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

**Interviewer** 15:38

So what is sort of your understanding, your perception, from sort of your work experience, but also just being a resident of Flint, about the relationships, for example, between use of retail and the different kinds of restaurants?

**Participant 112** 15:51

So in terms of the use of retail, for chain restaurants in Flint, I would definitely say the relationship is extremely high. Most people are eating fast food at least like you know, two, three times a week. The drive throughs are always packed. People are always pulling in and out of them.

**Interviewer** 16:23

Oh, I can't hear you suddenly. Can't hear you.

**Participant 112** 16:36

Okay, okay. I have poor internet. But yeah, I would say every, every time you make a few turns in Flint, you end up in front of another McDonald's or Arby's or Taco Bell. So yeah, pretty high relation there. But also, with local restaurants, I do believe as if it's also kind of high, maybe highest chain restaurants, but people who go to the local restaurants like swear by the local restaurants, like every single time I go to a meeting it's Roma's you know, or just something from the farmers market.

**Participant 112** 17:22

I mean, I worked at the farmers market, and I had like, a consistent stream of regulars all the time. So yeah, I would say, probably not as high as chain restaurants, but definitely fairly high. In the bar hopping scene, you know, pre pandemic was always pretty bopping downtown. Everybody was always going to all the different bars and restaurants and you know, especially when back when like the Flint local was the thing after show everybody would just go to like the taco truck or like, go to like torches and grab a burger. Or White Horse, get some pizza or something, you know?

**Interviewer** 18:08

And then what do you think about sort of the connection strengths to the different kinds of stores in Flint?

**Participant 112** 18:15

Hmm. So would party stores be convenience stores?

**Interviewer** 18:20

Yeah.

**Participant 112** 18:20

Extremely high. Literally even more so than chain restaurants. I could, if I had a pellet gun, I could shoot three different convenience stores from my house almost. They're all like, right next to each other. I live off Grantee and over by Fenton, Matherton it's all liquor stores. Definitely much less grocery stores and farmers markets. I mean, we only have one major farmers market here but people do love it dearly. People do frequent the farmers market. Grocery stores, we got Kroger, but that's kind of like in Burton, almost.

**Participant 112** 19:16

You can go to Walmart, but people who go to the Flint Walmart, usually rethink that and go to the Burton Walmart. Definitely a bit of a food desert when it comes to finding fresh produce for a good chunk of Flint. So low on the grocery store side. And then keep the farmer's market around a medium because it's far away from- okay, let's face it downtown? Rent's high, gentrification is high. It's unaffordable to live there for the average person in Flint, including myself. Yeah, so if there was more, and if there was more resources to get there, I would put it higher. But that is not the case, especially during a pandemic.

**Interviewer** 20:13

Yeah, I live in Ann Arbor. So I'm a student at U of M. And I live right by the farmers market. And it's definitely seen way less way less people going during the pandemic.

**Participant 112** 20:23

Oh, yeah, I was definitely. Yeah. And I mean, I freq- I still go to a farmers market. You know, I know, everybody there like I walk in, I know every single person that every booth because I worked with them for almost a year. So it's definitely like a nice little community here.

**Q:** **Okay, then thinking about the connection strengths between use of the supplemental sector and the different types of stores,** **how do you think about these strengths? Are supplemental nutrition programs used at certain places more often in Flint?**

**Interviewer** 20:43

Oh, great. And then do you have maybe a sense of where, you know, supplemental nutrition programs might be used more or less? Or is this something you can't really speak to? Oh, I can't hear you.

**Interviewer** 20:58

Oh- [participant loses internet connection]

**Participant 112** 21:09

Here we go.

**Interviewer** 21:10

All right. Yeah, sort of sense of these connection strengths between supplemental nutrition programs and different stores? Or is it something that you don't think you can really speak to?

**Participant 112** 21:25

By supplemental, like, sorry, I'm dyslexic as well. So reading isn't that easy, so supplemental, you mean like who supplies those things?

**Interviewer** 21:37

So that'd be like supplemental nutrition programs. So are people using like WIC or Snap or Double Up-

**Participant 112** 21:45

WIC, Double Up Food Bucks, and Snap, are all very, very popular at the farmers market. I know for a fact. I mean, if anything's packaged at the farmers market, pretty much its food stamps. So almost everybody, everybody in America, we got food stamps. Most people I know, that like around my age and Flint, have food stamps. A lot of people rely on them. And Double Up Food Bucks is pretty awesome. So we definitely benefit from that. And I would say, everybody use this WIC at all of those places, easily.

**Participant 112** 22:35

Sometimes also at the liquor store I to try to buy other things with it, but-

**Q4: Which of these other values are important to the Flint food system that you want to include in your map?**

**Interviewer** 25:00

Which two or three do you think are important?

**Participant 112** 25:05

I would say okay, so availability, I would say is definitely something I could probably speak on. And, okay, so go back up to education real quick just so [inaudible]. Yeah, I could speak on education, probably not so much on career development, but like, in our- [loses internet connection].

**Interviewer** 25:49

Hello? Alright, here we go.

**Participant 112** 25:53

Oh, are we back?

**Interviewer** 25:54

Yes.

**Participant 112** 25:55

Okay. So yeah, education. Trying to think.Can I look at the community engagement slide?

**Interviewer** 26:13

Yeah.

**Participant 112** 26:14

Okay. Yeah, I mean, we, I would say we do what we can with them by [inaudible] work. I mean, with the food distributions, all you do is you come up, right, your zip code, tell us how many families you got, and we just load you up. No questions asked. We try to, you know, prioritize needs. We do more than just food with those. It's also, you know, shampoo and conditioner and lotion and feminine care supplies. And, you know, just like baby clothes and stuff like diapers. It goes beyond just food. Those are just support events, I would say. But yeah, they definitely tie in with community empowerment and just looking out for one another. So yeah.

**Participant 112** 27:20

And then partnerships we work with so many people to make things happen. So like anything from the eastern Food Bank of Michigan to just simple donors, you know? So, I would say, I could definitely cover a few of those things. Here, don't mind me, I'm going to drink a horribly unhealthy energy drink while we talk about healthy food.

**Interviewer** 27:52

Yeah, that's a it's part of definitely one of these conversations is like, you know, sometimes if you have more money, you're not necessarily gonna buy better food. Like if I have more money, and I'm gonna buy fancier pizza.

**Participant 112** 28:05

I know right. I can get more sugary, salty sauce to drench my tofu in.

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

**Interviewer** 28:20

So yeah, sort of- I know it's sometimes it's gonna be hard to find a good place to start but this is sort of- we wanted to just sort of, you know, based on how you understand and see the current food system in Flint. How would you start drawing connections between these concepts?

**Participant 112** 28:40

Hmm. I'm gonna think well, with the emergency sector, would that be like, more so? Like, direct aid kind of stuff?

**Interviewer** 29:02

Yeah. So it'd be like anywhere that gives food away for free. So that would be like the food bank or like shelters?

**Participant 112** 29:09

Well, I think available- I think all of them could tie into that. That is what I have a lot of work with the past year. I mean, I've been doing food distributions monthly since April of last year. Pretty much since the beginning of the pandemic, also sorry, are people sleeping in the back? But yeah, [loses internet connection]

**Interviewer** 29:42

Oh, we lost you. Oh, hello? Oh, I can't hear you. Oh, no.

**Participant 112** 29:58

-to them.

**Interviewer** 30:00

Hello, okay, you just reconnected.

**Participant 112** 30:02

Okay. With the food distributions, they would, I would say if you have a car they're accessible that's kind of the culture of Flint in general.

**Interviewer** 30:16

Yeah.

**Participant 112** 30:18

There's- you drive. Yeah,I don't- it's just kind of like a this area of Michigan kind of thing. You know, very, I mean, and not to knock MTA what they're doing is great. But everyone drives. Even if they don't necessarily want to. Yeah. I mean, this, I mean, the city is just not the safest. I'm sure you've heard. So yeah, it's available, if you have a car. Granted, we do some direct support, like, my friend, her mother will come up. And we'll load her truck full of canned goods and take them to like the men's shelter, or like, take them to the church.

**Participant 112** 31:10

There's like, she'll come and make like four or five trips, because the eastern Food Bank just drops the food off at the school, we set up tables, package it, and then hopefully, by the time we have everything packaged we're ready. People are not, you know, getting antsy, or, you know, making threats. People get a little tense out here sometimes. But I just try, keep my head down and keep working. But yeah, it's available. And I would say, certain families, we know what families need, like serious help. I know, personally, like teachers at my school, and like the community school directors, have all been making personal visits to like, almost, at least at the schools, I work at personal visits every family that they can contact.

**Participant 112** 32:16

And like those are like, weekly and bi weekly. So like they're making sure our families are getting fed. And I mean, off the record. Yeah, I'll not state the details. But like, for instance, like, we have one family that both of their grandparents, one was already bedridden. One had just gotten surgery. And it was the oldest boy was in like, sixth grade. And, yeah, we would like we were like, personally delivering food to them. And like, oh, like all kinds of stuff. And I just say off the record for the sake of like, I mean, already completed that term, but for the sake of future, future America or you know, nonprofit.

**Participant 112** 33:13

Yeah, now, we help we directly help a few families, for sure. And yeah, we do make sure like, like, you can tell, you know, like, when you're seeing the kids directly, you could tell when they're not eating properly, when they're not eating properly, when something's bothering them at home. You know, like, it's- I just, I'm here to be like an advocate for the kids, you know, because they don't, they aren't listened to as much as they should be. So we look out for one another. Or try to at least do our best.

**Interviewer** 34:01

Would you be comfortable with me sort of summing some of that up with just like, building community around food as something that the emergency sector does? Yes.

**Participant 112** 34:14

Sorry, if I ramble, I tend to just-

**Interviewer** 34:18

No, it's all like great information. And that is, that is what I'm here to do is to listen to your experiences with food in Flint, as someone who hasn't really ever experienced that. That's great.

**Participant 112** 34:30

Yeah, I just I just, I read a lot of philosophy and then I just get- I can go on my spiels. If I ever go over a time limit, just let me know.

**Interviewer** 34:43

Other connections that you see that you would want to make?

**Participant 112** 34:55

Well with the education, we could also tie that into the use of the emergency sector because all this stuff takes place. Like everything I'm telling you is through the school's Flint Community Education Initiative, CRIM Fitness Foundation, and FLIK schools. So they partner with the eastern Food Bank, and with each other, and with other donors to get these food distributions. And even during school, we have our backpack program. The kids bring a backpack to us, we fill it full of food, they take it home, bring it back, do it again next week. That was like half my Fridays, were usually spent filling backpacks. Kids be like is my backpack done yet and I'm grabbing one for my brother too like, we were just like, if they're big families, we'd be like, give every kid like just a backpack full of canned goods to take home. Can't snack out on a bus, but it once you get home-

**Interviewer** 36:07

Yeah, that's sort of connected this sort of like partnerships piece to the ability of the emergency executor. Do you think that is, it's fair to say that this collaboration between different groups really, like enables a lot of the food that's provided?

**Participant 112** 36:22

Yeah, without this, like rise of [inaudible] partnerships, you know, like, this wouldn't be a thing. And there's not, it's like, when all this stuff's going down, like, there's no there's no, like, hierarchy, you know, it's we get like the thing, it goes to the place that needs to go, we get it done. You know, that's just how it goes. And without all the- cause at the food distributions it's anything from someone who just walked up off the street to families from Ann Arbor, I've worked alongside to, you know, former students from Flint, junior high or the you know, like, we allow anybody to volunteer, every single portion of AmeriCorps ends up there in Flint, like, it's every like, thing relating to educate education. We're all there. And then the news will show up to so like, you know, and then like, that just spreads outreach through like social media, everybody's going on Facebook Live, like they have those drive through events getting tense slinging boxes for like four or five hours.

**Interviewer** 37:41

Yeah other connections that you see that you would make in this map?

**Participant 112** 37:51

Let me think for a sec. Hang on one sec someone's knocking at my door.

**Participant 112** 38:49

Alright. I'm back. Sorry about that. So use supplementals. Trying to think of, sorry, I lost my train of thought.

**Interviewer** 39:14

You think out loud, if that'll be useful. I can also ask some sort of direct questions of like, what are other ways that availability are impacted? Maybe by that-

**Participant 112** 39:24

So other ways availability are impacted? I would say, especially right now, that it's getting colder. It's definitely getting harder to keep distributions going. And turnouts, like, are getting substantially lower because of the cold and rain. So weather definitely plays into this. But I did pick up on actually like, families were carpooling to the events. And yeah, I people were like, it'd be like four families per car. Then we just load, like, they'd bring their big old van and we just like, feel it to the ceiling food like, so. Lots of volunteers. Yeah. volunteering for sure. I mean, I did check in at the last like, I did, like sign in at the last one. And, yeah, a lot of people showed up from not even just Flint, like, the whole surrounding area, which was pretty cool.

**Participant 112** 40:35

And half the time, those volunteers also volunteer at the schools. Like I've worked alongside, like many of the coaches I worked with last year and like, other teachers would volunteer, some support staff would volunteer like janitors, and lunch ladies and stuff. And, yeah, so, I mean, a lot of this, a lot of this gets done due to free or cheap labor. It's not like it's not like it's a bad thing. I mean, every community needs good volunteering, and I'm happy people show up. For instance, last year, on MLK Day, at the door federal Event Center, which is like a big, big, like, arena, essentially, like an indoor arena.

**Participant 112** 41:30

But I think they packed like 22,000 pounds of food all together. Like we were like, it was just everybody from Flint from like, you know, US AmeriCorps members to Shriners clowns. We're packing like, you know, like, oatmeal meals and ministani or ministro, or whatever it's called, you know, soup packets, and we were all just preparing meals. And it was some ridiculous like, over 100,000 pounds of food were made just that day, and like a four hour span. And it was intense. I did check in for that. And then like, they immediately had me like put on like, nets and gloves and all kinds of stuff. And as soon as everybody down there, I jumped in the line. Just cranking out oatmeal for like, three hours. It was awesome.

**Q6: Are there other things that influence these variables? For example, if we got back to the traffic example, I might add carpooling, as something that decreases the number of cars on the road. Is there anything else you would like to add to your map?**

**Interviewer** 42:31

Cool. So today we're gonna think about is maybe like other other things you would maybe want to add to the map that influences the things that we've already talked about. So like my silly little traffic example I might say like, Oh, yeah, okay, you know, we talked about that like cars and public transportation impact traffic, but like what impacts the number of cars on the road? And I say like, Oh, well, if people are carpooling, then there's gonna be less people, you know, driving their individual cars. So is there anything that you would want to add to your map? I mean, like sort of other concepts as are things that you think are impactful or important in the food system?

**Participant 112** 43:13

I would definitely say the outsourcing the education system does for their food is a big factor in school food.

**Participant 112** 43:38

I'm sure that you've probably heard about SODEXO at some point. It's the food for Hurley hospitals, couple prisons I want to say, and Flint schools. So yeah, our schools are eating prisoner food. That's a pretty- and not to, you know, knock prisoner food, but like, quality. I mean, I do believe prisoners should have the right to healthy eating. But like our students, even more so in their same treatment in that regard. You know what I'm saying? Like it's a definitely a systemic thing. And I know, like, when it's when it's taco day, those kids don't touch.

**Participant 112** 44:43

Like, certain things like sour cream no go. They will be in the bathroom for the rest of the day and it's, the kids have, like an awareness of what they're eating isn't healthy for them. They don't like drinking the milks. They don't like eating tacos, or the burritos and it's honestly pretty gross. And I gotta love lunch ladies, school wouldn't survive without lunch ladies, but they need to be paid better. They need better materials to work with. And they need better food to give to these kids. You know, and I'm pretty sure all the foods prepared at Northwestern which To be frank looks like a blasted out war zone. Well, Northwestern is a rough and tough place. And it's definitely I wouldn't want my food cooked there. You know what I'm saying?

**Participant 112** 45:45

Like, I know this, the state of inner city schools are bad, but let me tell you, I go when I-but I coached basketball last year, and chaperoned and like, I was like, alright, boys, time to go, you know, change in the locker room. Gotta get in their basketball clothes. And they're like, I don't want to go in there. And you go in there like urinals are kicked in, sinks are ripped out of the wall, ceilings, exposed cracks on the flooring, you know, and that's how it is the whole building. So, you know, there's definitely probably some contaminants and I've ate some of the food and let me tell you, it's not good. And, yeah, and then, on top of that, I'm highly critical of the sanitization CSM provides in the lunchroom. I mean, I know how janitorial works.

**Participant 112** 46:54

I grew up with a mom working as a janitor, and eventually running a whole janitorial wing of a district. You know, I understand the work that needs to be done. And I've done it because my mom was like, I'm a lone janitor you should come with me tonight. So I've cleaned schools before. And like not that's not our record. That's just me doing it to help family out. And I don't know if it's necessarily sanitary, especially at the main hub. Yeah, that's definitely a concern of mine is those kids eating what comes out of there from those from that company. Plus, I don't think they treat their workers well.

**Participant 112** 47:48

That's a, I've heard from secondhand sources that with hours cut, pay cuts and all kinds of stuff. They cut their hours severely, and then I don't think they let them get fired. So they can get unemployment during COVID and all that fun stuff. But you know, that's just me, saying what I heard through the grapevine. I mean, it's believable, though, those outsourcing companies are known to be very dogmatic, chew ya up and spit ya out environments, especially to their minimum wage workers. Because they'll just think they can replace you. And that's, to them, you're just a means to an end. And the end is more money in their wallet.

**Interviewer** 48:50

And I think it's been- not necessarily enlightening because it's not any, it's not a new concept, but especially during COVID it's been really disheartening. I'm like, how many people involved in like the public health field and have so much disregard for people's lives? I'm like, why would you get into this field?

**Participant 112** 49:11

Exactly. That's all for money. Even though there's nothing to be made. I mean, realistically, all they're doing is just harming children. You know these kids need healthy green food. You know how many of them are lead babies? You know, I hate using that term, but it's a sad reality when we live in this area. Many children within Flint schools have disabilities related to lead and those usually result in mental problems. And exercise in green healthy foods can help diminish some of those alongside actual medical doctors for giving them mind and attention.

**Participant 112** 50:02

There needs to be a medical and holistic wellness approach to these children. Because the government created this problem, in my opinion. And that I mean, not opinion it's backed, the government created this problem. It's wholey fact. We have criminal charges underway right now, and half the people involved got away scot free with nothing but a slap on the wrist. So it's a situation that no one knows what to do. And I mean, who's-, I know, for a fact, before this, the lead was still in the city, the lead levels were even higher back in the day. So this is not only for these kids, but this is a generational issue. So that's a theme in lots of cities in America, but mainly-

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

**Interviewer** 50:58

Yeah, it is. Some of the, you know, one of the capabilities of this website is that you can run scenarios. So you can, you know, raise or lower one of the concepts and see what happens. And it is a little bit sad that when you turn off like systems of oppression, shockingly, everything gets way better. If only we could figure out how to do that. That does kind of tie into the next question of, you know, like, part of the goal with this project is to identify these leverage points and explore them like, you know, what things can we do in Flint. And so that could be something that's really small, that could be something that's really big. It's kind of, you know, it's a lot of different options, but sort of considering, you know, your knowledge and experience of Flint. You know, if you ran the world, how would you make changes to improve it?

**Participant 112** 52:02

So this is off the record, okay. Okay, well- okay, so this is coming from a fairly radical person, mind you. So I firmly believe that the systems of oppression need to be entirely dismantled, we need to start from the ground up using rhizomatic structures of direct democracy, workers unions, but, you know, so I mean, that's just my speculation, we need to get rid of a lot of the capitalistic behaviors of our society we need to get rid of corruption, which usually ties in heavily to capitalism and personal greed. And we need to learn how to take what we need and distribute the rest. We need to severely, severely, severely dismantle the education system and rebuild it from scratch, because the education system is built off principles that do not understand children.

**Participant 112** 53:20

And in terms of getting food to people, there is enough food for people, we just don't distribute it right. We there needs to be a way for- and we could do this all without working 11 to 12 hours a day. We could do this all working four hours a day. It's just we he worked eight hours a day because that's what makes us monetarily valuable. You know what I'm saying? That's how companies maximize our profit. So in my opinion, we need to communalize our outlook on food and education. That accommodates all cultures. But like then, if a person comes from a religious background, but I mean, there's Islamic children in my school, they won't eat something that isn't halal. But what is that? That's the salad bar.

**Participant 112** 54:33

Want some vinaigrette with some lettuce and some cherry tomatoes. Does that sound like enough food for you to be fulfilled for your entire day? You know, like in there is pretty highs Islamic ratio in Michigan. I mean, especially in Saginaw and, like here in Flint, you know, in Dearborn, and the schools don't accommodate for that, you know, nearly as much as they should schools I mean, nut allergies are such a big thing, even some flour, and the peanut butter. I mean, those peanut butters made out sampler I got a girl who breaks out in hives every time she's even near it, you know, my fifth graders and you know, I don't know, there's needs to be in and we need to dissect the current system as is. Strip away everything of personal gain seriously reevaluate like what we need to do to streamline the process of getting healthy food to people.

**Participant 112** 55:39

Because it's it's fully within the realm of reason. I mean, how much alone has this company spent on painting cop cars? I mean, this country spent on painting cop cars with the punisher logo on it. Like it's-you're telling me that money exists, but I got kids starving under 50 pounds, both their parents hooked on drugs and there's no support for them? You know what I'm saying? It's not a food problem. It's an American problem. Once the America problem's fixed then the food problem will probably be fixed as well.

**Interviewer** 56:38

It's yeah, it's been wild to me how much people don't understand in sort of, in academia, and we're like the food system that people spend so much time and effort thinking about how to like, oh we just to make food production more efficient. I'm like-

**Participant 112** 56:55

it's efficient as it's ever going to be.

**Interviewer** 56:58

You don't even make oh, now I can make four more ears of corn per acre, like, I don't care about-

**Participant 112** 57:04

Oh, how are you going to keep that corn from turning into a rot at the bottom of the dumpster? You know, because there are people out there that will eat it and don't throw it away. I mean for instance I know people who have, you know, when dumpster diving for pizza, they went, jumped in the dumpster ate the pizza, find out that the company had been putting rat poison on it to deter homeless people. That's the problem we're facing. And they could say, oh, that's for the pests. No, I know exactly what it was for you wouldn't have a fence around your dumpster if it was just for the pests. There's not bears over there. Raccoons gonna get in anyways even if you're in Flint, if you're in California, right, raccoons getting in the garbage.

**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** 1:08:09

Alright so I have a file, and I'm gonna stop sharing and sort of the final question is super freeform. You know, that we talked about a lot of different things about the different sectors, but the different values, in fact, of COVID Is there anything about sort of this conversation around food in Flint, and we haven't talked about and that you think is for us to know and sort of take forward in this research.

**Participant 112** 1:08:42

I would say as a final note, I do enjoy, like how much the community has rallied in response to COVID-19 and just getting food to people. Every single food distribution, like there's always new faces as volunteers and also, I guess, just like, strengthened connection, I've, you know, I've met so many people, I've fed so many people and people like, everybody recognizes each other now and like it's just been really cool watching the community kind of like, strengthen around that one thing I would say, which is distributing food, giving out and making sure people are fed and taken care of.