ACCESS TO FOOD SECURITY THROUGH MULTIPLE STREAMS:
LOCAL-LEVEL POLICY MAKING AND AGENDA SETTING

A Thesis
Presented
to the Faculty of
California State University, Chico

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Political Science

by
Joel Mitchell 2012
Summer 2012
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Joel Mitchell

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Professor Diana Dwyre for being my thesis chair, and I want to mention Professor Lori Weber for taking the position as co-chair. Without the emotional support of my wife, I may not have been capable to complete this thesis.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Understanding Policy Agenda Setting:</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Review of the Scholarly Literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingdon’s Multiple Stream Model</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Food Security as a Policy Problem and the</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Cleveland Resolution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Security</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Healthy Cleveland Resolution</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Analyzing Local-Level Agenda Setting</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Conclusion</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. “Healthy Cleveland” – Resolution No. 257-11</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Ordinance Number 208-07 (Urban Garden District)</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. List of Subjects to Interview</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Interview Schedule</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Research Subject Informed Consent Form</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Ordinance No. 1562-08, Zoning Code 347.02 (Restrictions on the Keeping of Farm Animals and Bees)</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Ordinance No. 1660-A-09 (Local Purchasing)</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Resolution No. 476-11 (Community Gardens)</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Independent Process Streams</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Coupling of Multiple Streams to Open a Policy Window</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Solution Coupling during an Open Problem Window</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Agenda Coupling during an Open Political Window</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Concentric Groups of Interest Group Coalitions</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Food Insecurity Problem Cycle</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cycle of Food Insecurity</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Visible Cluster of Interacting Food Policy Advocates in Cleveland</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Community</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Solution Cycle</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

ACCESS TO FOOD SECURITY THROUGH MULTIPLE STREAMS:
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by

Joel Mitchell

Master of Arts in Political Science
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Summer 2012

Food insecurity negatively affects vulnerable populations most severely. Additionally, unemployment, poverty, and the foreclosure crisis harm residents’ health in the deindustrialized city of Cleveland, Ohio. From 2007 to 2011, several policy proposals to increase food security made it on the city council’s agenda in Cleveland including the nation’s first zoning ordinance to protect urban gardens for food production. Then the Cleveland City Council unanimously adopted the “Healthy Cleveland Resolution” in 2011. I examine how and why these measures made it on to the policy agenda.

First, I present an overview of the food security problem and non-medical social determinants that affect the health of many Cleveland residents. To understand the recent policy-making in Cleveland on food security issues, I refine the agenda-setting model presented by John Kingdon in his seminal 1984 classic, Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies. Then I test the applicability of this modified Kingdon model using
Cleveland’s recent policy-making on food security as a case study. I hypothesize that Kingdon’s model is a good framework for understanding agenda setting such as that in Cleveland. However, I also hypothesize that interest group coalitions play an essential role as part of a broader policy community in local-level policy making and agenda setting, something that Kingdon did not stress.

I interviewed various actors to analyze the policymaking that produced the Healthy Cleveland Resolution. The interviews reveal various factors and conditions that show my modified Kingdon model is useful for understanding such local-level policy making and agenda setting.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Most urban areas have many residents living in undesirable circumstances. While it might be easy to identify these problems, it is not a simplistic process to solve them. As many eager policy actors try to participate in the solution process, various obstacles thwart their success. Since different actors enter into the discussion to solve problems carrying their own set of ideas, competing interests might stymie a viable solution from developing, and their individual solutions may fail to come together.

Numerous solutions to solve problems never appear in public policy proposals. Similarly, many thoughtful proposals might never make it to the governmental agenda where decision makers such as city council members engage in legislative deliberation. Moreover, they do not have to adopt or pass any proposals on the agenda. Without a majority of votes, or in some cases a two-thirds majority, numerous proposals simply fade away as historical footnotes.

Yet, a city council might adopt some proposals or pass them unanimously. Certainly, there must be an explanation for this political phenomenon. What political events transpired to push certain proposals onto the agenda? Why were these policy proposals made in the first place? Many scholars have sought to explain how and public policy is made. Specifically, why do some issues get the attention of policymakers and others do not?
Even when there seems to be general agreement that a policy problem exists, some issues do not always make it onto the policy agenda. One of the most important contributors to this investigation is John Kingdon, who proposed a policy agenda-setting model in his 1984 seminal classic, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Kingdon presents a theoretical model to explain how policy issues make it onto the policy agenda. He describes how three metaphorical process streams—the problem stream, policy stream, and political stream—open a window of opportunity for policy change when linked together. When this window opens, a proposal has an increased likelihood of making it onto the policy agenda. Then, once the issue is on the agenda, policymakers consider proposals to address the policy problem.

Kingdon’s multiple streams agenda-setting model has wide applicability. This is evident from the large body of related scholarly work that followed the publication of Kingdon’s book in 1984. Various scholars have tested the applicability of Kingdon’s model to a variety of national policy issues (see, for example, Ellington 2011; Gates 2010; Karlin and Humphreys 2007; Pralle 2009; Saint-Germain and Calamia 1996), to state-level policy making (Boscarino 2009; Galligan and Burgess 2005; Laird 2008; Travis and Zahariadis 2002; Young et al. 2010), to local-level policy making (Liu et al. 2010; Robinson and Eller 2010), and in different countries (Ahearne 2006; Brunner 2008; Bundgaard and Vrangbæk 2007; Exworthy and Powell 2004; Hyshka 2009; Khayesi and Amekudzi 2011; Ridde 2009; Schwartz and Johnson 2010; Zhu 2008). Generally, these scholars found that Kingdon’s model was a helpful and accurate theoretical model for understanding how issues make it onto the policy agenda. I too use Kingdon’s model to
test its applicability to local-level policy making on the issue of food security in Cleveland, Ohio.

My interest in the issue of food security led me to discover several food policy coalitions scattered across the United States with most of them located in large urban cities such as Cleveland, Baltimore, Buffalo, and Oakland. I found one food policy coalition responsible for several highly innovative proposals to boost local food security in Cleveland, Ohio. There have been a number of policy actions taken to address issues related to food insecurity in recent years, and Cleveland is at the forefront of localities attempting to address food security and related health issues with bottom up strategies. Of all the cities in America, why did these issues make it on to the policy agenda in Cleveland? And what was the process that resulted in the enactment of five pieces of legislation in Cleveland that addressed these policy problems?

I start with Kingdon’s model to analyze how and why these policy items made it on to the policy agenda in Cleveland. I hypothesize that the policymaking process in Cleveland on food security issues followed Kingdon’s multiple streams model. However, while collecting preliminary background information for my case study, it became clear that the significant role played by policy entrepreneurs within an interest group coalition in Cleveland could not be adequately explained using Kingdon’s model alone. Thus, I offer a modified version of Kingdon’s model with interest group coalitions as crucial players in local policy agenda setting. Then I test the applicability of this modified multiple streams model using Cleveland’s food security policy making as a case study.

Some of the nation’s first public policies to increase food security have come from Cleveland. I conduct a case study of food security policymaking in the City of
Cleveland from 2005 to 2011. I identified and interviewed the main actors around a policy proposal known as the Healthy Cleveland Resolution, which is the end policy product of five different pieces of legislation initiated by the same policy actors to increase food security (Gillispie 2010b; Gillispie 2010c; Gillispie 2010d; Gillispie 2010e). To facilitate access to nutritious and safe food, various policy actors at the local level affected food policy through the formation of an interest group coalition that eventually expanded to include both public and private policy actors in the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC), which is part of a broader policy community. This is not a closed policy community. The work of this public-private alliance led to the successful passage of the Healthy Cleveland Resolution through a policymaking window in 2011. In the resolution are several initiatives with the sole purposes of increasing food security for residents of Cleveland.

Food security is a good policy area to study in part because there has been quite a lot of recent activity to address this complex policy problem at various levels of government. For example, some national and state policymakers have linked the recent increase in childhood obesity to the inability of many families to access healthy foods in their neighborhoods (Dean et al. 2011; Larson et al. 2011; Stevens 2010). Researchers have analyzed the consequences of reduced food security in vulnerable populations including young mothers and children (Slopen et al. 2010; Stevens 2010), immigrant families (Chilton et al. 2009), and the elderly (Lee et al. 2010). In other food security related studies, the researchers analyzed food deserts (Bader et al. 2010; Dean et al. 2011; Freedman 2009; Kai et al. 2009; Larson et al. 2011; Morton et al. 2005; Schafft et al. 2009), food oppression (Freeman 2007; Hawkes 2008; Pothukuchi 2009; Xiaohui 2010),
and efforts to increase food security (Barling et al. 2002; Creighton 2009; Diller and Graff 2011; Lang 2010; Marsden 2010; Sonnino 2009; Yeatman 2003).

Yet, much of the policymaking in this area is being done on the local level, such as in Cleveland. The various efforts to address food insecurity in Cleveland have produced some of the earliest and most comprehensive policy approaches to this serious public health problem. Thus, Cleveland’s policy efforts to address food insecurity represent an excellent opportunity to test the modified Kingdon model that I have proposed, and to understand better how and why some policy issues make it on to the policy agenda while others do not.

In the next chapter, I present a review of the relevant scholarly literature. I discuss Kingdon’s multiple streams model and review the many and varied studies that have flowed from his agenda-setting theory. Because Kingdon’s model presents several heuristic metaphors that are quite vague and general, I further define the concepts that need elaboration. I then propose modifications to Kingdon’s model that better account for the potentially significant roles played by policy entrepreneurs within interest group coalitions and the wider policy community. Other scholars have noted the importance of these policy actors and coalitions (see, for example Berry 1997; Hula 1999; see also Baumgartner et al. 2009; and Baumgartner and Jones 1993), but their role has not been fully considered in the many tests of Kingdon’s multiple streams agenda-setting model. In an effort to build a more precise theory for understanding why some policy issues make it on to the policy agenda and to understand stages of the policy process, I use Kingdon’s framework with my modifications to analyze food security policymaking in Cleveland as my case study.
Interest group coalitions consolidate information. To illustrate, city council members might have trouble understanding dozens if not hundreds of disjointed suggestions and solutions. Fortunately, organizational structures such as interest group coalitions might form with a core set of members and one or more entrepreneurial leaders to shape participants’ ideas into a coherent and cohesive solution or proposal. I highlight the importance of such organizations and define the characteristics that make up an interest group coalition that works to influence public policy.

Policymaking involves actors in many processes. The framework I am using to organize the processes comes from Kingdon’s model to understand why some proposals make it on to the agenda and some do not. Kingdon’s model helps to organize the many actors and processes involved with the activity of policymaking and agenda setting. The model is useful because it recognizes the existence of relevant actors responsible for bringing policy proposals forward.

The conditions and factors that trigger agenda change appear in three separate streams. In the problem stream, troubling conditions become more noticeable when brought to the attention of policymakers. At the same time, a solution begins to boil until it either evaporates or solidifies as various actors contribute their own ideas in the policy stream. A fitting solution is one with the most potential of moving forward. Policymakers and solutions eventually link, and the policy entrepreneurs help to facilitate this coupling process, for they specialize in policymaking and agenda setting. When certain political events trigger a change in the agenda, the policy entrepreneurs use their resources to bring proposals out of the policy stream to put on, for example, the Cleveland City Council’s agenda where elected officials deliberate proposed polices.
In Chapter 3, I discuss the issue of food security in general and the efforts of the City of Cleveland to achieve it. The primary problem of food insecurity involves a lack of access to nutritious and safe food. The most vulnerable populations, such as young mothers, children, immigrants, and the elderly, are seriously at risk in food deserts and other locations with a high concentration of fast food restaurants and convenience stores but few vendors of fresh fruits and vegetables. Access to a full-scale grocery store where fresh fruits and vegetables are sold is cumbersome because of the travelling distance involved. Vulnerable populations might just choose to consume unhealthy food that is conveniently located closest to where they live. Moreover, if they are unaware of the negative health outcomes from consuming such food, they may be less likely to exert extra effort to travel outside of their neighborhood or community to acquire healthy food.

As a post-industrial urban area, Cleveland’s declining economic health in recent years has led to increased levels of unemployment, poverty, foreclosures, rising food insecurity, and thus to health disparities. From years of economic contraction, Cleveland has become a city devastated by population decline, so there are many unoccupied factory buildings, offices, and homes in the city. Many grocery stores have left the city as well, which has further reduced the availability of fresh food. Cleveland’s bottom-up response to these food security problems is a reaction to structural conditions that have been slowly decaying over several decades.

One of the first zoning ordinances to protect urban agricultural in the nation came from Cleveland. Another Cleveland policy to achieve food security includes an ordinance to permit bees, chickens, ducks, rabbits and similar farm animals. A third policy establishes residential districts for agricultural uses. As a way to encourage local
food production and consumption, the city has incentivized local purchases. And with the Healthy Cleveland Resolution, the city has set a goal to have a community garden within five blocks of every resident. This makes Cleveland a national leader in urban agriculture as a way to increase food security and improve residents’ health.

In Chapter 4, I report on my research and interviews of policy actors in the local level policymaking process to understand the factors and conditions that made it possible for food security policies to be put on the Cleveland City Council’s agenda. To analyze the policymaking process using my modified Kingdon multiple streams framework, I asked various political actors a set of questions. These actors include interest group coalition members, specialized experts, and elected and appointed government officials.

I analyze data in Chapter 4. I expect that the interview subjects’ responses and examples will demonstrate that a set of factors and conditions trigger a shift in the agenda to produce Cleveland’s recent policymaking on food security. In Chapter 5, I summarize what I have found and offer some suggestions for future research on policy agenda setting that may lead to more modifications of Kingdon’s model.
CHAPTER II

UNDERSTANDING POLICY AGENDA SETTING: A REVIEW OF THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

In this chapter, I review the scholarly literature on policy agenda setting and offer a model for understanding agenda setting at the local level. It is a daunting task to understand the many actors inside and outside of government involved with policymaking. Without an analytical tool to frame the numerous interactive processes, policymaking appears to be an extremely muddled activity. My model is based significantly on John Kingdon’s seminal 1984 work, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, in which he breaks down the agenda-setting process to reveal how it works. I update and refine Kingdon’s model and then test the applicability of this modified Kingdon model to local-level food security policy making in Cleveland, Ohio.

Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Model

To understand agenda setting at the national level specifically for the U.S. Congress, John Kingdon “saw the need for more fluid metaphors that could handle the complex and probabilistic nature of the policy making he observed,” Baumgartner and Jones say (2002, 157). To frame the agenda-setting process, Kingdon introduces a model with three metaphorical streams—the problem stream, the policy stream, and the political
stream (see Figure 1). Moreover, Kingdon creates a list of variables or conditions for agenda-setting windows of opportunity to open. In Figure 1, a separate set of variables is in each process stream.

Figure 1: Independent Process Streams


Kingdon’s model, which Lawrence Baum labels the “the process stream perspective,” is a valuable tool to understand the agenda-setting process (Baum 2011, 214). I propose modifications to Kingdon’s multiple process streams model, and use that framework to analyze the actors, their interactions, and factors that open windows of opportunity for agenda setting at the local level. I test the applicability of my modified Kingdon model of agenda-setting activity to food security policy in Cleveland from 2005 to 2011.

Kingdon’s model is more appropriate than an alternative agenda-setting model proposed by Baumgartner and Jones called the “punctuated equilibrium” theory.
(Baumgartner and Jones 1993). The punctuated equilibrium theory is a metaphorical derivative of evolutionary biology, and it carries ambiguities because researchers need to measure the stability of policymaking agendas over time (Pump 2011, 2-3). Moreover, Baumgartner and Jones neglect the significance of political parties’ agendas by quantitatively examining 50 years of agenda setting longitudinally (Walgrave and Varone 2008, 390-391). With parties made up of political actors, to disregard these participants’ interactive processes at the ground level produces an insufficient analysis.

When testing the punctuated equilibrium theory, Walgrave and Varone find the role of policy actors highly essential to produce change (2008, 387). Indeed, the punctuated equilibrium theory “ignores actors to a large extent,” but Kingdon’s model identifies a group of actors whose leading role is to set the policy agenda (Walgrave and Varone 2008, 390-391). The agenda, according to Kingdon, “is the list of subjects or problems to which government officials, and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time” (1995, 3). As Kingdon’s model outlines, various policy actors are necessary to bring problems and solutions to government officials who set the policy agenda. Therefore, policy actors play a pivotal role in the policymaking process.

Having considered a major weakness of Baumgartner and Jones’ punctuated equilibrium theory, I test the applicability of Kingdon’s model to explain agenda setting in Cleveland around the policy area of food security. Specifically, I consider the main policy actors, their interactive organizational structure, and any variables that produce windows of opportunity for agenda setting. Because Kingdon’s model is a theoretical explanation for the agenda-setting process of policymaking, there are several abstract
concepts to unpack. In the following, I describe Kingdon’s three process streams, policy communities, policy entrepreneurs, stream coupling as well as policy windows. Additionally, I modify Kingdon’s model by integrating the role of interest group coalitions in producing policy change. I argue that this modified Kingdon model is a better theoretical approach to understanding policy agenda setting at the local level.

**The Problem Stream**

Kingdon’s model has three process streams with a set of important variables in each stream. In the problem recognition stream, evidence of problematic issues float to the surface because of indicators, focusing events, and feedback effects (Kingdon 1995) (See Figure 1). Although these three variables exist mostly submerged in the problem stream, their escalating severity may push dormant issues like childhood obesity and heart disease to the surface. When issues reach the surface, policymakers become more aware of problems (Gates 2010, 358). Therefore, the saliency of issues will beget further public awareness. Awareness expands once certain problematic issues emerge in need of attention. As attention centers on various pieces of evidence, the existence of a problem becomes clearer.

Again, some issues float to the surface or draw the attention of decision makers while others do not. Therefore, to increase awareness about issues, it is strategically advantageous for policy actors to use indicators. For instance, nongovernmental researchers and bureaucrats in governmental agencies like the Department of Health and Human Services might use indicators to show the severity of food insecurity as a problem that needs attention from policymakers. “Policy makers consider a change in an indicator to be a change in the state of a system; this they define
as a problem,” Kingdon says (1995, 92). To illustrate, if the rate of childhood obesity and heart disease is increasing in areas with greater food insecurity, such a change requires attention (Schafft et al. 2009). Systematic indicators show problems exist, so experts interpret “testing results, state reports, or research studies” as evidence (Young et al. 2010, 16). When experts or advocates frame the definition of a problem using compelling evidence, they have the power to attract attention.

Effective framing of indicators determines the success of defining a problem. “Whose definition of a problem takes hold,” Pralle finds, “has enormous consequences because it can shape how an issue is handled in the political process” (2009, 785). Within the problem stream, the framing of a problem develops so it can receive deserving attention, and this definition might enhance its significance. “How those problems get defined—or what attributes are made salient in policy discussions—can determine what individuals and groups will pay attention to them,” argue Mintrom and Norman (2009, 652). There are specialized experts in academic research institutes, for example, who collect data and other evidence to help identify the severity of problems. To alarm policymakers who have limited time to confront numerous problems adequately, more effective framing can focus on the shocking consequences of future conditions without appropriate policy intervention (Pralle 2009, 789).

Although indicators may show quantitatively the extent of certain problems, sometimes problems need to become visible with focusing events like disasters to draw enough attention for agenda change (Kingdon 1995, 95). One way for nascent issues to float up and become salient is through focusing events. “Focusing events,” Smith and Byrne state, “often bring certain problems to the public consciousness” (2009, 274).
Focusing events influence the public’s perception and can shift more attention to incidents that would otherwise have gone unnoticed such as governmental performance (Walker and Waterman 2010). In this example, public perception shifts to focus on previously less noticed issues. As the public focuses on certain issues, an escalation of awareness may disrupt the problem stream and bring issues to the attention of policymakers.

In addition, Kirchhoff et al. verify how public feedback in response to focusing events increases recognition of a problem, making a solution necessary (2010, 336, 345). Because of focusing events, the desire for policy change grows. However, there might be no crisis moment to draw attention to a problem because focusing events are rare and unpredictable (Kubiak et al. 2005, 31; see also Pralle 2009, 784). Indeed, the lack of dramatic focusing events may diminish issues in the problem stream and shift the agenda focus elsewhere (Clark 2004).

A serious crisis might be needed to shift the focus. “Conditions must deteriorate to crisis proportions before the subject achieves enough visibility to become an active agenda item,” says Kingdon (1995, 95). An aggregation of compelling data may highlight a subject’s conditions as a crisis (Kingdon 1995, 96). To increase public attention, Pralle suggests seizing the opportunity when unpredictable focusing events occur (2009, 796). Without focusing events, there is less likelihood of an issue gaining saliency.

In addition to indicators and focusing events, feedback effects offer policy actors another format to highlight a deleterious problem like food insecurity. Feedback effects bring about issue awareness. Feedback is the information fed back from citizens to
policymakers about an issue. Feedback effects often convey the public sentiment on an issue. From surveys or other data collection methods, public opinion can reveal the level of concern about an issue. Feedback effects involve mobilized citizens, as Berry describes, “demonstrating to policymakers that people are truly concerned about an issue and that they are waiting to see what policy decisions are going to be made” (1997, 138). When citizens mobilize as a reaction to policy, their private opinions coalesce to form a broader public opinion that can become noticeable (Gusmano et al. 2002).

Furthermore, feedback effects provide visibility to an issue when opinions enter the public domain as collective experiences to pressure public policy decision makers into action. How the public feels about an issue does have significance for policy decision makers. For example, decision makers learn about unintended policy consequences through negative feedback (Pralle 2009, 785). Even governmental bureaucrats administering a program might provide feedback to affect the agenda (Kingdon 1985, 101). Providing feedback is another way to get policymakers’ attention because it disrupts the problem stream.

Brunner summarizes the attention policymakers give to an issue when “indicators such as data and reports . . . focusing events such as disasters . . . other feedback channels such as media and public deliberation” push the problem stream into view (2008, 501). Such “attention-drawing” triggers put the issue onto the agenda and enhance conditions for policy change (Brunner 2008). More triggers may indicate the escalating severity of certain conditions. “Conditions that become problems for some,” says Lieberman, “are never addressed by any form of public policy unless they succeed in making it onto the agenda” (2002, 445). Since setting the agenda is a main goal,
framing a problem worthy of attention is essential at this point in the policymaking process. And, a pressing problem will gain more attention from decision makers when a solution to solve it gets linked to it (Kingdon 1995, 115).

Indicators may not get the same attention without focusing events or crises, yet disasters alone do not automatically develop into a problem because policy actors must cultivate the problem as relevant by attaching a feasible solution to it (Kingdon 1995, 96, 98; see also Boscarino 2009). The negative public health consequences caused by rampant food insecurity affecting a local community might attract attention that is necessary to change public policy when a viable solution is available. In areas where access to fresh fruits and vegetables is limited for the urban poor, community gardens and urban agriculture can increase the availability of nutritious food to reduce food insecurity.

In my study, the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition, the local-level Food Policy Coalition (FPC), identified food insecurity as a problem. The FPC’s coordination helped link problems with a solution to shape a policy proposal. Such solutions come from the policy stream.

The Policy Stream

Part of the policymaking process is the development and dispersion of policy ideas. Just as the problem stream has various actors trying to bring issues to the surface, in the policy generation stream (also known as the policy solution stream or solution stream), actors organize to develop various solutions. In the policy stream, Kingdon says, “proposals, alternatives, and solutions float about, being discussed, revised, and discussed again” (1995, 172). At the national level, ideas diffuse inside what Kingdon describes as “policy communities” with various actors involved (Kingdon 1995, 117). Kingdon lists
these actors as “researchers, congressional staffers, people in planning and evaluation offices and in budgets offices, academics, interest group analysts . . . scattered both through and outside of government” (Kingdon 1984, 122-123). While Kingdon’s list provides some indication of who these actors are within policy communities, it excludes executive branch players, legislators themselves, interest group coalitions and others.

Smith agrees that Kingdon’s concept of policy communities is outdated and thus has limitations because it excludes important actors in contemporary policy making such as elected or appointed governmental officials and consumer groups (1991, 236). Indeed, a government without vast expertise must rely on policy communities and particularly interest groups for advice (Marshall 1995, 273). For instance, consumer groups have experienced exclusion when agricultural interests dominate food policy communities (Smith 1991, 239). Consumer groups, declares Smith, “face well-organized, well-resourced groups with clear interests on both the farming and food industry side who have direct and institutionalized access to government” (Smith 1991, 240).

To illustrate, Britain’s wartime agricultural policy community between 1930 and 1947 dominated policy formation and excluded consumers (Marsh and Smith 2000, 16). Consequently, there was no consideration of alternatives offered by outside interests as part of the decision-making process since a closed policy community dominated agricultural policy (Marsh and Smith 2000). Although the external economic conditions that produced the agricultural policy community changed after the war, the reinforcing ideological beliefs remained between 1947 and 1980 to perpetuate a set of policy outcomes such as agricultural expansion, overproduction, and surplus (Marsh and Smith 2000).
Actors participating in tightly knit policy communities share a similar understanding of policy objectives (Kisby 2007, 83), but this narrow approach is not helpful as a tool to identify specific actors (Jordan 2005, 318-321). Instead of using policy communities as an approach to understand policymaking structures, some researchers use a different concept altogether, such as an issue network or policy network (Burstein 1991, 341; Marsh and Smith 2000, 5-6; Sandström and Carlsson 2008, 498; Zahariadis and Allen 1995, 74). However, instead of replacing policy communities to identify and describe organizational policymaking structures with some other concept, I argue that Kingdon’s policy communities concept can be refined.

Indeed, the concept of policy communities can include a much broader configuration of ideologically diverse actors and can be more inclusive than Kingdon suggests. Instead of replacing Kingdon’s term, I have refined it. For instance, interest groups from the health and environmental fields might collaborate with agricultural interests in a food policy community. At the local level, especially in Cleveland, policymaking appears to be more pluralistic and less fragmented than at the national level. It is characterized by an organizational structure where many political actors work to produce policy. I offer a more pluralistic local-level structural arrangement of a policy community where collaborating actors produce policy.

In the policy stream, who are the actors in a policy community? The actors who personally interact in policy communities come with their concerns for a common policy area such as health and food security. They include, as I argue and Young et al. also propose, “policy actors inside and outside of the government who interact with each other, exchange ideas, and formulate and reformulate policy alternatives” (2010, 4). By
having proposals, alternatives, and solutions discussed thoroughly in policy communities, the final output is more likely to gain acceptance from elected officials (Lieberman 2002, 445). Because local elected officials such as city council members are unable to focus attention on every issue, a solid proposal is more likely to make it onto the agenda (Liu et al. 2010, 86).

Inside of policy communities, the many pieces of a proposal come together because specialists have detailed knowledge of ideas and solutions to advance the arrangement of alternative solutions (Liu et al. 2010, 71). Specialists “float their ideas up and the ideas bubble around in these policy communities,” says Kingdon (1995, 87). In policy communities, specialists focus on a specific policy problem. The specialized experts within policy communities may come from interest groups, academic research institutes, and inside government to suggest solutions (Gates 2010). To illustrate, specialists may develop proposals in a specific policy area (Sardell and Johnson 1998, 181; Kingdon 1984, 117). “Specialists may sort out which policy alternatives a proposal might contain,” for they formulate and reformulate solution proposals using available information, says Lieberman (2002, 445).

Policy Entrepreneurs

Robinson and Eller confirm the notion that the policy stream is “populated almost entirely by elite policy specialists” but contend that instead of a wide range of actors within the problem stream, a specific set of advocates frame problems as well as solutions and occupy multiple streams (2010, 200). Kingdon calls advocates who play a pivotal role in the policymaking process the “policy entrepreneurs,” because they make it their business to shape public policy (Kingdon 1984, 129). They, as Kingdon says, “could
be in or out of government, in elected or appointed positions, in interest groups or research organizations” (Kingdon 1984, 129). Policy entrepreneurs may be individuals or groups who influence the policy process (Crow 2010, 300). “Policy entrepreneurs can be identified by their efforts to promote significant policy change,” say Mintrom and Norman (2009, 652). Policy entrepreneurs are ambitious advocates who produce policy change by identifying problems, formulating solutions, and arranging the necessary support for their policy.

Advocates’ involvement in shaping policy is possible because they have the resources to facilitate policy change. Indeed, advocates willingly invest resources “in anticipation of future returns,” says Moya (1998, 527). For Kingdon, entrepreneurs share a set of defining characteristics:

their willingness to invest their resources—time, energy, reputation, and sometimes money—in the hope of a future return . . . in the form of policies of which they approve, satisfaction from participation, or even personal aggrandizement in the form of job security or career promotion. (1995, 122-123)

These advocates are willing to invest their resources to push favored proposals forward onto the governmental decision agenda (Kingdon 1995, 20).

Because much of what policy entrepreneurs do involves getting the necessary people to listen to suggestions about a pressing public issue, they work well with others, are team builders, shape a coalition’s composition, and have access to a personal and professional network of supporters (Mintrom and Norman 2009, 653). To illustrate, Crow separates policy entrepreneurs into three categories with specialized experts having more influence than either citizen entrepreneurs or elected “political” officials in the technical policy area of recreational water rights in Colorado (2010, 312). A primary role of
advocates is “to bring the policy issues out into the public domain and attempt to invoke a swell of interest intended to induce major change” according to Mintrom and Norman (2009, 656-657). Persistent advocates, says Kingdon, are heard more often over others as specialized experts with political connections or negotiating skills to dominate the process successfully (Kingdon 1995, 181). In Crow’s study, attorneys and government managers receive more individual-level trust as advocates because of their advisory role as technical experts (2010, 313). Therefore, some advocates are capable of convincing legislators that their inaction may bring negative consequences.

Advocates from the policy stream might cross streams, or occupy the problem stream as well, to define and frame a problem. In research by Oborn et al., advocates play a key role in “creating a strategic vision that imparted a sense of urgency [among stakeholders] and highlighted a need for change” (2011, 341). The need for change depends upon the definition of a problem. Problem definition is a strategy used in the policymaking process as a precursor to setting the policy-making agenda. “As actors who seek to promote significant policy change,” explain Mintrom and Norman, “policy entrepreneurs pay close attention to problem definition” (2009, 652). Indeed, problem definition is part of the process, and those responsible for defining problems get to frame issues. How issues get framed is as important as who does the framing. As Robinson and Eller suggest, “policy entrepreneurs within a relatively closed policy community dominate the process” because framing issues requires specialized knowledge (2010, 202).

In some instances, advocates may come from within the government to bring a proposal much closer to the decision making policy agenda. To illustrate, Carter et al.
reveal how and why “congressional foreign policy entrepreneurs” frame issues and set the policy agenda for decision makers (2004). Because of a passion for or commitment to an issue or set of issues, members of Congress who act as entrepreneurs invest resources and devote themselves persistently to their U.S. foreign policy agenda goals (Carter et al. 2004). Thus, advocates may appear from within the government. For example, while applying Kingdon’s agenda-setting model to executive branch policy-making decisions, Ellington identifies how internal governmental advocates set the policy change agenda, which resulted in the growth of private military contractors in theaters of war (2011). So, powerful government insiders, elected and appointed officials, as well as private sector leaders can take up the role as policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon 1984, 129). While a variety of actors arguably participate in the policy stream, Lieberman identifies policy entrepreneurs as most important in Kingdon’s framework (2002).

When researchers use Kingdon’s framework to analyze local-level policymaking, process streams appear less independent or separate since the same policy actors occupy the problem stream and policy stream (Robinson and Eller 2010, 206). In a study identifying the probability of participation in exclusive solution-focused processes, actors with greater participation rates in the problem stream indicate greater participation in the policy stream, according to Robinson and Eller (2010). “Participation breeds participation,” they argue (Robinson and Eller 2010, 210). Therefore, some policy actors occupy several streams and their interactions are interdependent with other streams. At the local level, perhaps because the area and population are smaller than at the national level, advocates participate in framing problems as well as linking them with solutions.
Indeed, the proximity of policy entrepreneurs to problems as well as solutions may increase the viability for a solid proposal to emerge.

Nevertheless, the strategic process of linking the problem stream and the policy stream takes time, and waiting too long may breed contentiousness between actors who want their project or program to start. Those actors who develop a unique policy proposal to hail as a solution must wait for the best time to attach it to a problem. Linking a solution to a problem is a strategic process, so “advocates seek to connect their solution to a highly salient problem in order to increase its chances of making it onto the governmental agenda,” says Boscarino (2009, 416). Boscarino points out how an actor’s pet project as a proposed solution often precedes the saliency of problems while various proposals surf around the problem stream waiting to ride “the next big wave” (Boscarino 2009). Although some solutions have their merits, without problems to ride on, they might never become visible. “Solutions have lives of their own,” assert Rapaport et al., “and are adapted to match and stick to various policy problems” (2009, 712). When solutions match problems or problems stick to solutions, solutions may go through a reinvention before a viable proposal emerges (Boscarino 2009, 429).

The process of actors strategically framing a solution to fit a “high-profile” problem, known as “problem surfing,” consists primarily of framing issues (Boscarino 2009, 416-418). By using the ability to frame issues as a political tool, advocates attempt to generate reactions or shape individuals’ opinions about problems and solutions. For example, using issue frames can garner favorable support for a policy position (Jacoby 2000, 751). Competing interests define problems with issue frames to advance their policy objective (Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2001). Issue frames “affect the likelihood
that policymakers will accept an issue onto the agenda,” expands Boscarino, “as well as influence the policy solution that is deemed most appropriate” (2009, 417). However, pressing issues first need to reach a certain level of public saliency before actors can problem surf (Boscarino 2009, 429). Once problems punctuate or burst out of the problem stream, the necessity to find an alternative solution rises.

In a study by Gates, public outcry—a feedback effect—influences the policy stream by pushing for the creation of a solution, and this outcry flows like gushing water during a flood into the political stream where the decision makers adopt policy such as in a local city council (2010). According to Robinson and Eller, a public outcry can directly influence elected decision-makers during the policymaking process (2010). “If decision makers become convinced a problem is pressing,” Kingdon says, “they reach into the policy stream for an alternative that can reasonably be seen as a solution” (1995, 174). After reaching a tipping point where diffused public issues become more salient, attention shifts focus from the beleaguering problems with a greater interest on a viable solution, and then, as Kingdon describes, “consensus spreads through a policy community” (1995, 139-140; see Gates 2010). Once a problem’s final formulation gains acceptance among collaborating coalition members, alternatives to address it develop (Karlin and Humphreys 2007). When actors within the policy community acquiesce on a specific solution through greater awareness, a proposal can propel forward onto the decision makers’ policy agenda. Therefore, the final proposal often experiences a change through a recombination of solutions (Kingdon 1995, 124).

Unacceptable proposals sometimes leave the policy stream. Because the internal characteristics of a policy community (composed of policy actors from the public
and private sector) might consist of disjointed specialists unable to produce a solid proposal, this lack of cohesion results in further delay of a policy’s progression through the policy stream. Furthermore, fragmented proposals fail in the policy stream and do not remain salient for future deliberation. With policy actors from the private and public sector together in various interest groups, there is an inevitability of wrangling inside the policy stream. For this reason, an alternative solution might never develop. “To alter the status quo,” Karlin and Humphreys argue, “an appropriate policy alternative must be identified and coupled [or linked] with the problem as its solution” (2007, 645). Thus, policy change requires conditions that are favorable in both the problem and policy streams (Brunner 2008, 505).

In the politics of policymaking, some advocates identify problems, formulate solutions, and cajole actors to support proposals. Baumgartner and Jones suggest that “policy entrepreneurs can move swiftly to manipulate elite and mass opinion toward a surge of enthusiasm for the new policy” (1993, 83). In order to identify specific actors as policy entrepreneurs, it is first necessary to recognize their role in the policymaking process. For instance, in an application of Kingdon’s framework to state-level educational policy change, Young et al. identify state governors as policy entrepreneurs for proposing policies in the policy stream along with participation in the problem stream where they exploited focusing events (2010, 14). Again, advocates appear from within government to influence the policymaking process.

To prepare the national policy community, policy entrepreneurs engage in an education campaign. This Kingdon calls “softening up,” and “the purpose of the softening up is to insure that the relevant public is ready for a certain type of proposal
when its time does come” (1995, 128). If proposals are initiated too early, there will be no action (Kingdon 1995, 130). Therefore, advocates wait to “hook solutions to problems, proposals to political momentum, and political events to policy problems,” says Kingdon (1995, 182). Laird describes softening up as “the idea that advocates of policy change need to state their case repeatedly” (2008, 430). After the softening up of constituencies and policymakers, outcomes are dependent upon technical knowledge before policymakers take proposals seriously. Policy entrepreneurs’ ideas, Brunner says, “must be technically feasible, fit the community’s dominant values, and be able to anticipate potential constraints” (2008, 502). However, in the case of China’s political system, Zhu finds technical infeasibility advantageous because it attracts the attention of the media and public (2008, 331). Perhaps technical infeasibility is a strategy for softening up Chinese bureaucrats. Nonetheless, Laird expands the concept of softening up by recognizing “the idea that policy advocates become credible through perseverance and repeatedly making their case” (2008, 430). Without softening up, the likelihood for advocates to affect the agenda is weak.

In a study on local level policymaking, Galligan and Burgess found an example of entrepreneurs not able to clearly advocate solutions (2005, 9). The policy community became fragmented and unable to form a policy. Policy fragmentation results when a loosely integrated policy community lacks communication, which produces instability rather than the stability necessary to set the agenda (Kingdon 1995, 119).

As a critique, Exworthy and Powell claim the policy stream “needs greater elucidation” beyond proposals—it needs strategies and initiatives in what Kingdon calls the “policy primeval soup” stirred by policy entrepreneurs, and it should focus on goals
and objectives (2004, 265; see Kingdon 1984, 209). Furthermore, in Kingdon’s model, there is a lack of emphasis on coalitions setting agendas within the policy stream according to Brunner (2008, 506). Indeed, Liu et al. find the consensus among actors through coalition building to be the most impactful factor in local policy agenda setting (2010, 82). Subsequently, Young et al. recommend forming coalitions of researchers and practitioners with interest groups to pressure decision makers (2010, 16). Mobilized coalitions provide feedback in the problem stream and pressure decision makers as an organized force in the political stream (Young et al. 2010). Coalitions are organized political forces mobilized with the intent of setting items on the agenda, and coalitions as an extra governmental force may occupy the problem stream, policy stream, and the political stream.

**The Political Stream**

Despite the existence of numerous problems and solid proposals to solve them, setting the agenda is not possible without an opening in the political stream (see Figure 1). Developments in the political stream create an environment conducive for agenda change. Kingdon says the political stream is “composed of such things as public mood, pressure group campaigns, election results, partisan or ideological distributions in Congress, and changes of administration” (1984, 152). These five variables induce conditions favorable to open up the political stream.

First, the public mood consists of a majority of people who think similarly about a problem. The mood is described by Robinson and Eller as “the tendency of the public to support or oppose extensions of governmental programs” (2010, 202). Because politicians do not know what everyone is thinking, such a measure of the mood might
emerge through opinion polling or conversations heard. Since city council members and mayors represent a smaller population than policymakers at the state level or in the U.S. Congress, it might be easier for local government officials to hear from enough people to get a sense of the public mood (Kingdon 1984, 156).

With many constituents talking about a problem, the perceived public mood promotes some items onto the governmental policy agenda ((Kingdon 1984, 153). It is advantageous for elected representatives such as city council members to put an item on the agenda when aware of a problem (Robinson and Eller 2010, 147). With the political stream influenced by changes in the constituents’ mood, agendas might be set to appease their organized interests (Robinson and Eller 2010, 163). Therefore, when politicians identify their constituents’ disposition as relevant, “seeing the electoral payoff, [those politicians] climb on the bandwagon” in what Mayhew identifies as position taking (Kingdon 1995, 149). Thus, the public mood can be an impetus for action.

In addition to the public mood, other political events disrupt the political stream. Kingdon identifies significant political events as variables influencing the political process such as election results and a change of administration (Kingdon 1995, 17). A change in decision makers is likely to shift priorities and produce a specialized agenda different from before. Because of the change of personnel, previously ignored items may gain prominence. Factors that help produce a new policy agenda correlate with dramatic political events. Political events burst open the political stream and splash waves across the other process streams. If advocates can channel the streams’ energy successfully, a tsunami of change may be possible
Coupling and Policy Windows

I have modified Kingdon’s description of coupling and policy windows because these important concepts received a vague description in their initial unveiling (Kingdon 1984). Kingdon’s model has three process streams that flow separately until connected by policy entrepreneurs at a critical point to open a policy window (Kingdon 1995, 172-184) (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Coupling of Multiple Streams to Open a Policy Window


To describe the process of connecting a salient problem with a possible solution and a proposal to the legislative agenda, Kingdon uses the concept of coupling (Kingdon 1995, 20). In Figure 2, policy entrepreneurs are coupling the multiple streams
to open a policy window. The opportune time for coupling is when problem and political windows open. This coupling opens a policy window. When a policy window opens, policymaking within a policy area such as food security might occur. Once the policy window opens, the original proposal or a recombination of it pushes forward onto the governmental agenda.

However, some ambiguity exists in the literature since scholars quote Kingdon without a detailed explanation of coupling. For example, Eggers and O’Leary describe coupling as “the magic moment when these three separate factors [or policy streams] join” (2009, 85). Furthermore, Bennet et al. describe coupling as “when solutions are linked to problems, proposals are linked to political demands, and agenda changes lead to the selection of particular policy alternatives” as a reaction to public issues (2006, 44). Thus, the process of linking is the same process as coupling. To couple, says Ness, “an identified problem is matched with a plausible solution in a politically favorable context” by policy entrepreneurs, so events in the political stream determine the opportune time to couple (2009, 20).

To make Kingdon’s concept less abstract, the idea of coupling needs elaboration. Because coupling describes a general process, I clarify the concept of coupling by modifying the term. I propose a relabeling of the coupling concept, so when problems are coupled with a solution, policy entrepreneurs are solution coupling (see Figure 3). First, I discuss solution coupling and then the other process of agenda coupling.

In solution coupling, advocates couple an alternative solution to compelling problems (see Figure 3). If indicators, focusing events, and feedback effects push the
severity of certain problems out of the problem stream, the problem stream bursts, so coupling becomes possible to stop the flooding. To illustrate, in a description about the streams, Baumgartner and Jones say each stream may “act as river banks to restrain the moving streams until there is a flood” (2002, 157). The metaphorical flood opens a window of opportunity for actors to engage within other streams. Actors from the problem stream and policy stream can interact while policymakers from the political stream learn about various solutions available to put onto the agenda.

Figure 3: Solution Coupling during an Open Problem Window


By coupling the policy stream together with the problem stream, streams merge for a while to decrease the inundation of feedback effects (see Figure 3). A proposed solution might provide temporary drainage until other fissures appear. If numerous problems emerge, the current solution becomes less viable, so advocates arrange an alternative solution within the policy stream to submerge various problems, but the solution still requires support from the political environment.
Subsequently, when policy entrepreneurs set a solution onto the legislative agenda, they are agenda coupling (see Figure 4). While various policy actors might try to do the coupling, policy entrepreneurs in their defined role possess the necessary wherewithal to couple successfully. Figure 4 illustrates the moment when the political window opens and three process streams overlap during agenda coupling. Agenda coupling, as I have defined it, is the coupling of streams that opens a policy window. The policy window may not always open, but when streams line up during coupling, the policy window most likely will open to set a proposal onto the agenda.

When the political climate is supportive, policymakers are open to put a proposal on the governmental decision agenda. A supportive political system is necessary for agenda coupling. If the political climate does not support policy change, policymakers might speak publicly about problems to attract support for a solution. Yet, without a noticeable wave of support to adopt a solution, efforts might not move forward. This is why interest group campaigns use lobbying to push policymakers for a solution. Through lobbying, policymakers become aware of problems and the need for a solution to set onto the agenda. Setting the agenda is possible through agenda coupling, which is the desired outcome of policy entrepreneurs who couple the three process streams (see Figures 2 and 4).

Advocates wait for the perceived ideal time when the political climate is open enough to set the agenda. When a momentum of support changes the political climate, a politically favorable context opens a political window of opportunity, so during this time, policymakers solve problems rather than just take positions to solve problems later (Ness 2009, 21) (See Figure 4).
Advocates wait for the perceived ideal time when the political climate is open enough to set the agenda. When a momentum of support changes the political climate, a politically favorable context opens a political window of opportunity, so during this time, policymakers solve problems rather than just take positions to solve problems later (Ness 2009, 21) (See Figure 4). The time a political window opens in the political stream is analogous to a stream of politicians lined up and waiting eagerly, while standing next to a stream of specialized experts who have various solutions packaged with problems available for agenda coupling. If politicians sense the climate awards solving a problem, a window of opportunity opens to bring a packaged solution forward, and this is when policy entrepreneurs couple a solution to the agenda, which I identify as agenda coupling (see Figure 4).

Coupling involves linking streams of various actors together. Coupling, Koppenjan and Klijn explain, is a process “of bringing actors together who are involved in the articulation of a problem situation or the development or promotion of a solution” (2004, 188). To achieve a certain policy outcome, entrepreneurs organize the actors. Entrepreneurs bring government officials together “so that not only the problem and
solution fit together, but so the coupling also finds support in the political stream,” state Baldersheim et al. (2011, 145). By coupling streams, entrepreneurs bring actors together from within and outside of government to open a policy window. Without an open policy window, advocates cannot set the agenda for government action.

Because there are problem windows, political windows, and policy windows, some ambiguity exists when distinguishing the appearance of the proverbial window of opportunity (Cavelty 2008, 32) (See Figure 4). The problem window opens in the problem stream, the political window opens in the political stream, and when the policy window opens, advocates couple the streams. Because an existing solution is unsatisfactorily resolving salient issues, a problem window opens and requires an alternative, so decision makers “reach into the policy stream for an alternative that can reasonably be seen as a solution,” as Kingdon says (1984, 182). When a problem window opens, policy entrepreneurs attach or couple a solution perceived as most viable (Boscarino 2009). To couple these streams, advocates link together a solution with problems in the policy stream. As Ridde explains, “when a window of opportunity appears in the problem or policy streams, a policy entrepreneur will do everything possible to couple these streams in order for a public policy to emerge” (2009, 940). Hence, diligent entrepreneurs facilitate the coupling of streams and champion a solution (Liu et al. 2010, 71). Therefore, entrepreneurs strategically position themselves, waiting for a window to open.

Likewise, changes in the political stream can open a political window. A political window can open, for example, from “a change of administration” according to Kingdon (1984, 176) (See Figure 4). During a change of administration, different policy
opportunities become available since the agenda changes under new leadership. Eggers and O’Leary call the political window “a receptiveness among politicians to be open to bold alternatives to established practice” (2009, 85). Decision makers want proposals when the political window opens, so policy entrepreneurs couple the policy stream and political stream. “The [policy] entrepreneur,” as Bundgaard and Vrangbæk state, “couples problems with solutions and presents the ‘package’ to a positive audience in the political stream” (2007, 494). When the political climate is right, the package—a policy proposal—gains more acceptability.

To illustrate, a shift in public mood or other political events fertilize the likelihood of policy change. Change in the political stream has the potential to open a policy window to set agendas. “Agendas are changed,” Kingdon says, “because some of the major participants change” (1995, 153). Therefore, the feasibility of a proposal making it onto the agenda increases when incumbents change priorities or there is personnel turnover, for such changes create an opportunity for a policy window to open. With events in the political stream, a proposal gains political acceptability for policy change when a window opens (Pralle 2009). Without a shift in the political climate, in tandem with the constituents’ support, the viability of a proposal entering the political stream is weak since no political window opens for coupling streams. To set the agenda, both the problem window as well as the political window need to be open for a policy window to open.

When both windows open, it is time for coupling a solution to problems (solution coupling), and then to bring the solution to the agenda through the open political window (agenda coupling). With a goal of setting the policy agenda,
entrepreneurs strategically link a solution with problems when the time is ripe (solution coupling), but relevant political events in the political stream are still necessary for proposals to get set onto the governmental policy agenda from agenda coupling. Policy change is possible, Smith and Byrne propose, when “problem awareness, policy evidence, and political acceptability” converge (2009, 289). This convergence of policymaking process streams consists of coupling problems, policies, and politics (Kingdon 1995, 19; Liu et al. 2010) (See Figure 2).

When compelling problems emerge, a problem window opens, and with events in the political stream, a political window opens, so there is coupling to open or create a policy window (Kamieniecki 2006, 67; Pollack 2003, 51; see also Kingdon 1984, 204). Simply, a policy window opens when policy entrepreneurs couple the streams after both a problem window opens and a political window opens (Ryan and Shepard 2008, 58). Advocates use policy windows as an opportunity “to make decisions and implement alternative solutions” Khayesi and Amekudzi say (2011, 1549). Therefore, the best time to set the agenda is when both problems and political events coincide (Daniels and Martin 1995, 33). Certainly, two different windows must open simultaneously.

As streams couple and flow together, actors from each stream may interact, yet some actors remain within their stream from the problem to agenda-setting phase. “Ongoing interactions between the streams,” Rapaport et al. explain, “result in various occasions for matching policy problems to solutions as well as the other way round” (2009, 700). Having actors engaged from the problem to solution phase allows for consistency within streams to advance an issue to agenda status. As Young et al. state:
policy actors must activate multiple mechanisms within each stream. Within the problem stream, an indicator and feedback are insufficient, they simply fertilize the terrain. A focusing event is the necessary ingredient for opening a policy window in the problem stream. And, within the political stream, mood and changes in the government are important, but political pressure preferably with multiple [coalition] forces advocating action in the same direction—is tantamount. (2010, 15)

Just as windows open, they close as well. “If the window is lost,” writes Brunner, “then the launch has to wait until alignments become appropriate again” (2008, 502). Without a problem or political window opening, advocates must wait until the next set of bursts in the streams. According to Hyshka, policymaking does “occur in bursts where several factors come together to make policy change possible” (2009, 514). Bursts open windows of opportunity for policy to pass through.

Schwartz and Johnson find a lack of policy feasibility from an unfavorable political climate results in the policy window closing, for there must be “broad agreement about the existence of a problem and of effective and feasible solutions” (2010, 343). Until stakeholders reach an agreement, the process streams fail to couple (Schwartz and Johnson 2010). “Windows may close for a variety of reasons,” Galligan and Burgess argue, “including ineffective action, no action taken, a change in actors, a passing of events which framed the window originally, or the lack of viable, actionable policy alternatives” (2005, 8). Although policymakers might agree on compelling problems, policy change is improbable when a viable solution is unavailable (Baumgartner and Jones 2002, 269).

Neither a solution nor a proposal makes it onto the policy agenda if the stakeholders do not engage in dialogue (Poulter et al. 2009, 151). For that reason, lobbying is an important part of policymaking. Therefore, during the policymaking
process, a series of educational dialogues will be noticeable. For instance, when conflicting evidence is supplied to decision-makers, the policy window slams shut, as Hyshka discovered in her study of Western Australian and Canadian cannabis policy windows (2009, 525). Because policy windows can be fleeting, it is important for those wanting to shape public policy to act quickly (Gates 2010).

Agenda setting remains feasible only while the policy window is open. “Once there is confluence of the three streams,” state Exworthy and Powell, “the policy window opens and change is made possible” (2004, 265). Otherwise, it is politically unrealistic for a policy to pass. The policy window provides an opportunity for a policy community, consisting of a myriad of actors with some coalescing as an interest group coalition at the local level, to propose strategic solutions as part of a government plan of action (Galligan and Burgess 2005, 4-6). If multiple (problem, policy, and political) streams couple, a policy window opens for a proposal to go through onto the governmental decision-making agenda (Travis and Zahariadis 2002).

Unlike the governmental agenda with its broad set of policies, the decision-making agenda prioritizes specific issues when a policy window opens. When the policy window opens, advocates take advantage of this opportunity to propel their favored solutions forward (Galligan and Burgess 2005, 2; Kingdon 1995, 165). If the political climate changes, a solution can move from the broad governmental agenda to the prioritized decision-making agenda (Eccleston 2007, 56). On the decision agenda, proposals queue in a prioritized line closer to legislative enactment. Pralle explains: the public agenda refers to the set of issues that are most salient to citizens and voters, the governmental agenda consists of the issues that are up for discussion in governmental institutions such as legislatures and executive agencies, and the
decision agenda is the narrower set of issues about which governmental officials are poised to make a decision. (2009, 782)

By narrowing the set of issues, advocates focus the governmental officials’ attention (Kingdon 1984, 4).

To produce policy change, specialists develop an alternative solution to problems in the policy community and there is a moment for coupling when disruptive changes occur in the political stream. Crises disrupt policy subsystems because they change the organization of interconnected political actors. “Policy subsystems—regularized patterns of making policy with more or less connected sets of actors who share vocabularies and issue definitions—often operate parallel to each other,” and during crises, unlinked actors align with new policy subsystems, according to Pump (2011, 2). Similarly, when stream coupling occurs, actors form new alliances. “The result is a blurring of the boundaries,” says Pump, “that clearly demarcated subsystem expertise and concern” (2011, 5). Through coupling, actors participating in different process streams align and interact to alleviate the pressure from a disruption in the streams.

Therefore, change is possible from exogenous shocks such as disruptive focusing events (crises), which may open a window to change the agenda (Walgrave and Varone 2008). Indeed, political inputs such as focusing events and a change of administration produce friction that facilitates bursts in process streams, yet without policy entrepreneurs to make sense of these bursts, volatile disruptions go unattended (Pump 2011, 3). Advocates participate in the policymaking system to produce change through coupling. Without advocates coupling the streams, there is no change (Ellina
Agenda change requires policy entrepreneurs to do the coupling necessary to bring problems, policy, and politics together as Kingdon’s model outlines.

Policy entrepreneurs engineer consent by assembling participants, pointing out the support of specialists within a coalition, and putting together the necessary solution to set onto the agenda (Ricci 1993, 197). Coupling does not occur without participants and specifically policy entrepreneurs. Policy entrepreneurs advocate policy innovation and act as a broker to facilitate competing interests (Oborn et al. 2011, 327). To broker a compromise, coupling brings important political actors together in a policy venue like a coalition. In a coalition, advocates broker support from a variety of interest groups, and a piece of legislation surfaces packed with their pet projects such as the Healthy Cleveland Resolution that I analyze in this thesis (See Chapter 4 and Appendix A; see also Baumgartner and Jones 2002, 209).

**Interest Group Coalitions**

Although the Kingdon model provides a valuable lens to understand national policymaking, he does not examine local interest group coalitions as legislation-generating organizational structures unified with contributing policymakers within policy communities. I suggest a refinement of Kingdon’s concept of policy communities to include interest group coalitions as important entities in agenda setting. I hypothesize that this modified concept of policy communities better explains policy formation and agenda setting at the local level.

Interest group coalitions are made up of various associations and organizations that join resources with others to shape and share political power to foster policy change. With an aggressive demand to change policy, coalitions mobilize,
advocate, and fight as organized interests for legislative action (Hula 1999, 2). Coalitions, Hula argues, are “symbiotic alliances with organizations to facilitate their own goals in the policy process” (1999, 3). Under Hula’s definition, coalitions pursue diversity through forming many alliances. To achieve a policy outcome requires a strong coalition representing a wide array of interest groups (Baumgartner et al. 2009, 12).

Coalitions are made up of interest groups with actors sharing similar concerns (Berry 1997, 193). All coalitions, says Hula, “are characterized by organizational actors cooperatively pursuing political goals” (1999, 5). Baumgartner et al. find “the efforts of a broad coalition focused on the same goal may be more effective in attracting attention to an issue than would be those of a single advocate acting alone” (2009, 118). Through coalitions, concerns become consolidated. In American politics, coalitions aggregate the organized interests’ viewpoints (Hula 1999, 7).

Uniting similarly concerned constituencies is an important strategy of a coalition. By strategically coalescing constituencies to influence policy, a collective effort gains momentum. Once organized, a credible coalition has a greater ability to achieve its objectives by expanding scarce resources (Berry 1997, 188). Scare resources include money and time. Because money and time are limited for most, bundling resources together increases the strength for a coalition to achieve its stated objectives. “Coalition actors consciously join resources,” explains Hinckley, “work in a mixed-motive situation, and apply power to determine outcomes” (1981, 5). Although individual concerns may vary, actors associate with the most complementary interest groups to be part of a larger coalition. Group members bring a variety of goals, priorities and resources to the coalition.
Within a coalition are stratified group members with differentiated levels of involvement who coalesce and combine resources to achieve a goal (Hula 1999, 40). Hula categorizes the position and role of coalition group members into three concentric groups (1999, 39) (See Figure 5). Figure 5 shows the three concentric groups making up interest group coalitions: core members, specialists or players, and peripherals or tag-alongs (Hula 1999).

Core members provide and maintain a critical role in the coalition’s center, and as Hula states, “are notable for their willingness to expend high levels of resources to promote overall legislative victory” (Hula 1999, 40). Core members provide and maintain a critical role in the coalition’s center, and as Hula states, “are notable for their willingness to expend high levels of resources to promote overall legislative victory” (Hula 1999, 40). Core members include the coalition’s founders, brokers, and others with a strong commitment to achieve policy goals strategically (Hula 1999, 41-43). They invest the most resources such as time and energy. “Coalitions gel with the exchange of benefits brokered by the founding core members of a nascent coalition,” says Hula (1999, 77).

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Figure 5: Concentric Groups of Interest Group Coalitions


A secondary group includes specialists or “players” who align with a coalition to achieve limited policy goals (Hula 1999, 44). Furthermore, specialists’ expertise shapes the coalition’s agenda, hones in relevant points, and focuses around a smaller piece instead of the entire policy (Hula 1999, 45). “The constituency of each group,” states Berry, “broadens the coalition’s expertise on the issues and subissues before policymakers” (1997, 188). Expertise in the form of accumulated greater knowledge has value as a commodity, so obtaining more expertise as a resource benefits the coalition. When specialists possess knowledge about an issue, “they are sometimes able to portray the issue in simplified and favorable terms to nonspecialists” claim Baumgartner and Jones (1993, 25). Specialists piggyback proposals onto the coalition for as long as they perceive the coalition serves their interests.

The other coalition members include peripheral groups not fully committed to a policy goal that exert minimal involvement (Hula 1999, 46). Although these peripheral groups contribute almost no resources to the coalition, their welcomed presence increases
the chance for success by inclusion because legislators are likely to notice long lists of endorsements from organizations (Hula 1999, 48). These members tag-along to relish symbolically in any feasible victory achieved. Moreover, they wish to obtain any shared rewards from an achieved policy. Participation in a strategic coalition may be a purely symbolic activity for peripheral groups to claim credit and gain “a low-cost trophy” as Hula says (1999, 36). They join as a “symbolic gesture,” says Hula, “to show their members that they are working actively on an issue or to demonstrate solidarity with another organization” (Hula 1999, 23). Hula summarizes asymmetrical yet symbiotic groups:

Specialist groups often join a coalition to shape its agenda by piggybacking a particular concern onto the broader coalition platform, while peripheral groups tag along with the crowd for symbolic benefits, such as the ability to demonstrate action to a constituency without expending significant resources. (1999, 112)

Unified interest groups, with members appearing to have unselfish motivations for the general well-being of others, gain higher credibility (Berry 1997, 235). This means policymakers recognize the solidarity of passionate interest groups who seem genuinely concerned for others. “When an interest group has a large number of members with impassioned views and has built an effective organizational structure that can quickly mobilize the rank-and-file,” Berry indicates, “it will be greatly respected (and maybe even feared) by politicians” (1997, 234). Politicians do not want to lose a large number of supporters. This makes it easier for interest groups to “both push for recognition of pet problems,” says Kingdon, “and for adoption of their solutions or proposals” (1995, 87). When politicians push solutions or proposals forward, they have the opportunity to gain recognition for taking them up and attempting to solve a
problematic issue. When political events such as a change of decision makers occur, interest groups mobilize in order to take advantage of an opportunity to make their agenda relevant. Interest groups use various strategies to achieve political advantage in the policymaking process. As part of the political process, effective interest groups will capitalize on political events.

If a problematic situation has the potential to burden more than one group, gathering partners to influence policy becomes easier. In the political stream, “coalitions are being built through the granting of concessions [or bargaining] in return for support of the coalition,” claims Kingdon, “or as actual or potential coalition members make bargains” (1984, 167). During coalition building, stakeholders reach a consensus after negotiating for benefits. Through bargaining for benefits, a coalition’s consensus solidifies. By having a consensual agreement, the coalition is better situated to impact the local policy agenda as a major political factor (Liu et al. 2010, 82). Support must be galvanized for action; otherwise, a weak coalition may inhibit change (Kubiak et al. 2005, 31).

Regardless of a coalition’s strength, elected officials ultimately determine what happens in the political stream (Lieberman 2002, 448). An amicable relationship with organized political forces such as an interest group coalition is advantageous for government officials. A mutually beneficial interest group coalition evolves as vested stakeholders inside and outside of government bargain strategically for their pet programs. “To build an effective political coalition,” Dahl says, “rewards must be conferred” (1970, 94). Rewards might include the addition of one’s pet project or program as part of a proposal. Without joining a coalition, the chance of one’s program
entering the proposal is unlikely. For instance, “potential coalition supporters are enticed into support by promises of some benefit,” says Kingdon, “and others climb aboard the bandwagon out of fear that they will be left without their share of the benefits” (1984, 169). As a metaphor, when the train is leaving the station, it is time for everyone to board.

Another important factor to consider is the power of a coalition during pressure group campaigns. To understand what Kingdon identifies as pressure group campaigns, I examine lobbying as a process in policymaking. The word “lobbying” originates from the legislatures’ lobbies where lobbyists attempt to influence policymakers (Berry 1997, 6, 103). When representatives of interest groups lobby, they lobby legislators to influence public policy. Legislators are self-interested actors who pursue what maximizes future electability. Therefore, legislators under pressure from constituencies at the grassroots level notice their requests, so interest groups mobilize constituencies to engage in direct citizen lobbying.

Moreover, a legislator acts when an issue becomes more salient. Effective lobbying also requires cogent facts delivered to elected officials. “The combination of issue salience and a conviction about the quality of a policy proposal,” Levine states, “may well motivate a member to take risks that she might ordinarily consider not worth the effort” (2009, 85). Issue salience helps those making decisions understand the problem. “Government leaders prefer a clear message,” declares Burns (2006, 118), and lobbying that delivers a clear message to decision makers will help advance a policy solution.
Lobbyists, according to Baumgartner et al., “place a priority on working closely with their legislative allies and nurturing contacts with those in gatekeeping positions . . . Lobbyists need allies inside of government to introduce legislation, to propose amendments, and to work actively for policy change” (2009, 152-155). Baumgartner et al. find that “most lobbying consists of working with allied government officials rather than only trying to convince them to support some policy option” (2009, 195). Lobbyists are more likely to expend their blood, sweat, and tears on issues that have some chance of gaining attention, hopefully sooner rather than later.

As part of the legislative policymaking process, lobbying is an inevitable aspect of politics. “Politics,” write Farley et al., “is about the strategic representation of problems and policies in a way that brings together coalitions and alliances needed to move them on to the policy agenda” (2006, 345). With solutions brought forward by lobbyists, it is easier for decision makers to set the policy agenda. As Lieberman says, “the agenda is the key hurdle for issues on their way to becoming public policy” (2002, 445). Once the policymaking agenda is set, there is a greater chance for policy change. Therefore, interest group coalitions with advocates seek to dominate the agenda-setting process. Policy can evolve because of the actions of interest group coalitions (Hobbs et al. 2004, 91).

I agree with Liu et al. that interest group coalitions are an important and perhaps crucial variable in contemporary policymaking (2010). Indeed, policy entrepreneurs (“advocates”) set the policy agenda for Cleveland’s City Council with the support of an interest group coalition. I argue that advocates from the political stream collaborate in the policy stream with an interest group coalition, and that the policy
community bridges both streams together allowing for solutions and proposals to go through policy windows when policy entrepreneurs are agenda coupling. Agenda coupling might open a policy window, for the moment a problem window and a political window open, policy entrepreneurs are more than likely prepared to set the agenda. In my case study, the Cleveland-Cuyahoga Food Policy Coalition plays a pivotal role in setting the agenda to increase food security.

In the next chapter, I discuss the policy problem of food insecurity and the approach that the city of Cleveland took with the support of the food policy community to address this policy problem. Then, in Chapter 4, I test the applicability of my modified Kingdon multiple streams model presented above using Cleveland’s policy making on food security from 2005 to 2011 as a case study.
In the next chapter, I test whether the efforts of Cleveland, Ohio to address the issue of food insecurity confirm the policy agenda-setting model set out in Chapter 2. First, however, I present some information on the issue of food security and introduce how the city of Cleveland addressed this issue.

Food Security

The negative consequences of food insecurity are more severe for young mothers, children, immigrants, and the elderly. It is more challenging for these vulnerable groups to overcome structural barriers like limited access to full-service grocery stores. For any of these groups occupying the lowest economic stratum in society, access to food becomes highly problematic because of financial and transportation obstacles. A sufficient abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables does not exist where the most susceptible groups to food insecurity’s harmful effects live.

For those living in locations without access to healthy fresh fruits and vegetables, the threat of unemployment, poverty, and health troubles exists as a stark reality. Consequently, a lack of access to nutritious food produces depression, obesity,
disabilities, and chronic diseases that would have been otherwise preventable with a healthier diet. A cyclical problem might develop if a poor diet creates crippling health complications because this further impairs access to food. For instance, obese children with poor health might lack the necessary nutrients for development from an insufficient diet, so these undernourished children might not achieve the optimal level of education to compete in a global economy. Therefore, such uneducated children might fall into a life of poverty and poor health. Without food security, many children may develop along a similar trajectory. Since a lack of food security has such startlingly negative consequences, I began to investigate policy efforts to increase food access.

While investigating legislation in the policy area of food security, I discovered food policy coalitions organized at the grassroots level in many cities across the United States. Activity around this issue is currently most robust on the local level. To my surprise, a food policy coalition in Cleveland was responsible for several of the nation’s first city ordinances to increase food security. In order to understand the coalition’s agenda-setting activity around food security, I needed an analytical tool to organize policymaking processes. I set out to test Kingdon’s multiple streams model by systematically examining and analyzing policymaking on food security issues in Cleveland. After I define food security, I present an overview of problematic issues surrounding food insecurity, food deserts, and some of its health consequences the food policy coalition in Cleveland is attempting to address.

The standard definition offered in 1996 at The World Food Summit in Rome, Italy, identifies food security as “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life” (World Food Summit 1996).
Similarly, the U.S. Department of Agriculture identifies food security as “access by all
members [of a household] at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life” (USDA
Economic Research Service 2009, 2). Without nutritious food, it is not possible to
maintain a healthy life. A healthy person has the opportunity to live an active life.
Therefore, the problem of inaccessibility to food has dire health consequences.

Lack of access to nutritious and safe food to meet one’s dietary needs has
negative consequences. For instance, nutritionally inadequate diets reduce human
productivity (Kregg-Byers and Schlenk 2010). Without a diet of safe and nutritious food,
the threat of food related illnesses increases. Indeed, a lack of access to safe and
nutritious food has many more negative effects for the most vulnerable groups.

**Women with Children and the Elderly**

Food insecurity extends to young mothers, single mothers, and children.
“Food insecurity,” indicates Andersen, “occurs when there is limited or uncertain
availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to
acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways” (1990, 1560; see also Morton el al.
2005, 102). Although some families are eating food, their meals may not be nutritionally
adequate and safe. Stevens writes that “the stress of food insecurity” leads to depression
and obesity for young mothers from the ages of 15 to 24 because they buy inexpensive
filling food that is high in fat and carbohydrates, which increases the likelihood of
chronic disease such as diabetes (Stevens 2010; see also Dean et al. 2011; Larson et al.
2011). A large portion of low-income women with children experience poor health,
diabetes, disease, and cognitive impairment from food insecurity (Chilton et al. 2009).
Those mothers are without adequate nutrition because they lack access to the necessary food for good health. Stevens argues that “interventions need to be developed that reduce food insecurity and increase nutritional adequacy for these young women and their families” (2010, 164). The sample of mothers in Stevens’ study lacked access because of their geographic location. Although eighty-five percent of the respondents in the survey received some economic benefits from federal grant programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), more than three-fourths of entitlement recipients still experienced food insecurity (Stevens 2010, 165). Respondents stated that fresh fruits and vegetables were difficult to obtain and expensive. Stevens recommends more farmers’ markets in low-income neighborhoods (Stevens 2010, 169).

Among immigrants, Chilton et al. argue that food insecurity is more pronounced. They find that children (infants and toddlers) born in low-income, immigrant households have poorer health because of food insecurity, and food insecurity damages toddlers’ brain growth and cognitive development (Chilton et al. 2009). Food insecurity decreases the mental well-being of children because it deprives them of the essential nutritious vitamins and minerals for healthy development (Slopen et al. 2010). Food insecurity may jeopardize children’s ability to achieve in school, develop to their full potential, and contribute to the future economy as productive workers (Chilton et al. 2009, 560).

Moreover, food insecure immigrant households have higher rates of children with poor health compared with households with US born mothers (Chilton et al. 2009).
“In households experiencing food insecurity,” Chilton et al. find “not all members have access to enough food, and they have reduced food intakes, consume poor-quality food, or have disrupted eating patterns” (2009, 556). Elevated rates of food insecurity are an indication that immigrant families and their young children face preventable health risks. Fortunately, after ten years of residency, food insecurity arguably decreases because of improved English or knowledge of government assistance programs to increase food access (Chilton et al. 2009).

Food insecurity does not just threaten mothers and children but the elderly as well. For the elderly trying to maintain an active life, food insecurity can block their efforts. Hunger or very low food security is more severe for some segments of older adults who then have a higher risk of chronic nutrition-related health problems (Lee et al. 2010). Their vulnerability to food insecurity increases the potential for disabling mental and physiological stress, which exacerbates their inability to obtain food security (Lee et al. 2010). Hindered by physical disabilities, the elderly living in facilities designed for senior citizens lose their independence to provide for themselves. These facilities may lack the wherewithal to provide nutritiously appropriate meals. A remedial approach to increasing access in these venues requires overcoming political barriers that maintain the status quo. Because the solution to establish food security requires policy to implement it, some policymakers and their constituents resist change. Therefore, the level of food insecurity rises in areas without access to safe and nutritious food, which is deleteriously more cumbersome for elderly and low-income people (Morton et al. 2005).
Food Deserts

Geographic barriers further stymie access to healthy food. Humans need access to nutritious fruits and vegetables, yet many geographical locations with limited access result in populations experiencing health inequities (Freedman 2009). The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognizes food desert locations as areas that lack access to food security as well as regions with severe health disparities (Kai et al. 2009; Morton et al. 2005; Schafft et al. 2009). Food deserts, according to Bader et al., are “areas with little or no provision of fresh produce and other healthy food—[which] may contribute to disparities in obesity and related health problems, such as diabetes or hypertension” (2010, 410; see also Dean et al. 2011; Larson et al. 2011). Furthermore, Russell and Heidkamp describe a food desert as an area, “typically at the scale of the neighborhood or greater, where residents have highly limited access to adequate retail sources of healthy and affordable foods” (2011, 1198). Simply put, a food desert is a geographical area where there is food insecurity (Morton et al. 2005, 110).

Because the elderly and low-income people in rural areas lack adequate and convenient transportation, they suffer because access to retail food environments is reduced (Morton et al. 2005). “When the normal food system is unevenly distributed,” describe Morton et al., “areas of concentration and food deserts are created . . . rural food deserts will perpetuate the inequality cycle unless individuals and communities proactively devise ways to solve the problem of food access” (2005, 96). In food deserts, other than convenience stores and restaurants, few grocery stores exist to provide nutritious and safe food unless residents expend greater (financial and physical) resources
to achieve food security by traveling ten miles or more if they have transportation (Morton et al. 2005, 96).

A neighborhood’s food environment quality, which includes spatial accessibility such as physical distance and travel burden, does appear to create a cleavage between the rich and poor, for access to supermarkets is reduced as a person is stratified lower down on the socioeconomic ladder (Bader et al. 2010, 412). In New York City, Bader et al. identify crime risk as another factor because dangerous neighborhood conditions can diminish access even if public transportation is available (2010, 425). Additionally, if pedestrians perceive traffic conditions as hazardous, their effort to visit food outlets that require travel decreases (Bader et al. 2010). For example, many rural and suburban areas do not have sidewalks.

In some locations, convenience stores or fast food chains are substitutes for grocery stores, which some identify as a structural form of food oppression because no alternatives exist for purchasing nutritious food (Freeman 2007; Hawkes 2008; Pothukuchi 2009, 351; Xiaohui 2010, 734). “Food oppression,” Freeman argues, “undermines both the survival and well-being of low-income, urban communities of color” (2007, 2222). Although many low-income and urban neighborhoods have a surplus of fast food restaurants available, residents of those food environments lack access to healthy food and thus experience food insecurity. Patrons of such facilities experience a type of “food oppression” from diet-related diseases because they have limited access to healthy options (Freeman 2007, 2221).

In a study examining qualitatively how community members in neighborhoods with people living below the poverty level perceive their access to food,
participants complained that they had no access to healthy fruits and vegetables (Freedman 2009, 388). Freedman finds one out of five stores sold fresh vegetables and 30 percent sold fresh fruit. Because of the low quality of the produce, a third of respondents stated they would not buy it (Freedman 2009). Some interviewees expressed the prevalence of segregated access to healthy foods, with African-Americans unable to buy fresh fruits and vegetables (Freedman 2009, 391). Thus, respondents perceived their race and class as causal factors blocking access.

Just as the geographical location reduces access to local food environments, the demographic composition of that area can also. Indeed one’s race and class hinder access because demographic barriers are rooted in politics (Freedman 2009, 383). For instance, some local food environments are the result of zoning policies at the political level. According to Freedman, “local food environments are reflections of social hierarchies” negatively influencing the public health of those occupying the lowest rung (Freedman 2009, 382). To illustrate, chain supermarkets in areas with middle-class whites have a wide variety of healthy food options; in contrast, almost every convenient store and non-chain grocery store found in mostly lower income racial and ethnic minority communities have limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables (Freedman 2009, 382).

For families at or below the poverty level, food insecurity may also escalate from unpredictable expenditure shocks such as rising housing costs, energy prices, or medical expenses (Fletcher et al. 2009). Coupled with exogenous economic shocks during recessions, the likelihood of food insecurity increases since “households tend to
buy cheaper calories,” Xiaohui claims, “which actually results in a net increase in total calories consumed” (Xiaohui 2010, 734). Health problems escalate henceforth.

More than a third of poor households report food insecurity resulting in poor health (Fletcher et al. 2009, 80). When access to safe and healthy nutritious food is limited in rural and urban areas, the market fails to provide food security, and individuals are unable to be personally responsible for their diet (Kersh and Morone 2005). Local-community food production may alleviate some of these access problems. To ameliorate the deficiency of food security in densely populated urban areas, local efforts can support farmers’ markets and cart-stands selling fruits and vegetables.

For those living in food deserts with limited income and no transportation, an increase of personal connections for food exchange and the perception of civic structure to solve a community food problem can decrease food insecurity (Morton et al. 2005). Because of high socioeconomic distress, those without vehicles might create together a delivery system (Sadler et al. 2011, 13). For geographical accessibility to food sources, urban planners and public health professionals must use thorough data for effective evidence-based decision-making (Sadler et al. 2011, 14).

Some areas experience greater food insecurity because of the way neighborhoods are planned and zoned (Hallett and McDermott 2011, 1213; see Russell and Heidkamp, 2011, 1205). For urban residents, the United States Department of Agriculture considers having a supermarket within a mile of walking distance reasonable while the distance for rural residents is ten miles (Hubley 2011, 1225). For instance, Hallett and McDermott investigate the rural food desert of Lawrence, Kansas, and measure if residents “need to spend a disproportionate share of their time or income to
obtain food” (2011, 1212). To access food, variation is observed in travel time and cost for those who walk, take public transportation, or drive (Hallett and McDermott 2011, 1215).

However, healthier options might be available in other food outlets besides the supermarket as Hubley finds in rural Maine (2011, 1230). In a few food deserts, farmers’ markets provide healthier options—fresh produce—more than convenience stores (Larsen and Gilliland 2009, 1158). As a result, the diets of those purchasing healthier food from farmers’ markets have improved while their overall food expenditure has decreased (Larsen and Gilliland 2009). Larsen and Gilliland conclude that farmers’ markets “provide a healthy and sustainable alternative to the standard supermarket by reducing food miles and allowing residents to ‘eat fresh’ and support local farmers” (2009, 1160). When including farmers’ markets, general stores, and independently-owned food retailers that provide fresh produce, the extent of food deserts’ negative health impact decreases slightly (Larsen and Gilliland 2009). Nevertheless, food accessibility is dependent upon geographic, economic, and informational factors such as living farther than ten miles from the nearest food outlet, lacking the money to purchase food and the skills to cook (McEntee and Agyeman 2010).

In a study of rural food-desert areas, Schafft et al. find higher rates of poverty and unemployment for residents than areas not considered food deserts (Schafft et al. 2009, 165). Furthermore, children of rural food-desert areas are more overweight with increasing rates of obesity (Schafft et al. 2009, 170). “Districts in rural food deserts where obesity is likely to be highest are also disproportionately economically disadvantaged,” state Schafft et al. (2009, 173). Schafft et al. report median family
income as a predictor of food-desert locations instead of non-significant variables such as total population and educational attainment (2009, 170). Likewise, this is consistent with data on urban food-deserts (Widener et al. 2011, 441). Comparatively, obesity rates and the prevalence of diabetes on average are higher for minorities in low-income urban areas where an abundance of inexpensive, calorie-rich food with high fat content is mostly available to purchase (Gordon et al. 2011, 696, 700). With the intake of more fruits and vegetables, African-Americans’ mortality and morbidity rates can decrease as their health outcomes improve (Robinson 2008, 404). However, supermarkets may not exist in areas in need of more fruits and vegetables to prevent illnesses.

Opening a supermarket is a profit-driven investment. Indeed, owners and shareholders of retail food outlets forecast a rise in revenue and profit from consumers buying merchandise. When the population of a city plunges by double digits decade after decade, these supermarkets inevitably relocate to wealthier neighborhoods where residents have extra money to spend. For example, an unprofitable supermarket in downtown Cleveland reduced its size by almost 75 percent by converting itself into a convenience store, which further limited residents’ food access (McFee 2010). Because of increasing poverty, doing business in poorer neighborhoods diminishes overall profit, so food outlets move.

Because of profit-driven decision making in the global market, a wave of grocery consolidation occurs. The profit-motive changes the food system. “When the normal food system is unevenly distributed,” argue Morton et al., “areas of concentration and food deserts are created” (2005, 95). For example, the departure of a large supermarket in New Haven, Connecticut resulted in a drastic transformation of the urban
food environment. To reduce the negative consequences of food insecurity, the number of community gardens, soup kitchens, and food pantries began to expand (Russell and Heidkamp 2011, 1205). In sum, an overreliance on large supermarkets for food security as part of a local food system creates a dependency that is detrimental to the community when supermarkets leave. When supermarkets leave, many jobs go as well, and this increases the rate of unemployment. In Figure 6, I present a diagram showing this chain of events as a problem cycle.

*Figure 6: Food Insecurity Problem Cycle*
The lack of access to food security exacerbates the severity of negative consequences that emanate from closing businesses, rising unemployment, decreasing incomes, increasing poverty, spreading foreclosures, and a growing number of vacant lots, which separately and collectively are negatively affecting people’s health. The conditions in Cleveland flow along a similar trajectory.

Unemployment may be a result of suffering from depression if depressive symptoms debilitate some from seeking and keeping a job. While the belief that unemployment results from depression may be partially true, diet can be a causal factor for depression. Moreover, depression contributes to the consumption of fast-food, as Crawford et al. find (2011). In a study of middle-aged women suffering from depressive symptoms, their intake of fast-food is higher. Crawford et al. identify a population of women consuming more fast-food who are either divorced, separated or widowed, have a lower level of education and income, currently smoke, report less leisure physical activity, and use an anti-depressant medication (2011, 255). However, Crawford et al. do not consider if these women live in food deserts. Many middle-aged women eat fast-food because it is more available in the food deserts where they live, and fast-food perpetuates their poor health, which further exacerbates their depression. I consider this a cycle of food insecurity (see Figure 7).

Crawford et al. suggest a bidirectional pathway rather than confirm a causal pathway (Crawford et al. 2011, 255). If depression is at least partially attributable to diet and food insecurity, for those who live within walking distance of fast food, having healthier food options to provide more beneficial nutrients as an alternative is best. Therefore, urban agricultural farms provide healthier food as an option to what depressed
people eat (Crawford et al. 2011, 256). Research indicates how local food and urban agriculture can change poor health outcomes for those living in food deserts or suffering from food insecurity (Crawford et al. 2011).

![Figure 7: Cycle of Food Insecurity](http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/al936e/al936e00.pdf)

Indeed, depression may be a diet-related chronic disease, and for low-income African Americans in urban food deserts, fast food consumption results from convenience and availability (Lucan et al. 2010, 631). These two motivational factors increase for residents of food desert communities. One solution is to reduce the concentration of fast food restaurants in a specific geographical area. With zoning...
ordinances designed to curtail the proliferation of fast food restaurants, public policy might reduce “the alarmingly high obesity rate in the United States,” as Davis says (2008, 288). Yet, while zoning may limit the availability of fast food restaurants, a healthier alternative for residents must be offered, such as urban agricultural farms or locations to catch fish, as long as that fish is safe to eat.

Contaminated Fish

In the post-industrial city of Cleveland, residents have access to Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie for catching fish. Although the Cuyahoga River was burning for two hours on June 22, 1969, most of the flammable pollution is gone and fish are now breeding (Scott 2009). Because fish is an excellent source of protein available—as it should be—wherever navigable waters exist, access to fish is an important source of food security. However, eating fish comes with risks. Pollution often contaminates fish and thus reduces food security. Inedible fish increases food insecurity because it thwarts access to nutritious and safe food for consumption.

According to the EPA, mercury contamination impacts more than 6.3 million acres of lakes, reservoirs and ponds as well as 47,000 miles of rivers and streams (Hopey 2011b). Mercury-contamination is the most prevalent form of pollution contaminating fish. Consumption of mercury-contaminated fish reduces fetal brain development (Zito 2011) and negatively affects children’s nervous systems (Fahys 2011a). Eating fish contaminated with mercury—a potent neurotoxin—is a health threat because the brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, nervous and immune systems are susceptible to damage and cancer (Chen et al. 2008; Elsie 2007; Green 2010).
However, eating uncontaminated fish improves cognition and is an excellent source of protein. During fetal brain development, omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids are beneficial nutrients (Mainwaring 2011). For instance, polyunsaturated fatty acids (omega-3s) reduce attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms in children and deficiencies of omega-3s may cause common developmental disorders (Manor et al. 2011). On the other hand, intake of mercury-contaminated fish lowers cognition (Oken et al. 2005) and reduces fetal growth (Ramón et al. 2009). Pregnant women may have a miscarriage from eating mercury-contaminated fish (Del Gobbo et al. 2010; Fischer et al. 2007).

According to Food and Water Watch, a non-profit public interest organization advocating safe fish and water, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration inspects less than two percent of the imported foreign-produced fish (Salisbury 2011). Since eighty-six percent of the nation’s seafood is imported, a serious health threat exists, because most imported fish comes from countries without strict health and safety regulations comparable to the United States (Nassauer 2011). In addition, a report from the National Academy of Sciences shows more than 60,000 children annually succumb to a life of neurological problems from their childbearing mother’s ingestion of mercury in fish (Shute 2003). Additionally, children eating contaminated fish may develop learning disabilities (Pamer 2011).

Contaminated fish is a source of the hazardous neurotoxin methyl mercury (MeHg) (Kunt et al. 2010; Xue et al. 2007). MeHg makes its way up the food chain and biomagnifies in concentrations since larger fish as well as animals eat contaminated aquatic bottom feeders, so humans consume a bioaccumulation of MeHg in fish
(Fitzgerald and Baralt 2010; Trasande et al. 2005, 590). For example, because of hazardous chemical buildup in Pennsylvania’s fish, a 150-pound person should not eat more than a pound of bass or catfish per month from the state’s waterways (Loewenstein 2011).

Mercury pollution is so bad that every state has an advisory against eating contaminated fish because it is a health hazard. We must find other food sources if the nearest lake or river with fish may not provide a safe and sustainable source of food security. With a majority of fish contaminated, access to food security becomes even more challenging.

**Increasing Access to Food Security**

As the political saliency of food insecurity increases, possible policy solutions might emerge (Lang 2010; Marsden 2010). As such, specialized experts have examined a ban on fast food (Creighton 2009), how to increase access through urban food systems, and strategies for fighting obesity (Sonnino 2009; Diller and Graff 2011). However, political barriers that protect the status quo stymie accessibility to nutritious, safe, and sufficient food (Barling et al. 2002, 557; Lang 2010; Yeatman 2003, 135).

Increasing food security requires attention to the issue on the policymaking agenda. However, when corporate interests dominate the policymaking process, priorities shift from food security to economic sustainability (Barling et al. 2002, 560). For instance, successful strategies to reduce the global public health problem of obesity are unclear (Faith et al. 2007; Tillotson 2004). Therefore, the framing of viable solutions to the problem of food insecurity, like other policy problems, tends to favor the status quo and its economic interests, surpassing concerns for health, nutrition, and the environment.
Officials unaware of how food production impacts the environment, or the rising health costs from diet-related illnesses, are less inclined to establish a goal for sustainable development in the food supply chain (Barling et al. 2002, 560). Without sustainable food sources, the threat of food insecurity escalates (Lang 2010). To reduce food insecurity at the local level, Yeatman finds health professionals might suggest incremental changes to established policy (2003, 135). Having specialized experts such as health professionals champion the reduction of food insecurity may gain traction with policy decision makers to increase food security access.

Food environments may have a large concentration of fast food restaurants with few alternatives. As a strategy to prevent obesity as well as impose healthier eating habits, the Los Angeles’ City Council has put a cap on the number of fast food restaurants that can open (Creighton 2009). This is an example of a local government’s municipal authority to develop and implement policy to combat obesity as well as other food related diseases (Diller and Graff 2011). Since the hundred-billion dollar fast food industry is part of our free-market economy, vilifying the industry does not address larger systematic challenges. “Leaving it up to the free-market,” Marsden argues, “is a convenient device to do nothing to intervene or change current power relations in the food supply system” (2010, 446). Lang argues: “the world actually needs the deployment of policy measures locally, nationally and globally where the core goal is to feed everyone sustainably, equitably and healthily” (2010, 95). While such food policy may seem unrealistic to achieve, efforts are in place to improve food access at the local level such as in the City of Cleveland.
Urban food provisioning systems require strategic planning to prevent vast food insecurity. As such, government sponsored city farming, which reduces transporting costs and brings economic opportunities for the local community, is highly sustainable (Sonnino 2009). “The role of urban agriculture in providing food security,” says Sonnino, “is likely to become more and more important in the context of the current food crisis” (2009, 427). This innovative bottom-up approach for procurement involves people growing food for each other at the community level.

To illustrate, after implementing a reform program to localize school food, almost a million students in the New York City school system are eating healthier, and local producers in the food supply chain benefit as well (Sonnino 2009). Sonnino claims “international and national food policy-making has largely failed to achieve sustainability objectives,” so city level responses bypass ineffective policies that have failed to maintain food security (2009, 431). From the bottom up instead of a top down approach, local decision-makers can implement food policy that increases food security through access improvement strategies (Blay-Palmer 2009; Rocha and Lessa 2009).

Urban food planning committees, coalitions, and task forces formulate policies applicable to each locale based upon specific needs. Each community has a unique challenge, but they all fall under the crisis of food insecurity. According to Pothukuchi, “Low-income urban communities suffer high rates of diet-related disease due to the great abundance of processed, high-calorie foods of low nutritional quality” (2009, 351). Such foods dominate the shelves in convenience stores and other food desert environments. As Chilton and Rose declare:
The existence [in the USA] of widespread food insecurity in a country with the world’s largest economy—one that produces a cornucopia of food even to the point of grand-scale exports of surplus commodities—is morally reprehensible. (2009, 1202)

Given the local nature of the problem, it is not surprising that there are local efforts to address the problem. When formulating policy to reduce food insecurity, it is important to consider vulnerable populations experiencing reduced productivity from poor health, diabetes, disease, and cognitive impairment because of nutritionally inadequate diets (Kregg-Byers and Schlenk 2010). Low-income mothers’ inability to maintain an active and healthy life deserves attention (Chilton et al. 2009) as do the marginally secure households (Coleman-Jensen 2010) and the elderly (Lee et al. 2010). The examples above provide evidence that various structural conditions reduce access to food security, and local-level efforts to address these conditions may be the most effective means to address this policy problem. There is substantial evidence that illustrates an increase in food insecurity, which national politicians seem less capable of addressing. However, there are some local efforts to increase food security. The next section examines one of these local efforts, the Healthy Cleveland Resolution adopted by the Cleveland City Council on March 28, 2011 (The City Record 2011c, 508).

The Healthy Cleveland Resolution

Members of the Cleveland City Council have the decision-making authority as elected officials to consider proposals on their governmental agenda. Since adopted proposals most likely impact Cleveland’s residents, there are many stakeholders vying to set the agenda. However, stakeholders might be able to agree on a set of solutions to place in a proposal. For those advocating a policy change, setting a coherent proposal
onto the political agenda is vital. City council members will eventually vote and adopt such a proposal like the “Healthy Cleveland” Resolution (The City Record 2011a). In the following, I provide some contextual information about Healthy Cleveland.

To launch the Healthy Cleveland campaign in February of 2011, Cleveland’s Mayor, Frank G. Jackson, enlisted Councilman Joe Cimperman (Townsend 2011). Councilman Cimperman is an enthusiastic proponent of local food security, and he wants to see Cleveland use its vacant land for self-sustaining food production (Larkin 2010). Councilman Cimperman has been a member of Cleveland’s City Council since 1997, and he heads the Cleveland City Council’s Health and Human Services Committee as Chairman (Gillispie 2010a; Glenn 2005).

Introduced by Councilman Cimperman, the first reading of the Healthy Cleveland Resolution to the Cleveland City Council was on February 28, 2011 (The City Record 2011a, 270-271). The city council referred the resolution to the Directors of Public Health, Finance, and Law as well as the Committees on Health and Human Services, City Planning, and Finance (The City Record 2011a, 270-271). On March 28, 2011, the Cleveland City Council passed the historic “Healthy Cleveland Resolution,” Number 257-11, unanimously with 19 “yeas” to become effective on that same day (The City Record 2011b, 436; Theiss 2011a; Theiss 2011b; see Resolution in Appendix A). Parts of the resolution are designed to reduce food-related health issues, to improve access to healthy foods, and to use zoning at the municipality level to increase access to urban agricultural farms, farmers’ markets, and other venues for obtaining fresh fruit, vegetables, and other food (see Appendix A).
Councilman Cimperman said the proposal came forward because “our people are dying too soon. Period. End of discussion” (Fields 2011). The Healthy Cleveland Resolution is a declaration of numerous activities initiated by Cleveland’s Mayor Frank G. Jackson, Councilman Cimperman, and four major health institutions in Cleveland. To improve the health of city residents, Councilman Cimperman collaborated with officials from the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals Case Medical Center, the Sisters of Charity Health System (which includes St. Vincent Charity Medical Center), and MetroHealth Medical Center (Townsend 2011). Proponents of the resolution believe Clevelanders will certainly become healthier as will future generations going forward.

One of the major health institutions supporting the Healthy Cleveland Resolution is the Cleveland Clinic. The Cleveland Clinic is renowned throughout the world for heart treatment, for its eye-wound care, and for numerous other practices to improve people’s health. For instance, there were 73,487 surgical cases during 2008 in the Cleveland Clinic, and its Department of Neurological Surgery has more than 21 full-time neurosurgeons making it one of the country’s largest (Spiotta et al. 2010, 60, 65). In 2008, the Cleveland Clinic was the site for the country’s first partial face transplant (Kruvand 2010, 367). The Cleveland Clinic is one of the largest and most respected academic medical centers in the United States.

Second, University Hospitals is a national and international leader in cancer treatment. To illustrate its prowess, a University Hospitals’ cardiologist discovered why most sudden cardiac deaths happen in the morning (Scicolone 2012). Third, St. Vincent Charity Hospital is a leader in geriatric surgery, health literacy, and they have the only psychiatric trauma emergency room in the state of Ohio to address mental health needs.
And MetroHealth hospital is the state of Ohio’s best trauma treatment center with recognized doctors specializing in diabetes treatment.

By gathering the CEOs from the four major area hospital systems together, a local food policy coalition involved with various aspects of Healthy Cleveland helped to spur area residents into becoming healthier (Townsend 2011, Theiss 2011c). The Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC), a coalition of sixty organizations including governmental agencies, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, and different educational institutions, suggests and promotes grassroots level legislation (for a detailed list of members, see http://cccfoodpolicy.org/who-we-are). To illustrate, the mission statement for the FPC is to “Promote a just, equitable, healthy, and sustainable food system in the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, and Northeast Ohio” (Cleveland-Cuyahoga Coalition Food Policy Coalition 2010). Indeed, the myriad of problems beleaguering Cleveland comes with substantial credible evidence. To understand the depth of certain problems, research institutes conduct studies when funding is available.

With grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine’s Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods studied how community conditions negatively impact the health of Greater Cleveland’s residents (Zeltner 2009). Community conditions include non-medical determinants of health such as environmental and political factors. Moreover, the collective risk factors shaping the social determinants of health (SDH) are social, demographic, economic, and behavioral (Prus 2011, 50). These factors impact how
people live, work, and play, which “affects people’s ability to make healthy behavior choices,” Robert and Booske argue (2011, 1655).

Proponents of the social determinants of health recognize how “adverse living conditions” influence one’s physical and mental health (Fisher and Baum 2010, 1057). Because of adverse living conditions, noncommunicable conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and major depression rise along a “social gradient in health” (Fisher and Baum 2010, 1057). Having a lower socioeconomic status exposes certain groups to “biopsychosocial” forces that increase greater health problems (Moniz 2010, 310). Food insecurity is a social determinant as well because it influences health outcomes. By recognizing the non-medical social determinants of health, city officials integrate an evaluation of potential health effects into public policy to make a health impact assessment.

The health impact assessment is a set of tools and methods for evaluating projects, plans, and programs to understand their linkage to health effects (Dannenberg et al. 2008). Because government projects and programs eventually affect the human condition, the health impact assessment considers the health implications of policy decisions (Dannenberg et al. 2008). Through a health lens, public officials examine the negative or adverse health impacts of a policy decision, so they can modify the policy or project to improve the potential health outcome.

With a social determinant health lens, the focus is on people and not profit. For instance, although fast food restaurants may profit from their customers’ purchases, the problem of obesity and poor health from the overconsumption of fast food and junk food harms individuals and the community. Food-related health issues might produce
health inequities that impact the community. As a result of health inequities, individuals and governments spend a tremendous amount of money on medical expenditures that are otherwise preventable while the private sector profits, so alternative policy is needed to reverse the trend.

Through social and economic policy, it may be possible to improve health. However, “politicians may take longer to act on social and economic determinants of health if their constituents are not involved politically to make it clear how these factors affect their health and wellbeing” Robert and Booske claim (2011, 1661). Because those suffering from health problems are less likely to vote, their political voice is not heard as much as the healthy and upper-class constituency. Robert and Booske suggest “a very high level of public support might be needed to mobilize the public and policymakers to move a social policy onto the policy agenda for improving health” (2011, 1662). In Cleveland, Mayor Jackson initiated an effort along with Councilman Cimperman, the FPC, and the endorsement of CEOs from the four major health institutions to improve health through public policy.

It is possible for governmental officials to change policy without pressure from their constituency. Because poor health is not caused exclusively from individual behavior or medical care, other causal factors such as stress from racial discrimination, unemployment, and poverty require attention (Niederdeppe et al. 2008, 505).

Niederdeppe et al. claim “raising awareness of SDH [social determinants of health] involves the difficult task of convincing higher SES [socioeconomic status] individuals and groups that the plight of others, rather than their own self-interest, is important to formulating health and social policy” (2008, 485). Complex policy affecting the health of
America’s numerous communities can appropriately integrate health outcomes into decision-making (Dannenberg et al. 2008, 254). Therefore, awareness raising and social policy are best in tandem. One way to raise awareness is by looking at researchers’ data.

When researchers investigate the availability of fresh food in urban areas like Cleveland, they find a severe lack of access to food security in some neighborhoods, but the possibility does exist that advocates exaggerated the threat. On the other hand, when multiple reports from different researchers all indicate the existence of a similar problem, the evidence becomes uncontested. Food insecurity exists as well as chronic diet-related illnesses. Upon closer examination of the food security problem in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County, the source of the problem is multi-faceted.

**Cleveland’s Non-Medical Determinants of Food Insecurity**

Cleveland’s population has decreased significantly, going from 914,808 in 1950, to 573,822 in 1980, to 396,815 in 2010 (Exner 2011a). So, one of the issues is an abundance of vacant land and how it physically impacts negatively the city in certain neighborhoods. Because of the foreclosure crisis, the number of vacant lots is growing. The city is demolishing properties and creating more vacant land. Therefore, the city wants to utilize that vacant land for economic, energy, and food access opportunities.

The causal chain argument suggests that one problem is the result of another, but the problems in Cleveland are circular and cyclical (see Figure 6). For instance, higher unemployment rates produce a growing number of residents living below poverty; so, many residents are losing their homes through foreclosures. Moreover, the population is decreasing, which is producing an overabundance of vacant lots. In such a neighborhood or community, more businesses close than open, and people would rather
move out of this location than move into it. As more businesses move out, fewer employment opportunities become available, so the problem cycle escalates into a massive crisis (see Figure 6). These non-medical determinants of health further reduce residents’ access to food security.

The lack of food security (and the existence of food insecurity) in Cleveland is verifiable both quantitatively and qualitatively. For example, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, in conjunction with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, released the results of a Cuyahoga County Food Insecurity Analysis on April 16, 2008 (Community Food Assessment 2008). The analysis showed fast food restaurants are on average .3 miles from Cleveland residents, while the distance to a grocery store is 1.6 miles. In other words, the distance to a grocery store is farther than to a fast food restaurant, so fast food is 4.5 times more accessible (Community Food Assessment 2008). In some neighborhoods, half of the residents are without a vehicle, so large concentrations of residents do not have access to grocery stores. Indeed, the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program reports that Cleveland has a large population with low access to grocery outlets (Berube 2010). Such data accentuates the severity of non-medical determinants like environment affecting health, which highlights the urban poor’s circumstance.

Therefore, the extent of food insecurity in Cuyahoga County is evident as a bona fide problem. “Food insecurity occurs when there is limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways,” according to Morton et al. (2005, 102). Consequently, many low-income residents inhabit Cleveland’s “food desert”
communities and are unable to eat healthy food. “While food deserts may not be the source of food insecurity,” as Morton et al. explain, “they frame the conditions under which disadvantaged communities and households must expend greater resources to obtain food through normal sources” (2005, 96). Without access to healthy food, there is a high chance of residents having physical and cognitive development problems. These problems decrease residents’ productivity, which in turn exacerbate their poverty (see Figure 7). Their poverty is in part the result of structural factors such as the environment where they live.

In Cleveland, the rate of poverty increased from 26.3 percent in 2000 to 30.5 percent in 2008 (Piiparine and Coulton 2012, 3). By 2009, the poverty rate had risen sharply to 35 percent, leaving one out of every three Clevelanders in poverty (Exner 2010). Outside of the city in the suburbs, poverty rates increased sharply from 45.9 percent to 57.1 percent during the decade (Piiparine and Coulton 2012, 3). Poverty increased for three out of four in Cleveland’s suburbs as 277,000 jobs were lost (Davis 2012). Because of employment discrimination in predominantly African-Americans suburbs, African-Americans with vehicles must disproportionately commute longer distances to the central city than suburban whites (Gottlieb and Lentnek 2001, 1183). And sixty percent of Cleveland’s poor now live in the suburbs (Tavernise 2011). Conditions in parts of the city are just as dire.

For instance, poverty excessively beleaguers Cleveland’s Central neighborhood. In 1970, the poverty rate in Cleveland’s Central neighborhood was 43.9 percent and rose to 65.1 percent in 2000 (Erickson et al. 2008, 36). With the median household income below $8,657 in 2000, Central’s poverty rate hit 73 percent in 2010
(Davis 2012; Erickson et al. 2008, 36). In contrast, the estimated median income for residents of Cleveland was $25,977 while Cuyahoga County was $41,347 based on the Census Bureau’s 2010 American Community Survey (Exner 2011b). Back in Central, ninety-one percent of households are female-headed, and 80 percent of the children live below the poverty line (Bernstein 2011a). More than 90 percent of Central’s residents are African-American and live in subsidized housing (Ott 2011a).

The post-industrial city’s conditions were once more prosperous. Because of better economic opportunities, the population of African-Americans in Cleveland expanded from 1.2 percent in 1890 to 47 percent by 1990 (Morton 2000, 142). Yet, they have been more vulnerable to lay-offs during economic downturns. For instance, during the Great Depression, the percent of African-Americans unemployed in some neighborhoods reached 90 percent (Morton 2000, 149). To advance racial integration in the workplace, Cleveland’s City Council in 1950 passed the country’s first Fair Employment Practices law (Morton 2000, 150). In 1967, the first black mayor of an American city, Carl B. Stokes, was elected to represent Cleveland (Morton 2000, 152). Despite this symbolic victory for African-Americans in the political arena, Cleveland remained one of the most racially segregated cities in America with large concentrations of African-Americans unemployed and living in poverty (Morton 2000, 153).

To extend the problem further, the collapse of the subprime mortgage market ravaged Cleveland because mortgage lenders and brokers sold deceptively thousands of homes to low-income minorities (Cutts 2008, 1409). Despite Cleveland’s anti-predatory legislation passed in 2002, predatory lenders ravaged thousands of families by turning their dream homes into debt nightmares as the mortgage crisis hit. In a 2008 lawsuit
against many major investment firms, the City of Cleveland claims “Wall Street’s irresponsible securitization of subprime mortgages led to a continuing rash of foreclosures in Cleveland, necessitating greater expenditures on police and fire protection [and the cost of demolition] while costing the City significant tax revenues” (Cutts 2008, 1399). While predatory lenders quickly profited, the local government has had to pay the bill for abandoned homes. From 2006 to 2011, the city spent more than $42 million to demolish 5,900 houses (Ott 2012b).

Within a three-year period from the beginning of 2006 to the beginning of 2009, Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court received more than 46,000 foreclosure cases, with four ZIP codes in Cleveland having some of the most filings in the nation (Christie 2007). Since 2006, more than 26,000 properties are vacant from foreclosures in Cuyahoga County and Cleveland (Pagonakis 2012). Cuyahoga County demolished more than 1,000 homes just in 2011 with 20,000 to demolish throughout the county (Parsons 2012; Pelley 2011).

With a pervasiveness of foreclosures and residents leaving, a plethora of dilapidated, abandoned, and vacant homes, businesses, and industries litter Cleveland and Cuyahoga County’s landscape. Because sections of Cleveland are rife with unemployment and poverty, many supermarkets have left. An abundance of fast food establishments, convenience stores, and gas stations for paltry sustenance remain, so many residents lack access to healthy foods. Therefore, these residents are experiencing food oppression within food deserts because access to fresh food is greatly limited.
From Problems to Solutions

While some researchers study problems, others focus on solutions. In November 2010, Michael Shuman prepared job and tax projections for Cleveland’s local food scene (Larkin 2010). Shuman has a J.D. from Stanford University and consults with small-businesses as the Director for Research and Public Policy for the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE). At the City Club of Cleveland, Shuman gave a presentation extolling the benefits of urban farming as a highly touted solution to improve Cleveland’s economy through local food production (Snook 2010b).

Shuman found that the local food industry has the potential to increase the number of farm cooperatives delivering throughout Northeast Ohio (Snook 2010b). In the short term, by increasing the production and consumption of food at the local level, the potential for a long-term self-sustaining food economy increases. Shuman advocated Clevelanders to consume 25 percent of local food to save an ailing economy. His study suggests that increasing local food production can reignite Cleveland’s declining economy by boosting job growth while at the same time keeping revenue from leaving the city (Larkin 2010).

The Shuman report released in 2010 got the attention of officials in the City of Cleveland’s Department of Economic Development about the jobs, revenue, and tax generation potential of the local food economy. Brent Larkin from The Plain Dealer writes that Councilman Joe Cimperman is “one of the idea’s most enthusiastic proponents” (Larkin 2010). Michael Shuman’s report was not the watershed report but rather was a piece of the puzzle. It was part of a broader progression of filling in those gaps of information to help make the case for an investment of time and resources into
local food work. Since the push to purchase local food encourages more production, overall food security might increase in communities suffering from food deserts’ ailments. Because urban agricultural farms use vacant land to improve public health and decrease unemployment, there is a major initiative to transform Cleveland’s food deserts into urban farms where local growers can sell crops to schools and restaurants as well as at farmer’s markets (Seagall 2011).

In the post-industrial city of Cleveland, the ability to circumvent a dependency on the global market for sustenance is emerging (Schuering 2011). To avoid the negative consequences of globalization, through urban agricultural food production, it is possible for consumers to become 100 percent self-reliant in Cleveland (Grewal and Grewal 2012). “Local self-reliance encourages communities to use their limited resources in the most efficient and sustainable manner, and grants localities both autonomy and economic resilience, counteracting the major negative externalities of globalization,” Grewal and Grewal conclude (2012, 2). Globalization disconnects consumers from the nefarious aspects of food production like the “depletion of finite resources, pollution of natural environments, and accumulation of waste,” Grewal and Grewal argue (2012). According to Grewal and Grewal’s evidence, Cleveland can achieve food security (2012).

Cleveland has the space, because of so many vacant lots, for the production of fresh vegetables and fruits, eggs, poultry and honey to feed all of its residents (Grewal and Grewal 2012). As of August 10, 2010, the Cleveland City Planning Commission data show 3413 acres of vacant lots (not including rooftops) available for producing food with almost 25 percent of the industrial lots as well as 25 percent of commercial lots vacant (Grewal and Grewal 2012, 5). Because Clevelanders annually spend almost $44 million
on fresh vegetables, $25.7 million on fresh fruit, $36.4 million on poultry, $9.1 million on eggs, and $2.1 million on honey, the 100 percent local self-reliance production of food can keep $115.3 million in the local economy (Grewal and Grewal 2012, 6). The grassroots mobilization of policy actors to support this policy direction is realized with the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC).

A founding member of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC) is a program specialist for Ohio State University Extension, which was involved with developing more than 150 community gardens on over 3000 acres of land. The motto of Cuyahoga County’s Ohio State University Extension Community Garden Project, which operates in conjunction with the FPC, is “Promoting a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system in the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County.” This founding member of the FPC wants to increase the demand for local food consumption and increase the number of farmers’ markets that accept Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)—an electronic distribution system for recipients of the federal government’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or food stamp benefits (Funk 2011; Romero 2010).

To encourage customers who receive SNAP food assistance (EBT) to use their money at farmers’ markets for fresh food, the city of Cleveland and the Downtown Cleveland Alliance offer incentives such as providing an additional $5 for purchases exceeding $5 (Romero 2010). Accepting EBT at farmers’ markets will help insure that everyone has access to fresh healthy food. Moreover, supporting farmers’ markets keeps more money in the local economy. Because only 1 percent of the $11 billion annually spent on food by Cuyahoga County residents stays in the local region, much effort to
increase local consumption is underway (Funk 2011). If local food producers receive 2 percent, an estimated $868 million in additional wages, $126 million in new taxes and almost 30,000 jobs would result (Masi et al. 2010). This would expand the regional economy since Cuyahoga County has more than 200 community gardens and 20 farmers’ markets (Larkin 2010). Advocates hope to induce a shift so a fourth of every dollar spent remains in the local economy.

In this geographical location, many residents are predisposed to health inequities. As a result, residents’ health deteriorates and the public health sector endures a heavy cost from otherwise preventable food-related chronic diseases and illnesses such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. To alleviate the rampant suffering of the urban poor, Cleveland became the first city in the U.S. to pass legislation that zones city land exclusively for community agricultural gardens (Wallace 2011; The City Record 2007, 421-422; see Urban Garden District in Appendix B). With more than 250 community gardens and all of the city’s farmers’ markets accepting SNAP benefits, access to affordable healthy food for all residents can increase.

To increase food security for Clevelanders, an initiative in the Healthy Cleveland Resolution is to have a community garden within a five-block area for every resident. On April 4, 2011, the Cleveland City Council passed unanimously Resolution No. 476-11, and this resolution amends the Cleveland Planning Commission’s Civic Vision 2020 plan by including Councilman Cimperman’s community garden provision from the Healthy Cleveland Resolution (The City Record 2011c, 491-492; The City Record 2011d, 562; see Appendix H). This is an example of a local level policymaking effort to achieve food security and improve residents’ health with urban agriculture.
Cleveland is the first city in the United States to adopt policy such as the Healthy Cleveland Resolution.

Perhaps the traditional approach to solve local problems has been stymied because of an overreliance upon state and national legislators to formulate an implementable top-down solution. To solve local problems like food insecurity with a state or national solution, policymakers first need to recognize that the plight of the lowest economic stratum of society is a consequence of an interconnected set of structural barriers. Structural barriers include a collapse in property values because the number of surrounding foreclosures has risen. Since desolated neighborhoods rarely appeal to newcomers moving into a city, more homes are not sold. Many homes are left abandoned as residents leave.

With fewer customers, businesses such as grocery stores close permanently. Neighborhoods lose even more residents as employment opportunities disappear. Therefore, there are interconnected structural barriers found in Cleveland. When local policymakers recognize residents’ bleak conditions as the result of structural barriers, a bottom-up solution might be possible.

If structural barriers cannot be removed, then alternative solutions are required to achieve food security. For example, since young mothers, children, immigrants, and the elderly living in urban food deserts have limited or no access to achieve food security, unhealthy outcomes further perpetuate their poverty. For those living in perpetual poverty, overcoming the structural barriers of an urban area requires local level policymaking. At the grassroots level, the seeds of change come when policymakers
adopt legislation for residents to produce their own food security through urban agriculture.

In the next chapter, I analyze the process that put the food security issue on Cleveland’s public policy agenda. I propose that the modified Kingdon multiple streams model, with a significant focus on the role of interest group coalitions, that I developed in Chapter 2 is a good model for understanding this and other local-level agenda-setting processes in the U.S.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYZING LOCAL-LEVEL
AGENDA SETTING

In this chapter, I test whether the modified Kingdon multiple streams model presented in Chapter 2 is a good model for understanding policy agenda setting at the local level. Specifically, I analyzed the predecision policymaking processes to set a local government’s agenda using Kingdon’s multiple streams framework with a case study about policy efforts to address food insecurity in the City of Cleveland.

Data Collection Methodology

Public policy comes into existence through human interactions. Therefore, it is useful to identify the political actors involved with the policymaking process when a proposal begins to emerge on a city council’s agenda. In my case study, I have identified political actors as members of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC), including some government officials closely connected to the Healthy Cleveland Resolution that passed in 2011.

To test Kingdon’s framework, I interviewed nongovernmental and governmental actors involved with the FPC. This public and private partnership exists as an organizational structure with engaged actors who worked to push the Healthy Cleveland proposal onto the governmental decision agenda.
I began to identify actors who participated in the policy process to set the agenda through archival data such as newspapers like the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*. Using newspapers to gather information had strategic advantages because it provided preliminary background information such as who the participants were in the public promoting issues. I also examined public documents from interest groups across various websites. My first set of interviews consisted of respondents extracted from archival data found in newspapers (see Appendix C).

Many scholars have analyzed different aspects of Kingdon’s model using data from interviews (see Boscarino 2009; Lieberman 2002; Liu et al. 2010). Kingdon’s descriptive model has been a valuable organizational tool to analyze actors’ entrepreneurial actions (Moya 1998, 54). I adopted an interview strategy found in the literature for testing Kingdon’s model. To find a sample of policy actors to interview, Young et al., for example, identified participants through a review of archival data (2010). Archival data validated the level of involvement of actors recommended through snowballing where participants may suggest other actors to interview, and this sample method produced an array of knowledgeable participants and influential decision makers for Young et al. (2010, 6; see also Sardell and Johnson 1998). Similarly, I used snowball sampling to find other key informants and stakeholders.

My interviews were conducted on a rolling basis with the first sample of respondents identified from a series of newspaper articles. After identifying key actors in the local policymaking process, I interviewed FPC members, as well as government bureaucrats who took an interest in the issue of food security, and elected or appointed government officials (see Appendix C). Because it was not possible to travel 2400 miles
for face-to-face interviews, I contacted respondents via the telephone. Before I asked respondents questions, I asked them for their informed consent to participate voluntarily in the study and to record their responses (see the research subject informed consent form in Appendix E). With respondents’ permission when consent was granted, I audio-recorded their interviews to maintain accuracy while also taking notes. For respondents who did not want their names documented, I have identified them by organization membership or position title (Hula 1999, 20). The unit of analysis was the individual policy actor in the policy-making process (see Appendix C).

With key players from the public and private sectors interviewed, I determined the stakeholders’ involvement in the policy process and in which stream or streams to locate each actor. I used an open-ended interview schedule as my data collection instrument with twelve questions across five sections to determine my respondents’ type of involvement in the agenda-setting process. I tried to ask each question conversationally with minimal variation to the exact wording of the interview schedule. I tried to capture the policy actors’ perception of their role in the policy process and any strategies deployed to set the agenda. I was the principal investigator who did the interviews.

By asking a set of twelve questions (see interview schedule in Appendix D), I attempted to gain more knowledge of the policymaking process using Kingdon’s framework. My aim was to understand a variety of particular policy processes in Cleveland. For example, which of the three streams did the policy actors occupy? Who influenced the setting of the policy agenda? Were the variables from Kingdon’s multiple
streams framework applicable to explain the agenda-setting process at this local level of policymaking?

For collecting data, I broke up twelve interview questions into five categories (see Appendix D). Two questions were in each of the following categories: coalitions, the problem stream, the policy stream, the political stream, and policy entrepreneurs. I analyzed each respondent’s answers to determine which stream or streams he or she occupied in the process. For the category of coalitions, the first question detected the self-identified level of unity within the coalition: In what capacity did you participate in the [Cleveland-Cuyahoga County] Food Policy Coalition’s local effort (question #1)? With question 1, I hoped to learn more about the coalition’s organizational structure as well as the participant’s role in it. A second question detected the level of consensus within the coalition and if fragmentation existed: What do you think made the Food Policy Coalition successful (question #2)? Because policy proposals have been coming from the coalition since its inception in 2007, I attempted to learn about its successful characteristics from the participants’ point of view.

I used the following criteria as stream locators. To detect participation in the problem stream, I looked for various problem indicators, focusing events like a crisis or disaster, or feedback conditions. In the problem stream, did the respondent identify such variables as factors deserving the attention of decision makers? I gauged this by asking two questions: Was there any event or did something happen that made the public become more aware of the problem (question #3)? Are there key people who helped to define the problem or shape solutions (question #4)? With question 3, the most salient problems were detectable if multiple respondents identified similar variables such as
poverty, unemployment, food deserts, or food insecurity. The purpose of question 4 was to detect policy entrepreneurs or any actors engaged in the process of framing issues, for framing might increase issue saliency since effective frames strategically bring problems forward to shift the publics’ opinion and possibly gain the attention of officials with decision-making authority.

In the policy stream, ideas turn into proposals, so I asked questions to determine if policy entrepreneurs framed a solution to a problem and then coupled it with a proposal. These questions exposed policy entrepreneurs’ efforts to change policy. Question number 5 identified the actor’s level of influence in policymaking: Can you recall any concrete proposals, alternatives, or solutions in response to food security that you were involved in shaping (question #5)? Such participation placed respondents in the policy stream. Question number 6 involved softening up the public as an educational campaign involving policy entrepreneurs pushing ideas and building acceptance: Have you ever met with anyone working in the local government to discuss the food security problem or policy solution (question #6)?

In the political stream, events occur to make proposals more likely to be recognized. I asked a question to identify major political events. Question 7 identified the level of public recognition attached to the problem: Is the time ripe for policy change because of a change or swing in the public mood (question #7)? In question 8, direct experience in the political stream involved mentioning the public mood, pressure group campaigns, election results, partisan or ideological distributions, or changes of administration: Were there any noticeable election results or changes of administration
that shifted the focus (question #8)? Effective interest groups might have capitalized advantageously on political events during the policymaking process.

I asked two questions to determine if a respondent participated as a policy entrepreneur: Are you able to identify people who invested their time, money or even reputation to propose a solution (question #9)? With question 9, I expected respondents to discuss their own involvement or talk about others. By talking about others, I was able to find more respondents to interview. Question 10 helped to identify other important actors: Have you ever met with other concerned citizens to discuss the food security problem (question #10)? With question 11, I wanted to learn more about my respondent’s specific level of involvement in shaping the proposal. Are there any parts of the “Healthy Cleveland” resolution that reflect your participation and efforts (question #11)?

In my data analysis, I applied Kingdon’s framework to examine agenda setting in Cleveland. I examined the problem stream (with indicators, focusing events, and feedback effects), the policy stream (with a list of proposals, alternatives, and solutions), and the political stream (with the public mood, election results, partisan or ideological distributions, and changes of administration) to test Kingdon’s multiple streams model (see Figure 1).

Findings

Of course, I could only interview those who responded to my request. However, I am confident that my respondents were the most relevant actors in the predecision, agenda-setting stage. Figure 8 shows the visible cluster of interacting food policy advocates based on my findings in Cleveland, Ohio.
Based on my respondents’ answers about policymaking, Mayor Jackson interacted with a legislator from the city council who is Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee (Councilman Joe Cimperman), and Councilman Cimperman interacted with the Director of Public Health and the Chief City Planner (see Figure 8). And Councilman Cimperman has had a close connection with Morgan Taggart, who is a program specialist in Agriculture and Natural Resources at the Ohio State University Extension as well as a food policy advocate, and a founding core member of the mentioned during my telephone interviews, and their relationships with each other were multidirectional.

*Figure 8: Visible Cluster of Interacting Food Policy Advocates in Cleveland Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition. These were the main actors*
I began sending requests for interviews via email on January 12, 2012. Then a half-hour later, a reply came in an email from Morgan Taggart with the names of two main participants in the policy formation process along with the following detail: “They are leaders and facilitators of this [Healthy Cleveland] effort and will have a lot to share” (Taggart 2012). This reply was forwarded via email to one of the suggested participants, Councilman Joe Cimperman. Although five different actors did not reply, I received replies to three other requests with the recommendation of interviewing Councilman Cimperman as well. It quickly became clear how significant Councilman Cimperman’s role was during the formation of the Healthy Cleveland proposal as an item to put onto the city council’s agenda in Cleveland, Ohio.

In sum, I interviewed seven participants and all of the interviews lasted more than forty minutes. My respondents willingly imparted many details about the policymaking process. Without interviewing these participants, I would have had only data from newspapers and websites to rely on to understand the policy processes that led to the adoption of the Healthy Cleveland Resolution in 2011. I had an incomplete set of data about agenda setting until I analyzed my respondents’ interviews. The respondents described a variety of factors that explained how and why the Healthy Cleveland Resolution and four other proposals passed through the policy window.

Throughout the month of January and February, I interviewed coalition participants over the telephone. Through these interviews, I was able to ascertain which actors were the primary policy entrepreneurs coupling streams. Stream coupling is when actors and their ideas are brought together during opportune times for change. In my case study, the actors included specialists like Morgan Taggart interacting with elected
government officials like Councilman Cimperman and leading officials from the Cleveland Department of Public Health and Cleveland’s Planning Commission.

Using interview questions I modeled on variables mentioned in Kingdon’s multiple streams model, I was able to identify a variety of pivotal problematic issues and political events impacting Cleveland. From my interviews and analysis, I achieved a deeper understanding of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition’s success as a policy community and its place within the process streams. I organized this analysis by the thematic sets of questions asked during interviews: coalition questions, problem stream questions, policy stream questions, political stream questions, and policy entrepreneur questions. I have included a subsection labeled “Policy Windows” to explain the proposals put onto the Cleveland City Council’s agenda. Since the coalition’s academics, researchers, specialists, and other participants stirred the policy primeval soup, their collaboration generated sound alternatives (Kingdon 1984, 209).

Coalition Questions

I begin with an examination of interest groups in the predecision agenda-setting process. As discussed in Chapter 2, Kingdon neglects to describe the integral role of interest group coalitions, and I propose that these organized groups of political actors can play a pivotal role in the agenda-setting process. So, I designed a set of interview questions to develop an extended understanding of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC). After interviews with three of FPC’s core members and four city officials, I learned that political actors designed the FPC in 2007 as a model to insure healthy sustainable food systems, access to healthier foods, and food security, according to the one co-convener that I interviewed (Co-Convener 2012).
Before the FPC officially formed in 2007, four different individuals representing different organizations and acting as conveners coalesced because of their shared interest in food security and sustainability (Co-Convener 2012). This group of non-governmental actors was the original interest group coalition that formed to address issues of food security and health. In general, the quality of the coalition was somewhat apolitical. There were conveners based at universities with a research orientation who helped legitimize the coalition because they provided credibility (Co-Convener 2012). Then the conveners “defined the objectives of the coalition, the spirit, and the guiding principles,” the co-convener said (2012). The coalition hoped to improve the health and wellness of Clevelanders by increasing access to nutritious food through the conveners’ efforts.

The one co-convener I interviewed described a convener who was a founding member as well: “there has been one person driving the organization since the beginning, and that is Morgan Taggart . . . who came up with the vision for the organization and continues as a convener” (Co-Convener 2012). The conveners brought together various individuals and organizations with shared interests to the coalition for meetings and events. The conveners were solution coupling those actors who create policy solutions with policymakers into a larger policy coalition. The interest group exists within a food policy community that includes interest group stakeholders outside of government, governmental officials, and legislative and executive policymakers.

The conveners held meetings and larger events that were open to the public, which is an example of what Kingdon calls softening up the relevant stakeholders. Based
on the co-convener’s description, the conveners were lobbying policymakers. Before forming the FPC, according to the co-convener,

[the conveners] developed many relationships beforehand such as meeting with the mayor, and trying to gauge what kind of support he might be able to provide. That also included members of the city council at that time and members of the department of health as well. They were certainly interested in reaching out to policymakers before really forming the organizations. (Co-Convener 2012)

Cleveland’s Chief City Planner confirmed that the coalition has been a champion of health and wellness by identifying the need for children in schools to obtain nutritious food (2012). Specifically, policy initiatives included in the Healthy Cleveland Resolution require the City of Cleveland’s Planning Commission to have gardens producing food in every new school plan along with the existence of a city garden within walking distance of every citizen in Cleveland by 2020 (The City Record 2011d, 562; see Appendix A). These initiatives appeared in the resolution because of the interest group coalition’s collaborative effort. Cleveland’s City Planning Commission collaborates with the Health and Human Services Committee to implement these initiatives.

In terms of collaboration, Morgan Taggart, an initial convener of the interest group coalition and later a founding member of the FPC, described the FPC’s success as attributable to a “multi-sector effort that cuts across organizations, city and county agencies, and tries to act as an interdisciplinary body with which to develop policy recommendations that impact food access and the local food economy” (Taggart 2012). With a broad base of diverse specialists and members working on multiple issues, the FPC’s chances for success should increase (Baumgartner et al. 2009, 118). Since “a broad and diverse stakeholder base participated in the founding and continues to work with the coalition,” the FPC had added strength to achieve its objectives, according to Morgan
Taggart (2012). So, the diversity of specialists participating in policy formation has benefited the coalition.

My other interview respondents repeated a similar set of descriptions about the FPC’s success. The Director of the Cleveland Department of Public Health acknowledged the presence of a “multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary grouping that really allowed the coalition itself to benefit from the varied perspective that each of its members brought” (2012). Indeed, the FPC has had five separate working groups to focus on specific areas under the following titles: Community Food Assessment, Food Waste Recovery, Health and Nutrition, Land Use and Planning, and Local Purchasing (for a more thorough description of the working groups, see http://cccfoodpolicy.org/working-groups). Thus, the FPC strategically diversified its focus into specific policy areas.

According to Councilman Cimperman, who identified himself as a supporter, member, and steward of the FPC, the FPC has had “an amazing dynamic formula of people who have that rare blend of policy, practice, and understand the body politic” (Cimperman 2012). Some of the best minds in the region were working together around local food and urban agriculture policy in the interest group coalition and then in the FPC (the wider policy community). Councilman Cimperman described the FPC as a broad coalition with an open door that “invites people and encourages dialogue” from a variety of supporters (Cimperman 2012).

The FPC was highly instrumental in advocating policy change on issues through a strategic “multiple-brokerage” strategy that built a web of supporters (Ansell et al. 2009, 737). The multiple-brokerage strategy, Ansell et al. explain, “builds links between the core and the periphery of the movement by leveraging existing ties between
individuals, institutions, and issues” (2009). Indeed, the FPC was a collaboration of stakeholders from a variety of organizations including heads of governmental departments and committees. As Morgan Taggart described,

the coalition is the vehicle to communicate through and work with the various city departments. When I meet with city and county government officials to work on specific policy initiatives and recommendations, it is on behalf of the food policy coalition. To bring in expertise that local government may not have, experts from the university and other specialists have been brought in through the coalition. (2012)

The original interest group coalition and the FPC were fundamental to the policymaking process. Therefore, the interest group coalition’s composition of multiple interest groups coalescing is consistent with the literature (Berry 1997; Hula 1999). Previous researchers have shown that the strength of a coalition through its wide range of support correlates with success to achieve policy objectives. Additionally, the role of elected officials from within government collaborating outside of the interest group coalition in the surrounding food policy community confirms my hypothesized refinement of Kingdon’s concept of policy communities (see Chapter 2).

Without a large web of supporters, an interest group coalition would more than likely falter in its policy objective (Mansbridge 1986). “Because the coalition itself and the Health Department represent a wide variety of areas of expertise,” said the Director of Public Health, “we are not only able to identify and analyze a problem, but with knowledge and experience to develop a solution directly toward solving those issues” (2012). With many organizations and agencies aligning to achieve similar food security objectives, a large pool of knowledge became more accessible within the policy community.
As many scholars have found, interest group coalitions consist of members pooling resources together to expand the existence of pragmatic knowledge (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 25; Berry 1997, 188; Hinckley 1981, 5; Hula 1999, 40; Shaefer 2006, 80). Councilman Cimperman said the coalition “is the group where I turn to find out what’s next and how to manage the resources we currently have” (2012). By having expanded resources, members of the coalition have the tools to achieve cohesive and coherent policy objectives.

A majority of the interest group coalition’s members were mid-level specialists and academics in research institutions with vast technical expertise (Taggart 2012). They developed policy recommendations. Unlike core members, these specialists occupied the second concentric circle as discussed in Hula’s coalition model (1999, 39) (See Figure 5). Their technical knowledge brought an extra layer of support to develop effective policy. The coalition utilized its members’ sustained perseverance to be successful. A high level of commitment from core members and specialists added extra strength for the coalition to leverage. The vital role of these specialized experts is consistent with the description of interest group coalitions and the wider policy community outlined in Chapter 2. These characteristics fit with my local-level modification of Kingdon’s model to include a significant focus on interest group coalitions.

By bringing in a number of different experts, the FPC had available a variety of perspectives to generate solutions that made a difference. According to Councilman Cimperman, “the food policy coalition is a force for urban agriculture and local food” to produce zoning policy that increases food security (2012). It was impractical without
such a coalition’s powerful phalanx to undertake policy change efforts. “Whether it is zoning or local procurement policy, or food assistance at farmers’ markets, it is a wide swath of issues and challenges to work on, so it is a very broad base,” said Taggart (2012). In the policy stream, the FPC provided a nexus for mid-level specialized experts, academics, and government officials to intersect and exchange their resources. In the policy stream is the wider food policy community including the FPC, and its core is the original interest group coalition.

Furthermore, the FPC was successful because it provided resources, connections, and a place for those interested in the issues to have a beneficial dialogue. For example, Mayor Jackson and Councilman Cimperman brought together the four major healthcare institutions to build a productive partnership. This partnership set the foundation for the Healthy Cleveland proposal to be on the agenda because many stakeholders aware of the problems, who were not previously collaborating, began to work together. Through the FPC’s lobbying efforts, four CEOs from major medical institutions joined with the coalition. Thus, elected government officials sometimes lobby when necessary to garner support (Kingdon 1984, 51). From policy entrepreneurs’ pressure group campaigns, collaboration put the Healthy Cleveland proposal on the local-level policy agenda.

For a coalition to gain support, existing available resources must be leveraged to attract others, and attracting others involves offering them valuable concessions when necessary (Kingdon 1984, 167). Some coalition members have engaged in horse-trading behind-the-scenes in return for support. To illustrate this, consider the provisions within the Healthy Cleveland Resolution, which reflect mutually beneficial items brought
together as one proposal. In the resolution, a wide range of initiatives was packaged together such as “smoking cessation, diet and nutrition, exercise and mobility issues and behavioral and mood disorders” (see Resolution in Appendix A). To give the proposal the necessary support to be on the governmental agenda, FPC members inserted many stakeholders’ pet projects and programs into it. To curtail the blockage of its passage by the city council, the coalition gathered a wide range of stakeholders beforehand to unite collectively behind the proposal to increases its strength.

In sum, the interest group coalition in my case study had many knowledgeable specialists who shared resources with governmental officials to create a public-private partnership, the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition. Just as described in my modified Kingdon model to explain the organizational structure of local-level policy stream actors, an interest group coalition pooled resources together to produce policy proposals.

Outside of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition is a wider food policy community with Mayor Jackson, Councilman Cimperman, the Director of Public Health, the Chief City Planner, and the four major medical institutions. There were more than nine governmental agencies such as Cleveland’s Departments of Economic Development, Public Health, and Utilities associating with the FPC. The coalition’s interest groups included more than twenty-five non-profit/non-governmental organizations, five different educational institutions, farmers and consumers, and various businesses. At the core of the FPC is the original interest group made up of convening organizations including Morgan Taggart and the co-convener. Although I located the Director of Public Health, for example, as part of the wider food policy community, the
Department of Public Health is within the FPC. Therefore, actors may participate individually or as representatives of their organization. This is why I have Mayor Jackson as an individual actor rather than the Jackson Administration. In Figure 9, I present a figure of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga Food Policy Community, and within the food policy community is the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition including the original interest group of convening organizations (see Figure 9) (For a detailed list of specific members, see http://cccfoodpolicy.org/who-we-are).

The FPC’s role was to muster support for proposals as a legislation generating entity. The local-level policy community in my case was a collaborative entity that generated its strengths from a wide diversity of members. With a variety of perspectives from a broad base of members, the policy community was highly successful in producing solutions. As part of a pressure group campaign, lobbying efforts persuaded many lawmakers to support the FPC’s grassroots effort to place the Healthy Cleveland proposal onto the Cleveland City Council’s agenda.

From my case study, I found a coalition at the local-level highly effective in its ability to organize a variety of interests into a productive policymaking organizational structure. At first, a broad base of actors from different institutions brought together might seem challenging, for they would have too many conflicting perspectives to reach a consensus, but I found the coalition’s diversity to be a major strength rather than a weakness. As my respondents frequently stated, the FPC’s openness to bring in the knowledge and expertise of many actors added to its strength as a policymaking entity. The FPC’s success was dependent upon the various characteristics of the successful interest group coalition described in Chapter 2 (Berry 1997; Hula 1999).
Without analyzing the vital role of interest group coalitions within the wider policy community, it might not be possible to understand clearly local-level policymaking processes. For instance, after using Kingdon’s agenda-setting framework to analyze the local level policy process with data mined from 271 interviews, Liu et al. found that interest group coalitions were the most influential political factor in setting the agenda (2010, 85). When interest groups collaborate as a coalition, they pool resources, highlight evidence, pressure legislators, engage in direct action, and attend hearings, as Shaefer notes (2006, 80). As I hypothesized, interest group coalitions as part of the broader policy community play an essential role in local-level policy making and agenda setting.
Problem Stream Questions

To identify processes and participants within the problem stream, I designed a second set of questions extracted from Kingdon’s model. I asked my interview respondents a question to determine if problematic issues had indeed floated to the surface, and a question to find out who framed these issues to increase awareness. From interviews with the main policy actors, it was possible to determine the most compelling problems responsible for shifting policymakers’ attention.

As Kingdon’s model suggests, the problem stream can burst and flood into other streams because of indicators, focusing events, and feedback events or the existence of all three. Although many problematic conditions were already plaguing the city such as rising unemployment and increasing poverty, respondents consistently mentioned the most pressing issue. The existence of prevalent health inequities between urban and suburban residents shifted the attention of city officials.

When researchers framed the health inequities data, the depth of the problem stream became clear as it burst the stream for a problem window to open. Data about health inequities in conjunction with food insecurity, population decline, and the devastating foreclosure crisis dramatically shifted the public’s attention and that of policymakers. Furthermore, redistricting the city led to the removal of two of Cleveland’s wards down to 19 from 21, so many constituents and residents took notice of what appeared to be a decaying city. Census data showing a 17.1 percent decline in population from the previous decade focused more attention on the seriousness of existing problems and the trajectory of Cleveland’s future as a post-industrial American city.
Because the economic conditions in Cleveland have been decaying slowly for many decades, policymakers were fairly unaware or unmoved until multiple indicators began to appear around the same time in 2010. Like a large cauldron overflowing with boiling water, the evidence of an interconnected systemic problem became clearer when various indicators intersected. Researchers began to appear with scientific data identifying systematic indicators of crisis proportion such as massive health inequities, chronic diseases, and abnormally high rates of childhood obesity (Zeltner 2010).

At the local level, systematic indicators symbolized or quantified a dramatic change in a condition. I argue that indicators made Cleveland’s problems more salient because the public learned about evidence, and these data triggered a major reaction to foster possibly a groundswell of mobilized citizens to demand action. If specialists strategically frame indicators to elicit a massive shift in public opinion, a heightened sense of awareness about a problem might cause the flooding problem stream to inundate policymakers with calls for action.

As an indicator of a problem, my interview respondents identified an alarming finding in a report from Place Matters. Place Matters, a nationwide initiative of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies’ Health Policy Institute, works to reduce health disparities and increase the highest quality of life. The most pertinent outcome from the Place Matters team of researchers in Cuyahoga County was a report showing a twenty-four year difference in life expectancy between some inner city Clevelanders and those living in nearby suburbs, with the urban residents dying at a disproportionately younger age (Sarasohn 2011). The report highlighted a disturbing disparity for those living in urban food deserts without access to healthy food.
The most striking part of that report was the life expectancy gap with a specific take away about health equity. “When comparing someone growing up in an urbanized area versus a suburban community,” explained Cleveland’s Chief City Planner, “there is a significant difference in life expectancy” (2012). It has been determined based on the research of Place Matters that differences in life expectancy were not based on genealogy. The findings of Place Matters reinforced how life expectancy depends more on one’s location as an influential factor rather than on individual behavior. Arguably, if the local conditions were to improve, the behavior subsequently might change and become positive. Systematic indicators such as the life expectancy gap created new information to compel political decision makers to act.

As far as indicators, the Place Matters report “added logs to the fire,” the Director of Public Health said (2012). The Place Matters report definitely made a case that major health disparities exist between communities in Cleveland. Individuals suffer adversely from negative health impacts because of their social, economic, and environmental conditions. Because of geography, some residents have a 24-year difference in life expectancy. For example, the neighborhood residents of Hough are mostly African-American, lower to middle class economically, and live an average of 50 years; conversely, the average life expectancy of residents in a suburb 15 minutes to the east of Hough is 74 years, so a discrepancy in life expectancy is evident (Bernstein 2011). As a pivotal finding in shaping the urgency for political action, my interview respondents identified the 24-year gap in life expectancy. This scientific data ruptured the problem stream. A serious problem became visible.
Furthermore, a series of specialized experts spoke to city leaders and other stakeholders to explicate the relationship between environment and health. Through a variety of public events at the City Club of Cleveland, and workshops and meetings held by the coalition, awareness grew about how non-medical social determinants such as the inaccessibility of nutritious food, a lack of transportation, and a weak economy result in poor health for many low-income people. To illustrate, Cleveland’s Chief City Planner explained the non-medical social determinants:

The health conditions of a community do not just stem from individuals’ behavior and medical related conditions. Because neighborhood conditions and quality of place influence behavior, the health of a community is impacted by social, environmental, and economic conditions. (Chief City Planner 2012)

A series of alarming reports reinforced the understanding that non-medical determinants negatively affect the health of many Cleveland residents.

In the problem stream, focusing events include the personal experiences of policy makers to push issues into saliency (Kingdon 1984, 101). In Cleveland, for instance, residents and constituents’ feedback shaped a city council member’s understanding of a ground level problem back in 2005. When Councilman Cimperman spoke to a group of senior citizens with agriculture and farming experience in his ward, he realized the ability of an urban agriculture alternative to increase food security was already within the reach of many residents.

Councilman Cimperman was receiving feedback effects from his ward’s constituents. Cimperman heard their private opinions voiced collectively in public when he visited his wards, and their negative feedback about a proposed development project pressured him to take action (Cimperman 2012). Because Cleveland has always been a
prolific agricultural community based on the immigration and migration status of its citizens, to harness their abilities to grow food would require little coaxing. After the Cleveland City Council implemented the ordinance to protect community gardens in 2005, Cimperman received positive feedback effects about the policy (Cimperman 2012).

Before the Cleveland City Council passed the “Urban Garden District” zoning Ordinance in 2007, Councilman Cimperman began to develop a perspective that his neighborhoods with community gardens were becoming safer (The City Record 2007, 421-422). With stronger block clubs and higher voter turnout as well as fewer foreclosures, neighborhoods with community gardens were thriving (Cimperman 2012). In neighborhoods with community gardens, Councilman Cimperman claims to have observed people taking care of each other more, and in these neighborhoods, residents were having greater civic dialogue about their city (2012). As a feedback effect, those with gardens were better off from their political representative’s perspective. When ascertaining the origins of a specific problem’s rise to prominence in need of government’s attention, Kingdon’s model recognizes focusing events and feedback effects as an important factor in the problem stream (1984).

With many Clevelanders dying from preventable diseases, government officials appeared to recognize the need for an alternative policy solution to reverse this trend. A major question has been how to improve the life expectancy of the people in the city of Cleveland. This need for a solution opened the floodgates. Because some neighborhoods have many residents with a life expectancy less than in surrounding suburban communities, existing evidence compounded for a problem window to open to push a policy onto the governmental agenda. Therefore, policy entrepreneurs such as
Morgan Taggart seized the opportunity to bring problems forward with a viable solution to place onto the agenda by solution coupling. Yet one indicator was not enough, because the political stream still needed to open for an item to rise on the agenda. Nevertheless, an indicator can still burst the problem stream in such a way that requires immediate attention. Extra focusing events and feedback effects cause the metaphorical dam to break.

In the problem stream, various indicators pointed out problems: food deserts, food insecurity, rising unemployment, increasing poverty, the foreclosure crisis, abandoned houses, and health disparities, which collectively represented an aggregation of prolonged crisis. One problem exacerbates and perpetuates another, such as unemployment causing poverty, and rising poverty increasing the number of foreclosures since fewer residents have the financial means to pay their rent or mortgage. The foreclosure crisis in Cleveland brought many interconnected problems to the surface.

“The foreclosure crisis was such an atomic bomb,” said Councilman Cimperman describing its immense devastation (2012). In a community full of foreclosures without the likelihood of homebuyers, debtors left many homes abandoned. Abandoned homes were an eyesore and reduced property values. With streets full of abandoned homes, other problems began to develop such as looting.

The presence of so many problems denotes the necessity for solutions. Outside of the coalition were specialized experts framing issues with research reports from Place Matters and Michael Shuman. Shuman, as a researcher and advocate for community-based economic-development, brought evidence to the forefront to support a solution but could not set the policy agenda directly, for he was not an elected
government official or bureaucrat. Shuman was capable of identifying a problem and suggesting a solution for Cleveland, but his involvement was limited to the problem stream like that of the Place Matters team. Nevertheless, Shuman pointed out not just many problems facing Cleveland but tangible solutions to improve the city.

These experts and advocates have framed the issues or conditions. When there was an impetus to do something about these issues or conditions, they became problems worthy of attention. The inundation of researchers’ evidence created an outcry about food insecurity and other non-medical health determinants. While residents suffer because of food insecurity, more data just bolsters support for a solution. As Cleveland’s Chief City Planner eloquently stated:

> we are trying to get everyone closer to the starting line to have the opportunity to compete because we can’t start a race and expect to win when a few are at the starting line while everyone else is outside the stadium trying to hear the gun go off. We are trying to create a clear baseline that is currently unclear in our nation. We created the conditions, the atmosphere which exists that dictates the choices one makes. (Chief City Planner 2012)

It is a process to bring these compelling issues of indicators, focusing events, and feedback effects forward as relevant conditions in need of attention.

Policy entrepreneurs facilitate the process of turning conditions into germane problems worthy of attention. Otherwise, the many neighborhoods in Cleveland would continue to decay as more residents depart, become too sick to leave, or just die from otherwise preventable conditions such as not having access to nutritious food. Consistent with Kingdon’s model, many issues were floating to the surface out of the problem stream. And, problems escalated until reaching the proverbial tipping point to burst the problem window open.
With the problem window open, it is possible for the actors and their ideas in the policy stream to couple. This means problems and solutions can connect. To help those suffering from food insecurity, solutions float out of the policy stream such as zoning ordinances for urban gardens. This is the critical juncture when the problem window opens, and during this opportune time, policy entrepreneurs can solution couple the problem stream and the policy stream.

**Policy Stream Questions**

Before the Healthy Cleveland proposal made it onto the agenda, it evolved through many contributing actors’ input. Policy proposals developed through many discussions and revisions made inside of the local-level coalition and the broader policy community. Since several of the proposals to come out of the FPC were the first of their kind in the nation to address food insecurity, the actors involved were innovative pioneers in the area of groundbreaking policymaking.

The specialized experts behind the coalition were able to leverage the valuable knowledge available to achieve a legislative victory. Namely, Morgan Taggart has the characteristics of a policy entrepreneur, for she has been influencing and shaping the policy process by coupling what and who was necessary to produce change. The co-convener described her role in detail:

> She is just an incredibly talented person, and incredibly dedicated, who works endless hours. She is a true believer in the mission. She understands how to deal with complex political situations, and to find a common goal among people with different political interests and to build teams necessary to push that through. (Co-Convener 2012)

Most importantly, the ambitious collaboration between Morgan Taggart and Councilman Cimperman enhanced the coalition’s inertia to bring proposals forward that otherwise
might have stalled without the other actor’s support. Through their devoted perseverance, they were able to put proposals onto the city council’s agenda.

As the problem window opened, the coalition’s policy entrepreneurs were ready to do some solution coupling. While there may have been additional actors involved other than Morgan Taggart in the solution coupling process, she led the effort. When the problem window opened, Councilman Cimperman was in the policy stream, which enhanced the awareness of a propitious time for agenda setting because he had access to the City Council. Furthermore, Councilman Cimperman was capable of softening up constituents and fellow policymakers. Other policy community members such as the Cleveland’s Chief City Planner and the Director of Public Health had worked on the technical feasibility of some proposals as part of stirring the primeval soup. These two agency specialists and Councilman Cimperman interacted with the coalition as an organized political force (see Figure 8).

Because of Cleveland’s foreclosure and vacancy rate was recognized in the problem stream, community interest around urban agriculture for local food production came to the forefront as a solution in the policy stream. As a potential alternative land use strategy, urban agriculture became a practical solution, according to many of my interview respondents. As Cleveland’s Chief City Planner explained, “we are dealing with thousands of acres of vacant land and a lack of development pressure to bring those properties into development for the market. These vacancies helped elevate the stature of that policy agenda around zoning and urban agriculture” (2012). Therefore, within the policy stream a solution existed before the problem rose to the surface. Through the
endorsement of city officials, the solution emerged as viable. Its subsequent arrival onto the agenda through a problem window fits with Kingdon’s model.

On March 5, 2007, the Cleveland City Council passed legislation introduced by Councilman Cimperman to designate land for community gardens through an innovative Urban Garden District zoning ordinance (Brady 2007; The City Record 2007, 421-422; see Appendix B). Councilman Cimperman acted as an agenda-coupling policy entrepreneur because he put the proposal on the agenda for fellow councilmembers to consider (Cimperman 2012). Cimperman had to involve officials from the City Planning Department in preparing the proposal because gardens over 15,000 square feet in area or greater require review and approval from that same government agency (The City Record 2007, 421-422). As Councilman Cimperman explained, “there is a way to do this and we have the power to do this. We need to apply the ideas and will to do it” (2012). Such interaction during policy formation occurs in the policy stream process.

As a solution to the abandoned homes and vacant lots in Cleveland, urban agriculture can produce healthier food for those living in food deserts. With a vast quantity of vacant land available as a consequence of rampant foreclosures, and a steep plunge over the last fifty years in Cleveland’s population, an alternative use of the vacant land in Cleveland has been underway (Masi 2008). To use the vacant land most suitably, Councilman Cimperman has championed the development of urban agriculture (Flachs 2010). Urban agriculture combats the plague of food insecurity as well as unemployment because it increases food access and provides a source of income (Dewar 2008). Urban agriculture is an important solution to the problem of urban food insecurity because it increases access to a wider variety of nutritionally rich foods (Zezza and Tasciotti 2010,
265-266). However, urban agriculture requires a policy change in municipal zoning regulations (Voigt 2011). Therefore, Councilman Cimperman’s coupling of solutions with problems makes him a policy entrepreneur, for he has been advocating policy change to improve the health of Clevelanders by increasing access to food security.

In Figure 10, I display a solution cycle whereby urban agriculture decreases the number of abandoned homes and vacant lots since residents, with the help of the coalition and city, demolish homes and transform these vacant lots into gardens to produce food. Then access to nutritious food increases so food insecurity decreases. Consequently, residents become healthier and more prosperous as they eat and sell their food. Subsequently, businesses eventually begin to open up again. When more businesses open, the need to hire workers probably increases, so the rate of unemployment decreases. As more residents gain employment, incomes increase, and the rate of poverty decreases as these working residents earn a living. As poverty decreases and residents have more money, they can pay their rent or mortgage, so more homeowners can make their payments to avoid foreclosure, which in turn produces fewer vacant lots (see Figure 10). Because of the prosperity in these communities where businesses have opened to hire residents, more people become healthier since they have the financial means to avoid substituting a rent or mortgage payment for nutritious meals. Undeniably, many Clevelanders may have previously forgone meals that meet the federal government’s dietary guidelines to avoid being homeless during hard economic times.

With a high level of support coming from Mayor Jackson for urban gardens to permeate throughout the city and stave off the ubiquitous problem of food insecurity, the virtues of this highly touted solution easily grew. The Jackson Administration’s
proclamation to increase food access has buttressed the food policy coalition’s local effort. On behalf of the coalition, Councilman Cimperman espoused wholeheartedly the health and economic benefits of urban agricultural farms (Cimperman 2012). To expand urban farming through citywide policies, the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC) “found a champion in City Councilor Joe Cimperman,” says Winne (2009). Since the average urban Cleveland household is disproportionately closer to fast food restaurants instead of grocery stores, urban agriculture produces more choices for

\[\text{Figure 10: Solution Cycle}\]
many residents to improve their health. Moreover, urban agriculture creates a more localized economy with residents less dependent upon the global market. Indeed, the merits of urban agriculture can grow farther than just producing access to healthier food.

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As an alternative to an overabundance of vacant lots, many urban farms have been sprouting up such as a 26-acre zone for local food production (Parsons 2012). Fifty acres of urban community gardens in Cleveland can produce up to $1.8 million worth of fresh food a year, and 5.3 square miles of vacant lots remain available for urban farming (Ferenchik 2011). “Folks across all socioeconomic classes are recognizing gardening as a way to increase property values, beautify the area, eliminate food deserts, and boost
healthy eating,” says Parsons (2012). Moreover, improving the urban landscape with large-scale rehabilitation increases housing values (Ding et al. 2000, 44).

Different community gardening and urban agricultural farm enterprises that touch every community are scattered throughout Cleveland, but most enterprises have been focusing mainly in limited resource areas to provide an important source of food to communities that lack retail infrastructure to access fresh food. Moreover, a major initiative and pet project of the coalition in conjunction with all of their partners has been to increase the acceptance of food stamps at farmers’ markets (Co-Convener 2012).

Because of the coalition’s Health and Nutrition Working Group’s focused ability to build relationships with those at farmer’s markets to implement the acceptance of EBT food assistance benefits, 80 percent of the farmers’ markets in the county now accept Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) food assistance cards (Taggart 2012). This one solution to reduce food insecurity, for example, was the result of the coalition’s ability to couple the problem stream with the policy stream. The coalition brought together stakeholders and government officials to the food policy community in the policy stream when the political atmosphere was open enough to accept a change.

Other processes occur in the policy stream before legislation is set onto the agenda. As the Director of Public Health described, a piece of legislation goes through a thorough process involving Cleveland’s Health and Human Services Committee and the testimony of experts brought in with corroborating information (2012). A rich discussion about health issues connected to the legislation typically involves the asking and answering of questions. From a very detailed and thorough process, stakeholders have to be assured the legislation will improve the public’s health rather than diminish it. As part
of the health impact assessment mentioned in Chapter 3, the positive and negative health effects of proposals come up for consideration (Collier 2011).

In sum, before moving forward with the legislation, there is thorough dialogue, comprehensive research and studies to inform those involved (Director of Public Health 2012). For example, “it is an educational process to see how directly connected the factors are in terms of where people live and how it impacts the accessibility to healthier fruits and vegetables,” said the Director of Public Health who explained the learning aspect involved within the policy stream (2012). Interest group coalition members and those in the food policy community contribute to the educational process as they share their knowledge.

Part of the policy stream’s process involves interest group coalition members bringing others from the policy community together to share limited resources such as specialized knowledge. As the Director of Public Health said, “we are continually trying to inform and educate people about how pervasive and complex the whole issue of health is” (2012). This includes educating government bureaucrats and elected officials the coalition has brought together through coupling. One of the coalition’s founding core members, Morgan Taggart, explained the process of agenda coupling policy with policymakers:

There is a lot of coalition building before anything is introduced to make sure it will have some traction once it makes its first introduction through city council. There is a lot of background work that happens before it first gets to that point often with inside knowledge that the Councilman [Cimperman] has, or what his colleagues are concerned about, what their perspective is, what issues they gravitate towards, so that has been and continues to be really valuable. (Taggart 2012)

Based on Morgan Taggart’s description, many hours go into the process of coalition
building (2012). As Hula stated, a coalition’s founding core members expend the most resources (1999). Members allocate much time to build a coalition and wait patiently for a policy window to open.

At the time of my interviews, the Healthy Cleveland Resolution went through the City Council’s policy window because of the coalition’s supportive contribution as a resource sharing structure. Councilman Cimperman gained endorsements from the four major medical institutions by negotiating to include additional initiatives on the proposal such as smoking cessation. The wide range of initiatives aimed at increasing the health of Clevelanders came from a multi-participatory coalition under the direction of leading policy entrepreneurs such as Morgan Taggart to set the agenda.

The wide range of initiatives within the Healthy Cleveland Resolution reflects the negotiating process to win support from a large group of diverse stakeholders (see Appendix A). To gain supporters, initiatives contained within the proposal were the result of stakeholders negotiating for incentives. Knowing the proposal would make it onto the policy agenda, many advocates came to have their initiative put into the proposal since its adoption by the city council was likely. In terms of direct lobbying for supporters, Morgan Taggart reflected on what happened in the policy stream:

> if the coalition discovered that there is a particular policy barrier within a local food access arena, often we would approach the Councilman [Cimperman] and say here are some ideas on solutions. Then we would meet with city department folks to talk through the idea of one of the possibilities, or meet with the council members one-on-one to talk with them about what is on the table, what the concern is, and about some potential options before them. (Taggart 2012)

Although a solution might have already existed, it went through a process of reformulation in the policy stream to include the input of various stakeholders, as
Kingdon explains (1984). In Morgan Taggart’s description, there was solution coupling to connect the problem stream with the policy stream because city officials were meeting with the coalition to discuss alternatives (Taggart 2012).

Overall, my respondents did not mention any internal bickering among the policy community members. Besides what appears to be a wholehearted concern for the wellbeing of Clevelanders, to delineate beyond this is mere speculation. No evidence appears to identify a counter-mobilization of staunch opponents attempting to vilify the coalition. Within the coalition, specialists designed solutions, developed the technical details, and reached out to government officials to set them on the agenda. This was the extent of some actor’s involvement in the policy stream, for they specialized in unique processes independent of other streams. The processes my respondents described fit with the policy stream in Kingdon’s model.

Cleveland has the policies, practices, and politics, such as the Urban Garden District agriculture zoning ordinance, to be self-sustaining (Gillispie 2011d) (For ordinance details, see The City Record 2007, 421-422). “Cleveland is covered with too many food deserts,” Councilman Cimperman stated, so he has been working on policy to increase Clevelanders’ access to more fresh fruit and vegetables instead of junk food and fast food (Cimperman 2012; Romero 2010). Aware of Cleveland’s abundance of food deserts, Councilman Cimperman advocated urban farming to increase Clevelanders’ health, productivity, and self-sufficiency. He has collaborated with coalition members and governmental agency directors to develop local food ordinances such as legislation to create zoning districts for urban community gardens as well as legislation to ease

As vested stakeholders, Morgan Taggart, Councilman Cimperman, Cleveland’s Chief City Planner, and the Director of Public Health were interacting within the policy community, the FPC, and the policy stream. They actively participated with the various components necessary to bring Healthy Cleveland, as a proposal, out of the policy stream’s primeval soup to the surface. The first proposal to protect a community garden was in 2005 before the original interest group formed. Other ordinances, such as the Urban Garden District and Local Purchasing, involved government agencies, so representatives from these agencies acted as specialists and shared their expertise to develop solutions.

The policymaking stages in Cleveland had identifiable participants interacting in the process streams. The factors, variables, or conditions Kingdon identifies in his model to open windows of opportunity were evident in the case of Cleveland. After analyzing some of the political actors involved at the ground level with the coalition, I found Morgan Taggart and Councilman Cimperman to be two highly essential policy entrepreneurs coupling streams. These actors put items on the agenda that government officials noticed. Without the concerted effort of those I have identified, there would not be policies coming out of the coalition to increase food security access in Cleveland, Ohio. The role of the coalition at the local level fits with my modified Kingdon multiple streams model.
Political Stream Questions

The variables, factors, and conditions Kingdon identifies to trigger a burst in the political stream occurred during a time of increased policymaking activity around the area of food security in Cleveland. From 2007 to 2011, a variety of political events occurred before and during the formation of the Healthy Cleveland proposal. As such, Kingdon’s formulation appears most prevalent in the political stream.

As political events disrupted the status quo’s stability, the coalition became a more active legislation generating entity. As far as identifiable variables affecting the political environment, multiple events shifted the attention of Cleveland’s policymakers. The election of a new mayor shifted priorities to produce a new agenda. Around the time the political window opened, more indicators were surfacing out of the problem stream. The coalition and its policy entrepreneurs might have had a few proposals ready to go when these windows opened, so the next step in the process was agenda coupling. Agenda coupling is a term I developed based on Kingdon’s more general concept of coupling to explain the process of coupling the three process streams when a political window opens.

In the political stream, an environment conducive for setting the agenda opens because of dramatic change in at least one of the following variables: public mood, election results, administration changes, appointees to committee chairs, and partisan distributions (Kingdon 1984, 152-172). Kingdon identifies a shift in public mood as a political stream variable. I find in my analysis that in Cleveland, there was a shift in the public mood resulting from the foreclosure crisis and its negative consequences.
Furthermore, every ten years the city redistricts its wards, so people realized because of the shifting wards how the city’s population has been declining. From 2000 to 2010, Cleveland’s population decreased by 17.1 percent to reach a 100-year low not seen since the year 1900 (Exner 2011a). Because of a drastic drop in Cleveland’s population, there was a loss of two wards.

There have been many abandoned neighborhoods in depopulated areas with entire streets vacated, and an awareness of this devastating population decline was reverberated in the public mood as citizens expressed uncertainty and fear about further population loss. With less population and more vacant land, what alternatives were there to improve the people’s condition? Cleveland’s built-in infrastructure of rail, public transit, road, and a good port makes it a prime location for community gardening and urban agriculture production, according to Councilman Cimperman (2012). The supportive public mood for urban agriculture was because the foreclosure crisis made available rare land in formerly densely populated urban areas.

In addition to the public mood affected by the foreclosure crisis and redistricting, election results sent large waves through the political stream. The election of a new mayor in the City of Cleveland was pivotal. My interview respondents unanimously recognized the election of Councilman Frank G. Jackson as their new mayor as a fundamental change in the political environment. Frank G. Jackson was a member of Cleveland’s City Council for 16 years before being elected mayor in 2005 (Sheeran 2009). In 2009, Mayor Jackson was re-elected to a second term by 77 percent of the vote (Gomez 2009).
Through the mayor’s strong leadership, the importance of improving public health has been elevated. As a result, Cleveland has been rededicating itself to look at contributing factors impacting residents’ health. This is why the Jackson Administration has been creating healthier communities through partnerships with world-class medical institutions that were willing to work together to bridge the gap between the public sector and the health sector. Mayor Jackson has pulled problems and solutions together during a prime time for change, so these qualities make him a policy entrepreneur partially responsible for policy innovation (for a description of different types of policy entrepreneurs and their policy-entrepreneurial activities, see Roberts and King 1991).

Moreover, Mayor Jackson was the Chairman of the Community and Economic Development Committee as a city council member, and he recognized the benefits of community gardens. In his Ward 5, there was always more land in the community than other parts of the city because of a declining population from a massive out-migration of white people in the 1950s and 1960s. Mayor Jackson has known about the value community gardening brings to safety, health, and civic participation. According to the Director of Public Health, Mayor Jackson’s years of experience with community level interaction “provides a whole additional level of commitment, empathy, and awareness” (2012). As a councilman, Frank Jackson saw directly numerous problems firsthand in his ward.

With the Jackson Administration’s adamant support for community gardens, a top-down supportive climate for positive agenda change emerged. In the following description by Councilman Cimperman, the political window clearly was open as a result of the change of administration with the election of a new mayor.
It is one thing to have the solution at hand and it is another when there is a change in political will and sensibilities for it to happen. If I were to ask any of the previous mayors to put a community garden next to City Hall, they would have told me to quickly walk 1000 yards and jump into Lake Erie. (Cimperman 2012)

At the local level, Mayor Jackson’s acceleration of support for community gardening and urban agriculture to increase food security has been remarkably supportive (Cimperman 2012). Councilman Cimperman said, “Mayor Jackson is an amazing mayor” because he enabled a solution to an impossible problem to come forward (2012). Having a new mayor is a major disruption in the political stream, and as Kingdon argues, such a disruption can open a political window to produce a change in the agenda (Kingdon 1984).

The fourth variable that fostered an agenda shift was when elected officials changed committee seats. If some of the major participants change, the government’s agenda can change (Kingdon 1984, 35-36, 160). When data from the 2010 census appeared, rapid population decline was evident in the City of Cleveland. There was accelerated population decline because of the foreclosure crisis, and that reduced the size of the wards from 21 to 19. So, committee chairs changed as a result of redistricting during the Cleveland City Council’s 119th session (Gillispie 2010a). Specifically, the city council’s president appointed Councilman Cimperman to the Health and Human Services Committee Chair. This in turn produced a burst in the political stream since it accelerated the impetus to change the agenda.

The Jackson Administration’s agenda changed as well through the political appointee of committee chairs because of redistricting. “It is quite common for the higher-level appointees [and elected officials appointed to chair certain committees] to
define an agenda item,” at the national level Kingdon notices, “and then to solicit the advice of [bureaucratic] careerists in drafting the proposals” (1984, 34). This applies to the local level government as well, especially when all these actors negotiate to collaborate. In the case of Cleveland, proposals developed in the policy stream mutually as department officials collaborated with Councilman Cimperman, the new head of an important committee.

An elected city council member such as Councilman Cimperman, for example, was a pivotal player. Such governmental political actors often dominate the agenda-setting process, so they will not squander their political capital or resources to pursue defunct policy (Kingdon 1984, 35-36). For example, the co-convener described Councilman Cimperman in this political stream process,

He put together a hearing where the Health and Human Services Committee at the City Council heard from the food policy coalition about the status of food insecurity in Cleveland. This gives the committee a better sense of how they can initiate the policy agenda. He has put together several meetings with coalition members, governmental officials, and the mayor. Members of the health department are regularly attending meetings. (Co-Convener 2012)

Entrenched career civil servants such as high-level administrators cannot set the policy agenda for their departments, so they leverage their vast wealth of expertise to become valuable allies for acquiescent elected officials. In the policy formation process, many less visible alternative specifications for policy came from these civil servants. These career bureaucrats implement and administer programs rather than directly set innovative items on the government’s decision agenda.

The Health and Human Services Committee Chairman assignment went to Councilman Cimperman, which Councilman Jackson previously occupied before he won
a majority of votes to become Cleveland’s new mayor. Therefore, both Councilman
Cimperman and Mayor Jackson had similar experience to understand the importance of
public health. This pushed public health to a much higher spot on the policy agenda. The
increased level of supportive leadership promoting food security and health created the
perfect environment to initiate a health-based item on the agenda as broad as the Healthy
Cleveland Resolution.

Then Councilman Cimperman brought the CEOs of the four major medical
hospital systems together for the first time in Cleveland’s history to improve health
through public policy collectively. Councilman Cimperman began a dialogue with the
four CEOs to address the issues of smoking cessation, improving exercise and mobility,
nutrition and diet, and increasing mental health awareness. While collaborating with
hospitals CEOs, the mayor, and government department leaders, Councilman Cimperman
was essential to this process of local level policymaking. Morgan Taggart, a founding
core member of the FPC, illustrated the significance of Councilman Cimperman’s
involvement:

... in junction with community members and strategic stakeholders was really the
catalyst... He has understood the nuanced relationship between environment and
public health... That knowledge and interest in these issues is important. (Taggart
2012)

Considering Councilman Cimperman’s level of involvement with the policymaking
process, I argue that he became a policy entrepreneur because he strongly believes urban
agriculture brings people together and benefits the city to increase food access.

As a core member of the FPC since its inception in 2007, Councilman
Cimperman has been coupling streams to place items on the city council’s agenda for
many years. The co-convener described the integral role of Councilman Cimperman:

He is an advocate for local food production, urban gardening, and food security initiatives as well. We come to him to get the message out about the food policy coalition or the local food movement in general. He’s been helpful in getting initiatives on the agenda for the city council, so he has put forward a good amount of policy that the food policy coalition has been able to get passed by the city council. (Co-Convener 2012)

Councilman Cimperman has brought six different proposals onto the City Council’s agenda to address food security. I demarcate two major political stream events. The most pivotal event was the election of Frank G. Jackson as Cleveland’s Mayor on November 8, 2005 and when he was sworn into office on January 2, 2006. Additionally, Councilman Cimperman became the Chairman of Health and Human Services Committee in January 2010.

Having an involved and dedicated member of the city council participate in the predecision policy stages was crucial in this particular local case. Councilman Cimperman, according the Director of Public Health:

. . . has just been a crucial driving force behind the whole Healthy Cleveland Initiative from the standpoint of his personal passion for health . . . He is so passionate and such a driving force. He is in a key position to be able to promote these health policies from a legislative standpoint that really allow Cleveland to establish in very tangible, concrete, and specific ways how to improve health and wellness. He has been just amazing. (Director of Public Health 2012)

Councilman Cimperman’s role included bringing issues to the appropriate people for solution coupling and agenda coupling. A task of the policy entrepreneur is to bring issues to the appropriate people, and this is how coupling happens.

Morgan Taggart explained the significant partnership with Councilman Cimperman because he “provided a lot of the nuanced legislative work, policy work and commitment to the issues to best present these issues to his colleagues on the council”
(2012). As Taggart’s description propounds, Councilman Cimperman put his reputation on the line while investing valuable time to connect policy with policymakers. He acted as a policy entrepreneur in solution coupling and agenda coupling. Like Kingdon says: “if an alternative is seized up by politicians, it is justified as a solution to a real problem” (1984, 187). Indeed, one of the main roles of a policy entrepreneur is the coupling of solutions within the political stream to set the agenda, and Councilman Cimperman’s presentation of issues to colleagues on Cleveland’s City Council fits perfectly with Kingdon’s model in this respect.

There were other less impactful political stream events. For a policy to emerge, I concur with Kingdon that “a combination of sources is virtually always responsible . . . the critical thing to understand is not where the seed comes from, but what makes the soil fertile” (1984, 81). For example, several respondents identified the incoming Obama Administration as a major national political event. Before Barack Obama took the oath of office as the 44th President of the United States on January 20, 2009, Cleveland’s political environment was fertile ground for change with the election of Frank Jackson as mayor in 2005. However, Michelle Obama’s agenda to improve health added one more layer of support coming from the national level. In response to my inquiry about the election of Obama, Taggart said, “the First Lady’s initiatives around ‘Let’s Move!’ certainly galvanized folks that maybe did not take our city’s issues as a priority” (2012). Having a new presidential administration, as Kingdon identifies, certainly affects the national agenda, and evidence from my case study suggests that the local level may have been influenced by this factor as well (1984, 161).
To illustrate, on February 9, 2010, Michelle Obama rolled-out her ambitious nationwide signature initiative to eliminate childhood obesity (Grier 2010). The First Lady’s “Let’s Move” campaign was designed to raise national awareness about the link between food and obesity (Sheryl 2010). Since one-third of U.S. children are overweight or obese, more cases of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes have been observed (Skiba 2010). Furthermore, an estimated $147 billion a year is being spent on obesity related medical bills (Hall and Hellmich 2010).

To promote healthier eating habits, 40 executives from major food production industries pledged to endorse the First Lady’s anti-obesity campaign (Skiba and Parsons 2010). The campaign’s community-oriented multifaceted effort has been focusing attention on healthier foods in schools. As a symbolic way to promote the consumption of fresh produce, the First Lady put an organic vegetable garden in the White House’s South Lawn (Hall and Hellmich 2010). Moreover, President Obama established the Task Force on Childhood Obesity (Barnes 2010). As the nation’s first federal task force to reduce childhood obesity, the Obama Administration’s cabinet secretaries from twelve government agencies developed a comprehensive action plan (Barnes 2010).

Councilman Cimperman confirmed that the First Lady’s leadership and focused support on health demonstrated that the issue was much larger than just a problem in Cleveland (Cimperman 2012). Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move Program was important because it challenged cities and states to reverse the trend of extremely poor health like the onset of adult type 2 diabetes (Director of Public Health 2012). Furthermore, because of the Obama Administration, health and health care reform continues to receive attention
as well as opportunities for the development of community programs that did not exist during the Bush Administration (Director of Public Health 2012).

Another political stream factor Kingdon briefly mentions is the ideological differences of political parties and partisanship to affect agendas (1984, 67-68). Each of the nineteen city council members serve a four-year term and represent a ward with approximately 25,000 residents in the City of Cleveland. Cleveland’s City Council has one member affiliated with the Green Party and the others are Democrats. When considering the partisan make-up of Cleveland voters, in the 2010 general election, there were 107,283 Clevelanders registered as Democrats and 9,901 as Republicans (Voter Control Report 2010). The political party affiliation of the Cleveland City Council’s members and their constituents’ political party affiliation by voting records are supportive of the Democratic Party.

Although the city council member’s political party affiliation as a variable may have influenced the political stream, it was the least germane in my case study. The city council’s political party affiliation did not change during the period of policy activity in the area of food security. Considering Mayor Jackson’s predisposition for health and urban agriculture, the change of administration at the local level was a pertinent factor in the political stream to open a window for agenda change since former Democratic mayors had not moved on the issue. The shift in the agenda was not affected by political party affiliation since January 1990 when the last Republican, George Voinovich, left office as the mayor of Cleveland (Miller 2010).

In sum, the issues framed in the problem stream have been plaguing Cleveland’s neighborhoods for decades, but with bursts in the political stream from the
awareness of indicators, a shift in public mood, election results, a change of administration with a new mayor, and new committee chairs, the political environment shifted to allow for a change in the agenda. A disrupted political environment puts heavy pressure on decision makers. When there is a need for problems to be solved, having the political climate supportive of a solution opens the policy window. Councilman Cimperman has direct experience with two previous mayors, so when he expressed that “we would not be where we are today without” Mayor Jackson’s tremendous support to accelerate urban agriculture, the evidence shows the relevancy of a new administration to facilitate policy agenda change (Cimperman 2012). However, policy entrepreneurs advocating change still had to bring a solution into the political stream.

My data show an agenda-setting process involving elected political officials, appointees, and leaders of agencies from within government who collaborated with various specialists in the policy stream. As Kingdon recognizes, “many participants do cut across the three process streams . . . any actor can be involved in any stream, and some of them actually are involved in several” (1984, 92). Actors navigated across streams during the policymaking process because the policy entrepreneurs were coupling streams. With coupling, a proposal “is vetted through the city departments, through the city council members, to really come up with something that has some legs, and has some potential” as Taggart described (2012). Since the policy community has members from inside the government who participated in policy option formation, the policy community was coupling streams by acting as a bridge for actors to cross. Although other advocates might have played an integral role in this political policy drama, two stand out as the
exclusive primary actors. Policy entrepreneurs such as Morgan Taggart and Councilman Cimperman from the coalition and policy community did the coupling.

With the problem window and political window open, the opportunity grew to bring forth an alternative solution to combat some of Cleveland’s most pressing problems. Indeed, when policy entrepreneurs carefully packaged a combination of problems with a technically feasible solution, the policymakers noticed. By softening up the important government officials, and having a wide variety of supporters behind the coalition, putting a proposal onto the agenda became more plausible.

Until the political window opened, many ideas existed unattached to the eventual proposals. When members of the coalition solicited support from government officials, the actual proposal delivered to the city council’s agenda contained a variety of provisions. Policy entrepreneurs waiting in the policy stream for a political window to open had to develop the proposal reflective of contributing participants’ interests. All of these political stream processes in my case study confirm that Kingdon’s model provides a framework to understand local-level policymaking.

Policy Windows

Before policy reaches the agenda, it passes through a policy window. In this section, I discuss a set of food security policies that passed through Cleveland’s policy windows. In 2005, the first piece of legislation to protect community gardens in Cleveland came about when Councilman Cimperman connected with a specialized expert from the Ohio State University Extension. Together they worked on legislation to establish a zoning ordinance to protect a community gardening project in a neighborhood Councilman Cimperman represented. Several different families took their subsistence
from this community garden for at least forty years, so residents wanted to stop a
property developer’s effort to turn their existing garden into a parking lot (Cimperman
2012). Part of the developer’s plan was to convert the neighboring four-unit apartment
from subsidized affordable housing into a two-unit condominium for sale (Cimperman
2012).

With a thriving community garden set for demolition, worried neighbors
approached Councilman Cimperman to protect their food security. The public outcry
resonated with him as a focusing event, and a problem window opened as a result of this
leak in the problem stream (Cimperman 2012). When Councilman Cimperman needed an
alternative solution, he went into the policy stream because coupling with a specialized
expert from the Ohio State University Extension brought him closer to those with
technical knowledge about certain issues. For instance, a program assistant from the Ohio
State University Extension, acting as a specialist and policy entrepreneur, used data to
boost the benefits of urban agriculture as a solution to the vacant lot crisis (Brady 2007)
(See Figure 10). Ideas for a solution were in the policy stream and a problem needed to
bring them forward. Other specialized experts came from Ohio State’s Center for Urban
Environment and Economic Development along with the Agricultural Research and
Development Center to suggest other alternatives.

A solution was formed to protect the community garden, which Councilman
Cimperman recalled as “embarrassing because people laughed at me publically when I
introduced this legislation” (2012). Resistance came from those holding the belief that
zoning is to encourage the development of new homes for sale as opposed to protecting
community gardens where residents grow produce (Cimperman 2012). Fortunately, more
people in the city started to realize that urban agriculture has many ancillary benefits beyond increasing access to food.

The first piece of legislation to be placed on the agenda to increase food security came as a result of a problem window opening because of a recognized condition within a community in need of a solution. That piece of legislation was labeled the “Open Space and Recreation Districts,” zoning Ordinance No. 1172-05 (The City Record 2005, 2274-2278). It is worth mentioning that the word “gardens” appears once in the ordinance under Section 342.03 (b), and it is surrounded by about six-hundred words (The City Record 2005, 2274-2278). This is relevant because the initial impetus for this ordinance might have been to protect community gardens but because of resistance, as the Councilman said, the proposal had to cover a more dynamic body of interests (The City Record 2005, 2274-2278). Councilman Cimperman attached the community garden initiative as a minor policy rider to a larger proposal in the hope that it would pass.

Here, even without an open political window, Councilman Cimperman chose to recognize his constituents’ unfortunate condition as a legitimate problem to resolve. With the problem window open, Morgan Taggart came from the policy stream as a policy entrepreneur to offer ideas with solution coupling.

Councilman Cimperman acknowledged his collaboration with specialists while formulating the community garden ordinance as the indoctrinating event connecting him with the urban agriculture movement and local food policy specialists (Cimperman 2012). Kingdon correctly states that “members of interest groups depend on those in elected positions” for a viable alternative to get a high position on a decision agenda (1984, 47). This collaboration set the foundation for an enduring relationship and
the eventual establishment of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC).

As a spillover effect, other food security policy floated up and out of the policy stream. “The success of the first case provides an argument by analogy for success in the second,” says Kingdon, because the “first success creates tremendously powerful spillover effects” (Kingdon 1984, 202-203). The next major piece of legislation to come out of the policy stream through the coalition’s efforts was the Urban Garden District Ordinance No. 208-07 of 2007, which was the first zoning ordinance in the United States to protect urban agriculture (see Appendix B). Its passage was the result of the political window opening from various political stream events such as the election of a new mayor. Perhaps Ordinance No. 208-07 was an extension of Ordinance No. 1172-05, for increasing food security was the impetus behind both proposals. As the co-convener said, “a number of initiatives the food policy coalition has been able to help push through the city council” (Co-Convener 2012).

The third policy success of the coalition and Councilman Cimperman was Cleveland’s progressive chicken and beekeeping policy for every single resident in the city (see Appendix F). With a policy window open, legislation put on the agenda by Councilman Cimperman on behalf of the FPC and its Land Use and Planning Working Group, passed to change zoning ordinances for the production of chickens, ducks, rabbits, and beehives in February 2009 to increase food security (Gillispie 2010b; The City Record 2009, 158-161; see Appendix F). Mayor Jackson’s vision gave tremendous support for the chicken and bee ordinance, and he helped with the subsequent local food purchasing policy, according to Councilman Cimperman (Cimperman 2012).
The fourth policy success came when the FPC’s Local Purchasing Working Group developed a comprehensive policy brief to increase institutional purchases of local food. This group of knowledgeable specialists developed innovative solutions to boost local food production and the local economy. This was a dynamic coupling of the food policy community, the FPC’s interest group coalition, Councilman Cimperman, the Cleveland City Council, and Mayor Jackson to develop a huge ordinance to leverage the City of Cleveland’s power to boost the local economy.

Mayor Jackson and Councilman Cimperman along with eight other city council members sponsored the Local Purchasing Ordinance Number 1660-A-09, which encourages the city to support local farmers and food distributors (Gillispie 2010e; see Appendix G). As Councilman Cimperman noted, “the solutions are out there, but it is the application of them that makes or breaks a city” (2012). The Cleveland City Council passed the ordinance on March 29, and it became effective on April 28, 2010 (The City Record 2010a, 460-461; see Appendix G). Cleveland became the first city in the country to pass legislation to encourage and incentivize the purchase of locally produced food. Furthermore, with the Mayor’s signature on the policy proposal and endorsement of other FPC proposals, there was surely a favorable political climate.

Finally, the Healthy Cleveland Resolution was the main result of a partnership between the coalition facilitated by Councilman Cimperman with the support of the Jackson Administration and the four major health institutions. Because of relevant conversations around public health, food, diet and exercise, “there was a partnership established with medical institutions with the goal of trying to work together to change the culture of health in the City of Cleveland,” according to Cleveland’s Chief City
Planner (2012). Healthy Cleveland is an outline of initiatives assigned to various city departments to begin implementation in 2012, such as smoking cessation, diet and exercise, and urban agriculture, so the city of Cleveland has been working with departments and agencies to help advance elements of the resolution to change the culture of health in Cleveland (see Appendix A).

For example, the City Planning Department collaborates with other city departments to improve the culture of health through all policies in the city of Cleveland. To change the culture of health “requires policy change, organizational change, and institutional knowledge,” declared Cleveland’s Chief City Planner (2012). Through stream coupling, the original interest group coalition as part of the FPC brought critical partners together with other stakeholders who possessed many years of expertise. Multiple partners brought institutional knowledge together during their effort to improve the health of Cleveland. Healthy Cleveland, the Director of Public Health enthusiastically explained:

. . . made a tremendous impact and brought together critical stakeholders who are on board. They understand how important public health is and the role of prevention for our city. There are many residual benefits that come from improving the health of our population such as the economic development opportunities. Communities are looking for lower health care costs, a healthier workforce, because that translates directly to greater attendance and more productivity. (2012)

Healthy Cleveland was the Jackson Administration’s answer to the various adverse health conditions existing particularly in Cleveland (Chief City Planner 2012). Indeed, the city of Cleveland was going on an offensive to improve its residents’ health. “A good idea catches on, snowballing as it picks up adherents,” states Kingdon (1984, 169).
The members of the food policy community were from within and outside of government. Within the food policy community was the FPC made up of an interest group coalition that had a public-private partnership with a wide array of supporters including high-level government officials with the mayor’s support in the forefront setting issues on the governmental agenda. In the policy stream, which in my case study was for the most part the food policy community, there was an organization called the Cleveland-Cuyahoga Food Policy Coalition (FPC) made up of various interest groups, educational institutions, and governmental agencies. Conveners from the original interest group coalition were coupling with governmental actors inside of the food policy community. My findings augment Kingdon’s model regarding the role of interest group coalitions at the local level. My case study provides a valuable example of an interest group coalition working aggressively with others both inside and outside of government to produce policies rather than block them.

In conclusion, the processes within the problem recognition and policy generation streams are unique, and participants can engage within any process stream. Usually participants specialize in one process, so the streams are independent until policy entrepreneurs do the coupling to bring them together (Kingdon 1984, 206). When policy entrepreneurs couple streams, a viable solution emerges from the policy stream.

The solution of demolishing vacant buildings to develop urban agricultural gardens for producing food has been a massive project. Similarly, the local purchasing ordinance has had numerous community stakeholders involved. Both policies required many public departments, agencies, and actors to coalesce before implementation started. Because of the FPC’s public-private collaboration with many interest group partners, a
mutual relationship of support came together. Indeed, when more city authorities and experts stood behind the FPC’s proposals, the momentum necessary to push them through the policy windows seemed to increase.

Through lobbying, as Baumgartner et al. discuss, conveners brought gatekeeping government officials into a food policy community to work together as allied members (2009). Since the government officials originated from the political stream, coupling brought them together with policy stream actors such as specialists and various stakeholders. The FPC established an organizational venue for actors with various interests to coalesce (see Figure 9). The consensus building process solidified groups into a coalition because policy entrepreneurs offered concessions in the form of having pet projects attached to proposals.

Likewise, having problem stream actors communicate with coalition members within the policy stream helped solutions to formulate. During solution coupling, these participating actors shared specialized knowledge to advance an outcome, as Berry suggests (1997). During coupling, FPC members interacted with government officials, and through their collaboration, proposals came together. Indeed, the FPC’s broad support became a consolidated driving force.

Without a favorable political climate, there might not have been agenda coupling because the existing political stream was undisrupted. “Sometimes participants choose not to open a window at all rather than risk an outcome that would be worse than the status quo,” says Kingdon (1984, 186). In a less favorable political climate, nothing might compel actors to risk their reputations or careers to produce a solution. Because the policy window opened, proposals moved from the governmental agenda to the decision
agenda for adoption. Thus, Kingdon’s model, especially with my modifications that highlight the pivotal role of interest group coalitions, is a fitting model for understanding such cutting-edge policymaking as that around food policy in Cleveland as well as policymaking on more familiar issues.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

An increasing number of local-level food policy coalitions began to appear in many American cities at the beginning of the new millennium. In Cleveland, a small group of specialists and advocates formed an informal interest group coalition and began to present data and information that highlighted the problem of food insecurity. Then the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition was formed in 2007 and it coordinated a deliberate policymaking effort to increase access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food for residents of Cleveland, Ohio.

When evidence of a problem began to surface, government officials and bureaucrats took notice that certain neighborhoods had less access to healthy and sufficient food and many health-related disparities from this poor food access. A collection of policy actors formed an interest group coalition within a broader food policy community, and they actively produced a number of policy proposals that were not just put onto the legislative agenda but were adopted by the Cleveland City Council.

John Kingdon’s multiple streams model offers a strategic framework to understand the policy agenda setting process (Kingdon 1984). Kingdon argues that an issue rises to saliency when framed as serious enough to require a prompt solution, and when the political climate allows for change as an alternative to the status quo, a solution can pass through a policy window of opportunity onto the agenda. Under conditions ripe
for change, there is a high probability that policy decision makers will adopt a solution. I proposed a modification to Kingdon’s model to put more focus on interest group coalitions and the policy entrepreneurs that drive them, and I tested this modified Kingdon model with a case study of local-level policymaking in Cleveland in the policy area of food security. In this way, my research contributes to other studies that test Kingdon’s multiple streams model at the local-level (see for example Liu et al. 2010).

Initially, the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition’s (FPC) website was a good starting point to learn about its efforts to increase food security. To learn more about what was happening in Cleveland around this policy issue, I also found newspaper articles and reports to supplement what was available on the FPC’s website. Without being in Cleveland to observe members of the coalition facilitating the creation of policy proposals, I had to obtain extra details about what was happening on the ground level. While published information was helpful, it was not enough to test my modified Kingdon model. Thus, I interviewed relevant members of the FPC and government actors in the policy community to get a more accurate understanding of the factors and conditions that inspired them to participate in the policymaking process.

When I first drafted the interview schedule, I was merely trying to locate actors in the policymaking process. Were they participating mainly in the problem stream, policy stream, or political stream? In other words, I wanted to know where these actors were located in Kingdon’s framework. It became clear that this sample of participants was the most enthusiastic about the FPC’s endeavors to improve food security. The actors I interviewed provided ample detailed information to understand
more clearly the predecision policymaking processes that triggered food security proposals to come forward in Cleveland from 2007 to 2011.

In the problem stream, I learned about the indicators, focusing events, and feedback effects from respondents’ interviews that newspaper articles had not reported. Their extensive responses provided a fuller set of data to analyze that would have otherwise been limited without the voices of those who participated in the policymaking process. Because my interview questions were designed to detect the more general factors and conditions that provoked policy change, I was surprised to get responses that provided specific details.

Of all the serious problems available for my respondents to mention, the most compelling was the health disparities between urban and suburban residents, for this fact stressed a vast inequality that has resulted in a life-expectancy gap. That particular indicator seems to have thrown fuel on to a long-burning fire, for it was the identifiable main impetus to change the policy agenda in Cleveland. It seems that a new problem window opened while the other factors and conditions had already triggered the necessary opportunity for agenda-setting action. So, policymakers were ready to deliberate on passing or adopting a proposal to address this major health problem.

When problems percolated and then overflowed to submerge policymakers with calls for help from their constituency, there was a disruption in the normal flow of political operations. As the overflowing stream submerged policymakers, they were swamped with problems and the onus was placed on the city council members to adopt effective solutions. Unless policy entrepreneurs harnessed this rare energy, much of it was going to be absorbed back into the stream.
Policy entrepreneurs coupled actors to bolster support. As an entrepreneurial tactic, coupling created an adhesive to heal the fissure. Coupling optimizes the flow of information between streams of actors, and the FPC maximized available resources to integrate participants in a central base that was the food policy community. Thus, the nexus between interest group actors and government officials caused a powerful disruption, and this combination of efforts was the catalyst that caused a flux in the system. Therefore, elected officials and government bureaucrats were in the market for a solution. Because a problem window opened, policy entrepreneurs like Moran Taggart of the FPC brought problems and policy together. I describe this process as solution coupling, which is a term I developed during my refinement of Kingdon’s multiple streams model. Thus, during solution coupling, the actors in search of a solution mixed with an interest group coalition that contained many specialized experts with the technical knowledge for a proposal to come out of the policy stream.

In the policy stream, the interest group coalition was involved with developing solutions, which was part of a much broader food policy community that contained government officials such as the Director of Public Health and the Cleveland Planning Commission’s chief planner. These two government bureaucrats brought expert knowledge to the policy community from their public sector vantage point. Additionally, Councilman Cimperman, as an elected official with policymaking authority, participated as a policy entrepreneur to bring together government officials with those operating outside of the government to create policies.

After fifteen years of public service as a member of Cleveland’s City Council, Councilman Cimperman was not going to exhaust his political capital on frivolous
pursuits. He understood the viability of alternatives and the likelihood of a successful proposal moving higher on the agenda. Such agenda-setting depends upon a supportive political climate, for unsupportive elected officials were more likely to stymie what was not in their preferred policy area. Without a supportive legislative body, efforts to promote policy change may have faced insurmountable obstacles.

As a founding member and convener of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition (FPC), Morgan Taggart, had the endurance to bring together those necessary to produce policy proposals when the time was ripe for change. As a policy entrepreneur, she was solution coupling. Because the FPC was part of a wider food policy community, government officials comfortably went into the policy stream for ideas to tackle the problem of food insecurity. Indeed, the FPC is pivotal as an assemblage of policy actors within and outside of government that worked together on proposals. The successful strategies of the FPC included softening up important stakeholders to garner their support from the beginning. Additionally, having conveners based at universities provided them with credibility.

The coalition’s conveners including Morgan Taggart were solution coupling by bringing together the problem stream and the policy stream to generate sound proposals to increase food security. When the political window was open, Councilman Cimperman came from the food policy community with packaged proposals ready for agenda coupling. While I have given considerable attention to the policymaking activity of Morgan Taggart and Councilman Cimperman, their participation was in tandem with other participants within the food policy community. “Public policy is not one single actor’s brainchild,” as Kingdon states, “. . . nobody has a monopoly on ideas. They come
from a plethora of different sources” (1984, 75-76). To illustrate, my respondents described the coalition as multi-sector, multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, broad and diverse (Councilman Cimperman 2012; Chief City Planner 2012; Director of Public Health 2012; Taggart 2012). Through the coalition’s collaborative effort, members transformed their limited resources into a powerful driver of policy change. The FPC’s specialists and government officials had the expertise to overcome technical obstacles in food security policies.

The Healthy Cleveland Resolution is a good example of a proposal originating in the policy stream with a variety of stakeholders involved. The proposed resolution might not have floated out of the policy stream were it not for the efforts of Councilman Cimperman to bring in the four CEOs from some of America’s best medical institutions. To join in a citywide effort to improve the health of Clevelanders and increase their food security, Councilman Cimperman’s had to cajole the leaders from the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals Case Medical Center, the Sisters of Charity Health System, and MetroHealth Medical Center. Without his appointment to Chair the Health and Human Services Committee, he might not have been able to facilitate their supporting endorsement.

When Councilman Cimperman was the Chair of the City Planning Committee, the food security proposals he introduced to the Cleveland City Council were mostly zoning ordinances to protect community gardens, permit urban agriculture, and protect the production of chickens, ducks, rabbits, and bees. Those ordinances involved the City Planning Commission. With the Healthy Cleveland Resolution, his proposals have become less about city planning and more about health, and this reflects his
appointment to Chair the Health and Human Services Committee, yet food security remains an integral part of his agenda.

The substance of each proposal that came from the FPC reflected the collaborative effort of those interest groups assembled in the periphery and the specialized players just near the core. Thus, as the conveners brought different interest groups into the coalition, as well as the different government officials, the composition of the coalition and the broader policy community changed. In the policy stream, these changes influenced each proposal’s substance to reflect those actors participating in the process.

It became evident that when new actors joined the effort, the organizational structure of the policy stream changed as well in such a way that the policy outcomes reflected the actors’ prerogatives. In general, the interest group coalition was developing policies within a policy community that contained many actors. In contrast, Kingdon briefly mentions that a large portion of interest group activity involves blocking issues for consideration before their arrival on the governmental agenda (1984, 52). By blocking policy agenda items, the status quo is maintained, for it is a contentious endeavor to set the agenda (1984, 52). My case study challenges Kingdon’s view of interest groups as defensive players and shows how interest group coalitions can be the drivers of policy change.

The importance of certain factors and conditions in the political stream that Kingdon highlighted was clearly evident in Cleveland. Political events such as the election of a new mayor and the change of committee chairs were the most evident triggers that opened a political window. With the political window open, there were more
opportunities for food security proposals to come forward because the overall agenda changed. It was not just the election of a new mayor that opened the window, but having a supportive mayor who endorsed food security proposals helped to increase the legislative activity in that policy area. For instance, prior to Jackson’s election as mayor, the conditions in Cleveland were already dire in terms of unemployment, poverty, and foreclosures. So, why weren’t there more food security policies on the agenda or enacted before January 2006?

Considerations for Future Research

While this research project is an analysis of just one case, future research on policy agenda setting can benefit from my findings. For example, my modification of Kingdon’s model to include a broader and more significant consideration of the role of interest group coalitions and their policy entrepreneurs can be tested further with different case studies and at different levels of government. My research also raises questions that can be explored in future research. For instance, the role of party influence and partisanship needs further study, especially in this era of highly polarized politics in many parts of the U.S. and at the national level.

Indeed, after recognizing and isolating each variable that might have collectively opened the political window by disrupting the political stream, it is important to consider how national initiatives such as the First Lady’s Let’s Move campaign might have influenced a local government’s agenda. Was Michelle Obama’s message to improve children’s health received more favorably in cities with a majority of Democratic leaders such as in Cleveland? If the First Lady’s campaign to produce change was more influential in cities and counties that traditionally vote Democratic, then the
power of a new administration at the national level to affect local level politics deserves further consideration in future research.

Policy makers’ political party affiliation may also have been an important variable. With all but one member affiliated with the Democratic Party in Cleveland, perhaps improving citizens’ food security and health was a partisan issue. Although it may seem that better food security and health for Americans is a nonpartisan issue and has bipartisan support, the local level policies coming from Cleveland involved no Republicans. For instance, the first zoning ordinances to improve food security in the nation have come from Cleveland’s City Council, which has a Green Party member and 18 Democrats with no Republicans (Ordinance No. 1172-05, No. 208-07, No. 1562-08, No. 814-10, No. 1660-A-09, and Resolution No. 257-11 and No. 476-11). Therefore, in cities with problems similar to those in Cleveland, the city council members’ political affiliation might be an important factor to explain why such policies make it on to the agenda in some locations but not in others.

Additionally, if advocates want to pass a specific set of initiatives, highlighting the extent of a problem is an optional strategy. Yet important policy actors can disagree about whether a problem is pressing or even if it exists. For example, a critical observer writes about food policy, “13.5 million Americans are supposedly McVictimized [a reference to blaming McDonalds for poor health] by food deserts . . . The problem is badly overstated” (Gratzer 2011). When does evidence show there is actually a problem or supposedly a problem? Indeed, policy entrepreneurs may frame issues as a menacing threat to bolster policymakers’ support for a solution, and clearly those opposed also try to frame the issue as less of a problem or not a problem at all.
My case study did not capture such a conflictual problem stream process, probably because of the lack of conservative opposition in Cleveland politics. Testing my modified Kingdon model in different local setting that are more politically competitive might therefore reveal a more complex and conflictual policy making process.

Indeed, there is some evidence that entrepreneurs might deliberately guide the problem stream with misinformation to create a moral panic (see Mitchell 2001). In this case, advocates falsely portrayed a threat with a bogeyman to create a moral panic and used scaremongering as a strategic tactic to garner support for their solution. After distorting the evidence, advocates defined problems, deployed supporters, and pushed a solution onto the agenda, which made it easier for them to obtain a legislative victory. Because the agenda setting process lends itself to abuse by those seeking to control policymaking, scholars need to consider policy entrepreneurs’ motives beyond what is publically stated. In my study, I applied a critical lens while collecting and analyzing data and such caution should be exercised in similar studies.

Finally, since I developed the interview schedule as a general template, I did not specifically design questions with Cleveland’s respondents in mind. Future analysis concerning the predecision public policy processes might need a revised measuring instrument with questions moving from the general to the specific, so that researchers can understand the participants and processes more precisely for each city.

My analysis has revealed quite a lot about this local-level agenda setting process that follows Kingdon’s multiple streams model. It also revealed aspects of the process that Kingdon’s model does not capture. Thus, to understand the predecision policymaking processes that trigger an opportunity for agenda-setting action to come
forward, I propose my modified Kingdon multiple streams model as a pragmatic analytical framework.

**My Contributions to the Literature**

To produce a qualitatively measurable model, I had to expand on most of Kingdon’s terms using additional scholarly literature. Therefore, I had to incorporate what other scholars had written about Kingdon’s model because there were no detailed descriptions to refine it. In order to have a clear set of variables and concepts to operationalize for testing with my case study, I expanded the existing conceptualization of these terms and concepts with examples that appear in the literature.

For instance, my contribution includes a more thorough description of policy entrepreneurs with detailed examples of what these political actors do to produce policy. Also, because most of the literature tends to cover policy windows instead of problem windows and political windows, I describe problem windows and political windows extensively in order to differentiate them from policy windows. Now future researchers can make a clear distinction among these different opportunities for engaging in policy making and agenda setting activity instead of using policy windows as a generic term to identify the best time for coupling.

Furthermore, I clarified the concept of coupling by separating it into solution coupling and agenda coupling, with the former used to describe the process of bringing actors from the problem stream and policy stream together to produce a solution. Second, I developed agenda coupling as a concept to describe the process of when policy entrepreneurs bring the three process streams together to open a policy window. With agenda coupling, actors put an item on the local-level decision making governmental
agenda when a political window opens because of major political events in the political stream.

Finally, and most importantly, my contribution to understanding policy making and agenda setting includes the addition of interest group coalitions as important and perhaps necessary players in the agenda-setting process. My addition of interest group coalitions to Kingdon’s model is very important because future researchers can test with other case studies if these organizational structures in the policy stream exist when proposals come from the policy stream and are put on the policy agenda. I hypothesize that without an effective interest group coalition, no viable proposals will appear on the agenda in the policy area of food security and public health at the local level. In sum, my contribution includes bringing forward through the literature review concepts that are more tangible for future researchers to measure. With concrete examples, we can more easily observe and understand how and why policy is put on the agenda.
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“Healthy Cleveland” – Resolution No. 257-11

By Mayor Jackson and Council Members Cimperman, Sweeney, Zone and Conwell.

An emergency resolution endorsing the creation of a Healthy Cleveland and agreeing to collaborate with the Mayor and the four hospital systems in Cleveland that will lend their staff, expertise, and research efforts to reach this goal.

Whereas, the City of Cleveland and Cleveland City Council are committed to creating a Healthy Cleveland with healthy neighborhoods and residents who enjoy longer and healthier lives and by combating chronic health conditions like chronic pulmonary disease, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and behavioral health; and

Whereas, Cleveland is home to the four best health care systems in the United States; Cleveland Clinic, MetroHealth, Sisters of Charity Health System, and University Hospitals, and all four institutions support the mission of creating a Healthy Cleveland; and

Whereas, to be successful in creating a Healthy Cleveland, the Jackson Administration, Cleveland City Council and the four health care institutions will collaborate to address smoking cessation, diet and nutrition, exercise and mobility issues and behavioral and mood disorders beginning in 2011; and

Whereas, banning of smoking on and in all City Properties, including parks, playgrounds, cemeteries, garages, and areas within 150 feet of any entrance to any City building or facility, including City Hall, Recreation Centers, and Public Health Centers will be discussed; and

Whereas, we will work to create a voluntarily-adopted smoke free zone within 150 feet of any entrance to any privately-owned facility or building in the city of Cleveland that seeks this voluntary designation; and

Whereas, by working collaboratively with local health institutions, we can provide and increase the accessibility of city-wide smoking cessation programs to help people quit smoking; and

Whereas, this City will remove all sugar-based drinks and products with trans-fats from dispensing machines in City facilities, to be replaced with water and 100% juice products and trans-fat free products; and

Whereas, this collaborative effort will work to encourage local restaurants and vendors to remove transfats from their menus and offer transfat free products; and

Whereas, an immediate task force will be established with our health care partners and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District to provide healthier food options in our city schools; and

Whereas, the Cleveland Planning Commission will collaborate with CMSD to ensure all new school construction or schools that are being rehabilitated have adequate kitchen facilities for the preparation of food; and

Whereas, the Committee on Public Health will work with CMSD to reincorporate school gardens in every new school plan; and
Whereas, in collaboration with the Cleveland Planning Commission the Health Committee will seek to ensure the existence of a city garden within walking distance of every citizen in Cleveland by 2020 with the support of the City Planning and Health Committees; and

Whereas, the Planning Committee will collaborate with the health care institutions and community partners to improve physical activity throughout Cleveland by creating joint-use agreements between community organizations, schools and city recreational facilities; and

Whereas, the City will work to develop a Complete Streets Policy to improve bike and pedestrian access and improve mobility on street, streetscape, bridge improvement projects; and

Whereas, by collaborating with Neighborhood Progress Incorporated and the Department of Community Development, community organizers in Cleveland’s neighborhoods will be trained in health literacy, with the goal of linking residents to existing health centers, providing proactive, preventative health information and creating an ethic of health education and health awareness at the grass roots level in the City; and

Whereas, by working with community organizers, the City of Cleveland and its health care partners can provide information and establish ways for residents to seek assistance for depression, schizophrenia, or any other mood related disorders; and

Whereas, City Planning will create health assessments of every neighborhood in the City, this effort will gauge how healthy each neighborhood is, and by working with all four health care systems, changes can be implemented with a scale upon which measurements can be made; and

Whereas, this work is being done to amplify outreach from the City on related health issues; and

Whereas, this resolution constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health or safety, now, therefore

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Cleveland:

Section 1. That this Council endorses the creation of a Healthy Cleveland and agrees to collaborate with the Mayor and the four hospital systems in Cleveland that will lend their staff, expertise, and research efforts to reach this goal.

Section 2. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Adopted: March 28, 2011.
Effective: March 28, 2011.

Source: The City Record 2011c, 508.
APPENDIX B
Ordinance Number 208-07. (Urban Garden District)
By Council Members Cimperman and Cummins.

The “Urban Garden District” is hereby established as part of the Zoning Code to ensure that urban garden areas are appropriately located and protected to meet needs for local food production, community health, community education, garden-related job training, environmental enhancement, preservation of green space, and community enjoyment on sites for which urban gardens represent the highest and best use for the community.

(a) “Community garden” means an area of land managed and maintained by a group of individuals to grow and harvest food crops and/or non-food, ornamental crops, such as flowers, for personal or group use, consumption or donation. Community gardens may be divided into separate plots for cultivation by one or more individuals or may be farmed collectively by members of the group and may include common areas maintained and used by group members.

(b) “Market garden” means an area of land managed and maintained by an individual or group of individuals to grow and harvest food crops and/or non-food, ornamental crops, such as flowers, to be sold for profit.

(c) “Greenhouse” means a building made of glass, plastic, or fiberglass in which plants are cultivated.

(d) “Hoophouse” means a structure made of PVC piping or other material covered with translucent plastic, constructed in a “half-round” or “hoop” shape.

(e) “Coldframe” means an unheated outdoor structure consisting of a wooden or concrete frame and a top of glass or clear plastic, used for protecting seedlings and plants from the cold.

**Bookmark 336.03 Permitted Main Uses**

Only the following main uses shall be permitted in an Urban Garden District:

(a) community gardens which may have occasional sales of items grown at the site;

(b) market gardens, including the sale of crops produced on the site.

**Bookmark 336.04 Permitted Accessory Uses**

Only the following accessory uses and structures shall be permitted in an Urban Garden District:

(a) greenhouses, hoophouses, cold-frames, and similar structures used to extend the growing season;

(b) open space associated with and intended for use as garden areas;

(c) signs limited to identification, information and directional signs, including sponsorship information where the sponsorship information is clearly secondary to other permitted information on any particular sign, in conformance with the regulations of Section 336.05;
(d) benches, bike racks, raised/accessible planting beds, compost bins, picnic tables, seasonal farm stands, fences, garden art, rain barrel systems, chicken coops, beehives, and children’s play areas;
(e) buildings, limited to tool sheds, shade pavilions, barns, rest-room facilities with composting toilets, and planting preparation houses, in conformance with the regulations of Section 336.05;
(f) off-street parking and walkways, in conformance with the regulations of Section 336.05.

**Bookmark 336.05 Supplemental Regulations**

Uses and structures in an Urban Garden District shall be developed and maintained in accordance with the following regulations.

(a) Location. Buildings shall be set back from property lines of a Residential District a minimum distance of five (5) feet.
(b) Height. No building or other structure shall be greater than twenty-five (25) feet in height.
(c) Building Coverage. The combined area of all buildings, excluding greenhouses and hoophouses, shall not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the garden site lot area.
(d) Parking and Walkways. Off-street parking shall be permitted only for those garden sites exceeding 15,000 square feet in lot area. Such parking shall be limited in size to ten percent (10%) of the garden site lot area and shall be either unpaved or surfaced with gravel or similar loose material or shall be paved with pervious paving material. Walkways shall be unpaved except as necessary to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.
(e) Signs. Signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet in area per side and shall not exceed six (6) feet in height.
(f) Seasonal Farm Stands. Seasonal farm stands shall be removed from the premises or stored inside a building on the premises during that time of the year when the garden is not open for public use.
(g) Fences. Fences shall not exceed six (6) feet in height, shall be at least fifty percent (50%) open if they are taller than four (4) feet, and shall be constructed of wood, chain link, or ornamental metal. For any garden that is 15,000 square feet in area or greater and is in a location that is subject to design review and approval by the City Planning Commission or Landmarks Commission, no fence shall be installed without review by the City Planning Director, on behalf of the Commission, who may confer with a neighborhood design review committee, if one exists, so that best efforts are taken to ensure that the fence is compatible in appearance and placement with the character of nearby properties.

Passed: March 5, 2007  
Effective: March 9, 2007  

*Source: The City Record 2007, 421-422.*
List of Subjects to Interview

On January 21, 2012, at 1:46 pm, I interviewed one co-convener and project coordinator at the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition.

On January 24, 2012, at 7:20 am, I interviewed the lead coordinator for urban agriculture with Cleveland’s City Planning Commission and a member of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition.

On January 24, 2012, at 8:14 am, I interviewed the Cleveland City Planning Commission’s Citywide Plan Project Manager, also called Cleveland’s Chief City Planner.

On January 26, 2012, at 6:44 am, I interviewed the Executive Assistant to Councilman Joe Cimperman.

On February 1, 2012, at 7:53 am, I interviewed Morgan Taggart, a program specialist, convener, and founding core member of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition who works at the Ohio State University Extension.

On February 10, 2012, at 8:46 am, I interviewed the Director of the Cleveland Department of Public Health.

On February 23, 2012, at 8:10 am, I interviewed Councilman Joe Cimperman, a member of Cleveland’s City Council and a founding core member of the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition.
APPENDIX D
Interview Schedule

**Coalition Questions**
1. In what capacity did you participate in the [Cleveland-Cuyahoga County] Food Policy Coalition’s local effort?

2. What do you think made the Food Policy Coalition successful?

**Problem Stream Questions**
3. Was there any event or did something happen that made the public become more aware of the problem?

4. Are there key people who helped to define the problem or shape solutions?

**Policy Stream Questions**
5. Can you recall any concrete proposals, alternatives, or solutions in response to food security that you were involved in shaping?

6. Have you ever met with anyone working in the local government to discuss the food security problem or policy solution?

**Political Stream Questions**
7. Is the time ripe for policy change because of a change or swing in the public mood?

8. Were there any noticeable election results or changes of administration that shifted the focus?

**Policy Entrepreneur Questions**
9. Are you able to identify people who invested their time, money or even reputation to propose a solution?

10. Have you ever met with other concerned citizens to discuss the food security problem?

11. Are there any parts of the “Healthy Cleveland” resolution that reflect your participation and efforts?

12. May I contact you again if I have any follow-up questions?
Research Subject Informed Consent Form

As a prospective research subject, you have the opportunity to participate in a project conducted through Chico State University. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Introduction:
I am a graduate student in California doing research on Cleveland’s food security policy. You are invited to take part because your experience can contribute to Political Science knowledge.

Project Title: Access to Food Security through Multiple Streams: Analysis of a Food Policy Coalition

Purpose of the research:
I believe your participation will enhance the body of knowledge about local food security policy.

Duration:
This research will involve participation in a short thirty minute interview.

Procedure:
You will be asked 10 questions about your involvement with local policy. With your informed consent, the interview will be audio-recorded. At any time you can stop the recording.

Voluntary participation / Rights to refuse or withdraw:
Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may stop at any time. You have the right not to answer any specific question. You are free to choose whether or not to participate. If you decide not to participate, there will be no negative consequences.

Risks or discomforts:
Talking about your involvement with local policy carries no psychological risk to you, yet if you feel uncomfortable in any way, you are encouraged to skip any questions. You can withdraw from the project at any time.
Confidentiality:
Information obtained about you for this study will be kept confidential to the extent mandated by law. Nothing that you say will be attributed to you by name unless you stipulate otherwise. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name. Only the researcher will know each name corresponding with a number. I will lock that information up with a lock and key. It will not be shared with or given to anyone.

Contacts
If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, please contact Joel Mitchell, Chico State University, Chico, CA 95926, jmitche ll1@csuchico.edu

Statement of consent:
I have read the above information. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I consent to participate in this project. I am at least 18 years of age.
Ordinance No. 1562-08, Zoning Code 347.02 (Restrictions on the Keeping of Farm Animals and Bees)

By Council Members Cimperman, Zone, Santiago, and Cummins.

(a) Purpose. The regulations of this section are established to permit the keeping of farm animals and bees in a manner that prevents nuisances to occupants of nearby properties and prevents conditions that are unsanitary or unsafe.

(b) Chickens, Ducks, Rabbits and Similar Animals. The keeping of chickens, ducks, rabbits and similar farm animals, and cages, coops and enclosures for the keeping of such animals, shall be governed by the following regulations.

1. In Residential Districts. In Residential Districts, the following regulations shall apply:
   A. Number. No more than one such animal shall be kept on a parcel of land for each 800 square feet of parcel or lot area. For a standard residential lot of 4,800 square feet, this regulation would permit no more than a total of six (6) such animals.
   B. Setbacks. The coops or cages housing such animals may not be located in front yard or side street yard areas and shall not be located within five (5) feet of a side yard line nor within eighteen (18) inches of a rear yard line, except where the rear lot line forms the side lot line or front lot line of an abutting property, in which case the setback from such rear lot line shall be five (5) feet. No animals shall be kept in required front yard or side street yard areas.
   C. Prohibitions. No roosters, geese or turkeys may be kept in a Residential District except on a parcel that is at least one (1) acre in area and only if the coop or cage housing the bird(s) is at least one hundred (100) feet from all property lines. For parcels greater than one (1) acre in area, one (1) additional such bird may be kept for each 24,000 square feet in excess of one (1) acre. No predatory birds may be kept on any property under the regulations of this section.
   D. Coops and Cages. All animals shall be provided with a covered, predator-proof coop or cage or other shelter that is thoroughly ventilated, designed to be easily accessed and cleaned, and of sufficient size to permit free movement of the animals exclusive of areas used for storage of materials or vehicles. The total area of all coops or cages on a lot shall not be greater than thirty two (32) square feet for up to six (6) animals. Coops and cages, singly or in combination, shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height.
E. **Enclosures and Fences.** Chickens and other birds shall have access to an outdoor enclosure adequately fenced or otherwise bounded to contain the birds on the property and to prevent access by dogs and other predators and providing at least ten (10) square feet of area for each bird.

(2) **In Non-Residential Districts.** In zoning districts other than Residential Districts, all regulations applicable in Residential Districts shall apply except that the number of such animals shall be limited to one (1) animals for each four hundred (400) square feet of lot area.

(c) **Goats, Pigs, Sheep and Similar Animals.** The keeping of goats, pigs, sheep and similar farm animals, and stables and enclosures for the keeping of such animals, shall be governed by the following regulations:

(1) **In Residential Districts.** In Residential Districts, no goats, pigs, sheep or similar farm animals shall be kept on a parcel of land less than 24,000 square feet in area. For a parcel that is at least 24,000 square feet in area, a maximum of two (2) such animals may be kept on the property, with one (1) additional animal permitted for each additional 2,400 square feet of area. Stables or other enclosures for such animals shall not be permitted in front yards or in side street yards and shall be set back at least forty (40) feet from any street and from any property other than a property located in an Industrial District and shall be set back at least one hundred (100) feet from a dwelling on another parcel or from the permitted placement of a dwelling on an adjoining vacant parcel.

(2) **In Non-Residential Districts.** In zoning districts other than Residential Districts, no goats, pigs, sheep or similar farm animals shall be kept on a parcel of land less than 14,400 square feet in area. For a parcel that is at least 14,400 square feet in area, a maximum of two (2) such animals may be kept on the property, with one (1) additional animal permitted for each additional 1,200 square feet of area. Stables or other enclosures for such animals shall be set back at least forty (40) feet from any street and from any property other than a property located in an Industrial District and shall be set back at least one hundred (100) feet from a dwelling on another parcel or from the permitted placement of a dwelling on an adjoining vacant parcel.

(3) **Prohibitions.** No horses, cows, alpacas, llamas or similar animals shall be kept on a property except in areas specifically designated for the keeping of such animals.

(d) **Bees.** The keeping of bees, and associated beehives, shall be governed by the following regulations.

(1) **In Residential Districts.** In Residential Districts, the following regulations shall apply:

A. **Number.** No more than one (1) beehive shall be kept for each 2,400 square feet of lot area, and no beehive shall be kept on a lot less than 2,400 square feet in area.

B. **Location and Setbacks.** No beehive shall be kept closer than five (5) feet to any lot line and ten (10) feet to a dwelling or the permitted placement of a dwelling on another parcel, and no beehive shall be kept in a required front yard or side street yard. The front of any beehive shall...
face away from the property line of the Residential property closest to the beehive.

C. **Fences and Shrubs.** A solid fence or dense hedge, known as a "flyway barrier," at least six (6) feet in height shall be placed along the side of the beehive that contains the entrance to the hive, and shall be located within five (5) feet of the hive and shall extend at least two (2) feet on either side of the hive. No such flyway barrier shall be required if all beehives are located at least twenty-five (25) feet from all property lines and for beehives that are located on porches or balconies at least ten (10) feet above grade, except if such porch or balcony is located less than five (5) feet from a property line.

D. **Water Supply.** A supply of fresh water shall be maintained in a location readily accessible to all bee colonies on the site throughout the day to prevent bees from congregating at neighboring swimming pools or other sources of water on nearby properties.

E. **Prohibitions.** No Africanized bees may be kept on a property under the regulations of this section.

(2) **In Non-Residential Districts.** In zoning districts other than Residential Districts, all regulations applicable in Residential Districts shall apply except that the number of beehives shall be limited to one (1) for each 1,000 square feet of lot area.

(e) **Lots Without a Residence.** Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 337.23 regarding Accessory Uses, farm animals or bees may be kept on a lot that is vacant or has no occupied residence but only if the applicant for such activity submits written documentation to the Director of Public Health, in accordance with the provisions of Section 205.04, demonstrating that the use will be managed in a manner that prevents the creation of nuisances or unsanitary or unsafe conditions.

(f) **Sanitation and Nuisances.** Farm animals shall be kept only in conditions that limit odors and noise and the attraction of insects and rodents so as not to cause a nuisance to occupants of nearby buildings or properties and not to cause health hazards. Furthermore, farm animals shall not be kept in a manner that is injurious or unhealthful to the animals being kept on the property.

(g) **Animal or Bird Noise.** It shall be unlawful for any person or other party operating or occupying any building or premises to keep or allow to be kept any animal or bird that makes noise so as to habitually disturb the peace and quiet of any person in the vicinity of the premises.

(h) **Slaughtering of Animals.** Chickens, ducks, rabbits and similar small animals may be slaughtered on site only if for consumption by the occupants of the premises. No other farm animal may be slaughtered on site.

(i) **Application to Building and Housing Department.** A proposal for the keeping of farms animals or bees is subject to approval by the Department of Building and Housing only if a Building Permit is required by the regulations of division (i)(2) of this section.

(1) **Contents of Application.** The application shall include the information required by the provisions of division (a) of Section 205.04.

(2) **Building Permits.** A Building Permit shall be required for installation of a
fence or for construction of a stable or other structure routinely requiring such
permit, except that no Building Permit shall be required for cages, coops or
beehives that are not permanently attached to the ground or to another structure
and do not exceed thirty two (32) square feet in area nor eight (8) feet in height.
No Building Permit shall be required for the barrier constituting a required
enclosure if such barrier is not permanently attached to the ground and does not
exceed three (3) feet in height; and no permit shall be required for a “flyway”
barrier not exceeding six (6) feet in height and six (6) feet in length.

(j) Application to Public Health Department. In accordance with the provisions of
Section 205.04, anyone proposing to keep farm animals or bees on a property in the City
of Cleveland shall apply for a two-year license from the City of Cleveland through its
Department of Public Health on a form provided by that office.

(k) Building Conditions. The keeping of farm animals or bees shall not be permitted on
a property occupied by a building that has been condemned by the Department of
Building and Housing.

(l) Enforcement. The Director of the Department of Building and Housing or the
Director’s designee shall have the authority to inspect any property to determine
compliance with the regulations of this section regarding the construction and permitted
placement of enclosures, fences, cages, coops, beehives, stables and other structures used
in the keeping of farm animals or bees and shall have the authority to enforce the
regulations of this section as they apply to such matters. The Department of Public Health
shall have the authority to enforce regulations of this section in accordance with the
provisions of Section 205.04.

(m) Variances. The Board of Zoning Appeals may vary the regulations of this section as
they apply to a particular property if it determines that such variance will be consistent
with the stated purpose of this section.

(n) Definitions. Terms used in this section shall have the meanings assigned to them in
the following definitions:

1) Farm Animal. “Farm animal” means any domestic species of animal that
is kept and raised for use as food or in the production of food or in the operation
of a farm and is not an “exotic animal” as defined in Section 603A.02 and is not a
house pet such as a dog, cat or similar animal.

2) Coop and Cage. “Coop” and “cage” mean a structure, not necessarily
attached to the ground, with a top and sides and designed to provide shelter and
protection for small animals or birds.

3) Enclosure. “Enclosure” means a set of walls or fences designed to confine
animals or birds to a space that is large enough to permit the animals and birds to
roam relatively freely in an open yard area.

4) Predatory Bird. “Predatory bird” means an owl, hawk, falcon, eagle or
similar bird that feeds principally by catching living prey.

5) Similar Animal. Any farm animal that is similar to other animals listed in
a particular category of permitted animals with respect to impacts on nearby
properties, including noise, odors, safety hazards or other nuisances.

(m) Review and Expiration. Not later than six (6) months after the effective date of this
section, the Department of Public Health and the Department of Building and Housing
shall submit a report to City Council listing any public complaints received and any enforcement actions taken during the first six (6) months after the effective date of this section relative to the keeping of farm animals or bees in accordance with the regulations of this section. Upon receiving this report from the Director of Public Health, City Council members shall conduct a mobile tour of select locations throughout the City where farm animals and bees are being kept in connection with licenses obtained under this ordinance. City Council shall use this report to make a determination on the effectiveness of the regulations. This section shall expire and be of no further force and effect twelve (12) months after the effective date of this section.

Passed: February 2, 2009
Effective: February 5, 2009

Source: The City Record 2009, 158-161.
Ordinance No. 1660-A-09 (Local Purchasing)

By Mayor Jackson and Council Members Cimperman, Zone, Mitchell, Westbrook, Brady, Pruitt, Brancatelli, Cummins and Polensek.

An ordinance to supplement the Codified Ordinances of Cleveland, Ohio, 1976, by enacting new Sections 187A.01 to 187A.07 and 187A.99, relating to the Local Producer, Local-Food Purchaser, and Sustainable Business Preference Code.

Whereas, large purchasers of goods and materials such as the City of Cleveland can strengthen the regional economy by procuring a greater percentage of their purchases from local businesses; and
Whereas, purchasing local products will reduce the City of Cleveland’s carbon footprint by reducing the distance that goods travel from factories and farms to the city, thereby decreasing the amount of harmful emissions; and
Whereas, the Greater Cleveland region has a vibrant manufacturing, industrial, and food production history and we are continuing to strengthen our local economy by supporting local producers; and
Whereas, purchasing local goods and materials will increase the City of Cleveland’s self-reliance and resiliency, as well as acting as a model for local purchasing policies that support both local and regional business development and economic growth; and
Whereas, encouraging local businesses to follow sustainable practices will expedite their participation in high-growth sectors of the economy such as renewable energy, recycling, green building, zero waste and other sustainable businesses, which in turn will encourage more graduates to remain in the Greater Cleveland region and attract new talent to the region; now, therefore

Be it ordained by the Council of the City of Cleveland:

**Section 1.** That the Codified Ordinances of Cleveland, Ohio, 1976, are supplemented by enacting new Sections 187A.01 to 187A.07 and 187A.99, to read as follows:

**CHAPTER 187A\nLOCAL PRODUCER, LOCAL-FOOD PURCHASER, AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PREFERENCE CODE\nSection 187A.01 Definitions of Terms**

As used in this Chapter, the following words, phrases, and terms shall be defined as set forth below:

(a) “Bidder” means a Person offering or proposing to contract with the City respectively in response to an invitation to bid or to a request for proposals.
(b) “Bid Discount” means the application of a percentage discount to the total amount of a bid submitted by a Bidder for a Contract solely for the purpose of bid comparisons when determining the lowest and best bid, or lowest responsible bid. The use of a Bid Discount for Bid Comparison does not alter the total amount of the bid submitted by a Bidder or the Contract executed based on a bid.

(c) “Business Enterprise” means a firm, sole proprietorship, partnership, association, corporation, company, or other business entity of any kind including, but not limited to, a limited liability corporation, incorporated professional association, joint venture, estate, or trust.

(d) “City” means the City of Cleveland, Ohio.

(e) “Commercially Useful Function” means when a Local Producer or Local-Food Purchaser:

1. Assumes the actual and contractual responsibility for furnishing the supplies or materials;
2. Is recognized as a provider of the contracted supplies and materials by the industry involved;
3. Owns or leases a warehouse, yard, building or other facilities for stocking inventory or otherwise conducts business in a manner which is usual and customary in the industry and market for the supplies or materials; and
4. Distributes, delivers, and services products primarily with its own staff and/or equipment.

(f) “Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Purchases and Supplies or the Commissioner’s designee.

(g) “Contract” means a binding agreement executed on or after the effective date of this Local Producer, Local-Food Purchaser, and Sustainable Business Preference Code by which the City either grants a privilege or is committed to expend or does expend its funds or other resources, or confers a benefit having monetary value including, but not limited to, a grant, loan, interest in real or personal property, or tax incentive in any form for or in connection with any work, project, or public purpose including, but not limited to, a contract for the:

1. Construction of any public improvement, including change orders or subsidiary agreements approved by the City during the performance of such Construction;
2. Purchase of personal property;
3. Purchase of any supplies, equipment or services; or
4. Lease of any personal property.

“Contract” shall include a binding agreement, funded or benefited by the City, between a party to a Contract and a third party, but shall exclude contracts with other public entities, except as provided in Section 187.09.

(h) “Contracting Department” includes any administrative department under charge of the Mayor or any office, board, or commission treated or construed as a department of City government for any purpose under the Charter or ordinances of the City for the benefit or program of which the City enters into a particular Contract.
(i) “Contractor” means a separate or distinguishable Business Enterprise employing one or more persons and participating in the performance of a Contract and shall include a Person in privity of contract with a Contractor for implementation of a Contract.

(j) “Director” means the official authorized to enter into a Contract on behalf of a particular Contracting Department.

(k) “Evaluation Credit” means a predetermined number of points in the evaluation of proposals submitted by a Bidder for a Contract to be added solely for the purpose of proposal comparison when evaluating competing proposals. The use of Evaluation Credits does not alter the amount of the proposal submitted by a Bidder or the Contract executed based on the proposal.

(l) “Local Contracting Market” or “Contracting Market” means the geographic market area consisting of Cuyahoga County, Geauga County, Lake County, Lorain County, and Medina County, Ohio; provided, however, that with respect to growers or producers of food only, the geographic market area also shall include: Erie County, Huron County, Richland County, Ashland County, Wayne County, Holmes County, Stark County, Summit County, Portage County, and Tuscarawas County.

(m) “Local Food” means and includes food that is grown, extracted, produced, recycled or manufactured within the Local Contracting Market.


(o) “Local Producer” means a Person that:

1. has its principal office (headquarters) located physically in the Local Contracting Market and whose highest executive officers and highest level managers maintain their offices and perform their respective executive and managerial functions and duties in the Local Contracting Market; and

2. A. grows food or fabricates goods, whether or not finished, from organic or raw materials;

   B. processes goods, materials, food or other products so as to increase their commercial value by not less than 50%;

   C. supplies goods by performing a Commercially Useful Function; or

   D. provides, by its qualified fulltime employees, maintenance, repair, personal, or professional services.

(p) “Local-Food Purchaser” means a Business Enterprise that, in implementation of its City contract, purchases Local Food in an amount comprising not less than twenty percent (20%) of the Business Enterprise’s City Contract amount.

(q) “Local Sustainable Business” means a Business Enterprise that:

1. has its principal office (headquarters) located physically in the Local Contracting Market and whose highest executive officers and highest level managers maintain their offices and perform their respective executive and managerial functions and duties in the Local Contracting Market; and

2. has established sustainability goals for itself and is a member of or signatory to a nationally-recognized sustainability program, which goals and program have been
determined acceptable by the City Chief of Sustainability or other officer designated by
the Mayor.

(r) “OEO Director” means the Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity of the City.

(s) “Person” means and includes a natural person, a Business Enterprise or other entity, unless the context or usage requires otherwise.

Section 187A.02 Preference for Local Producers, Local-Food Purchasers, and Local Sustainable Businesses

(a) Application of Bid Discount —A Contracting Department shall apply a Bid Discount of two percent (2%) to a bid received from a Local Producer; two percent (2%) to a bid received from a Local Sustainable Business; and two percent (2%) to a bid received from a Local-Food Purchaser; provided that the maximum total Bid Discount applied under this division (a) shall not exceed four percent (4%). Bid Discounts applied under this division (a) shall be in addition to any Bid Discount applied under Sections 187.03 and 187.05. The maximum amount of any Bid Discounts applied to a bid under this division (a) shall not exceed $50,000.00, provided, however, that the maximum cumulative amount of all Bid Discounts applied to the bid under this division (a) and under Sections 187.03 and 187.05 shall not exceed $75,000.00.

(b) Application of Evaluation Credit — A Contracting Department shall apply an Evaluation Credit of two percent (2%) of the total points awarded for a proposal received from a Local Producer, two percent (2%) of the total points awarded for a proposal received from a Local Sustainable Business, and two percent (2%) of the total points awarded for a proposal received from a Local-Food Purchaser; provided that the maximum total Evaluation Credit applied under this division (b) shall not exceed four percent (4%).

Section 187A.03 Duties of Director of Office of Equal Opportunity; Compliance Monitoring

(a) In addition to those duties specified in Section 123.08 and Section 187.02, the OEO Director, through the Office of Equal Opportunity employees as necessary, shall implement and enforce the provisions of this Code. The OEO Director’s duties shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) Reviewing all submittals and other information required or necessary under this Code to determine whether a particular Person qualifies for certification or approval as a Local Producer or a Local-Food Purchaser or a Local Sustainable Business and is in compliance with this Code;

(2) Notifying an affected Contracting Department that the certificate or approval pertaining to a particular person is or is not currently effective with respect to the matters for which the same were issued;

(3) Initiating and receiving complaints of non-compliance with this Code; and

(4) Investigating complaints pertaining to non-compliance with this Code and recommending appropriate sanctions.
(b) The OEO Director shall monitor a Contractor’s compliance with its bid representations of its qualification(s) as a Local Producer or Local-Food Purchaser or Local Sustainable Business during the performance of a Contract it was awarded because of applying a Bid Discount or Evaluation Credit under Section 187A.02. If the OEO Director determines that there is cause to believe that a Contractor failed to qualify as a Local Producer or Local-Food Purchaser or Local Sustainable Business as represented in its bid or proposal, the OEO Director shall notify the Contractor of the apparent breach of or default under the contract. The OEO Director may require a Contractor or Bidder to submit such reports, information and documentation as reasonably necessary to determine its status as a Local Producer or Local-Food Purchaser or Local Sustainable Business in the performance of its Contract.

(c) The OEO Director shall maintain complete and accurate records of the use of Local Producer’s or Local-Food Purchaser’s or Local Sustainable Businesses’ goods, materials, supplies, or services in performance of the Contracting Department’s Contracts, including the dollar value of orders supplied by Local Producers or Local-Food Purchasers or Local Sustainable Businesses, the nature of the goods, materials, supplies, or services provided, and the name and address, and the qualifications of each Local Producer or Local-Food Purchaser or Local Sustainable Business as such.

Section 187A.04 Sanctions for Noncompliance
If the OEO Director determines that a Contractor is in breach or default with respect to any representation regarding its status as a Local Producer or Local-Food Purchaser or Local Sustainable Business when the Contractor would not have been the lowest bidder or recommended proposer for a Contract but for application of any Bid Discount(s) or Evaluation Credit(s) based upon that status, the OEO Director, in addition to other remedies available with respect to the foregoing or other defaults under any Contract in question, may recommend that the Contracting Department Director cancel the contract and declare a forfeiture of any performance bond.

Section 187A.05 Responsibilities of Commissioner and Contracting Departments
The Commissioner and each Contracting Department shall:
(a) Endeavor to maximize the purchase of Local Producers, Local-Food Purchasers, and Local Sustainable Businesses goods, materials, supplies, or services in Contracts of $10,000 or less; and
(b) Develop lists of Local Producers, Local-Food Purchasers, and Local Sustainable Businesses for whose goods, materials, supplies, or services the City typically contracts.

Section 187A.06 Contracts with Other Governmental Entities as Contractors
Contracts or other agreements between the City and other political subdivisions, Governmental, or quasigovernmental agencies, under which those entities receive money from or through the City for the purpose of contracting with Business Enterprises to perform projects in the City, shall encourage Business Enterprises to comply with the provisions of this Chapter in awarding, administering, and implementing the contracts.
Section 187A.07 Reports; Reconsideration of Scope.
(a) As part of the annual report submitted under Section 123.08, the OEO Director shall summarize the utilization of this chapter in the award of City contracts during the preceding year.
(b) The Council shall reconsider the scope of this chapter, including the size of the Local Contracting Market, five years after the effective date of this section.

Section 187A.99 Violations; Penalty
(a) No Person shall willfully falsify, conceal or cover up by a trick, scheme, or device a material fact, or make any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or representations or make use of any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statement or entry in any matter administered under this Chapter.
(b) No Person shall fraudulently obtain, attempt to obtain, or aid another Person fraudulently obtaining or attempting to obtain a Local Producer’s or Local-Food Purchaser’s or Local Sustainable Business’ Bid Discount or Evaluation Credit.
(c) Any Person who violates the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor of the first degree.
(d) In addition to other remedies available with respect to violations of divisions (a) and (b) of this section, the OEO Director may recommend to a Contracting Department Director, and a Contracting Department Director may:
(1) Recommend to the Director of Law that the City take such legal action, whether civil or criminal, as the Director of Law deems appropriate;
(2) Disqualify a Bidder, Contractor, or other Business Enterprise from eligibility as Contractor, subcontractor, or Local Producer or Local-Food Purchaser or Local Sustainable Business for providing goods, materials, supplies, or services to the City for a period not to exceed two (2) years; or (3) Make a claim for payment of damages, including but not limited to any liquidated damages specified in the Contract.

Section 2. That Sections 187A.01 to 187A.07 and 187A.99 of the Codified Ordinances of Cleveland, Ohio, 1976, shall take effect and be in force sixty (60) days after passage of this ordinance.

Section 3. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.


Source: The City Record 2010a, 460-461.
APPENDIX H
Resolution No. 476-11.

By Council Member Cimperman.
An emergency resolution urging the City Planning Commission to amend the Civic Vision 2020 plan to strive for a community garden within five blocks of every resident by 2020.

Whereas, the community garden movement is alive and well in the City of Cleveland, and we are the national leader in the urban agriculture movement; and

Whereas, this City Council asks the Cleveland Planning Commission with regard to the Civic Vision Plan for 2020 to include a goal of a community garden within every five blocks of every resident, including but not limited to vacant lots, school gardens, rooftop gardens, container gardens, gardens at recreation centers, church gardens, health care institution sponsored gardens, and other gardens that may come forward; and

Whereas, there is a need to connect our citizens to the Healthy Cleveland Resolution passed unanimously by this City Council on March 28, 2011, and community gardening is a great way to achieve health and nutrition goals, and exercise mobility goals as well; and

Whereas, this resolution constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health, or safety, now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Council of the City of Cleveland:

Section 1. That this Council urges the City Planning Commission to amend the Civic Vision 2020 plan to strive for a community garden within five blocks of every resident by 2020.

Section 2. That the Clerk of Council is hereby directed to transmit certified copies of this resolution to Mayor Frank Jackson, the City Planning Commission, and Director Bob Brown.

Section 3. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Adopted: April 4, 2011.
Effective: April 6, 2011.

Source: The City Record 2011d, 562.