

**UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY BASED GOVERNANCE TOWARD A
GENERATIVE GROWING FUTURE: A TRANSFORMATIVE STUDY OF THE
TRENT LANDS AND NATURE AREAS PLAN AND PROCESS**

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Abstract

University-Community Based Governance Toward a Generative Growing Future: A Transformative Study of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan and Process

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Institutional claims of university-community engagement in support of the public good and planning for teaching, learning, and research have largely remained in the realm of rhetoric. This thesis analyzes the 2019-2021 Trent University Lands and Nature Areas Plan and public consultation process, which at times was marked by the complete absence of consultation and at other times, wholly inadequate consultation with regards to developments affecting its on-campus food growing system and correlate pedagogy. Using methods from Institutional Ethnography, Participatory Action Learning and Action Research, and the BIAS FREE Framework, I explore how Trent University manages its approach to land-use planning and public consultation, revealing that it is ultimately working at cross-purposes with its foundational principles. I advise that Trent University's current land-use planning model, lacking critical examination and intervention, puts the institution's academic reputation, campus ecological functions, and university-community relations at risk. If perpetuated, this model will be detrimental to the university's capacity to generate new knowledge for teaching, learning, and research, as well as context-specific solutions for its land-use planning. My findings define a new concept of *fait accompli* planning to describe how and why Trent's public consultation process fell significantly short of both its institutional mandate and claims of robust and comprehensive engagement. I conclude that post-secondary institutions (and beyond) need to implement dialogic approaches to planning that abandon predetermined outcomes and instead foster genuine dialogue toward a collaborative milieu of shared, informed, and deliberate planning practices.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Abstract | ii |
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| Table of Contents | vi |
| List of Figures | viii |
| List of Tables | ix |
| List of Acronyms | ix |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Researcher Positionality | 3 |
| Overview of Chapters | 11 |
| Chapter 1: Research Methodology | 13 |
| 1.1 Overview of Research Approach | 13 |
| 1.2 Background, Initial Research Questions, and Theoretical Commitments | 14 |
| 1.3 Methodological Framework | 19 |
| 1.4 Methods | 23 |
| 1.4.1 PALAR..... | 23 |
| 1.4.1.i Group Workshops..... | 25 |
| 1.4.1.ii Participatory Mapping..... | 27 |
| 1.4.2 Institutional Ethnography | 28 |
| 1.4.2.i Participant Observation..... | 29 |
| 1.4.2.ii Semi-structured Interviews | 32 |
| 1.4.2.iii Document (text) Collection | 33 |
| 1.5 Study Limitations | 35 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review | 41 |
| 2.1 The Role of Universities in the Public Sphere | 41 |
| 2.2 Examining the Landscape of the Public Sphere in Post-secondary Institutions | 43 |
| 2.3 Analyzing and Altering the Uneven Social Practices that Shape Our Universities | 48 |
| Chapter 3: Research Context - A Brief History of Trent University Lands Planning and Governance | 51 |
| 3.1 Outlining the Scope for the Context of this Research | 52 |
| 3.2 Comparing Processes Between the 2006 Endowment Lands Plan and 2021 Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan | 53 |
| Chapter 4: The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Process - Phases 1 and 2 | 64 |
| 4.1 Phase 1: February 2019 to June 2019 - Campus and Community Consultation Activities and Events 64 | |

| | | |
|--|--|------------|
| 4.2 | Phase 1: March 2019 to February 2020 - Food Growing System Consultation Experiences and Context | 67 |
| 4.2.1 | Twin-pad Arena and Cleantech Commons Consultation Context | 74 |
| 4.3 | Phase 2: February 2020 to October 2020 - Growers Group and Trent School of Environment Engagements in the TLNAP Process..... | 78 |
| 4.3.1 | Three Decision Making Bodies in Discussion for Trent’s Campus Food Growing System..... | 88 |
| 4.3.1.i | Trent Lands Committee | 88 |
| 4.3.1.ii | Trent School of Environment..... | 90 |
| 4.3.1.iii | Growers Group | 91 |
| 4.3.2. | Farm Planning in the Absence of Information: Misleading Communications and the Omission/Erasure of Context | 106 |
| Chapter 5: The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Process - Phases 3 and 4 | | 110 |
| 5.1 | Phase 3: October 2020 to January 2021 - Grower Group Engagements in the TLNAP Process | 111 |
| 5.2 | Phases 3 & 4: October 2020 to March 2021 - Campus and Community Engagements in the TLNAP Process | 124 |
| Chapter 6: Further Study and Analysis of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Process ... | | 125 |
| 6.1 | A Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of the TLNAP Results | 126 |
| 6.2 | University Green Network, the Nature Areas, and Red Herrings | 130 |
| 6.3 | Governance Structures and Conduct that Impede Responsible University-Community Engagement and Undermine Institutional and Academic Integrity..... | 134 |
| 6.3.1 | The Trent Lands Committee..... | 134 |
| 6.3.2 | The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Levels of Engagement..... | 143 |
| Chapter 7: Research Findings - Alternative, and Generative Approaches to Land-use Planning | | 152 |
| 7.1 | Fait Accompli Planning | 154 |
| 7.2 | Group Workshops - Stage 1 Visioning Exercise..... | 158 |
| 7.3 | Inter-rater Method | 159 |
| 7.4 | Data Visualization..... | 163 |
| 7.5 | Common Guiding Principles for Action Learning | 166 |
| 7.6 | Participatory Mapping..... | 167 |
| 7.7 | Discussion | 176 |
| Chapter 8: The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Implementation —A Case of Fait Accompli Planning | | 179 |
| 8.1 | Context of the Grounds Operation Relocation | 179 |
| 8.2 | TLNAP Implementation: March 2021 to June 2023 - Grower Group and Community Engagements | 181 |
| Conclusion and Recommendations..... | | 193 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| References | 201 |
| Appendices | 243 |
| Appendix A: Trent University Research Ethics Board Approval..... | 243 |
| Appendix B: Indigenous Education Council at Trent University Approval | 244 |
| Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Sample 1 Questions | 245 |
| Appendix D: Semi-structured Interview Sample 2 Questions..... | 246 |
| Appendix E: The BIAS FREE Framework for Research | 247 |
| Appendix F: Additional Research Demonstrating a Lack of Consultation and Inadequate Land-use Planning | 250 |
| F.1 The Removal of Shared and Deliberate Planning Practices..... | 253 |
| Appendix G: Timeline and Documentation of Campus and Community Submissions to Trent Lands Committee During Phase 3 and 4 of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan..... | 254 |
| G.1 Phase 3: October 13, 2020, to February 5, 2021, Submissions | 254 |
| G.2 Phase 4: February 22, 2021, to March 26, 2021, Submissions | 259 |
| Appendix H: Common Guiding Principles to Guide Future Land-use Planning Discussions for Trent’s Food Growing System..... | 262 |
| Appendix I: Additional Observations of Misleading Information..... | 263 |
| Appendix J: Critical Questions About the Decisions for Residence Parking Lot Developments | 267 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure 1: Growers Group Timeline of Engagements..... | 59 |
| Figure 2: On-Campus Food Growing Sites | 69 |
| Figure 3: Trent University Experimental Farm Lands..... | 70 |
| Figure 4: Map of Proposed Development Projects Affecting Campus and Community Members on Trent University East Bank Lands 2015 to 2023..... | 73 |
| Figure 5: Trent Gardens Permanent Growing Space Proposal by Growers Group | 81 |
| Figure 6: The Trent Lands Committee’s Proposed Farm Location Options | 87 |
| Figure 7: Responses from Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Society (SAFSS) Group Workshop..... | 159 |
| Figure 8: Inter-rater Theme Comparison Process..... | 161 |
| Figure 9: Themes Combination Process | 162 |
| Figure 10: Inter-rater Analysis and Member Checking Worksheet from TSE/Trent Farm Group Workshop..... | 163 |
| Figure 11: Preferred Word Cloud from SAFSS Group Workshop..... | 164 |
| Figure 12: Preferred Word Cloud from TVG/Apiary Group Workshop | 165 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Figure 13: Sample Word Cloud from TSE/Trent Farm Group Workshop | 166 |
| Figure 14: Beautiful, Hand-drawn Mapping Sheets by TVG Coordinator..... | 168 |
| Figure 15: Selection of Participatory Mapping Observations..... | 169 |
| Figure 16: Site Outlines for Grounds Operation Relocation, Science North Residence Parking Lots, and Expansion Lands for Student and Community Growers | 185 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 1: Basic Beliefs of the Transformative Paradigm Developed by Mertens | 16 |
|--|----|

List of Acronyms

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Action Learning (AL)

Action Research (AR)

BIAS FREE Framework (BFF)

Board of Governors (BOG; Board)

Brook McIlroy (BM)

Critical Food Systems Education (CFSE)

Environmental Impact Brief (EIB)

First Peoples House of Learning (FPHL)

Institutional Ethnography (IE)

International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF)

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee (NASAC)

Otonabee Region Conservation Authority (ORCA)

Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR)

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Peterborough Regional Farmers' Market (PRFM)

Private Ownership Operating Lease-License Back (POOLLB)

Research Ethics Board (REB)

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (SAFS)

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Society (SAFSS)

Trent Assessment Parcels (TAP)

Trent Central Student Association (TCSA)

Trent Graduate Student Association (TGSA)

Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan (TLNAP)

Trent Market Garden (TMG)

Trent School of Environment (TSE)

Trent Vegetable Gardens (TVG)

University Green Network (UGN)

Introduction

In this thesis I conduct an in-depth examination of land-use planning practices at Trent University, with a focus on the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan (TLNAP) and the implications this process had on food growing spaces on campus. Each chapter contributes to developing a nuanced understanding of the tensions, challenges, and outcomes that are part of Trent's approach to campus land-use planning. The Trent Lands Committee, overseen by the Board of Governors and senior administration, was pivotal in managing the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan and process, setting the stage for the research detailed in this thesis.

The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan was promoted as a *public* consultation and participation process to inform and create a campus master plan (Trent University, 2019c, 2019d, 2019f, 2020e). From its introduction in 2019-2021 and continuing into late 2023, land-use planning associated with the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan has frustrated student, staff, faculty, and community efforts to sustain the viability of on-campus food growing projects and collaborate toward shared outcomes. Trent University is host to a productive on-campus food system with its Seasoned Spoon Café and Trent Vegetable Gardens farm-to-table model demonstrating a successful track record of 17+ years of operation. As well, it boasts multiple other food growing and learning sites such as the Trent Market Garden, Trent Apiary, and Experimental Farm (now Trent Research Farm) for soil sciences. It has an undergraduate Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems program, and a graduate Sustainability Studies program. Yet, limited attention has been given to the current state of the on-campus food system following the recent TLNAP process.

The question of permanence for existing food growing sites and stability for their established organizations was repeatedly mired in uncertainty within Trent's campus planning process. There was an inevitability narrative proceeding from the Trent Lands Committee and senior leadership that future developments were likely to disturb the established food growing locations. This approach which I coin as *fait accompli planning* predetermines outcomes as technical matters of course and generates narratives about the circumstances at-hand as apolitical, while seeking to push changes through quickly, or without comprehensive input; a process which obscures and/or hides the politics and social choices that are directing the decisions being made.

This study is grounded in commitments from a transformative paradigm that emphasizes social justice and recognizes the potential for research to drive actionable change. As a participant-researcher in Trent's on-campus food system, I deployed techniques from Participatory Action Learning and Action Research and Institutional Ethnography to address the complex obstacles faced by its campus food growing organizations. Amid ongoing efforts to sustain student livelihoods, experiential learning, and scholarship, the university's campus and community members face challenges that extend beyond the practical aspects of sustaining alternative methods of food production or building out its critical food systems pedagogy. To highlight these obstacles, I draw on the BIAS FREE Framework as an analytical tool to illuminate how social hierarchies at Trent erode the public commitments of the institution.

While the institutional governance practices tend to favour a specific form of authority, the research emphasizes the non-monolithic nature of its structure. It demonstrates that

alternative possibilities regularly present themselves, challenging the status quo and highlighting the need for attention to Trent's current approach to land-use planning. This study invites critical conversation, advocating for equity in engagements to generate answers among the various logics operating within Trent's land-use planning context. It calls for a more inclusive, transparent, and collaborative decision-making structure, as well as practices that work to empower its campus and community. The thesis argues that Trent's current land-use planning model, if perpetuated, will continue to be a detriment to the institution's reputation and its ability to generate new knowledge for teaching, learning, and research, as well as context-specific solutions for its land-use planning. The current structure, characterized by a lack of critical examination and intervention, poses risks to Trent's academic integrity, ecological functions, future development, and integral university-community relations.

Researcher Positionality

Before reading this research, it is important to understand what experiences informed my ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions and thus methodological choices for my project. This section extends beyond common positionality statements in both depth and length; however, I think it is necessary to convey specific understandings from lived experience and how they came to galvanize my research actions beyond theory. As Blanche & Durrheim (2006) point out, research is not simply a product of how accurate a researcher's observations are but is also produced by "the background knowledge against which they made sense of their observations. Background knowledge tells us what exists, how to understand it, and –most concretely– how to study it" (p. 2). As Wood (2020) states, "our lives are guided by specific philosophical assumptions that we make, even if we are not fully aware of them. Sometimes

these are referred to as a worldview” (p. 21). Through travel over the last 15 years, I have become aware of some of the unconscious biases that were in the background of my experience and guiding my worldview. Since my arrival at Trent University in 2018, I have deepened my understandings about the effects of worldviews, such as the destructive impacts from settler-colonialism and sabotaged Treaty agreements with First Nations by representatives of the Crown, specifically in Treaty 20, Nogojiwanong, Peterborough, where Trent is situated. Through this project I sought to acknowledge and address some of the ahistorical thought patterns that perpetuate harm and systematize injustice in the society within which I live today.

I descend from a recent history of ancestors who came from Czechoslovakia and Belgium to Canada in the first half of the 1900s. I was born in the Treaty 2 area and ancestral territory of the Odawa, Potawatomi and Ojibwe, which is also home to the Lenape peoples of the Delaware Nation. The area is also known as Chatham-Kent. My family, like many settlers, found themselves taking up farm labour to support family life. Their worldviews were largely shaped by the socio-economic environment of which they were a part, which, alongside other unquestioned and harmful beliefs of the time, instilled a more instrumentalist view of life, as James Murton (2007) puts it, “in which the natural world is judged solely on its usefulness to human ends” (p.13). This created, as Donald Worster (1985) wrote, “a culture and society built on, and absolutely dependent on, a sharply alienating, intensely managerial relationship with nature” (p. 5).

My Euro-Canadian upbringing influenced my understanding that the individual accumulation of resources is a normative means to living well. This concept was idealized and

privileged in the millennial era in which I was born. Valuing this knowledge, in 2004 I enrolled in a Bachelor of Commerce degree to study business. My aim at that time was to generate as much wealth as 'humanly possible'. From a stroke of investment luck, I was able to afford the opportunity to travel to Europe in 2007, and then Africa in 2008. Subsequently, my worldview, which posited individualistic accumulation and intensely managerial relationships with the natural world as the way to living well, was challenged.

In Europe I witnessed for the first time overtly extravagant estates (Louis XIV's castle in Versailles, France) and lifestyles (Monte Carlo, Monaco). This was contrasted with observations and firsthand experience of rampant theft, and I found myself questioning the historical and contemporary cost of such accumulation. What were the consequences of such accumulation and how was it affecting the lives of others? Reflecting on inequity, my ideals around wealth generation and a passion for what was 'humanly possible' soon turned to questions of what was humane-ly possible. This experience of the world was unravelling a cornerstone of my worldview and leading me to question the core tenets of individualism and accumulation within my society.

In 2008, seeking alternatives to my worldview, I embarked on a volunteer trip to Ghana. I wanted to contribute to the world rather than take from it. Was it possible to live well from a place of giving and reciprocal relationships, rather than from the accumulating and individualistic principles in which I was surrounded? My longings did not go unanswered. A chance encounter with a meditation teacher led me on a journey to discover a near two-decade

old medical clinic serving the poor and destitute, for absolutely free. The founder of Shekinah medical clinic, Dr. David Abdulai, told me his story.

Dr. Abdulai was the sole survivor from eleven children in his family who died from malnutrition; he rose above all odds to become a medical doctor serving the government of Ghana. Knowing his roots, he had always held it in his heart to serve the poor but was unable to in a cash and carry system, where Ghanaians were required to pay to access health services. He took a leap of faith in 1989 by providing a high-risk lifesaving surgery outside of medical facilities to a woman who could not afford health care. Miraculously, she survived, and it set in motion a profound, lifetime intention of Dr. David's to serve those in need. He quit his position in the government and founded the Shekinah medical clinic in his hometown of Tamale.

(personal communication, 2008)

While there, I saw destitute mothers dying of AIDS and their children were provided housing as well as those with leprosy who were otherwise uncared for because of stigma. A food program served 150 community members seven days per week, 365 days per year, and medical supplies were distributed daily to those who couldn't afford them. Witnessing this had a substantial impact on me. Many of those who were served by the Shekinah clinic returned to help run its operations, from growing food on the land, to preparing and distributing meals, and assisting with the facilities on site. That which I was seeking had appeared in full living form; it is indeed possible to live well from a place of giving and reciprocity, rather than from an accumulating and individualistic orientation toward the world.

I returned home to finish my degree, but with a wish to explore a different pathway forward. A year prior to my travels in Ghana, I had begun to experiment with meditation. Pranayama breathing techniques were inspired by a book that explained intuitive knowing was a faculty that could be developed. Experiencing physical sensations from that practice, I knew there was something to it. What were the odds that I had encountered a meditation teacher in Ghana? We kept in touch, and she encouraged me to take up the practice of Insight (Vipassana) meditation and attend a retreat at Insight Meditation Society in Massachusetts. I set out to understand more about what this practice entailed and how it could inform knowledge and my way of living in the world.

I think it's important to pause here. And to note that what was needed next, for me at least, was not years of study on how to change course in the world, but rather a tangible shift in cognition, and thus perspective. A shift that would push my understanding beyond the bounds of my current worldview. I draw on Ronald Wright as he discussed his 2004 CBC Massey Lectures with CBC Ideas in: *Escape options narrowing for world caught in 'progress trap'* (Godfrey & Ayed, 2019). He provided a detailed account of the Rapa Nui (Easter Island) people and said they were “seduced by a kind of progress that becomes a mania, an ideological pathology.” Although the tempo and temporality behind this narrative has now been contested (DiNapoli et al., 2020), it is the characteristics of Wright's account that provide a stark and eerie contrast to my own experiences and perceptions of contemporary society. Could it be that the tenets of individualistic accumulation, and a sharply alienating and managerial relationship with nature, have us caught in a similar progress trap? Are these unquestioned assumptions that inform a Euro-Canadian perspective shared with 1) Rapa Nui people's contact with Europeans, or 2) a

theoretical Rapa Nui worldview that, according to various historical models, demonstrated declines and abject failure? Given the observance of these rudimentary assumptions and their seeming penetration across global societies, resemblances between Rapa Nui approaches to land-use and responses to climate change (Lima et al., 2020) and —now— anthropic levels of climate change and species extinction in the contemporary context (Ceballos et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2017; Otto, 2018) may be pointing toward a confirmation.

How then can we shake ourselves free from what may be a pathological ideology?

An ontological *re-reversal* (Dahlin et al., 2009), I would argue, is a pre-requisite for the type of change required. Building from Husserl's (1970) work, Harvey (1989) coins the term “ontological reversal” as an orientation toward reality that positions the conceptual knowing of the world to be more real than the living experience from which understanding is abstracted. “What is actually secondary, ontologically speaking, becomes primary” (Dahlin et al., 2009, p. 187). As Francis et al. (2015) elaborate, “this forms the very basis for an ontological *re-reversal*, where lifeworld phenomena are given back their ontological primacy” (p. 79). As explorer and researcher Wade Davis puts it in his 2009 CBC Massey Lecture, *The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World*, what we need is a shift that “sparks a new era of interest in the living diversity of human experience and the incredible ways in which we can intimately know, and be alive with, the world” (CBC Radio, 2009).

In 2009, I attended a retreat at Insight Meditation Society which provided the conditions for such a shift in my worldview. At its core, Insight meditation is the exploration of the nature

of phenomena through observation. I can't recall a particular instruction from the time, but Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj (1999) summarizes it well. He stated:

My actual experience is not different. It is my evaluation and attitude that differ. I see the same world as you do but not in the same way. There is nothing mysterious about it. Everybody sees the world through the idea he has of himself. As you think yourself to be, so you think the world to be. If you imagine yourself as separate from the world, the world will appear as separate from you and you will experience desire and fear. I do not see the world as separate from me and so there is nothing for me to desire, or fear. (p. 135)

At the beginning of the retreat, I was encountering intense knee pain in sitting meditations and an aversion to the meditation practice. For days on end, I resisted this pain until, to my amazement, an inconspicuous moth provided a most spectacular lesson. During a walking meditation, I passed by a window where a moth was frantically seeking its freedom outside. No matter how hard (but softly) I tried to catch it to set it free, I simply couldn't and had to walk away. Remarkably, the very next day as I went to perform my communal job of mopping the floors, a moth was there sitting on top of the mop. It was soaking wet and barely able to move. I gently picked it up and set it outside in the sunshine, into freedom. The understanding struck me like a bolt of lightning: if I was battling against a windowpane (pain) seeking freedom, even if a helping hand was there willing to set me free, it wouldn't be able to catch me. This stirred a profound shift in how I would relate to my knee pain at the next sitting meditation.

Instead of resisting, I decided to yield and surrender to the painful sensations. *The language* surrounding the phenomena also shifted. It was no longer "my pain", but rather, "this is what the Universe is experiencing in this moment" and, "it's ok, I am also this and accept this." Suddenly, beyond explanation, not only did the pain transform but for a moment all conceptual knowing of my body vanished into what felt like an ocean of sensation, simultaneously coming

and going. In the minutes proceeding I felt as though I was as large as a mountain, and there was no more pain. I had released from my sharply alienating and managerial relationship with nature on an ontological level. My conceptual knowing of this—the actual formation of knowledge—occurred through a flash of insight and said, “welcome everything, and hold onto nothing.” This all came from-and-after the shift in relationship to the sensory interaction.

Francis et al. (2015) draw on John Dewey (2005) and Edvin Østergaard, (2015) to succinctly describe this relationship between person and environment, experience, and knowledge.

Here, aesthetic experience is regarded as ‘the result, the sign, and the reward of that interaction of organism and environment which, when carried to the full, is a transformation of interaction into participation and communication’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 22). He also goes further by claiming that this form of experience integrates person and environment. In the true experience, the viewer and the viewed are one. This concept of the *aesthetic* experience is related to phenomenology’s emphasis on rich sense experiences. The word *aesthetics* is derived from the Greek words *aisthetikos*, ‘sensitive, perceptive’ and *aisthanesthai* which means ‘to perceive (by the senses or by the mind), to feel.’ Etymologically speaking, an aesthetic experience is a precognitive, sensuous experience, an experience opened up for [*sic*] through sensuous perception (Østergaard, 2015, p. 519). As Dewey emphasizes, in the aesthetic experience, there is no distinction of self and object, ‘since it is esthetic in the degree in which organism and environment cooperate to institute an experience in which the two are so fully integrated that each disappears’ (Dewey, 2005, p. 259). (p. 79)

These powerful insights are key to informing my methodological commitments. The takeaways are threefold: 1) it is possible to reorient and live well from a place of giving and cultivating reciprocal relationships, rather than from an accumulation mindset and individualistic orientation toward the world; 2) how an Euro-Canadian worldview relates to all phenomena with its intensely managerial relationship and attachment to the conceptual realm of identifying the nature of life as subject/object, and thus separate from our being, has profound implications; and

3) an emergent, participatory research design is in alignment with the foundations of the ontological re-reversal.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter 1: This chapter details my theoretical foundations and methodological framework, employing Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) and Institutional Ethnography. The transformative paradigm guides my research, emphasizing social justice and the potential for research to link to action. I also centre myself in the research process using the participatory paradigm which recognizes the relational nature inherent in, and reflexive orientation required for, social sciences research. The chapter concludes with a discussion on study limitations and future research opportunities.

Chapter 2: This chapter establishes the conceptual framework necessary for understanding how I construct my thesis arguments. Drawing on scholarly works, I explore a conceptualization of the public good within the context of universities, and document numerous instances where post-secondary institutions have failed to align with claims of serving the public good. The BIAS FREE Framework is introduced as an analytical tool to illuminate governance practices and explain tensions that erode commitments to the public good in university settings and beyond.

Chapter 3: This chapter provides a condensed history of land-use planning at Trent University. I examine recurring methods of land-use planning spanning two decades at Trent and explore overlapping tensions, themes, and outcomes. The research primes readers to critically

assess assertions from Trent's senior leadership regarding extensive public engagement. I set the stage for subsequent chapters that detail how Trent's contemporary approach to land use planning falls significantly short of its public engagement claims, and post-secondary educational mandate.

Chapters 4 and 5: These chapters offer readers a thick description of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan and process as it unfolded, with a particular focus on the campus food growing system. The detailed examination reveals an assemblage of choices and textual realities shaping Trent's land-use planning. Rooted in transformative and participatory paradigms, my institutional ethnography exposes how social hierarchies enacted in land-use planning work at cross-purposes with serving the public good and the institution's educational mandate.

Chapter 6: This chapter broadens the scope beyond the food growing system to look at other implications arising from the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process. I provide a comprehensive understanding of additional, far-reaching social, environmental, and economic ramifications that the current land-use planning process has on the Trent lands and its associated teaching, research, and learning.

Chapter 7: This chapter synthesizes the context examined in the preceding chapters with academic literature to establish the concept of *fait accompli* planning. I propose alternative land-use planning approaches and detail methods that advance collaborative efforts and dialogic practices. These alternative approaches lay the groundwork to begin addressing the uneven social

relations and textual realities that shape land-use planning practices at Trent University and initiate improvements for its campus food growing system.

Chapter 8: The final chapter documents outcomes related to the campus food growing system after the approval of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan in 2021. I examine the context surrounding the Grounds Operation relocation to reveal a compelling case of failed planning, wherein Trent University is failing to follow through with its TLNAP implementation guidelines. The actions of Trent's senior leadership suggest an escalating trend toward social biases that include inadequate communications, the undervaluing of campus and community input in its planning processes, and the perpetuation of uncertainty and constraints that threaten the viability of the established, campus-based food system.

Chapter 1: Research Methodology

1.1 Overview of Research Approach

This chapter details the theoretical commitments of my research and outlines the methodological framework I employed, along with study limitations. A list of research questions which provided the impetus for this research is included first, followed by my theoretical commitments to a transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2009). My methodological framework section outlines how I operationalized my research using Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) (Wood, 2020; Wood & Zuber-Skerrit, 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011, 2015) and Institutional Ethnography (Smith, 2005, 2006). The combination of these methodologies provided a strong foundation for positioning myself as a participant in the

research process. I then categorize and detail my methods under each methodology according to their corresponding techniques, such as PALAR for group workshops and participatory mapping, and Institutional Ethnography for participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document collection; all of which paid particular attention to issues of power, the enhancement of social justice, and the potential for research to link to action and social change (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2009, 2010). Finally, I conclude with my study limitations and future opportunities for research.

1.2 Background, Initial Research Questions, and Theoretical Commitments

The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan (TLNAP) was promoted as a public consultation and participation process (Trent University, 2019c, 2019d, 2019f, 2020e). When the TLNAP process emerged in 2019, I was a co-manager of the Trent Market Garden (TMG) (see [Figure 2](#)) and a student participant in Trent's broader on-campus food growing system.¹ This thesis research originated from my involvement with the informal collective later called the Growers Group.² The group formed out of concern for the TLNAP process, which at times was marked by the complete absence of consultation and, at other times, wholly inadequate consultation with regards to developments affecting the on-campus food growing system and correlate pedagogy (see [Figure 4](#)). We shared a common concern about what possible impacts meant for the future of food growing and land-based learning at Trent. The collective had mobilized around several

¹ Trent's on-campus food growing system is detailed in Chapter 4, section 4.3.1. As noted in Chapter 4, outreach was made to the First Peoples House of Learning Medicine Gardens, but it was not going to be impacted by the TLNAP and no further connections were made at the time.

² The Growers Group was an informal group that formed out of a concern for the TLNAP process and was fluid in its membership. Initially, the collective's meetings included Trent School of Environment members. Later distinctions were made by the Trent Lands Committee in the TLNAP that this Group was distinct from the TSE, composed of members from the various campus food growing projects (*Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 2: Engagement Summary Report*, 2020).

questions, including the location and continuation of the food growing sites on campus in the face of uncertainty about whether we'd be displaced by development. Where was Trent's senior administration proposing our projects be moved to? How could we ensure the permanent protection of these spaces for long term growth? How do we quantify the value these projects and spaces generate for students, student learning, the community, and Trent's campus? Who did we need to speak to, to make our case for the food growing spaces to remain on campus and accessible?

Accordingly, to imbed my thesis research around the TLNAP process and context, and given the early concerns about gaps in consultation, I sought methodological frameworks that would ground my research actions in a transformative paradigm. The transformative paradigm focuses on issues of power, the enhancement of social justice, and potential role for research to link to action and social change (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2009, 2010).³ As Creswell (2014) writes:

[T]he research contains an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life. Moreover, specific issues need to be addressed that speak to important social issues of the day, issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation. . . . This research also assumes that the inquirer will proceed collaboratively so as to not further marginalize the participants as a result of the inquiry. (pp. 9-10)

Table 1 outlines the basic beliefs of the transformative paradigm from Mertens (1998, 2005, 2009).

³ Following Creswell's (2014) selection of a research approach, I use the words paradigm and worldview interchangeably (p. 6).

Table 1: Basic Beliefs of the Transformative Paradigm Developed by Mertens

| Elements of Paradigm | Commitments |
|--|---|
| Axiology: assumptions about ethics | Ethical considerations include respect for cultural norms of interaction; beneficence is defined in terms of the promotion of human rights and increase in social justice |
| Ontology: assumptions about the nature of what exists; what is reality | Rejects cultural relativism and recognizes the influence of privilege in determining what is real and the consequences of accepting one version of reality over another; multiple realities are shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender, disability, and other values |
| Epistemology: assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the researcher/evaluator and the stakeholders needed to achieve accurate knowledge | Recognizes an interactive link between researcher/ evaluator and participants/co-researchers/evaluators; knowledge is seen as socially and historically situated; issues of power and privilege are explicitly addressed; development of a trusting relationship is seen as critical |
| Methodology: assumptions about appropriate methods of systematic inquiry | Inclusion of qualitative methods (dialogical) is seen as critical; quantitative and mixed methods can be used; interactive link |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>recognized between the researcher/evaluator and participants in the definition of the focus and questions; methods are adjusted to accommodate cultural complexity; and contextual and historical factors are acknowledged, especially as they relate to discrimination and oppression</p> |
|--|---|

Note. Adapted from (Mertens, 2009, p. 49)

Furthermore, given that this research was intimately tied to issues bound up with land, these commitments were deepened by locating myself in understandings from critical place inquiry. Tuck and McKenzie (2015) state, “critical place research can be established by reference to its relational validity, or in other words, its grounding and implications for relations to land, to social context, and to future generations” (p. 19). Specifically, critical place inquiry:

- Addresses spatialized and placed-based processes of colonization and settler colonization, and works against their further erasure or neutralization through social science research
- Extends beyond considerations of the social to more deeply consider the land itself and its nonhuman inhabitants and characteristics as they determine and manifest place
- Aims to further generative and critical politics of places through such conceptualizations/practices via a relational ethics of accountability to people and place. (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 19)

The rigour of these commitments and how they link to my positionality are rearticulated by (Bang et al., 2014), and elaborated on by, Tuck and McKenzie (2015). Both scholars drew from Burkhart’s (2004) revision of Descartes statement, “I think, therefore I am,” to reframe individualist notions of existence toward a more relational understanding, “We are, therefore I

am.” Bang et al. (2014) extend this to land, showing us the stark contrast of “I am, therefore place is,” to that of “Land is, therefore we are.” As Tuck and McKenzie (2015) elaborated:

Bang et al. (2014) seem to be saying that the ontology of place prioritizes and centers the individual human, the surveyor or place, whereas an ontology of land prioritizes and centers land, which constitutes the life of a collective. This represents a profound distinction that cannot be overlooked. (p. 56)

This distinction is a key methodological point of departure, and one that I will argue constitutes a principal argument of my thesis. Trent University’s governance conduct has, thus far, remained fixed in an ontology of place, and its governance structures reify the continued disconnection from an ontology of land. There is no abstraction, it is literal. As I demonstrate in this research, specific conduct and structures at Trent are shown to negatively affect the socio-ecological connectivity that comprise its on-campus food growing projects and natural areas, and more broadly has led to repeated conflict for its campus and community.⁴ The central importance and implications of this are well articulated by Bawden and Williams (2017), as cited by Zuber-Skerritt (2018):

. . . worldviews essentially comprise those idiosyncratic sets of beliefs and assumptions that each of us hold (essentially non-consciously) about matters that include the nature of reality, of knowing and knowledge, and of value and the process of judgment. Our worldviews represent the way we ‘see’ the world about us, which in turn and in large part determines the way that we ‘act’ in it. From this it follows that transforming the way we view the world is prerequisite if we want (or need) to profoundly change what we do in (and to) that world. This is obviously relevant to all who embrace action-for-change as an integral aspect of the process of learning.

The central thesis here is that ignorance of these so-called epistemic dimensions of learning – the actual character and composition of our own worldviews – represents a major impediment to the search for responsible improvements to the circumstances that we currently face. Of even greater concern is that even in situations where a degree of epistemic awareness exists, there is a seemingly innate personal and cultural resistance to the exposure of personal beliefs and assumptions, let alone a preparedness to interrogate

⁴ In the context of this research, ‘campus’ refers to Trent staff, faculty, and/or students, and ‘community’ refers to members of Peterborough/Nogojwanong and/or the alumni community; all of whom are either directly affected by Trent’s land-use decisions or share interests in the Trent lands.

their adequacy in the face of the pressing issues of the times. This cognitive resistance is especially pertinent in situations where the focus of attention is on sustainable social and material developments under such complex, messy and truly ‘wicked’ circumstances that are presented by global climate change, sectarian violence, endemic poverty, and pervasively corrupt and ineffective governance. (p. 514)

1.3 Methodological Framework

I operationalized these theoretical underpinnings and developed this thesis by approaching the research through an emergent design and drawing on techniques from Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (Wood, 2020; Wood & Zuber-Skerritt, 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011, 2015) and Institutional Ethnography (Smith, 2005, 2006). My choice of an emergent research design was guided by PALAR methodologist, Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt. Zuber-Skerritt (2011) stated:

‘validity’ and ‘rigour’ have a different meaning in different paradigms. Validity is accepted in the positivist paradigm when knowledge is generalizable and when the study is conducted in controlled conditions, using rigorous methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The research design is experimental. It starts with the inquirer’s predetermined hypothesis that is to be tested and finally either confirmed or refuted. . . .

On the other hand, phenomenologists recognize that knowledge is socially constructed and created from within, and for, a particular group and context. The researcher’s role is to describe and explain the situation or the case in as convincing and trustworthy a manner as possible. The aim is not to establish generalizable laws for multiple contexts but to know, understand, improve or change a particular social situation or context and to advocate for the benefit of the people who are also the ‘participants’ (not ‘subjects’) in the inquiry and who are affected by the results and solutions. Variables are not predetermined and controlled but are taken on board as they are identified from the emerging meanings. These are multiple and dynamic. Rigour is achieved through triangulation or multiple use of methods and of perspectives and through participant validation or member checking. (pp. 79-80)

The constituent parts that created the PALAR methodology arose from philosophical debates and methodological approaches that challenged the positivist paradigm and subsuming knowledge hegemony of an enlightenment epistemology. PALAR was created from two distinct

concepts of Action Learning (AL) (Revans, 1980, 1982) and Action Research (AR) (Lewin, 1946, 1947), which were brought together at the First World Congress on Action Learning, Action Research and Process Management (ALARPM – later renamed ALARA) hosted in Brisbane in 1990. They were then joined conceptually as ALAR (Kearney et al., 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2009). ALAR was then further combined with the Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Fals Borda, 1979; Fals Borda & Rahman, 1991) concept and practice to provide the PALAR integrated approach to research (Kearney et al., 2013; Zuber-Skerritt, 2009). PALAR deliberately positions the researcher as a participant and co-researcher in the research process. Zuber-Skerritt (2018) advanced that social science research needs to be approached from a participatory paradigm:

Instead of believing that researchers are objective, distant observers of what they are researching, we need to conceive of researchers as active ‘participants’ and co-researchers in the whole process of research and development (R&D). Instead of the dominant paradigm’s preoccupation with objectivity and ‘exclusion’ from the research task, our alternative paradigm recognizes and incorporates action researchers as totally inclusive and holistic researchers who work together with those involved in the research – not just in specifically ‘research’ tasks but in all of life. (p. 514)

Lesley Wood (2020) elucidated why the participatory approach to research is critically important:

[T]he PALAR approach is distinctively concerned with enhancing social justice through embracing diversity and generating understanding of one’s own role in contributing to a more inclusive and democratic society. It is based on the awareness that we live in relation with others and the geophysical environment, implying that we have not only certain rights within this relationship, but also a collective responsibility towards the human and non-human world. This in turn requires us to be self-reflexive (Heron & Reason, 1997) so we can reflect on and reframe our paradigms, ideally through reflexive dialogue with others. This is in opposition to a positivist paradigm which positions reality as a series of external truths (Lincoln et al., 2011) and requires human beings to adapt to the world around them, rather than acknowledging that humans have the ability to influence reality. (p. 22)

My choice of institutional ethnography (IE) allowed me to bring to the foreground how work processes (in this case, the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process) are coordinated through texts and discourses (DeVault, 2006). As Cheek (2004) pointed out, there are many definitions of discourse, and it is important to establish “where the author is coming from both theoretically and in terms of the understanding of discourse analysis in use” (p. 1144). IE pivots from Foucault’s (1981) operationalization of discourse analysis as Dorothy Smith (1999) describes, “to step outside the artifice of the text’s stasis and rediscover discourse as an actually happening, actually performed, local organization of consciousness” (p. 134). First, Smith (1990) examined textual realities as relations of ruling:

Textual realities are the ground of our contemporary consciousness of the world beyond the immediately known. As such they are integral to the coordination of activities among different levels of organization, within organizations, and in the society at large. . . . Depths and complexities of the social organization of ruling interpose between local actualities and textual surfaces. . . . textual realities are not fictions or falsehoods; they are normal, integral, and indeed essential features of the relations and apparatuses of ruling—state administrative apparatuses, management, professional organizations, the discourses of social science and other academic discourses, the mass media, and so forth. . . . textual surfaces presuppose an organization of power as the concerting of people’s activities and the uses of organization to enforce processes producing a version of the world that is peculiarly one-sided, that is known only from within the modes of ruling, and that defines the objects of its power. The subjects entered into these virtual realities are displaced as speakers both at the point of inscription, where lived actualities are entered ‘into the record,’ and as the characteristic hierarchies of organization set up a self-sealing division of labor in the making of objectified knowledge. (pp. 83-84)

Second, Smith (1999) moved to take up the project of discourse analysis as an “insider” and pivoted away from Foucault by positioning the researcher as a participant (p. 133). She asserted the need to “lift the discourse off the page and pull it into life” (p. 134). And with good reason. Relations of ruling aren’t only referring to structures of power but also how they are discursively formed and reified through textual forms of coordination (DeVault, 2006; Smith, 2006). Without positioning the researcher and/or the actors in discursive processes as

participants, discourse analysis risks continuing to cleave the textual realities from the subjectivities that create and activate them. As Smith (1999) states:

The subject/knower of inquiry is not a transcendent subject but situated in the actualities of her own living, in relations with others as they are. Whatever exists socially is produced/accomplished by people 'at work,' that is, active, thinking, intending, feeling, in the actual local settings of their living . . .

Their deceitful stasis is an effect of how the printed text enables us to return to them again, find them again, as if nothing had changed. But each such iteration is the actual local practice of a particular individual, reading just where she is, for just the what-comes-next that her reading initiates. (pp. 74-75)

The illustration of this cleave and a subject-less textual reality is well articulated by Smith (1990):

Factual social organization is foundational to the relations of ruling. Characteristically, whether as 'bodies of knowledge' vested in professions or as 'corporations' . . . the relations of ruling are organized as supra- or extrapersonal. Corporations and agencies act through their employees; their employees' concerted actions become the acts of the corporation or agency. Objectified bodies of knowledge embedded in discursive organization are *known* by the members of the relevant discourse; through processes of controlled training, those members bear a body of knowledge externalized in texts; they become its knowers. Textual realities are essential constituents of these social relations and their organization, which depend upon objectified forms of knowledge independent of particular subjectivities, appearing in rationally standardized forms invariant as to time, place, and the particular perspectives, interests, and will of participants. Textual realities constitute shared, identical, and perspectiveless objects and environments, locked into decision processes through the schemata, categories, and concepts that organize them. (p. 84)

To address this, DeVault & McCoy (2006) inform us that: "Institutional ethnography takes for its entry point the experiences of specific individuals whose everyday activities are in some way hooked into, shaped by, and constituent of the institutional relations under exploration" (p. 18). Drawing from Dorothy Smith's (1999) work, DeVault (2006) elaborated that IE's "focus on texts comes from an empirical observation—that technologies of social control are increasingly and pervasively textual and discursive" (p. 294). As a participant in the

Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process, my deployment of IE in chapters 3 through 8 leaned heavily on scrutinizing textual realities and discourses⁵ that have been recognized and approved by the institution⁶ and triangulating them with a detailed assemblage of campus⁷ and community⁸ inputs. As Devault (2006) states, “institutional ideologies typically acknowledge some kinds of work and not others. Thus, the investigator attends to all of the work that’s done in the setting, and also notes which activities are recognized and accounted institutionally and which are not” (p. 294). Within this context—through a detailed examination of the TLNAP process and its correlate coordination—I approached the institutional texts and discourses as technologies that are ultimately meant to underscore institutional logics and reinforce its existing power dynamics, while showing how the combination of these negatively impacted Trent’s land-use planning for teaching, learning, and research, and moved the institution in ways that are counter to its objects and purposes (Bill Pr24: An Act to Incorporate Trent University, 1963, p. 884).

1.4 Methods

1.4.1 PALAR

The Participatory Action Learning and Action Research approach provided a stepping off point to undertake this research. As Kearney et al. (2013) state:

People involved in PALAR projects are interested in participating (P) and working together on a complex issue (or issues) affecting their lives, learning from their experience and from one another (AL) and engaging in a systematic inquiry (AR) into how to address and resolve this issue/issues. (p. 115)

⁵ Textual realities and discourses in this research consist of: documents, language, maps, meetings, correspondences, audio/visual recordings, news stories, and events as they pertain to the TLNAP and correlate process.

⁶ Inputs from the executive, administration, and/or consultants at Trent University

⁷ Inputs from Trent staff, faculty, and/or students

⁸ Inputs from community members, First Nation Elders, and/or City officials of the Peterborough/Nogojwanong community

Action Learning (AL), Action Research (AR), and Participatory Action Research (PAR) emerged from various fields of study preceding from workplace management, academic research, and community-based development, respectively. AR is known to be more formal in its approach because its aims are to produce rigorous information that is open to public inquiry and examination. Zuber-Skerritt (2011) states that AR “integrates theory and practice, research and action” (p. 33). Following an emergent research design, I came to operationalize the more rigorous AR component of this project through institutional ethnography (detailed later in this section). AL on the other hand is less systematic but its aims are largely similar in that it focuses on fostering conditions for people to identify an issue and empower them to solve it through dialectic, interpersonal development, and action. AL was derived from management training to foster bottom up, collaborative problem solving, skill development, and actions for transforming the workplace/organization (McNulty, 1979; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011).

My entry point into this research came through the bottom-up approach and an organic operationalization of AL and PAR. At the time the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in 2020, I was engaged in another research project which became no longer viable. Like many, I encountered existential questions and that led me to question what meaningful research could be done. Having already assumed a volunteer coordinator role within the Growers Group, I decided to pivot my thesis focus. At this point, I was organizing regular meetings and helping to aggregate data to address issues in campus land-use planning and engage in the TLNAP process.

In total, I coordinated 46 strategic planning meetings and recorded group notes for each between October 18, 2019, and April 15, 2022.⁹ 31 of these meetings were directed at taking action to address concerns in the TLNAP process, and the 15 other meetings were coordinated to develop safety protocols and pivot on-campus food growing operations during COVID-19. During this time, I collaborated on the development and delivery of two presentations to the Trent Lands Committee and President to inform the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process about the on-campus food growing system. Additionally, myself and some other group members attended three Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee meetings between October 30, 2020, and December 11, 2020. I also delivered two deputations to the Board of Governors, February 5, 2021, and March 26, 2021. From these efforts, the following methods were undertaken to generate research about Trent's food growing system, and to contribute to future joined-up efforts that could enhance campus and community knowledge and address the shortcomings encountered in the TLNAP process. All methods were conducted in alignment with Trent's Research Ethics Board and Indigenous Education Council approvals (see Appendices [A](#) and [B](#)).

1.4.1.i Group Workshops

Group workshops were conducted after the TLNAP was finalized and were designed to be a productive response to two issues: 1) ongoing uncertainties about development that would impact the on-campus food growing system and correlated land, and 2) to attend to fissures in

⁹ I continued to aggregate data from Growers Group correspondences although meeting coordination had subsided after April 15, 2022. In December of 2022, I joined the Trent Vegetable Gardens Steering Committee, so a particular focus on its engagements was documented up until July 2023.

planning and pedagogical development between the Trent School of Environment (TSE) and Growers Group that emerged from how the TLNAP process was governed.¹⁰

The workshop idea came from conversations between myself and the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Society (SAFSS) Coordinator,¹¹ proceeding with the notion that it is the people who carry the final responsibility for the work on the land and in the food growing spaces who need to share and discuss what their problems are to inform solutions. The design was based off the start-up workshop and vision-building concept from Zuber-Skerrit's (2011) description of AL programmes and inspired by the "Learning with Life" approach to pedagogical development (Rojas et al., 2007). A second stage of the group workshops was to be modeled on Michael Marquardt's method to facilitate a successful Action Learning group (Marquardt, 1999, 2009). It was open to everyone involved in the campus food growing system and participants could self-select in or out throughout any part of the process. 16 meetings were carried out between June 14, 2021, and October 28, 2021, to inform the design, conduct the workshops, and analyze and disseminate the data.

In total, three discrete visioning workshops were conducted between 12 participants who oversaw or participated in operations in the campus food growing system. The first workshop was co-facilitated between the SAFSS Coordinator and I, and we participated alongside four other participants consisting of SAFSS students, the TMG Manager,¹² and the Trent Apiary Co-

¹⁰ Detailed in Chapters 4 and 5.

¹¹ The Coordinator oversaw administrative tasks for the Trent Market Garden (TMG), which was going to be affected by the Experimental Farm relocation plans in the TLNAP.

¹² When this workshop was conducted in June of 2021, I was no longer a co-manager or directly involved in the TMG project.

manager. The second workshop was co-facilitated between me and the Apiary Co-manager from the first workshop and had four participants consisting of the Trent Vegetable Gardens (TVG) Coordinator, TVG staff, and another Apiary Co-manager. The third workshop had two participants consisting of TSE faculty and was co-facilitated between the SAFSS Coordinator and myself. The coordination of a fourth workshop with Peterborough/Nogojiwanong community members was attempted but faltered due to uncertain interest. Instead, a participatory mapping event was undertaken with supportive interest and strong participation.

1.4.1.ii Participatory Mapping

The participatory mapping event was in response to the ongoing uncertainties about development that would impact the Trent Vegetable Gardens and surrounding area. The event was viewed as a more accessible and creative response to engage the broader Peterborough/Nogojiwanong community members in the research process, all of whom were either directly affected by Trent's land-use decisions at the TVG (there were 18 community garden plots) or shared interests in the Trent lands.

Participatory mapping has been used in university campus settings to develop interventions that enhance social justice and link research to social change (Fanshel & Iles, 2020, 2022). At the time, Trent's administration had adopted an industrial/research park's Cleantech Commons Master Plan (Brook McIlroy & DM Wills, 2017) into the TLNAP, which showed a street connection (p. 7) that was developed prior to consultation and would negatively impact approximately 1/3 of the Trent Vegetable Gardens. The purpose of this event was to raise awareness about the unresolved concern and map out the biodiversity that had established itself

over 15 years of community interaction and care. This also aligned with commitments from critical place inquiry which, as Tuck and McKenzie (2015) state, “Extends beyond considerations of the social to more deeply consider the land itself and its nonhuman inhabitants and characteristics as they determine and manifest place.” And which “Aims to further generative and critical politics of places through such conceptualizations/practices via a relational ethics of accountability to people and place” (p. 19).

In total 14 participants attended the event. Participants plotted findings on a map using direct experience, pre-existing knowledge, as well as guidebooks to capture a snapshot of the existing flora, fauna, and fungi. A group discussion was held afterward to capture additional context and nuance about the meaning and significance of their relationships to the Trent Vegetable Gardens and Trent lands.

1.4.2 Institutional Ethnography

Institutional Ethnography proceeds from the lived experiences embedded in social and/or institutional processes (Smith, 2006). In tandem with PALAR, the alternative, non-positivist research approach positions researchers as active participants in generating new understandings, where subjectivities are valued rather than overruled by a myth of the dissociated, objective observer (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). Experience defines the inquiry and iterative direction that the research takes, as Smith (2005) states, “It begins with some issues, concerns, or problems that are real for people and that are situated in their relationships to an institutional order” (p. 32).

The AR component of this study focused on producing knowledge from the TLNAP process that described and analyzed how its order was put together and aimed at making it visible for the participants who participated in and confronted it. As Smith (2005) points out:

Knowing how things work, how they're put together, is invaluable for those who often have to struggle in the dark. For example, knowing the implications for practice of changing the concepts and categories that operate in coordinating institutional processes can be very useful at the point where changes have not yet been settled and where there is room for maneuver. More generally, problematic institutional practices lying within practicable reach can be identified, creating possibilities of change from within (Pence, 2001). These are in addition to the gains of knowledge that can be made from a method of inquiry aiming to discover just how our everyday worlds are being put together within social relations beyond the scope of our experience. (p. 32)

The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan and process provided a substantive lens for research to peer into the everyday workings of Trent University, as well as productive circumstances to point out practicable possibilities for change within the institution. Deploying the following methods, I explored Trent's institutional processes through its textual realities and discourses, explicating in chapters 3 through 8 how they assemble and coordinate people's work, affect teaching, learning, and research, and where real opportunities are already written (and/or could additionally be written) for a different way of proceeding.

1.4.2.i Participant Observation

Participant observation is an important technique to enable researchers to enter local settings where people's communications and conduct—their doings—can be observed operating and contributing to the social organization of the local (Smith, 2006). It is grounded in actual events and correspondences from which the research, descriptions, and institutional discourses are derived. The deployment of participation observation from my involvement in the TLNAP process follows Smith's (2006) description:

Participant observation begins in a specific setting . . . It provides a way to start in local particularities to establish a problematic with a focus on how actualities of people's lives come to be hooked up with institutional relations.

As with place, *time* is immanent in participant observation research. . . . this research form goes on in a specific place and time, and over time. As such, participant observation explores the social *in motion*, as an ongoing concerting of activities. . . .

Participant observation can open up the analytic aperture away from individuals and toward the *coordination* of their doings observed while doing them. One can observe (some of) the texts as they occur in the course of a work sequence in which the researcher is involved. (pp. 60-61)

Additionally, as Smith (2006, p. 60) points out in her own research, one manner of participant observation is covert research. Through my participation in the TLNAP process, I revisited discourses over time, in motion, and of which coordinated the local particularities within the unfolding problematic. Specifically, I was approved by Trent's Research Ethics Board to use personal email correspondences as primary data without the requirement to seek prior consent. As Smith (2006) expands:

I decided to study the ruling by immersing myself in its subjugation rather than getting administrators' permissions, which would have been conspiring with them, to be on the side of the ruling. The present conditions of research in North America may well preclude such a posture, with the human subjects review committees acting as gatekeepers of permissions from authorities. Researchers now have to explore creative ways to pose an investigation that does not involve overt deceit. (pp. 60-61)

I included the following rationale in my ethics application revisions which was approved by Trent's Research Ethics Board to be used with alignment to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) (Government of Canada, 2018).

TCPS2 Article 10.4 Application states:

In some types of critical inquiry, anonymity would result in individuals in positions of power not being held accountable for their actions and for how their exercise of power has implications for others. The safeguards for those in the public arena are through public debate and discourse. (p. 14)

As documented in this thesis, the way that power was administered during the TLNAP process had constrained public forums, overrode various meeting points, and closed institutional structures for public discourse and debate. Having participated and made use of all avenues of communication and consultation in the TLNAP process, I delivered a deputation on critical matters to Trent's Board of Governors on February 5, 2021. When I raised my hand to ask a follow up question, the Chair of the Board enacted Trent By-law Special Resolution IV.1 section 6.2 e (Trent University, 2018e) and the floor was closed to questions; the safeguard for public discourse and debate was removed.

The use of power during the development and approval processes of the TLNAP ultimately rested on policies that, in alignment with TCPS2 Articles 10.2 and 10.4, justified the exception to the requirement to seek prior consent. TCPS2 Article 10.2 Observational Studies (Government of Canada, 2018) states:

Participant observation is often identified with ethnographic research, in which the researcher's role is to gain a holistic overview of the studied context through engagement in, and observation of, the setting to describe its social environments, processes and relationships. Participant observation may or may not require permission to observe and participate in activities of the setting studied. In some situations, researchers will identify themselves and seek consent from individuals in that setting; in others, researchers will engage in covert observation and not seek consent. (p. 138)

It is important to note that covert participant observation was limited to personal email correspondences for my document collection and analysis. Consent was requested during the group workshops, participatory mapping, and semi-structured interviews. Additionally, as part of my ethics approval, I made explicit that all data would be anonymized in my research and analysis unless consent had been given. I redacted names from email correspondences and position titles were inserted where relevant. I only identify structures, positions, and/or

department titles which, as Smith (2006) states, “open[s] up the analytic aperture away from individuals and toward the *coordination* of their doings while doing them” [my addition] (p. 61).¹³ By presenting the research data in this way, it is my hope that readers and future researchers are able to: 1) zoom out to the layer of identifiable structures and “textually mediated social relations” at Trent (Smith, 2006, p. 62), while 2) simultaneously applying their own analysis to the communications and conduct, *the doings*, that activate those textual realities and produce what possibilities of coordination can or cannot take place.

1.4.2.ii Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect first-hand experiences with the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process, and to provide a more contextualized and rigorous understanding of its undertaking and outcomes. The aim of the interview that was communicated to each participant was to aid research toward a long-term vision that could effectively use Trent University lands as an educational site.

Requests for semi-structured interviews along with sample questions (for examples, see Appendices [C](#) and [D](#)) were emailed to 10 participants and included a wide range of TLNAP participants such as: Trent faculty, staff, students, and senior administration, members of the Growers Group, and Peterborough/Nogojiwanong planners and community members. In total, five interviews were scheduled and conducted over Zoom, however, one participant withdrew

¹³ The structures/positions/department titles identified in this research will likely remain in Trent’s institutional context in the short to medium term. This allows researchers to trace the coordination of institutional processes. Structural name changes do happen from time to time, however, and cannot be anticipated beyond this research. Researchers need to remain attentive to this. Notable examples relevant in the context of this research were Physical Resources, now named Facilities Management, and the VP of External Relations & Advancement, now named VP External Relations & Development.

after completion (see section 1.5 Study Limitations). From the four completed and transcribed interviews, quotes have been inserted throughout chapters 3 through 7 to demonstrate prevalence and further substantiate the institutional ethnography.

1.4.2.iii Document (text) Collection

As Smith (2006) defines, “Institutional Ethnography uses the notion of text to refer to words, images, or sounds that are set into a material form of some kind from which they can be read, seen, heard, watched, and so on” (p. 66). I use this definition of texts interchangeably with documents for this research.

Research was aggregated from Trent University Archive documents dating back to 1963 (Trent’s articles of incorporation), and to a limited extent Board of Governors reports were examined from the late 1980s and early 1990s about the establishment of the Endowment lands, which set the stage for the TLNAP and contemporary land-use planning at Trent. Predominantly, this research was situated in a study of documents both internal and external to Trent between 2002 and 2023. A comprehensive collection of documents was gathered from the Trent University website, its campus organizations’ websites, local community members, personal email correspondences, the City of Peterborough’s website, as well as local news websites.

These include:

- Trent University Board of Governors agendas and meeting minutes, Trent lands planning drafts and finalized land use planning documents, consultation event documents and audio-visual recordings, Trent University PowerPoint presentations, newsletters, maps, bylaws, financial statements, and consultation engagement summaries

- Student surveys, student feedback letters, Trent staff and faculty feedback letters, community feedback letters, personal email correspondences, field notes, and photos
- City of Peterborough meeting minutes, budgets, draft and Official Plan documents, and Memoranda of Understanding
- Local and Trent news stories.

One challenge encountered with this method was the inability to adapt original texts from the TLNAP or previous land-use planning processes, such as embedding maps in the research (even with rigorous referencing) without potentially violating copyright law. My thesis committee member suggested approaching Trent University to seek further guidance and/or consent. However, by the time this suggestion was received I had already taken measures to adapt my approach, and given the tensions being explored during my research I didn't feel comfortable approaching Trent administration for specific document permissions. This demonstrates a counterproductive condition operating in the textual realities of public, post-secondary institutions, where communicating context and its examination in a full and transparent manner can be, or appear to be, constrained. To navigate this tension to the best of my abilities, documents were referenced to their direct web link with specific page numbers cited. All documents that are referenced for context in this thesis that do not have a direct weblink have been submitted to Trent Archives under the digital collection called Matt Dutry and Community Trent Lands Plan Research Collection (23-015). The collection files can be viewed or emailed to readers by request. I reference files in this collection throughout this thesis; however, for folders with multiple files, I refer readers to the collection with the location in parenthesis like above. Additionally, to maintain the integrity of the web linked references in this

thesis, backup links have been created at web.archive.org and a secondary reference list (Dutry, 2023) is included in the collection.¹⁴

1.5 Study Limitations

Graduate researchers study topics or phenomena where there is a gap in understanding. In that vein, research on the decision-making culture at Trent University in connection with land-use planning may be largely understudied. Having no previous framework that I am aware of to support such an integrated undertaking proved challenging. I primarily drew on recent documents and various iterations of Trent Lands plans from 2002 – 2023. Further studies may benefit from archival research that analyzes the full spectrum of Trent’s history from its early inception in 1957 to its founding in 1964, and onward.

Several limitations need to be made explicit from this study so that future researchers may advance these initial findings or seek solutions to better their own research. One limitation in this study was that the PALAR research framework came after the initial formation of the Growers Group and early participatory action in the TLNAP process was underway. I was already volunteering as coordinator for the Growers Group, and we were acting on a defined problem, namely the absence of consultation related to developments affecting the on-campus food growing sites. Due to the variable and changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and unfolding TLNAP process, I had to approach this research through an emergent design, and the results of the research may not be as compelling as if the group had undertaken each stage of

¹⁴ Important note to readers: By the time this thesis was completed, Trent University had created a new URL to showcase the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan. Consequently, many of the referenced web links and corresponding files are no longer available. Please request the backup reference list before proceeding (Dutry, 2023).

a formal PALAR design from the onset. I approximated a PALAR research design as soon as it was identified and at a stage when it emerged as being useful. However, my later stage design, inexperience with guiding research, and absence of experienced PALAR practitioners within the Sustainability Studies program resulted in my undertaking of this complex methodology largely on my own. As Wood (2020) writes:

But therein lies the problem. Current ethical procedures in higher education have their origins in positivistic, non-participatory paradigms typical of those that dominate “science”. In the creation of scientific knowledge, the traditional academic researcher initiates, designs and controls the research, and collects data from the study’s ‘subjects’, whose role is merely to supply the information needed. (p. 85)

In PALAR research, participants are to collectively undertake each stage of the research project, from inception to design, and ultimately the dissemination of the knowledge created. In this case, without methodological experience, a true-to-form PALAR research design was not followed because I applied the methodology to the work already in progress and the summation of results are being disseminated through this thesis paper rather than by the group. Notwithstanding, I remained resolute in my commitment to upholding the theoretical principles of PALAR and approaching this research through community-based techniques. As Zuber-Skerritt (2011) points out, “*methods play a secondary role; the paradigm or the theoretical framework is of primary importance and must be made explicit so that the reader/examiner can evaluate the process, methods and outcomes, using relevant criteria from the researcher’s particular perspective*” (p. 79).

Additional challenges arose from the time constraints and limitations of the research ethics process which are not suited to emergent, participatory research designs. I submitted my ethics application in February of 2021, but it did not receive approval until June 2021. My initial

research findings were to be based on a combination of PALAR and Institutional Ethnography methodologies, using participant observation and semi-structured interviews, all of which proceed from the lived experiences embedded in social and/or institutional processes (Chapters 3 through 6). However, akin to what my methodological commitments advance at the beginning of this chapter, demand surfaced within the Growers Group from the notion that it is the people who carry the final responsibility for the work on the land and in the food growing spaces who needed to share and discuss what their problems were, and genuinely inform solutions. Upon the Board of Governors' approval of the TLNAP,¹⁵ no one was envisioning how to collectively address the divided circumstances that had resulted and gaps in planning now facing Trent's food growing system. The Group Workshops began to be conceptualized three months after my ethics submission. They were viewed as an opportunity to meaningfully advance dialogue/action toward addressing the cleave in Trent's food growing system from how the Trent Lands Committee used—what I later define as—*fait accompli planning* to conduct the TLNAP process.¹⁶

Fortunately, I was able to accommodate the Group Workshops into the participant observation portion of my ethics protocol, but the confines of the approved ethics period in combination with the conflicting and complex nature of circumstances, post-TLNAP approval, presented challenges. Coordinating workshops with the splintered campus groups responsible for activities in Trent's food growing system proved challenging. To fully conduct Stage 1 Visioning Exercise, several requests for an extension had to be submitted to the Research Ethics Board

¹⁵ The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Parts I-III were approved by the Board of Governors February 5, 2021, and Part IV on March 26, 2021.

¹⁶ See Chapter 7 for the description and definition of *fait accompli planning*.

(REB), extending to December of 2021. From outreach to response and conducting Stage 1 Visioning Exercises, the first two student and community groups were completed within one month. However, coordinating Stage 1 with the TSE proved to be more onerous. The TSE workshop took four months to coordinate and, even then, we did not achieve full participation as the Experimental Farm manager declined, one SAFS instructor changed institutions, and no participants responded to choosing a word cloud. As a result, additional nuance and perspectives are likely missing from the findings and Action Learning component of my research.

Furthermore, no additional group discussions were held after the Stage 1 Visioning Exercise findings were circulated for member checking and feedback. Sustaining engagement beyond the initial visioning exercise was not realistic within the approved ethics period. Subsequently, as I uncovered the deeper systemic orientations of Trent's governance structure and approach to land-use planning through my writing process, and the divisiveness between groups cooled down, it may have been easier to conduct a follow up to the visioning workshops and fulfill the reflexive learning component of the PALAR methodology. Revisiting understandings later in the writing phase of the thesis to complete the learning/integration of new ideas in the PALAR process would have been valuable but could not be included in the research without opening another ethics application.

Stage 2 of the Action Learning workshop was to be modeled on Michael Marquardt's method to facilitate a successful Action Learning group (Marquardt, 1999, 2009). After the closure of the research ethics period, I continued to have many informal conversations with the various group members, but I was not allowed to facilitate or record their reflexive observations

in my research. Future research would include the coordination of Stage 2 Action Learning workshops where all groups come together with the most up to date knowledge and collaboratively employ the Common Guiding Principles generated in Stage 1. The objective would be to collectively take action to address priority issues that affect all the groups (e.g., pedagogical development, and/or resource sharing). This in part shows the limitations of my own knowledge/experience as a researcher (a much longer research period would be needed on REB applications), but it also demonstrates the constraints of the ethics periods and rigid institutional structure (2-year funded programs), which equated to a gap in this project. These limitations do not invalidate my PALAR approach and findings. Instead, they point to the need for ongoing studies to further verify or repudiate their validity and highlight potential possibilities for REB procedural reforms.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect first-hand experiences with the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process to produce a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of the subject matter. As Wood (2020) states:

the validity of a PALAR process depends to a large extent on contradictions, tensions and synergies being brought to the surface in the explanation of participants' learning and development and the influence of these contradictions. (p. 155)

Sample questions (for examples, see Appendices [C](#) and [D](#)) were emailed to 10 participants and included a wide range of TLNAP participants such as: Trent faculty, staff, students, and senior administration, members of the Growers Group, and Peterborough/Nogojwanong planners and community members. In total, five interviews were scheduled and conducted over Zoom.

Unfortunately, no interviews were accepted by Trent faculty, staff, or senior administration to share the institutional perspective. Resistance and assertiveness were encountered from one

planner after sending the email request, and one interview participant withdrew after the interview was completed due to possible social and/or professional repercussions. This may point to possible correlations demonstrating how important, contested, divisive, and in some senses risky the TLNAP process was perceived as. As a result, I was not able to document an unabridged account of contradictions, tensions, and synergies in this research. It is important to note that my entry point into this work was through the Growers Group, and this may have influenced these limitations because of my perceived position. My institutional ethnography relies on student and community responses from the interview findings, but this partiality was not an intentional part of my research design (see [Appendix E](#), D3). I also reiterate the constraints of the ethics period and rigid program structure, this was master's level work, and a more comprehensive, pluralistic undertaking may be sought in a lengthier PhD program.

Finally, limitations should be stated about the participatory mapping event. As noted in Chapter 1, part of the purpose of this event was to raise awareness about the unresolved development concerns and map out the biodiversity that had established itself over 15 years of community interaction and care. This also aligned with commitments from critical place inquiry which, as Tuck and McKenzie (2015) state, “Extends beyond considerations of the social to more deeply consider the land itself and its nonhuman inhabitants and characteristics as they determine and manifest place” (p. 19). Although the first commitment to raising awareness about the unresolved developments and mapping out some of the biodiversity was completed, the latter commitments toward a deeper, relational orientation to the more-than-human inhabitants as they manifest place was lacking. The findings largely reflect surface-level observations and additional time (beyond 2 hrs), instruction, and/or subsequent follow up events would be recommended for

future research. Methods such as using “sit spots” (Stapleton & Lynch, 2021) could be employed to foster a deepening of relational experiences for participants where observations come *from* the land itself and not their pre-existing knowledge about it. In this way, participants could practice the ontological re-reversal (Dahlin et al., 2009), as Francis et al. (2015) elaborate, “where lifeworld phenomena are given back their ontological primacy” (p. 79).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter establishes key concepts that are important for readers to know how I approach writing and implementing this thesis, along with tools to apply their own analysis to its content. I draw on: 1) scholarly works that provide a framework for how to conceptualize the public good, 2) scholarly works that document the underpinnings, outcomes, and failures of post-secondary educational institutions to live up to their claims of serving the public good, and 3) the BIAS FREE Framework (Burke & Eichler, 2006; Wolbring, 2023) as an analytic tool to help us understand why and how the public good in 1) and 2) have been undermined in universities in general, and their planning processes in particular.

2.1 The Role of Universities in the Public Sphere

As stated in the methodology chapter, this research project began in response to the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process, which at times was marked by the complete absence of consultation and at other times, wholly inadequate consultation with regards to developments affecting the on-campus food growing system and correlate pedagogy. Koekkoek et al. (2021) bring together the literature on “university-community engagement” and from that work I employ Swaner’s (2007) developmental perspective. Swaner (2007) builds from Etzioni (1995)

and Hoppe (2004) positing that student engagement and learning must encompass the cultivation of citizenship capacities crucial for participatory democracy and developing the needed social responsibilities for the broader communities to which they belong. Westheimer (2015) outlines an appreciable body of work on this topic in his paper, *Teaching for Democratic Action*.

My Participatory Action Research and Action Learning project can be viewed as an epistemic antidote to this larger context and following assemblage of fundamental issues facing post-secondary institutions. As Wood (2020) articulates:

Universities the world over are claiming to be “engaged” institutions whose purpose is to foster positive social change through teaching, research and community engagement (Fitzgerald et al., 2016). And rightly so, since public universities are funded by public funds and therefore should be focussed on generating knowledge for the public good. However, with few exceptions, this argument has not moved past rhetoric. The very differentiation of these core activities tends to encourage a neo-liberal, silo-like model of operation where the bottom-line trumps social impact in most strategic decisions. In reality, current institutional policies and structures tend to mitigate the ideals and benefits of engagement. In addition, the contemporary university still tends to be exclusive and lacks ways to connect with traditionally marginalised groups (Perkins, 2015). (p. 4)

Before proceeding further, I build off a recognition from Polster & Newson (2015) about what “the public”, or community, and “the public interest” and “the public good” entail here. First, there is an acknowledgement that ‘the public’ or community is not homogenous and there is no single path that leads to the public good. There is a recognition of our complex social world and that in some cases, advancing mainstream, public opinion, the ‘what’, could be helpful, or harmful. I draw from Fraser (1990) who advanced this understanding through the ‘multiplicity of publics’ and calls for “a form of public life in which multiple but unequal publics participate” (p. 70), and where post-secondary institutions serve as sites to advance ‘public spheres’ (Ambrozas, 1998; Fraser, 1990; Pusser, 2006). These scholars argue that post-secondary institutions need to

be rendered visible and girded by commitments to comprehensive discursive interactions that, as Fraser (1990) directs us, “narrow the gap in participatory parity between dominant and subordinate groups” (p. 66). Fraser continues, “an adequate conception of the public sphere requires not merely the bracketing, but rather the elimination, of social inequality” (p. 77).

To address this, I employ understandings from Burke & Eichler (2006), and their BIAS FREE Framework (Building an Integrative Analytical System for Recognizing and Eliminating InEquities, BFF), grounding my research within the normative commitments of “a human rights perspective that presupposes equality as an underlying societal value and a commitment to equity as a pathway to achieving equality and ensuring that all people can enjoy their full human rights (United Nations, 1948)” (p. 11). In line with this thinking, what I turn to examine in the context of this work is the ‘how’, by uncovering the process(es) of consultation and participation that move us toward or away from democracy-enhancing approaches to decision making and notions of the public good, from both a human rights perspective, and the understanding of post-secondary institutions as critically important discursive spaces. Like these scholars, I argue how universities have a role to play in advancing comprehensive processes for discursive interaction, and meaningfully informing their own decisions and policies to meet the mandate of their public-serving, educational mission.

2.2 Examining the Landscape of the Public Sphere in Post-secondary Institutions

There is a growing body of literature substantiating how post-secondary institutions are falling short and undermining the public good. A brief look at the many examples includes universities becoming agents of community displacement, benefactors from harmful government

and commercial research, being used as apparatuses to benefit private businesses, and perpetrators of worker casualization and precarious employment, to name a few (Baldwin, 2021; Brownlee, 2015; Dreier, 2013; Hall, 2020; McMillan Cottom, 2017; Newfield, 2016; Norris, 2011; Polster & Newson, 2015). Scholars have also documented the critical link of many universities to, and dishonest earnings derived from, colonialism, slavery, and the displacement of Indigenous peoples (C. P. A. Harvey, 2021; Stein, 2020; Wilder, 2013).

To deepen the understandings of the current challenges relevant to this context, I draw on scholars such as Sears (2003) who use methods of historical sociology to analyze education reform in Ontario. They direct our attention to a problematic foundation underlying our education system, which is the exclusionary [genocidal] practices toward Indigenous peoples and their knowledges, which aimed at forming and orienting citizens to the authority of the Canadian state.¹⁷ Sears (2003) drawing on Connell (1993) writes:

the hegemonic curriculum developed through the state education system comes to define ‘knowledge,’ marginalizing other experiences and ways of knowing the world. This has specific implications for class, gender and ethnic inequality as particular ways of learning and particular kinds of knowledge - most often associated with middle and ruling classes, men and people from particular European backgrounds - acquire official status while others are relegated to the sidelines. (p. 34)

As explored in my methodology chapter, this has profound implications. I reiterate that critical attention must be directed towards our worldviews because such paradigms hold far-reaching implications for how we approach reality itself, what and whose knowledge is valued, and penultimately, what solutions can be generated. The prioritized framing and treatment of land as

¹⁷ Sears (2003) argues that “educational expansion has been driven by the increasing need to incorporate the population into the realm of administration. Schooling produces citizens by habituating students to state administration” (p. 32). This mirrors Dorothy Smith’s ‘relations of ruling’ as discussed in my methodology chapter.

a resource and property versus land as relational, for example, is systemic in Trent's approach to land-use planning and highlighted in the context of my research.

In addition to these early, destructive, and severely limiting underpinnings of knowledge creation in our education system, Sears (2003) points to other past/ongoing socio-economic factors that are relevant to this research.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in England, labour-power was made into a commodity through a long process of struggle that drove peasants off the land, severing direct producers from the means of production (the tools, resources and processes required to transform nature to meet our wants and needs) and depriving them of access to the means of subsistence (the goods and services we want and need to survive). (p. 12)

In combination, these parallel, constraining factors can be viewed to be contributing to the organization of current circumstances at Trent—operating through the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process—where student- and community-led food growing organizations are being displaced from the land by infrastructure developments. Our education system as Sears (2003) argues, “does not prepare students to take power. On the contrary, it prepares them to be ruled” (p. 23). His work details a deepening of these orientations through capitalist restructuring, the logic of neo-liberalism, and lean management techniques that arose from the economic instability of the 1970s. Through the application of lean management techniques in state apparatuses such as public education, Sears (2003) documents how neo-liberal reforms have recast Ontario education and the development of citizens, from that of being oriented toward the state, to that of being oriented toward the market.

The lean state aims to orient the population towards the market, in part by suppressing any non-market alternatives for survival. The emerging social policy of the lean state is to force us onto the market in two ways: through seeking jobs on the labour market, which means selling our capacity to work to employers; and through the purchase of market goods and services to survive.

The program of the lean state also requires education reform. The system of liberal education that developed over the past century focused largely on the development of citizens. Thus, the education reform agenda aims to shift the focus of schools, colleges and universities so that they focus on preparing people for the relations of the market rather than those of citizenship. The logic of the Harris government's agenda has been to develop a more entrepreneurial and consumerist orientation throughout the education system. Education reform is part of the neo-liberal transformation of citizenship. (p. 3)

The underpinnings of these reforms and fundamental changes in post-secondary education have been excavated by other scholars. Norris (2011) highlights a list of scholars who advanced the literature (Bourdieu, 1973; Bowles, 1976; Callahan, 1962; Cremin, 1961; Hyslop-Margison, 2000; Robertson, 1998), with Norris applying a parallel lens looking at education being reoriented toward consumerism, stating “education is profoundly compromised when youth are viewed as consumers and not as future members of a public world, and when education is viewed as an opportunity to secure a new market of consumers rather than a preparation of citizens for public participation” (p. 47). Baldwin (2021) extends the analysis to bring into view large-scale urban impacts from the reorientation toward a market ethos and a consumer-centric education, through corresponding processes of university growth and development.

Urban development is higher education’s latest economic growth strategy. . . . These university developments also reorganize their host cities for new private investments in the bioscience and information-technology industries. . . .

Indeed, urban universities . . . stand as one of the most central yet least examined social forces shaping today’s cities. In today’s knowledge economy, universities have become the new companies, and our major cities serve as their company towns. But unlike Amazon, Microsoft, and other info-tech industries, higher education claims responsibility for our public good. In fact, the presumption that higher education is a public good has for too long distracted critics and urban residents from getting to the heart of the matter: what makes universities good for our cities? We need fewer assumptions and more analysis. (p. 6)

Polster et al. (2015) expand the debate beyond cause-and-effect explanations of ‘the neo-liberal university’ toward the lens of an *evolving process* with an array of factors, which create a negative feedback loop “such as changes in federal and provincial granting council programs, academic reward systems, governance structures, and national and international intellectual property regimes” p. (8). Polster et al. (2015) continue:

In other words, we do not view corporatization as the result of some carefully laid out, unified program of action . . . In our approach, corporatization is understood as arising through actions undertaken by numerous agents with diverse motivations and interests. (p. 8)

[T]ravelling this path has not been inevitable nor has it resulted from random events or capricious decision-making: indeed the changes we have tracked have been leveraged by government policies, by selective funding, and by altering decision-making processes at many levels. . . .

Finally, we want to dispel perhaps the most serious obstacle of all to mounting effective resistance to these changes, namely, the all too common perception that these changes are a *fait accompli*. (pp. 6-7)

The concept of *fait accompli* is a very important observation in the context of this research, yet only a small body of literature examines its process and definition. Altman (2017) examines it in the context of land grabs/territorial appropriations and draws on Schelling (1966) and Snyder & Diesing (1977) to define it: “A *fait accompli* imposes a limited unilateral gain at an adversary’s expense in an attempt to get away with that gain when the adversary chooses to relent rather than escalate in retaliation” (p. 882). It differs from brute force such as violence for direct acquisition, as well as coercion which is the threat of violence or intimidation to bring about surrender. The *fait accompli* seeks to impose a change to the status quo and accomplish unilateral gains without consent. As Altman (2017) writes, “Each *fait accompli* is a calculated risk. Whether it results in a successful gain or escalation depends on whether the challenger has successfully gauged the level of loss the defender will accept” (p. 882). In chapter 7, I apply the

term *fait accompli planning* as a planning process phenomenon that is observable in this research and deserving of more attention in the post-secondary institutional context. For this research, I derive its meaning from Altman's (2017) definition and operationalize its antithesis through PALAR and institutional ethnography, drawing from the work of Polster et al. (2015) when referring to a *fait accompli*:

By this view . . . the corporatization of our universities has been accomplished and there is little realistic hope of stopping its continued advance, much less reversing it. On the contrary, we believe much can be accomplished by intervening into the workings of local institutions and by mobilizing concerned citizens to reform policy directions that governments [and university institutions] have adopted to facilitate corporatization [my addition]. (p. 7)

2.3 Analyzing and Altering the Uneven Social Practices that Shape Our Universities

I adopt a similar stance as Polster et al. (2015) and build from the works of Fraser (1990), Ambrozias (1998), and Pusser (2006) that views any attempt to move beyond simplified cause and effect relations without problematizing and altering the underlying, multidimensional social/governance practices, as misguided and ineffective. Hall (2020) outlines a breadth of work from scholars who have advanced similar notions. He draws on Critical University Studies with various analyses exploring historical models, fractions in academic labour, policy enclosures, and alternatives that seek to restore 'the public university'. As Hall (2020) writes:

The University is an anchor point in any social re-imagination, but it needs to be re-centred away from dominant, neoliberal discourse.

These counter-narratives tend to describe organising principles that desire a better capitalist University, framed by hope, love, care, solidarity and so on. They form a terrain of outrage, *but they tend to lack a deeper, categorical analysis of either the forces or relations of production that discipline and give texture and meaning to the University* [emphasis added]. . . . Moreover, they risk preserving hegemonic imaginaries that are not mindful of intersectional and Indigenous experiences and ways of knowing the world. (p. 837)

A cursory scan of post-secondary campus planning literature reflects a similar dearth in examination of the deeper relational dynamics that shape and imbue Universities (and beyond) with structure, texture, and meaning. The focus is placed on the ‘what’ of ‘town and gown’ relations and ‘anchor institutions’, providing a strong empirical body of literature that verifies and/or problematizes parts of the status quo (Dalton et al., 2018; Fernandez et al., 2022; Harris & Holley, 2016; Norton et al., 2007; Revington & Wray, 2022; Walker & East, 2018), or even provides account of its changes (Clauson & McKnight, 2018), but does not attend to altering ‘how’ uneven social relations are discursively produced and power structures are operationalized. Correlate literature suggests moving toward dialogic practices to improve outcomes (Flecha, 2011; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Pearce & Wood, 2019; C. Taylor & Robinson, 2009; Westheimer, 2015). However, before Trent can move into helpful dialogue, its problematic institutional realities must be made visible. As Taylor & Robinson (2009) write:

Student voice [as well as faculty and staff], in working within the parameters of a consensual, normative dialogue, may not currently have the practical or theoretical tools at its disposal either to explain, or to contend with, the multifarious ways in which power relations work within school decision-making processes. As a consequence, it may find itself implicated in reproducing, rather than unsettling or transforming, the hegemonic-normative practices it sought to contest [my addition]. (p. 169)

To help address this, I draw on literature that examines risk literacy and governance practices both inside and outside of educational settings. Wolbring (2023) advances the BIAS FREE Framework (Burke & Eichler, 2006), an analytic tool designed to identify and attend to the biases that derive from and perpetuate social inequalities through social hierarchies. To ground my analysis and offer readers a rigorous and generative approach to this thesis, I draw in the BIAS FREE Framework (BFF) which provides 19 diagnostic questions developed to alert readers to the presence of biases and their solutions in social hierarchies (see [Appendix E](#)). The

19 questions are divided by type into three categories, which illustrate ‘how’ unhelpful outcomes are enacted in social hierarchies; they are: **(H)** Hierarchy, maintaining an existing hierarchy; **(F)** Failing, failing to examine differences; and **(D)** Double standards, using double standards.

Wolbring (2023) writes:

The BFF benefits risk governance activities as it allows for the unmasking of biases, premises, and positionalities of different actors impacted by science and technology and by revealing differences in risk narratives between different actors and differences in judging risks based on values, ideologies and life experiences of a diversity of people and public perceptions. (p. 80)

I will apply the BIAS FREE Framework questions using their corresponding codes (H: 1-7, D: 1-4, and F: 1-8) to assist readers in deconstructing the various points of tension that emerged within the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process. Thus, as Hall (2020) and others call for, rendering visible a categorical examination of the forces of production that structure, shape, and imbue the University with its scope and meaning. Throughout chapters 3 through 6, and 8, I draw these question codes from [Appendix E](#) into the context to assist readers to reflect on, analyze, and apply this diagnostic tool toward future transformations; redressing unhelpful power asymmetries where similar empirical observations may arise in land-use planning and decision making at Trent University (and beyond). Ultimately, I advance the argument that if the status quo at Trent is left unaddressed, the biases operating within its institutional culture and structures will maintain social hierarchies to the detriment of the public good and put Trent University at cross-purposes with its objects and purposes (Bill Pr24: An Act to Incorporate Trent University, 1963, p. 884).¹⁸

¹⁸ The Trent Act states: “The objects and purposes of the University are, (a) the advancement of learning and the dissemination of knowledge; and (b) the intellectual, social, moral and physical development of its members and the betterment of society” (Bill Pr24: An Act to Incorporate Trent University, 1963, p. 884).

Chapter 3: Research Context - A Brief History of Trent University Lands Planning and Governance

This chapter details a brief history of land-use planning at Trent University. The purpose of recounting this history is to establish overlapping points of tension, themes, and outcomes, alongside potential root causes (see [Appendix E](#)), that have emerged from the principles of campus land-use planning at Trent. During the development and implementation of the TLNAP, The Trent Lands Committee and members of Trent’s senior administration maintained a common claim to be demonstrating leadership through extensive engagement and consultation, design excellence, and emerging best practices in campus land-use planning (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021b, pp. 3–5; Trent University, 2021b, 2021c, 2021d, 2022d; Trent University Board of Governors, 2021b, pp. 2–3). However, in chapters 3 through 6, and 8, I document and examine these claims in detail, both structurally, by drawing conclusions from specific governance structures configured prior to and implemented during the TLNAP, and ethnographically, by aggregating participant experiences with the TLNAP and previous land-use planning processes. I argue ultimately that Trent’s approach to land use planning is critically inadequate for a public institution, and moreover, as an institution for post-secondary education. The documented tensions and outcomes are wide-reaching, negatively affecting teaching, learning, and research, the future implementation of the TLNAP, and at the most fundamental level, the objects and purposes of the University (Bill Pr24: An Act to Incorporate Trent University, 1963, p. 884).

3.1 Outlining the Scope for the Context of this Research

For the sake of scope and brevity, this research included a cursory examination of Trent’s lands planning history. My primary analysis was situated in a study of documents both internal and external to Trent between 2002 and 2023. I didn’t examine Trent’s early establishment and land-use history detailing its impacts on the Nassau Mills community and controversial land expropriations that have been documented by others (Drummond, 2010; McLean, 2000). I also resisted the temptation to dive headlong into the settler-colonial context of where Trent emerged (Blair, 2008; Williams, 2018), but which may offer a pathway to a cogent factor or explanation for the repeated outcomes observed within this thesis. The prioritized framing of land as resource and property (officeforurbanism, 2006) versus land as relational (Kimmerer, 2013; Simpson, 2017, pp. 160–161) has remained systematic in Trent’s governance structure throughout the span of this project (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, p. 190).¹⁹

I also refrained from extrapolating on the 2012/13 Trent Lands Plan process (Trent University, 2013f). There was a lack of detailed accounts and research information available beyond Peterborough Examiner articles (inaccessible behind paywalls, and many links have now been taken down) (Examiner Staff, 2012; McCormick, 2012, 2013; Peterborough Examiner, 2012a, 2012b; Peterborough This Week, 2013) and Trent’s finalized documents (Trent University, n.d.-c, n.d.-b, 2012, 2013b, 2013d, 2013a, 2013c, 2013e). Noteworthy though, Trent appeared to improve its data transparency during the 2013 Trent Lands Plan process by

¹⁹ The TLNAP states the overall responsibility for Trent lands falls under the Board of Governor’s Finance and Property Committee. Curbing my enthusiasm for the topic, I leave the reader with encouragement to explore contemporary research in the field of neuroscience. Iain McGilchrist’s (2019) work on the divided brain may provide the most functional theory as to what is happening, why, and how from our inborn ability to comprehend a more holistic picture, the broader phenomena of colonization can change.

publishing participants' consultation event notes (Trent University, 2012, 2013b, 2013a).

However, such detailed transparency and data dissemination was short lived and did not continue in the TLNAP process.²⁰ And although I don't detail the period just prior to this at the turn of the 2000s, future researchers may also find what came to be known amongst campus and community members as the 'Bonnie Patterson era' and the Build 2000 program, an exceptionally turbulent, disturbing, and revealing period of change in Trent's governance and land-use planning (Bourette, 2001; Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2000; Motluk & Wright, 2003; Nelson, n.d.; OurTrent, 2004; "Proposed Change, Change ... and Debate: Chronicle of an Institution Grappling with Change," n.d.; Theall, 2001).

3.2 Comparing Processes Between the 2006 Endowment Lands Plan and 2021 Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan

More presciently, the revival and focus on Trent's mid 2000s lands-planning history provided documented context that revealed strategies continuing in the present-day Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process. I begin my analysis in part, from where OurTrent—a campus and community group concerned with transparency and accountability at Trent—left off in 2006 (OurTrent, 2003). Critical accounts were almost lost and, if it weren't for web archives, underlying understandings that are part of Trent's land-use planning history would be erased. To enhance scholarship and take measure of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan, readers need to evaluate a more nuanced history and evolution of the TLNAP beyond the official institutional narrative, and the "Trent Lands Plan Timeline" offered by Trent University (Trent University, n.d.-d).

²⁰ Detailed in Chapter 6, section 6.1.

Reading through a detailed account of the 2006 Endowment Lands Plan process (OurTrent, 2006), striking similarities between its consultation process and what is documented in this thesis about the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process emerge. It is clear when viewing the phased structure of the Endowment Lands Plan process (I, II, III, and IV), the TLNAP process followed the same format (officeforurbanism & CB Richard Ellis, n.d.-b). Their methods were also consistent; the 2006 stakeholder meetings and public open houses were rebranded in 2019 as stakeholder sessions, campus and community pop ups, community input sessions, and town hall. The main difference between the two engagement methods was the introduction of the Social PinPoint online tool in 2019, a brief online survey in 2020,²¹ and the increase in quantity of campus and community pop ups/engagements for the TLNAP (officeforurbanism & CB Richard Ellis, n.d.-b; Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020, p. 40; *Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 2: Engagement Summary Report*, 2020, p. 4). In both cases, draft plan documents were released October 13 with impracticable feedback windows of approximately two weeks, demonstrating the first overlapping points of tension and theme of a hurried pace and pressure to act (Trent University, 2005, 2020f). Both feedback processes were later extended to the first week of January, but each were contested by campus and community members stating that December exam periods and holiday breaks were problematic for meaningful engagement with the draft plans, and more time was needed. In the case of the 2006 process, an additional (disingenuous, as documented by OurTrent) two weeks were provided for feedback after the campus and community had raised their concerns (OurTrent, 2006). Comparatively, no extension was granted after campus and community members/organizations

²¹ These methods presumably reflect in part, the advancement of, and public familiarity with online tools.

submitted requests for an extension during the same period in the TLNAP process (see [Appendix G](#)).

Readers can apply the BIAS FREE Framework to analyze the above outcomes and problematize potential root causes (see [Appendix E](#), H2, H3, and D2). Both processes used a “what you told us”, or “what we heard” approach to reporting and including feedback in draft plans, but with no resolution mechanisms for outstanding concerns (officeforurbanism & CB Richard Ellis, n.d.-a; *Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 3: Engagement Summary Report*, 2021). Amidst much contestation (OurTrent, 2006; see [Appendix G](#)), Trent’s senior leadership claimed to have followed an “extensive” consultation and community engagement process at the time of approval for each planning process (Trent University, 2006, 2021c, p. 9) (see [Appendix E](#), H1, H2, F3, D2, D4, and D5.)

A well-articulated submission to Trent administration by alumnus Derrick McIntosh (2006a, 2006b), was reported by Arthur Newspaper during the 2006 planning process. It highlighted strategies of passing over of academic expertise and the use of governance structures and power that undermined oversight and input. The draft 2006 Endowment Lands Plan (Part IV) reintroduced the 1990 idea for a Trent Real Estate Corporation (Trent University Board of Governors, 1990, n. Appendix B) with the proposed formation of ‘An Arms-length Trent University Development Corporation’, said to create:

the impression of an entity that has the authority to make decisions and get ‘deals done’ with private sector thinking and practices that are respectful of institutional objectives, as outlined in the Guiding Principles.

And projected to remove:

the ‘multiple interest party’ approach to decision-making that so often stagnates opportunities. (officeforurbanism, n.d., p. 151)

Despite multiple interest parties²² being referenced as the so-often-cause for stagnation (see [Appendix E](#), H4), such rhetoric appears baseless when comparing the draft 2006 Recommended Priority Action Plan (officeforurbanism, n.d., pp. 159–160) and on-the-ground context in May 2023. By 2023, Trent has not acted on 2006 plans for its priority parcels 1G, 1A, 3A and 1D (officeforurbanism, 2006, p. 78), there shows to be delayed developments in 4A,²³ lingering approvals in 2C and 2D (p. 78),²⁴ and only one completion in 1C (p. 78).²⁵ No strong evidence suggests these parcels were unduly delayed by multiple interests. Rather, evidenced delays in Trent’s development plans showed them to be from Trent’s senior leadership’s failure to secure tenants (Johnston-Lindsay, 2023), or matter-of-fact processes being applied to ecologically significant areas on Trent lands, such as Provincial Policy requirements.²⁶

Trent leadership refrained from publishing its 2006 draft Part IV Implementation Strategies which concealed this important, historical land-use planning context for study and analysis. Although the 2006 draft Part IV Implementation Strategies didn’t go to the Board of Governors for approval (OurTrent, 2006), nor did its real estate corporation come to fruition (Trent University Task Force on Endowment Lands Management and Governance, 2007), the objective to remove multiple interest groups and input in Trent’s land-use decision making was accomplished in 2017 with the establishment of the Trent Lands Committee.²⁷ Such strategies

²² In a Trent specific context, this could be inferred to mean Senate and/or Trent’s academic faculty, students, staff, and community that are affected by the development decisions.

²³ Trent’s Cleantech Commons project.

²⁴ Trent’s Seniors Village project. Worrisome findings detailed in Chapter 6, section 6.2.

²⁵ Trent’s Water Street student residences.

²⁶ Detailed in Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.

²⁷ Detailed in Chapter 6, section 6.3.

documented in 2006 and the recurrent subordination of academic/community integrity and expertise to private-sector thinking and revenue-driven development priorities have shown to be consistent in the formation and execution of the TLNAP (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017; Trent University Task Force on Endowment Lands Management and Governance, 2007).

As OurTrent (2006) wrote: “Don’t be fooled! Trent’s plan to create the Trent University Development Corporation to manage its endowment lands is still very much alive”. This warning rings across nearly two decades and foreshadows the events detailed in this thesis, as well as provides an impetus for future researchers to remain attentive (see Chapter 6). [Figure 1](#) below summarizes key research output resulting from this project — a timeline of the TLNAP as developed by the Growers Group. I present this here for two reasons. First, to provide an overview of the TLNAP process and what is detailed in chapters 4 through 6 and 8. Second, to demonstrate the extent to which the Growers Group, alongside the wider campus and community were, and attempted to be, involved in the land planning process. For the most part, our efforts were rebuffed, ignored, or distorted — though it remains crucially important to document these efforts for posterity. Similar to what is observed in this thesis, readers comparing the 2006 accounts (D. McIntosh, 2006a, 2006b; OurTrent, 2006) can identify themes around a lack of transparency, an absence of or suboptimal consultation, a hurried pace and pressure to act, undervaluing of campus and community ideas and engagement, misleading communications and/or the erasure or omission of context, and simplified framings that threaten destruction to the natural environment. Essentially, these are pervasive themes that share substantive examples over a lengthy period, and therefore the trajectory of these approaches to planning at Trent are not isolated or made in simple error but are patterned approaches that require critical attention.

In the proceeding chapters, I waste no time entering the complexity of Trent's textual realities and social hierarchies that are driven by an assemblage of interests, positionalities, and choices, seeking to reveal how its order and approach to land-use planning is put together, and aiming to make it visible for all participants. Specifically, this research documents and examines Trent's assertions of public and campus consultation and participation in its University land planning processes, alongside its latest guiding principles that claim to be serving notions of the public good, such as: learning and discovery; environmental resilience and integrity; economic resilience, leadership, and innovation; and social resilience, community, and inclusivity (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, pp. 35–37). Through PALAR and institutional ethnography, I will exhibit how the application of these methodologies provides concrete entry points for researchers and participants from various intersections of community and the institution to engage and act toward eliminating detrimental biases and address these previously, unexamined risks to the public good.

Figure 1: Growers Group Timeline of Engagements



Growers Group TLNAP Engagement Timeline

January 2020

January 24, 2020

Received meeting invite for February 18 with Trent Lands Committee

January 31, 2020

Prepared talking points for February 4 Campus and Community Session and February 18 Presentation

Phase 2

Key Engagements from February 2020 to March 2020

February 4, 2020

Phase 2 of TLNAP launched. Attended Campus and Community Session

February 18, 2020

Growers Group Presentation to Trent Lands Committee

March 4, 2020

Received meeting invite for March 25 with Trent University President and Dean of Science

March 9, 2020

Meeting rescheduled to April 7, 2020

March 13, 2020

COVID-19 Shutdown

April 2020 to May 2020

April 1, 2020

Growers Group submitted COVID-19 response letter and safety protocols to access campus

April & May, 2020

Created campus access calendar and worked with TSE to meet risk management requirements

April & May, 2020

No communication on meeting with President and Dean of Science
No communication from Trent Lands Committee

May 27, 2020

Growers Group informed about the relocation of Experimental Farm

June 2020

June 1, 2020

Growers Group walked/mapped the land in proximity to TVG for relocation of TMG, Apiary, and Experimental Farm

June 8, 2020

Emailed TSE to re-engage meeting with President and Dean of Science. Intent to reconnect with Trent Lands Committee

June 22, 2020

Presentation to President and Dean of Science. Instructed to collaborate on Farm Plan to be incorporated in TLNAP

June 23, 2020

Drafted map of core location for TVG, TMG, Apiary and Experimental Farm. Submitted to TSE

July 2020 to August 2020

July 3, 2020

Farm Plan meeting with TSE

July 27, 2020

Received first draft of Farm Plan

July 30 & 31, 2020

Walked/mapped additional land to be included in Farm Plan.

Governance issue raised

August 5, 2020

Submitted alternate Cleantech Commons road (diversion of 40 metres) to be included in Farm Plan

August 24, 2020

Trent Lands Committee meeting with TSE and Growers Group

August 31, 2020

Advised Farm Plan will need to be modified to receive support from Admin

Growers Group TLNAP Engagement Timeline

September 2020 to October 2020

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| September 24 & 25, 2020 No September meeting could be arranged with TSE. Growers Group met to discuss next steps, preferences, and re-engagement with TSE | September 26, 2020 TSE advised choice of location beyond our collective control September 29, 2020 Growers Group received revised draft of Farm Plan | October 2, 2020 Met with TSE to discuss revised draft of Farm Plan | October 5, 2020 Growers Group accepted revised draft of Farm Plan with conditional questions |
|---|---|--|--|

Phase 3

Key Engagements from October 2020

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| October 13, 2020 TLNAP I, II, III drafts and supporting documents released for public feedback. Deadline: November 1 | October 15 to 20, 2020 Growers Group posted for public feedback regarding displacement and relocation of food growing spaces | October 23, 2020 TLNAP deadline extended to January 4 October 27 & 29, 2020 Growers Group began drafting Open Letter | October 30, 2020 Growers Group members attended Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee (NASAC) meeting |
|--|--|---|---|

November 2020

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| November 2, 2020 Met with Trent Lands Committee and TSE to discuss concerns about TLNAP process and farm location(s) | November 12, 22, & 25, 2020 Finalized Open Letter and shared internally for feedback. Support to publish withdrawn November 18, 2020 Attended TLNAP Virtual Town Hall | November 22, 2020 TCSA released survey to measure student engagement in TLNAP process | November 27, 2020 Growers Group members attended Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee (NASAC) meeting |
|--|--|---|--|

December 2020

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| December 3, 2020 Revised Open Letter with Seasoned Spoon December 7, 2020 Open Letter published and submitted to Trent Lands Committee | December 10, 2020 TCSA and TGSA submitted request for extension to Phase 3 feedback deadline | December 11, 2020 Growers Group members attended Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee (NASAC) meeting | December 13, 2020 Indigenous Elders and Trent students hosted public conference called Honouring the Land of the Sacred Elements |
|---|--|--|--|

December 2020 to January 2021

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| December 15, 24, 2020 & Jan 4, 6, 7, 2021 Students and Community submitted detailed letters with concerns about TLNAP | December 17, 2020 Trent Lands Committee denied TCSA and TGSA request for extension to Phase 3 feedback deadline | December 22, 2020 Trent Lands Committee notified Growers Group/Spoon of additional information required by week of January 4, 2021 | January 3, 2021 TCSA published survey results and submitted an appeal to extend deadline for Phase 3 |
|---|---|--|--|

Growers Group TLNAP Engagement Timeline

January 2021 to February 2021

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| January 8, 2021 Growers Group submitted response to meet the Trent Lands Committee's Phase 3 consultation requirement | January 15, 2021 Trent Lands Committee responded to Growers Group misstating core location request was new and substantial | January 20, 2021 TGSA released survey to measure graduate student engagement in TLNAP process | February 3, 2021 TGSA published survey results and submitted an appeal to extend deadline for Phase 3 |
|---|--|---|---|

February 2021

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| February 4, 2021 Students and Community published concerns about TLNAP and its process with recommendations | February 5, 2021 Three deputations delivered to Board of Governors objecting the approval of TLNAP I, II, III | February 5, 2021 Board of Governors approved TLNAP I, II, III with no internal debate, abstentions, or objections |
|---|---|---|

Phase 4

Key Engagements from February 2021 to March 2021

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| February 22, 2021 TLNAP IV released for public feedback. Deadline: March 5 | February 26, 2021 Representatives from student and community organizations submitted request for extension to Phase 4 deadline | March 1, 2021 TLNAP Part IV deadline extended to March 10 but not communicated to public | March 2, 5, 9, 24, & 26, 2021 Students and Community submitted unresolved concerns with TLNAP consultations and the Plan's content |
|---|--|--|--|

March 2021

| | |
|--|---|
| March 26, 2021 One deputation delivered to Board of Governors objecting approval of TLNAP IV without fundamental revisions | March 26, 2021 Board of Governors approved TLNAP IV with no internal debate, abstentions, or objections |
|--|---|

See Post-TLNAP Approval Engagement Below

Growers Group TLNAP Engagement Timeline

Post-
TLNAP
Approval

Key Engagements After TLNAP Approval

April 29, 2021

Growers Group emailed the Trent Lands Committee to clarify effects of TLNAP on TVG, TMG, and Apiary

May 12, 2021

Trent Lands Committee emailed response, encouraging Growers Group to engage in planning conversations apart from the boundaries of the TVG

July 22, 2021

Trent Lands Committee asked for meeting and tour of the TVG, Apiary, and proposed core location

August 18, 2021

Trent Lands Committee met with campus and community members for site tour and information gathering

October 27, 2021

Community member informed by VP External Relations & Advancement that Trent has no plans for road to develop through the TVG

December 8, 14, & 22 2021

TVG Coordinator and Growers Group informed about design plans for Grounds Operations facility. TVG MOU Requested

February 14, March 25, April 7, June 23, & June 28, 2022

TVG Coordinator emailed requests and responses to sign now-expired MOU with Trent

April 5, 2022

Grounds Operations facility presented to the Trent Apiary leadership as a “future public works yard”, conflating it with City driven priorities

September 9, 2022

TVG Coordinator informed about modified site vision for Grounds Operations and Science North residence parking lots

October 27, 2022

Trent Lands Committee obfuscated documented project timelines and TLNAP Development Process. Deferred engagement to unknown, future point in time

January 24, 2023

TVG Steering Committee meeting. Coordinator informed committee that no MOU had been signed yet

April 21, 2023

TVG Steering Committee informed about Trent’s draft updates to the TVG MOU, which included punitive language regarding its expansion

July 4, 2023

Campus and Community members respond to punitive MOU terms by submitting a boundary update request letter

Chapter 4: The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Process - Phases 1 and 2

In this chapter, I detail the first two phases of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process as a campus participant and researcher. I follow the chronology of campus and community consultation events and activities to reveal how Trent's approach to land-use planning was put together. By applying commitments from a transformative paradigm, which focuses on issues of power, the enhancement of social justice, and potential role for research to link to action and social change (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2009, 2010), I document the textual realities that are driven by an assemblage of choices over time. By doing so, this chapter makes visible how Trent's social hierarchies are enacted in land-use planning, aiming to empower future participants to broaden dialogues and work towards eliminating detrimental biases that generate unexamined risks to the public good.

4.1 Phase 1: February 2019 to June 2019 - Campus and Community Consultation Activities and Events

Trent's President emailed initial communications about Phase 1 of the process in February 2019 to inform students about the TLNAP, its vision of fostering a "sustainable and inspiring campus community, thoughtfully integrating the natural and built environments, with vibrant spaces to learn, innovate, be active and live" (personal communication, February 7, 2019), along with input opportunities. The President's email was not effective in spurring my engagement or raising my awareness of the TLNAP process. I initially found the President's email marked as unread in 2022 when reviewing all TLNAP correspondences. A review of Trent University's official Instagram and Facebook pages showed 0 of 37, and 5 of 158 (3%) of posts between February 1, 2019, to May 31, 2019, were promoting the TLNAP. In the context of this

research, my engagements in the TLNAP process were initially prompted by the Trent Vegetable Gardens Coordinator on March 21, 2019, when they put a call out to their distribution list for feedback to the TLNAP's Social PinPoint tool (LURA Consulting, 2019a). Before my participation in the TLNAP process, Trent had already completed four input sessions. Trent's Phase 1 background document reported that 60 participants attended a Public Session on March 5, 2019, 45 for the Campus Community Session on March 6, and six for the Student Groups Session on March 11 (Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020, p. 40). The Trent Lands Committee did not report the numbers from the Indigenous Sharing Meeting on March 14 (Trent University, 2019b). Personal communications with an attendee noted that participants in the Indigenous Sharing Meeting were irate with Trent's previous development actions²⁸ and students criticized Trent's hiring of an Indigenous consultant from another Treaty territory for the TLNAP process. They did not feel this represented genuine efforts to consult on the Trent lands. A future study may consider looking at whether the suggestion of cultural competency training for the Board of Governors and senior management was followed up on (Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020, p. 35).

Three occurrences of Community Pop-Up stations were advertised for various locations on campus and one Pop-Up was held at the downtown Peterborough Regional Farmers' Market (PRFM) (Trent University, 2019d, p. 3). Participants could put stickers and comments beside pre-defined land-use goals and/or marked areas of importance on a map, similar to the Social PinPoint tool. The goals activity asked, "Which potential goals should advise our Nature Areas Stewardship?" These goals were later shown to have come from the 2002 Nature Areas

²⁸ Detailed in Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.

Stewardship Plan (Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020, p. 45). When I participated in the Gzowski College Pop-Up on March 25, I did not think the activity with its statements and yes/no format was particularly useful for generating feedback. To me, the questions appeared as self-evident and the activity unproductive for stimulating new information. It is of interest to note the number of recorded responses for each goal was ≤ 35 in contrast with the total of 280 reported participants (Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020, pp. 40, 45). It is only conjecture but by the engagement numbers, other participants may have shared similar experience with this activity. Peterborough Examiner photos from the PRFM Pop-Up showed little-to-no feedback in the comments section (Skarstedt, 2019) (see Matt Dutry and Community Trent Lands Plan Research Collection (23-015-13-08)).²⁹

The Social PinPoint/mapping activity prompted community members to establish points on a map to indicate areas of campus that were important to them. PinPoint and map options included: Favourite Places, Improving Trails and Accessibility, Ideas for Environmental Enhancement, Areas of Concern, Significant Locations for Commemoration, Interpretation and Indigenous Knowledge, and Research and Learning Areas. Of note for the context of this research was the density of Social PinPoint responses in proximity to the Trent Vegetable Gardens location (see Matt Dutry and Community Trent Lands Plan Research Collection (23-015-13-05)). Notably, clusters or densities of location data from the Pop-Up stations were not recorded in the Phase 1 background report. In a subsequent planning meeting with the Trent

²⁹ Original photos appear to be taken down after the Peterborough Examiner made some changes to their webpage. They were also available on MyKawartha.com which redirects to the Examiner now. See Trent Archives collection.

Lands Committee there was indication that feedback from this activity may not have been thoroughly reviewed.³⁰

Feedback for Phase 1 closed on May 24, 2019, and the Trent Lands Committee stated that they would report back with their findings in the fall of 2019 (Trent University, 2019e, p. 1). Taking measure of the quantitative and qualitative context above, the results beg the question, to what extent was Trent's senior leadership genuinely interested in gathering meaningful feedback for the TLNAP? The findings appear to illustrate a suboptimal approach to consultation (see [Appendix E](#), F3, D2). However, indicating a possible realization of the weakness in their approach, when fall arrived, the Trent Lands Committee stated that they were extending the completion date to ensure enough time for meaningful community engagement and to coordinate their plans with City of Peterborough initiatives (Trent University, 2019f, p. 2).³¹ Thus, future opportunities for engagement would be shared in January 2020.

4.2 Phase 1: March 2019 to February 2020 - Food Growing System Consultation Experiences and Context

In early September 2019, a Trent School of Environment (TSE) staff member and leadership from Trent's various food growing sites had gathered to discuss a collective application for the Local Food Infrastructure Fund (LFIF) (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, n.d.). We envisioned the funding (our eligible stream, up to \$50,000) could support the construction of an outdoor pavilion and kitchen space for teaching and learning. When the

³⁰ The Social PinPoint map contained feedback detailing an 'Area of Concern' where herbicides and vegetation cutting apply because of the Hydro One right of way (LURA Consulting, 2019b). Yet, in August 2020 the Trent Lands Committee proposed the Hydro Corridor as a potential farm location for the TSE and Growers Group (see Figure 6).

³¹ A measure of this claim for coordinating with City initiatives is in Appendix F, see "Even more disconcerting".

logistics of the application began to take shape, discussions around the location drew our attention back to the TLNAP process underway. How would the TLNAP developments affect the food growing sites? Would our ideas and efforts to submit a LFIF application be negated if they were not integrated with the TLNAP process?

Figure 2: On-Campus Food Growing Sites



(Radcliffe, 2023a)

Shortly after initiating these conversations, managers and staff from the Trent Market Garden (TMG) and TSE encountered chisel ploughing taking place on the Experimental Farm lands.

Figure 3: Trent University Experimental Farm Lands



Note. Photos of lands being ploughed without consultation on September 20, 2019. Left photo is looking East, and right photo is looking West (Dutry, 2019).

The TMG managers found out these actions were not communicated to the Trent School of Environment who were responsible for the oversight of the Experimental Farm. TSE staff later informed the TMG managers that it was an archeological assessment that was commissioned by senior administration. Was this part of the stage 1 & 2 archeological studies for the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan (Trent University, 2019e, p. 2)? Without transparency or consultation, such decisions operating during the formation of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan were seen as problematic. If this could happen to the Trent School of Environment, what could result at the Trent Vegetable Gardens (TVG), where it was said that a road development was being planned? Earlier in March of 2019, the TVG Coordinator contacted Trent's Sustainability

Coordinator to inquire about a roadway shown to impact the TVG location. The roadway in question was from a map shared with the TVG Coordinator by the TSE's Experimental Farm Manager (*Roadway Affecting Trent Vegetable Gardens*, 2019). Shortly thereafter, the Associate VP of Facilities Management responded to the TVG Coordinator alluding to future impacts from a Grounds Operation relocation (see [Appendix E](#), H2, H3). The email correspondence March 31, 2019, stated:

Thanks for reaching out to [REDACTED] about the roadway issue with the proposed Ground Operation relocation.

As per engineering to-date, there would be some impact on you guys. That being said, the construction would now appear to be an issue in Summer 2020, at the earliest. As you may have heard, the City has delayed their project where the current Grounds Operation resides, so we intend to stay put until we have to move. Additionally, we wish to hold off until the Trent Lands Plan process culminates to ensure that we are in concert with its principles.

So, nothing imminent, but we will keep you in the loop. We will work with you to plan and mitigate when/if the time comes. Good luck with this summers operations.
(forwarded personal communication, December 9, 2022)

However, the roadway in question was not part of the Grounds Operation relocation. The road the TVG Coordinator was inquiring about was part of the 2017 Cleantech Commons Master Plan (Brook McIlroy & DM Wills, 2017, p. 7). The Associate VP of Facilities Management's conflation of this, whether intentional or not, obscured further questioning about the Grounds Operation relocation (see [Appendix E](#), F3). This continued until design plans were first circulated to campus and community members in December 2021.³² In both cases, these plans were not communicated to the current or previous TVG Coordinators at the time of their development or approval. The failure to consult with organizational leaders, coupled with a lack

³² In the case of the Grounds Operation relocation, plans were not released to the student and community groups it would impact until nine months after the 2019-2021 Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process concluded (detailed in Chapter 8).

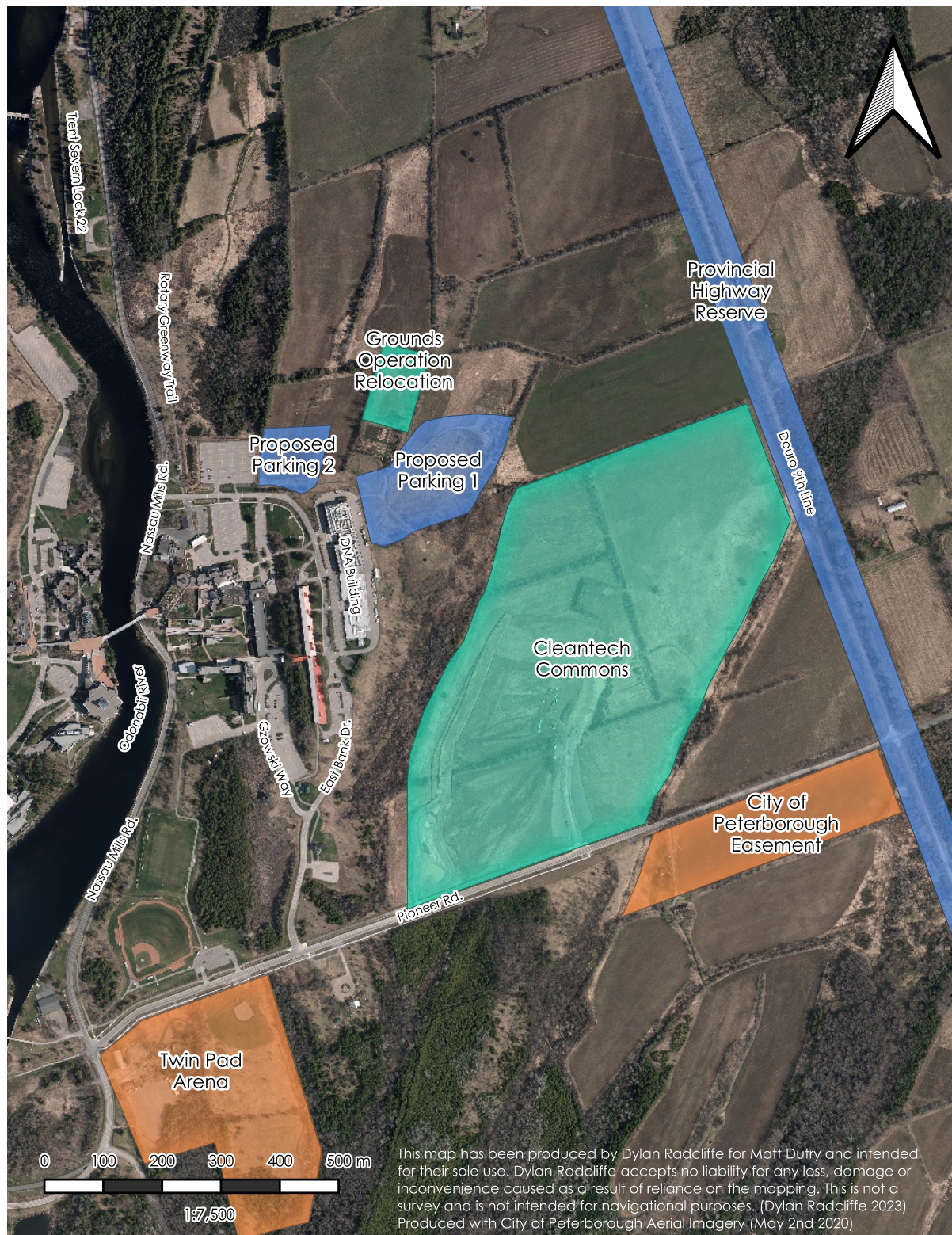
of awareness about the Grounds Operation relocation, became evident in an interview with the TVG Coordinator:

TVG Coordinator: So I was first alerted to the Nature Areas Plan in 2018 when I started in this Coordinator role. And unfortunately, I learned that before I was hired, the year before I believe, there was a plan released having to do with the Cleantech Commons development that had been approved and was already set in motion. So I learned that there had been decisions made about development of the area sort of behind DNA and the far East side of Trent's campus and the land that they own. So specifically like a road that would connect to the rear end of Cleantech Commons was slated to run right through the garden that I just got hired at. So it was pretty alarming to hear and I heard, it was very clear to me that the TVG specifically had not been consulted at all.

Researcher: So the previous Coordinator had no, nothing of that nature to pass along to you. Like, there was no consultation that they had mentioned or anything like that?

TVG Coordinator: No, they were not aware. And I spoke to them after and asked whether or not they were contacted or if they knew about this plan. And they didn't, it was a big surprise to them. So that was a disappointment for sure. (personal communication, September 10, 2021)

Figure 4: Map of Proposed Development Projects Affecting Campus and Community Members on Trent University East Bank Lands 2015 to 2023



(Radcliffe, 2023b)

4.2.1 Twin-pad Arena and Cleantech Commons Consultation Context

Was this lack of consultation a pattern being observed or a one-off coincidence?

Unfortunately, it was not a one-off coincidence. Elder Doug Williams-ban from the Curve Lake First Nation led a ceremony when Trent cut down significant cedar trees in 2017 without consultation, during the initial development of Trent's Research and Innovation Park (later rebranded Cleantech Commons) (Kylie, La Barge, et al., 2017, p. 4; Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020, p. 3; Trent University, 2017). In 2015, Trent also approved a decision to provide land for a twin-pad arena development (Peterborough Examiner, 2015; Trent University, 2015) that would displace part of a wetland without evaluation by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Curve Lake First Nation, Indigenous Elders, Trent students, and community members opposed the decision to develop over the unevaluated wetland (G. Davis, 2018; Hayward-Haines, 2018; Kapyrka, 2018; Stewart, 2018) and delegations were made to the City of Peterborough (City of Peterborough, 2017, pp. 2–3). Trent officially signed off on transferring the land in question to the City in 2018 (Trent University, 2019a, p. 27), amid the rigorous campus and community opposition, and City decision makers continued to press onward even when Provincial funding was cut from the development project later that year (Kovach, 2018; Seabrooke, 2018, pp. 1–3). The contested project at Trent was only overturned after the wetlands in question received the Provincially Significant Wetland designation in 2019 (Gibson, 2019; Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry & D.M. Wills Associates Limited, 2019).

In the TLNAP Phase 1 background report, Trent would attempt to position itself as having little-to-no culpability in these matters, stating, “Although Trent was not the lead on these projects, the public perception is that Trent University is responsible, in some way, given these

lands are considered to be Trent Lands” (Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020, p. 34). However, when reviewing the 2016 Trent Research and Innovation Park presentation (J. Davis et al., 2016), and timing of when Trent signed the 2018 Development Agreement to transfer the land where the arena would be developed (Trent University, 2019a, p. 27), it becomes difficult to argue that Trent had no leading role in both issues. Statements in the 2018 Development Agreement show to conflict with Trent’s public communications from the time, which claimed the arena land transfer took place in 2015 and by 2017 the project was proceeding on City land (Trent University, 2018c, p. 14, 2018d).

These early issues with the planning process led a group of concerned students to more directly engage in the TLNAP process and inspired the direction of my thesis work. Between October 18 and November 15, 2019, student leaders and TSE members met to discuss the TLNAP process, build capacity to work together and figure out a way to get to the planning and discussions table with the Trent Lands Committee. The collective, later called the Growers Group, was an informal group that formed out of a concern for this process. It was fluid in its membership and later distinctions were made by the Trent Lands Committee in the TLNAP that this was distinct from the TSE, composed of concerned students, community members, and leaders from the various campus food growing projects. The collective was mobilized around several questions, including the location and continuation of the food growing sites; were we going to be forced to move (i.e., displaced by development)? Where was Trent’s senior administration proposing our projects be moved to? How could we ensure the permanent protection of these spaces to facilitate long term growth? This included considerations for infrastructure, ecological integrity, the sustainability of established organizations, and continued

integration of pedagogical development. How do we quantify the value these projects and spaces generate for students, student learning, the community, and Trent's campus? Who did we need to speak to, to make our case for the food growing spaces to remain close to the campus core and accessible?

A stakeholder list was created to help discern who our points of contact in the TLNAP process were and what other individuals or organizations might be involved as allies. TSE staff submitted a request for more information to the Manager of Community Relations and University Events who was the liaison for the Trent Lands Committee. The Trent Lands Committee identified goals for the TLNAP that included: student learning and employment, research collaborations, financial sustainability of the University, contributing to a vibrant campus community, and responding to community needs.

Although we hadn't received consultation on development plans to date, our group agreed by consensus that a positive and propositional approach was needed to meaningfully engage with the process. We created a value proposition based on these parameters that quantified all work from 2019 that the various food growing projects were contributing to Trent's campus and its surrounding community. By mid-November we had aggregated all data (i.e., total food lbs. grown, employment & volunteer hours, revenue generated, food donated to community, linked curriculum, and hosted events) between the TVG, TMG, and Trent Apiary, and began to assemble metrics for an infographic and presentation. Additional data (i.e., total seed production, research grants, and industry partnerships) was later collected from the Nourish Seed Saving Project and TSE.

It should be noted that the First Peoples House of Learning Medicine Gardens was also on campus and run by the First Peoples House of Learning (FPHL). It provided Indigenous students with multiple growing plots and a medicine wheel garden for native plant medicines and foods. Outreach was made to FPHL, and members from the Indigenous Studies department and Indigenous community during Phase 1 of the TLNAP. However, their location next to the Gzowski building was not going to be affected by the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan and no further connections were made. A Notice of Request to Consult was also submitted to the Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers Council during Phase 2 of the TLNAP (June 2020) but did not receive a reply.

Meeting requests were submitted to the Trent Lands Committee but responses stalled, and by mid-January, left us wondering what other action we may need to take to get to the discussion table. In a sudden turn of communication, a meeting was arranged for our group February 18, 2020.³³ The surprising change left me curious. Had interest arisen from a December 16, 2019, meeting between a private investor, Trent, and municipal food system actors,³⁴ or had our time simply come to take part in the consultation process? From our vantage point, it appeared that Trent was taking steps toward consultation and inclusion.

³³ The meeting was arranged during reading week when many students leave. No student input was sought for establishing initial meeting dates and key members of Growers Group could not attend because of this. Student engagement was an afterthought, and the meeting was planned to proceed with the TSE regardless.

³⁴ This meeting was documented as “an environment and planning focus group comprising local authorities, among others” (*Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 2: Engagement Summary Report*, 2020, p. 4). However, communications from an attendee noted a private investor and municipal food system actors (personal communication, December 2019).

4.3 Phase 2: February 2020 to October 2020 - Growers Group and Trent School of Environment Engagements in the TLNAP Process

Phase 2 commenced on February 4, 2020, and was the Growers Group's first involvement in the TLNAP process. We attended the Campus and Community Session in the Great Hall, Champlain College where panels were on display from Phase 1 (Nbisiing Consulting Inc. et al., 2020) and the Trent Lands Committee gave a presentation (Trent University et al., 2020). Our members' previously submitted concerns were not represented in the Phase 1 findings. There was no mention of the TVG, Experimental Farm, TMG, or Apiary sites. Rather, displayed on their panel under "Phase 1: What We Heard" was a single statement that made no connection to the ongoing work and experiential learning happening on Trent lands; the poster read: "expand programs relating to urban agriculture and farm-to-table" (Nbisiing Consulting Inc. et al., 2020, p. 4). This did not reflect the site-specific concerns (signage, avoid development and disturbance, commemoration) that were documented in the Phase 1 background report (Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020, pp. 42–44). Again, our team was faced with little-to-no evidence to demonstrate the ongoing planning process was meaningfully engaging with the data on hand. As the leader for the Trent Apiary commented in an interview:

Yeah, so I think I was initially involved because of my leadership role at the Trent Apiary. Which is one of the groups with physical facilities that were kind of put in a tenuous position because of the Trent Land and Nature Areas Plan.

The Apiary doesn't really feature on the maps in the Lands Plan, or at least the initial ones. And so that was always a little concerning especially like that I guess that gave the impression that, and this was the case for all the groups, the groups, the gardens. Just that if we weren't on the map then maybe we weren't expected to be there once the developments began. (personal communication, September 21, 2021)

The session allowed us to communicate comments to members from the Trent Lands Committee, but the moderated format made it difficult to broaden the conversation. Campus and

community members were limited to answering specific questions on a written feedback form³⁵ and groups were instructed to present their answers. There was no stage for an open question and answer period which didn't enable participants to address issues at hand, such as the road development through the TVG (see [Appendix E](#), H2, F3, D2, D4).

Two weeks later, the Growers Group alongside members from the TSE met with the Trent Lands Committee. During this meeting we gave a presentation about our operations, our keys to growth, and the social, economic, and environmental value we bring to the Trent campus and community through our collaborative work. The presentation was well received, and we agreed to meet again to negotiate the best possible location for Trent's food growing operations in relation with the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan.

Due to the existential uncertainty around both the food growing sites and continuation of SAFS programming at the time, we thought it would be advantageous to present as part of our vision and keys to growth, the location be encompassed under the Trent School of Environment. This positioning was twofold: 1) it supported the TSE in preserving the SAFS program, and 2) it would avoid these projects being put under a different department or management where relationships were not already established. However, this may have obfuscated important operational distinctions (detailed at section 4.3.1 'Three Decision Making Bodies') between the land-based work being done by student leadership and the curriculum offerings overseen by the TSE for the SAFS program. They were mostly independent but synergistic in their functioning (e.g. the TSE benefitted from tying SAFS curriculum to the student-led experiential learning

³⁵ See the Campus and Community Session questions documented in italics (*Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 2: Engagement Summary Report*, 2020, pp. 8–11).

sites and the TVG, TMG, and Apiary benefited from recruitment of students enrolled in the SAFS program). This act of solidarity from the students may have inadvertently reinforced Trent's hierarchical structure and the attribution of power to the TSE was left unaddressed in conversations between the TSE and student growers. The Trent Lands Committee proceeded to conflate and assert that all decision-making power was in the hands of the TSE for the remainder of the TLNAP process (see [Appendix E](#), H2, F1, F4, D4).

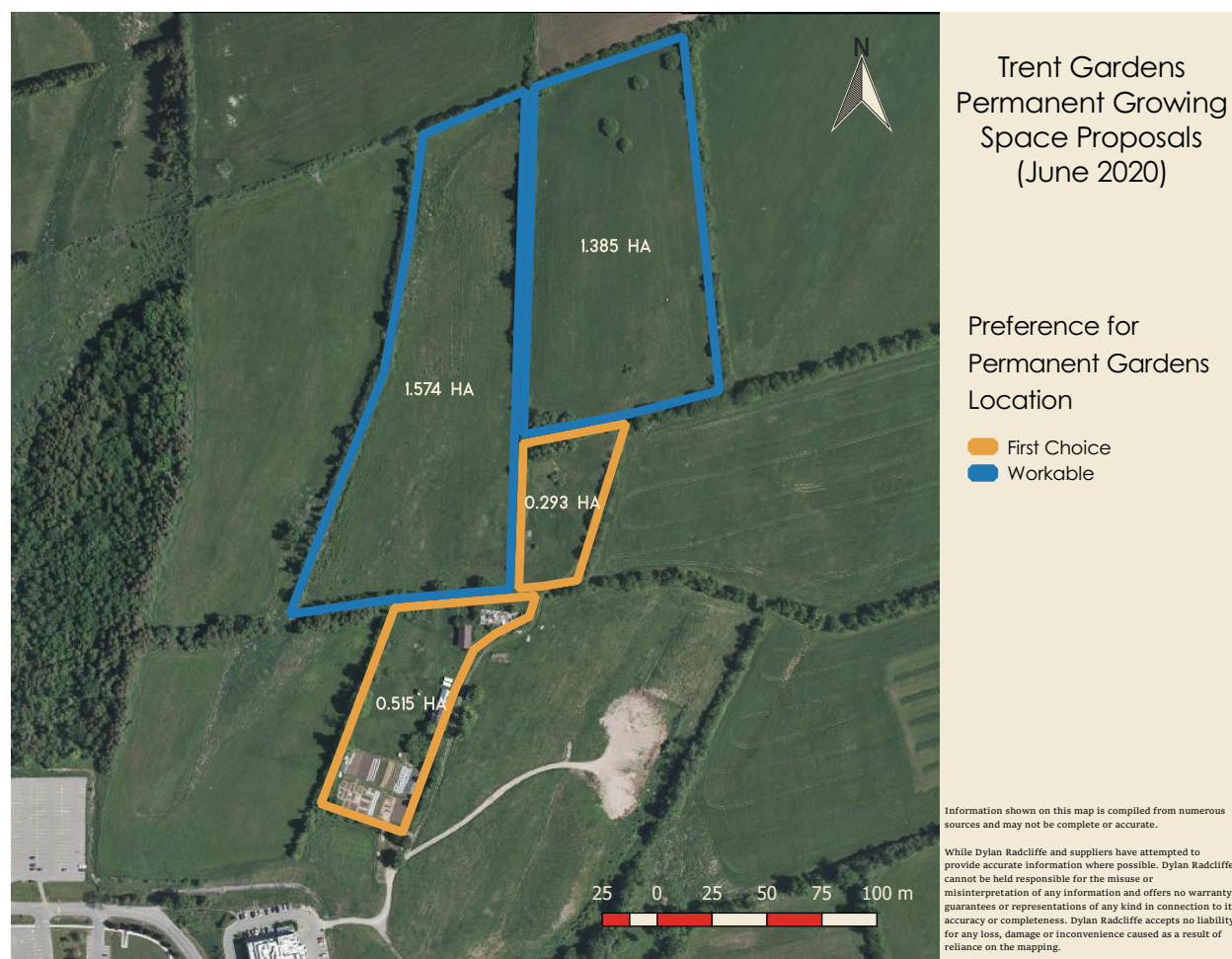
On March 4, 2020 we received a meeting invite to present our work to the President and Dean of Science, which subsequently changed to April 7, 2020 to accommodate the President's schedule (see [Appendix E](#), D1).³⁶ However, due to COVID-19, a global pandemic that shut down most public interactions for many months, including Trent University starting on March 13, 2020, our presentation to the administration and involvement with the Trent Lands Committee was interrupted. The Growers Group spent the months of April and May 2020 drafting pandemic response protocols to comply with Trent's risk management requirements so that operations could continue during the growing season. We were successful and obtained clearance with the help of the TSE and were able to continue operations. However, in late May we learned that there was a proposal to move the Experimental Farm to Pioneer Rd. and Douro Ninth Line due to a potential highway corridor designated by the Ministry of Transport (MTO) (Papadacos, 2022a, pp. 10–12, 2022b). This proposal meant that the Trent Market Garden and Trent Apiary, whose leadership was part of the Growers Group, would also be displaced, as they were situated within

³⁶ Notable was the continued pattern of meetings being arranged without student and in this case, SAFS instructor input. A key member of the SAFS program could not attend the initial meeting because of this. Meetings were planned to proceed and required others to accommodate regardless of their scheduling needs.

the Experimental Farm lands. Planning discussions had continued without our involvement, suggesting the absence of consultation was being repeated once again (see [Appendix E](#), F3, D2).

The potential relocation to Pioneer Rd. represented a break from our shared vision and a key to growth presented to the Trent Lands Committee in February of having an on-campus, walkable, and accessible location. On June 1, 2020, the Growers Group walked the land surrounding the TVG and began assembling an alternative proposal.

Figure 5: Trent Gardens Permanent Growing Space Proposal by Growers Group



(Radcliffe, 2020b)

In effort to regain our seat at the negotiations table, we requested to re-engage and deliver our presentation to the President. We met with the President on June 22, 2020³⁷ and they directed the TSE and Growers Group to assemble a Farm Plan document for the Trent Lands Committee to be incorporated into the TLNAP process. The instruction from the Dean of Science during this conversation was to “really dream big” (personal communication, June 22, 2020), and they suggested an experimental farm committee be struck. The President echoed the statements and suggested the Dean of Science, Director of the TSE, and VP of Research and Innovation be part of the visioning. However, this committee (although later mentioned in the Farm Plan) never came to full fruition.

A Farm Plan meeting was coordinated with the TSE for July 3, 2020. The relocation to Pioneer Rd. represented a departure from earlier conversations and consultations that involved the Growers Group and needed to be discussed. In preparation for the meeting, coordination efforts were made to address the sensitive nature of the topic. My coordination email June 26, 2020, stated:

I think for this first meeting we focus on bringing information to the table without being tied to a particular outcome. This meeting will be a success if information and ideas are laid on the table in a positive and open way - nothing is a 'bad' option. Let's see clearly what we're all working with. Some food for thought:

- What are your respective project needs (land/space, tools, structures, access to utilities, administrative resources)?
- What does that look like for you?
- Why is it important to have things configured in this way? (Remember: we're not defending this point, just tabling the information)

³⁷ A similar pattern emerged in the scheduling of this meeting. A seeming improvement was made when the meeting was scheduled based on TSE and student feedback and availability. However, the Provost was only available at another date and time and the whole meeting shifted to accommodate their schedule. The Provost did not attend the meeting in the end (see [Appendix E](#), D1).

Hopefully this is a helpful start and feel free to add in any other discussion points. (personal communication, June 26, 2020)

In hindsight, the attribution of power to the TSE that was unaddressed in conversations between the TSE and student leaders may have begun to have an impact on the planning process. As evidenced below, the Growers Group was viewed as secondary, or even disposable, at the planning table even though they oversaw most of the physical operations and experiential learning at the Trent Vegetable Gardens, the Trent Market Garden, and Trent Apiary (see [Appendix E](#), H2, F2, D2). The response to my email from a TSE faculty member stated:

I just wanted to see if we might add something to the agenda. Part of what the TSE needs to do, in conversation with senior admin, is put together a broad shared vision on pretty short notice. A key element of this vision would be thinking about a consolidated farm as a model for teaching and learning about small-scale sustainable agriculture, while of course maintaining, and ideally growing and diversifying, production. So, as part of the meeting, we were hoping to talk about how (or if) the various student groups see themselves in this vision. Could that be a thing we might add to the discussion? (personal communication, June 29, 2020)

Another notable point of tension in the TSE Faculty's response, was that the planning process put pressure on the TSE to create a shared vision on short notice. This hurried pace and pressure to act applied through the TLNAP process threatened to splinter the collective efforts that formed in earlier Phases 1 and 2 of engagement. The uncertainty surrounding a collective response and outcome was articulated at this stage in the planning process. My email response June 30, 2020, stated:

Sounds good. Thank you for taking the time to connect and clarify things over the phone today. I think it's important for folks to know that we are not on an immediate deadline but that there is an accelerated push for our discussions to inform the Lands Plan Committee's masterplan. And with the many moving parts, this process will be moving quickly to meet the finalization set to launch in the fall.

I think this gives us a fairly clear objective: our (collective tbd) voice needs to be in that masterplan. (personal communication, June 30, 2020)

The planning process with its emphasis on speed, threatened to disrupt previous relationship building.

Fortunately, an initial Farm Plan was carefully drafted by TSE members with input from the Growers Group and included our proposed location and mapping for a core farm Northeast of Trent's DNA building (Trent University School of the Environment, 2020a, p. 5), and TSE proposed satellite parcels in the Nature Areas on Pioneer Rd. and Douro Ninth Line (p. 6). The Farm Plan also included an alternate road development map to divert the Cleantech Commons road 40 metres south of its proposed crossing over the Trent Vegetable Gardens (p. 7). This plan would leave the Trent Vegetable Gardens intact and allow for the movement and growth of the Experimental Farm, Trent Apiary and Trent Market Garden into areas that would not be affected by the MTO corridor. During the drafting of the Farm Plan, the Growers Group raised important questions about governance. My email correspondence July 31, 2020, stated:

Our growers group had a great meeting yesterday. We walked the land where you had mentioned additional asks may be made. I've attached the map with the orange and red blocks³⁸ being of primary interest for the TVG/TMG/Apiary. We would be happy to detail other indicators on these maps such as slopes, lowlands and flats for future discussions on feasibility. We think that sloped areas should be put on contour and that would be where the orchard trees get planted.

Questions/Comments:

1) Governance structure: What is the decision making process going to look like for these diversification and expansion projects? Will the student groups be considered equals at the decision making table? What process enables negotiations to happen if students want to make changes or if the decisions being made do not reflect the student groups' needs? How are final decisions made? (personal communication, July 31, 2020)

³⁸ As depicted in the email, an additional red outlined block was added in a rough sketch (*Additional Asks Rough Draft [Map]*, 2020). In the final iteration, the addition to the map was updated in orange (see South-East parcel) (Radcliffe, 2020a).

Unfortunately, these questions were left unaddressed and may have had profound consequences for the remainder of this project and beyond. The following communication highlights how later discussions that informed the modification of the Farm Plan were restricted to the TSE. Although student feedback was sought, the hierarchical structures of power severed student presence from the planning table (see [Appendix E](#), H2, F1, F2, F3, D1, D2). The email correspondence from the Director of the TSE, September 26, 2020, stated:

We believe that it is not the case of whether there will be a Farm - the question is more where will it be and what will it look like? . . . as to what it will look like relates to our Trent Farm plan. The administration has made it very clear that this needs to be curriculum driven and come from the TSE (implications for staffing/resourcing etc.). . . .

[TSE members]³⁹ have put together a revised version of draft Trent Farm Plan (with comments from others) that has a chance of being supported by the administration. I want to go through it one more time and then I think we can share it with you (student groups) for feedback. The TSE feels that it is critical to get student feedback so it will not go to the Trent Lands Committee/Board before the student groups have commented. We will do our best to accommodate all student wishes. (personal communication, September 26, 2020)

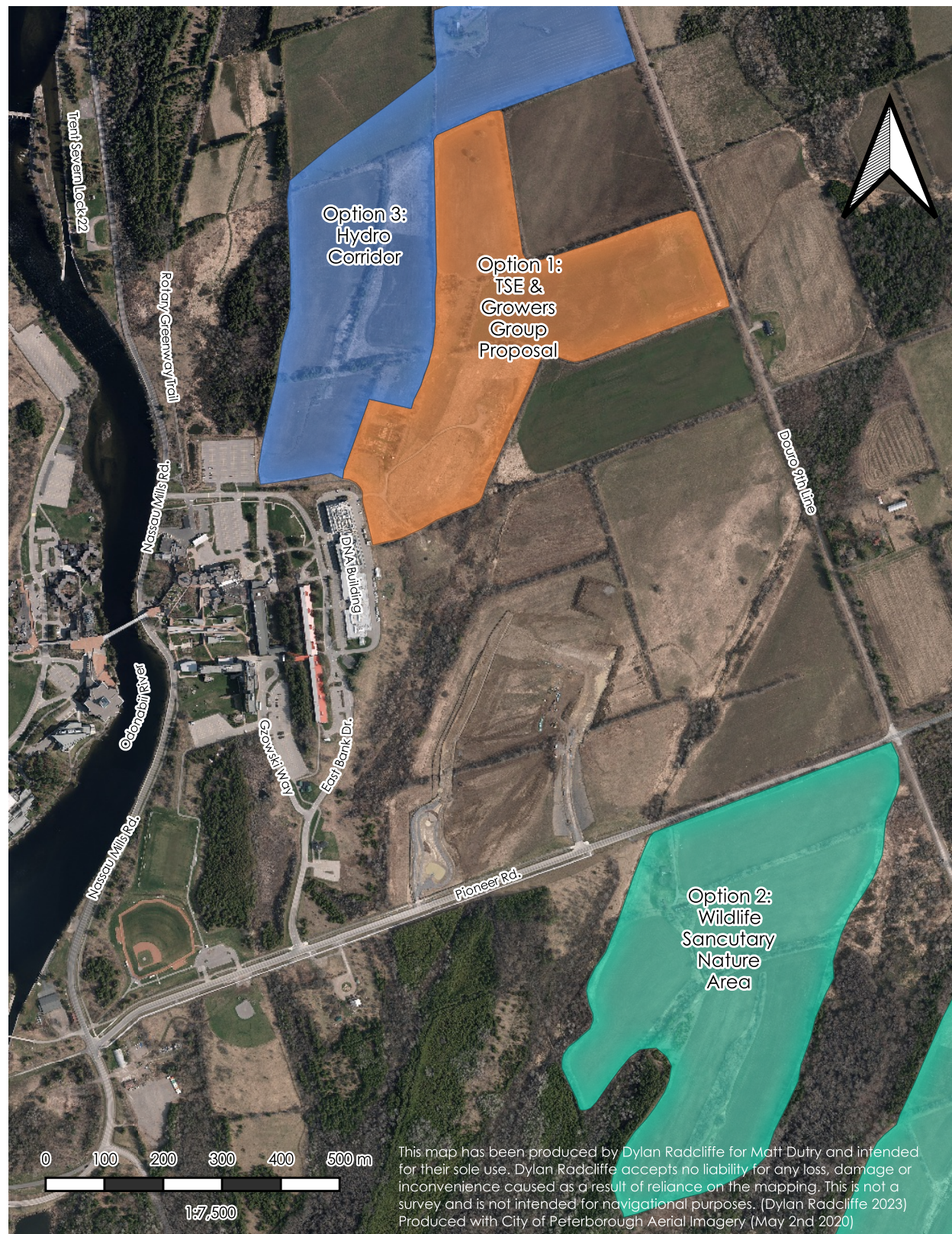
Because students were excluded in the departmental discussions, it wasn't entirely clear what resource pressures the TSE was facing from administration related to their curriculum offerings. Personal communications from a TSE member at the time (September 25, 2020) highlighted retirements, staffing shortages, and uncertainty around the number of new hires and allocations for the TSE.

³⁹ I used square brackets to denote that names/pronouns were redacted, and position titles inserted. This is done to assist readers and researchers in understanding the structural relationships at Trent, while maintaining as much confidentiality as possible. It also better illustrates the relationships to, and/or positions of power in, Trent's system of governance at the time.

On August 24, 2020, we met with the Trent Lands Committee for a second time.⁴⁰ They presented us with three location options: 1) The core farm area proposed in the Farm Plan, Northeast of Trent's DNA building; 2) the proposed satellite parcels in the Nature Areas on Pioneer Rd. and Douro Ninth Line; or, 3) the Hydro One corridor (previously shown to be an 'Area of Concern', see footnote 30).

⁴⁰ In my fieldnotes, I noted the repeated pattern of meetings being arranged in a command-and-control fashion without student input. The date and time were set, and students were initially invited through the TSE, not by the Trent Lands Committee (see [Appendix E](#), H2, D1).

Figure 6: The Trent Lands Committee's Proposed Farm Location Options



(Radcliffe, 2023d)

4.3.1 Three Decision Making Bodies in Discussion for Trent's Campus Food Growing System

I think it is important to step back here and gather perspective on the participants at this meeting, as well as the assemblage of interests, responsibilities, and structural arrangements of power that were operating within this TLNAP planning discussion. What information can we take stock of to discern the level of involvement or understanding related to the food growing sites that informed the parties' decision(s)? What groups were at the decision-making table, what motivated them to be there, and how was power administered/balanced in the planning process to assist in making well informed decisions?

4.3.1.i Trent Lands Committee

The Trent Lands Committee was overseeing the development of the TLNAP and were responsible for oversight and guidance of any development projects (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, p. 190). We did not have this information at the time, but the committee was formed in 2017 by the Endowment Lands Governance Task Force. The goal of the Task Force was to advance the Trent Lands Master Plan and to meet the Board's strategic goal to "accelerate development of Trent's endowment lands (in particular the Trent Research and Innovation Park, and possibly residential developments and/or the Sustainable Village), including the necessary governance structures" (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, p. 1). The new Trent Lands Committee was identified as *not* having a majority of its members serving from the Board of Governors (BOG) (p. 1-2).⁴¹ Our meeting included a third-party consultant from SvN Architects + Planners Inc. who was hired through the RFP process for the TLNAP (Trent University, 2018b), Facilities Management personnel (Associate VP Facilities Management and their reporting Project

⁴¹ This required a by-law change at the time and is examined in Chapter 6, section 6.3.1.

Manager), and Trent administrators (VP External Relations & Advancement and their reporting Manager of Community Relations and University Events). We did not know who else was on this committee beyond those in attendance. One indication that was found in an earlier BOG report stated, “The Trent Lands Development Committee will be focused on development of the endowment lands . . . with a membership comprised of volunteer real estate, land developer and legal experts” (Kylie, La Barge, et al., 2017, p. 5). However, unlike Trent’s administrative and academic committees (Trent University, 2020b),⁴² there was no transparency in membership for Board committees, thereby identifying who was overseeing and participating in their decisions was not possible (see [Appendix E](#), D1). Further, in the Trent Lands Committee’s Terms of Reference (Trent University Board of Governors, 2019e, p. 3) they were stipulated to be an In-Camera committee⁴³ which makes its discussions private, and decisions remain undisclosed to anyone that has not been appointed to the committee.

In remark to the terms of reference that outlined the committee’s scope of work, composition, and authority, the Governors responsible for its establishment claimed: “This governance model allows more oversight by the Board of Governors than more arms-length approaches at other Universities” (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, p. 4). Given the many examples of harmful uses of power and detrimental university-community outcomes (Baldwin, 2021; Brownlee, 2015; Dreier, 2013; Hall, 2020; C. P. A. Harvey, 2021; McMillan Cottom, 2017; Newfield, 2016; Norris, 2011; Polster & Newson, 2015; Stein, 2020; Wilder, 2013), including

⁴² In 2022, the administrative and academic committee membership list was removed from public access. This may signal to future Jarislowsky researchers (Trent University, 2022h) to ask critical questions about the direction and evolution of transparency and governance practices at Trent University, a public institution. Researchers can also draw on Critical University Studies from Hall (2020) and Newfield (2016) to help broaden their understanding on the topic.

⁴³ Examined in Chapter 6, section 6.3.1 at “Another crucial observation to make”.

Trent-specific examples (Bourette, 2001; Drummond, 2010; Gibson, 2019; D. McIntosh, 2006a, 2006b; McLean, 2000; Motluk & Wright, 2003; OurTrent, 2004, 2006), it is unnerving that this closed and non-transparent structure was the choice model of governance. How might this structure with its goal of accelerated development impact the formation of the Trent Lands Master Plan (Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan) said to be “an important opportunity to re-engage the community to express their hopes, concerns and ideas for the Trent Lands” (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, p. 4)?

4.3.1.ii Trent School of Environment

The Trent School of Environment had faculty and staff in attendance representing the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (SAFS) degree program. Their group included a soil microbiologist, a forest and water ecosystem scientist, a political ecologist and food system scholar, an animal and environmental ethics scholar, and the Experimental Farm manager who specialized in cash crop and cattle farming. In Trent’s management hierarchy, this group of people oversaw the classroom curriculum for the SAFS program and management of the Experimental Farm land (see [Figure 2](#)). From the farm’s inception in 2014, research trials for crop and soil sciences had been intermittently conducted by faculty, graduate, and undergraduate honours students. Student groups also operated the TMG and Apiary social enterprises at this location. In the Ontario Provincial government’s new Strategic Mandate Agreement (Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities & Trent University, 2020, p. 6), there were inducements (in the form of significant increases in funding) for enhanced focus on experiential learning. Accordingly, the TSE was looking to secure a permanent site for field programming to support and extend their experiential learning opportunities within the SAFS program (Trent University

School of the Environment, n.d.). However, the extent to which this list was actualized by SAFS programming was unclear. During my brief time in the SAFS program, I noticed that on-campus experiential learning opportunities piggybacked off non-TSE initiatives, such as the student- and community-led TVG and TMG (detailed below), and metrics were tracked by student and community leadership from these projects, not by the department. TSE staff and faculty supported these projects peripherally though, through navigating Facilities Management relationships, structural repairs, operating large machinery, facilitating Trent payroll (in the case of the TMG), and overall risk management permissions to operate on the Experimental Farm (and broader Trent lands during the COVID-19 pandemic).

4.3.1.iii Growers Group

The Growers Group were represented by student and community managers who oversaw the operations of the Trent Vegetable Gardens, the Trent Market Garden, and Trent Apiary. The scope of their responsibilities was wide ranging. The Trent Vegetable Gardens (Trent Vegetable Gardens, n.d.) managed a rooftop garden on the Environmental Science Building and a larger field garden situated behind the DNA building. From 2006 onward, the TVG operated a farm-to-table model with the Seasoned Spoon Café (Seasoned Spoon Café, n.d.), where food grown at the TVG was turned into meals to be sold, and fresh vegetables were given to student volunteers and community food organizations. The TVG Coordinator provided students food growing experience as well as employment during the summer months. The field garden also hosted community garden plots where members from the Peterborough Community Medicine Gardens, BIPOC Collective, Trent staff, students, alumni, and other community members grew food and plant medicines. The Trent Market Garden was run by the Sustainable Agriculture and Food

Systems Society (SAFSS) (Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems Society, n.d.), a student-led levy group, that also offered growing experience and summer employment. They maintained a 1-acre plot in the Experimental Farm that focused on growing food to be sold at the Peterborough Regional Farmers' Market. The student managers oversaw all operations, from business planning, budgeting, administration and hiring, to greenhouse seeding, field planting, harvesting, transportation logistics and direct market sales. The Trent Apiary (Trent Apiary, n.d.) was also located in the Experimental Farm area. They were an entirely volunteer built student club that provided campus and community members hands-on experience with all aspects of honeybee care, from maintaining hives, to processing honey, and learning about the many facets of beeswax, pollen, propolis, royal jelly, and honeybees' relationships with pollinator plants. Almost everything (with exception of operating large machinery) related to food growing in these spaces, was taken on by these groups and their leadership.

It came as a surprise then, when meeting with the Trent Lands Committee for this second time in August 2020, that option 1 (our proposed core farm location) was quickly dismissed in discussions. A seeming preference for option 2 (moving to the Nature Areas on Pioneer Rd. and Douro Ninth Line) was expressed by the Trent Lands Committee and followed in conversation by TSE members with little-to-no hesitation. The food growing projects were long-standing and successful projects. Relocating these operations was no small undertaking. In addition, it would require students to walk ~25 minutes (minimum, one way) to the new location, which left serious questions about the feasibility between classes or short breaks in student schedules (see [Appendix E](#), H3, F1, F2, F3, F4, D2, D4). What were the logics behind the quick dismissal of option 1 and apparent preference for another location?

We were informed by the Trent Lands Committee that two roads would eventually bisect this space and that future development was likely to occur in this area. We knew about the Cleantech Commons road, but the second road development was new information to us, and no further details were shared about additional developments. The Trent Lands Committee and TSE members moved forward in the conversation without soliciting questions or concerns, leaving the Growers Group at a loss for words. The pace at which the conversation progressed left us feeling that we didn't have a genuine voice at the table. One substantial gap in understanding the factors behind the relocation conversation surfaced nine months after the TLNAP was finalized. In December of 2021, the TVG Coordinator would receive an update from Facilities Management showing a site design to construct the Grounds Operation Facility on land overlapping where the TVG resided. This development was not detailed in any of the 2019-2021 TLNAP meetings, process, or final documents. Yet, in contrast of this information, it was later found in several Board of Governor's agendas that stated it would be included in the TLNAP dialogue and final recommendations (Trent University Board of Governors, 2019a, pp. 49–50, 2019c, pp. 18–19, 2019d, pp. 15–16). The details of this present a compelling case of fait accompli planning, which I define in Chapter 7, section 7.1, and expand on the particulars of this case in Chapter 8.

The Trent Lands Committee framed the August 24, 2020 meeting around a compromise between permanency or proximity. This fragmented our Farm Plan proposal. Option 1 would be closest to the campus core and accessible to students whereas option 2 or 3 would secure permanency. However, neither of these factors nor the Trent Lands Committee's scenarios were

nuanced enough to consider the social and ecological implications tied into the planning discussion. The simplified framing did not allow for the complexity and risks associated with relocating these projects, or possible alternatives, to be discussed. An alternative solution of a Green Academic land designation (University of British Columbia, 2015, p. 11) was previously suggested by a TSE member based on the University of British Columbia's campus farm model and would have offered both permanency and proximity in alignment with the Farm Plan proposal. However, this solution had not been evaluated by the Trent Lands Committee and we were not aware if they ever followed up with the recommendation (see [Appendix E](#), H3, F2, F3, D2, D4). Remarkably, Trent's administration had used road developments as justification for proceeding with preferred plans during their 2006 Endowment Lands Plan process as well, while simultaneously rejecting a proposed alternative Green zone proposal (OurTrent, 2005).

In hindsight, it would become clear to us that the Trent Lands Committee was not motivated to make a more informed decision on the matter. Their preference to relocate was in preparation for the Cleantech Commons road and Grounds Operation Facility developments, both of which were designed without meaningful consultation, and now apparently, accommodation of public interests. This put the burden on the Growers Group and TSE (and future students, staff, and community) to work through any consequences that this planning process posed. To make headway on the relocation, the Trent Lands Committee offered to excavate the soil for us (*Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 3: Engagement Summary Report*, 2021, p. 16) (see 4.3.2 Future Opportunities) seemingly not appreciating just how destructive this proposal was. This lack of basic understanding of soil health and functioning was further demonstrated in the final TLNAP with statements like: "Thoughtfully establish the Trent

Farm to offer a hub that recycles biological nutrients to regenerate and capture the value of organic materials at each stage of decomposition, and similarly restores, repairs, reuses, refurbishes, and recycles nutrients that do not decompose” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, p. 76). This simplified framing, as though complex, living soil relationships can be treated akin to a recycling project, is deplorable. In the planning discussions, the Trent Lands Committee was giving little-to-no consideration to how disruptions to the well-established ecology and social framework that sustain the functioning of these systems, projects, and curriculum, put both the land, and the groups and SAFS programming that were tied to it, at risk (see [Appendix E](#), H3, H5, F1, F2, F3, D2 D4). As leadership from the Trent Apiary commented:

I often got the impression that administration and physical resource folks felt as though the gardens and the projects could literally just be picked up and moved. And it was just a matter of logistics to do so. And that there was like this sense of frustration that we were hemming and hawing because we didn't want to do the logistical move. But I think to us and this might not have ever translated, but it wasn't about the move being logistically difficult. It was that the projects wouldn't be the same thing if they were moved. And the way they exist now is predicated on like a 15 year history of like slow construction by many hands. And like there's value to the place and the project and the people doing it. And all the things. And you can't just move it and it will be the same thing. (personal communication, September 21, 2021)

We knew that the TSE needed to secure a permanent location for SAFS programming, so it made sense that with no major physical operations in the area, a relocation elsewhere to avoid development could be reasoned on their end. We saw a clear preference was expressed for option 2 by the other meeting members, however, this represented a continued departure from our earlier planning efforts with the TSE. The Growers Group didn't feel that we had the information necessary to make an informed decision and our opinions were not solicited, leaving us feeling as though decisions were being made beyond our ability to influence them (see [Appendix E](#), F2, F3). By all appearances, the Trent Lands Committee's reasoning was led by their development

plans. The Trent School of Environment's reasoning was led by the promise of a supported and permanent location for SAFS programming outside of the boundaries of development (or so they thought, come 2022 this would change).⁴⁴ However, neither of these groups had resources or immediate livelihoods tied into the succession of the current food growing projects on campus. The Trent Lands Committee and TSE needs could be met in hypothetical projections of the future. The complexity of these circumstances was reiterated in my interview with the TVG Coordinator:

TVG Coordinator: I think that the underlying issue is a mismatch of values.

Researcher: What would some of those values be?

TVG Coordinator: Well, with the case of the TVG it's a community-based project that's very, it's a levy funded group, so it's heavily based in students, and what students want and need from their campus community. And there's various groups that are involved in that, in maintaining that space that have all happened. That have all sprung up organically. And that have involved a tremendous amount of work and care and attention from students and community members over time. And whereas Trent is really concerned with sort of sweeping plans and long term visions. It doesn't always translate to these sort of small community based groups that are quite focused on meeting the immediate needs of their members and of the community at large.

It's like farming in general is such a land-based practice, and you have to be so in tune with the world around you, and the weather and the creatures that you coexist with. This method of farming anyway is very sort of micro level. . . .

But I think Trent is more concerned in these sweeping decisions that will affect the institution for decades to come. So it's hard for them to sort of slow down and take a look at what's happening on the ground. . . . I think Trent is very locked into that academic calendar. And their fiscal year and how, I don't know, you know, those larger trends over time and how can Trent be successful in that sort of macro worldview.

Whereas I'm really concerned about like, you know, darn my spinach isn't germinating. How am I going to drop such and such off at One Roof, if you know, the beetles are eating it all? It's just a very, like we're on different schedules, we've got different values, we've got different ways of looking at the world. And so, when we come together and sit at the same table it's like we're speaking different languages, you know?

⁴⁴ A substantial discrepancy about the Trent Farm location arose in the finalized TLNAP after it was approved by the Board of Governors. Detailed at "However, when the Trent Lands Committee finalized the TLNAP" in section 4.3.2.

Researcher: That's really, really well put and yeah, sounds like you're dealing more with the concrete [present] and Trent is dealing more with the abstract [future]. [my additions]

TVG Coordinator: Yes, yeah definitely. (personal communication, September 10, 2021)

The Growers Group were not explicitly told that we had to decide about moving the food growing operations at this meeting; it was noted that six weeks remained before a final decision was to be made. However, we felt that the preference toward option 2 reflected a perfunctory decision being made to assist in aligning with the October deadline for finalizing the TLNAP.

Equal to or perhaps even more influential than the planning logics documented in this research, was how power was administered in the TLNAP process. We were meeting with the Trent Lands Committee and fully participating in the TLNAP process. Was it making a difference? Evidence in our email communications with the Director of the TSE at the time, make plain the imbalance of power. The Director of the TSE stated:

Just a heads up that based on feedback from the President we will have to modify the plan to have any chance of support from the administration. The timing is not great with the start of term looming but hopefully we can chat soon. (personal communication, August 31, 2020)

Why was the President providing feedback to the TSE about the Farm Plan rather than the Trent Lands Committee? In our June 22, 2020, meeting, the President had directed us to submit our plan to the Trent Lands Committee. Was the President also part of the Trent Lands Committee? As it turns out, while undisclosed and unknown to us at the time, they were a voting member of the committee (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, p. 3). “*Any chance of support*” [emphasis added] is strong language. What modification(s) was the President referring to and why wouldn't the administration support the current plan? One piece of information the TVG Coordinator received

from the Experimental Farm manager was that “we weren’t dreaming big enough” (forwarded personal communication, September 24, 2020). Perhaps this was in reference to program aspirations given that the initial Farm Plan contained a proposal for 83 acres, yet, in the final TLNAP only 58 acres would be set aside for regenerative agriculture (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, p. 42), a reduction by 25 acres.

The following communication elucidates that, aside from any program aspirations, a key modification was the matter of location, and further, that decisions were being made by the administration at this planning stage without meaningful input. In this case, support for the Farm Plan would come from the senior administration when it aligned with their proposal for relocation. Email correspondence from the Director of the TSE on September 26, 2020:

Sorry for the delay in getting back but this conversation about the Farm has led to a domino effect that is going through the TSE (e.g. impacts on all our programming/curriculum review etc.) and goes well beyond the Farm Plan. In short, any changes to the farm need to be connected to other programming decisions in the TSE as the resources we get are not degree specific, but I don't want to go into the details except to say it is complicated.

That being said, this is where we stand. We believe that it is not the case of whether there will be a Farm - *the question is more where will it be and what will it look like? As for the first question, while we may have a preference it is ultimately a decision that is out of our control* [emphasis added] and my feeling is that the Farm will end up moving to the area adjacent to the Nature Areas. (personal communication, September 26, 2020)

Why didn’t the TSE and Growers Group share control in the decision being made about their location? They were two thirds of the discussion. Why did the Trent Lands Committee present us with three location options if there was no legitimate opportunity for choosing (see [Figure 6](#))? In the very least, why wouldn’t they engage in problem solving to find a mutually acceptable solution that met everyone’s needs? What did this reveal about how power was being

used in directing the TLNAP process and decision making? Morgan and Davis (2019) draw our attention to an evolution of leadership over the past 30 years:

Historically, the dominant model was one of the charismatic and/or “command and control” leader at the helm of a hierarchical structure or system. In the 1980s, the notion of “transformational leadership” took hold, as leaders came to be seen as effective if primarily motivated by a desire to serve others or employing a social change model (Dugan, 2017). These approaches to change focused on leadership as a process rather than a position. Benjamin Barber (1980, 1988) argued that the United States needs strong citizens, not strong leaders. Ron Heifetz, founder of Harvard’s Center for Public Leadership at the Kennedy School of Government, envisioned leadership as distinct from authority—leaders can be individuals with or without positional authority. Effective leaders mobilize the talents of many who represent diverse perspectives to work collaboratively. They are skilled in convening, inquiring, engaging in dialogue and deliberation, mobilizing coalitions, and collaborating to solve community problems. (pp. 35-36)

In this case, closing remarks from the Director of the TSE’s September 26 email demonstrate their acceptance and adoption of an outmoded command-and-control approach, showing how it was being used to lead and direct the Growers Group activities as well. The Director stated:

In the short-term there will be little to no impact on student activities, but what we need to do is start planning and laying the ground work for the ‘new’ Farm, which is a long-term project but is important to enable a seamless transition for any ongoing activities.

I expect that you will get a copy of the plan next week and we can take it from there. (personal communication, September 26, 2020)

Student attempts to coordinate a conversation and inform revisions in the Farm Plan were met by responses about the logistical challenges of meeting during the start of the school year. In the end, no meeting between the TSE and Growers Group took place in September when major revisions to the Farm Plan were being made. When the TSE revised the Farm Plan, their final draft placed the growing spaces in the Nature Areas (see [Figure 6](#)). Given the position of the TSE in the hierarchy of the University, and their need for permanency and resources from a

curriculum standpoint, we surmised that there was pressure to act in accordance with the Trent Lands Committee's timeline and directive. We believed the impending deadline to publish the TLNAP draft moved the TSE to commit to option 2; a complete relocation of the farm and food growing spaces to the Nature Areas on Pioneer Rd. and Douro Ninth Line (see [Appendix E](#), H2, H3, H7, F3, D2, D4).

However, it begs the question, how might this adoption and apparent indifference toward the administration's command-and-control approach have obstructed shared, informed, and deliberate planning practices? These decisions were made in a matter of weeks (during the start of the school year) and conversations about the risks to established food growing projects and their relationships to the surrounding ecology, SAFS programming, student accessibility, Seasoned Spoon Café, the implications for the Nature Areas (i.e. land use policies, building infrastructure, water wells, etc.), alternatives such as the Green Academic land designation, or further discussions of a hybrid model involving both locations, were not explored. In a study of senior student affairs professionals, Morgan and Orphan (2016) observed how there is often an adherence by administrators to the concept of political neutrality in academic institutions. To provide a useful lens for this observation they draw on scholarship from Yoo (2010), stating:

Yoo (2010) 'parsed' neutrality by describing ambivalence (balance of positive and negative affect) versus indifference (lack of either). For example, if appearing politically neutral or ambivalent is done in an effort to bring opposing ideological sides together for healthy discussion (i.e., deliberative dialogue), then the appearance of neutrality may be warranted. However, if neutrality is used as a crux to avoid engaging students in the political realm at all (i.e., indifference), then opportunities to help students build skills for everyday politics may be missed. Additionally, it is critical to consider the larger philosophical question of whether it is possible for a person to truly be, or appear to be, neutral in matters of politics when certain social identities are inherently power-laden (Crenshaw, 1991). (pp. 28-29)

On October 2, 2020, the Growers Group met with TSE staff and were asked whether we would sign on to the final draft of the Farm Plan, which would relocate all the farming projects in the Nature Areas. It was noted that the TLNAP process seemed to be operating within a timeframe that we couldn't fully inform. Concerns were raised about the previous meeting being presented in a way that only led to one option. Pros and cons of the relocation were discussed. TSE members reiterated their need for permanency to pursue funding and long-term projects. The threat of development posed a risk to the SAFS program. A single location could also close the distance gap between TSE and student/community-led food growing spaces and strengthen their work through long term stability. However, avoiding the threat of development in one proposal did not eliminate risks associated with development in the other, nor ensure a strengthening of shared governance. The move would destabilize the current food growing projects for an undetermined period of time. In our 2019 planning discussions for the Local Food Infrastructure Fund application, we envisioned constructing a pavilion/outdoor classroom and kitchen space for teaching and learning. It was unknown whether these developments were possible in the Nature Areas location. Could or should we be developing infrastructure within the Nature Areas? What were the policies, restrictions, and potential consequences? How would the community respond to this, and would there be pushback against the SAFS program? Accessibility issues were also raised; a one-way ~25 minute walk between seminars seemed like a barrier to enabling program integration, let alone actual Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act requirements.

The concern about an uncertain governance structure was discussed further by the Growers Group and TSE members at this October 2, 2020, meeting. A TSE member suggested

that shared values and principles for operations and land use could be developed and that each project would retain autonomy. The TSE would not be co-opting current projects but offering more support.⁴⁵ Important historical context was brought forward by another TSE member. They mentioned that when the Experimental Farm Committee founded the Experimental Farm in 2014, they lacked vision and foundational governance (i.e. how do they turn down projects from industrial agriculture companies because they don't align with the farm objectives, mission, or values?). Also, there was a divergence between founding faculty and student projects. A TSE member communicated to us that there was the 'research science side' versus 'fun student projects'. This framing may have been problematic though, and the dichotomy itself antithetical with regards to shared outcomes (see [Appendix E](#), D1, D6). As time played out the student led projects demonstrated their value with contributions to SAFS programming and community, and their ability to sustain themselves as the research science side lessened in these spaces (personal communication, October 2, 2020). This account of past failures to collaborate, and another case of divergence about to unfold in two weeks' time, was a key issue, and provided the impetus for the Group Workshops component of my thesis research.

By the end of the meeting, the Growers Group were informed that there was no hard deadline for the Farm Plan submission but a decision sooner rather than later would be pragmatic. The TLNAP process was closing in the near term and a yes/no decision was required

⁴⁵ In 2022, the TSE's Experimental Farm manager would override the SAFSS students' and Coordinator hiring decision, which resulted in no hire being made and interruptions to SAFSS planning and continuity. The logic for the obstruction (hiring a community member and liability) were not justified given the existing coordinator was a community member, and the TVG operated with a similar model. The SAFSS Coordinator and student efforts to address the matter were left unresolved. See Matt Dutry and Community Trent Lands Plan Research Collection (23-015-13-09).

whether we would sign on to the plan. The Growers Group agreed to deliberate and return with a final decision in the coming days.

The day after our meeting, I sent an email to the TSE and Growers Group members as if a prediction of the times to come were written about the Trent lands and food growing projects, by people from another culture, lands, and generations apart. My email correspondence October 3, 2020, stated:

Hey Folks,

Our growers group is still meeting to deliberate on Sunday and we will return to the table shortly thereafter. However, a particular lesson struck me afterwards that I wanted to share from Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass*. There is something about this move to the Natures Area that is disconcerting, without fully understanding what we're getting into.

So I wanted to share the following excerpts from her chapter, *The Council of Pecans*.

'For mast fruiting to succeed in generating new forests, each tree has to make lots and lots of nuts—so many that it overwhelms the would be seed predators. . . . But given the high caloric value of nuts, the trees can't afford this outpouring every year—they have to save up for it, as a family saves up for a special event. . . .

Forest ecologists hypothesize that mast fruiting is the simple outcome of this energetic equation: make fruit only when you can afford it. That makes sense. But trees grow and accumulate calories at different rates depending on their habitats. So, like the settlers who got the fertile farmland, the fortunate ones would get rich quickly and fruit often, while their shaded neighbors would struggle and only rarely have an abundance, waiting for years to reproduce. If this were true, each tree would fruit on its own schedule, predictable by the size of its reserves of stored starch. But they don't. If one tree fruits, they all fruit—there are no soloists. Not one tree in a grove, but the whole grove; not one grove in the forest, but every grove; all across the county and all across the state. The trees act not as individuals, but somehow as a collective. Exactly how they do this, we don't know yet. But what we see is the power of unity. What happens to one happens to us all. We can starve together or feast together. All flourishing is mutual. . . .

So after thousands of miles of forced moves and loss and finally settling us in Kansas, the federal government came once again to my people and offered another move, this time to a place that would be theirs forever, a move to end all moves. And what's more, the people were offered a chance to become United States citizens, to be part of the great

country that surrounded them and to be protected by its power. . . . The leaders were offered the American Dream, the right to own their own property as individuals, inviolate from the vagaries of shifting Indian policy. . . . With heavy hearts, they sat in council all summer, struggling to decide and weighing the options, which were few. . . .

We have always known that the plants and animals have their own councils, and a common language. The trees, especially, we recognize as our teachers. But it seems no one listened that summer when the Pecans counseled: Stick together, act as one. We Pecans have learned that there is strength in unity, that the lone individual can be picked off easily as the tree that has fruited out of season. The teachings of Pecans were not heard, or heeded. . . . During the allotment era, more than two-thirds of the reservation lands were lost. Barely a generation after land was "guaranteed" through the sacrifice of common land converted to private property, most of it was gone' (Kimmerer, 2013, pp. 15, 17, 18, 19).

I think there are important lessons in this for us. Academia has trained us to see through the logics that further entrench these very outcomes that our societies are striving to no longer tolerate. This is no hard and fast answer to what we face together, but I think there's an importance to this message and story that needs to be reflected upon in our heart of hearts, and deliberated upon with our very well trained minds.

I look forward to our continued discussions, no matter where they take us. (personal communication, October 3, 2020)

Looking back at the early history of the Experimental Farm with its “permanent, close-proximity study site” (Sharifi, 2016, p. 25), and comparing it to what would later unfold for the TSE during and after the TLNAP process (detailed below), can serve as a stark reminder of settler-colonial logics and outcomes. The language of permanence, and the promises that come along with relocation, though much smaller in magnitude compared with the story above, reflect similar operational logics and outcomes of dispossession and displacement, and a move toward an inadequately imagined future that is ungrounded in socio-ecological understandings of the land.

To assist our deliberations, a TSE member scouted the land of the new location and emailed our group with some information of their observations. Their email correspondence October 3, 2020, stated:

In advance of your conversation, I decided to go over and take a quick peek at the areas that have been proposed as part of the lands process for the new farm. Of course, pictures are no substitute for walking land, but I was curious to get a glimpse of what things looked like.

The first picture is just before the corner of Pioneer at Ninth Line (on Pioneer). As mentioned, hay is being grown here at the moment. This is the location I am the most certain of in terms of its relationship to the map.

The next two pictures are when you turn the corner onto Ninth Line. We would have to match up the land proposed with the pictures more finely at some point, but to me it looks like a mix of wetland and hay production (tho I am unsure if the wetland was included, it doesn't look to be on the map). What I also think from the map is the more densely forested areas are not included in the farm area (and indeed likely couldn't be under ORCA rules), which lends the proposed area its patchy quality.

These pictures may or may not be useful to you; I only provide them as additional information. (personal communication, October 3, 2020)

Notable is both the certainty and uncertainty expressed by this TSE member with regards to proposed relocation sites. First, is the high level of certainty expressed about the corner of Pioneer Rd and Douro Ninth Line (on Pioneer), as mapped for the new farm, which would later be annulled by the Trent Lands Committee. Second, was the uncertainty around the orientation, features, and suitability of the remaining proposed lands. I highlight all of this to show this move was enveloped in a planning process that was proceeding in the absence of information and shared and deliberate planning practices.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Additional gaps in consultation and planning regarding the farm relocation were also documented, stemming from the inadequate and siloed meetings between the Trent Lands Committee and the Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee (see [Appendix F](#)).

4.3.2. Farm Planning in the Absence of Information: Misleading Communications and the Omission/Erasure of Context

The Growers Group met October 4, 2020, and discussed the information we had. It still wasn't clear what the Trent Lands Committee's timeline was for relocation. When would the move have to happen and how long did we have to prepare? What supports were in place for these projects to move? We agreed that a lot of work went into engaging in the TLNAP process, but it hadn't changed our outcome. By all accounts, we still faced displacement in the future. By signing onto the final draft of the Farm Plan we could ensure TSE and student collaborations going forward. However, we felt we were "being towed along in this process" (fieldnotes, October 4, 2020), and that our location and operations were an afterthought in the TLNAP process. The road development that showed to bisect the TVG in the 2017 Cleantech Commons Masterplan (Brook McIlroy & DM Wills, 2017, p. 7), and Trent Grounds Operation relocation mentioned once by the Associate VP of Facilities Management in March 2019 (yet excluded in the TLNAP process and final documents), substantiate that our thoughts and feelings were likely true.

On October 5, 2020, we offered agreement to the TSE's proposition for two reasons. First, by agreeing with the TSE's revised Farm Plan we could maintain our working relationship with the TSE. This was done in hope of informing future planning discussions. According to the Director of the TSE,⁴⁷ the plan would not impede our short-term activities; thereby enabling all parties involved to move forward in meeting their immediate needs. Second, these meetings with the TSE and Trent Lands Committee had required a lot of our time and energy, and it was clear that we hadn't progressed in our ability to influence the planning decisions. By freeing up our

⁴⁷ Refer to the Director's email communications from September 26, 2020.

focus, our Growers Group could shift efforts toward fostering a stronger governance structure so that we could better mobilize and advocate how and where our labour would get put to use in the future.

As part of our response, we requested answers to the following questions. 1) What are the Nature Areas policies on building new structures, clearing trees, digging wells, etc. in the zoning/relocation lands that are being proposed? 2) What are the timelines on the physical relocation of the various projects? 3) What supports are in place to provide compensation for the material and labour needs required in the relocation of these projects?

A TSE member forwarded a response from the VP External Relations & Advancement on behalf of the Trent Lands Committee. Answers to questions 2 and 3 were vague and no contractual agreements were brought to the discussion table (a detriment to the Trent Farm, post-TLNAP approval). The email correspondence from TSE faculty October 13, 2020, stated:

I just wanted to circle back with some answers that [VP External Relations & Advancement] gave to the questions your [*sic*] posed about the farm plan. Of note, too, is that the draft Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan will be released today on the Trent Lands website if you want to take a look.

Answer to Question 2:

There is no urgency on Trent's end. They have suggested we propose a timeline that allows us to work the soil on the new site. The only constraint would be existing leases on the land that need to be tidied up.

Answer to Question 3:

Facilities would be responsible for all relocation (labour and material) for relocation. (personal communication, October 13, 2020)

Our first question yielded a few answers for research however, and when reviewing maps, documents, and conversations from the time, it demonstrates the Trent Lands Committee was providing mixed communications about the relocation lands that would be supported for the Trent Farm. The October 13, 2020, email correspondence continued:

Answer to Question 1:

There is a ‘pending further assessment’ parcel to the south of Pioneer Rd, with the experimental farm overlaid. [VP External Relations & Advancement’s] office believes it's appropriate for this part of the Nature Areas to be classified as a developable area, to enable the complementary infrastructure to be built there (outdoor pavilion, kitchen facility, greenhouse and barn). [The VP External Relations & Advancement] noted they will do some field studies there to confirm no areas of natural significance. (personal communication, October 13, 2020)

I reiterate the high level of certainty expressed by the TSE member in our October 3, 2020, correspondence with regards to this parcel at the corner of Pioneer Rd and Douro Ninth Line (on Pioneer), as mapped in “the areas that have been proposed as part of the lands process for the new farm” (personal communication, October 3, 2020). Under the Farm Plan’s “investment” section (Trent University School of the Environment, 2020b, p. 3) the TSE included the specific request for this parcel as part of 30 acres to be allocated for the Trent Farm in the TLNAP process. Post-TLNAP approval, this location would become a point of contention and obstacle for the TSE in establishing the Trent Farm (personal communications, July 30, 2022; September 30, 2022). By comparing the VP External Relations & Advancement’s communications in the October 13, 2020 email with TLNAP maps from the time, a convoluted picture emerges of where exactly their committee was proposing the Trent Farm relocate. The “UGN Pending Further Assessment” parcel also referred to in the email above, overlaid with the “Relocation of Experimental Farm” in the Framework Plan (*Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Summary: Framework Plan*, 2020, p. 7) was supposedly a distinct and important dividing

boundary from the “Future Opportunities” (East Bank Lands) location (p. 5), where low-impact infrastructure was listed envisioned to support farm uses. These locations were presented as a unified location in the Trent Land Committee’s Virtual Town Hall⁴⁸ on November 18, 2020 (Trent University, 2020g, pt. 1:09:32), and later conflated in the Phase 3 Engagement Report, where it was documented that the “required infrastructure for the Trent Farm can be accommodated within the existing footprint of land immediately south of Pioneer Road” (*Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 3: Engagement Summary Report*, 2021, p. 16).

However, when the Trent Lands Committee finalized the TLNAP (February 5, 2021), they removed the any/all agricultural language related to the Trent Farm in the East Bank Lands location (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, p. 43, 2021e, p. 87) without further consultation on the matter. In the TLNAP they vaguely stated: “East Bank Lands are primarily reserved to maintain opportunities for the future generations of Trent scholars and community members, and to allocate sites for projects that achieve the aspirations of this Plan” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021e, p. 100). By 2022, this ambiguous area of land would become unsupported by the Trent Lands Committee for the Trent Farm (personal communications, July 30, 2022; September 30, 2022). Researching this further, I found that Trent had signed a Development Agreement with the City of Peterborough in 2018 for the land at the southeast corner of Pioneer Rd and Douro Ninth Line as a potential location for recreational sports fields (City of Peterborough, 2018, p. 37) (see [Figure 4](#), City of Peterborough Easement). The Trent Lands Committee did not disclose this to the TSE and Growers Group during TLNAP consultations (see [Appendix E](#), D2). In addition to this, Trent has expressed they have no

⁴⁸ Showing the equivalent outline of the 30-acre parcel requested in the Farm Plan.

intention to offer the City an alternate site (as per their Development Agreement) (Trent University, 2022a, p. 30) so that the TSE could carry forward their full vision for the SAFS program.

From the combined documents and context, it appeared the Trent Lands Committee's founding imperative to meet the Board of Governors' strategic goal of accelerating development over the Endowment Lands, in combination with Trent's hierarchical governance structure, was overriding shared, informed, and deliberate planning practices in the first two phases of the TLNAP.

Chapter 5: The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Process - Phases 3 and 4

In this chapter, I detail the last two phases of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process as a campus participant and researcher. I follow the chronology of campus and community consultation events and activities to reveal how Trent's approach to land-use planning was put together. By applying commitments from a transformative paradigm, which focuses on issues of power, the enhancement of social justice, and potential role for research to link to action and social change (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2009, 2010), I document the textual realities that are driven by an assemblage of choices over time. By doing so, this chapter makes visible how Trent's social hierarchies are enacted in land-use planning, aiming to empower future participants to broaden dialogues and work towards eliminating detrimental biases that generate unexamined risks to the public good.

5.1 Phase 3: October 2020 to January 2021 - Grower Group Engagements in the TLNAP Process

At this point, our trust in the TLNAP process and Trent Lands Committee to validate and support our needs was low. First-hand accounts of the constrained decisions (emails from the Director of the TSE August 31 and September 26, 2020) and our own knowledge and experiences of how planning had been conducted, both prior to the TLNAP and now during its development, eroded our confidence that we could inform the decisions being made. Our experiences working under the umbrella of the TSE during this process also left us concerned (fieldnotes, October 27, 2020). Student levy groups operate and fund many of the projects that were going to be affected by these changes. Land put under the control of a hierarchical structure, where the TSE would, with apparent indifference (Morgan & Orphan, 2016, pp. 28–29; Yoo, 2010), be reporting to a controlling administration, was alarming. The continuation of these patterns in planning posed serious risks to the longevity of student organizations, their sustainable projects, and overall student learning. In the case of the food growing sites, land -and their interrelated projects- managed under this type of governance could disrupt established socio-ecological relationships, hinder student groups operationally, and perhaps more fundamentally, curtail students’ “preparation to make significant contributions to an increasingly complex world” (Trent University, 2022c). This TLNAP process demonstrated that Trent’s governance structure was diminishing engagement from some of the most active, experiential learners and student leaders on campus. In the process, the institution also appeared to be working at cross-purposes with its objects and purposes (Bill Pr24: An Act to Incorporate Trent University, 1963, p. 884)⁴⁹ and broader vision and mission (Trent University, 2022c). The

⁴⁹ The Trent Act states: “The objects and purposes of the University are, (a) the advancement of learning and the dissemination of knowledge; and (b) the intellectual, social, moral and physical development of its members and the betterment of society” (Bill Pr24: An Act to Incorporate Trent University, 1963, p. 884).

Growers Group viewed the remainder of the TLNAP process as an opportunity to advocate for these long-standing food growing sites, call for attention to the issues, and continue our dialogue.

When the draft Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan was released on October 13, 2020, the initial deadline for public input was November 1, 2020. Until this point, the Trent Lands Committee had made no public statements about the displacement of these food growing spaces for development; their relocation was new information to the public. During our August 24, 2020 planning meeting, the Trent Lands Committee had requested we keep the relocation options confidential. Given that the campus and community were unaware of the proposed changes, and the short window for feedback (later extended to January 4), the Growers Group believed this necessitated a response and put out requests on social media for public comment. As the student and community managers of the campus food growing spaces, we felt a responsibility to the stakeholders both past and present, who had contributed their time, labour, and money to these projects over the years. All stakeholder input was needed to complete this process. Without such feedback, these changes would become formalized in the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan and would conclude, by many measures, an uninformed fate for the farm and food growing initiatives. However, our social media outreach put us at odds with the TSE and Trent Lands Committee because of our recent conformity to the revised Farm Plan. As a result, the Trent Lands Committee organized another meeting with us.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ This meeting was coordinated through the TSE. Building on early footnotes about the coordination of meetings, this demonstrates a double-standard (see [Appendix E, D1](#)) in communications arising from the command-and-control approach to consultation and planning.

In preparation for our next meeting, our Growers Group began assembling an open letter in response to the draft TLNAP, to detail our engagements and reasoning for requesting public feedback. We also sent an email to one of our liaisons in the TSE outlining some boundaries for the upcoming meeting because of what had transpired during and since the August 24, 2020 meeting. The questions were also emailed to the Trent Lands Committee in advance of our meeting: My email correspondence October 29, 2020, stated:

Our growers group met a couple of times this week to discuss next steps. Let me first say that this process has been taxing on all* of us. So let's just commend us all for doing this unenviable work. I believe we are all still part of the same team even if complexities have emerged that need greater attention. To that end, we've come up with some questions, comments and concerns that we think will move us forward in a more congruous manner.

The growers would like to take the lead to explain their position/experience in this process and for the group's needs to be heard and placed at the forefront of Monday's discussion without disruption. We would like all of our questions answered by the TLNAP [sic] and not to be derailed by a move to confirm location options or discuss disconnected content [emphasis added].

Our questions are pasted below and we'd like to know if there is overlap/alignment in questions that the TSE may have? Ie. logistical questions

What are the timelines for road construction that are planned to displace the TVG and TMG? Can you please provide development details on the roads/construction in and around the TVG and Experimental farm spaces that are not currently represented in your draft plan map? Eg. There are currently water conduits being laid adjacent to the TVG and Alpaca pen. What are these for? Also, during our August meeting there was mention of a second road bisecting the 'Option 1' space. What are the details of that additional road?

How will Trent ensure that these spaces remain safe for students and community members to access and work in while construction happens nearby?

How will the TLNAP be using the public feedback to inform the final decision of where the food growing spaces will be located?

From 2017 onward, who has overseen the management (committees and/or individuals) decisions being made that govern the Nature Areas use and boundaries? Is the TLNAP committee writing the rules for the management and governing of the Nature Areas?

Can you provide a detailed explanation of the ‘pending further assessment’ designation given to the section of the Nature Areas that the Experimental Farm is currently shown to move into? What assessment will take place and what is the timeline required for its completion?

What timelines are in place for the current farming tenants/leases in the Nature Areas? What kind of farming do they do, and will the land require remediation following conventional farming methods? (personal communication, October 29, 2020)

Having evidence of the way in which structural power was being used to direct decisions (emails from the Director of the TSE August 31, 2020 and September 26, 2020), and our own experience of directed-conversation in meetings with the Trent Lands Committee (February 4, 2020 Campus and Community Session, and August 24, 2020 Trent Lands Committee meeting), we anticipated that our questions may be ignored and that the conversation would “be derailed by a move to confirm location options or discuss disconnected content” (personal communication, October 29, 2020), separate from answering our questions. In hindsight and in all fairness, we should have expressed these same boundaries to the Trent Lands Committee; their response to our questions was predictable. The email correspondence from the Manager of Community Relations and University Events October 30, 2020, stated:

Thanks for your note and for your questions. I've shared them with the team joining the meeting on Monday. We're also looking forward to meeting again with you and the growers to discuss the opportunities and any concerns.

We have a few questions for consideration for our conversation Monday

- * What work do you foresee that needs to be done at the new location to support the move, and about how long would this take (i.e. 3 months, or 3 seasons)?
- * What work needs to be done at the current location to prepare for the move?
- * If necessary, what would the remediation you mentioned involve?
- * I understand soil biome is a priority. What other concerns does the group have (beyond what's included in your questions below)? (personal communication, October 30, 2020)

On November 2, 2020, we met with the Trent Lands Committee for a third time. True to our expectation, this meeting began as a conversation about the relocation to the Nature Areas. The Trent Lands Committee presented the Nature Areas as the option most consistent with our priorities (see [Appendix E](#), F1, F3, F4). However, we informed them about our open letter and were given the time to explain our concerns about how the decision was arrived at –that it did not actually reflect comprehensive deliberations– and expressed our desire to revisit the proposed TLNAP decisions. We discussed our preference for our location in the original Farm Plan proposal with an alternate route for the Cleantech Commons road. The committee agreed to examine these possibilities fully, which included reassessing the grading, buffering and impact zone for the Cleantech Commons road development. The Director of the TSE also expressed their support for a hybrid model that would allow for multiple farm locations. The Trent Lands Committee would later document our concerns and preference in their Phase 3 Engagement Report (*Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 3: Engagement Summary Report*, 2021, p. 10), but mention of the student-run TVG, TMG, and Apiary in the proposed core location was skirted by an inevitability narrative, stating “The Plan ... does not preclude them from being located within the campus core ... Decisions around *the proposed road* connecting the core campus to Cleantech Commons, *likely to disturb the location of the TVG* [emphasis added], are not anticipated for some time” (p. 15).

In the weeks and months (and years) to follow, Trent only promoted the ‘new location’, and mention of farming in the core of campus in the final TLNAP documents was non-descript or enclosed by statements of relocation and transition (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, p. 75, 2021e, p. 91; Trent University, 2021e, 2022b, 2022g) (see [Appendix E](#), H2, H3,

F2, D2). In official institutional documents the Trent Lands Committee's maps would minimize the TVG's location and presence to a small, numbered dot (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, p. 59).⁵¹ More brazenly, Trent would use photos from the TVG to promote the Trent Farm, such as in their news story claiming, "research ramping up to establish strong roots for Trent Experimental Farm"(Trent University, 2022g) (see [Appendix E](#), H7). Trent repeated this again in 2023 by using a photo of the TVG to launch their new Trent Research Farm webpage which stated, "Since its inception in 2014, the Trent Farm has been a learning landscape. Relocating to the south side of Pioneer Road, the expanded farm location allows for long-term research and better built and natural infrastructure" (Trent University, 2023b). A blatant appropriation and decontextualization of the on-the-ground reality they were representing. Paradoxically, these two locations were not linked because of the way the Trent Lands Committee conducted the TLNAP process, and this selective marketing erased both the long history and ongoing student and community labour in the established Trent Vegetable Gardens. The same practice of spotlighting the "Trent Farm" while using student- and community-led projects for its marketing materials was also observed in Trent's Campaign for Momentous Change, with the use of photos from the Trent Market Garden, which was accompanied by the claim, "In typical Trent fashion, the Farm focuses on making agriculture more sustainable, while maximizing benefits in a socially just and community-engaged manner" ("Trent Farm Leads Way for Climate-Smart Agriculture," 2023, pp. 34, 35). From all the information available, these actions only served to advance a single-location priority and seemed to deepen the fragmentation

⁵¹ Demonstrating further disregard or failure to take proper care, the Trent Lands Committee inserted a picture in the TLNAP to represent the TVG that was not of the TVG. Additionally, the Apiary was not illustrated in maps as previously declared: "similar to how the parking lots/ buildings within the campus core are" (Trent University VP External Relations & Advancement, 2020, p. 1) which demonstrated both the neglect and logic to which these vital learning spaces were being treated.

between the Growers Group's efforts and meaningful TLNAP outcomes. As a result, with no meaningful administrative support put toward developing a hybrid model, efforts to create a re-integrated Farm Plan would remain out of reach for the remainder of the TLNAP process and extend beyond its finalization. The lament of these circumstances was well articulated by the TVG Coordinator in our interview:

I think that there's this attitude that Trent is made up of the academic programming that it offers. When that's obviously very true. But of course, it also, like what makes Trent, Trent is the people and the student body and the sort of civil society that exists here. And I think that there's a real undervaluing of yeah, the work. The real, tangible work that's being done by students and by community members. By some staff members here at Trent. That isn't recognized and isn't valued. As sort of contributing to what Trent has to offer. But I think it's totally backwards, that assumption. I think that what makes a school is the people that it inspires and the work that it inspires, not just what happens in the classroom.

So yeah it's really disappointing to be one of those people who's on the ground, who's working their butt off to reach a goal and to serve their community. And for that to not be recognized as part of Trent or not to be recognized as adding value to the Trent campus. I think in a lot of ways it's taken for granted. By the administration that these activities, these social groups, these levy groups. It's taken advantage, it's sort of expected that this community will just sort of perpetuate itself. And it will continue to exist without any kind of support or attention from the administration. . . .

And you know, thinking back to my time as a student, obviously you know, there were definitely classes that I got a lot out of and professors that I admired, and you know I obviously learned a lot. But my most vivid memories and my happiest memories are with my fellow students and getting involved in clubs and groups and spearheading some of that work myself. Like that's where I learned the most and grew the most. It wasn't you know, sitting in a classroom. That's not the defining moments of my undergrad career. It was all of those activities that aren't really academic that made my experience. So I think that there's a real systemic undervaluing of all of that activity. That's really disheartening, yeah. (personal communication, September 10, 2021)

Beyond the misleading marketing and erasure of the on-the-ground context, the way in which hierarchical power was being used to steer development planning had self-reported socio-psychological effects as well. Upon the completion of our Growers Group's open letter, one member expressed heightened fears of the consequences that could come from publishing it,

such as: the alienation or removal by the Trent Lands Committee from future decision-making discussions, exclusion from Trent's provision of funding and future infrastructure support, and/or the severing of TSE and departmental relationships (fieldnotes, November 12, 2020). Trent staff also expressed that the entire process had had detrimental impacts on their overall wellbeing. One TSE member confided their anxiety and a waning patience within the department, and a dissatisfaction that communications between Growers Group and TSE were not as effective as they thought (fieldnotes, November 12, 2020). These concerns led to an unexpected and last-minute withdrawal of support for publishing the open letter penned by the Growers Group, and a tension within the Growers Group that would threaten its solidarity. Fortunately, the Growers Group had committed to a consensus-based, decision-making model during its formation. This enabled us to collectively take a step back and consider alternatives. As a result of this decision-making model, the delay in publishing afforded us the opportunity to regroup and collaborate with even more stakeholders, such as the Seasoned Spoon, which strengthened our message and a broader, more representative letter was eventually published (Blyth et al., 2020).

On November 18, 2020, the Trent Lands Committee held a Virtual Town Hall for campus and community members to learn more about the draft TLNAP and ask questions (Trent University, 2020g; Trent University et al., 2020). The Virtual Town Hall resembled the method of community engagement used in the Campus and Community Session in February 2020. Participants were able to communicate their commentary directly to the Trent Lands Committee, but conversation between participants was limited. The Trent Lands Committee had restricted user options, with no participants view, chat or videos. It only allowed participants to view the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan presentation. Although one improvement was made with the

addition of a Q&A feature and period, it was highly moderated, and participants could not view other queries to speak (see [Appendix E](#), H2). Again, this approach to engagement made it difficult to share information or broaden the conversation between participants and build capacity for shared understanding about any issues at hand.

I had submitted a question on behalf of the Growers Group before the Virtual Town Hall drawing on land-use change literature (Minnes et al., 2020; Ratner et al., 2018). My email correspondence November 18, 2020, stated:

Hello [Trent Lands Committee] and team,

Land-use change literature calls for governance mechanisms that facilitate both relationship building and building of shared understandings of the landscape in question. What qualitative analysis will get applied to the public feedback and what is your plan for communicating these findings to the public after the feedback period? Further, what are the next step plans/timelines if resolution mechanisms are needed (eg. collective multi-stakeholder dialogues) to foster the building of shared understandings and ameliorate substantiated concerns?

We look forward to continuing to work with the TLNAP team in building social resilience, community and inclusivity. (personal communication, November 18, 2020)

In response, the second part of this question was left out of the Q&A (Trent University, 2020g, pt. 1:22:33) and needed to be prompted again during the open question period. A Trent Lands Committee member provided comment on the methods used for collecting public feedback (dialogue, website email, information sessions, focus groups, campus pop ups) but made no mention of how the committee was conducting their data analysis to inform final outputs. The committee member said that in terms of building a shared understanding of the landscape, key messages and feedback they received were outlined through the Phase 1 and 2 Engagement Reports (Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020; *Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 2:*

Engagement Summary Report, 2020), as well as it was the purpose of the Natural Heritage Report to show a regulatory context (North-South Environmental Inc., 2021a, 2021c, 2021b). The documenting of Indigenous history in the area was also mentioned. Although these reports are informative, the Trent Lands Committee failed to acknowledge or recognize that by remaining a sole point of contact for campus and community feedback, reporting did not equate to facilitating the building of relationships, shared understandings, or resolutions to concerns between those with vested interests in the landscape. The campus and community stakeholders remained siloed, and these reports only provided a static record of their data collection and interpretation of the community's inquiries and concerns (see [Appendix E](#), D4).

After prompting the question again, it was altered by the meeting facilitator from asking about “*resolution*” mechanisms to asking about “*reporting*” [emphasis added] mechanisms (Trent University, 2020g, pt. 1:51:51). Subsequently, the next steps mentioned were more reporting (and submitting feedback to the Trent Lands Committee about their reports) and the forming of “focus group conversations”, which sounded promising, and solutions oriented, but were far from collective multi-stakeholder dialogues. The meeting facilitator stated:

Matt, as you're aware already, with any specific concerns we've been forming some focus group conversations. And so we've been having more detailed conversations on specific issues with interest groups. So the Growers Group being one of those. We just met recently since release of this plan with the Growers Group and our intent is to meet again. We've been preparing for this Town Hall, and so once this milestone passes, we'll be sure to meet with you again. We have heard a lot of the comments and concerns from members of the Growers Group about, you know, the desire for food security and the access to farm assets. And so it is our intention to connect before this commenting period is over so that, you know, we get it right in the final plan. (Trent University, 2020g, pt. 1:53:25)

In fact, these meetings were siloed and ineffective as our Growers Group experienced. Paralleling how ineffective these detailed conversations had been, the Trent Lands Committee member failed to acknowledge that the main issue was the relocation of the food growing sites when they cited their conversations with the Growers Group. The committee member committed to meet with the Growers Group again before the finalization of the TLNAP, but no such meeting would take place. In admission of my own error, I agreed that my question had been answered but the recording during the event speaks for itself; the question was not answered.

The Growers Group and Seasoned Spoon submitted a joint letter to the Trent Lands Committee after the Virtual Town Hall on December 7, 2020 (Blyth et al., 2020). Notable was the final manner, timeline, and task assigned by the committee during Phase 3 consultations. At day end on December 22, 2020 (the day the University closed for holidays to January 4), we were notified of a requirement to assemble a long-term vision and infrastructure plan to be submitted by the week of January 4 (Trent University VP External Relations & Advancement, 2020). The email called for retained information by the Growers Group, but this information was not fundamental for location planning and unnecessary for the Trent Lands Committee's reiterated, "high-level plan"; most of it was quantitative data (e.g., total food lbs. grown, employment/volunteer hours, revenue generated, food donated, affiliated curriculum, and events data) specific to our projects. This highly marketable information from our student and community labour was not to be distributed for University use without permission from those who created it. On the whole, our long-term vision and keys to growth were already communicated and encompassed in the initial Farm Plan submitted in August 2020 (Trent University School of the Environment, 2020a, p. 5), and joint letter (above) which included our

mapped, core location proposal. Ultimately, this was perceived as a disingenuous request given to us during a holiday break to coordinate, which (for some) if the holidays were not stressful enough, and our group's spirit was not broken from the asymmetry of power employed during consultations, our last effort "may be able to resolve this as part of the TLNAP . . . Otherwise, the TVG/ Apiary location will be considered a site-specific decision that will be made later, using the guidelines of the final TLNAP" (Trent University VP External Relations & Advancement, 2020, p. 2). All our work and engagements (31 internal meetings, multiple coordinated with the TSE, three with the Trent Lands Committee, two presentations delivered to the Trent Lands Committee and President, two campus and community town hall events attended, online Social PinPoint and written submissions, and attendance at the pop up consultation stands) were reduced to this one task. Otherwise, we would be dismissed for an indeterminate, site-specific decision in the future. Our group was segregated from immediate farm planning discussions as well, such as the January 6, 2021 Trent Lands Committee meeting with the TSE (*Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 3: Engagement Summary Report*, 2021, p. 8), though this now homogenous, hierarchical cleave had first been documented earlier in the process (see [Appendix E](#), H2, H3, F1, F2, D1, D2).⁵²

I emailed a large group of campus and community of stakeholders expressing my exasperation with this consultation process that —by all appearances— was stuck in a positive [*sic*] feedback loop⁵³ with the Trent Lands Committee's agenda (Dutry, 2021b). One of several

⁵² See the TSE faculty member's email June 29, 2020, and the divide reiterated in the Director of TSE's email correspondence September 26, 2020.

⁵³ In my email I wrote positive feedback loop but what I meant to say was negative feedback loop.

responses detailed the shared desire to realize an expanded vision of the TLNAP and its process (Jenkins, 2021).⁵⁴

Our Growers Group persevered in the final days of Phase 3 and made a submission so that our efforts would carry forward in the TLNAP process (Growers Group, 2021b). Yet even this was met with more contradiction from the Trent Lands Committee on January 15, 2021, stating:

The request for 11 acres is new, and substantial. As we have indicated, we remain interested in ensuring space for a smaller farm within the campus core while the larger farmland and associated infrastructure is relocated south of Pioneer Rd, both with a location that provides permanence and access. (personal communication, January 15, 2021)

This information was asserted as though our contributions and core location request in the initial Farm Plan, followed by our joint Growers Group and Seasoned Spoon letter, were never meaningfully considered, and that a minimum 25-minute walk from campus to the Pioneer Rd location was somehow compatible with access. If anything, our last efforts in Phase 3 were able to achieve partial representation of our location in the final TLNAP (although the Apiary was not illustrated as promised in the Trent Lands Committee's December 22 email). As well, the indication from the Trent Lands Committee of "increasing the boundaries of the core campus on the East Bank to provide land for TVG/TMG/Apiary" was also received (Trent University VP External Relations & Advancement, 2021b). But as mentioned previously, the Trent Lands Committee's final maps would minimize our core location and presence to a small numbered dot (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, p. 59), and its future public communications, alongside any mention of farming in the core of campus in the final TLNAP documents, was

⁵⁴ Note: the respondent chose to identify themselves in the context of this research and email correspondence.

non-descript or enclosed by statements of relocation and transition (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, p. 75, 2021e, p. 91; Trent University, 2021e, 2022b, 2022g).

5.2 Phases 3 & 4: October 2020 to March 2021 - Campus and Community Engagements in the TLNAP Process

The convergence of all these events documented in Chapters 4 and 5 generated an upswell of campus and community engagement during the Phase 3 feedback period from October 13, 2020, to January 4, 2021, and a brief but equally fervent response during Phase 4 from February 22, 2021, to March 26, 2021. In the final two phases of the TLNAP process, student and community leaders documented and submitted substantive, and in many cases overlapping concerns, hosted their own virtual event called Honouring the Land of the Sacred Elements, expressed a common need for meaningful engagement, requested extensions of Phase 3 and Phase 4 consultation periods, and more transparency to better inform the outcome of the TLNAP. A detailed timeline (see [Appendix G](#)) and corresponding documents from these submissions to the Trent Lands Committee have been submitted to the Trent Archives, accession #23-105-13-03 Matt Dutry and Community Trent Lands Plan Research Collection.

The last phase of the TLNAP consultation process followed the release of TLNAP Part IV: Towards Implementation, and ran from February 22, 2021, to March 5, 2021 (and March 10, 2021, unofficially). Phase 4 was limited to submitting online comments through a Qualtrics survey about Part IV of the draft plan, unlike the previous three phases which had interactive (albeit, also limited) input processes. The Growers Group had exhausted all avenues for consultation at this point and received no further communications from the Trent Lands Committee. In support of the core location proposal from the Growers Group and initial Farm

Plan drafted with the TSE, 4th year students from the ERST 4810H Ecological Design course emailed a project proposal (personal communication, March 9, 2021) to the Trent Lands Committee, requesting that a consolidated farm location North-East of the DNA building be incorporated in the TLNAP. This mixed-use proposal showed the integration of food and farming alongside campus infrastructure and residence developments (F. Francis, 2021). The design proposal was met with an email endorsement from a Governor (personal communication, March 12, 2021) and a courteous response from the VP of External Relations & Advancement (personal communication, March 12, 2021), but no further follow up was had. Like Phase 3, representatives from student and community organizations submitted many unresolved concerns and requested an extension to the Phase 4 feedback deadline to April 30, 2021. A five-day extension to the feedback deadline was granted to March 10 but was not communicated publicly (Trent University Manager Community Relations & University Events, 2021). On March 26, 2021, the Board of Governors approved the TLNAP Part IV: Implementation with no internal debate, abstentions, or objections.

Chapter 6: Further Study and Analysis of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Process

The outcomes documented in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 call attention to critical themes shown to be pervasive in the conduct of land-use planning at Trent. These include: the absence of or suboptimal consultation, misleading communications and/or the erasure or omission of context, a hurried pace and pressure to act, planning in the absence of information, hierarchy and its detrimental effects on consultation, an undervaluing of faculty, student, and community ideas and engagement, the overriding of shared and deliberate planning practices, a lack of

transparency and withholding information, simplified framings that threaten destruction to the social and ecological environment, and leadership performance that is at cross-purposes with its institutional principles. Research of this magnitude requires both the zooming in and zooming out of scope (beyond the Growers Group's context) to look at broader ramifications as they relate to the TLNAP. In this chapter, scholars, administrators, and community members can better comprehend the wide-reaching social, environmental, and economic implications affecting the Trent lands, and associated teaching, research, and learning. As a matter of course, this project led me to document prominent examples of conduct that intersect with the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan, its process, participants, and directives. The additional research and analysis contained in this chapter substantiate how development imperatives that are ungrounded in their socio-ecological context drive actions that thwart responsible university-community engagement (Etzioni, 1995; Hoppe, 2004; Koekkoek et al., 2021; Swaner, 2007; Westheimer, 2015), and put the institution at cross-purposes with the objects and purposes of the Trent Act (Bill Pr24: An Act to Incorporate Trent University, 1963, p. 884), and its broader vision and mission statements (Trent University, 2022c).

6.1 A Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of the TLNAP Results

A review of the numbers reported from the Phase 3 engagement period demonstrated a significant level of engagement occurred parallel to the formal feedback channels of the TLNAP process. The Trent Lands Committee reported 140+ respondents provided written entries through their online form and email (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021c, p. 9; *Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 3: Engagement Summary Report*, 2021, p. 7). The Trent Central Student Association (TCSA) and Trent Graduate Student Association (TGSA) reports showed a

total of 187+ respondents provided feedback to their online surveys (Sesin & Klemet-N'Guessan, 2021; Whalen, 2020). Beyond the 25% difference in engagement, a notable difference in the reporting was that the TCSA and TGSA published all the raw data collected, whereas the Trent Lands Committee did not. This underscores a distinct limitation in the Trent Lands Committee's reporting (Sesin & Klemet-N'Guessan, 2021; *Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 3: Engagement Summary Report*, 2021; Whalen, 2020). Notably, this result contrasted with that requested for increased information sharing, clarity, and transparency documented in the written submissions to the Trent Lands Committee (see [Appendix G](#)). This could have been heeded by the Trent Lands Committee in their Phase 3 report and their data published, while keeping confidentiality. After all, it was not an unfamiliar practice since they had published some data in their Phase 1 report (Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020, p. 45), and the precedent was demonstrated earlier in the 2012/13 Trent Lands Plan process (Trent University, 2013b, 2013a). Instead, they gave *an account* of the feedback/responses in a 'What We Heard' format which largely obscured the frequency and/or verifiable significance across the responses. And, by the Trent Lands Committee's own account, they likely omitted some responses from being reported stating, "The following is a list of the key messages we heard from participants through the various means of engagement, but is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the feedback received" (*Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Phase 3: Engagement Summary Report*, 2021, p. 9). Without transparency in the data, it is impossible to know to what extent feedback informed key messages, or what may have been missing in the reporting of feedback they received. However, we don't have to look far (see paragraph below) to see that in follow through, the Trent Lands Committee's actions did not meaningfully account for the student feedback they received. Furthermore, their reported "Translating Community

Engagement Findings to the TLNAP” (pp. 13-18) failed to provide the requested “active and open resolution process” (p. 12) to accommodate for unresolved concerns in the TLNAP process. Instead, process resolutions were simply put off to future engagements, stating “Trent University is committed to an ongoing public engagement at the more detailed project design stage of future initiatives” (p. 13). Given the patterns outlined in Chapter 3, 4, and 5, it seems unlikely that future engagements will differ substantively from those of the past.

The TCSA and TGSA survey data demonstrate that student consultation arising out of the Trent Lands Committee’s creation of the Trent Lands Master Plan (Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan), said to be “an important opportunity to re-engage the community to express their hopes, concerns and ideas for the Trent Lands” (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, p. 4) was, to a large extent, a failure. These reports, in combination with the following review of documents, demonstrate the Trent Lands Committee did not achieve alignment of students with their adopted University initiatives such as the Cleantech Commons, Seniors Village, and relocation of the Experimental Farm. These initiatives were ranked amongst the lowest percentiles of importance across both surveys. Students ranked other initiatives in the TLNAP Framework Plan such as the Traditional Teaching Lodge and Medicine Garden, Conservation and Enhancement of Trent Nature Areas, and Sustainable Village as most important, with some disagreement between the surveys in ranking the Complete Community (Sesin & Klemet-N’Guessan, 2021, pp. 3–4; *Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Summary: Framework Plan*, 2020, p. 7; Trent University, 2020d, pp. 5–6; Whalen, 2020, pp. 2–3).

More than a year after the TLNAP was approved, I followed the progress of initiatives in the Framework Plan with a review of Trent's 2021-22 Annual Report on the Implementation of the TLNAP and associated Capital Projects Update (Trent University Board of Governors, 2022a, pp. 44–49). Trent made no mention of the Traditional Teaching Lodge and Medicine Garden or Sustainable Village projects and instead listed the relocations of the Experimental Farm and Grounds Operation Facility (excluded in TLNAP consultations and documents). Paragraphs detailed the Seniors Village, Trent Farm relocation, and Cleantech Commons; all among the lowest ranked initiatives in the student feedback surveys. This wasn't the first time in recent history that Trent's consultation processes had strayed far from hitting their mark, either. Well-documented cases involving Trent International (2016) and Trent's Anti-Racism Task Force (2022) were published in Arthur Newspaper (N. Taylor, 2022). Taylor (2022) provides compelling quantitative and qualitative research that indicate detrimental trends for student well-being and questionable administrative conduct affecting the university. Hauntingly, their research echoes much of the blatant disregard for student input and disconnected consultation outcomes that have been documented here.

To give Trent credit where credit is due, the University Green Network (UGN)⁵⁵ was included in the Annual Report on the Implementation of the TLNAP (Trent University Board of Governors, 2022a, p. 47). This signaled a positive step in the direction of Conservation and Enhancement of Trent Nature Areas, which was the highest ranked initiative by graduate students in the Framework Plan (Sesin & Klemet-N'Guessan, 2021, p. 3). However, in the context of this research there was ample reason to be skeptical of the implementation report

⁵⁵ The University Green Network (which includes Trent's Nature Areas) is one of four campus areas that compose the Framework Plan of the TLNAP (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, p. 42).

given Trent’s patterns in land-use planning. The extent to which this was being carried out qualified it for supplemental study.

6.2 University Green Network, the Nature Areas, and Red Herrings

As of November 2022, only one Trent news story (Trent University, 2022j) highlighted the on-the-ground work to inform the University Green Network and Nature Areas management plans. All other news was repeated information from the TD Bank grant received (Trent University, 2021g, 2022e, 2022f) that would fund an ecologist to lead the work. The article detailed work from a student intern who undertook a biological monitoring project in the summer of 2022. It appeared that a comprehensive monitoring project was undertaken. Yet, with an understanding that Trent had conveyed unvetted content previously in updates about its campus food growing system, careful attention was warranted.⁵⁶ It was not clear to what extent each Nature Area received monitoring for species at risk and invasive plants, there were no reports or findings published. What was discernable in the news story was Trent’s development imperative intrinsic in a portion of the work listed; that was collecting baseline environmental information at the future University-Integrated Seniors Village site. In the same period, The Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences celebrated parallel research for the University-Integrated Seniors Village for its ability to be “integrated with university lands development priorities” (Trent University, 2022i). In this case, we could ask what extent of the total research was in response and auxiliary to land development priorities versus academic-based, environmental research to conserve and enhance Trent’s Nature Areas (and City designated Natural Areas)? The following

⁵⁶ Trent used a misleading photo from the TVG in its news story that claimed “research ramping up to establish strong roots for Trent Experimental Farm” (Trent University, 2022g).

monitoring work undertaken in the Nature Areas during Phase 2 through 4 of the TLNAP showed that, in the Trent context, research becomes an addendum to development priorities.

In 2020, Trent retained GEI Consultants, Savanta Division to undertake an Environmental Impact Brief (EIB) for the University-Integrated Seniors Village site. Summarizing the work, GEI Consultants made a technical claim that there would be a resulting increase in the surrounding Total Loss Farm Nature Area (TLFNA):

Overall, the total developable area (i.e., 7.84 ha) will be reduced, as compared to a 17 ha development area within the Trent Lands Plan (2013), and will allow Trent to increase the area of the TLFNA on the Subject Lands from approximately 13.23 ha to 22.6 ha (i.e., net gain of 9.37 ha). (GEI Consultants Savanta Division, 2021, p. 4)

At first glance it would appear Trent was achieving its Net Benefit objective of “maintaining or improving habitat and biodiversity within the system” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021f, p. 162). However, when examining the TLFNA context across multiple documents, striking discrepancies in the conservation and enhancement narrative became clear. First, GEI Consultants, whether intentionally or not, passed over the fact that Natural Areas (i.e. potentially significant woodlands and candidate significant wildlife habitat) adjoined with the TLFNA boundaries were inadequately researched and updated in the 2013 Trent Lands Plan. When comparing the 2013 Trent Lands Plan map (Trent University, 2013e), to the EIB map (GEI Consultants Savanta Division, 2021, fig. 3), it was clear Trent had simply overlaid a mixed-use, medium, and low density residential development plan on top of a sparsely described Parcel Profile from the 2006 Endowment Lands Master Plan (officeforurbanism, 2006, pp. 83, 118–119).⁵⁷ In this case, the GEI Consultants’ claimed gain for the TLFNA was, to an

⁵⁷ Which from an ecological standpoint, was not updated since the 2002 Nature Areas Stewardship Plan (Jones et al., 2002, pp. 242–248).

extent, only restoring to working order what was already there but had not been correctly documented. Second, when viewing City maps of the protected Natural Areas adjoining the TLFNA (GEI Consultants Savanta Division, 2021, figs. 1, 3),⁵⁸ the proposed total developable area was actually a *subtraction* from the Natural Areas and immediate expansion of the TLFNA.⁵⁹ This impact on the Natural Areas and loss for an enhanced TLFNA was later obfuscated in Trent’s public communications (Trent University, 2021f, pp. 1–2) and, by all appearances, the Trent Lands Committee had planned for this subtraction by omitting the parcel lands in question from its Nature Areas designation during Phase 3 of the TLNAP development (Trent University, 2020a) and in the final TLNAP (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021f, pp. 155, 157, 161). It’s difficult to unsee that Trent was pre-supposing a site-specific outcome for this area, although in their public communications this is exactly what the Trent Lands Committee claimed the TLNAP was not doing (Trent University, 2021b, p. 2), and later glossed over, neglecting to mention what had been left unprotected, while indicating GEI Consultants’ “reports are being prepared to inform the site design” (Trent University, 2021a, p. 3). This misleading approach to land-use planning at Trent was not new in the context of this research. However, it can be seen as a precedent setting case in the context of the TLNAP implementation where comprehensive research at the University-Integrated Seniors Village site and on-campus pedagogy became an addendum to development priorities (and shares characteristics with what I later coin as *fait accompli* planning). In the case of the Total Loss Farm Nature Area, research

⁵⁸ The Natural Areas were adopted in the 2021 City of Peterborough Official Plan and approved after the Provincial review was completed in 2023 (City of Peterborough, 2021b, p. 2, 2023a, pp. 1, 2).

⁵⁹ The GEI Consultant’s report stated: “Potentially significant woodlands and candidate SWH were identified on the TAP 2D lands and should be further assessed through detailed studies. Significant features (i.e., woodlands and candidate SWH) identified on the TAP 2D lands are constrained from a policy perspective and should be assessed further” (GEI Consultants Savanta Division, 2021, p. 17).

from both students and external consultants was absorbed into supporting a development imperative.

We don't have to look far to see an additional, and sizeable, gap in Trent's University Green Network framework. Trent made a similar, cunning claim about increases to the Nature Areas in the final TLNAP. When viewing the total hectares of Nature Areas protected across the 2002, 2006, 2013, and 2021 land plans, it becomes clear Trent's (2021) highlighted 'increase' of 20 ha to 314 ha is a red herring (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021f, p. 154). By omitting to note the reductions of land from the Nature Areas that occurred between the 2002 Nature Areas Stewardship Plan and 2006 Endowment Lands Master Plan (and were carried over to the 2013 Trent Lands Plan), the total 314 hectares of approved Nature Areas in the TLNAP were actually a slight decrease from the 317 ha designated in the 2002 plan (Jones et al., 2002, p. 35). There was no 20 ha increase to the Nature Areas. Furthermore, using the search terms 'Trent Lands and Nature Areas' to review all Board of Governors agendas from March 2021 through May 2023 showed no approval for the only legitimate and meaningful increase in the 2021 plan, the "Pending Further Assessment" area, located at the Promise Rock Nature Area, which was supposed to add 8 ha (for a total of 322 ha) to the Nature Areas (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021f, pp. 150, 154, 155) (see Matt Dutry and Community Trent Lands Plan Research Collection (23-015-13-02-03; 23-015-13-02-04; 23-015-13-02-05)). The current boundary of the Nature Areas remains at 314 ha, which is a reduction from the 2002 plan, raising questions about the authenticity of Trent's approach to protection and the claimed additions to the Nature Areas in the 2021 TLNAP.

6.3 Governance Structures and Conduct that Impede Responsible University-Community Engagement and Undermine Institutional and Academic Integrity

6.3.1 The Trent Lands Committee

Lands development priorities were embedded in the Trent Lands Committee’s founding (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, p. 1; Kylie, La Barge, et al., 2017, p. 5; Trent University Task Force on Endowment Lands Management and Governance, 2007). Due to the conduct of Trent’s senior leadership before, during, and after the TLNAP process, it has been consistently demonstrated that meaningful consultation with the campus and community is subordinated to revenue-driven and predetermined development plans. As Wood (2020) stated, “In reality, current institutional policies and structures tend to mitigate the ideals and benefits of engagement” (p. 4). As the preceding context and chapters demonstrated, senior leadership actions have failed to move past a rhetoric of engagement and demonstrate rigorous conduct with their own, and/or others’, information during land-use planning and consultation processes. The following information further substantiates such rhetoric, but also extends the analysis to the institutional policies and structures that enable such conduct, which obscure the politics and social choices that are directing the decisions being made, and mask potential or real harms to the public good.

During the BOG’s approval of the TLNAP, the President noted several responsibilities justifying its approval, including “a responsibility to continue the mission of the founders of Trent University” (Trent University Board of Governors, 2021b, p. 3).⁶⁰ Further, they stated:

⁶⁰ The Trent Act states: “The objects and purposes of the University are, (a) the advancement of learning and the dissemination of knowledge; and (b) the intellectual, social, moral and physical development of its members and the betterment of society” (Bill Pr24: An Act to Incorporate Trent University, 1963, p. 884).

failing to explore appropriate development opportunities was not the way for Trent to be an intellectual and a moral leader in a situation in which the development of lands would necessarily continue, but in unsustainable ways if we and others did not take leadership in showing *how* [emphasis added] to pursue development in a way that is consistent with economic, social and environmental responsibilities. (p. 3)

The research contained herein is not claiming that construction for services, housing, community infrastructure, and associated revenue are inherently an undermining undertaking. However, it is the *how*, not the doing, of planning and development that is a very important distinction, and requiring further attention and study given the patterns, themes, and strategies documented in this research. As demonstrated by the twin-pad arena development, whether legitimate inclusion of the campus and community at the decision-making table is part of a development process can determine which path development actions take and the outcomes that result (Gibson, 2019; Hayward-Haines, 2018; Stewart, 2018). To my knowledge, no detailed analysis has been documented about the comprehensive failings resulting from the pursuit of the twin-pad arena development on Trent lands (City of Peterborough, 2019; Kovach, 2019). What were the total costs from wasted financial resources (both City and Trent), hours of community and administrative labour used (not to speak of damages to trust and reputation), and near loss of ecological functions in a Provincially Significant Wetland, during the pursuit of this development?⁶¹ Yet, lacking a published analysis, and in support of approving the contested TLNAP and process, the President had the conceit to invoke:

a responsibility to ensure that the University operates in a way that is both environmentally and financially sustainable, not only now, but for a hundred years in the future...

⁶¹ A future case study might also analyze similar metrics associated with the Cleantech Commons project, with regards to the loss of significant environmental features (a drumlin (J. Davis et al., 2016, pp. 34, 44–46, 71) and old growth cedar trees (Schollen & Company Inc. et al., 2020, p. 3 "removal of cedar trees")), impacts on trust and reputation, timeline delays (Johnston-Lindsay, 2023), and the absence of revenue (Trent University Board of Governors, 2023a, pp. 26–27). As of December 2023, City Councillor Riel noted the City's \$14 million investment and continued share of 50% of the Executive Director's \$260,000 salary, with no tenants or return on investment (City of Peterborough, 2023b, pt. 1:50:01).

The Board of Governors Minutes of the Meeting on February 5, 2021, continued:

(in passing, he [the President] noted that the insolvency issues at Laurentian University were a reminder that we must take this seriously) [my addition]. (Trent University Board of Governors, 2021b, p. 3)

With no apparent analysis into Trent’s “*showing how to pursue development*” [emphasis added] (p. 3), it raises questions about what is being taken seriously in this context? Ironically, Laurentian University’s Sudbury Campus Master Plan shared a disturbing resemblance to many components (i.e., the language, planning framework, engagement process, visuals, and content) within the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan (DIALOG Inc. & MMM Inc., 2013).

Fieldnotes during my engagement in the TLNAP process revealed a moment of perspicacity. On January 2, 2021, I recorded my personal thoughts and intuitions about the TLNAP:

At this point, I am taking a step back from the Trent Lands Committee’s stick and carrot game. . . . I would much rather turn my time and attention toward developing an analysis that can provide explanation for the apparent lack of feedback incorporation. However, that is not to say that I don’t see value with continued engagement. I don’t believe the current trajectory will provide outcomes that are reflective of, or inclusive of the substantiated community feedback. Mainly, *I hypothesize that this process which stems from deeper systemic orientations, will, on its current course, not meet an outcome that is holistic or inclusive of substantiated community feedback* [emphasis added]. I will continue to play my role in the community organizations I am a part of, however. (fieldnotes, January 2, 2021)

I did not have the documents substantiating this at the time, but the reality was that Trent’s senior leadership had created an insular governance model with the formation of the Trent Lands Committee. This was facilitated through unprecedented by-law changes alongside non-board

members being deputized into *significant* decision-making positions. What followed in action reflected my hypothesis in the design, methods, and results of the TLNAP process.

In 2017, Trent's senior leadership (the Chair of Executive Committee, Chair of Nominating and Governance Committee, Chair of Endowment Lands Committee, and VP External Relations & Advancement) subverted some of Trent's structural checks and balances within its governing by-laws through the establishment of the Trent Lands Committee (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017). Before this, any appointed committee of the Board of Governors that had a majority of members who were not *also serving* on the Board, was to function in an advisory capacity only (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, n. Appendix A, sec. 26). Trent's leadership changed Trent By-Laws No. 1 which previously maintained BOG oversight and control over the institution's highest levels of decision-making. The by-law changes during this committee's inception enabled the Trent Lands Committee, composed of a majority of non-board members, to be delegated the same powers as the Board of Governors, and execute decisions beyond an advisory capacity (sec. 27).

Without reviewing the entirety of recorded by-law changes, we can surmise this may have been the first time in Trent's history that a *standing* committee with a non-majority of Board members would be given the power to make the decisions implemented by the Execution of Instruments such as "Contracts, documents or instruments in writing requiring execution by the University ... as used in this by-law shall include deeds, mortgages, charges, conveyances, powers of attorney, transfers and assignments of property of all kinds..." (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, n. Appendix A, sec. 34). Beyond delegated signing authority on financial instruments, its

non-board members were also given many of the same rights as Board members, such as indemnification (sec. 36), insurance (sec. 37), and limitation of liability (sec. 38). This undermining of the structure and direct accountability of the Board and its power is a worrisome development in a publicly funded University. It is especially concerning given the narrow scope of the Trent Lands Committee’s previously identified membership, “comprised of volunteer real estate, land developer and legal experts” (Kylie, La Barge, et al., 2017, p. 5).

The justification provided for these changes was misleading. Leadership establishing the Trent Lands Committee claimed:

To ensure this committee has sufficient expertise, focus and capacity to execute its mandate, it will be composed of a majority of non-board members with relevant experience. In order for this committee to move forward with this composition, changes to the Trent By-Laws No. 1 are required. (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, p. 3)

The first sentence in the committee’s statement is valid. The rationale for efficacy can be easily understood. However, the second sentence makes a false claim. Trent’s leadership did not require changes to Trent By-Laws No 1 for the “committee to move forward with its composition” (p. 3). The Board did not need to make these changes as suggested; the execution of Board powers over Instruments by a majority of non-board members for planning and development decisions could have remained under Board control on a case-by-case basis. Further by-law/archival research would be needed to confirm, but it’s probable in all previous cases from Trent’s 53 years of history, under the guidance of the Board of Governors, only *from time to time* by resolution would an appointee be delegated such powers (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, n. Appendix A, sec. 34). An appointee receiving delegation on a case-by-case basis, versus a standing, In-Camera committee (detailed below) with the power to make the decisions

implemented by the Execution of Instruments, was a significant departure here. Although an argument for efficiency may be put forward, the documented results and failures from the TLNAP process demonstrate that this governance model was inadequate in fulfilling the full scope of its Terms of Reference (Trent University Board of Governors, 2019e, p. 1). The Trent Lands Committee divided the food growing spaces and associated academic partnerships, imperiled learning opportunities and employment for students, repeatedly undermined Trent’s environmental knowledge and reputation, and failed to benefit from some of its most engaged campus and community members. More than six years after its establishment it hadn’t even achieved an annual revenue stream, its key metric of success (Trent University Board of Governors, 2023a, pp. 24–28). The detrimental, structural circumstances in which powers have been delegated from 2017 remain.

Another crucial observation to make with the establishment of the Trent Lands Committee, was their use of Board Special Resolution IV.1: Meetings of the Board of Governors, Appendix B ‘Protocol for In Camera Meetings’. In the committee’s Terms of Reference, it simply stated “In accordance with University by-laws, Trent Lands Committee and sub-committee meetings are held in camera unless otherwise determined” (Trent University Board of Governors, 2019e, p. 3). But what were the by-laws regulating the use of this protocol, and how did the Trent Lands Committee act in accordance with the “Closed Session” requirements for all meetings (Trent University, 2018e, n. Appendix B)? With no justification present in their Terms of Reference, the term “LAND” in Board Special Resolution IV.1: Meetings of the Board of Governors may provide the most plausible explanation. It states, “LAND – matters related to property transactions and related financial matters where a high

degree of financial confidentiality is required”. Less frequent or fitting for the development of the TLNAP may have been “LEGAL – matters related to lawsuits, litigation, sensitive legal undertakings, etc.;" (Trent University, 2018e, n. Appendix B).

It's reasonable to claim that in the case of informing the development of the TLNAP, not all conversations would have categorically fell under, or been constrained by, property or legal matters. The fact of the matter is that the Trent Lands Committee alongside hired consultants were directly overseeing the “Campus and Community Engagement” process to create the TLNAP (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021c, p. 8). Statements such as “‘the land’ is an important cultural construct at Trent that must be considered throughout the process, as well as the social context of campus and community interactions on the various parts of the Trent Lands” (Trent University, 2018b, p. 37) and “Early engagement with faculty focused on taking students out of the classroom and providing them with first-hand experience of cultural values, environments, and the lands surrounding the university campus” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021c, p. 8), show that the Trent Lands Committee had a much more extensive understanding of ‘LAND’. One way the Trent Lands Committee could have addressed this would have been to have separate agenda items, those sorted into that which were non-property or -legal, and those that explicitly were. This could have enabled open session meetings and the potential for a better handling of discussions and decision making. As I have documented throughout this thesis, there are many examples of meetings and land-use planning activities overseen by the Trent Lands Committee that diversified well beyond its ‘in camera’ confinements, where discussion would have, and arguably needed to, benefit from “the experiences of specific individuals whose everyday activities are in some way hooked into,

shaped by, and constituent of the institutional relations under exploration” (DeVault & McCoy, 2006, p. 18).

The closure of all Trent Lands Committee meetings is a structural overextension of power that separated public access to its meeting discussions, minutes, analysis, decisions, and general oversight in relation to the TLNAP process. In March of 2021, I put forward questions, and a corresponding proposal regarding increasing representation on the Trent Lands Committee to the Chair of the Board of Governors, VP External Relations & Advancement, and President. Yet, it was met with no meaningful engagement or consideration. The Chair of the Board signaled the continuation of the status quo when responding to my inquiry. My email correspondence March 29, 2021, stated:

I do want to follow up on my concerns though, as well as the open invitation to more fulsome discussions and working toward developing a more inclusive approach. We met last Tuesday and spoke about some language changes that were made from the feedback period. Was there any approval of the additional revisions for firmer, more committed language in the TLNAP documents? I had not heard back by the time of my deputation.

Further, I wonder if the Trent Lands Committee (and Board) would consider appointing two student positions to its composition? I believe there is a gap in student and community knowledge of the plan as identified in both the TCSA and TGSA reports, as well as from broader engagements. In addition to the aforementioned revisions, Trent could benefit from having student experts on this committee. A position(s) profile and skills matrix could be drawn up and to help with potential turnover, the two positions can be staggered to ensure continuity and succession in student expertise. I would extend my hand to this effort as someone who has come here to work in good faith, having already gained expertise on the TLNAP. (personal communication, March 29, 2021)

The email response from the Chair of the Board of Governors April 6, 2021, stated:

Matt, I want to acknowledge receipt of your email dated March 29, 2021, re follow up to the Board of Governors meeting.

The Trent Lands and Nature Area Plan provides us with a framework that upholds Trent University’s mission as a learning institution, steward of the natural environment and

community anchor and as I indicated at the meeting, the Board of Governors has been very engaged for the past three years in every aspect of the development of that plan. I speak on behalf of all of the Governors when I say how appreciative we are of your interest in the TL&NA Plan and the passion that you have demonstrated at each of your deputations.

Your feedback and the feedback that we received from other members of the campus and community were integral to the development of the new TL&NA Plan.

As we undertake public engagement on the university's plans for the Seniors Village, I would encourage you to continue to provide us with feedback and input, however, in order for the Trent Lands Committee and the Board of Governors to properly assess that feedback and input I would ask you to adhere to the deadlines established. (personal communication, April 6, 2021) (see [Appendix E](#), H2, H6, F1)

At the time of this writing, the Trent Lands Committee has still held all its meetings in camera and there were no indications if they opened their membership to students and/or community members with more diverse backgrounds.

More broadly, given what this research reveals, the misapplication of by-laws to close the Trent Lands Committee's meetings while simultaneously providing it excessive Board powers raises critical questions as to Trent leadership's ability to execute a reasonably prudent 'Standard of Care' and "act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the University" (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, n. Appendix A, sec. 6). Readers need to examine the balance of responsibilities entrusted to the Trent Lands Committee: their responsibility in the formation of the TLNAP for a public institution, oversight for the facilitation of the campus and community engagement process, guidance over current and future development projects affecting community and ecosystem function, financial implications on the institution, and to have regard for its guiding principles of 'RESPECT' identified as core to the TLNAP. These include:

Respect the unique cultural heritage, history, context, and setting;

Enhance the University and support the campus community;

Strengthen integration, connectivity, and relationships with the surrounding communities;

Protect and enhance natural areas;

Enhance and create high-quality public spaces and architecture;

Commit to planning and design excellence and innovation; and

Target sustainable initiatives and projects

(Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, n. Appendix B)

In the context of this research, it is difficult to justify the continued misapplication of these by-laws as generally exercising “care, diligence and skill that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in comparable circumstances” (Kylie, Edwards, et al., 2017, n. Appendix A, sec. 6)

Further, when looking at the final output of the TLNAP, we can see that the confinement of power through Trent’s by-laws and structures was not an isolated action in the establishment of the Trent Lands Committee but has remained an intentional practice sanctioned in the TLNAP by Trent’s Board of Governors.

6.3.2 The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Levels of Engagement

The TLNAP shows a Levels of Engagement table (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, p. 195) with Trent’s approach to engagement. This model was adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). But the Trent Lands Committee reduced the scope of the

original model. Nowhere does Trent acknowledge the IAP2 Federation as the source of the model or that theirs is an adaptation of the original; it was labelled under a header of ‘A Trent-Specific Approach’ (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, p. 195). The IAP2 Guidelines for Use of Copyright Protected Materials state: “It should be clearly understood that failure to request permission, as well as give due recognition to the IAP2 Federation as the source and the custodian of this body of intellectual knowledge will be considered unethical and unacceptable” (IAP2 International Federation, n.d.-b). This was a clear violation of academic integrity as set out by Trent itself, whereby “All members of the University community share the responsibility for the academic standards and reputation of the University” (Trent University, n.d.-a). A fair question emerges, does the integrity of information in land-use planning and governance meet the same requirements for academic integrity that apply within Trent’s institution? And should the conduct of leadership roles be held to the same rigorous standards that students are? After all, if a student fails to uphold these standards, it only impacts the individual. In the case of senior leadership, and as evidenced by the twin-pad arena development,⁶² any failures to uphold rigour in their decisions can have irreversible and impactful effects on the campus, community, and environment at large, and over long periods of time.

The alterations to the IAP2 model, alongside the misapplication of by-laws, remove significant power from the campus and community to genuinely engage with and influence the TLNAP implementation. Drawing from Dorothy Smith’s (1999) work, DeVault (2006) elaborated that with institutional ethnography, a “focus on texts comes from an empirical observation—that technologies of social control are increasingly and pervasively textual and

⁶² See Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.

discursive” (p. 294). Smith (1990, pp. 83–84) examined textual realities as relations of ruling. In short, relations of ruling aren’t only referring to structures of power but also how they are discursively formed and reified through textual forms of coordination (DeVault, 2006; Smith, 2006).

Trent modified key language under each of the five columns in the IAP2 model. Below, I outline what these changes were in each column, and then provide a rationale and some examples of how each of these changes can affect transparent, informed, and meaningful public participation. By triangulating the IAP2 model, Trent’s Levels of Engagement model, and documented outcomes, we can begin to understand why these alterations have significant ramifications for campus and community engagement, and the future of land-use planning at Trent:

- 1) In the “Inform” column, the IAP2 model stated with “balanced and objective information” (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). This was changed to “information and data” in Trent’s model (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, p. 195). By way of these changes, Trent can, and did, inform public engagement with unbalanced, and obfuscated information.
 - a. The Trent Lands Committee and VP External Relations & Advancement conflated the MTO Highway Reserve boundary and Cleantech Commons road development. This obfuscated potential impacts arising from the Ministry of Transport plans that, more precisely, would not affect the TVG (see [Appendix I](#)).

- b. The Trent Lands Committee did not disclose the transfer of land to the City of Peterborough in 2018 at Pioneer Rd and Douro Ninth Line for potential recreational sports fields where they communicated the Trent Farm was to relocate.
 - c. The Trent Lands Committee excluded the Grounds Operation relocation during the TLNAP process that could displace the TVG. The Grounds Operation Facility was also conflated as a ‘future public works yard’ alongside a City transportation design, rather than it being Trent’s internal servicing facility and development project.
 - d. The Director of Campus Planning and Development (who reports to the Trent Lands Committee) repeatedly obfuscated documented, development project timelines and the TLNAP Development Process.⁶³
- 2) In the “Consult” column, the IAP2 model stated to “obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions” (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). This was changed to “attain feedback on *presented* [emphasis added] analysis and mapping, options and or decisions” in Trent’s model (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, p. 195). By way of these changes, Trent maintains a biased, dominant perspective approach to decision making (see [Appendix E](#), H2, H3).
- a. The misapplication of by-laws excluded public access to Trent Lands Committee meetings. Thereby providing feedback on the Trent Lands Committee’s handling of raw data/information, analysis, and formation of alternatives or decisions was not possible. Trent’s change to “presented analysis” reinforces the exclusion (p. 195).

⁶³ Detailed in Chapter 8.

- 3) In the “Involve” column, the IAP2 model stated to “ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered” (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). This was changed to “ensure feedback and aspirations are understood” in Trent’s model (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, p. 195). By way of these changes, Trent does not need to substantiate or repudiate considerations from public feedback. If the objective of this column is to involve public participation in influencing the options developed, this modification diminishes Trent’s responsibility to engage with their campus and community in a transparent and meaningful dialogue during the decision-making process (see [Appendix E](#), H2, H3, F3, D2, D4).
- a. Trent’s changes justify their truncated ‘what we heard’ approach to involvement, where concerns/feedback were echoed back to the community through TLNAP engagement reports. However, there was no assurance or documentation that contributions were considered or substantially evaluated (nor the extent to which feedback may have been, wholly or partially, adopted, and why) by the Trent Lands Committee. For example, the alternative of a Green Academic land designation (versus complete relocation) to offer both permanency and proximity for the campus food growing projects, aligning with the core model Farm Plan proposal, was not evaluated and discussed.
 - b. The dissonance and disapproval expressed in many of the campus and community consultation letters submitted between December 2020 to March 2021 show that the Trent Lands Committee member’s claims about the “robust engagement activities” and “that [*sic*] consultation process had been remarkable and unprecedented” (Trent

- University Board of Governors, 2021b, p. 2), did not align with community responses about its own participation (see [Appendix G](#)).
- c. The Trent Lands Committee’s ongoing development and displacement pressures put on the TVG, failure to re-sign their Memorandum of Understanding, and punitive MOU terms demonstrate the departure from meaningful consideration.⁶⁴
- 4) In the “Collaborate” column, the IAP2 model stated to “incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible” (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). This was changed to “incorporate advice to the extent possible” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, p. 195) in Trent’s model. By way of these changes, Trent’s ambiguous statement of “extent possible” (p. 195), in combination with the Trent Lands Committee’s closed session meetings, sustain structural uses of power to direct decision-making in non-transparent and limiting ways, while keeping advice and/or recommendations at an unsubstantiated, arm’s length (see [Appendix E](#), H2, H3, F1, F2, F3, D2).
- a. 32 examples of vague, non-committal language with regards to Trent’s future actions were highlighted during Phase 4 of the TLNAP consultations and submitted to the Trent Lands Committee after a campus and community consultation meeting raised the issue (Dutry, 2021a; Trent University Manager of Community Relations and University Events, 2021). Only two changes were incorporated in the final TLNAP with no rationale or resolution (which were requested) for the outstanding concerns.

⁶⁴ Detailed in Chapter 8.

- When viewing the submissions, it is clear that ‘extent possible’ in this case was a nugatory measure for collaboration.
- b. Other uses of this ambiguous and opaque processing language are found throughout the TLNAP, mainly as it relates to campus and community engagement (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, pp. 75, 76, 2021e, p. 90, 2021f, p. 179, 2021h, pp. 189, 194, 195, 205, 207, A-233, B-237) and the protection of the environment and natural features (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, pp. 35, 72, 76, 84, 2021e, pp. 89, 112, 113, 130, 2021f, pp. 162, 176, 2021h, pp. 201, 208, 210, 218, 219, 221, 222, B-237). Search terms include: where relevant, where appropriate, as appropriate, to the degree possible, where possible, extent feasible, where feasible, and extent possible. Questionably, by whose measures/criteria; what information or data is included in the analysis, toward what goal, or mission statement, and to who is it accountable? Within Trent’s current structure, all land related matters are controlled by Trent’s senior leadership in closed committee meetings with no requirements for transparency or accountability to the campus or community’s analysis. This use of language contradicts Trent’s clear awareness around maximums, or “greatest extent” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021e, p. 133) as stated in relation to its compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Yet even this was diminished by the broad use of “degree possible” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021e, p. 123) in Trent’s Universal Accessibility section. Trent’s repetitive use of ambiguous and opaque processing language in combination with its closed governance structure enables the negation of informed decision making, as demonstrated by the context in this thesis research.

- c. The Trent Lands Committee used their power to direct changes in the Farm Plan and affect the choice of location for the SAFS programming and student-led food growing projects. Contrary to incorporating the TSE and student recommendations to the maximum extent possible, or providing balanced and objective information to inform discussions, the committee dismissed the initial Farm Plan recommendations and instead framed choices around a compromise between permanency or proximity, while not supporting the cultivation of a hybrid model.
- 5) In the “Empower” column, the IAP2 model stated “we will implement what you decide” (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). Trent completely omitted this column from their model (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, p. 195). Neither IAP2 Guidelines nor IAP2 Core Values suggest organizations select one of the ways they will largely consult or use a truncated version of their model for public participation (IAP2 International Federation, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). By way of these changes, Trent currently eliminates any assured possibility for empowering campus and community-led solutions to future issues, whereby implementing firsthand knowledge may be the most effectual.
- a. This removal was opposite to other claims in the TLNAP. In section 7.0 University Districts - Universal Guidelines, Trent stated: “The following guidelines are intended to inform the design of development across all of the University Districts” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021e, p. 104). Under guideline 7.1 Towards a Regenerative Future, Trent stated, “Social Resilience, Community, and Inclusivity: An opportunity to connect and amplify initiatives that address social needs in a systemic and holistic way, under a community-led vision” (p. 106). Trent’s deletion

of this column is especially relevant as it relates to land-based learning, related pedagogy, Treaty relations and Indigenous Knowledge, and the advancement and creation of novel, context-specific knowledge.

The above alterations, although subtle in appearance, have profound implications on what is to be accepted at Trent University as public participation. It is clear however, given the many examples above, that these normative changes negate the IAP2's Core Values (IAP2 International Federation, n.d.-a). Like the Trent Lands Committee's broader intellectual understanding of 'LAND', their choice of quote in their February 14, 2020, newsletter demonstrates that the committee had a more extensive understanding about the importance of active, public participation in community-university engagement:

In an age of disruption, community–university collaboration is a must . . .

Communities possess deep knowledge of change, its drivers and its impacts. In many cases, they actively seek change to realize the vision of a better future. Establishing two-way, symbiotic relationships between communities and universities — in which the community is an active participant, stimulating and focusing research and innovation — will generate the resiliency and creativity needed for our communities to navigate a disrupted future. Doing so means bringing the community from outside of campus to the heart of campus, where it can help inform the work of students, faculty and staff. (Trent University, 2020c, pp. 3–4)

The juxtaposition between the Trent Lands Committee's changes to the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation and its public engagements may provide some understanding into the dissonance expressed in many of the campus and community consultation letters submitted between December 2020 to March 2021 (see [Appendix G](#)). This sentiment was echoed by one

interview participant regarding the imposed relocation of the food growing projects to the Nature Areas on the periphery of campus.⁶⁵

I'm really upset about it. I think so, for the real like lack of consultation, lack of empowerment, purposeful use of discourse. What I've said about soil quality, mycelium, and carbon, but also in terms of access for students. Like, it's a significant distance further away from the campus. Which means that less students will go or can go. Which means that less students will engage in the land around them. Less students will engage in critical food systems education. And less students will physically have access to food. Food insecurity for post-secondary students is almost an epidemic that we don't talk about. And one of the really dignified and easy ways that you can access fresh food at Trent is to volunteer in one of these gardens. They've always operated like unofficially, mutual aid style, take what you need. If you add 15 minutes of a walk [in addition to the existing 10–15-minute walk] or the need for a vehicle or bus or whatever into that. Less people will go and that means that less people will have access to food. . . . And just in terms of physical access like Trent has a really inaccessible campus already if you're disabled. You maybe can get to the TVG. You definitely won't get over to the Nature Areas. So [they're] taking another layer of access away [my additions]. (personal communication, September 28, 2021)

The emphasis and reiteration need to be made, claims from the Trent Lands Committee's members about the “robust engagement activities” and “that [*sic*] consultation process had been remarkable and unprecedented” (Trent University Board of Governors, 2021b, p. 2) did not match the community's responses about its own participation in the TLNAP process.

Chapter 7: Research Findings - Alternative, and Generative Approaches to Land-use Planning

In Chapters 3 through 6, I render visible and unsettle as Taylor and Robinson (2009) write, “the multifarious ways in which power relations work within school decision-making processes” (p. 169). As identified in Chapter 2, the bulk of my research contributes to a dearth in

⁶⁵ Detailed in Chapter 4, p. 105. See “The following communication elucidates that aside from any program aspirations, a key modification was the matter of location”.

literature attending to how uneven social relations are discursively produced and structures of power are operationalized in post-secondary institutions. In this chapter, I go one step further to detail alternative approaches to land-use planning that can offer generative possibilities in contrast to what was documented within Trent's Land and Nature Areas Plan process, and as correlate educational literature suggests, move toward dialogic practices to improve outcomes (Flecha, 2011; Miller & Hafner, 2008; Pearce & Wood, 2019; C. Taylor & Robinson, 2009; Westheimer, 2015). This is echoed in critical food systems education (CFSE) literature, where scholars call for education that assists students and members of community in recognizing their capacity to bring about structural transformation through collaborative efforts (Meek & Tarlau, 2015, 2016).

These findings reflect pluriversal planning scholarship where communities' resistance and articulation of visions produce alternatives to planning processes that have failed them (Escobar, 2018; Vasudevan & Novoa E., 2022). The recent failures from the Ontario government's planning approach to housing development (Lysyk, 2023) and subsequent reversal of the Greenbelt decision (Benzie et al., 2023; E. McIntosh & Syed, 2023) demonstrates the importance of political activism that mobilizes in contrast to the prevailing power structure and takes action to broaden the planning process. When communities (or in this case, Trent's campus and community) are excluded from genuine engagement in official processes, their members can be inspired to conduct their own organizing and planning in parallel to these hermetically sealed, 'official' planning processes, which can result in substantive changes. The evolving literature of pluriversal planning suggests these expanded planning processes are increasingly relevant,

legitimate, and necessary forms of planning. A response from one interview participant gives support to this understanding:

Participant: The other side of that, though, that I see is that students increasingly see themselves as a body with rights. I feel like it used to be for me at least, when I was in school, I was just grateful to be there. The university was in charge. And now along with this commoditization do see myself as a customer. I am one of the people whose keeping this University afloat, and I should be able to demand what I want out of my education and what I wanted in my institution. Whether that's good hours or benefits or a say in the direction of the physical development of the university. And I think that more students are starting to see themselves like that which is really inspiring.”

Researcher: Yeah, understanding themselves, as you know, like in the context of Trent.

Participant: Like we have agency.

Researcher: Yeah, as part of the community, right?

Participant: And it's not just that these things are happening to us, but that we can be a part of them and even change the direction of a lot of processes. (personal communication, September 28, 2021)

7.1 [Fait Accompli Planning](#)

At Trent University, the questions of permanence for existing food growing sites and stability for their established organizations were repeatedly mired in uncertainty within the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process. There was an inevitability narrative proceeding from the Trent Lands Committee and senior leadership that future developments, such as the MTO highway corridor on the eastern campus border, decisions around the proposed road connecting the Cleantech Commons to the core campus, or later, the Grounds Operations relocation were likely to disturb the established food growing locations. Using institutional ethnography in Chapters 4 and 5, I documented how this planning narrative initiated a cleave in the original farm plan between the Trent School of Environment (TSE) and Growers Group for where the location of the farm and food growing operations should or could be located. As the Director of the Trent

School of Environment noted, it was a decision that was out of our control (personal communication, September 26, 2020).

However, as a participant-researcher in Trent's on-campus food system, I have documented how the changes imposed by the Trent Lands Committee failed to advance a comprehensive process for discursive interaction. Additionally, the institution failed to undertake a genuinely public consultation, falling well short of the mandate expected from a public-serving educational institution. This approach, which I coin as *fait accompli* planning, reflects an undemocratic, non-generative, planning process approach that is observable within this research and deserving of more attention in post-secondary institutional contexts.

A "*fait accompli*" represents a strategic move in the context of land grabs/territorial appropriations. Altman (2017), drawing from Schelling (1966) and Snyder & Diesing (1977), define it as: "A *fait accompli* imposes a limited unilateral gain at an adversary's expense in an attempt to get away with that gain when the adversary chooses to relent rather than escalate in retaliation" (p. 882). One of the prominent contours of *fait accompli* planning is a false inevitability narrative proceeding from those in positions of power, such as the impending developments reiterated by the Trent Lands Committee during (and after) the TLNAP process, or the Ontario government's need for Greenbelt land to accommodate housing development. Additional recurring themes that emerged through the intuitional ethnography included: a lack of transparency and withholding of information, absence of consultation, misleading communications and the omission/erasure of context, simplified framings that threaten destruction to the social and ecological environment, the undervaluing of faculty, student, and community ideas and engagement, planning in the absence of information, pace and pressure to

act, the overriding of shared and deliberate planning practices, and leadership performance that is at cross-purposes with its institutional principles. Many of these themes were also documented in the Ontario government's approach to land use planning (Syed, 2023).

A *fait accompli* planning process predetermines outcomes as technical matters of course and generates narratives about the circumstances at-hand as apolitical, while seeking to push changes through quickly, or without comprehensive input; a process which obscures the politics and social choices that are directing the decisions being made.

As documented in this thesis, land-use planning processes are embedded with social practices and textual realities that impact our public spheres, shaping both our institutions and broader environments. This phenomenon is not unique to Ontario. In the case of *fait accompli* planning, its approach appears to be far-reaching, as detailed by Baldwin (2021) in the context of the University of Chicago:

The civic engagement staff members were stuck working to support a real estate development process they didn't control. And Matthew's beliefs about the university's deceptions around community engagement became most clear in his work with the Office of Communications.

Matthew was not allowed to make any public statements before every word was vetted. Administrators grew nervous about how the community would respond to UChicago's presence in the broader neighbourhood. If the media called, Matthew referred them to the Communications Office, and then Communications would tell him what to say: 'I came from a full meeting with a complete rendering and details about a development, and then it was our job to say that there was no development at this point'. Matthew found the lack of transparency enforced on him extremely frustrating. (pp. 140-141)

In the context of Trent University, the 'inevitable' developments affecting the existing food growing sites were scrutinized and found to be avoidable (Biddanda, 2022), or

improbable,⁶⁶ and to an ongoing extent, rejected by campus and community members. Yet, the *fait accompli* planning strategy persists as detailed in Chapter 8. To begin redress this through my thesis work, I drew on methods such as Action Learning (AL) (Marquardt, 1999; McNulty, 1979; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011) which was derived from management training to foster bottom up, collaborative problem solving and actions for transforming the workplace/organization, and participatory mapping which has been used in university settings to develop interventions that enhance social justice and link research to social change (Fanshel & Iles, 2020, 2022). The research methods were designed to be productive responses to two issues: 1) the ongoing uncertainties about development that would impact the on-campus food growing system and correlated land, and 2) to attend to fissures in planning and pedagogical development between the Trent School of Environment and Growers Group that emerged from how the TLNAP process was conducted using *fait accompli* planning.

⁶⁶ When speaking about the MTO highway corridor in my interview with a Supervisor of Development Planning at the City of Peterborough, they stated:

Supervisor of Development Planning: I can't really speak authoritatively on the issue because it's a Ministry of Transportation issue. But I have spoken with the Ministry of Transportation about it several times. My own personal feeling is that the Ministry doesn't really have any plans of building that road. . . . So, you know, in my mind the issue with that corridor is that there's probably some kind of a need to accommodate provincial level traffic. Through or around the East side of the city of Peterborough. But I don't think personally that corridor ends at a location that necessarily accommodates where provincial traffic wants to travel to. Right, because right now, if you follow that corridor to its ending, it kind of ends just south of Lakefield on the West side of the river. . . . That's where that corridor kind of ends and I don't really see that as being where provincial traffic is trying to go to, right. I would see it more being towards I think it's highway 28 that goes up towards Apsley, as where the bulk of the provincial traffic is trying to go to. . . .

Researcher: Right, so yeah it seems highly unlikely. And you mentioned it crosses through a Provincially Significant Wetland?

Supervisor of Development Planning: Yeah, just North of the intersection of Television Road and Highway 7. When you get a little North there's a wetland area there on both sides of Television Road and that's the Downers Corner Provincially Significant Wetland.

Researcher: Yeah, so it seems like there's a lot in the way of that development and as you say, it doesn't seem like where it lands is feasible.

Supervisor of Development Planning: Yeah. (personal communication, October 25, 2021).

Three group workshops (one with SAFSS, one with TVG/Apiary, and one with TSE faculty) and a participatory mapping event (with campus and community members) (detailed in Chapter 1, section 1.4.1) were undertaken to generate data and dialogue proceeding from the understanding that it is both people and the more-than-human relationships who determine and manifest place, and who need to share and inform solutions (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Wood, 2020; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). The research was aimed at laying the groundwork for future Action Learning workshops that move the campus toward a joined-up campus food growing system between people and place. Common guiding principles were generated for Trent's alternative campus food system to guide dialectic, interpersonal, transpersonal, and pedagogical development. The initial research findings are detailed below.

7.2 Group Workshops - Stage 1 Visioning Exercise

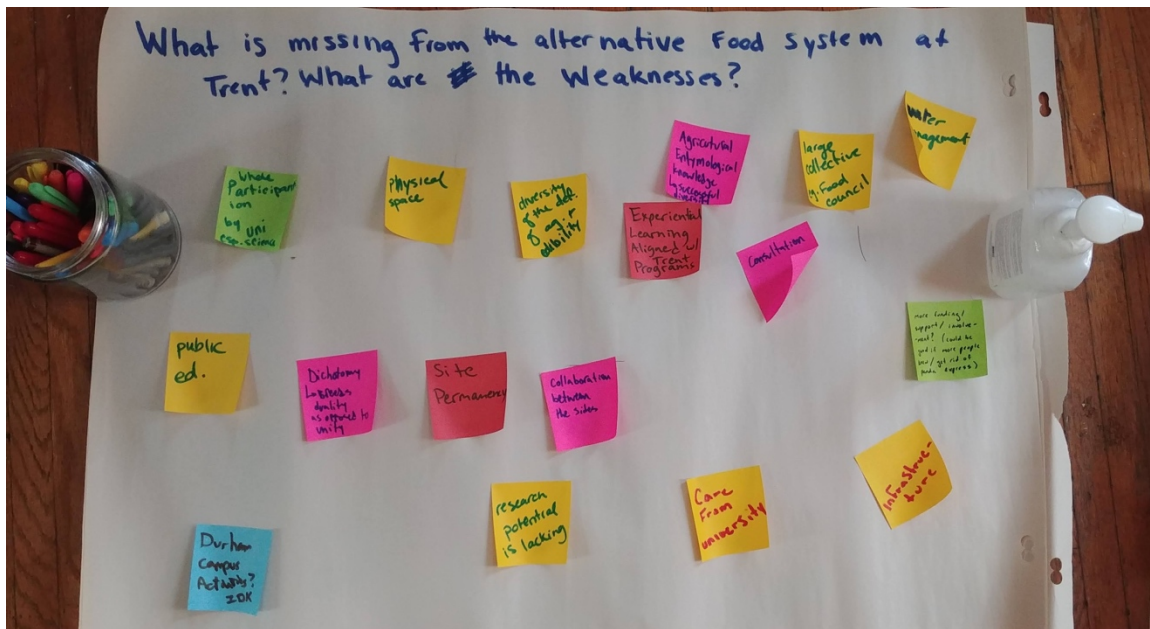
16 meetings were carried out between June 14, 2021, and October 28, 2021, to inform the design, conduct the workshops, and analyze and disseminate the data. 12 participants who oversaw or participated in operations in the campus food growing system took part in the workshops. The first workshop took place with SAFSS members on June 27, 2021, the second with TVG and Apiary members on July 19, 2021, and the third with TSE faculty on October 8, 2021.⁶⁷ The group workshops were used to aggregate thoughts and perspectives on Trent's alternative food system. This leg of the research was aimed at informing the inception of overarching themes and guiding principles for the advancement of Trent's alternative food

⁶⁷ Detailed in Chapter 1 under Methods: Group Workshops.

system. Five initial visioning questions were displayed one at a time on chart paper and sticky notes were given to each participant to record their responses. The questions were:

1. What does a 'good food system' mean to you?
2. Reflect on the alternative food system at Trent. What does it include?
3. What does it not include?
4. What do you like about the alternative food system at Trent currently? What are the strengths?
5. What is missing from the alternative food system at Trent currently? What are the weaknesses?

Figure 7: Responses from Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Society (SAFSS) Group Workshop



(Boere, 2021)

7.3 Inter-rater Method

Following the first workshop, an inter-rater method was employed between myself and the SAFSS Coordinator to generate themes. Initial themes were separately generated by reviewing

the workshop responses to each question. We then had each other code (sort the responses) with the themes that each inter-rater found in the data. This approach was not 100% blind as a discussion was had while we were viewing the initial themes and codes (responses) and considering what our next steps would be for combining them. However, it was thought that by exchanging themes and reverse coding, nuance may emerge, in addition to overlap, and through discussing the nuance, new and/or more refined themes may be defined from the exchange of understandings.

After the themes from each inter-rater were exchanged and the coding process was undertaken again, the codes across all themes were tallied to identify prevalence. Then the themes' meanings were discussed, compared, and edited for clarity to progressively reflect the responses (see [Figure 8](#)). Lastly the themes were combined where there was the most prevalence and/or shared meaning to create principal themes, later termed common guiding principles from all the responses (see [Figure 9](#)).

Figure 8: Inter-rater Theme Comparison Process

| Notes to readers / add into notes | Participation & leadership | Community & relationships | Education, experiential & skill building | Production, environmental, resources and ecological awareness | Prevalence of data | Difference | Prevalence of distal | Building Paradigm Change | Experiential, Ecological Learning | Intentional Community Building | Student Centered | Workshops and Opportunities | Notes |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--------------------|------------|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Diverse | Diverse | Diverse | Diverse | 4 | 0 | 4 | Diverse | Diverse | Diverse | Diverse | Diverse | |
| | Local | Local | Local | Local | 2 | 0 | 2 | Local | Local | Local | Local | Local | |
| | People feeding themselves | People feeding themselves | People feeding themselves | Local when possible, fair trade when not | 3 | 0 | 3 | People feeding themselves | People feeding themselves | People feeding themselves | People feeding themselves | Local when possible, fair trade when not | Knowing what to produce or what can be produced and when. |
| | Local when possible, fair trade when not | Local when possible, fair trade when not | Local when possible, fair trade when not | Local when possible, fair trade when not | 3 | 2 | 1 | Local when possible, fair trade when not | Local when possible, fair trade when not | Local when possible, fair trade when not | Local when possible, fair trade when not | Local when possible, fair trade when not | |
| | Low input growing methods | Low input growing methods | Low input growing methods | Low input growing methods | 2 | 0 | 2 | Low input growing methods | Low input growing methods | Low input growing methods | Low input growing methods | Low input growing methods | |
| | Pollutants | Pollutants | Pollutants | Pollutants | 3 | 2 | 1 | Pollutants | Pollutants | Preserves and canned goods | Preserves and canned goods | Preserves and canned goods | |
| | Preserves and canned goods | Preserves and canned goods | Preserves and canned goods | Preserves and canned goods | 2 | 1 | 3 | Preserves and canned goods | Preserves and canned goods | Preserves and canned goods | Preserves and canned goods | Preserves and canned goods | |
| | Shared | Shared | Shared | Shared | 4 | 0 | 4 | Shared | Shared | Shared | Shared | Shared | |
| | Some perennial food production | Some perennial food production | Some perennial food production | Some perennial food production | 2 | 0 | 2 | Some perennial food production | Some perennial food production | Some perennial food production | Some perennial food production | Some perennial food production | |
| | Student voices | Student voices | Student voices | Student voices | 3 | 0 | 3 | Student voices | Student voices | Student voices | Student voices | Student voices | |
| | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | 4 | 1 | 3 | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | |
| | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | 3 | 1 | 4 | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | |
| | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | 4 | 0 | 4 | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | |
| | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | 4 | 0 | 4 | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | |
| | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG | 4 | 1 | 3 | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG | |
| | Community | Community | Community | Community | 4 | 3 | 1 | Community | Community | Community | Community | Community | |
| | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | 4 | 1 | 3 | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | |
| | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | 2 | 2 | 4 | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | |
| | Integration of knowledge systems, it's potential | Integration of knowledge systems, it's potential | Integration of knowledge systems, it's potential | Integration of knowledge systems, it's potential | 3 | 0 | 4 | Integration of knowledge systems, it's potential | Integration of knowledge systems, it's potential | Integration of knowledge systems, it's potential | Integration of knowledge systems, it's potential | Integration of knowledge systems, it's potential | |
| | It's potential | It's potential | It's potential | It's potential | 4 | 0 | 4 | It's potential | It's potential | It's potential | It's potential | It's potential | It's not often that students get put in charge of complete operations/lead an agricultural space. Validates and empowers students to explore new ideas and innovations. |
| | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | 2 | 2 | 4 | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | |
| | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | 2 | 1 | 2 | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | |
| | Student led, autonomy | Student led, autonomy | Student led, autonomy | Student led, autonomy | 2 | 0 | 2 | Student led, autonomy | Student led, autonomy | Student led, autonomy | Student led, autonomy | Student led, autonomy | |
| | Student projects, thesis research | Student projects, thesis research | Student projects, thesis research | Student projects, thesis research | 4 | 1 | 3 | Student projects, thesis research | Student projects, thesis research | Student projects, thesis research | Student projects, thesis research | Student projects, thesis research | |
| | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | 4 | 1 | 3 | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | |
| | We have an agony! | We have an agony! | We have an agony! | We have an agony! | 4 | 2 | 2 | We have an agony! | We have an agony! | We have an agony! | We have an agony! | We have an agony! | |
| | Communicative | Communicative | Communicative | Communicative | 3 | 0 | 3 | Communicative | Communicative | Communicative | Communicative | Communicative | |
| | Accessible to community | Accessible to community | Accessible to community | Accessible to community | 4 | 1 | 3 | Accessible to community | Accessible to community | Accessible to community | Accessible to community | Accessible to community | |
| | Culturally relevant | Culturally relevant | Culturally relevant | Culturally relevant | 4 | 1 | 3 | Culturally relevant | Culturally relevant | Culturally relevant | Culturally relevant | Culturally relevant | |
| | 22 | 24 | 22 | 24 | 22 | 24 | 22 | 24 | 22 | 24 | 22 | 24 | |

Note. Some rows/responses are hidden to show to full length/analysis of the Excel worksheet in the screen capture. Text will only be visible by zooming in with the digital copy of the thesis.

Figure 9: Themes Combination Process

| Notes to reword / put into context | Hindrances and Opportunities | Participation & leadership | Student Centred (especially valuable when looking at Trent, but not as much outside of it) | Holistic Relationships and Community Building | Experiential and Ecological Education and Skill-Building | Assisting Paradigm Change | Notes |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| | Student voices | Student voices | Student voices | Student voices | Student voices | Student voices | |
| | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | Treaty relationship | |
| | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | Widespread student involvement | |
| | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | Space for learning and experimenting | |
| | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | Space to learn, experimentation | |
| | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG Community | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG Community | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG Community | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG Community | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG Community | Circular economy w. Spoon and TVG Community | |
| | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | Community involvement, fosters interest where food comes from | |
| | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | Hands on activity - interdisciplinary | |
| | It's potential | It's potential | It's potential | It's potential | It's potential | It's potential | |
| | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | Job opportunities | It's not often that students get put in charge of complete operations/lead an agricultural space. Validates and empowers students to explore new ideas and innovations. |
| | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | Lack of pretention, enables openness to all | |
| | Student led; autonomy | Student led; autonomy | Student led; autonomy | Student led; autonomy | Student led; autonomy | Student led; autonomy | |
| | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | Students from different majors | |
| | Nonexploitative | Nonexploitative | Nonexploitative | Nonexploitative | Nonexploitative | Nonexploitative | |
| ie. Farmer mental health and well being | | | | Other non-food needs met for farmers | Other non-food needs met for farmers | Other non-food needs met for farmers | |
| | Range of perspectives | Range of perspectives | Range of perspectives | Range of perspectives | Range of perspectives | Range of perspectives | |
| | Relational | Relational | Relational | Regeneration | Regeneration | Regeneration | |
| Concept of renewability in education | | | | Renewable | Renewable | Renewable | |
| | | | | Sustainable and renewable | Sustainable and renewable | Sustainable and renewable | |
| | Herbicides, pesticides, synthetic fertilizers | | | | | | |
| | Top down decision making | | | | | | |
| | Diversity of the definition of agriculture and edibility | | | | | | |
| | Agricultural entymological knowledge; successful diversity | | | | | | |
| | Care from university | | | | | | |
| Centering the student experience | Consultation | | | | | | |
| | Infrastructure | | | | | | |
| | 7 | 18 | 10 | 20 | 22 | 22 | |
| | 11% | 28% | 16% | 31% | 34% | 34% | |

Note. Principal themes, later termed common guiding principles, are outlined at the top in red. Some rows/responses are hidden to show to full length/analysis of the Excel worksheet in the screen capture. Text will only be visible by zooming in with the digital copy of the thesis.

After each workshop an inductive, inter-rater method was applied to analyze each response within the context they were spoken and sort the responses into the previously identified themes. The analysis paid close attention to responses that could be considered outliers, in which case a

revision of the themes would be required. Across all three workshops, there were no outlier responses that could not be categorized within one or more of the previously identified themes.

7.4 Data Visualization

After the data from each workshop was coded, the analysis, theme definitions, and raw data was emailed to each group for member checking, verification, and feedback. Three word clouds were also generated using NVivo 12 for each group using word counts from the recorded responses in each workshop. These were to be voted on by the group members for their preferred choice. The purpose of the word clouds was to visualize additional values that were articulated in the workshops based on word-use frequency. The intention was to have these available at future Action Learning workshops to allow the groups to easily visualize common answers/values between the TVG, Apiary, SAFSS/TMG, and TSE/Trent Farm.

Figure 10: Inter-rater Analysis and Member Checking Worksheet from TSE/Trent Farm Group Workshop

| Questions and Answers | Participation & Leadership | Sub-category Student Center | Relative Relationships and Community Building | Experiential and Ecological Education and Skill-Building | Existing Paradigm Change | Resources and Opportunities | Notes |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Definitions of Themes | Who is able to participate and who has potential/has decision making power. How and where people are able to participate and have leadership. Qualities and characteristics of leadership. Methods and processes that allow for engagement and leadership to emerge. Outcomes/impacts of leadership. | Students in positions of leadership. Students on the main campus. Qualities and characteristics that students bring. Spaces that are for students. | The beyond human relationships. Activities and programs that allow for community building. Qualities and values that help construct these relationships. Providing interdependence and caring for shared resources. Structures that foster holistic relationships and community building. Intra-community networks (internal to PHS), external community networks (beyond PHS). | Qualities and values. Skills/outcomes that are needed or desired to be learned. Activities and actions that foster learning. | Education, learning and knowledge production is shared. Subjectivities are valued. There is no end goal to knowledge. It is iterative, intercultural, intergenerational and requires continuous reinvention. Ideas are not fixed and immediate elements. Reality is not only a series of external truths but is also socially constructed. Acknowledging that humans affect reality and thoughts are formed and re-formed through experience. (Pillay, 2014; Wood, 2016) Collaborational structures, governance, organizations or spaces that foster any or all of the above. | | |
| What does a good food system mean to you? | | | Sustainable Food Production Good Food Supply Affordable | Sustainable Food Production Good Food Supply Affordable | Sustainable Food Production Good Food Supply Affordable | | |
| Economically Sustainable | Affordable | | Economically Sustainable | Economically Sustainable | Economically Sustainable | | Affordable for people to buy as well as for people to grow for the market or for needs to be sustainable for producers and purchasers |
| Socially Sustainable | | | Socially Sustainable | Socially Sustainable | Socially Sustainable | | |
| Environmentally Sustainable | | | Environmentally Sustainable | Environmentally Sustainable | Environmentally Sustainable | | |
| Resilient/Provenant | Resilient/Provenant | | Resilient/Provenant | Resilient/Provenant | Resilient/Provenant | | |
| Provides Food Security | | | Provides Food Security | Provides Food Security | Provides Food Security | | High rates of food insecurity in Peterborough - trending upward |
| Equitable Access | Equitable Access | | Equitable Access | Equitable Access | Equitable Access | | |
| Reflection on the food system at Trent | | | | | | | |
| What does it include? | Student Led Volunteer Partnership | Student Led Partnership | Student Led Partnership | Student Led Volunteer Partnership | Student Led Partnership | | |
| Connected (sometimes) | Connected (sometimes) | Connected (sometimes) | Connected (sometimes) | Connected (sometimes) | Connected (sometimes) | | Connected (sometimes) |
| Association/Partnerships (Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association) | Association/Partnerships (Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association) | Association/Partnerships (Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association) | Association/Partnerships (Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association) | Association/Partnerships (Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association) | Association/Partnerships (Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association) | | Funding for strategic file, research on current/past |
| University and College Partnerships (Central College, UofT Scarborough, University Institute of Technology) | University and College Partnerships (Central College, UofT Scarborough, University Institute of Technology) | University and College Partnerships (Central College, UofT Scarborough, University Institute of Technology) | University and College Partnerships (Central College, UofT Scarborough, University Institute of Technology) | University and College Partnerships (Central College, UofT Scarborough, University Institute of Technology) | University and College Partnerships (Central College, UofT Scarborough, University Institute of Technology) | | Grant/partnerships |
| Interdepartmental Partnerships (Biology, Chemistry, Anthropology) | Interdepartmental Partnerships (Biology, Chemistry, Anthropology) | Interdepartmental Partnerships (Biology, Chemistry, Anthropology) | Interdepartmental Partnerships (Biology, Chemistry, Anthropology) | Interdepartmental Partnerships (Biology, Chemistry, Anthropology) | Interdepartmental Partnerships (Biology, Chemistry, Anthropology) | | |
| Funding Partnerships (Canadian Foundation for Innovation) | Funding Partnerships (Canadian Foundation for Innovation) | Funding Partnerships (Canadian Foundation for Innovation) | Funding Partnerships (Canadian Foundation for Innovation) | Funding Partnerships (Canadian Foundation for Innovation) | Funding Partnerships (Canadian Foundation for Innovation) | | \$2 mil. CFI water innovation application - waste water treatment instrument, C |
| Community Partnerships (Kawartha Land Trust, Clearwater Farms) | Community Partnerships (Kawartha Land Trust, Clearwater Farms) | Community Partnerships (Kawartha Land Trust, Clearwater Farms) | Community Partnerships (Kawartha Land Trust, Clearwater Farms) | Community Partnerships (Kawartha Land Trust, Clearwater Farms) | Community Partnerships (Kawartha Land Trust, Clearwater Farms) | | |
| Farm Experiential Learning | Farm Experiential Learning | Farm Experiential Learning | Farm Experiential Learning | Farm Experiential Learning | Farm Experiential Learning | | |
| Student Assets | Student Assets | Student Assets | Student Assets | Student Assets | Student Assets | | Student led |
| Trent Market Garden | Trent Market Garden | Trent Market Garden | Trent Market Garden | Trent Market Garden | Trent Market Garden | | Student led |
| Trent Vegetable Garden | Trent Vegetable Garden | Trent Vegetable Garden | Trent Vegetable Garden | Trent Vegetable Garden | Trent Vegetable Garden | | Student led |
| Agency | Agency | Agency | Agency | Agency | Agency | | |
| Community Spaces for social + community building | Community Spaces for social + community building | Community Spaces for social + community building | Community Spaces for social + community building | Community Spaces for social + community building | Community Spaces for social + community building | | |
| Seasoned Spoon workshops | Seasoned Spoon workshops | Seasoned Spoon workshops | Seasoned Spoon workshops | Seasoned Spoon workshops | Seasoned Spoon workshops | | |
| Learning Spaces | Learning Spaces | Learning Spaces | Learning Spaces | Learning Spaces | Learning Spaces | | |
| Greenhouse | Greenhouse | Greenhouse | Greenhouse | Greenhouse | Greenhouse | | |
| The Experimental Farm | The Experimental Farm | The Experimental Farm | The Experimental Farm | The Experimental Farm | The Experimental Farm | | |
| What does it not include? | | | | | | | |
| Permanent Funding Structure | | | | | | Permanent Funding Structure | Dean provides single budget for the whole TSE department - SAFE Program is |
| Security | | | | | | Security | Long term security of program and farm spaces remains unclear |
| Connected (sometimes) | | | | | | Connected (sometimes) | |
| A/Budget? | | | | | | A/Budget? | |
| Funding Support | | | | | | Funding Support | |
| Budget for faculty | | | | | | Budget for faculty | |
| Current Research Areas | | | | | | Current Research Areas | Limited |
| Measurement of Outcomes | | | | | | Measurement of Outcomes | |
| Annexes/Livestock | | | | | | Annexes/Livestock | |

Paradigm Change. The idea was for all participants (students, staff, faculty, and community members) directly involved in the food growing operations to apply these dialogic principles using the Action Learning group method (Marquardt, 1999, 2009), like the “Learning with Life” approach to pedagogical development (Rojas et al., 2007), to augment their engagement and guide problem solving and future land-use planning across Trent’s food growing system. Such an approach may help these groups overcome the limitations from structural hierarchies (Burke & Eichler, 2006; Wolbring, 2023) and fait accompli planning processes, and shift creative attention toward generative and collaborative learning outcomes in response to the challenges at hand.

7.6 Participatory Mapping

The participatory mapping event was held on August 22, 2021, in response to the ongoing uncertainties about development that was showing to impact the Trent Vegetable Gardens. 14 participants generated data about the existing flora, fauna, and fungi using direct experience, pre-existing knowledge, as well as using guidebooks. The event was viewed as a way to engage the broader Peterborough/Nogojwanong community members in the research process and raise awareness about the issues at hand, all of whom were either directly affected by Trent’s land-use decisions at the TVG (there were 18 community garden plots) or shared interests in the Trent lands. The event was designed to capture a snapshot of 15 years of campus and community interaction and care and showcase the biodiversity of the TVG and surrounding lands. A three-part mapping sheet was created by the TVG Coordinator and provided to the participants to record their findings (see [Figure 14](#)). A fourth sheet (not pictured) was also created that showed a magnified view of the Southern portion of the gardens.

Figure 14: Beautiful, Hand-drawn Mapping Sheets by TVG Coordinator

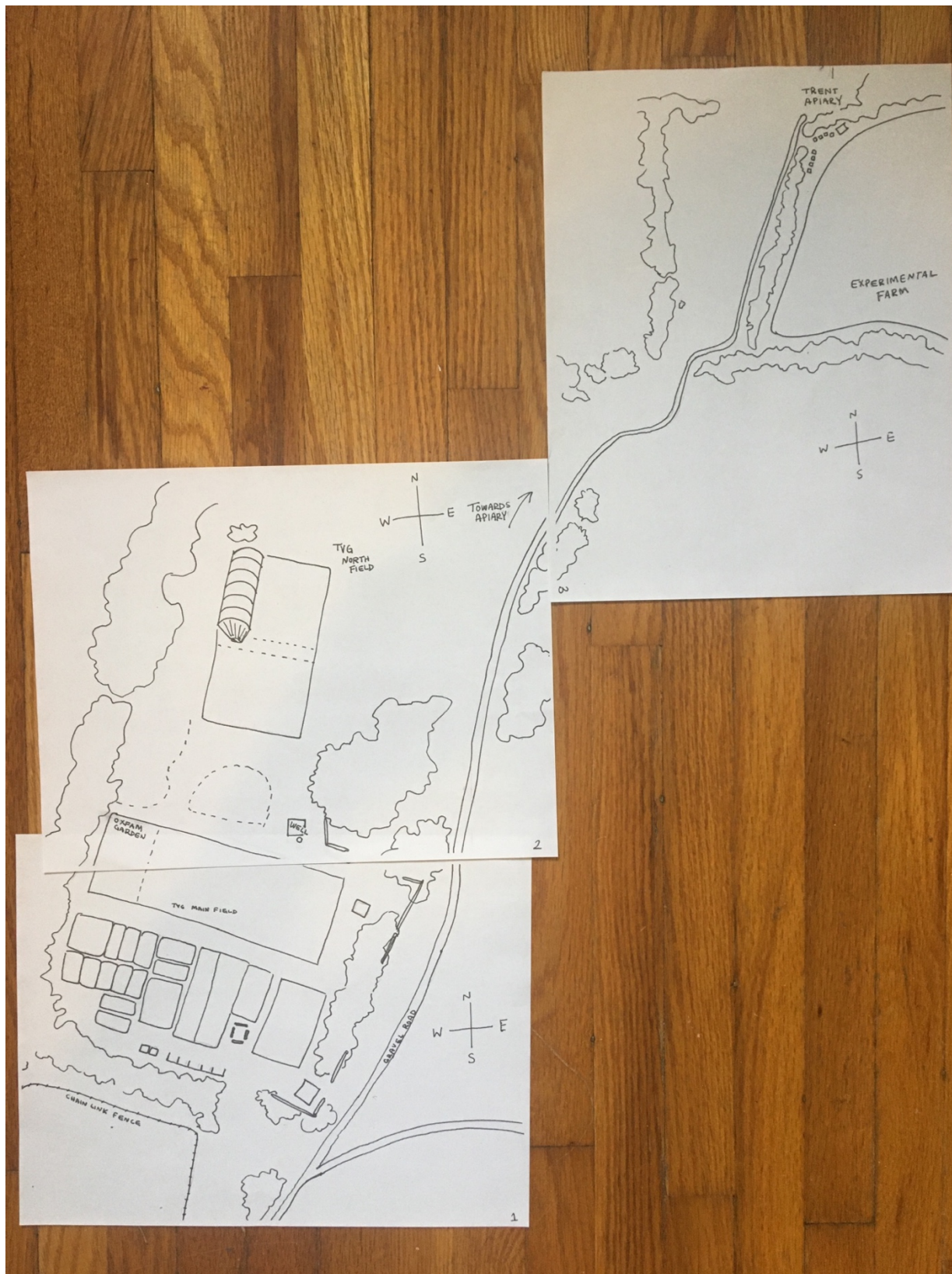
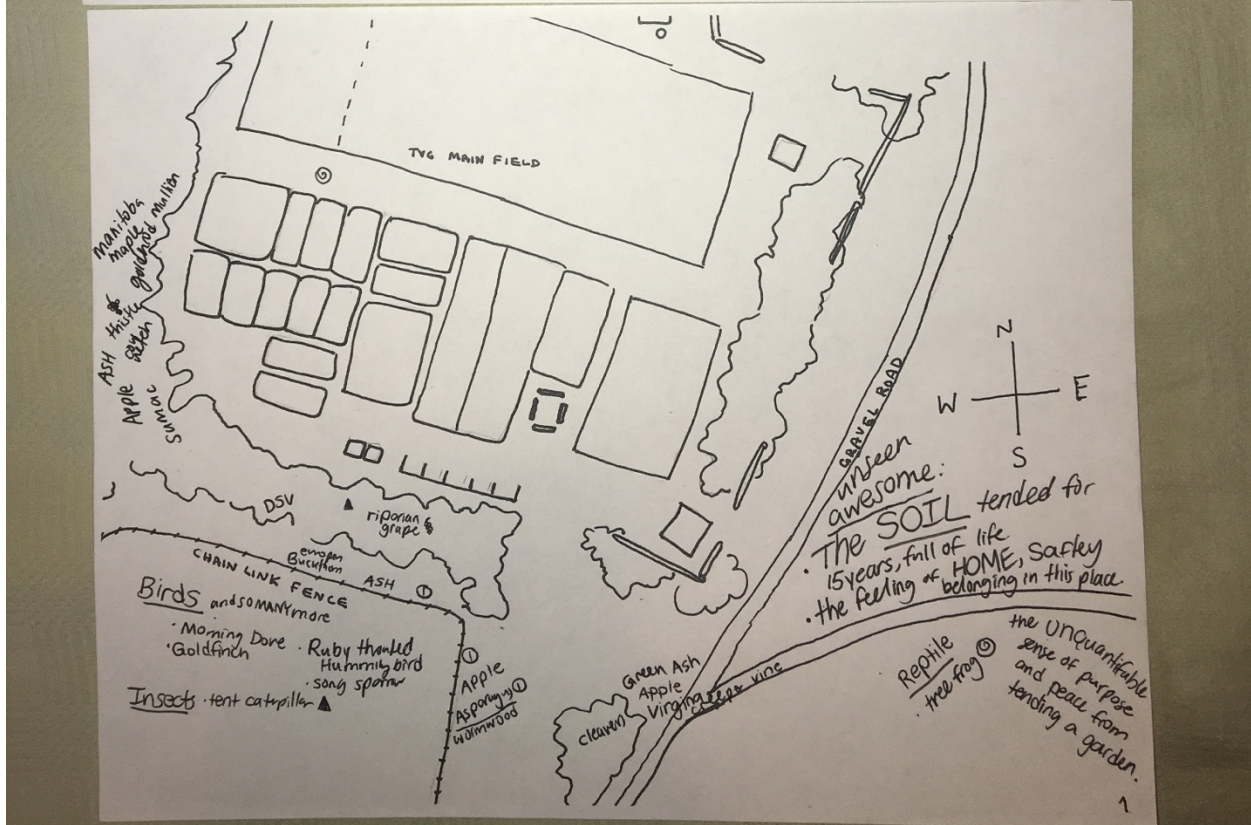
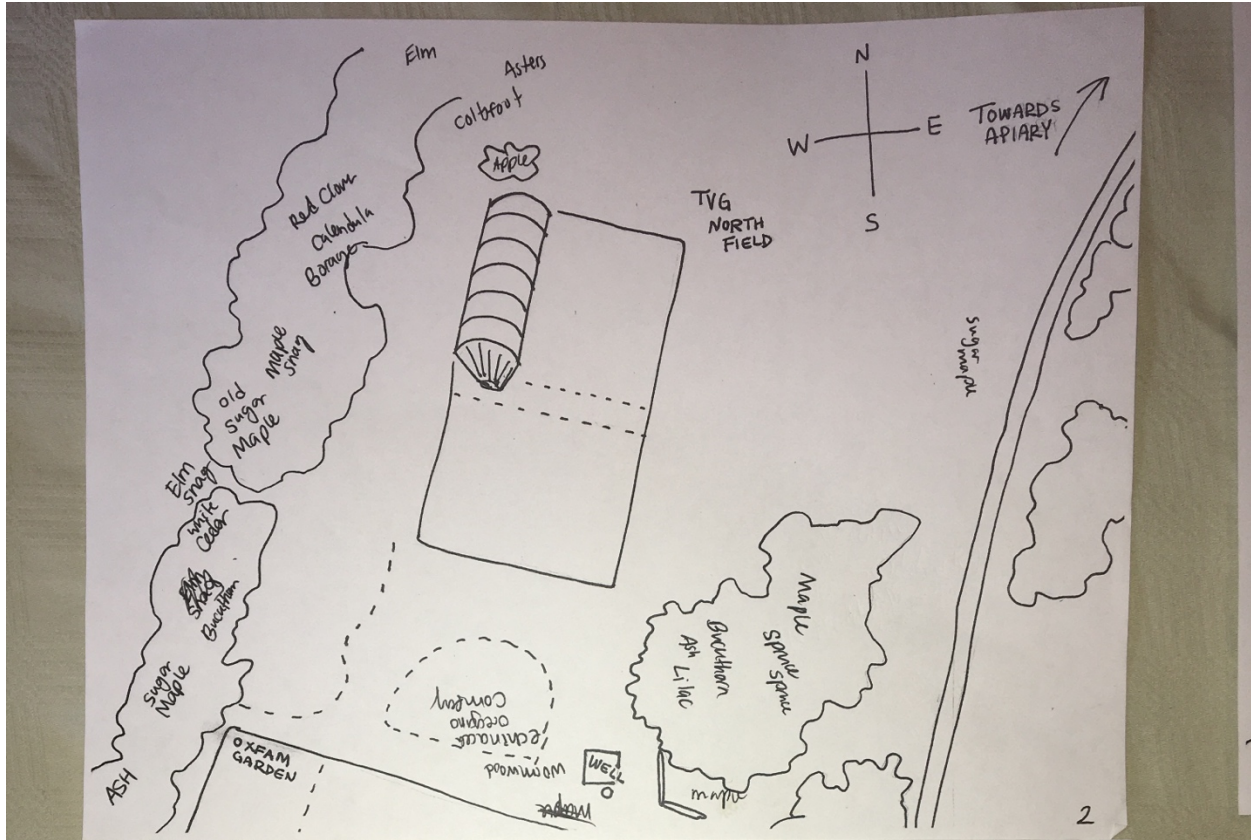
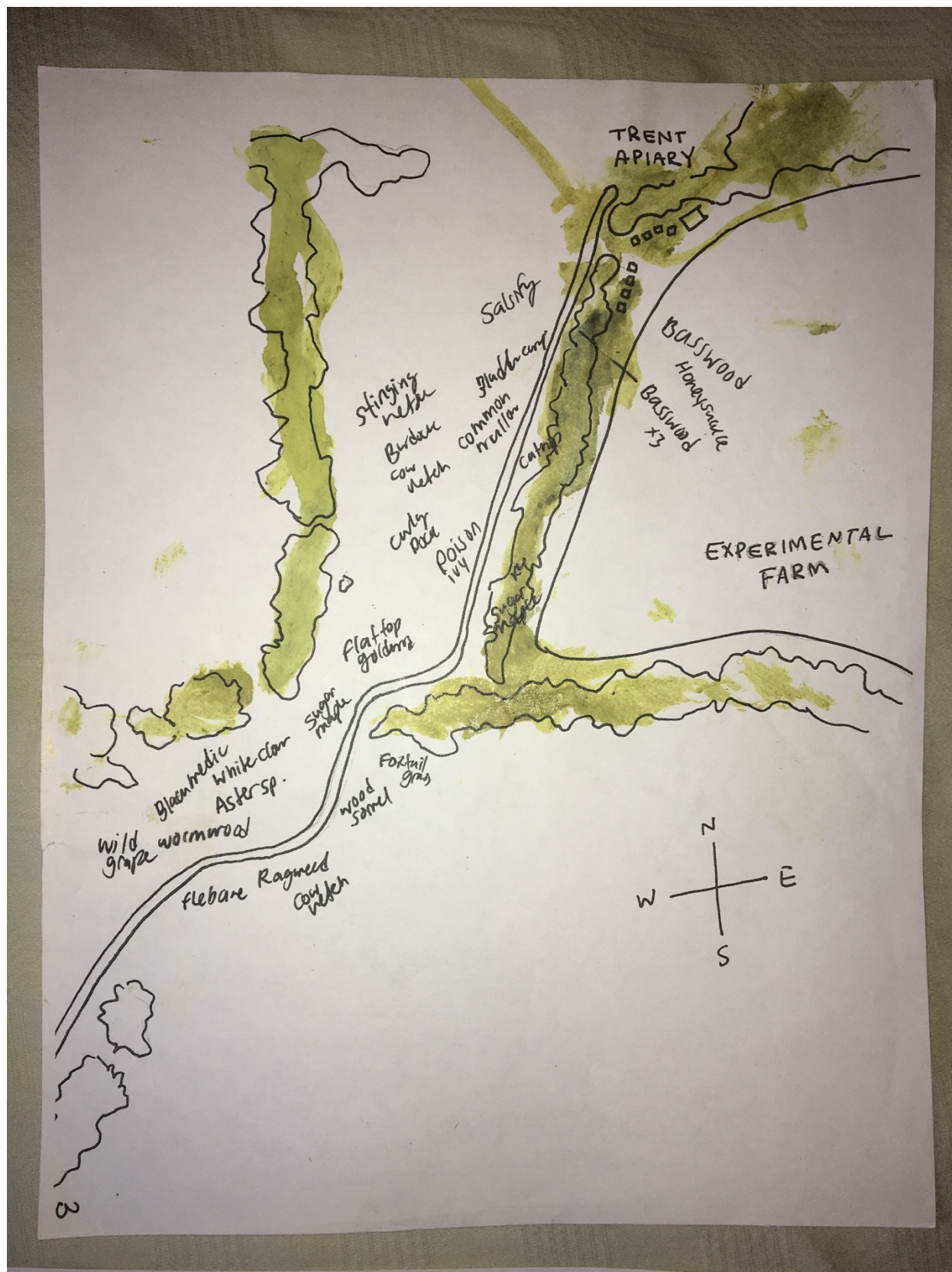
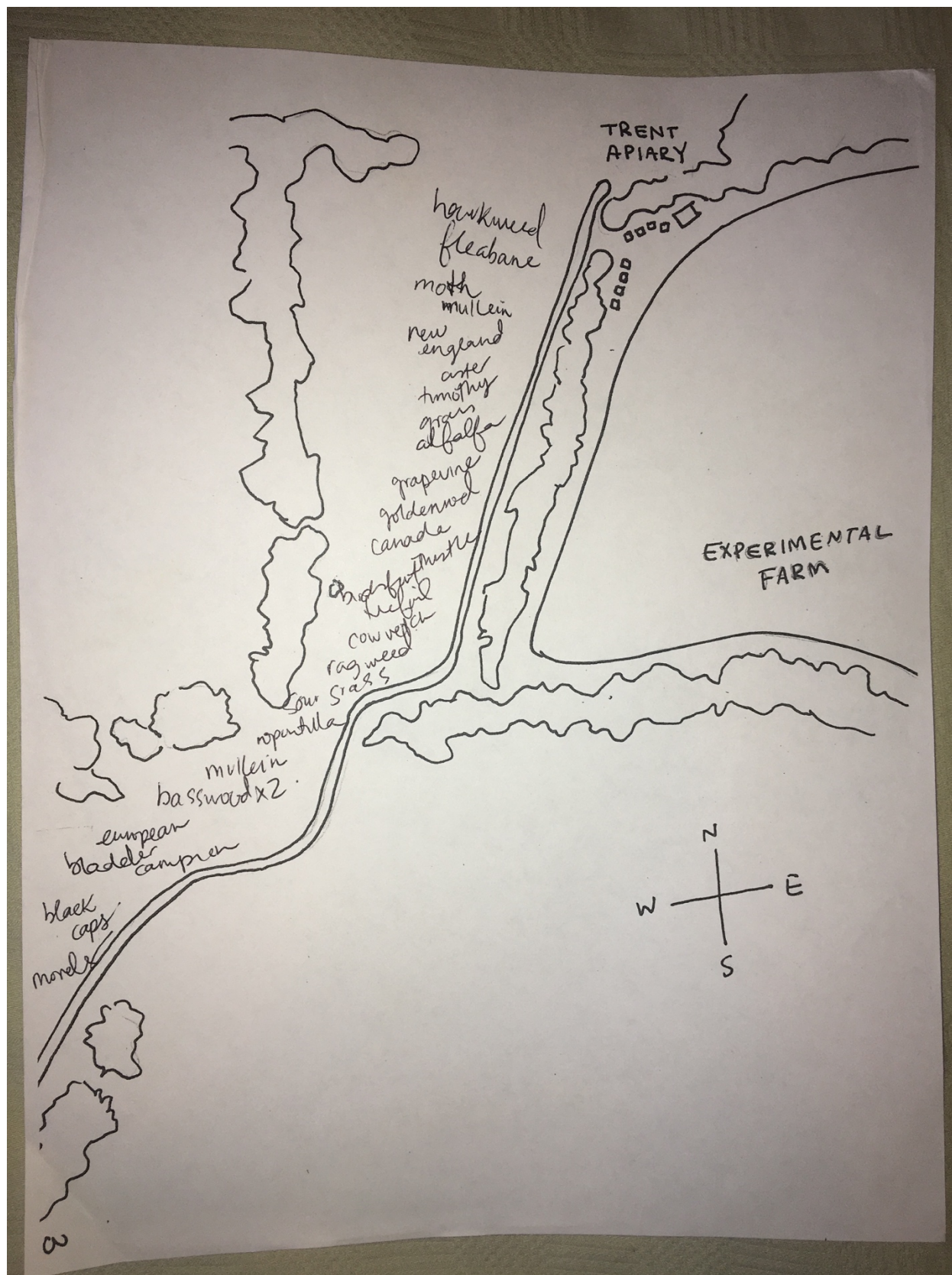
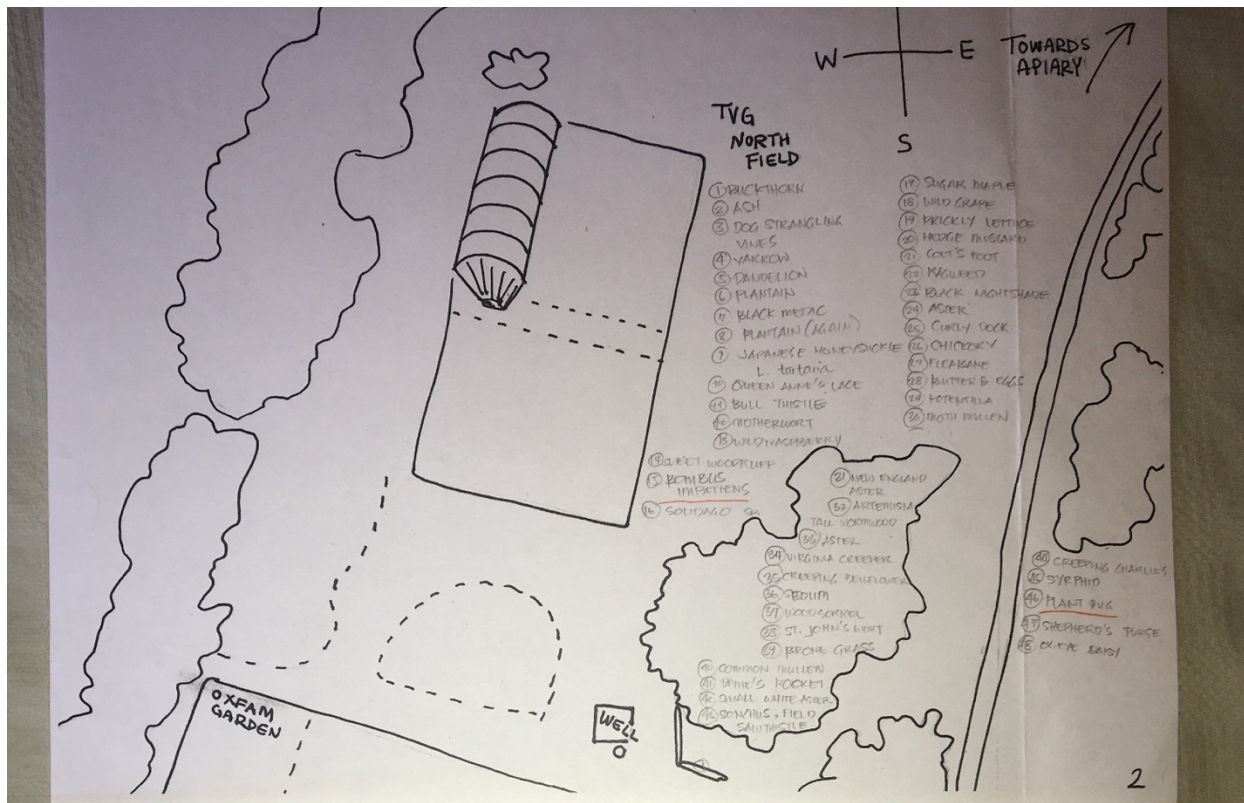


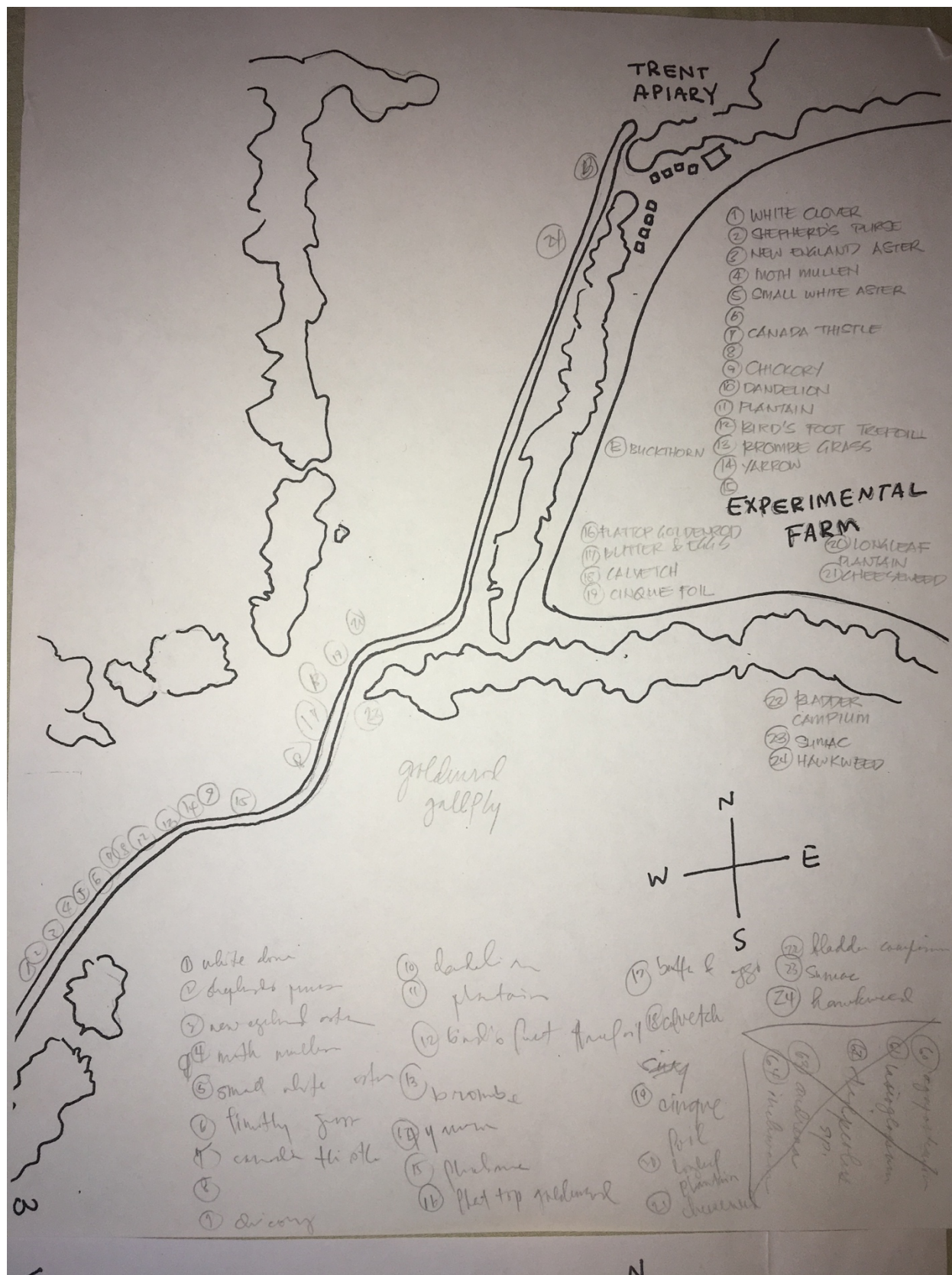
Figure 15: Selection of Participatory Mapping Observations











Amongst the many floras, fauna, and fungi recorded by participants, they also gathered to discuss many other unseen connections such as soil microbes, and values that the TVG and surrounding land bring to the community. They expressed that the Trent Vegetable Gardens cultivated a community of sharing and exchange. Knowledge was shared about plants, trees, insects, lichens, mosses, delicious foods and recipes, and even narratives around ‘invasives’ that may miss out on unknown benefits to the more-than-human world. The TVG provided a place for art, storytelling, journaling, and seasonal observations of the many patterns and migrations throughout the different times of year. One participant expressed how nature engages our minds in layered and textured ways that brought them a sense of stress relief. Another participant suggested that more birdhouses were needed in the area. In summary, the TVG was viewed as providing a place and sense of belonging.

7.7 Discussion

These research findings demonstrate an alternative approach to land-use planning that offers Trent’s on-campus food growing system and established organizations a pathway into generative dialogue and collaboration. Like other scholars (Ambrozas, 1998; Etzioni, 1995; Fraser, 1990; Hoppe, 2004; Polster & Newson, 2015; Pusser, 2006; Swaner, 2007; Westheimer, 2015), I argue how universities have a role to play in advancing comprehensive processes for discursive interaction, and that engagement must encompass the cultivation of citizenship capacities crucial for participatory democracy and developing the needed social responsibilities for the broader communities to which they belong. In contrast to the *fait accompli* planning approach, where command-and-control methods of engagement impair collaborative, contextualized, and sustained dialogue (as documented in the TLNAP process), these methods

proceed from a place that does not foreclose upon specific outcomes prior to engagements, or use social hierarchy to override informed, shared, and deliberate planning practices.

As documented in the next Chapter 8, the *fait accompli* planning practices persist well into 2023, and the pre-determined development decisions that were part of the 2019-2021 TLNAP process have not resulted in substantive outcomes, or collaborative developments benefiting Trent's food growing organizations and correlate pedagogy. Instead, Trent's food growing system has remained in a state of uncertainty. After multiple failed funding applications submitted by the TSE to develop the Trent Farm relocation (personal communication, July 17, 2023), Trent is turning to external consultants to design the new Trent Research Farm (Trent University, 2023a), (alongside large capital investments (Trent University Board of Governors, 2023b, p. 18), neither of which offer to "narrow the gap in participatory parity between dominant and subordinate groups" (Fraser, 1990, p. 66) in Trent's on-campus food growing system.

Instead, these findings offer Trent an opportunity to generate dialogue between its campus and community members, and foster partnerships and pedagogical development *from the existing* farm operations. Trent's capital investments are posturing to start from scratch and seek to reproduce facets of the existing food growing operations in the new Trent Farm location. As stated on the Trent Research Farm webpage:

The Trent Farm is a hub for learning and discovery, providing community networking spaces, employment, and volunteer opportunities for students, *all while serving as a source of fresh seasonal food for the Trent community* [emphasis added]. . . .

Relocating to the south side of Pioneer Road, the expanded farm location allows for long-term research and better built and natural infrastructure, including water regulation and a barn, to support food production, research and learning. (Trent University, 2023b)

However, in contrast to my research, Trent's capital-intensive approach may be excessive and unwarranted without first grounding itself in a transformative and/or participatory paradigm (Mertens, 2009; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). Beyond requiring a large amount of capital, this approach risks diminishing the well-established food growing operations, and further marginalizing student and community labour in Trent's on-campus food system. As evidenced by an interview participant:

One thing that we've discussed kind of as a group, like some of the leadership of the other agricultural projects. Is dissatisfaction with the consultation process and the involvement of more student leaders in decision making. And I guess the frustration can be boiled down to the fact that it feels as though the school is trying to recreate or create a new agricultural facility for educational purposes. That already kind of exists but it's run by other people. And so, it's that idea of yeah, just kind of like not utilizing the resources that are already there. The projects that are already happening, and instead kind of moving at a pace and decision making that isn't really collaborative. (personal communication, September 21, 2021)

My research shows an alternative approach that takes measures to first unsettle the various ways in which power overrides informed, shared, and deliberate planning practices (Burke & Eichler, 2006; Wolbring, 2023). Second, the bottom up, collaborative problem-solving approach of Action Learning (Marquardt, 1999; McNulty, 1979; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011) provides a tangible management strategy for generative growth in the institution. My research results lay the groundwork for this undertaking by providing dialogic guidelines (see [Appendix H](#)) proceeding from the understanding that it is both people and the more-than-human relationships who determine and manifest place, and who need to share and inform solutions. By applying these research findings, participants can engage and act toward eliminating detrimental biases, collaboratively analyze current risks to Trent's pedagogical development and the public good, and potentially move the campus toward a joined-up, campus food growing system.

Chapter 8: The Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan Implementation — A Case of Fait Accompli Planning

My final chapter documents some of the outcomes related to the campus food growing system after the TLNAP was approved on March 26, 2021, and unpacks the continuation of embedded biases in Trent’s TLNAP implementation actions. The results provide a compelling case of fait accompli planning, where predetermined outcomes are glossed over as technical matters of course, and the narratives put forward by Trent’s senior leadership about the circumstances at-hand, as apolitical. Trent’s senior leadership continue to attempt to enact land-use changes without comprehensive input or meaningful consultation, and the implementation of the TLNAP process is shown to be obscured by social choices that prioritize infrastructure developments over informed, shared, and deliberate planning practices. As pointed out by Polster et al. (2015) in Chapter 2, section 2.2, these choices can be viewed as part of a larger evolving process and negative feedback loop, creating the all-too-common perception that these changes are a fait accompli. However, while the status quo continues to cast uncertainty over the campus-based food system, posing a threat to the viability of its existing food growing sites and constraining future pedagogical development, this chapter reveals the social choices that are shaping the circumstances at hand. At each turn, it demonstrates that alternative possibilities regularly present themselves.

8.1 Context of the Grounds Operation Relocation

Before delving into a prevailing example of fait accompli planning at Trent University, readers need to understand its conceptual underpinnings, detailed in Chapter 2, section 2.2 and further defined in Chapter 7, section 7.1. The fait accompli seeks to impose a change to the status

quo and accomplish unilateral gains without consent. As Altman (2017) writes, “Each fait accompli is a calculated risk. Whether it results in a successful gain or escalation depends on whether the challenger has successfully gauged the level of loss the defender will accept” (p. 882).

The Grounds Operation relocation came on the heels of a previously contested and overturned development project — the twin-pad arena.⁶⁸ As part of the Capital Projects update in the Board of Governor’s meeting agenda on September 30, 2016, Trent first noted the relocation of the Grounds Operation was required for the arena complex (Trent University Board of Governors, 2016b, p. 4). Trent’s Board of Governors maintained that suitable relocation options were being investigated in their open session meetings on December 2, 2016, February 3, 2017, October 13, 2017, December 1, 2017, February 2, 2018, March 23, 2018, and May 11, 2018 (Trent University Board of Governors, 2016a, 2017b, 2017c, 2017a, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c). In their March 23, and May 11, 2018, meetings, they noted that planning and design had commenced for the construction of a new Grounds Operation facility, however, suitable locations were still being investigated (Trent University Board of Governors, 2018b, p. 16, 2018c, p. 17). It was not until March 29, 2019, that Trent detailed the chosen site for their new Grounds Operation facility in their meeting agenda, which they noted was northeast of the DNA building, but failed to identify or acknowledge that the Trent Vegetable Gardens was located there (Trent University Board of Governors, 2019b, pp. 9–10).⁶⁹ Not once in this long chain of

⁶⁸ Detailed in Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.

⁶⁹ In contrast to the timing of these March 2019 Board statements, a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act request filed in 2023 showed the civil engineering designs for the Grounds Operations facility were completed in October 2018, with full knowledge and details of its chosen development location (*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Request*, 2023).

decisions was the Trent Vegetable Gardens leadership made aware or consulted about the planning of this development (see [Appendix E](#), D2). As noted in Chapter 4, section 4.2, the VP of Facilities Management alluded to future impacts and expressed working in concert with the TLNAP process. This was later found to be supported by several Board of Governors' agendas that stated it would be included in the TLNAP dialogue and final recommendations (Trent University Board of Governors, 2019a, pp. 49–50, 2019c, pp. 18–19, 2019d, pp. 15–16). For example, the May 10, 2019, Board agenda stated:

there is value in allowing the Trent Lands Plan to be completed, with the proposed Grounds Operation location included in the dialogue and final recommendations. To proceed with the required civil work and land clearing that must take place in order to complete the Grounds Operation relocation, while Trent Lands plan consultation is taking place, would not be a constructive approach. (Trent University Board of Governors, 2019c, p. 19)

However, despite numerous TLNAP engagements and meetings with the Trent Lands Committee and senior leadership, there was no mention or sharing of documentation regarding the Grounds Operation relocation (see [Appendix E](#), D2, D4). In the case of the Grounds Operation relocation, plans were not released to the student and community groups it would affect until nine months after the conclusion and approval of the 2019 – 2021 Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan by Trent's Board of Governors. It was essentially treated as a *fait accompli*.

8.2 TLNAP Implementation: March 2021 to June 2023 - Grower Group and Community Engagements

At the time of the TLNAP approval on March 26, 2021, our Growers Group had not received any further communications from our January 15, 2021 correspondence with the Trent

Lands Committee.⁷⁰ When we reached out April 29, 2021 to ask clarifying questions about the TVG in the approved TLNAP (Growers Group, 2021a), we received more information, but little of which was useful for long term planning, or provided specifics about next steps of engagement. The answers conferred responsibility to non-Trent Lands Committee personnel and encouraged us to engage in planning conversations that were outside of the boundaries of the TVG (Trent University VP External Relations & Advancement, 2021a) (see [Appendix E](#), H2, F1, F2, D1).

We did not hear from the Trent Lands Committee again until the VP External Relations & Advancement contacted the TVG Coordinator July 22, 2021, to arrange a meeting in August. The initial subject line was “visiting the farm” with the meeting description later updated to “tour of the gardens and discussion of proposed expansion site” (personal communication, August 17, 2021). In the July 22, 2021, email, the VP External Relations & Advancement stated:

Following up on the continuing conversation about the TVG I'd like to see your current farm in operation and also look at the other site you have proposed. Not a decision-making meeting, just information sharing. (forwarded personal communication, January 10, 2023)

A tour of the TVG took place August 18, 2021. It's important to note that no information was shared with us about the Trent Lands Committee's plans during this meeting; in specific, nothing was mentioned about the Grounds Operation relocation (and at the time, the Growers Group had no information to discern that this was something additional to the Cleantech Commons road development). In attendance were the VP External Relations & Advancement, Associate VP Facilities Management, Director of Campus Planning and Development, interim

⁷⁰ Detailed in Chapter 5, last paragraph of section 5.1, p. 130.

Manager of Community Relations and University Events, and members from the TVG, TMG, Apiary, Peterborough Community Medicine Garden, BIPOC Growing Collective, Seasoned Spoon, and community garden plots. Many members shared their experiences and the substantial value that their time on this land, the relationships, learnings, and skill-building had brought them, and that these complex exchanges were not easily or simply replicable somewhere else. Some members expressed their concerns about development to the administration and reiterated objections to the Cleantech Commons road development (not yet diverted). The group also led a walking tour of the proposed core location request, specifically the 0.515 ha and 0.293 ha plots (see [Figure 5](#)) from the joint Growers Group and Seasoned Spoon letter and in the original Farm Plan (Blyth et al., 2020; Trent University School of the Environment, 2020a, p. 5). These plots were requested once again, with the potential benefits outlined to the administration.

The one-directional sharing detailed above is significant to note, otherwise, on the surface, the Trent Lands Committee may purport they were fulfilling their Development Process (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, pp. 207–210). In the TLNAP (Part IV), Trent stated, “the campus community will be engaged in the planning and implementation of various University initiatives” (p. 190) and “the community will be engaged at key points in realizing this Plan by providing input at the visioning and design stage, reviewing and commenting on draft plans, or collaborating to deliver initiatives” (p. 192). However, what claim can be made about providing input when the campus and community members being engaged did not have knowledge of the University initiative under consideration (the Grounds Operation relocation)? In the year to come, it would become clear that this information ‘sharing’ was less about advancing the TVG and associated student led TMG and Apiary projects, and more about

molding their footprint to fit with the Trent Lands Committee's Grounds Operation relocation plan, and a new residence development (see [Appendix E](#), H3, D4).

On December 14, 2021, the Director of Campus Planning and Development emailed two maps to the TVG Coordinator, revealing Trent's site vision for the Grounds Operation Facility.⁷¹ One of their maps suggested expansion areas (see below #1-3) where student and community growers could potentially relocate in the future. This was due to the potential displacement of approximately half of the TVG resulting from the Grounds Operation relocation (see [Figure 16](#)).

⁷¹ The original maps were deposited by the author in the Trent University Archives and can be accessed digitally by request (*Potential TVG Sites 01 December 21, 2021; Trent Gardens Overlay - Grounds Operation Relocation, 2021*).

Figure 16: Site Outlines for Grounds Operation Relocation, Science North Residence Parking Lots, and Expansion Lands for Student and Community Growers



(Radcliffe, 2023c)

In the December 2021 email, the Director stated:

The recent expansions of the TVG encroach onto the proposed works yard. I have spoken to [REDACTED], the AVP of Facilities Management about this. [They have] indicated [they have] no objection to the TVG using the lands in the interim providing it is understood that there are pre-existing plans for this area that will take precedence. Any soil improvements to this area will be lost if/when the works yard is constructed [my additions]. (forwarded personal communication, January 25, 2023)

This simplified framing failed to acknowledge that in the summer of 2019 the Trent Vegetable Gardens, working with the Trent School of Environment, shifted their growing space North to avoid possible impacts from the Cleantech Commons road development (see [Appendix](#)

[E](#), H4, H6, D5). Plainly speaking, they were working with the information they had to adapt and sustain their operations in the face of destruction to their social and ecological environment. As discussed above, Trent withheld all design plans for the Grounds Operation relocation throughout the TLNAP process. Thus, this positioning of “pre-existing plans” created a distorted set of circumstances that advanced a fait accompli, whereby any potential for input from the campus and community during the preliminary study and visioning phase was erased and/or undermined. The student and community organizations were expected to accept this overriding of shared and deliberate planning practices, and work within the confines of Trent’s latest, fait accompli planning proposal (see [Appendix E](#), H2, F2, D2, D4).

In continuation of the previous statements, the Director of Campus Planning and Development alluded to future planning, as if normalizing the undervaluing and overriding of campus and community involvement in the TLNAP Development Process well into Trent’s future (see [Appendix E](#), D4). The Director’s statements in the December 14, 2021, email, continued:

When we talked about expansion, I noted that *a tighter footprint may be less risky for the TVG. As the University evolves over the long-term, it might be easier to work around a more compact layout* [emphasis added] than a linear shape. I raised a few possible locations as potential expansion spots.

As part of their next steps, they stated:

I am going to make some edits to the existing MOU that is up for renewal that attempts to capture the above. I want to circulate a few other folks at my end first, so I may not be able to send it over for your review until the new year. (forwarded personal communication, January 25, 2023)

This foreshadowing was telling. In subsequent communications the Director of Campus Planning and Development would begin to retract the lands on offer. In the months following the

December 2021 exchange, the TVG Coordinator contacted the Director multiple times so they could re-sign their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that expired in January 2022. By June 24, 2022, after multiple requests and deferments, the Director of Campus Planning replied with further delays and new information about the lands on offer:

Good afternoon [REDACTED] –

Our lawyer has advised me that next week is “Trent Week” for him so we should see something soon (ish). Once I have the updated MOU in hand we can reconvene. I would love to meet on site with you, our Land Stewardship Coordinator [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] from the Apiary to go over long term plans. *When we last spoke about expansion opportunities we didn't know that the new residence was going to be on the east bank which could have some ripple effects* [emphasis added]. It would be a good time to think about how that might change your needs and brainstorm. I am on vacation from July 1 – 11 so hopefully we have something then and can arrange a meeting. (forwarded personal communication, January 25, 2023)

The Director’s statements reflect a pattern observed during and after the TLNAP process of misleading communications and the omission/erasure of context about developments on Trent lands (see [Appendix I](#)). As documented in Trent’s housing strategy, Board Engagement timeline, the initial site locations for the new residence were received by the Board of Governors in December 2019 (Trent University Board of Governors, 2022b, p. 92).⁷² The administration and Brook McIlroy (BM) concluded a multi-site analysis and chose BM’s East bank recommendation of “a new college building north of the science building (K Science North)” in March 2020 (pp. 92-93). Although the Director of Campus Planning and Development was not part of Trent’s Facilities Management team in 2019/20, it appears dubitable that these long-established and highly impactful decisions had not been communicated to the Director several months into their role. This skepticism arises, particularly given their job description, which includes “Project

⁷² For a digital copy of this Board agenda, see Matt Dutry and Community Trent Lands Plan Research Collection (23-015-13-02-04.12).

management of capital infrastructure and development projects, studies and initiatives from concept through to completion” (Trent University Department of Human Resources, 2020, p. 2). And who was the Director referring to when they stated, “we didn’t know” (forwarded personal communication, January 25, 2023)?

This rhetoric was repeated by the Director on August 10, 2022, when coordinating a meeting with the TVG Coordinator to discuss the TVG expansion. They continued to obscure the timing of decisions, as well as their role and responsibility in Trent’s decision-making structure and proximity to institutional information (see [Appendix E](#), H1):

██████, since I made some suggestions for expansion areas last fall, the University has decided to locate a new residence/college on the east bank of campus which will likely have a number of ripple effects particularly as it relates to parking. (forwarded personal communication, January 25, 2023)

By September 2022, having received only notice of “ripple effects” with regards to the residence development (forwarded email correspondences, January 25, 2023), the Director revealed a modified site vision in their meeting with the TVG Coordinator, where approximately half of the suggested expansion areas were no longer available. More astonishing, the remaining lands on offer were impractical. The Director provided an initial rough sketch (Trent University Director of Campus Planning & Development, 2022) that showed the only remaining lands after the potential displacement of the TVG would be parts of area #2 (situated on highly sloped land, with no morning sun exposure) and/or area #1 (shown to be impacted by the Grounds Operation entrance road on the map shared December 14, 2021 (*Trent Gardens Overlay - Grounds Operation Relocation*, 2021)) (also see [Figure 16](#)). The rest of the expansion areas had been flagged for parking lot developments in order to accommodate Trent’s Science North student

residence (Trent University Board of Governors, 2022b, p. 94) (personal communication, October 26, 2022). Parking space minimums were positioned prominently in the September discussion of the modified site vision (personal communication, October 26, 2022). Markedly, the campus and community had not been included in this latest iteration of planning either, and effectively the footprint of the TVG was being reduced, mired in more uncertainty, and given no viable options to sustain its current operations (see [Appendix E](#), H2, H3, F2, D2).

The undervaluing of faculty, student, and community ideas and engagement, and the overriding of shared and deliberate planning practices begs the question, was Trent's lack of meaningful consultation exposing it to greater social and environmental risks? Broader understandings in community (and cities') vision and design, such as the end to parking minimums, may affirm that Trent was taking unnecessary risks (Throop, 2022). Further details in Board documents about the project scope for the Science North residence, alongside critical questions, add to the case that Trent was likely taking unnecessary risks (see [Appendix J](#)).

In a follow up email, the TVG Coordinator asked about the evolving site plan for the TVG area and opportunities for stakeholder and community feedback, as well as how the plan necessarily conforms to the TLNAP's guiding principles.⁷³ The Director provided a deflective answer, alongside a largely, unintelligible site plan. If anything was clearer from this latest communication and site plan, it was the extent to which the Grounds Operation roadway would

⁷³ See TLNAP Development Process responsibilities, Phase 2: Preliminary Study & Visioning (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, pp. 208, 210). Also see TLNAP guiding principles (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, pp. 35–37, 2021h, p. 207).

impact the expansion area #1 (Image002, 2022). In the email correspondence October 27, 2022, the Director stated:

“Hi [REDACTED]

I have pasted the site plan below. I know there is a better one kicking around that isn't part of a larger file – I am trying to track it down.

The site selection process and design development for the works yard pre-dates the TLNAP; I recall being approached for feedback about two of the potential sites when I worked at the Conservation Authority in and around 2017/18. As a result, it is important to keep in mind that the site selection would have been driven by the policies/legislation/regulations of the time. I do know that care was taken to work around the boundaries of TVG in the design. No design work has taken place around the yard since the original design in 2018. (forwarded personal communication, November 9, 2022)

The prompt to distance/disconnect the Ground Operations relocation from the TLNAP process because it was initiated before the TLNAP, advances the technical and apolitical narrative inherent in fait accompli planning (see [Appendix E](#), D5). Yet, it shows to be in direct conflict with Board of Governors documentation that stated it would be included in the TLNAP dialogue and final recommendations (Trent University Board of Governors, 2019a, 2019c, 2019d). It is also in conflict with the 2019 communications from the Associate VP of Facilities Management. Referring to the Grounds Operation relocation, they stated there would be adherence to the Trent Lands Plan process (forwarded personal communication, December 9, 2022). Further, it also obscures the politics and social choices from Trent's senior leadership that imposed the complete relocation of the campus food growing projects during the TLNAP process (personal communication, September 26, 2020). Statements in the remainder of the October 27, 2022, email (below), further obfuscate the TLNAP Development Process. Given that site designs and visions for these development projects that affect the TVG continue to evolve internally at Trent, the following information was not helpful. The Director stated:

At this point in time, it is anticipated that any relocation of the works yard will be triggered by future realignment of the Nassau Mills Road/Armour Road/Pioneer Road/University Road intersections that would be the outcome of the City of Peterborough North End Municipal Class EA study. . . . The preferred option for the Nassau/Armour/Pioneer/University intersection would require some of Trent land including where the workshop currently sits ([Peterborough PIC Transportation Designs](#)) which is why we are continuing to hold the identified relocation spot. When/if the existing yard is relocated it will have to complete a formal Site Plan Approval process, which is an application under the Planning Act, and where most of the details are fleshed out.

When/if that time comes, we will need to look at the identified location against whatever policies are in place at the time, whether they be TLNAP-driven policies, municipal policies and/or legislation/regulations, and determine if the site and design is still feasible or appropriate. Since we don't know or control the timing on it, we are not pre-supposing what policies/legislation/regulations will be in place and what our conclusions or consultation program will be.

Hope this helps. (forwarded personal communication, November 9, 2022)

This redirection and shifting of the TLNAP Development Process responsibilities to a future point in time, largely dependent on external initiatives, decision-making bodies, sets of policies, legislation, and regulations, is problematic. Their reference to the Site Plan process under the Provincial Planning Act is a moot point, given that generally, there is no public consultation or public appeal to a tribunal (Government of Ontario, 2023, sec. 41). This positioning obscures the importance of sorting out coarse site plan considerations at the campus level. Like patterns observed in [Appendix I](#), what is omitted from this narrative and framing is that their choice of location for the Grounds Operation relocation was, and largely remains, beyond any directives from the City and Province. Yet, this framing erases the historical context that it was a predetermined outcome, absent of consultation, and positions it as apolitical. It obscures the fact that the choice of location has always been Trent's internal initiative and development project (see [Appendix E](#), H2, F2, D4).

As of 2023, Trent’s senior leadership continue to push changes forward without comprehensive input. Trent has doubled down on their attempt to see through their fait accompli planning process by putting language into the TVG MOU that seeks to erase the full context of events detailed here, obscure the TLNAP Development Process, and skirt any firm commitments to redressing negative social and environmental impacts. In a MOU meeting between the TVG Coordinator and the incumbent Associate Vice President of Facilities Management, the word “endeavour” was repeatedly used by the Associate Vice President of Facilities Management with regards to the actions that Trent would take (personal communication, October 17, 2023). This positioning advances a continued ambiguity and the potential for Trent to develop the area without firm commitments to their TLNAP Development Process.

In the context of the proposed MOU, Trent is now edging along lines of brute force and coercive intimidation to bring about the surrender of lands. Revisions from the Director of Campus Planning and Development in the MOU included:

Recognize that the Field Garden has expanded, without approval by the University, beyond the original footprint. TVG recognizes that while Trent is allowing this expanded area to be used for the Field Garden at this time, the area of expansion may be subject to reclamation by the University in the future. TVG recognizes that any soil amendments made by TVG in this location will not be compensated by the University. . . .

In the event that one of the gardens is required to move locations, Trent will endeavour to provide another location... This does not apply to portions of the Field Garden that have expanded beyond the original footprint. . . . should the Field Garden need to be relocated, Trent will endeavour to provide reasonable notice to the TVG... (*TVG Mou Updates v.3.1 16 April 23, 2023*) (see [Appendix E](#), H4, H6, D5)

As the fait accompli planning practices continue at Trent, its campus and community members have continued to uphold their diplomacy and make every effort to engage with administration to advance these areas of student livelihood, experiential learning, and

scholarship. The campus and community members' response to these problematic advances can be read in a June 2023 TVG boundary reconsideration request letter (*TVG Boundary Reconsideration Request*, 2023). And although Trent's conduct of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process has continued to frustrate student, staff, faculty, and community efforts, there can now be a growing understanding that the themes of fait accompli planning are ultimately a hinderance to generative land-use planning at the university. Through this work, scholars and community members alike can better identify the many characteristics of fait accompli planning and work toward making visible its false inevitability narratives and detrimental practices. Land-use planning decisions are not apolitical, technical matters of course. To preserve the viability and sustainability of long-term planning choices, along with the communities and environments they sustain, they require comprehensive input for the decisions being made.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In exploring the entanglements of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan and process, this thesis illuminates the social practices and textual realities that shape the university's land-use planning process, and by implication, its public sphere. The initial research objective was to arrive at a compatible and improved outcome for all the stakeholders in Trent's food growing system. However, the conclusion of this project reveals that systemic changes are likely needed, both structurally and in terms of planning practices, to foster outcomes more in-line with the principles of (publicly funded) institutes of higher learning. The overarching vision for Trent's regenerative, campus-based food system remains uncertain, and its existing food growing projects and associated organizations are threatened by conduct that obscures the TLNAP process and its principles.

Throughout the course of this research, I document numerous examples where university-community engagement in Trent's land-use planning process has been compromised. In the case of the on-campus food system and correlated pedagogy, Trent's senior leadership have advanced a milieu which attempts to set a precedent for 'acceptable knowledge', which is to be determined by their use of authority. However, this research demonstrates that Trent's structure of governance is not monolithic, and its senior leadership fail time and again to uphold common understandings of established knowledge. Through the many documented points of friction, my thesis demonstrates that other possibilities have presented themselves regularly, and the status quo approach to land-use planning at Trent requires critical attention.

Despite well-crafted public relations campaigns, Trent University's on-the-ground reality falls significantly short for students, staff, faculty, and the community, advocating for a more effective and inclusive approach. The research reveals discrepancies in planning, communications, governance, and adherence to institutional principles. I spotlight breaches of academic integrity, impacts on the institution's Natural Heritage features and environmental reputation, and underscore persistent effects on community-university engagement. My research raises productive questions about the use of power within Trent's institutional setting and the routine acceptance of *fait accompli* planning practices, urging us to contemplate the potential futures that such approaches might promote.

This thesis presents a well-documented case in which *fait accompli* planning was applied to the relocation of on-campus food growing sites. In listening about processes for intelligent,

collective decision-making, I found that Daniel Schmachtenberger’s articulation parallels the experiences of Trent’s food growing system. This comparison highlights the shortcomings of fait accompli planning as well as a general direction for its rectification. Daniel Schmachtenberger put it in basic terms:

We can get into ... people voting yes/no on a binary proposition where both sides, where both versions of the proposition suck. If it goes through it benefits something and harms something else. If it doesn’t go through the thing it would benefit is now harmed because the proposition was just designed stupidly to begin with. It didn’t factor how interconnected everything was, so the yes/no on it, can’t not polarize the population.

Like that’s just a stupid system of collective intelligence, right? . . . We can just do much, much, better. Where, before you make a proposition, you actually do the sense making of what are all the interconnected things? What are all of the values? You take those as design constraints to go through a better proposition crafting process of what is the best synergistic satisfier with the least theory of tradeoffs possible. And what are better voting systems than binary that inherently polarize the population? I think we can do a radically better job of systems of collective intelligence. And a radically better job of education of people to be able to participate with these things. (Rebel Wisdom, 2022, pt. 2:33:43)

I think generally, this research underscores a tension between two potential futures for Trent — one that focuses on revenue-driven development for economic sustainability and growth in the transactional conferment of degrees, and another that focuses on developmental growth for students to be democratically versed and innovative in their orientation toward society. These futures are not mutually exclusive however, and it is precisely in the words of Trent’s President, “showing how to pursue development,” where we must draw our guidelines for conduct and meeting Trent University’s mandate of a public-serving, educational institution. But how do we get there?

I refrain from asserting a singular ‘true’ discourse or totalizing claim to truth. I invite critical conversation into my analysis, seeking collaborative approaches to finding answers

amongst the many sets of discourses — food systems, education/pedagogy, land-use/land relations, culture, consultation, leadership ethics, institutional sustainability, economics, and more — that operate within the Trent University land-use planning context. It is my attempt to bridge what could otherwise be critiqued as abstraction by excavating an extraordinary volume of empirical data from the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan and process. The purpose of this research is to explicate in as rigorous a manner possible, “the actual social relations in which people’s lives are embedded and to make these visible to them/ourselves” (Smith, 1999, p. 74).

Smith (1999) advises:

As a project of inquiry rather than of theory, it must rely on the possibility that truth can be told in the following very ordinary sense: that when people disagree about statements made about the world, accuracy or truth is not decided on the basis of 'authority' or on the shared beliefs of a community but by referring back, in principle at least, to an original state of affairs, extraneous to the accounts they have given. (p. 97)

Flax (1992) echoes this understanding stating, “Prior agreement on rules, not the compelling power of objective truth, makes conflict resolution possible” (p. 452). A potential starting point for an ‘original state’ or prior agreement on rules, which can provide Trent University’s campus and community an opportunity to bind a multitude of accounts, texts, and discourses, is in its legally binding articles of incorporation. Again, the Trent Act states the objects and purposes of the university are: “(a) the advancement of learning and the dissemination of knowledge; and (b) the intellectual, social, moral and physical development of its members and the betterment of society” (Bill Pr24: An Act to Incorporate Trent University, 1963, p. 884).

I argue that a rethinking of land-use planning and governance at Trent University, rooted in these original guidelines for conduct, is productive. As demonstrated in this research, a

leadership culture that adheres to the command-and-control approach to decision making falls short in advancing an informed and adaptable way of improving numerous situations, over long periods of time. I reiterate Morgan and Davis (2019) who draw our attention to an evolution of leadership over the past 30 years:

Historically, the dominant model was one of the charismatic and/or “command and control” leader at the helm of a hierarchical structure or system. In the 1980s, the notion of “transformational leadership” took hold, as leaders came to be seen as effective if primarily motivated by a desire to serve others or employing a social change model (Dugan, 2017). These approaches to change focused on leadership as a process rather than a position. Benjamin Barber (1980, 1988) argued that the United States needs strong citizens, not strong leaders. Ron Heifetz, founder of Harvard’s Center for Public Leadership at the Kennedy School of Government, envisioned leadership as distinct from authority—leaders can be individuals with or without positional authority. Effective leaders mobilize the talents of many who represent diverse perspectives to work collaboratively. They are skilled in convening, inquiring, engaging in dialogue and deliberation, mobilizing coalitions, and collaborating to solve community problems. (pp. 35-36)

In a CBC Spark episode discussing failed transformations in education, Marshall

McLuhan was quoted saying:

People live in the rear-view mirror because it’s safer. They’ve been there before, they feel more comfortable. Anybody who looks at the present is a threat. The present is an area that people have always avoided throughout all human history. The utopias of mankind are all rear-view mirror images of the preceding age. (Killick & Young, 2021, pt. 35:55)

However, this research establishes that the leadership strategies documented herein, derived from the preceding age, are not a sufficient model for attending to our complex social and environmental reality. In the absence of critical examination and intervention, the continuation of Trent’s current land-use planning model as an example for Trent students, future leaders, and generations yet-to-come, validates the current practices as a normative means to ‘best practice’ campus land-use planning (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021b). It upholds exclusions of meaningful contributions from engaged campus and community members,

organizational leadership and academics who hold subject matter expertise, and establishes underpinnings for siloed decision making which persistently obstructs the advancement of learning and dissemination of knowledge.

This holds particular significance, especially if Trent University is committed to genuinely honouring its esteemed Indigenous Studies and fulfilling obligations to Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous First Nations. Within the historical context of Treaty relations, what do Trent's moral directives really entail in the 21st century? The dialectic tensions between viewing land as property, object, and an instrument for human ends, versus viewing land as living, relational, and kin to which we belong with reciprocal responsibilities, carry profound implications. How can future generations navigate the complexity of this epistemological gap if the educational institution(s) remain fixed in a command-and-control approach toward collective human and more-than-human intelligence in decision-making? Ultimately, Trent's current model stands to harm the institution's reputation and hinder its potential to generate novel and context-specific knowledge and solutions in the course of its planning, along with associated teaching, learning, and research.

Fortunately, Trent University is already positioned to usher in a productive rethinking of its current planning practices. Trent's newly established Jarislowsky Chair in Trust and Political Leadership is poised to address the challenges at hand. As stated on Trent's website:

The new Jarislowsky Chair at Trent is part of a national network of scholars set to engage with the next generation of politicians and public sector leaders in ethics, democratic values and responsible governance, within the contexts of Canada's diverse citizenship, democracy, and commitment to meaningful Truth and Reconciliation. (Trent University, 2022k)

Over the next five years, the development of an innovative program of scholarship for teaching, research, and experiential learning is supported by a \$4 million dollar endowment (Trent University Board of Governors, 2023b, p. 43, 2023c, p. 5). Its specific aim is to expand knowledge and training for ethical politics, fiduciary responsibility, and democratic governance. I invite the opportunity and offer to work with the Jarislowsky Chair to realize this transformative objective. I was instilled with a sense of hope during their presentation to the Board of Governors on March 24, 2023. The Jarislowsky Chair expressed their openness to work with students, faculty, researchers, the Board, and community members who would like to join this initiative, stating, “I want to bring people together, not push them into silos” (personal communication, March 24, 2023). A Governor, who identified their position as the Chair of Physics and Astronomy, asked if any of the research would impact or inform campus governance internally at Trent? The Jarislowsky Chair noted that they would love that, further extrapolating that one of the failings in Canada is that we do not do an adequate job of studying and developing university-level governance. In closing, the Chair of the Board brought up a point of information that the University of Manitoba has established a certificate course for Governance in Canadian Universities (University of Manitoba Extended Education, 2023) and in its first term had received an oversubscription of enrolments (personal communication, March 24, 2023).

Trent’s campus and community stand at a pivotal moment, with the potential to become a leader in this emerging field of Trust and Political Leadership. The actions taken post-TLNAP approval, along with communications extending into 2023, reveal yet-to-be-actualized commitments from Trent’s Development Process. These developments prompt questions about whether balanced and objective information is being provided to engaged campus and

community members. Demonstrating an unwavering commitment, a diverse intersection of the campus and community continues to organize, aligning their efforts to realize Trent's objects and purposes and advance comprehensive interaction in decision making. This concerted effort reflects a genuine interest in addressing the shortcomings uncovered by this research.

Drawing from the insights gained in this thesis, I propose that experiential learning in Trust and Political Leadership programming can be integrated with frameworks aimed at creating equity, such as the BIAS FREE Framework (Burke & Eichler, 2006; Wolbring, 2023), and methodologies such as Action Learning to help cultivate a public sphere conducive to productive questioning and collaborative solutions-making (Marquardt, 1999; McNulty, 1979; Zuber-Skerritt, 2011). I conclude, by advancing with other scholars, that universities have a vital role to play in creating comprehensive forums for discursive interaction (Ambrozas, 1998; Etzioni, 1995; Fraser, 1990; Hoppe, 2004; Polster & Newson, 2015; Pusser, 2006; Swaner, 2007; Westheimer, 2015). University-community governance and engagement must encompass the modeling of citizenship capacities crucial for participatory democracy and developing the needed social responsibilities for the broader communities to which we all belong. This holistic approach, grounded in a commitment to Trent University's founding principles and fostering genuine engagement, sets the stage for creating a more equitable public sphere and bringing about improvements across a multitude of complex situations well into Trent's future, and beyond.

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⁷⁴ Note to readers: If a reference web link is broken, please use <https://web.archive.org/> and search for the original URL. All URLs have been archived for posterity. Additionally, many of the files have been submitted to Trent University Archives and can be viewed digitally by request. See Matt Dutry and Community Trent Lands Plan Research Collection (23-015).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Trent University Research Ethics Board Approval



Matthew Dutry <matthewdutry@trentu.ca>

REB - Confirmation of Approval

jmuckle@trentu.ca <jmuckle@trentu.ca>

To: "Classens Michael(Supervisor)" <michaelclassens@trentu.ca>, "Dutry Matthew(Primary Investigator)" <matthewdutry@trentu.ca>

Cc: jmuckle@trentu.ca

Fri, Jun 4, 2021 at 8:39 AM



June 04, 2021

File #: 26568

Title: Community-based land planning for a regenerative food growing future

Dear Mr. Dutry,

The Research Ethics Board (REB) has given approval to your proposal entitled "Community-based land planning for a regenerative food growing future".

When a project is approved by the REB, it is an Institutional approval. It is not to be used in place of any other ethics process.

To maintain its compliance with this approval, the REB must receive via ROMEO:

An Annual Update for each calendar year research is active;

A Study Renewal should the research extend beyond its approved end date of August 31, 2021;

A Study Closure Form at the end of active research.

This project has the following reporting milestones set:

Appendix B: Indigenous Education Council at Trent University Approval



CHANIE WENJACK SCHOOL
FOR INDIGENOUS STUDIES

1600 West Bank Drive
Peterborough, ON Canada K9L 0G2

Telephone (705) 748-1011 ext. 7466
Facsimile (705) 748-1416
Email: indigenoustudies@trentu.ca
Web: www.trentu.ca/indigenoustudies

June 3, 2021

Dear Matt:

RE: IEC REVIEW OF ETHICS APPLICATION #26568 - APPROVAL

We are writing to you with our approval of your ethics application for the research project entitled: Community-based land use planning for a regenerative food growing future.

Thank you for your modifications and your explanations. It is clear that individuals will have a chance to review their contributions and direct quotations prior to their use in your thesis.

It was an interesting idea to incorporate the tobacco offering into the consent form. However, we suggest you remove this from the consent form. Many Elders are reluctant to refer to themselves as an Elder. The consent process is an oral process. You can say that you would like to offer tobacco and ask whether the Elder would like to receive the tobacco, given the COVID context and what the best way would be for them to receive it.

Please add to your consent form: "This research was reviewed and approved through the Indigenous Education Council ethics review process at Trent University."

If any questions arise, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Lynne Davis
Dr. Lynne Davis
Chair, IEC/DERC Review Committee
Professor, Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies
lydavis@trentu.ca

c.c. Dr. Catherine Thibeault, Chair, REB
Jamie Muckle, Certifications and Regulatory Compliance Officer
Dr. Michael Classen, Supervisor

Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Sample 1 Questions

Interview Sample Questions

Community-based land use planning for a regenerative food growing future

The purpose of this interview is to aid research toward a long-term vision that will effectively utilize Trent University's land base as an educational site. You are invited to take part in this study on the opportunities and challenges with land use and development practices at Trent, the Trent Land and Nature Areas Plan and/or its predecessor plans. The success of the project relies on your perspective, insight and knowledge. By sharing your experiences about land use and development practices, research efforts toward a long-term vision that will effectively utilize Trent University's land base as an educational site can be carried out.

Sample Questions:

- 1) How long have you been involved with Trent, as a community member, student, employee or other?
- 2) Can you tell me a bit about your participation and/or activities at Trent with regards to land use, development, the Trent Land and Nature Areas Plan and/or its predecessor plans?
 - a) What committees/groups have you been a part of or engagements have you had through the community or other?
- 3) What do you view as key decisions being made in this current Trent Land and Nature Areas plan?
 - a) What factors or pressures do you think weighed in on those decisions? Can you list a few?
- 4) What challenges or gaps does Trent face with regards to appeasing its surrounding community members in its land development process(es)?
 - a) What types of consultation occurred?
 - b) How were student critiques helpful in the process?
- 5) How might the Trent Land and Nature Areas plan impact land-based learning? What aspects of regenerative agricultural learning is it a proponent of? What aspects is it missing?
 - a) What resources have been committed in support of it?
 - b) What is your opinion on Trent's relocation of the Experimental Farm adjacent with the Nature Areas?
- 6) How might the Cleantech Commons impact education or the future of regenerative food growing at Trent?
 - a) In your view, what relationships between technology and regenerative food growing would be helpful? What would you consider to be unhelpful?
- 7) What opportunities do you think could or should be integrated in the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan, either in its current implementation phase or retroactively, in its prior planning phase(s)?
- 8) Do you have anything else to add?
- 9) Do you suggest anyone else who I should talk to?

Appendix D: Semi-structured Interview Sample 2 Questions

Interview Sample Questions

Community-based land use planning for a regenerative food growing future

The purpose of this interview is to aid research toward a long-term vision that will effectively utilize Trent University's land base as an educational site. You are invited to take part in this study on the opportunities and challenges with land use and development practices at Trent, the Trent Land and Nature Areas Plan and/or its predecessor plans. The success of the project relies on your perspective, insight and knowledge. By sharing your experiences about land use and development practices, research efforts toward a long-term vision that will effectively utilize Trent University's land base as an educational site can be carried out.

Sample Questions:

- 1) How long have you been involved with Trent, as a community member, employee, student or other?
- 2) Can you tell me a bit about your participation and/or activities at Trent with regards to land use, development, the Trent Land and Nature Areas Plan and/or its predecessor plans?
 - a) What committees/groups have you been a part of or engagements have you had through the community or other?
- 3) How might the Trent Land and Nature Areas plan impact land-based learning? What aspects of land-based learning is it a proponent of?
 - a) What resources have been committed in support of it?
- 4) What challenges or gaps does Trent face with regards to appeasing all stakeholder groups in its land development process(es)?
 - a) What types of consultation occurred?
 - i) How did the public have successful influence in the process?
 - ii) How were student critiques helpful in the process?
 - b) What were public misperceptions in the process?
 - c) What factors or pressures weighed in on key decisions? Can you list a few?
- 5) Is Trent required to consult with Curve Lake First Nation, given it gets government funding and is an agent of the Crown?
- 6) What processes must Trent follow with the city of Peterborough? What is more the city's role in approvals and what is Trent's?
- 7) The Nature Areas Stewardship Plan released in 2002 outlines general policies, classifications and zoning as well as management guidelines, all of which are specific in detail as to how to steward the Nature Areas. How well do you think the Trent Land and Nature Areas Plan will perform with regards to being able to uphold stewardship of the Nature Areas?
- 8) What are key next steps in the Trent Land and Nature Areas Plan?
- 9) Do you have anything else to add?
- 10) Do you suggest anyone else who I should talk to?

Appendix E: The BIAS FREE Framework for Research

| Main Problem Type | Nature of Problem | Solution |
|--|---|--|
| <p>(H) - Hierarchy Maintaining an existing hierarchy</p> <p>Is the dominance of one group over the other in any way justified or maintained?</p> <p>Situate the problem within a human rights framework, in which equality is an underlying value. Point out the discrepancy between this value and the inequality among groups of people that result from the hierarchy.</p> | <p>H1 - Denying hierarchy: Is the existence of a hierarchy denied in spite of widespread evidence to the contrary?</p> | <p>The existence of a hierarchy is acknowledged; its validation is questioned and rejected.</p> |
| | <p>H2 - Maintaining hierarchy: Are practices or views that are based on a hierarchy presented as normal or unproblematic?</p> | <p>Expressions of hierarchies are questioned and problematized.</p> |
| | <p>H3 - Dominant perspective: Is the perspective or standpoint of the dominant group adopted?</p> | <p>The perspectives of non-dominant and dominant groups are respected and accepted.</p> |
| | <p>H4 - Pathologization: Is the non-dominant group pathologized when it differs from the norms derived from the dominant group?</p> | <p>Challenge the norm and address the reasons given for pathologizing the group.</p> |
| | <p>H5 - Objectification: Is stripping people of their intrinsic dignity and personhood presented as normal or unproblematic?</p> | <p>Recognize that every human being has intrinsic dignity and human rights are inviolable and must be protected, and conduct the activity accordingly.</p> |
| | <p>H6 - Victim-blaming: Are victims of individual and/or structural violence blamed and held accountable?</p> | <p>Victims are not blamed; individual and/or structural violence is identified; and those responsible are held accountable.</p> |
| | <p>H7 - Appropriation: Is ownership claimed by the dominant group for entities that originate(d) in or belong to the non-dominant group?</p> | <p>Original ownership is acknowledged and respected.</p> |

| Main Problem Type | Nature of Problem | Solution |
|----------------------|--|---|
| (F) - Failing | <p>F1 - Insensitivity to difference: Has the relevance of membership in</p> | <p>Relevance of dominant/non-dominant group membership must always be determined; group membership must be included as an</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Failing to examine differences | dominant/non-dominant group been ignored? | analytical variable throughout the activity and only then can its relevance be assessed. |
| Is membership in a non-dominant/dominant group examined as socially relevant and accommodated? | F2 - Decontextualization: Has the different social reality of dominant and non-dominant groups explicitly been considered? | The context with respect to domination/non-dominant group membership is explicitly examined and differences following from this are identified, analyzed and taken into account. |
| Establish the relevance of group membership within a given context. Once relevance is established, accommodate differences in ways that reduce the hierarchy. | F3 - Over-generalization or universalization: Is information derived from dominant groups generalized to non-dominant groups without examining if it is applicable to the non-dominant groups? | Information about the dominant group is acknowledged as such, and efforts are made to obtain information about the non-dominant group or conclusions are limited to the dominant group. |
| | F4 - Assumed homogeneity: Is the dominant or non-dominant group treated as a uniform group? | Differences within dominant and non-dominant groups are acknowledged and taken into account. |

| Main Problem Type | Nature of Problem | Solution |
|---|---|---|
| (D) - Double standards Using double standards Identify the double standard that leads to different treatment of members of dominant and non-dominant groups and how this maintains a hierarchy; then, devise means to provide the same treatment to both groups. | D1 - Overt double standard: Are non-dominant and dominant groups treated differently? | Provide the same treatment to members of dominant and non-dominant groups whenever this increases equity. |
| | D2 - Under representation or exclusion: Are non-dominant groups under represented or excluded? | Non-dominant groups are included whenever relevant. Ie. affected by the decisions being made |
| | D3 - Exceptional under representation or exclusion: In contexts normally associated with non-dominant groups, but pertinent to all groups, is the dominant group under represented or excluded? | Dominant groups are appropriately represented in issues of relevance to them that have been stereotyped as being important only for a non-dominant group. |
| | D4 - Denying agency: Is there a failure to consider non-dominant/dominant | Examine ways in which dominant and non-dominant groups are both acting as well as acted upon. |

| | |
|---|--|
| groups as both actors and acted upon? | |
| D5 - Treating dominant opinions as facts: Are opinions expressed by a dominant group about a non-dominant group treated as opinion or fact? | Opinions expressed by dominant groups about non-dominant groups are treated as opinions, not fact. |
| D6 - Stereotyping: Are stereotypes of non-dominant/dominant groups treated as essential aspects of group membership? | Treat stereotypes as stereotypes, not as truths. |
| D7 - Exaggerating differences: Are overlapping traits treated as if they were characteristic of only non-dominant/dominant groups? | Document both the differences and the similarities between members of non-dominant and dominant groups. |
| D8 - Hidden double standard: Are different criteria used to define comparable facts with the effect of hiding their comparability? | Ask whether there might be a hidden double standard by looking for non-obvious parallels. One way of achieving this is by asking what form the phenomenon identified within one group might take within another group. |

Note. Adapted from (Burke & Eichler, 2006, pp. 51–53)

Appendix F: Additional Research Demonstrating a Lack of Consultation and Inadequate Land-use Planning

This appendix documents additional research that pertains to the Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee (NASAC) in relation to the TLNAP and its process. Informal communications with members from the 2020 committee reported generally positive outcomes, however, some notable issues were documented during the course of this thesis.

Building on the inquiries made by our Growers Group to the Trent Lands Committee (refer to Chapter 4, section 4.3.2), we wondered whether NASAC, which shared oversight of the Nature Areas, was consulted regarding the farm relocation proposal. In response to Question 1 about Nature Areas policies (see p. 107), we received a forwarded response from the VP External Relations & Advancement that stated:

the Nature Areas Stewardship Plan states that ‘Opportunities for complementary uses may also be considered on a case-by-case basis (e.g., market garden, storage sheds, wells for irrigation) as a general directive for all nature areas. The plan currently states ‘There shall be no removal of plants and animals, including wildflowers and edible plants, except as undertaken by Trent University Facilities Management with advice from the Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee for management, research or teaching purposes. Indigenous traditional uses are exempt’. (personal communication, October 13, 2020)

In the weeks and months that followed, the Growers Group learned that consultation from the Trent Lands Committee with NASAC regarding the farm relocation was lacking.⁷⁵ Members from the Growers Group attended three Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee meetings on October 30, November 27, and December 11, 2020. In these meetings the committee members noted that NASAC had been consulted during the summer months about

⁷⁵ There was no overlap in committee members between NASAC and members working on the Trent Farm proposal.

Nature Areas boundary additions/deletions, but no discussion had taken place with its full committee about the relocation of the Experimental Farm into the Nature Areas (fieldnotes, October 30, 2020; November 27, 2020). What implications would the farm relocation have for the Nature Areas and why had no fulsome discussions taken place with NASAC? Trent's confounding pattern of consultation was surfacing once again. How had the TLNAP arrived at its final draft stage without an assessment of risks or impacts to the Nature Areas? Following our December 11, 2020, meeting, NASAC submitted feedback to the Trent Lands Committee that highlighted the ongoing and unaddressed concerns:

As one example, the committee feels that further discussion regarding the role of agriculture as a category or management objective in the Nature Areas is warranted. Points to consider include whether and/or how agricultural objectives might align (or not) with the goals of other parts of the Nature Areas (e.g., grasslands crops can provide useful habitat for some species). This may also involve questions about the types of agricultural practices on the land (e.g., traditional vs. regenerative), or whether agricultural lands is an appropriate land use to be included in Nature Areas. . . . Discussion of removing and restoring existing agricultural land should also be discussed. We wish to emphasize the need for ongoing resources (i.e., financial and people) and venues to support the work of maintaining the Nature Areas into the future, including activities such as sorting through potential conflicts among users and stakeholders of the Nature Areas. (Nature Areas Stewardship Advisory Committee, 2020)⁷⁶

Even more disconcerting, upon the publication of the draft City Official Plan by the City of Peterborough in July 2021 (City of Peterborough, 2021a, p. 55, 2021b, p. 2), I would come to discover that the Trent Lands Committee had finalized the TLNAP without ensuring they had the correct Land Use Designation for agricultural activities to take place at their proposed farm relocation site (in the Nature Areas).⁷⁷ Yet, during Phase 1 of the process (Trent University,

⁷⁶ This document was shared with me by a member of NASAC with permission to deposit in the Trent University Archives.

⁷⁷ The land was designated as Major Open Space in the City Official Plan. Under this designation, permitted uses included horticultural activities such as community gardens, garden plots, and nursery gardening. The designation would limit the scope of agricultural activities and research. The City later made last-minute changes to its Official Plan, altering the designation to Major Institutional, which permits research and development facilities, as well as employment uses related to such facilities.

2019f) and reiterated in the finalized TLNAP, the Trent Lands Committee stated: “The engagement plan was designed to allow for fair input into the Plan, while ensuring timely approval to ensure the Plan could inform critical City and County planning processes” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021c, p. 13). If these processes were tied together by design, why was something as critical as a Land Use Designation not addressed? Interestingly, it was only after I raised this concern with TSE faculty during our October 8, 2021, group workshop, that last-minute changes to Land Use Designation were made in the final November draft of the City Official Plan. At the Director of the TSE’s request, I followed up with an email detailing the limitations affecting the Trent Farm on October 9, 2021. The City Official Plan changes were confirmed to be made mid-October during my semi-structured interview with a Supervisor of Development Planning at the City, on October 25, 2021:

Supervisor of Development Planning: So I can tell you that as of Thursday when the staff report comes out, those lands will be shown as Major Institution.

Researcher: Okay.

Supervisor of Development Planning: The portions of the Major Open Space that are South of Pioneer road, they kind of look like fingers, they will go Major Institution in part to protect for, what are they called, the experiential farm?

Researcher: Experimental Farm, yeah.

Supervisor of Development Planning: Experimental Farm. Yeah, relocation. . . .

Researcher: And so was that just a recent decision that was made?

Supervisor of Development Planning: Yeah, very recent. . . . And again, so you’ll see that Thursday. The draft Official Plan goes out on the web.

Researcher: Okay. So did Trent come to the City with that concern then? Was that something that came from them?

Supervisor of Development Planning: Yep. (personal communication, October 25, 2021)

F.1 The Removal of Shared and Deliberate Planning Practices

Lastly, a significant observation was documented in the Trent Lands Committee’s subtle change of language in later TLNAP drafts, where they further removed shared and deliberate planning practices. In the TLNAP Part IV (February 22, vs. March 19, 2021) NASAC’s “key role in reviewing studies and recommendations to *define* [emphasis added] targets and actions” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021a, p. 191) was relegated to “reviewing studies and recommendations *about* [emphasis added] targets and actions” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021g, p. 191). This further aggregation of power may warrant additional, critical study. This was not the first instance where Trent’s administration demoted the authority of this committee; the most severe undermining of this committee was referenced to take place in the early 2000s when it was removed from being a subcommittee of Senate and installed under administration reporting to the Board of Governors (OurTrent, 2005). Although I do not provide a detailed comparison between the 2021 TLNAP and 2002 Nature Areas Stewardship Plan,⁷⁸ future environmental and policy researchers may want to compare the policies and guidelines for management of the Nature Areas. What were the targets and actions (i.e., general policies, and management guidelines and procedures) detailed in the 2002 Nature Areas Stewardship Plan (Jones et al., 2002, pp. 99–101; 120–129), and were they carried over into the current TLNAP? If not, why, and what was supposed to be the configuration of institutional responsibility (Jones et al., 2002, p. 157) for the implementation of the Stewardship Plan and management of Trent’s Nature Areas? What implications might this have for research and caretaking in the Nature Areas at Trent?

⁷⁸ I found no research that supported the 2002 Nature Areas Stewardship Plan was formally approved by the Board of Governors, nonetheless, the Nature Areas were embedded in the 2006 Endowment Lands Plan and carried forward in the 2013 and 2021 lands plans.

Appendix G: Timeline and Documentation of Campus and Community Submissions to Trent Lands Committee During Phase 3 and 4 of the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan

Note to readers: This is not an exhaustive list of all feedback submitted to the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan process. Feedback/submissions made to the Trent Lands Committee were not made public so there is no record to account for what may be missing. These were collected through public webpages and/or personal email correspondences where consent was obtained from the various authors. All the corresponding documentation can be viewed in the Trent University Archives, Matt Dutry and Community Trent Lands Plan Research Collection (23-105-13-03).

G.1 Phase 3: October 13, 2020, to February 5, 2021, Submissions

- October 13, 2020, Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan (TLNAP) I, II, III drafts and supporting documents released for public feedback. The initial deadline for public input was November 1, 2020.
- October 23, 2020, Trent Lands Committee responded to community disapproval of the impetuous TLNAP public feedback deadline and extended it to January 4, 2021. This was still viewed as hurried by the campus and community and additional requests for extensions would be submitted.

- November 22, 2020, the Trent Central Student Association's (TCSA) Environment and Sustainability Commissioner released a student survey to gather students' perspectives on the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan.
- December 7, 2020, the Seasoned Spoon and Growers Group published and submitted a joint request to maintain the current TVG location and called for increased representation in maps and communication about developments. Additionally, the letter asked for the Trent Lands Committee to foster collaborative consultation amongst stakeholders who had shared concerns, starting with an extension of the January 4 feedback deadline.
- December 10, 2020, the TCSA and Trent Graduate Student Association (TGSA) submitted concerns regarding the timeline and conduct of the TLNAP consultations and process, and requested for an extension of the January 4 public input deadline.
- December 13, 2020, Indigenous Elders and Trent students collaborated to create a public conference called Honouring the Land of the Sacred Elements and to raise awareness about the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan. Panelists presented research findings of the unique, and in many cases increasingly rare living diversity across Trent lands, and highlighted concerns about the loss of Trent's Nature Areas to development from 2002 onward. Indigenous Elders drew attention to our inextricable connection to the elements and natural world, and further called for Trent's administration to reconsider their approach to land.

- December 15, 2020, a collective of representatives from community and student organizations submitted a joint letter of concern regarding the clarity of the TLNAP documents, and the timing and absence of a clear resolution process for the feedback period. They requested an extension of the January 4 deadline.
- December 17, 2020, the Trent Lands Committee denied the TCSA and TGSA's request for an extension; citing consultant expertise for the allotted review period, future commenting during Phase 4 to address outstanding concerns, and a key sequence of steps to accommodate the February and March Board of Governors meetings to approve the TLNAP guiding principles and meet imperatives for planning.⁷⁹
- December 22, 2020, the Trent Lands Committee notified the Growers Group and Seasoned Spoon of a requirement to assemble a long-term vision and infrastructure plan to be submitted by the week of January 4.
- December 24, 2020, Sustainable Trent submitted a detailed letter listing concerns with the TLNAP maps, Indigenous consultation, displacement of wetlands and food-providing areas, urban sprawl, and transparency in data collection and disclosure. They echoed previous requests for an extension of the January 4 deadline.

⁷⁹ In this email communication, the Trent Lands Committee's rhetoric of timing to be in sync with the 'academic term' is notable given the TCSA and TGSA surveys demonstrated that the Trent Lands Committee's engagement process and follow-through actions did not meaningfully account for student feedback. See Chapter 6, section 6.1.

- January 3, 2021, the TCSA published and submitted their survey results, and based on their findings, appealed the Trent Lands Committee's decision that declined extending the Phase 3 feedback deadline.
- January 4, 2021, Debbie Jenkins PhD Candidate submitted their scientific findings demonstrating the significance of Trent's Nature Areas and campus, detailed concerns about discrepancies, and provided recommendations for resolutions in the TLNAP.
- January 6, 2021, Ian Attridge submitted extensive observations, pointing out disjointed parts of the TLNAP, and recommendations regarding its proposed developments. They also expressed their concern about the seemingly expedited approval process and recommended further engagement to achieve synergies.
- January 7, 2021, student volunteers started a petition to save the Trent Field Garden (referring to the Trent Vegetable Gardens).
- January 8, 2021, the Growers Group submitted their response to meet the Trent Lands Committee's Phase 3 consultation requirement outlined on December 22.
- January 20, 2021, the TGSA released a student survey to gather graduate students' perspectives on the Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan.

- February 3, 2021, the TGSA published and submitted their survey results, and based on their findings, appealed the Trent Lands Committee's decision to decline extending the Phase 3 feedback deadline.
- February 4, 2021, a collective of representatives from community and student organizations published their wide-ranging observations and experiences with the TLNAP and process, and submitted a report to the Trent Lands Committee with recommendations.
- February 5, 2021, the Board of Governors approved the TLNAP with no internal debate, abstentions, or objections. Campus and community members delivered deputations to the Board of Governors raising objections to the approval of the 2021 Trent Lands and Nature Areas Plan, and reiterated previously communicated concerns, requests for extensions to the process, and revisions in the TLNAP. They highlighted an inadequate consultation process and absence of definitive information/changes in the TLNAP that reflected meaningful input. In partial response, the President stated how the TLNAP is protective of Natural Heritage features, yet, when I raised my hand to ask about the drumlin feature that was developed for the Cleantech Commons entrance,⁸⁰ the Chair of the meeting closed the floor to questions. The Chair invoked the by-law that all deputations are received by the Board for information, with no debate. This typified the subtle, but closed nature of decision making at Trent University and structural obstructions for informed discussions that were encountered by campus and community

⁸⁰ See footnote 61.

members at the different phases and engagements in the TLNAP process, now also showing to be present in its final approval.

G.2 Phase 4: February 22, 2021, to March 26, 2021, Submissions

- February 26, 2021, a collective of representatives from student and community organizations highlighted an inadequate Phase 4 feedback period (February 22 to March 5) and requested an extension of the input deadline to April 30. An extension to March 10 was given in response to this group but not communicated to Trent’s campus and community.
- March 2, 2021, Sustainable Trent submitted a response during Phase 4 requesting the Board of Governors take action to address the “ambiguity and a lack of commitment to meaningful consultation [that] has been expressed through the planning process and the plan itself”.
- March 5, 2021, Matt Dutry M.A. Sustainability Studies Candidate submitted comments during Phase 4 highlighting a lack of committal and firm stewardship language in the TLNAP.
- March 5, 2021, the Trent Lands Committee responded to Phase 4 feedback from the collective of student and community organization representatives, citing earlier Phase 3 engagement responses documented in the TLNAP, tracked TLNAP changes, and

deferring to Phase 4 Implementation Plan in response to requests about processes and decision making.

- March 9, 2021, 4th year students from ERST 4810H Ecological Design course emailed their proposal to the Trent Lands Committee for a consolidated farm location North-East of the DNA building to be incorporated in the TLNAP, and with future community and residence facility developments.
- March 24, 2021, following a campus and community consultation meeting on March 23, thirty two examples of vague, non-committal language in the TLNAP's guidance framework were submitted to the Trent Lands Committee for revision.
- March 24, 2021, Sustainable Trent submitted a letter to the Board of Governors stating unresolved concerns in the TLNAP.
- March 26, 2021, Debbie Jenkins PhD Candidate submitted a letter to the Board of Governors objecting the approval of the TLNAP on the grounds that it does not meaningfully advance the protection and enhancement of Trent's natural areas.
- March 26, 2021, the Board of Governors approved the TLNAP Part IV: Implementation with no internal debate, abstentions, or objections. I delivered a deputation to the Board of Governors raising objection to the approval of the Implementation Plan without fundamental revisions, stating the Plan's failure to uphold meaningful consultation and IAP2 Core Values for Public Participation, its development first agenda, absence of

protections and a fair valuation process for land, and threats to Trent's competitive advantage and reputation.

Appendix H: Common Guiding Principles to Guide Future Land-use Planning Discussions for Trent's Food Growing System



Visualizing Our Shared Values for Trent's Regenerative Education and Food Growing Future

Please share your feedback and comments below.

Participation & Leadership:

Who is able to participate and who has potential/shares decision making power. How and where people are able to participate and have leadership. Qualities and characteristics of leadership. Methods and processes that allow for engagement and leadership to emerge. Outcomes/goals of leadership.

Sub-category Student Centred:

Students in positions of leadership. Students are the main participants. Qualities and characteristics that students bring. Spaces that are for students.

Holistic Relationships and Community Building:

The beyond human relationships. Activities and programs that allow for community building. Qualities and values that help construct these relationships. Promoting interdependence and caring for shared resources. Structures that foster holistic relationships and community building. Intra-community networks (internal to Ptbo), external community networks (beyond Ptbo).

Experiential and Ecological Education and Skill-Building:

Qualities and values. Skills/outcomes that are needed or desired to be learned. Activities and actions that foster learning and development.

Assisting Paradigm Change:

Education, learning and knowledge production is shared. Subjectivities are valued. There is no end point to knowledge, it is iterative, intercultural, intergenerational and requires continuous reflexivity. Ideas are not fixed and immutable elements. Reality is not only a series of external truths but is also socially constructed. Acknowledging that humans affect reality and thoughts are formed and re-formed through experience (Kolb, 1984; Wood, 2020). Cultural/societal structures, governance, organizations or spaces that foster any or all of the above.

Appendix I: Additional Observations of Misleading Information

At the time the TLNAP was approved, no resolutions had been received by the campus and community with regards to the Cleantech Commons road development; it was still uncertain whether or not it would affect the Trent Vegetable Gardens. Notably, no further communications on the Cleantech Commons road development were received by our Growers Group after our November 2, 2020, meeting. It wasn't until a community member contacted the Trent Lands Committee with the concern almost one year later, in October of 2021 that we heard more. The email correspondence from the community member to the Trent Lands Committee October 19, 2021, stated:

I have been hearing a number of stories about the future of the gardens and thought I would ask you directly. Is it the intention of the Trent Administration to build a road through the gardens? As you are aware there are many of us who are very attached to the space and would like to know the direction you will be taking. Your feedback would be much appreciated. (forwarded personal communication, October 27, 2021)

The VP External Relations & Advancement responded on October 27, 2021, stating:

Thank you for reaching out about the Trent Vegetable Gardens.

We have no plans for a road through the TVG. On the map (page 43 of the plan) within the TLNAP you will see there is a road nearby that would be a requirement if the Ministry of Transportation Highway Reserve along the 9th line proceeds (we and the City are trying to get confirmation from the MTO of their plans). Early engineering sketches suggested it would bisect the TVG – however, if it did need to go ahead (which is many years into the future before it would be needed) every effort would be made to avoid this impact. Over the next year we'll be working with [the TVG Coordinator] and [their] team to explore further expansion of the TVG as presented to us on our tour, in conjunction with renewal of the lease between Trent and the Seasoned Spoon.

I hope this gives you some comfort in our support for the TVG, and an understanding of the discussions that have taken place. (forwarded personal communication, October 27, 2021)

The information presented in this response was a misleading conflation of facts. The required road shown on page 43 of the plan (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021d, p. 43),⁸¹ was not part of the MTO Highway Reserve boundary. It came from early engineering sketches of a street connection in the Cleantech Commons Master Plan (Brook McIlroy & DM Wills, 2017, p. 7).⁸² The detail omitted from this narrative and framing by the VP External Relations & Advancement was that the road development and its location were beyond the directives of the MTO. This road development was adjacent to the Highway Reserve and any precise choice of location for where it would be developed on Trent lands was under the supervision of the Trent Lands Committee. It was also noted that the Trent Lands Committee used a similar rhetoric during their TLNAP meeting with the Trent Central Student Association (TCSA) Board of Directors and students, ambiguously referring to “the gardens” being affected by the MTO corridor. They did not make any distinction between the Trent Market Garden site (which could be affected by the corridor) and the TVG site (which could not be affected by the corridor) (personal communication, December 6, 2020) (see [Figure 2](#) and [Figure 4](#)).

This pattern was also observed in communications between the Director of Campus Planning and Development and Trent Apiary leadership. Regarding the Grounds Operation relocation, the Director conflated it with City driven priorities rather than an internal plan and servicing facility. The Grounds Operation relocation was presented to the Trent Apiary leadership as a “future public works yard” alongside a City transportation design (forwarded personal communication, June 22, 2022), rather than it being Trent’s internal servicing facility

⁸¹ The East bank, two directional white road that would bisect the TVG location.

⁸² More accurately described by another member from the Trent Lands Committee during their Virtual Town Hall event (Trent University, 2020g, pt. 1:08:24).

and development project. To a discerning reader, this could be seen as an attempt to abdicate Trent’s responsibility in the matter. The email correspondence from the Director of Campus Planning and Development April 5, 2022, stated:

Good afternoon [Trent Apiary leadership] -

Thanks for reaching out. ...

Attached is an image showing the location of the future public works yard. This site was identified as an alternative to the current location at the corner of Nassau Mills and University in recognition that the solving of the traffic problems in around the University could result in road realignments that would make the current location unsuitable. Any road realignments will be done by the City and will be driven by their priorities and their funding, so we don’t actually know if and when this could/will happen. At this point, we are holding that alternate location so if it has to relocate it has a spot go [*sic*]. Having said that, it doesn’t look like it would affect the current location of apiary [*sic*]. (forwarded personal communication, June 22, 2022)

The threat of a road realignment cited in the Director of Campus Planning and Development’s email was part of the North End Trent University Area Class Environmental Assessment (Aecom & City of Peterborough, n.d., pp. 26–27), and a valid area of concern for the University. However, presenting the yard development as a “public works yard” alongside a City transportation design (forwarded personal communication, June 22, 2022), could affect one’s perception that Trent had little-to-no responsibility in the relocation matter at hand. In addition, this positioning erased the historical context from 2016-2019 when Trent was planning for this relocation due to the twin-pad arena, without consulting the TVG leadership.

In both examples, the Trent Lands Committee’s choices for location and placement of these developments supersedes all external governance bodies’ plans.⁸³

⁸³ The misleading and shifting of development responsibilities to an external decision-making body may offer future researchers additional, critical examination. Does positioning developments in this way remove agency and thereby preclude campus and/or community members from meaningful engagement with the developments in question?

Does this strategy expose campus and/or community members affected by the development decisions to unnecessary levels of risk and/or harm? What are the outcomes from employing this strategy? What benefits and drawbacks arise in land-use planning contexts, and for whom?

Appendix J: Critical Questions About the Decisions for Residence Parking Lot Developments

The project scope for Science North showed the condition for designing, building, and financing the parking lot was a requirement for the developer (Trent University Board of Governors, 2022b, p. 86). An obvious first question comes to mind, given the existing parking lot infrastructure (see Parking ‘Q’ and ‘R’ lots) (Trent University, 2018a) adjacent to, and on the Science North site (Trent University Board of Governors, 2022b, p. 86), why wasn’t the Campus Planning and Development team proposing vertical or underground parking that could be sited over the existing parking lot infrastructure, and/or integrated in the Science North design, and thus avoid natural features and areas? The TLNAP guidelines state, “Encourage structured or underground parking as an alternative to surface parking lots, where feasible” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021e, p. 138). What was not feasible about this approach?

As shown across Trent’s Science North project scope and its financing objectives, there was “No material obligation or liability to the University” for the residence and its parking development. This would allow Trent to “Mitigate asset ownership and lifecycle risk of the residences” while “Long-term land ownership is retained” (Trent University Board of Governors, 2022b, pp. 86, 90). This Private Ownership Operating Lease-License Back (POOLLB) (Trent University Board of Governors, 2021a, p. 24) model would clearly benefit Trent’s finances but what about the student and community food growing organizations (with documented long-term sustainability) that were facing increasing enclosures (parking lots) alongside displacement (Grounds Operation relocation) from these plans? Trent showed to be moving forward with the residence development with the TLNAP’s ‘Phase 1: Site Selection’ completed in 2020 (Trent University Board of Governors, 2022b, pp. 92–93). Where did the campus and community fit

into ‘Phase 2: Preliminary Study & Visioning’ of the Development Process? This phase aims to identify key priorities, a site vision, and site program that contributes to the University’s academic mission while providing opportunities for the restoration and enhancement of the environment (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021h, pp. 208, 210). As well, how did the Campus Planning and Development team’s positioning of parking lots where they previously proposed food growing sites fit with TLNAP guidelines for parking areas that “re-imagine standard parking” and “contribute to the environmental sustainability of the campus” (North-South Environmental Inc. et al., 2021e, p. 138)?