**FLPP: Interview Template**

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

**Interviewer** 14:59

So how much like people are buying food, you know, how much of it are they purchasing food at local restaurants versus chain restaurants? Is there one do people go to one way more often? Are they about the same? What do you think? How would you describe the strength of those relationships?

**Participant 119** 15:20

I believe that previous to the pandemic, people were probably frequenting restaurants and local restaurants and chain restaurants, more so. But since the pandemic, they are probably using grocery stores, or markets, are doing most of their cooking and eating at home. At least I would hope so.

**Interviewer** 15:53

Okay, and we will be talking about COVID later, so I'll keep that in mind. So maybe they're sort of like medium connections right now. But those will change after we talk about COVID. Do you have any sort of thoughts about maybe, if people go to grocery stores or convenience stores or farmer's markets, about the same one way more than the others? What do you think?

**Participant 119** 16:24

I would say grocery stores more so than farmers markets. And first convenience stores, I think that would depend upon the area that you live in, because some areas are devoid of grocery stores. They and all they generally have is convenience stores, you know, the little mom and pop places?

**Interviewer** 16:52

Yeah.

**Participant 119** 16:56

Is that okay?

**Interviewer** 16:58

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, and it is, certainly my job is also to translate sort of, you know, your knowledge into the map.

**Interviewer** 17:10

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

**Participant 119** 20:03

No, I think I got it. [Coughs] excuse me.

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

**Interviewer** 20:10

And then which ones- again, maybe two or three do you think are particularly important? Or do you think that you have experience with that you want to add to your map?

**Participant 119** 20:24

I believe education, affordability and availability are very important. Those are the three most important to me.

**Interviewer** 20:38

Yeah. Awesome. So then I'll switch back to mental modeler. And I'll go ahead and add those. Sorry, I also have a slightly silly home, working from home setup where I have two different laptops. So I'm always looking over here.

**Participant 119** 20:56

It's all good.

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

**Interviewer** 21:00

All right, education, availability. And then if it makes sense to you, I'll go ahead and add urban agriculture/gardening as a concept in your map. So how would you maybe how would you think about how these concepts are connected to each other, or these different sectors in flint?

**Participant 119** 21:49

I would say the- [coughs] excuse me, the education as far as knowing what foods give you the most bang for your buck. Nutritionally, that's very important. And the availability is equally as important as the affordability actually, for the simple fact that, you know, it's great if that produce is available, but what if you can't afford it? What if it's $3 for a head of lettuce? And, you know, you can't afford that $3 you know, you have to go with something that's much cheaper, and or skip it all together.

**Interviewer** 22:38

Yeah.

**Participant 119** 22:43

So yeah, kind of like what you got there.

**Interviewer** 22:47

So that education can influence food choice or make you aware of how to, you know, maybe find more affordable foods and more nutritious foods, but then also your maybe consumption or access to nutritious foods, it's also impacted by the affordability of those foods and the availability of those foods.

**Participant 119** 23:09

Yep.

**Interviewer** 23:10

Great. How would you think about how these different you know sectors or different retail places sort of affect availability and affordability?

**Participant 119** 23:27

Well, the larger grocery stores have probably a better variety, and definitely better prices than, say, a convenience store because they have they have, you know, more room for warehousing and such and importing produce from different parts of the nation where, you know, a convenience store, they just, they get what they get. Farmers markets, you're dealing with small businessmen, and a lot of times they end up having to charge a little bit more because they're paying for the booth in order to provide that produce to you.

**Interviewer** 24:20

Yeah.

**Participant 119** 24:21

And they, you know, I mean, once again, because they're small business they, you know, they are limited in what they can offer.

**Interviewer** 24:31

Yeah. Maybe if you have any thoughts on sort of their impacts on nutritious foods. Is there more available in one place or another?

**Participant 119** 24:53

Your large grocery stores your chain stores are going to have the more nutritious produce. They have, you know, they've got a better selection. You know, I mean, if you've got a Mejiers or Walmart or Kroger, it beats the tar out of going to Joe's market down the street where, you know, they have maybe apples, oranges and bananas and maybe a wilted head of lettuce.

**Interviewer** 25:30

And maybe how would you sort of see how this urban agriculture or gardening piece fits into Flint sort of, how does it you know, what are the outcomes? How does it maybe affect affordability, nutritious foods, availability, other things,

**Participant 119** 25:49

Urban agriculture allows for people to make their own choices as to what they would like to plant in their yard. And or if it's a community garden, what they would like in their own little patch of dirt. They can exchange information with their neighbors, and maybe get a little more bang for their buck.

**Participant 119** 26:17

I know that there are some areas probably here in Michigan, I don't know of any but over at Wisconsin, they have like Farm to Market or, you know, or farm to table restaurants to where they actually buy produce from the neighbor and the neighboring farm. And so I think that would be something that would be nice. We're here in Flint. I don't know if we have a market for that type of thing. But one would hope so.

**Interviewer** 27:04

Other connections that you see?

**Participant 119** 27:13

No, not really.

**Q5b: Were there other values that we went over that you also think are important and want to include?**

**Interviewer** 27:15

Definitely. Awesome. Were there other values that you would want to add to your map? Or do you feel good about these four?

**Participant 119** 27:34

I think if we could encourage more people to have their little urban gardens, I mean, it used to be up until after WWII, and maybe even a little beyond that. Everybody and their mothers had a backyard garden even here. I mean, it was just a given, you know, you had your little patch of dirt you grew whatever you wanted for your kitchen, at least. Yeah, and a lot of times people would put up things, you know, they'd be canning and such. And, you know, have a larder for the lean times.

**Interviewer** 28:19

What do you think, are sort of maybe, like barriers to people, people gardening, or maybe things that you think would prompt more people to do it?

**Participant 119** 28:35

A barrier I would think would be education. And, you know, not only how to grow the vegetables, but how much better they are for you and cheaper if you're growing them for yourself. And let's face it, we live in a microwave society now. Everybody wants everything at their fingertips with a garden you have to work for it.

**Interviewer** 29:14

Yeah. This is a bit of a tangent. But I for the first year have trying to start my own seedlings for like tomatoes and stuff. Instead of buying a seedling, I'm trying to start from seeds. I'm like, wait, I have to water this multiple times a day for months? And I'm like, I'm committed it's gonna be great.

**Participant 119** 29:36

You'll learn a lot is as time goes by I mean, you know, this doesn't work for you. Sometimes you can, you know glean information from other folks. I- I belong to a couple of different sites on Facebook, where we share information.

**Interviewer** 29:56

Yeah. Yeah, maybe that will be something we can talk about as like, sort of how or where education is happening in Flint, or opportunities, you see to have more education around these topics in Flint.

**Participant 119** 30:22

Once again, you know, you have, you know, you have various sites on Facebook, which, you know, the ones I've wanted to encompass the entire state of Michigan, because there's a few different regions, this is basically region five to six for growing, but you have regions A, B, and C, you know, and so it just depends, I mean, you know, if you're region five, but you're over by Lake Huron, well, then it may be region five, C. So, it just depends on where you're located.

**Participant 119** 31:01

Because like, let's face it the [inaudible], you have definitely a shorter growing season up there than you do down here. So, by getting involved with the MSU, extensions, which are throughout the, throughout the state of Michigan, you have an ability to be put in touch with programs like edible plants, where they will teach you how what to grow, how to grow it, how to preserve it, in whatever else you might be-

**Participant 119** 31:38

No, I mean, if you get, say, a blight on something, like I had fungus on my cord last year, which I had never seen before. And apparently in Mexico, they consider that fungus a delicacy. And I'm like, no, I ain't eating it. It looks kind of funky to me but hey, everybody likes something different.

**Interviewer** 32:15

And so these connections sort of encompass what you were talking about is that sources of education would be, you know, social media and the internet and extension services. And then they introduce sort of this loop of feedback, that education can lead to more urban agriculture and gardening, and that people can build communities through that. And then by building community, they're also establishing these relationships where they can get more like information through having sort of these connections to people who are doing similar things to them.

**Participant 119** 32:50

So I agree with what's right here with the vegetable beds and the fruit across the street. I've gotten to know quite a few more of my neighbors by having these fruits and vegetables available to them. And, yeah, we get to talk about stuff, they ask questions, sometimes they come in and lend a hand, and you know, come harvest time, I don't have a problem with putting stuff out on the picnic table or even walking around with a basket saying, "Hey, want some of this here," So yeah, everybody likes a fresh tomato.

**Interviewer** 33:39

Absolutely. Great. So the next thing is sort of, are there any other concepts or connections that you want to bring into your map any other things that you think are important for us to know about food in Flint.

**Participant 119** 34:05

Along with gardening, I think it would be nice to be able to learn more about various herbs and spices. And also get in touch with the various ethnic groups like we have the Arab American Association here in Flint, and, you know, you can reach out to them and find out the types of herbs that they might need in their garden. We're working with them. And we're also working with the LATINX center, trying to make sure that they have things that are native to their own countries that they would like to be able to grow here but may not have them available, be it the seedlings or the seeds.

**Interviewer** 35:06

And, you know, I mean, we need to be cognisant of the differences. And, you know, be the- I don't know. The cultural differences- well it's like a friend of mine, you know from Ghana, you know I mean, some of the foods that she eats are quite similar, or the same as, but they're fixed in different ways. So you know, and we do have a store here that caters that carries African foods. So she was able to get the things that she needed to fix her cultural dishes.

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

**Interviewer** 37:10

So considering your understanding of what's going on with food in Flint, and if you sort of ran the world, how would you make changes to improve the Flint food system?

**Participant 119** 37:23

Can you say that last part again?

**Interviewer** 37:25

Yeah. And how would you sort of like what would be a few changes you would make to the food system that you think would make it better? So this could be big things, this could be small things. One of them that I already wrote down is a farm to table restaurant that buys from local or community gardeners. Another one I wrote down would be more people getting involved in gardening. Are there other ideas or thoughts you have to improve the Flint food system?

**Participant 119** 38:02

Oh, boy.

**Interviewer** 38:05

It's a big question. I know.

**Participant 119** 38:08

You know, it's a fun question. I think making sure that people are aware of these various programs. Like I said, up until just a few years ago, I didn't know about the neighborhood engagement hub, the tool shed the MSU extension, just, I mean, a lot of things. And there's a lot of programs that are available here in Genesee County, and I'm sure throughout the United States are well throughout the state of Michigan. But where do you get this information? It's kind of like a hidden treasure.

**Interviewer** 38:59

Yeah. Any other leverage points that you think about?

**Participant 119** 40:41

No, I think that's it.

**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** 42:05

Any other connections that you make or add or do you feel good about your map?

**Participant 119** 42:14

Yeah, I think it's pretty damn snazzy. Very colorful.

**Participant 119** 42:24

Yeah, I'm big into color coding. For some reason, it makes me feel more organized. Voting is great. So I'm gonna stop sharing. And my last question is, you know, we've talked a lot about different food system sectors, about urban agriculture, about these different values and COVID-19. Is there anything else important about the sort of conversation around food influence that we haven't talked about? And you want to make sure that we carry forward in this research?

**Participant 119** 43:01

Yeah, I think people need to hearken back to the older days to where they realize you don't have to have steak tartare. Beans and taters are pretty damn good. They'll get through the lean times. Yeah. a sack of dried beans or black eyed peas or whatever. You know, lentils, things like that. You know, you fix that you get some cornbread and a skillet. There you go. Now you got to you know, throw a little onion and some fat back in there. Just like there's some good eats.

**Interviewer 2** 43:38

I was just about to say what time is dinner? What?

**Participant 119** 43:46

I mean you know- but everybody wants to all this highfalutin stuff. And yeah, it's, it looks wonderful. And it tastes good. Then it's like, who gives a big rat's patootie? Yeah, no, I mean, it's what fills your stomach. And, you know, keeps you from starving. You know, I mean, when we were at home, we had a root cellar. We can probably 200 quarts of everything, ya know, and we just, it was survival food. You know, people have forgotten how to survive like, okay, your power's out? Yeah, well, put your food in a cooler and stick it in your garage, or in a snowbank.

**Interviewer** 44:27

Ya know, things like that. You can get the snow and use it to flush your toilet with, you know, and you don't have to flush every single time. You know, things like that. I mean, I don't know having grown up with an outhouse up until the time I was about 12. God knows I know what that's all about. Ya know? I- people have gotten away from the basics and it's okay once all the newfangled stuff and you know, like I have a laptop. that's great or digital TV, whatever the hell that things- Smart TV, you know? But you know, I've had the same cell phone forever today where my son is like, oh, yeah, and I could get an upgrade. I'm like, what's wrong with it is the current one is it broke? So I think people need to be reminded that sometimes simpler is better.