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

**Participant 138** 13:54

So I would say if you're looking at the two different restaurant models, the chain restaurants kind of dominate just my opinion and the traffic I see around the chain restaurants. Our area, or I'd say a lot of our local restaurants have, over the last few years started to put an emphasis on utilizing local produce, locally sourced goods, which has been awesome. As far as the grocery store component of this goes, I'm just trying to make sense of how your arrows are pointing there. So the grocery store component of it, I wouldn't say is very local at all. Does that make sense?

**Interviewer** 14:51

Yeah,

**Participant 138** 14:52

Everything going into these grocery stores is pretty much coming from, you know, outside our area larger wholesalers. I don't know, you better steer me in this way to wrap my head around all this.

**Interviewer** 15:11

Yeah, we did the sort of similar thing of, you know, comparing, like, how long do you think people get food or source food from chain restaurants versus local restaurants, we do the same sort of thing. You know, in Flint, there are a lot of people purchasing their food from grocery stores versus convenience stores versus farmers markets. How much of a share, essentially, do you think that those sources makeup in, you know, the average person's diet?

**Participant 138** 15:40

I gotcha. If you're talking about Flint proper, like, the actual little city of Flint, yeah, I would say convenience stores play a pretty big role. Just in those areas where people have maybe problems securing transportation, and then, you know, then grocery stores and then you know, the farmers market being last as far as the amount of use that people give it.

**Interviewer** 16:22

That transportation, that can make it a negative connection. So when people have more transportation, or like less access to transportation, they are more likely to switch to another.

**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 138** 16:51

I think a lot of it gets used here at the market. Like our Double Up Food Bucks Program and SNAP dollars, I guess, probably a majority of the SNAP dollars get used up in things like a grocery store, convenience store. But the expansion of the Double Up Food Bucks program over the last few years to stores outside of the Flint farmers market, I think have helped increase use of produce, or purchases of produce.

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

**Participant 138** 20:12

I guess education. And by community- can you go back to the community empowerment one?

**Interviewer** 20:24

Absolutely.

**Participant 138** 20:28

Yeah, that's, that, that's something I could speak to, I think,

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

**Interviewer** 20:37

And as I said, we can definitely add more than just two or three. But sometimes when people are like I like five of these, and when they stare at the map, they're like, I don't know where to start. So I will go ahead and add education. And then community empowerment. So maybe we can start with education, and think about how you might start integrating this into your map. So thinking about sort of what goes to education, so where education happens in the Flint students system or about the food system, and then what goes from education? What are the outcomes of having food skills education?

**Participant 138** 21:30

party, the role I've played here at the market, as well as what I'm doing with Flint, kids cook is educating people about how to utilize fresh produce. And I think that that definitely speaks to a positive impact on purchases at a farmers market. And also, like, into the local agriculture. It's, it's all about breaking down the barriers of just like, not knowing how to use something, or not understanding what it might taste like, or, or having, you know, having this, like this conception, or misconception that, you know, something, can't be used for like a quick dinner, you know, that sort of thing. So I think that when you empower people to make good choices, they do, you know, or help them to get over the hump of just not knowing how to use something. So I think education plays a big role there.

**Participant 138** 22:44

I think that that's something that a lot of other people in the community see as an important role as well. So there's a lot of different organizations out there that are trying to present a good, healthy sort of nutrition, educating. I do it, I do it through cooking classes, or cooking demonstrations, but there are other ways that that's being done. So even like people like Michigan State Extension, who make market tours, or grocery store tours and educate people on, you know, reading nutrition labels, talking about food in terms of like nutrition density, you know, how a carrot, you know, bubble spinach would be so much more nutritious than, you know, than a bag of potato chips or something, for instance. So, I think that that's a huge component of our food system here in Flint. The community empowerment part of it kind of comes into play with what I'm doing with Flint food works. We're trying to encourage people to actually start food businesses utilizing as much fresh, locally grown produce as possible. So that is all about you know, creating jobs and, and fostering entrepreneurship, you know, in the food system here.

**Participant 138** 24:14

So that's also a role that I'd say if you want to add a box for Flint Fresh, you know, the having the food out there, and the mobile market going, it provides an instant outlet to anybody who's trying to start farming. So that local, the local agriculture component is positively impacted by the, you know, having Flint Fresh there.

**Interviewer** 24:54

Yeah, what do you think it's fair to say- so I sort of added this. So connections going both directions that are like there are this sort of mostly beneficial relationship that local agriculture feeds into like fresh and fresh supports local agriculture. And then sort of connecting that farmers market is sort of, in one way or another sort of like supporting these different programs and groups and stuff.

**Interviewer** 25:31

So are there other sort of connections that you would want to make here.

**Participant 138** 25:37

I think this map is gonna give me a seizure. I don't know how you keep track of all these arrows.

**Interviewer** 25:49

You should see some of them, they get a little bit busy.

**Participant 138** 25:54

You know, let's see local agriculture. I mean, I could make a connection between just about any of these things, I don't know, if it's substantial enough to really delve into. You know, the education, you know, part of it with the nutritious foods, I think that that's huge, that also plays a big role in making sure that people want to buy stuff from Flint fresh or the Flint farmers market. So you know, without the knowledge of how to utilize these vegetables, they'll be passed over. So I don't know, you better keep steering me in the right direction.

**Interviewer** 26:42

No, that's great. I think I'm going to reorganize these concepts, I like the pathway that you've connected in that, it's that education leads to the demand for these foods. And the demand pushes people to use stuff like Flint Fresh, go to the farmers market, and it's through those sources that they now have, like, can purchase nutritious food from the community.

**Participant 138** 27:07

I like that. Halfway, a lot of you think that's a fair sort of representation of that, that dynamic?

**Interviewer** 27:31

I guess something you mentioned was this local food business, it leads to sort of community empowerment, but then there's also you sort of mentioned, like, the direct benefit for people is that now they are running a business so there's like income plus employment. Other connections that you'd be interested in making?

**Participant 138** 28:06

I don't think so.

**Interviewer** 28:14

I can ask kind of directed questions if that would be more helpful.

**Interviewer** 28:22

I guess something that we could talk about is, you know, we've talked a lot about the like, the pros of like, the beneficial outcomes of these different programs. What do you think are some of the barriers? So you know, that like Food Works is doing this really good work towards local businesses? What are some reasons maybe that you've seen or experienced that local food businesses struggle either to even get to the point of getting involved with food works for sort of after that point.

**Participant 138** 29:00

I think the biggest initial hurdle is the startup cost of the food business getting licensed. So if you're trying to start a catering company, for example, or a food truck or a restaurant, and utilize the Flint food works, you have to be licensed by the Genesee County Health Department. And their fees are quite substantial. So one of the things that we try to discuss with our potential kitchen users is to help shift their focus to consumer packaged goods if we can. If they produce, you know, something that gets put into a package, they can be licensed but the Michigan Department of Agriculture and their fees are substantially lower and not so much of a barrier for people to enter into the marketplace. The problem is convincing an entrepreneur that what they have an idea for should be changed, because every entrepreneur is an expert on their thing. And then that goes back to, you know, helping them succeed. We try to present programming here, the Flint FoodWorks works to help, you know, the continuation business counseling, business planning, and that sort of thing. It can be hard to convince people to take the advice. Sometimes you gotta learn the hard way.

**Interviewer** 30:43

I guess, yeah, I guess I'd have sort of similar questions. On your thoughts on education. You know, I believe at this point, I've had like, 35 interviews or something, and this education piece and the importance of it has really sprung up. What do you think are some some barriers or, like, either, I guess, like barriers to people participating in these education, opportunities, or, if you know, you don't have to tell me any names or anything, if you've seen like education, or outreach efforts that have failed what were maybe some things that contributed to failure or success of sort of, like-

**Participant 138** 31:22

I think maybe- I think maybe there's a lack of coordination between all the different people who are out there doing stuff, I don't know, if there's really anything you can do to solve that problem. That's, that's like, the ever present problem. But beyond that, I found I'm gonna talk about my experience with one book. And part of what we're going to try to do in the future to connect Flint Kids Cook to Flint FoodWorks.

**Participant 138** 31:58

So with Flint Kids Cook, we're taking kids who are, you know, upper, like, you know, mid to upper elementary through middle school and putting them through a six week course of hands on training, you know, going the whole spectrum of fruits, vegetables, grains, everything on the food pyramid, basically, okay? We're doing that through hands-on learning, so that they're actually working with that specific food group, and, you know, creating a recipe and then tasting it, and then it gives them some empowerment.

**Participant 138** 32:33

All right. And then from that, you know, they leave that six weeks of coursework, and they've got nothing. And then you get into my work at the Flint FoodWorks where I'm often meeting with younger, let's say 20, something 30 something entrepreneurs, who may have some experience in the food industry, you know, be it fast food, local restaurant, chain restaurant, and they've got an idea that they want to, you know, turn, you know, take this concept from ideation all the way through to actually getting it out into the marketplace. There's no addressing the in between time.

**Participant 138** 33:16

Other than, you know, the culinary program at the community college, or, you know, which presents its own financial barriers, or the Genesee Career Institute, you know, through the Genesee County Intermediate School District that their program, programming might not mesh with, you know, the real life scenarios of some of these kids that were, you know, we have participating in Flint Kids Cook. So I'm currently exploring a way to bridge that gap through, you know, after school/summertime, programming entrepreneurship, and just continuing that culinary skill set, you know, throughout their younger years. And I think that's probably the biggest hurdle that I see. The biggest hurdle is that gap between initial education, and then whether it be entrepreneurship or just moving into adulthood.

**Participant 138** 34:21

Okay, so the connection between just isn't there. So, you know learning is a lifelong process. And if you plant that seed early, like we do at the Flint Kids Cook and then don't follow up on it. All the time that you've invested in the beginning, is it just withers away, you know, year after year, and so you got, you know, a seven or eight year old kid who you're giving this great foundation to, and then you don't have contact with them. You know, for a few years, everything you've done is pretty much gone to waste as far as. So we have to find ways to fill those gaps. But, you know, going back up to this box up here, where it says lack of coordination, there has to be a coordinated effort to make sure that, you know if I'm turning out a cohort of seven or eight kids from Flint Kids Cook, where can I point them to continue.

**Participant 138** 35:18

So if there was somebody, you know, there's some way of coordinating, hey, you know, this church over here as a program for teens after school, that would be the next step for you. I think, if you're interested in what you did at Flint Kids Cook, let's go here with you. Alright, so having some way to continue pushing the kids forward. Or even the adults or wherever they enter into the food, whatever stage of life, they enter into this, being able to continue through the process and just keep moving them forward, I think is key to succeeding. But that's just like my two focuses on this big huge model here are really like local food, business, entrepreneurship, and then I just so happened to be in the realm of the kids, you know, area as well, so just through teaching the classes. I'm sure there's a whole bunch of other stuff in between that I'm missing.

**Interviewer** 36:18

No, this is, again, we really, we really are trying to talk to people about their piece of the puzzle. So the map builds out in lots of different directions. What people have knowledge and experience on like, I've had in depth conversations with people about accessibility of like hoop houses because they're local producers, or like, online SNAP benefit systems, they're involved in those programs. It becomes whatever, you're experiencing your knowledge is, which is really cool. Awesome. Are there any other of these values that you would potentially want to include? We've talked about education, community empowerment, and we've added partnerships and nutritious foods.

**Participant 138** 37:07

Can I see the partnership slide again, real quick? So that's something I guess I could speak to just from my experience with Flint Fresh. The Flint Fresh project started as a meeting between quite a few different organizations here at the market. And I had this idea and brought people together doing like a mobile market. And just having a truck that could go and park outside of some of these convenience stores and corner stores. And I wrote a grant with a professor at Michigan State and it went nowhere. So it died for like a year. And then all of a sudden, you know, people came back together around the time of the water crisis. And there was some funding available to do something. So we kind of gathered up about five of us to really create some momentum and put some, some work behind getting started. So that was my first big experience with the partnerships.

**Participant 138** 38:27

We developed a partnership agreement. Yeah, we were all there as individuals, but we were kind of representing our respective organizations. And so we all, you know, tried to recognize what areas of expertise that we and our organization brought to the table for that partnership. And I think that that was a huge benefit in moving our project forward, is that we weren't all from the same sort of pool. You know, there were people with different expertise and different, quite frankly, different goals. You know, for some of us in the group, it was about getting nutritious food, you know, to a food desert. And I personally was there because I thought the model that we were putting together was a way to enhance the economy and provide jobs, which was a priority for me over you know, that was my priority over the nutrition component of it.

**Participant 138** 39:32

And then there were people who were there that were strictly there because, you know, their priority was the local food component of it, making sure that it was the local farmers that were involved in providing the fruit. So all of that culminated in the US receiving funding from the Michigan Department of Education to actually put this food hub together. So what started as a small project to become a little mobile food market is mushroomed into something gigantic. And so I think having people try and try and put themselves together in partnerships where they're not just, I guess siloed in their own little echo chambers and having some resistance at meetings and having different opinions and different viewpoints coming together at the table was pretty beneficial to us. So that was, that was great and I, you know, that's good for any organization, I think so.

**Interviewer** 40:39

Really an interesting point and something that I've heard in my, it's cool to see that ever Sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself, it's cool to see that that you've actually experienced like, that's something that I've, I've learned about just like in school, like theoretically, is that like, the power of bringing together different groups is that you can like, build coalitions and like, address multiple things at the same time. So it's cool to see that that actually works, not just in a textbook.

**Participant 138** 41:08

Let me give you my jaded view of that though. Okay, if you go out into this world chrissa and think that you're going to build everything through Coalition's and what do you say? What's the consensus, okay? Like, forgive my French, somebody at the table has to be the asshole who pushes things forward. So don't forget that. If everybody operated in, like, oh, we have to have consensus, nothing will get done. So I think that, even though I experienced having, you know, this coalition of people brought together, we were the five people who are the quote, unquote, assholes, amongst the rest of that group of people that met that said, forget you guys, we're not going to listen, we're not going to sit here and try and figure out a way for all of us to harmonize together, we need to get something done. So there always has to be some component of that coalition that just pushes forward and doesn't care about hurting feelings. You know and just goes in, whether it's right or wrong. Whether it results in a mistake, or not something getting done is better than nothing getting done. That's my jaded view.

**Interviewer** 42:22

No, I agree in a lot of ways, I feel like often when people talk about negotiations, they're setting a goal of compromising, and I'm like, that's not always the best outcome is a compromise. It's like sometimes someone who needs to give something up for like, the best of the community, or whatever.

**Participant 138** 42:39

Remember, a successful negotiation is when both parties walk away from the negotiation, unhappy. That's a successful negotiation. Each side had to budge a little bit. And that's why you know, a lot of what happened in Flint, at least to my knowledge, prior to, to me actually entering into this whole map that you're putting here back in 2014, was a lot of people coming together and trying to form consensus on things, and nothing moved forward. So it did take quite a few different people and some different organizations to be squeaky, you know, just go ahead and double be damned, and just do things. And it hurt a lot of feelings, people's, you know, a lot of people around the community have their feelings hurt, and it's still creating some animosity amongst some of the different groups to this day. But ultimately, you know, the benefits that come from people moving forward, like that moved forward in that way, are, you know, still showing, so it is what it is.

**Q7: When you look at the model you created, is there anything you think is missing, or that you want to add to better capture how you think about the food system in Flint?**

**Participant 138** 44:19

You know, I don't know if you've talked to very many people about the school systems and how things are operating in, like in our little area. But one of the areas that we try to address at Flint Fresh is getting, you know, local aggregate local produce into the schools. And I know that the one thing that we haven't concentrated on yet is the education component of that because you can put carrots in front of kids but if you don't educate them or spend some time talking to them about the carrot, probably not going to eat them. So it's that's an area that it goes back to like my, my Flint kids cook scenario where you've got kids who are young, and they're influential, and it's a perfect time to teach them good habits and to show them actual good food.

**Participant 138** 45:16

But in the end, they're stuck going to, you know, most of them are on, you know, most of the kids in the Flint city school system are on like supplemental nutrition. And so the schools are, you know, what their, what 30 cents a meal budget, or whatever it is. They're getting packaged crap, instead of good, wholesome food. And so that's an area that I think needs to be probably. It's, it's like, it's always an emergency situation, right. But if it doesn't ever get addressed, you haven't, you haven't spent all that valuable time to build a foundation just wasted it, you know, you haven't taken advantage of the positive influence that you can have on kids at a young age.

**Participant 138** 46:10

What's crazy is that we spend so much time emphasizing literacy, and math, and some of the, you know, the things that they need to, you know, move them forward in an educational environment. We don't spend nearly enough time talking about them in a holistic way of, you know, how do you expect a kid to concentrate during math class, if he hasn't had a nutritious breakfast, or to come back from recess and actually sit down and calm down for the afternoon reading lesson when they had, you know, 50 grams of sugar for lunch? So it's, I think that that's an area that is probably way under addressed in our especially in poorer communities.

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

**Participant 138** 49:32

I don't know. That's a big question. Yeah, that's a big question. Can you make it more pointed or specific?

**Interviewer** 49:41

Yeah I guess if there was a, you know, sort of one of these influential things that you were working on. I think we covered sort of the education piece of it, but this sort of local food business are there thoughts, you have ideas you have things you'd like to see that you think would lead to a more robust, more like local economy of more people involved in businesses?

**Participant 138** 50:11

Yeah, I think it goes back to the cost, structure barriers. The one thing that I think would be helpful is if there were, I don't know, I don't want to say grants, it's never helpful to give somebody money just because I don't even know how to start a business without any kind of structure underneath them. But I'm trying to develop Flint FoodWorks into more of a, not just a rental facility, but a support program. We're utilizing a curriculum called CO.STARTERS and I think that if we had a coordination of that, plus maybe some like, low barrier, no, or low interest loan type programs for people, it would encourage more people to start businesses.

**Participant 138** 51:11

I find that there's like this black market economy of people cooking out of their homes, you know, look on Facebook, and somebody's selling, you know, barbecue out of their garage, or wings out of the kitchen or whatever. And it's hard to convince somebody who's doing business in that way to come in to the legitimate business structure of becoming licensed, and actually following the rules and doing everything because of all the costs that are involved with that. So you know, cuts pretty deep into the profit that they're getting just, you know, cash in hand when they sell somebody something out of their back door. So there's got to be a way to help people see that scaling up in a legitimate way can be lucrative. Just haven't found that connection, and I haven't found that leverage point yet.

**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?**

**Participant 138** 59:34

I think I've touched on just about every area that I could talk about.