107

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flint, people, farmers market, mm, grocery store, food, neighborhood, store, food bank, area, talking, kroger, farmer, money, hear, question, buy, downtown, carrying, walk

**SPEAKERS**

Interviewer, Speaker 4, Participant 107, Interviewer 2

[INTRO]

**Participant 107** 04:24

That's okay. Go ahead. Let's talk

**Interviewer** 04:26

Okay, awesome. Um, so my first question is really sort of about this, this retail piece. So thinking about like what is your understanding- Okay, I'm going to back up slightly first: if I ever asked a question that you're like, "I don't really know" or like, "I don't think I can speak to that," like, definitely let me know we can just skip that section. Because the food system is really big and complicated. Yeah, so I guess my first question would be sort of around this retail piece. What is your maybe understanding or your experience of how people are using retail in Flint? Do you think people are going, buying more food from-from chain restaurants versus local restaurants? When people go to the stores, what-what stores are they going to? Where they purchasing food? What is your sort of sense of, you know, if people are using one kind of retail more than another, which one? Which ones do you think?

**Participant 107** 05:32

Okay, let's take one question at a time.

**Interviewer** 05:35

Yeah.

**Participant 107** 05:36

Okay. Start with your first question.

**Interviewer** 05:40

Um, do you think people use local restaurants? Like buy food from local restaurants? More than chain restaurants or chain restaurants more than local?

**Participant 107** 05:55

Okay, are you talking about going out to eat? Is that what you're?

**Interviewer** 05:59

Mm hm

**Participant 107** 06:00

Okay. I think people probably doing more fast foods if that's your question. If that's your question, is that your question?

**Interviewer** 06:11

Yeah.

**Participant 107** 06:12

I think they're doing more fast foods in a carry out environment.

**Interviewer** 06:17

Yeah. Um, and then for when people are buying more like ingredients to potentially cook? Do you think people are getting those more from grocery stores or convenience stores?

**Participant 107** 06:37

Okay, ingredients that they use to cook with?

**Interviewer** 06:42

Yeah, or like-

**Participant 107** 06:44

A combination. I think a combination of both, of both. They use them both: the grocery stores and convenience stores, just depends on what's closest to them. And also depends on the items needed as to whether that convenience store carries it or not. And of course, as we all know, there is a food desert. In Flint, you don't have grocery stores, per se. In Flint, the only real grocery stores in Flint is like landmark. I mean, they're like, they're smaller. They're not chains. They're not chain stores. So as far as a chain store, I would have to say they would lose out, depending on the situation to the mom and pop or family owned grocery store. Does that make sense? Okay.

**Interviewer** 08:03

And then, what do you think about like, the farmers market? Do you think that people use it a lot in Flint or not really?

**Participant 107** 08:15

I think they use it a lot. I think they use it a lot. The only thing that I would say about the farmers market is it isn't open but-but two-two to three days a week. Yeah. And I think that would, that's probably the biggest drawback for the farmers market. But the people absolutely love it. I think it's utilized quite a bit. You know, when it's open. And, you know, I don't hear any negatives whatsoever when it comes to the farmers market, like you do the grocery stores. You hear more negative to the grocery stores than you do the farmers market. I think people love it. I think it could be expanded. I believe that people feel that what they get from it is fresh, whether it's homemade, or whether it's home grown. I think there's more confidence in the farmers market, to be honest with you.

**Participant 107** 09:38

Also, I think people do like the mom and pop stores, to be honest. Because what they're convenient, they're next door or they're around the corner or they're right up the street. And I think that that's a problem for chain stores because they have removed themselves from Flint. They did that. So therefore, it's going to be very difficult for them to gain a footing. Back in Flint proper, Flin-Flint proper, you understand what I'm saying, but you've got Walmart, which is on the outside area. And then of course, you've got Kroger's, which is outside of Flint, then you have Meijer's, which is outside of Flint. This is not like living in Detroit. It's not like living in Houston, where everything is five miles from you. People in Flint are looking more for convenience, because of transportation. The buses can take them there, and they don't have to, or they can walk around the corner, or walk up the street, or have them have a friend to drop them off. You know, it's just not the same. And so I think that we need to take under consideration the fact that Flint is a smaller area, and you can get anywhere you really want to go in 10 minutes. So people here are accustomed to convenience. So when you had a chain store that was close, and in close proximity, yes, it did well. But when the industry broke down, and people's transportation broke down along with it, then people are gonna go to what's convenient, and that's walking around the corner to the Dollar General, or the Family Dollar, or the mom and pop store. Even if they don't have what they want, even if it's a little bit higher. It's the convenience that they are looking at, right now. You know, more than anything, that's just my personal opinion.

**Participant 107** 12:24

And I'm from Houston. So in Houston, I mean, you had to have a car to drive wherever you gon go. Do you see, and it was the same, it's the same in Dallas. I'm from Dallas-Houston area. So it's the same there, but that's what people were accustomed to. And I think you have that same situation in Detroit, pretty much, you know, and and even if you have the liquor stores on the corners, and so forth, you-you, people are still gonna go in those because they're convenient. And they have begun actually, to be honest with you, maybe, they have taken up where they're carrying more product that they used to carry. In other words that carry in salt and pepper. You know what I'm saying? They're carrying garlic salt, they're carrying fresh produce, even in the liquor stores. They're carrying milk, they're carrying sugar. Now you can't buy- go always go in and buy meat and stuff like that. But even if you're now in the dollar- Family Dollars, and then the Family Dollar General stores, you can go into their coolers, they've got meat, they've got frozen foods. So they're making it more convenient, which is really putting these chains out of business. Does that- you follow me?

**Participant 107** 13:52

So the people love the farmers market. They love that farmers market. Why? Because now the farmers market, even before they moved, was centrally located. So that now they're right across the street from the bus station. A person could get on the bus and go to the farmers market. They can go to the farmers market, get on the bus and go home. So it's the convenience of them not having to stand in the rain stand in the snow stand in the heat. They can just walk across the street and get on the bus. And so the weather for them, going to the farmers market, is not a big issue. What I think is going to be the issue for the farmers market is that they moved into an area where they've kind of boxed themselves in and can't grow. I hope that makes sense what I'm saying. I'm talking about: they can't add another building to where they are. They box themselves in. Can they grow in that area? If they do, it will take the parking place up. So and now you've got condos that's built where they can- people can walk right now to the farmers market. I'm just trying to see, where's the chain store gonna go?

**Interviewer** 15:30

Yeah.

**Participant 107** 15:33

That's gonna be centrally located, to where they can stay open.

**Interviewer** 15:39

Yeah.

**Participant 107** 15:40

Does that make sense?

**Interviewer** 15:42

Absolutely.

**Participant 107** 15:44

See, so they did this to themselves when they took themselves out of Flint because they were trying to hit the suburban areas. But now you've got people moving back into urban Flint.

**Interviewer** 16:03

Yeah.

**Participant 107** 16:04

You see, you've-you've got the condos coming up. Now right downtown. Right around Fifth Street, up in that area. Now you've got more condos, you've got more apartments now shooting up than ever before. Because back then you had homeowners. So all of those houses that were vacated have been torn down. And you've got people moving in to those condos, townhouses and apartments.

**Participant 107** 16:40

But check this out: somebody gives me some money. So I can go and buy me a store and put it right up in that area. I'm ready to do that. Okay, so then let's look at it from this perspective: the farmers market was right there. And they moved to downtown. They were right there on Fifth and Saginaw right by the Holiday Inn. Now you've got all of those condos, apartments, townhomes being built right up in that area. Tell me: where are those people going to go and buy groceries? Hudson's: a family owned store? Is the pricing gonna be right at Hudson's? And I use them because that's the name- that's the store that's the closest store? Or are they going to get on the bus and go to the farmers market? Are they going to get on the bus and go to Kroger's, which is closer than Meijer? Are they going to get on the bus and go to Walmart?

**Participant 107** 18:15

So my question is: or are they going to go to that family dollar that they can walk to that may or may not have what that individual needs such as fresh produce? You're- you hear me? what I'm saying? Yes, it may have diapers, they may have dishwashing soap, they may have washing powder for them to wash the clothes with and so forth. But are they going to really carry at a decent price what this new community is going to need? — The new community is not too-too far from the farmers market. But it really would have been smart to have kept the old one as well.

**Interviewer** 19:29

I'm going to speak to this more but it's been something we've talked about to a couple different people about sort of the politics and the impact of the farmer's market moving downtown.

**Participant 107** 19:44

Well, the politics for the farmers market has just gotten out of control as to what it was. And I know a lot of that has to do with the upkeep. You know, keeping it- because they did move downtown. And because downtown is now trying to upgrade its image, you follow me? You've got the new hotel that's down there, you've got elga. That's moving down there. So-so-so downtown is trying to upgrade its its image. And you want that, because when people look at your downtown, they, in their minds measure what the city is like. See? So you've probably got a lot more politics than I'm aware of. And I'm not, I don't doubt it at all. And then of course, you're not looking at just the farmers market anymore. You've got the medical center up-up on top, whereas in the old-old farmer's market, you had farmer's market on both floors. See, so you've-you've got a lot of stuff going on. And do they, outside of the produce that's outside in the summer months, I mean, what is it for people to really be able to afford in the winter months? Why because it's more now, it's more of a medical center than it is a farmers market. But the people love the farmers market. And I personally feel that it was put there to be able to sustain it, I'm talking about the medical portion, to sustain it, you know, you have to have sustainable income to keep the building the way that that it's supposed to be. I'm looking at it from an economic perspective. And so, having a medical facility in there helped to sustain the farmers market itself. However, I really feel that in order for it to really be called a farmers market, you need to have more farmers in there, even during the winter months. In the summer months it's not so bad. But in the winter months, they need to find a way to have a more sustainable market in that place. I hope that makes sense.

**Interviewer** 22:52

Yeah it does. So I sort of mapped out, as we were talking, sort of this-this impact of really the grocery store closures that overtime has created a situation where there's not really- I think it's sort of like room or demand for chain stores. I also added pieces of the farmers market, with sort of the seasonality, they're not open all the time, close constraints, and also sort of the move that affected availability. Are there other things that you would want to talk about or add about retail, or would you be okay with moving on to talking about emergency food.

**Participant 107** 23:57

I'd like to see Flint become sustained. I'd like sustainability. I'd like to see Flint, be able to have a sustainable food income in this city. And us not always- I want to see us get out of what we're in and have a plan. I see what we're trying to do here. But what concerns me is the work that we have put in: is it gonna be implemented? That's-that's my biggest issue. I think that everybody that's on this team. Everybody who has been involved, feels the same way. We have put in a lot of time, a lot of effort. I think the sincerity is there. I think everybody wants the same thing and that is to see Flint solvent. See it's sustainable. Not always see this constant, constant change. You're in here today, but you're gone tomorrow. I'm tired of the dollar- fam-family dollars popping up-

**Interviewer** 25:23

We can't hear you.

**Participant 107** 25:38

I'm sorry. What I'm saying to you is this, I don't have a problem with the mom and family-pop grocery stores. What's bothering me, is instead of us having chain grocery stores, we've got chain family dollars, or dollar general's. That's what I'm saying. That's what has taken over our community. We've got chain liquor stores, on every corner, you got a chain liquor store on this corner, and right across the street from it is another liquor store. And if it's not a liquor store, then you've got a Sunoco that's carrying food.

**Participant 107** 26:24

You know, do I want my child- to send my child to the chain corner store to go get me a can of milk, or to get me some salt and pepper? Do I want- my mother used to send me to the corner store. Even though it was family owned corner store, she didn't have to worry about me walking out of there with somebody to buy me a can of beer. And so our communities are not communities anymore. It's about money, guys. Let's just be straight up honest. So my question is, we're doing all of this, but at the end of the day, are we going to be able to solve these issues? Where I can send my 10 year old to the corner store? So that's why I'm saying that the chain grocery store needs to be in effect. Because a minor is not going to walk out of there with the wrong thing. I'm not worried about my minor being picked up and-and get bought a package of cigarettes. So- or sold a joint.

**Interviewer** 27:56

Yeah.

**Participant 107** 27:58

So I'm saying that's the image that we have created in this area, the Flint area. And I'm telling you what nobody else may not say. But as an older woman, I know that our communities at one time we look out for each other. But these family dollars are not looking out for our children. They're not looking out for our grandchildren. They're not. It's all about the dollar. So you're talking about a food desert. There's not really a food desert, there's a food- There's a desert, of community involvement when it comes to the food. That's why the farmers market is so- this particular farmer's market has liquor in it. The other one I don't think had as big of a space. But because it's it's privately owned, they're not going to sale to a minor in the farmer's market. They're not gonna do it. And most of the people that go into the farmer's market are families. And so now that you've got the condos and the townhomes downtown, and they're going to send a child up to the farmers market to get them, you know, some Watkins garlic powder, or salt and pepper, or something like that. You're not going to be as worried about that child coming back with cigarettes and-and-and or getting high in between there and home. The only place that's going to happen is in his or her walk from the farmers market through the bus station to home, and they are trying to crack down on the traffic- drug trafficking in the bus station. Because they've had, they had one guy that got killed not too long ago, about two years ago, shot a man and killed him right there in the bus station. Because they- it was all about the drugs. So we cannot forget about the drug trafficking in these areas. That's also a hinderance, which is why I'm gonna get in my car and drive to Kroger's, or I'm gonna get in my car and drive to Meijer's. I hope I've helped a little bit.

**Interviewer 2** 31:07

Mm hmm. Absolutely. Oh.

**Participant 107** 31:14

And so we don't realize, but we have we have allowed the drugs in our neighborhood. Because we have allowed- because the chain stores have moved out of our neighborhoods. If you go to Kroger's, I don't care how rundown Kroger's may be, you're not gonna see people standing outside of Kroger's selling drugs. But you are going to catch them on these corner stores, these liquor stores standing outside, you know what I'm saying?

**Interviewer** 31:52

Yeah

**Participant 107** 31:55

And that, for me, has a great deal to do with us being a food desert. That has a great deal. And you really don't see them as much standing outside of the family grocery store. But you're seeing them on these corners of the liquor stores. But the liquor stores are carrying the food. Yeah. Even in my neighborhood, there's a liquor store over here in woodcroft. Now you don't see it, you don't see it. It's not visible. But now that they have legalized marijuana, but it still didn't legalize for my 16 year old, or my 13 year old. It's still not legal for them to buy alcohol. But if there was a corner, Mom and Pop store, grocery store, or a small- you know, what would- it just popped into my head? What would be nice is if we could have small farmers markets and strategically placed in neighborhoods, just like we have strategically placed marijuana places now. In a neighborhood. We fought- we found it in ours. We did. Oh, yes, ma'am. We fought it so hard till it was crazy. We fought it. Why? Because you got Powers High School right here by us,

**Interviewer 2** 33:40

Mm hm

**Participant 107** 33:41

We did not want legalized marijuana in our neighborhood where these kids have to run. They're running track, getting prepared for their sports activities. And so they run our whole neighborhood. You see what I'm saying?

**Interviewer 2** 34:02

Mm hm

**Participant 107** 34:02

So we even in keeping in thought of us having a food desert- Think about it. I live right here off of 69 and Hammerberg. There's no grocery store here. And I'm in supposedly one of the better areas. I'm in one of the areas that is still considered as a neighborhood. Right? Where we have churches, we've got schools, we've got Kettering University, right here around us. But there's no grocery store that I can say I can walk to myself other than woodcroft corner store up here. That's a liquor store. How do we get out of this mess we have put ourselves in? And we have allowed people with money to come and put up a marijuana facility in our neighborhood, because it brings money into the state. We have sold our souls to the devil. And yes, I know I'm being recorded.

**Interviewer 2** 35:10

And it's okay.

**Participant 107** 35:36

Okay.

**Interviewer 2** 35:37

Because tell the truth. I mean, your truth is important in this discussion. All these things, that you point out and have been sharing with us, are all things that impact food, and food impacts these things. And so it's important that, you know, people like yourself- Is and this is where [interviewer] and I have felt so blessed, really, in holding this space, is that because people are giving this information and nuanced, like what you're talking about. These are important kinds of things that have to be taken into consideration. And if we don't hear from a variety of people like yourself, and able to show a whole picture, you're only going to see the snapshots of the usual conversations. And so everything you have to say is relevant to us [participant 107]. It's so- it's super important to understand the level of dynamics affecting the food experience in Flint. So thank you for that, you know,

**Participant 107** 36:42

Well-

**Interviewer 2** 36:43

We need the record to get our notes straight. That's why we got recordings. Because, you know, when you listen to stuff over and over, you really have to have a place to go back, to pull out some things. So thank you for that.

**Participant 107** 36:55

So I think it's important though, for us to realize that we're not sending our children to the corner stores.

**Interviewer 2** 37:03

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 37:05

We're not sending our grandchildren to get us a gallon of milk. You're going to see a car pull up to that corner Woodcroft that's been here for a long time. But that's what you're gonna see. Because we've been living in this neighborhood for almost 20 years, and woodcroft has been right there, but not the marijuana facility that wanted to open. And do you want your child to walk by that marijuana facility to walk to the liquor store that still has, you could pick up milk, and bread, and some fresh vegetables maybe up in there? So we don't realize what we have done to ourselves. And this- and this is, like I said, this is supposed to be the good neighborhood.

**Interviewer 2** 38:13

Mm hm

**Participant 107** 38:15

So you know, we really need to step back, take this same group. And we need to be able to take this exact same group. And I'd like to see you take a group similar to this in Detroit.

**Interviewer 2** 38:32

Oh, absolutely.

**Participant 107** 38:33

You know what I'm saying?

**Interviewer 2** 38:34

Yeah, absolutely.

**Participant 107** 38:35

A group exactly like ours.

**Interviewer 2** 38:38

Yeah.

**Participant 107** 38:39

And look at it in Detroit.

**Interviewer 2** 38:42

Absolutely.

**Participant 107** 38:43

Because what we're doing and we don't realize it: girl, we're killing ourselves.

**Interviewer 2** 38:49

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 38:50

We can't we can't blame this always on big government. We have to bring it- bring it back down to the level of lackadaisical-ness. And and just saying, Oh, well, you know, it really doesn't involve me. I'm a grandmother. I don't have any kids at home. Yeah, but we got children all in the neighborhood now. You know, because why? We're dying off and the younger group are coming in and buying up our houses. And so they've got children in the neighborhood that are now- but it's keeping the neighborhood alive. They're remodeling the houses and you see them uh, you know, with their kids and stuff riding around when- As soon as the sun comes out, there out with roller- you know, scooters and stuff with their kids. So we have to be mindful to say, what's gonna happen to us?

**Interviewer 2** 39:48

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 39:49

What is gonna happen to Flint. I'm thinking of, I'm thinking of over by my college.There's no there's no grocery store over in that area. Same same. There's not even a mom and pop store close to them. I'm thinking there's not a Family Dollar close to them. So when you look at 475, that runs through, and you're looking at crossing over the bridge from downtown, going over to the Mott College area, which is another residential area.

**Interviewer 2** 40:49

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 40:52

In my mind, I don't see a Family Dollar within the neighborhood. Okay. I don't see a Family Dollar in my neighborhood. So everybody over in this area has to have a car to get to where they want to go to buy something to eat. Or they have to get on the bus. Is that alright? Yeah, I guess it is. Is it convenient? No, it isn't.

**Interviewer 2** 41:34

What's not a Flint is that [participant 107],

**Participant 107** 41:36

Which side?

**Interviewer 2** 41:37

Which side of Flint are you referring to right now? Is that North or what area?

**Participant 107** 41:44

Mott college is south.

**Interviewer 2** 41:47

Okay, South. And where are you? North, south, east?

**Participant 107** 41:51

I'm south. I'm South,

**Interviewer 2** 41:54

You're south too.

**Participant 107** 41:57

Mott college would be southeast.

**Interviewer 2** 42:02

Okay. Okay.

**Participant 107** 42:04

I am south.

**Interviewer 2** 42:08

Okay.

**Participant 107** 42:08

Because I'm right- I'm from Kettering.

**Interviewer 2** 42:11

Okay.

**Participant 107** 42:12

So I would say I'm, I'm off from Kettering. So I'm- I'm due south.

**Interviewer 2** 42:18

Okay.

**Participant 107** 42:19

And because in it, yeah, I'm right in Downtown. Downtown is south.

**Interviewer 2** 42:25

Okay. Okay. You're near downtown. Okay. All right. Okay. Thank you.

**Participant 107** 42:32

So, I think southeast, which is where the church is. You have a Sunoco where everything and his mama goes to. And then right across the street from it is a liquor store. And within the last year, they built a Family Dollar right behind the Sunoco. So, right behind there is Flint housing. Right behind Flint housing is section eight. Do you see where I'm going with this?

**Interviewer 2** 43:23

Absolutely.

**Participant 107** 43:25

And then you leave section eight, and you have houses which you have nothing. There's no liquor store. There's no Family Dollar until you get all the way down to Genesee. Which you- Say so for me, it isn't about color, because on the northeast side is primarily white. So it's not about race. It's about people. See, that's why we have got to, we've got to get out of this. The majority of the clientele that we serve is tomorrow. And I really wish that one of you could get in your car and come over and see how many people come through our church site to pick up water and food. I distribute 10,000 boxes of food a week. Did you hear what I just said

**Interviewer 2** 44:42

I sure did. We did. Oh my gosh.

**Participant 107** 44:47

And tomorrow it'll be about 300 vehicles that drive through. They'll pick up water. We verify the license because we don't give water to people outside of Flint. Okay, but we will give food. And you'd be surprised at how many of those people just come in to get food.

**Interviewer 2** 45:10

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 45:15

We deliver to over 1600 households in the Flint area, and we deliver food. Do the math. Then we set out about 12 pallets of food for people driving down Dort highway for them to pick up what they need. We'll set out- Within a week's time we'll set out maybe 16 pallets in a total week.

**Interviewer 2** 45:56

Hm

**Participant 107** 45:58

And it's gone. Like if we set out right now it's-it's 2:30. Right? If we set out three pallets, about 4:30, no-no about 3:30 it's gone. Each pallet has anywhere from 48 to 52 boxes of food. Well,

**Interviewer 2** 46:30

And that was on what highway?

**Participant 107** 46:32

Dort. North Dort highway.

**Interviewer 2** 46:34

North Dort. Okay, okay. Okay.

**Participant 107** 46:36

D-O-R-T

**Interviewer 2** 46:37

This is-this is helpful because you see [interviewer] is going to town here on this map. Um these connections, you know, what you're giving us, is you see her going to town on this map. Is these connections between how people are accessing food; Where are they accessing it? You know, what are some of the issues around where people live and not having access, or the kinds of access that they have. And the other conditions they might have to go through to even get access to the foods. So you were talking about the drugs and other kinds of things that the youth have to go by, just to get to where the food is. So when you're looking at this, because I'm watching her she's drawing these-these are the kinds of things that she's capturing on this-on this map.

**Participant 107** 47:26

Alright. And what what do you have to also understand is, in these boxes right now that they're picking up from us is USDA farmers to families. Each of these boxes has a gallon of milk. It'll have yogurt, cottage cheese, sour cream, some other form of cheese, it'll have produce, like potatoes or possibly squash or whatever is in, you know, right at that time. It'll have onions, and it'll have apples, grapefruit, or oranges in it. And it'll have five at least five pounds of pre cooked meat such as chicken quarters, patties, chicken patties, or, it'll have meatballs, you know, something like that in it. In that one box, so the box itself will weigh about 30 pounds. Now I want you to hear what I'm about to say. The problem with that box weighing 30 pounds is you can't get on a bus with a 30 pound box.

**Interviewer 2** 48:57

Yes, ma'am. Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 49:05

But we've got neighbors that'll stop. And they'll ask us, can I get more than one box? I need to get a box for my neighbor. And we're like, yep, you sure can. So they'll pick up four or five boxes and distribute it in their neighborhood.

**Interviewer 2** 49:26

Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 49:31

Okay. Then, on Tuesday, and Friday- Tuesday morning, we'll have about 20 to 26 different churches and nonprofit organizations that will come and pick up pallets from us to distribute in their various areas. That's on Tuesday mornings and Friday mornings. And you've got churches and organizations that will rent U-hauls, Penske trucks, 26 footers, where they can pick up 10 pallets at a time. And they distribute that from their local organizations, or from their churches. These are nonprofits, okay? Because you can't sell this food, you can only give it away. And we're working with the USDA, farmers to families, and we get in at our site outside of the food bank. I want you to hear what I'm saying. Outside of the food bank, we are the second largest distributor of USDA farmers to families in Flint.

**Interviewer 2** 51:11

Okay. Okay.

**Participant 107** 51:14

In Flint, and it is hard for me to get money. Because most of these funders say they can't pay for basic needs. Basic needs. Basic needs for me, means food. But then I've got to pay for our- for young men to get on that U-haul, that 53 footer and put a fork- a pallet jack up there, flip that thing around so that a forklift driver can take it off of the trucks.

**Interviewer 2** 52:11

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 52:15

So we were happy if it wasn't for United Way, really stepping in and the Community Foundation and helping us, do you realize how many people would go hungry? If everything was dependent solely on the food bank: they can only do so much. Because they're hitting basically the larger organizations. So we've got a lot of the smaller ones. And so when I talked with Catholic Charities, and I said "Hey, you guys, if you need anything, let me know." And they're like, well, we would, but everybody that basically comes to us a-walking and they can't carry a 30 pound box.

**Interviewer 2** 53:05

Yeah, so I see a connection there. You're saying down here in terms of just the ability of the sector, that they can't necessarily meet the needs of the smaller organizations? Because they're they're basically going- to get into the bigger organizations is what I'm hearing you say, is that right?

**Participant 107** 53:26

Well, I don't- Let me say that, Let me say-

**Interviewer 2** 53:29

Not necessarily can't meet, but they're meeting the needs of the larger-

**Participant 107** 53:33

Well, that's because they feel that the larger one then can be distributed down.

**Interviewer 2** 53:38

Okay.

**Participant 107** 53:39

Makes sense?

**Interviewer 2** 53:40

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 53:44

Yes. Eric told me that they're- they're doing like- Where they used to see like, 40, now they're seeing more like 53.

**Interviewer 2** 53:56

Okay.

**Participant 107** 53:58

See, that's that's what the need has grown to, especially during this pandemic. Will-will the relief of the monies help? Maybe, maybe not. Because that money, that's gonna be- that President Biden and them just released is gonna go more for a livelihood. Like paying your rent, paying your utilities. You know what I'm saying? Paying your- paying your car note. So you can come and pick- get food. They didn't say anything about that money going on your bridge card. I mean, that's not saying that it's not gonna do it. I just didn't hear that. Did you?

**Interviewer 2** 54:50

No I haven't listened to that closely.

**Participant 107** 54:53

I didn't- I didn't hear about it going on your bridge card either. Why? The reason that I didn't hear about it going on your bridge card is because they want that money to go back into society. Right? They want it to go back into the economy

**Interviewer 2** 55:07

The economy. Right.

**Participant 107** 55:08

And that's what [interviewer] was saying. They want you to go to the restaurant and eat.

**Interviewer** 55:14

Yeah

**Interviewer 2** 55:14

Right, right.

**Participant 107** 55:16

But I'm saying [inaudible]. They want that money to build the economy up.

**Interviewer 2** 55:22

Yeah. Yeah.

**Participant 107** 55:23

They want you to go into the grocery store and spend that money in the grocery store.

**Interviewer 2** 55:31

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 55:32

So we may see the USDA farmers to families go down, but if it does, then they've affected the farmer.

**Interviewer 2** 55:45

Right?

**Participant 107** 55:46

You see what I'm saying?

**Interviewer 2** 55:48

Absolutely.

**Participant 107** 55:49

Yeah, yeah. So-So it's almost like everybody- I'm a almost in a catch 22. I hope-I hope I'm making sense.

**Interviewer 2** 55:58

Oh, yeah. Don't you see [interviewer] drawing these concepts on this map? Yeah, you're making a whole lot of sense.

**Participant 107** 56:04

Um, so the fast food restaurant, they want to go to the Olive Garden, they want you to spend that money back into the economy.

**Interviewer 2** 56:17

Right? Exactly.

**Participant 107** 56:18

Okay. But at the same time, they're saying, "Okay, farmer, we're hoping that they spend this money in the grocery store." Because now, we're giving that mother more money.

**Interviewer 2** 56:39

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 56:41

To feed her family.

**Interviewer 2** 56:43

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 56:45

So we're hoping that the grocery store can order more now from you again?

**Interviewer 2** 56:51

Mm, hmm.

**Interviewer** 56:55

Got it, yeah.

**Participant 107** 57:00

So I really don't know where it's gonna end up, to be honest with you. Because like [name] was saying she has increased by 1300, more or 1000 more-more families. I don't know how that measures out for her. But I know for us, we we were at like, 1100 households that we were delivering to. And to- And my director told me yesterday, she just added in 30 more people yesterday.

**Interviewer 2** 57:32

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 57:35

That's why we're up to 1600. opposed to 1100. We deliver too.

**Interviewer 2** 57:47

[Interviewer]? Do you need to check in on this map? Are you feeling pretty good listening?

**Interviewer** 57:53

Um, yeah, I'm feeling pretty good about some of the connections. I mean definitely I know, it's getting a little bit busy. But we, if there's anything that you see [inaudible] that you think is not, like accurate, or things that you would word differently — I'll kind of run through pretty quickly of sort of, you know, building out this emergency sector. That some of the barriers to your guys's operation is just like lack of funding for basic needs. And for smaller operations was a little more tough, or you're saying in general, not with your specific center, with the sort of top-down funding. Um, it can be a little more challenging. Um, and some of the programs that do like delivering food and like people being able to pick up from their vehicles, that-that improves access, but there are also challenges there. And so I made connections, you can't see them because it's really busy. But when people don't have convenient transportation if they don't live-live nearby, that impacts their ability to access emergency food. And so that may be a barrier for them being able to get that.

**Participant 107** 59:13

That's right. Absolutely. And just the mere fact that I don't know how to explain it, but I keep hearing us wanting chain grocery stores. We want them. But the chain grocery store is not going to move back into Flint until that store feels that it can be solvent. You see what I'm saying?

**Interviewer 2** 59:46

Mm hm

**Participant 107** 59:48

It's just not going to do it. Because even Meijer's that was right there at 75 and Pearson road, closed the store down. Closed it. What- about five years ago now? The only store close to us in Flint is Kroger's. Because the smokers that was in Flint on Davidson shut down.

**Interviewer 2** 1:00:22

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 1:00:24

That was the only Kroger's, that was actually

**Interviewer 2** 1:00:29

in Flint,

**Participant 107** 1:00:30

In Flint. And it closed. But then what they don't understand is we don't want no run down stores either. If you don't keep your stores up, you don't keep it looking decent on the outside- The Kroger's right now, over on Corunna's. If you drive by, would you really want to go on the inside? No. Because you're in a shopping center that has not kept its frontal up.

**Interviewer 2** 1:01:04

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 1:01:05

So our people get in their cars, and they got to go to Kroger's on Miller road all the way down in Swartz Creek. Or the one in- are they going to go to Grand Blanc? Because they don't want to go to something that's rundown and don't look good, either. So you talk about us, not bringing our money into your facility. But your facilities don't look like something we want to go in. Let's just face it.

**Interviewer 2** 1:01:41

Yeah, got it.

**Participant 107** 1:01:48

So it's almost like a catch 22. And there's not a voice. There's not a voice. I tell you, oh, what's the name? My baby that used to work for the community foundation that started all of this.

**Speaker 4** 1:02:05

Oh, [name].

**Participant 107** 1:02:09

[name] had a voice that could say to Kroger's, hey, but you need to fix your store on the outside and they will be happy to come. And then Kroger's will say well, we remodeled on the inside. Yeah, but you still look like devil on outside. It's not clean. It's not clean on the outside. You don't sweep outdoors. You don't keep it swept up and cleaned up and it hasn't been painted where it looks decent. So people-people consider it I'm not going to get out because I don't know what I'm gonna be walking int. They're scared somebody's gon hijack them. Just because the way it looks on the outside.

**Interviewer 2** 1:02:49

Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Sounds like we had a good transition place, [interviewer] because we've got a couple of other really key questions to ask you, [participant 107].

**Participant 107** 1:03:09

Okay.

**Interviewer 2** 1:03:09

Do you see how good that map looks?

**Participant 107** 1:03:12

Yeah, I see.

**Interviewer 2** 1:03:13

That's a good looking map right there.

**Participant 107** 1:03:15

Oh, is it?

**Interviewer 2** 1:03:15

Yes, it is, is?

**Interviewer** 1:03:16

It is not

**Interviewer 2** 1:03:17

It says a very good- it's a very good looking map.

**Participant 107** 1:03:20

This is [participant 107] with her big mouth.

**Interviewer 2** 1:03:23

No, it's [participant 107] giving us the details and information that we need to inform these conversations. That's what you see right there.

**Participant 107** 1:03:33

I think it's been- And so we put a lot of weight on the food bank. We expect the food bank to be everything to us. And that is not fair to the food bank. But we do. We do. The- especially in the lower income facility. You know, we put a lot off on the food bank. And then when they can't meet our needs we are upset.

**Interviewer 2** 1:04:08

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 1:04:11

You know what I mean? We are thoroughly upset. [aside: Because I'm on a zoom call, son just bring it here.] But we expect them to be our everything.

**Interviewer 2** 1:04:30

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 1:04:32

We expect them to supply all nonprofits. And they can't supply all nonprofits. You see- to see what I'm saying? [aside: I see it. I'll be the first to sign it]. You see what I mean? And but we don't realize that it costs money for them to stay afloat. Because I know what it costs for us to stay afloat. So I can just imagine what it costs for them to stay afloat. And then the organizations that want them to meet their needs. They don't feel that they have to meet the requirements that they require.

**Interviewer 2** 1:05:22

Uh huh. Uh huh. Uh huh.

**Participant 107** 1:05:25

There's a standard that they have to meet,

**Interviewer** 1:05:28

Right

**Participant 107** 1:05:31

To be- for you to be an agent, right?

**Interviewer 2** 1:05:35

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 1:05:37

But you see, it's kind of just like with me, they want me to help them with their boxes. But at the same time, you don't want to do this, but once a month. I'm not- I'm not- I'm not the food bank. So I can't- I can't set aside for you to to do once a month.

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:02

Right?

**Participant 107** 1:06:04

With me, I have to be able to show that I can produce twice a week. And you're saying, Yeah, but I don't want but $100 worth of food. I'm sorry. I can't do that.

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:22

Mm hmm.

**Interviewer** 1:06:27

Yeah, yeah

**Participant 107** 1:06:29

I'm talking about for these- for these uh organizations, they are not 501 c 3s.

**Interviewer** 1:06:37

Right.

**Participant 107** 1:06:38

They- so what we're trying to say to them: team up with an organization that gets a 501 c 3.

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:49

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 1:06:51

Work as a team, and then everybody wins, right?

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:55

Mm hmm. Yeah, I see that down there too. That whole ability to access because they're not because of the organization type.

**Participant 107** 1:07:09

Exactly. Exactly.

**Interviewer 2** 1:07:12

Uh, huh.

**Participant 107** 1:07:13

You see what I'm saying? Right? Everybody wants their own? Right? I don't see why it's necessary for you to just have your own. Right? Mm hmm. work as a team, and then you can get a whole- you can accomplish a whole lot more.

**Interviewer 2** 1:07:32

Right. Okay.

**Participant 107** 1:07:35

I'm sorry, you have your questions there

**Interviewer** 1:07:39

Yeah-Yeah, um, one thing we wanted to ask you about is, you know, part of the project is to identify these these leverage points, these these high impact changes. Like, you know, wrote down what you're talking about, of these of these partnerships working together. And then things like small farmers, markets, neighborhoods, improving the quality and like safety of retail stores. Are there other things that you think like these leverage points that you think would benefit? What-what you would change to about the food system?

**Participant 107** 1:08:19

I think I've hit just about everything, and the food system itself. Until Flint comes together, and, and sees themselves again, as one unit, instead of 50 jillion units. Flint has to come together. We fight each other. Let me tell you about the food bank of Eastern Michigan, and I want to use them as an example. Okay. Some of their employees have tried to pit us against one another. They see us, how do you see an organization that all we're doing is trying to help the community. How? And we just started doing this since the water crisis. How do you see us as a threat against an organization existing before we ever even started doing this? How do you see us as a threat?

**Interviewer 2** 1:09:39

Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 1:09:41

So let me tell you about the food bank. The Food Bank was able to receive grant money during the water crisis. I mean, during the pandemic, the COVID. They took that as an opportunity went in and bought uh- their remodeling, right. Guess what they, guess what they did? They had a walk in cooler-freezer. And they said, we're donating this to greater holy temple. To the RL Jones community outreach. And they, they gave us their walk in cooler freezer, which allows us to be able to- In the freezer, we can put anywhere from six to eight pallets in there. In the cooler, we could probably get 24 pallets in that cooler. They didn't have to do that. But they did. And then United Way said, "Okay, let's help them get it installed." And the Community Foundation said, "Let's get behind them." With the pete- with the rapid response monies.

**Interviewer 2** 1:11:24

Hmm.

**Participant 107** 1:11:26

And they gave us, I want to say almost $100,000 just to have them installed. So if it costs that much to install them.

**Interviewer 2** 1:11:39

Come on now.

**Participant 107** 1:11:40

You see that what the community found- I mean what food bank gave us. Those units cost about $250,000. Do you see what I'm saying? That's what I'm talking about.

**Interviewer** 1:11:55

Right.

**Participant 107** 1:11:55

That's working together for the benefit of the community.

**Interviewer** 1:12:01

Right.

**Participant 107** 1:12:02

They realized that they were putting in units, probably three times now what that's worth, you understand what I'm saying? In those units and threw them away?

**Interviewer 2** 1:12:15

Absolutely. Yeah.

**Participant 107** 1:12:17

But instead, they said: I know what [name] is doing over there?

**Interviewer 2** 1:12:24

Right? Mm hmm.

**Participant 107** 1:12:27

Let's not throw this away?

**Interviewer 2** 1:12:29

Yeah. So that goes back to your point around the leverage points being around partnerships and coming together as one as opposed to pitting? Yeah, okay. Okay.

**Participant 107** 1:12:43

And the same was true. With Parishtown ministries. Parishtown said "we can no longer host a closet." So we're going to take all of our clothes over to [name].

**Interviewer 2** 1:13:02

Hmm.

**Participant 107** 1:13:03

We'll let people bring the donations in to us. But will allow them to be the distributor.

**Interviewer 2** 1:13:10

Yeah, gotcha.

**Participant 107** 1:13:14

Catholic Charities. Okay. Catholic Charities. When we get too much, we'll call you. If you get too much you call us.

**Interviewer 2** 1:13:24

Uh huh, gotcha.

**Participant 107** 1:13:26

But we work together.

**Interviewer 2** 1:13:28

Right?

**Participant 107** 1:13:29

Not because they're worried about me getting bigger than them.

**Interviewer 2** 1:13:33

Right.

**Participant 107** 1:13:36

I'm saying that we all should work together as partners. And that's what we have done, for the most part during this pandemic. And we need to see more of that. And it's not about me, myself and mine. It's about this community growing together.

**Interviewer 2** 1:14:00

Mm hmm. Hmm. Hmm. That's great

**Interviewer** 1:14:07

Are there any other- I want to make sure to wrap up, I have to run to a meeting at three. Are there any other impacts that you've sort of seen and experience from COVID-19. I draw the connections between increased partnerships, increased funding, like these economic recovery policies, driving people more towards grocery stores and chain restaurants. Are there other impacts that you've sort of seen or experienced?

**Participant 107** 1:14:43

I think I've about hit on it. The main thing I want to see us togetherness. I'd like to see and I shared with this [name], I'd like to see us have you Whether it's quarterly, or whatever, I'd like to see organizations come together so that whatever solution we come up with that it grows and not go away. I'd like to see our hard work continue. I'd like to see this community benefit from this hard work put together. And I'd like to see us to come up with a model that we can take and say, okay, Houston, this is what we did. Hmm. All right, New Jersey. This is what we did. Hmm. All right, Philadelphia. This is what we did. Hmm. Let's see you expand on it, huh? Take it and expand it. Alright, Detroit. You know, Detroit is we'd like to see Detroit. Take yourself and put you into four sections north, south, east and west. And we'd like to see this model put in Detroit. Oh, absolutely. That's why I'm here.

**Interviewer 2** 1:16:15

saying, Oh, yeah, Uh, huh. Yeah. Yeah.

**Participant 107** 1:16:21

Okay. So that's what I like to see. I'd like to see this word growth. I'd like to be a part of the growth. Hmm. And I'd like to be able to, as we come up with different things that we have not been able to uncover as they're uncovered in Detroit. But Houston, will Philadelphia and New Jersey or wherever? enlarge our base. Yeah.

**Interviewer** 1:16:57

Um, what I'm going to save this file, and stop sharing. I'm gonna put a link in the chat. If you have the time, it's a quick exit survey, it should take you two to five minutes to complete. Send it in an email, if that will be-

[OUTRO]