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**SPEAKERS**

Participant 136, Interviewer, Speaker 4, Interviewer 2

[INTRO]

**Interviewer** 15:48

One thing we could start with, is determining some of the connection strengths for all the relationships that have question marks. I do just want to say if there's any time that I ask a question, that you're like, "I don't really know" or like, "I don't think I can speak to that," definitely just let me know. And we can like, skip that section. I- you know, I've- we talked to, like, producers, you know, so like local farmers, I'm like, "What do you think about the supplemental sector?" They're like, "I have no idea." And so we definitely- there's anything you're like, I don't think I know about that. Let me know, we can just skip it. I don't want to- I don't want to waste your time. Because again, food system is really big and complicated. So we don't want to, you know, ask people to spend time on something that is-is not in their wheelhouse, not in their area of expertise.

**Interviewer** 16:33

But if you do have any, like thoughts or perception or your your understanding, you can maybe start with thinking about these connections that go out from from retail, and what they're-they mean, and sort of, you know, like: When people purchase food in Flint, you know, where are they getting that food? Are they going more to chain restaurants versus local restaurants? Are they buying a lot of their food in grocery stores? Are they buying in convenience stores? Are they going to the farmers market? What would be your understanding of, again, only if you want to sort of speak about these, these relationships, What is your understanding of-of where people participate in Flint? Of how they're using these different retail sources?

**Participant 136** 17:15

Yeah, I think it just depends on you know, your-your-your own situation. And, you know, there's a big conversation around the north end of Flint, and you know, access to healthy food there. And the uproot of, you know, if you have a historical perspective of Hamady Brothers, and then Hamady Brothers 2.0 that came there. And then now there is, you know, Pastor [name], who's trying to do a north side grocery store, you know. And then you know, so once again- this is not something that's heavily talked about in our task force, but something that's getting- drawing more attention is, you know: What-what does it look like to be in a food in a food desert? You know, this is where this conversation- this conversation has. And so when you talk about traffic, and you know- if you have, you know, a healthy food store, quote, unquote, across the street, but then there's a local corner store, you know, right- that you don't have to cross the street, you know, where are you- where are you going to go? You're going to go and get those hot Cheetos and some ramen noodles as opposed to across- going across the street. So those those things, you know- you're just thinking about the master planning of the city that, you know. We just went through a whole process, you know, over the past, you know, three, four or five years years ago, and you know where that is. And so maybe the- okay then maybe I'm getting on my own soapbox, but

**Interviewer** 18:41

No, I'm so glad. These are- these are all sorts of things we want to hear.

**Participant 136** 18:47

But-but in terms of, you know- and, you know, if I honed in during this pandemic period, you know, people are calling up, you know, grubhub, and those other entities. And saying, "hey, they'll come to me because I don't have access." You know, so and some of those things in terms of, you know, Meijers and Shipt and even Kroger, and their delivery services, you know, saying that seems to be you know, more of a middle class more of a upper middle class, you know, type of situation. It's not as ex- for my opinion, it's not as accessible. That's something like grubhub to McDonald's or-or what have you.

**Participant 136** 19:27

So you have people going to, you know, these chain restaurants by byproduct of being more- being more accessible just because of the conditions and the need for online. But then, you know, people will support you know, the mom and pops. There-there's a subculture, if you will, that will always be entrenched. And that's- and you know, to the, you know, the barbecue shop that's on the corner; to, you know- to try things and all that kind of stuff. You know there will be an affinity to that, you know, just by nature. And so you're going to hop in the car with a group of friends and get that, you know, latest trend unhealthy diet if you will. So I mean you see those things- I mean the fried things in the hood you know serves Oreos, you know what I'm saying.

**Participant 136** 20:20

I mean someone like Red Robin will sell- will sell fried Oreos as well. So it's just like, you know, big guy or big dog versus little dog type of competition. And it's-it's all unhealthy stuff. So-so yeah, so-so long story short, you know, it's really split 50/50. It just depends on where-where you are, you know. The north side of Flint, there was a lot of uproot, you know. You know, byproduct of GM, byproduct of the water crisis, byproduct of this pandemic. You know what I'm saying? So you have a crisis, on top of a crisis, on top of a crisis that's just, you know, that's embedding bad behavior, poor choices. And then you- and then you know, infrastructure and administration that's not responding fast enough. Because these are all yesterday type of problems staring us right in the face right now. And-and our community are suffering so that- if I link to that it will probably be a 50/50 split. It's really compartmentalize on your current condition. And for- and for us here in the city of Flint, this changed rapidly over the past 20 years with all these things.

**Interviewer** 21:47

Yeah, I just want to make sure that I'm capturing this correctly. So 50/50 split sort of grocery stores and convenience stores with the biggest- Like a big driver of which one do you end up going to, or which one you have access to getting these-these spatial differences and in sort of accessing these- So more convenience stores less grocery stores based on some of these impacts we've talked about. So GM closures and water crisis, response from government and administration. Another driver being being transportation that can be a source of a more convenient, they're more prevalent. So if you don't have a lot of access to transportation it would be easier to go to convenience stores. If you do have access it might, you know, be easier to go to grocery stores. And then also connections is sort of the delivery of services: chain restaurants, local restaurants. Sort of what you said about chain restaurants are unhealthy, but a lot of local restaurants are also not providing nutritious food for folks

**Participant 136** 22:56

Yeah and then I think you know, you can infer from this- but I mean you don't want to miss or minimize it somewhere. You will want to just talk about that this is- your socioeconomic structure will definitely play a huge part in how you fare in the conductivity of these things. You know, I mean there's one side that just needs okay for those poor choices. And you can talk about how, you know, commercials and what we feed, you know, our young people- just feed society in general- is one thing. But then your ability to make choices- and it's not by accident but all these after school programs, you know, are continually investing into nutrition education. You know, just because it's fun to do. That-that's another crisis you know. It's the Battle of the bowl you know. It's-it's so yeah. I'm sorry- is this, talk about this stuff and it's a nightmare. Okay,

**Interviewer** 24:04

This is great. Um, no and that's something that I want to- potentially combat some of the things-

**Speaker 4** 24:20

Can you talk about like lunch menus at the school?

**Participant 136** 24:29

We gota a outside- outside inferer here. My daugher is talking about lunch. And you know, what I just say this. So my daughter, she was a part of mt after school program. Both of my- I have three kids you know, two of them were old enough to go you know. They- and one thing you know for me, you know- If this program isn't good enough- This is just a, you know, soapbox moment for me but you know. All of these programs for disadvantage kids or whatever you want to call it. Okay, if this program here that I'm doing that I'm a part of: If it's not good enough for my kids, then we not gon do it. And then on top of that, you know the-the food choices that I had.

**Participant 136** 24:36

And we- I think we had a good partner because I- one of the first things that I did you know for for our program when I became the director of it was said "hey, okay, what's what's going on with the food here? Is it appetizing? Is it something that you know I would eat? Is it something that I would have you know, my kids eat?" And then you know for for most of the meals It was "no." You know, saying they would just you know- food clumped into one container. And I was like, "No, no, we're not- we're not doing that." You know, so we did- and then we got another food supplier you know what I'm saying. But they weren't- I [inaudible] to them, you know. I said: "Hey, if the kids didn't like it, if it wasn't appetizing, we're not serving it." And so those type of things, you know, the whole paradigm of you know, keeping people poor because it's a profit. That has to- have to go out the window because we have to- we have to set a standard for these- for these entities to, you know, to serve what-what I would- what you and I would take home and eat.

**Interviewer** 26:23

Sort of add that into the map. Cause that's- that it's something that we've talked to a couple folks who are involved, not necessarily decision makers in the school, the school food system, but you know, have knowledge of it. And it's something that they've talked about as potentially a serious disservice to the to the children of Flint. Is the quality of food that is given to them as they're growing up: big concern for them.

**Participant 136** 26:54

And this- I don't know why I was- I don't know if I was looming. This meeting was looming in my mind, but I was- I was literally thinking just last night like "what did I eat for lunch at school?" You know, and I'm just trying to think about- Okay, in elementary I can remember the pizza, the rectangle pizza, and the box that said pizza on it. You know what I'm saying. I could remember the hotdogs. I could remember this magic meat. W-w-when I got to middle school, I was like, "what was it that we ate?" What was served? I'd like to remember: It was french fries and pizza.

**Participant 136** 27:01

In high school. I'm like, okay, I remember going through the line They had a little, you know, a cafeteria thing. What did we get there? French fries. And then they had little caesars pizza. You know? And that's all I could- that's all I could remember eating at high school is french fries and pizza. So I mean, maybe it just seemed like- you know, salads and you know, healthy things, fruit, fresh fruit. Those things seemed like they weren't accessible. So I'm gonna- I need to ask my- couple of my sisters and my brothers. I have some younger ones. I have a younger brother who's in Flushing high school right now. And I'm gonna ask him what is he eating, what is accessible, you know, prior to the pandemic. And then even with my- before they transferred to Flushing, they went to southwestern High School, which is a Flint school that I- You know, I went to Flint schools. And that's a whole nother conversation on rigor. But anyway, okay, I digress.

**Interviewer 2** 28:37

It's all relevant.

**Interviewer** 28:45

Awesome. The last connections that we can potentially make decisions on is if you have any thoughts on how or if people are using farmers markets or other sorts of direct like, close connections with producers. So that could be like CSA boxes, that could be Flint Fresh, in Flint. If you have any thoughts on that.

**Participant 136** 29:08

Well, I just say this. I go to the farmers market regularly. My daughter, she says she wants to go to the farmers market. I've literally stood- I literally stood outside some of these apartment complexes, some of the neighborhoods, even some of our former- even some of our after school sites. And said okay, we're serving these meals, we have a schedule set up, you know, to provide meals for the community for this pandemic. I can't- and you know, going out to the community, "[Participant 136], this, [Participant 136] that." Whatever. Never one time have I saw one of those kids from the apartment complex, River Park, in the hood, in the farmers market. And you-you know what I'm saying? I see them everywhere. I see them at the mall. I can see him in the- you know in a park. You know and I can see him at McDonald's you know. But I can't- I cannot tell you, you know unless it- unless it was a field trip connected with a school or program. it didn't- it just didn't happen. "Who were you there with?" "Oh we were here with this program." But it was never I'm here with my parent or guardian.

**Interviewer** 30:33

Yeah, I guess- wondering we could get a little deeper into that. If you have any, any hypotheses, you know, anything that you think contributes- contributes to that?

**Participant 136** 30:47

All this- all this to the left side of the field up in the upper north-northwest quarter. That- I mean that-that- those are the drivers: that whole socioeconomic status, you know. Those those crises that have not been adequately addressed: the GM, you know. We just talked about a whole education crisis. My sister, my younger sister, she transferred from Southwestern to Flushing, you know. And all my-my younger brothers, I don't know how to- what gene pool they got, but they are all A-students, you know, through high school, elementary, whatever. She cried her eyes out because she went to flushing and got her first B because the rigor is so different. So different.

**Interviewer** 31:43

Yeah.

**Participant 136** 31:44

You talk about- I mean, this is- as an 11th grader, she had to bust her behind to get that B. Never had that experience. And we're talking about rigor, and we're talking a- we're talking about my other brother, who's a Gates Scholar. Watch this: full ride to U of M. He's at Harvard right now. Getting his- his something. But he's actually here, but he's an- he's enrolled in Harvard getting some kind of fancy schmancy degree. He said, he got- he's-he graduated from Southwestern High School first school. He was inadequately prepared for college.

**Interviewer** 32:24

Yeah

**Participant 136** 32:26

So this is a- this is a domino effect. And, you know, I'm kind of unloading on you guys because I guess you just opened Pandora's box. Because some- these are some of the things that you know, just aren't just aren't being talked about. And then, you know, we, we got a whole highway for Claressa Shields and- what's the other gentleman that play football? But that whole level- the value of education is not being- is not being promoted. You know, we have all these kids that want to be athletes and want to be rap stars, which is fine. But in terms of the putting in the work behind the book, or the academic structure is foreign to them. And, you know, then you have- then you perpetuate a life of crime that says, "Okay, I have to get it by any means necessary."

**Participant 136** 33:21

And that's not being put- or checked in perspective, you know. The narrative behind the trouble is foreign to a lot of our young people. And you know, so then you have, you know- I'm gonna put my wife into the, in the conversation, who works- who's a sex educator for Planned Parenthood. You know, say what you want to say about the organization but at the end of the day, you have people who are caked up- and they're cooped up in their communities, uneducated about, you know, their sexual responsibility. And choice is- and that's a- and that's it that's another health piece that we do not talk about. We talk about- we talk about mental health, we talk about physical health, but we lose that piece and that's a big piece. I mean when we talk about economics and your social structure. So these are- these aren't political. These-these are- these are just human-human matters. And it comes down- and it comes down to, you know, profit-profit over people. And until we get over the whole aspect that- just because we, you know, this is this is a this is a global piece, you know. Just pushing off a creative food off in Somalia: it's not solving it. And we do that same thing in here. We just dropping off- walk in, and not dealing with the root of the problems or the issues or the matters. I don't know if you- if I'm telling you the right things, I'm just-

**Interviewer 2** 35:01

Yes you are. That last statement that you made, I'd love for you to dig into that just a little bit. Dropping off a crate of food and not blah blah blah. How does that tie into these connections that you see here on this map? Because you've said some really powerful things. You've talked about- you know, the education and the rigor. How does that tie into what's happening in the food system? How does this- even the dropping off of food: What do you see as some of the issues or-or outcomes or values; things that you think need to be addressed that we can help, you know draw some connections here for you

**Participant 136** 35:44

My wife was having this conversation with a group of people. She said you know, I grew up with my grandmother and if you wanted to eat you would learn how to cook. You know, so okay- So this thing about, you know, dropping off food, you know, if it- if it's not microwavable, we not- we, you know. It's just like, okay, food that's gonna be tossed, or that's gonna go bad. Because it'd be- It'd be- And we still worry about the same thing- people being hungry, food insecurity We know it. And so like those food demos are important for young people. But you know there's the old adage: you can only be what you- what you can see, you know, saying. So what are we promoting, you know, in our in our communities? You know- you know, the handout is-is okay and it's- and it's needed. But then then the hand up.

**Participant 136** 36:36

And then you know, we talked about this stimulus. Oh my gosh, you know, saying when-when-when the- [sigh] when the mall is full. And then there's not a talk about investment. We not- we not- we not talking about Dr. King's poor people campaign about making an investment in folks. See, that's-that's a difference between the hand- the hand out and the hand up. You've got the hand out can be okay. But if it's not a hand up, you know, you know- When you know better you do better. And so I mean, really have a genuine concern for, okay, changing the narrative in the mindset of folks.

**Participant 136** 37:14

You know, without-without that judgmental aspect of it. I mean, yeah, I mean, we're talking about human beings here, you know. Saying in absolute, unadulterated love for humanity. I'm not mad- I'm not mad because you get a few- a few dollars. I'm not mad because you're-you're getting the opportunity for education. You know, and it's a thing. When- My valedictorian of my class, [name]. I didn't mean to drop her name, but I love [name]. Me and [Name] got along really well. She's a very successful person. And but we had a conversation, you know, during our senior year in high school. And she's white, and she said, you know, "where are my scholarships? There are all these things for black folks."

**Participant 136** 38:07

And so-so that's, that's a [inaudible]. Can we have that educated, you know, conversation. You know, if we're going to be equal, we're going to be equal at all times. So, I mean, I know it's tight, you know what I'm saying, but I, I call it right, you know what I'm saying. But we need to get to a level of righteousness. And when- I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm all over the place. I'm like, you know- it's a lot of stuff that we need to address. I thank you all for doing this and being a part of this. This is, you know, this is- this is not a small task by any means.

**Interviewer** 38:46

I'm just-

**Interviewer 2** 38:46

Now [Interviwer]'s getting your points here

**Interviewer** 38:48

Hopefully. They're incredible points. I'm just trying to- sometimes it is a hard task to translate a really big issue into a couple of words. ButI just want to make sure that- Um — And let me be horrible at spelling in public. Okay. Um — I was hearing there have sort of, I guess- Maybe we could flesh out some of- There's a couple of things like sections that I want to make sure that I'm capturing. That we've talked about is sort of this- sort of loop of like, I called it over emphasis or reliance on free food. So that it's not furthering Flint at this point. Of like there's a point where it is needed, and there's a point where it is no longer super helpful. Um, we could leave it as that sort of loop right there. We could build out more more connections from it, if that will be useful. I guess if there are things- outcomes, you see from that and things that you think contribute to that we can we can add.

**Participant 136** 40:13

Yeah, I mean, we have to physically- no we have to mentally and literally change the appetite of our community. Okay, and how that- how that is: You have to literally get people off of, and this is- this is starting as young as possible, get-get off- get people off of Hot Cheetos and quarter juices. And elevate their minds to you know, wanting to have that side of- wanting to grab an apple, wanting to grab a banana. You know, that's- that- I mean, so- you would have all the you know- And then you can have all the education in the world. But if it's not accessible, I mean what does that get?

**Participant 136** 41:10

100% of those kids that I mentioned, that I never see in the Flint farmers market, the-the-the narrative in their mind that "I can never get there, I don't belong there." You know, and so- that's-that's convoluted in itself. So you got to go back, you got to go back to "I'm black, and I'm proud" or "I'm Hispanic and I'm proud" or "I'm white, and I'm proud," you know what I'm saying. And being able for everybody to live in that space of being who they are, and being proud. And it's not no me against you, and come over to the whole notion that we're in this thing together. And then if you make it, I'm happy for you. Because I know that I'm able to make it too, despite whatever-whatever-whatever class, race, or socioeconomic, you know- you know, background you come from. Just moving that- moving that agenda forward, you know.

**Participant 136** 42:14

But- you know, I struggle, you know, you know, the-the organization versus-versus, you know, versus the narrative of it: Black Lives Matter, the organization and Black Lives Matter the, you know, the statement, you know. So those are two polar opposite different things for me. And be- and as a [inaudible] across the United States- If we can't compartmentalize: walk and chew gum on that topic, we gon- we gon- we gonna lose it all- We gon lose it everywhere else. I mean, because we-we-we tripping over pennies to get to nickels. I mean, it's like, what's-what's the point here? You know, it's a zero sum game. So-so I don't know if we leaned into that appropriately on that one. Because that my wife likes randomly, you know-

**Interviewer 2** 43:10

Oh no these maps are where people's thoughts go. And our job is to listen and to plug in, so no worries about that. That's just how it happens.

**Interviewer** 43:22

Um, one thing I-I maybe want to dive into is some of the things that we have talked about sort of at the top here. Sort of drawing from your experience with sort of youth program and workforce development. I feel like, there are connections that we could make from this sort of like youth programs and engagement, and education, through how it impacts community later. Of, you know, preparedness for success in college, or like for the employment gap aspects. Are there connections that you see, with that, sort of, like moving it back into the food system or other ways that these things are impacted?

**Participant 136** 44:11

Yeah, I mean, you have to think about in those- in those realms, or those worlds of mine that, you know, many people are involved in, you got to think of the models. Okay, so-so the model that we will talk about workforce development is the braided funding, the the holistic, you know, funding. You know what I'm saying. The thing that we would talking about in terms of, you know, healthy out of school time would be access, you know what I'm saying. And then family engagement, you know. So these are- these are code words for models, for systems, for holistic approaches. And so without that- but-but see, it comes down to the WIFM aspect, you know, "what's in it for me?" My name is not in lights, you know what I'm saying. If I- if-if I'm not getting the credit on the bill, and I said I'm gonna take my marbles and go home, you know type thing.

**Participant 136** 45:10

And so fast forward to what's going on. You know what I found in reaching out to different partners to put this on, you know with my- with my, you know, food giveaway at the church a couple of weeks ago, there were- there's this [inaudible] race. People who, you know- because it, because- you know what there's money involved. There's resources at stake. And opposed- and rather than people coming together and saying, "hey, okay, you can cover this square over here, we can cover this square over here, "you know, it's just like this tug of war and this this turf war. You know, like, "Nah, you know, I don't mess with them, because XYZ." And they're trying to do that. And, you know, I was on this call, and they were blasting me, they didn't know I was on this call. And we're not working- we're not working together. And it's sad, and it's unfortunate. And, you know, I don't-

**Participant 136** 46:05

So-so that we got to knock down some barriers. And maybe that's- if we're talking about, you know, governmental support, maybe it needs- these governmental supports need to be forcing individuals to be collaborative. You know, we do this thing with the- we just had our summit, our neighborhood small grants, programs summit. Kind of hashtag or earmarked as "connect the blocks." You know what I'm saying. So what if we had bigger organizations working with the smaller organizations, who are grassroots boots on the ground, you know? Because it's one thing to do things, like, as I said earlier, to the community, rather with the community. So a lot of times, we're just- we're just doing this, you know, not in the form of collaboration with the community. You know, because- I tell you- I tell you what- I tell you, I'm, I'm hungry, and you bring me a glass of water. Okay. I can't get full off a glass of water. It's just- it's just a band aid.

**Participant 136** 47:14

So it's a cyclical process, you know. It goes round, around, around until someone says, "Stop, let's streamline this thing." Let's throw the egos out the window. You know, and is that city government? I don't know. Is that the Community Foundation? Is that the philanthropic field? Is it- You know, so, once again, you know- Once you- once you try to compartmentalize, you know, who's the- who's the new spokesman, who's the Dr. King of this generation? You know, at the end of the day, we have to just work together, you know, point blank period. It's not going to be: your name and lights, you get the credit, all that kind of stuff. Yeah, this work right here is just as- just as important as, you know, President Biden saying, "here's the stimulus" for folks.

**Interviewer** 48:22

Okay. Trying to make things a little more readable. Again, great- It's awesome stuff, I just want to- Out of sort of um, this sort of partnerships piece, that partnerships and like, between groups and collaboration with the community, can lead to- I called it effective engagement, and we can call it something else if you prefer. And if that is an impact on like, you like the accessibility of education on education itself. There's other impacts that you think of, you know, organizations, or groups, engaging with the community, let me know when we can draw some more connections. But two things that sort of negatively impacted successful partnerships would be sort of this conflict over resources. And I called it like power structures, or like, we could call it something else of like, conflict with power, or like- I don't know, something like that. Sort of these two different aspects of like, people wanting recognition for stuff that is like-

**Participant 136** 49:38

Oh, WIFM, WIFM. What's in it- What's in it- What's in it for me? Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer 2** 49:47

Turf wars. I heard you say that, too.

**Participant 136** 49:50

Yeah. Yes, ma'am. Yeah, those-those-those are tough. And you know, that- I'm sorry. I don't know if you, you know, heard about that taskforce, or some of the things. I mean I know you're- that-that I'm just kind of spewing out or sharing. But um you know one thing I like about the taskforce is- and I think you know this is my Wile E. coyote, you know analogy, you know type deal. I always wanted him to you know catch the Road Runner. You know he had these great ideas and then you know one thing that I thought was a super great idea was those rocket shoes. He-he almost caught him. You know I'm saying? He was right there but then smack- he got hit with a truck, you know I'm saying. And then he threw away the rocket shoes. And I'm like "no." Don't throw away the rocket shoes, you know- Just watch out for the truck next time, you know what I'm saying.

**Participant 136** 50:42

So-so-so in essence, you know, the task force is- has enabled ourselves um, you know, some great rocket shoes. And you know, but- And time and time again, there will be a truck we get hit with. And we just need to, you know, kind of do a better job of watching out. Because I think the task force of racial inequities is what I call the Justice League. You know, what the Justice League is: It's Batman, Superman, all these superheroes. Who are- who are great in their own- in their own right. But when they come together, you know, they-they-they do some marvelous things. And you know, keep a pulse on those things as as crime and the evil doers at bay, you know. And they're being- and um, just-just-just for- You know, Voltron is another one. You know what I'm saying? Like hey, you know what I'm saying. They got their own thing going on, but when they come together, they do great things. And so that level of partnership just has to- have to be there. And not throwing out the baby with the bathwater in terms of some challenges that we have, you know

**Interviewer 2** 51:52

That's a great analogy

**Interviewer** 52:01

Yeah, that's um- I'm reminded of like sort of, you know, the the avoiding the truck, of so important it is to have like- the like, what institutional knowledge or like something like that. Having a sense of like history. Of what have we tried already, what has been effective, what have been- what have been the barriers. How did we address those. To like how effective action in complex, really complex systems. Um cool. One last little bit we could talk about here, before we move on to something else, is potentially if you have a sense of these sort of connections from the supplemental sector. If you think that supplemental nutrition programs, as people arem you know- where people are using them in Flint. Or if you're thinking they're-they're driving folks more to use farmers markets, or convenience stores, or grocery stores. Or if you're like I'm not really sure, you can just skip this section.

**Participant 136** 53:04

A- well you know, I just say this. This is just an observation you know, um, you know, just doing community work, you know, you gotta bounce around. And you know, I go to my old neighborhood frequently because that's where some of the work is. But-but you know, I go to Meijers if I buy a pack of hot dogs, it's you know, X amount of prices. But if I go to the hood, if I go to Mr. B's, it's just-that's astronomical. And once again: profit over people. If you thinking about that- I'm just like wait a minute: So if you mean my double up, you know, food bucks will stretch further at Meijers where I can't get to? And then there's, you know, it doesn't go as far as Mr. B's in the hood where I can get to?

**Participant 136** 54:21

I mean who- Now tell me why I don't want to take a vaccine now? Because it's all rigged, you know. I mean, you know, it's so- that's just- that's just the perception. You just saying- and, you know- and I just feel that was an aha moment for me. You know, I'm, I'm fine with taking the vaccine or whatever. But you know what I'm saying, then there's the equity whole thing with that. But that just- that just hit me just like wow. You know, why are these people still on the Tuskegee Institute and stuff like that, and talking about all this kind of stuff? No, this is happening right now. This system is not- it's not- it's not thought out. It's not- it's not getting the voices, you know. And even if you have to voice it, have they even you know, been able to articulate it in such a way? And I reconnected the dots for them, you know, in a way that you know, that's not abusive. That's not you know, getting over, that's not taking the bandage away

**Interviewer** 55:21

I'm gonna- I'm gonna go to a- again, we've already talked about several- We're gonna go through a couple food system values that have come from conversations and focus groups with Flint residents. So ultimately they ask you, what do you want from the food system? What would a food system that serves you well look like? And these are some of the concepts that sort of emerged from those conversations. So you'll see education, partnership, nutritious foods, and affordability are already all concepts that we sort of added to the map. And the other ones that we have. So education, you know, people want opportunities to learn food skills like cooking, and nutrition and gardening and stuff like that. And potentially planned career development. One we haven't talked about that we could potentially include will be community empowerment. So this is that people want the food system to empower communities in a couple different ways. Like supporting local economic development, fostering a sense of community and prioritizing residents cultural values.

**Interviewer** 56:24

We also have quality of life is respected so that people want to be able to move through the food system with their dignity, choices, comfort and safety respected in a way that promotes the common good, and quality of life for all. We talked about sort of partnerships, you know: creativity, trust, leadership, support collaboration, communication. And nutritious foods, we kind of talked about. We touched on inaffordability, so food price, but also like income and stuff like that. But the other one we haven't talked about would be availability: the type of quality and amount of food required for community members to continue to feed themselves and their families should be physically present. Are there any of these three that we haven't talked about already that you would like to add to your map? The answer could definitely be no. You could be like, No, I'm good. We don't have to talk about those. It's only, you know. If you want to

**Participant 136** 57:16

Wait a minute. Give me- I was writing them down. You said, which one is that we didn't-

**Interviewer** 57:21

We didn't talk about community empowerment, um quality of life is respected, and availability. We can- I can come back to this definition at any point. We've also sent the definitions in a PDF to my emails, but we can just go back to this whenever.

**Participant 136** 57:39

Yeah, I mean, the community empowerment piece. If we- if we talk to shared about that. I mean, it's tough. I mean, that's that's a tough- that's a tough nut to crack. You know, because, you know, the value- the value system has drastically changed from generation to generation. Has changed from crisis to crisis. At- when you talk about community engagement, you know, my own soapbox narrative of the word impact. Okay, what does impact mean, for me? You know, it's just the acronym that I made up: Intentionally Making Provisions to Act, Care and Transform.

**Participant 136** 58:26

Okay, impact, we have to be intentional about what we're doing. We have to make the necessary provisions. Our time, our talent, and treasure. People have to know that you're acting on their behalf. And at the end of the day, they don't care what you know, until they know that you care. And that's a big piece right there. When you talk about like community engagement. Because once again, we've been from crisis to crisis to crisis. And-and-and at some point you, you're going to come to a point where "nobody cares about me." And we just might as well just sit here and just die. But-but-but how? How do we get to the point of-of, once we let people know that we care about them, that we begin to transform.

**Participant 136** 59:16

When we come into the community, and this is- this is- this is- this is the Jesus piece of it. Men and women, no matter who you talk to you if you just read the if you read the book, okay? When people encounter Jesus, okay, they were different. Okay, when people encounter us, when people encounter the food bank, when people encounter, you know, fill in the blank. How are our people different? Because engagement is one thing, but if you're not in transformational, you're just being transactional. You're just saying "here" without a level of transformation. And soo of course, you're still going to have those problems. So without the element of transformation, you don't care. You're not acting on my behalf. You're not really investing time, time and treasure. You're not being intentional. And so you draw all of those things back by just saying "here." And once again, a handout without the hand up is not helping. Is only- is only a bandaid, is only a pacifier. It's only a-a Christmas gift because daddy is not here. So, yeah, so that engagement piece is-is something is a lot to unpack there.

**Interviewer** 1:00:40

And it's something that we've been- [Interviewer 2] can maybe speak to this, um, something that we've been hearing and been excited to hear about, in Flint is is getting beyond like, you know- There's XYZ amount of food insecurity, and more getting on to like- how do we like, like- There are so many programs that exist, does Flint need another program? Probably not. Like how do we actually have, like effective engagement? How do we actually get to sort of these like root causes?

**Interviewer 2** 1:01:16

Yeah, yeah, we definitely are hearing you know, what you're saying about- I guess the connection that's jumped out to me was your comment, you know, moving from transaction to transformative. And the difference between hand up and hand out. So what I heard was, transaction is hand out, transformative, his hand up. And I heard specific actions, caring, act on behalf, intentionality. Those seem to be variables, distinctions, you know, that you seem to feel like, you know, trigger more of a transformation. That's- that's- if I can echo it back. That's, that's what I was hearing.

**Participant 136** 1:02:04

Yeah. I mean, you-you know, and I just need a backstory. You know, when I first started with the Y, you know-you know, I was doing this program. And you know, people always looking for a story, you know, this kind of stuff. I was asked to speak, and give a impact story on the program. So I said, you know, I'm two days in I'm speaking about this. I mean, I definitely feel passionate about but, you know. You know, not knowing the whole gambit of things. I said, "Okay, what would this impact really mean?" So that, that-that-that birthed that acronym for me. And I think it's just, we're practitioners, and, and we're in the thick of the things, we want to make an impact.

**Participant 136** 1:02:48

So what are those elements, as you echoed-echoed those things out. What are those elements of making an impact: being intentional, making those necessary provision. Because it has to be a sacrifice. It has to be an element of serving. And so those those things are talent and time, talent and treasure. You know, acting on people's behalf, you know. They may not have the voice, they may not articulate it, but we have to crack this thing and say, "Hey, we got you." And with that, you know, we're- we were gonna say, okay, we know a lot, you know what I'm saying. But we have to normalize ourselves. We gon- we're not gonna have our suit and ties on. We come in into the hood. And we- Hey we care about you. And at the end of the day, the result is to be transformational. And so when you talk about you know, the hand up being transformation. There is a touch there. You got to touch somebody, you know what I'm saying? You humanize someone, but if you if you just drop something off- You know, you don't make eye contact. You don't feel warm, you don't get no embrace. You know, and so- you know, so that's-that's just- that's just what it was for me. And, you know, I just tried to drive that home as my narrative. That narrative's not going to change for me. No, so- I just thought it would be apropos here, as we just are talking these things out.

**Interviewer 2** 1:04:16

It's great, thank you.

**Interviewer** 1:04:21

Yeah, and I guess the- Don't worry, we can always make more space. Next question I have is really- and you know, we have these sectors and some of these values that we define that we wanted to start off with. But we also want to give you the chance to sort of like open it up for other things that you'd like to add to your map. Other things that you think are influential on the Flint food system, or other outcomes that you think are really important that aren't captured, yet.

**Participant 136** 1:05:01

You know, I mean I -I don't want to over-over over-oversimplify but you know- you know- How do we dive into this? This is- this is a lot this is the I mean as this is cast on here. This is a whale that you know that's-that's sticky, that-that's that's uncomfortable. And one of the things that we're talking about is truth, racial healing, and transformation. Okay and being able to have those tough conversations. And you know what we just had this discussion the other day, and someone said [Interviewer], he said you know "White folks are at the table. They're listening." And you know I'm like okay cool. Well what what white folks are? If- [Interviewer], you seem you seem cool. You seem you seem like you-you know- you down for the cause. But if you at the table- Okay, you you know the deal.

**Participant 136** 1:05:01

But if those people who who got the money in their pocket: if they're at the table. If these people who are on these big boards and stuff, the Community Foundation included, Mott foundation, you know, all of these other foundations. If the people who you know kind of have you know the money- And it's just like nothing's really gonna change. They're not gonna- they're not going to be at the table- and then if we can't- if-we have a holistic, and this is just everybody- We just can't say "hey, you know we're just talking here. We're just talking." Ain't nobody gotta get mad or upset, you know what I'm saying.

**Participant 136** 1:05:01

If you- if you do that's okay because we're on the same team. We should be on the same team. But like I said, my folks okay, you know. I played basketball for a few years, and I enjoy the sport. As a team- my teammates, you know what I'm saying, all the time would say "hey, you know, do this or do that." And when we go into a locker room at halftime they gon get in my face. They gon get mad. They're gonna get upset. I'm gonna get in their face, but when we get back on a court, you know, what anybody who's working together. Because we are on the same team, you know what I'm saying. And so you know, it's okay to go in a locker room and get it together. But what are you going to do when you on the- when you on the on the field. So yes, so I think that the element of true racial healing and transformation, that's a big piece for us. But it has to be handled with care

**Interviewer 2** 1:06:24

mm hmm

**Participant 136** 1:06:44

It has to it has to be handled with care, you know. You know people talk about church hurt. Human hurt is real too.

**Interviewer 2** 1:07:53

Absolutely it's the same thing. I mean, you know. It does come down to with humanity You know, it all comes down. There- my-my take. I'm-I'm a person of faith like you also you know, Minister um, it comes down to our humanity. And-and you're right and I'd love to hear more about- and maybe we can't hear it in this conversation. We might need to invite you to a different conversation about- that we're going to have around race equity and food. I'm going to be facilitating those discussions. But this piece that you touched on about how something is handled with care is important. So maybe there's a way in this map you can at least speak to the humanity element, you know. The-the human care element and how we address this. Or [Interviewer] you might have got that just in the notes around what else do we do

**Participant 136** 1:08:56

Yeah, anything I can do. I'm mean I'm at your all disposal. This is just a very much needed conversation. And it doesn't need to be missed. And all the other stuff, I mean when we talk about so many things, I mean mental health: that was a piece and it's starting to get that airplay. It's food insecurity: needs to get the airplay you know what I'm saying. The sex education needs to get that airplay because they're-the because when there's some- when there's some main themes about stuff, but then you meet you- but you miss some key but maybe not overarching elements, like those are things we just mentioned. You know, you can have a you-you have a weak- you have a weak link. Because you- because you're you- because you're missing something, you know. There's a- there's a puzzle piece missing there. And so we have to make sure we modulate these different conversations, these different elements. You know, no piece left behind. You know, I think it's important

**Interviewer** 1:09:59

And it's um- you know, we've had a lot of conversations with people about the food system and they're like, "Is it too broad to like, bring in housing to like food?" I'm like, absolutely not. Please talk about it. Like, yeah, like, let's bring it in all of these like impacts with like- yeah, like, there's so many ways- I mean, part of the reason I got into food systems that it is so connected to

**Participant 136** 1:10:22

Yeah, you talking about renting versus buying. I mean, now you point out- you don't have any wealth, you don't have any investments. And then you- I mean, s-so if you're spending money on housing. And once again, you don't have the quality of life, or the quality of resources to pour into your- to your diet. Now, and so once again, and then you got the- and then you have the aid. Once again, you're strapped again, because you know, your dollar doesn't stretch as far. You know, you made- you've made a choice to, you know, use public transportation as your main mode of transportation. Because you're you're saving. I mean you done reach the element, your narrative, your [inaduible] has changed enough to where you done got to the point I'm saving.

**Participant 136** 1:11:16

You know, and now this destruction. The timing, you got to get to your kids, this. You're trying to do that. Things are not accessible in your neighborhood. And so now you have a time element. With our young people with the school system, and- you bussing, all of these kids from Flint to Grand Blanc. They got to get up at four o'clock in the morning, get to the bus stop at five o'clock, get bussed, an hour time, hour and a half b-both ways. It's 10 o'clock when they get home. There's no family time. You know, and so I mean, you-you may- you may, as we look at some of a lot of the negative byproducts. I mean, you talk about, you know, a three day three day weekend, you know what I'm saying, the opportunity to work from home. I've seen some of the positive impacts of this-this COVID piece. The-that some of the things that it brought to light, where we are failing ourselves as hu- as a human structure.

**Interviewer** 1:11:37

That's a good transition. I'm gonna save this file. One thing that we wanted to talk about is, you know, not just building this map, but we're also sort of collecting and evaluating different leverage points: of things that are big or small, that could be changed, or-or new concepts that happen in Flint, that you think would be impactful. That would lead to positive transformation. I know it's kind of a big and very open ended question. But are there any things that you have in mind that you would consider to be leverage points? You know, if you ran the world, how would you change the funding system?

**Participant 136** 1:13:13

Oh man, Naz had a song, and I think it was a Kurtis Blow beforehand: "If I ruled the world." Geez, that's a- that's a loaded-loaded-loaded question. In itself. I mean, we will all think, if we were King for a day that we have all the answers. And I don't- I don't have much. I don't have much on that. There's some things that I've seen. There's some things that we talked about that, you know, I think, I believe should be implemented.

**Participant 136** 1:13:44

You know, I think just bottom line, love and respect for humanity is a starting point. How do we get there? Is that truth, racial healing and transformation? I don't know. Is it a stimulus package? I don't know. Is it you know, providing free meals? I definitely- I don't know. But as a bedrock, if we treated each other, across race, across whatever, with love and respect. I know that's not necessarily scientific. That's not you know, anecdotal, whatever. But if you ask- if I were a- and you can't force anybody to love anybody and respect anyone. But if there was a way to allow people to just love and respect folks. I would lean into that work, but I don't have the answer.

**Interviewer 2** 1:15:00

I'm right there with you. I'm serious. Yes.

**Interviewer** 1:15:07

A friend of mine does environmental psychology work. And a lot of his research is how to build resilience into neighborhoods especially, or like communities and cities in general especially with climate based crisises staring us right in the face. And what he's found is really that the biggest way to build resilience is to have a community that looks out for each other and protects each other, and that can share resources. And it's like "Oh your powers out; come to my house." It was like "cool like you don't have food this week, here's some lasagna." That like it's more useful than having like "oh let's spend a million dollars on a warming structure." It's like no let's make sure people know each other. It's really cool to see the stuff that you

**Participant 136** 1:15:53

[Interviewer 2], you know, I know one thing . You know when these church meetings and, you know they get hot and heavy and stuff. One thing I like to end on, you know, we like to sing and I was like "if you don't sing a song we gon sing this song." I know you're mad at each other but: I need you; you need me. We're all a part of one body

**Interviewer 2** 1:16:18

That's it. Yeah

**Participant 136** 1:16:19

I won't hurt you. We're [inaudible]. I love you. I need you to [inaudible] you know?

**Interviewer 2** 1:16:27

Yeah

**Participant 136** 1:16:27

If we if we talk about it- let's just be about it. You know?

**Interviewer 2** 1:16:31

Yeah, yeah, I want to say this and I know [Interviewer] is gonna wrap us up here shortly. Um, this is a- for me this is a matter of prayer all the time. Um, last week, you know- I've been- I've been studying John 15:1-12 since 2005. It has been my anchor scripture right. I have maps of it. I'm drawing maps and looked at all the things that you know it shows and all of that. And I'm like man, I thought I had seen everything in it. Last Tuesday the father brought me to it again, Holy Spirit connected me to 9, 10 and 12. Verses 9, 10 and 12. Now nine speaks to the Father has loved me and and I have a vote and His love and His commandments. That he says, you know, and I need you to abide in me or made a my love and my commandments. And then you know what 12 says?

**Participant 136** 1:17:33

Come on with it

**Interviewer 2** 1:17:33

This is my command. Love ye one another. So I was like, there is one answer. There is one answer. So my daily prayer is- I wrote this down. I spent most of the weekend meditating on this. Father you have to show me. I want to love like you love. You are love, I want to be loved. Show me how to do love. Show me how to be love. Show me how to think love. Show me how to speak love. Show me how to create loving systems. So one answer- one answer right? So I'm right there with you.

**Participant 136** 1:18:18

Okay, can we- can we- I don't even- I don't even- Can I- can I just- can you give me like co-host rights real quick? I want to just- I just want to share my screen cuz Ima mess- I'm a mess you up real quick. I'm just gonna mess you up really quickly

**Interviewer 2** 1:18:33

Uh oh I gotta see this. Okay.

**Participant 136** 1:18:37

I want to share my screen.

**Interviewer 2** 1:18:48

All stop.

**Participant 136** 1:18:52

That was last week's

**Interviewer 2** 1:18:54

Well, we right here then. We right here. I mean, seriously. I've been in John 15:1-12 since 2005. I wrote an engagement journal about it. I have a map that I've drawn. And I mean, when the Holy Spirit pulled those three out on Tuesday, last Tuesday. I was like, No, I thought I'd seen everything in here. But he put those three right together. And I was like, there are no more questions. He said this is my commandment. Love each other as I have loved you. Period. Done. So anyway, [Interviewer]. Yeah, well, you know, you just have to know the Holy Ghost to hijack anything. Okay. That's what just happened. That's called the Holy Spirit hijacking.

[COVID SECTION/OUTRO]