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

**Interviewer** 16:52

So as you see some initial things, connections that I've made that haven't, you know, added if they're positive or negative, or how strong they are, is this dynamic that you're talking about that like, the food service, in Flint schools, you know, they employ people, but really, the success of them is also like dependent on your staff, right? They really feed into how much you're able to do things. So I sort of added one connection to staff and then a connection back from staff to food service. Is that accurate? Would you change that? Does that make sense to you?

**Participant 139** 17:25

Yeah, no that's accurate.

**Interviewer** 17:29

So like, would you consider that like, they're going to be positive relationships? Because they're, you know, supporting one another? Would you consider that to be like, weak connections? Medium connections, strong connections?

**Participant 139** 17:40

That's a strong connection for sure.

**Interviewer** 17:42

Yeah. Okay. Cool. Other tentative things that I've pulled in from when you're talking about is that like, I mean, obviously, like, the, the fundamental service, right there is that they're providing students and kids with food. I titled it youth food access, but we could call it something else. Like, if it makes sense to you, I don't know. Would you think that that's like, a medium or a strong relationship? Do you think that like how much is school food, like, maybe like, how much of a lot of Flint kids do you think like, school food is like a big part of their diet?

**Participant 139** 18:32

That's a strong connection. Yeah, yes. Um, so when I was touring before COVID hit, a lot of the kids were saying, like, this is the only meals we're going to eat today. If we didn't go to school, we wouldn't be we wouldn't know, you know, if we were going to eat at home. So that's a very strong connection.

**Interviewer** 18:53

And is that- definitely correct me if I'm wrong, that's mostly through school food services, or national programs, is that subsidized or?

**Participant 139** 19:08

You know, it's not subsidized but it's through the National School Lunch Program.

**Interviewer** 19:12

Gotcha. And then this is tentative, we can talk about that a little bit later. This is the process where we're going to go through making connections and bringing things in and connect them and stuff like that. I do want to go through a few things that switch screens one more time. And we don't necessarily need to bring so here are some food system values that we have sort of like, developed through conversations with residents.

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

**Interviewer** 20:00

People want opportunities to learn food skills like cooking and gardening, and like nutrition and health and stuff like that. And like one community empowerment, like welcoming development and like a sense of community and stuff like that, like quality of life for partnerships, and stuff like this, like, partnerships that, you know, further the food system like leadership and creativity, and priority is nutritious food, so like high nutritional content.

**Participant 139** 21:02

Out of seven, all of them. Sounds weird, but all of them. Educational wise, we strive and I've been making a big point, especially, I mean, this is my first year, but I've been making a big point to educate our kids on how important it is to eat healthy and start eating healthy eating fruits and vegetables and learning the correlation between healthy eating and healthy living and in schools, right and academic and making sure okay, if I eat the right foods, fruits and vegetables and food, I'll be more energized in school, if I'm more energized with school, I'll start to learn more, I'll pay attention more that you know, so that's because that comes in full circle.

**Participant 139** 21:49

Community empowerment is us going into the community. I went into the communities, I went into the apartments and what they call the projects, and I've set up shop and pulled out the van, backed up the van and opened up and pulled the table out and started serving meals there. And, you know, you know, the news was there, that the residents were so empowered that we were able to just pull up in there and make sure that their kids were fed and that they that their kids ate, that it brought a source of togetherness there. Like it was one of the one of one of the apartment complexes that had a high crime rate. But while we were out there, they all let us know that okay, look, none of this was going on right now you guys are safe.

**Participant 139** 22:37

You guys are here to feed our baby, so you guys are protected. You know, quality of life and respect goes along with number two, because they know that we're feeding their kids. So along with that comes respect. Partnerships throughout the company I work for, SodexoMAGIC and Flint community schools. There's partners throughout the whole city, whether it's the news channels, letting all the parents know, hey, SodexoMagic is out here servicing your kids. And then we have 24 locations, and they list all 24 locations to build that relationship throughout the city of Flint to let them know that hey, Flint community schools and SodexoMAGIC, have your kids back. If your kids need to eat throughout this time, come and pick up your lunches, nutritious food, we always strive to make sure that we're providing the most fresh and the best quality of meals for our students.

**Participant 139** 23:43

This is just not processed, prepackaged meals every day that are high in sodium content and fat content. We are under restricted guidelines by the USDA. And we follow and we make sure that we're serving fresh fruits and vegetables and along with the correct components that are required for a full meal, whether it be breakfast, lunch, supper and snack.

**Participant 139** 24:18

Affordability- we're a CP district. So that means every kid eats for free. And availability like I said, we've only had four days off. We made sure that we're at our locations from 6 o'clock till 1pm. And we have right now currently we have 11 sites, right and then we have four drive up sites that we like I said, we drive to certain areas of the city, and we park and we set up stop there for four hours or until we run out of meals and we make sure that we're accessible to any and everyone.

**Interviewer** 25:01

Oh, back to the model and start sort of like drawing these connections. So definitely, if you think that I'm marking them in the wrong way, let me know.

**Interviewer** 25:15

School as its own concept and sort of link those connections [inaudible] with a partnership. So that, you know, they both sort of feed into each other for their partnerships, but then partnerships, also sort of then that these connections are beneficial for both. I also want to connect nutritious foods here, oh, no education first, so that you know, both the food service is doing educational efforts that may be- and nutritious foods. Providing nutritious foods, and hopefully, it's sort of a combination of those things linked to healthy choices. And not can too. And so all those connections there.

**Interviewer** 26:56

So maybe we can talk about these connections strengths here. I guess, how you've talked about it is that healthy choices is like a pretty big determinant of performance in school of being healthy, but even just like having access to food. If you're hungry, who cares about math class? So how big are both of those sort of strong relationships? What do you think? I guess, like thinking about the sort of nutritious foods? How would you rate sort of like, the food that you guys are able to provide this sort of like, a medium connection? Where do you think it falls?

**Participant 139** 27:45

If we're [inaudible] the food we're able to provide as of now, I would say it's between medium and strong. Only because with COVID there's so many restrictions? And due to COVID, it's kind of hard to recoup what we were used to getting from our vendors, right? Because supplies are down, demand is up.

**Participant 139** 28:12

So it's kind of like okay, they're dropping like a piece of steak in front of six lions, who's going to get it first? So we try everything and anything to make sure that we still are providing a high quality, healthy choices of meals. But sometimes we might have to take a healthy choice out and we might have to serve grilled cheese one day, but it's definitely not grilled cheese, Hot Cheetos, and cornstarch food, you know, every day for lunch and things like that.

**Interviewer** 28:51

So yeah, I kind of added this piece that you mentioned of the USDA regulations. And then we're also going to talk about COVID. So we'll add that to the map. Great. So yeah, I guess I a question here I have is sort of, I guess, if you have any, opinion, really, or perspective of maybe how much education and health and nutrition versus like access to healthy foods if they have sort of, similar impacts on healthy choices, or if one is more impactful than the other? I'm not sure.

**Participant 139** 29:35

I'm gonna sound blah here. But everything you have up there as far as connection wise, it's, they're all strong.

**Interviewer** 29:43

Yeah.

**Participant 139** 29:45

They're all strong because all of them without one, the other one doesn't exist.

**Interviewer** 30:06

Another connection we're going to add is availability. Also it makes it so you don't have to pay for food there. So that's pretty high. Something that I also even heard from conversation with someone else through this process who is a parent, they were like, COVID has made stuff more expensive because like, now I have to consider buying all of these meals for my kids, which I never had to do before.

**Participant 139** 30:37

Exactly.

**Interviewer** 30:38

And I was like yeah wow-

**Participant 139** 30:40

Yeah, that's right. That fits in right under affordability. Yeah, their kids are home all day now, you know. So instead of being with us, and eating three or four or five meals a day, you know, like I said, sometimes the kids don't have food to go home to, so being accessible, and creating that path of affordability for them. It- you see how all that stuff just fits in and ties in with one another. You know, and that's the culprit right there. COVID-19.

**Interviewer** 31:11

Yeah, definitely. I want to sort of tie some of these connections, that some of what you talked about is that COVID-19 has had an impact on staff. That, and then you've also, you've had some also, there was a lot as a new concept is your supply chain issues. Above that, this is something that we have, like national food chains were destroyed.

**Interviewer** 31:48

So that has led to some difficulties getting maybe nutritious foods, or even just like foods that you're used to serving.

**Participant 139** 31:56

Yeah.

**Interviewer** 31:58

Awesome. The other thing I would say is maybe- I want to pull in the safety piece, because it's something that I don't think I've heard or other people haven't brought up that you know, it's not only like, oh, well, we have this really important task as a central worker, but it is a burden that COVID-19 have made it way less safe.

**Participant 139** 32:25

Yeah. I mean, as far as safety, I have to make sure that everyone is six feet apart. But as far as rate, speed and rate of service, how can you reassure us that things are going to be packaged and done correctly and quick enough, in order for us to meet the demand? And I mean, yeah, to meet the demand is, it was a whole lot of things, I had a lot of sleepless nights, I'll tell you that much. And then as far as making sure that we package everything safely, make sure that my employees are not going around just wiping their nose or touching their phones and then touching up food and placing it right in a bag and giving it to the kids, you know, this is a huge component.

**Interviewer** 33:31

Cool. Okay, so, oh, okay, that's what I'm missing. Community empowerment. Are there other things I sort of, you know, we have these sort of values that that we wanted to talk about. After I add these on if there are other connections you would want to make of things that are already on the map or, or other concepts you want to bring in that you think are really important and not yet reflected in this map.

**Participant 139** 34:33

I don't know. I'm trying to see how I could categorize it but as far as like, the mental, emotional, and physical state, that you know, the effect that it took to make sure all this happened and just-

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

**Participant 139** 35:54

Well, first and foremost, I would have a lot more employees than I have right now. Right? Staffing is a major barrier. And if I had my regular amount of staff, I wouldn't be able to maybe do like a two team circuit. Half on half off type thing, where, you know, the first half serves the first half of the week and the second half serves the second half of the week, team one, team two, that way I can ensure that my staff, not me, but my staff receive better work life balance. Just so they're able to take care of their mental and physical state, because I want to say I'm the youngest.

**Participant 139** 37:20

Right, so I'm the director, I'm the youngest. And we have staff members that are 60, scratching on 70's door, you know they've been in the school district for 25, 30 years. So I think that's where I'm failing them at. I'm doing everything I can. But they understand that they understand that they said they're with me to the wheels fall off, but me, me I-I need to figure out on like I said, well, no, I didn't say but this coming up, Spring Break out, I managed and I was able to get them that whole week off. And they love it. But, staffing is a major obstacle.

**Interviewer** 38:12

How do you think I guess- maybe, what are the barriers to that right now? Is it that people aren't interested? Is it that there's, not the funding for-

**Participant 139** 38:24

You want to know the truth?

**Interviewer** 38:26

I would love to know the truth.

**Participant 139** 38:27

Okay. So, um, and this is going on around the world, so we're not the only ones affected. But when your government pays you more in unemployment, to stay home, then to come to work, then you would be paid to come to work, that kinda creates a barrier, right? So unemployment is paying a lot of people a lot of money, that, I mean for a lot of them, is their first time seeing that much money. So it seems to be an incentive to stay home, to stay unemployed.

**Participant 139** 39:03

So and then all they have to combine it with is that they're high risk, right? So doctors are accessible. And as long as the patient says, hey, I don't feel well, I don't feel comfortable. Or if they have any underlying conditions, not saying that it's made up or is false. They can- they can use that by turning it into a doctor's note. And we have to, I mean, we can't discriminate, we have to approve that. So it-it seems like the perfect imperfect storm. And that's what we're facing. That's what we're facing. And we've been getting through it, but it's been challenging every step of the way.

**Interviewer** 40:18

Are there other leverage points that you think of other things that would you think have a good impact on sort of the food system in general, like youth food access, or anything like that?

**Interviewer** 40:38

Honestly, I think throughout this whole year, we've probably figured out the rest of the challenges and we've overcome them. That's why we're able, I mean, we're almost had 2 million meals served since last March. When you break it down, that's almost that's the brown 12,000 meals a day. I mean, that's, that's unheard of, really. Throughout this, I have accumulated a lot of accolades, which I praise my team every time once I've, you know, but you know, we've received the Presidential Award for our company, SodexoMAGIC, because of what we're doing, and how often we're doing and how we're doing it.

**Participant 139** 41:24

A lot of other districts have copied off of our plan, our template to expedite their food and make sure that all their students are eating, you know, so I feel good about that. Like I said, whoa, okay, these kids, these kids' parents don't have transportation, they all live in this certain area, I told you, I got in a van, we loaded it up, and we drove through that area and brought the food there. Not knowing if it's a dangerous area, in the moment, not really caring at all, I don't know if that was kind of idiotic of me or not. But the only thing on my mind was, we have to feed these kids.

**Participant 139** 42:06

So anything like that, we kind of break down those barriers. But as long as unemployment keeps paying people $300 extra, on top of unemployment, it's kind of hard to defeat that we have the funds, but it's it- we can't compete with that, you get what I'm saying we go with minimum wage, and above a minimum waste, depending on the job description and the job type. But that's as far as we can go. I mean, we've been giving my employees incentives, bonuses every week, for just being there, sticking their neck out and just riding with me, you know, but it's only so much we can do.

**Interviewer** 42:45

I'm wondering- this is not in the script. So I might not, it's not like something I've ever asked before. But I'm wondering, have you had any of you just like, haven't even had a second to like, stop and breathe and consider, but I'm wondering, what does the future look like, you know, like post COVID that, like, you're gonna have all these things, resources that are coming back as kids start getting in the classroom again. And this is easier to process. Do you have other goals for the future and stuff like that?

**Interviewer** 43:24

Well, I don't know if it'll ever be such a thing as, I guess, post COVID. Just because even if the virus is gone, the memory of the virus and what we had to go through would still be there. So I think people will still be wearing masks, I think everyone would be carrying a thing of hand sanitizer in their pocket. Which, you know, some of these things could have been already in place, always washing your hands and making sure your hands are sanitized, staying out of a lot of people's faces, respecting their space, things like that you're taught as a little kid, but somewhere along the way it got lost.

**Participant 139** 44:05

But as a food service, we want to make sure that again, we're the kids and the families that we're touching right now, we continue to do that. To make sure that we're still accessible to make sure that you know we listen to what the demand is, hey, can we get in more fresh fruits? Can we do this? Can we do that? I even implemented my partner with CRIM and we started making different recipes for the vegetables and the fruit that the kids received so they just don't- aren't eating regular oranges or regular apples and strawberries and things like that.

**Participant 139** 44:44

We're giving them recipes to maybe cut 'em or slice them up and make a big apple pie or, you know, make a stir fry with their vegetables and you know, things like that just to keep up with being relevant. You know? Hey, these- because we all know adults, kids, vegetables or fruits, sometimes they get boring. But- so we offered different recipes to maybe spice it up, so to speak. So we just want to keep the relationship strong with the district and with the parents with the children to let them know, and have them fill up that food service, we really have their best interest in hand. And we'll do whatever we have to do to make sure that, you know, the students eat.

**Interviewer** 45:28

Yeah, that's awesome. Yeah, I just, I asked because like, some people that I talked to, you know, asking about leverage points, they're like, oh, it'd be really cool if we could connect, like local farmers to school food and stuff like that. And I'm like, I know, like I've gotten involved in like, my undergrad institutions like food service, like looking at, like food sustainability. And like, it is so much time and effort to try to interface with local farmers and producers like so much more labor.

**Participant 139** 45:58

You got to go through this loop, go through this, to make sure it connects with this, make sure that it's certified. And to make sure that it's approved with the regulations of that loop you know. It's so hard to connect and network with those types of groups.

**Interviewer** 46:15

Here, the priority, of course, is providing food, is there a horizon that you can see ? You can settle a little bit and maybe put some extra labor to do other things. But like right now, we just got to-

**Participant 139** 46:29

Yeah that's it, yeah. I mean, we've talked to we've MD, Michigan Department education and nutrition, we have meetings every week. And we follow USDA guidelines along with Michigan guidelines. And as soon as COVID hit they said, okay, guys, I know we have these rules and regulations, we need you to follow, you know, the healthy eating regulations and the rules and the portion sizes, but we- we need to to make sure that the kids eat, okay? You know, they gave us a lot of waivers that we could sign just in case we didn't have certain meals, or we couldn't meet the certain grain requirements per meal and things like that due to limitations. But the ultimate goal was to continue to make sure that our kids ate.