

Actions concerning urban and periurban agriculture at municipal level in Toulouse (France). Focus on the action of the Toulouse municipality

Isabelle Duvernoy, INRA UMR 1248 Agir, duvernoy@toulouse.inra.fr

The municipality of Toulouse and its geographical scope of action

Communes are in France the smallest administrative division with an elected board and public functions. Their number is really high, around 36 000, they are small (median 10 km²) and towns are generally composed of several communes. The commune of Toulouse is big, 118 km² for 400 000 inhab., but its continuous urbanized area lays on 72 communes (850 000 inhab.). (The public transportation (buses, subway and tram) concerns 99 communes).

Several laws in France created several types of inter-municipal entities. These entities are not political jurisdictions in themselves, but exercise some of the public responsibilities of the communes, as land planning, economical development... The boards of these entities are composed by members of the elected boards of the municipalities. Toulouse is now part of the "urban community" Toulouse Metropole (TM), composed of 37 communes. The President of Toulouse Metropole is the mayor of Toulouse, the president of the department of Environment and Sustainable Development of Toulouse Metropole is a member of the municipal council of Toulouse. Part of the municipal public servants of Toulouse is working directly for Toulouse Metropole.

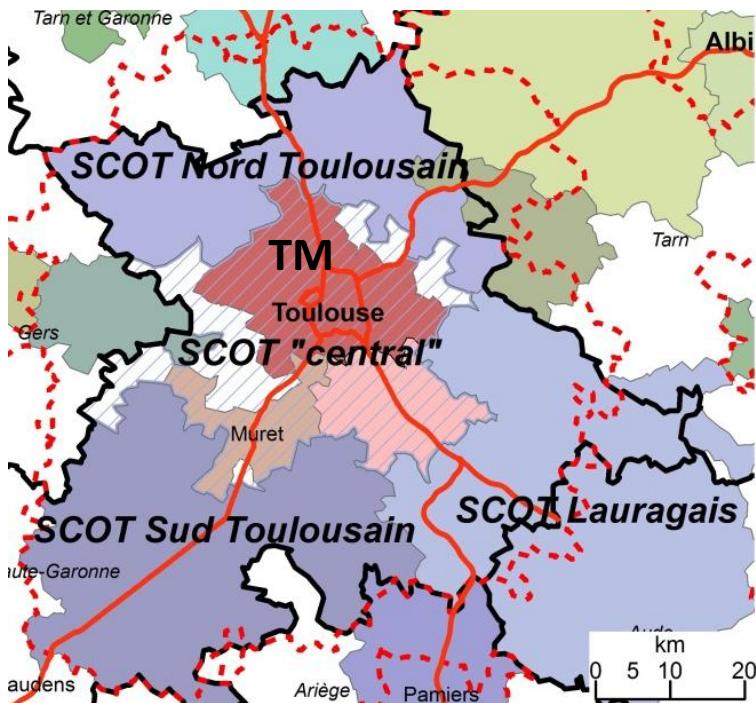
➔ In conclusion, the scope of action of the municipality of Toulouse goes well beyond its communal borders, in terms of political decisions, expertise and actions. In terms of public governance, in a case like Toulouse, the municipal level can not be studied in isolation, but as a part of a multi-level public governance. Its actions are developed at a supra-communal level; it should respect and apply the national laws, for instance in terms of land planning; it should negotiate the funding of its important projects with national, regional and departmental bodies.

Controlling farm lands consumption in the urban realm

Several French laws (SRU, Grenelle II) changed the rules and the spirit of land planning, in order to densify the urbanization and preserve non-built areas, including farm lands. Toulouse is an example of past urban sprawl. To reverse this trend, the Toulouse Metropole is planning and organizing its urbanization at several levels: municipal, supra-communal (SCOT master plan with two other supra-communal entities and a few isolated communes), and adopting common rules at the scale of the whole urban realm (level of the 4 urban master plans, called interScot, concerning circa 350 communes).

- At municipal level, urban planning includes attention to open and natural spaces and enhancing biodiversity. The farming area is very small: a municipal farm of circa 300 ha, sparse farm lands, a last vegetable organic farm, which landowner is Toulouse Metropole since 2012.
- At the level of its 27 communes, Toulouse Metropole tries to reduce the impact of its different projects on farms land, taking into account existing farms (diagnosis of farms' structure by the chamber of agriculture)
- At master plan level, the Scot central (117 communes), a green belt is delimited, at the periphery of the plan, where building is prohibited or strongly controlled. The objective is to reduce by half the annual consumption of farm lands by densifying the existing built area,
- At interscot level (~400 communes), a common carta magna was approved, in order to increase the protection farm lands from the urban sprawl.

→ There is a consensus to reduce farm lands consumption, according to Grenelle II laws. This consensus translates in stronger protection of farm lands in urban land planning at several scales. But protecting existing farm lands goes beyond protecting existing farms for Toulouse Metropole.



Master plans in the Toulouse urban area.

The "urban area" is defined as the commuting area around Toulouse (dotted line in red).

The central master plan (*SCOT central*) concern Toulouse Metropole (TM) (including the commune of Toulouse) but also other communes and inter-communal entities.

The four mentioned SCOT are part of the "interscot".

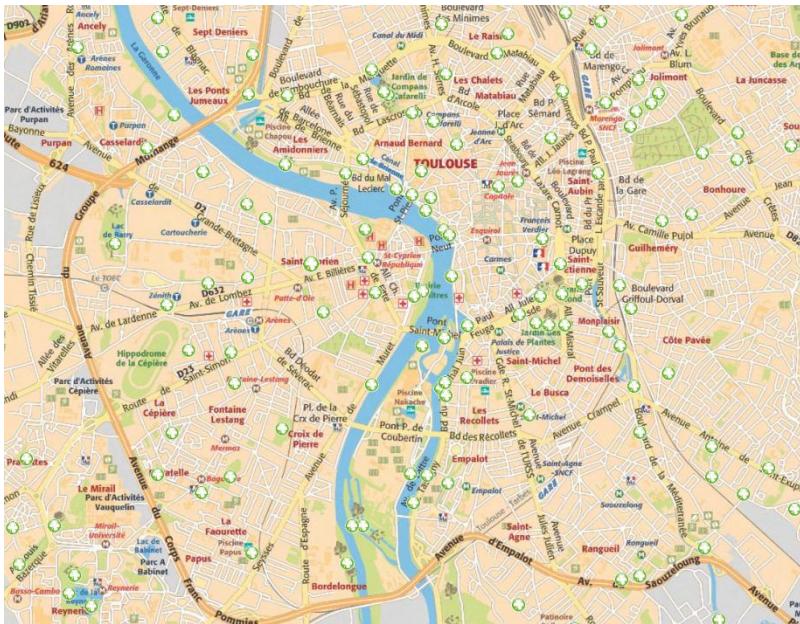
Providing local food to the city

The Grenelle II laws command an increase of the proportion of organic food in public canteens (up to 20%). TM would like its "cuisine centrale" (the kitchen providing lunch to schools), which serves 30,000 meals a day, to address this objective with local production. The amount of organic farmers around Toulouse is too low to access quickly this objective, furthermore the main orientation of farming are cereals, oil crops as sunflower, far away from the fresh food (vegetable, fruits, meat) the kitchen is expecting. Nevertheless, the chamber of agriculture is organizing a distribution center for local producers in order to enhance their collective capacity to answer the local government procurement code (in terms of quantity and quality).

Producers markets are also developing in the urban realm (the Chamber of Agriculture, via the association *Bienvenue à la Ferme*, helps to control that the sellers are producers), as well as producers shops (two in Toulouse) and CSA deliveries.

New thinking for urban parks

The management of urban open spaces changed these last 10 years. New notions, as urban biodiversity, induced a change in practices and in the promoted esthetics of urban parks and green areas (along the canal for instance). Food production made its entrance in this esthetic with small vegetable gardens (few m²) in the main urban parks or in the recent Museum garden.



Toulouse official map of urban "green spaces". (Focus on the center of the commune)

It includes the public parks but also the whole variety of public or open gardens in Toulouse.

(Source :

<http://www.toulouse.fr/cadre-vie/parcs-jardins/jardins-de-quartier> and

<http://pdi.cugt.org/map/?t=PSI>)

Urban gardens: connecting collective action and public support

In the same time, TM is promoting urban gardening in and around Toulouse, and specially community gardens. In its carta magna of community gardens, TM strongly emphasizes the collective and public dimension of these gardens. The direction of urban ecology and sustainable development supports community initiatives for finding a plot, while the direction for urban open spaces offers expertise and classes, provides plants, trees, water supply. Furthermore, TM inscribes these areas as permanent non-built areas in the local plan of urbanism (PLU). These community gardens rely on local initiatives of the inhabitants or, more commonly, of local institutions as local social centers. TM contracted an NGO, *SaluTerre*, to organize the local participation to create new community gardens. A new local organization, *Partageons les jardins*, gathers the different gardens in Toulouse and might now play this role, even at a larger scale (Region).

The example of the Pousse-Cailloux Garden: an example of local initiative

This garden was created in 2009/2010 by a small group (six or seven) of neighbors and friends who have a longer common history of involvement, auto-organization and local militancy. (A large part had their children in the same auto-organized day-nursery at the beginning of the 2000's and were or still are members of the school board). Their interest in gardening seems to have various origins: thinking and actions on the urban live and environment (spreading of "seed bombs" in public areas), professional involvement as artist and social worker, group of friends who wanted to share and design a common open space. One is currently involved as an artist in other community gardens in the suburbs of Toulouse, developing reflections on the place for vegetation and nature in the built area(support coming from the *Politique de la Ville*). This initial group was looking for a free plot in the district; a public abandoned plot was eventually provided by the local municipal counselor. The public support was first provided by the municipal direction of urban open spaces (who initially was in charge of public parks): tables, compost bins, toolsheds but also orchards trees, vines etc. Quickly the urban gardens were depending on a new direction, and other counselors: the urban ecology and sustainable development direction (also in charge of periurban farming). In 2012, this municipal plot was declared as remaining non-built area in the local urban plan (PLU).

According to one of the initial promoter, the interest for TM is not gardening *per se* but the recreation of local relationships between inhabitants. The counterpart for the municipal help and support is to create a new public area (gardeners should leave the door open for the inhabitants who would like to enjoy the garden). The garden association organizes public events in the garden or in the district (exchange of seeds and plants, concerts...). It participates to municipal events on urban gardening.

This community garden gathers now more than 35 gardeners and the same number of sympathizers for 200 m²! The former gardeners were largely coming from the same group of acquaintances (parents who have their children in the same school), but the association receives frequently new demands from other inhabitants to participate.



Entrance around 2009.
(Source: google map – no date)



Entrance in 2012 (and detail)



Farm lands: toward a new open space for the city

The new twelve communes entering TM in 2011 are in the periphery of the urban community and less densely populated. According to the farms census of 2000, the proportion of farm lands differed greatly between the initial 25 communes of TM (22% of the total area) and the new 12 communes (48% of the total area). TM, and especially the Urban ecology and sustainable development direction is currently trying to elaborate farming projects for the city, beyond the maintenance of farm lands. Since 2010, they concentrated their reflection on a few projects: the last organic vegetable farm in the Toulouse commune (which land was bought by TM), a farm in another commune and a project for a new urban park on farm lands. At institutional level, these projects involve the *chambre d'agriculture*, as the official representative of farmers. Besides, the two institutions joined together, in 2005, *Terres en Villes*, a national organization for the promotion of urban agriculture. Furthermore, they wrote a common carta magna (2012) for the maintenance of farming in the TM area, despite open differences in their priorities.

The project of a new urban park is in fact a new version of an older project (2007) of an urban park in the commune of Pin-Balma, part of TM, at a few kilometers of a subway station. This former project concentrated on the idea of a park for outdoor activities but didn't really consider the existing farming activities and met with a strong resistance from the farmers' organizations (the chambre d'agriculture to begin with). The commune of Pin-Balma now included this area of 200 ha in its PLU in order to protect the farm lands from further development. TM is now trying to take more into account the farming landscape and would like to involve farmers in the design and dynamic of this park, advocating at the same time for different productions and practices (organic farming for instance, innovative production techniques...). This time, instead of contracting landscape architect to design a park, TM is trying to conduct a more participative project involving a large expertise on farming diversification and a specific work with farmers, to understand their production systems and their possibility of diversification. This on-going work is done by a consortium of the Chamber of Agriculture and an NGO specialized in environment.

Recapitulation of the issues for urban and periurban agriculture in Toulouse Metropole (TM)

WG2 Gradient: **Urbanites in agriculture** **Agriculture for “urbania”** **Agriculture in “urbania”**

	Community gardens in the city	Allotment gardens in the city	Local food consumption	Local food production	Agricultural park (project)	Farming oriented to external market
TM involvement by land planning at communal level at supra-communal level	Plots appearing as non-built areas in the urban code (PLU)	Plots appearing as non-built areas in the urban code (PLU)	Reducing by half the consumption of farm lands	Reducing by half the consumption of farm lands	Plots appearing as non-built areas in the urban code (PLU) Reducing by half the consumption of farm lands	Reducing by half the consumption of farm lands
TM involvement by technical support	Support by the urban open space direction (equipment)	Support by the urban open space direction (equipment)	?	?	In land planning and landscape design	None
TM involvement by financing	Financing of local facilitators (NGO, social centers)	?	? (maybe funding of producers shops and markets in different communes)	Management of a public farm (now organic). Purchase of an organic farm in Toulouse.	Financing of studies for the park design, then for the farms in the park area	None
TM involvements by organizational support	Carta magna Organizational tools	?	Relaxation of the criteria of the procurement contracts	Strong politic orientations in favor of local organic farming	Contracts, participatory meetings	None
Other organizations' involvement	Various NGO (facilitation)	? Punctual interventions of agronomic faculties	CSA networks in the city Local producers markets and shops	Project of a distribution center (chambre d'agriculture)	Chambre d'agriculture (as expert and as farmers' representative) NGO (expert)	Chambre d'agriculture: representation of farmers, involvement in land planning Private organization as experts.
Partnerships between institutions	Contracts btw TM and NGO	?	Participation of the chamber of agriculture (BAF) in the local market board (control of producers)	Common answer to an Interreg call for proximity farming	Carta magna for PUA Contract btw TM and chambre d'agriculture and NGO	Carta magna for PUA Participation in land planning by chambre d'agriculture + expertise on farms

Institutional calendar

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Municipal election (new socialist and green parties board)						Municipal election
	Gardens: Urban open space direction	Gardens: Urban ecology and sustainable development direction				
Communauté d'agglomération Grand Toulouse (25 communes)	Transfo. in Communauté urbaine Grand Toulouse (25 communes)		Communauté urbaine Grand Toulouse :+ 12 communes (37 communes)	Change of name for Toulouse Metropole		
The Chambre d'agriculture selects Grand Toulouse as its main partner for PUA				Signature of the carta magna on PUA between TM and the Chambre d'agriculture		
				Farms studies for the project of urban park on farm lands		

Mains data mentionned

Interviews

One of the six first promoters of Jardin Pousse-Cailloux. (July 31, 2012)

Grand Toulouse, local civil servant of the direction of environment. (Novembre 26, 2008)

Grand Toulouse, local civil servant of the direction of Urban ecology and sustainable development (Decembre 9, 2010).

Chambre d'agriculture, manager of the network Bienvenue à la Ferme.(February 24, 2009)

Chambre d'agriculture, managers of the direction in charge of land planning and periurban agriculture. (July 10, 2011; September 4, 2007)

Documents

Mairie de Toulouse, no date. La charte des jardins partagés toulousains. Pour une pépinière d'initiatives de nouveaux espaces publics à jardiner ensemble. 4 p.

SMEAT, 2012. Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale de la grande agglomération toulousaine. Carte les cohérences naturelles et urbaines.

Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche et Chambre d'Agriculture de la Haute-Garonne, 2008. *Le Projet Agricole Départemental 2008-2013*. Plaquette, 2 p.

Observations

Participant observations of Jardin Pousse-Cailloux (2011 and 2012)

Meetings to elaborate and present a carta magna for periurban agriculture in the Grand Toulouse/Toulouse Metropole (April 19, 2011 ; February 8, 2012).

Meetings to design an agricultural park in Pin Balma (September 6, 2012).

Consultation of Web sites

<http://www.pousse-cailloux.net/>

<http://www.toulouse.fr/cadre-vie/jardins-partages>

<http://www.toulouse-metropole.fr/home>