 2010, p. 1783). While these ethics are context dependent they have entered the mainstream consciousness and are “beginning to denote particular and calcifying sets of socioecological relationships”
In this process of 'calcification' these ethics about the ecological and social benefits of alternative food, have become accepted as the norm and the reality of these relationships is no longer questioned.

One problem that occurs as a result of this unclear definition is that it is used to evaluate access to food while many other aspects of our collective food system are left out. The use of “static and binary assumptions about the constitution of [alternative and conventional]” overlooks certain aspects of the food system and embellishes others (Hinrichs, 2003, p. 35). In action, this allows the alternative food movement to stand for everything and nothing at all. In the case of Columbus, the many iterations of the alternative food movement have tended to concentrate on both local foods, which can mean anything from locally grown to locally produced, and healthy foods. Both of these have been described by local activists and government officials as better than other foods and as having an inherent 'goodness' about them. As a result of this unclear definition it is important to examine who is defining the alternative food and what metrics are being used to measure its success, not only in food provision but also in terms of social change. The alternative food movement makes claims about many things, but the lack of a clear definition of alternative food makes these claims impossible to evaluate. While alternative food has social and ecological relations attached to it, this does not necessarily represent any canonical relationship between the movement and said relationships; it “does not imply a necessary set of ecological or social relations” (Eaton, 2007, p. 1004).

**Urban Amenity Approach**

The discourse surrounding alternative food becomes especially important when it is adopted in urban planning and governance. This project seeks to understand how the
discourse of the alternative food movement interacts with current trends in urban development strategies, specifically examining motivations and outcomes of city planning that are both tangentially and directly involved in the provision of food. As the alternative food movement has gained momentum across the mainstream media, food, specifically fresh, local organic food, has gained caché as a marker for indicating a city as eco-conscious, trendy, urban, and socially just.

Key to this is the rise of urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1989) as the standard operating procedure for how cities currently function (Peck, 2005). Cities now compete with each other for capital accumulation causing local powers “to maximize the attractiveness of the local site as a lure for capitalist development” (Harvey, 1989, p. 5). This is where current discourses surrounding food enter into the picture. In an urban entrepreneurial environment “the ideology of locality, place and community becomes central to the political rhetoric of urban governance which concentrates on the idea of togetherness in defense against a hostile and threatening world of international trade and heightened competition” (Harvey, 1989, p. 14).

This rhetoric closely parallels the rhetoric surrounding alternative foods, which may be the reason that they often become comingled. The ideas espoused by the alternative food movement could easily be folded into urban planning and marketing ideas, resulting in policies that appear to be highly supportive of the goals of the alternative food movement. As such these “processes-in-place constitute and sustain” the alternative food movement (Jarosz, 2008, p.232). Because there is no well defined goal or definition of alternative food, governmental policy makers can use whichever iteration of alternative foods that best fits with current trends in urban competition and marketing.
Participation in the alternative food movement can be used as a tool to help develop “whole new complexes of recreation, consumption, production, and pleasure” that aid cities in the competition for business development and retention (Smith, 2002, p. 443).

When alternative food discourses are entwined with the urban entrepreneurialist movement, the goal of basic food provision becomes obfuscated. Urban entrepreneurialism demands a “speculative construction of place rather than amelioration of conditions within a particular territory as its immediate … political and economic goal” (Harvey, 1989, p. 8). A city's involvement in food provision is no longer a question of meeting needs, but has now become a means in which to showcase the extent to which a city is 'cutting-edge' and healthy in competition with other cities. Provision of food banks and grocery stores do not earn the same rankings as community gardens and farmers markets for the slew of city rankings comparing city to city.

This competition has led to urban development strategies that stress the marketing of a city towards knowledge-based creative economies, heavily influenced by the Richard Florida's creative class (Florida, 2002) and Markusen's sticky places (Markusen, 1996) theories. These ideas have propelled a turn in urban development that stresses the importance of amenities within cities to attract and retain a certain type of business and resident. The problem is that Richard Florida's creative strategies “commodify the arts and cultural resources, even social tolerance itself, suturing them as putative economic assets to evolving regimes of urban competition” (Peck, 2005, p. 763). In these creative strategies alternative food becomes further commodified as a marketing tactic in place creation. This commodification of alternative food reproduces food as an amenity which often pushes the goal of increased food access even further to the periphery. As the
“investments in the 'soft infrastructure' of the arts and culture are easy to make, and need not be especially costly, so the creativity script easily translates into certain forms of municipal action” (Peck, 2005, p. 749). This can be seen in the case of community gardens and farmers markets, which need very little initial investment from the city and require little to no permanent infrastructure. Florida's ideas have gained mainstream momentum as “they work quietly with the grain of extant 'neoliberal' development agendas, framed around interurban competition, gentrification, middle-class consumption and place-marketing” (Peck, 2005, p. 740). The attraction of these creative strategies is that they are easy to enact and they fit naturally into ongoing ideologies of urban entrepreneurialism and neoliberalism. It is for these reasons that food, in particular access to fresh, local, 'good' food, has become an economical and convenient way for cities to engage in creative development strategies.

Neoliberalism and Citizenship

For the purposes of this project I have responded to MacLeod's call to “conceptualize that very space [of neoliberalism] as negotiated, enacted, performed, lived in and through, contested, representative, but also practical” (MacLeod, 2002, p. 618). The study of food provides an ideal area to examine how neoliberal ideologies are enacted in everyday ways that affect people in their day-to-day living. Within a neoliberal framework the type of food an individual consumes can remove them from poverty or deepen their economic plight. Eating the 'right' food is key not only to an individual’s health but has become essential to moving up the socioeconomic ladder. The virtuousness of alternative food has been easily absorbed into neoliberal government policies (Buller, 2010, Guthman, 2008). Neoliberal influence can be seen in the bootstrap
ideology surrounding the alternative food movement, the commodification of alternative food and the global competition between cities that have marketed food as an amenity. Neoliberalism effectively “shapes the environments, contexts, and frameworks within which political-economic and socio-institutional restructuring takes place” and alternative food discourses have become a tactic in this restructuring (Peck & Tickell, 2002, p.400). It is important to examine the outcomes produced by the interaction of neoliberal and alternative food discourses.

Both neoliberalism and the alternative food movement seek to construct citizenship by guiding “people towards what a variety of actors believe to be the 'correct' consumption choices” (Lockie, 2008, p.197). Both of these ideologies stress that choice lies in the hands of the individual, but the choices available to consumers are limited by the processes of neoliberalization. As alternative food movement discourse becomes a part of policy making, how and what individuals consume will be “bounded by the choices made available to them as consumers” (Lockie, 2008, p. 200). Consequently, the adoption of alternative food discourses becomes particularly important.

Community Gardens

Community gardens have been presented in Columbus as the exemplar of both alternative food and urban amenity creation. Community gardens are gardens that incorporate “in some sense a public garden in terms of ownership, access, and degree of democratic control” (Ferris, J., Norman, C & Sempik, J, 2001, p.559). These gardens produce food either for individuals or groups as a whole and rely heavily on volunteers to sustain the garden. The appeal of community gardens as an urban amenity stems from their perceived ability to create positive changes in the communities in which they are
present and increase access to fresh food.

According to the literature, the mere presence of a community garden can improve residents’ attitudes towards their neighborhood and has been shown to improve the appearance of other properties in the community (Armstrong, 2000). Many gardens are established with the goal of improving the neighborhood by getting rid of vacant lots, “ridding it of drug dealers and by bringing some nature into the area” (Schemelzkopf, 1996, p.373). As such the hope is that they become pockets of community development within neighborhoods, an appealing solution to city planners to the problems often occurring in disenfranchised neighborhoods. One aspect of this theme that is not commonly addressed is that “one of the outcomes of strategies that shift more responsibilities on communities and localities is that the places with the most need are probably also the places with the least ability to provide adequate care” (Staheli, 2005, p. 15). While the community garden is visualized as a source of community development it may not be able to actualize many of the benefits that the literature points to. The successes of the garden in terms of community development should not be ignored, but they must also be practically examined. The garden cannot serve as a replacement to other necessary infrastructure nor can it heal the ills of a neighborhood, because to an extent the garden is restrained by the same issues that it is meant to solve.

One of the explicitly understood benefits of community gardens is their ability to increase participants' access to fresh foods with relatively little economic investment, given the high yield of the garden. Empirical studies have shown that “community gardens have the potential to mitigate costs associated with consuming fruits and vegetables and to reduce the need for transportation to grocery stores in urban areas”
(Alaimo et al., 2008, p. 99). The community garden movement aims not only to increase access to food but to also encourage a certain set of consumptive practices by promoting organic, locally grown food (Baker, 2004). While there are indeed benefits to having access to cheap and close-to-home produce it is hard to establish a causal relationship between participation in a community garden and fruit and vegetable intake in all cases (Alaimo et al, 2008; McCormack et al., 2010). In fact, “it may be that individuals who prefer to eat fruits and vegetables are more likely to seek out community gardens as an alternative source of produce for their regular diet, rather than community gardens having a positive influence on availability and consumption preference” (Alaimo et al., 2008, p. 99).

Community gardens have been promoted as “a new political space in which people with hitherto few options but to passively accept their roles as 'consumers' of whatever the food industry chose to supply them with are empowered to take responsibility for themselves, their communities, and their environments” (Lockie, 2008, p. 194). The problem with this viewpoint is that it relies on neoliberal ideologies in that the individual is taken to be able to consume their way out of a situation, but it does nothing to change the processes that have and will perpetuate a lack of access to food. These types of “neoliberal strategies in cities [have] entailed, not the rolling back of state intervention, but rather its political, institutional, and geographical reorganization” (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p. 345). The problem of access to food has not been solved through neoliberalism, but is now reified through strategies that ask people to consume themselves into better citizens (Goodman, M., Maye & Holloway, 2010). By consuming the right types of food individuals are participating in a desirable social movement that
demonstrates their willingness and ability to conform to societal norms that will ameliorate their situation.

Throughout the literature on community gardens there is an assumption that the gardens will foster and increase physical health. Participation in a garden has been billed as a simple way to improve the physical health of participants through increased physical activity and access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This body of literature attempts to “focus attention on the potential of community gardens as a mechanism for promoting urban health” (Wakefield et al., 2007, p. 100). The community garden is therefore framed as a mechanism to promote health in areas and populations with poor health and poor access to healthcare (Twiss et al., 2003). As a result of other benefits of the garden, such as community development and social inclusion, the garden has been developed into a cheap and easy way to enact public health measures in low income neighborhoods. Community gardens are often explicitly created to address the problems facing poor and elderly populations. What is missing from much of this literature is an explicit empirical discussion of how successful community gardens are at increasing the physical health of community garden participants. Teig et al. identify that “little is known about the intervening mechanisms that explain how gardens impact health and well-being of neighborhood residents” (Teig et al., 2009, p.1116). This essentially eliminates any true understanding of the ability of community gardens to mitigate unhealthful behavior or lack of access to healthcare. The garden serves only as a partial solution to urban healthcare. It avoids any attempt to address the actual problems that make the garden necessary and the only plausible answer for some individuals.

We must begin to question what kind of citizenship is being produced and
encouraged by the gardens and why there is a desire to turn marginalized populations into exemplary citizens. The type of citizenship promoted by community gardens is “less neighborhoods rising up to reclaim their communities and resist their marginalization and rather more a variety of non-state and quasi-state actors who deliberately organize gardens to achieve a desired transformation of individuals in place of collective resistance and/or mobilization” (Pudup, 2008, p. 1230). It is this idea that the garden turns individuals into productive citizens that are able to fend for themselves and their community that is problematic. The garden “puts individuals in charge of their own adjustment(s) to economic restructuring and social dislocation through self-help technologies [citizenship] centered on personal contact with nature” (Pudup, 2008, p. 1228). This particular type of neoliberal framing of citizenship, produced through gardens, is problematic because it allows the city to continue to ignore the structural frameworks that create the need for gardens. Often community gardens are established in impoverished neighborhoods where infrastructure has all but failed, community gardens are then seen as a way to somehow mitigate the effects of this lack of infrastructure. The realities which necessitate the creation of gardens remain unexamined in the name of bootstrap ideologies that ignore the place-based politics that led to the creation of the gardens in the first place.

The insecurity of land tenure is unanimously agreed upon as the greatest risk to the community garden. Any land that a community garden is built on is under constant threat of development even when supported by government and community institutions because “a community garden is rarely considered 'the highest and best use' of urban land” (Lawson, 2007, p. 614). While cities continue to applaud the community garden as
a low cost alternative to other forms of social service and recreation programs,
“governments generally withdraw their support and focus instead on profitable real estate
development on the former garden plots” (Schemelzkopf, 1996, p. 364). Inherent in this
line of thinking is “the tendency to consider gardening as a moveable, replaceable
resource, ignoring the labor and social networks necessary to create such spaces”
(Lawson, 2007, p. 611). When this concept is combined with the lure of high land prices,
the gardens will almost always suffer. The main contradiction that occurs concerning
land tenure is that as cities propose sustainable initiatives, the gardens are subject to
discourses that wish to develop garden land yet in doing so they are eliminating a site of
urban sustainability (Domene & Sauri, 2007). In this struggle between money and
sustainability the gardens typically end up on the losing side. As neighborhoods gain a
greater voice through the production of citizenship and community development, the
garden can be in conflict with the development that it sought to create.

Conclusion

The result of using this framework is that it allows for an examination of how
alternative food discourse is reproduced by urban governance. This section discussed the
need to provide a more critical examination of the effects of the discourses surrounding
both alternative food and the creative class. When food is grouped into complementary
categories such as 'alternative' and 'conventional', this results in a system that values
certain types of food over others, framing food as an ethical issue. As a result, neoliberal
urban policies have become concerned with providing 'good' food to marginalized
groups. The problem is that with no adequate definitions or metrics, we remain unable to
quantify the validity, efficacy, and ethics of the movement. This foundational weakness
allows governmental policies to use whichever iteration of alternative foods fits best with current trends in urban competition and marketing. In the City of Columbus the dominant current trends are urban entrepreneurialism and creative class-centered development tactics. This thesis will examine the linkages between urban entrepreneurialism and alternative food as a means to attract creative class residents. It will show how these notions of 'good' food are reproduced by development policies that make food into marketable image strategy for Columbus.
Chapter 2: Urban Entrepreneurialism and Creative Class Development

Introduction

“They [creative businesses] are bringing in creative people. It's happening; we just need to be a little more aggressive about talking about it. And when you get creative people, they want to eat well.”

(Mike Brown Interview, 2011)

As exhibited in Brown's comments, Columbus has achieved success in attracting both new businesses and creative class residents through the use of targeted development strategies. Food, as evidenced by the above comment, is perceived as having a significant role in the success of these new development strategies and as a burgeoning asset to creative class appeal. This chapter will discuss Columbus's turn to urban entrepreneurial and creative class development strategies as a means to stay economically competitive and to develop a marketable image. In recent years, Columbus has embraced urban entrepreneurial strategies in order to bolster its already strong knowledge-based economy. This has led to development approaches that concentrate on further growing Columbus's strong research and technology sectors and placing emphasis on public-private partnerships. These methods have all emphasized the need for Columbus to develop an image that can be used to more easily market the community and attract new businesses and residents.

Columbus has emulated many other U.S. cities in adopting urban planning strategies that are heavily influenced by Richard Florida's creative class discourse. As
such, Columbus is using creative class-centered development policies to attract and retain members of the creative class, which can include everything from artists and musicians to engineers and graphic designers. This approach has resulted in an amenity-led development course with policies that strongly favor arts and culture. Included in this process is the redefinition by the city of 'arts' and 'culture'. Such categories are no longer limited to simply fine arts or venues such as museums, but are broadened to include Columbus's food culture. Food is no longer simply fuel for residents' bodies, it is an item around which Columbus can shape its image and gain credibility for its claims of being an attractive, forward-thinking, creative class city.

The first section of this chapter will show evidence for the growth of urban entrepreneurial strategies in Columbus, concentrating on the image-building of Columbus as a 'Tech' city. The second section will show that there was an explicit turn in development strategies, starting in 2006, to include the arts and creative-class centered development. It was at that time that city leaders began to emphasize the need to more fully integrate arts and culture into economic development in order to compete against other cities in the 'modern economy'. It is here where we also see alternative food’s nascent role as a selling point for Columbus's new active, healthy image.

**The City of Columbus, Urban Entrepreneurialism and city-to-city competition**

While it is difficult to determine when Columbus turned to an urban entrepreneurial development strategy, it is clear that it is the current dominant philosophy for development in the City of Columbus. Trends in Columbus's development strategies exemplify David Harvey's (1989) definitions for urban entrepreneurialism, for example concentration on public-private partnerships, place making, and the search for local
identity. This strategy has only increased as Columbus has sought to change its self-image by re-branding itself as the place for creative class residents and businesses. According to Mike Brown “we have an incredibly strong research base that we have never owned that in our brand. But it’s just here. And that is something that we are intentionally trying to own better now” (Mike Brown Interview, 2011). This is a very purposeful re-branding, it has not happened by accident.

One of the main signifiers of urban entrepreneurial development in Columbus is the movement to promote Columbus as a tech and research town. By capitalizing on technology and knowledge based industries such as Battelle, Chemical Abstracts and The Ohio State University's research centers, the city hopes to attract other tech-sector businesses to the city. The first of these initiatives centered on the creation of a Research and Technology corridor along State Route 315, a major artery that runs near all three of these organizations. The motivations for this project according to then-City Council president Matt Habash, were to “build economic growth by taking advantage of the city's 'smart capital' – the creative, home-grown talents of the current workforce” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2005b). This explicitly expresses the council's desire to encourage the development of the workforce already present in Columbus. While this venture was used to attract new businesses it was also a tool to market the city to its own residents in order to create local support for the idea of Columbus as a center of research and technology. This sentiment is captured by City Council President Matt Habash in a press release about the marketing of the Research and Technology Corridor where he states “to sell the world, we have to sell ourselves. We cannot begin to convince major investors, companies, and researchers to make the Corridor their home if we cannot
convince ourselves” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2006b). This development trajectory has not been chosen by accident, as in the same press release Councilwoman Mary Jo Hudson explicitly states that this project represents “a whole new approach to entrepreneurial development here in Central Ohio” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2006b).

This technology-inspired push is furthered by Columbus's broadband initiative, a project which began in 2009 with a grant application for the installation of a broadband network that covers the whole city, concentrating on downtown Columbus. Since the initial grant application, the city council has continued to invest money each year towards the completion of this project. According to Councilman Troy Miller the purpose of the project is to “position Columbus as ostensibly the only large city in the nation to own a fiber optic network for economic development purposes” (Columbus City Council Highlights, 2009). The motivation for this network is very explicit: it is key to promoting Columbus as a cutting edge city that makes doing business easy and cost effective. These and other tech based tactics proved successful in 2009 when Forbes magazine ranked Columbus as the No. 1 'up and coming Tech city in the nation'.

In his 2009 State of the City Address, Mayor Coleman said that the Forbes magazine recognition was “no accident” (Office of the Mayor, 2009). The city has faith in urban entrepreneurial development. In this same address Coleman said that “innovation and entrepreneurialism will leapfrog Columbus into greater prosperity” (Office of the Mayor, 2009). The Forbes ranking serves, at least to city officials, as a measure of the success of its current development plans. This ranking also serves as a 'place maker' legitimizing the efforts of city council and Mayor Coleman in promoting
Columbus as a tech town. Many of Mayor Coleman's speeches embody the struggle of local vs. global motivations for development in urban entrepreneurialism. A complex aspect of urban entrepreneurialism is that it encourages the growth and promotion of place at a local level in order to compete with other cities and differentiate a city at a global level. At times this goal is obscured, as in Mayor Coleman's 2008 statement that “our city must maintain its Midwestern values of family, honesty and hard work, while at the same time, be active, be alive, be vibrant – a hip and cool city” (Office of the Mayor, 2008). Columbus must both embody what it is and at the same time repackage its Midwestern geography under new terms in order to market an authentic image of what Columbus stands for. Instead of ignoring its Midwestern status, Coleman wishes to use the stereotypes to promote Columbus as a different type of 21st Century city. This is place making in action and Mayor Coleman wants this story told in as many ways as possible: “as we tell our story we are marketing who we are and what we have to offer to businesses looking for a place to land, to tourists looking for a place to visit, to conventions looking for a place to meet” (Office of the Mayor, 2011). This research is concerned with how this story has been constructed and what the city has decided to promote as its winning assets in the place making of Columbus.

In 2005 Columbus cemented its involvement in the promotion of local businesses by earmarking $133,000 to the Economic and Development Institute (ECDI) for micro-loans for entrepreneurs and small businesses that are posited to be “the lifeblood of the Columbus economy creating new jobs everyday” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2005a). The city's fiscal support for ECDI has been ongoing since 2005 and continues to this day. Each year since the micro-loan program's inception, the Columbus City Council
has given money to the program and highlighted the fact in its press releases. “In 2009, ECDI launched the Growing Entrepreneurs Initiative (GEI) food business incubation program” (Economic and Development Institute, n.d.). Of the five specific micro-loan programs listed on ECDI's website there is only one specifically geared towards a specific type of activity, and that is food-related entrepreneurs. With specific programming geared towards the needs of food entrepreneurs “in addition to access to ECDI’s capitalization programs including loans and individual development accounts, GEI programming includes: Workshops and seminars for food entrepreneurs, including an introduction to business models for food manufacturers, restaurants, caterers, and mobile cart vendors” (Economic and Development Institute, n.d.). This is a reflection of the importance currently placed on developing a food culture in Columbus. This points to a specific desire to develop food entrepreneurs for Columbus by dedicating a portion of their programming to food entrepreneurship.

Further evidence of Columbus's interest in urban entrepreneurial development can be seen in its concentration on attracting and retaining residents and businesses. In 2006 Columbus hired Rebecca Ryan from Next Generation Consulting to “outline how Columbus can step up to be a more attractive community for young professionals and be more of a 'cool community' in the eyes of the next generation” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2006c). The resulting report by Next Generation Consulting inspired a series of investments and initiatives from City Council centering on attracting and retaining young professionals and selling the quality of life and ease of business aspect of Columbus to businesses looking to locate in Columbus. The twenty-three recommendations generated from this report have been seriously taken into consideration
as Columbus has moved forward in its development plans. The first aspect of this was the development of a Young Professionals initiative, “an economic development strategy designed to attract and retain young professionals to our area” (Columbus City Council Highlights, 2010a). This has been done by promoting the urban core of Columbus, as well as its biking, arts, culture, and affordable housing. The website created and maintained by the Young Professionals initiative sells the image of Columbus as vibrant and forward-moving place with a unique neighborhood for everyone.

Harvey is explicit that urban entrepreneurial development is entrenched in private-public partnerships. Columbus has embraced this. Several projects in the past few years have emphasized such partnerships as the de facto model for piecemeal urban redevelopment. Projects such as the Columbus Commons, a large park which was previously the site of the empty downtown City Center Mall, and the Scioto Mile, a riverfront redevelopment, opened in 2011. Perhaps the most important of these projects is the Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens which houses the Scott's Miracle-Gro Community Gardening Campus and the Chase Community Gardening Center. All three of these projects represent public-private partnerships that the City of Columbus has engaged in for development purposes. The Columbus Commons and Scioto Mile projects both represent an attempt to redevelop corridors of downtown Columbus that were virtually abandoned due to failed development strategies. These projects exemplify the corridor approach to development that Harvey identified as an indicator of urban entrepreneurial growth. It is a patchwork mode of development that concentrates on specific pieces of development that emphasize place making as the main goal of new development. All three of these projects represent the attempt to
manufacture an active image for the city. Of utmost interest for this research is the Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens which “elevates quality of life and connects the community through educational, cultural, and social experiences” (Franklin Park Conservatory, n.d.). It includes botanical gardens, a large park, works of art, a community gardening center and holds events and programming throughout the year. Public-private partnerships were used to establish the now nationally recognized community gardening center. This public-private partnership is the leading force in the community garden movement in Columbus, exemplifying the role that alternative food plays in the creation entrepreneurial development for Columbus. The Franklin Park Conservatory will serve repeatedly as an exemplar of how creative class marketing and alternative food have combined to present new cultural experiences in Columbus.

**How do we compete? Columbus's turn to creative class development strategies:**

**Keeping the Young Professionals**

It is clear that in the process of turning towards a more urban entrepreneurial development strategy Columbus has identified arts and culture as the main means to sell the city. The concentration on developing and promoting Columbus as a tech city completed the first T in Richard Florida's three T's of technology, talent and tolerance. With the national and international shift to development strategies that reproduce Florida's teachings on the creative class, it is no surprise that Columbus has relied heavily on these ideals to craft a new image for the city. While several explicit links to Florida's work can be found in Columbus's development strategies, it is more important to note the subtler ways in which these ideas have infiltrated city policy and become the normative path for city development. This research suggests that the explicit use of Florida's
methods is not as important as the ways in which Florida's concept of the necessity of the creative class for economic success has been reproduced with various outcomes.

In 2006 there was a distinct shift in how Columbus viewed the interaction of the arts and economic development. At this time a series of policy papers were produced separately by the city and arts organizations that highlighted the necessity for Columbus to more fully integrate the arts and cultural capital into the economic development plans for the city. The evidence suggests that this concentrated effort is the result of two things: first, the turn to a more urban entrepreneurial approach and the need to market the city as a place to be, and second, the rise of Richard Florida's creative class theory which paints arts, culture and diversity as the means to attract and retain the creative class. As a result of the concentration on attracting and retaining businesses to Columbus a decision was made to attract a certain type of business and creative talent. The slew of papers produced at this time suggests an overarching call to integrate the arts into the city's plans for economic development by both the city and Columbus's major arts institutions.

Creative Columbus Policy Steering Committee

Columbus City Council began its commitment to this new development strategy with the appointment of the Creative Columbus Policy Steering Committee. This steering committee was created by City Council to conduct research and offer policy recommendations in response to “the emergence of the creative class in our community” because “we [the City of Columbus] are in the midst of a rapidly and profoundly changing setting” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2006a). The urgency of this need to change is the result of the perceived need to compete for the creative class against other cities. Columbus did not want to be left behind when it came to adopting the new
development strategies espoused by Richard Florida. This committee produced a policy paper in 2007 titled “The Creative Economy: Leveraging the Arts, Culture, and Creative Community for a Stronger Columbus”, that described the current state of the arts and provided recommendations for integrating the arts and economic policy in Columbus. This report identifies the arts as “key economic and image assets for the City” (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p. 27). It stressed that integrating arts and culture is necessary for Columbus's economic development “to move into a 21st-century cultural policy model” (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p.6). The emphasis here is on the need to integrate, market, and to an extent manufacture arts and culture for the city. This paper also builds on the idea that Columbus lacks the visibility and distinct image that is needed in order to compete with other cities for businesses and residents. Increased visibility and image-making are both key motivators and are the desired outcomes of more fully integrating arts and culture into city development plans. Instead of making Columbus's lack of image a downfall to development it is presented as an ideal opportunity “to establish and define a positive, attractive image” that will work well with the current trends in policy and development models (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p.37). The motivation of this is to attract and retain creative class professionals by “scaling up' creative assets [that] will help attract and retain technical, managerial, and scientific members of the 'creative class’” (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p. 19). Included in these creative assets, according to Mike Brown, is food and Columbus's growing food movement, “when we bring people here, we don't have the ocean, we don't have the mountains, but we have an amazing art scene ... we have all the levels of the arts and we have amazing food” (Mike Brown Interview, 2011). This only emphasizes the fact that food is considered by
Columbus to be a part of its cultural assets.

Florida's influence can clearly be seen in the language used in this policy paper, with constant references to the creative class and citations of Florida's work, giving a decidedly neoliberal flavor to the presented rhetoric. This paper argues that “a thriving arts and cultural sector can be a source of civic pride and identity” (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p.5). This kind of language emphasizes the need to construct citizenship around certain ideals, particularly the arts and civic participation. This seems to support Peck's argument that many of these so-called creative class tactics are being added onto ongoing neoliberal forms of governance. These tactics imply a distinct path of development that relies on the reproduction of a certain type of ideal civic identity.

The lack of specifics in how to generate creative class appeal is apparent in some of the recommendations within this paper as well. It is clear that Columbus has to expand its definition of what counts as arts and culture, and moreover, that the idea of 'home-grown creativity' is key to attracting outside talent and investments (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p. 35). This emphasis on the idea of an authentic 'home-grown creativity' is interesting because the city and its officials have latched on to this idea that you can somehow grow and create creativity. According to Mike Brown, one of the "local things that we know is a winning message now is the 'food movement'. Should we own it? Absolutely” (Mike Brown Interview, 2011). Emphasis is placed on the idea that “arts and culture have evolved from being a luxury for the few to being a quality-of-life ingredient for all” and that non-arts cultural establishments should be included in asset planning (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p. 6). Previously not thought of as a cultural institution, food and specifically 'good' food has become a part of Columbus's cultural
image and as Mike Brown has stated, it is an essential asset for the city. Instead of recommending specifics on how to foster or develop these quality of life ideals, the importance of developing and fostering a “creative ecology” is emphasized. A “healthy creative ecology is likely to be characterized by mix and variety” which can include everything from skilled workers to events and, more importantly, to “engaged consumers” (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p. 21). The idea of engaging consumers in a particular way once again points to neoliberal ideals about consumption. There is also a substantial amount of emphasis placed on increasing the residents' quality of life in a means that is more appealing to the creative class. In fact “government policies other than cultural policy – such as neighborhood development, tourism, transportation, and education – affect the futures of the arts and culture sector” (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p. 17). Specifics of how to accomplish this are not discussed; instead, there are brief mentions of subjective concepts such as the need for distinct urban neighborhoods with “lively and creative street-scapes that can take many different forms” (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p. 23). These forms are not defined by the committee, leaving this suggestion open to interpretation. This document evokes many ideas and pictures of what this new form of development should feel like but leaves open to interpretation how the City of Columbus can develop these everyday amenities for creative class subjects and create urban neighborhoods that will capture the interest of the creative class.

There is also an emphasis placed on emulating other cities that are seen as successes in the merging of arts and the economy and creating a visible identity. Cities such as Austin, Seattle and Portland are frequently mentioned and used as models of how to successfully woo the creative class. Janet Siebert from the Cultural Arts Division of
Austin was brought in by the Committee to speak about the arts as a clear means to economic development. This only seems to emphasize that Columbus is trying to use other cities as a basis of development. Cities such as Austin are viewed as successes in creative class strategies. My research suggests that these cities continue to be the main reference point for comparison for the Mayor and City Council.

Of particular importance, again, is the emphasis placed on the Franklin Park Conservatory as representative of the creative culture of Columbus. This policy report identified the Franklin Park Conservatory as an ideal focus for cultural development and included the large community gardening campus as a key cultural asset. For this committee the gardens are not just important as a cultural asset but are important because of who they employ, a “key part of the 'creative class’” (Creative Columbus Policy, 2007, p. 25). This emphasizes that not only are community gardens an important cultural aspect, but that the garden produces the type of creative class people the city wishes to cultivate. This inclusion of the Franklin Park Conservatory and its community gardens represents this committee's broader definition of what is included in the city's cultural strategies and promotes community gardening as an exemplar of this new larger definition of creative culture.

The Columbus Cultural Leadership Consortium

The Columbus Cultural Leadership Consortium (CCLC) is a local arts leadership organization whose main strategy “is to engage the community in a conversation, leading to decisions about the future of arts and culture that can further advance the city's 'quality of place and life' standing” (CCLC, 2006, p. 2). The CCLC also wants the community to adopt the arts and culture as a main economic development endeavor as it strongly
believes that “in today's world, creativity and economy are inextricably linked” and that this is the key to setting Columbus apart from other cities in the world (CCLC, 2006, p.2). The CCLC’s 2006 policy paper titled “Arts and Culture in Columbus: Creating Competitive Advantage and Community Benefit” emphasizes the need and the necessity for integrating the arts into Columbus's economic development plans and provides a strategy in order to begin this process. The CCLC’s most desired outcome of its work is that “culture and arts will form a significant differentiator for our city and contribute to its overall economic development” (CCLC, 2006, p.2). This statement builds further on the idea that Columbus is seeking out the arts and culture in order to set it apart from other cities. The idea of creating projects to differentiate Columbus has been adopted by Mayor Coleman and appears again in his State of the City Address in 2011. The CCLC also stresses the idea that the development of a strong arts and culture infrastructure will help “prevent the proverbial 'brain drain' from damaging our economy” (CCLC, 2006, p.2). Once again the emphasis is on keeping the creative class in Columbus. This is a familiar argument: that the city must not only attract creatives, but even more importantly, keep those that are here from leaving. This builds on the Young Professionals initiatives that the city has put forth and offers up the arts and culture as a solution to the city’s ongoing fear that it cannot retain the many students that come to the Columbus area to attend one of its many colleges post-graduation. These creative tactics do seem to be working, at least as far as the city is concerned. According to Mike Brown, “we are a college town. We create, we train talent, we attract it, it comes in it does its thing and it makes a choice to go somewhere else. You should expect that 90% of it to leave so if you keep 20% that is actually a win. We are actually doing really well on the
creative young talent side” (Mike Brown Interview, 2011).

The CCLC explicitly references Richard Florida's work and his identification of leisure options as key to attracting knowledge workers to a city (CCLC, 2006, p. 7). The entire conclusion of its policy paper reads as a laundry list of the new creative class development rhetoric. Columbus must be vibrant and “consistent with the research that creativity feeds economic growth” (CCLC, 2006, p.28). The goal of this work is the creation of a Columbus that is a forward-looking, “thriving habitat for the so-called 'creative class’” and “a tolerant, diverse, and sophisticated place” (CCLC, 2006, p.28). This serves as a guideline for a very specific type of development that privileges certain outcomes over others, that caters exclusively to creative class residents in order for Columbus to compete.

All of this is closely associated with the need for Columbus to set itself apart with a clear identity. The CCLC paper posits that this identity must come from an integrated approach. In fact, “culture and the arts in Columbus drive economic development and an insistent sense of place, clearly distinguishable from anywhere else in the world” (CCLC, 2006, p.17). The CCLC has defined arts and culture not as a passive participant in the new economy, but instead as active and key to the city's success. The CCLC has conceptualized that Columbus can be the artistic hub of the Midwest, a move that would provide it an image all its own.

As the CCLC is not a government organization and instead represents arts organizations alone, this suggests that the drive to move into a creative class type of development is not just being espoused by elected officials. It is important to acknowledge that arts organizations have a particular interest in pushing for this type of
economic development because it obviously serves their own interests quite well to attract investment in the arts. Yet, the CCLC paper stresses that this change in thinking has become necessary in order to participate in what they call the 'New Economy'. This idea is never explicitly explained but it alludes to the need to create a competitive advantage over other cities in the competition for companies and to attract and retain the creative class.

The CCLC paper promotes the idea that arts and culture development is the answer to the city’s brain-drain problem and this development can be used to retain creative class professionals by creating and fully leveraging a 'coolness' factor that the city needs to compete in the new economy. This idea that you have to create and promote 'coolness' goes hand in hand with attracting the creative class. Under this philosophy arts are key to creating the right kind of buzz about a city. For Mike Brown this includes “selling ourselves as a smart, sexy, creative, young city” and for the city, promoting Columbus as a foodie town is key to creating this buzz (Mike Brown Interview, 2011).

Like the Creative Columbus Policy Steering Committee policy paper, this paper also stresses the need to concentrate on quality of life goals in order to facilitate the marketing of Columbus. Community building is considered a key component to increasing the quality of life in Columbus according to the CCLC. The exemplar of this, according to its research, is— once again— the Franklin Park Conservatory and its participation in and fostering of eighty community gardens in Central Ohio as of 2006. Among the reasons listed: its use of public-private value, the donation of fresh foods, and its plans to expand and therefore “make an even more profound difference in our [the] community” (CCLC, 2006, p.21). In this case community gardens are being promoted as
not just a source of food, but as culturally important due to the community building ethics attached to the gardens. This promotion of the conservatory comes as little surprise given that the Franklin Park Conservatory, despite not being a traditional arts organization, is a CCLC member. This inclusion of Franklin Park and its activities—and the role of gardens and food in the cultural policy documents—points to the fact that the marketing of alternative food plays a significant role in 'differentiating' Columbus culturally.

The Greater Columbus Arts Council

The Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC) is the main arts organization in Columbus and receives a significant amount of funding from the city via hotel/motel tax revenue. The money is given to the GCAC for distribution at its discretion, “for the purpose of fostering arts and cultural services to enhance Columbus” (Columbus City Council Highlights, 2011). The GCAC therefore serves as the de facto arts committee for the city. The GCAC, as the main source of arts funding in Columbus from both city funds and other sources, has significant influence over both local arts organizations and city council. In 2007 the GCAC also released a paper titled: “Arts and Economic Prosperity Report: Economic Impact in Columbus”. This report surveyed 47 local arts organizations and determined that the arts in Columbus contribute $331 million annually to the local economy and employ 11,068 full-time staff (GCAC, 2007). This report represents the continuation of the 2006-2007 movement to demonstrate the economic importance of the arts to Columbus both in the present and as a potential growth industry. At the same time that this study was published, the GCAC also began spending money on projects dedicated to “cultivating the creative economy” of Columbus (Columbus City Council Highlights, 2007). The GCAC not only supports this mission through funding
but also serves as a main advocate for acknowledging the economic impact of the arts in Columbus.

In 2010 the GCAC met with city council and the Department of Development to discuss “the importance and impact of the arts in Columbus” (Columbus City Council Advisories, 2010a). The inclusion of the Department of Development represents the GCAC’s desire to foster development projects that promote creative class objectives. Most recently the GCAC received an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. This grant represents “the NEA's latest investment in creative placemaking, through which partners from both public and private sectors come together to strategically shape the social, physical and economic character of a neighborhood, town, city or region around arts and cultural activities” (GCAC, 2011b). The receipt of this grant serves as further recognition of the GCAC's dedication to promoting the arts as the solution to Columbus's lack of image and the work the GCAC has done to promote the importance of the arts for Columbus's economic advancement.

In 2007 the GCAC funded an artist market survey to determine local artist interest in a combination living and working area and to determine potential sites for this space. This survey was conducted by Artspace, a non-profit real estate developer. The goal of this project according to then-Councilwoman Maryellen O'Shaughnessy is to solidify “City Council’s commitment to building a thriving, vibrant downtown, and the need to nurture the creative class in our economy that we believe will be the leaders in making the heart of our city the place we expect it to be” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2007). The creative class is not only a marketing target because of their economic impact, but for the possible leadership they may offer in Columbus's struggle to develop a
cohesive and appealing image. City Council and the GCAC have promoted the living
and working space project as having multiple possible effects on the city: “as a way to
support and inspire our artist community, as an important affordable housing
development project that promises to strengthen its host neighborhood, and as a public
statement about the quality of, and commitment to, the arts in our community”
(Columbus City Council Releases, 2007). Artspace identified the Franklinton
neighborhood, a neighborhood undergoing significant gentrification, as an ideal place for
the realization of this space. In 2011 the city broke ground on this project, which will
include “a unique community of studio spaces, performance and event venues, galleries
and music, food and drink to the Columbus artistic and creative class and the community
at large” (Columbus City Council Release, 2011c). This represents the new movement to
develop housing and entertainment districts explicitly designed to appeal to the creative
class. The fact that this is a result of an initial survey paid for by the GCAC suggests that
this represents the wishes of both the city and local arts organizations to develop the city
with an eye for creative class growth. According to Mayor Coleman's speech concerning
the new project, “this begins our efforts to market, incentivize and build an affordable
neighborhood tailored for our city’s creative sector” (Columbus City Council Releases,
2011b). This demonstrates Mayor Coleman's desire to redevelop Columbus's lower
income neighborhoods according to a certain aesthetic that can be used to market
Columbus as a creative city. The GCAC considers community gardens an exemplar of
this aesthetic in the Franklinton neighborhood, and the GCAC in 2011 provided a grant
for “two large community murals to provide a backdrop for Franklinton's first community
garden” (GCAC, 2011a). This development strategy was further emphasized in the press
release from city council that compared Franklinton's development trajectory to “other large and small cities [that] have experienced economic and neighborhood revitalization through catering to the creative sector including: Miami Beach, FL Cultural Arts Neighborhood District Overlay Incentive; Boston, MA; Covington, KY The Covington Artist Residential District Homeowner Loan Program; Paducah, KY The Artist Relocation Program; Seattle, WA; Austin, TX” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2011b). Once again, it's evident that Columbus is modeling itself after other cities such as Seattle and Austin that have had success in leveraging creative class development into a marketing strategy.

Cultivating Culture

In addition to the creation of the Creative Columbus Steering committee and the allocation of funds for the GCAC, Columbus City Council has demonstrated its dedication to creative class-driven involvement in other ways. Most recently there has been a push from city council to make sure the council's encouragement of the arts was more visible. This may be the result of budgetary limitations and the wait to unveil several projects for the city's bicentennial. Regardless of the reasons, these measures suggest an ongoing desire on the part of city council to make Columbus's dedication to the arts known. In 2008 Councilwoman Priscilla Tyson passed a “resolution to encourage Columbus residents to incorporate the arts into their lives” (Columbus City Council Highlights, 2008b). The council is also engaging in and publicizing its ongoing meetings with the city's Department of Development to “discuss the importance and impact of the arts in Columbus” (Columbus City Council Advisories, 2010a). This suggests a continuing desire to make Columbus's involvement with the arts and creative class
endeavors visible even when there is no actual news to publicize. Statements such as Councilwoman Tyson's resolution require absolutely no monetary or policy development investment. As such they represent the problem of neoliberal development strategies that attempt to create 'buzz', but instead are empty resolutions. These types of resolutions are used to create a certain image, but in reality hold little meaning.

The outcomes of Columbus's entrepreneurial and creative class type development strategies are evident in Mayor Coleman's most recent State of the City address. Richard Florida's ideas about the importance of diversity within cities are evidenced by Mayor Coleman emphasizing that “we [the city] find strength in the diversity of ideas rather than allowing ourselves to be defined by our differences” (Office of the Mayor, 2011). Mayor Coleman also discusses the importance of catering new development in Columbus toward the creative sector which “includes professions like artists, designers, performers, media, architects, engineers, techies, marketers and those in the advertising industry” (Office of the Mayor, 2011). Again this suggests the adoption of the creative class rhetoric that emphasizes both professionals and artists as part of the creative class. This also represents the first time the city has explicitly defined exactly who these development strategies are targeting- and as a result who they are not i.e. the poor and needy.

This most recent speech focuses heavily on the importance of the new creative live-work district in Franklinton, and on developing a neighborhood “as a cool, funky and, most of all, an affordable place to be” (Office of the Mayor, 2011). The idea of developing 'coolness' is a direct outcome of the current trends in city development that emphasize the importance of creating 'buzz' for your city, that 'coolness' can in fact be created by proper city policies and development strategies. In this case Columbus has
had some success, perhaps the most prominent of which is a current ranking by Creative Cities International which lists Columbus 8th on the “Creative Cities Vitality Index”, “a cultural impact study that models the human experience of the city at its heart” using qualitative and quantitative data analysis (Creative Cities International, 2011). Mayor Coleman also cites a Brookings Institute report in his 2011 Sate of the City Address which “says that Columbus is one of the few cities in the country where recent college graduates have chosen to live as young professionals rather than move somewhere else” (Office of the Mayor, 2011). For the city, outside recognition such as that provided by Creative Cities and the Brookings Institute serves as validation that its efforts are paying off. Although no direct cause-and-effect relationship has been established, the message of its 'coolness' seems to have reached the intended targets: young professionals, members of the creative class.

**Conclusion**

Columbus has turned to urban entrepreneurial development as a means to grow its knowledge-based economy. This has led to development strategies promoting Columbus as a tech and research city and has emphasized the promotion of public-private partnerships. These development strategies have been heavily influenced by current creative class-centered trends in development. Columbus appears to have fully adopted the language and tactics espoused by Richard Florida as a means to compete with other cities for creative class residents and businesses. This has resulted in a series of policies and initiatives that privilege a very specific method to improving the quality of life of Columbus's residents, as well as privileging a very specific resident: the creative class. A key part of these strategies has been to promote a new more 'hip' image of Columbus.
Statements by Mike Brown have made it clear that the development and promotion of the alternative food movement has been identified by the city and arts organizations as key to creating Columbus's new image. As discussed throughout, the Franklin Park Conservatory has been promoted as an exemplar of arts and culture for the City of Columbus, with particular emphasis placed on the community gardens. This has resulted in the reproduction of food as a cultural amenity. The conservatory has incorporated a slew of food-related programming to its offerings; from cooking classes for adults and children to community gardening courses, it is promoting food, specifically 'good' food, as a cultural institution in Columbus. Columbus has turned to strategies that attempt to cultivate and produce the image of a certain type of culture in order to attract the creative class, and one of the means by which this image is created is with alternative food, with 'good' food.
Chapter 3: Columbus and Alternative Food Movements

Introduction

“Recent reports show that Generation Y, or those people born in the mid-1970s, will choose the city that they want to live in based on culture, amenities, and opportunities for employment. Columbus must continue to create the culture and provide the amenities that young workers desire if we hope to attract and retain the next generation’s workforce and the companies that will employ them. The positives of community gardening have proven to be effective in efforts to attract these young professionals.”

(Councilwoman Tyson's Office, 2010b)

Councilwoman Priscilla Tyson’s comments illustrate how alternative food—and not just local restaurants but community gardens — plays an integral role in the city's creative class development strategies. The City of Columbus has decided that alternative food, specifically community gardens and farmers markets, are an essential amenity for attracting creative class residents. However, its promotion of alternative food is typically framed as an answer to issues of food access for under-served populations in Columbus. Rarely does the city make explicit reference to the usefulness of community gardens and farmers markets as a marketable urban amenity. Essential to this has been the City of Columbus's adoption of the socioecological ethics attached to alternative food that promote it as healthier, 'greener', and more socially just than conventional food.

This chapter will demonstrate how the ethics attached to community gardens and farmers markets allow them to be promoted as active, 'green', healthy, and sustainable, playing a specific role in Columbus's new creative class-friendly image. The first section concentrates on the role gardens and farmers markets have played in forming Columbus's
'green' image. The second section discusses the role of Columbus Public Health in promoting community gardens and farmers markets as answers to the issue of residents' lack of access to healthy food. The final section concerns Columbus's ardent promotion of community gardening and its distinct role as an urban amenity.

Get Green Columbus and the rise of alternative food as a sustainability measure

The City of Columbus has associated farmers markets and community gardens with a particular set of ecological and social outcomes for the city and used those outcomes to promote a green image for the city. This 'green' component of Columbus's image is an important aspect of creative class development, as it promotes an active and forward thinking image of the city. Local food, especially community gardens and farmers markets, are heavily promoted as a key initiative in Mayor Coleman's Get Green program which began in 2005 and is one of Mayor Coleman's largest and most active initiatives to date. Mayor Coleman started the program to “show how Columbus could be environmentally friendly, while building the economy and making neighborhoods healthier” (Office of the Mayor, 2008). The wording of the statement, in particular the use of 'show', demonstrates that the goal of this program is not only to create a more sustainable city. For the City of Columbus the marketing of a green image for the city is just as --if not more important--than the actual greening process. The city uses this green image to promote Columbus as a forward thinking city and uses it to attract creative class residents. Since its inception the program has sought to promote and foster the greening of Columbus. It includes various programs falling into five main categories: green building promotion, recycling, transportation, renewable energy, and resource protection / conservation (Get Green Columbus, n.d.). It is funded by the city and by the Solid Waste
Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO). The program includes initiatives to green internal city operations as well as those conducted in conjunction with outside partnerships with businesses and community groups.

While the overall initiative covers many different types of greening projects, since its inception it has incorporated alternative food as a key part of its mission. Local food is named as part of the second guiding principal for the Get Green initiative and is included in the main mission document. This clause states that Columbus must “provide for the needs of a growing population in a manner that enhances prosperity and sustains a diverse, resilient and healthy environment when establishing policy on land use, infrastructure development, open space preservation, healthy lifestyles, preservation of natural resources, growing food locally, and the greening of the city through tree planting and parks development” (Get Green Columbus, 2006b). The mention of local food suggests that it has been imbued with environmentally minded ethics that frame it as a greener choice. The outcome of this principle in the Get Green Columbus program has been an emphasis on the importance of local foods, community gardens and farmers markets as key to 'showing' or promoting to others how green Columbus can be. The gardens are used in marketing material, speeches and press releases to evoke the idea of Columbus's green mission as a bottom-up approach to making Columbus green. Promoting the grassroots nature of these alternative food movements and the larger green movement works in the city’s favor to create the desired air of authenticity to the local green movement. This then is leveraged to tell a story about how these environmental ethics are ingrained in Columbus's social ecology. Local food, community gardens and farmers markets have been fully integrated into Columbus's sustainability measures,
exemplifying how the environmental ethics attached to alternative food can be leveraged into creative class-centered city development strategies. The presence of community gardens and farmers markets has become more than a method to address a lack of access to healthy food; it is a means to market Columbus with a green, progressive image. This image is used to 'show' others how innovative the city is in solving problems such as food access with new forward thinking strategies. Ultimately these strategies exemplify neoliberal tactics that place the burden of change on individuals and communities in order to address a lack of access to 'good' food in neighborhoods, instead of addressing the larger infrastructure problems that have made these tactics so necessary.

Get Green and Community Gardens

The mayor’s Get Green program has focused on increasing food access primarily through the promotion of community gardens. In 2007 Get Green Columbus published a “Community Garden Resource Manual” which is still in distribution. This document was developed in conjunction with the Franklin Park Conservatory's Growing to Green program. This document exemplifies the many ways in which the city has promoted community gardening as an answer not only to the lack of fresh food in a community, but as a panacea to a range of social problems. The document provides a long list of benefits of the community garden, excerpted here:

“Benefits of a Community Garden
- Community building tool--creates opportunities for neighbors to work together
- Produces fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables in urban areas for community or food bank use
- Improves and uses vacant and unsightly lots
- Provides a safe learning space for children and adults
- Reduces crime
- Preserves urban green space
- Creates income opportunities and economic empowerment
- Reduces city heat from streets and parking lots

56
• Enables exposure and connection to nature and the cultivation of environmental stewardship
• Reduces stress and improves mental health of community members
• Beautifies and enriches neighborhoods and enhances their sense of identity
• Provides opportunities for intergenerational and cross-cultural connections’’

(Get Green Columbus, 2007, p. 5)

This list of benefits exemplifies the ways in which community gardens, as an exemplar of 'good' food, have become imbued with the power to transform a whole community socially, environmentally and economically. Mayor Coleman's statements to the public make extensive use of this idealized language surrounding community gardens, marking them as the key to good neighborhood development. A prime example of this exists in Coleman's introduction to the gardening resource manual:

“One way to make a difference in your neighborhood is to develop neighborhood-backed agricultural projects, like community gardens. These aren't just great ways to get healthy foods, but also can become cornerstones of community and even a business opportunity with our local farmers markets. Community gardening can also be a lot of fun and offer local youth a way to learn something new about their world”

(Get Green Columbus, 2007, p. 2)

Statements like this imply that the garden can achieve almost anything when it comes to neighborhood development. Mayor Coleman here places an immense amount of responsibility on the power of the community garden to transform the lives of local residents purely by its presence. This statement also stresses the concept that it is 'your' responsibility to create change. While this is not untrue, statements such as this place the burden of food access on the individual instead of the city in effect, ignoring the systemic challenges residents may face. This demonstrates how the rhetoric of alternative food is used within development policy to emphasize greener, more neoliberal tactics to solving problems of disenfranchisement and poverty in inner city neighborhoods of Columbus.

While the garden is a powerful example of change, the promotion of gardens by
the city represents an easy and cheap partial solution to underlying infrastructure problems of the neighborhoods in which they are promoted. The publication of this manual represents an attempt to not only encourage community gardening, but to emphasize the use of gardens to increase neighborhood appeal. The gardens serve as an easy way to create the semblance of new infrastructure in neighborhoods where the regular infrastructure has broken down due to poverty and general neglect. The neoliberal ideals of this rhetoric are exemplified in statements such as “developing community gardens on vacant city-owned land increases the surrounding community's access to healthy foods and strengthens neighborhood infrastructure” (Get Green Columbus, 2006a, p. 4). The city is instructing neighborhoods to develop their own infrastructure, effectively placing the responsibility for change in the hands of neighborhood residents under the guise of cultivating a greener Columbus. This acknowledges the breakdown of essential neighborhood infrastructure but avoids any discussion of the city's responsibility for causing or fixing said breakdown.

Get Green Promotion of Alternative Food

Get Green Columbus's emphasis on local food extends past the publication of a gardening resource manual. Each year the program releases a 'year in review' document, and a consistent highlight of these documents has been the community gardens and farmers markets in Columbus. These often include work done by Columbus Public Health, but since they fall under the 'green' label they are highlighted by Get Green Columbus as an example of the success of Columbus's green programming. Community gardens and farmers markets have been easily manipulated to fulfill different marketing tactics for the City of Columbus, and as a result one sees many of the same programs
claimed as examples of the successful implementation of multiple ideals, including 'healthy', 'green', 'sustainable', and 'community building'. In the 2009 Get Green Annual Report this is evidenced by the section titled “Fostering the Greening of Columbus” (Get Green Columbus, 2009a, p.11). Included in this section is Columbus Public Health's farmers market, Columbus Public Health's food access mapping project and the Get Green Columbus program plan to drastically increase the number of community gardens (Get Green Columbus, 2009a, p.11). The Get Green program serves as the ideal venue for Columbus to market the 'greeness' of the city's involvement with the alternative food movements. In the five-year summary document for Get Green Columbus, “2005-2009 A Summary of Progress”, the closing section of the document centers on the program’s success with community gardens and farmers markets, demonstrating a particular enthusiasm for Columbus's fostering of 'good' food. By highlighting the work of other groups as a positive aspect of city development, the program implicitly associates itself with the work of others. “Columbus has also worked with local partners to improve access to fresh, nutritious foods for residents in most need” (Get Green Columbus, 2009b, p. 15). Once again, the topic in question is the provision of food, but the statement makes it clear that impoverished residents are the primary beneficiaries of the work. While this may seem like an obvious choice of words, it is noteworthy that the literature published by the city often avoids any reference to Columbus residents being in need. Typically, this need is framed as a problem of access rather than explicitly a problem of poverty. By wording its statements in this manner, the city manages to avoid the implication that Columbus does in fact have a poor population. This document also highlights the ability of alternative foods to “provide ecological awareness to youth and adults” (Get Green
Columbus, 2009b, p.15). The educational component adds to the list of ongoing benefits of alternative food, and attempts to highlight Columbus's dedication to education independently of promoting ecology and the environment. This serves as yet another way for Columbus to show how extensive and authentic this green movement is while also highlighting another benefit of community gardens. All of these aspects help to construct a story about how embedded the 'green' movement in Columbus is and the role food plays in this story.

Get Green Columbus uses the green ethic rhetoric attached to alternative foods to promote a specific image for the city, while only superficially engaging the food access problems that exist for many Columbus communities. Using community gardens and farmers markets to promote the image of a green Columbus allows the city to appear to be addressing the problem of food access in a currently relevant, progressive, and sustainable manner. Whether or not this initiative is successful in increasing food access or if these gardens and markets actually grow food sustainably (soils free of chemicals, organic fertilizer, and no pesticides) appears to be unimportant, indeed such facts are not tracked. Instead, it is the image of the gardens themselves, and of children working in the soil, that is important for the promotion of the city's green image. Get Green Columbus is more than an environmental initiative – it is a piece of Columbus's entrepreneurially based development strategy. The economic goals of this initiative are explicitly stated in the guiding "Green Principles" document. The third principle of this document states that this initiative will “strengthen economic vitality and economic security within the community through environmentally based policies that create jobs, promote entrepreneurship, and expand green business opportunities” (Get Green Columbus,
Since the second principle of this same document emphasizes the need to create a local food system, this suggests that local food plays an important role in the new greener economy of Columbus. This role is dualistic in nature; it provides a marketing point for city promoters and it can be used to promote the importance of local homegrown economic activity. Alternative food in Columbus ideally provides a tangible demonstration of how green Columbus can be and help to bolster the local economy.

The usefulness of a green image to attract green businesses, promote a better quality of life, and encourage a certain type of economic development is heavily emphasized in the 2010 Get Green Annual Report. The first objective listed is to “create, attract and retain green job industries” (Get Green Columbus, 2010, p. 4). The city's push to make Columbus a center for green industry effectively plays a large role in the city's encouragement of the alternative food outlets such as community gardens and farmers markets. Programs such as the creation of community gardens and farmers markets alongside the city's exhaustive development of a citywide biking initiative provide the types of amenities these companies and their potential employees are looking for. All of these amenities help contribute to the 'vibe', espoused by Rebecca Ryan of Next Generation Consulting, needed for Columbus to attract and retain creative class individuals. These types of programs fall under the 'green' goal to “market Columbus's assets to targeted green job industries” (Get Green Columbus, 2010, p.4). One way that Columbus hopes to do this is by developing a map that highlights the quality-of-life and cultural assets within the city. While this map has yet to be created, the Get Green program has already shown food, specifically farmers markets and community gardens, to be an important way in which to authenticate the 'green' story of Columbus and a
means to demonstrate a higher quality of life. This stems from the idea that the
development of a local food system is not only more environmentally sound but will
provide a higher quality of life for area residents because of the numerous social
components attached to it. Local food is ostensibly associated with a higher quality of
life, whereas a grocery store fails to provide the same social caché. This quality of life
element plays an important role in creative class development tactics. The problem here
is that these tactics are targeted to appeal to the interests of creative class residents, but
there is no way of knowing what the appeal of these tactics is for other types of residents.
While there may be a call for community gardens and farmers markets from underserved
populations there does not appear to be an understanding of their motivations. It may be
that they believe community gardens provide the best and greenest solution to the
problem of food access. They could also be motivated to pursue community gardens and
farmers markets because it is the only solution the city has proffered.

Perhaps the largest indicator that Get Green Columbus is heavily invested in
alternative food movements is a specific action point from the most recent annual report:
to “explore and provide financial incentives to targeted areas for development of green
buildings, infill development and local food system development” (Get Green Columbus
2010, p.17). The appeal of alternative food movement is that they require very little
monetary commitment from the Get Green program. Alternative food promotion, for the
city, has mainly relied on enabling cheap land use and partnering with other public or
private entities for fiscal contributions. It remains to be seen whether the currently
successful marketing of alternative food will result in actual monetary investment, or if
this is merely a specious way for the city to demonstrate its purported dedication to the
Mayor Coleman envisions this initiative as a method to stay current in the city-to-city competition for rankings and attention. In his 2008 State of the City address, Coleman says, that “Columbus is getting green in an environment of global competition and it's clear that no city can be an island, separated from the world” (Office of the Mayor, 2008). While Coleman's previous statements emphasized the local benefits of the Get Green initiative, this address seeks to clarify and establish the global significance of the city and its role in the global economy. The emphasis on local place-making and the need to remain globally competitive embody the rhetoric of urban entrepreneurialism. While the alternative food movement espouses a 'local food' ethic this does not mean that it fails to fulfill the broader, more globally oriented goal. The fostering of Columbus's alternative food movement lends an air of authenticity to Columbus's green movement. The presence of a 'green' food movement allows Columbus to construct a narrative about environmental awareness that reaches past the de rigueur green business recruitment approach. Mayor Coleman can claim for Columbus a green awareness at a grassroots level, providing the stamp of authenticity to what is in actuality predominately a top-down green development approach. The city’s efforts to 'green' its image are achieving success. For instance, since initiating the Get Green initiative Columbus was one of three finalists in the large community category of the Siemens Sustainable Community Award in 2011. While the city was not victorious, the finalist status nevertheless represents a significant accomplishment in the development of Columbus's green image and there is little doubt that the city will continue to strive for such recognition.
Local, good food as the answer to Public Health

As previously mentioned there is significant overlap in the initiatives and city departments involved in promoting alternative food movements in Columbus. When there is more tangible involvement required it is almost always handled by Columbus Public Health. Although limited in scope, monetary responsibility, infrastructure, and planning for the gardens and markets is most often conducted by Columbus Public Health. Columbus Public Health's motivation for its involvement is to emphasize the health benefits of alternative food. During an interview, a Columbus Public Health employee provided several reasons for this. The first is that, due to the obesity crisis in the United States and food borne illness, establishing community gardens is “a popular thing to do” and this popularity has been spurred by Michelle Obama's garden (Columbus Public Health Interview, 2011). As a result there are more local residents asking for these types of programs and more public officials readily offering them in return. This does not mean that community gardens and farmers markets are not successful, but it does explain the upswing in their use as public health programs. The second is that these types of initiatives include an economic aspect. According to the interviewee, “I probably advocate for local because when I look at our communities it is not just a health issue, there is an economic issue and if we can, we know that local food travels less and you should be able to get it closer to harvest than something coming from California. But it is also getting that revenue back into those neighborhoods and we've heard that from people in the neighborhoods” (Columbus Public Health Interview, 2011). This idea of the economic aspect of local foods, such as community gardens that sell their own produce or farmers markets, was brought up several times in the course of our interview. This seems
to emphasize that Columbus Public Health, like other entities in Columbus, promotes gardens and farmers markets as more than a source of fresh food.

**The language of healthy food**

There has been a noteworthy shift in the prioritizing of 'local fresh food' over 'fresh food' in the language Columbus Public Health uses when discussing 'good' food. Columbus Public Health issued one significant document on food access in 2005, and then remained relatively silent on the subject and marketing of local and alternative foods until 2008. Aside from the 2005 document, an evaluation of press releases and newsletters for the time revealed very little involvement in promoting alternative food measures. This seems to indicate that there was a point in time where the discussion of nutritious foods changed to local foods, when eating right became about more than purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables. In 2008 there was an obvious shift in both Columbus Public Health's promotion of alternative food measures and the type of language used to discuss food in its literature. Prior to 2008 the term 'fresh fruits and vegetables' was the one most commonly used to describe proper nutrition, but there has now been a shift to promoting *local* fresh food as the most ideal nutritional choice. This change represents a full adoption of alternative food discourses and has resulted in a direct increase in the marketing of alternative food as the answer to both the bodily and economic health for Columbus's residents by Columbus Public Health. This timing coincides with the growth of creative class development and the declaration of food as key asset in Columbus's marketing strategy to the creative class.

**Issues of Access**

“Tool” reflects the early stages of an ongoing awareness about food access in Columbus. It was “developed as a self-help resource for anyone wanting to work with others to find ways to bring healthier foods into their neighborhood” (Columbus Public Health, 2005, p.2). This early document reflects the ongoing ideology that it is up to neighborhood residents to rectify the lack of food access in their neighborhoods. It tacitly acknowledges that many Columbus neighborhoods are dealing with a food access problem; however, the solution presented is that the city will provide informational tools to local residents so that they might learn how to ameliorate the problem, but it is up to the residents to actually enact these changes. This seems to have set the tone for how Columbus wishes to address food access in its neighborhoods and represents a neoliberal approach to the issue of food access. The document outlines a set of ideas and possibilities for increasing fresh food access, but the language of local food and 'good' food is absent from this early document. This is significant because this demonstrates that Columbus Public Health's initial involvement with alternative food was limited to increasing the amount of fresh vegetables and fruits that residents consume and in raising awareness about the need to eat generally more nutritious foods. The section titled “What Does it mean to Eat Healthy” includes recommendations for the types of canned and frozen fruits and vegetables that are the healthiest (low-salt, in its own juices, etc.) and there is no mention of organic or local food (Columbus Public Health, 2005, p.1). This section even encourages the use of frozen and canned produce because that there is significant lull in the growing season in Columbus that makes their use necessary. In contrast, the city's food rhetoric today lacks any mention of the idea of the seasonality and availability of local foods. Current discussions completely omit the concept that the
growing season in the 'local' area of Ohio—or even the Midwest—is not year-round, and therefore limits the usefulness of relying on farmers markets and community gardens for fresh produce to a few months out of the year. The presence of this discussion in the 2005 document suggests that there has been a shift in how Columbus Public Health has chosen to discuss healthy nutrition. There is now a very explicit discussion that promotes locally grown food as the best nutritional choice regardless of Ohio’s growing season and the questionable availability of local produce year round. When this issue was brought up in an interview with a Columbus Public Health employee, she quickly acknowledged that “that was a good question” but did not elaborate (Columbus Public Health Interview, 2011). If this is taken into consideration food access in many of these neighborhoods remains the same for almost nine months of the year. The question then becomes who is better served by these local food initiatives, the underserved populations that lack food access or the creative class that are attracted to this kind of food policy?

While this document reflects a language no longer used to promote food, it does foreshadow the growth of farmers markets, community gardens, and corner-store initiatives as an answer to Columbus's food access problems. Table 1 is a complete list of the suggested strategies to alleviate food access issues in the “Improving Access to Healthy Food: A Community Planning Tool” document:
While this list presents a variety of choices, the document as a whole points to certain strategies as being more viable than others. Throughout the document farmers markets are stressed as an ideal choice for increasing food access and bolstering local economy. Strategies two and three, which concern grocery stores, appear early on the list but are not highly encouraged and the difficulty of enacting these strategies is emphasized in the document. The promotion of farmers markets and community gardens over these other strategies is not explicit, but of the eight examples of ‘learning cases' presented, four of them concern community gardens or farmers markets (Columbus Public Health, 2005).

Of the strategies in this list, there are three that Columbus Public Health currently utilizes: farmers markets, community gardens, and corner-store projects. It seems no coincidence that these are the three strategies that are most heavily emphasized in the discourse and literature of the alternative food movement. If the other strategies are being utilized in Columbus's neighborhoods, they are not being promoted and marketed by Columbus Public Health to the same extent as farmers markets and community gardens.

Table 1: Suggested Strategies to Increase Food Access (Columbus Public Health, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 1</th>
<th>Working With Corner Grocery Stores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2</td>
<td>Working with Existing Supermarkets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3</td>
<td>Bringing New Supermarkets to a Neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4</td>
<td>Starting a Food Cooperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 5</td>
<td>Creating a Buying Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 6</td>
<td>Food Kiosks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 7</td>
<td>Farmers’ Markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 8</td>
<td>Community Gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 9</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
gardens, although the current corner store initiative is in its beginning stages so marketing evidence in not available at this time.

Columbus Public Health appears to be taking the first steps to quantitatively evaluate the food access problem in Columbus. In February of 2011 it began a food access mapping project and released a document detailing the specifics of the project in a document titled “Mapping Food Access”. The document discusses different barriers to food access and moves the discussion away from food deserts because most areas in Columbus “are not food 'deserts'- they have food sources” (Columbus Public Health, 2011b, p.14). The problem of food access is framed as an issue of balance between access to fast food and access to healthy food. The goal of this is to project is to identify “locations where accessing less nutritious food may be the easiest option” (Columbus Public Health, 2011b, p.14). The options presented to increase food access are “full-service groceries, improving corner stores, farmers markets, mobile produce vans, community gardens, and CSA's” (Columbus Public Health, 2011b, p. 14). These options are very similar to those presented in the 2005 food access document, except all of them save one represent a turn to methods espoused by the alternative food movement. This represents an attempt to mitigate the problem of food access with non-traditional measures. Unlike the 2005 document there is no mention of the seasonality of many of the solutions proffered by this current document. In this case, a neighborhood may appear to have better food access than it effectively does, if that access is dependent on gardens and farmers markets. In that case, the limitations imposed by the region's growing season mean that for more than half the year, residents do not have the access the document describes. This suggests that these attempts to increase food access are not
as broad in coverage as they appear. For the city and Columbus Public Health, it would be problematic to discuss the seasonal issues inherent in many of these plans. It appears more advantageous to applaud the immediate successes of these programs without questioning the actual effect they have on increasing food access year round. Solutions such as farmers markets and community gardens rely on the perceived goodness of these methods which may obfuscate the actual impact these methods have on increasing food access year round in communities. This document makes the claim that “all residents should have the opportunity to make choices that allow them to be healthy, regardless of their income, education, or ethnic background” (Columbus Public Health, 2011c). However having focused its energies to alternative food solutions, the program falls short in accounting for the inability of these programs to provide a stable long term solution to an ongoing problem. Instead the purpose of this mapping project according to a Columbus Public Health employee is to better identify the best areas to add new farmers markets and community gardens so that there is complete coverage. The ease of executing these types of programs and the idea that this is the correct way to provide good food to our communities has become the selling point of the programs, rather than their actual ability to create permanent change for area residents. This does not mean these programs are in no way beneficial, but it is necessary to begin to question the idea that these programs can produce a permanent infrastructure for better food provision and better neighborhoods.

The most recent example of one of these current initiatives is a program to bring fresh food to corner stores. The program targets corner stores in the Franklinton neighborhood of Columbus, which, as already discussed, is currently in the process of
extensive government-funded gentrification and is the site of a new art and living community. The project, entitled Fresh Foods Here, is in the beginning stages and represents the first example of a program that works with businesses to create changes in the food available in a neighborhood. Due to the vast number of vacant houses and its proximity to downtown Columbus, this neighborhood represents a clean slate for the city. The city is using this neighborhood to demonstrate how creative class development strategies can transform a neighborhood into a lively active place. The choice of this neighborhood for the new corner store initiative is purposeful and contributes to the building of a new image of this neighborhood as innovative and forward thinking. The Franklinton neighborhood already possesses a large community gardening network and a food kiosk, both of which have been established by residents new to the area in the past few years. In general these new residents exemplify the creative class resident sought by the City of Columbus; usually young and artistic they have been the active force behind the neighborhood community gardens, local art festivals and various other creative endeavors. According to a Columbus Public Health employee the emphasis of this program is “not just fresh fruits and vegetables. They are trying to get whole grain products and dairy, low sodium, low sugar” foods on the shelves of two local corners stores (Columbus Public Health Interview, 2011). This represents a program put forth by Columbus Public Health that has remained relatively free of the ethics normally associated with 'good' food and a possible return to the necessity of bringing nutritious foods to underserved populations in Columbus.

However the corner-store program is also being lauded for its ability to transcend normal food provision goals by other members of the organizing committee. Patrick
Kaufman, one of the creators of this program, co-director of the Franklinton Community Gardens and, importantly, one of the neighborhood's creative class residents, emphasizes that this program is about more than food. It is about teaching people how to eat right with cooking classes, and “there will also be food for the soul. We want to have an outdoor concert series where local artists can play” (Madigan, 2011, p.45). While this program centers around food, it is clear by comments such as this that it is also about creating a certain type of culture surrounding food and providing local long-term residents with something currently perceived to be missing. This concept of ’feed the body, feed the soul’ is popular in alternative food discourse and is often invoked as a way of making these programs about more than just food. In this case it refers to community - a specific type of community that fits in with the city's current plans to market the neighborhood to creative class residents and businesses.

**Columbus Public Health and farmers markets**

Columbus Public Health joined Columbus's fervor over farmers markets by establishing one in 2007 on its own front lawn. The publicly stated motivation for this was to establish a market where WIC participants could use farmers market vouchers. Columbus Public Health had been issuing the vouchers for WIC participants to buy fresh food at markets, but had only a “50% redemption rate” due to a lack of access to farmers markets (Columbus Public Health Interview, 2011). In order to solve this issue the Columbus Public Health decided to provide a market on the campus to increase participation and to draw in other public health visitors and increasing the use of WIC vouchers to 90% (Columbus Public Health Interview, 2011). “The markets are open to neighborhood residents, the general public and participants of the Women, Infants and
Children (WIC) nutrition program and the Ohio Direction Card. WIC participants will receive a coupon book on site for free market produce” (Columbus Public Health Release, 2009). Statements such as this show that one of Columbus Public Health's goals is to provide a targeted program to provide fresh foods to the underserved residents of Columbus. This goes hand in hand with the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program which provides senior citizens with fifty dollar vouchers to use to purchase produce at farmers markets. This program “allows low income seniors in Central Ohio to obtain locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs” (Columbus City Council Highlights, 2010). These voucher programs represent the efforts of Columbus Public Health to target and address food access for specific portions of the population.

Columbus Public Health's farmers market has now become an annual event and occurs in late summer for a total of three Thursday afternoons. The frequency of this market is notable because it is only available three times a year and only for a few hours. While it may help increase food access for those three weeks it by no means makes a permanent or semi-permanent impact on access to healthy foods, but it is portrayed by Columbus Public Health and Mayor Coleman as having a significant impact, with little mention of how these people are served the other 362 days a year. The farmers market is painted as having more of an impact on neighborhood food access than it actually does, as indicated by statements such as: “Too many hard working families do not have access to the fresh produce they need for a healthy and vibrant life. Farmers markets like this one are another way our public health partners and I are working to build healthier and safer neighborhoods” (Columbus Public Health Release, 2009).

In the publicity put forth by Columbus Public Health, the farmers market has been
framed as an answer to chronic health conditions, diabetes, and obesity. These statements imply that the presence of access to fresh foods within a neighborhood through the markets will solve health issues related to improper nutrition. “The markets provide easier access to healthier foods and support Columbus Public Health’s mission of healthier and safer people because many chronic health conditions – including diabetes, overweight and obesity – are related to poor nutrition” (Columbus Public Health, Media Advisory, 2010). Statements such as this subtly invoke the alternative food rhetoric that fresh food access is somehow better achieved through the use of farmers markets. Once again projects such as this ignore the fact that markets do not represent a permanent change in food access for residents in these areas. Access to food three afternoons a year does not represent the permanent increase in access to healthy food needed to address the ongoing health problems of a whole class of people.

The city’s marketing of the farmers market promotes it as the great equalizer in terms of food access. Columbus Public Health does not simply promote its farmers markets as a site of healthful nutrition. When you visit the Web page for the market the headline is “Buy fresh fruits and vegetables...and so much more” (Columbus Public Health, 2011a). This implies that there is something extra to be gained from attending the farmers market besides fresh food. The Web page does not advertise that there are other items available for sale at the farmers market so this term 'so much more' seems to be indicating that there is something less tangible available from attending the market. Tag lines such as this are meant to evoke certain feelings towards the markets and are the result of the discourses that promote markets as something more than just a place to purchase food. The 'more' being offered here promotes the idea that the market is an
event where fun and community can be had. However, as is the case with alternative food discourse, Columbus Public Health remains unable to define exactly what is being offered, despite its awareness of the importance of advertising the farmers market as more than just a place to buy food. It is in this awareness that the effect of the intermingling discourse of alternative foods and creative class development becomes reproduced as an urban amenity. Defining and actually providing 'more' is not as important as being sure to promote the idea that there is something extra to be had simply by attending the market, that it is a place for fun and 'good' food.

Columbus's Healthy Food Image

The City of Columbus has chosen to use community gardens and farmers markets as a marketing tactic to exemplify how Columbus is evolving into its new, as-yet-undefined identity. According to Mayor Coleman: “Reform isn't just about government. It's also about reforming the way we live, our health, our lifestyles and our environment. A prosperous city is a healthy city and an active city, and it is time to step up our fight against childhood obesity and diabetes” (Office of the Mayor, 2010c). Coleman indicates that the promotion of Columbus as a healthy city is key to Columbus's economic success. Mayor Coleman attempts to evoke the image of Columbus as an active and vibrant city, a concept heavily stressed by creative class development. While this statement appears to be concerned with the promotion of a healthier Columbus, it primarily serves to highlight the new active image of the city.

This goal of manufacturing such an image is exemplified by the 2008 creation of the Institute of Active Living which “implements strategies to make Columbus a more active, vibrant place to live” (Columbus City Council Highlights, 2008a). Much of the
Institute's programming represents Columbus Public Health programs already in place, suggesting that the main goal of the Institute is to increase the visibility of these programs. This was confirmed in interviews in which both Mike Brown and a public health employee emphasized that the purpose of the institute was to promote active living, “that’s all she [Barb Seckler, the head of the institute] does. She just goes around talking and encouraging people to do more for active living” (Mike Brown Interview, 2011). The Institute is promoting alternative food methods as a key part of this new active and vibrant Columbus. Listed on its website under 'Suggestions on How to Live a More Active Life' are items including “Enjoy nutritious, fresh and local food. Go to a farmer’s market. Help plant a community garden” (Columbus Public Health, n.d.). Again, the emphasis is on the acquisition of nutritious food from very specific venues. The implication is that by going to the market or the garden you are participating in a healthier, more active way to obtain food than you would be by visiting a local supermarket. This serves as another example of the fetishization of local food as 'more' by Columbus Public Health. Implicit in these promotions by Columbus Public Health is that in order to be truly good for your health, food must be acquired locally from either a farmers market or a garden. It is no longer enough to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, but you must also participate in the garden or interact at a market in order to acquire all the necessary health benefits. The truth of the matter is that this website and the Institute promotes a very specific image of Columbus, an image of an active city that promotes initiatives such as biking and farmers markets as the markers of a creative class fun and entertainment.
Community gardens and Columbus

According to Mike Brown, “what government here [in Columbus] is trying to do is to kinda kick start that a little bit an authentic return to urban gardening. Which I think is phenomenal as a public policy goal” (Mike Brown, Interview, 2011). Columbus's investment in the community gardening movement is intentional and the result of the intermingling of creative class development strategies and alternative food discourses. The movement has been spearheaded by Mayor Coleman, who has embraced the idea of community gardens with an unapologetic zeal. The vigorous promotion of community gardens as the ideal solution for issues related to food access, community infrastructure, and the health of residents has resulted in a distinct discourse about the benefits of community gardens for neighborhood development and quality of life improvements. As such community gardens represent an ideal answer to many of the qualities sought in creative class development strategies, as already emphasized by Councilwoman Tyson's quote with which the chapter opened outlining the importance of community gardens for Columbus. The growth of community gardens in Columbus has led to positive marketing outcomes for the city, but it remains nearly impossible to measure the magnitude of these outcomes for increased food access in the neighborhoods that have been targeted the most. The marketing power of Columbus's involvement with the community garden movement is somewhat more quantifiable, and has resulted in positive and perceived successes for city officials for creative class development. Columbus's developing 'green', healthy, and 'foodie' culture image is authenticated by community gardens that provide the perfect example how 'homegrown' this image is.

This is most evident in Mayor Coleman's community garden initiative for the
The mayor has set a goal to have 500 community gardens in the city by the year 2012, the city's bicentennial, an attempt to drastically increase the mere number of community gardens within the city, currently around 200. How he arrived on this number is unclear and has never been explained, perhaps it is a round number that sounds impressive. If that is the case this suggests that this is more about image creation than an initiative motivated by a specific need or intended outcome. Press releases surrounding this project reiterate the belief in the gardens as key to Columbus's development activity: “Mayor Coleman supports community gardening and believes gardens can produce many benefits to our community – from increasing access to healthy food, beautifying neighborhoods, anchoring re-development activities, and reconnecting neighbors” (Office of the Mayor, 2010b, p. 2). Comments like this express the idea that the city positions community gardens as crucial for the redevelopment of Columbus neighborhoods. Community gardens have again been framed as more than just a source of local food; they are key to Columbus's development plans. The gardens are an important aspect to this bicentennial celebration because they help to authenticate the green, local food story that the city wants to market. Mayor Coleman emphasized this in his 2011 State of the City Address: “our bicentennial will celebrate our past, launch us into the future and fill each of us with civic pride. But most importantly, the bicentennial presents to us a great opportunity to promote economic prosperity by telling our story” (Office of the Mayor, 2011). The 500 community gardens are an integral part of this story telling experience that Mayor Coleman is creating for the city. The community gardens support the image of Columbus as a green, forward-thinking city that is using alternative food to propel the local economy into the future. All of these are traits highly
emphasized to attract creative class residents to cities.

Gardens as policy

These ideas have been officially incorporated into development policy for the city. The City of Columbus has begun to include community gardens in the Department of Development’s “Planning Guide 2011: The Guide to Area and Neighborhood Planning”. This guide “establishes the basis for undertaking neighborhood based planning in the City of Columbus. Its purpose is to explain the role and function of planning, the process and methodologies undertaken by the Planning Division when engaging our neighborhoods, and presenting a set of best practices to guide policy development” (Department of Development, 2011b). Community gardens are included in the section “Policy Best Practices” (Department of Development, 2011a, p. 28). This is the first example of community gardens being promoted as true development policy, not just as a project or initiative. Since this document is used to engage local residents with the city’s development plans, it is important that the city is promoting a tactic that actually requires little to no involvement by the city. The reasoning behind this inclusion is that “Community gardening offers many benefits to Columbus neighborhoods, including the provision of fresh food, building community, and improving neighborhood beauty and property values” (Department of Development, 2011a, p.28). While the concept of the gardens beautifying a neighborhood is a commonly cited benefit, this statement is explicit in the idea that it will increase property values for area residents.

Franklin Park Conservatory as the leader of the gardening movement

The community gardening movement in Columbus is centered on the Franklin Park Conservatory, which we already saw was a key institution in the city’s promotion of
itself as a center of arts and creativity. Much of this movement stems from the conservatory's Growing to Green program, a “community outreach program, founded in 2000, [that] has assisted in the start-up and renovation of more than 150 community gardens, school gardens and city beautification, projects” (Scotts Miracle-Gro, 2009). As the conservatory is widely acknowledged as a cultural institution the Growing to Green program provides an explicit link between Columbus's culture and the community gardening movement. The participation of the conservatory in the community gardening movement helps to legitimize the culture to be garnered from participating in the various outcomes of alternative food. In 2006 the Franklin Park Conservatory became the home to the American Community Gardening Association, a bi-national nonprofit organization that “supports community gardening by facilitating the formation and expansion of state and regional community gardening networks; developing resources in support of community gardening; and, encouraging research and conducting educational programs” (American Community Gardening Association (ACGA), n.d.) . The presence of the ACGA helps to lend even more authority to the conservatory's promotion of community gardens. No longer solely a cultural institution dabbling in the alternative food movement, the conservatory has become recognized as a national center for community gardening. This represents a coup by the city for promoting itself as a leader in the community gardening movement.

The support generated for the conservatory's community gardening efforts is unprecedented. The city has funded a large portion of the conservatory's master plan which includes a “4 acre Community Garden Campus” (Columbus City Council Highlights, 2010b), which has been more highly promoted than the other aspects of the
master plan. In 2009 the conservatory opened The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company
Community Garden campus, which is a 7-acre 'living classroom' (Scotts Miracle-Gro,
2009). This includes “the new American Electric Power Foundation Education Pavilion,
anchored by numerous vegetable and herb gardens, a learning center for horticulture and
environmental programming. The campus will also feature the newly renovated Chase
Community Garden Center, new home for the American Community Garden Association
(ACGA) and Franklin Park Conservatory’s education department” (Councilwoman
Tyson's Office, 2009). This unique project exemplifies the public-private partnerships
encouraged by entrepreneurial development; this is place-making in action. The changes
being made at the Franklin Park Conservatory indicate the creation of a unique cultural
center, with food as a centerpiece. The gardening center at the conservatory has its hand
in helping to establish most of the local neighborhood community gardens in the city.

The City of Columbus has taken to promoting one neighborhood community
garden over all others: the Linden Community Garden. The garden is located in the
South Linden neighborhood, a lower income area still dealing with the economic
downturn caused by the loss of industry and suburban flight. The creation of this garden
in 2010 represents the fulfillment of a 2003 neighborhood plan developed by the
Department of Development and the Linden community, which listed community gardens
as a solution to mitigate the effects of vacant lots in the neighborhood. The city used
federal funds from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program to tear down an abandoned
building in order to establish a community garden. Although it was the city that tore
down the building, the actual creation of the garden was done by volunteers. Supplies
and soil were donated by sponsors and the city made no monetary contribution to this
project. The city, despite its relatively meager investment in this project, has laid claim to this project due to its initial involvement with the demolition of the building and used it for several rounds of publicity throughout the project's completion. Projects such as this demonstrate the ease in which the city is able to achieve major public relations benefits for very little action or effort. The benefit of this publicity is that it helps to promote a distinct image of the city as a leader in community gardening.

According to Mayor Coleman, the goal of this project is “to replace this vacant and abandoned eyesore with a community garden that will produce fresh, nutritious food for this neighborhood as well as valuable learning experiences for young people” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2010). Again here we see the garden not simply just as a source of nutrition but weighted with these extra purposes. The city has promoted the garden as the answer to food access issues in the neighborhood. It “represents a step forward to increase access to convenient, affordable, fresh produce by expanding food production, processing and distribution to the Greater Linden neighborhood. The site will house additional community gardens, equipment, such as hoop houses, to extend the growing season, and a learning laboratory for Linden McKinley High School students” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2010). Fresh produce isn't the only thing planners say they hope to yield for the garden. The outcome of the belief in these added benefits of community gardens such as this is that these are the same benefits espoused by creative development strategies. Community gardens, like the Linden Community Garden, help to authenticate the story of Columbus as healthy, green, active and rich in 'foodie' culture.

The promotion of Columbus as a leader in Community Gardening

In 2010 Mayor Coleman had a community garden built outside of city hall on the
grounds of the old police station. Coleman's goal was “to plant seeds to inspire community gardens throughout Columbus” (Office of the Mayor, 2010a, p.1). Coleman emphasizes in this same newsletter that community gardens “can provide so many benefits” but these benefits are left undefined (Office of the Mayor, 2010a, p.1). Twelve plots were constructed and the food was donated to a local food pantry, but the garden was destroyed after its first season due to construction. This construction was planned before the garden was built, which seems to represent the idea that the garden was never meant to be an ongoing project for city hall. The acknowledgment that the garden would most likely be destroyed within the coming year suggests that the purpose of the garden was to capitalize on the marketing power of creating an image that the city was fully participating in the community gardening movement. The garden was later moved to the terrace of city hall and presented as a new version of the city hall community garden, but a visit to the garden in July 2011, revealed that it now consists of three raised beds that hold a handful of plants. This new city hall garden has generated a certain amount of press and the intent seems to be to keep up the appearance that city hall is actively involved with community gardens and is serving as an example for the community at large.

What is most important about the city hall community garden is its presence. The creation of this garden at city hall may not represent a thriving, sustainable garden, but it does promote a vision of Mayor Coleman and the city as dedicated to the community gardening movement. At the unveiling of the original city hall garden Councilwoman Tyson commented that “these gardens will feed the mind, the body and the soul. They are creative outlets for active living that lead to healthier lifestyles and stronger communities
in Columbus” (Columbus City Council Advisories, 2010b). As was previously noted, the concept of “feed the mind, the body, and the soul” serves as another example of how the ethics of alternative food are being espoused by the City of Columbus. The garden is once again portrayed as offering more than just food, suggesting that it is a panacea for Columbus's residents. Tyson’s comments are an explicit statement about the 'garden' as a creative outlet, heavily suggesting that the city views community gardens as a part of a creative class development strategy. Most of these community gardens are in underserved neighborhoods and are offered to residents as an answer to their lack of access to fresh foods, yet it seems that the real target of many of these policies is the creative class, with limited increase in food access as an added benefit.

The city views the community garden movement as yet another means to compete with and compare itself to other cities. Specifically, the city hall garden has been portrayed as the ultimate commitment to the movement “join[ing] the company of cutting edge cities like Portland, San Francisco, Baltimore, Boston, New York City, Colorado Springs and the rooftop gardens of Chicago’s City Hall. Every city has a unique spin on the need for their garden and who tends to it, but all these great cities agree with Columbus that it is important for our local government to get our hands dirty and grow towards becoming a healthier, active place to live” (Councilwoman Tyson's Office, 2010b). These kinds of statements suggest the ongoing desire for Columbus to showcase itself as on par with cities that have active and successful images. The gardening movement is used to construct Columbus's image as an active city and one that engages with alternative food to create authenticity for its new healthy image.

One of the most direct ways that the city is involved in Columbus's community
garden movement is through its Land Bank Community Garden Program. This program offers city-owned vacant land for community garden use. The license costs ten dollars and requires a background check. This program is promoted by the city as an innovative method of turning neighborhood eyesores into productive land use. While the program is successful in providing much needed land to community garden groups, it is not without its downsides. The first is that the use of a background check as part of the application process. While this policy has very practical motivations, it limits the type of 'citizen' able to participate in this program. This limitation is especially important because the city has promoted community gardens as an answer in low-income and high crime neighborhoods. The second is that it offers very limited land tenure to gardeners, as the leases are only good for one year. Historically if the city were to find a buyer or better use for the land, the community gardeners can be denied their license for the next year. There has been a recent change in this policy and the “Land Redevelopment Office will consider an annual renewal provision for gardens that receive grant funding and are continually maintained” (Land Redevelopment Office, n.d.). However this new policy still fails to guarantee land tenure. Instead it appears to exist only to placate the fears of community garden groups. This project once again shows the city's efforts to put forth minimal expenditure for maximum marketing returns. The city loses nothing by allowing vacant lots be used for community gardens and can use the program to exhibit dedication to the community gardening movement. Programs such as this represent a neoliberal approach to solving the problems caused by the vacant lots. Neighborhood residents and groups do the work required to turn the lots from an eyesore to a marketable city amenity, and the city is then able to appropriate this work as its own.
In 2010 the city further solidified its commitment to the community gardening movement by establishing a Community Produce Gardening Grant. This program began in 2010 as an addition to the Landscape Enhancement grant program the city has been supporting for several years. The program was spearheaded by Councilwoman Tyson in order to “support existing landscape and community garden sites. An emphasis is placed on sustainability of the garden, and the demonstrated and anticipated positive impact to the community” (Councilwoman Tyson's Office, 2010a). One of the most noteworthy aspects of this program is that it supports existing gardens rather than creates new ones. Mayor Coleman's main push has been to create more gardens, while this grant program appears to acknowledge the instability of many of these projects and chooses to recognize the programs with a history of success. This represents one of the first efforts of the city to establish a lasting community garden network. This statement also emphasizes the philosophy that the gardens must provide more than food to local residents by having a 'positive impact on the community'. This requirement while never defined, appears as criteria on the grant application. This represents the adoption of a discourse that has leveraged community gardens as an urban amenity easily adopted to fulfill the increased 'quality of life' and lively neighborhood goals touted in much of the creative class policy papers previously discussed.

The winners of the 2011 grants were announced at the city's Earth Day celebration, once again underscoring the gardens role in the 'green' image of Columbus. The impetus for supporting this grant project is the city's adoption of the community garden as the answer to almost every problem. This is made clear in the city's press release for the grant program which emphasizes that “community gardens promote
healthy lifestyles by providing fresh food for families, encourage engagement among residents of all ages, create green jobs in an improving economy and increase the overall pride in a neighborhood” (Columbus City Council Releases, 2011a). Statements such as this demonstrate the interleaving of alternative food discourses and the creative class development discourses. The intermingling of these two discourses resulted in a small grant program being imbued with the ability to contribute to the city's desired developmental outcomes. This is furthered by the presence of a public-private partnership with Scotts Miracle-Gro. These grants consisted of monetary awards of up to $4,000 and in-kind donations from Scotts, representing a continuation of the heavy public-private partnership the city has established with Scotts to support the community gardening efforts in Columbus. This in-kind contribution from Scotts includes money to take the community gardening classes offered at the Franklin Park Conservatory, again emphasizing the essential role that the Franklin Park Conservatory has played in presenting community gardens as essential to the creative culture of Columbus. This has not happened by accident, the policy papers of the CCLC and the Creative Columbus Policy Steering Committee promoted the conservatory and its gardening efforts as key to the ongoing efforts to expand the cultural footprint of Columbus to include new forms of cultural amenities, namely 'good' food.

**Conclusion**

In sum, for the city of Columbus, community gardens have been marketed as a cultural amenity that complements creative class development strategies. Councilwoman Tyson, along with Mayor Coleman, has led the city’s engagement with community gardens as a means to attract creative class residents to the city. Excerpted here is text
from one of Councilwoman Tyson’s 2010 newsletters:

“These cultural characteristics are attractive to young professionals and new businesses who flock to cities like San Francisco, Portland, and Chicago in part because of their urban core and known commitment to active, healthy lifestyles. By supporting community gardening, and putting together a task force to address some of the barriers to community gardening like access to water, I am confident that just like our group of volunteers here at City Hall and in the over 200 community gardens already thriving in the city, we will become a model to others. Good food comes from the ground, not the drive-thru, and the physical health benefits of gardening are just as good for us as the community building benefits.”

(Councilwoman Tyson's Office, 2010b)

Tyson’s comments are the most explicit statements an elected official has made about the city’s interest in Columbus's community gardening movement. These motivations are about more than the usual alternative food ethics, this is not just about community building and a green image. Instead the emphasis is on the ability of Columbus to leverage the gardens as a desirable cultural amenity. This turns Columbus's community garden movement into more than a resource for food; the presence of the movement is itself an amenity. As evidenced earlier by other comments made by councilwoman Tyson, the gardens are seen as another tactic in the city’s campaign to attract and retain young professionals to the city. Again there is reference to a group of cities that Columbus wants to both imitate and compete against, yet the emphasis is placed on Columbus becoming the leader in community gardening. This suggests that Columbus is attempting to build a part of its image around the community garden movement, that the city can create a name for itself through the success of the movement. The reference to 'good food' evokes many of the ethics attached to the alternative food movement, but here it is presented as secondary to the creative class benefits of the movement. Councilwoman Tyson expounds upon the means in which the community
garden can be used as a cultural amenity, but these normative ethics about garden producing 'good food' are presented as another less important benefit to the city at large. This group of statements represents how alternative food ethics and development policy construct the community garden as a creative class amenity.

It is clear from this evidence that Columbus has adopted many of the ethics attached to alternative food and used them to present farmers markets and community gardens as the answer to various issues. It has presented these alternative food practices as 'green' and healthy, and it has imbued them with the ability to foster the local economy and replace missing infrastructure. Yet no metrics have been developed to measure how successful alternative food is at accomplishing all of these things—and in the end, they seem beside the point. Rather, as comments like Councilwoman Tyson's made explicit, there is another motivation at work than the ones usually stated. Community gardens and farmers markets have become a part Columbus's attempts to build a new image and attract creative class residents in its efforts to compete for business investment and wealth. As a result, the true measure of success of many of these programs and initiatives is not how well they increase food access or contribute to the community, but how well they are received and seen as authentic pieces of Columbus's culture for creative class residents and business investors.
Chapter 4: Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued that alternative food has been reproduced as an urban amenity in the City of Columbus, Ohio due to the ethics attached to alternative food combined with the rise of urban entrepreneurialism and creative class development strategies. U.S. cities, influenced by the teachings of urban studies theorists (chief among them Richard Florida) have shifted from providing services to their residents to embracing a neoliberal approach to developing a community infrastructure. When cities view issues such as food access through this neoliberal lens, its approach to addressing issues of food access becomes convoluted and obscured.

This thesis has examined the motivations and outcomes of city planning that are both tangentially and directly involved in the provision of food for residents of Columbus, Ohio. Cities such as Columbus have increasingly embraced the idea of city-to-city competition and the expectation that they must distinguish themselves from peer cities in order to attract creative class citizenry. The City of Columbus has long sought to develop an image or brand for itself—and often fallen short. It has positioned itself as a tech town and, more recently, as a vibrant active city with a strong arts culture. Complementary to that vision of Columbus is that of the city as a “foodie” town. The City of Columbus has made a de facto decision that alternative food—specifically, community gardens and farmers markets—is an essential amenity for attracting creative class residents. And while some elements of the city's food scene have arisen organically,
many have occurred with the explicit support of the City of Columbus. The City, in marketing its efforts around alternative food, has framed the matter as the answer to the issue of food access for Columbus's under-served populations. The City of Columbus's acknowledgment of the problem of food access, and its stated desire to address the problem, is evidence that it sees itself with a responsibility to engage in solving those issues. A central aim of the thesis, then, is to examine how Columbus has set out to fulfill its responsibility to address food access for under-served populations. While serving those needy populations is the stated intent behind the City's backing of community gardens and farmers markets, such alternative food amenities are not necessarily practical solutions to meeting the needs of under-served residents. What this thesis finds, however, is that they are appealing to the creative class the City seeks to woo. The ethics attached to these alternative food amenities allows community gardens and farmers markets to be promoted by the City as active, 'green', healthy, and sustainable, all significant attractors to this more elite population.

This thesis is a response to current calls in the critical geography literature to more thoroughly examine the alternative food movement using a critical approach to understand how the ethics attached to the provisioning of 'good' food in the United States is reproduced in urban areas (Barnett, 2010; Buller, 2010; Friedberg, 2010; Goodman, M., Maye, & Holloway, 2010). Of utmost interest for this thesis is the ways in which alternative food has been imbued with specific ethics, which have been applied to this responsibility to serve the needs of under-served neighborhoods. I have examined how the normative definitions surrounding the alternative food movement and the socially constructed ideas about the ‘goodness’ of alternative food have become embedded in
current discourses surrounding the provisioning of 'good' food by Columbus’s City Council and Mayor’s Office. Given that the alternative food movement is still evolving, there has been little research conducted on how this movement has been interpreted and executed by policy makers. To date, little work has been done to understand how the ethics of alternative food are reproduced in urban governance. This research is limited to the governance as produced by the Mayor’s Office, City Council, Columbus Public Health and the Department of Development in Columbus. A point for further research would be to examine governance at a larger scale, including non-profits and neighborhood groups.

This thesis ties together David Harvey's urban entrepreneurialism theory and critical geographers' perspectives on alternative food as a framework to analyze the links between creative class development strategies and current alternative food discourses. This has resulted in an examination of the present-day promotion of alternative food strategies such as community gardens and farmers markets by cities as an urban amenity, using the City of Columbus, Ohio as a case study. It examines how the ideologies of neoliberalism, urban entrepreneurialism, and alternative food work with each other, revealing insights into how these ideologies have become reified through their interaction. The promotion of alternative food as an answer to the social and physical ills of disenfranchised neighborhoods has become embedded in the currently en vogue creative class discourses and city development strategies.

This research provides a critique of the alternative food literature that has promoted alternative food as a social and ecological panacea. My research seeks to more thoroughly examine how alternative food is promoted as ethical in terms of sustainability,
health and social justice, and to respond to current calls to examine how these ethical attachments are reproduced. The embedded nature of these ideas of 'good' and 'bad' food within urban governance—and the development of 'good' food as an urban creative class amenity—has hindered our ability to evaluate the efficacy of city initiatives addressing food access. This work helps to reevaluate current discourses surrounding the 'goodness' of alternative food in order to more fully understand the implications of 'good' food as they are enacted in creative class-centered urban practices and policies. The alternative food movement offers city governments an attractive solution to mediating the problems of disenfranchised neighborhoods and works seamlessly with urban entrepreneurial development strategies. Florida's creative class rhetoric depends heavily on the existence of urban entrepreneurial development strategies and represents a more targeted continuation of many of the ideas put in place by urban entrepreneurialism.

Trends in Columbus's development strategies exemplify David Harvey's (1989) definitions for urban entrepreneurialism, specifically concentrating on public-private partnerships, place-making, and, most importantly, the search for local identity. Columbus has embraced the discourse of urban entrepreneurialism as a vehicle by which to create an image for itself and, in doing so, make it more competitive against other cities in attracting wealthy residents and businesses. This research shows that the City of Columbus has absorbed Richard Florida's creative class discourse and uses it to guide its urban entrepreneurial development strategy, which is in turn being used to construct a new, more marketable image for the city. This image-building is taken to be more than simply a means to compete for creative class residents, but ultimately more importantly, a means to reinvent the City of Columbus. Most notably, there was a concentrated push in
2006/2007 by Columbus City Council and local arts organizations to make the arts a defining part of Columbus's development strategy. The trend at this time was to expand the standard definition of “arts and culture” beyond institutions such as museums or live music to include the sciences and, notably, food. The City of Columbus has embraced food culture as a key element of its creative class-driven image development, as detailed by Mike Brown's and Councilwoman Priscilla Tyson's statements. The effectiveness of this new culture has yet to be evidenced, but what matters is that the Mayor's Office and Experience Columbus believe it to be an effective strategy for the promotion of Columbus to businesses, residents and tourists. This culture is not made out of chain restaurants; it depends on the restaurants and businesses of alternative food. The community gardens and farmers markets discussed in this thesis are perceived as essential to selling the authenticity of Columbus's burgeoning food culture. Florida's influence on Columbus is apparent in its use of creative class-centered development policies, which have resulted in amenity-led development with policies that strongly favor arts and culture and the creative class. The outcome of this is a slew of policies and initiatives that appear to serve the needy, but instead are much more successful at creating a desirable image for creative class residents.

The City has taken an active role—or, on occasion, the appearance of an active role—in initiatives that promote community gardens and farmers markets as a means to 'green' Columbus, improve residents' health, and increase their access to fresh food. This research indicates that there are other underlying motivations for the city's involvement. Councilwoman Tyson’s comments make these motivations explicit: the community gardens and farmers markets are amenities for the attraction and retention of creative
class residents. The Franklin Park Conservatory, as a center for community gardening, and, now, an active part of the arts landscape, represents the adoption of community gardens as a cultural institution in the City of Columbus. The inclusion of the conservatory in the many arts policy documents as a shining example of the new definition of culture has led to the adoption of food—specifically, local food—as an established cultural amenity. In order to attract the type of residents it desires, the City of Columbus has folded the presumed ethics of alternative food into creative class development strategies in order to promote Columbus as a green, active, healthy city. Community gardens have been proffered as the exemplar of healthy green development in Columbus, but the discussion falls short in examining how successful these gardens are at achieving their intended publicly stated goals of increasing healthy food access.

City leaders have used community gardens as a linchpin in their marketing of Columbus's 'homegrown' creative story, and the City has dedicated no small portion of its programs, initiatives and media outreach to the Columbus alternative food movement. Columbus's promotion of community gardens is the preeminent example of how this framework comes together. In its literature, the City promotes community gardens as a means to address issues of food access, health, and sustainability in urban neighborhoods. As such, it embodies the benefits and the downfalls of much of the alternative food movement. Such a promotion is a prime example of neoliberal ideologies that encourage residents to “grow” themselves out of their neighborhood infrastructure. This ideology, which in Columbus is seen in the promotion of an ideal type of citizenship through garden participation, has been fully adopted by the Mayor's Office. Such an ideology folds into the urban entrepreneurial goals of improving residents' quality of life and is
then extended into Florida's creative class rhetoric, because community gardens are promoted as an attractive solution to an ugly problem.

This research has sought to examine what problems alternative food amenities are truly solving and who is being served best by the City's intense cultivation of community gardens and farmers markets. The promotion of alternative food as an urban amenity obfuscates many of the supposed goals of the alternative food movement. The result is policies and initiatives that have the appearance of helping the disenfranchised, but lack any real measure of their success. This can in turn aid in reproducing the exact inequalities that the movement seeks to correct. This thesis is the first step in examining what role the City of Columbus may have in the reproduction of a movement that places the interests of one class of people, the creative class, over the underserved populations in Columbus.
References


97


Columbus Public Health, Media Advisory. (2010). *Farmers markets to provide fresh produce to neighborhood residents markets to be held July 29, August 5 and August 12 at Columbus Public Health*. Retrieved from http://publichealth.columbus.gov/health_pressroom.aspx


*Geoforum.* 39, p.1228-1240


