**FLPP: Interview Template**

**Q: How would you describe the different connection strengths between retail use and the five retail types?**

**Interviewer** 10:36

But for context, this question would kind of be like, what is your perception of where people buy food in Flint? Is it more at grocery stores more at convenience stores more at local restaurants? Is it more at chains, and not that much at local restaurants? Sort of like what is the strength of the connection from retail to the different sources. So that's something that you would feel comfortable, like sort of sharing your thoughts on.

**Participant 111** 11:08

I think I in many cases, it has to deal with if a person has transportation, and access to sites. So my work on the north end of Flint, where many people don't have transportation, there are a fair number of people that buy from essentially from the liquor store in order to get their food supplies. And so there is that category of questionable quality of food, because they don't have many choices. So there's a part of what's Flint's community that has that issue, then, when you go to the to what's next, I think the chain stores there are within the city limits, full grocery stores don't exist. Or there are two or three, but for the most part, a full grocery store does not exist. So people are going to outside of the city boundaries

to usually to a Meijers, or to a Walmart to buy large amounts. Now we have a huge number of people that are getting their food in the boxes that is put up by the food bank and various lines that people stand in choice on what they get. Whether it's a vegetable that their family will eat, or that they know how to cook, why not necessarily that they have a stove to cook it home. So we have a huge array of ways people get their food, and what choices are in that food. I don't know what that does on these lines here.

**Interviewer** 13:08

And that is sort of part of my role in-

**Participant 111** 13:12

Transportation is a factor. If you don't have transportation and you are carrying the food from wherever you've gone and you may have to go eight or 10 blocks you are carrying far less and less likely to be able to buy a cost effective large quantity. Most do the small quantities. It does affect the variety that people have, the qualities. I think the weight of food is a factor. The weight of a box. Would you buy a whole bag of apples? It'd be much better price but can you carry that with your five pounds of flour? Your five pounds of sugar? Maybe not.

**Interviewer** 13:57

Yeah, in my undergrad, my main mode of transportation was a bicycle. And so a grocery shop definitely like-

**Interviewer** 14:12

So do you have a sort of like, what are your thoughts on, you know, the prevalence of the use of local restaurants versus chain restaurants in Flint? Is it pretty even? Or do you think there's a lean towards one or the other?

**Participant 111** 14:25

One of the things that's happened in COVID is that the Halo burgers are gone. McDonald's are on the outside edges of the city. The quick and relatively inexpensive places to get food don't exist.

**Participant 111** 14:51

If we think back a year and a half, it would look different than it does right now. But right now. [Inaudible] are part of it to one of the Starlights just close too, those are places that people can get relatively inexpensive food quickly. And they also are hammered by the COVID. COVID not code [referring to the Zoom subtitles] but okay.

**Interviewer** 15:24

Yeah the auto transcription is not the best. Great. So then the final connections would be sort of, unless you think people are using farmers markets to purchase food, and then sort of, you have a sense of the use of supplemental nutrition programs in grocery stores versus convenience stores versus farmers markets.

**Interviewer** 15:48

Let's say. So if we expand farmers markets to talk about the veggie truck, I think that that does bring access to folks too, and a good many of communities that can't get to it otherwise. And that does include produce, and cheeses and eggs. So it does open the opportunity, probably not remotely as, as large as it should be as well known, you have to, you have to know exactly where it's going to be and what the schedule is. And so that's an area that probably needs to be expanded, especially right now, while many of the small places don't have healthy food, it does accept EBT. So the access pieces is there for being able to afford it. But it's not a consistent source, if you run out on Tuesday, and it may not come till the next Tuesday, that kind of barrier.

**Q5a:** **Based on how you see the current food system in Flint, how would you draw connections between these concepts?**

**Interviewer** 19:15

So do you have any questions about those values, or sort of a sense of which ones you would want to include in your map?

**Participant 111** 19:36

I would, I would almost start with availability as being most significant that people can avail themselves of nutritious foods, the choices and the choices that fit what they can do. I don't have a stove. Or if it's carrying it a long distance, all of those things impact the quality of what people can eat. So it's availability of nutritious foods that people can actually can use in their family.

**Participant 111** 20:24

And an example we're working on what goes into the transplant kits and the seed kits are so the partnership that Edible Flint has done not only includes our African American households, and our particularly Southern white households, but it also includes Latinx households, which come from many, many countries, prepare foods in many different ways and haven't been able to get hot peppers grow sometimes. And we're working with the indigenous community. And their greatest need was for the corn seeds that they could grow to grind for their corn meal.

**Participant 111** 21:11

And it was only available in tiny packages. So there are different aspects of what are many parts of the community need, and there may not be well- maybe there's not the knowledge of the need, but there's also not a marketability and large enough amounts for a community to be able to support that business. So that takes me back to availability in a different way than carrying boxes. It's whether a small market can make it and still be placed so that people can use it. I don't know where that was on your, your lines here.

**Interviewer** 22:01

Sort of how to model concepts because I definitely want to capture those. So let's add availability.

**Participant 111** 22:12

To community engagement that kind of falls in there, too. We have a lot of communities in our community.

**Interviewer** 22:21

Yeah. Also don't mind me, if I'm looking off to the side, I have a ridiculous home, working from home setup where I have two different laptops, I'm a little bit [inaudible].

**Interviewer** 22:37

Great, so I guess I'm sort of the sort of connections that I was hearing sort of connections between availability and nutritious foods, and also sort of this like quality of life aspect. So that, you know-

**Participant 111** 23:06

One thing that's kind of omitted here, too, quite sure where it fits, but the dignity of human beings and the use of their time with sitting in line after line to get water or to get food. It is a partic-, it's an enormous investment or waste of time for people of all economic levels right now, when you look at the long, long lines waiting for water, because there's no trust of our water system. And the same things happen for getting food, but they're just, there's got to be a better way.

**Q7: When you look at the model you created, is there anything you think is missing, or that you want to add to better capture how you think about the food system in Flint?**

**Interviewer** 24:00

Yeah, so some of the things that I kind of heard would be that sort of this quality of life that people have choice that they have dignity, that they have cultural appropriate foods for them, you know, is really impacted by sort of this is availability of those foods, that aspect of choice, things like that. And that availability, also, you know, has potentially an impact on nutritious foods that if it's not very available, then there's you know, not that many nutritious foods. Are there sort of other things other aspects, you know, connections you see other things about the food system in Flint that you want to talk through? You can also- I have more specific questions if nothing is immediately mind. Because around this conversations about sort of ability and nutritious foods and things like that.

**Participant 111** 25:15

There's more to be said about affordability and what that does to people's choice and the quality of food they get. When a person's stands in line to get a box of produce, the contents are what there was lots of not necessarily what the family will eat, or a balance of what they- what they need nutritionally either. Or the- sometimes there's- I joke about how many beats there are sitting in a big carton outside because people drop it back off.

**Participant 111** 26:06

What shows up on the doorstep of- so my office is very neighborhood engagement hub, and what gets left on the doorstep there that someone knows they're not going to use, maybe somebody else will. They don't want to take it home. And so they leave it there, and maybe someone else will, or maybe it will end up dumped. We're not- so the supply that is available, what those sources are, and how they end up. Given, I guess, to those who don't have choices at that moment. So I guess it's an affordability issue, but it's affordability and access, and it's access to what is in surplus someplace.

**Interviewer** 27:06

So I'm thinking about sort of how to map this dynamic that you're talking about. That sort of affordability has an impact on choice that you have, you know, if you are able to afford food, and you have more choices, and that if you have less choices. And also that availability affects choice. And that if you have less choices, then that potentially has an impact on food waste. Is that sort of capturing it? Is there more to it? Is it not quite correct?

**Participant 111** 27:46

The food waste probably has to do with its being a poor match. Either in amounts or the or what are the kind of food or the ability to be able to use it. It may not be an intentional throw away. It's a result of the combination of circumstances.

**Interviewer** 28:13

Yeah, that's something that we've definitely heard from other other interviews of people who like run emergency food programs that are, you know, trying to make sure that the food that they're giving out to people are, you know, is something that are going to be used, like, they'll ask like, I'm not going to give you a can of green beans, if you don't have a can opener, or I'm not going to give you something that's microwaveable if you don't have a microwave like that would not be useful for you, let's make sure that we match sort of your situation. Are there other sort of other connections that you want to make on this map, or do you want to move on to sort of the next question?

**Participant 111** 28:59

No, it's okay to go ahead.

**Interviewer** 29:02

So then the other thing I would like to sort of talk about with you will be in line of sort of like your, you know, experience and expertise with gardening or urban agriculture. And just sort of I know, this is gonna be a bit of a broad and open question, but I was wondering about sort of how you see that fitting into the Flint food system. So both the benefits from it, but then also things that drive it are barriers to do that.

**Participant 111** 29:39

So we have land and land and land and we are getting more land all of the time. And the ability to prepare that land and to manage it is a struggle. We have a history of potentially contaminated with lead paint. We know that when you demolish a property that you have left behind not only the potential of past contamination, but what gets dumped into that demolition. The control and management of that and the doubt, maybe it's okay and maybe it isn't. That we have the potential of having urban farms. But we're not doing the kind of investment of, well, in the soil quality [inaudible] equipment, in the education and long term tools, the costs that it takes to begin to bring a large area into production.

**Participant 111** 31:03

And not just the the dollars and cents cost, but the energy costs, the information cost, all of those pieces are very spotty, the potential to do so [inaudible]. So what I see the term on here, partnerships, the potential of good partnerships with community groups and neighbors next door to vacant land. And with those that have this, the skills and information they're not, they're not linked yet. And I'm not sure that it's a priority of enough of the- the organizations that are out here. And then neighborhood ones, you know, there's a difference. There's an intellectual belief, there's a belief that we have different skills and information. That may not be true, but if the person wears a suit to work, and the person wears boots to work, but there's a different perspective of what they know, and what they can do, which may be untrue for both sides.

**Participant 111** 32:15

But we're not making those links, and tying it to the enormous amount of land that we have available. And the number of people who would value and benefit from caring for the land if they had the equipment, you know, trust that the soil can grow good, can grow healthy stuff with lots of cornfields but we don't. And a little bit of it is not knowing who owns it, or how to get the right to use it. Presently the land bank is requiring liability insurance for anybody that's using their land. And that's just an enormous barrier. It's new and as far as I'm concerned it's got to stop. But it's adding one more layer to the to the I guess it's adding a layer to blight but it's adding a layer to we can't do anything about this. We think we can't.

**Interviewer** 33:30

Yeah, so how do you sort of see some of the, you know, the benefits, you know, currently of gardening or urban agriculture, or the potential benefits if it was expanded, you know, besides some of the maybe obvious ones, that it would raise nutritious foods and stuff like that in the community? What are sort of other other things you see?

**Participant 111** 33:53

Well, small businesses. There's the ability to make some money off your land eventually. And to be able to provide the produce that's needed. Accessibility for your neighbor down the street who doesn't have transportation and the human links, sharing what you have, and then it's managing the blight in the abandoned sense that is a part of not only Flint, but some of our closest neighbors also. It feels — it's a waste but it feels like it's overwhelming in what to do about it. It has, it must have lots of pieces to it and "I," as in quotes, "I don't know what to do so I don't do anything." And then we're quite seasonal also. So you can only grow things part of the year. And you got to be, you got to get ready in March, if you're going to have an expectation of eating it in July, if you haven't figured out in March, who even owns the land, and if you can get the tiller, it's- some of the barriers are not a clear pathway, I guess.

**Interviewer** 35:39

So anything else that you would like to add or change on this map, so I know it's a little busy, we can make some more room, you know that we've added these additional concepts like transportation and choice, and gardening, urban agriculture. Are there other concepts that you think would be that are important to the food system that you would want to include in your map?

**Participant 111** 36:09

Not sure where this fits, but I think there is a need for the valuing of the different ways we need to grow, cook.

**Participant 111** 36:31

So we have neighborhoods that are two blocks from each other that are enormously different in their whole style of, of cooking, eating, socializing. And I think we haven't, we don't value that as an important tool to the whole system of our foods that our grocery stores. How do I say this, without it sounding judgmental? But lots of small convenience stores. Their owners or the people that run them are coming from, they're coming from Dearborn there, they are not rooted here, many of them don't come out the door except to get in their car and leave.

**Participant 111** 37:28

They don't know. I was I was [inaudible], we had mowed for one of those convenience stores and cleaned up around it. And one of our members went in to say, and you can borrow the lawn more all the time, from over in the tool shed now there they can see the tool shed out their door they had never seen she actually took him by the elbow and took him outside and said there it is, and you can get it free. And here's the hours. But it was not- he was that isolated from the neighborhood, but also from the resources. It's a one way street to go there to get things conveniently. It's not cohesive.

**Interviewer** 38:30

So how I've sort of connected these is that I sort of summed up this concept and you can definitely, you can change the name, but sort of this idea of building community around food. And there are things that contribute to that, like, you know, urban agriculture, like farmers markets, especially the local restaurants, if you think that you know, there's these benefits to building that community have been able to share resources, and sort of like contributing to this quality of life is respected. Is that sort of a fair summation sort of things?

**Interviewer** 39:21

It is.

**Q9: So now considering your map of the current Flint food system, how would you make changes to improve it?**

**Interviewer** 39:32

Are there other- are there any sort of ideas that you have any sort of things that you would advocate for that you would consider to be leverage points and the way that we would change the food system to have positive outcomes? This can be small, this can be big. I know it's also kind of freeform, but sort of any sort of thoughts you have about- if you ran the world, what would you change?

**Participant 111** 40:00

I think one of the information sources that we often overlook is billboards. And the signs in buses and the signs at bus stops. If they changed often with "Hey did you know?" And provided our resource information in a really easy way, graphically, that we could be communicating pretty well across all kinds of cultures and, and interests because everybody moves in some way. And it's, it's a big- it's a big screen. So I'd be looking for somebody that wanted to sponsor it, and then 25 different communities to put the word up of something different every two weeks.

**Interviewer** 41:01

Yeah. Okay.

**Participant 111** 41:05

But you know, knowing that now's the time to get seeds, or now's the time to order. Did you know that there's going to be such and such an event. I don't know [laughs]. It could be a living kind of thing that crosses all cultures.

**Participant 111** 41:36

Any other sort of ideas, I've written down things that you previously talked about sort of like this idea that like partnerships, and connections with partnerships, and urban agriculture could be stronger. And that could be a potential leverage point. Is there anything else?

**Participant 111** 41:57

One thing that perhaps I didn't stick with is that as demolitions occur and land becomes available that is always prepared for a healthy place to grow. And for kids, to play. At this moment, we don't- we need places where kids can run and play and they're not necessarily safe places. Because the quality of the soil the fill- if you go to what has- in the various demolitions of big plants, what that has done to the soil quality around them in what was in the air, we don't know what to trust and how to evaluate them and making that easy for a neighbor to know what's next door. It would be an important tool.

**Q12: We’ve talked a lot about different food system sectors and values, and the impact of COVID-19. Is there anything important about this conversation that I forgot to ask you, or something that you want to add?**

**Interviewer** 42:53

And my last real question is sort of also open ended, that we, you know, have talked about these different food system sectors and these different values and sort of the impacts of COVID-19. But is there anything else, you know, that we haven't talked about that you think is important to have this sort of conversation around food in Flint, something that you want to make sure that this research takes forward or takes into consideration?

**Participant 111** 46:29

No, I don't think so, I think most of the issues do have to do with our being able to use the resources of our land, and the resources of people together.