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

**Interviewer** 19:35

If we're thinking about sort of the relationships out from use of retail, what the connection strength means, is really sort of, you know, when people purchase food in Flint, are they getting that mostly, you know, from one source or another? Or is it kind of evenly split? Are there some places that people don't go that often or you know,do you want to start with sort of thinking about the use of retail and local versus chain restaurants? Do you think people go to one more than another go to both, or like people don't really buy food and restaurants at all, is also an option. So what would you think about maybe the connection strings between people purchasing food and then using local restaurants versus chain restaurants?

**Participant 117** 20:26

Well, it is hard for me to- and I'm only speaking on my experience. When it comes to, I do believe there is too much fast foods that people gravitate to. Only because I think, in today's society, we're not- it's hard to prepare food at home. Because if you're constantly working your job, managing your job, you're managing your children, going to a fast food to pick up something to eat is a lot easier than going home. If you didn't take something out the freezer, then you're trying to find out what you're going to prepare. And you're always looking at the time wise that you're feeling like this is the easiest way. When it comes to I gotta say, I think it's more fast food.

**Interviewer** 21:36

And then sort of what are your thoughts on the different connection strengths between grocery stores, convenience stores and farmers markets?

**Participant 117** 21:46

Okay, well, once again, this is based on what I do. And what I've seen in some of the residents, when I walk into a convenience store, it actually turns my stomach. Because one, their prices are too high. And I'm not saying that all of them are doing this, but I feel that they're price gouging their prices, which I'm totally against. I have seen some convenience stores that have a section of fruits and vegetables that I wouldn't give to my dog. Because I think they get a kickback from the state, if they can show that they had vegetables, and fruit on their shelves, then they could get some type of kickback.

**Participant 117** 22:45

And so they just put it on a shelf. That, to me in my opinion, is dirty. It looks unsanitized and you're serving this to the customers? You should be ashamed of yourself. So I'm totally against convenience stores. However, if the residents don't have any other place to shop, then that's all they can go to. So that's why I'm so passionate about the co-op is that we're going to give people in the residence, more of an opportunity to shop somewhere as if it was in the suburbs. So I truly feel that convenience stores are convenient. But I think they have gotten- to me over time, they're not upholding the standards with parking lots being clean, and offering some of the best quality food they can offer.

**Participant 117** 23:52

Farmers markets, I think there should be more. I really truly feel that a generation is not understanding what farmers markets is all about. I think that they are not educated on that piece. So I think moving forward, we need to bring that farmers market into residential areas. So we can show them how to freeze your food, how to store it properly. And then of course, I think you can buy the best amount of vegetables when you go to a farmers market rather than a grocery store or convenience store.

**Interviewer** 24:42

Yeah, my- this is a bit of a tangent- my father is a professor of botany so he studies plants and he has a day in his class where he just teaches all of his students where different fruits and vegetables come from and how they grow and he says that it's one of the most rewarding things of people being like, oh my gosh, I never knew pineapples grew like that that's wild, but people are so disconnected from food and like the production of food that is incredible to have them build that connection back up.

**Participant 117** 25:15

It's true. And one more thing is I think that we need to show young people how to become farmers. You know, granted, I tried to grow a vegetable garden in my backyard. But it's a lot of work. When you work 40 plus hours, and Meijers, I didn't have time to come home, trying to pull weeds out the garden. So unfortunately, it didn't go anywhere.

**Interviewer** 25:51

I had a few friends do garden plots this summer, but it's only because of like, you know, COVID, or because they're in, you know, education where they get the summers off, so they'd have the time to spend on it. But it was, wow, that's like, oh, my gosh, you go to your garden, like every day, and work on it?

**Participant 117** 26:11

So that's why I appreciate the farmer markets. I said why am I trying to grow some backyard, which I'm not able to give that much time? Let me go to some professionals, and they know what they're doing.

**Interviewer** 26:27

Great. So the last one to connect here would be grocery stores, how do you think about sort of the use of grocery stores in Flint?

**Participant 117** 26:38

Well, unfortunately, in Flint, all the major stores have moved out, we do have some mom and pop grocery stores that have been around for 40 plus years. However, I think, and this is my opinion, of course, I feel that they know that they don't have any other competition. So we don't have any competition, you don't have to be on your A game. So you can have dirty floors. Or you can probably charge this much. Or you probably don't have to offer any real customer service to your residents. Because in the back of your mind, you're saying well, they don't have any place to go.

**Participant 117** 27:27

Yeah, so I can treat or choose how I want to handle my customers, which I think, of course is wrong, in my opinion. Your parking lot looks like you got litter going all over the place. You don't try to fix your parking lights, you don't try to fix your parking lot, you have debris running all around. I think that's the eyesore. And I don't think that the stores that we have in Flint, they don't care about that, because no one's holding them accountable for it. So for grocery stores, I do think they're important because no one should have to drive to Timbuktu to get, you know, small portions of eggs or bread. But unfortunately, in our area, we only have mom and pop stores.

**CB Knox** 28:33

So maybe we want to go through some of these connections that I've made just to like, sort of make sure that this is accurately capturing sort of all of these things that you're talking about. So I guess starting from the bottom and working your way up, I have, you know, convenience stores and chain restaurants. One of the main drivers behind their use is that they are incredibly convenient for people to use. And especially considering transportation, where if people have access to transportation, such as a personal vehicle or convenient public transportation, they're more likely to be able to access grocery stores.

**Interviewer** 29:14

And if they're not, then they have to do most of their purchasing at convenience stores. Also, that a big driver in the lack of grocery stores will be grocery store closures. And that grocery stores in Flint and convenience stores in Flint are not necessarily, you know, respecting, through sort of their management operations, aren't necessarily respecting the quality of life of their customers. And so we'll get into some of these things, our definitions of values that we haven't talked about, but these are values that were identified by Flint residents as things that they want from the food system. So I'm sort of connecting the things we're talking about to the things that they've talked about, but definitely let me know if you think that that's not really getting at what you want to talk about then you can add a new concept.

**Interviewer** 29:59

Also sort of this food safety piece, in grocery and convenience stores that connects back to sort of quality of life that like, you know, that it should be like a basic part of respecting the quality of life of your customers as to provide food, safe food. And then sort of this affordability piece that convenience stores are less affordable, and then nutritious foods, that the strongest contributor in nutritious foods will be the strongest in farmers markets follow the grocery store, and that convenience stores have a negative relationship, so it doesn't provide nutritious food for folks. And then finally, sort of this education leading to gardening and urban agriculture piece. Does that feel like sort of a fair summary of things you said? Are there things you want to add or change?

**Participant 117** 30:35

I think you're doing a marvelous job.

**Interviewer** 31:00

It's incredible information. So I want to make sure that I'm capturing it correctly.

**Participant 117** 31:05

Looking on this map here. It's like, I don't even know how you was able to diagram this piece. But I like it.

**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** 31:13

I mean, I have spent the last six years learning how to model stuff. So it's probably that. Awesome. So the last thing we're going to talk about before we get into the values is maybe deciding some of these connections. So how people may be used or don't use Supplemental Nutrition Programs, in sort of grocery stores, convenience stores or farmers markets.

**Participant 117** 31:41

I'm sorry- so how many people?

**Interviewer** 31:44

Yeah, so like, are people using supplemental nutrition programs in farmers markets or not really? Are they using it more in grocery stores? Convenience stores? Or are they sort of equal across the board? What do you think about how strong these relationships are?

**Participant 117** 32:00

Okay, well, we do have a farmers market in downtown Flint. That if you haven't been to Flint, that is remarkable. You really feel that farmer's market vision when you walk in and you have your own personal bag, and you're loaded up on vegetables, and you're taking those home. I like that feeling. Again, it's downtown Flint. So if you don't have access to a vehicle, or you're not getting on the bus to get to downtown Flint, you're not experiencing that. So I would think that it's probably more or less people outside this plant area who are gravitating to the farmers market, more than the people who live in Flint are using that resource. So I truly believe that more supplements should be offered in the residential areas on the north side, the south side, and the east side of Flint.

**Interviewer** 33:17

Alright, any thoughts about maybe differences between people using like, WIC and SNAP and convenience stores versus grocery stores? Is it about the same? Or do you think this is something you maybe can't speak to,

**Participant 117** 33:30

I can speak to convenience stores. All of your major supermarket box stores offer that piece, and it's very necessary. And as long as I worked in Meijers, we had access to those different programs.

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

**Interviewer** 33:52

So the ones that we've added so far are education, quality of life is respected, affordability and nutritious foods. Are there other ones that you would like to add to your map?

**Participant 117** 36:47

Partnerships.

**Interviewer** 36:49

Okay.

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

**Interviewer** 36:57

So I will switch back. And we can definitely add any of the other ones if you are interested, but usually a little bit easier to start from a smaller list and build up to it. I will add partnerships. Yeah, so I know it's a little bit busy. But considering sort of your understanding of food in Flint, how would you start making connections between these concepts? So either sort of these values and the different sectors or even like between the values themselves?

**Participant 117** 37:42

Oh, that is a little complex. Because I'm looking at things like food safety, affordability, how I can connect those. Okay. Well, let's start our food safety. One thing, and I'm taking this back to my Meijer days, we were very on top of our food safety. I mean, from washing your hands between every customer used to making sure that your temps are done properly three times a day, you ever just pencil with your temperatures, you make sure that you're sticking the thermometer into the food and get a proper temperature, I think is so important.

**Participant 117** 38:32

And I always use this at any of my Meijer stores. When it comes to food safety, you have to ensure that you're not compromising someone's health because you're taking shortcuts. The shortcuts can lead to someone getting sick, and potentially dying. And I don't want to have that type of conversation with the family telling them or my legal team oh, guess what, we just penciled in our temperatures just so we can get through the day. So food safety, in my opinion, should be on the top of everyone's radar. When you are serving food to your community, whether it's in the grocery store, restaurant or convenience store, food safety should be at the top of your list. Next, do you just want me to keep going?

**Interviewer** 39:30

Yeah, I can also if you want some sort of directing questions, that's also something I would be able to do.

**Participant 117** 39:37

Yeah, I like that. I can-

**Interviewer** 39:40

Well, yeah definitely so yeah, we can sort of talk about affordability. If you see other sorts of connections, how the different sectors or different kinds of retail affect affordability. And we can also sort of talk about the outcomes like what does it mean for, you know, for residents, for families, for a community to have affordable food or not?

**Participant 117** 40:08

Well, I like that question. From a box store, such as Meijers or Walmart, we have to accept the fact that they have larger distribution centers. So they can order massive quantities of food and charge lesser prices, rather than a mom and pop store. Because a lot of times people always say, you go here, you're paying this amount of money, compared to if I went to Meijers a Walmart, so I can see why their prices are lower. So you go for food Co Op. I'm telling my members, we're going to get the best quality food that money can buy.

**Participant 117** 40:59

But keep in mind, we're only one store compared to the big box stores. So our prices are going to be a little higher. However, it's going to be a better quality of food. And most of our members, because we're educating them on that piece. So they understand that when they're walking into the store, but I do believe that it's very important that you are, well, at least I want to get the best affordable food for our community, I don't want to try to, you know, charge this amount when I know I can charge this portion. So it takes a lot of educating myself, but also making great partnerships with local farmers, local vendors, and doing my homework to find out how I can get the best food that money can buy.

**Interviewer** 42:01

Partnerships can have an impact on affordability of food. Also think about, you know, maybe this education piece is still a little bit disconnected. And it definitely can be sort of, again, either things that affect education, you know, maybe where's education happening in the food system, or potential outcomes, right. So one of the outcomes is that education around gardening or agriculture can lead to people producing food. Are there other outcomes of education around sort of like food skills or nutrition that you see?

**Participant 117** 42:50

I think when it comes to education, food, it should be in the school system. I truly, and I'm going to go back to I have a friend that lives down in Georgia. And he sent me an article where local farmers were providing the food to source to the school system. So their children were getting fresh vegetables from the garden. They were getting chicken from a chicken farm. So all of their food that they were serving for lunch was produced right out on the farm. So they had a great connection from the farmers directly to the school system.

**Participant 117** 43:35

And I was thinking to myself, what a great way to show children how their food was grown, rather than more processed food that we see our children in the north getting, what better way to have that type of partnership. So I truly feel that as much land as we have out here. If we use it properly, we can definitely source more resourceful food coming into the school system. And I think it would be healthier for them rather than how we're getting our food. So educating our students in the school system should be part of this criteria.

**Participant 117** 44:26

I would like to add to that is, that's one thing that we want to offer at the full Co Op. We want to offer classes and show some of our young people how to prepare brussel sprouts or asparagus. They may not know that when you go to a grocery store, if your asparagus is not sitting in, you know, some type of water that is no good. And sometimes grocery stores don't know to put water into their asparagus. So there's a lot of learning that needs to happen, and also how to prepare the food. So I'm willing to open up our community room to have cooking classes and show young people how to prepare food.

**Interviewer** 45:24

So I've sort of mapped that out by connecting sort of these partnerships as something that prompts educational opportunities. And also that some of the benefits of education could be specifically youth engagement, and then also education around nutritious foods, which can have a connection to sort of physical health. Does that feel like sort of a fair sort of connection? Is there anything you want to change or add to better reflect on sort of what you're saying?

**Participant 117** 45:04

No, I think this is great. All these lines it's a very busy.

**Interviewer 2** 46:06

Can I jump in for a second? I can hear her mention the land. Okay. The fact that having more land available to grow on would also help us get more access to locally sourced food?

**Interviewer** 46:27

A sort of an impact on gardening and urban agriculture there? And then this maybe connects to nutritious foods. Okay. Anything else you want to add or change about your map?

**Participant 117** 46:58

No, I do want to add one caveat. And this is just what I've noticed, especially in Flint, when we only have probably three mom and pop stores. But if you count the amount of McDonald's that we have, that's a problem. You got more fast food in all of our areas. And we don't have that many grocery stores. There is a big problem.

**Interviewer** 47:31

Yeah. And that's actually something that is really sort of an offshoot of this research project is building sort of like a list and understanding about local restaurants versus chain restaurants and how it impacts sort of like, the availability of nutritious foods, and also the affordability of food in Flint. Because those questions really came up in these interviews in this work. And we're like, you know, what, like, I think we could spend that time and like, look at menus and prices, and, you know, do some of this inventory to really answer this question of like, what is happening? So hopefully, that's part of our research that will eventually have an answer of like, quantifying that number, you know.

**Participant 117** 48:18

It's just, and I think, you know, growing up, you know, we always have fast foods in our home, but not at this level. I mean, it would be just a weekend, a Friday night, you go and get some fast food. But the six days, you're eating at home, home cooked meals. Now, that's changed to where you're probably only cooking one night a week, and you're eating fast food six times a week, and we see what that's doing to some of our children's obesity, diabetes, when it comes to adults, heart disease, cholesterol, I mean, the whole list is just adding up. And I think we're missing the link here.

**Interviewer** 49:10

Yeah there's- sorry this is a bit of a tangent- but it's something I think about a lot of, you know, because there's a lot of conversation around like, how do we, how do we help, you know, kids be more active and stuff like that, but it's like, the whole you know, food environment is really like the determinant of this. It's like, it is so impactful, of what food they have access to, and also like, cultural pressures and like changing norms and stuff. That is, you know, it's not so much that like, it's never like the kids fault. Oh, kids these days are just, you know, staying home playing video games, like no, it's also that like, they have access to it's just not as healthy as it used to be.

**Participant 117** 49:48

And like for us, you know, in order for my two sons who are 16 and nine, I mean, they're playing travel soccer, so they're getting to exercise, but I still have to make sure sure that while I'm doing zoom calls like this, that I have access to, you know, oranges and apples, and I just put them on the counter, because they just love to grab an apple and keep on going, or grapes on the counter, I just plate some grapes, clean them off, put them on a collar, because that's how they eat, they eat almost every two hours, I don't know where you're putting the food at. But for my husband, I, that's what we have to do, we have to put the food in front of them, or they're not going to eat it, they're going to gravitate to the- well, my youngest loves more sugar, my oldest, he loves more fruits and vegetables, but I have to make sure that it's there for them, and show them that this is good, and find a way to eat it.

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

**Interviewer** 50:55

Okay so the next thing we're gonna do is we're gonna lay off the mapping for a second. But we're gonna get into sort of like one of the, the the questions of this research is, you know, what are the leverage points in Flint? What changes could we consider that would improve the Flint food system? So considering sort of your experience with the Flint food system, you know, and maybe if you want to contextualize it in the map you can, you know, what would you if you ran the world? How would you change it, to have positive outcomes. And this could really be small things, or big things. And I know it's kind of freeform, but it's really any thoughts that you have of, you know, how you would change the food system to better serve the community?

**Participant 117** 51:50

That's a very good question. I think for- I'm going to start the north side of Flint, I really think is important to have, because right now, when I grew up, everyone lived in their homes, they owned homes, they took care of the neighborhood, you can walk to local corner store, you can get some candy, go back home and get ready for mom and dad's supper. Well, they are gone. Not all the way. But they have changed. So now there's less people owning their homes, there's more land available for residents, residential areas now, because some people have moved out of the area, the homes are condemned, they have been torn down.

**Participant 117** 52:49

So now you have these open lots. Utilize that land to have community gardens, then take the community gardens and sell the product in the neighborhoods. I mean, it doesn't have to be some type of storefront. But use that area to be able to sell your merchandise. And make sure that the merchandise is good quality. I mean, when no one should be using fertilizers, but using the proper methods to sell your product. And then being able to show young people who are not working, do not have anything else to do with their spare time. Get them off video games, get them in the yards with the sun beating down on themselves and show them how to grow stuff. And make it fun. I think that that can go a long way to the school system, in which the school system could be able to have food for the children that may not have food at home. And that just circles all around. In the end, see where that goes. I'm not saying that that would be a win win, but I think it will show a partnership between your community, the school and your neighborhood.

**Interviewer** 54:28

Sounds like a win win to me.

**Participant 117** 54:32

I want to get kids outside because they are even mine, when they're not doing homework or they're not practicing. They tend to get on a video game. And my husband and I we have to limit the video games or we will lose our children. So that's a big factor about that.

**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** 1:01:10

But is there anything sort of important about food and Flint, sort of in this conversation that we haven't talked about that you want us to know and sort of carry forward with this research?

**Participant 117** 1:01:28

I guess with the North Flint Food Market, folks, we're just gonna, we're a small Co Op. Right now we have 165 members that we're growing every single day. But we want to offer a store that's going to provide a deli area, bakery, meats, produce dry goods, and dairy, and even frozen, it's that going to be your organic and natural type of food Co Op, it will be more of a conventional grocery store that can offer organic and natural foods. But for our residents, we are trying to show them that we can have a local grocery store that can be put in any suburb in the Michigan area. But we want to be able to have it for our residents on the north side because with the impact of the 2014 water crisis, and what happens in COVID, we want to offer home deliveries, we are going to offer curbside because our most vulnerable group is our seniors. And I feel as someone who grew up in this area, we have got to take care of our seniors, I think they have done more than their fair share, and it's time to get back to them. So we really want to offer that.