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**SPEAKERS**

Participant 126, Interviewer, Interviewer 2

[INTRO]

**Interviewer** 16:57

Awesome. So I'm going to switch to the model, um, of sort of the things that we've already talked about at least in different sectors. And the first thing I would like to do is maybe decide the connection strengths of all the ones that have question marks.

**Participant 126** 17:14

Okay.

**Interviewer** 17:15

And one thing that is important is that we are sort of trying to map your perception. So there are definitely times that I ask a question, and you're like, I don't really know. Or like, I don't think I can really speak about that, I don't think I have experience. Um, just let me know and we can totally skip it. Like we've talked to, you know, people who are like urban farmers, and they're like, I don't know how people use the supplemental system, like, I have no idea, I don't even want to talk about it. That's totally fair. Um, so just let me know, at any time really.

**Participant 126** 17:45

Okay.

**Interviewer** 17:46

Um, so for context, let's maybe focus first on deciding these two relationships. So from from retail to local versus chain restaurants.

**Participant 126** 17:57

Okay.

**Interviewer** 17:58

The- the context of sort of what these relationships mean, is like, of the retail food sold in Flint or like, of, like, meals that people are purchasing, how much are they going to local restaurants? Or how much are they going to chain restaurants? Are they going the same? Are they going different? Do they- does nobody go to restaurants at all? Sort of what's your perception of how people are using these sources of food?

**Participant 126** 18:26

[Sneeze] Excuse me. So um, I guess my thought is, I mean, I'm most familiar with my peers, my colleagues, the folks in my immediate circles, that are much more- excuse me, sneeze again [sneeze] much more likely- [sneeze] to, um, go to - oh thank you - go to local restaurants, but I think broadly, as a community, there is a lot of use of chain restaurants. It's just not in my sort of immediate experience. [Sneeze] excuse me, let me grab a tissue, excuse me.

**Interviewer** 19:34

All right, so the next ones we might think about is these three connections of sort of use of retail, how much are people maybe getting their food from grocery stores, from convenience stores, from the Farmers Market, do you have a sense of maybe how- what these connections strengths might be and how they might differ from each other?

**Participant 126** 19:57

Uh, my sense would be that the grocery store is most frequently used, and then convenience stores and then farmers market in that order.

**Interviewer** 20:18

And then the last set of connections would be sort of this use of supplemental sector, uh to grocery stores, convenience stores or farmers markets. So based on maybe the different programs that encourage, you know, supplemental nutrition programs that are at grocery stores or convenience stores or farmers markets, what is your sense of what these connection strengths might be?

**Participant 126** 20:44

So I think the, um, grocery stores, at least in Flint, because of the, um, usage of Double Up Food Bucks at the farmers market, I'd say grocery stores and farmers market as it relates to supplemental convenience stores is a third.

**Interviewer** 21:18

So the next thing we're going to do is I'm going to go back to the presentation, and we're going to go over quickly. These seven food system values, and these are also in the document that I sent you. So these values came out of sort of workshops and conversations with residents, which basically asked, you know, what do you want from the food system? What does a food system that serves you well look like. And these are sort of, you know, aggregated concepts that came out of those conversations. So I'm going to go through these definitions really quickly. And as I do that, if you wouldn't mind thinking about which two or three you think are particularly important or significant to the food system, or that you in particular have experience with that you would want to include in your map. So I'll go ahead and go through them right now. The first is education. And this is that people want opportunities to learn food skills, so cooking, gardening, nutrition, health, and potentially apply those to career development. Another is community empowerment that the food system should empower communities in a couple of ways like supporting local economic development, fostering a sense of community and prioritizing residents cultural values. have quality of life is respected says that residents want to be able to move through the food system their dignity choices, comfort and safety respected in a way that sort of promotes the common good and quality of life. So partnerships, those be sort of a step above the consumer so the different groups and organizations involved in the food system, sort of that the food system should promote creativity and encourage problem solving, reduce trust and strong partnerships that provide leadership and support collaboration and communication. Also have nutritious foods so the food system should offer more food options that are high nutritional content added into preservative and appropriate portions to benefit health. The last two is affordability so food should be priced at community members can access the type of quality and quantity they require. So is this considering not just the price of food but also sort of in relation to resident income? Can they purchase goods that they will like and then availability so that the type quality and amount of food required for community members to conveniently feed families and themselves should be physically present? So do you have any questions about these values and definitions?

**Participant 126** 23:58

No, I don't have any questions.

**Interviewer** 24:01

Awesome, so which two or three would you possibly want to include in your map?

**Participant 126** 24:09

Um, I think availability, um nutritious, and community empowerment I can't- can't quite get my head around the clear distinction between quality of life is respected and community empowerment because I think they're so intertwined, but-

**Interviewer** 24:29

They are.

**Participant 126** 24:30

I'll go with community empowerment.

**Interviewer** 24:32

Great, and we can definitely go back and add more of these values if you would like to, it's just usually a little bit easier-

**Participant 126** 24:38

Let's start [inaudible]-

**Interviewer** 24:39

[inaudible] you are until now. Yeah, sometimes when in our pilot when we would start with a lot of values and I'd be like, how do you want to start connecting them? And then people would be like, overwhelmed with [inaudible] -a little bit harder. [Inaudible] mental modeler, um, and go ahead and add these. [Inaudible] whoo, that's fun.

**Participant 126** 25:16

Did you say this is a- this is a free program that can be used for lots of different purposes?

**Interviewer** 25:23

Yeah, so it is-

**Participant 126** 25:25

This is interesting.

**Interviewer** 25:26

Yeah, it was developed by one of the GI's of this species project, Steven Gray. Um, and so it is just a website, and you can go on, and use it whenever you want.

**Participant 126** 25:40

It's great.

**Interviewer** 25:41

Cool. Um, so based on how you sort of see the current food system in Flint, how would you start drawing connections between these concepts?

**Participant 126** 25:54

Um, so certainly, um, availability to me is very much tied to retail. And so I guess I, what exactly do you want me to-?

**Interviewer** 26:14

Yeah, so um, if there are ways that you think, uh, that different kinds of retail, if they affect availability differently, we can talk about that, if you want to talk, generally, we can just connect it from the use of retail to availability, it's kind of whatever- your preference.

**Participant 126** 26:32

Okay. So in terms of availability, I'd say, you know, there's, um, the location of grocery stores is not directly in line with the location of the population in the city. So there's, um, access issues, even if it might be available in a store, it doesn't mean that people, um, can get to it as readily because of transportation or other reasons, which then lends itself sometimes to looking to a convenience store or a more convenient source of getting food. It might be the convenience store might be a farmers market might be a community garden, or some other, other avenue, but actual location, um.

27:29

I think availability to the farmers- the farmers market piece is, uh, it's somewhat seasonally dependent. I think that you know, people think of the farmers market as an option more frequently during nicer weather, and when they're sort of aware of the more abundance of produce in Michigan fresh produce.

**Interviewer** 27:53

And so maybe that'd be like a weaker, positive relationship. Um, I just want to backtrack a little bit, what was your sort of, understanding of how convenience stores affect availability?

**Participant 126** 28:07

I think that they're sometimes a default choice based on transportation and other, um, other issues related to, for lack of a better word, convenience, right? Sort of on the, you know, they're- they tend to be more in the neighborhoods than these other choices.

**Interviewer** 28:31

Um, so maybe drawing connections between transportation that if you have less transportation, or less accessible transportation, and you're going to go to more convenience stores. And then it may be if you have more transportation options, then maybe go to grocery stores more often, um-

**Participant 126** 28:51

Yeah, and I think another thing that impacts all three of these is hours of operation, right? So farmers market is you know, you have three days of the week to choose from not seven. Um, and I, I would- I don't know enough, I don't really ever go to convenience store, so. Um, so I don't know exactly what the, um, I mean, I think that those grocery stores that have more extensive hours, like the bigger chains, that increases availability and accessibility whereas maybe the smaller like mom and pop grocery stores that you know, decreases based on when people can get to the store based on their own schedules. I feel like convenience stores are more likely to make those decisions of hours of operation based on, you know, the volume of their particular location.

**Interviewer** 29:50

Yeah. Maybe not, um, a strong connection there either direction. Um, and then maybe you didn't mention it explicitly, but I feel like it maybe was part of the conversation, would you draw a connection? Are you fine with having transportation affect accessibility through sort of stores? Or would you like a sort of direct connection from transportation to accessibility?

**Participant 126** 30:18

I think there should be a direct connection.

**Interviewer 2** 30:27

I thought I had it wrong the first time, it was okay.

**Interviewer** 30:30

All right. Cool. Um, what would you consider to be the strength of that relationship?

**Participant 126** 30:41

Um, you mean positive or negative?

**Interviewer** 30:44

Well, yeah, I think contextually we have a positive relationship, if that makes sense to you? But we're just concerned, do you think this is a weak, a medium, or strong relationship?

**Participant 126** 30:55

I think it's strong.

**Interviewer** 31:06

Sorry, I've sort of a silly work from home setup, where I have two different levels.

**Participant 126** 31:11

Well, yeah, it took me a minute, when we got on that we've got- that two of the people on the call, are you. [Laughing] Yeah. There's just one extra person.

**Interviewer** 31:21

I used to have like, multiple monitors at -at the office I work at, but [inaudible] here, so sometimes I'm like, ugh how do I do something when I need like, 20 things up? And the answer is two laptops.

**Participant 126** 31:37

Apparently, that's the answer.

**Interviewer** 31:40

Awesome, um, other connections that you'd like to make?

**Participant 126** 31:54

Um, I guess, information, right? I mean, you know, and marketing or whatever the right term would be, that impacts, um, why you might, um, make sure you get to one of these versus the other based on pricing or because you do know that they have, you know, more flexible hours of operation or whatever that case may be.

**Interviewer** 32:24

Right, um, [inaudible] maybe, um, would you like to model potentially more complex relationships, um, between things or would you be comfortable with me connecting information to marketing just to use of retail?

**Participant 126** 32:49

I think connecting it directly to use of retail is fine.

**Interviewer** 32:52

Good, okay. Other connections around availability, or if you'd like to move on to one of the other values?

**Participant 126** 33:09

Uh, I think we can move on.

**Interviewer** 33:16

Awesome. Um, yeah, so connections you see to either sort of nutritious foods or community empowerment?

**Participant 126** 33:24

And we're still sticking with retail, right?

**Interviewer** 33:26

Yeah. Um, you can also branch out and talk about supplemental sector or emergency sector, it's sort of whatever process works for you.

**Participant 126** 33:34

Okay. Um, so in terms of nutritious food, I mean, I think, um, grocery stores and farmers markets have the strongest relationship there. And it's almost an inverse relationship with most of the convenience stores, um — I think that also, um, also has to do a lot with information and marketing too in terms of people understanding, you know, the benefits of certain nutrition, vitamins, certain foods and how it helps to- so some of is information marketing and it's- it's education too, um. Which also has a, a cultural component to it, too, in terms of what, you know, a family's experience and what they've been raised on versus understanding, um, you know, what, how that might dictate certain consumption practices that they're just not aware of are healthy or unhealthy.

**Interviewer** 34:59

Um, would you prefer a term like cultural knowledge or like cultural identity or cultural influences on food?

**Participant 126** 35:30

I think I like cultural influences, could be a family, could be, you know, friends that you hang out with, could be a lot of different things, so.

**Interviewer** 35:41

Um, and would you, and maybe it's a little complex, but how would you maybe think about this connection, um, on food choices as it's currently sort of occurring in Flint, do you think it has a, a positive impact- we're probably going to define food choices like, uh, like benefit health, beneficial food choices, do you think it's sort of been, uh, sort of existing as a positive influence or a negative influence on people's food choices and sort of healthy direction?

**Participant 126** 36:15

I think, um, my perception is that as a result of the water crisis, people in Flint have had more information about, you know, what's in- and nutritious food choices that can help mitigate the impact of lead sometimes they may not know that that's actually the outcome, that they could achieve but that having good food, having nutritious food, high in vitamins, whether they know it's D or calcium or whatever, is- can be beneficial to combat the impact of lead exposure. And by- and for those who have been enrolled in Double Up Food Bucks, you know, they get a lot more information thrown at them about, about that. And they then also, you know, the- some of the products that could, may not have been considered for that program at one point were then added as a result of the water crisis and so that also had its own message about you know, what's important in terms of nutrition.

**Interviewer** 37:18

To me it sort of impacts on this sort of like healthy food choices, um, you know, education which connects back to, um, people, you know, using so like programs associated with the supplemental sector, um, the availability of nutritious foods, and some cultural influences. Does that sort of, um, fit what you're talking about, are there changes you'd make?

**Participant 126** 37:46

No.

**Interviewer** 37:54

Other connections that you see?

**Participant 126** 38:03

Well, I think, I mean, um, just thinking about retail and like local, local restaurants in particular that having a good um, by having a good local food supply, that can help source local restaurants to have more nutritious and- options and by more nutritious I mean, you know, sort of locally grown, less transportation, less treated, fresh, uh, products, as opposed to all of it coming from Cisco.

**Interviewer** 38:58

Um, so sort of introduced this mimic of different agricultural, local foods, potentially selling to local restaurants and those having impacts from the nutritious foods that are available.

**Participant 126** 39:11

Mm-hmm. Um, when you have the nutritious foods too I think it's also, um, relates to the, you know, the supplemental sector too in terms of, um, and just healthy food choices, so how are those programs whether it's a school lunch program, or, you know, after school program, how, what decisions are being made about the food that is served in those programs and how that also influences what kids will end up liking or- and what families may end up purchasing.

**Interviewer** 40:04

Yeah. Um, how would you maybe describe this connection as it's currently sort of happening in Flint? Do you think that new supplement- supplemental nutrition programs in Flint are- are overall providing nutritious foods or they're not or you know maybe a weaker, medium connection either way? Where, where is your-

**Participant 126** 40:28

I would- I would guess, I don't really feel like an expert but I would guess that somewhere in the medium range because I think it's, I feel confident enough to say in most cases it's an active consideration in their programs whether or not they're able to afford or find the source that they need for the best outcome and the best option and the most nutritious option, I think that's still a struggle but I think it's- it's a constant consideration that there's efforts to try to do that.

**Interviewer** 41:02

Great and so then, uh, okay, yeah, and then that other sort of dynamic of influencing, uh, healthy food choices through supplemental programs is slightly captured in sort of this connection to education and education to healthy choices. Are you good with that representation? Would you want to change it?

**Participant 126** 41:22

No, I'm good with that.

**Interviewer** 41:23

Ok, good. Other connections you see? Um, what would you like to move on to? Community empowerment?

**Participant 126** 41:49

Uh let's move on to community empowerment.

**Interviewer** 41:52

Awesome, um, what ways that these different sectors or these different values or other pieces that are on the map now, uh, how do they maybe affect community empowerment?

**Participant 126** 42:09

Um, all of it. It's hard to find the place um, you know, to what extent, for example, there was you know, the recent grocery store neighborhood-based grocery store that was, you know, existed for a minute like it popped up it was, in theory it was designed to- with the neighborhood in mind, um, it didn't last very long and so everything from you know, thinking about where retail exists and what's offered there to you know, what's- how do people get there and then what's inside based on the voice of the community are all really interconnected to this piece.

**Interviewer** 42:56

Um, do you- perchance remember the name or more information about that? I would love to look into it.

**Participant 126** 43:03

Um, it was I don't know- remember what the name ended up being but the Hamady family, if you like, were to put, like grocery store, Hamady, it'll pop up. It was like the biggest like ribbon-cutting the chamber had had, this is pre-COVID obviously, and it literally I think closed within three months. Um, it was privately owned and then there is an effort, I believe, still underway. Um, you know, standing up a co op, co op model type of grocery store. That is very much in line with the notion of community empowerment, but also has been very challenging in terms of the financial model. So, um, you know, that's where, um, it would be a great example of community empowerment. And so, yeah, like I said, from everything from, you know, where retail is located to what's inside, should have a relationship with community empowerment. I don't think there's really much, uh, deliberate effort in the community to try to build some, um, a knowledge base in the Flint area of grocery retail and food retail, that would also you know, seed entrepreneurs and others to have more homegrown approaches to what retail could look like in Flint.

**Interviewer** 44:41

Uh, something we'll talk about in a little bit, but we won't do now is, you know, part of the goal of this project is not only to build a system understanding but also sort of illicit different leverage points that people would think would be effective in Flint. And so, if you're saying that this is not a thing that exists right now, that's potentially good, I'll probably mark that down, if it makes sense to you as a potential leverage point for Flint, sort of this curating local food businesses [inaudible].

**Participant 126** 45:16

Yeah, I think we have a cadre of quote unquote, food entrepreneurs in terms of creating certain products and things, but not like on the retail side, not trying to think about what that would look like to have, uh, to have, um, a locally based grocery chain or smaller markets around the community that go back to sort of the mom and pop style shops, that's not something I think that- that I'm aware of, that's really being fostered enough to, to end up with a system that is really, um, driven by what neighborhoods and residents want.

**Interviewer** 46:01

So I guess, yeah, other connections that you see to community empowerment or outcomes, that you understand, that benefits the community empowerment?

**Participant 126** 46:16

Well, I think that with, uh, if community empowerment is high, then you're also going to have, um, less- cultural influences will, will be appropriate, right? It'll be a, it'll be a complementary relationship, rather than one where it's sort of, um, could also be, you know, negative in terms of where the, where the influence is coming from. So um, I think with community empowerment, you do have a robust, uh, locally based urban, agri- agricultural, local food system is- is stronger when you have community empowerment.

**Interviewer** 47:05

Um, would you say that that is a potentially a cir- ooh, I cannot pronounce that word, circuitous relationship, that, um, I don't know, do you see a connection between urban agricultural, local foods and food requirement in that direction too?

**Participant 126** 47:23

Yes, for sure.

**Interviewer** 47:38

Um, do you have any more connections for community empowerment? Um-

**Participant 126** 47:45

Um, I that- I think it also goes back to the information and marketing. Um, you know, one of the things we learned early on in the water crisis was the fact that you know, non English speaking populations as well as the deaf and hard of hearing, were really being left out of that information. And so when you're looking at empowering the community, that- that has to mean you're also looking at groups sometimes that are, can be left out or not heard from, by all sectors. So materials about good and nutritious food, and where to find it need to be multiple languages, need to be at places where people will see them based on where they may worship, or recreate, or that kind of thing.

**Interviewer** 48:42

Maybe, I'm going to sort of represent this maybe in your map, I've written it down as also a potential leverage point of that like, you know, educational campaigns or informational campaigns should be part of their consideration. Um, because your sense that that is not something that is currently functioning well in Flint, or like something that's not really happening, or is it, is it happening?

**Participant 126** 49:06

Um, I think, I mean, it's gone in spurts because like for, you know, for example, the Double Up Food Bucks during the water crisis, have, I want to say like, a half a million dollars, put towards marketing and trying to, you know, and getting sort of, quote unquote, local celebrities to be featured and ads and things like that, and really encourage people to seek out that resource. That's definitely gone down since then. But I think there are other other types of things like that, that are still around with the water crisis. So, um, and I think as a community, we've gotten better at getting information to the Spanish speaking population in our community, but I don't know enough about some of the other languages that are spoken in the community, and how, how well, how much information they get.

**Interviewer** 50:08

Maybe, I said it's sort of like a weak positive relationship is that fair? Um, and one other thing I may introduce that definitely critique or change if you don't like how it set up, something I was hearing about the supplemental sector, about how these programs put out information and marketing about themselves. So I've introduced one connection from sort of abilities or like the functioning of the sector to information and marketing and then a connection back to the use of the supplemental sector, that it's sort of a mechanism they have to inform people about these programs and get them involved. Is that fair?

**Participant 126** 50:44

Yes, no, that's right.

**Interviewer** 51:04

Um, maybe the next thing we could talk about is either if there's more connections you'd maybe want to make from or to either the supplemental sector or the emergency sector.

**Participant 126** 51:17

Say that again?

**Interviewer** 51:18

There's connections sort of from or to either be the supplemental sector or the emergency sector if you want to move on and talk more in depth of either one of those?

**Participant 126** 51:29

Well, I think- and especially when I think about retail and the relationship with emergency sector um, you know, in terms of COVID, you know that- So this- One piece of that is, you know, it's one of the first times in, you know, sort of emergency food systems' history at least anybody who's in it today that an entire country was affected by the same crisis. So it really impacted everybody's access to emergency food. It's not like it all needed to get to Texas because of a hurricane or it all needed to get to Florida or whatever in terms of the excess, or what other communities could-could- were willing to sort of give up if you will. So um definitely the entire supply chain during COVID, particularly early on impacted the accessibility of food for the emergency sector which really drove up prices. Um, you know, retail stores were not- they didn't have excesses. So you couldn't get that discounted food because their-their shelves were empty. They were trying to keep, you know, stuff on the shelves. So that relationship was certainly highlighted during this crisis and has been.

**Interviewer** 52:53

Um, we're actually ,near the end of the interview we're going to talk about COVID-19 so I took notes on that I will definitely add them to the map at that point.

**Participant 126** 53:01

Yeah. So-so there is definitely a very dependent relationship between retail and the emergency sector in terms of you know, what the emergency sector is able to get through those channels, and what it costs, and then where- You know, a lot of times our funding is used when those prices begin to go up drastically or there's something that you can't get through the system very readily, that you got to pay a premium for. And that might be used for- Our-our funding might be used to get access to those things. Or, uh, you know, a federal program changes which, uh, you know, lots of dairy built into it and they change the percentage of dairy so now that either goes away altogether or- or the availability of it changes enough that other dollars need to be used to complement that and then I think there- yeah, there's- I was just gonna say a really strong relationship between community empowerment and the emergency sector too um, you know, the emergency sector needs to also offer choices to- to families and make sure that they have choices, both culturally appropriate choices, choices. Um, I remember we did um, we all- we volunteered at one of the health centers as a team one time and we're handing out you know, some of the food that they would get in those lines and you know, there was- they were called turban gourds, there were a certain kind of gourd that nobody had ever seen before. Oh, I'll take them put it on my table for Halloween decoration, like, they weren't planning on you eating it. Um, I wouldn't know what to do with it if someone gave me one either and- or a certain kind of cereal that box that they would hand out and they're like, oh, that's the one that tastes like cardboard. Thanks. You know?

**Interviewer** 55:06

Yeah. Yeah. How would you maybe draw the connections? Or like describe the connection? Positive or negative and different strengths between these two things? So um sort of like how the emergency sector, how they're performing and sort of places that culturally appropriate foods.

**Participant 126** 55:26

I think it's gotten better, but it has a long way to go. Um, so I'd say it's a- it's probably on the weaker side.

**Interviewer** 55:40

Yeah. Would that be a weak positive or weak negative?

**Participant 126** 55:45

Um, a weak positive. Like, I guess- I- am I- I'm not sure if I'm answering that right. So it's weak, but it's headed in the right direction, is that how you're? Okay.

**Interviewer** 56:00

Yeah. So it's basically that like, emergency sector people have like increased, uh, slightly increased choices or like slightly increased, like, access to culturally appropriate foods.

**Participant 126** 56:12

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 56:21

Other connections you see?

**Participant 126** 56:26

Other, I'm sorry, say that, again?

**Interviewer** 56:28

Other connections you see? Where sort of like, out from emergency sector, sort of the role it has, the impact it has on the community, or maybe, um, too, so sort of what impacts how much people use it or the ability of the sector?

**Participant 126** 56:52

Well one thing that's not on here that I think is critical for that is, is leadership. And having the right leadership within the emergency sector that has a strong understanding of the community has both the logistical knowledge of how those systems work, and how to maximize the resources that are available to operate those types of programs, but then also, um, is, you know, understands the community well, and can you know, try to adapt to varying trends and things like that. And so I think, um, at the moment, I think we've got, um, there's a really good infrastructure for that leadership.

**Interviewer** 57:39

Um is this impossible to see or is it okay? n

**Participant 126** 57:42

No I can see it.

**Interviewer** 57:43

Okay, I just made it a little bit- growing the space to make it a little bit less busy, but I don't want the words to be too small to read. Okay, so that would be, um, sort of a medium or strong relationships that it is currently functioning fairly well in the Flint food system. Um, what I heard, but definitely correct me if that is not true.

**Participant 126** 58:11

No, I think that's right. Yeah, I can't think of anything else at the moment that's missing.

**Interviewer** 58:26

So the next thing we're going to do, oh, I guess, is there any other values that you would like to include on the screen? Uh, we've currently talked about education, community empowerment, nutritious foods, and availability, are there other- any others that you would like to include, or do you feel good about the, this set?

**Participant 126** 58:45

Yeah, the only thing I would say is that when I'm talking about effective and high quality leadership, I'm also talking about partnerships, you know, those leaders have strong abilities to partner, know who to partner with to get things done, so, so I don't need- I don't see the need to call that out explicitly.

**Interviewer** 59:06

So, uh, the next thing we're going to do is that you know, we started with a lot of the definitions and concepts from us. So these food sectors that we define and these seven values that the community defined, but we definitely want to give you the opportunity to sort of open it up and see what else you would want to add. So other things that you think are impactful or important in the Flint food system, or other outcomes that you think are important?

**Participant 126** 59:39

Um, well you said we're going to talk about COVID are we also going to talk about water crisis?

**Interviewer** 59:45

We're not we can definitely add it in the map if you'd like to.

**Participant 126** 59:49

I just think that the, that the, um, the food system locally, I don't know where it actually fits in on the map, because it has partly probably why we're having this discussion is because food became such a prominent issue as a way to help mitigate the impacts of people exposed to lead, so while the food systems work was underway in Flint already, it accelerated it, it brought more people into it, it brought residents into it, in a- in a different way, I think. I don't know exactly where that fits in.

**Interviewer** 1:00:43

Maybe, um, connecting it, I'm thinking about the possibility of, you know, affecting sort of the ability of the emergency sector that raise and strengthen, and other things that you're talking about maybe, you know, partnerships, um, that were sort of built during this. Um, and maybe also like community engagement with food system, um.

**Participant 126** 1:01:18

Yeah, I think that's right. And like, you know, for example, I think there's-there's something there leaning into the COVID piece of it, like with the water crisis, you know. Local restaurants, and probably some smaller retail, initially, mostly restaurants, maybe local restaurants, you know, suffered early on in the water crisis until they could prove that their water was safe. And just like, you know, with COVID, as restaurants have had to navigate what makes patrons comfortable based on the current realities. I mean, that certainly the local restaurant impact was much more short- short term, now that we have something to compare it to, it felt- probably felt like the worst of it for them at that time, before we had any idea what was coming. Yeah, yeah, I see it less- I believe there was much less of an impact on chain restaurants, but at the same time, yeah, there would have been some impact there too.

**Interviewer** 1:02:49

Any other things you'd like to add or changes you'd like to make or are you feeling good about it?

**Participant 126** 1:02:54

Not that I can think of,

**Interviewer** 1:02:58

There will be lots of chances in the future, um, I'm going to save this file real quick. Um, and the next thing we're going to talk about is what we've already talked about a little bit, but potential leverage point. So changes you might consider that would improve the system. I know, this is sort of a, an open ended and also a very big question. But this could be you know, little things that you think would make improvements, big things that you think [inaudible]. So considering sort of your, your understanding of what's going on with food in Flint, you know, sort of if you ran the world, how would you make changes to improve it?

**Participant 126** 1:03:39

Um, I think you know, one of the things that we struggled with for a long time is those sort of, um, having more available grocery store options within the city. Um, not having to go outside the city and even neighborhood based which I think would let them lend itself to an increase in you know, culturally appropriate foods and foods that certain communities would like to see in their diet or like to have more access to. Um, I don't know to the- I don't know to what extent there's a strong enough, um, uh, relationship between the rest- moreso the restaurants rather than the retailers, but the restaurants and the local food, urban agriculture and local food supply. I mean, is there are a lot more opportunity to be growing a lot more locally because of the demand in those places? I mean, I guess that applies to retail, too.

**Interviewer** 1:05:08

Any other leverage points?

**Participant 126** 1:05:15

I mean, there's a- there are a lot of them right? But when I think about the current, you know, sort of the current environment. Again, I think like, I wonder if that, you know, opportunity, if there's some cost savings and more locally sourced locally grown food, that then maybe that means then the retail stores have more access of the types of things that the emergencies, the emergency food sector usually is, you know, tapping into for their food banks and that type of thing. And I think it would increase, you know, the amount of healthy and nutritious food that people have access to. And the that would, of course, then increase a lot of other sort of outcomes for families and individuals for having a healthier diet.

[COVID SECTION]

**Interviewer** 1:06:24

I want to make sure that I am respecting your time, right, we wrap it at 245. So maybe we can move on and talk about my team. Go ahead and add that concept map. And then I'll start maybe drawing some of the connections that we've already talked about. So you know, having an impact on local restaurants, as well as talked about

**Participant 126** 1:06:57

emergency sector.

**Interviewer** 1:06:59

These supply chain disruptions

**Participant 126** 1:07:15

And habits, you know. It changed people's habits, too. So they may have been approaching their food one way. I, for example, almost all of my meat and produce prior to COVID came from the farmers market. They're right on my back door at my office. I could get it, you know, Tuesday, Thursday and be good. And I have um gone, you know, I do curbside. But I had more groceries from a grocery store than I have in probably almost five years.

**Interviewer** 1:07:50

Yeah. grocery stores and farmers markets. Yeah, I also, I live in Ann Arbor and I live right by the Ann Arbor farmers market. Yeah. Especially when COVID was just starting and people had no idea what was or was not safe. I know that people were scrambling to get the word out about like CSA boxes rather than physically go into the groceries go into Farmers Market picking stocks now, huh?

**Participant 126** 1:08:24

Yeah, so-so habits in terms of retail, hmm, um, within the emergency sector, a lot of the the new users, as a result of COVID, are first time users, and often families that you know, are sort of the working poor, if you will. Families that are on the bubble, but don't really, in many cases don't qualify for some of those supplemental programs that are out there. So that is their sort of lifeline. And they come with different-different questions and different expectations and a different need to help navigate the system too.

**Interviewer** 1:09:21

would you say that there's a sense of there's also been a bump or relatively safe use of supplemental sector of the web. Now the supplemental sector and people using nutrition support programs more during COVID or is that the same?

**Participant 126** 1:09:36

My understanding is it's about the same [use of supplemental sector] because especially- [inaudible] But my understanding is that it's- the bump [increase in use of supplemental sector] that people expected, it isn't there. Because like I said, a lot of the families that are newly needing this support are because of having in the past had just enough income to get by. And now, you know, maybe- But they were people maybe working two or three jobs and one of those jobs, they can't work anymore, or something like that. But still don't qualify for the supplemental. And people may be using a little bit more because of the fact that the supplemental sector is giving more too, right. There's, you know, they've increased, you know, with the SNAP increase that recently came out for these next couple of months. I think WIC did some. Not only did they- I don't know if they did the increases, but they also made it incredibly easy, right. They keep putting money on my card, and I'm not using it. And I don't have to go to an office to get that information or do anything. They're just doing it remotely. So that, um, that removing a barriers may have been- made it easier to- for people to access that.

**Interviewer** 1:11:05

That's um, something we heard in a previous interview is that was talking about, they're able to order groceries online using snap, which they weren't able to previously. And that was really convenient.

**Participant 126** 1:11:19

Yeah, and double up food bucks has developed an app in Flint for-for that too. So that can be contactless. And I mean, they wouldn't necessarily thought about doing that before. Now that SNAP is online it makes sense to. But um, but I guess a big part of the COVID piece too, is transportation, that that is one of the more risky activities in terms of public transportation. And so that, um, you know, impacts people's choices about where they're gonna go, and whether or not they want to take that risk of the bus all the way across town and back and forth. Or they really are just gonna walk down to the neighborhood convenience store and see what they've got.

**Interviewer** 1:12:06

Yeah. So draw drew two lines that were in your map previously, that's kind of what I'm hearing that sort of this accessibility, availabilities, connections, transportation, sort of also impacts the sort of choices piece. You so the connections just because if this is for connections we have from COVID-19. Okay, it's sort of this sort of bump in a little bit of a bump in use and supplemental, a little bit of an ability. As I said, they're opening up new programs, people are going more to grocery stores, less to farmers markets, transportation is less accessible and safe. People are not going to restaurants or they've struggled during the pandemic, there's been supply chain disruption will lead the emerging sector more and from supply chain disruption, maybe dropped availability and dropped the ability of the emergency sector? Are there other connections that she would like to make or other impacts of COVID-19?

**Participant 126** 1:13:26

Um,

**Interviewer** 1:13:28

I know there's a lot going on. So it's kind of

**Participant 126** 1:13:29

Yeah, and I'm trying to figure out because- figure out how to articulate it. So I mean, I think this is a positive thing that you know, and it relates to the-the water crisis as well. That a lot of- One of the things that I think has been clear in Flint is that a lot of the partnerships that needed to exist across organizations, that came out of the water crisis benefited us when COVID-19 hit. So you know, those providers who are trying to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in the community were already very well connected with one another, knew who to call when, for what. And a lot of that muscle, if you will, was really built during the water crisis when- Um, you know, the organizations knew each other and knew what each other did. But it was- it's certainly not the same in terms of how, I think about more honestly, on the housing side of things and COVID how closely those groups work and communicate to one another. And that-that didn't have to be built as we were going through it. It was already there. And that exists, I think, in the food sector, in the food system as well because of so much work that's done on and done around food as a result of the water crisis.

**Interviewer** 1:14:52

Yeah, that was actually something I was gonna I was gonna ask you, and because part of what we're interested in looking at what this is project with this research is comparing how Flint food system has coped or handled COVID-19. how that might be different than other comparable cities, because there was so much like, not real infrastructure, but you know, these these partnerships are like this very strong emergency food system, I guess, would it be your perception that Flint has, like, overall, like, copes with COVID-19, that people, you know, have been food hub, if people have been wanting food, it has been provided through them for the for the emergency sector?

**Participant 126** 1:15:38

I think so. [Flint was better equipped to handle covid because of the water crisis] I think so. Um, I think part of that- both because of infrastructure with the emergency sector, and then a lot of those same places, for example, that were distributing water during the water crisis, you know, opened up, you know, drive thru programs for kids who weren't getting their, you know, meals through schools. And, you know, they were ready sites to do that kind of outreach, and providing of resources. And many of them already, again, had a process and place for when they would do water distribution. So it wasn't something they had to figure out for the first time either. So they just took that skill set and that knowledge and pivoted to- whether it was actually you know, food or school supplies, or whatever the case might be. Yeah, and again, those-those- the providers who got them what they needed to then distribute, those relationships, you know, already existed, I think, a lot- in large part due to the water crisis.

**Interviewer** 1:16:46

Yeah.

**Participant 126** 1:16:54

The major conveners were already known, like, you know, the United Way would, you know, that's who sort of gets the ball rolling, to get folks together to start, triaging what needs to happen. And then the groups sort of split off into their different areas, which is exactly how how it played out with the crisis, too. But we figured it out as we went along, as opposed to this-this time had a- had a process in place to do that fairly quickly.

**Interviewer** 1:17:24

And, well, if there's anything else you would like to change, or add about your sort of impact, COVID-19 Oakland food system, and go ahead and do that. Otherwise, we can go on to the last question.

**Participant 126** 1:17:37

Okay. No, I think I think I'm good.

1:17:40

[COVID SECTION ENDS]

**Interviewer** 1:17:41

I'll save this file, and stop sharing. So my last question is sort of a little bit fairly open ended. Um, you know, we've talked a lot about these sectors, values in COVID-19. But is there anything important about this sort of conversation of food in Flint, that we didn't talk about today that you want to make sure that we carry forward in this research?

**Participant 126** 1:18:08

Um, I mean, I guess the only thing that I would potentially want to explore further is, is, you know, sort of the the impact across, you know, children versus adults or family households versus, you know, individuals, you know, a lot of the supplemental programs, for example, are hard for individuals to tap into. But yet they have a lot of food insecurity. So that differentiation between, you know, the households and what some of the barriers may be and access points might be.

**Interviewer** 1:18:54

I'm just taking notes. And that is one of the, you know, there's a lot of pros and cons of this sort of this mapping methods, like it's fairly intuitive, and it's fairly quick to put together. But there are some of these deficits for, you know, if we're talking at a super high level, it's hard to map differences between like children and adults, and a lot of people talk about like, yeah, well, it changes based on where you are in Flint. How can we represent like spatial dynamics in this kind of mapping, but it is something where eventually going to- this research is going to feed into a more complex system dynamics model. So all of these are thoughts and ideas. That's sort of the richness that we were captured in this conversation, but maybe not in the diagram that is still going to be part of the research and will feed into what we do in the future.

[OUTRO]