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

**Participant 130** 22:33

Yeah, I mean, I'm sure it's just sort of my opinion, not necessarily fact.

**Interviewer** 22:39

Okay.

**Participant 130** 22:39

But we can, we can have a conversation.

**Interviewer** 22:42

Yeah, no, this is definitely like, all, like your perception. And that, you know, can come from any sort of formal role, but also just your experience as someone who has lived and eaten food in Flint. Those are both definitely, like, super valid, you know, information to draw from. Yeah, so I guess what would be your perception about sort of the connection strengths to local versus chain restaurants, you think that people use one more than the other about the same, none of the above in Flint?

**Participant 130** 23:19

And we're talking Flint specifically or Flint, Genesee County, surrounding areas?

**Interviewer** 23:25

I might defer to Renee. I think we are mostly trying to focus on Flint.

**Interviewer 2** 23:32

Yeah. We're really honing in on Flint, primarily, what we have discovered, as we have the conversations, people will share that certain things happen outside of Flint. But if you start from what you know about in Flint, and then, you know, there'll be examples, like, I'll use this one, I'm sure you already know this. People will talk about where grocery stores are, there's x in Flint, but people go out. So, so focusing from Flint, referencing things outside if necessary to, you know, to make your point.

**Participant 130** 24:11

Right, so your first question is about where do Flint residents eat either fast food or local restaurants?

**Interviewer** 24:24

Yeah.

**Participant 130** 24:27

Again, I don't know from a quote unquote, factual perspective. I think there's probably more tendency to utilize fast foods, convenience stores, those kinds of things.

**Interviewer** 25:01

Then what is your perception maybe about how much people might use farmers markets or other sort of direct from producer to consumer programs insulin.

**Participant 130** 25:15

I guess again, my perception is, farmers markets are involved, if you will, right? I mean, fresh fruits, vegetables, year round, those kinds of things. I think the price point is a deterrent. But again, that's sort of where your quote unquote supplementals come in, that may be able to subsidize some of that buying power, if you will, of a consumer. So I do think there is a much more propensity to buy local, for all the reasons that sort of, we think in terms of helping the local farmers, getting fresh fruits and vegetables. I may be willing to pay a little more for fresh fruits and vegetables that I might get at a grocery store. And I would say probably the farmers market in Flint is probably more convenient than quote unquote, trying to find the grocery store. But limited by hours and that kind of stuff, too. Make sense?

**Interviewer** 26:50

Yeah. So I want to maybe go through some of these connections that I've made, just to make sure that they're really capturing what we just talked about. So pulling out some impacts of, you know, let's maybe start with convenience that, you know, grocery stores in Flint are maybe less convenient, I drew a line from convenience stores, just is not me explicitly mentioned, I can definitely get rid of it or change it. But it may be implicit in conversation. And so I had a positive relationship. And the farmers market has a positive relationship, but a bit weaker, to convenience so that people can access these things. I also drew, you know, this sort of hours of operation. I think you mentioned that that is a big impact on convenience, and that the farmers market does not have a lot of necessarily hours of operation as opposed to traditional retail. So that might be an influence, also put in this concept of nutritious foods, that people access those at farmer's markets and grocery stores. And then also this affordability piece, that farmers markets are not necessarily very affordable, and that impacts how people are- and affordability impacts how people are using retail. Does that sort of map to your-

**Participant 130** 28:19

Yeah. The other thing that comes to mind, I don't know, I don't know what word to describe it but because it's fresh, and not preservatives and those kinds of things. There may be a potential for more waste to you know, people go and buy fresh and have to use it right away, and then they may not have the ability to use it right away. So there may potentially be more waste. Just because I don't know what you call that, you know? Again, just speaking from personal experience, you go to the farmers market, you buy a ton of fruits and vegetables, you bring it home and you're throwing half of it out because you haven't either haven't prepared it fast enough or what not. But anyway.

**Interviewer** 29:13

I'm always very impressed with myself when I manage to use whole bunches of spinach without wasting even a little bit.

**Interviewer 2** 29:24

That's a really-

**Participant 130** 29:29

Yeah, my my wife said she wanted the big carrots, you know, like the whole carrot, not the little mini ones and that kind of stuff. And so I got this huge bag of them. And I don't want to say half of them went two ways, but they did taste better, but you might have one bunch of it and it just, you just don't use it all so.

**Interviewer 2** 29:52

And it's good for you- good to hear that pulled out and the because oftentimes people aren't thinking about the waste part of what happens in this food system space. And it is important to really take a close look at it. So we get a general sense, because we can say people are buying a lot of fruits and vegetables, but are they eating them all? And if they're not right, what are we doing with that byproduct? You know, waste is a waste as a resource. Right? So thank you for sharing that.

**Participant 130** 30:27

Yeah, the other thing is that, you know, I've been involved in a lot of giveaways, if you will, it helps that there's that kind of stuff in the food bank, and I don't know if they've gotten better at it or not, in terms of portion control. But you know, you give someone a 10 pound bag of potatoes. A, do they have the means to cook them? And B, you know, are they going to be able to go to 10 pounds of potatoes and half the time you throw them out on the street as you're cleaning up, because they don't have any way to prepare them or utilize that many of them.

**Interviewer 2** 31:05

Yeah, thanks for that insight.

**Participant 130** 31:06

And I think the other thing that when we talk, local versus chain, and we talk about inside outside of Flint, I, you know, again, personal experience, I will drive to Flint and eat at some of the local restaurants because I can, because I can afford it. Whereas I don't know if people can I hate to make a stereotype but I'm not sure if all the folks in Flint can afford the local quote unquote, restaurants that maybe people out beside the community might be able to.

**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?**

**Participant 130** 32:26

The use of supplements in grocery stores?

**Interviewer** 32:30

Mmhmm.

**Interviewer** 32:32

Strength wise? I think, yeah. It's strengthened it I guess. I don't know how best to say it.

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

**Participant 130** 35:36

Yeah. Wow, you've sort of hit the nail on the head with all of his

**Interviewer** 35:43

Great, that's the goal.

**Participant 130** 35:46

I think the reason why I first started dabbling in food systems was around, I guess, partnerships. You know, and, you know, 5,6,7,8 years ago, when the Community Foundation sort of made this a strategic priority. I think the general consensus was there wasn't a lot of partnering, collaborating, and we were either leaving a lot of money on the table, grants and assistance and those kinds of things.

**Participant 130** 36:21

And wouldn't it be nice if we could get all partners sitting around the table, representing, you know, the various sectors in the food systems to work collaboratively. And so that's sort of how we ended up funding a food system navigator and tried to do a lot of work around. Basically the left hand knowing what the right hand is doing. And so I think partnership was key for me in this work. You know, obviously, to what end? You know, obviously, affordability, availability, nutritious foods, those kinds of things, I think all would come from that. If we were all working around the same goal, same metrics, those kinds of things, with sort of those end goals in mind, you know.

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

**Participant 130** 38:23

Wow, where to begin. And we can definitely maybe retract a little bit about partnerships already.

**Interviewer** 38:31

So maybe we can start with partnerships. So something that I was hearing around partnerships, sorry, my mouse sometimes, as I said, it doesn't like clicking anymore. All right. Is that a partnership unable to like maybe get/share resources?

**Participant 130** 38:53

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 38:54

That was something I was hearing. Are there other connections that you see from partnerships, either things that impact the success of building and using partnerships or, or outcomes that are made possible by good partnerships?

**Participant 130** 39:25

What makes it difficult for me, looking at sort of all your different boxes, is when you have grocery stores or retail convenience stores they're typically not at the table, right? I mean, the sort of big players, at least in my mind, locally here in Flint they get I don't know much about I'm not an expert in food systems, but typically it's the food banks and the farmers market and [inaudible] and you know, Edible Flint they're the ones that are sitting around the table talking about resources, what's available out there should be to be applied to this as sort of a unified, but you don't have sort of those end users, if you will, meaning the the product, meaning the grocery stores, restaurants, retail outlets, or those kinds of things, sitting at the table. So it's hard for me to say, you know, where the where the where the where's the partnerships, when it seems like there's just a different crowd, talking about food systems, that leaves a huge part of the delivery system out of the kind of the partnership crowd, if you know what I mean. I can't remember. I mean, I don't recall Kroger or Meijers or any convenience store, 711, being at our table. It was always, you know, the usual suspects.

**Interviewer** 41:12

I- Renee would be better at talking about this.

**Interviewer 2** 41:18

Yeah-

**Interviewer** 41:19

I don't want to bias any of our conversation. It is something that has come up in other interviews and have come up during research.

**Interviewer 2** 41:28

And you might have some insight on that. Because you make a really great observation. Even if you're looking at our base model that we started with, you can see supplemental, emergency, and they were talking about the use of retail, right? So you're pinpointing something that's very important in terms of the folks like you call the delivery system, the process to get the food to people, you know, the absence. So if you could maybe if there's a value, or something that you think is contributing to or influencing the access of those folks at the table would be helpful if we could somehow reflect that in this map.

**Participant 130** 42:16

Can you go back to your values?

**Interviewer** 42:18

Yeah, absolutely.

**Participant 130** 42:23

And maybe it's I don't know, again, like if you look at affordability, I don't know community empowerment. You know, where do the Kroger's and the Meijers go to get fresh fruits and vegetables or whatever, in a food system? And maybe I'm being too narrow on food systems to be fresh fruits and vegetables? Maybe it's all edible? Who knows? Meat, dairy, that kind of stuff. You know, they go to the big Conagra things, right, and, or whatever in terms of purchasing power. And I don't think they're interested in you know, the local farmer who's producing something, they have to go to the processing center and sell their stuff.

**Participant 130** 43:10

So eventually the Mejiers and the Kroger's, buy it from that processing center. So I- there just seems to be a disconnect between what we're trying to do locally, and lifting people up making them more affordable and what the big chains what their equation to affordability and nutritious is, you know what I mean? It just seems like it's just disconnected in some way. Maybe, again, I don't know, you know, the, the intricacies all the little intricacies of food systems, but it's almost like, that's where they're gonna go to get the best bang for their buck, to be able to pass it on to the consumer versus, you know, John Smith farmer who's making, you know, lettuce and all that kind of stuff here in Genesee County, there's only so much you can do at the farmers market versus does he make more money if he send it off to whatever Kraft Foods or [inaudible].

**Interviewer 2** 44:14

No, those are great connections. That is precisely what it's all about. Where do those connections happen? I heard you talk about the local farmer and potentially their ability to connect inside the food system. Where do they have to give their product? You talked about the farmers market as well as the processing center, which I think you're referring to Flint Fresh, the Hub? Is that what you're referring to?

**Participant 130** 44:45

Yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 44:46

When you say Process Center? Yes. Okay.

**Participant 130** 44:49

And the commercial ones. I don't know what the big commercial ones are. So, you know, I'm doing if I'm, you know, growing beets and bringing it to Pioneer Sugar I mean, it gets processed there. And then it goes to Mejiers, you know?

**Interviewer 2** 45:06

yes.

**Participant 130** 45:09

And so they're trying to make a living as farmers and where they're gonna get the best bang for their buck?

**Interviewer 2** 45:13

Exactly. Okay. Yeah. Because the processing center is another sector. Right. So how did the farmers connect to the processing centers? Or the hubs? Okay, yeah. No, that's good that those are great observations between the two, you know, the farmer and those who have to distribute the food. Great. And the other thing I heard you say, was the disconnect between what we're trying to do to lift up the local market and the distinction or tension between that and what the large retailers are doing?

**Participant 130** 46:05

I mean, if you walk into Kroger today, you don't see a fruit stand, like you say, the farmers market, right? I mean, right. It's all packaged and bought somewhere else. You may have a local farmer who's contributing to the apples and the oranges and all that kind of stuff. But it seems to be a circuitous route, to get back into the stores and in literally the hands of consumers, when you go to the buyers and the Kroger's of the world.

**Interviewer 2** 46:45

That's a perfect observation. Thank you for that.

**Participant 130** 46:56

I once had a colleague who talked- there used to be a dairy in Flint, I think it was McDonald's Dairy on Dort Highway and 475. And he was hell bent about turning that into a food processing center. For corn, I don't know what it was, and then having all the local farmers grow that product and bring it there. And, you know, he was talking to some economists and that kind of stuff. And I said, well, then everyone's growing the same thing. And he said, yeah, but they have a place to go, it stays local, you produce it here and then selling versus farming it out and sending it to who knows where and coming back, who knows how into the local community. There's kind of a unique concept, but never really came to.

**Interviewer 2** 47:47

That's a perfect closed loop. Grow it here, process it here, provided into the market here. People eat it here.

**Participant 130** 48:04

Right. Or elsewhere. You could ship it elsewhere. But you had your local community in mind in terms of what you were trying to do.

**Interviewer 2** 48:13

Yes. Okay.

**Interviewer** 48:22

Yeah, maybe you want to talk about sort of this a little bit more of thinking, like, local food economy, if that makes sense to you, things that support it, you know, are gardening and urban agriculture or local restaurants. Are there other ways that you think, you know, this process is supported? Or do you want to talk about maybe what comes out of it? What are the benefits of having this?

**Interviewer 2** 48:59

Just really good.

**Participant 130** 49:04

Are you talking to me?

**Interviewer** 49:06

Yeah.

**Participant 130** 49:09

So what's the question?

**Interviewer** 49:10

Yeah. So we, you've talked a couple times about sort of supporting these local food efforts. And I was wondering if you wouldn't mind talking about maybe what are either sort of like the outcomes of this. What are the benefits of supporting local food? More if you- I've connected gardening and local agriculture and local restaurants, if there are other ways that you think that these efforts are supported?

**Participant 130** 49:41

Yeah. So again, I guess my sort of greatest experience has been around the women's farm. And we sort of got into that from you know, what, what does Genesis have in terms of resources and one of our resources was land. And decided to turn it into a women's farm. And it sort of resonated with, you know, being good stewards of our resources, as well as looking for economic development opportunities, because we, again, we wanted to use our campus in various ways, and this, this was leadership at Genesis, so the outlets, we can do this. Plus, we wanted to reach out to at-risk poor, vulnerable populations to provide, you know, a new career, if you will, in terms of farming and those kinds of things. It probably hasn't gone as well as we had hoped.

**Participant 130** 50:52

There's a lot of small wins, if you will, you know, I think it trained a couple farmers. But sort of the the spokes that would possibly come off of that, you know, you mentioned the, the worm farm, the composting farm, you know, in terms of trying to, to minimize our waste in terms of what we're dumping into the landfill. But again, goes back to partnerships, you know, we have a partnership with a company called, I'm trying to remember the name, no, drawing a blank- Touchpoint, who's our food service provider, and Touchpoint needed to do something extra in terms of scraps and those kinds of things to get out to the farm.

**Participant 130** 51:41

And, you know, we have one little kingpin or chink in the armor and the whole thing falls apart. And so they weren't a real, motivated or engaged partner. So that kind of has fallen off, we thought we could generate some more support from our own associates who wanted to learn about, you know, farming and gardening and that kind of stuff. And that really hasn't taken off. But it's still a cool project that had a lot of different tentacles to it. And opportunities, I guess, associated with it. But it's been sort of this real small microcosm of a larger system.

**Interviewer 2** 52:30

Yeah, that's a, that's a really good example.

**Participant 130** 52:34

And then, when you look at Flint, water and the water crisis, and being able to sort of pivot in terms of what they were growing at the farm in terms of lead mitigating vegetables, those kinds of things, fruits and vegetables, they were able to do that, sell it at the farmers market, or to Flint Fresh or whatever. You know, again, I'm not sure if you're going to get rich off of that, or if it is a viable, quote, unquote, career, but I, you know, the person that's been dedicated to the farm out there is still at it, so she must be doing okay. But I've never really asked you know and say, how's it going for you? And what other kinds of supports do you need in order for you to flourish and for the project to flourish.

**Interviewer 2** 53:26

That was a great point, because you're talking about a resource building capacity. So the resource of the farm, the land, the food, building capacity, and also checking to determine if the level of support is sufficient to get to that economic viability. That's what I heard.

**Participant 130** 53:49

Sure. The observation I'll make is that it's a very fragile system that requires partnerships. I mean, so our buildings and grounds folks had to, you know, provide the water and all that kind of stuff there. And if that breaks down, you know, the plants die, right? As I mentioned, that our partnership with Touchpoint, you know, in terms of the vermicomposting, you know, we just could never get them to say, hey, let's, and there was always other reasons. I mean, it was like, you know, they have very little waste, if you will, which is a good thing. But it's, but it's at the detriment, you know, kind of the vermicomposting system, and so a lot of little fragile partnerships that and then, you know, if we wanted to, again, divert waste from the cafeteria to a composting center, you had to reduce your tipping fees and all that kind of stuff. There were, you know, sort of these benefits that were out there. But you had to have faith and trust in these partnerships in order for the whole thing to keep kind of moving forward. And any one little slip up sets the project back, you know, two or three steps.

**Interviewer 2** 55:15

That's excellent-

**Participant 130** 55:17

Yeah. Funding funding as the other thing. I mean, you know, we've had some challenges with funding. To keep that moving.

**Interviewer 2** 55:30

You are talking about talking.

**Participant 130** 55:35

Right.

**Interviewer 2** 55:37

No, seriously, I'm located in Detroit, Food Plus Detroit. One of my primary focuses is food waste diversion, or composting, to build healthy soils, or food system innovation, and also other environmental uses, like water, you know, how do we manage our stormwater by using, you know, improving our soils and things like you're talking my language right now. And you're right.

**Participant 130** 56:10

It's, you know, I hate to say that, but it's foreign language to, you know, hospital leaders, if you will, to say, hey, we want you to pay X to move this waste to Y, but in the long run, you're going to save money, and the environments going to be better off, but it takes that sort of leap of faith. And yes, sometimes, sometimes you get shot down so many times that it's like, okay, I guess it's not worth it. You know, and, but, you know, we keep fighting the good fight, and hope people will see the light at the end of the tunnel of this. Yeah it's an uphill battle always.

**Participant 130** 56:56

The other thing that was really cool about the women's farm, is the number of students you know, like the middle school students and elementary students that we've had come out, like in harvest days and that kind of stuff to learn about farming, it was really kind of cool. [Inaudible] was out there and all the partners were out there doing an educational field trip, if you will, for school aged kids that, you know, who knows what might spark a career in agriculture or something.

**Interviewer 2** 57:31

Right, spark a career also, they go home, and they influence their parents. Right?

**Participant 130** 57:41

Yep.

**Interviewer 2** 57:42

Nothing like a little kid telling you you should eat better.

**Participant 130** 57:46

Right. And here's a recipe we got from the farm.

**Interviewer 2** 57:50

Absolutely. And Mom, will you fix it? Dad, will you fix it? Right? That's good. That's good. So the connection with the schools also is what came out of that?

**Interviewer** 58:02

I do you want to be conscious of time, it's about 10am right now. And so I would potentially like to add another one concept. You know, I would like to get your perspective as someone involved in sort of the health aspect of food, sort of how the food plan affects, you know, community health. If you would feel comfortable speaking to that.

**Participant 130** 58:38

Sure.

**Interviewer** 58:43

Yeah. So how would you maybe start drawing connections and we can we can also build this out, we could talk about physical health, we could talk about like, more sort of like mental emotional well being it's kind of your preference, but how might you start drawing some connections between what we've talked about so far, and, like, health and wellbeing.

**Participant 130** 59:08

So I think of the majority of what we talked about, you know, outside of the grocery stores and other retail, that kind of stuff, kind of this, I don't know, sub market of the food system, whether it's foreign markets, gardens, that kind of stuff. Sort of supports this, I'll say the safety net, in terms of health and physical well being. You know, obviously, you have your supplemental programs that, you know, when when we have a poor, vulnerable Medicaid eligible mom or whatever, we want to make certain that your mom and baby are getting nutritious foods and that kind of stuffs and signing up for WIC or other other types of snapper modes. Those types of supplemental programs is key. I- I think in the medical profession, we don't look at food as medicine, we're beginning to, we're beginning to understand that better.

**Participant 130** 1:00:15

And, you know, obviously the Food Farmacy is a good example of that where people have food insecurities, and they have a life limiting illness or disease. And food is sort of their lifeline, if you will. And so it's beginning to get a little more traction in terms of the importance of food on their physical health and well being. The other thing that we experienced during COVID was people living on the margins. And these are our own associates, if you will, that are working in the minimum wage jobs typically in buildings and grounds and housekeeping and food services, etc, living on the margins when their spouse or significant other or even they get either laid off furloughed or hours cut, who have probably never had to rely on the supplemental programs found least we found ourselves referring them more and more to the food banks and the catholic church soup kitchens soup kitchens and those kinds of things.

**Participant 130** 1:01:24

But there's a stigma to that, unfortunately, that, oh, I'm taking a handout or it's in poor quality food, etc. But, you know, I think we got to get past that, that food insecurity is a huge health issue. And are there ways that we can continue to dabble in that food system where where it's appropriate, whether it's Food Farmacy, whether it's assistance programs, etc, because because of the impact on overall health well being and mental health, you know, when you're, when you're sitting there not knowing where you're going to get your next meal from, and you're in the middle of a pandemic, you know, that that's one less thing that you have to worry about it if we're much more coordinated in terms of how we, how we address those food insecurities.

**Participant 130** 1:02:23

And the other thing is, I think we're beginning to screen for that in our primary care offices, and our maternal health office, our offices, screen for food insecurity, as well as other social determinants of health, and provide resources, whether or not again, whenever you use closed loop, whether or not the patient or the associate actually went and picked up a bag of groceries or applied for SNAP or whatever. I think that's becoming more and more important, recognizing. These are sometimes very sensitive questions to ask people because it gives them their personal space, you know? And maybe they don't want you to ask them, maybe they don't want you to know that they went to the soup kitchen or whatever. But just by virtue of asking, do they need help, they need some support, speaks to, I think, their overall physical and mental well being.

**Interviewer 2** 1:03:29

Those are excellent. points. And you're right. It's, you know, I think one of the things you would probably be interested in as a value that we talked about was quality of life, and the element of respect and dignity. What you just said, seems to resonate in that space, this that, as we dabble explore within the food system. And that's what this project is really all about is, how do we look and I know, Chris is gonna take you there in just a moment. Um, that quality of life, as a value was something that came across very strong, from community folk, how they are treated, how they're talk to, you know, those kind of things. So I just heard that in what you were saying about the sensitivity, in asking people questions and exploring, you know, how you explore their need for help and support. I'm putting words in your mouth.

**Participant 130** 1:04:27

I remember, several years ago, when we were just introducing, you know, social determinants of health questionnaires in our primary care offices, and the doctors were saying, You want me to ask this of every patient? And like, yeah, and they felt very uncomfortable asking, you know, every single patient and they wanted to, well, we know if there is Medicaid, they probably have these issues, but if they're commercially and they don't, I'm like, how do you know that? I mean, how do you can't look at someone and know that they're struggling with, with food or other issues, right, just by, you know, their exterior. Look, you know, they could be having a myriad of problems that you have no idea about. And by virtue of you asking the question, do you need help? To me that respects dignity and so I- I think we're going to continue to dabble in that. And then I think the role of anchor institutions like a hospital, etc. are to move further upstream and talk about what we're what we've been talking about and saying, what is our role in addressing food insecurities? Maybe making more hoop houses? It may be who knows what that is. I really think getting at the root cause of some of these downstream impacts of poor food consumption or whatever is our business.

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:00

Yeah, I would agree with that. I echo everything you said. Definitely, we don't know what food insecurity looks like, you know, I'll just share a story real quick. You know, we all know 2008 was one of those crazy years, right? As an entrepreneur, I was one of the people who was impacted by that downturn in the market. I've been an entrepreneur since '89. But in 2008, I was driving a Lexus carrying a Tumi bag, wearing suits every day with a British card in my purse.

**Participant 130** 1:06:41

Right.

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:41

So did I look?

**Participant 130** 1:06:42

Exactly.

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:43

Did I look food insecure? Not at all. So your point is well taken.

**Participant 130** 1:06:50

Yeah, I think we have a ways to go. Although I do, I do think it's becoming more in Vogue, if you will, you know, social determinants of health. And recognizing that, you know, 60 to 80%, of everything that happens downstream doesn't happen, you know, it's not, you know, do I get the prescription pills recommend to my doctor, it happens out in community, and all the issues that that are we're confronted with on a daily basis. And I, I think it's just as important as taking one's blood pressure, when you come into the office or taking their height and weight, you should be asking these types of questions. Now, can we be everything to everyone? No. So that, again, goes back to our partnership conversations, where you do have local organizations who are addressing food insecurities, and they're the subject matter expert on it. So let them have it but, you know, we have to do our fair share in terms of either assessing and then where we need to invest our dollars or community benefit dollars upstream, I think you'll see more and more of that happening versus sort of these 1-D, 2-D little programs that may may have an impact on 5,6,7,8,9,10 people versus, you know, a much broader population of people.

**Interviewer 2** 1:08:15

So there's a concept there that strategic funding to have impact upstream. And I also heard you say, you know, that kind of two steps in the process, you assess, and then triage, you do a triage assessment. And then you refer out to partners who can take the ball from there and move it through the process. Excellent. Yeah, that's really good. And invest strategically, upstream for higher impact.

**Participant 130** 1:08:45

Yeah. And so there's one thing for assessing and referring to, it's another thing to say, okay, why are these people keep coming to us with food insecurities?

**Interviewer 2** 1:08:53

Yes, yes. Root cause.

**Participant 130** 1:08:55

It could be jobs, it could be education, it could be, you know, access issues. So how do we address you know, that on a larger macro system, where we're not, we're not going to solve the, the world hunger, but we shouldn't be at the table like everyone else who's trying to address food insecurities, and try to figure out what our role is in that in that system.

**Interviewer 2** 1:09:22

Okay.

**Interviewer** 1:09:24

I do want to potentially move on to talking about leverage points. I would just like to give the opportunity. Is there anything you want to connect to? I've added sort of social determinants of health. Is there any specifics that you would like to get into or connect anything that is already in the map to this concept, or are you comfortable just leaving it as that concept?

**Participant 130** 1:09:50

No, I think I think you just leave it at that.

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

**Participant 130** 1:10:35

I think we touched on one thing, and I don't know how to get the Walmarts, the Kroger's, the Meijers, to the table. And, you know, they may, they may be thinking they're doing a great job because they can buy it at, you know, bulk and pass on those, their purchasing power to the consumer. But if I don't have a job and can't afford, you know, even so, so how do you get them at the table to have a very similar conversation of what we're trying to, what we're trying to solve, I think is, is probably, at least on the food systems perspective, how do you how do you do that? The other thing is, you know, speaking selfishly, from a health systems perspective, we know food is medicine. And so trying to figure out, you know, folks who don't have access, or who are food insecure, how do we get them the sort of medically necessary food to help better manage their illness and disease?

**Participant 130** 1:11:55

You know, again, we used Hurley Food Farmacy as an example, you know, they went out and found the money and the funding for that. But once the funding goes away, then what, you know? The problem doesn't go away, just this, your access point might go away. Anything else? Any other leverage points?

**Participant 130** 1:12:23

But I do think that I do, I do think that the Community Foundation, and I've kind of lost a little bit of touch with sort of the food navigation system, that kind of stuff that they put on their strategic plan. But I think that was a bold step. And they they hired a point person, if you will, which again, I don't know if you, if that's the answer, but at least there's they're throwing some resources out to try to form some assemblance, to the food systems in Flint and Genesee County, which I think, moved it mountains from where we were, you know, 5,6,7 years ago. She has since left, so I met- they did hire a replacement. And I'm not sure you know where the momentum is right now on that, on that strategic initiative. You know, and the water crisis didn't help. I mean, a huge curveball, if you will, in the middle of that project. But we were able to pivot and help, you know, focus on the problem at hand. But

**Interviewer 2** 1:13:42

Happy to hear you mentioned that. The foundation is actually one of the key partners on this project. So we're working very closely with them. The current program manager, also our Tina Statland, who you referred to, [inaudible] she's still- she's- we talk to her, you know, frequently. She was involved not only in the genesis of this, but also she and I, we worked this whole modeling work with the food cris- with the water crisis as well. So the foundation is really very, very interested in taking, I love your language, the bold step around food navigation. So yeah, they're still very much involved as partners.

**Participant 130** 1:14:35

And I think actually your word genesis of the whole food navigation was, the foundation was realizing that we were leaving hundreds of 1000s if not millions of dollars on the table because the people in our local community we're competing for the same dollars. Like, wait a minute, and the funders would come back and say don't you know what the left and right hand is doing in Flint and no.

**Interviewer 2** 1:14:59

You're right they were the ones that started the process, the whole partnership piece that you spoke about. Great, thank you.

**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 2** 1:21:49

I guess my, my biggest, and I don't know the answer, to be honest with you, but I think we all want to jump towards a solution. Whether it's SNAP or WIC or whatever, we want to jump to a solution versus sort of embracing the problem and sitting with the problem, and what does the problem entail, mean, and that kind of stuff. So fall in love with the problem, not the solution. And I think if you do that, as sort of your mantra and moving forward, you'll begin to find solutions. And to me, it's always continuing to move further, further, further upstream. And so, you know, would we solve food insecurities if everyone had good paying jobs? And so should we focus on economic development? And those kinds of things and addressing poverty in our community? Yeah, I don't know. So it's, it's sort of, you kind of keep moving further upstream until you get to whatever the root causes of food insecurities are. And I think that's what we're doing today is looking at a lot of different issues and factors that contribute to the problem, that maybe one day we'll have the magic pill, and we'll be able to swallow that and get the vaccine for it, and we won't have anymore. But until that time, you know, I do think it needs to continue this dialogue about all the different sectors in our community, and truly understanding what their role and responsibility is in that, whether it's us, assessing whether it's us supporting financially, other organizations who are, are addressing food insecurity or food system work. So that's what I'll leave with.